

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



31st January 2025

Scott's, Richmond
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

T&RT

Contents

TickerTape:

South Western Railway

The Tree Agency

Local Picture Postcard Column - Hampton Court Palace Artist Painted Postcards

Alan Winter

Last week's Messums Boatyard & the Three Pigeons Pub postcards

Alan Winter

Letters

Crusader Travel

The Royal Parks launches online shop, bringing the parks to your home

The Royal Parks

Orchids - Inspired by the beauty of Peru

Kew Gardens

Council Report: Full Council

James Knight

News from Holy Trinity Twickenham

Holy Trinity Twickenham

Join the Community Conversation and have your say about where you live

Richmond Council

Richmond Council urges action to protect Royal Parks Police

Richmond Council

Celebrating 60 years!

Age UK Richmond

Green Party motion supporting Natural History GCSE passed by Richmond Council

Green Party

Charity Quiz and Curry Night in Twickenham returns

Richmond Borough Mind

Richmond Council opposes government decision on Heathrow expansion

Richmond Council

Next week at Richmond Council

Discover nature with Eco-Explorers

Barnes Common

Twickers Foodie - Everyday Pressure Cooking

Alison Jee

Sunborn, Gibraltar - Valentine's Package

Council Reports: Richmond Health & Wellbeing Board

James Knight

Earthshot 2024: The Anlo Wetlands GHANA

Teresa Read

What makes this weekend the most special?

Deep Patel

Mark Aspen Review: Posh

Andrew Lawston

Mark Aspen Review: Weird Women

Gill Martin

Mark Aspen Review: Summer 1954

Eugene Broad

St Mary's Becomes TASS Delivery Site and PGA Partner

St Mary's University

Six Nations Fixtures

RFU

England Team To Play Ireland In Dublin

RFU

Match Preview: Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur

Brentford Football Club

Two tailored tax reliefs to help grow the alcohol sector take effect tomorrow

HM Treasury

Heathrow Third Runway Will Create "Thousands Of Good Jobs"

GMB Union

World Health Organization: Situation Report

WHO

Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

TickerTape - News in Brief

South Western Railway

South Western Railway (SWR) is advising customers to plan ahead of Sunday 2 and Sunday 9 February.

Engineers will complete maintenance in the Wimbledon area, affecting services across the SWR network, with many services in South West London and Surrey replaced by buses.

Network Rail engineers will finish work to renew approximately 800 metres of track, ballast, and sleepers between Wimbledon and Earlsfield.

They will also replace points (moveable sections of track that allow trains to move from one line to another) and install 100 meters of conductor rail, which powers trains.

When complete, the work will improve the reliability of the track in the area. It will also reduce the number of faults caused by rail and wheel wear and provide customers with a smoother ride as the layout of the track is improved.

Services between London Waterloo and Chessington South, Dorking and London Waterloo via Kingston, will not run. Other services will be revised and customers should check at southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey.

On **Sunday 2 February**, rail replacement bus services will operate between Clapham Junction and:

- Twickenham via Kingston
- Chessington South via Wimbledon
- Worcester Park via Wimbledon
- Surbiton (non-stop)
- Hampton Court via Surbiton
- Effingham Junction via Surbiton
- Weybridge via Surbiton

On **Sunday 9 February**, rail replacement buses will operate between Clapham Junction and:

- Chessington South via Wimbledon
- Surbiton (non-stop)
- Surbiton via Wimbledon
- Surbiton via Kingston
- Epsom via Wimbledon



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darryl parkin

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Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 286

Hampton Court Palace Artist Painted Postcards

By Alan Winter

The three postcards of Hampton Court shown today were published by W F Sedgwick, an Old Fleet Street, London based printers. They also published postcards for the Natural History Museum and Kew Gardens during the 20th Century and used Tunstall Small as a regular artist for these contracts.

Tunstall Small painted all three of this week's Hampton Court Palace postcard images. They are 1. The corner of the South Front. 2. The Wilderness in Spring Time. 3. The East End of Broad Walk and the Flower Border.



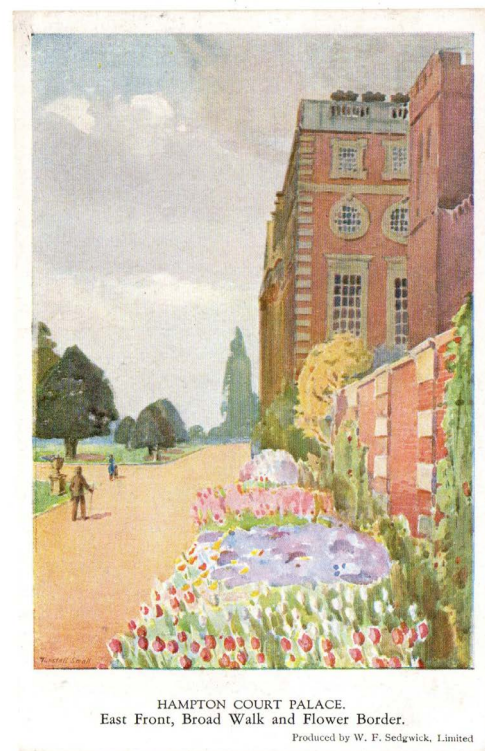
Born in Chiswick, Tunstall-Small (1888-1958) was an artist, printmaker, poster designer and author who was an expert on English Mediaeval and early Renaissance wrought iron work. He wrote several books on these subjects. Tunstall-Small (sometimes not hyphenated) designed posters for the London North Eastern Railway and held a solo exhibition in 1938. Many of these railway posters are now in the care of the National Railway Museum.



Tunstall-Small was also very knowledgeable about the brickwork and mouldings of the Tudor period.

With nearly 300 weekly columns behind me in the Tribune I am beginning to run out of postcards of our local area that I haven't already written about. So, 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!



Last week's Messums Boatyard & the Three Pigeons Pub postcards

Alan Winter

A bit more information has come in regarding last week's featured postcards of the Messums Boatyard and the Three Pigeons Pub on the River Thames near to 85 Petersham Road.

Petersham Boat Services operated from the boat houses directly next door to Messums and at one stage was in the Messums building itself. This business operated until 2000. The landing stage and moorings business was then taken over by the Puppet Theatre business in order to ensure that they would always have access to their summer mooring in the future.

The Messums building has been used in part by the Puppet Theatre since the early 1980's. The first performance on the barge was presented in 1982. Described as one of London's more elusive treasures, it is an established 55 seat theatre with comfortable seating and all modern facilities and is unique. Fully heated in the winter and cooled in the summer, it is rich in atmosphere and provides the ideal setting for the imaginative shows produced by this company.

The theatre presents marionette and rod puppet spectacles throughout the year, spending the winter in Little Venice, central London, and the summer on the River Thames. Performances at Richmond-on-Thames take place from July to October on the Puppet Theatre Barge.



Dear Sir,

Second Cross Road Memories

I enjoy the weekly postcards and photographs of the local area in the postcard column.

I am hoping that your readers may be able to help me with the following.

We have lived at 32 Second Cross Road, Twickenham since 1984.

When we moved in, John Wright's Scrapyard and Barton's Expanded Metal Company were opposite. Bishop House (formerly the Lord Napier pub) is two doors down.

The house was numbered 32 and 34 until sometime between 1881 and 1891 when the two houses were merged.

The merged house was listed as 'Blay's Shop' in the 1891 census when it was a bakery owned by James Blay. His son Charles, aged 2 years at the time, was also resident. I believe he went on to own the local motorcycle businesses.

The house contained various businesses until 1980 when it was converted to residential. The last business was an antique shop owned by a Frenchwoman called Dorothy Langlois, from 1969 - 1980.

I would be immensely interested in any memories, or photographs, of the house in its commercial years and can be contacted on tom.lowe@metronet.co.uk or the above address.

Thanks and Kind Regards, Tom Lowe

CrusaderTravel

020 8744 0474

crusadertravel.com

Escapology Experts

info@crusadertravel.com



Your friendly local Travel Agency
established in Twickenham since 1966

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



The Royal Parks launches online shop, bringing the parks to your home

The Royal Parks charity has launched a new online shop – a space dedicated to feel-good shopping, offering visitors a unique opportunity to engage with and support London’s eight Royal Parks from the comfort of their own homes.

This follows the successful opening of the first physical shop in Hyde Park and is set to expand the charity’s reach, providing a convenient way for park lovers across the country to purchase sustainable, high-quality products inspired by the parks’ nature and heritage.

The online shop features a diverse range of timeless, premium products with a modern twist – perfect for seasonal gifting. Shoppers can explore gardening items such as tools and seeds, as well as homeware, outdoor and picnic accessories, toys, food gifts, home fragrances, and books. Just like the shop in Hyde Park, the online shop supports small businesses and independent suppliers who are also committed to responsible production.



The Royal Parks’ branded collection is also available online, offering tote bags, prints, cards, and keyrings.

The first 250 orders from the online shop will receive a special gift with purchase. In addition, everyone who subscribes to The Royal Parks shop newsletter will receive 10% off their first order, as well as exclusive news and offers in the months to come.

Jo Fyfe, Deputy Commercial Director at The Royal Parks charity, said: *“We are thrilled to extend our retail presence with the launch of our online shop. This new platform allows us to share the beauty and heritage of the royal parks with a wider audience, offering an array of products that reflect the essence of these treasured green spaces. Whether you’re in London or anywhere else in the UK, you can now enjoy a piece of the parks at home.”*

Every purchase from the online shop benefits The Royal Parks charity and supports vital conservation efforts, restoration projects, learning, and volunteering activities, helping life to flourish in the heart of the city.

Explore the collection and support The Royal Parks by visiting the new online shop today at shop.royalparks.org.uk



Orchids

Inspired by the beauty of Peru

Join us for a Peruvian orchid spectacular!



Transport yourself from the cold British winter to Peru, with a vibrant floral celebration in our Princess of Wales glasshouse. Celebrate Peru, one of the most biodiverse countries on Earth, with its landscapes ranging from beaches and deserts to mountains, valleys and rainforests.

