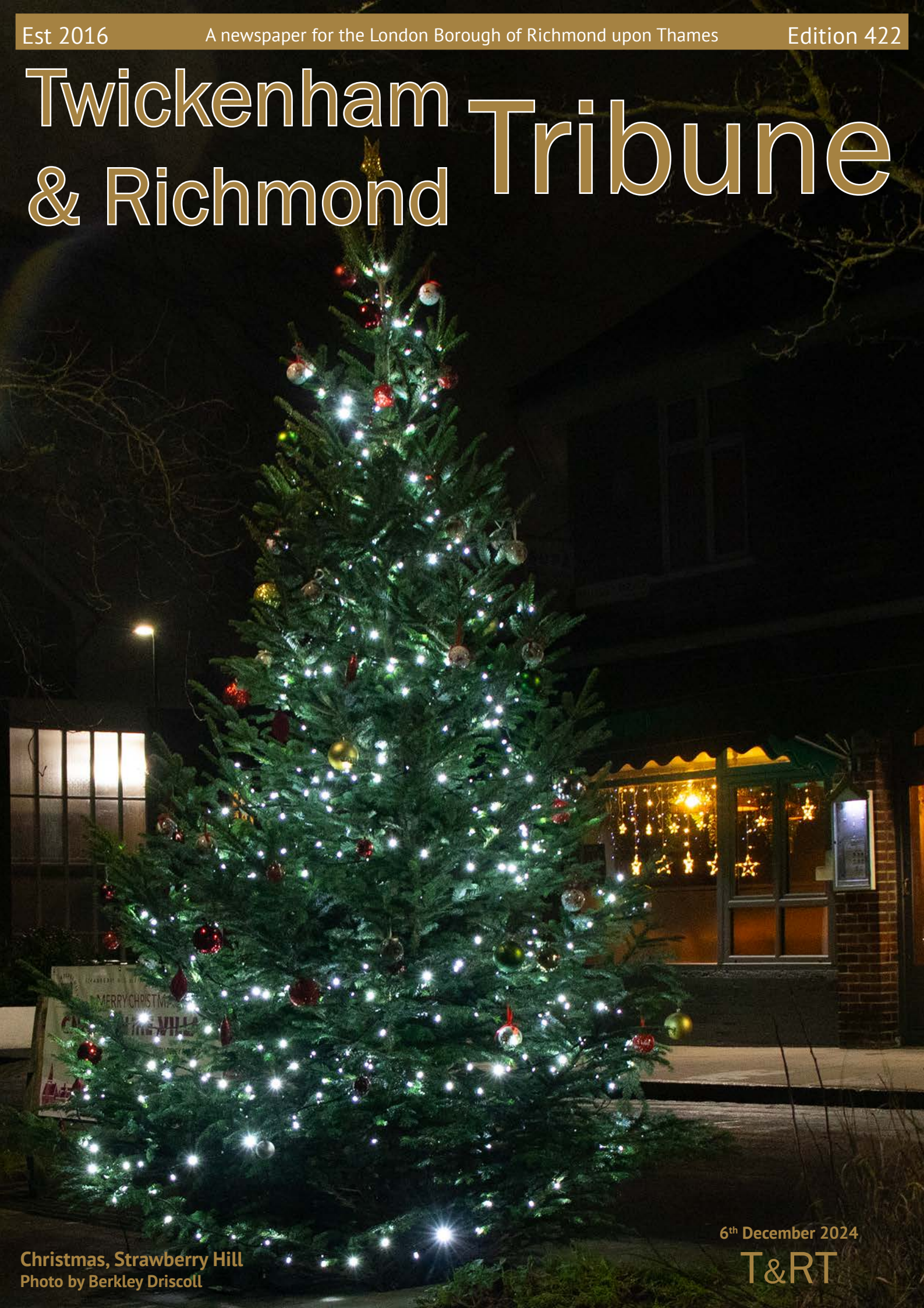


Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



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Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

TickerTape - News in Brief

Struggling to pay your annual fuel bills? We can help

From Richmond Council

We are once again launching our annual Fuel Grant Scheme to help those struggling to pay fuel bills this winter.

Grants of up to £170 are now available 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 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 Friday 17 January 2025. Applications received after the closing date will not be processed.

You can [apply online](#) before midnight on 17 January. You will need to register online before you are able to make an online application.

If you are unable to apply online, you can collect an application form from your local library or from the Civic Centre in Twickenham. Application forms must be received by 5pm on 17 January.

If your application is successful, payment to your utility provider will be made in the week commencing 10 February 2025.



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

The Treehouse
25 King Edwards Grove
Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9LY
Telephone 020 8274 0107
Mobile 07960 123580
Fax 020 8274 0119
info@thetreeagency.co.uk
www.thetreeagency.co.uk



Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 278

St. Augustines Church – Whitton

By Alan Winter

St Augustine of Canterbury, on Hospital Bridge Road in Whitton is a Church of England church in the Diocese of London. Its minister is The Revd Canon John Kafwanka K who resides at St Augustine's Vicarage, Hospital Bridge Road, Whitton, Twickenham, Middlesex, TW2 6DE.



The first black and white postcard dates from the Church opening in 1958 while the two colour images are of the church and the Chertsey Road roundabout with church behind from about 15 years ago.

The church was founded in 1935 and met, until 1958, at Bishop Perrin's School. The district attached to the church of ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY was assigned to it in 1951 out of the parish of St. Philip and St. James, Whitton. A

priest-in-charge was appointed by the London Diocesan Home Mission in 1935 and services were held in the hall of the Bishop Perrin Memorial School until 1958, when the permanent church was opened. It stands on the corner of the Chertsey Road and Hospital Bridge Road and was designed by Harold Gibbons. It is of yellow brick with an aisled nave and chancel under a single barrel vault, transepts, side chapels, and a west tower. The interior is cement rendered, and the altar stands under the crossing with the choir-stalls behind.



The abbey of St Peter and Paul (later rededicated to St Augustine) was founded in Canterbury in about 598. Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury, a role that to this day is still the most senior cleric in the Church of England.

St Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury, Kent became one of the most important Benedictine monasteries in the medieval world. It is the burial place of several Anglo-Saxon kings and Archbishops of Canterbury, including St Augustine

himself, and today forms part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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!

CrusaderTravel

020 8744 0474

crusadertravel.com

Escapology Experts

info@crusadertravel.com



Your friendly local Travel Agency
established in Twickenham since 1966

With over 50 years experience we pride ourselves on being able to offer an unrivalled service with attention to detail. Come and have a chat with us in our cosy office off the Church Street Square, we are open 6 days a week from 11am until 6pm (Closed Sunday)



Notification of Parks closure

Due to severe wind gusts caused by Storm Darragh, [all of the Royal Parks](#), plus Brompton Cemetery and Victoria Tower Gardens will be closed on Saturday 7 December. This closure includes all park roads and cycleways, cafés and kiosks, Parks Sports venues, the Serpentine Lido and Boating Lake, [the Royal Parks Shop](#) and Hyde Park Winter Wonderland.



This closure is in line with our Tree Safety Policy and Emergency Plan relating to high winds.

All parks will be subject to a delay to usual opening times on Sunday 8 December, following a safety inspection. Updates will be issued via our website and social media channels.



The safety of visitors and staff is our top priority.

We're sorry for any inconvenience that these closures may cause.

Next week at Richmond Council

On Wednesday, the **Planning Committee** will meet to decide an application to extend a children's day nursery into an adjoining rear garden. The site is located at 34 Priory Road & 54 Percy Road, Hampton. The meeting will commence at 7.00 pm at York House.

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


On Thursday, the **Education and Children's Services Committee** will meet to discuss (1) the Annual safeguarding report, (2) the SEND Future Plan update, (3) the mid-year corporate performance report, (4) the committee work programme. The meeting will commence at 7 pm at York House.

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 participate. You can submit questions or speak on an item on the agenda. To ask a question, simply submit it by 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](#)

HAMPTON CHORAL SOCIETY A Christmas Fantasy

An illustration of St. Nicholas, a bearded man in a red and yellow robe with a crown, holding a staff and a lantern. He is walking alongside a child in a green hooded cloak carrying a bundle of sticks on their back. The scene is framed by a decorative, Art Nouveau-style border with floral and scrollwork motifs.

Wenceslas - Bob Chilcott
Fantasia on Christmas Carols - Ralph V Williams
The Feast of Stephen - George W Parris (new
commission for Hampton Choral Society)
Carols for audience and choir

Musical Director - Emma Warren with professional soloists

Saturday 7 December 2024 - 6.30pm

All Saints Church, Market Place, Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 1JP

Tickets: £15 (Adults), £7 (Under 16's)
Box Office: 020 8941 5394
on the door: contactless, card, cheque, cash
www.hamptonchoral.org.uk

Charity Number 261788

Wrapping up the municipal year amid lingering concerns

By James Knight

The final council meeting of 2024 was a brisk affair, hurried along by the allure of festive refreshments afterwards. Yet, amid the brevity, substantive issues managed to provoke debate and reflect underlying tensions within the borough. Opening the session, Mayor Councillor Richard Pine struck a conciliatory note, urging colleagues toward “calm and considered debate.” Whether his call was heeded remains debatable.

First up was a petition from 76 residents opposing the plan to permanently unlock **Castelnau Recreation Ground** in Barnes, citing safety and environmental risks. While formally acknowledged, the swift dismissal of the petition left some attendees disillusioned, with murmurs of dissatisfaction suggesting the council’s procedural handling appeared perfunctory rather than participatory.

