

AUTUMN 2011

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



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THAMES DITTON TODAY

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

Published quarterly since Spring 1970

Autumn 2011

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You are welcome to submit articles or images. Please contact the Editor well in advance of the next deadline on 1 November.

In this Issue:

News from the Residents' Association	7
Our High Street Shops	15
The Scandal part 2	23
Whether the weather be fine	29
Amazing Cars	31
Curtain Up at the Vera Fletcher Hall	35
The Theatre in the Village (programme)	39
Summer Crossword	41
Solution to Spring Crossword	43
Services, Groups, Clubs and Societies.....	44
By Hook or Crook	46

Cover photo: *Splendid fireworks at Colets – an annual village treat open to all. Let's hope the weather stays dry!*
Photo by Editor.

www.residents-association.com

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

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THAMES DITTON & WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



About the Association

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

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

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

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

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News From the Residents' Association



21 May – 21 August

For once, a quiet summer, in contrast with other parts of the country, for which we can be grateful; but happily a host of enjoyable social activities.

Parking

The imposition of pay and display on streets throughout Surrey continued to backfire. Business and residents' groups argued that county leaders had not followed the normal consultation procedure in Reigate and in Elmbridge, and Surrey was obliged to refer the matter correctly to the local Committees. Meanwhile, papers for the Elmbridge Local Committee of 20 June stated that: "The on street parking charges proposals in the High Street, Thames Ditton and in Spencer Road and Cedar Road, Cobham have been removed." On 11 July the Committee met again, and recommended scrapping pay and display proposals in Claygate and Hersham. We believe that the SCC leadership has now accepted this. Borough Councillors in Esher, however, went along with the county's pay and display proposals there.

Proposals for yellow lines at choke points in Thames Ditton and Weston Green went through, and should be implemented shortly.

Streetlights

With funds committed by (the last) central government, Surrey County Council is replacing all the street lights in

the county with new ones that will use low-energy lamps giving white light. Contractors have embarked on the conversion in Elmbridge. Their rolling schedule may be viewed online. In roads outside conservation areas, straight standard columns will be installed but if residents in older roads wish to request one of a number of different patterns (for a whole road) they may do so at their own extra cost. River Avenue and some roads in Long Ditton have already done so. Inside the conservation areas Surrey are putting their own proposals to Borough Conservation officers, who will have a month to respond. Surrey should be able to fund their own proposals, but will almost certainly expect any recommendations for upgrades over their proposals to be funded either by Elmbridge Borough Council or by residents in individual roads. There's a full briefing, together with photos of the various lighting columns, on our website.

Planning

Continuing hard work for the Association's officers and councillors. To the relief of residents in the area, with our councillors leading, the Elmbridge Planning Committee unanimously rejected the application for a **taxi office at Winter's Bridge**. Local planning guidelines specifically rule out taxi offices being located close to residential areas.

There's a new application for 4 houses to replace The Harrow. Although reduced in number, the houses have grown in size. Plots 1 and 2 adjacent to Green Belt are taller than the houses refused in earlier appeals for reasons of height and mass. A "chalet bungalow" has 2 storeys and is taller than all neighbouring properties and almost as wide as the 2 houses proposed for the plot in the previous application. The Association's representatives did meet with the developer to try to find a way forward constructively, but it seems that the developer has not fairly accommodated the views of local residents and those of Elmbridge and the planning inspectorate.

There's also a new application for six houses on the site of one house at **31 Embercourt Road**. Were permission to be granted, others are ready to follow suit and we would be faced with the progressive destruction of large houses which form a consistent street scene in that part of Embercourt Road, as owners sell out and move elsewhere. A quick calculation suggests that this would lead to three times as many cars on that stretch of road.

Blue plaques

On 17 June the Association mounted seven blue plaques to commemorate some of the many significant names and places in Thames Ditton and Weston Green: Picton House (Cesar Picton), Stag's Court (oldest secular building in the village), Ferry Works (Peter Willans), the former Foundry now Nucleus (Cox & son and A. B. Burton), the Old Manor House (Hannibal Speer), the Old Red House (Jacob Hansler), and The Elms (General

Sir John Lambert). It has taken almost two years, and for once the Residents' Association has been on the other end of the planning process as an applicant! Most of the buildings are listed. Many thanks are due to HonSec Tricia Bland for driving the process through. The plaques are funded jointly by the Association and by our County Councillor Peter Hickman's local works allowance from Surrey. There will be more plaques to come. Meanwhile, potted histories of the names celebrated in the plaques can be viewed in our website forum's local history thread.

Apropos: if you can identify where **Grubbe's House** was (ca. 1870-1880) – owned by Hannibal Speer but rented to the Rowley Lamberts – please let the Editor know.

Other news snippets

HSBC has written to customers announcing that the branch in St. Leonard's Road is to close by 25 November. We assume that closure will mean the loss of the cash machine on the outer wall.

Work against littering continues: Andrew Roberts, our Highways Convenor, got the railway authorities to clear up the frightful littering of the **embankment at Thames Ditton railway station**. Dittons Souts have agreed to 'adopt' Giggs Hill Green as their area for occasional litter picks. Albany Reach has been much better this summer.

Andrew has managed to arrange for the services, gratis, of an Italian lady hydrologist who will visit in September to advise on the feasibility of improving water collection and supply to **Milbourne Pond**.

Please don't chuck rubbish and hedge trimmings into the Rythe. Thames Angling Conservancy have found several places where accumulated muck was blocking the flow.

Doings and dates

Congratulations to **Bronach Hughes**, well known in school governing bodies and as Division Commissioner for the Guides, who was awarded a well-deserved MBE in the Birthday Honours.



Bronach Hughes MBE

PCSO Richard Platt, one of our very effective Neighbourhood Police team, will be moving on to a new role as Roads Police Community Support Officer for Elmbridge. He writes: *"My role will be to deal with traffic issues that are affecting communities like parking, speeding, and anti-social behaviour around motor vehicles. I have enjoyed my time in the area and thank you all for your help and*

assistance in the past. My replacement is currently in training and will be in the area soon."

The refurbished **Walsingham Care** Charity Shop and Grants Enquiry office was reopened on 27 July by local actor Keith Barron, a longstanding friend and customer. Since the Charity was launched in 2008 as the successor to the Home of Compassion it's awarded new grants of £152,000 to more than 50 local beneficiaries and families in need. Overall, in the past 3 years Walsingham has augmented and supported care of local frail elderly people to the tune of over £250,000. Anyone of limited means living within 5 miles of any of the 13 parishes in Emly Deanery of the Diocese of Guildford, is eligible. The Charity Shop began in 1999 in the Home's Chapel and Priory. Hundreds of thousands of pounds have been raised to help local people in real need of care. Please support it at 68 Bridge Road, East Molesey: good quality donations of saleable goods are welcomed during opening hours (Monday – Friday 10.00am- 4.30pm, and weekends from 11.00am- 4.00pm). Clothes, shoes, books, DVDs, CDs, bric-a-brac, small antiques and collectables are welcome, as are customers; but alas not electrical goods, video cassettes, furniture or baby equipment.

