

Epsom Choral Society carols for cardiac charity

24 December 2024



Epsom Choral Society presented its ever-popular annual Christmas Concert on Saturday 21st December at St Martin's Church in Epsom. Always a highlight of the festive season, this year's concert was a joyful celebration filled with music, readings, and plenty of audience participation. The concert was attended by the Worshipful, the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, and the Lady Mayoress, Steve and Carol Bridger.

The choir welcomed back **Connaught Brass**, one of the UK's leading brass ensembles, known for their vibrant performances across the UK and Europe. They brought the true spirit of Christmas through their entertaining instrumental pieces and in their accompaniments to the traditional favourites.

This year's programme featured a variety of carols and Christmas songs performed by the choir, accompanied by Marion Lea on the piano and Ben Lewis-Smith on the organ as well as seasonal brass arrangements and uplifting Christmas readings. As always, the audience had the opportunity to join in singing much-loved traditional carols, and filled the church with the warmth and joy of the season.

In keeping with the Christmas spirit of giving, there was an exit collection in aid of the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) where over £650 was raised. CRY works to reduce the frequency of young sudden cardiac deaths through vital awareness, screening, and research, making this a particularly meaningful way to support those in need during the holiday season.

Epsom business contact with the King warranted

24 December 2024



Epsom based since 2013 **Cirrus**, the leading provider of contact centre software, is proud to announce it has been granted a Royal Warrant of Appointment by His Majesty **King Charles III**. The grants were made to 386 companies previously holding a Royal Warrant of Appointment from Queen Elizabeth II, as well as 7 companies with an established and ongoing trading relationship with HM Queen Camilla.

This prestigious recognition marks a reappointment for Cirrus, building on the acknowledgement previously granted by Her late Majesty The Queen for its outstanding service to the Royal Household.

Cirrus has built a strong reputation for providing innovative, cloud-based contact centre solutions that help organisations improve customer engagement and service delivery. This Royal Warrant recognises the company's continued excellence in supporting the Royal Collection Trust.

Jason Roos, Founder and CEO of Cirrus, shared: "It's an immense honour for Cirrus to receive this recognition with a Royal Warrant. This achievement reflects the hard work and dedication of our team. We've always focused on delivering solutions that make a real impact, and this recognition from His Majesty's Household validates that effort in the most meaningful way."

The Royal Warrant of Appointment is awarded to businesses that have supplied goods or services to the Royal Household for at least five years. This announcement also highlights Cirrus' ongoing commitment to supporting local communities, while maintaining the highest environmental standards. Cirrus joins the ranks of household names such as BT and Samsung.

"Looking back, it's incredible to see how far we've come. And looking ahead, we're more motivated than ever to keep pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve. This Royal Warrant is a recognition of our daily efforts, and we're excited to continue collaborating with fantastic partners and clients," Roos added.



In the past year, Cirrus has continued to thrive, securing new clients across sectors such as public services, healthcare, and retail. The company's solutions are trusted by organisations including Nisbets, Premium Credit, and Northern Ireland Water.

Epsom Choral Society's Christmas Concert

24 December 2024



Epsom Choral Society again presents its ever-popular annual Christmas Concert on Saturday 21st December at 7:30pm at St Martin's Church in Epsom.

Always a highlight of the festive season, this year's concert promises to be a joyful celebration filled with music, readings, and plenty of audience participation.

The choir is delighted to welcome back **Connaught Brass**, one of the UK's leading brass ensembles, known for their vibrant performances across the UK and Europe. Together, they will bring the true spirit of Christmas alive through stirring instrumental pieces and traditional favourites.

This year's programme features a variety of **carols and Christmas songs** performed by the choir, accompanied by **Marion Lea** on the piano and **Ben Lewis-Smith** on the organ, as well as seasonal brass arrangements and uplifting Christmas readings. As always, the audience will also have the opportunity to join in singing much-loved traditional carols, filling the church with the warmth and joy of the season.

In keeping with the Christmas spirit of giving, there will be an **exit collection in aid of the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY)**. CRY works to reduce the frequency of young sudden cardiac deaths through vital awareness, screening, and research, making this a particularly meaningful way to support those in need during the holiday season.

Tickets:

- £20 per person
- Half price (£10) for under-25s

Tickets, which include a **free glass of wine** and a **free programme** with the words of the carols, can be bought online at: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/epsom-choral-society/t-ojrzldn> or at the **door**.

19th December 2024

24 December 2024

Business Community

An Epsom and Ewell education in water shortage



18 December 2024

The residents of Epsom, Ewell, Stoneleigh, and surrounding areas have been grappling with a significant water supply crisis over the past 48 hours, following a major failure in the infrastructure ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

Epsom and Ewell's new housing targets in Surrey perspective



18 December 2024

Housing targets in Surrey are set to skyrocket, with some areas expected to deliver double the number of homes under new Government plans. On December 12, the long-awaited update to ... [Read More](#)

Football Sports

Epsom and Ewell FC get marching orders from Sandhurst



18 December 2024

Epsom and Ewell FC 1-2 Sandhurst Town. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Tuesday 17th December 2024. Following our defeat at Chipstead in November I advised that we regularly ... [Read More](#)

Arts Culture Education

Watching out for tomorrow's film talent in Epsom and Ewell



17 December 2024

Creative Media students from North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) were joined by their tutors, family and friends for the premiere of their short film, 'The Watching' which was ... [Read More](#)

Rugby Sports

Sutton & Epsom topple league leaders



17 December 2024

Sutton & Epsom RFC 20 Beckenham 19. Saturday 14th December. For the final league match at Rugby Lane in 2024 the crowd were treated to the visit of the league ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

The Local Plan plot thickens after revised NPPF



16 December 2024

The Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 12 December, has set ambitious new housing targets, requiring local councils to accelerate their housebuilding efforts. This move coincides with ... [Read More](#)

Arts Culture

Epsom Chamber Choir Christmas concert benefits hospital



16 December 2024

Epsom Chamber Choir was delighted to welcome The Worshipful The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor Steve Bridger, and the Mayoress, Mrs. Carol Bridger, to their annual Christmas concert at ... [Read More](#)

Education Health News

Plant-based meat alternatives might be depressing



16 December 2024

There is mounting evidence suggesting that ultra-processed foods (UPF) are bad for our health, but if you stick to a vegetarian diet, is that still the case? Plant-based meat alternatives (PBMA) are ... [Read More](#)

Council Environment

Epsom and Ewell's solar powered spaceship

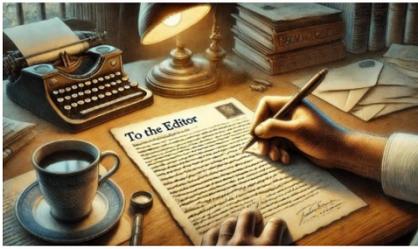


16 December 2024

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has recently installed solar panels on the roof of Bourne Hall, and secured funding from the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund to develop a ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Letters

Can the green light to Epsom's Green Belt housing turn red?



