

Esher & Hersham Matters

No. 103
Autumn 2021



Historic Orleans Arms could be razed for seven storey block



Source: Elmbridge Planning Portal

Image: Tripadvisor.com



Image: Howard Webb Collection

Cafe Rouge demolition could lead to building on Sandown Green Belt

An outline application to demolish the former pub and restaurant on Portsmouth Road, home of the Grade 2 listed 'White Lady' milestone, has been posted on the Elmbridge Planning portal (elmbridge.gov.uk/ebc_planning. App no 2021/2814). In its place, the developer intends to build a monster, seven storey building to include offices, a possible 'drinking establishment' and 38 flats. To see the application, scan this QR code:



Not only would this lead to the loss of a significant historic building, **it opens the way to the Jockey Club building on Sandown Park and the Green Belt**. HM Inspectorate rejected their proposals this year to build on the track's periphery because it caused harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Should this building be permitted, the Jockey Club could refresh their proposals, citing that the harm to the Green Belt has already happened.

We think this is a dreadful scheme and that a local protection order should be placed on the Orleans Arms. The ERA is actively seeking this and will campaign strongly against these plans, but **it's imperative that residents show their strong opposition to them** via the planning portal - see QR code above.

Inside: The Modernist classic on your doorstep - Esher's monuments
Kings George's Hall is Esher Theatre - River Mole flood plans
John Profumo and his links to Hersham

Five months a councillor...



Since my election in May, I have been learning how the Council functions (or doesn't in some cases). I sit on the committees: East Area Planning, Climate Change Action Group, Licensing, Esher/Hersham Spending Board, Lower Green Group, Overview & Scrutiny and Full Council.

Planning: the successful defence against the Sandown Park appeal has strengthened our position on the Green Belt, but there is a constant influx of high-density development applications. Many people, including other Councillors, appear to be blindly fixated upon the 640 new dwellings/year target set by the Government. The new Local Plan and recent change in ministers should see some movement on this.

Roads/Traffic/Pedestrians: these are controlled by Surrey Highways and the officers are very open and willing to discuss ideas. But Highways has a time horizon of years for a simple crossing and decades for major changes. It is frustratingly slow.

I have managed to get a plan to spend £1.5m re-designing the Scilly Isles sent back to the drawing board. It would have made the congestion worse and would have pushed two lanes of cyclists onto a shared pavement with pedestrians.

Climate Change/Pollution: I am working with the Cabinet member for the Environment and the officers to get Elmbridge to be more ambitious on climate change and pollution, although, again, Highways plays a key role here.

Several other new Councillors and I are trying to improve the Council's processes and engagement with residents. There are many meetings and a plethora of lengthy reports which could, and should, be streamlined. Finally, I have been helping a number of residents with various issues. We've provided some guidance on how to engage with the Council at esher-residents.com/engaging-ebc or, if you require further information, then please contact me at dyoung@esher-residents.com.

Peter Heaney steps down...

After 33 years serving the ERA, Peter Heaney, our much loved former councillor and mentor of so much that happens in the Association, is standing down from our Committee to take up the role of Honorary President.

Peter served three terms as a Councillor and was chair of the Planning Committee. His knowledge of the Esher Ward is incomparable and his input will be greatly missed.

However, at a lunch in his honour, he promised to offer his wise counsel on planning matters and to campaign for us during local elections.

We have not seen the last of him!



Entertainment news

King George's Hall debuts as Esher Theatre



Major confidence boost for Esher High Street as Shakatak opens new venture

King George's Hall Trust has completed a long-term lease with theatre entrepreneur Charlie Swift to run the hall as a theatre, while maintaining access for the various hirers who have always used the hall during the day.

Swift and his team have transformed the former dance hall into an exciting live theatre - something residents have been asking for for a long time. It is beautifully appointed, with a bar that reflects the art deco history of the building and a mass of hi tech lighting and a top class sound system by Funktion-One.

The bar focuses on locally sourced drinks as much as possible, with Lower Green's Big Smoke Brewery, Thames Ditton & Silent Pool Gins to the fore. The pretty outdoor seating area allows you to soak up the atmosphere under the 'Broadway Style' sign and festoon lit trees. There are beautiful flowers and a seasonal patch, all by Garsons.

