

# THAMES DITTON TODAY

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

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# THAMES DITTON TODAY

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<i>Cover credit: Emma Palmer at <a href="http://www.emmapalmerphotography.co.uk">www.emmapalmerphotography.co.uk</a></i>	

## [www.residents-association.com](http://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 village Christmas trees. The subscription is only £5 per household. If you can contribute more, please do so. Subscriptions can be paid via our website [www.residents-association.com](http://www.residents-association.com); subscriptions (in an envelope please) may be left at Boots Pharmacy, 14 High Street, Thames Ditton or Thorkhill Road Pharmacy, 94 Thorkhill Road, Thames Ditton. Or mail to Membership Secretary Peter Haynes at 6 Onslow Gardens, Thames Ditton KT7 0JJ. Thank you.

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# THAMES DITTON AND 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 residents. 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 six Residents' Association Councillors covering the two electoral wards we have a strong voice on Elmbridge Borough Council working with other Residents' Association 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, Nick Darby, represents our views at Surrey County Council.

### President: Martin Wilberforce

7 River Avenue,  
Thames Ditton 020 8398 4732

### Vice President: Ruth Lyon,

11 Riversdale Road,  
Thames Ditton 0208 398 3396

### Vice President Tannia Shipley,

27 Lower Green Road, Esher 020 8398 2484

### Surrey County Councillor: Nick Darby,

12 Basing Close, Thames Ditton 020 8398 2382

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Thames Ditton 07710 943140

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Thames Ditton 07970 672723

Karen Randolph,  
Deepfield, Giggs Hill Road,  
Thames Ditton 020 8398 5005

### Hinchley Wood & Weston Green Borough Councillors

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Esher 020 8873 3040

Janet Turner, 2 Montgomery Ave,  
Hinchley Wood 020 8398 1565

Nigel Haig-Brown  
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Health and Community: Karen Randolph (see above)

Planning: Rhodri Richards,  
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Thames Ditton 020 8398 4962

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1 Boyle Farm Road, Thames Ditton 020 8786 6882

Flooding Tony Thompson,  
Willow End, River Bank, Thames Ditton 07736 677671



## THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE

Tuesday September 21, 8pm – Vera Fletcher Hall

Tuesday November 30, 8pm – Vera Fletcher Hall

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# News from the Residents' Association to end August



## Finally, face to face and thank you

After 18 months of Zoom meetings we held a face to face Open Meeting on 20 July at All Saints Hall, Weston Green. It was lovely to see people 'in real life'.



*Graham Cooke presentation to Tannia Shipley at the RA Open Meeting*

A highlight of the meeting was the presentation to Tannia Shipley from the RA in recognition of her long and distinguished service as our Weston Green and Hinchley Wood councillor.



*Presentation to Tricia Bland at the Farmers' Market*

Graham Cooke made a similar presentation at the July Farmers Market to say thank you to Tricia Bland who has retired as a councillor for Thames Ditton ward.

Both received beautiful pictures by Nadia Day, from View Gallery in Thames Ditton.

## Meeting with Dominic Raab



*Ruth and Graham meeting with Dominic Raab*

Ruth Lyon and Graham Cooke from the RA arranged a meeting between local MP Dominic Raab and a number of non-political residents' groups from his constituency to inform him of residents' concerns about aspects of the Government's planning proposals, particularly:

- Zoning
- Government-imposed housing targets
- Permitted Development Rights
- Affordable housing/social housing
- Green Belt and green spaces
- Increased densities and high-rise development
- Conservation Areas
- Pressure on infrastructure

Dominic Raab said that he would support a Local Plan with as few as 70% of the

Government target for new dwellings per annum (around 450 p.a.). Potentially, this would, and should avoid Green Belt release. In his opinion such a Plan would not require high-rise buildings in Elmbridge.

He acknowledged that a 70% Local Plan would need to be robustly defended at public examination level to prove that there were exceptional local circumstances for the shortfall and that, while best efforts had been made to reach the full target, our local constraints such as the Green Belt and the need to protect the local character of towns and village centres had made this impossible.

He offered to work with all interests to support the Plan and to achieve what he described as ‘a smart solution’ with the Inspector and Secretary of State.

The Elmbridge Local Plan is due to be available for consultation this Autumn.

## **Robert Jenrick and Permitted Development Rights**

In replying to a letter from Dominic Raab MP, Robert Jenrick, the Secretary of State for housing communities and local government, brushed aside our concerns regarding Permitted Development Rights and their impact on our High Street. With regards to Town Centres and High Streets he said: *“We want to support them...to become thriving vibrant hubs where people live, shop, use services and spend their leisure time... (so) we introduced a new commercial business and service use class (Class E) which allows change within those uses.*

*“Following the recent consultation we are now introducing a new permitted development right to allow the change of buildings from class E to residential.”*

We are not sure that Mr Jenrick fully understands the impact of local house

prices on the desire to change all our Class E premises to housing. Or the fact that, once that is done, there will be nowhere to shop, use services or spend leisure time. It is that sort of balance that local, elected, councils seek to manage.

Rather alarmingly for those who want to retain a vibrant village centre, in our meeting with Dominic Raab he said he approved of PDRs to turn shops into residential saying *‘we are all shopping on line now’*. Well, those of us who shop at Paul’s, Thames Ditton Bakery, Secret Garden Florist, Budgens, Thames Food and Wine, Nice Buns, View, Lime Tree, Cycle Shop and visit the village cafés may disagree.

## **Planning / PDRs**

**Prior Approval Application (2021/2556) for 51 flats in AC Court** in the centre of Thames Ditton, which has recently been submitted, is therefore not subject to the usual planning application review by Elmbridge Borough Council, although officers can reject it if limited criteria have not been met.

The RA has submitted its concerns about this development to EBC’s Planning Department, stressing that we are not totally opposed to the conversion of redundant office space to residential use. However, the resulting flats must be designed to recognised standards which enhance the residential environment of Thames Ditton, not detract from it.

Areas of existing design shortfall have been pointed out including poor design, lack of light, poor space standards and lack of amenity space. The full response can be read on our website [www.residents-association.com](http://www.residents-association.com)

The application to develop the Jolly Boatman site has been refused. (see the EBC Councillors update on page 12). RA

Councillor Karen Randolph played a key role in explaining why this particular proposal failed to respect the heritage and character of such an important site.



*Cllr Karen Randolph on the roof of Hampton Court Palace*

A number of planning applications have been received for houses on Thames Ditton Island which seek to dramatically increase the size of existing buildings (whether that be via extensions or knocking down and replacing) with an increase in ridge heights, and in some cases, with full second floors. Whilst nobody could object to islanders seeking to modernise and extend their existing properties we would hope that any changes would not be to the detriment of the unique and charming character of the island with its chalet style housing.

## **Merrywood**

Although the planning application for 26 homes on the site of Merrywood in Weston Green was successful, the proposed access

requires use of a small area of common land and EBC has not agreed to this. Use of common land for private purposes has been refused for many years. The matter will come to the Cabinet in the next few months for review and a final decision.

