

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Terrace Gardens, Richmond
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

11th July 2025

T&RT

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RFU

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Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

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TickerTape - News in Brief

Consultation to support future pharmacy services in Richmond upon Thames

From Richmond Council

Public consultation is now open on the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025-2028.

Developed by Richmond's Health and Wellbeing Board, the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025-2028 was informed by resident feedback gathered in the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment survey undertaken in May 2025. This survey is carried out every three years and asks residents how they access pharmacies, what works well when they use them, and what they would like to see improved.

Comments from the consultation will inform the final Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, which is set to be completed in September 2025, and published the following month.

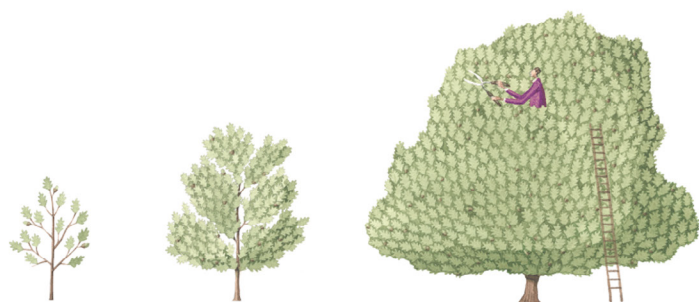
We are consulting with statutory organisations, such as pharmacy contractors, Healthwatch, the Integrated Care Board, as well as patients and community groups in who have an interest in pharmaceutical services in the borough. The final Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment will be used by NHS England and the Integrated Care Board to support decisions on new pharmacy services to continue to meet community needs now and into the future.

Residents are invited to read the report, take a short, confidential survey to share your thoughts on the current draft and provide comments on what you think of the Assessment and what else could be included.

Read the [report](#) and tell us what you think by **7 September 2025**.

[Have your say](#)

To request a paper copy or alternative format, email publichealth@richmond.gov.uk or call 020 8891 1411 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.



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darryl parkin

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The Tree Agency



Twickenham Residents and Visitors Had a Great Choice of Weekend Events

Report and pictures by Doug Goodman

Two different events provided entertainment in St Margaret's and Teddington last Saturday.



The annual St. Margaret's fair held in Moor Mead Park was bigger and better than ever and drew large crowds to enjoy picnics in the sun while listening to a number of bands on stage.

The beer tent and fast food stalls did a brisk trade while visitors admired the display of cars, the arts and craft items and tried out the funfair rides. Local shops, charities and businesses were represented ensuring a lively and happy day in the park. The annual fair is held in support of local schools and charities.

Earth Wind and Choir was the title of The Teddington Choral Society Concert at The Landmark Arts Centre on Saturday evening. The musical celebration of nature's power featured works by Haydn, Mendelssohn, Stanford and others and was conducted by Julian Collings. Together with Baritone Jon Stainsby, pianist Lindsay Bramley and the voices of 82 members of the society, a superb performance was greatly enjoyed by the large audience.

Future events: December 6th, Christmas concert at The Landmark Arts Centre; December 15th at St. James' Church in Hampton Hill for carol singing; March 28th 2026 Spring concert at All Saints Kingston. Contact www.teddingtonchoral.co.uk

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR



CHORAL DELIGHT



Full Council: A Chamber Questioned

Residents and Councillors Probe the Administration

By James Knight

Richmond's Full Council meeting, held on Tuesday, opened with a series of questions from residents and councillors alike. While the tone remained courteous, the substance revealed difficult issues for the Liberal Democrat administration. It was an evening when public concern and political scrutiny laid bare fault lines beneath the Council's composed exterior.

The most pointed challenge came from Green councillor Chas Warlow, who asked how the Council's public commitment to democratic values aligned with its opaque decision-making around the Pensford Field lease. The decision was made in a private meeting involving the Council Leader and a trustee of the organisation. No minutes were published. The response confirmed that the action was within procedural powers but made no attempt to explain why the public was excluded. In a council that prides itself on openness, the reply appeared defensive and insufficient.

Public frustration also emerged regarding social support and education issues. Mr Richard White questioned the Council about its record in special educational needs tribunals, emphasising the national trend where parents win most appeals. Councillor Penny Cambridge cited statistics: 17 conceded, 22 settled, one won by parents, but she did not recognise the stress on families caused by late-stage concessions. When asked if cases were being dropped at the last minute, she promised a written reply. For many parents, that likely sounded like evasion from a council that has been letting parents of children with SEND down.

Mr Gary Evans challenged the Council over a sharp rise in serious cycling collisions, citing a 130 per cent increase from official data. Councillor Alexander Ehmann countered that cycling rates were up, suggesting the relative risk had declined. However, he did not address the practical implications of increasing absolute figures, whether current infrastructure is fit for purpose, or why there are so few cycle tracks in Richmond.

Other residents raised well-informed questions on topics including domestic violence funding, the disbanding of the SEND Voluntary Forum, and the escalating cost of the Twickenham Riverside redevelopment. Answers were polished but often non-committal. There was a consistent pattern: the more politically sensitive the question, the more guarded the reply. Residents were thanked but rarely persuaded.

For a Council that promotes engagement and co-production, the session revealed how far practice lags behind principle.

Part Two: Reports, Reviews and Lost Votes

Beyond public questions and policy motions, the Council also reviewed a series of reports, some of which had significant implications. Chief among them was a report on the miscount at the 2024 General Election in the Richmond Park constituency, where 688 votes were omitted due to a spreadsheet error.

The incident that reversed the finishing order of the Green and Reform UK candidates was not discovered until six weeks after the count. While the elected MP remained unaffected, the report confirmed that the mistake stemmed from poorly constructed formulas and a lack of independent checking. The spreadsheet was created by a retired officer brought in to assist with the election. Despite its critical role, no technical review was undertaken, and no dry run was conducted.

The report's recommendations were pragmatic and necessary: pre-count rehearsals, mandatory formula checks, and better staff briefings. However, its conclusions did not name individuals or

scrutinise the oversight of senior officials. Nor did it address the wider damage to public trust, especially in an era where electoral integrity faces increased national scrutiny.

Other reports were more procedural but remained relevant. The Tenants' Champion report emphasised the number and types of housing complaints and indicated signs of increased engagement. The Climate and Nature Strategy 2025–2030 was adopted, though not without criticism. Although it sets ambitious targets, including replacing 6,700 gas boilers each year, a credible delivery plan was not provided. Given that only a dozen boilers have been removed in the past five years, the gap between aspiration and capacity is glaring.

These issues highlight a wider concern about Richmond's committee-led governance approach. While decisions are legally made in public, much of the discussion takes place behind closed doors, in pre-meetings or through delegated authority to chairs. Without formal oversight powers or mechanisms for public challenge, true transparency remains limited. The Council rightly defends its committee system from Whitehall interference, but it would do well to examine its own internal opacity.

Part Three: Motions Expose Richmond's Political Fault Lines

Four motions were scheduled for debate. Two passed with ease, but the other two revealed deeper divisions, particularly over environmental ambition and democratic accountability.

