

# Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



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# TickerTape - News in Brief

## Bus strikes to disrupt services across Richmond upon Thames

From Richmond Council

Residents are advised to plan ahead as significant disruption is expected to many bus services across South West London including some directly serving the borough due to planned strike action.

If the walkouts go ahead, industrial action is expected on the following dates:

- From 5am on Friday 29 August until 5am on Saturday 30 August
- From 5am on Monday 1 September until 5am on Tuesday 2 September

### Affected routes

Affected bus routes:

13, 18, 23, 31, 33, 49, 65, 70, 71, 72, 85, 94, 105, 110, 116, 117, 148, 203, 216, 218, 220, 224, 235, 272, 281, 283, 290, 293, 295, 371, 406, 411, 418, 419, 423, 440, 452, 467, 613, 662, 665, 681, 696, C1, E3, H22, H37, H98, K1, K2, K3, K4, K5

Affected night bus services:

N18, N31, N33, N65, N72

### Travel advice

- Services may be subject to delays, reduced frequency or cancellations
- Other services including rail, tube and London Overground will continue to run as normal
- Passengers are encouraged to check the [TfL website](#) to plan ahead and check before you travel for [live updates](#)
- Leave extra time and consider walking or cycling for local journeys

To find out more, visit [Strikes - Transport for London](#).



**The Tree Agency**

darryl parkin

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*The Tree Agency*





## Come along to our Open Day in support of The Fire Fighters Charity

**Date:** Sunday 31st August 2025

**Time:** 12:00 until 16:00

**Location:** Twickenham Fire Station  
30 South Road TW2 5NT



To donate, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera or QR code reader app.

[www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/open-day-donate](http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk/open-day-donate)

Royal Patron Her Majesty The Queen

Registered office: The Fire Fighters Charity, Level 6, Belvedere, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4HG. Charity registered in England & Wales (1093387) and Scotland (SC040096).



Bernardo O'Higgins studied for a while in [Richmond-Upon-Thames](#) (UK). He lived at 2 The Vineyard and a blue plaque commemorating his stay was erected by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission in 1994.

“Chile” became part of the [Spanish](#) Vice Royalty of [Peru](#) in the mid sixteenth century. Led by Pedro de Valdivia, Spanish soldiers moved into the region and founded Santiago (1541).

In 1817 the Spanish were defeated by the revolutionary forces of Bernardo O'Higgins and Jose de San Martin, the liberator of [Argentina](#).

On Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August the Mayor of Richmond, Cllr Penelope Frost, attended the annual wreath-laying ceremony at the bust of Bernardo O'Higgins, next to Richmond Bridge. The Mayor was joined by representatives of the Chilean Embassy.





# Join Arts Richmond for their annual drama party

From Arts Richmond

The local theatre community will gather at the Landmark Arts Centre on 20 September 2025 for the highlight of their social and creative year.



The evening will feature the announcement of the Swan Award winners for 2024/25, but this party isn't just for Swan nominees - it's for everyone involved in local theatre.

In addition, the winner of this year's Arts Richmond's Radio Plays Competition will be announced at the event.

The evening is the ideal opportunity to socialise, network, party and have fun. This will be a true celebration of the local theatre community.

If you haven't already booked your tickets, at a very reasonable £20 each, you can book via the [Arts Richmond website](#).



## 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 5,023 (an increase from 4,870 on 1st August 2025)

You can view and sign the petition [HERE](#)

Read comments from over 5,000 people [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**)



Dear Tribune,

### **My Story With The Richmond Council**

My name is Mahtab Mahdeiyaniyan. I am 30 years old, a British citizen, and a single mother to my six-year-old son, who attends a School in St Margaret's, Richmond.

I have worked for the NHS for 10 years, serving my community and giving back through my work. Alongside this, I have always rented privately and supported my child on my own. I have never relied on the council before. However, due to difficult personal circumstances, including the loss of my father and a separation, I am now in urgent need of help – and Richmond Council have completely let me down.

Since submitting my homelessness application on 30 June 2025, me and my son have been moved four times between unsuitable emergency accommodations. These include:

- Unsafe and unhygienic shared housing with multiple men present, despite being told I would be placed somewhere suitable for mothers with young children.
- A property in Hounslow, where I was robbed at knifepoint. Despite providing the police CAD number, council staff initially insisted I had to stay there.
- Emergency placements far from my son's school (Wimbledon, over an hour each way), which makes his education almost impossible to maintain.

I have now been living in limbo for two months. Most of my belongings are in my car and the rest are in a storage unit. I have no proper home to live in with my son.

On several occasions, council staff promised me a suitable one-bedroom or two-bedroom self-contained temporary accommodation. Each time, the promise has been broken, leaving me without stability.

To make matters worse, Richmond Council are terrible at communication:

- They fail to reply to emails around 99% of the time.
- Their phone lines are constantly unanswered, and even when I do reach someone, they rarely follow through.
- They promise things and then simply do not deliver.

This instability has severely affected my mental health and my son's wellbeing. My son is distressed, and I am suffering from depression and anxiety. On top of this, I am preparing for a child arrangements court case in October. My ex-partner has already threatened to take my son away from me, using the council's failures against me by saying I cannot provide him with a safe, stable home.

I feel abandoned as a citizen who has worked hard, paid taxes, and dedicated a decade of my life to the NHS and to serving my community. When I finally asked for help, Richmond Council failed in their duty to provide suitable accommodation and left me in unsafe, unsuitable conditions.

I would be grateful if you could report my story to show how families like mine are being treated. I am prepared to provide evidence – including emails, police reports, and call logs – and to speak on the record.

Thank you for your time,  
Mahtab Mahdeiyaniyan

# RED ROSES *FIXTURES*



**69** | **07**



USARUGBY

***VS* SAMOA**

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST ► 17:00 BST KICK-OFF  
FRANKLIN'S GARDENS, NORTHAMPTON

***VS* AUSTRALIA**

SATURDAY 06 SEPTEMBER ► 17:00 BST KICK-OFF  
BRIGHTON AND HOVE ALBION STADIUM, BRIGHTON AND HOVE





# Violence Falls at Notting Hill Carnival, but Residents and Police Count the Cost

By James Knight

The Metropolitan Police reported a decline in serious violence at this year's Notting Hill Carnival, even as more than 500 arrests highlighted the heavy burden the event places on London's communities, its police, and the public purse.

Over the August Bank Holiday, 528 arrests were made, 200 on Sunday and 328 on Monday, in one of the Met's largest deployments of the year, with over 7,000 officers on duty each day.

## Arrests and Offences

Those detained included 167 individuals for drug offences, 50 for carrying offensive weapons, 49 for violent incidents that did not result in injury, 21 on suspicion of sexual offences, and four for violence causing injury. There were also 55 assaults on police officers, two of whom required hospital treatment; one for a broken nose and another after a severe bite to the hand. Four stabbing or slashing incidents were reported, none life-threatening but each a reminder of the knife crime that has long shadowed the event.

## Crackdown on "Hippy Crack"

This year's policing strategy included a visible crackdown on nitrous oxide, or *hippy crack*. Officers seized large numbers of canisters and balloons, saying the gas, banned in 2023, fuels anti-social behaviour and adds to policing pressures.

During the last London mayoral election, Liberal Democrat candidate Rob Blackie criticised the ban as a 'waste of time', arguing that police resources should be directed elsewhere – a position also echoed by Cllr Gareth Roberts, leader of Richmond Council and Assembly Member for South West London.

## Residents Bearing the Burden

For local residents, Carnival's costs are felt not only in policing but in personal disruption. Many board up their homes or businesses at considerable expense, sometimes more than £1,500. Others complain of their front doors being used as toilets, gardens strewn with litter, and drunken disorder late into the night. Older residents often choose to leave the area altogether, fearing damage or intimidation.

The contrast is clear: Carnival is celebrated internationally as a cultural spectacle, yet for many who live at its centre it is an unwelcome ordeal of noise, disruption and insecurity.

## Officers Abstracted and Attacked

The Met's deployment drew officers from boroughs including Richmond, leaving local policing stretched thin during one of the busiest weekends of the year.

