

# THAMES DITTON TODAY

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
THAMES DITTON & WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
SUMMER 2021

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# THAMES DITTON TODAY

Published quarterly since 1970

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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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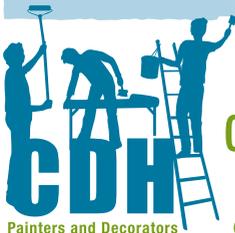
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# THAMES DITTON AND WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## 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

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12 Basing Close, Thames Ditton 020 8398 2382

### **Thames Ditton Borough Councillors**

Alex Batchelor,  
12 Hayward Road,  
Thames Ditton 07710 943140  
Caroline James,  
Laurel Cottage, 20 High Street,  
Thames Ditton 07970 672723  
Karen Randolph,  
Deepfield, Giggs Hill Road,  
Thames Ditton 020 8398 5005

### **Hinchley Wood & Weston Green Borough Councillors**

Gill Coates,  
The Oaks, Orchard Gate,  
Esher 020 8873 3040  
Janet Turner, 2 Montgomery Ave,  
Hinchley Wood 020 8398 1565  
Nigel Haig-Brown  
53 Heathside, Esher 020 8398 4060

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1 Boyle Farm Road, Thames Ditton 020 8786 6882  
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Willow End, River Bank, Thames Ditton 07736 677671



## THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE

June 29, 8pm – In person, lockdown easing permitting - see website for details  
September 21, 8pm – In person, lockdown easing permitting - see website for details

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# News from the Residents' Association to end-May



## May Elections

Thank you for turning out to vote. The local elections held on May 6 demonstrated overwhelming support for our Residents' Association (RA) candidates.

Our two new candidates for Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) standing in Thames Ditton and Weston Green were elected with overwhelming majorities.

For Thames Ditton, Alex Batchelor polled 56% of the vote, beating four other candidates. For Hinchley Wood and Weston Green, Gill Coates polled 59% of the vote, beating three other candidates.

Voters also recognized the hard work of our sitting Surrey County Councillor Nick Darby, returning him with 50% of the vote and 1,500 votes clear of the nearest of four challengers. He continues as leader of the opposition. See his update on page 13.

## Gill Coates: RA EBC Councillor Hinchley Wood & Weston Green



Gill has lived in Weston Green for more than 20 years.

In her time as a Weston Green resident she has combined many roles: commuter, mum, dog owner, carer and a volunteer both as a trustee of Citizens Advice and with Meals on Wheels. She now brings all that experience to her new role as a councillor.

## Alex Batchelor: RA EBC Councillor Thames Ditton



Alex has lived in Thames Ditton for 26 years. He is Chair of a market research agency and a business consultant. His four children all attended Thames Ditton Infants School, where Alex served as a Governor.

Alex is now in a position to bring his understanding of life in the local community to his new role as a councillor.

Alex and Gill are following in the footsteps of two amazing RA Councillors who retire this year. Tannia Shipley (Hinchley Wood & Weston Green and Tricia Bland (Thames Ditton). We cannot thank them enough for all the work they have put in to supporting our local area (see articles pages 27 and 29).

Also, a huge thank you is due to Peter Haynes, who acted as election agent, and to all the volunteers who delivered manifestos and canvassed support.

## Elmbridge Borough Council administration

The results of the election to the Local Borough Council means that it remains an RA/ Liberal Democrat administration, allowing continuity in these very difficult times.

## Significant threat to local government and our High Street

The local elections proved that electors appreciate having independent local councillors. At the same time, we see a

significant threat to local democracy and to our high streets from central government.

The RA has consistently drawn attention to proposals by the government to enact legislation giving permitted development rights (PDRs) to convert retail properties to residential **without the requirement for planning permission** and consequently no oversight from local elected authorities.

It is extraordinary that the government seems set on this course, despite the pandemic demonstrating our reliance on local shops and the fact that where and how we work is likely to differ significantly in the future.

We have written regularly both to Robert Jenrick, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and our local Conservative MP, Dominic Raab. Our correspondence can be found on our website **residents-association.com** The most recent letter to Dominic Raab is opposite.

*The Times 1st February 2021*

# Converting shops to homes 'could destroy town centres'

Louisa Clarence-Smith  
Property Correspondent

Britain's biggest association for property developers has warned of the damaging impact of government plans to allow high streets to be converted into housing without planning permission.

The British Property Federation (BPF), whose members include Ham-merson, British Land and Land Securities, said the proposal would exacerbate the decline of high streets and hit local government finances.

The housing department began a consultation last month proposing new permitted development rights to enable more shops and other business premises to be converted into housing without planning permission as a solu-

tion to the decline of town centres. The BPF said that it would lead to developers prioritising residential conversions over lower-value retailers, restaurants, crèches or community hubs, which will be required to increase footfall in town centres when it is safe to do so.

Ian Fletcher, of the BPF, said: "Poorly planned homes will do more harm than good. It'll result in quick delivery of new homes without taking into consideration what the entire high street requires to serve the community." Neither would the plan address "pressure on local resources such as GPs, parking and classroom sizes", the BPF warned.

Permitted development rights were first introduced in 2013 to let developers convert offices into flats without planning permission.

# Open letter to our MP Dominic Raab

## Subject: Our Local Shops



The letter below sent to Dominic Raab on 4 May

4 May 2020

*Dear Dominic,*

*In January this year, we responded to your Government's consultation on the extension of Permitted Development Rights, which included the proposal to allow retail premises to convert to residential use without need for planning permission.*

*I forwarded you a copy of our response which set out our considerable concerns and asked for your assurance that you supported our local shops. Sadly, I received no response from you. I assume, therefore, that you fully support the proposed changes which will become law in August this year.*

*Whilst we accept that there may be some parts of the country where derelict high streets could be suitable for re-development, this is not the case in others. In Thames Ditton, Hinchley Wood and most of Elmbridge, residential property prices are at a level where there will be a substantial 'premium' available to commercial property owners and developers who shut down shops and re-develop them as residential units.*

*This will be piecemeal development which will do very little to contribute to our housing need but will come at the expense of valuable assets in the community which have served us well, especially over the last year.*

*Your local Conservative candidate in his election manifesto says that, if elected, he will be 'a champion for our local shops'. Quite how he can make such a statement is beyond me given the change in the law which is only 3 months away!*

*Surely, there is still time for a re-think? If a legacy of the pandemic in Elmbridge is the death of local shops, it will be your Government that will be held to account.*

*The local community needs to understand your position and I would ask for your response as soon as possible.*

*Regards,*

*Graham*

**Graham Cooke**  
**Chair Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association**

Dominic's office replied to say that that it would ask him to write to Robert Jenrick to raise our concerns and call for change and said that he *'is very keen to support local high streets in Elmbridge.'* However, we have yet to see a copy of the letter and he has not answered our question about whether he supported the change in the law.