It's been an active year for the Hinchley Wood & Thames Ditton **Probus Club**, with talks ranging from the St. Johns Ambulance through Queen's Messengers, plant hunting in Nepal, beekeeping, the Queen's bookbinder, SOE in the war, and others to come on the Cinque Ports, and the Crimean war. Not to mention golf events and walks. The

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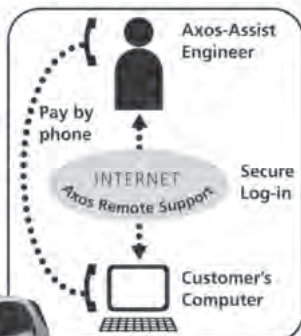
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Queen's Road basket & box competition is just lovely!

club was formed in 2007 and meets from 11am on the third Tuesday of the month at Imber Court. Call Geoff Francis on 01932 867771 or new Chairman Colin Dalziell on 020 8398 0900.

The annual Queen's Road hanging basket and window box competition, organised by resident **Pam Bannister**, was again a really nice community event, with the **Albany** staging a splendid after-party for local residents who, remarked manager Laurence Davey, are a mainstay of the pub. Much appreciated.

At Hampton Court Flower Show, Thames Ditton resident **Jayne Thomas'** entry in the 'English Poets' gardens gained a bronze from the Judges but deserved more.

On 21 August, the **AC Car Owners Club** mounted a plaque to the company on the wall of Ferry Works, and staged a

concours d'elegance on Giggs Hill Green to mark 100 years since the company came to Thames Ditton, its heyday home. See Rakesh Kotecha's article on page 31.

Splendid '**secret gardens**' large and small were on show on Sunday 19 June in or near the High Street. Many are normally hidden from view, as are one or two of the cottages themselves. The village was buzzing as over 300 curious ticket-holders circulated happily amidst a fine mix of plantings – and, this being Thames Ditton, not a few eccentricities. Aply organised by Caroline James, Tricia Bland and Libby MacIntyre, and with a lot of hard work from competitive gardeners, the afternoon was a great success in the village community and raised considerable funds for the High Street Appeal. Tricia and Will Bland, with sterling support, also hosted a splendid Garden Party at Garden Cottage on 3 July.



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AC Cars centenary on the Green

These social events are a great deal of work but excellent value, adding much to community life as well as fun. Further fun and fundraising events are planned:

– **Race Night** at the George and Dragon Thursday 15th September, sponsored by Landlord Joe and Evelyn McCann.

– **Raffle** for the painting by Alan Hepburn of the 'Thames Ditton Christmas Fair' with of course the lit Lime Tree depicted on it.

– **Christmas Quiz** at the Vera Fletcher Hall on Friday 2nd December.

With the lime tree lights now paid off, the appeal will support additional High Street initiatives such as putting brackets on buildings in the High Street for Christmas trees with lights; and paying for someone to administer the **Christmas Fair (Wednesday 7th December)** where in previous years much of the burden has been carried by just one or two volunteers.

With new organisers and a live band, excellent food and wine, the **Residents' Christmas Party** will be from 7pm on Saturday 10 December at the Vera Fletcher Hall. Why not get a group together from your road, or come on your own or *en famille*? Tickets available from 7 November are £32.50 and include a welcoming glass of fizz with canapés, a three course dinner and dancing. Call Fiona Elliot on 020 8398 1788.

If you're planning to go to a panto, make it the good one at the Vera Fletcher Hall on Friday 13th & Saturday 14th January, where Charles Court Opera presents **BEOWULF, a riotous pantomime** turning Ye Olde English Viking legend on its head. Hilarity with some of the UK's best young professional opera talent. Tickets are just £12.50.



a splendid Autumn photo of a rutting stag in Bushy Park taken by resident Paul Winstone

A reminder to pay your 2011 annual **subscriptions, please**, if you haven't already done so: just £3 helps to keep the Association and this magazine going. See foot of page 3 for how to subscribe.

And lastly, to counteract tales of "rip-off Britain" a heartwarming story from resident **Susan Duff**, who writes:

"Just before 9:00 am on 11 June I dashed to a Thames Ditton pharmacy to buy a suddenly needed medication before being collected to go away on holiday at 9:15 am. As luck would have it, the till system was misbehaving and the pharmacist was only able to dispense prescriptions or accept payment of the exact amount. I had rushed out with just a £10 note grabbed from my husband; my medication was £4.10.

"A young woman who had entered the shop behind me offered to pay for me as she had the exact money needed and I accepted gratefully. When I asked for her name and address to repay the debt she laughed and refused and said it was her "good deed for the day". Try as I might I could not get her details although she eventually agreed to tell me her name was Sue.

I still feel quite overwhelmed when I think of her generosity and each time I took the medication whilst I was away, I thought of her and saw her lovely smile. I hope you might read this Sue for you truly were a very generous friend in need to someone you had never met before. THANK YOU from the other Sue whom you helped so willingly."

www.residents-association.com

Our High Street Shops

Anne Mitchell surveys the scene



Gatherings of affluent-looking yummy mummies are to be found packing out The Lime Tree delicatessen on many a weekday morning. However, despite this jolly scene, the growing number of empty shops in Thames Ditton High Street provides clear – and unsightly – evidence that the recession is taking its toll.

Attitudes of local residents to the local traders are mixed. A small, random and highly unscientific survey threw up a

range of responses. At one end of the spectrum some said that they don't shop in the village at all. It had nothing to offer them. On the other hand, an encouraging number said that based on the premise 'if you don't use it, you lose it', they made every effort to buy as much as possible locally. Most, though, would like a larger variety of shops. And, it is true that it has been a very long time since most essentials could be bought in the village itself.

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October 4th **JACKS AND SPITS** A lighthearted look at the spit turning mechanisms which became such an important part of medieval and later kitchens. If you have been to Hampton Court you will have seen these spits but not the stories behind them!

November 1st **THE GREAT REVOLUTION** An illustrated talk on how, from the first paintings of the Impressionists through to the outbreak of war in 1914, the Art Establishment changed fundamentally. Our speaker Brian Dunne has exhibited in major galleries throughout Europe and lectured at the Chelsea School of Art.

Meetings are at the Vera Fletcher Hall, 4 Embercourt Road, Thames Ditton – 7.30 for 8.00pm. Later meetings cover English country houses, wine related antiques for oenophiles, antique jewellery, Wren's London and the Scottish Colourists.

The village trading mix has changed radically over the years. For example, back in 1987, in addition to a butcher and a grocer, the village had no less than six antique dealers and four hairdressers. Today, the village is down to one hairdresser (Hype), which has been in the village for more than ten years and one antique shop.

The current collection of traders know that they need to work hard to stay in business. And as well as making every effort to be known personally in the village, they have also taken various initiatives to raise their profile and their profits. A prime example of this is the annual 'Christmas Fair'. It started eight years ago – and has been going from strength to strength ever since. On one evening in early December each year the High Street is closed to traffic and the shops open. Although clearly hoping to make some sales on the night itself, the event doubles as a pretty effective Public Relations exercise. To soften up customers, wine is on offer at most shops; Joe McCann at The George and Dragon dispenses mulled wine at the entrance to the car park. The recently-departed (only to Scotland) Nick Ives from the Secret Garden, used to roast chestnuts. A choir sings carols, stalls sell, among other things, illuminated toys for children and, of course, some of the formidable village ladies collect for local good causes such as the Guide Hut. Given good weather, the event is very successful in bringing out the villagers – and getting them together.

There are several specialist retailers in the village. For instance, Silversmith Bernard Leon has been running his

jewellery business Assimi for ten years. Most of his business, he notes, is local. And despite having had a few brushes with burglars, he says he loves working in the village. 'Not many people walk past that don't own a piece of my jewellery'. That said, he also works for several of the seriously posh West End jewellers, including Asprey. He has one year left on his lease, and has to consider his future. But it looks as if he will be around for a while yet.