Council Leader Gareth Roberts opened with a motion defending the borough's committee system against proposals to adopt a cabinet model. Councillors expressed pride in Richmond's inclusive governance, yet there was little reflection on how the system actually operates. The risk of centralised decision-making behind the curtain of collective governance persists.

More contentious was the second motion, proposed by Green councillor Caroline Wren, calling on the Council to prepare parking charges based on vehicle size and emissions. The case was clear: SUVs are getting wider, more polluting, and increasingly dominate residential streets. The motion merely asked for options to be developed. But the administration refused, arguing the proposal was too complex and could alienate voters ahead of the 2026 elections. No amendment was offered. The motion was voted down.

The debate laid bare a dilemma that now confronts the Council. It speaks often of climate leadership, but on this issue it declined even to consult residents. The zero-emission parking discount has already been scrapped. Now, charges remain flat regardless of emissions or size. The Council has not only removed the green incentive, it has also rejected a chance to introduce a disincentive for more polluting vehicles. The result is a system that rewards no one and discourages nothing.

Deputy Leader Jim Millard followed with a motion on the government's council Funding review. The motion warned that Richmond could lose out under new formulas that disregard housing costs and social pressures. It passed without opposition. While this united the chamber, it also allowed the administration to shift attention to Westminster, rather than reflect on its own spending priorities, especially as borrowing for Twickenham Riverside rises to £37 million and the upwards-only pressure it will place on council tax.

A final motion on disability welfare reform was withdrawn due to policy changes at national level. However, the Council missed an opportunity to establish a proactive local stance on supporting disabled residents.

Tuesday's motions confirmed the shape of Richmond's political debate. The Liberal Democrats remain dominant, but their appetite for bold decisions is visibly limited. The Greens, though small in number, continue to press them on transparency, environmental issues, and public accountability. For a Council that often discusses ambition, it is time to demonstrate it through actions as well as words.

Dear Sir,

An Increase In Council Tax On The Horizon?

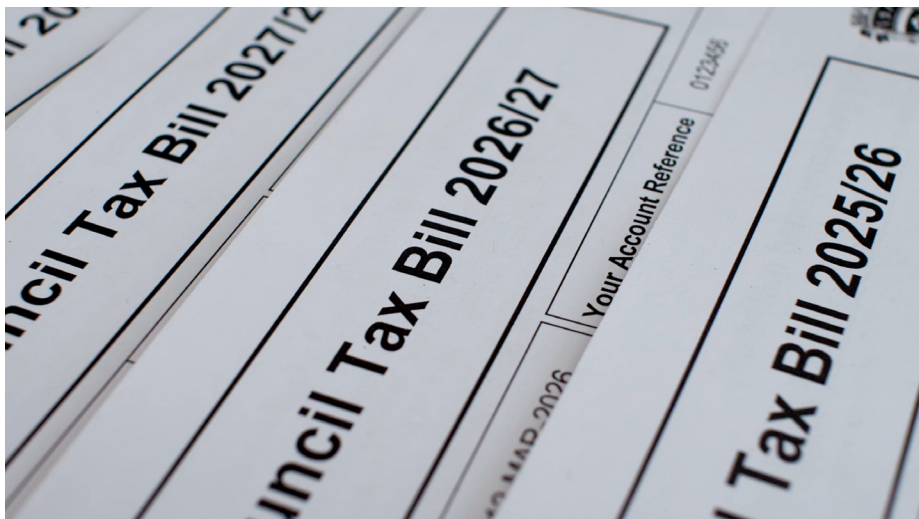
Thank you for keeping residents informed about the rising costs of the Council's plan for Twickenham Riverside. The cost stated was £67,000,000, an increase of £16,000,000 before construction starts (last week's Twickenham & Richmond Tribune, Edition 452).

It now seems that the Council will need to borrow a significant amount of money to complete their proposed plan, but will the same councillors still be representing the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames when the debt has to be paid?

Presumably, most of us will still be here and we will have to foot the bill as costs for Twickenham Riverside seem to be ever increasing. Did we vote for this?

Yours faithfully,

Twickenham Resident
Name and Address Supplied



Greens challenge rising “car-spreading” as Lib Dems block SUV parking-charge motion

The Opposition Green Party councillors took on the surge of oversized, high-polluting vehicles at Full Council on 8 July 2025, urging Richmond Council to introduce parking charges that reflect a car’s size and emissions.

The Green motion – proposed by Cllr Caroline Wren and seconded by Cllr Andrée Frieze – asked officers to design a fair, “polluter-pays” fee structure for the 2026/27 budget.

Despite cross-party support for similar measures at the London Assembly in June 2025, including the Leader of Richmond Council, Cllr Gareth Roberts, in his role as Assembly Member, the Liberal Democrat administration voted the motion down.

Why it matters

- **Parking bays can’t cope:** more than half of new cars sold in the UK are now wider than the borough’s standard 1.8m on-street bays, with many SUVs topping 2m.
- **Danger on our streets:** a child struck by an SUV is 82% more likely to die than if hit by a smaller car.
- **Public-health cost:** 111 people were injured on Richmond’s roads in 2023, costing society over £32million in direct and human costs.
- **Climate impact:** petrol and diesel SUVs burn around 20% more fuel than medium cars, while even electric SUVs need bigger batteries and more critical minerals.
- **We’re falling behind:** Around two-thirds of London boroughs now link parking permit prices to vehicle emissions – but Richmond hasn’t had any such scheme since 2011.

Richmond’s transport record still lags

The 2025 UK Council Climate Action Scorecards give Richmond just **54%** for Transport – well behind leading London authorities – and it applied a 10% penalty for air-quality failures.

What the Greens said

“Car-spreading is squeezing our Victorian streets and putting people at risk. If you choose a larger, more polluting vehicle, you should cover its true social cost.”

Cllr Caroline Wren, Opposition councillor for Fulwell and Hampton Hill

“The Lib Dems talk a good game on climate action, but when a practical measure comes forward they duck it. Greens will keep bringing forward solutions the borough needs.”

Cllr Chas Warlow, Deputy Leader of the Opposition

“Richmond pioneered emissions-based charges 20 years ago; it’s past time to update them for today’s super-sized SUVs. Evidence – and 20 other boroughs – show this works.”

Cllr Andrée Frieze, Leader of the Opposition

Next steps

Greens will continue to press the Council’s Transport & Air Quality Committee to adopt size- and emissions-based charges, and will work with residents’ groups, cycling and road-safety campaigners to build support for safer, healthier streets.

Celebrate summer at The Poppy Factory

From The Poppy Factory

Come along to The Poppy Factory for a special summer season.

Discover the unique story of The Poppy Factory and get hands-on in the charity's interactive exhibition, featuring a treasure hunt, poppy-making and creative challenges.

Hosted discovery sessions will also run throughout summer at the charity's visitor centre on Petersham Road, and groups of 25 or more who book their visits in July or August will receive a 20% discount on tickets and refreshments.

- **Date:** Until Thursday 28 August 2025
- **Location:** 20 Petersham Road, Richmond, TW10 6UR
- **Price:** From £7.50

[Book your tickets](#)



The summer programme supports The Poppy Factory's national Veteran and Family Services. Last year, the charity helped more than 1,100 members of the Armed Forces community make progress on the path to employment.

