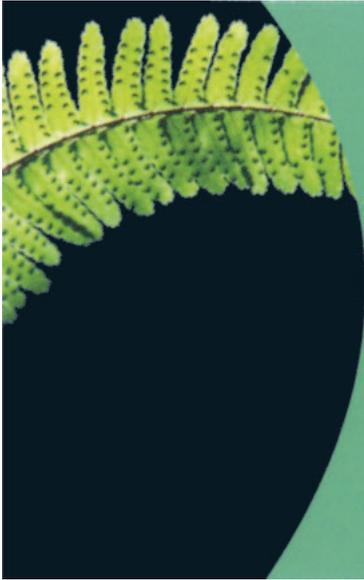


WINTER 2011

THAMES DITTON — TODAY —



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THAMES DITTON TODAY

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

Published quarterly since Spring 1970

Winter 2011

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Cover photo: *All Saints Weston in last Winter's snows.*
Photo by Keith Evetts

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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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.

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News From the Residents' Association



22 August – 17 November

Proposed Boundary change

Our thanks to all those residents and organisations who wrote to the Local Government Boundary Commission concerning their proposal to split Weston Green down the middle for county voting purposes. The results of the public consultation are unequivocal. ALL the one hundred and thirty-five submissions concerning Weston Green (from 149 individuals) objected to the proposal. Objectors included all the borough councillors for Weston Green and for Thames Ditton, among whom two former Mayors of Elmbridge; a Hinchley Wood councillor and our County councillor. Both the Anglican and the Catholic churches objected to the proposals, as did Weston Green school and the Chair of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee for Weston Green.

There were NO local submissions in favour of the LGBCE proposal. The majority of respondents supported an alternative, viable proposal from the Association which meets the Commission's criteria without dividing the community. We now look to the Commission to honour their statement that local people know best: their decision is expected in mid-January.

Parking

Thames Ditton residents may be weary of this subject. After five years of

consultation and argument that at times bitterly split the community, fairly minimal proposals were adopted. Nobody is entirely satisfied and everybody has a different, strongly-held view on what might be better. Following the Association's Open Meeting in November there is to be a renewed look at the question of restricted parking bays in the High Street (along the lines of Winter's Bridge), proposed by Residents' Councillor Ruth Lyon, who with Honsec Tricia Bland, Highways Convenor Andrew Roberts and County Councillor Peter Hickman will again sound out High Street retailers in the first instance. If retailers agree to pursue parking bays, then others, particularly residents and offices in the High Street, will be fully consulted in turn.

The problem is that despite our success in halving charges in the car park, and despite improved signage to it arranged by our councillors in October, it is rarely more than one-third full; while the High Street is fully parked up by all-day parkers. Casual shoppers, who like some other categories of user would prefer to avoid the slight inconvenience of the very cheap car park, can find no easy place.

The risk is that as parking bays need approval by Surrey, who require them to be enforceable, then once established they will make the High Street further prey to traffic wardens and an eventual

resurgence of pay-and-display. We were successful in seeing off pay and display this year. But though it may be dead for the present, it does not have a stake through the heart.

A further consideration as we go to press is that the yellow lines in and near the High Street which the council's contractors were supposed to have implemented, but haven't, will in effect remove at least a dozen spaces where drivers currently park, but shouldn't. That will increase pressure on remaining High Street spaces.

Meanwhile Basingfield Road residents still await the promised curfew parking along one side; and in Weston Green frustrated residents await the long-delayed yellow lines across the Commons, around the danger spots in the Woodlands, outside Imber Close and opposite at Carleton Close.

Surrey coups

Disarray in Surrey's parking strategy illuminated an extraordinary week in September when first, Deputy Council Leader David Hodge (Conservative, Warlingham) resigned, then Ian Lake (Conservative, Weybridge), the architect of the pay and display fiasco, was ousted. When the party acts it is noted for doing so with ruthlessness and in the same week, Cllr. Hodge was chosen by the party caucus as Leader, and Council Leader Andrew Povey (Conservative, Waverley Eastern Villages) was in turn ousted. Cllr. Hodge then announced a new Cabinet – with Cllr Lake restored within it – and the deposed Povey commented publicly that it comprised “*six men, four*

women, one known gay and no PhD” and wouldn't have been his choice. He later apologised. The electorate has no direct say in the appointment of the county's Leader.

Cllr Hodge immediately announced the end of the pay and display policy. What happens to the £2m of taxpayers' money in the contract for the meters is not yet known. We wish the new leadership well, and hope that from now on they will truly consult residents *before* adopting policies in their small caucus.

Street lights

Outside the Conservation Areas, installation of the new lights continues in fits and starts. Inside our Conservation Areas, Surrey as expected proposed a mix of standard 'modern' lamps, and the swan-necked variant dubbed by observant residents 'The Triffid'.



*the "Triffid" may be an object of affection
in 30 years time...*

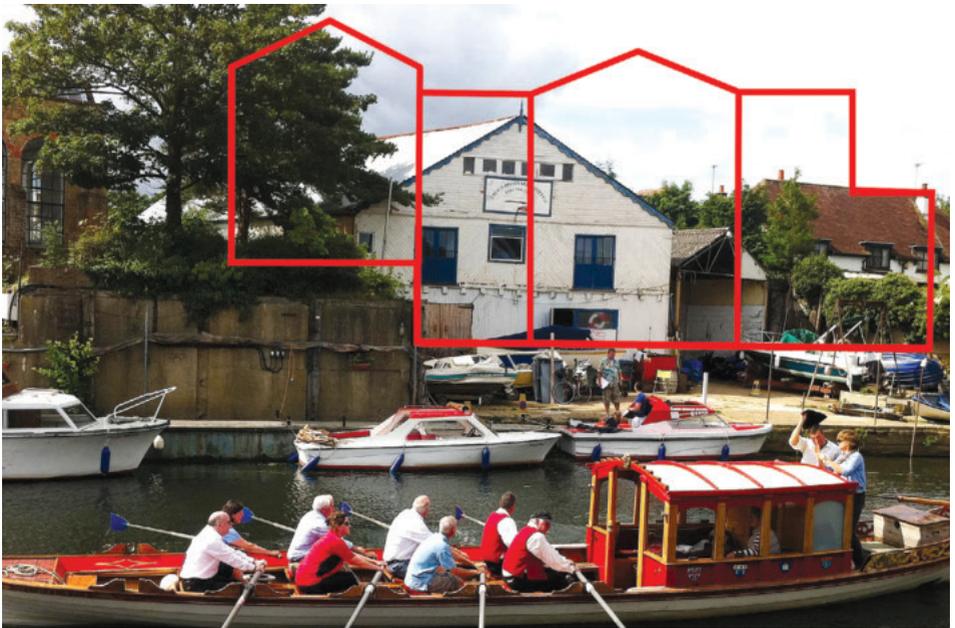
Elmbridge's Heritage team has responded that in the Giggs Hill Green area modern lights are acceptable throughout. In the Thames Ditton village CA there should be 22 modern lights in Church Lane, High Street, and Watts Road, while the proposed 17 replacement swan necks in Ashley Road and Church Walk must be of a better design. In the Weston Green CA the 5 replacement swan necks in Weston Green must be better designed, and SCC must add Alma Road and Chestnut Avenue, which they had omitted altogether! There is a pause in bureaucratic and budgetary skirmishing while Surrey's contractors look at improvements to the 'Triffid' design – basically, this is understood to be mounting a smaller, less top-heavy luminary on the swan neck.

