

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune

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TickerTape - News in Brief

Rugby at Twickenham Stadium

RED ROSES v FRANCE, Sat 26th April, Kick Off 16:45

Exp. attendance: 60,000

CPZ in force 11:00-23:00. Whitton, Rugby & London Roads close 14:45-16:45 and 18:15-20:45

South Western Railway

Altered train services due to Rugby at Twickenham **Saturday 26 April**

London Waterloo – Shepperton

- Between 1041 and 2241, all **Shepperton to London Waterloo** services are diverted via **Twickenham**.
- Between 1142 and 2342*, all **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services are diverted via **Twickenham**.

London Waterloo – Reading

- Services will depart earlier from **Reading** through most of the day (at xx:05 and xx:35).
- Trains departing **Reading** between 1730 & 2230 will call additionally at **Putney and Vauxhall**.
- Services will also run **later** from **Richmond** to **Reading** before the match.

Altered train services and buses replace trains in the Barnes area **Sunday 27 April**

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

Due to the diverted services, some services via **Wimbledon** will be **revised**.

- London Waterloo to Reading** services will be **revised** and will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Twickenham**. These services will call additionally at **Wimbledon, Kingston and Strawberry Hill**.
- London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised**.
An **hourly** service will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Twickenham via Kingston** calling at all stations.
An **hourly** service will start from **Richmond** calling at all stations.
- London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Kingston** services will be **revised** and will only run between **Richmond and Kingston**.
- Buses** will run between **Clapham Junction and Twickenham via Richmond**. These **buses** will **not** call at **St Margarets**.
- London Waterloo to Woking via Staines** services will start from **Kew Bridge**.
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.
- Buses** will run between **Clapham Junction and Kew Bridge**.
- London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will run **hourly**.
- London Waterloo/Wimbledon to Guildford via Cobham** services will be **revised** and will start from **London Waterloo** all day.



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

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The Tree Agency

The Local Picture Postcard Page - Part 298

Kilmorey Mausoleum - St Margarets

By Alan Winter

Only one postcard this week and it is the only postcard I have ever seen showing the Mausoleum in St Margarets Road. I recently attended a talk given by Andrew JT George who wrote a booklet about the Mausoleum last year for the Habitats & Heritage Registered charity based in East Twickenham.

This is such an interesting story that I thought it deserved to be featured in this column although I have never seen another postcard on the subject. This particular postcard was published in 2022 by the charity after it was photographed by charity member Stephen Fielding. The same photograph features on the cover of Andrew's book on the subject which was published last year (2024). What follows is all taken from Andrew's talk and book on the subject for which I thank him.

The Kilmorey Mausoleum in St Margarets Road is a magnificent example Of Victorian funerary architecture. It was originally erected in 1854 in the Brompton Cemetery for Priscilla Hoste, the young lover of Francis Jack Needham, the 2nd Earl of Kilmorey. It is 15-foot square made from the finest polished granite in the Egyptian style.

The Earl was a larger than life character, a patron of the arts, a keen rower and who had a predilection for buying large properties and renovating them. However, he is mostly remembered for his scandalous relationship with Priscilla, with whom he eloped in 1843 when she was 20 and he was 56. They lived together in a number of houses in Twickenham until her death in 1854.

After Priscilla was deposited in it, the mausoleum was moved twice, once to Woburn Park, his residence in Weybridge and then to its current location on what is now St Margarets Road, close to his home in Gordon House. Francis Jack died in 1880. He was laid to rest in his coffin next to that of Priscilla in the Mausoleum.



Habitats
Heritage

ANDREW JT GEORGE

The Kilmorey Mausoleum:
An Example of Victorian Industry and Art

The mausoleum was manufactured from polished Aberdeen granite, something that only became possible because of technological developments in the 19th Century.

It is an amazing story of how it was designed, made, transported and eventually landed under the care of Habitats and Heritage.

The charity is having a plant sale and open day at the Mausoleum on Sunday 11th May 10.00 to 2.00. The Mausoleum will be open to the public with a guided tour and no doubt Andrew's book and Stephen's postcard will be available to purchase.

You can find all details on their website [HERE](#) So once again, my thanks to Andrew JT George and Stephen Fielding.

If you have any old postcards or photograph albums that you would consider parting with, I'd be very interested in arranging to see them. Please contact me on 07875 578398 or by email at: alanwinter192@hotmail.com I am happy to pay cash for anything like that which I find of interest. So don't throw old postcards etc. in the skip or recycling bins. Show them to me first!



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 urges cyclists to slow down as it launches new cycling campaign

86% of Londoners think there should be a 20mph speed limit for bicycles

The Royal Parks charity launched a campaign today encouraging cyclists to be more considerate and to adhere to the speed limit in the parks in order to enhance safety and improve the park experience for all visitors.

The 'considerate cycling' campaign has been launched following several incidents in the parks and in response to a recent survey *, which revealed that almost three-quarters of London pedestrians (72%) had witnessed or experienced a near miss or collision with a cyclist.

The same number of respondents (72%) also stated that people 'cycling without due care and attention' was their main concern as a pedestrian. 86% of people believe the 20-mph vehicle speed limit in central London should also apply to bicycles, which are currently exempt.

The campaign is backed by a [new code of conduct](#) that all cyclists entering the parks should adhere to, regardless of whether they are commuting, exercising or exploring the parks recreationally. It is also supported by new signage that can be seen across the Royal Parks in high-traffic areas, and there is a new online hub on The Royal Parks' website for people who want to learn more about cycling in the parks.

The code of conduct provides best-practice guidance on safe cycling within the parks. It asks cyclists to:

1. Respect the park environment
2. Respect all park visitors
3. Control their speed
4. Know the rules - comply with the Highway Code and Park Regulations
5. Be seen and be heard

The campaign, which will run through the spring and summer months, highlights the importance of creating a harmonious environment for cyclists and pedestrians. With an increasing number of people riding bikes in parks, it is crucial that cyclists adhere to posted speed limits and exercise caution.

Darren Share, Director of Parks, The Royal Parks charity, said:

"These wonderful urban green spaces are incredibly important to so many people, but we all need to remember that they are shared spaces meant for everyone, and we must all play our part. Cyclists must understand the impact their speed can have on others, which is why it is crucial that they comply with the Park Regulations, and we are asking people to stay within the vehicle speed limits in the parks."

"The safety of all visitors is our top priority. By encouraging cyclists to slow down, respect the park environment and be considerate of others, we hope to foster a culture of respect and a safer, more enjoyable experience for all park visitors whether on two feet or two wheels."



St George's Day

Sunday 27th April
12pm-6pm
Whitton High Street



Midday Parade
Live Entertainment • Raffle
Food & Drink • Marketplace



Richmond Council Hit by Fraud

By James Knight

Richmond Council is under fire after revelations of widespread fraud across multiple departments. A recent fraud report reveals that more than £1.47 million in losses and overpayments were uncovered in the past year alone. The South West London Fraud Partnership (SWLFP), which investigates fraud across Richmond and neighbouring boroughs, has warned that the risk of fraud remains “substantial” and continues to be the largest reported crime type.

The most alarming figures emerge from the borough’s housing sector. Richmond no longer directly manages its social housing, having transferred responsibility to associations like the Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP). Yet the Council still bears the financial burden of temporary accommodation costs, which have soared to an eye-watering £4 million a day across London.

In the past year, 12 properties were recovered from fraudsters. Tenants were found subletting, living abroad, or abandoning homes entirely, denying legitimate families much-needed housing. The Council estimates a £93,000 notional saving for each home reclaimed – but these victories are few and hard-won.

A recent London-wide report, *Tenancy Fraud London 2025*, warns that detection rates have plummeted by 40% in a decade. Housing associations, now managing the majority of London’s social homes, often lack incentives to police tenancies effectively. As long as rent is paid, fraudsters slip through the cracks.

But the problems don’t stop at housing. Richmond Council’s own departments have fallen victim to serious internal fraud. Five council employees were caught inflating overtime claims, stealing over £39,000. Three were sacked, and a report branded the council’s systems unfit for purpose.

In another scandal, two officers colluded with developers of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), fast-tracking preferred landlords for temporary housing placements. Both resigned before facing disciplinary action, and the case is now with police.

From bogus parking permits to abuse of council tax discounts, fraud cases paint a troubling picture of a council stretched thin on oversight.

The Council claims it has a “robust anti-fraud culture,” but the facts suggest otherwise. Surveillance powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) – once a key fraud-fighting tool – have scarcely been used in recent years.

This crisis is as much about policy as it is about enforcement. The decision to transfer social housing to associations may have streamlined operations, but it has left a vacuum in accountability. Housing associations face no direct financial penalty for fraud; councils – and taxpayers – foot the bill.

Fraud in Richmond isn’t just a technical issue buried in committee reports. It’s a moral failing, depriving local families of homes and draining scarce public funds. What’s needed now is leadership – to restore proper oversight, demand accountability from housing providers, and invest in fraud detection before the cracks become chasms.

To watch the webcast and to access the committee papers, please click [HERE](#)

Richmond Volunteer Fair

Wednesday 21 May 2025

Looking to get more involved in your community? Visit the Richmond Volunteer Fair

The annual Richmond Volunteer Fair is back at Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College (RHACC) on Wednesday 21 May, from 2pm - 6pm.

Once again, this free-to-join event offers the chance to informally meet a fantastic range of local charities and learn about their work, their services, their volunteer roles, and how you can get involved in supporting them.

With 50+ groups under one roof, get a taste of some of the incredible charities on your doorstep who could be looking for just the time and skills you can give. To name a few, typically you'll find groups which include those working in health and wellbeing, nature/ environment, arts, heritage, children and young people, neighbourhood and community, advice, and specialist support.



