

X-Ray vision wins Surrey Uni “spin-off” a prize

28 November 2024



Silveray, the digital X-ray film company and Surrey spinout, wins coveted Institute of Physics award with a new approach to X-ray imaging

Innovation in X-ray technology could be key to detecting cancer more accurately than ever before, says the CEO of a startup that has won this year’s Institute for Physics Business Startup Award.

Silveray, a spinout from the University of Surrey, has invented a flexible, reusable, and cost-effective Digital X-ray Film (DXF) that is transforming industrial radiography for weld inspection. In the long term, the ground-breaking technology offers the promise of more accurate diagnostic X-ray imaging at lower radiation doses for earlier and more accurate tumour detection, leading to better patient outcomes.

Silveray’s nanoparticle-based material for X-ray imaging is made of a semiconductor ink that is coated on to a flexible electronic backplane with pixels that captures the X-ray image. Unlike the current X-ray market status quo, Silveray’s technology enables enhancements in image quality on a physically flexible medium at a cost-effective price point.

Dan Cathie, CEO and Co-Founder of Silveray, said:

“The X-ray imaging sector has seen relatively few revolutionary innovations since the advent of digital imaging. Our vision at Silveray is to develop technology that disrupts this way of thinking by creating financially sustainable, reusable, physically flexible Digital X-ray Film (DXF).

“We know there is more to be done but this award from the Institute of Physics is a recognition of the valuable potential of our technology for the industrial non-destructive test (NDT) market. Furthermore, our vision is to become game changers for mammography and other areas of X-ray imaging with our high-sensitivity, high-resolution, Digital X-ray Film invention.

“This award comes as fantastic recognition for the team at Silveray following the close of our recent funding round, led by Northern Gritstone.”

Silveray was founded in 2018 by Professor Ravi Silva, Director of the Advanced Technology Institute (ATI) at the University of Surrey. Since then, Silveray and the ATI have painstakingly worked on the technology that incorporates high-Z elements (heavy atoms known for their ability to absorb X-rays) into semiconductor polymer materials, creating flexible X-ray detectors that are both sensitive and adaptable to curved surfaces.

Professor Silva said:

“Traditional indirect conversion X-ray detectors are stiff, costly, and inherently force a trade-off between image quality, speed, and dose, but our innovation at Silveray changes that.

“Our direct conversion technology is flexible, reusable, and closely mimics human tissue, making it perfect for medical uses like accurate diagnosis for early tumour detection. Because it doesn’t require complicated processing, this could make a real difference in improving medical X-ray imaging and radiotherapy.”

Image: the Silveray team with the IoP award.

The real world visits the virtual world at Ewell’s NESCOT

28 November 2024



Principals and teachers from across the world visited Nescot (North East Surrey College of Technology) College in Ewell, Surrey last week, to try out its brand-new virtual reality (VR) immersive classroom. Delegates from Brazil to Bulgaria and South Africa to Singapore joined a visit arranged by global education network ORT for a masterclass on artificial intelligence (AI), chatbots, and the use of immersive technology in education.

The Nescot immersive classroom is packed with state-of-the-art technology, including an Igloo (a pod with a 360-degree projection system), immersive room, vehicle simulators, and VR headsets. The international delegates were able to try these out and found themselves virtually transported to different spaces, driving diggers on a construction site, and exploring hazards in a health and safety simulation. Students from across the curriculum at the college use the room to gain skills and experiences they couldn’t easily access elsewhere.

The visit to Nescot was part of ORT’s Hatter technology seminar programme, where professional educators from around the world explore the latest developments in science, technology, engineering, and maths teaching and learning.

Somayyeh Clifton, Head of Quality Improvement & Innovation at Nescot, who led the masterclass, said: “It’s been so fantastic to welcome delegates from across the globe to Nescot to share ideas, experience, and knowledge on AI. It’s also been brilliant to give them a demo of our incredible equipment, which makes learning exciting, interactive, and fun. Working with other education professionals like this is so valuable, with different perspectives helping to inspire our work going forward. We’re all working to give students the best education, which will lead to fulfilling careers in the modern world. Our excellent facilities at Nescot have been a game changer.”

Leor Harel, World ORT Learning Development Manager, said: “Nescot’s VR classrooms are a groundbreaking approach to education and immersive technology. This visit was a perfect opportunity for our group of global education experts to see first-hand a world-leading provision. We are delighted that our teachers will go back to their schools and apply the principles and learnings from their time at Nescot.”

