



## Spring Newsletter

2026 (no. 67)

### Message from the Chairman: 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Spring is nearly upon us; the sun has appeared, and the flowers are abundant. It is my pleasure to introduce our latest newsletter. You will note elsewhere that your committee has been actively promoting the anniversary of our Twinning with Chantilly, and more events are planned during our 30<sup>th</sup> year.

As many of you are aware plans have been finalised to reorganise Local government in Surrey with the merger of five Boroughs and parts of Surrey County Council to become the East Surrey Unitary Authority. Consequently, this results in the dissolution of all the districts and boroughs in the County. Surrey County Council and Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will no longer exist. I have had a meeting with EEBC's Chief Executive to seek clarity on how this impacts Twinning's Charter between Epsom and Chantilly and am awaiting advice. I am exploring every option to ensure the future of Twinning in Epsom and Ewell and will let you know as soon as I have any more information.

The main event scheduled for this year is a visit to Chantilly to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twinning. The Council in Chantilly have suggested dates in July or October and the official invitation is eagerly awaited. Chantilly has recently elected a new mayor, Bénédicte de Cacqueray, who led the delegation which visited Epsom in 2022. There is also a suggestion that we might hold a 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary closing event here at the Epsom Racecourse in the afternoon of their season finale.

We have also had some 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorative lapel badges made and they look fantastic. If you don't yet have one and would like one please do get in touch as we have a small supply still available.

Our AGM will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June at the Town Hall and I look forward to seeing you there.



We have a quiz night set for 2 October, these are usually very popular and enjoyable events, and I hope we will have a good turnout. More details will be sent out shortly.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Committee for their hard work and support over the past year, and for their continued commitment to the cause of Twinning, with my best wishes to you for the rest of 2026.

*Nigel Collin*  
*Chairman*

### **AGM Tuesday June 23rd**

Please put a note in your diary. The Annual General Meeting of Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association will take place on Tuesday June 23rd, at Epsom Town Hall, with a start time of 7pm. England play a World Cup match against Ghana that evening with a kick-off time of 9pm. The chairman assures us that proceedings will be finished in time to allow those who wish to watch that game to do so! So please don't be deterred!

Further details will be sent out in due course, but its a chance to hear about the activities of the Association over the past year; its finances; membership trends and of course the future in an era of local government reorganisation. There is also a chance to elect committee members and even to put yourself forward to join the committee if you are interested.

### **Entries invited for Cyril Frazer Award 2026**

The committee is delighted to be inviting applications for this year's Cyril Frazer Award, set up as a memorial to Cyril Frazer who died in 2016. Cyril was Mayor of Epsom and Ewell when it was first twinned with Chantilly in 1995 and was a founding member of the association. As well as Twinning, one of his other great passions was singing, and he was a keen member of the Epsom Male Voice Choir.

Both are reflected in the requirements for the top award of £500, which is available to individuals and groups within the Borough and will be awarded to qualified applicants who meet some or all of the following agreed criteria:

- Applicants live or study in the Borough
- The award meets a special need, such as mental or physical health
- It benefits young people

- It has cultural/educational value
- It is music or performing arts related
- It furthers friendships or links with Chantilly
- It supports a key twinning or community event

The prize will be awarded at the Twinning Association's AGM in June and the deadline for applications is May 31st 2026. If you know of any worthy potential recipients do pass this information on to them or let us know so we can send them an application form. For more information about the Award and how to apply please contact [diana@epsomtwinning.com](mailto:diana@epsomtwinning.com).

### **Celebrating Twelfth Night in style**

A group of around thirty members, including the Mayor and Mayoress, met at the Epsom Club on 6th January to celebrate Twelfth Night. As last year, Anita of Avita Catering prepared a delicious French themed dinner offering a choice of Coq au Vin, Fish in cream sauce or a bean based vegetarian option. For the sweet course we could choose between Poire Pochées and traditional Galette des Rois, a frangipane filled pie with a surprise in it. Some of us had both!



*The Mayor and Mayoress enjoying the Twelfth Night celebrations at the Epsom Club in the company of Town Twinning Association members*

It seems that the custom varies according to region, but the original idea was to hide a dried fava bean in the pie, and the person who found it in their slice became king for the evening. Elsewhere it could be a "charm", previously we

have had something like a Smurf or a Minion in commercially produced tarts, or it could be some kind of nut

Thanks to many generous donations of prizes, we had a successful raffle which was followed by a few words of appreciation from the Mayor wishing everyone a very Happy New Year.

