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THAMES DITTON TODAY

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

Published quarterly since Spring 1970

WINTER 2009

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Cover photo: *Church Walk in the Winter – taken in last
February's snow - Editor.*

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 Thorhill Road Pharmacy, 94 Thorhill Road, Thames Ditton. Or mail to Membership Secretary Peter Haynes at 6 Onslow Gardens, Thames Ditton KT7 0JJ. Thank you.

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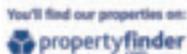
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THAMES DITTON & WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



About the Association

Founded in 1934 our Association is a strong, locally based non-party-political organisation concerned with protecting the amenities and furthering the interests of the inhabitants of Thames Ditton and Weston Green. We work to preserve and enhance the best in our attractive environment and the quality of life of everyone in our community.

Through regular meetings, social activities, our magazine and website we keep in touch with residents' views and we raise and spend funds for the benefit of the community, from tree and bulb planting to contesting unacceptable development projects.

With five Residents' Councillors we have a strong voice on Elmbridge Council working with other residents' councillors to ensure that decisions are based on the needs of local communities and on good management rather than on party politics.

Our Residents' County Councillor Peter Hickman represents our views at Surrey County Council.

President: Ann Levick,

8 Basing Close, Thames Ditton

Vice-President: Edward Rowe,

23 Portsmouth Avenue, Thames Ditton

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1 Boyle Farm Road, Thames Ditton 020 8786 6882

THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE

TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY AND TUESDAY 16 MARCH (AGM), AT 8.00PM

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News From the Residents' Association



18 September to 18 November

There are signs that the recession is beginning to bite in Thames Ditton. The off-licence in the High Street has closed and the fate of the one in Thorhill Road is uncertain. Membership of Colets is markedly down. The contentious High Street buildings failed to sell at auction, and other offices remain unlet. Shops in nearby towns report less footfall. Please, wherever you can, **support the small shops** in these villages that save the place from being mere dormitories and offices. There are perfectly good Christmas gifts to be had here!



Dog Control Orders

Elmbridge are considering legislation to require dogs to be put on leads in certain areas of all Elmbridge's publicly-owned green spaces; to exclude them from play areas and sports fields; to require owners to clear up their dog's mess from these green areas; and to prevent anyone from walking more than three dogs at a time. It appears that this follows a handful of complaints about dogs from members of the public. Two senior EBC officials, Ian Gayton and Hamish White, generously gave up their evening to explain the proposals at our Open Meeting of 17 November. It is good that EBC engage in consultation on these issues: some eighty per cent of the 3000 or more responses received so far from the public to their survey (ended 30 November) are opposed to the proposed

dogs may have to be kept on lead

control orders, and there was not one vote for the measures from some 65 lively residents attending our meeting. Apropos, we already have bye-laws against dog-fouling of our streets but they are not fully enforced: although dog faeces on our pavements exist, there has been not one prosecution or fine for dog mess in the whole of Elmbridge during the past five years. The officials reassured those present that the Council would be bound by the results of the public consultation, which they estimate to have cost some £5,000 and not, as stated at the meeting, 5000 officer hours.

Save our Surrey Community Hospitals

The trail of misleading statements, broken promises and decisions taken

behind closed doors by regional NHS authorities since the early 1970s continues, with Surrey Primary Care Trust cutting or closing beds at Cobham and Molesey without consultation, to go with cuts at community hospitals already apparent in Thames Ditton and Weybridge. The PCT is moving towards treatment in expensive major hospital beds then (often early) discharge to patients' homes with no intermediate care in lower-cost community beds closer to home, and no extra funding for nursing or other help in the home either. A group of concerned community representatives from Walton-on-Thames, Weybridge, and Thames Ditton has been established to campaign. Under the Chairmanship of Residents' Councillor Karen Randolph, Save Our Surrey Community Hospitals (SOS) will act as a focal point for this campaign to stop what appears to be a systematic closure of all community hospitals in Surrey.

County

Residents' councillor Peter Hickman reports that there is a strong likelihood of **budget cuts** of the order of 20% over the coming year or two. Meanwhile recent audits at Surrey County Council showed areas where the Council is failing to meet the Audit Commission's minimum requirements. Debate on the Frater report continues to be suppressed by the Conservative leadership.

Surrey is proposing to **withdraw the 514 bus**. This will seriously reduce the service from Thames Ditton to Kingston. Please make your views known to SCC – there is an online survey on www.surreycc.gov.uk

At long last Surrey are no longer prepared to defend the **highways contract** with Carillion and Ringway. It expires in 2010 and will be put out to fresh tender. Meanwhile please let our Highways Convenor, Andrew Roberts, know of potholes in your roads – we found that the county response was better when during the summer we put some thirty cases to them at once, and kept pressure on.

Surrey have now adopted reciprocal exclusion measures against residents outside Surrey using **Surrey's recycling centres**. Since 2008 Thames Ditton residents have been excluded by Kingston Borough from using nearby Villiers Road. You now have to show suitable proof of residence to use the centre at Charlton Lane at Shepperton (Leatherhead does not appear to be on the list of tips where identification is required).

Peter Hickman reports that SCC Highways Dept wish to reduce the amount of **signage** along our streets. This may be a welcome reorientation, but is counting against a request he had relayed for a roadside sign to the Catholic Church.

Parking

The Thames Ditton parking consultation has recommenced with an initial tour of the roads by two officers of Surrey County Council with Peter Hickman and Andrew Roberts. The officers are also visiting unannounced at various times of day to see the parking situation for themselves. They are looking first at measures to protect junctions and roundabouts from obstructive parking. They will then factor in some short term parking in the High Street and an element of curfew parking in



no place for shoppers

a few streets, particularly around the railway station. We have stressed the need for a simple uncomplicated scheme that is easy to enforce. The last attempt at a scheme was beset by intractable complications, and the more extensive the scheme the fewer parking spaces would be available overall, to an unacceptable degree. There will be public consultation, both informal and then the required formal stage, before any implementation.

Meanwhile our Elmbridge Residents' councillors together with Andrew Roberts and representatives from the High Street business community have continued to press the case for more sensible pricing in Ashley Road car park, meeting with the leader of the Council and the Executive

member for Highways and Transport. It is too early to predict whether, pending the outcome of Surrey's parking consultation, the outcome will be the common-sense solution or whether the Elmbridge cabinet will remain inflexible.

Pond

Your Weston Green Councillors Lorraine Sharp and Tannia Shipley argued strongly at the EBC Countryside Committee for definitive action to restore Milbourne Pond. Officials have cut (but not removed) damaging bullrushes and will repuddle the clay lining over the next few days. Other options are being explored for the future.

Planning

Always a great deal of work for our Planning Convenor Graham Cooke and for our councillors, the following are the main developments:

There is a new planning application for the **Olde Harrow** site. This appears to be of similar mass to the earlier application rejected by Elmbridge's planners and by the Planning Inspector on appeal, who said that the unsympathetic nature of the frontage buildings would harm the visual amenities of the immediately adjacent Green Belt. Residents accept the case for residential use of this site which is now in a sorry state, but proposals should take proper account of its situation and respect the locality in terms of size and design of buildings.

