

# THAMES DITTON TODAY

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

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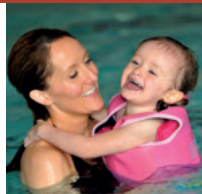
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# THAMES DITTON TODAY

Published quarterly since 1970

## Editorial Team

Libby MacIntyre & Sandra Dennis  
editor@residents-association.com

## Magazine Design

Guy Holman  
24 Angel Road  
Thames Ditton  
020 8398 1770

## Distribution

David Youd  
6 Riversdale Road,  
Thames Ditton KT7 0QL  
020 8398 3216

## Advertisement Manager

Verity Park  
20 Portsmouth Avenue  
Thames Ditton KT7 0RT  
020 8398 5926

## Contributors

You are welcome to submit articles or images. Please contact the Editorial Team well in advance of the next deadline October 5

## Advertisers

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*Cover photo credit: Sandra Dennis*

[www.residents-association.com](http://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 village Christmas trees. 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, Thames Ditton or Thorhill Road Pharmacy, 94 Thorhill 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 AND WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## About the Association

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

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

With six Residents' Association Councillors covering the two electoral wards we have a strong voice on Elmbridge Borough Council working with other Residents' Association Councillors to ensure that decisions are based on the needs of local communities and on good management rather than on party politics.

Our Residents' County Councillor, Nick Darby, represents our views at Surrey County Council.

**President: Martin Wilberforce**  
7 River Avenue, Thames Ditton 020 8398 4732

**Vice President: Peter Hickman,**  
3 Elmbridge Lodge, Weston Green Road  
Thames Ditton 020 8339 0931

**Surrey County Councillor: Nick Darby,**  
12 Basing Close, Thames Ditton 020 8398 2382

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Tricia W. Bland,  
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Caroline James,  
Laurel Cottage, 20 High Street,  
Thames Ditton 07970 672723  
Karen Randolph,  
Deepfield, Giggs Hill Road,  
Thames Ditton 020 8398 5005

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Janet Turner, 2 Montgomery Ave,  
Hinchley Wood 020 8398 1565  
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6 Onslow Gardens, Thames Ditton 020 8398 6019

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Planning: Rhodri Richards,  
Ditton Cottage, Giggs Hill Road,  
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Highways, Drainage: Andrew Roberts,  
1 Boyle Farm Road, Thames Ditton 020 8786 6882  
Flooding Tony Thompson,  
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## THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE

September 25 8pm - Vera Fletcher Hall, Thames Ditton

November 6 8pm - Vera Fletcher Hall, Thames Ditton

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# News from the Residents' Association to end-August



## Fantastic Flags

The glorious summer was set off by our fantastic Union Flags in the High Street. They went up in May in time to celebrate the Royal wedding, and remained to cheer on the Secret Gardens, the World Cup and the cycle race. The flags have now been washed (no small task) and stored for next year.

## Independent retailer awards

Once again, Thames Ditton has won four out of the seven awards in this year's Elmbridge Independent Retailer of the Year Awards. Cafe Noir at Thames Ditton Station won best independent cafe/restaurant, Paulls Fruit & Veg won best independent deli or grocer, Cycle Link won best specialist independent retailer (both in Thames Ditton High Street) and Cafe Noir won best overall independent retailer. Congratulations to all.

## Path at Ditton

### Common/Station Road

Following a request made at an RA Open Meeting in 2016, a path was established along Station Road to provide a safer route for pedestrians accessing Esher Station.

We are delighted to report that Cllr Tannia Shipley, supported by fellow ward councillors Janet Turner and Nigel Haig, has secured funding for a special surface to provide a defined path whilst retaining the rural character of the Common and preserving the biodiversity found along the ditch.

Depending on the tendering process, the weather and the condition of the path the work should be completed by the end of September.

## Unauthorised Traveller encampments

Unauthorised Traveller encampments over the summer caused a great deal of distress locally. The community's concerns were voiced in the national press by our local councillor Karen Randolph. Turn to page 9 for a more detailed update.



Ian Burrows, Head of Leisure & Cultural Services at Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) will present an update on the unauthorised encampments at our Open Meeting on 25 September, 8pm at the Vera Fletcher Hall.

## Planned train timetable changes for December 2018 postponed

UK train operators have decided to scale back their next timetable overhaul, which was planned for December 2018, to avoid a repeat of the rail disruption that took place in May following the introduction of a new schedule for Thameslink and Northern services. As a result, the timetable for Thames Ditton and Hampton Court Stations, both operated by South Western Railway, will remain unchanged.

In a statement, South Western Railway confirmed that it is still determined to introduce additional capacity on its services to Waterloo in spring 2019, but it is unlikely that this will directly benefit our local stations. We will continue to monitor the situation and press for improved services for commuters and other rail passengers.

## High Street Treasure Hunt

The second High Street Treasure Hunt held on 7 July was a great success. There was an excellent turn out and one lucky winner won £50 to spend in one of the High St shops.

## Holiday at Home club

All Saints Church ran a 'Holiday at Home' club for anyone retired and living in the community to meet new people and enjoy three days of activities without having to leave Weston Green! The programme included quizzes, board games, bingo, singing and exercise and even a Garden Party to round it off. The event was greatly enjoyed and the team hopes to run it again next summer.

## Secret Gardens success

The Secret Gardens of Thames Ditton 2018 was a great success. We raised £2,600 in total; £600 pounds went to the Garden of Remembrance with £2,000 going towards the Christmas lights.

## Planning

Articles regarding the current situation at Taggs Boatyard and the proposed redevelopment of the Jolly Boatman site can be found on pages 11 and 17 respectively

The application to build **Northwest of the Spinney on Weston Green Road** (2017/3414) next to the Tennis Club has been refused.

The application to build on the plot of **7 Embercourt Road and neighbouring gardens** (2017/4062) is awaiting decision.

## Farmers' Market – can you help?

Thames Ditton Farmers' Market is an important monthly event in the village. The Organising Committee is losing some members. Replacements are needed for these key roles, or it will be a struggle to keep it going in the long term.

If you have a few hours a month to commit to some important tasks such as: liaising with existing stallholders and actively seeking new ones, arranging publicity, booking of artists, crafters, entertainment, providing social media and website updates, assisting with the set up and take down of the market on the day, the organising committee would love to hear from you.

To find out more, please email: [info@thamesdittonfarmersmarket.com](mailto:info@thamesdittonfarmersmarket.com)

## Dates for your diary

### RA Open Meeting

Vera Fletcher Hall, September 25,  
November 6, 8pm

### Farmers' Market

George and Dragon car park  
9.30am-1.30pm Saturdays;  
22 September, 27 October, 24 November

### Weston Green Litter Pickers

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

### Thames Ditton Litter Pickers

Meet on the third Saturday of the month  
at the George & Dragon at 11am

### Bereavement Café - Just drop in

All Saints Church Hall, Weston Green  
10.30-12.00 first Tuesday of the month.

St Nicholas Church Hall, Thames Ditton  
10.30-12.00 third Wednesday of the month.



# Traveller incursions over the summer



Sadly, for many residents the summer was marred by a series of unauthorised traveller encampments in Longmead Road, Lower Green Recreation Ground and most recently (at time of writing) Long Ditton Recreation Ground. There have been similar incidents across Surrey and the rest of the country.

At our Open Meeting in June, Longmead Road residents were very upset, reporting that travellers were using the footpath and public space as a toilet and rubbish tip, as well as exhibiting anti-social and threatening behaviour.

By the time Long Ditton Recreation Ground was targeted removal procedures had speeded up and the group of caravans and vehicles was moved on within four days. However, that was not before the football pitches and cricket pitches had been deliberately damaged, locals had been threatened and stones thrown at passing cars. Local stores also reported numerous incidents of shoplifting.

After the Rec was vacated, as well as the usual litter picking the council required a specialist contractor with large grab-lorries to clear the area of rubbish and a specialist cleaning company to cleanse the area.