Fashion retailer Gianna Shinozawa started her Adiva boutique in late October 2008. And reckons it takes three to five years to become 'established'. Next year could be 'make or break'. To start a business, as she did, in a recession could be considered 'very brave, or very stupid'. In her case, it was 'a bit of both'. She stresses that businesses need to manage expectations according to market conditions. And that 'you need capital behind you'. Gianna believes in making her shop 'accessible'. For instance, she makes sure she puts her prices – which are very reasonable – in the window.

Another specialist is Maison Bleu. Open for three years, its core business is bespoke curtains, blinds and lovely fabrics. It also sells home accessories. Business is not only local. Owner Paula Tennant works on anything from high-end central London homes to coastal cottages. Paula: "I love it here, and have been made so welcome". She is about to sign a new lease.

The village's focal point is the Post Office and the shops around it – the Lime Tree itself, the green grocer and the florist. Not a few villagers were nervous



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when they heard Nick Ives was leaving. They need not have been. It is now run by Jason and Katie Paull – and renamed Paull’s. Katie’s father is a fruit and vegetable wholesaler, who supplied Nick, and several of her relatives have been shop keepers. The produce, the presentation and, not least the prices – around 25% cheaper than Waitrose – are as good as ever.

Helen and Chris Evans have been running the Secret Garden florist for five years. The business includes a considerable amount of corporate work and, as well as remaining part of the Interflora network, they have recently started a courier service. Their floral arrangements can now be delivered anywhere in the UK mainland the next day.

Jeremy Hamilton, owner of Stitchery, which has been going for 12 years now, has been in the forefront of getting the ‘team players’ among the local retailers to get together to organise events with a dual function – to bring ‘the community’ together and to raise money. Some of the money is needed for the much-admired Christmas lights on the old Lime Tree, opposite the Post Office. Besides the recent Secret Gardens project, which raked in almost two thousand pounds, there is a ‘race night’ at the George and Dragon in September and a Quiz night at the Vera Fletcher Hall in December.

Jeremy admits that Thames Ditton is ‘an acquired taste’ and that right now the High Street is looking ‘worse than it has ever looked’. The vacant shops don’t help, nor does the village ‘eyesore’ – the empty office building next to estate agent Hawes & Co.



Jeremy weathers the economic Ice Age

David Brown at Jenkins Law is marketing the old Wine Rack unit. Asking rent for the 850 sq ft ground floor area is £20,000 a year. It was under offer, but the deal fell through. Rayat & Bal is asking £11,000 a year for the two ground floor units that make up the Pro Shop. The agents are talking to a prospective tenant.

The development under way around the old bakery will provide more retail space on the ground floor in an attractive courtyard development – with a proposed link though to the main car park. The ‘bakery’ shop is being extended to provide one large or two small units and behind Hawes & Co is to be a separate retail/office building.

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Above, four one-bedroom flats and a studio flat are taking shape. Architect Simon Foster, who dealt with the planning and was responsible for the award-winning housing development at the bottom of Ashley Road, is keeping a beady eye on the quality of the building work. As for the eyesore office block, it is now in the hands of a Swiss pension fund. It forms a minuscule portion of its portfolio so 'it couldn't care less' says Foster who also reports demand for the new units from a range of potential occupiers.

Current longest-standing retailer in the High Street is Tracey Blatchford of Bradley and Brown – she started Thames

Fireplaces in June 1996 in the same shop. Contrary to muttered rumours, she will be re-opening very soon. Tracey feels that the villagers should support their shops more. After all, she points out, if every one bought just one greetings card a year from all the appropriate shops "we would all survive".

Survival is what's on our mind.

Anne Mitchell

High Street resident Anne, a chartered surveyor, worked as a Fleet Street financial journalist and freelance writer. Ten years in Africa included three in Nairobi and the rest as an editor on the Financial Mail in Johannesburg.

Background info

In 1843 eleven shops in the High Street comprised a baker, hairdresser, two butchers, a supplier of game and poultry, a bootmaker, two drapers, a fishmonger, a grocer and a toy dealer. In addition there was a cab business (flies), a blacksmith/farrier, a saddler, a corn and coal merchant, a builder/house agent who doubled as undertaker, two watermen, and a surgeon. About 19 shops and offices in all.

Writing in this magazine in 1987, young Alison Dwelly found that in 1977 there had been about 21 shops in the High Street including three grocers, three butchers, two greengrocers, a fishmonger, three antiques shops, two hairdressers, a wool/haberdashery, four clothes shops, an ironmonger and a bookshop. Just ten years later there were 16 shops, with traditional retail declining, 'fringe' retail replacing it and less stability overall. Meanwhile,

assorted office businesses had grown considerably to about thirty-five.

The article awoke the Residents' Association to defend our remaining retail shop premises, and resist their conversion to residential or office use which is more profitable for landlords. So I asked Anne to take a fresh and independent look.

To some extent the effort has succeeded, in that the decline in numbers was arrested and today we still have 16 functioning shops (not counting two due to close imminently); and a few still attract the workaday footfall that brings the High Street to life. But business is precarious and several shops are empty or closing. Shopping patterns have changed: generally the retail businesses that survive in the village need more than one leg to stand on. The grim state of the economy doesn't help – but you can: by buying local where possible.

Editor



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Before the summer is completely forgotten think about

HOMEOPATHIC HAY FEVER TREATMENT *IN WINTER!*

Many people have discovered that homeopathic remedies work well in summer to alleviate the miserable symptoms of hay fever and there are some excellent combination remedies available for over the counter purchase. But did you know that a course of properly prescribed remedies taken *over the winter months* may help to significantly reduce hay fever symptoms next season?



Often the susceptibility to hay fever, and other allergic responses, is a thread running through the family health and some deeper homeopathic treatment can help to strengthen your resistance season after season so that those, sometimes rare, sunny days can be wholeheartedly welcomed and enjoyed! An initial full consultation is necessary to tailor the remedies to you and then you can take away your personal winter programme.

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

The Scandal

– Part 2



First, a confession about part 1: in the thrill of the chase I did not jump all the historical hedges cleanly. Based on a sentence in the Victoria County History of Surrey I reached a working conclusion that William Speer (a litigious fellow) somehow acquired patronage of the living of St. Nicholas when he bought the Lordship of the Manor of Weston in 1801. After further research I think this is incorrect, and that the patronage remained with Kings College Cambridge right up to 1834 when William acquired it for a “turn”, in a deal that probably involved land. Meanwhile:

In the first episode I introduced Capt. Sir Charles Sullivan RN, 3rd Baronet of Thames Ditton and now through marriage installed at opulent Imber Court; and William Speer, rapacious land owner and property speculator who bought the Manor of Weston along with its commons, was enclosing some of them, had instigated lawsuits in pursuit of property against other residents both notables and commoners, opposed the Vestry’s plans to alter St. Nicholas church, and installed his son Wilfred as perpetual curate in 1835.

Towards the end of 1839 Sir Charles, a leading light in the Vestry, had gone to the Bishop with churchwarden Leonard Seeley to charge that Wilfred was a drunkard who was driving away the congregation. The case against Wilfred Speer in the ecclesiastical Court of Arches now unfolded in humiliating detail under judge Sir Herbert Jenner, Dean of the Court. The case opened on 17 February 1841 and by 4 March, when hearings closed, half the village seems to have testified against Wilfred, and the other half in his defence. The indictment:

Drunk on duty...