Public scrutiny turned more intense with questions over the divisive **Burton’s Road Low Traffic Neighbourhood** scheme in Hampton. Councillor Alexander Ehmann defended the council’s broader reinvestment strategy, though his remarks—that funds raised by the scheme were redistributed borough-wide—did little to placate vocal critics like Ms. Wilson, who raised pointed concerns about financial transparency. A frustrated observer summed up the mood: “Their unwillingness to provide detailed answers is eroding trust.”

The meeting also discussed the abrupt termination of the **Pensford Field** lease, a contentious issue for many residents in Kew and further afield. Councillor Gareth Roberts sought to reassure the public by promising inclusivity under new management, but his angry tone in replying did nothing to conciliate aggrieved residents.

Amid the tension, Councillor Robin Brown offered a sobering glimpse into the borough’s financial trajectory. He highlighted a “**funding squeeze**” anticipated post-2026 and praised Richmond’s council tax reduction scheme. However, his cautionary remarks about looming fiscal pressures—particularly in social care—sparked questions about whether the borough’s current strategies were robust enough to avoid a crunch with all the expensive capital projects coming up in the next couple of years.

Racing through their agenda, almost faster than Rudolf the Reindeer, councillors endorsed a Public Space Protection Order extension for the Rosslyn Road abortion clinic and reaffirmed their stance against **Heathrow expansion**. Attention then shifted to three motions: addressing the impact of national insurance hikes on the voluntary sector, tackling the borough’s incineration practices, and confronting the rising scourge of violence against women and girls (VAWG), with councillors pointing the finger at social media giants like Meta (maybe they should have a word with their former leader Sir Nick Clegg who is now Meta’s president for global affairs).

Green Councillor Chas Warlow led a spirited call to reduce waste incineration, underscoring Richmond’s environmental commitments. Yet, the Liberal Democrat bloc pointedly critiqued the lack of viable alternatives for managing the borough’s burgeoning waste problem. The Greens’ suggestion to **switch to fortnightly refuse collections** was met with mixed reactions, highlighting the persistent challenges of improving recycling rates in the borough.

Across the evening, recurring themes of transparency, fiscal prudence, and environmental responsibility underpinned discussions. Yet, for many, the council’s perceived failure to truly engage with residents’ concerns was the enduring takeaway. As one attendee reflected, “They’re hearing us, but they’re not listening.” With a meeting overshadowed by unresolved issues, it remains to be seen whether 2025 will bring a more inclusive and decisive council agenda—or more of just pointing the finger at other people.

Christmas and New Year waste and recycling collections

From Richmond Council

Your waste and recycling collections will change over the festive period. There will also be changes to garden waste collections, and we will be offering Christmas tree collections.

Waste and recycling collections

We will be running a revised collection schedule from Wednesday 25 December 2024 to Saturday 4 January 2025.

Normal collection day	Revised collection day
Wednesday 25 December	Friday 27 December
Thursday 26 December	Saturday 28 December
Friday 27 December	Sunday 29 December
Monday 30 December	No change
Tuesday 31 December	No change
Wednesday 1 January	Thursday 2 January
Thursday 2 January	Friday 3 January
Friday 3 January	Saturday 4 January

Bulky waste

Bulky waste collections will be suspended between Monday 23 December 2024 and Friday 3 January 2025.

Garden waste

Garden waste collections will be suspended from Monday 6 to Friday 17 January 2025. Collections will resume on Monday 20 January.

Food waste

To support food waste recycling during the holidays, residents who receive this service can pick up a [free roll of compostable caddy liners](#) from their local library or the Civic Centre in Twickenham.

Christmas tree recycling

We offer both a drop off and collection service for real Christmas trees. Find out more about [Christmas tree recycling](#).

The Christmas tree collection service was enhanced in 2024 to include the ability for residents to report an abandoned tree or fly tipped tree. It included GIS to pinpoint the tree's location and the ability to upload a photograph. This worked well and will be repeated in January 2025.

Council must reduce black bag waste and avoid incineration

CLlr Chas Warlow, Green Party Councillor for South Richmond

Another success for Richmond and Twickenham Greens, as Councillor Chas Warlow's motion on waste incineration passed at the Full Council meeting on Tuesday.

Campaigners and experts have serious concerns that the national strategy of sending ever more waste for incineration is harming air quality and preventing us from reaching climate goals.

Richmond borough sends 48,000 tonnes of black bag waste every year to incineration facilities, one of which is only 500 metres from the nearest school.

Emissions from incineration facilities contain harmful gases and particulates for which there is no safe World Health Organisation limit.

CLlr Warlow's speech at last night's meeting highlighted that long-term contracts often tie councils into providing minimum amounts of waste to incineration operators. Chas said: *"That approach makes a mockery of our commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle."*

Richmond Council's waste is managed by the West London Waste Authority, which has precisely this kind of contract. Moreover, emissions from waste incineration are due to become part of the Emissions Trading Scheme in 2028, which will cost Richmond Council several million pounds a year at current prices.

The motion in full reads:

"Council:

- Continues to recognise the climate and health risks caused by emissions from incineration.*
- Reaffirms the existing commitment further to reduce the tonnage of waste sent to incineration, given that burning waste produces the same amount of greenhouse gases for each unit of energy as coal power.*
- Will continue to work with the West London Waste Authority to reduce waste.*
- Will lobby national government to take urgent action to align manufacturing and waste disposal policies with the circular economy concept.*
- Acknowledges the urgency arising from the 2028 extension of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to incineration, potentially costing councils millions."*

The motion passed with no votes against or abstentions. Chas said: *"We need to lobby the Labour government ... to kick this polluting method into touch as soon as possible and focus on creating a sustainable future."*





Kettner Concerts Twickenham E.T.A. Hoffmann's The Nutcracker



Sunday, 8 December 2024, 6.00 pm

"Music is the most sublime of all the arts." - E.T.A. Hoffmann

Concert pianist **Cristian Sandrin** presents a recital celebrating the Prussian satirist, artist and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann, an influential novelist whose famous tales combined reality with fantasy and the macabre. Hoffmann created the fictional character of Johannes Kreisler, a tortured composer whose predicament inspired works by Schumann and Brahms. He also wrote the famous story of The Nutcracker which was later adapted into a ballet by Tchaikovsky. Tonight we shall hear Mikhail Pletnev's dazzling piano transcription of the ballet suite.

Programme

E.T.A. Hoffmann: Piano Sonata in F minor

J. Brahms: Four Ballades op. 10

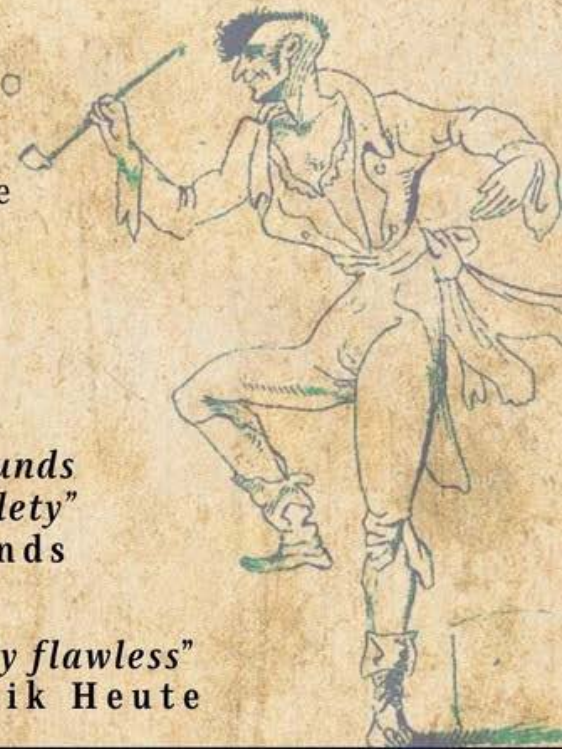
R. Schumann: Kreisleriana op. 16

P.I. Tchaikovsky/Pletnev: The Nutcracker Suite

"A luscious recital"
American Record Guide

*"Sandrin expresses the sounds
with infinite subtlety"*
Nieuwe Noten Netherlands

"technically flawless"
Klassik Heute



St Mary's Church
Church Street
Twickenham
TW1 3NJ



Tickets: £15
(£10 for students and under 18s)
kettnerconcerts.co.uk
Book tickets on Eventbrite.co.uk
or scan the qr code

The Kettner Society is a registered charity no. 1161105
for enquiries: kettnerconcerts@gmail.com

Join VisitRichmond on the countdown to Christmas!

From VisitRichmond

Residents and visitors are invited to take part in VisitRichmond's advent calendar giveaway for daily surprises and to vote for their favourite windows in the Christmas window decoration competition.

Christmas advent calendar giveaway

To celebrate the festive season, VisitRichmond has launched an online advent calendar giveaway, where residents and visitors can enter each day for a chance to win one of 25 fantastic local prizes.

VisitRichmond Partners have donated fantastic prizes to win every day until Wednesday 25 December from overnight stay at The Selwyn, moonlight swim at Hampton Pool, panto tickets, afternoon tea, dinner for two at Sticks n Sushi and so much more!

To participate, click on each door of the advent calendar and enter the prize draw by filling in your details. You have until midnight each day to enter.



Find out more about the [Christmas advent calendar giveaway](#).

