

Local Talent Shines Bright

30 June 2023



On the evening of June 27th, 2023, **The Epsom Playhouse** opened its doors to **The Epsom and Ewell Showcase**, brought together by the **Epsom Rotary Club**. This evening had it all, proving that our community is bursting with extraordinary talent and bringing everyone together to fundraise for local charities.

The evening began with a young Epsom saxophonist whose melodic tunes transported the audience to another realm. She was followed by **Kasumi Brooker**, whose soprano voice soared through the auditorium gracefully. Then came **Ambition School of Dance**, showcasing their remarkable choreography and flawless execution. **Cam Brown** lightened the mood with his humorous songs, and the **Bharathakalalayam South Indian Dance Troupe** transported the audience to the vibrant and rich world of Indian classical dance and legend. **Leatherhead Link's** inspirational and emotional performance closed the first half with the audience in complete harmony with the choir. In the second half, **Protégè** brought us the 70s vibes and danced to Abba's hits, the **Girlguiding Epsom** sang campfire favourites, and the **Epsom Silver Band's Brass Quintet** perfectly played well-known versions of classic songs.

The presence of the **Mayor of Epsom and Ewell** Cllr Robert Geleit and the Mayoress added a touch of prestige to the event. Their support and appreciation for local talent underscored the importance of nurturing and celebrating our community's creative spirit.

None of this would have been possible without the support of generous sponsors: Honey & Bamboo, a zero-waste shop from Ewell Village, Alexandra Park's Park View Cafe, Rotary South D1145, a kind anonymous donor and the fantastic people at the Playhouse who helped with everything.

Epsom Rotary is active in the community with a wonderful allotment project delivering food to **The Pantry** in South Street and working in conjunction with the **Epsom and Ewell Royal British Legion** to look after our veterans, amongst many other activities. If you would like to join Rotary or become a Friend of Rotary and volunteer to help your community as well, then don't hesitate to fill out the form:

<https://www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/membershipenquiry.php?ClubID=874>

You can find out more about Rotary here: <https://www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=874>

Reporter **Romana Sustar** is a multilingual freelance journalist, University Language Tutor, marketer and owner of Epsom Digital Ltd., a local digital marketing agency.

Biggins departs for good conduct

30 June 2023



This was **Mark Biggins'** last concert in charge of **Epsom Chamber Choir**. He may return some day as a guest. The conductor Chamber Choir have shared with English National Opera moves on to take a post with the Grand Théâtre de Genève, a bit too distant to combine.

Auditions for a replacement happen this autumn. Conductors leave their impression on this choir. For two decades **Michael Stevenson** worked on refinement and blend such that you needed to be very close to pick out individual voices from the ensemble. His successor, **Piers Maxim**, liked to entrust choir members with solo spots instead of hiring outside soloists. Mark Biggins has brought an added experience of the opera house, so the timbre has gained energy and exuberance, especially among higher voices, that would do justice to a larger venue even than **St Martin's Church, Epsom**.

All these influences were on show in Saturday's concert (24th June at St Martins Church, Epsom). The ensemble retains its refinement, between singers well used to listening to each other. The big and difficult tenor solo in the choral dances from Britten's *Gloriana* was skilfully handled by **Dominic Morris**. **Neil Thomas** took the baritone spotlight in the folksong arrangement *The Lark in the Clear Air*. The Britten choral dances, from *Gloriana*, were straight out of the opera house, with fast tempi and committed dynamic variations creating an aural spectacle.

There were over a dozen separate items, showcasing an eclectic range of repertoire, mostly on a theme of summer but with one bizarre Christmas piece apparently left over from an earlier programme, Jonathan Dove's *Wellcome All Wonders*. Covid may have cancelled the date when it should have been sung but the choir were not to be denied the chance of demonstrating their prowess tuning its complicated discords.

The audience got invited to sing a refrain in the title number, the mediaeval tune *Sumer is Icumen In*. A cuckoo has been known to visit Epsom Common. If you encounter it and were at this concert, you know now how to address it.

Instead of more Britten, Flower Songs were furnished by Eric Whitacre. His trademark use of dissonance is more velvety and luxuriant. I have heard it compared to chocolate cake. The choir tuned all the clusters confidently and allowed their audience to wallow in the rich sonority.

Steve Ridge played for the one jazzier piece, by Bob Chilcott, that needed a piano. The other accompanied items employed a harp, more exotic and less percussive and played by **Mared Pugh-Evans**. She was kept busy, in the Britten dances, in a mystical upper-voices song *Summer* by Gustav Holst and in two euphonous folk-song arrangements by **John Bawden**. He was singing tenor with Chamber Choir last time I heard these settings but has now gravitated to bass. He composes with a calm facility combined with a lifelong immersion in choral idiom. Hearing these songs was as refreshing as being handed a long, cool drink.

