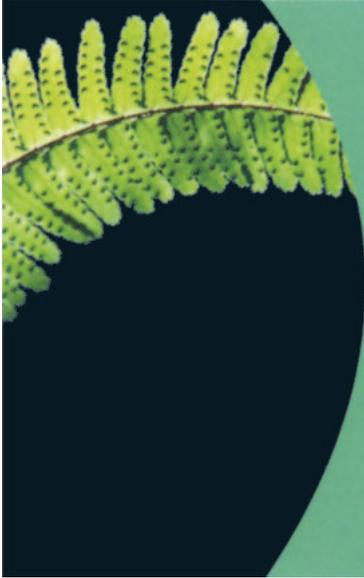


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THE MAGAZINE OF THE THAMES DITTON AND WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



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THAMES DITTON TODAY

The Magazine of the Thames Ditton and Weston Green
Residents' Association

Spring 2014

Published quarterly since Spring 1970

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Vacant: applicants invited.
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The next issue is uncertain in the
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Cover photo: *Spring freshet, river running high* by Keith

www.residents-association.com

Officers and staff of the Association are volunteers, but we must fund costs of this magazine, administrative and election expenses, and other expenses such as spring bulb-planting and the village Christmas tree. The subscription is only £3 per household. If you can contribute more, please do so. Subscriptions (in an envelope please) may be left at Boots Chemist, 14 High Street, or Thorkill Road Pharmacy, 94 Thorkill Road, Thames Ditton. Or mail to Membership Secretary Peter Haynes at 6 Onslow Gardens, Thames Ditton KT7 0JJ. Thank you.

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THAMES DITTON & WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Annual General Meeting

8.00 pm on 18 March 2013,
at Vera Fletcher Hall

Agenda:

1. **MINUTES** of the 2013 Annual General Meeting and matters arising therefrom.
2. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT:** to receive, discuss and adopt the Annual Report for 2013-2014.
3. **ACCOUNTS:** to receive the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013.
4. **APPOINTMENTS:** to receive nominations and appoint officers and an Auditor:

President	Chairman
Vice Chairmen	Hon Secretary
Hon Treasurer	Auditor
5. **ELECTIONS:** to adopt a candidate to stand at the Elmbridge Borough Council Elections on 22 May 2014
6. **RESOLUTIONS:** to consider any resolutions submitted in writing to the Secretary by 4 March 2012.

7. **GUEST SPEAKERS:** Christine Drury, Chairman S.E. Region, Campaign to Protect Rural England: "Our Green Belt in Danger;" and Gerry Acher, Chairman, Cobham Green Belt: "Your Villages Under Siege"

President: Maureen Sheldrick,
34 The Woodlands, Esher

Surrey County Councillor:

Peter Hickman, Little Lodge,
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Ruth Lyon,
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Karen Randolph,
Deepfield, Giggs Hill Road,
Thames Ditton 020 8398 5005

Weston Green Councillors

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Membership Secretary: Peter Haynes
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Health and Community:
Karen Randolph (see above)
Planning: Graham Cooke,
23 Ashley Road, Thames Ditton 020 8398 8509
Highways, Drainage: Andrew Roberts,
1 Boyle Farm Road, Thames Ditton 020 8786 6882

THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE

TUESDAY 18 MARCH (AGM) AND TUESDAY 29 APRIL AT 8.00PM,
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News from the Residents' Association



to 20 February

After another highly successful Christmas Fair in the High Street, with kind weather, an unprecedented rainy season set in. The upper reaches of the Mole flooded dramatically, and later the Thames at Thames Ditton Island reached its highest recorded level in modern times. Defences at Molesey, and the raised houses of Thames Ditton Island, stood up very well. Nearly all the islanders remained throughout. Elsewhere some riverine basement areas were penetrated by seepage from the high water table but pumps were adequate. Other parts of the borough were worse affected. The

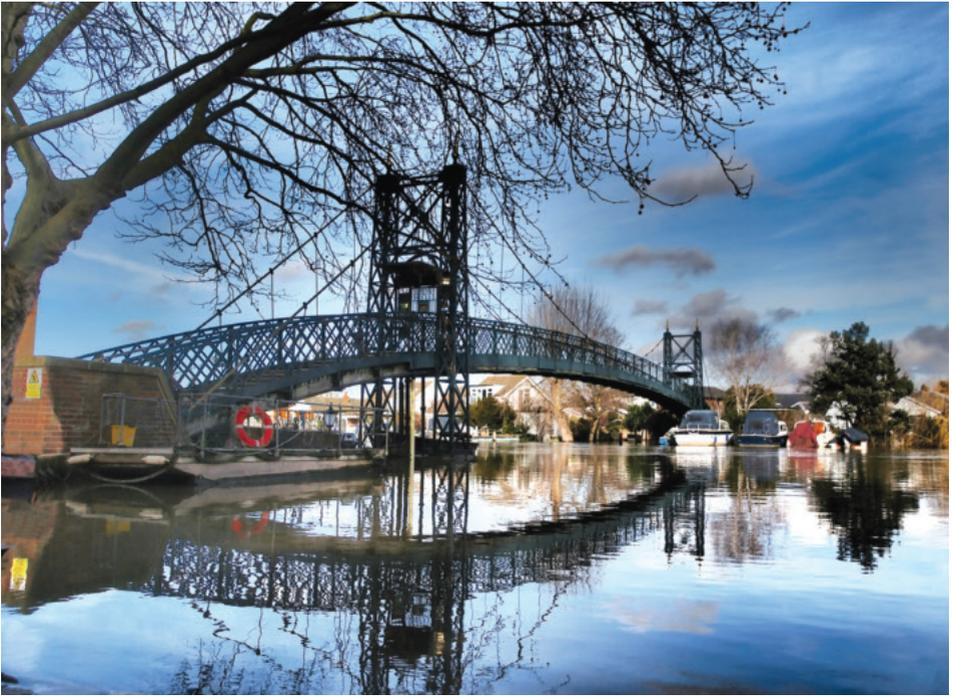


Borough Council set up a flood emergency centre 24/7 and our Residents' Association councillors ensured that the threat to Thames Ditton residents was fully factored in to council support activity including the provision of sandbags, advice, contingency refuge and protection for vulnerable residents. Community spirit was high.

Along with lobbying for decent domestic insurance provision for properties at risk of occasional flooding, the Association has long resisted new building, hard surfaces and basement excavations on the flood plain. As so often, lip-service is paid by Elmbridge's planners to strictures dutifully expressed by them in planning guidelines, but individual applications from developers

are still approved in apparent disregard of them, when the sun is out.

Readers will recall the immense effort that went into close reading of some 150 pages of Elmbridge draft planning documentation last summer during its public consultation phase (the Development Management Plan (DMP) and the highly controversial Settlement Investment and Development Plan (SID) which last included the proposal to build 24 houses on part of the Old Paulines – Colets – playing fields). Elmbridge promised to recirculate an amended text for consultation before submitting it for government approval. That text is now available (see EBC's website) and comments must be in by 16 March.



high water and strange weather provided some attractive light for photographers

However, there is no revised new SID text to go with it, so the existing, unsatisfactory text remains the working document to which developers are referred in the DMP. Initial reaction to the text is that it is replete with sententious official flannel but deficient in certain important respects. The policy regarding development on the flood plain is no stronger than it was, and there are some challengeable statements such as:

“To reduce people’s reliance on driving, by directing new development to sustainable locations, promoting attractive and convenient alternatives to using the private car”

You may well ask where these “sustainable locations” are (presumably

close to overcrowded rail services and reduced bus services) and are not; and what “attractive and convenient alternatives” to private car transport do our councils envisage providing, exactly? Does this have anything to do with:

“The Council will seek the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging points within all new developments as set out below...”

Secondary school places

The revised Development Management Plan conspicuously avoids the issue of linking new school provision to new residential development, a shortcoming on which the Association’s response to Elmbridge last year appears to have been

ignored. The text refers vaguely to “infrastructure” in general, where *“Communities will have more say in the creation of new facilities as part of the Settlement ID Plan allocations and by having input into how funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy are spent.”* What constitutes a “community” is not clear, nor how much “say” they will have. No doubt their views will be “taken into account.”

