

Twickenham & Richmond TRIBUNE

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Berkley Driscoll
Teresa Read



17th February 2023

T&RT

TickerTape - News in Brief

Richmond Council will waive fees for Coronation street parties and give funding for community-led events

Richmond Council will again waive the administration fee for street party road closures this summer, to help residents celebrate the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Camilla, Queen Consort, over the bank holiday weekend of Saturday 6 to Sunday 8 May 2023.

The Council will also offer grants of up to £5,000 to registered voluntary and community organisations who wish to bring together communities to celebrate or organise volunteering projects as part of the Big Help Out.

Residents will need to plan in plenty of time, applications are now open and will close on Sunday 2 April 2023.

Buckingham Palace has announced details of the Coronation celebrations which include The Coronation Service on Saturday 6 May, a concert and the Big Lunch on Sunday 7 May and the Big Help Out on Monday 8 May 2023.

Find out more about [hosting a street party](#) and how to [apply for a grant](#).

Community health bus returns to Richmond on Monday 20 February

The 'Come and have a chat about your health' bus will be returning to Richmond on Monday 20 February 2023 to offer flu and COVID-19 vaccines to those eligible, answer any health-related questions and offer free COVID-19 testing kits.

The bus will be parked outside Sainsbury's, Lower Richmond Road, Richmond, TW9 4LT from 10am to 3pm.

Health experts on our bus will be distributing a free box of COVID-19 testing kits to those who attend if they would like one, while supplies last.

A local pharmacist will be available to offer advice on a range of different areas

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COVID-19

Teresa Read

IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK

Aljazeera: Will bird flu spark the next pandemic? A dramatic series of outbreaks is leading to concerns that a mutation could eventually hit humans and make COVID-19 seem mild.

The Telegraph: Covid is back with a rebrand – and the rules have changed: The disease may be the same, but everything surrounding it – from the official NHS advice to office etiquette – is different...

Sky News: Queen Consort Camilla has tested positive for COVID-19, Buckingham Palace says.

World Health Organization

COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update: Data as of 12 February 2023

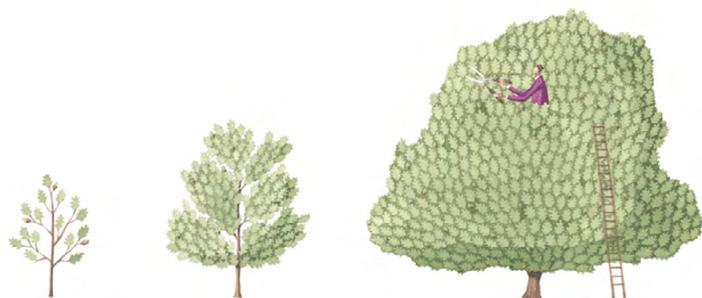
At the country level, the highest numbers of new 28-day cases were reported from Japan (1,627,259), China (1,272,035), the United States of America (1,165,050), the Republic of Korea (543,308), and Brazil (332,404).

The highest numbers of new 28-day deaths were reported from China (20,979), the United States of America (14,326), Japan (8,294), Brazil (2,426), and the United Kingdom (2,269 new deaths).

European Region

The European Region reported over 1.2 million new cases with the highest proportional increases observed in Georgia and Armenia.

The highest numbers of new deaths (in the 28-day period) were reported from the United Kingdom (2,269), Italy (1,393) and the Russian Federation (1,153).



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The Tree Agency

The mysterious rise of the parakeet

By Simon Fowler

I've had problems with parakeets coming down the chimney. A few didn't make it out alive, but the others have made it perfectly clear that they want to leave the flat NOW!

The birds are, of course, now a familiar if noisy presence across the borough. Nobody really knows how they got here, although there are various urban myths. The most famous of which relates to the escape of the birds from the set at Shepperton Studios where the *African Queen* was being filmed in the early 1950s.



However, the explanation is probably more prosaic: ornithologists believe that the original birds probably escaped from aviaries during the 1960s. There were soon enough breeding pairs to establish themselves in the wild. The increasingly mild winters and abundant food have also helped them to thrive.

The first Parakeets arrived from India by the 1830s. They were displayed at regular shows held at Crystal Palace and other large venues.

Originally, the birds were expensive and highly regarded by enthusiasts. In July 1915, George Varney, an animal dealer from Twickenham, was charged with selling stolen canaries and a parakeet taken from an aviary in Cambridge Park. He told the court he sold them for 10s 6d a pair (roughly £500 today).

But the birds had a habit of escaping. In 1898 a worried owner from Barnes offered a five-shilling reward for the return of a one-legged bird. A few years later the 'Suffragette Princess' Sophia Duleep Singh, who lived at Hampton Court, sought the return of her pet green parakeet.

It is likely that by the 1970s there were separate local flocks. In 1977, *The Times* reported that parakeets were well-known to commuters in South London. David Tomlinson, writing in *Country Life*, remembered seeing a small flock flying low at Park Langley in Beckenham in the early seventies.

In 1980 *The Guardian* reported that they had been sighted across Hammersmith and Chiswick, as well as at Kew Gardens. By 1987 the flock in Chiswick Park was being promoted by London Transport as a tourist attraction. They quickly took up residence in Richmond Park, where according to Paul May the birds were 'now easier to find than deer or a place to park.'

The largest flock established themselves near Wraysbury. In 1991 bird-watching trips were organised to see the parakeets in the area's quarries. Writing to the *Richmond Informer* at the same time Geoff Taylor from Hampton said that he had had seen the occasional birds in his garden for years, but the flocks were new. By 2004 they had been spotted in Bushy Park and a flock of 4,000 birds roosted at Esher Rugby Club.

Eventually they might take over the world. Will they then leave my chimney alone?

Night-time road closure planned for Heath Road railway bridge works

Network Rail are due to begin major bridge maintenance works at the railway bridge at Heath Road junction with The Green, TW1.

The improvement works will take place from 20 February to 14 April 2023 between 10pm and 5am.

The Heath Road junction with The Green will be closed nightly with an approved diversion route, prohibiting vehicle access only. Variable Message Signs (VMS) are positioned on Heath Road, Staines Road and The Green.



Network Rail will be using specialist equipment designed to minimise noise. However, some equipment will cause some disturbance.

Visit the [Network Rail website](#) for more information or call their 24-hour helpline on 03457 11 41 41 and choose option 4.



Dear Sir

School Streets Zone during Half Term

Having noticed that the school streets zone signage was not covered up this morning, despite Sir Richard Reynolds school being closed for Half Term I telephoned the Council to ask for it to be done asap, only to be told that a decision had been made NOT to cover the signs as the Council did not have the resources to do so! Covering signs outside of school operational times should have been factored into the running costs of this scheme.

This decision is undemocratic and grossly unfair on residents, who are already adversely affected by this zone. What happened to neighbourhood consultation and democracy? Yet again we are treated as third class citizens, unworthy of any consideration.

Can someone please tell me what previously happened regarding the ANPR cameras when the signs were previously covered and confirm in writing that NO FINES will be issued if the signage remaining uncovered or preferably send someone to cover the signs at the junction of Sherland Road / Station Road and also Clifden Road.

Regards,
Twickenham Resident

Dear Editor,

Twickenham Riverside Transport Assessment

On the Council's Planning Portal, that formed the basis of the planning application for the redevelopment of Twickenham Riverside, there is a Transport Assessment document dated 17th October 2022. In it the Transport Department looked at the parking proposals developed to date that sought to address the displacement of the removal of 81 parking spaces around The Embankment area. They admitted that the true impact of the removal of these spaces was not known and that the Council was working towards a resolution in this matter, especially as it had already issued more parking permits than there were parking spaces. The finalised proposals were to be implemented by way of an Experimental Traffic Order removing the 81 parking spaces "*in order to provide a period of operational experience and a statutory consultation period of six months along with an option to make early modifications if required.*" The results of the removal of so much parking would have shown whether there was a serious impact on the lives and livelihoods of local residents, whether they were shops, cafes and bars, businesses, boathouses, riparian clubs or those living in the immediate vicinity.

Yet just over one month later (24th November 2022), in the 190 page document that was presented to Councillors at the Planning Meeting, this Experimental Traffic Order has disappeared – airbrushed out by the Transport Department or Council. They have decided that, fingers crossed, it won't be needed and all will be tickety-boo. The Council has instead responded with a Stopping Up Order (in laymen's terms "the closure") of the Embankment to all traffic from 10 a.m. until midnight and, by inference, its attendant parking. If any objections to this Stopping Up Order are received by 2nd March then this too will go to the Planning Inspector in June.

There will be objections.

