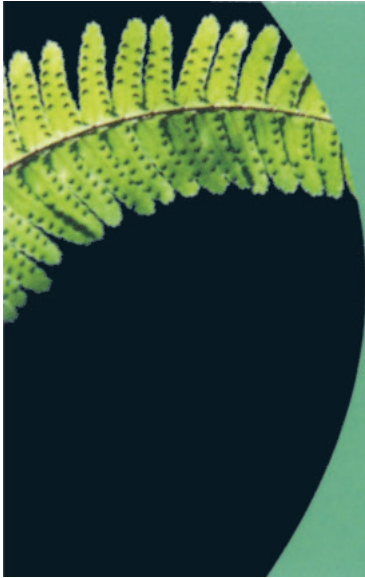


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THAMES DITTON TODAY

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

Published quarterly since Spring 1970

Summer 2011

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Cover photo: *No summer village scene is complete without cricket on the Green. Here TDCC's Sunday Eleven takes on Clapham in a 'friendly.'* Photo by Editor.

The Club also arranged for a Lancaster bomber to fly past on President's Day, 14 May. Photos on our website.

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.

President: Maureen Sheldrick,
34 The Woodlands, Esher

Surrey County Councillor:
Peter Hickman, Little Lodge,
Watts Road, Thames Ditton 020 8339 0931

Thames Ditton Councillors

Sandra Dennis,
Little Bradley, Thames Ditton 020 8873 2936
Ruth Lyon,
11 Riversdale Road, Thames Ditton 020 8398 3396
Karen Randolph,
Deepfield, Giggs Hill Road,
Thames Ditton 020 8398 5005

Weston Green Councillors

Lorraine Sharp,
168 Ember Lane, Esher 07970 874 925
Tannia Shipley, 'Clinton House'
27 Lower Green Road, Esher 020 8398 2484

Officers:

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Conveners of Sub-Committees:

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Karen Randolph (see above for details)
Planning: Graham Cooke
23 Ashley Road, Thames Ditton 020 8398 8509
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Andrew Roberts, 1 Boyle Farm Road,
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**THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE
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News From the Residents' Association



16 February – 20 May

Another period of much effort by many members, with generally good results.

Borough Elections went well

The Association thanks the many who gave their time to help with the re-election of your Residents' candidates to Elmbridge Borough Council on 5 May, and to all those who turned out to vote for them at the polls.

In Weston Green, Tannia Shipley was re-elected with 1217 votes. The Conservative candidate received 269. Turnout at some 54% was the highest in Elmbridge.

In Thames Ditton, Karen Randolph was re-elected with 1738 votes while the Conservative received 370 and Labour 174 in a turnout of around 48%.

Overall in Elmbridge, Conservatives made two gains at the expense of Liberal-Democrats, while Residents groups held their seats generally with an increased majority. Elsewhere in Surrey, the Residents' Association in Epsom and Ewell gained three seats and remains in control of that council.

Karen Randolph writes on behalf of Tannia and herself with thanks to all, and the words:

“The credit for such a resounding victory lies squarely with the Residents Association and those involved with it. We are so fortunate to have such a wonderfully energetic, intelligent,



Tannia and Karen

articulate, community minded group of people from widely different backgrounds and interests who want to protect and improve our village and community and its surrounding area.

They care not for politics but appreciate and understand the need for interdependence and the responsibility we have to the wider area we live in.

“We both look forward to representing and supporting Thames Ditton and Weston Green residents over the next four years and are very grateful for your continued confidence in us and your Residents Association.”

Parking

The period has seen significant developments on parking, notably in Thames Ditton High Street and Ashley Road car park.

For the past two years our county councillor Peter Hickman had been informed by Surrey officials that the parking measures long in preparation



photo by Peter Haynes

would be published for local consultation, premises in the affected roads would be formally notified, and only those measures with majority support would be implemented after consideration in the Elmbridge local Area Committee. But what was actually done turned out to be rather different. The proposals for Thames Ditton and Weston Green were wrapped with others throughout Elmbridge and published as incomprehensible statutory orders on laminated sheets attached to lamp posts. The council was several days late in putting diagrams on their website and in the Dittons Library, for the period of ‘consultation.’ The many detailed proposals have been completely overshadowed by the determination of the Conservative leadership to impose pay and display metering on restricted parking bays throughout the county, including the eight proposed new bays in our High Street.

In support of our High Street retailers, and equally opposed to the introduction

and spread of markings, posts, signs and machines in the Conservation Area, the Association called on residents to object to the Pay and Display in the High Street. The response was magnificent. At least 330 residents filed their formal objections during the period and these played a critical part in what has followed.

Meanwhile businesses and residents throughout Surrey opposed the Surrey leadership’s plans, while the leadership’s party colleagues in most Borough Councils, including Cabinet of Elmbridge Borough Council, broadly supported them. An online petition opposing pay and display acquired an amazing 26,289 signatures. A simultaneous petition in favour of it achieved only 11. Tens of thousands in addition signed paper petitions in Guildford and several other towns in Surrey to oppose pay and display. The online petition forced a debate in council upon an unwilling leadership, predictably ending with the Conservatives voting down the petition *en bloc*.

Concerning Thames Ditton, the Council did not answer adequately requests our officers made under the Freedom of Information Act for information on the decision process, the numbers of objectors, and the business case (it was very clear that no proper business analysis had been made before the proposals for pay and display had been promulgated). Surrey is already being investigated by the Office of the Information Commissioner as one of sixteen authorities that have been the object of public complaints about dilatoriness under the Act.

County Council officials also banned a banner over the High Street to indicate that Thames Ditton rejected the parking charges. The banners were displayed in shop windows instead.

Notwithstanding the very clear weight of opposition, the Surrey leadership, which in advance of decision following the ‘consultation’ had already put the meters to tender, has voted to go ahead with its plans throughout Surrey – **except in Thames Ditton where the figures lately calculated for the pay and display bays add up to a running operational loss. The plan will not be implemented at the present time.** This is a most welcome victory for our residents, retailers and common sense if hardly for democracy.

However, Surrey will ‘review the situation’ in 6-12 months’ time in the light of implementation elsewhere, so we cannot relax.

Ashley Road car park: success

Over the past two years the Association and our councillors have

lobbied, petitioned and negotiated hard to reverse the Elmbridge Conservatives’ swingeing increase in charges for longer term parking which emptied Ashley Road car park and reduced overall revenue. Having twice used their whip to vote down resolutions introduced by Ruth Lyon to halve the rate (which would still represent an increase of 25% on the 2008 rates), they finally climbed down from an unsustainable position. The charges are to be halved with effect from June. This is another major victory for common sense and persistence.

