

SUMMER 2009

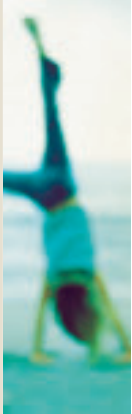
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THAMES DITTON TODAY

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

SUMMER 2009

Published quarterly since Spring 1970

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Cover photo: *Time Waits for no Man*
St Nicholas' Church 2009 – 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 Moss 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.

President: Ann Levick,
8 Basing Close, Thames Ditton

Vice-President: Edward Rowe,
23 Portsmouth Avenue, Thames Ditton

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Planning: Graham Cooke 23 Ashley Road,
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**THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE
TUESDAY 30 JUNE AND TUESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER, 2009 AT 8.00PM
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Chairman's Report to the AGM



It is hard to believe a year has gone by since the last AGM and I am called on again to deliver the Chairman's report and let you know how we have got on against our objectives; namely to protect the amenities and further the interests of people who live in the area and encourage a community spirit.

The RA continues to appeal to local people and currently over 30% of the households in the area subscribe. I would like to thank Peter Haynes our membership secretary for all his work in this area.

We retain 5 RA Borough Councillors after Borough elections in May last year and, following Maureen Sheldrick's retirement after 16 years committed service, Lorraine Sharp was elected to serve alongside Tannia Shipley in Weston Green Ward and Ruth Lyon was again returned to serve alongside Karen Randolph and David Lowe in Thames Ditton. Peter Hickman continues to serve as the Dittons representation on Surrey County Council.

We continue to work to keep you both informed and involved through our Open Meetings, our website and Thames Ditton Today. The Open Meetings are held every couple of months and provide the opportunity for people to hear directly from RA councillors and officers, as well as ask questions and to provide input. The website continues to attract a high number of regular visitors including regional news media. It is an effective, low cost means of communication both ways with residents,

providing opportunity for you to make your views known or engage in discussion through the forum. The facility to email those members who have given us their email addresses will continue to be used very sparingly to avoid adding to your inbox. The web address is in the magazine – or just Google 'Thames Ditton residents' or 'Weston Green residents' and you'll find it.

As a result of a merger at the printers the magazine is now being printed at higher quality. We have been able to hold the costs steady partly because more processing is done before material is taken to the printers. Advertising has held up well so far during the recession and there is still a waiting list: I would like to thank Verity Park our advertising manager for her sterling work. Advertising does not defray all costs of the magazine, and member subscriptions and contributions are essential to ensure its continuance. We thank members for those contributions, and the willing team of volunteers who distribute the magazine.

Keith Evetts has played a pivotal role in keeping residents informed, currently filling the role of editor of TDT and webmaster. I would like to record my thanks to him for all his hard work. It has become clear that while there is considerable synergy between magazine and website, the task of attending to both of them has grown to the point where we need to divide the work. We will therefore be looking to play in a new editor over the

next few issues of TD Today, and Keith will then focus on overhauling and updating the website.

As we do report regularly through the year I intend to just highlight a few examples of the work of the past year.

Parking

In January Elmbridge Borough Council imposed significant increases of between 100% and a 150% on daily and termly parking charges at the Ashley Road Car Park. This hit office and shop employees as well as residents who need to park for more than a couple of hours. It emptied the car park as people chose to park on our overcrowded streets instead. We supported a petition organized by Helen Peters of Axos, and following a very cold Saturday morning outside the shops we, together with local traders, collected around 500 signatures from residents

requesting that the council roll back the increases. That has been presented to the EBC Cabinet and the council is currently reviewing the position.

It is worth reminding ourselves that, whilst EBC have responsibility for the Ashley Road Car Park, Surrey County Council has responsibility for on road parking. We are still awaiting a scheme from SCC regarding how best to manage on-street parking. SCC had insufficient funds to complete the consultation work and work up final proposals in the FY 08-09. That work is now due to be completed in this next year '09-'10 and any work would not start until 10-11. Peter Hickman will continue lobbying the council to complete this work.

Ember Centre

It seems to have been a bit of a year for petitions as we have also been active in petitioning EBC to maintain the Ember day centre for the elderly held twice a week here at the Vera Fletcher Hall with an active core of volunteers who help out. This enables older people to get out of their homes, socialise, have a hot meal and participate in a number of activities whether physical, educational or entertaining. As part of cost cutting measures (to save less than £17,000) the Cabinet at EBC had proposed to close the centre at the Hall and offer inferior facilities at St Helens down the road.

The Association joined with local church groups, local shops and others to raise a petition to the council to keep the Centre open. It was a measure of local rejection of the Council's proposals that within 10 days we had gathered a record breaking 2152 signatures. Residents



Libby collects another signature

Association members & officers attended both the EBC cabinet meeting and the full council meeting to make sure the councillors were in no doubt of the strength of feeling locally. The Cabinet instructed officials once again to look at the whole question of the Ember Centre.

On that note, the Association's executive also proposed to make small donation of £500 towards the purchase of computers to enable the Ember Centre to extend its activities and provide computer classes and access as part of the activities on offer.

Winters Bridge

We made a similar donation made last year towards improvement of parking at Winters Bridge to enable people to use the shops there. Traders and shoppers led by Chris Bachmann of the well-known patisserie had organised a petition asking for a lay-by for short-stay shoppers, as changes to the bus stop and the introduction of parking wardens was making life difficult. Councillor Peter Hickman's persistence steered the proposal through the Area Committee and with some funds from his council allocation, contributions from Bachmann's and from us sufficient money was secured to put in place the new layby which has proved a great success.