With best wishes,
Sue Hamilton-Miller
Twickenham resident

Letters published do not necessarily reflect the views of the Twickenham & Richmond Tribune, its Publisher, its staff or its advertisers.

Letters of approximately 500 words of body text will be printed at our standard 14pt font size, which will publish as a single page.

All letters must be submitted by the end of Thursday, prior to publication the following day on Friday.

The Tribune prefers letters to include the writer's name, but will publish anonymously provided details are supplied.

Dear Chess Players; young old and indifferent

By Shona Lyons

For many years (since the first Twickenham Festival was organised by my dad Bruce Lyons in 1995) we have had a giant chess board and giant chess outside our office. It started its life as an event in the festival with teams from the local fire brigade and the local police, but it was so popular that everyone asked him to keep it in the square.



For many years now we have remade the chess board by going to Alsford Timber and buy large blocks of plywood which my dad used to put tiles on originally and then when I started working in the office I painted it for many years as we had to renew the board (as we used to leave it out in all weathers) often yearly.

Then in 2020 a kindly person made us a new one as, as we were in the middle of the pandemic and were thinking it might be time to say goodbye to the giant chess as we were not allowed to put it out because of Covid regulations anyway and we thought maybe time to simplify our lives a little. But there was a big outcry and some nice chap offered to make us a new board so at least we didn't have to worry about making another new board ourselves.

And we have upgraded the conditions a little better ourselves as we now have a box to keep the chess in and also we wrap the boards up at night to keep the rain off them and so no one can trip on them in the dark.

But I have a bit of a problem because the boards are very heavy and picking them up every night and putting them away and then dragging them out every morning is very hard work for me especially as I have a busy travel office to then run with my Dad, Bruce. A few years ago, I did approach the council with an idea to repave this bit of the square and actually have set tiles in the colour and shape of a giant chess board in the square so we would then only need to store and put out the chess pieces every day. It is such a popular local amenity and it would be a shame I think for Twickenham to lose it. But



at the time the council were not very interested in that idea. I wonder if someone might change their mind about this and actually have a chess board set in tiles in the square for everyone to still enjoy but not be quite such a back breaking endeavour as it is at the moment.

THE BIRTH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

Councillor Geoffrey Samuel

The Council to which I was elected, at the fourth attempt, on 14th November 1957 in the Hampton Hill by-election was Twickenham Borough Council, created in 1926 when Twickenham Urban District received its Charter and comprised Twickenham and Whitton. In 1937 the District Councils of Hampton, Teddington and Hampton Wick [yes! Hampton Wick had its own Council] were added.

Some features of the Council are worth a mention:

- Every Ward had three councillors one of whom retired by rotation each year – so every year was an Election year.
- Until national abolition in 1978 councillors ‘elected’ Aldermen in the ratio of 1:3 for Boroughs, 1:6 for Counties. Except for mode of election and a six –year term they were identical with councillors. In the early months of 1978, having announced that I was not seeking re-election, I became the last Alderman of Richmond upon Thames.
- With all committees held in private there was more cross-party work. Conservatives acted as independents: for example a Conservative amendment to the Conservative proposed rates for the following year: two or more Conservative candidates for Mayor, decided at the Annual meeting.
- Meetings were brief, paper-work minimal. Thus a far wider range of people became councillors as they could easily combine the work with a job and a family. Twickenham Councillors included a driver of the 90b Bus, the Vicar of Twickenham, several small shopkeepers all of whom by working in the community added a valued dimension to deliberations. I am not convinced that our longer meetings and agendas of several hundreds of pages have improved the quality local of government.

In 1957 the Government set up a Royal Commission on London Government with Sir Edwin Herbert as Chairman. The existing system was a large number of Boroughs and a few District Councils all with limited powers and subordinate to the County Council – Middlesex and Surrey in our part of London, Kent, Essex and the London County Council elsewhere. The duplication and frustration involved were ripe for reform. In its submission to the Commission Twickenham opined that the ideal size for an enhanced Borough was a population of some 100,000: it was, of course, a complete coincidence that this was the size of Twickenham.

The main recommendations of Herbert – a smaller number of more powerful Boroughs and a strategic Greater London Council with limited powers [virtually none in Education and Social Services] were incorporated in the London Government Act of 1963. However on all the fringes of London small independent councils – in our case Staines, Sunbury, Esher, Walton and Weybridge- successfully fought to remain independent rather than be part of Greater London as Herbert had proposed.

All the existing Councils continued until 1965 but the new Councils were elected in 1964 as Shadow Councils to prepare for their launch the following year. There can be few more challenging, more exciting jobs than, as we all did, starting with a blank sheet of paper –no Constitution, no officers, no committees, no anything.

Twickenham was now joined with the two smaller Boroughs of Richmond and Barnes but outnumbered them both combined. As Twickenham councillors voted en bloc rather than on political lines it was largely Twickenham officers and Twickenham procedures which were adopted: there were, for example, as expected three candidates for Town Clerk [Chief Executive] one from each of the former Boroughs but Mr Jones of Twickenham was appointed. The Boroughs initially just had a number – we were Borough number 24 but, unlike some other Councils, failed to gain acceptance for our preferred name which would have been the London Borough of Richmond and Twickenham.

And so there was born, fully grown, in May 1965 the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames –our new Borough as we called it then and, for me, ever since.

Thames Water public meetings on Thames abstraction proposals

Residents are invited to attend two consultation meetings with Thames Water, on their plans to abstract up to 75 million litres of water a day from the river Thames some 300m upstream of Teddington Lock and replace it with treated effluent from the Mogden Sewage Treatment Works.

Thames Water have said this should be the cheapest and quickest way of capturing water, which will be sent via pipeline and tunnel under London to the Lee Valley reservoirs and onto homes and businesses in East London. This forms part of the [wider draft Water Resources Management Plan](#) which looks at tackling future water shortages and boosting drinking water supply for the next 50 years.

There are two public meetings to allow residents to feedback on plans, to Thames Water.

Webinar and Q&A - Teddington Direct River Abstraction:

- **Date:** Monday 27 February 2023
- **Time:** 7 to 8.30pm
- **Location:** Online

[Register](#)

Community information event:

- **Date:** Friday 3 March 2023
- **Time:** 2 to 8.30pm
- **Location:** Public drop in event at York House, Twickenham

[Book your place](#)



JOIN US FOR A LITTLE LITTER PICKING!

Help clean up East Twickenham!

Wednesday, 1 March
10:30 am to 11:30 am

ETNA Community Centre
13 Rosslyn Road, TW1 2AR

Litter pickers provided.

More info at:

hello@habitasandheritage.org.uk
<https://habitasandheritage.org.uk/>



COVID-19 and flu vaccine pop-up clinics schedule for February and March

Eligible residents who would like to get a COVID-19 or flu jab can do so at a series of regular pop-up clinics being held in the borough.

Having a flu and/or COVID-19 jab can help make sure you and those you care for are well protected during the winter months and beyond. This new schedule of community pop-ups aims to provide a regularity to this service that allows for greater availability and opportunity to plan ahead.

Throughout February and March, the pop-up clinic will be available at Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College (RHACC) (opposite Richmond Station, TW9 2RE) from 11am to 5pm.

Pop-up clinic schedule

RHACC:

- Thursday 23 February - From 11am to 5pm
- Tuesday 7 March - From 11am to 5pm
- Tuesday 14 March - From 11am to 5pm
- Tuesday 21 March - From 11am to 5pm
- Tuesday 28 March - From 11am to 5pm

Who is eligible for a free jab?

Anyone aged 12+ who would like to get a first or second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine will be able to do so at these clinics. Flu jabs will be available at all clinics for those aged 50+ or anyone typically eligible for a free flu jab.



Doses of the COVID-19 jab for children aged 5 to 11 will be available at all pop-ups. Please note that booster vaccines are no longer being offered at local pop-up clinics as a result of the change to the national vaccine offer.

Find out [who is eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine](#) and the [flu jab](#). All other services are open for all ages.

No appointments are required, and people can just walk in. If you have recently tested positive for COVID-19, you need to wait before getting any dose of the vaccine and the number of weeks depends on how old you are.

If anyone is hesitant about the vaccine or has any questions, the pop-up clinics are an opportunity to speak to experts from the NHS in a private and confidential environment.

Barnes Ward

March 6th PLG Ward Panel Survey

Just a friendly reminder the Barnes Police Liaison Group meeting will be taking place on Monday the 6th of March at 19:45 hours, at the Castlenau Centre on Stillingfleet Road, SW13. Also attached is a copy of the ward panel survey to complete this shouldn't take more than 5 minutes of your time and all results remain anonymous, thank you.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/B8ANAR/>



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

Struggling to pay your annual fuel bills? The Council can help

A vital lifeline for residents who need help to pay their annual fuel bills has once again been launched by Richmond Council.

