

# Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Christmas, Twickenham  
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

20<sup>th</sup> December 2024

T&RT

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British Beekeepers' Association

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GMB Union

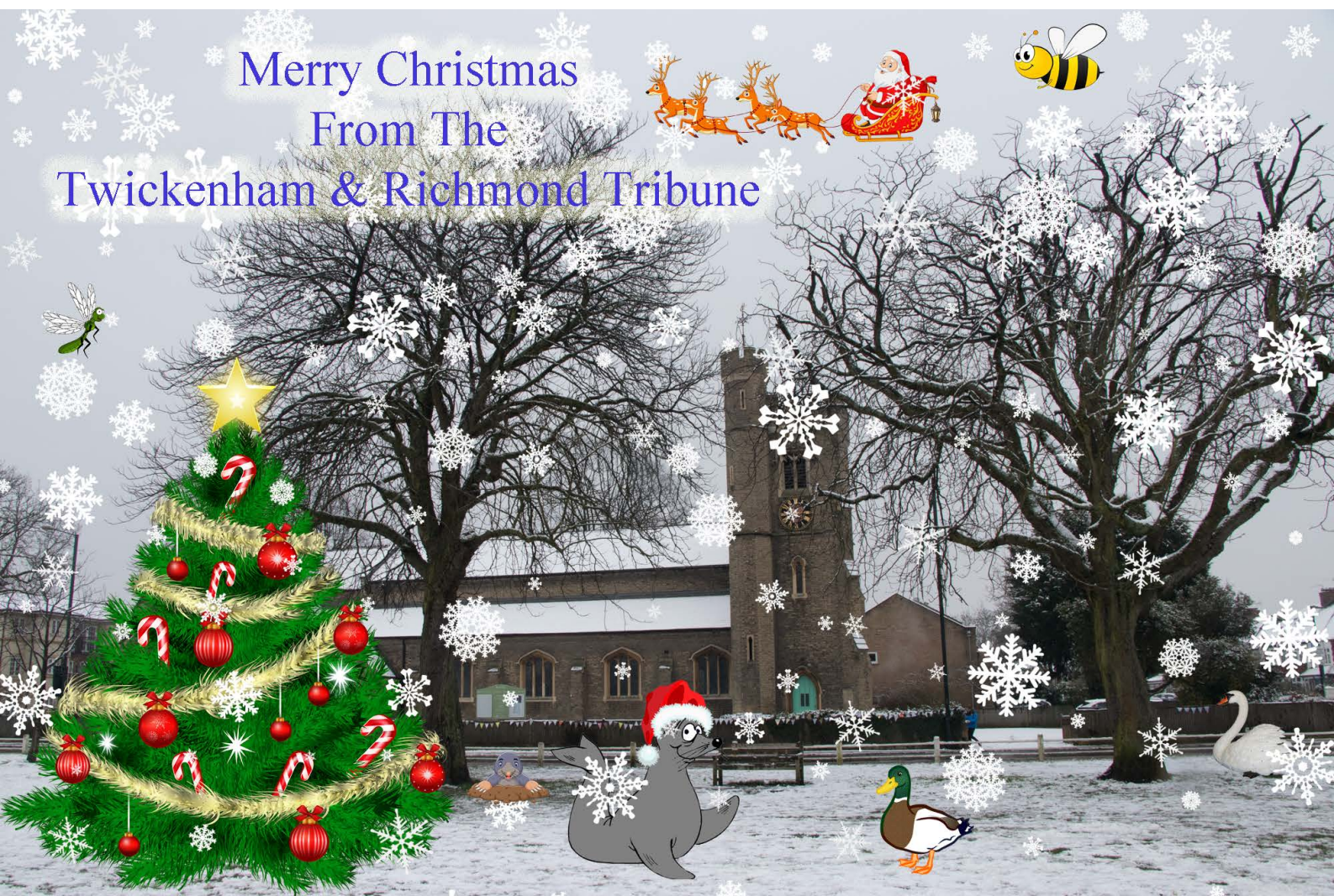
Brentford v Nottingham Forest

Brentford Football Club

Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

Wishing all our wonderful readers a very

# Merry Christmas



# TickerTape - News in Brief

## Kickstart your new year with a new skill

From Live Languages

On Saturday 11 January 2025, residents of all ages and levels of French are invited to practise their French conversation over tea, coffee, croissants and traditional Galettes des Rois at ETNA Community Centre.

This is a great chance to start the year with new skills and meet like-minded French students in ETNA's café which includes both indoor and outdoor seating areas. Live Languages is using its French conversation groups as an opportunity to raise money for the ETNA Community Centre, so donations of £10 are encouraged. Learn [more about their past events](#).

French coffee morning details:

- **Date:** Saturday 11 January 2025
- **Time:** 10.30 to 11.30am
- **Location:** ETNA Community Centre, 13 Rosslyn Road, TW1 2AR

[Register and make donations](#)

Live Languages is offering all Richmond Card holders a £10 taster session in a suitable French or Spanish conversation group (daytime only). Make local friends with shared interests and meet face-to-face to learn in a relaxed environment, with a maximum of five other students. Learn to speak a language more confidently with real people, rather than an app!

To find out more, contact Live Languages on [infolivelanguages@gmail.com](mailto:infolivelanguages@gmail.com), stating your preferred language, your current level and your linguistic objectives.

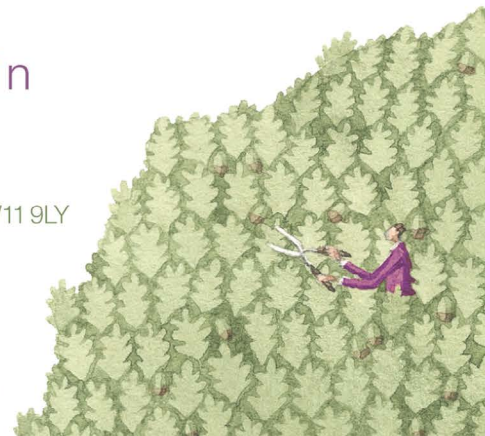
Seasons Greetings from



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

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The Tree Agency

# Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 280

## Christmas Postcards 2024

By Alan Winter

Imagine waking up on Christmas Day in Edwardian England. The year could be anywhere between 1901 and the beginning of World War I which began in 1914. The postal service was far superior to its current day counterpart and households in the UK could look forward to several postal deliveries a day including weekends, bank holidays and even Christmas Day!

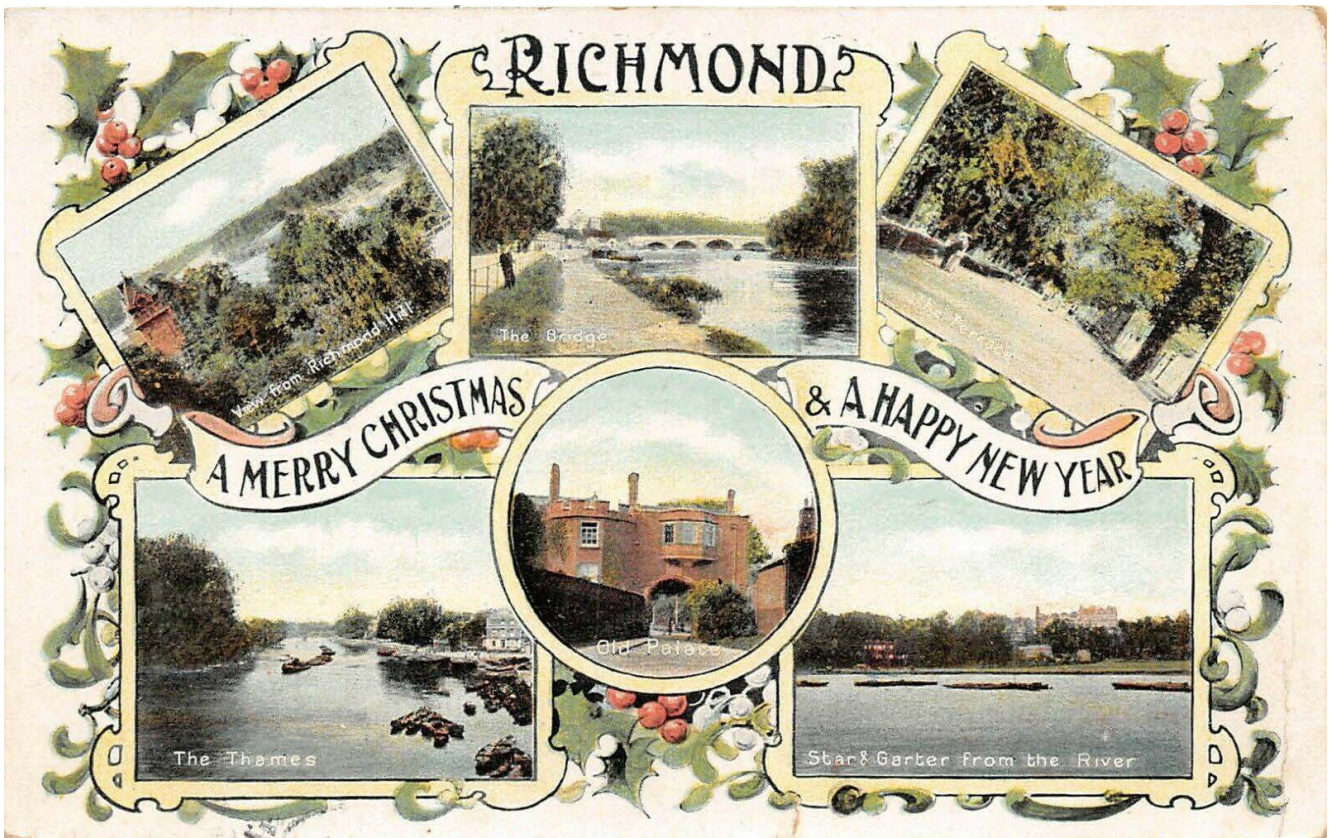
With no telephones or computers in those days the only method of communication was by post. The letterbox would rattle and quantities of Christmas postcards (Christmas cards came later) would land on the mat. If the postman got up early enough he would get home in time for his own Christmas lunch.