From time to time we look to donate small sums to enhance some aspect of the local community. These are only made once other costs are covered and after ensuring we maintain a healthy contingency fund. I trust that you are happy for the executive to continue these small contributions to our local area.

Planning

Your Association is not against development (no community can stand

still) but we do want to make sure it is appropriate for the area. The overall number of planning applications for Thames Ditton & Weston Green fell from 250 for the period March 2007/2008 to 210 for period March 2008 to March 2009. Whilst this reduction in numbers is not substantial, most applications were for extensions and minor changes such as tree surgery in the Conservation Areas. The number of new build applications for flats and the like has been very much lower clearly reflecting economic conditions.

Unfortunately, the fact that we may be seeing less development does not mean that we need to be less vigilant since current economic conditions will mean that developers are more tempted to cut corners. The work of the Association has more recently concentrated on ensuring that the Council enforce planning conditions.

You will have seen that after a considerable period of inactivity work has now started again in the High Street, on number 29 and the houses behind. However, once again it appears that the work does not comply with planning conditions. In the last few days, what appears to be no more than a plywood covering has been applied to the front of the building and this is in course of being painted. Councillors and Association Officers have been chasing EBC to come and take a look and make sure that the works will be compliant. Frankly we are very frustrated by the response from the Council planning staff but we continue to keep up the pressure. On the plus side we did succeed in having the proposal rejected to create five flats in the office building, that now houses Hawes Estate Agents, and that rejection was upheld on appeal.



Esher College Kids' Club

Following a successful launch last year, we have put together a two week programme of activities for kids starting 3rd August. Fees start at £25 per day, or £100 for a full week, with activities including:

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- ⊗ Kwik Cricket

The club is based at the College's site in Weston Green Road. All staff are Police checked, with the sports activities run by a qualified PE teacher, and assisted by trained coaches.



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Turning to Weston Green, there are three significant areas of potential development, the Olde Harrow, Newlands and the former Cottage Hospital.

The application to build on the Olde Harrow site that was rejected by Elmbridge has gone to appeal and we are supporting local residents in fighting the appeal. An entirely inappropriate development proposal for the Newlands, in Weston Green Road was withdrawn after considerable objections had been raised however a fresh application will no doubt be forthcoming.

The fate of the former Cottage Hospital building, again in Weston Green Road, is uncertain. We will resist any application that seeks to change use of the property away from a public amenity.

As in previous years, we have found that getting inappropriate planning applications rejected relies on getting good local support in the form of objection letters and, where cases go to Appeal, getting people to turn up at Hearings when these are held.

CHIP

Last year I said I found it disappointing that there is no overall plan for development of this important part of the village. The number of individual applications tests planning officers, residents and ourselves when looking to keep on top of what is actually going on and the overall impact of the plans.

This year as part of the Community Heritage Initiative Project (or CHIP) Elmbridge Borough Council have been reappraising the conservation areas of Thames Ditton and Giggs Hill Green in order to complete a comprehensive



the Swan and Ferry Works – part of our conservation area

character appraisal and proposals for managing the areas. Along with other bodies and individuals the Residents Association have taken an active role working with the consultants to articulate what gives these areas their character. We have sought to keep residents up to date with the project via TDT and the website. As the project progressed all households in the area have received an outline of the proposals and EBC staged an exhibition in the library. I hope you have all taken the opportunity to make your views known.

The final document will be used in preparation of the local development framework and as a basis for informing decision making. It will be a material consideration when it comes to considering planning applications. Our hope is, as a result of this work, there will be much tighter management of the conservation areas and help us to make sure any development enhances the local character.

Policing

We continue to have a good relationship with the police locally and our local beat officer Andy Grapsas usually holds a police panel meeting prior

to our regular open meetings so do come along and meet him and stay on to discuss local issues.

Highways & Drainage

Whilst there have been no headline-grabbing floods this year drainage continues to take up a great deal of time from our councillors and Andrew Roberts our Highways & Drainage convener. Last year when Tannia Shipley and Peter Hickman succeeded in getting network rail and SCC to clear the drains and culverts around Esher Station to alleviate flooding they warned that routine maintenance and clearance would be required to keep this problem under control. Unfortunately that has not happened and as a result we have had further flooding problems. As always Tannia and Peter are keeping up the pressure but take no pleasure in being proved right.

Andrew also took action to remove graffiti at Thames Ditton Station when it seemed impossible to get the responsible bodies to act.

Peter Hickman our SCC Councillor continues to keep the pressure on regarding highways whether in relation to getting lights fixed or verges cut. He has also gained agreement from SCC to make improvements to the school crossing near the station, we are now waiting for that work to start.

Our Weston Green Councillors had to act when once again antique tiles were stolen from the pavements at Weston Green and SCC refused to purchase 200 replacements. With residents they managed to gather together the tiles needed from spares that people had put aside.

Public Health

Our Elmbridge Borough Councillors and County Councillor continue to press for the NHS to make use of the beds at the Emberbrook hospital which we see as a key part of ensuring better healthcare local to home.

Community Spirit

The Christmas Fair was once again a great success and it is lovely to see residents out and about celebrating the Christmas spirit together. We organised the Christmas party for residents, provided the Christmas tree for the village and as we head into spring we have once again provided a number of bulbs to brighten us up:



John Lyon planted another 500 bulbs for us

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, our Association can only prosper with the participation and support of its members and on behalf of the Officers and Committee I would like to thank you all. Thank you.

Libby MacIntyre, Chairman

News From the Residents' Association



24 March (AGM) to 22 May

The period since our AGM has been somewhat less frenetic than the four months over Winter and early Spring, that saw several major planning and other issues vigorously contested by residents and their Association, now in its 75th year. Villagers have turned with some relief to the many community pursuits of summertime.

