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RIP Teresa Read

T&RT

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RFU

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Brentford Football Club

Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

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It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of
Teresa Read

Teresa was the founder, editor and driving force behind the
Tribune.

It was Teresa's wish that I continue publishing the Tribune
and I will do my best to do so.

Thank you for your support.
Berkley Driscoll

TickerTape - News in Brief

Orleans House Gallery awarded £117k to enhance community impact

From Orleans House Gallery

We are pleased to share that Orleans House Gallery has been awarded £117,354 through Arts Council England's [Museum Renewal Fund](#), in recognition of the unique role the gallery plays in celebrating culture, creativity and community.

Councillor John Coombs, Spokesperson for Arts, said:

"Orleans House Gallery blends historic charm with inspiring exhibitions that reflect the borough's diversity. With the generous support from [Arts Council England](#), this funding will help ensure the gallery continues to inspire residents and visitors."

The funding, in addition to donations and other income streams, will enable Orleans House Gallery to build a sustainable programme of events and activities, strengthening its capacity to deliver cultural initiatives beyond Council support.

This includes the gallery's newly launched [Shadowscales show](#), as well as initiatives that strengthen collaborations with local artists and communities.

The funding also helps develop and maintain the gallery's art collection which tells the shared story of Richmond's people and places through art.

This year, 75 museums have been awarded support through Arts Council England's £20 million Museum Renewal Fund, helping safeguard the vital community engagement and impact made possible by public access to museums.



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A Confident Return to Conservative Principles

Why Richmond needs real leadership grounded in values, not slogans

By Jonathan Hulley, Conservative Parliamentary spokesperson, Twickenham

This year's Conservative Party Conference felt like a turning point.

Not just for the party nationally, but for those of us in communities like Richmond borough, where public trust in local leadership is at risk of being permanently eroded. The message from Manchester was clear: the Conservative Party is returning to its core values of responsibility, aspiration and national renewal.

That message is urgently needed here in Twickenham.

Across the borough, residents are increasingly frustrated. They feel ignored by a Liberal Democrat council that governs with gestures and ideology rather than delivery and competence. People want safe streets, thriving high streets, homes they can afford, and councils that treat taxpayers' money with respect. Instead, they are getting symbolic policy, bloated vanity projects and a refusal to listen. National Conservative priorities such as sound money, secure borders, safer communities and restored pride in place are exactly the values we will bring back to Richmond.

We are committed to restoring economic responsibility, both nationally and locally. The "golden rule" announced at conference, that for every pound saved, half will go to reducing the deficit, reflects the kind of common sense that families and small businesses across our borough live by every day. Spending carefully, planning ahead and expecting value in return. This is not about austerity. It is about rebuilding public confidence in the state's ability to live within its means. That principle matters here in Richmond, where council budgets continue to rise while results remain absent.

For young people and families across the borough, our pledge to abolish Stamp Duty on primary homes will be a game changer. It will remove one of the biggest financial barriers to homeownership, particularly in high-cost areas like ours. The new £5,000 First Job Bonus, designed to help young people build a deposit, will show that we are serious about restoring the dream of homeownership to the next generation. These are policies rooted in aspiration and opportunity, the very principles that once defined local government in this area.

The same applies to our high streets. While the Liberal Democrats have cut Richmond Card parking discounts and made it harder to drive into town centres, we will offer real support. We will cut red tape, invest in apprenticeships and abolish business rates for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses. National Conservatives have a plan to take burdens off business owners. Liberal Democrat councillors in Richmond have added to them. The contrast could not be clearer.



On welfare and immigration, we will offer the clarity that voters have long called for. The British people are compassionate. They believe in helping those fleeing genuine persecution. But they also know the current system is broken. Illegal migration is placing unsustainable pressure on housing, public services and local authority budgets. We will end the use of asylum hotels, establish a removals force and restore control of our borders. Welfare reform will ensure that benefits and social housing go to British citizens and those with genuine long-term needs. The system must reward fairness, not entitlement.

We are proud of our country, and we make no apology for it. The Union Jack is not a political symbol. It belongs to all of us. Whether your family has lived here for generations or you are newly arrived, our national flag should be something we can all take pride in. Yet here in Richmond, the council has discouraged its display. That decision reflects an unease with patriotism that now runs through much of the modern Left. We believe pride in our country should be celebrated, not censored. Patriotism is not exclusionary. It is inclusive. It brings people together.

Nowhere is the failure of local Liberal Democrat leadership more visible than in their handling of public money. At Ellera Hall, the council failed to conduct a credit check on the appointed contractor in a negligent manner. The firm went bust, the project stalled and costs soared. Residents are still waiting for a replacement community centre that should have been delivered years ago. This was not bad luck. It was serious mismanagement.

The Twickenham Riverside site tells a similar story. What began as a long-awaited opportunity to regenerate the town centre has become an open wound. Had the previous Conservative scheme gone ahead, we would already have new homes built and shops open. Instead, the site remains a hole in the ground while the cost has ballooned to a staggering £67.2 million – and it will lumber the council with high repayments for years to come. Years have been wasted. Opportunities lost. All at the expense of council taxpayers.

We will continue to hold the Liberal Democrats to account. We will do so in our communities, in local media and in every conversation with residents who deserve better. Because the Conservative message today is not just a national one. It is a local one too. We want a council that serves residents, not special interest groups. One that listens before it lectures. One that builds for the future, not just for headlines.

I know that many Conservatives across Richmond feel politically homeless. But now is the time to come home. Only the Conservative Party will offer a serious plan – rooted in our values, focused on real delivery and powered by belief in the potential of our communities. If you believe in rewarding effort, protecting what works, standing up for Britain and getting the basics right, then this is your moment.

Join us in delivering a Richmond borough that works for everyone: cleaner, safer streets; thriving high streets; homes for the next generation – and a council that works with, not against, the people it serves.

Cllr Jonathan Hulley is a Social Housing Lawyer and the Conservative Parliamentary Spokesperson for Twickenham. He writes on housing, local leadership and national policy

Halloween Talk

The Birth of the Gothic Novel in Twickenham

From Marble Hill House

Join us at Marble Hill House on Wednesday 29 October for a literary talk on 'The Birth of the Gothic Novel at Twickenham' with readings from 'The Castle of Otranto' by Horace Walpole.



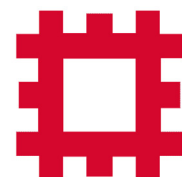
Join us for a drink from 5.30pm. A glass of bubbly or a non-alcoholic alternative is included in the ticket price. The tour will take place 6-7pm.

This talk will be delivered by Alison Stacey. Alison has always had a love of history. She was a local teacher of English and the Classics for over 35 years and joined Marble Hill as a volunteer in 2020. Since joining the team, Alison has revelled in the nuances of the Georgian era. She has a fascination with and a deep understanding of the historic links between the house, the life of Henrietta Howard and the creative world that she inhabited.

Please meet your guide inside the house.

This talk is not suitable for children under 13.

