

Thanks to people who gave up their time for others

Hannah Farquharson reports on the volunteers who have been helping for more than two decades

FOR 20 years, people willing to give up their free time have been linked with volunteering opportunities by a dedicated centre.

But there are never enough volunteers and staff at Elmbridge's Volunteer Centre (VC) are always trying to fill vacancies.

Last week, VC gathered those who have been volunteering for more than 20 years

to celebrate their anniversary and thank them for their hard work, with the support of Glaxo Smithkline.

VC began life in the old fire station, Weybridge, before moving to Community Walk in Esher town centre in 1998.

Sue Gray, volunteer co-ordinator at VC, explained: "We are a brokery service. We have a database of more than 450 volunteer opportunities.

"We go looking for volunteer opportunities in Elmbridge and beyond. We then see people who want to volunteer and try to match them to an opportunity."

Word of mouth, coverage in local papers and libraries and uploads on the national "Do it" website help to advertise volunteering opportunities in the borough.

Sue, a volunteer at St Peter's

Church in Hershaw, is supported in her part-time role at VC by four volunteers who use their personal experiences to help advise clients.

"We couldn't exist without them," said Sue. "A lot of voluntary organisations in the borough wouldn't manage without volunteers."

"There is a fantastic range of opportunities, from driving people to hospital to museum work. If somebody wants something in particular, we can easily find it."

Sue believes people volunteer out of a desire to give something back to the community and to make a difference.

Anyone over the age of 14 can contact VC to find out about opportunities by visiting the centre, e-mailing or phoning. They will then be interviewed so Sue and her team can establish the kind of opportunity that might suit them.

"Very often, people come in knowing what they want to do



Cllr Rosemary Dane, the Mayor of Elmbridge, with volunteers who have been recognised for their work over 20 years.

and go away thinking they will try something else," said Sue. "We talk about what is available, what people are interested in and what skills they have."

"They might want to do something totally different."

VC then provides the volunteer with the information they need to contact the organisation.

"We always encourage people to have a go at several different things," added Sue. "We work with people until they find what they want to do."

Volunteering can be done as often as you like, for long as you like.

Some businesses in the borough have signed up to employee volunteering schemes in which groups of staff take part in opportunities.

Sue explained: "It is team building for staff. Often people get involved like that and go on to volunteer on their own."

Once you become involved in volunteering, Sue and her team are there to support you.

"We see how people are getting on and are always there to give support, help or to talk

about it," she said. Two years ago Elmbridge Volunteer Centre (VC) and Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) combined to become Voluntary Action in Elmbridge (VAE) and are housed in Esher town centre.

Sue believes that with CVS providing support for commu-

nity organisations and VC promoting volunteering, they are good match.

And by recognising the work of those who have volunteered for more than 20 years as part of their birthday celebration, VC hopes more people will realise the benefits of volunteering.

Recognised for more than 20 years' work

- Geoffrey Bloomer, Robert Casbard, Jack Hill, John Riley, Michael Goodall, Hilary Lomax, Roy Lomax, Barrie Mullins, Terry Parsons, Albert Pruden and Jack Stacey, all of Brooklands Museum Trust.
- Ivy Gosden of Whiteley Homes Trust, Whiteley Village.
- Anthony Harvey of Walton Stroke Group.
- Margaret Harvey of Accappella Choir.
- Jim Mansfield, Peter

- Shiells, Wendy Mundie and Cyril Wadey of Oxshott Village Sports Club.
- Jean Rigden of Mencap.
- Geraldine Mitchell of Weston Green Over 60s Trust.
- Pat Acheson, Carol Marshall and Dorothy Moore of the British Heart Foundation.
- Vernon Barrow of the MS Society North Surrey Branch.
- Alice Batchelor of

- Elmgrove Disabled and Blind Bowls Club.
- Joan Bellingham and John Davies of Care in Weybridge.
- Noel Franklin-Taylor of North West Surrey Samaritans.
- Jean Smith of Walton, Weybridge and Hershaw CAB.
- Jenny Vickers of Cobham Care.
- Clare Warnie of Elmbridge Crossroads.

Archiving pictures and answering the phone

■ JACK Stacey has been volunteering at Brooklands Museum for 25 years.

When he started, the now-91-year-old began to archive photographs and continues to do so to this day.