Even some property developers have called this a dangerous precedent, saying it would *'exacerbate the decline of high streets and hit local government finances.'*

The legislation also means no oversight of quality or design of buildings to ensure that they complement the local area. Such oversight costs us, the taxpayer, money to process. However, no fees are payable for PDRs.

The government has slightly modified its extension of permitted development rights to Conservation Areas by placing additional restrictions on what would be acceptable as permitted development. It will now be more difficult than previously indicated. 'prior approval' will now be required (this is not the same as planning permission, which would not be required) if the development relates to conservation areas such as Thames Ditton High Street and Bridge Road in East Molesey. Such prior approval will be needed where the development relates to the ground floor, or if the change of use will have an impact on the character or sustainability of the conservation area.

Be aware that this drive for development comes on top of 1.1 million planning permissions granted and not built, as our chairman pointed out in his recent letter to The Times.

If you care about maintaining local shops and having a say in what happens to your local area, please make your views known.

Write to:

**Robert Jenrick**

*robert.jenrick.mp@parliament.uk*

**Boris Johnson**

*boris.johnson.mp@parliament.uk*

**Dominic Raab**

*dominic.raab.mp@parliament.uk*

If you know Carrie Johnson (nee Symonds) it could be worth dropping her a line!

## Village Bakery staying open



*Laurent Trega at the Thames Ditton Bakery*

Villagers (and many others who were drawn by the lure of baked goods) are delighted that Laurent Trega has taken over the bakery at No 16 Thames Ditton High Street. It is now known as Thames Ditton Bakery and continues to provide a wonderful selection of bread and other goodies.

## AGM

We made a little bit of RA history when we held our first AGM via Zoom. We were lucky to have a wonderful speaker, Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary of the Open Spaces Society, talking to us about its history and work. Read Kate's article on page 15.

## Future of the River Mole

The consultation on the Lower Mole Flood Alleviation Scheme is now closed and the

Environment Agency reports that ‘*Over the coming months, we will be developing our options to incorporate all of the feedback received*’. We will let you know when further information becomes available.



*The sunny return of the Farmers' Market*

## Farmers' Market

April saw the welcome return of the Farmers' Market at the Mercer Close car park, and it is back on the 4th Saturday of each month. Thank you to all the volunteers who make this possible and we look forward to seeing you there.

## Planning

The appeal against EBCs decision to refuse the planning application for development at Sandown Racecourse has been dismissed. The decision document is long and can be found on the EBC website, however in summary it says: “*The Secretary of State considers that the benefits of the scheme... would not clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the harm to the character and appearance of the area.*”

At time of writing there has been no application received for the Guy Salmon site on the Portsmouth Road, now owned by Aldi.

Part of **Bleakleys Tiles** at **Winter's Bridge** will be turned into a residential flat despite numerous objections. The application under Permitted Development (PD) rights removes the ability of local residents' voices to be heard. There are very few reasons for a PD application to be reserved, flooding and

environmental concerns are the main ones. This is the tip of the iceberg and the RA is lobbying our local MP to get this very unpopular legislation changed, we must do all we can to stop our high streets becoming residential wastelands.

## Thames Ditton in Bloom

May 16 saw a Thames Ditton in Bloom team planting the huge selection of containers on Thames Ditton Station platform with a selection of plants from begonias to gazanias. They were joined by staff from South Western Railway who also rolled up their sleeves to help. Thanks to Tricia and Will Bland for organising and fuelling the work with cake; all the super volunteers for planting; the Boomerang Bag Sewing Bees for beautiful bunting to deck the ticket office; and to AI, who came specially to give out complementary teas and coffees!



*The planting team at Thames Ditton Station*

Follow them on Twitter [@TDInBloom](https://twitter.com/TDInBloom), or to find out more email [tricia@the-lands.co.uk](mailto:tricia@the-lands.co.uk)

## Residents' Association

[www.residents-association.com](http://www.residents-association.com) or follow us on Twitter [@TDresidents](https://twitter.com/TDresidents)

## Dates for your diary

### Farmers' Market

Mercer Close Car Park  
(opposite the Library),  
9am-1pm; Saturday June 26, Saturday  
July 23, Saturday August 28.

### Weston Green Litter Pickers

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

### Thames Ditton Litter Pickers

Meet on the third Saturday of the month  
at 10.45 for 11am start in the car park at  
Thames Ditton Lawn Tennis Club.

### 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 (Exhibitions & Interpretation Officer, Elmbridge Museum).
- Saturday November 20, Jane Lewis of The Surrey History Centre on Corsets & Cameras!

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# Update from Nick Darby, Surrey County Councillor



With the local elections becoming a distant memory, I must thank those who voted for me, and for giving me another 4 years to represent all residents in the Dittons. Our Independent / Residents Association group at Surrey now has 16 seats, up from 11. I am thrilled we remain the largest opposition group (Labour 2, Greens 2, Lib Dems 14). As a result, I am leader of the official opposition. We will continue to hold the administration to account, for instance in relation to the recently recommissioned children's mental health contract.

As to the Dittons, my recent involvement includes:-

- a meeting with the customer services director of Thames Water and liaising with Surrey officers to encourage better coordination of Thames Water works
- highlighting the proposal for a new 18 metre phone mast at the Speer Road/ Summer Road junction. If only there was a mast register which the various providers could access and an effort to coordinate suitable sites. There is a fine balance between better connectivity and a visual eyesore!
- looking into drainage issues at Mercer Close - a work in progress
- checking and chasing timing for installation of new yellow lines at various locations around the Dittons e.g. at Ditton Reach to help the Sea Scouts exit their compound
- working for the replacement of the Ash Path sign
- provisional agreement with my Surrey Highways contacts for the resurfacing of the footways on Station Road and



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

Watts Road Thames Ditton, also ongoing discussion about works to Grove Way Weston Green

And finally, the Local Plan - I cannot emphasise too strongly the need for protection of our Green Belt and open spaces, at the same time avoiding poorly designed development elsewhere - these areas play an essential role in providing openness and separation, also preventing us becoming indistinguishable from Kingston. Quite apart from and in addition to that, Stokes Field, One Tree Hill, the cricket club and hockey club, and the allotments all play a vital role in our health and wellbeing, readily accessible and providing a variety of recreational uses.