Permission to light another court at the **Ember Sports Club** was refused as the intrusion of light would adversely affect the reasonable amenities of adjoining residents.

Lower Green Residents collected over 3000 signatures on the petition to Network Rail seeking to prevent Vodafone from

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erecting a **phone mast** next to the path that runs from Lower Green Road to Esher railway station. There is an alternative site on the roof of the grandstand at Sandown Park that would be acceptable to residents (and to Sandown) if Vodafone can be persuaded to opt for it.

Street cleaning

This is getting much better following representations by Residents' Cllr. David Lowe. Despite the problems of Autumn and wet leaves, the Elmbridge street cleaning team now manually sweep under parked cars.

Crime

Burglaries are up over last year. Better security measures at the former Home of Compassion and increased coordination between the security company and our responsive neighbourhood police seem to have been effective in deterring intruders and vandals.

In mid-October, Adrian McCrae of **Harvest Lane**, described as a "professional thug" who was caught at the end of last year by Southampton police (on bicycles!) with a sawn-off shotgun and a pot of sulphuric acid apparently acting as a drugs enforcer, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment by Southampton Crown Court. A security van outside **HSBC's** branch bank at Winter's Bridge was robbed by two young men on foot at lunchtime on Friday 23 October. A 17 year old from London was later arrested and charged. At 13.35 on 3 November police, acting promptly and robustly, arrived in Thames Ditton High Street to execute a warrant under Dangerous Dogs legislation and enter the flat above 31 High Street whence they

removed two **Rottweilers**, leaving four puppies there. This followed reports of aggression by the dogs, said to have bitten at least two residents.

On the afternoon of 30 October a white male flasher age 25-27, height 5'6" approx, medium build, mousey hair of average length, smartly dressed, navy blue overcoat was spotted lurking in bushes in the Dell close to the slope that leads up to Ash Path. Police were called but the man had left when they arrived promptly. He was seen again flashing at the same place a few days later, in the morning. Call 999 straight away if you see another instance.



Doings

We have a new lollipop person at the school crossing by Thames Ditton railway station. **Andrew James**, who lives in the village, started his duties on 3 November and was acclaimed with universal pleasure by parents of young children at the Infants' and Junior Schools.

The Autumn **Good-As-New sale** at Esher College attracted over 400 people



Isabella, one of our younger members at the 75th anniversary party

and raised more than £3,500 for Cancer Research. Well done Alison Derrick, Pat Farmiloe and team.

On **Remembrance Sunday** Lorraine Sharp and Tannia Shipley laid wreaths at the war memorial in Weston Green on behalf of the Association and the Council respectively, and Martin Wilberforce and Ruth Lyon did likewise at the memorial on Giggs Hill Green where several hundred gathered for the occasion organised by Dittons Scouts.

On Sunday 27 September our **Association celebrated 75 years** since its founding, with a garden party for 120 volunteers, officers, and councillors past and present admirably hosted by HonSec Tricia Bland. We were delighted to see past Chairmen including Brian Moore who trekked up from Dorset for the occasion, with Audrey; and the sun shone on a beautiful day.

Seiko Ashida Wakefield, who has been teaching the Kumon approach to Mathematics (and Japanese) to children

from three years of age upwards, is retiring after 26 years. During the past nine, classes have been held at St. Nicholas' Church Hall. An article on her appeared in TD Today of Autumn 1993. Seiko has not managed to find anyone to take over her pupils in April next year: if you are interested, please call her on 01372 465381.

Dates

Village Christmas Fair – Wednesday 9th December 6pm onwards. The High Street will be closed to traffic. The Residents' Association will again provide a Christmas tree in the High Street.

Residents' Christmas party – Saturday 12th December at the Vera Fletcher Hall – tickets £29 from Lorraine Sharp on 07970 874 925.

Ember Centre members' Christmas lunch – 17 December. With singer and keyboard artiste Victor Hook and the Ember Centre dance team.

During the Autumn there was a stir among residents when Elmbridge removed the litter bins along Albany Reach. They explained that this was a trial: the idea being that if there were no bins, people would take their litter away. The bins were reinstated at the Association's request. **On 9 February our next Open Meeting** will consider the issue and possible further trials. Elmbridge officials Ian Gayton and Jenny James of Leisure and Cultural services will explain the thinking and invite discussion and feedback on this beautiful stretch of bank.

It remains to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a recession-proof 2010. And to commend to you the Christmas panto – see overleaf. Keep an eye on our website for current news and events.

www.residents-association.com



The Friends of Thames Ditton Hospital are putting on **Charles Court Opera's Christmas Pantomime** "Dick Whittington" on Saturday 16th January at the Vera Fletcher Hall in aid of the Thames Ditton Hospital Appeal. Young professional singers, with guest artist Simon Masterton-Smith from English

National Opera and D'Oyly Carte as Alderman Fitzwarren, scour the streets of Olde London town in search of gold (fat chance) in a terrifically funny production with toe tapping routines and musical treats from pop to opera. Tickets including a 3 course dinner are £32 from Karen Randolph on 020 8398 5005.

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Fringes of Thames Ditton



It's a long time since student days when I did the Christmas Post paired with Elgar's lovely great-grandniece. She went off to a different university, alas; but that faint bell is rung whenever our stately composer is in the news. And so he was in early November, when a new recording of 'The Fringes of the Fleet' was Classic FM's CD of the week and merited a spot on BBC 4's Today programme. I wouldn't be troubling you with this but for the fact that the recording company is seated right here in Thames Ditton, and, as one has come to expect in this village, top quality it is too. SOMM Recordings (Siva Oke Music Management) is its name, Riversdale Road its headquarters.

Siva Oke, born in Cyprus of a Greek father keen on mythology, trained as a pianist at London's Royal Academy where she received her performer's diploma, then studied with the famous British pianist Cyril Smith. But the life of a performer on the road had less appeal than hearth and home. She settled in Thames Ditton in 1977, marrying Keith Oke – a good Devonian name – where, in addition to bringing up children while Siva taught piano and worked for recording company Unicorn, they founded SOMM in 1995. Keith handles the administration while Siva puts her musical flair to the immensely enjoyable and satisfying task of selecting and recording a classical repertoire of scholarship and distinction. "Living and working together requires a



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SIR EDWARD ELGAR'S "THE FRINGES OF THE FLEET"
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the 1917 performance

sense of humour that fortunately we both have!" – says Siva, while her husband chuckles darkly in the background.

Managing a recording company that competes with the majors requires a fine sense of what the latter have missed, which will have appeal. SOMM has been very successful in identifying good original material and artists of talent and

finesse to perform it, recording it sympathetically and with meticulous quality. Consequently, SOMM's output meets with huzzahs from a serious musical establishment that can be highly demanding. Only last year, a recording of Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony conducted by the composer at the Royal Albert Hall back in 1952, tracked down and remastered by SOMM, won the Historic Archive Award of Classic FM. There have been other fine recordings, including some of Weston Green's international tenor Justin Lavender (TDT Summer 2007).

