

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



6th September 2024

Holy Trinity Church, Twickenham Green
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

T&RT

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Editors:

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TickerTape - News in Brief

Diamond Jubilee Gardens

On Friday, the Diamond Jubilee Garden site “passed from Trust to Council ownership” according to a [tweet](#) made by Cllr James Chard (Twickenham Riverside Ward).

South Western Railway

Altered train services and buses replace trains in the Wimbledon area **Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 September**

The lines in the Wimbledon area will be closed all weekend due to maintenance work.

Saturday

- **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services will be **revised** and will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Kingston via Richmond**.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will **not** run.
- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will start from **Surbiton** and will run **hourly**.
- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will be **revised**.
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised**.

Sunday

- **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services will be **revised** and will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Kingston via Richmond**.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will **not** run.
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.
- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will **not** run.
- **Buses** will run between **Clapham Junction and Hampton Court via Surbiton**.



The Tree Agency

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Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 265

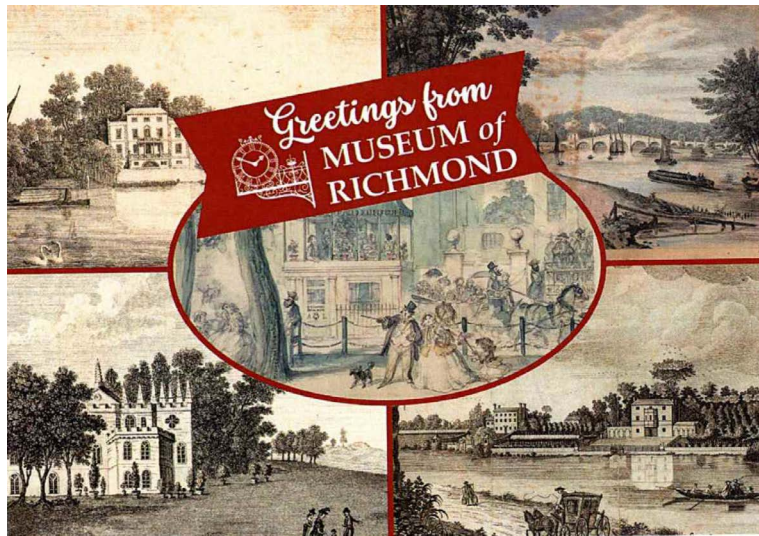
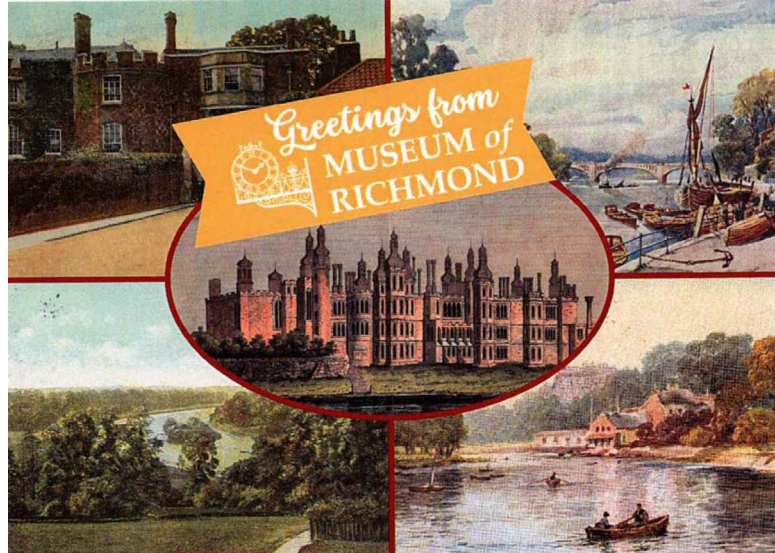
By Alan Winter

Museum Of Richmond- “Wish You Were Here!”

Something a bit different this week. A modern- day example of the use of current and vintage postcards proving that they still have a place in today’s world.

The Museum of Richmond opened a new exhibition last month called “Wish You Were Here”. A phrase that appeared on millions of postcards sent home and to friends by people on holiday throughout the 20th Century. The exhibition is sub-titled FROM HORACE WALPOLE TO TED LASSO and covers the story of tourism to the Richmond and Twickenham area over the last 300 years.

Picture postcards play a significant part in the exhibition covering images of the area throughout much of that time.



Interestingly and cleverly thought out is a set of postcards published by the Museum which advertise the exhibition very well. Here are a couple of these along with the exhibition flyer.

The exhibition is running until December this year and is free to enter. So, if you want to see an excellent local exhibition which

is supported by many local postcards of the area, do pop along to the Museum of Richmond which is on the second floor of the Old Town Hall in Whittaker Avenue, Richmond, TW9 1TP.

My search for old postcards continues. I am always looking for old postcards and old photograph albums etc. The postcards can be British or Foreign, black and white or coloured and of places or subjects. If you have any that are sitting unwanted in a drawer, in a box in the loft or in the garage or under a bed, please contact me on 07875 578398 or alanwinter192@hotmail.com I would like to see them and I pay cash!



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Triumph for local chippy

By Jonathan Hulley

Conservative Parliamentary Spokesperson for Twickenham

It was with a mix of relief and delight when I visited John Charalambous's Teddington Fish Bar on Tuesday, the day he reopened for business, following a successful legal battle with his landlord, who had unlawfully locked him out of the premises, preventing him from earning his living. It was great to see him back in action behind the counter of his shop after all he had been through.



As the Conservative Parliamentary spokesperson for Twickenham and a lawyer specialising in property and housing litigation, I first met John in August, being introduced by Teddington's Community champion, Elizabeth Foster. In these dual capacities, I was eager to discuss John's legal predicament and offer my assistance pro bono.



In my professional view, John's landlord had acted unlawfully by locking him out of the Fish Bar premises without warning and threatening to seize his cooking equipment, including his kitchen fryer. I advised that John needed to urgently apply to the court for an urgent injunction order, requiring the landlord to let him back into the Fish Bar and allow him to continue trading. My support included identifying the correct legal forms and helping with the legal language contained in the application.

On 27 August, the Kingston County Court granted John an interim injunction, ordering John's landlord to return the keys to him and prohibiting him from touching his kitchen equipment. The court also wanted John and his landlord to return to court on 30 August, when it would consider making a further injunction order.

On hearing this good news, I put John in touch with specialist property dispute lawyers, who worked tirelessly to help them present a compelling case at the hearing. I was then delighted to hear that the court had awarded John a further injunction order for a year, allowing John to reopen his business while negotiations could start with the landlord on a new lease.

The reopening of the Teddington Fish Bar is a triumph for John and the local community, whom he has served for over a decade. As John and his team negotiate a new lease with the landlord in the coming months, they can be assured of my unwavering support. I stand with John and his team, ready to assist further in any way I can.



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Contemporary

ART FAIR



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September 7 & 8th

Sat 10-6, Sun 11-4, Entry £3

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Next week at Richmond Council

The **Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee** will meet on Wednesday. Dealing with (1) a request for playgrounds to be lit at night so children can use them after school in the winter, (b) how grants to arts and sports groups are managed (c) the River Thames strategy for the Local Plan, (d) the award for the parks maintenance contract for the next six years, (e) budget monitoring and the projected £700,000 overspend, (f) and finally the committee work programme. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. at York House, Twickenham.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

The **Education and Children Services** will meet on Thursday. The meeting has the following items on the agenda: (a) how to manage falling demand at primary schools (one option is for 14 primary schools may have their planned admission numbers permanently reduced next year), (b) the budget monitoring report and the £2.782 million overspend, (c) The committee work programme. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. at York House, Twickenham.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

On Friday, the **Licencing Sub-Committee** will meet to determine an application from M&M Off Licence & Groceries 149 White Hart Lane, Barnes, that is being opposed by the police. The meeting is being held virtually at 10.30, though residents will be able to watch the webcast.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

How to participate: we encourage all members of the public who live or work in the borough to engage. You can submit questions or speak on an item on the agenda for three minutes. To ask a question, submit your question by 12 noon, two working days in advance. To speak, you must register by noon the working day before the meeting.

For further details on how to participate, please follow the link [HERE](#)

Come and have your say about the future of Richmond upon Thames

From Richmond Council

We are inviting residents to have their voices heard at the upcoming Community Conversation event, scheduled for **Tuesday 24 September 2024, from 6.30 to 9pm** at Clarendon Hall, York House, Twickenham.

