



SATURDAYS 9AM-1PM
SEPTEMBER 20
OCTOBER 18
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**Surbiton
Farmers' Market**

Issue 82

The best thing to come out of Surbition since the A3

September 2025

● Not only did the discerning judges at the area's premier annual veg show rate Alun Watkins' carrots 'best in breed', but they said they were also the finest entry out of **360** submitted by four fiercely competitive allotments. See **p12**



● Three men have been charged with rape after a 17-year-old girl was allegedly drugged and assaulted in Fishponds park at around 7am on Thu, Aug 21. Nerijus Vencus, 37, of Surbition; Peter Hoppe, 41, of Tolworth; and Vidas Rupeika, 35, of Epsom, appeared before magistrates on Aug 23, and were remanded in custody. A fourth man has been bailed pending further inquiries. Anyone with information can call 101 and cite ref **CAD1207/21AUG**.

● Residents have until Sept 19 to respond to Taylor Wimpey's latest plans for 144 homes on the Hill Park Roses site alongside Squire's garden centre (arrowed) off Woodstock Lane N. Long Ditton Residents' Assn opposes **all** green belt loss, but the developer counters that 50% of homes would be 'affordable'. View plans at: **tinyurl.com/232zpv6**



TW claims it's 'grey belt', but LDRA disagrees, fearing it's the start of seeing the area absorbed into the Greater London sprawl. A public meeting will be held at 7pm on Thu, Sept 11, at Long Ditton village hall to coordinate action, having won 'village green' status for adjoining land.

Bike theft blow

In a heartbreaking blow, Surbition's electric bike queen Kathée La Hood is the victim of a planned heist in which 31 powered bicycles and 93 battery packs worth more than £50,000 were stolen.

Thieves used phoney ID to gain entry to a storage facility where she kept New Zealand-made Black and German-made Kreidler bikes destined for customers at her Victoria Road Torque Electric shop.

Police are now scrutinising CCTV footage to try to trace the culprits, who used a truck in the theft on Mon, Aug 11.

"It's so frustrating," said Kathée, 51. "We had to turn away four or five sales in the following week; it's come at the worst possible time."



Devastated: Kathée La Hood recovers from the shocking theft

Though insurance will replace the stolen stock, it's a cruel disruption to the business of one of the town's most enterprising traders.

torqueelectric.co.uk
Tim Harrison

It's a cool place to be

Riding a wave (UK ice cream parlours take £500m a year), ex-Surbeanton owner John Basar launches Gala Gelato behind Costa, where Victoria and St Andrew's roads meet. With 24 flavours, eight toppings and a warm chocolate fountain, it already needs a queue barrier.

The gelato is from Lake Como, it's open 10.30am-7pm daily, and John was forced to close early one warm weekend after selling out of **500 kilos** of ice cream in the cups and cones!

Style mags declare ice cream parlours the go-to place for bright young things seeking cheaper, alcohol-free alternatives to pricey restaurants.

It's £5.95 for two scoops, with the ice creams soon to be joined by a juice bar.



Try before you buy. John Basar at Gala Gelato

Jess is out to help sleepy mums

Are you 'sleep starved'? If young children exhaust you, a Surbition specialist sleep consultant could help. Jess Parrett, 34, of Victoria Avenue, has three girls of her own, and sleeps soundly through the night. "But 40% of parents don't, and 75% of mums say they have less of a 'village' support than their mothers' generation," said the former ad executive. "My eldest started school, and I scratched around for a bit deciding what to do. One thing I'd cracked was my girls' sleep. I'd been a

walking zombie with my first, but I did a lot of research and found a technique that works. Now it's bed at 7, awake at 7." She said babies need structure based around feeding. After training and being certified as a sleep consultant, she helps other parents in Surbition's 'nappy valley' sleep well, starting with a free 15-minute phone consultation. "My role is to provide clear, informative sleep solutions for tired families. I work with children from 3 months to 6 years, providing personalised support. It's the most rewarding job I've ever done; so fulfilling." Instagram: **@jp_baby_sleep**

● The old Halifax building in the high street, by M&S, is reopening as healthfood store Holland & Barrett after workmen ironed out its quirky recessed entrance, once a haven for rough sleepers who had to be shooed away by staff when they arrived each morning.



The shop has lain empty since the bank shut in May 2023. A century ago it was Harry Stewart the ironmonger's, before turning into the National Provincial bank in the 1940s, and then the Halifax.

Fourteen staff will work in the vitamin and supplement store, which will open 9am-6.30pm, seven days a week. Joy of joys, there's a wheelchair-accessible public loo too. Walk through the double doors and you'll see four banks of display cabinets in front, with three chilled cabinets to your right. Upstairs is the manager's office and staff rooms. In total, over two floors, there is just under 4,000 sq ft of space.

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Jam tomorrow

They're jamming at the Save The World Club. Des Kay's recycling charity in Southsea Road holds jam sessions on Sat, Sept 27; jam-making in one room, and music jam in the new studio, recently opened by the mayor, 3-5pm. If you've never made jam, you'll learn how to create jars for hampers for those in need. Bring fruit, and see how easy it is. If you have spare fruit, or jars, drop them in, noon-7pm weekdays, 2-6pm Sat. Then jam in the Connect Studio, where music and poetry rule. It's free. Advance book: www.savetheworldclub.org/events

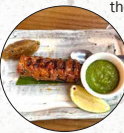


● With just 3 fried chicken shops to its name, Tolworth Broadway clearly needs more. Pepe's Piri Piri, the 100th London branch of the chain,

is opening near Iceland on the Broadway/Oakleigh Way corner, in the old First Home Improvements window firm.

A tasting menu with panache

Tasting menus paired with flights of wine are an elite restaurant mainstay, but few curry houses have ventured there. Yet critics and chefs are beating a path to Koyal on the Balacava/Brighton Road corner for Goan wild boar shoulder, matched with a hearty Shiraz from Sula vineyard – India's largest producer; one of seven dishes on a £55 menu (paired wine, £35), or a £45 vegetarian version including baby aubergines in masala with tamarind. Chef Nand Kishor has devised some gems. The grilled tiger prawn, right, is smoky and flavoursome,



the sweet potato & kale chaat colourful and refreshing, and the guinea fowl kebab, left, with spicy chutney, balanced by apple marmalade, is a triumph. Add a sorbet cleanser and puds with Muscat, and Koyal has created a variety club of classy food. Early diner deals too, with complimentary drink. koyalrestaurant.com **Tim Harrison**



● The dairy which was a lifeline for many in Covid has won a People's Choice award. Morgans Dairy, on Tolworth's Red Lion business park, was top in the region in the national family business awards and second in the Champions section for the UK. "We're over the moon," said chuffed director Lara Morgan-Graham.



Jamie takes up boxing

Surbitonians with long memories will recall Gardenia; a florist next to Waitrose. For 20 years Jamie Grant ran the family firm started by his dad, Andy (who, as a produce buyer, introduced avocados to Waitrose in the 1970s!).

In lockdown Jamie launched veg box deliveries via a stall at the farmers' market in Maple Road, using his vans to supply subscribers in Surbiton.



Jamie Grant

Now he's back, as the area's franchisee for Cotswold Veg Box. "We deliver weekly seasonal fruit & veg boxes, free from unnecessary plastic packaging and sourced from the Cotswolds, Vale of Evesham and Wye Valley; areas renowned for fantastic British produce," he said. "It's good, honest food, packed with care and delivered with love; less fuff, more flavour. It's a slice of the good life, from our family to yours." cotswoldvegbox.com

● Surbiton's restless hospitality king Sam Berry has launched Sonny's, a cocktail bar with views over Kingston Bridge, upstairs in what was Cinderella Rockerfellas, McClusky's, then Viper Rooms; a part-open-air bar, named after the son of Sam's business partner.

A launch night for KT glitterati teed up regular Wed-Sun evenings, with DJs and rooftop food.

Sam runs Bone Idyll gin, two Cento Uno pizzeria (one in Maple Road) and Hideaway by the river. And Sam was once a willowy young barman at McClusky's!

● Cinderellas was opened in 1985 by David Essex, then in the

West End in Mutiny on the Bounty.

Good Life: Sam, did you know David Essex opened the original nightclub? **Sam:** Who's David Essex? To be fair, Sam was born in 1989, when the teenage pin-up, once of Ditton Road, was past 40.

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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 12,500 homes.

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Take to the boats

Weather-wise, Surbiton's farmers' market usually leads a charmed life. But July's was disrupted by monsoon rain and fast-flowing gutter streams. That month's charity? The RNLI.

Guided bowling

A ten-pin bowling club for visually impaired people meets monthly at Tolworth's Hollywood Bowl, with volunteer-led sessions using guiding ramps and tips. Call 020 8605 0060.

Excellent results

A bumper exam result year saw 78% of Hollyfield's A-level students gaining A*-C grades. Elliott Forey (A*, A, B) won a place at Oxford to read law. "They've done unbelievably well," said the head, Amy Jackson.

Wings on the prom

There are fairies on Queen's Prom. In a summer project, young residents created winged figures from lolly sticks under several river walk trees.

Extend yourself

Plans have been submitted to knock down a wall at 4 Ditton Hill Road, Long Ditton, near the Friendly Café, and build a single-storey extension.

Bet, puff and gulp

Ads for gambling, vaping and junk food are now banned on council-run poster sites – a move to improve health and reduce obesity rates.

Tweets of the day

Nick Martin talks on Forest of Dean birds and wildlife at Surbiton Bird Club on Tue, Sept 16, 7.30pm, at St Matthew's School, Langley Ave. All welcome. surbitonbirds.org

Tools disappear

Tools were stolen from a Mercedes Vito van outside a house in Fleece Road, Long Ditton, in the early hours. Police advise keeping tools in a lockable cabinet within any van.

Oxbridge places

With 92% of Surbiton High's A-level students achieving A*-B grades, 11 have secured Oxbridge places. Principal Matthew Shoults praised their "energy, determination and commitment". The next sixth-form open event is on Tue, Sept 23.