Christmas windows competition

This year, VisitRichmond is hosting its first Christmas windows competition. Over 80 local businesses across Richmond upon Thames have entered, and residents can vote for who should be the winner for 2024. The competition is open until Friday 20 December at 5pm. It is simple to vote - visit your local town centre and scan the QR code in the window to ensure that your favourite window has the chance to win. The Mayor of Richmond will be announcing the winner on Saturday 21 December.

Remember to #ShopLocal this festive season and support your high street businesses this Small Business Saturday. Find out more about the [Christmas windows competition](#).

Richmond Station information kiosk open during Twixmas

VisitRichmond is pleased to announce that the information kiosk at Richmond Station will be open throughout the festive period from 10am until 2pm seven days a week. We would like to thank the VisitRichmond volunteers for all their help in making this possible.

Find out more about [VisitRichmond](#).

Former Pupil Colin Shares His Memories With Bishop Perrin Pupils

Colin Squire, Chairman Emeritus of Squire's Garden Centres, recently returned to his former school, Bishop Perrin Primary on Hospital Bridge Road, Twickenham, to share his experiences as a pupil over 80 years ago, during World War II, with Year 1 Endurance Class students.

The special visit marked a memorable culmination to the children's half-term focus on the history of the school and local community, bringing to life the past in a truly meaningful way for the young learners.

Colin reminisced about his time at the school during the 1940s, recalling the wartime atmosphere, complete with air raid wardens on the roof ready to signal when pupils needed to take cover in their shelter. Staff at Bishop Perrin located a photo of the teachers from Mr Squire's school days, which brought back fond memories and was a touching reminder of his school days.

Reflecting on his visit, Colin Squire commented: *"It was a joy to return to Bishop Perrin and share some of my happy memories from over 80 years ago with the children. It's so important to pass on stories of our history to the next generation, not only to make them aware of the hardships and sacrifices of the past but also to help them appreciate the peace and fortune we enjoy today. Bishop Perrin has always been a wonderful part of the community, and it's inspiring to see its rich history continue to play a role in the lives of young people.*

"I was so impressed with the enthusiasm of the pupils and thoroughly enjoyed talking with the staff. It is a wonderful school and has come a long way since the 1940s when I was a pupil."

Colin, whose father started the Squire's Garden Centres business in Twickenham in 1936, started the short session by showing the children a handful of seeds, explaining how a tiny seed contains all the information to grow into something as lovely as a seasonal pansy, sparking curiosity and engagement among the 5- and 6-year-old pupils. The young learners listened eagerly, asked thoughtful questions, and shared their own perspectives, drawing connections between the similarities and differences of school life then and now. The school badge, a tradition that has carried through the years, served as a reminder of the shared heritage that continues to bond past and present generations.

Rachael Macklearn, Interim Head Teacher at Bishop Perrin Primary, commented: *"It was wonderful to welcome Colin back to our school. His visit brought a memorable and meaningful dimension to the children's learning about our school. Colin has left us with a sense of wonder and connection to the past, as well as an appreciation for the rich history of our school as well as its place in the community."*



Above, back row: Colin Squire, Chairman Emeritus, Squire's Garden Centres, with Mrs Avril Beith, Endurance Class Teacher, and, front row, Year 1 pupils, with the pansies Mr Squire brought along to show the children.

SQUIRES
GARDEN CENTRES

The Elizabeth Twining Almshouses welcome new residents this winter

From Richmond Charities

Richmond Charities are pleased to announce that The Elizabeth Twining Almshouses are now allocated to elderly residents in housing and financial need in the borough.

The process of allocating new residents for the five new dwellings at The Elizabeth Twining Almshouses has been completed, and new appointees have been confirmed. The development features four high quality one-bed wheelchair user dwellings and one high quality one-bed accessible and adaptable dwelling.

Juliet Ames-Lewis, Chief Executive of The Richmond Charities, said: *“We are delighted with our new wheelchair accessible almshouses which have been built to PassivHaus standards, the highest level of energy efficiency accreditation. There are many people over the age of 65 in the borough wishing to join our community and we have prioritised those in the highest mobility need for these new almshouses. We are looking forward to welcoming them.”*

Two of the new residents are moving from other existing almshouses due to their mobility needs and the requirement for level access. One of the new residents was previously homeless. In addition, two new residents are moving from social housing, both having lived in PA Housing properties on secure tenancies. Their previous homes were unsuitable for their increasing mobility needs and all were deemed to be in high priority.

As a result, three PA Housing properties will be available for re-letting from the Council Register.



We collaborated closely with Richmond Charities. Our specialist Occupational Therapist from the Housing Enablement team supported the Charities to ensure the new homes were fit for purpose and built out as fully accessible, from pre-planning stages all the way to completion of the new homes. This included advising on the design and layout of the bungalows and on inclusive contemporary products. This dedicated role helps to keep inclusive, adaptable and accessible homes high on the borough’s housing agenda and ensure new builds meet the diverse needs of residents.

Councillor Jim Millard, Deputy Leader of Richmond Council and Lead Member for Housing said: *“Ensuring our elderly residents have access to suitable and high-quality housing is a priority for us. By collaborating with Richmond Charities to ensure that these homes are accessible and meet the diverse needs of our residents, we can ensure the borough provides not only homes, but a community where older people can thrive with the necessary support and security.”*

Additionally, Richmond Charities’ second new development on Queen’s Road is opening this spring. These affordable homes will be suitable for the over 65s in the borough who are in housing and financial need. To apply or for more details, contact The Richmond Charities at info@richmondcharities.org.uk.

The [Richmond Charities](https://www.richmondcharities.org.uk) provide a vibrant, friendly and caring community where older people are encouraged to live full and active lives within the setting of high quality housing, support, comfort and security.

Mural for Regal House, Twickenham?

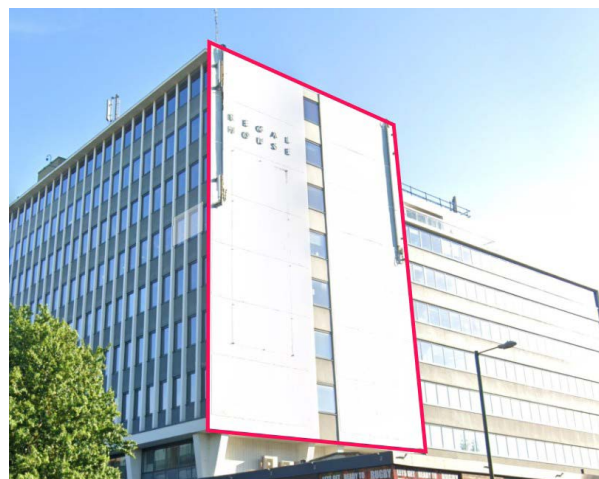
A planning application has been submitted for a 30-metre-high mural on the side of Regal House in Twickenham.

The presentation states:

Street Art for Mankind (SAM) is partnering with UN agencies UNEP & FAO to amplify the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, by launching a massive 10-year mural campaign (2021- 2030) of #EcosystemRestorationMurals.

SAM is creating 50 murals to raise awareness amongst the public on the critical need to halt, prevent and reverse ecosystem degradation, and to effectively restore degraded terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems across the globe. The goal is also to unite local and global initiatives and trigger action as we are “the last generation that can make peace with nature”.

This one in Twickenham will be the 6th of the series - after Brussels, Houston, New York, Detroit and Seattle.



You can see the presentation [HERE](#). Visit the planning site [HERE](#).

Images from the planning application

Mail Order Christmas Gifts For Foodies

With the queues in the post office getting longer and slower than ever, it certainly makes sense to do some forward planning with online gifts for folk you aren't going to be seeing over Christmas. Obviously, we want to support independent local shops where possible, and choose wisely when it comes to online gift purchases. I've done some research for you and here is a list of my suggestions for gifts for far flung foodies.

Obviously 'the' name for hampers is **Fortnum & Mason**. I've been a past recipient of one or two of the iconic hampers and can't recommend them highly enough. And don't assume that everything from F&M is very pricey - I've been surprised at the value of some of their Christmas food and gifts this year, and suggest you look at the range online [here](#). There are a number of gift hampers from under £100. But with an ample budget you can go wild.



Of course there are other great hamper companies. **Hampers.com** has an amazingly extensive range of options. Christmas hampers full of traditional treats, or you choose one based on their all-year-round favourites: gin, Champagne, chocolate or cheese! Many products in a Christmas hamper don't have to be enjoyed immediately, and retain their optimum taste and flavours for a long time after the gift is delivered. Hampers.com is carbon neutral and the company has been sourcing and sending hampers for nearly 50 years, so they know what's what. There's such a wide range: vegan, alcohol free and even one for the dog! UK delivery is included in the price but if it's a last minute order they can also arrange next day delivery. Overseas delivery is also available for an additional price.

Another excellent hamper company is **The British Hamper Co** - another that chooses the contents very carefully and is mindful that they should all be British, including lots of award winning British food products. The contents are specially branded by the company for uniformity. There is also a facility on this site to make up your own hamper and sending corporate gifts. Another nice touch is that you can send a gift of a voucher for a specific hamper to the recipient by text, along with a personal message, so that they can select their delivery date.