More info and booking [HERE](#)



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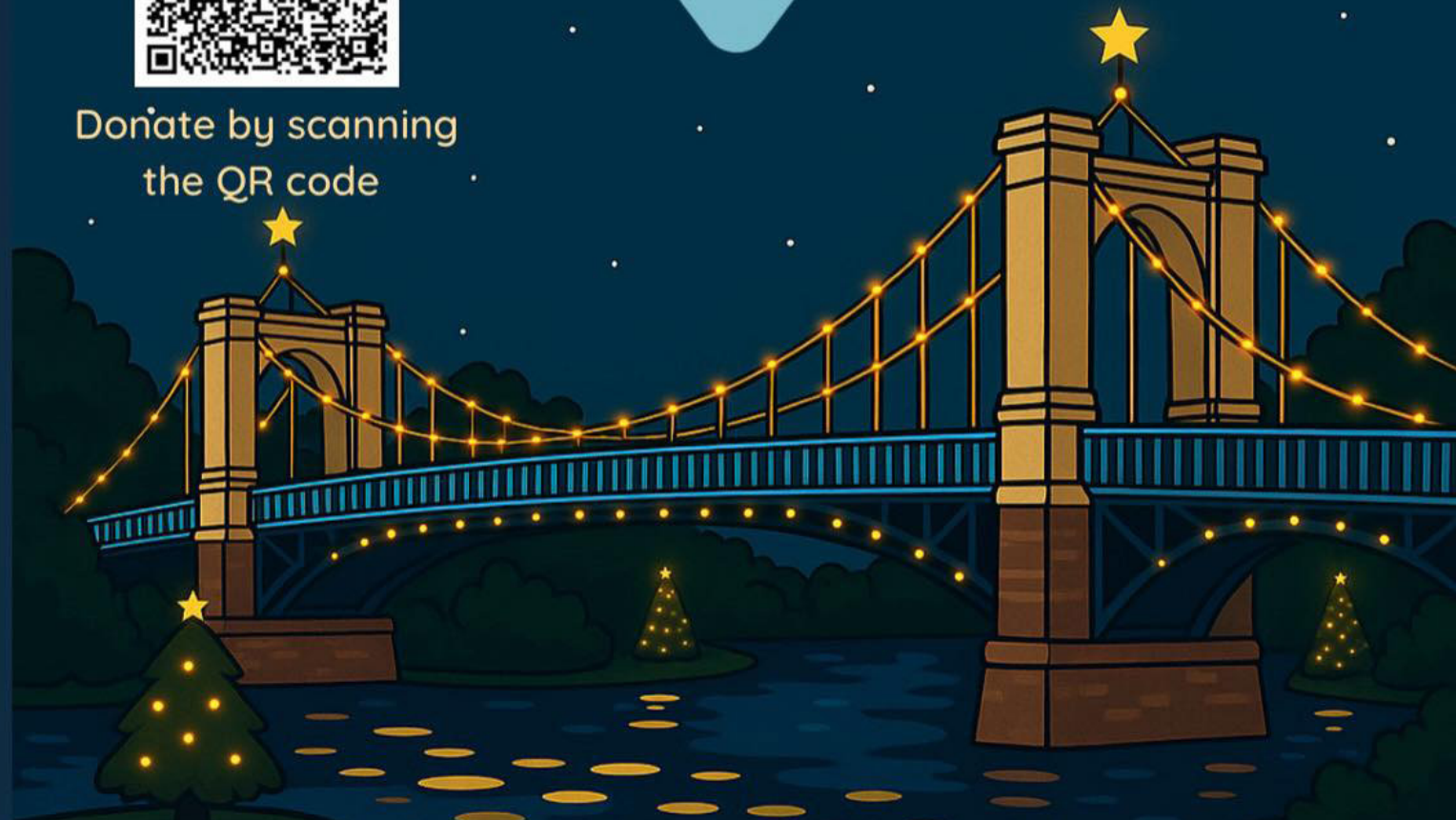
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Edging Toward the Precipice

Coded Warning of Impending Bankruptcy in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy

By James Knight

Richmond councillors assembled at York House on Tuesday night for the full council meeting that mixed civic formality with flashes of unease about money, management and control. The evening saw tributes, petitions and a pointed debate on the borough's finances, but it was a single public question, about the handling of a council-owned nature reserve in Kew, that momentarily lifted the veil on a more combustible mood.

A Question Too Close to Home

Martin Barker, who runs the [Richmond Council Watch](#) YouTube Channel, attempted to press the administration on the early termination of the Pensford Field lease and the decision to grant a new one to the mental health charity *Dose of Nature*. Citing the Council's own Scheme of Delegation, Mr Barker asked whether officers had exceeded their authority by using the code "HR 101" to sign the agreement.

When he rose to put a supplementary question, the Mayor ruled him out of order. The exchange was brief but telling: Barker was told the meeting had moved on. His latest video notes that the Council's Scheme of Delegation (the document defining which powers officers may exercise) is available only on the Wandsworth website, not Richmond's own. The omission, he argues, leaves residents in the dark about who actually signs what. Officials offered no comment during the meeting, and the Leader did not revisit the matter. Yet the moment captured a growing friction between transparency campaigners and an administration already facing questions over openness and oversight.

Municipal Jargon

Cllr Gareth Roberts congratulated England's Red Roses rugby side and linked their triumph to the borough's new strategy for women and girls in sport. Debate over the term "place shaping" prompted Green Cllr Richard Bennett to observe that "if I said that in the Eel Pie, they'd have no idea what I was talking about." Cllr Julia Neden-Watts accepted the rebuke with a smile and pointed to progress at Twickenham Riverside, still the Liberal Democrats' flagship project.

Local Plan Adopted

Before the fiscal storm, councillors had taken a calmer decision: adopting the Richmond Local Plan 2024–2039, a document setting policies for housing, environment and transport. Cllr Neden-Watts hailed it as "the blueprint for a sustainable borough." Green councillors supported the broad aims but questioned deliverability. Last year, the Council was forced to remove the financing of new affordable housing developments from the Medium-Term Financial Strategy because the cost of the Twickenham Riverside development left little cash for other priorities.

Finances Under Pressure

The atmosphere hardened when Cllr Jim Millard, the new Cabinet Member for Finance, unveiled the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The report laid bare a £20 million shortfall in 2026–27, widening to more than £50 million within three years. Reserves are forecast to be exhausted by 2027–28, even with the Council's maximum permitted rise in council tax. The looming Fair Funding Review 2.0 is expected to remove 90% of Richmond's general Government grant: a loss of roughly £45 million a year. The section 151 Officer is understood to have cautioned councillors that, without new savings, the Council could soon face the unthinkable: a Section 114 notice – local government's equivalent of bankruptcy. This would place a bar on all discretionary spending and could see youth centres, libraries and day centres for older people forced to close.

Millard insisted that the challenge was “serious but manageable” through what he called “disciplined transformation.” The transformation plan is expected to target “efficiencies” in management, procurement and digital services, with early proposals including the use of artificial intelligence to handle routine resident enquiries: a move that officials say will reduce staffing costs but which some councillors fear could erode the human face of local government. Critics were unconvinced. Green Cllr Wren warned that the capital programme’s scale now threatened core services; Cllr Bennett, quoting Shania Twain’s *That Don’t Impress Me Much*, accused the leadership of “whistling past the graveyard.” He went further, telling councillors that while they were “nice, civilised people,” there were times “when you can be complete plonkers.” The chamber laughed, but the figures were stark enough to silence the back benches.

