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

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Ewell Teachers who go further awarded

19 June 2024



The Creative Media Teaching Team at Nescot college in Ewell, Surrey, has been recognised with a Silver Award for **Further Education Team of the Year** in the Pearson National Teaching Awards. Now in the running for the coveted Gold Award, the team was selected from thousands of Pearson award nominees due to its inspirational approach. The tutors not only teach students skills for a career working in the media, but also shape young lives by partnering with charities and weaving issues like inclusion, mental health and awareness raising into their projects.

Recognising a lack of work experience opportunities for students, the Creative Media Teaching Team has partnered with charities to create bespoke projects. This provides students with hands on experience and increases the reach and impact of the charities involved. The team have initiated projects on Black History with The Black Curriculum, on suicide in young men with Olly's Future and on healthy relationships with Everyone's Invited. Students have developed videos on poems about race, have created animated films on mental health awareness and have produced video stills about toxic masculinity. The charities involved use these resources across social media and within education programmes to boost awareness and make a 'real life' difference.

Julie Kapsalis, CEO and Principal at Nescot said "I'm so proud of the Media Teaching Team, who consistently produce exciting, challenging, and impactful projects. They've been creative about getting Nescot students work experience and have worked hard to embed and champion inclusion in their work. Those on the course are offered real world, credible experience which will help them when they move into the workplace. The team are also moulding young people who understand their community, have empathy, speak up and feel heard. I hope they'll clinch the Gold Award later this year – it would be so well deserved."

This isn't the first award the team has received. They have an enviable tally of success at the World Skills Awards over the last decade – 5 Gold (including 2023), 2 Silver and 2 Bronze awards – a credit to their commitment, hard work, and dedication to their students.

The National Teaching Award announcement comes as students, schools and colleges across the UK are today paying tribute to all those who work in education to mark National Thank a Teacher Day, which celebrates the whole education community and shines a light on the exceptional impact they have on shaping young lives.

Sharon Hague, Managing Director of School Assessment & Qualifications at Pearson UK, said

"We're delighted to recognise this year's Silver Award winners on their outstanding achievements. The contributions they make and the impact they have on young people's lives every day is truly exceptional. We're extremely proud to support the National Teaching Awards and mark the achievements of all our very worthy winners. Thank you for your continued work and congratulations!!"

National Thank a Teacher Day and the Pearson National Teaching Awards are run by the Teaching Awards Trust, an independent charity established over 25 years ago to celebrate the transformative impact of education, shining a spotlight on the pivotal roles teachers, support staff, colleges, schools and early years educators play in inspiring young people, every single day.

Two antidotes to politics coming up in Epsom

19 June 2024

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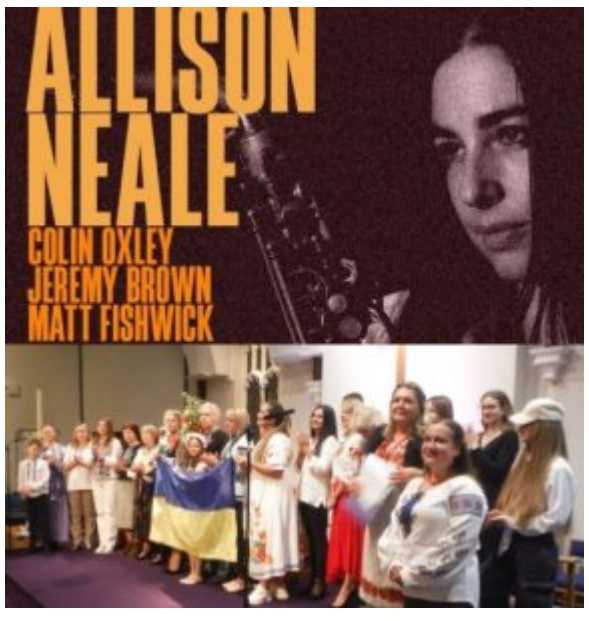

Need a welcome break from election campaigning, canvassing and TV debate political bickering?

In the heart of Epsom classy professional live jazz comes to the Comrades Club, The Parade Epsom on Thursday 27th June at 7.30pm. Epsom Jazz Club presents Allison Neale and an evening of West Coast jazz with Colin Oxley, Jeremy Brown and Matt Fishwick. Click here for details. Flat rate ticket price of £20 buys you a comfortable seat at a cabaret table and bar. Compares with £30 for Ronnie Scotts and you don't have to commute to London.

On Saturday 29th June at the Epsom Methodist Church an evening of Ukrainian music: brass ensemble, violinist, opera singer and Ukrainian refugee choir and more. Entry is FREE. The evening opens at 6pm with a finger buffet (you may bring a plate to share) and the entertainment begins at 7pm ending about 8.30pm. Come and support professional Ukrainian musicians and enjoy first class music. Ashley Road, Epsom. Epsom Music (a charity) comes together with partner local charities The Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network and Surrey Stands With Ukraine in organising and supporting this event.