Meanwhile local parents, ably led by Louise McDonagh (see TD Today Winter 2013 issue), pressed their petition to Surrey County Council for new schooling provision. The Conservative-dominated Council rejected the petition at the hearing on 12 February at which Louise spoke. Their formal response stated that *“there are sufficient places in the borough overall; for 2014 these will be provided by Esher High School, Heathside, Hinchley Wood, RES and The Cobham Free School. We have also planned for additional places to be available from 2015 onwards in line with our forecast data. Surrey County Council is also concerned that its secondary schools are large enough to provide the breadth of curriculum and subject options required by young people in order to equip them for the future. This means that our secondary schools need to be at least six forms of entry (i.e. 180 students per year group) to be viable... Where we only need one or two additional forms we would always look to expand existing successful schools in the first instance...”*

The present Government’s policies mean that *“...as local authorities can no longer promote new community schools*

any new secondary school would have to be an academy or Free School.”

In constructive mode, Hinchley Wood and Esher High Schools have been undertaking a local consultation on admissions policy. You may read fuller notes of all these developments in our website forum, for which many thanks to Louise and the other parents who have given time to this campaign. Meanwhile there are other admissions anomalies caused by national and local policy on school provision, for example concerning faith schools, which our Weston Green Residents’ Councillors have lately brought to the attention of MP Dominic Raab in requesting his support.

Bad driving

In response to concerns expressed at the Neighbourhood Police Panel, police have mounted at least one "Drive Smart" enforcement operation along Station Road and Speer Road, Thames Ditton. Three persistent concerns have been the use of mobile phones while driving; cars mounting the pavement at the congested stretch of Station Road opposite the Old Manor House; and the growing problem of drivers who ignore the signs and turn right from Station Road into Speer Road without going round the bridge. Lest there be any doubt, this manoeuvre is illegal. It is also dangerous for oncoming cars rounding the bridge and for pedestrians crossing Speer Road from Embercourt Road, who do not expect an oncoming car to turn right into them as they cross. There have been some near misses, particularly at night. Police have been asked specifically to act in enforcement.

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it's clear enough, isn't it? Yet bad drivers turn right into Speer Road. It's illegal

Green Belt

Plans by Surbiton High School for a major indoor sports complex on Green Belt land at lovely Telegraph Hill were refused planning permission by Elmbridge, but the council declined to appear at the Appeal to defend their decision and forbade members of the planning committee from speaking to that defence. It was left to local residents and Residents' Association councillors Janet Turner and Ruth Lyon to give evidence which persuaded the Inspector that there were no overriding sports considerations

to justify building in the Green Belt. The Planning Inspector ruled unequivocally that *“the appeal proposal would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt”*

You may well ask why, if the Inspector even in these pro-development times found strong reasons to reject the appeal, the current Administration in Elmbridge were too feeble to defend their own refusal of planning permission. This is the Administration that voted to demolish Moore Place in Esher and allow a large new building on Green Belt there, and

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voted for building an enlarged hotel on Sandown Park Green Belt. They want to build a sports stadium on the green banks of the river Thames by Sunbury lock. Yet again, the only people who consistently defend the Green Belt are the Residents' Associations. Others, for whatever reason, are too ready to let it be built upon.

Doings and dates

100 guests enjoyed splendid French cuisine and the after-dinner pantomime "Buttons" presented by Charles Court Opera on 11 January at an event organised by the **Friends of Thames Ditton Hospital** and sponsored by **Dairy Crest**. It raised over £4,000 which will go to purchase more medical equipment at Emberbrook Centre so that patients can get an extensive out-patients consultant service without needing to go to an acute hospital such as Kingston, St Georges' or Epsom. Chair of the Friends Karen Randolph notes that the Friends continue to work both for more out-patient services and for the provision of NHS intermediate care beds for local patients requiring short term care. Several years ago NHS Surrey's financial problems resulted in the loss of more than 30% of Surrey's community hospital beds although they are clearly needed to take the pressure off beds at acute hospitals.

Tricia Bland's article on p27 records *inter alia* the opening of **Pip's Path** connecting the car park to the High Street, a project led by Bob Huxster whose late wife was named Pip. To

ensure that the path remains for the use of residents, it is owned by the Thames Ditton Foundation, a charity (see TD Today Summer 2011, p21).

Written and produced by **Nick Handel**, a Weston Green resident with a background in BBC production, **Weston's War** was presented in All Saints Weston over a weekend to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the church. It was a triumph. The mix of songs, comic sketches and real-life war stories with very high production values was completely sold out with people queuing for returns. Revd Phillip Johnson, himself no stranger to the boards as actor and theatre director, described the show as "*absolutely phenomenal... the number of emails and calls we have had saying it was fantastic is amazing. It meant a lot to people because each story was a real story from real people who lived in Weston Green.*"

Please note that the summer Residents' Association **Open Meeting of 24 June will be held in the church hall at All Saints Weston**, Chestnut Avenue, following a very well-attended trial meeting there last year.

The **Esher May Fair**, organized by 4th Thames Ditton 'Ajax' Sea Scouts will take place from noon on Saturday 17 May at Esher Green. For further information see www.eshermayfair.org.uk. We don't yet have firm dates for two further car boot sales in Ashley Road car park, the Dittons Scout Fair on Giggs Hill Green or the next Good As New sale at Esher College.

Subscriptions and elections

Please take time to send your subscription for 2014 to the Association, for which a form is enclosed with this issue. Your subscription allows the Association to function, to carry insurance cover extending to the Christmas and Summer Fairs, to carry out tasks from bulb planting through mounting blue plaques to small works or useful donations; to fight elections so that Thames Ditton and Weston Green can have an independent voice free of national political dogma, and to fund contingencies for the inevitable major planning and other battles where legal representation might be required.

We hope you will vote for your Residents' Association candidate in the upcoming Borough elections. Our candidates have a track record of service in the local community and are not motivated by the thought of a political career. Residents' Councillors have voted consistently for a council tax freeze. Last year, when there were no Borough elections, the Conservative administration voted to increase council tax – the second time they have taken advantage of a year with no elections to raid your wallet unnecessarily.

Message from the outgoing Editor

“I have enjoyed my eight years as Editor of Thames Ditton Today. During that time I introduced full colour throughout the magazine and added four pages of content, all at no extra cost from our excellent printers Impress

Print. I have tried to keep readers better informed through this regular news section, to keep the quality of writing high and the range of articles interesting, balanced and substantive. I thank all the contributors who have made editing a pleasure, and all those kind readers who have given positive feedback and encouragement. I am also most grateful to the fine team who help prepare and distribute Thames Ditton Today, particularly Advertising Manager Verity Park.

Health and other preoccupations together with a certain fatigue mean that I must now give up the editorship, having signalled this over a year ago. Many have told me that the magazine is well worthwhile, but nobody has felt it worthwhile enough to make the commitment to take over. I expect that the Executive Committee of the Association will find a solution one way or another, but as I write, the future of the magazine and the nature of any successor publication remain uncertain.

So come on, potential editors, if you want to see the magazine continue. There is never a shortage of material. Quite the reverse - there's an interesting story behind every front door. There are also dozens more local history stories for me to write for you. There's a waiting list of advertisers, and a competent team.

If you're prepared to make this voluntary commitment, please address enquiries to the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen or Hon. Sec.

Keith Evetts”

Thunderbirds Are Still Go!

Hard to believe, particularly for those of us of a certain age, but August 2015 sees the fiftieth (yes, you heard it right) anniversary of the screening of the Thunderbirds TV puppet show. If puppets aged like the rest of us, the Tracy brothers would have long since retired from rescuing those in peril, and Lady Penelope would be ageing, surely very gracefully indeed, in her stately home, long since sold to the National Trust and occasionally emerging to greet tourists with romantic tales of her International Rescue days.

