

The Twickenham Times

COUNCILLORS VETO CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR ICE RINK IN TWICKENHAM

Despite plans for the ice rink and the recommendation of Permission from senior Planning Officers the Council did nothing to facilitate an ice rink this year dashing the rink's hopes of opening in time for school visits at the end of term.

At the Planning Committee meeting seven councillors, including Pamela Fleming who is responsible for the development of Twickenham Riverside, ignored the Planning Officers' robust arguments for the ice rink in Radnor Gardens. As well as the Planning Committee it now seems that councillors who speak at planning meetings join in the discussions on applications. Councillor David Marlow and Councillor Benedict Dias both spoke as objectors in addition to the three objectors usually allowed. Councillor Dias, whose ward is Twickenham Riverside, lives near the rink - his road had the most objections. Eight councillors who objected to the rink were from the political party which is currently in control of the Council.

It seemed that councillors believed that residents would prefer to go to Radnor Gardens for "quiet enjoyment" over Christmas and New Year and did not want a small community ice rink which took up around five percent of the Gardens.

Council officers had gone to great lengths to agree conditions which took into consideration the worries of some local people including restricting the number of skaters. All relevant departments of the Council had been consulted as well as the Environment Agency but councillors did not agree with three senior Planning Officers that the temporary nature of the event and the enjoyment of the local community outweighed concerns put forward. In fact, one councillor queried if there were benefits to the community. All credit goes to the very experienced Planning Officers who tried so hard to persuade the councillors on the Planning Committee to allow the ice rink to operate over the festive season.

So after three years of ice skating in Twickenham there will be no rink at Christmas and New Year. Councillors' visions of little Johnny tearing across the bowling green instead of skating with his parents won the day. As the councillors on the Planning Committee do not visit the ice rink during the festive season they had little idea of the family atmosphere of the community rink which has given so much enjoyment to children and people of all ages over the last few years

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Click above image to view short video of the temporary ice rink

This is Twickenham

The Streets Project - Discover Your High Street

by Teresa Read

On the weekend of 19 and 20 November The Streets project, celebrating the High Street, came to Twickenham. A pop up exhibition on the hidden history of the high street took place in Café Nero.



The main high street in Twickenham is King Street. Behind the row of shops parallel to the Thames there is a very interesting history.

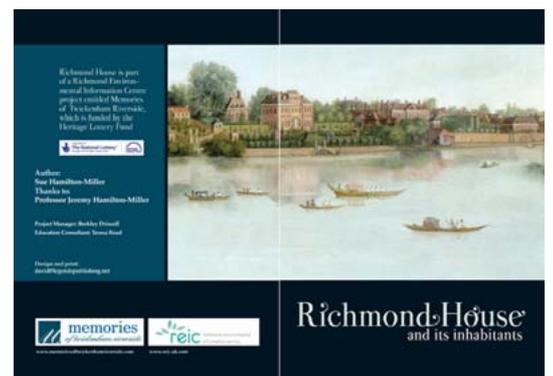
There used to be a gate at the end of the high street which led into the grounds of a large house known as Richmond House. What was not known until the Memories of Twickenham Riverside project took place was that a much grander Richmond House, built in the early seventeenth century, stood in the grounds previously.

Local people who came along to the exhibition were surprised to see a small copy of a painting which includes the original Richmond House on Twickenham Riverside. Early occupants in this house included members of the Middleton family, ancestors of the Duchess of Cambridge. A copy of Richmond House, a limited edition booklet of thirty-six pages, has been given to the Duchess who was pleased to receive the booklet with details of the rich and famous who lived on Twickenham Riverside.

An old photograph of the gate leading into the older Richmond House was on display and next to this there was a photograph of the later building.

Residents were surprised to know that so many well known people once lived overlooking our riverside: lords, ladies, countesses and even a prominent slave trader.

After the second house was pulled down local people took a petition to the Council asking for a public bath house and outdoor swimming pool to be built on the site. This was opened in 1935. Photographs of the Art Deco building were on show including photographs of a newly married couple who spent their honeymoon in Twickenham enjoying the outside swimming pool.