How about a specific cuisine? The **Lebnani** Beirut food hamper was created with authentic products and ingredients from chef **Jad Youssef**. This Christmas hamper has an unusual selection of gourmet ingredients and treats. It includes Lebanese delicacies sourced by Jad to cook with, and serve in his restaurant **Lebnani**. The Deluxe Beirut Hamper (£49) includes: a bottle of Château Héritage Nine; sumac and zaatar; pomegranate molasses; Lebanese Zet Zeytoun Extra Virgin Olive Oil; rose water; orange blossom water; Fig jam with roasted sesame seeds; pickled wild cucumbers; pistachio baklava and Lebnani recipe cards. More info here: <https://lebnani.co.uk/hampers>



Maybe just send a foodie a gift card to let them choose their own gift? Sous Chef is a veritable 'Aladdin's cave' for any culinary connoisseur and you can always send them a [voucher](#) from just amounts of £10 upwards. Or another lovely idea perhaps: choose one nice festive item like a [panettone](#) from the company's really extensive range and include a gift voucher with it?



If savoury is more appropriate, then I suggest you head to the [Tracklements website](#) where you'll find a whole range of gift options from mustards, to chutneys and ketchups, dressings and much more. You can even make up your own gift box online. How about a gourmet bundle of six different mustards? I can think of lots of friends who'd love that for their Boxing Day lunch!

Maybe your recipient likes a margarita? Go for **Mirror Margarita**. Having tasted this ready to drink, award winning, crystal clear tequila based cocktail by the company's founder, expert mixologist **Deano Moncrieffe**, I recommend it. Made using 100% Premium Agave Blanco Cazcabel Tequila, mixed with blended citrus oils and organic malic acid (naturally produced by the agave plant itself) to create a perfectly balanced margarita encapsulating the flavours of agave. Just add ice. It's in a stylish bottle, and with the optional gift box makes a great gift (you can order online and include a gift message) But if keen to enjoy it yourself, it's available at Sainsbury's and Amazon. mirrormargarita.com



Talking of cocktails **Edmunds Cocktails** skilfully selects and blends so you just shake, stir, and serve. Everything you need is supplied to produce a world-class cocktail – all you need is a glass, ice and maybe a splash of soda... even the perfect garnish is included. Create your own box of 6, 12 or 24 single-serve cocktails (from £34.95 per box, £4.99 per bottle) selected from Edmunds' core range of twelve drinks. These Great Taste **Award** winning bottled cocktails use a double measure of premium spirits with the finest liqueurs, juices, syrups and aromatics, so no need to buy lots of specialist liqueurs. Edmunds also has two new festive options, the **White Christmas Cocktail** and **Gingerbread Espresso Martini** as well as recently launched **Mango Daiquiri** and **Raspberry Gimlet**. (www.edmundscocktails.co.uk)

For wine lovers with a strong ethical conscience, and love of the sea, try **Sea Change Wines**. It offers award-winning, ethically sourced, eco-friendly wines supporting global ocean conservation. **Plastic-free, vegan, plus alcohol-free** (0% Free Sparkling) and **organic** options. With prices under £20 and a diverse range, Sea Change offers single bottles or gift packs. Each bottle features hand-drawn illustrations of marine creatures. The company has raised 500,000 Euros towards marine conservation too! The range of gift packs, starting at under £40 is online [here](#)



For a fan of Espresso Martinis, liven up their Christmas with a bottle of **Café Solo Original** - a tantalising coffee liqueur that's smooth and indulgent. It boasts a robust ABV of 25%, delivers a bold, rich flavour profile with hints of dark fruit acidity, chocolate and vanilla, culminating in a subtle sweet finish. Café Solo Cold Brew Coffee Liqueur Original is the first in what will become a range of full-bodied cold brew coffee liqueurs made with the experts at SOLO Coffee. From £30 for a 70cl bottle. Available from: [Master of Malt](#), [Drink Finder](#) and [Amazon](#),

Cento Uno...Numero Uno For Teddington Pasta

We were sad to see that One One Four in the heart of Teddington had closed. But all was not lost, as Sam and Alex Berry, the dynamic couple behind this restaurant and other SW London dining hotspots, had other plans for the site. I'm delighted to report that **Cento Uno**, One One Four's new guise, is fabulous and more than makes up for the loss of its predecessor. There is another Cento Uno run by the couple, in Surbiton, where they first launched their business.



A sensible indoor porch with a heavy curtain cuts cold draughts and adds a sense of mystique as one emerges into the warm restaurant. It's very Italian, with the walls adorned with vintage Italian black and white photos and other Italian artwork. The spectacular central bar is just as spectacular as before and if one just wanted to pop in to try some of the Bone Idyll spirits that Sam and Alex produce, there are lots

of bar stools on which to perch and 'people watch' while enjoying your drink. The bar has been tastefully decorated with Christmas decorations and there is an open kitchen at the rear. While the vibe is casual, they have the sense to offer smart proper striped cotton napkins of a generous size - adding a little more class to the whole experience.

I started with my usual favourite - a Negroni, and this was a really good one. And, amazingly, it was only £6! Our server, Ed, told us that it's one of their most popular cocktails (not surprisingly). They also had Peroni Libera, so my husband was happy. When you are seated at your table, you're offered still or sparkling complimentary water - a nice touch.

The **Antipasto Della Casa** £14 (Selection of Italian Cured Meat, Grilled Vegetables, olives) appealed and Ed sensibly advised us that it is a very generous portion, so it was unlikely we'd need another starter. He was absolutely right: this was a seriously fabulous spread with heaps of Spianata, Prosciutto Cotto and Prosciutto Crudo. The grilled vegetables were particularly good, and I'm surprised that these aren't offered as a starter in their own right as a great vegetarian option.





Having seen some rather magnificent looking pizzas being served at other tables, my husband chose to have the Teddington Pizza, (with Fior Di Latte, Courgette Cream, Courgette Chips, Speck Ham, Roasted Tomatoes). I couldn't resist the Granchio e Gamberoni pasta (Bigoli Pasta, King Prawns, Crab Meat Fresh Tomatoes, White Wine Sauce) and I'm a fan of a small salad with my pasta, so chose the small rocket salad to accompany.

The food was exquisite. My husband's pizza was excellent and one of the things we appreciated was when ordering, you're asked if you'd like your pizza to be served ready sliced. His pizza was piled with meat, had a beautiful crispy crust, generous cheese topping and was further topped with spirals of courgette strips that had been

deep fried - giving the appearance of fried spaghetti.

My pasta was soooo good. Cooked perfectly al dente and the sauce had just the right amount of chilli - a gentle heat on the finish but not enough to mask or overpower the lovely seafood. It was garlicky, tomatoey and topped with four fat prawns. The salad was another triumph - Parmesan shavings and crispy seeds added interest without detracting from the deliciously dressed rocket.

A glass of the house white - a classic Soave priced at £6/8 a glass or £29 a bottle was all that was needed to finish a really excellent meal.

Not surprisingly, we didn't want or need anything else, but we'll be back soon to try some more items on the menu.

Cento Uno features **vinyl DJs every weekend**, spinning records that bring a lively and warm ambiance to the restaurant. It's the perfect backdrop for a relaxed evening with friends, a special family dinner, or a cosy meal with your canine companion.

Cento Uno is open from **Tuesday to Sunday** to serve up a mix of Italian fare, with **brunch** from **9 am to 3 pm**, **lunch** from **12 pm to 3 pm**, and **dinner** from **5 pm to 9:30 pm**.

Bring the kids, bring your friends, bring your pup—this is our new Teddington go-to.



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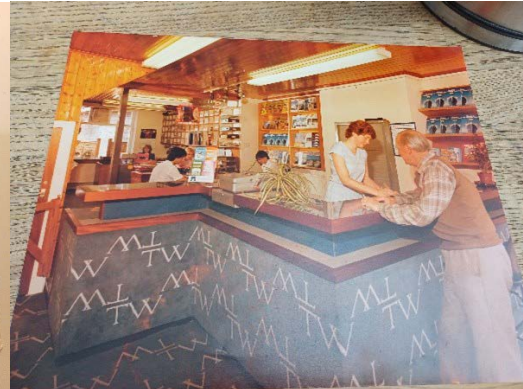
Come and visit our small community travel agency at 58 Church Street, serving the local community's travel needs since 1966. By Shona Lyons.

"Small Business Saturday returns this Saturday 7 December and provides an important opportunity to champion our independent businesses, visit your local high street and shop local ahead of the holidays. Our small businesses make up the core of our community and help to create vibrant, unified neighbourhoods"

We have had been serving our local community's travel needs since 1966, having a family run independent travel agency in Church Street all these many years, first at 22 Church Street, and since 1995,



at 58 Church Street, off the Square, by our Giant Chess Board. We invite you to come and have a little glass of mulled wine and a tasty mince pie with brandy cream & toast the Christmas Season with us 😊



We even have a little surprise for you, in that we were even just given an early Christmas present by someone who no longer lives in Twickenham but remembers good times playing chess with his sons and very kindly gave us another new board. His sons who visited Twickenham recently, told

him that the squares on the old board (that he had also donated to us a few years ago) had worn out. It looks amazing, so come visit and maybe even enjoy a game of chess on the new board!



We have lived and run our small independent business in Twickenham for most of our lives. We love our beautiful neighbourhood, our interesting job and our unique clients with all their different requirements. What is so nice about running a community travel agency, is that every day is different, no enquiry is the same. We always look forward to meeting old and new clients who come through our door. We have a wealth of experience, working in travel for so many years, before the internet age even, in tailor made travel, tour operating & even chartering our own flights back in the day. So really no enquiry is too big or too small for us. We are happy to help with anything, from rail & coach journeys to planning that once in a lifetime honeymoon!