Mared Pugh-Evans switched from subtle accompaniment with hints of ancient bucolic tradition to virtuoso display for her solo item, *Rhapsodie*, by Marcel Grandjany. Composed by a harpist, it let her demonstrate a vast range of impossibly rapid ripples and resonant chords, sometimes at the same time, while always giving the impression that this is what harpists do for fun.

Epsom clarinetist **Zoë Humphries** joined her for the Victorian Kitchen Garden Suite by Paul Reade, a piece chosen to entertain rather than dazzle. They played with appealing, never forced tone, passing the tunes from one to the other and radiating serenity around the building as the evening started to cool. We heard a Monteverdi madrigal and two joyful, sparkling partsongs by Fanny Hensel.

Then Mark Biggins' valedictory item, a nod to his past studies in America, was Stephen Paulus' *The Road Home*, which was encored affectingly.

Nigel Williams

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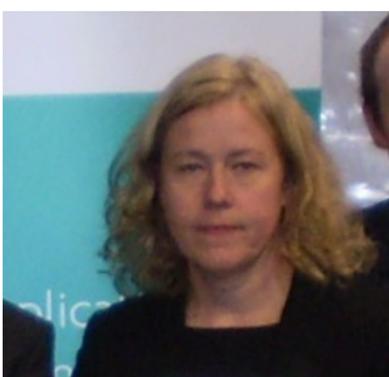


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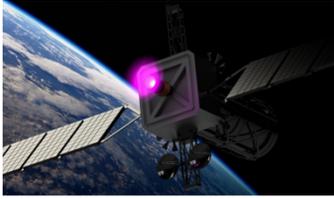


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Epsom family Opened to a two degree challenge

30 June 2023



Joanna McLenaghan walked quite literally in her Epsom father's footsteps when she followed dad Ian across the stage to collect identical degrees recently at a ceremony staged by **The Open University**.

The pair signed up for an OU MSc in Maths in the same year and there followed six years of "total rivalry" to see who could get the best marks for assignments.

It's the third degree for Joanna, 36, who is now a data scientist managing a team of people at Gousto, the recipe box company.

She earned a first-class degree in physics at Oxford followed by a doctorate in the same subject from the University of St Andrews. But her latest achievement was hard won by burning the midnight oil whilst working full time.

Jo, as she is also known, says her OU degree was definitely a factor in her gaining her latest job at Gousto as she says employers know the "level of effort and commitment that you have to put in, particularly doing something over six years on top of a job. Whilst I already had the undergraduate degree and a PhD, I think as an employer, when you're looking through hundreds of applications having something like this on a CV really helps you to shine," she said.

Ian McLenaghan, 66, from **Epsom** in Surrey, is full of praise for his daughter: "I'm incredibly proud of her achievements. We might have started out on the same pathway but she's much more of a people person, who's capable of doing things like management. "That's something I avoided like the plague when I was working. I just wanted to go away in a cupboard somewhere and work on my own solving technical problems."

Yet Ian is something of an academic himself. He *also* has an Oxford degree in physics, and in the same subject holds a doctorate from Imperial College as well as an MS from the California Institute of Technology. He began his MSc while semi-retired to “keep Alzheimer’s at bay” but also admitted “I guess we like studying”.

Jo says she clearly remembers Ian encouraging her and supporting her studies through childhood: “I always remember, before I went to high school, that my dad and I had these study sessions where he cut out these different molecules and then we’d attach them together with paper clips. And he was always buying me things like magnet sets, so he definitely encouraged me from a young age.” She says once he bought her a book on Java programming!

For Jo, her dad is an inspiration: “He’s had a lifelong love of learning that he’s been willing to pass on. He taught himself coding and computer programming and it’s that curiosity that has guided him his whole life.” She added: “I think a lot of people think you just learn when you’re a child; a teenager and then you when you go to university and then that’s it!”

The Open University (OU) is the largest academic institution in the UK and a world leader in flexible distance learning. Since it began in 1969, the OU has taught more than 2.3 million students worldwide and currently has over 208,000 students. Seventy-one per cent of directly registered students are in full-time or part-time employment, and 76 FTSE 100 companies have sponsored staff to take OU courses.

Philippa Green reporting.

A Midsummer’s Night’s Dream in Cheam

30 June 2023



Epsom Choral Society gave us a night to remember at St Andrews Church in Cheam last Saturday. Their programme was an unusual and attractive coupling of works by **Constant Lambert** and **David Fanshawe**. In *The Rio Grande*, Lambert sets a poem by Sacheverell Sitwell for choir, two pianos and percussion, while in *African Sanctus*, written following visits to Africa in 1969, Fanshawe combines African sounds, both human and natural, with live musicians and a Latin Mass.

