

The Twickenham Tribune

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Diamond Jubilee Gardens, Twickenham
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Exciting news this week as regular reader Professor Paul Leonard discovers what may well turn out to be the earliest known example of a picture postcard sent from Twickenham. We also look at Moormead on postcards, a much valued local space which sits between Twickenham and St Margarets stations and has been used for fairs, fetes, football and cricket for over a century.

I said a couple of issues back that the earliest recorded postmark on a used picture postcard with a Twickenham date stamp was 10th September 1899. Local stamp and postcard enthusiast Prof. Paul Leonard, who is a member of the Royal Philatelic Society has since shown me a postcard with a picture of Richmond Palace that was sent to the British Consulate in Austria and clearly shows a Twickenham postmark dated 10th October 1898. I shall return to this story once we have Paul's postcard authenticated by the relevant committee.

And so to Moormead, or to give it its full name according to LBRUT – Moormead and Bandy Recreation Ground. The park hosts many sports and has a playground, tennis courts and pavilion. The River Crane runs along the western side of the park and Moormead Bridge sits in the north west of the park and dates from 1902. Moormead has the atmosphere of a village green and since 1979 has been the site of the annual St Margarets Fair.

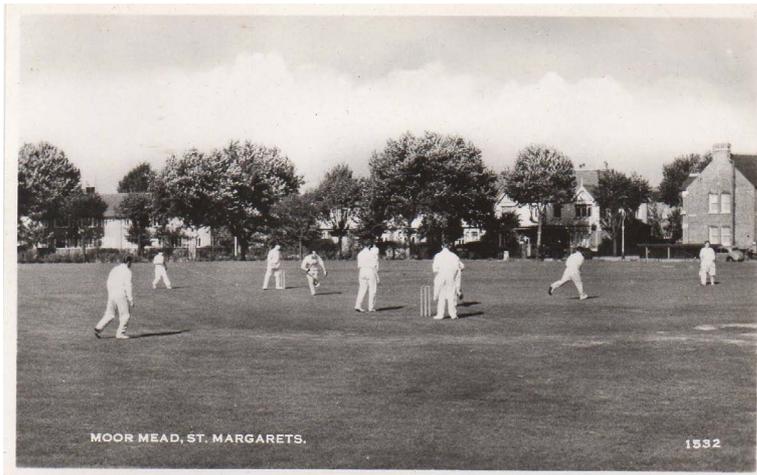


Our first postcard dates from 1910 and shows Moormead Road and the bottom end of Kenley Road in the background. The second is some 55 years later and shows a cricket match (possibly between St Margarets and someone else)! If you played in this game please let me know! Originally wasteland, the idea of turning “the mead” into a formal recreation area seems to have been around since 1893 and by 1898 the area at Bandy Close and Moormead is listed in Twickenham Urban District Council's Bylaws governing pleasure grounds.

I love this next bit which was apparently part of a proposal to establish Moormead as a recreation area in the mid 1890's.

“It would be physically desirable by providing a ‘place for healthy exercise and promotion of clean lives’ and morally desirable ‘by supplying the means of innocent recreation to counteract evil influences which are always too plentiful, and by inducing that healthfulness of body which has so much to do with a healthy moral condition”.

So I suppose they meant that if you need to counteract evil influences you should go for a walk in the park?



On a personal note, I first played organised football on grass at Moormead as I attended St Stephens School and they used it for training as well as playing in the late 1950s. Into the 1960s and after school hours Moormead became the meeting point for a couple of dozen boys from the local area who played hours of friendly football matches with coats down as goalposts from 5.00 until it became

too dark. Various these games were between 4 to 15 a side and went on for about 3 or 4 hours with some players going home for their tea and returning later. Scorelines of 65 -17 and thereabouts were not uncommon! Subsequently in the early 1960s a local football team called Centurions was established playing home games at Marble Hill and Old Deer Park for many years as it progressed successfully from the Richmond Youth League to the West Middlesex Sunday League where the club played in the higher echelons for many years. I played in their first ever match which was in a six a side tournament at Hampton Football Club’s Beveree ground. Moormead park also had a resident park keeper called Peter who along with his Labrador “Bruce” made sure that we didn’t contravene too many by-laws! Happy days!

If you are a postcard enthusiast please diary Saturday February 10th as there will be a postcard fair in Teddington. More details nearer the time.

If you have any postcards to dispose of, any comments on this subject, or ideas for future articles, please drop me a line at alanwinter192@hotmail.com

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07875 578398

Tucked away down the side of Tesco in Richmond, nestling beside the church, is – in my opinion - one of Richmond's finest restaurants. La Buvette has been quietly building a loyal local custom since it first opened back in 2004 and it serves some of the very best French food available locally, at very reasonable prices. It is owned and run by the very personable Bruce Duckett, who was once the 'Bru' part of what used to be Brula in St Margarets.

I was there this week for a monthly meeting of the [Richmond Lunch Club](#) – a local business-networking organisation that hosts very friendly, informal monthly lunches at La Buvette. (do check it out if you are a local business person – we'd love to see you at a future meeting) We were served the Prix Fixe menu – which at just £20 for three courses is a real steal. What's more, it is available every day they are open, both at lunch and dinner (no bumping up the price at the weekends here).



I started with the Country Style Pork Terrine with Piccalilli. Now, I don't actually like Piccalilli. I should admit this at the outset, but any time I see it on a menu at La Buvette I have to have the dish it accompanies, because Bruce makes his own, and it is so divine, believe me! It was served with a very acceptable - nay delicious - pork terrine, but for me the star was the pickle – I could have eaten a whole bowl of it! The other starter options were mushroom soup with persillade and garlic croutons or potted smoked haddock with sourdough toast, both of which looked delicious, and, by all accounts, were.



I was tempted by the steak frites with herb butter for my main, but in the interests of gastronomy, felt moved to try the Salmon à la Bourguignonne (mushroom, onion, bacon and red wine). Fish is rarely cooked with red wine, but when I taste a dish like this I can't, for the life of me, understand why it isn't more often. This plate of food was unctuous and so tasty, and the portion size was perfect. It was accompanied by creamy mashed potato. I did have slight food envy at the steak frites, which was again a generous portion and cooked to pink perfection, and also the vegetarian option looked great: Celeriac à la Grenobloise, mash potato and braised chicory.

The third course offered a choice of cheese (Brie de Meaux) crème brûlée or pink grapefruit sorbet. I confess I was more than comfortably full after two courses, but if I was at La Buvette in the evening, would have been tempted.

There are a number of different set menus at La Buvette, starting at lunchtime for just £15 (Salade verte aux noix / Steak frites / Crème brûlée or Brie de Meaux). House wines start at £19 a bottle and there is a wide selection available by the glass. In the summer one can dine al fresco in the courtyard, which is partially covered and away from traffic fumes.

If you haven't already tried La Buvette, do check it out, as it offers brilliant food at real value for money prices. And it is nice to support a privately owned local enterprise, as opposed to one of the many chains that are in danger of turning our Arcadian haven into a faceless replica of so many other British high streets!

A SPANISH MINEFIELD

By Michael Gatehouse

Premier Wine

Think Spain, think Rioja. Or sherry. This was true twenty years ago or more, when Spanish wines in general were not regarded as highly as those from France and Italy, and with the emergence of the New World were largely ignored. There were of course exceptions; great names like Riscal, Murrieta, Torres, Vega Sicilia, and some wonderful Cavas, but you'd need an arm and a leg to buy these, so there was a gap between the lofty heights of the few fabulous wines, and the low quality bulk wines from regions like Navarra and La Mancha.



