

# THAMES DITTON TODAY

The Magazine of the



Thames Ditton  
& Weston Green  
Residents' Association



SUMMER 2015

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# THAMES DITTON TODAY

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

Summer 2015

Published quarterly since Spring 1970

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'Thames Ditton' by Lisa Tolley*

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Officers and staff of the Association are volunteers, but we must fund costs of this magazine, administrative and election expenses, and other expenses such as spring bulb-planting and the village Christmas tree. The subscription is only £3 per household. If you can contribute more, please do so. Subscriptions can be paid via our website [www.residents-association.com](http://www.residents-association.com). Subscriptions (in an envelope please) may be left at Boots Pharmacy, 14 High Street, 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 organization 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

Tricia Bland,  
29 Station Road, Thames Ditton 020 8339 0485  
Ruth Lyon,  
11 Riversdale Road, Thames Ditton 020 8398 3396  
Karen Randolph,  
Deepfield, Giggs Hill Road,  
Thames Ditton 020 8398 5005

## Weston Green Councillors

Ruth Bruce,  
15 Imber Grove, Esher 020 8398 8324  
Tannia Shipley, Clinton House,  
27 Lower Green Road, Esher 020 8398 2484

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Planning: Graham Cooke,  
23 Ashley Road, Thames Ditton 020 8398 8509  
Highways, Drainage: Andrew Roberts,  
1 Boyle Farm Road, Thames Ditton 020 8786 6882

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**The next Residents' Association Open Meetings are**  
**Tuesday 23 June – 8pm**, All Saints' Church Hall, Weston Green and  
**Tuesday 29 September at 8pm**, Vera Fletcher Hall, Thames Ditton  
all who live or work in Thames Ditton and Weston Green are welcome

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# News from the Residents' Association



## To end-May

### **Borough Council elections**

The hard work and time that our Residents' Association Borough Councillors put in on our behalf were clearly recognised and appreciated when Tannia Shipley and Karen Randolph were emphatically re-elected in Weston Green and Thames Ditton, with 66% and 56% of the vote respectively. Weston Green ward had the highest turnout with 77.5% of the electorate voting. Thames Ditton ward was hot on its heels with 74.3%.

### **Deputy Mayor of Elmbridge**

Following her re-election Tannia Shipley was elected Deputy Mayor of Elmbridge at the Annual Council Meeting.

### **Proposed changes to ward boundaries**

We reported in the Spring edition that the Elmbridge Conservative administration has decided to reduce the number of Borough Councillors from 60 to 48. RA Councillors have sought to ensure any redrawing of boundaries does not break up long-standing communities. Proposals are now with the Boundary Commission for review and their deliberations will be open to consultation later in the year. We will keep you informed

### **Ember River Bridge Project**

Thames Ditton resident Howard Baker is leading the charge on a project to build a new pedestrian bridge over the Ember River.

The proposed bridge will provide an uninterrupted riverside walk from Thames Ditton to Hampton Court Bridge by joining Albany Reach and Cigarette Island Park. Current thinking is that the bridge will be an elegant arched bridge set back some 30 metres from the confluence of the Thames and the Ember Rivers.

Howard's team includes Thames Ditton resident Andrew Roberts and Andy von Bradsky, Chairman, PRP Architects, national architects with an office at Ferry Works Thames Ditton.

The current plan is to file a full planning application in the summer at which time local residents and statutory consultees will have the opportunity to make representations. The estate of long-time Thames Ditton resident Barry Johnson has very kindly contributed £1,000 to help fund the planning application, which will need input from engineers, ecologists and architects.



*'The bridge will need to be functional and very elegant, respecting the setting opposite Hampton Court Palace' says Howard Baker*

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One other member Howard would like to add to the project team is a Civil Engineer, ideally with an interest in bridges. If this sounds like you, please contact Howard via the RA website where a forum has been started ([www.residents-association.com](http://www.residents-association.com)).

There are a number of issues to resolve before the bridge is commissioned, not the least being how the bridge is funded and who pays for on-going maintenance costs.



### **Historic home demolished**

Despite a spirited campaign to save the home of Sir Sydney Camm, ‘the man who saved Britain’, the house he lived in - Carradale, in Ember Court Road, Thames Ditton - was demolished by developers Shanley Homes, starting (somewhat ironically) on VE day.

Sir Sydney designed the Hurricane fighter plane, which in 1940 shot down 60 per cent of enemy aircraft in WWII leading the News Chronicle to of 1941 to describe him as ‘the man who saved Britain’. He went on to design many other fighter aircraft, including early versions of the Harrier Jump Jet.

Residents’ Association Councillors Ruth Lyon and Karen Randolph gathered considerable national support in an attempt to save the house, including letters to the Times signed by distinguished former presidents of the Royal Aeronautical Society, to local press and to the Evening Standard. It was also featured in articles in the Standard, Daily Mail and Surrey Comet as well as on BBC television.

Alas, the developers were not open to an alternative development which would have kept intact the historic house for future generations. The Residents’ Association will be asking Shanly Homes to provide tangible recognition and to celebrate the fact that Sir Sydney Camm lived and worked in the village for more than 30 years; including working with us to erect a Blue Plaque when the development is finished.

### **Short-term parking bays**

The implementation of short-term parking bays to facilitate trade to shops in the High Street is due to start shortly. No firm date is available at present.

### **Planning**

Planning permission was sought to demolish two houses and erect four at **87/89 Grove Way** (2014/1132). This was refused by EBC and the applicant went to appeal which was dismissed.

There is currently a planning application for the site of **Esher Tyre and Exhaust** (2015/1257). The proposal is to build four, two storey houses with rooms in the roof



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space and dormer windows. Surrey County Council Highways have recommended refusal on pedestrian safety issues.

The planning application for **The Ewe Public House** by the Co-Op was granted with a plethora of conditions. Confirmation of Compliance with those conditions is now being submitted and determined by the council. A variation of Condition 2 (Approved Plans) has been received (PA 2015/0291) for the addition of external air conditioning units and refrigeration plant.

A substantial and highly prominent steel structure, incorporating safety rails and ladders, has been erected above the distinctive 'saw tooth' roof of **Ferry Works** in Summer Road, apparently for safety reasons but without planning permission. Retrospective planning permission has now been applied for (2015/0728). Ferry works is in a Conservation Area and the structures are highly visible and incongruous in this setting. The RA hopes that a more appropriate and less prominent solution to the identified safety issues is available.