We can look at a few postcards all posted locally within the Tribune catchment area from around that period and carrying a printed Christmas message.



Starting with a multi-view from Teddington we move on to a postcard of the Fountains at Hampton Court which has been overprinted to increase sales at the Christmas period and a multi-view postcard from Richmond which has gone for both Christmas and the New Year's greetings.



Finally, a traditional Christmas Greetings postcard with Father Christmas wishing you well for the season. And so do I!



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](mailto:alanwinter192@hotmail.com) I would like to see them and I pay cash!

# Council cuts lead to the closure of Whitton Day Centre

In a move that has sparked concern among residents and local advocacy groups, Richmond Council announced plans to close the Whitton Day Centre as part of a broader restructuring of its day services provision. This restructuring will leave no day centres on the Middlesex side of the borough, leading many to question the wisdom of this move. The closure, discussed during the latest Adult Social Services and Housing Committee last Monday, is part of the council's strategy to modernise and consolidate its day services, aiming to address changing usage patterns and better meet the community's evolving needs.

The Whitton Day Centre, located on Kneller Road, has long been a lifeline for residents with physical disabilities and neurological conditions and their carers. While the council acknowledges the centre's significance, the facility reportedly operates at 40% capacity. This underutilisation, coupled with broader goals to centralise services, has led to the integration of its functions into two revamped facilities in Ham and Sheen.

The council plans to transition services from Whitton to two specialised centres: one in Ham, which will focus on dementia care, and another in Sheen, which will cater to physical disabilities and frailty. While officials emphasised that individualised transition plans will be developed to support current users and their families, concerns have been raised about the disruption this may cause.

Despite these assurances, residents and advocacy groups have voiced fears that the closure will disproportionately affect vulnerable individuals and their carers. This is particularly true given the added strain of increased travel to the new facilities, which may prevent many vulnerable residents from using the service.

Healthwatch Richmond, which conducted an independent review of the borough's day services, acknowledged the quality of care at Whitton and the need for modernisation. *"The services provided are invaluable, but there are opportunities to improve integration and better utilise resources,"* said Mike Derry, Chief Officer of Healthwatch Richmond.

Some councillors expressed reservations about the closure. *"While I understand the logic behind the decision, we cannot ignore the unique role Whitton Day Centre plays in our community,"* said Councillor Hale. *"It's crucial that we closely monitor how these changes affect residents."*

The council has committed to investing in its remaining two facilities to create "centres of excellence" with improved infrastructure and services, including enhanced transport options. However, as plans move forward, the focus will remain on mitigating the impact of the closure on current users and maintaining high-quality care.

The closure of Whitton Day Centre reflects a growing trend among local councils to consolidate services amid financial and logistical pressures. Whether this approach will achieve its intended benefits without alienating vulnerable community members remains to be seen.



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info@crusadertravel.com 0208 744 0474

## New plans revealed to renew Petersham Playground in Richmond Park

[The Royal Parks charity](#) has revealed designs for a renewal of the popular [Petersham Playground](#) in Richmond Park.

The charity, which manages [London's eight Royal Parks](#), is set to revive and improve the playground by installing new equipment, incorporating more accessible opportunities for play, and improving provision for children with additional needs.

The playground has been welcoming children for decades. But following a previous restoration more than 20 years ago, some of the features are now worn and in need of renewal.

The charity has gathered the views and feedback from local playground users and school children, in order to ensure that the new designs create a more welcoming, inclusive play area for all children and their carers.

The new playground will focus on improving the connection children have with the natural environment, by incorporating ecological features such as bird boxes and bug hotels and by using natural materials for the equipment.

Better paths, new seating and new planting schemes based on species found in the park, including hedging, trees, shrubs and grasses, will create a more relaxing natural location for play. The new designs will also incorporate increased shaded areas within the playground.

Paul Richards, Richmond Park's manager said: *"After decades of play enjoyed by thousands and thousands of children, some of the current play features have become worn - and we wanted to make the site much more accessible. We've worked with the local community to find out what's important to them, and we have included their views in the development of new designs for a refreshed and improved playground. Please bear with us while we deliver this exciting project. We look forward to welcoming back thousands of children next spring, to enjoy social, physical and creative free play within the wonderful natural backdrop of Richmond Park - and to create memories to last a lifetime."*

The playground will close in January 2025 to deliver the works and will reopen in spring 2025.





# Thousands of pensioners might not get Winter Fuel Payment in time for Christmas

Jonathan Hulley, Conservative Parliamentary spokesperson for Twickenham

I remain committed to standing up for Twickenham constituency pensioners.

Labour's decision to remove the winter fuel allowance from most pensioners, coupled with the Liberal Democrats' apparent indifference or inability to do anything about it, leaves many of our elderly community vulnerable and facing a difficult winter.

In October, it was revealed that Labour failed to carry out a full equality impact assessment before making these cuts to the Winter Fuel allowance. Pensioners with incomes of less than £12,600 stand to lose up to £300, while those on high incomes, like train drivers on £65,000, enjoy an inflation-busting pay rise of £10,000. This selective, unfair approach starkly reminds us of Labour's priorities. Our pensioners don't have the option to work extra hours to cover this loss. Labour campaigned on promises of energy bill reductions only to support cuts when in office, which shows a lack of credibility and a willingness to use empty promises for electoral gain.



Others, including the Conservatives, have raised the alarm at this injustice. In Twickenham alone, 14,728 pensioners—out of 16,180—are set to lose their winter fuel allowance. This decision will hit vulnerable groups the hardest: 84% of disabled pensioners, 83% of those over 80, and a staggering 90% of pensioners aged 66-79 will be affected this autumn. Despite these warnings, this failing Labour government presses on, indifferent to the plight of thousands of pensioners in Twickenham and elsewhere in the country.

There has been a surge in applications for Pension Credit since Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced in July that this year's Winter Fuel Payments would be mainly limited to those receiving Pension Credit. Now, we know that tens of thousands of pensioners who are still eligible are unlikely to receive their Winter Fuel Payments before the end of the year. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has been grappling with a growing backlog of new Pension Credit claims.

According to independent analysis, as of mid-November, there was a backlog of 90,000 unprocessed claims. With around 9,000 processed each week and a likely similar number of new applications each week since then, there is a risk that the backlog will still be tens of thousands by the end of the year.

It might be helpful to set out how best to get in touch with me. For casework, queries, and support, please do contact me at [jonathan.hulley@outlook.com](mailto:jonathan.hulley@outlook.com). I am here to help

Dear Editor

## District Line 'Roulette'

This is a game that I and other District Line travellers at Richmond have, reluctantly, to play. It's been going on for weeks. This is how it works. Rather than Russian Roulette's six chambers of a revolver, it involves the three District Line platforms at Richmond (5, 6 and 7), and the aim is not to avoid a bullet, but to guess correctly the platform from which the next train will leave.

You follow the information on the concourse departures screen, and the platform indicator screens, as to which train will leave first. You get on it. Then a train pulls into another platform and the train you are on doesn't leave. The screens still show yours as the first to leave. Which will you choose? The screen information or instinct? My experience of choosing to believe London Underground's (LU) information screens, but seeing the other train leave first, suggests it's better to rely on instinct.

One evening, the departures screen identified the train at platform 5 as the next to leave, in two minutes time. There was no train at that platform, but there was one at platform 6, which people were, naturally, boarding. It was due out at 7.10 pm, shortly after which a train pulled into platform 7. The train on platform 6 didn't leave. I explained the rules of the 'game' to some fellow passengers and we prepared to 'place our bets'. However, after some minutes, I caught the eye of the driver on platform 7 and he gesticulated that the train on 6 would leave first.

There was then an announcement from our driver (a rarity) that the destination was no longer Upminster, but Edgware Road. Some passengers alighted. At Kew Gardens, two French couples got on. I heard them refer to Victoria as their intended destination. I told them, in my 'best' French, that the train would not be calling at Victoria, and that they should change at Earl's Court. They replied in perfect English. I apologised that so little seems to work in our country.

Joking aside, it's a shambles at Richmond, with a total disconnect between LU's information screens and what actually happens. There's no reliable tannoy counter-information and no LU staff to tell passengers which train to board. Yesterday, a kind cleaner in an LU high viz jacket was trying his best to help passengers who approached him. SWR staff are actively unhelpful.

Sarah Olney's office have told me that LU says the problem is due to a cyber-attack, which they are trying to rectify. Pity they don't put up a notice explaining that to passengers, but I guess that would need to end with some advice, which LU seem unable or unwilling to give.

A simple non-computer-generated announcement of which train will leave first should surely be possible. It's probably too much to expect a member of LU staff to be stationed at Richmond, but LU could do worse than to equip and pay the public spirited cleaner to do the task. Surely the driver of the train that will leave first could announce that, not only on the train but also by the simple means of a megaphone?

I tried several times to lodge a complaint via the TfL/LU on-line complaints system, but - yes, you guessed - it wasn't working, the morose screen stating 'Oops, something seems to have gone wrong', encapsulating the present state of the District Line service from Richmond.