Amanda Shepard, Chief Executive of The Poppy Factory, said: "*Summer is a great time to make new connections in our community. We're looking*

forward to welcoming many different visitors this year, from adults with school-age children who are looking for an informative and affordable afternoon out, to local groups who need flexible space for their own activities. If you haven't yet discovered all that we have to offer in the heart of Richmond, now is the perfect time to get in touch."

The Poppy Factory also encourages veterans from the Armed Forces community, especially those based in London, to join their team of volunteers to support activities and share their experience of military life with visiting guests of all ages.



**THE
POPPY
FACTORY**

Rayner's move against council outsourcing

By James Knight

Angela Rayner has fired the starting gun on a dramatic shift in local government policy, declaring an end to the era of automatic outsourcing and prompting fresh questions over Richmond Council's yet-to-be-implemented leisure centre contract.

In her speech to the Local Government Association Conference, the Deputy Prime Minister confirmed that councils would now be encouraged to bring services back in-house, with a new public interest test to determine whether external contracts truly serve the public good. *"We are working to undo the ideological presumption of outsourcing by default,"* Mrs Rayner said, adding that reliance on private providers had created *"a costly dependence"* and left vulnerable residents at risk of failure.

The announcement places pressure on Liberal Democrat-run Richmond Council, which recently signed a new management contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) to run the borough's two loss making public swimming pools. The deal involves transferring council-employed staff to the private operator under TUPE arrangements. However, the contract has not yet been enacted, raising serious questions about whether it should now be paused or abandoned entirely.

Unions seize the moment

The policy change was immediately welcomed by UNISON, the UK's largest public service union, which has long campaigned for a return to direct council delivery. *"Curbs on outsourcing can't happen soon enough,"* said UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea. "In-house is always best for the public and for workers. There's no profit element, services are more efficient and responsive to local needs." Ms McAnea warned that staff often *"end up with a raw deal when external firms win contracts"* and said ministers "must put a stop to this exploitation and job insecurity."

UNISON's intervention puts Richmond's Liberal Democrats in an awkward position. While the party has publicly championed community-led services and progressive values, it has consistently supported outsourcing at the local level. The new GLL contract is just the latest in a long line of externalised services, including waste collection, grounds maintenance, and road maintenance.

Critics argue that this approach runs counter to the direction of national reform and risks locking the council into long-term arrangements as the policy winds shift.

Should Richmond hit pause?

With the GLL contract signed but not yet live, the Council faces a dilemma. Implementing the deal now would be seen as swimming against the tide of national policy. Freezing it, however, would be an admission that the original decision was premature or worse, ideologically incoherent.

The trade unions believe the answer is clear. *"A public interest test on awarding outside contracts shows the government is following through on its promise,"* Ms McAnea said. *"Ministers must demonstrate they recognise just how vital local government services are for communities and the country."*

Whether Richmond's leadership shares that view remains to be seen. But as Labour ministers seek to reverse four decades of contracting out, boroughs like Richmond may soon be asked whether they stand with the unions or with outsourced operators and legacy deals.

Either way, the clock is ticking.

Big display of opposition To Thames Water's proposals

From Mike Pemberton

Over 500 people turned out on the 28th for a big river and riverbank “Show of Hands” rally against Thames Water’s Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) proposals. Some at the rally expressed their feelings toward TDRA very clearly as you can see.



The rally was organised by local campaign group [SOLAR](#) (Save Our Lands And River) STOP Thames Water TDRA - Save Our Lands & River from Thames Water who oppose the plan to take water from the river above Teddington weir and replace it with partially treated sewage.

Thames Water are currently conducting local events as part of the requirements for a statutory consultation for feedback on this [plan](#) (TDRA Statutory Consultation 2025 - Document Library)

Having considered the detail available SOLAR maintains its opposition to the appropriateness of this plan costing over £1b over its life, yet operating on average only six weeks a year in high summer when the river life is most vulnerable to the treated effluent which would be pumped in. This opposition is based on the belief there are better, cheaper, greener alternatives which need more consideration.

Thames Water provide a feedback questionnaire asking for peoples’ preferences about the layout, features and design of the proposed scheme based on an assumption that it is going ahead with no clear option to reject the proposal as a whole. SOLAR offer a range of acceptable ways of making a rejection statement.

Responses to the consultation must be in by **August 26th**.



Notice of Temporary Ferry Closure – Saturday

Please be advised that the ferry will not be operating this Saturday between 11:45 AM and 1:00 PM. This temporary closure is to allow for a private memorial and ashes scattering ceremony in honor of Ian, affectionately known as "the man who lived on the raft."

Ian was a familiar and cherished presence in our community, and this brief pause in service is a gesture of respect and remembrance for a unique life lived close to the water he loved.

We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your understanding and support during this time.

**Thank you.
—The Ferry Team**

Twickenham Lido Interest Increases

Following the letter in the Tribune last week the interest in plans for a lido, promoted earlier in the Riverside saga, have taken on a new life. Residents are still signing the petition and recording their views on the riverside site at [Change.org](https://change.org).

Twickenham's history includes a lido and an ice rink, both brushed aside by successive Councils in favour of luxury flats that few local residents can afford. Forget the "rabbit hutch" flats to the side for those who cannot afford to buy one of the flats on the prime site, they are a token to appease residents who tried to save Twickenham pool.



Find out about suggested concepts for the Twickenham Riverside site that were ignored by those promoting a luxury tower block – and also a pub.

<https://twickenhamlido.com/>

The number of residents who want to bring back an outside pool on the site can be seen at this petition site [HERE](#)

However, when do the Council listen? And, of course, there are those more concerned with thoughts of the House of Lords than Twickenham.

Lidos Alive project: <https://lidosalive.com/project.html>

Image ©Berkley Driscoll

Next week at Richmond Council

On Wednesday Evening, the **Planning Committee** will convene. The agenda includes 1) an application to build a new house between numbers 18 and 20 Vicarage Road in Hampton Wick and a tree preservation order for an Oak Tree outside 328 Nelson Road, Whitton. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. at York House in Twickenham. For more details, click [HERE](#)

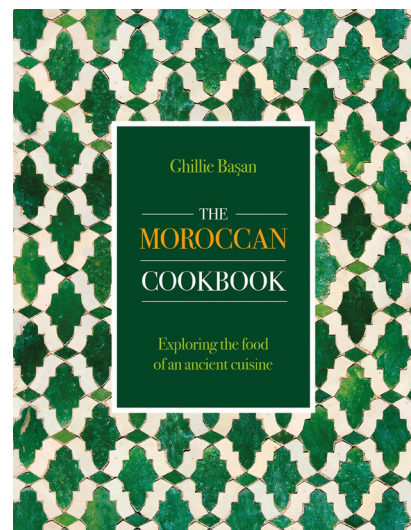
On Thursday morning, the **North West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee** will meet to discuss 1) maternity provision in North West London, 2) adult mental health, and 3) the reconfiguration of the ICB Board. The meeting will commence at 10:00 a.m. at the Hillingdon Council Civic Centre. For more details, click [HERE](#)

