

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Contents

TickerTape
South Western Railway

The Tree Agency

Floods Of Visitors For Twickenham's High Tide Music Festival

Teddington Comes Together to Defend the Thames

Letters

Dance, laugh and sip tea at Landmark Arts Centre in Teddington

Enjoy an artistic August at Orleans House Gallery

Richmond's Council in National "Asylum Freebiegate" Row

Missed Opportunity to Reinstate an Outside Pool on Twickenham Riverside

The Exchange receives donation to enrich programme development

Traders Criticise Twickenham BID

Met in the Park

Lammas

Alarmed? You should Be!

Richmond's Street Party – a Trojan Horse for a Traffic Ban?

A talk at Garrick's Temple

Richmond's women in sport: Swans Football

Twickers Foodie: For The Love of Lemons

Gibraltar Rocks Package

Traveller's Tales 174: So Much To See In Northern France

Did you go?

Mark Aspen Review: Ladies Down Under

Mark Aspen Review: By Royal Appointment

Mark Aspen Review: Macbeth

Curtain Raiser Party!

St Mary's Endurance Athletes Selected to Represent GB at World University Games

Red Roses team to play Spain in Rugby World Cup warm-up

Rugby World Cup winner Richard Hill to be inducted to World Rugby Hall of Fame

Match Preview: QPR v Brentford

Ria Lina: Riabellion

Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

Doug Goodman

Michael Jones

Landmark Arts Centre

Orleans House Gallery

James Knight

The Exchange

Metropolitan Police

Jeremy Hamilton-Miller

'Heated' of Hampton

James Knight

Garrick's Temple

Swans Football

Alison Jee

Sunborn

Doug Goodman

Deep Patel

Andrew Lawston

Eleanor Marsh

Mark Aspen'

Richmond Shakespeare Society

St Mary's University

RFU

RFU

Brentford Football Club

Ria Lina

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TickerTape - News in Brief

South Western Railway

Altered train services and buses replace trains in the Hounslow area **Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 August**

The lines in the **Hounslow** area will be **closed all weekend** due to maintenance work.

Saturday

- **London Waterloo to Weybridge via Staines** services will be **revised**. These services will be diverted between **Barnes and Feltham** and will call additionally at **Richmond and Twickenham**.
- **Buses** will run between **Barnes and Feltham via Hounslow**.

Sunday

- **London Waterloo to Woking via Staines** services will be **revised**. These services will be diverted between **Barnes and Feltham** and will call additionally at **Richmond and Twickenham**.
- **Buses** will run between **Barnes and Feltham via Hounslow**.
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.
- **Buses** will run between **Barnes and Twickenham via Hounslow (afternoon and evening only)**.



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

The Treehouse
25 King Edwards Grove
Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9LY
Telephone 020 8274 0107
Mobile 07960 123580
Fax 020 8274 0119
info@thetreeagency.co.uk
www.thetreeagency.co.uk



The Tree Agency

Floods Of Visitors For Twickenham's High Tide Music Festival

Report by Doug Goodman

Twickenham's sixth music festival filled the riverside, town centre, The Green, several pubs and The Exchange with visitors eager to hear the 89 bands and artists performing at 17 locations throughout last Sunday. Supported by local businesses, the council, Jawbone Brewery, Essential Living, Sara Morton Real Estate and London Square, the festival celebrated the town's musical heritage.



Teddington Comes Together to Defend the Thames

By Michael Jones

There was standing room only this week at a packed public meeting in Teddington, as residents came together to discuss Thames Water's proposed Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) scheme. The evening was marked by warmth, shared concern, and a clear message: the Thames is worth protecting.

Organised by local campaign group **SOLAR (Save Our Lands and Rivers)**, the meeting welcomed people from all walks of life – swimmers, rowers, families, conservationists, and first-time campaigners. Attendees filled The Wharf restaurant & Bar in Teddington with conversation, questions, and applause as speakers set out the risks of the proposal and how residents can take action.

A River Scheme That's Raising Alarm

The TDRA scheme would allow Thames Water to pump up to 75 million litres of water from the Thames during drought periods and replace it with treated wastewater discharged upstream. While the company insists the water would be treated to a high standard, residents expressed serious concerns about river health, water quality, and public trust.



“You simply can’t have a swimming location with tertiary treated sewage there,” said one speaker, pointing to the inconsistency between the scheme and efforts to make parts of the Thames safe for recreational use.

Campaigners also questioned whether this scheme is the only option. One of the campaign coordinators explained that if the wastewater from the sewage works were treated to Level 4 using reverse osmosis, the water could be piped directly to reservoirs without being discharged into the river at all. “If they did that,” he said, “they could shovel a great big pipe between Mogden direct to the reservoirs...”

However, others acknowledged this alternative comes with its own trade-offs: reverse osmosis is energy-intensive, with a much higher carbon footprint, and may face public resistance due to the so-called “yuck factor” the psychological discomfort some people feel at the idea of drinking water directly derived from treated sewage.

While concerns were raised about water quality and the psychological barrier of drinking water derived from sewage, it's worth noting that the **United Nations** actively supports safe water recycling. Under **Sustainable Development Goal 6**, the UN calls for a substantial increase in the reuse of treated wastewater as part of global efforts to reduce pollution and improve water security. However, the UN also emphasises the importance of strong regulation, transparent public engagement, and community trust, all of which have become central points of debate in Teddington.

This technical debate highlighted the complexity of the issue, but campaigners argued that the current TDRA proposal is not the right solution, environmentally or socially.

“It Is Not a Done Deal”

Organisers were keen to stress that the proposal has not yet received planning permission. “It is not a done deal,” said one speaker. “It is a done deal if you believe Thames Water’s PR... [but] Thames Water still has a very long process to get through, and our job is to keep challenging them all the way

through.”

The formal planning application is not expected before 2026, giving campaigners time to organise and respond. Earlier consultations led to changes in the scheme following just 2,300 responses and now the campaign is targeting **30,000 signatures** to send an even stronger message.

“Why Would You Trust These People?”

One of the most striking sentiments of the evening was the community’s lack of trust in the water company behind the proposal. “If you were thinking of going into a partnership with someone... and you found out years of mismanagement, total lack of leadership, incredible disengagement... why would you, for any reason, trust these people to do anything for you?”

There was also frustration at how Thames Water has handled the consultation process. “The environmental statement won’t be published until the consultation is finished,” one resident pointed out, noting that the company’s testing data on water quality won’t be available until late 2025.

“This Is Not a Political Campaign”

Throughout the evening, speakers repeatedly emphasised the non-partisan nature of the movement. “This is not a political campaign,” one organiser said. “Thames Water is a private company... Yes, it is controversial because it might damage the environment and the quality of the water, but that is not a political point. That is a common-sense point.”

Even so, some attendees expressed concern about the perception of political activity, noting that a small number of people had arrived wearing Liberal Democrat party-branded stickers and appeared to be canvassing for support. This reportedly caused unease among several campaigners, who said such behaviour had discouraged local institutions, including some schools and GP surgeries, from getting involved, out of concern that the campaign was becoming too politicised.

In addition to technical briefings, attendees were encouraged to act: signing postcards, joining the WhatsApp group, distributing flyers, and sharing campaign materials online. “Everybody should be taking a hundred cards with them,” urged one volunteer.



Building a Movement, Not Just a Campaign

The organisers shared news that SOLAR’s social media content had reached nearly 100,000 views in a single month, driven by short video stories featuring local people and families. One contributor said: “The more I do it, the more I fall in love with this place and this whole community.”

An upcoming “Picnic and Paddle” event on 17 August will invite families to the riverside for a community day of swimming, paddleboarding, music and picnicking. Residents are also being encouraged to submit their own short videos as part of a competition to raise awareness – with prizes for the most compelling stories.

“You need to go out there and tell your children and your grandchildren,” said one speaker. “It’s their future.”

Dear Editor, Twickenham and Richmond Tribune,

Further cuts to rail services for users at Barnes, Mortlake, North Sheen, Richmond and St Margaret's Stations

Any hope that the recent re-nationalisation of South Western Railway might lead to the reinstatement in part or in whole of the four-trains-per-hour level of service to and from Waterloo serving Barnes, Mortlake, North Sheen, Richmond and St Margaret's that operated before the Covid close-down have been further dashed by the introduction earlier this week by South Western Railway of the 'Summer Timetable' (sic), which reduces the service down to only one-train-per hour level of service in each direction through the greater part of each day, from the post-Covid, two-trains-per-hour level of service in each direction through the greater part of each day. This reduces the cut in train services by 75% from the pre-Covid level.

With little if any advance or current publicity by South Western Railway for the cutting of services between the 28th July and the 29th August other than by the posting of a small notice on the outer door of St Margaret's Station (and, I assume, at other affected stations) stating that 'A reduced service will operate on the following lines for either part of or all-day Monday to Friday - Waterloo to and from Waterloo via Kingston, Waterloo to and from Windsor and Eton Riverside, Waterloo to and from Reading, and Waterloo to and from Shepperton via Richmond'. The situation for intending passengers is not helped by the absence of any clear and definitive information at St Margaret's Station (and, I assume, at other affected stations) about which trains in particular through each day have been cut.

Regular users of these rail services to and from Waterloo over the last year, will have readily observed that the number of passengers using these South Western Railway services have now have returned materially towards pre-Covid levels, even in this mid-summer season, and that overcrowding is still not infrequent, not least, when four-car trains are used in place of eight-car trains, due to alleged technical and other operational reasons.

With the route H37 and 110 bus services between St Margaret's and Richmond severely delayed by the current road-closures in Hill Street and George Street, Richmond - not helped by the full closure of Hill Rise and the necessary diversion of traffic - taking the bus is not an attractive alternative.

One can only hope that such cuts in rail-services are not a direct and continuing result of the much vaunted re-nationalisation of South Western Railway. Regular users of public transport in the area deserve much better. Sadly, from the advice provided back in March in a response from South Western Railway to my concerns about the level of services, conveyed through my MP, 'at present there are no plans for increases in service frequencies across the SWR network'.

