

Guildford cathedral appeal dismissed

7 June 2024



Plans to build 124 new homes around Guildford Cathedral have been thrown out by an inspector as the proposal would cause a negative impact on the distinct character and history of the building. Developers Vivid appealed after Guildford Borough Council refused the application in March 2023.

The government’s planning inspectorate has dismissed the plans, which was said would financially support the cathedral. Tom Bristow, the inspector, concluded the proposal would result in a “clear adverse effect” to the historical and natural setting and significance of the Cathedral’s “lofty, dominance” and “imposing” character.

Concerns were raised that of the 124 new homes, including 94 flats, Vivid intended to build, they “would have little affinity with the prevailing characteristics of the area”.

Mr Bristow gave great benefit to the community value of the Grade II listed grounds as locals said it was a “well-used public space”. He added that the “semi-natural and rugged state” of the cathedral grounds was “distinct and rare” in comparison with more formally landscaped, maintained land in the area.

Tristen Samuels, Group Development and New Business Director at Vivid Homes, said: “We remain proud of the proposals we put forward to deliver highly-sustainable new homes in Guildford – including 40% affordable which is so desperately needed. We will consider the findings of the Inspector’s report in the coming days.”

The inspector also found the money generated from the development would bring in just over a third of the £3,570,000 the cathedral needs for building repairs. Mr Bristow said: “Irrespective of the outcome of the scheme, the Cathedral will continue to be predominantly reliant on other sources of funding for upkeep.”

Interim Dean, the Venerable Stuart Beake, said the way forward is “challenging” and cast doubt on if the cathedral would be able to “operate in the same way”. He said an additional £150,000 was needed each year to cover the shortfall in day-to-day costs at the cathedral.

Mr Beake added: “Whilst naturally disappointed by the outcome, the cathedral chapter is determined to carry on delivering the mission of the cathedral in the community.”

Related reports:

New housing around Surrey’s cathedral in contention

Surrey County’s Cathedral citadel conserved...

Indicative Cgi Of Planning Application For Homes Near Guildford Cathedral. (Image: VIVID Homes)

Gold star at the end of the Rainbow

7 June 2024



Better’s Rainbow Leisure Centre in Epsom has maintained its ‘Excellent’ status from QUEST – the Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure. This follows a mystery visit from the organisation in April plus a planned audit in May.

Rainbow’s facilities include two pools – full-size and teaching – a sports hall, 100+ station gym, soft play area, spa and a senior activity room.

The centre has approximately 70 members of staff (full and part-time) and around 3,000 members who are mainly families or adults over the age of 66.

QUEST’s report commented on the centre’s excellent, well-maintained facilities and its extremely warm, friendly and

welcoming staff. Emily Simmons, General Manager, comments, “I am immensely proud of the centre and our team. Achieving QUEST Excellent status is no easy task and staff consistently work hard to maintain the high standards they set themselves.

“QUEST is a fantastic tool for evaluating best practice and customer service levels. It sets the standard for leisure centre management and sports development, taking into account programming, facilities, management policies and procedures, staff training and development, and environmental impact. This award means both customers and staff are getting the highest level of service, care and support.”

Better’s Head of Service in the area Steve Hannen adds, “A huge well done! It’s a great achievement for Rainbow to maintain Excellent status. This is not an easy thing to do and the entire centre team should be proud.”

Rainbow Leisure Centre is managed by charitable social enterprise GLL under the ‘Better’ brand. Supporting the wellbeing of local communities is an important part of the organisation’s ethos.

GLL press

Student racemakers favourites at the Derby

7 June 2024



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“We were also delighted to help the students present the beautifully designed plaques to the grooms of the Betfred Derby

runners and want to thank them for their hard work in the build up to the event.

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

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

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

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

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

Epsom’s gypsies celebrated this month

7 June 2024



Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) History Month is a chance for everyone to celebrate the rich and unique histories of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people across **Surrey**. This year’s theme is ‘What does family mean to you?’ and encourages everyone to think about the importance of family. With the diverse cultures of nomadic and travelling communities, family is the bond which ties everything together. The community has an amazing oral history tradition of sharing stories of ancestors and cultural traditions that garner a sense of pride in Romani heritage.

You can find out more about this year’s campaign and download a fantastic GRT history timeline on their website.

Did you know that Romany Gypsies have been present in Britain since at least 1515 after migrating from Europe during the Roma migration from India? The first mention of the GRT community in Surrey dates back to 1596 and can be found in the papers of the More family of Loseley.

Surrey Heritage has celebrated GRT History Month for many years now and supports the work of the Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum with their events such as Romany Day at the Rural Living Museum, Tilford. The Forum has deposited records relating to their community and the work that they do to the archive here, including poetry, newsletter, videos and publicity material (SHC reference 10379)

Text and image courtesy Surrey History Centre. See more local history news [HERE](#).

Related reports:

Daughter of Lord Rosebery who helped Derby Gypsies

Image: Photograph of Gypsies leaving **Lady Sybil Grant’s site at Epsom**, early 20th century (SHC reference 6035/1/18)

Surrey seats to watch in the election

7 June 2024



The BBC’s Local Democracy reporter Emily Dalton analyses prospects for Conservative candidates in some Surrey

constituencies:

There is a chance of a seismic shift in the Surrey political landscape at the upcoming General Election. Multiple long-standing MPs are standing down, and there have been reports looking into alleged severe misconduct all with the backdrop of heavy Local Election losses for the Conservatives in the county in May.

With a General Election on the cards for July 4, Rishi Sunak will be hoping to remain Prime Minister to show ‘the plan is working’ for economic growth. With many of these hoped for economic benefits not yet reaching people’s pockets, it’s too soon to say if the public will be persuaded.

Epsom and Ewell Times will be staging a local HUSTINGS for the Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Candidates at the Adrian Mann Theatre, NESLOT, Reigate Road in Ewell at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June. All welcome.

Will Labour leader Keir Starmer (born and raised in Surrey’s Oxshott) be able to break into the traditional Conservative Surrey heartlands and turn some blue seats red? Ed Davey’s Liberal Democrats have been eying up Surrey seats for years and hope to play their part in removing the Conservatives from office.

Surrey has been a Tory stronghold for decades, at borough, county and parliamentary level. But recent local election results showed all parties benefiting from a fall in Conservative support. The results meant that none of Surrey’s 11 boroughs and districts now has a Tory majority. Although there is a narrow Conservative majority on the county council

Six Surrey MPs have announced they won’t be standing for reelection, Conservative MPs Michael Gove (Surrey Heath), Dominic Raab (Esher and Walton), Kwasi Kwarteng (Spelthorne), **Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell)**, and Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) are not seeking reelection alongside Reigate MP Crispin Blunt, who was elected as a Conservative but now sits as an independent.