The Police Federation, which represents rank-and-file officers, has voiced repeated concern. In 2024 it warned that 'police have the right to come to work and not be attacked or treated as

fair game'. Senior figures now caution that continued exposure to such violence is damaging morale and worsening retention.

### **Dispute Over Carnival's Future**

The question of governance is now pressing. Conservatives at City Hall argue the Greater London Authority should take charge, as it does with other major events such as New Year's Eve fireworks. Susan Hall, their leader on the Assembly, warned Carnival "cannot be left to a small group of well-meaning volunteers" given the risks involved.

The warnings are not theoretical. Senior Met commanders have said openly that the Carnival risks a mass casualty crush, with one officer cautioning that even with new measures "not all the risks will have been mitigated." The



Mayor himself admitted he was "frightened" by images of dangerous overcrowding, while Hall has argued the event has only narrowly avoided "a mass crush on the scale of Hillsborough,"

Despite this, the Liberal Democrats continue to oppose a City Hall takeover, maintaining that Carnival must remain community-led. Critics describe this stance as reckless, ignoring the advice of experts the party so often demands others follow, and argue that it prioritises political symbolism over public safety.

The dispute is also financial. Policing Carnival costs an estimated £13.5 million annually, with councils contributing only around £1 million. The Mayor has appealed for central government funding, warning that without additional support Carnival's long-term viability may be at risk. Conservatives counter that only structural reform can guarantee safety and sustainability.

### **A Celebration Under Strain**

Notting Hill Carnival remains Europe's largest street festival, drawing close to two million visitors each year and standing as a central celebration of Caribbean heritage. Its cultural and economic importance is considerable. Yet the strains are clear: residents bear expense and disruption, police are assaulted and diverted from other communities, and safety experts continue to warn of catastrophic risk.

An independent crowd safety review, due in October, will test whether incremental reforms can suffice, or whether fundamental change is now unavoidable.



# Practise your post-holiday Spanish with Live Languages

From Live Languages

On Saturday 13 September, residents of all ages and levels of Spanish are invited to practise their Spanish conversation with an optional activity, alongside like-minded Spanish students at ETNA Community Centre.

Make new, local friends and sample Spanish snacks. Live Languages Spanish groups are raising money for the ETNA Community Centre, so donations of £15 are required to confirm your place.

- Date: Saturday 13 September 2025
- Time: 10.30 to 11.30am
- Location: ETNA Community Centre, 13 Rosslyn Road, TW1 2AR

[Learn more and register.](#)



## Weekend Fixtures



From Twickenham CC

The penultimate round and five teams are still charging




**MC WEEKEND CL FIXTURES**


**SAT 30 AUGUST**


**1ST XI VS INDIAN GYMKHANA CC**   
HOME 12:00  **LIVE STREAMING**  **tvplay**



**2ND XI VS NORTH LONDON**   
AWAY 12:00

**3RD XI VS BESSBOROUGH 3S**   
AWAY 12:00 PM

**4TH XI VS CHISWICK 5S**   
HOME 12:00 PM

**5TH XI VS SKLPC 4S**   
HOME 12:00 PM

**Twickenham CC** 

**BOMB SQUAD**  **srb**  **HOLLYWOOD**  **bets**  **DEVENPORTS**  **GREEN BUTCHER** 

1st XI host Indian Gymkhana at home and it's LIVE

2s and 3s are on the road

4s and 5s are both at home with something to prove

All games start 12:00 PM

One more week after this. Let's leave it all out there

# Ed Davey's Trump Banquet Snub

By James Knight

Sir Ed Davey's decision to boycott next month's state banquet for Donald Trump has been billed as an act of principle. The Liberal Democrat leader insists he cannot, in good conscience, dine with a president whose record on Gaza, climate change and women's rights he regards as indefensible. On the surface, it looks like a bold stand. Many voters, instinctively uneasy about Mr Trump, will sympathise with that position. Yet it tells us far more about the Liberal Democrats' political instincts than it does about Trump himself.

## Following a Familiar Script

This is not the first time a Liberal Democrat leader has performed such a snub. In 2019, Sir Vince Cable, then party leader and the former MP for Twickenham, refused to attend Trump's earlier state banquet, citing the president's record on racism and misogyny. Davey is following the same playbook, a move guaranteed to go down well with Liberal Democrat activists, who are among the most viscerally hostile to Trump and most steeped in protest politics of any party base in Britain.

## A Leader Few Recognise

The difficulty for Davey is that most Britons remain unaware of who he is. A new YouGov survey found that only 37 per cent of the public can correctly identify him by name, even after five years as leader and the party's best general election performance in over a century. Among his own voters, just six in ten can name him. For a politician struggling to cut through, the symbolism of a boycott risks being noticed chiefly by the already converted.

## More Left than their Branding Suggests

What the boycott does make clear is the ideological direction of the Liberal Democrats. Despite their branding as moderates or centrists, their recent record places them well to the left of Labour on many fronts: more permissive on immigration and asylum, more radical on climate targets, and more socially liberal than Keir Starmer's government.

In truth, the "centre ground" label is little more than a political marketing device, designed to reassure disillusioned Conservatives in southern England that they are voting for moderation. In substance, the Lib Dems are now a left-wing party vying for right-wing protest votes; appealing to Tory defectors with anti-Conservative rhetoric while keeping their base sweet with the kind of ritualised protest epitomised by this week's banquet boycott.

## Maturity vs. Protest Politics

Other party leaders, though far from Trump's admirers, have accepted the invitation not for show, but because they recognise that governing requires presence even when it is uncomfortable. However divisive Trump may be, the United States remains Britain's most important ally, and the national interest requires a degree of statesmanship above party politics. To participate in the banquet is to demonstrate maturity: to respect the institution of the state visit, and to strengthen ties between London and Washington.

In declining his invitation, Davey may please his left-wing base, but he risks sending the message that the Lib Dems prefer placard politics to the responsibilities of office.

## Symbolism Over Substance

The lesson from Ed Davey's boycott is therefore not about Trump but about the Lib Dems themselves. They remain a party defined too much by political theatre and identity pageantry that resonate with activists but do little to solve the dilemmas of governing. And until their leader can be recognised by more than a third of the British public, the risk is that their "principled stands" will be remembered only by the faithful, rather than by the country they aspire to lead.

What Britain needs from its leaders is not the theatre of protest but the discipline of statesmanship. Sir Ed should have put country before party, setting aside his personal distaste to defend the national interest. History does not reward those who stand outside the hall, but those who sit at the table.



# Thames Tidefest returns to Chiswick on September 14th with a new sponsor

Now in its 11th year Thames Tidefest - the annual celebration of the river taking place mainly at Strand on the Green, Chiswick - was facing an uncertain future until a new sponsor came forward. Since 2011 Tidefest had enjoyed initial support from the Thames Tideway Tunnel project and latterly from Thames Water but this dried up two years ago in the wake of the water company's financial problems.

However, new sponsorship from the Port of London Authority has breathed fresh life into an event which the organisers admit has been 'running on fumes' for the last two years.

Thames Tidefest began in 2014 as a coalition of volunteers from many river related organisations with the aim of increasing public awareness and appreciation London's river as an environmental and recreational resource. It grew out of the desire to see a cleaner Thames with the successful *Thames Tunnel Now* campaign in favour of what is now the Thames Tideway Tunnel, which opened earlier this year.

Groups associated with Tidefest have included Active 360, Angling Trust, Edge Paddling, Chelsea Kayak Club, Environment Agency, River Thames Society, PLA, RNLI, Strand on the Green Sailing Club, Thames 21, Thames Estuary Partnership, Thames Water, WaterAid, London Wildlife Trust, RSPB, London Museum of Water and Steam, ZSL, local residents' groups and others.

Tidefest celebrates the recreational opportunities available on the Tidal Thames with affordable activities for all the family. These include paddle boarding, kayaking, foreshore walks, river dipping, circus workshop, London's biggest angling competition and much more. This year the event will be showcasing the *In the Drink* campaign, supported by the PLA, which aims to tackle scourge of plastic pollution in the Thames.



