Twickenham TRIBUNE & Richmond TRUBUNE

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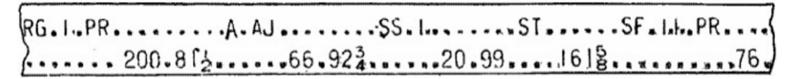
* Berkley Driscoll Teresa Read







24th November 2023



TickerTape - News in Brief

Christmas presents needed for young care leavers

Cocoon, Care After Care are holding their annual Christmas Day Dinner for young care leavers to celebrate their resilience and create positive memories.

On 25 December, 50 young adults who grew up in care will be brought together for a very special event to ensure that they do not spend the day alone and will be treated to the Christmas they deserve.

All those attending on the day are aged between 18 to 25 and do not have family they can spend Christmas Day with.

As well as being provided with a delicious chef-prepared Christmas dinner with all the trimmings, entertainment and a hamper full of essentials, they will also go home with a sack full of carefully chosen high-quality presents.

If you would like to buy a present for a guest you can shop local at The Hare and The Moon in Twickenham who have a <u>specially curated gift list</u>.

To find out more about the Christmas Day Dinner, please visit the <u>Cocoon, Care After Care</u> website.

Visit the Vineyard Community and Richmond Foodbank's Christmas Fair

On Saturday 2 December, enjoy an afternoon of children's crafts and activities, mulled wine and festive fun at the Vineyard Community and Richmond Foodbank's Christmas Fair.

Join in from 1.30 to 6pm at Vineyard Community, Richmond, TW10 6AQ. The fair will include market stalls throughout the day, as well as live music and dance performances by the Richmond Ukrainian Refugee Hub partners, local choirs and musicians.

There will also be a fashion show and Santa's Grotto for guests to visit. For more information, please visit the Vineyard Community website.



The Local Picture Postcard Page Part 224

By Alan Winter

The Warren Footpath At Twickenham Riverside

This week we are going to learn about the centuries old practices of Twickenham's rabbit farming industry - or are we? I have struggled with this article this week as the subject matter is not too clear about dates and locations from many conflicting historical records that I have consulted.



By far the most concise writing on the subject is found in the 1986 booklet written by A.C.B. Irwin and published by the Borough of Twickenham Local History Society (BOTLHS).

My thanks to both Mr Irwin and the Society for coming up with this booklet nearly 40 years ago. I have used the book to establish dates and facts where possible.

Living as a child in Orleans Road, I always knew the footpath at the bottom of the road by the river as "The Warren". So did the postcard publishers of the last century who you can see have all used the name as a title for their photographs of the footpath. I now read that the path was renamed the "Marble Hill Footpath" at some point, but I can find no evidence of dates or signage to support that. If you have any information on it, please let me know and I will clarify it in a future column.

All three postcards of the Warren date from the 1905-1920 period.

The Warren Footpath runs along the Middlesex bank of the River Thames from the end of Orleans Road to Richmond Bridge, passing Marble Hill House and Park in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. It is the main off-road route between Richmond and



Twickenham Town Centres and is well used by pedestrians and cyclists. There is also evidence to suggest the area is well used by bats.

We can go back to the year 1200 when rabbit was a particular delicacy and a great favourite on the tables of the rich. Being a rare animal it was also very expensive. It was the only fresh meat normally available over several centuries until the mass rearing of poultry and were also valued for their fur.



Rabbit Farms or Warrens as they were known were established in England in the late 1200's and by 1270 rabbits cost four or five times the price of a chicken. The **Twickenham** Park and Fulwell Lodge areas seem to have been the largest and most long established Warrens in the

Twickenham area and both estates employed Warreners to keep the rabbits safe from birds of prey and wild animals such as stoats, weasels, foxes and even wolves. Poaching was also a great sport to be had by many men who were trying to put meat on the family table.

By 1800 the only Warren left in Middlesex was at Uxbridge Common as there were already 150 acres of fruit gardens in Twickenham which proved many times more profitable than rabbit keeping. This coincided with a massive increase in wild rabbits and so the rearing price had started to fall.

"The Rabbit Warrens of Twickenham" can be purchased from the BOTLHS website for not much more than the price of a pint. www.botlhs.co.uk will get you there and then look at the publications section.

If you have any old postcards that you would consider parting with, I'd be very interested in arranging to see them.

Please contact me on 07875 578398 or by email at alanwinter192@hotmail.com

I am happy to pay cash for anything like that which I find of interest. So don't throw old postcards etc. in the skip or recycling bins. Show them to me first!

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Your friendly local Travel Agency established in Twickenham since 1966

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Visit our Health Bus and get 'winter strong' ahead of the holidays

The drop-in health bus will visit locations across Richmond upon Thames this November and December, with the NHS on hand to offer seasonal vaccinations to eligible residents.

As we enter the autumn and winter months it is important for us to take care of our health and wellbeing. Vaccines offer the best protection against flu and COVID-19.

Health professionals will be on hand to answer any health-related questions and offer advice on how to stay well as the months get colder.

If you have any questions or concerns about the vaccines, you can come along and have a chat, with no pressure to get a jab.

We will also be giving out a free box of COVID-19 testing kits to those who attend if they would like one, while

supplies last.

Health bus schedule

The bus will visit the following locations.

Twickenham

Date: Thursday 30 November 2023

Time: 10am to 3pm

Address: Outside York House, Richmond Road, TW1 3AA

Teddington

Date: Thursday 7 December 2023

Time: 10am to 3pm

Address: Tesco Teddington (North Lane Car Park), 20-28 Broad Street, TW11 8RF

Ham

Date: Tuesday 12 December 2023

Time: 8.30am to 3pm

Address: Outside Kanset Pharmacy, 177 Ashburnham Road, TW10 7NR

Eligibility for vaccines

Covid-19 seasonal booster eligibility:

- All adults aged 65 years and over
- Adults under age 64 years in a clinical risk group
- All frontline health and social care workers
- Adults under age 64 who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- Adults under age 64 who are carers, and staff working in care homes for older adults

Flu vaccine eligibility:

- All adults aged 65 years and over
- All adults under 65 years of age who have a medical condition
- All pregnant individuals
- People who receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person
- All adults living with someone who has lowered immunity due to disease or treatment
- · All frontline health and social care workers

Walk-in clinics

Unable to make it to the health bus but still want to get your flu and/or COVID-19 seasonal vaccine? Walk-in clinics are happening every Monday and Tuesday in Kew and Richmond.

- Every Monday: Kew Community Trust, 9am to 12.30pm, St Luke's, The Avenue, TW9 2AJ
- Every Tuesday: Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College, 2 to 5pm, Parkshot, TW9 2RE

You can find details of your nearest walk-in vaccine clinic on the <u>NHS South West London Integrated Care Board website</u>.



COME and have

a CHAT today



Dear Sir,

Rejoining the EU? Some Food for Thought

Since the United Kingdom left the European Union nearly four years ago, there have been opinion polls that suggest that the mood has changed, and that a return to membership would be desirable.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_on_the_United_Kingdom_rejoining_the_European_Union_(2020%E2%80%93present)].

As it is always advisable to check the small print of any agreement before signing up, I have been trying to explore the mechanism by which re-joining could happen; I have discovered that it would involve a complex series of decisions and processes.

The UK left the EU according to Article 50 of the European Union Treaty; it is now therefore regarded as a "third country", and thus if it wishes to re-join, it must do so under the conditions set out in Article 49 (the Maastricht Treaty of 1992). This states, among other things, that the UK must "respect and commit to promote the values specified in Article 2", have its application unanimously approved by the EU Council, and by a majority vote of MEPs.

Article 2 of the Treaty refers to criteria decided by the European Council at Copenhagen in 1993: the values are those of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, human rights, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality. In addition there are requirements for sound institutions and robust checks and balances, a functioning and resilient market economy and capacity to implement and absorb the full sum of EU law (the "acquis communautaire").

The acquis is an evolving document, that presently consists of 35 chapters, covering a very wide range of topics.

Joining the euro and the Schengen area (giving border control-free travel) are consequential requirements for re-joining.

The EU has also long had a desire for an ever closer political union: in the Solemn Declaration made in June 1983 it "...confirms a commitment towards ever closer union among peoples and member states...". This is in line with the concept of "The United States of Europe" suggested by the French statesman Jean Monnet in 1955, the essence of which morphed via The European Economic Community (EEC or Common Market) in 1957 to the European Union as we know it today.

It is possible to negotiate opt-outs to some of these conditions, as was done previously, but such would require fresh approval from all member states and a majority vote by MEPs.

As the above shows, there is a lot to think about before committing the nation to re-join. The EU as it is now is a very different entity to that which UK joined in 1973 (which was at that time the EEC).

Jeremy Hamilton-Miller, Twickenham



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Noting The Obfuscation Of The Proposed Housing On Twickenham Riverside And Inappropriate Use Of Social Media By Elected Councillors

It seems that the jury is out on who should be credited with the following quotation: "I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it" but it came to mind when reading some rather ungracious comments on Twitter by two LBRUT councillors following the publication of Tribune edition 367 and a short article relating to Twickenham Riverside from the prospective Conservative Member of Parliament.

Some of us will be aware that there has been a degree of obfuscation concerning the proposed housing on Twickenham Riverside; it should be noted that there are **TWO distinct areas and two types of housing proposed**.

Firstly, there is the land owned by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, next to Water Lane, left derelict by the Council for some years, the site for "affordable housing".

