

Est 2016

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Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Twickenham Riverside at dawn
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

10th January 2025

T&RT

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Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

TickerTape - News in Brief

Teddington Lock footbridges improvement works

From Richmond Council

The weeknight closures planned for 6 to 10 January and 13 to 14 January have been postponed. This is due to a problem with a part which had to be returned to the manufacturer.

We will share the revised dates as soon as they have been confirmed. Thank you for your continued patience during these works.

The essential maintenance works to repair the suspension footbridge main structure and lockcut iron truss footbridge will ensure this vital crossing can continue to be used safely for many years to come.

South Western Railway

Altered train services and buses replace trains in the Staines area **Sunday 12 January**

The lines in the **Staines** area will be **closed all day** due to maintenance work.

- A **revised** service will run between **London Waterloo and Hounslow via Richmond and via Brentford.**
- **Buses** will run between **Hounslow and Ascot via Staines.**
- A **revised** service will run between **Ascot and Reading.**
- **Buses** will run between **Hounslow and Woking via Staines.**
- **Buses** will run between **Hounslow and Windsor via Staines.**
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will run **all day** and will terminate at **Hounslow.**



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

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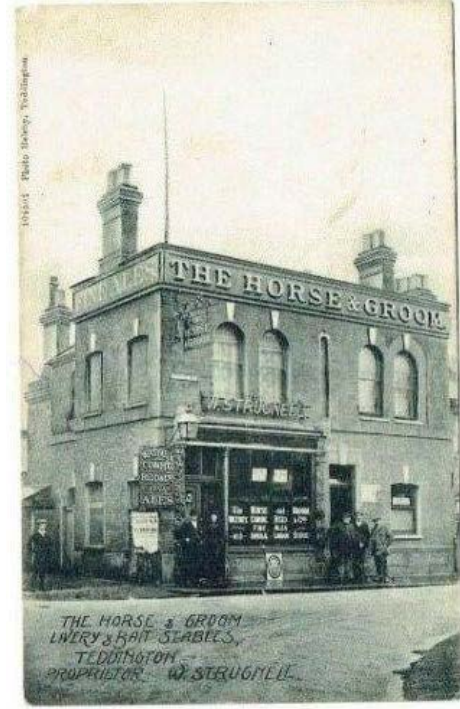
Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 283

Horse & Groom Pub - Teddington

By Alan Winter

Closed for nearly 30 years now and a Pizza Express since 1997, The building still maintains its 'pub look' that was established when it originally opened at 6, Bridge Place, Teddington. That address was subsequently changed to 11, Waldegrave Road which remains at the junction between High Street and Broad Street.

I used to play darts in this pub sometimes back in the late 1960's with a then work colleague, Lionel Dormer. An interesting thing about the ageing process is that in my mid 70's I can remember my teenage years very clearly and yet ask me what I had for breakfast today and I can't remember! Oh well, I'm not the only one am I?



We can trace the Horse and Groom back to 1881 although it may have traded as a beer house earlier. Our first postcard this week shows the pub at some point between 1911 and 1914 when the family of William Strugnell were the proprietors as shown on the building signage on the postcard.

The second postcard is a more modern image of the pub photographed by A.P. Cannings from the corner of Elmfield



Teddington High Street from Elmfield Avenue

Photograph by A. P. Cannings

Avenue. This postcard was published by the Teddington Society.

Finally, we bring the building up to date with a photo showing it trading as the Pizza Express that it is today.

My search for old postcards continues. I am always looking for old postcards and old photograph albums etc. The postcards can also be British or Foreign, black and white or coloured and of places or subjects.

If you have any that are sitting unwanted in a drawer, in a box in the loft or in the garage or under a bed, please contact me on 07875 578398 or alanwinter192@hotmail.com I would like to see them and I pay cash!



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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)



Council Reports

Environment Committee

By James Knight

The Richmond Environment, Sustainability, Culture, and Sports Committee convened on January 7 to address an agenda, including establishing a nature reserve, an arts strategy update, public toilet provisions, and a performance review of street-cleaning operations. While council members heralded progress in several areas, notable shortcomings in planning, transparency, and implementation clouded the session.

New Nature Reserve: The committee's endorsement of a new nature reserve at Oldfield Road Meadow was a rare bright spot. The 0.6-hectare site promises a haven for biodiversity, with plans to include a Miyawaki forest and natural play areas. Public consultation revealed overwhelming support, with 97% of respondents backing the project. However, questions arose regarding long-term funding and if there was genuine community involvement. Despite the enthusiasm, the absence of a detailed financial roadmap for maintenance raises concerns about sustainability. The Greens also wanted to know why the consultation did not include a community food-growing project.

Arts Strategy: Tim Coram, head of Richmond Arts Service, presented an impressive report highlighting the borough's flourishing arts scene, with participation rates surpassing 80,000 last year. Yet, beneath this veneer of success lies an inequitable landscape. While arts initiatives excel in affluent areas, participation lags in underserved communities such as Hampton North and Whitton and young people across the borough. The committee's rhetoric of inclusivity and accessibility was undercut by its lack of concrete proposals to address these disparities. Calls for more robust partnerships with local schools and refugee communities offered hope, but these ideas remain aspirational rather than actionable.

Public Toilets: The Community Toilet Scheme update revealed a borough grappling with uneven toilet accessibility that was exposed during the lockdown. The initiative, which relies on local businesses to host public facilities, has expanded to 90 locations. However, gaps persist in areas such as Barnes, where elderly residents and parents with young children face significant challenges. Councillor Fiona Sacks aptly pointed out that while digital maps are helpful, many in the community lack access to technology. Efforts to place prominent signage in participating businesses are promising but overdue. Furthermore, relying on a temporary project officer to manage the scheme underscores a lack of long-term strategic thinking.

The Decline in Street Cleaning Standards: Perhaps the most contentious issue was the decline in street cleanliness, which is a sore point for residents and something the council has been receiving a lot of flak over on social media. An electric vehicle charging failure at the depot was blamed for recent lapses, with diesel vehicles temporarily filling the gap. While the problem appears resolved, broader issues remain. Complaints of missed schedules and insufficient manual sweepers were met with promises of increased monitoring and budgetary adjustments. However, Councillor Zoe McLeod noted that residents' trust hinges on tangible improvements, not just assurances.

Performance Review: Missed Opportunities: The council's broader performance review revealed mixed results. While library visits and arts participation soared post-pandemic, critical metrics—including housing delivery and recycling rates—painted a less rosy picture. A modest increase in food waste participation to 30% of eligible households falls well below expectations. In the absence of coordinated national efforts, the council's reliance on local campaigns limits progress on food recycling. Most concerning is the council's inability to meet housing delivery targets, raising questions about its strategic priorities. With the Labour Government threatening to take over planning powers from councils that are not meeting their targets, local democratic control over planning could be lost.

Housing Targets: Government Pressure Mounts: The government's recent decision to increase housing delivery targets loomed large during the meeting. In response, the committee agreed to bring a detailed paper to a future session outlining how Richmond can realistically meet these heightened expectations. Chair Councillor Julia Neden-Watts emphasised the complexity of balancing government mandates with the borough's limited capacity for large-scale development. She noted that the paper will address Richmond's housing action plan and explore innovative solutions to deliver sustainable growth while preserving the borough's character. With the Labour Government threatening to take over planning powers from councils that are not meeting their targets, local democratic control over planning could be lost.

The January 7 meeting epitomised a council balancing ambition with uneven execution. While individual initiatives—such as the nature reserve and arts strategy—hold promise, systemic flaws in planning, transparency, and community engagement undermine their potential. The council's inability to address street-cleaning concerns and toilet accessibility with urgency is particularly disappointing.

Residents are left with a familiar refrain of lofty aspirations tempered by operational inefficiencies. As Richmond navigates pressing challenges—from climate action to community cohesion—its council must ensure that ambition is matched by accountability. Anything less risks eroding public trust, leaving the borough's grand visions unfulfilled.

To see the papers for the meeting, please click [HERE](#)

Next week at Richmond Council

On Wednesday, the **Planning Committee** will meet to discuss the following two applications:

1. Proposals for a new self-storage warehouse, 74 Oldfield Road, Hampton (next to Waitrose)
2. Enlargement of a detached house, 30 Acacia Road, Hampton

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

How to participate:

Members of the public are welcome to speak about specific applications at Planning Committee meetings. You must register to speak in advance by 12 noon two working days before the meeting. You are able to speak at Planning Committee in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams.

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

Friday Family Film Club - 17th January

Holy Trinity, Twickenham

This term we are trying something new. We are having a family film club at church on **Friday 17th January, from 3:30 - 5:30pm**. Parents are welcome to bring food and drink, as we settle in to watch Disney's Luca. Popcorn will be provided for the little ones, and there will be a modest bar for the grown-ups!

There is no formal charge for the event, but there will be a retiring to collection to help us cover the cost of the screening license. This is an opportunity for parents to catch up in the new year, and for the children to socialise outside of school.



THE GREEN POP UP CAFE with special guest COLIN DOWNEY

THURSDAY
16 JANUARY

10.30-12.00



Come along for a morning of refreshments and entertaining stories as Colin - a top flight referee in the 80s - joins us for coffee and informal chat to share his experiences at the highest level of football.

**The Green Room, Holy Trinity Twickenham
Twickenham Green, TW2 5TS**



HOLY TRINITY TWICKENHAM

Twickenham care home partners with Ancestry to uncover residents' legacies

Research commissioned by the leader in family history, Ancestry has unveiled that 46% of Brits are eager for information about their elderly loved ones' lives, with many (86%) feeling they could learn life lessons from the wisdom gained by them.

To help consumers learn from the lives led by their elderly loved ones and explore their family history, Ancestry is partnering with TV's Anna Richardson and Barchester Healthcare. **To launch the partnership, Ancestry will be holding a workshop with residents and their families, at Lynde House Care Home in Twickenham on Tuesday 14th January.**

Hosted by Anna Richardson and attended by Ancestry genealogists and experts, residents will learn how to build their family trees and explore their history using a variety of Ancestry resources. From military archives to census records, residents attending will be able to access a variety of resources to bring the past to life, and preserve the memories of today for future generations.

Free webinars about boosting local air quality and protecting your health

From Richmond Council

On Monday 13 January 2025, come along to free sessions exploring our new Draft Air Quality Action Plan and the health impacts of wood burning.

Draft Air Quality Action Plan consultation webinar Q&A

We are hosting our final Q&A consultation session for people who live, work or study in the borough to learn about and share their views on our draft Air Quality Action Plan.