Planning

The Association is deeply concerned by the implications of the government draft planning reforms – see Ruth Lyon's article on p. 17. We are in good company. Meanwhile our officers and councillors have continued to put in many hours in support of residents who object to overdevelopment.

An application for demolition of **Taggs boatyard** and a house on Riversdale Road, to be replaced by a very large and inappropriate four-storey building of boatyard, offices and seven flats, was made by **PRC Group Surbiton** acting for a partnership called **New Thames Ditton Developments Llp**.

Although it has a UK address the latter is wholly run by two individuals



Taggs – resident Craig Williams superimposed the outline plan on the present scene to give you an idea of the overscale development proposed

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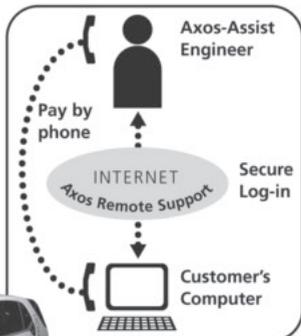
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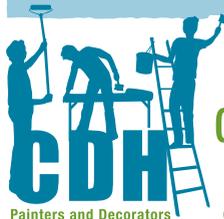
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ordinarily resident outside the UK each of whom has registered a company in the Marshall Islands, a Pacific tax haven, which companies make up the remaining part of “New Thames Ditton Developments”. Following several objections, the application was withdrawn. A further application is likely.

There were 30 objectors to the latest application to develop the **Harrow**. Elmbridge refused permission as the proposal had not overcome previous reasons for refusal and would result in harm to the character of the area and the street scene, including the adjacent Green Belt, due to the bulk, scale, and cramped form of development, inappropriate and out of keeping with the area.

The developers of the **Cottage Hospital** site in Weston Green Road lost their appeal against Elmbridge’s decision to refuse planning permission. In dismissing the appeal, the Planning inspector noted that “there may be other design solutions for the site which better meet the density requirements without harming the local character.”

A second application for six houses to replace one at **31 Embercourt Road** was refused on the grounds that its scale, massing, design and inadequate rear garden space made for a cramped development out of keeping with the area and would prejudice the value of the open space previously known as ‘the paddock’ and views from Hampton Court Way, against several of Elmbridge’s planning guidelines.

The Association is in favour of a variety of housing in the village including smaller units – but we will support residents who object to overscale or high-

density overdevelopment irreversibly threatening a road’s character.

High Street improvements

Please see Tricia Bland’s article on page 31 for the latest on Christmas lights. By the time this issue appears, the new lights should have been ceremonially switched on by TV’s “Downton Abbey” cast member Lesley Nicol, who plays Mrs Patmore.

Our thanks go to Francine Brooks and Paula Tennant at Maison Bleu for the wonderful display of blue, white and yellow winter pansies at the Boyle Farm roundabout to follow the summer geraniums; and to John Lyon who has planted another 500 spring bulbs around Thames Ditton and Weston Green. Andrew Roberts will shortly be erecting the Christmas Tree, which is this year supplied courtesy of Mike Dandy of the Swan.

More can be done to make the High Street prettier, particularly during the summer months. The new Elmbridge Core Strategy contains the line: “At Thames Ditton and Hinchley Wood shopping centres, measures will be supported that improve their environments and their individual roles as valued local centres.” It has lately become apparent that of some £600,000 of taxpayers’ money which Elmbridge has spent on sprucing up High Streets in the borough, none has been spent on Thames Ditton or Weston Green (another £400,000 is apparently available). It may well be that requests have to come from local businesses. Funding has included empty shop front improvements and signage for businesses in Walton and Weybridge, Esher and Molesey, plants

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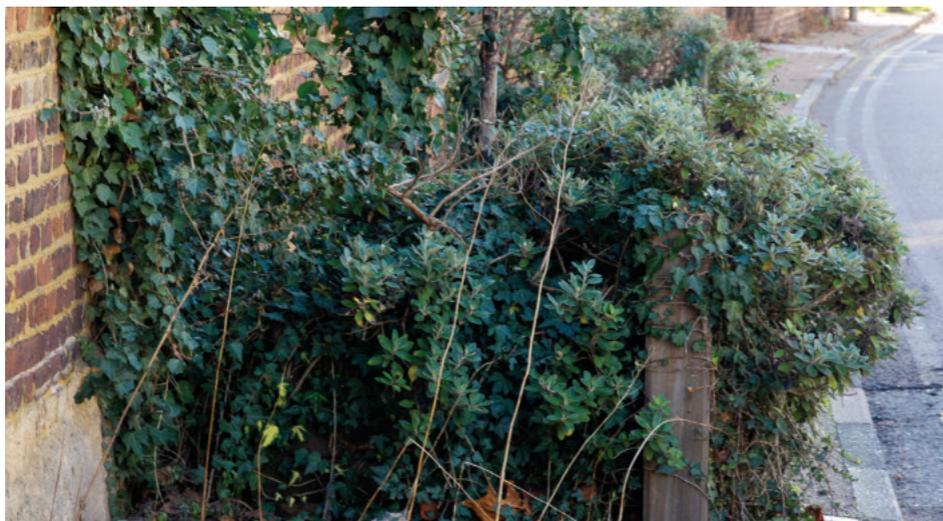
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several derelict planters in the High Street

and planting in Hersham and Cobham and street furniture in Walton and Claygate.

One candidate for ‘sprucing up’ could be the Post Office, about which several residents have expressed concern for its appearance and future.

Further, while the council funds and maintains planters and hanging baskets in most other areas – including 40 hanging baskets and 10 troughs in Walton, 60 baskets and 6 troughs in Cobham, and 53 baskets, 10 troughs in Weybridge – no baskets or planters are funded and maintained by the council in Thames Ditton or Weston Green. At the Open Meeting in November our councillors were asked to investigate and report on how we should go about getting our share.