Yours  
Jonathan Haydn-Williams, Richmond

# Support Age UK Richmond's latest book

From Age UK Richmond

Over the summer Age UK Richmond asked older people to write about memorable moments from their lives. The winning stories are now gathered and published in 'Everyone Has a Story or Two'. Come along to purchase a copy at Age UK Richmond's Twickenham Wellbeing Centre.

'Everyone Has a Story or Two' not only offers a glimpse into treasured personal memories from local older people, it also supports [Age UK Richmond's](#) work.

The book immortalises older people's wisdom and adventures, including recollections of a shark attack, a charge of a hippo, wedding day blues, schooldays, travels, war stories, old loves, losses, retirement, new pastures. Over 40 people rose to the challenge. The wonderful stories were judged by Angela Rippon CBE and Dr Russell Schechter, senior lecturer in Creative Writing from St Mary's University.



If you are looking for a perfect Christmas present that has real value and also supports Age UK Richmond, look no further!

'Everyone Has a Story or Two' is now available for purchase through the Christmas season and New Year.

- **Where to buy:** Age UK Richmond Twickenham Wellbeing Centre, TW1 3NH
- **Price:** Early bird cost £5, 2025 cost £7.50

You can also order a copy of the book by emailing [mt.keegan@ageukrichmond.org.uk](mailto:mt.keegan@ageukrichmond.org.uk). Find out [more about this project](#).

## The Green Pop Up Café at Holy Trinity Twickenham

This is a warm community space open between 10.30 am and 12 noon on a Thursday for refreshment and chat.

<https://httchurch.org/>



# Meet your police team and find out about local issues

From Hampton and Hampton North Police Liaison Group

On Thursday 9 January, residents are invited to Hampton and Hampton North Police Liaison Group's meeting.

The Hampton and Hampton North Police Liaison Group is running a session for residents to meet and question your police ward team and set local priorities. If you are a resident or work in these wards, please come along. The Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams look forward to meeting you there!



Event details:

- **Date:** Thursday 9 January 2025
- **Time:** 7pm
- **Location:** All Saints Church Hall, The Avenue, TW12 3RG

# Artists Make Space programme creates opportunity for local artists

From Orleans House Gallery

Our Arts Service team and Orleans House Gallery support artists by providing free studio space across the borough.

This year, eleven artists and groups were chosen through an open call process. They are now working in Orleans House Gallery in Twickenham, The Old Town Hall in Richmond and OSO Arts Centre in Barnes.

The Artists Make Space programme provides free spaces for artists living, working or studying in the borough, to develop their practice. The programme is open to artists, artist organisations and artist collectives. Find out [more about the selected artists and their works](#).



# Government threatens to take over planning powers from Richmond Council

James Knight

Richmond is bracing itself for a seismic shift in its planning policy, as the Government threatens to wrest control from the local council over unmet housing targets. This move comes amid a drive to deliver 1.5 million new homes within five years, positioning Richmond as a focal point of the housing debate.

Under the new targets, Richmond must now oversee the construction of 2,513 homes annually—a dramatic leap from its current goal of 777 homes and its dismal three-year average of 154 completions. The borough now faces a staggering 1,532% increase in housing delivery, second only to Kensington and Chelsea.

Critics have pointed to Richmond Council's Liberal Democrat leadership as the root cause of the crisis. Housing delivery under their watch has dwindled to one of the lowest levels in London. The government's ultimatum is clear: submit a credible housing plan within three months or face losing control of your planning powers. Such a move would strip residents of their voice in local development, sparking fears of high-density projects towering over Richmond's historic streets.

Opponents of the government's intervention worry that it will erode Richmond's quintessential charm. Long celebrated for their low-rise character, the borough's towns and villages could soon see an influx of towering apartment blocks.

Metropolitan Open Land, once fiercely protected, is increasingly under threat. Areas near railway stations, including Fulwell Golf Course in Hampton, have emerged as potential sites for large-scale development, having been previously pencilled in for development under the Cross Rail 2 business case. Others have welcomed the move and feel the area should sacrifice some of its golf courses so the next generation can get on the housing ladder.

Richmond's infrastructure is under strain. Already struggling to meet demand, local GP surgeries and secondary schools will bear the brunt of the borough's burgeoning population. Residents question whether the area's services can withstand such rapid growth and if the promises that social infrastructure will accompany the new development will be delivered.

Last year, the leader of Richmond Council, Cllr Gareth Roberts, took to the stage at the Liberal Democrat Conference to decry mandatory housing targets. While a defiant gesture, Labour insiders suggest this stance may have inadvertently hastened the borough's current predicament, as it alerted them to the low level of housing delivery.

A Turning Point for Richmond? The government's intervention represents a critical juncture for Richmond. Will the borough rise to the challenge and find innovative solutions to meet housing demand without compromising its cherished identity? Or will central planners impose a vision at odds with local sentiment?

Richmond's future is in doubt. For now, our beautiful borough faces an unprecedented challenge that could redefine its character for generations to come.

# Christmas services in Richmond upon Thames

From Richmond Council

There will be some changes to services and opening times over the Christmas and New Year period. Find out when we will be open and how you can get in touch with us during the festive season.

Our offices will be closed on Wednesday 25 December, Thursday 26 December, and Wednesday 1 January. The telephone lines and Customer Centre will close at 3pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The Customer Centre doors will close for the last customer at 2.30pm.

During the holidays, you can still [report, apply or pay online](#) for most of our services. Outside of our normal opening hours, you can report emergencies to us on 020 8891 7999.



Throughout the festive period local organisations and community groups are helping to provide [food support](#) across the borough.

Visit our [Christmas services](#) page to find out about our library and leisure centre opening hours as well as details of changes to waste and recycling collections.

You can also find details of [bank holiday parking arrangements](#) across Richmond upon Thames.

We offer a wide range of email updates to keep you informed on what is happening in the borough throughout the year, you can subscribe to our weekly e-newsletter, roadworks updates, waste and recycling information and more. [Sign up to email updates](#).

# 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.

## Festive Food and Drink Suggestions

Even if you're a keen cook, I always think it's a good idea to stock up on easy snacks and canapes, and the local supermarket is a godsend. **Marks and Spencer** has a fabulous range as usual, and many of them can be frozen. I particularly like the mini Yorkshire puds £7.50 for 12 (Yorkshire puddings filled with creamy mushroom and pulled British beef with red wine, topped with a garlic and herb crumb). The Caramelised Onion and Goat Cheese Tartlets too, are delicious and suitable for vegetarians (12 all butter puff pastry, topped with goat's cheese and onions caramelised in balsamic and sherry vinegar.) The Crispy Duck Spring Rolls with a hoisin dip are even better value at £5.50 for a dozen. There are ultra festive Bao Buns too, which will bring a smile to anyone's face. Do check out the range at your local branch or, if you've already been sensible and booked a pre Christmas Ocado delivery, add them to your order. And **M&S Pigs in Blankets** are double wrapped in bacon this year - and so delicious - made with outdoor bred British pork and dry cured artisan bacon. From around £5 and available in various sizes and packs.



I always make sure that I have a good supply of snacks that can easily be turned into canapes, and the **Crosta & Mollica** range of Italian snacks is one of my favourites. A few packs of Crostini, Bolli or Linguette will stand you in good stead. Just dunk in a dip, top with an anchovy or a chunk of cheese and - hey presto - you're all set to rustle up a tray of appetisers for unexpected guests. Widely available from around £2 a pack.



Make sure you have **Parma Ham and Parmigiano Reggiano** for all manner of snacks, sandwiches and other festive dishes. They're Protected Designation of Origin products (PDO), meaning they can only be made in a specific area of Italy. Parma Ham, a cured meat, is a healthier option

than other types of red meat, and a good substitute for bacon, as it's made with no nitrates or nitrites. Parmigiano Reggiano is a unique cheese and made using artisanal, natural methods. As one of the oldest cheeses in the world, it's undergone little change to the production process, and is made with just milk, salt and rennet with no additives or preservatives. Lots of recipe ideas for both are [here](#) and [here](#)



I know there are loads of alcohol infused creams in the shops, but actually a really good unadulterated free range single or double cream is hard to beat. I recently tried some fabulous cream - it comes in little 250 ml glass bottles and is produced by **Tom Parker Creamery**. The creams are rich and velvety, with a full bodied creamy depth and they have so many uses. The Tom Parker Creamery range comes in a fully recyclable, resealable glass bottle with a paper label. £2.60 at Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Ocado and speciality food stores nationwide.



Your choice of festive wines for the big day is so important to the whole event...a great fizz for kicking off the celebrations is a bottle of **Bouvet Ladubay Sparkling**. They are very reasonably priced and Majestic has a strong range with prices from just £10 a bottle. I was lucky enough to taste some recently and you can't go wrong with them. My favourite was the Tresor Saumur Brut Vintage. Further info [here](#)



Whether you're planning a large piece of roast beef, goose, or turkey (or any other roast meat to be honest) or lolling by the fire finishing up some cheese, a gutsy red wine pairs well, and at Christmas you want to make sure you've bought a good one. **Trivento**, the UK's leading Argentinian wine brand is celebrated for its exceptional Reserve Malbec range, has the perfect trio of red wines that are very widely available and start from around just £7. Whether you're entertaining guests or cozying by the fire, **Trivento Reserve Malbec, Private Reserve Malbec, and Golden Reserve Malbec** are the ultimate companions to any festive celebration. I'd recommend pushing the boat out with the Golden Reserve at around £16 - after all, it is Christmas! And it's on offer at **Asda** currently at £12.50, along with a great range of other wines, particularly the Asda excellent own label **Extra Special** range



One of my treats this year to feel the 'festive spirit' is **Opihr Gin**. It is so unusual, and delicately spiced, that it makes a really special G&T. It takes you on the journey along the Ancient Spice Route, with exotic botanicals such as cubeb berries from Malaysia, coriander from Morocco and cardamom from India.