He said: "I feel very privileged today. One could vegetate in retirement. It has given

me 25 wonderful years. I have met lots of great names, such as Sir George Edwards and Sir Stirling Moss."

■ NOEL Franklin-Taylor has been volunteering at North West Surrey Samaritans for 42 years.

He explained: "It is about

putting something back into society."

During his time at the Samaritans, Noel has always been the voice on the end of the phone.

The 81-year-old added: "It can be challenging but you are always a member of a team, not an individual."

Celebration for Ajax Sea Scouts with new HQ name

A BRAND new galley and a new name for their riverside headquarters provided a double celebration for Ajax Sea Scouts.

The Thames Ditton-based group's home was formally renamed the Chiefy Sharman Water Activities Centre, and Surrey County councillor Peter Hickman opened its new galley — the nautical term for a kitchen.

Both ceremonies took place at the group's annual fun regatta, barbecue and AGM, which was attended by more than 100 parents, supporters and friends, together with their children.

Brenda Sharman, widow of WR Sharman (known as "Chiefy"), who was joint founder of Ajax in 1948 and Group Scout Leader for 39

years from 1949 to 1978, performed the renaming of the building.

Chiefy remained actively involved with the group until his death in 2005 and it is largely because of his vision, leadership and commitment that Ajax is ranked by the Royal Navy as one of the UK's premier Sea Scout groups.

Joined by her daughters Jill and Joy, Mrs Sharman unveiled a separate plaque inside the building to commemorate the "living legacy" created by her husband.

The major upgrade of Ajax's galley would have been impossible without generous financial support from Surrey County Council and the help of Cllr Hickman.

The galley is now equipped to commercial standards and fully compliant with the most stringent health and hygiene regulations.

The warm sunny September Sunday provided the perfect backdrop for the celebrations and for an idyllic barbecue beside the river, while the youngsters enjoyed a day of fun-filled boating

under the watchful eye of Ajax leaders. Next year is the 60th anniversary of the group and further celebrations are planned.

Any old Ajaccios interested in attending should contact assistant group Scout leader Mark Marriott on 01932 867402 or via e-mail at mmariott@ukonline.co.uk.

Cleaner earns praise

A HOSPITAL cleaner has been praised for his hard work and attention to detail, which extends to cleaning the light bulbs on his ward.

A recent patient was so impressed by the work of Sunil Punnoose that she wrote to St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey, to hail his efforts.

Former nurse Sandra Hancock said: "This very quiet gentleman is a credit to the

cleaning team, and to the training given to him at the very start."

Mr Punnoose, 39, originally from India but now living in Addlestone, was pleased to learn of the praise.

His boss, housekeeping services manager, Emma Brookes, said: "Nothing is too much trouble for Sunil and he is a great asset to the housekeeping team."

Wine & Dine in and around Elmbridge



Advertising Feature

Simple taste of India

PERCHED at the top of Oxshott High Street, The Raja restaurant offers fine Indian cuisine in a simple yet stylish environment.

Service from the staff is both prompt and attentive to the customer's needs, and the menu is filled with a blend of traditional delicacies and more modern alternatives.

The mixed starter is a wise choice for anyone wishing to sample a little of everything — the plate contains generous portions of sheekh kebab, onion bhajee, samosa and chicken tikka.

As for main courses, the restaurant offers sumptuous seafood, chicken and lamb curries, as well as the chef's special menu.

The shahi chicken dish is a particular delight. A house speciality, the chicken is marinated and then oven cooked in an authentic creamy sauce with spices and herbs.

The result is a rich flavour which tickles the taste buds without overloading them, and is complemented by the fruity texture of the house red wine.

After a satisfyingly brisk and generous meal in the cosy surroundings of The Raja, diners can finish with a flourish. The mouthwatering "Mouchak" dessert — consisting of vanilla ice cream, topped with glazed almonds drizzled in honey — is a particularly delectable offering.

Or, if you fancy something a little more racy, the calypso coffee fuses a fresh and awakening scent with a delightfully sinful kick of Tia Maria.

If you are looking for subtle yet immensely satisfying Indian cuisine, The Raja is an ideal choice for a pleasant night out or a relaxing night in.

Prices are more than reasonable as well — all starters are less than £5 and most main courses range between £6 and £11.

