EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

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Surrey musical quartet to play Jubilee concert to fundraise for their local NHS

11 May 2022



Epsom Music Charity will host an NHS Staff Benefit concert, featuring the Salieri Quartet, as part of local Jubilee celebrations on Friday 27 May at midday at the Epsom Playhouse in the presence of Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Mayor Elect of Epsom and Ewell.

The long established and experienced Salieri Quartet, whose members have played with orchestras across Europe and worked on West End shows, will treat the audience to a relaxing hour of classical favourites such as the Pachelbel Canon along with works from famous and familiar composers like Bach and Mozart to name but a few. The quartet will then 'string out' the entertainment by setting up in Market Square to entertain shoppers and businesses with a more contemporary programme, ranging from Beyoncé to Game of Thrones, and where donations will also be gratefully received!

READ MORE: Police appeal for witnesses after assault on Waterloo Road, Epsom

Simon Littlefield, Chief Nurse of the Trust, who will be attending the event said: *"A huge thank you to Epsom Music and the Salieri Quartet for dedicating their time to organise this event to support our charity; our people and the NHS. We are very grateful for the effort that has been put into this and would encourage people to come along and support this special day-time musical interlude."*



Jubilee Concert poster

Lionel Blackman, Trustee of Epsom Music, said: *"Our charity supports the education and performance of all music throughout Epsom and Ewell. Many in the music community were sadly affected by Covid in one way or another, and now that events can once again take place, we wanted to take the opportunity to show our immense gratitude to our local NHS. We are honoured the Mayor Elect can attend, and we hope other people can show their support by getting a ticket*

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and coming along!"

The concert will be for one hour and start at midday on Friday 27 May. A minimum donation of £10 per ticket is requested which can be made online at www.epsommusic.org and all funds raised will go to Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity.

READ MORE: Enter the Dojo of the Code Ninjas

Interview: A conversation with Nigel Price

11 May 2022



Epsom & Ewell Times have had the absolute honour of sitting down with Nigel Price. Epsom born and bred Nigel Price is an award-winning Jazz guitarist whose career has spanned over 25 years, and he kindly agreed to answer some of our questions, read on for more!

How old were you when you first picked up and played a guitar?

I was 11 years old. A bunch of us at St Martin's school got together and decided to form a band. It was just for fun but it immediately felt right and we rehearsed regularly. Every Sunday between 2 and 6. The music was pretty awful. How much can you do with a drum kit, an air powered keyboard, a mouth organ, a guitar and a boys brigade snare drum? At 6 o'clock on the dot the drummer's mum used to throw the door open and shout "Right. THAT'S IT!" and chuck us us all out.

Did you teach yourself or did you have years of lessons?

I am pretty much self taught. Once in a while I might have a single lesson with a player I really respect but I figured nearly everything out on my own. They say 'the greatest encyclopaedia is your record player'.

Where and when did you first play in public?

We played at the school in 1982. Blimey. That sounds like a long time ago! There followed many gigs around Epsom. There was a really great music scene for young people back then. Linton's Lane, The Playhouse, Nescot, Bourne Hall and other places used to put on music nights for local groups and sometimes 'battle of the bands' competitions. It's such a shame that this doesn't seem to be the case anymore. My first paid gigs were with a reggae/ska band in the early nineties. We toured around Europe, playing clubs and festivals, often supporting the legendary Jamaican band 'The Skatalites'.

Do you play any other instruments?

No, I don't. I was always worried that I would end up being a jack of all trades, master of none so I poured all of my practise into the guitar. I did play the bass in a funk band for a while though which was great fun.

Who have been your greatest musical inspirations and why?

As a kid, once I'd devoured all of my dad's record collection, that was made up of classic sixties pop, Motown, a bit of Queen and everything by the Beatles, I moved on to buying my own records. I was already used to listening to music that had been made decades before so it didn't feel unusual or wrong in any way to be listening to bands that had gone before, like Led Zeppelin. Of course, Jimmy Page (the guitarist from Led Zep) is an Epsom boy and actually used to sit next to one of my mate's dads when he was at school. Epsom High I think. I think having the notion that it was possible to 'make it' really spurred me on and I was convinced I was going to be a pop star! Of course, that never really worked out but I think I've ultimately ended up doing something much more fulfilling through a life in jazz.

There was a natural progression to jazz via the blues that I'd heard in bands like Led Zep, AC/DC and Thin Lizzy. My elder brother was a mod and listened to a lot of proper blues too, like John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters etc, so that was filtering through too. I eventually bought some actual jazz records and I was completely blown away by hearing Art Pepper, Miles

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Davis, Eddie Harris and several other horn players. I made a concerted effort to seek out jazz guitar players and it didn't take too long to bump into Joe Pass, Wes Montgomery and George Benson. There's a whole lot of music to listen to with just those three. I made it my business to check out as many guitarist as I possibly could. I remember thinking that perhaps it was a rabbit hole I would go down for a couple of years but I actually never made it out!

What's the size of the biggest audience you've played and where was that?

It was a festival in Holland. Nijmegen I think. We played right after 'Supergrass'. There were about 20,000 people in front of us and I was nervous as hell! There was a cameraman on stage. He ran up to me at one point while I was soloing, I remember taking my eye off the guitar, looking at the camera and then making a big howling mistake, right there on live tv! Ha ha!

Do you have any favourite jazz composers?

Not really. Although sometimes you end up playing tunes not knowing who they're composed by and then you often find that the same names pop up. Duke Ellington is obviously the don, along with Billy Strayhorn. Some of Benny Golson's compositions are absolutely great, as are Kurt Weill's. Actually, there is such a huge volume of repertoire that it would be impossible to name a favourite. If you asked me the same question tomorrow I may have given you three different answers!

Who are the most famous artists you've played for?