Throughout all these incidents residents reported feeling extremely vulnerable and unsupported by police. There was a pervading sense that a different set of rules were being applied to the travellers. More than one resident said *'it is not the fact of them being here that is so upsetting, it is the deliberate anti-social behaviour. It is one thing having caravans in place for a short while; it is another to be shouted at and threatened and to have to wade through piles of rubbish and human excrement.'*

Our Elmbridge councillors and our Surrey

County Councillor have been talking to residents and encouraging the authorities to do what they can, within the law, to address the situation.

On 16 August Elmbridge Borough Council was granted a (three month) protective injunction banning the setting up of unauthorised encampments and fly-tipping on all identified public land.

The Residents' Association has been in communication with our local MP, Dominic Raab, both by e-mail and by formal letter, to express the community's distress and frustration about the situation. The letter stresses residents' upset and frustration that nothing seems able to be done to protect their right to enjoy a peaceful private life and that they end up footing a substantial bill when the travellers move on. It asks that he presses for this problem to be dealt with at a national level.

The issue of unauthorised traveller encampments was raised in parliament in the spring and the letter asks Dominic Raab to let us know the status of the government review and what steps he can take to help bring the misery of unauthorised / illegal traveller encampments to an end. It says the community understands that nomadic life is not illegal and Gypsy, Roma, travellers have a basic right to this way of life. Our concerns are not raised through a lack of respect for a different culture but through the request for respect of the environment and the settled population. We hope that there will be resolution to these problems.

You can find the letter and his reply, along with any additional information on our website [residents-association.com](http://residents-association.com).

# All Saints Weston Lunch Club



All Saints Weston Lunch Club restarts on Wednesday 26 September after the August break. We welcome retired people, single and couples and if you would enjoy a tasty two-course meal (with appropriate beverage!) followed by tea or coffee and chocolates, plus plenty of company and conversation, then do come along. Most months we also have a guest speaker.

We meet on the last Wednesday of each month and our autumn dates are 26 September, 31 October and 28 November.

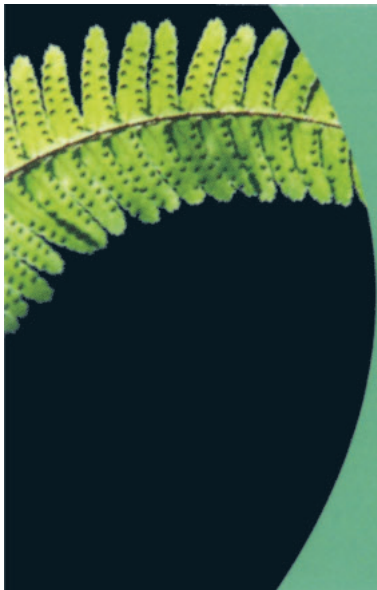
There is also a Christmas/New Year lunch in what can be rather a 'down' time between festivities. Lunches are held in the Hall alongside All Saints Church in Chestnut

Avenue – the white church by the pond – from 11.30 for 12.00 noon. There is no fixed charge but donations are appreciated on the day.

The club was delighted in July to receive an award from the Iris Simmons Award 2018 scheme for projects in the community; which gives huge encouragement to everyone involved both members and volunteers. So if you live within the parish of All Saints Weston or its near neighbourhood, why not join us and perhaps bring a friend?

For further information contact Val Atkinson on 020 8398 1117 or email [valantoni.atkinson@gmail.com](mailto:valantoni.atkinson@gmail.com)

**Val Atkinson**



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# Taggs Boatyard development



Many residents, particularly on the Island, Summer Road and Riversdale Road, will be aware of the construction taking place on the site of Taggs Boatyard and of a new planning application (2018/1695) for the site. There is concern that this current, retrospective, application, (intended to address changes in the new build compared to that permitted) effectively ignores the reasons for the council's refusal of an earlier application and introduces changes which contradict the intentions of the Appeal Inspector's decision.

This site has a lot of history: in recent years the Council has refused two major applications for this site. The last substantial application (2014/1600) was refused by the Council, at committee, in 2015. However, this application - for 9 flats, 19 car parking spaces, offices and a much smaller boatyard - was appealed by the applicants and permitted by the Planning Inspector after a public hearing.

There have been a number of further applications in respect of various conditions etc. since. However, following several complaints by residents concerned that the present build did not conform to the existing permission granted in 2015, the new owners of the site submitted a further planning application for retrospective permission to cover a number of changes. Concerns about the present build (not all of which are included in the new application) identified by residents include:

- Increased height of the building
- Building has been brought forward of the permitted position, thereby bringing it closer to the river.
- The 'emergency escape walkway' (provided

at the rear for the flats, because the area is at high risk of flooding) has been built to allow full length doors opening onto it, encouraging regular use of what was intended to be only used as an emergency escape route. This would impact on the privacy of neighbours in Riversdale Road and Summer Road.

- The Oriel windows on the first and second floors have been clear glazed rather than double glazed and additional windows have been observed in the build, which were not specified on the original application.
- Some residents have expressed concerns that the boathouse being constructed, will not be able to support a viable boatyard business. (considered by the Inspector to be an essential element of the previous application.)

The already agreed proposals will result in a significant building which would have a considerable, but in the Appeal Inspector's view largely favourable, impact on the immediate area. That application, had sought to address the reasons for refusal of an earlier application (**2013/2820**), by modifying the mass, bulk, scale, height and siting of the building. This present application appears to be 'rowing back' from that attempt to address to reduce the impact of the building.

Although the official closing date for comments has passed, any further letters will be added to the EBC planning website. They can be viewed by the planning officers drafting the report and the councillors who sit on East Area Planning Sub Committee; which is likely to take the decision on this application.

**Karen Randolph**



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# Update from Nick Darby, our Surrey County Councillor



It has been a busy three months.

You have already read about the traveller incursions across the county and Surrey County Council continues to liaise with all their Boroughs and Districts to achieve a consistent approach. It concerns me that the police did not use the powers they already have in this instance. I share the overwhelming feeling that something needs to be done and the RA is pressing our MP Dominic Raab on the matter.

Back in July, a diesel spill by Thames Ditton station closed the road while Surrey Highways resurfaced. This was quickly followed by a gas leak in the High Street, closing that too. Then, almost at the same time, Thames Water decided to call an “emergency” to deal with a water leak on Watts Road opposite the George and Dragon. This was first reported to Thames Water last October and followed up by me since then. Works abandoned for 24 hours, like the gas works, cause much frustration, especially with inaccurate “Road Closed” signs. Current rules mean Surrey can’t intervene. That needs to change and I will work on it. There are similar issues on Copsem Lane beyond Esher.

I met with local residents about secondary school places in Elmbridge. Due to its success Hinchley Wood is heavily oversubscribed. All Elmbridge secondary schools are Academies so set their own admissions criteria which follow national guidelines. I then met with Surrey officers who coordinate admissions, to gain a better understanding.

I attended a presentation of new proposals by the developers of the Jolly Boatman Hampton Court Station site. (See article on



page 17. I have significant concerns about the effect on Hampton Court itself, as well as parking and highway safety issues. A planning application is due shortly and I am liaising with my Surrey colleague from East Molesey, and with Borough Councillors.

Another meeting was at Heathrow to hear their detailed proposals for the third runway. Detailed they may be in relation to exactly where it will be, the housing they need to buy out, and compensation packages. However, the proposals for related transport links are sketchy at best. Everything - for instance new rail links from the south and west - needs to be in and operational before the third runway comes into use. I hear Surrey was ‘duped’ in respect of Terminal 5, so nothing less than an enforceable planning condition would be acceptable this time.

There are real air quality issues if the transport infrastructure isn’t in place. It’s not just cleaner aircraft, that is needed but fewer clogged roads and less nose-to-tail and stationary traffic. Our group at County

Hall did a press release on this and I did an interview on BBC Surrey radio (104.6). There are similarities both with HS2 and the extra housing needed in the south east. Each needs proper coordination of related infrastructure, and a strategic regional planned approach.