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The swimming pool and the residents' petition were of particular interest as there is currently space on the old pool site available for development and three thousand people have supported this idea of bringing back a lido via an internet petition.

There was also great interest in photographs of a Victorian frieze which have been hidden under a false ceiling for many years at 9 King Street. This building was used as a town hall, a music hall and later a dance hall, then as a martial arts centre.

The Victorian frieze was only available to view for one day during a Heritage Lottery project and also at the same time as people were trying, in vain, to save this historic

building from development.

There was also a photographic exhibition of the historic Charlie Shore Boathouse and the Charlie Shore Regatta for Boys and Girls which was popular at the beginning of the twentieth century and up until the Second World War. This Regatta for children from the age of twelve to sixteen was revived by the Richmond Environmental Information Centre in 2011.

Those who came along were excited to find out about the history behind Twickenham high street. There was particular interest in the photographs of the Queen's Hall frieze and the story of the slave owner who lived on Twickenham Riverside.

So, The Streets project: **Discover Your High Street** has been able to give the opportunity to a local project to show some of the history of Twickenham town to many people who otherwise would not have known about it or seen the photographs. I believe that over fifty people wrote down their memories of Twickenham at the exhibition and many more came along to find out more about the exhibition in Café Nero.

Further information on the history behind Twickenham High Street can be found at the **Memories of Twickenham Riverside** website, a project funded by the Heritage Lottery



Oscar Wilde's visit to Twickenham in 1881

by Jeremy Hamilton-Miller

On 19 November 1881, the Queen's Hall on King Street was the venue for the debut stage performance of Lillie (often spelled Lily) Langtry. She was the famous "Jersey Lily", between 1877 and 1880 a mistress of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. Lillie was stage trained by Henrietta Labouchere, whose husband Henri, the MP for Northampton, had a weekend retreat in Pope's Villa, that later became their main home[see footnote].

The second part of the evening's programme was a short play "A Fair Encounter", starring Henrietta, with a smaller part for her protégée Lillie. It is remarkable that only one month after this, her first acting experience, Lillie performed on the London stage in "She Stoops to Conquer".

Oscar Wilde was a great admirer and confidant of Lillie, and dedicated one of his poems "The New Helen" to her, comparing her beauty to that of Helen of Troy. The event at The Queen's Hall that night was a sparkling affair, under the patronage of the Duchess of Teck, to raise money for the newly-opened St John's Hospital in



Lillie Langtry
by William Downey

Amyand Park Road. The great and the good of Twickenham attended what was described in the local Press as "Grand Dramatic Performance – a brilliant success". Oscar's appearance was also brilliant, recorded as "the whiteness of whose cravat, plastron and waitcoat was relieved by a kerchief of sunflower hue, thrust with cunning carelessness into the last-named garment". The popularity of the event was evident, as it was "computed by the police that at least 150 carriages were in waiting at the close of the performance".



Oscar Wilde
by Napoleon Sarony

The Queen's Hall was also the venue for other important events, such as the 1888 exhibition to mark the bicentenary of Pope, and the visit of the Comtesse de Paris in 1889; its main use was for local events.

There are current plans for its redevelopment (approved in January 2014); these incorporate provision for the frieze (illustrated on page 2 of edition 001) to be preserved. No action has yet been taken, and as the whole block of King Street nos 3 – 33 is now up for sale, it seems unlikely that anything will happen soon.

Footnote: although Henri Labouchere had lived with Henrietta since about 1868 and described her as his wife, they were not married until 1887. This was quite a scandal in Victorian times, but it is interesting to note that Henrietta described her occupation as "concubine" in the 1881 Census. In 1891 they lived at Pope's Villa, with seven servants and a gardener.