13 December 2024

Letters to the Editor From Tim Murphy of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England A Dark Day for Epsom and Ewell
Dear Editor, I write with deep disappointment and ... [Read More](#)

Crime News

Epsom led crime gang banged up



13 December 2024

An organised crime group who carried out multiple burglaries, a vicious assault, and stole more than £215,000 worth of high-value cars have been jailed for a total of twenty seven ... [Read More](#)

News Westminster

Epsom and Ewell's MP leads debate on support for Explosive Ordnance Disposers



12 December 2024

Helen Maguire, Epsom and Ewell's MP and former British Army Military Police Officer, led a Westminster Hall debate 11th December on government support for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) community. ... [Read More](#)

Crime News

Woking child murder lessons for Surrey's agencies



12 December 2024

Authorities must face serious questions about years of missed chances to prevent Sara Sharif's death. Sara was murdered aged 10 years old by her father Urfan Sharif and stepmother Beinash ... [Read More](#)

Epsom Chamber Choir Christmas concert benefits



hospital

24 December 2024



Epsom Chamber Choir was delighted to welcome The Worshipful The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor **Steve Bridger**, and the Mayoress, Mrs. Carol Bridger, to their annual Christmas concert at St Martin’s Church on Saturday, 14th December.

Starting at a family-friendly 6 pm and lasting just an hour, the choir’s programme, devised by conductor **Jack Apperley**, packed in all the elements expected at this time of the year. Inevitably, there was some Rutter – his arrangement of the Sans Day Carol – and audience carols including *O come, all ye faithful* with the Willcocks descant. The choir also sang newer music chosen to feature women composers, including Kerensa Briggs’ increasingly well-known *A tender shoot*.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, a composer closely associated with our local area, was represented by his popular *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, based on folk tunes, with soloists from the choir.

The concert closed with a group of lighter items, including a long-time choir favourite, Peter Gritton’s close-harmony version of *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* and a jazzy arrangement of *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer*.

The Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity supports patients, their families, and staff at our local hospitals. We were pleased to offer them the opportunity to take a retiring collection after the concert which raised £413.94

Roger Miller

Image: Jack Apperley with Molly Simpson from the hospital charity with the Mayor and Mayoress of Epsom and Ewell

Can the green light to Epsom’s Green Belt housing turn red?

24 December 2024



Letters to the Editor

From Tim Murphy of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England

A Dark Day for Epsom and Ewell

Dear Editor,

I write with deep disappointment and dismay at the decision by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) to approve a draft Local Plan that sacrifices Green Belt land in our borough for housing development. This decision marks a dark day for Epsom & Ewell and represents a significant betrayal of the community’s trust and values.

On December 10, EEBC councillors voted by 16 to 8, with 7 abstentions, to approve the latest draft Local Plan, which proposes releasing large areas of our much-valued Green Belt. Planning officers claim councillors had no choice due to Government housing targets. However, this argument does not excuse the council’s willingness to surrender cherished green spaces. The community clearly recognizes the value of protecting our countryside, even if the council does not.

Public opposition to the loss of Green Belt land has been overwhelming. During last year’s consultation, more than 1,500 residents responded, with 87% opposing any Green Belt development. A petition against the loss of Green Belt land attracted an astonishing 11,000 signatures, and a subsequent petition was so strongly supported that councillors were forced to debate it at the December meeting. The message from residents is clear: we do not want our Green Belt sacrificed for development.

It is worth emphasizing that the council’s own Green Belt study concluded that the vast majority of the borough’s Green

Belt is performing its intended function. This includes Horton Farm and Hook Road Arena—two areas now designated for housing—which were identified as “highly performing” under the Government’s own criteria. Why, then, is the council choosing to give up such valuable land?

Protecting our Green Belt is about more than preserving open spaces. It is essential for public health, biodiversity, climate change mitigation, and preventing urban sprawl. Epsom & Ewell has largely resisted London’s sprawl, maintaining its identity as Surrey’s smallest district. Its open spaces are limited to either municipal parks or the Green Belt, yet these are now at risk. Over the past 25 years, the borough has already absorbed significant population growth through large housing developments on former hospital sites.

The council’s reliance on private developers to address local housing needs is deeply flawed. Private housebuilders often fail to deliver affordable homes, using “viability assessments” to argue that profits would be insufficient if they included the required number of affordable units. For example, a recently approved development on Green Belt land in this borough includes no affordable housing at all.

If EEBC were serious about tackling local housing needs, it would prioritise socially rented housing by working with central government and housing associations to develop urban brownfield sites and town-centre locations. Instead, the council appears intimidated by unrealistic housing targets set by Whitehall and has chosen to offer up our Green Belt as an easy sacrifice. This raises serious questions about local democracy and accountability.

The council’s decision disregards the wishes of the community it is supposed to serve. It is vital that we continue to challenge this plan and advocate for a future where Epsom & Ewell’s Green Belt is valued and protected for generations to come.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Murphy, Trustee Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England

From Katherine Alexander of The Epsom Green Belt Group

Dear Editor,

The ink is barely dry on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s signing off on the draft Local Plan when it has been rendered obsolete.

The Epsom Green Belt Group warned the council that failing to accelerate the Local Plan process would result in disaster for the borough, and that disaster has now arrived.

The Local Plan will now be caught by the revised National Planning Policy Framework issued today by the government.

Prior to today, the council had the option not to review Green Belt boundaries and not to argue for exceptional circumstances to build on the Green Belt. It chose not to do either, but instead to revise Green Belt boundaries to permit development. Seven and a half years of delays have led us to this point.