All political groups in Elmbridge have said they aspire to this - recent manifestos are clear. Now is the time to deliver this community vision.

**Nick Darby –  
SCC Leader of the Opposition**



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# The Opens Spaces Society - saving our open spaces



*Hindhead Common, bought in 1906 by the Open Spaces Society and given to the National Trust*

The Open Spaces Society is Britain's oldest national conservation body, founded as the Commons Preservation Society on 19 July 1865. Its first chairman was Lord Eversley (George Shaw Lefevre, the Liberal MP for Reading). Others involved were Octavia Hill and Robert Hunter (who later founded the National Trust), John Stuart Mill, William Morris, and establishment figures like the Duke of Westminster, and WH Smith.

The society has always been involved in protecting and saving common land. Contrary to its name such land is owned, but it is special because others have rights there, to collect wood or bracken, dig peat or graze animals. These rights are used in connection with the commoners' own

properties and the produce cannot be sold commercially.

Once much of England and Wales was common land, but following the enclosures of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a great deal was lost. However, that which remains is important for its natural habitats and beauty, wildlife, archaeology and cultural heritage. The public has the right to walk there and, on some commons, the right to ride.

In its early days, the Commons Preservation Society's legal experts helped commoners to defend their rights. Among the society's early successes was the rescue of Hampstead Heath, Wimbledon Common and Epping Forest from exploitation.



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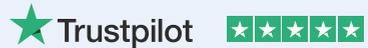
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The society fought many parliamentary bills which threatened commons. In 1896 it saved part of Mitcham Common from the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. Also, in that year it defeated the Petersham and Ham Lands Bill which would have allowed the enclosure of 300 acres of Ham Common Fields. There is much land that remains open today because of the early efforts of the Open Spaces Society.

The society's founders created the National Trust in 1895, recognising that the best way to save land was to own it. Through local committees the society raised money to buy land which it gave to the Trust, such as the Devil's Punchbowl at Hindhead Common, Surrey, in 1906.

Inspired by Octavia Hill, the society took on rights of way, and in 1899 merged with the National Footpaths Society. It drafted much of the Rights of Way Act 1932 which enabled the public to claim routes as highways after 20 years' use without interruption or challenge - an important rule to this day.

In 1965 the Commons Registration Act provided only three years for registering all the commons in England and Wales, and the society led the charge in identifying as many as it could—though the registers remain incomplete. Works on commons need the consent of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in addition to any planning permission. The society is notified of, and responds to, all such applications, arguing for the public interest.

It also campaigns for open spaces which are used and enjoyed by the public, by right or informally. Those spaces with the strongest protection are the towns and village greens, registered usually because they have been used informally for 20 years by local people without permission or challenge. Registration as a green gives local people rights of recreation there and protects the land from development.

However, in 2013 it became much more difficult to claim greens. The Growth and Infrastructure Act outlawed the registration



*Kingsmead Field was voluntarily registered as a green in 2019 by Canterbury City Council,*

of any land which was threatened with development.

The society encourages communities to explore local green spaces to see if they are eligible for village green status. If so, local people should gather evidence of use and apply to the county council for registration

before the land is threatened. Also, it is open to any landowner, voluntarily, to register land as a green and thereby secure its protection - one trick is to persuade landowning parish and town councils to do this in the public interest.

As people have discovered their local open spaces and paths during the pandemic those assets have become much more valued. Yet at the same time they are under unprecedented threat from the proposed weakening of the planning system.

This makes the society's work for commons, greens, open spaces, and paths

more important than ever before in its 156-year history. The society welcomes your membership and support so that it can keep up the fight.



**Kate Ashbrook , General Secretary of the Open Spaces Society**

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# Meet your distributors - John Raeside



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

**John delivers to Ember Lane.**

## How and when did you start living in Weston Green?

My late wife, Judy, and I worked and lived abroad for many years. We actually bought this house via the internet from Australia without viewing it! We had owned a house in East Molesey before that and we split our year between the UK and Oz. Family reasons eventually brought us back to this country permanently in 2006.

## How did you become a distributor?

I really can't remember but I guess somebody asked me or a mate suggested it. I like to help out if it's something I agree with.

## A brief 'potted biography'?

I was born in Clapham, South West London which was not as gentrified as it is these days. I went to a local primary school and then a scholarship to Emanuel, Battersea. I took a science degree at London and spent a couple of years working for a chain of pharmacies until a job advertisement in *The Pharmaceutical Journal* caught my eye – "*Be Our Man In The Caribbean*"! I could see myself on a tropical island so I applied.

I made it onto the short list but was eventually offered a post in Ghana. West Africa had a grim reputation at that time – but I loved it! I have worked and lived all over the world – Africa, The Middle East, Switzerland, Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong, where I met and married my wife who was Australian. I have one daughter known as '*The Favourite Daughter*'. I retired when the company I worked for thought I was too

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old, too crabby, and overpaid!

## What hobbies and activities do you enjoy?

I have a slobbery Boxer dog, Droolie, who needs plenty of exercise when I am not gardening. I play tennis at Ember Sports Club with a regular group. I would say that my enthusiasm exceeds my ability.

I had a narrow boat on the Grand Union canal, and I also took young people out on the narrow boats operated by The Surrey Care Trust at Dapdune Wharf in Guildford.

I enjoy fishing and have been shark fishing in The Pacific and salmon fishing near Vancouver.

I belong to a group which walks in the Surrey Hills and ends up in a pub.

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

I crewed a twin-engine catamaran from Sydney to Port Douglas up the Pacific coast of Australia. We got caught in a Force 9 gale and the six day trip took twelve days.

### Quick Fire Questions

#### Wine or beer?

Yes!

#### Eat In or Eat Out?

I love cooking so I don't eat out much. My speciality is hot, spicy food such as curries or stir fries.

#### Holiday Home or Away?

It would be interesting to go back to see more of some of the countries I visited for work. For instance, I did many business trips to Israel but have never been to Jerusalem.