Join us to hear about the priorities laid out in the plan, ask your questions and voice your ideas.

- **Date:** Monday 13 January 2025
- **Time:** 7 to 8pm

[Register for the draft Air Quality Action Plan webinar](#)



The draft Air Quality Action Plan focuses on key locations and groups within our community. This includes areas where pollution levels are highest, where public exposure is most significant, and where vulnerable populations are at risk. We've also published an [online consultation survey](#), through which you can have your say. This survey is open until 20 January 2025.

If you would like a paper copy or another format of the survey, email consultation@richmond.gov.uk or call 020 8871 6000.

Clean Air Night webinar

As part of the [Clean Air Night campaign](#), this free session, run by environmental charity Global Action Plan, aims to improve public awareness of the [harmful effect domestic wood burning can have](#) on your health.

Don't miss this chance to learn how we can work together for cleaner air and a healthier community!

- **Date:** Monday 13 January 2025
- **Time:** 2pm

[Register for the Clean Air Night webinar](#)

Free water-themed art sessions at Castelnau Community Centre

From The Water Bodies Community Art Club

From Tuesday 21 January, residents are invited to explore the beauty, movement, and symbolism of water through art.

Whether you're a seasoned artist or just starting out, these fun-filled sessions are perfect the perfect way to unleash your creativity whilst exploring our relationship with water and the environment through art.

The Water Bodies Community Art Club, in partnership with [Community BlueScapes](#), offers a friendly and welcoming environment where participants can meet fellow art enthusiasts and delve into different art techniques.

Each session uses a specific water-based technique to explore how water is diverse and impacts the environment.

Marbling session

- **Date:** Tuesday 21 January 2025
- **Time:** 6.30 to 8pm
- **Location:** Castelnau Community Centre, 7 Stillingfleet Road, London, SW13

[Book marbling tickets](#)

Acrylic pour session

- **Date:** Tuesday 11 February 2025
- **Time:** 6.30 to 8pm
- **Location:** Castelnau Community Centre, 7 Stillingfleet Road, London, SW13

[Book acrylic pour tickets](#)

Water journals session

- **Date:** Tuesday 25 February 2025
- **Time:** 6.30 to 8pm
- **Location:** Castelnau Community Centre, 7 Stillingfleet Road, London, SW13

[Book water journals tickets](#)



Liberal Democrats abstain in vote on Grooming Gangs Inquiry

By James Knight

One of the most contentious debates of this parliamentary term unfolded this week as the issue of grooming gangs once again took centre stage. The catalyst for the renewed focus was the safeguarding minister Jess Phillips' rejection of Oldham Council's request for a government-led inquiry into historical child sexual exploitation of working-class white girls by predatory gangs.

The matter escalated further when Elon Musk, adviser to President-Elect Trump, publicly criticised the government, drawing significant attention to the issue by circulating harrowing extracts from court transcripts that exposed the true extent of the abuse. The tally of towns affected by the scandal had grown from 14 to over 50, with resulting public outcry pushing the topic to the forefront of national discourse.

The controversy culminated in the Conservative Party's attempt to force a national inquiry into grooming gangs. Their proposed amendment, attached to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, was decisively defeated by 364 votes to 111—a margin of 253. **Both Richmond's Sarah Olney and Twickenham's Munira Wilson abstained from the vote.**

The amendment's inclusion threatened the passage of the broader bill, which would have been blocked had the vote succeeded. Nevertheless, Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch offered to withdraw the amendment if the government agreed to the inquiry. Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philip explained the move: "When you're in opposition, you need to use every parliamentary device available to try and bring issues to the fore."

Appearing on BBC Breakfast on the morning of the debate, Wilson attempted to justify her party's decision to abstain, dismissing the Conservatives' approach as "a cheap political stunt." Her remarks appear to have placed her at odds with public opinion. A recent YouGov poll, commissioned by the Women's Policy Centre think tank, revealed that 76% of British adults support a new inquiry into grooming gangs, indicating widespread concern and frustration with the lack of action.

Critics argue that the Liberal Democrats' stance is indefensible, driven more by political calculations than principle. Wilson's refusal to condemn the controversial educational reforms in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill has also drawn fire. The bill's provisions would significantly curtail the freedoms of academies and free schools, including their autonomy over pay, staffing, and curriculum focus. Conservative MP Graham Stuart warned that the measures would result in "gross, socialist uniformity," stifling the ability of high-performing schools to expand and innovate.

The Liberal Democrats' decision to abstain from the vote and Wilson's subsequent defence of their position have drawn sharp criticism on social media. For many, this underscores a broader failure to address issues of national importance with the seriousness and urgency they demand. It is also part of a broader pattern of behaviour by the Liberal Democrats of their MPs not showing up to debates or voting in the Commons (especially on the last sitting day of the week), treating it almost as a part-time job—something that is of great disservice to their constituents and the country.

NO REFERRALS NEEDED
CLOSED ON BANK HOLIDAYS



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TWICKENHAM

PLEASE COME TO OUR PAY AS YOU FEEL
COMMUNITY CAFES AND FOOD SURPLUS HUBS

BRING A BAG TO TAKE SURPLUS HOME

MONDAY

11.30AM - 1.30PM ETNAEAST TWICKENHAM
COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB
2.30 - 4.30 PM LINDEN HALL, HAMPTON
FOOD SURPLUS HUB

TUESDAY

11.00 AM - 12.00PM NOBLE GREEN WINES, HAMPTON HILL
FOOD SURPLUS HUB

11.30AM - 1.30PM HAM YOUTH CENTRE, HAM
COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB

WEDNESDAY

11.30AM - 1.30 PM ETNA, EAST TWICKENHAM
COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB

11.30AM - 1.30PM CAMBRIAN COMMUNITY CENTER, RICHMOND
COMMUNITY CAFE

THURSDAY

11.30AM - 1.30PM LINDEN HALL, HAMPTON
TAKEAWAY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB

FRIDAY

11.30AM - 1.30PM ETNA, EAST TWICKENHAM
COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB

WWW.TRJFPTWICKENHAM.COM

Dry January - Or Dry Full Year In Fact!

Lots of people I know (including my own husband) have chosen to give up alcohol. While there are some really excellent 'fake' spirits and alcohol free beers and the like, don't forget that there are already stacks of really good, and interesting alternatives to alcohol, that the family can enjoy.

For example, **Counter Culture** kombucha is launching **Try Dry**®, a zingy new flavour to mark its partnership with Alcohol Change UK as the Official Kombucha for Dry January. Try Dry® celebrates the role of Alcohol Change UK's Try Dry® app, helping participants of Dry January® to track their dry days, calories and money saved through the month. Counter Culture's new Try Dry flavour is organic with a light and natural tang, with a citrus yuzu hit. 5% of all sales from Try Dry® will go to Alcohol Change UK to support its vital work tackling alcohol harm, and helping reset folks' drinking habits – a financial commitment that aligns strongly to Counter Culture's values. The brand has already donated 51% of its shares to non-profit organisations and maintains an unrelenting goal to donate £1million as an entrepreneurial donation to the non-profit organisations respect and have affinity with. You can purchase Try Dry® and the rest of Counter Culture's range from £23.95 for a case of x12 (RRP) from: [Counter Culture](#) "DRYJANUARY20" for 20% off all products or [Amazon](#) or [Wise Bartender](#)



Functional drinks are big news, and according to **TRIP**, over 8 million people in the UK have either tried, or regularly drink, functional beverages, switching alcohol for offerings with added health benefits. TRIP, with its range of CBD or magnesium-infused drinks that help you to unwind alcohol-free, is the UK's fastest growing soft drinks brand over the last 2 years, achieving 405% growth. Half of us have either ditched booze altogether or are drinking less than the previous 6 months with 15.5 million planning to take part in the **2025 Dry**

January® challenge. TRIP has recently launched its Great Taste Award winning **Mindful Blend** range (RRP £2 per 250ml can), magnesium-infused drinks, listed in Sainsburys, Waitrose and Holland & Barrett. The Mindful Blend range combines Lion's Mane, Magnesium, Ashwagandha and L-theanine with an infusion of nature's botanicals. The unique blend provides a new way to find calm in an accessible drink format, through powerful functional ingredients. The range debuted with two exclusive flavours, Cucumber Mint and Blood Orange Rosemary, alongside two of the most popular flavours from its core range, Elderflower Mint and Raspberry Orange Blossom.

Soft drinks company **Belvoir Farm** has a great range of alcohol free cocktails as well as its well-known cordials. These premium soft drinks are refreshingly real in flavour and delicious and make a great alternative to alcohol. They use simple ingredients, with delicious products like **Non-Alcoholic Passion Fruit Martini**, made with real tropical fruit juices and Madagascan vanilla extract, or **Lime & Yuzu Mojito** or **Peach Bellini**. Available in bottles (750ml at £3.40) or cans (4 x250ml at £4.50) from Waitrose, Ocado. Info on the full range and stockist information is on their website [here](#)



Gingerbread, ginger snaps, ginger cake, crystallised ginger they're all familiar warming winter favourites. Ginger was brought to Europe in 992 by an Armenian monk and by Elizabethan times, medicine men sold ginger cookies as love charms. Ginger is still regarded as a healthy spice today, thought to boost immunity, reduce inflammation and aid digestion. It's also ideal for pregnant mums in the early stages of pregnancy as it helps with nausea.

Artisan drinks maker, **The Dorset Ginger Company** uses ginger as the core ingredient in its range of delicious fiery drinks. In fact, they claim to have the hottest ginger drink available in the UK. Aimed at genuine ginger lovers, their drinks deliver a powerful ginger kick with every sip, leaving a pleasing warming sensation in the mouth, guaranteed to delight ginger connoisseurs everywhere. The range comprises some eleven variants, from original to extra strong with cinnamon, and comes in two bottle sizes - 33cl and 75cl and can be bought from www.dorsetginger.ltd You can buy a selection box of five bottles in a gift box for £18.15



Mushrooms are the "IT" health trend at the moment, and those clever folk at M&S have been busy working with the scientific brains of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. They have just launched a range of unusual mushroom drinks, featuring Lion's Mane and Reishi. It's the only 'big brand' supermarket to have its own label mushroom drinks, and the only ones to have the mushroom content verified by scientists at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Products include: **YAY! Mushrooms** Vanilla Latte (£1.90) and the **YAY! Mushrooms AM & PM Cold Press Shots** (duo pack: £3.00).

