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19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

1st generation UCA graduates celebrated

15 April 2024



Two graduates from the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Epsom, Surrey have been named in Universities UK's 100 Faces campaign, celebrating the stories and achievements of first-generation students.

McKenna Marsden and **Troy Hunter** feature in the campaign's arts and sports talents category alongside Happy Valley star, Amit Shah, the crime writer Sir Ian James Rankin OBE, and BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2022, Beth Mead. All 100 graduates listed by Universities UK were the first in their families to attend university.

"Going to university gave me a lot more independence and taught me new skills, developing my abilities in a subject which was once just a passion," said McKenna, who is a BA (Hons) Fashion graduate. He was chosen by British Vogue as one of its top 50 emerging designers, showcased his graduate collection at London Fashion Week, and interned at Christopher Kane.

He said: "University gave me stability while allowing me to break into the fashion industry, leading to many big achievements. I don't think I would have had the success I did without studying at university."

Originally from Newcastle, McKenna's working-class background was the main inspiration for his final graduate fashion collection and continues to influence his designs.

"Anything is possible if you believe it and work hard for it no matter how many setbacks you may have, if you believe you can achieve your goals you can," McKenna added.

Troy, who graduated from UCA in 2013 with a degree in BA (Hons) Film Production, has gone on to write episodes for the hit Netflix show Sex Education and an episode of Eastenders. He was also nominated for Outstanding Breakthrough Creative (Television) at the NAACP Awards.

Troy said: "Studying film production at UCA made a huge difference in my life, it gave me the confidence and determination to continue pursuing a career in the TV and Film industry when people around me were telling me otherwise."

His success continues in the form of a short film called Mya and his debut play Black Pride, as well as a television adaptation of the same name, with Maia Pictures.

New research commissioned by Universities UK revealed the transformative impact of going to university, with almost three-quarters of first-in-the-family students agreeing their degree gave them the confidence to apply for jobs without feeling like an imposter.

Vivienne Stern MBE, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said: "There are those who say that too many people go to university. I disagree. These stories tell you why. In this country, you are still twice as likely to go to university if you are from the wealthiest background, compared to the least wealthy. That's not right.

New born enters world by rare EXIT

15 April 2024



A 50 strong team of specialist medics crammed into an operation theatre recently to carry out a globally rare procedure on a newborn baby and save his life.

Little Freddie Verschueren was delivered at St George's hospital in South West London using the Ex-utero Intrapartum Treatment (EXIT) procedure which delivers babies who could potentially have serious challenges at birth.

This procedure is used when an unborn child has an obstruction in their airway which means they would be unable to breathe independently once they are removed from the placenta.

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Professor Asma Khalil, consultant obstetrician at St George's, led the entire operation, which involved about 50 medics and other staff in the operating theatre.

She said: "An EXIT procedure involves a large number of healthcare professionals from various backgrounds including an obstetrician, fetal medicine specialist, an anaesthetist, a paediatric anaesthetist, a paediatric ENT surgeon, midwives and the neonatal team, as well as other theatre staff."

In little Freddie's case there was a cyst on his tongue that could potentially block his airways it was detected in a scan during his mum's second trimester. The team made an incision in mum Anna's tummy and delivered Freddie's head and shoulders first, leaving him attached to the placenta and able to breathe.

They established an airway so he could breathe independently before delivering the rest of him. Freddie weighed 6lbs 8oz (3.1kg) at birth and was able to go home with his parents Anna and Peter Verschueren a healthy baby.

Anna said: "We've been incredibly impressed with the service we have had at St George's, at every step it has been outstanding care. When we found out we needed to have the procedure we felt in such safe hands with the experts at St George's. We never doubted their skill and advice."

Professor Khalil added: "I am very grateful to the efforts by every member of our large team who ensured that we delivered the best care to Anna and Freddie. Saving babies' lives and caring for the parents during challenging times is the most rewarding aspect of my job."

An EXIT procedure is extremely rare. However, despite its global rarity this is the second time it has been carried out in St George's this year.

Dr Richard Jennings, Group Chief Medical Officer for St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group, said: "St George's is one of the few hospitals in the country that carries out this rare procedure and saves the lives of many babies. I am pleased to hear that Freddie is doing well thanks to our dedicated and skilled teams and everyone at St George's wishes him and his family all the best for the future."

11th April 2024

15 April 2024

NEWS

Auto fire alarms need a 999 before fire service respond in Surrey



9 April 2024

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service has changed the way it now responds to automatic fire alarm call outs (AFAs) to residential and domestic properties, by only attending if there's been … READ MORE

NATURE NEWS

Ewell's wetlands to be celebrated on an open day



9 April 2024

The South East Rivers Trust (SERT) is inviting local residents to come and celebrate the newly-createdChamber Mead wetlands with a day of family fun, activities and guided tours. The celebration … READ MORE

RUGBY SPORTS

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London Calling Time with a Sutton & Epsom Win



9 April 2024

Sutton & Epsom RFC 12 Reeds Weybridge 10. Saturday 6th April. As is the format of league rugby the fixtures conclude by playing the opposition firstencountered on the opening day … READ MORE

COUNCIL FINANCES NEWS

Surrey Councils holding unclaimed tax refunds

Council	Value of refunds owed	Number of accounts owed
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	Failed to share the requested data	
Elmbridge Borough Council	Failed to share the requested data	
Tandridge District Council	Failed to share the requested data	
Guildford Borough Council (rolling)	£323,769.96	1,095
Spelthorne Borough Council	£307,273.08	1,245
Mole Valley District Council	£249,459.01	802
Reigate & Banstead Borough Council	£218,883.91	765
Waverley Borough Council	£157,452.49	566
Woking Borough Council	£148,046.16	566
Surrey Heath Borough Council	£83,060.34	293
Runnymede Borough Council	£5,777.17	4

9 April 2024

Councils in Surrey are holding nearly £1.5million in overpaid tax that can be claimed back. People who moved to a different borough after paying their tax are supposed to be … READ MORE

HEALTH NEWS

Virtual care to rise under ambulance plan



8 April 2024

Over a third of South East Coast Ambulance (SECAmb) service responses will be done remotely in a new five-year strategy. (Here “remotely” means by video call or telephone rather than … READ MORE

HOUSING NEWS

Floods with silver linings for Guildford’s housing targets?