With familiar faces gone and a raft of boundary changes meaning new constituencies in the county there is much uncertainty. Below are five seats to keep an eye on in the upcoming election.

1: Godalming and Ash

Contesting MP: **Jeremy Hunt** – Conservative (53.3% votes in 2019).

While many of his cabinet colleagues have fallen away, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is clearly not ready to leave his position or constituents. An MP since 2010, Mr Hunt won an 8,827 majority in the 2019 elections. A prominent figure in the cabinet, Mr Hunt has held numerous positions and is well-known.

Due to constituency boundary changes, Mr Hunt’s West Surrey constituency no longer exists with the seats of Godalming and Ash and Farnham and Borden being created to replace it.

Running as the Lib Dem candidate in Godalming and Ash is Cllr Paul Follows. He is leader of Waverley Borough Council, leader of Godalming Town Council and a Surrey County councillor. Safe to say Mr Follows knows the depths of local government, can he make it to the national level?

Polls from The New Statesman and on Election Maps UK predict a Lib Dem victory, with between 36%-41% of the vote, and Conservatives at 30-33% – perhaps depending on how many votes Reform UK secures. This looks like a close race and surely one to watch- the Chancellor of the Exchequer could be about to have his own Portillo moment.

2: Guildford

Contesting MP: **Angela Richardson** – Conservative (44.9% votes in 2019).

Deputy chair of the Conservative Party, Angela Richardson won a narrow victory last election with only a 3,000 vote majority. She voted against PM Boris Johnson in the 2022 no confidence vote, arguing he had lost the public’s trust.

Hot on her heels is Zoe Franklin, for the Liberal Democrats, who came second in 2019 with 39.2% of the vote. Hoping for third time lucky, Ms Franklin’s votes have jumped from around 13,000 in 2017, to nearly 23,000 in 2019.

The Lib Dems have controlled the council since May 2019, with just 10 Conservative councillors

Water is likely to be a main talking point, with the Lib Dems’ national campaign to stop sewage dumping and tackle water reform. Meanwhile, Ms Richardson is campaigning to reduce flooding in Guildford and the surrounds.

3: Esher and Walton

Previous MP: **Dominic Raab** – Conservative (49.4% of votes in 2019).

Dominic Raab has been the MP for Esher and Walton since 2010, but after bullying allegations emerged and a subsequent report found him “unreasonably aggressive” in 2022 he decided to step down at the next election. Mr Raab denied all wrongdoing.

Campaigning in a ‘Remain’ constituency, Brexiteer Mr Raab secured a narrow 3,000 majority ahead of his Lib Dem opponent, Monica Harding in the 2019 election. Tactical voting may have played a heavy hand as locals sent a message to the Conservatives. With Brexit less of a core issue this time round will the vote be as close again?

Opposition leader for Elmbridge Council, Cllr John Cope is running as the Conservative candidate. He narrowly kept his ward seat in the May council elections with just 129 votes more than his Lib Dem rival. Will this be replicated in the wider constituency?

Contesting the seat for the second time, Ms Harding is hoping to make it. Running her campaign in 2019 based on no

political experience, Ms Harding decided to stop ‘shouting at the tv’ and went on to achieve 28,389 votes.

4: Runnymede and Weybridge

Contesting MP: **Ben Spencer** – Conservative (54.9% of votes in 2019).

Securing a strong majority of 18,270 votes in the 2019 elections, Dr Ben Spencer achieved a similar percentage to his predecessor Philip Hammond. Dr Spencer might not be so lucky this time. Recent polling from The New Statesman and Election Maps UK show a close race forecast between the Conservatives and Labour, taking around 30% of the vote each.

After being a Conservative stronghold seat since its creation in 1997, Runnymede and Weybridge could be the first brick of the Surrey wall to turn red for Labour. The Reform Party, although unlikely to win a seat here, could take important votes away from the Conservatives as it is predicted to absorb 11.7% of the vote.

Giving it a second chance, Robert King (Labour) is running again. Leader of the Labour Party in the Runnymede council, he had a successful May local elections as his party won four seats. The Conservatives lost seven seats, including the deputy council leader.

5: Reigate

Previous MP: **Crispin Blunt** – Independent (53.9% of votes in 2019 as a Conservative).

After over 25 years of public service as an MP (1997), Mr Blunt announced he would step down at the next election in May 2022. In October 2023, he was arrested on suspicion of rape and possession of controlled substances, and had the Conservative Party whip removed. Mr Blunt was released under investigation in April 2024 and denies any wrongdoing.

After Mr Blunt won a massive majority of 18,310 in 2019, can the Conservatives inherit his popularity? Labour and Lib Dems came neck and neck at the 2019 election with around 10,000 votes each, showing a strong sense of feeling between the two. Current polling suggests either a close run between Conservatives and Lib Dems (New Statesman) or Conservatives and Labour (Election Maps UK).

With new candidates standing from the three main parties, it could be a toss up between them. Rebecca Paul (Conservative), Mark Johnston (Lib Dem) and Stuart Brady (Labour) all seem to stick to the representative party policies, rather than designing a unique promise to Reigate.

May local elections saw all other parties gain from Conservative losses, with Labour gaining another councillor in Redhill.

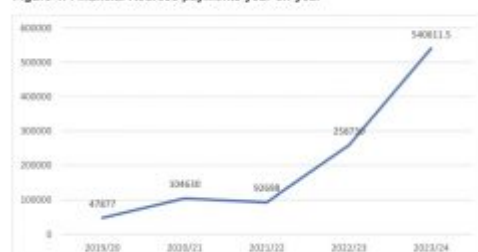
Image: Scout outside a polling station Molesey (image: Chris Caulfield)