The government has focussed its headlines on building on the ‘greybelt’ to make their plans sound palatable. However, the ‘greybelt’ definition is a smokescreen for much broader development that they want to portray. This is for two reasons:

1. All Green Belt qualifies as ‘greybelt’ except:

- Strips of land at the edge of a borough that separate it from built-up sections of neighbouring boroughs.
- Land that ‘strongly contributes’ to ‘checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.’

In Epsom & Ewell, 22 of the 53 parcels of Green Belt land in the council’s analysis fail to meet either of these criteria and would therefore be classed as greybelt under the new definition. No disused petrol stations to be seen anywhere.

One of the parcels that would remain Green Belt, not greybelt, under this definition is Horton Farm. However, the council has voluntarily included it in the plan.

2. The NPPF states that where there is insufficient greybelt land to meet the new housing target, councils must find enough Green Belt land to make up the difference (para 148).

The only hint of protection is if that Green Belt land need not be released if it ‘would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt when considered across the area of the plan.’ There is no guidance available as to what that means in practice, but as Epsom Common and Horton Country Park will remain, this exception is unlikely to help either.

What then is the new housing target for Epsom?

889 dwellings per year. That is almost five times the historical house building rate in the borough (c.189 per year) and more than three times the rate in the proposed Local Plan (c.273 per year).

Every scrap of available land will need to be included in the plan, and even then it won’t be enough to get close to the target.

The council only has itself to blame. It has failed to protect the borough, and the government has made it so the price for that failure is astronomically high.

After over 7.5 years of delays, the council’s task now is to work quickly—hitherto anathema to them—to review the NPPF in detail and work out whether any of the Green Belt can be saved under the new rules. This may mean taking out land that it had already included, because there is an argument to protect it (such as Horton Farm) in order to mitigate and

minimize the disastrous impacts for the borough.

The previous excuse for progressing with an unpopular plan was to protect the borough from speculative development. Because of their delays, there will be no land left for speculative development. Perhaps they've got their wish.

Yours faithfully,

Katherine Alexander

From Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Epsom & Ewell Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) Consultation to go ahead as soon as possible

10th December Councillors voted to approve the Epsom & Ewell Proposed Submission Local Plan (2022-2040) and that the Regulation 19 Consultation should take place at the earliest opportunity. The Regulation 19 Consultation is the final opportunity for residents to feedback on the plan before it is submitted for independent examination next summer.

At the meeting of Full Council, Councillors heard from a petitioner who requested that all green belt land should be removed from the Proposed Submission Local Plan except for previously developed land. This was debated by Councillors during the meeting, before the vote.

Commenting after the meeting, Councillor Peter O'Donovan, Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy, said "The Proposed Submission Local Plan provides a vision for our borough that strikes a balance between providing much needed homes including affordable housing, infrastructure, and support for local businesses whilst ensuring enhanced protection for biodiversity and our borough's green spaces, and protecting the valuable local heritage and character of our borough's towns and villages.

"It is challenging to find a path that meets the many different needs of all our communities, and not everyone may agree with every aspect of this plan. However, having listened to all the feedback, and examined the comprehensive evidence base, we feel strongly that this plan ensures that everyone in our borough, both now and in the future, is given the chance to thrive in Epsom & Ewell.

The Regulation 19 Consultation will take place at the earliest opportunity. We will announce the dates on our website and on social media as soon as they are confirmed."

An up-to-date Local Plan protects the borough from ad hoc and inappropriate development and ensures responsibility for future planning decisions remains with the borough and its communities. It provides a framework for where in the borough new development should go and where should be protected.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council consulted on the Draft Local Plan in February and March 2023. The comments received on the Draft Local Plan, along with the local evidence base, informed the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The Regulation 18 consultation feedback summary report, which shows how the council has taken account of the feedback received, can be found here: [Consultation response statement](#)

During the Regulation 19 Consultation residents, visitors and local businesses can comment on whether the plan is legally compliant and sound, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Guidance on how to respond will be published on the council's website.

Responses collected as part of the consultation will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate with the Proposed Submission Local Plan and the evidence base documents.

Dear Editor

As someone involved in the Save Epsom Green Belt campaign I just cannot contain my disbelief and anger at the local Council.

Last week the majority of them went ahead with a policy to build on our wonderful and well used recreational green spaces doubtless under some 'exceptional circumstances' clause.

Obviously, as already said many times and with recent letters to you, it is nevertheless worth reminding all your readers of the true devastating significance of this decision.

It is a Residents' Association Majority Council. They are supposed to represent the local residents: the clue is in the name! They have not and should be ashamed at letting us down despite the many efforts to stop this. I understand that Epsom is the smallest Surrey Borough yet the most populated for its size. As many of us know, the present infrastructure is overloaded: schools, the hospital, GP surgeries, roads viz. Ruxley Lane in rush hours!

This building programme will further exacerbate the problem and severely restrict the country wide environment and its diverse wildlife. No doubt developers are already rubbing their hands with due opportunism as, thanks to the Residents' Association Group, the local Green Belt vanishes FOR EVER! YES, WITH NO COMING BACK.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr Ted Bailey

West Ewell

From Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire

Dear Editor,

Housing in Epsom and Ewell: A Call for Community-Led Solutions

I write to express my deep concern over the Government’s recently announced planning framework, which enables developers to bypass locally elected councillors and pressures councils to review precious green belt land for development. For communities like ours in Epsom and Ewell, this approach represents yet another example of Whitehall ignoring the voices of local people who are best placed to decide what their area needs.

Housing is a pressing issue, but the solutions must be community-led. The homes we build here must be genuinely affordable and accompanied by the services that people rely on—GP surgeries, schools, and reliable public transport. It is equally important that we protect the green spaces that define our borough.

Vulnerable families in Epsom and Ewell need safe and warm homes, but this cannot be achieved by sidelining the community. When residents are engaged and empowered, we can deliver the homes required to support those living in temporary accommodation, help older residents access housing solutions tailored to their needs, and ensure the next generation has somewhere to call home.

