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Surbiton
Farmers' Market

Where to put that cross?

It's election week (as if you haven't noticed), and The Good Life has a full list of each candidate, in the order that they'll appear on the ballot papers on Thursday as you unfurl your broly and make your way to the scout hut. See **p9**



● **Surbiton Love Island contestant Munveer Jabbar is turning his hand to making salsa sauces after being dumped on the reality romance show. See p8**



● **Spoke like a gent! How a concerted blitz on marking is getting on top of bike thefts in Surbiton. See p7**



● **The Surbiton Trophy has ended... or has it? See p12**



Roselle Adriatico and Jasmine Constance, both four, were among those marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings in France, with Royal British Legion events in Surbiton & Long Ditton. Full story on p10

Market maestro

Surbiton farmers' market has raised £100,000 for good causes in its 15 years, and organiser David Jacobson has been recognised in the King's birthday honours list.

He'll receive the British Empire Medal after being mentioned in the same breath as Tracey Emin, Imelda Staunton and Simon Le Bon. The citation refers to David's hands-on services to the community. Also honoured,



David Jacobson at last month's market
 local luminaries Karen Carney, Alison Baverstock and Tony Arbour.

Continued p5

Cat-astrophe in Tolworth Pk Rd

Here is the mews. A moggy was first on the scene after a car cornered into Tolworth Park Road from Bond Road, somersaulted and ended up rocking on its roof.

Mercifully no one was hurt, but the feline investigator – with a certain sense of furboding – made a puzzled circuit of the stranded Vauxhall



Astra, established that nothing could be done, then strolled purrposefully away. After a short paws, police arrived and took a statement from the shaken driver.

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Buyers vie for high street bank building

Two would-be buyers are jostling to purchase the old NatWest bank building in Surbiton.

The freehold was valued at £560,000, plus £1,000 per week rates. Bids closed in June, with two rival offers now being weighed up.

It's an intriguing listed building with more than 2,700sqft of ground-floor space behind its columns. The roof has an ornate balustrade, and there is a huge secure bank vault in the basement. A major plus is the six private car parking spaces out back, in the heart of Surbiton.

Agent Freddie King told The Good Life that although the building is currently designated Class E (shops, offices, restaurants etc), its use

could be altered with planning permission... perhaps if someone wanted to turn the basement into their own private wine cellar.

"The bid deadline was last week, and we have received offers," Freddie confirmed.

"Now NatWest is deliberating about who it wants to proceed with." He said that he was conscious many old banks had become bars, such as the All Bar One chain. "We get all sorts of investors," he said, adding that part of the appeal of Surbiton NatWest branch was its hefty secure subterranean vault.

NatWest left Surbiton on Feb 21 this year. Halifax shut on May 10 2023, Barclays on July 1 2022 and Santander on July 29 2021.



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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 Between issues, join nearly 8,000 locals who follow us on Instagram (just scan the QR code) and Facebook @thegoodlifesurbiton or visit our website: 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).



Arrr! A new tasty option

After failing to turn Surbiton's cabbies vegan, the station forecourt cafe, recently Busy Beans but fondly remembered as Wilder's deli, has a new owner, and is called – I kid you not – RR Tasty. Why? The Turkish boss (new to cafes) explained: "Because the things we serve 'Arrr' tasty." Maybe there are pirates in the family.

Anyway, there's a fresh buzz about the place after Busy Beans' 'vegan only' experiment flopped. Cabbies can now get hot dogs and chips, lathered in ketchup, pizza slices, coffees, ice cream, chilled cans, milkshakes, protein bars, rolls, sarnies and a selection of pastries.

It's early days. Confusingly, RR Tasty's website map places Surbiton in Savannah, Georgia!

But now that summer might have arrived, there are five tables outside, some on astroturf, while the inside remains, even by the owners' admission, 'cosy'. It opens at 6.30am, Mon-Sat, to catch early commuters, and closes at 5pm.

Old Delhi food at new Delhi eatery

Big things are planned at Surbiton's newest curry house, launched with fanfare in the space once occupied by Thali Ho on Brighton Road's curry quarter-mile.

Delhi By Nature, sister to an eatery in Sutton, pledges to do things differently by focusing on northern Indian cuisine and street food of Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi's bazaar area.

Instead of popadums by number, you get a basket of mixed spicy and plain, with mint sauce and chutneys.

Rather than the customary main+bhaji order, you're urged to pick and mix from different sections of the menu for shared dining, with starters including mango prawn cocktail (top, right), a dome of chopped fruit and fish, drizzled with mango salsa, and Amritsari fish fry. The calamari, crisp-fried with curried mayo, is colourful and spicy.

While butter chicken is a conventional main dish, the hotter Goan fish curry is a spicier choice; thin fillets cooked in a complex paste with coconut and tamarind.

Letters alongside menu dishes point diners to potential allergy issues, while DBN offers takeaways, deliveries and event catering, where the restaurant comes to you.

Long-term plans include warm-weather expansion into the area facing Electric Parade. Amiable and enthusiastic waiters buzz about in plentiful numbers, and scribble orders on notepads not hand-held devices. Wine by the glass from £6, with Kingfisher and Cobra on draught. Pre-meal cocktails start at £7.95 and, as word spreads, the space – one of the largest in the town – was all-but full last weekend.

One discernable Surbitonian trend is that everyone seems to be eating earlier than the days of the traditional late-night, post-pub dash.

Tim Harrison



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Pub garden gears up for action

Everything's ready for some summer sun! The Plough & Harrow's patrons are enjoying new outdoor tables, while younger customers are making the most of the attractive play area. The 230-year-old Heartwood Inns pub in Ditton Hill Road, Long Ditton, had a £3m refurb and, if England are still in the Euros, will screen games in the garden. "There's ample space to watch the action unfold," said assistant manager Mihai Andrei. "Enjoy garden games, 10-pint pitchers, seasonal food and a range of bar snacks." More at ploughandharrowsurbiton.com



● **Frame it, or sip it? A latte work of art at Surbeanton in Victoria Road.**

Mem's the word

Mem's, No97's successor in Maple Road, has soft-launched, offering modern European fine dining and a basement cocktail bar.

Its first à la carte menu has four starters, five mains, three sides and three puds. Or choose from a set menu; two courses for £43, three for £48.

Starters include foie gras terrine with fig chutney, candied walnuts and elderflower gel (£14), or seared scallops, miso beurre blanc and sunchoke purée (£13). For mains: filet mignon, honey-glazed baby carrots, potato terrine and red wine sauce (£32) or poached Dover sole, lobster mousseline, bisque and crispy leeks (£30). For

pud, New York cheesecake with cherry, white chocolate and pistachios (£9).

For bookings phone 020 8241 2984, WhatsApp 07542 944 448 or email memssurbiton@gmail.com

● In other news, Sam Berry and wife Alex, former owners of No97, are to close their restaurant One One Four in Teddington after seven years. "Our decision is rooted in a belief that the era of special-occasion dining experiences has had its day," said Sam, who also owns Cento Uno next to Mem's, Hideaway on the river at Thames Ditton Marina, and Bone Idyll cocktail bar and distillery in Water Lane, Kingston.

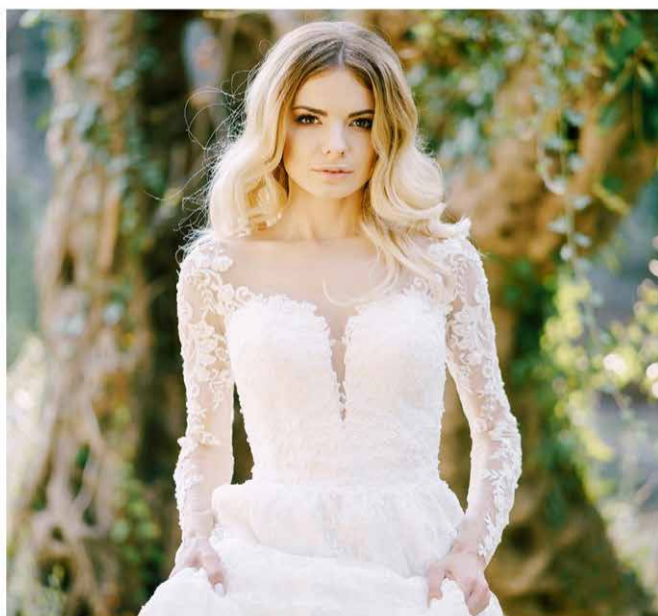
"We hear the call for a restaurant that feels like a second home, a place where everyone can gather regularly, not for grand celebrations but everyday moments."

One One Four closes on August 11.



Mem's offers modern fine dining in Maple Road

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Birthday revamp for COTC

Coffee on the Corner has been remodelled ahead of its fifth anniversary, with room for 15 inside on comfy seats at tables, on banquettes or at a breakfast bar. There's also a takeaway window at the side opposite Alexandra rec, to grab and go, and tables in a covered garden at the back, plus patio out front.

In 2020, owner Kyle Hyams closed the Beaconsfield Road cafe because of lockdown. It reopened for takeaway trade but after its revamp is eat-in once again. "When we opened in 2019 we said we were here for the community.



Manager Suzie Bicker in the new-look interior

Now we can be again!" said Kyle. "We still have plenty more exciting news to announce, and we can't wait to see everyone inside again."