This February, explore the beauty of Peru, with stunning horticultural displays of Peruvian plants and animals, and discover some iconic landmarks of Peru like the Nazca Lines and Machu Picchu. You might even spot some alpacas, flamingos or spectacled bears amongst the blooms!

Home to 3,000 species of orchids, many of them found growing wild nowhere else on Earth, Peru is a cornucopia teeming with life and colour. The glasshouse will transform into a microcosm of this vibrant country and provide a feast for all the senses.

Orchids will also provide an opportunity to delve into some of Kew's work in Peru. This involves restoring forests, adapting agriculture to climate change and enhancing access to medicinal plants. Learn more about the vital work our scientists are doing in the field as you meander through the colourful displays and leave feeling inspired and hopeful.

Visit our Orchids After Hours event for an evening in the glasshouse after dark with entertainment from London-based artists and performers celebrating Peruvian music and culture.

Date: 1 February to 2 March 2025

Location: Princess of Wales Conservatory, Kew Gardens

More information and booking [HERE](#)

Please note that buggies are not permitted in the Princess of Wales Conservatory during Orchids.

Royal
Botanic
Gardens **Kew**

Council Report: Full Council

By James Knight

28 January 2025 – The latest meeting of Richmond Council was marked by public scrutiny, political exchanges, and the occasional administrative stumble, including an opening gaffe by Mayor Richard Pyne, who said he was the Mayor of Richmond-on-Thames. Many key issues were met with dissatisfaction from residents and opposition members alike.

Mayor's Visit to Richmond, Virginia: The mayor announced his upcoming visit to Richmond, Virginia, as part of a town twinning renewal initiative. This visit, which is set to take place in early March, will mark the first official visit from a Richmond upon Thames Mayor to its American counterpart in over two decades. Mayor Richard Pyne emphasised that the trip will be funded at his own expense, to reinforce historical ties between the two Richmonds and encouraging further cultural and economic collaboration. Plans for the visit include meetings with local officials, a ceremonial gift exchange, and discussions on expanding educational and business partnerships.

Heathrow Expansion: Cross-Party Opposition: the council reaffirmed its long-standing opposition to the proposed Heathrow Airport, expressing concerns about the environmental impact, increased air pollution, and the strain on local infrastructure. Leader Gareth Roberts highlighted the ongoing collaboration with other local authorities controlled by the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats and advocacy groups to challenge the expansion plans, ensuring that Richmond's opposition remains clear at both regional and national levels. The council pledged to continue lobbying central government and working with MPs to halt the expansion, citing its detrimental effects on residents' quality of life.

Public Questions: public scrutiny was fierce as residents raised concerns over local governance. A question on the **Richmond Town Centre Project**, by Mr Darren Munday, was left unanswered in the chamber due to his absence, with a written answer to be sent to him instead. The project, which aims to revitalise the area with new developments and infrastructure improvements, has been met with scepticism by some residents who question whether the plans are practical or merely cosmetic.

This was followed by a heated exchange regarding reassigning the lease for **Pensford Field in Kew**, with Mr Martin Baker pressing for explanations over the council's controversial decision to grant the lease to a mental health charity rather than a conservation-focused organisation. Deputy Leader Julia Neden-Watts, appearing somewhat defensive, insisted that biodiversity considerations remained paramount. However, the response failed to convince Mr Baker, whose supplementary question challenged the consistency of council decisions.

The lease's reassignment has been a particularly contentious issue, with environmental groups warning that the shift in management could jeopardise the site's long-term ecological sustainability. While the mental health charity in question, Dose of Nature, has committed to incorporating environmental stewardship into its approach, many remain unconvinced that this will match the existing efforts of the Pensford Field Environmental Trust. How this has been handled has been seen as a big mistake by the leader.

A particularly pointed moment arose when Diana, Viscountess Dunrossil, challenged Leader Gareth Roberts over an email from Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley, suggesting prior commitments had been made regarding the lease. Councillor Roberts, while denying any firm commitment, did little to dispel concerns over transparency, instead offering vague assurances about differing recollections of the meeting in question. This response, while diplomatic, seemed to do little to allay the concerns of those present, with murmurs of discontent audible throughout the chamber.

Financial transparency was also in the spotlight as Mr Gary Evans questioned the use of revenue generated from the controversial **Burtons Road Low Traffic Neighbourhood**. While Councillor Alexander Ehmann detailed the various projects funded indirectly by the revenue, he was reluctant to confirm a specific reinvestment figure for the ward itself. This evasiveness was not lost on Mr Evans, whose supplementary question highlighted an apparent £1.65 million underspend in the transport budget. The lack of clarity regarding how these funds

were allocated has been a recurring issue, with many residents questioning whether their neighbourhoods are receiving their fair share of infrastructure investment.

Member Questions: the council faced a number of questions from members, covering finance, infrastructure, education, policing, and environmental concerns, but with only a few Green Party Members to act as an opposition, most of the questions were softball ones submitted by Liberal Democrat Councillors designed to try and show the council in a good light.

Councillor McLeod sought an update on the **Winter Fuel Grant Scheme**, questioning how many borough households had received assistance. Councillor Robin Brown responded that approximately 1,360 households had benefited from a £170 payment directly to their utility providers, with an additional 909 pensioners receiving £100 each in supplementary payments. However, he cautioned that growing demand indicated an increasing risk of fuel poverty among vulnerable residents.

Councillor Warlow pressed the council on its scrutiny of **developers' viability assessments** for planning applications, particularly regarding affordable housing commitments. Councillor Julia Neden-Watts stated that all such assessments are reviewed by expert officers and, where necessary, external consultants. However, she acknowledged that the process remains complex and suggested further member training on viability assessments to improve oversight.

Councillor O'Shea raised concerns over the collapsed towpath/**flood defence** between Richmond Lock and Kew Gardens car park, asking when repairs would commence. Councillor Ehmann assured members that investigations had been completed, with a preferred design solution identified and funding expected to be approved in February. He stated that work was expected to begin in the spring, pending final consents from the relevant agencies. There are concerns about the condition of the flood barriers across the borough with known defects in the barrier by Marble Hill House.

Councillor Chard requested an update on the financial implications of the **increase in National Insurance contributions** and how these might impact council services. Councillor Brown noted that additional government grants would cover some direct costs for the council and its associated entities. However, he expressed concern about the impact on council contractors and suppliers, particularly in adult social care, where increased costs could lead to service reductions.

Councillor Warren inquired about the council's response to the Education Committee's inquiry into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (**SEND**) **services**. Councillor Penny Frost confirmed that a submission had been made, advocating for a statutory framework for SEND support, increased funding, and better training for mainstream school staff to facilitate inclusion.

Councillor Wren highlighted the **failure of electric vehicle charging points** for the borough's street sweepers, which resulted in a temporary return to diesel vehicles. Councillor Neden-Watts acknowledged the issue, explaining that infrastructure limitations had led to charging failures. She emphasised the need for a long-term backup charging strategy to prevent similar disruptions in the future.

Councillor Bennett raised concerns about the council's new **Air Quality Action Plan**, questioning whether the plan contained clear, measurable targets for emissions reductions. He also remarked that Councillor Ehmann always appeared angry when responding to questions and humorously suggested that he needed to offer him a 'manly hug' to ease his frustration. While the comment drew laughter in the chamber, Councillor Bennett emphasised that his main concern remained the lack of concrete targets in the plan. Councillor Ehmann defended the plan, stating that it aligns with World Health Organization standards, but opposition members pressed for clearer accountability measures and specific emission reduction goals.

Councillor Millum questioned the impact of the **Right to Buy policy** on local social housing stock. Councillor Millard revealed that 4,148 homes had been lost under the scheme since its introduction. He said the council was lobbying central government to devolve the power over the right to buy to the Mayor of London and local councils – and if they had the power, Richmond would end the right to buy in the borough.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme Changes: councillors approved changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, aimed at simplifying the process for claimants and ensuring that the most vulnerable residents receive necessary support. The revised scheme moves towards a banded system to align with Universal Credit changes, making it easier for claimants to understand their entitlements. Councillor Niki Crookdake raised concerns over the impact of the current system, highlighting that nearly 7,000 summonses had been issued in the past year to residents struggling with council tax arrears. She urged the council to improve outreach efforts to ensure eligible residents are aware of available reductions and to explore ways to prevent unnecessary legal actions against those in financial distress.

Councillor Expenses: A notable development from the meeting was the approval of new expenses and allowances for councillors. The council voted to introduce a special responsibility allowance for the newly created role of Lead Member for Richmond Town Centre, set at £9,547 per year, alongside a £2,387 allowance for the newly appointed Sanctuary Champion, a role focused on refugee support. While some councillors justified the expenses as necessary for effective governance and community engagement, others questioned whether such payments were justifiable amidst ongoing budgetary pressures and rising local taxation.

An aspect of councillor allowances that a veil is often drawn over is the existence of the Liberal Democrat national **'tithe' system**. Under this arrangement, Liberal Democrat councillors must contribute 10% of their pre-tax allowances to the local party, on pain of being deselected if they do not. While party members have defended this as a means of supporting grassroots campaigning and community initiatives, critics argue that it effectively reduces the financial independence of elected representatives and raises ethical questions about the use of public funds to bolster party infrastructure.

Motions: Moving on to the section our councillors seem to enjoy the most: motions for debate. At this point, the councillors struggling to stay awake suddenly become energised. The first motion, moved by Councillor Chas Warlow, urged the government to implement the long-delayed **Natural History GCSE**, citing its importance in reconnecting young people with the environment. The motion passed overwhelmingly, with members noting the inexplicable delays under both Conservative and Labour governments. Councillor Warlow spoke passionately about educating young people on biodiversity, climate change, and conservation, arguing that such knowledge would be essential in shaping future policies and attitudes towards the natural world.