#### Favourite country?

South East Asia would be my favourite

destination, but I loved doing business in Iran because it was so challenging. I have a vivid and happy memory of sitting in a café in the Avenue Ferdowsi near the British Embassy in Iran in the time of the Shah and ordering caviar and blinis.

#### Film or Book?

I am currently reading 'Putin's People' by Catherine Belton. I generally prefer non-fiction.

#### Favourite music?

The heavier side of opera such as Wagner and trad jazz bands like Chris Barber's. I used to go to see them on Eel Pie Island – even the bushes were rocking!

Pat Cooke

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# Local people and their relationship with the river



Jon (right) and Alan, training in the Thames with visibility floats

## Long distance swimming

Jon Southey lives in Thames Ditton and regularly swims across The English Channel which takes him around 14 hours.

The Thames (near Hurst Park) is his training ground, he swims there regularly with Alan and Neil. He had always been a swimmer, so when his friend Neil decided to swim The Channel as a 60th birthday challenge in 2017; Jon was the obvious choice to train with.

While Neil still enjoys a regular dip with his bobble hat on and Alan keeps fit by swimming front crawl or breast stroke; Jon trains to get ready for his next long-distance challenge. He does not wear a wetsuit (as this is not allowed in cross channel swims), and doing front crawl means that water goes

in and out of his mouth. Jon said, “you can’t avoid it, but I try not to swallow it”. He swims for up to 40 minutes and says “it’s more enjoyable and freer without a wetsuit, but you do feel colder when you go in. Your body keeps cooling for up to 20 minutes, so you have to be careful not to stay in for too long”.

To take care of the river Jon and his friends get in from the rocks to avoid erosion and pick up litter.



Jon leaving Dover on a channel crossing



*Jon cross-channel training in the winter!*

## Boating

Jane Ellingham's relationship with the river goes back a long way. She grew up in a family always boating and sailing, and her grandfather built a cabin cruiser in his garden, later becoming part of the Upper Thames Patrol during WWII.

Jane and her husband Scott moved to Thames Ditton 11 years ago, and soon after, rescued a dinghy and joined the BMYC boat club, where Scott enjoys helping out with the practical jobs in running a members' club.

They and their family have enjoyed many happy hours messing about on the river ever since. They don't go far or fast. Jane said, *'the furthest we've been is to a party in Teddington. The distance required a can of extra petrol and I had to row while Scott filled the tank - a bit challenging after a party!'*

They enjoy the variety of wildlife, such as the Great Crested Grebes, and watching the terrapins sunning themselves at Cigarette Island. Jane said, *'boating is a great source of fun for us and it's where we feel most at home. We're delighted to see people of all ages taking up kayaking and paddle boarding.'*



*Jane and family boating*

## Riverside living

After falling in love with the tidal magic of the Thames near Gunnersbury, Lucy and Ben Siegle decided to seek a home next to the river. Lucy felt doubtful when her first sight was the Thames at its most furious – the river was high, fast and brown, with floating debris.

Now, they love its constant change and regeneration, and use their kayaks to go shopping, dog walking, and helping to keep

the river clean. Lucy said, *'you never know what you are going to see – we've watched a coracle pass, a water bottle raft, the hover boarders, a seal visiting, snakes that swim over from Home Park and someone playing a euphonium!'*



*Lucy going shopping in her kayak*

As a high-profile environmental journalist, author and TV presenter, Lucy was keen to talk about the river environment. *'There was much less plastic waste in the river during the lockdowns, as there were no big events and places were closed, so people had to take picnics from home. Also, restrictions on boat use led to a calmer environment for the wildlife.'* Lucy says the river is part of our community and advocates a local climate plan, *'we're the custodians and it's up to us to protect it'*.

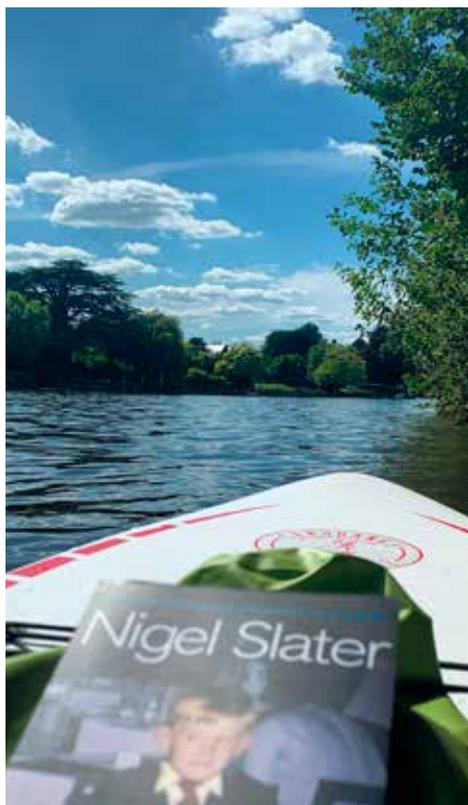
## **Paddle boarding**

Federica Bowman took up paddle boarding while living in New York and said, *'I used to enjoy paddling on the Hudson River which is tidal, very wide and much busier than the Thames'*.

She and her husband moved here five years ago. *'We wanted more greenery and liked the character of the village - we could tell people seemed to know each other. The river was a bonus.'*

After many towpath walks, Federica decided to take a refresher course with Ditton Paddle boarders. She paddles around locally, and with the river quieter during last summer's pandemic she described her enjoyment of a timeless scene where people paddled and swam from Albany Reach with the beautiful backdrop of Hampton Court Palace. Federica always wears a buoyancy aid and said paddle boarding takes concentration and balance, but you can make it anything you want it to be - an extreme form of exercise, a group activity, or solitary mindfulness.

For her, it's for relaxation, so if you see someone lying back while floating around in a little inlet – odds on it will be Federica in her mindful state.



*The view from Federica's paddle board*



*Juliet enjoying a swim off Boyle Farm Island*

## **Immersion and artistic inspiration**

Juliet Turnbull is a textile artist and has lived on a mooring off Boyle Farm Island with her partner for over fifteen years. Juliet is the river – she lives on it, swims in it, uses a dinghy for transport, is artistically inspired by it and looks after its wildlife – particularly George and Mildred, a pair of ducks who they feed each day from the end of their Dutch barge home.