Also ageing gracefully are two longstanding Thames Ditton residents who were at the heart of the Thunderbirds shows; maker and operator of the puppets, Mary Turner, and her co-puppeteer on the show Judith Shutt, Mary's lifelong friend and now next door neighbour.

How to become a puppeteer

Mary was brought up in Isleworth, but now lives in the Thames Ditton house bought by her parents in 1976, where they moved to get away from being under the



Mary with Beoswayne from Cloppa Castle – photo by Jeremy

Heathrow flight-path. Mary moved back into the house in 1986 following her father's passing, where she lives surrounded by the quirky artefacts of an artistic family and her own creative and illustrious career in TV and film.

Mary was by her own admission “hooked” by puppets when her mother

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Pat (an artist) went to puppet making classes after the war and brought home a marionette, following which they worked up a puppet show that they took out to parties and schools. Mary later went to art school herself to study sculpture, and after some work at the BBC in the early days of TV, was “auditioned” by puppet maker Christine Glanville who was looking for puppeteers to work on “Torchy the Battery Boy”, the second venture for the fledgling production company AP Films, founded by young producers Gerry Anderson and Arthur Provis. This audition was something of a brave move having given up a teaching job, but it was to prove somewhat serendipitous.

In the meantime, Judith was employed as a hairdresser but had also been demonstrating marionettes for Pelham Puppets in Hamleys toy shop in Regent Street at Christmas, her interest in puppets having been kindled by being taken to a puppet theatre on family holidays to Broadstairs, at which she saw a notice for the annual British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild exhibition in London where she saw Mary Turner’s nascent puppet show demonstrated.

The Gerry Anderson years

The Gerry and Sylvia Anderson shows, on which Mary was working, moved from the delightfully naïve children’s shows of Torchy and the cowboys of Four Feather Falls (in which Nicholas Parsons had a starring voice-over role) to the more adventurous sci-fi of Supercar and Fireball XL5, and developed in complexity as they did so. As well as operating the puppets

during this time, Mary drew on her sculpting skills and started making the heads and hands of the puppets. Heads had to be sculpted in plasticine and painted to make sure they were right before taking a rubber mould and casting them in fibreglass. Gerry Anderson’s wife Sylvia was in charge of characterisation, and she and Mary used the showbiz agents’ bible “Spotlight” to find suitable faces for the characters; in Stingray, using James Garner for Troy Tempest. Titan, Christine Glanville’s evil Aquaphibian, was based loosely on Lawrence Olivier. For Thunderbirds, the achingly sexy Lady Penelope, made by Mary, was based on – and voiced by – Sylvia Anderson herself. Several heads were made for each character: normal, smiler, frowner and blinker, and latterly more than one puppet for each of two stages.

Originally all the filming was done at a house on the banks of the Thames in Maidenhead, occasionally surrounded by water as the Thames often flooded at high tide. Judith joined Mary there as a puppeteer for the Fireball XL5 series, still made in black and white; Stingray was the first series made in colour at Lew Grade’s insistence, so he could sell it to the USA, even though there was no colour TV in the UK at that time. By the time of Thunderbirds, filming had moved to much larger premises on an industrial estate in Slough, and the show had developed to require five directors, three puppeteers for each of two stages, and an additional four people making the puppets for the next series.

Thunderbirds went from Stingray’s half hour slot to a full hour, and by Gerry

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Anderson's admission, was costing a million per show, "in today's money" as he put it. Mary, by this time, was supervising puppeteer and maker, and was involved in the two Thunderbirds feature films made at the time. Judith was still a key puppet operator, and also acted as the hands of Lady Penelope when more detailed close ups were needed.

Gerry Anderson abandoned puppets and started developing live action shows in 1969, effectively closing down the

puppet studio operation. Many of the puppets, stored in boxes in the studio roof-space, were sadly lost, and original examples are now much sought after by collectors, of which film Director Peter Jackson is a notable example.

Mary's career did not stop with Thunderbirds, however, and together with one of the AP Films' directors, she formed a new production company "Cinamation", directing 156 ten minute episodes of Rupert the Bear, and creating Cloppa Castle, at the time the number one performing children's TV show in ITV's lunchtime slot.

Mary was awarded a "lifetime achievement award" by the British Puppet and Model Theatre Guild last year, and now divides her time between Thames Ditton, where she organises volunteers to maintain the Garden of Remembrance at St Nicholas' church, and her cottage in County Waterford in Ireland. She still creates puppets and automata and lives a life of quiet celebrity, though no doubt she will have to fend off many approaches to talk about her work on Thunderbirds when its fiftieth anniversary arrives later in the year.



Lady Penelope: still cool at 50-something, now a Thames Ditton resident, had her hair done for this photocall

Jeremy Sroxtton



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Detecting Changes in Local Ponds

– Royal Society Partnership Project with TDJS



Alby and Joe of TD Junior School

The government, learned scientific societies and employers have repeatedly expressed concern about the decline in the uptake of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects at university and warned of the implications of this decline for the health and well-being of society and the economy. Nurturing an interest in science at an early age through specialist science teachers and facilities can help sustain that interest into the future. The Partnership Grants scheme, run by the UK's premier scientific organization, the Royal Society, provides support for projects designed to allow teachers and school children to work alongside practising scientists and

engineers. 'Detecting Change in Local Ponds' is a collaboration, funded by a Royal Society Partnership Grant, between Thames Ditton Junior School and scientists from the Environmental Change Research Centre at University College London (UCL). The grant has provided specialist laboratory and field equipment to enable the school to carry out the project.

'Detecting Changes in Local Ponds' is concerned with monitoring the 'health' of two ponds on Littleworth Common, between Thames Ditton and Esher. Ponds form an important part of our local environment: they are important for wildlife, have high conservation value and support a range of leisure activities.



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Throughout the UK, ponds are under pressure from human activities, lack of careful management and increasingly from climate change. Careful and regular monitoring of the aquatic environment in ponds can help us to measure long-term and short-term changes and determine the degree to which any particular pond is at risk of deterioration.

Our project, which began in summer term 2012, involves termly visits to the two ponds by year 6 children at Thames Ditton Junior School. During each visit, the children monitor the 'health' of each pond using a combination of field and laboratory measurements and observations. In the field, the presence of different types of invertebrates is used to generate a pond health score, using a methodology recently developed by the OPAL (Open Air Laboratories) project, which is supported by the Big Lottery Fund. This score is supplemented by measurements of water pH, electrical conductivity (a proxy for total dissolved solid content), dissolved oxygen and clarity. Back in the school's new science laboratory (featured in the Spring 2103 edition of Thames Ditton Today), the children study the pond organisms in greater detail under the microscope (all of the organisms are returned to the water at the end of the day) and discuss their findings.

With over a year of data in hand, we are now beginning to build up a picture of short-term variations in the two ponds. During our visits, New Pond was almost always slightly warmer than Old Pond, although the results from our dataloggers (which measure temperature every two hours) paint a rather different picture, with much larger daily fluctuations in temper-

ature and higher temperatures at Old Pond. However, the results for last summer are misleading, as the datalogger in Old Pond was left high and dry by falling water levels.

Pond health scores vary markedly. Perhaps surprisingly, given that it was established more recently, a wider range of invertebrates and higher pond health score have generally been found at New Pond. The health of Old Pond deteriorated markedly last summer when it all but dried out during the summer drought. However its water level has largely recovered as a result of autumn and winter rain and it will be interesting to see if the pond's wildlife has also recovered when we visit this term.

As a result of this project, year 6 children from Thames Ditton Junior School are taking part in a piece of real scientific research. During their visits to the ponds, they gain familiarity with their local environment and learn how to collect physical and biological data in the field and the laboratory. The children develop an understanding of the relationships between aquatic plants and animals and their environment, and an appreciation of the fact that the health of a pond can be determined by biological and physical variables. The project comes to a close officially at the end of the 2013-2014 school year: however, we hope to continue monitoring the two ponds further into the future in order to gain a better understanding of short and long term variations in their state of health. Further information about the project is available at the project website (www.ostracod.co.uk).