The second motion, moved by Councillor Gareth Roberts, opposed the **potential disbandment of the Royal Parks Police** amid wider concerns over Metropolitan Police funding. Roberts described the possibility of losing specialist officers as akin to "leaving an entire borough unpoliced." With Richmond Park and Bushy Park covering vast areas, members questioned whether existing local policing teams could effectively manage crime and emergencies in such complex environments. The motion was passed with strong support, with additional calls for the Mayor of London to ensure adequate resourcing for public safety in all parks across the city. However, many saw the Mayor's threat to cut the Royal Parks Police as a classic 'Marching Band' cut—a symbolic proposal to provoke opposition rather than a serious financial measure.

The third motion, introduced by Councillor Michael Wilson, focused on increasing mental health spending in the borough. Wilson highlighted the growing demand for **mental health services**, particularly among young people, and emphasised the strain on existing resources. He stated that the NHS only provides a third of the funding for mental health treatment compared to what other parts of London receive. What wasn't commented upon is that when there are imbalances of that magnitude, the Leader of the Council should address the issue personally with the NHS, as their position as council leader means they have more influence with the NHS. Unfortunately for residents, the leader is now preoccupied with his role as a member of the Greater London Assembly, and ensuring Richmond gets its fair share of mental health funding is something that has fallen to the wayside.

A Night of Unresolved Tensions: While the council meeting demonstrated a commitment to addressing local issues, leadership's responses often felt unsatisfactory to residents and opposition councillors.

News from Holy Trinity Twickenham

Holy Trinity Quiz Night - Save the Date

We are looking forward to the return of one of Holy Trinity's favourite social events, the Big Quiz on Saturday 1 March. Put the date in your diary and look out for more information in upcoming newsletters.

Spring Term Gardening Socials

Come and be part of the Holy Trinity gardening gang during their spring meets. Gardening mornings will be running from 10.30am-12.30pm on the following Saturdays (please bring along gloves and tools if you have them):

February 8th, March 1, March 29, 17 May

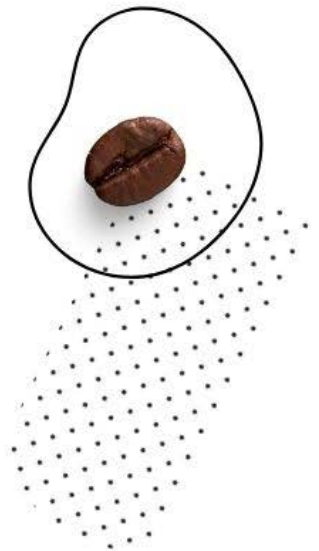


THE GREEN POP UP CAFE

THURSDAYS

10.30-12.00

The Green Room
Holy Trinity Twickenham
Twickenham Green
TW2 5TS



A community space where
everyone is welcome to pop in
for refreshments, friendly chat and activities



HOLY TRINITY TWICKENHAM

Join the Community Conversation and have your say about where you live

From Richmond Council

If you have something to say about where you live, come along to the latest round of Community Conversations kicking off next month.

These events are a chance for ward councillors to hear what matters most to residents and businesses and share ideas about the future of local areas.

Councillor Nancy Baldwin, Spokesperson for Communities, Equalities and the Voluntary Sector, said: *“I am pleased to announce the 2025 round of Community Conversations. These gatherings are a fantastic opportunity for us to come together, share our ideas, and work collaboratively to shape the future of our communities. I encourage everyone to be a part of the conversation, whether that is online or in person, and share their views with their ward councillors.”*

You can [view the dates for the 2025 Community Conversation events](#).

The Community Conversations will be held as hybrid events, with residents able to join in person or watch an online stream of the event and submit questions via a digital platform. Attendance is free, but registration is essential. Instructions for joining online will be sent in advance of the event via email.

If you are attending in person, you will be able to meet your councillors and view information stalls between 6.30 and 7pm. From 7 to 9pm a Q&A will take place for those attending in person and online.



You can [read more about the Community Conversation events](#) and [sign up to our mailing list to receive event details](#), including the registration link straight to your inbox.

Richmond Council urges action to protect Royal Parks Police

From Richmond Council

We are raising urgent concerns over the future of the Royal Parks Police following warnings from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner that specialist units, including the Royal Parks Police, could face cuts as part of efforts to address a £450 million budget shortfall.

The Royal Parks Police, responsible for policing London's iconic Royal Parks—including Richmond Park and Bushy Park—are under threat as the Metropolitan Police looks to reduce its workforce. The Police Commissioner has warned that up to 2,000 officers and specialist teams may be cut to meet efficiency targets.

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Leader of Richmond Council, said scrapping the Royal Parks Police would be a huge mistake: *“Losing the Royal Parks Police would put the safety of Richmond Park and Bushy Park at serious risk. These parks are home to diverse wildlife and attract thousands of visitors daily. Without dedicated police teams, both people and animals would be left vulnerable to crime and anti-social behaviour.”*



“Richmond Park and Bushy Park together span over 3,600 acres—the size of a small London borough. The Royal Parks Police have unique expertise in managing these vast spaces, and it’s unrealistic to expect our already overstretched Safer Neighbourhood Teams to take on these responsibilities.”

“The government must step in now to protect specialist services like the Royal Parks Police and ensure the safety of our green spaces.”

Richmond Park and Bushy Park are two of the largest green spaces in London. The Royal Parks Police, made up of 77 officers, patrol these areas, addressing issues from wildlife protection to more serious crime. Their specialist knowledge is crucial for maintaining order in such vast and complex environments.

In response to the threat of cuts, we passed a motion on Tuesday 28 January reaffirming our commitment to working with local MPs and other stakeholders to urge the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, the Mayor of London, and the government to secure the funding needed to protect the Royal Parks Police. We also voiced our determination to safeguard other specialist police units at risk, stressing the need to maintain safety across the borough's green spaces.

Celebrating 60 years!

2025 is a Remarkable Year for Age UK Richmond!

This year marks 60 incredible years of supporting older people in Richmond upon Thames. To celebrate this momentous milestone, we're thrilled to be planning to host a series of fun events and campaigns throughout the year to raise awareness of our work, reach more people, and raise much-needed funds.

How You Can Get Involved This Year

We'd love for the community to join us in making this anniversary truly unforgettable. Over the year, we will be sending you updates on the different events and activities taking place.

Things You Can Do Now:

Share our story and help us reach more people

Spread the word about the incredible ways we support older people in Richmond upon Thames.

- **Practical Advice & Support**

We provide valuable information and advice, assist with finances and grants, offer support to ease loneliness, and help individuals transition from hospital to home.

- **Maintaining Independence at Home**

From looking after homes and gardens to fixing and repairing, we're here to help. We even take care of household chores, collect prescriptions, and do the shopping – always going the extra mile to ensure comfort and peace of mind.

- **Staying Active & Connected**

We help older people stay physically active and socially engaged. Why not invite someone to explore the activities on offer at our three Social & Wellbeing Centres or within the community?

Make Sure You Stay in the Loop

Don't miss out and follow us on BlueSky, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Like, comment, and share our posts to reach even more people! Find us at [@AgeUKRichmond](#).

Invite others to receive our weekly e-bulletin so they can stay informed about our events and initiatives. They will need to click [here](#) to subscribe

Join the Fun

We are planning a few exciting events happening throughout the year. We would love you to take part. We will share more details about our celebration party and quiz night nearer the time.

Make a Difference

You will have a chance to support our fundraising appeal in December (more details to follow) or consider leaving a lasting legacy by including Age UK Richmond in your will (Registered Charity No. 1084211). Click [here](#) for more information.

Volunteer Your Time

Share your skills, lend a hand, and join our team of amazing volunteers. To view our current opportunities, click [here](#)

Together, let's celebrate 60 years of making a difference.

Thank you for your continued support – we couldn't do it without you!



Green Party motion supporting Natural History GCSE passed by Richmond Council

At the Council meeting on Tuesday 28 January 2025, Richmond Council passed what is believed to be the first motion passed by a local authority in support of the proposed GCSE in Natural History. Educators, naturalists and campaigners say that the new qualification is a vital way of helping young people to develop an understanding of the natural world and to face the future challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

The GCSE was supposed to have been started being taught in schools in 2025, but the final step in the process to introduce it – a public consultation – has been delayed indefinitely. Deputy leader of the Opposition, Chas Warlow, proposed the motion which called on the Council to urge the Department of Education to continue the process to introduce the qualification without further delay and accused the government of “kicking the idea into the long grass”.

At a time when the twin challenges of climate change and nature depletion are proving to be deep concerns for young people – a recent Save the Children survey of 3,000 children found that 70 per cent said they are worried about the world they will inherit and 60 per cent felt that climate change and inequality are affecting their generation’s mental health – the GCSE will give them the confidence to face up to these issues and find practical solutions.

In the words of Mary Colwell, the naturalist and broadcaster who initiated the idea of the GCSE in Natural History: *“We need a nature-literate society to tackle the challenges of the future. We must make the right decisions in all sectors of society to meet the needs of the fast-emerging green economy, and for the health and well-being of citizens. One way to do that is to embed nature education into the heart of education.”*



The motion was passed unanimously.

Charity Quiz and Curry Night in Twickenham returns

From Richmond Borough Mind

Don't miss out on Richmond Borough Mind's Quiz and Curry Night on Friday 28 February at St Stephen's Church.

Residents are welcome to join this evening event on your own or as part of a team to enjoy a delicious curry and take part in a fun quiz. A bar and amazing raffle prizes will be available.

Money raised will go towards Richmond Borough Mind's work supporting mental health services in Richmond.

- **Date:** Friday 28 February 2025. Doors open at 6.30pm
- **Price:** £20 per person
- **Location:** St Stephen's Church, Twickenham, TW1 2PD

[Find out more and book tickets](#)



If you are able to donate a prize to the raffle, contact the organisers at fundraising@rbmind.org.

Richmond Council opposes government decision on Heathrow expansion

From Richmond Council

The Leader of Richmond Council has today reaffirmed the Council's long-standing opposition to the expansion of Heathrow Airport, including the construction of a third runway, following the latest announcement from the Chancellor.

Councillor Gareth Roberts stressed the significant harm the expansion would cause to local communities, already heavily affected by flight paths.