Whether you're on an initial fact-finding mission, actively looking for a new and rewarding experience, seeking a new challenge, or simply interested in giving back to a good cause, they would love to meet you. And if you're worried about the time commitment, you might be surprised at the options and flexibility possible.

The event is organised by Richmond CVS, who run the Richmond Volunteer Service. The service helps to promote local volunteer opportunities and volunteer recruitment in the borough of Richmond upon Thames.

It's free to attend but advance booking is requested. Sign up for volunteering ideas and information, and be inspired by an amazing community that you could be part of.

Register [HERE](#) now to visit the Richmond Volunteer Fair 2025.

Richmond's Council's £38.8 Million Black Hole: Residents Face Hidden Cuts and Tax Hikes

By James Knight

Richmond Council is facing a *£38.8 million budget black hole*—but residents are being kept in the dark about the deep cuts to local services that may soon follow.

This week's meeting of the Council's Audit, Standards, and Statutory Accounts Committee laid bare the growing financial pressures. The Council's external auditors, Ernst & Young, have *been unable to sign off Richmond's accounts for the second year in a row*, due to a shortage of auditing professionals.

The auditors highlighted major errors in the valuation of council-owned buildings. Two schools, in particular, were undervalued by millions of pounds due to outdated information. Although these mistakes have now been corrected, the auditors still say they *cannot trust the overall state of Richmond's accounts*.

The *£38.8 million budget gap* is present in the medium term financial strategy. This shortfall is likely to increase further as the council has been holding back the latest cost estimates for the Twickenham Riverside Development. There has been growing frustration amongst councillors over this secrecy, who feel the senior members of the administration are trying to run away from scrutiny.

Behind the scenes, town hall officials are preparing for *severe cuts* to local services. Libraries, community centres, and day centres for the elderly are *believed to be at risk*. But the Liberal Democrat-run Council is keeping these plans under wraps until after the May 2026 local elections—hoping to avoid a public backlash before polling day.

Due to these financial troubles, the Council continues to raise council tax at the highest level allowed without a referendum. This year's increase follows a string of above-inflation tax rises, pushing the burden ever higher for local families.

Meanwhile, the Council's financial reserves are running low. Richmond's *General Fund balance*—the money that can be used in emergencies—now stands at just £11.1 million. This represents 6% of expenditure and is at the lower end of the 5-10% agreed by the council.

That's enough to keep the Council going for *only 23 days* if the money runs out.

The Liberal Democrats have often attacked other councils in similar positions, calling them *“in crisis”* or accusing them of being *“close to bankruptcy”*. Yet now, Richmond is showing the same signs: widening deficits, shrinking reserves, and qualified audits.

All this in one of the wealthiest boroughs in the country. Richmond collects *one of the highest levels of council tax per household in Britain*, thanks to the large number of homes in the top council tax bands. Yet residents are paying more, whilst the council lets roads and pavements crumble.

For a borough with such a strong tax base, the question is simple: *how have the Liberal Democrats managed to let it come to this?*

You watch a webcast of the meeting and read the background papers by clicking [HERE](#)

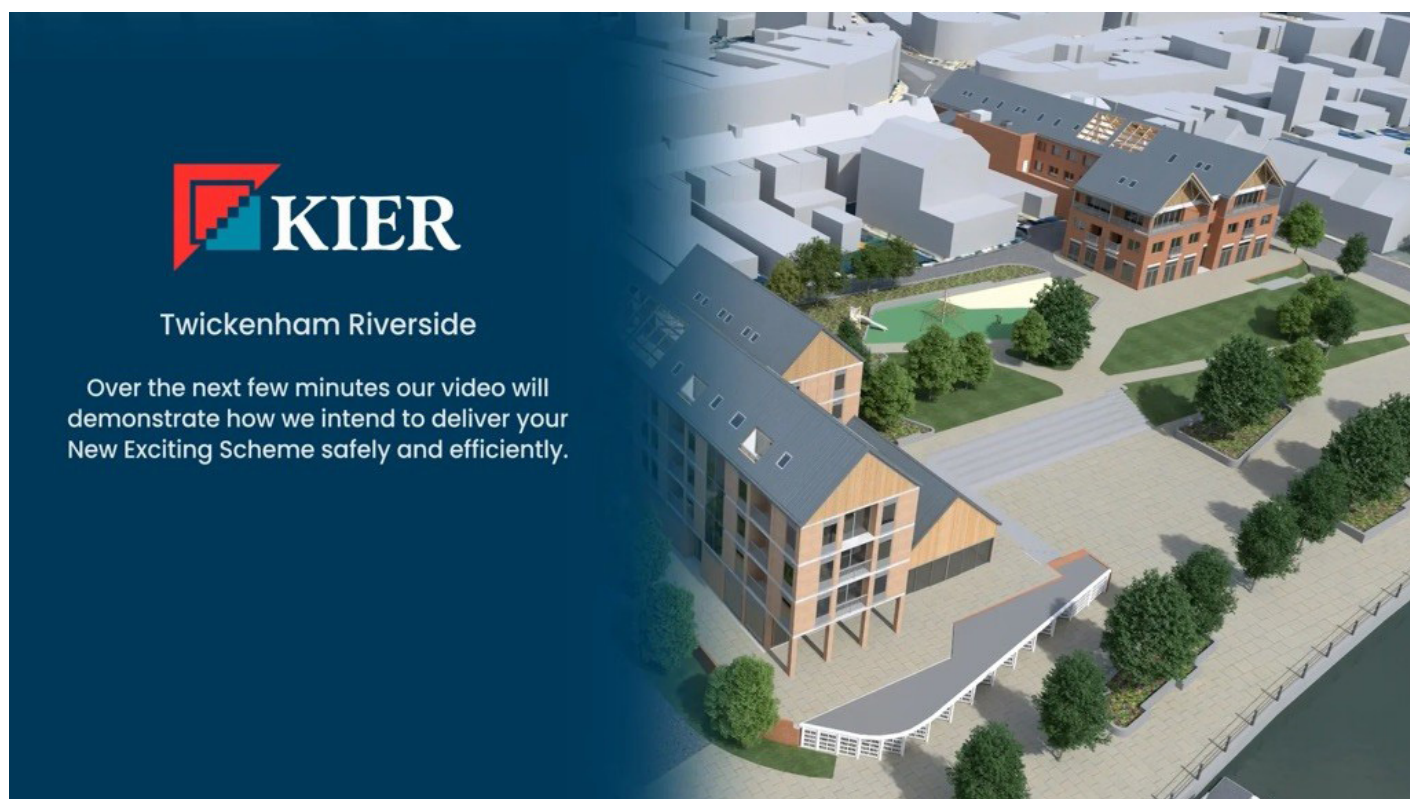


Twickenham Riverside

Keir has been appointed to undertake the construction of redeveloping Twickenham Riverside.

Tribune readers may be interested to watch Keir's video outlining how they will deliver the scheme.

To watch the video, click on the image below.



News From Twickenham Studios and Samsung

Teresa Read

The Twickenham Film Studios are well known to the editors of the Tribune; in 2013 we organized the first Twickenham Alive Film Festival originally discussed with Maria Walker at Twickenham Film Studios, St Margaret's. The first film festival, sponsored by the RFU, was held in the Live Room with Maria Walker presenting the prizes; the festival continued annually until the Covid pandemic (films can be seen at <https://www.twickenhamfilm.com>).

Established in 1913, the Twickenham Film Studios have made films for over a hundred years. The studios were constructed by the London Film Company, which closed in 1920, and subsequently used for various productions. Films included 'The Italian Job', starring Michael Caine and The Beatles 'A Hard Day's Night'.

Samsung Electronics has announced that it has teamed up with Twickenham Film Studios and award-winning Virtual Production experts Quite Brilliant that will see Samsung's cutting-edge Virtual Production technology in Twickenham's historic Stage 3 from the end of June 2025.



The Mulberry Centre Launches Spring Raffle to Raise Vital Funds for Cancer Support Services

The Mulberry Centre is delighted to announce the launch of its **Spring Raffle 2025**, a vibrant fundraising initiative blooming with exciting prizes, all in aid of supporting local people affected by cancer.

Running until **2pm on Friday 30th May 2025**, the raffle invites the community to get involved and help raise essential funds for the charity's wide-ranging support services. From counselling and complementary therapies to workshops and wellbeing sessions, The Mulberry Centre continues to provide free,

accessible support to individuals navigating the challenges of a cancer diagnosis. As a charity, we need to raise £780k this financial year to support those with cancer in this tough economic climate.



Tickets are just £5 each, and every ticket purchased brings not only the chance to win incredible prizes but also contributes directly to The Mulberry Centre's mission to offer hope, comfort, and community to those in need.

Prizes include:

- Overnight Stay for two including a full English Breakfast at the Hilton Syon Park Hotel
- Bed and Breakfast for Two at the Double Tree Hilton London
- One night (weekend) stay & breakfast at the Clayton Hotel, Chiswick
- Beauty basket of wellness pamper products curated by Roxana
- Afternoon Tea for Two at the Double Tree Hilton London
- 80 MINUTE Aromatherapy Massage donated by Holistic Treatments
- £25 Dining Voucher for Takaa Tak restaurant in Teddington
- Blue Tooth Speaker

The raffle closes on Friday 30th May 2025 at 2pm, with the draw taking place on Monday 2nd June 2025 at 3pm.

Tickets can be purchased online [HERE](#)

"We're so grateful for the generous support of local businesses and donors who've helped us offer such fantastic prizes," said a spokesperson from The Mulberry Centre. "Every ticket sold helps ensure we can continue to offer free cancer support to those who need it most in our community."

