



## Inquest into Banstead tree fall death of 12 year old

A full inquest into the death of 12-year-old Brooke Wiggins, who was crushed to death by a falling tree branch on the Surrey and South London border last year, is set to take place next spring, as urgent questions remain over the tree's maintenance and safety.

The date was set following a pre-inquest review held on October 7 at South London Coroners Court, inside Croydon Council Chambers, and overseen by Coroner Ivor Collett. The inquest will determine whether Sutton Council, Surrey County Council, or both, bear any responsibility for the conditions that led to her death.

Brooke died on November 9 last year after a branch snapped from a tree she had been swinging on using a rope swing, while playing with friends at Grove Place, near the junction with Carshalton Road. The scene was described as deeply distressing, with her friends screaming for help as they waited for emergency services to arrive.

Emergency services spent over an hour trying to free her from the fallen branch, but despite efforts from residents and rescue teams, she was pronounced dead at the scene.

The inquest will hear evidence from the police, the Health and Safety Executive, and representatives of Surrey County Council. The council is responsible for managing the tree from which the rope swing was attached.

Arboriculture managers from Surrey will be called to give evidence on the inspection regime for the tree and whether it met required safety standards. The hearing will aim to establish if the branch failure was preventable and whether council maintenance processes were sufficient.

Coroner Collett noted the broader significance of the case, describing it as "an important issue for Surrey", given that it has the highest number of trees of any county in England, with a tree cover of 22.4%. He has also granted Surrey County Council permission to begin 'monolithing' - the removal of remaining branches on the tree involved in the incident.

The coroner is considering whether the London Borough of Sutton should be named as an "interested party" in the inquest. Interested parties are individuals, organisations or representatives with a legal interest in the death, giving them the right to be more actively involved in the inquest than other witnesses.

Although the tree was under Surrey's control, the branch extended over land owned by Sutton, and Brooke and her friends are believed to have accessed the area by crossing rights of way also owned by Sutton.

The inquest will examine the cause of Brooke's death and determine how and why the branch gave way.

Brooke's family attended the hearing and are expected to provide a pen portrait during the inquest to honour her memory. Coroner Collett confirmed that distressing body-worn footage from the day will not be used during the hearing, but that audio from the 999 calls will be played as part of the evidence.

Collett acknowledged that while the potential spring date for the three-day hearing was regrettable, it was a realistic outcome given the current backlog facing the court. Confirmation of the exact date is expected within the month.

Harrison Galliven - LDRS

Image: Brooke was killed after she was crushed by a branch in Banstead last year Credit: Google Maps

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## "Outstanding" rating for Worcester Park based carers

Trinity Homecare Group is delighted to announce that its Worcester Park-based visiting care service has been awarded an 'Outstanding' rating by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) following a recent inspection.

The CQC awarded the service **Outstanding in four of the five key areas** - Well-led, Caring, Effective and Responsive - placing it among a *tiny handful* of homecare providers nationally to achieve this level of recognition.

### A service at the heart of the community

Inspectors praised the service for being "exceptionally personalised and kind," with carers and managers going above and beyond to support local people in their daily lives. The Worcester Park branch provides visiting care to individuals and families across



Surrey, including communities in Cobham, Walton, Weybridge, Byfleet, Addlestone, Epsom, Banstead, Kingston, Tadworth, Ashted, Leatherhead, New Malden, Surbiton, Thames Ditton, Molesey and Chessington.

Highlights from the inspection report included:

- Helping clients maintain independence, with flexible support tailored around their daily routines.
- Supporting people to enjoy life's small but meaningful moments - from feeding ducks and gardening, to celebrating birthdays.
- Spotting health needs early and working with families and local professionals to ensure the right support is in place.
- Embracing new technology and creative initiatives such as *Stories for Life*, enabling people to capture their personal history and strengthen family connections.

## Celebrating local carers

"Families in our local communities trust us not just to provide safe care, but to make every day more meaningful," said **Carla Gama, Director of Operations at Trinity Homecare Group**.

"That is thanks to the incredible work of our carers here in Worcester Park and across Surrey. They bring compassion, kindness and professionalism into people's homes every single day, and this Outstanding rating is truly theirs to celebrate."