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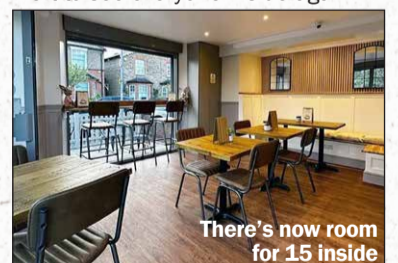
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There's now room for 15 inside



● The Waggon & Horses pub in Surbiton Hill Road has refurbished its raised garden area, replacing old decking with paving, reworking the booths and adding tables in both sun and shade. The planting regime includes olive trees and bamboo.



Powwow is refixed

After June's neighbourhood meeting was axed for the general election, the next Surbiton councillors' powwow is at Glenmore House on July 16.

Off with the birds

Photographer Nick Martin is guest speaker at Surbiton Birdwatchers' meeting on Tue, July 16, at 7.30pm in St Matthew's school, Langley Road, talking about wildlife in Scotland.

Forces supporters

Have links to the military? The new Kingston Armed Forces Support Group offers advice on careers and higher education. Email A.Baverstock@kingston.ac.uk

Nick to stand down

Despite heroic help from wife Annie, Long Ditton's county councillor Nick Darby is standing down next year because of his failing eyesight.

Board fee levied

To display a pavement board outside a shop in Surbiton costs £158 a year; a charge intended to limit numbers.

Filtering opinion

Feel strongly about Seething Wells filter bed neglect? Help the action group's fight for a wildlife haven at forms.gle/18p63nDpzzUR4WX59

Erin's salsa cause

Erin Boag's Surbiton Trophy salsa session at Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club raised £430 for a cancer cause. "Being a part of such a great event is always a pleasure," she said.

Old Smellylands

Transport buff Jago Hazzard's amusing YouTube video **What's so bad about Berrylands (apart from the smell)?** tells the history of the area and its 'pretty obscure' station. youtube.com/@JagoHazzard

Regency steps

Mrs Bennet's next Regency dance class is July 10, 8pm, at St Mark's church hall. £5. Wear flat-soled shoes. There's a Zoom option too. Full details at mrsbennet.co.uk

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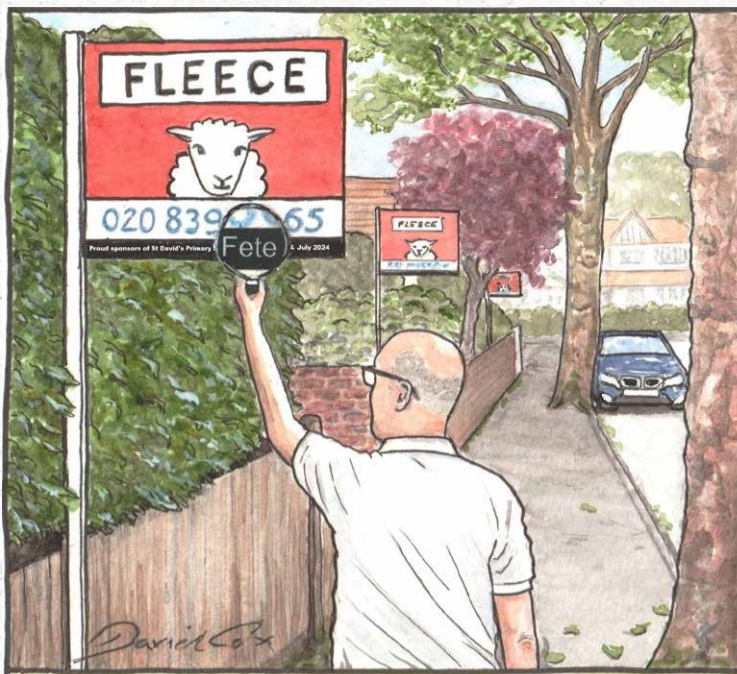
A recent rash of car number plate thefts in Surbiton and Long Ditton involves night-time thieves and drills.

Oh, bra-vissimo!

Give unwanted bras to Sunray Recycle to reuse, recycle or repurpose. The Sunray estate's waste-not, want-not group collects unloved bras to send to Against Breast Cancer which splits them into those that can be used here, sent abroad or made into something else. For every tonne collected, it gets £700 to fund research. "The most recent bundle of bras we sent was 80kg," said Sunray Recycle's Janine Martin. Leave bras at the recycling point outside the Sunray estate community centre in Knollmead.

SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



Careful reading of the small print revealed there will be a school fete in the neighbourhood, and not an exodus

● Farewell (or maybe Żegnaj na zawsze) to the Polish deli by the railway bridge in Brighton Road, which has closed after nine years of selling sauerkraut, frankfurters and pickled cucumbers. Cramped but friendly, the shop, which sold Polish magazines as well as fresh and dried food, specialised in sausages and ham. It had a loyal following among shoppers who liked the quirky products. In past lives the shop has been a beauty salon and estate agent.



Berrylands festivities

The Berrylands summer festival is on Sunday (July 7) from noon-4pm, just off Raeburn Avenue on the old lagoon site. Aim for the noise! Attractions include bouncy castles, pig racing, coconut shy, tug-of-war, barbecue, beer tent,



● Who should feel most flattered, and who the most put out? Charlie the poodle was judged to look most like his owner at Seething sports day.

teas, food stalls and craft displays. Free entry. The event will fund new loos for the scout hall, including installation of an accessible toilet. berrylandsfestival.co.uk

Go to Mars, says Helen

Surbiton astronaut Helen Sharman – the first Brit in space – predicts that by the mid 2040s humans will be on Mars. Helen, now 61, was listening to the radio in her car in June 1989 on her way home to Adelaide Road when she heard the appeal for candidates to become the UK's first astronaut. She discussed it with boyfriend Kevin at her flat in Stratton Court, and applied, then was picked from 13,000 applicants to join the British-Soviet Juno mission. She already knew Mars. She worked in the research lab of the sweet giant in Slough! Helen was in Surbiton from 1988 to 1994, but now lives down the A3, near Guildford. The borough still claims her; Kingston uni has a science laboratory named after her. "Elon Musk says he could get there with his great big rocket, said Helen. "There's a race to the moon now, and Mars will come soon after; we'll probably have people there by the

mid 2040s. There's an orbiting space station round the moon that we might use, and lunar bases to start. It's very exciting."

However, astrophysicist Catherine Heymans reckons Helen is in dreamland. She recently told Radio 4 (after confessing that, as a teenager, she'd been inspired by Helen visiting her school) that it was all romantic nonsense as radiation levels made Mars missions too dangerous for humans. Safer, she reckons, to send robots.



"I think we should be going," insisted Helen, who carried a photo of the Queen with her on her trip to the Mir space station. "Humans are more efficient and mobile than robots."

Call to potterers

So you enjoy pottering in your man or woman cave? You yearn to unscrew objects to see how they work? You despair at our throwaway culture, and hark back to the days when everyday things could be mended? Join the Revive-All crew at The Circulatory, the haven of rescued and upcycled items saved from landfill, based at 18 Southsea Road, on the Kingston/Surbiton boundary.

Led by Des Kay (pictured as alter ego Mr Green), Tariq Shabbeer and Roland Lawrence, the team restore and rehome almost anything. "We hope more volunteers come forward to assist," said Des, a recycler with a 35+ year pedigree. Tools, food & drink provided. Call Des on 07962 231830 or visit savetheworldclub.org See p8 for more information about the Revive-All project at The Circulatory.



Relax. The K3 route is secure

Persistent rumours questioning whether the K3 bus has a future were emphatically quashed at the Long Ditton Residents' Association's recent agm.

"The rumours are wrong," said association chair Frank Renton, firmly. "We have it on good authority from Transport for London that there is no intention to make any changes to the K3 bus service."

'Bus garage whispers' were blamed, stemming from overheard and misinterpreted remarks made by a bus driver about an administrative retendering process.

Long Ditton's councillors assured the 50+ attendees at the village hall that the highly valued service linking Esher, Claygate, Long Ditton, Surbiton, Kingston and Roehampton faces no threat.



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Matthew James

Squeeze up! I'm trying to get to sleep!

On the face of it, 154 Ellerton Road is a straightforward three-bed, two-bath home. It has a sale board outside, and is on the market with Surbiton estate agents Humphrey & Brand at £850,000. But it has a long-forgotten history that once made it the most talked about home for miles.

In Edwardian England the house was occupied by Jim Foster, his wife and their 11 children; a large, but not exceptionally large, family in that era. But to make ends meet, the Fosters took in lodgers. Which is why Jim Foster found himself up before Kingston magistrates in 1904, with Mr W Negus in the chair.

He was charged with allowing such extreme overcrowding that it was a health hazard. No fewer than **22** people lived in the house!

Bill Nesfield, Surbiton's sanitary inspector, brought the prosecution, with a Surbiton district council representative called to give evidence against our Jim. To his credit, the defendant admitted the charge, but claimed mitigation on the grounds that he was "too tender-hearted" to turn away anyone who needed a roof over their head!

Prosecution witness Mr Shelly was clerk to the council, in the days when Surbiton was its own borough, based in the stylish redbrick former town hall (built in 1898), alongside today's library at the Ewell Road/Berrylands Road junction.



Today 154 Ellerton Road is just right for a modest family... but it hit the headlines when 22 people were found to be living there

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Mr Shelly told the court that 154 Ellerton Road was a long house with parlour, kitchen and scullery downstairs, and three bedrooms. He then took a deep breath to list the occupants. "The defendant, his wife and 11 children, together with two other families, plus two male lodgers, so that there are 22 people living in the house."