8 April 2024

Guildford has been given the “biggest opportunity” to transform itself in a century. The Environment Agency is looking into an expanded flood prevention scheme that would save homes and businesses … READ MORE

BUSINESS NEWS

Big employment hub coming to Leatherhead



8 April 2024

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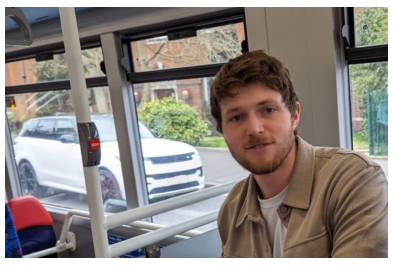
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The future of a possibly major employment hub in Leatherhead has been given a huge “vote of confidence”. Four new buildings and 13 industrial warehouse units will be built in … READ MORE

NEWS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Taking a ride on Epsom’s new S2 bus



6 April 2024

More than most in the capital, South Londoners notice when the bus timetables change. Whether this stems from a love of the iconic red fleet or an over-reliance on the … READ MORE

CRIME NATURE

Tree felling foul of the law



6 April 2024

The culprits who illegally chopped down more than 100 protected trees and damaged seven others have been fined nearly £20,000, Woking Borough Council said. A landowner, together with its contractor … READ MORE

HEALTH NEWS

Psychiatric bed shortages in Surrey



4 April 2024

A man tragically took his own life in Surrey after a mental health relapse, prompting a coroner to warn of a shortage of psychiatric beds in Surrey hospitals. Jonathan Harris, … READ MORE

COUNCIL NEWS

New Chief Executive for County



4 April 2024

Surrey County Council has appointed Terence Herbert as its new Chief Executive. Terence, currently Chief Executive at Wiltshire Council, was chosen after a robust recruitment process to find a replacement … READ MORE

Ewell’s wetlands to be celebrated on an open day

15 April 2024

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The South East Rivers Trust (SERT) is inviting local residents to come and celebrate the newly-created **Chamber Mead** wetlands with a day of family fun, activities and guided tours.

The celebration day on Saturday 20th April will give nature lovers the chance to add plants to this critical pollution buster for the **River Hogsmil**l, a precious chalk stream.

Families will also have the chance to learn about the health of the river by taking part in riverfly demonstrations, a scavenger hunt and nature craft activities. Guided tours of the wetlands will also be part of the day, which runs from 11am to 3pm.

The open day begins a fortnight of planting opportunities for schools and community groups. All the plants have been specially selected to absorb pollutants and attract pollinators and an increased range of wildlife across the **Hogsmill Local Nature Reserve**.

The wetlands in **Ewell** now divert urban pollutants from the Green Lanes Stream away from the Hogsmill, one of only 200 chalk streams in the world. Once filtered water is fed back into the river just downstream of the famous Stepping Stones, another 5km of waterway is protected as it flows into south London all the way to the Thames.

Dr Bella Davies, Co-CEO of SERT, said: “We’re thrilled to be giving the community the chance to learn all about Chamber Mead wetlands and crucially give people the chance to complete the project. The public have been very supportive of the wetlands from the start and adding plants is a wonderful opportunity to attract new wildlife not only to the water but the wider nature reserve. This will fulfill the potential of the wetlands to become another jewel in the crown of the reserve and make it an even bigger asset for the community. We’re excited to see the results in years to come on the Hogsmill, which should be a haven for brown trout, water voles and native crayfish, among other species which need our help in recovering their numbers.”

Councillor **John Beckett**, (RA Auriol) Chair of the Environment Committee at **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**, said: “We are overjoyed to be able to join SERT on the Chamber Mead Wetlands Open Day, to celebrate the fantastic work that has been done here to boost biodiversity and reduce pollution in the Hogsmill River. I hope that residents will join us to help complete the project, which will ensure the Hogsmill River Local Nature Reserve is a place where wildlife and nature can thrive, and one that we can enjoy for many years to come.”

Supported by the Hogsmill Catchment Partnership, the project has received funding from The Coca-Cola Foundation, Natural England (through the Species Recovery Programme), the Environment Agency, Surrey County Council, the Rivers Trust, the Zoological Society of London, Garfield Weston Foundation and Thames Water, with in-kind support from the landowner Epsom & Ewell Borough Council. The new wetlands are part of the wider Replenish programme in partnership with the Coca-Cola Foundation and the Rivers Trust. The aim of Replenish is to restore millions of litres of water in this and other local catchments, in turn improving biodiversity.

Speeches will take place at 11:30am- 12noon:

These will be delivered by **Jackie King**, Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Dr Bella Davies, Co-CEO of the South East Rivers Trust, and Borough Mayor Cllr **Robert Geleit** (Labour Court) who will also cut the ribbon to officially open the wetlands.

Plants such as yellow flag iris have been chosen for their ability to take up nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous. Meanwhile ragged robin and purple loosestrife will attract species such as butterflies, bees and damselfies, while brooklime, typical in chalk stream settings, will offer shelter for tadpoles and sticklebacks.

Related reports:

Chalking up a victory for the Hogsmill

“Garden of Eden” coming to West Ewell as Wetlands Plan is approved. Will this stop pollution?