“Richmond Council has been clear and consistent in its stance: a third runway at Heathrow would have catastrophic consequences for our borough and for London. The environmental damage, increased noise pollution, and disruption to local communities are simply too high a price to pay, especially when viable alternatives exist that can support sustainable economic growth without compromising our health or our future.”

“We fully recognise Heathrow's importance to the local and national economy, but a better Heathrow does not have to mean a bigger Heathrow. Growth should never come at the expense of the wellbeing of our communities or the health of our planet. The airport has yet to present a credible plan showing how its expansion would align with the UK's net-zero targets. It continues to ignore the ongoing issues of noise and air pollution that are severely affecting our residents.”



“The Chancellor's decision to prioritise short-term economic growth over the long-term health of our communities and the environment is deeply disappointing. This move fails to consider our climate commitments and disregards the devastating impact a third runway would have on families and households in our borough and across London.”

Richmond Council has long warned about the challenges posed by Heathrow's expansion and remains committed to working with the government to protect local communities and the environment from its harmful consequences.

Councillor Roberts is actively reconvening a cross-party coalition of councils, local MPs, Assembly Members, and community groups to oppose the renewed push for expansion at Heathrow. *“This coalition was instrumental in overturning the government's approval of a third runway in 2020, and by uniting once again, we will continue to fight for the protection of our borough and the wider London community from the adverse effects of this expansion.”*

Last month, Richmond Council [restated its opposition](#) to a third runway and updated its policy position on Heathrow's planned developments, including opposing any increase in night flights, challenging airspace modernisation, and supporting renewed efforts on easterly alternation.

Next week at Richmond Council

On Monday evening, the **Transport and Air Quality Committee** meets. The agenda includes (1) Kew Controlled Parking Zone review, (2) the programme of planned highway works for 2025/26, (3) the Budget report and fees and charges – parking charges are going up by 10% in most cases (4) Bike hangers (5) quarterly (6) mid-year corporate performance report monitoring report. The meeting commences at 7.00 pm, at York House, Twickenham.

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

On Thursday, the **Education and Children's Services Committee** will meet to discuss (1) admission arrangements for community schools (2) the directorate 2025/26 budget report, (3) the schools budget report 2025/26, (4) school maintenance capital allocations. The meeting commences at 7.00 pm, at York House, Twickenham.

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

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

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

Alternatively, you can communicate your views to your elected representatives using the WriteToThem service provided by MySociety, which allows you to find and message them quickly and easily. Follow the link [HERE](#)

Discover nature with Eco-Explorers

From Barnes Common

If you're between 10 and 14 years old, join the Eco-Explorers, learn about the wildlife all around us and take steps to protect it!

This year, local charity Barnes Common is expanding its Eco-Explorers programme to encourage 10 to 14 year olds to take part in nature-related activities throughout the year, not just on a one-off basis. The programme will also offer participants the chance to meet other young people who are similarly interested in the environment.

You can now kick off your Eco-Explorers journey by registering for a bird box building workshop. The full programme is packed with adventures, including a bat walk, a tree trail and a week-long summer camp, which will open for registration in the upcoming months. Find out more about [Eco-Explorers](#).

Bird box building workshop

- **Date:** Tuesday 18 February 2025
- **Time:** 10.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30 to 3.30pm
- **Price:** From £9.92
- **Location:** Vine Road Pavilion, Vine Road Recreation Ground, Barnes, SW13 0NE

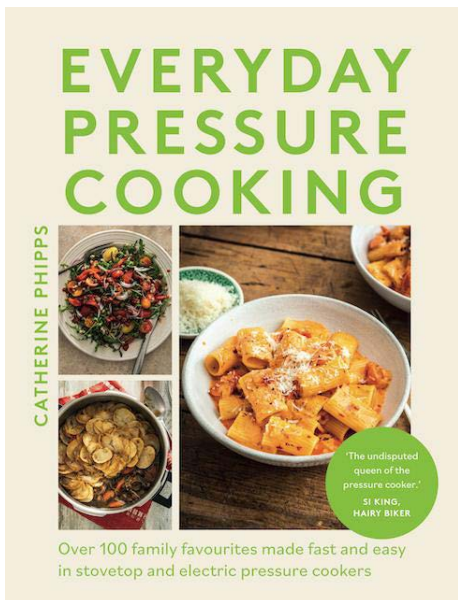
[Book tickets](#)

All proceeds from ticket sales will support Barnes Common's conservation work and future learning events.



Everyday Pressure Cooking

Catherine Phipps is often described as the undisputed 'Queen of Pressure Cooking', and I totally agree. Catherine has taken a form of cooking that many people (including me) have been far too scared to try, and encouraged us to try this classic, speedy and energy saving way to cook. She's already a well known cookery book writer (**Citrus** and **Leaf** are both fabulous) and her latest book **Everyday Pressure Cooking**, published by **Quadrille** (£22 hardback) is the ideal excuse to invest in a pressure cooker - or dust off that one that might be languishing in a cupboard!



Everyday Pressure Cooking puts the pressure cooker at the heart of simple mealtime solutions, cutting down the time spent toiling the stove. She explains the basics of using this fabulous bit of kit in a clear, accessible way, and offers family-friendly meals. Catherine's recipes are delicious and work every time, giving fast, nutritious dishes when you have only minutes, rather than hours, to spare. From flavour-packed meals such as Chicken, Pumpkin and Peanut Soup, Tortilla Lasagne and Beetroot and Paneer Curry, to weekend feasts like Roast Lamb with Red Wine and Rosemary Gravy and Whole Roasted Squash, the pressure cooker will become the hardest-working item in your kitchen! With over 100 recipes for fish, vegetables, meat, pulses, grains as well as puddings, this is the go-to cookbook for all pressure cooker owners.

I've actually started using my pressure cooker thanks to this book.

Here are a couple of recipes to persuade you either to invest in one or get yours out!

TOMATO AND LENTIL SOUP Serves 4

"By far the most popular recipe in my last book was the Buttery Tomato Soup. Here I wanted to create something similar in terms of very fast prep time with the same comfort factor. We are a household that loves spice, so this recipe – inspired by one from Madhur Jaffrey in her excellent Curry Easy – does it for us. And it happens to be even faster in terms of prep and cooking! You don't have to be bound by any of these flavours – it is an excellent receptacle for any spice or curry paste you might want to use up."

- 2 x 400g (14oz) cans tomatoes or the fresh equivalent, puréed
- 100g (3½oz) red lentils, rinsed
- 1 onion, halved
- 10g (¼ oz) piece of ginger, roughly chopped
- 4 garlic cloves
- 1 tbsp your favourite curry powder
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 litre (35fl oz) vegetable or chicken stock or water
- 1 small bunch of coriander (cilantro)
- Sea salt
- A couple of green chillies, finely sliced, to serve

FOR THE TADKA (OPTIONAL)

- 1 tbsp coconut or olive oil
- 15 curry leaves
- 1 tsp mustard seeds or cumin seeds



Put everything except the coriander and chillies in your pressure cooker. Cut the coriander leaves from the stems and add the stems to the cooker along with plenty of salt, reserving the leaves. Bring to high pressure, then adjust the heat until it is just high enough to maintain the pressure. Cook for 5 minutes, then remove from

the heat and leave to drop pressure naturally.

Blitz the soup using a jug or stick blender and make sure it is piping hot. Pour into bowls.

If making the tadka, heat the coconut or olive oil in a small frying pan (skillet) and add the curry leaves and seeds. As soon as they start to crackle and pop, remove from the heat and pour in a swirl over the bowls. Serve with the coriander leaves and some sliced green chillies for extra heat.

BRAISED FISH WITH CHICKPEAS Serves 4

“This is a one-pot, but cooked in two parts. The chickpeas are cooked in a sauce first to allow the flavours to develop, then the fish is added and cooked quickly but gently on top. It takes moments to put together and just a few minutes to cook. I usually use thick pieces of loin or steaks here, but I have also tested this with a whole white fish, trimmed to fit, and it braised perfectly in the time. It is more fiddly to serve, but more of a show-stopper.”

- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra to drizzle
- 1 red onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- A few sprigs of rosemary
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- 2 tsp North African-style spice mix, or ras-el-hanout
- 500g (1lb 2oz) cooked chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- 100ml (3½ fl oz) white wine
- 400g (14oz) fresh or canned tomatoes, puréed
- 4 white fish steaks or thick pieces of loin, eg hake, halibut, cod or coley (or one whole fish, cleaned and gutted)
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 200g (7oz) baby leaf spinach (optional)
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Finely chopped flat-leaf parsley, to serve (optional)

Heat your pressure cooker and add the oil. When hot, add the red onion, sauté for a few minutes, just to get it started, then stir in the garlic, rosemary, chilli flakes and spice mix. Add the chickpeas, then pour in the white wine and tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper and stir to make sure the base of the cooker is completely deglazed.

Close the lid and bring up to high pressure. Adjust the heat so it is just high enough to maintain the pressure, then cook for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and fast release.

Season the fish and, if cooking a whole one, cut a few slashes into the flesh. Arrange on top of the chickpeas and close the lid. Bring up to low pressure, cook for 2 minutes, then remove from the heat and leave to drop pressure for another 3 minutes. Release the remaining pressure.

Remove the fish from the pan. Squeeze over some lemon juice and stir the zest into the chickpeas. If using spinach, add now and stir until wilted into the sauce. Divide the chickpeas between bowls and top each one with a fish steak (or present a whole fish at the table). Drizzle with a little more olive oil and garnish with chopped parsley, if you like.



*Credit: Everyday Pressure Cooking by Catherine Phipps (Quadrille, £22),
Photography © Andrew Hayes-Watkins*

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Council Reports: Richmond Health & Wellbeing Board

Slow Progress on Key Issues

By James Knight

At its latest meeting, the Richmond Health & Wellbeing Board wrestled with the borough's approach to mental health, immunisation policies, and environmental issues. Chaired by Councillor Piers Allen, the gathering, held at York House, was characterised by a blend of optimism and frustration. Despite a full agenda, the meeting did little to alleviate concerns regarding the slow progress in tackling the borough's fundamental health and wellbeing challenges. Identifying the speakers proved to be difficult, as the Chair, Piers Allen, rarely used full names, and the cameras did not consistently capture the place names.