This event is an opportunity for local people to engage directly with lead councillors and share their thoughts on the future of the borough.

Attendees will have the chance to ask questions and share thoughts and ideas on key issues such as community safety, environment and sustainability, Council spending, and more.

Cllr Nancy Baldwin, the Council's lead for Communities, says: *"Listening to residents is fundamental when it comes to shaping the future of our borough. Creating an inclusive borough where everyone feels valued and heard is at the heart of our vision for Richmond's future. We want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to share their ideas and concerns, whether they attend in person or join us online. This Community Conversation is a vital part of our commitment to an open town hall and collaboration."*

Richmond Council Leader Gareth Roberts, along with the chairs of the Council's decision-making committees, will be present to answer questions on a broad range of topics affecting the borough.

The evening will begin with informational stalls and the chance to meet councillors in person from 6.30 to 7pm, followed by a Q&A session that residents can join either in person or online.

Attendance is free but registration is essential. [Register now](#)



Council Reports

Health and Wellbeing Board

2 September 2024

James Knight

Richmond Pool on the Park Health Suite to be reinstated? / Children and Young People's Plan / Hampton pharmacy application hit by council mistake

The first part of the meeting was public engagement. First up was councillor Elizabeth Gant (Hampton North), who criticised her own party by saying the council “can and must do better” over pharmacy provision in Hampton after Boots closed both pharmacies in the ward. The second speaker was Martin Baker, speaking on behalf of the Richmond Pools on the Park Health Suite Action Group. He highlighted how the council refused to disclose the results of its consultation to close the spa facilities at Richmond for over two years; when it was finally published, it showed that 78% of respondents wanted to keep the facilities. He said it was called a health suite for a reason and invited the committee to reconsider its closure. The meeting chair, Cllr Piers Allen (West Twickenham) stated the council was looking to reinstate some of the lost facilities, though they may be on a smaller scale.

There was a quick update on the Children and Young People's Plan, with officers seeking agreement on monitoring and reporting the plan's progress. Then, the committee gave their agreement to the new Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029, which sets out the priorities for improving the health and well-being of its local population identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The committee then had an update on the application to open a new pharmacy in Hampton North. The NHS Pharmaceutical Services Regulations Committee rejected it the first time around. This was due to the council issuing a supplementary statement to the pharmaceutical needs assessment (PNA), which conflicted with the type of application that was made. The firm that applied for a new pharmacy licence made an ‘unforeseen benefits application’, which can only be used for gaps in provision not identified in the PNA. However, the council's supplementary statement identifying the same gap invalidated the existing application. The chair of the committee, Cllr Allen, tried to blame the NHS for this calamity; however, it does point to the council being asleep at the wheel and not being on top of the issue.

The committee then noted several reports, including the Richmond Health Watch Annual Report, The Richmond Better Care Fund, and the Homelessness Needs Assessment. The meeting then agreed to change its terms of reference to prevent residents from bringing up the same issue within six months (bad news for Martin Baker and the Richmond Pools on the Park Health Suite Action Group). The last item was agreeing on the work programme for the committee before the chair closed the meeting.

You can read the paper for the meeting by following the link [HERE](#)

Complimentary
drink
on arrival



His Worshipful the Mayor of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames,
Cllr Richard Pyne would like to invite you to the

MAYOR'S Fish & Chip Cruise

Wednesday 11 September 2024 from 12pm* to 4pm

Join the Mayor of Richmond for a scenic cruise aboard the New Southern Belle along the Thames. Tickets are just £35 and this includes a Fish and Chip supper and a complimentary drink on arrival. Arrive at St Helena Pier at 11.30am to board by 11.45 and leave promptly at 12pm. We return at 4pm.

Note - tables and seating is limited not everyone will be seated at a table.

THE MAYOR'S CHARITIES THIS YEAR ARE: HOME START & MIND RICHMOND



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Donate your clothes for good causes

From Traid

This September, charity retailer Traid is running a free home clothing collection scheme where residents can donate clothes, shoes, accessories and household linens to help fund good causes in the fashion industry.

As Zero Waste Week begins, it is the perfect time to explore the many ways we can reduce landfill waste, boost our recycling efforts and contribute to a more sustainable borough.

Residents looking to clear out their clothes for the new season are invited to join Traid's Closet Clear-out Challenge, which aims to collect 250,000 garments. Your donations will help support the people who make our clothes, from garment workers to organic cotton farmers.



Residents are welcome to sort through the clothes

you no longer wear, [book a free collection slot online](#) or at 020 8733 2595, and a Traid branded van will come to collect your donations.

Let's transform fashion for the better, one wardrobe at a time!

Find out more about the [Closet Clear-out Challenge](#).

Our [Climate Action Microgrant](#) awards between £100 and £500 to community groups, schools, individuals or non-profits to run events, activities and initiatives that promote positive behaviours in the community around climate change and sustainability.

If you're looking to upcycle your cloths or explore your love of stitching, the [Library of Things](#) in Twickenham can be very useful.

They have sewing machines and a range of tools available to borrow. You can also enjoy a 10% discount off your first rental using the code TAKE10.



Grants of up to £500 to help people stay well this winter

From South West London NHS

Could you run an event or activity to help people stay healthy this winter? Funding is available to support you.

South West London NHS is funding community and voluntary organisations to support their initiatives focused on winter health and wellbeing.

Topics include vaccinations, places to find support, using local pharmacies and the NHS App and more. Collecting feedback from participants is also required.

The organiser is particularly keen to hear from organisations that can reach:

- Parents and carers with children aged two to three years old
- People who are pregnant
- People aged over 65 years old
- People who experience issues or barriers in access their health and care
- Specific areas mentioned in question 12 in the application form

If you would like to find out more about the funding, come along to an online drop-in session.

Event details:

- **Date:** Tuesday 10 September 2024
- **Time:** 3 to 3.30pm
- **Location:** [Online Zoom meeting](#)

A grant of up to £500 is available per organisation. All winter activities and events must be delivered by the end of January 2025.

Find out more about the [Winter Engagement Fund](#).

Applications close on Monday 30 September 2024. If you have any questions contact training@cvalive.org.uk.



Strawberry Hill House Flower Festival 2024

With just one week to go the Strawberry Hill House Flower Festival is nearly here, running from September 13-15, 2024. Experience “Nature Unbound” with 30 of the UK’s top floral designers inside the stunning gothic walls of Strawberry Hill House.

Book at <https://www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/flower-festival/>



Delve deeper into the borough's rich local history during Know Your Place Festival

From Richmond Council

The Know Your Place heritage festival has celebrated and engaged residents and visitors with the borough's rich local history for over a decade. This year, our festival will feature the people and places that have shaped the vibrant cultural borough you can see today.



Whether you're interested in the mysterious stories of London in the 1960s, uncovering the history of York House, delving into the secrets of Richmond Old Town Hall, or researching the history of your own home, there's something for everyone.

See the full programme and [book your tickets](#) now.

Join Richmond Bridge Club for their open day

From Richmond Bridge Club

On Saturday 14 September, the local club is running free bridge taster sessions for residents looking to learn, play and hone their skills.

The free event will feature an introduction to the game and hands-on practice guided by the club's experienced teachers. Refreshments will be served.

If you are looking to play bridge in a relaxed and friendly environment, come along to meet new friends and challenge the grey cells!



Event details:

- **Date:** Saturday 14 September 2024
- **Time:** 10am to 3.30pm
- **Location:** Richmond Bridge Club, The Old Pavilion, Cambridge Park (opposite No 3), East Twickenham, TW1 2PG

Find out more about [Richmond Bridge Club](#).

A Taste of Italy - In Richmond, Or Brought to You

Pasta Evangelists has opened in Richmond, and I went to check it out the other day. It's very handily placed for a cinema trip and the restaurant is interesting. It has a counter serving pasta, and also tables where one can dine while watching the footfall on the street outside through the 'shopfront' large windows.



There's a choice of waiter service or ordering online. I have to say that my Italian friend Barbara (who certainly knows her pasta) and I were a bit confused as to the actual ordering process. Our charming waiter did say there was a paper menu, but suggested we use the QR code at the table as that menu was, apparently, more up to date. Annoyingly, when I got home I discovered that the link no longer works, so I had to refer to the menu on the website, but quite a few of the delicious things we had to eat aren't featured on it.