I guess Van Morrison would be the most famous. Recording on his album 'Keep me singing' was an unforgettable experience for sure! It was an honour to back Dame Cleo Laine on her ninetieth birthday bash at Birmingham town hall too. I spend most of my time playing with figures in the jazz world which, well, let's just say they wouldn't be considered 'household names' but within our scene there are many who I personally consider to be legends! Invariably, this is where the best music happens…

How did Covid impact on your work?

I'm not sure if I can even talk about it. To lose everything for such a long time was really mentally damaging. I love to work and I love to work hard. I've been playing 300+ gigs a year for two decades so I was utterly lost for a while.

How are things today?

To my surprise, things bounced back very quickly and I've been chockablock all year so far. A bit too busy actually!

Who is your favourite classical composer?

You've got me. I'm not really a classical music fan and I don't listen to it very often. Having said that, there are a lot of jazz sensibilities in Bach's music but I'll freely admit to never really having studied it in any great depth. Sometimes I hear something from the classical world that sounds amazing but I guess I just always find toward improvised music. I find the idea of spontaneous composition much more exciting.

You can hear Nigel Price play at the Epsom Jazz Club on 2nd June and 7th July. See www.epsomjazzclub.com

Read more of our Arts coverage here!

The Northman Review: Robert Egger's Viking Epic does not disappoint.

11 May 2022

There are SPOILERS for The Northman in this review. Film watched at ODEON Epsom.

Robert Eggers' latest feature may find itself being remembered as the most accessible of his filmography so far, with a simple enough, easy to follow plot (it's Viking Hamlet, not rocket science) and immense popcorn-munching fight scenes, including a climactic lava-lit battle at the mouth of a volcano, where it wouldn't have been too much of a visual stretch to give the characters lightsabers instead of shortswords. The main character, Amleth, is a Viking Prince and heir to his father's (played by Ethan Hawke) Kingdom, who witnesses his Father betrayed and murdered by Amleth's uncle Fjölnir, who also steals his kingdom and kidnaps his mother. So begins his quest for revenge, he speaks it aloud to himself while he's escaping the Irish coast: Avenge father, rescue mother, kill uncle. This admirable conflict is well established, the sides are drawn clearly and the brutality of the ordeal young Amleth has to go through gets the audience rooting for him instantly.

The next time we see Amleth he's a grown man, a Viking berserker who raids villages along the Slavic coast. It's on one of these raids that we're truly reintroduced to Amleth, as he cuts and slashes his way across a village in a sequence so truly brutal and raw, that you completely believe that this is a man who had his world taken away from him. The story wastes

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no time and after a brief magical encounter with Bjork (not kidding, wish I was), Amelth is on his way to confront his uncle. Alexander Skarsgard throws himself into the role completely, delivering earth-shattering Viking-berserker wolf-howls and vengeful promises of retribution, while also carrying the more dramatic parts of the film, like the chemistry-oozing scenes featuring Anya Taylor-Joy's Olga. The cast is certainly star-studded, Ethan Hawke's King Aurvandill commands a powerful presence for his brief screentime, Hawke is a wonderful actor, who puts 100% into every role he plays, opposite him, Nicole Kidman plays Queen Gudrún, a multi-layered and complex character that she plays effortlessly. Willem Dafoe makes an appearance as court jester/he-witch Heimir the Fool, a role he absolutely knocks out of the park.

The Northman, like all Eggers films, is shot magnificently, Jarin Blaschke (who also collaborated with Eggers on his 2019 film The Lighthouse, as well as his directorial debut The Witch) does an incredible job at making you feel like you're in the middle of a village being raided, you can practically feel the bite of the cold in the wide-shots of the Icelandic landscape, simply put, the camera work is exhilarating and visceral. The visuals are a treat from start to finish, the epic shots of a smoky volcano, the incredible establishing shots of settlements and villages, and the trippy dream-sequence vision quests that occur more than once, are all delightful to spectate. Blaschke uses everything at his disposal to his advantage, colour, light and phenomenal framing bless our screens with pure movie magic.

Eggers manages to build a very gritty, realistic depiction of the dark ages, the production and sound design come together to transport the audience to a violent, cold, but very real 895AD, whose magnificent scope simply must be seen to be believed. The film is markedly an Egger's picture, with mysticism and surreal elements scattered throughout, but if anything, he's reined in some of his more Lovecraftian and horror-based inspirations, with The Northman being much more accessible to the everyday filmgoer than the surreal psychological cosmic-horror that was The Lighthouse. It's a bit of a shame, to me, the film absolutely thrives in these surreal scenes and is at its best in these scenes, and honestly, I wish he lent into them a little more.

The Northman is very well-paced and rarely dull, even its calmer scenes are stacked full of well-written character interactions and powerful performances, Claes Bang puts in an excellent shift as the villainous Fjölnir, as does Gustav Lindh, who plays his son Thorir. One of the things I really liked about The Northman was how it portrayed a character who was almost completely selfish in his motivations, not driven to stop his Uncle because his Uncle was an evil man but driven entirely by his own revenge and personal grudges. The film explores this throughout, introducing elements that make Amleth and the audience question the moral absolutism of his quest. While this complexity is appreciated, it falls a tad flat by the film's conclusion.

Eggers has cemented himself as a visionary with his first two films, a master of substance and style, and The Northman deserves to stand amongst his stunning filmography. Overall though, it's in the third act of his Viking Epic that this substance begins to wear little thin, certain contrivances in the plot begin to arise and it feels like the film is plodding along to the next beat until we reach the (admittedly thrilling) climax. However, that is a small gripe compared to the pure majesty of the film, a visual marvel and an absolutely exhilarating ride, I'll be shocked it if doesn't adorn top ten lists at the end of the year.