**Summer Smith, Registered Branch Manager at Worcester Park**, added:

"I am so proud of our team here. Every carer and support staff member goes above and beyond to make sure people feel safe, valued and cared for in the way they want. This rating reflects their dedication and the strong relationships they build with clients and families in our local communities."

## About Trinity Homecare Group

Trinity Homecare Group is one of the UK's leading providers of live-in and visiting homecare, supporting people to live independently and safely in the comfort of their own homes. With over 25 years of experience and a growing national footprint, Trinity continues to set the standard for high-quality, person-centred care.

The Group includes a family of trusted brands: Trinity Homecare, Country Cousins and Patricia White's - together spanning fully managed, regulated live-in and visiting care, as well as introductory agency live-in and visiting care services across the UK.

Learn more or view the full CQC report: [www.trinityhomecare.co.uk](http://www.trinityhomecare.co.uk)

[Copy prepared by Trinity Home Care.]

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## From Epsom to the Big Screen

Dean Puckett Returns Home with His Debut Feature *The Severed Sun* for a Special Screening and Q&A next week Wednesday 8th October!

A special homecoming event is set to light up the screen at Epsom Picturehouse as local filmmaker Dean Puckett returns to share his debut feature film, *The Severed Sun*. Dean, a former student of Glyn High School and UCA Farnham, moved from London to Surrey as a teenager before embarking on a filmmaking career that has taken him to major international festivals. Now, he returns to Epsom for a screening and Q&A celebrating the launch of his haunting British folk horror debut.

Set in an isolated church community gripped by paranoia and superstition after a brutal murder, *The Severed Sun* is a chilling tale of faith, fear, and folklore. The feature marks the first full-length film from Puckett — produced by Rebecca Wolff (Grasp the Nettle Films) and Jude Goldrei (Lunar Lander Films) — and had its world premiere at Fantastic Fest 2024.

Following screenings at Picturehouse cinemas across the UK, this special Epsom event will feature a post-screening Q&A with Dean, who will share insights into the creative process, behind-the-scenes stories, and what it takes to bring a first feature from script to screen.



"I discovered my love for filmmaking in a small cupboard at Glyn High School in Epsom. This was entirely thanks to one exceptional teacher, Mr Ramasami, who believed in me. Despite struggling academically, he saw that I had a flair for visual storytelling. I lived in Worcester Park from the age of 12 and took countless trips to the cinema in Epsom during my youth, so it's incredibly gratifying and moving for me to return now with my own feature film. "

— Dean Puckett, Director of *The Severed Sun*

"It's a real privilege to work with homegrown talent like Dean and to share his debut feature with the community that helped shape his creative journey. Events like this are not only exciting cinematic moments, they're also a chance to show aspiring filmmakers that it is possible to follow your passion and make something special. Community is at the heart of what we do at Picturehouse, and hosting screenings like this — which bring people together and celebrate local success — is exactly what our cinema is all about."

The screening is a chance not only to experience one of the most distinctive new British films of the year but also to celebrate a hometown success story — and discover what it's really like to turn a dream into a debut.

Event Details:



Epsom Picturehouse, Epsom Square, Epsom, KT19 8AG

*The Severed Sun*: followed by a Q&A with Dean Puckett and filmmakers



Tuesday 8 October, 6:30pm



Tickets: [www.picturehouses.com/epsom](http://www.picturehouses.com/epsom)

Image of Dean Puckett

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## 2nd October 2025

Council Finances

### Epsom reserves vs investment



29 September 2025

A bid to raid a Epsom and Ewell council's multi-million pound property reserves to pay for crumbling public buildings has been thrown out by councillors. Epsom and Ewell Borough councillors ... [Read More](#)

Community Health



## Rehabilitation Hub in Leatherhead rehabilitated



29 September 2025

Epsom residents are set to benefit from a new integrated musculoskeletal (MSK) facility following a significant investment at Leatherhead Hospital. The Leach Rehabilitation Hub has undergone a comprehensive transformation, creating ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