Whether you purchase a ticket or help spread the word, your support makes a difference.

Together, let's make this spring one of hope and healing.



**TICKETS
£5.00**



for anyone
affected by cancer

TheMulberryCentre

SPRING RAFFLE

GIVE, GROW, WIN!

DRAWN AT 3PM ON 2ND JUNE 2025

**TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED AT THE
CENTRE OR ONLINE**



**GREAT
PRIZES
TO BE
WON!**

SCAN TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS!

RAFFLE CLOSES AT 2PM 30TH MAY 2025

**THE MULBERRY CENTRE, WEST MIDDLESEX,
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, ISLEWORTH, TW7 6AF**

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News from Holy Trinity Church, Twickenham

Sunday School and Youth Group - This Sunday

Sunday School for nursery and primary age groups will start again at this Sunday's 10.30am service. The first Youth Group of this term will also be taking place this Sunday from 4.30-6pm in the Green Room, where we welcome all those in Year 7 and above. We also look forward to welcoming Year 6 at the Youth Group in the second half of the summer term, keep an eye on notices for more details.

Confirmation - We are hosting a service of confirmation on Sunday 6th July with Bishop Emma. Confirmation is a chance to publicly affirm your faith, and it often marks the point at which people start to receive Communion in the Church of England. If you are interested in this wonderful opportunity, please get in touch with Rev Simon. (07933147711)



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 our Transport Strategy 2040 forum and help shape the future of local travel

From Richmond Council

Residents, workers, and students across Richmond upon Thames are invited to attend a public forum next month to have their say on the borough's long-term transport plans.

The Transport Strategy 2040 sets out our vision for a more sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport network over the next 15 years. The forum, which will take place at York House, Twickenham on Thursday 8 May, will give attendees the opportunity to hear about the strategy's aims and contribute their ideas in a series of roundtable discussions.

So far, more than 1,550 people have taken part in the consultation by contributing to an interactive map and completing a public survey. We are encouraging even more residents to get involved before the consultation closes at the end of May.

Cllr Alexander Ehmann, Chair of the Transport and Air Quality Services Committee, said: *"Richmond Council has always believed that we need to plan for the long-term to make this borough more connected and ultimately more prosperous. Your ideas and priorities really can help us to shape the borough's future as a more accessible, clean and connected place."*

The strategy focuses on several key priorities, including:

- Improving connectivity and accessibility
- Increasing public transport reliability
- Supporting walking and cycling
- Reducing emissions and improving air quality



Public Forum

- Date: Thursday 8 May 2025
- Time: 6.30 to 8pm
- Location: York House, Richmond Road, Twickenham, TW1 3AA
- Booking: Register to attend the session on Eventbrite

The event will begin with a presentation outlining the Transport Strategy 2040, followed by group discussions with councillors and members of the project team.

Online consultation

For those unable to attend the forum, we are continuing to gather feedback online.

You can find more information about the current status of transport in the borough by [visiting the dedicated transport strategy website](#). Here, like hundreds of other residents, you can take our survey and share your concerns on our interactive map. [Share your ideas today](#)

Richmond Volunteer Fair

Wednesday 21 May 2025, 2pm - 6pm

RHACC, Parkshot, Richmond, TW9 2RE

Register at www.richmondcvvs.org.uk



Richmond
Volunteer
Service

020 8843 7940



Registered charity number 1075259

Richmond
CVS

empower - enable - involve

J.M.W. Turner's 250th birthday celebrated at his Twickenham home

Turner's House

From Wednesday 23 April, Turner's 250th birthday, discover a rich tapestry of art and history that continues to inspire and captivate generations.

Richmond upon Thames has long been a hub of creativity and historical significance, and that's where J.M.W. Turner, one of England's greatest painters, found inspiration for some of his most iconic works.

From 23 April to 26 October, residents are invited to explore Turner's exceptional watercolours, as well as his angling equipment and personal letters at the newly launched exhibition 'Turner's Kingdom: Beauty, Birds and Beasts' at Turner's House in Twickenham.

Councillor John Coombs, Richmond Council's Spokesperson for Arts, said: *"We are excited to see a range of events and talks that celebrate Turner's legacy and the rich cultural heritage of Richmond. I encourage everyone to take the opportunity to explore the beauty and history that continue to enrich our community."*

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Leader of Richmond Council, said: *"This year, as we mark Richmond's 60th anniversary and the 250th birthday of Turner, we honour our vibrant history and cultural heritage. These milestones remind us of not only of the the creativity and resilience that shape, and have shaped, our community but also serve to remind us of the pantheon of luminaries who have chosen to call this special corner of South West London home."*



To celebrate Turner's semiquincentennial, Turner's House and Twickenham Museum are hosting a line-up of exhibitions, talks and events. Come along and immerse yourself in the beauty of Turner's art.

Turner's Kingdom: Beauty, Birds and Beasts

Opening on 23 April, this exhibition will showcase [rarely seen animals and birds](#) painted by the renowned artist. This is a pay-as-you-wish event.

If you'd like to further explore Turner's work with animals, including insights into his personal life and the creatures that inspired him, these [online lectures](#) will delve into the narrative, symbolic and decorative functions of birds and beasts within Turner's paintings.

JMW Turner and West London

This free event is all about Turner and his association with West London, as he lived in Twickenham, Brentford, Isleworth and Hammersmith. Turner loved to row, fish and paint the River Thames and some of his largest and most important paintings were inspired by the view from Richmond Hill. Find out about [Turner's Twickenham-based paintings](#).

Find out more about [festivities on Turner's semiquincentennial](#).

St Margarets: The ‘Geriatric Mother’ Capital of the UK

By Michael Jones, TRT reporter

St Margarets in Richmond upon Thames, with its tree-lined avenues, artisan cafés, and enviable proximity to the River Thames, has long represented a picture of middle-class comfort. However, beneath the postcard-perfect scenery lies a striking demographic detail: this affluent corner of southwest London is home to the oldest new mothers in the United Kingdom.

According to the latest data from the Office for National Statistics, the average age of first-time mothers in Richmond upon Thames is now over 35 – the highest in the country. In St Margarets specifically, births to women under the age of 25 have become virtually non-existent. It is not uncommon for women to start families in their late thirties or even early forties – a trend that has become so prevalent in the area that the term “geriatric mother,” the medical term, if outdated and socially awkward, applies to a large number of residents.

There are clear reasons for this shift. One of the biggest drivers is the cost of living – or more precisely, the cost of housing. Richmond is among the most expensive boroughs in the capital, with average property prices comfortably exceeding £900,000. For many couples, buying a home suitable for raising children requires years of saving, career building, and financial planning. Parenthood, once something entered into in one’s twenties, has become a milestone deferred until the conditions feel “just right.”

For many women, this means spending much of their prime reproductive years pursuing higher education, building careers, and achieving financial security – all perfectly reasonable ambitions. However, while modern medicine has made later motherhood more viable, the biological clock has not kept pace with social change. Fertility begins to decline steadily after the age of 30 and more rapidly after 35. By 40, natural conception becomes significantly more challenging.



As a result, many women in places like St Margarets turn to fertility treatment. Yet what is often underestimated is how physically and emotionally taxing these treatments can be. IVF, for instance, requires hormone injections, regular scans, surgical egg collection, and often multiple rounds before success—if it comes at all. The process can be financially draining and psychologically exhausting, particularly when it follows years of trying to conceive naturally. Some women also face the painful reality that no amount of medical intervention can guarantee pregnancy.

While much attention is often given to women’s fertility and age, men over 35 also face declining fertility, although it tends to receive less public focus. As men age, sperm quality gradually decreases, resulting in lower sperm counts, reduced motility (movement), and higher rates of DNA fragmentation. These changes can complicate conception and increase the risk of miscarriage or certain conditions in children, including autism spectrum disorder.

Although men can technically father children well into later life, studies show that after age 40, the time it takes to conceive increases, and the chances of success with fertility treatments such as IVF decline. This highlights that fertility challenges are not solely a women's issue; advancing paternal age can play a significant role in a couple's ability to start a family.

These realities have attracted renewed public attention after a controversial statement from Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. The Trust, in materials related to its "Born in Bradford" study, made a direct comparison between the risks of cousin marriage – common in some ethnic communities – and women over 34 choosing to have children later in life. Both, the Trust argued, are "cultural practices" that double the risk of birth defects in children.

The comparison has proved divisive. While both scenarios may involve increased risks, critics argue they arise from fundamentally different circumstances – and should not be equated. In St Margarets, older mothers typically have access to high-quality healthcare, private medical support, and prenatal screening – factors that can significantly reduce risks and improve outcomes. Moreover, late motherhood here often results from structural pressures, particularly housing costs, rather than being a lifestyle "choice" made lightly.

Nonetheless, the risks associated with later motherhood are significant. Women over 35 face increased chances of complications during pregnancy, including gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, and chromosomal abnormalities. While most women in this age group go on to have healthy pregnancies and babies, the process can be more complex and demanding than many expect.

The rise in older mothers across Richmond has coincided with an increase in the number of children requiring SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) support. Older maternal age is associated with a higher risk of developmental conditions such as autism and learning difficulties, which can contribute to greater demand for specialist education services. This growing pressure has placed Richmond's SEND provision under enormous strain, leading to a significant funding shortfall in recent years.

In St Margarets, the absence of young mothers is striking. The traditional image of twenty-something parents pushing prams through the park has largely been replaced by women juggling nursery drop-offs with Zoom meetings. This shift reflects broader changes in British society, where education, economic pressures, and social expectations are pushing parenthood further down the timeline.