If we want to keep this gain – and also to guarantee the future of the car park – it is vital that those wishing to park in or near the High Street for more than a couple of hours should now **use the car park**, and with local businesses we will be mounting a campaign for this.

Through Ruth Lyon and Peter Hickman we have also secured the agreement of both Surrey and Elmbridge officials to install better signage pointing visitors to the car park: this should be installed very soon.

Planning

With much effort on the part of residents supported by the Association’s officers and councillors we have had some good results on planning matters.

Proposals for development of the **former Cottage Hospital** were rejected by Elmbridge mostly because of over-development filling in the land at the rear.

Yet another appeal by the developers of the **Harrow** site was rejected, and emphatically so, by the Planning Inspector as the design failed to address earlier objections concerning overbearing

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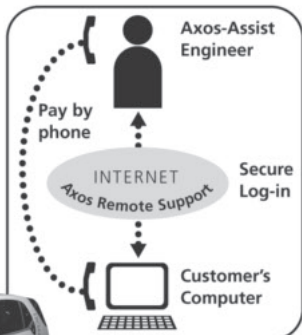
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and overly massive plans overlooking green belt. Meanwhile the developers have submitted a further application that again fails to address these points and it is likely to go the same way. But we hope that the unequivocal reasons given by the Inspector will soon prompt the developers to consult seriously with residents over plans that would be acceptably in keeping with the site.

Plans to demolish **31 Embercourt Road** and build six detached houses in the garden were also rejected by Elmbridge planners.

Vodafone was refused permission to erect a forty-foot phone mast and cabinet on Hampton Court Way near St. Paul's school. Patchy mobile reception remains a concern to many of you, but we have yet to find residents who want a mast near their house in order to resolve that problem. Government policy is that once permission is given for one mast in a particular location, a precedent is set for others there. We are quietly looking for sites that might meet with acceptance – please get in touch if you have suggestions.

The Association is concerned that **changes in the planning regulations** coming down the pipe should not amount to a blank cheque for developers. As well as changes consequent on the Localism Bill there were statements in the Chancellor's Budget which caught the attention. The government would like to make approval of planning applications the default; to limit the procedures to a year; and to enable the conversion of small commercial properties to residential use without planning permission being required. They will also pursue auctions

to private bidders of public lands; and will enable planning authorities to take more money from developers. The aim is to stimulate the economy, but clearly there are greater risks of unsuitable development if the process is in the wrong hands.

There is currently a government consultation on plans to relax regulations on change of commercial to residential use, and residents are urged to visit the Government's online planning portal and submit their views. We have emailed members on the matter and our website carries details.

Lastly, Elmbridge are no longer consistently putting up site notices of planning applications, except in the conservation areas. We need to be sure we don't miss any applications that are of importance. Residents are encouraged to flag up applications of wider significance in our website forum. It may also be the case that residents in the immediate locality have specific local knowledge of which the Association's officers may be unaware – please make it known.

Litter

The Association is mounting a sustained, low-key campaign against litter. Our thanks to the many residents who regularly pick up litter from public green spaces and put it in the bins provided. We asked householders to spare ten minutes on 27 April to ensure their frontages were clear (we would also encourage you to kill or remove weeds along your frontage) and will hold another such day or two later in the summer. We've approached several schools and youth organisations to ask them to 'adopt' a green space close to them,



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and either pick litter or monitor its levels a few times a year. The aim of this is not to do the council's job for them, but to raise awareness among youngsters of the litter problem and the need to avoid trashing at least our part of the planet. The response has been generally good. The Infants School agreed to take an interest in The Dell, the Junior School the areas near them, and the Thames Ditton Guides have adopted Church Walk, the churchyard paths and the Garden of Remembrance. Weston Green Scouts already do occasional litter picks on the commons near All Saints, We need to do more to engage the students of Esher College who haven't yet responded and are among the worst transgressors dropping litter rather than putting it in the bins.

There are also litter 'hotspots' where we have taken action with the authorities to clear particularly bad areas. Tannia Shipley persuaded the railway authorities to clear the embankment at Esher station, and we're trying to get the equally bad pile of drink cans and food wrappers cleared from the embankment at Thames Ditton station. Elmbridge was asked to clear the housing trust wasteland along Ash Path. In response to our email circular, residents came up with other ideas that we are pursuing.

Elmbridge have finally restored the litter bins along Albany Reach but will not finance anti-scavenging bins which, we gather, cost some £600 each. They will look at better signage.

Other matters in brief

Following sustained lobbying by the Association and particularly our County Councillor Peter Hickman, the **new drain**

was finally laid outside the Infant School in Speer Road – although not in the expected position that would drain the whole length of the puddle. Most of the onward drainage has been cleared and we now await rain to test it.

Thames Water 'may' have fixed the backup causing the **smell near the Old Bank** in the High Street – they believe the ultimate cause was a long distance away – in Weston Green Road! Again, time will tell and 'we are not holding our breath...'

Thames Water contractors clearing drains along Thorkill Road pumped silt into the roadside gullies which went into the **River Rythe**, killing off water plants and clearing 100 yards of the Rythe of fish. The Rythe had been doing well lately, with residents reporting the presence of fingerling barbel and chub, and even kingfishers. Contact established with the Thames Angling Conservancy concerning Albany Reach proved useful, as together with your Editor, TAC representatives checked out the problem in mid-May, removed some invasive plants and found three places where rubbish thrown in by crass idiots was blocking the free flow of the river. These were cleared. Invasive mitten crabs were also found to be present.

Doings

The **Royal Wedding** saw a number of street parties – always enjoyable occasions. Church Walk, Sterry Drive, Kings and Queens Roads and the Island all celebrated in style. Details and photos on our website.

The Cricket Club, one of the Seven Pillars of Thames Ditton, wangled a great fly-past by the RAF's Lancaster bomber on 14 May, and Dittons Scouts organised



let's keep our green spaces tidy – Giggs Hill Green

yet another terrific annual Fair on Giggs Hill Green the day after. Photos from both occasions on our website.

