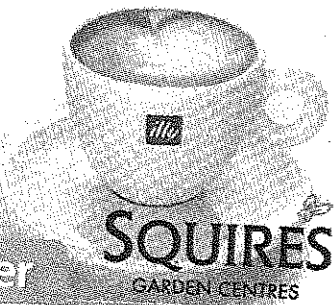


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coffee for
every reader



Reader Offer

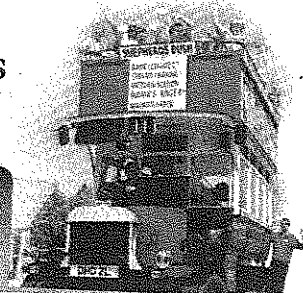
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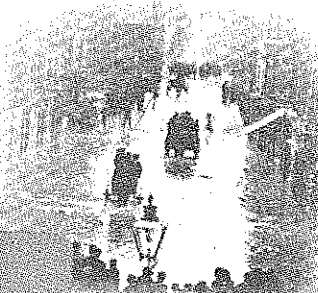


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Pub owners put through the mill by floods and burglars

A PUB landlord and landlady were 'distracted' after being hit by the Christmas power cuts and flooding, then losing items they had rescued in a burglary, with no contents insurance to fall back on.

Georgia and Jeff Watts took over running The Mill in Elstead in spring.

They had just finished updating the sprawling historic pub when disaster struck.

Mrs Watts said that when

the flooding started on Christmas Eve - on her son's birthday - she and her husband just had to stand by and watch it happen.

"It gushed through every possible gap," she said. "It came through the wheelhouse, the stairs, it was horrifying, actually."

As the water filled the sweeping driveway, the couple rushed to their cottage in the grounds and managed to

salvage their most precious items by taking them upstairs.

But on January 2, when the Watts were away from the cottage, opportunistic thieves smashed a window into their home and stole what was left of their salvaged belongings.

Unfortunately, the cottage was not insured for its contents because it is on a flood plain.

Mrs Watts lost a diamond

engagement ring and three gold necklaces, and watches and five bottles of champagne were also taken.

But the couple, who have done a healthy trade since taking on the popular watering hole, remain optimistic and want to reassure customers the Mill will be back up and running in March, hopefully in time for Mother's Day.

"She will be coming back

even more beautiful than before," said Mrs Watts.

"This can be a new chapter for the Mill and we look forward to seeing everyone when she re-opens.

"The building is prone to flooding but she has not flooded like this since 1969.

"Usually it is just a mop-and-bucket job, but this is different.

"She is soaked. The water went through the whole

dining room, the cellar. Trade had been going really well, customers were coming back saying how much they liked it here and then this happened.

"But like I said, we have to stay optimistic."

Talking about the drama of having to escape the water while trying to salvage possessions, Mrs Watts said: "Jeff was actually a bit annoyed with me because I was so

preoccupied trying to get in touch with customers to cancel their Christmas bookings that by the time we got to the cottage, the water was over the top of our wellies and it was actually quite dangerous.

"You could not see what was pavement and what was river."

"I was distraught when we were burgled."

"You get to the point where

you just think things cannot get any worse, and then they do.

"I was just getting over the shock of the flooding and then that just knocked me straight back down again.

"But we have been so touched by all the support we have had from the community and Fullers have been great. Here's to a brighter 2014."

A Surrey Police spokesman

said the force is unable to identify whether a pattern has developed of flooded properties being targeted by thieves in the area.

According to its records, a detached house in Witley was burgled on the same day and a home in Milford targeted the following day.

Anyone with information on any of the incidents is asked to call Surrey Police on 101.

In brief

Energy supplier attends meeting

REPRESENTATIVES from electricity supplier SSE will be attending an Elstead Parish Council meeting on Monday to discuss power supplies, following the recent disruption.

The meeting will take place at the United Reformed Church hall in Milford Road, at 7.30pm.

Meet your local policing team

SURREY Police's local neighbourhood team for Frensham are holding a meeting in the village on Wednesday.

It will be held at the Royal British Legion Club on Shortfield Common.

Development meeting invite for residents

By Jennifer Morris

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Chairman of the team

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It will be held at the Royal British Legion Club on Shortfield Common Road, from noon to 1.30pm, when villagers are invited to discuss crime concerns and to receive advice from the officers.

Heart start for the Pepperpot

A DEFIBRILLATOR will be installed in Godalming's Pepperpot after the town council agreed its funding.