The magistrates were told Mr Foster had been warned about overcrowding several times, and had responded by ditching the two lodgers and sending his eldest daughter to live elsewhere, so that "at present there are 19 persons living in that six-roomed cottage".

In Mr Shelly's opinion, Mr Foster "had been exploiting the housing shortage by sub-letting", and he called for a court order to abate the nuisance, and fine the defendant.

Mr Nesfield, the sanitary inspector, said that while there was demand for housing, the district council had recently built more than 100 homes in response. He said that had it simply been the Foster family - all 13 of them - living at 154 Ellerton Road, that would have been fine. "But as soon as one occupant leaves, he takes in another!"

SURBITON. TWENTY-TWO IN A HOUSE.

Occupant to Abate Nuisance: His Plea of Tender-Heartedness.

At the Kingston County Bench on Thursday, before Mr. W. Negus, and other magistrates, James Foster, 154, Ellerton-road, Surbiton, was summoned at the instance of Wm. Nesfield, Sanitary Inspector to Surbiton District Council, for neglecting to comply with a notice served on him to abate a nuisance at his premises caused by overcrowding, the house being in a state dangerous and injurious to the health of the inhabitants.

Mr. Shelly, clerk to the District Council,

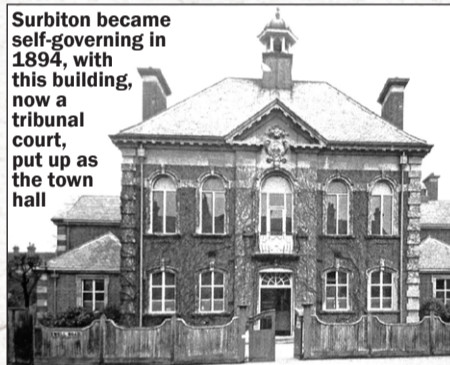
How the Surrey Comet reported the court case

In his defence, Mr Foster said: "It's all due to my tender-heartedness in taking in people who could not find shelter."

What happened next? "Court rise," bellowed the usher as Mr Negus and his two magistrate 'wingers' went out to the retiring room to consider the case over tea. Garibaldi and digestives. When they returned they gave Mr Foster a fortnight to literally put his house in order, stop sub-letting, and pay the council's 14-shilling costs... the equivalent of £70 today.

Modern-day 154 Ellerton Road is described as 'stunning' by the estate agent, with a conservatory and outside studio. You can assess the size of the property via a video tour (humphreyandbrand.co.uk/property/ellerton-road-surbiton-2) to work out how 22 people could once have lived within its walls.

Tim Harrison



Surbiton became self-governing in 1894, with this building, now a tribunal court, put up as the town hall

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That's my writing! Cellar scrawl revealed

When The Good Life ran a story about messages found on the walls of a Second World War bomb shelter under a Surbiton house, an extraordinary thing happened. The six-year-old scribbler came forward!

Now 90, Pam Ponting - as she is today - recalled: "My father designed the shelter, and it was built by a local builder called Mr Clayton." The cavern has survived beneath the living room of the house in Effingham Road (on the market with HJC at £1.7m), as have the young Pam Higgins' poignant messages. She hid there with her cat, assorted relatives and a schoolpal called Sally as bombs fell on Surbiton.

The worst nights were October 9 and 10, 1940, when high explosives rained down on Victoria rec and Balaclava Road, yards from the Higgins' home. A train heading to Surbiton was derailed, and in two intense months, the bombs killed 19 Surbiton residents.

Pam recorded dates and details in pencil on the bricks of the shelter... and they survive to this day. "It was quite primitive, with folding bunk beds that could sleep eight of us, but we felt very safe there," said Pam, who is now in Leamington Spa. Younger sister Pauline still lives in Berrylands and spotted our news story.

Other names written on the cellar wall include Auntie Win and Sally Barnett - a schoolfriend who helpfully added the words 'Surrey's champion swimmer' after her name! "She was just too young to take part in the 1948 London Olympics as she was only 14 or 15," said Pam. And the cat, which is mentioned on the wall scrawl? "That was Timmy, my tabby cat! He disappeared one day, and never came back. We think he may have drowned in the reservoirs which were behind us, where the houses are now."

The article set Pam looking back through an old autograph book. "We went to Morden Park for the annual film fete, and I have signatures of Diana Dors, Douglas Fairbanks, Richard Todd, Petula Clark and John Mills! We moved to Stoneleigh in 1949, and a Commander Ryland bought the house for £3,500." He added a poignant message, hoping the shelter would never be needed again. Perhaps Pam's words will last another 80 years, especially the one from May 1945, marking victory in Europe.



Pam Higgins



Pam Ponting today



Pam Higgins' war scrawl survives



● It's a thing of beauty. This immaculate, rare Porsche 959 was made in 1988, has had one owner from new, and belongs to Charles Ivey Porsche specialists in Hollyfield Road, Surbiton. It was the world's fastest street-legal production car of its day, with a top speed of nearly 200mph. Its 2.7 litre engine has only done 14,000 miles. Dream on, though; it's not for sale.

Hold tight please! Passengers enjoy old buses

When the bus museum in Brooklands emptied for the day to give all the old girls a chance to show they could still chug along nicely, it created a nostalgic parade on the 406 route between Kingston and Epsom, via Surbiton, with buses of all shapes and sizes, from the 1940s to the 1990s, carrying wistful passengers back and forth for free.

They included this grand lady, LYF 21, which came into service in January, 1951. It's a country area RT bus, an AEC Regent III model with a Park Royal body, and it's in superb condition. The RT bus type constituted London's largest ever standardised bus fleet, with 7,000 of them produced... eventually being replaced by another old favourite, the Routemaster. The last day of service for the RT was on April 7 1979, but once in a while this green goddess gets to purr along the streets it used to serve.

Brian Bell was the conductor on this bus for the 406 route heritage day (all you had to do was stick out your hand and it was free to board) between 9am and 5pm. He told The Good Life: "I virtually lost my voice that day; shouting out the stop names and so on!"

One passenger, riding back in time, was Surbitonian Tony Dale. "I hopped on the last bus from Kingston to Epsom. When I got to the top of St Mark's Hill, I rang the bell to get off at the bus stop by the library... but the driver pulled in at the telephone exchange, where the old stop used to be!" he said. "The conductor was a little confused, but I assured him that the bus would



have been familiar with the old stop."

As a hoarse Brian instructed the remaining passengers: "Hold tight please!", it bumbled on towards Tolworth. Many younger riders on heritage bus day had never encountered a conductor, and watched transfixed as Brian confidently swung from side to side from the pole on the open platform, occasionally getting off at stops to help someone with a shopping trolley before a ting-ting told the driver all were aboard and he could set off. **Tim Harrison**

Local luminaries honoured

Continued from p1

David Jacobson is now entitled to a baptism, marriage or funeral at St Paul's Cathedral! "I can also design my own coat of arms," he said. "I've just got to decide what to put on it."

Former footballer turned pundit Karen Carney was already an MBE, but has now been elevated to an OBE. A Surbiton resident for a decade, Kaz turns 37 next month.

The award recognises her chairing of the government's recent review into the future of women's football. "I'm honoured and humbled, and I'm particularly grateful that this is for work I've done since retiring as a player," she said. "Chairing that review has probably been one of the hardest challenges I've faced."

Alison Baverstock, associate priest at St Mary's, Long Ditton, and a Kingston Uni professor, has been made an MBE for charitable services to British armed forces families, and for founding the charity Reading Force, set up in 2011.

Tony Arbour, 78, has been made an OBE. The former Surbiton County Grammar pupil represented Surbiton in the Greater London Assembly for more than two decades, and was a GLC councillor for Surbiton from 1983-86.



It's bowling along

Punters spent an average £10.82 per visit, giving Hollywood Bowl a profitable year... despite being encircled by barriers during Tolworth roundabout's roadworks. Chief executive Steve Burns reported a 3% profit growth in the first six months of the year. "It's fabulous to see," he said. "Most people are feeling the pinch, so it's important to keep our prices as competitive as possible. People

are looking for value." In the next decade, the group aims to expand from 68 bowling centres to 130. So profitable is the Hollywood Bowl that its board refused to sell to Guinness Homes, preventing the site from being absorbed into the huge Signal Park flat scheme.



DID YOU KNOW MARGARET?



Author writing a book about actress and Kingston resident Margaret Lockwood would like to hear from anyone who knew her.

Please contact Lynda: lyndacar@hotmail.co.uk 07891 059418

Clandon Wood

Burials, ash interments and nature reserve



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Guildford in Bloom
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It's rare to see emotion – any emotion, frankly – at a residents' association agm, but the tears welled up at Long Ditton village hall as treasurer Paul Bartlett, left, relayed the enormity of the result of the David v Goliath inquiry into whether One Tree Hill and land around Stokes Field should gain 'Village Green' status to shield it from the covetous

eyes of developer Taylor Wimpey for all time. He had to pause to compose himself as he spoke of the seven-year battle waged by Save Hinchley Wood and Long Ditton Green Belt which pitted residents against a £5.4billion behemoth in an exhaustive public inquiry. Meeting chairman Frank Renton led thunderous

applause for Paul's hard work after the treasurer retold the tale of crowdfunding £60,000 to hire a specialist barrister to fight the cause. "We did it!" he said. "Thank you all for your support." Residents had to convince an inspector that the land had been in continuous recreational use for 20+ years; a task which involved locals summoning up the names of dogs they'd once walked there!