Nescot is a hub of innovation, with the Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology hosting robotics, AI, and cyber security facilities. The college is part of the AI in Education initiative, with Principal and CEO Julie Kapsalis sitting on the Strategic Board. 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 was provided from the Government’s Local Skills Improvement Fund, a project which aims to support local people into

work. As well as being beneficial for education professionals and Nescot students, the college is 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.

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.

Epsom and Ewell business Oscars night

28 November 2024



Last night Epsom Social in the Epsom Square hosted the Oscars of local businesses. The annual Epsom and Ewell Business Awards recognised excellence in 9 categories with the cafe in the park “Park View” scooping the Best Overall Winner. The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell **Steve Bridger** bestowing the final prize.



Park View is a family run business operating in Alexandria Park in Epsom. “Our story began in 2020 with a successful pitch to the Epsom Council for a café in Alexandra Park. Since then, we have worked hard to create a special place, which we have opened to our customers in July 2021. It has become a thriving meeting place for the local community”.

Michaela and Erik of the Your Park View Cafe Team – The Pavilion. Alexandra Park, Epsom, KT17 4BU, proudly hold their awards.

Another notable winner (pictured above) was **Emily Fry**. A local artist with an extensive portfolio of styles and genres. “A key mission of my art is to create unique and passionate work that personally touches my clients. My most common enquiry is pet commissions. With a photo of your beloved companion I will transform them into a unique, personal piece of art. Despite this I am able paint anything from people to animals, cars to trains, buildings to landscapes. I really enjoy having the ability to produce any piece of artwork which means so much to my client.”

The full line up of winners. First **in bold** the winner and runners up in no order below the winner.

The Sponsors:

EPSOM & EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL, EPSOM DOWNS RACECOURSE, EPSOM SQUARE, GO EPSOM, NESCOT, AMBER GROUP, THE FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES and TWM SOLICITORS.

Judging Panel:

CLLR NEIL DALLIN, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, JULIE KAPSALIS Chief Executive & Principal at NESCOT, JACKIE KING Chief Executive, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council. KAREN PENGELLY Epsom Bid Manager, PAUL TAYLOR What’s on in Epsom, LEE WIDDOWS University for the Creative Arts, MARY ZOELLER Deputy Lieutenant

Award Categories & Finalists:

BEST RETAIL BUSINESS – Sponsored by Epsom Square:

Randy Cow

Camille

The Secret Garden

BEST INDEPENDENT BUSINESS – Sponsored by Federation of Small Businesses:

Emily Fry Art

Grow Cook Enjoy

The Secret Garden

BEST ENTREPRENEUR -Sponsored by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council:

Dave Weller of Randy Cow

Yolanda Artal
Itay & Zia Zilkha

BEST BUSINESS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE -Sponsored by Amber Group:

Snipperty Do Dahs

Cronos Protection Ltd.
The Personal Agent

COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY – Sponsored by TWM Solicitors:

The Well Being Therapy Hut

All Things Nice
NEAT

BEST BUSINESS FOR FOOD & HOSPITALITY – Sponsored by Epsom Downs Racecourse:

Park View Café

Kornetto
The Secret Garden

BEST BUSINESS FOR HEALTH & BEAUTY – Sponsored by Nescot:

Honey & Bamboo

Aphrodite Aesthetics
Snipperty Do Dahs

GO EPSOM BEST BUSINESS IN EPSOM TOWN CENTRE – Sponsored by GO Epsom:

Epsom Picturehouse

Epsom Foot Care
White House Health and Wellness Centre

BEST OVERALL WINNER:

PARK VIEW

Epsom and Ewell College wins Surrey’s employer of the year

28 November 2024



Nescot college in Reigate Road, Ewell, won “Employer of the Year’ at the Surrey Business Awards last night, against some stiff competition. (NESCOT stands for North-East Surrey College of Technology.)

The **Surrey Business Awards**, which took place at G Live in Guildford, is the largest event of its kind and the most prestigious in the county. Winners were chosen by a distinguished panel of judges, consisting of industry experts and influential business leaders.

Nescot has an annual turnover of £25m and is one of the largest employers in East Surrey, supporting over 7,000 learners and 500 businesses each year. The award highlights that Nescot’s greatest asset is its staff, who work 365 days a year (the farm never closes!) to ensure that the 60-acre site is fully functioning and providing high quality training and facilities.