A planning application (2015/1507) has been submitted for change of use of the **George and Dragon** car park one Saturday per month between 8.00 am and 13.00 pm for use as farmers market.

### **Home of Compassion roadworks**

At the time of writing, Caring Homes had announced that there will be roadworks in the vicinity of the High Street near the Home Of Compassion in order to facilitate the installation/updating of various utilities. Anticipated dates for the gas supply are: 17, 18 and 19 June and 22, 23 and 24 June. For the duration of these

dates there will be temporary traffic lights erected as part of the traffic management ie a partial road closure, allowing single lane traffic flow. In addition, dates are yet to be set for other utilities: water, electricity and telephone. Water is projected to be laid between September-Christmas. The responsibility of notification to all those immediately affected is that of the utility companies and should take place about two weeks before. In terms of the restoration and building works for the Home of Compassion, this is still on schedule for completion mid-February, 2016.

### **Milbourne Pond**

We are waiting for our environmental consultant to provide acceptable water abstraction rates. We expect this in the next couple of weeks, following which we will ask Elmbridge Borough Council for their agreement to lay a pipe to the pond and start abstracting small quantities of top-up water. This is very much an experiment to see if keeping the clay surface wet will enable us to maintain a shallow pond until such time as we have funds to re-profile and line the pond.

### **Marathon success**

Congratulations to the RA Honoray Secretary Florian Traub, who completed the London Marathon in a pretty swift 3:24:21. As a result he raised £2,033 for CLIC Sargent, which is a cancer charity for children and young people.

### **Dates for your diary**

**Secret Gardens of Weston Green** – Sunday June 21 1-5pm.

**Christmas Fair** in the High Street Sunday 29 November 3-6 pm.

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# Traveller incursions – protecting our greens



Local residents will be well aware of the traveller incursions that occurred last Summer.

A great deal of time, energy, and money was spent in dealing with the illegal possession of common land over a period of six weeks from the end of July to September. It has to be said that Elmbridge Borough Council, together with the help of the police, did an extraordinary job of moving the travellers on. It was an onerous and difficult process – one that had to be carried out in a meticulous way in order to comply with very rigorous legal requirements. As Ward Councillors, Cllr Bruce and I were kept very busy – the telephones did not stop ringing and the emails were flooding in on an hourly basis. Residents were, understandably, extremely concerned and were very helpful in informing us of any developments on the sites that had been illegally occupied. Our greatest difficulty was keeping residents

informed of the steps being taken to remove the travellers from the site. The Residents Association website, particularly the forum, became an invaluable tool and much time was spent updating progress on the website. ([www.residents-association.com](http://www.residents-association.com)).

Following a series of incursions during the previous summer of 2013 the Council had adopted a Joint Protocol with Surrey Police for the management of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Encampments. This protocol guided the response to the incursions in Weston Green and Thames Ditton last Summer.

Officers and Ward Councillors have recently been considering the best way to prevent further incursions. Total and absolute protection of every site is impossible, but it is crucial that security is reviewed and improved where possible.

There are various options. Ditching and banking is one such solution and involves digging a large trench, with the spoil

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forming a bank. This is probably the most secure option. The bank would be mechanically mowed and would blend in with the surrounding green areas. Unfortunately, the area would look very unsightly for the first year or two but in the long-term it would provide the most natural barrier.

Wooden posts are an alternative. They have a shorter life span but are used, quite successfully, in a large number of open spaces. They require regular maintenance and can be removed by large vehicles.

Metal posts are a more expensive solution but not always appropriate in our green open spaces such as our beautiful Weston Green Conservation Area.

It is sometimes possible to use selected tree planting as an option.


An assortment of these deterrents will be utilised in Weston Green and I am delighted to report that we have been prioritised in the light of last year's incursions. The work has gone out to tender and residents should soon see the work commencing.

I would ask that residents are patient, especially when the ditching starts. The area will look pretty bleak at first – bulbs will be displaced and there will be long trenches of earth that will look unsightly. We have to be patient, understanding, and realise that this work is vital in order to protect this very special area against further incursions.

**Councillor Tannia Shipley**

**Stop Press** – at time of publication another incursion has occurred by Longmead Road.

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# Xbox versus the summer



There are currently teenage thumbs in our community itching for the school holidays to start and the summer Xbox/ Playstation/ iPod/iPad/Facebook/Twitter (delete or add to as applicable) sessions to begin. If allowed, they will last uninterrupted until September. In the school holidays this tribe is rarely seen during the day, except when they emerge out of their den, early afternoon, clad in a onesie, bed head hair and looking to raid the fridge for brunch.

Are you one of the many parents who despair at the amount of time your offspring spends doing this? Or perhaps one of this tribe who has come to realise that by week 4 of the holidays it's getting pretty boring and you wouldn't mind actually seeing your mates.

This dilemma faced my friend during the Easter holidays. Unwilling to accept defeat she and a couple of like minded Mums each agreed to organise something that their four teenage sons would enjoy doing together. And this is what they did.

**Day 1:** Golf lesson followed by a round of golf. The 4 boys had all played before though to varying degrees and the golf professional tailored the lesson to suit them all. Those without clubs borrowed them or shared with those that had. They had lunch and afterwards played on the course. None of them had a handicap. There are a couple of clubs locally that offer lessons, it's not always necessary to have a handicap and you don't have to be a member either.

**Day 2:** Tennis camp. By the time they are teenagers the thought of going to any kind of organised kids camp is out of the question so this Mum got in touch with a local tennis coach and asked him to do a morning of lessons, fun drills etc. After lunch the lads played as they wanted. Fortunately she had a tennis court and swimming pool for after, but failing that there are tennis coaches at local clubs in Thames Ditton and Esher.

**Day 3:** Cook me a curry. Local cooks/chefs/companies have courses to teach teenagers to cook. Run over one day or more they are tailor made to the individual e.g. cooking for students, bread and pizza making. Courses take place in your home or at their venue. Some years ago I organised this myself and was amazed when my children and their friends (all under 9 at the time) cooked a 4 course lunch for their Mums, served it and washed up. Boys enjoy these courses just as much as girls.

**Day 4:** Daytona and the cinema. Tucked away in the middle of Sandown race course is Daytona race track. This is karting. It's bookable in advance or you can just turn up, arrive and drive. Participants get a safety briefing and instruction and then drive the karts. For lunch they ate in Esher and a movie (of the lad's choice) followed in the afternoon.