## Stage 2 Examination of Epsom & Ewell's Local Plan opens Tuesday



28 September 2025

The Inspector appointed to examine Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's draft Local Plan, C Masters MA (Hons) FRTPI, will open Stage 2 hearings at Epsom Town Hall, The Parade, KT18 ... [Read More](#)

Council Council constitution

## Caterham's parochial battle.... a sign of things to come?



27 September 2025

Caterham could soon be governed by a single town council after a majority of residents backed the idea - but the proposal has split opinion among councillors and locals. At ... [Read More](#)

Horse racing Sports



## Epsom Racecourse: Preview and Tips for Sunday's Seven-Race Card



27 September 2025

It's Epsom Racecourse's season finale Sunday, and the seven-race card features the Apprentices' Derby Handicap, alongside four other handicaps, a conditions stakes and a novice. Read on for a ... [Read More](#)

Council Transport

## Half price Surrey bus journeys for under 20s soar to one million



27 September 2025

19,000 young people aged 20 and under are now benefitting from 50% off bus journeys across Surrey. The Surrey LINK card was developed by Surrey County Council in 2023 to ... [Read More](#)

Council Education

## Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity expands into 70 Surrey schools



27 September 2025

The Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINs) has begun its second year in Surrey, extending support from 41 to 70 schools. The programme, a joint initiative by NHS ... [Read More](#)





Arts Community Culture

## **Guildford theatre stage for a community cultural hub**



27 September 2025

Yvonne Arnaud Theatre marks 60th birthday with major transformation On Wednesday 10 September, the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford hosted a 60th Birthday Concert celebrating both a milestone anniversary and ... [Read More](#)

Community News

## **Bookham to get new community centre**



24 September 2025

After six years of waiting and false starts, Bookham is finally getting a new community centre. The old Bookham Youth Centre on Lower Road shut its doors in 2019 after ... [Read More](#)

Community Council

## **Surrey's "suffer the little children..." tested**



24 September 2025

Plans to turn a family house into a home for vulnerable children on a Surrey street have been given the green light despite strong opposition from its future neighbours. A ... [Read More](#)

Community Education

## Surrey Uni finds gay vets face discrimination

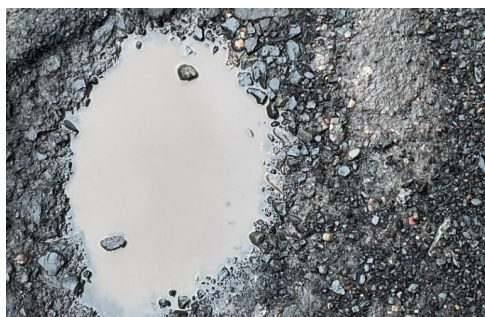


24 September 2025

A new study from the University of Surrey and the Royal Veterinary College has highlighted the ongoing presence of discrimination and its impact on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other ... [Read More](#)

Council Transport

## Epsom's potholes. We're not alone...



24 September 2025

'Sink holes happen' was the blunt message from a Surrey highways officer when asked if the council had the budget to repair five crumbling suburban roads. In fairness, council budgets ... [Read More](#)

Education News

## Epsom and Ewell's NESCOT plumbs the heights



24 September 2025

Nescot's gas and plumbing apprenticeship provision has been awarded a City & Guilds End Point Assessment (EPA) plaque for



excellence in apprenticeship delivery. Elizabeth Akinlaja, City & Guilds Business Development ... [Read More](#)

Community Culture Local History

## Epsom & Ewell's French racing twin is a favourite



24 September 2025

The Château de Chantilly has been selected as Monument Préféré des Français 2025 (France's Favourite Monument), surpassing 13 other iconic sites in a national vote. It succeeds the 24 Hours ... [Read More](#)

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## Epsom commemorates VJ day

St Martin's Church, Epsom, was filled on Friday 15th August as the borough came together to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day - the end of the Second World War in the Far East. The service, organised by the Royal British Legion's Epsom and Ewell branch, brought together civic leaders, veterans, families, choirs and the wider community to commemorate those who served and those who never came home.

The service was led by Revd Nick Parish, who in his opening prayer set the tone:

"God, our Father, in the dying and rising of your Son, Jesus Christ, you have brought life and salvation out of cruelty and death. We mark VJ Day in gratitude for the courage of the allied forces who suffered for freedom in the Far East campaign, and in sorrow for all that hinders the coming of your kingdom of peace. Give us wisdom to learn from the bitter memories of war and hearts that long for the unity of all nations."