My recommendation is not to use a slice of anything citrus to garnish - float a whole star anise on top...wow! It makes a stonkingly good Negroni too. Opihr is available in its rather striking bottle from [Tesco](#) or [Sainsbury's](#) at around £27 a bottle



But if a wee dram is more to your taste, do check out **Torabhaig Single Malt Scotch Whisky**. Using the purest island spring water, Torabhaig is an Isle of Skye whisky, complex and compelling as its land of origin. It's the perfect, warming dram for any whisky lover this Christmas. Serve it neat, in front of a roaring fire. Available from around £50 from [Master of Malt](#)



For many of us, a bottle of port is another festive treat. It goes so well with Stilton too. But try something different this year: **Graham's 10 Year Old Tawny Port**. Time-honoured skills, handed down from generation to generation, produce an extraordinary selection of Tawny Ports. On the nose, it shows complex nutty aromas combined with hints of honey and figs. On the palate, rich mature fruit flavours, mellowed with a luscious long finish. It's a perfect match for sweet pastries, such as apple pie with cinnamon too. Best enjoyed slightly chilled. RRP around £24 but currently on offer at £18.50 in Waitrose.



And finally, a cream liqueur is a Christmas treat. Either on the rocks, chilled, or over ice cream. **Lidl** has a new dessert-inspired Irish Cream Liqueur range, featuring flavours such as **Caramel Biscuit, Tiramisu, and White Chocolate**. An affordable, indulgent, extra addition to holiday celebrations. Delicious and priced very reasonably at **under £8**, the full range is available in stores nationwide.

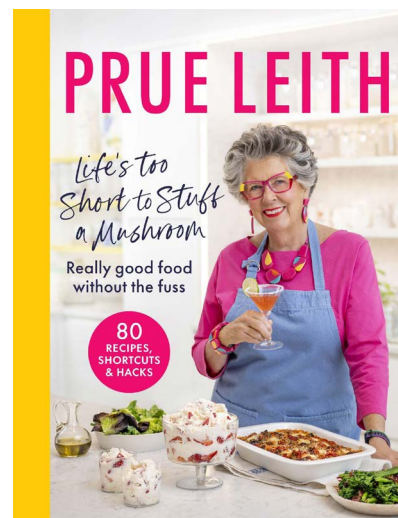


**HAPPY CHRISTMAS!**

## Life's Too Short To Stuff A Mushroom – Prue Leith

I think Dame Prue Leith is fab. She's great on The Great British Bake Off and I listened to her being interviewed by Gyles Brandreth on his Rosebud podcast recently, talking about her extraordinary life. Her latest cookbook is another triumph. This chef and TV legend brings us the cookbook we've always wanted: 80 delicious recipes, with accompanying kitchen shortcuts and hacks, for easy cooking. The title, coined by Shirley Conran in her '70s bestseller Superwoman, 'Life's Too Short to Stuff a Mushroom' is a phrase we busy folk can relate to. There are recipes where a neat trick can save time, cheat versions tasting as good as home-made, and lots to avoid waste and save money.

With quick-win recipes including Chicory, Pear, Hazelnut and Goat's Cheese Salad, Crispy Pork Belly, Gunpowder-crusted Steak with Coriander Chutney and Herbed Salmon Parcels, Prue's handy hacks show you how a little bit of insight helps. A great read for home cooks, absolute beginners, those for whom cooking has lost its attraction – ***Life's Too Short to Stuff a Mushroom*** shares years of culinary know-how. **Published by Carnival at £25** it will make a wonderful Christmas present too.



Here's a taste of what's in store if you buy the book and this recipe is great for the festive season:

### Masala Poppadom Nachos SERVES 4

*"Tortilla chips out of a packet are usually used as a base for Mexican-style nachos, but we have used Indian poppadoms here. Nachos have all sorts of toppings: cheese, guacamole, refried beans or minced cooked beef. But I like this vegetarian mixture – slightly spicy, and delicious and fresh – best."*

- 6 ready-to-eat poppadoms (plain or spicy)
- 1 small red onion, finely diced
- 1 ripe tomato, deseeded and diced
- 1 small cucumber, finely diced
- 1 green chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tbsp mango chutney
- seeds from 1/2 pomegranate, to garnish

### For the mint raita

- 4 tbsp plain yogurt
- a small handful of mint leaves, plus a few extra leaves to garnish
- a small handful of coriander (cilantro), roughly chopped, plus a few extra leaves for garnish
- a good pinch of salt



1. Make the mint raita by combining all the ingredients in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. Break up the poppadoms and put the pieces on one large plate or four individual plates.
3. In a mixing bowl, combine the onion, tomato, cucumber and chilli. Add the lemon juice and garam masala. Mix well.
4. Spread the mixture evenly over the poppadoms, then dot with the mango chutney and drizzle the raita over the top.
5. Top with the extra mint and coriander (cilantro) leaves and the pomegranate seeds to garnish, then serve immediately.

GIBRALTAR

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5 - STARYACHT HOTEL  
CASINO RESORT



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# Eeny Meeny Miny Moe!

## Where Shall We go?

By Bruce Lyons of Crusader Travel



2025 is going to be a challenge for all of us. Where will you go to get the best value for your pounds? I guess you could say – it is a catch question. Some rates of exchange are in our favor. But, often there is a snag, maybe the destination in today's unsettled world is considered a little unsecure. Or perhaps the destination's economy is even worse than ours. On the other hand, the destination maybe what they call "an emerging country" such places can be great for exploring.

Looking around, my choices would be as follows:

MOROCCO is a wonderful country. A journey for the senses. Full of contrasts. A well-developed tourist Infrastructure, though still suffering from the late release from Lock Down – It is a country that desperately needs tourists & the rate of exchange is very good!

Morocco offers some wonderful experiences from beach and water sports to fantastic cities like Marrakech, Fez and Tangier \* the recently developed beach resort of Tagazout, beautiful Mountains Deserts, Trekking and safaris down to the Sahara! Almost the best value country for Family Adventures on a budget.

EGYPT is an extraordinary country with fantastically good coral beaches to the Nile and the Pharaohs and the newly opened Egyptian Museum. Another country that has suffered these last years with a fragile economy , tourism damaged first by the effects of Covid and latterly by unsettled Middle East crisis However, Egypt is a huge country The Hutis in Yemen are just some 2000 km away .In fact this season we have seen a huge increase of flights both to Cairo (newly from Manchester, in addition to London ) and to Luxor and the Red Sea destinations of Sharm el Sheik and Hurghada. The Diving and Snorkeling is amongst the best in the world

TUNISIA has an excellent rate of exchange, still suffering from the Arab Spring as well as the aftereffects of Covid 19. A very sophisticated tourist infrastructure as well as amazing cultural experiences- fabulous value for 5\* family all-inclusive vacations "on the beach"

CUBA is another county offering the very best value in the Caribbean with a diversity hard to compare. Wildlife, history, beautiful beaches and some extraordinary Colonial Cities. Ten years ago, there were as many as 10 direct flights, even some regional to more than three airports. Now !? you need to go in-directly with Air Europa or Air France. But due to the fact that they need the tourists and the beneficial rate of exchange and the fact that overtime they have developed a modern tourist infrastructure It is good value and exciting. Coach Tours, hiking – cycling – scuba and snorkeling as well as great Music. Cuba has it all.

SRI LANKA surprising – considering the diversity the country is only half the size of the UK! Here is an extraordinary country offering wonderful wildlife safaris – tea Plantations, historic cultural experiences, super beaches. Sri Lanka however has suffered immensely from the Tamil uprising and then the Covid effect on Tourism and the Tsunami and then after everything else the economy collapsed. So, again here we have good exchange rates, an exotic destination a well-developed infrastructure – what more could we want!! Spoilt for choice.

# Christmas

Teresa Read



During 2003 and 2004 I was a coordinator in an international project between school children around the world. The description of Christmas in the UK was submitted for the project and might be of interest to some of our readers from abroad who follow the Tribune.

Christmas in the UK starts in the shopping centres in early November. Before long, lights and decorations appear in the shops, in the streets, and eventually, inside, and outside people's houses. Christmas trees also materialise, along with men in Father Christmas (Santa Claus) suits.

Christmas trees became part of Christmas in the UK from Queen Victoria's reign. Queen Victoria was married to the German prince, Albert (Saxe-Coburg & Gotha) who popularised the German tradition.

Holly and mistletoe are traditionally used in Christmas decorations; both were originally plants which played a part in the Celtic Druid religion, before Christianity was introduced. Holly was used to ward off evil spirits and mistletoe was a sacred plant to the Druids. Today the spiky holly leaves symbolize the crown of thorns used in Christ's Crucifixion and the berries symbolize his blood. Kissing under the mistletoe is a Christmas tradition.

Before Christmas, people send one another Christmas cards, and in schools teachers make red post boxes decorated with cotton wool "snow". At the end of term children receive their cards and presents from their friends, and parents are invited to watch Nativity plays about the birth of Jesus and sing Christmas carols, such as "While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks by Night" and "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem". Other popular songs at this time include "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer", "The Twelve Days of Christmas", "Silent Night", "So This Is Christmas" and "White Christmas".

Christmas films are shown on television including versions of Charles Dickens' book "A Christmas Carol". Ebenezer Scrooge, the main character in the story, hates Christmas until he is visited by the three ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present and Christmas Future. The animated film "The Snowman" is also very popular and features the song "Walking in the Air".