Failing children costs Council taxpayers half-million

7 June 2024

42. During 2023/24 the total amount paid in financial remedies was £540,611.59.

Figure 4: Financial Redress payments year-on-year



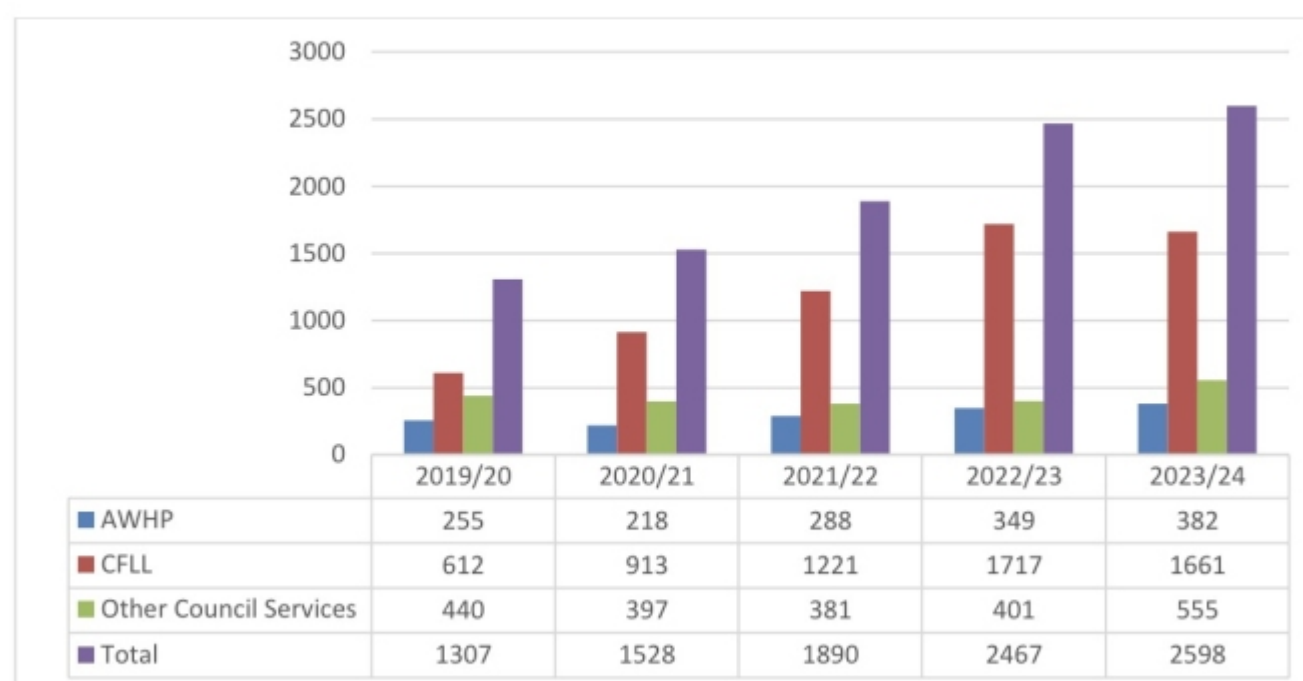
Fines paid out by **Surrey County Council** for repeatedly failing children and young people topped half a million pounds in the past year – more than doubling its previous worst level. The council paid £540,611.59 in the last year to families who raised complaints through the children and social care watchdog.

It is an increase of £281,880, or 109 per cent, on 2023’s figure – when the council said it was “working hard to improve services”. Part of the “notable increase” is due to a change in guidance from the Ombudsman, which encourages local authorities to provide financial remedies earlier, as well as on an ongoing basis for delays to education, health and care (EHC) plans.

The council said it has cut its backlog of delayed care plans and is approaching the national norm.

Opposition members said ombudsman complaints and fines were just the tip of the iceberg and the trauma caused to families has long-lasting effects.

Figure 1: Total complaints received.



Dr **Julia Katherine**, Surrey County Council’s interim director of education and lifelong learning said: “We are working hard to reduce spend on fines, which we know is higher than it should be.” She added: “However, we recognise that delays in issuing EHC plans have also contributed to missed provision and subsequent fines, and we apologise for any distress caused to the children and families affected.

“As timeliness improves, provision will be put in place within normal service delivery rather than retrospectively through remedies and we naturally expect fines to fall in line with this. We have seen a 64 per cent increase in EHC needs assessment requests across Surrey since 2020, at a time of a national shortage of educational psychologists, and this has naturally had an impact.”

Dr Katherine said the council had prioritised how it was addressing timelines and had reduced the number of delayed EHC plan requests from 1,658 in October 2023 to about 100 by the end of May 2024 – and is on track to eliminate the backlog altogether.

She said: “This should ultimately result in improved timeliness of assessments, putting Surrey in line with national levels, from June 2024, and in turn an improved experience for families and a reduction in the need for financial remedies. We are resolute in our ambition to continue to improve services and outcomes for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities so that they are happy, healthy, safe and confident about their future.”

According to the council’s own figures, £107,102.50 was paid in “symbolic financial remedies” in recognition of the “distress and anxiety and time and trouble taken in pursuing” complaints, an increase of £19,656.85 (11 per cent) when compared to the previous 12 months.

The council paid £255,318 because of problems in its education services, including a single payout of £12,900 which included missed education and delay. There were also two one-off payments of £12,486 and £12,400 for loss of education provision and delay. Children’s social care shortcomings cost £74,441 with £43,245 to one family to acknowledge financial support errors. The figures were released ahead of the June 5 meeting of its Audit and Governance committee.

Councillor **Catherine Powell**, leader of the residents group at Surrey County Council, said “I’m sad but it doesn’t surprise me. The half a million is devastating for the families, it’s devastating that its money not being spent on services, but it’s all the other families that are not even able to take it to that point. To go through to the ombudsman, you kind of have to have money behind you and there are an awful lot of people who don’t and they just end up sitting in the system.”

She added: “Once you’ve traumatised a child you don’t untraumatise them, they learn to live with it and that’s where the long-term mental health issue can. “The parents of these children are under extreme strain. If we don’t support the parents in the right way, we are actually creating long term health issues for the parents as well because they are burnt out and unable to cope. I hear it’s a very isolating experience.

“If you have a child not in school regularly there are lots of things you can’t do, you can’t work and you have to support the child in an intense day-to-day way. It’s very hard.”

Cllr Powell added (the council) has “put money into educational psychologists and the service believes it will get the backlog down but the reality is not just that, but the support we provide along the way.”

Missed education provision meant the council had to reimburse parents £222,657 in symbolic financial payments to recognise each month missed. These are payments the council should be spending to meet assessed needs irrespective of a complaint being made.

In the past year, Surrey County Council recorded a total of 1,661 complaints in its children, families and lifelong learning service – down from 1,771 the previous year.

Only a “very small number of complaints” escalate to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the council said, with the vast majority successfully resolved and responded to by the local authority.

Cllr **Will Forster**, leader of the Liberal Democrat Group said: “We have highlighted Surrey County Council’s awful record of protecting vulnerable young people before. All too often the Ombudsman has found the county council wanting. This is an awful way to spend taxpayers’ money, and on lawyers fees fighting these judgements. The cases that come to the ombudsman area only when parents have fought and pushed through the system to get to this point. There will be so many more failures that carers and young people aren’t able to complain about.”

Computer’s gift of a Trojan Horse?

7 June 2024



The computer won the Derby! On the eve of yesterday’s famous Epsom flat race Epsom and Ewell Times published winner tips Los Angeles from Royal Ascot Odds and first to cross the finishing line **City of Troy** from a super-computer. What other gifts for humanity might be brought by AI?