The rise of the "geriatric mother" may be a product of modern success, but it also comes with trade-offs – not just biologically, but emotionally and financially. As public health officials seek to raise awareness about reproductive ageing, they must walk a careful line: respecting the choices and realities of women today while ensuring they have access to accurate information, support, and timely intervention.

In St. Margarets, where ambition and affluence go hand in hand, motherhood may come later – but it is no less desired. The challenge lies in ensuring that those desires are not met with avoidable heartache.

Next week at Richmond Council

On Monday morning, the **Licensing Sub-Committee** will convene to discuss granting a street trading licence to a coffee van on Ranelagh Drive, near Richmond Lock. The van would operate from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week. The online meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. For details, click [HERE](#)

On Monday evening, the **Finance, Policy and Resources Committee** will meet to discuss: (1) the refurbishment and decarbonisation of the civic centre, (2) the violence against women and girls strategy 2024-2027, (3) Richmond CCTV monitoring. The meeting will commence at 7 pm, York House, Twickenham. For details, click [HERE](#)

On Wednesday afternoon, the **Quality Accounts Subcommittee** will discuss South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust's draft quality account 2024/2025. The meeting will commence at 2 pm, York House. For details, click [HERE](#)

On Thursday Morning, the **North West London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee** will meet to discuss (1) community-based palliative care, (2) an update on the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, and (3) the New Involvement Strategy. The meeting will commence at 10 am at Brent Civic Centre, Wembley. For details, click [HERE](#)

For guidance on how to participate at different types of council meetings, such as speaking or asking written or verbal questions, please click [HERE](#)

Affordable Art Tent

From Arts Richmond

Arts Richmond is hosting an Affordable Art Tent for residents to purchase unique artworks from local artists.

- **Date:** Saturday 10 May 2025
- **Location:** The Green in Richmond, TW9 1LX - As part of the Richmond May Fair

If you're interested in selling your work, contact the organiser at info@artsrichmond.org.uk or call 020 8892 9446.

You can [find out more about the Affordable Art Tent](#).



Mayor unveils twinned town information board in Kneller Gardens

From Richmond in Europe Association

On Saturday 19 April 2025, the Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Richard Pyne, and the Mayoress unveiled a new information board about our twinned towns of Fontainebleau and Konstanz.

At the unveiling event, Richmond in Europe Association Chairman, Alan Mockford, organised fabulous music from the Whitton Community Big Band. Cllr Piers Allen, Cllr Lesley Pollesche, and Cllr John Coombs joined the enthusiastic crowd to celebrate our borough's connection with Konstanz in Germany and Fontainebleau in France.



The fourth of five new information boards, now standing in Kneller Gardens, commemorates the upcoming reaffirmation of our European partnerships taking place from Friday 6 to Sunday 8 June 2025. These boards feature information about Richmond's twinned towns, offering a deeper understanding of our shared heritage and the importance of maintaining these international connections.

As we mark 65 years of our international partnerships, there over 50 events and activities happening around the borough. The main celebration will take place over the Twinning Reaffirmation Weekend from 6 to 8 June, with some activities kicking off from this month, and more events continuing throughout the summer.

View the [full event programme](#) and find out more about the [Twinning Reaffirmation Weekend](#). If you would like to get more actively involved with our twinned towns you can become a member of the [Richmond in Europe Association](#).

Meadlands Primary School looking for new governors

From Meadlands Primary School

Meadlands Primary School is looking for co-opted governors to join its Governing Board and make a positive contribution to the ongoing success of the school.

The Meadlands Primary School Governing Board plans the strategic direction of the school, oversees its financial performance, and holds the Headteacher and School Leadership Team to account.

The new governors will commit to a four-year term of office, beginning in September 2025. Responsibilities include attending six governor meetings per year, undertaking a small number of school visits per year, and other input as required.

Full training is provided and governors are able to access free development and training opportunities run by Achieving for Children.

If you are interested, contact Meadlands Primary School at chairgb@meadlands.richmond.sch.uk. Find out [more about the school](#).



April Food and Drink News

Well, after the opening of the fabulous **Ottolenghi** deli in Richmond (which I will be reviewing soon) he's collaborated with Bold Beans to launch a delicious new product: **Queen Black Chickpeas**. Black chickpeas boast a beautifully rich and nutty flavour profile and creamy texture. Their skins aren't tough or chewy, but have a firm bite, and an exciting, contrasting mouthfeel. They hold their shape, ideal for roasting, slow-cooking or confited in olive oil until buttery and soft. These Queen Black Chickpeas differ from their cream-coloured counterparts in that they're smaller and slightly firmer, with a deep, roasted undertone that makes them perfect to scatter over salads, toss with spices or even spoon straight from the jar. Queen Black Chickpeas are also a resilient crop, thriving in poor soil while fixing nitrogen back into the earth. It's important to both Bold Bean Co. and Ottolenghi to celebrate the lesser-known crops that have great potential and with the next harvest taking place in late summer, they're a step towards a more sustainable food future. Available in Waitrose at £3.60 for a 570g jar and at Ottolenghi delis across London.



Another collaboration with beans of a different variety, but still delicious, is this tasty new product from **Ginsters** and **Heinz**: Banz & Cheese Slice. Heinz Banz and melted cheese are wrapped in Ginsters' golden pastry. The slice is designed to deliver the perfect balance of pastry, beans and cheese. All I know is that it pops into the air fryer and you have a really tasty lunch in minutes! **The Ginsters Limited Edition Heinz Banz & Cheese Slice** is available from Morrisons and Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury's with an RRSP of £1.95. And its **Great British Beef Week** from **23-30 April**, so here's a timely reminder from Ginsters that it only uses British Beef in its pasties, as provenance is a principle: Whether it's locally sourced vegetables or British meat. As our British farmers continue to face rising costs and changing conditions, Great British Beef Week is a timely reminder of the value of supporting UK agriculture.

Another limited edition product is an ultra tasty **Special Edition Pineapple & Chilli Relish** from **Tracklements**. It's a beautiful combo of sweet and tangy, with a tropical kick. Reminiscent of a mango chutney, but with more sweetness and spice, the natural sugars of the pineapple balance the spice of the chilli, ginger and mustard seed, while a touch of cider vinegar elevates the flavour. As well as the usual uses for a relish, it also makes a terrific fruity (and a bit fiery) marinade, as the pineapple contains an enzyme called bromelain, which tenderizes meat such as chicken and pork, so it absorbs the flavours of the marinade better. £3.95 / 190g, is available from fine food delis and farm shops nationwide and online at www.tracklements.co.uk





Regular readers will know that I'm such a fan of the South London based husband and wife team, **MOMO Kombucha** (www.momo-kombucha.com), who create **Great Taste Award** winning kombucha using natural methods. This month saw this New Covent Garden Market based brewery launch a new seasonal kombucha, the limited-edition **Blood Orange Kombucha** (RRP from £4.50 per 330ml glass bottle) in collaboration with **Natoora** (www.natoora.com), Available from **MOMO, Natoora, Selfridges, Gail's Bakeries, Planet Organic, Zapp** and **Whole Foods Market**; it's limited edition, but it's set to be in stock until July, so you've got plenty of time to try it...it's fabulous!.

Not a limited edition this time, and looking to warmer weather (🍌) this summer, **unearthed®** is reimagining pintxos - Spain's beloved skewered snacks, . These new, easy-to-enjoy products, let you savour the flavours of Spain at home. Pintxos - meaning "spike" in Basque - are a Northern Spanish tradition. Instead of ready-assembled pintxos, these unearthed® products come deconstructed in a resealable bucket, allowing you to build your own, as well as snacking straight from the pack. Around £5.00 (330G), at Sainsbury's. Also available is **unearthed® Green Olive & Gouda Cheese (330g)** with the Hojiblanca olive—one of Spain's most popular varieties, known for its buttery, slightly nutty flavour.



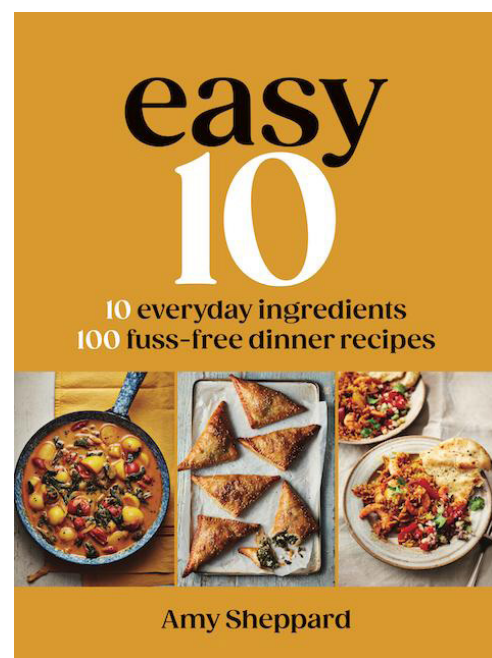
Next **Friday 2 May** is **International Sauvignon Blanc Day**, so I'm giving you plenty of time to stock up with one of my favourite white wines. The Sauvignon Blanc grape is known for producing crisp, dry, and aromatic wines with high acidity. These wines often feature flavours of citrus, grass, and green fruit. The grape can be grown in many types of soil and climates and takes on different personalities depending on where it is grown. Here are some recommendations from Calvet, one of the foremost names in wine for over a century:



For a full bodied and deliciously herbal wine, this **Calvet Réserve Sauvignon Blanc** at £9.99 from Waitrose will give you concentrated white fruit notes as well. It pairs wonderfully with shellfish, smoked salmon and grilled fish. If you like a softly oaked, the **Calvet Prestige Bordeaux White Sauvignon Fumé** at £8 a bottle from Ocado is one to note. This is perfectly balanced with hints of citrus and vanilla. It's great on its own but also pairs well with chicken and seafood. And the rather special **Calvet Pouilly Fumé** at £23.50 from Ocado has a yellow green hue, a powerful nose with floral and fruity aromas. It's well balanced, fleshy and fabulous, and a delicious accompaniment to king prawns and any other seafood. Cheers.