High Street premises with wheelee bins are asked kindly to make sure that they are removed from the High Street to within the curtilage of the properties concerned, within a day of emptying by

the contractors. At present, several bins are being left for days where they are unsightly and obstructive. Also, shoppers are asked not to put live fag-ends in litter bins not equipped for them – retailers have had to put out an occasional fire started in the bins that way. Thank you.

Libraries

Surrey intends to close several smaller libraries in the county unless volunteers take over their staffing: this is ‘Big Society’ at work. The spin is breathtaking but one ironic soul managed to describe the policy as “cutting edge” in a PR document! There is an online petition to oppose this at <http://petitions.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/>

For the present, our well-used Dittons Library does not seem to be under threat. But it will surprise few if the county leadership reverts in a year or two with the line that the policy has been ‘so successful’ that it will be extended to other libraries.



Christmas shopping in the High Street

Snow

Our 'Snowman' scheme continues to grow. With funding from Residents' Councillors Sandra Dennis' and Tannia Shipley's local allowances for community schemes, membership secretary and Head Snowman Peter Haynes has acquired 12 more snow shovels and is setting up additional road groups. There are new groups in Church Walk and Ashley Road (two through routes for pedestrians in snow) and in Weston Green, with four shovels for future deployment or as spares.

Doings and Dates

Congratulations to the staff and volunteers of **Thames Ditton Centre for**

the Community which has won an award presented at the House of Lords for its 'all ages' approach. It is wonderful to see the Hall and the Centre thriving and honoured after long years in which we had to defend their continued existence against the Conservative leaders in Surrey, who tried to sell the Hall to developers, and in Elmbridge, who tried to close the Centre.

On **Remembrance Sunday** Councillor Ruth Lyon and Martin Wilberforce laid wreaths for Elmbridge and the Association respectively at the war memorial at Giggs Hill Green, while Councillors Tannia Shipley (for



Christmas Pantomime “Beowulf” sponsored by Dairy Crest on Saturday 14th January at the Vera Fletcher Hall in aid of the Thames Ditton Hospital Appeal. A smash hit which Time Out rated as four star entertainment. Tickets including a 3 course dinner are £33 from Karen Randolph on 020 8398 5005.

This issue may arrive too late to remind you of the Christmas Fair (evening of 7 December) and the

Beowulf as never before

Elmbridge) and Lorraine Sharp (for the Association) laid wreaths at the war memorial at Weston Green.

Back issues of **Thames Ditton Today** from its beginning in Spring 1970 have now been bound and made available in the reference section of Dittons Library as a permanent local historical resource for all. The binding was eighty percent funded by a grant from Surrey County Council. The Association has funded electronic scanning of back issues which is three-quarters complete. When finished, the files will be made available to the Surrey History Centre and will be downloadable from our website.

The Friends of Thames Ditton Hospital are putting on Charles Court Opera’s

Christmas Party (10 December). Details were in the Autumn issue – call or look at our website if you need last minute information.

And lastly: we may be living through a financial Blitz, but it should draw us closer together. Do try to do some of your Christmas shopping in the village – from wonderful cakes, via jewellery and many gifts, to subscriptions to Colets and excellent fresh deliveries from Paulls. With thanks to all our advertisers, our distribution team, and the many who contribute positively to life in this community, we wish you all a **happy Christmas – and good luck in 2012.**

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Planning Reforms – The Threats



Why the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework is a threat to our Thames Ditton and Weston Green environment.

This September your Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents’ Association joined the National Trust, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Daily Telegraph and Simon Jenkins writing in the Guardian and the Times to object to the government’s proposals to change the present planning system to make it more favourable to “economic development” – a plan described by Conservative Waverley Council as a “developers’ charter”. Joining these august bodies, we opposed the draft document replacing the present system which has grown up over 50 years and which through its planning policy guidelines provides clarity and checks and balances to planning development.



protection for this attractive shop would be lost

The draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the removal of Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements will remove the present protection for vulnerable sites in Elmbridge – not just in the Green Belt but in our towns, villages, urban open land, playing fields, flooding, heritage and conservation areas and High Street shops converted to residential use.



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The Green Belt is at risk – eg land at Sandown Park

The present planning policies provide clear guidance on Green Belts – less open to question than the more general statements in the NPPF. Contrary to the Government’s claims that the Green Belt is safe, the omission from the draft NPPF of any reference to the fact that *“the quality of the landscape is not relevant to the inclusion of land within a Green Belt or to its continued protection”* is typical. Instead of the present “general presumption against inappropriate development” in the Green Belt the NPPF states that “inappropriate development is harmful” but does not define what “inappropriate” or “harmful” means. The use in the draft of the words “building” and “engineering operations” open up development in the Green Belt in ways that would be restricted under the present system. We have been warned.

Threats to Urban Open Land – Protection of Open Spaces eg Thames Ditton Tennis Club

The approach of the NPPF to protection of open space includes provision for development if the *“need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss”*. This is very much weaker than the present policy which states that open spaces of value to a local community should be protected and the loss of such open space could only be allowed if it can be exchanged for other land of the same quality and accessibility. In the battle to save Thames Ditton Tennis Club from being

sold to developers for housing the protection afforded by the present policy was critical and this protection is now lost.

Historic Environment eg Picton House, High Street, a listed building

In relation to the historic environment there is a change from *“preserve and enhance”* to a situation where applications are only deemed unacceptable if they cause *“substantial harm”*. It is usually the cumulative impact of development which cause minor or moderate harm that irretrievably damages the historic environment. Your Residents’ Association successfully opposed plans to build a house in the garden of Picton House which involved a new entrance breaching the old listed wall. It is by no means certain that the new rules would provide this protection.

Retail shops in High Street eg 30 High Street now Adiva

The NPPF undermines the protection for land for business and employment. In areas like Elmbridge where residential development is much more lucrative, we need policies to protect shops, businesses and employment in our shopping areas. When the Inspector dismissed the appeal for a change of use from shop to residential at 30 High Street, he said the proposal would adversely affect the vitality and viability of the Thames Ditton village centre contrary to Government planning guidance advice. This protection would be removed under the Government’s proposals.

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Flood Risk eg flood plain between Summer Road and Riversdale Road

The present policies have been successful in delivering the necessary guidance required for flood management in planning. The NPPF provides little strong guidance on where to build or how to mitigate flood risk. There are no definitions for flood risk. Many parts of Thames Ditton and Weston Green lie in areas of flood risk and present policies protect residents from new building in the flood plain which could cause flooding elsewhere -through displacement – into homes which previously did not suffer flooding.