The outcome of the four days surprised the organisers. The boys enjoyed it so much that they have set up a couple of outings themselves for the summer holidays.

**Sandra Dennis**

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# Boxing clever in Weston Green



*Foley Boxing Club – ready for action*

On Saturday May 2, the fight of the century took place in Las Vegas. Sixteen thousand fans filled the arena and it became the most watched pay-per-view event of all time. Floyd ‘Money’ Mayweather boxed Manny ‘Pac-man’ Pacquiao for the world welter-weight championship and split a purse of \$300 million. The richest fight ever... money, money, money... USA versus the Philippines over 12 three-minute rounds. Fantastic! But was it really worth it?

On Sunday morning on May 3, a dozen or so people gathered in the pavilion of the Weston Green Sports Club, home of the Foley Amateur Boxing Club, for another session of coaching and fitness training. Beverley Peppard, the club’s secretary, provided a warm welcome.

Men, boys and girls aged between six and 60 were warming up, bobbing and

weaving, whilst a young teenage girl skipped rhythmically and expertly, her rope in perfect counterpoint to her feet.

Two six-year-old boys engaged in a game of no-touch boxing, making the moves as taught by the head coach Paul Dawson, – one boy retreating as the other advanced – ducking (no diving) – as the other prepared a right jab, the two boys serious in their application of the coach’s instructions. No punching, no knock-outs, no contact, but determination to do as the coach says. Paul explains that boys up to the age of 10 can enjoy a contactless introduction to the sport; thereafter contact is allowed as long as the correct headgear and gloves are worn.

That Sunday morning was nothing special for the Foley club – the usual mix of banter and bantam-weights, thumps and bumps, rhythmic skipping and the hammer of blows into the helpless punchbags. Much of human life could be there.

For example, where else could Lucy, a lively 15-year-old Chelsea ladies’ footballer be seen in a boxing ring with Dominic Raab, the 45-year-old local Member of Parliament standing (and winning) for re-election in five-days’ time? They were not of course opponents but were stewarded by two Foley stalwarts wearing punchbag gloves as



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targets for Lucy's rapid lefts and rights and for Dom's more conservative haymakers.

The Foley ABC began life in the 1960s in a stable adjoining the Foley Arms pub in Claygate. Encouraged by Youngs brewery, the club gained a reputation for punching above its weight and produced a long line of amateur champions, many of whom went on to enjoy successful professional careers.

The club's future was put in doubt when the brewery redeveloped the site into a pub/restaurant/hotel business. Fortunately the Foley was offered a home by the WGSC, an offer accompanied by a generous £46,000 donation from Sir George Young, enabling them to construct a modern boxing gymnasium in their new home.

The Foley has always endeavoured to provide a club for boxers ie a competitive environment where boxers aged between 11 and 40 can be matched against contestants of similar ages, weight and experience in a three-round contest. Alongside that, the club offers facilities for anyone who wants to keep fit and strong, and who might occasionally feel the need to smash their frustrations into a punchbag. This is the therapeutic and calming side of the sport.

Beverley also sees the Foley very much as an extended family with her partner, Paul, and three other ex-professional boxers volunteering to give something back to the wider community. They all live by the Foley ethos and expect others to act in a similar fashion.

The Olympic Games have always been a beacon for amateur boxing and Nicola Adams (the world's first female boxing Olympic Champion) is a great role model

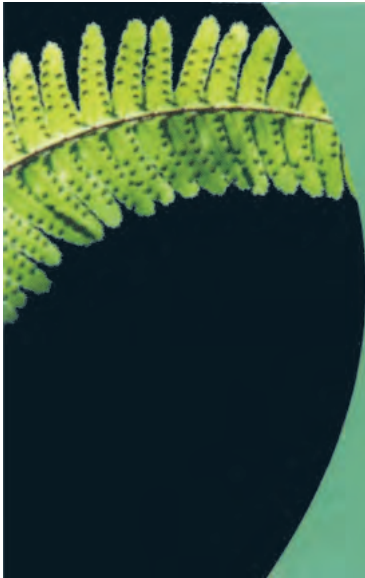
for the girls. Although they are outnumbered 4:1 by the men in the Foley squad, Lucy and two others are eager to follow in her footsteps.

The Foley is not just interested in resting on its well-earned laurels; it sends out a message to local schools and councils that Amateur Boxing can, and should be, a vehicle for disciplined restraint as a counter to violence and aggression. Many potential troublemakers are encouraged to get down to the Foley as soon as they feel an attack coming on. Hit a punchbag rather than a passer-by! In that way, not only can they avoid a potential problem, but they can count on the continuing support of the Foley family.

**Terry Bygraves**



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# Thames Dittons Almshouses

## – Can you help?



*Almshouses, Station Road, Thames Ditton*

Thames Ditton has an Almshouse Charity which runs two groups of residences and is currently looking for one or two new Trustees – could you help?

The first recorded Almshouse was founded by King Athelstan in York in the 10th Century, and the oldest still in existence is thought to be the Hospital of St. Oswald in Worcester (circa 990). In the 1500s, there were about 800 mediaeval hospitals across the country. Following the dissolution of the monasteries, only a handful remained, and these were re-founded on secular lines and rebuilt in a new domestic collegiate style. They offered accommodation to poor, old and distressed people. Later on wealthy people donated money to build homes for the poor in their areas, and from the 18th century, industrialists and later unions provided accommodation for people who had worked for them or who were members.

Today there are almshouses for retired fishermen, miners, retail workers and a host of other groups in addition to the elderly. Some were founded by the City Livery Companies many of which still retain almshouses. There are also almshouses for families, the disabled and even a few for key workers.

In **Thames Ditton** the oldest Almshouse was built around 1630 on a piece of waste ground at Ditton Marsh at the end of what became Almshouse Lane, now called Weston Park. These four properties were provided by Dame Elizabeth Hill of Imber Court. Two further Almshouses were provided in 1873 by Helen and Williamina, twin daughters of the Rt. Hon. Fitzwilliam Hume Dick, MP, of Ditton House.

By 1970 these properties were in a sorry state and could not be lived in. The Trustees at the time decided to build six new units. This block of residences is on

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the edge of the common, surrounded by a small communal garden, with parking

Commuters will be familiar with the other six residences in Station Road; opposite Thames Ditton Station. They are important Grade 2\* listed buildings, provided in 1720, by Henry Bridges, Lord of the Manor of Imber, for 'six poor old men or women belonging to the Parish of Thames Ditton'.