Ember Centre

We are delighted to report that with the rallying of all who care about the elderly members of our community, we drove the Elmbridge Cabinet, out of touch with the views of residents and churches alike, to withdraw its plans to close the Ember Centre at the Vera Fletcher Hall. Indeed, the coming together of the community to see off this threat has re-invigorated the Ember Centre, boosted the work of its many volunteers and its membership, and attracted additional support. To go with the £500 pledged by the Residents' Association towards laptops for computer and internet lessons, Andrew Roberts (our Highways convenor) has donated a further £500.

Conservation

The final documents of Elmbridge's Community Heritage Initiative Project (CHIP) report on the Conservation Areas of Thames Ditton and Giggs Hill Green should be published on EBC's website this month. They should provide an

essential baseline of information and principles to be applied to planning applications in those areas. At our well-attended Open Meeting on 28 April the leading outside consultant for CHIP, James Webb, gave a useful roundup of the principles applied during the project. Meanwhile following the address to our AGM by Chairman of the Royal Society of Arts, conservationist Gerry Archer CBE LVO, the Association is exploring the idea of blue plaques for some of the buildings in these wards (not just the conservation areas) that have historic connotations for Thames Ditton and Weston Green. An article by Libby elsewhere in this issue expands upon this.

Meanwhile in Weston Green, where CHIP will look at the conservation area in due course, a new Conservation Street Sign has been installed with advice from Elmbridge's Heritage officer Clare Smith to mark the small line of houses known as Admiral's Row.

Trees

The CHIP project underscored how important to this flat and built-up area are the mature trees we enjoy. Having noted some trees being felled or severely damaged by owners in the area, the Association has renewed efforts to monitor significant trees, to urge sympathetic treatment by their owners and where appropriate seek further Tree Preservation Orders.



the Holm oak after its haircut

The ancient Holm oak at Harvest Lane was given attention early in May to remove one of its three trunks, re-brace the remaining two, and thin out the crown. The crack in the diseased trunk had opened perceptibly over the previous few months. The owners decided to put into effect the works agreed in planning application (2008/1616) (and thoughtfully informed us so that the situation could be properly explained to concerned visitors to our website). This much-loved tree should recover given time. It's an asset to the village skyline.

A horse chestnut at the Guy Salmon showroom was also found by arboricultural specialists to be badly diseased, so there was no option but for EBC to agree to it being felled. Guy Salmon are required to plant a replacement - preferably a red chestnut, more resistant to the disease that is afflicting the white chestnuts. The

location of the new young tree will not be in exactly the same place but close to it.

Residents have been concerned about the magnificent copper beech felled in a property in Weston Park near Milbourne Pond. There was a preservation order on the tree, but it had *meripilus giganteus* and it had to be felled. The owners were very upset and consulted three arboriculturalists and the RHS. The council were also involved in the sad but inevitable decision.

Another horse chestnut, to be felled at Weston Green School, will also be replaced.

A question was asked at our last Open Meeting about the work done on the common near Newlands Avenue, in order to reinstate the original path. The path had become wider and wider because the drainage was very poor, and walkers were walking around the puddles in order to avoid them. Opening up the area should help dry out the path and the growth will then be reinstated on the edges - making the path narrower again. This area was long overdue for some maintenance. The last time it was done was in 1996. The Senior Countryside Ranger has confirmed that the trees removed along that section of Ditton Common consisted solely of conifers and holly trees, plus a number of dead elm trees, an elder bush, straggly hawthorns and one sycamore with squirrel damage. Ash trees of good form have been retained and these will become the next generation.

In order to preserve the edge of the common from erosion, wooden posts have been installed opposite The Newlands. What had become a muddy mess should swiftly green over.

Flowers

We love it when residents take a pride in their streets. Pamela Bannister has organised a hanging basket/window box competition among the residents in Queens Road. Pam writes: “Squires will judge the entries during the week of 29 June and the winner/runner-up will be announced during the week of Hampton Court Flower Show in July. The Albany Pub, situated at the end of Queens Road, runs a little daily ferry to and from the Flower Show and many local people walk down our road to make use of this. I thought it would be nice to support the Albany and generally enhance the appearance of the road by encouraging residents to show off their floral skills! The Albany chipped in with a meal for two, and Squires are giving a £50 voucher to the winner to support this initiative.” Excellent.



one of the baskets in Queens Road

Planning

A relatively quiet period, although the 29 High Street saga continues to give planning enforcement problems. There is no sign yet of a renewed application for The Newlands. The rejected proposals for the Harrow will be considered by the Planning Inspector on appeal on 2 June, after this is written but before it is published.

Surrey County Council's Executive failed to plan in good time for predictable demographic changes at both infants and secondary school level, despite pressure from our Councillors over the past two years to do so. To meet the shortfall, SCC proposed to erect a temporary “Portacabin” in the Conservation Area at Thames Ditton Infants School. The need for infant places in the Dittons is pressing; the school is excellent. But the County authorities must not be led to think that this temporary structure might *de facto* become ‘permanent.’ In granting permission, therefore, the Elmbridge area planning subcommittee has attached a firm condition limiting the cabin to five years.

Doings

The **Scout Fair, Regatta and Guides'** activities are reported on later pages in this issue.

Young **Charlotte Fraser**, who lives along Giggs Hill Green, recently received a Diana award from the Princess Diana foundation for her charitable fundraising work for The Back Up Trust, a national Spinal Injuries charity. In 2008 she attended a week long Back Up Youth Course for spinally injured teenagers in the Lake District. To help contribute to

the cost of the course the charity encourage 'Buddies' to fundraise through activities. Charlotte came up with the idea of doing three rounds of the Harry Hawkes 8, one on a pushbike, one on a hand-bike specifically designed for paraplegics, and one in a wheelchair. She raised over £1,400 receiving sponsorship from all continents.