Previously the Assistant Manager at the Swan pub, she was encouraged to focus on her art as a form of income when she produced a river scene of an overhanging tree in the sunset, and someone snapped it up. Since then, the river is her main inspiration, providing her with plenty of material to satisfy her passion for colour and texture; with kingfishers, trees, wildflowers, river reflections and of course swimming, regularly appearing in her work (as featured on our front cover).

Having been a competitive swimmer, Juliet does not feel complete until she

has immersed herself in the water and encourages others to experience this through her work running Surrey Outdoor Swimmers.

Find Juliet's river inspired artwork at <https://linktr.ee/julieturnbull>



## **Julie Royce**

*Julie was also the author of Hannibal's History Tour in our spring edition (Ed)*

# Thank you, Tannia Shipley

## RA Borough Councillor 1999 - 2021



First elected in 1999, Tannia Shipley served as our Residents' Association Councillor at Elmbridge Borough Council for 22 years.

Tannia moved to Weston Green in 1986 and started attending the RA Open Meetings when her lively engagement brought her to public eye and the next thing she knew she was asked to stand for election to Elmbridge Borough Council. The rest is history.

Having personally experienced the challenge of looking after an elderly relative, when she was elected she brought that experience to help the council deliver support for the vulnerable elderly in the community. She sat for many years on the Elmbridge Older Persons Advisory Body (and its predecessors) and focused her energy on committees and organisations that supported older people.

Over the years she has been a vital part of the

many committees that manage the council's work, from environment to licencing.

She served on the East Area Planning Committee for 20 years and her in depth knowledge of the local area and forensic eye for detail have been invaluable, both to the committee and to local people looking for help.

With her passion for Weston Green, Tannia built up a wealth of local knowledge to help conserve and improve the area. She made it a personal mission to sort out the flooding under Esher Station railway bridge (the first record of which is in 1948) and has an impressive grasp of the drainage streams, ditches and culverts that criss-cross the area.

She brought the same will to giving Milbourne Pond a future as a viable living pond and making walking to the station easier and safer for commuters.



*Tannia is a source of knowledge about Weston Green*

Over the years she has achieved so much for Weston Green which is documented in the many editions of Thames Ditton Today since she was elected.

She was recognised by her colleagues when she was chosen to be Mayor of Elmbridge in 2016/17. When asked what had struck her most in her year as Mayor she said *“the fantastic work done by volunteers across the Borough.”*

Her most challenging role was probably her final one, when she served as the Portfolio Holder for Social Affairs and helped oversee EBC’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This last year saw more than 65,000 meals on wheels delivered, thousands of clinically vulnerable people supported and 41,000



*Mayor Tannia Shipley with husband Nigel in Buckingham Palace garden*

welfare calls made. The council continued to deliver excellent services, seamlessly, whilst dealing with the impact of the pandemic on its people and processes.

When asked what she would most miss about being a councillor she said *“contact with so many people both residents and the officers at the council, but I am looking forward having time to catch up with all my friends and family”.*

On hearing of her retirement, a local resident summed it up by saying *“the local community has benefitted enormously from all your hard work.”*

*“Please accept our best wishes for the future and thank you for your time and commitment as a councillor.”*

# Thank you Tricia W Bland

## RA Borough Councillor 2014 - 2021



Along with her husband Will and three daughters, Tricia moved to Thames Ditton in 2007. Keen to get stuck into village life, she joined the Residents' Association, swiftly became Honorary Secretary and created the Keep the Heart in our High Street campaign to protect and promote Thames Ditton High Street. She started with fundraising for and arranging of Christmas lights for the Lime Tree, followed by the 43 trees along the High Street (a decade on she is still the main organiser).

A driver of many other initiatives to promote and protect Thames Ditton High Street including hanging baskets and Union Flags, she also helped spearhead the successful RA campaign resulting instead in the introduction of crucial one hour free parking bays.



*Reducing plastic waste is a focus for Tricia*

behind the introduction of the successful Farmers' Market and instigated the creation of Thames Ditton In Bloom, the Award winning garden at Thames Ditton Station.

Tricia is passionate about environmental issues and eliminating single-use plastics and as a councillor has focussed on these across Elmbridge.

She championed the Refill scheme which allows people to fill up reusable containers with tap water and expanded the reach of reusable Boomerang Bags made from donated fabric.

With the advent of the pandemic as well as setting up local foodbank collection points throughout the village she added sewing reusable face masks to the remit of the



*The RA out in force to save our buses*

In 2014 she was persuaded to add role of councillor to her many other activities. In this she was at the forefront of the successful Save The Buses campaign.; was

volunteer Boomerang Bags sewing group. Elmbridge Borough Council now endorses these as a more sustainable option and for this year's local elections she arranged for 500 reusable face masks to be given to officers/volunteers at all polling stations.

Together with Cllr Mary Marshall, Tricia sponsored the motion in July 2019 for EBC to declare a Climate Emergency, and chaired the Energy & Sustainability Working Group which has worked hard to increase recycling, particularly tetrapak and carton recycling across the borough.

As with all our RA councillors, Tricia has always been available to help residents with local issues, including littering (she organises Thames Ditton Litter Pickers), and successfully campaigned to continue the high profile of Neighbourhood Watch, 'the eyes and ears of our community', which

was under threat of being marginalised.

Although Tricia is standing down as a councillor, she will continue with all the projects which are still dear to her heart and making such a positive difference to our local area. We will keep you up to date with all that she is doing for the village.



As one local resident said: *"a huge thank you is due to Tricia for her seven years as a councillor. She has made a real difference to the village and helped us Keep the Heart in our High Street"*



We are delighted to announce that the Vera Fletcher Hall will be going al fresco this summer. On Sunday July 25 we will be welcoming back Giles Shenton, with his enchanting, heartwarming and charming play OLD HERBACEOUS.

The play is about the friendship between the old gardener and the lady of the manor house, what better setting could there be than the gorgeous garden of RC Sherriff Trustee Tricia and her husband Will Bland.

There will be two performances, one at 2.30 pm and one at 7.30 pm. Tickets are £22 and include a glass of Prosecco or sparkling Elderflower and some elegant snacks. Booking will open shortly.

We expect tickets to be snapped up, so if you would like to make an early reservation, please drop our Theatre Manager, Claire, a line on [theatre@verafletcherhall.co.uk](mailto:theatre@verafletcherhall.co.uk). Further details will be on our website shortly.



# Weston Green Community Archive Project



The Weston Green Community Archive Project is intended to celebrate the history of Weston Green, its church and community, by making available online the archives that have been collected over the last 100 years.