Grants of up to £170 are now available from the Council to protect residents who are at risk from living in fuel poverty. If you are on benefits or have a low income you may be eligible for help from the Council with heating bills, even if you are already receiving help from elsewhere.

Find out more about the [Fuel Grant Scheme](#), including who is eligible and how to apply.

Applications will be processed as they are received, and you will be notified if your application has been successful.

The closing date for applications is Thursday 9 March 2023. Applications received after the closing date will not be processed.

You can [apply online](#) before midnight on 9 March. You will need to register online before you are able to make an online application.



Alternatively, you can print off and complete an application form and return it to us together with the required evidence in support of your application. Application forms must be received by 5pm on 9 March.

FEBRUARY FOOD AND DRINK NEWS



It's Shrove Tuesday next week, and the shops have quickly swapped Valentine's displays for pancake ingredients. Pancake Spice from **Just Spices** is a warming blend with notes of cinnamon, lemon and cardamom making it perfect for mixing through your batter or as a topping on fluffy warm pancakes. While it might be too late for next Tuesday, you'll still find lots of other ways to use these spices: for baking; giving your porridge, rice pudding or yoghurt an extra oomph... plus a host of dessert applications. £4.99 from Just Spices alongside a host of other great mixes.

Amarula African Gin is made from 'marula fruit spirit', giving it a distinctive and exotic taste. And with every litre of Amarula African Gin sold, £1 goes to the Amarula Trust - supporting elephant conservation and local communities which harvest this special fruit once a year. The makers of Amarula Cream Liqueur launched this premium, complex and unique gin, which celebrates the exotic flavours of the indigenous marula fruit - offering a sweet orange note with a spicy backbone. Serve it with Indian tonic, over ice with a slice of fresh grapefruit for an unexpected twist on the classic G&T. Amarula African Gin is 43% ABV, available on Amazon for £25 for 700ml.



Umami is the fifth taste (sweet, sour, bitter and salty being the others). Its intensity comes from many foods including mushrooms, miso, seaweed, tomatoes and cheese. **Umazing** is the brainchild of London-based vegan chef Kalvinder Chaggar. This **Miso and Shitake Superboost Powder** is a potent, deliciously umami, combination of fermented miso and other organic, umami-rich ingredients. It's a seasoning that deepens the flavour of savoury dishes and will lift your culinary repertoire. I love it on scrambled eggs, with plain rice or pasta, but am finding I'm sprinkling it on lots of other foods...yum! It's packed with healthy microbiota, reduces your salt consumption, and it's a Great Taste Award winner, and you can buy from Umazing.co.uk £14.99 for a 60g pot.

We've all had those times when we're in a hurry, but fancy something hot and tasty for a quick lunch - especially on a cold day! I tried the new **Idahoan Perfect Mash Pots** recently and they are excellent! Available in two flavours: Bubble & Squeak or Bacon & Cheese, they're a great office standby too, as they only need boiling water. They're 100 % real potato, and low calorie at 220 calories or less per pot. Idahoan Pots are available from Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Ocado RRP £1.50.



Fans of Guinness and cold brew coffee will love **Guinness Cold Brew Coffee Beer** Roasted coffee flavour packs notes of chocolate, caramel and coffee, giving off a smooth tone, and making it a great after-work beverage. It's ideal for coffee lovers as well as beer lovers. Guinness Cold Brew Coffee Beer is widely available in Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Tesco for around £5.50 for 4 x 440ml cans, ABV 4%.



Finally, a taste of heaven! **Häagen-Dazs**, has teamed up with Pierre Hermé, one of the world's greatest pastry chefs, to create an extraordinary **macaron ice cream** range! Packed with mini macaroons and so yummy, they are available in Strawberry & Raspberry or Double Chocolate Ganache, and worth seeking out! Try two of each at Asda at £3.50 for a mixed pack of four mini pots.



The Search is ON!

By Bruce Lyons



Now is the time! Most of the Adventure companies started off the New Year with amazing discounts of 20% & 25% discounts off but in most cases these exotic locations had to be booked by the 31st of January. Many of the Mauritian discounts ended in early February. But all the offers have not expired – in fact far from it, though often now they are in the upper end of the holiday market.

In fact most of the Hyatt stable is being offered by the Luxury operators in the Secrets and Zoetry Brands at up to 40/50% offers on the hotel content. Indeed last week we booked a week in Jamaica for £5000 for two at a Secrets hotel – all inclusive, true it included only 1 flight – as that was what we needed, amazing value, but not an isolated example.

Here is a random selection that may be of interest.; book by 28th February to get 50% off AMA Venita 14-day Vietnam and Cambodia or Dalmatian small boat cruises between April and December with offers of 40% off if booked by 28th Feb for departures between April and September. There is a £300 per person saving off the Royal Lotus sailings between September 2023 and April 2024 – 14-day departures with Cairo – Nile Cruise and Jordan itinerary.

There are more even in Europe in the Luxury category – but you have to look about as different operators feature different brands of hotels – so it is a bit of a hunt to find the right operator- but definitely worth it. But hurry most of these offers end either end February or end March.

But then my daughter always tells me that not everyone is always looking for a bargain and many book with us because they know we offer a bespoke service second to none, reachable anytime and because our clients know that we put a great deal of effort into looking after our clients as if they were our own family.

She was just telling me about Titan's new premium African Safari; Africa Uncovered - Atlas Mountains to the Maasai Mara by Private Jet. 22 days from £39,999 per person! You want luxury? We've got luxury. Be whisked away on a privately chartered jet for a grand and unique journey like no other, discovering the wonders of Africa. Beginning in Marrakech, where culture and history intertwine with the hustle and bustle of the souks, before journeying through Ghana, Namibia, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya. Staying in exquisite hotels and lodges, indulging in the most authentic and immersive African dining experiences, treated to an array of jaw-dropping once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Trekking for gorillas, fine dining on a steam train at Victoria Falls, toasting to good health in the rugged bush, taking a helicopter flight over the South African winelands, & wandering the sand dunes of Namibia and even zipline in the middle of the Atlas Mountains.



The world is your oyster! Come and see us with for any adventure, at any budget. We cater to all and offer a bespoke service to all our clients. Come in and have a chat, in our cosy intimate office, at 58 Church Street, by our giant chess board in the Church Street Square and if our coffee pot is still full, you are more than welcome to join us for a brew. 😊

WIZ TALES: NICARAGUA

Teresa Read

Nicaragua is prone to a number of natural disasters that will increase in severity with climate change; the country is particularly prone to droughts, tropical storms, flooding and landslides. There is also the threat of earthquakes and volcanic eruption.



USAID

USAID has provided Nicaragua with assistance through its International Development programme, playing a vital role in areas such as economic growth, education and health.

However, Russian military troops have trained in Nicaragua and President Daniel Ortega was one of the first world leaders to back Russia over Ukraine.



León Cathedral, one of Nicaragua's World Heritage Sites.



Masaya



Flooding in Lake Managua after Hurricane Mitch in 1998

World InfoZone information on Nicaragua <https://worldinfozone.com/country.php?country=Nicaragua>

World InfoZone is a collaboration of people and organizations throughout the world, produced in Twickenham since 1997 <https://worldinfozone.com/about.php>



It was just an apple...

By Deep Patel

~ **Through the eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper** ~



My name is Deep Patel and I am a shop keeper running Meet & Deep Newsagents with my family in Twickenham. Running a newsagent shop is a real joy as you have the opportunity to engage with a multitude of people, all carrying with them such a vast range of opinions and beliefs. Friends who visit always remark on how interesting they feel the vibe is in our shop, so I've decided to share some of the inspiration and stories from the shop with the readers of The Twickenham and Richmond Tribune through presenting an article each week in a series which I will call "through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper". This weeks article is about an incident that inspired me involving a little red apple.

It was late afternoon and the shop was fairly quite...I was stocking the shelves in preparation for the evening, when I heard a little voice at the door saying "an apple, an apple". In came a little girl, probably around 4 years old, wearing a princess outfit complete with tiara and pearls. The little girl circled the shop looking at every shelf whilst her parents followed here around the shop. The parents kept pointing at items I sold that little girls usually love such as comics, sweets, ice creams, extra strong mints (yes there is actually a little girl who frequently visits and only ever chooses to buy extra strong mints!)...but the little girl who was with her parents refused to pursue any of her parents suggestions and kept saying "an apple". It was at that moment I began to wondering if she was looking for an apple (yes I am a genius). We usually do sell apples, but we did not have a delivery that week.