The concert got off to rousing start with the choir in fine voice, with plenty of rhythmic verve and effective dynamic contrasts throughout. It’s worth remembering, however, that in very soft passages articulation needs to be even crisper. I did also wonder whether there might have been slightly more sway and swagger in phrases such as “... they dance in the city, down the public squares...”. These are minor quibbles; the performance was as accomplished as one might expect.

Marion Lea, the choir’s regular accompanist, took the solo piano role, with its virtuosic cadenzas, while **Peter Jaekel**, a regular visitor, took the ‘orchestral’ part. Both pianists dealt expertly with the technical demands, and they displayed an excellent rapport. This was also apparent as two pianos became one for the three lollipops from Walton’s *Façade* suite, namely Polka, Popular Song and Foxtrot, hugely enjoyed by the sizeable audience. The first half ended with a brief introduction to *African Sanctus* by the late composer’s widow **Jane Fanshawe**. During her very informative words and photographs, conductor **Julian Collings** was presented with one of David Fanshawe’s trademark caps.

The second half of the concert was heralded by a mighty roar of “Sanctus” from the choir, accompanied by a full percussion ensemble. Having conducted this work myself many moons ago, I recall just how tricky it was to get all elements perfectly aligned – I wish I had had professional sound engineers such as the excellent team on Saturday! A mesmerising muezzin’s call to prayer got the next movement under way. Here the gorgeous blend of the voices produced some exquisite singing with perfect intonation. Other qualities such as stamina and staying power presented themselves in the next two movements. The call of the muezzin translates into the key of D, and as any soprano will tell you a very high D lies well out of the comfort zone so full marks to the sopranos here.

Following the Credo came Love Song, a tender and moving episode in which a cattle boy in East Sudan sings about a girl called Abdha. At the start of the movement, we hear a recording of a mother ringing tiny bells outside her tent in an ancient custom signifying the birth of a baby son. In the context of the mass this signifies the birth of Jesus Christ, and as the sound of the bells gently faded the effect was intensely poignant.

The Crucifixus is described by the composer as the “heart of the work” and it features a fearsome mix of war cries, rainstorms and dances, resulting in a dramatic and menacing texture. I wondered for a moment whether the percussion was slightly overpowering here – the war cries from South Sudan, for example, were not easily picked out. A belated mention here of the excellent soprano soloist, **Lisa Swayne**, who managed the wide jagged leaps with great style and aplomb.

The gentle Lord’s Prayer which followed drew a lovely gospel feel to the singing, although I did feel that the lead guitar was slightly over-amplified. After a movement of chants and a superbly effective Agnus Dei – with the soloist once again shining in her three consecutive cries of Jesu Christe – a thrilling, exhilarating and exuberant finale brought this unique

work to a close. Rapturous applause followed, leading to an encore – a repeat of the Lord’s Prayer – during which Julian Collings, fittingly I thought, wore the cap presented to him earlier.

Martin Seath

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Photo credit: Clive Richardson

Epsom and Ewell’s refugee talent

30 June 2023



Celebrating World Refugee Week (19th – 25th June) Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network has been celebrating the talents and success of refugees the charity has supported.

Nataliia Zadorizhna is a concert pianist who started playing the piano at the age of 4. She graduated from the Glier Kyiv Academy of Music and also has a PhD in Linguistics. She arrived here in May to flee the war in Ukraine.

Natalia has been appointed as a peripatetic piano teacher for Surrey Arts and also gives private piano lessons. She has formed a Ukrainian choir in Epsom and is a top-class musician who has played in several concerts in and around Epsom.



Ksenia Bugrimova is an award-winning film producer and creative director who has made many films and tv programs in Ukraine. Since arriving in the UK, she founded Talented U - <https://talented-u.com/en> - a Ukrainian-British Association of screen industry professionals. Here is an example of her much acclaimed work <https://youtu.be/ayVgCK-3f00>

Samira is a 17-year-old Afghan girl who came to the UK in summer of 2021 and moved to Epsom in May 2022. She is a gifted artist and doing a dressmaking course at college. EERN provided her with a sewing machine and one of our volunteers helped her learn how to use it (as she had never used an electric machine before). Within 2 weeks she had made 4 traditional Afghan dresses and she hopes to become a professional tailor.

Samira has been working very hard at her English, supported by EERN, and was very pleased to pass her driving theory

test first time!



Helin Konyar was studying singing at Kiev Municipal Academy of Circus and Variety Arts when, at the age of 20, she had to leave Kyiv last May. When she arrived here, she auditioned for the famous Laine Theatre Art College in Epsom and was awarded a 3-year scholarship. This week she appeared in her first show at Epsom Playhouse.