A number of people attend church services and Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Christmas in the UK is celebrated on 25 December although there is debate among scholars as to whether this is really the correct date of the birth of Jesus. The Eastern Christian Church celebrates Christmas Day on 6 January, which in the UK is the day following "Twelfth Night".

On Christmas Day, people exchange gifts and children open presents which have been left by Father Christmas in their "sacks"; sometimes these are pillowcases which hold more than Christmas stockings! Children leave carrots in their sacks for the reindeer which pull Father Christmas' sleigh and quite often Father Christmas is left a Christmas mince pie.

On Christmas Day there are plenty of nuts, fruit and chocolates around and lots of different drinks. Christmas lunch is traditionally roast turkey with sage and onion stuffing, chestnut stuffing, sausages, roast potatoes, brussel sprouts and other vegetables with gravy. This is followed by Christmas Pudding which used to be called “plum pudding” and is now full of raisins, currants, sultanas, nuts and cherries. It is served with a variety of toppings such as custard, cream and brandy butter. Before the Christmas Pudding is carried to the table it is often covered with brandy and set alight. Christmas crackers (or “bon bons”) are also on the table. These are decorated tubes containing paper hats, jokes and small presents. A cracker is pulled by two people and makes a bang; the person with the longer part of the cracker wins the contents.

Later in the day, people continue to eat a variety of foods including Christmas cake (a fruit cake with marzipan and icing sugar) and Yule Log (a chocolate roll covered in chocolate icing sugar and decorated with a piece of holly). Those who have open fires burn logs and sit around the fire. The tradition of the Yule Log goes back centuries when burning a Yule Log was supposed to ward off the devil.

Some people go for a walk, others have parties and some visit pantomimes, a great British theatrical tradition. Pantomimes are loved by old and young. The story is often a children’s tale like “Aladdin”, “Cinderella” and “Jack and the Beanstalk”. There is always a happy ending but along the way we meet a villain and usually two “dames” who are men dressed as women. Pantomimes have lots of audience participation and comedy as well as beautiful scenery and dancing.

Outside the weather is usually cold; recently there has not been snow at Christmas but people always hope that Christmas will be white.

<https://worldinfozone.com/features.php?section=PartnersUK2>

*The project was selected Finalist for the Category Education in The Stockholm Challenge Award 2003/2004 for their contribution in the global movement of building a better Information Society for all.* <https://worldinfozone.com/features.php?section=Stockholm>



# Come to Meet & Deep Newsagents on Christmas day for a samosa, mince pie...and a cup of our masala chai!

By Deep Patel

~Life through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper~



*Above: Shashi (left) Pallu (right). My parents and owners of Meet & Deep Newsagents on Hampton Road, Twickenham inviting the entire community to join them from 12pm to 4pm on Christmas day for their community Christmas party!*

Most of you here know that I am always writing about kindness towards the little lives around us (like using your mobile phone torch when walking in the rain at night to pick up any slugs, worms and snails stranded on the pavements so they are not crushed by others walking there, or choosing to sprinkle talcum powder around where ants come to stop them kindly (but not directly on them) and swapping out nasty mouse traps for humane live capture traps to set them free in woodland areas after...but this week, for the Christmas edition, my attention is turning towards the humans...Meet & Deep Newsagents on Hampton Road will again be opening their doors on Christmas day to offer the community a warm and welcoming place to come to for my mother's famous samosas, my father's great-grandmothers blend of festive masala chai and of course mince pies and free hugs.

My parents and owners Shashi and Pallu Patel (pictured above outside their shop) started this tradition 25 years ago to try and help combat loneliness during a time where most people are spending time with their families. They have one mission with their Christmas community party (which now attracts in excess of 300 visitors through the 4 hours they are open) ...they just want to make sure that no one is lonely on Christmas day. The party is however not just for those that may be alone, but for the entire local community, everyone is welcome and we would LOVE to see you there on Christmas day this year!

The truth is, it doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, black or white, young or old, male, female or both...we all need to feel the association of others at some point.

Pallu said "this year many of our customers have said they cannot afford to heat their homes, we have no heating in our shop but our shop is naturally warm because of all the machinery and motors, we don't want anyone to feel cold or alone on Christmas so we are inviting everyone to have my Christmas samosas and my husband Shashi's own blend masala chai tea, you don't have to buy anything, we are family".

Shashi has always said "I do not measure the success of my shop on the number of coins in my till, but on the number of smiles on our customers faces, if they buy nothing I don't care, as long as they leave

with a happy face, that makes me happy most, because my shop is also my home and everyone should only leave happy from my home”.

So, there we have it...as well as preaching kindness towards the spiders, ants, worms and spiders of Twickenham, Meet and Deep newsagents loves people too!

If you can escape your home for a festive afternoon walk on Christmas day between the hours of 12pm-4pm, please pop in for a mince pie, hug and some of Pallu's samosas (she has prepared over 300...not even exaggerating, she actually has). If you can come, be sure to have a cup of Shashi's great grandmother's blend masala chai...

**“Why spend Christmas at home when you can spend it with us!”**

**Follow our Facebook page “Meet and Deep News” for more information, or simply turn up between 12pm-4pm to 34 Hampton Road, Twickenham, TW2 5QB**

For those of you who cannot be present physically, we have planned a Facebook live game show at 11am on Christmas morning where viewers will be able to join me to take part in an interactive game show style extravaganza broadcast LIVE via our Facebook page (search for “Meet & Deep News on Facebook)...so now there really is no reason to be alone at Christmas...instead come and be with us... either in person at our shop or online via our Facebook-live broadcast feed...we are family!



*Pictured above left to right: Meet (son) Pallu (mum) Shashi (dad) and Me! (Deep)*



*Yes...Shashi felt he had to spell it out for you...  
Do come in for his Masala chai tea...it's free and given with his love!*

...Happy Christmas to all Tribune readers from Meet & Deep Newsagents xxxx

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL and see you all on Christmas day between 12pm and 4pm for our community Christmas party at Meet & Deep Newsagents, 34 Hampton Road, TW2-5QB.

**Remember...**

***“The greatest gift that anyone can give to someone is their time...”***

**MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...**

**STOP FOXES 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 our 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](mailto:InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com) or join my Facebook page: **“INSECT LOVERS UNITE”**



# Jack and the Beanstalk

by Loz Keal

Teddington Theatre Club at Hampton Hill Theatre

The festive season has well and truly arrived in Teddington and Hampton Hill with Christmas lights on and Christmas fairs opening all down the High Street, and, topping all, TTC's family pantomime. We were treated to time-honoured ingredients, including booing the baddies, and scary bear in the woods. The fun and anarchic routine, 'If I were not upon the stage', is rarely seen outside the commercial theatre, but you guys completely smashed it (figuratively, not literally)!



From the opening scene of the fairy talking in rhyme (Naomi Pink), to Roxanne Ip's slickly choreographed dance numbers, the atmosphere was buzzing. And Stuart McEwan as the Dame had more costume changes and more sequins than a *Strictly* final! The King (David Hannigan) and Queen (Danielle Thompson)'s quick-fire news jokes read from their royal scrolls were particularly hysterical. Plenty of risqué jokes and double-entendres showcased comic deliveries which would give any stand-up a run for their money!



Our sweet and sanguine quadruplet of heroes and love interests, Sarah the maid and Silly Simon (Cara Bullimore and Jo Wickham), Jack (Carmen Mackey) and Princess Rosalind (TTC panto regular, Molly Cole) is clearly multi-talented. They swung between romance, action, suspense and comedy, in a strong execution of singing, dancing and acting, plus lively audience interaction.

Nigel Cole relished his pantomime baddie role, and was magnificently malevolent having obtained his B-Tech in Evil from Richmond upon Thames College. Alex Farley, as his side kick Grimshade, was suitably redeemed as the tale progressed, going against the traditional panto formula, but providing a surprising third wedding pairing.

Heather Mathew was hilarious as Lila Kaye (think Phoenix Buchanan), as she lamented her earlier classic roles, hamming up the Shakespearean

delivery of her portrayals of Daisy the Hen and the Magic Chicken.

Hats off to the brilliant costumes (Mags Wrightson and team) and hilarious pop song adaptations (Lizzie Lattimore and Becky Popovich), as well as the set designs (Wesley Henderson Roe) which switched effortlessly from palace to village to the giant's lair.



What a traditional fun panto director Josh Clarke has delivered! We're lucky enough to have such a local high quality production on our doorstep - Richmond Theatre beware!

Read Thea Diamond's review at [www.markaspen.com/2024/12/01/jack-beans-ttc](http://www.markaspen.com/2024/12/01/jack-beans-ttc)

Photography by Jonathan Constant



# It's A Wonderful Life

by Mary Elliot Nelson

PTC at Putney Arts Theatre until 21<sup>st</sup> December

Taking an eight decades-old Hollywood icon, and adapting it for the stage, represents a daunting challenge. However, *It's A Wonderful Life* successfully captures the spirit, sentiment and charm of the film.

Essentially a supernatural drama, it introduces musical numbers, but maintains the original setting (New Bedford in New York State) and in its 1946 period. A small-town financier, George Bailey, although a good and compassionate man finds himself, on Christmas Eve, depressed and suicidal. Enter from heaven his guardian angel, a trainee yet to earn her wings, who sets out to remind George of all good qualities and how poorer life would be without him.



Director Lois Savill uses three actors to play a host of different roles in a fast moving and complex narrative, creating an exciting challenge in interpreting the varying characters. No such problem however in playing George for Matthew Hoisch, the fourth actor, who develops his sole character with heartfelt empathy.