Anyway, back to the restaurant itself. The walls are adorned with lovely photos of classic Italian scenes and the tables have a wooden container with the napkins and cutlery.

We ordered a side of charcuterie and a burrata with tomato



sauce to start, alongside some focaccia. The food was delicious, and as Barbara pointed out, very obviously top quality, authentic, Italian produce is used. The charcuterie was served at perfect temperature to allow the flavours to shine through and the fennel salami was seriously delicious. I wouldn't have thought of serving burrata with cold tomato sauce (pasta sauce style), but it was surprisingly good. The focaccia was excellent too, but Barbara commented that there were no sprigs of rosemary on the top, as one might expect with a classic focaccia.

We enjoyed a lovely glass of Italo Disco Tuscan red wine - served chilled. The wine list is short, with excellent Italian wines, but the wines aren't cheap, starting at £28 a bottle and rising to £42. Two large glasses came to £28. There are various sizes of most wines available by the glass as well.



We shared our main courses: a portion of lobster, crab and prawn ravioli and a porcini and wild mushroom lasagne. One can choose different sauces for most of the pastas - we chose tomato for our ravioli.

It was really good, but we felt that they could have been more generous with the sauce. Interestingly one can choose different portion sizes (priced accordingly) which is good for those with a larger appetite.

The lasagne was fabulous, a good sized portion, beautifully seasoned with lots of



good bechamel.

We shared a portion of profiteroles (apparently they usually have top-notch tiramisu but sadly had run out that evening) but as Barbara pointed out, it was good, but not particularly Italian.



To sum up, the food at Pasta Evangelists is excellent. Prices aren't cheap, but the quality is superb.

There is home delivery of course, too, and they are running all sorts of events like pasta making classes and wine tastings (check the website for details).

And if you sign up to their newsletters, you'll find out which pasta is on special offer for the week for home delivery and details of all sorts of other special promotions.

Organic September: Food For Thought

It's **Organic September** this month, the UK's biggest celebration of organic living. so I thought it worth highlighting just a few of the many benefits of choosing organic products. I was invited last month by The Soil Association to visit a wonderful organic farm - **Sandy Lane Farm** - just outside Thame. We spent a fascinating day looking at the crops in the fields, seeing how the veg boxes are packed and learning about the whole organic movement. As well, of course as choosing to eat organic produce, I hadn't really thought about the other ways one can embrace the organic movement. For example, a fascinating talk by **Tabitha James Kraan** reminded us that our hair should be considered 'another mouth' in that we absorb chemicals into our body through our hair, skin and nails as well as our stomachs.



The Soil Association is inviting us to '**Love Organic**'. The annual campaign will inspire individuals and communities to embrace organic choices, underscoring the significant benefits for health, environment, and nature. As demand for sustainable and ethical products continues to grow - 41% of shoppers state considerations around environmental sustainability affect their food purchasing decisions "a fair amount" and 14% "to a large extent" (YouGov tracker Aug 2024) - Organic September highlights the dedication behind creating exceptional organic products that benefit both people and the planet.

Organic matters, because Organic farming is more than just a different way of farming; it represents a vital shift towards a healthier, more sustainable future. Here's why choosing organic is important:

- **Fewer chemicals, more nature:** Organic farming uses no artificial pesticides and avoids fossil-fuel based fertilisers, meaning fewer chemicals in your food and more space for nature to thrive. Healthier soil that stores more carbon, and more wildlife in our countryside.
- **Better animal welfare:** Organic farming prioritises animal welfare with the highest standards, providing conditions where animals can express natural behaviours, enjoy plenty of space, fresh air, and organic feed. It's a farming approach that respects animals as living beings, not just products.
- **Packed with goodness:** Organic food has been found to be nutritionally different, with more antioxidants (including immune-supporting polyphenols) in organic fruit and vegetables and more beneficial omega-3 fatty acids in meat and dairy. This is largely due to the way it is produced. Plus, with no genetically modified organisms (GMOs), you can trust that your food is as natural as possible.
- **Fighting climate change:** Organic farming works in harmony with nature. By focusing on healthy soils and natural processes, organic farms can store more carbon in the soil, use less energy, and emit fewer greenhouse gases. This benefits the planet today and secures a better future for our food.
- **Doing good feels good:** Choosing organic supports the planet, wildlife, and the health of future generations—and it feels great to know that your food is contributing to a better world for all.

What's more, when I did a taste comparison between the vegetables that I brought back from Sandy Lane Farm and the supermarket standard issue, there really was such a difference in flavour. The carrots, for example, were absolutely packed with flavour. It's worth paying a premium, not just for better flavour, but for our own health, and the health of the land that we hold in trust for future generations.

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Bonkers for Conkers?

By Deep Patel

~ Life through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



The recent combination of sunshine followed by rain has contributed to the extra-large sized conkers once again this year ...the trees can barely hold them up as there are so many! Twickenham Green is littered with them, and quite often so is my shop as children bring them in on their way back from the green and end up leaving them around my shelves and forgetting about them...I love to see them and feel their super smooth, varnished and polished cool exterior...especially when they are fresh from their green spikey shells...the magnificent shine and swirling design on them instantly transports me back to childhood and playground games each autumn...timed by nature to be provided at the same time that children go back to school, as if to be a welcome to school gift by mother nature herself.

Knowing of my background in entomology, one of the questions that I have been asked most by my customers this past week is whether conkers actually help to stop spiders...I have to say although not scientifically proven, it is a YES from me...well to an extent and spider species dependent... It is no coincidence that mother-nature has gifted us conkers at the EXACT same time that the UK house spider season begins...Conkers keep spiders away due to an oil within them...simply line your windows and corners of your homes, edges of your rooms and everywhere in-between with conkers and they will help to stop spiders coming! Just ensure that you place them so that the “eye” of the conker (the light oval part) is always facing upwards otherwise it may not work.

If you do see a spider, before you reach for your slipper to clout it one and be done with it, spare a thought for just how amazing these little creatures are ...spider webbing is currently being structurally examined to replicate intricate weaves to create parachutes and bullet-

proof vests for human use (no I am not joking) and it is a fact that if you had spider webbing around the thickness of a pencil, it would easily stop a car in motion as it is 5 times stronger than a strand of steel of the same thickness (again, no joke)...spiders catch little ticks that may cause us allergies...so they are literally helping us to keep our homes healthy and clean...like a personal cleaner that never asks for wages...what more could you ask?

Remember 99.9% of the spiders in Twickenham are COMPLETELY harmless to us humans, we tower over them as giants a million times bigger than them, yet we still think that they are gonna “get us”?! What are we like?! I mean really?!? Never mind...the past is in the past... let's make a positive change today and no longer kill off our fellow spiders with a new found respect for them and in the interest of good karma for ourselves...

I am a great enthusiast of good karma and am asking that we all resort to kinder ways to stop spiders in our homes going forward...if you have to put a house spider outside, remember they CANNOT live in the cold of our winters (hence they are “house spiders”) so always put them near a garage or shed where they can live happily away from you but in peace.

Like I always say, even 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 or peppermint oil around where they come but not on them) counts as a good deed too!

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). So that just about wraps up another article from me...the key to our own happiness lies in the happiness of other life forms...until the next time...have a lovely week and look after the smaller life forms and the universe will look after you.

Remember...

“...Big or small...short or tall...A life is a life...so be kind to all...”

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...

STOP FOXES, RATS, MICE & SQUIRRELS KINDLY (GOOD KARMA):

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

For ANY specific tip to stop any “pest” or insect KINDLY (for good karma/blessings), email me: InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com, or join my fakebook group “INSECT LOVERS UNITE”

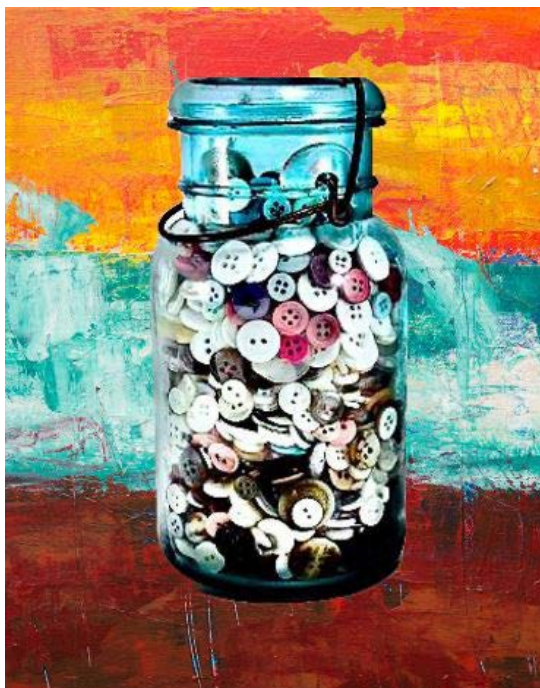
The Button Jar

by Deborah Whitmarsh-Boyce

Sensible Footwear at Hen and Chickens Theatre, Highbury

A picture of studied disarray is the setting for *The Button Jar*. As two women select music on their iPhone, it becomes clear that they are sisters and that they are coping with the loss of their mother.