Nescot is rightly proud of its work culture and its leadership, with 650 staff who support thousands of learners each year, but also have the opportunity to learn, develop and progress in their careers.

Julie Kapsalis, CEO and Principal at Nescot said “We’re over the moon to win the ‘Employer of the Year’ award. Nescot is a unique and special place to work and our investment in staff wellbeing and professional development is a key priority. We have an incredible community of dedicated staff who share our vision and work tirelessly, for both our students and our staff. This award is for them.”

Julie was also recognised personally last night with a nomination for ‘Businessperson of the Year’ as a result of her work both within the college and externally.

As well as her role at Nescot, she has been Chair of the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for the last four years and on the Board for over a decade. The role helped to oversee £275 million of investment in the region which supports infrastructure, skills, heritage and businesses. For the past three years she also served as Chair of Catalyst South – a group of six LEPs covering the South East as a direct voice to Government. Julie is also a director, trustee, advisor and mentor and already has awards under her belt for inspirational leadership, corporate social responsibility and being a community hero.

In addition to the award win and nomination, Nescot was also a proud sponsor of the ‘Future Talent of the Year’ award at the event, attended by business leaders and guests from across Surrey.

Anyone interested in joining the team at ‘Employer of the Year’ – Nescot, can visit www.nescotcareers.co.uk or email jobs@nescot.ac.uk

Photo: Nescot team: Donna Patterson – Chief People Officer, Andy Cowan – Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality, Julie Kapsalis – Principal and CEO and Sarah Watson – Chief Operating Officer.

Epsom High St in need of more love?

28 November 2024



Driving safely, parking appropriately. Romy Sustar reports:

This is the second article in my series following on from “Epsom town as a safe place to Live”. It seemed to me that for the second article it was worth looking at a specific business issue around anti-social behaviour in Epsom High St, that is currently being discussed widely. And one that currently projects an image of decline and lawlessness in our High St.

My all-time favourite McDonald’s meal has always been—and still is—the Filet-O-Fish Combo. I’m “lovin’ it” and really want to hold onto this positive feeling. However, like so many others, McDonald’s seems to have forgotten its leadership role.

Last Friday night, on my way to the cinema, I walked by McDonald’s and counted 23 drivers parked on the pavement, completely blocking the pavement between Creams and McDonald’s, extending along the High Street towards the crossing. Pedestrians had no choice but to either walk on the busy street or navigate through the maze of motorcycles. It made me feel very unsafe and angry, but I don’t blame the drivers.

Drivers for UberEats, Just Eat, and Deliveroo frequently express their frustrations on platforms like Glassdoor and Indeed, highlighting their shared challenges with residents impacted by these services. While UberEats drivers appreciate the quick onboarding process, this excitement soon fades as many struggle to earn even £10 during entire shifts, facing inadequate customer support that leaves them feeling isolated and undervalued. Deliveroo riders share similar grievances, describing their experiences as akin to “slave labour,” contending with low pay and fierce competition for orders. Issues with app reliability and poor management responsiveness only deepen their dissatisfaction. Just Eat feedback on Glassdoor clearly states that management doesn’t really understand the performance of the business. I wonder how many of the drivers are aware that the minimum hourly rate for 2024/25 in the UK is £11.44 for age group 21 and over.

Let’s consider McDonald’s in Epsom High St, it’s been a pillar of the community for more than two decades, in that time most of us have come to understand the fantastic benefits brought by Ronald McDonald House allowing parents to stay with their sick children. We have seen the support for thousands of UK and Irish farmers in very difficult times, and for the organic farmers as their industry developed. We have noticed the healthy options appearing in the menu, the sugar content reducing, and have been reassured as recycled cardboard content has increased. All of this happening, whilst most of us simply continued to enjoy the product as one of the love brands in our local economy.

Are they truly so insensitive that they fail to recognise the damage they’re inflicting? Or is it that they simply don’t care about the residents and migrants at all, revealing their brand identity to be a facade? When I mention “residents,” I mean everyone—from young children and mothers with baby pushers to the elderly and those with disabilities, the blind and those in wheelchairs.