Kind regards,

Paul Velluet - Regular user of St Margaret's, Richmond and Waterloo Stations.

Dance, laugh and sip tea at Landmark Arts Centre in Teddington

From Landmark Arts Centre

This Saturday 2 August, come along to Landmark Arts Centre for a joyful afternoon!

Whether you're a seasoned dancer or a complete beginner, the Landmark Tea Dance is a fun and social way to spend an afternoon. Perfect for groups or solo visitors, it's a chance to try something new or rediscover the joy of dancing. With great music, tea and plenty of space to move, everyone is welcome to join the fun.

Led by the ever-popular Mr Wonderful, you will enjoy a mix of classic Ballroom, Latin, and Sequence dances in a relaxed and friendly setting. Start with an optional beginner class to learn the basics or brush up on your steps, then stay for the main event.

It's the perfect way to spend time with friends, meet new people, and experience the magic of our beautiful new dance floor!

Date: Saturday 2 August 2025

Time: 12 noon to 4.30pm

Location: Landmark Arts Centre, Teddington

Price: From £10

[Book your tickets](#)



Enjoy an artistic August at Orleans House Gallery

From Orleans House Gallery

This summer, come along to Orleans House Gallery with your little ones for creativity, exploration or simply some fun discovering the woods.

National Play Day

On Wednesday 6 August 2025, come and build playful spaces! Make cosy nooks, secret hideaways, and imagination dens using all kinds of curious materials. Let your creativity run wild – explore, build, and dream together. Drop in and stay as long as you like – there is no need to book and this activity is free: [National Play Day – Create and Play](#).

Collect your free art pack

A new art pack inspired, by the artwork My Body is a Sundial, is available until 31 August 2025 or until stocks last. The activity explores colours and shadows. Inside the pack, you will find materials and instructions on how to use them.

Enjoy exhibitions about nature

Listen and dance to the Nature Sings songs by Finn Chatwyn-Ros in the Cultural Reforesting exhibition. Use the family trail or sensory bag to guide your visit through the exhibitions. Current exhibitions are [Cultural Reforesting](#) and [Imagining the Forest](#).

Don't forget to pick up a copy of Families in the Forest guide from the Cultural Reforesting exhibition.

Café and outdoor fun

Visit the café, serving ice creams, refreshments, snacks and lunch options. Spend time in the woodland and grounds, including a families play area.

[Find out more.](#)

Photo credit: Anne Tetzlaff



Richmond's Council in National "Asylum Freebiegate" Row

By James Knight

When the political blog Guido Fawkes described Richmond Council as one of the most "egregious examples" of local authorities offering free perks to asylum seekers, many might have dismissed it as just another tabloid-provocation. However, beneath the rhetorical flourish lies a genuine concern; one that quietly reverberates through leisure centres, swimming pools, and council meeting rooms.

At the centre of the controversy is the Council's Fair Access Scheme, which provides entirely free access to swimming pools, gym sessions, and group exercise classes for people seeking



asylum and those in emergency accommodation. Meanwhile, disabled residents, people on pension credit, and other low-income locals are asked to pay £30 per month, while full-paying residents now face charges of £52.50 a month to access the same facilities.

The Council's official response, issued following national media coverage, framed it as a compassionate initiative: "This is a borough of sanctuary. The scheme is designed to remove barriers to participation for residents who are most in need of support. This includes those in emergency accommodation, on low incomes, or fleeing violence and persecution. The council remains committed to creating a fairer borough where everyone has the opportunity to lead a healthy and active life."

However, critics argue that, regardless of the intention, the implementation of the policy is creating inequality rather than removing it. Many of those most affected by the recent changes are Richmond's older residents, who are now paying significantly higher fees to provide discounts for migrants.

The Cost of Compassion?

Since 2022, the cost of an annual swim membership for over-60s has increased from £180 to £320, while the pay-as-you-go swim price for senior citizens has jumped from £2.60 to £4.50 – a 73% increase in just three years. These hikes were introduced as the Council simultaneously rolled out free access for those qualifying under the new Fair Access criteria.

One local resident, speaking at a public council meeting in November 2024 when the changes were formally adopted, captured what this shift feels like on the ground: "*It's not fair to take*

something away from older people that they've had for years. It's not just about exercise – it's about social contact, about routine, and about dignity."

Her concerns are shared by many across the borough. Leisure centres are not simply places of fitness, but crucial community spaces. For many pensioners, especially those living alone, regular swim sessions or fitness classes are a key part of mental and physical wellbeing. The withdrawal of affordable access risks turning an inclusive community asset into a means-tested luxury.

Voices from Experience

Zara Gezdari, the Conservative Parliamentary candidate for Richmond Park and herself a former refugee from Albania, brought national attention to the policy in a recent GB News interview. Drawing on her personal experience, she noted: *"I fled Albania in 1997 because of civil war. I was lucky to get an education, but I wasn't given a gym membership – and I didn't expect one. It just feels wrong that people on disability benefits are paying while others get access for free."*

Gezdari's perspective, while politically framed, highlights the discomfort many feel with a scheme that appears to reward one form of vulnerability while sidelining others. The Fair Access policy is intended to remove barriers, but by focusing so narrowly on sanctuary status and housing need, it may be reinforcing others.

Her remarks were echoed by Max Young of Guido Fawkes, who was more blunt in his assessment: "Richmond is one of the most egregious examples we've seen of councils doing feel-good stuff while the state collapses in slow motion." He warned that generous publicised perks, however minor in cost, risk creating false expectations among people considering dangerous Channel crossings. "It doesn't wash with taxpayers anymore," he said. "It's not just unfair, it's fuelling a perception that the system rewards arrival, not contribution."

A Borough at a Crossroads

To be clear, no one is suggesting that asylum seekers cross borders in search of leisure centre passes. But in an era where migration is already a politically charged and emotionally fraught topic, public authorities must act with care and consistency. Free health club access may be a small gesture, but it is a highly visible one, and visibility matters.

Councillor Gareth Roberts and his Liberal Democrat administration may not have foreseen the national spotlight when this policy was introduced. But the scrutiny is now here, and the contradictions it exposes will not go away quietly. A borough of sanctuary should aim to lift up the vulnerable, but that goal cannot be achieved by pushing others down in the process.

It is no longer enough to say the policy is well-intentioned. Many policies are. The real test is whether it is fair, sustainable, and respected by those who fund it. Right now, that test is being failed.

If the Council wishes to retain the public's trust, across all communities, it must act. That means restoring affordable access for older residents, improving communication with local stakeholders, and applying the principle of fairness evenly and transparently. Anything less risks turning a borough of sanctuary into one of division.

Missed Opportunity to Reinstate an Outside Pool on Twickenham Riverside

Support for the return of the pool on Twickenham Riverside continues

This week's support from residents is 4,870 (an increase from 4,806 on 18th July 2025)
You can view and sign the petition [HERE](#)

Previous Lido concepts: <https://twickenhamlido.com/video.html>

The Cost of the Current Council Plan

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' present Twickenham Riverside Housing and Pub plan to cost an estimated **£67.2 million** (recent reported borrowing **£16.8 million**)

The Exchange receives donation to enrich programme development

From The Exchange

A generous £500 donation from The Arts Society Richmond has supported the development of The Exchange's artistic programme and helped increase inclusivity.

Thanks to this donation, The Exchange is now the owner of a beautiful Mini-Grand piano which will be used by visiting artists, and also available to community groups and schools that use the theatre for performances. This addition will enhance audience experience as well as open up opportunities for a wider range of musical genres to be brought to The Exchange.

Becky Shaw, Programme & Partnership Manager at The Exchange, commented: "A Mini-Grand piano has been on our wish list for many years

and without this donation it would not have been possible to purchase it. We are very grateful to The Arts Society Richmond for their generosity as the piano makes a wonderful addition to the venue and will bring great enjoyment to our visitors."



The Exchange is a multi-arts venue owned by Richmond Council and leased to St Mary's University for a mix of university use, community activities and public events. Based in the heart of Twickenham, it comprises a 285-seat theatre space, five multi-purpose studio rooms and a large conservatory. The venue offers a year-round programme of events of film, live music, theatre, spoken word, comedy and educational classes, providing a welcoming cultural space for people of all ages in our borough and beyond.

Find out more about [what's on at the Exchange](#).

Traders Criticise Twickenham BID

Twickenham Traders Say They Are Out Of The Loop

Narrow Support, Broad Impact

A scheme designed to reinvigorate Twickenham's town centre is facing growing scrutiny as questions arise over financial priorities, legal enforcement, and the democratic mandate underpinning its renewal. The Discover Twickenham Business Improvement District (BID), funded through a compulsory levy on local businesses, has come under fire from several quarters after it emerged that a significant number of traders have faced legal action for non-payment.

The BID, renewed in late 2023, imposes an annual charge of 1.57 per cent of a business's 2023 rateable value, capped at £12,000, on all hereditaments valued at £12,000 or more. This levy is in addition to business rates and is enforced by Richmond Council, which uses statutory powers to collect payments.

Despite the strength of these powers, the renewal ballot revealed limited enthusiasm. Of the 196 ballots cast, only 109 were in favour—a slender majority of 55.6 per cent. With at least 327 hereditaments having paid the levy, turnout was strikingly low, and support from the business community was clearly far from overwhelming.

Court Action Against Local Traders

Perhaps more revealing is the scale of enforcement now underway. In the first year of the renewed BID term, 114 businesses received summons letters. Of these, 59 resulted in court-issued liability orders, while 12 unpaid accounts were passed to enforcement agents. That means enforcement action was taken against more than one in three levy payers.

Several traders told the Tribune that they were unaware the BID had been renewed, while others described the levy as unjustifiable and poorly explained. One café owner said simply, "We just get a bill, and now a threat of court action if we don't pay. There's no real engagement."