The public will have free access to the life-saving machinery, that gives the heart an electric shock in some cases of cardiac arrest.

It will reside in the undercroft of the Pepperpot, subject to the agreement of the historic buildings officer, and will cost £150.

Godalming Town Council will take on responsibility for the device's maintenance.

Action after recent flooding

COUNCILLORS for Farncombe and Catteshall held a meeting chaired by Jeremy Hunt last week to decide what action to take

Development meeting invite for residents

By Jennifer Morris

A RALLYING cry for "every resident of Godalming and Farncombe" to turn out for a public meeting on development next week, has been issued by the town council.

GU7's neighbourhood plan will be launched at the Borough Hall meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday.

Neighbourhood planning is a government drive to get communities involved in deciding what should be built, and where, in their towns and villages.

Amid fears of unfettered development after the withdrawal of the borough council's core strategy for development, the neighbourhood plan presents a chance for neighbours to have a say on how the area should evolve over the next 15 years or so.

Once approved, the neighbourhood plan will be used as an important reference when decisions are made on planning applications.

Chris Bowden from Navigus Planning, the consultants that will work with Godalming Town Council on the document,

said a neighbourhood plan is a legally relevant document and holds as much weight as a local plan - which it will be considered alongside.

That said, Waverley Borough Council says a neighbourhood plan cannot be used to prevent the building of homes and businesses required to meet needs, but can influence the type, design, location and mix of development.

A spokesman for the town council said: "This meeting will inform people about the process, how the plan will be taken forward and how individuals can get involved."

"It is essential the community has a voice in the future shape and growth of the town and all will be welcome."

"Neighbourhood planning is an important tool from the government to give communities a clearer, stronger and more proactive voice in planning. Communities can use the process to say where new homes and businesses should be built and what they should look like. Godalming Town Council believes the people of Godalming and Farncombe should seize the opportunity and the council will do all it

can to help the community bring a neighbourhood plan together."

Chairman of the town council's neighbourhood planning working group, Councillor Jane Thomson, added: "There is no substitute for sound local knowledge and understanding, so who better to create the neighbourhood plan than the people who live and work in our community?"

Mr Bowden will lead the meeting and provide an insight into how the process will work in Godalming. His consultancy is involved with neighbourhood plans in Surrey, including Chiddingfold's, which launched last year. Only a handful have been completed and the process takes two years.

After the launch meeting, people with an interest will be invited to take part in working groups which will probably discuss different aspects of the plan.

The Godalming Trust is an interest group working to maintain the town's heritage and its inhabitants' quality of life.

A spokesman for the group said its members would be

attending the meeting and following the process very carefully.

"We are hoping to get answers to important questions at the meeting," said the spokesman. "This is absolutely a vitally important meeting. People must understand the part they can play in our future."

Cranleigh's neighbourhood plan launched last week with hundreds of villagers turned away from the launch meeting as the village hall reached capacity on Thursday.

Concern has been mounting among Waverley's communities in recent months as more and more developers submit plans for housing developments.

Just last week, the *Surrey Advertiser* reported Croudace Strategic's proposals to build around 70 homes on land next to Furze Lane in Farncombe.

Once drawn up, the community will vote on whether to adopt the neighbourhood plan by way of a referendum in May 2016.

Anyone with an interest is urged to attend Thursday's event.



Alistair Wilson SA140124

Godalming Junior School Year 6 pupils Jacob, Amelia, Jay and Spike with cycling proficiency instructors Afonso Mello and Lucy Eyre.

Saddling up for Bikeability class

PUPILS at Godalming Junior School saddled up for cycling proficiency lessons this week.

The Bikeability scheme teaches children skills such as balance, handling, turning and using hand signals.

The youngsters put their skills to the test on roads near the school. It is open to all

Year 6 children and the school encourages pupils to take part as it believes it a great opportunity to stay safe.

"As we have quite a few Year 6 children, the training lasts two weeks, with each child going out for a two-hour session, five times in the week," said deputy head Julie Robinson.

"Developing road awareness is vital to primary school children and at Godalming Junior School, we are committed to preparing our children for adulthood.

"Many of our children ride their bikes to school and we are aware of the busy traffic around the school in the morning and at home times

"This week has been 'road safety week' here too, at the school, and we hope to educate the children about some of the risks and dangers of the roads but also equip them with the confidence and competence so they can lead happy, healthy lifestyles on our roads whether walking or cycling."

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