Voles let loose on the Hogsmill

About the South East Rivers Trust:

The South East Rivers Trust is an environmental charity bringing rivers and their catchments back to life. Working in 12 river catchments across the South East, the Trust connects communities and mobilises citizen scientists to educate and engage people on the importance of rivers, and supports and challenges stakeholders, businesses and individuals to protect them. The Trust uses data and evidence to target positive action and works with nature to make rivers healthy again. This includes tackling water pollution, addressing water scarcity, reconnecting rivers and restoring habitats.

www.southeastriverstrust.org/

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4th April 2024

15 April 2024

COUNCIL PLANNING

Enforcing planning enforcement in Epsom and Ewell



29 March 2024

In a comprehensive analysis of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council‘s planning enforcement procedures, a recent audit report titled “EPSOM & EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2023-24,” conducted … READ MORE

COUNCIL HOUSING

Stoneleigh library flats for homeless



29 March 2024

Two flats above a library are set to be used as temporary accommodation for homeless people, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council decided yesterday (March 26). Demand for temporary accommodation is … READ MORE

COUNCIL FINANCES

Was County HQ sold for a song?



29 March 2024

Surrey County Council faces scrutiny over its £25 million sale of a former headquarters site after it was revealed it could have a gross development value of £250 million once … READ MORE

CHRIS GRAYLING WESTMINSTER

Unstable world, religious discrimination, the Local Plan and trains



28 March 2024

We live, sadly, in an increasingly unstable world. The situation in Israel and Gaza has been and continues to be horrendous. There is a huge international diplomatic effort, involving the … READ MORE

COUNCIL PLANNING

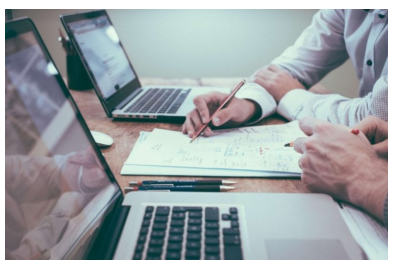
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Fast track your planning application at a premium



28 March 2024

From 1 April 2024, applicants submitting certain planning applications in Epsom & Ewell will be able to choose to ‘fast track’ their application. Developed to meet customer demands, the new … READ MORE

COUNCIL FINANCES

How many £s does it take to change a Council light bulb?



28 March 2024

The cost of changing Council light bulbs was the subject of some concern at Tuesday 26th March’s meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. … READ MORE

HEALTH NEWS

Cancer patient getting the right royal treatment



28 March 2024

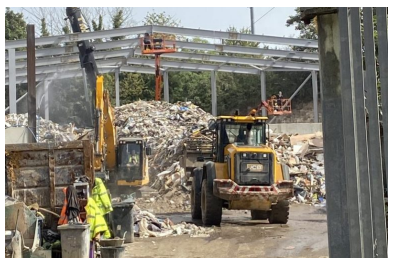
The first cancer patient set to undergo a revolutionary new procedure that could cut treatment time to almost a quarter said it was a “ privilege” to be given the … READ MORE

28th March 2024

15 April 2024

COUNCIL TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Chalk Pit action – a tale of two committees



27 March 2024

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council grappled with the pressing issue of noise and dust pollution stemming from the waste recycling centre, Chalk Pit off College Road in Epsom. Residents’ longstanding grievances … READ MORE

ARTS CULTURE

Music for our times

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26 March 2024

Shelagh Godwin reviews last Saturday’s Epsom Chamber Choir concert at St Martin’s Church. Imagine writing a piece that means a lot to you and then never hearing it performed. This … READ MORE

RUGBY SPORTS

Sutton and Epsom leapfrog Old Colfeians in the end

26 March 2024

Old Colfeians 22 – Sutton and Epsom RFC 31. Saturday 23rd March. In bygone years this was a regular league fixture and Saturday bore witness to thesixteenth such encounter between … READ MORE

COUNCIL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Council cancel culture?



26 March 2024

Some opposition Councillors on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council have voiced concerns over the apparently high rate of cancellation of policy and scrutiny committees of the Council on which they … READ MORE

CRIME GINA MILLER WESTMINSTER

Gina Miller Urges Ecocide Criminalization



26 March 2024

Gina Miller, the leader of the True & Fair Party, and her Party’s Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom and Ewell, has called for the criminalization of ecocide, highlighting concerns over … READ MORE

ARTS CULTURE

Ashtead Choral Society give a lesson in three Rs



25 March 2024

Jane Pickles reviews a concert given by the Ashtead Choral Society in Epsom’s St Martin’s Church on Saturday 16th March that included works from Rameau, Rossini and Rutter. I don’t … READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

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Generous in defeat

V

24 March 2024

Epsom & Ewell FC 1-4 Horley Town. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 23rd March 2024 A strange contest took place at the Madgwick on Saturday as we hosted … READ MORE

EDUCATION SPORTS

Epsom squash team stand the squeeze



24 March 2024

When five girls from Rosebery School, Epsom formed the school’s first ever squash team just six months ago with a view to entering the England Squash National Schools Championships 2023/24, … READ MORE

LOCAL HISTORY

The Great Escape – New Unpublished Evidence



24 March 2024

A man from Ewell was involved in the Great Escape. He was caught and executed. 80 years to the day of the Great Escape The History Detectorist tells his story. … READ MORE

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

NESCOT marks 70 years with a tree



22 March 2024

Nescot (North East Surrey College of Technology) in Ewell marked seven decades since its official opening with a commemorative tree planting in the college grounds today (22.03.24). The Mayor Epsom … READ MORE

ARTS BUSINESS

More than a Hollywood Moment for Surrey



21 March 2024

Amazon MGM Studios and Netflix have taken up residence in the completed expansion of Shepperton Studios. The development makes Shepperton Studios the second biggest film studio in the world with … READ MORE