On Thursday evening, the **Policy and Performance Review Board** will meet to discuss 1) voter ID, 2) end-of-year corporate performance report, and 3) corporate plan 2025/26. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. at York House in Twickenham. For more 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](#)

A True Taste Of Morocco

I've long been a fan of Morocco, I've visited a number of times and, in fact, also helped with publicity for the Moroccan Tourist Office here in the UK. Moroccan food is fabulous. Spicy and scented, fruity and sweet, offering creative combinations of cumin and ginger, honey and cinnamon, saffron and rose, chillies and turmeric, nuts, marinated olives and preserved lemons, served in painted, earthenware bowls and tagines... It's no wonder the food of Morocco has been described as its "perfumed soul". Freshly baked or griddled bread, sweetmeats and fruit are offered to greet guests, and wherever you go a glass of hot, sweet mint tea is the essence of hospitality. Morocco, the land of the setting sun, is the western part of the Arab world and a geographical door to the rest of Africa. Its cooking traditions have been shaped by invaders and settlers from the ancient Romans and Arabs to the Ottomans, Spaniards and the French. This rich history and culinary culture are vividly displayed as you travel through the country. It has its roots in Africa but its branches touch the Mediterranean.



The Moroccan Cookbook by Ghillie Basan is the culmination of years of research, an evocative volume by this award-winning author and cook explores the history and customs of Morocco, as well as the local ingredients, and presents a mouthwatering selection of more than 145 classic recipes. The vibrant location photographs are by adventurer Alice Morrison, who lives in Imlil and whose expeditions have been documented in films and books. It's a fabulous book, published by Lorenz Books at £20 for a beautifully illustrated hardback - a veritable trip to Morocco! Here are some recipes to whet your appetite:

Sautéed herb salad with chilli and preserved lemon Serves four

"Firm-leafed fresh herbs, such as flat leaf parsley and mint tossed in a little olive oil and seasoned with salt, are fabulous to serve as a salad in a kemia spread, or go wonderfully with spicy kebabs or tagines. Lightly sautéed with garlic and served warm with yogurt, this dish is delightful even on its own."

- large bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley
- large bunch of fresh mint large bunch of fresh coriander
- bunch of rocket
- large bunch of spinach leaves (about 115g/4oz)
- 60–75ml/4–5 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 green or red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- ½ preserved lemon, finely chopped
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 45–60ml/3–4 tbsp Greek (strained plain) yogurt, to serve



Roughly chop the herbs, rocket and spinach. Heat the olive oil in a wide, heavy pan. Stir in the garlic and chilli, and fry until they begin to colour. Toss in the herbs, rocket and spinach and cook gently, until they begin to soften and wilt. Add the preserved lemon and season to taste. Serve the salad warm with a dollop of yogurt. **Making garlic-flavoured yogurt:** For additional flavour, crush a clove of garlic and stir it into the yogurt with salt and ground pepper to taste.

Mini saffron fish cakes with chilled sweet cucumber and cinnamon salad Serves four

“This scented cucumber salad makes a superbly refreshing accompaniment for the fish cakes. Both the fish cakes and salad include the sweet and spicy flavours that are so popular in Moroccan food. If you’re in a rush and can’t get fresh fish, canned tuna makes a good substitute. Make the salad in advance to allow time for chilling before serving.”

- 450g/1lb white fish fillets, such as sea bass, ling or haddock, skinned and cut into chunks
- 10ml/2 tsp harissa
- rind of ½ preserved lemon, finely chopped
- small bunch of fresh coriander, finely chopped
- 1 egg
- 5ml/1 tsp honey
- pinch of saffron threads, soaked in 5ml/1 tsp water

- salt and ground black pepper
- sunflower oil, for frying
- For the salad:
- 2 cucumbers, peeled and grated
- juice of 1 orange
- juice of ½ lemon
- 5–30ml/1–2 tbsp orange flower water
- 15–20ml/3–4 tsp sugar
- 2.5ml/½ tsp ground cinnamon

1. Place the cucumber in a strainer over a bowl and sprinkle with some salt. Leave to drain for about 10 minutes. Using your hands, squeeze out the excess liquid and place the cucumber in a bowl. In a small jug, combine the orange and lemon juice, orange flower water and sugar and pour over the cucumber. Toss well, sprinkle with cinnamon and chill for at least 1 hour.
2. To make the fish cakes, put the fish in a food processor. Add the harissa, preserved lemon, coriander, egg, honey, saffron with its soaking water, and seasoning, and whizz until smooth. Divide the mixture into 16 portions. Wet your hands under cold water to prevent the mixture from sticking to them, then roll each portion into a ball and flatten in the palm of your hand.
3. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the fish cakes in batches, until golden brown on each side. Drain the fish cakes on kitchen paper and keep hot until all the fish cakes are cooked. Serve immediately with the chilled cucumber salad.



Sautéed chicken livers with orange flower water and roasted hazelnuts Serves four

“Sautéed offal, such as liver and kidney, is a popular appetizer, often cooked simply in olive oil and garlic and served with lemon to squeeze over. This dish of chicken livers makes a delicious, tangy appetizer on its own, served with a few salad leaves, or spooned on thin slices of toasted bread. In the restaurants of Casablanca, where the French influence still lingers, you will find variations of this dish using lamb’s liver too.”

- 30–45ml/2–3 tbsp olive oil
- 2–3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 dried red chilli, chopped
- 5ml/1 tsp cumin seeds
- 450g/1lb chicken livers, trimmed and cut into bite size chunks
- 5ml/1 tsp ground coriander
- handful of roasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped
- 10–15ml/2–3 tsp orange flower water
- ½ preserved lemon, finely sliced or chopped
- salt and ground black pepper
- small bunch of fresh coriander, chopped
- fresh salad leaves, to serve



1. Heat the olive oil in a heavy frying pan and stir in the garlic, chilli and cumin seeds.
2. Add the chicken livers and toss over the heat until they are browned on all sides.
3. Reduce the heat a little and continue to cook for 3–5 minutes.
4. When the livers are almost cooked, add the ground coriander and hazelnuts.
5. Stir in the orange flower water and preserved lemon.
6. Season to taste with salt and black pepper and sprinkle with a little fresh coriander.
7. Serve immediately with salad leaves.

Variation:

Lamb’s liver, trimmed and finely sliced, is also good cooked this way. The trick is to sear the outside so that the middle is almost pink and melts in the mouth. If you don’t have orange flower water, try a little balsamic vinegar.

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In the News: Eel Pie Island

Teresa Read



This week Eel Pie island in Twickenham was featured in the national press.

The following website takes the visitor to earlier years on the island, known for its links with music. <https://worldinfozone.com/features.php?section=EelPieIsland>

Those living and working on Eel Pie Island, on the Thames in Twickenham in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, are a mixture of professionals, artisans and artists; it is not a tourist spot but the photographs may be of interest to some of our readers, many living outside the UK.



Thirty years?