Well, things have changed. The 1990's saw the arrival of flying winemakers, and the acceptance of internationally recognised grapes such as Syrah and Chardonnay. Irrigation started to be used more widely, and the general standard began to rise, leading to the emergence of the indigenous grape varieties Tempranillo and Garnacha and a new generation of marketable wines.

There are 20 main grape varieties planted in Spain, and over a hundred winemaking regions. Where there used to be a dozen different wines available in the UK, there are now many times that, and there are some brilliant wines made which won't damage the pocket too much (Vega del Rayo Rioja Reserva 2011 £11.99 - An intense wine, classically designed and crafted. Aromas of ripe red berries, a touch of oak, cinnamon and spice) and from Jumilla: Juan Gil Monastrell at £9.99 - rich plum and blackcurrant characters, with delicate vanilla spice and cedar.

Whites, too, have enjoyed an explosion of popularity. Godello, Viura, and Albarino, for example, have become known as grapes capable of making wines of real quality, and white Rioja has become much sought after. Vina Real barrel fermented Rioja £10.99 - Beautifully balanced and quite delicious with floral and citrus aromas leading into a rounded, creamy rich palate. And there are lots of inexpensive, tasty, honest little wines to be had, from the Valencia and Campo de Borja regions.

But, dear reader, beware! It can still be a bit of a minefield, with some pretty grim inexpensive sludge out there packaged with medals and wire mesh. Spain is still king of the cheap as chips bulk wine industry and some of this stuff can be seen in supermarkets today. There are, however, two classification categories: DO for quality wine and Vina de Mesa for table wine. You may be guided by these to some extent. Buena suerte.



Offers and Competitions

Win a pair of Ecoffee Cups



One lucky Twickenham Tribune reader can win a pair of Ecoffee Cups in the stylish William Morris range. To enter, visit their website

ecoffeecup.eco and check out the 'Seaweed' William Morris design.

Then email us with its capacity (you can use ounces or mls) to win@twickenhamtribune.com together with your name and postcode, with Ecoffee in the subject. Closing date is Friday 26th January 2018. Entry deems permission to publish details of winner. No cash alternative available.

Winner of a Winter Spa Day at bhuti Is Jane Tuffney, TW2

Monthly Photography Competition

Win an 18 hole round of golf for 4 at Strawberry Hill Golf Club
With a glass of wine or beer at the bar afterwards



Email your photo to win@TwickenhamTribune.com

(include your name and postcode) All 4 players must play the same round.

Photos of pets or wildlife, or any scenes taken within the local villages, ie Twickenham, St Margaret's, East Twickenham, Strawberry Hill, Teddington, Hampton Wick, Hampton, Hampton Hill and Whitton/Heathfield

This competition is run in conjunction with [Strawberry Hill Golf Club www.shgc.net](http://www.shgc.net)

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Places People Play





by Erica White

Friday, 19 January - Saturday, 27 January:

EDMUNDION PLAYERS present their annual pantomime, SLEEPING BEAUTY at St Edmund's Church Hall, Nelson Road, Whitton. Weekday eves and weekend matinees. Tickets and info: edmundianplayers.com.

Saturday, 20 January - Saturday, 27 January, at 7.45 eves, at 3.00p, Sunday matinee (no perf Wed), the curtain goes up on RSS production of BETTE AND JOAN (Davis & Crawford) by Anton Burge, directed by Harry Medawar, at MWT, Embankment, TW1 3DU.

Info: www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk.

Sunday 28 January - Saturday, 3 February, at 7.45 eves, at 4.00pm, Sunday matinee, at HHT: TTC presents A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE by Arthur Miller, directed by Dane Hardie, at HHT. Heavy demand for tickets anticipated for this production of a 20th century American classic: info: www.ttc-boxoffice.org.uk.

Saturday, 27 January. at 7.30 for 8.00pm: HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, The Green, TW2 presents their second Community Concert, RAISE THE ROOF, featuring local talent from the community. This is a fund-raiser for roof repairs, hence tom bola, raffle, and bar for refreshments. Tickets @ £10/£3 and info: www.holytrinity.org.uk.

Tuesday, 23 January, at 8.00pm: the redoubtable GERMAINE GREER presents her WOMEN FOR LIFE talk at THE EXCHANGE, Community Arts Centre opposite Twickenham Station. Tickets and info: exchangetwickenham.co.uk; www.ticketsourceco.uk.

Friday, 26 January, at 8.00pm: TRAILS AND TRIBULATIONS Folk music featuring MARK SIMPSON, guitarist, singer and songwriter: and supper

at LAC. Tickets and info: www.landmarkartscentre.org.uk.

Sunday, 28 January at 2.30 pm: ANTHEA FRY presents AN AFTERNOON AT THE THEATRE. Music from opera and ballet. Info: www.landmarkartscentre.org.uk.

Tuesday, 23 January at 8.00pm: TWICKENHAM JAZZ CLUB host DAVE HAMMER'S "LITTLE BIG HORN"; info: twickenhamjazzclub.co.uk.

Thursday, 25 January at 8.00pm: EEL PIE CLUB rocks with THE ROLLIN' STONED, "The Best Rock'n'Roll Tribute Band in the World" at THE CABBAGE PATCH, London Road.TW1. Info: www.eelpieclub.com.

TWICKENHAM MUSEUM welcomes visitors, after its refit, on Tuesdays, 11-00am-3.00p; Saturdays, 11.am-3.00pm, Sundays, 2.00pm-4.00pm.

Early notice of something completely different: FINE ART & ANTIQUES AUCTIONS at Normansfield Theatre: Series begins Saturday, 10 February and monthly thereafter, conducted by Hansons of Hampton Court Village Fine Arts. Info: www.langdondowncentre.org.uk.

Abbreviations: HHT: Hampton Theatre Club; LAC; Landmark Arts Centre; MWT: Mary Wallace Theatre; RSS: Richmond Shakespeare Society; TTC: Teddington Theatre Club.



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darryl parkin

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The council continues to plough on with its unpopular planning application for Twickenham Riverside, with the single goal of having the whole sorry mess wrapped up and in place before the elections on 3rd May.

Having completed extensive faux 'consultations' the end result is a bland 'business park' style housing estate, which offers nothing to regenerate Twickenham. It doesn't matter if the freehold remains with the council, the private flats are hardly accessible to the public and the retail ground floor can scarcely be called public space, leaving a rather reduced town square, which now doesn't even have the much vaunted fountain owing to financial consideration; what else will be trimmed off for viability reasons by the time the development is finished?

Considering the important history of the site, TwickerSeal thought that at least some form of archaeological exploration should be undertaken and so took it into his own flippers ...



Do You Know What Your Council Is Doing?

View next week's calendar of events

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5:00 pm Licensing Sub-Committee	9:30 am North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 7:00 pm Council	7:00 pm Children and Young People with Disabilities and Learning		

Of particular interest at the council meeting:

Mr Alexandre Andrews has given notice to ask the Joint Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Business and Community:

“Will the Cabinet Member provide an update on progress with the parking study of Twickenham and whether it will be possible to remove some of the parking spaces from the Embankment?”

Councillor Roberts has given notice to ask the Leader of the Council:

“Does he agree with the Cabinet Member for the Environment who, at the Twickenham Rediscovered Scrutiny Panel, claimed spending £700,000 of taxpayers' money on Stage 4 RIBA designs for a project which may never be delivered in its current form was an appropriate use of taxpayers' money?”

Twickenham Riverside Housing Development

Cabinet 18 January Item 9

<https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MIId=4218>

This report provides Cabinet with an update on the proposed redevelopment of the Twickenham Riverside (former pool) site and 1, 1A, 1B King Street and 2/4 Water Lane, Twickenham to deliver a high quality, mixed-use, town centre development as per the aims set out in the Twickenham Area Action Plan (TAAP).

