



Ewell East underpass transformed by new community mural

A once grim and intimidating underpass in Ewell East has been given a striking new look thanks to a community mural designed to tackle anti-social behaviour and instil pride in the area.

The tunnel, connecting Nescot College with Ewell East railway station, has long been identified as a hotspot for crime and intimidation. Following reports from residents and students, the Epsom & Ewell Community Safety Partnership's Joint Action Group coordinated a project to reclaim the space.

Work began in September after Epsom & Ewell Borough Council successfully applied for funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Fund. The mural was unveiled on 9 October by Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend.

The artwork was created by the street art organisation Positive Arts in collaboration with Level 1 and 2 Art & Design students from Nescot. It draws inspiration from the college's 70-year history, incorporating elements from old prospectus covers, the Spirit of the Wind motif from a former college logo, a frieze from the original entrance, and images of local flora and fauna.

Lisa Townsend said: "It's really important to me that residents in Surrey are safe in their communities, and that they feel safe too. The footpath between Nescot and Ewell East Station was highlighted by residents as a location of concern, and I have discussed this issue with partners including Surrey Police, college leaders and the British Transport Police.

"The beautiful mural aims to reclaim this public space, which is used by both students and residents. Improvements to lighting, police patrols and additional private security will also bolster community safety and crime prevention in the area. There are seven murals within Epsom and Ewell, each of which helps to foster pride in our communities."

Councillor Shanice Goldman, Chair of the Crime and Disorder Committee, said: "This community mural is a fantastic example of how multiple partners can work together for the betterment of the community. It is also a valuable step forward in combating anti-social behaviour by rejuvenating an unloved, run down part of the borough and instilling a sense of pride and ownership of the area in the students."

Sarah Jane Morgan, Art & Design Lecturer at Nescot, said: "It's been an incredible learning opportunity for our talented students to work alongside renowned artists from Positive Arts to create and bring to life a professional street art mural. They have enjoyed painting a design that celebrates Nescot's history and curriculum areas, and we are grateful to the council for commissioning our students to work on this transformative project."

Positive Arts' director Julian Phethean added: "All of the students participated with passion and pride, eagerly embracing new spray painting techniques and applying them effectively while working collaboratively. They demonstrated a high level of creativity, motivation and focus throughout."

The Epsom & Ewell Community Safety Partnership includes representatives from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Surrey Police, Surrey County Council, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Nescot, National Rail and other community partners. The council's recent programme of murals across the borough has already shown success in reducing graffiti and improving the look and feel of public spaces.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Surrey Police And Crime Commissioner Reveal mural near Ewell East train station. (Credit: Emily Dalton/ LDRS)

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

Image of Dean Puckett

Guildford theatre stage for a community cultural hub

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 the completion of a major regeneration project made possible by substantial funding from Your Fund Surrey.

Landmark investment from Surrey County Council

In June 2023, Surrey County Council approved more than £2 million from its Your Fund Surrey Large Community Project scheme for the theatre’s ‘Play Your Part’ capital campaign. It is the largest single award ever made under the fund, designed to secure the Yvonne Arnaud’s future as a cultural community hub with theatre at its heart.



A theatre transformed

Over the past two years, the theatre has delivered radical improvements including a new accessible lift, modernised toilets on every floor, flexible multi-purpose rooms for community groups, a reconfigured front of house and a more welcoming ground floor foyer.

During the anniversary concert, VIP guests including His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh toured the new spaces and enjoyed performances spanning six decades of productions, with contributions from the volunteer choir and Young Company.

Six decades at the heart of the community

Since opening in 1965, the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre has been central to Guildford's cultural life and an important driver of the local economy. Its outreach programmes and community initiatives already play a significant role across Surrey. The new facilities, supported by Your Fund Surrey, are intended to ensure the theatre can meet the needs of residents and visitors for the next half century.

Voices of support

Denise Turner-Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community, said the council was proud to back the project:

"We would like to congratulate the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre on the delivery of this flagship Your Fund Surrey project, thanks to over £2 million of Large Community Projects Funding, to develop Guildford's iconic and much-beloved building into a friendly, accessible community hub to serve the whole of Surrey.

"Your Fund Surrey is all about empowering our residents to Make It Happen, by significantly investing in projects that will make a real lasting impact for local communities.

"This long-anticipated renovation project at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre is a great example of how Your Fund Surrey investment has been used to create vibrant, resilient spaces where residents and community groups can come together for social and cultural enrichment, both now and in the future."

Theatre Director and Chief Executive Joanna Read added:

"We can't thank Surrey County Council's Your Fund Surrey enough for supporting our determination to make the theatre accessible and sustainable for the future. We are also hugely grateful to the many people who, early in our journey, wrote letters of support for our ambitions to refurbish the theatre, and those who donated to our campaign.