Secondly, there is land currently the site of Diamond Jubilee Gardens and proposed flats that have been described as *luxury housing*, particularly when making a comparison between this site and homes to be provided on the derelict Council site next to Water Lane.

Use of social media by elected LBRuT councillors

Twitter can be a minefield; there can be unexpected consequences, as we have seen, even years later, thus, it would be in their interests for our councillors to make sure they are following the Social Media Guidance for the elected council members of the London Borough or Richmond upon Thames, especially the LBRUT councillors who like to tweet and who do not seem to have read or be abiding by the LBRUT Social Media Protocol.

This week the Tribune was contacted by a concerned resident about the use of social media by a very senior LBRUT councillor and a Twickenham ward councillor; additionally, it has been said that a former Liberal Democrat LBRUT councillor is also very disturbed about inappropriate tweeting and is at a loss to know what to do about the situation of the tweeting duo. Of course, there is the LBRUT Social Media Protocol linked below that needs to be enforced:

https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/documents/s500007690/04.09%20Social%20Media%20 Protocol.pdf

The Protocol warns: "However, there are challenges that may discourage Councillors and the Council from using social media. For example, inappropriate use (which may occur inadvertently) can cause significant damage to a Councillor's (or the Council's) reputation and can lead to legal claims."

There is also the warning about Harassment: "it is an offence to repeatedly pursue a campaign against a person that is likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress."

And, Councillors should also avoid using Council equipment when tweeting comments that would not be approved by the Council, or, indeed, upset or alarm residents: "Council resources, including any use of social media on Council mobile devices or IT equipment, should not be used for political/campaign purposes. Particular care should also be taken when using social media during the pre-election period".

Additional Points from The LBRUT Social Media Code of Conduct

Councillors may use social media in both an official and personal capacity, but they must be aware that the public may perceive them as acting in either capacity when that is not their intention.

"Any social media account which could be potentially linked to a councillor would need to meet the standards of the code of conduct."

The Code of Conduct warns Councillors: "Similarly, 'liking', 'sharing' or 're-tweeting' posts could be seen as an endorsement of them"

Other principles in the LBRUT Council Code state:

"Careful use of language is required. Sarcasm, irony and ambiguous comments should be avoided."

"Be respectful – set the tone for online conversations by being polite, open and respectful." "Think twice – think carefully about all your social media posts. Once published it will be too late to change your mind."

Finally, the LBRUT Council Code states: Under the Code of Conduct you will have a duty at all times not to do anything which brings your Council or office into disrepute and not to misuse your official position to your own advantage or to the advantage or disadvantage of others. Further information is available from the Members Handbook: Ethics, https://www.richmond.gov.uk/media/15705/members_handbook_ethics.pdf

Additionally, Councillors must bear in mind **The Seven Principles of Public Life known as the Nolan Principles**.

The Seven Principles of Public Life outline the ethical standards those working in the public sector are expected to adhere to. They were first set out by Lord Nolan in 1995 and they are included in a range of codes of conduct across public life.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life

(Twitter is now known as X)

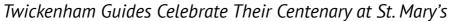
One Hundred Years Young

By Doug Goodman

The 8th Twickenham Guides celebrated their centenary last weekend at St Mary's Church. The Guides, along with Brownies and a large congregation, attended a service of celebration conducted by The Revd. Jeff Hopkin Williams. The Guides have always been closely linked to St Mary's Church and a fascinating guide record book displayed in the church, along with historical documents and other items, showed that in 1931 the Guides were keen on marching and drill and once a month would march to All Hallows, St Mary's sister church, for parade.

The Guides were given their certificate of registration in October 1923 by Robert Baden-Powell and haven't skipped a beat throughout the past 100 years, always embracing tradition while pushing boundaries; from knitting babies woolies in 1924 to giving a display of country dancing in 1940; from holding a 'beatnik' party on the night of the thickest fog ever in 1961 to attending the Guides' Big Gig' at Wembley in 2009 to taking the 'vlogging' badge last year.

Many local girls and young women have been proud members of the 8th Twickenham Guides, which today is 25 strong.











The Royal Parks Seeks Volunteer Rangers For Richmond And Bushy Parks

The Royal Parks is on the lookout for up to 70 Volunteer Rangers to join Bushy and Richmond Parks.

Recruitment for Volunteer Rangers opens on 21 November 2023, and the charity is keen to hear from friendly and chatty people who are passionate about the parks and want to inspire and educate visitors. Volunteers will need to commit to a minimum of four hours per month.

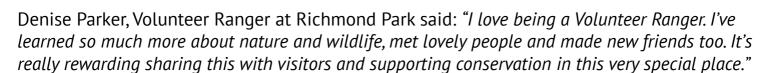
Volunteer Officer for The Royal Parks, Jo Meays, said "The Volunteer Rangers provide a welcoming service to the millions of visitors who enjoy Richmond and Bushy Parks each year. These unique spaces have been designated by Natural England as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and part of the remit of the Volunteer Rangers is to inform visitors on how we can all help nature thrive in these spaces. This includes sharing safety information with visitors on maintaining a minimum distance of 50m from the resident deer that roam both parks.

"Becoming a Volunteer Ranger is a great way to be out in nature, to make friends and to learn more about the heritage and wildlife of these two parks."

Volunteer Rangers have a choice of two-hour volunteering sessions across weekdays and weekends that suit their schedule.

Since the service started in 2019, Volunteer Rangers at Richmond and Bushy Parks have spoken to over 110,000 people on a number of

topics including ancient trees, walking routes and The Royal Parks' efforts to protect skylarks.



Jo Meays adds, "The blueprint for The Royal Parks' Volunteer Ranger service was developed in Bushy and Richmond Parks in 2019, and its success has meant we have been able to roll out this service to two other Royal Parks - Greenwich Park and The Regent's Park. We currently have over 260 Volunteer Rangers across these four parks, and we look forward to welcoming more."

Applications will open on 21 November and close on 31 December 2023. Full training will be given.

To apply, visit https://www.royalparks.org.uk/rangers



Shout out for 21 years of Britain's loudest bird

WWT London Wetland Centre celebrates 21 years of sightings of the rare and secretive bittern

Famously Britain's loudest bird, the male bittern's booming call rivals that of a jet engine. But, despite its volume, this cleverly camouflaged bird, wading cautiously among dense reeds, is incredibly difficult to spot.

Requiring large, undisturbed reedbeds to hunt and breed, London Wetland Centre is the only place it can be regularly seen in the London area during winter.

Senior Reserve Warden, Angus Wilkinson, said: "The bittern is such a special sight in the UK and we're thrilled that London Wetland Centre has been able to offer this species a wintering ground haven for more than two decades."



These beautiful, shy birds were pushed to the brink of extinction in Victorian times when their reedbed homes were drained for reservoirs.

Reserve Manager, Adam Salmon said: "When London Wetland Centre opened in 2000 there were only 30 known breeding pairs in the UK. Now, thanks to conservation efforts, there are well over 200 breeding pairs. With its numbers steadily rising, the bittern is a true flagship species for wetland conservation - proving that if we work to protect and restore precious habitats we can turn the tide on extinction."

"Not only this, but by protecting habitats like reedbeds and peat bogs we unlock the carbon sinking super powers that these wetlands hold – one of the planet's biggest weapons in the battle against climate change."



"Our booming bitterns winter here at London Wetland Centre from around October until March, so come down and spot a true wetland wonder today!"

If that wasn't enough, the Centre is also looking forward to welcoming some new feathered friends this December.

Three common white storks will be moving into 'Wetlands of the



World', an exhibit that invites visitors to explore the magic of different wetlands and the threatened species that rely on them.

Despite their name, these storks are rare across Europe with only a handful of sightings in the UK over the last 25 years.

John Arbon, Living Collections Manager, said: "With changing farming practises and modern city construction, these once 'common' storks have all but disappeared with only around 20 spotted in England every year."

"The sight of their large, twig-ladened nests on roof tops and chimneys was once a common feature in our town and cityscapes."

"In fact these famous, red-beaked, long-legged birds are so embedded into our landscapes that they play a role in our historic mythology, with images of them delivering babies still used in cards today."

"It's essential to realise that if we allow wetland habitats to continue to be destroyed here in the UK, we will lose our iconic wildlife for good."

"Having species like the white stork here at the Centre reminds us of what we stand to lose if we don't act now and stand up for the protection of precious habitats."

But there is hope in the future, the Centre's newest birds could form part of a breeding programme for the species, seeking to build numbers.

The new arrivals will be on view to visitors from Friday 15 December. See magnificent white storks, glimpse illusive

bitterns, say hello to playful otters and so much more... book your visit to London Wetland Centre today at www.org.uk/London Every visit supports WWT's wetland saving work here in the UK and around the world.

*Adult ticket prices are £15.40 without donation, £17.00 including donation. Junior ticket prices are £10 without donation, £11.00 with donation. Under 4s always go free.



Winter Carriage Rides in Richmond Park

Enjoy a magical horse drawn carriage ride in the beautiful Richmond Park...

This Christmas, experience <u>Richmond Park</u> like never before with a ride around the park in a six-person Park Brake drawn by our majestic **Shire Horses**. Enjoy the sounds of hoofs and bells, revel in the crisp air and watch the wildlife up close while you snuggle under a blanket...and have some sloe gin and a mince pie to truly get into the festive spirit!

- The 75-minute experience begins at Holly Lodge, Richmond Park, where you'll be met with refreshments.
- You will take your place in the carriage embarking on an hour long ride through the park
 in all its winter beauty! You'll also be treated to a unique behind-the-scenes visit of the
 working stables.