Coming up we have:

A **Garden Party, Sunday 3rd July, 3-6pm** in aid of our on-going campaign to support local shops and businesses in our High Street including the Thames Ditton Lights Appeal. Hosted by HonSec Trica Bland and husband at Garden Cottage, 29 Station Road, Thames Ditton, this will be a quintessentially English experience featuring Stephanie Tress and the Mariette string quartet who will be performing a varied classical and popular programme. A TV screen will be available for addicts to view the men's Wimbledon final so there can be no excuse for failure to attend! Tickets: £7.50 per person or £20 family/group of 4 (children must be over

12) to include afternoon tea with sandwiches, selection of cakes and soft drinks. Available from Tricia on 020 8339 0485 or from Adiva Boutique, La Clinique/NV Hair, Maison Bleu and The Stitchery in the High Street.

Other events planned to support the appeal are a walk round '**The secret gardens of Thames Ditton**' on Sunday 19th June, where several keen gardeners have kindly agreed to open up their normally hidden gardens in and near the High Street and tea will be available; and a **race night at the George and Dragon** organised by landlord Joe McCann in inimitable style on Thursday 15th September. Details will be on our website.

Three Thames Ditton-based artists will be opening their studios to the public from 11th – 26th June as part of the

annual **Surrey Artists Open Studios** event along with over 150 others across the county. The local studios are in 3 Harvest Lane, home of textile artist Linda Walsh, and at Willowbank in Claygate Lane (by the model railway) where painter and printmaker Phillippa Egerton and painter Mike Newman both work. Further information from Linda Walsh on 07904 064489.

Condolences to resident Pam Bannister on the loss of her husband Trevor Bannister, actor and known to many as ‘Mr. Lucas’ from the TV sitcom “Are You Being Served,” who died recently of a heart attack while fixing the shed roof on the allotment. Pam is organising the third **Queens Road hanging basket and flower trough competition** as usual, for which the judging will take place on the afternoon of 30 June. Sponsored by the Albany (where prizes will be awarded while residents remain reasonably sober) and other friendly organisations, this always sees some very keen competition and good fun. Your editor is one of the unbribable judges.

The competition is timed to coincide with the Hampton Court Flower Show and beautify Queens Road down which many visitors travel before getting the ferry across from the Albany. At the Show, Speer Road resident **Jayne Thomas** is exhibiting a garden for the second year running. In 2010 her lovely Shakespearean garden “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” won a silver medal and was voted People’s Choice Best Small Garden in the show. This year she’s building an English Poet’s Garden based on Shelley’s poem “Mont Blanc,” where there will be a waterfall over some 30 tons of rock.

It’s a hundred years since Britain’s first car manufacturers, **AC Cars** (Auto Carriers Ltd) moved their ten-year-old business to Thames Ditton’s Ferry Works, subsequently to the High Street, and in late summer the customary annual visit of the Belgian AC Cobra owners’ club will be a rather larger affair with the cars being shown on Giggs Hill Green. Date and details awaited.

The **Elmbridge Music Festival** will be held at Imber Court on Saturday 18 June from noon until 10pm. A day of music from local bands, school bands and community choirs with headline bands ACM Gospel Choir, Majestic Brass, High Barnets, Sundays Child and others from local schools and other organisations. Bring a chair, stay all day, food and bar available for £5 adults and £2 children and concessions.

Lastly, some good news and some less good. First, a big thank you to **Francine Brooks** who volunteered to plant out the fountain flower beds on the Boyle Farm roundabout in Thames Ditton High Street with a wonderful display of pink and red geraniums which make a colourful welcome at the entrance to Thames Ditton village. Next, a sad farewell to **Nick and Marlene Ives** of the Secret Garden greengrocery who are decamping to be nearer to family west of Glasgow. Mother Eileen Ives will stay in Thames Ditton, where the Ives will remain owners of the stand of shops and the greengrocery will be taken over on 4 July by Kate and Jason Paull. We ask you to give them a warm welcome together with your support and custom.

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The bells, the bells...

A resident Morris Man confesses



Once upon a time I was an ordinary, straight-forward young chap with no bad habits to speak of, but then I heard the bells and am now part of the laughing stock of old England. Yes, I saw the Morris men dance, I was enticed by a colleague's honeyed words and then I joined up. That was nearly thirty years ago and now I find myself



Squire (club chairman) of Thames Valley Morris Men. How did that happen?

Well it's because I love it and it has become an essential part of my life.

Of course, there are quite a lot of us with beards – becoming fashionable again, you will have noticed. Yes, we do like pubs and beer quite a lot, but then we do drink good British ale preferably from small independent producers – how green is that? And, sadly, yes quite a lot of us are getting quite old now – and here is the nub of the thing. Why has this very ancient – and noble – tradition, become so out of fashion (despite the beards!) and popular only as a source of humour?

beards are not obligatory

Is it that it takes some dedication and perseverance? Typically, you would take over a year to get to the point of feeling comfortable in a set for a dance – usually six men, sometimes four or eight. And that was a year of weekly practice on Tuesday evenings in Claygate. It might be a year after that before the Squire invites you to dance a solo jig and become a full member of the club and earn the right to wear a hat and your personalised waistcoat. By that time, you would know about forty different dances in some ten different styles – some with handkerchiefs, some with sticks. It's quite an achievement!



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So why should anyone bother?

Well, it certainly keeps me fit – over sixty and still jumping in the air, not too bad - and dancing is a lot more fun than the gym. It keeps me out of doors in the summer (and the winter sometimes, eg Thames Ditton’s Christmas Fair). Usually that would be outside a friendly pub, locally here in Surrey or as far afield as the Cotswolds or Cornwall. We’ve taken ourselves to France, Germany, Holland and Ireland too.

But most of all, there’s the immense pleasure of dancing in a team with very good friends and participating in an ancient tradition that has been continuous in England for centuries. One of the earliest written records is found in the Kingston churchwardens accounts for 1507 where payments are listed for “bellys for the daunsars” (bells for the dancers) and “the makying of the mores garments for the daunsars” (the making of the morris garments for the dancers) among other things. In fact most of the dances we do nowadays are probably of Victorian origin, but that sense of connection with the past is very powerful.

We would be delighted to welcome new members – both dancers and musicians (we are a men’s club). We will very happily teach you from scratch and would have you starting to dance on your first visit. We meet at the Foley Arms in Claygate every Tuesday in the winter (September through April) from 8.30pm. In the summer, we’ll probably be dancing outside a pub somewhere (check our website). Come and give it a try.

John Walsh

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Thames Ditton Foundation

– contribute to a more caring community



A long-time resident of Thames Ditton is founding a registered charity and seeks subscribing Trustees in the enterprise, to assist in finalising the Articles and getting the project off the ground.