Festival Funding Raises Eyebrows

At the centre of growing concern is the annual High Tide Festival, a flagship summer event supported by BID funds and run by High Tide Twickenham CIC. The most recent published accounts for the CIC reveal total expenditure of £77,979 in 2023, of which £42,696—almost 55 per cent—was spent on performer fees. The directors' statement notes that the full cost of staging the event was £114,844, with other public bodies covering additional items directly.

The BID is listed as a funder, along with Richmond Council and other sponsors. While the festival is broadly popular with visitors, traders have raised serious concerns about the size of these payments and the event's return on investment for levy payers. One local business owner said I think you will find a very large amount went to High Tide. I don't know who decides on where the budget is spent—there doesn't seem to be any consultation with traders in town."

In fact, High Tide is now operated by High Tide Twickenham CIC, a not-for-profit company.

Kevin Jones resigned from Eel Pie Records on 30 April 2024 and stepped down from the BID board on 5 November 2024. He remains a director of the CIC. “The Chair is voluntary,” a trader added, “but the BID manager is paid. And we, the traders, are completely out of the loop.”

Some traders have begun to question whether the festival, while lively and well-attended, truly supports local business in any measurable way. “People come for the music and the atmosphere,” one high street retailer remarked, “but they’re not browsing the shops or making appointments; they’re queuing for beer.” One trader asked. With High Tide absorbing a large share of the BID’s cultural budget, the opportunity cost is becoming harder to ignore. Critics argue that smaller, more frequent events, tailored to local audiences and coordinated with shopfront promotions, might drive more sustainable footfall across the year.

Double-Charging for Council Duties?

Another source of controversy is the BID’s spending on supplementary street cleaning, graffiti removal, and jet-washing. While these services are visible and often welcomed by residents, some business owners have questioned whether such expenditure is appropriate, given that Richmond Council already has a legal duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to maintain public cleanliness.

NI195 national standards measure whether a “reasonable standard” of cleanliness is being met, and the BID’s own baseline agreement with the Council lists cleansing and graffiti removal among core municipal duties. For those already paying full business rates, the BID’s use of levy funds to duplicate essential services feels like double taxation, with many traders feeling that the council has too much influence over the BID.

Lack of Evidence for Impact

Despite the criticism, supporters of the BID argue that the scheme has delivered visible improvements, including seasonal lights, promotions, and popular public events. However, the BID has yet to publish detailed reports demonstrating the impact of these activities on footfall or local sales, leaving many levy payers unsure of what, if anything, they are gaining in return for their contribution.

Business-Led in Name Only?

Though officially described as “business-led,” the BID is run by a private limited company with decisions made by a voluntary board and a salaried manager. A growing number of business owners now believe that the BID suffers from limited accountability. Suggestions raised include regular consultation with levy payers, public disclosure of major grants and funding decisions, and safeguards to prevent perceived conflicts of interest.

The Road Ahead for Twickenham

Twickenham is a town still recovering from the economic aftershocks of the pandemic, high inflation, and a retail sector in flux. While few would object to initiatives that aim to bring footfall and energy back to the high street, many are questioning whether the current BID model, compulsory in cost but limited in consent, is the right vehicle to deliver that.

Until local traders feel consulted, respected and fairly treated, the discontent is unlikely to subside.

MET IN THE PARK

6TH AUGUST
OLD DEER PARK,
RICHMOND



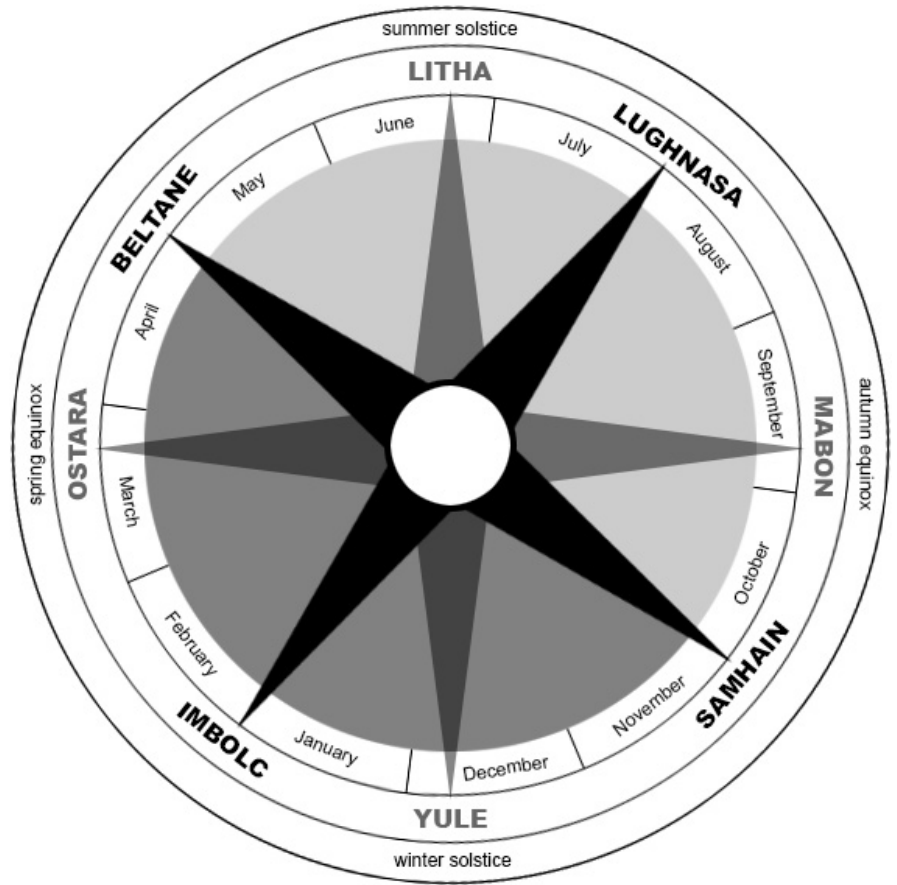
COME ALONG AND MEET TSG,
POLICE HORSES AND DOGS, RNLI,
LONDON FIRE BRIGADE AND MANY MORE!

Lammas

By Jeremy Hamilton-Miller

August 1st is the Festival of Lammas. If you have friends who are neopagans, druids or wicca, they will tell you that this is an ancient celebration marking the beginning of harvest time. August 1st lies halfway between the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes, thus being symbolically a turning point in the year. To the Pagan community, Lammas is one of the points of the Wheel of the Year.

The name is derived from the Celtic god Lugh aka Lughnasa, who represents skills, trade and harvests. Oddly enough, the river Lea, a tributary of the Thames, is thought to be named after Lugh (so also Leyton, Leytonstone and Luton, that are close to where this river flows).



Wheel of the Year.

Lammas was formerly widely observed in Ireland and Scotland, and has been adopted by some Christian churches in the Northern Hemisphere as “Loaf Mass” day, the loaf representing the result of harvest. The pagans celebrate by baking, and also making corn dollies, symbols of good luck and fertility.



Corn dollies

Lammas is more of a true “midsummer day” than the traditional Midsummer’s Day, June 24; the Summer Solstice, June 20 or 21, thus a few days earlier, is called Litha in Pagan tradition.

If the above seems irrelevant in this day and age, note that August 1st is also International Beer Day

Alarmed? You should Be!

by 'Heated' of Hampton.

On 18 Feb this year, my telephone rang just as I switched on the cooker hob to heat about 2mm of oil in a small saucepan – so I immediately switched it off and went upstairs to answer the phone.

Three minutes later, there was an earsplitting din as both smoke alarms sounded so I went down and found the lounge and kitchen full of smoke with flames over a metre high coming from the pan.

As a retired British Airways pilot with years of safety training with real fires, I knew the drill and immediately used the kitchen fire blanket to smother the flames. It worked! I knew not to put water on it but, as an extra safety measure, I opened the kitchen door and threw it, still wrapped in the blanket, out into the garden. When I turned round, I saw the cooker hood was also burning so I emptied my extinguisher into it. White powder everywhere but the fires were out!

I was then shocked to see that the cooker knob was not in the OFF position but in the MAX position – so while I was on the phone the pan was getting hotter and hotter until it ignited.

I did the right thing by turning it off when the phone rang but it had actually click-stopped in the MAX position – because OFF and MAX are adjacent and look similar. Strangely, the knobs turn anticlockwise to increase – unlike all other knobs in the world which turn clockwise to increase and anticlockwise to decrease. The extractor hood caught fire not because it was dirty but because, unknown to me, its fan blades were flammable plastic! These are serious design faults on modern equipment about which I will be contacting the manufacturers. My conclusion is that the fire was caused by the knob's design, leading to flames despite my believing I had turned it off.

Although the fires were out, I dialled 999 and the operator rightly sent the Fire Brigade and ambulance anyway. She confirmed what I was already doing, i.e. putting my hands under cool running water. As I did so, most of the skin on the backs of my hands simply slid off into the sink leaving both hands completely raw. Horrific!

Two fire engines arrived incredibly quickly, probably within two minutes. I didn't realise I was so badly burnt until the firemen wrapped my hands in cling-film and told me it was serious. They were incredibly kind and secured the house and even came to A&E later to check that I was ok! The ambulance crew were also great and took me to West Middlesex Hospital where I was treated immediately. The doctor sent photos of my hands to Chelsea and Westminster Hospital for advice as this is the main burns unit for London. I have written to thank them all.

The next day, C&W Hospital found I had already sustained an infection through the raw burnt skin requiring three days as an in-patient on an antibiotic drip followed by twice-weekly attendance ever since for redressing, physiotherapy, and pain management. The bandages mean I cannot drive or use public transport so I need a taxi each time. So far, that's nearly £4,000 in taxi fares not recoverable from insurance.

There was no pain on the day of the fire but since then it has been agony 24 hours a day with excruciating stabbing pains across both hands. Fortunately, all fingers and thumbs are working (I can still play the clarinet) but daily tasks such as dressing and bathing have been almost impossible. In fact, although all the medical staff have been very kind, it has been nearly six months of total misery with possibly another year to properly heal. From just two seconds of heat!