Choosing music for a funeral is always contentious, but brief squabbles lead to the appropriate song being agreed. The consistent underlying aggression between the two is skilfully honed by Deborah Whitmarsh-Boyce as Liz, and by Sandra Hollins playing Aly, who has the edge on grief and anger. Over prolonged folding and sorting of clothes, there arises a combination of memories for a lost matriarch, one who had held the bond in the family, leaving the daughters to deal with the pain of separation.



However, don't think this is a grim piece. Despite the pathos, it has optimism and real humour.

A button jar has so much subtext. A lot of us grew up with such an item as this, intimate and personal. It is a pity there is not more connection with this heirloom, and more reminiscences arising from these very personal buttons. I would also like to have known more about their late mother. However, when they could have drifted away, the coveted jar manages to sew the sisters together. The concept is cleverly conveyed.

The Button Jar is directed with sensitivity by the two actors themselves, who neatly tell the tale of the pain at the end of an era. As we feel their loss, the sentiment inevitably filters through as an issue for the audience.

[Sensible Footwear](#) is a prolific all-female enterprise by ladies of a certain age. Do look out for this engaging, entertaining and creative company.

Read Heather Moulson's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/08/24/button-jar

Photography courtesy of Sensible Footwear



Swan Lake

by Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky, choreography by Alexei Fadeychev and Nina Ananiashvili, after Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov

State Ballet of Georgia at the London Coliseum and on tour until 24th November

Swan Lake's enthralling story, timeless score, and choreography has made it the world's most in-demand ballet, and the State Ballet of Georgia's production offers sumptuous escapism in a glorious attack on the senses. The gorgeously opulent costumes, stunning sets, and imaginative lighting help to power the narrative, providing the perfect structural support for the elegance, grace, and dextrous athleticism of a gifted ballet company.



Swan Lake's fascinating representation of good versus evil counterposes Odette, the vulnerable, ethereal White Swan, and Odile, the seductive, deceptive Black Swan. The challenging role of Odette-Odile is performed by Principal Dancer Nino Samadashvili, a leading Georgian soloist. Her Odette is graceful, elegant, and captivatingly vulnerable; but her Odile is the true highlight, dynamic, passionate and energetic, oozing menace and peril, with flashing eyes and knowing looks.



Oleg Ligai makes a carefree and impulsive Prince Siegfried, whose love for Odette and fascination with Odile successfully anchors the narrative. His on-stage chemistry with Samdashvili is powerful and convincing. As Rothbart, Marcelo Soares revels in his status as the evil villain. His expressive hands and contemptuous glares, combined with technical athleticism, present an embodiment of malice.

The corps de ballet works in sublime synchronicity. The utmost stillness with which the swans pose to frame the central action is a feat of technical discipline. Its movement is equally mesmerising, the hypnotic flock moving in synchronised ripples while fluttering en pointe.

Conductor Papuna Gvaberidze ensures that the superb ENO Orchestra exploits the pulse of Tchaikovsky's score to meticulously underpin the narrative, ranging from tender, gentle moments in the lakeside pas de deux, to the rousing bombast of the climatic conflict between Rothbart and Siegfried.

The set and costumes, designed by Vyacheslav Okunev, amply enrich the action, with simple yet effective use of lighting effortlessly transporting opulent palace park to enchanted moonlit lakeside.



Whether a seasoned ballet aficionado, or a newcomer to the genre, this *Swan Lake* provides a much-needed antidote to the tribulations of the real world. It will live long in the memory.

Read Harry Zimmerman's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/08/29/swan-lake-sbg

Photography by Sasha Gusov

555: Verlaine en Prison

by Logan Lopez Gonzalez and Eleanor Burke

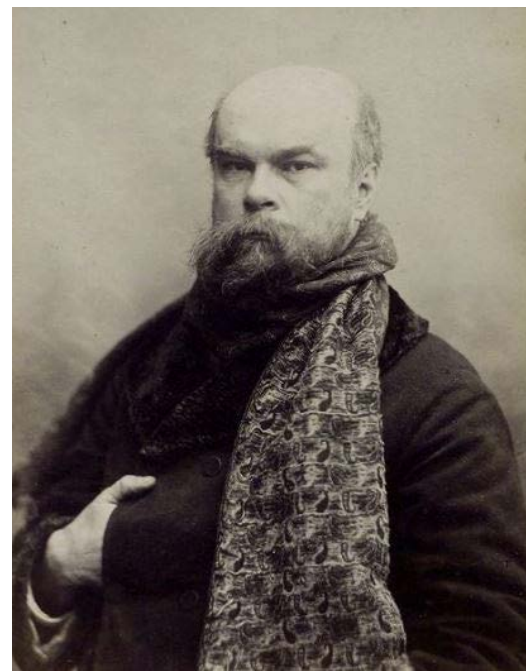
Green Opera, Grimeborn Festival at the Arcola Theatre

An artfully crafted song recital with a bit of acting, narrative, and context thrown in, is essentially French chanson.

Glorious singing from countertenor Logan Lopez Gonzalez is accompanied by pianist Stella Marie Lorenz. He entrances with beautifully sustained high notes at the end of the sensuous phrases: truly gorgeous.

555: Verlaine en Prison features the poems and letters of Paul Verlaine in settings by Debussy, Hahn and Fauré. They are rapturous, languid, serene, elegant, and gently melancholic. We are spared the self-pity and bad faith of the addict.

However, they are not very varied in overall mood and don't have the vitality, range and emotional pain of Schubert. An hour of this lovely music is enough.



Perhaps the potential lack of variety led the authors to provide some narrative and context by telling of Verlaine's marriage, encounter with the seventeen year old Rimbaud, and descent into alcoholism that led to his shooting of Rimbaud and imprisonment for 555 days. It's a messy, miserable life that doesn't seem to have much to do with the music, or even the poetry, which often seems beguiled by the landscapes in which the poet finds himself rather than expressing despair or pain.

The story on which the piece is based is pretty ghastly. The alcoholic Verlaine seems to have been a virtuoso of domestic violence and would be judged today as a child abuser. Rimbaud was just as awful in his way. But they both produced poetry of an enduring beauty that doesn't so much transcend the awfulness of their lives as seem to have little connection to it.

With its multiple flashbacks the narrative loses any sense of emotional trajectory. Moreover, the music overwhelms the poetry. Anna Sideris plays all the parts other than Verlaine – Rimbaud, Verlaine's wife, the narrator – in a way that is unclear just who is speaking. Eleanor Burke's direction is subtle and effective, but it might have worked almost as well on the radio. However, *555: Verlaine en Prison* does provide plenty think about even though it only lasts an hour.