I kept thinking to myself...this little girl...dressed as a princess complete with crown had an entire shop to choose ANYTHING she desired from the premium candies, to ice creams galore and all she wanted was an apple? I was so impressed...I suddenly remembered that I had

packed a little red apple for my own lunch that day and kept it in the fridge. I stopped the girl before she could leave and said “are you looking for an apple?”...she looked up to me as if I was a giant (I am not tall, she was just very small) and she nodded and said “yes please mr shop man”. She melted my heart and I gave her the apple and told her it was my present to her...she smiled at me as if I had given her a diamond. Her face lit up completely...it was just an apple... but to her...at that moment...it was everything that she desired.

So I didn't get my “five a day” that day (as if I ever do?) but I got something I considered much better...the contentment of knowing I made a little girl very happy...as she left the shop and walked up the road munching on the apple, she kept looking back and smiling at me... her parents were so grateful and couldn't believe I gave her my apple without wanting any payment. It was just an apple, but it made so many people happy. So if you have the opportunity this coming week...as a random act of kindness, give someone an apple...you never know how happy it may make them (or they may think you are a little odd perhaps...but who cares?...just do it!)

Those who follow my articles will know, what I am about to say about kindness to little lives... but just in case you are a first-time reader, I always like to share these little good-karma gems, helping each other and all the life forms on this beautiful planet we call home. We are not the only inhabitants of this beautiful planet and there is a kind way for everything...If you have rodent issues, consider live capture traps where you can catch the rodents alive and release them in woodland or parkland areas far from homes. Try electronic high-frequency sound deterrents (check online for ones with good reviews and ones that are safe for your pets if you have any). Put empty jam jar lids filled with white vinegar all around areas where you don't want them to stop them without harming them (they HATE the smell of white vinegar). This also works for foxes, squirrels, mice and rabbits. Just picking up a slug off a pavement with a leaf and moving it over a wall counts as a good deed... choosing a kind way to stop ants (like talcum powder around where they come but not on them) counts as a good deed. Avoid sweeping/washing the garden patio too often to help save countless tiny almost invisible little lives that live there (particularly under large pots in the garden, hence I say gently lift the pots if you need to move them rather than dragging them to avoid crushing little lives). As I always say, the true key to our own happiness lies in the happiness of other life forms...until the next time...have a lovely week ahead and look after the smaller life forms and the universe will look after you. For further tips, check out my Facebook page “Kind World”. As always...Peace, love and good karma to all Xx

Remember...

“An apple a day...”

Duet for One

by Tom Kempinski

The Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond until 18th March

Duet for One is an unspoken homage to the world-renowned cellist Jacqueline de Pre, who in 1973 was diagnosed with an aggressive form of multiple sclerosis. Fourteen years later, at age 42, it was to take her life ... but, did she also take a lethal injection in an assisted suicide?

In Kempinski's play, the musician becomes Stephanie Abrahams, a renowned classical violinist, increasingly unable to play due to MS. The plot follows a series of therapy sessions between the illness-stricken violinist and her psychiatrist, Dr Feldmann. In this new production live music is introduced, played by a solo violinist. Particularly poignant are the brief scenes when the stricken patient looks up at the balcony where the violinist is playing ... seeing an image of her former self.



The two performers are totally spellbinding. The fascination of the play lies in the development of the characters as we watch their progress through a series of six therapy sessions. Explosive questions and exchanges are excellently argued between the two protagonists.

In the early stages, Tara Fitzgerald's violinist is confident, eager to dismiss the problems caused by her illness. As the therapy progresses, mood changes occur, swinging from defensive to aggressive, and descending into anger and despair. This is a powder-keg performance, bursting with explosives.

Equally compelling is Maureen Beattie's psychiatrist, an unruffled interrogator, full of gentle philosophy. It is a finely nuanced performance as steely silences give way to polite concern as she calmly listens to her patient's increasing desperation.

Director Richard Beecham's production is brisk and well-paced. His use of significant pauses is bold and to great dramatic effect. Design, by Simon Kenny, consists of a simple round podium that revolves imperceptibly throughout the performance. A virtual bullring, it allows for the two to face-off from their respective armchairs.

Duet for One is a compelling piece of writing, rich in language, provocative in argument and containing many ironic and amusing lines. With two beautifully observed characters, it is an absolute masterclass of theatre.

Read Steve Mackrell's review at www.markaspen.com/2023/02/17/duet-one

Photography by Helen Murray



*Pride & Prejudice** (*Sort Of)

by Isobel MacArthur, after Jane Austen

Tron Theatre and Royal Lyceum, at Richmond Theatre, then on tour until 24th June

Anyone expecting a prim and proper, po-faced reworking of a Jane Austen classic will be disappointed. Here is a *Pride and Prejudice* for our era – think speed-dating with karaoke. In this adaptation the corsets are off and everyone is free to be more honest (brutally so at times). *Pride & Prejudice** is a slick, fast-paced production, adapting and updating the novel into a hilarious comedy, performed with huge energy by a multi-talented quintet of actor-musicians.



A clean, simple set design conveys grand houses and a literature backdrop (books are everywhere). Five female servants – who are often ignored in such stories, but critical to the plot (“who can have a liaison without clean sheets”) re-tell the Darcy-Bennett romance – playing all the key characters – with rapid costume changes and perfectly timed entrances worthy of a classic farce. They take us through the fripperies, faux pas and fancies of the tale with a few ‘Eff Orf’s thrown in.



With the modern dialogue and addition of commentary on the action, comes a heightened sense of the absurdity and outrageousness of the perceived class differences of the time. You are invited to laugh at the mores of the early 19th Century ... and then recognise this could be set in 2023.

As an ensemble piece, the women all give strong performances, with good musicianship and a keen sense of comic timing. Indeed, many of the laughs came simply from well-timed looks to the audience highlighting their despair, horror or confusion at their latest predicament. The pace rarely lets up and the crisp, clear writing ensures the plot and characterisations are clear without the need for excessive dialogue.

Even those with an aversion to costume dramas will find this production richly entertaining and through the laughter recognise some very modern messages in this Regency love story (sort of).

Read John Davies’ review at www.markaspen.com/2023/02/14/pride-prejd-sort

Photography by Clara Cowen



Bloody Influencers

by Ena Begovic and Ben Mansbridge

East London Theatre Collective at the Barons Court Theatre

Bloody Influencers starts, before the show starts, with Daisy pulling audience members on stage for selfies and Instagram story uploads, tropes of the social media generation. Daisy, played by co-author Ena Begovic, is a character fully immersed at the deep end of the social media top end.

Begovic's constant energy carries the show and the audience through the ups and downs of the world and lifestyle of the social media influencer. Daisy admits that her real name is actually Lucija, indicating the unreliable scatter-brained nature of the character, and allowing the odd moment of slips in the performance to be forgiven. Indeed, in some ways they almost add to the immersive feel that her performance gives.



For the first third of the play, proceedings seem quite light-hearted and fun, but as events go on, the darker nature of what lies under the surface begins to manifest itself. When Daisy first likens her life to that of a drug addict, there were a few laughs from the audience, but as the play goes on it becomes clear that people are watching a genuine addict who is dealing with a dangerous addiction that could severely wreck and destroy her life.

The dialogue comes at a relentless pace, but Sofia Zaragoza's direction channels Begovic's energy well and keeps things running along smoothly. However, there are certain gaps in its coherence. The occasional breaks in play for a Tik-Tok dance or other social media activity can come off as a little contrived, which lessen their impact. There is, though, good use of a video screen to tell the story of Daisy and her boyfriend Neil.

Bloody Influencers that takes a timely look into the highs, lows and a host of things in between of the current allure of the influencer. For those wondering about the life and styles of the social media generation it offers some good answers ... but also plenty of questions.

Read Denis Valentine's review at www.markaspen.com/2023/02/12/bloody-influ

Photography courtesy of ELTC



Medea

by Robinson Jeffers, adapted from the play by *Euripides*
Fictionhouse at the @SohoPlace Theatre until 22nd April

Lurking in the darker corners of Greek mythology are Medea and her husband Jason, he who together found the Golden Fleece. Their horrifying story may be nearly two and a half thousand years old, but what Medea does when Jason finally, inevitably, betrays her is all too familiar today. In his lyrically visceral *Medea*, freely adapted from Euripides, the American poet Robinson Jeffers does not attempt to garner sympathy for Medea. For him, she is precisely what she was when Euripides first told the story – a witch who is capable of acts of unimaginable evil and whose only defence is the possibility, no more, that the gods have directed her actions.