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CRIME POLICING

Crime rising on Surrey farms



21 March 2024

Surrey farmers have called for police to take rural crime ‘seriously’ as it pledges to crackdown on rising incidents. The National Farmers’ Union (NFU) have welcomed Surrey Police’s commitment to tackle … READ MORE

ARTS CULTURE

A concert of English music in Epsom



21 March 2024

Peter Lutton reviews a concert given by Epsom Choral Society of English music conducted by their Musical Director, Julian Collings. The concert took place Saturday 9th March at St Martin’s … READ MORE

COUNCIL FINANCES

‘Crisis point’ in local government funding



21 March 2024

Parties from across the spectrum called on the next government to change its funding model for local councils, claiming it is “not fit for purpose”. Councillor Robert Evans (Labour)

Music for our times

15 April 2024



Shelagh Godwin reviews last Saturday’s Epsom Chamber Choir concert at St Martin’s Church.

Imagine writing a piece that means a lot to you and then never hearing it performed. This was the fate of **Maximilian Steinberg**’s Passion Week. Composed in the 1920s just as the Soviet regime was banning any religious music, the piece was published in Paris at the behest of the composer in 1927, and scores eventually made it to the United States, but it was not until 2014 that a complete performance and an award-winning recording took place. It has had its enthusiasts since, one of whom, Epsom Chamber Choir’s conductor Jack Apperley, presented a performance on Saturday 23rd March in St Martin’s Parish Church in Epsom.

Based largely on Russian Orthodox chants, Passion Week could not be more different from the sacred music composed by Steinberg’s contemporary and fellow-student Igor Stravinsky. Indeed, it draws more from the influence of his father-in-law Rimsky-Korsakov. It is more reflective in mood than Rachmaninov’s more celebrated Vespers, and the stepwise movement of Orthodox chant pervades the work and the general mood. The texts are Church Slavonic hymns for Holy

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Week, and are reflective tableaux rather than narrative. The eleven sections tend to sound somewhat the same, but there are great moments, enhanced on Saturday by the Epsom Chamber Choir's well-co-ordinated ensemble and effective use of excellent soloists from within the choir. Like much Russian choral music of the time, it abounds in low notes for the basses, who dealt with that challenge magnificently.

Interspersed with the hymns of Passion Week were the five deeply moving spirituals from **Tippett**'s A Child of our Time, which received superb and moving performances from the choir.

A more unfamiliar interjection was **Owain Park**'s Phos hilaron (Hail gladdening Light), a complex setting of psalms and Greek liturgy. I say complex because it was very difficult to follow the words! It did achieve the desired effect, as did the extremely evocative encore, **John Rutter**'s heart-rending Prayer for Ukraine, sung in Ukrainian. Entirely appropriate in view of the tragedies of the previous few days.

Shelagh Godwin

Ashtead Choral Society give a lesson in three Rs

15 April 2024



Jane Pickles reviews a concert given by the Ashtead Choral Society in Epsom's St Martin's Church on Saturday 16th March that included works from Rameau, Rossini and Rutter.

I don't know about you, but when I open my Spotify application to listen to music I am immediately drawn to the familiar where one finds comfort and pleasure. The glory of this programme was to take the audience on a spiritual journey from the less familiar Catholic Baroque to the well-known glory of the modern English church tradition.

You will find it difficult to find a recording of **Rameau**'s Blow the Trumpet. One wonders why as this joyful opening set the scene invigoratingly for the evening, bringing together the full forces of choir, organ and soprano, Helen Pritchard. If you were at the last ACS concert, you will have enjoyed the rich, operatic dramaticism of **Rossini**'s Petite Messe Solennelle. This time we were treated to three of his glorious motets in the same vein, with Musical Director Dr Andrew Storey making the most of the sacred setting and acoustic of St Martin of Tours and the powerful shifts in expression offered by Rossini.

Helen Pritchard's solo performance moved us firmly into the early 20 th century with a rare opportunity to experience Vierne's Les Angelus song cycle in which John Carnelley's shimmering organ playing underpinned Pritchard's effortlessly lyrical appeals to the Virgin Mary. This set the scene for another rarely heard classic: the intense homophonic simplicity of Gorecki's incantation Totus Tuus. Storey created and sustained a mesmerising soundscape, still yet kinetic, and crowned with a resounding silence at the end of this evocative chant to the Virgin Mary.

Faure's Pavane and Cantique de Jean Racine brought us back to the familiar and foreshadowed the last stage in the evening's journey, **Rutter**'s well-known Requiem. Rutter went to France to view the original manuscript of Faure's Requiem before he wrote his own, and Storey illustrated exactly why Rutter's offering is a modern classic.

The choir dealt purposefully with the anguished chromatic calls for eternal rest that open the work, before resolving into the simple, lyrical beauty of Rutter's requiem theme. In the psalm setting movements – Out of the Deep and The Lord is My Shepherd – the choir shifted seamlessly from simple lines shared between the parts, to glorious harmonies and well-delivered choral recitatives. Pritchard gave us grace and purity in Rutter's Pie Jesu, soaring to heaven and back again from the pulpit.

Storey gave a blazing Sanctus, an Angus Dei which tore at the heartstrings as he drove a crescendo of pleas to the Lamb of God from choir, and, finally, resolution and rest through the spare lines of the Lux Aeterna.

All in all, tour of Europe, a tour of musical epochs, and a tour for the soul. Storey must have tours on his mind as he mentioned that ACS will be taking much of this repertoire on tour to Italy later this year. Bravo!

Jane Pickles

Photo Credit: Sue Weeks.