Book Now

Please note:

- The rides take place on various dates throughout the festive season, starting from the end of November to the beginning of January.
- Proceeds from the horse drawn rides will help fund sustainable conservation initiatives with the working Shire horses in The Royal Parks.
- The purchase of one £450 (+booking fee) ticket seats six people in an exclusive carriage.
- Children are welcome.
- Ticket price includes tea/refreshments before the ride and a tour of the stables.
- We operate in all-weather unless the Park issues a safety warning so please check the weather before you come and dress appropriately.
- Refunds are not available unless we need to cancel.
- We regret that because this is a traditional vehicle we cannot accommodate wheelchair users.



Twickers Foodie - By Alison Jee

Mail Order Christmas Gifts For Far Flung Foodies

With the cost of postage escalating crazily, and the queues at the Post Office getting longer soon, it makes sense to order online gifts, where possible, that can be sent directly to the recipient with a gift message. With this in mind, here are some recommendations for a range of hampers and other mail order gifts to inspire you:

A gift of chutneys, jams and other yummy artisan creations is always welcome, and I've been impressed with the quality of British products from **Rosebud Preserves.** New for this Christmas is a

Christmas Day Chutney, (£9.95/375g) perfect for the Christmas cheese board; a Midwinter Jam (£4.50/227g), a delicious accompaniment to a fireside afternoon tea; and a gift pack, 'Spirit of Preserves' (£14.95), featuring its award-winning Gooseberry & Elderflower jam. There are larger Kilner jars packed with a range of chutneys and marmalades (£9.95), and almond & orange mincemeat (£11.95) There is also a range of gift packs filled with Rosebud's other products, that make a



perfect foodie gift, as well as a range of preserves and liqueurs to savour over the Christmas season. Visit the website and design your own hamper here with free delivery for orders over £25 (last order date for Christmas delivery is 18 December)



For British charcuterie, check out the award-winning **Bray Cured.** There's a great range of hampers, letter box gifts, subscriptions and you could even consider a voucher for a Duck Curing Course (£105) giving a half day at the HQ (5 mins from the Elizabeth Line), refreshments, hands-on making charcuterie, a charcuterie tasting lunch with local wine, and of course taking home what you make. Full details and lots more on the website here The company also offers letterbox gifts and subscriptions from just £15 - so you could give a gift that lasts all year. Full information on the website here

If a taste of Spain's what you're looking for, then planning Christmas gifts has never been so easy, thanks to **Ibérica Restaurants**' fantastic range of Mediterranean hampers, gift boxes and stocking fillers available from its <u>online shop</u> – Ibérica at Home. Showcasing the best Spanish ingredients selected by Michelin-starred Chef Nacho Manzano the collection ranges from cured meats to Spanish wine and mouth-watering Manchego. The full collection of hampers and gift boxes are available from the **Ibérica at Home** online shop with nationwide delivery and includes the option of a gift box or wicker basket (+ £10) for a touch of added luxury. Or, if you're on the look-out for something



even more personal, there's plenty for vegans and the option to create your own bespoke hamper online.



Maybe Greece takes your fancy? Odysea's hampers and gift sets are great for Christmas. Award-winning Greek and Mediterranean products, featuring a limited-edition **Kew Gardens Hamper** (£90), new **Brother Marcus Hamper** (£50) and show-stopping **Mediterranean Christmas Feast Hamper** (£250)! Across the range you'll find products including Extra Virgin Olive Oils, fruit Compotes, a moreish range of olives, seasonal honey and more. The full

collection of gift sets and hampers, starting at £20, is available to order from <u>Odysea's website</u> for nationwide delivery. Last orders for guaranteed Christmas delivery is **19th December.**



And of course there's always Italy to consider... have a look at the fantastic range of products on offer from **Valentina's Deli**. As well as other Italian delicacies, including confectionery and superb wines that you are unlikely to see elsewhere there is a massive selection. And I was staggered to see that they have the most outstanding range of panettone and pandoros I've ever encountered - from under £20. You can do online orders and create your own hamper from the range available online here. Better still, if you're nearby, pop into their shops in East Sheen or Weybridge and you'll find yourself in Italian deli heaven!

Maybe you would just consider sending someone a top-notch, award-winning Christmas pudding? I help judge the **Great Taste Awards** each year and I know that a product has to be exceptionally good to win a star, let alone two or three. **LillyPuds** website is spangled with Great Taste logos and stars. There's a great selection, including vegan and free-from options, in a variety of sizes, from LillyPuds. And the company even caters for folk who don't like nuts, are gluten intolerant, or just prefer a sponge pud (lots of options available). New this year is a Figgy Pudding with Ginger Conserve (£15 for 454g) - sounds wonderful! Full information on the ranges are on the website <u>here</u>



Any whisky aficionado will really appreciate a subscription to a selection of rare whiskies, especially if they receive a bottle of aged whisky every other month! **Summerton Whisky Club**, founded by Daniel Humphrey as a Christmas gift for his dad, gives access to bottle samples from the world's leading artisan distillers - *many bottles aren't available on the open market*. Further benefits include an active member community, with regular virtual sipping sessions, tours and events. The subscription is delivered every two months but can be paused or cancelled at any time. Members have access to the Summerton Whisky Club shop – featuring exclusive bottles and discounts. Each membership helps to support distillers and craft producers. Participants include Denmark's Stauning Distillery, the East London Liquor Co, Australia's



Starward, Ireland's Liag and Connacht Distillers, with Scotland's Wolfburn, Fettercairn, Deanston and Glasgow Distillers too. £50 every two months here

English sparkling wines are really coming into their own of late. So, if wine appeals more, then a bottle



of excellent English sparkling will be a fabulous gift. This gift set from **The Bolney Estate** includes a bottle of their award-winning sparkling wine of your choice (including a choice of Rosés, Cuvée Noir, Blanc de Blancs) plus two glasses and a stopper. Prices from £56 depending on the wine included. The company also has a range of gift boxed single bottles, starting from £24 for their still wine as well as magnums. There is also a range of hampers, here, each including a selection of the Bolney Estate wines with suitable accompaniments. And if you want to treat yourself too...**Bolney South Downs Vintage Release** is available from **Tesco at £32**

Black Friday ALERT! Seek, and you shall find ©

By Bruce Lyons

I did a comprehensive review of Black Friday offers and came to the view that as few as 2% represented value, over and above the normal price you pay. Many are offers that tie you up with marketing promos – that you are forever getting. From our experience this is largely true – and that view applies to much of the Travel Trade views as well.

However, there are deals, if you search around – less likely to apply to high holiday dates, wouldn't make sense really – but they can offer the flexible client excellent value. Let's have a little look; 30% off for both these properties.

The Relais Henley & The Relais Cooden Beach

These two charming hotels can be booked till next Thursday (30th November) through your local friendly travel agency, yes that's us! Crusader Travel- of course! with a big discount – We checked the availability for Feb School break and there was room – you can even take your little Fido too (small charge) the offer is valid for stays until 31st March – there are some, a few, blackout dates- call or email with your details and dates and we will be more than happy to hold the rooms, if available.

As far as cruise companies are concerned, there are more than the two I am telling you about here. So just ask. Hurtigruten are trying hard to make ground in the British Market and are very much the Expedition Style



of cruising. The prices don't include the joining flights and must be booked by 30th November but there is up to 50% off 12 Day Classic Round Voyage Bergen – Kirkenes – Bergen (Includes Northern |Lights Promise) with discounts included from £845 Jan 2024 through to March 2025 departures. Up to 50% off the 14 Day North Cape Express Oslo - - Itineraries on the MS Trollfjord Departures December 2023 through to April 2024. Bergen and Oslo Departures also include Northern Lights Promise from £1,014 p.p.

Up to 40% off the 16 Day Svalbard Express – Bergen – Longyearbyen – Bergen also on Troll fjord May through to September Departures.



More Cruising: Celestyal Holidays

Their "Celestyal Journey" has had to revise its summer routing due to the Israel/Gaza War and they have revamped their itineraries – with the RESULT that they are offering a great deal: 27th March 1 nigh Istanbul – 4 nights Aegean Island Cruise with flights to Istanbul return from Athens and stops in Chios/Los/Mykonos/Piraeus from £899!

Call us to book or for more details on 020 8744 0474, we are based just off the charming Church Street Square, number 58, by the Giant Chess and opposite St Mary's Church.



- a taste of -Twickenham



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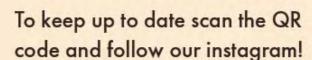
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WHERE: THE CABBAGE PATCH
WHEN: SAT. NOV 25TH & SUNDAY
THE 26TH 10AM TO 6PM





A Taste of Twickenham



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WIZ Tales: South Korea

Teresa Read

This week the South Korean President, Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife arrived in London on a formal three-day state visit to the UK.

The Prince and Princess of Wales met the President and the First Lady at their hotel, before travelling to Horse Guards Parade to be meet the King and Queen at the Royal Pavilion. It was reported that there will be trade and defence talks between the two countries.

The Republic of Korea (South Korea) is situated in Eastern Asia on the Korean Peninsula. The islands of Japan are to the east. Its land border is with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and its coasts are surrounded by the Yellow Sea and Korea's East Sea. Seoul is Korea's capital city.