Unfortunately, the Government’s announcement fails to address the root causes of Britain’s housing crisis. The biggest issue is a desperate lack of social housing. Too often, developers use legal loopholes to shirk their obligations to build affordable homes. Meanwhile, the very term “affordable” has become meaningless to many local families who are priced out of the market. We need clearer definitions and upfront solutions to ensure that affordability is not just a slogan but a reality.

The recent decision by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to move forward with the Local Plan, including controversial Green Belt sites, highlights the challenge we face. While I welcome the council’s efforts to prepare a plan, I share the concerns of many local residents and Liberal Democrat councillors who feel that housing targets and the development of virgin Green Belt land, such as Horton Farm, are not the right path forward.

The ruling Residents Association has been slow to update the borough’s planning policies, leaving us vulnerable to inappropriate and opportunistic applications. It is time for all parties to work together to prioritise robust, community-supported plans that deliver for Epsom and Ewell.

Epsom and Ewell deserve housing solutions that respect our unique character, address the needs of vulnerable residents, and safeguard our green spaces for future generations. I will continue to stand with our community in advocating for planning policies that reflect these priorities.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Maguire MP

Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell

12th December 2024

24 December 2024

Council Housing Planning

Council minority vote Local Plan to next stage with Green Belt in



11 December 2024

On 10th December 2024, the Full Council of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council convened to debate the proposed Local Plan, a pivotal document that will shape the borough’s future planning, ... [Read More](#)

Arts Business Education

Surrey first in image AI



11 December 2024

Surrey announces world's first AI model for near-instant image creation on consumer-grade hardware A groundbreaking AI model that creates images as the user types, using only modest and affordable hardware, has been announced by the Surrey ... [Read More](#)

Council Education Transport

Surrey: Free school buses withdrawn



11 December 2024

Free school buses are being axed after a cross-country route was judged safe by Surrey County Council. Parents say the letter outlining the new walkable route explicitly states that the ... [Read More](#)

Arts Community Culture

Epsom Symphony Orchestra: A Cornerstone of Local Musical Excellence



11 December 2024

The Epsom Symphony Orchestra, a cherished fixture in the town's cultural landscape, has been delighting audiences since its founding in 1951. Over its decades-long history, the orchestra has shared the ... [Read More](#)

Rugby Sports

Rugby result reads well for Sutton & Epsom



11 December 2024

Sutton & Epsom RFC 17 - Reeds Weybridge 11. Saturday 7th December 2024. The arrival of Reeds Weybridge at Rugby Lane signalled the culmination of the first half of the ... [Read More](#)

News

A dog's dinner of a licensing scheme?



8 December 2024

Professional dog walkers have rallied against a new dog licensing scheme in Surrey, claiming the managers have overstepped their mark. Dog walkers may have to pay £360 a year to ... [Read More](#)

Council Finances

Ideas for empty Council premises in Reigate and Redhill



8 December 2024

Calls to make use of empty town centre units could see charities and pop-up shops take over in Surrey towns as councillors ask for short-term leases to be made available ... [Read More](#)

Council Finances

Examination of a Surrey Borough's 2nd highest UK debt



8 December 2024

The review into Spelthorne Borough Council's £1 billion debt and whether it is upholding its duty to provide best value to residents has been extended. In May, the government wrote ... [Read More](#)

Business News

Small Business is my business says Epsom's MP



5 December 2024

Helen Maguire, MP for Epsom and Ewell, has announced a new survey for local businesses and will spend time working alongside staff at three local establishments in the lead-up to ... [Read More](#)

Business Health

Surrey pharmacies need a better financial prescription



5 December 2024

Pharmacy owners in Surrey say “enough is enough” as they complain working 12-hour days and barely breaking even. One pharmacist said it has to dispense just over 6,000 prescriptions a ... [Read More](#)

Community Finances

Epsom and Ewell low-income crisis support



5 December 2024

The Household Support Fund, provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, offers short-term financial support to households struggling to afford essentials. Distributed by CAEE on behalf of Epsom & ... [Read More](#)

Epsom and Ewell low-income crisis support

24 December 2024



The **Household Support Fund**, provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, offers short-term financial support to households struggling to afford essentials. Distributed by CAEE on behalf of **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**, this fund is available until **31st March 2025**.

Who Can Apply?

You may be eligible if you:

- Are on benefits
- Live in a low-income household
- Require crisis support that could otherwise lead to financial hardship

Who Can CAEE Help?

CAEE provides support to:

- Families
- Pensioners
- Disabled people
- Those in financial crisis

What Can the Funds Cover?

The Household Support Fund can help with:

- Utilities
- Food
- Essential goods
- Crisis support to avoid financial hardship

How to Access the Fund

- **Online:** Complete an application via our website: www.cae.org.uk/household-support-fund/
- **Phone:** Call us on **01372 300777**
- **In Person:** Attend a drop-in session:
 - **Monday & Tuesday:** 10 am - 1 pm
 - **Thursday:** 10 am - 3 pm

Message from Lisa Davis, CEO of CAEE

“We have been given more Household Support funds to distribute to those who are tipping into financial crisis. From June to September, we assisted 161 clients, including families, older people, and those with disabilities or long-term conditions. We provided essential help such as energy or supermarket vouchers and direct utility payments.

We saw first-hand the significant positive impact this support had on our community, alleviating financial pressure and anxiety.

Examples of crises we can help with include:

- Repairing an essential family car to get to work
- Providing support equipment to prevent a disabled person from falling into hardship
- Covering costs for new school uniforms
- Assisting with utility bills

Get in touch with us as soon as possible - we can help.

Unhappy couple. Photo by Timur Weber: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/discord-between-man-and-woman-8560374/>

5th December 2024

24 December 2024

Community Education Health

Call to address mental health of health workers



4 December 2024

Only a system-wide overhaul of the NHS that invests in staff wellbeing can address the psychological ill-health crisis amongst healthcare workers, according to research led by the University of Surrey in ... [Read More](#)

Environment News

Surrey academic to lead plastic pollution fight



4 December 2024

Tackling the plastic pollution crisis: Legislation must evolve to address challenges for our climate, ecosystems and human health Urgent legislative action is needed to stop the imminent threats of environmental ... [Read More](#)

Health Local History Volunteers

Surrey History Centre throws light on Epsom's hospitals



4 December 2024

Epsom Surrey had more mental hospitals than most English counties and, at Surrey History Centre, we are justly proud of the quantity and quality of surviving records we hold. These ... [Read More](#)

News Transport

Epsom and Ewell to be served by publicly owned trains



4 December 2024

The government has announced that South Western Railway (SWR), which serves commuters from Epsom, Ewell West, Stoneleigh and Worcester Park to London Waterloo, will be the first train operator to ... [Read More](#)

Arts Culture

Lucy Porter Returns to Her Roots with “No Regrets” at Epsom Playhouse



3 December 2024

Epsom Playhouse is set to welcome one of comedy's most beloved figures, Lucy Porter, on 18th January 2025, as part of her nationwide tour with the brand-new show No Regrets. ... [Read More](#)

Council Education

Surrey schools not out for so long in summer?