Take Life Easy with Easy 10

Wouldn't it be great if someone could write a cookbook that takes everyday supermarket ingredients and provides us with not one, but 10 easy ideas for a meal using them? Well folks, it's just happened and the book: **Easy 10 by Amy Sheppard** was published this week. Amy understands how we shop. Creatures of habit, we often buy the same basic staples every week and then inevitably cook the same old recipes. She takes 10 of the top supermarket ingredients and offers 10 delicious dinners for each one, with a few 'cheats' and twists along the way, and always with budget in mind. The top 10 are: chicken, potatoes, ready rolled pastry, lentils, mince, cheese, tinned fish, pasta, sausages and rice – our beloved favourites, but Amy is here to spice up our repertoire and inspire us to create really tasty dishes in a matter of minutes. The chapter structure of the book means that you can find just the recipe you need instantly, and each recipe comes with tips and swaps – ways to make the meal veggie or gluten-free and options for air-frying. Easy 10 delivers simple, delicious dinner ideas for busy people who want to cook from scratch, but don't want to spend hours in the kitchen. Easy 10 by Amy Sheppard (Quadrille, £22), Photography © Dan Jones



To whet your appetite, try one or two of these:

15-MINUTE GNOCCHI FISH PIE FEEDS 5

"I love fish pie and so do my family, but it's such a faff to make and creates so much washing up! This is a really easy, cheap version that is on the table in under 15 minutes and uses canned tuna, shop-bought gnocchi and just one pan!"

- oil, for frying
- 500g (1lb 2oz) gnocchi
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 200g (7oz) garlic and herb soft cheese
- 2 x 145g (5oz) cans tuna, drained
- 100g (3½oz) cheddar, grated
- 250ml (9fl oz) milk 80g (2¾oz) frozen sweetcorn
- 80g (2¾oz) frozen peas
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 50g (1¾oz) fresh spinach leaves
- garlic bread and salad, to serve
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

TIPS & SWAPS

You can cook the gnocchi in the air fryer for 6 minutes at 190°C/375°F, if you prefer, before adding it to the sauce. If you want a crispy topping, sprinkle the finished dish with the garlic crumb from page 58. You can cook it in the same pan after you've fried the gnocchi. Use reduced-fat soft cheese in this for a less rich option.



1. Heat a good drizzle of oil in a large, non-stick frying pan (skillet). When it's spitting hot, add the gnocchi (work in two batches if need be) and fry for 3–5 minutes over a medium–high heat until golden brown and crisp. Set the gnocchi aside.
2. Heat a little more oil in the pan. Add the onion and fry for 5 minutes until soft. Take the pan off the heat and add the soft cheese, tuna, grated cheddar, milk, frozen sweetcorn, frozen peas and oregano. Season with salt and pepper and return to a medium heat.
3. Stir until all the ingredients are combined and the mixture is starting to gently bubble.
4. Once the cheese has melted, stir in the spinach and the fried gnocchi. Simmer for a minute or two until the frozen veg is soft and the gnocchi is heated through.
5. Serve immediately with a side of garlic bread and salad.

20-MINUTE BEEF CHOW MEIN FEEDS 4

"This is a great Friday night dinner when you fancy a takeaway, but you're on a budget. The brilliant thing about chow mein is that it's easy to make taste just like the real thing! Serve this with spring rolls and prawn crackers if you want to go all out!"

- oil, for frying
- 600g (1lb 5oz) bag of mixed stir-fry vegetables
- 1 Tbsp cornflour (cornstarch)
- 4 Tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp tomato ketchup
- 70ml (2½ fl oz) oyster sauce
- 500g (1lb 2oz) beef mince (ground beef)
- 300g (10½ oz) straight to wok noodles
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

TIPS & SWAPS

You can make this the classic way, by using thinly sliced chicken breast instead of beef. Use dried noodles if you prefer. Simmer 3 nests of noodles for 5 minutes in boiling water until tender. Drain and add to the pan.

Swap the noodles for 2 pouches of microwave basmati rice. Heat following the packet instructions before adding to the pan with the sauce.



1. Heat a good glug of oil in a wok or large non-stick frying pan (skillet). Add the stir-fry vegetables and fry for 5 minutes over a high heat, turning regularly, until soft.
2. Meanwhile, put the cornflour in a small bowl. Add the soy sauce and whisk with a fork until there are no lumps. Stir in the ketchup and oyster sauce and set aside.
3. Remove the veg from the pan and set aside.
4. Add a little more oil to the pan, if needed. When hot, add the beef mince and fry over a medium heat for 5 minutes, turning regularly, until browned.
5. Drain off any excess fat and return the veg to the wok. Gently pull apart the noodles so each one is separated, before adding them to the wok along with the sauce. Stir fry for 3–5 minutes over a medium heat, stirring regularly until the beef and noodles are cooked through and everything is coated in sauce. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

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Nationwide unrest in the USA on the 250th Anniversary on the Declaration of Independence

Following the “Hands Off” marches throughout the USA last week, when over 500,000 Americans took to the streets against the Trump administration, another country-wide demonstration took place.

Last weekend Americans came out in their tens of thousands for the “No Kings” protest – No Kings in America, the weekend of the 250th Anniversary of the start of the American Revolution. It was reported that around 100,000 Americans marched against their president in 1,200 locations including outside the White House, the official residence and workplace of the president of the United States.

I spent some time on X (formerly Twitter) on both the abovementioned occasions, watching the BBC News at the same time. The information on X gave an on-the-spot view of the situation in the USA, but no noticeable coverage by our public service television broadcaster at the time the protests were taking place.



It is of concern that one of the most prominent countries in the world should be experiencing such dissatisfaction on the anniversary weekend of its independence, but our British television service does not seem to cover such momentous news at the time – and for two weeks running.

Protests were seen on X last Saturday, but this is just a snapshot of the situation in a country with fifty states - and Washington DC:

New York: thousands take to the streets to call for the end of the Trump regime; San Francisco: human banner of protestors spelling out “Impeach” “Remove”; huge demonstration in Houston; massive demonstration at Daley Plaza, Chicago; anti-Trump demonstration in Portland, Oregon; Protest in Buffalo, NY; massive protest at the White House, Washington DC; massive protest in Denver, Colorado State Capitol; thousands in mid-town Manhattan, “No Kings in America. Power belongs to the people”; Protest Ohio Statehouse; 300+ protestors in Franklin, Tennessee; thousands protest in Salt Lake City; more than a thousand protestors in St Paul Minnesota; anti-Trump protestors in Nashville’s Centennial Park; protests in North Carolina and South Carolina; Rhode Island protest rally; Hundreds protest outside J.D Vance’s house in DC; Protests in Colorado Springs; JD Vance confronted in Cincinnati, Ohio; Huge crowd of protestors in Hartford Connecticut; Phoenix, Arizona, protestors chanted “No Kings” and “Resist Fascism”; St Paul, Minnesota Hands Off protests; over a thousand protestors in San Antonio; Protests in Albuquerque, New Mexico and thousands of protestors in Anchorage, Alaska. Times Square was packed and protestors gathered at Trump International Hotel, New York.

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Modern Warfare

At the time of writing there is no clear news about the “plan” for Ukraine.

On Friday this week the Mayor of Kyiv said on the news that Putin does not care about human life. This is clear when looking at the devastation, loss of life (on all sides) and suffering by the Ukrainian people who just want to live in peace.

The US president, Donald Trump, said he would end the war within 24 hours of being elected, but the weeks have gone on and so has the war. People, killed, maimed, buried and burned alive, and Ukrainian children abducted and taken to Russia. Donald Trump, the US president, the leader of the free world, now says the 24 hours promise was just a joke.

It has been reported on X that Russian authorities are extracting mineral resources from occupied Mariupol. Over 120,000 tons of Ukrainian coking coal has already been shipped from a local port; this coal, essential for steel production, may be fuelling Russia’s war economy. Russia destroyed Mariupol in 2022; thus, it seems from reports that valuable commodities have been taken from the area and used to continue aggression towards Ukraine.

Denmark, also has a concern about Trump’s eye on Greenland’s minerals and has made a request to invoke Article 4 of NATO, formally requesting consultation with allies. Greenland is included in the Council of Europe and NATO as part of Denmark.

In response to the situation The Netherlands King Willem-Alexander has said that the country must “*arm itself to the teeth*”.

Trump has now stated that the USSR has offered a “Pretty Big Concession” to stopping the war in Ukraine – the Russians will get Ukrainian land, but the “promise” now is not to take the whole of Ukraine.

Richard Branson reminded us on X (formerly Twitter) that it was America and Britain that guaranteed the sovereignty of Ukraine and its borders for giving up their nuclear weapons. Now we have a US president who is obsessed with making “Deals”.

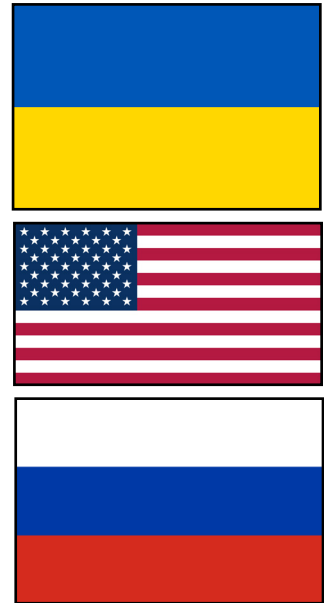
It has been said that Ukraine’s military intelligence believes that more people in Russia are ready to resist the Kremlin and carry out acts of “demilitarization”.