The Foundation will benefit the inhabitants of Thames Ditton and, where agreed, the surrounding areas, by contributing to the maintenance or improvement of public amenities and public safety. It would also consider assistance to individuals where there is an outstanding case including hardship, and education, training or retraining, particularly among unemployed people.

The founder, who wishes to retain anonymity, notes that local good causes struggle to get the funds they require, particularly those requiring some capital investment. Recent projects in the village have included the Guide Hut, the churchyard, recreational and library facilities at schools; other projects in the offing might include an investment to secure the future of Milbourne pond.

Many residents are comparatively well-off and would like to do something for Thames Ditton, but are not sure what. Others may wish to give funds for specific projects under tax-friendly Gift Aid rules. Still others may wish to make bequests knowing that they will be put to very good use for the village even if there is no project current at the time the bequest is made.

The Articles of the new Foundation drafted by Russell-Cooke Solicitors are



framed for a flexible approach whereby Trustees, who will themselves be significant donors pledging funds of the order of several thousand pounds preferably on a periodic basis, will be able to direct funding according to donors' wishes. They will ensure integrity, impartiality and the civic relevance of future projects, and secure anonymity for contributors if that is what they wish.

The new Foundation is entirely independent of the Residents' Association or any other group. Donors are encouraged to participate, and to preserve the Founder's anonymity should first enquire, without obligation, via Tricia Bland (contact details on page 5 of this magazine), who will be able to provide a copy of the draft Articles of the Thames Ditton Foundation and, to those wishing to participate, a link to the founder.

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Sue had been suffering from lower back pain for many years and anything she tried gave only temporary relief. She had seen a magazine article about The Bowen Technique, a complementary therapy that involves a series of mainly gentle movements. She limped into my clinic presenting with sacrum pain and a misaligned pelvis. After three treatments she was no longer limping and pain free, she continues to come monthly to keep her body in balance and relieve tension.



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Struggle for Survival

– Milbourne Pond



Milbourne Pond and Weston Green Road about 1905

In 1843 there were sixteen ponds in Weston Green. Now there are two. The survival of Milbourne Pond has been problematic since the 1950s. Local planning guidelines designate it as a site of nature conservation importance, and it is a central feature of the Conservation Area. Hewett Watson, founder of the Botanical Society of the British Isles,

botanised there and recorded the surrounding flora.

On several occasions, residents have raised money and put in labour to preserve the pond, and some ten years ago the council was prompted to completely remake and re-puddle it, reducing its size. But the problems of water retention



dry in 2009 despite wet summer months

persisted. In part these are due to the pond's profile, which is not adequately dished, its size and depth related to its surface area being insufficient to hold enough water to prevent it drying out. The growth of vegetation in and beside the pond caused a high rate of water loss through transpiration as well as silting it up with invasive roots which probably penetrated the clay lining to boot.

There are also problems with water supply, dating from the time Hampton Court Way was built in 1932. For few ponds like this do not, in fact, depend on

dew. They are filled with runoff from the surrounding land. Matters came to a head again two years ago, when the pond completely dried out. This was not due to inadequate rainfall. During the 'noughties', rainfall was 6.5% more than the long-term average, and we'd had three wettish summers with July 2009 the wettest July on record.

Our redoubtable Councillors went into action again and succeeded in getting the Countryside officers to modify their view of the pond as a sort of eco-swamp, and take meaningful steps to preserve it more in keeping with its historic form – a pond with water in it as the community wants. A good deal has been done to tackle the several problems.

Last year, the pond was mechanically re-puddled again and, taking advantage of the fact that it had dried up, the invasive sedges (bullrushes) were sprayed with selective weedkiller. They can't simply be pulled up without damaging the clay lining and leaving holes – they have to be thoroughly killed, then cut. All the existing drains and runoffs leading to the pond were cleared, and at least one new one created. Peter Dodge, living nearby and an active supporter of the

pond, reports that when it rains, they are working.

This Spring, almost all the surrounding vegetation that had earlier been planted or allowed to grow as a sort of barrier was removed. That plus the elimination of the sedges should have greatly reduced water loss through transpiration. It's also reduced the traps for litter where idiots threw, or the wind blew, cans and wrappers into the bushes. And in April residents joined in to repaint the fence-posts white.

Now, the pond looks a whole lot better – more in keeping with its history – and it seems to be holding water. Even after one of the driest Springs ever, there was still some water in it until the last few days.

But not enough. The Association is now attempting to engage a hydrologist to consult on maximising the water supply. If you know a true expert who is prepared to offer their services for next to nothing, please let us know. We've also costed an alternative lining, although rubber ones are not quite the thing. But however impermeable the lining, if there isn't enough water coming in then the pond will suffer the slow death of Admiral's Pond on Weston Green by the Harrow. That fine pond produced fish for the table of Weston House when netted every year. Now, it is a sad grassy hollow collecting coke cans and sandwich packaging from thoughtless lunchers.

We can't let that happen to Milbourne Pond.



going home from school in the late Spring sun

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Summer is fast

approaching and the work of the Property Ombudsman has steadily increased over the last year. 49% of his work load related to lettings – in 2008 it was 28%. He anticipates that 2/3rds of all complaints will derive from the lettings market in 2010. “This is precisely why it is imperative that all letting agents should be required to comply with a strict code of conduct which will have twin benefits of giving greater consumer protection and raising standards of service and behaviour”.

But what of Lettings Agents who do adhere and find themselves on the wrong end of rogue landlords and tenants?

It would be unprofessional to name and shame publicly (I’ll enlighten any local agent who wants to know though) the amateur landlord who, after finding him excellent tenants, tried to do a private deal with them. Luckily the applicants were of such high calibre that they declined his offer on the basis that his deceitful behaviour didn’t bode well for their future as his tenants “if he can break an agreement with you, what’s to stop him doing the same to us”. I’m pleased to say they found through another agent and have moved into the village.

Then our unblemished record with the Property Ombudsman was put in jeopardy when a disgruntled and dishonest tenant made a complaint against us. The complaint was quickly withdrawn but at what cost to our reputation. This tenant needs to be named and shamed but the only vehicle I know of in which to do so requires the tenant to agree with the complaint. How many are likely too?

It does make me wonder what we get in return for the vast amount of money we spend making sure we’ve got the right stickers in our window. In a short survey of our own landlords I discovered that not one of them would be interested in them should they be looking for an agent!