2 December 2024

Surrey County Council is looking at possible changes to school holidays. A consultation has been launched on whether the county council should switch to a two-week half term break in ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

Local Plan lessons from our neighbour?



2 December 2024

“Four more years?” is the resounding cry after a Surrey council has been moved back to square one with its plan for 8,000 new homes, potentially at a cost of ... [Read More](#)

Community Education Volunteers

Epsom Teen Selected as Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Youth Ambassador



2 December 2024

A young woman from Epsom is amplifying young people’s voices after being chosen as a UK Youth Ambassador for The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award (DofE). Kalina Hristova, 17, joins a ... [Read More](#)

Rugby Sports

Epsom rugby scrape a point lead over Gravesend



2 December 2024

Gravesend 22 Sutton & Epsom RFC 23. Saturday 30th November. Sutton and Epsom RFC visited Gravesend RFC in October last season at the height of the high tackle hysteria. In ... [Read More](#)

Community Council Finances

Ewell village set to improve



2 December 2024

Earlier this month Epsom and Ewell Borough councillors met to agree their contribution of £1.25m Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding toward the Ewell Village improvement project. This funding will match ... [Read More](#)

Business

The Essential Guide to Maintaining Clean Carpets and Upholstery in Woking



30 November 2024

Sponsored article: Maintaining a clean and inviting home is a priority for every homeowner. Among the most overlooked aspects of cleanliness are carpets and upholstery, which, if left unattended, can ... [Read More](#)

News Transport

Broad Gauges New Train Set to Serve Epsom



28 November 2024

Residents of Epsom will soon benefit from South Western Railway's (SWR) latest investment in modern rail travel as the new Arterio trains, officially launched this week, are set to roll ... [Read More](#)

Council Finances

What cuts to Surrey County Council services are you prepared for?



28 November 2024

Surrey County Council has unveiled its draft budget for the upcoming financial year and is calling on residents to share their views through a public consultation. As councils nationwide grapple ... [Read More](#)

Business Education Health

X-Ray vision wins Surrey Uni "spin-off" a prize



28 November 2024

Silveray, the digital X-ray film company and Surrey spinout, wins coveted Institute of Physics award with a new approach to X-ray imaging Innovation in X-ray technology could be key to ... [Read More](#)

Council Education News

Epsom SEND case highlights a national problem



28 November 2024

A shocking case of systemic failure by Surrey County Council (SCC) has brought renewed attention to the challenges faced by families of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). ... [Read More](#)

Housing News

Is a Isa the answer to Epsom's high house prices?



28 November 2024

With the five-year anniversary of the Help to Buy ISA closure approaching, a fresh analysis has revealed how Epsom and Ewell compares to other Surrey boroughs in benefiting from this ... [Read More](#)

Council Environment

Fly-tipping bags and BB gun shots close Bagshot recycle centre



28 November 2024

Bagshot community recycling centre will close in an effort to protect staff from being threatened with violence, Surrey County Council has said. The depot has been plagued with issues for years ... [Read More](#)

Council Local History News

Epsom & Ewell's local history museum to be born again?



28 November 2024

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Arts Culture

Epsom Choral Society's Verdi Requiem reviewed



28 November 2024

I will never forget the first time I heard Verdi's Requiem. That crashing wall of sound that was the Dies Irae filled me with fear and awe. It seemed as ... [Read More](#)

Surrey History Centre throws light on Epsom's hospitals

24 December 2024



Epsom Surrey had more mental hospitals than most English counties and, at Surrey History Centre, we are justly proud of the quantity and quality of surviving records we hold. These range from the early private asylums of the late eighteenth century through to the county asylums of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Many of these records were rescued by our archivists when the institutions were closed down in the 1990s, and they include the records of some of the 'Epsom Cluster' of hospitals. In 1896 the newly created London County Council, faced with the need to provide for huge numbers of the mentally ill, purchased the Horton Manor estate at Epsom and built five large hospitals. The Manor opened in 1899; Horton in 1902; Ewell Epileptic Colony, later St Ebba's, in 1904; Long Grove in 1907; and West Park in 1924.

Among the extensive archive of The Manor hospital at Surrey History Centre is a wonderful collection of glass plate negatives of individual male and female patients dating back to 1899. The patients were photographed on admission to the hospital and many who recovered after treatment were often photographed again on discharge, showing a marked improvement in their demeanour.

These glass plates had been languishing in our strong rooms so, earlier this year, we started creating digital positive copies of some of the plates that are over one hundred years old. Once digitised, the images were identified by matching them to the photographic prints in the Manor Hospital patient case books. Sadly a few of the case books had not survived, so a number of images remained unidentified, but more of this later. Thanks to our volunteer, Brenda, we have now successfully digitised over 500 images which can be viewed by researchers in our searchroom. The names of the patients whose photographs have been identified are also available on our online catalogue.

This digitisation project was actually prompted by the work of the Epsom based **Friends of Horton Cemetery**. Their Out of Sight, Out of Mind project explores and commemorates the lives of some of the 9,000 Epsom Cluster patients buried in unmarked graves in the disused cemetery. More information about this fascinating project can be found on the Horton Cemetery website.

This has truly been a collaborative undertaking. Also working in partnership with Surrey History Centre and the Friends

of Horton Cemetery is multimedia artist and medic, Dr Eric Fong. His work spans film, photography, sculpture, and installation, often exploring themes of the body, identity, and vulnerability. His moving and haunting Cyanotype Apparitions exhibition, using some of the Manor Hospital patient glass slides, won the London Independent Film Awards' Best Experimental Short October 2024 award.