The Residents Group at the council are not in principle against development of this site (though they voted against this particular design and layout) and recognise that developments on such backland sites are inevitable if we are to protect our Green Belt and open common land.

## **Battling litter**



*Litter collected from Albany Reach*

The local litter picking groups have been out in force this summer with the Albany Reach team making huge efforts to keep the beautiful space by the river clean.

Organiser Nell Hickman is asking anyone who can spare some time to keep Albany Reach tidy to get in touch on 07711 017100. She says *“I have vests and litter pickers for you to use and help, even once a month, would be appreciated.”* We understand fox proof bins are on order for Albany Reach. See article on page 29 about how the local council is responding to the litter Tsunami.

## **Our local vaccination hub**

The vaccination hub at the Thames Ditton



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*"We were recommended to TDB for their architectural design service. We liked the clarity of the process and costs, and we were delighted when our plans were approved. We asked three firms to quote for the build, and while TDB didn't come out the cheapest we again felt that we knew exactly what was included and we thought that the price was fair. We expected some stresses during the building project, but the TDB team were great to work with, and ultimately everything was finished on time, and there were no surprise costs. Overall, we couldn't be more pleased". Mrs SM, Surbiton*



Ditton Garages, Southville Road, Thames Ditton, KT7 0UL

Centre in Mercer Close, continues its successful vaccination programme within our local community. Having started in December 2020 with the most vulnerable, it was recently the turn of 16 – 17-year-olds. By the end of August, almost 50,000 doses have been given to patients in Thames Ditton. So many people continue to be thankful that this can happen on their doorstep and everyone involved remains heartened by the strong community spirit evident at the hub.

### Tennis courts refurbished

The tennis courts at Giggs Hill Field have been refurbished, now all we need is some sunshine!



### Dates for your diary

#### Farmers' Market

Mercer Close Car Park (opposite the Library), fourth Saturday of the month

#### Weston Green Litter Pickers

Meet at Marneys pub on the first Saturday in the month at 10.30am

#### Thames Ditton Litter Pickers

Meet in Thames Ditton Tennis Club car park third Saturday of the month 10.45am

#### Esher and District Local History Society

Meet at 2.30pm at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Claygate KT10 0JP.

[www.edlhs.co.uk](http://www.edlhs.co.uk)

- Saturday September 18, AGM and Alan Wright, author of The Surrey Census of Nomads, 1913.
- Saturday October 23, Amy Swainston from Elmbridge Museum)

### Residents' Association

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# Update from your Residents' Associations'

## Thames Ditton Ward



Karen Randolph  
TDWGRA

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Caroline James  
TDWGRA

*cjames@elmbridge.gov.uk*



Alex Batchelor  
TDWGRA

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### CIL Awards

We've all been busy with different committees and specific local matters but one area where we work together is the annual Local Spending Board, which awards grants from the Community Infrastructure Levy – a charge on developers designed to fund a wide range of the infrastructure needed to mitigate the effects of development.

Our local spending board (us and Long Ditton) received bids totalling £1,901,706, but as there was only £122,425 available we had to pass over many good projects. Allocations were made to Long Ditton Village Hall (roof repairs), Hinchley Wood Scouts and Guides (car park repairs), Long Ditton Infant School (fencing), Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents Association (flood resilience project), Old Cranleigh RFC (ground drainage works) and The Strenue Association / Esher Football Club (fencing).

### Planning updates

On July 15 the Planning Committee discussed the controversial Jolly Boatman site application. It came to the committee

with a recommendation to refuse, but there was lots of lively debate. The three of us on the Planning Committee all voted to refuse, with Karen Randolph adding a number of amendments to the reasons for refusal to explain why this particular proposal failed to respect the heritage and character of such an important site.

The Prior Approval application to turn AC Court in Thames Ditton into residential use from offices highlights the concerns we have about the poor quality of homes that can result in such circumstances. Permitted Development allows applicants to introduce certain changes without having to go through the planning system. One of the major problems evident here is that the homes proposed appear unlikely to provide the standard of accommodation (size, design, ventilation, access to amenity space etc.) the planning system could impose to make them fit for 21st century living. Many local authorities are uneasy about Permitted Development and AC Court highlights why.

Aldi has now taken over what was previously the Guy Salmon car showroom on Portsmouth Road. In spite of the time lapse, we are still awaiting a planning application.

# Councillors at Elmbridge Borough Council

## Hinchley Wood and Weston Green Ward



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TDWGRA

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Nigel Haig Brown  
HWRA

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### Time for a chat?

A while ago a local resident alerted us to Chatty Benches, an initiative already introduced in some parts of the UK, inspired by similar schemes overseas. Elmbridge Borough Council has attached notices to several benches on Giggs Hill Green with the following text:

#### **‘Happy to Chat Bench**

**Sit here if you don’t mind someone stopping to say hello’.**

If it’s successful the Council will consider rolling it out to the rest of the borough, so get chatting and let us know what you think.



*Happy to Chat bench on Giggs Hill Green*

### Things you need to know:

#### **Licensed traders on Giggs Hill Green**

In a move to help small businesses get

a foothold, licenses have been granted to one trader per green open space (with one exception where two have been licensed). You may have seen a coffee van on Giggs Hill Green between Friday and Monday. This van has a license and is entitled to be there. (None of the Ice Cream Vans that come onto the Green are licensed.)

#### **Missed garden waste collections in August**

Thanks to everyone for your patience with the reduced garden waste collection service last month. Contracts will be automatically extended to compensate, but please renew your contract as normal when it is due to avoid an interruption to your service.

#### **Homes for Afghan families**

We’ve all seen the news about the terrible events in Afghanistan so we’re pleased to announce that Elmbridge is supporting the Afghan Local Employed Staff Relocation Scheme by welcoming three families whose lives were at risk because of their previous help to the British.

The families will be supported by the local refugee charity Elmbridge CAN ([Elmbridgcan.org.uk](http://Elmbridgcan.org.uk)) and if you want to help or donate we are sure they would love to hear from you.

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# Update from Nick Darby, Surrey County Councillor



I am thrilled that work is finally under way on resurfacing the footway on Station Road. This project was my first choice for footway repairs this year. A large section on Effingham Road is due to be done later.

As Ferry Road was resurfaced a few months ago I am keeping my fingers crossed that work isn't undone by whatever Thames Water need to do to cure the drain/sewer issue in the vicinity.

Following a request from residents at Leaf Close, I have liaised with Surrey Highways and am delighted to report that a replacement for the tree is now agreed, cost and timing to be sorted shortly.

Surrey are re-negotiating their main Highways contract and, at the same time, reorganising the Highways Department. Many of us have expressed concerns about these, to ensure we get both good value for the significant sums spent and continuity from the Highways team given their knowledge of our local area.

Happily I was able to advise a local parent with a successful school transport appeal, If parents are concerned about transport to school, it is worth looking carefully at the rules before deciding which schools to apply to.