## French Public Speaking Competition marks ten years

The French Speaking Competition, organised jointly by Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association and Epsom Rotary, took place in early February on one of the wettest nights of the year so far. The event, the tenth staging of the competition for schools, was held at Glyn School in Ewell in the presence of the Deputy Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Cllr Lucie McIntyre.

Members and friends of both organisations turned out to support and ensured it ran smoothly. Special thanks are due to Helen Roberts and Jim Davis, the judges on the night, who did a great job.

Junior students from Glyn, Epsom College and Blenheim schools impressed with their renditions of a selection of French poems selected by the judges. Many were able to recite the poem from memory and to perform it with the



aid of props, such as the one where the only cat in town ate the only bird. The joint winners were George Shabunin from Epsom College and Zara Olson-Benytout from Blenheim.

The Intermediate students gave a presentation in French, speaking about their homes, families and hobbies, their friends and even giving advice on

living a healthy life, before answering a series of questions on these subjects posed by the judges. The well-deserved winner was Ruby Collins from Blenheim with Aycus Lam from Glyn in second place.

Consideration is being given to whether to stage the event next year. The level of interest from local schools was this year fairly disappointing, for the senior level in particular, and the committee needs to consider whether there is still support for the concept.



*Finalists from the Intermediate (top) and Junior (below) French Speaking competition with Deputy Mayor Cllr. Lucie McIntyre*

## **NESCOT hosts celebration of 30 years of Twinning**

To mark 30 years of Twinning in the Borough a group of long-standing members of the Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association were treated to a superb dinner cooked and served by catering students at NESCOT, keen to practise and perfect their culinary skills and customer service, on March 20th. All the students did exceptionally well both front of house and in the kitchens.



*Members enjoy the special 30th Anniversary dinner at Nescot and, below, Deputy Mayor Cllr Lucie McIntyre with Nescot catering students and staff*

For many this was their first experience of serving in a 'real' situation which made the standard all the more remarkable.

Following a welcome drink, members moved into the restaurant area near the main reception, which had been beautifully laid out in the blue, white and red of the French flag, and place names bearing the Twinning logo. The food also had a French flavour with main courses of beef carbonade, chicken chasseur

and vegetable cassoulet, followed by a French apple tart appropriately served with crème Chantilly. Coffee followed, accompanied by a very special treat of homemade macarons and chocolate truffles.

Members were joined by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Lucie McIntyre, who complimented the NESOCOT catering department and staff for putting on such a memorable event.

This is one of several joint initiatives between the College and Twinning. Currently, a project is also underway between marketing students from NESOCOT together with the Lycée de la Foret, the Technical High School in Chantilly.

### **Plans to relaunch the Derby to boost visitor numbers**

One of the underlying reasons for our Twinning relationship with Chantilly is the shared horse racing heritage and in particular our staging of the respective English and French 'Derbys'. Epsom Derby in recent years has seen visitor numbers decline and recently members of Twinning, including Caroline Baldock and Bill Eacott, were among the audience as Jim Allen, the Managing Director of Epsom Racecourse, gathered together a group of people he intends to be part of his plan to get people back to the Derby.

*The Derby is a tough test for race horses*



This took place as a response to the event seeing its lowest ever attendance in 2025, which in all fairness was overshadowed by the bleak weather prospects, and a desire to get the Derby back to its unique popularity.

Jim told the meeting that the new regime will mean no parking charges; 20 double decker buses will be available for hire by local organisations; there will be a place where hair and makeup can be perfected, along with music and an after party in the Grandstand. There will also be 'bleachers style' seating along the final furlong where people will be able to sit and watch the racing. A food and drink festival will also entertain, and there will be a market and a fun fair. As a new initiative to encourage young racegoers to attend, anyone under 18 will given free entry on both days in General Admission enclosures and there will be a brand new DerbyFest area on The Hill, run in partnership with Queensberry, famous for promoting some of the world's biggest sporting events, to drive attendance and engagement with the local community.

The Derby is a stern trial for the 3 year olds, with the rise to the top of the Downs being higher than Nelson's column, the turn for the straight is a challenge, and then the course undulates and the finish rises. It is there to prove the horse that is the fittest, the best and the most courageous and deserves to be witnessed by larger crowds. We hope the Jockey Club's initiatives are a success.