"...during the time of Divine service, on Sunday mornings, you have been constantly furnished from the Swan with a bottle of port wine or with brandy, which you have invariably drunk in the vestry during the service; on many such occasions you have become intoxicated, and have been scarcely able to get through the services or preach your sermon... in the year of our Lord 1836 you were in a state of intoxication, and totally unfit to finish the service... Sir Charles Sullivan being present in the Church, and observing your state and condition, called Leonard Seeley, the churchwarden of the parish, who proceeded into the vestry where you, the said Wilfred Speer, then were; and the said Leonard Seeley then and there remonstrated with you, and urged to you that by reason of your intoxication you were in an unfit state to proceed with the service; that the said Sir Charles Sullivan offered that he would take upon himself to say the congregation would willingly dispense with the sermon, upon which you eagerly adopted this suggestion...

"...also that in the summer of the year 1836 you called upon Captain Rowland Edward Williams, one of your parishioners, in a state of intoxication; that on your leaving his house you attempted to mount your horse, and in so doing put your foot in the stirrup, but in lieu of seating yourself in the saddle you fell over the other side into the middle of the road...

"...on Sunday the 25th day of March, in the year of our Lord 1838, on occasion of christening the child of William Karn, a parishioner, you read the service in an indecent manner, and so as to be almost unintelligible, and that at such time you were in a state of intoxication... after the christening was over, the said William Karn gave you the regular fee due on such occasions; that on the said parties leaving the church you called them back again and said, "Look ye here at this fee," and remarked that clergymen were said to rob the poor, and added "This does not look like it."

And so forth in what is a riveting read. Witnesses called in support of the charges included Sir Charles Sullivan, Lord de Ros, Capt. Williams of the Dragoons, Capt. Lambert RN and Leonard Seeley, various parishioners; the previous and present landlords of the Swan, and the Master of the National School. All attested to the defendant's 'habits of intoxication', in as well as out of the church. The landlord of the Swan testified that "Mr Speer had come to his house so intoxicated, that he had refused to let him have more liquor... he had been spoken of as a disgrace to the parish... he had carried his habits of intoxication into the church." It was proved that he was supplied with a bottle of port every

Sunday morning from the Swan, which was taken into the vestry, *“and the defendant then drank it; that it was not placed openly on the table, but put in a cupboard.”* William Middleton, Master of the National School testified that on one occasion, *“when he had preached about half his sermon, he leaned his head on a cushion and could go no further, and the congregation after a little while dispersed.”*

Or tired and emotional?...

Poor Wilfred denied all the charges. He was *“of a weak and sickly constitution”* and had taken a glass or two of wine in the vestry room *“without which he could not have gone through the fatigue of his duty,”* but had never been drunk. He had been *“seriously ill”* on the morning when Sir Charles Sullivan and Leonard Seeley went to fish him out of the vestry. He’d been found by them *“with a glass of water in hand, which he was sipping, and almost in a fainting state.”* On the occasion he mounted his horse and capsized over the other side, the horse (also of a nervous disposition) *“had shied”* and had since been returned to the dealer. As for the christening, he had been returning the fee to Mr Karn, *“as usual on similar occasions.”*

To support the defence, Wilfred Speer’s doctor, William Roots of Kingston and of an eminent family, said that he had never observed Speer to be addicted to alcohol, though *“he is naturally weak and sickly and of a highly nervous and sensitive temperament.”* Roots had suggested he keep *“some nervous medicine”* at the church, but had not recommended wine. Speer’s friends,

including the widow of the previous incumbent, testified in his favour that they had ‘never observed him’ drunk. Rev John Bluck of Hanworth, who occasionally officiated for him, affirmed that to him, *“Mr Speer never appeared to be fond of wine... a glass or two would affect him.”* Likewise Samuel Doria, a schoolmaster, *“had known him to falter at the close of his sermon, which was owing to exhaustion... and nervousness.”*

The defence further maintained that the case had been brought through malice: *“the real prosecutors were Sir C. Sullivan and Mr. Seeley; the defendant had been proceeded against by them without one cautionary hint, or one word of previous remonstrance... an attempt had been made to run him down.”*



Judge Herbert Jenner handled a knotty case

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The latest figures from RICS show that demand for rented property is increasing at its fastest rate ever. 86% more of the Institute’s members reported seeing an increase in rents over the three-month period to December 2010. RICS makes the point, backed up elsewhere in the market, that many people are seeking to rent rather than buy as getting a mortgage becomes more and more difficult and deposits go through the roof.

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Summing up: no malice

Jenner took three months to reflect before giving judgement. It was proper for the Bishop to have promoted the proceedings, he concluded. As the evidence from Sir Charles Sullivan and Mr Seeley was important, it *“would not have been prudent for one of them to have been prosecutor.”* In such cases the prosecutors would normally have been the churchwardens but one was an important witness in the case, and the other had been appointed by Mr Speer and was employed as a builder by his father, *“a large landed proprietor in the parish.”* This was a proceeding against the son of a person who was his best customer.

Jenner continued: *“It has been said that the whole prosecution originates in spite and malice... that Sir Charles Sullivan and Mr Seeley have, in fact, instituted this suit against Mr Speer from motives of private revenge. Possibly it may be so... but the Court must look at the character of the witnesses with great care before it could conclude that... out of fourteen witnesses examined in support of the articles, two have been concerned in this conspiracy.”*

Vicar liked by the poor

“Mr Speer is represented as a person of popular manners; all the witnesses to Mr Speer’s general character speak of him as a man of mild manners, and amiable as husband, father and child; attentive to the poor; and an extremely kind hearted man. It was difficult to conceive that a man of these amiable qualities should have been a target of persecution. “The parties supposed to have taken this unfounded prejudice

against Mr Speer are persons of respectability, of honourable stations in life, upon whom no other imputation has been cast.”

But not by the nobility

“Mr Speer was charitable to, and beloved by, the poor, and yet the higher classes of his parishioners would take no notice of him – it is stated, from unfounded prejudices...”. Lord de Ros, having said that Rev. Speer was as often drunk as sober, had stated that Speer *“..has been avoided by the upper classes on account of his conduct; and there is no other reason why, living with his family in the parish, he should not have been received into the society of the superior classes.”* Jenner continued: *“Sir Charles Sullivan is another person supposed to have taken this matter up from religious motives, and to gratify a private resentment against this unfortunate gentleman.”* But Jenner concluded that Sir Charles Sullivan’s character was not consistent with that imputation *“..and all the Court can do is to say that he is free from all suspicion of improper motives, or of being influenced by malice or resentment.”*

Swan respectable; Vicar less so

“The Swan is proved to be a very respectable public house... there is nothing against Mr Speer for having occasionally had recourse to that house for the purpose of refreshment” – but all the evidence supported the charges. *“Merser, the parish clerk for forty-two years, an unwilling witness, admits that there have often been ‘great failures’ in performance of Divine service... these failures had always been attributed to*

intoxication; and many persons have been driven away from attending Divine service...” On the christening, “Merser... will not enter into particulars; he says the occurrence of things of this kind was so frequent, that he is unable to recollect what took place upon any particular occasion.”