At the end of the day what is more important – stickers or a proven track record of providing a service based on honesty, reliability and professionalism. The jury is out but, if you notice our window is bereft of colourful stickers, you’ll know why!

Thought for the Day
“Change brings Change”



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The Scandal

part I



I once asked a journalist friend who'd read every issue of this august organ what readers would like to see in the magazine. "More Scandals!" he replied.

Well, I've got one for you. A tale of wealth, power, influence, bitterness and snobbery, which split the village down the middle from 1835 to 1841 and years after. Ostensibly it centred on the demon drink, but you will draw your own conclusions. The stage on which it was played out was the church. It does not appear in T. S. Mercer's 'Tales and Scandals' of Thames Ditton. From a newspaper article he wrote, Mercer was aware of the scandal's ending, but I doubt that he happened across the detailed court records that would surely transfix the hardest of local journalists, for they don't appear in his copious collection of documents.

Two local dynasties were involved, the Sullivans and the Speers. Both came to the village in the late 1700s.

The nobility

Of the ancient Irish house of O'Sullivan More, whose possessions once extended over much of Cork and Kerry counties and with links to Oilioll Olum King of Munster, Dublin-born Richard Joseph Sullivan was the third son of Benjamin O'Sullivan and well-connected. His relative Laurence Sullivan was Chairman of the East India Company, no



Mary Sullivan, newly wed and 18, painted by George Romney for £37.16s

less, and Richard Sullivan spent time in India. He wrote a number of books about his travels. Returned to England, in late 1778 he married Mary, the only daughter of Thomas Lodge of Leeds, a rich wool merchant and joint partner in Becketts Bank – the largest provincial bank. At first, they lived in St James', Richard Sullivan being MP for New Romney, where only eight of nearly a thousand citizens were allowed to vote, and subsequently for Seaford, a nearby rotten borough – later a casualty of the Reform Act. An ally of William Pitt, Richard Sullivan was not a frequent speaker in the

House but his vote could be relied upon by the Tories.

The marriage produced seven sons and six daughters. The rich Sullivans bought beautiful Ditton House just down stream of Boyle Farm, where Kings Drive and Queens Drive now are, and when Pitt had Sullivan created Baronet of Thames Ditton in 1804 it became known as Thames Ditton House. Sullivan did his bit for the local community as Surveyor of the Highways within the parish Vestry. It's said that wealth does not always bring contentment, but I think that along with his travel and writing, his beautiful and fecund wife, family, lovely house, first-class connections, Irish royal blood, noble status and sinecure in the House, Richard must surely have been a most contented man until his untimely death in 1806 at the age of 54.

His eldest son, also Richard, died in childhood, and the second son and baronet, Henry, MP for Lincoln and Lieutenant-Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, was killed in action against the French at Bayonne in 1814. There's a plaque to his memory in St. Nicholas Church. So the third son, Charles, succeeded to the Baronetcy – and he is one of the main protagonists in our scandal.

Sir Charles Sullivan (1789–1862)

Charles had entered the Navy quite old for a midshipman at the age of about 12, where, helped by his family's influence, he was soon made post-captain (aside



Imber Court

from the Sullivans' top parliamentary and East India Company connections, Charles' uncle John Sullivan was under-secretary of war 1801-1805). At the time of this story, Sir Charles had been ashore without a command since 1829. Like his father he married very well, in 1818, to Jean Ann the only daughter of Robert Taylor, the rich owner of Imber Court where the couple removed on Robert's death in 1823.

As well as Imber Court, its lands and mills, Sir Charles and his lady inherited at least part of her father's lucrative Lucky Valley Estate sugar plantation of 2,000 acres in Jamaica, and the Mount Atlas coffee plantation there, together with a schedule of slaves in an indenture authenticated by the Lord Mayor of London (some 45 slaves were transferred to relative Simon Taylor of Jamaica). As

one would expect from such a prominent landowner contributing substantial tithes and rates, Sir Charles Sullivan played a leading role in the local decision-making of the parish Vestry.

Other noble households of note in the parish, and involved in this story, include Lord de Ros (William Lascelles de Ros) – the oldest peerage in England, then of Boyle Cottage; and Captain George Robert Lambert RN (later Admiral and knighted) of the prestigious Lambert family in Weston Green which served this country with great military honour by sea and land.

The men of property

And now we turn to the household in the opposite camp, the rich Speers, who were neither knighted nor ennobled. In 1758 William (variously Guiliemi or Wilhelm) Speer had married heiress Catherine Wilson, acquiring large chunks of Westminster, Whitehall and Fulham. They acquired a place in the country at Thames Ditton where William bought up substantial landholdings including Manor Farm in Weston Green. In local administration he succeeded Richard Sullivan as Surveyor of the Highways, and he was one of the sponsoring signatories of the group of 80 local vigilantes established at a meeting in The Harrow in 1792.

Later, according to records in the Surrey History centre, his son William in 1801 bought from the Crown what remained of the Manor of Weston, which included ‘waste’ or common lands that had been annexed by Henry VIII for his deer chase 250 years earlier, and with

them the Lordship of the Manor.

By the period of this story the younger William Speer had accumulated about 660 acres of Thames Ditton in addition to land in Esher and beyond. He owned commercial properties including what is now Hawkes’ yard in the High Street, and was a major local employer and landlord. We may fairly infer that the younger William Speer was feared, certainly; respected, perhaps; but not popular in the village. He used his wealth to bring court cases against those who worked small parcels of land, where their rights were not properly enshrined in law, and asserted his ownership. The enclosure of common lands was a particularly unpopular property speculation of the time as seen by the common people, and William Speer secured the enclosure of over 37 acres of commons in the parish of Thames Ditton via the Kingston and Imber Court Enclosure Award in the mid 1830s. It is probable that the flighty law firm of Hannibal Sandys and his son of the same name was involved – specialists in enclosures and at one time bankrupt – and the connection is likely to have led the younger Hannibal Sandys to meet Cecilia Speer whom he later married.

We note that well before the move to enclose common land, William Speer had been in legal dispute over lands with Sir Charles Sullivan’s father-in-law Robert Taylor, Lord of the Manor of Imworth at Imber Court, and Sheriff of Surrey. Willing to take on anybody, with scant concern for the animosity it might engender, Speer had another legal wrangle over land with Alexander Raphael, MP for St Albans, Sheriff of London and

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owner of Ditton Lodge where Raphael Drive is today.