The Children's Mental Health contract was renewed by Surrey in April. The previous provider made progress in clearing a significant backlog of cases but didn't clear it completely. Early support is so important and I am watching this space

If you have a local project which needs funding applications to Your Fund Surrey are welcome. Search for Your Fund Surrey



*Surrey County Councillor, (The Dittons) Nick Darby*

on the internet; if you have any query before or during an application, do give me a call.

South Western Railway have been consulting over their timetable. We want to make sure services are retained, not just to Thames Ditton, but Esher too; also that when there are problems, the Hampton Court branch is not abandoned. Statements that fewer trains mean better punctuality are not entirely encouraging

Finally, Surrey have expressed an interest in the possibility of a County Deal, whatever that may mean. Details are in very short supply. Further working together between Surrey and the various Boroughs and Districts may well be desirable if the aim is to produce cost effective efficient and good value services, properly planned at the outset. Time will tell.

**Nick Darby, Surrey County Councillor  
Leader of the Residents Association  
and Independent Group**

# Wildflower wonder



*Helen Edwards creator of the wildflower meadow in the New Acre Graveyard*

My place of work had closed down during the pandemic. I was at a loose end and looking for a new purpose so I volunteered to help the Rev Andrew Cowie from St. Nicholas' Church as he needed help strimming and clearing the New Acre graveyard. Andrew was talking about the upkeep of it and how wonderful it would be to turn it into a wildflower meadow... before I knew what was happening I said I would do it! I had no experience of meadow planting and quickly found myself immersed in research and had roped my husband and sons into many wintery Saturdays of digging and preparing the land during the lockdowns, egg and bacon sandwiches kept them going!

We asked for wildflower seed donations from twenty-three seed companies, the local garden centres, the Thames Ditton community and church congregation. I was even interviewed on Radio Jackie and put out an appeal there... we got hundreds of donations and it has been amazing to see the flowers start to bloom this year, it usually takes three years for a meadow to take hold. I felt very moved when I saw my nineteen year old son strimming around the grave of a nineteen year old soldier who fell in the Battle of the Somme. The RHS donated special poppy seeds for the soldiers, sailors and airmen who lie within the meadow; it's pretty striking to see the patches of red spring up amongst the grasses.



*The RHS donated poppy seeds*

Mary Turner a local resident at the age of eighty-eight came to sow wildflower seeds. I found out over a tea break that Mary designed and made Thunderbirds puppets including 'Lady Penelope' and 'Captain Scarlet' in the 60's. This inspirational woman also upkeepes the Memorial Garden at St Nicholas so that the local community can enjoy the beautiful roses. I have seen many young families having picnics during the lockdowns... this immaculate garden is due to the efforts of Mary and her team.

My favourite thing has been seeing over 260 school children, including our very own Thames Ditton Junior School, armed

with magnifying glasses and clipboards to document the different types of flowers and wildlife. A wonderful moment came by chance in early July when a glowing bride arrived to get married at the same time as the children from Year 3 at Long Ditton St Mary's descended upon the meadow, to have two classes of eight-year-olds waving good luck to her as she was about to walk down the aisle was a special moment I think she will never forget.

The Claygate Guides also visited the meadow during a Monday evening in the pouring rain (forgot the Girl Guides do not mind the weather) and 'threw' wildflower seed bombs with shrieks of delight amongst the flowers followed by a quiz. We have also got to know the friendly fox that lives here too, we have named the fox 'Nicholas' just in case you come across him.

My background was in television starting at the age of seventeen typing scripts, then seven years at Fountain Studios assisting with programmes such as 'Ready, Steady, Cook', programmes for children such as 'Wizadora' together with pop videos and commercials. After starting a family, having three sons in the space of five years, I then went on to work in an historical conference venue and now volunteer at Strawberry Hill House in Twickenham. My husband worked as Studio Manager at Wembley Studios working on 'The X Factor' and 'Britain's Got Talent'; I could not have completed the meadow without his advice and support together with my sons and Andrew Cowie ...and yes it was a great way to get my sons off the computer!

Emma Palmer, a talented photographer based in Thames Ditton, went out of her way to take photographs of the meadow in her own time so that the local community could enjoy the flowers if they were unable to visit.

I would encourage anybody to sow wildflower seeds, even if it is in a small pot by your front door, a packet of seeds can cost as little as £2.50 from a local garden centre. 'Seeds4Bees' and 'Wildflower Lawns and Meadows' are great companies to buy from on the internet both of which have donated seeds to the St Nicholas wildflower meadow; I am grateful to them for their kindness together with the local Thames Ditton community. It's all been a lot of hard work.... but definitely worth it!

**Helen Edwards**

with photos by **Emma Palmer** at  
[www.emmapalmerphotography.co.uk](http://www.emmapalmerphotography.co.uk)

**Find your wildflower seeds at**

[www.seeds4bees.com](http://www.seeds4bees.com)

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*Nicholas the fox in the wildflower meadow*



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# Elmbridge Museum at 30



*'The idea of a museum for Weybridge commends itself to me as an excellent one and I, with pleasure, give £5 towards its inception... I think it of the greatest possible value for every district with associations like Weybridge to keep the records of the past together.'*

This was the sentiment passionately expressed by Philip Pilditch in 1908. Philip was a prominent local Weybridge personality: since the late 1800s, he had made it his mission to champion the preservation of the local area and had been involved in numerous campaigns to safeguard nature and history ever since. The £5 he donated towards Weybridge Museum's formation was equivalent to £617 today and combined with funding from the Weybridge Urban District Council and the enthusiastic backing of the Weybridge Mutual Improvement Society, it resulted in the Weybridge Museum at Aberdeen House in Church Street, opening on 23 June 1909.

## The first steps

Enter Dr Eric Gardner, the first voluntary Museum Curator. Eric was a specialist in archaeology and local history, with an avid interest in the Chertsey Abbey and Oatlands finds. In the collection can be traced early letters to Dr. Gardner, informing him of the exciting Chertsey Abbey discoveries in the 1910s.

We have evidence that Eric also took pride in delivering expert talks on the subject to the Museum's audiences as early as the 1920s, and he is to thank for the preservation of many important pieces of local archaeology - even donating some pieces he himself had

discovered in the Thames.

Working alongside Eric from the very beginning was another colourful local character, Ethel Harting. She had previously been on the Weybridge Urban District Council Committee that oversaw the creation of the Museum, and subsequently became its first Curator of Natural History until 1926. Ethel herself has since become an intrinsic part of the Museum's archive: 170 of the beautiful watercolours she painted of plants found in local areas during the late 19th century remain preserved in the collection today as a reminder of her creativity and passion for local wildlife.

Together, Eric and Ethel oversaw the expansion of the fledgling Weybridge Museum into a valued local hub for preservation and learning, and it was from this point onwards that the Museum would continue to grow.

## Encompassing Elmbridge

More than 80 years later, Weybridge Museum was undergoing a landmark change. 1965 saw it move to a larger premises above the library in Church Street. Its multiple new galleries covering all manner of topics from natural history to Oatlands Palace, the history of childhood and domestic life, had seen many visitors, and the now permanent, paid staff had led many a successful talk and learning event.