Elgar's forgotten 'Fringes of the Fleet' was based on short verses by Rudyard Kipling published in the newspapers in late 1915, when the Royal Navy's popularity was ebbing in the absence of the expected battle between our expensive Dreadnoughts and the German Fleet. Kipling underlined the contribution of the people's navy – the less glamorous naval auxiliaries: submarines, minesweepers, and fishing boats conscripted as coastal defence vessels. The Admiralty in the shape of Adm. Charles Beresford (famed for a vast fox-hunting tattoo on his back) asked Elgar to set Kipling's verses to music, and in 1917 the first public performances in the wartime music halls were an instant popular success. Elgar himself conducted the work at the Coliseum, and it went on tour.

But in November that year, Kipling asked that the performances be stopped. It is supposed that Kipling, made tender by his son John's death at Loos, was irked at his poems being used for popular war entertainment. Elgar was reportedly furious – but the work was performed

no more, and languished for ninety years until conductor Tom Higgins, a Surbiton resident, together with Siva, took an interest. Higgins prepared a new performing edition, basing it on manuscript copies and on Elgar's own recordings of 1917. Among music that Elgar wrote to popularise the war effort, Higgins considers 'The Fringes of the Fleet' to be his best work, albeit of a genre rare for him.

Now, it has to be said that Kipling's verses are not his best; nor is the Elgar, though mature and instantly recognisable, at the composer's sublimest heights. It was for music hall, after all. But Kipling writes that '*The game is more than the player of the game And the ship is more than the crew*' and so it is here. Moreover, the recording, with Higgins conducting the Guildford Philharmonic, is impeccable as we expect from SOMM, Roderick Williams' baritone is very fine indeed, and on the CD there is an engaging miscellany of other period pieces too. Among which, a beautiful, restrained rendition of Elgar's infinitely sweet and poignant Elegy for Strings will bring a tear to the eye of the most hardened. You have a very worthwhile recording to fill an interesting and unique hole in your Elgar collection, a good story to go with it, and another peek behind the unassuming front doors of Thames Ditton's villas where so much quality resides.

Keith Evetts

See: somm-recordings.com
Fringes of the Fleet is available from
Amazon

O Happy Days

Graham Cooke runs up the flag for Surbiton Grammar



Some years not much happens. The Bryan Adams' song 'Summer of 69' was actually released in 1984, a year that had become famous long before as the title of a novel by George Orwell. But can anyone recall any major events in 1984? Compare that with 1969. Led Zeppelin released their first album and the Beatles played their last concert. The first Concorde took to the air. British troops arrived in Northern Ireland at the start of 'the troubles'. Robin Knox-Johnston was the first person to sail round the world solo and non-stop. Richard Nixon became the 37th US President, De Gaulle resigned and retired to the countryside while Edward Kennedy took a wrong turn off a bridge at Chappaquiddick. The Woodstock Festival took place at a farm in upstate New York.

Need I go on? Oh yes – a couple more things. In June 1969 I sat my 'O' levels in a muggy school hall in Thames Ditton and while I was waiting for the results, a man stood on the Moon for the first time. The school hall in Weston Green Road is now part of Esher College but then it was part of Surbiton County Grammar School for Boys. Why was a school with Surbiton in the title in Thames Ditton? The answer lies in boundary changes that occurred in the early 1960's whereby Surbiton became part of Kingston, a London Borough, while the Surbiton Grammar was a Surrey school. Until 1965 it occupied the premises where Hollyfield



1969 – this could have been Graham; if he'd been born earlier, and in the USA; instead he was waiting for his O level results.

School is now, on the corner of St Mark's Hill and Surbiton Hill Road.

The premises to which the school relocated were newly built. Whilst Esher College has expanded considerably since the first buildings, anyone who knew the Grammar School would still be quite familiar with much of the layout. When my daughter Jenny attended Esher College in the late 1990's, I discovered that a number of the teachers who had taught me, were still there. But teaching

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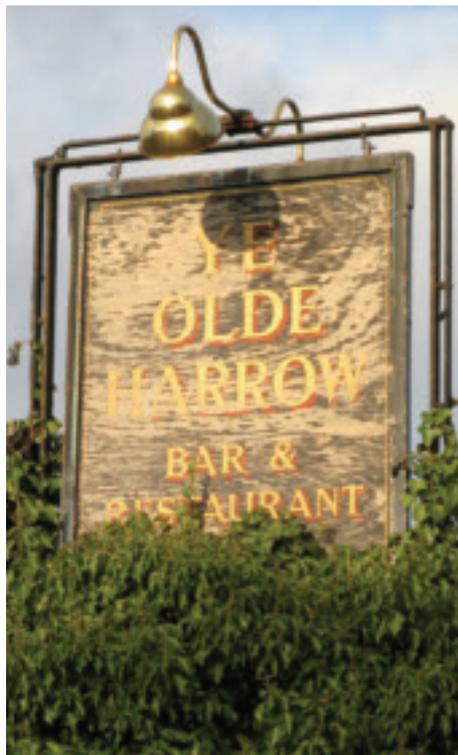
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methods have changed a little. Corporal punishment was quite common and although I narrowly avoided being caned on a number of occasions, being ‘slipperd’ was a fairly frequent occurrence. Until the sixth form, leaving the premises during the day was strictly against the rules. However quite a few of us felt the need and in free periods our usual haunt was ‘The Ferry Tea Rooms’, a café in Summer Road run by Aggie and Sis and known to us as ‘the Spoon,’ where the Alpona is now. Frequented by workers from Rola Celestion opposite, a bacon roll was 9d, that’s under 4p in today’s money. Burger and chips 1s 6d, that’s 7.5p; not bad eh?



fond memories of a youth well spent

If there wasn’t time for a trip to ‘The Spoon’, then the Dell was a popular spot. I like to think that we were a tidy bunch and never left our empty cigarette packets behind. Getting around the village required good local knowledge of footpaths and byways, to avoid running into a member of staff. One place to avoid in the fifth form was the Olde Harrow pub, this being the haunt of the sixth formers including the prefects. By schoolboy convention, only the sixth form could use the Harrow. If anyone suggests that under age drinking is a new phenomenon they are talking through their hat! On one occasion, a number of masters from the school raided the pub and a few of us had to escape through a back window. So sad to see the old haunt boarded up and decrepit.

In the late 1970s the School converted itself into the present college, went co-educational and briefly styled itself Esher Grammar. The crest and motto of Surbiton Grammar lives on as Cobham Rugby Club’s which was formerly known as ‘Old Surbitonians’ and carries on its great rugby tradition. The old school badge features the ‘Lion of St Mark’, presumably an association with St Mark’s Church close to the original school location in Surbiton. The translation of the motto ‘Animo et fide pergitte’ is, I think, ‘With Courage and Faith Persist’ but I’m quite prepared to be corrected, as whatever the school did achieve, it never managed to teach me much Latin!

Graham Cooke

Graham is paying his debt to society as Residents’ Association Planning Convenor.



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A Hundred Years of Guiding



In 1909 a group of girls gate-crashed the first Scout Rally at Crystal Palace – if boys could have an organisation then girls wanted one, too. With some reluctance Robert Baden-Powell let them tag on to the end of the parade. A year later, however, he formed the Girl Guides under his sister Agnes to give girls a ‘Voice in Society.’ Angry critics denounced ‘girl scouting’ as a ‘mischievous new development’, a ‘foolish and pernicious movement’ and an ‘idiotic sport’. This was a time when girls were not expected to run, jump, shout, or even lift their arms over their heads, still less to camp and hike. They do all of that now – And Much More!!