Read Patrick Shorrock's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/09/04/555-verlaine

Photography by Otto Wegener and Peter Mould

Man In The Rain

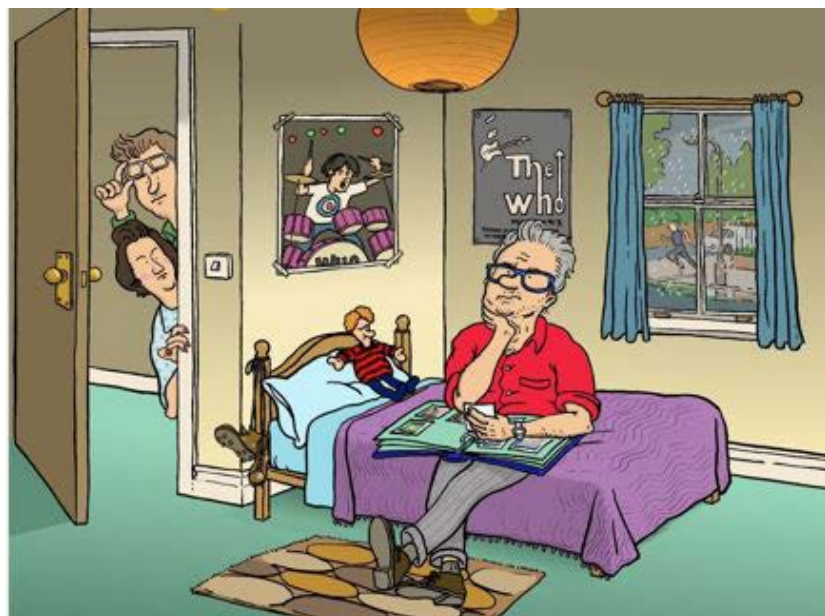
by Tony Bell

Quiet Light at Stanley Arts, Norwood and on tour until 30th September

One man shows, especially of an autobiographical nature, can often be challenging and brave pieces, and *Man In The Rain*, written by and starring Tony Bell, is no exception.

Bell takes a journey through his life, and explores and reflects on the relationships that have moulded him. He begins at childhood and there are moments about growing up that most people will be able to relate directly to. The end of childhood innocence is being met with the pitfalls of adolescence, where Bell's singing of a child's song is interrupted in increasing intensity with slurs and the confrontation of teenage troubles.

The play may enact the human experience of going through life, but a lot is centred on Bell's relationship with his own father. The opening, a depiction of his father's funeral, sets up not only Bell but also his dad as the central figures in the play. There are many moments where Bell is not only looking into his own experiences, but his father's as well. We see his dad go from being a man excited by having a young son, to a villainous antagonist in his treatment of not only Bell but also his wife as well. The closing moments display his more reflective tone, serving as a reminder that life has its ups and downs.



The physicality of certain characters made it unclear at times who was speaking: whether it be he, his mother, father or another figure, but for the majority of the show it was a very well-handled multi-person, one person performance. It is a testimony to Bell's craft and his skill that, even with minimal set and no lighting, the stage never felt empty or seemed that these elements were particularly missing.

Anyone observing could not help but feel that, over the hour's runtime, they have come to see and know what has not only helped make the show's performer, but also to understand his father as well. *Man In The Rain* is a terrific reflective piece on the reality of the human experience.

Read Denis Valentine's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/09/03/man-rain

Image courtesy of QA

American Buffalo

Petty Criminals, Petty Crime

The Mary Wallace Theatre. September 14th-21st

In a rundown Chicago junkshop three petty criminals plan the theft of what they perceive to be a valuable 'American Buffalo' coin.

AMERICAN



BUFFALO



Pathetic and hilarious, these no-hopers spout moronic platitudes on capitalism, morality and life as if they were titans of industry.

Funny, vicious and ultimately tragic, Mamet's depiction of those at the bottom of the social and economic heap of American capitalism is a masterpiece of modern theatre.

David Mamet's AMERICAN BUFFALO plays at the Mary Wallace Theatre from September 14th to 21st September.

The Richmond Shakespeare Society at The Mary Wallace Theatre
The Embankment, Twickenham TW1 3DU

Booking and further information at

www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk



RICHMOND SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY

Renowned Music Man Project Comes to the Normansfield Theatre

Inspirational musicians from The Music Man Project, a multi-award-winning, world record-breaking charity for musicians with learning disabilities, will debut at the Normansfield Theatre, Langdon Down Centre on Saturday 26th October at 6pm.



Founded by the UK Disability and Access Ambassador for Arts and Culture, David Stanley BEM, The Music Man Project is a global beacon of musical inclusivity and opportunity. The charity operates across the United Kingdom and has reached Nepal, the Philippines, South Africa, India, Italy, the USA and Canada. David's musicians have entertained Royalty, performed original productions at the London Palladium and Royal Albert Hall, featured on TV and radio, broken a Guinness World Record and opened a national TV advert.

In April this year, The Music Man Project returned to the Royal Albert Hall to showcase 300 musicians with learning disabilities from across their UK network in an original production called "Music is Magic". They were accompanied by His Majesty's Band of the Royal Marines, with a special guest appearance by Music Man Project patron, Michael Ball. It was the nation's largest ever celebration of accessible music.



The concert at Normansfield will welcome the charity's world-renowned Global Ambassadors, whose recent accolades include a top 10

Christmas single with the Royal Marines, a concert tour to San Diego, a debut at the Royal Nova Scotia Tattoo in Canada, a standing ovation from His Majesty the King and at Number 10 Downing Street.



"The Music Man Project has performed at some of the most prestigious and exciting venues in the world," said David Stanley. *"Many of our musicians have Down Syndrome so performing in this beautiful and historic venue will be particularly poignant. It is very important to us all"*

Tickets are £10 and available now from the Langdon Down Centre. All proceeds

will go towards the Down's Syndrome Association and The Music Man Project.

For more please information

visit <https://langdowndowncentre.org.uk/product/music-man-project-concert/>

Visit www.themusicmanproject.com



Music Man Project

Contribute to conservation with citizen scientist wildlife watch

From The Royal Parks

Thanks to players of [People's Postcode Lottery](#), we are launching an exciting new range of [citizen science projects](#) in [Bushy Park](#) and [Richmond Park](#). This year, we'll be conducting research on the parks' diverse species, including moths, small mammals and reptiles - and you're invited to get involved!

Join us as we take a closer look at the fascinating wildlife you can expect to encounter.

Moths

We're seeking volunteers to join our team in conducting moth trap surveys. By participating, you'll learn all about moths, gain hands-on experience with surveying techniques, and master the use of a Robinson Moth trap (which is harmless to moths).



Close up of a Clouded Drab (*Orthosia incerta*) moth

Moths are important pollinators and can come in a range of beautiful colours and patterns. Moth populations can also be used as an indicator of ecosystem health as they rely on diverse plant species and act as key food sources for our bats. Climate change is also having a massive impact on moths, and we need to understand the populations we've got to work out how we can better support them. Moth's life cycles are synchronized with the plants they rely on, but the changing climate means they are now emerging at different times to these plants. This is also having an impact on the birds and bats which rely on moths as food sources.

Small mammal survey

Many of the UK's small mammals play an important role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and preserving biodiversity. They are also a key part of the food chain for birds such as owls and kestrels.

We'll be collecting up the humane mammal traps set out the night before and then identifying, counting, potentially sexing, and releasing the mammals captured.



Wood Mouse



Common Shrew



Bank Vole



Weasel

Mice

There are two main types of mice that we expect to find in [Richmond Park](#) and [Bushy Park](#), the common wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) and the yellow-necked mouse (*Apodemus flavicollis*). Our small mammal surveys could help us understand whether the parks would be suitable receiving sites for a harvest mouse reintroduction project - so there is a chance we might find those here at some point in the future too!

Mice are key food sources for owls and rely on nuts and berries for overwintering food stocks. Yellow-necked mice can jump up to 2m high.

Shrew

There are three types of shrew in the UK, and we're really keen to find out which ones we've got in [Richmond Park](#) and [Bushy Park](#)!

We're most likely to find common shrew (*Sorex araneus*) but might find their smaller cousin the pygmy shrew (*Sorex minutus*) or even their larger cousin the water shrew (*Neomys fodiens*).

Shrews are protected species and feed entirely on insects – pygmy shrews can eat 125% of their body weight in insects in a single day!

Vole

Though many people don't know about them, the field vole (*Microtus agrestis*) is actually a really common small mammal in the UK. We are also hoping to find their even smaller cousins the bank voles (*Myodes glareolus*). We unfortunately don't expect to find their larger cousin the water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), which is a priority species, during these surveys because they don't fit through the humane trap entrance and we also know we have American mink present along the waterways.

You can tell the difference between a mouse and a vole by looking at the shape of their face (voles have quite blunt noses and small ears whereas mice have pointed faces and larger ears). Voles also have shorter tails, with the field vole's tail being about 1/3rd the length of its body.

Weasel

If we're lucky, we might manage to spot our smallest mustelid – a weasel (*Mustela nivalis*). These charismatic mammals are related to stoats, otters and pine martens, and love to eat both mice and voles!

Weasels and stoats look quite similar, to tell them apart look at how they move – while stoats leap and jump, weasels run. Stoats are also larger and have a black tip to their tail.