The Raja can be found at 4 High Street, Oxshott. There is also a 10% discount on collection. Opening times are noon to 2.30pm and 5.30pm to 11.30pm.

For more information and bookings, call 01372 844116 or 01372 844464.



The Raja restaurant in Oxshott.

A warm Italian welcome awaits

A WARM welcome and traditional Italian cuisine await you at Vecchia Roma in Bridge Street, Hampton Court.

Diners can choose from a menu featuring the best in traditional Italian food, as well as a number of international specialities.

The selection of mouth-watering dishes includes Cozze, mussels sauteed in olive oil, wine, onion, tomato and garlic, and Battuta Di Manzo, thin-cut sirloin steak cooked in white wine sauce with crushed black peppers, mushrooms and a touch of cream.

Bookings are now being taken for Christmas. For more information, phone 020 8979 5490.



Vecchia Roma restaurant in Bridge Street, Hampton Court.



The Good Earth in Esher is one of the borough's favourite Chinese restaurants. Call in to 14-18 High Street, Esher, or call 01372 462489 for more information.



Visit La Capanna for the finest Italian dining experience in the most picturesque of settings. La Capanna is open every day for lunch and dinner and has a private car park. Phone 01932 862121 for more details, call in at 48 High Street, Cobham, or book your table online at www.lacapanna.co.uk.

LA CAPANNA

"For the finest Italian dining experience in the most picturesque of settings."

Perfect for that romantic dinner for two, a family celebration or business entertainment"

"La Capanna must boast the prettiest interior of any restaurant I have ever dined in."
- David Billington, Hello Magazine

La Capanna Special Menu ~ 2 courses £28.95
From Monday to Saturday 2 course Lunch Menu **£16.95**
Sunday 3 course Lunch **£22.95 Children's Menu £12.00**

BOOK NOW FOR CHRISTMAS' AND NEW YEAR'S PARTIES
See Menus online: www.lacapanna.co.uk

La Capanna is open everyday for lunch and dinner. Private Car Park
48 High Street, Cobham, Surrey
Tel: 01932 862121

Book your table online on our website: www.lacapanna.co.uk
Party bookings and business account customers are welcome

All bills are subject to a 12.5% service charge. All major credit cards accepted. Cheques are accepted up to the value of a valid Cheque Guarantee Card.

大三元 THE GOOD EARTH

The Good Earth Restaurants are designed for your utmost comfort, whether you come in for a simple meal or an Imperial Banquet.

★
SPECIAL LUNCH MENU
Monday - Saturday only. 12 - 2.30 p.m.
1-course meal £7.95. 2-course meal £9.95

★

Our reputation will ensure you the highest standard possible in Chinese Regional Cuisine

★

We have a Home Delivery Service within approx 3 miles of this branch!

★

ESHER: 14-18 High St., Esher, KT10 9RT
Tel: 01372 462489/465588

OTHER RESTAURANTS:
KNIGHTSBRIDGE: 233 Brompton Rd., London SW3. Tel: 020 7584 3658
MILL HILL: 143-145 The Broadway, London NW7. Tel: 020 8959 70112

TAKE-AWAY EXPRESSES:
RICHMOND: 6 Friars Stile Road, Surrey TW10. Tel: 020 8948 3399
WEST HAMPSHIRE: 335 West End Lane, NW6. Tel: 020 7433 3111
WANDSWORTH: 116 St. John's Hill, London SW11. Tel: 020 8228 3140
WIMBLEDON: 81 Ridgeway, London SW19. Tel: 020 8944 8883

VECCHIA ROMA

SET MENUS

Lunch from **£10.95** for 2 courses
Sunday Lunch **£14.95**
Dinner from **£13.95** for 2 courses

Do come and try the set menu or the a la carte. They will delight both your palate and your wallet!

Telephone for reservation and any more information
020 8979 5490 or 020 8941 5337
55 Bridge Road, Hampton Court, East Molesey, Surrey

The
Raja
Restaurant

Come and Enjoy
Fine Indian Cuisine in
a Relaxed Atmosphere
- Fully Licensed -
Air Conditioned

4 High Street, Oxshott
Surrey KT22 0JN

Opening Hours:
12noon - 2.30pm
5.30pm-11.30pm

01372 844116
01372 844464

TAKE-AWAY SERVICE AVAILABLE