We reached out to McDonald’s and a spokesperson: “At McDonald’s we strive to be a good neighbour in the communities we serve, and the management team at our Epsom restaurant are continuously working with local stakeholders to help find a solution to the on-going parking issues which are affecting a number of businesses in the town. The safety and wellbeing of our people, customers and local residents remains our top priority and as such we have asked our delivery partners to ensure that all couriers continue to drive safely and park appropriately.”

When the views of the local manager were sought McDonald’s asked for nothing to be added to its spokespeson’s response.

The phrase “Continue to drive safely and park appropriately” seems more like a message to maintain a facade than a reflection of daily reality in Epsom. This raises my curiosity about which local stakeholders McDonald’s claims to be “continuously working with.” It suggests a disconnect between their messaging and the actual experiences of the community.

So I contacted Russell Bailey from Swail House, a local Blind charity severely affected by the issues: “I am in touch with the Surrey Council parking enforcement team and councillors and our MP Helen Maguire regularly about the issue, but there does not seem to be any progress. It seems to be that it will take an accident before any real action is going to be taken”.

Then I contacted the Ebbisham Centre owners of the land just behind McDonalds who said: “We are as frustrated as residents and customers of Epsom Square about the prevalence of mopeds parked on our premises and at the entrance to our squares, on council pavements. The mopeds themselves are unsightly and a hazard. The congregation of moped drivers, usually with full face helmets still worn, creates an intimidating and threatening atmosphere in the town and at the entrance to our squares. This is not good for the economy or for the wellbeing of residents, and seems to serve only the benefit of one or two national-multiple fast food outlets on the High Street”.

The Council are now vocal on the issue and are reacting to pressure from the community. **Steve McCormick** (an RA Surrey County and Borough Councillor) passed a unanimous motion at the County to deal with the problem. So who is McDonald’s actually talking to and how could it possibly be, that McDonalds, our love brand, is still entirely oblivious to the oncoming storm if it is “continuously working with local stakeholders to help find a solution”?

Town Ward RA Councillor **Neil Dallen** is aware of the problem but a Council led solution is proving elusive.

Epsom and Ewell Times sent a simple survey to all Epsom and Ewell Councillors. These are the few responses received to the questions how many times in the last year have you used these services and what is your solution?

Date	Name	Party and Ward	Orders last year	Do you have a solution to the problem of many delivery riders on two-wheels obstructing roads and pathways in Epsom? If so, please describe the solution briefly
12/10	Steve Bridger	RA Stamford (Mayor)	0	Dedicated area for them to park - NOT obstructing the pavement at one of the busiest areas with a bus stop! Also to check the insurance, licences and validity of the electric scooters of the drivers
12/10	Julie Morris	LibDem College	12	Create dedicated parking areas for delivery bikes. For example, Epsom Square, taxi bay in Upper High St, convert small sections of pavement where it’s wide enough and use that for delivery.bike parking, etc. eventually deliveries will come via drones and it won’t be so bad. After segregated parking has been put in place, enforce illegal parking from delivery bikes
12/10	James Lawrence	LibDem College	1	There need to be dedicated parking bays for them, similar to the bays outside Dreams (near the Odeon). Enforcement then needs to be used to ensure these bays are used. This will allow them to continue their very useful activities of providing delivery services to businesses and residents, without blocking the pavement or being an obstruction for pedestrians.
12/10	Robert Geleit	Labour Court	15	Find them a place to go. Make sure that they don’t have to work 12 hours a day 7 days a week.
13/10	Phil Neale	RA Cuddington	0	Have a system where the riders can be reported to the company that employs them then operate a three strikes and out policy.
16/10	Alison Kelly	LibDem Stamford	0	There needs to be a designated parking zone for the delivery drivers. It is clear that many people want home delivery. The solution is not asking the police to continually move them on.
18/10	Chris Ames	Labour Court	12	Police enforcement, including stopping riders with illegally powered bikes

And finally we contacted the closest local residential management company whose residents are most affected by the issues on a daily basis.

“Nobody from McDonald’s has ever contacted us. Our residents are almost 100% in favour of a thriving High St. We live in Town ward because we like the hustle and bustle, the bars, the businesses, and yes even a cheeky Mac and chips, along with the immediate access to all the wonderful things on offer in Epsom.

It should however never be forgotten that this is our manor, it does not belong to corporations and they do not have any right to ruin our environment, subject our families to unacceptable risk or to impede our disabled, simply because it is convenient and profitable to do so. McDonald’s should be reminded that you can only kick a dog so many times and that once kicked the dog is unlikely to care, if someone else is kicking it as well.”