Church open day

St Matthew's church, St Matthew's Ave, marks 150 years with a heritage day on Sat Sept 13, 10am-4pm; a chance to climb its tower, admire the stained glass and enjoy a cuppa.

Kids' clothes sale

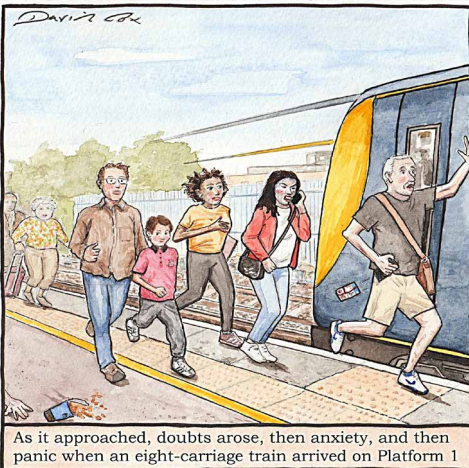
A children's good-as-new sale in aid of cancer research is being held at Asher sixth form college, Weston Green Rd, Thames Ditton, on Oct 4, 1.30-3.30pm. The last one raised £1,800 for charity. crukgoodasnewsale.org.uk

Useful youth grant

Tolworth's Sunray estate youth club in the Knollmead community centre has been given a £2,715 council grant for football, pool, table tennis and gaming. The club, for 7-11s, meets Thursdays, 7-8.30pm. Just bowl up.

SURBITON LIFE

by David Cox



From 4x4s to the hereafter

An industrial unit once used to repair and service Land Rovers is to become a funeral centre with a mortuary for 160 bodies.

Vacant for two years, the building at the back of the Crowne Plaza hotel in Portsmouth Road is to be sub-divided by Dignity, the UK's only national funeral firm, with half of it becoming a coffin workshop, chilled store, chapel and parking lot for a fleet of hearses.

It was built as a factory in the mid 1960s, but by the early 1970s had become one of the main servicing centres for Guy Salmon cars, specialising in Jaguars and Land Rovers.

Change-of-use permission was granted, with one objection to 'the potential for smells' being overruled. The centre will be visible from homes in Houston Road, Chadwick Place and Prospect Road.

Coffins would be delivered to a processing area, where powered trolleys could deal with bodies weighing up to 65 stone (412kg). That links to a cold room with capacity for 64 bodies. There will be an embalming area and a second cold room – in the former tyre bay – capable of holding a further 96 bodies. Trickle charge points will be installed to power up to seven electric hearses.

Relatives will be able to pay last respects in a chapel area. The new funeral centre will cover more than 2,500 sq m. Even with the comings and goings of hearses, Dignity reckons vehicle traffic will be about the same as it was when the unit serviced cars.

Elmbridge planners took into account that local business spaces are at a premium. "This will provide much-needed units to support local enterprise and revitalise the area," read one positive response to the project. Following concerns expressed by Prospect Road residents, the original square block design has been redrawn with sloped roofs.



Dignity, owned by UK investors, is made up of scores of smaller undertaker firms, including Frederick Paine, and operates under 500 different trading names. It owns 46 crematoria, among them Randsall Park in Leatherhead. **Tim Harrison**

Beauty pageants helped Corin Bateman conquer anxiety. Now the reigning International Junior Miss Surbiton sees them as a platform to assist others. Corin, who lives in Surbiton, went to Esher College and studied architecture at South Bank uni, was a teenage pageant star before winning her new crown and sash. "It's all focused on community service and empowering young women," she said, adding that her dream is to progress to

represent the UK at next year's Orlando world final. Her severe anxiety wasn't helped by moving 10 times to different countries as a child. "I know what it's like to be overwhelmed, but I haven't let it define me," she said. "Through pageantry I've used my challenges to help others." Corin also supports the charity Not Just Another Number. You can follow her @corinbateman



20mph zones 'lower casualty rate'

It has its decriers, but the blanket 20mph speed limit across Surbiton is set to stay following a major survey which shows that casualties on the roads have dropped by a third.

Transport for London analysed 150 schemes in the capital over 30 years, including Surbiton's, to gain a better understanding of the long-term impact of lower limits.

It found that where 20mph zones had been brought in, the number of people killed or injured fell by 34%. However, motorcycle deaths and injuries remained unchanged. Child casualty rates have dropped by 50%, from 517 measured when the speed limit was 30mph to 280 at 20mph.

The TfL report concedes that the speed reduction alone may not account for all the improvement, and that other road safety measures will also have had an effect.

Out of the 33 London boroughs, 21 now have a default 20mph speed limit. More than half of all the capital's roads are now 20mph.

TfL chief safety officer Lilli Matson said: "Lower speed limits save lives, and we're committed to eliminating unsafe speeds across London. The analysis in this report reinforces our approach."

20



Let's hear it for Surbiton's cabbies! After Huw Williams' mobile phone slid out of his pocket in a taxi taking him from Surbiton station to his Prospect Road home, the driver drove all the way back to Huw's gaff to return it, having dropped off his last fare of the day.

A month later, another senior moment. "I got a cab home from the station, and realised I didn't have my shoulder bag," said Huw. "There was a knock on the door, and there was the cabbie, asking if I'd lost anything!"

Huw praised "the knights of the road" for their "kindness and professionalism", adding: "They went out of their way to return my things. Thank you guys, I promise to be more careful in future!"

...however

The borough is slipping down the Healthy Streets Scorecard, compiled by a coalition of environment and transport groups to track residents' wellbeing.

Kingston showed the second biggest fall of the year, leaving it languishing in 20th out of 33 London boroughs.

Cycling has increased, but the car-to-household ratio is still 89 per 100 and "school area measures have not improved".

Yes, 98% of borough streets are 20mph, but more bus lanes, low traffic neighbourhoods and school streets are needed, says the campaign group.

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Gaze at the stained-glass windows of St Mark's and St Matthew's, and you'll be admiring the work of modest Tolworth craftsman Tom Shapland. One of the foremost glass artists of post-war Britain, his designs replaced umpteen church and cathedral windows blown to bits by Luftwaffe bombs.

His sudden death at 47, at the peak of his career, robbed the country of an unassuming master of his trade. He was born William Thomas Carter Shapland (Carter being his mother's maiden name) a century ago in Sauls farm in Wembworthy, North Devon. The 16th century cob-and-thatch farmhouse, now Grade II listed, and bordered by a tributary of the River Taw, still stands. The second youngest of five, he had a strict upbringing. No talk was permitted at the dinner table. His father, Herbert, was a reluctant farmer who had bowed to family pressure to till the land of his forefathers instead of pursuing his dream of a career in medicine.

Tom left school as soon as he could, enrolled in art college at the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and was then apprenticed to an Exeter stained glass firm under Arthur Erridge, a master craftsman who, as the son of a London roadsweeper, mirrored his student's humble roots. Despite being in his late teens, Tom hadn't been able to sign up as a soldier because of an eye injury caused by a childhood accident involving an umbrella tip. Instead, he served on the home front, becoming skilled at Morse code.

After a five-year apprenticeship, Tom headed for the big smoke and met the elegant Wendy Leach, two years his junior and the daughter of First World War hero Pte James Leach, who had won the Victoria Cross in 1914 for retaking a trench lost to the Germans.

Tom and Wendy married in Chiswick in the summer of 1951, close to where she lived. They shared a love of music; Tom enjoying classical works, especially those involving singing. Tom would go on

Magnifying glass

to form a real bond with his father-in-law; each enjoying the other's company. James found in Tom a listener with whom he could share harrowing war experiences.

The newlyweds moved to Brighton where Tom joined a glass firm, but when the lease on their flat expired, they returned to the capital. Having won two Glaziers' Company craftsman awards, Tom boldly went freelance.

The couple rented a flat in south-east London, where daughter Felicity (Fliss to the family) was born in 1955. Made homeless after being given notice to quit, they decided it was time to get on the property ladder, and on May 18 1956 moved into a bungalow they'd bought from a Herbert Blaker at 62 Tolworth Park Road (phone ELM 7863); Tom and Wendy in one front bedroom, Fliss the other. A studio, with kiln, was in a room at the side.

It was bonanza time for skilled specialists such as Tom. Heinkels, Junkers and doodlebugs had destroyed so many church and cathedral windows in the Second World War that craftsmen were in demand, with the War Damage Commission picking up the tab.

He was soon labouring flat-out, creating stained glass for local and national projects. Surbiton's parish church, St Mark's, was a burnt-out shell in 1940, gutted by enemy firebombs. Rebuilding on the old foundations had begun in 1955, and Tom was tasked with creating the west window, the north aisle 'St George' window and the children's altar window in the south-west corner, plus a diamond-shaped glass panel for St Andrew's & St Mark's school, thick enough to withstand playground damage!

On September 30 1960 the church was reconsecrated by Mervyn Stockwood, Bishop of Southwark. Tom presented him with a piece of glass as part of the ceremony. The vibrancy Tom brought to the windows wasn't just about decoration, it was about making the space inside come alive. Tom knew stained glass wasn't merely to let light in, it was also to lift the spirits.

Canon Christopher Blair-Fish, St Mark's vicar from 1955-1973, summed up Tom as "unassuming, inquiring, a master of his trade, but diffident about explaining it to an audience". The vicar was delighted with his new windows, praising "a beauty and quality that is recognisably distinctive", yet managing to avoid being "trendy".

The west window was the vicar's favourite. "Black squares mingle with brilliant yellows and reds in a careful but studied design," enthused Blair-Fish. "Each apostle is identifiable by his symbol; a shell for James, moneybags for Matthew, a Latin cross for Philip." Tom himself was less happy with the north-aisle window; something of a compromise as his ideas conflicted with those of donor Mr Court, who part-funded it.

Tom sometimes attended St Mark's services, taking little Fliss to Sunday school while Wendy stayed at home looking after their new arrival, Penny. The seven-year gap between the sisters is explained by a miscarriage Wendy suffered.