But as young men went off to fight during the First World War, skills that had been considered ‘unseemly’ and ‘boyish’ by those who were ‘anti-Guides’ became very useful to the nation, earning respect for women. The girls worked in hospitals and nursing institutions, and on farms, they made clothes and helped the war effort in any way that they could, e.g. collecting horse chestnuts for munitions factories, for they could be used to make acetone for the manufacture of cordite. In the Second World War, The Guide International Service (GIS) was formed and from 1944 some of the older Rangers and Guiders worked in refugee camps. In 1945 a team were among the first to enter Belsen concentration camp. They helped in the camp clinic and children’s hospital – their work in Germany continued until

1952. There are stories of Guide and Brownie companies being set up in wartime prison camps in China and Japan – in appalling conditions, Guiding gave the girls a focus and a way to cope with their everyday existence. In Britain, the RAF needed 15,000 cotton reels for a secret job – they asked the Guides to help, and within a week they had 42,000 reels!

Guides still work towards gaining new skills and acquiring badges, and have come a long way since those pre-1920 badges which included Electrician, Farmer, Air Mechanic, Rifle Shot, Cobbler, and Poultry Farmer. Now Guides have ‘Go For Its’ – and they choose what to do – there is something for everyone, whether it be Chocolate or Healthy Eating, Party Planning or Outdoor Pursuits such as abseiling, sailing, or skiing, World Issues or Science.

Baden Powell’s vision was to bring youngsters together regardless of class, race or background. The need to *include* and *adapt* was evident at the beginning. The first ‘inclusive’ group was formed at Queen Mary’s Hospital – it was so popular that it grew to be five Guides companies, six Brownie packs and a Ranger company. In 1910, a period when those with disabilities were generally shunned by society, a Guide group was formed for children with hearing and speech problems, followed a few years later by a group for blind children and a group for children with other disabilities.

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In Surrey now there is Woodlarks campsite – 12 acres – which provides accessible camping for people with all kinds of disabilities, and there a ‘Disability Awareness Challenge Badge’ – for Brownies and Guides to imagine life from a different perspective.

Guiding has always been involved with National projects e.g. the ‘Keep Britain Tidy’ campaign of 1981, and with environmental issues such as recycling. In war years it was ‘Make do and mend’; collecting herbs for hospitals, milk bottle tops, jam jars and aluminium cans. Now ‘re-cycling’ is something we are all encouraged to do. The latest challenge has been the ‘Changing the World’ projects. Girls have chosen which projects to support and in what way, whether it be raising funds for Railway Children (a charity to help runaway children), National Deaf Children’s Society, Woodland Trust, Help the Hospices, UNICEF or WWF.

Guiding reaches out beyond our own country and there are trips overseas to meet guides from other countries and cultures. Some Guides have worked with children in South Africa orphaned by AIDS, or Street Children in South America, and for younger Guides, their first international experience may be a jamboree.

Very much thriving, in 2009 GirlGuiding UK is the largest Youth Organisation in the UK, and, with 10 million members in 145 countries, the biggest organisation for girls and young women in the world. The Centenary Celebrations in Surrey started at Imber Court where over 3000 Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, Leaders and

Trefoil Members gathered. There will be centenary events all over England until 20 October 2010. Famous Guides may participate: H.M. The Queen, Lesley Garrett, Sally Gunnell, Dame Kelly Holmes, Natasha Kaplinsky, Angela Rippon, J K Rowling, Jayne Torvill and Carol Vorderman.

Baden-Powell handed the Guide Movement to his determined wife Olave who dedicated her working life to it. After he died, Lady Baden-Powell lived by grace-and-favour in apartment 18 at Hampton Court Palace from 1942 to 1974. It was known as ‘Hampers Hotel’ because of the number of visitors and guests – especially members of the Guiding and Scouting movements who visited the palace in uniform, and were invited to tea. She also visited Thames Ditton Guides in our Guide Hut on Church Walk.

Brownies, Guides and Rainbows in Thames Ditton have raised funds towards a new eye hospital in Ghana and for the Shooting Star Hospice, they have done sponsored walks and swims, picked up litter in the village and green spaces, sold cakes and organised tombolas, taken part in local fairs and fun runs. Over the last three years most of their fund-raising efforts have been directed at refurbishing the Hut, and when that is ‘sorted’, the girls will be able to raise funds for other projects. A sense of adventure and determination prevails. They camp here and internationally. Oh – and they have a lot of fun as girls together! A Centenary, yes; but Guides are far from a hundred years old...

Lesley Evetts

Lesley, a keen Guider, is part of the Memories team at Hampton Court Palace.

We See What We Want To See



It would be jolly useful to have a resident magician in the village. And, for a while, there was one. Then – he disappeared.

The delightfully named Jasper Maskelyne (b. 1902) was of the third generation of a family of magicians. After starting in the provinces, his grandfather John Nevil Maskelyne, with friend George Cooke, established their ‘entertainment of pure trickery’ in Piccadilly in 1873. When Cooke died in 1905 John Maskelyne partnered David Devant, now said by the Magic Circle –

of which the pair were founders – to be the greatest of all magicians. The famed and immensely popular ‘Maskelyne and Devant’s Mysteries’ lasted at St. George’s Hall in London until 1915. This ingenious Maskelyne also patented the coin-operated lock for public lavatories, magical in its own way in time of need, from which the phrase ‘to spend a penny’ derives. On his death the show was taken on by his magician son Nevil, who in turn became the first editor of ‘The Magic Circular’ and eventually President of the Magic Circle, and, with his own sons



Jasper does it again

Clive, Noel, and Jasper, kept the family entertainment going in London.

When Nevil died in 1924 Jasper's elder brother Clive became managing director of Maskelyne's as well as President of the Magic Circle. A history of the Circle, however, notes that theatre was not Clive's forté and in 1926 his brothers forced him to resign: he died two years later. Young, tall, debonair and handsome Jasper, although not a full member of the Circle until 1938, seems to have been more successful as a stage magician and was included in the Royal Variety Performance in May 1932 at the London Palladium.

In the mid 1930s Jasper quit Maskelyne's after a family argument and embarked upon a solo career. After initial acclaim his touring show ran out of steam and he appears to have got into financial difficulties. As part of the solution, he looked around for a convenient cottage within easy reach of London. Thames Ditton, with its tradition of homes for popular entertainers, was ideal. In 1936, with his wife and two children he rented Little Lodge in Watts Road and became a resident: but I cannot confirm that he joined our Association.

