

Student racemakers favourites at the Derby

5 June 2024



Ewell based **Nescot** (North East Surrey College of Technology) were proud to be part of this year's **Epsom Derby** Festival. Our Travel and Tourism students were once again 'Racemakers' and our Animal Management students presented personalised handmade plaques to the grooms of the Betfred Derby runners.

NESCOT on Reigate Road, Ewell is the location for a local HUSTINGS, staged by Epsom and Ewell Times, for the Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Candidates in the Adrian Mann Theatre at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June. All welcome.

Our Travel and Tourism Level 2 and 3 students were part of the 'Racemaker' team on 31 May and 1 June. They used skills developed within their course to assist visitors with directions and queries, helping to ensure an excellent experience was had by all. The students benefitted from both, the preparation and employment during the event. The experience has allowed them to develop their academic and transferrable skills, from CV development to interviews and onsite advice and guidance with Epsom Downs Racecourse. They received training on the various enquiries they might receive including how to effectively deal with a range of customer service scenarios.

A team of four of our Level 2 and 3 Animal Management students also presented unique mementos made from wood off cuts that bore the names of the horses running in the Derby. These personalised and handmade plaques were presented to each groom. The students were chosen for their consistent hard work and involvement in sustainability projects as part of their course.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO of Nescot, said, "We are proud of our involvement at the Betfred Derby Festival. Thanks to our staff for creating these collaborative opportunities and to our students for being excellent ambassadors for the College. It has been an incredible experience for them to be part of an internationally renowned premier racing event.

"We are hugely appreciative of Epsom Down Racecourse for inviting our students to be part of this prestigious event. Working with businesses and the community is important to us as a college and we look forward to our continued partnership that will enrich our learners with practical experiences to prepare them for their careers."

Jennifer Fasad and **Jemma Brodie**, Travel and Tourism lecturers at Nescot also expressed their gratitude. They said, "A huge thank you to the team at Epsom Downs Racecourse who ensured a comprehensive training programme was given to all learners involved. The opportunity to gain first hand customer service skills at an event of this scale offers them an all-important experience as they consider career paths in the travel, hospitality and events industry."

Zoe Brown, Head of Curriculum, Animal Studies, commented, "Our students were thrilled with the invitation to go behind the scenes in the stables area and meet the people who care for the horses. It's been an amazing experience for them. Thanks to Epsom Downs Racecourse for organising this opportunity. We are delighted that the personalised plaques were well received and we've been asked to provide them next year too."

Tom Sammes, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said "We were pleased to offer students from Nescot the opportunity to be part of the 'Racemaker' team at the Betfred Derby Festival. Their enthusiasm and commitment to learn and execute their roles is commendable, and the whole team were professional and dedicated across the two days.

"We were also delighted to help the students present the beautifully designed plaques to the grooms of the Betfred Derby runners and want to thank them for their hard work in the build up to the event.

"Epsom Downs Racecourse is looking forward to offering a range of different projects to support study programmes for young people throughout the rest of the year. Nescot is a huge part of the local community, and we want to help them continue to make a positive impact on the young people that come through their doors."

Travel and Tourism student Frankie said, "We had such a great time working as part of the Racemaker Team. The guidance and the allocation of roles and locations was clear and organised. This opportunity has allowed me to develop my leadership skills. I was proud to be placed on the radio as a team leader during the second day."

Another student Josh added, "It was an amazing experience! Helping customers has developed my confidence. I had some fantastic personal moments and even had the opportunity to see the beautiful race horses in the winner enclosure."

This is the second year that our Travel and Tourism students have worked alongside The Jockey Club as part of the Beacon Project that was set up in in Autumn 2022. This collaboration offers our students work experience opportunities with various projects at Epsom Downs Racecourse to aid with their studies and understanding of the racing industry and career opportunities it presents.

Nescot's Travel and Tourism students as part of the 'Racemaker' team at Epsom Downs Racecourse for the Betfred Derby Festival along with Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO. Photo credit: Nescot

From blow your hair to blow your mind?