King's Gongs for Surrey leaders

19 June 2024



Tim Oliver, Conservative Leader of Surrey County Council and **Rachael Wardell**, Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning at Surrey County Council have both been awarded OBEs in The King's Birthday Honours list 2024. Mr Oliver receives his Honour as Councillor and Leader for services to Local Government, and Rachael Wardell for services to children's social care.

Commenting on his Honour, Tim Oliver said: *"I'm delighted that the King recognises so many people's contribution to public service in this way, and it's an honour to receive an award. During the last six years as Leader of Surrey County Council nothing could have been achieved without the dedication and skill of those colleagues who put public service at the heart of everything they do. So, I'd like to say a big thank you to all those who have supported me, and to the people of Surrey who I've had the privilege of leading in this great county."*

Commenting on her Honour, Rachael Wardell said: "*I was pleased and touched to be honoured in this way. As with any kind of public service, any of the achievements or successes attributed to me are really the work of dozens, if not hundreds of people, pulling together in the interests of children and their families, so I am grateful to all the teams I have been privileged to work with over the years whose skills and strengths are reflected in this recognition*."

Joanna Killian, Chief Executive of the LGA and former Chief Executive of Surrey County Council, said: *"I'm delighted to see that Tim has been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours. That recognition is hugely deserving for an exemplary and dedicated public servant. Tim is a shining example of the very best of local government leadership."*

"I'm also hugely proud of Rachael Wardell to be honoured with an OBE. Rachael has always been totally focused on delivering the very best for children under her care and Surrey is lucky to have such a strong and skilled Director of Children's Services."

In relation to Rachael's OBE, Michael Coughlin, Interim Chief Executive of Surrey County Council said: "*On behalf of everyone at Surrey County Council, I would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Rachael. Her exceptional leadership and dedication to public service throughout her career has been unwavering.*

"*Rachael has played a critical role in the lives of children in a number of Councils, including at Surrey, which has been recognised in the award of this thoroughly deserved OBE in the King's Birthday Honours.*

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In relation to Tim's OBE, Simon Edwards, Chief Executive of the County Councils Network (CCN) said: *"On behalf of the County Councils Network, I would like to congratulate Tim on this richly deserved honour; a recognition of his many achievements in a long career in local government.*

"Having served on both Elmbridge Borough Council and Surrey County Council – becoming leader in 2017 – Tim has worked tirelessly to champion Surrey for over two decades. As chairman of the County Councils Network since 2021, Tim has been a strong advocate for improving local services for the 26m people who live in county and rural areas."

Tim Oliver career history
Tim has been an Elmbridge Borough or Surrey County councillor for nearly 25 years. He took on the role of leader of Surrey County Council in 2018 at a challenging time for the organisation and embarked on a wholescale transformation project with the Chief Executive that has provided financial stability, leadership across Surrey and had a clear positive impact on residents.

Formerly CEO and then Deputy Chairman of a legal and professional services business, Tim was extensively involved in driving operational delivery and business development. He is a qualified solicitor and the author of three legal text books.

He has held many non-executive roles including on a wide range of not-for-profit boards. Tim is actively involved in the Charity sector as Vice President and previous Chair of Shooting Star Children's Hospices and Chair of the Weybridge Land Charity.

He is currently the Chair of the County Councils Network and Chair of the Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board.

Rachael Wardell career history
Rachael Wardell has held the position of Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning at Surrey County Council since 2020 and is currently also the Vice President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS). In addition, Rachael is the Executive Director sponsor for Surrey County Council's internal network for ethnically diverse staff.

Rachael has dedicated her career to helping those most in need with nearly 30 years of public service, having previously served as Director of Children's Services in the London Borough of Merton, and as both Director of Children's Services and Director of Adult Social Services at West Berkshire Council, and she also held posts at Wokingham Borough Council and Ofsted. Rachael's background in children's services began in Early Years inspection and regulation and one of her happy places will always be a daycare setting or a reception classroom.

Before becoming Vice President of ADCS in 2024, Rachael, at various times, was also a Board Member/Trustee of The Staff College, Skills for Care and Become (the charity for children in care and young care leavers).

During her time at Surrey County Council, Rachael has driven significant improvement in children's services which was recognised by Ofsted in a recent focused visit. Balancing the other professional demands on her, Rachael spends as much time as possible meeting children, families, schools and staff to hear their experiences and shape services with their best interests and outcomes at heart.

Image: Buckingham Palace licence details Tim Oliver and Rachael Wardell SCC

Council unaware it was Mental Health Awareness Week?

19 June 2024



Former **Epsom and Ewell** Mayor **Rob Geleit** (Labour Court) has accused the Council of removing references to his schizophrenia from his final speech. Cllr Geleit argues that the action reflects prejudice against mental health issues and constitutes improper censorship. The occasion was the Annual Mayor making meeting of the Full Council on Tuesday 14th May. Notably this was during **Mental Health Awareness Week**.