At the time of writing, 25 April 2025, there have been two reports from Russia: the death of a Russian general, Major General Yaroslav Moskalik, in a car blast near Moscow, and two deaths in an explosion of a car belonging to Russian designer, Yevgeny Rytikov in Bryansk, working on modernizing electronic warfare.

Despite huge demonstrations against President Trump, he is talking about running for president for a third term. The Twenty-Second Amendment to the US Constitution limits the number of times a person can serve as president of the USA <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-22/>

It is strange to see that President Trump has started wearing a MAGA 2028 baseball cap, but he will no doubt be past retirement then, if not sooner. However, to bring a bit of light-heartedness to the article Barack Obama was seen on X wearing a similar cap for 2028; a challenge to Trump?

Reuters has seen the text of a set of proposals on how to end Russia’s war in Ukraine that were given to the U.S. side on Wednesday by Ukrainian and European officials at talks in London. See details [HERE](#)



Which shop has the best customers in Twickenham?

~ Life through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~

By Deep Patel



One of the phrases that I hear most often is “one lucky dip please”...Twickenham folk seem to love to try their luck with the lottery...some evenings when there has been a triple giant roll-over draw, all I hear is “one lucky dip please”...so when I asked my customers, if they won the lottery jackpot, what would they do? Read on and find out...

We have heard the saying “money can’t buy you happiness” ...this has got to be true, because if it did buy you happiness, all the rich people would always be happy (which we all know is not always the case). There are plenty of incredibly rich yet incredibly miserable people (which is silently quite reassuring) and of course the same is true for the opposite. So if money can’t buy us happiness, why on earth do so many of us buy lottery tickets (me included)? Well...money can’t buy us happiness...but it may help right? So then the next question arises...what would you do with it if you won? When I asked this question to my customers, the first thing most of them said was “I would give a lot to you” which I thought was so kind of them to say. After this, many said “I’d give most if away to charity” (what a truly lovely folk Twickenham folk truly are right?). The next top answer was “I would give some to my family and friends” ...ahhhh how nice, so Twickenham folk are truly family and friends focused too. After this, the next answer was “I don’t really want to win, it’s too much money for one person” to which I answered “well why are you even buying a ticket then?” ...yes that was a common answer, but a really weird one don’t you think?

Out of all this, the thing that surfaced was that when asked what they would do if they won the lottery, the majority of customer’s first answer was “give some to you Deep!”...when I asked them why me they said “without you I wouldn’t have had the ticket, thanks to you for selling it to me!”...for the rest of the week I walked around with a huge smile on my face feeling so loved by the customers...even if they may have been saying it to be polite...it’s the thought that counts, and I felt chuffed that as their local shopkeeper, I was put ahead of their friends, families and even charities on their priority list of whom they would give money too if they won the lottery...I am truly humbled...it made me think...who needs to win the lottery when you have customers as nice as I do?

Remember...

“...True wealth is measured by the amount of people who love you...”

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK: **GOT FLIES?**

Don’t waste your money on fly sprays...that will only mask the problem and is bad for us too...instead get to the root of the problem and remove any uneaten dog/cat food soon after your pet has eaten it, keep food covered up or stored in airtight containers, keep bin lids both outdoors and indoors firmly closed at all times and sprinkle talcum powder in your kitchen bin every few days to keep it dry and mask the smell of rotting foods that flies are attracted to lay their eggs in...always choose a kind way...you will get blessings in your life and have good karma too! Share this tip!

For more tips, email: InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com or join my Facebook group: “INSECT LOVERS UNITE”.

Interview with David McGeachie on the release of his second album

Hello David, you are a well-known local estate agency owner, so how does music come into it?
Well music's been there all my life – I started playing drums when I was 9 then guitar and bass etc then was in bands in Scotland for years before coming to London, where I worked for top record labels before leaving to work for myself 26 years ago. I started the estate agency in 2006, but all this time I was playing at jams and writing songs and then I decided to try and make something of that a few years ago after meeting music publishers that liked my songs.

You released an album a few years ago?

Yes, my first one, 'Vendetta' and as I am fond of saying, it was the biggest selling local artist CD at Eel Pie Records shop, ever – mind you the previous one only sold 2! But it did well, and I was thrilled. It is all available on streaming too of course- Spotify / Amazon / iTunes etc

You call yourself David Anstruther for music – where does that name come from?

Anstruther is a fishing village in Scotland where I spent all my family childhood holidays, so it has very happy memories and good feelings for me. I still visit it most years



Do you have a band or is it all, for example, acoustic?

It all sounds like a band playing but it is all me – drums, keys, bass, guitar - and I write it all and record it too. McPrince! The only other person involved is my friend Jovan who used to work in a top studio, and he masters it all for release.

What is the style of music and what are your songs about?

I suppose it is pop/rock – I believe in 'The Song' as a structure so I try to make it interesting musically. In terms of lyrics, they are about being me, being my age and being around here! A funny thing happened with my first album – I thought people would like the general lyrics, if anything, but they liked the most personal ones, funnily enough, so this time I went for it on that side, so much so that I've printed the lyrics on the CD cover and online. I like writing about

where I live so this time tracks include 'Eel Pie Island' and 'Naked Ladies' both of which already have people singing along at open mics, which is fantastic. On the first album I had a song called 'The Draw Off' which was about the River and that gets applause too which is amazing.



How do you write your songs? Lyrics first? Or tune?

Sometimes it's a title, or a tune comes into your head and it already has words attached that fit, so you then write the song about that, but a lot of the time I have a small list of lyric ideas lying around and I try to match them to one of the musical ideas that come up at another time and make them work together. I suppose my favourite song on the album is 'Eel Pie Island' and that came about as I was walking along the embankment one night. The chorus and its tune just came into my head. Just a song about the special island we all love.

Do you play live or are you more a studio person?

I love writing and recording and creating but I've always played live and with my own songs I play them regularly around here at open mics and other gigs. A hearty round of applause for a song I wrote myself is an incredible thing for me.

Who do you think might like your songs?

I suppose people my age mainly, age 50 and up. They are, I suppose, traditional pop/rock songs with lyrics from the perspective of someone my sort of age.

What is your ambition with your music

Well, that's a good question; I'm not going to be the latest pop star at my age. I just like the idea of being 'that estate agent guy who does music and some of his songs are quite good!' and have a group of people around here who like my stuff. And also, I'd love to get a song away as a cover - my music publisher and I have started submitting songs to major artists, when invited by their managers and producers, so it would be fabulous to get a song of mine recorded by someone well-known.

Will album number 3 come along?

Yes! I have dozens of songs and new ones keep coming too, so yes, will keep going; I totally love doing it.

How is the estate agency doing?

It's great thanks, still gradually growing after all these years and I have wonderful colleagues, so that's good and I love that too, but you have to have things outside work and the biggest item in that category for me is music and songs. My great uncle Alec in Edinburgh was playing guitar and singing live well into his 80s so if I can follow him in that way I'd be delighted.

Thanks, and good luck with the album

Thanks v much indeed.



David's new album is called Jigsaw and is available on main streaming platforms plus on low price CD at Eel Pie Records, Church Street, Twickenham. The first album 'Vendetta' is also available.

Tis a Pitty Shee's a Whore

by John Ford

Richmond Shakespeare Society at the Mary Wallace Theatre, Twickenham until 26th April

John Ford's masterpiece of Jacobean theatre is not for the faint-hearted. A dark drama about sexual passion leading to despair, incest and revenge, director Rodney Figaro's production hurls itself at us from the start, but with absolute power and magnificence. The poignancy of love is shown in the physical relationship between brother Giovanni and sister Annabella which rises to supreme tragedy.

Ford takes a compassionate view of two young siblings, who discover a pure love, in stark contrast to the deceit and violence of the treacherous Italian court. He is not condoning incest, but expressing terrible pity of the waste of two young lives, the *Pitty* of the play's title. Figaro and his fine cast gradually steer us through the drama to its horrific climax with extreme skill.



Played by Will Hunter and Emma Gridley, the brother and sister are not Romeos and Juliets. Parma is a darker place than Verona. Hunter's performance is aggressive from the start, as he depicts Giovanni increasingly losing control until overtaken by madness. It is a tribute to both Hunter and Gridley that, in a performance that could go OTT, their first on stage kiss is shocking, but their emotions throughout are just kept within bounds. Gridley plays Annabella as in thrall of her domineering brother's all-consuming lust. When she learns she is with his child, her tragedy seems clearer to her than to her lover's. Giovanni has to kill her. Her final moments are most moving. A greater twosome is seldom seen.

Eric Petrossian is the mercenary Spaniard, Vasques, developing the Iago-like personality with carefully-studied brilliance. Paul Smith and Roderick Ellis, as Bergetto and Poggio, keep the comedy scenes controlled, concentrating on their own ridiculousness until nemesis descends. Fran Billington plays Floria, Giovanni's and Annabella's mother as sensitive, sage and sensible. Although originally Florio, the female characterisation works well. Billington always excels in benevolent parental roles.

John Gilbert and Junis Olmscheid's costumes are thankfully true to the 1620's period, splendid brocade, velvet, tassels and pearls.

With its many wheeling characters, interwoven plots, and visceral violence, one comes out of a play such as this positively reeling, and with the tragic recognition that, whatever Giovanni's and Annabella's feelings are for each other, their love is doomed.