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Nescot college in Ewell, Surrey is investing £650,000 to transform a hair studio on campus into a virtual reality (VR), immersive space for its students. The state-of-the-art technology, currently being installed, will be used across a wide range of courses on offer at Nescot and includes driving simulators and immersive learning spaces which work with a variety of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. This will allow students to gain specialist skills and experiences, like driving a forklift truck, or navigating a busy A&E ward, without even leaving the classroom.

Nescot will have a range of cutting-edge technology, including an Igloo, immersive room, and vehicle simulators. The Igloo is cylindrical, six metres in diameter and features a 360-degree projection system that can 'transport' groups of students around the world. It offers things like virtual field trips, design opportunities and gaming development. It can also recreate complex activities or hazardous environments so students can safely learn.

A suite of four advanced simulators will provide vehicle handling training for a wide range of machinery, from cranes to fire engines. These simulators, alongside virtual reality headsets, will mean students can work together to refine their driving or operation skills in a realistic scenario where multiple machines or vehicles are in use.

The immersive room has a projection system which equips all the walls with screens. Two of the screens are interactive and respond to touch, creating a hands-on learning experience. Two ultra-high-definition screens are also incorporated, and cameras enable instructors and students to magnify objects of interest and project them onto any of the four screens, facilitating discussion. The technology also brings remote learners into the classroom via a dedicated video call screen.

The facility further cements Nescot's reputation as a hub of innovation, having recently opened robotics, AI and cyber security facilities as part of its Institute of Technology. The staff/student hair studio, which was a commercial salon and not a learning space for students, has already moved out of the space and has been relocated nearby. There is no impact at all on the Nescot hairdressing course, which is still a valued part of the curriculum.

Julie Kapsalis, CEO and Principal at Nescot said "We pride ourselves on innovation, and giving our students the best experience at Nescot, so we're adopting this cutting-edge technology which will be a game changer. It can virtually transport students around the world to learn, allows them to safely practice dangerous scenarios, and is a fun and exciting way to boost motivation, creativity, and engagement. We can't wait to get it installed."

Somayyeh Clifton, Head of Quality Improvement & Innovation at Nescot said "This is not just for students doing IT related subjects, we expect it to be used across the whole curriculum, giving students the skills and experience they need to succeed in the modern world. We've come a long way since teaching from the front of the room and we really value the importance of learning through experience. We're keen to get prospective students along to our open days to find out more about this, and what we'll have to offer in the next academic year."

Julie and Somayyeh are both part of AI in Education initiative, with Julie sitting on the Strategic Board and Somayyeh on the Practitioners Panel. AI in Education aims to support and advise schools and colleges so they can maximise the benefits of AI and minimise the risks.

The funding to create the immersive space has been provided from the Government's Local Skills Improvement Fund, a project which aims to support local people into work. Nescot is working with other local colleges and universities to better support the skills needs of the labour market in key areas identified by local businesses - CreaTech, Advance Manufacturing, Engineering and Construction, Digital, and Employability and Professional skills.

As well as being beneficial for Nescot students, the college will be encouraging local businesses to get involved, by using the technology to train staff. Partnerships with business and enterprise are invaluable for both parties as organisations get to access cutting edge training and learning resources, plus a pool of talented, experienced students who can enter the workforce via apprenticeships, work placements and post-college recruitment.

Nescot offers college courses for school leavers and adults, with a wide range of career-focused vocational courses including Animal Care, Business, Computing and IT, Construction, Performing Arts, Childcare, Health & Social Care and Beauty Therapy. The college has two events coming up, where prospective students can see what's on offer, and learn more about the immersive classroom as it's being built.

- Open evening, Wednesday 22 May 2024, 4.30 - 7.30pm
- Summer fair, Saturday 15th June 2024, 10.00am - 2.00pm

To find out more, call 020 8394 3038, visit www.nescot.ac.uk or email adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk

Local businesses interested in using the immersive classroom for training, or working with the college on apprenticeships, work placements or recruitment should contact businesscentre@nescot.ac.uk or call 020 8394 8593.