With the outbreak of war Jasper tried to get a commission that would make use of his rare skills as a magician. Initially the military were sceptical and he was not successful. However, in 1940 he succeeded in getting an interview with Churchill's scientific adviser through a family friend, Hendley Lenton, of 'Show Boat' at the Green in nearby Hampton Court. Call-up to the Royal Engineers' Camouflage Section ensued, which somewhat ironically has led to more

fame, if of questionable foundation, than his previous eminence on the stage! His wife and children were packed off to live in the Antipodes while Jasper, after a training course at Farnham, was posted to Egypt. Here, Capt. Maskelyne's task was to head the Camouflage Experimental Section under the overall command of the Head of Camouflage, Middle East, Geoffrey Barkas. In a wonderful example of British creative amateurism, a motley collection of painters, sculptors, cartoonists, and film people (Barkas had been a film producer between the wars) was set to reinvent the arts of concealment and deception deployed by the military since Troy. Barkas was a member of the Residents' Association, by the way – and a stalwart one too: he played a significant role in defeating the 1966 Joviel Plan to demolish half of Thames Ditton's High Street and replace it with a boxy brick shopping precinct. No wands were used in that campaign.

Our secret weapon was blown to the Germans by the Daily Mail of 13 April 1941: "*A famous illusionist, member of the world's best-known family of illusionists, has been sent to Egypt – to help make the British Army disappear.*" But the enemy was far from overawed by his pedigree. With field grey humour, their next publications scoffed at this news, quipping that "*the German army topped it all last year by making the British army disappear from Europe.*"

Now, Maskelyne's post-war fame stems from his authorship of a book under the irresistibly appealing title "Magic – Top Secret," which he published in 1949. In it he compares himself, as a fighting wizard, with Moses parting the waves and

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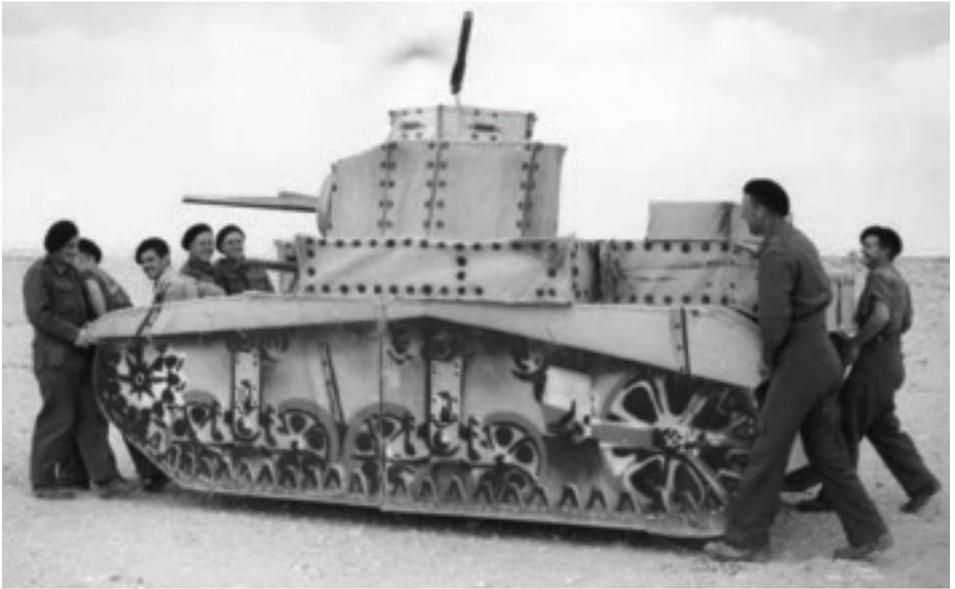
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Joshua making the sun and moon stand still. He goes on colourfully to convey how ‘Maskelyne magic’ deluded enemy bombers of Alexandria and the Suez canal on a vast scale, and enabled many other wonders to be performed by way of illusion. There is a duel with a leading Dervish to gain political advantage to enable a retreat, and a string of astonishing if Pythonesque concealing devices for special operations, escape and evasion. Jasper was always keen on his illusionist’s workshop (he had one in the back garden of Little Lodge). The whole is salted with endearingly *gauche* personal observations. A few pages after Maskelyne writes that it is a pity children grow into “snobbish, race-conscious things” we read that “Wops are born liars” and just after, that “Native evidence is so unreliable” with “hundreds of Wogs ready

and willing” to say whatever one expected (Wops being a derogatory term for Italians, and Wogs for natives of a swarthy complexion).

His story was subsequently much romanced by David Fisher, an American author, in a further book on our ‘War Magician,’ and in 2002, Channel 4 broadcast a TV programme on Jasper Maskelyne. A film was mooted. But meanwhile an Australian military historian, also a magician, has been painstakingly researching our man with help from surviving Maskelynes. In his published articles, Richard Stokes convincingly debunks the greater part of Maskelyne’s claims and plausibly argues, with evidence, that the war wizard’s book was ‘creatively’ ghost-written with the main aim of earning post-war cash in somewhat strapped circumstances. On reading Maskelyne and



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Fisher, one's incredulity bubbles over; but Stokes' systematic deflation is so deadly and contemptuous that some sympathy for Maskelyne is restored.

Where does the truth lie? For this reader, Maskelyne was just one of several talented men who brought their ingenuity and specialisms to camouflage and illusion under team-builder and organiser, Barkas. No doubt it was harder for a stage magician's ego to be submerged in a team that, once Maskelyne's wilder claims are discounted, did a thoroughly good job of camouflage – particularly at the battle of El Alamein, where my own father led a tank unit in the 7th Armoured Division. In the immediate aftermath of that victory, Churchill told Parliament: *“By a marvellous system of camouflage, complete tactical surprise was achieved in the desert. The enemy suspected – indeed knew – that an attack was coming, but when and where and how it was coming was hidden from him.”*

Maskelyne's showmanship was also used by the military both for educational purposes – teaching officers and the ranks how best to use their camouflage kit – and of course for forces' welfare in the form of magic shows. But our man preferred not to emphasise these aspects of his wartime exploits.

After the war, Maskelyne tried to resuscitate his touring show but with patchy success. It became seedier; his wife died and he remarried to the displeasure of his children; he reportedly accumulated large tax bills and sought solace in drink. Not long after his book issued, he emigrated to Kenya where, after some association with the police and the national theatre in Nairobi, he died in 1973. In 2002 – the year of the Channel 4 broadcast – the Guardian

of June 28 said: *“Maskelyne received no official recognition. For a vain man this was intolerable and he died an embittered drunk. It gives his story a poignancy without which it would be mere chest-beating.”* The Magic Circle's Magician of the Year award, first presented in 1970, is now called 'the Maskelyne' in honour of this amazing family of magicians.

Jasper Maskelyne wrote of the art of magic that it hinged upon engaging the audience's perceptions thus to manipulate them. We see what we expect to see, what we want to see. His greatest illusion may have been to induce so many, not least the entertainment people who came after, to believe his version of wartime events.

But then, aren't all our lives an illusion? At any rate, yours...

Keith Evetts

Footnote: this subject arose from an old issue of Thames Ditton Today in which Peter Hickman, current owner of Little Lodge, mentioned Maskelyne as a former occupant. While researching, I found that Maskelyne's Commanding Officer and Residents' Association stalwart Colonel Geoffrey Barkas spent his later years in the very apartment at Ditton Close where Margaret Briggs lives today. She edited this magazine for eight years. Now 93, she remembers being taken to a Maskelyne show as a young girl: “Rather good!” And, as time's carousel swings around once more, it turns out that one of her talented sons under his nom-de-plume is contemplating a film on... Jasper Maskelyne.