### A personal touch from local families

Among the most moving contributions came from Mrs Sheila Carlson-Berry, who read extracts from her late father Douglas Fletcher's letters home from Burma. Fletcher, who had volunteered for the RAF at 19, wrote more than 250 letters to his sweetheart Sylvie during his service.

From October 1944 he wrote with cautious optimism:

"I suppose by the time you receive this European war will be just about finished. What a wonderful thought. It must make the people at home very happy... loved ones at home free from all danger. That, of course, is the main reason for our joy. The other is that now we can have the men and materials out here to put an end to this."

In another letter, he reflected on the "forgotten" nature of the Burma campaign:

"Most people don't realise there's a war on out here. It's only the people who have someone here that understand what is happening. The children have suffered most. It will take years to erase horrible memories from their minds. Man's inhumanity to man - a terrible war, isn't it?"

By August 1945, as the atomic bombs fell on Japan, Fletcher wrote with relief:

"So it's all over. Hard to believe, isn't it? It came so suddenly, but there it is. It will make things so much easier... Yes, the atomic bomb is a terrible weapon, but I think we have it to thank for the Jap surrender... I sincerely hope it will be the last war on this earth. War is too terrible a business. So many innocent people have to suffer."





Sheila told the congregation: "As you probably guessed, Douglas is my dad. Sylvie, my mum. He never forgot his comrades. Each Remembrance Day, I went with him to Westminster, and he cried as he planted a cross in the garden for his friend and pilot, Godwin Scudamore, who didn't make it home."

## The stories of Epsom's fallen

Cllr Dr Graham Jones MBE and the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Michael Molyneux, read researched accounts of four Epsom men who lost their lives in the Far East campaign.

- **Sergeant Jack Cannon**, Royal Artillery, died 28 February 1944 aged 30 at Imphal, India: "Jack married Nora Rush in 1940, and a year later their son Anthony was born. After just a year with his family, Jack was sent to India... He was killed in action during a Japanese attack and later interred at the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery in Imphal. His widow Nora requested the inscription: *'To a beautiful life came a sudden end, and he died as he lived, everyone's friend.'*"
- **Corporal Lionel William Murray**, Dorset Regiment, killed at the Battle of Kohima, 4 May 1944, aged 28: "Before the war he lived with his mother in Langley Vale. He was evacuated from Dunkirk, then sent to India to train in jungle warfare. At Kohima he fought in bitter hand-to-hand combat and was killed in action. His gravestone reads: *'In loving memory of a beloved son and brother. Rest in peace.'*"
- **Lance Bombardier Alfred William Cates**, Royal Artillery, died of cholera 26 July 1943 aged 42: "Stationed in Singapore, he was taken prisoner in February 1942 and sent to work on the notorious Thailand-Burma Death Railway. His widow Emma chose the words: *'So young, so calm, so bright, I bid you, my dearest one, goodnight.'*"
- **Noel Seymour**, RAF wireless operator, died 14 October 1943 aged 21: "Taken prisoner in Singapore, he too was forced to work on the Burma Railway, where some 30 prisoners died every day. Noel was one of them. He lies in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand, and his name is remembered on the war memorial in this very church."

## Tributes from today's leaders

Helen Maguire MP for Epsom and Ewell, whose grandfather had served in Burma, spoke of both the past and her own military service: "Those who served in the Burma campaign were referred to as the Forgotten Army, and today we remember them and we honour them... My grandfather fought in the Battle of Kohima, a brutal and decisive turning point in the war. Like many who served there, he never spoke of his experiences, but it was clear the war stayed with him for the rest of his life. I remember him today with pride, gratitude and honour."

Maguire linked her own military service in Bosnia and Iraq to the experiences of those remembered:

"War is cruel and it affects innocent people. It's something civilians should never have to live through. Today, I remember my grandfather and those he served with. I remember those who didn't come home, and I remember too the lasting impact of service on families, on lives and on future generations. We give thanks for peace and pray for an end to wars."