Photographer **Keith Hern**, a Thames Ditton resident who survived throat cancer in 2007, has been raising money for the Royal Marsden Hospital with a quiz night and other appeals to include a trek to the Arctic this summer. See www.justgiving.com/keithhern. One of Keith's photographs recently placed first in a Kingston First competition and has been exhibited at the Bentall Centre. Thames Ditton resident Michael Tagg was one of several local fundraisers to complete the London Marathon today (his first marathon): he raised more than £2500 for the Suzy Lamplugh Trust. Michael was a late entrant with just 6 weeks to go, which makes his time (3 hr 50 mins) all the more impressive.

In mid-May **Colet's** awesome squash club retained the Men's national club title in what is becoming almost an annual ritual! They also won the national Men's Over 35 and Over 45 titles .

Please note that the local **Probus Club** which had been meeting at The Angel has now moved to the Imber Court (Metropolitan Police Sports & Social Club) Esher Suite 1, where they meet on the third Tuesday of each month.

Belgian owners of **AC Cobra** cars visited Thames Ditton in early May with



*an AC Cobra from Belgium visits its birthplace
photo provided by Martin Steel from the visitors*

8 cars, 2 support vehicles and some partners. to meet with local fans of the marque, the best-known product of the village's motor industry in its hey-day, and enjoy lunch at the Swan near to AC's old factory.

Moss Pharmacy in the High Street is to be refurbished from 25th July to 3rd August. During this time it will be open for prescriptions, but closed for over-the-counter purchases. On reopening it will be known as Your Local Boots Pharmacy. The Moss pharmacy was actually owned by Alliance which merged with Boots a few years ago. The rebranding is part of a programme already carried out in many of their other pharmacies.

Crime and policing

The past few months have seen a modest increase in the crime rate, with burglaries on the rise . There has been some antisocial behaviour and criminal damage, the most mindless of which happened on the night of Good Friday when the old lamp fitting on top of the Fountain monument was ripped off its mounting. Councillor Peter Hickman had the fitting removed to Surrey's depots and it is hoped that it will be restored and replaced soon.



fountain vandalised

At the neighbourhood police panel on 28 April our local police added the High Street to the priority areas for monitoring. There have been a number of thefts and incidents there in recent months. Police

will also step up again their coverage of hotspots for antisocial behaviour now that the weather is warming up and youths are out in those places.

Weston Green has a new neighbourhood constable, PC Pete Bazley, and the Dittons and Hinchley Wood will imminently be back up to strength with the recruitment and training of a new PCSO, Nigel Oates.

Finally

We welcome Sally Stronge as our new Minutes Secretary, replacing Emma Barton whom we thank for doing a sterling job: her husband has now been posted East of the Urals. Sally lives in the part of Thames Ditton which is 'the other side' of the Portsmouth Road; she adds representational balance to the committee. Also, meetings will be fun.



Sally Stronge, new Minutes Secretary

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Blue Plaques for Red-Letter Days?



Have you ever walked around London and looked at some of the blue plaques in the city which give a little slice of history or insight into a street or a square? Perhaps it has surprised you to see that Boris Karloff (aka William Henry Pratt) was born in East Dulwich, or had a little shiver down your spine when you walk past the site where the first flying bomb hit London (Tower Hamlets). When you find a blue plaque on your walk, whether as part of your daily commute or on a sightseeing afternoon, you feel that you know a little more than when you started your day.

Have you ever thought that our little corner of the world, here in Thames Ditton or Weston Green, has a wealth of history that could give some parts of London a run for their money? Wouldn't it be as interesting for passers by to know that Marie Lloyd sang at the Albany Music Hall, a site near the Dittons Skiff & Punt club, or that the house boats of the time that were moored along that side of the river were the scene of many a party for the theatrical set of the time. The industrially-minded among us might like to know that in the 1870s the brilliant engineers Peter Williams and Mark Robinson originally manufactured engines at Ferry Works.



Could this building be a good candidate for a blue plaque? In the same family of butchers for many years, and opposite the former village slaughterhouse at Stag's Court – one of the oldest surviving buildings here. In Victorian times was it the butcher's shop in the High Street run by Dick Porter, keeper of the Royal Deer at Hampton Court? Would someone like to do the research?

When Gerry Acher from Cobham Conservation & Heritage Trust came to talk to the Residents Association AGM at the end of March he told us about a blue plaque scheme the Trust runs in Cobham to identify places of historic interest.



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David Taylor, a local historian of Cobham, has researched much of the history of the village and working with residents and members of the trust they have three blue plaques in place with more coming this year. It makes a pleasant and informative addition to a walk around Cobham and gives people a chance to consider the past and the people that have helped shape what is there today.

Gerry's talk got us thinking that there could be real potential for a blue plaque scheme here in Thames Ditton and Weston Green – and this coincided with our plans for marking the 75th anniversary this year of the Residents Association. The more we thought, the more it seemed that there may be a natural affinity between the two ideas. What if we were to mark this milestone by starting a similar local scheme here? Wouldn't it be nice when walking around the village there were some blue plaques giving a little bit of the history of this special place?

There is a lot of work involved to set up such a scheme but we think it would repay the effort. We would need to find sponsors – whether individuals or companies – prepared to contribute to the plaques and people prepared to do some of the research to make sure that facts are

accurate. But we do believe it could enhance our environment and perhaps draw people to visit the village.