Prof. Jonathan Holmes
University College London
Nan Davies
Thames Ditton Junior School



Your Residents' Association

web site and forum maintained as resource for all residents

notification to residents of key planning applications

active secret

Peter Hickman re-elected to County Council

professional theatre, concerts, opera at Vera Fletcher Hall

removal of abandoned vehicles

supported residents' objections to inappropriate development

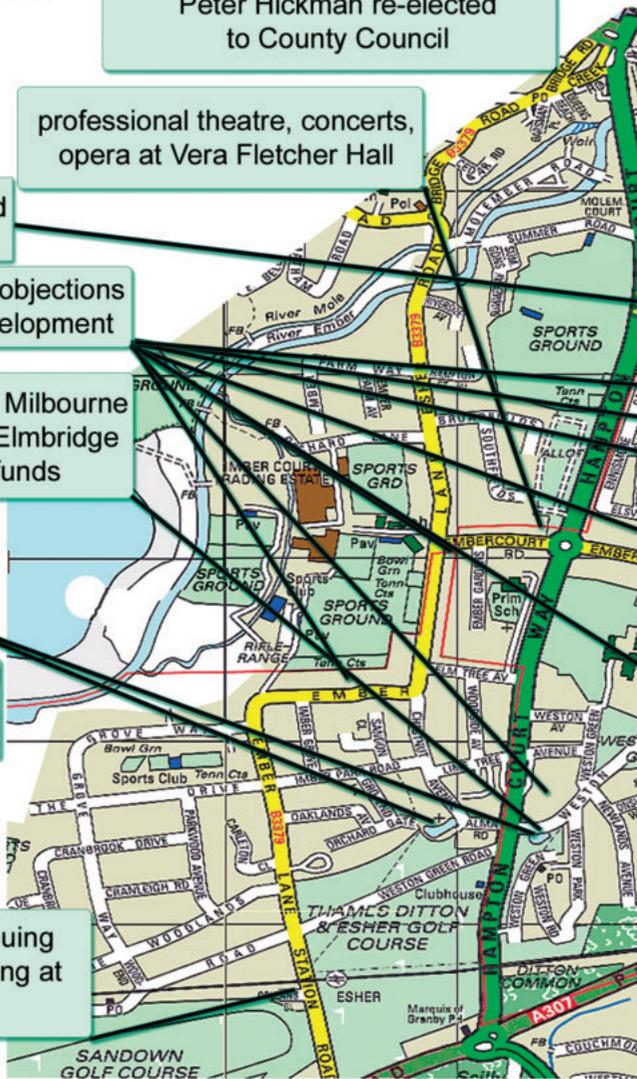
pursued hydrology report on Milbourne Pond, gain approval from Elmbridge for solution, & raised funds

maintenance of Marney's and Milbourne Ponds

supported parents seeking long term solution to secondary schools crisis

RA stall at Weston Christmas Fair

persistent pressure for continuing maintenance to prevent flooding at Esher station



ion in Action 2013-2014



programme of social events -
at gardens,, Christmas Party

4,000 copies of Thames Ditton
Today distributed quarterly

major input to review of long
term planning targets

supported proposed path
from car park to High St,
reasonable pricing in car
park, and car boot sales

maintenance of flower beds,
erected Christmas tree, planted
500 more spring bulbs around the
village

lobbied for flood prevention measures,
resisted new builds on flood plain,
worked with Council for emergency
flood relief

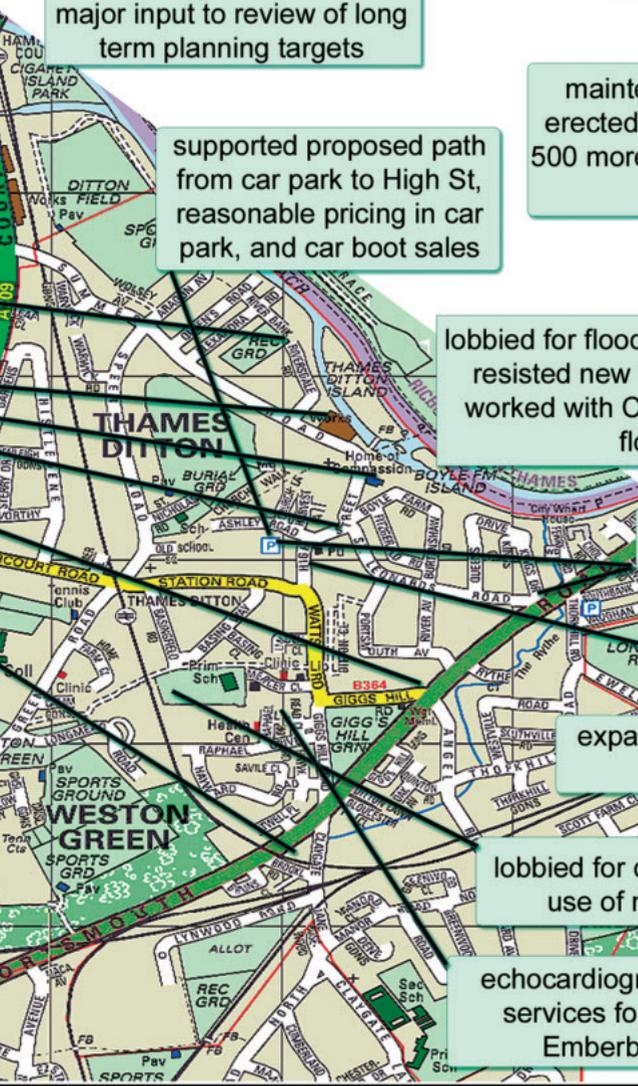
supported retention
of shops

active support for
Christmas and
Summer Fairs

expanded residents' snow-
clearing scheme

lobbied for continuing community
use of multisports courts

echocardiograph and heart rate monitor
services for NHS patients opened at
Emberbrook with funds raised



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Keeping The Heart In Our High Street



Bob Huxster with Tricia Bland, Peter Vernon-Kell, Peter Hickman, Ruth Lyon, Libby MacIntyre and others involved in the opening of Pip's Path – named after the late Pip Huxster. Photo by Micaela Cianci

When actress Charlie Brooks switched on the Lime Tree lights at last year's Christmas Fair the event attracted the biggest ever crowd to see her flick the switch which set the in motion the lighting up of 43 trees along the High Street. It signalled the start of the run-up to the festivities and showed, without a shadow of a doubt, that the High Street is the centre of our community.

The event was a truly family affair and virtually every shop and business put on special activities. Santa and his elves made a special appearance, there was abundant food, wine and festive treats and a non-stop programme of entertainment. It was a perfect day under a crisp, winter sun.

But sadly, the storm clouds are ever gathering, which is why the High Street remains a central concern and priority of the Residents' Association and is the reason we have a clear and coherent vision relating to it going forward. Since the inception of the RA 80 years ago there have been many battles, fought and won, in support of the High Street. One recent example was the RA's 'Say No To Pay & Display' campaign vigorously opposing SCC's proposals to make people pay for on-street parking. The community agreed that this would threaten the viability of the shops and there was a successful outcome.

One of the most serious threats currently facing high streets everywhere

concerns Government proposals to allow change of use from retail to residential without the need to apply for planning permission from the local council. In areas like Thames Ditton, where housing is high-value, there is the potential for developers and landlords to be tempted to cash in by converting viable shop space to residential use. Currently, conservation areas, including Thames Ditton High Street, are exempt but the RA continues to be vigilant about planning. We are determined to retain a mixed High Street with shops, restaurants and pubs as well as residential. Our efforts so far have been broadly successful, but pressures remain high.

We recognise that a range of initiatives is needed at any one time to support and improve the viability of shops including the retention of a viable car park with modest charges. Quicker, more convenient pedestrian access to the Ashley Road car park has long been campaigned for and this was achieved in December with the opening of ‘Pip’s Path’, a walkway from the car park to the High Street. We are now awaiting permanent signage to replace the temporary ones. We are also looking at freeing up short term parking outside the shops during working hours to encourage more passing trade and the consultation on this will take place later this year.