Public Calls for Reform: In the public participation slot Wendy McElroy raised the ongoing issue of restrictive practices in mental health care, including excessive use of force and involuntary treatment, which she argued run counter to international human rights guidance. She pointed to Seni's Law—a hard-fought piece of legislation introduced in 2018 following the death of Seni Lewis, who was fatally restrained by police. Despite its passage, reports still indicate a disturbingly high rate of face-down restraints in mental health settings. Councillor Allen acknowledged the concerns but directed the meeting back to its scheduled agenda.

Vaccination Issues: A significant portion of the meeting focused on the borough's vaccination strategy, particularly regarding COVID-19 and flu immunisations. Councillor Nancy Baldwin expressed concerns about the limited choice of vaccines for individuals who have previously experienced adverse reactions, which had affected her personally. Director of Public Health Shannon Katiyo replied that the local authority has limited influence in this matter, as NHS England governs immunisation policy.

Some committee members voiced disappointment that the local authority was not pushing harder for flexibility in vaccine provision. Baldwin noted that individuals with contraindications to the standard vaccines had no options, effectively barring them from immunisation. Health representatives admitted that national policy dictates supply but promised to escalate the concerns to NHS England.

Further issues were raised regarding the borough's cervical cancer screening rates and childhood immunisation uptake. While the meeting acknowledged that Richmond generally outperforms national averages, some councillors expressed concerns that engagement efforts failed to reach key demographics, such as pregnant women and lower-income residents. Public health officials conceded that more work was needed to tailor outreach efforts to these communities but offered little tangible solutions. A request for clearer comparative data was met with assurances that such information would be incorporated in future reports.

Long Waits for Child Neurodevelopment Assessments: Ian Dodds, the joint Director of Children's Services, raised the issue of long delays. He disclosed that 252 children are on the waiting list, and it can take up to four years for them to be assessed. The answer did not instil confidence that the NHS Integrated Care Board would adequately address the matter. Critics have highlighted a developing crisis in Richmond and have emphasised the need for the council's senior leadership to become more involved in the issue – due to its enormous impact on vulnerable residents.

Children's Safeguarding Report: Ian Dodds, the Joint Director of Children's Services, reported that the Safeguarding Children Partnership has prioritised four issues this year. The first is parental vulnerability that affects children, encompassing domestic violence, parental mental health concerns, and substance abuse. The second priority focuses on the mental health of young children, as Richmond currently has the highest rate of self-harm among those aged 10 to 15, and the third highest for those aged 14 to 19, alongside elevated rates of risk-taking behaviours, such as drug use. The third priority addresses risks to children outside the home, including child sexual abuse or exploitation by criminal gangs. The fourth priority is child neglect, following two serious incidents in the borough. The council found that the toolkit used by staff to identify neglect was not applied consistently, partly due to staff turnover, which required a renewed focus on this area.

SEND Funding Crisis: The council continues to spend £3 million more each year on education for children

with SEND than what is allocated in the education budget. As a result, once the final payment from the Government's safety valve agreements is received (£20 million in total), the council's deficit will increase again on 1 April 2025. Ian Dodds pointed out that the council is in an unsustainable financial position. Currently, there are 2,000 children with an Education, Care, and Health Plan and another 3,000 without a plan but with special educational needs. Cllr Bennett highlighted that delays in building the new special schools have resulted in a shortfall of 72 places, which he described as "just awful." Dodds responded that the Department of Education has now postponed one of the specialist schools in Barnes to 2027. Consequently, they have had to create temporary classrooms across the borough to accommodate the children.

Environmental and Air Quality Concerns: the Board's update on its 'Live Well' initiative—addressing adult immunisation, air quality, and climate change—also failed to instil confidence. Public health officials mentioned 'progress' in reducing emissions, yet Councillor Richard Bennett questioned whether key policies were genuinely delivering tangible results. He remarked that while actions were outlined, their actual impact on emissions remained ambiguous.

A particular area of criticism was the borough's anti-idling campaign, which, despite being widely publicised, was noticeably absent from the Board's report. Councillor Baldwin suggested a more coordinated approach to communicating with the public and voluntary sector to ensure engagement with climate-related initiatives. Several members expressed concerns that while individual projects were underway, the overall strategy lacked cohesion, making it difficult to assess Richmond's progress in tackling air pollution and climate change.

Furthermore, members expressed concerns regarding the insufficient engagement with community-led environmental initiatives. Projects like Barnes Common's Community BlueScapes Project have been implementing grassroots efforts to enhance air quality and promote urban greening; however, their contributions were overlooked in the official reporting. Catherine Stelling urged the Board to integrate more community partnerships into its strategy, cautioning that local expertise was being disregarded in favour of top-down initiatives that lacked public support.

A Pattern of Deferral? Despite the Board's insistence that progress was being made, a recurring theme throughout the meeting was the promise of 'future updates' rather than solutions being implemented. Whether regarding vaccination accessibility, mental health reform, or environmental initiatives, little definitive action was taken.

For instance, the Board's discussion on air quality highlighted that while measures were being taken to monitor pollution levels, there was a lack of accountability in enforcing policies designed to curb emissions. Councillor Bennett pressed for more transparency in tracking the success of existing programs, questioning whether the borough was prioritising short-term projects over long-term structural improvements.

Similarly, while officials acknowledged that pregnant women had the lowest vaccine uptake rates, there was no clear commitment to a specific outreach program targeting this demographic. Instead, vague assurances were made about 'considering new strategies'—a phrase that seemed to encapsulate the overall tone of the meeting.

Looking Ahead: Will Richmond Deliver? The Richmond Health & Wellbeing Board appears to recognise the right questions but struggles to deliver satisfactory answers. For residents facing pressing healthcare and well-being challenges, polite acknowledgements and assurances of further discussion may do little to instil confidence that vulnerable people in the borough are getting the services they deserve from their council.

With another meeting scheduled in the coming months, the pressure will be on the Board to demonstrate that it can offer more than mere procedural box-ticking. The public is growing increasingly frustrated with a system that seems more concerned with discussing problems than actually solving them. Richmond's challenges—whether in mental health services, immunisation policies, or environmental reform—are not insurmountable, but they necessitate decisive leadership. The question remains: will the Board rise to the occasion, or will it continue to postpone action in favour of further deliberation?

You can read the committee papers and view the webcast by following the link [HERE](#)

Earthshot 2024

The Anlo Wetlands GHANA

Teresa Read

The Earthshot Prize searches worldwide for innovations that aim to repair Planet Earth. Awards of £1 million are made each year for solutions to assist in this work. Categories are Protect and Restore Nature, Clean our Air, Revive our Oceans, Build a Waste-free World and Fix Our Climate.

Over one million mangroves have been planted in the Anlo Wetlands, in Ghana, since early 2024, using seawater to restore degraded ecosystems, creating artificial saltmarshes and wetlands.

Wetlands, such as mangroves, and other forested coastal areas, act as windbreaks providing natural infrastructure to help protect nearby populated areas by reducing erosion and absorbing the impact of storm surge.

Mangroves are powerful carbon sinks, storing carbon 3-5 times more efficiently than terrestrial forests - and habitats for biodiversity. The project aims to lock in around two million tonnes of carbon dioxide over forty years, and at the same time, protect the habitats of sea turtles, migratory birds and West African manatees.

The project is led by Earthshot Prize Nominee Seawater Solutions in partnership with Terraformation, the Ghanaian government and local communities (2024)

By restoring these vital ecosystems, Seawater Solutions demonstrates how innovative solutions can tackle climate change, support local communities, and safeguard biodiversity.



Further information about Ghana <https://www.worldinfozone.com/country.php?country=Ghana> an international project (1997 onwards)

What makes this weekend the most special?

By Deep Patel

~Life through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper~



Ahhh so that's January ticked off the list, how was it for you? A cracking brand new start gone well with 100% improvements in every facet of your life or has it been another month of disappointment after disappointment with each next day more disappointing than the previous (be honest)? Well, as we finish month 1 of 2025, the top conversation topic of the week in my shop has been exactly this. You may (or may not) be surprised to hear that the majority of customers I spoke to said the latter...well it made me feel better knowing that I was not the only one to feel that everything had been going wrong for me this year...but then I read a headline in one of the newspapers this past week giving me a glimmer of hope that maybe...just maybe things were going to change for me because from this weekend onwards and for the first few days of February there will be an alignment of 6 major planets in our solar system, this happens only once every 144 years, astrologically this can bring huge shifts in our futures and despite having had a rocky start to the year, things could supposedly still get better for all of us (amen to that)...ALSO this week we had coinciding with this celestial, planetary alignment phenomenon the Chinese new year...and this year is the year of the snake...the snake in this capacity is related to the element of fire which in turn symbolizes intelligence, passion, energy and transformation... and these just so happen to ALL be things that I myself lack! On top of this, in India RIGHT NOW is the Maha-Kumbh-Mela (the biggest religious gathering in the world, dedicated to Lord Shiva, the Hindu God responsible for destroying negativity from life, and this particular festival happens in the way it does this year only once every twelve years...so yet ANOTHER auspicious sign...to add to the magic, this weekend sees the end of January (of the hardest months of the year) and the start of February (the month of luuuurve)...

Sitting behind my shop counter thinking about all this, I realised that with this quadruple auspicious whammy of the astrological-planet-alignment-chinese-new-year-snake-Hindu-Maha-Kumbh-Mela-Valentines-love...it really didn't matter if we had experienced a hard start to the year and "everything had been going wrong" as the true magic is happening RIGHT NOW and the four afore mentioned events that are happening right now will provide any of with the support and energies of the universe that we may require still in order to change things in our lives and perhaps make 2025 the best year yet?...

If any of you happen to be passing by Meet & Deep Newsagents on Hampton Road, TW2 5QB...do pop in any say hello now won't you.

Remember...

"The opportunities are there...it's what you do with them that makes the difference..."

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...