In the early 1940s, Jeffers wrote *Medea* for the Australian actress Judith Anderson, unforgettable as Mrs Danvers in Hitchcock's film *Rebecca*, who played *Medea* when it opened on Broadway. For Anderson - and, one senses, also for Jeffers - *Medea* was “used, abandoned, humiliated, scorned, but she wasn't bad. She loved, and gave everything, and was betrayed.” All this and much, *much* more is apparent in Sophie Okonedo's blistering performance as the wretched wrathful fury, in Dominic Cooke's revival of Jeffers' *Medea* at the “first new-build West End theatre in fifty years”, the aching zeitgeisty @SohoPlace.



Set in the ancient Greek city of Corinth and Vicki Mortimer's design for *Medea* is a model of stark simplicity, an elliptical stone courtyard, bounded by what appears to be a low curved wall but proves to conceal steps to Medea's quarters. The symbolism is clear: Medea has given everything for Jason, and has nothing in return. The courtyard is patrolled by Ben Daniels who plays all of the male characters (including one that stays more or less on the right side of cliché). Daniels is superb and his Jason is almost the equal of Okonedo's Medea. As the children's nanny, Marion Bailey is heart-rending, caught between Medea and her enemies, and entangled in loyalty and fear, and guidance – not always reliable – from the women of Corinth.

A devastating play, *Medea* is unforgettable

Read Louis Mazzini's review at www.markaspen.com/2023/02/16/medea-soho
Photography courtesy of Fictionhouse

JAKE REVOLVER

“Gumshoe” drama at the Mary Wallace Theatre

Shadows of Hollywood *film noir* can be seen on Twickenham’s Embankment this coming weekend as Mathew Konkel’s private-eye parody is brought vividly to the stage by the RSS Young Actors Company.

JAKE REVOLVER - FREELANCE SECRET AGENT invites us to follow our dauntless sleuth into the dangerous world of deceit, deception and Derringers as he seeks to uncover the killer of his own narrator. Young performers at their best in this shady underworld of fedoras and *femmes fatales*.

JAKE REVOLVER plays for four performances from Thursday, February 16th with tickets available now at www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk

The Mary Wallace Theatre is situated on Twickenham’s Embankment, between St Mary’s Church and the Barmy Arms.



Richmond Shakespeare Society
RSS
at the Mary Wallace Theatre

WORDSROBJECTS: Stathis Dimitriadis

Art Exhibition

One Paved Court, 1 Paved Court, Richmond, London, TW9 1LZ

Stathis Dimitriadis presents his latest series of text based sculptures and poetic objects WORDSROBJECTS is a body of work developed over the last 3 years at the convergence of conceptual art, craft, and poetry. With a fusion of text and imagery into materials such as ceramic, paper or found objects, Stathis creates paradoxical, metaphorical, and playful associations that challenge the familiar use of text and enhance the experience of objecthood.

Each of the artworks is produced with a unique process that pushes the boundaries between language and matter. Vessels are hand thrown, sliced, peeled, filled with paper, and stencilled with words and verses. Poems are written, fragmented, carved and drawn onto sculpted or found objects.

The exhibition is accompanied by the following free events.

All welcome:

Walk-in Workshop: Sat 25 Feb, Thurs 2 and Sat 4 March, 1 - 4pm.

You are invited to join in and respond to the experimental nature of the show. Come along to one of the walk-in concrete poetry workshops, combining objects with words under the guidance of the artist.

Artists talk: Sat 11 March, 2:30pm.

Find more information [HERE](#)



St Mary's University

St Mary's Students Volunteer in Support of Local Community

St Mary's student sports teams and societies banded together this week (15th February, 2023) to take part in a litter pick of Radnor Gardens and the surrounding Strawberry Hill area.

As part of the Students' Union's Volunteering Week, over 40 students, primarily from the Fishing Society, Creative Writing Society, and the Men's Rugby League team, spent part of the day working alongside local community members to ensure the local area – one of London's leafiest suburbs – is kept in top condition.



The event, the largest volunteering venture of this year to date, fell on [Student Volunteering Week](#), an event which was established by the Student Volunteering Network to celebrate the impact of student volunteers and encourage students to engage in civic life.

St Mary's supports its students in finding volunteering opportunities to make positive changes in their local community, improve their skills, and gain valuable experience.

Students are encouraged to explore their

options at home and abroad, through a dedicated [careers service](#).

There is a strong connection between these endeavours and the values of the University.

As a Catholic University, St Mary's has a clear [mission](#) to empower its community to have a positive impact on the world.

The University, which is well-known for its strong community, amongst students of all faiths, and of no faith, is a product of this mission and the values that underpin it.

[Radnor Gardens](#) borders University land, and sits adjacent to Strawberry Hill House.

The gardens include a summerhouse and gazebo from the mid-18th century, during the period when poet Alexander Pope was a local.

A cafe, and play area are also on site, and fishing is permitted with a licence.

The University is at the heart of [Richmond-upon-Thames](#) borough, which houses London's most recognisable green spaces, with Kew Gardens to the north, Richmond Park to the south, and the River Thames to the west.



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Student success - Sophie's story

Sophie Millbank joined Richmond upon Thames College's Supported Learning department in September 2015 as part of Clarendon School Link, where she completed a Cookery and Recycling Course.

The course allowed Sophie to grow academically and socially and thanks to this, Sophie joined RuTC full-time in September 2016.

Sophie was also an instrumental member of sports teams competing in wheelchair basketball and football for the students with additional needs.

She progressed from Supported Learning and went on to complete Level 1 and Level 2 in both Food Preparation and Food Service.

Her attendance and punctuality were outstanding and her commitment to the course was second to none. She particularly excelled in front of house where she was very well liked, both in the canteen and the restaurant for her smile and politeness.

Daniele Giraud RuTC Catering teacher says "I am very confident Sophie will achieve a lot in her career as she has a great attitude and work ethic. Sophie tries her best in everything she does, with a smile every time. She will go far!"

Sophie decided to broaden her experience and she completed the L2 Health and Social Care programme and is currently a L3 2nd year Health and Social Care student.

She has had work experience at Clarendon Primary School as a Teaching Assistant and they loved her so much, she has now secured a permanent position. In addition, Sophie volunteered at Capella Speech and Language Primary School.

Shona Corben, ILS tutor at RuTC explains, "Sophie is a quiet joy. An extremely caring, attentive young woman, who goes the extra mile as a talented Teaching Assistant.

"Sophie became renowned to the Supported Learning team as a brilliant mentor, whilst supporting her peers in the classroom on work experience as a teaching assistant.

"Sophie is calm and knows how to get the best out of students, using quiet praise and comforting and encouraging words. I cannot wait to see what else the future holds for her."



**Richmond upon
Thames College**

Richmond upon Thames College celebrates National Apprenticeship Week

Last week, (6-12th February) Richmond upon Thames College, along with colleges around the country, celebrated NAW 2023. (National Apprenticeship Week)

National Apprenticeship Week is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of apprentices around the country and noticing the positive impact they can make to communities, organisations, individuals and the wider community.

As well as celebrating apprentices, the week also looked at the benefit of apprenticeships and what positive affect they can have on businesses, employers and educational institutions.