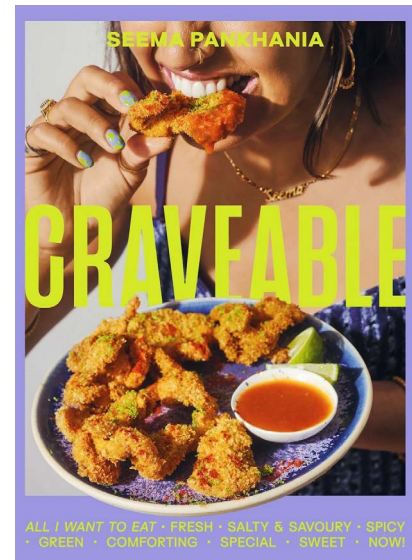
This has a shot to wake you up and give you energy in the morning and another to calm you down last thing before heading off to bed and enjoying a good night's sleep.

Don't fear! These delicious drinks don't actually taste of mushrooms, so you can get all the benefits without the taste!



Craveable - What A Fabulous Cookbook!

It's rare that I look through a cookbook and want to create every single recipe that is included, but this one had me inspired and salivating! **Craveable**, by **Seema Pankhania**, published by Penguin Michael Joseph (£22 hardback) is her first book, and is inspired by her travels (and food cravings). Seema created this book to be a collection of simple trusted recipes that you can turn to when you need something savoury, sweet or fresh or just need to make a quick meal that's still delicious. If you don't have an ingredient, there's a list of simple substitutes and it empowers you to make the recipes your own. The NOW! chapter includes Seema's immediate pick-me-up recipes to avoid an expensive takeaway. Dishes include Bombay Fish Finger Sandwiches, Pickled Jalapeno Mac n Cheese, Indian Fried Chicken, Caramelised Honey and Zaatar Cheese Toastie, and even a 30-minute Emergency Birthday Cake!



During a testing childhood, fighting cancer, she spent many hours watching cooking channels, and that fuelled her passion for food. She baked cupcakes to raise funds for travelling and began her culinary career working for Gordon Ramsay. A moped accident, while commuting, resulted in another hospital spell. during which she applied to join Mob Kitchen as a food creator. She now has over 1.3 million followers and 24.3 million likes on Tik Tok and over 444k followers on Instagram.

It really is a mouthwatering read - here are some recipes to tempt you to buy a copy:

BEETROOT & FETA CHAAT (TIME - 15 mins SERVES 4 as a side or 2 as a main, VEGGIE)

“Chaat is one of the most underrated foods in India. It's an all-encompassing salad, fresh, sour, spicy and crunchy. My mum would make this with yoghurt, potatoes and chickpeas, but in my version I've used the sweetness of cooked beetroot with salty feta to achieve a parallel version. Perfect with any curry or just on its own. Traditionally the crunch element would come from papri, which is fried dough, but I've used Bombay mix because it's a bit easier to find. However, if you find any crunchy fried puri in the Indian supermarket, give them a go!”

COOK YOUR OWN BEETROOT: *I love pre-cooked beetroot – all the fun without the mess. But if you want to use fresh, roast it at 200°C, brushed with a little oil and wrapped in foil, for 45–60 minutes until tender. Allow to cool before using.*

- 250g cooked beetroot
- 2 large tomatoes, core removed
- 1 x 400g tin of chickpeas
- 1/2 a red onion
- 2 green finger chillies
- a small handful of fresh mint
- 3 tbsp tamarind paste
- 2 tbsp honey, brown sugar or agave
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 200g Greek yoghurt
- 100g feta
- 100g Bombay mix



- a small handful of pomegranate seeds (optional)
- salt

1. Cut the beetroot into large chunks and the tomatoes into small pieces.
2. Drain and rinse the chickpeas.
Finely chop the red onion, chillies and mint. Make the tamarind dressing by combining the tamarind paste with the honey, 2 tablespoons of water and a pinch of ground cumin. In a bowl, combine the beetroot, tomatoes, chickpeas and onions, lightly season with salt. Spread the yoghurt on your serving plate and top with the beetroot mix.
3. Drizzle over the tamarind dressing and crumble over the feta, then sprinkle over the chopped mint and chillies and the Bombay mix.
4. Finish with the pomegranate seeds and a sprinkling of ground cumin, and enjoy.

CRISPY CHILLI GARLIC KERALA PRAWNS (TIME 30 Mins, SERVES 4)

“Kerala has some of the most delicious fish and shellfish I’ve ever had, smothered in garlic and fried in coconut oil. I’ve been dreaming of it ever since. Seafood with Indian flavours isn’t something that I grew up with, but it is incredibly popular in the south of India. Make sure you mop up that crispy garlic chilli oil with some naan. I know you’re not meant to have favourites, but this may be my favourite recipe in the book!”

- 1kg head-on and shell-on prawns (750g de-shelled) 100ml coconut oil
- 1 bulb of garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp desiccated coconut
- 10 long dried chillies (e.g. Sichuan chillies, De arbol chillies, but definitely not Thai chillies), finely chopped
- 1 tbsp chilli flakes (plus an extra tbsp if you like)
- 1 tbsp chilli powder
- 3 tbsp crispy shallots
- 1/2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp MSG
- 10 fresh curry leaves
- 2 limes, cut into wedges

1. Remove the shells and devein the prawns, keeping the heads on – they give lots of flavour to the oil and are great to suck on.
2. In a large pan, melt the coconut oil and add the garlic and desiccated coconut. Cook for 5 minutes on a medium heat, until the garlic is golden brown and crispy. Turn the heat to low and add the chopped chillies and chilli flakes, chilli powder (if using), shallots, sugar, salt and MSG. Cook for a further 2 minutes, until the oils start to look red.
3. Add the prawns to the pan and cook for 2 minutes on each side. Before flipping them over, add the fresh curry leaves.
4. Toss the prawns well in the garlic and lay them out on a platter. Add some wedges of lime and enjoy with rice or hot naan.



FRENCH ONION GNOCCHI (TIME 60 mins. SERVES 4 VEGGIE - WITH SUBS)

“When it comes to winter soups, French onion soup reigns as the undisputed king. The slow caramelization of the onions is a labour of love in itself, resulting in a deep, rich flavour that’s worth every minute. In this recipe, those beautifully caramelized onions are paired with tender gnocchi, all swimming in a hearty stock infused with the umami goodness of miso and earthy mushrooms. It’s the kind of comforting meal that warms you from the inside out. Make this completely veggie by leaving out the Worcestershire sauce.”

- 250g chestnut mushrooms, sliced
- 500g onions, thinly sliced
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 1 tbsp miso -optional
- 1 tbsp Worcester sauce – use 1 anchovy, or omit
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar – or white wine vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 6 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 4 tbsp butter
- ½ tsp dried thyme - or dried rosemary
- 150 ml dry white wine. – or chicken or vegetable stock, plus 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 500g potato gnocchi
- 100g Gruyere cheese – or any melty cheese
- 50g panko breadcrumbs
- 50g Parmesan, grated - or veggie Parmesan or any hard cheese
- Olive oil, Salt

1. In a dry pan over medium heat, cook the mushrooms with a pinch of salt for about 10 minutes. The water in the mushrooms will evaporate first, and once they’re dry and start sticking to the pan, add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and cook for an additional 3 minutes on a high heat until crispy. Transfer them to a bowl. Using the same pan (no need to clean it), cook the onions with a generous amount of oil on a medium heat for 25 minutes, until they are very caramelized. Add a tablespoon of water if the pan looks dry and continue cooking. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Crumble the vegetable stock cube into a bowl and add the miso, Worcestershire sauce and balsamic vinegar. Stir in 500ml of boiling water to dissolve the stock cube. Finely chop the garlic and add it to the onions along with the butter and thyme. Cook for 2 minutes, then deglaze with the white wine. Bring to a simmer, then add the vegetable stock mixture, cooked mushrooms and the gnocchi. Stir and cook for 10 minutes, until the sauce thickens.
3. Grate half the Gruyère and roughly chop the rest. Mix the roughly chopped cheese into the pan of gnocchi. Transfer the gnocchi mixture to a baking dish and cover it with the breadcrumbs, the grated Gruyère and the Parmesan. Bake for about 15 minutes, or until it turns golden and crispy.



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SPECIAL OFFER
WINTER
Sale

UP 40% OFF ALL ROOM TYPES

The offer runs from 26th December 2024 until 12th January 2025. – some dates are not included in the offer. – Discounts may vary across months- Offer can't be added to previous bookings. - Bookings must be made direct via www.sunborngibraltar.com. Bookings via OTA's (Online Travel Agents) will not be accepted. - Payment in advance is required on all bookings- Bookings can be modified for free to another date within 2025.

Baby It's Cold Out There!

By Bruce Lyons of Crusader Travel

As the Bishop said to the Butcher, put the boiler on standby, tell the neighbors to look after the cat – packngo!

Just this week, one of our regular clients came in and asked us to propose a holiday to use up some left-over precious holiday time, so I explored a few options for holidays offering Sun and also good value.

If you are short on cash but high on expectations – well ponder this.

La Badira, 5* adults only, member of the Leading Hotels of the World. As on the hotel's web site, "The name "Badira: as bright as the full moon" seems obvious. Playing on the principle of shadow and light, dear to the artists who have frequented Hammamet since the beginning of the 20th century, its sound inspires a poetic universe filled with serenity. Everything that makes up the essence of the hotel" This luxury hotel, with a heated swimming pool, right at the shoreline & with very good reviews too, at under £600 for a deluxe ocean view room for 13 nights on the 25th of January, what more could you want? The hotel is close to cultural & historical hotspots and only 50 minutes from Tunis and the world-famous Mosaics, The Bardo Museum. Or if you fancy adventure over culture, you could go desert bashing in locations where they filmed Star Wars, or Camel Trekking and much more. The package comes with superb flight times too. 😊 Fabulous! Shona wrote an article on her trips to Tunisia in the Twickenham Tribune edition 0417 on the 1st of November, on her experiences in this wonderful country. Well worth a read if you do feel like venturing to this North African country.



Shona's card factory reopens

By Shona Lyons

My christmas card making extravaganza was lots of fun, making lots of Christmas Tree card magnets and also quite a few boxes of cards for clients, friends and neighbours. I had lots of very nice feed back which was a lovely start to the holiday season. I took a few weeks off from my hobby and with the start of the new year, especially, as buisness at my family travel agency has picked up a pace with new and old clients starting to prepare for their holidays this year.