Bank of Korea, Main Office



The Lotus Flower Bridge and Seven Treasure Bridge at Bulguksa in Gyeongju



Sangdangsanseong Mountain Fortress



Joabulsang bronzed Buddha atop Mt. Taejosan in Cheonan

Information and Photographs: https://worldinfozone.com/gallery.php?country=Korea

Things are not always what they seem...

~ Through the eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~

The days are getting colder and people are spending more time in my shop having a nice chat (initially I thought it was because customers liked talking to me, but now I think I have accepted that it's more as the shop is pleasantly warm due to all the fridge motors and lights etc). As customers are spending longer in my warm shop, there have been many more opportunities for insightful conversations, and as we all know, it's good to talk as when we listen, we can learn new things. So what did I learn from the conversations with customers in my shop this past week then?

Well, there is this very quiet lady who has been visiting the shop for a few years now...but she never actually buys anything...she just slowly limps over to our newspaper section, gently and slowly bends over to look at them, and after a 5 second glance she slowly limps back out without even saying hello or looking at me...of course she didn't bother me, she wasn't harming me, but I was just curious...

There was another customer at the counter a few days ago when the same lady came in and looked at the newspapers as she always does and then walked out. The other customer said under his breath "this isn't a library you know"...but the elderly lady didn't hear and just carried on walking up the street. Then again a day after, a young lady and her son were trying make their way to the counter to pay, but the elderly lady was blocking the aisle bent over looking at the newspapers



again. The young lady said to the elderly woman in an abrupt manner; "excuse me please can you move? I can't get past?"...the elderly lady didn't seem to mind and as usual, she silently limped out of my shop to go home. I just couldn't work her out...she wasn't standing long enough to read the stories or even the headlines? What could she be doing?

Customers started to get to know this elderly lady and they would say when she left "how peculiar?" or "what is up with her?"...but it was only 1 day ago when she came and my curiosity got the better of me and as she bent down to glance at the news I blurted out "are you ok there?" she stopped...for the first time ever...and looked at me softly. Her eyes looked like she was hiding some type of pain. I had never noticed that before. I smiled and said politely "if you need any help, let me know". She turned away from me and started limping to the door to leave my shop and make a slow journey back to her home...she got to the door to leave and suddenly stopped and looked back at me...I wondered what she would say to me so I went closer to her...

She said "I'm sorry that I come into your shop so often but I don't need anything". I said "it's ok, my shop is your shop, you don't have to buy anything, you're welcome to browse".

She walked closer to me and said "I hope you don't mind, but I come in each day to look at your newspapers so I can find out which day of the week it is, you see I live alone and have no TV or radio so if it wasn't for your shop being here, I would never know what day of the week it is".

At that moment my eyes welled up and it was like everything around me stopped for a moment. All these years people had thought wrongly of her, when all she was doing was trying to find out what day it was. It made me think about just how often we all see "unusual" behaviours around us and can easily misjudge the person exhibiting the behaviours without thinking past what we visually see. Things are not always as they seem. Also it made me appreciate how fortunate I am. Fortunate enough to have a TV, fortunate enough to have a radio...fortunate enough to have family and friends who can tell me what day of the week it is if I needed to know...not everyone is so lucky. So this week, I have been counting my blessings, the "little" things...because in the end, sometimes it's the little things that turn out to be the big things in life. Have a great week ahead everybody...

Remember...

'The little things often turn out to be the big things in the end..."

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP:

STOP FOXES KINDLY (GOOD KARMA):

Place empty bowls filled with white vinegar around places where you don't want them to come...they will go without you having to harm them...use humane mouse & rat traps and release them back in parkland areas. Use electronic plug in deterrents with good reviews around your house to stop them coming (the smell of white vinegar placed around places in empty bottle caps also stops ants, rats, mice, squirrels and rabbits and many more kindly too).

For ANY specific tip to stop any "pest" or insect KINDLY (for good karma/blessings), email me: thedeepatel@gmail.com or join my Facebook group: "INSECT LOVERS"

People, Planet, Pint Launch Alternative COP28 Event in Richmond

- People, Planet, Pint launched during COP26 to share green ideas in a fun and inspiring way
- The Sustainability initiative has brought together more than 10,000 people across 450 events in 75 cities
- Plus, the first **33** people to arrive get a free pint!
- On Dec 7, along with PPP's across the country, Richmond's chapter will be hosting an extra special event - COPPP
- An alternative to COP28 when the world leaders gather in Dubai to discuss climate change it is part of a nationwide gathering to empower people to take action in their local community, and highlight the great work that is already going on.

The event, is hosted by Sonia Lakshman of Couch to Carbon Zero and Claire Osborne

Register <u>HERE</u> and come along for free via Eventbrite

PPP founder Adam Bastock said:

"COPPP is about starting broad conversations across all parts of the community, not just for sustainability experts, but anyone who is concerned or curious. There is no agenda, workshops or webinars at our events. It's simply a chat over some drinks where you can meet others and hear about the work that is happening locally."



People, Planet, Pint is the perfect opportunity

for those with an interest in sustainability to meet like-minded people, make connections and friends. It's a chance to enjoy a drink while sharing ideas and finding inspiration on how they can take action across the local area.

After all, creating a sustainable future requires connected communities. And what better way to bring everyone together than over a drink?

The brainchild of Small99 founder, Adam Bastock. Small99 helps small businesses across the UK to improve their sustainability programmes and achieve net zero emissions while building a more resilient and profitable company at the same time.

Nationwide Sustainability

The first People, Planet, Pint was an impromptu event at COP26 in Glasgow, with 30 people turning up to talk about sustainability in a friendly and relaxed space. The event has now brought together over 10,000 people at more than 450 events.

COPPP is the largest meeting to date, with free-ticket events running simultaneously across Newcastle upon Tyne, Manchester, Glasgow, Chester, Chipping Norton, Farnham, Leeds, Northampton, Cheltenham, Wokingham, Bath, Sevenoaks, Sheffield, Canterbury, Brighton, Edinburgh, Colchester, Cambridge, Nottingham, London, Bristol, Croydon, Richmond, Bearsted, Aberdeen, Pontypridd, Barry, Hampshire, Ashford, and Shefford. And the first 33 people to arrive not only get the best seats in the pub but will also get a free pint!







CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS



PACKAGE INCLUDES:

WELCOME AMENITIES | BREAKFAST BUFFET
CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH BUFFET | CHRISTMAS DINNER ON THE 24TH DECEMBER
1X CHRISTMAS PAMPER VOUCHER AT SUNBORN INFINITY SPA (£50)

Book 23rd to 27th December, 4 nights £1050 For 2 guests in a Super Yacht Superior Room Book 24rd to 26th December, 2 nights £575 For 2 guests in a Super Yacht Superior Room

Terms and conditions: offer Subject to availability in all outlets

Bookings can not be combined with other bookings. Reservations must be made directly via phone or email cannot be extended to third party bookings

Pre payment is required and bookings cannot be cancelled or modified.

TO BOOK CONTACT: +350 200 16900 | RESERVATIONS@SUNBORNGIBRALTAR.COM

Not the Chost of a Chance



The Woman in Black

by Stephen Mallatratt, adapted from the novel by Susan Hill PW Productions at Richmond Theatre and on tour until 1st June 2024

If you think you have seen Mark Hawkins at Richmond Theatre before, it is not that he one of the theatre's famous ghosts, but he often works in the box-office. Now he encounters ghosts as The Actor in the national tour of *The Woman in Black*. A humorous first entrance from the auditorium before the house lights dim gives a false sense of security. But once they dim, we long for them to return, as terror and apprehension envelope us.



The Woman in Black is a well-written two hander between an older reserved Mr Kipps, recalling a terrible incident, and an uninhibited upbeat jobbing actor.



Mark Hawkins works manically hard through every re-enacted scene of Mr Kipp's recollections of thirty years ago. Malcolm James gives a clever performance as the, initially, reticent Mr Kipps, gradually sheds his deceptively subdued air.

The impressive set cleverly conveys an air of abandonment and secrets in a strange house cut off by a causeway. Looming menacing shadows anticipate the horror to come. There are terrifying sounds, particularly timely and effective on the younger Mr Kipp's remote train journey.

The second act brings unrelenting horror as the story unfolds. There are genuinely creepy moments, including The Woman herself walking down the aisle. The press night audience screamed in sheer terror.

Mr Kipps, as a solicitor to the recently deceased,

unwisely sleeps over with an ineffectual dog for company. The creepy and dimly lit abandoned rooms on the upper floor and the ghostly air of malice really builds up the tension, while strong writing and unnerving plot raise the hairs quite nicely.

Directed in great detail by Robin Herford The Woman *in Black* is terrifying!! And the ethereal eponymous Woman in Black actually takes a curtain call – from behind her ghostly wall. What a trouper!



Read Heather Moulson's review at www.markaspen.com/2023/11/15/woman-black

Photography by Mark Douet

JAOULT UN ULTURO M



Don Giovanni

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte Glyndebourne Productions at Glyndebourne Festival Theatre until 2nd December.

Mozart and Da Ponte knew what pulled in the crowds: sex and violence, with a strong whiff of society gossip. Glyndebourne's *Don Giovanni* balances hubris, the overweening amoral self-confidence of the macho Don Giovanni, and humour, the pragmatism of the hapless scapegoat Leporello, his loyal manservant.