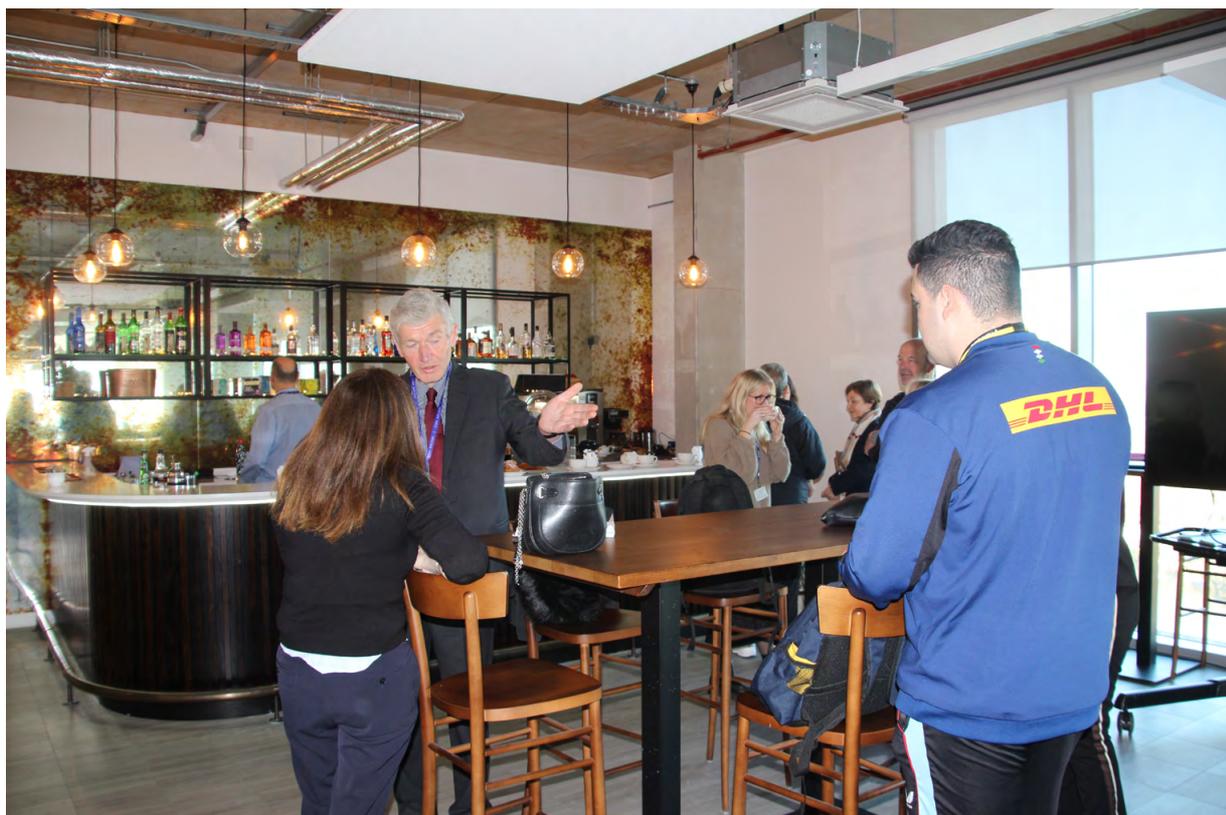
The theme of this year's NAW was 'Skills for Life' and on each day throughout

the week, students at RuTC were given the opportunity to learn more about varying aspects of apprenticeships, the themes given were 'Employer Tuesday' 'Apprentice Wednesday' and 'Celebration Friday.'

On Wednesday morning, (15th) RuTC hosted an employer's breakfast event at the college, inviting the employers of the apprentices into the college to engage with others, learn more about what RuTC can offer and to discuss the many benefits of apprenticeships.

Sheila Fraser-Whyte, Director of Strategic Partnership & Innovation at RuTC enjoyed this year's National Apprenticeship Week, explaining "National Apprenticeship Week is an amazing opportunity for us to showcase our many brilliant apprentices and the employers that make it possible.

Apprenticeships are great for businesses, individuals and the economy and we often hear from apprentices how pleased they are to have chosen this path."



**Richmond upon
Thames College**

CHISWICK CHEESE MARKET

LONDON'S ONLY CHEESE MARKET

One year on we have not forgotten Ukraine – help us raise money to support the ongoing crisis.

We are joined by [Dimas Vodka](#) who will be selling shots to raise money for [@firstaidukraine](#) (paired with [@thefrenchcomte](#) aged Comte cheese – thank you Roberto). [British Ukrainian Aid](#) will be offering tastes of handmade Ukrainian pastries and music in return for donations.

And the Cheese Market team will be selling pre-loved cookbooks to add to the £500 we will be donating too.

NOT FORGETTING our regular traders who are all out in force for this market – over 38 stalls - so roll-up roll-up for a fabulous February feast of cheese!

SUNDAY FEB 19TH 9:30AM-3PM

150 DIFFERENT CHEESES

plus chutney, crackers and many more
cheese related goodies. This month we have...

A TASTE OF UKRAINE & UKRAINIAN MUSIC!

DIMA'S VODKA!

paired with pickles and comte
cheese by [thefrenchcomte.co.uk](#)



SUPPORTING
**British-
Ukrainian
Aid**

[british-ukrainianaid.org](#)

SUPPORTING
**First Aid
Ukraine**

[@firstaidukraine](#)

Talk – Are Citizens’ Assemblies the Solution to Political Paralysis?

A FREE TALK ON WEDNESDAY 1st MARCH, 7:30 PM TO 9:00 PM GMT
THE EXCHANGE, 75 LONDON ROAD TW1 1BE (across from Twickenham Rail Station)

A Citizens’ Assembly is a form of participatory decision-making which has been used successfully around the world. Citizens’ Assemblies broke the deadlock in Ireland on the controversial issues of same-sex marriage and abortion. The National Trust, RSPB and World Wildlife Fund recently commissioned a Citizens’ Assembly to produce a “People’s Plan for Nature”, due out in March.

A fair and deeply democratic process, a Citizens’ Assembly brings together ordinary people, randomly selected but reflecting the make-up of their country, to hear evidence from experts and find solutions to thorny issues. Citizens’ Assemblies could break through the political log-jams that block progress on tackling the climate crisis. There will be time for questions and discussion afterwards.

Limited places, so please [register](#) with Eventbrite – google Eventbrite citizens assemblies, or follow link at the top. Presented by Richmond and Twickenham Friends of the Earth

Capital finishes dismal 76th in new global broadband rankings

A new [global list](#) has been published, which sees London trailing behind more than 70 other major cities when it comes to broadband speed.

The capital’s 79.13 Mb speed saw it placed in 76th, far behind European rivals like Paris and Madrid, and also cities including Bucharest and Bogota. Meanwhile, the UK came 54th in the world rankings below most of the EU, with its 72.24 Mb speed also lagging behind the global average of 76.34 Mb.

Here are some comments from broadband expert Alex Tofts, from Broadband Genie:

Alex Tofts, broadband expert at [Broadband Genie](#), comments: *“It’s official, London is lagging, with the capital still miles behind its world city rivals when it comes to internet speeds.*

“In 2015, a cross-party group of London’s MPs said it was ‘unacceptable’ for the city to be trailing European rivals on broadband, yet eight years on the gap seems to be as big as ever. Paris enjoys average download speeds of 164.61 Mb – more than twice as quick as the Big Smoke, while Bucharest and Bogota are also putting us to shame.

“If you wanted to download the new Hogwarts Legacy game in London it would take you nearly two-and-a-half hours, while in Beijing it would take around 40 minutes.

“Meanwhile Manchester, the only other UK city on the list, is 82nd just behind the Bulgarian capital Sofia, with a rate of 74.10 Mb, below the global average of 76.34 Mb.

“As a whole, the UK is ranked 54th in the world. Its 72.24 Mb speed means it’s sandwiched between Barbados and Peru, behind 16 of the 27 EU countries and two places down in January 2022.

“Compared with the likes of China, the US and Denmark, which lead the way on global download speeds, the UK is currently an also-ran and it shows how desperately upgrades are needed to our broadband infrastructure.

“To make us more competitive and help our businesses, the Government must make good on its Project Gigabit pledges to roll out 1,000 Mb download speeds. For millions across the country, it can’t come soon enough.”

Toney set to start against Crystal Palace

Written by [Brentford Football Club](#)

Thomas Frank confirms that Ivan Toney will start for Brentford against Crystal Palace on Saturday; the striker was withdrawn during the Bees' 1-1 draw with Arsenal last weekend

Ivan Toney will start for Brentford against Crystal Palace on Saturday.

The striker was spotted rubbing his hamstring when being substituted during [last weekend's 1-1 draw with Arsenal](#), but head coach Thomas Frank confirmed that he is fit and available for the Eagles' visit to TW8.

Only Erling Haaland (26) and Harry Kane (17) have scored more Premier League goals than Toney this season (14).

Thomas Strakosha (ankle), Pontus Jansson and Frank Onyeka (both hamstring) will not be in the squad, but Frank is hopeful that the trio could return for Brentford's game against Fulham on 6 March.

With an almost fully fit squad at his disposal, Frank was asked about the importance of tactical flexibility during the Bees' 10-game unbeaten run.

Brentford's head coach has switched between 3-5-2 and 4-3-3 systems during the club's time in the Premier League.

"I take the decision, together with my coaching staff, what kind of system we want to play before each match," he said.

"Earlier in my career I was more focused on a single system – that's what we do, and we do it very, very well.

"Maybe we tweak it a little bit. With a 4-3-3 system, you could have an in-possession formation and an out-of-possession formation. It can tweak from game to game depending on the pressure and the build-up.

"But I've learned that it's nice to have different systems; right now it's the 3-5-2 and the 4-3-3 that we can use depending on the opponent and what kind of task is in front of us.

"With where we are at Brentford, it has helped us. It has given us one of many small extra edges that are adding up and giving us the opportunity to be in this good form."



Match Preview: Crystal Palace

Written by [Brentford Football Club](#)

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

Brentford are preparing for the second of three successive London derbies this weekend, with Crystal Palace making the trip from SE25 to TW8.