Guilt and sentence

In sum, Jenner determined that the charges were amply proved. Rev. Wilfred Speer was guilty of being habitually and indecently drunk on duty and so reducing his congregation. There were no grounds for mitigation of sentence, said Jenner: *“from beginning to end he has denied the charges; and it is suggested that they are founded in malice, and therefore there is nothing of which he has to repent.”*

Sentence was then pronounced. That, and the interesting aftermath of an unsavoury scandal that quite plainly had left the village riven, the church weakened, and scarcely anyone’s character enhanced, will be the subject of the concluding episode.

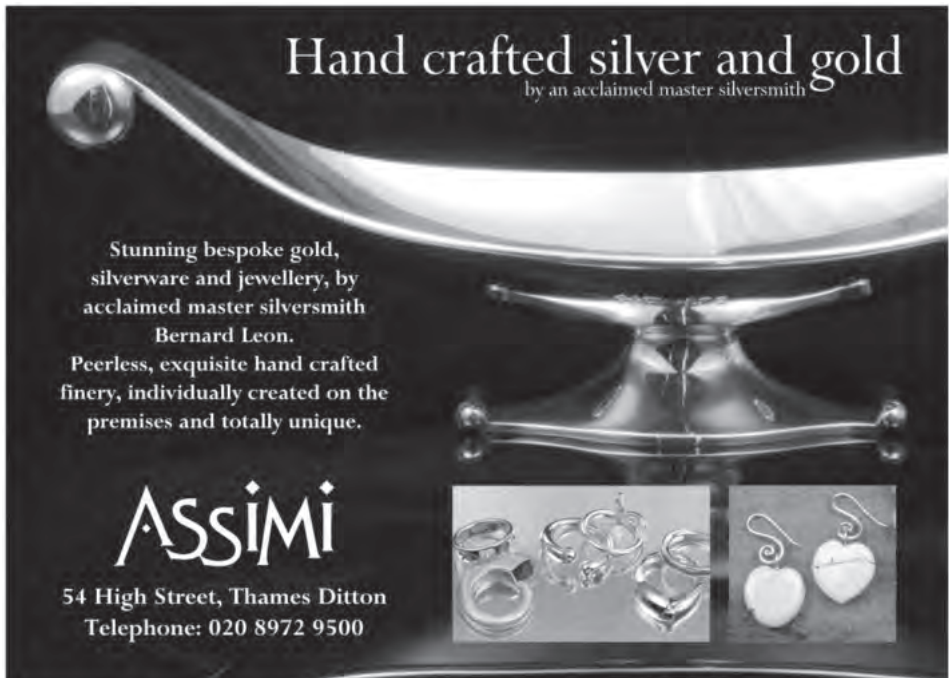
Keith Evetts

References:

Notes of Cases in the Maritime & Ecclesiastical courts Volume 1: Easter Term 1841 to Trinity Term 1842 Ed. Thomas Thornton pub. 1843 by Thomas Blenkarn, p39 – 64 (essential reading!)

The Times, 17 February and especially 5 March 1841 (reporting from opening and closing days of hearings)

The Examiner (London, England), Sunday, March 7, 1841; Issue 1727: Charge of Habitual Drunkenness Against a Clergyman





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Whether the weather be fine...



As an amateur keeper of weather records in Thames Ditton, I recently interviewed Mrs. Ingrid Holford who lives in Ditton Close. Now 91, she's a true expert: her many books on weather include "The Guinness Book of Weather Facts and Feats" (which has an entry for Thames Ditton – the floods in September 1968), and weather guides for yachtsmen and pilots.



Ingrid Holford

Ingrid provided weather forecasts for the RAF as a WAAF officer from 1942-1946 and is proud of never having lost an aircraft through unpredicted bad weather. Ingrid has also researched the weather forecasts for D-Day as given to Eisenhower in June 1944, who took advice from meteorologist John Stagg and postponed the invasion of Normandy by a day.

Now 2010 was a remarkable year for weather in my records. In January 2010, following very cold weather up to Christmas temperatures plummeted to -5C

and remained cold for the rest of the month. There was a lot of snow although we escaped some of the worst (we often do) compared with some other areas including Kent. February was very wet, March was better and April was the second sunniest month of 2010, June the sunniest. The fine early summer went on into July, but August was very wet, cool and dull.

The Autumn was pleasant with some warm sun, but from 25 November there were freezing northeasterlies and then snow. Again, Thames Ditton did not get the worst of it compared with other parts of the country, rural Surrey and Kent.

We saw some notable freezes from 1-8 and 17-26 December: the lowest temperature here was -6 on 20 December and the snow on 18 December was spectacular, recalling the winters of 1981/2 and 1962/3 and for the older of us, 1946/7. Despite the cold month there was not a gamblers' White Christmas. Sunshine was notably absent last winter, which added to the gloom, but after the thaw on 20 January this year the weather was not especially cold. In 2011 we have had a remarkably dry and sunny Spring:



the eternal question: showers with sunny periods, or sunny periods with showers?

no guarantee of a dry, warm summer, as we know!

I discussed this weather with Ingrid, who with her very long experience said that no pattern can be seen – we have had such spells of hot, cold, wet and dry weather in the past. While we have recently had very cold winters, they haven't been as severe as the winter of 1962/3 when the Thames froze over thick enough to walk across.

With all of today's super-computers, real-time satellite images and instant information from weather balloons you may well ask why, if they can see it coming, so often the Meteorological Office still gets local weather forecasts wrong! Ingrid believes that even these aids cannot cope with weather changes brought about by "the random flap of a butterfly's wing." She has a barograph to indicate air pressure, which remains the best guide to local weather in the immediate future. She was not surprised that long-range public forecasts had effectively been abandoned. After all, we live on an island so it is rare that we have the same weather across the country. There's not enough pattern to conclude that climate change is bringing about a realignment of British weather; and indeed Ingrid is far from sure that mankind is behind observable climate change.

We can, however, safely forecast that for the foreseeable future, the weather will remain a topic of keen conversation in this English village, be it cold or hot. And we'll weather the weather, whatever the weather, whether we like it or not.

Tom Rees

Amazing Cars



*AC Fivet, produced at Ferry Works from 1913.
Photo supplied by John Spencer, AC archivist*

Walking through the peaceful streets of our village it is hard to believe that this was once the home of one of the most famous names of British Car manufacturing: AC Cars. This year marks the centenary of Auto Carriers Ltd.'s arrival at Ferry Works, having outgrown their first home as Weller and Portwine in West Norwood.

For the first couple of years, production was focussed on their three wheel Tricar, and a new, four wheeled 'AC Light car', which rolled off the lines in 1913. The First World War put the brakes on a good start. Ferry Works was switched to production of shells and fuses as well as a motorcar for the Home Office. After the war production of the Light car resumed and production expanded from the Ferry Works to the High Street – the erstwhile grounds of

High House, which was demolished.

In 1919 founding partner John Weller designed the world's first Light-Six engine, acknowledged as a landmark for the company and the motoring industry and which would continue to be produced in various guises until 1963. It was the bedrock of AC Cars'

motoring success, particularly in trials and sprints. In 1921 Selwyn Edge bought in as governing director. Edge wanted to focus on motorsport success and in 1921 John Weller designed a competition car which would break many records at Brooklands.

Edge's impact was not all positive. In 1922 Weller and Portwine resigned from their positions as managing directors and in spite of sporting success, the company was losing money. In 1927 Edge took the company private with a £135,000 buyout, and re-registered it as AC (Acedes) Ltd. Alas in the crash of 1929 the company went into receivership and was sold to the Hurlock family. The Ferry Works site was not included but the Hurlocks kept the factory in the High Street and bought space on Taggs Island.