In a modern four-star hotel, there are two lots of guests. The black-tie Sloanies, are principled Don Ottavio, with Donna Elvira (Alexandra Lowe) and Donna Anna (Kseniia Proshina), and The Commendatore, Anna's father. Then the chavs (Glyndebourne Chorus having energetic fun), clad in TK Maxx's best, out celebrating the forthcoming wedding



of Zerlina and Massetto. There is quite a bit of naughtiness, the girls' plastic falsies a cheeky come-on.



Don Giovanni is not the jack-the-lad likable rouge. Andrei Bondarenko plays him as devoid of scruples, a brash *nouveau-riche*, showing no remorse about killing The Commendatore. His moto, being faithful to one deceives the others, epitomises Giovanni's shallow cocky attitude to women.

The leavening with humour falls to Leporello. Sam Carl, with hangdog horn-rims and droopy moustache, takes on the role with vigorous knockabout physically. During Leporello's famous "madamina" aria, the catalogue of Giovanni's 2,065 conquests, the hotel's pictures simultaneously flip from landscapes to naked women's breasts in all shapes and sizes ... but faceless women.

To Don Giovanni, marriage is a sacrament he is willing to desecrate. A stage-filling wedding cake arrives for

the feast, but he uses it as a podium for his "Champagne Aria". The cake becomes a squigged mess, a drunken debauched Giovanni lolling in it.

The statue of the dead Commendatore (resonant bass Ivo Stabchev) has spoken, but Giovanni has brazened it out. The final decent to hell is very impressive, Giovani in the statue's arms disappearing through the floor in a ring of very real fire.

Conductor, Stephanie Childress takes the Glyndebourne Sinfonia through the complexities of multiple-voice pieces and the moods of the music with great élan, in a well-paced thoroughly enjoyable performance. Director Mariame Clément's *Don Giovanni* has the sex and the violence, and the gossip. They are all there ... but they come with a health warning!

Read Mark Aspen's review at www.markaspen.com/2023/11/14/don-giov-glynde

Photography by Richard Hubert Smith @Glyndebourne Productions Ltd

BUNE BOLLOW (HEEKINESS

Mark Aspen www.markaspen.wordpress.com Expressing the art of the theatre critic

La Clique 2023

by David Bates

Underbelly at the Spiegeltent, Leicester Square, until 6th January

Popcorn and parasols, hip hop and hoola hoops, shaving foam and bare bottom cheekiness, daring aerial acrobatics, music veering from opera to Adele, eye-watering splits and sequins.

Welcome to *La Clique*, the poor man's (other genders are available) *Cirque du Soleil*. With a lot more laughs and a much cheaper ticket, Underbelly's *La Clique* has again pitched its Spiegeltent in Soho ready for a festive fling. A saucy show of uproarious comedy, puppetry, juggling, exotic dance, dazzling costumes, it is spiced with

striptease, weird and wonderful physical feats and thunderous music.





It's a striking venue: an antique Flemish mirror tent with a real circus vibe. Turn up early, brave the front row round the tiny circular stage if you dare, and down a glass or two before the show to help embrace the spirit of the event.

The evening is a bonkers mix of bizarre and scary acts showcasing an international circus of cabaret, burlesque and vaudeville. With a world wracked with war, want and weariness, this is a welcome way to throw the switch from horror to humour.

Strap hanging demonstrated by Lj Marles, striking with beard, dreadlocks, midnight blue Lycra and incongruously high heels, has nothing to do with

commuting on the Northern Line. Aerial tension straps have him spinning with giddying rotations and plunging with jaw-dropping speed. Don't try this at home.



Keeping a receptive audience in check with audacious humour and the odd insult is a larger-than-life personality and generous figure encased in leopard skin and sequins. Take a bow Chastity Belt who, true to her name, belts out an impressive selection of songs with power and verve.

There's a beautiful and delicate display of movement and dance from David Pereira. But my absolute favourite is the graceful and surreal act of parasol balancing from Tara Boom.

Yes, *La Clique* is a cliché. But it is as bright and brash as a bauble on a Christmas tree. And a beaming audience left wanting more.

Read Gill Martin's review at www.markaspen.com/2023/11/16/clique-23

Photography by Jody Hartley and Craig Sugden





The Rehearsal

by Jean Anouilh
The Questors at the Studio, Ealing until 25th November

French aristocrats at the centre of *The Rehearsal* are themselves rehearsing for a play, which is to take place during a weekend party at a chateau. Their rehearsal is impeded by romantic love - both required and unrequited - a complicated amorous and indulgent battleground in the francophone countryside.

Within the manor the rehearsal is at the centre of everyone's attention, not least the hosts, The Count, known as Tiger, and his wife The Countess Eliane. Their relationship has very fluid boundaries, with both 'taking a lover' and openly discussing and tolerating the situation. Indeed Tiger's mistress Hortensia and his wife Eliane are often in amicable and understanding conversation. Likewise, Eliane's other man, Villebosse is not considered a threat by Tiger, but rather he is the butt of everyone's jokes *dans le chateau*.

Also joining the party are elder statesman Monsieur Damiens and his goddaughter Lucile, who quickly garners the attentions of Tiger, sowing the seeds of rumbling discontent.

The Questors' rendition of The Rehearsal, then, ensues a masterclass in romantic deception and revelation, epitomised by



the final guest, the enigmatic Hero at its heart. Initially presented as a comedic figure, Hero turns towards a darker and melancholic story lurking beneath the surface. Effervescent comic lines and poignant, hard-hitting plot revelations result in an engrossing juxtaposition. Hero's story acts as the cornerstone of the overall musings in on the meaning of love, forming the foundation for every other character's own version.

The minimalistic staging allows a sharp focus on the dynamics and tensions of the interwoven relationships between the characters. Whilst *The Rehearsal* unfolds within a context of theatricality and performance, blurring the lines between reality and staged representation, the way John Tuner directs the narrative allows a far more personal delving into the lives of a fragile group of simple human minds. It asks questions as to who, if anyone, are the heroes or villains of their love stories. Perhaps *The Rehearsal's* greatest success is that this question is left as possibly impossible to answer.

Read Brent Muirhouse's review at www.markaspen.com/2023/11/18/rehearsal

Image courtesy of Questors

SPAMALOT

A new musical lovingly ripped off from the motion picture Monty Python and the Holy Grail

Lovingly ripped off from the classic film comedy Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the musical *Spamalot* retells the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, and features a bevy of beautiful show girls, not to mention cows, killer rabbits, and French people.

Did we mention the bevy of beautiful show girls?

Performance Times

- Sun 3rd Dec 2pm & 6pm: £19 (Member £16)
- Mon 4th Dec 7.30pm: £19 (Member £16)
- Tues 5th Dec 7.30pm: £21 (Member £18)
- Weds 6th Dec 7.30pm: £21 (Member £18)
- Thurs 7th Dec 7.30pm: £21 (Member £18)
- Fri 8th Dec 7.30pm: £23 (Member £20)
- Sat 9th Dec 6pm: £23 (Member £20)

Members prices - Why not join?

Address: Main Auditorium, Hampton Hill Theatre, 90 High Street, Hampton Hill TW12 1NZ

Website: https://www.hamptonhilltheatre.org.uk/



Arts Richmond offering £10 taster membership

You can get a £10 taster membership with Arts Richmond, giving you full membership for the next six months.

Arts Richmond is an independent charity with over 100 affiliated societies based in the borough.

The charity provides a wide variety of services and events aimed at promoting local arts and cultural activity.

Membership gives you various benefits, including:

- Early access to tickets for exclusive events
- Exclusive access to Showcoach outings
- Access to the Arts Richmond newsletter
- Joining a community of art enthusiasts

To find out more and sign up for a membership, visit the Arts Richmond website.



Richmond Shakespeare Society to perform comedy play this festive season

The All-Female Pallas Players, a touring troupe, present their retelling of 'Whisky Galore' by

Compton Mackenzie.

The tale mirrors the true story of the whisky-filled shipwreck on a remote Scottish island, where the 'golden dram' supply has dried up due to the war.

Adapted for the stage by Philip Goulding, come along and watch this heartwarming, comedy tale at the Mary Wallace Theatre, The Embankment, TW1 3DU.



Performances take place from Saturday 9 to Saturday 16 December 2023.

Buy your tickets



Support local artists at the Orleans House Gallery winter show

Orleans House Gallery will hosts its annual winter show from Friday 1 December 2023 to Sunday 28 January 2024 between 10am and 5pm, showcasing over 70 local artists.

The exhibition is free and open to all. There will also be special late opening event on Friday 1 December from 6 to 8pm.

Each artwork on display will be original, for sale and made in the borough so come along and enjoy Richmond's vibrant visual arts community.

The gallery is set on the banks of the River Thames in Twickenham surrounded by beautiful gardens and woods. There is also an onsite café serving delicious drinks and food.

Find out more information about the Orleans House Gallery winter show.



Early Years Students Raise Over £300 for Children in Need

Last week Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) supported the annual charitable cause, Children in



Need, through enrichment events organised by the Early Years department.

On Monday 13th November, there was a college wide pyjama day! For a £1 donation, students and staff could roll out of bed and straight into college to spend the day in their comfy pyjamas. A successful bake sale also ran through lunchtime in the main Atrium area on this day, which Early Years and Supported Learning students baked delicious cakes for.

On Wednesday 15th November, a talent show took place in our Auditorium, which featured student performers from a number of different departments. All staff and students were able to attend and support the performers and Children in Need with a £2 donation. The audience was thoroughly entertained by a range of performances, including Bollywood dancing, singing and guitar playing.

In total, RuTC raised over £300 throughout the week, which will go towards helping children all over the UK thrive and be the best that they can be.