The sides head into the game on contrasting runs of form. [The Bees' draw at Arsenal](#) extended their unbeaten run in the Premier League to 10 matches, while Palace arrive at the Gtech Community Stadium looking for their first win of 2023.

The Opposition

World Cup break disrupts Palace's momentum

Three-time Premier League winner Patrick Vieira enjoyed a pretty solid return to English football after taking charge at Selhurst Park in July 2021, guiding Crystal Palace to within three points of the top half.

Wilfried Zaha hit a career-best 15 goals in all competitions, Conor Gallagher starred during a loan spell from Chelsea and Michael Olise continued his meteoric rise, following a move from Reading, which resulted in a maiden France under-21 call-up.

Last summer, the club's pre-season was severely disrupted prior to their July tour of Australia and Singapore, with only 10 senior players travelling after either being deemed fit or meeting the Covid-19 regulations to enter the country, meaning Zaha, Olise, Ebere Eze and Marc Guehi were among those left behind.

Thankfully for Vieira, it did not seem to have too much of an adverse effect.

The Eagles were in action on the opening night of the Premier League season, when they were beaten 2-0 by a buoyant Arsenal side, but they showed, in fleeting glimpses, encouraging signs of what they are able to produce.

That was illustrated in the 1-1 draw with Liverpool on 15 August, when they took the lead before Luis Diaz's second-half strike rescued the Reds, and in the 4-2 defeat to Manchester City just under a fortnight later, when they raced into a 2-0 lead, only for an Erling Haaland hat-trick to turn the game.

It was a similar story against Chelsea on 1 October. In the opening months of the season, it seemed to be the case that opponents would sense an opportunity when Palace took the lead, while they would do the same if they were the ones to fall behind.

Since the Premier League returned after the World Cup break, Palace have struggled to get back into the groove.

In the league, they have played eight games, won once and scored five goals, in comparison to winning five of their first 15 matches in the Premier League and being on the verge of the top half before the break. They lost to Southampton in the FA Cup third round last month, too.

A hamstring injury suffered by Zaha in the goalless draw with Newcastle on 21 January has kept him out for the two games since and though there are encouraging signs that a return could be imminent, the initial prognosis suggested he could be out of action until March.

The return of their chief tormentor – who has either scored or assisted nine goals in 20 appearances – will be something Palace are counting down the days until.

Right now, there is a buffer between Vieira's men and the clutch of teams ensconced in the embryonic relegation battle.

Seven points separate Palace and the bottom three, but that gap could narrow rapidly without an upturn in form.



RFU Statement

Wasps and Worcester Warriors

The RFU can confirm, following yesterday's deadline related to Championship applications, that Wasps has met the conditions and will have a place in next season's Championship.

Atlas, the buyers of Worcester Warriors, informed the RFU last week that it would not be continuing with its application for a place in the Championship and this position has not changed. Therefore, they will not have a place in the Championship next year.

RFU CEO, Bill Sweeney, said: *"Our goal has consistently been to see Wasps and Worcester in the Championship and preserve the clubs for their fans and the wider communities they serve.*

"While we had hoped to see both clubs in the Championship next season, we are pleased that following months of work from all parties involved, Wasps will have a place. We know this will be very welcome news to all those connected with the club. We would like to thank all those involved with Wasps for the open and collaborative dialogue over recent months.

"We appreciate that the disappointment felt by Worcester Warriors staff, players and fans following the Atlas decision will be very significant.

"For a club to continue following insolvency, it is imperative that it has a sustainable and funded business plan, that there is transparency about ownership and funding structures, and that rugby creditors are paid.

"Payment of rugby creditors is an integral part of our insolvency regulations, and we cannot approve the takeover of a club without agreement that rugby creditor payments will be made. Given Atlas's withdrawal from the process, we remain concerned that there are insufficient funds to pay rugby creditors which is a responsibility of the administrator of WRFC Trading Limited and the liquidator of WRFC Players Limited to determine.

"We will continue to work with Atlas over the coming weeks to understand their vision for rugby at Sixways.

"While the RFU is the regulator of rugby union, we have worked tirelessly to ensure we are making decisions that are best for the sport."

Wasps

The RFU has received the signed insolvency agreement and proof of funds.

Wasps and the RFU have been working closely in recent weeks, particularly around the payment of rugby creditors, to establish a clear process for validation and payment of those rugby creditors. We will continue to work with and support the club over the payment of rugby creditors. The RFU and Wasps have agreed within the insolvency agreement that the payment of staff and players must be prioritised.

Worcester Warriors

On Thursday 9 February, Atlas released a statement saying that they had withdrawn its application for Worcester Warriors men's team to play in the Championship. The RFU and DCMS met with Atlas on Monday 13 February to see if there could be a different resolution to the situation. The Atlas position did not change, and therefore Worcester Warriors will not participate in the Championship in the 2023-24 season.

The Atlas decision to withdraw their Championship application leaves the RFU with no regulatory means to enforce the payment of rugby creditors and this responsibility for managing the liabilities of the insolvent club now lies with the administrator of WRFC Trading Limited, and the liquidator of WRFC Players Limited.

The RFU awaits the detailed proposals from Atlas on how it proposes to maintain rugby at Sixways, and will continue to work with DCMS, local MPs, Atlas and the local rugby community to help find the best rugby outcome.

The RFU maintains its commitment to running the Midlands academy which it took over in November and the continuation of Worcester Warriors Women.



SOUTH LONDON HOSPITALS NEXT IN LINE FOR GMB NHS STRIKE ACTION

Hard working GMB members are angry that ISS is failing to recognise the value of the vital services they provide to South London and Maudsley NHS, says GMB

GMB, the NHS union, will be balloting its members employed by outsourcing conglomerate ISS across South London and Maudsley NHS Trust from today [13 February].

The members work as domestics and hostesses across the trust's hospital sites, which include Maudsley Hospital, Bethlem Royal Hospital, the Ladywell Unit at Lewisham Hospital and Lambeth Hospital.

The staff have previously submitted a pay claim which has been ignored by management.

The dispute therefore centres around pay, but also reflects that the workers are on a number of different contracts and want parity of pay terms and conditions with each other and with NHS colleagues.

Helen O'Connor, GMB Regional Organiser said:

“Hard working GMB members are angry that ISS is failing to recognise the value of the vital services they provide to South London and Maudsley NHS.

“They are sick and tired of ISS taking them for granted and running the service into the ground and are being unexpectedly moved from wards and areas, expected to take on bigger workloads as their pay has plummeted way below the current rate of inflation.

“Many cannot afford to stay in their job roles and ISS is increasingly subcontracting and bringing in agency workers who are treated even worse.

“They want to be valued properly and they know that this will be reflected in their pay and conditions and in the way they are treated and are angry that ISS is kicking their very reasonable pay claim into the long grass.

“GMB is calling on the trust and ISS to invest in meals and cleaning by putting a significant offer on the table so that staff can be retained and services can be protected for the patients within SLAM.”



Second river search needed to find missing Nicola, says search leader

Peter Faulding said 'whoever's made these decisions needs to answer lots of questions and says family 'don't have a voice'

A SECOND search for missing mother Nicola Bulley is needed due to new information released by police, according to the forensic search and rescue specialist called in by the family.

Peter Faulding, chief executive of Specialist Group International, suggested she could be further down the river if she had intended to take her own life due to issues with alcohol.

He told [GB News](#): "I feel so sorry for the family that these issues have been released in this way - it should never have come out.

"They could have just told us on the quiet, the press wouldn't have known, and it would have changed everything.

"The police are getting beaten up here. This is terrible because it's not the police. It's just a comms issue.

"And, whoever's made these decisions needs to answer lots of questions.

"That's not not the police, that's not the family. Let's regroup, get together and then redo this search again so we actually get to try and get some closure for this poor family."

In an interview with Isabel Webster and Martin Daubney during Breakfast on GB News, he added: "Lets not mock the police.

"I have not been paid for these interviews. I'm on holiday in Cornwall at the moment and I'm just trying to voice my concerns for the family so we can re-group and get this damn thing sorted out properly."

Asked about the information released about Nicola's issue with alcohol, he said: "Well, I feel sorry for the family and also I feel sorry for all the hard work the police officers who are working behind the scenes and search teams have done but they've been let down by the communications.

"The police have been brilliant. They have been without a doubt. I am disappointed that the police search advisor did not give me that information.

"It's probably come from a higher level I'd imagine...probably the sergeant on the ground was told not to give me that information.

"We would not have told that to the press because I work on complex murders and I never give information like this."

He added: "I've become this sort of spokesman for the family and this whole case good no one is given any information out I'm not enjoying doing this.

"I'm getting criticised for it but the family have got no voice because all their comms were told to go through the police and not talk to anybody unless they go through the police."