"We're finding our shows are selling out really quickly," says Swift. "It demonstrates what an unmet need there is in Esher. I think having a theatre on your doorstep is such a major plus nowadays. After lockdown there was a thirst for live entertainment from everyone, performers, crew and audiences too. Our focus on bringing the 'West End' vibe local has been so well received by many who are craving the arts but are not quite ready to venture into London just yet. There's no need to rush for the last train if a concert encore is proving a little long and there's ample parking and plenty of local restaurants happy to serve you".

The line up in the coming months, following Shakatak and Leee John's (Imagination) opening night, includes firm comedy favourites, Andy Parsons and Harry Hill, as well as a revival of RC Sherriff's Journey's End, which promises a special experience in the run up to and including Remembrance Sunday. The theatre offers something for everyone and brings famous names to the stage whilst supporting local bands and theatre groups. There will be special events for Halloween and New Year's Eve and, for the Christmas period, a superb interpretation of The Nutcracker ballet performance and children's show Dear Santa.

Check out the What's On page to see upcoming shows, or pop into the theatre and have a coffee whilst booking tickets. www.eshertheatre.com/whatson

The Homewood...

The Homewood can be found situated in ten acres of woodland gardens just off the Portsmouth Road opposite Black Pond. This family house, designed by the Modernist architect Patrick Gwynne, is one of just two mid twentieth century houses owned by the National Trust, the other being Erno Goldfinger's home at 2 Willow Road, Hampstead.



Photo: Courtesy of Alice Dunn



Image: National Trust

Patrick Gwynne (1913-2003) designed the Homewood when he was only 24 years old to replace his family's Victorian-Gothic home. He designed much of the furniture and gardens and continued living there all his life, refining the style and appearance of the building's interior so that it now has design elements from inception up to the time of his death. "That's what is so great about the place" says V&A curator Gareth Williams, who visited before Gwynne died. "It's a 30s, 50s and 70s house in one. There are layers of living there and all the many things he made over the years".

Gwynne had been influenced very early in his career by the modernist architect Wells Coates, founder of the Modern Architecture Research Group and worked for him while designing the Homewood. Coates advised on technical matters and another of Coates' assistants, Denys Lasdun (architect of the Southbank's National Theatre) designed the elliptical terrace pool. Gwynne's father Alban called it "the temple of costly experience" which it was at £10,000 when it was built in 1938 and which today is an equivalent build cost of approximately £1.94m.

Esher's Modernist marvel

The Homewood was designed in reinforced concrete and the latest materials and technology were used. This enabled lean line modular elevations with wide spans and the use of floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows. The house is elevated, providing plenty of family parking underneath and open planning of the residential rooms above.

The living room is one of the defining features of the house with three identical floor-to-ceiling windows each divided into three panes which perfectly frame views over the grounds. A maple wood sprung floor made this a spectacular room for dancing and entertaining with furniture being moved to the sides.



Photos: National Trust

There is an impressive central concrete spiral staircase with a large uplighter and an interesting chandelier on the landing. It is astonishing that this house designed in 1937 still appears Modern, even futuristic.



Photo: National Trust



Photo: Dennis Gilbert / National Trust

Visiting

At the time of going to press and due to Covid restrictions, the house remains closed. However, bookings can be made to join small conducted tours of the grounds. For details contact the National Trust website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Lower Mole flood alleviation

Mole Flood Control system update

In the Spring, the Environment Agency (EA) launched a public consultation on options to update the River Mole Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS).

The FAS was completed in the 1980s in response to severe flooding of the Mole in 1968. It protects around 3000 homes and businesses in the area. The scheme consists of sluice gates installed at six points along the river between Hersham and the Thames. These are used to control high flow in times of heavy rainfall.

The update is needed because the system is at the end of its design life and must be refurbished to remain effective.

The consultation proposed six options for the scale and quality of the update. These are detailed on the project website at: www.lowermolefloodalleviationscheme.co.uk.

Also detailed are the factors to be taken into account in looking at each option; these include **cost**: the costs and benefits over the full lifetime of the option, plus its long-term maintenance; **flood risk**: maintaining the standard of protection of the current scheme; **water level**: the potential impact on water levels; **carbon footprint and water environment**: this covers the movement of fish, biodiversity and water quality – the condition of the water in enabling species to survive.