Town Centres eg Esher and Walton

The need to maintain and regenerate town centres is a consistent and widely supported aspect of planning policy. Out-of-town retail parks undermine the economic viability of town centres. The NPPF fails to include clear and unambiguous guidance to ensure that town centres remain the first choice for retail, leisure and offices and that the sequential test should continue to require applicants to give priority to town centre sites.

Brownfield Development, eg the former Inland Revenue Offices, Lynwood Road

The loss of the brownfield target will lead to a dispersal of development to “easy to develop” greenfield sites. This will prejudice the regeneration of sites within urban areas which combine the benefits of improving the local

environment and maximising the utilisation of existing infrastructure.

Housing shortages

The proposed Bill will do nothing to alleviate the real need in housing – the provision of affordable houses. Developers will always seek the cheapest land on which to build high value houses and it is primarily the lack of finance which is the cause of the lack of new houses and not any shortcomings in the planning system, as the Government claims. Nationally, developers have planning permission for around 300,000 houses which they are not implementing.

Conclusion

The National Planning Policy Framework needs to be redrafted to balance the interests of the community and the environment with the needs for economic development. The draft NPPF will compromise not only the countryside environment but that of our towns, villages and suburbs. Unlike neighbouring Conservative councils the response of Elmbridge Council to the Government’s consultation was frighteningly complacent and they seem to think that there is little to worry about. Your Residents councillors attempted to stiffen the Council’s response but with little success. Let us hope the Government takes on board the constructive comments made by so many organisations across the country.

Councillor Ruth Lyon

Ruth has 38 years of invaluable Council experience defending the interests of Thames Ditton and Weston Green in the arcane but vital matter of planning.



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Before the summer is completely forgotten think about

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For more information on help with this and other chronic conditions visit the Homeopathy page on www.clinicofnaturalmedicine.com or call Judith von Bradsky MLC Hom MARH for an informal chat on 020 8398 6389.

The Scandal

Part 3: the aftermath



After a trial in excoriating detail, the charge against Rev. Wilfred Speer of habitual drunkenness, to the great scandal and reduction of his congregation, had been proved. In June 1841, Sir Herbert Jenner, presiding over the Court of Arches, sentenced Wilfred to suspension from office without benefit of the living for a minimum of three years. To resume office, he had to produce a certificate from three beneficed clergymen, that he had been of good conduct during that time. He never did so.

The sentence was ordered to be displayed on the church door. The public humiliation of Wilfred Speer, and by extension his powerful father and patron William, was complete. The village would never be the same again.

Schism with Claygate

Once it became apparent to me just how very serious and divisive this scandal was, I looked at what else was happening at the time. Now, the new church of Holy Trinity at Claygate was consecrated in December 1840. Hitherto, the history of this has been written from the perspective of Claygate. The formal story goes that the church at St. Nicholas was full, Claygate was growing, and its 300 inhabitants wanted a church nearby. It is summarised in a good monograph by local historian Howard Mallinson, whom I contacted before his untimely death this summer. He had concluded perceptively

that *“The full story of how this came about is still not entirely transparent... With a population of only 300 the case for a new church without some other factor looks thin.”*

The scandal supplies the other factor. We know from the court case that Rev Wilfred was habitually drunk in office from the time his incumbency began in March 1835, and while in 1836 St. Nicholas church was extended, Wilfred solved the overcrowding problem in an idiosyncratic way.

The court Articles tell us that in 1839 services at St Nicholas had more or less ground to a halt as soon as the Rural Dean began investigations, following the occasion in March when Wilfred again passed out during the Sunday service, and Sir Charles Sullivan and Leonard Seeley made a formal complaint to the Bishop. Wilfred of his own accord then ceased officiating, presumably because he would be under close observation. He probably hired stand-ins.

Seeley, one of the two main protagonists in the prosecution of Wilfred Speer, was equally a prime mover in the establishment of Holy Trinity Claygate although not a resident of that hamlet. A year after complaints had been filed against Wilfred, a half-acre of ground in Claygate was purchased (March 1840). Holy Trinity was then erected with remarkable speed. The financial

contributions of the Buxton family, of Ruxley Lodge in Claygate, to the cost of the church are well documented; but of course we will now pay particular attention to who was going to officiate there! For it is quite clear that at the time the new church was built, the inhabitants of Claygate would not want Wilfred Speer to do the job. The foundation of a small benefice of two thousand pounds enabled a curate to be appointed independently. This money was provided by Rev Frederick Bevan, Rector of All Saints at Carleton Rode in Norfolk, the nature of whose connection has hitherto remained a mystery. I can now reveal that he was married to Sir John Jacob Buxton's sister Anne, and owed his rich living to their father Sir Robert Buxton, patron of Carleton Rode. Frederick and Anne had no children. A press report in 1840 shows that Frederick had become aware of the situation in Claygate while visiting his brother-in-law. The Buxton and Bevan families were to contribute, in all, about three-quarters of the overall cost of the new church plus benefice in Claygate.

The Bishop declared Claygate a Particular District just before the trial came to a head. Its first independent incumbent, Rev David Baker, was installed in January 1841 two months before the final court hearings opened, and its separation from Thames Ditton began – although as late as 1888 the vestry at St Nicholas still included the inhabitants of Claygate in local government matters; and Claygate's separate status as a parish, rejected by the High Court in 1924, was not fully resolved until 1943.

A cover-up?

Now you would expect the matter of the new church in Claygate, and indeed the court case, to be reflected in the Vestry minutes of the time. I tried to track them down. It turns out that the minutes for several years from around 1837, two years into Wilfred's incumbency... are missing! Moreover, I noted that local historian C R S Saunders, writing a eulogistic piece about the Speers in the Parish magazine as late as January 1959, made no mention of Wilfred's suspension, merely stating that he "*was Incumbent at St Nicholas Church from 1835 until 1856, the year he died.*" Had the matter been covered up?

It was not until the energetic T S Mercer mentioned Wilfred's sentence in an *Esher News* article of 1966 that the case surfaced tangentially. Mercer had been researching Speer graves (it had struck him as odd that Wilfred was not buried in the graveyard of his church). He came across the sole paper on the matter that was in parish records – the transcript of the sentence which had to be displayed on the church door. Mercer made no mention of the scandal in his 'Tales and Scandals' books, from which I deduce that he found nothing more, and had not realised the depth, duration and gravity of the case, for Mercer was not a man to duck a good scandal.

I began to wonder whether some filleting of the parish records had been done; and, if so, just when! For Peebles in his 'Book of Claygate' (published in 1983) writes on p.31: "*According to the minutes of Thames Ditton Vestry Meetings, the proposal to establish a church in Claygate caused considerable*

and heated debate before the decision was finally taken to go ahead with the project.”