*Almshouses, Weston Park*

Today Thames Ditton has 12 residences for people of pensionable age who have limited financial means and who live in the Ancient Parish of Thames Ditton (this includes Weston Green, Hinchley Wood, most of Claygate and parts of Esher). The charity is self-funded, monthly maintenance fees are paid by the residents to contribute towards overheads. Currently all residences are occupied but a waiting list is maintained for people who may wish to be considered if a vacancy arises.

The Station Road property has just had approval to replace the current casement windows at the front, and as per the grade 2\* listing requirements will be like for like. They will be of better quality, be more secure and draught proof!

The charity is run by up to 7 trustees, 3 of which are appointed by Elmbridge Council, and 4 co-opted. The Trustees may appoint other people to assist in the running of the Charity; this includes Treasurer and 'Clerks'. People experienced in accounting, law maintenance of properties, housing associations or care homes professions amongst many, can all use these skills in volunteering to be a Trustee. Contractors

are employed when required, although we could not do without our garden maintenance contractor to ensure the grass is cut, shrubs pruned and gardens kept in a reasonable condition. Residents also maintain areas of the gardens.

Currently we have a potential requirement for two further trustees and / or appointees who would be prepared to take on various tasks; local people who are able to give a small amount of time to deal with any resident or property issues, to take on the administration for meeting agendas & minute taking, or a financial background to take on aspects of accounting, income and expenditure and also just be able to pop in and visit the residents. As always the key to being a volunteer is the sharing of responsibilities. At least quarterly meetings are held to discuss resident issues, health & safety, applications, financials, ongoing maintenance and longer term tasks.

If anyone has an interest in becoming a Trustee please give Steve Butler or Irene Taylor a call.

Steve Butler 020 8224 0749  
Irene Taylor 020 8398 1011

**Steve Butler**

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# Lisa Tolley – Local Artist



When you close your eyes and think of Thames Ditton or Weston Green what images come to mind – quaint cottages, verdant verges, a rippling river? Or perhaps lively shops, busy tots and family outings? All these delightful aspects have been captured over the years by local artist Lisa Tolley, whose charming house paintings and street scenes have become well known in our villages.

As part of her contribution to the Residents' Association and village life Lisa has generously provided – free – the lovely artwork, maps and tickets for all the Secret Gardens events, including the latest 'Secret Gardens of Weston Green' to be held on Sunday June 21. I caught up with her as she was creating the map for

the event to find out a bit more about her and her work.

I was surprised to find that while her artwork is now part and parcel of the local scene it might have been very different if Lisa had not had met Jeremy Hamilton from Stitchery in Thames Ditton High Street. But let's begin at the beginning...

Lisa trained as a textile designer at Manchester Metropolitan University, then in the heart of UK textile production. She says her distinctive style is a reflection of the rigorous training she received, with a focus on colour and detail. Her first student assignment was to paint a spider plant and identify all the different greens! Her fascination with colour and the co-ordination of shades and colour was born.

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Gouache paint was the medium of choice in the textile world and is the medium she still paints with now – loving it for its flexibility and intensity of colour.

Following her degree she went travelling for a year, mainly in Asia, filling sketch books with small scenes from her travels – a row of houses in Darwin, Australia, or sail boats bobbing off the coast in Thailand. She also painted postcards to send home to her mum, original souvenirs of her time away.

The world of work beckoned and following a Masters in Business she worked in product development and marketing, finally working as a textile buyer for the Conran Shop in London, Paris and New York. In all those years she didn't pick up a paint brush until her brother-in-law asked her to produce a canvas for his 40th birthday. Realising how much she enjoyed painting, and looking for a way to work from home when her eldest son was born, she thought about how she could work for herself.

She took the painting of the Darwin houses into Stitchery and asked Jeremy if he thought there could be a market for similar paintings in our area. He suggested that she start with some postcards – and they went from there. That year (2004) she had a small space in Stitchery at the first High Street Christmas Fair and sold her first picture. Since then her distinctive paintings have adorned bags, mugs and tea towels and many local people went on to commission a Lisa Tolley original of their houses and families.

She and her husband Richard have lived in Thames Ditton for ten years and with three boys from six to 13 she is

now part of village life. Lisa works from home in her airy office or on the kitchen table. It takes up to 20 hours to create a house painting and she always meets clients to get a sense of their lifestyle, as that helps her capture them and the way they live in the painting. Her website [www.lisatolley.co.uk](http://www.lisatolley.co.uk) shows many more examples of her work and provides information for those who would like to commission a painting. Prices range from £275 to £375 and there is a small discount for those who live locally. Lisa Tolley prints can also be purchased at Stitchery.

In the course of our chat Lisa told me that her favourite artist was David Hockney and I could see the appeal – they both capture the places they love with a designer's eye for colour and pattern.

Her paintings really portray what it is like to live here: quirky, colourful – and fun!

**Libby MacIntyre**



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# Secret Gardens 2015

## – Weston Green



Napoleon (borrowing from Adam Smith) once disparagingly called the UK a ‘Nation of Shopkeepers’, but we all know that we are in fact a ‘Nation of Gardeners’.

Now, some of us can tell our dahlias from our delphiniums and some of us blissfully cannot, even though we might thoroughly appreciate both.

Most folk will probably take offence at a wasp after our sandwich at a picnic, but are the majority of us really much troubled by insects in the grand scheme of things? Probably not.

However, out there in the undergrowth lurks a breed of beings whose hearts beat a little faster at the thought of a handful of odd-looking shrivelled-up vegetable matter arriving over the winter in a packet, ready to be planted out at the opportune time. They are preoccupied by the nocturnal habits of slugs and snails – the unseen ‘enemies within’. They long for sun and, when it appears, worry there's too much of it and pray for rain. Come the summer they begin to watch the news from behind a cushion and listen with bated breath to radio reports in trepidation and fear of being faced with the dreaded words ‘hose pipe ban’. They are of course... the Secret Gardeners.

At some point in late winter/early spring this sterling band of guys and girls kindly and valiantly agreed to share something of their ‘green’ worlds with us by making their patches – large or small, groomed or wild (umm, sorry... natural) – available to

us to visit en masse. Not a decision for the faint hearted! So on Sunday June 21, Fathers’ Day, they will be eagerly waiting to welcome us to share, enjoy and I am sure, admire, the fruits of their labour. What better treat for Dad – and it might get him out of cutting his own grass perhaps?