Photo: Environment Agency

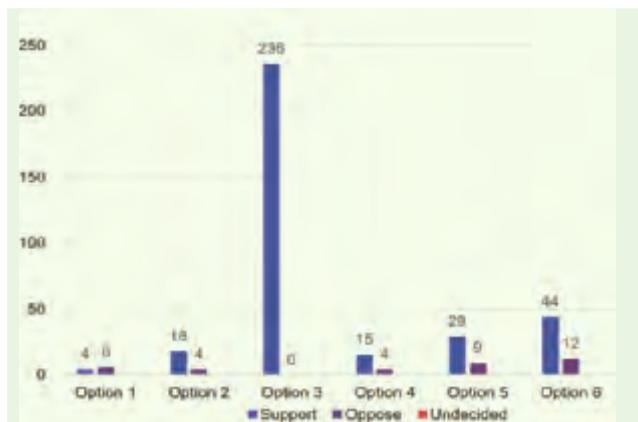
The six options proposed are:

- **Option 1** - Doing nothing (included only to give a cost baseline).
- **Option 2** - Do nothing but to provide reactive maintenance; it is by far the highest cost solution.
- **Option 3** - Retains the sluice gate technology; it would involve replacing some of the existing gates but would then be essentially the same system as we have now.
- **Options 4 and 5** - Each involves removing some or all of the sluice gates and replacing them with weirs and/or piers.
- **Option 6** - Removes all the gates and relies on restoring natural river flow processes.

ERA's view is that Option 3 is the only tried and tested solution; the current system works – and according to the EA will “maintain the current standard of flood protection”. Options 4, 5 and 6 have environmental benefits – for example for fish passage.

ERA supports Option 3

Each, however, carries the likelihood of lower water levels which could severely impact amenity access along parts of the river and, in the case of Option 6, its entire length. Also, extreme low levels could expose effluent in the river which, in hot weather, would be damaging for amenity and the environment.



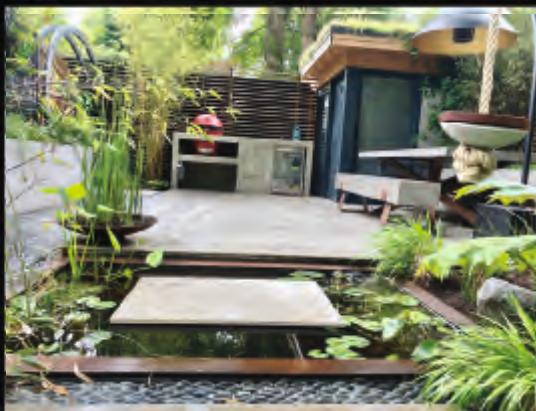
The results of the consultation have now been published - scan the QR code to see them.



There were 5250 unique visits to the consultation website. Of those who indicated a preference for an option (left) the vast majority agreed with ERA.

The EA to announce its preferred option by the end of 2021

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John Profumo and Hersham

Scandal hit minister and his local links



Image: Howard Bowden

Did you know that John Profumo, the minister who nearly brought down Harold Macmillan's 1960s government had strong links to Hersham? His ashes and those of his glamorous actor wife, Valerie Hobson, famous for her role in "Kind Hearts and Coronets," are interred at the family vault in St. Peter's Church.

At the height of the Cold War, Profumo, Secretary of State for War, enjoyed an affair with model Christine Keeler. She was also involved with Yevgeny Ivanov the senior naval attaché at the Soviet Embassy. A national furore ensued when it emerged that Profumo had lied to Parliament in denying the affair and he was forced to resign. Prime Minister, Macmillan resigned months later.

Over time, Profumo restored his reputation, volunteering at East End poverty charity, Toynbee Hall, being awarded a CBE in 1975.

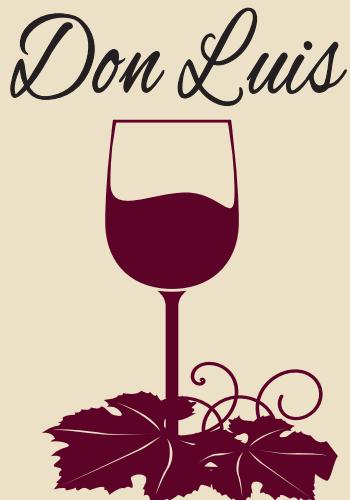
Profumo's father, Baron Albert Profumo, made his fortune in insurance and lived in splendour at Mole House in Hersham. Former Hersham councillor, Roy Green says "In anticipation of the Hersham By Pass being built, the council acquired land from the Profumo estate in 1934, the majority of which was turned into allotments. In 1954 to meet the housing needs, they allocated five acres to housing and built Mole Road, Profumo Road and Brittain Road".