I visited Surrey History Centre to look at the original Minute book. I could find no such debate in it. Neither I nor, before me, Howard Mallinson managed to track any other such papers down, whether here or with the church authorities in Winchester, Guildford or Lambeth. With the admirable help of local church stalwart Dennis Evans, papers remaining in the chest at St Nicholas were checked and found to have no relation to the matter.

The parish records were handed over to Surrey in 1981. Were they ‘sanitised’ first? I don’t think so. The Vestry minute book from 1810-1837 was kept by the faithful and long-serving parish clerk, Merser. We know from the court case that he was still in that post in 1841. One can see from the minute book that no pages have been excised, and that there are blank pages at the end of it where minutes could have continued. For the present I conclude that the unhappy clerk, faced with a distasteful situation, simply stopped recording the proceedings – if indeed meaningful meetings continued at all with Rev Wilfred as Chairman of the Vestry *ex officio*, particularly after some of his Vestry had complained to the Bishop.

However, it does seem likely that the affair was regarded for years as too dreadful to mention let alone write down. Particularly so, as it was the Speer family who remained in the parish, while the other players subsequently disconnected from it.

What became of them? The Speers:

Wilfred Speer never resumed office at St Nicholas after his suspension, although on paper he remained ‘perpetual curate’ until he died. For fifteen years two temporary curates held office. His father William died in April 1844, and the burial service was at Thames Ditton. Wilfred inherited the Lordship of the Manor of Weston that his father had bought, and held court. He and wife Sarah continued to live in Thames Ditton at West End Lodge, which eventually became the Manor House. On his own death in 1856 his son Capt. Wilfred Dakin Speer inherited. In 1867 he was shot dead by an American soldier aboard the Octavia, a paddle steamer on the Missouri River. Another son of Rev. Wilfred, William, died a year after his brother, then the Speer estates passed via Rev. Wilfred’s spinster sister Maria Speer, to his nephew (son of his sister Cecilia) Hannibal Sandys, In 1871 Hannibal changed his surname to Speer by royal warrant, to satisfy the controlling terms of William Speer’s will. Hannibal rehabilitated the name of Speer by much public benevolence around Thames Ditton and Weston Green, and he is perhaps the subject of a future article.

On Wilfred’s death, the patronage of St Nicholas church was exercised by King’s College, the glebe lands were mortgaged and a vicarage was built, and after the short incumbency of Rev. William Talman, Rev. E H Rogers, a Fellow of King’s, was installed in 1860. It was a successful, healing and enduring appointment (and saw the eventual

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Be prepared to make a prompt decision

With the best properties often being let quickly, it is important to be able to make a swift and informed decision. However, it's even more important not to feel pressured into accepting a property that does not fit your agreed standards - quick decisions are different to rushed decisions.

Don't go it alone

As the saying goes, a problem shared is a problem halved, which is why it can be useful to bring a friend or family member along to viewings for that crucial second opinion.

Get some knowledge of the local market

If you are moving to a new part of town, check it out on foot to get a feel for the area before you begin your search. It is also a good idea to conduct online research into average rents for the area to build up a picture of likely prices and adjust your own expectations - or budget.-

Get your house in order

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resumption – or retention – of vestry minutes).

The instigators:

After the trial Capt. Sir Charles Sullivan, 3rd Baronet of Thames Ditton, perhaps not feeling entirely comfortable, asked for a ship. He had been twelve years ashore. Six months after the case he was back at sea as captain of second-rater HMS Formidable, 84 guns. She ran aground near Barcelona and he was court-martialled in 1843. Sullivan was admonished, urged to be more careful in future and acquitted. In 1844 he was stand-in captain of HMS Queen for three months, then again without a command and remained ashore for good. Moving up the seniority list, he was promoted Rear-Admiral in 1850, Vice-Admiral in 1857 and full Admiral just before his death. In 1860 he announced that he was leaving the parish, and after the sale of Imber Court removed to Hurst House in West Molesey where he died in 1862. His eldest son, named after him, succeeded to the baronetcy, ran through the money with astonishing speed, was imprisoned for debt a year later and died in 1865, aged 45 and unmarried, just off Belgrave Square.

Of the others who joined with Sir Charles in the case against Wilfred Speer, Lord William Lennox Lascelles Fitzgerald de Ros, a descendant of Charles II, Captain in the Life Guards and briefly Gentleman Usher to Queen Victoria, had inherited the barony in 1839 on the death of his eldest brother Henry, a high-living fellow and a cheat for high stakes at cards. Born and brought up in Thames Ditton, as matters came to a head he also left the parish, moving just across

the border to Long Ditton and presumably worshipping thereafter at St Mary's. A young member of the Duke of Wellington's *coterie*, de Ros was promoted colonel in 1846, serving briefly as Quartermaster-General for the British Army in Turkey, but for health reasons returned home as the army embarked for the Crimea. He ended with the rank of General. In the Earl of Derby's first administration de Ros was appointed Deputy Lieutenant of the Tower of London, Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard, and made a Privy Councillor. If you can find records that he saw action under shot and shell, I'd be glad to have them. De Ros died in 1874 on his Fitzgerald family estate at Strangford, County Down, where he was well liked.

Capt. George Lambert, whose testimony at the trial strikes me as practical and fair minded, had a distinguished – and operational – naval career ending as a full Admiral and knighted GCB. He went back to sea in early 1845 and when posted home thereafter he also moved out of the parish, eventually renting what remained of Norbiton Place. He died in 1869, leaving a third generation of naval and military Lamberts who served their country well and played a fine part in the life of the community. It will be a pleasure to write about them. Leonard Seeley remained in Weston Green for at least another decade, but later removed to Torquay where he had a bookshop on the Parade. When he died there in 1876 his estate was worth less than £100.

Captain Rowland Williams of the Dragoons, who with his butler memorably

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testified to drunken Wilfred mounting his horse, only to fall over the other side, left for the West Indies during the trial. He rented out to General Sir John Lambert his house in Weston Green – The Newlands, built by his ancestors in the late 1600s from the proceeds of plantations in Antigua. With the abolition of slavery, family business had taken a dive. I don't think he returned here, ending five generations' direct association with Weston Green.

Conclusions

A cleric addicted to alcohol today would meet with forgiveness from the Christian church. From society there would be sympathy, understanding and treatment rather than retribution. Our times are less religious, more humane.

Although clearly something had to be done about a hopelessly alcoholic vicar, the way in which Rev. Wilfred Speer was pursued to court seems hostile and merciless, particularly in a village that had regarded with great affection an earlier vicar said to be a toper, Rev. George Harvest, after whom Harvest Lane is named. It seems likely that not weak Wilfred, but his father, William, had excited animosity and was the target of spite.