An Epsom and Ewell Times reader put £50 on both tips and came away with a £100 profit thanks to the brain-power of a super-computer. He said “One swallow does not make a summer. So, I won’t be inclined to follow computer tips every time but thanks for this one”

No Royal could be spotted on Epsom Downs this Derby Day but our own leading citizen Mayor **Steve Bridger** and Mayoress Carol Bridger took centre stage in the Royal Box of The Queen’s Stand. Another Epsom and Ewell highlight was **Helin Konyar** a Ukraine scholar of the local **Laine Theatre Arts** leading the National Anthem just before the Derby stakes. The King and Queen attended Oaks Day on Friday.



Students of Epsom’s Laine Theatre Arts. Helin Konyar front row centre in yellow dress.

City Of Troy (3-1 Favourite) banished the memory of his disappointing run in the QIPCO 2000 Guineas with a breathtaking performance to clinch victory in the 245th Betfred Derby at Epsom Downs today.

The colt, sired by Justify, secured a record-extending 10th win in this prestigious Classic for his trainer Aidan O’Brien, while jockey Ryan Moore celebrated his fourth Derby triumph.

City Of Troy, racing on the inside, was settled towards the rear among the 16 runners as stablemates Euphoric and Los Angeles led the field.

Rounding Tattenham Corner, City Of Troy began to make an impressive move, surging to the front in the final quarter mile. He maintained his momentum, finishing strongly to fend off Ambiente Friendly by two and three-quarter lengths,

with Los Angeles trailing three and a quarter lengths behind in third.



The Derby jockeys. Epsom Racecourse 1st June 2024 c. Epsom and Ewell Times

“It was hard to know what would happen today, but I was very sure we still had the best horse before the race,” Ryan Moore said to ITV Racing. “Newmarket... it didn’t happen. I can’t pretend that we knew it would happen [today], but we do know that he has a big engine, he showed himself to be a brilliant two-year-old. The Guineas... we got a few things wrong. But it’s great that he could come back today. He’s still a little bit immature, that’s the first time he’s run around a bend, hopefully there’s plenty more to work with.”

Moore reflected on the race’s turning point, stating, “We did a few things wrong at Newmarket, today we rectified it and put it right.”

On the sensation of guiding City Of Troy through the final stages, Moore said, “He was going to win very easily. With the loose horse in front of him, he was still a bit unsure, and then he galloped out strong. He quickened well and then kind of waited, you have to be delighted with what he has done today.”

“I had to find a little bit of room. The race kind of opened up, loose horse in there, he travelled well into the straight, and he picked up and went to the front very easily and very quickly,” Moore recounted. “Then I felt he was still a little bit inexperienced, with the loose horse in front of him he wasn’t quite sure what to do – he was pricking his ears, then he changed his leads near the line and went on again. I’m just delighted that a horse who showed so much as a two-year-old – he was very good at two – and the Guineas, we got a few things wrong on the day and it’s great that Aidan’s got him back and brought him here today. He didn’t lose faith in the horse, stuck to the plan and it has paid off. We believed that if he turned up like we thought he would, he’d be too good for them, and he was.

“I was always happy where I was. It’s never going to be 100% smooth with a field that size, where we were, but I was able to pick a path. He took me there early and easily, and the race was over and he was in control of it a fair way out.

“He’s special – he won the Dewhurst, won a Group Two as early as July, won the Dewhurst, then to come here, and it’s the first time he’s been round a bend, and obviously it’s a big step up in trip. We thought he was the sort of horse, and once again Aidan’s brought him here, he’s turned up and it all worked out great,” Moore concluded to ITV Racing.

Epsom Downs witnessed a remarkable performance today, marking yet another chapter in the illustrious careers of City Of Troy, Aidan O’Brien, and Ryan Moore.

Human versus computer tips for Derby winner

7 June 2024



One of the biggest Flat races of the season arrives at Epsom Downs on Saturday afternoon as the £1.5 million Epsom Derby takes centre stage in the sporting world.

The Group 1 contest, open to three-year-old horses only, is run over the 1m4f distance at the track, and in 2024, 16 runners have been declared for the showpiece race to battle it out for the £882,408 top prize at 4:30 on Saturday.

Many eyes will be focused on City Of Troy, trained by Ballydoyle maestro Aidan O’Brien, who looked like a world-class prospect as a two-year-old before being well-beaten at odds-on in the 2000 Guineas to start his three-year-old campaign. O’Brien won this race last year with Auguste Rodin, who also flopped in the Guineas before bouncing back, but City of Troy hasn’t got the best stall draw from stall number one, which has seen his odds drift slightly.

Another O’Brien runner, **Los Angeles**, could be the play in the Derby. A winner of the Group 1 Criterium de Saint-Cloud back in October, he backed that up with a win in the Derby Trial at Leopardstown on May 12 and will relish the step up in trip at Epsom.

Away from the Irish challengers, Macduff for trainer Ralph Beckett is expected to be in contention. Fourth in the Royal Lodge on his final start as a two-year-old, he returned at three with a decent second to Arabian Crown in the Sandown Classic Trial and is another who will enjoy the further trip.

Trainer Andrew Balding is no stranger to having big-priced runners go well in this race and he has an outside chance with Sayedaty Sadaty, runner-up in Listed races at Newcastle and Newmarket this session but could well take a giant leap forward here. Sea The Stars won the Derby in 2009 and Bellum Justum, one of his offspring, could pose a real threat for Balding, with top-jockey Oisin Murphy on board.

Before the big one, however, there is no shortage of action elsewhere on the Epsom card with another seven races on offer, kicking off at 1:25 with a Class 2 handicap over the 1m2f trip. Balding could get the card off to a perfect start for him with Portsmouth, scoring in fine style at Epsom in the season opener last month and backed it up with a runner-up finish at Goodwood.

Nine runners will take on the Group 3 Princess Elizabeth Stakes, race two on the Epsom card, at 2:00. Preference is for Dahlia Stakes runner-up Running Lion, who is down in class and she should take plenty of beating. The progressive Sparks Fly, who excelled as a three-year-old, rates as the main danger, very much up in class but wasn’t disgraced in handicap company at Haydock on seasonal return.

The third race on the card (2:35) is the Group 3 Diomed Stakes. Of the eight runners tackling the extended mile distance, Embesto for trainer Roger Varian is taken to get the better of last year’s winner Regal Reality, who is back for more this weekend and also cannot be ruled out having placed in both starts this year.