RICHMOND'S FEEL-GOOD DREAM OF A PANTOMIME

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Arts and Entertainment

by Erica White

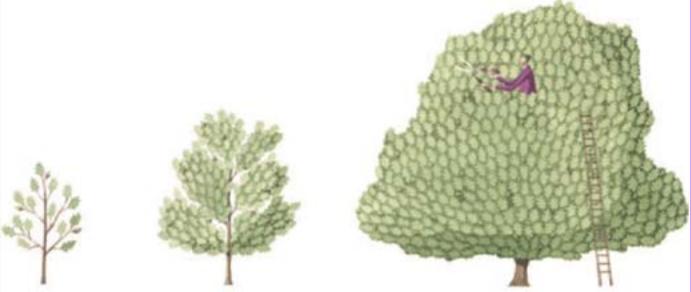
Christmas street fairs and tree lighting dominate the scene at this time of the year. Teddington High Street is already lit, Hampton Hill High Street lights up on Friday 25. Parade, bands, food and gift stalls along the street. Under cover, more stalls selling more crafts, and delicious home-made cakes will renew energy levels, together with tea or coffee in proper china cups upstairs at Hampton Hill Theatre from 5-9pm.

On Sunday 27 it's Twickenham's turn to light up and start from noon. Church Street is the place to go to visit independent retailers and have the chance to savour a Very Special Hot Chocolate at Corto Italian Deli.

In King Street the Christmas market starts at noon, with the Santa Express Train, Free Face Painting, and Santa's Grotto. The Tree Lights switch on at 5.30pm. In the Diamond Jubilee Gardens off Wharf Lane, from 2pm Axel Sheffler, illustrator of the Gruffalo books will be reading and drawing as well as signing books, along with other live shows. A snow machine will be in action. Up at Twickenham Green from 3 pm you have the opportunity to meet the Three Kings and their camels, visit more stalls, join in some Christmas carol singing and see the tree switched on at 4.40pm. Free hot chocolate will be on offer at Arthur's Bistro.

Eel Pie Island is the venue for the Richmond Art Society Winter Art Exhibition. Paintings, pottery, glassware and other crafts will be on sale from Saturday 26 November-Sunday 4 December, 10-6pm, but 5pm n last day. Free entry.

Twickenham Art Circle offers a programme of painting and drawing sessions using i-pads and tablets at the ETNA Centre, 13 Rosslyn Road East Twickenham. Take along your own tablets and Jan Lee Johnson will instruct you on how to download photos of your paintings. This is on December 3 at 2pm. Further enquiries, twickenhamartcircle.org.uk.



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Arts and Entertainment cont.

Of course, the panto season is upon us. OH! YES IT IS ! Encouraging us to get out our glass slippers is Cinderella at Hampton Hill Theatre where Teddington Theatre Club perform “an old fashioned modern pantomime for children of all ages”. This is on from Saturday 3 to Saturday 10. Matinee performances take place on both Saturdays at 2.30 and Sunday with evening performances at 6.30pm Weekday performances start at 7.30. Tickets at ttc-boxoffice.org.uk, or phone 0845 838 7529.

Richmond Shakespeare's Society's December production will be Oh! What a Lovely War. This lively classic of the modern theatre combines satire, music hall and musical numbers. This will be at the Mary Wallace Theatre on Twickenham Embankment from Saturday 10-Saturday 17 December. Tickets at richmondshakespeare.org.uk, or phone 8744 0547.

At the Landmark Arts Centre in Teddington the Thames Philharmonia are in concert on Saturday 3 December, and on Sunday 4 Chamberhouse Winds present The Snowman in Concert. Don't miss Carols by Candlelight at this venue on Saturday 17. Information from www.landmarkartscentre.org.



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Finally, Twickenham Museum at 25 The Embankment, unveils its new Exhibition, Working for a Living in Twickenham, Whitton, Teddington and the Hamptons, on 3 December. Photographs, artefacts, catalogues and much more on display. Opening hours, Tuesday 11-3pm, Saturday 11-3pm, Sunday 2-4pm. www.twickenham-museum.org.uk

The Twickers Foodie

A new regular column coming soon, featuring reviews and news on restaurants, cafes and all things foodie!

Whitton Station

Passengers using Whitton station will now benefit from £5 million worth of upgrades at their station, after Network Rail's route managing director, Becky Lumlock, officially marked the completion of the final phase of the upgrade – a new, fully-accessible footbridge – alongside MP for Twickenham, Dr Tania Mathias, and representatives from Richmond Borough Council, the Rugby Football Union and South West Trains.