Ben Wheeler's various flamboyant characters include larger-than-life portrayals of Uncle Billy and the eccentric Italian Mr Martini. Robert Wallis's roles include George's successful brother Harry, a dour street cop and the profiteer Mr Potter.

Nicole Pavlou manages countless quick entrances and costume changes, as she plays the guardian angel Clarissa Oddbody, George Bailey's wife Mary, plus all the other female roles. Her early scenes as Mary falling in love

with George are remarkably well-observed, and her scene as the angel on the bridge, urging George to rethink, is powerfully persuasive.

The minimalist set conveys the feel of the small township, above which tower the girders of an American railroad bridge. It helps to maintain the energetic pace as the actors fill the stage with movement.

This is not just a whimsical feel-good fantasy about redemption. It's about dreams and aspirations, success and failure. The dark atmospheric mood of the play is epitomised by haunting and discordant piano playing of *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*. Although there is a jazzy *Jingle Bells* entr'acte, a Christmas tree and *Auld Lang Syne*, this is a show for grown-ups. Nevertheless, *It's A Wonderful Life* is still all about Christmas with its moving message, an uplifting story for the season of good will.



Read Steve Mackrell's review at [www.markaspen.com/2024/12/18/wonderful-ptc](http://www.markaspen.com/2024/12/18/wonderful-ptc)

Photography by Steve Lippitt

## Cinderella

by Loz Keal

Exchange Players and Twickenham Youth Theatre at the Exchange, Twickenham until 22<sup>nd</sup> December

*Cinderella* is an evergreen pantomime story, filled as it is with grotesque siblings, disguises, and a dash of fairy magic, but Loz Keal's new script slims down the story to its bare bones for a fast fun-filled show.



Samantha McGill's newly-qualified fairy godmother seems to have trouble finding rhymes to end her verses – a running gag that soon has everybody calling out to correct her. Kieran Rose's chirpy Buttons is of course the main link with the audience, who already shout "Hello, Buttons!" with extreme enthusiasm by the end of his first scene.

Prince Charming, Dandini and a disappointed Footman hand out invitations to the Prince's ball to villagers, including Twickenham Youth Theatre, who form the energetic chorus and deliver fun jokes with huge confidence and aplomb.



Ellie Armstrong's spirited Cinderella is crushed by Sally Halsey's swaggeringly evil Wicked Stepmother. And by the Ugly Sisters, David Hannigan as "Bey Bey" and John Wilkinson as "Tay Tay", who steal every scene in which they appear. Terrie Cresswell's costumes are bright and sparkling, from Cinderella's first patchwork dress to its on-stage transformation by clever trickery into a beautiful blue frock in the ball scene, where it is in danger of being overshadowed by the Ugly Sisters' confections!

Gathering wood in the forest, Cinderella meets Em Hartnett's charismatic Prince Charming, who has swapped coats with Marc Batten's engaging Dandini. Hartnett and Armstrong clearly enjoy their inevitable duet, and have great chemistry.



The traditional call-and-response pantomime material, and a few "jokes for the grown-ups", are accompanied by an eclectic variety of songs, courtesy of Helen Geldert, complemented by Samantha McGill's choreography. The music is upbeat, and the performers fully commit to the routines.

Projected scenery enables set changes at the touch of a button, which director Wesley Henderson Roe uses to move the show along at a brisk pace. A centre stage plinth is used mostly as a prop table. None of the cast takes this opportunity for a "someday my plinth will come" joke, but rest assured that almost any other pantomime gag you can think of is present and delivered with great gusto.

A strong production with a great ensemble cast, *Cinderella* is a highly entertaining pantomime for all ages.

Read Andrew Lawston's review at [www.markaspen.com/2024/12/19/cinderella-xp](http://www.markaspen.com/2024/12/19/cinderella-xp)

Photography by Louise Ellard-Turnbull

# Local not-for-profit supports youth band to shine at Royal Albert Hall

From Powerjam Band Project

BlueZd, a youth blues rock band from Twickenham-based Powerjam Band Project, was chosen to perform at the Music for Youth Proms in November.

Earlier, the band of 12 to 15 year olds participated in two nationwide live rounds, and impressed judges at both the Music for Youth regional and national festivals.

BlueZd was formed over two years ago when the members were aged 10 to 13. Powerjam founder and volunteer, Anna Texier, who was a Community Heroes Awards winners in 2018, and co-director, Dr. Andrei Sora matched the Powerjam applicants together to form BlueZd. They have been rehearsing and tutoring them on a weekly basis since.



- [Watch BlueZd's performance](#)

Powerjam aims to empower young musicians and improve their mental health by honing their musical and ensemble skills at weekly band rehearsals with like-minded peers, providing regular gig opportunities, and helping them to gain self-esteem and confidence on and off stage.

Powerjam bands, aged 11 to 18, have been showcased on countless local community event stages over the past nine years. One to three members in each Powerjam band are disadvantaged and/or have special educational needs, making up 40% of Powerjam's cohort.

As a non-selective music project for all young musicians, whether budding, serious, or those just looking to play and perform music with others, Powerjam provides the complete band experience and allows all young musicians to retain full copyrights of their songs.

If you would like to volunteer, donate, or support Powerjam in any way, visit the [Powerjam Bands website](#) to find out more about what they do to support young local musicians.

# Local charity unveils new name as Richmond Foundation

From Richmond Foundation

Last month, Richmond Parish Lands Charity announced their new name, Richmond Foundation, reaffirming their commitment to fostering a fairer and more supportive community for everyone.

What remains unchanged is Richmond Foundation's dedication to providing funding and support that empowers individuals with opportunities, responds to needs, and provides resources to unlock their full potential. The foundation's grant priorities include strengthening the local voluntary and community sector, accessing support and advice services, improving health outcomes, reducing inequalities in education and enhancing community cohesion.

Richmond Foundation's funded partners tackle social issues and needs including organisations such as the [Vineyard Community Project](#) who supports those battling homelessness, food poverty, recovery from substance misuse and mental health challenges.

Richmond Foundation is also committed to supporting local talent. This year they launched the Future Leaders initiative. This innovative career development programme is designed for senior charity managers, helping to strengthen local peer networks and invest in the future of voluntary sector leadership. Future Leaders is a partnership project developed with Richmond Council for Voluntary Services, the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations and Clear Thinking Consultancy.

Founded in 1786, Richmond Foundation has a strong legacy of supporting individuals and local initiatives across the borough. As the charity continues to evolve, the new name better reflects its dynamic and inclusive vision for the future. You can [find out more about Richmond Foundation](#).



# New outdoor gyms installed at Barn Elm Southside and Cambridge Gardens

From Richmond Council

Following feedback from residents in the [Barn Elm Southside consultation](#) run earlier this year, we have installed various pieces of static and moving gym equipment to provide a well-rounded workout, including a phone-charging spin bike. The following equipment has been installed:

- Multi-purpose fitness frame
- Electric-charging bike
- Arm bike
- Tai Chi wheels
- Standard cycle
- Leg press
- Chest press/lat pull combination
- Cross rider duo



Fitness equipment was also identified as a key feature that our younger residents want to see more of in parks, based on feedback from our [2023 Youth Engagement consultation](#).

# Royal Star & Garter residents in Surbiton gear up for Christmas

Residents at Royal Star & Garter have helped decorate their care home as they prepare for Christmas.

The veterans from the Surbiton Home helped with Christmas trees and putting up decorations.

They are also being treated to a number of festive art and crafts and cookery activities, carol concerts, pantomimes and outings in the run-up to the special day.



Royal Star & Garter is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, and has launched new services, such as Lunch Club and Day Care, into the community.

The Home's dedicated Wellbeing Teams have been helping residents get into the festive spirit. School choirs have visited and sung carols, and there have also been live concerts, arts and crafts activities, and garden centre visits. Residents have made Christmas puddings, and taken part in Christmas karaoke sessions.

On Christmas Day, Santa will drop each resident a bespoke present. The Homes will also be filled with visitors, many of whom will stay to enjoy a delicious Christmas dinner.

Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton is welcoming new residents.

For more information on this, the new services it provides, or to work at the Home, go to [www.starandgarter.org/surbiton](http://www.starandgarter.org/surbiton)



**Royal Star & Garter**

Care with courage

# AGE UK Urges Every Older Person to Protect Their Health As Soon As They Can

With the roll out of the 2024 winter flu and covid vaccination programme underway, Age UK urges older people to do all they can to stay well this winter by having the vaccinations for which they are eligible as soon as they can.

By having a vaccine those most at risk from respiratory illnesses can be protected through the colder months, preventing nasty winter bugs from developing into more serious illnesses and helping to minimise hospitalisations.

Studies show that older people and particularly those managing health conditions are among those most at risk from the serious impacts of flu, COVID-19 and respiratory virus.

The UKHSA weekly flu and covid surveillance reports show those aged 85+ had the highest hospital admission rate for influenza between December 2023 and May 2024. This was followed by those aged 75-84 who had the second highest rate.

The weekly rates of hospital admissions for older people with RSV has risen sharply since October 2024, leaping from 0.3 per 100,000 patients on October 14, to 2.92 on November 25 for the 65-74 age group. For the 75-84 age group, those figures have risen from 0.5 to 5.95 per 100,000 patients (almost 12 times as many) during the same period. For those 85+, the admission rate for RSV has risen from 1.27 to 14.05 (over 11 times as many) during the same period [iii].

Despite the risks across eligible groups, influenza vaccine uptake in the UK has generally lower during the 2024 to 2025 season, compared to the previous 2023 to 2024 season among the 65+ age group. However, estimates show the effectiveness of the influenza vaccine against hospitalisation was 30% in those aged 65 and above, making it a vital tool in protecting ourselves against serious winter illnesses.