In an interview with the **Epsom and Ewell Times**, Mr Geleit revealed that he had planned to end his speech by saying, "It has been an honour and privilege to serve as The Worshipful The Mayor Cllr Rob Geleit for the past year. Schizophrenia or no schizophrenia. If you are all up for it, perhaps we could vote me in for another year?"

However, this section was removed. Mr Geleit stated that he was informed of the change by Mr **Piero Ionta**, Head of

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Legal and Monitoring Officer, prior to the meeting.

Mr Geleit added that he had already mentioned his schizophrenia in his acceptance speech when he was made Mayor. He stated he believes that while the visibility of mental health issues has improved, chronic mental health problems remain a taboo subject.

He was not particularly surprised by this, as he has become accustomed to such situations. However, he is now working with his leadership team to file a formal complaint against the conduct of a council officer. He hopes the complaint will result in an apology and assurances that such incidents will not happen again.

In response to these allegations, a council spokesperson stated, “In the course of preparing for council meetings where the Mayor will make a speech, it is the normal course of business for officers and the Mayor to discuss speech content, and for officers to offer any advice and guidance, which is what happened on this occasion. Officers do not decide on any changes to the speech, they purely advise, and it is the Mayor’s ultimate decision on whether to act on the advice. Officers do not recognise the conversation had in this instance as being reflective of the allegation that has been made.”

The council also further emphasised its commitment to mental health issues: “The council is aware that poor mental health is a big challenge for many of our residents. As a result, the council has made mental health the top priority in our work with our NHS colleagues in the Epsom and Ewell Neighbourhood Board. We also have a cohort of trained Mental Health First Aiders within the council to assist and support our own staff and councillors.”

Councillor **Chris Ames** (Labour Court) expressed strong disapproval of the incident, stating, “The removal of the reference to schizophrenia was a shocking and wholly outdated expression of the type of stigma and prejudice that many of us have worked to move on from. It was also totally outrageous censorship of an elected official who has served the Borough with dignity and distinction during his year as Mayor.”

Despite these challenges, Mr Geleit remains confident and hopeful about the future. He revealed that he will continue to contest for the West Ewell Division of Surrey County Council and that his experience as Mayor has inspired new ambitions to join Parliament.

Image – Cllr. Robert Geleit at the Derby when Mayor of Epsom and Ewell.

Cleanliness is next to Godliness

19 June 2024



On Sunday, June 9th, around 30 volunteers from ASEZ WAO UK, a local young adult volunteer group inspired by the World Mission Society Church of God in Epsom, gathered to clean along the stream at Longmead Road. The event, joined by Howard Gregory, Chairman of the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board, aimed to prevent plastic pollution in local waterways.

This litter pick was part of the group’s Blue Ocean campaign, which strives to reduce pollution in streams, rivers, beaches, and seas. In just two hours, the volunteers collected a total of 37 bags of litter, removing mainly plastics to prevent them from entering the waterways. Passersby at Longmead Road were pleased and cheered the volunteers, expressing their gratitude.

ASEZ WAO UK conducts cleanups like this almost monthly, fostering a positive mindset and a sense of community.

The World Mission Society Church of God, located on East Street in Epsom, is a global church with over 7,500 branches and approximately 3.5 million members. The church teaches about God the Father and God the Mother through the Bible.

The group remains committed to keeping the waterways in Surrey plastic-free.

ASEZ WAO UK

Miniature railway set to get bigger

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There will be a new train line coming to Surrey – for enthusiasts, engineers and eager families looking for a day out.

The Surrey Society of Model Engineers has been given planning permission for a revised inner track complete with a new bridge across a man made pond.

The site, in green belt on Fetcham Springs, Mill Lane, just outside Leatherhead, has long been established as a model railway.

It was considered acceptable for development because it was being used for outdoor recreation and the pond would add to the biodiversity of the area.

Councillor Chris Hunt said: “I think this is an excellent proposal and the policy grounds for approving it are very clear.

“My hope will be that the pond is maintained.

“As you might know we’ve had some issues with the main pond in Ashtead in terms of some of the species were too aggressively growing and led to a loss of biodiversity in the end until it was cleaned out.

“Perhaps if there were to be an extra informative about the maintenance of the pond would be just as important?

“Planting is a condition already – but obviously the engineers might not be biodiversity experts and maybe they could approach the council for some hints on long-term care for the pond. – or Surrey Wildlife Trust?”

Leatherhead Miniature Railway is run as a non-profit, members’ club, and “unites those with interests in model and miniature engineering, particularly but not exclusively trains” planning documents presented to Mole Valley District Council’s Wednesday June 5 planning committee read.