The favourite phrase following a disaster seems to be '*Lessons will be learnt*,' so I urge readers to consider the importance of the following precautions:

1. You **MUST** have smoke alarms in your house. Without them, my house would have burnt down and I might not be here to tell the tale. I've been shocked at how many friends and neighbours don't have them.
2. DO check the London Fire Brigade website for expert advice, especially when cooking. In fact, a professional chef friend told me that he never fries anything at home because it's just too dangerous. But most people do fry things – so at least have a fire blanket and a Firexo sachet (see below) on the wall by the kitchen door.

Fortunately, due to my flying training, there was no panic as my instinct was to deal with it rather than just escape although, with hindsight, escape would have been easier and safer. I still have no idea how the burns occurred, especially as they were all on the backs of my hands. Most people assume that it was the oil that burnt my hands but the oil had all burnt away, so I assume it was the residual heat from the pan and its metal handle. I have changed all my saucepans to Japanese ones which have wooden handles.

I have also replaced my 1kg extinguishers with 2kg ones suitable for all types of fires including lithium batteries. Another, made by the FIREXO company specifically for cooking oil fires, is a plastic sachet which you simply put into the burning pan to extinguish it. (see their website video). Very cheap and easy. If I'd had this, I would not now be going to hospital for a year.

My flying training also taught me to always know escape routes especially if you have children or elderly family. This applies to holiday hotels, too, where the first thing I do when checking in is to always get a room not above the fourth floor and check the location of the fire escapes. Any higher and you might not get out.

DO practice fire drills with your family. I am always extremely careful about home safety but, even so, the consequences of my small fire have been absolutely terrible and could have been fatal.

So, PLEASE, PLEASE, make sure you know what to do. Just one smoke alarm could save you.

You only have one life so make sure you keep it!

Richmond's Street Party – a Trojan Horse for a Traffic Ban?

By James Knight

Richmond Council is promising “music, creativity and community” when it closes George Street to traffic for a new festival this September. But behind the upbeat talk of street performers and pop-up dining, many believe the council is laying the groundwork for something far more permanent: the long-planned pedestrianisation of one of Richmond's busiest roads.



Set for Saturday 13 September, the one-day event will see George Street and Whittaker Avenue handed over to parades, live music, theatre and food stalls. Councillor Katie Mansfield, the Liberal Democrat lead for Richmond Town Centre, describes it as “a way to try new ideas” and “show what’s possible when we use our streets differently.” To critics, the implication is clear: pedestrianisation is already the goal and the festival is simply a public relations exercise to make that decision more palatable.

January's Criticism Still Lingers

When the council's **Town Centre Vision** was unveiled in January, it was met with scepticism from residents and business owners alike. Critics dismissed it as more branding than blueprint: a short, vague strategy that seemed more interested in optics than outcomes.

Martin Barker, who runs the YouTube channel *Richmond Council Watch*, mocked the strategy at the time, comparing it to AI-generated waffle and reading out a near-identical version created using ChatGPT.

Pamela Fleming of the Richmond Society raised more substantive concerns. She warned that pedestrianising George Street would displace traffic into residential roads like Church Road and Queens Road, increasing congestion and pollution in precisely the places families live. The council, she said, had not published any serious modelling or data to address these consequences.

Although the council promised “phased trials in the summer,” there has been little follow-up. The September festival now appears to be the first step: not a trial, but a demonstration.

Who's Paying for This?

While the event is presented as a celebration of Richmond's creativity, it is not being paid for by the council alone. The **Richmond Business Improvement District (BID)** funded by levies on local businesses is also subsidising the festival.

Some traders have contacted the *Tribune* to express concern that the BID, set up to support business interests, is instead **underwriting a political agenda** with clear implications for traffic and trade.

“Most of us thought the BID was here to support businesses, not bankroll the council's campaign to pedestrianise the high street,” said one shopkeeper. “If this experiment backfires, we're the ones who'll suffer and we're paying for it.”

Congestion Already at Breaking Point

The festival comes at a time when Richmond's road network is under intense pressure. According to TomTom's latest congestion index, Richmond upon Thames is now London's most congested borough, with an average congestion level of 41 per cent in 2024.

Drivers now take 24.1 minutes to travel just 10km, with average speeds of only 24.8mph. TomTom attributes this to narrow roads, the borough's popularity, high SUV ownership, and the spread of ULEZ-related displacement traffic.

Critics argue that deliberately closing George Street, one of the few arterial routes through the town centre, will only make things worse. But some suspect that worsening congestion isn't an unintended consequence of these policies, but the desired effect.

A Policy of Inconvenience

The Liberal Democrats often present their transport reforms as moral imperatives: less driving, more walking and cycling, lower emissions are their commandments. But critics point out that many of these policies have little to do with improving the environment and everything to do with deterring car use through engineered inconvenience.

For those who can work from home or commute occasionally by train, a longer journey time is a small trade-off. But for tradespeople, delivery drivers and carers, people who rely on their vehicles to earn a living, these delays have real consequences.

"This is a policy that punishes the people who can't opt out of the road network," said one local contractor. "The people who support it the most are often the ones least affected by it."

Footfall – But Who Really Benefits?

The council insists that street festivals bring life and footfall to the high street. And they do at least temporarily. Families come to enjoy the performances, grab a coffee or ice cream, and browse.

But shopkeepers argue that this kind of traffic rarely turns into serious custom. "A family who comes for a parade isn't going to drop £100 on homewares or fashion," one retailer said privately. "They'll buy a snack and leave. Meanwhile, we've lost trade from customers who drive in, park, and actually shop."

For small, independent businesses already under pressure, the loss of vehicle access and delivery convenience could be the difference between surviving and folding.

"As one business owner put it: 'We're not asking for festivals – we're asking for customers.'"

The Bigger Picture

Richmond's streets will no doubt be lively on 13 September, and many residents will enjoy the festivities. But the real test isn't whether the event feels fun: it's whether the borough is willing to accept the long-term consequences of closing George Street to traffic.

Because if that decision is made permanent, residents will also be asked to accept chronic congestion, longer journey times, and an unspoken shift: that car use in Richmond should be so unpleasant that people give it up altogether.

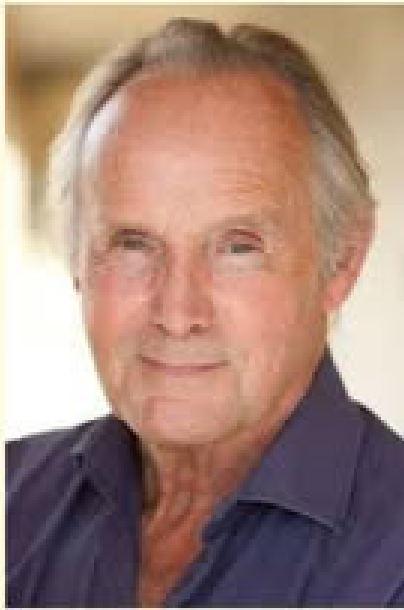
Enjoy the music, the food stalls, and the atmosphere. But ask yourself: is this really a celebration of community, or a dress rehearsal for a political decision that's already been made?

A Talk at Garrick's Temple

by Clive Francis

David Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee

**Sunday 10th August
at 6pm**



The actor Clive Francis - renowned Shakespearean actor and television star, and Chairman of the Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare Trust - will give a talk at the Temple, recounting the tale of David Garrick's 1769 Shakespeare Jubilee. Wine and other refreshments will be served during the talk.

David Garrick - Shakespearean actor, impresario and showman - organised the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769 that put Stratford on the tourist map. It also nearly bankrupted Garrick, but he managed to transform his fortunes by successfully retelling the story of the celebration in his Drury Lane theatre. Enjoy a glass of wine inside the Temple built by Garrick as Clive leads us through this boisterous and intriguing story.



Tickets cost £15

Book online at www.garrickstemple.org.uk/events

Or pay with cash or card on the door

Richmond's women in sport: Swans Football

From Swans Football

Meet Swans Football, who are building a welcoming and inclusive platform for women's football in and around Richmond upon Thames.

With the Lionesses bringing home their second consecutive Euros title, a huge summer of women's sport has already given us amazing moments and memories. Now all eyes turn towards the Red Roses at the Women's Rugby World Cup taking place on home soil from Friday 22 August, with the bronze medal match and the final taking place at Twickenham's Allianz Stadium on Saturday 27 September.

About Swans Football

Swans Football started in Twickenham in 2023, with games now also available in Richmond and Barnes for women aged anywhere between 18 and 81+, with no experience needed to get involved.

The sessions already attract a broad spectrum of women including many who have never played before; women who used to play but dropped out of the sport, and parents of youth footballers keen to better understand the game their children play.



Those who take part enjoy a fully inclusive football experience that offers every woman the opportunity to learn and play football, keep fit, and make friends in a fun and welcoming environment.

Swans Football now regularly attracts close to 50 players over its two weekly sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. For those who then want something with a competitive edge, the Swans Super League launched this June.

To find out more about the impact of the group, we spoke to Eamonn (Swans Football founder), and some of the many women that take part about just what Swans Football means to them.