I hesitate to mention parking but...you may remember back in January the result of the parking review (started in 2016). It was to have been fully implemented by the end of April. However, despite pressure from me, the Surrey parking team clearly has difficulty persuading their contractors to finish the job; the double yellow lines due at the end of St Leonards Road by the mini roundabout have yet to be installed. This is an appalling advertisement for local government. Surrey undeservedly gets a bad press in many areas, but this is not one of them. The delay is inexcusable. I apologise. However, I am

pleased to say that, finally, the cycle rack at Thames Ditton Station is in place!

If by now you are not quietly dozing I have also had meetings covering overhanging foliage, the state of various pavements, parking up to the edge of residential roads, Claygate Lane school cycling, Costa deliveries, the state of Surrey Highways, Surrey's vision for the future, local infrastructure, the number of school places, the relationship between planning and parking, school crossings, extra zebra crossings, lighting, and this week possible new equipment at the Mercers Close Community Centre. I cannot always make a difference, but I can and will listen and follow through. If you have any concerns, please let me know. I am delighted to be able to work with our borough councillors, Tricia and Karen and the recently elected Caroline.

**Nick Darby**

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# A blooming success story



Tucked away on a shelf in the Secret Garden florist in Thames Ditton High Street, the eagle-eyed shopper may have spotted the silver medal which was awarded to young florist Laura Spackman at this year's Chelsea Flower Show.

Laura has always loved all things creative; she is a talented photographer and artist. As a youngster she spent Saturdays and school holidays in her grandmother's floristry business in Bedfont. Her grandmother and her mother (also a florist) realised she had flair and encouraged her to train at Merrist Wood College, the leading college training florists. She has just completed her level 5 and is now proud to be a Master Florist.

Her course tutor saw her talent and encouraged her to apply to Chelsea Flower Show to create a floral display. Just getting there is a challenge - florists compete in heats throughout the country with only the top 15 selected to display at the show. After an anxious few months the news came that Laura had been selected and her task was daunting, she needed to create a floral throne, of which two thirds must comprise flowers/foilage.

She had just five weeks to source ideas and choose her 'look'. Her father created the base of the throne; the wholesale supplier to Secret Garden florist, Tom Brown, sponsored her and supplied the flowers. The upholstery was comprised of laurel leaves and Laura wove china grasses to make the cushion. Helen, owner of the Secret Garden, sourced beechwood for the back which Laura interwove with willow to make a frame.

Her floral scheme was a spectacular combination of white (orchids, eucharis

and campanula); green (amaranthus and carnations): and yellow (calla, roses, gloriosa and crespida) interwoven with delphiniums, hydrangea and nigella.



*Laura and her Chelsea medal*

Judging took place on the first day of the show. Each entrant had an envelope next to it but only a very few had an award. Laura said: "I couldn't quite believe I had won a silver medal at Chelsea at my first attempt. It took a long time to sink in but now that it has I am very proud."

We are lucky to have such a talented florist in the village; she is bursting with ideas and knows which flowers complement each other. At this time of year she recommends burnt oranges and mustard yellows and also loves cherises/lime green and orange combinations. She is always happy to help you achieve your look.

Many congratulations Laura!

**Caroline James**

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## autumn exhibition

New work by Jenny Greenland,  
Teresa Lawton and Nadia Day.



**view**  
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# New plans for the Jolly Boatman and Hampton Court station



Developers image: Jolly Boatman site

Alexpo recently held a public consultation event for draft planning proposals and approached Elmbridge Borough Council for initial thoughts, see [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning-application-number-2018/2065](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning-application-number-2018/2065). Public consultation documents, can be found at [www.hamptoncourtconsultation.co.uk/exhibitions](http://www.hamptoncourtconsultation.co.uk/exhibitions). You can leave public comment on both sites. A full planning application is expected in autumn 2018.

The Thames Ditton and Weston Green Resident's Association and this magazine does not normally publish the opinion of one organisation regarding planning, but prefers instead to make its own representation. However, as this site is of such national significance and interest locally we have asked the Hampton Court Rescue Campaign (HCRC) to provide an analysis of the new proposals.

## **Hampton Court Rescue Campaign Response to Alexpo Consultation 'Jolly Boatman' & the Hampton Court Railway Station Site (Summarised to key points)**

### **Background**

In 2008 Gladedale submitted a planning application for a comprehensive development. Although planning approval was granted, the Gladedale scheme was not implemented "because the cost of access arrangements made it unviable".

Alexpo acquired the site in October 2014. Its scheme is broadly similar to the Gladedale scheme but with the omission of the hotel on the 'Boatman' site. The Alexpo scheme also has a much smaller car park and revised access road.

## Site Characteristics

The site has a number of challenging characteristics which have frustrated a long line of developers:

- The need to protect the setting of Hampton Court Palace.
- A sensitive refurbishment of the locally listed Hampton Court Railway Station.
- Requirement for safe access for cars, buses, pedestrians, commuters and cyclists and the guarantee of safe transit for visitors to Hampton Court Palace where visitor numbers have increased from 500,000 to the current level of 1 million plus.
- Build costs for underground car parks on flood plains are prohibitive.
- Increased demand for affordable housing.
- The increased risk of flooding.
- Increases in construction costs and soft residential values.

These characteristics have substantive legacy implications which the planning authority and developer must address. HCRC has confidence that Elmbridge will ensure that:

- The setting of Hampton Court Palace is enhanced.
- There is a positive impact on parking and the movement of vehicles to and from the site and on surrounding roads.
- The site will accommodate exponential growth in visitor numbers to Hampton Court Palace.
- The car park size and affordable housing ratios are not compromised to facilitate a scheme with low viability.
- The objectives set out in Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) 1999 Planning Brief stand.

**HCRC assessment of the proposed Alexpo scheme:**

## Car Parking

The existing Network Rail car park has 204 spaces, whereas Alexpo's scheme proposes a single, additional car park space. The new 205 space car park must cater for rail-users, visitors to Hampton Court Palace, 97 residential apartments, a 72 bed hotel and retail units. This compares with Gladedale's smaller scheme of 66 apartments, a 46 bed hotel, retail units and a care home, which the Planning Inspector assessed as needing 287 parking spaces.

HCRC is aware that the planning authority is encouraging less reliance on cars, however post 2008 there is very limited evidence of a substantive modal shift in the use of cars and there is no justification for a larger development with a reduced car park of only 205 spaces.

Our understanding is that the proposed car park size is driven by the developer's profit aspirations and does not reflect current demand, or any reasonable assessment into the future. For these reasons and with reference to the Planning Inspector's earlier report we believe that the proposed parking provision has no realistic chance of being acceptable to the planning authority. If this proposal was to be approved, it could be challenged in the courts.

The inevitable impact of inadequate parking will be further congestion and intolerable overspill into East Molesey streets, a reduction in rail passengers who use Hampton Court as a commuter station, and fewer visitors travelling to Hampton Court Palace.

## 'Jolly Boatman' Site

Alexpo's scheme reduces the building footprint on the Boatman site from the 2008 scheme, which HCRC applauds. The inclusion of some open space is also a positive element, but we regret the use and widening of the existing Park Maintenance

Service Road as the primary access route to the site, as it will divorce the open space from the river and Cigarette Island Park and will be visually and functionally disappointing. We therefore urge the developer to consider locating the Park Servicing/Primary Access Road nearer to the station building.

We note that Alexpo's proposed gable-end extends onto the Boatman site, 13 meters beyond the building-line of the current station and we therefore encourage the developer to reduce its encroachment onto the Boatman site, as the projecting wing reduces the opportunity for relocating the access road and impinges on the public open space to link with Cigarette Island Park.

There are opportunities to adjust the positions of some elements of the development. For example; by moving the apartment blocks further east (as per the approved 2008 scheme) and by small reductions in the gaps between blocks together with a smaller gable. A combination of these strategies could reasonably adhere to the known building line of the current station footprint.

HCRC's key objective is to protect the unique setting of historic Hampton Court Station's relationship to Hampton Court Palace with a seamless integration of the Boatman land to Cigarette Island Park. Central to this plan is the preference for 'soft edge' landscaping on the Elmbridge-side embankment. This fits with the adopted plans of Historic Royal Palaces and the Thames Landscape Strategy.