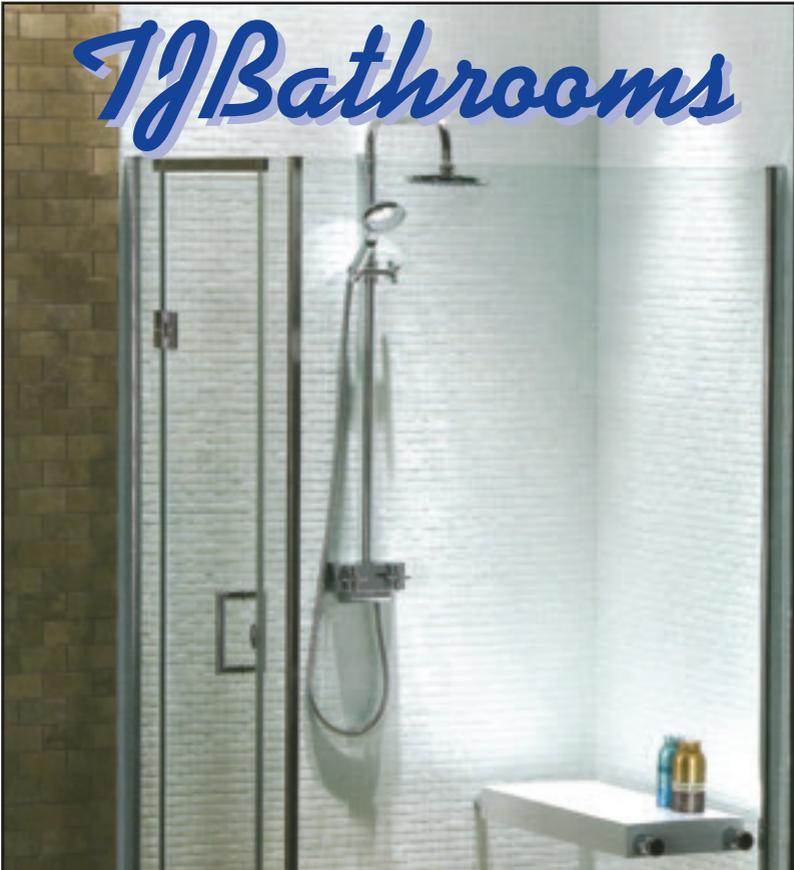
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Articles 1993-95 in Geniis Magic and at www.maskelynemagic.com : Richard Stokes
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
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This generosity has enabled us nearly to complete the first phase of restoration – do visit the church to view the new lighting. We now move to the next priorities: replacement of our unreliable heating boiler, and renewal of our electronic organ. Beyond that comes the churchyard, where for aesthetic and security reasons we wish to open up the view of the church, obscured mostly by fast-growing yews planted in modern times, and to improve footpaths and lighting. We shall preserve slow-growing ancient yews and conserve historic monuments within the churchyard, some of which are listed in their own right. We also want to remodel the area around the church porch to make it more accessible and more welcoming.



the new lights – photo by Derek Potts

How fast we can proceed depends on our fund-raising and the necessary planning procedures. Further fund-raising activities include a carol sing-along at 4.30 pm on 12 December, and a fashion show after Easter. Meanwhile a generous anonymous donor has offered to match other individual donations to the appeal, up to a certain limit. To take advantage of this, we need to raise a further £2,000-£3,000 in donations. If you would like your gift to be doubled by matching, please mark your gift **“Match Funding”**, and return it to the Parish Office as soon as possible. You can still Gift Aid your donation as well, so that we may reclaim tax.

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Embers Blaze Into Life Again



Modern technology has arrived at the Ember Centre. The donated laptops have entered active service and the first tranche of members are taking their first tentative steps to send emails, surf the web, store and edit their photos and explore the wonders of on-line auctions at eBay. The internet is a terrific resource for the elderly and less mobile – once they are helped to learn how to use a computer.

Trainees work at their own pace and each Monday morning have a half hour personal session in the quiet upstairs room with a designated trainer (led by Kathy Gregory) in a programme which has been individually tailored to them. For each student there is time to take stock of what they have just learned and to “take breath” before involving themselves in slightly less arduous brain exercises elsewhere within the Ember Centre.

This approach is particularly suited to many senior citizens, who are more than capable of absorbing the principles of on-line information and mail but feel that modern technology is all of the TV recorder “leave it to the grandchildren” complexity and requires an acute level of manual dexterity! Yet those who have already taken the plunge are rapidly realising that once mouse buttons have been mastered and keyboards understood, all the other learning steps are quite straightforward and make sense. Kathy and her colleagues must be congratulated on hiding much of the underlying



Maddy gets to grips

complexity and making the system easy to learn.

Thus far the training has concentrated on browsing the Web and email. All of those who have plucked up courage have been assigned email addresses so they are already able to communicate electronically with their wider circle of family and friends. In the next few weeks as trainees become more familiar and confident with their newly learned skills, some laptops will be located in the main hall so Ember Centre members can browse the web, and email, whenever they feel so inclined.

The initial generous funding came from the Friends of the Vera Fletcher Hall, the Residents’ Association and a TDGWRA officer who prefers anonymity. But I’m glad to say that after abandoning their misguided plan to close the Ember Centre, Elmbridge Council decided that



Hannah, Sarah and Sophie – Esher College volunteers at the Ember Centre

they would make a contribution at the Centre along the lines of other day centres in the borough. So Elmbridge has funded the first four laptops, a printer and the training staff while the broadband and WiFi facilities have come from the Vera Fletcher Hall Association.

That has freed funds to pay for more laptops as usage grows. And Helen Hewitt, the Ember Centre Manager, with Joy Woodhead for the Friends of the Centre are considering some other intriguing technology training plans. One of which – with the assistance of students from Esher College – will cover the wonders of mobile phones, texting and becoming a bit more familiar with the myriad features of modern phones...

who's got two left thumbs then?! The funding overall will also contribute to the arts and crafts and other lessons where physical co-ordination and fun has now been extended from Tai Chi to Line dancing and Tap dancing (titillatingly misread a couple of weeks ago as Lap dancing!) which, along with the American Smooth, the Ember Dancers will perform at the members' Christmas Party.

With over a hundred active members and an enterprising community in support, this worthwhile Centre is making a real difference to the productive lives of so many of our older residents. Long may it continue!

*David Lowe
Chairman of the Vera Fletcher Hall*

Walsingham Care

The new charity in Thames Ditton



the sale of the Home of Compassion has funded a new charity independent of its former Home.

As a local charitable Church Foundation the trustees of the Home of Compassion ran the nursing home by the river in Thames Ditton from 1981 until the building was sold to Caring Homes in September 2008. It was a Nursing Home for over 100 years after Anglican Nuns brought their work with the poor and elderly from the East End of London to Thames Ditton. The Church took over the administration following the demise of the Nuns and appointed local trustees to run the Charity.