Last time we were in Weston Green, two years ago in 2013, we were regaled with stories of gardening by torchlight by Gerald Smith – Weston Green’s very own ‘garden gnome’, greatly impressed by Lorraine and Graham Hequet’s plant list, and utterly enchanted by Nicki Holland’s compact ‘white’ courtyard among many other horticultural delights.



*A secret sun spot?*



So what's in store this time? Well, we can't give the whole game away but everyone is working very hard. There are some concerns – a 'singed' conifer, the availability of sphagnum moss in June, the recent windy spell knocking things down, rival demands on time approaching an offspring's 18th birthday celebration – and the problem of trying to persuade the family dog not to relieve himself on the lawn for the next few weeks!

One person, who of course shall remain nameless, used the words 'dandelion gate' when I caught up with her. On further enquiry, gardeners' emotions ranged from 'a bag of nerves' (calmer now) to 'very relaxed, as I am supervising my other half from the comfort of my deckchair'. I'd say this was about normal at this stage of preparation, so all is well.



Now, no Secret Garden event would be complete without an opportunity to indulge in cake and a 'cuppa' and so Anstice, who must surely be the most glamorous 'tea lady' in the kingdom, will be on hand with her team in All Saints' Church Hall (and outside if the weather allows) to tempt us with refreshment goodies that befit the good burghers of the neighbourhood and various visitors.

So we cordially invite interested parties from Weston Green, Thames Ditton and further abroad to come and uncover the Secret Gardens' secrets and, with them, eagerly wait to see what lies beyond the various garden gates.

### **What you need to know about the Secret Gardens of Weston Green**

Date: Sunday June 21, 2015  
Time: 1pm – 5pm (teas from 2pm)  
Tickets: £5 per adult,  
children under 18 free

#### **Available in Weston Green from:**

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Tannia Shipley  
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tannia.shipley@dial.pipex.com

#### **Available in Thames Ditton from:**

The Stitchery  
The Secret Garden florist



**Councillor Ruth Bruce**

# Celebrating 100 years of the Women's Institute



Everyone has probably heard of the Womens' Institute (WI) but perhaps not so many will be aware that the WI is celebrating its centenary during 2015. Thames Ditton WI have decided to renovate and plant up the wheelbarrows which adorn the platform at Thames Ditton Railway Station. This annual task use to be undertaken by the former Station Master, Ron Cox. It is hoped that commuters and travellers will enjoy the floral display during the summer. WIs all over the country are making similar contributions to their communities. The WI nationally campaigns on a range of issues and provides friendship and fun to the members.

Thames Ditton WI meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 8.00pm in St Nicholas Church Hall. If you would like to join us just come along and be sure of a warm welcome.



Contact 020 8398 2700 for more information.

**Celia Rowe**  
President Thames Ditton WI

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# Fund raising in Thames Ditton



Forty five years ago after my husband Michael had died of cancer at the early age of 34, I joined a group of, to my young mind, elderly ladies fund raising for Cancer Research Campaign. I had been persuaded to join them.

A couple of years later, I became the Chairman of this group and as the older committee members retired I replaced them with my younger friends. We have remained together ever since, raising half a million pounds over the years for what has now become Cancer Research UK. Some of my original friends have sadly died but one or two of them still remain. They are loyal and trusted friends. However, we are now probably a great deal older than the original committee that I joined. Ideally, for the fundraising to continue we need a young group of people to come and join us.

Do you have a reason to want to raise money for this worthy cause? Most families have someone who has, or has had cancer, or have friends who have experienced it. So much has been done over the past forty years to improve the treatment and life expectancy of people

with cancer. So many people now live with cancer that is no longer the death sentence it once was. But much more still needs to be done. Maybe you feel that other illnesses are more deserving. I don't know.

I do know that medical research is going on all the time into dreadful diseases and sometimes due to genetic research into cancer something is discovered that can help a completely different problem.

Joining a fundraising group may seem like a considerable commitment but it needn't be. It is what you make of it. We only arrange social activities in and around Thames Ditton and East Molesey. We always try to give good value for money and something that involves



*The local Cancer Research Campaign fundraising committee in 1983.*

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enjoyment for the person donating and for us too. Sponsoring someone to do something brave and adventurous only involves the person being sponsored. What does the sponsor get out of it? They just write the cheque!

We like our events to be fun for all of us, with good food and company in the local community. So why not come and join us. You don't have to be a group of friends. Maybe you are new to the area and would like to meet new people. Do get in touch with me Vivienne Harris on 020 8398 6787 or Kathy Lowe on 020 8979 3247. We look forward to meeting you.

**Vivienne Harris**

*In recognition of their fundraising the committee were invited to the House of Commons by MP Liam Fox*



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# Hanging gardens of Queens Road



*A winning hanging basket*

Babylon had its hanging gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world – but Thames Ditton has its hanging baskets, and if Queens Road resident and RA member Pam Bannister keeps up the good work she could be vying for eighth place in years to come.

This year, on Tuesday June 30, Pam is organising the eighth annual floral extravaganza that is the Queens Road Hanging Basket Competition. From a small seed of an idea, planted by Pam in the summer of July 2008 among a select group of householders, the competition

has grown into a cascade of colour that lights up this pretty road of charming cottages, leading usefully as it does to the delights of the Albany riverside pub and dining house, which this year – as ever – is generously sponsoring the event, together with The Angel Comedy Club and Squires Garden Centre.

“A few houses always did their best to brighten up the road with pretty floral baskets and containers, and it just struck me one day that it would be lovely if everyone could be persuaded to have a go,” said the vivacious Pam, a resident of Thames Ditton for nearly 30 years.



“I mailshotted every house in the road and had a great response. In that first year around half the households participated and it has grown from there.”

Pam admitted that she was rather embarrassed when the independent judges awarded one of the first prizes to her! “Since then I have not entered the competition, although I do make sure the house keeps up the high standard of the road!”

The competition is timed to coincide with the Hampton Court Flower Show and ensures that visitors who walk down the road to catch the ferry from the Albany get their gardening fix off to a good start.

Judges have included Jim Buttress (judge of Britain in Bloom and the

Allotment Challenge). Its fame has spread and last year attracted the attention of the BBC when a camera crew from the Flower Show made the trip across the river to examine the work of the local green-fingered brigade.