And here's a fitting postscript: last month saw the recovery of one of the long-lost Manor Hospital patient case books, filling an important gap in the hospital's record collection at Surrey History Centre. Discovered in an attic, this remarkable volume, spanning May 1900 to July 1901, records the medical histories of 250 women, complete with their personal details and poignant photographic portraits. And importantly, it has allowed us to identify some more of the unnamed glass plate images.

For more news from Surrey History Centre - read more here.

Image: glass plate negative of Caroline Appleton and William Smith

Surrey History Centre

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[Portraits of pauper patients in Epsom's Horton Cemetery, inspires artist](#)

[Petition to reclaim Horton Cemetery from property speculator](#)

Epsom Teen Selected as Duke of Edinburgh's Award Youth Ambassador

24 December 2024



A young woman from Epsom is amplifying young people's voices after being chosen as a UK Youth Ambassador for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE).

Kalina Hristova, 17, joins a select group of 35 DofE Award holders aged 16-24 from across the UK. These Youth Ambassadors will advocate for young people by sharing their insights on key issues, speaking at events, meeting decision-makers in Parliament, and contributing to the DofE charity's direction.

Originally from Bulgaria, Kalina has lived in the UK for ten years and credits the DofE with helping her socially. She began her DofE journey at the Silver level when she joined a new school, finding it a great way to meet people outside her classes.

Kalina said:

"Starting a new school in Year 10 is quite daunting, so I joined DofE to make new friends and learn new skills. I'm glad I did, as I've met some of my best friends through DofE, and I've been able to dedicate my time to something I want to achieve."

For her Volunteering section, Kalina coached netball, leading sessions for younger students, running drills, and planning fun games. This not only improved the students' skills but also enhanced Kalina's communication abilities.

For her Physical section, she focused on fitness, tracking her progress through her Apple Watch. An avid sportswoman, she joined a gym to start weightlifting. *"Sometimes I found it a bit intimidating, as it can be a male-dominated environment, but the more I progressed, the easier it became,"* Kalina added.

She also participated in the London Vitality 10K race, raising awareness and funds for the DofE. *"I would never have run a distance like this if not for the DofE. I was not a runner before, but with all the work I put in for my Physical section, I knew I could do it,"* she said.

As part of her Gold Volunteering, Kalina became her school's DofE ambassador, supporting Bronze and Silver participants, organising expeditions, and teaching skills like map reading and food planning.

For her Residential section, Kalina attended a three-week summer programme in Pennsylvania called Leadership in the

Business World, which inspired her to consider studying Economics or Finance at university. “DofE has been so much fun, and it’s way more than just an Expedition. I applied to be a Youth Ambassador to apply the skills I’ve learned through DofE to the real world,” she explained.

Empowering Young Leaders

Funded by The Gosling Foundation, the Youth Ambassador programme places young people at the heart of shaping the DofE’s work. Ambassadors have met Ministers, spoken at high-profile events, represented the DofE at international forums, and influenced key decisions across the charity.

Ashley Williams, UK Youth Engagement Manager at The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, said: “Kalina is one of many young people who have achieved incredible things through their DofE. As a charity, we’re determined to put young people at the heart of everything we do and give them opportunities to make a positive impact on the issues they care about.”

“It’s not an easy time to be a young person, with the after-effects of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Opportunities like the DofE allow young people to have fun, grow in resilience and self-belief, and develop vital skills they can’t always get in the classroom.”

Young people aged 14-24 who participate in the DofE choose activities in four sections: Physical, Skills, Volunteering, and Expedition. Along the way, they gain confidence, discover new talents, and work toward a highly respected award.

The Essential Guide to Maintaining Clean Carpets and Upholstery in Woking

24 December 2024



Sponsored article: Maintaining a clean and inviting home is a priority for every homeowner. Among the most overlooked aspects of cleanliness are carpets and upholstery, which, if left unattended, can accumulate dirt, allergens, and stains over time. For residents of Woking, finding reliable carpet and upholstery cleaning services is key to ensuring your home remains a sanctuary. In this article, we’ll explore the importance of regular cleaning, practical tips, and professional solutions to help you keep your carpets and upholstery in pristine condition.

Why Regular Cleaning Matters

Your carpets and upholstery are subjected to daily wear and tear, whether from foot traffic, spills, or pet accidents. Over time, these materials can trap dust, bacteria, and allergens, which can negatively impact indoor air quality and trigger allergies or respiratory issues. Regular cleaning not only prolongs the life of these furnishings but also ensures a healthier living environment for your family.

Signs Your Carpets and Upholstery Need Professional Attention

While routine vacuuming and spot-cleaning are essential, there are clear indicators that your carpets and upholstery need expert care:

- **Persistent Stains:** Stubborn marks from coffee, wine, or ink often require specialized treatments to remove without damaging the fibers.
- **Unpleasant Odors:** Lingering smells can indicate deeply embedded dirt or mildew.
- **Fading Colors:** A dull appearance is a sign of accumulated grime and wear.
- **Allergy Symptoms:** Frequent sneezing, itchy eyes, or a runny nose indoors could be caused by allergens hiding in your soft furnishings.

Professional Carpet Cleaning in Woking

For residents looking for high-quality **Carpet Cleaning Woking** services, enlisting a trusted provider is the best solution. Expert cleaners use advanced techniques like hot water extraction, dry cleaning, and stain removal to restore carpets to their original beauty. Not only do they tackle visible dirt, but they also eliminate deep-seated bacteria and allergens.

Don't Overlook Upholstery Cleaning

Your sofas, armchairs, and other upholstered furniture also deserve attention. Regular professional cleaning can preserve their texture and appearance, preventing premature wear. Companies specializing in **Sofa Cleaning Woking** and **Upholstery Cleaning Woking** offer tailored solutions for different fabric types. From delicate silk to durable microfiber, professional cleaners ensure the process is safe and effective.