STOP FOXES & RATS 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 deterrent 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: thedeepatel@gmail.com or join my Facebook page: "INSECT LOVERS UNITE"

Posh

by Laura Wade

Questors Production at the Judi Dench Playhouse, Ealing until 1st February

How does one pull off a successful dinner at The Riot Club? Guy Bellingfield telephones the House of Lords to ask his godfather's experience. This exclusive Oxford University dining club has been in abeyance following unfavourable coverage in the press.

Into the private dining room of a rural gastropub, complete with chandeliers, stern portrait of Winston Churchill, and a large table set for a banquet, swaggers a collection of confident young men, uniformly in tail-coats and polished shoes, intent on having the night of their lives, the ten members of The Riot Club. (Any similarity to The Bullingdon Club may be purely coincidental.)



Bellingfield is anxious to rehabilitate the club, since he harbours ambitions to be its president. Guy Jack, in an energetic performance, introduces the play's themes succinctly: arrogant young men behaving disgracefully, believing themselves to be beyond reproach and immune from consequences.

The Riot Club has booked The Bull's Head under a false name, but they broadly agree to keep their antics under control to avoid media backlash. Some seethe at these restrictions. Resentment becomes a recurring theme, and there's even tension that the Greek student Dimitri (a brilliantly restrained Omar Aga) is one of their number, despite him offering them a jaunt in his family's private jet. This simmering undercurrent fuels the play's tension. It seems inevitable that events will escalate and get out of hand, as potential catalysts are either defused, or stoke the bubbling rage.

All heap scorn on Toby "Tubs" Maitland. Pascal Orzabal gives a spirited physical performance as he moves from dejection, through the humiliating ritual of "dreggsing", and briefly appears to incarnate Lord Riot himself. The half-finished carcass of the nine-bird roast (being short of a guinea-fowl) lingers on stage for the rest of the play like Chekov's gun, as the landlord grows ever more exasperated. James Rushbrooke's performance is impressive as he alternates between bluster and wheedling, trying to keep some kind of control.



Posh's strength lies in its characterisation. The Riot Club is repellent as a group, but individually some are charming, some are intelligent, and some are witty, and all the actors embody their characters magnificently. Director Gary R. Reid's frenetic pace never lets up as *Posh* becomes funny, shocking, and alarming by turns.

Read Andrew Lawston's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/01/25/posh

Photography by Carla Evans

Weird Women

by Genni Trickett

Teddington Theatre Club, at the Studio, Hampton Hill Theatre until 1st February

The setting couldn't be more reassuringly normal, cosy sitting room full of comfy cushions and crochet, a scene of domestic calm, with net curtains and a Welsh dresser crammed with family photographs. Wellington boots line up by a coat stand festooned with sensible tweed, a cloth cap and plastic rain hat favoured by older ladies protecting their perms.

But look carefully and you'll spot dreamcatchers, corn dollies and crystal balls. Scattered on the floor are books on tarot and psychic ability. Are these clues to the drama about to unfold in the old Lancashire home of three sisters who reunite for their mother's funeral? How can homely turn into horror?



The women, in their fifties, have all chosen different paths in life. The oldest, Lilian (Isabelle Crean), is a God-fearing country vicar's wife; middle sister Barbie (Anthea Barter) wears long green velvet and a tiara, and dabbles in more alternative beliefs; youngest is single mum Diana (Claire Morrissey), who has escaped to London with her two daughters. United in grief, but divided in ambition and character, the sisters also have a dark secret that binds them together.

Family tensions bubble to the surface after the wake for their 85 year old mother Dot, whose Christian funeral has just been conducted by Lilian's overbearing bible-bashing husband Eddie (Michael Andrew). The calves-foot jelly stands wobbling in the kitchen along with leftover parkin ginger cake as they await the arrival of Lilian's son Zack (Jasper Loxton), braving a Lancashire lightning storm after a flight from his Hong Kong home.

Excellent casting also includes Diana's two daughters, the rumbustious blonde Cassie (September Taliana-Carey) who exalts in shellac nail polish, bold tattoos and bargain Prada shoes and her elder quiet-as-a-dormouse sister Morgan (Jenny Doran), who will surprise us all.

Director Cat Lamin ensures fear, menace and tension are ratcheted up in this atmospheric production. Tricky special effects had us gripping our seats ... while sickening violence brought gasps from the audience.



What a tremendous build up to the explosive conclusion!

Read Gill Martin's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/01/29/weird-women

Photography by Sarah J. Carter



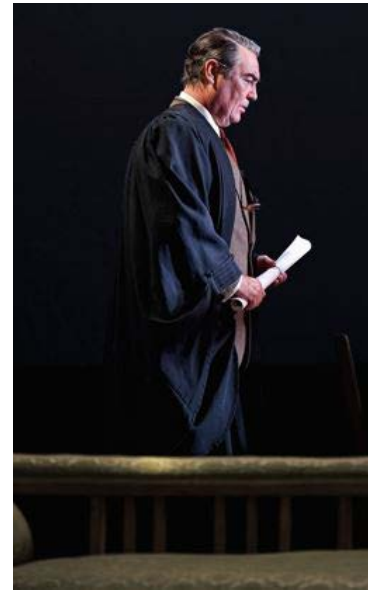
Summer 1954

by Terrance Rattigan

Theatre Royal Bath at Richmond Theatre, then on tour until 15th February

The controlled emotions of Rattigan's characters imbue his work with arching poignancy, and *Summer 1954* is a masterful bittersweet slice of life. It brings together the single act *The Browning Version* and a playlet from *Separate Tables*, each a study of a man forced to confront his own inadequacies.

In *Table Number Seven*, set in a private hotel with its ordered ambiance and hushed conversations, an aged bachelor, Major Pollock (more Walter Mitty than Colonel Mustard) is discovered by domineering Mrs Railton-Bell to have recently pleaded guilty before local magistrates to importuning young men. She summons the well-heeled residents to a meeting where she chides, charms, and cajoles them to call for Major Pollock's eviction. But she underestimates the magisterial hotel manager Miss Cooper, who gives Pollock the empathic support he needs to emerge from behind his psychological facade.



The esteemed Dame Siân Phillips plays Railton-Bell with sparkling crystalline wit. Despite having entered her 90s, she performs with an energy that can only come with a lifetime's experience.

In *The Browning Version*, an ailing Classics teacher, Crocker-Harris takes early retirement after faithful service, yet staff and pupils alike revile him as soulless. Gifted a copy of *Agamemnon* by a pupil, Crocker-Harris is overcome with emotion, which spirals into full existential crisis, while his manipulative wife twists the knife. Ironically, it is a hedonistic fellow teacher, who is cuckolding him, who helps Crocker-Harris to find self-respect.

Nathaniel Parker, in the major roles as both Pollock and Crocker-Harris, delivers his characters with effortless sincerity. Likewise, Lolita Chakrabarti displays an emotional range, being heroine and villain as Cooper and as Millie Crocker-Harris.

The whole cast act with authenticity and ease, portraying a lightness without being overly-sentimental. Their interactions feel natural and fluid, never stilted or forced.

Summer 1954 is as masterful as stagecraft can get. Mike Britton's revolving set is almost a character in itself, offering kinetic dimension to the production. Period appropriate details (like a 1950s pram) have been meticulously sourced. Bella Kear's soundscape is subtly omnipresent, especially the ambient music, which imperceptibly escalates tension. It feels reminiscent of Nordic influences, so it was no surprise the music was scored by the Icelander, Valgeir Sigurdsson.

Direction from James Dacre and acting from the entire cast creates a masterful weave of momentous occasions into life's tapestries. A well-constructed and considered production like this seldom comes around.

Read Eugene Broad's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/01/28/summer-1954

Photography by Manuel Harlan



St Mary's University

St Mary's Becomes TASS Delivery Site and PGA Partner

St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) is proud to announce that it has been officially designated as a TASS (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) delivery site. Along with this, St Mary's will also be working with Crystal Palace FC and The FA, as part of the club's Professional Game Academy (PGA).

St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) is proud to announce that it has been officially designated as a [TASS \(Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme\)](#) delivery site. This recognition marks an exciting new chapter in the University's commitment to supporting elite athletes in their athletic pursuits.



TASS is a national scheme designed to support athletes. The programme offers support for athletes in a wide range of sports, and includes access to performance sport services, a medical scheme and mental health support.

As a TASS delivery site, St Mary's will now provide enhanced support for talented athletes, offering them access to world-class sports facilities and sports science experts. Services include performance nutrition, sport psychology, strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, and personal development support. The University's strong tradition of sporting excellence, coupled with its innovative approach to student-athlete development, makes it an ideal partner for this prestigious programme. The TASS programme is widely regarded as one of the best sports scholarship schemes in the UK, and St Mary's is excited to be a part of this vital initiative.

Along with being TASS' newest delivery site, St Mary's will also be working with Crystal Palace FC and The FA, as part of the club's [Professional Game Academy](#) (PGA). PGAs form a core component of TASS' overall support to high-level athletes. Women's Super League (WSL) team [Crystal Palace Women FC](#) have been awarded a PGA license this season, having won the Women's Championship last year to gain promotion. The PGA's play a key role in identifying and developing talented players with the aim of increasing the number of quality footballers that meet the demands of the professional game.

In the last four years, the number of women and girls playing football has increased by 56%. With practitioners based at the Crystal Palace training ground, players will have the opportunity to visit St Mary's in order to show them the educational opportunities available.

As part of TASS's work with the PGAs, St Mary's is delivering strength and conditioning and nutrition support to top players aged 14 to 18 in the Crystal Palace Women's academy. This will primarily focus on athletes who are most likely to progress to the professional game, but at the same time create a pathway into university.

St Mary's has long been a leader in providing exceptional support for athletes. Its high-performance sports facilities, including the state-of-the-art Sports Hall, Performance Education Centre (PEC), and dedicated sports science services, are vital components of the University's comprehensive athlete development programme.