What Swans means to its members

- *"After years of cheerleading from the sidelines, it's great to finally make it on to the pitch with a bunch of like-minded mums who want to have fun, stay active and show their daughters that they can play too" - Laura*
- *"I really look forward to training every week and have made some great friends. There is a really lovely bond between all the players!" - Gisella*
- *"The coaching caters for players of all abilities, especially those, like me, who are new to the game. Every week we practice new things and end the session with a match which is always great fun!" - Emma*
- *"We're so excited to keep expanding the Swans programme and create more opportunities for women to play. It's been inspiring to see the players' determination and commitment and the many new friendship groups that are being created along the way. We want to continue attracting more players to the game with the emphasis on fitness, friendship and fun." - Eamonn, Swans Football Founder*

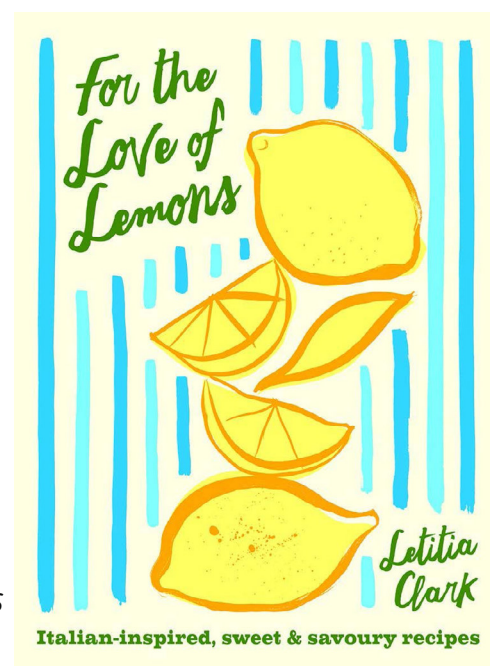
Get involved

Anyone interested in joining can register on the [Swans website](https://www.swansfootball.co.uk) or email hello@swansfootball.co.uk.

For The Love of Lemons

From crisp summer salads to deliciously do-able pasta dishes and indulgent sweet delights, ***For the Love of Lemons*** by Letitia Clark, celebrates the versatility of this much-loved citrus fruit. Seamlessly weaving history, anecdote, and stories, as well as ways to use lemons outside the kitchen, this bestselling author dives into the enchanting world of lemons with a vibrant collection of Italian-inspired recipes that includes dishes such as *Lemony Burrata with Spring Vegetables* and *Pistachio Pesto*, *Creamy Lemon and Mascarpone Carbonara*, *Chicken with Lemon, Saffron and Artichokes* and *Lemon Tiramisu*.

Complete with beautiful location photography throughout, it showcases the unrivalled ability of lemons to bring freshness and zing to your cooking. [Letitia Clark](#) lives in Sardinia where she is setting up an agrotourism and runs cookery classes. She is the author of four cookbooks: *Bitter Honey* (2020), *La Vita è Dolce* (2021), *Wild Figs and Fennel* (2024) and now *For the Love of Lemons* (2025)



Here are a couple of recipes from this gorgeous book, published by Quadrille at £28. Photography is by © Charlotte Bland

FRIED CHEESE WITH LEMON SERVES 2

“Are there any two sweeter words than fried cheese? Saganaki, that classic Greek taverna staple, is one of my favourite things on earth, and one of the many Greek dishes that make me shiny-eyed about emigrating (I adore Greek food).

Luckily for me, the young pecorino I am able to get here in Sardinia can be treated in the same way. There are many similarities between Greek and Sardinian food – the numerous sheep’s cheeses of different consistency and flavour being one example. While cheese is often roasted here in Sardinia, it is not usually fried in this way, yet the Greek technique of a hefty squeeze of lemon to cut through the fat is pure, lip-smacking heaven. As far as I am concerned, this is far superior to fried calamari rings or fritto misto – the textural contrast between chewy, soft and stringy cheese within and salty, fried, crunchy crust without is pure bliss. Eat with a cold beer and, ideally, a sea view.”

- 2 thick slabs of pecorino fresco
- (or provolone, young Gouda, feta or halloumi, based on what you have available)
- a little flour
- olive oil, for frying
- sea salt
- lemon wedges

Coat the cheese evenly in flour. Heat a good drizzle of olive oil in a heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Fry the cheese for a minute or two on each side until golden brown. Drain briefly on paper towels, sprinkle with salt (necessary if using a young pecorino but not with the very salty halloumi) and then serve immediately with fat wedges of lemon to squeeze over.



LEMON SELF-SAUCING PUDDING SERVES 4–6

“Often it’s imperfection that we fall in love with. A nose that’s too big, a lopsided grin, the little wispy tufts of hair at the top of an ear. As with lovers, so with dishes, and one of the things that made my mother’s puddings so good when I was a child was that they were very far from perfect and she often slightly under (or over) cooked them. Her most famous was Eve’s pudding, which consisted of whatever sour fruit (gooseberries/rhubarb) she had grown that season, stewed and topped with a simple buttery sponge. Undercooking such sponge meant that the pudding’s centre was deliciously gooey and provided a sort of creamy fruit sauce – hot, buttery, sweet and a perfect contrast to the fluffy crumb of the properly cooked parts. Once the pudding had been duly doused in cream, this warm and sticky sauce mixed with the cold cream to create something that was truly ambrosial.

Which brings me to self-saucing puddings. This pudding is pure nostalgia. Nostalgia must never be tinkered with, so I have kept it classic and traditional, it would be a crime to try to fancify this fresh-faced, fluffy and angelic nursery pudding. Almost a soufflé, almost a sponge, this pudding is truly a wonderful thing, quick to rustle up for hungry loved ones with a craving for something sweet. I can do the entire process with just two bowls and 20 minutes (I have often cooked it in the enamel bowl I mixed it in). Like those my mum made, it is cooked in the same dish as it is served in, a bonus for the washer-upper, and nicely unfussy. I often prefer a gratin dish on a table with scoops taken out of it, rather than fiddly individual portions.”

- 60 g (2 oz) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
- 180 g (6 1/4 oz/1 cup minus 1 1/2 tablespoons) caster (superfine) sugar
- zest and juice of 2 large lemons
- 3 eggs, separated
- 60 g (2 oz/scant 1/2 cup) plain (all-purpose) or 00 flour
- 300 ml (10 fl oz/1 1/4 cups) whole milk
- a good pinch of salt
- cream, to serve

Preheat the oven to 160oC fan (180oC/350oF). Lightly butter a deep, ovenproof dish.

Cream the butter, sugar and lemon zest together until well combined. Beat in the egg yolks, one at a time, until incorporated. Fold in the flour and the milk until you have a smooth batter, then gradually mix in the lemon juice.

In a separate bowl whisk the egg whites with the salt until they form soft peaks and then carefully fold them into the cake batter.

Decant the mixture into the buttered dish and stand it in a roasting tin filled with water to come about halfway up the side of the dish.

Bake in the oven for 45–50 minutes until golden. Eat warm with cold cream.



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Traveller's Tales 174

So Much To See In Northern France

Doug Goodman Visits The Aisne

I've visited the Departments of Nord, Pas-de-Calais and the Champagne Region many times but the Department of Aisne was a new destination for me. A recent visit as guest of the Aisne Tourist Board to the magnificent, old cities of St. Quentin and Laon as well as providing the chance to learn about the military significance of the region during The First World War, filled three fascinating days. I knew that the American army played an important role in the closing stages of WW1 in 1918 but not how much is dedicated to their memory. When writing about the sites in and around St. Quentin and Laon it is impossible to avoid covering the tragedy of 1914/18. My first feature describes some of the key places: likewise with the second feature. A third will cover the monuments, museums, cemeteries and sites dedicated to the exploits of the American soldiers. These places attract thousands of American visitors – just as The Somme continues to attract vast numbers of British visitors - but Aisne remains comparatively unknown and little visited by us.



St Quentin Art-Deco Station



Art-Deco Building



Grande Place and Town Hall

ST. QUENTIN

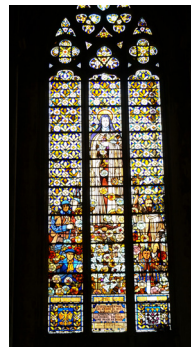
The Aisne region is easily reached by car from the DFDS Dover to Calais ferry in two hours on the A26 or by Eurostar to Lille or Paris and a local train in less than two hours. St. Quentin has sixteen attractive Art-Deco buildings – some original and others restored after the wartime destruction of 70% of the city. On arrival at the station I was shown the beautifully restored former waiting room and ticket office. The main square, Grande Place, is dominated by the town hall with its origins going back to 1252. A pedestrianised street leads to the Basilica with a rebuilt facade and restored tower. After restoration of the ruined building the Basilica's huge stone silhouette once again dominates the town. Viewed from the Cathedral's gallery you can see on the floor a tiled labyrinth with a tortuous black path leading to the centre representing a journey through past life. The columns inside retain the scars where masonry was hacked out and replaced with explosives set to be detonated by the retreating German forces in October 1918. Behind the town hall there's a plaque on a wall of the Henry Martin High School commemorating the spot where the British army had its HQ. Here, at a meeting on 26 August 1914 between France's General Joffre and Sir John French, commander of the British Expeditionary Force, it was decided that British troops would stand and fight at Le Cateau – one of the first major battles of WW1. The school became a hospital for wounded British soldiers and after the arrival of the conquering German army it continued as a hospital for their wounded. The poet Wilfred Owen served in the area and his poem 'Spring Offensive' written in July 1918 describes the attack by the Manchester Regiment on St. Quentin



1914. British Army HQ



St. Quentin Basilica



Basilica Window



Basilica. Explosives Were Placed on the Columns

In the centre of St. Quentin there are parks, wetlands, a zoo and a large boating lake. The Fine Arts Museum has a collection of delightful pastels by Maurice Quentin de la Tour. There is also a butterfly museum and a collection of motorbikes. Dinner at the lakeside restaurant La Java with traditional dishes and local strong beer followed by a night at the city-centre hotel Le Picardy ended a very full day.



Remains of the Hindenburg Line



St. Quentin Canal and Tunnel



Canal Bridge. Site of Battle

THE HINDENBURG LINE

In March 1917, with hope of victory dwindling after years of combat, heavy losses of men and equipment and sinking morale, Germany made a planned retreat to the heavily fortified Hindenburg Line, which extended from Arras to Laffaux. Over 45,000 inhabitants of St Quentin, which formed part of the new line, were evacuated in anticipation of a coming battle with American and Australian forces. In October 1918 the famous battle for the Riqueval Bridge took place and the German line was broken. The St. Quentin Canal was a vital part of the German defence and was bitterly contested. In a violent bombardment over 1600 guns fired a million shells to enable troops and tanks to cross the bank once the enemy had been forced to retreat. The waterway was built in Napoleonic times to carry coal by barges to the northern industrial areas. Part of it was bored through a hillside 6,000 yards long. It is an important landmark and leisure area with boat trips available while the banks are popular for walking and cycling.