By Deep Patel

~ Life Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



I first saw them as I opened my shop shutters at the start of the week...I was still half asleep due to staying up too late the previous night surfing the net...yes I had blurry eyes that's for sure, but I still saw them...and if you live in Twickenham...you would have noticed they are already making an appearance too...there are tons of them but what exactly causes them to come out in their thousands...can you guess what I am talking about? No I am not talking about the increased amount of people in shorts that are just way too tight for them or tee-shirts that could do with going into the rag-bank by Twickenham Green...I am talking about none other than flying ants...coming out in hoards...more so than ever before...so much so that this year we won't have a "flying ant day"...it will be a "flying ant month"...so should we be worried? What exactly is making them come out? Anytime in July whereby extreme heat is followed by extreme rain...they surface in their thousands...but should we "get rid of them"?

Ants have been on this planet millions of years before we were (so before we get on our high-horses, it's us taking residence in their properties...not the other way around).

All the large flying ants we see out are ALL females in waiting to be queens of new colonies...the tiny flying ants are the males...the males only purpose is to impregnate the females and then as soon as they have...they drop dead... (what a way to go!). The females then eat the dead males to get protein for their future babies (waste not want not)...next the successful females will dig themselves deeper into the ground where they will sit and wait for their firsts born to hatch...as they can't leave their dens, these queens will reach the point whereby they almost starve to death but will avoid starvation through eating their own wings. Once the babies hatch, they will go out to find food for their queen and push her deeper into the ground to keep her safe...once deep under the ground, the Queens won't ever see daylight again...for the whole of their lives...which could be up to a massive 30 years...So you see, try when you see them this year to AVOID stepping on them otherwise you could be ending an innocent life that is pregnant and could have lived up to 30 years...what do you want to be...the good-karma life-saving hero or the bad-karma murdering maniac?...Your choice...My advice? I would tell you to stay in and let them enjoy their one day of fun...remember, that one day is all they have...after that they will be under ground for their whole lives...and that is up to 30 years!!! So this flying ant day (or month) remember one thing...be kind...choose to live and let live!!!

Remember...

"Doesn't every life deserve at least one day of fun?"

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...

STOP ANTS INSTANTLY...WITHOUT KILLING!...

Sprinkle white vinegar, talcum powder, peppermint oil or rosemary powder where they come...Olbas oil does the trick too! They will stop coming without you having to harm them...light citronella candles or burn peppermint oil in aromatherapy tealight diffusers to stop them coming...you will get blessings in your life or have good karma for choosing a kind way too! This remedy also works to deter virtually any insect without harming them...like it & share it! For ANY specific tip to stop any "pest" or insect KINDLY (for good karma/blessings), email me: InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com, Instagram & Facebook: "Insect Lovers Unite"

Eugene Onegin

by Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky, after Alexander Pushkin

Wild Arts at Layer Marney Tower, Essex, then on tour until 18th September

There is something open and uncomplicated about this *Eugene Onegin* that makes a setting in the wide and open East Anglian vistas particularly pertinent and attractive. It keeps things simple and lets Tchaikovsky's music and libretto breathe.

Director Dominic Dromgoole, formerly the Globe's artistic director, unwraps the emotions and impulses of the opera's all-to-human characters with empathetic intimacy. Dramatic *aperçus* pin the story of youthful impulsiveness. Onegin, the visitor from the city, is 26 years old, while Tatyana, Olga and Lensky, Olga's fiancé, are all teenagers.



Orlando Jopling's adept arrangement distils Tchaikovsky's score to a quarter of the number of instruments, yet losing nothing in extent or emphasis. Music and action infuse each other, as Jopling conducts the Wild Arts Ensemble, a lithe octet, with skill and pace. The whole plot of *Eugene Onegin* turns on a single dance; and Siân Williams' choreography creates the harvest dance, a joyous courante in Larina's barn, to contrast against the stiff hauteur of the St Petersburg ballroom, and its fashionable polonaise.

[Galina Averina](#) plays a determined Tatyana, swept away by bookish ideas of romance, become real life in Onegin. Averina's honeyed soprano expresses Tatyana's turmoil and self-confusion. [Timothy Nelson](#) portrays the complicated Onegin with nuance, his burnished baritone hinting at protectiveness, in a revelatory aria explaining he is not yet ready for love. [Emily Hodkinson](#)'s effervescent mezzo has a light quicksilver timbre, which says all about the extrovert Olga's joyous sweet life.

Xavier Hetherington plays Lensky as sincere and passionate. His velvety tenor expresses "Where have you gone, golden days of my spring?" with deeply moving intensity, as Lensky waits at the dawn duelling field.

[Robert Burt](#) excels as Monsieur Triquet, the saucy French tutor, with a tinkle in both his eye and his voice; while Rozanna Madylus's spirited mezzo nails the character of the feisty but loyal servant Filipyevna.

When many years later, we see the mutual devotion between Tatyana and her older husband, Prince Gremin richly and sonorously expressed in his aria, "To love, both young and old surrender", which Welsh bass Sion Goronwy fills with a tender and gentle passion.

Dromgoole's enriching *Eugene Onegin* is an outstanding work of art that eschews extraneous elaboration to bring out the very soul of the opera.

Read Mark Aspen's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/06/21/eugene-onegin-wa

Photography by Allan Titmuss

Les Indes galantes

by Jean-Philippe Rameau, libretto by Louis Fuzelier

The Grange Festival at The Grange Northington, then on international tour until 4th December

With temperatures soaring towards the highest ever in Hampshire, it seemed almost redundant for Rameau to take us on a journey to hotter climes, with his 1735 *opéra-ballet*, but this proved to be a most remarkable voyage of discovery.

Incredibly, this is the first staged UK production of *Les Indes Galantes* as it has intricate vocal techniques, tightly interwoven score, and integrated expression of dance. These complexities are overcome by the unlikely combination of ensembles; the baroque orchestra Cappella Mediterranea, the baroque choir, Chœur de chambre de Namur; and the contemporary dance company Structure Rualité, based on hip-hop and street-dance styles. Rameau was a mould-breaking composer, and he would have loved this production, which has strong synergy between music, song, dance and design.



The structure of *Les Indes galantes* is a prologue and four *entrées*, episodic stand alone Acts. They cover the theme of love triangles involving people of different cultures, seen through the open eyes of the Enlightenment, with understanding and reason.



The foundation of the kaleidoscopic design is Benjamin Nesme's inspired and innovative lighting, centred a large suspended central disc. It is raised, lowered and tilted, while its spotlights swivel to become sea, sky, sun, a rose fountain, a forest, or most excitingly a volcano. Charlotte Coffinet's eclectic costumes are androgynous and seem to have been sourced after an explosion in a charity shop.

The action spills frequently into the auditorium, giving it an embracing feel ... and a few surprises. Consequently the conductor, Leonardo García-Alarcón perambulates around the stage to be where the action is. He is barefoot (as are many of the orchestra), grounded, and is totally immersed in the unfolding work. He has an ubiquitous fluidity that infuses the integral nature of the work. The Cappella Mediterranea electrifies the musical appeal with rarely seen period instruments. We may often see a theorbo in a baroque orchestra, occasionally valveless trumpets, but it is rare to see a musette de cour, the bellows-blown bagpipe of Rameau's time.