Yuliia Komyshan is a professional bandura player from Poltava, Ukraine (a bandura is a Ukrainian plucked-string folk-instrument). She has degrees from Poltava Professional College of Arts and from Glinka Dnipropetrovsk Academy of Music and a PhD in Educational and Pedagogical Sciences.

Yuliia came to the UK when the war started in Ukraine. She dreams of introducing people all over the world to the interesting and rich Ukrainian culture and traditions. She loves giving people the opportunity to listen to the bandura and to connect with Ukrainian musical culture, both traditional and modern. She performs at concerts whenever she can.



Yuliia says that she is very grateful to the government, sponsors, volunteers and new friends for the support which she has received here.

For more information about the work of Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network visit their website. <https://epsomrefugeenetwork.org>

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Local talent showing up for charity

30 June 2023



EPSOM ROTARY CLUB will again be hosting the **EPSOM & EWELL SHOWCASE** at **Epsom Playhouse** at 19.00 hr on Tuesday 27 June 2023. Tickets at £25 each support an amazing variety of local talent and in turn local charities and local good causes in and around Epsom. The acts consist of:

Cam Brown is a well know local guitarist and singer. He enjoys performing songs by Jake Thackray and often performs in local pubs and halls.

Rhea is the winner of the local Young Musician award and will play “Against All the Odds) Phil Collins and Albright on her saxophone.

Kasumi Brooker, a soprano who sings with Epsom Choral Society will sing Puccini, Mozart, Gershwin, Bernstein, Lloyd Webber and Loewe.

Relive the experience **Girlguiding Epsom** will bring the Camp-fire to the stage with music!

Protègèm Dance School will perform contemporary dance on stage.

Brass Quintet Come and see a great performance by the Brass Quintet of the Epsom and **Ewell Silver Band**.

Bharathakalalayam Dance Southern India brings us lots of great Dancing and these dances are based on the Hindu religion -Radha Krishnan, Dandia and Thillana.

Ambition School of Dance Ballet, Modern, Disco/tap dancing brought to the stage by these young performers. They wowed us last year so come and see them this year.

Leatherhead Link Who of us could ever forget the emotional, joyful and committed performance by Leatherhead Link last year. They have come back to repeat the performance and we are looking forward to a stunning evening.

Tickets available [HERE](#).

Surrey’s “Tugs in Space!”

30 June 2023



Thanks to £250,000 of government funding announced today, a new type of electric space propulsion system will be developed by the **University of Surrey** in partnership with the University of Leicester. The new thruster would be used to service and reposition satellites in space via agile space tugs.

The **PLAsma TORch Rocket** (PLATOR) project will fill a gap in current propulsion options, offering a balance between the high thrust typical of chemical propulsion engines and the propellant efficiency of electrical propulsion ones.

The project has been awarded £250,000 from the **UK Space Agency’s** Enabling Technologies programme.

Dr Andrea Lucca Fabris, Senior Lecturer in Electric Propulsion at the University’s Surrey Space Centre and project lead, said:

“Our PLATOR rocket could be used as the main way to move spacecraft after launch, or it could be used in space transportation vehicles, or space tugs, for delivering satellites to specific orbital slots, refuelling satellites to prolong their service life and removing space debris.”

As well as designing the propulsion system, the project will explore potential uses for PLATOR through flight dynamics simulations, identify the optimal size and design of space tugs and, in partnership with researchers at the University of Leicester, develop a piloting system.

Dr **Nicola Baresi**, Lecturer in Astrodynamics at the University’s Surrey Space Centre and project co-Investigator, added:

“PLATOR will increase the options available to mission planners and could be particularly useful when the UK develops its own launch capability. UK launches will only be able to reach high-inclination orbits, but our proposed space tugs could hopefully expand their reach, opening the door to new and exciting mission opportunities from the UK soil”

Surrey Space Centre is where the era of small, low-cost satellites began with the successful spin-out company SSTL. Today, Surrey Space Centre is a world-leading academic centre of excellence for space engineering research and education which regularly leads on experimental orbital payloads. Surrey Space Centre is globally renowned for its Space Engineering education courses at Masters and Undergraduate level. It is part of the Space South Central regional cluster.

The PLATOR project will make the most of the advanced vacuum facilities and instrumentation in the Space Propulsion Laboratory at Surrey Space Centre.

Image: An artist's impression of PLATOR: Oliver Hitchens, University of Surrey.