We look forward to seeing you and chatting with you about your travel plans over a nice cup of mulled wine at 58 Church Street, our office is on the flat and even has disabled access 😊

An Alternative Christmas Tree

Teresa Read

This week, as the Trafalgar Square Christmas tree lights were switched on, I was reminded that a family member working in Norway following the Second World War, was involved in bringing the first Trafalgar Square tree to London.

At this time of year there are plenty of Christmas trees for sale – in fact around fifty million – but since we are aware of the importance trees play in storing carbon dioxide, we should be conscious of releasing CO2 into the atmosphere when trees are cut down and later destroyed.

However, decorating the tree is a traditional part of Christmas so what is the alternative to cutting down millions of Christmas trees every year? Of course, there are “trees” produced using a variety of materials but there are still those of us who prefer a real tree. My “Christmas” tree is a weeping fig, thrown out of an office twenty-five years ago as it was thought to be past its best. Today, the tree still survives; each year it is covered with Christmas decorations brightening up the cold winter days.



25,000 little lives on your tree?

By Deep Patel

~Life through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper~

Tis' the season...first week of December has just passed, Twickenham Green has the beautifully decorated large Christmas tree lit up and standing proud, there is even one of the large conker trees lit up and looking very magical...but have you got your tree up yet? From asking this question to customers this week I have found that the majority of my customers are putting up their trees this weekend, but something that was in the national press this week had put some of them off...and it was relating to something that I am an expert on...so customers have been asking me this week about that news story...

The news story said this:

“What’s lurking in YOUR Christmas tree? Up to 25,000 creepy crawlies could be hiding among your tinsel and baubles” (Source: Daily Mail online)

After reading that, I don't blame anyone who may feel a little worried...but please wait a second, don't grab your real Christmas tree from the living room and hurl it out of your window before reading the rest of this article...things are not as bad as the Daily Mail reports here...

The insects (or “pests”) that they speak of are not anything to worry about! They are no different from the pests that we have in our pot plants and gardens all year anyway...the ones on Christmas trees are tiny...like spider mites, aphids and saw flies, but they are usually on the trees due to hibernating for the winter, the trouble is, when we bring them indoors, our central heating makes the insects feel like spring has arrived, so it forces them out of hibernation, hence we see them sometimes coming from our real Christmas trees when we bring them indoors...so what can we do to help this situation you may be thinking?

Well, the answer is quite simple, follow a few little tips that I am about to type here and you will have a bug-free Christmas and also (of course) good-karma!! What is not to like about that?! So read on...

1. THE CHRISTMAS SHAKE

This one is good fun... grab a member of your family/a friend or neighbour (or your partner/kids if they are up for it) and ask them to hold one end of the tree whilst you hold the other end horizontally and shake the tree hard! This action will help to dislodge any insects that may be on the tree...playing Christmas carols in the background whilst you do this is optional but adds to the fun...make it a festive activity...shake your tree!



2. POTTED CHRISTMAS TREE?

If you have one of those rooted and potted trees, remember that many insects can be living in the soil, again, the warmth of your home may bring them out of hibernation and they will come out through the holes in the bottom of the pot...they are harmless and just want to live, they mean no harm and if Christmas is about being kind to all, we should also remember to be kind to them, as they have a life too and they want to live like we do too...so simply add a saucer under the potted tree, you can buy large plant pot saucers from garden centres or DIY warehouses or online too, adding that saucer under the pot of your tree will keep the soil insects from coming out and spilling onto your kitchen floor!

3. SPRITZ AWAY...

Make a nice spritz using two spoons of essential lavender oil into a cup of water, and pour that into a gardeners misting bottle, or any spray bottle and spritz your Christmas tree every few days... it will deter the insects too...alternatively use essential citronella oil or essential peppermint oil in the same way (however the latter two oils keep away from direct contact with pets as they may irritate certain pets). You can also use white vinegar in the same way, 50% white vinegar and 50% water and spritz the tree...some prefer the smell of the essential oils though, however I love using white vinegar for so many insects, a few drops near where ants come will stop them and most other insects in fact...and totally non-toxic if you have pets or young children etc. White vinegar actually stops mice, rats, squirrels and foxes as I always say, a few bowls where they come will stop them without harming them...they can't stand the smell...for mice though I always say use humane mouse traps (available at my shop, Meet & Deep newsagents on Hampton road, TW2 if you fail to find them online or in garden centres) as the humane mouse traps are MUCH better than poison or glue traps...poison makes their veins tear up internally over a few days and they slowly die in pain leaving nest with starving babies behind to die too sadly)...

So there we have it, many customers asked me how to stop the insects coming off their real Christmas trees this year...the answers are above, not only will you have an insect free Christmas, you will also have GOOD KARMA and be sharing the REAL message of Christmas...kindness and compassion towards ALL (including insects...well all God's creations and all that). So...when you get your tree... follow my tips and share the true message of Christmas!

Remember...

“Christmas...a time to show unconditional compassion towards all lives...and I mean all...”

Thank you for reading my article, if you would like to contact me, email thedeepatel@gmail.com or pop into Meet & Deep Newsagents on Hampton Road in Twickenham and say hello.

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...

STOP ANY INSECT KINDLY without killing (FOR GOOD KARMA): Sprinkle pure essential peppermint oil, Olbas oil, fine black pepper or white vinegar around places where you don't want them to come (but NOT directly on them) ...they will go without you having to harm them.

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

Nutcracker in Havana

by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, arranged by Pepe Gavilondo Peón
Acosta Danza at Richmond Theatre and on tour until 28th January

The Nutcracker is much a part of Christmas as mince pies. Bring in a doyen of ballet and one might expect a chocolate-box traditional ballet. But Carlos Acosta brings in his native Cuba, where waltzes can dissolve into congas, ballet shoes can be overshadowed with wooden flip-flops, and those soaring strings play alongside claves and saxophones. *Nutcracker in Havana* is brilliant. Innovative, inventive, imaginative, nothing is lost: Tchaikovsky's melodies, the plot; the beauty and the bombast, the magic and mystery.

With video projections onto slit drape and gauzes, designer Nina Dunn create wonderful three-dimensional worlds, cities, jungle, snowscapes that you could lose yourself in.

The atmosphere of this ballet is set from the beginning in the hacienda in the countryside outside Havana where Clara lives with her extended family. Christmas is back after two decades of Marxist repression of its celebration, and the family have all come together to have a joyous time. The children have a rough-and-tumble, the oldies banter, while the mums and dads try to keep everyone in order.



Here the traditional Drosselmeyer is the debonair Uncle Elías, arrived from exile aboard with a backpack of pressies. Everybody falls under his benign spell as he magically transforms their shack into a splendid mansion with sweeping grand staircase, and their denims into snazzy suits and party gowns.

The eponymous Nutcracker and his gingerbread soldiers become mambí guerrillas, traditional Cuban heroes. The customary battle with the King Rat and his rodent troops is a horrifically energetic display of dance.

What makes *Nutcracker in Havana* special is the *son Cubano*, unique rhythms such as criolla and guaracha. Pepe Gavilondo's arrangements seamlessly blend in these rhythms with Tchaikovsky's score. Where it most striking, visually and aurally, is in the use of the chanqueta dance. Chanqueta are sandals, cum flip-flops, cum clogs, fitting loosely over the ballet shoes, which makes a loud clattering sound. Yes, Acosta's magic fuses this with classical French ballet!

The *divertissements* too have added Cuban pizzazz, although Acosta prudently does not often stray far from the classical presentation. There is a beautiful Arabian Dance, full of soft sinuous sensuality. The Mirlitones Dance is not a quartet of tutu-ed ballerinas, but a trio of harlequins, in a humorous and athletic interpretation in a tipsy exuberance. The Chinese Dance is a mesmerising duet in which kung-fu swordsmen seem to dance around, over and through each other. The muscular Trépak, the Russian Cossack dance, is quite breathtaking. To call Carlos Acosta's *Nutcracker in Havana* a crossover piece would downplay the skill in combining classical ballet, contemporary techniques, folk dances, jazz and *son Cubano*, all mingling as sweet and smooth as a syllabus.



The overall picture is one of joy. The second half of the 20th Century in Cuba saw the violent despotism of Castro and Che Guevara. Christmas was banned at this time. Carlos Acosta's blockbuster is a tribute to the resilience of the Cuban people and of its innate sense of fun that had been repressed for so long.

Nutcracker in Havana deserves to become a Christmas staple alongside the standards we have grown used to. And I will be the first to lead the conga around the Christmas tree.

Read Mark Aspen's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/11/28/nutcracker-havana

Photography by Johan Persson

The Scummy Mummies Greatest Hits

by Ellie Gibson and Helen Thorn

Scummy Mummies at the Exchange Theatre, Twickenham, then on tour until 19th December

Having heard great things about this prolific comedy duo, I was curious to see them 'in the flesh'. And so I did, quite literally, as their tight revealing cat-suits made a striking first impression.

Unsurprisingly, the audience predominately consisted of school mothers and PTA members. However, I thought I'd come to *Jerry Springer* or *The Fully Monty* by mistake, as big parties of women are very raucous indeed. True, school motherhood had ended for me some time ago, but this was not how I remembered Twickenham parents!