Thank you so much to all that donated to this brilliant cause and to our Early Years department for all their hard work in organising the fundraising events!



Travel & Tourism Students Visit London's South Bank

On Halloween day, all Travel and Tourism students at Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) took part in a fun and educational visit to the South Bank in London, as part of their course.



During the trip they visited the famous London Eye, and thoroughly enjoyed the ride filled with panoramic views of London. They then walked along the South Bank of the River Thames, enjoying the beautiful scenery, impressive landmarks of London and riverside attractions.

To round off the trip, students visited the bustling Borough Market, where they were able to buy lunch from various food stalls and observe the busy tourist attraction of central London.

Travel & Tourism lecturer, Hannah Talabany commented on the trip:

"As a travel and tourism lecturer, I believe that educational trips are very useful, as they enable students to visit different places and learn how tourist attractions operate, also how they appeal to different types of visitors. Educational trips enrich learners' knowledge and broaden their outlook. We are lucky to have such an iconic, cultural city on our doorstep and this trip was a fantastic opportunity for our students to learn outside of the classroom."

Care home veterans receive special message from The King

His Majesty The King passed on a special message to Royal Star & Garter residents when he met Nurses working for the charity.

King Charles III asked Walter Chikanya to pass his regards to all veterans living at Royal Star & Garter, during a Buckingham Palace reception he was hosting to celebrate Nurses and Midwives working in

the UK.

Walter, who is Head of Care at Royal Star & Garter, was one of three Nurses from the charity present at the event, held on 14 November.

High Wycombe Home Manager, Reggie Ballos, and Surbiton Clinical Nurse Educator, Grace Nabus, were among the other Royal Star & Garter Registered Nurses attending the reception, which was part of NHS 75 celebrations and fell on His Majesty's 75th birthday.

Over 400 Nurses and Midwives attended from the multitude of backgrounds and cultures which



His Majesty talking to Royal Star & Garter's Head of Care Quality Walter Chikanya, at the reception at Buckingham Palace (Image credit: Ian Jones Photography)

contribute to the UK's Health and Social Care sector. In addition to British Nurses and Midwives, His Majesty also met a selection of international Nurses and Midwives currently working in the UK.

Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, from Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe.

Walter was invited to represent social care Nurses. Reggie and Grace, who qualified in the Philippines, were part of a group representing internationally educated Nurses.

Walter spoke to His Majesty about his 1982 visit to the charity's old Home in Richmond, which The King said he clearly remembered. It was during this conversation that King Charles III gave Walter his message for Royal Star & Garter veterans.

The reception ended with a surprise Happy Birthday song, performed by the NHS choir.

Walter later said: "I wasn't expecting a message from The King to our veterans, and I'm very happy to pass it on. It was an incredible experience, and an honour to talk to The King about my work with the charity, and the importance of the social care sector. I was proud to be there, representing the sector, and representing Royal Star & Garter and its residents."

Reggie said: "It was wonderful to be in a room full of so many Nurses. It was an honour and I felt very proud to sing Happy Birthday to The King. It's good to know he recognises internationally trained Nurses."

Grace attended the event wearing traditional Filipino dress. She said: "It felt very special that The King would choose to spend his birthday with us. It was an amazing night."

The three Royal Star & Garter Nurses had been invited to the reception by Professor Deborah Sturdy, the Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care for England.

Royal Star & Garter is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, or to work for the charity, go to www.starandgarter.org



Match Preview: Brentford v Arsenal

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's Premier League game against Arsenal

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford and Arsenal meet this Saturday at Gtech Community Stadium (5.30pm kick-off) with both sides looking to preserve fantastic records of late in London derby games.

The Bees enter the contest undefeated in their last 14 Premier League London derbies (W8 D6) – a club record - with Arsenal (W11 D5) the only team in the capital on a longer unbeaten streak in derby

fixtures.

To add further spice to Saturday's encounter, Brentford's last derby loss came against the Gunners in September 2022 - the Bees slipping to a 3-0 reverse as Mikel Arteta's side turned in a slick away performance.

Pre-match analysis

Stephen Gillett, Playmaker Stats: Can Brentford breach Arsenal's stubborn backline?

Head to lead 19 26 17 Goals Conceded 64 56 Shot On Goal 48% 61% Possession 30 Yellow Cards 16 2 0



Even though Arsenal are unable to call upon ineligible Brentford loanee David Raya, the north Londoners have been defensive mean machines on the road thus far this season.

Mikkel Arteta's side have shipped fewer away goals (3) than any team in the top flight and Arsenal have largely been watertight on their travels - although their one Premier League defeat of the season (a hugely controversial 1-0 loss to Newcastle) did come on the road.

The Gunners are a tough nut to crack and for a team commonly associated with fluid football they have been incredibly effective when the ball has gone 'dead' this season.

To illustrate the point, Arsenal have scored more goals from dead-ball situations (14 including penalties) than any team in the Premier League this season. Further, no team has conceded fewer goals from such situations in the top flight than the Gunners (2).

Brentford love a challenge, however, and the Bees will hope their fabled prowess from set-pieces can cause Arsenal serious problems. The stats, at present, suggest Thomas Frank's side have deserved far greater reward than two goals from a league-leading 67 shots from set-pieces this season.

They may be a point off the top, but the general consensus is that Arsenal have yet to properly hit their stride this season and a closer look at their numbers suggests they have literally been slow starters.

The Gunners are among only four teams (along with Sheffield Utd, Luton Town and Manchester United) yet to score in the opening 15 minutes of a Premier League game so far this season, and their goal difference of -2 between 0-15 minutes should incentivise Brentford to fly out of the traps on Saturday.

On the flip side of that coin, Arsenal have scored more goals (8) than any team between 76-90+ minutes and their seven goals from substitutes this term underlines the sheer depth of attacking options at the Gunners' disposal.

The game will mark Arteta's 200th game in charge of the Gunners - can Brentford make it an eminently forgettable landmark?

Scout Report

Arsenal flying high despite lengthy injury list

Given Manchester City's dominance of the Premier League in recent years, Arsenal will no doubt be wondering what might have been last season.

Mikel Arteta's side stormed to the top of the division last August and were five points clear of secondplaced City by the time domestic football paused for the World Cup in November, having won 12 of their first 14 games.

They stayed there until April, too. But by that point any stuttering from City was a thing of the past; as Pep Guardiola's men hit their stride, the Gunners buckled. They won three, drew three and lost three in the final nine, as the increasing pressure placed upon them finally told. They finished as runners-up, five points off the pace.

"We want to deliver success and the destination has to be trophy success and enjoyment for this club, but we have to enjoy the journey to get there," said Arteta after his side's 5-0 win at home to Wolves on the final day, which mattered little, but ensured they finished a thoroughly positive season on a high note.

The lofty league position - the Gunners' highest since 2015/16 - as well as a return to the Champions League for the first time in six seasons, attracted squad additions of the highest calibre, suggesting the north London club has completed its time away from the spotlight and is ready to ensure last term was not just simply just a flash in the pan.

Yet, while Declan Rice has slotted seamlessly into Arsenal's midfield and David Raya has claimed the no.1 shirt from Aaron Ramsdale, Jurrien Timber suffered an ACL injury in August and Kai Havertz is yet to fully justify why the club shelled out £65 million to bring him in from Chelsea in the summer - playing at left-back for Germany during November's international break has, however, showed there is an untapped versatility to him.

That said, Arteta's men have ticked along nicely over the first four months of the campaign, albeit perhaps not quite in the same, ruthless manner as 2022/23.

Arsenal collected their first piece of silverware after beating City on penalties in the Community Shield and, though they exited the Carabao Cup at the fourth-round stage after falling to a 3-1 defeat at West Ham, their first season back in the Champions League is going very smoothly; with three wins from their four group-stage games to date, qualification for the knockout stage should soon follow.

Third place in the Premier League is theirs at the moment, too, which makes them very much part of the title race that is shaping up nicely with almost a third of the season gone - 12 games in, three points separate City in first and Aston Villa in fifth.

The Gunners have the joint-best defensive record in the division alongside Liverpool (10 conceded), with both teams having lost only one game each.

Though they have coped well, injuries have been biting at times, <u>as Kaya Kaynak, chief Arsenal writer</u> <u>for football.london tells us</u>, and speaking just before the international break, following the 3-1 win

over Burnley at Emirates Stadium, Arteta alluded to the fact he was happy with the state of his squad, but that he needed everyone back and pulling their weight for a busy festive period.

"We're in a really strong position for the international break," he said. "We need to get players back because, at the moment, we have eight players not available and that's a lot. In December we have 11 games coming up, so we'd better get everyone ready."

As cliché and obvious as it sounds, the sheer number of games means Christmas will be key for Arsenal's season. Coming through unscathed will be of paramount importance to keep their hopes of success intact.

In the Dugout

Mikel Arteta

Mikel Arteta was a product of Barcelona's famed La Masia youth set-up in the late 1990s and started his professional career at Barcelona B, for whom he played until 2002, with a loan spell at Paris Saint-Germain preceding his sale to Rangers for £6 million.

In 2002/03 - the first of his two seasons at Ibrox - he lifted the Scottish Premier League and League Cup. After 68 appearances and 14 goals in all competitions, he returned to Spain in the summer of 2004 and signed for Real Sociedad.

However, his time at Anoeta was over in a flash; he started three league games during the first half of the season, before joining Everton on loan.

He was an instant hit at Goodison Park and signed a five-year deal in 2005. He ended up staying for seven seasons and more than 200 appearances.