Read Ralph Stanhope's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/04/21/pitty-shees-whore, and Gill Martin's reflections at www.markaspen.com/2025/04/20/pitty-whore



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In Twickenham

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The Three Piano Sonatas Op. 2

Cristian Sandrin, piano

as featured on



Join acclaimed pianist Cristian Sandrin for an extraordinary evening showcasing Beethoven's complete Opus 2 Piano Sonatas. Written to challenge the legacy of Mozart and Haydn, these three early piano sonatas mark Beethoven's explosive composition debut and his emerging unique voice within the musical world of Vienna.

Witness the complete cycle performed in the sumptuous acoustics of the St Mary's Church, in the heart of Twickenham - a rare opportunity to hear these sonatas live.

Tickets: £15 General Admissions
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Book tickets on [Eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk) or
scan the QR code

Saturday
17 May 2025

6.00 pm

St Mary's Church
Twickenham
Church Street
TW1 3NJ

The Kettner Society is a
registered charity (1161105)
Contact: kettnerconcerts@gmail.com

Lee John of Imagination

The Flashback Greatest Hits (40th Anniversary) UK Tour 2025

Comes to The Exchange, Twickenham

Thursday 1st May 2025

With special guest: DJ Calvin Francis (MI- SOUL)

"When I think of Lee John & IMAGINATION, the words music trailblazers come to mind, whose unique sound, definitive style, and body of work have unquestionably left an incredible music legacy, paving the way ahead for so many black British bands that have followed on". Trevor Nelson, MBE

With record sales in excess of over 30 million+ albums, the incomparable award-winning Lee John of 80's crossover soul hit-makers IMAGINATION is set to go on tour with a series of UK tour dates planned for 2025, performing all their unforgettable greatest hits as well as tracks from his diverse music solo career. To coincide with the 40th anniversary of Lee John and his group IMAGINATION, the "Flashback (40th Anniversary) Greatest Hits 2025 UK Tour" comes to The Exchange/ Twickenham on Thursday 1st May 2025, followed by Esher Theatre/Esher Friday 2nd May, Concorde Club/Eastleigh Friday 30th May, Jazz Café/London Friday 13th June and The Blues Kitchen/ Manchester Thursday 9th October with further dates soon to be added, this tour will reflect an incredible musical journey of songs from some of the UK's finest recording artists, spanning over a spectacular four decades.

The inimitable Lee John and his group IMAGINATION first burst onto the British music scene in 1981 with their unforgettable debut single 'Body Talk' becoming a favourite of pirate soul, jazz, and funk stations, eventually propelling the track into the charts and the band onto their debut appearance on Top of the Pops. The track was soon followed by so many amazing global classic hits singles and platinum, gold, and silver albums, with further chart hits such as 'In and Out of Love', 'Flashback', 'Just An Illusion', and 'Music and Lights', and the influential albums 'Body Talk', 'In the Heat of the Night', 'Scandalous', 'Closer', and 'Like It Is' and many more, all delivering them smash hits in over 30 countries and securing their perfect Brit Soul/Jazz/Funk songs, establishing their position as essential 80's crossover hit-makers and an influence for future generations in the music industry. Following on from his recent music collaboration with the super talented Damon Alban, in which he co-wrote and sung with Lee on the last Gorillaz album "Song Machine," with the phenomenal global track release "The Lost Chord," which has gone on to date to receive rave Intl reviews and has surpassed over 15 million streaming downloads to date. See [video](#)

Also, an exciting musical collaboration written and composed by LEE JOHN, with the smooth and sultry sounding Latin single "SOLITUDE" with x 2 Latin Grammy Award winning Brazilian Artist Jorge Vercillo a bilingual duet sung in English & Portuguese.

LEE JOHN OF IMAGINATION continues to tour the world and has appeared with many world-renowned artists such as The Jacksons, Earth Wind and Fire, Kool and the Gang, Nile Rogers of Chic, Incognito, Kid Creole, and the Coconuts. Recently, he was honoured and given a lifetime achievement award in the UK and a humanitarian award in France for his continuous ongoing charity work support in aid of SOS Children, a world orphan charity.

Singer, Songwriter, Live Performer, Producer, and Director Lee John is an artist who continues to forever challenge his own unique creativity and driving force in its endless boundaries and remains to delight fans around the globe with his timeless global classic hits and new music releases. - www.leejohn.com

To book tickets for the Live show at The Exchange/Twickenham click [here](#)



Honey Bees on the Move

BBKA Beekeepers Ready to Rescue Spring Swarms

It's that time of year when honey bee swarms start taking flight across the UK. Swarming is usually limited to a couple of months but many may not survive without your help.

The UK charity, the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA), has launched its annual Swarm Savers initiative with thousands of trained beekeepers across the country on standby to safely rescue and rehome honey bee swarms completely free of charge.



While swarming is a natural and vital part of a honey bee colony's life cycle, up to 80 per cent of swarms perish if they don't find a suitable home - a statistic that underscores the urgency of public awareness and support.

With the growing threat of the yellow-legged asian hornet - a predator that can decimate honey bee colonies - supporting the survival and safe rehoming of these swarms has never been more important.

Commenting on the situation, Diane

Drinkwater, chair of the BBKA said:

"There's something truly magical about witnessing a honey bee swarm. It's how a colony reproduces; a natural marvel where thousands of bees work together to protect their queen and find a new home. But without help, many never make it."

What should you do if you see a swarm?

Stay calm. Despite the noise and size, swarming honey bees are usually docile. Their main focus is protecting their queen and not hurting humans.

Keep a safe distance and do not attempt to move or destroy the swarm.

Correctly identify whether it is a honey bee swarm - if you're unsure, take a clear photo and contact a BBKA swarm collector. You can find identification resources [here](#).

Use the BBKA's interactive Swarm Map to locate a local volunteer swarm collector

Diane Drinkwater added:

"We know many people are fascinated or concerned by swarms but by knowing what to do, we can all help honey bees and make sure they're around for generations to come."

Honey bees are the only insect to swarm in the UK and the BBKA beekeepers are unable to help with the removal of the nests of any of the other more than 250 species of bees found in the UK.



Richmond gymnasts bring home European medals for Great Britain

From Richmond Gymnastics Association

Richmond's gymnasts enjoyed a great Acrobatic European Championships in Luxembourg, representing Great Britain and bringing home silver and bronze medals.

The 2025 Senior European All Round Silver medallists are Richmond Gymnastics Association's (RGA) Senior Men's Group: Louis Alexander, Freddie Turner, Rex Booth and Samuel Ditchburn. The Men's Group also secured a bronze medal in the Dynamic routine final, impressing the audience with their high-energy skills and upbeat performance. They showcased exceptional energy in every routine, blending flair and personality with remarkable technical precision.

RGA's Head of Acrobatics, Melanie Sanders commented, *"We are immensely proud of all our gymnasts at the 2025 European Acrobatic Championships. Their commitment and dedication is exceptional and we are delighted with their performances in Luxembourg, with bronze and silver medals being an added bonus!"*

RGA's Women's Group, Michaela Cook, Amber Harvey and Chiara Linden dazzled on the competition floor with beautiful, confident routines and high-difficulty, securing them a fantastic eighth place in the Balance routine final.

It was the first time competing at Senior level for RGA's Senior Mixed Pair Toby Cooper-Driver and Leela Were-Ramini. They looked amazing on the floor with elegant routines and successful high-power skills, placing fifth in the Dynamic routine finals and a brilliant eighth in the All Round Final.



In the 12 to 18 Age Group Championships, Christoph and Louisa performed beautifully with their poise and expressive routines, coming fifth in Europe.

Melanie added, *"In addition to their achievements, these gymnasts have become role models at the club, inspiring the next generation to pursue their dreams with the same passion and resilience. Their accomplishments not only showcase their individual talents but also reflect the strength and unity of our team. The European Championships have been a testament to their perseverance and the incredible support system surrounding them."*

Find out [how to get involved in gymnastics](#) with Richmond Gymnastics Association.

Red Roses Team to Play France

Emma Sing will earn her 3rd Red Roses start on Saturday when John Mitchell's side host France in the final round of the Guinness Women's Six Nations at Allianz Stadium.

The back-to-back Premiership Women's Rugby top points scorer comes in at full-back for her eighth cap with Ellie Kildunne ruled out due to a hamstring injury.

Half-backs Natasha Hunt and Zoe Harrison link up for the third time this tournament and Tatyana Heard returns at inside centre. Wings Abby Dow and Claudia MacDonald retain their spots after scoring two tries each last time out against Scotland, and Megan Jones remains in the 13 jersey.

Hannah Botterman and Maud Muir start at loosehead prop and tighthead prop respectively while Maddie Feaunati switches to openside flanker to accommodate Alex Matthews at Number 8.

Hooker Lark Atkin-Davies, second rows Morwenna Talling and Abbie Ward continue in their respective positions, and Zoe Aldcroft captains the team from blindside flanker for the fifth match in a row.