Surrey University Press Office

22nd June 2023

30 June 2023



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On Thursday 15 June, Clean Air Day, Surrey County Council is launching the trial of two domestic kerbside electric vehicle (EV) charging solutions for Surrey residents who do not have ... [READ MORE](#)

2700 cubs and brownies came to Epsom

30 June 2023



Cub Scouts and Brownies from **Epsom & Ewell districts** joined over 2700 Cub Scouts, Brownies and leaders from across Surrey for a day of fun and adventure at an activity day called SCRAM at **Hook Arena, Epsom** on Saturday 17th June 2023.

Cub Scouts and Brownies were able to try many new and large activities that cannot be organised in groups or districts as well as being able to mix with Cubs and Brownies from other districts.

Over 200 activities were on offer including pedal karts, high ropes, bungee trampolines, Assault course Wire, bungee running and zorbing as well as smaller activities like making popcorn, Grand Prix table game, firing water rockets and much more. As well as having fun and enjoying the activities on offer, many activities taught them #skills for life.

During the day, a number of local Mayors from around the County visited to see what was on offer as well as **CJ Ledger**, Deputy UK Commissioner (Support) who spoke to the young people during the day as well as seeing what Surrey Scouting had to offer.

Oliver a Cub Scout from Surrey aged 9 said "I liked the inflatable that you had to jump over so you don't get knocked over, I think it helped that we played a similar game at Cubs which helps with co-ordination skills"

Lauren a Cub Scout from Surrey aged 10 said "I liked the bungee trampoline because it was fun and exciting".

Max a Cub Scout from Surrey aged 8 said "I liked the zorbing because it was fun and I haven't done it before".

Sarah a Brownie from Surrey aged 8 said "I liked the activities and the excitement of the day, there was lots to do".

Ali Tickett, Organiser of SCRAM for Surrey said "What a day! 2,700 cubs, Brownies and leaders came to Hook Road Arena to celebrate just how brilliant being a Cub Scout and Brownie is! The cubs and Brownies had an incredible range of activities to try including a cave bus, metal detecting, pancake making as well as a high ropes course and many, many more. Some activities were just for fun and other were a real challenge all supporting the fact that Scouting helps young people develop Skills For Life."

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[Dutch scouts go English in Epsom & Ewell](#)

Cub Scouts are for Boys and Girls aged 8 to 10.5
Brownies are for girls aged 7- 9
Brownies are part of Girlguiding UK
Pre-pandemic youth membership was 479,000 (2020)
Up until the pandemic, The Scouts enjoyed a sustained period of growth, with total membership rising by nearly 200,000 between 2006 and 2020
2020 to 2021, youth membership fell from 480,083 to 362,752 - a 24.5% decline - and adult membership fell from 155,907 to 141,863
2021 to 2022 membership growth is 362,668 to 421,852 - an increase of 16%

Prevention costs less than cures.....

30 June 2023



Opinion by County Councillor **Eber Kington**:

It goes without saying that, if local councils prevent something untoward happening, that will save the higher costs of repairing the damaged caused. Fill in the potholes quickly and damage to vehicles and bigger potholes is prevented. Build the flood defences, and you do not have deal with the physical and emotional costs of lost homes and possessions.

And what applies to tarmac, bricks and riverbanks also applies to our young children and families. Ensure they have a good start, and you avoid the higher costs of intervention and support in later years. That might seem obvious, but I am not sure that **Surrey County Council**, with its responsibilities for children and families really understands that.

Many **Family Centres** were closed by the Conservative administration in 2019 on the basis that SCC would target those most in need. But Family Centres, with its universal provision and encouragement of all to attend, were designed to ensure that families did not fall into need in the first place. A strategy focussing only on those that have already met the threshold for support is neither preventative nor sound.

In this year's Budget, the ruling group decided against even an inflationary increase in budget for the supportive and therapeutic **Short Breaks Services for Children** with SEND and their families. This was despite the Council's own the **Equality Impact Assessment** telling them that:

"Any reductions in capacity of short breaks services due to either or both inflation linked price increases [or] reduced current levels of investmentare likely to: reduce positive outcomes for children with disabilities and their families; and increase pressure within families of children with disabilities, which is likely to, in some cases, contribute to family breakdown if this is not mitigated - leading to increased cost for the local authority"

Short Breaks is a service that makes a real preventative difference, and even a standstill budget is likely have future financial consequences. And SCC continues to fail some of our most challenged young people in another way. Support for

them comes, in part, through the development of an EHCP (**Education, Health and Care Plan**) within their school setting. But SCC has a backlog of 937 new applications which, at the current rate of action, will take until March 2024 to clear.

I understand that there are pressures, with more young people in need of an EHCP, and those with the expertise to develop them not readily available. But, all the while there are children whose needs are not being met, the longer-term costs of meeting their educational needs are rising.