Jen Fairfield, the Sport Performance Manager at St Mary's said, *"This is an exciting process which is invaluable to our mission to promote the value of linking higher education with young and upcoming athletes. Our aim is to help create a dual-pathway and to facilitate an environment that is supportive of talented female footballers and challenges them to be their best."*

Speaking on the initiative, Crystal Palace Women's Academy Manager Lewis Craig said, *"We are happy to link up with St Mary's University as part of the TASS provision provided by the FA and the PGA in our first year as an academy. The provision provides us with practitioners across strength and conditioning and nutrition for the 2024/25 season, working across our U16 and U21 age groups, providing additional high-performance support for over 40 players."*

Andrew Reid-Smith, the Head of Sport at St Mary's said, *"It's wonderful to be partnering with TASS as a delivery site, and as part of the PGA setup. As a multi-sport delivery site this presents an exciting opportunity to work with even more talented young performers, and their national governing bodies. The expert practitioners will be supporting athletes from a range of sports, including our England Athletics Talent Hub athletes, to flourish and excel."*

National Director of TASS, Guy Taylor said, *"We are delighted to welcome St Mary's University to the TASS network of delivery sites. Their commitment to supporting athletes at the top of the England Pathway aligns perfectly with our mission, and we look forward to working together."*



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

FIXTURES

2025

— GMT —

ROUND 1	FRA 	FRI 31 JAN 20:15	 WAL	ROUND 1
	SCO 	SAT 1 FEB 14:15	 ITA	
	IRE 	SAT 1 FEB 16:45	 ENG	
ROUND 2	ITA 	SAT 8 FEB 14:15	 WAL	ROUND 2
	ENG 	SAT 8 FEB 16:45	 FRA	
	SCO 	SUN 9 FEB 15:00	 IRE	
ROUND 3	WAL 	SAT 22 FEB 14:15	 IRE	ROUND 3
	ENG 	SAT 22 FEB 16:45	 SCO	
	ITA 	SUN 23 FEB 15:00	 FRA	
ROUND 4	IRE 	SAT 8 MAR 14:15	 FRA	ROUND 4
	SCO 	SAT 8 MAR 16:45	 WAL	
	ENG 	SUN 9 MAR 15:00	 ITA	
ROUND 5	ITA 	SAT 15 MAR 14:15	 IRE	ROUND 5
	WAL 	SAT 15 MAR 16:45	 ENG	
	FRA 	SAT 15 MAR 20:00	 SCO	

IHG[®]

HOTELS & RESORTS

England Team To Play Ireland In Dublin

England men's head coach Steve Borthwick has named his team to play Ireland in Dublin on Saturday 1 February (kick-off 4.45pm, live on ITV1).



Maro Itoje will captain England for the first time, becoming the 136th player to do so since Frederick Stokes led the team in 1871. He will be supported by vice-captain Ellis Genge.

Saturday's Test match will be the 143rd meeting between England and Ireland since their first encounter in 1875.

In the front row, Luke Cowan-Dickie is named at hooker alongside Genge at loosehead prop and Will Stuart at tighthead. In the second row, Itoje partners George Martin. The back row sees Tom Curry on the blindside flank, his twin-brother Ben Curry at openside and Ben Earl at No.8.

In the half-backs, Alex Mitchell starts at scrum-half with Marcus Smith at 10. The midfield sees Henry Slade named at inside centre with Ollie Lawrence at 13.

In the back three, Cadan Murley will make his England debut on the left wing, with Tommy Freeman on the right and Freddie Steward at full-back, rounding off the starting line-up.

Theo Dan, Fin Baxter, Joe Heyes, Ollie Chessum, Chandler Cunningham-South, Tom Willis, Harry Randall and Fin Smith take their places on a 6-2 split replacements bench.

"We're looking forward to the challenge of facing the tournament favourites," said Borthwick.

"We know it'll be a tough contest against a team that's very familiar with each other. We'll need to work tirelessly and maintain our discipline from the first whistle to the last. England versus Ireland in Dublin is a huge occasion, and we'll be ready to face it head-on."

IRELAND v ENGLAND

Saturday 1 February 2025, Aviva Stadium, Dublin

Kick-off: 4.45pm (GMT)

- 15. Freddie Steward (Leicester Tigers, 35 caps)
- 14. Tommy Freeman (Northampton Saints, 15 caps)
- 13. Ollie Lawrence (Bath Rugby, 31 caps)
- 12. Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs, 69 caps)
- 11. Cadan Murley (Harlequins, uncapped)
- 10. Marcus Smith (Harlequins, 39 caps)
- 9. Alex Mitchell (Northampton Saints, 18 caps)

Replacements:

- 16. Theo Dan (Saracens, 16 caps)
- 17. Fin Baxter (Harlequins, 6 caps)
- 18. Joe Heyes (Leicester Tigers, 7 caps)
- 19. Ollie Chessum (Leicester Tigers, 23 caps)

- 1. Ellis Genge (Bristol Bears, 66 caps) – vice-captain
- 2. Luke Cowan-Dickie (Sale Sharks, 44 caps)
- 3. Will Stuart (Bath Rugby, 45 caps)
- 4. Maro Itoje (Saracens, 88 caps) – captain
- 5. George Martin (Leicester Tigers, 19 caps)
- 6. Tom Curry (Sale Sharks, 56 caps)
- 7. Ben Curry (Sale Sharks, 6 caps)
- 8. Ben Earl (Saracens, 37 caps)

- 20. Chandler Cunningham-South (Harlequins, 11 caps)
- 21. Tom Willis (Saracens, 1 cap)
- 22. Harry Randall (Bristol Bears, 11 caps)
- 23. Fin Smith (Northampton Saints, 6 caps)

Match Preview: Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's Premier League game against Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday 2 February at Gtech Community Stadium (2pm kick-off GMT)

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford will be hoping to make it successive Premier League victories when Tottenham Hotspur visit Gtech Community Stadium on Sunday 2 February (2pm kick-off GMT).

The west Londoners won 2-1 at Crystal Palace last time out while Ange Postecoglou's Spurs lost at home to Leicester City by the same scoreline.

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

Pre-match Analysis

Richard Cole, Playmaker Stats: Brentford must be wary of Tottenham's threat from wide areas

According to Premier Injuries, Spurs are the only team with more players unavailable (12) than Brentford (10) in the Premier League right now.

In many ways, Spurs are the Brentford of last season: a team that is far below the points tally their collective talents have deserved.

And while Thomas Frank will no doubt not mind that the likes of Dominic Solanke, James Maddison and Brennan Johnson are out for this fixture – the north London side still possesses plenty of threat going forward.



Chief among them is perhaps the influential Dejan Kulusevski. The Swedish international has publicly come out in defence of his manager recently and his on-field contributions show that he thrives under Ange Postecoglou.

Only Cole Palmer has managed more key passes (63) and more shot-creating actions (130) than Kulusevski this season with the 24-year-old contributing 58 key passes and 113 shot-creating actions respectively.

And if you discount the aforementioned injured trio of Solanke, Maddison, and Johnson, Kulusevski is the club's top scorer in the Premier League alongside captain Son Heung-min with six goals.

Speaking of the South Korean, he is always a threat. As well as his six goals this season, Son has six assists (joint-sixth in the league, one assist fewer than Mikkel Damsgaard) meaning that he has the joint-most goal contributions for Spurs (12), the same number as James Maddison (eight goals, four assists).

A lot of Spurs' threat comes through the wide areas and in particular on the right meaning that the Bees' left side will need to be well-prepared.

On the right side, Pedro Porro has been one of the Premier League's stand-out full-backs/wing-backs this campaign. The Spaniard has sent in the most accurate crosses this season (35) although that is a stat he

currently shares with four other players: Andreas Pereira, Antonee Robinson, Dwight McNeil and Trent Alexander-Armstrong.

The Bees may want to make sure their left side is ready for the threat of Porro, especially considering that the player is also eighth in the league for passes into the penalty area (43).

This season, Postecoglou's outfit have particularly struggled on their travels after losing seven on the road – only bottom-of-the-league Southampton have suffered more defeats away from home (10).

And while Brentford have yet to win at home in the Premier League since defeating Newcastle United 4-2 back in early December there is still only one team (Liverpool, eight) with more top-flight wins than Brentford (seven) so far this season.

Scout Report

Dan Long, Sky Sports: Spurs still battling on four fronts



There's no getting away from the fact that Tottenham's Premier League season, and in particular the last couple of months of it, has been a disappointment.

In the last 11 Premier League games, Spurs have been on the losing side on eight occasions. They have taken the lead six times, but only won one game. There has been only one clean sheet and 24 goals conceded. The current run of seven without a victory is their longest top-flight winless record since they failed to win nine between May and October 2008.

Only Southampton are below them in the form table over the last 10 games.

Sunday's defeat to Leicester means that, for the first time since a loss to Notts County in 1912, Spurs lost at home against a team that had lost their last seven league games in a row.

They were booed off the pitch in north London after the latest defeat and, speaking to Sky Sports after the game, Postecoglou said "a fair chunk" of people think he should be sacked as a result of the recent run of form.

But there are factors that might well play into the hands of the Australian.

Firstly, and most importantly, Tottenham's injury record this term has done them absolutely no favours. At the time of writing, the following players are out of action: Dominic Solanke, Guglielmo Vicario, Destiny Udogie, Brennan Johnson, Timo Werner, Djed Spence, Micky van de Ven, Wilson Odobert and Cristian Romero.

James Maddison and Richarlison both scored in their most recent appearances, but both - along with Pape Matar Sarr - are walking wounded.

Football.london's Rob Guest framed it well in Hot off the Press: *"If you took nine or 10 players out of the Liverpool or Arsenal team, that would impact them as well."*

Regardless of what some might consider to be the beginnings of an unlikely relegation battle Spurs currently find themselves in, there are still opportunities to make the season a success elsewhere – and next week will be crucial.

On Thursday 6 February, they face Liverpool in the Carabao Cup semi-final second leg, a game they go into with a 1-0 aggregate lead.

On Sunday 9 February, they travel to Aston Villa in the fourth round of the FA Cup. And after four wins in their first seven league phase games, their Europa League journey continues, too.