An indulgent new tapas and steak restaurant has opened in the heart of Esher

The vast selection of Spanish dishes will tantalise the taste buds and ensure you return again and again to sample the full menu.

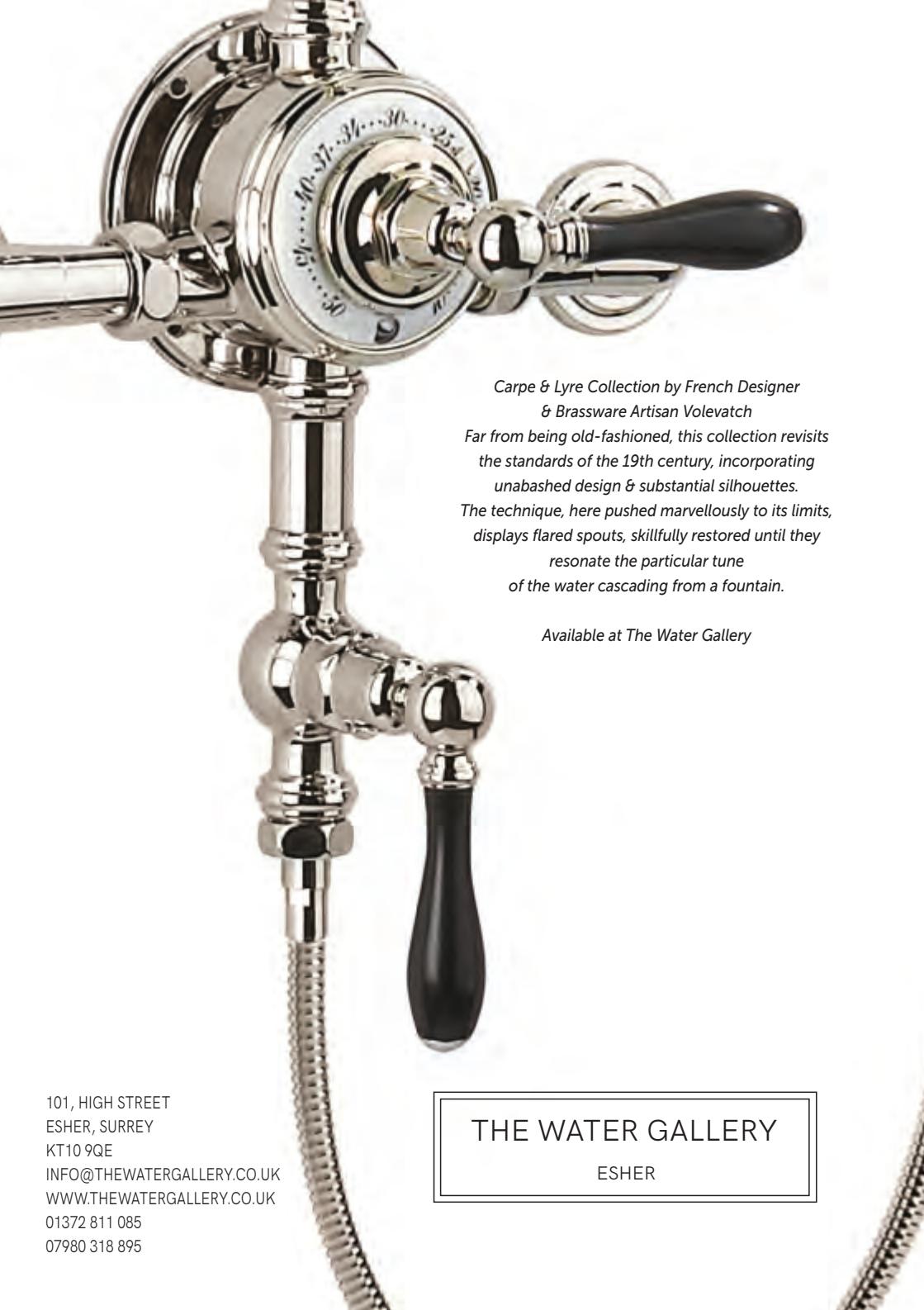
Whether you fancy patatas bravas, sizzling gammas or succulent steak, we cater for all. With our authentic ingredients from Spain we only believe in the best quality.