But card making gives me moment of pure creative mindfulness and a little break from the daily toil, so again the paint pots are coming out again and I have a new project, in that I will be making little Bon Voyage Card magnets to put with travel documents for clients travelling, thanking them for booking with us and wishing them very pleasurable and enjoyable experiences on their trips this year 😊

Pablo our new little kitten also asked me to make a card for the nice vet who gave him his second vaccination and he wanted to write and thank her for being so kind and gentle with him, so I have done that for him and he has written her a little note, which he meowed to me.

Wishing all the Twickenham Tribune Readers a very Happy New Year, may all your wishes come true and maybe you to, will receive a card from me?? Who knows? I hope so. 😊



Everything changes...

By Deep Patel

~ Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



We've all seen it haven't we? Well, if you live around where my shop is, you would know what I am talking about for sure...it's that time of year again folks...ahhh yes...you know what I mean...the street corners (no...I don't mean that type of thing...not in Twickenham thank you very much). You may well at this point be thinking, so what is this bumbling fool of a shopkeeper talking about? Well...none other than the now dull green relics of what once was practically worshipped and took pride of position in our homes...the humble Christmas tree. They say "there is a season for everything" and that goes for Christmas trees too...seems like only yesterday I gazed out from my shop door at the happy families laughing and joking, holding hands, children hopping and skipping, faces lit up with utter glee as their parents proudly carry home that which for many symbolizes the very start of the festive season...the good old Christmas tree...I had touched on this in a previous article (for those of you who are hardcore loyal readers!) but this past week, conversations in my shop between myself and many of my customers turned to this topic once again...and it's such an important reminder that these trees provide us with...and you may be thinking I mean DURING Christmas...well yes...but what I am most interested in is what the Christmas tree teaches us AFTER Christmas...that is what I find most important as a reminder...

So, the tree came into our home naked...we displayed her with such pride, adorned her lovingly with fairy lights, tinsel, baubles and even placed an angel on top of her to make her divine...that once naked tree became an object of marvel and wonder, one we took selfies with and proudly posted to our social media pages for all our friends and family to admire. That once naked tree almost became like an object of worship and adoration, then on Christmas eve, that once naked tree became a focal point even more so as we gave further importance through circling her with beautifully wrapped gifts for our loved ones ready to open on Christmas morning. This enchanting period of adoration and wonder continued each time she was gazed at by her host family for up to twelve days after Christmas, after this...what happened to that once naked, but now worshipped tree?... she was abruptly stripped of all those ornaments her host family once gave her, those ornaments that she so proudly held between her branches for so many days before, the baubles we once so lovingly and gently adorned her with snatched from her every branch now leaving her looking cold and sad, to top this off, the necklaces of twinkling tinsel we intricately coiled around her entire body were pulled off her body with one forceful tug

leaving her once again completely exposed and naked, but this time weaker, older and less green than before. As one final blow, the angel that once sat proudly on top of her like a divine symbol in her very crown was lifted off her head rendering her completely abandoned and lusterless, weak and sad, like she meant nothing at all to anyone anymore. She was then pushed over and dragged by her trunk with force across the floor, causing her to shed her needles one by one, like tear drops whilst being dragged away from what had become her home, that home where she received so much love and respect, becoming a part of the family of all those that resided there over the past few weeks...As if that wasn't enough, she was then taken out into the cold across rough ground losing more of her needles as she went, to once again face the outdoor elements of the wind, rain and sun that once nurtured her very being and helped her grow into what she had become... but this time the difference being that she was a dead relic, a symbol of the glory that she once embodied and the importance that she held in so many people's hearts and minds... then taken to her final resting place where she was dumped on the corner of the street where she once lived, alongside other trees who had been through the same experiences as her, all once the pride of the homes in which they literally lit up the lives of those who lived there. These trees now tossed onto a pile one on top of another and left to decay by those very hands which carried them into their homes and showed them a life of love and glamour, by those very hands that adorned her, by those very beings who smiled and cheered as she lit up their days, lit up their homes... and lit up their lives. In the coming days, people walking past will step over her, or even on her branches, carelessly crushing under their feet her little needles that they themselves once adorned with glitter and lights. Passing dogs will mark their territory through defecating on her. Empty drink cans and littered food packaging will now adorn her branches where previously twinkling tinsel and fairy lights once proudly sat...littered empty crisps packets will now become her ornaments where beautiful baubles once delicately hung until she is finally lifted one last time and tossed into the back of a dustbin lorry for the last of her being to be crushed alongside all the other discarded items of rubbish and waste from our homes, never to be seen again. As we look to the coming days with great hope for the new year, the joy, light, love and laughter that she inspired within us will begin to fade and be forgotten...perhaps all that will remain is a few photos of all that she once was...

So there we have it...the humble Christmas tree...what she once was...and what she after became...a reminder to us all perhaps, that with time everything changes...and that we should always remain humble through the high times of our lives and the low...as everything in this world has its season...

Have a good week dear Tribune readers, and if you happen to pass by Meet & Deep Newsagents on Hampton road in Twickenham, do pop in and say hello...

Remember...

“What goes up...must come down...stay humble...”

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...

RODENT TIPS.... MICE CAUSING YOU ISSUES?

Place empty bowls filled with white vinegar around where they come and they will stop coming without you having to harm them...you will get blessings in your life or have good karma for choosing a kind way too! This remedy also works to deter virtually any insect without harming them...like it & share it! 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”

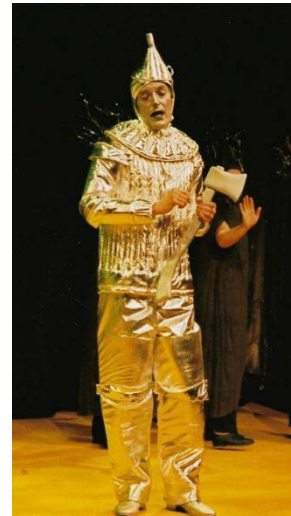


Mark Aspen's New Year Retrospective

With the 2024 pantos winding down and the new theatre season about to take to the wing(s), Mark Aspen has been reminiscing about what was happening in local theatre twenty years ago. Around Christmastide and the New Year 2005 there was quite a mixed bag.

Two decades ago, we still had the Hampton Hill Playhouse, before its grand moniker was modestly relegated to that of Theatre, fourteen years later. There was no panto in the Playhouse that year, instead we were treated to Michelle Hood's memorable *Wizard of Oz*.

There were of course pantos aplenty in that cornucopia of the performing arts that is the catchment area of The Twickenham and Richmond Tribune, but the year's end provided a very mixed bag of thespian delights. Here are three from Mark Aspen Reviews that catch the flavour.



As we came into December, in the Playhouse BROS Theatre Company had tidied up the



endgame of *Chess*, the musical collaboration between Tim Rice, writing the lyrics, and ABBA's Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus, providing the "pulsating score". In an edgy allegory of Cold War politics, two grandmasters meet across the board. The Russian grandmaster, Anatoly Sergievsky was played by Paul Kirkbright who "created an accurate portrait of the used and bemused Anatoly". Bryan Cardus's powerful singing "gave us a Freddy in many moods", the American grandmaster, Freddy Trumper (what a prescience choice of name!). Think Bobby

Fischer against Spassky or Kasparov. Meanwhile, "KGB and CIA officers within the rank and file ... sacrifice Svetlana, Anatoly's wife (Alison Birtle) in a gambit to win him back to the Soviet side". There is a sub-plot, a love story involving Florence Vassy, an Hungarian refugee (Emma Mclean-Cook). BROS stalwart, Robert Salter "played the sinister KGB officer, Molokov with energy and great stage presence". Wesley Henderson Roe's set was "a giant chessboard, with its black and white highlighted" by a bright red "Daliesque" flow down the stage. *Chess* was a grand-master of a production, stylish, humorous and highly dramatic. See www.markaspen.com/2004/11/17/chess-bros.

Amongst the best of the pantos in the New Year 2005 was The Edmundians' *Peter Pan*, an "Edwardian enchantment". The Edmundians, a much loved local group, had been providing similar family pantos from Cheray Hall, its home theatre in Whitton, for over a half century, until sadly last year. At the beginning of 2024, their theatre was sequestered and the company has tragically been forced to disband. Also with its origin in a local church, another



local drama company that has been disbanded early in 2024 was SMDG, the post-war brainchild of the late Swan Accolade holder, Jean Wood; again largely due to lack of a home theatre. There are however seeds from the past members of each group, so watch out for the Eden Players and the New Theatre Company respectively. From the embers of the members we may yet see not one Phoenix rise, but two.

Edmundians' *Peter Pan* was lucky to have the ex-Kneller Hall tutor Roger Swift's "seemingly effortless expertise" to provide its musical direction. It was an ambitious production, with its eponymous "boy who never grew up" flown in across the flies, an effect not often tackled in much bigger theatres. Its strong cast

included many well established local names. Smee was "played with much relished humour" by Sue Miller. The inimitable Matt Power not only "devoured" the role of Captain Hook, but also partnered Jackie Howting, as Mr and Mrs Darling. The outstanding scenic artist Peter Hogan crafted amazing forest and lagoon backdrops, while the late Dave Young, a man beloved by all and sorely missed, created fairy Tinkerbell, "as an elusive illusory image" in lights. *Peter Pan* was "a show of star-dust magic". See www.markaspen.com/2005/01/26/peter-pan-edm.

Later in January 2005, back in the Playhouse, Teddington Theatre Club "dipped its toe once more into Neil Simon's incisive and well-observed comedy writing". It took us across the Atlantic to the New York brownstone apartment of the just married Paul and Corrie Bratter. The (1965) period-perfect set, with its "false perspective and a massive (broken) skylight" accentuated the vast emptiness of their new home, bringing them down with a bump as Corrie "comes to terms with post-honeymoon life". Karen Heyworth-Taylor "brought a starry-eyed vivacity to the part, a Babycham effervescence"; whilst Ashley Munson, played Paul, "the young fogey, with an anxious energy". An embarrassed telephone repairman (John Spencer) and set-designer Andy Waterworth's asthmatic Delivery Man (in a "spit and a cough" came), became "caught in the crossfire of the newly-weds' argument". Clare Terry as Ethel Banks, Corrie's lonely mother, "skilfully balanced pathos and humour", when she discovered that she was falling for the eccentric Hungarian, Victor Velasco, "an emaciated gourmet and impoverished bon viveur". Terence M Cardinal rather stole the show as he "added a rubber jointed physicality" to Victor's "insouciant glee into ... serving his knichis". (See www.markaspen.com/2005/02/01/barefoot-ttc.) Then the honeymoon was over.



