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INTERVIEW
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winner Richard Jones
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SURREY LIFE

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10

HEAD FOR THE HILLS SPECIAL

of the best spring walks

Places we love in

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WENTWORTH

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MILFORD

£3.80



Editor's letter

ACCORDING to a recent study by the *The British Journal of Sports*, a child's level of physical activity begins to tail off age seven, coinciding with the peak age of obesity cases in children. As an adult working in a job that requires a lot of time sitting in front of a computer, I'm all too aware of the perils an increasingly sedentary lifestyle can bring. While I admit I wasn't the biggest PE or sports fan when I was growing up, I could rarely wait to get outside and 'run and play' with my friends and so it saddens me to hear that the next generation is becoming progressively less active so early on in childhood.

One sure-fire way of helping children to be more active is to encourage them to get involved with the Surrey Youth Games, which take place next month. The Olympic-style, multi-sport competition features all manner of physical activity, from squash to swimming, and badminton to boccia (I wasn't sure either but apparently it's similar to bowls). The initiative is open to any child between the ages of seven and 16 and doesn't cost a penny to take part. Children can register at activesurrey.com/SYG.

Ahead of the games, our Lifestyle Coach, Ben Short, has also got some great tips on how to help youngsters – from babies, right through to teenagers – keep active. Turn to page 121 for his latest column.

If you too want to make the most of the brighter weather and get more active in the open air, then there are plenty of other ideas in this issue to inspire you to get moving. May is National Walking Month and what better way to incorporate more physical movement into your lifestyle than by walking.

Whether it's a short stroll in your lunch break (or in the evenings now that they stay lighter for longer) or a more lengthy ramble through the countryside on a Sunday afternoon, in Surrey, we are spoilt for choice when it comes to routes to explore. We've picked some of our favourites on page 43.

As well as our usual suggestions for getting out and about this month, I'm incredibly excited that



ADRIAN DAVIES/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Surrey has an abundance of walking routes to explore

bestselling author, Guildford girl (and a bit of a heroine of mine), Adele Parks, has joined the team here at *Surrey Life*. Each month, she'll be offering her take on days out across the county in her column *Are we nearly there yet?*, which debuts on page 53. I do hope you enjoy...



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MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS



CHRISTINE HOWARD

Christine, or Chris as she is better known, wears a ridiculous number of hats including being chairman of the Surrey Hills Society and Visit Surrey. She writes our regular walks feature and Head for the Hills column, which this month has been extended to a special on page 43, incorporating 10 of the best spring walks our county has to offer.



ANTONIO FALCO

Our Doing the Business columnist is the new board chairman of Young Enterprise Surrey. Business consultant and small business campaigner, Antonio loves nothing better than helping small businesses to thrive. He talks about how important it is to incorporate young people into the mix on page 133.



ADELE PARKS

Adele has published 16 bestselling novels in 16 years. Award-winning, she's sold three million copies of her work in the UK alone and her books are translated into 26 languages. Her latest novel, *The Stranger in My Home*, is now available in paperback. She lives in Guildford with her husband and teenage son.



“ARE we nearly there yet?”, one of the most irritating phrases a parent has to endure, up there with “she/he started it”.

My son is 16, it strikes me that we are nearly there, in terms of launching him into adulthood. I was given a timely reminder of just how far we’ve come when I spent a day with my friend and her twin six-year-olds. She’d been moaning that she was frazzled and her recent move from London to Southampton had left her feeling a bit at sea (excuse the pun). She grumpily complained that I wouldn’t understand. “Surrey is practically London, but green,” she said. I felt duty bound to share my cornucopia of good fortune and invited her for the weekend.

I thought it would be a brilliant idea to visit Bockett’s Farm – a firm favourite for my son when he was younger and who doesn’t love squishy play areas and ponies? The obvious bonus of keeping the boys out of my home was startlingly apparent to me and, no doubt, my Frazzled Friend. I dismissed the idea of packing a picnic, promising the delights of the tea room at Bockett’s.

We had not travelled 100 yards before Twin One asked, without any sense of irony, “Are we nearly there yet?” Twin Two was not to be outdone, “I’m bored”. I started to wax lyrical about the delights that were in store: animal feeding, pig racing and goat milking. “Any Pokémon?” asked Twin One. “No,” I admit. “Or Ninjas?” asked Twin Two. “There is a tractor, you can have a ride on that,” I said. They eyed me shiftily and picked up their I-thingsies.

A tense birth

I crossed my fingers that the working farm had held its charms a decade on. And oh my, yes it had. Besides the fact they could, and did, run around like mad things on the indoor soft play area and outdoor adventure area until they were hot and sweaty, there were numerous other things available to entertain them. The Pokémon hunting ninja’s cast aside their i-thingsies to feed baby



Escape to the country

Our new columnists, bestselling author Adele Parks, convinces a frazzled friend and twins to accompany her on a trip to the farm

animals, bounce on trampolines and dress scarecrows. We were even ‘fortunate’ enough to see a lamb being born. It’s more tense than you’d imagine. Undignified for the ewe and not for the squeamish (which I am). “Why is that man putting his hand up the sheep’s bum?” demanded Twin One, causing his brother to squeal with laughter. “To help the lamb,” I replied vaguely. “Why?” “Why what?” “Why does that help. I wouldn’t think it was a help.” I offered to buy ice

“Who doesn’t love squishy play areas and ponies?”

creams as a diversion. We stayed six hours, which gave Frazzled Friend time enough to un-wrinkle her forehead and declare the outing good value for money. We drove home in silence, Frazzled Friend no doubt contemplating a well-earned glass of wine, the boys exhausted and content.

“It’s called membrane, you know. Not goo,” commented Twin One. “The farmer lady told me.” He looked at his brother, covered in smears of ice cream and mud. “Membrane face,” he giggled. ♦

Above: Lambs at Bocketts Farm