The lively music and warm ambience provides a cosy atmosphere for all.



10 Esher High Street KT10 9RT
01372 202197

Facebook: Don Luis Tapas & Steak Instagram: don_luis_esher
You can also find us by searching @donluis on Facebook



*Carpe & Lyre Collection by French Designer
& Brassware Artisan Volevatch*

*Far from being old-fashioned, this collection revisits
the standards of the 19th century, incorporating
unabashed design & substantial silhouettes.*

*The technique, here pushed marvellously to its limits,
displays flared spouts, skillfully restored until they
resonate the particular tune
of the water cascading from a fountain.*

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07980 318 895

THE WATER GALLERY

ESHER

Monuments in Esher High Street

Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Memorial

This fine Grade II listed monument takes the form of a copper statue of Britannia standing with a trident and is mounted on a red marble plinth and pedestal bearing a bronze plaque of Queen Victoria with the inscription "Victoria Regina et Imperatrix 1837-1897".

The Memorial was designed by Francis Williamson (1833-1920) Queen Victoria's favourite sculptor who lived and worked at "The Grapes", (79 High Street) within sight of the memorial.

"The Grapes" is the site of the inaugural ERA blue plaque that commemorates Francis Williamson.



The Village Pump and Le Comte de Paris

HRH The Comte de Paris was the grandson of the deposed King Louis Phillippe of France and his Queen, who lived at Claremont.

The Comte married Princess Isabella of Spain in 1864, spending part of his honeymoon at Claremont and presented the pump to the village in commemoration of his marriage. By 1876 the water had become unsafe to drink and the pump was moved from its original position in the High Street to Sandown Park.

In 1961 It was refurbished and moved back to its current position on the grassed traffic island in the middle of the High Street crossroads.



How many can you name?

The Queen Victoria Water Fountain

The original public water pump on Cato's Hill near the Green had been cut off in 1874 and the Comte de Paris pump removed in 1876, so it was fortuitous that a drinking fountain was presented by Queen Victoria in 1877 to commemorate the fortieth year of her reign.

The granite drinking fountain (3.6 metres high), has a marble basin and bronze lion head spout and remains in its original High Street position. The safe water supply which it provided was funded by local eminent subscribers.



The Travellers Rest

Originally known as "Wolsey's Well" is an English Heritage Grade II listed structure situated on the Sandown side opposite the Civic Centre entrance.

The Grotto is believed to have been built by Henry Pelham, brother of the Earl of Newcastle, between 1730 - 1740. It is built in random flint and rubblestone set in mortar and possibly incorporating rubble from Sandown Church.



There are three arched sections set in an angled front with stone slab seats. The square panel above the centre arch has a carved stylised "M" which is, in fact, the Pelham family emblem, a buckle.

The grotto was originally a drinking fountain with a spring fed water basin on the left side. Over the years the grotto has been demolished and moved away from the Sandown entrance. It was hit by an out of control dumper truck from Sandown Park in the 1960's. It now seems to be somewhat neglected and could do with some restoration and repair.

The ERA needs you!

Join us

We have a **great need** for residents to join our **Committee**, to run a campaign or to represent a particular area. Please email us at helloesher@esher-residents.com if you'd like to **play a role in shaping Esher and Hersham's future.**

Our Quiz and Fish'n'Chip supper is back!

Saturday November 27th Claygate Village Hall

7.00 for 7.30pm.

Join us and bring your friends.

Table of 8 suggested. Couples and singles welcome. We can make up tables on the night.

BYO - Bring your own drink and opener. Tickets £17.50 pp.

Email quiz@esher-residents.com to book a table

Contributing to **Oasis** *Vital support to vulnerable children and their families in Elmbridge*

Donate

We are run entirely by **volunteers** and rely on **residents' donations**. If you'd like us to continue our work, do contribute. To donate please go to esher-residents.com/support-us or scan this QR code..



AGM

Join us at the **ERA Annual General Meeting** to be held on Zoom on Thursday 18th November at 7.30pm. Our guest speaker will be Richard Knox-Johnson of the London Green Belt Council. To register, please scan this QR code or go to www.esher-residents/AGM2021