In conclusion, my investigation indicates that McDonald’s has not engaged with the local stakeholders most affected by its new business model. Merely claiming that other businesses are doing the same raises ethical concerns, and the message that “all couriers continue to drive safely and park appropriately” seems both absurd and disingenuous. This suggests that McDonald’s has indeed lost touch with its core values. As a result, local stakeholders may soon be expressing their discontent by singing, “Ba Da Ba Ba Bah, Not Lovin’ It.”

Up hill struggle to stop oil drilling in Surrey - pays off?

28 November 2024



A clash between environmental advocates and oil developers at Horse Hill in Surrey has resurfaced as local campaigners question why oil production continues despite a lack of planning permission. The Weald Action Group, which represents numerous community groups opposing fossil fuel extraction across Southeast England, has raised concerns over ongoing operations by Horse Hill Developments Ltd (HHDL). The site, located in the Surrey Hills, is still producing oil even though the Supreme Court recently ruled that planning permission was granted unlawfully, citing omissions in the environmental impact assessment.

This summer, the UK Supreme Court upheld a challenge brought by environmentalist Sarah Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group. The ruling faulted Surrey County Council for not considering indirect greenhouse gas emissions linked to the burning of the oil produced at Horse Hill when they approved the application. Consequently, the planning approval was nullified, marking a significant win for the environmental action group and setting a precedent that has since impacted other oil and gas sites across the UK.

In response to continued production at Horse Hill, the Weald Action Group’s legal team has written to Surrey County Council, requesting clarity on whether HHDL’s operations are indeed unauthorized and if the council intends to enforce a halt to production until retrospective planning permissions are secured. “It’s not clear why UKOG are still producing oil at Horse Hill despite having no planning permission to do so,” the group’s spokesperson stated. Meanwhile, Chris Coghlan, the newly elected MP for Dorking and Horley, has also pressed the council for answers.

The council’s statement confirmed it is aware of the issue, stressing that without planning permission, HHDL’s production activities may indeed be unlawful. It stated: “Following the Supreme Court decision, there is no planning permission for oil production at the site... The County Council is continuing its enforcement investigation and will determine whether formal enforcement action is expedient.” While the council refrained from offering a definitive timeline, it confirmed that formal enforcement remains a possibility, pending the ongoing investigation.

For the Weald Action Group and concerned residents, the situation underscores broader frustrations with fossil fuel projects in rural areas. Their efforts highlight a commitment to maintaining local accountability and environmental protections, especially in ecologically sensitive areas like the Surrey Hills.

UPDATE:

In a major development in the ongoing Horse Hill oil drilling controversy, UK Oil & Gas PLC (UKOG) has ordered the cessation of oil production at its Horse Hill site following intense public and political pressure. The decision comes after weeks of scrutiny, with mounting calls from local activists, national environmental groups, media outlets, and the newly elected MP for Dorking and Horley, Chris Coghlan, urging an end to operations that lacked valid planning permission.

The Weald Action Group, which represents a network of community groups opposed to oil and gas development in the Southeast, welcomed the decision but condemned the circumstances that led to it. “We are pleased that they have now suspended operations,” they stated, “but we are appalled that it took protests by Extinction Rebellion, news coverage, questions from the local MP, and the threat of legal action by Friends of the Earth to bring them to this conclusion.” According to the group, the suspension followed sustained pressure and widespread public outrage over UKOG’s ongoing activities despite the Supreme Court’s ruling that rendered Horse Hill’s planning permission invalid.

Brian Alexander, Communications Director for UKOG, initially defended the company’s position, claiming on Channel 4 that production at Horse Hill was compliant. “It’s not unlawful. We would not be doing it if it was unlawful... We are of the understanding, certainly from Surrey, that we are doing what we should be doing,” Alexander told the media.

In a statement issued after halting production, UKOG announced: “After recent discussions with Surrey County Council (SCC) and in keeping with the Company’s strategic move from oil & gas into material scale clean hydrogen storage projects, we instructed our subsidiary Horse Hill Developments Ltd (HHDL) to voluntarily suspend oil production at the Horse Hill site.” The suspension, effective as of Friday, October 25, reportedly aligns with the company’s new focus on hydrogen storage projects, reflecting a shift away from oil and gas.