Such was his talent that there was even speculation he could play for England under Fabio Capello, having not received a Spain call-up, though it ultimately did not materialise.

In August 2011, Arteta signed for Arsenal for a reported fee of £10m and, three years later, was appointed club captain by Arsène Wenger. He appeared 150 times for the Gunners, winning the FA Cup and Community Shield on two occasions each.

He retired in 2016 at the age of 34 and soon became part of Pep Guardiola's coaching team at Manchester City.

In 2018, he was linked with a return to the Emirates Stadium after Wenger's exit. Although fellow Spaniard Unai Emery took on the role of manager at that time, Arteta replaced him in December 2019. He led them to a second FA Cup win in four years but could not prevent an eighth-place finish - the lowest since 1994/95.

The 41-year-old surpassed 150 games in charge of the Gunners last season and is now two away from 200; a milestone only 10 managers in the club's history have surpassed.

More impressively, the 116 wins he has overseen during his time in charge represent a win ratio of 58.6 per cent, which is the highest in club history.

Under his stewardship, Arsenal have so far lifted the FA Cup once and the Community Shield twice.



Chancellor backs business and rewards workers to get Britain growing

Tax cuts for working people and British business headlined Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's 'Autumn Statement for Growth' today, Wednesday 22 November.

Aimed at building a stronger and more resilient economy, the Chancellor set out a plan to unlock growth and productivity by boosting business investment by £20 billion a year, getting more people into work, and cutting tax for 29 million workers – the biggest tax cut on work since the 1980s.

With higher revenues resulting from stronger growth than previously projected and the pledge to halve inflation having been met, the government has stabilised the economy through taking sound decisions. As set out by the Prime Minister this week, the stronger outlook means taxes can now be cut in a serious, responsible way.

To that end, Mr Hunt announced that a 2 percentage point cut to Employee National Insurance from 12% to 10% will come into effect from January 2024.

For the average worker earning £35,400 a year, that amounts to an over £450 annual tax cut - almost immediately improving living standards for millions of people and rewarding hard-work as the government builds an economy for the future.

Taxes for the self-employed will also be cut and reformed. From April 2024, Class 4 NICs for the self-employed will be reduced from 9% to 8% and no self-employed person will have to pay Class 2 NICs, saving the average self-employed person on £28,200 a year £350 in 2024/25.

Taken together, this is a tax cut of over £9 billion per year and represents the largest ever cut to employee and self-employed National Insurance. The independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) says these reductions will lead to an additional 28,000 people entering work.

Cutting National Insurance will not lead to any change in NHS funding or pension payments. Services will remain unchanged and continue to be funded as they are now.

Businesses will also benefit from the biggest business tax cut in modern British history. As signalled at Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced permanent Full Expensing: Invest for Less for those investing in IT equipment, plant, and machinery.

Full Expensing: Invest for Less is an effective permanent tax cut of £11 billion a year, boosting business investment by £14 billion across the forecast period and helping to grow the economy. With the tax cut now permanent, the UK will continue to have both the lowest headline corporation tax rate in the G7 and the most generous capital allowances in the OECD group of major advanced economies, such as the United States, Japan, South Korea and Germany. Since the introduction of the super deduction – the predecessor to full expensing – in 2021, investment in the UK has grown the fastest in the G7.

To further ensure that work pays, Mr Hunt confirmed that the National Living Wage will increase by nearly 10% to £11.44 an hour from April 2024, the largest ever cash increase. The Chancellor also reinforced the new £2.5 billion Back to Work Plan for those with long-term health conditions, disabilities and difficulties finding employment, which includes tough new sanctions for those who can work but choose not to.

The Chancellor also announced that the government will honour its commitment to the triple lock in full, with the state pension to increase by 8.5% in April in what is the second biggest ever cash increase. Universal Credit and other working age benefits will also be boosted by 6.7% in April, in line with September's inflation figure as is convention.

Further action to help families includes increasing the Local Housing Allowance rate to cover the lowest 30% of rents from April – benefiting 1.6 million households with an average gain of £800 in 2024/25 - and an alcohol duty freeze to 1st August 2024, following common-sense changes of the duty system made possible by Brexit. Measures today take the government's total support for the cost-of-living between 2022-25 beyond the £100 billion mark, to an average of £3,700 per household.

Accompanying forecasts by the OBR confirm that today's measures will make the economy permanently bigger, with growth every year of the forecast period. Borrowing and debt as a share of the economy are lower than in Spring this year and next year, with borrowing also lower on average across the forecast by comparison. They also confirm that inflation is expected to return to target in line with the Prime Minister's economic priorities.

Tax

With inflation halved and debt forecast to fall, Mr Hunt delivered on the government's commitment to cut taxes – rewarding and incentivising work as part of its long-term plan to grow the economy.

The main rate of Employee National Insurance will be cut by 2 percentage points from 12% to 10%, coming into effect from January 2024 - delivering the benefit of a tax cut quickly for 27 million workers.

The combined rate of income tax and National Insurance for employees paying the basic rate of tax will therefore fall from 32% to 30% - the lowest combined basic rate since the 1980s.

The rate of Class 4 NICs on all earnings between £12,570 and £50,270 will be cut by 1p, from 9% to 8% from April 2024.

The weekly Class 2 NICs – the flat rate compulsory charge which is currently £3.45 paid by self-employed people earning more than £12,570 - will effectively be abolished, with no-one required to pay from April 2024. Access to contributory benefits will be maintained and those currently paying voluntarily will still be able to do so at the same rate.

The cuts to Class 4 and Class 2 together amount to a tax cut of £350 a year for the average self-employed person on £28,200, with around 2 million individuals to benefit.

Business

Measures to back British businesses big and small will remove barriers to investment and help to bridge the productivity gap between the UK and its G7 peers – unlocking £20 billion extra business investment per year over the next decade.

Permanent Full Expensing will create the certainty that businesses need to confidently invest for less. A company can now permanently claim 100% capital allowances on qualifying main rate plant and machinery investments, meaning that for every pound invested its taxes are cut by up to 25p.

A business rates support package worth £4.3 billion over the next 5 years will help high streets and protect those small businesses that are the backbones of communities. This includes a rollover of 75% Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief for 230,000 properties and a freeze to the small business multiplier, which will protect around 90% of ratepayers for a fourth consecutive year.

Pension reforms, including through establishing a new Growth Fund within the British Business Bank, will help unlock an extra £75 billion of financing for high-growth companies by 2030 while providing an extra £1,000 a year in retirement for the average earner saving from 18.

SMEs will be supported with tougher regulation on late payers to improve prompt payments, the expansion of Made Smarter in Great Britain and continued funding for Help to Grow.

The existing R&D Expenditure Credit and Small and Medium Enterprise Scheme will be merged from April 2024, simplifying the system and boosting innovation in the UK.

The rate at which loss-making companies are taxed within the merged scheme will be reduced from 25% to 19%, and the threshold for additional support for R&D intensive loss-making SMEs will be lowered to 30%, benefiting a further 5,000 SMEs.

The Climate Change Agreement Scheme will be extended, giving energy intensive businesses like steel, ceramics and breweries around £300 million of tax relief every year until 2033 to encourage investment in energy efficiency and support the Net Zero transition.

Work and welfare reform

Mr Hunt set out steps to reward work, help make work pay, and reform welfare in recognition of the need to expand the workforce and get those out of work back into work to deliver growth. The OBR expect that the measures announced at Autumn Statement will support a further 78,000 people into work by 2028-29, on top of the 110,000 resulting from action taken at Spring Budget.

From 1 April 2024, the National Living Wage will increase by 9.8% to £11.44 an hour for eligible workers. For the first time this will include 21- and 22-year-olds. This represents an increase of over £1,800 to the annual earnings of a full-time worker on the NLW and is expected to benefit over 2.7 million low paid workers. The government will also substantially increase the National Minimum Wage rates for young people and apprentices: for people aged 18-20 by 14.8% to £8.60 an hour, for 16-17 year olds and apprentices by 21.2% to £6.40 an hour.

The government is reforming the Work Capability Assessment to ensure that people who can work are supported to do so via the welfare system. Changes to the activities and descriptors will better reflect the greater flexibility and reasonable adjustments now available in the world of work, preventing some individuals from being deemed not fit for work and ensuring they will be better supported into employment.

The boosting of four key programmes – NHS Talking Therapies, Individual Placement and Support, Restart and Universal Support – will benefit up to 1.1 million people over the next five years.

The government is exploring reforms of the fit note process to provide individuals whose health affects their ability to work with easy and rapid access to specialised work and health support.

Mandatory work placements will boost skills and employability for those who have not found a job after 18 months of intensive support. Those who choose not to engage with the work search process for six months will have their claims closed and benefits stopped.

Infrastructure and levelling up

The Chancellor unveiled a raft of supply-side measures and funding packages to benefit businesses and local communities.

£4.5 billion of funding for <u>British manufacturers</u> in the high-growth industries of the future, including £960 million earmarked for the Green Industries Growth Accelerator to support clean energy.

The government has published its full response to the Winser review and Connections Action Plan, which will cut grid access times for larger projects by half, halve the time to build major grid upgrades and offer up to £10,000 off electricity bills over 10 years for those living closest to new transmission infrastructure.

Three advanced manufacturing Investment Zones will be established in Greater Manchester, East Midlands, and West Midlands – together generating £3.4 billion of private investment and creating 65,000 high-quality jobs within the next decade.