Which places in Thames Ditton or Weston Green do you think should be marked by a blue plaque, perhaps because of the historic nature of the site or the people who have lived there? If you would like to get involved in this exciting project, whether helping with research or perhaps sponsoring a plaque, contact our Hon Sec Tricia Bland or email our editor and webmaster Keith Evetts: their contacting particulars appear on pages 3 and 5 of this issue, and the contacts page of our website.

Please have your say and let us know: if you were choosing to mark a special spot, what would it be and why? Let us know in two or three paragraphs the building or place you think would be worthy of a blue plaque, including some historical facts and the reason you think it is worthy of note. Please send your nominations to Tricia Bland, preferably by the end of July.

In the next edition of Thames Ditton Today we'll let you know what has captured peoples' imagination and what might happen next.

Libby MacIntyre
Chairman

Village voices...

In theory there's no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.

How long a minute is depends on what side of the bathroom door you're on.

I told her she was the worst wife in the world but she thought that was too much of a coincidence.

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Let There Be Light



St Nicholas' Church, the historic parish church of Thames Ditton, is launching a £200,000 appeal for major renovations to the church. We have had no choice. The church electricians failed our most recent five-yearly inspection and we must take steps to replace them. 80% of the church electricians are to do with lighting. A new lighting system has been designed for us by Bruce Kirk of 'Light Perceptions'. A display in the church showing the proposed fittings, specifically designed for St Nicholas', has been very well received. Their traditional appearance suits the character of the church but the scheme takes full advantage of technology to provide an economical and flexible system.

It soon became clear to us that to fund this scheme we should need to launch an appeal. But we also realised that there are other works we shall need to tackle in the very near future and that the only sensible option was to launch a comprehensive appeal rather than a series of small appeals.

What are these other works?

- To replace the heating boiler, which has become very unreliable and expensive, and which has sometimes failed when we most needed it.
- To improve access to the church for all, whatever their particular needs.



by day, John sheds light on infants' questions

- To improve the landscaping and lighting of the churchyard, which we recognise is a key element of the Thames Ditton conservation area.

We have some funds available, and we are exploring possible grants, but in order to carry out these necessary plans we shall need the generous support of the local community. We shall be launching a formal appeal shortly and we trust that all who value St Nicholas' Church and its surroundings will want to play their part in ensuring its success. Thank you.

John Silk, Vicar

Where The Bee Sucks



We haven't counted them but there seem to be lots of bees in Thames Ditton and Weston Green. We do mean the buzzy variety! Yet beekeepers and naturalists throughout England have become increasingly worried about a fall-off in the bee population. Broadly, there are two kinds of bees. Honeybees live in large colonies of up to 50,000, generally cared for by beekeepers. Bumblebees live in much smaller family groups of an hundred or so in the wild. Their numbers are declining, but researchers are not sure why.



bumblebee pollinating in Church Walk

The drowsy sound of bees fumbling the flowers is a keynote of summer that we would not be without. So how can we help them? Michael Evans, who when he is not dragooned by wife Sharon into serving in the Lime Tree deli is Chairman of Kingston Beekeepers, writes:

“Bumblebees live under the ground and in nooks and crannies, and feed on many garden flowers. You can stack old logs to provide shelter. There are many flowers you can plant to attract and nourish bees, and a quick search of the internet will furnish you with a list that includes bluebells, cotoneaster, lupins, honeysuckle and geraniums, as well as foxgloves and clover that not everyone wants in the garden. However, there's a

wealth of flowers for bees to feed on in all the gardens of this area, and in any case their main source of nectar is trees, so that doesn't seem to be the problem.

“Please don't spray flowers in bloom with insecticide. It can kill the bees as well as damaging the appearance of the flowers' petals. A bee will take poisoned nectar back to its nest. And don't let bees feed on honey you get from shops! A lot of imported honey is contaminated with American Foul Brood, which is very dangerous to our native honeybees: if a colony is found to be infected with AFB then by law it has to be destroyed.

“Unlike wasps, bees are nothing to be afraid of: if you stay calm they will stay calm too, and you won’t be stung. The bee will die if it stings you. Bee stings can be beneficial for arthritis, but a very small number of people can have a severe allergic reaction to a sting that needs immediate medical treatment. If you are stung, scrape the sting off immediately to remove the venom and reduce the pain, and look for an antihistamine cream.

“Try to leave bumblebee nests undisturbed. It’s very sad when we get calls from gardeners wishing to kill off bumblebees to make way for their next bit of garden decking.”



busy bumblebee on cotoneaster and campanula



crocus are an early attractor for bees

And – support your local beekeepers by buying their honey! It may cost a bit more, but it’s worth every penny. You know where it’s been, and it’s full of goodness, with many medicinal benefits claimed for local honey.

Good websites are www.bumblebee.org and, for information on honeybees, www.britishbee.org.uk – the website of the British Beekeepers Association.

Michael Evans and Michael Jackson

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Speaking of Councils



Enhanced Bin Collection

We read everywhere of confidential documents going astray – left on the bus, or in a pub or passed to a reporter by an unknown hand or embarrassing emails that mysteriously end up at the Daily Mail or the Express. Now it seems that even Elmbridge is not immune - our magazine’s very own anonymous investigative reporter, sitting one night in a dark corner in a local pub in Weston Green, has “acquired” a memorandum sent to colleagues by an official in a

council not a hundred miles from Thames Ditton. We should emphasise that no money changed hands and we publish it in solely in the public interest, particularly in the light of recent comments in the Press on how councils and councillors talk to the people about the work they do. We have checked carefully with our sources and can assure readers that every phrase is genuine.