Epsom squash team stand the squeeze

15 April 2024

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When five girls from **Rosebery School**, **Epsom** formed the school's first ever squash team just six months ago with a view to entering the England Squash National Schools Championships 2023/24, little did they know how far they would go in this tough and prestigious tournament. Being a state school with no on-site squash facilities, they knew they would be competing against a lot of private schools around the country, many with their own squash courts and dedicated coaches. They were, however, all keen squash players and junior members of **Ebbisham Sports Club** in Epsom where they trained on a regular basis.

By dint of their considerable success in Stages 1 and 2 of the Championships, held respectively at Limpsfield Club in November 2023 and **Epsom College** in January 2024, the Rosebery School Girls Squash Team were delighted to learn that they had done enough to qualify for the Finals held in Birmingham on 14th March. One of the top eight teams from around the country to reach the Finals, the Rosebery Squash Team battled hard through three very tough matches during the course of a long day, with some excellent individual match wins and some very close losses. Whilst they came extremely close to beating one of the other schools, in the end the Rosebery team had to settle for final place, but did so with a smile on their faces and knowing they had given the Championships their all.

Gillian Mead

NESCOT marks 70 years with a tree

15 April 2024



Nescot (North East Surrey College of Technology) in Ewell marked seven decades since its official opening with a commemorative tree planting in the college grounds today (22.03.24). The Mayor Epsom & Ewell, Councillor **Rob Geleit** (Labour Court Ward) planted a silver birch along with **Julie Kapsalis**, Principal and CEO of Nescot and **Chris Muller**, Chair of Nescot Corporation. They were joined by three students, Donna from our Supported Internship programme; Kirsty from Access to Nursing and Anna from Catering who have all had a successful term and made an impression.

Speaking at the tree planting, Julie Kapsalis, said: "It is wonderful to have students take part in this historic moment as without them and the many thousands who walked through these gates before them, we would not be here.

"As we reflect on 70 years of Nescot today, by planting this beautiful silver birch tree we are also looking to the future of education here, which we hope will be sustainable, ever-growing and long-lived. Maybe in 70 years' time – 2094 – people here will be looking back on photos from today, admiring this tree in its full maturity, and be reflecting on education and what Nescot means to them."

Marking the commemorative event with the tree planting, the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Cllr Rob Geleit, said: "It is an honour to be here today to plant this commemorative tree to mark Nescot's 70th anniversary. I hope in 70 years' time someone similar will be doing the same thing."

Julie added, "When this site was formally opened on 22 March 1954, the world was very different and courses such as Home Economics, Flower Arrangement, Guest House Management and Typing were on the curriculum, along with a number of more scientific and technical subjects. Today, our curriculum includes learning opportunities in electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, robotics, gaming, sectors which could barely have been imagined in 1954.

"We can be proud of the role that Nescot plays, offering increased opportunities for people from all walks of life to gain the skills and qualifications they need for a successful career and continuing to provide learning for the local community in Epsom & Ewell and our surrounding region."

Students and staff took part in a variety of events throughout the day and during the week organised by various curriculum areas that included activities, displays and even a 1950s lesson for some of our plumbing apprentices to mark Nescot's 70 years.

Nescot began life as Ewell County Technical College, with the first students beginning courses in September 1953 and the establishment being formally opened the following March. Explore the college's rich history, evolution of education and community engagement on our website here.

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The fellowship of NESCOT

NESCOT Saturday academies for the young

Coursera & NESCOT to enhance further education

Epsom and Ewell's Technology College 70 years young

Photo: (Centre) The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Rob Geleit at the commemorative tree planting of a silver birch to mark Nescot's 70th anniversary along with (left to right), Catering student Anna, Principal and CEO of Nescot, Julie Kapsalis, Access to Nursing student, Kirsty and Chair of Nescot Corporation, Chris Muller. Credit: Nescot

A concert of English music in Epsom

15 April 2024



Peter Lutton reviews a concert given by Epsom Choral Society of English music conducted by their Musical Director, Julian Collings. The concert took place Saturday 9th March at St Martin's Church, Epsom.

The concert opened with Elgar's The Spirit of the Lord, the atmospheric opening to his oratorio The Apostles, contains several themes heard throughout the work. There are one or two tricky moments but it is very direct in its unison passages and with its majestically long melodic line. The choir ensemble throughout was good and the climax was very effective, Elgar's word setting allowing real clarity of text. Just occasionally I felt that a little more support in the choir's breathing would have lifted the line, but this was a strong start.

John Ireland's Greater Love Hath No Man again has a strong melodic line and clear presentation of the text. The opening tenor line was well projected with a good vocal blend and it was encouraging to see a choral society with a healthy number of men, some younger – one or two of the latter watching the conductor assiduously. Only once was the ensemble not quite together but the early climax was powerful and was particularly dramatic as it subsided. The Soprano solo was excellently projected and well balanced by the Baritone. The change of tempo was smooth and the build up to the choral climax suitably staged. The arrival at the final climax was very effective, followed by a well-supported soft closing section, though I would have liked to hear more bass in the final bars. The emotional circumstances of this work's early performances (during and after WW 1) resonate today as much as ever and this presentation was in the best English tradition.

Herbert Howells' Like as the Hart is one of four small-scale anthems written in war time when he directed the reduced forces of the chapel music at St John's College, Cambridge. The tenors and basses produced a warm sound at the start and the first tutti was suitably intense. A few more consonants from the sopranos would help in the acoustics of St Martin's but the Piu Animato went well as did the climax on 'Where is now thy God?' The Tenor and Bass were better supported than the Sopranos but the latter handled very well the demanding descant which accompanies the return of the opening material. Bliss indeed was the final tutti with its ecstatic solo Soprano, followed by the atmospheric ending. A memorable performance of a great piece, an all-time favourite of your scribe.