Wendy was the crucial backroom figure, handling all Tom's correspondence, typing letters, doing the accounts and chasing invoices. "She was very good at dealing with people," Fliss told The

Good Life. "She wasn't fazed by cathedral deans! My father was much more reserved, and sometimes he took on too much work."

Fliss remembers helping in his studio, sometimes being handed a wire brush and asked to scrub. "Everything seemed to be a rush," she said, recalling how he would meticulously paint faces on the glass. "I saw so many of his works in progress."

A triple window in St Matthew's, Surbiton, was the last Tom created. Dedicated on March 15 1970, it memorialised 'Bobs' and Marjorie Caporn. Bobs (the nickname came from the fact that his middle name was Roberts) had been warden to the then vicar, Canon Jimmy Martin. Bobs and Marjorie had died within a year of each other in the mid 1960s. Canon Martin sketched some ideas and approached artist John Hayward. But Hayward's proposal was rejected by the diocese. So Tom Shapland was asked to submit, and his design was accepted. He was paid £550.

The window includes a nod to the old Surbiton Hospital, with a uniformed nurse featured in the left window; an example of Tom's skill at combining artistry, personal tales, history and local interest.

Canon Martin wanted the Caporn window



Tom Shapland loved the countryside. Below: St Mark's 'Holy Spirit' west window, with each apostle identified by his symbol



on the north side of the church, but Tom insisted it should be on the south side to best show the colours in daylight. Tom won.

Though Tolworth was his home, Tom's work is everywhere. St Alban's; Mottingham, SE9; St Etheldreda's, Fulham; a stunning Pilgrim's Progress set of a dozen windows in St George's, Battersea; Southwark cathedral (where he created the window of King David); Peterborough cathedral; St John the Divine, Kennington; the Church of the Ascension, Wembley... the list runs to more than 200 churches.

He even fulfilled international orders in Canada, South Africa and Australia... and Gibraltar, where his memorial window to George VI in the King's Chapel, completed in 1955, shows off Tom's ability to design for grand spaces with intricate detail, from royal insignia to an image of Windsor Castle, all created in vivid coloured glass.

As Tom was raised on a farm, it was natural he'd adopt a ploughshare – the cutting edge of the plough – as his maker's mark; a triangular spike piercing a disc, with an S, or sometimes WTCS, and/or a date. But it wasn't just a nod to agricultural roots, it was also a meaningful link to the faith-based themes he explored in his windows.

NOTABLE SURBITONIANS Tom Shapland



Left: To relax, Tom loved nothing better than playing in the garden with his dogs. Above: Tom's stained-glass 'signature' was a stylised ploughshare – a nod to his Devonian upbringing



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The triple south-east window in St Matthew's, installed in 1970 and dedicated to parishioners 'Bobs' and Marjorie Caporn, included a uniformed nurse from Surbiton Hospital in the left window; an example of Shapland's skill at combining religious, historical and local elements

Much of his work, including in St Matthew's and St Mark's, tells stories of Christian faith, with the ploughshare's significance as a tool for labour mirroring the sacred work he was doing as an artist. His mark also had deep religious connotations, particularly in Christian rituals. On Plough Sunday, a tradition in many agricultural areas of England, a plough is brought into church to be blessed for a successful year's harvest. So the ploughshare was seen as a symbol of hard work, hope and divine blessing for the year ahead.

Tom's crowning glory – his lasting memorial – is in Chester cathedral, where the huge west window, dedicated in December 1961 by the then Archbishop of York, the Most Rev Donald Coggan, is one of the finest in Europe. It cost £7,500. It features the saints of the north of England, including St Chad and St Oswald, it is neither modern nor traditional, but is – as critics have commented – “a glorious tapestry of colour” and “a work of merit which the 20th century bequeathed”.

Tom researched the characters in the window using his own library of art, ecclesiastical and history books, as well as frequent visits to Surbiton Library. “In the first place I prepared a scale design,” wrote Tom in the order of service at the dedication. “When this had been approved by the Dean and Chapter, full-scale working drawings were prepared after obtaining templates of the window openings.

“The shades and colours of glass were selected and the linework traced on to the glass with a tracing enamel of iron oxide and manganese dioxide, fired in a kiln at 600 centigrade. This was waxed on large sheets of plate glass, and painted and textured with oxide pigment. Once again, this was fired, then glazed in sections. Quite a large amount of the glass in the window came from France, to increase the colour range.”

Fliss has visited Chester several times to admire the window. “It's the highlight of his career,” she said. “I'd been a few times, but I hadn't seen it in years, and I went on a bright day. To see the colours from the window reflected on the cathedral pillars... it just took my breath away. It's interesting; his work on windows got bolder as time went by.”

But all the work and commission deadlines were taking a physical toll on Tom. In 1969 he'd suffered a mild heart attack at home, which delayed completion of the Caporn window in St Matthew's. The doctor advised rest, and he stayed in bed for several weeks. He gradually recovered, taking regular walks with the family dogs, which included a spaniel and a Jack Russell.

By then, the family had left their Tolworth Park Road bungalow to gain more space, moving to 27 Grove Way, Esher (Phone: EMB 3058). It had a double garage, which soon filled up with Tom's glass, of which he kept huge quantities, his tools and the kiln.

On the Friday before Christmas of 1972, Tom and Wendy drove into Surbiton to do the shopping for the big day. Wendy wandered to one shop, Tom to another. When she returned to the car she found him sitting in the driver's seat, slumped over the steering wheel. He had suffered a massive heart attack, and died instantly.

It was a huge shock to family and friends, and a terrible blow to Wendy, Fliss and Penny. “It came out of the blue,” said Fliss. “They'd both gone shopping in Surbiton... but only one came home.”



Left: 62 Tolworth Park Road. Right: Sauls farmhouse in Devon, where Tom was born. Right: Tom and Wendy on their wedding day in 1951



A police officer went with Wendy to break the news to the girls. “I was getting ready for A-levels,” said Fliss. The funeral was at St Mark's, Surbiton, with the low winter sunlight streaming in through Tom's windows. It was followed by a private cremation at Randalls Park, Leatherhead.

Initially, Wendy remained in Esher after Tom's death, but in the early 1980s moved to Devon to be closer to Tom's older sister. Wendy made a new life, busying herself with antiques classes and German lessons. She died of cancer in 2019, nursed by Fliss and regularly visited by Penny.

Tom's stained-glass windows are an important part of Surbiton's history, blending artistry and local stories. If you're passing St Matthew's or St Mark's, pause to admire them. You'll be looking at more than just glass; you'll be viewing the work of an artist who made light a little brighter, and life a little more colourful. His work, as Canon Blair-Fish of St Mark's put it, “will shine for generations yet to come”.

Tim Harrison and Erin Crombie

• William Thomas Carter Shapland, b Feb 3 1925, Devon, d Dec 22 1972, Surbiton

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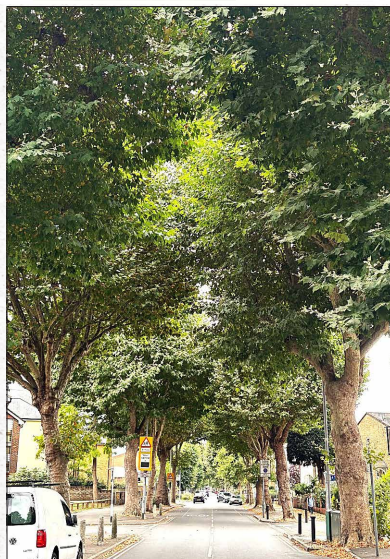
Colours from the Rupert Bear storyboards on the footbridge over the railway have been captured in flowers by green-fingered Friends of Surbiton Station, who have planted the bed that straddles platforms 1 and 2. Red geraniums and yellow sunflowers echo Rupert's checked trousers, red top and scarf, drawn by Surbiton artist Fred Bestall.

Following the success of May's Hollyfield School Efficient Homes Show, the council marks 'sustainable September' with a bitesize version at the Guildhall on Sept 20, 11.30am-3.30pm. It's free (advance tickets via Eventbrite) and includes talks on low-energy homes, solar energy and insulation. Sustainable September is a rallying cry for a 'greener' borough, with half of all climate-change emissions coming from fossil fuels.

The serial winners

The volunteers at Queen's Prom just can't stop winning gongs! Landing the Green Flag community award for 2025/26 makes it three in a row for one of Surbiton's most active nature transformation groups.

"It's recognition not just for the beautiful green space we've worked hard to create, but also the high standards we continue to uphold in caring for nature and running our brilliant volunteer group," said chair Stefan Gross, adding thanks to Surbiton Farmers' Market for generous grant support. "Earlier this year we put effort into keeping our gardens lush and vibrant. The dry weather hasn't made it easy, but thanks to watering cans, buckets and hoses, we've kept things thriving."



It's that time of year when you stroll or drive down Maple Road and realise that it's become a glorious tunnel of greenery as the London planes reach over to each other while the first hints of colour change begin.



Nine volunteers at Kingston GoodGym, who run, walk and cycle to assist community projects, cleared rubbish and weeds from Surbiton library car park after a call from Alan Ridley, who thought the council wasn't doing its job in keeping the area tidy. Alan helped too!

Join the volunteers and supporters of Alexandra Millennium Green on Sat, Sept 13, for a funded community picnic and planting day. "We'll focus on the mound, and other small pockets where volunteers have worked hard to clear brambles," said Luke Versey. Big things are poised to happen at the open space as consultants, funded by a levy on developers, report back in November on ways of improving the overall look, drainage, footpaths, access and ponds of the green off Alexandra Drive.

Having undertaken a spring planting blitz on Queen's Prom, members of 3rd Surbiton brownies have been admiring the results of their sunflower crown in the newly unveiled Athelstan garden; part of the borough celebration of 1,100 years since that king's coronation in Kingston.



Fishponds park has achieved green flag status for excellence for the first time; credit to volunteers and Glendale Services. A history board, below, is new. All welcome at the flag ceremony: Fri, Sept 19,

Must press on! Windfalls are crushed by David Gander at the farmers' market as Abundance turns harvest gluts into juice.