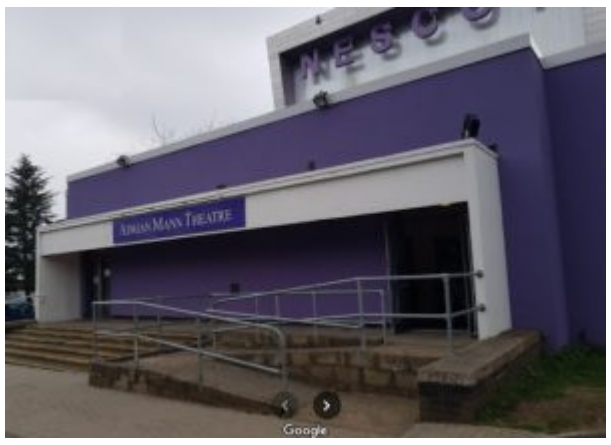
The club has about 11 open days this year usually falling on Sundays and Bank Holidays, including a Santa weekend in December.

One of the open days is in association with the fire station open day. The fire station is adjacent to the site, and train rides take visitors to and from the fire station open day.

Tickets are sold for rides on the miniature trains at £2 per ride.

Epsom and Ewell General Election Public Hustings

19 June 2024



Epsom and Ewell Times, in collaboration with NESCOT, will host a public hustings for local voters. Your opportunity to question Parliamentary Candidates on Wednesday 26th June at 7pm. The hustings will be held in the Adrian Mann Theatre, NESCOT, Reigate Road, Ewell, Epsom.

Campaign to save Ewell Village’s Glyn Hall

19 June 2024

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Tucked away in the heart of **Ewell Village** is **Glyn Hall**, a not-for-profit community space providing a venue for local organisations, including those linked to the arts, music and education. Glyn Hall also caters for social gatherings, society meetings, birthday parties and exercise classes for all generations. Located at 3a Cheam Road in Ewell Village, Glyn Hall has served the local community for over a century.

The precise age of Glyn Hall is not known but it is thought to have been built between 1866 and 1894. Archived records show that during this time **Sir Arthur Glyn** had a small wooden building built for his daughter, **Margaret Henrietta Glyn** to practice playing her music in and it is thought that this building was the original to the little green hut that now stands at 3a Cheam Road.

Margaret Henrietta Glyn, the last member of Ewell's Glyn dynasty and a champion of conservation of the local area's heritage, bequeathed Glyn Hall, which had been used by the Adult Education movement since the 1920s to the people of Ewell Village just before she died in 1946.

Mike Ralph, a retired blacksmith from Ewell Village knows Glyn Hall well and has commented as follows:

'My parents and grandparents were very involved with The Adult School at Glyn Hall until the 1960s. They held social events such as beetle-drives and whist-drives. My father would give talks about blacksmithing and his great passion, astrology. The family also arranged for other speakers to present at The Adult School.'

Lovingly looked after by volunteers, Glyn Hall has played a key role in local life ever since it was generously gifted to the village, but despite the best endeavours of the volunteers, the building has now sadly reached the end of its long life.

Determined to stop the hall being sold to developers and the space irretrievably lost, a new group of volunteers has stepped in to save the much-loved community hub that is as original and independent as the area it serves.

Unlike other halls in the area, Glyn Hall is not a religious or a commercial enterprise, but a community hall available 365 days of the year for members of the community to use and enjoy for a minimal fee.



Despite the age-related problems with the current structure, Glyn Hall is now set for an exciting new chapter, as

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preparations are made to replace the original structure with a modern, sustainable and fit-for-purpose design that is built for the future, whilst respectfully honouring the past. Boasting a large hall, kitchen facilities and meeting space, the new not-for-profit venue will provide the backdrop for a range of local gatherings – from social clubs and society meetings to exercise classes and birthday parties.

Having worked tirelessly to secure planning permission and with £90k in funding already in the bank, the volunteer trustees must now raise a further £300k to construct the new hall and are appealing to the public for donations.

Every donation received by the volunteers overseeing the project takes them one step closer to realising their dream of creating a space where the community can meet and make memories for generations to come. The names of financial donors will be displayed inside the new building unless they wish to remain anonymous.

Margaret Glyn left a precious gift to the people of Ewell that the volunteers are working hard to replace in a way that she would have approved of. The volunteers believe that there is a duty to protect the space occupied by Glyn Hall, thereby retaining its place at the heart of the community and extending its legacy for the future.

To find out more about the history, project and fundraising, please visit www.glynhallewell.co.uk.

Ewell Village Hall Registered Charity No: 305031

Local college to drive student success

19 June 2024



From September, Nescot College in Ewell, Surrey is offering a new course on Motorsport Vehicle Maintenance and Repair with spaces still available for school leavers aged 16 – 19. An element of the course includes the preparation and inspection of a real-life Nescot racing car which will be entering high profile racing events around the UK. Student mechanics will attend track days at circuits like Brands Hatch, Donington Park and Silverstone to experience motorsport in action and keep the car in top condition.

The one-year qualification – the Institute of Motor Industry Diploma in Motorsport Vehicle Maintenance and Repair – is an addition to Nescot's well-established Motor Vehicle Department. It's a full-time course which involves a combination of practical experience and theory. Students learn on several vehicles in the college workshop including the racing car, and study systems such as the brakes, engine and suspension.