Headed “How to Get our Message Across” it reads as follows:



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To all staff: How to Get Our Message Across

The Council badly needs to have an image overhaul and our vision and top priorities need actualising. How do we lock this in? Our direction of travel must be reoriented so that our residents see that we have a robust approach to delivering value for money and that we are providing accessible outreach services through a basket of performance indicators. We must provide a comprehensive corporate toolkit, explore service synergies and ensure that our procurement processes and flagship activities are all showcased, so that they signpost residents and improve full functionality in our core services.

We will set up a working party partnered with a focus group to think outside the box and report on how we join up all aspects of our service. This should include a reduction in the Council's overall potential risk management profile, and provide a benchmark for councillor reflection on community outcomes, not forgetting our overarching policies on sustainable licences and reporting on the traffic light system we use in our Council agenda. The working group needs to look at our skill-sets and provide a table of elements to enable us to focus on service-specific criteria such as enhanced bin collection, the operability of amenities, asset mapping, themed delivery partnerships and, at a time of economic downturn, on recession busters and business process re-engineering. The outputs from this group can provide a cornerstone for future external assessment and then be rolled out to our key stakeholders for evaluation in the context of our Sustainable Community Partnership.

I believe this gives us an exciting possibility to re-engage with residents and present a new image for the Council through a clear statement of our policies in a way which will be easily intelligible to everyone.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I am indebted to Subliminal Perceptions In Neurolinguistics whose lengthy consultancy report informs this memorandum, providing value-added entirely commensurate with their not inconsiderable emoluments.



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Residents protest against phone mast



Local residents have united to oppose a planning appeal by Vodafone to place a 14.4m phone mast and huge equipment cabinets in an area densely populated by families with young children. The equipment proposed by Vodafone would be along the footpath leading from the platforms at Esher Station to the part of Lower Green Road close to the turnstiles of Sandown Park Racecourse, on unregistered land.

Lower Green Residents' Committee, a group of concerned residents and parents, have joined together to voice their concerns over this planning application and to raise awareness among the community to ensure that this planning application is refused at Appeal.

This footpath is used not just by commuters but also by school children travelling to and from Esher High School. Accordingly, Vodafone's original planning application for the mast (application no. 2008/1951) was refused by Elmbridge Council last September on numerous grounds including, most importantly, safety. The proposed equipment cabinets are enormous, the largest of the two cabinets being 6ft 4ins tall, and if Vodafone get their way the cabinets will be placed on the unlit section of the pathway enclosed on one side by a 9ft railway embankment and on the other, by the Sandown Park Racecourse fence. It is common sense that this hiding place would provide

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opportunities to harm vulnerable passers-by, including our school children.

Furthermore, Vodafone would be placing their equipment up against the railway embankment. Introducing a telecomms “staircase” up onto the railway track (namely a lower cabinet – then pole – then higher cabinet), quite frankly beggars belief! However, as is their legal right, Vodafone have chosen to challenge the grounds of Elmbridge Council’s decision. That Network Rail failed to respond to Elmbridge Council during the latter’s consultation on the proposal is, in the view of local residents, equally remonstrable.

In order to provide coverage to this area, Vodafone were granted permission in 2006 to place antenna on the rooftop of Sandown Park Racecourse, alongside the equipment of 3 other mobile phone operators. Vodafone coverage in the area is felt to be good; thus the purpose of this 3G technology is not to improve existing coverage – rather to push non-essential TV, entertainment and other leisure services as a profit-making medium.

Residents are concerned also that if Vodafone’s appeal is successful, it will open the floodgates for multiple applications from other mobile phone companies; one only has to look at the

cluster of phone masts sited close to Hampton Court Station on Hampton Court Way to see that this a very real possibility. Indeed, there is already concern amongst residents about the health implications of these phone masts. Just recently, EU MEPs Elizabeth Lynne, Kathy Sinnott and Carl Schlyter have tabled in writing Declaration No. 47/2009 on the risks of exposure to electromagnetic fields resulting from the use of wireless technology.

Each time a new mast is approved, it becomes the line of sight for the next new mast potentially only a few hundreds metres away. It is therefore extremely important that residents with concerns, not only about this application but the insidious spread of phone masts amongst our homes, attend the forthcoming appeal.

As soon as the date of the appeal hearing is announced, all residents located within a 250m radius of the site will receive a leaflet from the Lower Green Residents’ Committee urging them to attend the public hearing. The date will also be publicised as widely as possible, particularly given the holiday season coming up. For all the cogent reasons above, we ask you to support us.

**The Lower Green Residents’
Committee**

Research prizes...

The Swiss Federal Ethics Committee on Non-Human Biotechnology has been awarded the annual ‘ig-nobel’ prize for Peace, for adopting the legal principle that plants have dignity.

The prize for Literature went to Briton David Sims of Cass Business School for his painstaking study “You Bastard: A Narrative Exploration of the Experience of Indignation within Organizations.”

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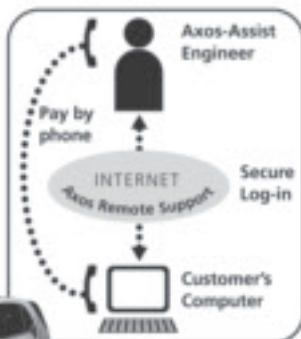
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Summer Days



the demon bowler

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The Cricket Club's fortunes should be transformed by an injection of Caribbean vigour and laughter, although we hear that Richie Richardson was bowled out for two runs in his first innings for the Club (can that be true?). Caribbean barbecues and more visiting aces are predicted as senior cricketers rediscover the roots of cricket on our

lovely village green at Giggs Hill.

Also on the green, the Scout Fair on 10 May was a huge success, absolutely seething with happy villagers and raising not far short of £10,500 for the Dittons Scout Group. A lot of hard work goes into organising this spiffing fair, with karate demonstrations, and all the stalls and rides, cakes and refreshments. Not only does it keep the fine work of the Scouts going, it adds another vibrant occasion to the village and is much appreciated.