Public loos are back on Queen's Prom, and it's anything but bog-standard. To the untrammelled joy of cross-legged Surbitonians, and sporting a modern look, the clean, quality facilities (plus public drinking fountain for Fido and owner, and bottle-filling) have arrived. Flushed with pride at their artistic endeavours are Sunnie and Harriet from Ninetyfiveprints. We're delighted to lift the lid on this project.

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Commemorating VJ Day

There was an excellent turnout at Surbiton's Royal British Legion marked 80 years since VJ Day with an event at its Hollyfield Road HQ.

Limited-edition T-shirts were sold, children sported glitter 'tattoos', free spine checks were offered, and Hutchy's Heavenly Bakes did a roaring trade as the car park became a festival site. There were craft stalls and a lucky dip.

Centre stage were three military vehicles: a 1942 Jeep – one of 650,000 built during the Second World War, a Ferret Mk1 desert scout car and a 1944 Fordson truck. The Ferret, now based in Twickenham, was built in 1953 and saw service in Jordan with the British Army at the time of the Suez crisis, Aden, in Northern Ireland during the Troubles and – in 1990 – in Iraq during Operation Desert Sabre.

Both the Jeep and Fordson are owned by Seamus Cunningham, right, of Hinchley Wood.

In the Legion, a display of memorabilia of British soldiers with local links who were imprisoned in appalling conditions by the Japanese in the Second World War was a poignant reminder of the significance of the anniversary of the end of Far East hostilities.

The Legion band played, while streetside pillars were decorated with knitted scenes,



left, by the centre's stitch and natter group. The Buckingham Palace and Nelson's Column ones will be kept for next year's display (with a provisional London landmark



Festival arrives at end of the month

Surbiton Festival takes over the town on Sat, Sept 27, 10am-4pm, with a rock and pop stage, beer tent and food and drink



● In the past year, Surbiton Rotary has given £20,000 to charities – 70% in the borough, 4% UK-wide and 26% internationally.

The bulk was raised through the annual Christmas collection, race nights, charity golf day and personal donations, with the rest from a legacy. In addition to fundraising events, members have volunteered at the Surbiton Festival, the Efficient Homes Show at Hollyfield School, the Berrylands Festival and Celebrate Chessington.

The club held a youth art competition in local schools and also launched a community awards scheme for primary ages. It also supports young people and families suffering from hardship, and gives bursaries to enhance young lives. surbitonrotary.org.uk

● A bereavement journey course starts at St Matthew's church on Tues, Oct 7 (2-4.30pm), for anyone living with grief, past or recent. It's free, runs for seven weeks, and the only faith content is in the optional session seven.

"So it's suitable for people of faith or no faith," explained organiser Susan Kang. Previous courses have proved effective and useful in helping attendees process their loss and find ways of rebuilding their lives. Call her on **07745 795395**, email lay.pastoral@stmatthewskt6.org or visit www.stmatthewskt6.org



Tool up! A welcome arrival

The town has lacked a proper hardware store since Brighton Road's Surbiton Hardware closed five years ago, becoming the Alchemie cafe/wellbeing hub.

But that's changing as the former English & Oriental Carpets shop at 5 Victoria Road, opposite the station, undergoes renovation. It will also be called Surbiton Hardware, run by the Bek family, who operate 15 similar shops across London.

It will sell tools in the front section of the 3,766 sq ft shop, but will also continue the premises' 25-year tradition of carpet sales, with the rear area devoted to flooring. There is a huge basement storage/retail space too.

Managed by Rekar Bek, 39, a carpet entrepreneur of Iraqi heritage, the shop aims to be up and running by the first week of October. **Tim Harrison**



The new Surbiton Hardware in Victoria Road takes shape

Made in Italy... but created in a Surbiton atelier

Fashion designer Teresa Scognamiglio has been fêted at an awards ceremony in Rome. Teresa, who runs haute couture fashion

house Teresa Si at The Sanctuary off Oak Hill Grove, was acclaimed for her talent, vision and passion, representing Italian excellence at a magazine's Made in Italy celebrations.

Some guests wore Teresa's designs, inspired by Herculaneum and Pompeii mosaics.

They included dancer Guendalina Mazzullo, pictured left in front of the Colosseum.

Teresa's creations, crafted at her Surbiton atelier, have been seen at the Oscars, BAFTAs



and at Royal Ascot. More information at the website, www.teresasi.com



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● Police are still investigating a suspicious fire which destroyed a sports pavilion in Jubilee Way, Tolworth. Sixty firefighters tackled the blaze at King George's Field, Tolworth, as plumes of black smoke rose into the sky.



● The only train in Tolworth sure to be on time? Showtrain – the annual model railway exhibition, at Tolworth Recreation Centre, Nov 8 and 9. With 23 working layouts, and stalls selling everything from steam engines to miniature trees, it's a celebration of railway history with scaled 'time capsule' scenes. Free bus shuttles from Surbiton station. Tickets from £3 for children. www.tolworthshowtrain.co.uk



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Poundland to shut

Poundland's Tolworth branch is to close, despite it not being on the list of stores to be axed. The Good Life learns that 122 Broadway will shut for good on September 23, when its current lease expires.

Poundland told the paper that despite it not being on the 68-branch hitlist of stores for the chop, the landlord had jumped the gun and was looking for alternative tenants.

All 800 Poundlands, plus debts, were sold to US investors for a token £1, with the new owners aiming to cut the chain size by 150.

But Surbiton's and Tolworth's branches were said to be safe.

"Sometimes landlords put stores on the market without us knowing about it," Poundland told the paper.

To Let signs went up last month in Tolworth, on what – until 2013 – had been a giant Blockbuster video store. Agents are asking £100,000 a year rent for the shop – one of Poundland's largest at 5,533 sq ft, plus a 1,717 sq ft service yard at the back. Annual rates are £83,000.

Tim Harrison



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Residents are fuming

Neighbours of Surbiton High's girls' prep are fuming... about car fumes.

"Families line up in residential Fassett Road for drop-offs and collections, and the cars run their engines – sometimes for 30 minutes at a time," said Karen Herschleb, between coughs. She has now started a petition to give the issue wider prominence.

Prep school head Louise McCabe-Arnold said that while Surbiton High had no authority over behaviour on public roads, it did station a staff member outside to urge parents to switch off engines when idling.

The school told The Good Life: "We regularly remind parents to show consideration to our neighbours, other road users, pedestrians and cyclists. We have signs on site to remind parents of the need to switch their engines off."

But Karen Herschleb believes the root of the problem is the school's 'one-by-one' collection system, which – she says – turns residential roads into informal car parks.

"It's impacting our quality of life and damaging community relations, as well as contributing to unnecessary vehicle emissions," she said. She'd prefer an off-site pick-up zone for schoolchildren.

The concerns have been taken up by Cllr Nicola Nardelli, who is also troubled by the school buses which affect traffic flow near the former Assembly Rooms building – something she dubs "unacceptable". The Kingston Council petition (tinyurl.com/2h7dsw37) runs to Oct 19.



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● Kingston College star student Dara Ojenike gained a triple distinction in her BTEC in information technology – the equivalent of three A* A-levels – in the latest exam results, and chirruped: "Choosing Kingston College was one of the best decisions I've made; I'm proud to have been part of such a supportive and inspiring community."

Group principal Peter Mayhew-Smith said: "Really well done! We're delighted to have so many great results in our A-Level, BTEC and other courses. Our students and staff have all worked so hard and been thoroughly rewarded."

Dara, a student ambassador and student council member, aims for a career in cybersecurity and now seeks a degree apprenticeship.

Kingston College still has places available on courses starting later this month. For full details, visit stcg.ac.uk/kc-enrolment

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● New cycle hangars will replace parking bays in Catherine Rd (outside River Ct) and St Leonard's Rd (outside Embassy Ct). There will also be hangars in Adelaide Rd, near the St Mark's Hill junction; South Bank, opposite Bramshott Lodge; Alpha Rd,

alongside 19 Browns Rd; Kingsdowne Rd, at the back of 9 Iris Close; and Avenue Elmers, by 57 Selsdon Close. However, plans have been shelved for two further cycle hangars outside 56 Bond Rd, and in Parklands, outside 2 Woodleigh.

A new box junction?

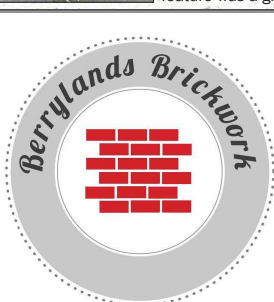
After pleas to stop drivers haring round Tolworth Broadway's service roads to dodge queues, an 'experimental traffic management order' (more familiarly, a whopping great planter – sadly bereft of plants) has blocked off Tolworth Close.

Pedestrians, cyclists and mopeds can still get through, but grizzling Range Rover drivers are having to backtrack.

"We've listened to feedback that Tolworth Close has excessive traffic and is being used as a short cut," declared the council. What do you think? Comments are encouraged. You have until Dec 23 to get them off your chest via tinyurl.com/ywew6taa



● Step back in time to the last day of 2012, when the elegant fountain in Victoria rec was destroyed by vandals trying to steal lead for scrap. The polished granite pillar (ironically disconnected in the 1990s over fears about safely drinking from lead pipes) was built in 1916; a gift to the people of Surbiton from the snappily named Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association. One popular feature was a ground-level stone drinking bowl for dogs. Now restoration work is underway, with backing from the Heritage of London Trust, which works to restore neglected public assets. New pipes will reconnect this stylish column.



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Next! A doc when it suits you

A new private doctor's surgery has opened in Ewell Road, opposite Surbiton's health centre, offering GP appointments, check-ups and minor skin surgery.

The joint directors are Ben Gauci and Chetan Shori, and The Doctor Surgery (no money was wasted on focus group name ideas!) is in gleamingly refurbished premises which, for a decade, housed Newman chemist.