With the Lordship of the Manor that William had bought, along with assorted commons, had come the rights of patron of the living of St. Nicholas Church. It is there that we proceed to set the scene which unfolded before the entire community. For in March 1835, William Speer exercised his patronage to install as

Vicar his son Rev. Wilfred Speer, ordained some three years previously. Wilfred lived in West End Lodge in Hoo (or Hoe) Lane, later known as the Manor House, now the Old Manor House; and the lane is now called Station Road. With many substantial landowners in the parish, the living was rich. The Vicar's revenue from tithes was the equivalent of over £200,000 a year today, calculating by average incomes.



Old Manor House today – formerly West End Lodge

The Church

In those times the parish of Thames Ditton was much bigger than it is now. Along with the village it encompassed Claygate, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green. In a society with few entertainments the church was the centre of social as well as spiritual life for a community of almost 2,000 parishioners, whose local administration, local law and local taxation were governed by the parish Vestry committee composed of significant tithe- and rate-payers. At church services the richest households occupied the pews at the front, while from the rear the poorest gazed at the backs of the nobs. If they dropped into poverty they would become a charge on the parish, dependent on the organs of the Vestry

whose workhouse awaited the penurious. They could not move away from Thames Ditton without external support, else they would risk falling foul of the laws on vagrancy. Not only was there little else to do on Sundays, there were laws preventing them from playing sport or working or otherwise breaking the Sabbath, and they were fined about a third of a week's pay if they did.

And for all these reasons and more, the church was full. So full, in fact, that in 1835 there were plans by the Vestry, in which Sir Charles Sullivan played a significant role, to demolish part of the nave – the north aisle – and extend it to accommodate the congregation.

This provoked what must be the most succinct and pithy objection to a development proposal ever made in Thames Ditton. In September 1835, the Vestry notified William Speer of the plan by note of hand. He wrote back, the same day:

“In reply to yours of 3rd instant, I have to inform you that as patron of the living and as a parishioner, I shall oppose the

destruction of the ancient nave of Thames Ditton Church.

*I have the Honour to be
Your Very Ob'd Servt.
W. Speer.”*

The position of the new Vicar, caught between his father and the Vestry, is not recorded. But others agreed with Sir Charles and his colleagues: the plans went ahead the following year.

The Demon drink

We may readily conclude that by this time there was bad blood between Sir Charles Sullivan and the Speers. Over the next few years relations would further deteriorate as it became ever more apparent that Rev. Wilfred Speer, the perpetual curate of Thames Ditton, was perpetually drunk on duty. A dereliction for which, in the Navy, Sir Charles as captain would have had a man flogged. Yet here Sir Charles was obliged to pay tithes to support the drinking habit of a well-heeled cleric, son of a man who had crossed his interests in law, opposed his plans for the Church, and foisted his son on the parish as Vicar.

But if Sir Charles was rich and influential, the Speers were wealthy and powerful too. It took four years before matters came to a fulminating head. During that time the numbers attending church dropped as the stories about the Vicar grew. Eventually, Sir Charles Sullivan together with Baron de Ros, Captain Lambert, and churchwarden Leonard Seeley – a publisher of



the church before expansion

substance who owned the Elms in Weston Green – went privately to see the Bishop of Winchester to make a complaint, and put the Bishop up to grasping the nettle. After the Rural Dean had been directed to inquire into the truth of the complaints the Bishop’s secretary, John Burder, filed articles of indictment with the ecclesiastical Court of Arches at Canterbury. And richly resonant they were too. For example, among the first few paragraphs:



the Swan, about the start of the 1800s

“...we article and object to you, the said Wilfred Speer, that ever since your entrance on the spiritual duties of the said perpetual curacy of Thames Ditton, you have addicted yourself to the immoderate use of wine and spirituous liquors; that you have been in the habit of frequenting a public house or small inn, in Thames Ditton aforesaid, known by the name of the Swan, and of there drinking to excess... to the great scandal and offence of your parishioners.. you have been in the habit of performing Divine service... in an indecent and irreverent manner... and that you have by such conduct and demeanour driven many of your parishioners away from attending the said Church...”

The articles continue in painful detail. The Speers wriggled and squirmed, and tried to get the articles thrown out by appealing to the Privy Council, which merely reaffirmed them, with costs. Then in March 1841 the case was heard.

And it is that court case, fertile in eyebrow-raising anecdote and saying as much about the prosecutors and the village as about the hapless Vicar, which we'll look at in the next episode.

Keith Evetts

Diverse sources for this part include records in the Mercer Collection and very many online resources, plus newspaper archives from the 19th. century, online archives of the Surrey History Centre and a relatively recent Country Life for some details of Mary Sullivan and the portrait. Relative income levels are calculated for 1840/2009 using the website measuringworth.com. The Rev. Speer's tithes were of the order of £282 pa, while a teacher or clerk would earn some £30 to £50 pa. I'll give the source for the court case in the next episode.



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Chairman's Report to the AGM

22 March 2011



One of the key strengths of the Association is having local residents representing Thames Ditton and Weston Green whose policies are determined by local needs, not dictated by party politics. We continue to have five Borough Councillors. Peter Hickman also continues as Residents Councillor on Surrey County Council. We are also fortunate to have many people willing to give their time to get involved in the community, whether as members of the Executive, distributing magazines or collecting subscriptions.

We keep you up to date with what the Association is doing. Thames Ditton Today gives a quarterly update and the Association website at www.residents-association.com is a dynamic source of

news and information. A Google search for “Thames Ditton Residents”, or for “Weston Green Residents” will find it.

Drainage

After years of problems and much pressure from the Association, Surrey Highways finally laid a new drain to deal with the flooding outside TD Infant School on Speer Road. It was found that the existing drain would never have worked as it had never been connected! Weston Green also experiences more than its fair share of flooding and Tannia Shipley and Peter Hickman have put in huge efforts to address the problems of flooding around Esher Station. As a result Surrey Highways finally found the budget to clear the culvert under Long Arch Bridge, with some success.

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Snow

This year saw a new initiative to encourage residents to clear snow from village pavements. This followed a suggestion by member Richard Lanigan. Peter Haynes, our Membership Secretary, took responsibility for fostering the initiative. As a result we now have a number of snow shovels held by volunteers around Weston Green and Thames Ditton. These are made available to neighbours for snow clearance. We saw the benefit in December's heavy snowfall when we started to see some concerted efforts to keep pavements clear. We encourage other residents to join in next time.