The course has been developed by a teaching team with a track record of success in national motorsport competitions. Students from other departments such as engineering, media, sport, and hospitality will also be able to take part in the competitions, contributing their own skills and forming a multidisciplinary motor racing team.

Nescot will enter their team, driver and car into the Student Motorsport Challenge which is embedded into the British Racing & Sports Car Club Nankang Tyres City Car Cup. The season typically consists of 7 race events which include 17 races. Students race against other schools, colleges and universities in the Challenge and also compete against the professional teams and drivers in the City Car Cup. Students will be responsible for the smooth running of the car and will attend racing circuits to experience motorsport, learn on the job and network.

George Keith, Head of Curriculum for Construction, Trades and Green Technology at Nescot said "If you want to be a mechanic or have an interest in other roles in motorsport, then this course will be right up your street. You get hands on experience in the workshop, and then at the racetrack. You'll be making our Nescot race car the best it can be, while getting work-ready and learning vital skills for a career, post-college. We still have some spaces available, so why not sign up and be a key part of our racing team?"

Julie Kapsalis, CEO and Principal at Nescot said "We're keen to offer courses on things that young people are passionate about and wherever possible, help them find ways to turn those interests into careers that they'll love. This is a perfect example, mixing motorsport with mechanics to create an exciting course which can set them up for a great career. I can't wait to see Nescot's racing car in action, and it will be amazing knowing that our students got it to the start line, with their new skills, knowledge and hard work. Then it's just fingers crossed for a win!"

Local businesses are being encouraged to support or partner with the Nescot race team. Sponsors already on board include LKQ Euro Car parts (which has donated new vehicle parts for the build) and Bossdog vehicle wrapping in Redhill (which has agreed to carry out the wrap at a discounted price). Sponsors not only support young people's education but may also have the opportunity to get their logo on the race car and attend motorsport events. Businesses interested in finding out more, can contact George Keith on gkeith@nescot.ac.uk or call 0208 394 1731, extension 3136.

Entry requirements for the course are 4 GCSEs grade 9-3 (A*- D) that includes English grade 3 and Maths grade 4. Applicants must have a strong interest in the Motorsport industry. Following completion of the course, a successful

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student with this qualification may have the opportunity to attain a related Higher Education qualification or be employed as an apprentice within the Motor or Motorsport industry.

To find out more about the Motorsport course, call 020 8394 3038, visit www.nescot.ac.uk or email adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk. More information on the motorsport competition Nescot is taking part in can be found at www.studentmotorsport.com

Nescot is holding a Summer Fair, where prospective students can visit the college and see the facilities. This is taking place on Saturday 15th June 2024, 10.00am – 2.00pm.

Credit for image: Student Motorsport

Reform candidate for Epsom and Ewell

19 June 2024



Epsom and Ewell Times is publishing the appeals of the Parliamentary Candidates standing in the General Election for the constituency of Epsom and Ewell. This is the first from **Reform** candidate **Mayuran Senthilnathan**.

An overwhelming Labour majority is set to be announced on July 4th. If Sunak's promises of a quadruple lock on pensions and more tax cuts sound enticing, rest assured none of us will be experiencing them. As I write this, average polling suggests Reform UK is neck and neck with the Conservatives, with Reform about to overtake any day now. The pressing question is not who we want in power, but rather who is going to be an effective opposition?

While Reform UK's success can be largely attributed to the 'Farage effect' it is rooted in the abject failure of the Tories. When my parents came to this country from Sri Lanka in the early 1980s, net immigration was in the tens of thousands. They invested heavily in my education which led to me study dentistry at King's College. I went on to get my own practice, working within the NHS for almost twenty years. No doubt my success is due to the hard work of my parents, but it was also due to the systems which were in place in this great country. I am a product of the British dream. A dream which I believe no longer exists for the people of this country. In short nothing works anymore.

From police turning a blind eye to petty crime, to record waiting lists on the NHS. From the highest tax burden since the 1940s, to soaring rents and house prices, Britain is definitively broken. This is without addressing the elephant in the room which all other parties refuse to properly acknowledge.

Net immigration by December 2022 was three quarters of a million, 2023 saw a figure of 685,000 (likely to be revised up). We are effectively importing a city larger than Manchester every year, all under successive Conservative governments which promised to slash numbers to the tens of thousands. People are now starting to draw a link between the strain on public services, roads, schools, GPs, hospitals and the amount of people in this country. Yes, birth rates are falling, everybody understands workers are needed in the NHS and social care as well as other sectors, but these numbers are simply breathtaking. While GDP figures go up as a whole, GDP per capita is declining. In other words the economy is growing but we are getting poorer. Within the British psyche is the deeper issue of culture. George Galloway has aptly highlighted obvious sectarian divides, by successively campaigning exclusively on the Gaza conflict. There is a growing sense that we no longer live in a cohesive society. This is hardly surprising. The influx of this many people in such a short time makes the prospect of integration an impossibility. It is well worth noting – it takes centuries to build a culture but it takes just a couple of decades to destroy it.