Reptile survey

Reptiles are highly vulnerable to the climate emergency as they have a very narrow range of optimal climates.

Join our ecologist on a long romp through the park visiting our Reptile Refugia sites to see if they are in use. We'll be carefully checking the refugia and identifying/counting reptiles before leaving them in peace again.

Snake

Grass snakes (*Natrix Helvetica*) are the UK's largest native species of snake! While large, they are not dangerous or aggressive. With their distinctive yellow collars and piano key marked bellies, grass snakes are not venomous and are actually very shy. They'll often be hiding away beneath logs and are normally only spotted when basking in the sun.



Grass snake

Lizard

There are two potential lizards we might find in our surveys, the common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) which is a protected species and our commonly misunderstood slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) which, despite looking like a snake, is actually a legless lizard!



Common Lizard

A unique experience

Learn more by signing up for [The Wildlife Survey Collection](#).

These sessions are free and made possible thanks to [People's Postcode Lottery](#) players who have raised over £6.2 million to help the [Royal Parks charity](#) support nature for future generations.

[Register Now](#)





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RICHMOND,
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THE
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The Seasons

FRIDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2024
FROM 7PM - QUIZ STARTS AT 7.30PM

Tickets are £20.00, which includes a delicious Indian meal.
There will be a raffle, and a cash bar, throughout the evening.

The quiz will start promptly at 7.30pm at York House,
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Maximum of 8 people per table. No minimum, we can always find you a team.



THE MAYOR'S CHARITIES THIS YEAR ARE: **HOME-START RICHMOND** AND **RICHMOND MIND**

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Public urged to get to know their insects during Asian Hornet Week

Beekeepers are calling on people to make sure they know how to identify the invasive species, after more than 20,000 false reports of 'yellow-legged' Asian hornets last year.

People are being encouraged to better familiarize themselves with the insects in their gardens, as efforts to increase awareness of the 'yellow-legged' hornet - also known as the Asian hornet - continue.

To coincide with Asian Hornet Week (2nd-8th September), the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) has created a simple spotting sheet to help people tell the difference between some of the most common species they might come across, and whether they need to be concerned by what they find.



Asian hornets are a non-native invasive species that are currently being monitored by the Animal and Plant Health Agency's National Bee Unit (NBU), which delivers bee health programmes in England and Wales on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Welsh Government. Any sightings should be reported through the Asian Hornet Watch app, so that nests that have been built can be traced and destroyed to limit the insects' spread.

More than 1,000 BBKA members have been mobilised to provide localised emergency support to the NBU when a report is made through the app.

However, there are concerns that many people are still unaware of how to identify an Asian hornet correctly, with many confusing them with other species, including the native European hornet.



According to Defra more than 20,000 incorrect reports of Asian hornets were made through the app in 2023, impacting the NBU's ability to respond to sightings quickly.

The invasive insects are a threat to our ecosystem in the UK, due to their



predation of honey bees and other vital pollinators. Last year saw a record number of Asian hornets in the UK, and genetic analysis from earlier this year suggests they may have started overwintering here.

Diane Drinkwater, chair of the BBKA said: *“Given the scale of the problem with incorrect reporting last year, it’s more important than ever that as many people as possible know how to tell the*

difference between Asian hornets and some of the more common, native species they might find in their gardens.

“European hornets, in particular, can be large and noisy, and might give people a bit of a fright, leading many to think they are the ones that need to be reported.

“But they are important pollinators and predators of species that feed on plants and crops - and interactions can often be peaceful if they’re treated with proper respect and caution.

“As with all wasps and hornets, don’t approach nests. Instead, just take a few moments to get to know what Asian hornets look like, and how to report them. This alone could help make a real difference in preventing them from becoming established here”.



Kate Wilson, Head of the Animal Plant & Health Agency’s National Bee Unit, said: *“Asian hornets cause significant damage to native pollinators, including our much-loved honey bees. APHA’s National Bee Unit continues to take swift and effective action to stamp out the threat posed by Asian hornets as part of ongoing monitoring and surveillance work to protect our pollinators.*

“We encourage the public to remain vigilant this Asian Hornet Week and continue to report sightings to the Asian Hornet Watch app or online”.

Asian hornets can be identified by their distinct markings: they are slightly smaller than the European hornet, with yellow legs, an orange face and dark black/brown body with one yellow/orange stripe on the lower abdomen. Sightings can be reported via the Asian Hornet Watch app (available to download for Android and Apple device), online via irecord (www.irecord.org.uk/enter-non-native-records) or by emailing alernonnative@ceh.ac.uk



Squire's Celebrates Success with Teddington Library Community Garden

Squire's Garden Centres Twickenham has presented Teddington Library Community Garden with a special plaque marking the success of their 'Love Where You Live' programme, which saw a project at the site receiving a special award back in March. The presentation marked the culmination of a four month long project and concluded Squire's horticultural programme for the current year.

Squire's had awarded a total of £5,500 in gardening vouchers to nine local community gardening projects as part of its 'Love Where you Live' 2024 programme, supporting the work of projects within communities close to its centres.

The programme assists community gardening projects that educate, grow produce, or provide health and wellbeing benefits through horticulture. Following the unveiling of the programme, over 80 applications were received in a matter of weeks, highlighting the need for funds by local groups who are championing horticulture for the benefit of their local community.

Nine groups were selected for an award, comprising Squire's vouchers enabling recipients to choose plants, tools and other gardening supplies. Over the spring and summer months the projects got underway, award recipients reported back on their progress, highlighting their successes and how the award had been used to make a difference to local projects and people.

Clare Thompson, Community Libraries Manager for Teddington Library and co Project Co-ordinator with Emma Florczak, Volunteer Co-ordinator for Richmond upon Thames Libraries, comments:

"We're really delighted to be a recipient of a Squire's 'Love Where You Live' award earlier this year. It has enabled us to fund project work in the library community garden that will assist our volunteers and importantly, benefit the wider community. We have been able to purchase gardening materials to support our project enabling us to make good headway – the award has made a big difference."

Teddington Library Community Garden used their award to implement:

- Adding two trellises for climbers to go up and a garden mirror to the back wall which creates a lovely focal point to the garden
- Adding new planting to all of the community garden assisted by volunteers and a completely new bed created in the middle of the garden.
- Plants - all of the plants chosen from Squire's were selected because they are good pollinators and wildlife friendly. The project is already seeing the benefits of this in terms of an increase in biodiversity. Bees, ladybirds and butterflies are regular visitors to the garden.

Clare comments: *"The best thing has been to see the enjoyment on the faces of local people using the garden and their support for what we are trying to achieve."*

Sarah Squire, Chairman of Squire's Garden Centres, comments: *"We were really pleased to make awards to a range of important local projects. It has been fantastic to see that there are so many keen supporters and groups with a strong desire to enhance their local environment through the wonderful benefits horticulture delivers.*

"The feedback we have received certainly confirms the awards have made a difference and assisted volunteers with some rewarding work which will be of wider benefit either to users of the gardens or the wider community. We hope these awards have helped start projects that will continue into the future and enable groups to create something pleasing for communities to enjoy or creating shared spaces that brings individuals together. Our centres are embedded in the communities we serve and 'Love Where You Live' enables Squire's to give back to the local area."

Squire's 'Love Where You Live' 2025 programme will open for applications in late 2024.



Clare Thompson, Community Libraries Manager for Teddington Library and co-Project Co-ordinator (second from left) with Julie Leatherdale, Squire's Twickenham Centre Manager (far right) and community garden volunteers

St Mary's University

St Mary's Ranked No 1 for Education in Daily Mail University Guide

St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) has been ranked the best university for Education in the Daily Mail University Guide 2024. This follows The School of Education retaining its Ofsted Outstanding rating in all categories for Primary and Secondary Initial Teacher Training earlier this year.



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Speaking about the University, the Daily Mail University Guide said, *"In a city dominated by large – occasionally impersonal – universities, St Mary's offers an individual experience, reflected in its consistently excellent scores in the National Student Survey."*

The Daily Mail ranked St Mary's No. 1 out of 51 universities for Education courses. St Mary's has been rated as Ofsted Outstanding for its teaching courses since 2011, retaining the status in 2019, and again in June 2024. [The Ofsted report](#) earlier this year found that at SMU trainee teachers *"benefit from first-class levels of support from university staff from the point of application"* and that, *"The curriculum places a strong emphasis on current, credible research, which shapes all aspects of training and mentoring."*

This year sees St Mary's climb 10 places in the Daily Mail's overall university ranking to 68th in the country. St Mary's also ranked in the Top 10 for Student Support and Teaching Excellence.