PLA's Corporate Affairs Director, Sian Foster said: *"Tidefest is a fantastic celebration of everything the tidal Thames has to offer, from family activities on the foreshore to getting out on the water. We're proud to support an event that brings communities together and helps more people discover and safely enjoy their local river."*

*"Our Thames Vision 2050 strategy sets out our ambition for more people from diverse backgrounds enjoying sport and leisure opportunities on the Thames. Tidefest is a great celebration of the river as a place to spend time, connect with nature and feel part of something bigger."*

Tidefest Chairman and Angling Trust Head of Policy, Martin Salter said: *"After 11 years of building a popular event that helped 'reconnect Londoners with their river' and highlighted the huge recreational and environmental importance of the tidal Thames, it would have been a tragedy if Tidefest had come to an end this year. We are so pleased that PLA have agreed to come on board as a sponsor and we are hopeful that this could be the beginning of a successful long term partnership. The Thames needs strong advocates and both the PLA and all the groups involved with Tidefest share the desire to build public support and engagement with the capital's famous river."*

Paul Hyam, *In the Drink* Founder and Director of Active 360 added: *It's a pleasure to have been involved in Tidefest from when the festival started 11 years ago and to host it at Active360s Kew Bridge base. Now the festival is moving into a new phase with even more emphasis on protecting the Thames and helping people to learn how to use the river safely. This makes it as relevant as ever and more important to Londoners*



# National Debt Rises £186 Billion in Labour's First Year

By James Knight

## Sharp Increase in Public Borrowing

Britain's national debt has increased by over £186 billion since Labour took office, according to new analysis from the TaxPayers' Alliance (TPA).

Data released by the Office for National Statistics shows that the country's debt now stands at £2.71 trillion, up from £2.53 trillion last July. This equates to an extra £6,510 of debt per household in just twelve months, a stark reminder of how quickly the government is borrowing.

The TPA, which has been campaigning on debt since last summer, highlights the urgency of the situation with its digital "debt clock." Updated in real-time, the clock indicates the UK is adding nearly £5,000 every second and more than £428 million daily to the national debt.

## Debt in Perspective

If the increase in debt over the past year were measured as a government department, it would rank as the third largest in Whitehall, behind only the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care. This puts the scale of borrowing into perspective, aligning it with some of the most costly aspects of government activity.

Such figures raise questions not only about fiscal sustainability but also about the political priorities behind borrowing decisions. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research has already warned of a £41 billion black hole in public finances - a shortfall that could increase to over £50 billion once fiscal headroom commitments are considered.

## Local Resonance: Richmond and Twickenham in the Spotlight

For Richmond Park and Twickenham, the debate over the national debt is more than just an abstract economic argument. These two constituencies consistently rank among the highest in the country for property values and income tax contributions.

That combination heightens sensitivity to tax changes. A future wealth or property tax, a policy some on the left have advocated as a way to close the fiscal gap would impact this part of south-west London significantly. While some say such measures are overdue, critics warn they could unfairly affect those who are "asset rich but income stretched," such as older homeowners in family homes whose values have risen considerably over the years.

## Political Context: Calls for More Spending

The challenge is heightened by the stance of the area's two Liberal Democrat MPs. Munira Wilson in Twickenham and Sarah Olney in Richmond Park have consistently advocated for increased public spending in sectors like childcare, education, and local services.

Supporters claim these are essential investments in social infrastructure. However, sceptics question how such commitments can be balanced with increasing national debt and whether residents of constituencies like Richmond and Twickenham will ultimately bear the financial burden through higher taxes.

## The TaxPayers' Alliance Warning

Darwin Friend, head of research at the TPA, offered a stark critique of Labour's first year in office: *"The fundamental truth is that Britain has a borrowing problem because politicians have a chronic spending addiction. In just one year, Labour have splurged hundreds of billions they don't have, piling yet more debt onto taxpayers' backs. Ministers must slam the brakes on this reckless debt binge, because if the government doesn't get Britain's financial house in order it will be ordinary taxpayers that suffer."*

## Looking Ahead: Autumn Budget Uncertainty

The Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, will deliver her first full budget this autumn. For households across Richmond Park and Twickenham, the stakes are clear. The government must decide whether to impose spending restraint or introduce new forms of taxation, potentially including a levy on property wealth, to stabilise the nation's finances.

Either way, the debate over debt is set to influence not just Westminster politics but also the financial futures of local families and homeowners.



# Cargo bikes and cakes are coming to Twickenham Green

From Solve the School Run

Fed up of getting stuck in traffic driving the kids around? A cargo bike could be just what you need. Chat to local parents about cargo bikes and how they can revolutionise your journey to school.

## About cargo bikes

The ultimate parenting hack, these bikes can carry up to three children within them as well as all their 'stuff'. They are electric, which means tackling hills, dropping the kids to school and then heading into work has never been easier.

## About the event

Think of it as a speed dating event between families who are thinking about buying a cargo bike and families who have already taken the plunge!

You'll be able to test ride some different bikes and chat about how they are working for families. Find out first hand the answers to common questions you might be thinking.

To join, simply come along with your kids to Twickenham Green between 3 to 5.30pm on Friday 26 September for an after school chat, free cake and cargo bikes.



See [more information about the event](#).

If you have any questions, email [hello@solvetheschoolrun.org](mailto:hello@solvetheschoolrun.org).

This event is brought to you by the Richmond Cargo Collective, Solve the School Run and Richmond Council.



## Speedy Comfort

We all tend to be busy folk, and meals - in particular those midweek suppers - can so easily turn into a ready-made supermarket meal, probably loaded with UPFs and all sorts of other 'nasties'. Well, just this week a fabulous book - **Speedy Comforts** by **Jon Watts** - has been published, that will certainly ease those midweek meal dilemmas, as well as giving us more time to enjoy our weekends. Chef Jon Watts has a huge following, thanks to his recipes which cut out unnecessary steps and time for home cooks. In this book he takes his Speedy recipes to the next level with cosy comfort food that takes no time at all.

**Speedy Comfort** shares over 80 delicious and comforting recipes, from the classics like Mac and Cheese to bold flavours like Popcorn Chicken Katsu. Chapters include Family Feasts; Old School (Nostalgia); Easy Dinners; Weekend Treats; Cosy Traybakes; Healthy Comforts and Puddings. Jon includes fan favourites like One Pan Baked Butter Chicken as well as new treats like Spiced Salmon Traybake. There are also healthy (and still comforting) options like Pad Thai, as well as decadent puds like Baileys and Chocolate Mousse. This book brings us many tasty, filling and super comforting meals, while remaining affordable and fuss-free.

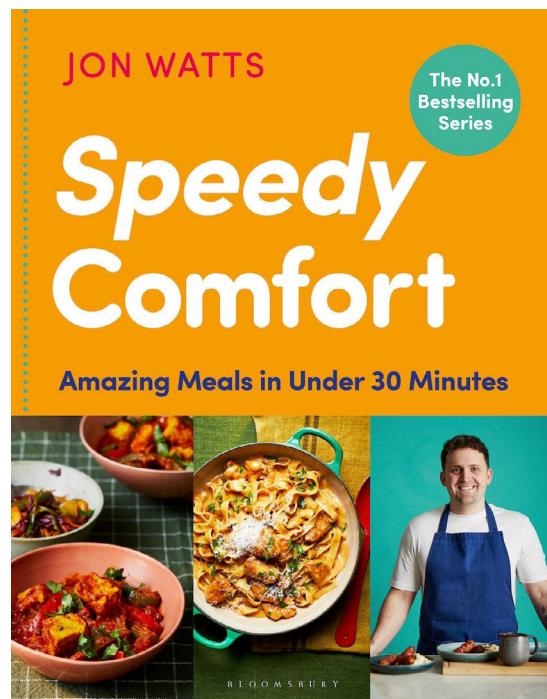
**Jon Watts** is a professional chef, recipe creator, and influential social media chef. His first book with Bloomsbury, *Speedy Weeknight Meals*, was a no.1 *Sunday Times* bestseller on launch. After troubled teenage years and a spell in a young offenders institute, he secured a job at one of Jamie Oliver's restaurants before setting up on his own. He's gained national exposure through his social media profile and TV appearances. Away from cooking, he uses his story to inspire a range of audiences, from businesses to at-risk young people. **@jonwatts88**