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coconut's eye view at the Scout fair

The Dog Show at the Fair is always absolutely riveting, with embarrassed dogs dressed in satins, tricks and obstacle courses, and of course the remarkable demonstrations of obedience training where some dogs seem to have their owners almost perfectly trained:



taking your girl for a walk

The Thames Ditton Regatta is another remarkable annual event. Now in its 61st year, it was founded after the Second World War by four oarsmen friends who wanted a good amateur regatta of high standards. A popular event in the rowing calendar, it attracts crews from all over the country. On 16 May you could see St Johns College Oxford, or crews from Eton, dusting up the river with crews from schools and rowing clubs from everywhere. Always well-organised and well-behaved, this is a quintessentially English occasion on our lovely stretch of river.

The Guides and Brownies have also been active to raise funds for their Guide

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Hut Appeal. A month ago Joe, landlord of the George and Dragon, staged and sponsored a hilarious Race Night where local firms sponsored horses and race prizes, and merry punters took advantage of a Tote for the Guides. Full details of the many who helped in this are on our website. The event raised almost £1800 for the Appeal, to go with the £400 Joe raised with his mulled wine at the Christmas Fair.

The Guides added another £280 from their stall at the Scout Fair. Then on 16 May, Brownies and Guides again teamed up with the staff of Guy Salmon to offer us all a professional car wash and valeting for a remarkably decent fee while we drank coffee and ate biscuits. This raised a further £400. Since the Guy Salmon staff adopted this local cause, they have helped to raise about £2000 in all, including sponsorship for two races at race Night and for the Christmas Raffle.

The Guides have made steady progress. Surveys have been done (inevitably uncovering more that needs to be put right) and the professional project manager and architect who have volunteered to oversee the hut project



Brownie Lauren washes cars for the Hut Appeal

are on the case. Meanwhile fundraising continues and the Guides are now in a position to apply for some major grants. The plan is that all the works can be done in one go.

In all these activities, the clubs, pubs, organisers and volunteers and local businesses pull together to do really worthwhile work for our community while also giving us a rattling good time and bringing life and colour to these villages. Bravo!

Keith Evetts



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Summer Crossword

By Michael Jackson



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

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

ACROSS

1. Magnetic Prime Minister (5)
4. After a meal a gnu has a dance (9)
9. Herb with seed pods pushed under (9)
10. Where ships anchor on US railways? (5)
11. Use these to report a screed (4,9)
14. Animal pants (4)
15. Aerial kick (2,3,5)
18. Lee chatted to him about ten elements (10)
19. ...and when performing he will be out on a ...(4)
21. Replacement at back of mountain chain I hear is intended (13)
24. This on a cake is a bonus (5)
25. Legendary wife and mistress (9)
27. Local 'Wood and Spanner' renamed by the Council (9)
28. Traps are set for this bait (5)

DOWN

1. Plant allergic to moonlight? (10)
2. It's in a curious place (3)
3. A letter from a country wanting food (6)
4. Miners back here in France, chum are about town (9)
5. American liquid measure (5)
6. Splendid in appearance (8)
7. To calculate speed at mile post you will have to watch this (7,4)
8. In the recess have peas cooked (4)
12. Acrid, impure, no but ones heart is in it (11)
13. An old London way inhabited by needy authors and hacks (4,6)
16. You won't hear this about Swiss Railways (3,2,4)
17. He won't know you having a rest, Gran (8)
20. Games of rugby played by numbers? (6)
22. Stiff, cold but not loud (5)
23. Frosty Prince returning from the middle East? (4)
26. It's human to do this (3)

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Solution to the Spring Crossword



Each of the first three correct entries opened, below, wins a £5 Voucher for spending in any Thames Ditton or Weston Green shop. Well done!

David Pascoe
1 Burtenshaw Road
Thames Ditton KT7 0TP

Christine 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	020 8398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Mrs Carole Roycroft	01372 463587
M.D.H.S. Household Services (& garden tidying)	Carolyn Smart (Manager)	01932 248533
Surrey Mobile Library Service		01483 517402
Surrey Youth and Adult Education Service	Elmbridge Area	020 8979 8334

GROUPS

Girl Guiding in TD & WG	Mrs K Williams	020 8398 1300
1st Thames Ditton Brownies	Mrs. Bronach Hughes	020 8398 1628
3rd Thames Ditton Brownies	Mrs Heather Horler	020 8398 0364
2nd Thames Ditton Rainbows	Nicki Sutherland	020 8398 4202
1st Weston Green (All Saints) Scout Group	Alan Nolan-Davies	0844 414 2826
1st Weston Green Guides (All Saints)	Mrs. Louise Lewis	020 8398 4843
2nd Thames Ditton Guides	Mrs. Bronach Hughes	020 8398 1628
1st Weston Green Brownies (All Saints)	Mrs K Williams	020 8398 1300
2nd Weston Green Brownies	Linda Hall	020 8941 4913
1st Weston Green Rainbows	Mrs Helen Hill	020 8398 3135
4th Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts	Alison Derrick	020 8398 0041
Dittons Scout Group	Mr. Keith Berry	020 8398 3447
Coffee and chat (United Reformed Church)	Mrs. E. Barker	01372 467491
Emberbrook Trefoil Guild	Mrs. Adrienne Nealing	020 8398 5582
Esher Floral Art Group	Mrs. M. Dingle	020 8398 3943
Friends of Bushey and Home Parks	Mrs. Julie Cohen	020 8943 2017
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chicken	0208 398 2932
Molesey and Dittons Neighbourhood Watch	Chairman: Pat Farmiloe	020 8398 2787
Parents and Toddlers(St Nicholas church)	Information	020 8398 7211
Ripieno Choir	Nick Harris	020 8399 7231
Surrey Bell-ringers	Nick Pattenden	Nick@FSLimited.com