Cllr Gareth Roberts, the Leader, delivered a terse retort, suggesting that opposition members were “pointing fingers without answers” and that the Greens would “do better to participate actively in finding savings rather than throwing brickbats from the sidelines.” The exchange captured the evening’s tone, restrained on the surface but tinged with frustration. With no Conservative councillors on the chamber floor, scrutiny of the administration’s decisions now rests with the Green Party and residents like Martin Baker, who are asking awkward questions.

No councillor spoke directly about Twickenham Riverside during the finance debate, yet several references to “capital discipline” and “affordability testing” hinted at concern. Under national rules, the Council must re-test every major project once the funding settlement is confirmed. Insiders acknowledge that a £67 million discretionary scheme financed largely by borrowing will struggle to pass that test if the grant cut is as deep as forecast.

Motions and Civic Business

The latter part of the meeting dealt with four motions: on the Special Educational Needs deficit, the threatened closure of Twickenham Police Station’s front counter, Council Tax support, and the borough’s reaffirmation of its Sanctuary status. The policing motion achieved rare unanimity; others split along predictable lines. The chamber’s mood, though, remained courteous under Mayor Penny Frost’s steady chairing.

Anxious Optimism

By the time the Mayor closed proceedings, Richmond’s councillors had delivered both reassurance and alarm. The Liberal Democrat leadership claims that transformation will keep services intact; opposition members believe the arithmetic has already outpaced the rhetoric. Between a 90 per cent funding cut and ambitions that refuse to shrink, Richmond’s claim to prudence is about to face its severest test yet. If artificial intelligence replaces frontline contact, the policy could prove deeply unpopular – most residents only turn to the Council when something has gone wrong, whether it’s a missed bin collection or an unswept street, and few will welcome a chatbot in place of a person.

You can watch the meeting and view the papers by clicking the link [HERE](#)



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Full Of Beans: Be Bold!

We love beans in our house; not just baked beans (but we love them too) but all manner of beans. And **Bold Bean Co** beans tend to feature regularly on our shopping lists, because they are just fabulous and so versatile and good for us. **Amelia Christie-Miller**, who founded the company, has just this week published a fabulous new cookbook: **Full of Beans**, that's packed with delicious beanie recipes to inspire us.

Organised by types of beans, including butter beans, chickpeas and red kidney beans, recipes range from quick, satisfying lunches and weeknight dinners, through to showstopping feasts, all centred around beans. There are warming autumnal dishes such as Sausage and butter bean stew; Nduja beans with mozzarella and hot honey; and Sweet potato and peanut butter curry. Salads and soups include Black bean makhani with kachumber and a cosy chicken and white bean soup, as well as satisfying lunch ideas like Cheesy marmite beans on toast with pickled shallots. Showcasing how versatile and exciting beans can be, the book also includes double page spreads on traybakes and their 'beanottos' - where beans are used in replacement of rice.

Published by Octopus Books in hardback, packed with lovely photographs, it's £22 and it's available now. To inspire you and encourage you to buy a copy, here are a couple of recipes from the book.

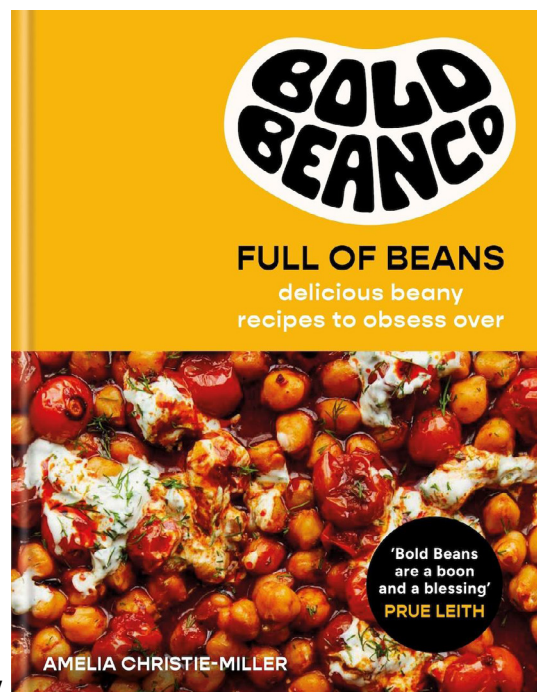
CRISPY BAKED HALLOUMI, CARLIN PEA + ORANGE SALAD (Feeds 2 Takes 30 minutes)

This super easy lunch is a perfect antidote to sad desk salads. Think of it like an orange fattoush. It's light, refreshing and leaves you feeling FULL OF BEANS! You get a salty kick from the cheese, freshness from the herbs, sweetness from the oranges and crunch from the croutons. Plus it's a great way to use up old pittas or leftover bread.

- 225g (8oz) halloumi
- 2 pitta breads or leftover bread (optional)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- pinch of dried chilli flakes or chilli powder (optional)
- 25g (1oz) walnuts or pecans or almonds, roughly chopped
- 2 large oranges
- 570g (1lb 4½oz) jarred carlin peas, drained
- 15g (½oz) mint or dill, finely chopped
- 100g (3½oz) mixed salad leaves, such as rocket or spinach, roughly chopped
- salt and pepper

FOR THE DRESSING

- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp honey
- 2 tsp apple cider vinegar or lemon juice
- ½ red bird's-eye chilli, deseeded and thinly sliced (optional)
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil



1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/400°F/gas mark 6.
2. Tear the halloumi and pitta breads or leftover bread, if using, into rough bite-sized chunks. Tumble onto a baking tray and drizzle with the olive oil and chilli flakes, if using. Season, remembering that halloumi is already salty. Bake for 8 minutes, flipping halfway, then add the walnuts and bake for a further 3–5 minutes until everything is golden.
3. Meanwhile, prep the rest of the ingredients and make the dressing. Cut the peel and pith away from the oranges, then use a small serrated knife to segment them, catching any juices in a bowl. Set the segments aside. Squeeze any excess juice from the off-cut pith into the bowl as well. Use this as the base for your dressing: add the mustard, honey, vinegar or lemon juice, chilli, if using, and olive oil, then season with just a pinch of salt and pepper, and mix well to combine.
4. Add the drained carlin peas, mint, orange segments and salad leaves to a bowl, along with the crispy baked halloumi and walnuts.
5. When you're ready to eat, pour over the dressing and mix well, scatter over the croutons, then tip onto plates or a serving platter and serve.

CHICKPEA, TOMATO + HARISSA STEW WITH HERBY YOGHURT (Feeds 2 Takes 20 minutes)

This is an iconic Bold Bean dish. Sweet cherry tomatoes, spicy harissa and chickpeas make an absolute banger of a dish – and it only takes 20 minutes. The tomatoes get blistered and charred so they're bursting with flavour, the bean stock makes everything super saucy and the harissa kick is balanced with creamy, herby yoghurt.