Mr Faulding said: "I work on these cases all the time with the police and the first thing to say if she is high risk, we change our search strategy.

"I was told they believed she'd fallen in the river at that particular place and that's why we conducted the search the way we did.

"At the bottom of the bank, if Nicola slipped in, it was only two feet deep on the day, on to rocks you would not have drowned, so that's what I've been saying all along.

"This is a mystery to me this particular job. Nicola could have wandered along the footpath, there's no CCTV going out to the road, she would not have been seen."

He added: "If somebody intends to take their own life, and I deal with a number of suicides each year for the police, they tend to jump in and they may swim and float down a while before they manage to drown themselves.

"It's very grim and we look for things like whiskey bottles, because most people have a drop of whiskey, they have some pills, and they go with it and they tend to drift down.

"That's the possibility then she could have been taken over the weir, but normally when they drown they go straight to the bottom and that's why we focused our search into specific areas."



BRITAIN'S NEWS CHANNEL

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78% OF THE PUBLIC SUPPORT AN AGE VERIFICATION SYSTEM SO THAT CHILDREN CANNOT ACCESS ONLINE PORNOGRAPHY

THERE is widespread public support for a new age verification system to prevent under 18's accessing porn online, a new poll reveals.

The People Polling for [GB News](#) asked whether websites should have an age verification system in place - and a massive 78% agreed.

Only 5% of the public disagreed, and 17% said they “didn't know” or “preferred not to say”.

The poll also found broad agreement across party lines. Eighty-four per cent of Conservative voters agreed that pornography websites should have an age verification system, and 80% of Labour voters agreed.

Commenting, politics expert Professor Matt Goodwin, said:

“What this shows is there is widespread public support for the efforts underway in Parliament to implement an age verification system so that under-18s cannot access pornography online.

Nearly eight in ten British adults support such change and so to me, at least, this looks like a clear vote winner for the Government.

If I were advising Rishi Sunak I would be telling him that introducing these age verification checks is a no-brainer.”

Details of the public's view on this comes amid reports that so-called ‘porn passports’ are set to be introduced in Europe in a world-first move.

France is hoping to tackle the issue of minors being exposed to pornography by introducing an age verification system, with some questioning whether the UK will follow suit.

Currently, users only have to click a button saying whether or not they're 18 - the legal age for pornography consumption.

However, with the new measures in place, viewers would have to install a government phone application in order to receive an official digital certification and code proving their age.

WHO issues case definition for Post COVID-19 condition in children

The World Health Organization has released a new [clinical case definition](#) for post COVID-19 condition or 'long COVID' in children and adolescents.

Children and adolescents are more likely to have few or no symptoms, or develop mild illness after being infected with COVID-19. As a result, the symptoms they experience in the post-acute period and their impact may differ.

Children with post COVID-19 condition are more likely to have fatigue, altered smell and anxiety than healthy children. For both adults and children, how long the symptoms last for (at least 2 months), and how soon after the initial infection they start (within 3 months) are common in the two definitions.

The new definition is based on the latest scientific data and was developed through an expert consensus process, including the involvement of patient advocates and clinicians. WHO used a consensus-seeking approach called a Delphi exercise, for which experts and patients responded to repeated surveys. This definition applies to children of all ages, with age-specific symptoms taken into consideration.

WHO initiated the process of developing a definition specific for children and adolescents because COVID-19 affects them differently from adults.

Definition

“Post COVID-19 condition in children and adolescents occurs in individuals with a history of confirmed or probable SARS-CoV-2 infection, when experiencing symptoms lasting at least 2 months which initially occurred within 3 months of acute COVID-19. Current evidence suggests that symptoms more frequently reported in children and adolescents with post-COVID-19 condition compared with controls are fatigue, altered smell (anosmia) and anxiety. Other symptoms have also been reported. Symptoms generally have an impact on everyday functioning such as changes in eating habits, physical activity, behaviour, academic performance, social functions (interactions with friends, peers, family) and developmental milestones. Symptoms may be new onset following initial recovery from an acute COVID-19 episode or persist from the initial illness. They may also fluctuate or relapse over time. Workup may reveal additional diagnoses, but this does not exclude the diagnosis of post COVID-19 condition.”

About post COVID-19 condition

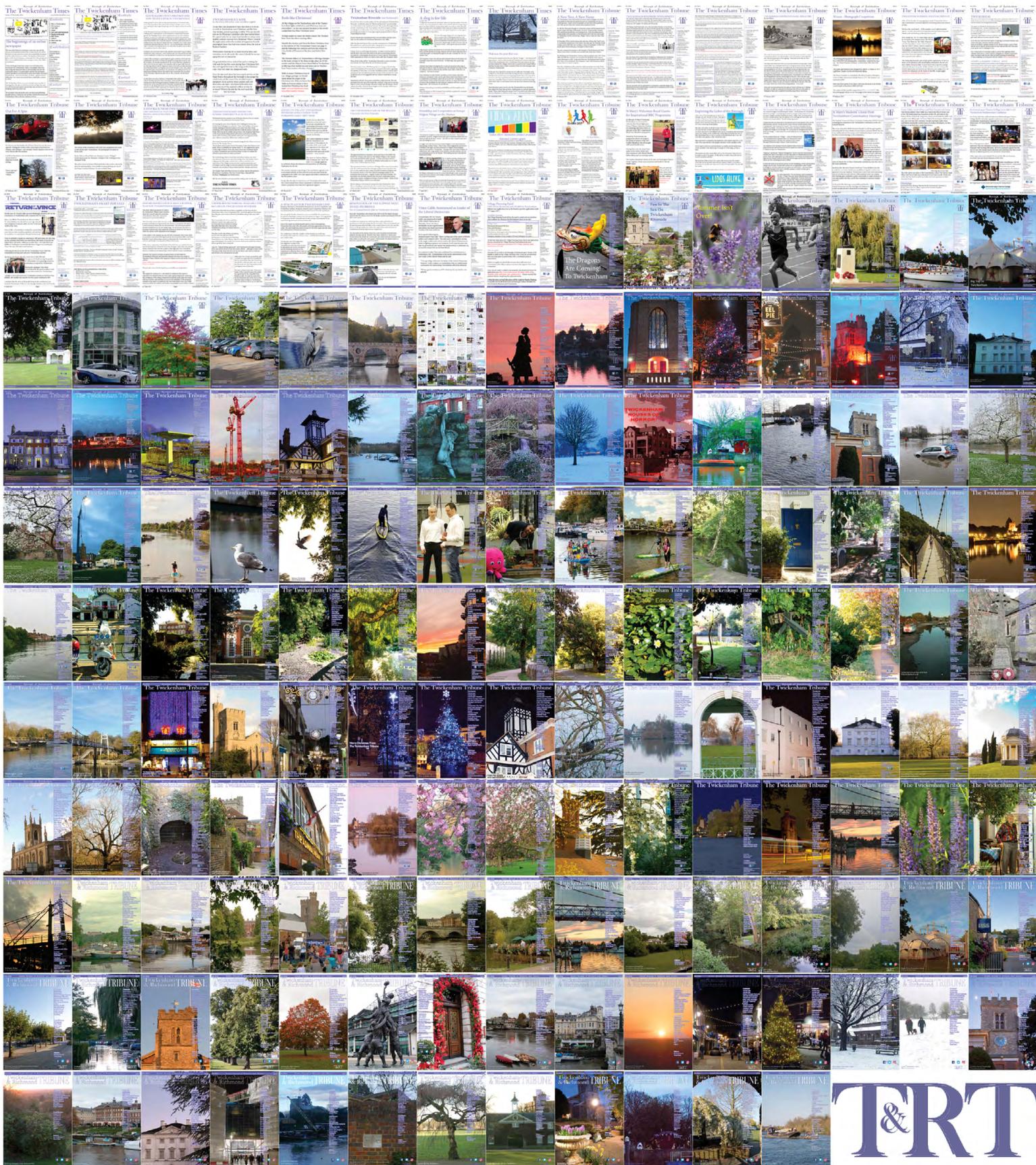
Anyone with COVID-19 can get post COVID-19 condition, irrespective of the severity of disease, though it is more commonly reported in those who had severe disease. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) estimated that by the end of 2021, 145 million people had developed post COVID-19 condition (3.7% of those infected with SARS-CoV-2) as defined by the WHO clinical case definition, with 15.1% of those (22 million) having persistent symptoms at 12 months after infection onset.

There remains limited information on the condition in children and adolescents, and about medium-to long-term outcomes. Using a standardized definition will contribute to a global understanding of its prevalence and allow for more comparable research studies.

WHO released the definition for post COVID-19 condition in adults in [October 2021](#).



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