For the first time, the NHS is also offering vaccines for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a common cause of coughs and colds which can be dangerous to older people. The jab, introduced earlier this month, is being made available to all adults turning 75 on or after 1 September. In the first year of the programme, there will also be a one-off catch-up campaign for adults already aged 75-79 years old on 31 August 2024.

Influenza and Covid vaccines will be available and are considered safe to have at the same time, but the RSV vaccine will be offered on a different day to the others.

**Caroline Abrahams, Charity Director at Age UK** said:

“This winter is shaping up to be another worrying one for many older people as they struggle to balance keeping warm this winter with the cost of energy, changes in eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment, and the rising cost of food. But having our vaccines when they are offered is something we can all do to help avoid serious illnesses, particularly as the weather turns cold. There are also other preventative steps that older people can take to help keep them healthier this time of year too, including proactively managing long-term conditions, keeping as warm as they can, eating well, and washing hands regularly, so they have the best chance of staying fit and well for as long as possible.

“If you’re eligible for a vaccine we would urge you to do everything you can to protect your health and take up the opportunity when it is offered. I am certainly doing so and I hope you will too”.

For some older people RSV may cause symptoms that are much like a cold, but this respiratory virus can also lead to more serious infections such as bronchiolitis or pneumonia. We understand that those who are not eligible at the moment may be frustrated to be missing out. However, this particular age range has been selected as there isn’t yet enough evidence on the vaccine’s effectiveness in the older age groups. Hopefully, eligibility may be extended in the future, depending on the outcome of this initial vaccine roll out.

For the RSV vaccine, you will be contacted by your GP to make an appointment, whereas for the winter COVID and flu vaccine, you can book on the NHS website, through the NHS App, or by calling 119 for free, you may also be contacted by your GP practice.



# British Beekeepers' Association response to interpretations of study on effectiveness of yellow-legged 'Asian' hornet eradication measures

The report brings welcome news – but the fight isn't over yet

A recent study into the extent of the spread of yellow-legged 'Asian' hornets (YLH) should not be interpreted as a sign that the invasive species has been eradicated in the UK, according to the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA).

Whilst encouraged by the evidence in the study, led by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), that measures to limit the spread of YLH in the UK have been successful so far, the BBKA has noted that there have been several media reports recently that interpret the findings as suggesting the insects' incursion has been stopped completely.

The BBKA feel that this is a misreading of the study and one which could hamper future efforts to prevent its establishment.

The BBKA represents nearly 30,000 hobbyist beekeepers in England and Wales and has been supporting the efforts of the Government's National Bee Unit (NBU) through the formation of volunteer Asian Hornet Teams across the country. These teams have been assisting with identifying potential sightings of YLH, as well as heightening awareness of the destructive hornets in their communities.

Maps within the UKCEH study show the UK and much of Western Europe as highly suitable environments in which YLH can establish. It provides evidence that widespread surveillance and rapid eradication in some countries has limited modelled projections of the spread, compared to nothing being done in a 'wait and see' approach.

In short, this UKCEH research looks at the success of measures in limiting spread. It does NOT suggest the threat has been removed. The report should not be seen as an 'all-clear' for this country going forward: a very significant threat still remains, despite the huge ongoing efforts by governments and civil society.

The BBKA's Asian Hornet Team volunteers have been working tirelessly to raise awareness of the threat posed by this invasive species, as well as actively responding to suspected sightings and monitoring for further hornet activity within their localities. Their efforts, and the efforts of countless others involved in this process, must not be undermined by the implication that the problem has now been solved. Continued public vigilance and support is vital in maintaining the positive momentum outlined by the UKCEH's findings.

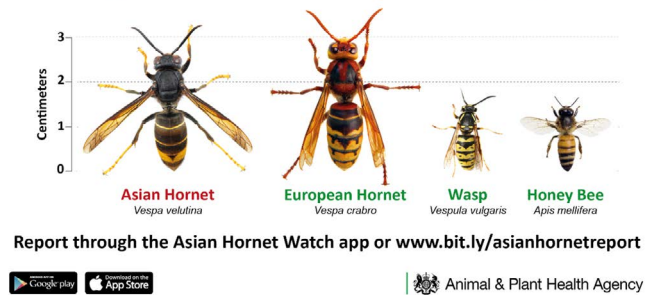
Diane Drinkwater, Chair of the BBKA, said: *"The evidence in the study highlights the effectiveness of surveillance and rapid eradication. The hard work of BBKA's associations and their members who've worked hard since the first incursion to support the National Bee Unit's work to prevent establishment is hugely appreciated. The BBKA hopes everyone will continue their efforts to raise public awareness which is essential for monitoring and reporting."*

Dr Richard Hassall, lead author of the UKCEH study, added: *"Our research highlights the effectiveness of action in the UK in preventing the spread of the yellow-legged hornet. Ongoing vigilance and rapid reporting of yellow-legged hornets is critical as the possibility of continued invasion remains high in the UK. We encourage people to report any suspected sightings to the Asian Hornet Watch App which is available online and as a mobile app."*

Yellow-legged 'Asian' hornets can be identified by their distinguishing characteristics:

- slightly smaller than our native European hornet
- black with an orange face
- a thin yellow band near the middle and a broader orange/yellow band around their abdomen, near the tail.
- They have bright yellow legs, like they've been dipped in a pot of yellow paint – hence the name.

**Think you've seen an Asian Hornet? Report it!**





# Christmas chaos across south London streets as traffic wardens strike

Streets in Kingston, Lambeth, Richmond and Wandsworth face gridlock in two days before Christmas

GMB, the union for local government, are warning of Christmas chaos across the streets of South London as parking wardens across four London Boroughs take two days of strike action.

The members employed by Apcoa work within the boroughs of Kingston, Lambeth, Richmond and Wandsworth and are taking action in a dispute that has already seen them strike for a week in October.

The parking wardens will not be working on Monday 23 or Tuesday 24 December, which will see little or no civil enforcement across the boroughs on the two days preceding Christmas.



Alex Etches, GMB Regional Organiser said:

*“As we stated last time these members took action, these members not only generate revenue for the boroughs, but also keep traffic moving and keep the streets clear.*

*“Our members deserve a decent pay rise that reflects the difficult and sometimes dangerous job they do for the boroughs’ residents.*

*“Apcoa need to agree to meet us, agree to negotiate with us properly and perhaps we can avoid this sort of unnecessary disruption to residents and local businesses going forward.”*



# London NHS staff hit with £7.5 million in car parking fees

Low-paid NHS workers in London were hit with more than £7.5 million in car parking charges last year, new figures show.

Data released by NHS Digital today [Thursday] show health workers in London forked out a whopping £7,563,678 just to park at work in the financial year 2023/24.

The two trusts which trousered the most were Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust, which took just over £1 million, followed by the Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust with £850,000.

GMB’s NHS pay claim submitted earlier this year calls for NHS staff car parking charges to be scrapped.

Rachel Harrison, GMB National Secretary, said:

*“NHS workers have had their first above inflation pay rise after almost 15 years of cuts. They’ve suffered rocketing workloads, chronic understaffing and the fallout from a global pandemic. Health workers are on their knees – they need help and support. Charging them to park is kicking them while they are down. GMB calls on the Government and NHS employers to do the right thing and scrap staff car parking charges.”*



# Match Preview: Brentford v Nottingham Forest

**Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's Premier League home game against Nottingham Forest on Saturday (3pm kick-off GMT)**

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford return to Premier League action against Nottingham Forest at Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday afternoon (3pm kick-off GMT).

The Bees will be looking to maintain their unbeaten and league-best home record against a Forest side who are flying high in fourth this term.

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of the game.

## Pre-match analysis

Stephen Gillett, Playmaker Stats: The key match-ups for Saturday's game

After finishing 16th and 17th respectively in the Premier League last season, Brentford and Nottingham Forest's form and fortunes have significantly improved in 2024/25.

Currently 11th in the top flight, Thomas Frank's Bees host Nuno Espírito Santo's high-flyers, who are perched impressively in fourth having snatched victory from the jaws of defeat in a thrilling 2-1 win over Aston Villa at the City Ground last Saturday.

That Villa win underlined the spirit and resilience Forest have shown so far this season, and there are plenty of intriguing tussles and tactical battles in store at Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday.

It is worth noting straight off the bat that Brentford's unbeaten home record will go on the line against one of the Premier League's best performers on the road. Winning four of their eight games on their travels, Forest have amassed 14 away points this season; only Chelsea (19) and Liverpool (17) have won more.

Brentford's Premier League adventure to date has seen them combine effective, direct football with an evolving ability to control possession and dictate tempo in their own defensive third. In this respect, Forest are an interesting opponent, as they average the second lowest possession share (41 per cent) in the division and the hosts should, therefore, have plenty of the ball.

The trick, however, will be to make that possession count, as - much like he did at Wolves - Nuno has moulded Forest into a lean defensive machine that can soak up pressure and deploy sufficient firepower to hurt their opposition. This brings us to our first match-up of interest: Bryan Mbeumo versus Chris Wood.

Two of only five players to reach double figures for Premier League goals this term, Mbeumo and Wood have notched a couple of penalties apiece, but spot-kicks aside their goalscoring MO couldn't be more different.

Kiwi forward Wood leads the division for headed goals (four) - as he did last season - and has fired his other six strikes with his right foot, while Mbeumo has, no surprises here, scored all 10 of his Premier League goals in 2024/25 with his trusty left foot.