The Friends of St Andrew's Square held a meet-and-greet in the June sunshine to discuss ways of improving the

square off Maple Road – the only one of its kind in the borough. It needs regular TLC, and the group has been liaising with Glendale Services, which has the maintenance contract. A new crab apple tree has been planted. Ian Roscow said it was a good way to get to know the neighbours. Local councillor (and mayor) Liz Green turned up to add her support, as did the community police. "Glendale have provided tools, and cleaned benches; then we decided to have this little meet-and-greet," said Ian. "People have been saying 'Oh, I've seen you walking around, but I've never spoken to you', so you start to build community spirit." Email st.andrews.sq.surbiton@gmail.com

Discover Kingston's hidden habitat and heritage gems on a treasure hunt from Queen's Prom in Surbiton to the bandstand in Canbury Gardens, Kingston.

The 4km walk from the Pocket Park opposite Uxbridge Road is new mayor Liz Green's first fundraiser for her chosen charity, Habitats & Heritage.

You'll get a booklet and have to solve clues to show the judges at the end. There's a prize for the winning team (suggested size: four to six) and tea, coffee and cake at Boaters Inn on the river.

It's on the afternoon of Sat, July 6 (first teams leave at 12.30pm) and you can register at kingston.gov.uk/events/event/298/kingstons-clue-quest

"It's fun for all the family or as a group of friends," said Liz. "Hope to see you there!"



Using up the abundance of local fruit



The fruit harvest from Surbiton gardens and allotments is too good to waste, says Toni Izard. "But it can be overwhelming if it all comes at once!" Abundance can help. It's a volunteer group which picks and harvests, leaving the owner with all the fruit they want and giving the rest to juice and jam makers, and the community kitchen.

If you have an hour or two to help harvest or make juice this summer and autumn, or you have a glut of fruit you'd like to see used, call/text **07749 633973** or email abundance@ttingston.org – the same to hire a range of presses to make apple/pear/plum/grape juice. Visit www.ttingston.org

Intrigued by AI, and to test if artificial intelligence could make journalists redundant, Good Life editor Tim Harrison asked a robot (editpad.org; others are available) to write 300 words on **A Tale of Spring on Queen's Promenade**. Tim did the same. The robot didn't hang about! It produced its work in five seconds flat! Tim took more than half an hour. You judge. Should R2-D2 be given the editor's chair?

Clumps of tulips the colour of Chilean Merlot surrounded Arabella's bench as she gazed out at Father Thames, rippling wearily by.

She could hear the distant buzz of conversation from the volunteers' hut on Queen's Prom. No doubt they were having a rest and a cuppa after their day's work.

She looked again at the magnificent tulips on the sloping banks of flowerbeds. Those volunteers had done a wonderful job, turning a neglected walkway into a relaxing paradise with a string of mini gardens, each filled with colour and character.

A teenager slouched past, pulling a reluctant dachshund on a bright yellow plastic lead.

She watched the dog's tail flicking from side to side, and smiled to herself. Then she looked more closely at the little black dedication plate on the bench alongside her.

It read: For Arabella. In memory of all those afternoons.

Another Arabella? Her mother once told her she'd picked it because she'd got talking to a garden designer at the Chelsea Flower Show one year... and she'd been an Arabella.

It seemed appropriate that two Arabellas were on the prom today, surrounded by spring flowers.

But what, Arabella wondered, were 'all those afternoons'?

It sounded rather wistful. Romantic. Possibly clandestine.

Then she noticed some spidery writing, scratched into the bench just below the name plaque. She got up and moved to get a closer look. She brushed the remains of a spider's web aside, and could make out the wording. *Darling, I never left you. Love, Arabella.*

A gust of wind ruffled the branches of the overhanging tree above her, and a swan paddled past on the river. The bird stretched its magnificent white wings, turned to face her and trumpeted out a call. Lost in her thoughts, Arabella rose and strolled on. Past the tulips.

Tim Harrison (35 mins)

A Prom writing challenge



As the days grew longer and the temperature rose, the residents of Surbiton eagerly awaited the arrival of spring at Queen's Promenade. The once bare trees began to bud, and the colorful [sic] flowers started to bloom, filling the air with their sweet fragrance.

One sunny afternoon, Emma decided to take a stroll along Queen's Promenade to soak up the beauty of the season. The vibrant green grass was speckled with patches of delicate wildflowers, and the gentle breeze carried the sound of chirping birds and the laughter of children playing nearby.

As she walked along the promenade, Emma noticed a group of friends having a picnic on a patch of grass. The smell of fresh sandwiches and strawberries wafted through the air, making her stomach growl with hunger. She smiled and waved at the group, feeling a sense of camaraderie with her fellow park-goers.

Further down the promenade, a young couple sat on a bench, gazing lovingly into each other's eyes. Emma couldn't help but feel a twinge of nostalgia for her own past romances, but she pushed the thought aside and focused on the present moment.

As she approached the end of Queen's Promenade, Emma spotted a group of squirrels frolicking in the trees, their bushy tails twitching with excitement. She watched in awe as they scurried up and down the branches, chasing each other in a playful game of tag.

Feeling rejuvenated by the beauty of the spring day, Emma made her way back home, grateful for the simple pleasures of nature and the sense of community that Queen's Promenade brought to the residents of Surbiton. She vowed to return often, basking in the beauty of the season and the joy of being part of such a vibrant community.

A Robot (5 seconds)

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Tip needs bike access

Surbiton's cyclists should have the same access to the tip in Villiers Road, Kingston, as motorists, they argue.

Restrictions on using the recycling centre were brought in for Covid, but while car drivers can now resume drop-offs, it remains a problem for anyone on foot, or on a bike. "The ghost of Covid past should not be invoked to maintain controls," said Bob Phillips. "We have the centre to maximise recycling and control of waste in the borough, and that should include people who do not have cars."

In response, the council says access by pedestrians and cyclists is permitted on Sundays. "While it is desirable to offer more time, the current configuration of Villiers Road makes this difficult." Kingston Council has indicated it will try to "reconfigure the site and ensure foot and cycle access is possible for longer periods".

● Join a dog-friendly wildlife walk and learn about the history and ecology of Tolworth Court Farm Fields. Exercise dogs, meet like-minded people and learn how to protect wildlife while enjoying the outdoors with your four-legged friends. Those without dogs are welcome too on the walk in the 42-hectare site bordered by the Hogsmill river, Jubilee Way and the Kingston Road. The hour-and-a-half ramble is on Thu, Aug 22 at midday and is organised by Surbiton-based rewinding group Citizen Zoo. Find out more and register at eventbrite.co.uk Search for Wild Tolworth.

● 20mph zones will be introduced outside Long Ditton infants' School, Ditton Hill Road, and Long Ditton St Mary's junior school, Sugden Road. Dittons councillor Nick Darby, who has been campaigning for the limit, even helping organise a speed trap with pupils and Surrey Police, said it would be achieved with signs and road markings, not speed humps. The zones would only be by the schools... not wider. As yet, no implementation date has been set.



● Chastened by The Good Life pointing out its sign offering 'stationary' was misspelt, the owners of Surbiton Homeware Store in Victoria Road replaced it with one correctly offering 'stationery'. Unfortunately, it now promises 'toiletries' rather than 'toiletries'. Still, it all keeps the local signwriters in work.

● Edith Gardens nature reserve opens to the public on Wed, July 24, 10.30am-2pm. The council-owned reserve, managed by Surbiton-based rewinding group Citizen Zoo, is a site of local importance for nature conservation.

Once overgrown, the 0.44 hectare site off Raeburn Avenue is now a thriving reserve with mixed habitats including woodland, ponds, a mini-meadow and bee bank. The event coincides with a group rewinding day. Volunteers maintain wheelchair-friendly paths and clear invasive plants. You can join in.

Find out more, and register, at eventbrite.co.uk Search for Edith Gardens Rewinding.

Clare Marie is simply the zest

Clare Marie Jones is always up for a challenge. The Surbiton floral designer, who has added a touch of class to Maple Road shops and restaurants for 20 years with her displays, created a Mediterranean lemon grove vibe with a contemporary edge to wow judges at Chelsea in Bloom.

Independent publisher Taschen in Duke of York Square commissioned Clare Marie, of Catherine Road, and florist Kirsten Tanner, who both formed Sisters of Bloom last year to undertake projects, to come up with a design to fit the floral feast brief, and to tie in with the launch of its new arty recipe book *The Gourmand's Lemon*.

Not only did the duo build a lemon tree from sustainable material outside the shop, underplanted with a daisy meadow of chamomile, tanacetum, oxeye, margherita, erigeron and leucanthemum, they also brought the lemon tree inside so it appeared to be growing through the shop window. The display also featured a huge lemon slice and wedge made of dried flowers.

"This is the first time we have entered Chelsea in Bloom and we got a bronze so we are thrilled," said Claire Marie, who had to create a stunning display on one of the smallest budgets in the festival using only sustainable materials. "We had amazing feedback and loads of people were getting their photos taken with our display."