The new bridge, which also provides two lifts for passengers, was completed in November 2016 and is the final phase of the improvements which began in March 2015.

During this time, the enormous investment in the station has provided passengers with refurbished platforms and canopies as well as a completely refurbished station building, a new fully-accessible toilet and an improved station forecourt and cycle racks.

The opening event was led by Becky Lumlock, route managing director at Network Rail, who commented: "Our Railway Upgrade Plan is delivering better stations and better journeys across the region, and the £5 million that has been invested here will make a real difference to passengers, providing them with a more pleasant and more welcoming station.

"The number of passengers using the railway is growing at a fantastic rate, and by investing in making the railway more accessible we can help to make sure that everyone can take advantage of the improvements we're making."



Richmond Council's Cabinet Member Highways and Streetscene, Cllr Peter Buckwell, said: "We have worked tremendously hard over the years with our partners at Network Rail and the RFU to help make this major £5million improvement programme happen at Whitton station. Today's official unveiling of this new, fully accessible footbridge is a proud day for us and marks the completion of the final phase of these upgrades.

"The new bridge provides two lifts for passengers and since the work began in March 2015 our £450k investment alongside a similar amount from the RFU, has helped to provide passengers with refurbished platforms and canopies and a new station building which houses a new ticket office, new retail unit, new accessible toilet and an improved station forecourt and cycle racks.

Chris Donnelly, community engagement officer for the RFU, said: "The RFU invests significantly in the local community and will continue to do so. Many of our neighbours and supporters use Whitton station, and we were delighted to be able to contribute to these improvements. We hope the upgrade encourages more visitors to come to Whitton and to use the fantastic local businesses and high street."

The investment at Whitton station was delivered jointly by Network Rail, the DfT, Richmond Borough Council and the Rugby Football Union (RFU).

Adam Piddington, customer service director for South West Trains, said: "The upgrade of station facilities at Whitton is great news for all of our passengers.

"The refurbished platforms and canopies will benefit everyone, especially during autumnal and winter weather months, and the new footbridge and lifts will ensure that the station is as accessible as possible.

"We will continue to work with industry partners to improve accessibility across the South West Trains network."

Sport Richmond – Supporting Voluntary Sector Sport in the Community

Sport Richmond is the independent forum for sport in the borough and was established to help clubs and other sport and recreation organisations to increase the opportunity for a wide variety of local people of all ages to play sport and engage in physical activity that contributes to the health and well-being of the community.



In a borough with no traditional community sports centre the voluntary sector plays a big role in providing places to play sport and Sport Richmond endeavours to increase the capacity of the local clubs – through advice and training, through intervention and negotiation around the use of school and other premises, most recently an extension to the community use access at Waldegrave School and access to Christs School for Richmond CC and to support planning applications where clubs are improving their own facilities to get more people playing sport such as sports lighting for Twickenham LTC.

The successful partnership between the public, education and voluntary sectors has enabled Richmond to be one of the most consistently successful areas in terms of adults playing sport and recently this has been reflected too amongst younger people and also with the successes at London Youth Games.

These are times of change across the sporting network with new policy from Government and Sport England with a greater emphasis and consequently financial support for the health and well-being outcomes. With the loss of a key post in the local authority Sport Richmond and its member clubs will be working even more to deliver these outcomes for the whole community. Recent success with the bowls clubs has reversed an earlier decline in membership and we hope to extend this in partnership with Age UK.

In an Olympic and Paralympic year Sport Richmond has continued to support young aspiring athletes from a range of sports with small grants of up to £500 and has been encouraged by their success on the international stage.

Sport Richmond communicates to members and the community through social media including a web page www.sportrichmond.org that contains articles and information of interest to sportspeople and clubs. Sport Richmond is happy to receive links to clubs and organisations in the borough. The application forms for athlete grants and club equipment loans are available to download.

In parallel there is a Facebook page with a mix of articles, photographs and links where we also encourage members to engage and post items.