In 1991 Weybridge Museum became 'Elmbridge Museum' as it is today. This significant milestone reflected the Museum's expanded role in preserving, teaching and promoting history across the

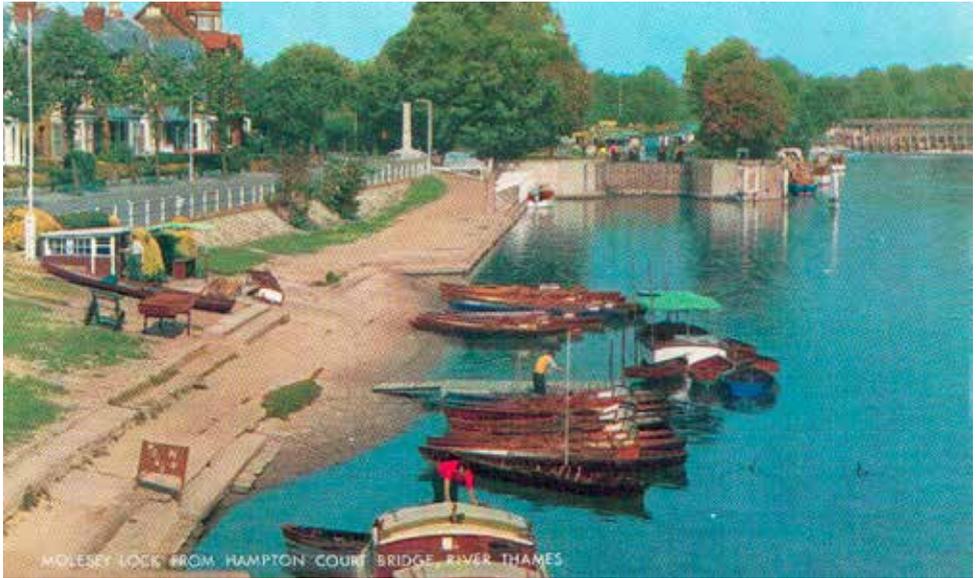
# Memories of Elmbridge at the Elmbridge Museum



*Mounted aerial black and white photograph of the Milk Marketing Board premises in Portsmouth Road, Thames Ditton soon after opening in the 1940s*



*Summer Fete at the Milk Marketing Board Building, Thames Ditton, circa 1950-51. Donated by the Hibbert family, who ran the Grocer's shop on the Green, Claygate, until its closure in November 1995.*



*Colour photograph entitled Molesey Lock from Hampton Court Bridge, River Thames, with the lock towards the background on the left (weir on the right) with several moored boats available for hire in the foreground. C.1960s*



*Black and white copy photograph of a postcard of "The New Lock, East Molesey", showing several punts, boats and a pleasure boat in the Lock in the centre of the photograph. C. early 20th century.*

entire borough of Elmbridge with its vast collection of over 40,000 items, a task it had been performing since 1974 when the borough was created. The new 'Elmbridge Museum at 30' exhibition at Cobham Library therefore celebrates 30 years since the Museum became 'Elmbridge' by looking back at key items from its story, from its conception over 100 years ago to its operation as an outreach museum today.

The relatively late expansion is why the largest part of the Museum's collection originates from mainly Weybridge or Walton. Since the creation of Elmbridge, however, efforts have been continually made to take in items from across the wider borough's history. A 'temporary prohibition' on acquisitions was instated in 2005 due to low storage space, but since then special items of particular local interest have been collected. A few of these key items are on display at Cobham in the exhibition. Included amongst them is a fascinating gold finger mourning ring from 1670, engraved with a skull and the initials of the deceased, which was discovered and taken into the Museum in 2008.

## Our work today

Part of what makes Elmbridge Museum special is its ability to adapt to the community's changing needs and interests, while still 'keeping the records of the past together.'

Our evolution continues into the 21st century. During the 1990s to 2000s, a number of temporary touring exhibitions were set up aiming to bring local history into community spaces across the whole borough. This strategy was a success and saw many landmark exhibitions which gained a wide attendance, including displays at the newly built Civic Centre in Esher. In 2014, the decision was taken

to close the Museum's gallery space and operate permanently from the Civic Centre as an outreach museum – while, of course, keeping our large archive of historic material. This enables us to put on displays across a greater number of areas within Elmbridge, with display cases spread far and wide across five locations. We work with community groups to ensure exhibitions are led by them through contributions such as oral histories, and the digital presence of the museum continues to grow.

For more information on the Elmbridge Museum at 30 exhibition, head to our website [elmbridgemuseum.org.uk](http://elmbridgemuseum.org.uk)

**Amy Swainston**  
**Exhibitions & Interpretation Officer,**  
**Elmbridge Museum**

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# Anyone for (Real) tennis?



*The (Real) Tennis Court at Hampton Court Palace*

Anyone for tennis? Good, let's play – inside, of course. But watch out for Hazards – taking a ball off the tambour is tricky. Remember that a shot in the grille is a sure-fire winner, as is one in the winning gallery. If you are 40-love down, do what you can to set a chase, even if it's only 'chase a yard worse', or even 'chase the line'. Or blast a winning ball into the dedans; off the wall is the best tactic here.

Clear as mud? Don't worry, all will become clear after a few hours on the Real Tennis court inside Hampton Court Palace, a hidden jewel in the stunning historic building just over the Thames. The ancestral home of Real Tennis since 1530, this ancient game of kings (and commoners) is still played here today by 500+ dedicated members of the Royal Tennis Court Club

(RTC) – and it's open to all.

Real Tennis lays claim to being the world's oldest racquet sport – that imposter Lawn Tennis evolved from it. It is similar to the lawn game in scoring (15-love, deuce, advantage, game, set, match) but different in many ways – all of them interesting. It is played indoors in what might be described as a squash court on steroids. There's tactics, spin, cut (the phrase 'cut to the chase' came from Real Tennis), speed, aggression, and subtlety. There are serves so fiendishly difficult to return they have their own names: the Railroad, the Bobble, the Boomerang (which rarely comes back).

Sometimes called 'chess on a tennis court' Real Tennis can be played by all ages and levels of ability. RTC members include teenagers taking their first lessons and 80+

year-old players, male and female, who might now creak a bit on court but can still blast a ball at 90mph through a letterbox at 40 paces on their day.



*A bird's eye view of the (Real) tennis court at Hampton Court Palace*

A clever handicap system means players of unequal abilities can still have a tight match. There are singles and doubles games on offer. There are tournaments, local and national, and opportunities for private lessons from some of the top players in the world. There are social functions in the Club garden, and cosy private clubrooms in which to unwind after a match, in front of a roaring fire, glass of RTC-blended wine in hand (yes really), while puzzled palace visitors peer through the panes at your private palatial paradise.

Joining the club is simple: an introductory lesson with a top professional is advised

first. If smitten, there is an age-related joining fee, quarterly subs and an hour's singles is £15 per person. For playing on one of the world's oldest sports courts, in a Royal palace, it's great value. Chase on!

And yes, Henry VIII really did play tennis at Hampton Court, many times. In his athletic youth he was a fine player, and as he got older and fatter he still won his matches – if his opponent knew what was good for him...