There are many other initiatives we are looking at to boost the viability of our High Street, ensuring it remains at the core of our community. I devised the phrase ‘Keep the Heart in our High Street’ for this. Putting lights on our historic lime tree wasn’t just about

brightening the village for Christmas, it acts as a beacon to draw visitors from all over Elmbridge. We are currently working to improve the condition of the hexagon under the lime tree and have refurbished the RA planters in the community area between Lunch and Emma At Home, seasonally planting this area as well as the roundabout at the High Street entrance. Other ongoing improvements include the installation of conservation Street lights and the refurbishment of the road surface which has been promised for later this year into 2015.

Working with the community, so we all take a sense of pride and ‘ownership’ of our High Street is a prime concern. The RA has close links with, and is highly supportive of the Retailers’ Association which recently set up its own website, thamesdittonhighstreet.com and is responsible for staging the Summer and Winter Fairs in the High Street. Following the success of the first Car Boot Sale in the Ashley Road Car Park last year, it is planning more dates throughout the Spring/Summer and we are delighted to support them in their work on this. It also supports the Retailers’ Association ‘Think Local. Shop Local’ initiative, designed to encourage the community to support the fantastic range of shops, cafes and restaurants we have in our centre.

The High Street is the heart of our community and the RA is determined to keep it this way, for now, and for future generations. The fight for its survival goes on.

Tricia W. Bland
Hon. Sec.

Rushett Farm and John Nethersole ...of Jamaica



If you own a house in Southville, Westville, Thorkhill or Angel Roads the history of your deeds might start with the sale of land by Alexander Glen, one of the successors by marriage to the estate of John Nethersole of Jamaica, who owned Rushett Farm, Thames Ditton in the mid 1800s.

Now to someone who has lived in that other, palm-studded Kingston, the name of Nethersole rings a very loud bell. Nethersole Place, in front of the Bank of Jamaica, is named after Noel Newton “Crab” Nethersole who, as Minister of Finance 1955-1959, was a prime mover in the new Bank’s foundation. His statue stands there. A larger than life figure in real life too, he was also a founder of the People’s National Party along with Norman Manley and Florizel Glasspole who, in his late seventies, was Governor of Jamaica when I served as First Secretary in our High Commission there.

Rhodes scholar, a left-handed batsman, sometime captain of the Jamaica cricket team, and solicitor of the Supreme Court, “Crab” Nethersole famously handled the legal defence of his erstwhile team-mate, pace bowler Leslie Hylton. In 1954



“Crab” Nethersole at the Bank of Jamaica

Hylton shot his wife Lurlene Rose, daughter of an Inspector of Police, after she confessed adultery. His defence, rather inconsistent, is said to have been that he was trying to shoot himself but missed. Author Paul Donnelly in “First, Last and Only: Cricket” (Hachette, 2010) comments that *“lack of accuracy was perhaps not the most credible defence for a former Test bowler with an average of 26.6.”* Moreover Hylton had fired seven

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bullets into Lurlene, having to reload his revolver during the process, which somewhat undermined his case. An all-male jury took an hour and a half to convict him of murder. Hylton was hanged, the only Test cricketer to have been executed.

But I digress.

You would think that a rare name like Nethersole would make the genealogy easy, but alas this is not the case. The Nethersole family name originates at Nethersole, a farm at Wymygeswolde (now Womenswold) in Kent. Significant Nethersoles include a John Nethersole, lawyer, of Lincoln's Inn, a deputy Sheriff of Kent and close to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Nethersole helped fund the new library for law students at Lincoln's Inn. He died about 1504. Another John Nethersole was reportedly a great favourite of Henry VIII and indulged to wear a cap in the King's presence. In the 1600s there was Sir Francis Nethersole, a rather hapless diplomat and for a while a parliamentarian. Baptized in 1587 at Kingston, Kent – yet another Kingston, he was the second son of “John Nethersole of Wymondeswold.”

There seems no confirmable connection of these august Nethersoles with “John Nethersole of Jamaica” who came to own Rushett Farm. The latter was born on 2 June 1791 in Dover, the eldest son of Michael Nethersole, a carrier, and his wife Sarah. He arrived in Jamaica on 9 June 1808 at the age of eighteen. Starting with nothing but enterprise, within a few decades he owned a tannery and three small plantations. He threw himself into local administration on the

island, becoming a magistrate, a guardian of the workhouse, overseer for the Bedlam or lunatic asylum, an alderman, Chairman of the Kingston Chamber of Commerce, Custos Rotulorum (Recorder, or Keeper of the Rolls) for the parish of Kingston, and a Board member of the first, private, Bank of Jamaica.

Not all went smoothly. Back home in England we find two court cases in the mid-1830s where plaintiffs sought payment from John Nethersole and Co. of Jamaica, one of them being represented by Sir Edward Sugden, the future Lord St Leonards, of Boyle Farm. Nethersole was visiting England at the time of at least one case. We also find negative comments in *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, Volume 3 1831 concerning negro slaves in Jamaica who did not want to load a vessel on a Sunday. They received 39 lashes, and were handcuffed to a ship's chain cable in Kingston harbour until released by a magistrate:

“this is the kind of conduct that Mr James Smith and Mr John Nethersole attempt to justify, and to examine and decide upon which they, as magistrates, meet and award justice by dismissing the complaint.”

There are glimpses of John Nethersole of Jamaica from an account by advocate James Logan of a tour of the region in 1838:

“At Kingston, I called on Mr John Nethersole... Next day, being Sunday, he came for me at ten o'clock in the morning and drove me to the Presbyterian Church, where we heard a good sermon... We then went to the Bedlam, which was under his management, and where about thirty poor

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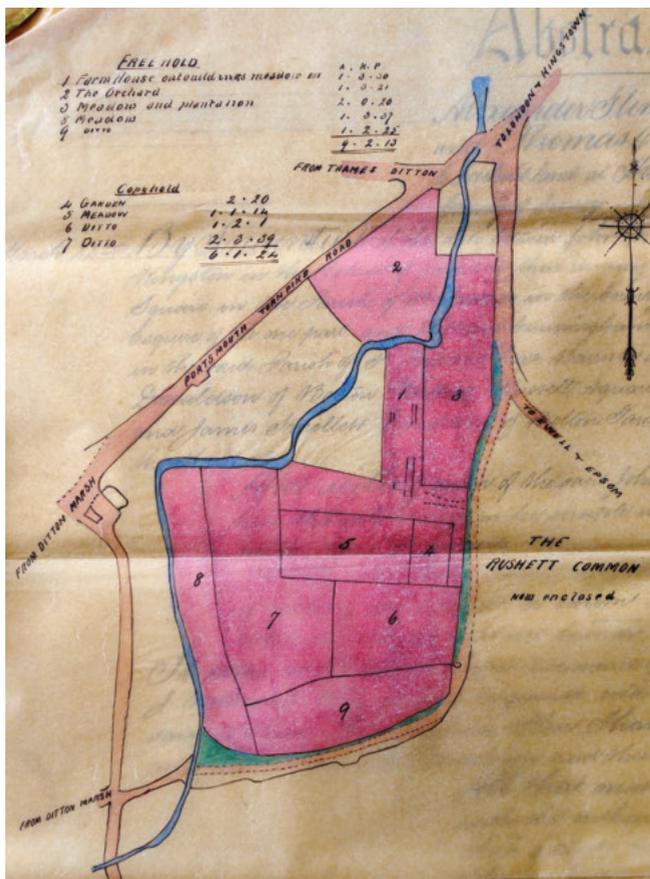
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creatures were confined, the deplorable condition of which cast a gloom upon my spirits... The institution, however, seemed to be admirably conducted, for Mr Nethersole had applied to its management his practical knowledge of human nature, and the results of his observation obtained while inspecting many similar establishments in the United States.