SCC has to value and fund preventative services, and **Residents Association** and Independent Councillors are committed to highlighting the removal and reduction of those preventative services when that happens.

However, we are also seeking to work positively with the ruling administration to ensure that Surrey's children and families get the best start in life and that the balance of funding between prevention and cure starts to be more clearly tipped in favour of the former.



County Councillor Eber Kington (RA Ewell Court, Auriol & Cuddington)

Top image: Epsom Family Centre within Pound Lane School.

Uncommon commitment to the Common

30 June 2023



The **Epsom Common Association** (ECA) has a membership of around five hundred households, and works closely with **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's** Countryside Team and the **Lower Mole Partnership** to protect and improve the Common.

On Tuesday evenings, from June until the end of August, ECA will be hand-pulling bracken for a couple of hours to prevent selected areas of heath or grassland from becoming smothered. During the autumn they will hold the three remaining conservation tasks of the year's programme of eight. Each task runs for two days, usually the third Sunday of the month and the following Monday. The programme is agreed with the Countryside Team, guided by the Council's **Hundred Year Management Plan**. The work typically involves removing scrub and small trees to maintain and improve areas of grass and heath or rejuvenate scrub.



Female Silver-washed Fritillary

Sustainable Epsom and Ewell in partnership with St Martin's Church are looking forward to hosting their 3rd Eco Fair on Saturday July 1st between 10:00 and 14:00. The event is free for all to attend and will include activities for children. Hot food and cakes will be available on the day.

Sustainable Epsom and Ewell is delighted to welcome again to our 3rd event the the Epsom Common Association. Further details about the work they do can be found on the website

<https://www.sustainableepsomewell.co.uk>.

Around fifteen cattle will be grazing across three separate pastures, following in the footsteps of their wild and subsequently domesticated ancestors. Every day the cattle must be checked for health, as must the fences and water troughs. Each week the ECA provides four of the daily checks; without this contribution it is unlikely that grazing could continue.

As well as conservation work, each year ECA publish three newsletters, hold two public meetings with guest speakers, and arrange several expert led guided walks. Of this summer's programme, walks for: butterflies (2nd July) and bush crickets (6th August) are still to take place; and residents are very welcome to come along.

Finally, ECA make excellent hardwood charcoal from logs harvested during conservation work. Two years ago, thanks to funding from the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy, they were able to take delivery of a modern charcoal retort, which has greatly reduced the smoke whilst increasing the yield. Their charcoal is available at local retailers, the sales help finance activities.

Last September, funded from a generous legacy in memory of **Dave Berry**, a volunteer on the Common, ECA worked with the Lower Mole Partnership to create a new pond. Despite a dry start, by early spring it was full and should provide a new habitat for invertebrates and amphibians. Some funds remain and ECA are considering overgrown and silted ponds for future restoration.

In February ECA funded the installation of two Kestrel nest boxes high up in Oak trees. At least one now appears to have been occupied. Might this suggest a shortage of natural nest sites, despite the substantial number of large trees? Many organisations, including the Countryside Team and members of the ECA, contribute significant effort to monitoring a wide range of animals and plants on the Common.

Previously unrecorded species including various dragonflies and the Black Hairstreak butterfly (probably introduced but now breeding); the third year of Grey Herons nesting at Great Pond; and continuing good numbers of many species all suggest that in many respects the habitat management is successful.

However losses such as breeding Willow Warblers, declining across the south and east of the UK, demonstrate the limits of individual nature reserves, which have only a tiny impact on climate change and none on damage to other areas of the planet that may be essential for a particular creature's life cycle.

Next year will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Association. ECA are considering what celebration might be appropriate, suggestions welcome. If you would like to help the ECA on its next fifty years please do get in touch. It is not all outdoor work, there is also plenty to be done in organisation, publicity and the like.

Details of activities and contacts can found at: <https://epsomcommon.org.uk/>

or

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EpsomCommonAssociation

David King

Top image: Berry Pond - Epsom Common

Related reports:

Flagging Up Epsom Common

Storm Eunice - Can the Epsom Common Ducks handle it?

Epsom Common Bird Walk Poem

Sustaining Epsom and Ewell's trees

30 June 2023



The **Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board** (EETAB) founded in 1994 is a partnership of environmentally minded volunteers from the local community who work together to safeguard and promote the value of trees in the borough.

EETAB operates via volunteer **TREE CHAMPIONS** who feel that trees matter and who help to care for trees in their road

or local park. Their aim is to ensure that they pass on to future generations a borough that is at least as leafy as the one we have inherited. EETAB is part of the wider Surrey Tree Warden Network.