The lead-up to the Derby cranks up with the five-furlong “Dash” at 3:10 for three-year-olds, and a whopping field of 20 will head to the start. Due For Luck is back on track this season having finished a neck third at Chester last time out to rediscover some form. Another who can bounce back is Vince L’Amour, a winner of a pair of handicaps at Ripon and Catterick last month and was a strong second when up in grade at Chester but bombed out last time around at York. Grandlad and Knicks, both winners last time out, are also ones to keep an eye on in a very competitive Dash.

Clarendon House should be too strong for his rivals in the second “Dash” on the card at 3:45, a winner at York just over a fortnight ago from the re-opposing Looking For Lynda. Sylkie Wilie rates the chief threat, however, handily weighted for this one having not won in 14 outings but was runner-up in this race last year and arrives off the back of a fifth of 15 in a Musselburgh handicap.

The Derby takes all the attention at 4:30 before two further races wrap up the Derby meeting for 2024. It’s tough to look past Ziggy in the Class 2 handicap (5:15), who returned from 15 months off with a second at Epsom’s season opener. In the finale (5:50), the selection is for Mr Wagyu, who is taken to kick on with his superb record in this race having won it in 2022 and was third last year.

Epsom selections - Saturday from Royal Ascot Odds

1:25 - Portsmouth
2:00 - Running Lion
2:35 - Embesto
3:10 - Vince L’Amour
3:45 - Clarendon House
4:30 - **Los Angeles**
5:15 - Ziggy
5:50 - Mr Wagyu

SuperComputer Predictions

City of Troy has been given a staggering 29.9% chance of winning the 2024 Epsom Derby on Saturday, according to the Best Payout Online Slots SuperComputer.

The SuperComputer is created by generating a specific code, which simulates the race 1,000 times, after being fed information relating to factors such as conditions, weight, jockey, trainer, and form, as well as betting market odds.

With the going officially declared as Good to Soft for the big day itself, the Aidan O’Brien-trained City of Troy has emerged as the huge favorite for the race, with a win percentage chance of 29.9%.

In second place is Ancient Wisdom at 11.8% and then Dancing Gemini at 10.2%. However, the chances of Ambiente Friendly also making a late surge for top spot are just 10.1% as well.

A spokesperson for Best Payout Online Slots said:

“Sports fans have throughout history relied on their ‘gut feeling’ or ‘instinct’ to make predictions for a season, which can

certainly be blighted by personal preferences or bias. However, the Best Payout Online Slots SuperComputer aims to remove the sentiment and emotions of predictions and instead replace these inexact methods with logical and intelligent predictions relying on data. By creating the code, we can simulate the race and create as accurate a model as possible – leading to the final matrix of positions we see above.”

How does the SuperComputer work?

The SuperComputer is a probability model, not determined by human predictions or bias. What happens is the SuperComputer estimates the outcome of the race based on a horse’s current strength (based on factors such as conditions, weight, jockey, trainer, and form) and betting market odds.

The machine then simulates the remaining games in a season 1,000 times and constructs an average league table from the 1,000 simulations, to rule out anomalous results.

Bearing the balls of Derby week in Langley Vale

7 June 2024



Residents of **Langley Vale**, an estate adjacent to the renowned Epsom Racecourse, have expressed growing frustration and concern over repeated incidents of anti-social behavior and vandalism coinciding with the annual **Derby week**. The community’s grievances were vividly shared through a series of social media posts, highlighting a range of disturbances and a perceived lack of adequate police response.

One resident described a troubling encounter with three males, one of whom had a cast, yet lamented the police’s apparent indifference. “This is serious now, not just knock down ginger, but they don’t seem to be taking it seriously. They should be going on site and looking for these culprits. The police should be patrolling this whole area of the downs anyway. They know we get trouble every year; a burnt-out car last year on the downs and theft,” the post read.

Another resident voiced their anger over the disruption Derby week brings to the village, accusing the police of failing to ensure community safety. “The whole village gets held hostage this time of year, and the police don’t do enough at all to make the residents feel safe,” they stated.

The most alarming incident reported involved the shattering of bedroom windows by ball bearings, suspected to have been launched with a catapult, between 10-11 PM. Fortunately, the children’s rooms were spared. The attack occurred at the top of Grosvenor Road, near the bridle path. “Reported it to the police, obviously, but if anyone has had similar treatment or saw anything suspicious, can you let me know or report it to 101,” the resident urged.

Further reports of catapult and ball bearing damage surfaced within the village, including a patio door destroyed within a half-hour span. The resident noted the impressive accuracy of the attack, considering their home’s secluded position next to the woods. They identified a pattern, suggesting the culprits were targeting homes from the bridle path at the top of Rosebery, Grosvenor, and Beaconsfield Roads, areas supposedly under police dispersal orders. “Despite these boys being exactly in the same place three evenings and nights running, no police presence was seen at the top of the village,” the post concluded.

As Derby week continues, Langley Vale residents remain on edge, calling for more proactive measures from law enforcement to protect their community from further disturbances.

Inspector **Kelly Clifton-Sinclair**, Borough Commander for Epsom and Ewell, said: “We are aware of reports of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the Langley Vale area. We know that these crimes can have a serious effect on the local community, and I would like to reassure residents that we are investigating all possible lines of enquiry so that we can work to identify those responsible. Since the reports were made to us, we have had officers patrolling the local area, proactively speaking to the local community and those affected, to make sure residents feel safe.

“If you are a victim of crime, or have recently been a victim of crime, please report it to us so that we can investigate it thoroughly. Each report helps us to build our understanding of crime in the area so that we can respond, work to deter crime, and help keep our communities safe. If you have any information that might assist our investigation, please get in touch with us via Messenger quoting PR/ 45240061106.”

BBC Question Time Came to Epsom

7 June 2024



Last night, **Epsom College** played host to BBC's **Question Time**, with **Fiona Bruce** at the helm. She opened the programme by highlighting Epsom's famed salts and rich horse racing heritage.

Epsom and Ewell Times will be staging a local "Question Time" for the Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Candidates at the Adrian Mann Theatre, NESLOT, Reigate Road in Ewell at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June. All welcome.

The Panel included **Damian Hinds** MP the Conservative School Minister, **Wes Streeting** MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, **Nigel Farage**, Reform UK President, **Rose Hudson-Wilkin**, Bishop of Dover and **Piers Morgan**, TV Presenter and Former Newspaper Editor.

Here is a summary of some of the questions and responses:

Question: "Is the idea of bringing back national service anything more than a political stunt?"

Damian Hinds: Defended the idea, suggesting it would broaden opportunities and foster a cohesive society, though Bruce noted criticism from senior military figures.

Wes Streeting: Highlighted existing opportunities like local cadets and questioned the government's track record over the past 14 years.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Cautioned against backdoor conscription, referencing existing youth programs.

Piers Morgan: Supported the idea for its potential to instill responsibility, but emphasized the need to address broader issues affecting young people.