The floral designer is in demand for weddings and major events. More at claremariejones.com or Instagram @[claremariejonesflowers](https://www.instagram.com/claremariejonesflowers)

Jane Grove



Clare Marie Jones, right, with florist pal Kirsten Tanner and, inset, the dried-flower lemon slice

● Make jewellery, find a musical talent, speak a language, learn digital skills and interview techniques, or business management. Many adult education courses are discounted or free at RHACC in Hillcroft, Surbiton, or Parkshot, Richmond. Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College also offers online courses. Visit the South Bank campus on an open day (one is Sept 5, 4-7pm) and meet the tutors. rhacc.ac.uk/events

● A day care service for veterans and their partners is offered at the Royal Star & Garter. Sessions run 10am-4pm, Mon, Wed and Fri, with dedicated days for those with early-stage dementia. Try a free day before Aug 31. "It offers respite to carers, who are often older people themselves," said the Upper Brighton Road home spokesman. Activities include quizzes, art therapy and music movement, as well as enjoying the garden and highly rated food. Email surbiton.enquiries@starandgarter.org or call 020 8339 5100.



The dog graphic on this Long Ditton rec bin means it is for litter AND dog waste

Dual-use bins to target dog waste

Any bin will do – well any public one. Elmbridge Council wants dog owners to use its bins to clean up after their dogs.

"We've installed dual-use bins (for litter and dog waste) in all our open spaces, and these can be used for dog waste," said a spokesman. "We also ask dog owners to encourage others to pick up after their dogs and be ready to spare a waste bag to those without, if necessary."

Kingston Council uses similar bins. Elmbridge has a dog walkers' charter, a code of conduct for those who use open spaces like Long Ditton rec or Stokes Field nature reserve while walking their pets.

- Dispose of dog waste responsibly
- Clean up after your dog
- Carry extra dog waste bags
- Be prepared to lend a dog waste bag to those without
- Kindly remind dog walkers to pick up after their dogs if they fail to do so
- Dispose of dog waste in any dual-use bin in green spaces
- If bins are full or you can't find one, take waste bags home for disposal
- Keep dogs under control
- Respect dog-free areas
- Look after the environment
- Don't let your dog swim in ponds and rivers where indicated
- Keep dogs to the main paths in nesting season, Mar-Sept to protect threatened bird species.

Life's no longer a pain in the neck

Surbiton chiropractor Neil Reilly has devised a solution to 'tech neck'; the muscle strain caused by continuously looking down at phones, tablets and computers.

The ergonomic Eyeprone is "the world's first device that allows the user to lie face down with a full field of vision".

Neil explained: "It takes the substantial weight of the head off your shoulders, and gives the muscles in your neck and upper back the chance to relax."

Essentially it converts your bed into a massage table.

"In use, the facet joints in the back of your neck will gently traction and decompress, which promotes better posture and eliminates the pain and discomfort associated with tech neck," he said.

In the UK, 2.9 million people live with neck or back-related issues; a number which has risen by 300,000 since 2019.

Neil, who is one of the longest practising UK chiropractors, works from Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club. From 1967-2002 his parents ran the Waggon & Horses pub.

How did the Eyeprone come about? "When I was first practising in the 80s, around 75% of patients complained of lower back pain," he said. "With more



working from home, 75% now suffer from the classic symptoms of tech neck instead.

"Patients struggle to find comfortable screen-viewing positions; some hunch over a laptop at the table, others resort to lying on the bed with a tablet on the floor – neither of which is sustainable. The spark of inspiration came when I paired the problem with how comfortable patients feel when lying on the treatment table."

Eyeprone, says Neil, eliminates neck pain and improves posture. "I believe it's a game-changer, and I hope it provides a solution for many sufferers." Details at eyeprone.co.uk

● The first three Good Life readers to buy a £99 Eyeprone online, plus a new patient consultation with Neil in Surbiton will get their £90 appointment free. Book at kingstonchiropracticplus.co.uk



● A scaffolding banner celebrates the history of Surbiton Assembly Rooms. Made by artist Lisa Tolley it covers up the major restoration work being undertaken on a building which dates from May 1889 and is now part of Surbiton High School.



● A spectacular firework display rounds off a showcase of talent at this year's Hollyfest. The event, staged every other year, is hosted by Hollyfield School in Surbiton Hill Road. It runs 2-10pm on Sat, July 13. As well as entertainment by students on two stages, attractions include giant inflatables, stalls, face-painting, an art show and barbecue.

"It's an enjoyable way to while away a summer afternoon and evening," said organiser Betsie Geere. Book at pta-events.co.uk/hollyfield or pay on the gate. U5s free, family ticket £12.



Police bike markers at June's Maple Road farmers' market

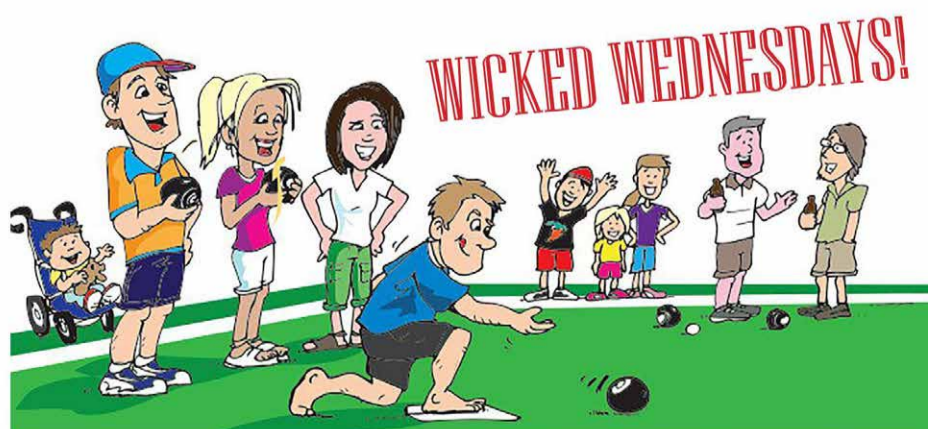
● To confront bike theft in Surbiton, police are stepping up marking... and it's producing results. "We hold marking events at Surbiton and Berrylands stations, Surbiton Farmers' Market and Tolworth Broadway," said Berrylands PCSO Wayne Carby. "Dates via the Berrylands safer neighbourhood team X account (@MPSBerrylands) or at bikeregister.com/events, where you put in your postcode for the nearest one." Home marking can also be arranged for Surbiton residents, especially if they have multiple bikes. Email: berrylands@met.police.uk

Since the scheme began, hundreds of bikes have been marked to deter thieves and boost recovery. Two bikes were reunited with owners in May, said PCSO Carby, resulting in an arrest for handling stolen goods. "It works!" he said.

● One of the longest-running religious groups in Tolworth has closed because of falling numbers. The Union of Catholic Mothers was set up at Our Lady Immaculate in Ewell Road in 1945 to support marriage and family life. Dwindling membership and a lack of committee officers meant it closed just before its 80th anniversary. Past members held a mass, followed by fish & chips, as a final hurrah in mid-June.

● A charity needs a treasurer. Kingston Association for the Blind seeks an experienced accountant. "Our accounts are not complex, but the successful candidate would need to maintain financial control and ensure we comply with legal responsibilities," said CEO Odette Battarel. Email kab@kingstonassociationforblind.org

Why not try something different during the holiday?



Every Wednesday between noon and 4pm from 17 July to the end of August, families can try out bowls. Bring the children along and give it a go! There will be plenty of people to show you the ropes, too. All you need is smooth-soled shoes. We'll provide the bowls. £4 per person for 2 hours.

King George Field Indoor Bowls Club, Jubilee Way, Chessington KT9 1TR
020 8397 7025 www.kgfindoorbowlsclub.co.uk kgfbc1971@outlook.com

Retirement prompts high street reshuffle

One of Surbiton's longest-serving estate agents has retired, prompting an intriguing reshuffle.

After 33 years behind the principal's desk at Avery Cole, Chris Watts, 66, can finally fulfil his dream of focusing on his neglected garden.

Last week he cleared his drawers, completed his tax return and left the compact office in Victoria Road, next to Regency bookshop and opposite Surbiton YMCA.



Colleague Phil Druce told The Good Life that the business had a new owner... but was coy about revealing who.



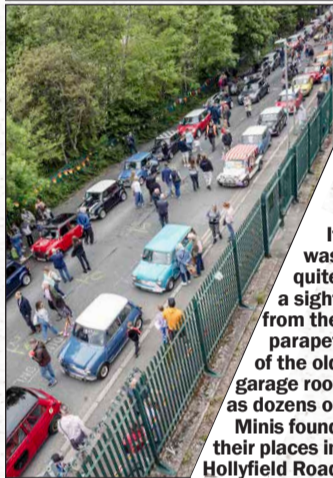
He only need bang on the wall to find out! It's Max Smith, 54, pictured left, from neighbouring agent Parry & Drewett, which, like Avery Cole, has been a fixture in Surbiton for more than half a century.

Both firms specialise in lettings, while Parry & Drewett - past sponsors of the Surbiton Festival - also handle sales... and have actually been selling property on behalf of Avery Cole for years.

The two offices will continue, side by side, but in the fullness of time, when tedious lease issues are sorted, integration seems probable. So while Max and Phil will be working together, they'll be doing so from adjoining premises.



Mayor Liz Green was chuffed to find a Mini that matched her hair!