As was January and 2005's New Year's goodies. The Twickenham and Richmond Tribune is lucky to have outstanding theatre on its patch, including the Little Theatre Guild venues, Richmond Shakespeare Society's Mary Wallace Theatre, TTC's Hampton Hill Theatre and Questors and Putney Arts own theatres. There are the award-winning musical companies BROS and TOPS, and a host of excellent smaller companies. We have much to look forward to in 2024. Watch this space.

Photography by Jennifer Laney, BROSTC, Enzo Dobbie and Dennis Baker

Arts Richmond brings back Diana Armfield prize for drawing from observation

From Arts Richmond

Local artist Diana, still an active artist at the grand age of 104 years, said: *“All professionals, amateurs and even those who say ‘I can’t draw a line’ are welcome to submit their drawings!”*.

The prize is awarded in memory of her husband, Bernard Dunstan RA.

Diana Armfield RA NEAC has lived in Kew for many years. She and her husband Bernard both had their studios in their family home. Diana studied at the Slade School of Fine Art and the Central School of Arts and Crafts. She was Artist in Residence in Perth, Australia in 1985, and in Jackson, Wyoming, USA in 1989. She was elected to the RA the same year. She started her career in textile and wallpaper design in partnership with Roy Passano. They contributed to the 1951 Festival of Britain, and examples of their work are in the permanent collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum.



To enter the drawing contest, submit a monochrome drawing in pen, pencil, ink, or charcoal. All entries must be original drawings from observation, without the use of photographs. Entrants will be required to sign a statement confirming this. Participants can submit up to three drawings, and all entrants must be 16 years or older. There is a £5 entry fee per drawing.

Bring your masterpieces to ETNA-Arts Richmond, Room 21, 13 Rosslyn Road, Twickenham, TW1 2AR between Monday 10 February and Saturday 15 February, from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

A panel of judges will select the finalists, and the renowned Diana Armfield RA NEAC will personally choose the winner. Drawings will be showcased in an exhibition at Patch Twickenham, 42 York Street, TW1 3BW from 3 to 8 March.

Read the full [terms and conditions for the competition](#).

Arts Richmond

Arts Richmond is an independent charity with over 100 affiliated societies based in the borough. The charity provides a wide variety of services and events aimed at promoting local arts and cultural activity.

Mark your calendars for a line-up of exciting shows and events ranging from dramas and classic comedies to unique retellings and thought-provoking performances.

Find out about [upcoming events](#).



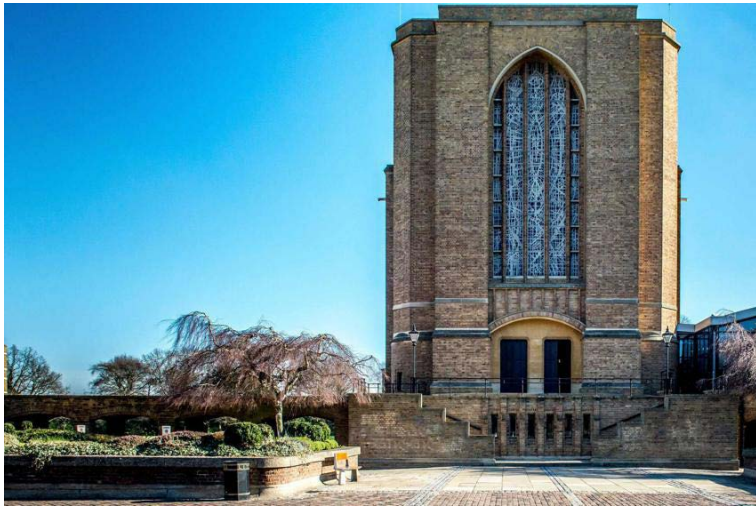
St Mary's University

St Mary's Announces Choral and Organ Scholarships

The School of Liberal and Creative Arts and the School of Theology at St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) have announced five undergraduate musical scholarships for the academic year 2025/26.

The School of Liberal and Creative Arts and the School of Theology at St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) have announced [five undergraduate musical scholarships](#) for the academic year 2025/26.

This includes four choral scholarships, one each for Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass which offer a stipend of £2,000 for one academic year.



There is one Organ scholarship, offering a stipend of £3,000 for one academic year.

As a St Mary's Choral Scholar or Organ scholar, students will have the opportunity to pursue a love of music alongside their undergraduate studies in an arts, humanities, or theological disciplines.

Speaking on the launch of these scholarships, Dean of the Faculty of Education, Theology and the Arts Kim Salmons said, *"This is a fantastic opportunity for young scholars to musically enhance their undergraduate studies. These scholarships show the commitment that St Mary's has to promoting the arts, and is aligned with our ethos of developing the whole student."*

In the first instance, students applying to study on the following degree programmes will be eligible

for the choral and organ scholarships:

- BA Acting
- BA Creative Production
- BA Creative and Professional Writing
- BA English Literature
- BA Film Making
- BA Film Studies
- BA History
- BA Liberal Arts
- BA Theology, Religion and Ethics
- BA Theological Studies
- BA Theological Studies with CertHE Philosophy.

Choral scholars will be part of expanding the musical legacy of St Mary's, taking part in music for Sunday Mass, Carol services and outreach activities. They will also expand the experience of spiritual life of St Mary's students across the University.

Organ scholars will be the first to play on the newly-restored organ in the St Mary's University Chapel, with an opportunity to direct the musical development of the Mass and other liturgical events as part of the expansion of musical events across the University.

Scholarships may be renewed for the 2026/27 academic year subject to satisfactory fulfilment of the role of choral and organ scholar, and provided the scholar satisfies the academic requirements of their course to progress into their next year of study.

Those interested in the scholarships need to have applied to one of the programmes listed above through UCAS by the 29th January 2025.

Scholars will be selected on the basis of their musical ability, and their motivation to contribute to the University community.

[Find out more about the full Choral and Organ scholarship application process](#)



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

London Repair Week, 3rd – 9th March 2025

London Repair Week is back for 2025, taking place from 3rd – 9th March. Last year the week featured more than 140 events, run by around 70 different partners, right across the city. Excitingly the week has expanded for 2025, and will also be running in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Belfast, Cardiff and County Durham.

Repair Week events will start appearing on the London Recycles Repair Week website from February onwards. In the meantime, find out more about the week and how to repair things in London [here](#).

- **WHAT:** Repair Week events
- **WHEN:** 3-9 March 2025
- **WHERE:** Various locations across London and online
- **TICKETS/COSTS:** Free and ticketed events – depends on organiser (check the website once events are listed)
- **INFORMATION:** [London Recycles | Repair Week](#)



Background:

Repair Week is designed to inspire us all to ‘think repair’ and either learn how to fix more of our stuff ourselves, or find local repair businesses or community groups who can fix them on our behalf – all in the name of saving money, helping to fight climate change and falling back in love with things we haven’t used for ages. It is run by London Recycles.

Research on repair of electrical and electronic items, conducted in 2024 by Imperial College London and [published](#) in November by ReLondon, showed that:

Londoners discarded around **£1.9 billion worth of repairable items in 2023 alone** – that’s an average of over £250 worth of items per adult

- Almost half of electricals sent for recycling could be reused and an additional 10% are estimated to only need minor repairs
- Only around half of people who have thought about repairing items actually then go ahead with the repair – which means that things like skills, cost, accessibility of repair services and more are getting in the way

 London recycles
**Repair
Week**

School children, teachers and RAF veterans raise money for Royal Star & Garter

A school in Surbiton is helping veterans in its local care home by taking part in a charity walk. Twenty pupils and teachers from Southborough High School will raise money for Royal Star & Garter when they take part in the 10km Winter Walk through London on Saturday, 25 January. The school visits the charity's Surbiton Home regularly, and hope to raise £1,500.

Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia. It also has Homes in Solihull and High Wycombe, and has launched new services reaching out into the community.

Pupils from the school in Hook Road have been visiting the Surbiton Home since last year, as they work towards their Young Leaders Award. Royal Star & Garter residents have also been to Southborough High to give talks to Year 7 students.

Headteacher Niall Smith and Senior Assistant Headteacher Dan Edwards will join pupils in the Winter Walk, along with school governor Matthew Iles. Mr Edwards said: *"The weekly visit of our Young Leader students is sincerely the highlight of their week, and I know residents take a great deal of joy from it too. To see the compassion and mutual respect grow between the young and old in our local community is truly inspirational. As a result of this proud intergenerational friendship, Southborough High School's Young Leaders, and teachers, have put themselves forward for the London Winter Walk to raise funds and support the residents and staff at Royal Star & Garter."*

Southborough High will be joined on the walk by Heather Perkins and Ryan O'Connor, who are both RAF veterans, and are also raising money for the charity.

Heather, who left the RAF in 2014 after serving nearly five years, is now Senior Partnerships Officer at Royal Star & Garter. She said: *"This is our first fundraiser of the year and we'd love to start with a bang and raise as much money as possible, to help the veterans we care for. I'm really looking forward to the Winter Walk, and joining Southborough High School and my friend Ryan on the start line. I'm very grateful for their support and hope we can raise lots of money!"*

Ryan attained the rank of Senior Aircraftman (SAC) during his five years in the RAF, before leaving in 2013. He said: *"Royal Star & Garter is a charity which helps veterans and their families, and one day that might be me and my family. So I'm really happy to be doing this for such a good cause."*

To sponsor Southborough High pupils and teachers see [HERE](#)

To sponsor Heather, see [HERE](#)

To sponsor Ryan, see [HERE](#)

Anyone interested in fundraising for Royal Star & Garter can go to www.starandgarter.org/how-you-can-help/fundraising/



St John Ambulance declares 2025 the year of holistic workplace health, warning organisations are at risk of outdated first aid approaches

England's leading first aid charity St John Ambulance has declared 2025 the year of holistic workplace health, warning that organisations must proactively address outdated approaches to first aid in the workplace to best protect their employees. As businesses reopen for the first full working week of the year, employers are being urged to recognise that the traditional concept of workplace first aid is dangerously outdated.

First aid is no longer solely about treating physical illness or injury, or maintaining emergency first aid kits, but integrating both physical and mental health first aid to holistically keep workers safe. Between 2023 and 2024, across the UK [there were 33.7 million working days lost](#) due to workplace injury or illness. Sick leave due to stress, depression or anxiety accounted for 16.4 million (about half) of those lost workdays.