Nigel Farage: Dismissed the policy as a focus group driven stunt, pointing out its limited scope.

Question: "Labour claims to reduce (NHS) waiting lists by extending working hours and asking doctors to work on weekends. Where will you find the staff?"

Wes Streeting: Explained plans for voluntary extra shifts, while acknowledging current pay and working condition issues.

Damian Hinds: Agreed on the need for more doctors and better technology, but noted industrial action worsened the backlog.

Piers Morgan: Criticized the system's inability to cope with population growth and increased life expectancy.

Nigel Farage: Called for a rethink of NHS funding.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Highlighted the delay in developing a workforce plan.

Question: "Regardless of people coming over on small boats, legal immigration is out of control. What is the solution?"

Nigel Farage: Blamed Labour for opening the door to high migration and called for using Brexit powers to control it.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Advocated for addressing global issues causing migration and warned against political scapegoating.

Damian Hinds: Emphasized the need to welcome contributing migrants but acknowledged current numbers were too high.

Piers Morgan: Warned about the rhetoric used in discussing migrants and criticized the lack of control postBrexit.

Question: "Is it morally right to impose a tax on parents' aspirations for their children?"

Wes Streeting: Defended Labour's plan to remove tax exemptions for private schools, arguing for better funding for state schools.

Piers Morgan: Condemned the policy as envy driven and harmful to aspirations.

Damian Hinds: Questioned the impact and minimal revenue from the tax.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Called for equitable resourcing of all schools.

Nigel Farage: Suggested more scholarships for working class children instead of taxing private schools.

The heated debate at Epsom College will be a night to remember for those lucky to get in and everyone at Epsom College who watched it.

Maraam Nusair

Top Tips for Oaks Day at Epsom Racecourse

7 June 2024



One of the biggest Flat race meetings of the British racing calendar is upon us as day one of the Derby meeting gets underway at Epsom Downs today.

The seven-race card has more than £1million in prize money up for grabs as the big gun trainers send their stars to Surrey for one of the most prestigious race days of the season.

The £550,000 Group 1 Betfred Oaks is the highlight on day one but not far behind that is the another Group 1, the Coronation Cup, with a prize pot of £445,000 up for grabs.

The Epsom card on Friday gets underway with the Woodcote Stakes (2.00), a six-furlong contest in class two for the two-year-old's. New Charter looked a handy type for trainer Richard Hannon when chasing home a current Royal Ascot favourite at Newmarket a fortnight ago and is taken to go one better at Epsom, but will face stern competition from Teej A, who won her maiden at Chester in fine fashion and will be bang up there once again.

The second race of the day is off at 2.35 and is a class two handicap over the extended mile trip, with 16 runners set to head to the starting stalls. Preference in this one goes Bopedro ahead of stablemate at David O'Meara's yard Blue For You, who finished third and fourth respectively in a handicap at York's Dante meeting earlier this month and both should improve at Epsom.

The first Group 1 on the card is race three at 3.10 – the Coronation Cup – and a small field of five will battle it out for the £252,360 first prize. Defending champion Emily Upjohn, trained by John and Thady Gosden, is back for more in 2024 and is the one to beat over the 1m4f trip once again. Luxembourg, a four-time Group 1 winner for master trainer Aidan O'Brien, rates as the obvious danger but needs to bounce back from a poor showing in the Dubai Turf at Meydan last time out. Feed The Flame is an intriguing runner in this one as well, heading over from France for trainer Pascal Bary having finished third of nine in the Prix Gany at Longchamps and connections opting to throw him into a Group 1 on British debut.

Fourteen runners look set for the start in race four of the cracking Epsom card on Friday at 3.45 – the Nifty 50 handicap – over the 1m2f distance. Ben Brookhouse's I Still Have Faith shaped well on seasonal reappearance at Nottingham after a fine 2023 campaign and is taken to score a fifth career win ahead of two Karl Burke runners in Bolster in Liberty Lane, who both won last time they were on track and will have plenty to say in proceedings.

The Group 1 Betfred Oaks is the feature race on day one at Epsom (4.30) and this year's renewal looks a belter, with £311,905 heading the way of the winner. That could well be Ylang Ylang for trainer O'Brien, who was a promising fifth in the first classic of the season in the 1000 Guineas at Newmarket and should relish the step up in trip here for a yard looking for a seventh win in the race since 2015.

Cheshire Oaks winner Forest Fairy looks to be a main player in the Oaks for trainer Ralph Beckett, who is no stranger to success in this race having won it with Look Here in 2008 and Talent in 2013, while Irish trainer Dermot Weld also has a live chance with Ezeliya, who has two wins from three starts and recently scored in a Group 3 at Navan.

After the big one, there are two more races on the Epsom card for punters to find a winner. The Listed Surrey Stakes (5.10) can go the way of Balmacara, trained by Eve Johnson-Houghton, who was a ready winner at Doncaster just over a month ago in a novice stakes contest.

Finally, the day one card comes to a close at 5.40 with the 12-runner class two handicap over the seven furlong trip and preference in the finale goes to the Roger Varian-trained Mission To Moon, who returned from a seven-month absence to score in fine style at Goodwood a month ago and is bred from a family who gets better with age.

*Epsom selections – Friday (via **Royal Ascot odds**)*

2.00 – New Charter

2.35 – Bopedro

3.10 – Emily Upjohn

3.45 – I Still Have Faith

4.30 – Forest Fairy

5.10 – Balmacara

5.40 - Mission To Moon

Copy provided by BoyleSports

Picture this house in the centre of Epsom!

7 June 2024



After much anticipation, **Epsom Picturehouse** — a six-screen cinema, café, and bar at the heart of Epsom Square — will be opening its doors on Saturday 01 June.

The latest addition to the Picturehouse Cinemas family, Epsom Picturehouse is set to encompass all the best that the world of film has to offer. Tickets are on sale now for *Furiosa*, George Miller's epic *Mad Max* prequel starring Chris Hemsworth and Anya Taylor-Joy, and film lovers will be able to book soon for new releases including the horror thriller *A Quiet Place: Day One* and Marvel Studios' *Deadpool & Wolverine*.

There'll also be chances to catch this year's wonderful family titles, *Inside Out 2* and *Despicable Me 4* - and don't forget to ask for the discounted Family Ticket! Film fans can also catch up with a wide range of classic movies from directors such as the Coen Brothers and Stanley Kubrick - perfect to revisit on the big screen.

The fun doesn't stop there: we're pleased to announce our Summer Outdoor Cinema season. Enjoy alfresco cinema under the stars as our pop-up screen comes to Bourne Hall in Ewell from Friday 05 July. Bring a blanket for the perfect way to spend a summer evening, with crowd-pleasers like *Mamma Mia*, *Twilight*, and *Back to the Future*!