Published at £22 for a lavishly illustrated hardback, by Bloomsbury Publishing, this is also a great book to give to anyone about to head off to university. Here are a couple of recipes to demonstrate Jon's skill:

**Prawn and Courgette Risotto** serves: **2** prep time: **10 mins** cook time: **20 mins**

*"Many years ago, in the first restaurant I worked at, occasionally we chefs were allowed to create our own 'chef's special' for the menu. I came up with this recipe, and it was always a winner: Parmesan with prawns works so well. So if you're one of those people who thinks seafood with cheese is blasphemy, I ask you to try this first! (And if you're not, don't let anybody tell you that you can't have cheese with seafood.)"*

- 500ml vegetable stock
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped 150g risotto rice
- 150ml white wine
- 1 large courgette, cut into chunks
- ½ red chilli, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped or grated





- 150g shelled raw king prawns
- 40g Parmesan cheese, finely grated, plus more to serve
- 40g butter, chopped
- Salt and black pepper
- Rocket leaves, to serve (optional)

1. Pour the vegetable stock into a saucepan and bring it to a simmer over a medium heat. Keep it warm on a back burner.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large frying pan over a medium- high heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes, until it softens.
3. Add the rice and cook for a few more minutes, stirring occasionally. The rice will start to crackle and that's when it will start to absorb the flavour. Pour in the wine – it should sizzle – then reduce it by half.
4. Now pour in the hot stock, bit by bit, stirring in between each addition. Stirring the rice will knock out its starch and help to create a creamy risotto.
5. Once the stock has all been used up and the rice is almost cooked, take it off the heat.
6. Now, in a separate frying pan, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil over a medium-high heat. Add the courgette chunks and cook for a few minutes. Add the chilli, garlic and prawns and cook for a couple of minutes more, until the prawns are pink all over with no sign of grey.
7. Add the prawns and courgette to the rice with the Parmesan and butter, then stir well until you have a creamy risotto. Taste for seasoning, then serve, with some rocket, if you like, and more Parmesan on the side, for sprinkling.

**Honey-Harissa Hasselback Halloumi** serves: 2 prep time: 5 mins cook time: 20 mins

*"You've heard of Hasselback potatoes, but how about Hasselback halloumi? Cutting slits into its surface opens up the cheese to give you maximum crispiness, as well as maximum flavour."*

- 5 tablespoons rose harissa paste
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 250g cherry tomatoes
- 2 red peppers, cut into chunks
- 2 courgettes, cut into rounds
- 400g can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 x 225g blocks of halloumi cheese
- **To serve** (optional)
- Mint leaves Lime wedges

- Preheat the oven to 200°C fan.
- Mix the harissa, honey and olive oil in a bowl.
- Pop the tomatoes, peppers, courgettes and chickpeas into an ovenproof dish and then spoon in the harissa mix, holding back about 1 tablespoon. Mix well so that all the veg is coated.
- Make 6 vertical cuts in each block of halloumi, making sure not to cut all the way through, so each block remains in one piece. Add it to the baking dish, then drizzle over the remaining honey-harissa, encouraging it into the cuts.
- Bake for 20 minutes, until the veggies are nicely roasted and the halloumi is crispy on top. Or you can cook this in an air fryer (for timings and temperatures, see the air fryer conversion chart on page 205).
- Scatter with mint leaves and serve with lime wedges, if you like.



## Summer No And Low Options

It is still summer, just, although it's turned colder and the rain is lashing my window as I write this.

In the hope that we will be able to enjoy some more sunny days - perhaps even an Indian summer - here are some lighter, healthy options for your consideration.

I've been really impressed with the range of **Thomson & Scott's Naughty** wines. Most alcohol free wines are high in sugar and chemicals, lack transparency with ingredients, and are often treated as an afterthought within a company's wider alcoholic portfolio. Not the case here. The impressive range, developed by Amanda Thomson, is low in sugar,



and is actually wine, not a wine alternative. They are healthy, vegan and low calorie, and an extremely acceptable alternative. For example, the **Naughty Sparkling Chardonnay** is 100 per cent dealcoholised chardonnay with some sugar (and the non-alcoholic bubbly served at the restaurant Bob Bob Ricard, famous for its “press for champagne” buttons on tables). It's light in colour and smells like wine – and yes, tastes like wine too. It doesn't taste like champagne, it's not dry or toasty enough, but definitely tastes like sparkling wine and a rather nice one. The range also includes a delicious sparkling rosé (100% Tempranillo), a 100% Syrah red, a 55% Chenin Blanc/45% Chardonnay white and a lovely still rosé (99% Chenin Blanc/1% Pinotage). You can find most of the range at Ocado, and it's also stocked by Waitrose and Sainsbury. More info at [naughtyaf.com](http://naughtyaf.com)



With so many of us choosing a more mindful approach to drinking, particularly during warmer weather, **Moderato's Cuvee Revolutionnaire Rosé**, available in Majestic wine stores, has 0.5% ABV and little compromise on taste. This Rosé brings with it notes of ripe and tangy red fruits. Made from a unique blend of Gascony grape varieties with Merlot and Gros Manseng, it's fresh, fruity and brings sunshine all year round. At £14 a bottle, you can try this and the rest of the Cuvee Revolutionnaire range (red, white and sparkling) at [Majestic](#), [Club Soda](#) or [Wise Bartender](#)



Sometimes we're happy with a lower alcohol - as opposed to alcohol-free - wine, and **Codorníu**, Spain's oldest wine producer, has unveiled a new range of **8% ABV** sparkling and still wines, as demand for low alcohol beverages continues to gain momentum. The new 8% range is available from Ocado at around £7 a bottle, and offers drinkers a lower-alcohol alternative, without compromising on quality and taste. Crafted with grapes from Codorníu's historic vineyards in Catalonia, the range includes a refreshing sparkling (Chardonnay, Xarel·lo, Macabeo) blend, as well as an elegant still white (Xarel·lo, Macabeo and Muscat), rosé (Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah), and red (Garnacha and Syrah).



If it's a cocktail you're after, do try the **Caleño** range of tropical non-alcoholic spirits and cocktails that capture the sunny vibes of Colombia. The company offers a diverse range of alcohol-free rum alternatives. Featuring bold and exotic flavours, from Spiced, to Coconut, and Mango & Passionfruit. For a convenient grab and go option, it also offers a canned range of Ready to Party cocktails.



Caleño's new White Coconut is full of flavour and gives the smooth and sweet exotic taste of fresh coconut with subtle notes of vanilla and pineapple. Sugar free. Allergen free. Low calories. No artificial flavourings. Vegan friendly. It's now available in over 100 Waitrose stores and currently on offer at £13.50 (a saving of £5)

But don't forget tea, which, when cold brewed, makes a refreshing and calorie free drink. **Whittard of Chelsea** has a great range with loose leaf tea infusions, such as Ice Cream Sundae and Summer Garden Flavoured, to bold cold brews with fruity notes of cherry

and mandarin. Whether enjoyed ice cold, served piping hot, poured over ice or even added to a cocktail. I particularly like [Rose & Verbena Fruit & Herbal Infusion](#) (RRP £9.95) balanced and refreshing. This combines delicate floral essence of rose petals with uplifting citrus notes of verbena, soothing and revitalising. They are ideal for hot or iced teas, or can be condensed and added to a cocktail or used for baking. Other flavours to consider are [Cherry & Mandarin Cold Brew](#) and [Raspberry & Grapefruit Cold Brew](#) - both £5.95



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# Traveller's Tales 176

## So Much To See In Northern France Part 3

Doug Goodman Discovers The Role Of The American Army In World War One



World War One was nearing its final stages when America sent troops to support the Allies in France. German submarine attacks on American shipping in early 1917 persuaded President Woodrow Wilson to join the war against Germany with the declaration being made on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1917. But it wasn't until winter 1917/18 that troops reached the front lines and then engaged the enemy in the spring of 1918. This was due to the lack of preparedness in training, equipment and administration as well as the promise made by Wilson in his 1916 election manifesto that he would keep America out of a foreign war.