In 1928 Mr Albert Hill started gathering together donations of photographs, postcards and news cuttings and this now forms the basis for the All Saints' archives collection. Mr Hill and his wife were the Principals of Newlands College, a school for boys and girls at The Newlands in Weston Green Road. He was a churchwarden of All Saints in the 1930s and was involved in the beginnings of the new parish, and in the building of the new church in Chestnut Avenue.

In the 1930s Weston Green was changing fast. From the beginning of the twentieth century new houses and roads were built to accommodate the growing numbers of people moving out of London. This stopped during the First World War and the depression that followed but gathered pace again after the Kingston Bypass was built in the late 1920s. The Hampton Court Way spur which pushed through the middle of Weston Green to the River Thames came in 1932 starting with a new railway bridge at Tuckers Arch. Extensive areas of farmland were sold off and a house building boom in Weston Green and the new area of Hinchley Wood was well on its way.



*Newlands College, 1930*



*Albert Hill, started a record for the future*

Perhaps because of the changes he could see coming, Mr Hill appealed for items such as photographs, postcards and parish magazines to keep alive the memories of “old” Weston Green. Many were fixed into a large album in 1964 as part of All Saints’ Silver Jubilee celebrations and this book has been a treasured resource ever since. We also have loose photographs and other albums kept by a succession of church groups and archivists which have been kept up by those who have been keen to preserve the history of Weston Green and keep a record of community and church events.

The Weston Green Community Archives Project came about when our former Vicar Revd. Phillip Johnson applied successfully for a £10,000 Heritage Lottery Grant in 2016. Surrey History Centre was consulted in the application process and is our official partner. Our aim is to create a community archive

which will be available online through Exploring Surrey’s Past (Surrey Heritage online resource) We hope that this will be a record of interest for local historians, family history enthusiasts and others who are simply curious about past Weston Green people, parish and community events.

Many hundreds of photographs, documents, maps and postcards have been digitised professionally, and with the support of Surrey History Centre the pages of the large archives book have been restored and have all now been photographed. This book and its contents are vulnerable and it is now good to have it digitally preserved for the future. Some cine films from 1962-1985 have also been digitised, and there are some parishioners on those who are recognisable (just about!)



*1931 Construction of the new railway bridge for Hampton Court Way at Tuckers Arch.*



*1900 Tuckers Arch and Arch Cottage before the new Hampton Court Railway Bridge was built.*

Our current work is the process of creating a catalogue for the images before they can be uploaded to Surrey Heritage. Like so much else this year, our progress has been put on hold by Covid. We hope to resume when my fellow volunteer and I can meet again.

We do welcome any contributions of photographs or other materials of Weston Green and Thames Ditton to this project, either as originals for safe keeping or for

digitising for the catalogue and return to the owner. The project is intended to be an open and ongoing commitment to collecting local area archives for the future.

**Pam Tiller**

If you have any photos or other material capturing the history of Weston Green and Thames Ditton that you can share with the project, please contact [pamhtiller@gmail.com](mailto:pamhtiller@gmail.com)



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# Local vaccination hub – update



There remains a wonderful atmosphere at the vaccination hub at the Thames Ditton Centre in Mercer Close. Patients continue to express their appreciation in so many ways including an almost daily delivery of homemade bakes!

Changes in guidance regarding vaccine eligibility has caused several administrative challenges as different age groups are offered specific vaccines and this has prompted the need for great agility in both communication and delivery.

At the end of March, Surrey Heartlands celebrated half a million vaccinations of which the hub in Thames Ditton has played a significant part. A celebratory cake was delivered to the hub to thank the staff and volunteers for their part in reaching this figure. At that time, we were vaccinating at the rate of one vaccination every 29 seconds and we are even faster now! By mid-May, more than 30,000 vaccines had been delivered at the hub – a huge accomplishment for our community and a testament to the spirit of determination and teamwork of everyone involved since the start of the programme in December.

It is likely the vaccination hub will remain at Mercer Close for the foreseeable future. The fire damage at Emberbrook Health Centre is now under repair but so extensive was the impact that it is unlikely work will be completed until September at the earliest.

Despite restrictions being lifted and lives becoming busier, the support of the volunteers continues.

In a recent recruitment drive over 30 people from the local area have stepped forward to



*Baked goods helping fuel vaccine volunteers.*

boost the volunteer force underlining how readily the Thames Ditton community has come together in this unprecedented situation. Dr Richard Strickland, a Partner at Glenlyn Medical Centre paid tribute to the volunteers, commenting:

*“Our continued thanks and admiration go to all the volunteers. It has been particularly impressive to see how the volunteers and Glenlyn have worked so closely together.*

*The volunteers have taken more senior roles, allowing the vaccination clinics to function more and more efficiently.*

*I am hopeful that this relationship will continue in our future programmes around flu vaccines and if Covid boosters are required and perhaps even in other specialist clinics for long term conditions.”*

**Louise Russell (Volunteer)**



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# History of Cigarette Island and the Jolly Boatman site



*James Thornhill drawing of Cigarette Island (The Serte), 1731*

**Before the 19th Century** Cigarette Island was known as The Serte, a tail of land between, the rivers Ember and Mole. The land was a meadow used to grow osiers or withies to make baskets and was very scenic attracting artists including J. M. W Turner in 1829. There was a straggle of buildings lining the west side of the River Mole (where Creek Road is now) leading to several mill buildings, as seen above in the James Thornhill drawing of 1731 before the first bridge was built in 1752/3. The Thames was tidal at this point before the construction of Teddington Lock.

**The 19th Century** saw the arrival of Hampton Court Station in 1849. Positioned on the island which was still under cultivation with willows, a smattering of trees and an irregular shoreline. The station was connected by a narrow wooden drawbridge across the River Mole from what is now Creek Road. The

early railway entrepreneurs considered it a good investment to bring more visitors to Hampton Court Palace following the introduction of free public access in 1838. The station was designed by Sir William Tite to have a strong visual relationship with the Palace, linked by the second bridge 1778-1865.

In easy reach of London via railway, the area attracted hordes of weekenders including bohemian music hall artists. Those of wealth established houseboats opposite the Palace on the banks of the meadow island. One of the more splendid houseboats, after which the island is named, was called The Cigarette, and was owned by a Member of Parliament and Mayor of Hammersmith, Sir Henry Foreman. Gradually the area grew into a motley assortment of boats, caravans and shacks, including Travellers who took over the meadow until after 1900.