Planning

I want to thank Graham Cooke, our planning convener, for his expertise, help and time in supporting residents to get the best outcome from any development. As you know, the Association is not against development provided that is in sympathy with the area and protects our local amenities. For example, the four new houses on Ashley Road in Thames Ditton have been an attractive addition to the street scene this year. In contrast, trying to achieve an acceptable development at, for example, the former Olde Harrow pub site continues to take a lot of time and effort, with a

myriad of planning applications with minor changes plus various appeals, making it hard to keep tabs on what is really going on.

We continue to resist the relentless pressure from developers to convert retail / commercial premises to housing, as Thames Ditton High Street especially requires critical mass to be a viable retail destination. Otherwise our villages will become no more than soulless dormitories, with no shops to stop at – and indeed, no reason to stop at all.

Christmas Lights

Our Hon Sec Tricia Bland galvanized the Association and others to action to put in place an eye-catching set of Christmas lights on the lime tree on the Octagon. This involved digging out and laying an electricity supply to the roundabout, as well as sourcing the lights themselves. Peter Hickman contributed £990 from his Surrey councillor's fund and the Association matched that and loaned the rest. Fundraising to pay off the loan is under way in earnest and we are seeing a real community spirit as residents and retailers get together to make it happen.

Parking

The High Street is still very much in the news as Surrey County Council finally

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published its proposals for parking in Thames Ditton and Weston Green. Quite a few changes are proposed. The Association Executive would like your continuing support in rejecting one proposal for the introduction of eight short term parking pay and display bays in TD High Street. The retailers are clear that this type of short term parking will be detrimental to their trade, whilst installing meters on our narrow pavements will also be visually ugly in what is the heart of our Conservation Area.

Regarding Ashley Road, we continue to press Elmbridge for a reduction in the daily charging rate. We have been consistently trying to get EBC to take action on this. Recent noises have led us to expect some change and we are keeping up the pressure.

Home of Compassion

It is of great concern to residents that the HoC has not yet been developed as a care home. The building has increasingly been the target of thieves and vandals. The importance of the building and its future to residents was clear from the volume of discussion on our website forum. The Association felt that Caring Homes, the current owner, was not taking the situation seriously in 2010 and eventually the building was occupied by squatters. That proved a turning point. As Norman Dolling, an insurance specialist, took responsibility for the removal of the squatters and the security of the building he also started to build a relationship with the Association and local residents and attended our last Open Meeting. Building on that, Paul Jeffery, the CEO of Caring Homes, is here to speak with us this evening. *[Editor's*

comment: Mr Jeffery subsequently told us that works to prevent deterioration were complete; that Caring Homes remain committed to development as a care Home when finance could be arranged; that he had some hope of arranging it soon; and he would return to let us know how things were progressing.]

Albany Reach

The riverside stretch of Albany Reach has again been a focus. The EBC trial to remove bins on Albany Reach in an attempt to reduce litter and enhance the appearance was not a success and when the results were presented to our Open Meeting residents were unanimous that bins should be reinstated. The council officers have promised to do this.

Blue Plaques

The blue plaque campaign, intended to highlight buildings and people of local importance, is nearing completion, with various planning applications in place for those plaques that are to be on listed buildings. It's turned out to be an unexpectedly toilsome bureaucratic process.

Thanks to Volunteers

I would like to thank all our councillors for the work they do, and all the members of the Executive Committee for giving freely of their time and effort, and our fantastic network of distributors and collectors for helping us to reach everyone. We welcome offers of help from anyone wishing to get more closely involved with the work of the Residents Association. The Association can prosper only with the participation and support of its members, and I thank all of you.

Libby MacIntyre

Weston Green School is an independent co-educational school for 3 to 11 year old pupils.

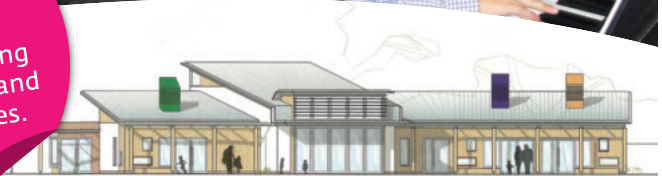
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The school is committed to ensuring that pupils achieve their full potential in a nurturing, challenging and innovative environment.



The school now has a brand new state-of-the-art Early Years Building for Kindergarten and Reception classes.



For further information, or to arrange a tour of the school, please contact Mrs. Skivington:

Tel: 020 8398 2778

E-mail: info@westongreenschool.org.uk

Website: www.westongreenschool.org.uk

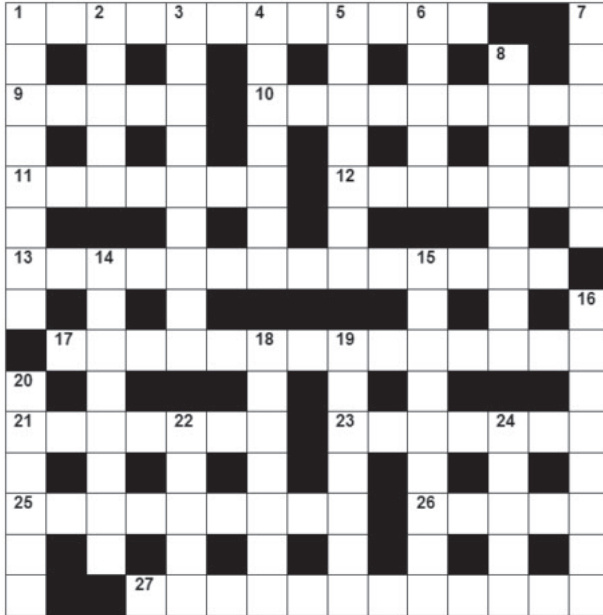
Weston Green School, Weston Green Road,
Thames Ditton, KT7 0JN



Weston Green
School

Summer Crossword

By Michael Jackson



A £5 Voucher for spending in any Thames Ditton or Weston Green shop will be awarded to each of the first three correct entries opened after the closing date of 7 August 2011.