The Home was adapted with up to 50 beds for the frail elderly but the trustees, despite a long struggle, were unable to raise the capital to modernize it to the latest care standards. The Charity Commission agreed that the trustees should sell the Home to a private care company and use the proceeds to set up a new local charitable fund. The Home's façade hid a much older house built in 1792 by Charlotte Boyle **Walsingham** and the name **Walsingham Care** was chosen for the new charity

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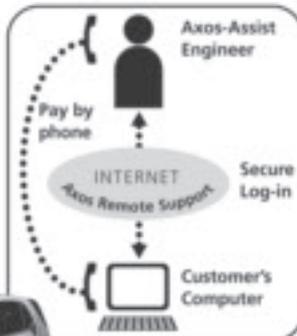
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The Charity provides financial support to people who are suffering from long-term ill health or disability, or in cases of terminal illness. It also aims to improve the quality of life for retired people and helps by providing grants in some circumstances. People living in residential or nursing homes can receive regular top-up grants towards shortfalls in their fees. Assistance can be given with the costs of care at home, or respite care in an approved Care Home, or in meeting costs allowing a rest or a short break to home helpers. We may also be able to help with the cost of equipment to enable people to stay in their own homes.

Who can apply?

Persons or relatives of persons who need financial help and live within a 5 mile radius of any point within Emly Deanery, Diocese of Guildford (the parishes of Claygate, East Molesey, Esher, Hersham, Hinchley Wood, Oatlands, Long Ditton, Thames Ditton, Walton on Thames, West Molesey, Weston Green, and Weybridge); or within 5 miles of the Boyle Farm roundabout in Thames Ditton; or if there is a family connection with the former Home of Compassion Charity nursing home during the years 1905-2008.

Most of the Charity's beneficiaries have limited means and we have devised a very fair system of calculating who is eligible for our assistance. Details are given on our website at www.walsinghamcare.org.uk where an application form can be downloaded. We sometimes accept applicants above the limits (which are reviewed annually) where there is a special need or a strong case for support can be made. Our criteria are reviewed to ensure that they meet both the needs of applicants and the resources of the Charity.

Supporting Walsingham Care

The Charity ran a Charity Shop at the Home for the last 10 years and this is now at 68 Bridge Road, Hampton Court, where further details and application forms for grants can also be found. The shop opens every day except Sundays and Mondays to raise funds for the charity by selling good quality donated goods and clothes.

In its new form Walsingham Care has given help and advice with grants to a number of local beneficiaries, former residents of the Home Of Compassion and eligible people. We have provided home nursing care, helped purchase equipment and supported the costs of care of local people through Princess Alice Hospice. As the former Administrator of the Home Of Compassion, I am providing continuity by administering Walsingham Care and you may contact me for help and advice on 020 8398 6774

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Friday 15 January 7.30 pm

Charles Court Opera presents

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Tickets £12.50

Saturday 16 January 7 for 7.30 pm

DICK WHITTINGTON

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Charles Court Opera return in style with some of the UK's best young operatic talent.

Tickets including three course supper £32 in aid of the Thames Ditton Hospital Appeal from Karen Randolph Tel: 020 8398 5005

Friday 26 February 8.00 pm

CONCERT: La Mariette Trio

Amy Tress (violin) Adam Crowther (piano)

Sophie Jagodzinska (cello)

Prize winning young musicians play solo and chamber works including Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata and Schumann's Piano Trio No. 2.

Tickets £10 (under 16 years free)

Friday 5 March 8.00 pm

Michael Lunts in

THE LAST BALLADE

A drama about the stormy end to the great love affair between Chopin and the writer George Sand.

The F major Ballade, Mazurkas, Nocturnes and the lovely Berceuse are performed live as part of the action.

"Spellbinding" – The Independent.

Tickets £10

Friday 19 March 8.00pm

Michael Friend Productions presents

ARMS AND THE MAN

Bernard Shaw's classic 1894 play set against the background of war between Bulgaria and Serbia.

This 'anti-romantic' comedy about the chocolate cream soldier was an original, witty attack on the popular heroic view of war.

Tickets £12.50

Friday 23 April 8.00 pm

Rodney Bewes in

THREE MEN IN A BOAT

(To Say Nothing of the Dog)

The star of "The Likely Lads" brings Jerome K. Jerome's classic story of three friends' trip up the Thames – how Harris got 40 strangers lost in Hampton Court Maze and other adventures.

Highlight of the Edinburgh Festival.

Tickets £12.50

YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

Saturday 13 February 2.30pm

Idolrich Theatre presents

CRIC THE CROC

A West African story about Cric, the exceedingly greedy Croc, who likes to keep the river all to himself. Captivating music, puppets and song.

A puppet show with bite!

For ages 4 – 9 years.

Tickets £6

Saturday 20 March 2.30pm

Noisy Oyster presents

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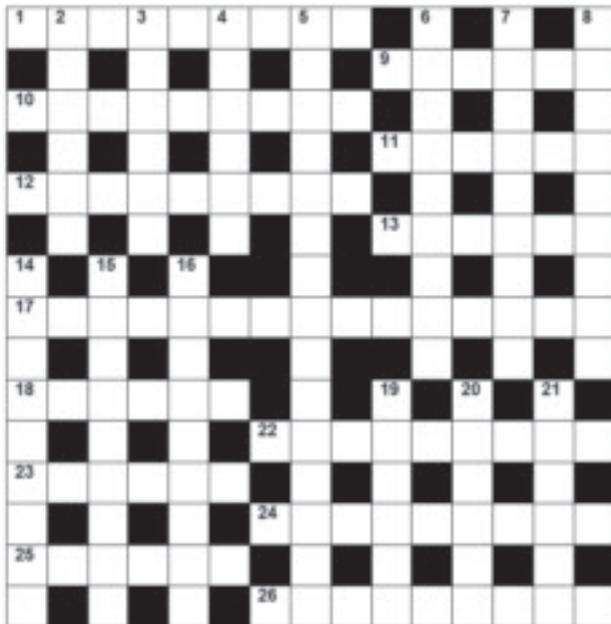
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for further details
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www.westongreenschool.org.uk

Winter Crossword

By Michael Jackson



A £5 Voucher for spending in any Thames Ditton or Weston Green shop will be awarded to each of the first three correct entries opened after the closing date of 7 February 2010

The completed puzzle (or photocopy) enclosing your name and address, with the envelope clearly marked 'Crossword Competition,' should be sent to:

Thames Ditton Today
Crossword Competition
6 Church Walk
Thames Ditton
KT7 0NW

ACROSS

1. Respighi's toyshop is... (9)
9. Big Ben is one I hear regularly (6)
10. Many a 5 down can – extempore (9)
11. Lobby or open-air room (6)
12. Experts in machinery, often civil (9)
13. A slipway ceremony (6)
17. Bus passing one at 60 or 65 (3,3,9)
18. Napoleon was to St. Helena (6)
22. I shall nip down the A3 to here (9)
23. A composer of Hungarian dances (6)
24. Tricked as a diversion (9)
25. Film-making here on Broadway? (6)
26. I try chest for treasures in Thames Ditton High Street (9)

DOWN

2. A nut from Maldon (6)
3. Butcher, smuggler, robber, hanged at York (6)
4. A Russian council (6)
5. As a practice stint, I must learn variations for me to perform (15)
6. ...and a scale with accidentals (9)
7. Dreaming I'm having a double gin (9)
8. A cone to be eaten, not played (9)
14. They swarm about for our well-being (9)
15. Crichton was praiseworthy (9)
16. The Green team are in accord (9)
19. Engrossed under canvas (6)
20. Sanctuary for ex P.M. off sick (6)
21. Cutter was a relics makeover (6)

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Solution to the Autumn Crossword

by Margaret Briggs



There were many entries with just one mistake, each for a different clue. Congratulations to those who sent in the first three correct ones opened after the deadline. Each wins a £5 Voucher for spending in any Thames Ditton or Weston Green shop.