“Mr Nethersole's tannery... is of great extent... native products are used for tanning... skins are tanned in six or eight months, and the leather is nearly, if not quite equal in quality to that of English manufacture. Alderman Nethersole may be said to have introduced this new and valuable branch of industry into the colony... This gentleman's indefatigable exertions in promoting the prosperity of the colony cannot be too much praised.”

It's not clear exactly when John Nethersole bought Rushett Farm in Thames Ditton (see map). It was after the tithes apportionment in 1843, and before 1853 when, visiting this country, he portioned the farm off as a settlement on the husbands of his two daughters in England, Eliza and Maria Nethersole.



Nethersole's Rushett Farm 1853, in pink, bounded by Portsmouth Road, what is now Thorkhill Road, and the Rythe.

These men were significant figures in Victorian Britain. William Cunningham Glen, who married Eliza, was a prominent lawyer, the author of books on law and public administration. Thomas Leverton Donaldson, a famed architect and civil engineer, became the first professor of architecture at University College London and was the *de facto* founder of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Among other buildings, he designed Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, and the

Holloway Sanatorium for the insane at Virginia Water.

As with John Nethersole, there is no evidence that either Glen or Donaldson actually lived at Rushett Farm. It seems clear that it was an investment back home, a buy-to-let enterprise. John Nethersole's finances deteriorated towards the end of his life, perhaps in connection with the Wheal Jamaica Copper mine which he established in 1854. Certainly, by 1862 a codicil to his will refers to the "great diminution of my means by recent events." John Nethersole of Jamaica died on that island. An inscription in Kingston parish church, Jamaica reads:

"The Hon. John Nethersole Custos Rotulorum of the parish of Kingston and proprietor of Castle James, Mount Woolfrys and Cassell plantations in the parish of St Andrews. born 02 jun 1791, d. 04 jun 1862. He landed at Port Royal 09 jun 1808 from which period he almost uninterruptedly resided in this city largely contributing by his example and energy to its welfare."

Solicitors' notes on the conveyance of Rushett Farm record the successive deaths of Thomas Leverton Donaldson and his son J S Donaldson. Before he died in Scotland in 1892, William Cunningham Glen appointed Alexander Glen, Reginald Cunningham Glen and Maria Cunningham Glen as executors. Early in the next century Rushett farm was sold off for housing development.

Now, I can't firmly tie John Nethersole of Jamaica, via Rhodes scholar John Mapletoft Nethersole, a prominent lawyer, to the latter's son, Noel Newton "Crab" Nethersole who features earlier in

this article. And neither can Olwen Long, keeper of the "One Name" study of the family name of Nethersole, although she surmises that most Jamaican Nethersoles are related to John's brother George. The situation is complicated by breeding which was not always recorded.

James Logan in the 1838 account of his visit to John Nethersole notes:

"The Society at Kingston is good, although there are few respectable ladies there, owing to the general practice of keeping mistresses, which, indeed, is common all over the island. This is in itself a great evil, and is highly injurious to the morals of the blacks, who imitate their masters in this as in other respects... at one time, when a stranger visited at an overseer's he might have his choice of females on the estate. The morals of the blacks are, of course, similar... they very seldom married, but had indiscriminate connexion with all the females."

And on that note I'll end this series of articles about the connections of Thames Ditton with slavery and its aftermath. For it appeals to me that this part of the story moves on from slave plantations to other industry after Abolition, via civic responsibility and a mingling of all races, to Nethersoles who contributed significantly to the institutions of Jamaica as it finally approached Independence.

Keith Evetts

Footnote: Rushett Farm was distinct from the house on Thorkhill Road that used to be called "The Rushett", which is now known as the old Manor House (although evidence that the house was ever the seat of any of our local manors is, to my knowledge, wanting).

Music For Spring

at the Vera Fletcher Hall



From Tchaikovsky's and Prokofiev's classic sonatas, through 20s jazz and Forties Big Bands to English Touring Opera's welcome return with their new childrens' opera "Borka – the Goose with No Feathers", the Vera Fletcher Hall will be alive with music this Spring in a packed programme.

Gilbert & Sullivan lovers have a treat when Charles Court Opera return with their "Patience" on Saturday 12 April. This delicious satire on one of the fads of the day – the aesthetic poetry movement, has glorious tunes – "Soldiers of the Queen", "Prithee, Pretty Maiden" and "Silver is the Raven Hair" sung by some of the UK's best young opera talent and telling the story of the poet Bunthorne who fails in his love for the simple milkmaid Patience and raffles himself off to his lady admirers. "Wickedly funny" – The Guardian.

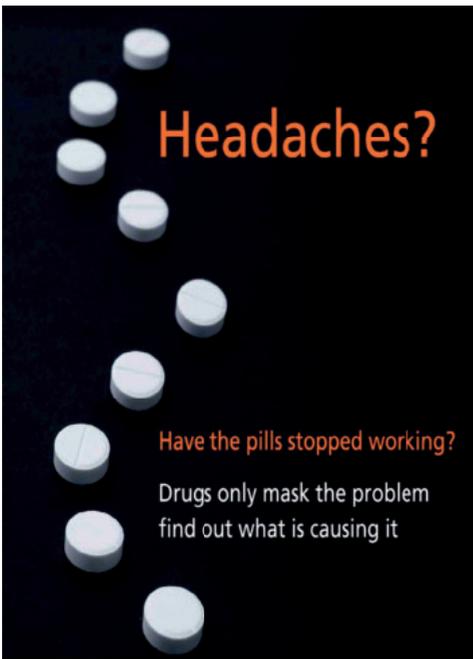
Jazz and swing is always a hit with our Strictly Sunday Shows and we welcome back Jake Fryer from the London Jazz Festival and Ronnie Scott's with "Jazz on a Spring Evening" on Sunday 30 March with his jazz classics by Duke Ellington, Cole Porter, Gershwin and other hits.



Charles Court Opera – Patience

This is followed on Sunday 18 May by "In the Mood" with Five Star Swing, one of the top swing and jazz bands in the UK, with the vibrant sound of the Big Band era: Glenn Miller, Vera Lynn...

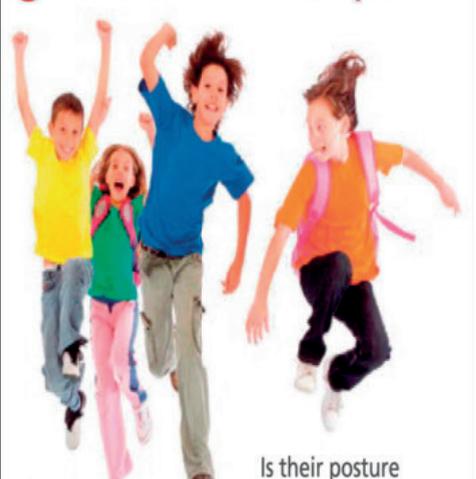
In more classical mode the London Chamber Collective, with local violinist Amy Tress, perform "The Great Russian Composers" with Shostakovich's Cello Sonata in D minor, Prokofiev's Violin Sonata in D major and Tchaikovsky's



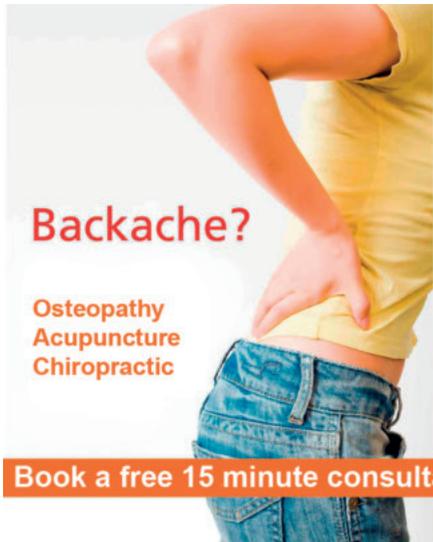
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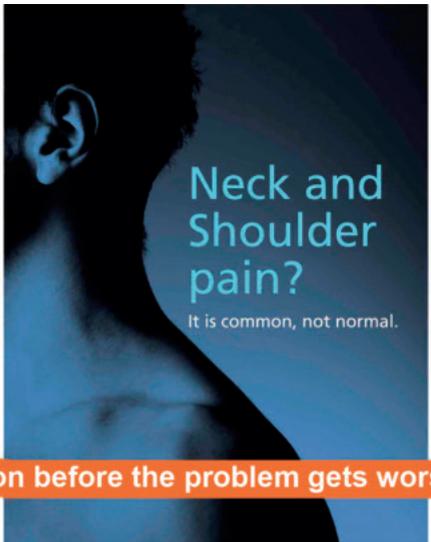


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String Sextet “Souvenir de Florence” on Friday 9 May.