Competitors can enter three classes: best hanging basket; best window box; and best front garden. Many enter all three and provide a great delight to the rest of us.

It is now a tradition for entrants and interested others to assemble at the Albany after judging and swap stories (if not gardening tips) over a few drinks. This has propagated a whole new social scene and an occasional ‘Queens Road Pub Crawl’ is organised to fill the gap between competitions.

Pam’s small idea has grown into a village tradition. Hopefully you might feel inspired to start one of your own?

**Andy Anderson**



*Organiser Pam shares a smile with Judge Jim Buttress*

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# Litter, litter everywhere



Having lived in Thames Ditton for nearly 50 years I feel saddened that many people do not have respect for our surroundings these days. This village we live or work in is disfigured with litter.

I go out with rubber gloves and carrier bags picking up other peoples litter from pavements, verges and gutters. This includes cans, bottles, plastic bags and cigarette packaging and cigarette ends. The cigarette ends being the most difficult to pick up. All these not only pollute and disfigure our environment but can block drains and cause harm and accidents to children, the elderly and wildlife.

Please think before you drop your cigarette butt or sweet papers etc and instead take it home with you or put it in

the nearest litter bin. Let's all have pride and respect for our village.

Maybe others will follow me in picking up litter around the village. Could Thames Ditton have a 'litter pick day' perhaps on a Sunday once a month when everyone could spend one hour collecting this rubbish to clean up our village and make it a pleasant place to live and work in?

**Avril Naish**

*This letter reflects concerns that residents have about litter in the village. Do you have ideas how to deal with it – would you be involved in a community drive to change things? Please let us know via the Forum on our website 'residents-association.com'.*

**Editor**

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# Imber Court and the *nouveaux riches*: Edward Knipe



*East India Company ships at Deptford – mid 1600s*

In January 1649 the lease on the Manor of Imber and its fine house, Ember Court, was conveyed from Sir Dudley Carleton, a senior diplomat and heir of Dudley Carleton, Viscount Dorchester, to Edward Knipe, merchant. Almost nothing has hitherto been written by local historians on Knipe. So who was he?

## **Adventuring with the East India Company**

Edward Knipe was born in 1609, the third child of Elizabeth and Christopher

Knipe, a London haberdasher from Lancashire, later a general merchant importing among other things beer from Holstein. The family did well. With 16 children their sons had to find a living, but connections helped. At the age of 21, in 1630, Edward was made a factor – an overseas merchant – of the East India Company, Britain's first joint stock corporation established under Elizabeth I in 1600. The Company was engaged in bitter, sometimes bloody, rivalry with its earlier-established Dutch, French, Spanish

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and Portuguese counterparts. Disease, cut-throat local politics and perilous conditions made life tough for the money.

Although selected for Persia, Edward was nabbed by the Company's Accountant at Surat in India, where he stayed. He fell foul of the Company's Court of Committees in London, who received reports that from the outset Knipe had been trading exorbitantly on his own private account. He was ordered home, despite support from his local bosses who commended his diligence, claimed to be unaware that he had done more than a tiny amount of private trading, suggested that London had received false information, and wrote of Knipe that he was: *"an acting, able, sprightly young man, tractable and disposed unto Employment, such a man as we should have continued in Amadavad if occasion had so required, from whence we had the testimony of all the Merchants written in his favour. ... Notwithstanding hee hath bene daily Conversant in the perfecting of your accompts, and hath amongst us so good an esteeme as to induce us to recommend him to your mercy, and if you please to a second Employment."*

On his homeward voyage in the *Jonas*, Knipe was implicated with two colleagues in the brutal punishment of a Company apprentice accused of stealing a parcel of musk from their cabin. In September 1635 the Court of Committees ordered Knipe to pay compensation to the injured apprentice.

After further months of wrangling the Company, in consideration of the letter

from his superiors in Surat and *"for his own and his father's sake"* decided to reinstate him. But the aggrieved Knipe joined the rival Courteen trade association which had received a charter to trade in Asia in areas where the East India Company was not active. It seems likely that it was during this spell in London that Knipe married Elizabeth Watts.

## With the Courteens

Knipe was posted to Aceh in north Sumatra, where there was a great deal of infighting with the Dutch traders. Happily we have a vignette of him in the voluminous manuscripts of traveller Peter Mundy, who wrote in 1638 on a voyage to Aceh:

*"Our English here esteemed off by the King, who bestowed on the Factory a good peece off ground, wheron they have built them a Commodious dwelling house, with others of Service, according to this Country Manner. Hee hath allsoe honoured them by letting them have one off his Elephantts... Mr Edward Knipe Cheiffe off the Factory hath bin often abroad with him on hunting off wild beasts... Died here Mr. Knipes Servauntt, Finding other 2 off the Factory very sicke att our arrivails but now well recovered ; This place held to bee unwholsome... Mr Edward Knipe having some businesse with the King, Captaine Swanly and my selffe went with him. Att the entraunce off the Court gate wee putt off our shooes. And comming Near where the King was, wee made an obeisaunce after the Country Manner... Then sate wee Downe Crosse legged, there beeing Many people. The King then beeholding the sporte off*



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*Cocke Fighting, much used here, there beeing good Cokes in this place.”*

But relations with the ruler of Aceh soured in 1639 over English alliances with the distrusted Portuguese. Knipe desperately sought evacuation for himself and colleagues from associates in India but received no help. It's not known how he managed to get back to London, but he had arrived there by 1641 and was in dispute with his employer. Knipe petitioned the House of Lords for “*relief against William Courteene... who refuses to pay the salary to which the petitioner is entitled and detains from him a parcel of cinnamon which is now worth here in England about 3500 pounds.*”

## East India Company part II

In 1642, as Civil War was breaking out in England, Edward Knipe rejoined the East India Company. His next recorded adventure was in 1644-45 when he embarked in the *John*, an armed Company merchantman bound round the Cape for India, with a cargo of cloth and lead to trade in Mozambique on the way. Things did not go well. Edward Knipe fell out with the ship's captain John Mucknell, a cantankerous Royalist, and after Knipe and the other merchant passengers had gone ashore to dine *al fresco* on the island of Johanna in the Comores, Captain Mucknell sailed off and left them marooned there. Mucknell took the ship back to Bristol where he offered it to the Royalist forces. Too much to handle, Mucknell set off for the Scilly Isles and started a pirate fleet with the *John* as flagship. The ship was sunk when the King's supporters later tried to control



*The first East India House on Leadenhall Street, 1648*

Mucknell. Its wreck was discovered in 2010 off Scilly.