UKOG emphasized that its actions regarding Horse Hill had been lawful, adding that HHDL has maintained regulatory compliance throughout its six years of operations. The company noted that discussions with Surrey County Council had been ongoing since June 2024 and included a recent site visit by council officials on October 16. UKOG stated it will now work closely with Surrey County Council to ensure a thorough suspension process and to support the planning redetermination process. This includes safely securing and decommissioning the Horse Hill site in compliance with environmental regulations.

The Weald Action Group, meanwhile, remains vigilant, stressing that it will continue to monitor UKOG’s activities and press for accountability at Horse Hill and other oil sites across the region. The group’s focus now turns to ensuring that any future decisions align with environmental protections and the community’s demands for transparency and local oversight.

Related reports:

[The Hills Are Alive With the Sound of Drilling... ?](#)

[Justice Stops Oil](#)

Image is AI generated imaginary picture of oil drilling in hills.

Nominate heroic businesswomen of Epsom and Ewell

28 November 2024



A new scheme entitled “**MP HERoes**”, *In Partnership with NatWest* and Supported by the Women & Enterprise All-Party Parliamentary Group has been introduced.

A cross-party Parliamentary programme that celebrates local women-owned businesses throughout the UK. MP HERoes enables each MP to highlight the vital contribution of women entrepreneurs to the local economy and beyond, generating positive PR for the business and for the nominating MP.

By nominating a woman business owner in the Epsom and Ewell Constituency, the goal is to create and celebrate local role models and encourage other women to start and grow a business. All HERoes become part of the MPH community, with regular events and workshops both online and in person, which support the business owner and their business.

Helen Maguire, Epsom and Ewell’s new MP, can nominate a local woman business owner from any sector or industry, the only requirement is they are based in your constituency.

If you wish to suggest someone to Helen Maguire email helen.maguire.mp@parliament.uk

NB There is no closing date, business owners can be nominated throughout the year.

Points you may wish to consider when nominating your HERo woman business owner

- established in the area
- provides a useful product or service
- employs local people
- supports the local community

What happens next

We contact the business to let them know about the Award. It’s not a competition, all MP HERoes nominated businesses (one per constituency) are award-winners and welcome within the MPH community. The MPH Award runs across 2-years, currently 2024/25.

Next steps for MPs

Once the business is confirmed, each MP and their HERo is featured on www.mpheroes.com and highlighted throughout the local press and on social media. It’s great for the business, the local economy, and an opportunity for MPs to promote their support for local business.

Celebration and Awards event at Westminster - 3.00pm November 20, 2024

MPs and their HERoes are invited to a celebration event at Parliament during Global Entrepreneurship Week. A Certificate is presented to each HERo and we hope as an MP you’re able to pop in during the afternoon to grab a photo with your business HERo. Should you nominate a business in the next year, the next Celebration takes place in spring 2025.

Image: local women led business Oracle PR

Fresh New Look for Ernest Jones Epsom

28 November 2024



Sponsored article:

A refreshed Ernest Jones store, designed for Epsom’s shoppers, has opened its doors in the Ashley Centre.

Customers are welcomed into a bright interior, with a host of new features to improve and enhance their shopping experience.

Every aspect of the refurbishment has been thoughtfully designed with local shoppers in mind.

“We wanted our Epsom customers to feel right at home from the moment they enter our store,” said store manager, Denise Ducasse.

“As a trusted jeweller with a reputation for quality, craftsmanship and expertise, we’re here to help our customers celebrate milestone moments and so we really wanted to heighten that sense of occasion in our store,” she said.

“We’re really excited and hope our customers, will love our makeover,” she added.



To celebrate the opening of the new-look store, this weekend from October 25th-27th, Ernest Jones is inviting shoppers to join them for a glass of bubbly with an opportunity to view the latest collections, learn more about the range of jewellery and watch services available as well as an enjoying an extra 10% off the final weekend of sale.

Ernest Jones Epsom is part of a multimillion-pound store investment programme by parent company Signet Jewelers UK and Ireland. A total of 14 Ernest Jones stores and 41 H Samuel stores across the UK are being refurbished.

“This significant investment underscores our dedication to local high streets and shopping centres across the country. We believe that a vibrant retail sector is a vital part of a thriving community and we hope our refurbished stores will be warmly welcomed by local shoppers,” said Neil Old, Managing Director Signet Jewelers UK and Ireland.