The compact surgery has two treatment rooms. So who is it aimed at? People who struggle to get a doctor's appointment, and who don't balk at the £100 fee for a face-to-face consultation. "There are a lot of young professionals in this area," said Dr Shori, a 37-year-old ex-Tiffin student.

"We're a medical and surgical clinic providing Harley Street expertise locally." Colleague Dr Gauci, 48, added: "While the NHS is a free service, it's under strain. We offer flexibility for people who want the convenience of an appointment when it suits them."

The new surgery also offers aesthetic work, but medically administered rather than by beauty salon staff, who do not have to be qualified. Specialist physio, dermatology and cardio experts are also on hand, and the surgery gives travel jabs and other vaccinations. www.thedoctorsurgery.com **Tim Harrison**



Chetan Shori, left, and Ben Gauci in their new Ewell Road premises

● A new group, Surbiton Sparkles, aims to bring Christmas lights back to the town via public fundraising. "We're a non-profit community group of individuals and small businesses, independently working to bring the lights back," said Andrew Thompson of Salon 13 in the high street. "Wouldn't it be lovely to really feel the spirit of Christmas in Surbiton, and see Victoria or Brighton Road lit up?" Check out Instagram @lightupsurbiton or email lightupsurbiton@gmail.com



● It was all smiles as MP Ed Davey met Emmanuel Macron on a state visit by the French president, but Vladimir Putin's threat topped a sombre agenda.



● St George's church hosts its sixth annual Meet Your Neighbour event in the church garden in Hamilton Avenue, Tolworth, on Sat, Sept 13, noon-4pm. Last year 400 attended. It's free, with the only charge being for the barbecue. Domino's Pizza of the Broadway is providing free pizzas. Enjoy magic shows and performances.



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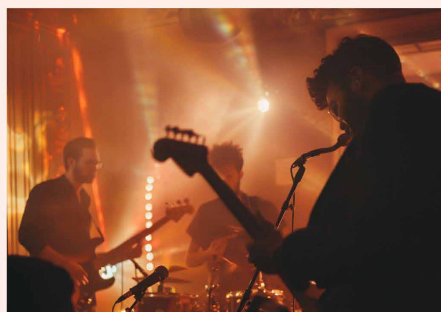
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- **NYE with Alex Jones Live** – Wed 31st Dec

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You rang?

It's an underappreciated area of architecture, but telephone exchanges have a distinct identity.

Take Surbiton's, near the railway bridge in Ewell Road; the large redbrick block, built in 1930 and today peopled by fitness groups, jujitsu clubs and boxers. Until its construction, Kingston handled Surbiton's phones.

It manually processed calls to ELMbridge and LAGoon numbers until 1968, when all-digit numbering came in. ELM translates to the familiar 399 local prefix.

On Wed, Oct 15, at 7.30pm at Tiffin School in London Road, Kingston, the Kingston Society guest speaker is Lisa Kinch. Her topic? The Architecture of Telephone Exchange Buildings. All welcome to attend.

She'll trace Britain's exchanges from civic landmarks to endangered relics of technological change, having



Surbiton's 1930 telephone exchange
Pic: David Hillas



Kingston's original 1908 exchange

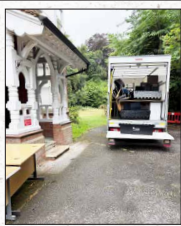
studied what were once vital nodes in the country's telecommunications network.

From ornate Neo-Georgian designs to modular post-war forms, she'll discuss the architectural and historic merit of buildings which are fast vanishing.

Kingston's first exchange, opened in 1908 at 6 Ashdown Road and now absorbed into the town's Royal Exchange regeneration, was designed by John Rutherford in Arts & Crafts style, and is Grade II-listed. It was superseded in the 1930s by a sprawl in Birkenhead Avenue.

Tim Harrison

● Removal teams have stripped out all the desks, chairs, computers and college fittings from Hillcroft College. Despite being on the market for a year at £7m, no buyer has been found. Richmond & Hillcroft Adult Community College has now centralised all courses at its Richmond campus, abandoning the venerable (but leaky) mansion in South Bank. It is steeped in history. Once the home of matchstick millionaire Wilberforce Bryant, it became, in 1920, a pioneering college for adult women; unique in the British education system.



● If you help someone in Surbiton with their mental wellbeing, the Kingston Mental Health Carers' Forum may be for you. It offers advice, access to information and supportive monthly meetings in a safe setting. It's free to join. kmhcf.org.uk

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Grant helps Surbiton surge ahead

With perfect timing, a £50,000 high-street improvement grant has arrived just as Surbiton's newly founded Town Centre Partnership gathers momentum.

The funding, from Mayor of London coffers, will pay for an expert-led local growth strategy for Surbiton to attract investment, improve public areas and boost the economy.

"It's a hugely exciting opportunity," said Surbiton Cllr Alison Holt, borough portfolio holder for economic development.

Replete with a new logo (by graphic designer Gen Krieff) and website (by digital marketing firm Dotwise), the partnership is exploring options for public art and working on ways to enhance the centre of Surbiton. A formal launch is pencilled in for October, but the partnership will have a presence at the Surbiton Festival on Sept 27.

Gaining grant funding was a huge fillip. All 33 London boroughs bid, with Surbiton one of just a dozen winners.

Overall, the partnership aims to breathe new life into the heart of town, create affordable workspaces, revive empty shops, improve mobility (including step-free access) and grow the nighttime economy. surbitonpartnership.co.uk



The green alternative hair salon

A welcoming smile from Karen Ross, who runs a hair salon with a difference at 93 Brighton Road. It's part of a green collective; a network of hairdressers committed to organic products, sustainability and recycling waste including hair (wigs, rope, textiles, fertiliser etc) and foil, which – with other metals – is collected and sold to benefit charity.

Now 49, Karen began working part-time at the age of 14 in her local salon in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, before training and then moving across to London.

After raising two daughters, and following a seven-year spell in Raynes Park, she's the proud owner of her own salon, with its must-see kitsch reception counter. "Customers are brand-savvy," she said, explaining her organic, ammonia-free products. www.karenrosslondon.co.uk



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!



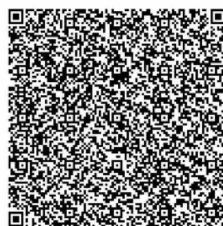
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● A volunteer is being sought at Our Lady Immaculate Roman Catholic church, Tolworth Broadway, to train as a bereavement counsellor. He or she will be coached in listening skills at a day-long course at Aylesford priory in Maidstone on Sept 27. The aim is to use that training to set up a parish support group in Surbiton.

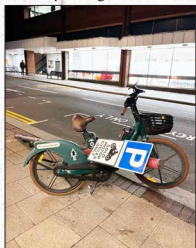
● No hope of riding off on this hire bike, left opposite Sainsbury's in Victoria Road, after it was pinned to the pavement when a truck demolished the 'solo motorcycle' sign.



Most of the stained-glass windows above the altar of St Andrew's church in Maple Road have been removed for renovation after members of the choir reported spits and spots of rain coming through holes and cracks, and falling on to their hymnbooks.

A generous legacy left to the church – built in 1871 and designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield at a cost of £6,600 – will fund the replacement and restoration work.

Services are continuing uninterrupted... but with clergy having to navigate scaffolding poles encased in vivid yellow foam.



Sorry, mate, the nick's closed. Try Lambeth

Surbitonians wanting to report a crime in person at a police station front desk currently rely on the 24-hour nick in Kingston High Street.

But under Met plans to make up a £260m budget shortfall, Kingston's hours are set to be reduced to 9-5 by the end of the year. The closest 24hr offices to see a copper face-to-face will then be Sutton (7 miles), Acton (9 miles) or Lambeth (14 miles).

Twickenham's police station – currently 24-hour – is set to lose its public counter altogether. The plans, leaked to the BBC, will leave only eight round-the-clock police station front desks in the whole of London, with just 19 'daytime' nicks in the capital, down from the current 37.

The Met says that only 5% of crimes were reported last year at front counters, with most people using laptops or phones.

But the proposed change contradicts a 2024 pledge given by Met commissioner Sir Mark Rowley who promised at least one 24/7 front counter in every London borough.

Marina Ahmad, Labour London Assembly police and crime spokeswoman, said: "Keeping at least one public-facing front desk open 24 hours a day in every borough was a pledge made in the New Met for London strategy."

"Front counters allow Londoners to report crime in person, produce documents and provide a stable and visible police presence in each



Surbiton's first police station in Ditton Road, on the site of today's Co-op

borough. Closing over half of our city's front counters is not the answer. The Met must urgently rethink."

The eight-strong park police team, responsible for Richmond and Bushy parks, has been disbanded, with plans to further axe 1,700 staff and PCSO posts... despite shoplifting and mobile phone snatches being on the rise.

Surbiton's community police work out of ground-floor rooms at the YMCA in Victoria Road, but there's no public front desk. There will be a weary sigh at the latest change to local policing, as Surbiton is well used to it.

After a lot of toing and froing over where it should be sited, Surbiton's first police station – a mighty five-storey redbrick edifice – opened in 1888 in Ditton Road (on the site of today's Co-op). It was demolished in 1972, reopening over the road in the former St Matthew's school at the corner of Broomfield Road, where Leslie Bell, a wise-cracking Northern Irish desk sergeant, held the fort.

It shut in 2010 (becoming first a college, then the present-day flats), and anyone wanting to report crime at a counter was directed to use the front desk of a police building at Millbank House, at the corner of Browns Road and Ewell Road. That didn't last long. It, in turn, closed to the public in 2013 as part of a cost-cutting exercise by the then London Mayor, one Boris Johnson.

Tim Harrison

Why no GP surgery?

The watchdog Kingston Society says it supports the principle of more development on the Signal Park site at the Tolworth roundabout, but worries about the lack of a doctors' surgery.

The society, which keeps a close eye on local planning applications and never hesitates to speak out when it spots flaws, says it "generally supports the need to build out the Signal Park development", but "opposes the loss of GP and children's nursery facilities from the latest proposals".