### **Pedestrian Safety and Access Road**

Given the ever-increasing popularity of Hampton Court Palace, pedestrian safety at the station must be at the forefront of any scheme. The new plans for the car park adopt the current Park Maintenance Access Road. Its entrance will be immediately

south of Hampton Court Bridge and take vehicles across the Boatman site, regulated by a pedestrian crossing located in very close proximity to, and parallel with the highway. The bridge viewing platform turret creates a dangerous blind spot for vehicles turning left into the site when approaching from the Richmond side and creates a high risk to pedestrians using the bridge.

Alexpo is proposing a signalled crossing to manage the conflict between cars and pedestrians here, but based only on the expectation of relatively few vehicle movements. However, the majority of pedestrians leaving the trains at Hampton Court Station move forward to Hampton Court Palace in waves. Experience suggests that motorists turning sharp left from Hampton Court Bridge will have limited visibility and insufficient space and time to avoid pedestrians. Moreover, we believe that many visitors will ignore the signals at this location, creating unpredictable conflicts with cars. HCRC encourages the developer to explore alternative road and pedestrian layouts that increase visibility and minimise the foreseeable dangers.

### **Cycle Parking**

Any initiative to reduce car usage must offer a significant increase in cycle parking provision. HCRC considers that passenger cycle parking must be accommodated at a higher level than the current usage.

### **Drawings and Visuals**

Currently, the drawings and visuals made available by Alexpo do not provide interested parties or the public with sufficient information to properly assess the scheme. There are no details for heights annotated on any buildings, no upper-floor plans at this stage and many of the colour blocks do not have a use identified. Moreover, we would welcome visuals and elevations of



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the four apartment blocks as viewed from Hampton Court Palace and Cigarette Island. Computer-generated images of the views from the Palace should correctly reflect the seasonal flora and fauna.

### **Development Bulk and Mass**

The initial plans appear to indicate the overall bulk and mass of Alexpo's proposals have been increased significantly from the 2008 scheme. This will negatively impact the locally-listed station. To preserve East Molesey's heritage, it is important that the height and mass of the apartment blocks and hotel do not overwhelm the scale of the Victorian station buildings.

The current proposals exceed the advised 3 floors + roof storey. The three apartment blocks facing the Palace rise a full 5 storeys and the new hotel proposed for Hampton Court Way will be an additional storey higher than the 2008 approved scheme. On height alone the development is categorically overdevelopment.

### **Riverside Block**

The complete form is 4 storeys, and even with the fourth storey appearing to be part of the roof form, it creates a strong horizontal eaves-line on the south elevation which sits behind and above the station building, dominating what should be the focal landmark building at the end of a recognised vista.

### **Car park/Cigarette Island facing Blocks**

The sections facing Cigarette Island Park will be a full 5 storeys - this being one storey higher than the 2008 approved scheme. The lightweight top storey does go some way to reducing the bulk of these structures but the density and raised ground floor will create a very overpowering built form that must surpass and break the 15.5m height limit which taken together with the hotel block,

will create a canyon effect.

### **Hotel/Hampton Court Way Block**

The visuals present a 4 storey rectangular block with a partial pitched roof and we assume a partial 5th floor which appears to contain roof top plant and machinery. The developer should consider stepping down the building height to 3 storeys including a roof-form nearest to the station forecourt.

The plan layout suggests that the hotel block either touches the station's existing second canopy over the second platform, or that the canopy is removed. This canopy forms part of the pair of original station canopies and is integral to the historic station as a covered exit route to the west. The building footprint should be moved away from these canopies (currently not shown on the visuals) to ensure that the station survives in its entirety.

### **In summary**

We believe that a better design of access road and a smaller scheme that do not encroach on the Boatman site are reasonable demands. We question whether any developer can overcome the inherent site characteristics and provide sufficient parking and meaningful levels of affordable housing.

Our view is that Alexpo is no closer to having a scheme which can be implemented than the long line of previous developers. Furthermore, residents would not entertain a scheme which had a negative long term legacy.

Given the complex legacy issues with this site we believe that it would be a disaster to use the scheme to attempt to drive the modal shift in car usage and we do not believe that any argument for low viability should be used to justify lower than acceptable ratios of affordable housing.

HCRC is not opposed to a realistic, sensitive development to reflect the site's unique setting. We would look favourably on Alexpo reviewing the current scheme and giving

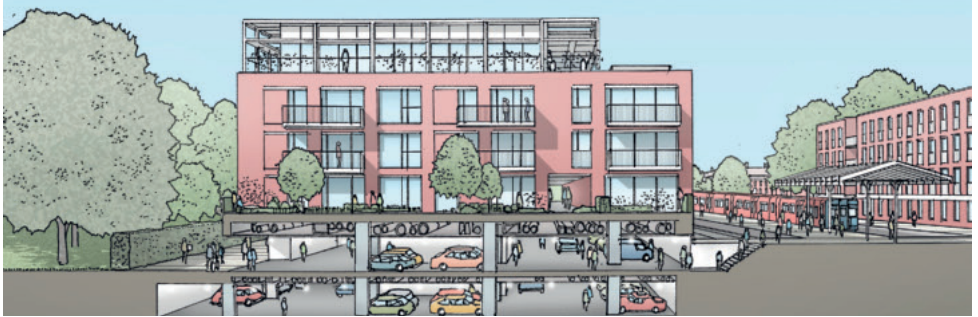
consideration to other possibilities.

The challenge to achieve a sensitive, high quality development on the Hampton Court Railway Station and Boatman sites has lasted for over twenty years. For the last five years the Boatman has been boarded up and suffers from increasing ugly dilapidation. However now is not the time for Elmbridge Council and local residents to be seduced by the prospect of regeneration at the expense of a poor development with a negative

legacy. The enduring maxim that ‘anything is better than this’ must not be allowed to stand. Alexpo’s consultation is a welcome opportunity to advance a new sympathetic scheme, and to indicate the limitations that our council and local residents are willing to consider.

The unabridged version of the HCRC response is available at: <http://www.hamptoncourtresearchcampaign.com>

**HCRC Committee**



*Developers image: car park proposal.*

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# The 1968 floods – schoolboys’ memories



*By the Fountain Roundabout - Thames Ditton*

It is somewhat ironic that I should be penning this short memory of events 50 years ago with the country in the grip of a drought. By publication date however, we could be back to the situation we were in during September 1968, when rain fell in record proportions. Who knows?

The year 1968 was a memorable one in world history with the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. In the UK we witnessed the last steam engine run on British Railways and the start of Dad’s Army on TV – oh, and a very wet summer. In fact, the summer of 1968 was the wettest in south east England since 1931 and in some areas the rain that fell over September 14 and 15 was the highest recorded amount for 100 years. Flows on the rivers Wey and Mole were also the highest recorded at the time.

We had witnessed wet weekends before

the one on September 14/15 1968, but I can’t recall one where the rain seemed to be ceaseless. On the Sunday evening, I was in a Morris Minor owned by a friend and accompanied by another couple of mates returning from some jaunt. Having passed through Thames Ditton High Street and into Watts Road, we were met by an extremely large puddle extending from close to the George and Dragon nearly up to the library.

Any mature and sensible bunch of people would have turned round and found a different route but we were young and fearless. Within about 30 seconds we were watching water coming through the bottom of the doors and listening to a starter motor failing to do its job. The car was pushed home to its destination just off Angel Road in the pouring rain. Luckily, as the youngest and smallest member of the group, I was allowed to steer while the others did the work.

Even after witnessing the Watts Road flooding on Sunday night, we had no idea just how bad things would be by the following morning.

I set out for school, a little late as I recall, heading to what is now Esher College, then Surbiton Grammar School. On the way I was met by another boy who informed me that the school had been closed due to flooding. This seemed far too good to be true but gradually the news was confirmed by word of mouth (yes, this is how it worked before Facebook and Twitter).

What was to be a seriously harrowing and unpleasant time for many people, particularly in East Molesey, was two weeks of extended summer holiday and fun for 15 and 16 year old boys.