After a month on Johanna, Knipe and the others were picked up by another ship and eventually reached India. His new post lasted two years. Company minutes record that Knipe had taken out a “great sum of gold” to trade on his private account, to the detriment of the Company's trade on the Malabar coast. By 1647 his salary was costing £200 per year, and the company needed to cut costs. Knipe and some others were ordered home. Furthermore, “*The great injury done the Company by private trade being so very obvious*”, the Company decided to sue Knipe and his colleagues in Chancery. The lawsuit took two years and eventually, in 1649, Knipe was offered a deal if he forfeited a thousand pounds to the Company.

And that seems to have marked the end of Edward Knipe's employment by the East India Company, in the year that he bought Ember Court – evidently with the



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wealth accumulated in his personal trading on the side.

## **Knife at Ember Court**

It's not clear what connections drew Edward Knife to Ember Court, but his is not the only Knife connection in the locality: Bartholomew Knife, probably identical with his younger brother of that name, married Rebecca, daughter of gunpowder supremo George Evelyn of Long Ditton. Bartholomew emigrated to Virginia with land grants totalling 800 acres.

There are few records of Edward's activity here. Soon after taking possession in 1649, he was nominated Sheriff of Surrey, a yearly appointment held by several Lords of Imber, prestigious but onerous and expensive, which he served in 1653.

From his entry in the Hearth Tax receipts of 1664 we can see that with 30 fireplaces, Ember Court was way larger than the next largest house in Thames Ditton and Weston Green – Sir Richard Hatton at Forde's Farm, the forerunner of Boyle Farm, with just 19 hearths.

St. Nicholas church records reveal that on 16 January 1670 fund-raising for the redemption of British captives from Turkish slavery included a contribution of ten shillings from Edward Knife (while Sir Richard Hatton gave a pound). We can assume that the list of contributors more or less reflected the number of solvent households in the parish. For these appeals for money were driven by royal command, there was a strong obligation to contribute, and the

smallest contribution recorded was of one penny. There were 95 contributors in all.

Knife and his numerous siblings named their sons after each other, which makes firm identifications difficult, but there was certainly a legacy of Knipes both in the Company (a younger Edward Knife and Richard, both probable sons of Edward) and in London and Surrey. Edward's nephew Thomas became a legendary Headmaster of Westminster School: a number of Knipes have memorial stones in the Abbey's cloisters. His brother Randolph sired a string of Randolphs and Edwards one of whom, Sir Randolph Knife, a rich merchant in cloth, became a Director of the Bank of England and Sheriff of London. He was later found naked and "*drowned in his own fish pond at Epsom*", allegedly a suicide under suspicion of fraud. Another Edward Knife, probable grandson of Sir Randolph, came into possession of the estate in Epsom, and was a Steward involved in the original article of agreement establishing Epsom races in 1778.

Edward Knife of Ember Court's brief will in 1668 left his wife Elizabeth as Executor to distribute among their children, whose names are not given, "*the worldly Estate, which it has pleased God to bless my pains and Travell*". He died in January 1677 and was buried at All Hallows Staining in the City of London, with probate granted in 1678.

In 1672, five years before Edward died, he sold Ember Court to an equally adventurous East India Company merchant. But that's another story...

**Keith Evetts**

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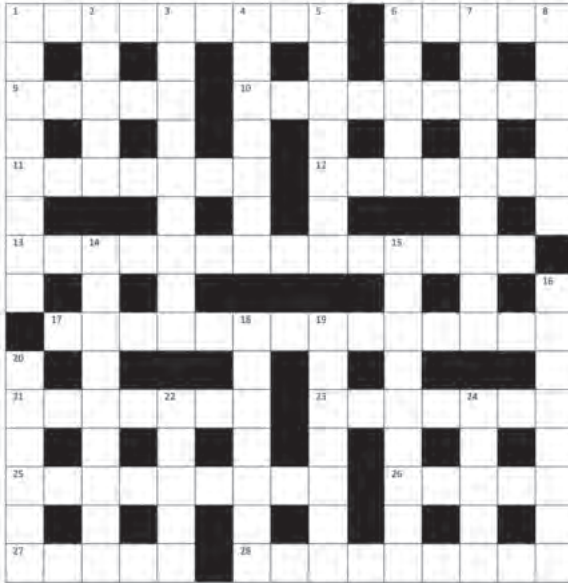
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# Summer Crossword

By Michael Jackson



The first three correct entries randomly opened after the closing date 8th August will win a £5 voucher to spend in local shops.

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

Thames Ditton Today  
Crossword Competition  
24 High Street  
Thames Ditton  
KT7 0RY

## ACROSS

1. Joy can pin shapes together (9)
6. Spanish Art Gallery (5)
9. Surprise one in Hampton Court's bewilderness (5)
10. Do American universities climb up places in it (3.6)
11. Tenderly in music (7)
12. Utters in a singing voice (7)
13. From the pier, dashing off to St. Pancras for it (4.5.5)
17. Senator lent to Ted recipes to attain penultimate honour (9-5)
21. Top rate fruit Mum, ripe too for a change (7)
23. A territory of the nobility (7)
25. In Panama an operation one's hip can alleviate the pain (4.5)
26. Old film partner of Stan (5)
27. She is in Nassau without a name (5)
28. Compiling and solving clues can become quite this (9)

## DOWN

1. He married Minnehaha (8)
2. Grand, Upright, softly (5)
3. Hot gardeners, you in charge? Use hose, change, then into these (9)
4. A typical characteristic of something (7)
5. Frustrated when a ball is in the way (7)
6. Fold a petal into this (5)
7. That man Silver from Buenos Aires (9)
8. Seaport on the Black Sea (6)
14. Fragrant flowers, Cape Jasmine (9)
15. They are used to tie down sails (4.5)
16. A politician and an excitable horse go off in head long flight (8)
18. Placido – singer (7)
19. Loudness curtailed, now it's just bumps (7)
20. Convulsions when maps in steamship are found in a muddle (6)
22. Pertaining to South American Indians high in the Andes (5)
24. Did student hide in the capital? (5)