Speaking on the Daily Mail University Guide findings, St Mary's Vice-Chancellor Professor Anthony McClaran said, *"Huge congratulations to the School of Education for being named the top provider in the country for their subject area! St Mary's was founded in 1850 to train teachers, and I am delighted that we will be rated the top university in the country for this when we celebrate our 175th anniversary in 2025. It is also great to see St Mary's recognised as a top institution for Student Support and Teaching Excellence. This is a true reflection of the outstanding work our academics and professional services team do to provide our students with the best possible experience across the board with us."*

Commenting on the Daily Mail's ranking Head of School of Education at St Mary's, Dr Jane Chambers, said, *"I am thrilled with the news that St Mary's has been recognised for the quality of its Education programmes. The education lecturers at St Mary's are leading lights in offering students an exceptional quality of teaching and learning. This is not only seen in our students' outcomes, who go on to flourishing careers educating our next generations, but also in the values of St Mary's University that they carry with them – excellence, generosity of spirit, inclusivity and respect."*

The Daily Mail University Guide also ranked St Mary's 4th in the country for Sport Science. Students regularly have practical classes in the state-of-the-art gym and Performance Education Centre (PEC) on campus, which includes a free weights area. Other world-class facilities used by students include an environmental chamber and biomechanics labs.

St Mary's is renowned for its sporting excellence, with fourteen SMU athletes selected to compete at the [Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games](#). So far, St Mary's alumni have won one Gold and four Bronze medals across triathlon, rugby and para-cycling events in Paris. St Mary's athletes have won gold medals at each Olympic Games since Beijing 2008.



**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**

English Rugby Set for a New Approach under the Men's Professional Game Partnership

The Rugby Football Union, Premiership Rugby and The Rugby Players Association have co-created a new Men's Professional Game Partnership (MPGP) after 18 months of collaboration.

The eight-year partnership aims to create world-leading English teams and thriving professional leagues with players and fans at the heart of it.

Improved Governance, Funding, Stabilisation and Cost Alignment

To lead this partnership into the next era, a new Professional Rugby Board (PRB) has been established to replace the Professional Game Board so that all rugby decisions are brought under one roof to oversee the strategy. The PRB will have an independent chair and two further independent members.

The RFU and Premiership Rugby will each have three voting members including the RFU's newly appointed [Board Member Wayne Barnes](#). The RPA will have two seats on the new Board (one voting and one observer) to ensure that players are central to decision making for the professional game.



The funding deal is across two four-year cycles with a guaranteed £33m per season for the first cycle, moving to a profit share in the second cycle of 26% of the RFU's Profit Before Rugby Investment (PBRI).

A number of joint initiatives to grow revenues and manage costs in the overall system, include;

- Commercial growth through a landmark Joint Marketing Agreement, driving club attendances and growing respective TV audiences and social following.
- A commitment to implementing a salary cap formula from 25/26 aligned to key central financial metrics, which will include a review of the salary cap credit system.
- Closer alignment and sharing of information to aid player welfare and management across the professional game.
- Implementation of an independent Financial Monitoring Panel (FMP) to monitor financial stability across Premiership Rugby and provide confidence to clubs playing in any given season. The FMP is currently chaired by Sir Nigel Boardman and is already in operation for the 24/25 season.

World-leading English teams

The Men's Professional Game Partnership has a vision to create *'World-leading English teams and thriving professional leagues delivered through a fully optimised performance system in partnership with our players'*. Fundamental to this vision are the changes to professional rugby system that have been agreed:

Enhanced England Playing Squad (EPS): the England Head Coach will be able to select up to 25 players into the Enhanced EPS, ensuring optimum preparation for key international fixtures, and will

have the final say on all sports science and medical matters relating to the management of Enhanced EPS players.

England performance pathway: to provide improved international playing opportunities and a link to the senior men's team, the U20s EPS squad will be expanded to 50 players and there will be up to four England A matches per season, with the squads drawn from the Senior and U20 EPS squads, with the opportunity to bring in additional U23 players if required.

Player welfare and management: there is a continued commitment to world-leading player welfare initiatives through collaboration and joint investment, including the use of aligned welfare and performance data systems for all players, clubs and England teams, underpinned by audited and sanctionable minimum standards/regulations. A jointly implemented Athlete Management System (AMS) will be introduced across clubs and England to better integrate, standardise and report on welfare and performance data.

Academy structure: reflecting the new structure of the Gallagher Premiership, the academy boundaries have been redefined, aligned to the Premiership clubs alongside a Yorkshire academy which will continue to be RFU operated under authority of the PRB. These academies will work with and utilise central data to establish satellite sites to ensure regional coverage with an ambition for access with reduced travel time for players.

Pathway changes: the academies will deliver a redefined phased approach to the player development system, starting at U15 and encompassing three phases: Foundation (ages 15 to 16), Development (ages 17 to 18) and Confirmation (ages 19 to 20). Each Academy will ensure that at least two State School / College partnerships are established, developed, and appropriately resourced to be able to participate in the RFU schools' competition.

Community: All parties are working together to co-create a joint community game programme that will align with the priorities emerging from the RFU's Community Game Future strategy and will build on the success of Project Rugby to continue to make the game more inclusive (the joint initiative from Premiership Rugby, in collaboration with the RFU and Gallagher that focused on engaging disadvantaged young people with Rugby Union).

Player Support Fund: All three parties will establish a Player Support Fund, which will be administered and supported by Restart, the official charity of the RPA. The fund will initially focus on medical support for retiring players, mental wellbeing support for current and retired players, as well as providing a safety net for players and staff affected by unforeseen club situations.

Bill Sweeney, Rugby Football Union CEO said: "This eight-year commitment will reshape the rugby landscape and reset the professional game to support, showcase and fund our game for the next decade and beyond.

"We have spent the last two years interrogating the data and listening to all parts of the game to understand what we need for rugby to grow in the future, how all parts of the system interact and support each other, and where we need to focus and allocate our investment for the best outcome.

"Despite the RFU having £150m revenue losses through Covid, and a £30m increase in operating costs over the last four years due to inflation, we are in a stable financial position. Today we have reached a significant milestone in turning our spend into the professional game into a true investment partnership with shared strategy, goals, and risks.

“The England national team benefits by having control over the IDPs, Medical and S&C of the best players in England at the peak of their form and in the best shape to play for their country. And the community game benefits from well run and funded academies to allow every young player to fulfil their potential and winning England teams that generate money to reinvest into the whole game.”

“This is not only a Men’s Professional Game Partnership, but also part of a broader partnership we have created together that joins and supports all parts of the game, international, domestic, community, players and investors, men and women, boys and girls.”

Simon Massie-Taylor, Premiership Rugby CEO said: “The new Professional Game Partnership is fundamental to the next phase of English club rugby. We have worked hard with the RFU and RPA to provide more financial stability, better governance and a joint high-performance plan that will help make the Men’s England Team and the Premiership clubs as successful as possible.

“What we have learnt from the challenges of the last few years is how important healthy clubs and a successful men’s England team are to the rugby eco-system - and also how important it is to work in partnership with the players, the governing body and other rugby stakeholders.”

Christian Day, RPA General Secretary said: “The Rugby Players Association’s inclusion as signatories to the Men’s Professional Game Partnership is a landmark day for our organisation, but most importantly for the players. The RPA will always exist to support, promote, and protect our members. Building an adequate safety net and striving to make England the best place to play rugby in the world. We are progressing through a time of what we believe to be positive change and unity for rugby union in England after a period of collective challenge. This new agreement should start to give players a feeling of real value, and in doing so can only improve their value add back into the game that they love.”

Promotion and Relegation

The RFU Council agreed there would continue to be a two-match home and away play-off between the bottom placed Gallagher Premiership club and the winner of the Championship/Tier 2, provided that that latter club meets the Minimum Standards Criteria in place at the relevant time. This continues to allow for promotion and relegation, but also balances the careful financial challenges of clubs in those leagues and ensure that promoted clubs can sustainably compete.