Gerald Finzi's Lo the Full and Final Sacrifice is a work on a much greater scale. After the organ introduction (full marks to the organist, Peter Jaekel, as this is a demanding piece on any instrument) the first choral entry was excellent despite a hint of flatness at the end of the section. Again, we have a piece where the words can be heard and understood – we heard them clearly. Though the next entries were exposed, they were confident and accurate, not least the altos with the low start. While the G flat section wobbled slightly, the Soprano entry with (another) big tune was very clear and confident as indeed were the following entries, though the unison on 'Help, Lord' was less united. But these are small points; the performance conveyed the rhapsodic nature of a musical style very suited to the metaphysical poets, not least in the climax on 'Lo the Bread of Life'.

The final work, Stainer's 'The Crucifixion' of 1887 has, as the programme helpfully noted, had its ups and downs. Stainer had rebuilt the reputation of St Paul's Cathedral Choir; in 'The Crucifixion' he encouraged the grass roots of Anglican music.

This performance did full justice to this piece. The soloists gave us the lines with simple directness, as did the choir in its first entries outlining the drama of the scene in the Garden. John Findon sensitively sang the tender solo that provided relief before the final tutti section. The recitative which covered the crucifixion itself was clearly given – the soloists were consistently top-class and

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the solos which followed kept up the intensity, especially in ‘King ever Glorious’. John Findon was very impressive at every level – I have not heard it sung better.

In the final chorus the pent-up tensions of the drama found release, in the brisk tempo and strong dynamic contrasts. There was some lack of clarity in the short ‘Crucify!’ shouts but we got the point. The final pages were well shaped, as well as being tender and dramatic in equal measure and having an effective ending, even though it was pianissimo.

Though we all know the end of the story, it still has the power to move, as this performance of the final recitative and semi-chorus proved. The well-known final hymn leaves us with the hope for the future even though Easter is not mentioned. It was clear that the choir had really enjoyed the whole dramatic progression; the audience certainly did.

Peter Lutton

21st March 2024

15 April 2024

EDUCATION NEWS

Worcester Park school celebrates



20 March 2024

Worcester Park‘s Linden Bridge School caters for 144 students with autism and complex social and communication needs from four to 19-years-old, including 20 in the sixth form and a residential … READ MORE

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Surrey’s vulnerable without expert legal advice



19 March 2024

Surrey has become a ‘legal aid desert’, marked by a critical shortage of support services, leaving vulnerable individuals without expert advice on key issues such as, community care, education, and … READ MORE

RUGBY SPORTS

Sutton and Epsom blow the Cobwebs away



18 March 2024

Sutton & Epsom RFC 49 Cobham 13. Saturday 16th March. Having lost to the basement boys of London Cornish, the Exiles gaining their firstwin on the road for over a … READ MORE

BUSINESS EDUCATION

Surrey Uni taking lead on future network security

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17 March 2024

A national effort is needed to train the next generation of the United Kingdom’s workforce in intelligent and resilient telecom networks, says a world-leading 5G and 6G expert from the … READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

Balham, gateway to the …. defeat

17 March 2024

Balham 2-0 Epsom & Ewell FC. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 16th March 2024. On Saturday we made our second visit of the season to the Mayfields Stadium … READ MORE

COUNCIL SOCIAL CARE

Work starts on Surrey’s respite centre for autistic people



17 March 2024

Families set to benefit from new short breaks accommodation being built in Woking helped mark the official start of work at a milestone groundbreaking ceremony. The purpose-built £5.7m facility will … READ MORE

COUNCIL TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Surrey Borough running ahead on bio-fuel



15 March 2024

The first Surrey council to switch its entire vehicle fleet from diesel to waste fats and cooking oil said the move could cut emissions by about 90 per cent. Runnymede … READ MORE

BUSINESS COMMUNITY SPORTS

Should we be going to…..?



15 March 2024

The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games is back. Following on from the success of the games last year, a wide range of activities are available in Epsom & Ewell again, including … READ MORE

HEALTH NEWS

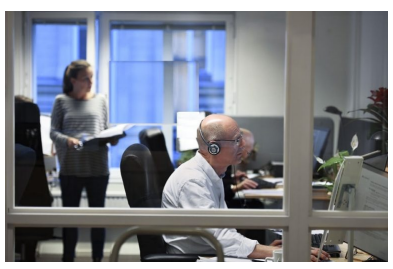
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Better private – public health communications could prevent deaths



15 March 2024

A young woman tragically took her own life in Surrey prompting a warning from a coroner over communication barriers between hospitals. Meghan Chrismas, who suffered from anxiety disorder, depression, complex … READ MORE

ARTS EDUCATION

Soni of Stagecoach Epsom lands lead role



15 March 2024

Vishal Soni student of Stagecoach Performing Arts in Epsom landed the lead role in the National Theatre’s musical production of Roald Dahl’s The Witches. Vishal fought off strong competition in auditions … READ MORE

COMMUNITY NEWS VOLUNTEERS

Fire Assembly for Ukraine



14 March 2024

Saturday 10th March a Bronto Fire Engine came to Epsom’s Market Square outside the Assembly Rooms. A crowd gathered to admire the magnificent machine and wish it well on its … READ MORE

COUNCIL FINANCES POLICING

It’s not a fair cop? Cllr. Coley on police funding



14 March 2024

Did you know that Surrey is the only police area in the country where local residents pay more towards policing than central government? The share of the burden is 55% … READ MORE

COUNCIL FINANCES

“Bonkers but essential” job to cut back jobs?



14 March 2024

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‘Bonkers but essential’ is how a new £75,000 job, running bankrupt Woking Borough Council’s decimated leisure and communities services is being described. Last month, the council cut more than £8million … READ MORE

Fire Assembly for Ukraine

15 April 2024



Saturday 10th March a Bronto Fire Engine came to Epsom’s Market Square outside the Assembly Rooms. A crowd gathered to admire the magnificent machine and wish it well on its journey to a city near the front-line of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Roy Deadman of the charity **Surrey Stands With Ukraine** explained: “Some population centres in Ukraine are so close to the Russian artillery that the missiles can strike before the sirens sound. This fire engine with its long-ladder can rescue lives trapped in apartment blocks.”