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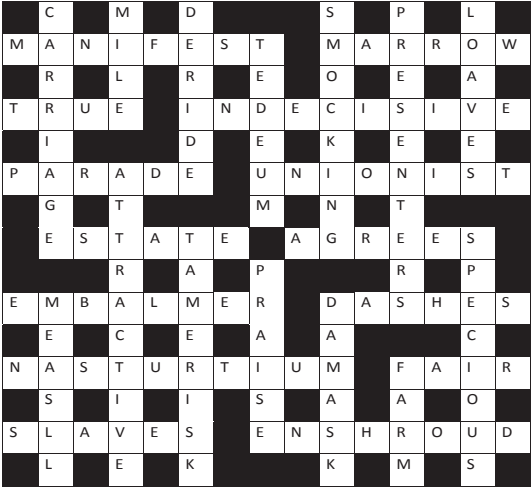
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# Solution to the Spring Crossword

by Maureen Willcox



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

Mr K Fuller  
11, The Island  
KT7 0SH

Mrs C Eddy  
46 Grove Way  
KT10 8HL

Miss J Harlow  
67 Thistledene  
KT7 0YH

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# SERVICES, GROUPS, CLUBS, AND SOCIETIES

## SERVICES

Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	Harry Livesey	01372 879321
Dittons and Weston Green Neighbourcare	Avril Ashworth	020 8398 7521
<b>Elmbridge Borough Council Community Support Services</b>		
Thames Ditton Centre for Retired People	Mon & Thurs	020 8398 5921
Thames Ditton Children's Centre	Tues, Weds, Fri	0208 398 3772
Meals on Wheels, Community Transport, Dial-a-Ride, Alarm & Telecare services, Relief Carers	ask for service at central switchboard	01372 474474
Homesupport Elmbridge	Pam Howard (Manager)	01932 267128
Esher and District Stroke Club	Ann Pollock	020 8398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Sally Dubery	01372 463587
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	Deborah Daoud	020 8398 5521
2nd Thames Ditton Rainbows	Alexandra Lyall	07779 616463
1st Weston Green (All Saints) Scout Group	Carole Needham	07975 842423
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	Jean Smith	020 8977 9391
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chicken	020 8398 2932
Molesey and Dittons Neighbourhood Watch	Chairman: John Haberfield	020 8398 5256
Parents and Toddlers(St Nicholas church)	Information	020 8398 7211
Ripieno Choir	Nick Harris	020 8399 7231
Surrey Bell-ringers	Nick Pattenden	Nick.Pattenden@cassiopae.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	Zenda Hedges	020 8398 7038
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	Heather Harvey	020 8398 2642
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	Simon Marshall (Men)	07801 737695
	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

### 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
Esher and District Amnesty International	Cherry Eddy (Campaigns)	020 8398 4377
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Lettings: Piotr Hennig	020 8398 5358
Long Ditton Youth Club	Toni Izard	07749 633973
Lynwood Allotment Society	Gill Vickers	020 8398 4870
Molesey and District Antiques Society	Linda Lambert	020 8398 1476
NADFAS (Decorative & Fine Arts) Kingston	Mrs. Valerie Windsor	020 8549 9967
Soroptimist International (Kingston District)	Secretary: Pat Harman	020 8390 3507
Thames Ditton Women's Institute (W.I.)	Secretary	020 8398 8615

### OTHER

Cancer Research UK	Mrs. Vivienne Harris	020 8398 6787
Elmbridge Fairtrade Network	Judy Porter	020 8398 6401
University of the Third Age (U3A)	Hon Sec Anne Brown	01932 881633
Vera Fletcher Hall	Lettings: Helen Mason	08456 528 529
	Membership: Sue Morris	020 8224 0980

Please contact the Editor to amend these listings

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# Chairman's Address to the AGM



Chairman **Rhodri Richards** opened by highlighting and thanking the many volunteers who offer their time and skills to support the Residents Association (RA). Key points from his report are:

- Thank you to Keith Evetts, who retired from roles of RA Webmaster and Editor of Thames Ditton Today and introduction of the (three!) new people taking over; Mark Charlesworth as Webmaster; and Sandra Dennis and Libby MacIntyre as co-editors of the magazine.
- Welcome to Florian Traub as Honorary Secretary, taking over from Tricia Bland who was elected Borough Councillor for Thames Ditton following the retirement of Sandra Dennis.
- The 69% of the vote for Tricia was testament to all the work she has done to 'keep the heart in the High Street'.
- RA members Caroline James and Andy Anderson had organized the fourth 'Secret Gardens' event. It was the largest yet and raised £2,500 for the 'Heart in the High Street' campaign, and St Nicholas Garden of Remembrance.
- RA councillors had worked closely with Elmbridge Council to evict travellers from illegal camps on the commons and to clean up the litter and repair damage caused. The council is looking at ways to prevent it happening again.
- We are committed to retaining a village Post Office. RA councillors and local MP met with Post Office Ltd to discuss local concerns at its relocation to Simply Fresh.
- Planning takes up great deal of time for officers and councilors. It is worth noting that the vast majority of planning applications go through without comment.
- The RA is not anti-development, and actively supports high-quality development which respects the streetscapes and historic fabric of our village.
- We always encourage developers to engage with local residents and businesses; where this does not happen we support residents who have valid reasons for objection.
- We supported the objections of residents who would have been overlooked by a new application for Taggs Boatyard. We also had concerns about the viability of the active boat yard.
- RA Councillors worked to ensure that residents' concerns about the redevelopment of The Ewe Public House as a Co-op store were addressed.
- The RA made representations as part of the Elmbridge Parking Review to introduce a few 'limited time' parking bays, outside local shops to help boost passing trade.
- The RA organized the installation of a borehole which should be able to keep the water in the Milbourne Pond on Weston Green topped up.
- The RA made representations to prevent proposed boundary changes breaking up long-standing community borders
- Residents' Association volunteers undertook many other activities over the course of the year, as they do every year. Some are visible, such as the installation and decoration of the Christmas trees in the High Street and roundabout, or the planting of spring bulbs, but much of it is behind the scenes.
- Rhodri again thanked the RA councillors, RA Officers and all volunteers for their work on behalf of the residents and businesses in Thames Ditton and Weston Green.



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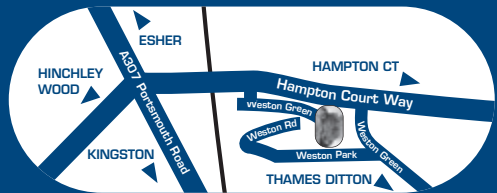
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