It also frets that traffic management and parking issues remain unresolved, including the slip road adjoining the site.



Green fingers... blue plaque

Tolworth pioneer gardening broadcaster Mr Middleton has been recognised by English Heritage, after a six-year campaign by local historian Bob Phillips. Cecil Middleton became the voice of the Dig for Victory campaign in the Second World War, declaring that "potatoes and beans are munitions of war as surely as bullets and shells".

Modern counterpart Alan Titchmarsh pulled the cord to reveal

a blue plaque on Mr M's former home, 17 Princes Avenue, as children from nearby Our Lady Immaculate sang garden-themed songs.

Today's occupants, Mishal Noor, 28, left, and her mum Neelma, were slightly nonplussed by all the ballyhoo, but joined in the fun. Mishal, who has lived in the area since she was four, said a plum tree in their back garden produced

"some of the best fruit you've ever tried". Could it have been planted by you-know-who?

"I'm not really a gardener; plants just die on me," she confessed, as Mr Titchmarsh confirmed one of her trees had indeed perished, before gently suggesting that "maybe a few tubs" could improve the look of the paved front garden.

Mr Middleton, who trained at Kew Gardens, worked at County Hall in Kingston as a gardening adviser before starting broadcasting in 1931. His funeral, at St Matthew's, was a national event.

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● You see some sights in Surbiton. Take these well-dressed ladies, standing in the recycling area of Waitrose car park. They were spotted by photographer David Jacobson, while doing his weekly Haribo sweet shopping. The blonde with the windswept hair and her companion in the kimono were waiting by the shoe bin.

David didn't have time to investigate as he's packing for an expedition to the Italian port city of Trieste, where he's shortlisted in the finals of three categories of the 2025 URBAN photo awards, and in with a shout of a share of €45,000 of prize money. The street photo contest, in its 16th year, culminates in a glitzy presentation night, where winners will gain trophies and medals made by Italian artist Giorgio Celiberti.

David's career as a lensman began at seven, when he was given a Kodak Instamatic by his father. That set him on the path to his recent award of a Royal Photographic Society associateship. You can admire one of his shortlisted photos, Hat-Trick, taken in Bologna, at: tinyurl.com/525phyux



● Surbiton's faded red 'pedestrian boxes' on the station roundabout crossings have been tarmacked over, and will not be reinstated. A planners' experiment to persuade motorists to slow down by mimicking pedestrian zones, they had no force in law and didn't feature in the Highway Code. If you feel nostalgic, there are still ghostly echoes of red dotted round about Tolworth and Surbiton junctions.



● Flooding and drainage issues which have beset a scout group have become the catalyst for a fundraising campaign to improve the club's HQ. "Our scout hut is more than a building; it's where young people come together to learn, grow and develop essential life skills," said James Roach-McGurn, Berrylands scout group leader. "Improving the drainage is crucial to ensuring we can continue to provide a supportive environment for our scouts. We are calling on the generosity of our community to help us achieve this important goal."

The group, founded in 1973, offers scouting for six to 18s through beavers, cubs, scouts and explorers. It has launched a crowdfunder to deal with drainage issues once and for all. It also wants to improve disabled access, and the toilet facilities.

James said the problems disrupted activities and posed a risk to the structure of the building.

The hut is in Stirling Walk off Raeburn Avenue, by a tributary of the Hogsmill. Donate at justgiving.com/campaign/berrylandsscoutgroup

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Gary calls time at the Fox

After dispensing beer, spirits and wisdom for 21 years, landlord Gary Rowbotham has left the Fox & Hounds. The pub at 60 Portsmouth Road – at the end of Westfield Road – is now tenanted by Mick Whelan, 59, who ran The Duke in Victoria Road in the 2010s, and worked at the Black Lion.

Regulars gathered to wish Gary well. A popular landlord with a trademark glum expression, he said: "I've enjoyed 20 years here; it doesn't feel like 20." His final year was, he said, "less fun", culminating in the death of his beloved blind dog Chaz; the pair a familiar sight out strolling.

Owned by Star Pubs (previously Scottish & Newcastle before being gobbled up in 2009 by Heineken), the Fox had good-value steak nights (£15), psychic events and a roaring winter fire.

Three years ago, Gary created an outdoor 'family' area at the Westfield Road side. A licence condition was that he install a digital CCTV network throughout the building. The pub is well known for its elevated sun terrace at the front, which was added in 1984.

A year before statutory retirement age, what are Gary's plans? One option is to take on some kind of carer role. "I'll be OK," he said, pulling a last pint. "I've always tried to make this a good pub, but it all seems to be about money these days. Money's never interested me."

● The Fox & Hounds began life as a coaching inn in the 1780s, but was originally on the opposite side of Portsmouth Road! When the Seething Wells waterworks were created in the 1850s, the pub was pulled down (in agreement with the Best family, which ran it for 40 years) and rebuilt across the road, at the corner with Westfield. A flat roof was later replaced with today's pitched tiles.

A rare smile as Gary pulls a final pint at the Fox. Below: a sign for one of the pub's quirky psychic evenings



Vic's the winner

Sometimes you just know it's going to be your day. After gaining the certificate for the most fruit wins at the area's premier flower show, and hearing his allotment named as the most successful, Vic Choules won top prize in the raffle; afternoon tea for two at the French Tarte, just round the corner from his Cleveland Road home!

Vic, and fellow allotmenteer Nick Greedy, who both have plots at Lynwood Road, Hinchley Wood, only faced a serious challenge to their supremacy at the annual Esher & Molesey Garden Society show in Thames Ditton from newcomer Alun Watkins, whose carrots were deemed not only best in their category but – agreed the judges – best in the whole show. He was given the RHS Banksian medal for winning the most points on the day, but the trophy for the top overall allotment was won by Lynwood Road, for the fourth year on the trot.

The 360 show entries (up 100 on last year) from four allotments filled the trestle tables in St Nick's church hall.



Above: Vic Choules, left, and Nick Greedy hold the cup for the most successful allotment. Right: Vic and his beetroots, which won 1st prize



The Surbiton Club

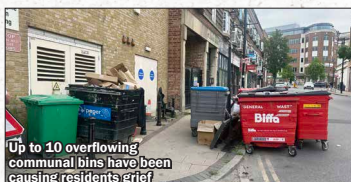
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Up to 10 overflowing communal bins have been causing residents' grief

● Aldi's back. The supermarket chain has made a fresh bid to site a store on the former Guy Salmon showroom in Portsmouth Road, taking on board – it insists – feedback. The revised design is lower with "a more traditional facade and more trees and hedging to improve screening". In 2022 Elmbridge Council refused permission, partly because of its impact on the conservation area around Gigg's Hill Green. Objectors said it looked like an alien spaceship. The new proposal specifies a green wall to "reduce the impact on neighbouring homes". There would also be a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing. Elmbridge Council says it will rule on the revised plan by October this year.

What has 40 wheels and flies?

Answer: 10 large Surbiton communal bins. Sprawled like a barricade across the pavement and highway of St James' Road... are these the stinkiest, most obstructive bins in the area?

Residents think so. Repeated complaints have eased the problem (and associated fly-tipping), but locals are still keeping a wary eye.

It began in June, when infill building work led to communal bins being moved to the pavement.

Then council waste contractor Veolia changed weekly pick-ups to fortnightly. After residents complained, weekly collections resumed. Then came a 3-week gap in service... in the heatwave.

Exasperated Emily Shotton said: "We pay the highest council tax in London, and it's going towards absolutely nothing! The bins aren't being collected; they're full, and swarming with flies."

Another said: "I counted 10 large, overflowing bins with food and fly-tipping all over the pavement and road. The stench is terrible. The council told me it wasn't a public highway, but it is! We have to walk between the bins to get to Victoria Road."

By mid-August bin numbers had subsided, and pavements were more-or-less navigable. For now.

● Rianna Washington, 29, will trek 100km in the Sahara in November to raise money for cancer charity CoppaFeel in memory of mum Freida, who many will remember as queen of Wilders Deli in Surbiton



station's forecourt. Freida ran the distinctive, green-painted deli for 10 years. She died from cancer in Sept 2021, aged 61. "I'll channel her rebel spirit," said Rianna. "We'll trek for five days in the name of chest-checking." Visit justgiving.com/page/rianna-for-freida

● The notion of a footbridge over the Thames from Queen's Prom to Bushy Park has been given a reluctant thumbs-down. Though councillors on Kingston's place committee love the idea, presented in a petition by Sanjeev Basi and signed by 907 locals, they thought it was too costly, posed engineering challenges and was complicated by some of the required land belonging to Historic Royal Palaces and Royal Parks. It would also have to be high enough for larger boats to pass under at a narrow stretch of the river. Mr Basi had proposed a feasibility study to assess the benefits it could bring to the community. Councillors suggested a ferry would be better and cheaper. "It remains a lovely idea but I'm afraid it remains utterly impractical," said Cllr Roger Hayes, adding it was the third time he'd heard it put forward since the 1980s.

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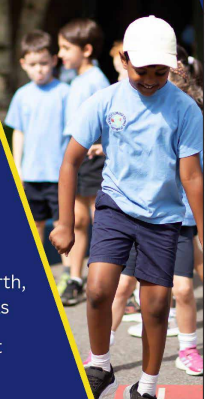
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Half a century of clattering keys

Fifty years ago, in August 1975, a cocky teenager sauntered up to the front desk of the Surrey Comet office at 20 Church Street, Kingston, near the entrance to the Market Place, and told the receptionist he was booked in to start a week's work experience.

Even before 10am on a Monday it was as noisy as a Victorian mill, with manual typewriters clicking and clattering, and one of the two news editors bellowing to a reporter that if he didn't spell tranquillity with two els next time, he'd be on a final warning.

I was handed a small, ringbound orange-covered Baberton Junior notebook (inset) and a biro, and was told to accompany chief reporter Mike Hains to Kingston Magistrates' Court, to sit on the press bench and see if there were any interesting cases.