Age Concern Epsom and Ewell's 75th

11 May 2022



Surrey Brass Friday 8th April entertained over 100 in the magnificent main hall of Epsom College in aid of local 75 years old this year charity Age Concern Epsom and Ewell. The charity's mission statement is: "Empowering older people in Epsom & Ewell to live the most fulfilling lives they can." The charity has an army of volunteers who befriend their clients with regular visits, help with DIY, drives to medical appointments, support for a foot clinic and a free hearing aid clinic, advice and information and other services. With demands on its services ever rising this Epsom and Ewell based charity can be proud of its year on year growth with income rising from £125,000 in 2017 to £258,000 year end March 2021. However, the Charity's Chief Officer Dorah May explains that the challenges of the Co-Vid pandemic are placing a strain on finances with reserves being used up. "Public support is needed more than ever to keep current services going."

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As their 75th year continues Age Concern Epsom and Ewell will combine its celebration with the Platinum Jubilee and recycle old hats that will be part of their Jubilee themed stall appearing in the Epsom Market Square on Thursdays throughout the month of May. Marie Thackwell, the charity's fundraising and marketing coordinator, said "I'm really looking forward to establishing some fun events and we already have a few great things lined up for the year ahead – after all it's Age Concern Epsom and Ewell's 75th anniversary – now that's something worth celebrating."

The Charity's monthly Sunday teas at Stoneleigh Methodist Church continue…



Menuhin Hall Concert raises money for Ukraine

11 May 2022



Pictured above: celebrated violinist Boris Kucharsky

Wednesday 30th March 2022 15 year old Ukrainian violin virtuoso Vadym Perig led the concert, accompanied by Ukrainian pianist Svitlana Kosenko, in renditions of Ukrainian composer Myroslav Skoryk's "Melody" – (that stirs the heart of every Ukrainian) and his Spanish Dance.

They were followed by Ukrainian pianist Dinara Klinton playing Rachmaninov's Elegie.

Sublime performances all the more remarkable to be accomplished considering the emotional turmoil being felt by the players from the violence being inflicted on their homeland.
The programme continued to a near capacity audience in the superb Menuhin Hall in Stoke D'Abernon with a Mozart duet for violin and viola and a student and school alumni ensemble, including the School's Director of Music Ashley Wass at the piano and soprano Mary Bevan, in Faure's magical La Bonne Chanson.

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Yehudi Menuhin, the hall's namesake, widely celebrated violinist and conductor

After an interval during which some of the Ukrainian ticket holders had the comfort of meeting Dinara Klinton, celebrated violinist Boris Kucharsky and student ensemble stretched their arm muscles to the limits in a performance of Brahm's very energetic String Sextet No 2 in G major.

Programme sales and collections raised money for the Disaster Emergency Committee's funds for humanitarian relief for Ukraine.
The Menuhin Hall is a somewhat hidden gem only 20 minutes drive from Epsom and Ewell. You can see its programme of concerts at https://themenuhinhall.co.uk/

Epsom Choral Society opens its centenary celebration 2022

11 May 2022



From **Epsom Choral Society**

This year Epsom Choral Society celebrates its Centenary and is doing so in style!

Our first concert was on **Saturday 19th March 2022** at St Martin's Church, Epsom attended by The Mayor, Peter Donovan and his wife. For this concert, the audience was treated to Vivaldi's *Gloria*, one of the most popular pieces from the Italian Baroque era, as well as three works which were all written for Epsom Choral Society – Cecilia McDowall's *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth*, Jonathan Willcocks' *O Joyful Soul* and Adrian Payne's *I Hid My Love*.

The soloists were Lisa Swayne, soprano, Helen Semple, soprano and Carolyn Holt, alto, all top-class young professionals and the concert was conducted by Epsom Choral Society's Musical Director Julian Collings.

Epsom Choral Society with Mayor Peter Donovan and his wife

Our other concerts in this Centenary year include **Songs from the Shows** in St Andrews Church, Cheam on 25th June 2022, **Messiah** at the Epsom Playhouse on Saturday 3rd December 2022 and our ever-popular Christmas Concert on Saturday 17th December.

Epsom Choral Society is Epsom's longest established choir and has continued to sing throughout the pandemic. At first

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via Zoom, then rehearsing outside in a garden and even, thanks to the kindness of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, live-streaming a concert in a car park which was heard by over 5,000 local residents thanks to What's On In My Town.

Continued …

B**riefing notes:**

1. Epsom Choral Society has been singing for 100 years and has around 90 singers. It usually puts on at least four concerts each year which attract a loyal following. Epsom Choral Society is a friendly choir – they do not require auditions but do aim for high performance standards. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings under the baton of their Musical Director, Julian Collings. www.epsomchoral.org.uk
2. Cecilia McDowall composed *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth* in 2009 for Epsom Choral Society as a tribute to Handel on the 250th anniversary of his death, with words taken from *Messiah*. It was first performed by Epsom Choral Society on 21st March 2009 at St Martin's Church, Epsom.
3. Jonathan Willcocks' *O Joyful Soul* was premiered by Epsom Choral Society on 30th June 2018. It was commissioned in memory of Cecil Wiltshire who had sung with the choir for 67 years, funded from the generous legacy that he left the choir. The piece's five movements were selected from religious and secular texts that encapsulated both his interests and his gentle and generous nature.
4. Adrian Payne's *I Hid My Love* received its world premiere by Epsom Choral Society on 15th June 2013 at St Martin's Church, Epsom. It was performed again the following year at the European Choral Festival in Überlingen in Germany and the choir has sung it on tour in France and The Netherlands. Adrian has sung with the choir for 25 years.