In Thames Ditton, the High Street flooding was at its deepest at the roundabout by Picton House and quite impassable for motor vehicles. Bikes were the preferred method of travel for us, although I do recall a pal of mine coming a cropper on his in the High Street and being completely submerged. Given the fact that the water would have been contaminated, it's a wonder we didn't succumb to serious illness.

Hampton Court Way was a sight to behold - pretty much a river from Weston Green to Hampton Court Station. The only method of travel was by boat. I vividly remember the house on the corner of Summer Road and Hampton Court way, on the Molesey side, with water up to the first floor window.

By some miracle the Thames never actually flooded: it was the Mole and Ember rivers that caused all the problems.

In fact, the waters started to recede within a few days of the disastrous weekend but, for those directly affected, the big clear up was to take months and in some cases, years.

It was clear that action had to be taken and the Lower Mole Flood Alleviation Scheme was built following the 1968 floods. This included more than 3km of earth banks and, in the 1970s, the river Ember was widened. The enlarged river now takes a significant proportion of the water flow from the Mole. See Thames Ditton Today summer edition 2017, page 15 for more information.

This all took a little bit of fun away as it meant that the ford (always known as 'the splash') along Summer Road was removed and now there is only a footbridge across the river.

### **Graham Cooke – Thames Ditton**



*Out and about with a bike*





*The way to travel*

At the time of the flood I lived in Elm Tree Avenue, Weston Green. The water came up through the drains very rapidly and by lunch time we had about a foot of water in the house. The Hampton Court Way was flooded from the Ember Court roundabout all the way through to Weston Green. Woodside Avenue was flooded, as was Lime Tree Avenue.

Despite all this our milkman carried on

delivering through the floods in his battery powered milk float. He actually finished his round that day, but did not return until the area dried out.

I got the canoes out and went up the Hampton Court Way but ran out of water at the roundabout. Luckily the army trucks now attending the scene provided me with large enough waves to surf on. I also ran a delivery service to neighbours for milk



*Claygate Lane*

and papers from the local shops. The clear up process was appalling - all carpets and floor coverings were destroyed, all the white goods scrapped, the cars all needed full servicing as the water lifted the oils out of the engines and gearboxes. The house could not be decorated for at least three months (and it should have been longer) to allow the plaster

and wood to dry out. Four houses down from me they put a hot air dryer under the stairs to try to dry it out - and unfortunately set the house alight!

The whole experience was quite extraordinary.

**Doug Griffith – Weston Green**



*Thames Ditton High Street*



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# Going wild at the Co-Op



*Wildflower meadow at the Co-Op*

So much can be achieved when a community works together.

In January I spoke with the manager of the Co-Op on Hampton Court Way with a view to creating a wild flower meadow in the car park. I also hoped that we could improve the flower bed situated immediately in front of the store.

Shanker, the manager, fully supported the idea, but we needed help to realise it. A local resident had already volunteered but I was also looking to involve some young people...enter Zoe Newton, the leader of the 1st Weston Green Scout Group Explorers. Zoe was keen to be involved and said that the work would enable the Explorers to complete the community service part of their Chief Scout Platinum Award.

Finding a suitable date proved difficult but plans were eventually put into place. Suitable plants were agreed, tools were found and several teenagers were 'straining at the bit.' On the morning of the planned

work, the snow arrived! Everything had to be put on hold as the soil was far too hard to dig, and any planting would have not survived the cold weather.

Another date was fixed and the scouts were ready to get started. Unfortunately, the plants for the flower bed were delivered prior to the fixed date and when the store manager was on leave! As a result they were planted without any soil preparation or weeding. The end result is not satisfactory but plans to address the problem are in the pipeline.

However, the plan for the wild flower meadow went ahead and a small but very enthusiastic group of scouts began to prepare the ground. It was extremely hard work as the ground was akin to concrete, and full of weeds and debris. They did an excellent job under the guidance of Zoe Newton and Richard Wheeler, who many readers will know as our local "Lawnenvy" man. I was very grateful that Elmbridge Borough Council's Leisure and Countryside

Team had provided us with packets of wild flowers. Several Flanders poppy seeds were also planted in support of the Royal British Legion's National Centenary Poppy Campaign to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the First World War.

All went well and the seeds began to germinate. Unfortunately, there followed the driest few weeks on record and the heat has taken its toll on the wild flowers. However, we are hopeful that, should they not revive this year; the area will give us a wonderful display in years to come.

The flowers should attract bees and butterflies. Members of the Men in Sheds project, based at the Thames Ditton Community Centre, are busy making a 'Bug Hotel' which will be installed in the meadow.

The interior of the Bug Hotel will be 'furnished' by the Weston Green Girl

Guiding Group in the Autumn. The Rainbows, Brownies, and Guides will all be involved and I am delighted that so many young people will be learning about community service and also the joys and importance of supporting wildlife and looking after the environment.

**Tannia Shipley**



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# Lower Green community Centre back in action



*The Mayor of Elmbridge and Joanna Sanson (second and third from left) with councillors at the opening*

The Lower Green community centre has always been at the heart of the Lower Green community. Unfortunately last year it was forced to close due to various issues. Now Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) is in partnership with Surrey Community Action (SCA) to get it back on its feet, and have recruited a Lower Green Development Worker to oversee this project.

EBC have invested £200,000 into refurbishment including works on the roof, mechanical, electrical and fire stopping equipment, and the installation of a brand new community café.

EBC and SCA want the centre to be a welcoming place for all members of the community. We have been finding out what residents would like to see, and putting

together a varied programme of activities. We hope to recruit and train a diverse team of new trustees to take over the running of the community centre from April 2019. Several people have come forward, with a range of skills and backgrounds.

The Lower Green Development Worker has met with residents to find out what people would like to see running from the centre. Ideas have included: sports and exercise groups for both children and adults, a slimming club, scouts and brownies, computer courses and a youth club.

Over the summer holidays, we have been running sessions for families to introduce the new centre. On July 14 we had a family picnic, and the Mayor of Elmbridge cut the ribbon to re-open the centre. In July we had

a fun session making a bug hotel, and creepy crawly arts and crafts. In August we had our first Lower Green Summer Fete, including information stalls from Elmbridge charities and other organisations, vintage jewellery making, arts and crafts and play from Shout!, cakes for sale, and a free roll and dessert for everyone from Ma and Pa Larkin.

Also running in August was our children's cookery group, which we hope will continue weekly after school in September, as well as football and boxing sessions for teens.

We hope to pilot our community café two afternoons a week from the autumn, and are looking for volunteers to help us serve snacks, coffee and light lunches to the community.

We have several groups ready to start in the autumn, including the return of Lower Green Football Club, pilates and yoga

sessions for adults, brownies and rainbows, youth football and coffee mornings for both parents and over 60s. (Girl Guiding are currently recruiting a volunteer leadership team to lead both Brownies and Rainbows sessions on a Wednesday evening.)

Finally, we have had some brand new signs installed to attract people to the building, and the community have voted for our new logo. SCA will be training our new trustees in October and November.

For more information and updates please see our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/lowergreencommunitycentre/>

If you are interested in volunteering, setting up groups or getting involved in any other way, please contact Joanna Sansom, Lower Green Development Worker, on [joannas@surreyca.org.uk](mailto:joannas@surreyca.org.uk).

**Joanna Sansom**

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# Out and about with the Environment Agency



*The EA team (Vince right, Peter left) meeting with the Home Park Rangers on the riverside*

We have been lucky during this long hot summer to live by the River Thames. At times Albany Reach has looked like the French Riviera with families sunbathing, splashing and swimming away the summer.

If you are a regular down by the river you will have probably seen the distinctive Environment Agency (EA) boats on the water - you may even have wondered what they actually do. So one particularly warm morning I met up with the EA Waterways Team to find out.

An EA launch is often moored at Molesey Lock so I met with Vince Hoar, a Waterways Officer and Technical Officer Peter Cobb at the Molesey Lock café opposite. This popular café serves freshly made goodies in a welcoming garden by the river, and

all profits go to charities including Cancer Research and the British Heart Foundation.