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 250g (9oz) cherry or baby plum tomatoes
- 2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 570g (1lb 4½oz) jarred chickpeas, with their bean stock
- 2 tbsp good-quality harissa paste

FOR THE HERBY YOGHURT

- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- zest of 1 lemon and a squeeze of the juice
- 15g (½oz) dill or parsley, finely chopped
- 3 tsp capers / a handful of green olives, drained and chopped
- 250g (9oz) Greek yoghurt

TO SERVE OPTIONAL

- warm flatbreads
- couscous or quinoa

1. Heat the olive oil in a non-stick frying pan over a high heat. Add the cherry tomatoes and cook for 5–6 minutes until blistered, soft and slightly charred. Lower the heat to medium, then add the garlic and fry for 1–2 minutes, stirring, until fragrant.
2. Add the chickpeas, along with their bean stock, and bubble for 3–4 minutes until reduced by half. Stir through the harissa and simmer for 2–3 minutes more.
3. Meanwhile, in a bowl, mix together all the ingredients for the herby yoghurt. Adjust the seasoning and acidity to your taste, adding a squeeze of lemon juice if you like it very lemony.
4. Spoon the chickpeas into warm bowls and top with the herby yoghurt. Serve with warm flatbreads and/or cooked couscous or quinoa, if you like



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Sammy the Seal, 1925

By Jeremy Hamilton-Miller

The appearance of a grey seal in the Thames at Richmond, reported recently on Social Media, was greeted with enthusiasm. He was given the name “Sammy the Seal”, and its appearance has been taken to show that the purity of the river water has, happily, increased.

However, your readers may be interested to know that there was a similar appearance in October almost exactly 100 years ago, that was excitedly reported in the national press (eg *The Daily Telegraph*, *The London Daily Chronicle* and *The Westminster Gazette*), the animal also being dubbed “Sammy the Seal”. The details of this sighting, and its aftermath, make intriguing reading.

The presence of a seal was suspected when in late September 1925, fishermen and a local boatman (Richard Waite) noticed decapitated fish and eels in the river; Sammy was first spotted in early October. Residents flocked to see his antics, despite efforts to capture him by fishermen whose sport had been threatened. However by October 6 his activity ceased, and his body was found shortly after. His death was attributed to pollution, as local boatmen observed that “there is usually a great deal of oil in the water”

Mr Waite very enterprisingly took the corpse back to land, and exhibited it at his boathouse. Later, as reported by *The Lancashire Evening Post*, Sammy’s stuffed body was put on show in Teddington Library, where a collection of £100 for the Cottage Hospital was made.

This is certainly not the first time a seal had come to an unfortunate end in Richmond, as *The Yorkshire Evening Post* had noted that in 1910 a man had been fined £2 (a large amount in today’s money) for shooting a seal that was in the Thames.

The resourceful Mr Waite, the main player in this story, owned the St Margaret’s Boathouse. He was one of the King’s Watermen, who row the Royal Barges. The picture shows him in his regalia



Are you treating the foreign ones badly?

By Deep Patel

~Life through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper~

Following the storm last weekend, Twickenham was sprinkled with more than just leaves... there were full blown branches and “parts of trees” everywhere...the cobwebs had definitely been blown away, however there was also something else people were finding on the ground where these things should not normally be found...money (we wish!)...this was far more furry and cute and has a bushy tail...have you guessed it yet? Squirrel kittens (no I am not talking about some kind of hybrid animal bred from a squirrel and a cat...baby squirrels are actually called “kittens” or “kits” believe it or not and the storms last weekend meant that many more had fallen to our pavements prematurely from their nests high up on the trees above...as most of my customers know that I care about all animals and life forms, my shop was becoming a mini squirrel hospital...why me and not the vets you may be thinking? Well rather controversial but let me tell you...many people may not know that the grey squirrel is a non-native species in the UK, meaning it is considered “invasive” so sadly many vets simply have to euthanize them (even if they are healthy, even if they are babies and even if they are alone)...some people reading this may be thinking, well that’s fair enough, it’s not from the UK so why do we want to try to save them...so this view becomes accepted and seen as a truth, but just imagine for a moment that we held that same attitude towards humans? That our hospitals began turning away those who didn’t “originate” in the UK, those who were from another country...just imagine how the reaction would be different? People would be disgusted on every account of human rights...but it’s ok to do this when it comes to animals somehow right?

This was an interesting point of conversation with customers this past week in my shop and made me think...we have been discriminating against foreign animals in the UK for decades now, and we get away with it...why? ...because animals can’t “talk back” perhaps? They cannot protest or complain to parliament? So they are treated unfairly and simply put to sleep by many vets and wildlife organisations for being of “foreign origin” ... sounds crazy right? Especially even more so as THEY didn’t ask to come to the UK...WE got them here to begin with, took them from their tropical, green leafy habitats through our trade routes and as pets to keep in aviaries and then when they began to breed, thrive and survive, we penalised them and branded them as “pests” for being good adaptors and successfully surviving our harsh winters and more than uncomfortable urban concrete environments? Well we’re so great aren’t we?

So fair and kind? Hmmmm maybe it’s time we re-think these things? Next time we see and injured green parakeet unable to fly or a squirrel baby on the ground and think “I’ll leave it to nature”, maybe we need to think how we would feel if that was us injured/in need and “left to nature”? Not great right? Instead pick them up by throwing a towel over them and place into a ventilated box, type your postcode into a website called www.HelpWildlife.co.uk and find your local wildlife centre and ask them if they are friendly towards so called “invasive species” and take them there to get them help... you may just save a life and be adding a little compassion and good karma into a world that desperately needs it? If we are not meant to discriminate between humans from different nationalities, isn’t it time that we did the same for animals too? If you can’t find anyone to help...call this number for Animals First Rescue Group...they help everything from injured mice to deer with no discrimination towards any life. If you can’t

be a hero and save a human life every day, take the opportunity and be an animal-hero and try to save more of them and help make the world a better place...one animal at a time! Come on Twickenham...we can do it!

Please follow the below advice in the poster next time you find a “squirrel kitten!”



FOUND A YOUNG SQUIRREL?

Please follow these emergency steps until you can get to a specialist:

Please share... It could save a little life ❤️

- 1) Keep on a towel in a small ventilated box indoors and cover squirrels body with warm towel or blanket
- 2) Place hot water bottle under only ONE half of box to make warm area under squirrel, don't feed.
- 3) Find a squirrel specialist

Remember...

***“Big or small...short or tall
...a life is a life...be kind”***

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/Instagram page: “INSECT LOVERS UNITE”

Emma

by Ava Pickett, based on the novel by Jane Austen

RTK Productions at The Rose Theatre, Kingston until 11th October

Here's an antidote to today's dreary, non-stop outpouring of news. *Emma* is a joy! Its fast-paced witty script shows, highlights the brilliance of Jane Austen's storytelling. A tale set in the strictly mannered world of the 18th Century has been re-interpreted to look as if it was always intended for today. It is not only a good story, it is very, very funny. To drop in the well known "Badly done Emma" line and make it fit amongst the modern world of TikTok messaging, and photo-sharing is pure genius.



OK, so it is not an exact match to the original story. Sleepy Highbury has been moved to *Made in Essex* territory, and the fruity language would certainly have shocked its author. But the familiar characters, the essential poignancy of the tale, and the familiar happy ending are all there.



The production is sharp. It maintains its bright exuberant tone right through to the spectacular finish. Christopher Haydon's direction is flawless. The wit of the script is enhanced by multiple doorways giving flashes of farce and by the split-second timing of the physical comedy.