Contact: **Nina Kaye**: publicity@epsomchoral.org.uk, 07778 406834

Epsom Choral Society rehearsing in the 60s

Epsom Choral Society rehearsing in 2022

Epsom Author Spotlight: Roger Cox

11 May 2022

The Hanford Trilogy



Profile

I am a British writer living in the UK who recently completed his first novel, *Shadow on the Sun*'. There was a follow-up, *Deep Earth* (published in 2015), with a third, much longer book set to be completed in 2019. The aim is for the three books to complete a trilogy and in its arc, the trilogy is aimed at telling a further story necessary to complete the saga. Since moving to London 40 years ago as a journo and PR consultant I have become a '*novel writer*'. Years of writing on various non-fiction matters such as North Sea Oil and industrial heating systems led me into novel writing. One has to bear in mind during this time I had to earn a earning so as to support two ex-wives and our various daughters.

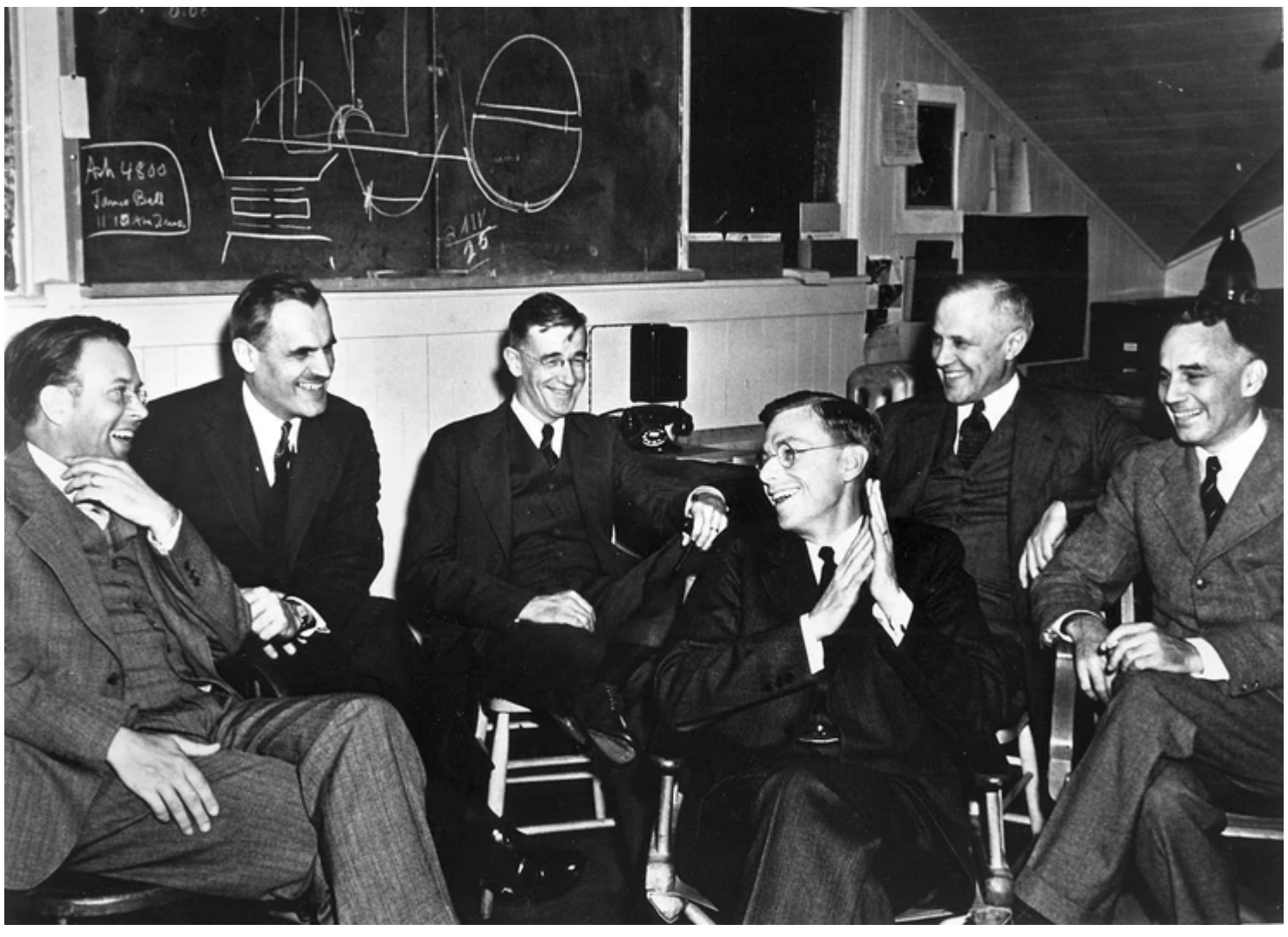
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The Manhattan Project