### **Spotlight on Jim Boyle - trainer**

It is hard to define Epsom trainer Jim Boyle's charm. He has elegance and a purpose about him, but maybe it is his determination which speaks loudest. Racing is a tough world. It is hard enough to keep the hours, very early mornings and late nights, as there are so many evening meetings. Then there is the travelling. Hours on motorways, and not always swift. But Jim's determination has paid off. He now has a modern yard to absolutely die for! It is a staggering complex built to the highest standards, well thought out and fit for purpose.

Jim was born in Cambridge and his family moved to Newmarket where Jim grew up. As a young lad he helped out in Sir Michael Stout's yard and was hugely influenced by growing up in the rarefied air of Newmarket's racing fraternity. While he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and trained to be a vet, deep down he really wanted to train racehorses. But being realistic he knew that getting into that world required a massive investment or a lot of luck. He qualified as a vet in 1996 and then spent three years working in general practice, focusing on horses. Just when decisions had to be made about joining a practice as a partner and remaining a vet, an opportunity arose to join Paul Coles in Lambourn as Assistant Trainer.

It was then with the help of Vince Kelly who worked for Sir Michael Stout that the opportunity occurred to share a yard owned by John Hopkins in Epsom, with Nigel Hamilton. Jim was able to gather owners and horses at last.



*Jim Boyle is a successful hands-on trainer,*

He married wife Pippa in 2007 and she manages the breeding side of Jim's business. Their best horse was Bad Company who won the City and Suburban in 2023, while Jim also won the Grand Metropolitan in 2022 with Going Gone.

I asked Jim what he looks for in a racehorse. He says, "Temperament is very important, and of course conformation, a smooth walk and clean limbs and athletic build. A good pedigree goes a long way too."

What is his favourite racecourse? "Epsom" is the inevitable answer!

Jim has loyal staff, who stay with him. As we all know today how hard it is to find and keep stable staff, I asked him if he had any advice to employers in the horse world? He says, "Try to be mindful and treat them as you would like to be treated. I pay them well and they all have one weekend off in three."

At the moment Jim is meeting with members of Parliament in a committee to discuss the funding of racing. The betting companies take out enormous profits which are bleeding the race scene dry of resources. Prize money is

shockingly low and prices with the bookies make it almost impossible to win anything. Jim is speaking on behalf of an industry caught up also in a situation of unfair taxation.



*Jim has a modern new training yard on Epsom Downs*

In the yearly awards at the local Owners and Trainers Dinner Jim picked up a number of Awards, including the best 3 year old in Many Men and the best 2 year old with Into the Sky. He was also nominated for the Best National Hunt Horse, in Classic Anthem. Jim is certainly a trainer worth keeping an eye on.

*Caroline Baldock*

**Apologies that there was not room to include the full article in the newsletter, but it is on the website as *Spring Supplement 2026 – Spotlight on Jim Boyle.***

### **Twinning with Ukrainian town being explored by Council**

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has taken the first step towards twinning with the Ukrainian town of Bucha. At a recent meeting of the strategy and resources committee a small working group was set up to look into the proposal before a final decision is made.

The council has been approached by volunteers keen to establish a formal link with Bucha, a town in the Kyiv Oblast province, and the project seemingly has the enthusiastic support of the Mayor of Bucha. If it gets the go ahead it is envisioned that the Twinning arrangement would build on the close ties between Epsom and Ewell and Ukraine that have developed since the Russian invasion in 2022.

## **Chantilly has a new Mayor**

In recent Mayoral elections in Chantilly, Bénédicte de Cacqueray emerged as the winner, with 67.91 % of the vote, overcoming her rival, Florence Woerth, wife of former Mayor, Eric Woerth.

We would like to wish Bénédicte well for her term of office and hope she can find time for a visit to Epsom and Ewell. Bénédicte was in fact part of the delegation that came to Epsom and Ewell in 2022 and so has some direct knowledge of twinning ties between the two towns.



*The new Mayor of Chantilly, Bénédicte de Cacqueray, plants a tree in Rosebery Park together with then Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Cllr. Clive Woodbridge in 2022*

## **Committee Members 2025-2026**

Nigel Collin - Chairman

Diana Deavin – Vice-Chairman and Acting Secretary

Donna Williams – Treasurer

Anne Richardson – Membership Secretary

Carol Thorley – Minutes Secretary

Cllr Rachel King – Council Nominee

Cllr Steve Bridger – Council Nominee

Cllr Clive Woodbridge

Caroline Baldock

Barbara Lewis

Martin Lewis

Barry Nash

Christine Rippon

Helen Roberts

Our Hon. President is The Worshipful the Mayor of Epsom and Ewell,  
Cllr Robert Leach