DIY Tips to Maintain Cleanliness Between Professional Services

While professional cleaning provides a deep refresh, here are some DIY steps you can take to maintain cleanliness:

1. **Vacuum Regularly:** Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter to remove surface dust and debris.
 2. **Address Spills Immediately:** Blot (don't rub) spills with a clean cloth and apply a gentle cleaning solution.
 3. **Rotate Furniture:** Prevent uneven wear by changing the position of rugs and furniture periodically.
 4. **Use Protective Covers:** For high-traffic areas, covers can shield your upholstery and carpets from dirt and stains.
-

Why Choose Professional Cleaning Services in Woking

Professional cleaners combine expertise with cutting-edge equipment to deliver exceptional results. Whether it's your carpets or upholstery, services in Woking provide customized solutions to suit your needs. With eco-friendly cleaning agents and meticulous attention to detail, they ensure a hassle-free experience and a fresher home environment.

Conclusion

Carpets and upholstery are significant investments that deserve regular care. By combining routine maintenance with professional services, you can enhance your home's appearance and promote a healthier living space. Don't wait for stains and odors to become a problem—schedule a professional cleaning today and enjoy the benefits of a spotless, inviting home.

Epsom Choral Society's Verdi Requiem reviewed

24 December 2024



I will never forget the first time I heard **Verdi's** Requiem. That crashing wall of sound that was the *Dies Irae* filled me with fear and awe. It seemed as if the mouth of hell had been opened and nothing could stop the all-consuming fire. And here on offer from **Epsom Choral Society** is this mighty work, accompanied by only five instruments. Would it work? I couldn't wait to find out.

The choir started off solemnly setting the scene. Their warm-hearted singing incorporated a range of colours - from a luminous 'et lux perpetua' to a firmness of purpose in 'te decet hymnus'. The four soloists also made an impressive appearance with their fugal 'Kyrie'.

Then came the 'Dies Irae'. Such was the spirit of the choir as they hurled their phrases at us that it was hard to believe there were not twice the number of singers on stage. This was fearless and exciting singing. With alternating timpani and bass drum replicating the original scoring, we were wholly immersed in fire and brimstone.

In addition to the high octane 'Dies Irae', the choir is given other saner but even more challenging fare, such as the fugue

for 2 choirs in 'Sanctus'. Here, ECS was nimble and assured, keeping the texture light, transparent and a joy to listen to. The concluding movement 'Libera me' is a balancing companion to the 'Sanctus', demanding equally tight control to prevent any section from charging off the rails. Such hair raising moments showed the true mettle of ECS in their ability to conquer details, keep a clear head and ride the storm.

What a fabulous quartet of fine young soloists. All performed magnificently and immeasurably added to the enjoyment of the evening. There were simply too many superlative moments, the following being a cruelly curtailed list.

Soprano **Elisabeth Findon**'s impassioned singing during the concluding 'Libera me' was a highlight of the evening. Her high Bb near the end - a true pianississimo (*pppp*) - floated above a muted chorus; it was translucent and sublime and a moment to remember. 'Quid sum miser' was exquisitely sung by mezzo Judy Louie Brown. It was accompanied by the marimba - an unexpectedly successful substitute for solo bassoon in the original score, and especially notable this evening for both percussionists duetting on the one instrument!

John Findon is a commanding tenor. He was majestic in the opening of the 'Kyrie', and tenderly sensuous in 'Qui Mariam'. **Mark Nathan**'s cantabile bass solo 'Voca me' showed off Verdi's song-writing skill at its most natural and beautiful. And whenever the four of them joined forces to sing as an ensemble, at times *a cappella*, they always added colour, sparkle and emotion to the drama. I came out from the concert knowing that the haunting 'Lacrymosa' will be my *Ohrwurm* for weeks to come.

Verdi's Requiem is universally adored. That this wonderful work can be accessible to local choirs with smaller forces at their disposal is thanks to Berlin musician, **Michael Betzner-Brandt**, who has miraculously reduced the massed orchestral requirements to an ingenious chamber ensemble of piano, horn, double bass, marimba (plus big bass drum) and timpani. Yes, there are moments that are hard to replicate, such as the antiphonal trumpets in the 'Tuba mirum', but they are a very small price to pay for what has been gained.

Lynda Chang

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News Policing

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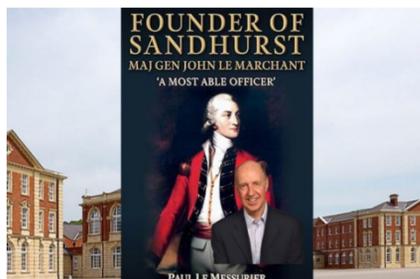


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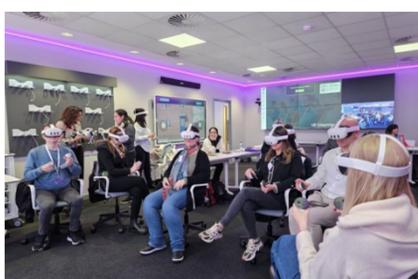


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Environment News

Party divide on Surrey solar farm?



21 November 2024

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News Transport

£12 million bus boost for Surrey



21 November 2024

Surrey County Council has been allocated £12,074,800 from the Department for Transport, to further improve and protect local buses. The council will work with bus operators to allocate the ... [Read More](#)

Epsom and Ewell Talking Newspaper talks about 50 years

24 December 2024



“I feel we are here today to pay homage to those good people who 50 years ago, established this splendid Charity and all those who have contributed ever since. On behalf of all the visually impaired Listeners over the past fifty years, I send a huge thank you to the Founders of Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper - EETN - and the multitude of Volunteers who have kept the free service operational for over half a century.” With these words, Judy Sarssam the present Chairwoman of EETN, welcomed the Worshipful Mayor of Epsom and Ewell (Charity’s President) Councillor Steve Bridger along with forty Volunteers and guests, to celebrate its Golden Anniversary on Thursday 21st November.

‘Our Volunteers are the shining stars,’ Judy continued, ‘because without them there would not be an Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper, whose function today is as valid as it was fifty years ago.’ Judy, herself visually impaired, went on to explain the importance of keeping visually impaired people feeling part of their community, as those with sight loss can so easily become isolated. Although technology has advanced in leaps and bounds since the early recordings, Judy was keen to emphasize that in a world now dominated by technology, isolation becomes more of an issue for those who are not technically adept.