"We are delighted that our building is now able to welcome even more people to enjoy the fantastic benefits of theatre and arts participation."

About Your Fund Surrey

Your Fund Surrey was launched in 2020 to back projects that deliver lasting benefits across the county. Since then, it has enabled communities to improve their local environment, build new spaces, enhance cultural venues and develop green areas, creating a stronger sense of pride and belonging.

By investing in diverse initiatives, the scheme is helping to build vibrant, resilient communities and demonstrates what can be achieved when residents come together to make it happen.

The Duke of Edinburgh addresses the audience, in front of the assembled concert company, before unveiling a commemorative plaque – credit: Craig Fuller

Sam Jones – Reporter



Dorking Halls to shut again for restoration?

One of Surrey's "largest and most comprehensive arts and performance" spaces could shut its doors again if the next phase of its near £10m revamp is approved. Dorking Halls closed last year as Mole Valley District Council agreed to fund £6.1m in "sorely needed" repairs and refurbishments to avoid safety risks and any unscheduled problems. It later became clear the original scope and scale of the issues had been underestimated and that work would take longer and cost more than first forecast. This has been made worse by rises in material prices and market rates over the past year, the council said. Hoped-for grant funding through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme has also stopped being available.

Mole Valley District Council is now seeking an extra £3.34m of upgrade works to replace outdated air handling units and chillers, cut annual carbon emissions by 75 tonnes with solar panels and heat recovery systems, as well as upgrading the Grand Hall to modern safety and performance standards. Councillor Nick Wright, cabinet member for leisure and tourism, said: "Dorking Halls is arguably the largest and most comprehensive arts and performance venue in eastern Surrey. It is central to our community and is key to the local economy. Dorking Halls plays a vital cultural role in the district, with a busy programme of shows, concerts and films, as well as hosting youth theatre, school productions, live screenings, and community events. It also provides employment opportunities, particularly for young people entering the hospitality sector. This investment will ensure the Halls continue to serve residents and visitors with high-quality cultural experiences for many years to come, while also helping MVDC to meet its carbon reduction goals."

The Mole Valley's cabinet is expected to agree to the additional funding when it meets on September 23 ahead of formal sign off at the following month's full council. The proposed works will be scheduled to minimise disruption, with the venue expected to close temporarily in 2026 from mid-April to early December. The halls last closed over the summer last year as the council addressed making its ceiling safe after a critical failure risk was identified. Had no work been done there was the potential the Grand Hall's fibrous plaster could become unstable – forcing its closure at short or no notice. Any collapse, regardless of whether the public were in attendance, would likely have led to a fine.

Chris Caulfield LDRS

Dorking Halls Grand Hall (Image MVDC)

Related reports:

[Dorking Halls to reopen after upgrade](#)

[Dorking Halls to get refit](#)

[Dorking refurb: "it's behind you"!](#)

Epsom's Milly to share spotlight with West End star Kerry Ellis

Local talent will step into the limelight at the Epsom Playhouse this Thursday, when Stagecoach Epsom student **Milly Playle** performs alongside one of Britain's most celebrated West End stars, **Kerry Ellis**, in the opening concert of Ellis's new UK tour.

Milly, who has already appeared in the West End production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and featured in several television commercials, was selected from hundreds of young hopefuls to join Ellis on stage. She has trained for years at



Stagecoach Epsom in singing, dancing and acting, building the skills that have brought her to this special opportunity.

Adding a further Epsom connection, both Stagecoach Principal **Rachel** and Milly's mother, **Emma**, trained at Laine Theatre Arts – the same renowned performing arts college attended by Ellis before her career took flight.

Ellis is a household name in British theatre. She made her West End debut in *My Fair Lady* before achieving international fame as the original British lead in *Wicked*, playing Elphaba both in London and on Broadway. She has starred in *We Will Rock You*, *Oliver!*, *Les Misérables* and *Cats*, and is a long-time collaborator of Queen guitarist **Brian May**, with whom she has toured worldwide. Her acclaimed solo albums and sell-out concert tours have cemented her reputation as one of the UK's leading musical theatre performers.

The Playhouse concert is being staged by **Perform Ready Events**, which creates unique performance opportunities for young people across the country. At every stop on Ellis's tour, a young performer will share the stage – and for the first night, it is Epsom's very own Milly.

Rachel, Principal of Stagecoach Epsom, said:

"We are so proud of Milly and thrilled that she'll be representing Stagecoach Epsom on stage with such an incredible performer. It's a wonderful opportunity not only for her, but also for our community to celebrate local young talent."

Surrey to mark 50 years since the death of playwright R.C. Sherriff

This November marks the 50th anniversary of the death of **Robert Cedric Sherriff (1896-1975)**, the Surrey-born playwright and screenwriter best remembered for his First World War play *Journey's End*.