The report seeks approval of the recommendation that the Council procure a building contractor via a two-stage Design and Build process, via a recognised framework compliant with European legislation and Local Authority Contract Standing Orders and delegates all decisions in respect to the appointment of a contractor to the Director of Environment and Community Services following consultation with the Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive and the Head of Legal Services.

Increase in Fly-Tipping

The Twickenham Tribune has reported fly-tipping in the borough but it seems this is a national problem.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/fly-tipping-cases-increase-to-more-than-a-million-js0bbdngd>

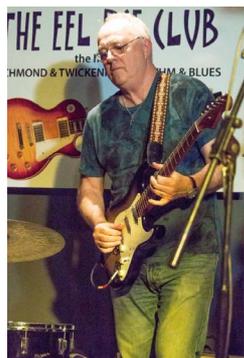


Eel Pie Club, The Cabbage Patch, Twickenham, 11th January

Review by Vince Francis

A welcome return to the Eel Pie Club last Thursday, to see the first gig of the year featuring BluesClub. I wouldn't claim to be an aficionado of the genre, but, as a sometime guitar player, I'm well aware of the history of blues music and how it has influenced much of the popular music of western culture, including Jazz, Folk and Country & Western. Apart from all that, I do enjoy the occasional immersion in the baptismal font that is a live blues gig.

On this particular evening, the BluesClub's stellar line up was: Guy Fletcher - Keys and Steel Guitar; William Topley - Vocals; Peter Hope-Evans - Harmonica and Jew's Harp; Paul Beavis - Drums; Robbie McIntosh - Guitar; Elliott Randall - Guitar; and Alan Rogan - Fender Bass. All of these have a very respectable CV and this was demonstrated in the opening number, a cool version of Taj Mahal's 1968 track She Caught the Katy, probably most famously known for underscoring the introduction to the 1980 film The Blues Brothers.



Peter Hope-Evans deserves a mention for staying power on harmonica and Jew's harp. Always in there with an appropriate musical flourish to underpin the number and ready to step forward as required. I also liked drummer Paul Beavis's work: crisp, enthusiastic and, again, ever ready with a tasteful fill to drive matters forward. But, overall, it feels churlish to critique musicians of this standard and experience in detail. Suffice it to say that this is a band that admirably demonstrates what professional standard live playing should be.

Of the numbers, the standouts for me were the trance like, Latin-influenced Meet Me at the Clubhouse, the whacky, cross-rhythmed I'm Drunk and the very tasty lap steel work from Guy Fletcher on Bring It to Jerome.

I don't know if I imagined this, but I felt there was a further nod to the area's illustrious blues past in William Topley's vocals. I thought he sounded a bit like Long John Baldry - and I intend that as a compliment. Baldry and his Hoochie Coochie Men band were regulars at the Eel Pie Island Hotel in the 60s and the legend goes that Baldry provided the launch pad for Rod Stewart's career, having heard him busking at Twickenham Station.

And a final thought. I don't want to guess at the average age, but looking around the audience, I was struck at one point by the soft shimmer of grey ponytails nodding sagely to old school riffs in the dimmed lights. I do wonder what's going to happen to this music when this generation of performers and fans finally hangs up their Strats. I said earlier that there is a fairly healthy scene at the moment, with some brilliant young players, such as John Mayer coming through. I hope they continue to acknowledge the roots - of the music, that is.

Read more of Vince Francis' review at www.markaspen.wordpress.com/2018/01/16/bluesclub

Photos by Pat Stancliffe

Electrical Appliances Special Collection

Richmond residents have set a new record by recycling 1,882 small electrical items during January's WEEE collection held by the Council and the West London Waste Authority.

In just one week, these small electrical items with a combined weight of 1,640kgs were deposited at the Civic Centre's collection point, making it the most successful WEEE collection ever.

Anyone who still has old or broken small electrical items that they wish to get rid of can do so all year round at a number of disposal points across the borough. Items can be taken to Townmead Household Waste and Recycling Centre in Kew, or to Twickenham Library or Ham Library. Small electrical items can also be collected when booking a bulky waste collection.

CLlr Pamela Fleming, Cabinet Member for Environment said: "The collections we run throughout the year have always proved popular but I am delighted that everyone in Richmond is getting on board in recycling rather than throwing away their electrical items.

"It makes a huge difference to the environment and means fewer raw materials need to be used in the manufacture of new goods and precious metals are used again.

"If you missed our collection in January, don't worry you can take your old, broken or unwanted electrical goods to one of our drop off sites at any time throughout the year and I encourage you to do so."



Photo by Berkley Driscoll

There Be No Dragons on Twickenham Riverside

Costs involved in closing roads for events have soared enormously since the amalgamation of LBRuT and Wandsworth Borough.

The cost of bringing dragon boats to Twickenham has also risen considerably in recent years but up until last year the Council had helped with the costs of road closures for "legacy" community events. However, things have changed with an estimate of over £4,000 alone for closing a small stretch of road and it seems that the Council sub-contracted Event organization even charges for the use of the tow path.



Such costs are beyond the scope of even the most generous sponsors so it looks as though river events will once again become a thing of the past.

Event procedure introduced in the last few years also means that local residents can object to events taking place, so if the Council builds the proposed housing estate on Twickenham Riverside any proposed events might meet the same fate as the dragons.

TwickerTape - News in Brief

RG. I. PR. A. AJ. SS. I. ST. SF. I. PR.
200.81². 66.92³. 20.99. 161⁵. 76

Friends Of the River Crane Environment have received an update from Richmond Council about the path through Twickenham Rough. Details at https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1523250427724128&id=291707220878461&ref=m_notif¬if_t=notify_me_page

Rock Salt

On Saturday 20th January the Council will once again be offering residents the option to collect up to 50kg of free rock salt to assist in the clearance of footpaths and to make areas safer for their use. Details at https://www.richmond.gov.uk/council/news/press_office/older_news/january_2018/another_chance_at_risk_of_slipping

(Eds note: Please remember the dangers of Rock Salt to cats and dogs to whom it is toxic if they lick it off their paws and can burn their paws if it remains on them)

QUIETWAY

With funding from TfL, Richmond Council has launched a consultation on revised proposals for a new 'Quietway' route in Ham. The route comes from the neighbouring borough of Wandsworth, through Richmond Park and via Ham Gate towards Teddington Lock footbridge.

This "Quietway" is part of a planned network of high-quality, well-signed cycle routes throughout London, mostly using less-trafficked streets. The "Quietways" are primarily aimed at new cyclists, and those who would prefer to cycle on quieter routes at a gentler pace.

In many places the "Quietways" will only require route signs and road markings, but some sections will require further measures to improve the safety of cyclists using the routes. The Council carried out a consultation on initial proposals for the scheme last year. Initially plans included extending the Quietway through Teddington High Street. However, following a review of the route, comments received and a review of funding, the council has decided not to continue with this stretch of road as part of the Quietway scheme. *(More details will be available in next week's issue)*

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CHRIS MURPHY PRACTICE

River Crane Sanctuary



This Week's Photos from the River Crane Sanctuary

<http://view.email.rspb.org.uk>

The RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch begins next Saturday 27th January so get ready by preparing some water and food sources in your garden to attract our feathered friends.

Alternatively, find a spot along the River Crane Sanctuary route to sit for a while and record what you see. eg. (Photo of Moorhen on our recent walk). We have been very lucky to see a Kingfisher by The Meadway Bridge towards Trafalgar School Playing fields and a host of chirpy sparrows on the trees and hedgerows.