This Emma is a young GenZ woman, proud of her feminism, well-meaning, intellectually inclined but unknowingly arrogant. She has a loving and admiring family, but she has a total lack of real empathy and self-awareness. Amelia Kenworthy makes Emma real, happy to be found lording it over her peers who have never left Essex, while she has been to university. Oooh! But there is always hints at her vulnerability.

Nigel Lindsay gives a nicely nuanced performance as Mr Woodhouse. He is a loving and thoughtful father, with a touch of the Del Boy, still mourning his late wife, but consoling himself with the help of the Lucy Benjamin's bubbly blonde Mrs. Bates. The effect of Emma's return on their relationship forms a moving sub-plot, a mix of emotional confusion and comedy.



Lucy Benjamin's Isabella is a gem. The spot-on Essex girl, she is exasperated with her irritatingly superior sister, yet a typical bride-to-be, excited and apprehensive. We are left cheering the everyday, ordinary folk whose worth Emma so easily overlooked, in this production, which is such fun it should be on prescription.

Read Polly Davies' review at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/23/emma-rtk

Photography by Marc Brenner

La Cenerentola

by Gioachino Rossini, libretto by Jacopo Ferretti

The English National Opera at the London Coliseum until 14th October

Rossini's *La Cenerentola, ossia La Bontà in trionfo*, "Cinderella or Goodness Triumphant" was composed in just 24 days. (And with two other operas in the year as well!) It was a great success and gave a role for coloratura contralto, for which this opera is designed.

He described it as *dramma giocoso* "drama with jokes" and the libretto translation by Christopher Cowell into contemporary doggerel (to be taken as a compliment as it works very well!), although, does verge at times towards Gilbert and Sullivan in effect.



The opera is directed by Julia Burbach and she has learnt a lot from her mentor Christof Loy. It's an intelligent colourful interpretation, busy but not fussy, tasteful and funny without being coarse. The production and the sets, both in concept and execution, are excellent. The characters are all "colour coded", and there is a set of ancestral cross-dressing ghosts, mainly royal figures from the past, to help the action along. There are children dressed as mice and colour changes of the wallpaper to signify changes within the two storey house, which has two revolving rooms on the ground floor to add variety and interest.

The choreography adds to the fun, slightly over the top as it should be for this Rossini entertainment.

The orchestra led by Yi-Chen Lin proves to be on good form and is generally light on it's feet, so providing effervescent foundation for the comedy.

The cast have a difficult task on their hands with such complicated and florid coloratura, but they are clearly well rehearsed and manage group actions with comic effect.



La Cenerentola makes a great start to the ENO season, an enjoyable easy opera that can appeal to children and adults alike. The singing, set, costumes come together to make a well thought-through entertaining evening.

Read Michael Rowlands' review at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/28/cenerentola-eno

Photography by Mark Douet

The Last Five Years

by Jason Robert Brown

Theatre Royal Bath at the Reading Rep Theatre until 12th October, then on tour until 3rd January

The Last Five Years is a powerful, emotionally intricate exploration of love found and lost. An intimate two-hander, it pulses with energy, wit and heartache.

Director Hal Chambers' finely tuned understanding of the complexities of the show's unique structure (two timelines moving in opposite directions), creates a piece that feels both immediate and universal, lifting this cult musical into a new light.

Shaping the emotional narrative, the setting is visually elegant and conceptually loaded. Screens reinforce the emotional barriers between the characters, giving a claustrophobic edge that reflects the slow, inevitable breakdown of their relationship.



Martha Kirby, as Cathy, offers a performance brimming with vulnerability and vocal prowess, as, with devastating clarity, she charts the downward spiral of love. This is made even more heartbreaking with her narrative playing in reverse. The hope and spark of their first date in the final scene stands in juxtaposition to her introduction where her heart is torn apart. Kirby is electric as she moves between the façade and her internal struggles.



Opposite her, Guy Woolf's Jamie is all comic charm and untamed energy as he enters the relationship. His physical comedy, full of boyish arrogance, provides a striking contrast to the raw emotional terrain Kirby is navigating. Woolf's shift into a more subdued, conflicted Jamie has restraint and thoughtfulness, ensuring that his character's descent doesn't lose the magnetic spark.

There's a slickness to the pacing and transitions that allows the piece to breathe. Lighter, comic moments sparingly punctuate the emotional heft without undercutting it. The music forms a bridge between the characters even when they're most emotionally distant. The on-stage musicians weave intricately and seamlessly into the storytelling, supporting the mood and the narrative peaks.

The production impresses through understatement. Its adept lighting design bathes the stage in warm amber during fleeting moments of hope, tightens in cold isolation during scenes of conflict, shaping with precision the emotional shifts.



There are moments of brilliance when all the elements coalesce: performance, direction, and design, to deliver something quietly heart-stopping. *The Last Five Years* is a deeply affecting and beautifully executed piece of musical theatre that finds both the sorrow and sweetness in a failed relationship.

Read Sam Martin's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/25/last-5-years

Photography by Alex Tabrizi

Patience

by W. S. Gilbert, music by Sir Arthur Sullivan

HLO Musical Company at the Hampton Hill Theatre, until 4th October

Gilbert and Sullivan's satire, written in 1881 to send up the fashionable aesthetic movement, doesn't miss a trick. There are lovesick maidens, simpering poets and rejected lovers apiece. Nowadays, no-one would get away with making this much fun of Gen Z's idols and their fans without falling foul of cancel culture.

The arrival of a dubious poet leads the local ladies to desert their military boyfriends as they fall under the spell of aestheticism. Self-indulgent and infatuated, they fall in love with this self-declared poet. *Patience* is the only one to resist his charms, but her curiosity leads her ultimately to succumb.



With Gilbert and Sullivan's wit and tongue twisting lyrics, and Lee Dewsnap's superb musical accompaniment, this lively *Patience* serves up non-stop laughter. The setting is moved from bucolic rural scene to upscale retirement home; think *Thursday Murder Club*. Village maidens are now ladies-who-lunch, the Officers of Dragoon Guards are now a veteran Guards (carpet) bowls club, the milkmaid a care-home worker.



The performance of the chorus of ladies-who-lunch, whether swooning, kneeling (with some difficulty) at the feet of their favoured poet, or taking part in Robynndra Allen's Lady Ella's perfectly timed yoga class, is expertly coordinated and very funny. As is the trio of Tony Cottrill, John Pyle and Paul

Huggins as the Duke, Colonel and Major, desperately trying to match the ladies' expectations by becoming both "mediaeval" and "sensitive".

Andy Cox as Reginald Bunthorpe switches between aesthetic sensitivity and self-doubt as he seethes at his nemesis, the vainglorious Archibald Grosvenor, a delightful Robert Smethurst. Felicity Morgan's bravura performance as Lady Jane manages to make *Sad Is That Woman's Lot* as poignant as it is funny.



Emma Hartnett has a beautiful voice and is equally persuasive as *Patience*, the down-to-earth catering assistant repelling the advances of faux aesthete poet, and the love-sick sweetheart who has bought into the love's painful ecstasy vibe.