During the celebration, messages of congratulations were read out, including from Mike Wood, President of The Talking News Federation, who acknowledged that 50 years of providing this regular, interesting and friendly service, recording more than 2390 editions, showed commitment by Volunteers and Listeners alike. Lionel Blackman, Director of Epsom & Ewell Times, said he was proud to be associated with EETN and was inspired by the dedication of its Volunteers. Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee for Epsom & Ewell said when he visited EETN as Mayor and presented long service awards to 15 Volunteers, he was impressed by the passion and hard work that goes into creating each edition.

Many of the Volunteers have been with the EETN for more than 10 years. Penny Dearing and Gwyneth Smith have been associated with EETN almost from its inception. Gwyneth joined as a Reader and her distinctive voice was well loved and remains melodic though Gwyneth is past her 90th birthday. She moved to Wales when COVID struck to join her family. A talented poet, she had planned to come to the celebration and read her 50th Anniversary poem. Sadly she was snow-

bound in Wales, but emailed her wonderful poem which was read by MC of the day, James Dubois.

Following the messages from the many well-wishers, Penny Dearing, a former News Editor, Trustee/Committee member and Reader, told us her pleasure at working with those early pioneers. The EETN travelled from being recorded in Volunteers' homes to a room in the Age Concern offices to a corridor at Swail House and eventually into a designated Studio at Swail House, which was the first site in the UK, designed specifically for visually impaired residents. During Covid full circle was reached as once more the EETN was temporarily recorded and produced in Volunteers' homes until it was possible to return to the Studio once more.

A montage of Volunteers past and present caught everyone's eye, as they enjoyed the delicious anniversary cake which the Mayor Councillor Steve Bridger ceremonially cut after making a generous speech in praise of the free EETN service. The celebration provided a wonderful opportunity for Volunteers to share their pleasure in continuing to offer access to local news, entertainment and information for the visually impaired people of Epsom and Ewell. Judy closed the event praising once more the special, hard-working team of 2024.

EETN Golden Jubilee - Poem by Gwyneth Smith

For over thirty years it was my privilege and pleasure
To be one of the READERS and the memories I treasure.
When Covid lockdown was announced my son rushed down to Surrey
To take me back with him to Wales to save us all from worry.

Continuing injections for my macular condition
I've now become a LISTENER and welcome each edition.
When it arrives in yellow pouch, protected from the weather,
I'm grateful to the Post Office, and how much more to Heather.

Epsom born I did not leave until my ninetieth year
So Epsom news and local views I'm very pleased to hear.
The MAGAZINE has always been the choice of those who EDIT
The wide variety produced is greatly to their credit.

It gives the READERS much more scope for their interpretation
Verse old and new and humour too can be a revelation.
So well done all who have a share in making each RECORDING
I hope you find the jobs you do are suitably rewarding.

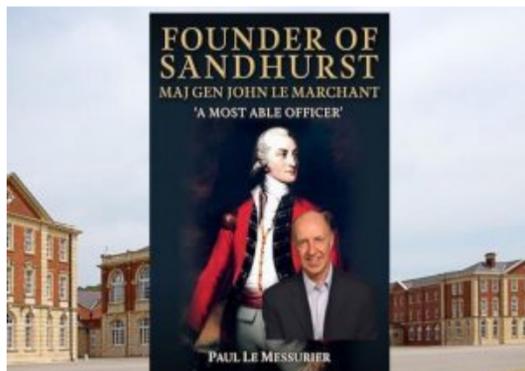
With SECRETARY, TREASURER and Judy in the CHAIR,
We're led by a COMMITTEE and we thank them for their care.
So happy Golden Birthday TALKING NEWSPAPER we say.
Let's give three cheers for fifty years and longer may you stay!

Gwyneth Smith, 2024

Photography by Steven McCormick.

Epsom historian and the Frenchman who trained the British armies that defeated Napoleon

24 December 2024



The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst has seen a lot of famous faces over the years. Several members of the Royal Family have attended the Academy. Sir Winston Churchill graduated in 1894, Field Marshal Montgomery in 1908. The Academy is so respected that many countries send their military personnel there for training, making it one of the top military schools in the world.

But, how much do we really know about the origins of Sandhurst?

Local author and historian **Paul Le Messurier** has been a resident of Epsom for several years now. His latest book, *Founder of Sandhurst, Maj-Gen John Le Marchant*, tells the remarkable story of the British cavalry officer who started what has now become one of this country's great institutions.



John Gaspard Le Marchant (1766-1812) was a French-born British cavalry officer who rose to prominence despite starting from humble beginnings. The son of a Guernsey father and a French mother, he joined the British Army at just 16. Through sheer skill and determination, he rose to become one of the most distinguished cavalry officers of his generation.

Le Marchant's first taste of active service came during the French Revolutionary Wars, where he served as a captain in a cavalry unit during the ill-fated Flanders campaign. A skilled swordsman, it was here that he noticed that the British Army's sword training was seriously lacking. Determined to make a difference, he designed a new cavalry sabre, wrote manuals on swordsmanship, and took it upon himself to train cavalymen across the country.

Even then, he was still not satisfied and set his sights on an even grander and more ambitious attempt at reform: improving the overall standard and education of army officers.

Le Marchant's idea for a military academy to professionally train army officers met with some initial resistance, but he eventually won royal and political backing. In 1801, Parliament approved his plans and allocated a budget of £30,000. The Royal Military College was established by Royal Warrant, initially based in High Wycombe and Marlow, with Le Marchant serving as its first Lieutenant-Governor. The college would later move to its prestigious location at Sandhurst.

In 1811, Le Marchant joined the Duke of Wellington's army in the Peninsular War against Napoleon's forces, taking command of a Heavy Cavalry brigade. He distinguished himself at the Battle of Salamanca, where he led one of the most successful cavalry charges of the campaign. Sadly, Le Marchant was killed in action during the battle at the age of 46. A memorial was erected in his honour at St. Paul's Cathedral.

The Royal Military Academy's motto today is 'Serve to Lead,' and that is exactly what Le Marchant did - both with the ground-breaking reforms he introduced and his bold leadership on the battlefield. Despite his many achievements, Le Marchant remains relatively unknown today. Paul Le Messurier's engaging book seeks to change that, shedding light on the powerful and lasting impact Le Marchant had on the British Army.

Royal Military Academy photo: Antony McCallum - <https://www.wyrdlight.com>