The PTA was the first group to come under fire from the witty Ellie Gibson and Helen Thorn. Brutal, frank and hilarious, they tore into Christmas lists and put on a drag race of archetypal playground mums. (Painful memories flooded back!) The school WhatsApp group also got a pounding, which made me realise how glad I was to miss this era, e-mails being state of the art back then. In fact, they took no prisoners at all, and sexual positions (while wrapping presents) were brought off marvellously without a trace of crudeness. They can carry off smut effortlessly. There was an extraordinary amount of props, and interesting costume changes that seemed to fit with the gynaecological and menopausal gags.

These performers are experienced and very aware, and the lyrics are very clever. There's a lot packed into a frantic and energetic two hours, but they speak over each other too often, and there are too many songs.

An audience mum's submitted written confessions at the end were on the anti-climatic side. However, Gibson and Thorn fought their corners beautifully with difficult members of the audience, including a particularly troublesome front row.

These two women have impressive backgrounds. Helen Thorn is a Sunday Times Bestselling author, and hosts her own hit podcast *Fat Lot of Good*. Ellie Gibson is an award-winning games journalist. Along with these accolades, they both have an exceptional gift for comedy.



Read Heather Moulson's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/12/04/scummy-mum

Photography courtesy of Scummy Mummies Ltd.

Local children's charity prepares to be there for families this Christmas

Christmas is just around the corner and Momentum Children's Charity is preparing to support more families than ever during the festive period this year.

While most people are busy getting involved in annual traditions, buying gifts, attending school shows and arranging social get-togethers, the reality of Christmas for a family with a seriously ill child is a stark contrast.

Family Support Workers at Momentum will be available for families who have a child with cancer or another life-challenging condition in hospital and at home this Christmas, ensuring that no one has to cope alone at this time of year.



Allena Tomkins' youngest child, Priscilla-Rose (Priddi), 4, was diagnosed with juvenile myelomonocytic leukaemia (JMML) last year after 14 months of misdiagnosis. Priscilla-Rose spent last Christmas in the Royal Marsden Hospital, London. Allena from Tadley, Hampshire, said:

"When we received Priddi's diagnosis, I knew it was going to be something bad, although I felt relieved after months of not knowing what was wrong. The only cure for JMML is a bone marrow transplant, and thankfully two of my children were a match for Priddi. My eldest child, Jessi-Mae, was determined she would be the one to have the transplant, so this went ahead last December, and we spent Christmas and New Year in hospital."

Prior to the transplant, Priddi had intensive invasive chemotherapy conditioning to clear out her own bone marrow. It hasn't been a straightforward journey - Priddi has had allergic reactions to medication, and everything has taken a lot longer because of the rarity of her cancer. In January, Priddi went into remission, but we were still administering medication until last month to prevent sickness, vitals and infections due to her low immune system."

Talking about Momentum Children's Charity, Priscilla-Rose's mum, Allena said: *"We found out about Momentum when Priddi was having treatment at the Royal Marsden Hospital. Sam, one of their Family Support Workers, came up to us, in her warm and welcoming way, and checked how we were doing. Sam has really helped us, particularly me, to open up and talk about things. We would see Sam in the hospital every week, she is a rare diamond and someone I will never forget, even when this nightmare is over for us - we have a lot to thank Momentum for."*

Bianca Effemey OBE, Founder and CEO at Momentum Children's Charity said: *"We are delighted that Priscilla-Rose has completed her treatment and is doing well. While many other services close for the festive period, those provided by Momentum remain available and because of this, we were able to be there for Priscilla-Rose's family when they were in hospital over Christmas last year."*

"The need for our support is growing and we must make sure we can be there for every family that needs us. As a charity, we receive no statutory income and rely entirely on voluntary donations. Christmas is just weeks away and we are encouraging anyone who is able to make a donation to Momentum, to do it, without delay. Funds raised this December will not only bring hope during the festive season but will provide ongoing assistance to families throughout the year."

Momentum Children's Charity supports families across London, Surrey, and Sussex whose children are facing cancer or a life-challenging condition. The charity partners with local hospitals to offer personally tailored support to the entire family through our family support workers, both in hospital and at home.

Help Momentum Children's Charity change a child's life this Christmas by making a donation on their website www.momentumcharity.org



St Mary's University

St Mary's Announces Appointment of New Provost

St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) has announced the appointment of Professor Sara Spear as the new Provost and Chief Academic Officer.

St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) has announced the appointment of Professor Sara Spear as the new Provost and Chief Academic Officer.



Prof Spear joined St Mary's in 2022 as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law. She has held the position of Interim Provost for the past three months, following the promotion of former Provost Prof Symeon Dagkas to Vice-Chancellor at Chichester University.

Sara has an extensive career in Higher Education, working at institutions including Anglia Ruskin University, the University of the West of England, and the University of Portsmouth. With a background in Management and Marketing teaching and research, Sara is focused on driving authentic approaches to teaching and assessment, to enhance student experience, learning, and graduate outcomes.

Since joining St Mary's, Prof Spear has led curriculum and portfolio developments for the Faculty of Business and Law, developed

successful Business and Law Clinics with industry and voluntary sector partnerships, and more recently launched the Academic Strategy in line with the University's strategic plan, Vision 2030.

Speaking of the appointment, St Mary's Vice-Chancellor Prof Anthony McClaran said, *"I am delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Sara Spear to the position of Provost and Chief Academic Officer, effective immediately."*

"As part of the University Senior Leadership Team, the Provost will lead all academic areas and holds a key role in determining and implementing university strategy. I welcome Sara to the Senior Leadership Team and look forward to working closely with her to deliver our plans for the University's growth through education, research, and excellent student experience and outcomes."

Prof Spear said of her new role, *"I am thrilled to take on the role of Provost, and to continue working with the academic and professional services teams across the University. There are exciting developments in the pipeline for St Mary's, as we continue to build on our reputation for excellence in teaching and student experience, and I am delighted to be leading on the academic aspects of these."*

"I am also looking forward to continuing work with our partners, both in the UK and internationally, to deliver the experiences and opportunities that make St Mary's an outstanding educational community."



**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**

Music Students Entertain Audiences and Raise Money for Charity at Winter Concert

In late November, Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) Music department put on their Winter Music Concert for a busy audience, in our college Auditorium. Ticket sales raised an incredible £250 for their chosen cause, [Music for All](#), a UK charity dedicated to improving access to music-making for disadvantaged individuals.



The performances from Extended Diploma students were a showcase of talent and teamwork, with one of the many highlights being our 1st year students taking the lead on sound engineering and lighting. The cohort delivered an array of energetic group and solo cover performances, that thoroughly entertained audiences.

Students also added an additional two afternoon performances throughout the week for their peers and RuTC staff to enjoy, which is the first time that they have performed a concert three times.



It was a fantastically festive occasion, with our learners having the opportunity to raise funds and the profile of a very important charity. Thank you to all who supported the event, helping to bring the joy of music to more lives across the UK!

[Check out our courses and how to apply for 2025 entry here.](#)



St Mary's Alumna Named World Rugby Women's Player of the Year

Former St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) student Ellie Kildunne has been named World Rugby women's player of the year for 2024.

Former St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) student Ellie Kildunne has been named [World Rugby Women's 15s Player of the Year](#) for 2024.



Ellie studied Sport and Exercise Science at St Mary's, and is an England and Harlequin F.C. full-back. During the [Six Nations](#) earlier this year, she was the [top try-scorer](#) with nine tries. The team went on to win the tournament, with Ellie also being named player of the championship.

Following her success in the Six Nations, Ellie also competed for Team GB at the [Paris 2024 Olympics](#) in the women's rugby sevens. The squad reached the quarter finals during the Games and finished seventh overall.

Speaking on Ellie's award, Head of School (Sport, Exercise and Applied Science) Jade Salim said, *"Ellie was an excellent student on the BSc Sport Science programme. Alongside her academic commitments, she excelled as an elite rugby player, showcasing exceptional dedication, perseverance, and determination. Congratulations to Ellie on this incredible achievement. This recognition is thoroughly deserved, and we are all immensely proud of her accomplishments."*

Head of Sport St Mary's Andrew Reid-Smith added, *"During her time at St Mary's, Ellie was a Sport Scholar. She is an exciting player and has had an outstanding year contributing to England's success in the Six Nations and making her Olympic debut. Congratulations to Ellie on being named World Rugby's women's player of the year."*



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

IPF welcomed by England Rugby during Autumn Nations Series

The specially adapted hospitality created for Injured Players Foundation clients at Allianz Stadium was a great place to be during the recent Autumn Nations Series.

Wheelchairs can be accommodated on the terrace and there's always a lively crowd chatting and catching up at half-time and post-match.

The day involves more than the obvious enjoyment of watching a Test match, as clients gain a lot from socializing and sharing experiences.

Hamish Minton (23) and Spencer Wadsworth (19) have a lot in common. They both suffered a rare Brachial Plexus injury, with permanent damage to the nerves that control movement and sensation in their right arm and hand.



Hamish was injured in March 2022 playing No 8 for Chichester while home from Swansea University. With IPF support, he returned to university and graduated in Engineering in July 2024.

Talking about the charity, he said: *“What haven’t the IPF done for me? I’ve had amazing support for me and my family, and it’s certainly kept my love of rugby alive.”*

Hamish, having been helped with vehicle adaptations and driving assessment, rehab equipment, gym membership and specialist rowing equipment, is now on the para rowing talent programme. He’s been waterskiing, done a golf taster and was one of the IPF clients welcomed at [Pennyhill Park England training](#).