It was one of the hottest summers anyone could remember (although the following year was drier still). After a couple of days' shadowing other journalists I was told to pop down to the river to check reports of a boat sinking.

Sure enough, near the foot of Kingston Bridge, a wooden prow was sticking out of the water, tethered to a metal ring on the towpath. 'Whose boat is it?' I asked a wary old salt, perched on a wall. 'Joe's', he replied. 'Who's Joe?' 'He lives in Raynes Park.' 'Does he know his boat's underwater?' 'Probably not.'

Armed with a partial address, I hopped on a bus, located Joe in a flat and gave him the news. I scribbled down his quote, returned to the office and sat at an antique Imperial Model 60 typewriter to bash out the story; one sentence to each A5 sheet of paper, with my initials and the catchline 'boat 1' at the top, and mf (more follows) at the bottom.

Pinning the papers together, I approached the newsdesk. A nod indicated the wire basket for Kingston news, by a tray marked Expenses, to which a wag had added: Fiction Department. That Saturday I had my first front-pager, headlined **Heat Sinks Boat**. Few know their career path at seven. But I'd been

told by Miss Audric – one of three teachers at Latchmere primary who wore her hair tied back in a severe bun – that I was destined for journalism after she'd read my handwritten eye-witness account of Winston Churchill's funeral, illustrated with pictures clipped from that weekend's Sunday supplements.

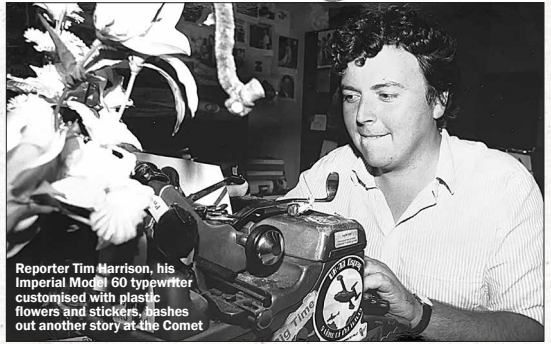
I spent 15 happy years at the Comet. The newsroom, overlooking Kingston's war memorial (where the drunks on the benches kept up a boisterous commentary on life), had a staff of 26, including five subs led by woolly haired, tattooed Welshman John Vivian – JV to his friends.

It was an office peopled by characters. June Sampson, a former Bentalls PR girl, produced well-researched local history features; Pam Fletcher-Jones edited the diary column – Trail of the Comet; Jack Allcock, an irascible, unstable man whose charmless presence wouldn't be tolerated in a modern workplace, produced the showpage, with theatre and film reviews and arts interviews; while septuagenarian retired bus inspector Bill Jeffries, was the 'office boy', carrying sheafs of sub-edited copy paper through to the works to be set in metal by a team of Linotype operators, in ink-stained overalls.

In terms of news, there were more than a dozen reporters – each assigned a specific area of the borough to monitor happenings, cultivate contacts and record events. With the office in the heart of town, scoops sometimes came to us.

One morning a man ran into reception shouting that Barclay's bank was being robbed. I called for a photographer to follow, and dashed over the road to find half a dozen customers lying flat on the floor of the banking hall, still obediently following the raiders' last instruction to stay put.

By the time the police had puffed across Kingston from



Reporter Tim Harrison, his Imperial Model 60 typewriter customised with plastic flowers and stickers, bashes out another story at the Comet

the nick, I'd interviewed all the key eye-witnesses.

The Comet printed twice a week: Wednesday (with the weekend's local sport) and Saturday, when 50,000 copies of the broadsheet were sold, including half a dozen pages of packed classified ad columns; the kind of 'lost cat', 'fridge for sale', 'anyone know a plumber?' notices you're served today on Nextdoor or eBay.

A huge articulated flatbed truck from Reed's paper mill would deliver giant rolls of newsprint to the print works (now the back half of M&S) each week, with the giant web presses rolling on Fridays, making the centre of Kingston hum and vibrate. It was an era of union power, with the printers (sometimes journalists too) often taking to picket lines to protest at injustices.

'Chapel' meetings were held upstairs at the Comet watering hole, The Druid's Head. I learnt more about journalism from the old hacks in the pub than I did on any course. There were several Second World War veterans on the paper's staff – old boys who'd seen it all. That was a feature of life; a mix of generations in offices.

With no computers, internet or mobiles, reporters had to find a red telephone box and ring the office when they were on an assignment, to give the news editor an

idea of how much space to give a story, and if it was worth sending a snapper to capture the scene.

In my early days, both staff photographers were functioning alcoholics, each needing start-of-day sharpeners to allow them to hold their cameras steady enough to take pictures.

Half a century on, that teenage reporter is still churning out Royal borough stories. Miss Audric would be chuffed.

Tim Harrison



SURREY COMET Editorial Department STAFF ONLY

Left: The 1980 leaving do for chief reporter Mike Hains (centre, in tie). Pictured from right: editor David Wilson, sports editor Ian Coates and chief sub John Vivian. Tim Harrison is standing in the middle, having just managed to grow a moustache. Above: The sign on the door of the Church Street office, salvaged before the newspaper moved to Lower Ham Road, Kingston

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● Self-styled king of fades Jatinder Singh has himself faded from the area. After five years' trimming and shaving, the lease on 54 Brighton Road – near the Black Lion – expired, and Eknoor barbers has closed. Jatinder has moved to Birmingham. "I'm looking to open a shop there," he told The Good Life.

Indian by birth, the 40-year-old opened the seven-day-a-week salon in what had been Hair by Mitch in July 2020, having worked for eight years at J's barbers, by Waitrose. The shop is now becoming a dog grooming salon.

A lockdown idea that flew

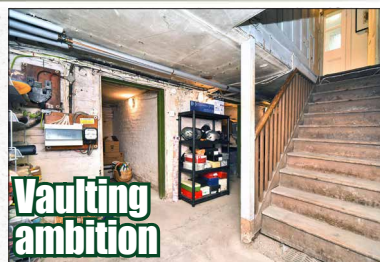
Set up in lockdown with a laptop and an idea, a Surbiton surveyors' firm is now a finalist in a national small business awards.

It's been quite a journey for ex-Southborough pupil David Coplin-Chard, 33, third from left, who for seven years was a junior estate agent at Parry & Drewett in Victoria Road.

In Covid David set up Landview with a vision of creating a brand for surveyors, rather than just a shoal of individuals, and in November he'll hear the outcome of the SME national business awards.

Retraining as a surveyor, pre-pandemic, David had a lightbulb moment; build a nationwide network of like-minded professionals. "I set up Landview on the sofa of my flat in Claremont Gardens," he said.

It's taken off. Now backed by a dedicated team in offices in St James' Road, he has more than 20 surveyors on board, from Brighton to Leeds. "It's vital they have that human touch," he said, adding that he was "really proud" of the backroom staff who made it possible. landviewsurveyors.co.uk



Vaulting ambition

Rare is the apartment which also boasts a network of hidden subterranean rooms. But beneath a three-bed Victorian conversion in Lovelace Road, on the market with HJC in Surbiton, is a mini world; six rooms, joined by linking corridors, giving a further 635 sq ft of space.

One room is 21ft by 5ft; an ideal wine cellar? The flat (asking price £1.15m freehold) has three bedrooms, two bathrooms, together with a conservatory, garage and private garden, and is a five-minute walk to the station. The conversion last sold 15 years ago, for £700,000.



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● She's dreamt of this day for years, and finally Mackeelie Boyle has her own salon... Studio Six. It's across from B&M in the former Collision opticians, now a cool hairdressers (@studiosixhairdressing). "It's just me," said the 28-year-old Aussie-born crimpier, who's worked in the UK for a decade and lives near Surbiton station. Why Studio Six? "It's short, it's sweet and it's shop No6 in Twyford



parade at 372 Ewell Road," she said, adding that feedback from clients had been positive. Student discounts offered and new customers get 15% off cut and blow dry. Open Mon-Sat.

Locals bid to force council to rethink HMOs

Sunray estate resident Jessica Dearlove has launched a petition over HMOs (houses in multiple occupation), a bugbear of many Surbitonians who argue they become

hubs of noise and nuisance, and do not fit into quiet residential areas.

With more than 1,000 signatures, it will force the topic on to October's Kingston Council agenda, making the authority confront her assertion that "Kingston is among the least regulated areas in London for

HMO development". It comes as residents in Adelaide Road express fears about plans to turn a care home near Surbiton station into a 38-bed house of multiple occupation.

Others have voiced concern about HMOs at Bond Road/ Tolworth Park Road, and in nearby Cotterill Road. The petition is at tinyurl.com/5n8mkh4t

● The local branch of emotional support charity Samaritans was August's farmers' market's good cause, with a £1-a-go tombola on its guest stall.

Surbiton had its own branch in St Andrew's Road until Feb, 2016. Then operations switched to a repurposed upholstery shop in Wheatfield

Way, Kingston. Each year the branch takes 26,000 calls, with a focus on suicide prevention at stations. In July the charity's national HQ announced plans to close half its 200 branches, switching many volunteers to home-working, rather than from shared offices. Kingston's branch, the biggest in London with 170 volunteers, seems safe. It suspended its drop-in service in Covid, and never reactivated it. All calls for help now arrive via phone or email.

● If you need help, free call Samaritans on 116 123. Each year Kingston's branch needs £55,000 to cover costs. samaritans.org/donate-now



● Outrage at the magnitude of council parking charge rises prompted a demo on the Guildhall steps, above, a 1,200-signature petition... and partial council U-turns.

After some street ticket charges leapt 460% to help Kingston balance its books, protesters besieged the council, demanding fairness.

A backtrack "in response to feedback" saw half-hourly time slots reinstated, some free 30-min parking reintroduced, and an officer-led review of all shopping parades promised.

Petition organiser Gia Borg-Darcy (in a We're P'd off T-shirt) called the rises "discriminatory" and said they hammered older people with mobility issues, parents, carers, businesses and shops which rely on short-stay customers. She said it now cost £8 in parts of the borough for grandparents to visit grandchildren for two hours.