Sherriff, who attended Kingston Grammar School, originally worked as an insurance clerk before serving with distinction on the Western Front. His experiences in the trenches shaped *Journey's End* (1928), the searing drama set in a British officers' dugout during the last year of the war.

The play, which launched the career of a young Laurence Olivier – barely 21 at the time – was first staged at the Apollo Theatre in London. It became one of the defining anti-war works of its age and continues to be revived on stage and screen nearly a century later.

But Sherriff's talents extended far beyond the theatre. He went on to become the **highest-paid English scriptwriter in Hollywood**, penning screenplays for classics such as *The Invisible Man* (1933), *Goodbye Mr Chips* (1939), *The Four Feathers* (1939), and *The Dam Busters* (1955). His work combined dramatic structure with cinematic flair, leaving an enduring legacy on both sides of the Atlantic.

To mark the anniversary, **Surrey History Centre** is hosting a special event in Woking on **Saturday 8 November (10.30am-12.15pm)**. The programme includes:

- **Dr David Cottis - "RC Sherriff and the Well-Made Screenplay"**

A look at how Sherriff brought stagecraft into cinema, illustrated with material from the Centre's archives.

- **Roland Wales - "Shirkers or Spies? RC Sherriff in Wartime Hollywood"**

Exploring Sherriff's move to America during the Second World War, where British expatriates were accused in some quarters of being shirkers at home and even suspected spies abroad. Despite this, their patriotic films resonated strongly with American audiences, helping shape wartime morale.

The event will be held both **in person at the Surrey History Centre, Woking (130 Goldsworth Road, GU21 6ND)**, and online via Zoom. Tickets cost **£6** and must be booked in advance. Book [HERE](#)

For those interested in Surrey's literary heritage, the occasion provides a rare chance to revisit the remarkable career of a local man who made a global impact – from Kingston schoolboy to West End dramatist, Hollywood insider, and chronicler of the war generation.

For more news and events from Surrey History Centre [CLICK HERE](#)



Let your A level winners be creative says Epsom's Arts University

Ahead of A-level results day and Clearing, University for the Creative Arts (UCA) has written an open letter to parents and carers asking them not to discourage their children from making the creative choice and ultimately pursuing their dreams this week.

UCA writes on behalf of the children that came before, those that didn't choose games over geography, marketing over medicine or animation over accounting due to pressure from their parents and carers, of which there are many examples posted on the online community, The Student Room. *"I'm honestly just doing linguistics for my parents. They expect me to get a 'good' degree, to get a secure job - they think working in the film industry won't get me anywhere."*

The University, which for nearly 170 years has delivered creative education, acknowledges it's only natural for parents and carers to feel uncertain when children say they want to pursue a creative subject. *"We understand the hopes and concerns that come with guiding children's higher education and subject choice. Parents and carers want the best for them - a secure future,"* says UCA's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Melanie Gray.

This is reinforced in UCAS' Project Next Generation report, which states parents want to guide their children towards the pathways that have the best capacity for earning and stability. As a result, almost half (48%) of children in the report, agreed that they feel pressure from parents to make 'good' decisions about their education.

UCA reassures in the letter that 'a creative choice is a career choice,' with the creative industries worth £124 billion a year to the UK economy and support more than 2.4 million jobs. Long-term, the sector is also part of the Government's modern Industrial Strategy - a 10-year plan backing the UK's strengths with ambitions for eight high-growth sectors, aiming to increase productivity and create jobs.

Professor Gray, adds: *"With this letter we're not reprimanding parents and carers, we're simply asking them to support their children and have confidence in them choosing what they love. We have seen time and time again, children not pursuing their creative dreams, which now more than ever, have a secure future."*

UCAS' report acknowledges parents and carers play a pivotal role in the crucial choices children make about their future. It also shows children's higher education choices are inspired by their passions. Support and reassurance, not pressure, is needed to empower children in their decision making.

Support ahead of A-level results day and Clearing is available on UCA's dedicated webpage, uca.ac.uk/clearing for parents and carers, as well as those wanting to make the creative choice. On Friday 15 and Saturday 16 August, the University also welcomes anyone to tour its campuses and ask staff and current students questions. For those not yet applied through Clearing, Staff will also make on-the-spot offers to those suitable.

Image: Student work by UCA BA Graphic Ryon Pattison

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). 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.

Creative Futures: Year 10 Taster Days at Epsom's UCA

The University for the Creative Arts (UCA), in collaboration with the Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON), is offering six exciting and inspiring Taster Days for current Year 10 students. These free events will focus on a range of creative disciplines including **Fine Art, Graphic Design, Animation, Acting, Textiles, and Creative Business**.