One of the key roles EETAB has is to monitor Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Area planning applications. EETAB seeks to ensure that major planning applications include appropriate soft landscaping requirements and tree planting to enhance the townscape. They provide scrutiny to these applications and this role is vital to maintain mature trees and ensure leafiness is maintained within the Borough. Both these activities often require site visits or follow up reviews to ensure any tree work or developments are aligned with the planning application.



Planting of hedge at the Epsom Riding for the Disabled site.

Sustainable Epsom and Ewell in partnership with St Martin's Church are looking forward to hosting their 3rd Eco Fair on Saturday July 1st between 10:00 and 14:00. The event is free for all to attend and will include activities for children. Hot food and cakes will be available on the day.

One of the aims of the Eco fair is to highlight the work of the many fantastic local green groups and businesses active in the Borough and provide an opportunity for our residents to find out about the work they do and how they can support these groups and businesses. Sustainable Epsom and Ewell are therefore delighted to welcome again to our 3rd event the **Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board**

Further details about the work they do can be found on the website
<https://www.sustainableepsomewell.co.uk>.

In addition to this work, EETAB also undertakes many practical tree planting work within the borough working both in establishing tree planting projects in local communities and supporting **Surrey County Council** to get more street trees planted. Some of the ongoing projects include:

Allotment Tree Nursery

EETAB operates a small tree nursery at the Alexandra Road allotment site. They use this site to care for young trees so that there is ready stock for tree planting projects. They have several hundred trees in pots at the nursery. A team of volunteers look after the saplings there and help maintain the plot and we are always in need of extra help with this work.

Planting Projects

Over the past year EETAB has been involved in planting projects at various sites in the borough, the largest of which has been helping to plant a 120m long section of hedge at the **Epsom Riding for the Disabled** site in January, followed by a further 25m section of hedge in March this year. Species planted included hazel, field maple, hawthorn, hornbeam, willow, rowan, ash, dogwood, and dog rose.

Street Trees Planting

When familiar trees are lost (due to age/disease/extreme weather) and not replaced, the appearance of a neighbourhood is altered, so the topic of street trees stirs some strong emotions amongst residents. In the planting season 2021/2022 just 10 new street trees were planted in our borough, a figure far lower than the number of street trees lost. EETAB ran a campaign highlighting the loss of street trees and the increasing numbers of stumps left in our verges to put pressure on Surrey County Council to plant more trees.

As a result of this campaign progress has been made and almost 30 street trees were planted in the borough in the 2022/2023. They worked with Surrey County Council to get 44 planted in the 2023/2024 season. There is still concern in some areas about a continuing decline in numbers of street trees, particularly in the tree lined 1930s estates of the north eastern side of the borough. EETAB appreciate residents' frustration about the reduction in the number of trees. Replacement trees are not being planted in some of these verges as they do not pass the criteria set by Surrey County Council for street tree planting, often due to the narrow width of the verge, or due to the presence of utilities underground.

Tree care and watering

Although there is often much focus on tree planting in the media, the ongoing care and watering of these newly planted trees is equally important. EETAB volunteers regularly check on the newly planted trees in the borough, clearing vegetation around the base of the tree (to reduce competition for water and to prevent strimmer and mower damage), putting down mulch and checking the tree ties and supports. Young trees need watering regularly for the first few years after they are planted with increased frequency during spells of hot dry weather. In the summer months there is a huge need for Tree Champion volunteers to help with watering young street trees. They have a list of trees in need of a champion and would welcome additional help with this.

If you would like to find out more about the **Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board**, please check their website: www.eetab.org.uk, follow on Facebook @EpsomEwellTreeAdvisoryBoard or email them at epsomandewelltab@gmail.com

Vicki Rees

Top image: EETAB Allotment Tree Nursery at Alexandra Road allotments.

Related reports:

Council Meeting: Does Epsom need more trees?

More trees please for Surrey

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15th June 2023

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Pressure on Epsom Hospital at boiling point?

30 June 2023



Visits to emergency departments (EDs) rocketed on Monday, with more people coming through the doors than ever before. More than 1,250 people went to one of St George's, Epsom and St Helier's three EDs - a rise on the previous record of 1,170, and a huge increase on a typical day of about 800 attendances.

It comes just hours before hundreds of junior doctors prepare to strike across the hospitals group - prompting fears of a "double whammy" of pressures.

ED attendances on Monday 12 June were as follows:

- St George's: 580
- Epsom and St Helier: 674
- Kingston: 533
- Croydon: 622

Croydon and Kingston hospitals also experienced very high demand and easily surpassed their previous highest number of attendances.

Kingston Hospital set a new record seeing more than 530 people visiting its emergency department in one day, including 78 ambulances and 455 walk-ins.

Croydon University Hospital saw 622 unwell patients needing to see an emergency care consultant - 16% above the previous busiest summer day on record on 17 June 2021.