Wood's aerial threat is a big reason why Forest are joint-top of the Premier League goal charts for headed goals this season, with seven, and it will be interesting to see how Brentford's backline divvy up the task of marking the 33-year-old target man.



It is also worth noting that Forest rank joint-second in the division for goals from set-pieces (seven) this season, as only corner-kick aficionados Arsenal (eight) have out-performed Nuno's side in this regard.

If we shift our focus to creating goals, rather than scoring them, there's another fantastic match-up to focus in on. Elliot Anderson and Mikkel Damsgaard have been two of their respective team's most influential performers this season, and the two midfielders share a common ability to make things happen in the final third.

It was Anderson's dynamic run and cross that led to Anthony Elanga's matchwinner for Forest against Villa last weekend and the 22-year-old former Newcastle man currently ranks joint-seventh, with Damsgaard and Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes, in the Premier League assist charts.

Let's finish up with a quick word of warning for Brentford on the subject of counter-attacks. Nicolas Jackson's strike for Chelsea last Sunday came on a fast break and the Bees have now conceded more goals (five) on counters than any team in the Premier League this season.

Forest may have only scored one goal from counter-attacks this term, but they led the division for goals on the break in 2023/24 (with nine) and the dual threat they pose, from quick transitions in open play and dead-ball situations, is very much reminiscent of Brentford themselves.

Game on!

## **Scout report**

Dan Long: Nottingham Forest on course for top-six finish

There was no surprise Nottingham Forest's intense approach in the transfer market continued last summer, after huge upheaval ahead of their first season back in the Premier League the year before. They had finished 16th, four points off the bottom three and wanted more.

10 first-team players were signed permanently, four joined on loan, 14 were either sold or released and another 11 went out on loan. If you can believe it, it was quieter than the year before.

By Christmas, though, Steve Cooper had been sacked and replaced by Nuno Espírito Santo after a run of six defeats in eight had left Forest hovering above the bottom three by two points, even after the 3-1 win over Newcastle on Boxing Day.

Including that game, the Portuguese won two of his first three games in charge, but then also oversaw his own run of six defeats in eight, while also contending with a four-point deduction, imposed after Forest breached profit and sustainability rules. The penalty was upheld after an appeal.

It was touch-and-go for the final two months, but crucial wins over Fulham, Sheffield United and Burnley helped them survive by six points. "Our fans are going to see Premier League football [again], that is very important," said Nuno after survival was confirmed.

Many had Forest down as one of the favourites for relegation again this term, but they have, in fact, proved the doubters - and the hopeful - wrong, in the most astonishing fashion.

In their seven Premier League seasons before 2024/25, they had only twice picked up more than 40 points - Nuno's side already have 28 on the board, with 22 more games still to play.

Losing just one of their first 10 games saw them skyrocket all the way to third. That run included a first win over Liverpool at Anfield since February 1969 and saw Nuno named Manager of the Month for October.

The form of Chris Wood was integral during that period. The New Zealand international - who is one goal away from 80 in the Premier League - scored eight across the first 10 games. He now has 10 league goals for the season, just five away from a new personal best return in the division.

Understandably, he was keen to remain grounded. After the 3-0 win over West Ham in early November, he said: "It doesn't mean anything now. We have to keep going as it's a very long season ahead of us." And he was right to be cautious, with defeats to Newcastle, Arsenal and Man City over the next month bringing somewhat of a reality check.

But then they beat Manchester United at Old Trafford for the first time in 30 years - inflicting a first home defeat on new boss Ruben Amorim - and all was right in the world again.

"It means a lot for the club," said Wood. "We should celebrate and be proud of us. I'm very proud of being part of this group of players and the squad. We are trying to do something together, something nice."

Whatever happens from here, "something nice" is certainly on the cards. An average of 36 points has been enough for the team in 17th to secure survival over the last five seasons, and Forest are only eight points away from that total.

In fact, if they continue picking up points at the rate they are currently - 1.75 per game - they will finish with 67 points, which has been enough for a top-six finish across each of the last five campaigns.

Talk of a top-four finish might be premature for now, but a push for a top-half finish for the first time since 1995/96 is rapidly gaining momentum.

### **In the dugout**

Nuno Espírito Santo

Once signed by Jose Mourinho during his time at Porto, Nuno Espírito Santo had a long career as a goalkeeper - though he often played second fiddle - primarily spent in Portugal and Spain, with time in Russia at Dynamo Moscow during 2005 and 2006.

Nuno retired in 2010, after his second spell at Porto, but quickly went on to become a goalkeeper coach at Malaga and then Panathinaikos, working with his former manager Jesualdo Ferreira each time. He returned to Portugal to take on his first managerial role with Rio Ave in the summer of 2012 and remained at the club for two years.

He was then hired by Valencia, whom he guided to a fourth-place finish in La Liga in 2014/15, though he resigned less than four months into the following campaign after three defeats in their first five Champions League group matches, as well as five wins from the first 13 league matches, which left them languishing in ninth when he departed.

Porto decided to take a chance on their former player in 2016/17, yet he only saw out half of his two-year deal as the club opted to replace him the following summer after he failed to deliver silverware, despite losing only six of his 49 games in charge.

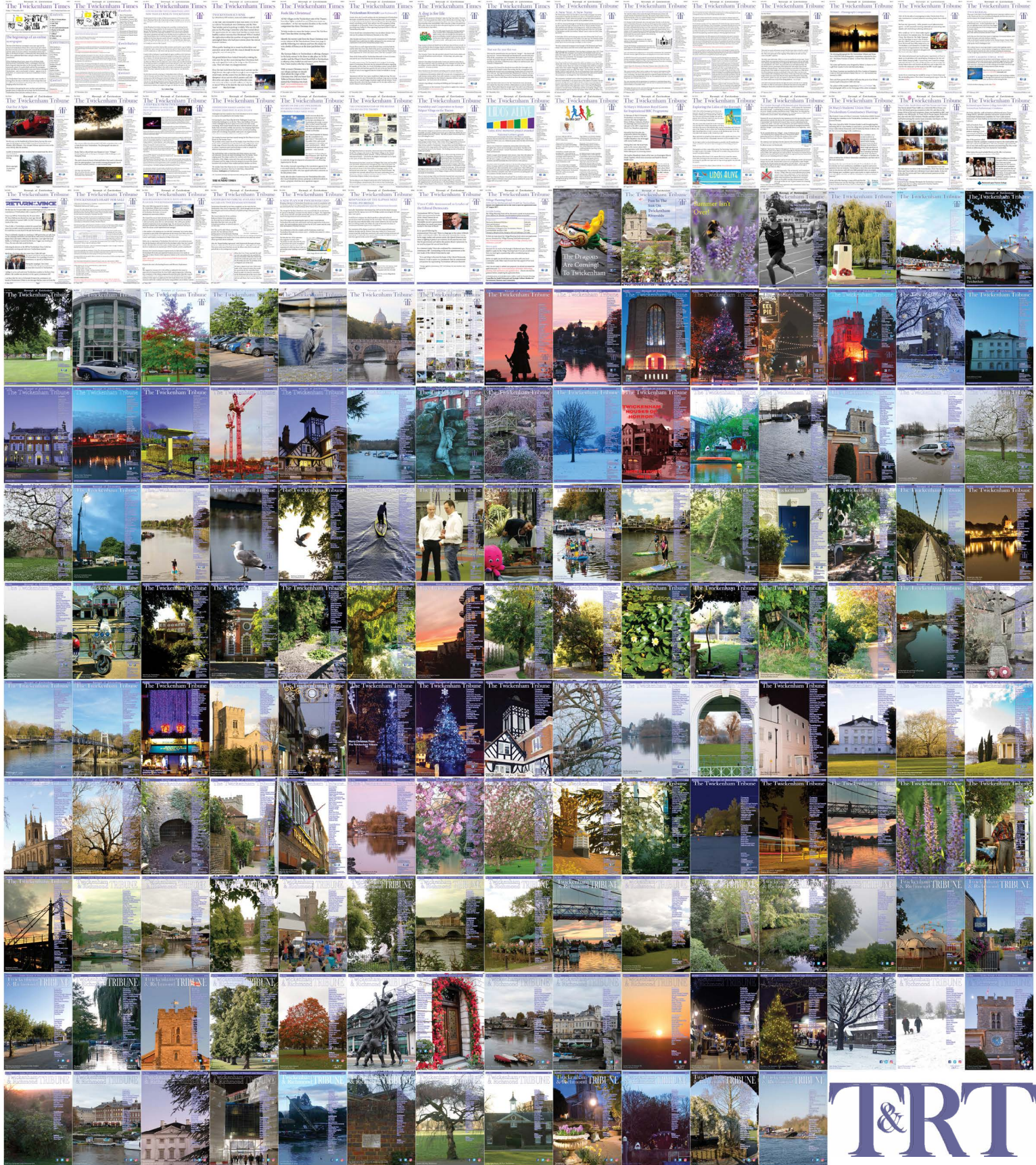
The 49-year-old is perhaps best known for the four years he spent at Wolves. He joined the club at the end of a chaotic 2016/17 campaign - during which they had three permanent managers - and led them to promotion out of the Championship at the first time of asking. In 2019/20, Wolves recorded their joint-highest Premier League finish (7th and their highest points tally of 59), as well as reaching the quarter-final of the Europa League.

Having left Molineux by mutual consent in June 2021, Nuno went to Tottenham and started well with three straight Premier League wins. Ultimately, he lasted only four months in the job, having followed up those victories with five defeats in the next seven.

He then spent 16 months in Saudi Arabia, guiding Al-Ittihad to the Saudi Pro League title and Saudi Super Cup, and returned to England just before Christmas 2023, having been sacked a little over a month earlier.



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