*Current Real Tennis World Champion Rob Fahey in action at Hampton Court Palace*

**The club is now actively seeking new members to play this fabulous sport. All ages are welcome, but juniors (roughly under 21) are especially encouraged – they are the future lifeblood of the game.**

If you are interested, we are encouraging groups of up to 10 friends or family members to get in touch to arrange a special offer 'Evening of Real Tennis' on Friday or Saturday evenings between 5pm and 7pm,

with the opportunity to use our clubrooms afterwards for socialising. An evening for both active and spectator participants would consist of a welcome drink, and a one to two-hour introduction to the game from one of our experienced professionals. Cost per group of up to 10 is £65 for one hour, £95 for two hours. Please quote Thames Ditton Today when booking.

Or, if you would like to arrange an individual introduction, we can arrange this at any time, court availability permitting, at a cost of £54 per hour.

Contact the Royal Tennis Court office: [info@royaltenniscourt.com](mailto:info@royaltenniscourt.com) or call 020 8977 3015.



**Andy Anderson**

*The cosy clubroom at the Palace*

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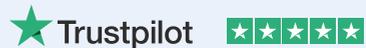
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# At last Secret Gardens were ‘go’



*A Secret Garden awaiting visitors*

What to do in the middle of a Covid year, with a tight deadline and an apocalyptic weather forecast for the day itself? Why... open your garden to the public of course!

Thames Ditton Secret Gardeners are made of stern stuff. After two postponements in 2020 and an interminable lockdown to kick off 2021, nine generous householders did indeed throw open their garden gates to villagers near and far on Saturday July 24 from 2pm to 5.30pm. And this year there was a ‘bonus garden’ selling teas and cakes which was open on the following Sunday, August 1. Ten gardens for a fiver: a bargain.

In spite of forecast gales, rain, hail and localised flooding (it is the English summer, after all) it miraculously stayed dry and warm(ish) on the afternoon, with even a trickle of sunlight occasionally blessing the 250-plus visitors who descended on the various Secret Gardens of Thames Ditton 2021, organised under the auspices of the Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents’ Association.

There were old favourites and new ones, some so stylish they could have graced the cover of a lifestyle magazine, others more densely green and lush (it’s been a wet year),



Secret Gardens tickets were a work of art and one given over to wildlife and recycling, a fine aim in these eco-conscious times.

Everyone who visited seemed delighted to be ‘free’ at last, and all the gardeners were rightly proud of the many warm compliments they were paid for all their hard work in this strangest of years.

As befits a true community event there were many local heroes who helped: local artist Lisa Tolley [www.lisatolley.co.uk](http://www.lisatolley.co.uk) once again generously hand-drew the tickets and map, EKA Services at Hampton Court

[www.ekaservices.co.uk](http://www.ekaservices.co.uk) pulled out the stops to print them in double-quick time, and in Thames Ditton the lovely staff at View Gifts [www.view-gifts.com](http://www.view-gifts.com) and The Secret Garden florist [www.secretgardenfloraldesigns.com](http://www.secretgardenfloraldesigns.com) sold most of the tickets in the preceding days.

In the end, a grand total of £1,540 was raised, of which £300 has been gifted to the lovely Garden of Remembrance at St Nicholas Church with the remainder going to support the High Street Christmas Lights/Christmas Fair fund – which has suffered from Covid-related cancellations.

Here’s hoping for a brighter end to this year. . .

Once again, huge thanks to all Secret Gardeners who took part so enthusiastically and generously in this much-loved village event.



**Andy Anderson**  
**Caroline James (RA Councillor)**  
**Secret Garden organisers**

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# Councillor Gill Coates talks a load of rubbish!



As a local councillor there are several things that appear in my inbox regularly. Planning, obviously. Potholes, understandably (but don't call us, call Nick Darby as highways are a Surrey County Council matter). Then there is litter. Lots of it.

When I say litter, I don't mean our household waste collections, which are handled by a contractor and generally very reliable. I mean the litter that is dropped, or distributed around the bins by foxes and squirrels, on our local green spaces like Ditton Common, Weston Green and Giggs Hill Green. Litter collection here is the responsibility of our local Green Spaces team and their sub-contractors, who manage 114 green spaces and countryside sites across our borough.

If you think the litter problem has got worse recently, you are right. Ordinarily, the team would expect to collect 300-400 kg a day from the various sites. They are now routinely collecting 600-1000 kg a day just from one site alone - Hurst Park in East Molesey. It's a monumental uplift and is clearly a reflection of the huge increase in numbers of people getting outdoors and enjoying the open air.

So how is the Council responding? Well, last year they increased the frequency of bin emptying over the summer and installed larger capacity bins at popular sites, at a cost of £100,000 (some of which was funded by the Government's COVID response fund).

In April 2021, an additional £40,000 of Council Tax funds was diverted to boost the number of temporary bins around the borough, increase frequency of collections



*Rubbish is a blight on our environment*

again and pay a sub-contractor to do regular litter picks at the worst 'hot spots'. This autumn there will be new fox-proof bins installed in some areas at further cost from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money.

It seems an awful lot of money for something that is so easily preventable - money that could be used in many other ways to improve our green spaces.

Leaving litter behind after a day out - even cramming it into the top of an already-full bin and hoping for the best - is anti-social behaviour. The Countryside Code tells us to 'take your litter home and leave no trace of your visit'. But it's more than anti-social. Littering is a criminal offence and can lead to fines of up to £2,500, which is one expensive packet of crisps!

I've written to Dominic Raab MP, urging the government to run a public information campaign about litter, highlighting the cost to the public purse, the dangers to wildlife

and (until we get better bins everywhere) the missed opportunity for recycling. I got a lengthy reply, but they're not going to take up my suggestion.

So, it's up to us as parents, grandparents, teachers, neighbours, friends, to always take our own litter home with us and urge everyone we know to do the same. Our Green Spaces team chose their careers to work in the great outdoors, managing our woodlands, commons and recreational areas, not to pick up our waste. And who wants the Council spending our money on a whole load of rubbish?

**Gill Coates**  
**RA Councillor**

## CHEER trustees needed

Set up more than 60 years ago, CHEER is a local charity that provides a befriending service, hosts events and helps with benefits advice and signposting to other services for over-65s in the borough.

With minimal resources, a small team of staff and a dedicated group of volunteers, the charity really makes a difference and helps older people to lead full, dignified and independent lives.

CHEER is currently looking for several new Trustees willing to help shape the strategic direction of the charity and its activities.

They are particularly interested in people who have experience of one or more of the following:

- Older people and social care
- Fundraising
- Marketing and digital communications

- Financial, accounting and regulatory (for the Treasurer role)
- Human Resources
- Legal
- Business management and planning

There are just a handful of meetings each year, but they'd love to hear from enthusiastic and committed people who are prepared to get involved and take a hands-on role.

If this sounds like you, please call Julian Rye (a long-standing CHEER Trustee) to find out more. He can be reached on 07774 137149, or email to [jerye@uwclub.net](mailto:jerye@uwclub.net).