Dr **Richard Jennings**, Group Chief Medical Officer at St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group, said: "We have never been busier, and with the upcoming strikes it's going to be a very challenging week.

"We're here, as always, for those who need us. But now more than ever, we need the public's support in those cases where it is not an emergency. NHS 111 online should be your first port of call in these instances, as it can direct you to where you need to go."

Members of the British Medical Association and Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association will strike for 72 hours from **7am on Wednesday 14 June until 7am on Saturday 17 June**.

This action will impact services at hospitals, and will mean that some appointments, procedures and operations may be postponed to ensure emergency care can be prioritised. Patients will be contacted directly if their appointments are rescheduled, and should continue to come forward for care as normal unless they hear otherwise.

The mercury is expected to remain in the high 20s, and even early 30s, when these strikes start - and will hit hot temperatures once action has finished, too, with the UK Health Security Agency and the Met Office extending their heat-health alert to Monday.

When temperatures rise, more people, especially those in high-risk groups, can suffer from illnesses like heat exhaustion and dehydration, as well as sunburn.

The pollen count has also been very high, and there has been a surge in people visiting EDs with shortness of breath. This might not be anything to worry about, but it is scary and sometimes those who are experiencing it will need medical help. NHS England has this advice for people who are affected.

If you have an underlying respiratory condition, you should contact your GP or asthma nurse as needed - unless it is an emergency, in which case you should call 999 or go to ED immediately.

Everyone should stay safe and well in the hotter weather, and take steps such as: looking out for people who may struggle to keep cool and hydrated, such as elderly relatives or neighbours; keeping windows closed when the room is cooler than outside; and staying hydrated.

You should also stay out of the sun between 11am and 3pm, apply sunscreen regularly, and wear a hat.

Dr Jennings added: "This weather has undoubtedly contributed to the rise in people - some who are vulnerable and very sick - coming to our emergency departments.

"Help us to prioritise care for those need it the most, and use our services wisely."

If you need urgent medical help use NHS 111 online first, which can direct you to where you need to go. Pharmacies, meanwhile, can offer advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, and aches and pains.

To find out more about staying safe during hot weather, visit the NHS's website.

St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group

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NHS website remedy for hay-fever

30 June 2023



With hay-fever suffering at a peak the NHS urges sufferers to visit its website for advice and reduce pressures on its telephone and other services.

The number of hay fever sufferers seeking advice from the NHS website has more than tripled - reaching 122,650 visits last week.

Analysis by NHS England, which runs the NHS website, found weekly visits to the hay fever page have increased by 252% in the past five weeks from 34,878 visits during the first week of May.

Sunday was the busiest day of the year so far for visits to the web page with 27,834 visits in 24 hours - an average of one visit every three seconds.

The surge coincides with figures seen last year when hay fever page visits topped a million during the six months from March to October, peaking at 462,706 in June 2022. December was the quietest month for visits with only 5,658.

NHS information pages on hay fever treatments have also proved popular during the past five weeks. Visits to the antihistamines and cetirizine pages have more than doubled, and visits to the fexofenadine page have more than tripled to reach 45,450 visits last week.

Most hay fever symptoms can be effectively managed at home or with medication widely and cheaply available in community pharmacies or supermarkets.

Robert Cleary, NHS England's Content Director for the NHS website, said:

"Many of us experience hay fever symptoms at this time of year and the nhs.uk hay fever advice page provides the latest medical advice to manage your symptoms, as well as giving guidance on when to get support from NHS services.

"Millions of people make the NHS website their first port of call for advice and information on a wide range of conditions.

The website is here for anyone 24 hours a day, making it easy for people to receive health advice and support from a trustworthy source around the clock.”

There is currently no cure for hay fever, which usually hits between late March and September when the weather is warm, windy and humid, and the pollen count is at its highest.

The symptoms include sneezing, coughing, a runny or blocked nose, as well as red, itchy or watery eyes. Sufferers can also experience headaches, earache or lose their sense of smell.

The NHS hay fever page details several ways people can ease their symptoms including staying indoors, keeping their windows shut, not cutting their grass or coating their nostrils with Vaseline to trap the pollen.

The page also offers advice on different treatments available from pharmacists and recommends when people should seek help from their GP.

The NHS website is the UK’s biggest health website with an estimated 2.6 million visits a day in 2022 from people seeking information and advice.

It includes over 4,000 pages and provides information about 990 medical conditions as well other health services including applying for a free UK Global Health Insurance Card for healthcare cover abroad, finding a GP, and a pregnancy due date calculator.

For more information visit Hay fever - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

NHS England Media Team

Image: Fitzpatrick AM CC BY-SA 4.0