Patience is not the easiest of Gilbert and Sullivan's works to make relevant to today's world, but with Elizabeth Malone's directoral choice of setting a touch of modernisation, bringing in phones, jeans, and a sprinkling of retailers, her successful and hilarious production is an outstanding achievement.

Read Polly Davies' review at www.markaspen.com/2025/10/02/patience-hlo

Photography by John Malone

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Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges Celebrates Turing Scheme Overseas Placements

Uxbridge Campus was the place to be on Thursday 2 October when Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges (HRUC) hosted a ceremony to showcase and celebrate five overseas work experience trips. During the academic year, 118 students and apprentices from HRUC travelled to destinations including Greece, South Africa, and Vancouver to undertake a work placement through The Turing Scheme - the UK government's global programme to study and work abroad. The scheme provides funding for international opportunities in education and training and provided our students with the opportunity to develop new skills, experience different cultures, and build confidence in ways that can't be replicated in the classroom.

Over 120 guests attended the celebration event, hosted by Liam Plumridge, Assistant Director for Enhanced Skills and Employability, and the evening got off to a great start with a fantastic performance by Kiki and Harrison.



Kiki took part in an overseas placement in Canada where she worked on the production of *Legally Blonde* with Theatre Under the Stars. Harrison, who is studying Level 4 Performing Arts with Kiki, joined her in that duet.

Praise from our Canadian Partner

We were also delighted to welcome our Canadian partner and special guest speaker, Tim Wells of INTERNeX who said: "HRUC are the best group I have ever worked with in 25 years of INTERNeX's existence. This was evidenced with the quality of the students and how they have shown such enthusiasm, detail and commitment to being better people which came through in both their journal reflections and their verbal impressions."

Each student received a certificate in recognition of their achievements presented by Jo Withers, Chief of Business Strategy and Kai Barnes, Assistant Principal - Curriculum and Quality. There was also an opportunity to hear from one student from each of the five trips who shared their thoughts and experiences as well as what the placement meant to them.

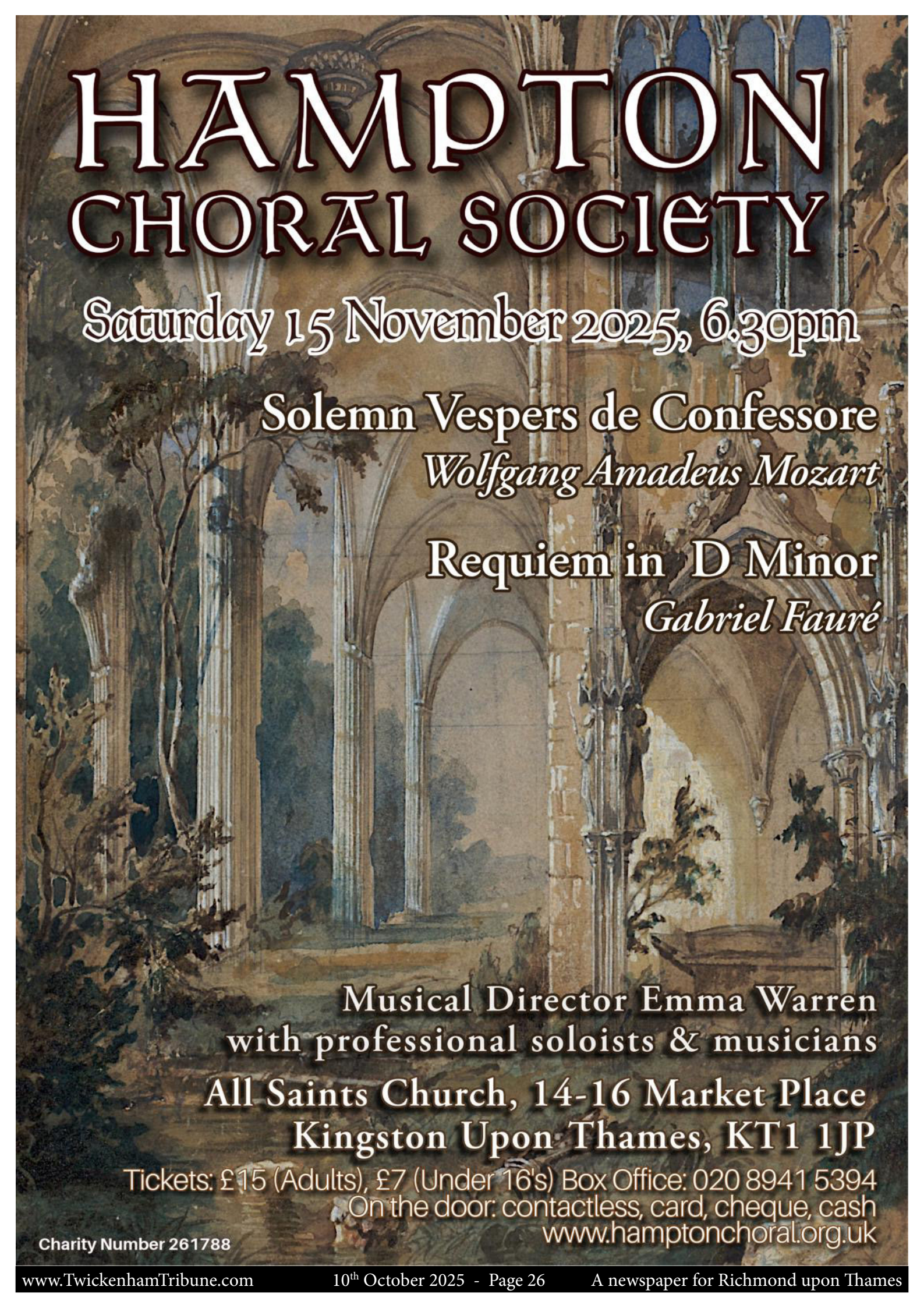
Throughout the evening a delicious World Food buffet was served with cuisine from each of our destinations which brought back some great culinary memories and experiences. There was also another amazing performance delivered by Performing Arts graduates Billy and Kaydeane, who also went to Vancouver this Summer with Theatre Under the Stars.

Travel Changes You

Liam closed the evening with a quote from Anthony Bourdain that perfectly captures the spirit of these experiences and the impact that these overseas placements have had on our students. "Travel changes you, as you move through this life and this world, you change things slightly and you leave marks behind, however small. And in return, life and travel will leave marks on you. Travel isn't always pretty; it isn't always comfortable. Sometimes it hurts, sometimes it breaks your heart, but that's okay. The journey changes you, it should change you."

Photo credit: images by [Rob Addis Photography](#)





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World Sight Day: Blind Veterans UK praise for Surbiton care home

From Royal Star & Garter

A care home has been praised for the care and support it is providing a blind RAF veteran.

Staff at Royal Star & Garter's Surbiton Home invited Blind Veterans UK to give them support and advice after former RAF policeman Jeremy Sellwood became a resident. According to Jed, as he is known, and his family, it has helped him to settle in and enjoy life at the Home.

The praise for Royal Star & Garter comes on World Sight Day, 9 October, and during World Blindness Awareness Month, which is running throughout October. Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care and support for veterans and their families, living with disability or dementia, through its Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing. It also provides services reaching into the community, including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

Blind Veterans UK supports anyone who has served in the Armed Forces and is now living with significant sight loss.