Entrance to Franco-American Museum



Anne Morgan



General Pershing

The first to arrive were 20,000 men of the 26<sup>th</sup> infantry division drawn from the North Eastern States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. Commanded by General Clarence Edwards they became known as The Yankee Division. In early 1918 three divisions arrived on The Aisne battlefields under America's top commander General John Pershing: later increasing to two million troops and fighting further south in the Champagne and Argonne Forest regions. Pershing wanted his forces to remain independent under American control but when the Germans attacked in the spring of 1918 in huge numbers and forced an Allied retreat westwards, his army was placed under the leadership of French supremo Marshall Foch. Unlike Allied soldiers, who were exhausted after three years fighting in the trenches, the Americans, despite their lack of experience, were fit and anxious to 'do their bit'. The American involvement helped shorten the war through their superiority in manpower. America's importance was in numbers but they had to rely on British and French companies to supply weapons, vehicles and training. Over 100,000 deaths in battle and vast numbers of injured soldiers testify to the enthusiasm and bravery of those from across The Atlantic who answered 'the call'.

### PILGRIMS

The Somme is well known to us for the prolonged fighting from July to December 1916 and especially for the British army's most disastrous day when on July 1<sup>st</sup> 20,000 were killed in an attempt to push back the German lines. So it's to the cemeteries, monuments and museums on The Somme that British visitors head to trace their ancestors and to learn about WW1.



American visitors, on the other hand, head for The Aisne to do exactly the same. Thousands from the US visit the large number of sites dedicated to the memory of America's role in The Great War.



US Museum. Recruitment



Ambulance



Mobile Library

Top spot for visitors is the amazing Franco-American Friendship Museum at Blerancourt fourteen miles north of St. Quentin. This history museum traces the links between the two countries back to the 18th century while the art gallery displays 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century paintings and sculpture. The Chateau of Blerancourt suffered during the 1789 revolution and was severely damaged in WW1. From the very start of the war the Americans living in Paris sent aid to the population to ease their living conditions. When victory seemed likely a huge relief operation was started by American women volunteers to get medical aid, social services, food and accommodation to the local French population: many of whom were starving and without shelter. The volunteers organised by Anne Morgan, daughter of the wealthy banker John Pierpoint Morgan, did so much to make life easier for 60,000 inhabitants in 127 towns and villages, particularly in education as no schooling had been available during the war. This support continued long after hostilities ceased up to the time when the French Government took over. In 1931, after reconstruction, Blerancourt became the national centre for Franco-American Cooperation to highlight the work of Anne Morgan's Committee for Devastated France and to commemorate the achievements of the American soldiers, of the ambulance drivers and medical volunteers. The first item you see is a member of The First Nation- an Indian in full regalia. The ground floor is devoted to WW1 with an ambulance, posters, photographs, artefacts and documents tracing the history of Anne Morgan's philanthropic work.



Temporary Home



American Poster.  
Support for France



Art in American Museum. New York Scene

The strong French influence on American art at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as New York discovered contemporary French art, is vividly portrayed. Between 1880 and 1930 there was



great cooperation between France and The USA on the arts scene. American artists enjoyed the Paris Salons and mixing with dealers and collectors. Blerancourt's extensive gardens, planted with American species of trees and shrubs, provide a tranquil spot for contemplation after absorbing the museum's information.



First Nation Figure



US Museum Art Gallery. Destruction

## THE AMERICAN CEMETERY

At The Somme American Cemetery and Memorial I met Stephen Munro its superintendent who, with a team of specialists, looks after the 14 acre site. He showed me maps and photographs of the fighting which took place in 1918 on the spot where 1,837 graves now commemorate the US troops who died there. Above the entrance to the chapel you will see a bronze eagle and inside are inscribed the names of 333 soldiers with no known grave. The immaculate grounds, rows of crosses and monument with the US flag and four bronze helmets at its base, gave a feeling of reverence and remembrance in this little corner of Aisne.



American Cemetery

Info: Laon Tourist Office, [www.tourisme-paysdelaon.com](http://www.tourisme-paysdelaon.com).

Franco-American Museum, [www.museefrancoamericain.fr](http://www.museefrancoamericain.fr).

Somme American Cemetery and orientation centre: [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)

To trace British relatives who served and died in WW1 your first visit should be to the website of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, [www.cwgc.com](http://www.cwgc.com)

# Does it really matter as much as we think though?

By Deep Patel

~Life Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



A week after the GCSE results were announced, conversations in my shop are still focusing on the amazing record-breaking results achieved...whilst this makes me delighted as a local shopkeeper, a part of me feels somewhat slightly resentful that "in the old days" when we didn't have the internet or half of the teaching modern facilities that they have today, we used to be known as absolute heroes when we got a few "A" grades mixed with "B" grades here and there...but now they tend to all bloomin well get what they call "9" grades across the board (our equivalent of "A" grades!). I know the youngsters are definitely getting more and more brainy (you should see how quickly they add up the sweets they are about to buy when they reach my counter...faster than my till even), but are the children actually getting more and more intelligent or is it easier for them today than it was for us back in the day? I would say the latter, (and of course it's obviously nothing to do with being a resentful, grumpy old shopkeeper).

The next thing that came to mind was the broken faces of some of the children I saw on their way back home from collecting their GCSE results...whilst some were grinning from ear to ear, so much so that they may as well have been cartwheeling up the road. As I restocked my shop fridge, I saw all sorts of varied emotions of the faces of the children going by. As a shopkeeper, I may not be as good as a dentist at cleaning your teeth, or as good as a lawyer at fighting your legal battle...but there are few who can be as good as a shopkeeper as understanding the reality of day to day life...that is an area that us shopkeepers definitely excel in. So the truth I have observed is quite reassuring...you see it is NOT always those who have had the private education or who have got the highest grades that actually end up "making it" in life...and it is not always those who receive the poorest grades that end up "failing" life...it's any of the above that can end up going any of the ways I mention above...so whilst at the time I got my GCSEs, some of my friends thought they had ruined their lives as some results they got were not as good as they had wanted...but that was 15 years ago...now most of them are doing incredibly well in life, whilst some of those who got exceptional grades are now doing very little with their lives...what is this I found myself contemplating, what kind of justice is that? I couldn't find the answer to that question but at that moment, the song titled "Que Sera Sera" (whatever will be will be) was playing on the radio next to me. I got my answer...the universe provided it and I wanted to share it with those children who were walking past my shop with broken faces. As some of them came into my shop, I told them that whilst GCSEs are important, they did not guarantee a successful or unsuccessful life...that was more down to personality, self-belief and state of mind...and that although we cannot change the past, it's what we do today that counts most, and that begins with one simple, positive thought...I am worthy...I am enough and the universe has a plan for me too...it then dawned on me that to really change your life and to help change the world, what is needed more than anything else (including GCSEs) is a mind that dares to think differently and a heart that supports it...life will happen as it was meant to...we are simply travellers passing through...always remember that...all of us...

**Remember...**

***"...Nothing matters in the end as much as your outlook in life...get it right and it will take you to where you were meant to be..."***

CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK:  
FOR ANTS...

Sprinkle baby powder, cinnamon powder or rosemary powder around where they come (but not directly on them) and they will stop without having to harm or kill them...you will get blessings in your life or have good karma for choosing a kind way too! This remedy also works to deter virtually any insect without harming them...like it & share it! For more tips, email: [InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com](mailto:InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com) or join my Facebook group: "INSECT LOVERS UNITE". Thank you



## Don Giovanni

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, libretto by Lorenzo Da Ponte  
Ensemble OrQuesta at the Arcola Theatre until 30<sup>th</sup> August

The story of a philanderer being dragged down to hell for respecting neither God, women, nor class divisions is not easy to stage. There is a fine line between authentically rough-and-ready and not really good enough. Marcio da Silva's production of *Don Giovanni* is on the wrong side of that line.

Mozart's opera is a hugely demanding piece, with fearsomely difficult roles that require vocal proficiency and theatrical charisma. With romantic and modern opera, sheer volume and intensity can cover a multitude of sins, but that is not an option for Mozart, where beauty of tone and fluent coloratura are also needed.