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. Doctor has a posh bottle I'm filling for testing (12)
9. A district of disturbances? (5)
10. A walk to a concert on deck (9)
11. Listens for a call-up (7)
12. Sunset time (7)
13. Press O and MAGIC! – your bearing revealed (7,7)
17. Disliking cuts I prod seven directors to better their ... (14)
21. A galley with three tiers (7)
23. Produce milk (7)
25. A toy (9)
26. Country, Independent Republic in 1950 (5)
27. They could spot Goliath's cause of death (12)

DOWN

1. She shows discretion (8)
2. Bella's tag (5)
3. Roofed platform for musicians (9)
4. Key workers in the office (7)
5. Tertiary division preceding Pliocene (7)
6. Esher letters gone astray - found somewhere near Guildford (5)
7. Solemn promise (6)
8. She alone plays a card game (8)
14. Almond and sugar confection (8)
15. Soaking and steeping (9)
16. Thrown by SAS? Aegis protects them (8)
18. To hold dear (7)
19. Ply Gill with ale to break the law (7)
20. Imaginary island of perfection (6)
22. There's more about tax changes (5)
24. Aconagua is found in these (5)

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Solution to the Spring Crossword

by Maureen Willcox



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

Good to see many new names among the entries this time. Congratulations to the senders of the first three correct ones opened in the shuffle. Each wins a £5 Voucher for spending in any Thames Ditton or Weston Green shop.

Sheila Bailey
65 High Street
Thames Ditton KT7 0SF

Mr. K. Yale
3 Elsworthy
Thames Ditton KT7 0YP

G. P. Clarke
70, Longmead Road
Thames Ditton KT7 0JF

Records of the ancient Fire Brigade at Hampton Court Palace reveal the following gem from 1886 (the inter-palace mail must have been remarkably quick in Victoria's day):

Memo from Sir H Ponsonby, Windsor Castle
To: Clerk of Works, Hampton Court Palace

**Is it true that the palace is on fire –
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SERVICES, CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

Services

Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	Harry Livesey	01372 474555
Dittons and Weston Green Neighbourcare	Avil Ashworth	020 8398 5161
Elmbridge Borough Council Community Support Services		
Information, Meals Services, Community		
Transport, Bus Permits		01372 474552/4
Elmbridge Community Alarm Service		01372 474560
Elmbridge Relief Carers Scheme		01372 474547
Thames Ditton Centre for the Retired	Mon & Thurs	020 8398 5921
	Tues Weds Fri	020 8398 3772
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)		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	020 8224 9262
1st Weston Green Guides (All Saints)	Mrs. Louise Lewis	020 8398 4843
2nd Thames Ditton Guides	Mrs. Bronach Hughes	020 8398 1628
1st Weston Green Brownies (All Saints)	Mrs K Williams	020 8398 1300
2nd Weston Green Brownies	Mrs J Epps	020 8395 0595
1st Weston Green Rainbows	Mrs Helen Hill	020 8398 3135
4th Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts	Alison Derrick	020 8398 0041
Dittons Scout Group	Laura Clarke	020 8398 3447
Coffee and chat (United Reformed Church)	Mrs. E. Barker	01372 467491
Emberbrook Trefoil Guild	Mrs. Adrienne Nealing	020 8398 5582
Friends of Bushey and Home Parks	Mrs. Julie Cohen	020 8943 2017
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chicken	020 8398 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	01784 466651
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	Annabel Duncan	020 8786 6318
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)	Jill Cotter	020 8398 4598
Old Cranleigh Rugby Club	Tony Price	07801 837129
Old Cranleigh Hockey Club	Eds Copleston (Men)	07775 940703
	Helen Hawes (Ladies)	07771 557900
River Club (BMYC)	David Walker	0870 460 3586
Rotary Club, Esher	Geoff Morris	01932 868454
Rubber Bridge TD Lawn Tennis Club	Val	020 8399 9972
Surbiton Croquet Club	Alec Thomas	020 8398 2391
Surbiton Golf Club	Secretary	020 8398 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	Chris Walker (Sec)	020 8398 6651
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
Esher & District Amnesty International	Secretary	gettle51@msn.com

OTHER

Cancer Research UK	Mrs. Vivienne Harris	020 8398 6787
University of the Third Age (U3A)	HonSec Anne Brown	01932 881633
Vera Fletcher Hall	Lettings: Helen Mason	08456 528 529
	Membership: Sue Morris	020 8224 2536

Please contact the Editor to amend these listings



The Language Of Diplomacy

H.M. The Queen describing our history in Ireland as “*not entirely benign*” has reminded me that foreigners think the English are hypocritical. We aren’t, of course: at least, no more than anyone else. It’s the subtle way we deploy the English language that baffles them.

With nuance and understatement, English comes to the rescue of the international community when they can’t agree. The classic UN case was in the Security Council resolutions on Palestine that support the Palestinians’ claim for self-determination. The Palestinians wanted their own land, and what’s the use of self-determination if you’ve nowhere to exercise it? Israel and therefore the USA were antipathetic to the idea of Palestinian statehood with land and borders. English came to the rescue: all were able to sign up to a resolution that averred the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination “*with all that this implies*”. Just **what** this implies can be different things to different people, avoiding explicit mention of statehood, and thus the phrase was the catalyst for agreement. Hypocritical? Well, maybe.

Drafting within our own bureaucracy is not without underlying humour. Ian Smith tried to head off majority rule in Rhodesia by fashioning a constitution that envisaged dual black and white ministers for every ministry. The preamble to the conference hosted by Britain to sort this out began with the classic understatement: “The constitution of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia is *deficient in certain important respects...*” Any British

diplomat knows this to mean that it was a complete cockup.

You’d think that thirty years of diplomatic drafting would stand me in good stead. Trouble is, my wife was in the FCO too, and worse, worked at UN Headquarters in New York for a while...

“Your contribution to the housework has been *deficient in certain important respects*,” she observes. I cannot of course reveal that I am *less than wholly enthusiastic* about it, and confine myself to: “I will address the issue *when time permits*.”

This clearly *leaves something to be desired*. “*With due respect*,” she says, tossing her head contemptuously, “I will use *all necessary means* to see that you do it.” She does not explicitly invoke Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter, but there are hints of a threat to peace and security and I know that not just the use of force but also economic sanctions could be on the way, if not bread and water for supper then possibly a shopping trip, *with all that this implies*.

I protest that I have contributed to domestic well-being in other ways. “I will give your views *the consideration they deserve*,” she says. I understand this to mean that they will be dismissed in a millisecond. I tell her she’s lucky to have me.

And she replies: “*I know how lucky I am*.”

I’m still studying that phrase very carefully indeed. It may not be entirely benign.

Keith Evetts



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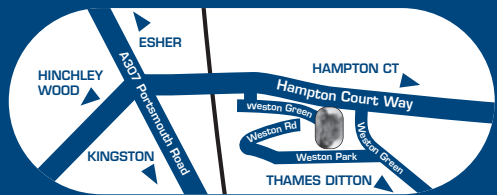
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