On Saturday 15 March the award winning Rosemary Branch Theatre bring us “Jane Eyre”, Charlotte Bronte’s classic story of the orphaned Jane Eyre emerging from charity school to seek her fortune as governess to the ward of the enigmatic Mr. Rochester: *“Six actors, six chairs, six books and a little piano music are all that’s needed to evocatively create the gothic world of Charlotte Bronte’s novel in this piece of fringe theatre at its best”* – The Stage.

On the lighter side we welcome Mrs Evans and the Claygate Music Hall Players who present An Evening of Music Hall and Variety on Sunday 23 March, with a fish and chip supper, licensed bar, and old favourites “My Old Man” and “Let’s All Go Down the Strand...” Molesey Musical Theatre from the 14-17 May bring us “A Century of Song”, a musical tour of the last 100 years from “Strike up the Band” to “Don’t Cry for Me, Argentina”.

“Borka – The Goose with No Feathers” from the story by John Burningham is given a new twist by the prestigious English Touring Opera on Friday 5 May when 8 singers, players and puppeteers tell of Borka, who tries to fly and swim, is abandoned by her friends but finally



Amy Tress and London Chamber Collective

rescued and taken to Kew Gardens. Other treats for children include the family participation musical “The Jungle Book” on Saturday 29 March and “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” on Saturday 10 May by Garlic Theatre, where a young boy works a spell with a broom making it dance and spin as it fetches water, but then a flood starts to rise. Will he be able to undo the spell before the sorcerer returns?... Puppets, mime and a touch of real magic.

See page 39 for times and tickets for these shows. Keep in touch with events at the Hall at www.verafletcherhall.co.uk.

Ruth Lyon



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Sunday 23 March 7.00pm

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“Let’s All go Down the Strand” ...
TICKETS (inc. supper) £15 from 01372 465 500

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PATIENCE

Gilbert & Sullivan’s delicious satire,
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“Prithee, pretty maiden”, with some of the UK’s
best young operatic talent.
“Wickedly funny” THE GUARDIAN.
TICKETS £16

Friday 9 May 8.00 pm

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Felicity Matthews and Paul Beckett (violas)
Auriol Evans and Hannah Sloane (cellos) and
Anyssa Neumann (piano) play Shostakovich Cello
Sonata in D minor, Prokofiev Violin Sonata No. 2
in D major and Tchaikovsky String Sextet
“Souvenir de Florence”
TICKETS £12 (under 16 years free)

Wed 14-Sat 17 May 7.30pm

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Image Musical Theatre presents

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English Touring Opera presents

BORKA – THE GOOSE WITH NO FEATHERS

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For ages 4-7 years.
TICKETS £6

Saturday 10 May 2.30 pm

Garlic Theatre presents

THE SORCERER’S APPRENTICE

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dance and spin as it fetches water for the cauldron,
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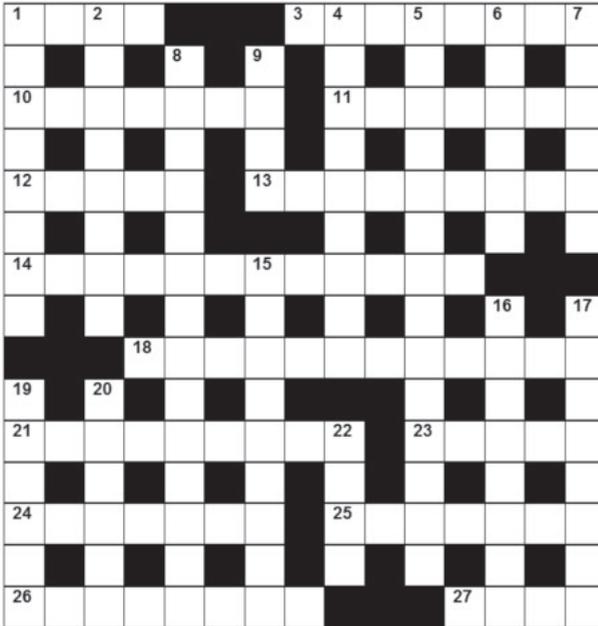
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Prep	7 - 11 year olds
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For further information about Open Mornings or to arrange an appointment please tel: **01372 473624** or email: **info@claremont.surrey.sch.uk**



Spring Crossword

By Maureen Willcox



The first three correct entries randomly opened after the closing date of 6 May 2014 will win a £5 voucher to spend in local shops.

Please send the completed puzzle (or photocopy) enclosing your name and address, with the envelope clearly marked 'Crossword Competition', to:

Thames Ditton Today
Crossword Competition
11 Riversdale Road
Thames Ditton
KT7 0QL

ACROSS

1. Give naughty teenager a telling off inside (4)
3. Letters taken from Upminster reach final destination (8)
10. Horrified servants found their son in M1 pile-up (7)
11. Sold for profit by freebooter (7)
12. Ned had a fat stomach which caused his slow progress (5)
13. Soon a plain girl may change, yet remain unknown (9)
14. Conclusion of celebration according to the Bard (7,5)
18. Précis of a longer text (5,7)
21. A German ferret tried to stick nose in (9)
23. Slow, slow, quick &c. &c. (5)
24. Take this comedienne to Hart! (7)
25. Henpecked Stan takes the rap for a simple life (7)
26. A hunt for hidden valuables (8)
27. Did an aged mother put her foot in it? (4)

DOWN

1. Think carefully before drinking rum in tea (8)
2. A metallic element (8)
4. Likely to blow up (9)
5. Festive time – but scram! Tim is at the sherry! (5,9)
6. Have you any inkling what this clue means? (6)
7. A wise man keeps a distance from this person (6)
8. Peer owns heavy metal bands that provide entertainment (4,2,3,5)
9. Constitutes one third of the land mass (4)
15. A mammal's mane gets stuffed! (9)
16. e.g. chalk and cheese (8)
17. 28.4 grams (3, 5)
19. Destiny of a popular show (6)
20. Prognosis for Hubbard's pet (6)
22. I like to conclude with a simple clue (4)

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Solution to the Winter Crossword

by Michael Jackson



E	N	J	O	Y	M	E	N	T	B	R	A	C	E
V	A	E	N	H	A	G	X						
E	N	C	H	A	N	T	A	S	S	E	G	A	I
N	K	R	E	M	E	R	S						
S	I	S	A	L	N	O	E	N	D	T	O	I	T
	P	A	T	S									
C	A	R	A	T	E	N	L	I	G	H	T	E	N
H	A	E	C	A	E	A	C						
A	F	T	E	R	N	O	O	N	O	L	I	V	E
M					R	D	L	L					
P	O	S	T	C	O	D	E	S	O	B	E	L	I
A	H	R	I	C	G	N	D						
G	R	A	N	A	D	A	A	R	I	A	D	N	E
N	K	F	L	P	S	E	A						
E	X	E	A	T	E	L	E	C	T	O	R	A	L

Congratulations to the first three of many correct entries opened after shuffling, who win a voucher. Some others please note the correct spelling of ASSEGAI :

Nicola Sirin
2 Warwick Place
Thames Ditton KT7 0QG

Helen Campbell
4 Camm Gardens
Thames Ditton KT7 0JA

Tom Eddy
46 Grove Way
Esher KT10 8HL

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SERVICES, CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