In addition under the management of both Labour and Tories we have increasingly seen the ideological capture of politics. Nowhere is this best illustrated than in the pursuit of net zero carbon emissions. While China churns out two new coal power stations per week and pumps out nearly 30% of the world's emissions, the UK is responsible for just 1%. Which means even if the UK reaches its net zero target, it would have almost no impact on the planet. In the pursuit of this ideological goal we are forcing the nation to pay more for its energy. Renewables are unreliable which is why fossil fuelled energy is imported to meet our

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country's needs. Industries which would have flourished on our shores have been forced abroad. But absurdly we end up buying back the products they make at higher prices- all so our government can wear the net zero badge of honour.

All this and I still have not mentioned the 'boats'.

What is the Answer?

Reform UK's manifesto sounds revolutionary but is actually a set of sane policies amidst an insane political landscape.

The national debt is eye-watering (£2.7 trillion). To raise funds we would action things like stopping the Bank of England paying voluntary interest payments on quantitative easing reserves (£35 billion), scrap net zero subsidies (£30 billion), cut government waste and quangos (£50 billion) and introduce the employer's immigration tax (£4 billion). This would allow us to raise the tax threshold to £20,000, making work pay. It would also grant space to further cut corporation tax and VAT. The approach would permit the implementation of a French-style health service that slashes waiting times and delivers better outcomes for all. A net-zero immigration model would be introduced that weans the economy off the addiction to cheap unskilled labour from abroad, to a high-skilled, high wage work force. This would bring the numbers down to an acceptable level tailored to the needs of the country. Finally we have a targeted six point plan to stop the boats which includes leaving the ECHR.

Once again we can become a serious country.

If you agree with the case, a vote for the Conservatives or Liberal Democrats is a wasted one. Let me explain. Labour have won, which will leave a decimated Tory party. Once Nigel Farage gets a seat into Parliament, he will naturally become the voice against Labour. The country is behind him and the party (just see what he has achieved in a week). The more Reform UK seats we win or indeed the more we rise in the polls, the quicker centre-right politics will realign. Over the next parliament, more and more of the remaining Conservative MPs will be compelled to defect to Reform UK. By 2029 our party will be the opposition ready to govern the nation. This is the 6-year master plan.

This is how we break the Tory-Labour deadlock. This is how we rally against a failed establishment. This is how we can get our country back. Join the people's revolt.

Vote Reform UK.

The other candidates:

Conservative who promises to serve "with integrity"

The Green promises

A True and Fair view of the world

Lib Dems' Helen Maguire – "Getting Things Done"

Mark my words for Labour candidate

First school art works for Surrey's trees

19 June 2024



An exciting competition kicked off across Surrey on the 1st June to encourage young people to celebrate ancient trees and have their artwork featured in a new children's book, 'The Thousand Year Tree'. Children aged between 4 and 11 years are encouraged to head to their local Surrey library to pick up a template and create artwork for the inside covers, known as 'end papers' of the new book. Any art medium can be used, and artwork should be themed around trees and nature.

As England's most wooded county, Surrey is home to some of our nation's oldest trees, many are over one thousand years old. To celebrate these trees, local author Lucy Reynolds and illustrator Katie Hickey, are working with a group of children from Weyfield Primary Academy in Guildford. They have already been involved in a series of creative workshops, school assemblies and educational visits to Newlands Corner in the Surrey Hills National Landscape, to see the ancient yew trees. The children, guided by the experts will create poems and timelines charting the history of ancient trees which will culminate in the creation of a captivating Children's Book. The book will be distributed across all 52 of Surrey's

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libraries as well as through additional local schools, inviting readers of all ages to learn about ancient trees and how to safeguard their future.

Gordon Jackson, Chairman of the Surrey Hills Society said: "*The Surrey Hills Society is delighted to be involved in this project, supported by a grant from the Surrey Hills Access for All fund. We are extremely grateful for the promotional support of the Surrey Library network. Being a part of the process of creating the book with both Lucy and Katie is inspirational and we very much look forward to seeing the final literary masterpiece. The Society is committed to encouraging people of all ages and abilities to discover and enjoy the Surrey Hills and we are proud to help Surrey's children learn so much about our ancient trees and surrounding countryside.*"

Carolyn McKenzie, Director of Environment at Surrey County Council said: "*With creativity, education, and community spirit at its core, this project not only celebrates Surrey's ancient trees but also fosters a deeper connection between young minds and the natural world, paving the way for a future generation of environmental stewards. This project highlights even more the importance of Surrey's tree planting scheme, which will plant 1.2 million trees by 2030, the trees of today will become the ancient trees of the future leaving a lasting legacy.*"

Susan Wills MBE Assistant Director Arts, Culture, Heritage and Libraries at Surrey County Council said: "*What a wonderful opportunity for children to take part in a creative reading project that encourages learning about nature and Surrey's ancient trees. Surrey is England's most wooded county and this project is a wonderful opportunity to educate children in the vital role trees play, from providing habitats for wildlife to absorbing carbon dioxide! All fifty-two of our Surrey Libraries are taking part so wish all the participants the best of luck!*".