Bintou Dembélé's choreography blends remarkably with Rameau's baroque masterpiece, in spite of the three centuries between their creation. The dancers use staccato street-dance moves, stomping, krumping, popping and waacking and the long travelling movements of break-dancing. The dances build and build until they explode with energy. In *The Incas of Peru*, the Sun Festival dance is a colourful spectacle, but as the plot progresses, the dance becomes more frenetic, as the mass of dancers whirl and gyrate in an evocation of an erupting volcano, the disgraced Inca priest Huascar throwing himself into the volcano's mouth. To say this dance is hot, in many senses, would be an understatement.



The four principal singers are wondrously dexterous in their skilled rendition of Rameau's sinuous vocal score, with its highly decorated musical athleticism.

Soprano Ana Quintans is a charming Émilie in *The Generous Turk*, and with tenor Alasdair Kent their duet, in which they call on the wind to take them home together, is an uplifting song of joy. Soprano Laurène Paternò is a charming and spirited Phani in *The Incas of Peru*. Here, with his

outstanding rich and resonant bass-baritone voice, Andreas Wolf's portrayal of the overzealous Huascar is Olympian, climaxing in his self-immolation in the volcano's magma. Wow!

In an entirely different mood, *The Flowers* is beautiful and lyrical as it foregrounds the music as the narrative recedes, and the exquisite quartet "*tendre amour*" is showstopping in its sublimity.

There is so much to take in in this bold and innovative production. It is full of ingenuity and inventiveness and bursts with energy. Yet never are the beauty of Rameau's music and Fuzelier's words lost. This is an *Indes galantes*, spiced with the new and exotic, full of excitement and energy that is not just hot, but volcanic!

Read Mark Aspen's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/07/03/indes-galantes

Photography by Richard Hubert Smith

Airswimming

by Charlotte Jones

Teddington Theatre Club at the Coward Studio, Hampton Hill Theatre until 12th July

This strange title is an apt choice for this gem of a play. It refers to buoyancy, keeping one's head above water in times of desperation; in this case, keeping sane after being wrongly incarcerated in a mental asylum.

Airswimming highlights a neglected piece of social history when society often placed women into mental institutions without plausible reason. Such "crimes" would today be laughable but broke the then (1920's) boundaries. Persephone is condemned indefinitely to an institution for having an illegitimate baby and Dora for dressing and living like a man.



Following their relationship for some fifty years, we see the intensity, the tenderness and the love, as the contrasting personalities become slowly interwoven. Distinguishing between youth and middle-age, two actors play each character. Hence we navigate through the passing decades, back and forth effortlessly in time, in a way that is both believable and seamless.



Isabelle Crean plays the outrageously clad, eccentric elder Persephone, who has taken on the persona of her alter-ego Doris Day, in a performance combining comedy with pathos. Her song and dance numbers are delightfully reminiscent of a bygone music hall double act. [Jane Marcus](#) as the elder Dora, gives a powerful portrait of a woman whose anger at her incarceration slowly rises to a crescendo. When Dora takes on the guise of a quizmaster to challenge Persephone's knowledge of Doris Day, it is comedy gold.

Georgia Barnwell gives a tender interpretation of the young Persephone which captures her innocent naivety. Her description of having her baby taken away is especially poignant. Taking on the more difficult role of the younger Dora, the cigar smoking transvestite, is Amy Domenica, giving a restrained interpretation of her character, whose celebrations of female figures of military history are particularly amusing.

The direction, by Aleksandra Marzocca, is sensitive and the device of the elder and younger selves observing each other is intensely powerful. [Wesley Henderson Roe's](#) effective set, using blocks of stairs which transform into a diving board is imaginative, while Jacob Taylor's sound design captures the mood of the times.

Thought provoking, funny and sad, this engrossing production casts light on a long-ignored aspect of inhumanity toward women, whose fate is summed-up in the words of the Doris Day classic, *Que sera sera*, "Whatever will be, will be."



Read Steve Mackrell's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/07/09/airswimming

Photography by Steve Sitton

Emma

by Doon Mackichan and Martin Millar, after the novel by Jane Austen
Questors Productions at Pitzhanger Manor, Ealing.

Now for a bright and breezy affair, perfect for a summer evening. Jane Austen has just finished her latest manuscript, *Emma*, and her nieces sneak into her room to read it. Performed at pace, and without an interval, the play is largely performed by them, while Austen herself lounges nearby, dropping in plot details, terribly amused by the whole production. Played with visible glee by Priya Patel, Austen also takes on the key role of Mr Knightley, switching between the two by an impressive shift in body language, but also through the fun motif of her huge sunglasses.



Miss Emma Woodhouse is a wealthy young lady who amuses herself by acting as matchmaker within her community. As Emma (Caitlyn Vary, in a compelling central performance that sets the pace for the production) weaves her matchmaking, friend of the family Mr Knightley looks on in disapproval. Their friendly but fractious relationship forms the heart of the show.

On Nikoleta Stefanova's lightly-furnished set, the nieces are all great fun, both as such, and when they become characters such as Miss Bates (a lisping and breathless Isabella Cottrell Kirby), Jane Fairfax (Sophie George, with a fine display of "air-pianoforte"), Mrs Weston (a fun role for Dina Fahmy), and Harriet Smith (Eloise McCreedy, who captures her zest for life between dancing for joy and bursting into floods of tears at her romantic disappointments).

Nick Thomas plays Mr Elton, Mr Woodhouse, Robert Martin, and various servants, changing hats and characters with blistering speed. Meanwhile, every Austen story needs its cad, and Anoop Jagan delivers an absurdly charismatic performance as the dashing Frank Churchill.

Rachel Moorhead's direction keeps the pace up, and as the evening rolls on, the show becomes ever more engrossing. We should have brought along strawberries and cream to match the story's excursion to Box Hill, but luckily Mrs Elton (Dina Fahmy, a West Country-accented delight) tosses packets of seeds into the audience.

Adapting *Emma* into a romantic comedy is an inspired choice, and this show stands head and shoulders above most adaptations, partly through sticking closely to the source text, and partly through the infectious enthusiasm of everyone involved. The result is a wonderfully fresh celebration of a classic novel in idyllic surroundings, the perfect way to spend a midsummer's evening.



Read Andrew Lawston's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/06/21/emma-q

Photography by Robert Vass

MAGIC, MAYHEM and MERRIMENT

in the Fountain Gardens. JULY 14th-19th

A bewitched faery queen in love with an ass?
A company of ham actors rehearsing a play?
Lovers pursuing the wrong partners through
an enchanted wood? You couldn't make it up.
But Shakespeare did of course, and wove those
elements into a timeless and magical play - one
which has, throughout four centuries, remained
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The Richmond Shakespeare Society will be
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Bring the family, a rug and a picnic - together with a spell for continuing sunshine - and bathe
in the joy and richness of Shakespeare's verse under an English sky.



July 14th-19th in the "Naked Ladies" Fountain Gardens.

Booking now at www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk

Rehearsal photos by PETE MESSUM and TOM NUNAN





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St Mary's University

St Mary's Maintains Ranking Within Top Five Universities in London for Teaching and Support

St Mary's University, London, has once again ranked among the top five universities in London for student satisfaction in several key areas of the 2025 National Student Survey (NSS), including teaching quality, academic support, and mental wellbeing communications.