It was quite a sight from the parapet of the old garage roof as dozens of Minis found their places in Hollyfield Road

● Hundreds turned out to view 150 Minis, Britain's symbol of the 60s, parked nose-to-bumper in Hollyfield Road to mark 60 years since a Mini Cooper won the Monte Carlo Rally. That Cooper S, **33 EJB**, researched and developed at the garage which is now the Charles Ivey Porsche base, was also on show. Mike Cooper, son of John who designed the classic car, opened the event, while Chris Dawson, who worked with the legendary designer, led tours of the garage. The event was run by Community Brain and Kingston Council. It included a parade of 60 Minis on a loop around the borough and through the pedestrianised area of Kingston town centre.

"This is where it started," said garage owner Alvaro Crego. "The event is a great celebration; it's a privilege to be involved, and it was wonderful to see so many people and Minis together."



Part of the 'Italian Job' parade of Minis in Brighton Road

Munveer's real saucy

It wasn't to be. Surbiton Romeo Munveer Jabbal was dumped off TV's most popular matchmaking show Love Island.

But the 30-year-old recruitment manager, right, isn't wallowing in self pity. He still plans to get saucy - by launching salsa dip Mamma Salsa.

Munveer, who worked for consulting giant Bain and was a Hollyfield School pupil, spoke of his frustration about leaving the villa in Majorca. "I'm grateful for the opportunity. I didn't just go there for a long holiday; I did go there to find love, but unfortunately it didn't happen, and that's fine. I'm just really excited for what happens next."

He has received lots of kind words from fans of the ITV2 show, which "made me feel so much better about myself".



'Heaven gains an angel'

TV presenter and broadcaster Dr Michael Mosley, who died on a walk while on holiday on the Greek island of Symi, is fondly remembered by Surbitonian Sindy Seenarine, who had just arrived at the Agia Marina resort near where the TV doctor's body was found on the morning of June 9.

Sindy, of Chadwick Place, said: "I had deep interest and respect for Dr Michael for years. His podcasts were highly intellectual, his scientific interest was made possible by perseverance, his interest in health and fitness was magnificent and he was extremely adventurous. Heaven has gained an angel."

Dr Mosley, 67, was holidaying with his wife, GP and author Clare Bailey, when he lost his way in scorching temperatures. His body was found near the perimeter fence of the Agia Marina resort. An initial post-mortem revealed he died of natural causes.

Greek police blamed heat exhaustion in 40°C temperatures. "The tragedy is he was so close to shelter; maybe he was desperately trying to get here," Sindy said. "This is the hottest it's ever been since we've been coming here. We've never experienced this in June."

● The Dittons' historic ties will be severed once Boundary Commission conclusions get the nod. It wants Long Ditton split from Thames Ditton lumping it in with both Hinchley Wood, and, bizarrely, Weston Green. Thames Ditton will pair with East Molesey. Despite opposition from residents and Long Ditton Residents' Association, rethink pleas fell on deaf ears. "It's a bad decision; plainly wrong," said Dittons Cllr Nick Darby.



Kathee La Hood from Torque Electric in Surbiton, with her cockapoo Ruby

Efficient homes show boosts green issues

More than 260 people attended the borough's second Efficient Homes Show at Hollyfield School.

It gave them the chance to question 37 exhibitors and listen to addresses from 21 speakers, including panellists and facilitators, about different types of technology and services that could help to improve their homes, reduce their energy bills and protect the environment at the same time.

The police registered 31 bikes, to help track them if they are stolen. Kingston Council's sustainable transport team fixed 20 bikes for free, and children and adults alike had the chance to meet Ruby, the five-year-old cockapoo, who was modelling baskets on the back of a range of e-bikes for her owner Kathee La Hood of Surbiton high street's Torque Electric.

The Save the World Club, based at The Circulatory, used the event to spread the word about its new repair shop for electrical and electronic goods, rather than consigning broken items to landfill.

It is also recruiting volunteers to help mend and restore. Des Kay stood by the Revive-All poster (right) at the show and said: "If you like to potter, or work out how to repair a broken item, come along and join us, for as long or as short a time as you like."

Kingston Council's green economy lead, Ionna Rossi, was pleased with the response to the Efficient Homes Show. "We've already had great feedback from residents who left the event with a better understanding about what they could achieve for their home or budget," she said.

The event was created by the council in partnership with Kingston Chamber of Commerce and Kingston Green Business Community, as part of collaborative efforts to help the local area take positive climate action while stimulating growth in the green economy and improving people's lives.

If you couldn't attend the Efficient Homes Show, or you would like to connect with any of the exhibitors or speakers who were taking part, or you would be interested in attending future Kingston Green Business Community events, visit kingston.gov.uk/climate-change/climate-change-information-businesses

The business community is free to join, and is open to all firms and organisations in the borough of Kingston. **Jane Grove**



Janine Martin from Sunray Recycle at the show in Hollyfield School

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Pupils go back to Victorian age

Blind man's buff, hopscotch and the potato race had pupils of Long Ditton St Mary's junior school in stitches as they enjoyed vintage playground games to mark the school's 150th anniversary.

Dressed in Victorian costumes, they also had a tour of the original 1874 school building (now the Kingston Liberal Synagogue) in Rushett Road.

Back at the newer 1960s building in Sugden Road, the children learned from headteacher Sarah Martin how lessons would have been conducted in the past, and took part in Victorian-themed activities such as dictation, learning the times table by rote and working out the cost of things in pounds, shillings and pence.

The Bishop of Guildford, the Rt Rev Andrew Watson, led a communion and rededication service, attended by dignitaries. To round things off there was an all-school concert and show at the Rose Theatre, Kingston, which involved 290 six to 11-year-olds, plus 60 pupils from Year 2 of Long Ditton Infants.



Mayor takes steps

They've been used for well over a year, but now they've been officially opened.

The extended staircase on Surbiton station's south side is part of a £6.7m upgrade including a new deck with eight ticket gates and new stairs from platforms 3 and 4. Mayor Liz Green did the honours. The upgrades should make passenger journeys safer and up to 31% faster.

Surbiton is the fifth busiest station on Network Rail's Wessex route, with 6.61m entries and exits a year. It's a key interchange for passengers travelling to and from London, with 434,021 souls changing trains annually.



Mayor Liz Green with rail execs Mark Goodall and Jerome Pacatte on the new back stairs

Author goes in search of forgotten pioneer



Sheena Evans

Berrylands resident Sheena Evans has shone a light on a remarkable but neglected pioneer by writing an exhaustively researched biography.

Published in June, and available at the Regency bookshop, Victoria Road, it tells the story of Janet Vaughan, the woman responsible for the blood transfusion service of today.

In 1930 she married David Gourlay, a man from Arlington Road; and himself a fascinating character. A conscientious objector in the First World War (mobs smashed the windows of his Surbiton home), he was a Sunday school teacher in Chessington and set up a travel agency to promote peace.

"Vaughan ranged widely in her activities," said Sheena, 78. "She was a woman of huge energy and passion who always sought to improve the lives of others. As a doctor, medical researcher and social reformer, she aimed to relieve suffering and to enable people – especially women – to develop and use their talents to live fulfilled lives."

In a man's world ("She spent her life as the only woman in the room!"), she built a career in haematology, inspiring some of Virginia Woolf's writing along the way. Her Communist Party membership put her on the Nazi blacklist, and during the Second World War she ran the busiest of London's emergency blood transfusion depots.

She made a harrowing trip to the liberated Belsen concentration camp to test treatments for starvation, using her medical skills to revive people on the brink of death. Vaughan later researched the risks associated with pooling blood donations, a topical issue in light of the contaminated blood scandal. After her death in 1993, the former head of the Royal College of Physicians called her 'one of the great figures of medicine of this century'.

Bloomsbury, Belsen, Oxford: Janet Vaughan – Medical Pioneer by Sheena Evans is published by University of Chester Press at £19.99. Meet Sheena for an author Q&A at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, at 7pm on September 24. Free entry. **Tim Harrison**



Janet Vaughan

ELECTION 2024 – WHO ARE THE CANDIDATES IN SURBITON AND LONG DITTON?

When nominations closed ahead of this Thursday's general election, eight people had put themselves forward to contest the Kingston & Surbiton constituency, and six names

had been proposed for the Esher & Walton seat (which includes Long Ditton in The Good Life distribution area). Each of them has paid £500 for the privilege of standing. For that sum, each

gets one free mailing to every voter address which, even for second class post, is quite a bargain! The candidates are listed below in the order they will appear on individual ballot papers.

KINGSTON & SURBITON

Ali Abdulla (Workers Party of Britain)

Representing George Galloway's party, and campaigning for 'a new working-class politics in Britain'. Would withdraw from Nato, redistribute wealth, and raise the basic tax threshold to £21,200.



A Gent Chinners (Official Monster Raving Loony Party)

Slogan: Forget the spinners, vote for Chinners. The party's 'manifesto' says levelling up could be achieved by giving away spirit levels. He'd replace the foreign secretary with a UK version.



Debojyoti Das (Green Party)

New Malden resident committed to bridging the gender pay gap and keeping community 'at the heart



Richard Bateson (Social Democratic Party)

Proposing an alternative to the two-party system. Policies include renationalising railways and utilities, and building 100,000 social homes a year. Slogan: Family, community, nation.



John Cope (Conservative)

Born on a council estate to a 14-year-old girl, he is the Conservative group leader on Elmbridge Council. Lives in Walton and is a cheerleader for apprenticeships and for local small companies.



of policy-making for a greener and fairer future. Backs the Save Seething Wells campaign.