The competition runs from 1 June to 4 September and templates can be collected and returned to any Surrey Library. Further details and terms and conditions are available on the Surrey Hills Society website, click here to find out how you can get involved..

The project is a collaborative effort between the Surrey Hills Society, Surrey Hills National Landscape, Surrey County Council, author Lucy Reynolds, illustrator Katie Hickey, Guildford Book Festival and The Old Dungate Press. With thanks to funding from the Surrey Hills Access for All fund, enabling everyone to love and protect Surrey's National Landscape.

Epsom author thinks the unthinkable

19 June 2024



Published on 28th May 2024, **The Unthinkable Truth** by **Epsom** based author **Yona Bouskila** is a gripping thriller that delves into the depths of the human mind and explores how real and seemingly innocent scientific discoveries can spiral into global dystopia.

With the authorities set to rob people of their freedom of choice, in order to create a perfectly obedient and mindless society, The Unthinkable Truth questions whether free will is simply an illusion, and whether our own human nature could be the catalyst to our downfall.

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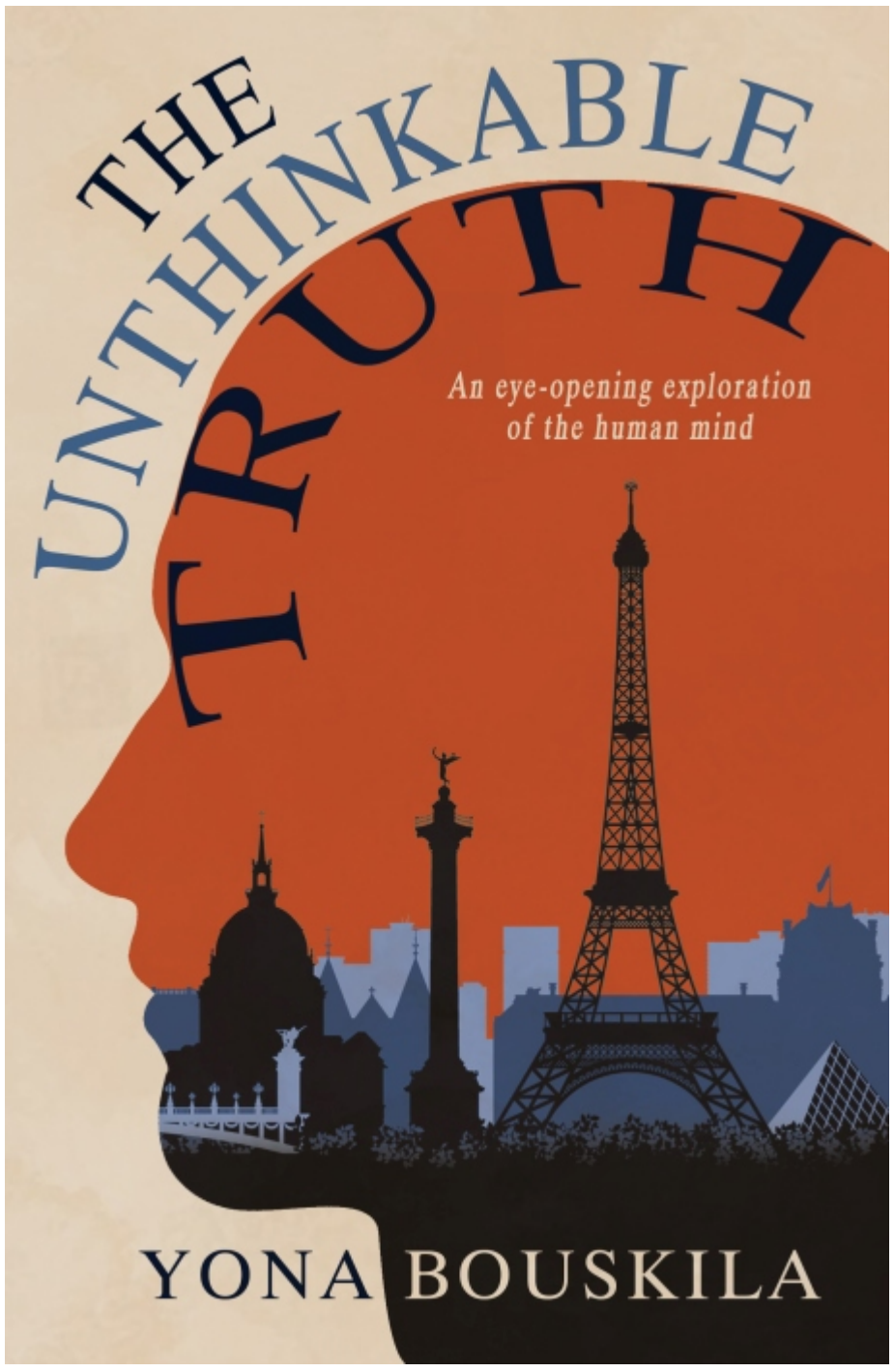

Making use of his extensive background in neuroscience, the author expertly transports us into a world where a team of scientists, other experts and a characterful AI are tasked with solving the most baffling question about the human mind, creating a gripping narrative that will appeal to all.