Photos of recent visitors are the Blackcap and a Majestic looking Seagull. The lovely colours of the river trees are also worth taking some time to stand and stare. Our album on River Crane Sanctuary flickr has more photos and videos of the wealth of wildlife on our doorstep.



The River Crane Sanctuary Under Threat <http://e-voice.org.uk/rcs/>

Outdoor Swimming



Our thanks to Alan Winter for the postcard of bathing at Palm Beach, Taggs Island <http://lidosalive.com/palmbeach.html>



A new video - about outdoor swimming - is now available on <http://lidosalive.com/lidos.html>

Research so far has shown a keen interest in outdoor swimming on the Twickenham side of the borough which, in the past, has included swimming in the Thames as well as the outdoor pools.

Little has been discovered on the Richmond side of Thames apart from Richmond Baths: Pools on the Park. The project team would love to hear any stories from Richmond. Please write to contact@LidosAlive.com

Students Explore the History of Twickenham Riverside

Students at Richmond upon Thames College are looking at local events and local history for their projects in architectural studies. The projects include a bridge from Ham to Eel Pie Island and a lido in the Twickenham area.

Eight students and two lecturers were given a tour of Diamond Jubilee Gardens (site of the former Twickenham Lido) and the surrounding area by Professor Jeremy Hamilton-Miller, a trustee of the Gardens. Historical photographs of the area were displayed on portable boards in the Gardens so students could compare the area many years ago to developments today.

The Tribune was on hand to record the event and to give the students a tour of the island.

To further their research the students will be visiting a lido of historical and architectural interest on Tuesday and on Friday Professor Hamilton-Miller will be giving a presentation on archival research in relation to renovation projects.

Historical information and photographs of the area can be seen on the Memories of Twickenham Riverside website, a Heritage Lottery project. <http://www.memoriesoftwickenhamriverside.com>



Pools On The Park opening Hours

Users of the outdoor pool at Pools on the Park in Richmond will be able to benefit from increased opening times over the winter months as the popularity of outdoor swimming flourishes in the borough.

From Monday 5th February 2018 the pool will be open from 6.30am to 11.00am, Monday to Friday, and from 7.00am to 2.00pm on a Saturday and Sunday. In response to customer feedback, Pools on the Park has invested in a greater number of staff to ensure the pool can open for extra hours during the winter season.

Vince Cable Presses for Help for local Deaf Children

Vince Cable MP has taken up the cause of over 200 deaf children in Richmond Borough (and 50,000 in the UK) who currently don't receive the support, in the early years, of which technology is now available.

Vince Cable recently attended a reception in Parliament organised by the National Deaf Children's Society which briefed MPs on how a national fund (the Special Premium Capital Fund) can be used by local councils to equip many young children with audio aids.

These can, if used at home, transform the capacity of deaf children to converse.

Speaking after the event Vince Cable said:

"My understanding is that Richmond Council is one of these which has not made use of the scheme, it should. The quality of life of many children could be transformed."

Nicola Ward, London Regional Director at the National Deaf Children's Society said:



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"Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council is one of 54% of councils in England who do not consistently provide deaf children in the early years with this transformational technology to use at home. With the Department for Education making funding available for this through the Special Provision Capital Fund, local authorities like Richmond upon Thames will now be able to fund this vital technology."

Nicola Ward went on to say that "As this research shows, funding radio aids will have a huge impact on so many deaf children locally, helping them to hear their parents more clearly, allowing them to thrive, acquire language at a faster rate, and to help them achieve just as well as their hearing friends."



by Rian Flatley

Noel Coward Studio, Hampton Hill Theatre

Until 20th January

Review by Genni Trickett

If you could see into your future, even for fifteen seconds, would you do it? What do you think you would see? Would fifteen seconds be enough?

Such are the musings of Faye, a feisty, Irish octogenarian currently residing in The Pines nursing home. It seems a strange train of thought for a lady of advanced years; after all, how far ahead would she be able to see? But Faye and her friends Lena and Tempie prefer to live on Memory Lane rather than in The Pines, and who can blame them?

As they settle down with an endless supply of tea, their routine demolition of the crossword is interwoven with reminiscences, flights of fancy and confidences. These ladies have been through a lot over the years. There have been happy times, hard times and devastating times, and they have faced them all with fortitude. They are survivors. Through monologues, flashbacks and song, we are privileged to push aside the curtain of time and peep into their lives.



Top-billing clearly goes to Faye, played with mercurial brio by Teresa Jennings. She talks the most, says deliberately provocative and outrageous things and is clearly used to being the centre of attention. In other hands the more muted Tempie and Lena might have faded entirely into the background; however, Clare Gollop and Kate Winder are not about to let that happen. Gollop's Tempie hides a kind heart beneath a gruff exterior, and Winder, as Lena, has the smile of an angel – appropriately, as it happens. Writer Rian Flatley's sparkling, witty dialogue is entertaining, but the gentle humanity of the script is what allows all three actresses to make their characters real, three-dimensional people. Their monologues are funny and touching, and give a fascinating glimpse into a time long past.

Read on at www.markaspen.wordpress.com/2018/01/18/7-letters

Photograph by Rian Flatley

Twickenham Enters The History Books

Twickenham has been designated one of the country's 100 most important historical places. Not, as you would expect from Hampton Court Palace or Marble Hill House or even the Turner House, but because of the Twickenham rugby stadium.

The stadium is classified with nine other places (including Wimbledon All England Club, Lords, Aintree, Blackpool Tower Ballroom, The Crucible in Sheffield) as of major historical interest, as a sporting venue that is now approaching 110 years old.

Vince Cable said: "The rugby stadium is the face of Twickenham in the same way as Wembley, Wimbledon, Trafford and St Andrews have come to be defined by their sport."

The choice of Twickenham rugby stadium was made by Baroness Tami Grey-Thompson, the former Paralympic athlete.



<http://www.englandrugby.com/news/twickenham-stadium-named-historic-venues-list/>

Local residents given drought warning

Impossible as it may seem, amid one of the wettest, new year period for years, the Environment Agency is warning that dry conditions for most of last year could lead to hose pipe bans late in 2018 if there is below average rainfall in the weeks ahead.

Responding to the warning Vince Cable said: "I couldn't believe it when I received an email from the Environment Agency warning of pressure on water supplies if we have continued historically dry weather. But it appears that groundwater needs recharging as well as reservoirs. We have been warned."



Recent information published by the Environment Agency:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-issues-permit-to-southern-water-for-bewl-reservoir>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/673143/Water_situation_report_December_2017.pdf

THE MENIN GATE

By Sue Hamilton-Miller

The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing, in Ypres (Ieper) Belgium, about 1 ½ hour drive from Calais, is probably one of the most well-known war memorials in the world. It is situated on the main road out of Ypres that the soldiers used to get to the front line during the battles of the Ypres Salient during WW1. The Memorial is dedicated to the British and Commonwealth soldiers who have no known grave who died in those battles. When completed in 1927 it was found to be too small to contain all the names of the soldiers, so a cut-off point of 15th August 1917 was chosen and 54,395 were inscribed on the Menin Gate and a further 34,984 names can be seen on the nearby Tyne Cot Memorial.

In 1928 prominent citizens of the town decided that some way should be found to express the gratitude of the Belgian nation towards those who had died for its freedom and independence and asked the buglers of the local volunteer Fire Brigade to sound the Last Post at the Memorial. This started a ceremony that has taken place, whatever the weather, every single night at 8 p.m. from then until now, apart from the four years when the Germans occupied the town during WW2 (when the ceremony was conducted in the Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey). On the evening that the Polish forces liberated the town in 1944 the ceremony was resumed, in spite of heavy fighting going on elsewhere in the town.