Find out more at: picturehouses.com/epsom

Clare Binns, Managing Director of Picturehouse Cinemas, says: "We're thrilled to be opening the doors and welcoming the people of Epsom into Picturehouse's 28th cinema - at long last! Our cinemas are shaped by their communities, and with six screens, a bar and a restaurant, this beautiful new venue will be a perfect space for bringing people together to relax, enjoy delicious food and drink, and soak up all the magic of the big screen."

Book a private screening to give your clients, colleagues, or employees a big-screen experience that blows them away, or enjoy a night of gaming in our specially-created event screen.

As part of our nod to local history, we've even dedicated one of our screens to Epsom's first-ever cinema, The Electric Theatre, which opened its doors to the neighbourhood's cinema lovers in 1910. We're proud to continue its legacy by honouring this jewel in the community, where people queued up for hours for silent films, newsreels, and live piano accompaniment.

Epsom Picturehouse Founder Membership is on sale now. The first 1000 customers who purchase an annual Membership for the new cinema will get their names installed in the building, on a specially commissioned Founder Members' Wall. The Memberships will also include an additional 2 free tickets to use when the cinema opens its doors. Learn more and sign up at picturehouses.com/epsom-membership.

About Picturehouse Cinemas:

Picturehouse is an award-winning UK film company incorporating cinema, distribution and home entertainment, formed in 1989 to challenge the multiplex model. Its flagship cinema Picturehouse Central is situated in the heart of London's West End, with the rest of its 28 venues located across England and Scotland.

Picturehouse's architecturally unique cinemas sit in the heart of local neighbourhoods and cater to a diverse and wide-ranging audience. They provide bespoke food and drink offerings across their cafés, bars, restaurants and members' bars. The programme is curated to champion films made for all ages and backgrounds, from quality mainstream film through to foreign-language and documentary features, as well as live event cinema and in-person events and Q&As when available.

Follow the latest news on Ealing Picturehouse on social media:

Twitter: @Epsom_PH

Instagram: @EpsomPicturehouse

Facebook: @EpsomPicturehouse

Picture House press release.

A Surrey council resists green-belt housing

7 June 2024



A contentious plan to build dozens of affordable homes in Surrey was rejected by councillors who prioritized protecting greenbelt land over addressing the area's housing shortage.

Developers had wanted to build up to 135 homes, of which at least half would have been sold at affordable rates, at Grove End between the A30 and A322, in Bagshot.

The outline planning application was rejected by Surrey Heath Borough Council's planning committee on Thursday May 23.

Early indications suggested there would have been at least 68 affordable homes, including 17 set aside as affordable first homes and 51 social affordable or intermediate rented properties. The developers said they would be willing to increase those numbers but the application itself had to be determined on those figures.

The committee was advised that permitting the plans would be a departure from its developing local plan and undermine the council's aim of only developing on brownfield sites in the near future - these are abandoned or underused former industrial land.

Councillor Kevin Thompson (Liberal Democrat, Lightwater) said: "Often we talk about this need for affordable housing and we talk about numbers and we talk about statistics, but I think it's important that we think about what that actually means.

"We have a situation where the people that teach our kids, who look after us in hospital, can't afford to live in this borough and they have to commute in, because we don't have the affordable housing we need. We need to look at this very carefully because [this proposal] does provide us with a significant amount of affordable housing."

The land, between the A322 dual carriageway linking the M3 with Bracknell and Windlesham Golf Club had been considered for redevelopment as the council looked for sites as part of its local plan. It "discontinued" the idea however as the borough could demonstrate it had enough brownfield land to meet its housing targets.

Developers tried to argue the land, next to the A30, was not the idyllic rolling Surrey countryside that people think of as greenbelt because the main road had an "urbanising" affect on the site. Speaking on behalf of the application, the agent added: "The borough unfortunately has a major and sustained issue with failing to meet affordable housing needs as demonstrated."

Cllr Shaun MacDonald, said: "We need to be extremely careful before we give up any green belt. I do accept the comments that this is not the most unique piece of green belt we have but it does form a barrier to the other areas adjacent and if we start allowing creep we will soon have all of the Green Belt gobbled up between Bagshot and north Windlesham. If this space was on the other side of the A322 I suspect we would be having a very different conversation about the feasibility and viability."

Access was another issue raised during the meeting with one Bagshot resident, who had lived in the area for 56 years raising safety issues for any young families who could move there. He said: "This particular site to my mind has a very serious problem attached to it with regards to access."

He said in recent years there had been a need to build 1,752 affordable homes, and so far it's delivering just 39 a year. This development, he argued, would provide two years of affordable housing on a single site.

He added that they needed to look at the quality of green belt in the borough as otherwise there would never been any development.

Image: Bagshot planning (SBC planning portal)

Should the Epsom Derby go back to Wednesday?

7 June 2024



The first Wednesday of June used to be for many an unofficial bank holiday. Office, retail and factory staff parties filled **Epsom Downs** enjoying a day off and the annual **Epsom Derby** flat-race. The Epsom High Street shops used to close.

Of course, this year the Epsom Derby will take place on Saturday 1st June and the shops will remain very much open.

In a bold statement aimed at reviving the charm and prominence of the Epsom Derby, retired jockey **Dane O'Neill** has suggested returning the event to its traditional Wednesday slot. This proposal comes in light of apparent declining attendances and the Derby's diminishing distinctiveness against competitors like Royal Ascot.

O'Neill was speaking to Boyle Sports, who offer the latest odds for the Epsom Derby event, said "I think they have messed things up by moving it around a lot, and as a result has lost its identity for the wider public. We have seen it under several different guises. For the aficionado it is always going to be the Epsom Derby, one of the mainstays of English racing, but they have changed it so much that it has lost its spark."

For much of the 20th century, the Epsom Derby was synonymous with the first Wednesday in June. This midweek scheduling created a unique atmosphere, drawing massive crowds not only for the race but also for a festive day out. Historically, even Parliament would adjourn to allow members to attend, highlighting the event's national significance.

However, in 1995, the race was moved to Saturday in a bid to boost attendances and television ratings, a decision that has since been met with mixed reactions.

The switch to Saturday was intended to increase visibility and attendance, capitalizing on the weekend's leisure time. Yet, O'Neill and other critics argue that this move has diluted the Derby's unique character, making it just another event in a crowded sporting calendar. O'Neill believes that returning to a Wednesday would help restore the Derby's distinctiveness and might reignite public interest by creating a midweek spectacle that stands out on its own.