Big theatrical effects are hard to bring off in the tiny Arcola theatre. A small space can often increase dramatic focus, but this production was rather unconvincing. For instance, when confronted by the masqueraders, Giovanni stayed sat-down and ate chocolate cake, walking off at the end in a way that was decidedly underwhelming. Never has the action of this opera seemed quite so implausible.



All the cast wore black, which was quite effective visually. There were also black headless and legless mannequins hanging from racks that were periodically wheeled on and off. Giovanni periodically made love to these, perhaps indicating that he is pursuing the generic woman rather than any individual woman.

The main issues with this performance were musical. In previous years, Ensemble OrQuesta have fielded a period band. Here we had just five string players, three woodwind, and no brass. which did the score no favours. Under Beth Fitzpatrick, the musicians did their best, but there was rather too much wayward intonation and tuning.

The singers were all challenged by their roles. Da Silva has presence but his Giovanni is too inclined to shout. John Twitchen should never have been asked to sing Ottavio, as he has none of the mellifluousness required. Leporello, Masetto, and the Commendatore were performed adequately, but were rarely vocally pleasing. Rosemary Carlton-Willis had the required vocal attack for Donna Anna, but was uneasy on the ear. Helen May pushed and forced too much as Elvira. However, Anna-Luise Wagner was a rather knowing and sophisticated Zerlina, and was able to make something of her musical opportunities.



Read Patrick Shorrock's review at [www.markaspen.com/2025/08/27/don-giovanni-eoq](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/08/27/don-giovanni-eoq)

Photography by Julian Guidera

## *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

by Simon Stephens, after the novel by Mark Hadden

Putney Theatre Company at the Putney Arts Theatre until 30<sup>th</sup> August

How does one create a stage play from a novel? Well, under Francis Bodiam's direction the answer is brilliantly. This is a stunning production, compelling and thought provoking.

The story maps the thoughts of the young Christopher, as he tries to understand the changes happening around him, centring on the death of the dog belonging to his neighbour. Christopher attends a special school, is highly intelligent, but has difficulty coping with daily life. In his obsessive quest to discover who killed the dog, his logic is impeccable. The emotional and personal challenges he faces provide an insight into the world of a neurodivergent teenager. Harry Pavlou's performance as Christopher is truly exceptional. We are with him throughout his 'project', entranced by his love of maths, fully understanding of his meltdowns.

Set as a play within the play, the creative, minimalist staging allows easy movement from schoolroom to home, to street and busy station. The train scenes had most of us wanting to scream with Christopher.

The role of his teacher, Siobhan, is beautifully played by Lizzie Iredale as she reminds him of the techniques he must use to help navigate situations incomprehensible to him.

At the centre of the story is Christopher's family. Ed and Judy are an ordinary couple with a child with special needs. Aidan Kershaw's sympathetic Ed is kind and has the patience of a saint. He has learnt how to cope with the inevitable meltdowns, and he fights for his son's rights. But the strain on him shows. The warmth of Elly Lacey's Judy is obvious. She clearly loves her son and tries to cope. Lacking the patience of her husband, it isn't surprising that everything becomes too much for her. It is inevitable that this difference causes a rift between them.

Special mention must go to Emily Fellow's old lady trying to explain his mother's disappearance to Christopher, and also to Reggie's portrayal as the dog Sandy, giving everyone a chance to relax and go 'Aah'. There is also another treat at the end for everyone who enjoys the geometric set.

A sensitive subject, but very well handled, this is ultimately a story about courage that, despite its bizarre nature, is a very human and heart-warming.

Read Polly Davies' review at [www.markaspen.com/2025/08/27/curious-dog-ptc](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/08/27/curious-dog-ptc)

Image by Malbec





# Edward Bond's "BINGO: Scenes of Money and Death"

at the Mary Wallace Theatre September 13<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>

At the Mary Wallace we are accustomed to bringing you Shakespeare's plays, but from September 13<sup>th</sup> we offer you the man himself - imagined by acclaimed playwright Edward Bond.

In 1615 a disillusioned Will Shakespeare returns to Stratford seeking peace and security, only to find that family and social problems await him there. Life in London was harsh and brutal but in Stratford, confronted by the inhuman oppression of the poor, he finds no solace but only inequality and injustice.



Book now at [www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk](http://www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk) to experience a period of Shakespeare's life not in the history books.



# Touchlines of Fortitude: Rugby Meets Art in a Celebration of Women's Resilience

## Essential info

- A vibrant programme of free exhibitions & events celebrating women's strength and creativity.
- Timed with the 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup finals in Twickenham.
- Featuring exhibitions, public talks, and schools' outreach.
- Supported by Arts Council England.
- Taking place in Twickenham and the surrounding area

Touchlines of Fortitude launches this September, uniting rugby, art and female resilience in Twickenham. Set against the backdrop of the Women's Rugby World Cup, *Touchlines of Fortitude* showcases how art and rugby can come together to highlight women's stories of strength and empowerment.

Taking place at The Beach Gallery - in West London, the symbolic home of English rugby – the exhibition brings together painting, sculpture, photography and community storytelling to celebrate the power of women both on and off the pitch.

## Why this matters

With the Women's Rugby World Cup shining a global spotlight on the sport, Touchlines of Fortitude offers a unique cultural response – exploring how resilience, teamwork and creativity connect sport, art and everyday life. It highlights voices often underrepresented – from women athletes to neurodiverse artists and community leaders – and sparks conversations around strength and mental health

## What to expect

The project will feature:

- **Exhibitions:** The first show features three acclaimed local artists, with a second, larger group exhibition to feature selected works from an open call, bringing together emerging voices from across London and beyond.
- **Public talk:** panel talk on what it takes to survive and thrive in rugby and art. Hosted by Victoria Rush, with speakers Alison Kervin OBE and artist Kate Howe.
- **Awards** for the best painting, photo and sculpture will be judged by a high-profile panel including prominent art critic Tabish Khan and high-profile figurative artist Karen Turner,
- **The Wall of Stories**, Visitors can also contribute to the interactive *Wall of Fortitude*, sharing their own stories of resilience.
- **Public events** Alongside the exhibitions, a writing workshop and a school programme will bring together artists, athletes and community voices

Thanks to funding from Arts Council England, sponsorship from Hobbycraft and support from a comprehensive network of partners, all events will be free-to-attend – ensuring the widest possible audience will be able to take part in, and get engaged with, the Touchlines of Fortitude story.

**Joel Pickering, Head of Marketing at Hobbycraft:** *"Creativity is a powerful tool for self-expression and resilience. This partnership reflects our commitment to nurturing creativity in communities and celebrating empowerment."*

**Agnieszka Lokaj, Touchlines of Fortitude founder:** *"The 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup aims to be the most inclusive women's sporting event in history. That makes it the perfect platform for Touchlines of Fortitude, amplifying this moment through art and storytelling. As an artist with ADHD, I see neurodiversity as a strength that drives my creativity and resilience"*

**Exhibitions** @ The Beach Gallery, Teddington

- *Touchlines of Fortitude I*: 12–20 Sept
- *Touchlines of Fortitude II*: 24 Sept–5 Oct

## Key Events

- Press Preview – 11 Sept, 1pm
- Wall of Stories Workshop – 13 Sept
- Building Resilience Talk – 17 Sept (venue: The Exchange, 75 London Rd, Twickenham TW1 1BE)
- Awards - 28 Sep, 2pm

*All events apart from the talk will take place at The Beach Gallery, Teddington*