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# Meet your distributors – Gordon Wratten



**Your copy of Thames Ditton Today was put through your letterbox by one of our distributors. Who are they and what are they up to when they are not delivering magazines?**

An area of East Molesey became part of Thames Ditton ward following the boundary changes in 2016. The Elmbridge Borough Councillors are Caroline James, Alex Batchelor and Karen Randolph. Residents in this area receive Thames Ditton Today.

Gordon delivers to Orchard Lane, East Molesey.

**How and when did you start living in East Molesey?**

We bought this house in 1973. I moved from North West London to work in Kingston. Orchard Lane has lots of open space with playing fields, gardens, and the riverside, yet in easy reach of the station.

**A brief ‘potted biography’?**

I was born and brought up in Middlesbrough. My father was in the steel industry. My parents were keen on tennis. He became an umpire and even umpired at Wimbledon, so we travelled to many tournaments to spectate. I went to Hugh Bell Secondary school, followed by college for Economics and British Constitution, but I consider myself largely self-educated.

During my National Service in the RAF, I was placed with the Met Office and produced weather maps. I have continued to be keenly interested in meteorology. Then I worked for The National Provincial Bank which became NatWest and then RBS. My last placing was in Cobham. I retired in

1992.

I am married to Marie, who is Chinese but brought up in South Africa. We met at the Intervarsity Club where she ran the Opera and Ballet group and organised theatre trips. Marie was a nurse.



*Gordon and his wife Marie*

**What hobbies and activities do you enjoy?**

During a holiday to Butlins, when I was young, I was introduced to ballroom dancing by watching a very high-quality event. It inspired me to join a local dance school run by Andy Fox and Beryl Wilson, who were Scottish professional champions. I danced for many years and of course love to watch Strictly.

I practised Tai Chi, the Yang style long form, and in 2002 went to China for an



*Gordon in his 'flamenco days'*

International Congress. For many, the shorter 24 form is better and it can be reduced to QiGong and even further to the Taoist eight section brocade – which is like a moving meditation. Look at YouTube and you can teach yourself!

I am part of the congregation of All Saints, Weston Green and a member of the PCC. Sadly, the numbers attending church have been reduced by the pandemic and I hope that in the future people will feel confident enough to return to services and other church groups.

**Is there one thing that perhaps people don't know about you?**

I performed in a flamenco dance company! When living in Hampstead I discovered a Spanish dance teacher, Tani Morena. I trained and then performed for three years. I stopped because I enjoyed training more than performing.

**Pat Cooke**

**Quick Fire Questions**

**Favourite pub?**

I avoided pubs when you could smoke indoors because I hated cigarette smoke.

**Favourite restaurant?**

I love Pizza Express. I'm not vegetarian but it has some interesting vegetarian options.

**Favourite book?**

I prefer classic novels and biographies but also spend a lot of time reading science books and in particular learning more about climate change.

**Favourite music?**

Anything lyrical like Gershwin, Cole Porter or Jerome Kern or from a musical – this goes back to my ballroom dancing days.

**Favourite holiday?**

We enjoy cruises. Marie and I always take part in the passenger entertainment. She sings and I do stand-up comedy. I specialise in one- liners, but my best act is when Marie joins me as the 'stooge'.

# TRY HOCKEY AT SURBITON HC...

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*2 hours*

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"Surbiton HC is a community - it makes me feel comfortable and really contributes to my enjoyment of living in the local area."

Chantelle, SHC player

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Follow us on Twitter and Instagram @surbitonhc or Surbiton Hockey Club on Facebook to find out about upcoming events at the club.

# Facebook, looking back and linking up



*Thames Ditton High Street 1908*

Living as we do in Thames Ditton's historic High Street one of the fun things about social media is spotting our present house on increasingly old photos.

The wonderful Facebook page, Esher, Claygate, Dittons, Memories, Local History and Genealogy has given many of us hours of pleasure seeing history brought to life through old photos, stories, or memories.

This private site currently has 3,500 members, each one personally welcomed by a diligent admin team. I wondered how it all got started, so I had a chat with Terry Gale, prolific poster and site administrator to find out a bit more about it. Just how did he and fellow administrators Terri Last,

Paul Eggleton and Martin Chaplin come to create such a wonderful Facebook site?

For Terry it started with his interest in genealogy; his family had been in Claygate from 1600 and only left about ten years ago. He had a great deal of family to research. In the 1800s his great-grandfather had two wives and 15 children: ten with his first wife in Claygate and five with his second wife in Chessington. That seems like a genealogy site all of its own!

Terry was born in Claygate and went to Claygate Primary School 1956–1961 and later to Wayneflete (subsequently Esher High School). Paul Eggleton, his brother's friend from Claygate, had family



*Thames Ditton High Street 2021*

connections from Long Ditton, and they got together over a shared interest in genealogy. As the internet developed Terry became a member of Genes Reunited in 2000 (yes there was a time before Facebook) where he discovered he might be related to a lady in Tolworth called Terri Last who shared the same great grandfather. From Genes Reunited Terry and Terri (yes, it can be confusing) established an e-mail list of 8 to 10 people collaborating on research.

Continuing his hunt for family history Terry joined a Kingston Memories site. Having no pictures of Kingston, Terry put up one featuring Box Hill titled 'What to do on a summer's day'. The response amazed him. He could see there was a huge desire to see and talk about pictures from the past, but there was no equivalent site for Claygate and Esher. So he set about changing that.

Terry, Terri and Paul along with Martin (Terry's first friend from primary school) had long been thinking about starting a group for local history memories. In

2015 they decided 'let's do it' and set up a Facebook page for Esher, Claygate and Dittons memories. With an eye to the future Terry quickly headhunted Janet Heskins, in his words "*a proper historian!*" and now they were up and running. Terry said, "*it was fascinating, more and more people came on the site that we hadn't seen for fifty years we couldn't wait to see who else might join us*".

I asked for people's experiences using the site and what it meant to them. Many contributions highlighted the opportunity to connect with or hear about friends from the past. Terry alone has rediscovered 12 friends from primary school and a big group from Waynefflete. As a result of the page Sue Franklin organised a Waynefflete School Reunion at the old school which was attended by 250 former pupils.

Jane Roberts said: "*It has given us the opportunity to come together with long-lost classmates and meet up after 60 years.*"

Nigel Bradford said: *“I left Claygate at 16 to join the Merchant Navy and never really came back, as my parents moved shortly after. Through this group I have reconnected with a lot of my childhood friends, and my ‘first love’ after 50 years. We have become great friends and have so much in common!”*

The ability to fill in family trees and make connections with relatives is another benefit of the site. Jackie Blackman said: *“I have made contact with so many relatives, some I knew of but had never met and others who I didn’t know of at all. It’s been so lovely to hear about my Grandad’s brothers and sisters and their descendants as well as more distant relatives.”*

And of course, those old photos of people and places give everyone pleasure. Perhaps one of the highlights was when a lady in her 90s was pictured on the site holding a school photo from the 1930s with her in it, which her granddaughter had found on the page. A real example of connecting the generations.