Red Roses team to play France

- 15 Emma Sing (Gloucester-Hartpury, 7 caps)
- 14 Abby Dow (Trailfinders Women, 51 caps)
- 13 Megan Jones (Leicester Tigers, 24 caps)
- 12 Tatyana Heard (Gloucester-Hartpury, 28 caps)
- 11 Claudia MacDonald (Exeter Chiefs, 34 caps)
- 10 Zoe Harrison (Saracens, 56 caps)
- 9 Natasha Hunt (Gloucester-Hartpury, 79 caps)
- 1 Hannah Botterman (Bristol Bears, 55 caps)
- 2 Lark Atkin-Davies (Bristol Bears, 65 caps)
- 3 Maud Muir (Gloucester-Hartpury, 39 caps)
- 4 Morwenna Talling (Sale Sharks, 21 caps)
- 5 Abbie Ward (Bristol Bears, 73 caps)
- 6 Zoe Aldcroft (Gloucester-Hartpury, 62 caps) - captain
- 7 Maddie Feaunati (Exeter Chiefs, 14 caps)
- 8 Alex Matthews (Gloucester-Hartpury, 74 caps)

Replacements

- 16 Amy Cokayne (Leicester Tigers, 82 caps)
- 17 Kelsey Clifford (Saracens, 13 caps)
- 18 Sarah Bern (Bristol Bears, 70 caps)
- 19 Rosie Galligan (Saracens, 23 caps)
- 20 Abi Burton (Trailfinders Women, 1 cap)
- 21 Lucy Packer (Harlequins, 30 caps)
- 22 Holly Aitchison (Bristol Bears, 39 caps)
- 23 Helena Rowland (Loughborough Lightning, 38 caps)



Brentford fans donate generously to support those living in poverty in west London

Written by Brentford Football Club

367 food items and £2,256 was donated for people in the community living in poverty thanks to activity organised by Brentford and Utilita Giving, the charity arm of club partner Utilita.

The generous food contributions, given by fans and staff, will go to Hounslow Community FoodBox, while the money raised will be split equally between the FoodBox and Utilita Giving, who took over the Premier League matchday for the visit of Brighton & Hove Albion to Gtech Community stadium to drive the fundraising activities.

Supporters took time out of their matchday to make donations of food items and money outside of the Gtech before [Thomas Frank's side beat the Seagulls 4-2](#).

The club's chief executive Jon Varney and chair Cliff Crown also dropped off donations on the day, while club mascots Buzz and Buzzette paid a visit to the Utilita Giving team. As part of the matchday takeover, Utilita Giving organised activities across the stadium for supporters to contribute to the donation pot.



Fans received Easter-themed prizes in an egg roulette game, while supporters in premium areas entered a raffle to win Utilita Arena tickets, a signed Brentford shirt and Amazon vouchers amongst other prizes.

At half-time, a game of football bowls between a Brentford and a Brighton fan took place on the pitch to raise even more money. Bees supporter James walked away with the victory, but together the players added £400 to the fundraising pot by tallying their scores together and generating cash donations from the club and Utilita.

Food donations were also supplemented by Brentford staff throughout the week, who ran a collection point in the club's offices and organised a collection in a local Morrisons store, with shoppers having an opportunity to take a picture with Buzz.

Sunny Kharbanda, operations manager at Hounslow Community FoodBox, said: *"The FoodBox is immensely grateful to have the support of Brentford FC and Utilita Giving, and we would like to thank the fans and local community for donating so generously to help aid our mission to continue supporting residents in crisis in our borough. Thank you to everyone involved in the arrangements to make the matchday takeover another success and have a positive impact in our community."*

Keira Meadus from Utilita Giving added: *"We are incredibly grateful to Brentford FC for allowing us to be a part of their matchday. There are few better ways to be seen by so many people and raise awareness than through football. We have forged some incredibly strong relationships in Brentford thanks to the club, and we continue to reach even more vulnerable people across the area. Thank you again. Together, we are making a real difference."*



Chancellor unveils plans to maintain level playing field for British business

British businesses will be supported to trade freely as the Chancellor chooses to act on practices that undercut fair trade, such as the dumping of cheap goods into the UK.

The government announced immediate action by the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA), the body responsible for defending the UK against certain unfair international trade practices. The Chancellor also announced her intention to review the customs treatment of Low Value Imports, which allows goods valued at £135 or less to be imported without paying customs duty.

Some of Britain's best-known retailers such as Next and Sainsburys, have called to amend the treatment, arguing that it disadvantages them by allowing international companies to undercut them.

Speaking in Washington D.C. at the annual IMF Springs meetings, Reeves was clear that an open global economy is crucial for UK growth, the number one priority of the government's Plan for Change. She said that free and open trade is good for the UK, but fairness needs to be injected into the global economic system.

Gains from global economic growth have not been equally shared both at home and abroad, and more needs to be done to tackle the rise in non-market practices that harm working people's incomes.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, said:

"The world has changed, and we are in a new era of global trade.

"We must stand up for free and open trade – crucial to deliver our Plan for Change to make everyone better off. We must help businesses keep their access to trade around the world.

"This government is meeting the moment to protect fair and open trade. Following recent announcements reducing tariffs and support for the zero-emissions vehicles industry, today's package will help businesses compete fairly with international exporters, supporting a world economy that provides stability and fairness for working people and businesses alike."

Today's support comes in addition to recent action taken by the government recently to support industry and businesses navigate tough global economic headwinds. This includes action to protect British steelmaking, as the UK vows to take a strategic approach to the forthcoming industrial strategy so the economy that can make, sell, and buy more in Britain.

As part of the Spring Statement tariffs were suspended on 89 foreign products – ranging from pasta, fruit juices and spices to plastics and gardening supplies – over the next two years. The Prime Minister announced earlier this month that the Zero Emission Vehicle Mandate is changing to make it easier for industry to upgrade to make electric vehicles while delivering the manifesto commitment to stop sales of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said:

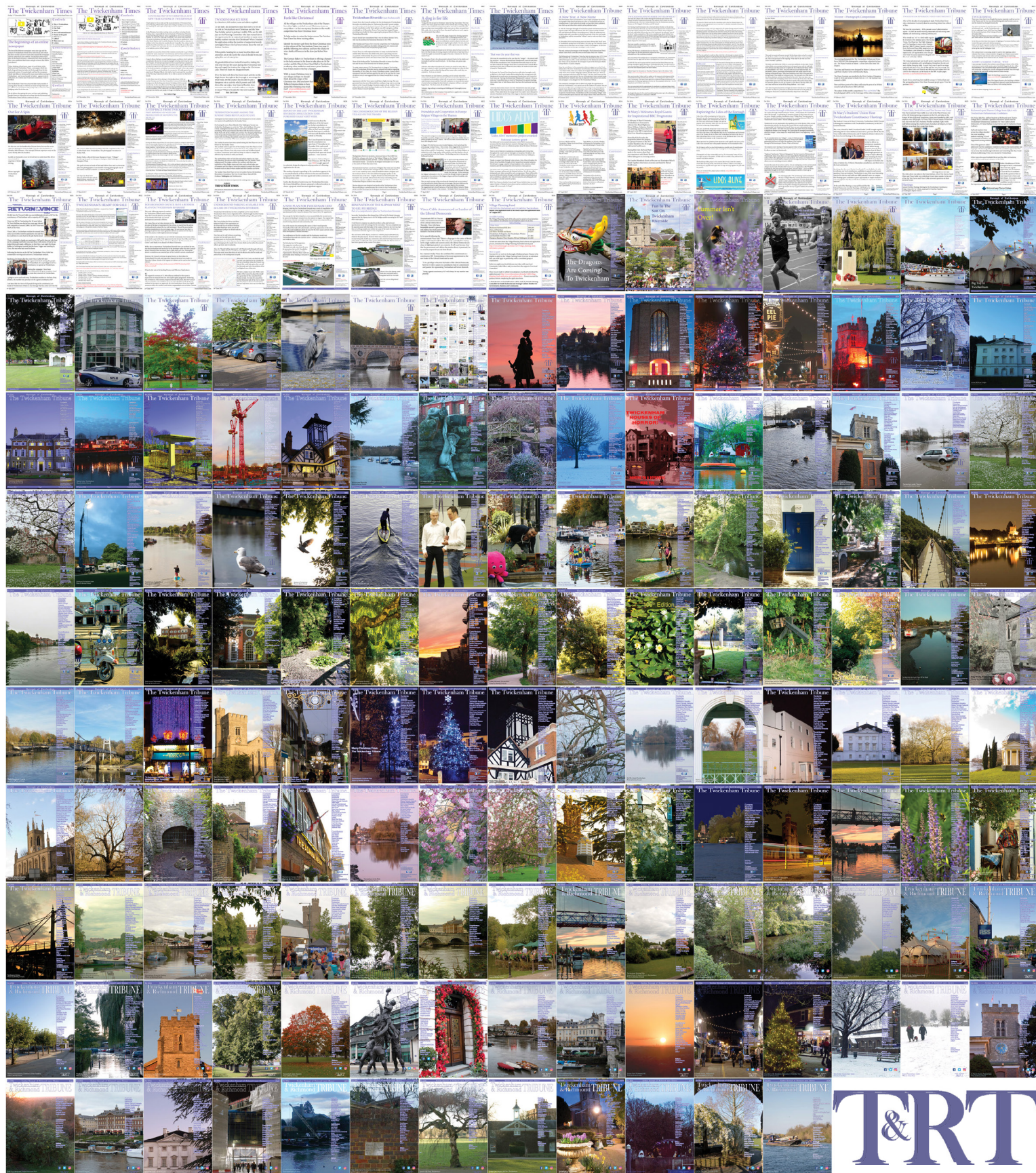
"This government won't stand idly by while cheap imports flood our markets and harm British industries. That is why I met with the TRA recently to agree urgent steps to tackle these issues in real time to deliver quicker protections for firms.

"This is about standing up for our national interest, and as part of our Plan for Change, creating a level playing field where UK businesses can thrive and grow."



HM Treasury

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Published by:

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune (in association with World InfoZone Limited)

Registered in England & Wales

Reg No 10549345

The Twickenham Tribune is registered with the ICO under the Data Protection Act, Reg No ZA224725

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