“The players are committed to what we’re doing. That’s important to me. I believe in it,” said Postecoglou after the Leicester defeat. *“This is as low as we’ve been this year but in the next three months we can do something really special. The players believe that.”*

“Right now it’s hard to visualise that with our circumstances. Just look at the absences, but they will be back. All these things aren’t allowing us to get any momentum. When those things change, we can make an impact.”

“I’ll correct myself: I don’t usually win things, I always win things in my second year,” was Postecoglou’s defiant response to a question during an interview with Sky Sports on pre-season comments where he said he “usually” wins trophies in his second season.

Will he continue that record by helping Spurs lift a trophy for the first time in 17 years?

In the Dugout

Ange Postecoglou

Ange Postecoglou started out in management in his native Australia with South Melbourne, where he had spent his entire playing career.

After two years as assistant, he was handed the head coach role in 1996 and spent another four successful years at the club, before leaving to work with the Australia U17s and U20s national teams for the next seven years.

Having failed to guide the U20s to the 2007 World Cup in Canada, he left the national set-up to coach Greek outfit Panachaiki and later Whittlesea Zebras (now Brunswick Juventus) back home.

In 2009, he took over at Brisbane Roar and won the A-League Championship in 2010/11 and 2011/12, before moving on to Melbourne Victory, where he was unable to produce a similar level of success.

Postecoglou’s tenure at AAMI Park concluded prematurely, however, as he was appointed head coach of the senior Australia men’s team in October 2013.

He oversaw a reasonably encouraging group-stage campaign at the 2014 World Cup and guided the Socceroos to the Asian Cup the following year.

Australia later qualified for the 2018 World Cup, but Postecoglou resigned shortly afterwards to join Yokohama F Marinos of the Japanese J-League. He would go on to guide the club to its first title in 15 years in 2019.

He then went on to have two incredible years at Celtic, with whom he won an unbelievable 83 of his 113 games in charge on the way to two Scottish Premiership titles, one Scottish Cup and two Scottish League Cups.

The 59-year-old arrived in north London in the summer of 2023, just over two months after Antonio Conte left the club, and has the 12th-highest win ratio of any Spurs manager, with 48.7 per cent.



Two tailored tax reliefs to help grow the alcohol sector take effect tomorrow

A package of support to help the alcohol sector to grow will tomorrow (1 February) take effect. Draught relief has increased to knock 1p off duty on draught products whilst small producer relief – a measure to encourage craft brewers to innovate - is becoming more generous.

Together these tax cuts are worth £85 million and are tailored to support the alcohol sector to innovate and grow. The increase to draught relief, first announced at Autumn Budget, will affect around three in five of all alcoholic drinks sold in pubs, and represents the first duty cut on a pint of beer in 10 years.

This is part of the Prime Minister's Plan for Change that will rebuild Britain for the future by boosting economic growth.

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray, said: *“Our pubs and brewers are an essential part the fabric of the UK and our brilliant high streets. Through draught relief, small producer relief, and expanding market access for smaller brewers, we will help boost sector growth and deliver our Plan for Change to put more money in working people's pockets.”*

Richard Naisby, Chair of the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA), said: *“The Government's increased investment in Draught Relief means that draught beer sold in our community pubs has a lower rate of alcohol duty than beer sold in supermarkets and should encourage more people to support their local. At the same time by going further on Small Producer Relief, the Government can help small breweries to compete and grow their businesses.*

“While these support schemes have kick started innovation and enabled small breweries to set up, many breweries struggle to get access to the vital pubs market so they can expand. The Government's review will examine ways to address these access issues and ensure that landlords can access the beers their customers want and small breweries can grow.”

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury James Murray visited the Queen Edith pub in Cambridge to welcome the incoming tax relief alongside Andy Slee, Chief Executive of the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) and Richard Naisby, Chair of SIBA and Founder and Managing Director of the Milton Brewery.

The Minister discussed during his visit in depth various growth measures to help the sector, including an increase in the generosity of small producer relief. This cuts duty for the UK's smallest, most innovative breweries and cider makers by up to more than 90%, further supporting growth.

James Murray also discussed how the government will consult in the future to encourage small brewers to retain and expand their access to UK pubs, maximising drinkers' choice and supporting local economic growth, including through provisions to enable more 'guest beers'.

Fees charged by the Spirit Drinks Verification Scheme will be reduced in the future and mandatory duty stamps for spirits will come to an end from 1 May 2025. This will help distilleries, including Scotch whisky makers, badge their products, increasing their chances to sell their products through pubs and supermarkets.

As announced at the Autumn Budget, alcohol duty has today also been increased in line with inflation. This helps sure up public finances and helps to fund the investment needed to grow the economy and fund public services.



HM Treasury

Heathrow Third Runway Will Create “Thousands Of Good Jobs” – GMB

A third runway at Heathrow will bring thousands of good skilled jobs, GMB Union has said today [Wednesday 29 January].

The construction of a new runway, announced by the Chancellor today, will represent a significant boost for both the local and national economy the union added.

Perry Phillips, GMB Regional Organiser, said:

“The Heathrow third runway expansion has finally been cleared for take-off. We welcome the Government’s decision and the thousands of good, unionised jobs and apprenticeships the project will create.

“The project represents a huge boost for construction skills in this country, which will be vital for future infrastructure projects. A new runway will enable the UK to capitalise on Heathrow’s importance as the world’s most connected airport, generating billions for the economy and demonstrating the Government’s commitment to delivering growth.

“Let’s get on and build it, without further delay.”



World Health Organization

Situation Report

28 January 2025

Multi-country outbreak of mpox

This is the 46th situation report for the multi-country outbreak of mpox, which provides details on the latest epidemiological trends, including reports of new travel-related cases of mpox due to clade Ib MPXV.

The outbreak of clade Ib monkeypox virus (MPXV) continues predominantly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Uganda, with new travel-related cases identified in previously unaffected countries.

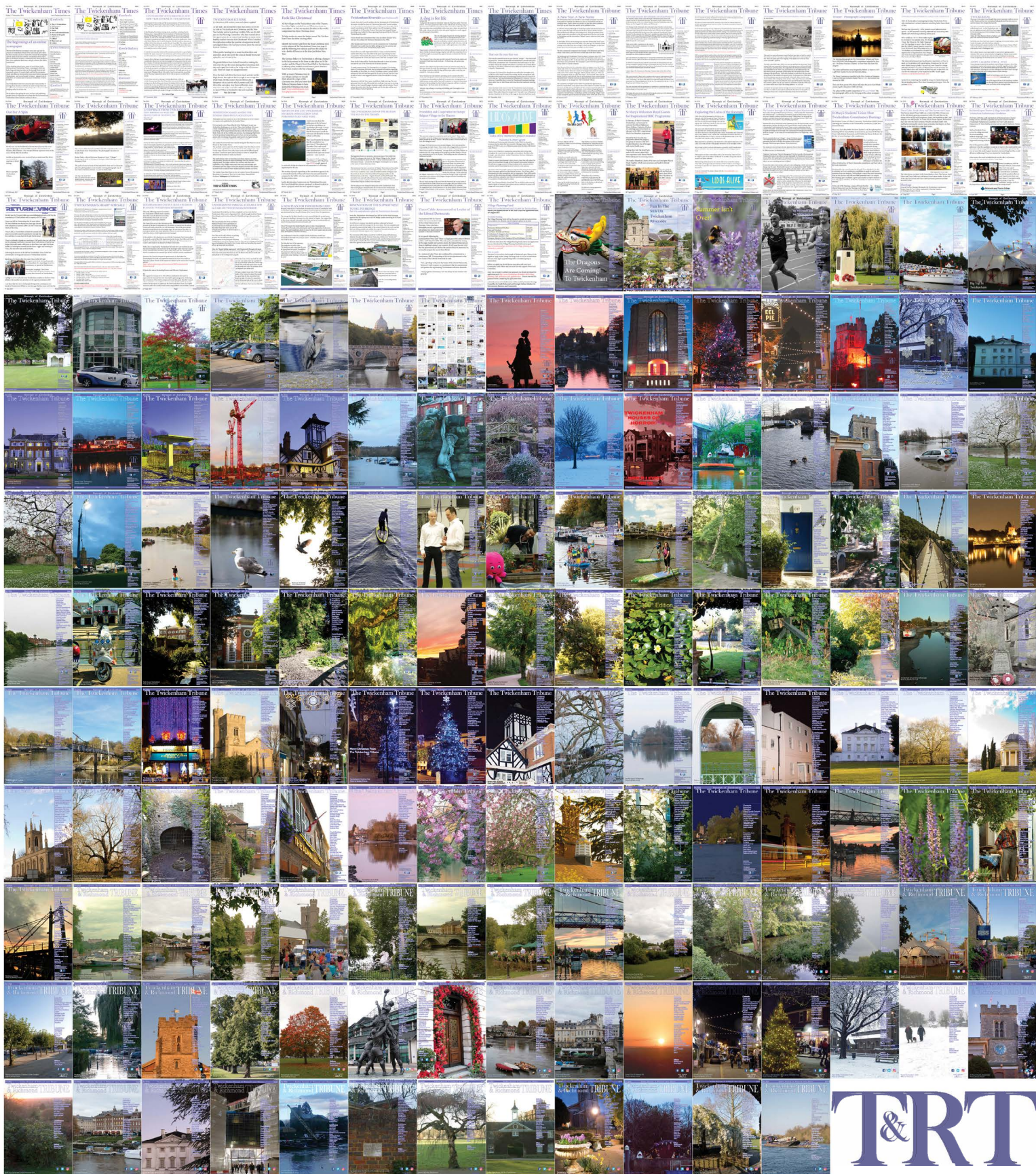
The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains the most affected country, experiencing circulation of both clade I MPXV subclades. Despite many of the provinces reporting stable trends in cases, the situation in the country remains concerning, with continued sustained circulation of virus strains. The escalating violence in the eastern part of the country poses additional challenges for the mpox response

- Burundi and Uganda continue to report the most cases outside of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- New travel-related cases of mpox due to clade Ib MPXV have been detected in countries that had already detected travel-related cases before, including China, Germany, Thailand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.
- Azerbaijan has reported its first case of mpox. Information on the MPXV clade is not yet available



**World Health
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