Next time the historic city of Laon is explored.

Information: DFDS Ferries www.dfds.com Aisne Tourism: www.aisne-tourisme-pro.com www.jaimelaisne.com www.saint-quentin.fr Hotel Le Picardy: www.lepicardyhotel.com Restaurant La Java: www.lajavarestaurant.fr

Did you go?

By Deep Patel

~ Life through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper ~

Did you go to the High Tide Twickenham annual festival last weekend? (if you answer no to this are you even a true “Twickenhamer”?)

Well luckily I close my shop earlier on Sundays so we had the opportunity to walk up to Twickenham with my family and soak up a bit of local-summer festival vibes!

We started at Twickenham Green thinking to ourselves we would then head back home, but somehow, the pervading energy of local-love and coming together as one drew us into the heart of Twickenham and the next thing I knew, my mother and father were head-banging to the act on the main stage next to York House (I kid you not).

Twickenham Green was delightful as always, a lovely stage set up and practically all of my customers were there (it took 45 mins to walk 3 metres as I would bump into someone I knew from the shop and have a lovely chat). There was a mixture of stalls selling everything from bohemian style beaded jewellery, to jars of homemade curried carrot pickles (absolutely delicious). The vibe was so relaxed and happy with locals (and lots of dogs) joining in with the bands and dancing their feet away on the dry burnt out grass of Twickenham green.



Deeper into Twickenham we were elated to see how alive Church Street was, all alfresco dining and like a scene from a film...lots of little street food vendors from every corner of the world including Vietnam, India and Mexico...the smells were amazing and the air was alive with the sounds laughter and clunking glasses of friends and family having a good time. Although there was another stage at Marble Hill, we didn't get so far and we ended our tour at the Barmy Arms on the Thames...It was lively and such a happy vibe again, we bumped into lots of lovely people (including one of the lovely editors of The Twickenham and Richmond Tribune). The locals there were swaying and singing along as the music there was much more to your classic sing-along and dance along favourites...We stayed there longer and I think that was why, there was hardly room to move, but no one cared (including me) as we were all there for a reason, and one reason only...that was to have a good time...and I can truly say, a good time was had by all...things like this are what makes this shopkeeper proud to be a Twickenhammer...LONG LIVE TWICKENHAM...Keep on rocking!

Remember...

“Love the place you live and live the place you love...”

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...

Make use of high-frequency plug-in pest stopping plugs into each room, buy ones with good reviews online and follow the instructions, we stock them at Meet & Deep Newsagents here too, they work really well to keep ALL “pests” away, without harming any...good karma always!

For ANY specific tip to stop any “pest” or insect KINDLY (for good karma/blessings), email me: thedeepatel@gmail.com or join my Facebook page: “INSECT LOVERS UNITE”

Ladies Down Under

by Amanda Whittington

BCP at the OSO Arts Centre, Barnes

The happy ending of [Ladies' Day](#) has four friends from a fish-packing factory in Hull win half a million pounds in a six-race accumulator on an outing to Ascot. Its sequel, *Ladies Down Under*, explores how they deal with a dramatic change in their fortunes. In a celebration of female friendship, the four, flush from their big win, go on a globe-trotting adventure trip to Australia.

Director Jane Gough does a great job of conveying everywhere from Manchester Airport to Uluru, via Bondi Beach. Clever back projections set the scenes and, in a nice touch, whenever the characters take photographs we see these too. And David Abel's sound and lighting conjures up convincing scenes such as a bush fire.

Travelling Australia in bright pink t-shirts, the four form a fun group of friends. Marie Bushell gets the biggest laughs as the rambunctious but forlorn Shelley, clashing with the curiously brittle Pearl, played by Cressida Strauss. Jan spends her time complaining, and it's testament to Imogen Measday's performance that she remains such a likeable character. Elizabeth Ollier's Linda is the quietest of the quartet, but comes into her own in the end.

With ladies commanding the stage, the male actors have a hard job. Stuart Piper has a brief but memorable turn as firefighter Tom, while Ashley Brown's affable Joe is a delight as he wanders cluelessly around Australia as a stereotypical Englishman abroad, until he is taken under the wing of Good Samaritan and fellow lost soul Danny, played by Darren Cheers with a twinkle in his eye. Ashley Brown delights as the wonderfully dry British ex-pat Charlie, a refugee from the 1960s, who bemoans what tourists have done to his beloved surfer's paradise. Mo Alwari provides standout comedy moments as flighty flight attendant and doubtful drag queen.

The ladies have adapted to their windfall in very different ways: Shelley splurges her money on designer luxuries; Pearl uses hers to broaden her experiences and see the world; Linda feels guilty seeing poverty around her; and Jan seems least affected, still working at the factory.

Ladies Down Under demonstrates that friendship and happiness are far more important than material wealth. The four ladies are played with charm, impeccable comic timing, and great chemistry. You feel as though you've spent an evening among old friends.

Read Andrew Lawston's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/07/18/ladies-d-under

Photography courtesy of BCP



By Royal Appointment

by Daisy Goodwin

Theatre Royal Bath at Richmond Theatre and on tour until 9th August

Goodwin's highly fictionalised debut play imagines the relationship between the late Queen Elizabeth II and her dresser, along with the designer and milliner for her last two decades. One must, however, suspend disbelief, as the actual period covered is 1969 to 2022; longer than twenty years with the same three dressing the Queen. Nevertheless, it is a clever set of vignettes each focussing on one iconic outfit and the story behind it; and collaterally providing a potted history of Britain.

Each scene is introduced by the Curator of a new exhibition of the Queen's outfits providing an informative and amusing list of major events that occurred at the time each dress was worn. Grainne Dromgoole does a sterling job in a clunky role, and she has great rapport with the audience.

[Anne Reid](#) as the Queen is pitch-perfect. This is no *Dead Ringers* impression of our late sovereign, no "doing the voice". It is acting in the best sense of embodying a role. Reid has excellent comic delivery, and got some big laughs. (Some from cheap and unnecessary jokes, eg "heir and spare", which since being weaponised by the Duke of Sussex seems tasteless.)

The Dresser (loosely based on Angela Kelly ... who really did wear-in the Queen's shoes) is nicely played by [Caroline Quentin](#). The feeling of a

long term mutually supportive relationship is palpable. But where did she get the time to be married? Where did she live? What happened if she wanted a holiday? All unanswered questions nicely posed in the subtext.

The Designer and Milliner are played by James Wilby and [James Dreyfuss](#) respectively. A joy to watch, both wring out the last drop of humour, but are equally effective in more emotional moments. However, they are fictional characters invented to progress the plot. In a play that is about real events and real people this jars. It is true that Angela Kelly was responsible for several of the Queen's iconic outfits. But what of everyone else, actual designers such as Hardy Amies or Norman Hartnell, who helped made those special events so memorable?

By Royal Appointment is bitter-sweet nostalgia. Director [Dominic Dromgoole](#) creates an interesting and entertaining play, warmly evocative of times now past.

Read Eleanor Marsh's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/07/23/royal-appmt

Photography by Nobby Clark



Macbeth

by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Francesco Maria Piave after William Shakespeare
West Green House Opera at the Green Theatre, Hartley Wintney

Packing real punch, the intensity of director Richard Studer's *Macbeth* creates a concentrated distillation of a dark psychological melodrama. In Verdi's *Macbeth* there is no romantic tenor lead, no soprano heroine. The two leading characters are real people who suffer for their over-vaunting ambitions, progressively tremulous, triumphant, terrified and ultimately torn apart by guilt as they are sucked into a spiral of evil of their own making.



The thought-provoking design, inventive lit by Sarah Dell, is based on tall purple and black cabinets. Representing castle walls, or assassins' hidey-holes, or spy niches, they are lined in deep-buttoned stuffed satin, padded cells or spiky iron maidens to crush dissent.

In burlesque, six formidable witches catch you off-guard. In their pinched-waist tartan, the bloody tears streaked across their faces are unsettlingly sinister. Jill Rolfe has produced some striking costumes, Macbeth and Banquo's long leather greatcoats with armadillo sleeves and Lady Macbeth's quirky but gorgeous gowns.



Wagnerian Simon Wilding playing Banquo really has real heft with his richly luxuriant bass. Horrifically omnipresent, he makes a blooded and battered ghost constantly staring at the terrified Macbeth. Canadian baritone Jean-Kristof Bouton has equally powerful presence. The potent resonance of his voice subtly follows the unravelling of Macbeth's mind, culminating in his final aria in which he realises that compassion, honour, and love will never again be his.

Bouton works in synergy with Mari Wyn Williams' Lady Macbeth. While he ruminates that he has "murdered sleep for ever", she orders him to be bold. Williams' athletic

soprano expresses this fiery excitement in forceful coloratura. And with her we follow Lady Macbeth's gradual psychological disintegration, culminates in the sleepwalking scene, "out damned spot", una *macchia ...via, ti dico*, sung with soft-toned delicacy.

A dozen plus full-throated chorus on a small stage provides a number of impressive scenes, such as the song of victory, *salve, o re*, lauding Malcolm, Duncan's son as King, and Macduff as the saviour of the Kingdom, a triumphant crescendo after the death of Macbeth. Velvety tenor Thomas Elwin makes a grounded, calm and regal Malcolm as he proclaims everlasting joy from this victory. The chorus' most touching scene, as displaced Scottish refugees stream across the English border, is enacted with measured pathos, as they sing in unison for their oppressed homeland, *patria oppressa*. Thinking of our present world, one is brought up with a jolt.