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**The early 20th Century** saw considerable changes in the area with the fourth bridge built in 1930-33, and the resultant rerouting of the River Mole, reprofiling of the nearby Thames banks and River Ember, together with the construction of the Hampton Court Way.

In 1902 HM Office of Works wanted to purchase Cigarette Island but in 1909 the land was bought by J H Foreman probably the MP Henry Foreman (1852-1924) who owned the houseboat, *'The Cigarette'*. Between 1921-9 several residential development proposals were presented to create a "garden city" estate on the island and the land south east of The Ember but all were rejected.

In 1923 the Minister of Transport limited the weight and speed of vehicles using Hampton Court Bridge which started 10 years of disruption until 1924 when the fourth bridge was put forward by the Dept of Transport to replace the failing bridge and alleviate the congestion in Bridge Road. In October 1926 East and West Molesey Urban District Council (UDC) adopted a scheme to form all the land east of the railway stretching as far as Summer Road Thames Ditton (including what is today Kingston Grammar School playing fields and Albany Reach open space) into a public park but they did not receive the support of the County Council or any national body to assist with the purchase of the land that was in private hands. Records show that by 1931 all houseboats had left having been given notice to quit.

The fourth current bridge completed 1930-33, was designed by Lutyens to harmonise with the Palace particularly the Wren frontage. Eventually following the completion of the new bridge and as part of the works to reform the banks of the river, HM Office of Works purchased the land to

preserve the view from and to the Palace. It is likely the land levels were made up with widening of the river. The plan was to remove the rural aspect and create a more formal park.

In March 1932, 32 Chestnut trees were purchased for a new walkway in the park which was completed in 1934. In 1935 HM Office of Works gifted the park to Esher Council, resulting in a covenant dated 1938. This established that the Council would layout and plant a riverside walk, maintain the land as an open space for use by the public for games and recreation, not erect buildings or stalls, nor allow the landing of boats, but maintain the riverbanks in good condition, and protect the amenities of the Palace.

**The mid-late 20th Century** was the heyday for this new public open space. The 1940's, 50's and 60's saw the grassy banks of the Thames and the manicured lawns heaving with people enjoying the river air, fishing and swimming. The railway sidings were still in operation before the laying out of the station car park which probably happened after the goods yard closed in 1965. Images from the 1950's show the banks clear of vegetation and used for relaxation and access into the river.

The space was used for Molesey's Carnival in the 1940's and 50's and until 1977. In 1958 the Carnival floats entered the park, and residents recall The Orchard Infant School used the space for their sports days. The park was well maintained and kept very open with clear banks and no signs of benches.

So, was it a conscious decision that the Thames bank was planted or self-seeded with trees, and left to naturalise? Some of the 32 Horse Chestnut tree avenue have died or been lost in storms, and there are now only 20 remaining, although two have been



*Hampton Court, The Thames From Cigarette Island c.1955 Courtesy of the Frith Collection*

replaced towards the west end. Many Holm Oaks have grown which are of irregular sizes and add nothing to the space. This begs the question were the Holm Oaks a progression plan to replace the Horse Chestnuts?

In 1962 Hurst Park Racecourse closed and the tram system was removed. Maybe these local activities had a bearing on the demise of the park. From 1948 the Jolly Boatman (now the hoarded site at the entrance) was sold by the railways and converted as a refreshment kiosk gradually expanding with a hotch-potch of single storey buildings over the next few decades until it became a restaurant and night music venue, which burnt down in 1988.

A planning application in 1984 showed intent to redevelop the site with more intensive built form, although nearly four decades, and several planning applications and owners later, nothing has been built and the site remains surrounded by ugly

hoarding. One application was granted permission (**2008/1600**) though thankfully was never commercially viable. There are 2 current applications (**2018/3810** & **2018/3803**) which represent a very serious threat to the site. These applications are still undetermined, and objections may be lodged online or by emailing **tplan@elmbridge.gov.uk** put the above planning references in the application search box to see plans for the major redevelopment around the station & for the temporary car park on part of the park during construction. It is still worth doing this even if you miss the deadline.

The view from the Palace of the rural idyll composed of osier meadows was inevitably going to change with the mid-19th century arrival of Hampton Court Railway station, the development of suburbia, and the reconfiguring of the rivers and highways with the fourth Lutyens bridge at the beginning of the 20th century.

These changes were carefully managed with the public acquisition of the open space for public use and the establishment of the 1938 covenant. Although the 20th century has thankfully retained views from the Palace of open land, and suburban development has not been allowed to encroach, the views of the Palace have been reduced to glimpses, instead of the wide views enjoyed in 1955.

The function and condition of the space has suffered in recent decades and there is much that can be done to save it from being subsumed into the more urban environment that is being forced on our community as outer London overflows into Surrey.

Surrey County Council has announced “Your Fund” to grant £100 million for community projects which improve the local area. Hampton Court Rescue Campaign have submitted two applications, one to improve the signage, remove brambles and foliage along the riverbank and reveal views of the Palace. This 5-year plan also

proposes works to reinforce the riverbank and improve the peninsular viewing point. The estimated cost of this first phase is £20,000. The second project is to acquire the Jolly Boatman site to form an extension to Cigarette Island Park enabling public access and restoration of views towards Hampton Court Palace.

If you would like to help the HCRC to bring the Jolly Boatman site back into community use, and see the restoration work at Cigarette Island proceed you can cast your vote for the projects by visiting:

<https://yourfundsurreymap.commonplace.is/comments/5fd206779d963fd035581d4f>  
and

<https://yourfundsurreymap.commonplace.is/comments/5fb39b83c935990f111ffe83>

Simply click the “thumbs up” or agree button to show your support and confirm the email you will receive.