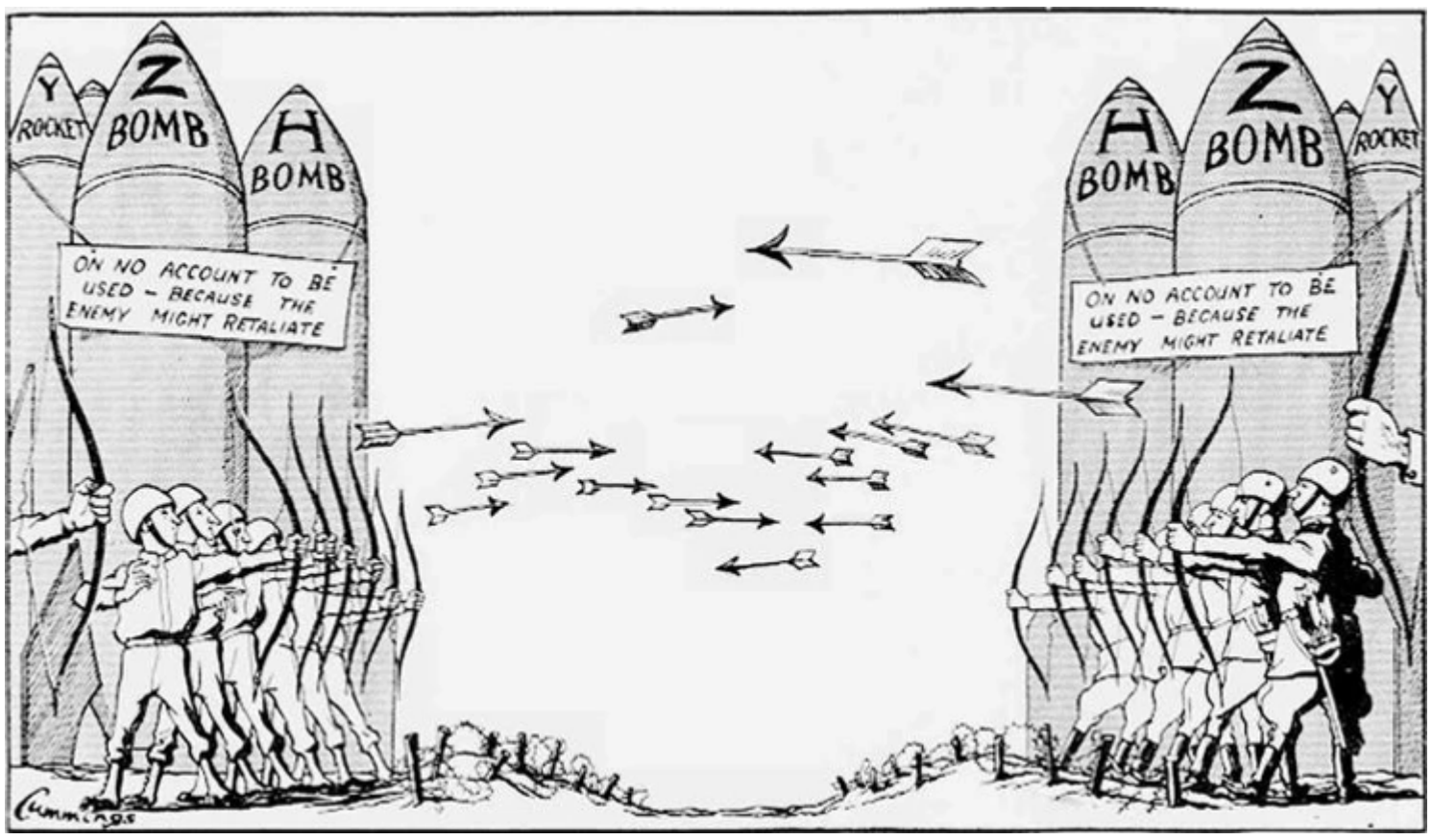


Picture: Manhattan Project members – March 1940 meeting at Berkeley, California: Ernest O. Lawrence, Arthur H. Compton, Vannevar Bush, James B. Conant, Karl T. Compton, and Alfred Loomis / By U.S. government – Public Domain

Much of *Shadow* takes place in the United States, for two reasons. The first is I had travelled extensively in this country. The second is I had always been fascinated by the American 'Manhattan Project', the Second World War project, named after the Manhattan Engineering District its founding location, aimed at beating the Germans' attempts to build an atomic bomb.

That the US was successful is evidenced by the abrupt ending of the war. But in the process a terrible legacy was created. Not only with the nigh on 200,000 Japanese people killed almost immediately with the atomic bomb droppings, but in the radioactive detritus that followed on for nearly seventy years affecting much of US, as well as obviously, Japanese land.

Part of the US legacy has been the awesome nuclear pollution affecting both the Columbia river, American's third largest and the plight of the Downwinders, and the land surrounding them. The Downwinders are the people who lived "downwind" of nuclear blasts, breathing the pollution it created, often dying early, and who spent years claiming compensation.



Picture: The Mutually Assured Destruction doctrine graphically illustrated / Schoolhistory.org.uk

But perhaps an even worse is legacy is the 60,000 US Cold War atomic weapons the US built as part of the mistaken belief of forcing the Soviets to abandon either the MAD doctrine – Mutually Assured Destruction – if ever the Soviets attempted to reach nuclear stalemate with the US.

The worst polluted place in the US has been- and still is – the Hanford Indian Reservation in Washington State. It is 600

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square miles of now badly polluted desert. This stems from Hanford eventually being the site of the eight nuclear reactors necessary for producing the bombmaking plutonium the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) believed it needed to meet US Government nuclear goals.

But making plutonium is no easy business. The clean-up bill to shutter eight nuclear reactors and the mess they have left behind was estimated at £130 billion in 2000. Since then figures of anywhere between $700 billion and $8 trillion have regularly been bandied about. The only accurate fact about these “costs” is every estimate far exceeds the preceding figures.

Becoming a Novelist

As a former journalist (amongst the many other hats I’ve worn) a combination of fact mixed with fiction seemed to me to be something I could try as a writer.

There was certainly plenty of material about Hanford. However, taking such a tack could be dangerous for it could mean any book would become out of date as events changed. But the issue at Hanford seemed likely to continue for several decades, more than enough to see me out! I like America and I like American writers, the latter covering the usual suspects. I like their style, the telling it like it is and not wasting words. How amazing it must have been in Hemingway’s day to have been around during his time in Paris in the early nineteen twenties. To get a flavour of it like Woody Alan’s loving movie pastiche, *‘Midnight in Paris*’.



Picture: Paris in style: Ernest Hemingway and Martha Gellhorn, his third wife / frenchly.us

Although there is much in today’s age to keep writers occupied I hope I have found one subject for me and something’ appeals to a wider audience. Not just for Californians who are pretty clued up about the environment they live in making them wary of people washing up on their shoreline with the aim of messing it all up. The debacle of the San Onofore nuclear power station just south of President Nixon’s old home at San Clemente is but one giant sized example. So as we speak I’m plodding away on my next book in a small town close to London. How long is it going to take me? I reckon another year before it’s all done. The world of books moves exceeding slowly so it will probably take longer. Have you all the patience to wait?