Jed at Royal Star & Garter



Jed in the RAF



Jed (right) passing-out as an RAF police officer

Jed lost his sight after sustaining a serious head injury in 1987, aged 25. It happened while he was based at JHQ (Joint Headquarters) Rheindahlen in West Germany, and he was off-duty at the time. With the support of Blind Veterans UK, he was able to live independently for more than 20 years. However, a series of falls resulted in Jed, now 63, coming to Royal Star & Garter in 2024.

It was after moving in that the Home's dedicated Wellbeing Team reached out to the sight loss charity. Wellbeing Coordinator Lesley O'Driscoll said: *"The team haven't had to support someone who is totally blind and we wanted advice and to know what we can do to help his wellbeing."*

Blind Veterans UK provided a box of activities and advised on the set-up of Jed's room. A case worker also meets Jed each month and Lesley added: *"We've definitely been able to improve the support and wellbeing we provide Jed since contacting Blind Veterans UK."*

Jed said: *"I think it's excellent that Royal Star & Garter got in contact with Blind Veterans UK. It's refreshing to see two organisations working together this way. Staff here always go the extra mile for every single resident."*

Jed's sister Kim said: *"Blind Veterans UK has been supporting Jed for a long time, so I was thrilled when Royal Star & Garter reached out to them to help with the support they can provide him."*

Mark Wheeler, from Blind Veterans UK said: *"We are proud to have been supporting Jed for many years. It was fantastic to work with Royal Star & Garter to share our expertise and support them to provide the best care possible. It's great to see two veterans' charities working together for Jed's benefit and we're grateful that staff at the Home reached out to us. It's good to know that Jed is now receiving such wonderful care and that he is happy."*

Speaking about Royal Star & Garter, Jed added: *"This place feels like home, it's absolutely fantastic. Everybody's friendly and helpful, and I feel lucky to be here."*

Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton is also welcoming new residents. For more information on this, its other services or to work at the Home, go to:

www.starandgarter.org/surbiton



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

World Cup-winning Red Roses inspire thousands at grassroots celebration 'RugbyFest'

Grassroots rugby clubs across the nation opened their doors to World Champion England Women's rugby team for RugbyFest, a nationwide celebration of rugby designed to inspire the next generation.

Fresh from their Women's Rugby World Cup victory, the Red Roses spent the weekend inspiring the next generation as RugbyFest 2025 brought grassroots rugby to life across the country.

RugbyFest was a celebration of rugby in England following the record-breaking Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 and Red Roses home-turf victory. The weekend was designed to encourage new players, supporters and volunteers to get involved in the sport.



Central to this effort is [FindRugby.com](https://www.findrugby.com), where young fans, parents and future players can discover local opportunities to start their rugby journey.

Hundreds of clubs hosted family fun days, mini festivals and taster sessions, uniting communities and giving new players the chance to experience rugby for the first time.

The highlight for many came as the Red Roses returned to the games' roots, visiting local clubs across the nation from Caldy RFC to Teignmouth RFC to meet aspiring players, sign shirts, take selfies and share stories of their own first steps in rugby. For Bracknell RFC, Chinnor RFC and Macclesfield RUFC, welcoming the Women's Rugby World Cup trophy created unforgettable moments for players and supporters alike.

Steve Grainger, Executive Director of Rugby Development at England Rugby, said: *"The success of RugbyFest shows the appetite for rugby in communities up and down the country. Seeing the Red Roses visit places they have a connection to is incredibly powerful, and will inspire countless young players to follow in their footsteps."*

RugbyFest formed part of Impact '25, the RFU's Women's Rugby World Cup legacy programme and is supported by The National Lottery. The programme is designed to grow participation and create more opportunities for women and girls to get involved in rugby over the coming years.

The Impact '25 programme sees over £14.55m of Government funding committed to the sport in England and the home unions up to the end of March 2026, creating more opportunities for women and girls to get involved in rugby.

Andria Vidler, Chief Executive of Allwyn operator of The National Lottery, said: *"Through playing The National Lottery the public have been backing women's rugby for over 20 years – made possible by the £6b they have raised for grassroots sport. Therefore, we've been delighted to be able to support RugbyFest and are thrilled that it's been such a success."*

With RugbyFest drawing in thousands of families, supporters and future players across the country, the weekend has proven that the Red Roses' success goes far beyond the pitch, ensuring their victory leaves a lasting legacy in communities for years to come.

Young people looking to take their first step into the game can find opportunities to get involved via [FindRugby.com](https://www.findrugby.com).



International round-up:

Henderson features as England defeat Wales

Written by Brentford Football Club

Jordan Henderson earns 86th England cap as Thomas Tuchel's Three Lions defeat Wales 3-0 at Wembley Stadium; Mikkell Damsgaard, Aaron Hickey and Dango Ouattara all start in wins for Denmark, Scotland and Burkina Faso respectively

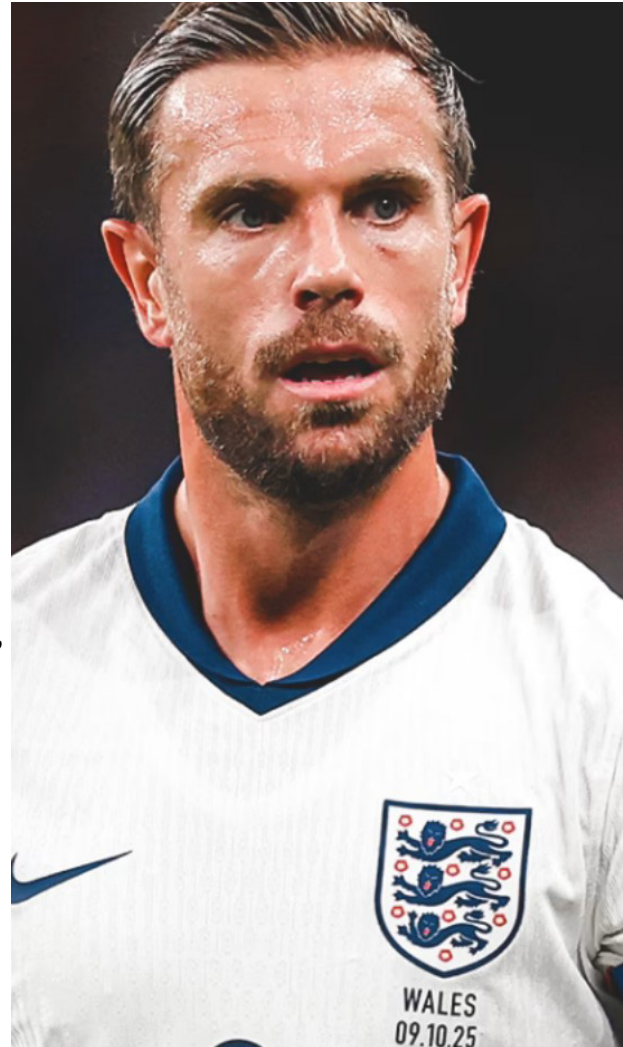
Jordan Henderson earned his 86th England cap as the Three Lions defeated Wales 3-0 in an international friendly at Wembley Stadium on Thursday evening.

The Brentford midfielder was utilised as a second-half substitute by Thomas Tuchel.