First things first: I am issued with a life jacket and shown how to fit it correctly before having a chat with Steve the lock keeper to catch up on the river gossip. I found out through the course of the day that there is a real community around the Thames and news travels quickly along the watercourse, possibly by river jungle drums

Following pre-patrol checks on the patrol launch and safety equipment we set off to check the two weirs at Molesey Lock.

The EA is the navigation authority for the non-tidal Thames and maintains 45 locks and their adjacent weirs along the course of the Thames. These regular checks make sure any obstructions, defects or other



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issues are picked up early. The Waterways team combines a number of different skills and are able to deal with some of the minor repairs themselves. Bigger issues go to the Operations Team.

The team was keen to stress to readers the importance of making simple routine checks before going out on the water. This can avoid breakdowns and if the worst happens and you need your safety equipment you know that all is ship shape. This is often the subject of conversation when they have to rescue stranded boaters!

Downstream of Hampton Court we stopped outside Hampton Court Palace to talk to James the Home Park Ranger and check there were no issues with the moorings or the river.

As we travelled on downstream the team was checking the banks and the river for anything unusual, whether obstructions in the water or boats that had been reported to the team which is responsible for licence compliance. All boats using the Thames must be registered and have insurance. Most powered craft also need a Boat Safety Certificate. The revenue from boat licenses is important to help maintain the river infrastructure and the process seeks to ensure that boats on the river are water worthy.

The patrol launch is equipped to check boat registration details on line as the team is out and about. I asked about some of the scruffier boats that have appeared on the river and caused concern for local residents. The team assured me that while they may look untidy some do have the necessary licence. If any boat does not, the team will take action. At the time of writing there is one boat due to be moved from Cigarette Island, however the owner says it is currently 'aground'.

Managing moorings along the river is a

complex business. Different parts of the river bank are the responsibility of different agencies; some are owned and managed by local government, some by private owners or institutions and a just a few by the EA.

I was interested to learn that structures in or over the water such as jetties (known as accommodations) also need to have EA approval and be registered. This is to control what is happening along the banks of the river and to ensure that structures do not cause problems for other river users.

We continued downstream through Kingston, past Trowlock Island to Teddington Lock which is staffed 24 hours a day and gives access to the tidal Thames. While supplies were delivered, there was time for a welcome cup of tea and a chat with the duty lock keepers. Once more finding out news and information to help keep the river operational.

Our time inspecting the river was accompanied by some of its wonderful wildlife, from the darting kingfisher to the stock-still heron; from regal swans with their cygnets to the busy little coots and moorhens.

There was always a friendly wave exchanged with passing boaters and a chat with one or two. Vince and Peter reminded me of bobbies on the beat (remember those days?) or our local PCSOs, taking the time to get to know the river and the people on it so that they know what is happening where and can take action if they need to.

As they delivered me back to Molesey Lock Peter got ready for a bit of lock maintenance they had noticed earlier in the week and Vince prepared to track down an unlicensed boat that had been reported as causing a collision.

**Libby MacIntyre**



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# The power of the garden



*Alison Gourlay, Fund Raising Manager with medal*


Despite the sometimes stifling heat of the summer, our passion for all things ‘garden’ continued unabated. As well as providing an environment for relaxation or pleasure, this snapshot of local stories shows how the garden has the power to give us a lot more than that.

## **Sharing and caring**

The Esher and Molesey Garden Society is a local group which worked with a national charity when it entered the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show ‘flower box garden’ for the second year running and won the Silver Gilt Medal. Designed by Nick Mills, the society collaborated with The Neuro

Foundation to use the garden as a means to promoting a message of sharing - through its depiction of a typical informal garden scene where seeds and plants would have been passed between friends and neighbours - and caring, by providing an opportunity to promote awareness of Neurofibromatosis.

Karen Cockburn, Charity Director of The Neuro Foundation said: ‘This garden has drawn a lot of interest at the show as it invites you in. Its garden bench set amongst the flowers of an English Country Garden has encouraged people to stop by for a while and hear more about Neurofibromatosis, which is a genetic disorder that causes



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the Farmers' Market on  
22<sup>nd</sup> September 2018*

tumour growth in the nerve tissue. People are largely unaware of it and yet it is more common than Hereditary Muscular Dystrophy, Huntingdon's Disease and Cystic Fibrosis combined.'

The primary focus of the charity is to develop and fund a team of specialist Neurofibromatosis Nurses, who provide crucial support to patients and families and you can find out more at <https://www.nfauk.org/>

## Connecting and protecting

'Elmbridge Men in Sheds', based in the Thames Ditton Centre for the Community, opposite the library, worked with Hampton Hill Primary School to make and paint wooden planters which the children planted up as their contribution to the RHS Growing Community Garden. The Community Garden was a key feature of the RHS Hampton Court Flower Show this year with its display of edibles, plants that attract beneficial pollinators, and lots of ideas for recycling and upcycling to promote sustainable gardening.



*Men in sheds and Hampton Hill Primary children  
Credit RHS & Suzanne Plunkett*

The Royal Horticultural Society promotes community gardening as a great way to connect with others and improve the place where you live. If you don't have a garden to call your own, community gardening means you can share the benefits of tending a green space, while helping others and the environment. Thames Ditton in Bloom is a good example of that.

## Mystery and Belonging

The Secret Gardens of Thames Ditton enjoyed another successful year, with five new gardens to delight those wandering the streets of Thames Ditton in search of its clandestine nooks and crannies. A legacy of the late Thames Ditton resident Russell Denoon Duncan, who came up with the idea when discussing how to raise money for the Lime Tree Christmas lights. Secret Gardens has been alternating between Thames Ditton and Weston Green on a biennial basis since 2012.

Libby and Andy, who host the tea and cakes in their garden at Maybury Lodge on the High Street, said: 'This event really fosters a sense of belonging in the village, as visitors share the delight of seeing different planting arrangements or simply enjoy an afternoon out in the company of others over a cup of tea. Children enjoy it too, many delighted in finding the different nursery rhyme characters in Jane Neild's themed garden on Giggs Hill Green.'

For the garden owners it gives them an opportunity to share their love for their garden with others. Andy said: 'They invest a lot of time and effort into their gardens and they value the chance to share it with others as their contribution to our community. They meet lots of people and get to learn from each other. We were delighted that relative newcomers to Thames Ditton joined in and said they met more people in four hours than in the previous 18 months that they had lived here'.

The secret gardens range from 2/3 of an acre to a pocket sized garden that people can peer over the fence to look at, so with two years' notice perhaps it's time for you to be involved?

**Julie Royce**



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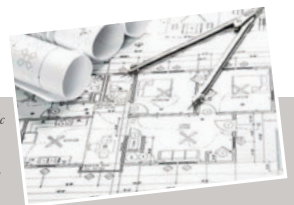


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# The Speers and the Sandys – a Dynasty of Taxmen Part 6



## Hannibal Speer

When Hannibal Sandys took up his position as principal inheritor under his grandfather William Speer II's complicated Trust, changing his surname to Speer as the latter required, he had just turned 45 years old. His father, Hannibal Sandys II, had died a bankrupt attorney in May 1835, when young Hannibal was aged nine (I don't have a copy of the death certificate, but this untimely death might have been related to the stress of bankruptcy).

The young Hannibal's mother Cecilia née Speer relied on her father William and subsequently the Trust for support: at death her own effects were valued at just £1000. Along with his younger sister, Mary Katherine, and brother Edward Frederick, he had been brought up partly at 26, The Grove, Boltons Court, Brompton which had been in the Speer family since the time of his great-grandfather William Speer I. They maintained connections with Thames Ditton and at the time of the 1841 census Cecilia and offspring were staying at Giggs Hill Green.

The connections of William, who had followed his father into the Treasury as a Revenue Clerk and like him had risen to the top of the Treasury's clerical tree, had procured positions in the Revenue for William's unmarried son Edward Speer and later for young Hannibal and Edward Frederick Sandys, the fourth generation of Revenue men. By 1849 the Stamp Office and the Board of Taxes had amalgamated with the Board of Excise to form the Inland Revenue at Somerset House, and Edward Frederick worked there, while from 1847 to at least 1866 we find Hannibal listed with the Revenue in Ireland, and presumably thereafter also at Somerset House.