N.B. This profile is taken from R Julian Cox’s Amazon profile and was written some years ago before Brightstar was completed.

Environmental Backdrop

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Picture: The Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington state. / PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

A key backdrop to the stories in these books is the aftermath of The Manhattan Project, the United States' race to develop and wield the power of nuclear weaponry towards the end of World War Two before the Germans could. Victory in this nuclear arms race and the expansion of nuclear testing and weaponry during the Cold War with the USSR led to major environmental pollution in multiple sites across the United States.

The books focus on one of largest of these polluted sites, Hanford Indian Reservation, Washington in the north west continental United States. From the end of nuclear activity in the 60s to the 80s several Federal agencies attempted to clean up the environmental damage, countering pollution of the surrounding land and nearby Columbia river. The river feeds into the Pacific North West where Seattle, a city of 7 million inhabitants, known for being the HQ of major global companies, Amazon, Microsoft and Boeing.

An additional ticking time bomb is the prospect of a more powerful series of eruptions from the volcanos underneath nearby Mount St Helens that last erupted in the 80s.

The Hub's Conversation with R Julian Cox – Spring, 2021

All That Jass

https://www.youtube.com/embed/M95UzNPfjhE?autoplay=0&mute=0&controls=1&origin=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thehubcast.co.uk&playsinline=1&showinfo=0&rel=0&iv_load_policy=3&modestbranding=1&enablejsapi=1&widgetid=17

YouTube video: Oscar Peterson Trio 1965

R Julian Cox's first foray into writing was penning an article, *'All That Jass',* in 1965 for *The Yorkshire Evening Press* to drum up membership for The York Jazz Club. The club met at the York City Rowing Club and would occasionally host big bands on tour in the north of England. Founder member Cox mis-spelt *Jass* in the title as a nod to its use as 'sex' in American street slang. He was fond of jazz greats like Oscar Peterson and lesser knowns, like coronet player Joe Harriott.

Fleet Street

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Picture: The Bee Gees on the cover of a Sony Music Japan International CD / www.discogs.com

Shortly after, Cox secured a role as an editorial assistant on the paper and progressed to writing articles. He soon left his native York, without regret, for Fleet Street in the Swinging 60s and 70s with a business journos' job on *The Daily Telegraph*. His big business story was covering British Steel reporting the then largest loss in UK business history. Cox recalls attending the press conference and being invited with other journalists by chairman Sir Monty Finneston for a liquid lunch somewhere in Covent Garden. *"Those days were a lot of fun!"*

He moved along Fleet Street to work on *The Sunday Observer*. Characteristically, he readily admits his career moves were: *"All about the money!"* He was buying a *"very nice"* flat in Kew at the time and needed all the money he could get!

Cox's highlight at *The Observer* was interviewing The Bee Gees at the height of their 70s fame. CDs were the new thing and Sony lacked CD-Rom recording artists so signed big acts like The Bee Gees and Paul McCartney. Cox says he remembers *"the boys"* as straightforward and easy to deal with.

Public Relations



Picture: Maggie, Maggie, Maggie! – Margaret Thatcher at the Conservative Party conference in 1979. / Photograph: PA

Money too drew him from journalism to PR. Cox joined an agency called Good Relations as *"the writer"* . His Fleet Street baptism-by-fire years, where he was expected to churn out important copy to tight daily deadlines, meant he now felt able to write on anything.

He did well in PR, marching into No. 10 in 1979 to assist the newly-elected Margaret Thatcher with copy. She was: *"Pretty good, straight and easy to get on with."* He was less impressed with some of her underlings. Successive defence

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secretaries Tom King and John Knox were less impressive, in his estimation.

The Hub asked if, in these high-octane London years, he ever stopped to wonder how far the boy from York had come. *"No, I was not star struck, I just did the job. It never crossed my mind to think about it. Maybe that makes me the Dumbo!"*

He left to be the day-to-day PR lead for Barrett PR, a new agency founded and fronted by BBC journalist Michael Barrett, well-known for presenting ratings-favourite Nationwide. True to the culture of the day Barrett would regularly invite Cox to the pub around 12 and soon sink a couple of double whiskeys.



Picture: Nationwide presenting team in 1974: Michael Barratt (left), Susan Stranks and Bob Wellings (right) / Getty Images

Big accounts included 20th Century Fox and Allied Medical Group, who were running a hospital in Saudi Arabia. Cox spent two months in Saudi where the working routine was *"a little different"* to the West End. The heat meant starting early, stopping mid-day and finishing off after sun-down.

Falling Out & Starting Again



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Picture: Labour MP Reg Prentice during a left-wing campaign to deselect him as MP for Newham North East constituency in July 1975 / www.redpepper.org.uk

After two years the company was going well, but in a repeat theme in his later PR years, Cox left because he and Barrett fell out. *"Barrett had a big ego. When I arrived all the calls were for him, but after a while they were all for me. He didn't like that."*

This time Cox set up The Grayling Company on his own, with a partner. The company was successful, but Cox was caught in a classic husband and wife squeeze. He shared a 38.5% split with his partner, but says the business relationship failed because her husband was determined to push Cox out. *"Not a nice experience!"*

So, he set up PR agency Catalyst with two industry friends and it took off *"like a rocket!"* Labour MP Reg Prentice was a member of the board and his daughter also worked at the firm. But four years later Cox fell out with his partners and finally left the PR industry.