If you have a relative whose name is on the Memorial you can apply to the Last Post Association to place a wreath during the extremely moving ceremony. This can be watched by vast crowds, especially on a date close to Remembrance Day or when a Regiment is taking part. Jeremy and I in 2014 laid a wreath on behalf of the 15 men from St Mary the Virgin Church, Twickenham, and since then our research has shown that the names of a further 15 men, from Holy Trinity Church, Twickenham, are also on the Memorial.



William Hammerton, one of several Hammertons who gave their lives during WW1, is commemorated on the Menin Gate. William, a Waterman and Lighterman, nicknamed “Doll”, was a parishioner of St Mary’s; he, his wife Emily and 11 children lived on The Embankment in Twickenham. William joined the 3rd Middlesex Regiment and was reported “Killed in Action (missing, death presumed)” on 8th May, 1915. His daughter Nellie married Edouard Labeye, one of the 6000 Belgian refugees who came to Twickenham during WW1 to work in the Pelabon munitions factory that was situated on the site that later became the Richmond Ice Rink. This is where Edouard (“Teddie”) and Nellie met. In 2017, their granddaughter and great-granddaughter were delighted to take part in the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to the Belgians that can now be seen on the towpath near Richmond Bridge.

St Mary's University Update

St Mary's Appoints New Dean of the Faculty of Sport Health and Applied Science

St Mary's University, Twickenham has appointed Prof Symeon Dagkas as Dean of the Faculty of Sport, Health and Applied Science (SHAS).

Prof Dagkas will be joining St Mary's in April from Canterbury Christ Church University, where he is currently the Head of the School of Human and Life Sciences. He has also served as Director of Research and Deputy Associate Dean Research at University of East London, and Head of the Sport Pedagogy Department in the School of Education, at Birmingham University.

Symeon began his sporting career as an elite swimmer after studying at the University of Thrace, Greece, going on to complete his PhD at Exeter University on promoting greater religious and cultural inclusion within Physical Education and Sport.

He is passionate about promoting diversity and inclusion in sport, physical activity and health, and his work is concentrated on examining the intersections of race, class, ethnicity and culture amongst young people, especially those with migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds, and how these influence their participation in sport and physical activity.

During his academic career has gained grants from various funding bodies and has produced over 90 published research outputs. He has published two edited books for Routledge entitled Families, young people, physical activity and health: critical perspectives (2016) and Inclusion and

Exclusion Through Youth Sport (2012). His new book for Routledge entitled Race, youth sport, physical activity and health: Global perspectives with colleagues from Columbia University NY, and Leeds Beckett University UK, will be published later in 2018.



During his time at Canterbury Christ Church, Symeon led a large multidisciplinary team and has led initiatives on enhancing student experience, reducing attrition as well as curriculum development and strengthening student recruitment.

Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Strategy Prof John Charmley said, "I am delighted to welcome Symeon to St Mary's. He brings a wealth of experience and ambitious outlook to the role and I look forward to working with him towards St Mary's plans for the future."



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National Apprenticeship Week 2018

The 11th annual National Apprenticeship Week will take place in a few weeks and we'd like to highlight an award-winning apprentice in Twickenham that we thought could form a great feature piece for you. From 5 to 9 March 2018, the Week, which is led and co-ordinated by the National Apprenticeship Service, will celebrate the positive impact of apprenticeships and showcase how apprenticeships work for individuals, employers, local communities and the wider economy.



In particular, we thought that Sabina Enu-Kwesi may be of interest. Sabina, 22 and from Twickenham, is leading the way for women in STEM through her role as an Apprentice Lift Engineer with Otis Elevator Company, which will also help her achieve an NVQ in maintenance engineering. She was recently highly commended in the Higher Apprentice of the Year category for London and the South East at the National Apprenticeship Awards 2017 and is passionate about the difference that apprenticeships can make on young people's lives. <https://www.naw2018.co.uk/>

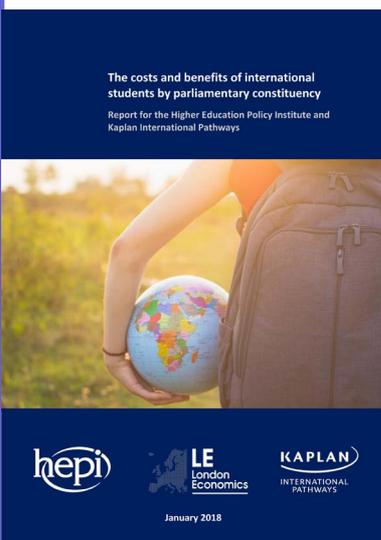


Twickenham overseas students bring in £43 million a year

A recent study by London Economics has shown that Britain benefits to the tune of £25bn a year from overseas students; London by £4.6bn and Twickenham – which hosts St Mary's University – by an estimated £43 million, equivalent to £382 per resident.

Vince Cable MP has championed the argument for welcoming overseas students despite the fact they are counted as "immigrants" in the official statistics:

"I have spent five years as Secretary of State trying – and largely succeeding – in stopping Theresa May, as Home Secretary, blocking overseas students. These students contribute to the local and national economy and help subsidise UK students. Universities are better off and far better places for being diverse and international. I want to see students taken out of the official immigration numbers since they come here for three years – usually – and then go home."



London Economics report. See page 68 for figures relating to Twickenham and other London constituencies:

<http://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Economic-benefits-of-international-students-by-constituency-Final-11-01-2018.pdf>

Twickenham Station closed this weekend

Station will be closed on

Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 January 2018

Solum's work at Twickenham Station continues to press ahead. We successfully installed the second tower crane on 14 January 2018.

This weekend there are engineering works taking place in the area and we are planning to work at the station while it is closed. We will be undertaking excavation work around the platforms, continuing the piling works and undertaking other work that is particularly challenging to do when the station is in use.



This is the last planned weekend closure until Easter 2018. An update on our schedule will be circulated nearer the time to outline what we will be doing.

Our contractor, Osborne, will keep lineside neighbours informed about any overnight works needed to ensure the new station and public plaza are delivered on time.

We would like to take this opportunity to apologise for any inconvenience caused.

If you need assistance planning a journey over these weekends, please visit www.nationalrail.co.uk

For more information about planned railway engineering works, please see South Western Railway's [planned improvements page](#).

You can keep up to date with the progress made on site, and read Osborne's latest updates on our dedicated project website: twickenhamforward.com/latest-news



The Friends of Udney Park Playing Fields (FUPPF)

Newsletter 30: January 19th 2018

Quantum has submitted its planning application.

It is now being “validated” by Richmond Council. In a week or so it will be uploaded onto the Council website when all may then make individual representations. We will let you know when that happens. In the meantime please consider what you want to submit--we are here to assist if you would like. There will be a limited time period-21 days-- for local residents to submit comments and it is vital that everyone makes their voice heard-- do not assume others will do it. To be silent is to consent!

Lets make it Quantum»s “Darkest Hour»! *

* Lord Beaverbrook who donated Udney Park Playing Fields for sport in perpetuity served in the WWII War Cabinet as a close confidant of Churchill. Let us not betray his generosity by surrendering his gift to a property developer but invoke a Churchillian spirit and

Lets make it Teddington»s «Finest Hour»!

The Friends of Udney Park Playing Fields

Please support us on Facebook: [Friends of Udney Park Playing Fields](#)

Email: fuppf.teddington@gmail.com <http://www.saveudneypark.org.uk>

Twitter: [@UPPFriends](#)

Petition: [Save Outdoor Sports-Fields](#)

Council’s Planning Application for Twickenham Riverside

The public consultation period finished on 6th January, but you can still submit your comments until the day before the planning committee meeting.