Wendy Herbert-Edwards spoke for the many users who now live abroad when she said *“I live in the U.S.A. now and it just takes me home”*

The contributors also congratulated the admin team for managing the site so well... so what does it take? For a start they are able to keep an admin eye on the site round the clock as founder member Paul Eggleton now lives in Los Angeles.

The site does not allow advertising or general community posts, whether lost dogs or planning applications, which provides a welcome refuge from much day-to-day social media. Needless to say, no nasty comments are permitted.

Usually someone will put up a post first thing in the morning so that people can look and comment during the day. Site

members commented about the *‘friendly and knowledgeable admin.’* Which may not be a surprise when you know that two of the administrators are also on the committee of Esher and District Local History Society. Terry is the Chairman and magazine editor whilst Terri Last is the website manager.

In response to a huge demand for similar pages Terry and the team also started Facebook pages for Kingston Surbiton Tolworth (more than 8,000 members) Epsom, Ewell, Cheam and Ashted; Weybridge and Walton and surrounding areas; and Byfleet and Cobham. They even set up the Claygate and Esher Community page for community posts to keep them separate, now with 5,000 members.

In our global and interconnected world it is nice to know that there are quiet, friendly online spaces where you can look at old photos, chat about past times, catch up with old friends and make new ones. In the words of site user Alan Taylor: *“Well done Terry and all the members of the group for keeping both the past and present so alive.”*

**Libby MacIntyre**

### **Esher District Local History Society**

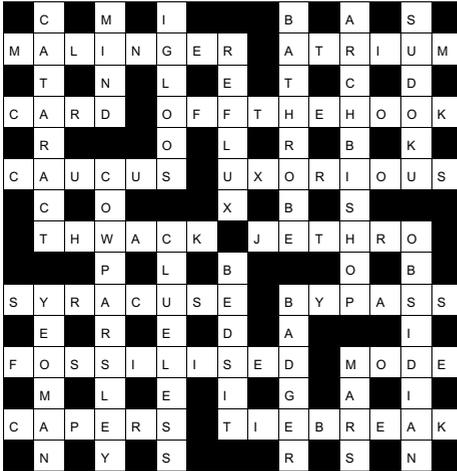
**are restarting their meetings on  
Saturday September 18**

at 2.30pm  
Holy Trinity Church Hall,  
Claygate  
KT10 0JP.

Dr Alan Wright will be giving a talk on *“Travelling through the archives – Gypsies in Victorian and Edwardian England”*.

Members free, guests £3 including refreshments.

# Solution to the Summer Crossword

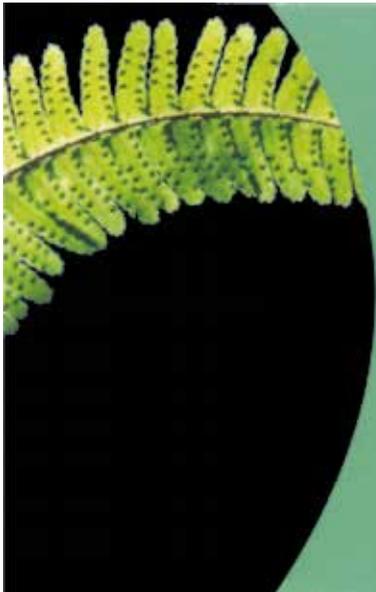


Congratulations to the senders of the first three correct entries opened in the shuffle. Each wins a £5 voucher to spend in local shops.

John Rinaldi  
37 Aragon Avenue  
KT7 0PY

Barbara Kirk  
4 St Helens  
Weston Green Road

Pauline Terry  
24 Westville Road  
KT7 0UJ



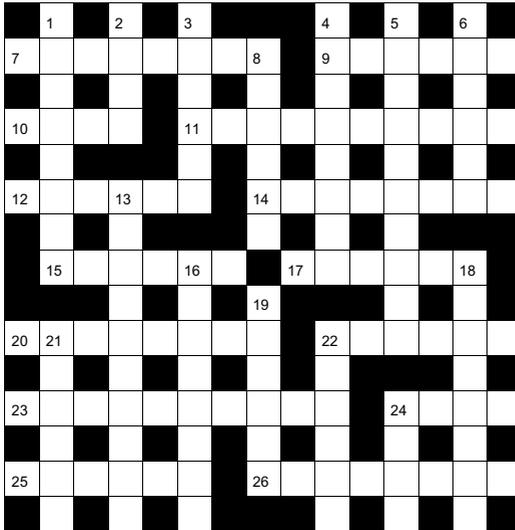
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# Auntumn Crossword



by Howard and Bob Cruthers

The first three correct entries randomly opened after the closing date of October 22, 2021 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  
24 High Street  
Thames Ditton  
KT7 0RY

## ACROSS CLUES

- 7 Arms a nag (anag) (8)
- 9 La Boheme and The Marriage of Figaro, for example (6)
- 10 Askew (4)
- 11 Bullied, around the head? (10)
- 12 Mysterious (6)
- 14 Violated (anag) – fit together tightly (8)
- 15 Cue actor in a timely fashion? (6)
- 17 Heraldic silver (6)
- 20 Indiscriminate brushing? (8)
- 22 Vacillate (6)
- 23 Clueless trainee astronaut? (5, 5)
- 24 Blackball (4)
- 25 Practical jokes (6)
- 26 Tube-shaped pasta (8)

## DOWN CLUES

- 1 Herbaceous plant, "Galanthus" (8)
- 2 Unprepossessing (4)
- 3 Ken's doll partner (6)
- 4 Bobby Charlton's hairstyle? (8)
- 5 Area of expertise, in a large organisation? (10)
- 6 Type of Judaism (6)
- 8 Poor, especially of workmanship (6)
- 13 Teenager (10)
- 16 Amalia of Holland or Charlene of Monaco, say (8)
- 18 Bird's noise, on its mobile? (8)
- 19 Moroccan port (6)
- 21 Windscreen clearers (6)
- 22 Senility (6)
- 24 Checks animals? (4)

# SERVICES, CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

## SERVICES

Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	Manager	01372 879321
Dittons & Weston Green NeighbourCare	Frankie Bell	07790 472993
<b>Elmbridge Borough Council Community Support Services</b>		
Thames Ditton Centre for the community	Mon & Thurs	0208 3985921
Thames Ditton Dementia Centre	Nikki Harding	01372 474526
Meals on Wheels, Community Transport, Dial-a-Ride, Alarm & Telecare services, Relief Carers	ask for service at central switchboard	01372 474552
Homesupport Elmbridge	Thomasina Breslin	01932 267128
Esher and District Stroke Club	Ann Pollock	0208398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Sally Dubery	01372 463587
Surrey Youth and Adult Education Service	Elmbridge Area	020 8979 8334