Company Fashion



Picture: Richard Branson and Virgin Airlines staff in an early corporate uniform / Virgin Atlantic

Three years later Cox moved on to snap up a company publishing a dry-cleaning business magazine. *"There was no money in dry cleaning, so I switched to a focus on companies, like banks, who wanted their staff to wear new corporate clothing."* Cox admits he was lucky to catch the corporate clothing wave just as Richard Branson highlighted the value of jazzy corporate gear for Virgin Airline. He sold the business *"for a tidy sum"* three years later.

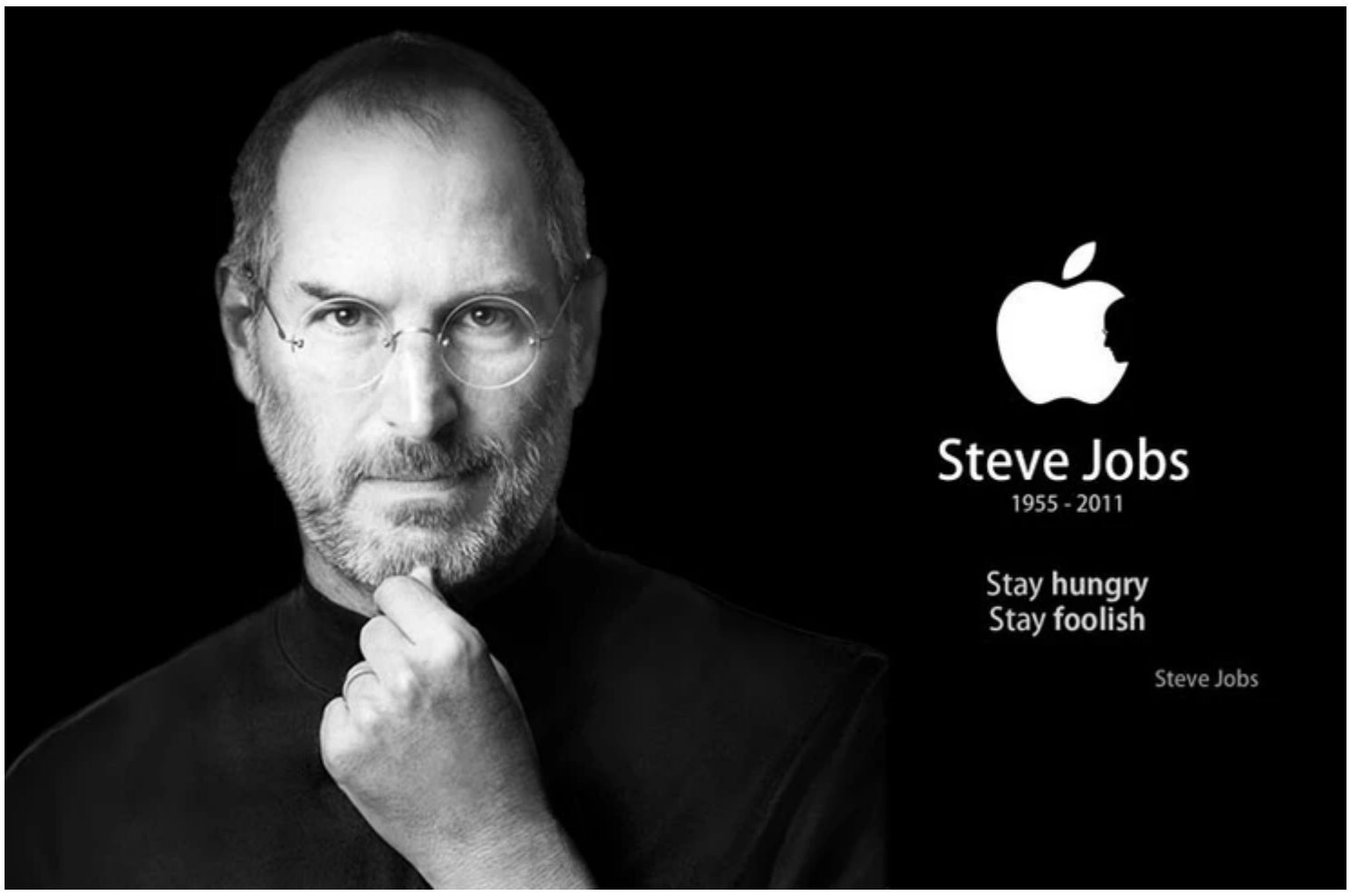
Computer Chips

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Picture: Steve Jobs in classic black polo pose / Medium.com – Marcus Svensson

Cox was executive chairman of computer company, Callhaven, at the time. So, he went full time and had *"a lot of fun!"* The company quickly grew to be the second largest Apple distributer in the UK, selling £25-30m annually. He got to know the Apple people well and met Steve Jobs who was, "*Not a very warm person*".

People's Capital

Cox's last hurrah in business was to make money from *"picking up a lot of knowledge"* from raising money for his various companies. People's Capital raised sub-£1 million for relatively small companies, typically £200k-300k, for company growth.

It was the late 90s/early 2000s and too often the company execs would use the money *"to have a good time"*. Cox made a good living from the business until 2006 when he says cryptically: *"I got out because it became increasingly difficult to raise money without going to jail!"*

Retiring to Write Those Books



Picture: Beginning / Middle / End: Actors Peter Falk and William Shatner, of Star Trek fame, in a classic scene from Colombo, the long-running ordinary detective outfoxing rich criminal TV series / streamondemandathome.com

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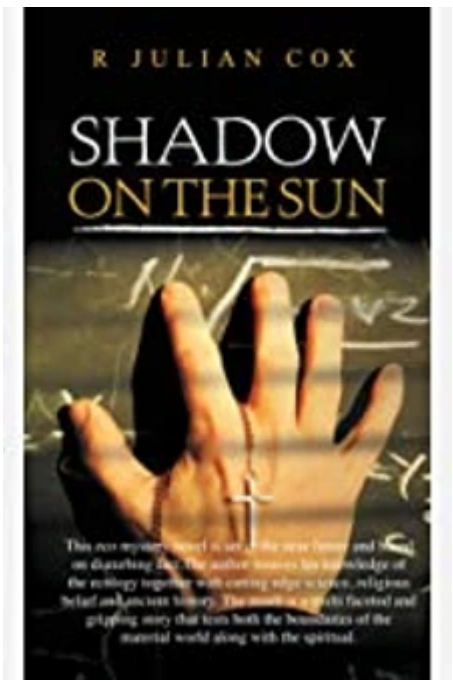
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Having made his nest egg, Cox retired and returned to writing, his first love. But he admits he found the transition from writing short copy to tight daily deadlines to the lengthier, less tangible discipline of novel writing challenging at first.