Make sure that your voice is heard and submit a comment

Visit the planning site [HERE](#)

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Places People Play



OBJECTION to Planning Application 17/4213/FUL

We object to Planning Application 17/4213/FUL on the grounds of **POOR QUALITY OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** and **FAILURE TO LISTEN TO AND RESPOND TO RESIDENTS' MAJOR CONCERNS** by Richmond Council.

This objection is based on the Statement of Community Involvement (SOI) which takes a very rose-tinted view of the consultation process and repeatedly suppresses the key requirements and major concerns expressed by thousands of residents, from the Barefoot consultation in 2010 through to the planning application in December 2017.

OBJECTION SUMMARY

The Twickenham Riverside Park Team was formed by a group of local Twickenham residents last Autumn because we were extremely concerned that each successive set of the Council's proposals for the Twickenham Riverside site was moving further and further away from the promises made in the initial Autumn 2015 Consultation and away from the Vision, Objectives and Strategy outlined in the **Twickenham Area Action Plan** (2013).

We were also very disappointed with the way in which the lengthy consultation process, that we have been actively involved in from the outset, was being manipulated by the limited choice of design options and the very limited topics/questions on which we could respond to the consultation. We have attended pop-up shops, workshops, exhibitions, public meetings and private meetings with nearly all of the 'stakeholder groups'. We have listened to residents' views at these meetings as well as on social media, in the press, via email and on our petition site.

What has become clear is that the views of the majority of Twickenham and wider borough residents have been dismissed in favour of a vociferous few interrelated stakeholder groups focused around Eel Pie Island (EPI) and Diamond Jubilee Gardens (DJG), who claimed to represent many more people than they actually do (ironically, based on petitions in early 2016 to reject the Council's approach, architects and proposals),

In general, we have observed that the Council set up the consultations to cherry-pick residents' support for some specific, often trivial, aspects of their proposals (such as the shape of steps: convex or concave). But, the Council has continually failed to listen to and respond to residents' major concerns. This is especially evident with regard to residents' repeated requests to remove cars from the Embankment to create a pedestrianised riverfront, and for the creation of a town square large enough to hold events such as farmers markets, other markets, fairs, and a temporary ice rink. These were clear themes captured in the Twickenham Area Action Plan (TAAP), which emerged from the Barefoot and All-In-One consultations.

Over just four months we have gained 2,270 petition supporters and have received over 300 comments of support for our Twickenham Riverside Park proposal. This is more than the total combined number of people that responded to the Council's last 3 consultations (with many of those responses being negative).

Unfortunately, the Council refuses to acknowledge petitions such as ours that are on Change.org (and other similar sites). We believe this is undemocratic, as does our MP Sir Vince Cable who has raised this issue with Government and the Leader of Council, but **the Council continues to ignore the 2,270 residents who support our proposals** and the 3,700 who support the Twickenham Lido proposals.

The Council may have spent a considerable amount of time and money on the consultation exercises, but the relatively low number of responses, and the large proportion of negative responses to the consultations clearly demonstrates that they have failed to inspire and impress the majority of residents with their lacklustre proposals.

The initial Winter 2015 Consultation promised 'A New Town Square for Twickenham' and 'New Public Space and an Amphitheatre'. In the Parking Strategy it was stated that 'Residents have told us in many local consultations that they want to remove cars from the Riverside. Therefore, the biggest proposed change to parking is that cars [and the road] will be removed from the Embankment.' It also advised that to compensate for the removal of parking 'Street level parking will be provided at the end of Wharf Lane' and 'There will be underground parking provided' and that 'The service road, that runs to the rear of DJG, will be extended to connect with Water Lane.' These proposals were welcomed with many positive comments, but much of the attention focused on the size and the inappropriate style of the proposed riverside building.

The **Summer 2016 Consultation** was all set to feature a revised version of the Autumn 2015 proposals, until this proposal was withdrawn following negative criticism from a select panel of residents. Instead, some themed questions were asked in the pop-up shop.

The **Summer 2016 Workshops** were open to only a small number of residents during the Summer holidays. Much the same group of older residents attended each workshop, and although they expressed some interesting views, the people attending were not representative of the Twickenham area demographic. This contravened Government Consultation Principles 2016: *F. Consultations should be targeted* - 'to tailor consultation to the needs and preferences of particular groups' such as families and younger adults. As a result, very little weight, if any, should be given to the workshop findings.

The **Winter 2016 Consultation** featured three proposals. Unfortunately, two were identical on King Street, and had only minor variations to the Embankment buildings. The third had been rejected by a select residents' panel prior to the Summer 2016 Consultation, and thus was not a valid option. A rushed decision was made by Cabinet very shortly after the close of the consultation to progress with options 1 & 2. This was done without the results of residents' consultation comments, which were published more than three months after the consultation finished. This publication delay contravened Government Consultation Principles: *J. Responses to consultations should be published in a timely fashion* to 'Publish responses within 12 weeks of the consultation'.

There was very clear feedback to the **Summer 2017 Consultation** that 66% of people Disagreed with the Council's proposed parking arrangements on the Riverside. 52% of those disagreed strongly. The SOCI doesn't mention these negative statistics, and dismissively lists 'concerns were raised over parking' as the last key message bullet point.

Rather than listen to residents' views which were to 'move cars off the riverside' and to 'move parking underground' the Council subsequently decided to address parking as a separate issue at a later date (possibly), and excluded it from the planning application. This was a highly manipulative way of removing the most commented upon and disliked aspect of the proposals so they could push through their plans within the current Council term in office. Thus, the Council had failed to listen to residents' major concern that had been repeatedly expressed since the Barefoot consultation in 2010.

The final **Autumn 2017 Consultation** actually featured the same road and parking plans as the Summer 2017 Consultation, and despite there being no specific question about parking this was yet again the most commented on subject ('Parking- get cars off the Embankment' = 46% of final comments). Again, the SOCI lists 'concerns over parking on the Embankment' as a key message without stating that it was the most commented upon subject and without providing any statistics.

Residents were asked to rate various aspects of the proposals in Quick Topics. The scores for the plan of the site (from above), and the building appearance from all four sides were both 3.6 out of 10. i.e. just a 36% approval (or 64% disapproval) rating for the proposed buildings viewed from every perspective! The SOCI commented on this consultation failure with the dismissive statement 'there was less agreement with the building appearance and proposed site plan', preferring to focus on more positive responses to the integration with DJG and the inclusion of a tiny square (fundamental aspects of their brief). This clearly indicates that the Council were not prepared to listen to residents' views, having already decided on the building design.

The Government's Consultation Principles advise in: '*B. Consultations should have a purpose*' - '*Do not consult for the sake of it*' and especially '**Do not ask questions or issues on which you already have a final view.**' Richmond Council clearly had a final view on the site plan layout and appearance of the buildings and despite highly negative responses to these aspects carried them forward to the planning application virtually unchanged.

The Government's Consultation Principles state in: '*C. Consultations should be informative*' that they should '*Include validated assessments of the costs...of options being considered*'. Throughout the two-year consultation period the Council refused to present costs or viability assessments of any of the proposals, merely indicating to Cabinet in 2017 that they '*aim to achieve nil net cost*' to taxpayers. Without any idea of the costs, residents were unable to make informed comments about the proposals, and would probably have commented differently had they seen the planning application viability appraisal during the consultation process. That viability appraisal presented a write-off the land purchase cost of £6.8 million, PLUS a building development loss of £6.0 million (partially offset by potential savings which are confidential). A potential £12.8million loss (with some unsubstantiated 'potential savings') for the proposal should have been an important factor in the consultation. Instead the Council hid this loss from residents until it submitted the planning application. This is yet another contravention of the Government's Consultation Principles.