Ernest Jones Ashley Centre, 10 Central Square, Epsom KT18 5DA

Modern Yard Revitalizes Epsom’s Historic Racing Scene

28 November 2024



The Daily Telegraph (Monday 21st October) has highlighted a significant revival for Epsom’s historic role in British horse racing, reporting on the recent developments at **Downs House**, a training yard with a prestigious past. According to the *Telegraph*’s racing correspondent, **Marcus Armytage**, the once derelict site is now undergoing a transformation into a modern facility, spearheading efforts to attract London-based owners back to the area.

The report details how New Zealander **Mark Travers**, who has lived in the UK for two decades, undertook the ambitious seven-year project to restore Downs House. Situated just a quarter of a mile from the start of the Derby, Downs House had long symbolized Epsom’s decline as a training hub, having lost its prominence as a centre for racehorse training decades ago. However, the newly revamped facility, now boasting space for 70 horses and cutting-edge amenities, is positioned to revive the town’s fortunes.

The *Daily Telegraph* also reports that **George Baker**, a Stewards’ Cup-winning trainer, will move his operation to Downs House in January. Baker, along with his wife Candida, was struck by the state-of-the-art facilities and the untapped potential of the nearby gallops. The move signals a bold step forward for Epsom’s equine industry, which has long played second fiddle to more prominent centres like Newmarket and Lambourn.

Baker, who has trained horses from his base in Chiddingfold, shared with the *Telegraph* how unlikely the move to Epsom once seemed. Yet, the combination of modern infrastructure and proximity to London convinced him to seize the opportunity. In an era when racehorse ownership is increasingly attractive to Londoners, Downs House’s accessibility could be a game-changer.

As reported, Baker hopes that his move will contribute to the broader rejuvenation of Epsom as a competitive training centre. With room for 50 horses initially, Baker is aiming to fill the yard within two years, making the facility a top choice for owners seeking convenience and quality.

While Epsom’s journey back to its glory days remains a work in progress, the ambitious restoration of Downs House, as highlighted in *The Daily Telegraph*, marks a pivotal step in the town’s efforts to reclaim its place on the racing map.

Image: Downs House aerial - Google

Ancaster acquires the Epsom keys to Allams

28 November 2024



Sponsored article: Ancaster Group has announced the acquisition of Allams of Epsom, a prominent Skoda dealership that has been a cornerstone of the local automotive industry for over 70 years. This move comes as Ancaster celebrates its 75th anniversary, marking a strategic expansion for the group across South West London and Surrey.

Allams of Epsom, located on Longmead Business Park, has been serving customers in the region since its establishment in 1952. The dealership is well-known for offering the full range of Skoda vehicles and operates as an authorised service and MOT centre. For decades, it has built a loyal customer base, providing reliable service and quality vehicles to generations of local residents.

With this acquisition, Ancaster Group continues to solidify its presence in the South East, adding to its existing network of 13 dealerships representing brands such as Nissan, Hyundai, MG, Renault, and Dacia. This addition will allow the group to further enhance its customer offerings, particularly in the fast-growing Skoda brand. Ancaster's Managing Director, Stephen Wood, expressed enthusiasm for the future, stating, "This acquisition is a strategic milestone for us, as it accelerates our growth and broadens the brands we offer in South London and Surrey. Allams and Ancaster share the same important core values of customer service provided by a motivated and committed team."

Allams will continue to operate under its current name, with customers benefiting from the enhanced support and synergies provided by Ancaster's wider network. The acquisition positions Ancaster to serve the Surrey and South West London markets even more effectively, with a strong focus on customer satisfaction, as both companies are known for their dedicated service teams.

The Allams dealership has long been a fixture in Epsom, having earned a reputation for trust and quality in automotive sales and servicing. For local residents, this acquisition signals the continuation of a trusted service, now backed by the broader expertise and resources of a larger dealership group. Ancaster's purchase ensures that Allams will remain an integral part of the community, while also benefiting from new growth opportunities within a larger organisation.

Ancaster Group, which was founded in 1949, has built its reputation over the decades through customer service, trust, and value. With this latest acquisition, the group looks set to strengthen its ties to the local community, continuing to offer a comprehensive range of new and pre-owned vehicles across multiple brands.

For Epsom motorists, this new chapter in the history of Allams promises continuity in quality service, combined with the benefits of a broader dealership network under the Ancaster umbrella.