He says: *"It takes a long time to write a book, to think of the idea, then get it down."* He declined to start with a structured plot. He just started writing, not knowing what he wanted to write. His editor at the time pulled him up and gave him the advice he needed.

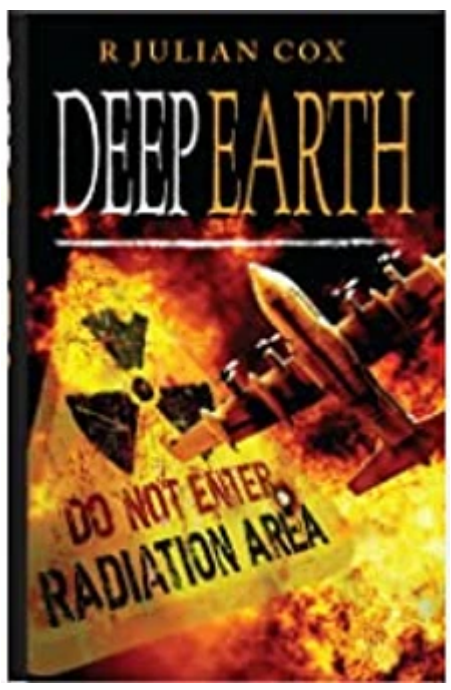
She said: *"A book needs a beginning, a middle and an end."* That made sense to him and made him realise why court room dramas are so enduringly popular, because they formulaically follow this structure.

The Hanford Trilogy



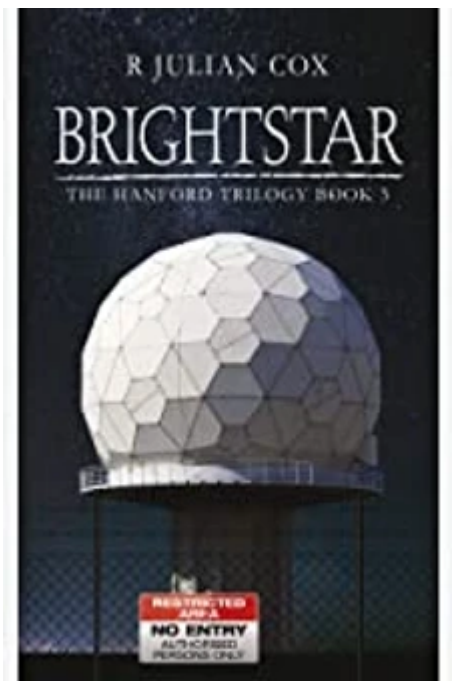
1. SHADOW OF THE SUN – published 2012

The Bright Star Defence System promises to offer mankind freedom from nuclear aggression. But we are in an uncertain time continuum as a plane crash in the 6th century attests.



2. DEEP EARTH – published 2015

This second book focuses on a new group of people uninterested in the past events covered in book one. For them, the BRIGHTSTAR system offers a chance to rebalance a military conflict that has previously pitted them as the weaker party.



3. BRIGHTSTAR – published in 2019

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The three stories overlap in this final wrap-up book, inevitably with a final twist.

R Julian Cox's *The Hanford Trilogy* is available via Amazon.

Poets Corner, Vol.1: Audrey Arden-Jones

11 May 2022

By local poets, for local poets and everyone

In collaboration with Epsom Hospital Radio we present poets' corner.

We are indebted to celebrated Epsom poet Audrey Ardern-Jones who has agreed to moderate this feature of our service.

You are invited to submit your poems for Audrey to read and publish those she selects. Every year we will have a readers' poems competition. The website will also carry audio files of the poems read by Audrey or the poet. If you wish to submit a poem please see our "Pitch an article" form under the "contact" tab.

Tattenham Corner
(For Emily Wilding Davison)

We may cross over a well turned track
turn back more than a hundred years
on Derby Day

spot a young woman in her prime
who was imprisoned, force fed
who spoke out, broke out
shouted out

who on that day, slipped under the railings
into an incoming storm
of horses
galloping round the curve
into the long final straightness

a moment of history
she braved it
stood like a beacon – there for you
there for me

with her iconic message
Votes for Women
her last
to a King who should have listened
then she stumbled
under his horse

she never spoke again
never smiled again
never again smelt the freshness of rain
nor heard the June birdsong
outside her window at the Cottage Hospital

a much maligned heroine of her time
a heroine of our time
a voice that lives on

a voice not just for women

by Audrey Ardern-Jones

About Audrey

Audrey Ardern-Jones is a lifelong promoter and lover of poetry. She's lived in Epsom for fifty years and in 1984 founded The Poetry & Music Ensemble – a group of international musicians and herself a performer of poetry.

Audrey's poetry is widely published in anthologies and journals. Last year in June Audrey read her poem 'Tattenham Corner' at the special event unveiling the statue of Emily Wilding Davison in the Epsom Market Square. In October 2021

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she read poetry and ran an art/poetry workshop for Epsom's 'Love me, Love my Mind' week. Audrey runs a regular 'Poets Corner' for the Hub – an online organisation linked with Epsom Hospital's radio – here she reads her favourite poets by famous poets.

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