There clearly wasn't enough time between the end of the Autumn 2017 Consultation on 30 October and the submission of the **Planning Application** four weeks later on 27 November to fully analyse the consultation results and to adapt the proposals according to residents' negative feedback. The SOCI lists pre-application consultation details with the Council's (own) planning team. These reveal that that final design discussions took place on 24 October, i.e. before the Autumn 2017 Consultation had finished and the results had been analysed. This confirms the suspicion of many residents that the building design (layout and appearance) was a done deal and the Council already had '*a final view*' on the design to be submitted to planning before the end, or probably even the start, of the Autumn 2017 Consultation.

Finally, in the Council's haste to get a planning application decision before the local election purdah period starts (in late March 2018), the Council announced the minimum legally allowed consultation period of 21 days (8 weeks is the norm for major applications like this) AND unsympathetically included the Christmas and New Year holiday period within those 21 days! The Government's Consultation Principles say that '*Consultations should take account of the groups being consulted*' and that '*When the consultation spans all or part of a holiday period...take appropriate mitigating action.*' No mitigating action has been taken, so, yet again the Council has contravened Government guidelines.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the Council's consultation exercises contravened many of the Government's Consultation Principles. The Council has sought to manipulate the consultation process in favour of their chosen, but deeply unpopular, design. This was contrary to the majority of residents clearly expressed and repeated requirements to move cars off the riverside and for a proper town square, key findings in the Barefoot Consultation and reflected in the TAAP. It was also contrary to residents' consistent feedback of strong disagreement with the parking proposals and strong disapproval of the buildings layout, design and appearance.

Despite their efforts to consult, the Council do not have the democratic authority to proceed with this planning application because it fails to deliver what they promised during the last local elections, it fails to deliver what they promised in the Twickenham Rediscovered objectives outlined by Lord True, it fails to deliver on the promises made regarding the King Street building & land purchase, it fails to deliver what they promised in the Barefoot and TAAP Consultations reports, and it fails because of the large volume of negative feedback from residents on key aspects of the proposals throughout the two-year consultation process.

The Council have failed to listen to residents' major concerns.

SUPPORT for the TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE PARK TEAM'S PROPOSALS

We now have 2,270 supporters for our #ParkNotCarPark proposals for Twickenham Riverside.

This support, gained over the last four months, is for our full riverside site proposals drawn up by a Twickenham architect with experience of major riverside developments. Our proposal features underground parking which enables us to deliver a large Town Square and a Riverside Park with more sympathetic buildings at either side of the site. By using the full site and removing the large area of road and parking from the riverfront we will improve the open space of Diamond Jubilee Gardens. Using the full site also opens up the potential to develop the rear of King Street and to deliver a financially viable plan (unlike the Council's).

Below you can see our design option that includes a Riverside Lido. We, and all of our supporters believe this is the attraction that will draw residents and visitors to Twickenham town centre hence rejuvenating the town as a whole. It meets all of the TAAP objectives, unlike the council's lacklustre constrained site plan.

OUR TWICKENHAM MP'S OPINION

At the end of October 2017 we presented our proposals to our Twickenham MP, Sir Vince Cable. This was his written response:

As a long-standing resident and campaigner – I am one of the relatively few Twickenham residents to have swum in the open-air pool over 40 years ago – I began to despair of ever finding a proposal which would command support of the council and a majority of residents.

There have, at various times, been serious plans to redevelop the site around a department store, a cinema/arts complex, a school, a new swimming pool, and ice rink, boat houses, a museum, a piazza/town square and numerous combinations and variations of the above. All attracted fierce criticism and were shot down because people wanted something else; didn't like the design; didn't like or approve of the enabling development (ie housing); or didn't like the political colour of the politicians promoting the scheme.

I share the sense of annoyance and frustration of residents that their [change.org](#) petition has been disqualified by the Council on incomprehensible, bureaucratic grounds. I raised the issue with the new Council Leader but nothing has changed. I also share the indignation of many residents that the present council, having campaigned eight years ago on a pledge to stop 'luxury' housing and overdevelopment on the site is proposing just that (and little else).

I am very attracted to your Town Square and Riverside Park proposal, which provide sufficient 'town square' space to permit multiple activities and is compatible with the modern lido concept which I also like.

Thank you for your briefing.

Regards

RT HON SIR VINCE CABLE MP

MP for Twickenham, Teddington, The Hamptons & Whitton

TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE PARK PETITION SUPPORT AND COMMENTS

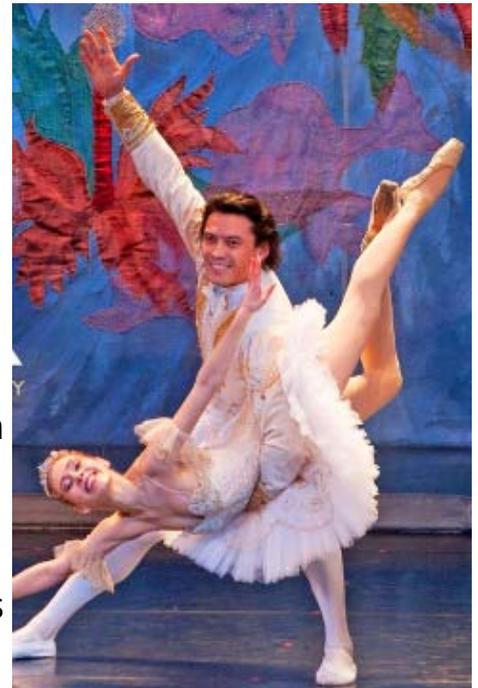
We will send the details of our 2,270 petition supporters, and the 300+ comments they have submitted, as supporting evidence to this planning application objection in separate emails.

RIGHT AMOUNT OF KITSCH - THE NUTCRACKER

Victor Smirnov-Golovanov, music by Pyotr Tchaikovsky
Moscow City Ballet, Richmond Theatre
with Swan Lake until 21st January

Review by Suzanne Frost

Moscow City Ballet is one of those companies that ride on the wave of Russian ballet's reputation for excellence - but they are not the Bolshoi. However, with their extensive touring schedule, they do bring classical ballet productions to all corners of the world and probably function as a first introduction to the art form for many people far and wide ... and as a first introduction this works just fine.



The philosophy behind Victor Smirnov-Golovanov's staging seems to be more is more. This Nutcracker is prop-tastic, the limited stage of the Richmond Theatre is full of people holding lots of stuff. Well it is Christmas after all: there's teddy bears and dolls, champagne glasses and flower bouquets and animal masks etc ...etc.

The first act at family Silbergau's Christmas Eve party can be mime heavy and Golovanov makes a welcome effort to do much of the storytelling through dancing. One of the challenges of staging The Nutcracker is to tie the two acts together: the first full of storytelling, the second a random suite of divertissement and waltzes. Golovanov's explanation is that everything from the fighting mice to the waltzing flowers is a dream Drosselmeyer brewed up for his godchild Clara, acting a bit as the BFG of ballet. Works for me.



Moscow City Ballet is keen to keep alive the tradition of classical Russian ballet. For the novice, the once a year theatregoer and the many, many children in the sold-out Richmond theatre, I think this was a joyful production with coherent storytelling and the right amount of kitsch. Good enough.