Taking place across UCA's campuses, each Taster Day is designed to give students a hands-on introduction to life at a specialist creative university. Participants will have the opportunity to work closely with practising artists, experienced academics, and current UCA students. Through engaging workshops and interactive sessions, students will gain valuable insight into what it's like to study and work in the creative industries.

These experiences allow students to explore the university's professional facilities, including industry-standard studios, workshops, and software. Whether it's using digital design tools, experimenting with materials, performing in rehearsal spaces, or developing their own summer music festival, these Taster Days are designed to develop creative confidence and key skills that can support students as they enter Year 11 and begin to think seriously about their future pathways.

UCA partners with HEON, a network of universities and colleges working together as part of the Office for Students' Uni Connect programme. HEON's mission is to raise awareness of higher education and help young people from North Hampshire and Surrey to make informed, confident choices about their next steps. By offering engaging and supportive activities, HEON aims to open doors to higher education for students who may not have previously considered it.

The Taster Days form part of this wider commitment to student outreach and aspiration-raising. They provide a first-hand experience of what it means to study creative subjects at a higher level, while also showcasing the range of career paths available in the creative industries, from visual arts and media to performance and entrepreneurship.

These Taster Days are not just about creativity – for many, it's the first time they've stepped onto a university campus or imagined themselves pursuing a career in the arts. We encourage all eligible Year 10 students to consider attending one of these fantastic opportunities.

24th July, 10:00-14:30 – UCA Farnham – Fine Art, Graphic Design, Animation, Acting

25th July, 10:00-14:30 – UCA Epsom – Textiles and Creative Business

Successful applicants will also be entered into a prize draw to win an artist's pack!

If you are a student, parent, or teacher interested in learning more, please don't hesitate to get in touch at outreach@uca.ac.uk.



Ewell's Nescot student's work selected for Origins Creatives 2025

Art & Design student from Nescot College, Imaani Zafar, has been selected to exhibit her work at Origins Creatives, taking place at the Mall Galleries in July.

Imaani's submission, titled, 'Mother Nature: The Voice of Amazigh Women Through Textile', explores the idea of civilisation and caught the attention of UAL (University of the Arts London) Awarding Body's curator, Calum Hall, amongst over 600 submissions.

Speaking about her work, Imaani, who has completed the first year of her UAL Level Three Extended Diploma said, "I made this installation to educate people about the Amazigh women. Their knowledge and practices are often overlooked, and I wanted to create something to honour their existence."

Sarah Morgan, Art and Digital Design lecturer at Nescot commented, "We are all so proud of Imaani. Her creation demonstrates her artistic voice with meaning and sentiment. We are thrilled that her work has been selected by UAL Awarding Body for Origins Creatives at the prestigious Mall Galleries. It is a fantastic opportunity for Imaani to showcase her work at this annual celebration of student achievement, connect with peers, industry experts and the public."

Origins Creatives is a free exhibition presented by UAL Awarding Body, offering an exciting opportunity for art enthusiasts, critics, and industry professionals in the creative sector to discover fresh, original talent. This event celebrates the dedication and hard work of young creatives from across the UK and internationally. Origins Creatives provides a platform for emerging talent to be seen and celebrated, connecting them with potential collaborators, industry leaders, and a wider audience.

The exhibition features outstanding work from students based across the UAL centres showcasing their talent across the UAL subject areas of Art and Design, Fashion Business and Retail, Creative Media, Music Performance and Production, Performing Arts, Entry Level 3 in Art and Design and Performing Arts, Professional Diplomas, and the Extended Project Qualification.

This year's edition of Origins Creatives will take place in person at the Mall Galleries in central London. The exhibition kicks off with an invite-only opening night on Tuesday 15 July. It will be open to the public from 16 - 19 July, alongside an online showcase.

The exhibition will showcase selected work created by students from Entry Level and Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 across all subject areas. You can expect to see a diverse range of painting, photography, drawing, sculpture, fashion and more.

Exhibition opening times for the public:

- Wednesday 16 July, 10am - 6pm
- Thursday 17 July, 1pm - 6pm
- Friday 18 July, 10am - 6pm
- Saturday 19 July, 10am - 5pm

Address: Mall Galleries, The Mall, St. James's, London SW1Y 5AS

If you are interested in attending this event, please book your ticket at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/origins-creatives-2025-tickets-1345097014379?aff=oddttdtcreator>

In addition to the range of Art and Digital Design UAL Awarding Body courses, Nescot offers a wide range of college courses for school leavers and adults, including Animal Care, Business, Computing and IT, Construction, Performing Arts, Childcare, Health & Social Care and Beauty Therapy. To find out more about studying at Nescot call 020 8394 3038, visit www.nescot.ac.uk or email adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk

Nescot student Imaani Zafar's art installation_Origins Creatives 2025_2