# Kettner Concerts In Twickenham

**“Beyond the Siege”**

**Shostakovich: Symphony no. 7 “Leningrad”  
(the rare piano-4-hands version)**

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025  
6.00 pm**

*“I have only tried to give an emotional expression of the war”*

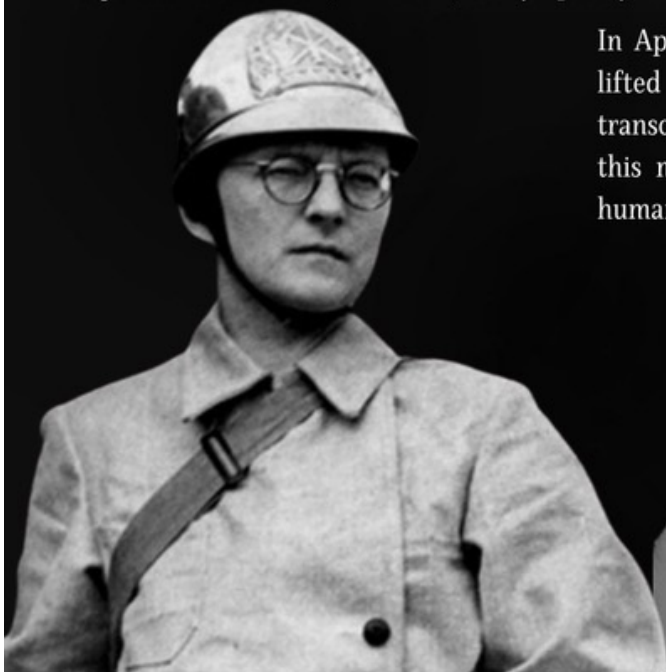
**Dmitri Shostakovich**

Experience one of history's most powerful musical statements, a deep reflection on survival and recovery in the face of oppression. This rare piano four-hands adaptation of Shostakovich's legendary Symphony No. 7 "Leningrad" was commissioned by the composer himself. Born from the crucible of the 872-day Siege of Leningrad, this extraordinary work emerged as a beacon of defiance against tyranny, and the Nazi encirclement of the city. Composed by Shostakovich while serving as both head of piano at the Conservatoire and volunteer firefighter during the brutal siege that claimed 800,000 lives, the symphony became a rallying cry for resistance.

In April 1942, amid starvation and desperation, the work's premiere lifted the spirits of a city under siege—a historic moment that transcended music to become a symbol of human endurance. Join us for this moving tribute to courage, resilience, and the triumph of the human spirit through music.

**Jed Distler, piano**

**Cristian Sandrin, piano**



**St Mary's Church Twickenham  
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**Tickets: £15 General Admissions  
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# St Mary's University

## St Mary's Alumnae Shine in Opening World Cup Game

St Mary's University, London alumnae Ellie Kildunne, Jess Breach and Abi Burton have been named in this year's England Women's Rugby World Cup Squad.

The first game of the tournament saw Ellie and Jess starting for the Red Roses against the United States.

Both Ellie and Jess contributed to the team's superb 69-7 victory over the US at the Stadium of Light, scoring two tries each.

metres gained, and most line-breaks for the team. Ellie has been playing for Harlequins FC since 2021.

Jess has 48 caps for England and is a prolific try-scorer, crossing six times on her international debut alone. She joined Saracens in 2022 from Harlequins.

Abi made her Red Roses debut earlier this year during the Six Nations, where she scored two tries against Wales.



All three of the former St Mary's students have previously played for their country, with Ellie and Jess both making their World Cup debuts in 2021 and Abi and Ellie starring in the Olympic sevens squad at Paris 2024. Abi made her Olympic debut at the Tokyo 2020 Games.

Ellie is the current World Player of the Year and was the [leading point-scorer](#) for the England team in the [2024 Six Nations tournament](#). She scored nine tries throughout the Six Nations last year, and finished the tournament with the most carries, most

Her inspirational strength has seen Abi fight back from [serious illness](#) and an induced coma in 2022 to making her World Cup debut this tournament. She has played for Trailfinders since 2024.

Speaking at her graduation earlier this summer [Ellie said](#), *"I'm absolutely buzzing for the World Cup. It's the thing I've been talking about since the last one three years ago. Obviously, it's a lot of hard work and dedication but we're really ready and raring to go."*



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
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# CLIMATE CHAT

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Learn how two local projects are making a difference to unwanted furniture and precious green spaces.



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# Women's Rugby World Cup preview: Red Roses v Samoa

From England Rugby

The Red Roses face Samoa in their second match of the Women's Rugby World Cup on Saturday 30 September at Franklin's Gardens, Northampton.

John Mitchell's side opened the tournament with a [dominant 69-7 win over the USA](#) in front of a record crowd at Sunderland's Stadium of Light.

They scored 11 tries between eight different scorers as they started their campaign in style.

This week the Red Roses take on Samoa, an opponent they haven't faced since the 2014 Women's Rugby World Cup, which they went on to win.

That match finished 65-3 in England's favour, with Manusina reduced to 14 players after 12 minutes, while the only other time the two have played was in 2005.

Samoa finished runners up in WXV 3 and the Oceania Rugby Women's Championship prior to the tournament.

They opened their 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup campaign with a 73-0 defeat at the hands of Australia.





## Stats and facts

England are unbeaten in Pool stage matches at the Rugby World Cup, winning 23 and drawing once at this stage; the Red Roses are the only team to have never lost a Pool stage game in the tournament.

In addition to recording a 100% scrum success rate on their own feed (11/11), the Red Roses also have the best win rate at the opposition scrum in the opening round of this year's Rugby World Cup (60%, 3/5); overall England won seven scrum penalties, two more than any other side.

No player has won more lineouts at Rugby World Cup 2025 than Samoa's Sui Pauaraisa who claimed nine of Samoa's 13 successful throws against Australia (level with Fiona Tuite).

England's [Morwenna Talling](#) made 27/27 tackles against USA, her tally of 27 tackles was the joint most of any player overall (also Emily Chancellor and Alba Capell).

## Keep your eye on...

[Jess Breach](#)'s landmark. The Red Roses wing sits is just one score away from her 50th try for her country having scored twice against the USA. She will look to reach the half-century in just 49 appearances.

Women's Rugby World Cup debutants. [Jade Shekells](#), [Abi Burton](#) and [Lilli Ives Campion](#) are all named to start in their first World Cup match, while [May Campbell](#) and [Mackenzie Carson](#) could make their first tournament debut as replacements.

[Claudia Moloney-MacDonald](#)'s return. After missing the warm-up matches and World Cup opener against the USA, Moloney-MacDonald returns to start on the wing.

All change in the front row. After an impressive performance from the forwards against the USA, [Kelsey Clifford](#), [Lark Atkin-Davies](#) and [Sarah Bern](#) get their first starts of the tournament.

## Recent results

2014: Red Roses 65-3 Samoa

2005: Samoa 0-53 Red Roses

## How to watch Red Roses v Samoa

Where	Franklin's Gardens, Northampton
When	Saturday 30 September
Kick-off	17:00 BST
How to watch	BBC Two and iPlayer



# Match Preview: Sunderland v Brentford

Written by Brentford Football Club

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's Premier League game against Sunderland at Stadium of Light on Saturday (3pm kick-off BST).

Brentford face newly promoted Sunderland at Stadium of Light on Saturday (3pm kick-off BST).

The Bees and the Black Cats have both taken three points from their opening two Premier League games.

Sunderland cruised to a 3-0 win over West Ham United on the opening day and then lost 2-0 at Burnley, while Keith Andrews' side bounced back from a 3-1 defeat at Nottingham Forest by beating Aston Villa 1-0 last weekend.

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know before kick-off.

## Pre-match Analysis

Stephen Gillett, Playmaker Stats: Brentford fighting for every ball under Andrews

Both Brentford and Sunderland head into Saturday's clash at Stadium of Light with three points and one Premier League win apiece, and their respective coaches will be eager to iron out wrinkles and refine their tactics to build momentum.

The Black Cats recorded a stunning 3-0 success over West Ham on the opening day of the 2025/26 season, and despite a league setback against Burnley and a cup shock midweek at home to Huddersfield Town, there have been positives to take for head coach Régis Le Bris as the Frenchman beds in a raft of summer signings following promotion from the Championship.