PGB agreed to increased flexibility in the Minimum Standards Criteria (MSC) for entry into the Gallagher Premiership. The new MSC will allow a longer period for a promoted club to achieve required ground capacities. Clubs may move from 5,000, to 7,500 and finally 10,001 at the start of their fourth season in the Premiership at the latest. This should enable aspirational clubs who gain promotion longer to embed into the Premiership a smoother transition in terms of investment into their stadium. From the start of the 2024/25 season, the responsibility of determining the MSC will transfer to the Professional Rugby Board.

Championship clubs have again been invited to play in the Premiership Rugby Cup and this invitation has already been extended for the 2025/26 season.

All parties want a viable, sustainable, and valued second tier that can produce clubs capable of competing in the Premiership and providing the jeopardy and competition that keeps the league vibrant. However, there is currently a major gap in competitiveness and playing budgets between the Gallagher Premiership and Championship clubs and the financial requirements needed to compete in the Gallagher Premiership.



Phil Giles on summer transfer window: New arrivals crucial for club's long-term health

Brentford director of football Phil Giles reflects on summer transfer window; Igor Thiago, Fábio Carvalho, Sepp van den Berg, Gustavo Nunes and Jayden Meghoma were recruited for Thomas Frank's first-team squad, while striker Ivan Toney departed for Saudi Pro League club Al-Ahli on Deadline Day; Giles: "I'm really happy with what we did"

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford director of football Phil Giles has reflected on the club's dealings during the summer transfer window.

Thomas Frank's first-team squad has been bolstered by the arrivals of Igor Thiago (23), Fábio Carvalho (21), Sepp van den Berg (22), Gustavo Nunes (18) and Jayden Meghoma (18).

Giles stated that he is happy with the west Londoners' recruitment, highlighting the players' age profile and potential, and shared his thoughts on striker Ivan Toney's move to Al-Ahli.

"The squad looks good," said Giles. "We've invested in young players, now it's about giving them an opportunity to step forward to develop. "It's quite a young squad now with Jayden, Gustavo and Fábio – I could name a few.

"So, it's not all about going out and buying a load more players in January or next summer. How do we develop these players and how can they take us to the next level?"

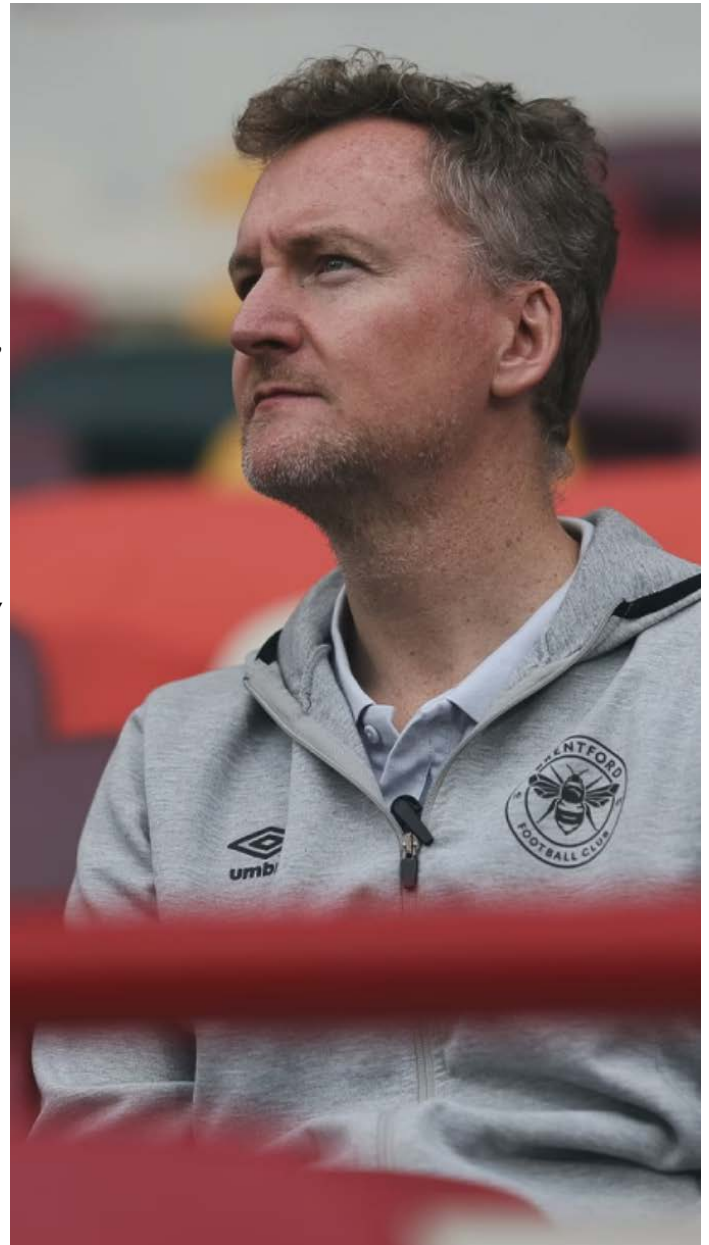
Giles added: *"I'm really happy with what we did. It's crucial not necessarily for today or tomorrow, but for the long-term health of the club. "We have to invest in top young players; we've been doing that for a long time now."*

Ivan Toney joined Saudi Pro League club Al-Ahli on Deadline Day.

Toney scored 72 goals in 141 appearances, playing a key role in the Bees' promotion to the Premier League in 2020/21 and the three top-flight seasons that followed, [and has been labelled a "Brentford legend" by Thomas Frank.](#)

"Thomas has said everything there is to say about Ivan in terms of his performances," said Giles.

"Everyone expected that there would be interest in Ivan. There could have potentially been more interest in



him, as it happened. There was strong interest from Al-Ahli and clearly a desire from us to get a deal done.

“They wanted to buy him, and we were open to selling him, so the process came down to agreeing a valuation, which took time. It went late into the window. It’s always a bit tricky when the season starts, but I think Thomas managed it well.

“We were really happy to get that done. Ivan’s done a great job for us, and he moves on to the next phase of his career. It was a good end to the window, from my point of view.”

Toney wasn’t the only player to depart the club on 30 August.

Midfielders Myles Peart-Harris and Frank Onyeka will spend the 2024/25 season on loan with Swansea City and Augsburg, respectively.

“Myles did well at Forest Green and stepped up to Portsmouth. Now he’s stepped up again,” said Giles. *“At this stage of his career, being on the bench or the fringes for us is not what he needed. We’ll see how he gets on. Frank is a different case. He’s played a lot of minutes for us – he was on the pitch 26 times last season – so letting him go is a little bit of a risk without an obvious replacement.*

“But I’m very confident that we have the players to step in and take those minutes and it’s important for them and their development. Frank wanted to start more games, so we agreed that it was the right thing to do.”

Onyeka is joined in the Bundesliga by Fin Stevens, who completed a permanent transfer to St Pauli in July.

Stevens signed for Brentford B as a 17-year-old, having spent the first part of his career in Arsenal’s Academy and at non-league side Worthing.

He progressed through the club’s system, earning a promotion to the first team in 2022, and made nine appearances for Frank’s side, including one outing in the Premier League.

“I love when players come from fairly far down the pyramid, step up and progress and make an impact,” said Giles. *“It was looking difficult for him to get in our team, but to move on to the Bundesliga is just a great story, especially in terms of evolving our B team and developing players.*

“It’s important to be able to move players on and bring a little bit of income to the club and show some progression. Ryan Trevitt is a similar example: non-league, B team and now he’s involved with the first team. It’s a fantastic story. Everyone loves the big signing and the money and all the rest of it, but those are the ones that give me most pleasure.”

Brentford first team, ins and outs summer 2024

In: Igor Thiago (Club Brugge), Fábio Carvalho (Liverpool), Sepp van den Berg (Liverpool), Gustavo Nunes (Grêmio), Jayden Meghoma (Southampton)

Out: David Raya (Arsenal), Saman Ghoddos, Charlie Goode (Stevenage), Shandon Baptiste (Luton Town), Ellery Balcombe (St Mirren, loan), Thomas Strakosha (AEK Athens), Fin Stevens (St Pauli), Ben Winterbottom (Fylde, loan), Zanka (Anderlecht), Myles Peart-Harris (Swansea City, loan), Frank Onyeka (Augsburg, loan), Ivan Toney (Al-Ahli)



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