## GROUPS

1st Thames Ditton Brownies	Bronach Hughes	bronachhughes@hotmail.com
3rd Thames Ditton Brownies	Bronach Hughes	bronachhughes@hotmail.com
2nd Thames Ditton Rainbows	Heather Crowe	heathercrowe@hotmail.com
1st Weston Green (All Saints) Scout Group	Carole Needham	gsl@westongreenscouts.org.uk
1st Weston Green Guides	Sumathi Jeevaratnam	sumathi.jeevaratnam@gmail.com
2nd Weston Green Guides	Helen Lawson	helenlawson287@gmail.com
2nd Thames Ditton Guides	Bronach Hughes	bronachhughes@hotmail.com
1st Weston Green Brownies (All Saints)		lwgbrownies@gmail.com
3rd Weston Green Brownies	Gillian Twomey	gtwomey@hotmail.com
1st Weston Green Rainbows	Lizzie Owen	westongreenrainbows@gmail.com
4th Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts	Alison Derrick	020 8398 0041
Dittons Scout Group	Stuart Jack	07971 479740
Emberbrook Trefoil Guild	Mary Bowen	020 8398 6857
Friends of Bushey and Home Parks	Jean Smith	020 8977 9391
Girlguiding in Thames Ditton and Weston Green		dittonsdistrict.hjh@gmail.com
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chiken	0208 398 2932
Molesey and Dittons Neighbourhood Watch	Chairman: John Haberfield	020 8398 5256
Parents and Toddlers(St Nicholas church)	Information	020 8398 7211
Ripieno Choir	Nick Harris	020 8399 7231
Surrey Bell-ringers	Giles Andre	020 8979 1994

## CLUBS

Albany Motor Yacht Club	Secretary	01784466651
All Saints Weston Lunch Club	Val Atkinson	020 8398 1117
Arts and Heritage Club	Carol Butcher	01932 867511
Cercle Francais d'Esher	Brigitte Tiller	01932 860842 brigitte@ptiller.com
Claygate Bridge Club	Hon. Secretary	020 8398 1710
Colets Health & Fitness	Giordano Orsini	020 8398 7108
Ditton Bridge Club	John Dagnall	02083984463
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	Elaine Sesemann	07801 943392
Ember Sports Club	Zenda Hedges	07717 304146
Ember Sports Club: Bowls	Sylvia Jones	01932 788701
Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Dr. David Cooke	01932 862841
Ember Sports Club: Tennis	Annabel Duncan	0208 786 6318
Esher Bowling Club	Roger Cooper	01372 468109
Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Esher 41 and Ex-Round Tablers' Club	Dr. R. Tudor-Williams	020 8398 0108
Folk Dance Club (St Nicholas)	David Ford	020 8715 2148
Long Ditton Cricket Club	Nigel Hardy	020 8398 8361
Long Ditton Garden Club	Heather Harvey	020 8398 2642
Model Railway Society (Hampton Court)	Secretary	01932 241224
Old Cranleigh Rugby Club	Tony Price	07801 837129
Old Cranleigh Hockey Club	Simon Marshall (Men)	07801 737695
	Helen Hawes (Ladies)	07771 557900
Probus club, Hinchley Wood & the Dittons	Edmund Woolley	020 8398 3581
Probus Club, Sandown	Julian Rye	01932 976994
Probus Club of Molesey	Roger Marlow	0208 398 5460
River Club (BMYC)	David Walker	0870 460 3586
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

### SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance	Mrs Brenda Denby	0208 398 6054
Ember Choral	Linda Bridges	020 8399 5402
Esher and Molesey Garden Society	Jean Billett	01372 465961
Esher and District Amnesty International	Cherry Eddy (Campaigns)	0208 398 4377
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Lettings: Piotr Hennig	020 8398 5358
Long Ditton Youth Club	Toni Izard	07749 633973
Lynwood Allotment Society	Gill Vickers	020 8398 4870
Molesey and District Antiques Society	Linda Lambert	020 8398 1476
NADFAS (Decorative & Fine Arts) Kingston	Mrs. Valerie Windsor	020 8549 9967
Oxshott & Cobham Music Society	Cherry Eddy (Membership)	0208 398 4377 cherryeddy102@gmail.com
Thames Ditton Women's Institute (W.I.)	Secretary	020 8398 8615

### OTHER

Cancer Research UK	Mrs. Vivienne Harris	020 8398 6787
University of the Third Age (U3A)	Hon Sec Anne Brown	01932 881633
Vera Fletcher Hall	Lettings: Amelia Crafts	08456 528 529
	Membership: Sue Morris	020 8224 0980
Weston Green Conservation Area Advisory Committee		wgcaac@outlook.com

**Please contact the Editor to amend these listings**

# The Vera Fletcher Hall Theatre is Re-opening



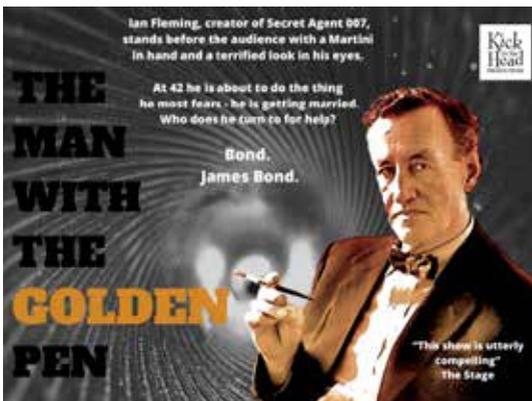
Giles is passionate about theatre and bringing the very best to the Vera Fletcher Hall. He joins at a particularly exciting time as VFH prepares to re-open the doors to its professional theatre season. We have a new website which will carry news of upcoming events and there will be regular e-newsletters reminding you of what shows are happening (sign up via the website). Giles will be supported by Hermione Delamare who runs the Front of House and bar operations for the events. We are always looking for people who are interested in volunteering behind the bar or Front of House for the shows. If you want to

Times are new and exciting at the Vera Fletcher Hall. Our theatre programmer, Claire Evans, who has been bringing events to the VFH since 2014, is having to focus her energies on running the Turbine Theatre in Battersea and an annual Summer Play Festival in Devon. Stepping on to the stage from stage left and into the spotlight is a face very familiar to VFH audiences. Our new theatre programmer is Giles Shenton, most recently seen in *Old Herbaceous* at a Garden Theatre event held to raise funds for the VFH, and a frequent performer at the Hall in plays such as *Three Men in a Boat* and *My Dog's Got No Nose*



find out more, email Hermione at [hiring@verafletcherhall.co.uk](mailto:hiring@verafletcherhall.co.uk)

Our new season will be announced shortly, but dates to be put in your diary are Friday October 1 when we re-open with a welcome burst of nostalgia and a Film Night presentation of Ian Fleming's *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* which is a prelude to Kick in the Head's latest production *Man with The Golden Pen* featuring NT and West End actor Jonathan Coote. We have a very special performance for Christmas time, a Vera Merry Christmas, with West End performer Alison Carter. We will also be welcoming back VFH favourites Charles Court Opera. If you are a fan of their legendary pantomimes, then Express G&A is for a must-see for you, a fast paced whodunnit with lots of much-loved G&S songs. Keep an eye on the website, the poster boards outside the Hall and sign up for the newsletter and be part of the Vera Fletcher Hall, keeping theatre live and local.



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