Hannibal may have had postings but didn't permanently reside in Ireland: the 1851 census, for example, lists him as a Treasury Clerk with his mother and siblings at an address in Sidney Street, Chelsea. In the 1861 census he and Edward were visiting his aunt Maria on Weston Green Road. Both were listed as clerks of the Inland Revenue, Somerset House. By 1871 he was at 26 the Grove, Boltons Court, Brompton with his



*Somerset house*

sister Mary, a cook and a housekeeper. This remained his main address at census times through to 1911 (in 1891 he was visiting his brother at Winterdown Lodge on Weston Green Road).

Unsurprisingly, his inheritance under the Trust also seems to have ended his employment, for after 1871 he is described in censuses variously as a land-owner, as a retired government official and 'living on own means,' statuses which also described his brother.

## Hannibal in Thames Ditton

After his aunt Maria's death he assumed the title of Lord of the Manor of Weston (his brother may have been Lord jointly, for the manor belonged to the Estate in Trust, and its records list Maria, Hannibal and Edward together as 'Lords of the Manor'). We may assume that he began to spend time during the summers at West End Lodge on Station Road, which had become the Manor House on the Rev Wilfred Speer's accession to the title, known today as the Old Manor House - 'old' in the sense of 'former.' After he came into the Trust at the beginning of 1872 Hannibal was listed electorally both as property owner at the Manor House (then coming under Epsom for electoral purposes) and at his primary residence in Brompton (Kensington and Chelsea); until 1894 and thereafter, when he appeared at the Manor House, Thames Ditton, on the Western Surrey electoral roll. By then he was 67.

Hannibal never married - one of several descendants of William Speer who remained single despite their comfortable lives under the Trust. His sister Maria generally lived with him, and after inheriting he added a butler to his cook and his housemaid. Hannibal's tenure under the Trust, with its very considerable

landholdings in and beyond Thames Ditton, saw the area burgeoning with new middle-class commuters to London as well as local growth in industry and civic activity. He was well placed to enter into arrangements with local builders who began to develop housing in this area, in Esher, and down toward Epsom - among which Church Walk, where my own house was built around 1888 as one of a pair of cottages for Hannibal's gardener and under-gardener. The Trust's wealth must have ballooned.

Like many who have means but no progeny of their own, Hannibal diverted some wealth to the good of the community, hedged around as it was by the Trust. The list of public projects he supported is substantial, and many of them are still tangible reminders of his contribution:

In 1879, Hannibal had the Drinking Fountain erected at his expense, at the intersection of the High Street and St Leonard's Road, on what is believed to be this former site of the village stocks. He presented the Fountain to the parishioners on its official opening on 24 June and set up the Drinking Fountain Association to maintain it, to which he subscribed annually.

He participated in funding for the Molesey Sewerage Defence Fund, serving on its committee in the late 1870s-early 1880s together with his brother (Treasurer), E.F. Burmester of The Elms and C J Corbett of Ember Court.

To retain the sloping ground along the Basing Field side of Station Road, he had a long low wall built in place of a hedge there, much of which is still in existence (with a plaque latterly restored by the Residents' Association).

In 1882 the Thames Ditton Lawn Tennis Club was established, Hannibal subsequently making land available from Manor Farm on a 99-year lease. This



became a knotty issue a century later when the Speer Estate Trust wanted to develop the land and the community wanted to buy it for sporting use. As I have no access to the administrative details of this family Trust I can only suppose that William Speer stipulated that landholdings should not be sold.

In about 1885 Hannibal presented the parish with the large rectangle of land between what is now Colets Health Club (and was then fields) and Church Walk, to extend the cemetery area when the old churchyard was full.



*Vera Fletcher Hall erected by Hannibal Speer*

Then in 1887 Hannibal had the village hall, now known as the Vera Fletcher Hall, erected on his own land (part of Manor Farm) and at his own expense for the perpetual use and enjoyment of the village. It was the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, marking her return to public view after years of isolation following the death of Albert, and many benefactors were building village halls throughout the country to celebrate the occasion. Hannibal was one of the first trustees of the Trust established to ensure its maintenance.

In 1892 the golf course on the Manor of Weston's commons was registered as a sporting club. Brian McDermott, then of

Weston Green Post Office and an amateur historian of the golf club, wrote in 1973 that Hannibal set up a three-hole course there for the exercise of his servants - and I presume himself. Again the land was on a 99-year lease and if I recall correctly without reference to my notes, was eventually acquired by Elmbridge on expiry.

In 1893 Hannibal leased on a variable term to the Vicar and Churchwardens at St. Nicholas land for a mortuary (I haven't been able to pinpoint this in my notes in time for this article, but if memory serves, it was in Ditton Marsh - probably along Portsmouth Road).

In 1894 Hannibal gave further land on 99-year lease for the construction of Thames Ditton Cottage Hospital on Weston Green Road.

Hannibal played his part on the church Finance Committee, and his brother Frederick was also active, acting as churchwarden for some 22 years. Of Hannibal Speer the person we know rather little. I have a picture in my mind of a sensitive fellow influenced by the early death of his father; intelligent, perhaps bookish: Thames Ditton's postmaster from 1900 recalls that Hannibal, who was 74 by the end of that year, was wont to order a cab "each day" to take him to the old Kingston Library. These days, the phrase "he never married" may have speculative connotations in the obituary columns. Certainly his wealth would have made him a good prospect for marriage, had he been that way inclined.

Hannibal was close to his brother Edward, and his sister Maria was normally part of Hannibal's household. He was not a recluse, it seems: resident George Booker's reminiscences of Thames Ditton from 1906, recorded by T S Mercer in 1960, mention "the chug, chug of the gas engine

in the corner of the coach house, and the hum of the dynamo; the Manor House, like most large houses in the district, generated its own electricity..... the brilliant dinner parties and the gay social gatherings that often took place there....”

## Death and aftermath

Hannibal Speer died aged 88 on 3 April 1915 at 26, the Grove in Brompton and his death was registered at Kensington. His younger brother Edward Frederick Sandys had died in November 1910, and the latter’s son, Edward Charles Hannibal Sandys, had also died, at the age of 14 at school: the lectern in St. Nicholas Church was donated in memoriam. The primary beneficiary of the Trust passed via Edward Frederick’s daughter Cecilia to the Litchfields into which family she had married, and her husband (who became Rear-Admiral F. Shirley Litchfield-Speer) added the name of Speer. I can find no clause in William’s Will requiring inheritors to have the Speer family name, a condition specifically cited in the Royal Warrant granted to Hannibal to change his name to Speer, so I conclude that it must be in the private family Trust set up by that Will. The Litchfields were able to drop the name of Speer in subsequent generations. In the decade following Hannibal’s death, the Litchfield-Speers initially remained associated with Thames Ditton and engaged with church responsibilities, but then drifted away.

In a far-sighted move in 1920 the Urban District Council for Esher and The Dittons acquired for £360 the Lordship of the Manor of Weston along with the freehold of its commons at Weston Green, Littleworth Common, Hare Lane Green and Arbrook Common comprising in all some 257 acres, to which were added many other greens and commons that have survived as invaluable pleasant spaces in our borough, accessible

for the common good. Otherwise the main parts of the farms and houses of the Speer Estates were developed. If there’s an odd tiny piece of land in the former parish, or some obscure leasehold on a community site, it is quite likely to trace back to the impenetrable Trust.

## Afterword

I researched the very knotty history of the Speers and the Sandys against the background of sentimental, sometimes sycophantic, historical pieces seventy years or so ago, notably omitting or glossing over the seismic scandal of Rev. Wilfred Speer and the many instances of William Speer II at loggerheads with other leading figures in the parish. It was conventional to touch the forelock to those who had money and position, inherited, merited, or not. The Speers and their successors had a fair grip on the Church and it was not surprising that C R S Saunders would write in the parish magazine of “this fine family” of whom “Thames Ditton can surely be proud.” It turns out that as with many family histories there are good and bad bits.