In this scandal drink was not the only demon. Port and brandy was mixed with power and prejudice, status and snobbery, riches, resentment, religion and revenge. A chilling and potent cocktail. With a nod to Sir Herbert Jenner's opinion, on researching the years that led up to the court case I could find a good deal of circumstance to support the defence's

contention that there was malice behind the prosecution. The standout was William Speer's crafty purchase of the Manor of Weston (a story in itself) and his protracted legal dispute with the Lords of Imber over territory and rights; but there too are signs that he had crossed the Fitzgeralds and others as well as the Taylors and Sullivans of Imber Court. Wily William had also wangled the church's living – which contained a fair bit of land – for his son Wilfred. The appointment was not greeted with unanimous support.

It may be that the witnesses in court spoke nothing but what they believed to be the truth. But of the fourteen who testified against Wilfred, I can find a dozen who from circumstance seem alienated by his father, else favouring the interests of Imber Court. And of the fourteen who testified in Wilfred's support, all but a couple seem to have been either friends of the family or in some way beholden to (or dependent on) landowner William Speer.

The scandal divided Thames Ditton, and ruptured the parish. Its cloud lasted for years: its memory was suppressed then forgotten for well over a century. You may well imagine what ordinary villagers thought as it unfolded above them and – horrors! – they were asked to take sides. And as I wandered among their headstones piecing events together, I could almost see them nodding, hear them saying: *“Yes, my boy, that's just how it was. We thought it would never be told.”*

Keith Evetts

(sources on application – run out of space)


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Twinkle Twinkle...

The story behind the campaign to light up the High Street



What a difference a year makes. Last winter SCC workmen moved in to dig up the road, to lay the cable, to power the lights to our historic Lime Tree, swiftly followed by contractors to wind 43 strings of lights on the branches. The exercise took under a week, but came after years of lobbying by the Residents' Association.

We'd have to find nearly 6K to fund the project. Our SCC Councillor, Peter Hickman, secured a small grant, while most of the rest was loaned by the RA in order to achieve 'switch on' by Christmas and I volunteered to organise a fund raising campaign to pay back the advance. The community quickly got behind me. High Street resident Caroline James and Jeremy Hamilton from The Stitchery came on board as fellow fund raisers, while countless more rallied round in other ways. The 'Lights Appeal' launched at



Santa launches the Christmas lights appeal

The Stitchery Christmas Fair at the Vera Fletcher Hall and I dressed as Santa with a crown of fairy lights. This was swiftly followed by fund raising posters and collecting tins in the shop plus Andy Warhol style limited edition Lime Tree tea

towels on sale at the High Street Christmas Fair.

But the Appeal really got going in the Spring with a series of ‘pop up’ tea parties – guests were treated to a Ritz Hotel style menu of finger sandwiches and home made cakes at my house transformed into tea rooms. Andy Anderson baked delicious scones while RA Chairman, Libby donned a lace apron along with Lynne Sinclair, myself and Caroline playing waitresses. David Pascoe sourced much needed teapots while Jeremy played dashing sommelier and Marie Poulter took charge of raffle tickets.

The Secret Gardens of Thames Ditton came next masterminded by Caroline who sourced 10 hidden gardens, revealing the best of Thames Ditton’s green and pleasant land along and around the High Street. On Father’s Day over 300 people followed the scented trail aided by Lisa Tolley’s exquisitely drawn map. Everyone was justly proud of our secret gardeners.

We were on a roll. A Garden Party held on Wimbledon Men’s Final Day, on one of the sunniest days of the year, was another sell-out. We erected a big screen for tennis and guests were entertained by the Mariette string quartet as they tucked into afternoon tea, plus Pimms, strawberries and cream at this quintessentially English event.

Joe and Evelyn McCann sponsored our next fixture, Race Night at the George & Dragon – the pub packed with locals and visitors, eager to place their bets. We also staged the raffle draw, distributing 16

fabulous prizes, generously donated by local High Street shops.

By Autumn, not only was the initial Lime Tree Lights loan repaid, but the fund was in surplus. This Christmas most of the High Street will be ‘switched on’ with trees adorning the majority of shops, businesses and residences. The aim: To make Thames Ditton High Street THE destination in Elmbridge to take the family to view the Christmas Lights. Our final fund raiser in early December is a Quiz Night at the Vera Fletcher Hall. Here we are raffling an exquisite painting of the Lime Tree lit up at night by celebrated artist, Alan Hepburn, painted especially for the Lights Appeal, with the final draw taking place at The High Street Christmas Fair.

Lighting up our High Street isn’t just about brightening our village, it has a serious message too. Thames Ditton has fantastic independent retailers which need our support and this magnificent show of lights will act as a beacon now, and in the future, of what can be achieved when a community pulls together.

This initiative is just the beginning. Next year we plan to deck the street with flags to celebrate the Queen’s Golden Jubilee and The Olympics. We want to see Thames Ditton High Street as a ‘must visit’ destination to enjoy the shops, the cafes, the post office and the pubs. We want to attract more like minded retailers and businesses to put our village well and truly on the map. This isn’t just another street. It is the heart of our community.

Tricia W. Bland

Long Ago and Far Away



April 1973: cleaning out Marney's Pond are David Hilbury, Ruth Lyon, Christopher Beavis, Brian Stacey and young helpers

A friend recently sent to me in Australia a cutting from 'S' Magazine. It featured a report by Tricia Bland about Thames Ditton and the Residents' Association. Reading it triggered memories: I was involved with the TDRA over forty years ago.

What struck me about her article was how similar, between then and now, have been the battles to retain the desirable character and integrity of the village. Traffic and parking problems, the threat of unsympathetic building development, and the curse of graffiti... we were dealing with the same issues then. To

give an idea of the period, I once spent most of one Saturday helping to scrub 'US out of Vietnam' off the bridge on Station Road!

I became Chairman of the Association and amongst the many events that come to mind were the fight to stop yellow lines along the High Street, our "Plant a Tree in 73" efforts, cleaning rubbish from the ponds at Weston Green and the great parties we held.

The campaign against yellow lines was waged because the High Street was being used increasingly as a rat run, mornings and evenings, and the Association argued

that to introduce a no-stopping clearway would allow vehicles through at more dangerous speeds.

To back our concern, we mounted a traffic survey and volunteers counted vehicles at every entry and exit point. Our argument to Surrey County Council was that the slower traffic had to move, the more of a deterrent it would be to motorists and safer for pedestrians. The only time I remember the sound of traffic being silenced was when the River Mole burst its banks and flooded the High Street!

The tree planting we undertook was our response to the Dutch Elm disease that changed the landscape. It was sad, for example, to watch the lovely old tree at the entrance to Boyle Farm gradually succumb. Nothing could be done to save it.

