EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
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3rd September 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

Epsom and Ewell's rock history goes under the hammer

19 August 2026

Rare posters from Ewell Technical College (today's NESCOT) concerts featuring Nick Drake, Genesis, Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin are among more than 300 pieces of music memorabilia being auctioned from the collection of industry veteran **Lindsay Brown**.

A remarkable collection chronicling both Ewell's place in British rock history and one man's five-decade career in the music industry is to be sold at auction next month.

More than 300 posters, records, autographs, backstage passes and other pieces assembled by Lindsay Brown will go under the hammer at Omega Auctions in Merseyside on Tuesday 15th September.

Mr Brown began his music industry career in 1969 as social secretary at Ewell Technical College – now part of Nescot – where he helped bring emerging and established performers to the college.

The venue hosted concerts by artists including Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, Caravan, Taste, Genesis, Nick Drake and Atomic Rooster. Other celebrated acts associated with the college's musical heyday included Led Zeppelin, King Crimson and Queen.

"It was a thrilling time to be involved in music," Mr Brown told the Epsom and Ewell Times. "The great artists of the day were available for all to see. Hendrix, The Doors and Led Zeppelin, to name but a few.

"New artists were emerging all the time, some of which were booked to support at Ewell – Genesis, Black Sabbath, King Crimson, Queen and the now legendary Nick Drake."

Mr Brown said the college became an important stop on the national concert circuit because successive social secretaries and entertainment committee members were adept both at securing major performers and identifying artists with the potential to become stars.

The college was also well placed near venues including the Toby Jug in Tolworth and the Fox Club in Croydon, with London's music clubs within easy reach.

"Many managers and agents would offer their talent and new signings for support slots at Ewell," he recalled.

Among the most valuable lots is an exceptionally rare poster advertising an Ewell Technical College concert by Atomic Rooster, Genesis and Nick Drake on 24th January 1970. It is expected to sell for more than £5,000.

Posters featuring Drake are particularly scarce because of his reluctance to perform live. The auction house believes the Ewell poster may be the first example of its kind to reach the open market.

Another lot is a small poster advertising what is described as the final public concert of Drake's career, held at Ewell Technical College on 25th June 1970. It has an estimated value of more than £2,000.

A red-and-gold poster by artist David Arnott, produced for a college performance by Black Sabbath supporting Caravan, is expected to fetch more than £1,000. An Arnott poster for Deep Purple's appearance at Ewell Tech on 18th April 1970 is being offered together with a ticket from the concert.

A framed 1968 Ewell Technical College poster originally advertising The Yardbirds is also expected to attract considerable interest. Following changes to the group, the concert instead featured an early incarnation of Led Zeppelin before a reported audience of just 150 people. The poster is estimated to sell for more than £2,000.

Mr Brown retains especially fond memories of concerts by Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Taste, although he said Caravan – which appeared at Ewell on several occasions – was the venue's most successful act.

"Seeing a very early King Crimson concert was a real privilege," he added.

After leaving Ewell Tech, Mr Brown went on to hold senior positions at Red Bus, MAM, Rock Exchange, Polydor and Eagle Rock Entertainment. As managing director of Eagle Rock, he signed The Rolling Stones for visual rights.

Across his career he worked with artists including Kate Bush, Elvis Costello, Barclay James Harvest, Dr Feelgood, 10cc, The Cure, Van Morrison, Björk, Alice Cooper, Queen, Jeff Beck and Simple Minds.

The wider collection reflects those associations. It includes authenticated Beatles autographs expected to fetch more than £3,000; a Fender Telecaster signed by Keith Richards; Rolling Stones autographs including that of Brian Jones; a 1969 Woodstock ticket; and Kate Bush tour posters, clothing, passes and merchandise.

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ISSN 2753-2771

A Queen collection relating to the band's 1976 Hyde Park concert includes autographs, a framed show flyer and a map of the band's route formerly owned by their driver. It is valued at more than £3,000.

Also for sale is a three-foot-high poster for the New York Dolls' first UK performance at the Rainbow Room at Biba in November 1973 – a concert attended by figures who would later help shape British punk.

A 1969 flyer for the Toby Jug Blues Club in Tolworth features Led Zeppelin's name misspelt and is valued at more than £500.

Although Mr Brown is parting with most of the collection, he has retained six particularly personal pieces. These include a poster from his farewell Caravan show at Ewell in 1970, a set of Rolling Stones autographs, a Kate Bush tour poster, a Barclay James Harvest gold disc and sales plaque, and a poster personally dedicated to him by Jeff Beck.

"It's sad to see the collection go, but I am thrilled by the continued worldwide interest in Ewell Tech's heritage, told through its posters, many of which were designed by the Redhill artist David Arnott," he said.

"Knowing these posters are going to good homes is very gratifying and lets the story continue to survive."

He believes collectors have an important role in protecting evidence of performances and events which could otherwise disappear from public memory.

"Without people keeping what might seem at the time inconsequential – tickets, stubs, flyers and so on – many of these shows would be completely forgotten in future years."

The collection, entitled "Time Has Told Me – 50 Years in Music", will be auctioned by Omega Auctions on Tuesday 15th September, with a public preview on Monday 14th September. The catalogue and bidding details are available from www.omegaauctions.co.uk.

1968 – 1971 Ewell Tech. Gig List – click here

Julie Kapsalis, CEO of NESCOT, responded to this story and told the Epsom and Ewell Times: "Music continues to be an important part of Nescot. The Entitled Sons played a gig at the college last year and Bazil Meade ran a masterclass on gospel music. Our music department also trains young people to enter the sector and this year they showcased their talents on the community stage at The Epsom Derby Festival. We now have a DJ club and college bands who regularly perform at college and external venues."

Lionel Blackman

Epsom and Ewell acknowledges with thanks the main contributions and research undertaken by Faye Blaylock of www.jvpublicity.com for this article

Photo: The band Barclay James Harvest with Lindsay Brown: Left to right: Wooly Wolstenholme, John Lees, Lindsay Brown, Les Holroyd, Mel Pritchard

Related report:

When the Rolling Stones rolled into Epsom — twice

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