Ed Davey (Liberal Democrats)

Surbiton resident, LibDem leader and paddleboarder. During the campaign, said he took voter concerns seriously, himself less so. Made emotional video about caring for his disabled son, John.



Helen Edward (Conservative)

Chessington-born fan of Surbiton's 'villagey feel'. Has a marketing background, volunteers at Kingston Hospital and mentors students at Kingston uni. Would keep private schools VAT-free.



Mark Fox (Reform UK)

Would 'do Brexit properly' for Nigel Farage's party, while opposing 'all the woke



nonsense that is holding us back'. Supports an immigration policy that cuts net migration into the UK to zero.

Eunice O'Dame (Labour)

A councillor in Croydon, and a working mum, she 'recognises that Kingston & Surbiton's community is unique' and puts her main focus on healthcare, education, housing and transport.



Yvonne Tracey (Kingston Independent Residents' Group)

A New Malden councillor, and part of the official opposition on Kingston Council, she believes in localism. 'We love where we live, and know it best, so we believe locals should decide local issues.'



ESHER & WALTON

Monica Harding (Liberal Democrats)

Fought Tory Dominic Raab at the last general election. Wants protected status for local rivers, mental health professionals in every school and a tougher police response to burglaries.



Maciej Pawlik (Green Party)

Disaster scientist focusing on improving resilience. Campaigns on the environment, higher education, a better NHS and addressing failings within the realm of social services.



Keith Thomas, who kept the diary



Brother Hugh, who flew Lancasters

Dear diary, it's now 1944

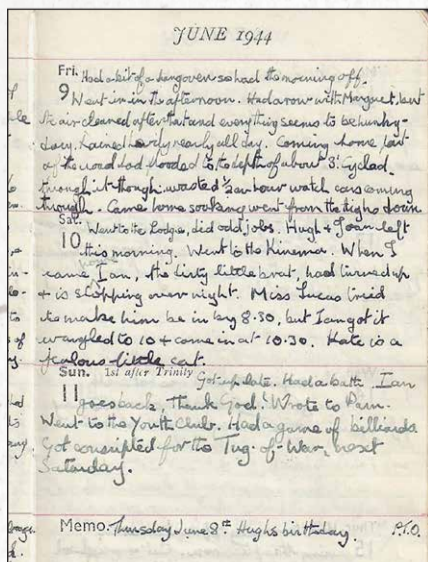
Inspired by discovering a trove of old documents, a couple are retelling a tale of two brothers' wartime experiences.

Jonathan Thomas and wife Felice

were so moved by a record of day-to-day life in 1944 that they are posting the often poignant diary entries so others can read how the year unfolded.

Jonathan's great aunt lived in Ewell Road, Surbiton, where she took in lodgers for nearly 30 years. His uncle, Keith, was 17 at the start of 1944, and adored going to the flicks in Surbiton and Tolworth... meticulously recording details of the films he saw at the Coronation and Odeon cinemas. He even wrote mini critiques of every movie.

Jonathan's father, Hugh, was a Lancaster pilot, and the couple have his flight logs from bombing missions, as well as the letters he sent to his future wife, Joan.



The first of the two new units created in the former Barclays branch in Victoria Road has been let, giving a well-established Surbiton letting agent a high-street presence. Until now, CHK Mountford (part of the John D Wood & Co group) has been based in double-fronted offices near the junction of Ewell Road and Langley Road.

Now the firm, which has been operating for 35 years, will be in a prime location, close to the station. One of the agents' last tasks, before leaving Ewell Road, was to rent out the refurbished five-flat development above its offices.

Both the sales and property letting sides of CHK Mountford will be combined in the old Barclays building. The bank left Surbiton's high street exactly two years ago.

CHK Mountford will be paying £60,000 rent a year for its new office.



Jonathan and Felice, who were moved by the diary entries

Every day the Thomases keep pace with life during the Second World War by posting diary entries on Facebook, and also on Instagram.

The social media pages are called **Wartime Brothers 1944**, and there's also a blog and photographs at wartimebrothers.com

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● Surbiton jeweller Gumus will close at the end of August. Set up 18 years ago by Turkish sisters Eda and Ela Akgul, it sourced stock from dad's silverware business in Istanbul. Gumus (pronounced 'goo-moosh') is 'silver' in Turkish. The shop at 21b Victoria Road is by the alley to St Philip's Road car park. Why is it closing? The Good Life was told, enigmatically: "Managing people's expectations is the hardest thing on the planet."



● New Elmburgh mayor Neil Houston, left, has hit the ground running. The Long Ditton councillor, accompanied by wife Veronica, has already attended numerous functions since taking on his new role in May, including recognising the work that volunteers do in the borough by presenting long-service awards. "It's been a whirlwind start," he said. "It has been nice visiting parts of the borough we normally wouldn't go to." Neil, a Lib-Dem councillor for Long Ditton since 2015, is keen to promote his nominated charity Home-Start Elmburgh, which supports local families with young children. Choral evensong at St Mary's, Long Ditton, on July 21 at 6pm, will be a special civic service in his honour, led by rector Dr Kuhan Satkunanayagam, who has been chosen as the mayor's chaplain. Neil will help pick the hymns for the service.

Bafflement at cancellation

Members of Surbiton's embryonic business group, set up to promote the town, were flummoxed when politics led to a meeting cancellation. "We were advised to postpone until after the election," said council regeneration officer Rachel Jones when June's gathering was called off.

Some would-be attendees were alerted; others found a note on the Glenmore House door, blaming the election. "Must all life stop if an election is called?" asked one.

A replacement date has been set for Thu, July 11 at 5.30pm at Glenmore House, The Crescent. All welcome. Refreshments.

● Surbiton resident Margaret Ciano and her pal Jacki Grafton had lunch at Squire's with the current and former bosses of the garden centre firm after winning a competition to mark its 60th anniversary. Over a meal they chatted to Sarah Squire, right, who described it as "an absolute pleasure", and her father, Colin, left, who opened the first centre in Twickenham in 1964 after expanding his dad's landscaping business. Margaret (in the picture with the dark hair) is a regular at the Long Ditton branch. Squire's has 16 centres.



Trad games win young fans

Enjoy board games? Shakes & Ladders is the place to be. The new pop-up board game cafe at Long Ditton village hall has shelves stocked with a huge range of games, from iconic classics to modern favourites... a perfect antidote to screen obsessions.

"We're passionate about bringing people together to switch off from technology and enjoy some friendly(ish) competition over a milkshake!" said Sarah Thomson, who set up the cafe with husband Jacob so that other people could benefit from the contents of their floor-to-ceiling cupboard with 140 games.



Jess Cresswell and son Benet, 8, play Ticket to Ride

The pair are on hand to help people choose games, and show them how to play - as well as supplying snacks and drinks to keep gamers going. The next event at the hall in Ewell Road, opposite Long Ditton rec, is Sun, July 14, 1-4.30pm. £4 for 16+; £3, 5-15; free, 4 and under. No need to book, just turn up.

Jane Grove

Crowds at D-Day events

More than 250 people gathered for a special event at Long Ditton's Royal British Legion to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Picnic tables filled the Betts Way branch garden, the Legion band played, DJ Mike Warne provided the soundtrack, and there were stalls, games, a bouncy castle, tombola, raffle, and plenty of food and drink. "It was an amazing community event - everyone seemed very happy," said Legion secretary Collette Steedman.

In Surbiton, the branch in Hollyfield Road was equally busy, staging events around the special anniversary. "We started with the Surbiton Royal British Legion youth marching band and culminated with the fantastic Lavender Club, who danced in the style of the era," said social club secretary Dawn Lloyd. "The SRBL Stitch & Natter Group also knitted the fabulous D-Day themed pillar toppers which will be auctioned later. Thank you to all who came along and supported us at this time of remembrance."



It was a busy day at the bar in Long Ditton's Royal British Legion



Amanda van der Berg with daughter Julianne, 14



Paul Resnikoff and daughter Eva, 4, learn chess

How do you keep the kids amused during the summer holidays? Wicked Wednesdays, that's how!

From July 17 until the end of August between noon and 4pm, families can try out bowling at King George Field Indoor Bowls Club.

"We were delighted by the turnout last year and we look forward to seeing more young people having fun," said ladies captain Vicki Harris.

"Who knows? One of these children, starting the game early in life, might mimic darts ace

Keep bowling along this summer

Luke Littler and turn out to be a national champion."

All you need is soft-soled shoes. Bowls are provided. £4 for a two-hour session.

There will also be experienced bowlers on hand to guide you on its six rinks and show you round its top-notch facilities in Jubilee Way, Tolworth.

Just turn up, or for more information email kgfbc1971@outlook.com or visit the club's website kgfindoorbowlsclub.co.uk



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Bullingdon Club. Cellar Door Theatre Company brings *Posh*, written by Laura Wade and first performed at the Royal Court Theatre in 2010, to the cornerHOUSE in Douglas Road on Thursday Aug 1 to Sunday Aug 4. Tickets from ticketsource.co.uk/cellar-door



● Fancy joining the 20-strong, four-part choir at St Mary's, Long Ditton?

Favourite composers whose music has been sung in recent months include Vaughan Williams, Sumsion, Aston, Howells, Haydn, Joubert, Ayleward, Stanford and Byrd.