Read Suzanne's detailed review at www.markaspen.wordpress.com/2018/01/18/nutcracker
Photographs by PMB Presentations



Mark Aspen

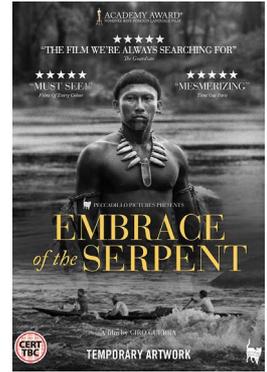
www.markaspen.wordpress.com

Expressing the art of the theatre critic

The second half of Richmond Film Society's Season comprises the following eight films at The Exchange:

30th January - *Embrace of the Serpent* (Colombia) - Directed by *Ciro Guerra*

The story of the relationship between Karamakate, an Amazonian shaman and last survivor of his people, and two scientists who work together over the course of 40 years to search the Amazon for a sacred healing plant. Short-listed for the Foreign Language Oscar.



13th February – *Graduation* (Romania) - Directed by *Cristian Mungiu*

Cristian Mungiu examines the corrupt underbelly of Romanian society through the travails and moral conflicts facing a respected doctor. When his daughter suffers a debilitating assault the day before her critical final examinations, his moral world view is put to the test: just how many strings is he prepared to pull to ensure that she makes the grade ?

27th February – *Men and Chicken* (Denmark) - Directed by *Anders Thomas Jensen*

A Danish comedy of an unusual and dysfunctional family reunion and the revelation of more than just one skeleton in the closet. When two brothers return to their family home after their father's death they meet their estranged siblings, with funny and bizarre consequences.

13th March – *Outside the Law* (France) - Directed by *Rachid Bouchareb*

An Algerian family are scattered across the globe. Messaoud joins the French army; Abdelkader becomes a leader of the Algerian independence movement; Saïd moves to Paris to make his fortune in the shady clubs and boxing halls. Their interconnecting destinies reunite them in Paris.... Award winning Gangster-Drama movie.

27th March – *Marshland* (Spain) - Directed by *Alberto Rodríguez*

Set in the early years of a post-Franco Spain, two detectives with things to hide are assigned to a remote part of Andalusia to investigate the murder of two sisters. Clues are scarce, the locals are unwelcoming and the ghosts of the past are everywhere.

10th April – *Toni Erdmann* (Germany) - Directed by *Maren Ade*

A father, concerned about his career-obsessed and apparently joyless daughter, deploys his dishevelled prankster alter ego, Toni Erdmann, to make mischief, travelling to her workplace and posing as an executive 'life coach'. A startlingly original and uproarious comedy, suffused with pathos and tenderness. Oscar-shortlisted and winner of 73 awards worldwide.

24th April – *A Man Called Ove* (Sweden) - Directed by *Hannes Holm*

Short-listed for the 2017 Foreign Language Oscar, Ove is the archetypal angry old man who spends his days enforcing block association rules and visiting his wife's grave. After reaching a life changing decision, an unlikely friendship develops and life takes a new path. A funny, tragic and heart-warming transformation of an angry, solitary and regimented old man.

<https://www.richmondfilmsoc.org.uk/>



HITCHCOCK OR BENNETT ?? - MARIE

by Sarah MacGillivray and Phil Bartlett

Old Sorting Office, Barnes, 11th and 12th January

Review by Eleanor Lewis



Mark Aspen

www.markaspen.wordpress.com

Expressing the art of the theatre critic

The Leviathan we call The Arts has to keep moving forward but it's a frustrating and only intermittently rewarding working life for the actors and writers who make that happen. A sweaty pub is often a long way from the thrill of the West End. However, the OSO gives a fresh stage to these key workers of the arts.

Sarah MacGillivray and Phil Bartlett's new play Marie is mainly concerned with one such key worker. Though described in the publicity as "a darkly comic new play inspired by the life of Mary Queen of Scots", it isn't really. It's definitely a darkly comic new play but whether it's inspired so much by the life of Mary Queen of Scots or the grindingly frustrating life of young actors trying to get a break is at least a moot point.

The play is the story of two women. Chirpy landlady Liz runs a London pub with her husband Barry. Marie, an aspiring actress from Edinburgh, arrives at the pub after a difficult first couple of hours in the capital and is given a job and a home. From then on Marie pursues acting jobs and Liz runs weekly history nights at the pub at which people turn up as costumed, historical characters and do some sort of 'turn'.



Marie encounters the usual difficulties whilst going to auditions, including a misdescribed porn film, but begins to enjoy playing Mary Queen of Scots at the pub's history night. Eventually a recall from the RSC yields a job and from then on there's a gentle but significant change in pace. Events begin to take their toll on Marie in disturbing ways that would amount to spoilers if described here. Suffice to say that what starts as an endearing tale ramps up into something that might have resulted from a collaboration between Hitchcock and Alan Bennett.

Being a one-woman show, Sarah MacGillivray plays all parts, switching from London Liz to Edinburgh Marie with occasional interventions from husband Barry and various other characters. MacGillivray is a skilful, subtle actor, she does justice to the tight, focussed writing and draws her audience gradually closer without making either main character needy or unsympathetic. In one of the OSO's studio spaces, alone on stage under soft lighting with only a tea towel and a glass for support, this is an impressive performance.

Marie is a great piece of writing, well performed and at little over an hour it's entertaining, funny and time well spent. Recommended.

Read more of Eleanor Lewis' review at www.markaspen.wordpress.com/2018/01/15/marie

Photo by Laura Sedgwick and Phil Bartlett

I THINK WE'VE BROKEN THE FOURTH WALL

SUFFRING

OSO Barnes, until 20th January

Review by Matthew Grierson



I would have liked to have told you more about StraightUp Productions, who are putting on *Suffring* at the OSO Barnes until Saturday, as both myself and (because she gets a say) Mrs Grierson enjoyed the evening. But perhaps it's appropriate that the company doesn't supply a programme, so cast and crew have to remain anonymous.

It's appropriate because, first, it suggests a lack of preparation entirely in keeping with the disorganised, nameless and fictitious company that is staging the play about suffragettes around which this play takes place. Second, there is every chance that the actual cast feel such sympathy with the pitiful performers they portray that they are embarrassed to declare themselves. Oh, and – third – it makes my job easier, as I only have one set of actors to refer to.

If this sounds an unduly complicated way to begin a review, it also reflects the tricky opening of the production itself. The first scene of this play about suffragettes is actually the final scene of a show about the Vietnam War, and it quickly becomes apparent that real action is taking place in a fringe theatre rather than an Edwardian parlour, as you might have expected. Once the marines are offstage, there is a riot of cast and crew, busying themselves in preparation for (fictional) director Helena Pickford's magnum opus about the women's suffrage movement. At this point, anyone who has ever participated in theatre at any level will laugh knowingly at the chaos of lost props and missing actors. Or wince.

Uptight technician Nicky, obsessed with health and safety, is a particular highlight of this sequence, and it's a shame that she remains true to professional form and never steps onstage during the "action". However, as with so many productions, this one is held together by the stage manager – in this case, nervy Kim, who conveys with beautiful precision her increasing desperation as the cast absences mount up. Thrusting herself into the role of Walter Greenslade, vacated first by a missing miss and then the star's Spanish husband, Esteban, Kim quickly builds up to gestures ever more dramatic in order to fill the gaps left by her talent. When she is told by Isabel – or is it Connie? – that women have the vote in Australia and New Zealand, the suffragette points into opposite wings, and, in character, Kim repeats the gesture in exaggerated form as though a snooker player leaning in for a difficult shot. She's only outdone late in the second act, when a false arm is deployed by another actor who has pulled herself out of a body bag that has been hidden in the wardrobe. You're not following this? You have to be there. No, really. You have to be there

Read on at www.markaspen.wordpress.com/2018/01/18/suffring

Photo by StraightUp Productions



Mark Aspen

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