Lisa Sharman, Head of Education and Commercial Training at St John Ambulance, said: *“Workplaces that do not upgrade their approach to first aid to incorporate mental health first aid, and a focus on mental wellbeing, are in significant danger of failing to provide holistic care for their employees.”*

She added, *“First aid – both physical and mental – is a core component of employee wellbeing – and in 2025, it demands a more sophisticated approach from businesses. Mental health first aid focuses on identifying, understanding, and responding to signs of mental health issues or crises, providing initial support and guidance to professional help if needed. Mental wellbeing is about proactively maintaining good mental health through practices like stress management, resilience building, and creating a supportive environment. Together, they complement each other: mental wellbeing promotes prevention and ongoing health, while mental health first aid equips people to respond effectively when issues arise.”*

“Mental and physical health are deeply interconnected. The workplace has changed dramatically in recent years, health requirements are evolving, and people’s expectations of their employer have shifted. A holistic workplace first aid strategy draws on physical health interventions, mental health support, preventative training, and integrated wellness programmes. By investing in holistic health approaches, organisations can reduce incidents and build more resilient, productive teams. As we start the new year, we are calling on organisations to adapt in order to proactively contribute to improved employee resilience, reduced workplace incidents, and enhanced overall organisational health.”

Workplace illness is a rapidly growing economic cost for England employers. Of the [£21.6 billion cost to business during 2022-2023](#), £7.1 billion was lost to workplace injury and more than twice that amount to ill health.

St John Ambulance provides [a range of physical and mental health first aid courses for the workplace](#) that adopt a uniquely practical approach to creating competent and confident workplace first aiders.

St John Ambulance is also one of the most trusted providers for first aid training, with organisations across England rating their courses at 4.9 out of 5, [based on more than 40,000 reviews](#).

The St John Ambulance [Workplace First Aid Training Courses](#) range from First Aid and Emergency First Aid at Work, to specialist training on defibrillators, paediatric first aid, annual refreshers and more.

The St John Ambulance [Mental Health First Aid Training Courses](#) range from Mental Health Awareness to Manager training, e-learning modules, Workplace First Aider and Workplace First Responder courses, helping workers to spot the signs and respond to the needs of a person experiencing a mental health issue.

Employers have a legal duty of care to ensure that employees are provided with a safe working environment. They must take reasonable care to prevent personal injury (including mental or physical harm) that may arise in the workplace. Employers can address first-aid provision in the workplace with the latest [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) guidance](#).

For more information, and to book a training course with St John Ambulance, visit <https://www.sja.org.uk/biggest-difference1>.



Red Roses Training Squad for January Camp



Head coach John Mitchell has named a 38-player training squad for the Red Roses' first camp of 2025.

The squad will assemble on Monday 13 January for three days as England begin their preparations for a 2025 campaign which includes a Guinness Women's Six Nations and home Rugby World Cup.

Prop

Hannah Botterman (Bristol Bears, 51 caps)
Sarah Bern (Bristol Bears, 66 caps)
Mackenzie Carson (Gloucester-Hartpury, 21 caps)
Kelsey Clifford (Saracens, 9 caps)
Lizzie Hanlon (Harlequins, 1 cap)
Maud Muir (Gloucester-Hartpury, 35 caps)

Hooker

Lark Atkin-Davies (Bristol Bears, 62 caps)
Amy Cokayne (Leicester Tigers, 79 caps)
Connie Powell (Harlequins, 19 caps)

Lock

Zoe Aldcroft (Gloucester-Hartpury, 58 caps)
Sarah Beckett (Gloucester-Hartpury, 35 caps)
Rosie Galligan (Saracens, 19 caps)
Lilli Ives Campion (Loughborough Lightning, 1 cap)
Abbie Ward (Bristol Bears, 69 caps)

Back Row

Georgia Brock (Gloucester-Hartpury, 2 caps)
Abi Burton (Trailfinders Women, uncapped)
Maddie Feaunati (Exeter Chiefs, 10 caps)
Sadia Kabeya (Loughborough Lightning, 18 caps)
Alex Matthews (Gloucester-Hartpury, 72 caps)
Marlie Packer (Saracens, 108 caps)
Morwenna Talling (Sale Sharks, 18 caps)

Scrum-half

Natasha Hunt (Gloucester-Hartpury, 76 caps)
Lucy Packer (Harlequins, 26 caps)
Flo Robinson (Exeter Chiefs, uncapped)

Fly-half

Holly Aitchison (Bristol Bears, 35 caps)
Zoe Harrison (Saracens, 54 caps)

Centre

Fran Goldthorp (Loughborough Lightning, uncapped)
Tatyana Heard (Gloucester-Hartpury, 26 caps)
Megan Jones (Leicester Tigers, 21 caps)
Helena Rowland (Loughborough Lightning, 34 caps)
Emily Scarratt (Loughborough Lightning, 116 caps)

Wing

Reneeqa Bonner (Bristol Bears, uncapped)
Jess Breach (Saracens, 43 caps)
Abby Dow (Trailfinders Women, 48 caps)
Claudia MacDonald (Exeter Chiefs, 32 caps)
Mia Venner (Gloucester-Hartpury, 1 cap)

Full-back

Ellie Kildunne (Harlequins, 48 caps)
Emma Sing (Gloucester-Hartpury, 6 caps)



U20 Men Name Side To Face Cambridge Rugby

Head coach Mark Mapletoft has named his first matchday squad of 2025 as his England U20 Men ready themselves for the challenge of Cambridge Rugby at Ellgia Fields this Saturday.



Sale Sharks lock Tom Burrow has been selected to captain the side in the uncapped match following on from leading the U19 Men's team in their 2024 fixtures.

19-year-old Burrow has made his Gallagher Premiership debut for Sharks this term as well as spending time on loan at Caldy RFC.

2024 World Rugby U20 Championship winners Jack Bracken (Saracens), Ben Coen and Kane James (both Exeter Chiefs) return to action in the matchday XV under Mapletoft's lead.

Further experience arrives off the replacements bench in the form of Vilikesa Sela (Bath Rugby), Olamide Sodeke (Saracens), as well as Harlequins' half-back pairing Lucas Friday and Josh Bellamy in a 27-strong squad in Cambridgeshire. U20 EPS member and Northampton Saints' Oli Scola also makes the bench after gaining loan experience with Cambridge in recent weeks.

England U20 Men return to action next Friday (17th) to face Bath United at the Recreation Ground (19:15 GMT kick-off), with tickets available free-of-charge [here](#).

Mark Mapletoft said: "19 members of the squad are set to take their first step on their journey with us in the U20s, and that has shown in the energy around the recent camps. It has been very encouraging for the staff."



"Cambridge presents an exciting and suitable challenge for our boys in the lead up to the Six Nations, with many of our players experiencing valuable game time in the Championship in the last few months."

"As a collective we're continuing to build on our principle of ownership in our first playing opportunity since the summer. As ever; enjoyment, speed and relentlessness will underpin our playing values ahead of what will be an instrumental few months for this team's development."

Tickets to England U20 Men vs. Cambridge Rugby can be purchased [here](#).

Tickets to see the reigning U20 Six Nations and world champions this February and March are available on general sale via [this link](#).

England U20 Men team to face Cambridge Rugby (includes current club, community club and U20 caps)

- 15 Jack Kinder (Leicester Tigers, Silhillians RUFC, uncapped)
- 14 Jack Bracken (Saracens, Barnet Elizabethans, 5 caps)
- 13 Jeremy Tuima (Provence, Ivybridge College Rugby, uncapped)
- 12 Nic Allison (Exeter Chiefs, Bishops Diocesan College, uncapped)
- 11 Charlie Griffin (Bath Rugby, Rosslyn Park, uncapped)
- 10 Ben Coen (Exeter Chiefs, Teignmouth RFC, 5 caps)
- 9 Dom Hanson (Sale Sharks, Stockport RFC, uncapped)

- 1 Ralph McEachran (Sale Sharks, Guildford RFC, uncapped)
- 2 Louie Gullely (Exeter Chiefs, Crediton RFC, uncapped)
- 3 Tye Raymont (Sale Sharks, West Park Leeds RFC, uncapped)
- 4 Aiden Ainsworth-Cave (Northampton Saints, Bedford Junior Blues, uncapped)
- 5 Tom Burrow (c) (Sale Sharks, Morley RUFC, uncapped)
- 6 George Timmins (Bath Rugby, Market Harborough RUFC, 2 caps)
- 7 Sam Williams (Leicester Tigers, Nottingham Corsairs RFC, uncapped)
- 8 Kane James (Exeter Chiefs, St. Peter's RFC, 9 caps)

Replacements

- 16 Oli Scola (Northampton Saints, Old Northamptonians RFC, uncapped)
- 17 Jimmy Staples (Harlequins, Worthing RFC, uncapped)
- 18 Kepu Tuipulotu (Bath Rugby, Cwmbarn RFC, uncapped)
- 19 Vilikesa Sela (Bath Rugby, Royal Wootton Bassett RFC, 9 caps)
- 20 Olamide Sodeke (Saracens, Blackheath Rugby Club, 11 caps)
- 21 Jos Gilmore (Sale Sharks, Sandbach RUFC, uncapped)
- 22 Reggie Hammick (Saracens, Saints Rugby Peregian, uncapped)
- 23 Lucas Friday (Harlequins, Bromley RFC, 6 caps)
- 24 Ollie Davies (Sale Sharks, Macclesfield Rugby Club, uncapped)
- 25 Nick Lilley (Exeter Chiefs, Ivybridge RFC, uncapped)
- 26 Campbell Ridl (Exeter Chiefs, Sharks, uncapped)
- 27 Josh Bellamy (Harlequins, Rosslyn Park, 10 caps)

Match Preview: Brentford v Plymouth

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's FA Cup third-round tie against Plymouth Argyle on Saturday (3pm kick-off GMT)

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford host Plymouth Argyle at Gtech Community Stadium in the third round of the FA Cup on Saturday afternoon (3pm kick-off GMT).

Thomas Frank's side go into the game following a 5-0 win at Southampton in the Premier League, while the Pilgrims have drawn both of their two Championship fixtures since former boss Wayne Rooney departed the club.

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

Pre-match analysis

Stephen Gillett, Playmaker Stats: Argyle's away form an increasing problem

Managerless Plymouth Argyle travel to Gtech Community Stadium to face Brentford in the third round of the FA Cup this Saturday, hoping to end a 15-game winless streak away from home this season.

While Plymouth have turned their own ground - Home Park - into one of the most formidable fortresses in the top four tiers over recent campaigns, they have fared considerably less well on their travels, and three draws and 12 losses from 15 away games across all competitions this season tells its own story.