## Community effort

Barb Warwick, principal organiser with the Epsom RBL, later thanked the many contributors, from choirs and standard bearers to the volunteers who served over 100 cups of tea and cake in St Martin's Hall. She acknowledged the "wonderful trumpeter Mr Dennis Sexton" for sounding the Last Post, and Tom Davey representing 135 Squadron.

Warwick reflected that this was "almost certainly the last service of its kind" and praised those who helped plan the event, especially John Rogers and Revd Nick Parish: "You did them proud."

## Remembering the Forgotten Army

The commemoration at St Martin's - once known as the "Burma Star church" - brought together personal memory, civic duty, and community remembrance. The letters of Douglas Fletcher, the stories of Cannon, Murray, Cates and Seymour, and the testimonies of descendants and leaders ensured that those from Epsom who served in the Far East will not be forgotten.

As the exhortation reminded the packed congregation: *"We will remember them."*



You can watch the full service on this video link: [Epsom and Ewell VJ Day Commemoration](#)

Image: Barb Warwick of Royal British Legion Epsom and Ewell the principal organiser of the event.

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## Silver musical lines under a cloudless Epsom sky

On Sunday 10 August, under a radiant summer sky, the Epsom & Ewell Silver Band gave a free open-air concert in Rosebery Park. Families and friends gathered, bringing their own chairs or settling under marquees, enjoying ice creams, picnics, and the gentle warmth of the day. The relaxed, communal atmosphere felt quintessentially British—just the sort of setting the band seems to relish.

EESB competes in the First Section of the London & Southern Counties region, and is active within the Southern Counties Amateur Band Association ([eesb.org.uk](http://eesb.org.uk)). Founded around 1910 as Banstead Silver Band, it has a rich heritage, including early rehearsal stories in barns and a legendary centenarian player, Tom Fiddimore, who helped sustain the band through decades. In July 2023, the experienced tenor-horn player and conductor Tariq Ahmed was appointed Musical Director. Originally from Lancashire, Tariq has an impressive background with championship bands and contest successes, including experience on BBC Radio 2, European tours, and national finals.

EESB's presentation was a masterclass in subtle harmonies and gorgeous arrangements. The ensemble gently wove together familiar melodies with rich brass textures.

The first half opened with San Lorenzo, a lyrical piece whose fluid lines invoked a serene Italian sunrise. Swingtime Religion brought a sprightly, jazz-tinged rhythm to the park. The Wichita Lineman was delivered with poignant phrasing, capturing the emotional core of Jimmy Webb's classic. In Concerto de Aranjuez, the Adagio's romantic guitar theme, eloquently rendered by brass, floated beautifully amid the greenery. The Spirit Within, a more modern piece imbued with introspection and warmth. Bui Doi carried a haunting quality, resonating with depth, while St Louis Blues March blended bluesy soul with marching energy. Let's Face the Music and Dance, the Irving Berlin standard, swung with effortless charm to close the half.

The second half began with Florentiner March, bright and ceremonial, restoring lively momentum. Ae Fond Kiss, Robert Burns' tender farewell, was exquisitely phrased. Salute to Sinatra offered a glitzy, nostalgic trip back to the Rat Pack era. With One Look from the musical Sunset Boulevard was dramatic and expressive, the brass almost singing the lyrics. Pinball Wizard brought energy and edge, while Song of the Night Sky was dreamy and atmospheric, ideal for a summer evening. Pastime with Good Company nodded to Elizabethan merriment, and the finale, You Can't Stop the Beat, soared energetically to bring the concert to a rousing close.

This concert showcased the band's mastery of nuance, from classical depth to modern zest, with arrangements that highlighted every section in balanced harmony. On a sunny August afternoon, amid picnics and cheerful chatter, the Epsom & Ewell Silver Band underlined its role not just as a brass ensemble, but as a focal point of community culture and joyful musical experience.

Thanks to Cllr Steven McCormick (RA Surrey and Woodcote and Langley) for arranging and the photo.