Amongst them is Macduff, the Thane of Fife, whose wife and children have been freshly slaughtered by Macbeth's squad of assassins. Robyn Lyn Evans is tragically magnificent as the bereft Macduff. *Ah, la paterna mano*, lamenting that his fatherly hand was not there to shield his loved ones, is the only tenor aria in the opera, and Evans imbues it with anguished intensity.

The band of assassins, who also brutally murder Banquo, are musically and visually arresting. They gather with rhythmical movements to Verdi's stark staccato themes, clad in black uniforms and jackboots, reminiscent of Mussolini's Blackshirts.

Conductor Jonathan Lyness takes the nineteen strong WGHO Orchestra on this emotional journey with insight and passion to create a musical ambience that follows not only the plot, but the psychological state of each character.

Macbeth is formidable package of passion and power that captures the full intensity of Verdi's masterpiece and portrays the evil quintessence of tyranny.

Read Mark Aspen's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/07/21/macbeth-wgho

Photography courtesy of WGHO

Curtain Raiser Party!

at the Mary Wallace Theatre - Saturday, August 2nd

The Richmond Shakespeare Society are pleased to announce their August **Curtain Raiser Party** to be held on Saturday, August 2nd in the theatre. We invite you to learn more about our current season of plays - September till Christmas - and to witness the unveiling of our Spring/Summer 2026 Season.

Directors of the plays will be on hand to discuss their productions and to provide further information. Meet the casts and crew of recent productions. Enjoy a personal guided tour of our theatre - foyer, stage, dressing rooms, workshop and costume store - and learn about the various departments and teams which underpin all our shows and the opportunities available to become involved in a production, onstage or backstage.

In addition, we hope to be able to announce the Swan Award nominations (Best Production, Best Actor, Best Youth Production etc) for the past year's shows. Above all, it's a party to which all are invited. Whether you are already an RSS member, interested in joining, or simply curious, you will be warmly welcomed.



RSS
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Icons for Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

The Mary Wallace Theatre (close to the Barmy Arms on Twickenham's Embankment). From 7pm on Saturday, August 2nd.

St Mary's University

St Mary's Endurance Athletes Selected to Represent GB at World University Games

Two student-athletes from St Mary's University's, Twickenham, [Endurance and Performance Centre](#) (EPC) have been selected to represent Great Britain at the [2025 FISU World University Games](#), taking place from 21-27 July in Germany.

Sam Charig will compete in the Men's 1500m, while Josh Hobbs, captain of the EPC team, is set to race in the Half Marathon. Both athletes are enjoying great seasons and will be part of a British squad competing for medals at one of this year's largest multi-sport events.

fantastic facilities."

The FISU World University Games Summer is expected to host around 8,500 student-athletes and officials from more than 150 countries. Athletics will be the largest sport by participation, with over 1,000 competitors across 51 events, highlighting its central role at the Games.

Sam heads to Germany having recently secured a podium finish at the [British Milers](#)

[Club Record Breaker event](#), which was hosted at St Mary's University. Josh, meanwhile, played a key role in this year's [Ekiden Relay](#), helping St Mary's secure a third-place finish against over 30 of the fastest universities and corporate teams.



Josh commented: *"I'm proud to have been selected to represent Great Britain at this year's WUGs, and I hope to be able to put in a performance that outlines the hard work I have put in over the last few months in combination with my coach Craig Winrow as part of the EPC setup here at St Mary's."*

Sam added: *"I am delighted to have been selected for Great Britain for the first time at the world university games. The St Mary's EPC has contributed massively to my breakthrough season through its incredible support staff and*

The pair are the latest in a long line of successful athletes to emerge from St Mary's EPC, one of England Athletics' Talent Hubs. The Centre has supported more than 50 GB internationals and a track record in developing Olympic and World Championship-calibre athletes, including Sir Mo Farah, Adelle Tracey, Jo Pavey, Beth Potter, Charlotte Purdue, Steph Twell, Ross Murray and Andy Vernon.



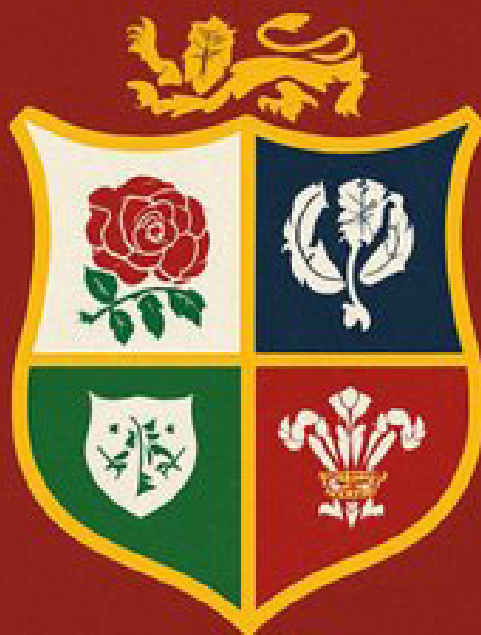
**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**

TWICKENHAM RFC

LIONS TEST

MATCHES

LIVE AT THE CLUB



BAR OPEN 10:30

KICK-OFF 11AM

KITCHEN PROMO / PIZZA & PINT £12

Red Roses team to play Spain in Rugby World Cup warm-up



Abi Burton will earn her first Test start when the Red Roses take on Spain at Mattioli Woods Welford Road on Saturday 2 August.



The Trailfinders Women forward debuted for her country in the Guinness Women's Six Nations, scoring twice from the bench, before appearing as a replacement in the Grand Slam decider against France. She will line up at blind-side flanker in a back row which contains Marlie Packer as captain and Maddie Feaunati at Number 8.

Kelsey Clifford, Lark Atkin-Davies and Sarah Bern form the front row - the last time the trio started together was the Red Roses' last visit to the home of Leicester Tigers back in April.

Jade Shekells returns to the 12 jersey, with vice-captain Megan Jones outside her. Lucy Packer and Zoe Harrison partner in the half-back slots and Emma Sing, Helena Rowland and Jess Breach make-up a new-look back three.

The Red Roses have made to changes to their team to play Spain this weekend.

Abbie Ward and Tatyana Heard come in for Rosie Galligan and Holly Aitchison.

Red Roses team to play Spain

- 15 Emma Sing (Gloucester-Hartpury, 8 caps)
- 14 Helena Rowland (Loughborough Lightning, 39 caps)
- 13 Megan Jones (Trailfinders Women, 25 caps)
- 12 Jade Shekells (Gloucester-Hartpury, 2 caps)
- 11 Jess Breach (Saracens, 45 caps)
- 10 Zoe Harrison (Saracens, 57 caps)
- 9 Lucy Packer (Harlequins, 31 caps)

Replacements

- 16 May Campbell (Saracens, 3 caps)
- 17 Hannah Botterman (Bristol Bears, 56 caps)
- 18 Maud Muir (Gloucester-Hartpury, 40 caps)
- 19 Zoe Aldcroft (Gloucester-Hartpury, 63 caps)

- 1 Kelsey Clifford (Saracens, 13 caps)
- 2 Lark Atkin-Davies (Bristol Bears, 66 caps)
- 3 Sarah Bern (Bristol Bears, 71 caps)
- 4 Abbie Ward (Bristol Bears, 74 caps)
- 5 Lilli Ives Champion (Loughborough Lightning, 2 caps)
- 6 Abi Burton (Trailfinders Women, 2 caps)
- 7 Marlie Packer (Saracens, 110 caps) - captain
- 8 Maddie Feaunati (Exeter Chiefs, 15 caps)

- 20 Sadia Kabeya (Loughborough Lightning, 21 caps)
- 21 Natasha Hunt (Gloucester-Hartpury, 80 caps)
- 22 Tatyana Heard (Gloucester-Hartpury, 29 caps)
- 23 Abby Dow (Unattached, 52 caps)

Rugby World Cup winner Richard Hill to be inducted to World Rugby Hall of Fame

Former England back row and 2003 Rugby World Cup winner Richard Hill will be inducted into the World Rugby Hall of Fame in Sydney on 2 August. Hill was part of England's much-vaunted back row under Sir Clive Woodward that helped secure the Rugby World Cup on Australian soil in 2003 and toured three times with the British and Irish Lions.

Educated at Bishop's Wordsworth School, Salisbury and then Brunel University College, Richard Hill became one of English rugby's greatest flankers as part of the squad in 2003.



While Neil Back was the link man and Lawrence Dallaglio the enforcer, Hill's ability to do the unseen graft won the respect of team-mates and opponents the world over, as well as the nickname, 'The Silent Assassin'. Even the great Wigan Rugby League team of the 1990s made a move to sign him, but he stayed loyal to Saracens, his only professional club, making 288 appearances.

Initially an openside flanker, Hill made his debut for England in a 41-13 win over Scotland in the 1997 Men's Six Nations and toured with the Lions to South Africa later that year, starting the victories in the first two tests against the Springboks. Hill won Lions five caps in total, having also faced Australia in 2001 and New Zealand in 2005, and 71 for his country, scoring 12 tries.

Battling back from two ACL reconstructions and nine operations, Hill continued playing until 2008, when he ended a journey that began as a five-year-old at Salisbury Rugby Club. Since his retirement, Hill has worked for Saracens and the Rugby Football Union and in 2016, he became England Men's team manager, a position he still holds.

He will be inducted as the 173rd World Rugby Hall of Fame member alongside Wallabies full back Matthew Burke on 2 August, with a further two female players at the Women's Summit of the Women's Rugby World Cup on September 26th.

John Eales, Chairman of the Hall of Fame panel and a Hall of Fame inductee, said: *"Richard is consistently acknowledged by his peers as one of the most important cogs in the successful English teams of the late 90s and early 2000s, whilst also being a star for the British and Irish Lions across three series. He remains a positive and influential figure off the field and represent the spirit and values of rugby in the highest capacity."*



Match Preview: QPR v Brentford

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford's second pre-season fixture of the 2025/26 campaign comes against west London rivals Queens Park Rangers at Loftus Road on Saturday (3pm kick-off BST). It is the first time the Bees will face QPR for over four years, with the Championship side also heading into the campaign with a new manager in Julien Stéphan. Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of the fixture.