CLUBS

Albany Motor Yacht Club	Secretary	01784466651
Arts and Heritage Club	Carol Butcher	01932 867511
Claremont PROBUS Club	Mr. P. Collins	020 8398 3125
Claygate Bridge Club	Hon. Secretary	020 8398 1710
Colets Health & Fitness	Giordano Orsini	020 8398 7108
Dittons Skiff and Punting Club	Hon Secretary	020 8398 1642
Dittons & Hinchley Wood Royal British Legion Club	Secretary	020 8398 6263
Ember Players (Drama) Ember Sports Club	Kelly Bradley	07971 839 648

Ember Sports Club	Mrs. Pauline Wareham	020 8979 8977
Ember Sports Club: Bowls	John Garland	01932 220221
Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Dr. David Cooke	01932 862841
Ember Sports Club: Tennis	Margaret Robinson	01372 842401
Esher Bowling Club	Roger Cooper	01372 468109
Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Esher Camera Club	Billy Buchanan	020 8398 3169
Folk Dance Club	Pam Phillips	01372 373745
Hinchley Wood / Dittons PROBUS Club	Ken Thomas	0208 398 0526
Long Ditton Cricket Club	Nigel Hardy	020 8398 8361
Long Ditton Garden Club	Mrs. Ann Allen	020 8398 1718
Model Railway Society (Hampton Court)	Secretary	01932 241224
Mothers Union (All Saints)	Val Lomax	01932 860344
Old Cranleigh Rugby Club	Tony Price	07801 837129
Old Cranleigh Hockey Club	Eds Copleston (Men)	07775 940703
	Helen Hawes (Ladies)	07771 557900
River Club (BMYC)	David Walker	0870 460 3586
Rotary Club, Esher	Geoff Morris	01932 868454
Rubber Bridge TD Lawn Tennis Club	Val	020 8399 9972
Surbiton Croquet Club	Alec Thomas	020 8398 2391
Surbiton Golf Club	Secretary	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	Mr. B. Andrews	020 8398 5063
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Secretary: Basil Rainbow	020 8398 8471
Lynwood Allotment Society	Barry Jordan	0776 282 5041
Molesey and District Antiques Society	Linda Lambert	020 8398 1476
NADFAS (Decorative & Fine Arts) Kingston	Mrs. Valerie Windsor	020 8549 9967
National Trust: Richmond Association	Membership Secretary	020 8894 2972
Soroptimist International (Kingston District)	Secretary: Pat Harman	020 8390 3507
Thames Ditton Women's Institute (W.I.)	Secretary	020 8398 8615
Thames Valley Amateur Radio Transmitters Society	Chairman	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



In the last 'Hook or Crook' I wrote of our failed bankers and politicians, urged constitutional reform, doubted that the present parties were the right people to do it and suggested they should be swept away. One reader - there does always seem to be one, and I like that - wrote to complain about the article, but many said "Three cheers!" and some asked to copy it to their friends.

Scandalous developments since then lead many to share this way of thinking. Politicians of all the national parties have disgraced the House - not for the first time, but now in wholesale fashion. The spectacle of their leaders, who have spent the past eighteen months trying to stop the information leaking out, now trying to appear like cleansing reformers is rather pathetic. A national shame. The future is in your votes.

Closer to home, in this issue we have an appeal from the **Lower Green Residents** to prevent the inappropriate siting of a phone mast. Our Association comprises concerned residents and it supports groups of residents who otherwise find themselves almost without recourse when challenging large commercial interests or, sometimes, those of the authorities. We know - I have had past communications to this effect - that there are other residents who could want the increased services more phone masts might bring. But when asked whether they and their neighbours want to have the masts on their street, near their home, and we could then support that; why then somehow the line goes dead! So let's have understanding, sympathy and real support for the residents of the Lower Green.

Whatever the rotten state of the nation, Thames Ditton and Weston Green are manifestly thriving. The groups and societies, churches, clubs and organisations, volunteers, and individuals who set out to accomplish something good are astonishing in range and quality. They enrich our lives, providing both entertainment and radiance.

The Cricket Club runs yet another major annual event of quality. **The Harry Hawkes Eight** has raised over £60,000 for local charities, schools, and organisations providing cricket and other sports for youngsters. Over 500 runners will take part 10.00 am on Sunday 6 September 2009 at Giggs Hill Green (aren't you glad Tesco was prevented from building a supermarket and garage there!) A flat, fast 8 mile course along the Thames by the Palace and back to the Green. Last year we had an Olympic silver medallist competing. There's a parallel, much shorter event for Juniors who can enter on the day. See www.hh8.org.uk or contact the Club.

Lastly, a call for support for another, even more ancient institution. **The Church of St. Nicholas**, our parish church and the historic backbone of the village, must find the money to renew its electrics and heating. Whatever your religious affiliation or state of grace, you've all walked through the churchyard, all admired the peace, the clock tower, the old stone and flint; and most of you have spent time or sought solace in its calm and congenial interior. Do give it the means to continue. Why, if we all gave a tenner the forthcoming Appeal would be halfway there.

It's worth it.

Editor



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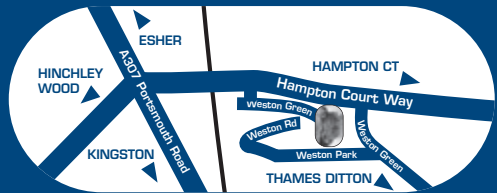
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