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## The Royal Marines Band Collingwood at Epsom Playhouse

Organised by Cllr **Dr Graham Jones** MBE (Lieutenant Colonel (retired) (RA Cuddington) the renowned **Royal Marines Band Collingwood** made a triumphant performance at the Epsom Playhouse on Friday night, delivering a rousing programme brimming with technical excellence, military precision, and heartfelt artistry. Conducted by Captain Phil Trudgeon and Warrant Officer 2 Bandmaster Jamie Gunn, the band captivated a near-capacity audience with a thrilling showcase of traditional military repertoire and popular favourites.

The evening began, fittingly, with the National Anthem performed with stately dignity, reflecting the band's deep roots in national and royal service.

The opening item, **Overture to *Candide* by Leonard Bernstein**, displayed infectious energy and fizzing orchestration, setting a



vibrant tone. Bernstein's much-loved operetta is famed for its satirical bite, and the Marines captured its brilliance and wit with panache.

Next came John Philip Sousa's **Who's Who in Navy Blue**, a 1920 march celebrating American naval traditions, crisply articulated by the brass and percussion with authentic verve.

In a change of mood, the band shifted to the familiar strains of the **Top Gun Theme**, arranged by Laughton. Its soaring harmonies and stirring sense of adventure delighted the audience, showcasing the band's ability to cross genres effortlessly.

The **Drum Static** interlude then brought the spotlight to the Corps of Drums. Their razor-sharp discipline, complex sticking patterns and synchronised movement brought rapturous applause.

**Cape Helles** by Young followed, a poignant musical tribute to the Gallipoli landings of 1915, performed with great sensitivity and power.

Alford's lively **The Mad Major** quick march injected a welcome spark of lightness, its playful melody and military swagger a reminder of Alford's enduring legacy as the "British March King."

A show-stopping highlight came with Corporal Savage's clarinet solo in **Artie Shaw's Clarinet Concerto**, arranged by Cray. This 1940 swing-inspired concerto, with its swooping glissandi and jazz idioms, was delivered with aplomb and won a spontaneous ovation.

The first half concluded with two contrasting works. **In Ireland** by Lance Corporal Brooks explored traditional folk-tinged melodies with a fresh, lyrical approach. Finally, Frank Ticheli's **Vesuvius** erupted with rhythmic fire and dramatic textures, a thrilling depiction of the famous volcano's destructive power.

The second half began with **Maiden Legacy**, an arrangement by Captain Trudgeon, demonstrating the band's ability to reinterpret newer repertoire with flair.

A stylish rendition of **Skyfall**, the James Bond theme popularised by Adele with band soloist Beth McGregor, delivered a rich, cinematic grandeur which clearly resonated with the audience.

For the finale, the band turned to a cornerstone of English wind music: Gustav Holst's **A Moorside Suite**, originally written for brass band.

- The **Scherzo** sparkled with rhythmic energy,
- The **Nocturne** brought a serene, pastoral calm,
- And the concluding **March** was robust and dignified, the perfect platform for the band's tonal power and ensemble unity.

**Shenandoah**, arranged by Frank Ticheli, offered a moving moment of reflection. This classic American folk tune, thought to date back to early 19th-century river boatmen, was performed with deep feeling and a sonorous blend. Played in memory of a young member of the band recently lost to motor neurone disease.

As dusk approached, the band performed the traditional **Sunset**, arranged by Green, a moment of quiet remembrance often associated with evening ceremonies in the Royal Navy.

The concert then closed with two of the Royal Marines' most cherished musical emblems: **Heart of Oak**, the official march of the Royal Navy since the 18th century, and **A Life on the Ocean Wave**, the Royal Marines' regimental march, based on Henry Russell's 19th-century song. These stirring finales underlined the band's powerful heritage and left the audience in no doubt of their world-class standing.

However, the audience would not let them go without an encore and with Eric Coates' great Dambusters March all left satisfied.

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The Royal Marines Band Service has maintained its traditions since the 18th century, combining musical excellence with operational service. The Band Collingwood, based at HMS Collingwood, continues to support Royal Navy and national ceremonial events across the UK and internationally. Its members are trained both as musicians and as deployable service personnel, maintaining a dual role unmatched in the military music world.

The evening was also attended by members of the local branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL), who noted in the programme that concerts like these are an enduring link between the public and the Armed Forces, highlighting the shared remembrance and



respect for those who have served.