Ralph Drayton
21 Angel Road
Thames Ditton KT7 0AZ

Mr. T. Eddy
46 Grove Way
Esher KT10 8HL

Mrs. Enid Gray
10 Camm Gardens
Thames Ditton KT7 0JA



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SERVICES, CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

Services

Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	Trudy O Keefe	01372 474555
Dittons and Weston Green Neighbourcare	Sue Mayes	020 8398 6714
Elmbridge Borough Council Community Support Services		
Information, Meals Services, Community		
Transport, Bus Permits		01372 474552/4
Elmbridge Community Alarm Service		01372 474560
Elmbridge Relief Carers Scheme		01372 474547
Ember Centre for the Retired	Mon & Thurs	020 8398 9870
	At other times	01372 474553
Esher and District Stroke Club	Ann Pollock	020 8398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Mrs Carole Roycroft	01372 463587
M.D.H.S. Household Services (& garden tidying)	Carolyn Smart (Manager)	01932 248533
Surrey Mobile Library Service		01483 517402
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	Mrs Heather Horler	020 8398 0364
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	Linda Hall	020 8941 4913
1st Weston Green Rainbows	Mrs Helen Hill	020 8398 3135
4th Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts	Alison Derrick	020 8398 0041
Dittons Scout Group	Keith Berry	020 8398 3447
Coffee and chat (United Reformed Church)	Mrs. E. Barker	01372 467491
Emberbrook Trefoil Guild	Mrs. Adrienne Nealing	020 8398 5582
Esher Floral Art Group	Mrs. M. Dingle	020 8398 3943
Friends of Bushey and Home Parks	Mrs. Julie Cohen	020 8943 2017
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chicken	0208 398 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	01784466651
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	020 8398 1642
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	Mrs. Pauline Wareham	020 8979 8977
Ember Sports Club: Bowls	John Garland	01932 220221
Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Dr. David Cooke	01932 862841
Ember Sports Club: Tennis	Margaret Robinson	01372 842401
Esher Bowling Club	Roger Cooper	01372 468109
Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Esher Camera Club	Billy Buchanan	020 8398 3169
Folk Dance Club	Pam Phillips	01372 373745
Hinchley Wood / Dittons PROBUS Club	Ken Thomas	020 8398 0526
Long Ditton Cricket Club	Nigel Hardy	020 8398 8361
Long Ditton Garden Club	Mrs. Ann Allen	020 8398 1718
Model Railway Society (Hampton Court)	Secretary	01932 241224
Mothers Union (All Saints)	Val Lomax	01932 860344
Old Cranleigh Rugby Club	Tony Price	07801 837129
Old Cranleigh Hockey Club	Eds Copleston (Men)	07775 940703
	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
Yoga for Health Club	Mrs. Celia Rowe	020 8398 2700

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	Julia Presland (Sec)	julia@mulcott.fsnet.co.uk
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Lettings: John Morgan	020 8398 3049
Lynwood Allotment Society	Barry Jordan	0776 282 5041
Molesey and District Antiques Society	Linda Lambert	020 8398 1476
NADFAS (Decorative & Fine Arts) Kingston	Mrs. Valerie Windsor	020 8549 9967
National Trust: Richmond Association	Membership Secretary	020 8894 2972
Soroptimist International (Kingston District)	Secretary: Pat Harman	020 8390 3507
Thames Ditton Women's Institute (W.I.)	Secretary	020 8398 8615
Thames Valley Amateur Radio Transmitters Society	Chairman	01483 284279

OTHER

Cancer Research UK	Mrs. Vivienne Harris	020 8398 6787
University of the Third Age (U3A)	Ken Kingham	020 8979 8053
Vera Fletcher Hall	Lettings: Helen Mason	08456 528 529
	Membership: Sue Morris	020 8224 2536

Please contact the Editor to amend these listings



The origin of the phrase “by hook or crook” is that in days of yore, citizens were allowed on the lord’s demesne to collect firewood from the small stuff that could be cut with a billhook or dragged down with a crook; and it came to mean “by one means or another”. Later, our school scrapbooks almost inevitably contained some unoriginal friend’s signature with “by hook or by crook, I’ll be last in this book,” and so the phrase has also acquired connotations of last-minute expediency.

Despite my efforts to gather in pieces from readers for this last page by hook or crook, particularly rants couched in civilised, literate and good-humoured terms, there have been almost none sent in since the egregious Fortescue-Smythe wrote on parking (I must goad him again). You are evidently contented villagers all, with no grumbles...

So I’ll use the page. Firstly to apologise for some errata between proof and printer in the potted history of the Association in the last issue. If you want to write in corrections: the page transition from p18 to p19 should have read “*The Association has always been eager to retain a mixed economy as part of the character of Thames Ditton...*” The page transition from p29 to p31 should have read “*As of 2009, at least forty other Residents’ Associations around the country are now registered with the Commission.*” These and other minor errata have been corrected in the version that may be downloaded in full from our web site’s ‘about’ page. It will be updated from time to time as more detail of the history of the Association becomes available.

When I was coerced by You-Know-Who into editing this organ I resolved that it

should be rather more about these villages today, than about Thames Ditton of yesteryear. So you’ve had more current news and features. Many readers, however, have asked for some articles on local history like those that featured in the magazine in the 1970s and 80s. Over the past three years I’ve approached several people with knowledge of local history, and suggested they write for the magazine, but none of them did. The invitation stands.

I’m no historian. As a schoolboy I was grabbed more by the present than by the past. But now I have more history myself, the subject has become rather more interesting! Researching the civic history of the area has fired me up and so, *faute de mieux*, henceforth I’ll inflict local history stories on you myself. I don’t want simply to regurgitate work that’s been published here in the past. Happily there are quite a few stories that even proper historians like C.R.S. Saunders, T.S. Mercer and P. Burchett missed because they did not have the advantage of digital archival material online.

And finally, a Merry Christmas to all from your volunteer editorial team: Verity Park (advertising), Guy Holman (designer), George Cammack (distribution) and me. A particular tribute to our wizard crossword-setters, whose average age is 89. They continue to be of national class – one winning another prize from the Daily Telegraph only last month. And our thanks to the many who help us with advertising, stories and distribution. It’s a good deal of work, but we hope you agree it’s worth doing.

Editor



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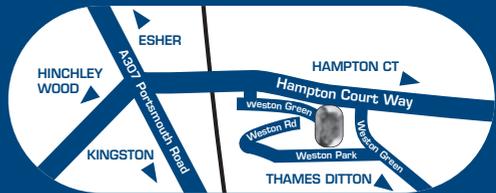
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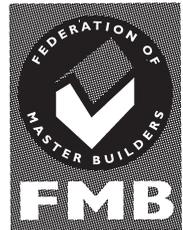
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