Bolton Wanderers (35 wins) are the only team with more EFL wins at home than the Pilgrims (34) over the past three seasons, but their stuttering form away from the 'Theatre of Greens' has become an increasing problem - one that the recently departed Wayne Rooney was unable to solve.

However, Plymouth recorded a 0-0 draw at Stoke in the Championship last weekend, under the interim managerial duo of coach Kevin Nancekivell and club captain Joe Edwards, and the Pilgrims will hope to build on that clean sheet against Brentford this weekend.

Currently bottom of the Championship, Plymouth's defensive issues have been central to their difficult season so far. In total, they have shipped 53 goals from 25 league games this season, roughly in line with their xG against, and have leaked an alarming 35 goals in 14 away contests.

What makes Plymouth's defensive struggles even more sobering is that the Devon club have only managed to score three away league goals; their goal difference on the road currently stands at -32.

Brentford, on the other hand, have been in prolific form on their own patch in 2024/25 and the Bees (27 goals) remain top of the pile in the Premier League when it comes to home goals scored this season.

Although Plymouth currently rank as the joint-lowest scorers in the Championship with 24 goals, they do have a proven goalscorer in their ranks whom Brentford will need to keep a close eye on.

Former Bees striker Andre Gray may have left the Pilgrims recently after his short-term deal expired, but Morgan Whittaker remains at Plymouth and the 24-year-old's ability to score goals from long range should be noted by Thomas Frank and his team.



Named in the Championship's Team of the Season last year, Whittaker hit 19 goals and supplied eight assists for the Pilgrims in the second tier in 2023/24, and he scored more goals (six) from outside the box than any player in the division.

Much like Brentford's very own Bryan Mbeumo (whose volley against Aston Villa last season remains his only non-left-footed Premier League goal), Whittaker possesses a wand of a left peg and this has been responsible for 16 (73 per cent) of his 22 Championship goals over this season and last.

With Whittaker now back to full fitness following a foot injury that sidelined him for nearly all of December, the Brentford keeper will need to be attentive to Whittaker's prowess from remote shooting positions.

To finish on a Brentford-related stat, it is worth noting that despite losing to Arsenal 3-1 in their last outing at home, the Bees did shade the possession stats against the Gunners (50.5 per cent v 49.5 per cent).

Frank's side have now enjoyed the lion's share of possession in eight of their 12 matches at Gtech Community Stadium this term, a trend perhaps indicative of Brentford aiming to exert greater control in games on their own turf.

That said, Brentford have won all four of their home games this season when they have had an inferior possession share (versus Newcastle, Wolves, Southampton and Palace), so make of that what you will!

Scout report



Dan Long, Sky Sports: Some positivity around Plymouth post-Rooney

It had been such a long time since Plymouth had played Championship football - 13 years to be precise - that staying in the division for a second consecutive season after winning the League One title in 2022/23 had to be the club's first and most important aim last term.

And there was nothing in their results during the first half of the season that suggested they would be anywhere but in some form of fight for survival later down the line.

When Steven Schumacher decided to leave for Stoke six days before Christmas 2023, the Pilgrims were six points above the bottom three after 22 games. In truth, it was only by virtue of their strong home form, given their run of seven defeats and four draws in 11 games on the road.

The form did not change for the better after former England youth coach Ian Foster took over; 1.18 points-per-game in the first 22 under Schumacher became 0.83 points-per-game in the 18 games under the ex-Kidderminster striker and he was sacked on 1 April, with six games still to play.

"We have to balance long-term stability against short-term decisions, and we have given Ian as long as possible to see if results could improve," said Plymouth chairman Simon Hallett. "Unfortunately, that hasn't been the case, and we feel now is the right time to make a change to give us the best chance of securing survival."

Director of football Neil Dewsnip steered the ship thereafter, with three wins and a draw helping to secure survival by the margin of just one point on the final day.

Wayne Rooney then took over as manager in the summer. Many expected him to learn from his previous mistakes, change people's opinions and deliver, given the manner in which Birmingham's decision to bring him in had failed so spectacularly.

Instead, there has been a horrible sense of déjà vu - and the 4-0 thumping against Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough set the tone. Again, had it not been for the home form, Plymouth would surely have been cut adrift long ago.

17 points from the first 16 games was fine. Nothing more. But then things started to make a turn for the worse. A 6-1 hammering at Norwich preceded a 4-0 defeat to Bristol City.

"It was another big embarrassment if I am honest," said Rooney after the latter. *"Away from home, nothing I am saying to the players seems to be getting through. When we go a goal down, the attitude is to try and keep it that way, which is not a good place to be in."*

"I came to the club to improve it and still believe I can do that."

Rooney was given five more games to turn things around, but one point from a 3-3 ding-dong against Middlesbrough - with two more defeats either side - was, understandably, not deemed sufficient and, on New Year's Eve, he was sacked.

There is no getting away from the fact this season has been a struggle for Plymouth, even more so than last year. But it is far from the end of the world and their fate is far from sealed.

They play in the Championship, where a few wins during a busy period can define a season, after all. And with more than 20 games still to play, just 10 points separates them, in 24th, and Millwall in 13th.

Watch this space.

In The Dugout

Kevin Nancekivell

Devon native Kevin Nancekivell played almost all of his football in non-league with Bideford and Tiverton Town, save for a six-game spell as a professional at Plymouth during the 2000/01 season.

He returned to Argyle in 2005, taking up a role within the club's youth set-up and was first appointed caretaker in January 2013, after Carl Fletcher was sacked.

A year later, he left to take up a role in Torquay's academy but returned in May 2015. Three years later, he started to work as a first-team coach at Home Park and, in April 2019, he was named caretaker for a second time after the sacking of Derek Adams.

A third spell in temporary charge came in December 2023, after Steven Schumacher left for Stoke, followed by a fourth in April 2024 when Schumacher's successor Ian Foster was dismissed.

The 53-year-old is now in his fifth spell as caretaker across the last 12 years - and this time, he is sharing the responsibilities with club captain Joe Edwards, 34, who has been sidelined by injury since October.

The right-sided player joined Bristol City at the age of 10 in 2001 and stayed until 2013, when he joined Yeovil after a successful loan spell there in 2012.

He then moved on to Colchester, then Walsall and Plymouth in 2019. He was part of the squad that won League One in 2022/23 and has played almost 250 times for the club to date.



Brentford's Gtech Community Stadium named as the third best ground for fans in the PL

A new study has identified which Premier League stadium is the best for fans, with **Anfield** taking the top spot.

The study, conducted by sports betting and casino experts [FIRST.com](https://www.first.com), looked at five factors, including the price of a season ticket, the percentage of five-star Google reviews, and the price of a pint, and assigned each Premier League stadium a score out of 100 to determine which are the best for fans.

Anfield is the best Premier League stadium for fans, with an index score of **75.77** out of 100. Home to **Liverpool**, the stadium has a capacity of 61,276 and boasts 87% of Google reviews with a five-star rating, with 33 pubs within 1km of the venue. The average price of a season ticket here is £816.10, while a pint is £4.40.

Following in second is the home of Liverpool's big rivals **Manchester United**. **Old Trafford** has an index score of **73.01** out of 100. The famous old stadium holds up to 74,310 punters and 81% of Google reviews rated the venue five stars.

A season ticket at Old Trafford is an average of £798, with a pint costing £3, and 11 pubs located within 1km of the stadium.

The top 10 Premier League stadiums for fans

Rank	Football stadium	Football club	Index score (out of 100)
1.	Anfield	Liverpool	75.77
2.	Old Trafford	Manchester United	73.02
3.	GTech Community Stadium	Brentford	71.93
4.	City Ground	Nottingham Forest	68.38
5.	Molineux	Wolves	67.82
6.	St James' Park	Newcastle	64.43
7.	Portman Road	Ipswich	60.00
8.	Selhurst Park	Crystal Palace	59.79
9.	Etihad Stadium	Manchester City	55.60
10.	King Power Stadium	Leicester	52.18

The **GTech Community Stadium** ranks third, with an index score of **71.93** out of 100. The stadium, home to **Brentford**, has a capacity of 17,250 visitors and was found to have 76% of its Google reviews rated five stars.

A season ticket costs an average of £553.33 and a pint at the venue will set visitors back £4. For those interested in grabbing a drink before or after the game, there are 14 pubs within 1km of the stadium.

The **City Ground** is placed fourth, with an index score of **68.38** out of 100. Home to **Nottingham Forest**, the stadium has a capacity of 30,404, and 81% of Google reviews rated it five stars.

A season ticket will cost an average of £667.50 for fans, with a pint costing £5.20. There are also 11 pubs within 1km of the stadium.

Rounding out the top five is **Molineux**, with an index score of **67.82** out of 100. Home to **Wolves**, it has a capacity of 31,750 visitors, with 76% of Google reviews rated as five stars.

The club charges an average of £774.86 per season ticket, and a pint will cost fans £4. Within 1km of the stadium, there are 29 pubs for those interested in a pre or post-game drink.

Ranking sixth is **St James' Park**, with an index score of **64.43** out of 100. Home to **Newcastle**, the stadium has a capacity of 52,305, and 78% of Google reviews are rated as five stars.

A season ticket will cost fans an average of £812 with a pint costing £4.90. As well as this, there are 106 pubs within 1km of the stadium.

Portman Road ranks seventh, with an index score of **60.00** out of 100. Home of **Ipswich**, it has a capacity of 29,673, and 70% of Google reviews are five stars. The average price of a season ticket is £530.93, and a pint costs £3.50. Within 1km of Portman Road, there are 30 pubs.

Selhurst Park is placed eighth, with an index score of **59.79** out of 100. Home to **Crystal Palace**, the stadium has a capacity of 25,486, and 73.06% of Google reviews are five stars. A season ticket here will cost fans £622 on average, with the cost of a pint being £5. Within 1km, there are eight pubs situated by Selhurst Park.

The **Etihad Stadium** comes in ninth, with an index score of **55.60** out of 100. Home to champions **Manchester City**, it has a capacity of 53,400 and 77% of Google reviews are five stars. They charge an average of £848.75 per season ticket and a pint will cost fans £4.60. There are six pubs to choose from within 1km of the stadium.

The **King Power Stadium** is tenth, with an index score of **52.18** out of 100. Home to **Leicester**, this stadium has a capacity of 32,262 visitors. 74% of Google reviews are five stars, and season tickets are priced at an average of £628.07 for fans. A pint costs £5.80, and within 1km from the stadium there are seven pubs.