Yona Bouskila ticks all the boxes for fans of both thrillers and intellectually stimulating reads, but most importantly, readers aren't required to know the first thing about science to enjoy his compelling and thought-provoking novel.

In the hope of distracting himself from his heartache, George Bennet, a mild-mannered professor of theoretical physics, accepts an invitation by UNESCO to join an eclectic multidisciplinary team of experts, tasked with unravelling the enigma of the human mind.

As this seemingly innocent academic investigation twists and turns, George suspects that they are being duped into aiding a sinister plan, which threatens to shatter the very foundations of society. When the unthinkable truth emerges as their final conclusion, and the plan is exposed, George and the team must be silenced. No matter the cost.

What is the unthinkable truth? Will George survive to reveal it? Only one thing is certain: humanity will never be the same.

Drawing on solid scientific research, The Unthinkable Truth is a compelling and intricate thriller that will make readers question their own human nature.

A scientist by training, a thinker by nature, and an author by passion, Yona Bouskila has a particular fascination with the human mind in all its aspects. This enduring passion, together with his penchant for thrillers, served as the driving force behind his novel, The Unthinkable Truth, which he describes as a thought-provoking thriller that culminates in an eye-opening revelation on the mind and humanity. He studied biology (with philosophy) and received a PhD in neuroscience from UCLA.

He is involved in medical research and development. Before that, he conducted brain research at several institutions in the US and Europe. He writes short stories, often with a humorous slant, and his debut novel will be published in May 2024. He lives in Epsom with his wife and pets, where he enjoys the Surrey countryside and contemplating life.

A book promotion will end on 10th June (https://www.amazon.co.uk/Unthinkable-Truth-Yona-Bouskila-ebook/dp/B0CW1N2JTJ)

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A beacon of hope in a troubled world?

19 June 2024



6th June 2024 marked 80 years since D-Day. The massive allied military campaign that signaled the beginning of the end of Nazi tyranny in Western Europe.

The Borough of **Epsom and Ewell** came together on Epsom Downs to celebrate this momentous day. Events organised by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, the Epsom branch of the Royal British Legion and Epsom Bid Ltd honoured the ultimate sacrifices of a then young generation of servicemen.

About 1500 residents flocked to the Downs, enjoying fish and chips while entertained by a choir and the **Epsom and Ewell Silver Band**. The Grandstand exhibited a gallery of photographs of Epsom and Ewell in wartime. The exhibition will be transferred to Bourne Hall in Ewell in due course.

The Worshipful Mayor of Epsom and Ewell Cllr. **Steve Bridger** addressed the assembled, paying tribute to the fallen and survivors of the historic day. Just before 9.15pm the Mayor lit the great Beacon at the viewpoint car park on Grandstand Road.

Related reports:

D-Day celebration on Epsom Downs

Epsom Sports Club £1 million boost

19 June 2024



Epsom Sports Club has been awarded £1 million in funding by Surrey County Council towards constructing a new clubhouse as part of the YourFundSurrey Large Community scheme.

The clubhouse will open up new exterior and interior spaces, creating a shared space in the heart of the community for a wide range of activities, with aims to support new participants to become active, particularly those from inactive and under-represented groups. The clubhouse will be built at Epsom Sports Club's sports facilities space in **Old Schools Lane in Ewell**, where a range of sports and activities already take place such as cricket, croquet, hockey and tennis – to name a few.

As a charity that promotes active lifestyles and community recreation for Epsom and Ewell residents, providing facilities for sports, recreation and other leisure activities, the Sports Club caters to all ages and abilities. Around 800 young people regularly participate in these sports. Walking cricket and hockey
have been recently introduced for older members and a disability hockey group is also affiliated with the club.

Planning permission has been granted for a fully accessible single-storey building which will hold four changing rooms, a clubroom for indoor activities, a kitchen and a bar for both participants and spectators.
Simon Everest, one of Epsom Sports Club's Directors, said: "The facility will be open to local community groups to hire and we anticipate that this will be of huge benefit to the Borough."

The funding was granted after the YourFundSurrey panel was presented with the planned community usage of the new clubhouse, which is said to hold activities such as exercise classes, art classes and the card game 'bridge'. The panel was also pleased to hear of potential plans for organisations such as guiding or scouts to make use of the facilities.

Natalia Anda, Chair of Epsom Hockey Club said: "We are so excited and grateful to have received this grant from YourFundSurrey. "The clubhouse will made such a difference to the club in maximising the potential use of our outdoor sports pitches, providing much needed changing facilities and a place to socialise for our members and the wider local community."

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Guildford cathedral appeal dismissed

19 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

19 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.

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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

19 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

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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

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