A main, on-going effort for the Association was, as now, keeping close tabs on building applications. Back then we had some serious matters to confront: the Milk Marketing Board offices still loomed over Giggs Hill Green and AC Cars was still a factory in the middle of the village – two large sites ripe for redevelopment.

I look back fondly on those days. What brought us all together was a sense of belonging to a place clearly defined by its boundaries. And with that community spirit we certainly knew how to enjoy ourselves! From the late '60s a Christmas party was held, with home-made food and decorations. Eight households took on the roasting of the turkeys.

In 1974 we also held a Summer Ball to celebrate the Association's 40th birthday. That fun evening sticks in my mind because the friend who drew the raffle announced winning ticket colours as 'ecru' and 'aqua', and called out imaginary prizes such as "A Weekend in Paris!" And with a final flourish she offered to kiss all the men who had not won anything. A long queue quickly formed.

Another activity was the Magazine, produced by a printing method very different from today's advanced technology. As its editor for a couple of years it was gratifying to receive comment from readers. My largest postbag was in response to my "Dear Rover" letter about fouling the pavements.

In her magazine article, Tricia mentioned the lights on the lime tree on the roundabout (I can remember when it was quite small!). The first Christmas tree we set up was planted in a dustbin outside Fern Cottage Antiques. The coloured lights went out every time a gust of wind blew the tree over and it became disconnected.

Happy days! And I hope that everyone now living in Thames Ditton loves their neighbourhood as much as we did then.

Merry Christmas to you all from

Christopher Beavis
Sydney, Australia

Neutering the Language



The BBC faces revolt from leading presenters over suggestions that they should use religiously neutral terms instead of “BC” or “AD,” to avoid causing offence to non-Christians, or heathens as they used to be known. BCE (Before Common Era) and ACE are ~~kosher~~ approved substitutes. The BBC denies that there has been official minuting, but there’s no smoke without fire...

I lunched a young contact in the Beeb to find out what’s going on. *“It’s one of our exciting, imaginative and innovative outreach focus themes partnering with the citizen,”* she yawned over a pot noodle, *“and no manager was ever promoted for keeping something that has worked perfectly well for a millennium or two.”*

Other terms of date and time will be similarly treated to placate the goddess. ‘January’, provocatively named after the two-faced Roman god Janus, will become ‘Jobbery,’ which has received approval from No. 10. ‘February’, aptly from the Roman god of the dead, Februus, will be changed to the irreligious ‘Mortuary’. ‘March’ is named after Mars, the god of war, and should be changed both on religious grounds and for incitement to violence, *“But there’s been fierce fighting in the Corporation over candidates to replace it.”*

‘May’ may stem from Maiesta, the Roman goddess of reverence and majesty.



Television Centre – the oracle

“That seems to wind the Druids up no end.” ‘June’, after the goddess Juno, protector and special advisor of the state, is another problem. *“We considered deriving something from the Office for Budgetary Responsibility,”* admitted my companion, *“but failed amid general laughter.”*

‘July’, formerly the old Roman ‘Quintilis’, is the month in which Julius Caesar was born, and was named after him in the year of his assassination. *“Military dictators are unfashionable. It needs updating – perhaps, retaining the Italian theme, to ‘Capello’.”* ‘August’, formerly Sextilis and renamed for Emperor Augustus, is another month causing the BBC call centre to leave you on hold while they handle a deluge of complaints, albeit mostly about the weather. As it is now the eighth month it should probably be renamed ‘October.’



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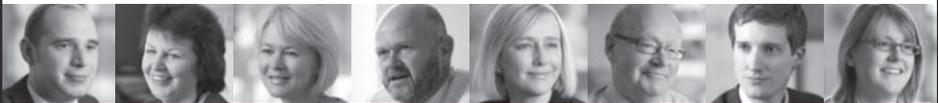
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September through December were the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth months in the old Roman calendar. Really confusing to modern Gregorians. Logically September should become November, October becomes December, November goes to Undecember and December will now be Duodecember. That should clear things up.

The days of the week cause a good deal of religious controversy. *“Take ‘Sunday’ – the Sun god, for example. Less offensive and more descriptive would be ‘Rainday’ or ‘Hangover’.”* But ‘Monday’, celebrating the goddess of the moon, is the day most complained about. *“The menstrual cycle’s ruled out as inspiration because half the population don’t understand it. Nick Clegg suggested something based on alarm clocks or work, possibly ‘Trainday’.”* Then we have ‘Tuesday.’ Tiw (Tyr) is the Norse god of single combat: *“How offensive is that?! He is generally portrayed as a one-handed man, however, so any change will have to preserve the disability.”*

‘Wednesday’ or Woden’s-day is for the Norse Father of the Gods. Along with ‘Thursday’ (Thor, the god of thunder and DIY engineering), that will have to be changed. As for ‘Friday’ – named for Freya, wife of Woden and the goddess of married love, *“the management worries that the name may offend non-Nordic religions and the vast number of licensees who perform unmarried love.”* Saturday is Saturn’s day, god of seed-time and fertility (the One Night Stand), and ruler of the Titans, a celestial football team. *“The public will be consulted about suitable changes, and then ignored.”*

“Easter is, well, a thorny problem, which has the telephone humming with offended heathens and Christians alike.” The Bede says it is derived from Eostre, the goddess whose festival of fertility at the vernal equinox was celebrated by the pagan Anglo-Saxons in appropriate – now wholly inappropriate – style. *“‘Eunuch’ has been suggested by feminists as a neutral replacement.”*

And that brings us to ‘Christmas.’ *“Reversion to the Nordic Yule or the Roman Saturnalia has been ruled out, obviously”* she said. *“This protracted and offensive festival, with its connotations of darkness, taxation, extramarital relationships and illegitimacy, sleeping rough in stables, rich business donors seeking favour, and the massacre of the innocents, not to mention the social baggage it has acquired of drink, duty, debt, disputes, divorce and even death, will be renamed ‘Giftmas.’ All references to Christmas on telly will be scrupulously neutralised.”* Hard hit is the broadcast Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols from King’s College with its in-your-face polemic of peace and goodwill, seen as extremely provocative by certain religions.

“So now you know the full story,” ended my helpful friend over the cappuccino. *“This year, Giftmas falls on Hangover 25th Duodecember 2011 ACE and Everyone Will Be Happy.”*

Don’t forget my present!”