Any questions to the secretary secretary@sportrichmond.org

Keeping our river safe

Andy Butterfield talks about his work as an RNLI volunteer with the Teddington Lifeboat crew
By Simon Griffiths, founder and publisher of H2Open Magazine (www.h2openmagazine.com)

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is staffed primarily by volunteers. While its tagline is “The Charity that Saves Lives at Sea”, it also works inland. In fact, its busiest station is Tower, on the Thames at Victoria Embankment in Central London, which receives around 500 call outs (or shouts) per year. The busiest coastal station is Poole, which receives around 180 shouts per year. Teddington station which is responsible for the stretch of river through Twickenham, had 80 last year.

Andy Butterfield has been an RNLI volunteer for 13 years and is now one of the helms at Teddington RNLI Station. As a local resident he’s a keen user of the river and the surrounding environment. He frequently crosses the lock to walk his dog along the riverside path in Ham and, in the summer, he’s been known to swim in the river or stand up paddle board along it.

The work at an inland station such as Teddington naturally differs from what might be traditionally seen as the role of the lifeboat crew.



“Whilst we do get boat-related incidents at Teddington (typically break downs or boats running out of fuel), these are far fewer that you would get in a coastal station,” he says. “On the river, we are often called to alcohol and mental health related incidents. These typically involve jumping or the threat of people jumping from bridges or sometimes people who have gone missing and were last seen ‘heading towards the river’. Unfortunately, we also get too many young men swimming when drunk and then drowning.”

Due to alcohol being linked to the most incidents we get as a station we have launched a local campaign, in conjunction with the RNLI’s national Respect the Water* campaign (see below for details), to provide throw bags to riverside pubs, bars and businesses in the area. To accompany this, we provide training at least twice a year to ensure the staff are trained in how to use the bags while another charity provides basic first aid training. One member of the security team at the Viper Rooms in Kingston has used his throw bags to save at least four lives since we launched our campaign. The RNLI are now expanding the throw line campaign at eight more pilot locations.

In addition to the throw line campaign the crew also give up their time to travel around local schools educating large numbers of children on the dangers of water, but more importantly on how to enjoy the water safely.

“Personally, I have long been interested in why many people who live along the river, including local kids, swim perfectly happily without any problems whereas other people get into difficulties and, sadly, sometimes drown. The main reason appears to be linked to alcohol,” says Andrew.

“People who have been drinking alcohol are more susceptible to drowning for a number of reasons. For example, they may set unrealistic ambitions such as attempting to swim fully clothed across a fast flowing cold river in the dark. In addition, their physical abilities and coordination will be impaired.” Drowning can occur very quickly, explains Andrew. Your average Saturday night reveler is probably una-

ware of the immediate disabling effects of cold water shock and that it may induce an involuntary gasp while their head is underwater. Swim failure also happens more quickly to people who've been drinking.

Peripheral vasoconstriction is a normal bodily defense response that restricts blood flow to the extremities in cold water in order to preserve heat and to maintain the blood and oxygen supply to the vital organs, especially the brain. However, alcohol does the opposite and tends to dilate blood vessels. This has the perverse effect of simultaneously making you feel warmer (as most heat sensors are near the surface of the skin) while actually lowering the temperature of your core, and hence your ability to coordinate your movements and swim.

“While I’m not against anyone enjoying the river or a beer, I strongly recommend not swimming while under the influence of alcohol.”

The best and worst of it

Volunteering can be hard work, and you need to be prepared for call outs in the middle of the night and ensuring your availability at certain times in case of an incident. However, Andrew is incredibly enthusiastic about the job.

“The best parts of being volunteer crew include being part of an amazing team of like-minded local people, being trained by the RNLI and the station to an exceptional standard across all relevant areas including boat handling, first aid, radio, local knowledge, environmental effects and more and to have a positive impact on the lives of those who live, work and enjoy the river and riverside,” he says.

But it's not always enjoyable.

“The worse part of the role of being crew is recovering the bodies of those that, for whatever reason, have passed away in the river. Tragically, with the exception of those with excess alcohol in them, the vast majority of people we recover had intended to die.”