St Mary's University, London, has once again ranked among the top five universities in London for student satisfaction in several key areas of the 2025 National Student Survey (NSS), including teaching quality, academic support, and mental wellbeing communications.

The results, gained from direct feedback from St Mary's students, highlight the University's consistent strength in delivering a high-quality, student-centred experience - even amid wider sector challenges. Students rated their experience highly in several questions, with scores over 90% for teaching quality and academic support, and performance above the sector average across multiple benchmarks.

Key highlights include:

- 96% of students said teaching staff are good at explaining things
- 91% said staff supported their learning

well

- 91% rated academic support positively
- 90% said staff were easy to contact
- 86% said information about mental wellbeing support was well communicated – which is above the national average

These results place St Mary's in the top five universities in London for each of these categories.

Professor Anthony McClaran, Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University, commented: *"At a time when the whole higher education sector is facing significant challenges, it's encouraging to see our students continue to recognise the dedication of our staff and the quality of the support they receive. We are especially proud to continue our record in teaching and wellbeing."*

The 2025 NSS results also place multiple undergraduate degree subject areas at St Mary's in the top 10 nationally for first degree results.

These include:

- Finance – 93%
- Teacher Training – 93%
- Health Sciences – 92%
- Education – 90%
- Psychology – 89%

St Mary's has consistently performed in the top tier of London universities across six important NSS themes, particularly teaching quality and student support. The 2025 results reaffirm the University's strong position in delivering student outcomes that matter most.



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Alumnus Returns to Richmond upon Thames College to Host Student Event

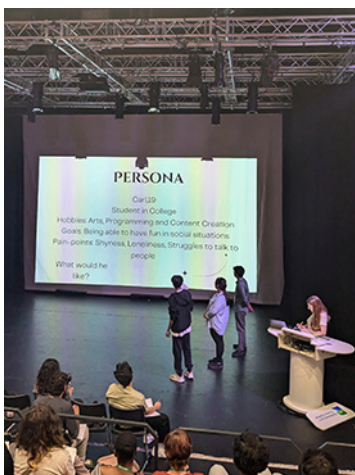
Last month, a group of A-Level students at Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) were thrown into a fast-paced day filled with new ideas, real budgets, and tight deadlines when a former RuTC student returned to the college to host one of her ideathon events.



Kirandeep Kaur attended RuTC from 2019-2021, after finishing her A-Levels she moved on to complete a two-year Level 4 Software Testing Apprenticeship with IBM. She has recently set up Ambifest events company, specialising in crafting unique, themed experiences that bring ideas to life.

With the Ambifest team our learners took part in a Halloween based event day, rising to the challenge of working in teams to build inspiring pitches to present to peers and tutors. Working outside of their comfort zones and handling unexpected setbacks, they demonstrated real resilience, adaptability, and determination throughout the day.

One of the most memorable moments came from the winning team, who lost their presentation file shortly before they were due to pitch. Rather than giving up, they delivered a heartfelt, face-to-face presentation without slides. Their idea to a combined murder mystery and horror film night aimed at tackling isolation - stood out as clear, creative, and realistic. The Ambifest team are now exploring ways to help them bring it to life this summer.



We were also proud to see students experiment with editing, content creation, animation and even acting as part of a surprise activity.

Overall, the presentations highlighted how much growth, confidence, and collaboration can take place in just one day.

CEO of Ambifest, Kirandeep commented: *"Having returned to RuTC, it's been nostalgic seeing the teachers who once supported me when I had no idea what I wanted to do in life. Thank you for the opportunity to share our life lessons with these students today. We hope they have come away with not only confidence in working with others, but also a belief that their ideas truly can make a difference in the world."*

Special thanks to our amazing volunteer mentors, and the RuTC and HRUC team, without whom we couldn't have done this! We look forward to seeing what these young minds do next and suggest they make the most of the support they have at college while they have it!"



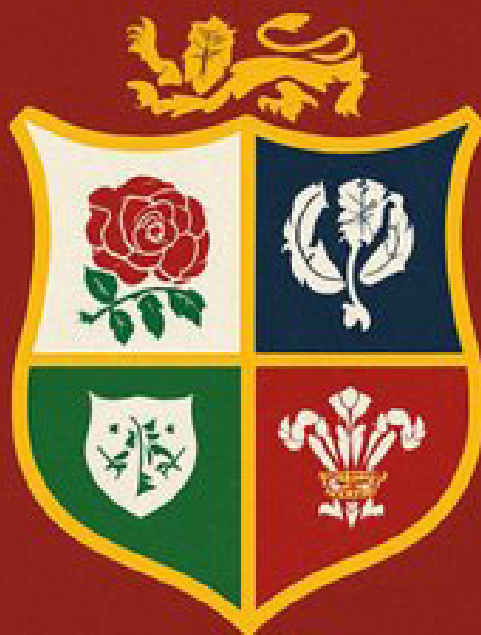
**Richmond upon
Thames College**

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England Team To Play Argentina In San Juan

England men's head coach Steve Borthwick has named his team to play Argentina at Estadio San Juan del Bicentenario on Saturday 12 July (kick-off 8.40pm BST, broadcast live on Sky Sports).

There is just one change to the starting XV that defeated Argentina in La Plata 35–12 last weekend, with Luke Northmore set to make his first start in an England shirt at centre.

The replacement bench remains unchanged, retaining a 6-2 split between forwards and backs. The final Test in the two-match series sees George Ford and Jamie George as co-captains.

“Saturday’s match in San Juan is another great challenge,” said Borthwick.

“The players have trained with real focus and intensity this week, determined to keep improving in every area.”

“We’re expecting a tactical battle as well as a tough, physical contest, and everyone is excited for what should be a fantastic Test match.”

England’s summer tour concludes with a match against the USA Eagles in Washington D.C. on Saturday 19 July.

ARGENTINA v ENGLAND

Saturday 12 July 2025

Estadio San Juan del Bicentenario, San Juan

Kick-off: 8.40pm (BST)

- 15. Freddie Steward (Leicester Tigers, 37 caps)
- 14. Tom Roebuck (Sale Sharks, 5 caps)
- 13. Luke Northmore (Harlequins, uncapped)
- 12. Seb Atkinson (Gloucester Rugby, 1 cap)
- 11. Will Muir (Bath Rugby, 1 cap)
- 10. George Ford (Sale Sharks, 100 caps) – co-captain
- 9. Ben Spencer (Bath Rugby, 9 caps)

- 1. Fin Baxter (Harlequins, 12 caps)
- 2. Jamie George (Saracens, 102 caps) – co-captain
- 3. Joe Heyes (Leicester Tigers, 13 caps)
- 4. Charlie Ewels (Bath Rugby, 32 caps)
- 5. Alex Coles (Northampton Saints, 8 caps)
- 6. Ben Curry (Sale Sharks, 12 caps)
- 7. Sam Underhill (Bath Rugby, 41 caps)
- 8. Tom Willis (Saracens, 7 caps)

Replacements:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 16. Theo Dan (Saracens, 18 caps) | 20. Guy Pepper (Bath Rugby, 1 cap) |
| 17. Bevan Rodd (Sale Sharks, 8 caps) | 21. Alex Dombrandt (Harlequins, 21 caps) |
| 18. Asher Opoku-Fordjour (Sale Sharks, 2 caps) | 22. Jack van Poortvliet (Leicester Tigers, 19 caps) |
| 19. Chandler Cunningham-South (Harlequins, 16 caps) | 23. Cadan Murley (Harlequins, 2 caps) |



RFU

Blockbuster fixtures set to kick-off new Champ Rugby season

The 2025/26 Champ Rugby season is fast approaching, with the fixtures for the [newly formatted](#) competition now confirmed, with qualification and play-off games adding aspiration and jeopardy excitement at the conclusion to the season.