The standout figures are William Speer II whose controlling nature set up his son for destruction and sundered the village and the parish; and his grandson Hannibal who contributed so much to the community. Other Speers did contribute some good, too: Rev Wilfred enabled the commercial transactions that provided our railway spur and village station; his son Capt. Wilfred Dakin Speer presented the land on which the present-day Infant School was built. We may conclude that the name of Speer was somewhat redeemed and the eventual naming of Speer Road justified. The name of Sandys, however, remains locally unremarked.

**Keith Evetts**

# Solution to the Summer Crossword



Sadly, we have to let you know that Michael Jackson, a regular crossword compiler for many years has passed away in his mid nineties. He was a great supporter of Thames Ditton Today and we will miss him. We are planning to resume the crossword in the Winter edition. If you would like to try your hand at crossword compiling please email [editor@residents-association.com](mailto:editor@residents-association.com)

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

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# SERVICES, CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

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Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	Mark Michelmore	01372 879321
Dittons & Weston Green NeighbourCare	Frankie Bell	07790 472993
<b>Elmbridge Borough Council Community Support Services</b>		
Thames Ditton Centre for the community	Mon & Thurs	0208 3985921
Thames Ditton Children's Centre	Tues, Weds, Fri	0208 3983772
Meals on Wheels, Community Transport, Dial-a-Ride, Alarm & Telecare services, Relief Carers	ask for service at central switchboard	01372 474552
Homesupport Elmbridge	Thomasina Breslin	01932 267128
Esher and District Stroke Club	Ann Pollock	0208398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Sally Dubery	01372 463587
Surrey Youth and Adult Education Service	Elmbridge Area	020 8979 8334

## GROUPS

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	Larisa Strickland	westongreenrainbows@gmail.com
4th Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts	Alison Derrick	020 8398 0041
Dittons Scout Group	Aileen Widdowson	07783 449666
Coffee and chat (United Reformed Church)	Mrs. E. Barker	01372 467491
Emberbrook Trefoil Guild	Mary Bowen	020 8398 6857
Friends of Bushey and Home Parks	Jean Smith	020 8977 9391
Friends of Walsingham Care	Miss Valerie Chicken	0208 398 2932
Molesey and Dittons Neighbourhood Watch	Chairman: John Haberfield	020 8398 5256
Parents and Toddlers(St Nicholas church)	Information	020 8398 7211
Ripieno Choir	Nick Harris	020 8399 7231
Surrey Bell-ringers	Giles Andre	020 8979 1994

## CLUBS

Albany Motor Yacht Club	Secretary	01784466651
All Saints Weston Lunch Club	Val Atkinson	020 8398 1117
Arts and Heritage Club	Carol Butcher	01932 867511
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	Elaine Sesemann	07801 943392
Ember Sports Club	Zenda Hedges	07717 304146

Ember Sports Club: Bowls	Sylvia Jones	01932 788701
Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Dr. David Cooke	01932 862841
Ember Sports Club: Tennis	Annabel Duncan	0208 786 6318
Esher Bowling Club	Roger Cooper	01372 468109
Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Esher 41 and Ex-Round Tablers' Club	Dr. R. Tudor-Williams	020 8398 0108
Folk Dance Club	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
Old Cranleighan Rugby Club	Tony Price	07801 837129
Old Cranleighan Hockey Club	Simon Marshall (Men)	07801 737695
	Helen Hawes (Ladies)	07771 557900
Probus Club, Hinchley Wood/Dittons	Edmund Woolley	020 8398 3581
Probus Club, Sandown	Julian Rye	020 8398 2463
River Club (BMYC)	David Walker	0870 460 3586
Rotary Club, Esher	Geoff Morris	01932 868454
Rubber Bridge TD Lawn Tennis Club	Val	020 8399 9972
Surbiton Croquet Club	Alec Thomas	020 8398 2391
Surbiton Golf Club	Secretary	0208 398 3101
Surbiton Hockey Club	Secretary	020 8398 2401
Thames Ditton Lawn Tennis Club	Chris Lewis	07770 562569
Thames Ditton & Esher Golf Club	Mark Rodbard	020 8398 1551
Thames Ditton Squash Club (Colets)	Dave Peck	020 8398 7108
Thames Ditton Cricket Club	Howard Frish (Secretary)	07947 561449

## SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance	Mrs Brenda Denby	0208 398 6054.
Ember Choral	Linda Bridges	020 8399 5402
Esher and Molesey Garden Society	Chris Walker (Sec)	0208 398 6651
Esher and District Amnesty International	Cherry Eddy (Campaigns)	0208398 4377
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Lettings: Piotr Hennig	020 8398 5358
Long Ditton Youth Club	Toni Izard	07749 633973
Lynwood Allotment Society	Gill Vickers	020 8398 4870
Molesey and District Antiques Society	Linda Lambert	020 8398 1476
NADFAS (Decorative & Fine Arts) Kingston	Mrs. Valerie Windsor	020 8549 9967
Oxshott & Cobham Music Society	Cherry Eddy (Membership)	0208 398 4377
	cherryeddy102@gmail.com	
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
University of the Third Age (U3A)	Hon Sec Anne Brown	01932 881633
Vera Fletcher Hall	Lettings: Amelia Crafts	08456 528 529
	Membership: Sue Morris	020 8224 0980

Please contact the Editor to amend these listings

## Events at the Vera Fletcher Hall

Autumn Season 2018

September October November



**MUSIC THE NEW JERSEY BOYS.** The Music of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons plus a tribute to Showaddywaddy A nostalgic musical journey through the career of one of the biggest selling groups of all times – The Four Seasons. The programme includes all the hits such as Sherry, Big Girls Don't Cry, Walk Like a Man and many more. There will be also be a tribute to another great rock and roll band, Showaddywaddy. This show has been a sell out around the UK and is already selling fast in Thames Ditton. **Friday 14 September 7.30 pm Tickets £18**

**OPERA POPUP OPERA** presents **LA TRAGÉDIE DE CARMEN A** reimagining by Peter Brook of Bizet's famous masterpiece. The intense and tragic tale of the four characters who lie at the heart of the original story plays out in a thought-provoking drama of unhinged love and jealousy. Brook collaborated with composer Marius Constant to create a journey through much of Bizet's memorable music, including Carmen's 'Habanera', Escamillo's Toreador Song and Don José's Flower Song, together with powerful new passages. Popup Opera return after their successful debut visit with Hansel and Gretel last year.

**Saturday 29 September 7.30 pm Tickets £18**

**FILM NIGHT VFH FILM NIGHT** presents in association with The R C Sherriff Trust, **Celebrating 25 Years Advancing the Arts in Elmbridge - GOODBYE MR CHIPS** We are presenting an R C Sherriff double, the first of which is the 1939 film, Goodbye Mr Chips, for which Sherriff penned the screenplay. Young schoolteacher Charles Edward Chipping (played by Robert Donat) looks back on his life from his days as a young school master. The film is set against the backdrop of the seismic events of the early C20th, the shattering violence of the first World War.

**Friday 21 September 7.30 pm  
Tickets £7.00** entrance includes a



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2018**

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**SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER - Little Vicky and the Seven Assassins (Comedy drama)**

**SATURDAY 20 OCTOBER - Alices's Adventures in Wonderland (Children's theatre)**

**SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER - Lucid (Music)**

**FRIDAY 9 NOVEMBER - The Eva Cassidy Story (Music)**

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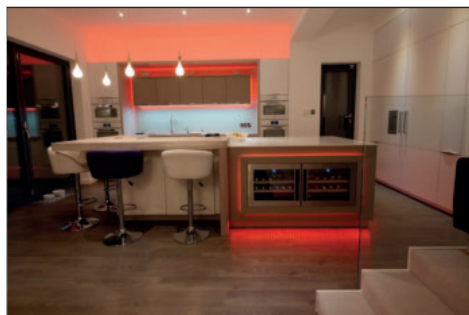
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