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Initially the Hurlocks' intention was not to keep on producing new cars but the AC Light Six engine continued to be popular and the company began to specialise in producing semi-bespoke cars to customer requirements. Car production would not remain profitable for long but the engineering capability of the company would stand it in good stead coming into the late thirties. The Second World War would benefit AC Cars as from 1937 the re-armament and war effort meant that the factory was expanded. The workforce increased from about 140 to 630 and AC Cars had established a reputation as a very capable engineering operation.

After the war, the company sustained itself through the continued production of munitions. By the end of 1949 it was producing about 250 cars a year. AC Cars also designed and produced 3 wheeler invalid carriages – a logical continuation of the work done during the war with government assistance to help disabled servicemen. This product stream would continue to be profitable for the next 30 years.

In 1953, the AC Ace launched with a fabulous lightweight chassis and a developed version of the Weller Light-Six engine. Within a year Aces had impact on competitive events. The Aceca, a stunning light alloy coupe derivation of the Ace was announced in 1954. This car was a great success in all levels of motor sports and AC Cars reputation in motorsport would grow to the extent that in 1961 Carroll Shelby approached them with the idea of mating a new light Ford V8 onto an AC Ace chassis.

Thus was born the AC Cobra – the most iconic car to roll off the production

lines in Thames Ditton. Cobra production for Shelby stopped in 1966 as Ford focussed on its own motorsport programs. AC Cars developed the chassis further, extending it and using a larger Ford engine but the timing of a big grand touring sports car was wrong with the oil crisis in 1973. Production and sales of cars suffered and in 1976 the Department of Health stopped the invalid carriage program which had provided the revenue steady stream over the years.

AC Cars would try and shift to the production of smaller sports cars but development was uneconomic. The company struggled, and production in Thames Ditton went into decline. In 1986, the Hurlocks sold their interests to the joint venture of CP Autokraft, headed by Brian Angliss who has some history and association with the Cobra cars, and Ford. The sale was coupled with a complete move away from Thames Ditton to a new purpose built factory, on the old Brooklands race track. Manufacturing moved to Weybridge in 1996, to Malta in 2005 and most recently in Germany in 2009. The AC Cobra continues to be a much praised and admired car and is now in its sixth official variation.

Thames Ditton, the home of AC Cars for 75 years, remains their spiritual home where for many years Ferry Works has borne the faded words “Amazing Cars” on its riverside brickwork. And now its facade will have a plaque to mark the centenary – arranged by the AC Owners' Club and unveiled by Selywn Edge's grandson!

Rakesh Kotecha

Resident Rakesh works in the City and is a mainstay of our website forum.



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In December this year we celebrate 20 years since the first performance at the Hall – Cordial Company’s “Christmas Hamper” (Tickets £4!). We continue to bring the best professional companies, but without the prices charged at many other venues. We charge only £6 for the Little Angel Theatre’s “The Magician’s Daughter” in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company and written by the Children’s Laureate, Michael Rosen, for which you would have had to pay £11 for the identical show at The Rose in Kingston.

Many of the companies who come to us also appear in venues such as the Yvonne Arnaud and the Edinburgh Festival. We keep prices down because of the dedicated group of volunteers who act as the impresario, publicity officer, Box Office, work with visiting companies on the day, man the bar, put out the chairs...

Our **music programme** welcomes back the prestigious **London Mozart Trio** on Friday 25 October with top international musicians Colin Stone (piano), Krzysztof Smietana (violin) and Sagi Hartov (cello). On Friday 7 October Amy Tress (violin) leads the Aros Quartet with other prize-winning young musicians from the Royal Academy and



Cheryl Knight as Joyce Grenfell – 25 November

Royal School of Music in a concert of Haydn, Beethoven and Janacek.

Our theatre productions have a growing following and this season we welcome two new companies. On Friday 30 September Handplay Productions present **Sherlock Holmes and the Hound of the Baskervilles**. This is one of Conan Doyle’s most gripping stories where Holmes and Dr. Watson try to solve the mystery of the supernatural hound on Dartmoor and the curse of the Baskerville family. The cast includes Judi Bowker, star of the National Theatre, TV and films

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(she starred as Clare of Assisi in Zefferelli's "Brother Sun, Sister Moon").

On Friday 25 November Hidden Pearl Productions present Cheryl Knight and Alice Farnham in "**Turn Back the Clock**", a comedy revue celebrating Joyce Grenfell's centenary. The Daily Telegraph described this show as... "a celebration of the wit and wisdom of Joyce Grenfell, weaving her songs and monologues with the help of a nice pianist, a French pleat, a pearl necklace and a lovely taffeta skirt". We all have memories of Joyce Grenfell on the stage, television and film, with her unique blend of gentle humour with a little bite and this promises to be a splendid evening.

As always our **children's programme** sells out early so don't delay booking! We have already highlighted the Little Angel Theatre Company's "**The Magician's Daughter**" – this company is one of the leading children's theatre companies in Britain and it is quite a coup to get them back to the Hall in this show inspired by Shakespeare's "The Tempest. Join Miranda's daughter and her adventures on a magical "isle full of noises" with

Caliban and Ariel. Image Musical Theatre are regular visitors to the Hall and on Saturday 26th November they bring their family participation musical "**Hansel and Gretel**" based on the classic Grimms fairy tale.

Finally, Christmas is celebrated on Friday 13th January with Charles Court Opera's pantomime "**Beowulf**" – you may have never heard of this panto but then no one else has! What we can be sure of is that with Charles Court Opera we are guaranteed a hilarious evening of toe-tapping routines, fun and musical treats from pop to opera (with a bit of Grieg and Sibelius thrown in?) England's oldest Viking legend will be turned on its head with some of the UK's best young opera talent.

See page 39 for times and tickets, and you can keep in touch with events on the website:

www.verafletcherhall.co.uk.

I'm sure readers will join me in heartily thanking Ruth Lyon, Joan Leifer, manager Helen Mason, and all the many volunteers for providing such a high quality – and very good value – theatrical and musical resource in the village. – Ed

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Sunday 25th September 7.30 pm

JAZZ ON A SEPTEMBER EVENING

Jake Fryer Ronnie Scotts and the London Jazz Festival and his top line-up play jazz classics by Duke Ellington, Cole Porter, Gershwin...

TICKETS £9 (under 16 years free)

Friday 30th September 8.00 pm

Handplay Productions present

SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

Judi Bowker – star of National Theatre, film and TV – leads a brilliant cast in this gripping murder by a supernatural hound – the curse of the Baskervilles.

TICKETS £12.50

Friday 7th October 8.00 pm

THE AROS QUARTET

Any Tress (violin) Julia Rogers (violin) Emma Stevenson (viola) and Sabina Olsson (cello) Rising stars in the music world play Haydn's String Quartet in B Flat "Sunrise", Beethoven's Quartet No. 12 in E flat and Janacek's String Quartet No. 2.

Tickets £10 (under 16 years free)

Friday 21st October 8.00 pm

Commedia Productions present

BIZET'S CARMEN

Sung in English, a new full scale production blending drama, passion and magnificent music with singers from major opera companies accompanied by Commedia's "virtual orchestra".

TICKETS £15

Friday 28th October 8.00pm

THE LONDON MOZART TRIO

Colin Stone (piano) Krzysztof Smietana (violin) Sagi Hartov (cello). Outstanding world class musicians play Brahms' Trio in C minor, Shostakovich's Trio No. 2 in E minor and Schubert's Trio in B flat.