Tom Bowdler



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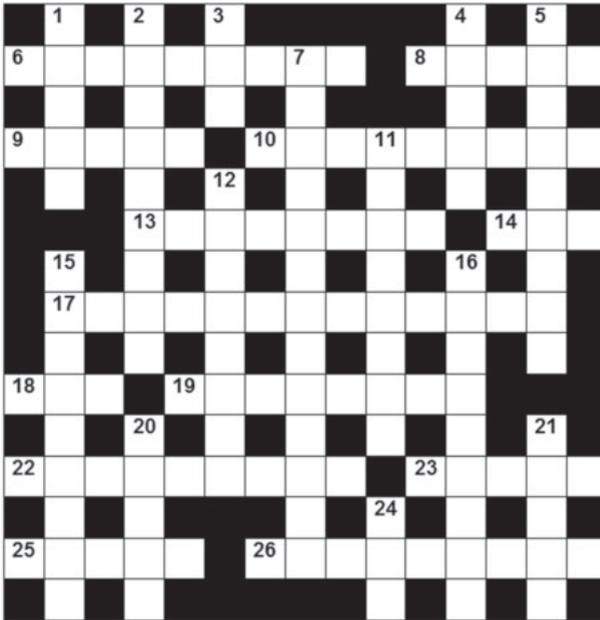
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Winter Crossword

By Michael Jackson



The first three correct entries randomly opened after the closing date of 7 February 2012 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
6 Church Walk
Thames Ditton
KT7 0NW

ACROSS

6. 'Welcome' – Table set, ginger rum punch warming (9)
8. He'll get the sack at Christmas (5)
9. A good host dislikes seeing these... (5)
10. Fruit sauce and jelly (9)
13. Foods that sustain (8)
14. Dad hears cork going... (3)
17. Spaniel with red and white coat (5,8)
18. Bird in the music school (3)
19. ...learning this dance after the allemande? (8)
22. You look real cute in hat and dress (9)
23. John ... Italian navigator (5)
25. Falstaff's drink? (5)
26. Instrument on board Earl's boat at sea (9)

DOWN

1. Sweet smell of spices (5)
2. How the house is heated inside (9)
3. Trap of Dutch origin (3)
4. ...and ale, a pleasure of life (5)
5. It's all right at sea (9)
7. From Spain great red wines enliven 'get togethers' (6,7)
11. Promoting growth (8)
12. Describing H.R.H on big elephant's howdah? (8)
15. You can see a butterfly crawl back in these (9)
16. Pleasing to the mind (9)
20. Plant found in the brush (5)
21. An exploding Meringue, sponge and cream? (5)
24. Attempt to finish (3)

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Solution to the Autumn Crossword

by Maureen Willcox



D	I	S	A	S	T	E	R		O	R	I	E	N	T	
E		T		P		L			E		L		E		
P	R	I	S	O	N	E	R		A	S	S	E	N	T	
A		G		O		M			P		C		H		
R	O	M	A	N	C	E	S		S	E	T	T	L	E	
T		A		S		N		W		C		R		R	
					S	T	R	E	E	T	W	I	S	E	
A		E		R		A		N		S		C		D	
D	O	N	K	E	Y	R	I	D	E						
V		V		P		Y		Y		E		A		H	
A	V	E	N	U	E			W	H	I	T	E	L	I	E
N		L		L				O		C		C		A	
C	H	O	O	S	E			R	U	S	H	H	O	U	R
E		P		E				S		E		V		T	
D	R	E	A	D	S			H	E	A	D	L	E	S	S

Congratulations to the first three contestants whose correct entries were opened after the deadline. Each wins a £5 Voucher for spending in any Thames Ditton or Weston Green shop.

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Dittons and Weston Green Neighbourcare	Avril Ashworth	020 8398 5161
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
Thames Ditton Centre for the Retired	Mon & Thurs	020 8398 5921
	Tues Wed Fri	020 8398 3772
Esher and District Stroke Club	Ann Pollock	020 8398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Mrs Carole Roycroft	01372 463587
Surrey Youth and Adult Education Service	Elmbridge Area	020 8979 8334
M.D.H.S. Household Services (& garden tidying)	Carolyn Smart (Manager)	01932 248533

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	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	0208 398 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	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

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Arts and Heritage Club	Carol Butcher	01932 867511
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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	Mrs. Pauline Wareham	020 8979 8977
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Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Dr. David Cooke	01932 862841
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Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Esher Camera Club	Billy Buchanan	020 8398 3169
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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)	Jill Cotter	020 8398 4598
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	0208 398 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)	0208 398 6651
Esher and District Amnesty International	Secretary	gettle51@msn.com
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Lettings: John Morgan	020 8398 3049
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
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

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



If you're online then you'll have plenty of information about **scams, distraction burglaries and mis-selling**. If you do not have a computer, you may be less well briefed. **Rogues are targeting the more elderly offline** and doing so in more sophisticated ways. It's getting worse.

It's impossible to cover all scams as there is boundless scope for evil creativity – watch those programmes on the TV. But there *are* some general principles which will reduce the likelihood that they'll make a mug of you.

Only deal with people **you** call or write to: **don't accept initiatives out of the blue**. If **they** phone you, immediately ask for their name and number to call back (90% of dubious callers won't give these details). Even if they pretend to be your bank or the Council (and some do), then ask phone callers or callers at your door to write to you with their proposition. If they aren't genuine, they are unlikely to write. If they do write, it still doesn't mean they are genuine!

Check them out before you allow things to go any further. If you don't have a computer, get a friend to look them up on the internet.

Don't take 'emergencies' at face value (unless you can see for yourself that it

really is one). Don't allow unknown people into your home and out of your sight. Check their credentials and phone their office. Be wary of distractions by burglars. Never give out bank or other financial information, or information that can be used by another to validate their posing as you. There's a scam where "your bank" telephones you and sends a courier to collect your bank card. Another where the "Inland Revenue" contacts you to ask for your bank details, to make a small "refund." Be alert if you are asked to front up a small payment.

Signal that you don't accept cold callers: get a sticker for the door (call 03456 626520). Register free with the Telephone Preference Service on 0845 070 0707 to reduce (but not eliminate) cold calling. Register with the Mailing Preference Service on 0845 703 4599 to reduce junk mailshots. Opt out of the public version of the electoral register. If you have questions, call Elmbridge council and ask to speak to the Community Safety team. If approached by alarm or security salesmen, ask them to write, then you should contact the local Crime Prevention Officer for advice.

We'll have some day-to-day stories in a future issue. Meanwhile, try not to feed the wolves – it's you they are after!

Editor

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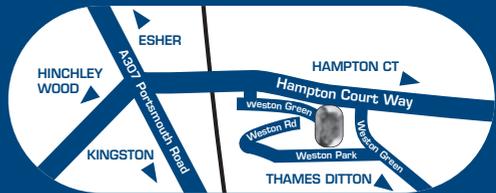
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