Epsom's course is renowned for its challenging nature, likened by O'Neill to a rollercoaster ride with its steep climbs and sharp turns, particularly at Tattenham Corner. This distinctive track demands exceptional skill from both horse and jockey, adding to the race's allure and prestige.

The Derby remains a cornerstone of English flat racing, celebrated for its history and the high calibre of competition it attracts.

Do you have a view? Write to our letters page.

Images credit: @EpsomRacecourse

D-Day celebration on Epsom Downs

7 June 2024



A special event to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings is taking place on Epsom Downs on Thursday 6 June, 7-9.30pm. The event is being jointly run by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Go Epsom and Epsom Downs Racecourse.

The D-Day Landings are recognised as the largest naval, air and land operation in history, with more than 150,000 troops landing on five beaches in Normandy and bringing about the liberation of north-west Europe from Nazi occupation. Commemorative events are taking place nationally to remember those who gave their lives during the D-Day Landings.

The public are invited to come down to the Racecourse from 7pm, when the grandstand will open. Refreshments and fish and chips will be on sale, and there will be a range of entertainment on offer. The event is free to attend.

At 9pm, a ceremony will take place at the beacon on Epsom Downs, including a lone piper playing, and at 9.15pm the beacon will be lit. The beacon lighting is part of a national chain of beacons being lit across the country, and along the Normandy coast of France, and is designed to represent the 'light of peace' that emerged out of the darkness of war.

Cllr **Clive Woodbridge**, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee at the council, said:

“The beacon lighting event is an opportunity for the community to come together to honour the thousands of people involved in the D-Day landings. Their brave actions enable us all to enjoy the peace and freedom we have today.

“We look forward to welcoming residents and visitors to this special and important event.”

Karen Pengelly, BID Manager at Go Epsom, said:

“Epsom’s beacon was erected two years ago to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. It is an absolute honour to be involved in the D-Day 80th commemoration. Epsom, just like many other places, played an active part in World War 2; this is our chance to remember the sacrifices made by so many.”

Tom Sammes, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said:

“We are honoured and delighted to be a part of the D-Day 80th commemoration. The racecourse was a key part of Epsom’s World War 2 response and we look forward to welcoming the community to remember the brave personnel who risked their lives for freedom and peace.”

Background image credit Expert Infantry CC BY 2.0 DEED

Epsom Derby week read?

7 June 2024



A tale of triumph and tragedy, dreams and disasters aptly describes the life of **Bernard Dillon**, as detailed in a new book by **Stephen Fernane**. This captivating biography delves into the extraordinary journey of Dillon, who won the prestigious **Epsom Derby** in 1910 on **Lemberg**. The 2024 Epsom Derby takes place on Saturday 1st June.



Dillon on 1910 Derby winner Lemberg Agence Rol - Gallica Digital Library Public Domain

For the first time since Bernard’s death in 1941, a book captures his astonishing rise to success and his subsequent fall from grace due to heavy drinking. From a talented apprentice to a shrewd professional, Bernard Dillon won the Epsom Derby and the Grand Prix de Paris, epitomizing a life of sporting triumph and human tragedy.

In 1901, at the tender age of thirteen, Bernard left Kerry with dreams of becoming a jockey in England. Remarkably, within three years, he had become the most popular sporting personality in both Britain and Ireland.

Stephen Fernane reveals that his fascination with Bernard’s sporting achievements and the overshadowing sadness of his later years inspired him to write this book. The fact that Bernard’s story is not widely known also motivated him.

As reported in the Irish Independent on 25th May the author said;

“Discovering Bernard’s career and learning about all he achieved is what inspired me to write it. The inner demons that led to his demise in later life are just as fascinating. To think that very little is known about someone as colourful and complex as Bernard Dillon is astonishing,” Stephen said.

The book, titled *The Life and Times of Bernard Dillon: The Narie that Won the Derby*, nods to Bernard’s birthplace at Caherina in Strand Road, Tralee, in 1887.

“I want to bring Bernard home for the book launch. To bring his story back to where it all started, and present it to people who might not know about him. That is the best tribute I can give him. Bernard is a ‘Narie’ for sure, which is why the Kerins O’Rahilly’s GAA Club is the appropriate venue. It’s his spiritual home as he was born only a few yards from the clubhouse,” Stephen explained.

Bernard Dillon’s journey from 1901 to 1911 was anything but smooth as he grappled with celebrity and adversity. Sadly, his downfall included domestic abuse and the mistreatment of his wife, the famous music hall artist Marie Lloyd.

Bernard and Marie met in 1905 and began a turbulent relationship. They were Edwardian England’s first celebrity couple, with Marie eighteen years older than Bernard. However, notoriety came at a cost. Bernard’s downfall began when he lost his jockey’s licence in 1913 over gambling allegations, marking the end of his reputation as a superstar.

Stephen believes it was essential to write Bernard’s story due to the fragmented way it exists in the archives. With Marie Lloyd being the more famous personality, information about Bernard’s life is usually viewed through the lens of Marie’s biographers rather than Bernard’s perspective.

“He wrote his memoir in 1922 which has largely been ignored until now. While he does not explain the more violent side to his personality in the memoir, I was able to solve this by reading through many court sittings he appeared before,” Stephen said.

“Even though the court charges are upsetting to read, my aim is to show Bernard’s opposing sides – not just him as a famous jockey. There are examples of closeness and intimacy between the couple that have never been written about before now,” he added.

“There is a chapter about Bernard and Marie being incarcerated at Ellis Island in 1913 because they were unmarried. It’s staggering to imagine two of the most famous people in Edwardian England being detained with hundreds of immigrants.

“They were the Posh and Becks of their time, for sure. As for Bernard’s active service during WWI, a judge accused him of engaging in more violence in London than on the Western Front! Nothing was ever straightforward in Bernard’s life from the time he left Tralee in short pants,” Stephen explained.

Stephen sums up Bernard’s life as ‘totally unorthodox’ and emphasizes that the book is about more than just horseracing.

“I wouldn’t want anyone to get the impression the book is solely about horses. Significant though they are in Bernard’s life, there is an undertone to the book that symbolizes a tragic love story between two people trying to deal with fame and infamy,” he said.

“This is a global story that started in a quiet Kerry street and extended to far-off places like America, South Africa, and the Middle East. I just felt it was time for Bernard’s story to be told in his own words. I think the book is fair to him and shows that no matter how successful we are in life, we are vulnerable to self-destruction,” Stephen said.

The Life and Times of Bernard Dillon: The Narie that Won the Derby will be launched on June 6.

The book is priced at €15 and is available at www.buythebook.ie/bernarddillon.

Top image: By Leslie Ward – Published in Vanity Fair, 12 September 1906, as “Men of the Day” Number 1031. Public Domain and background By Hywel Williams, CC BY-SA 2.0