TICKETS £12 (under 16 years free)

Tickets for all shows from Joan Leifer

Tel: 0844 884 8832 and

The Pro Shop, 52 High Street,
Thames Ditton.

11th November 8.00 pm

Charles Court Opera present

THE MIKADO

Gilbert & Sullivan's most popular opera set in the town of Titipu with "A Wandering Minstrel", "Three Little Maids from School" and the Lord High Executioner.

TICKETS £15

Sunday 20th November 7.30 pm

YOU'RE THE TOP

A tribute to Cole Porter

Andrew Brewis (pianist/singer), Terry Davis (double bass) and guests. Cabaret and jazz stars from the Cafe Royal, The Ivy and Ronnie Scotts celebrate the wit and music of Cole Porter

TICKETS £9 (under 16 years free)

Friday 25th November 8.00 pm

Cheryl Knight and (piano) Alice Farnham

TURN BACK THE CLOCK

A comedy revue celebrating "...the wit and wisdom of Joyce Grenfell, weaving her songs and monologues with the help of a nice pianist, a French pleat, a pearl necklace and a lovely taffeta skirt"

The Daily Telegraph

TICKETS £11

YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

Sunday 23rd October 2.30 & 4.30 pm

Little Angel Theatre in association with the

Royal Shakespeare Company

THE MAGICIAN'S DAUGHTER

Written by former Children's Laureate Michael Rosen, inspired by Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Join Miranda's daughter in her adventures on a magical "isle of noises" with Ariel and Caliban. Stunning puppets and song.

For 4-9 years TICKETS £6

Saturday 26th November 2.30 pm

Image Musical Theatre presents

HANSEL AND GRETEL

A family participation musical of the classic Grimms' fairy tale.

For 5-11 years TICKETS £6

www.verafletcherhall.co.uk

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E-mail: info@westongreenschool.org.uk

Website: www.westongreenschool.org.uk

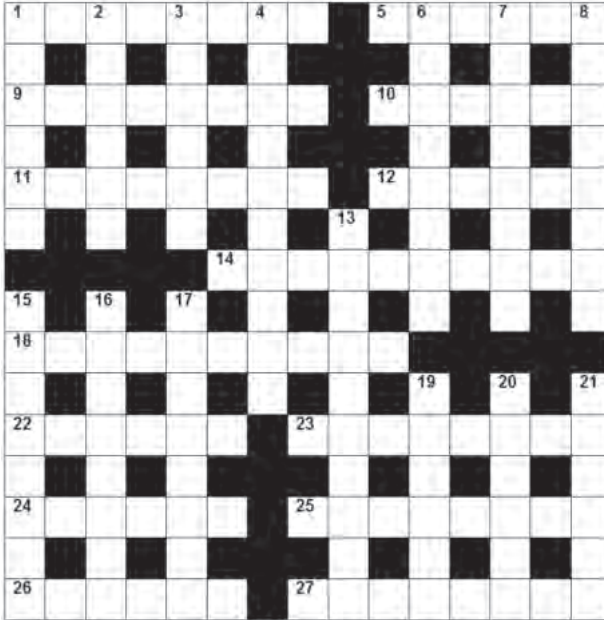
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Thames Ditton, KT7 0JN



Weston Green
School

Autumn Crossword

By Maureen Willcox



The first three correct entries randomly opened after the closing date of 7 November 2010 will win a £5 voucher to spend in local shops.

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

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

ACROSS

1. This catastrophe somehow has Sid ending in tears (6)
5. Some express that there's nothing foreign in the Old Testament (6)
9. Her Majesty's guest is unable to leave (8)
10. Concur that animal is referred to hospital department shortly (6)
11. Does a drunken man score in love affairs? (8)
12. Agree to deliver old wooden bench (6)
14. Skilled in outdoor urban life (10)
18. Neddy's seaside attraction (6,4)
22. This street is strangely even and paved with gold (6)
23. A colourless untruth spares one's feelings (5,3)
24. This or that? Decide! (6)
25. Peak for the sixty-minute dash (4,4)
26. Fears wild adders.
27. This Hicken is getting nowhere! (8)

DOWN

1. To leave: firstly, despite expense, purchase a rail ticket (6)
2. Some teens in gangs misbehaving appallingly are initially a social disgrace (6)
3. Kisses and cuddles cause quite a stir! (6)
4. Obvious to Holmes (10)
6. Paying these costs nothing (8)
7. Any strange relic etc. can be exciting (8)
8. Poor Ted swallowed anaesthetic which restricted his movement (8)
13. Unmortgageable property in Neverland (5,5)
15. Forward to Watson, opposed to 4 down (8)
16. Usually there is only one letter in this answer (8)
17. Oddly prude Les is romantically rejected (8)
19. Imprinted by corrosive experience (6)
20. Recess for haphazard California love (6)
21. They beat your second-best suit (6)

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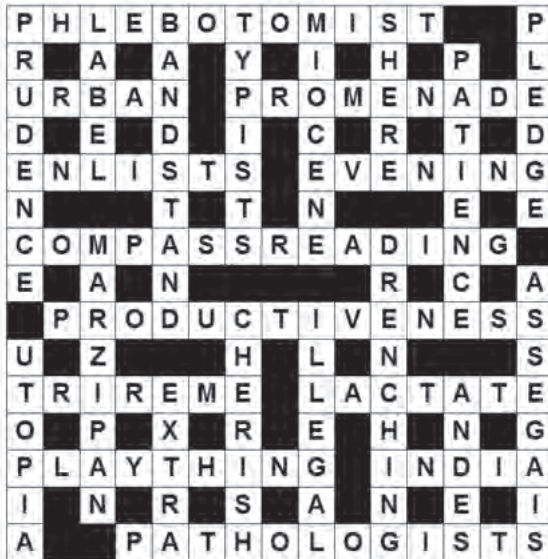
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Solution to the Summer Crossword

by Michael Jackson



Congratulations to the first three contestants whose correct entries were opened after the deadline. Each wins a £5 Voucher for spending in any Thames Ditton or Weston Green shop. (*Note: sending in two entries does not double your chances! :-)*)

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Ralph Dayton

51 Angel Road
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SERVICES, CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

Services

Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	Trudy O Keefe	01372 474555
Dittons and Weston Green Neighbourcare	Sue Mayes	020 8398 6714
Elmbridge Borough Council Community Support Services		
Information, Meals Services, Community		
Transport, Bus Permits		01372 474552/4
Elmbridge Community Alarm Service		01372 474560
Elmbridge Relief Carers Scheme		01372 474547
Ember Centre for the Retired	Mon & Thurs	020 8398 9870
	At other times	01372 474553
Esher and District Stroke Club	Ann Pollock	0208398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Mrs Carole Roycroft	01372 463587
M.D.H.S. Household Services (& garden tidying)	Carolyn Smart (Manager)	01932 248533
Surrey Mobile Library Service		01483 517402
Surrey Youth and Adult Education Service	Elmbridge Area	020 8979 8334