Another volunteer with the charity **Nick Budd** said “There has been a tremendous effort to raise the money to purchase this vehicle and the public have been very generous. Our partners in Ukraine are very grateful to be receiving this vital equipment.”

The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell **Robert Geleit** (Labour, Court Ward) was in attendance, confirming a moment of pride for Epsom and Ewell as the headquarters for the humanitarian efforts of SSWU.

Charity director **Lionel Blackman** said: “Post Brexit there remain various bureaucratic obstacles to the engine’s transportation across Europe to the Polish border, where our Ukrainian partners will collect and take through their country to where it is most needed; but we will overcome and we expect it to be in place in a few weeks from now.”

14th March 2024

15 April 2024

COUNCIL FINANCES NEWS

Surrey County Council workers to strike?

13 March 2024

Staff at Surrey County Council could walk out after a “record number” of people backed strike action – unless the authority makes a significantly improved pay offer, unions have said. … READ MORE

HEALTH NEWS

Varying opinions on local maternity services



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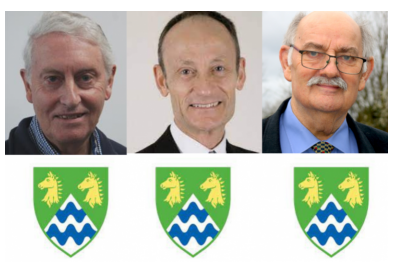
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13 March 2024

Epsom and St Helier Hospital NHS Trust claims it has a ‘strong’ maternity service despite failings in a recent CQC report. Safety in the maternity service was rated ‘inadequate’ in a … READ MORE

COMMUNITY COUNCIL VOLUNTEERS

Civic awards at civic reception



12 March 2024

The Epsom and Ewell Mayor’s civic reception took place at Bourne Hall, Ewell on Friday 8th March. The “great and the good” of the Borough, including Member of Parliament Chris Grayling, … READ MORE

NEWS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

New Bus Route for S2 through the Borough



12 March 2024

The transport landscape in East Ewell has seen a significant improvement with the inauguration of Bus Route S2. Commencing operations on 2nd March 2024, the S2 service now runs seven … READ MORE

COUNCIL FINANCES

Local Government monopoly board at play?



12 March 2024

Surrey County Council has added another building to its property portfolio after buying the Victoria Gate site from Woking Borough Council in a deal that will net the bankrupt authority … READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

Salts rescue a point from the Kiln

10 March 2024

Redhill 1-1 Epsom & Ewell FC. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 9th March 2024 An 85th minute equaliser from Zach Ingham-Wright earned us a well-deserved point from a … READ MORE

COUNCIL FINANCES

Boats on the canal “your time is up”?



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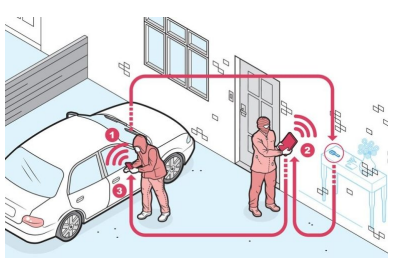
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9 March 2024

Basingstoke Canal could stop leisure activities like boat hire and camping because they’re not financially viable. The 32-mile-long Basingstoke Canal was jointly acquired by Hampshire and Surrey County Councils in … READ MORE

CRIME NEWS

Surrey “relay” car thieves sent down



9 March 2024

Four members of an organised crime group (OCG) responsible for the theft of 53 high value vehicles in Surrey and the South-East have been sentenced to a total of 12.5 … READ MORE

COMMUNITY GUEST COLUMN

Chinn up for women



9 March 2024

On International Women’s Day (Friday 8th March) and Epsom and Ewell’s association with the struggle for equal rights for women through the actions and death of Emily Davison, local Labour … READ MORE

Boats on the canal “your time is up”?

15 April 2024



Basingstoke Canal could stop leisure activities like boat hire and camping because they’re not financially viable.

The 32-mile-long Basingstoke Canal was jointly acquired by Hampshire and **Surrey County Councils** in the 1970s to manage risks, protect the canal, and provide public recreation.

It is a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and due to its hydrological biodiversity and effective management of its ecosystem, it is home to numerous nationally scarce species of flora and fauna.

The Basingstoke Canal Partnership was established to fund the canal operation following restoration in the late 1980s. The partnership includes a number of “riparian” partners like district, borough and town councils that contribute financially to the running of the canal.

In 1990, county councils for Hampshire and Surrey, as landowning authorities, created the Basingstoke Canal Authority. Under the arrangement, Hampshire employs the staff, provides IT and finance support to the authority, and Surrey manages the visitor centre at Mytchett.

However, according to the report, the current arrangement is not financially sustainable. In 2023/24, the cost of the canal required a draw of £192,000 on existing reserves to cover a shortfall in income.

The canal is funded by the landowning authorities and the riparian funding partners; however, some have indicated the reduction or withdrawal of their contributions, like Woking and Rushmoor Borough Council, which confirmed it was pulling all funding in 2023/24.

Due to the withdrawal of some funding, the two landowner authorities commissioned an external company to review management and recommend a sustainable operating model.

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From the five alternatives, the chosen one indicated that the Basingstoke Canal Authority will continue to deliver statutory requirements and leisure navigation.

However, under this option, the authority will no longer deliver activities such as boat hire, camping, running the visitor centre, and events.