This concert was a brilliant reminder of the pride, tradition, and sheer artistry of the Royal Marines Band Collingwood, whose excellence lifted the hearts of all who were privileged to hear them.

Well done to Dr Graham Jones for bringing such a memorable evening to Epsom.

Image courtesy Steven McCormick Photography

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## Epsom & Ewell athletics legend remembered

### Remembering Don Turner: A Legend in Local Athletics

Epsom and Ewell's athletics community is mourning the loss of **Don Turner**, who passed away on Sunday, 9 March. A dedicated member of **Epsom and Ewell Harriers** for an incredible 70 years, Don was not only an accomplished athlete but also a respected official and administrator who left an indelible mark on the sport, both locally and nationally.

Don's career in athletics was nothing short of remarkable. An international-standard distance runner, he completed 65 marathons, but his true talent shone in even longer races. He broke the world record for a six-hour track run in challenging conditions at Stompond Lane, won the grueling Isle of Man TT course race twice, and was part of a Surrey trio who dominated the 1962 Comrades Marathon in South Africa, finishing within the top four.

His dedication to the sport extended far beyond competing. Don was a pillar of athletics officiating, holding key roles within Epsom and Ewell Harriers, Surrey Athletics, the South of England AA, and South of the Thames Cross Country Association. His expertise in timekeeping was widely recognized, and he became a mentor to many officials in the region.

A true pioneer in race technology, Don played a crucial role in introducing photofinish techniques in an era when timing relied on manual stopwatches and wet film processing. He was a key figure in international athletics, including officiating at the prestigious Crystal Palace events and working with Seiko at the Barcelona Olympics test event in 1991.

Perhaps one of his most well-known contributions was his involvement in the founding of the London Marathon in 1981, working alongside Chris Brasher and John Disley to organize the race's finish and timekeeping. Yet, despite these high-profile roles, Don remained dedicated to grassroots athletics. Well into his 80s, he could be found officiating at local youth competitions, including the Ebbisham League at Ewell Track.

**Helen Maguire**, MP for Epsom and Ewell and an Epsom and Ewell Harriers runner, paid tribute to Don's immense contribution:

"Don officiated in many a race I've taken part in during my 14 years running for Epsom & Ewell Harriers. Don also helped start the London Marathon alongside Chris Brasher in 1981. He lived in Stoneleigh. His contribution to the sport of running has been enormous and he will not be forgotten. Thanks, Don, for everything you have done for the sport."

### A Club with a Rich Heritage

Don Turner's legacy will live on through Epsom and Ewell Harriers, one of the oldest and most successful athletics clubs in Surrey. With a membership of approximately 250 athletes of all ages and abilities, the club competes in a range of track and field, cross country, and road running events at regional, national, and even international levels.

The club's facilities include a six-lane track and provisions for high jump, long jump, pole vault, hammer, discus, and javelin training. It is a strong competitor in the Surrey Cross Country leagues, Area Cross Country Championships, and road running events. Additionally, the club actively supports and encourages coaching and officiating qualifications among its members.

Epsom and Ewell Harriers also play a vital role in the local running community, including their well-established link with Nonsuch parkrun, where they frequently provide volunteer support. As a registered charity (number 1187959), the club continues to promote athletics and nurture future generations of athletes.

Don Turner's passing marks the end of an era for Epsom and Ewell athletics. He will be remembered not just for his achievements and contributions but for his unwavering passion and generosity in supporting the sport at every level. The athletics community will deeply miss him, but his legacy will continue to inspire for years to come.

Image courtesy England Athletics





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## Epsom Symphony Orchestra: A Cornerstone of Local Musical Excellence

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 stage with numerous esteemed soloists, including pianists Phyllis Sellick, Eileen Joyce, and Semprini, clarinettist Gervase de Peyer, and, more recently, the internationally acclaimed pianist Benjamin Grosvenor.