SERVICES

Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	Harry Livesey	01372 879321
Dittons and Weston Green Neighbourcare	Avril Ashworth	020 8398 7521
Elmbridge Borough Council Community Support Services		
Thames Ditton Centre for Retired People	Mon & Thurs	020 83985921
Thames Ditton Children's Centre	Tues, Weds, Fri	020 83983772
Meals on Wheels, Community Transport, Dial-a-Ride,	ask for service at central	
Alarm & Telecare services, Relief Carers	switchboard	01372 474474
Homesupport Elmbridge	Pam Howard (Manager)	01932 267128
Esher and District Stroke Club	Ann Pollock	020 8398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Sally Dubery	01372 463587
Surrey Youth and Adult Education Service	Elmbridge Area	020 8979 8334

GROUPS

Girl Guiding in TD & WG	Mrs K Williams	020 8398 1300
1st Thames Ditton Brownies	Mrs. Bronach Hughes	020 8398 1628
3rd Thames Ditton Brownies	Deborah Daoud	020 8398 5521
2nd Thames Ditton Rainbows	Nicki Sutherland	020 8398 4202
1st Weston Green (All Saints) Scout Group	Alan Nolan-Davies	0844 414 2826
1st Weston Green Guides (All Saints)	Mrs. Louise Lewis	020 8398 4843
2nd Thames Ditton Guides	Mrs. Bronach Hughes	020 8398 1628
1st Weston Green Brownies (All Saints)	Mrs K Williams	020 8398 1300
2nd Weston Green Brownies	Mrs J Epps	020 8395 0595
1st Weston Green Rainbows	Mrs Helen Hill	020 8398 3135
4th Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts	Alison Derrick	020 8398 0041
Dittons Scout Group	Laura Clarke	020 8398 3447
Coffee and chat (United Reformed Church)	Mrs. E. Barker	01372 467491
Emberbrook Trefoil Guild	Mrs. Adrienne Nealing	020 8398 5582
Friends of Bushey and Home Parks	Jean Smith	020 8977 9391
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chicken	020 8398 2932
Molesey and Dittons Neighbourhood Watch	Chairman: Pat Farmiloe	020 8398 2787
Parents and Toddlers(St Nicholas church)	Information	020 8398 7211
Ripieno Choir	Nick Harris	020 8399 7231
Surrey Bell-ringers	Nick Pattenden	Nick@FSLimited.com

CLUBS

Albany Motor Yacht Club	Secretary	01784 466651
Arts and Heritage Club	Carol Butcher	01932 867511
Claremont PROBUS Club	Mr. P. Collins	020 8398 3125
Claygate Bridge Club	Hon. Secretary	020 8398 1710
Colets Health & Fitness	Giordano Orsini	020 8398 7108
Dittons Skiff and Punting Club	Hon Secretary	07710 139417
Dittons & Hinchley Wood Royal British Legion	Hon Secretary	020 8398 6263
Ember Players (Drama) Ember Sports Club	Anne Segall	020 8941 4528
Ember Sports Club	Zenda Hedges	020 8398 7038

Ember Sports Club: Bowls	Sylvia Jones	01932 788701
Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Dr. David Cooke	01932 862841
Ember Sports Club: Tennis	Annabel Duncan	020 8786 6318
Esher Bowling Club	Roger Cooper	01372 468109
Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Esher Camera Club	Billy Buchanan	020 8398 3169
Esher 41 and Ex-Round Tablers' Club	Dr. R. Tudor-Williams	020 8398 0108
Folk Dance Club	Pam Phillips	01372 373745
Hinchley Wood / Dittons PROBUS Club	Geoff Francis	01932 867771
Long Ditton Cricket Club	Nigel Hardy	020 8398 8361
Long Ditton Garden Club	Heather Harvey	020 8398 2642
Model Railway Society (Hampton Court)	Secretary	01932 241224
Mothers Union (All Saints)	Jill Cotter	020 8398 4598
Old Cranleigh Rugby Club	Tony Price	07801 837129
Old Cranleigh Hockey Club	Simon Marshall (Men)	07801 737695
	Helen Hawes (Ladies)	07771 557900
River Club (BMYC)	David Walker	0870 460 3586
Rotary Club, Esher	Geoff Morris	01932 868454
Rubber Bridge TD Lawn Tennis Club	Val	020 8399 9972
Surbiton Croquet Club	Alec Thomas	020 8398 2391
Surbiton Golf Club	Secretary	020 8398 3101
Surbiton Hockey Club	Secretary	020 8398 2401
Thames Ditton Lawn Tennis Club	Chris Lewis	07770 562569
Thames Ditton & Esher Golf Club	Mark Rodbard	020 8398 1551
Thames Ditton Squash Club (Colets)	Dave Peck	020 8398 7108
Thames Ditton Cricket Club	Howard Frish (Secretary)	07947 561449
Thames Ditton Marquetry Group	Jasmine Berry	020 8398 4358

SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Ember Choral Society	Linda Bridges	020 8399 5402
Esher Recorded Music Society	Miss S. M. Garrat	020 8398 8541
Esher and Molesey Garden Society	Chris Walker (Sec)	020 8398 6651
Esher and District Amnesty International	Cherry Eddy (Campaigns)	020 8398 4377
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Lettings: Piotr Hennig	020 8398 5358
Long Ditton Youth Club	Toni Izard	07749 633973
Lynwood Allotment Society	Louise Flaig	020 8398 7704
Molesey and District Antiques Society	Linda Lambert	020 8398 1476
NADFAS (Decorative & Fine Arts) Kingston	Mrs. Valerie Windsor	020 8549 9967
Soroptimist International (Kingston District)	Secretary: Pat Harman	020 8390 3507
Thames Ditton Women's Institute (W.I.)	Secretary	020 8398 8615

OTHER

Cancer Research UK	Mrs. Vivienne Harris	020 8398 6787
Elmbridge Fairtrade Network	Judy Porter	020 8398 6401
University of the Third Age (U3A)	Hon Sec Anne Brown	01932 881633
Vera Fletcher Hall	Lettings: Helen Mason	08456 528 529
	Membership: Sue Morris	020 8224 0980

Please contact the Editor to amend these listings



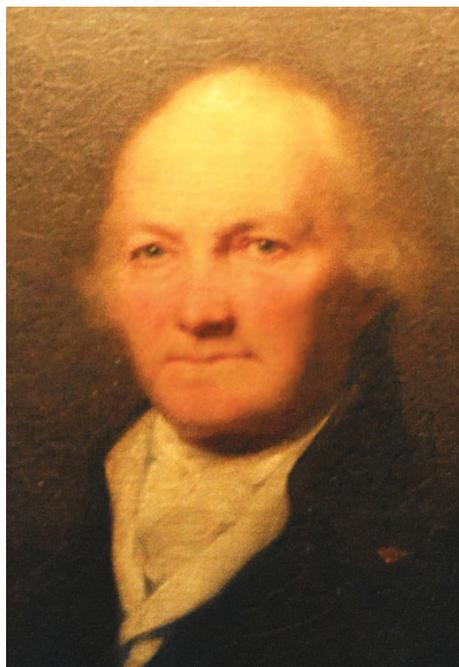
By Hook or Crook



I knew from Vice-Admiral Robert Stuart Lambert's will that portraits existed of his father and mother, who bought Weston House in 1798. I was unable to trace them. But lo! – an American gentleman who lately found my Lambert thread in a genealogy forum has them on his wall in Arizona. With the kind permission of owner Josh Friedman, here are (cropped) photographs of portraits of Capt. Robert Alexander Lambert RN and

his wife Catherine, attributed to young artist John Jackson, RA. The date would be 1804-5, the year before Capt. Lambert died. He was about 73 and Catherine about 53 at the sitting. Another descendant of their son Admiral George Lambert saw the thread and got in touch – he may visit Thames Ditton from his home near Leeds

Keith Evetts





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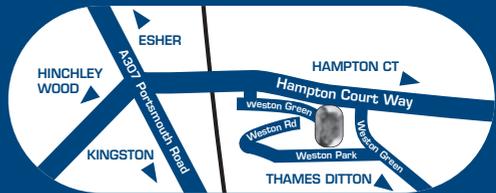
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