"We love what we do and feel this is an incredibly important tradition to continue," said Julia Bowyer, music director. "We hope that many more of our local friends and neighbours can share this uplifting experience with us."

Find out about the choir, and how to join it, by visiting stmaryslongditton.org.uk/music

● Best-selling children's author Holly Webb comes to the cornerHOUSE on Saturday, July 13 at 2pm to read from, and talk about, *The Determined Kitten*, and other stories she's written.

Tickets include a signed copy of the hot-off-the-press illustrated book (published on election day) while a selection of her other titles will also be available to purchase and have signed at the Surbiton Literary Festival event at the arts centre in Douglas Road.

To book visit ticketsource.co.uk/thecornerhouseevents



Wall spring Matilda

Congratulations to 21-year-old Kingston School of Art student Matilda Crossley, whose painting of the Glenbuck Road side of Surbiton station in springtime joins other works on the wall as part of Kingston Museum's Brill collection, capturing borough scenes likely to change dramatically in future. Sasha Alfillie won the £600 prize for a picture of Kingston's old Wilko shop, while Erin Christopher (who painted the Fire Brigade union HQ in Kingston) and Matilda each won £300. The award has run since 1955, creating a permanent record of long-gone vistas.

Baroque group opens Edinburgh fantasy ball

Seven members of Surbiton's Strictly Minuets group joined other dancers on the staircase (right) to open a three-night Crown and Dagger fantasy ball in Edinburgh, processing to The Skye Boat Song – the theme tune to the hit TV historical drama series *Outlander*.

The baroque dance group, which rehearses at St Raphael's hall, Portsmouth Road, also held a fundraiser for the church charity Cafod. A Night on the RMS *Mauretania* (below) raised £1,100 as 40 passengers, in Edwardian costume, took part in a captain's lifeboat drill, hat parade, period dancing, auction and raffle.

"Mauretania, for many years, held the record for the fastest Atlantic crossing to New York," said dance group leader Kate Horrocks. "We marked this with a cardboard Statue of Liberty being paraded outside the French windows with sparklers!"

Interested in joining? Call Kate (07747 465046) or email kate@minuetter.com



● Rose Theatre artistic director Chris Haydon directs the new stage adaptation of Nobel prizewinning author Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Never Let Me Go*. "It's an achingly beautiful story of how we maintain hope, and continue to love in the face of a hostile world," he said. "It's become one of the world's best-loved novels, and has all of the elements of a great piece of theatre." It runs from Sept 20-Oct 12 at the Kingston theatre before going on tour. Haydon's directorial credits include another of Ishiguro's tales, *The Remains of the Day*.

● Fans of everything French will enjoy this coming weekend's concert at St Andrew's church in Maple Road.

Teddington Choral Society, under the direction of Julian Collings, presents *A French Odyssey* at 7.30pm on Saturday July 6, with a selection of French compositions, including Duruflé's Requiem, Fauré's *Tantum Ergo* and a medley from *Les Misérables*.

The 120-strong choir is joined by mezzo soprano Clara Kanter, baritone Jon Stainsby, cellist Rebecca Hepplewhite, organist Peter Jaekel and pianist Phil Culling. Tickets £15 (U16s free) from eventbrite.co.uk (search for *A French Odyssey*).



● Guardian Children's Fiction Prize winner Piers Torday gives the next BookBox talk following novelist Victoria

Hislop's recent sell-out event at St Mary's church, Long Ditton.

Piers will chat about his work on Wed, July 17, at 8pm, this time in the community hall behind the church.

His new book reflects his experience of being with his father during his final illness. "It's an uplifting and comforting book, and although *There May Be A Castle* was written for young people, it can be read with great profit by those of any age," said organiser Alison Baverstock. Tickets via eventbrite.co.uk (search Torday).



● Speaker Jonathan Oates, above, gave an entertaining talk on the life of Dick Turpin at June's meeting of Surbiton Historical Society. August's talk, by Matthew Bowman, is about the Bow Street Runners. See advert on p3

Glitzy gala ends film fest

Eighty-six national and international films – including premieres – and numerous industry-related events featured at this year's Kingston International Film Festival.

It culminated in a glitzy gala awards ceremony on the last night.

One event, to get the ball rolling, saw Jelena Lützel, deputy festival director, interview director Shelagh McLeod about *The Return*, a stand-out short from last year.

Founder and director David Cunningham told *The Good Life* that 300+ films had been submitted for this year's festival from moviemakers in 40 countries, including China.

In a huge coup for KIFF, the festival secured an early screening of the feature-length environmental animation movie *Ozi: Voice of the Forest*, with director Tim Harper on



Tim Harper, left, director of *Ozi*, with KIFF founder David Cunningham

stage at the Rose to field questions from the audience, and reveal that the 1942 Disney film *Bambi* had been a big influence.

Donald Sutherland, who voiced a crocodile in the film, died three days before the KIFF screening... and many tributes were paid.

● If the festival has inspired you to make a film (one of the workshops tackled how to create a movie on a shoestring), you have until February next year to submit it. Details at kiffest.uk



Jelena Lützel, left, chats to Shelagh McLeod



Adrian Wootton from Film London presented a Bowie in Film retrospective in the Rose theatre

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● Surbiton Croquet Club, Alexandra Drive, the largest in London, is keen to recruit newcomers. With 150 members and everything from world events to informal roll-ups, plus a social programme, novices are welcome. Courses run on Tuesday afternoons. The club stages the Surrey championships from Aug 2-4. surbitoncroquet.org.uk



Mu's the right Maan

"You're in good hands!" That's the message from Mu Maan, right, to Corinthian-Casuals' supporters after taking on managing the Tolworth-based men's first team.

"I love this club and want to bring success back, because I feel fans deserve that," said Mu, already known to Casuals fans from three stints as midfielder for the club, scoring 20 goals in 133 appearances.

"I know the fans, I know what they're like, and they deserve success again," said Mu, who also played for Leatherhead, Dulwich Hamlet, Bognor Regis Town and Met Police in a career which included time in Dubai.

"I don't really want to speak about the last two years [Casuals have been relegated twice on the trot], because we all know what's happened, but I'm here to change that and give them something they can actually shout about."

More on Mu and the team, who play at King George's Field off Hook Rise South, at corinthian-casuals.com

● Corinthian-Casuals are looking for an assistant manager for the women's team next season. The requirement is a level 1 and above FA coaching badge. For details on the voluntary role, get in touch via the contact form at corinthian-casuals.com/womens-team/2024-player-trials-now-open



Em's on form

Emma Kjaer made it to the podium twice in the Surrey County Track & Field Championships, Kingsmeadow, Kingston.

The 12-year-old won gold in the 100m with a personal best of 12.89 seconds. She also won silver in the 200m with a PB of 26.56secs.

UK age rankings place Emma, of Effingham Road, fifth in the country in 200m and seventh for 100m. Her aim is to keep improving her PBs. Well done Emma!



● Surbiton Hockey Club plans changes to its clubhouse off Sugden Road, Long Ditton. It has applied for internal alterations, changes to its windows, ramp access to its main entrance, solar panels, an outdoor terrace and more parking. Deadline for comments is July 12. Elmbridge Council is to make a decision by Aug 6. Visit elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/find-or-comment-planning-application and look for 2024/1396.



● Congratulations to the Ladies 1st team at Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club; Diablo Surrey Padel League champs for a second year. Here are Alison Walters, Sarah Wray, Emmeline Gale & Stina Seripova mirrored in their silver salver. The club in Berrylands has two all-weather padel courts, catering to the fastest growing sport on the planet. surbiton.org/padel2

A trophy teaser

Though the Lawn Tennis Association has pulled the plug on the Surbiton Trophy, club director Roy Staniland has hinted something may yet replace it.

"We've been here before," he said, harking back a decade to when the LTA

and All England Club mooted a move. "I've mixed emotions. It's very sad. The volunteers have been fantastic, the kids [from Hollyfield] have been brilliant, and the LTA have been very supportive... but maybe it's a signal for us to look for something else."

The early June pre-Wimbledon event at Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club, Berrylands, will shift to Birmingham, to local fans' disappointment. "It offers more fans the opportunity to watch professional tennis," said the LTA, with spin worthy of Rafa Nadal. "So the mixed event in Surbiton will come to an end."

A new women's tennis tournament will be staged at Queen's, but on grass courts worn thin by the men.

For nearly 20 years, Surbiton (founded as a tennis club in 1881) has been the first grass court event of the year, although there were competitions in the post-war years, with 'Little Mo' Connolly an early winner (1952), with Christine Truman (1965), Ann Jones (1970), Sue Barker (1974) and Evonne Goolagong Cawley (1978). The men's roll of honour includes Roger Taylor (1963 and 1967), Anand Amritraj (1971) and David Lloyd (1978). In 2019, Dan Evans (pictured) won, and in 2023 Andy Murray became, at 36, the oldest Challenger title winner on grass.

It's rare for serious rain to disrupt Surbiton as the club is perched on such high ground. This year, heavy rain fell in Kingston on semi-finals day, but only the lightest shower briefly troubled Berrylands.

Roy Staniland, who began playing at the club at the age of 11, remains positive. The final Surbiton Trophy victors were the South African Lloyd Harris in the men's, and Belgian Ali Van Uytvanck in the women's, for the second time in three years.



Harmony Tan at this year's Surbiton Trophy

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