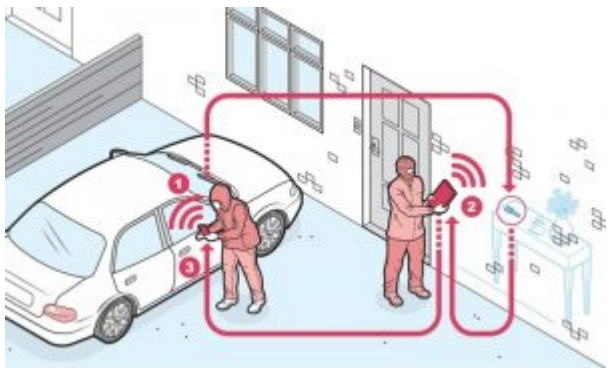
The proposal will be debated at the universal select committee (March 11), and the executive member for countryside and regulatory services, Cllr Russell Oppenheimer, will take a decision later that day.

Natalia Forero

Image credit: Basingstoke Canal Authority

Surrey “relay” car thieves sent down

15 April 2024



Four members of an organised crime group (OCG) responsible for the theft of 53 high value vehicles in **Surrey** and the South-East have been sentenced to a total of 12.5 years behind bars at **Guildford Crown Court** on Friday 8th March.

All four men pleaded guilty to conspiracy to steal and conspiracy to acquire criminal property and were sentenced to;

- Perry Lovejoy, 29, born 01/11/1994, of Reigate Road in Horley, was sentenced to 3 years in prison
- Luke Jackson, 28, born 25/07/1995, of Shoreham Close in Croydon, was sentenced to 3.5 years in prison
- Billy Harrison, 30, born 29/10/1993, of Tollers Lane in Coulsdon, was sentenced to 3 years behind bars
- Harry Sales, 28, born 20/09/1995, of Cornwall Road in Croydon, was sentenced to 3 years in prison

The conviction of the four men was the result of a thorough and complex investigation by the Serious and Organised Crime Unit into the thefts of the 53 vehicles, with a combined value of over £3.7 million pounds.

Jackson also had additional offences taken into consideration when sentenced after admitting his guilt in stealing a further 42 cars, with a combined value of 2.1 million pounds.

The thefts took place over 12 months and across Surrey and the South-East of England. Officers arrested the suspects on the 26 April 2023, after successfully building a clear picture of their illegal activities through intelligence, forensics, ANPR, call data, witness testimony and CCTV enquiries.

During the investigation, officers discovered how the gang used the ‘**relay attack**’ technique to target keyless vehicles including Rolls Royce, Bentley, Land Rover, Range Rover and Alfa Romeo. This method involves using a master device to copy the signal of the vehicle key and transmit it to a second smaller device, which replicates the key and unlocks the car.

Tellingly a manual for a relay device was also found saved on a mobile phone seized from Lovejoy’s possession.

Jackson was also sentenced for two offences of burglary committed whilst stealing two of the cars after pleading guilty. He received 18 months in prison to be served concurrently.

Lovejoy was also sentenced to being concerned in the supply of class b drugs (cannabis) after pleading guilty to this offence when officers found messages on his phone showing supply activity. He received 9 months in prison to be served consecutively.

Investigating Officer DC **Matt Earl**, said; “This was a large-scale investigation that was made possible by the hard-work and dedication of the Serious and Organised Crime Unit, as well as the support and collaboration of other neighbouring police forces.

In Court lawyers for the four said they were the “foot soldiers” in the operation and the maximum sentence for theft being 7 years, the sentences for the defendants should be less than the masterminds “at the top of the chain”, should they ever face justice.

His Honour Judge **Banarjee** said the conspiracy was sophisticated and involved extensive planning. He took into account the guilty pleas of the defendants and the conditions they had endured in HMP Wandsworth since their arrests in April 2023.

Image credit: Which.co.uk

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Chinn up for women

15 April 2024



On International Women's Day (Friday 8th March) and Epsom and Ewell's association with the struggle for equal rights for women through the actions and death of Emily Davison, local Labour Councillor **Kate Chinn** (Court Ward) shares her thoughts on the special day:

Today is **International Women's Day** and this year's theme is to inspire inclusion.

It means breaking down barriers, challenging stereotypes, and creating environments where all women are valued and respected. I've heard repeated the old idea that women don't really understand figures. Tell that to the three women at NASA who did the maths that were instrumental in one of history's greatest operations – the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit celebrated in the book and film **Hidden Figures**. A great read and watch

World renowned feminist, journalist Gloria Steinem reported:- "the story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organisation but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights"

We can all do what we can to support and advance women.

As the IWD website states:- "When women aren't present, we must ask: "if not why not." When women are discriminated against, we must call out poor practice. When the treatment of women is not equitable we must take action"

Local politics is a way that women can get involved with their local communities and work with the community, other councillors and partner agencies to make a difference in their local community.

I became active as I believe local politics matter. People need a decent home, to feel safe in their communities, access to the services they need and the opportunity to enjoy the good things in life. We need "bread and roses too", a phrase attributed to a strike in Massachusetts in 1912 now often referred to as the "Bread and Roses strike". The slogan pairing bread and roses, appealing for both fair wages and dignified conditions. Now a poem by **James Oppenheim**.

It's only good governance that can enable both and why local and national politics are so important to all of us.

If anyone is interested in getting involved in politics then please do get involved and there is plenty of available help and support. Talk to your local councillors and the local political parties. Both the political parties and Epsom and Ewell Council run sessions on being a councillor; some in person and some on line

I believe it is important to mark International Women's Days. One of the many reasons is to celebrate the inspirational women we have both past and present. **Emily Wilding Davison**, Mary Seacole, Rosa Parks and Malala Yousafzai, to name just a few of so many women who have made the world a better place.

Cllr Kate Chinn

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