He’s also going skiing with the IPF in January, alongside Spencer, who was injured in October 2023 in his first game for Keele University. Spencer missed the remainder of his first year but returned to his biomedical studies in September 2024 with IPF support. He has also been waterskiing and now coaches rugby at university and with Newcastle RFC in Stoke on Trent. He credits the charity with *“helping more than I can say. They’ve helped me into my new life and given me new opportunities.”*

Luke Orton, aged 27, was a guest at the New Zealand match with two teammates who were with him playing for Rhyde Rhinos at a beach rugby tournament in July 2023 and helping support Luke and his parents.

“I was completely paralysed as soon as it happened,” said Luke, “and it took a long time to get me off the beach. I’m still in hospital but I’m now in a care unit on the Isle of Wight while the IPF

are funding adaptations to my house. The IPF have been unbelievable, they provided my power wheelchair, helped mum and dad with travel costs while I was in Salisbury Spinal Unit. If it wasn't for rugby and wasn't for them, I would be in a really tight spot. My parents know they are there for me and will always be there."

The visit to Allianz Stadium was Luke's first independent travel since his injury.

Gareth Rees, aged 38, was injured in January 2011 playing for Stratford upon Avon RFC. He works for NFU Mutual and relies on a head-controlled powered wheelchair. Having been helped by the IPF with housing, wheelchairs, travel costs, IT equipment and garden adaptations, Gareth was at Allianz Stadium with Darren Cooper and Kevin Simons, who with Matt Levi, created a custom-made chariot to get him round the London Marathon.

"We wanted to avoid Gareth paying around £3,000 for something he'd only use once," said Darren. "The last marathon was the first where you were allowed to push someone around the course and my runners were two guys from Stratford RFC, Florent Vialan and Richard Pepperall, as well as a work colleague from NFU Mutual, Wendy Woodhouse. I'd already done a skydive for the IPF and thought what else could I do and we managed to raise over £7,000. I think it took us five and a half hours. It's great to be here at Allianz Stadium with the guys who made it possible."



IPF ambassadors also pop in to spend time and chat with clients, among them Topsy Ojo, Wayne Barnes and Katy Daley-McLean.

The youngest guests were Arron Williams' son and daughter five-year-old Oscar and Alexa (9). Thanks to the IPF they were also England mascots, running out with the players and singing the National Anthem.

Arron, now 42, was injured in September 2007 playing for Basildon RFC. He's been helped with housing adaptations, vehicle purchases and repairs, rehab and further physio. He and the family went on an adventure holiday with the IPF in 2023.

It was a tearful dad watching Oscar and Alexa on the day. *"I'm so thankful to the IPF for the opportunity for my little boy and girls to have the honour of being England mascots. There was a tear in my eye. It was really big for me,"* he said. *"I'm 17 years injured now and all I can say is the IPF are amazing, 17 years on and they are still supporting me through everything. I really feel part of the rugby community."*



Alexa added: *"When I was running out with the team, I saw lots of people cheering and my mum said they were cheering for me. It was really special."*



Match Preview: Brentford v Newcastle United

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's Premier League game against Newcastle United at Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday (3pm kick-off GMT)

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford welcome Newcastle United to Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday (3pm kick-off GMT). Thomas Frank's side have won six Premier League games on home soil this season, dropping just two points from a possible 21.

[In his pre-match press conference on Thursday, the Bees boss described Newcastle as his side's "biggest test" at the Gtech this term.](#) The Magpies sit 12th after a thrilling 3-3 draw with league leaders Liverpool in midweek.

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of the game. [Tickets are available on the exchange for members with 10+ TAPs. Buy now.](#)

Pre-match Analysis

Richard Cole, Playmaker Stats: Prolific Brentford looking to extend impressive home record

Brentford's excellent home record will face a tough test as they welcome Newcastle United to Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday.

The Bees remain one of three undefeated teams on home turf in the Premier League this season (alongside Arsenal and Brighton), but have scored more goals (22) and earned more points (19) at home than anyone else.

In fact, no team in the European top five leagues has scored as many home league goals.

Newcastle did well to earn a point in an entertaining 3-3 draw at St James' Park midweek against league pacesetters Liverpool.

The Magpies took the lead twice in the game (including a glorious Alexander Isak strike) and had the resilience to equalise late on having been 3-2 down.

Bruno Guimarães provided two assists in that game and as ever he will be a threat for Brentford's midfield to neutralise. The Brazilian ranks fifth in the Premier League for through balls with nine in total.

The 27-year-old is also the most-fouled player in the Premier League this season having drawn 54 fouls – that's a statistic that also ranks him first out of the European top leagues. Following just behind Guimarães in that stat is Anthony Gordon (who scored the second against Liverpool) on 34 fouls.

Fouls (or the lack of them) could be an interesting thing to watch out for at the weekend. Brentford have committed the joint-fewest fouls in the league this season (just 110, the same

number as Man City) while Newcastle (190) are, as you have guessed, the most fouled team. As a brief aside, only West Ham have been fouled fewer times (117) than Brentford (128).

That stat may prove important especially considering Newcastle earned their third goal midweek through an excellent Guimarães set-piece that Fabian Schär got on the end of.

Indeed, late goals are another thing that Brentford have to be wary of – especially considering the Bees often start the better of the two teams (scoring 17 first half goals to 10 in the second period). In that respect, the performance against Villa was something of an anomaly.

Meanwhile, Newcastle have scored the majority of their goals late on in games (12 second-half strikes to five in the first), and in particular from the 75th minute onwards until the end of stoppage time, when the Magpies have netted five times.

A win for Brentford at the weekend would help end the Magpies' winning run against the Bees. Newcastle have won their last five games against Brentford which equates to all of the games in which Eddie Howe was in the dugout for the club. The 3-3 draw back in November 2021 was officially Howe's first game in charge, but saw the former Bournemouth boss coaching from a hotel room due to testing positive for Covid-19.



Even then though, a goal late on for Newcastle earned them a point with Allan Saint-Maximin making it 3-3 in the 75th minute.

Thomas Frank will be keen to get a first win over Howe on Saturday, but Brentford will have to be at their very best for the full 90 minutes.

Scout Report

Dan Long, Sky Sports: Newcastle in need of consistency after 'patchy' start to the Premier League season

The issue with success is that increased expectation follows closely behind.

And after finishing inside the top four of the Premier League for the first time in two decades in 2022/23 - as well as reaching the Carabao Cup final and qualifying for the Champions League - Newcastle had a lot to live up to last season.

There had been extreme highs up to the start of last December; most notably opening with a 5-1 win against Aston Villa, thumping Sheffield United 8-0 and winning 4-1 against PSG in the first Champions League night at St James' Park since March 2003.

All that without even mentioning wins over Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester United and the fact Alexander Isak became the first Newcastle player to score 25 goals in all competitions since the great Alan Shearer netted 28 20 years earlier.



But there were pretty low lows, too. Sandro Tonali's 10-month ban for breaching the FA's betting regulations put the club in the spotlight and the Magpies particularly suffered at the end of 2023 and start of 2024, with a torrid run of six defeats in seven leaving them 11 points outside the top four.

They were out of the Carabao Cup before Christmas, by which time the dream of qualifying for the knockout rounds of the Champions League - or even dropping into the Europa League - was dead and buried.

"The group is in a good place, I don't see any negativity," said manager Eddie Howe after losing to Manchester City on 13 January. *"I see hurt because we aren't winning and that's what we're here to do."*

Things did start to pick up thereafter, though they finished with 11 points fewer than the year before.

The story of the Magpies' season was similar to that of Brighton's. Returning to European competition placed added strain on Eddie Howe's squad and they suffered 41 injuries throughout the season - the joint-third most of any Premier League club - which took its toll.

While not securing a place in Europe for this term will have come as a great disappointment, Howe and his staff would have been hoping fewer fixtures, and thus less strain on the players, would have translated on the pitch. That has not really been the case - or certainly not to the extent some might have expected.

To say their form has been patchy would probably be the best way to summarise it.

Three wins and a draw put them third after four games. Five games without a win then knocked them down to 12th. Wins over Arsenal and Nottingham Forest looked to have put them back on track, but then taking just one point from matches against struggling sides West Ham and Crystal Palace knocked them off again.

[As referenced by The Athletic's Chris Waugh](#), the defensive solidity this season has been well received. They have kept three clean sheets, only conceded more than one in a game on four occasions.

It is at the other end they have suffered. Prior to Wednesday's 3-3 draw with Liverpool, they had scored fewer goals than any of the teams in the top 14 places in the Premier League and underperformed their expected goals figure (17.55) by 3.55, having also only scored 14.

Right now, there is not an awful lot to worry about. There is already a nine-point gap between Ipswich in 18th and Bournemouth in 13th, yet only five points separating the teams from fifth to 13th, so if Newcastle start to string a few wins together over this hectic December, there is absolutely nothing to say a top six – or even top four – push is out of the question.

In the Dugout

Eddie Howe

Before turning his hand to management for the first time, Eddie Howe had a 13-year playing career as a defender, with all but two of his 312 senior appearances having been made in a Bournemouth shirt.

He was, however, forced to retire prematurely at the age of just 29 at the end of the 2006/07 season. By this time, he was already managing the Cherries' reserve team, a role he continued until September 2008, when manager Kevin Bond was sacked, concluding his time at the club, too. Before long, he had been re-hired as a youth coach and, in January 2009, was appointed first-team manager after a short spell as caretaker, following Jimmy Quinn's sacking.