Council leader Cllr Andreas Kirsch said that extra money was needed for road maintenance.

But opposition leader Cllr James Giles said the ruling Lib Dems had "slipped the rises in, hoping no one would notice", adding: "The council just sits back and counts the cash coming in." Campaigners left, still muttering.

● Like one of them thar sheriffs, pasting Wanted posters, Maple Road artist Steve Xoh (Insta: @stevoxoh) was in Wild West action at the last farmers' market.



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Payal relies on young critic

Surbiton artist Payal Roy's sternest critics aren't her husband Ian or the directors of London galleries where she's exhibited... it's her 14-year-old son, Jamie.

Payal, 51, of Elmbridge Avenue, who prefers abstract art "because it's not shouting at you, it's not obvious, and it has to speak to you", said Jamie was her sounding board as "he has a good eye for art, so I consult him on each painting".

Recent tragedy has spurred her on. Losing her mother, father and grandmother in six months meant she turned to art to help cope with grief. She now paints professionally, using a studio space at the back of the house.

Picked for this year's Woman's Essence art show, her twin targets are to exhibit at the Mall and Saatchi galleries. She uses acrylics, but prefers oils for layered depth. "I do a lot of sky and sea; I'm fascinated by the way light falls on surfaces." Instagram: @payalroyw **Tim Harrison**

When Marcia Summers went on a family holiday to Sri Lanka she was won over by the island, its people and its culture. That was 13 years ago. Since then the 58-year-old from Thames Ditton has been back and forth, raising £30,000 for worthwhile projects on the island by making an epic 1,000km bottom-to-top trek, through leech-infested rainforests and over mountains.

She has written a book about her travels (signed copies available), and about Sri Lanka's rich history, issues, nature and political upheaval. Now she's on stage in conversation with Good Life editor Tim Harrison at **An Evening With Marcia Summers**, at the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, on Tue, Sept 16 at 7.30pm (bar open 7pm), against a backdrop of some of the pictures she's taken on her adventures. Tickets £10 from thecornerhouse.org/events



Marcia at the Regency, which stocks her books



To whoops of glee from children and grandchildren, old rockers Adrian Long, of Derby Road, and brother Martin, performed a string of prog rock numbers they'd written half a century ago as local band **Gomrath**, in the back room of Brave New World, Berrylands. Rediscovered by a record label specialising in re-releasing music from the 60s and 70s, the brothers still get a retro buzz from playing live.

What lengths would you go to, to dig yourself out of trouble? Writer-director-actor Claire Morrissey has the answer. Claire of Hook Road, who was an understudy for Tamsin Greig and Selina Cadell in Terence Rattigan's *The Deep Blue Sea* at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in June, has written a new comedy about an unlikely group of people who join forces to resolve their financial woes. **Dirty Cash**, produced by Upstage Surrey, comes to The Barn Theatre Club in West Molesey from Wed, Oct 8 to Sat, Oct 11 at 7.30pm, with a matinee on Sun, Oct 12 at 5pm. ticketsource.co.uk/the-barn-theatre-club-2



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Brazil sambas into town

After being given £3,000 to promote an event to Surbitonians, expect a treat at the third **Solta o Jogo** Brazilian festival at Kingston Uni's town house, Penrhyn Road, on Oct 18 and 19.

A trio from the Association QMC School of Capoeira successfully pitched for the grant money. Entry is free, 10am-5pm, with displays of a Brazilian martial art which combines dance, music and culture... and classes to learn it. There will also be drumming and Afro dance, plus Brazilian food and stalls selling craftwork.

Surbiton Cllr Andrew Wooldridge was effusive. "It's brilliant," he said. "Kids love it, parents love it, even an old man like me loves it!" Cllr Mariana Gonçalves said past events had been "very well run".

Time is ticking to the Fri, Oct 31 deadline for submissions to the 2026 cornerHOUSE oneACT play festival. Judges are looking for original material for the week-long event in May, with plays needing to be between 15 and 30 minutes long. Guidance at www.thecornerhouse.org/what-we-do/oneacts-2

Subjects of past plays over the last 16 years include clowns, Elvis, internet dating and time travel. Email plays to cornerhouseoneacts@gmail.com

Filmmaker Claude Green, below, showed his documentary about a year in the life of the cornerHOUSE, Douglas Road, to 100 people as part of the arts centre's 30th anniversary.



A remarkable exhibition hangs on the cornerHOUSE walls; work by Kingston artist Cliff Port, right.

His painting will be familiar to the Douglas Road arts centre's regular panto goers as he has created many of the most memorable stage backdrops.

But he is also a stained-glass window artist, photographer, sketcher, sculptor; treading a fine line between ethereal and absurd. Hence: **From the Sublimist to the Ridiculous**.

Cliff painted the Live Aid hangings, and for 30 years has worked with stained-glass artist Sim Kay. Meet the artist on Wed, Sept 17, 7pm. Prebook via thecornerhouse.org. Show is on until Oct 18, any time the arts centre is open.

Regency dance tutor Mrs Bennet stages a summer tea dance on Sat, Oct 4, 2.30-5pm, at St Mark's church hall, with dancing to acoustic music by Meryl and Ian Thomson. Regency-style daywear preferred, with an instruction not to look 'rustic or outlandish'. mrsbennet.co.uk

Filmmakers take note. Entries are now open for next year's Kingston International Film Festival. The submission deadline for the fifth event (June 5-7) will close in February. Full T&Cs at www.kiffest.uk



The new Thames Concert season starts on Sat, Sept 13, at St Andrew's, Maple Road, with a performance by the award-winning Mela guitar quartet, left, who have been playing classical guitar since 2015. Matthew Robinson, George Tarlton, Michael Butten and Zahrah Hutton play a mix of orchestra works and new



commissioned music, and have three albums to their name.

On Sat, Oct 18, it's the turn of pianist brothers Joseph and Daniel Tong, right. They play works by Ravel, Debussy, Mozart, Chaminade & Schubert.

All 7.30pm. Tickets on the door, or discounted at www.thamesconcerts.com

Season tickets are available, NHS workers pay £10 on the door, and U16s and full-time students get in free, with ID.

As usual there are free tickets tied to farmers' market days in Surbiton, with 50-minute concerts at 10.30am on Oct 18, Nov 15, Dec 20 and Jan 17.

Ticketholders qualify for concert-day discounts at Gordon Bennett!, ExCellar & The Flyer.

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SATURDAY 15 NOVEMBER

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SATURDAY 6 DECEMBER

Baroque music with soprano Joanne Lunn accompanied by Rachel Beckett (flute), Alastair Ross (harpichord) and Reiko Ichise (viola).

MARKET DAYS: FREE COFFEE CONCERTS!

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18 OCTOBER - Polly May, William Slingsby

15 NOVEMBER - Kingston University
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Bands are on the march

Marching bands will fill Tolworth Recreation Centre with music on Sat, Oct 11, to mark Surbiton RBL Youth Marching Band's 60th anniversary.

As well as the Legion's own youth band, the tattoo will feature The Romford Drum & Trumpet Corps, 1st Claygate Scout & Guide Band, the Bournemouth Youth Marching Band and the Medina Marching Band.

"Each band will perform a dynamic blend of traditional military marches and modern musical arrangements from a variety of genres," said organiser Ross Millard. "The evening will conclude with a mass performance involving 250 musicians, ranging from eight to 60+."

"The finale will include the traditional Evening Hymn & Sunset. Join us for an unforgettable evening of music, history, and community spirit." The event, at the recreation centre in Fullers Way North, Tolworth, is at 6pm. Adults £10, U16s £5. Email srbtickets@gmail.com

Events, dear boy, events

Nursing Lauren back to fitness



After Chelsea's Women's Super League campaign launched at the Bridge against Man City, the women in blue face an away trip to Villa, then a home match against Leicester. But superstar Lauren James, left, may be out of action for weeks. She dragged herself through the Euros in the summer, being subbed in the semi win over Italy, and again before the break in the Lionesses' successful final. The issue? Lauren hasn't been herself since a hamstring tweak in April when playing for her country against Belgium. Further leg issues followed, while an ankle knock sidelined her at times in Switzerland with a strategically placed ice pack needed. Lauren, who has 'create' tattooed on her hand, was at Stamford Bridge on the men's opening day against Palace, watching big bro Reece.

Chelsea are angling for a seventh consecutive WSL title this season. Sam Kerr, out of action since sustaining a serious knee injury in January 2024, has been training, but lacks match fitness. "My focus is on trying to better the team and better myself, that's for sure," said Sam, adding that she was delighted Aussie Ellie Carpenter had been signed.



● The basketball court and outdoor gym at Long Ditton rec have had makeovers, with the court now used for five-a-side, basketball, netball and tennis. Next on the list for an upgrade is the recreation ground's children's play area, with work due to start this month.



● A 16-strong crew of rowers from Surbiton estate agent Humphrey & Brand and the F45 gym won Kingston's dragon boat race, raising more than £5,000 for the Royal Marsden at the Canbury Gardens festival. "It was a brilliantly organised day, and a fantastic experience," said director Laura Humphrey. "Thankfully the weather held. We were absolutely delighted to come away with the win."

● Strap on your ice blocks. Ski Sunday is at the foot of St Mark's Hill on Sun, Oct 12, from 11am, to a soundtrack of cowbells and cheers. It runs until 1.30pm as hardy over 18s risk their



wellbeing (medics on standby) to navigate the course. Bathtub races also feature. Then there's the king's soup in Claremont Gardens; a community meal & music.



● The Stragglers, whose Tuesday run goes from Giggles Hill Green along Portsmouth Road, staged the 43rd version of their 7k 'wedding day' race, first held on Charles and Di's big day in 1981, with 651 competitors (marshalled by 109 volunteers) in Bushy Park. The group just nursed seven 'You'll never catch-me-doing-it' beginners through the Couch to 5k programme. stragglers.org

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