Matches kick-off on the weekend of 4 October, and the final regular season matches will take place on the weekend of 9 May 2026. All teams will play each other in home and away fixtures over 26 rounds.

The upcoming season will include 14 teams, with Worcester Warriors and newly promoted Richmond joining the 12 teams from last season.

Champ Rugby will live stream games this season, with at least one fixture per round available on YouTube, increasing the visibility of the league and showcasing its rising talent, community pride and elite performances.

The opening weekend of fixtures promises to bring a host of close encounters and plenty of entertaining rugby, including the opportunity to see reigning champions Ealing Trailfinders head to Bedford Blues, locking horns with last season's runners-up. The two teams combined scoring points total for last season was close to 2,000, and both will be looking to get out of the blocks quickest come October.

Elsewhere in an action-packed Round 1, Worcester Warriors mark their return to professional rugby by hosting west midlands rivals, Coventry Rugby, at Sixways Stadium. Warriors have been busy recruiting over recent weeks and will face a tough test in Coventry, which finished fifth in the table last season.

Both Worcester Warriors v Coventry Rugby (2pm kick-off) and Ealing Trailfinders v Bedford Blues (4pm kick-off) will be the featured games on the new live streaming service, kicking off the season on Saturday 4 October.

Amphill makes the short trip to Cambridge for its opening match, which if their last meeting in May, with a 54-43 scoreline, is anything to go by, is set to be a high-scoring affair for both sets of supporters to enjoy.

Recently promoted Richmond will host Chinnor in their first match since returning to the second tier of English rugby. The London-based club notched up 21 wins from 26 games in National 1 last season, securing promotion in emphatic fashion.

Cornish Pirates are another side heading into the new season after an impressive end to their latest campaign. The Penzance side won four out of their five fixtures in the final month of last season and will be looking to continue that form in Round 1 when they host Hartpury University. Hartpury picked up impressive wins over Coventry, Cornish Pirates and Bedford last

season, and proving themselves as a tough outfit to overcome.

Doncaster Knights will head to the north midlands to take on Nottingham, hoping to continue the form that they finished their last campaign in, winning an impressive 12 matches in a row in all competitions to close out their 2024/25 season.

It is a trip further north for London Scottish in the opening round, as they are set to travel to Merseyside to take-on Caldy. Both sides won their home fixtures against each other last season and will be hoping to go one better this campaign.

Round 12 and 13 offer festive fixtures over the holiday period for supporters, these include unpredictable clashes such as Caldy v Ampthill, Ealing Trailfinders v Worcester Warriors, Coventry v Cornish Pirates and many more.

The final round of regular season action sees a reverse of Round 1, offering the chance to finish the season with some revenge at a crucial time with playoff places up for grabs. London Scottish, Doncaster Knights, Ampthill, Hartpury University, Coventry Rugby, Ealing Trailfinders and Chinnor all host their opposition, having made the journey to their league rivals in Round 1.

Changes to the season structure announced in May mean that at the end of the 26-round Champ Rugby regular season, the table will be split into qualification stages. The teams ranked from third to sixth will participate in the quarterfinals to earn entry into the semi-finals, where the winners will take on the top two ranked sides.

The winners of the semi-finals enter the final to determine the Champ Rugby champion. The overall winner will then face the bottom Premiership Rugby club in a promotion/relegation play-off, in both a home and away leg, to determine which league they will play in for the following campaign, subject to meeting the minimum standards criteria.

At the bottom end of the table, the team that finishes in 14th place will be relegated to National 1. The teams that finish in 12th and 13th will face off in a one-legged fixture, with the loser taking part in a play-off against the runner-up of National 1 to determine who will play in Champ Rugby for the following season. This play-off will be a one-legged fixture, with the winner joining the champion of National League 1 in Champ Rugby, subject to the teams meeting Champ Rugby Minimum Operating Standards.

Chair of the Champ Rugby Board, Simon Gillham, said: *"The upcoming Champ Rugby season is an exciting prospect, with a new format ready to test the teams. We are delighted to welcome Worcester Warriors and Richmond into the league, two clubs that are steeped in history and who will add to the competitiveness of Champ Rugby. The quality of rugby in last year's competition was clear, and we only expect that to improve this year, given the exciting format changes to Champ Rugby. Aspiration and jeopardy in the form of the new playoff system will create a brilliant narrative for the league and something that supporters will undoubtedly get behind. We can't wait to see how the season unfolds."*

[Click here](#) to see the full list of Champ Rugby fixtures for 2025/26.



Brentford first-team squad return to training for pre-season

Written by Brentford Football Club

The first group of Brentford players returned to training this week, as they took part in the first pre-season sessions under new Bees head coach Keith Andrews; Andrews was joined by his new backroom staff Neil MacFarlane, Mehmet Ali and Martin Drury at the Robert Rowan Performance Centre, as the west Londoners prepare for another Premier League season



Andrews, along with new first-team assistant coaches Neil MacFarlane, Mehmet Ali and Martin Drury, worked with some of the squad at Robert Rowan Performance Centre ahead of the new campaign.

In the first sessions back at Jersey Road, the first batch of first-team players were put through their paces with a lung-busting 2km Test.

This run measures the players' Maximum Aerobic Speed (MAS) by calculating the average speed over the 2km distance.

The players were working with Andrews after [his appointment as head coach](#), as well as his new-look backroom team.

[MacFarlane left his position as Brentford B head coach](#), which he has held since May 2019, to join Andrews' first-team coaching staff.

[Ali arrives at the club](#) having spent the last three years as Arsenal Under-21s head coach, while [Drury joins the Bees](#) having been at La Liga club Valencia.

The Bees are preparing for a pre-season trip to Portugal later this month, when [they will face Primeira Liga side Gil Vicente](#) in a friendly on Friday 25 July.

Estádio Cidade de Barcelos will play host to the game, which takes place as part of the club's training camp in Portugal.

Two other pre-season clashes have also been confirmed, with Keith Andrews' side making the short trip to Loftus Road on Saturday 2 August [to face west London rivals Queens Park Rangers](#).

Brentford will then welcome Bundesliga side Borussia Mönchengladbach to Gtech Community Stadium on Friday 8 August.

Those matches are in preparation for the club's fourth consecutive season in the top flight, with a [trip to Nottingham Forest first up on Sunday 17 August](#).



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