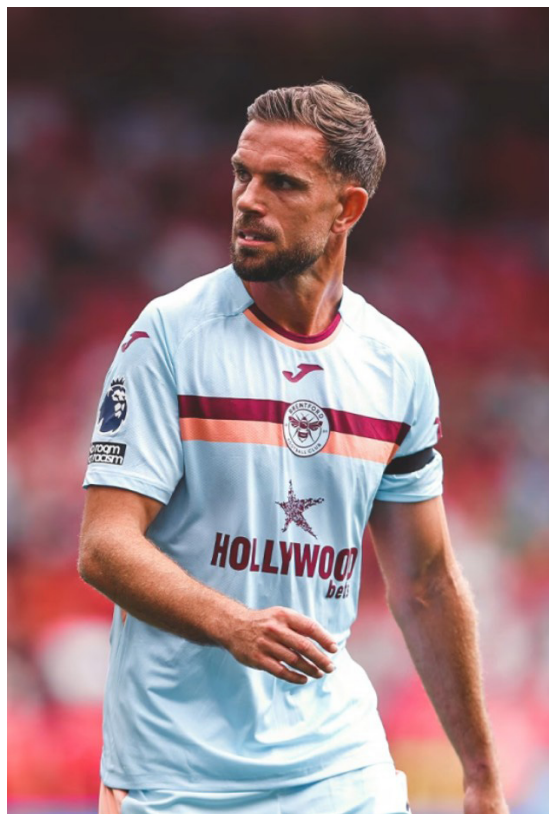
After a busy transfer window, Sunderland could potentially field an entirely new starting XI this season if they wanted to.

They have strengthened across the park, with Habib Diarra, Simon Adingra and Chemsdine Taibi adding athleticism and technique to complement the nous of new captain Granit Xhaka and ex-Atlético Madrid defender Reinildo.

We may only be two games into the Premier League season, but the Mackems' early highlights suggest they will be able to exert control at the higher level and also pose a threat in the final third.

Across the opening matchweeks of the new campaign, only Chelsea, Manchester City and Nottingham Forest have completed more sequences of 10 or more passes than Sunderland (29) and, in this respect, Xhaka's influence in the middle of the park has been obvious.

Set to face off against former Mackem Jordan Henderson this weekend, Xhaka arrived on Wearside from Bayer Leverkusen in the summer and the 32-year-old has already shown his capacity to boss proceedings in midfield.





Currently, Chelsea's Moises Caicedo (130) and Forest's Elliot Anderson (127) are the only two midfielders to complete more accurate passes than Xhaka (125) in the Premier League, and the Switzerland international averages 1.5 key passes per game - more than any other Sunderland player - to illustrate the penetration he offers in possession.



A clinical eye in front of goal is essential for any team wishing to transition successfully to Premier League life and the Black Cats' 32 per cent shot-on-target percentage from their opening two league games is respectable, and encouraging for Le Bris' men.

In the opposite dugout, Brentford boss Keith Andrews will be delighted by his team's outstanding response to defeat against Nottingham Forest in

his first game as head coach. [A resilient victory at home to Aston Villa last weekend](#) was followed by another [gritty win in the Carabao Cup against Bournemouth on Tuesday](#), and one of the Bees' primary challenges now is to ally their outstanding numbers out of possession with greater control of the ball.

The stats across Brentford's last two games illustrate that Andrews has instilled real defensive zeal after that Forest defeat, and the Irishman's charges currently lead the Premier League for overall blocks (60 for shots, crosses and passes combined), as well as tackles and interceptions (64 altogether). These numbers underline a simple truth: Brentford are fighting for every ball.

It is also promising for the Bees that they rank highly in the top flight for tackles won in the attacking third, with nine, and high turnovers (13) - their press among the most aggressive in the division according to PPDA (passes per defensive action) data.

As the Bees have already shown in spades this season, it is more than possible to control games and chalk up victories by dominating without the ball and it will now be fascinating to see how their season evolves with those solid foundations in place.

An average possession share of around 35 per cent across all competitions indicates the extent to which Brentford have ceded possession to their opponents thus far, and this snapshot is supported by the fact that the Bees have taken fewer touches in the middle and attacking thirds than any team in the Premier League this term.

Knowing how to dictate the flow of games at the highest level is an important quality to possess and, in this respect, the aforementioned battle between midfield dynamos Henderson and Xhaka is likely to shape the outcome on Saturday.

### Scout Report

Dan Long, *Sky Sports*: Sunderland's rollercoaster ride to the Premier League

To sum it up in just a few hundred words would do Sunderland's recent fall and rise a disservice. But one thing is for certain - being a Black Cats fan has been far from boring over the last nine years.

They were relegated from the Premier League in 2017, after a 10-season stay, and went down again in 2017/18, with Netflix's cameras capturing everything behind the scenes for the *Sunderland 'Til I Die* documentary.

In four seasons in League One, Sunderland reached the play-offs three times, triumphing at the third time of asking by beating Wycombe Wanderers at Wembley in May 2022.

Tony Mowbray guided them to sixth in the Championship in 2022/23, but they lost to Luton Town in the play-off semi-final.

Under three managers - Mowbray, Michael Beale and Mike Dodds - they finished 16th in 2023/24, safe by a margin of just six points.

On 22 June 2024, Régis Le Bris was appointed head coach on a three-year contract. He was a relative unknown and there would have been a few eyebrows raised at the fact his Lorient side had just been relegated from Ligue 1.

*"I want us to bring joy to our fans, not only through results, but also through our style of play, and I'm convinced that with commitment and hard work, we can write an exciting new chapter,"* he told the club's official website.

He set about delivering on his promise straight away. Sunderland shot to the top of the Championship after six wins from their first eight, scoring 16 goals and conceding only six.

They stayed there into November, a month where they did not win a single one of their six league games.

While that stat sounds ominous, it can be flipped, as between the start of October and the end of November, Le Bris' side lost just once.

A 1-0 defeat at Sheffield United on 29 November ended that 10-game unbeaten streak, but from then until the end of the season, they never once dropped below fourth, even after ending the season with a six-game winless streak that Le Bris called "strange".

That was far from ideal form to enter the play-offs, but Eliezer Mayenda struck an 88th-minute winner in the semi-final first leg at Coventry City, Dan Ballard hit a 123rd-minute aggregate winner in the second leg and Tommy Watson scored in the 95th minute against Sheffield United at Wembley to secure promotion with his final action before a move to Brighton and Hove Albion.

Given the tumultuous ride the club had been on in the years leading up to that, the manner of the victories was quite apt.

Now the priority is making sure this stay in the Premier League is not a short one - and chair Kyril Louis-Dreyfus has bankrolled a summer recruitment drive to the reported tune of £160 million as a result.

Enzo Le Fee's loan from Roma has become permanent, Habib Diarra has become the club-record signing and former Arsenal captain Granit Xhaka is now Sunderland skipper.

Signing 12 players to date could be seen as a risky approach, [as James Hunter spoke about in an interview with us earlier this week](#), but one they hope will pay off. Nottingham Forest signed many



more when they were promoted and remain in the top flight. The inspiration is there.

As for how things have gone on the pitch so far, three goals in just over half an hour at home to West Ham on the opening day understandably caused plenty of excitement, though a subsequent defeat to Burnley and penalty shootout defeat to League One Huddersfield Town in the Carabao Cup has somewhat tempered that.

But if Sunderland can harness the energy of Stadium of Light and make it a fortress, they can prove they are ready to be back in the Premier League for good.

### **In the Dugout**

Régis Le Bris



Régis Le Bris had a pretty low-key playing career as a defender between 1994 and 2003, playing for Rennes and Laval in France and Ronse in neighbouring Belgium. He played for France up to under-17 level, too, and retired at the age of 27.

The Frenchman was a

qualified coach by the following year and, in 2006, received his doctorate in sports physiology and biomechanics.

He went on to return to Rennes, where he stayed until 2012 in a coaching capacity, before moving on to Lorient.

He was Les Merlus' head of youth development for three years, then replaced Franck Haise as Lorient B chief.

In 2021/22 - Le Bris' final campaign in charge - he guided the team to second place in the Championnat National 2 - Group A.

Once he had completed his UEFA Pro Licence, he was appointed as the club's first team head coach in June 2022.

Lorient finished 10th in Ligue 1 in 2022/23, but 17th in 2023/24, which resulted in relegation to Ligue 2 after four seasons in the top flight.

Le Bris left the club by mutual consent in June 2024 and signed a three-year deal at Sunderland the very same day.



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