RNLI crew are typically aged 17 to 55. Volunteers need to be physically fit, live or work near a station and, most importantly, they must be available to respond to the pager. Every station wants a good mix of men and women, but I believe few have this, so more women are always welcome. There is no need to appear with a range of skills as all training is provided. However, any boating or medical background is always a bonus.

More information is available here: <https://volunteering.rnli.org/join-the-crew-2051.html>

Respect the Water

Respect the Water is the RNLI's drowning prevention campaign. It highlights the risks of water to help you avoid them and keep safe. It includes adverts in cinemas, on billboards, on the radio and online across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

The message from the RNLI is: “We want you to enjoy the water, but also to recognise its dangers and never underestimate its power. Half of those who die at the coast never even intended to get wet. It's easier than you think to slip, fall or get into trouble in the water, so get informed and get involved. The more people are aware of the risks, the better they can protect themselves around the water.”



Lifeboats

Letters

No Ice

Dear Sir

I was absolutely appalled by the conduct of Councillors as I watched last night's Planning Committee Meeting online.

I have been following the ICE RINK application closely and it has been evident for a year now that the Conservatives were always opposed to this scheme. Whether you prefer Twickenham to remain a Tumbleweed Town or you have pressures from within the Party or certain individuals I do not know, but what I do know is there has always been a bias against a rink.

If Radnor Gardens wasn't a suitable location, why didn't you offer another areas of Council owned land? Winter outdoor activities, enjoyed by all ages should be encouraged so I really am at a loss to know why exactly you are so hostile to the concept?

Despite the applicants having worked very hard with the Planning Officer and managing to jump through the ever increasing rings you threw at them, they succeeded in bringing this application before the Committee, with the recommendation for approval.

It was clear that the eight Conservative Councillors were ready to put every obstacle in the way of this application, with desperation kicking in at times when it was feared "Little Johnny" would mash up the Bowling Green, rip out benches or scratch cars - oh and what about the War Memorial too? For your information 14 cars were 'keyed' in my road on Bonfire Night - and not a skater amongst them....

If you had bothered to look at the planning website you would have seen that your assumption that most of the supporters were from outside the area was incorrect. No surprise though that the main objectors were from Bonsor Road, where I am told Cllr Diaz resides.....

Oh and what about the precious lawns at Radnor Gardens? It doesn't matter that the Council allows Zippo Circus to churn up Twickenham Green on an annual basis and play host to hordes of people driving into the Town and parking around the Green, no the Ice Rink MUST be stopped at all costs.

When all your efforts looked like failing, Martin Elengorn in his usual fashion, came to the rescue - it wasn't to be a temporary structure but a permanent one! Rejoice! The relief on the Chair's face betrayed her attempts at acting impartial. That's it. Let's object to the application as it is a building on metropolitan public ground.

I trust that you will all note this reason for refusal when the fate of Twickenham Riverside is decided as she cannot possibly support housing to be built on Twickenham Riverside. Get ready for your next Whipping - it is a fact that Cllr Fleming is totally against a LIDO - god forbid the Twickenham Trolls should be allowed ANY recreational activities.

Parents must now tell their children that there will be no Winter skating in Twickenham. Councillors decided it was a building and that instead, families should be allowed to enjoy spending their time on the (cold and soggy) expanse of grass.

I hope you are all pleased with yourselves.

Regards

Julie Hill, Twickenham Riverside Ward

Letters cont.

What's with Wandsworth?

Dear Sir

I have just phoned the Council and discovered that we do not have our own Chief Executive in charge of the London Borough of Richmond – we have someone in Wandsworth!

I am astounded. I did not hear of any consultation for such a momentous decision. Were the residents in Twickenham sent any information about this?

Why Wandsworth? What do the Villages of Richmond and Twickenham have in common with that sprawling inner city area?

Those responsible have a lot to answer. If we have to amalgamate what is wrong with Kingston?

I shudder to think what is going to happen in our borough. The whole thing is beyond me. This Council seems to do as it likes with little consideration for the rest of us.

NAME AND ADDRESS SUPPLIED

If you would like to contribute a letter, then please email to letters@TwickenhamTimes.com

Please send your letter before 12 noon Friday

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