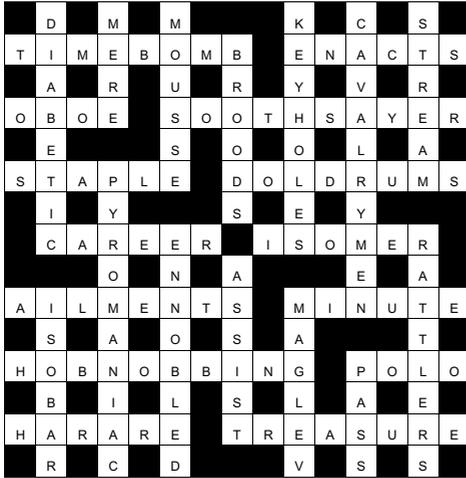
**Karen Liddell**

**The Hampton Court Rescue Campaign**



*Image of Cigarette Island in 1977, from a set of 24 photographs illustrating ‘A Walk Round East Molesey’, photographed for Elmbridge Museum by Mr. P Welstead. 72.1978/15. Reproduced by permission of Elmbridge Museum, Elmbridge Borough Council*

# Solution to the Spring Crossword



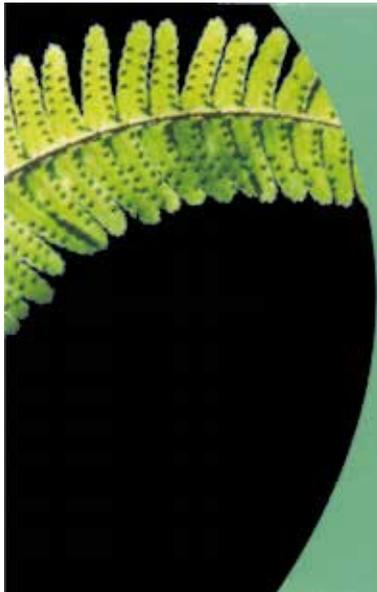
Congratulations to the senders of the first three correct entries opened in the shuffle.

Each wins a £5 voucher to spend in local shops.

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Headley Cottage  
Weston Green

Sheila Bailey  
Cleeves Cottage  
Thames Ditton

Carol Dickinson  
140 Ember Lane  
KT10 8EJ



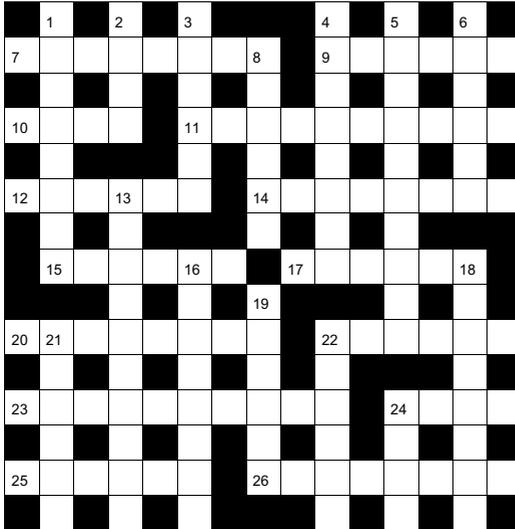
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# Summer Crossword



by Howard and Bob Cruthers

The first three correct entries randomly opened after the closing date of August 4, 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 pretend to be ill (8)
- 9 Part of heart, or house (6)
- 10 Joker? (4)
- 11 Fish gets out of trouble? (3, 3, 4)
- 12 Meeting of political supporters (6)
- 14 Showing excessive fondness for one's wife (8)
- 15 A sharp blow (6)
- 17 Moses' father-in-law; \_ Tull, 1960s rock band (6)
- 20 City in New York, or Sicily (8)
- 22 Detour of heart, or road (6)
- 23 Preserved, in Lyme Regis? (10)
- 24 Way of fashion? (4)
- 25 Escapades, or pizza topping? (6)
- 26 Method to determine a close game winner (8)

## DOWN CLUES

- 1 Eye problem; waterfall (8)
- 2 Object, to psyche? (4)
- 3 Snow huts (6)
- 4 Dressing gown (8)
- 5 Justin Welby, for example (10)
- 6 Number puzzle (6)
- 8 Backflow (6)
- 13 Osprey claw chopped up for hedgerow plant (anag) (3, 7)
- 16 Uninformed (unlike this puzzle) (8)
- 18 Volcanic glass (8)
- 19 Single unit, within a shared property (6)
- 21 Beefeater (6)
- 22 Pester striped animal? (6)
- 24 Roman god of war (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	Aileen Widdowson	07783 449666
Coffee and chat (United Reformed Church)	Mrs. E. Barker	01372 467491
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.ljh@gmail.com
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chicken	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**

# Chair's Address to the AGM



At our Residents' Association AGM on April 23, our Chair, Graham Cooke looked back at the last two years, as last year's AGM had to be cancelled.

Graham praised the efforts of all those in the community who had contributed to its well-being, especially over the previous 12 months. The fact that the RA had managed to produce and distribute its magazine during the lockdown was a huge result and Graham said that he was, *'especially proud that the organisation had carried on during the pandemic and showed its true colours in many ways'*.

With local elections on the horizon for both Surrey and Elmbridge Councils, Graham was very pleased to inform members that Nick Darby had agreed to stand again as Surrey County Councillor for The Dittons after four years of dedicated service. Nick is leader of the opposition at Surrey County Council and is, therefore, in a position to hold the Conservative-run (at the time of the AGM!) administration to account.

In Thames Ditton Ward, Tricia Bland would be standing down and Graham praised the work she had done in the community especially during the pandemic. Tricia will be sorely missed however, Alex Batchelor, a Thames Ditton resident for over 20 years was introduced and, later in the meeting was adopted as candidate.

In Hinchley Wood and Weston Green Ward, Tannia Shipley would be standing down after over 20 years as a councillor. Tannia, a previous Mayor of Elmbridge is well known to Weston Green residents who will be aware of all the work she has done in the area.

Graham was able to confirm that Gill Coates, another long term local resident had agreed to stand and Gill was subsequently adopted as candidate at the meeting.

Graham encouraged everyone to remember that the forthcoming elections were about local issues and that your Residents' Association believes that local people serve their communities best, not big political parties.

In conclusion, Graham went on to thank all those who had contributed to the well-being of the community via the Residents' Association in whatever ways but including:

- Standing and representing us as a councillor
- Litter picking on a Saturday morning
- Contributing to our magazine, Thames Ditton Today
- Opening gardens for 'Secret Gardens'
- Maintaining our website and communicating with members
- Planting spring bulbs
- Organising Zoom meetings
- Editing and distributing our magazine and election manifestos
- Chairing our Flood Committee
- Keeping our accounts in order
- Supporting our local businesses and the Food Bank
- Monitoring and commenting on planning applications
- Volunteering and supporting the Farmers' Market
- Putting up our Christmas trees and lights

He finished by noting that *"together we can make things happen"*.

**Residents-association.com**

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