Groups

Girl Guiding in TD & WG	Mrs K Williams	020 8398 1300
1st Thames Ditton Brownies	Mrs. Bronach Hughes	020 8398 1628
3rd Thames Ditton Brownies	Mrs Heather Horler	020 8398 0364
2nd Thames Ditton Rainbows	Nicki Sutherland	020 8398 4202
1st Weston Green (All Saints) Scout Group	Alan Nolan-Davies	0844 414 2826
1st Weston Green Guides (All Saints)	Mrs. Louise Lewis	020 8398 4843
2nd Thames Ditton Guides	Mrs. Bronach Hughes	020 8398 1628
1st Weston Green Brownies (All Saints)	Mrs K Williams	020 8398 1300
2nd Weston Green Brownies	Mrs J Epps	020 8395 0595
1st Weston Green Rainbows	Mrs Helen Hill	020 8398 3135
4th Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts	Alison Derrick	020 8398 0041
Dittons Scout Group	Keith Berry	0208 398 3447
Coffee and chat (United Reformed Church)	Mrs. E. Barker	01372 467491
Emberbrook Trefoil Guild	Mrs. Adrienne Nealing	020 8398 5582
Esher Floral Art Group	Mrs. M. Dingle	020 8398 3943
Friends of Bushey and Home Parks	Mrs. Julie Cohen	020 8943 2017
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chicken	0208 398 2932
Molesey and Dittons Neighbourhood Watch	Chairman: Pat Farmiloe	020 8398 2787
Parents and Toddlers(St Nicholas church)	Information	020 8398 7211
Ripieno Choir	Nick Harris	020 8399 7231
Surrey Bell-ringers	Nick Pattenden	Nick@FSLimited.com

Clubs

Albany Motor Yacht Club	Secretary	01784466651
Arts and Heritage Club	Carol Butcher	01932 867511
Claremont PROBUS Club	Mr. P. Collins	020 8398 3125
Claygate Bridge Club	Hon. Secretary	020 8398 1710
Colets Health & Fitness	Giordano Orsini	020 8398 7108
Dittons Skiff and Punting Club	Hon Secretary	07710 139417
Dittons & Hinchley Wood Royal British Legion	Hon Secretary	020 8398 6263

Ember Players (Drama) Ember Sports Club	Anne Segall	020 8941 4528
Ember Sports Club	Mrs. Pauline Wareham	020 8979 8977
Ember Sports Club: Bowls	Sylvia Jones	01932 788701
Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Dr. David Cooke	01932 862841
Ember Sports Club: Tennis	Margaret Robinson	01372 842401
Esher Bowling Club	Roger Cooper	01372 468109
Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Esher Camera Club	Billy Buchanan	020 8398 3169
Esher 41 and Ex-Round Tablers' Club	Dr. R. Tudor-Williams	020 8398 0108
Folk Dance Club	Pam Phillips	01372 373745
Hinchley Wood / Dittons PROBUS Club	Geoff Francis	01932 867771
Long Ditton Cricket Club	Nigel Hardy	020 8398 8361
Long Ditton Garden Club	Mrs. Ann Allen	020 8398 1718
Model Railway Society (Hampton Court)	Secretary	01932 241224
Mothers Union (All Saints)	Val Lomax	01932 860344
Old Cranleigh Rugby Club	Tony Price	07801 837129
Old Cranleigh Hockey Club	Eds Copleston (Men)	07775 940703
	Helen Hawes (Ladies)	07771 557900
River Club (BMYC)	David Walker	0870 460 3586
Rotary Club, Esher	Geoff Morris	01932 868454
Rubber Bridge TD Lawn Tennis Club	Val	020 8399 9972
Surbiton Croquet Club	Alec Thomas	020 8398 2391
Surbiton Golf Club	Secretary	0208 398 3101
Surbiton Hockey Club	Secretary	020 8398 2401
Thames Ditton Lawn Tennis Club	Chris Lewis	07770 562569
Thames Ditton & Esher Golf Club	Mark Rodbard	020 8398 1551
Thames Ditton Squash Club (Colets)	Dave Peck	020 8398 7108
Thames Ditton Cricket Club	Howard Frish (Secretary)	07947 561449
Thames Ditton Marquetry Group	Jasmine Berry	020 8398 4358
Yoga for Health Club	Mrs. Celia Rowe	020 8398 2700

SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Ember Choral Society	Linda Bridges	020 8399 5402
Esher Recorded Music Society	Miss S. M. Garrat	020 8398 8541
Esher and Molesey Garden Society	Julia Presland (Sec)	julia@mulcott.fsnet.co.uk
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Lettings: John Morgan	020 8398 3049
Lynwood Allotment Society	Louise Flaig	020 8398 7704
Molesey and District Antiques Society	Linda Lambert	020 8398 1476
NADFAS (Decorative & Fine Arts) Kingston	Mrs. Valerie Windsor	020 8549 9967
National Trust: Richmond Association	Membership Secretary	020 8894 2972
Soroptimist International (Kingston District)	Secretary: Pat Harman	020 8390 3507
Thames Ditton Women's Institute (W.I.)	Secretary	020 8398 8615
Thames Valley Amateur Radio Transmitters Society	Chairman	0148328 4279

OTHER

Cancer Research UK	Mrs. Vivienne Harris	020 8398 6787
University of the Third Age (U3A)	Ken Kingham	0208 979 8053
Vera Fletcher Hall	Lettings: Helen Mason	08456 528 529
	Membership: Sue Morris	020 8224 2536

Please contact the Editor to amend these listings



Elmbridge Newspeak

If you read in your paper that Elmbridge Museum was entering “an exciting new era” you might be excused for thinking that it was:

- a) going to be easier to get to with perhaps better parking; or
- b) moving to a larger and improved site; or
- c) to receive money to improve the way the collection is presented; or
- d) to benefit from a publicity campaign to encourage more visitors

How wrong you would be! In the Orwellian world of Elmbridge Council this “new era” actually means that:

- a) the Museum will close
- b) the collection will be split up
- c) access will now be on-line

Whoever in Elmbridge Council dreamed up this incredible use of the English language believing that the changes will really make the Museum “more accessible, relevant and cost effective to the community” must be living in a thought bubble of their own creation. What are we going to see next in this move to ‘redefine’ services – closing our day centres for the elderly and making them all “on line”? Closing our public halls, claiming that this makes the local people able to manage them better – but I’d forgotten of course that they are already doing this!

George Orwell in his famous book 1984 invented the words “Newspeak” and “Doublethink”, and the “Ministry of Truth”, whose purpose was to distort the truth in the belief that “Ignorance is Strength” and to use words to make lies sound truthful. Is 1984 required reading in the Civic Centre? This latest Council PR announcement is on a par with the claim last year that “there were no cuts in services – but changing with the times”. Humpty Dumpty would have been proud of Elmbridge’s public relations – “When I use a word... it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less”.

What is great about Elmbridge is that we have a fantastic local history and a wonderful collection of artefacts in the Museum. What we lack is any imagination in how to present this collection and make it truly accessible – or do we want Elmbridge to be known as the “Philistine” borough?

Winston Smith
(particulars supplied)

*(...and no, Smith is **not** the Editor writing under alias, but an altogether more distinguished resident. We’re collecting euphemisms for ‘cuts’, if you’d like to send some in).*

And finally:

“If you want things to stay as they are, things will have to change”

– *Giuseppe di Lamedosa (Sicilian writer)*



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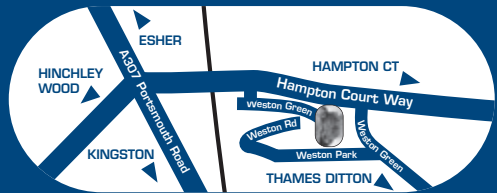
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