

Epsom Playhouse hosts a little horror.

24 November 2022



Leatherhead Operatic Society left the audience laughing and cheering with its production of **Little Shop of Horrors** at **Epsom Playhouse**, a musical comedy directed by John Harries, choreographed by Louise E Wilson and musically directed by Sam Fisher, based on the 1982 off-Broadway musical of the same name.

A failing flower shop on skid-row run by Mr Mushnik (Ben Horseburgh) is almost at the point of closing due to a lack of clientele. A Venus flytrap-looking plant, (Toby James) mysteriously appears during a total eclipse of the sun, attracting Seymour (Daniel Burns) to purchase it and name it after his love interest (played by Ellie-Claire King). This plant, however, is not an ordinary plant - it speaks, sings and lives on human blood and flesh, bringing new customers and, along with that, money and a name.

At first, Seymour can sustain Audrey II with his own blood, but this won't be enough for the ravenous plant who promises Seymour his desires, a success story that could be "bigger than hula hoops". What is Audrey II's goal?

This is not the only question of morality that echoes throughout the performance: how far would you go for love? Or fame, or wealth? And should you feed the sadist-dentist boyfriend of your love interest to your human-consuming plant in order to keep it growing and attract customers? The story ultimately examines the extent to which individuals (Seymour, specifically) will go in order to be successful.

The cast's performance is remarkable and leaves you questioning what you would've done in Seymour's situation, with each character forcing the audience into an empathetic view of the situation. And for those who are already familiar with the story, a different ending to the 1986 adaptation of Little Shop of Horrors alongside the stellar performances makes it worth experiencing again.

The opening night on Wednesday 23rd November was a resounding success, and the show will continue throughout the rest of the week. The performance will run until the matinee show at 2:30 pm on Saturday 26th November.

Mental Health services in Epsom and Ewell

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Freya Lawrence writes: The amount of sufferers with mental illness has increased immensely in recent years. With a global pandemic, increased living expenses and varying demographic changes, it is certainly easy to understand how and why. The resources available for those suffering are also on the rise. Disorders such as anxiety and depression can interfere with everyday life, with physical health and overall emotional wellbeing evidently being affected directly by mental illness. With 1 in 4 individuals in the UK suffering from a mental health problem each year, it is vital to us that the resources available in the local area are more accessible.

Starting the conversation about mental health within the borough is also important to us because of the stigma surrounding mental health disorders. Stigma has the potential to make mental health issues worse - causing delay or prevention of treatment for some sufferers.

Social attitudes have always played an important role in the diagnoses and treatment of mental

illnesses. The list of reasons for the stigmatisation is long and somewhat endless.

The mental health history of Epsom is worth noting due to the psychiatric institutions that once lived in the Horton area of the town, which in itself has created stigma.

With the globalisation of media, ideas about certain groups of individuals can be easily accessed.

It is evident that the media portray links between mental illness with dangerous and/or criminal behaviour- a huge misconception. There is a genuine lack of awareness and education when it

comes to these illnesses, and I would advise many to check out the list of disorders and their symptoms via the following link <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/>

Trying to find resources for mental health recovery or crises can not only be daunting, but time consuming and arduous- in the matter of finding the correct resources. Accordingly, **The Epsom and Ewell Times** felt it necessary to provide some information regarding the mental health resources that exist within the area that can hopefully benefit those suffering, and/or those seeking help for those around them. Our objective is to lay out an inclusive, easily accessible list. Below is a compiled list of several of the available services within the borough. It is worth noting the following list is not comprehensive. The aim is to provide an avenue for those suffering and looking for help.

Love Me Love My Mind -

Love Me Love My Mind is a small registered grassroots charity based in Epsom. The charities aim is to promote better understanding of mental health, and to provide support to individuals suffering.

Love Me Love My Mind have drop in services every Monday from 16:00pm-19:00pm at St Barnabas church, situated on Temple road. The drop in service is a brilliant idea for those isolated by their mental health issues - with refreshments, activities and a home cooked meal provided. For more information visit <https://www.lovemelovemymind.org.uk>

Horizon

Horizon is a mental health, specialist and learning disabilities community service hub, which opened in July 2021. Horizon is currently working from the following address : 28 Upper High Street, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 4QJ

Teams specialising in the following have moved into the hub:

- Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIIP)
- Mind Matters
- Community Mental Health Recovery Service (CMHRS) - Epsom
- Community Mental Health team for Older People (CMHTOP) - Mid Surrey
- i-access: East
- Perinatal Mental Health Service: South West
- ASD and ADHD Service: Surrey

Mary Frances Trust -

Since 1994, the Mary Frances Trust have specialised in mental health support for Surrey residents. The non profit organisation is located at 23 The Crescent, Leatherhead. The services provided by Mary Frances trust are extensive, from one-to-one support and crisis support to wellbeing courses and physical activities.

"Anyone over the age of 16 living in the Mole Valley, Epsom & Ewell, Banstead, Elmbridge areas of Surrey and experiencing any form of mental or emotional health issues can access our services."

The website has more information in regard to their services - <https://www.maryfrancestrust.org.uk>

Safe Haven: Epsom

The safe haven, located at 44 Waterloo road, KT19 8EX, is a drop in service for those experiencing a mental health crisis and those who are looking for general mental health support. For the former, the centre is open from 18:00pm-23:00pm 365 days a year. Those looking for the latter can drop in between 18:00pm-19:00pm daily. There is also a virtual safe haven offering crisis support that can be accessed between 18:00pm-23:00pm via this link - <https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-Epsom>

"We offer a supportive environment for any adult in crisis during a time of need and when there may be no-one else around to provide it."

The services provided by the Epsom Safe Haven are self referral. The safe haven will be moving to the brickfield centre in May 2022 - at Brickfield Centre, Portland Place, Epsom, KT17 1DL.

For more information in regard to the Epsom safe haven visit: <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health/safe-havens>

Alcoholics anonymous (AA) intergroup:

For those struggling with alcohol addiction, there are several AA sessions throughout the week in and around Epsom and Ewell. Below are many of the sessions offered - it is worth noting that many of the below sessions work at a first come, first served basis, and the duration of the sessions vary from 1 hour - 1 and 1/2 hours.

Monday at 20:00pm - St Joseph's Catholic Church, St Margaret's Drive, KT18 7JQ

Friday at 13:00pm - St Martin's Church Hall, Church St, KT17 4PX

Friday at 18:30pm - All Saints Church meeting room, KT19 9QZ

Saturday at 20:00pm - St Martin's Church, Church St, KT17 4PX

Saturday at 10:00am - Epsom Methodist Church, 11-13 Ashley Rd, KT18 5AQ

Mindworks Surrey -

Mindworks is a Surrey based service specialising in children and young peoples emotional wellbeing and mental health. The services offered by Mindworks are extensive, delivered by many

alliance partners. Alongside this, Mindworks support and work alongside various organisations and groups who work with children and young people. The Mindworks website is not only accessible for a parent or carer, but also children and young adults.

<https://www.mindworks-surrey.org>

In a different way The Friends of Horton Cemetery are de-stigmatizing mental illness through their project revealing the lives of 9000 patients buried between 1899 and 1955 in the abandoned Cemetery in Epsom. See www.hortoncemetery.org

Author: **Freya Lawrence**