The odds were stacked against Howe; Bournemouth were second bottom of League Two on New Year's Day - having been handed a 17-point deduction at the start of the year. Yet, he managed to guide his team to 12 wins from the final 21 games, which saw them miraculously survive by nine points.

Howe's side were promoted to League One the following year but, in January 2011, he left the south coast for Burnley, where he stayed until October 2012, before returning to Bournemouth to take over from Paul Groves.

He, essentially, picked up where he left off, securing promotion to the Championship in April 2013 and to the Premier League for the first time two years later. Bournemouth were relegated from the Premier League, after five consecutive seasons, in 2020, leading to Howe's departure from Vitality Stadium by mutual consent.

After a 15-month break, he took over from Steve Bruce at Newcastle in November 2021, with the 3-3 draw against Brentford his first official game in charge, though he had to watch the game from a hotel room after contracting Covid-19.

Howe – who celebrated three years in charge last month - is currently the fifth-longest serving manager in the Premier League, after Pep Guardiola, Thomas Frank, Mikel Arteta and Marco Silva.

He is also on course to become only the second manager since Bobby Robson (1999 to 2004) to take charge of 150 Newcastle games.



Bee killing pesticides polluting the vast majority of English rivers

A new analysis of the latest official data from the Environment Agency has uncovered widespread river pollution linked to toxic [neonicotinoid](#) pesticides (neonics), known for their harmful effects on bees. The data suggests a slight increase in the proportion of rivers affected over the past two years. These findings emerge as the government considers granting a controversial 'emergency' authorisation for the use of a banned bee-killing pesticide on sugar beet crops.

The analysis from the Rivers Trust and Wildlife and Countryside Link showed that:

- 1 or more harmful neonics were found in 85% of English river sites between 2023-2024 (23 of 27 surface water sites tested for neonics by the Environment Agency). The proportion of rivers affected seems to have increased - In 2020-2022 neonics were present in 79% of river sites tested by the regulator (34 of 43 sites).[1]
- Areas where sugar beet farming and processing is concentrated (particularly the East Midlands and East of England) had some of the highest detection rates of neonics in samples tested, and have many of the rivers with the highest number of neonics detected. The South West and South East had the highest overall neonic detection rate, in 54% and 41% of samples respectively.
- The largest numbers of neonics were found at single sites on the River Waveney and River Wensum in the East Midlands, where all 5 of the neonics analysed for were detected. Other sites that had high numbers of neonics detected included the River Nene, River Ouse and River Ivel in the East of England, River Lugg, River Tame and River Teme in the West Midlands, Sincil Dyke and the River Dove in the East Midlands, River Ouse and Ancholm in Yorks and Humber, River Test in the South East, River Chelt in the South West and the River Douglas in the North West.
- Only 27 river sites across the whole of England were tested for neonics in 2023-24, down from 43 sites in 2020-2022, a fall of over a third (37%) in the number of sites tested. Nature charities warn that this is an indicative sign of the worsening resources of the Environment Agency and the resulting decline in river monitoring by the regulator.

Two pesticides, Clothianidin and Imidacloprid, are by far the most prevalent neonics (both found at 29 of 45 river sites tested between 2020-2024 – 64.4%). Clothianidin is a neonicotinoid in its own right but is also a breakdown product of Thiamethoxam – the banned pesticide permitted for 'emergency use' by the sugar industry for the last 4 years by the previous Conservative Government. Imidacloprid is banned for use on crops but is still used in tick and flea treatments, with pet and livestock use the likely main cause of Imidacloprid pollution in our rivers.

Richard Benwell, CEO of Wildlife and Countryside Link, said: *“The extensive presence of potent pesticides in rivers is another smoking gun in the hands of intensive agriculture and the decline of nature. The Labour Party has pledged to end emergency authorisations of the use of banned neonicotinoid pesticides and to halve the risk of pesticide pollution by 2030. The sugar industry has again applied for emergency authorisation to use Cruiser SB coated sugar beet seeds and if approved this would make the 5th year in a row of 'emergency' use of neonicotinoids. The Government must surely deny the request and redouble farming reforms to offer generous support for farmers who cut right down on chemical use.”*

Barnaby Coupe, senior land use policy manager at the Wildlife Trusts, said: *“The UK Government's pledge to end the emergency use of these bee-killing pesticides must be signed into law. Pollinating insects like bees are the foundation of a healthy ecosystem and essential for pollinating crops. These chemicals are banned because they are extremely harmful for soils, water, wildlife and human health. The evidence is clear that the environmental risks from neonicotinoids are far too great – there is no place in modern society for them to be used.”*

Dr Rob Collins, Director of Policy and Science at the Rivers Trust, said: *“The widespread presence of neonicotinoid pesticides in rivers raises alarm bells for the health of our freshwater ecosystems and contributes to the huge cocktail of chemicals afflicting rivers, derived from agriculture, industry, transport and our homes and businesses. We need to see greater resources made available to monitor chemicals in the environment and systemic change that delivers a much more sustainable approach to their use, right across society.”*

In its election manifesto the Labour Party pledged to end emergency authorisations of the use of banned neonicotinoid pesticides. Yet British Sugar, which has a monopoly on the UK sugar industry, has again applied for emergency authorisation to use Cruiser SB coated sugar beet seeds, and the Government has yet to

confirm whether it will deny the request. If approved this would make the 5th year in a row 'emergency' use of neonicotinoids is approved on sugar beet crops.

Cruiser SB is based on the pesticide Thiamethoxam. Not only is the neonicotinoid pesticide Thiamethoxam highly toxic to bees (with one teaspoonful of such neonicotinoids able to kill [1.25 billion bees](#)) there are also many farmers who recognise we should be moving away from its use. With [40% of sugar farmers](#) choosing not to use this product even when it is authorised, demonstrating farmers are deciding their crops and yields can cope without banned pesticides.

There is also massive public opposition to the emergency authorisations of neonicotinoids for use by the sugar industry. Multiple environment charities have had huge responses to petitions about neonicotinoids. A current [petition](#) from Greenpeace alone is running at 1.6 million signatures, with members of the public encouraged to sign the petition ahead of it being handed in to Government imminently: <https://action.greenpeace.org.uk/ban-bee-killing-pesticides>

Dr Doug Parr, Policy Director at Greenpeace UK, said: *“Scientists are clear that neonicotinoids are killing bees and other pollinators while threatening our nature and food security. We now have worrying new findings about these pesticides polluting our waterways and harming the life in our rivers. Before the election Labour pledged to stop further use of bee poisons and, with the public overwhelmingly in support, they simply must stand by their promises. Now Labour are in the hot seat of government they can take the initiative by supporting farmers to transition away from these chemicals, backing essential clean food production and ensuring that nature can recover.”*

Paul de Zylva, senior sustainability analyst at Friends of the Earth, said: *“Our rivers and freshwaters are under assault from pesticides, which are too often overlooked as pollutants. Pesticide firms and the intensive farm industry claim that banning harmful pesticides would cause crop failures and job losses, but this simply hasn't happened. Nutritious, plentiful food can be grown without relying on quick-fix chemicals that clearly harm the nation's soils and wildlife. That's why Labour must stick to its pledge to end the use of these unnecessary and highly damaging pesticides, and ensure its independent water review fully addresses pollution from industrial and agricultural chemicals.”*

Josie Cohen, Head of Policy and Campaigns, Pesticide Action Network UK, said: *“The previous UK Government banned neonics in 2018 because of the harms they cause to pollinators. When in opposition, Labour were very supportive of the ban and criticised the Conservatives harshly for repeatedly granting emergency permissions for sugar beet. Despite all their warm words about restoring nature, it now seems possible that our new Government will follow their predecessors' leads in allowing an emergency authorisation which prioritises corporate interests over the environment. If Labour want voters to believe they are serious about protecting nature then they must end the use of all neonics in any circumstances.”*

Amy Fairman, Head of Campaigns, River Action said: *“There's a toxic cocktail of pollutants stirring in our rivers with pesticides a dangerous part of the mix. We need to ensure that the agricultural, chemical and sewage contamination dirtying our rivers, lakes and seas is taken off the menu for good. And that can only be achieved by much tougher legislation, regulation, and enforcement to make sure polluting doesn't pay! Tens of thousands of people and over 140 organisations joined us in flooding the streets on 3 November on the March for Clean Water disgusted at the state of our rivers and seas. The Government must heed the public outrage on this issue and deliver on its promises to turn the tide on the state of our waters.”*

Environmental charities are urging the Government to:

- Fulfil promises to make water polluters pay, including giving the pollution watchdog – the Environment Agency – stronger teeth. Years of underinvestment have left the regulator overstretched and under-resourced to monitor water pollution and enforce the law.
- Ensure nature-friendly farm payments incentivise and support land managers to transition to pesticide-free approaches and increase the use of nature-friendly alternatives.
- Fulfil Labour manifesto promises to permanently ban 'emergency' neonicotinoid authorisations for crops by putting this into law and ban the use of key harmful neonicotinoids in flea and tick treatments. These chemicals are already banned for use on crops, due to their hazards, so should also be prevented from ending up in our waters from pet and livestock parasite treatments.
- Deliver structural reform of the water sector, with tough targets and action plans for water pollution as part of the water review, including: strengthening the Water Framework Directive regulations; toughening polluter pays approaches including [ring-fencing fines for nature's recovery](#); and [accelerating and expanding](#) the use of green pollution solutions.



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