The Investment Zones programme and freeport tax reliefs will be extended from 5 years to 10 years, and a new £150 million Investment Opportunity Fund will support Investment Zones and Freeports to secure specific business investment opportunities.

Four new devolution deals across England have been agreed. Mayoral deals with Greater Lincolnshire and Hull and East Yorkshire, and non-mayoral deals with Lancashire and Cornwall, will boost investment right across the country and deliver on the Prime Minister's commitment to levelling-up.

£500 million of funding over the next two years will help establish two more Compute innovation centres, supporting the development of artificial intelligence as a growth opportunity for Britain.

The life sciences will also be supported as one of the Chancellor's key-growth sectors, with £20 million to speed up the development of new dementia treatments coming as part of the government's full response to the O'Shaughnessy Review of commercial clinical trials in the UK.

To prioritise those who want to invest in the UK's future, the government has accepted in principle the headline recommendations of Lord Harrington's review into increasing foreign direct investment. This includes additional resource for the Office for Investment, allowing it to deepen its world-class concierge offer to strategically important investors.



Upsurge of respiratory illnesses among children-Northern China

Description of the Situation

Since mid-October 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been monitoring data from Chinese surveillance systems that have been showing an increase in respiratory illness in children in northern China.

At a press conference on 13 November 2023, China's National Health Commission reported on a nationwide increase in the incidence of respiratory diseases, predominantly affecting children. Chinese authorities attributed this increase to lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and the arrival of the cold season, and due to circulating known pathogens such as influenza, *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). *Mycoplasma pneumonia* and RSV are known to affect children more than adults.

On 22 November 2023, WHO identified media and ProMED reports about clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia in children's hospitals in Beijing, Liaoning and other places in China. Through the International Health Regulations mechanism, WHO made an official request to China to provide additional epidemiologic and clinical information, as well as laboratory results from these reported cases and data about recent trends in circulating respiratory pathogens. A key purpose was to identify whether there have been "clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia" in Beijing and Liaoning as referred to in media reports, and if so whether these were separate events, or part of the known general increase in respiratory illnesses in the community. WHO further reached out through clinical networks for additional information.

On 23 November, WHO held a teleconference with Chinese health authorities from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Beijing Children's Hospital, facilitated by the National Health Commission and the National Administration of Disease Control and Prevention, in which the requested data were provided, indicating an increase in outpatient consultations and hospital admissions of children due to *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* pneumonia since May, and RSV, adenovirus and influenza virus since October. Some of these increases are earlier in the season than historically experienced, but not unexpected given the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, as similarly experienced in other countries. No changes in the disease presentation were reported by the Chinese health authorities. Chinese authorities advised that there has been no detection of any unusual or novel pathogens or unusual clinical presentations, including in Beijing and Liaoning, but only the aforementioned general increase in respiratory illnesses due to multiple known pathogens. They further stated that the rise in respiratory illness has not resulted in patient loads exceeding hospital capacities.

The Chinese authorities advised that, since mid-October, enhanced outpatient and inpatient surveillance has been implemented for respiratory illnesses covering a broad spectrum of viruses and bacteria, including, for the first time, *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*. This complements existing respiratory surveillance mechanisms and may have contributed to the observed increase in detection and reporting of respiratory illness in children.

Public Health Response

Since mid-October, in addition to enhancing disease surveillance in health care facilities and community settings, Chinese authorities have stressed the need to strengthen the capacity of the health system to manage patients. China has systems in place to capture information on trends in influenza, influenza-like illness (ILI), RSV and SARS-CoV-2, pneumonia and other severe acute respiratory infections (SARI), and reports influenza detections to platforms such as the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS). GISRS is led by WHO and used for the international virological and epidemiological surveillance of human influenza.

WHO is closely monitoring the situation and is in close contact with national authorities in China. WHO will continue to provide updates as warranted.

WHO Risk Assessment

In the current outbreak of respiratory illness, the reported symptoms are common to several respiratory diseases and, as of now, at the present time, Chinese surveillance and hospital systems report that the clinical manifestations are caused by known pathogens in circulation. Mycoplasma pneumoniae is a common respiratory pathogen and a common cause of paediatric pneumonia and is readily treated with antibiotics.

China has an influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) sentinel surveillance system. Since mid-October, China has implemented enhanced surveillance systems for respiratory illness covering a broad spectrum of respiratory viruses and bacteria, including Mycoplasma pneumoniae.

There is limited detailed information available to fully characterize the overall risk of these reported cases of respiratory illness in children. However, due to the arrival of the winter season, the increasing trend in respiratory illnesses is expected; co-circulation of respiratory viruses may increase burden on health care facilities.

According to surveillance data reported to WHO's FluNet and published by the National Influenza Centre in China, ILI was above usual levels for this time of year and increasing in the northern provinces. Influenza detections were predominantly A(H3N2) and B/Victoria lineage viruses.

WHO Advice

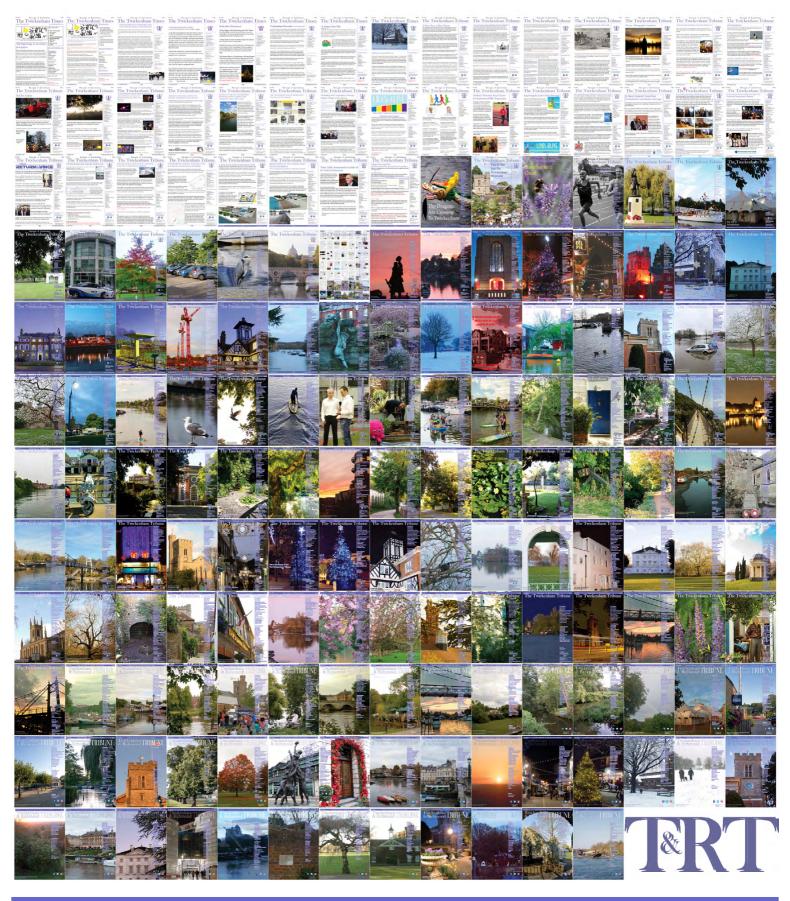
Based on the available information, WHO recommends that people in China follow measures to reduce the risk of respiratory illness, which include recommended vaccines against influenza, COVID-19 and other respiratory pathogens as appropriate; keeping distance from people who are ill; staying home when ill; getting tested and medical care as needed; wearing masks as appropriate; ensuring good ventilation; and practicing regular handwashing.

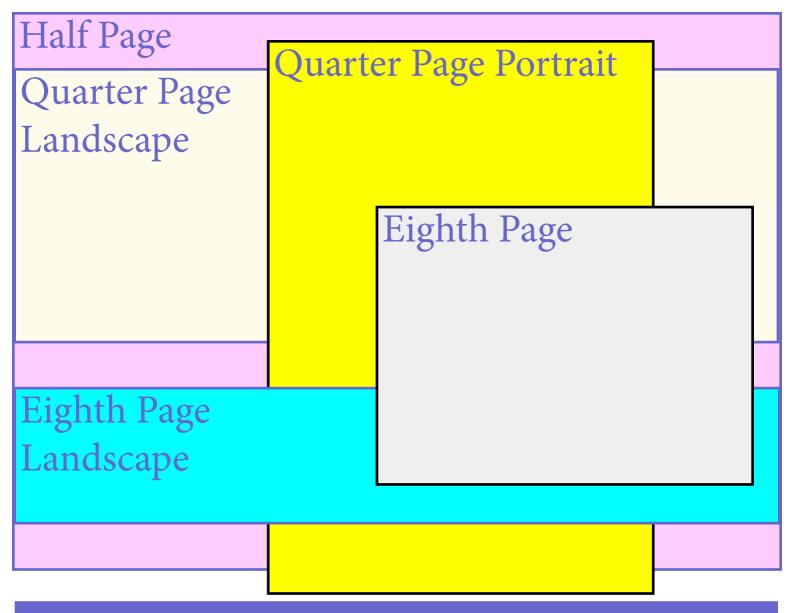
WHO does not recommend any specific measures for travellers to China. In general, persons should avoid travel while experiencing symptoms suggestive of respiratory illness, if possible; in case of symptoms during or after travel, travellers are encouraged to seek medical attention and share travel history with their health care provider.

WHO advises against the application of any travel or trade restrictions based on the current information available on this event.



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