Pre-match analysis

Stephen Gillett, Playmaker
Stats: Set-pieces could be key in pre-season derby clash

West London bragging rights are on the line as Brentford make the short trip across the capital to face QPR this Saturday for what promises to be an entertaining pre-season clash between two clubs under new management.

The Bees enter the contest fresh from a pre-season trip to Portugal, which allowed head coach Keith Andrews some quality time with his squad and featured a [1-1 friendly draw against Gil Vicente](#) last Friday.

Brazilian striker [Igor Thiago](#) opened his pre-season account with a tap-in from Mikkel Damsgaard's cross to hint at a productive partnership in the making and Andrews afterwards declared himself "really pleased" with his side's overall display.

Unofficial debuts for Caoimhín Kelleher, Jordan Henderson and Antoni Milambo, along with [Aaron Hickey](#)'s return after a lengthy spell on the sidelines, were among the biggest positives to take from the warm-up fixture in northern Portugal, and the Bees will now aim to take further strides forward at Loftus Road this weekend.

After two seasons under new Leicester City manager Martí Cifuentes, QPR appointed Stéphan in June and after stints in the dugout at Rennes and Strasbourg in Ligue 1, the 44-year-old has a promising squad at his disposal as he readies the Hoops for the 2025/26 Championship season.



Signed from Burton Albion this week, striker Rumarn Burrell will have to adjust to the new level, but 11 league goals in 2025 for the Brewers showed that the Jamaica international knows where the back of the net is, and Kwame Poku (12 goals and 10 assists in all competitions for Peterborough last season) has consistently supplied goals, in addition to scoring them himself, at League One level.

Former Celtic wonderkid Karamoko Dembele, meanwhile, has been one of the Hoops' best performers in pre-season and ranked second among his team-mates for assists last season, with four, despite missing large chunks of the campaign through injury.

A snapshot of QPR's 2024/25 stats highlights a need for a reliable goalscorer (Michael Frey was their top marksman in the Championship with eight goals) and a tendency to ship goals, particularly on their own patch (only relegated Plymouth Argyle - 39 - conceded more goals at home than the Hoops - 34). That said, the Rs ranking third in the division for goals from substitutes hinted at the breadth of their attacking options, and their prowess from set-pieces was underlined by the fact that only four teams scored more Championship goals from corners, throw-ins and free-kicks last term - something Brentford also focus heavily on.

With 'elite' academy graduates such as Harvey Vale and Esquerdinha - who came through at Chelsea and Fluminense respectively - seemingly primed for breakthrough seasons, QPR have a wave of young talent coming through, and it will be interesting to see how they match up against Premier League opposition in what will be the Hoops' final preparation game before their Championship opener against Preston North End on 9 August.

Scout report

Dan Long, Sky Sports: QPR approaching new campaign with 'cautious optimism'

Before the 2024/25 campaign, QPR had finished in the top half of the Championship just three times in nine seasons following relegation from the [Premier League](#). In 2023/24, they had finished just six points above the drop zone, the same gap as the season before that - and, for the first four months of last season, a worse finish looked very much on the cards. One win in the first 16 league games left them bottom, already cut five points adrift.

"The club knows very well, since the summer, there are areas I think we need to improve," said head coach Martí Cifuentes after a draw at home to Stoke on 23 November. *"I'm here as a coach trying to do my best."*

The shocking start was a wake-up call, and one his players responded to. They won eight of the next 12 to move into midtable. It was a period that, in hindsight - given a huge dip in results thereafter - saved their season. Such consistency in results never returned, and the lingering chances of relegation stuck around until the final weeks of the season. It was only on 18 April, following a 2-1 comeback win at Preston, that those fears were eased altogether.

But in the days leading up to the final game of the season, away at Sunderland, QPR announced Cifuentes - who had been linked with the vacant managerial role at West Brom - had been placed on gardening leave.

“This is, naturally, a disappointing situation for everyone concerned,” said CEO Christian Nourry in a statement posted on the club’s official website. “I fully understand and appreciate supporters’ frustrations at this time. As a club, we are working to ensure this matter is resolved as swiftly as possible so we can start preparations in earnest for the future.”

His assistants, Kevin Betsy and Xavi Calm, took charge of the trip to the Stadium of Light, which Rangers won 1-0.

On 24 June, Cifuentes’ departure was confirmed and, the following day, Stéphan was appointed head coach on a two-year contract.

“Julien’s appointment is the fruit of an extensive process that was undertaken by key club figures to identify, evaluate and recruit a coach that understands the club’s football philosophy and is energised by it,” said Nourry.

Since then, QPR have signed players including Poku from Peterborough United, Amadou Mbengue from Reading, and Burrell from Burton Albion, but they had already given new contracts to Steve Cook, Sam Field, Frey and Jimmy Dunne and, most recently, Ziyad Larkeche.

There will be cautious optimism that they will not be raided for their prized assets, either, in the final month of the transfer window, so a squad with potential will have the chance to prove they are better than one that has, recently, been in a perpetual relegation battle.

In the Dugout

Julien Stéphan

Stéphan had a 10-year career as a player, which took in spells at Paris Saint-Germain B, Toulouse, RC Paris, Stade Briochin and Drouais, between 1998 and 2008. It is in management, mostly at hometown club Rennes, that he has made a name for himself, however.

Between 2012 and 2015, he coached Les Rennais’ Under-19s, before stepping up to Rennes B in July 2015. There, he guided the team to a fifth-tier title win in 2015/16 and a fourth-tier title win in 2016/17.

Following the sacking of Sabri Lamouchi - who went on to manage Nottingham Forest and Cardiff City - in December 2018, Stéphan took over on an interim basis, but was appointed permanently within a fortnight, following Ligue 1 wins over Lyon and Dijon and a 2-0 win over Astana, which secured Rennes’ progress to the Europa League knockout stages.

Stéphan’s side won the Coupe de France in 2019, denying PSG a fifth-straight triumph.

He resigned in March 2021 and took over at Strasbourg four months later, but returned to Rennes in November 2023, spending just shy of another year at the club.

Six months later, on June 25 2025, Stéphan signed a two-year deal to replace Martí Cifuentes at QPR.



Ria Lina: Riabellion

Tour 2025-26 - Sat 13 Sep 2025: Twickenham, The Exchange

Following her killer debut tour, Riawakening (Top Ten Best Stand-up Shows of 2024 - Telegraph), the leading Filipina comedian in British stand-up is taking her new show, Riabellion, around the country from September 2025 to February 2026. Tickets go on sale to her mailing list at a special early bird price at 10am on Wednesday 29th January, with general sale beginning 10am on Friday 31st January.

The “fearless, provocative, and very funny” (The Scotsman) comedian realised last year that she wasn’t just awake, she was ready to rebel. Expect a relentless stream of hilarity as Ria explores the state of the world, the eternal battle of the sexes, and the delight of throwing life up in the air after years of following the rules.

“Ridiculously gifted” The Evening Standard

Ria Lina is a highly accomplished writer, actor and comedian; a multi-award winner who commands the stage with a whirlwind of energy and leaves audiences breathless with laughter. Regarded as one of the hardest working comedians in the industry, her appearances on television and radio have garnered critical acclaim. Credits include two stints on Live at the Apollo (once in the coveted host slot), Have I Got News For You?, Mock the Week, cohosting Pointless, The Last Leg, Celebrity Mastermind and many more.

“I have no doubt she will hold her own so easily that she’ll have a hand free to hold someone else’s too”
The Guardian

It’s not just Ria’s comedy that is intelligent. She holds a BSc in Experimental Pathology, an MSc in Forensic Science, and a PhD in Virology, along with experience in IT Forensics at the Serious Fraud Office. As a result, Ria has recently had her own Radio 4 series, ‘Ria Lina Gets Forensic’, commissioned in which she investigates anti-aging treatments, scrutinising the lengths people will go to cheat age and stay young, using herself as a test subject. Ria has also been a frequent pundit on Sky News, BBC News, Times Radio, and TalkTV, she is sought after for her scientific expertise, poised delivery, and sharp wit.

Ria is also passionate about being neurodivergent and increasing the visibility of neurodivergent talent within the entertainment industry. Ria recently sat on the panel of a Conway Hall Ethical Society talk on Autism & ADHD, and has been profiled on Sky News talking about how her autism has informed, and enhanced, her work.

“Sharp as a tack and with a scientific bent that underpins her charming demeanour”
The Comedian’s Comedian With Stuart Goldsmith

A hugely admired act on the UK comedy circuit, this multi-award-winning artist commands respect from the moment she walks onstage and delivers with natural ease, energy and fierceness.

“There isn’t a comedy venue in the country that shouldn’t be fighting for her” The Scotsman

Ria’s last tour show was included in The Telegraph’s list of the ‘10 best comedy shows to see in 2024’, and she has been recognised by The Evening Standard as one of the “Hottest Comedians You Should Be Watching Now”, reflecting her lasting influence on the comedy scene. Throughout her career, she has brought six shows to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, addressing themes such as autism, current affairs, and racial identity. With a diverse career across stage, screen, radio, and even the ukulele, Ria Lina’s unique style has garnered praise from critics, with Time Out admiring her ability to be “engaging, endearing and eye-opening”.

“Her shows come from a place of deep intelligence [...], that she wears lightly and with huge laughs” The Crack

A prolific writer, Ria has lent her talents to projects like the Ladyboys of Bangkok’s ‘Fantasy & Feathers’ and ‘Glamorous Amorous’ tours. Additionally, she wrote and performed in the ITV2 comedy sketch show Meet the Blogs and presented her own documentary on Channel 4, dispelling myths surrounding East Asian women in Britain.

“Engaging, endearing and eye-opening” Time Out



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