The bottom three Premier League stadiums for fans

London Stadium ranked as the worst Premier League stadium for football supporters with an index score of **18.94** out of 100. Home to **West Ham**, the stadium scored 4.4 out of 5 on Google and just 64% of reviews were rated five stars.

The club charges an average of £946.25 per season ticket, a pint will cost fans a rather pricey £6.30, and there are only 10 pubs within 1km of the stadium.

Ranking second from the bottom is **Craven Cottage**, with an index score of **27.83** out of 100. Home of **Fulham**, the London-based stadium only has 71% of Google reviews rating it five stars. A season ticket here will set you back an average of £1,230.77, with a pint at the venue costing £5.50. There are 11 pubs within 1km of the stadium.

Rounding out the bottom three is the **Emirates Stadium** with an index score of **31.77** out of 100. Arsenal's home ground recorded 76% of Google reviews rated as five stars and an average rating of 4.6 out of 5.

The club charge an eye-watering £1,394.47 per season ticket on average, a pint will cost fans £6.30, but within 1km of the stadium, there are 36 pubs.

Speaking on the findings, Ekaterina Boboleva, CEO of [FIRST.com](https://www.first.com) said,

“Each club’s unique combination of these factors can highlight where they place emphasis: A club with high Google ratings but high costs might focus on premium experiences, while clubs with affordable ticket and pint prices may prioritise accessibility for the average fan, and proximity to pubs shows whether clubs cater to convenience and pre/post-match culture.

“This analysis shows the importance of the fan journey—not just the 90 minutes on the pitch but the broader context of attending a match. It paints a picture of what makes football a communal, accessible, and enjoyable spectacle across the Premier League.”

Chancellor on China: Stable relationship that supports secure growth is in our national interest

Making working people across Britain secure and better off is at the forefront of the Chancellor's mind while in Beijing this weekend for a UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD).

Rachel Reeves will meet with her counterpart, Vice Premier He Lifeng, in the Chinese capital today for a series of conversations around the financial services relationship between the two countries, support for safe trade and investment and the importance of cooperation on global issues like climate change.

She will be joined by Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey, Chief Executive of the Financial Conduct Authority Nikhil Rathi, and senior representatives from some of Britain's biggest financial services firms as she seeks outcomes that benefit our businesses, support secure and resilient growth in the UK, and finance tackling shared global challenges.

The Chancellor's visit follows a meeting between Prime Minister Keir Starmer and President Xi Jinping at the G20 Summit last autumn, where they discussed deepening the economic and trade relationship shared by the UK and China, in order to yield mutual benefits, support growth, and have candid discussion on issues where our views differ. As part of this, the Chancellor is expected to raise constraints on rights and freedoms in Hong Kong and to urge China to stop its material and economic support for the Russian war effort in Ukraine.

This is part of the consistent, long term and strategic approach that the government is taking in managing the UK's relations with China, rooted in UK and global interests. The government will co-operate where it can, compete where it needs to, and challenge where it must, including to protect our values and national security as the first duty of government.

Ahead of her visit, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves said:

"Growing the economy and raising living standards is front and centre of this government's Plan for Change. That growth must be secure, resilient, and built on stable foundations, including through careful pragmatic cooperation with international partners. By finding common ground on trade and investment while being candid about our differences and upholding national security as the first duty of this government, we can build a long-term economic relationship with China that works in the national interest."

While in Beijing, the Chancellor will also visit Brompton's flagship store. The enduring British bike brand is celebrating its 50th anniversary year, and its flourishing community in the Chinese capital as its foremost market is a major success story for UK exports to China.

In addition to building on the financial services relationship, the EFD will also seek to bring down barriers that British businesses face when looking to export or expand to China, supporting them to seize growth opportunities and follow in the footsteps of brands like Brompton, and other cornerstones of British culture and industry like Jaguar Land Rover, Unilever and Diageo – three companies whom Reeves will also meet with during her visit.

Reeves is also to visit Shanghai on Sunday to engage with representatives across British and Chinese business. Alongside London, the city is a leading global financial centre which has long been important for UK-China economic and financial links, including in financial services with the landmark financial market connectivity initiative between the London Stock Exchange and the Shanghai Stock Exchange entering its sixth year.

China is the world's second largest economy and the UK's fourth largest single trading partner, with a trade relationship worth almost £113 billion, and with exports to China supporting over 455,000 jobs in the UK in 2020.



HM Treasury

World Health Organization

Trends of acute respiratory infection, including human metapneumovirus, in the Northern Hemisphere

7th January 2025

In many countries of the Northern Hemisphere, trends in acute respiratory infections increase at this time of year. These increases are typically caused by seasonal epidemics of respiratory pathogens such as seasonal influenza, RSV, and other common respiratory viruses, including hMPV, as well as mycoplasma pneumoniae. The co-circulation of multiple respiratory pathogens during the winter season can sometimes cause an increased burden on health care systems treating sick persons.

Currently, in some countries in the temperate Northern hemisphere, influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or acute respiratory infection (ARI) rates have increased in recent weeks and are above baseline levels, following usual seasonal trends. Influenza activity is elevated in many countries in Europe, Central America and the Caribbean, Western Africa, Middle Africa, and many countries across Asia, with the predominant seasonal influenza type and subtype varying by location, typical for this time of year, except during most of 2020 and 2021, when there was little influenza activity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There has been international interest in a potential increase of respiratory virus transmission in China, particularly hMPV, including suggestions of hospitals being overwhelmed. China has an established sentinel surveillance system for ILI and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI), including hMPV, and conducts routine virological surveillance for common respiratory pathogens with detailed reports published weekly on the China Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website. Surveillance and laboratory data for hMPV is not available routinely from all countries.

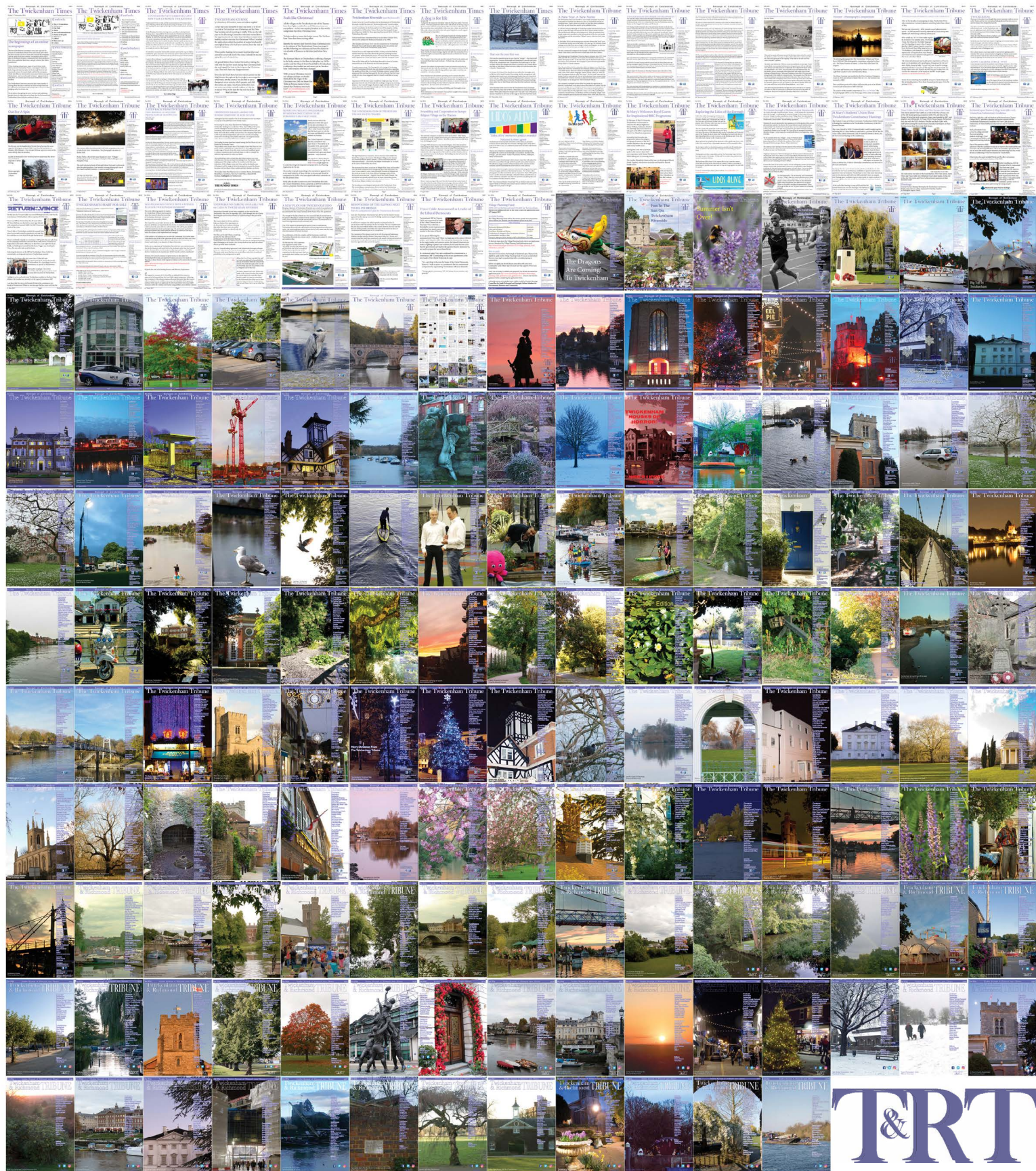
According to the most recent data on acute respiratory infections shared by the China CDC (up to 29 December 2024), there has been an upward trend of common acute respiratory infections, including those due to seasonal influenza viruses, RSV and hMPV – as expected for this time of year during the Northern Hemisphere winter. Influenza is currently the most reported cause of respiratory disease, with the highest positivity rate among all monitored pathogens for all age groups except children aged 5-14 years for whom mycoplasma pneumoniae had the highest positivity rate. SARS-CoV-2 activity remains low however with an increase in reported severe COVID-19 cases.

WHO recommends that individuals in areas where it is winter take normal precautions to prevent the spread and reduce risks posed by respiratory pathogens, especially to the most vulnerable. People with mild symptoms should stay home to avoid infecting other people and rest. People at high risk or with complicated or severe symptoms should seek medical care as soon as possible. Individuals should also consider wearing a mask in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or bent elbow, practice regular handwashing, and get recommended vaccines as per physician and local public health authorities' advice.



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