Currently under the direction of its long-serving musical director **Darrell Davison**, the orchestra performs four concerts annually at the **Epsom Playhouse**. Mr. Davison, who has led the orchestra since 1981, brings an impressive musical pedigree to the role. A scholar of both Charterhouse and St Catherine's College, Cambridge, Davison began his career as the principal cellist of the Ulster Orchestra before transitioning to conducting. A winner of the Sir John Barbirolli Conducting Competition in 1979 and a prize winner at the inaugural Leeds Conducting Competition in 1984, Davison has conducted major ensembles across England, including all four London orchestras, and has appeared at venues such as the Royal Festival Hall.

The Epsom Symphony Orchestra comprises a blend of professional musicians and dedicated amateurs, creating a vibrant and inclusive musical community. Among its members is leader **Julia Burkert**, a German-born violinist who studied on scholarship in Canada and Scotland before establishing a successful freelance career in London. The orchestra's ethos of collaboration and shared passion for music resonates strongly with its members, many of whom describe it as a "musical family."

The orchestra recently performed its annual Christmas concert to a packed audience at the Playhouse. The festive program featured interactive elements that encouraged audience participation, adding to the warm and lively atmosphere. This year's Christmas concert continued a tradition of welcoming celebrity narrators for musical pantomimes, with past guests including Johnny Morris, Wayne Sleep, and Lionel Blair.

Looking ahead, the orchestra's next concert on 23rd March promises a compelling program of classical masterworks. Highlights include Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet Overture*, Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* with Cypriot pianist Christos Fountos as the soloist, and Shostakovich's emotionally charged Fifth Symphony. Mr. Fountos, born in Nicosia in 1997, began his piano studies at the age of five and made his orchestral debut at 17 with the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra.

The orchestra's commitment to nurturing local talent and delivering high-quality performances continues to enrich Epsom's cultural life. It is also actively seeking new players of a good standard to join its ranks, ensuring its legacy endures for years to come. For more information, prospective musicians and concertgoers are encouraged to visit the orchestra's website. <http://www.epsomsymphony.co.uk/>

Related report:

[Spanish fiesta came to Epsom](#)

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## "The Wizard of Oz" works its magic in Epsom

Friday 15th December was opening night for this seasons annual pantomime at the **Epsom Playhouse**. **Kate Spiller**, founder of the production company said "We are delighted to present the classic tale of 'THE WIZARD OF OZ' ... This well known story follows Dorothy in her adventures along the 'Yellow Brick Road: Her 3 great friends -The Lion, Tin Man and The Scarecrow join her in her search for the Wonderful Wizard. We have stuck very closely to the original story line with our production, although this talented cast have added much comedy and humour."

She added "Many thanks must be given to **Mrs Elaine Teague** and her team at the Playhouse, who work very hard throughout the year to bring you a whole array of theatrical productions. Special thanks are also due to the great number of 'mums and dads' that have driven their children to rehearsals and performances over the last few weeks allowing us to have over 200 Munchkins in the show and opening up a whole new world to these talented youngsters."

The players maintained a giddy momentum and energy throughout a packed programme of dance routines, pantomime banter and adult innuendoes.



The synchronization of vivid computer animated backdrops, a lively sound-track and the stage actions worked wonders in creating the dream-like qualities at the heart of the Wizard of Oz experience.

Sadly, copyright issues and cost mean the songs we are familiar with from the original "Judy Garland" film version will not be sung at the Playhouse.

Shining though were the performances of Emily Day as Dorothy, Rikki Stone's scarecrow and though unpopular in the traditional way, Jake Anthony Pearse's charismatic role as the Wicked Witch was appreciated at the final curtain.

The Lisa Jayn dancers didn't miss a beat in a variety of the main dance routines.

No less than six local young persons dance groups sourced the 200 little munchkins. None could have been taller than 4 feet. 20 were on stage at a time and performed with great professionalism. They included The Arnould School of Dancing, Gemini Dancers, The Italia Conti - Reigate, Joco Dance and Theatre Arts, Starstruck and Epsom's Terri-Jayne's School of Dance.

The success of the night is a tribute to the workings of an Epsom and Ewell Borough Council owned and managed arts venue, working in collaboration with artists in the private sector.

You can get tickets for performances through to 1st January 2024 via the Epsom Playhouse box office. Even at the full adult price of £25 the entertainment is good value for money and no commuting necessary.