Aston Villa duo Morgan Rogers and Ollie Watkins put England two goals ahead inside the opening 11 minutes, before Arsenal's Bukayo Saka curled in a superb third to complete the scoring after just 20 minutes.

Henderson replaced Elliot Anderson on 69 minutes, also taking the captain's armband from the evening's stand-in skipper, Declan Rice.

England will secure their place at next summer's World Cup with a victory away at Latvia on Tuesday evening, should Serbia fail to beat Albania 24 hours earlier.



Mikkell Damsgaard played the full 90 minutes for Denmark, who won 6-0 at Belarus in World Cup qualifying to remain top of Group C on goal difference, ahead of **Aaron Hickey's** Scotland, who came from a goal down to beat Greece 3-1.

Denmark host Greece on Sunday while Scotland will welcome Belarus to Hampden Park on the same day.

Burkina Faso boosted their chances of World Cup qualifying with an important 1-0 win against Sierra Leone, with **Dango Ouattara** starting the game at Samuel Kanyon Doe Stadium.

His nation sit second in CAF qualifying group A and are well-placed to feature in the play-offs as one of the four best runners up.

Finally, **Ji-soo Kim** was an unused substitute for South Korea, who lost 5-0 in an international friendly against Brazil in Seoul.



Every Brentford player on international duty in October

Written by Brentford Football Club

19 Brentford players are set to represent their nations during October; here's a look at when they could feature on the international stage

19 Brentford players are set to represent their nations during the October international window.

Multiple Bees players can qualify for the 2026 World Cup over the next week, including England and Jordan Henderson, Norway and Kristoffer Ajer, and Jamaica and Ethan Pinnock.

Here are all the players on international duty (kick-off times shown in BST).

Jordan Henderson - England

International friendly and FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier

Wales (H) - Thursday 9 October, 7.45pm

Latvia (A) - Tuesday 14 October, 7.45pm

Kevin Schade - Germany

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier

Luxembourg (H) - Friday 10 October, 7.45pm

Northern Ireland (A) - Monday 13 October, 7.45pm

Nathan Collins and Caoimhín Kelleher - Republic of Ireland

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

Portugal (A) - Saturday 11 October, 7.45pm

Armenia (H) - Tuesday 14 October, 7.45pm

Aaron Hickey - Scotland

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

Greece (H) - Thursday 9 October, 7.45pm

Belarus (H) - Sunday 12 October, 5pm

Mikkel Damsgaard - Denmark

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

Belarus (A) - Thursday 9 October, 7.45pm

Greece (H) - Sunday 12 October, 7.45pm

Yehor Yarmoliuk - Ukraine

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

Iceland (A) - Friday 10 October, 7.45pm

Azerbaijan (H) - Monday 13 October, 7.45pm

Hákon Valdimarsson - Iceland

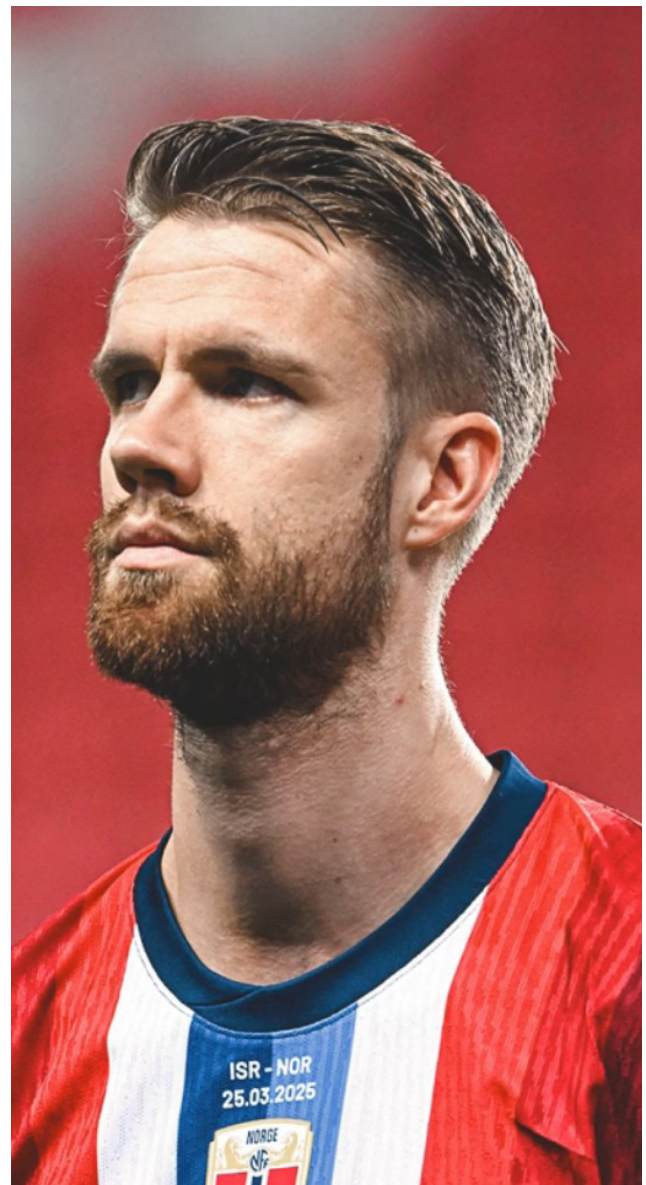
FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

Ukraine (H) - Friday 10 October, 7.45pm

France (H) - Monday 13 October, 7.45pm

Kristoffer Ajer - Norway

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier and international friendly



Israel (H) - Saturday 11 October, 5pm
New Zealand (H) - Tuesday 14 October, 5pm

Dango Ouattara - Burkina Faso

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

Sierra Leone (A) - Wednesday 8 October, 5pm
Ethiopia (H) - Sunday 12 October, 8pm

Frank Onyeka and Benjamin Fredrick - Nigeria

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

Lesotho (A) - Friday 10 October, 5pm
Benin Republic (H) - Tuesday 14 October, 5pm

Ethan Pinnock - Jamaica

FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers

Curacao (A) - Saturday 11 October, 12am
Bermuda (H) - Wednesday 15 October, 1am

Ji-soo Kim - South Korea

International friendlies

Brazil (H) - Friday 10 October, 12pm
Paraguay (H) - Tuesday 14 October, 12pm

Antoni Milambo - Netherlands U21

UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualifier and international friendly

Bosnia & Herzegovina (A) - Friday 10 October, 5pm
Lithuania (H) - Tuesday 14 October, 5.30pm

Yunus Emre Konak - Turkey U21

UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualifiers

Lithuania (H) - Friday 10 October, 6pm
Hungary (A) - Tuesday 14 October, 5pm

Romelle Donovan - England U20

International friendly

Switzerland (H) - Friday 10 October, 1pm

Luka Bentt - Belgium U19

International friendlies

England - Saturday 11 October, 10am
USA - Tuesday 14 October, 1pm

Matas Klimas - Lithuania U19

Estonia - Friday 10 October
Estonia - Sunday 12 October

Coran Madden - Northern Ireland U17

International friendlies. Both games played in Spain

Portugal - Thursday 9 October
USA - Saturday 11 October



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