

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Clouds ... at last!
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

21st August 2026

T&RT

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TickerTape - News in Brief

Warning - blue-green algae detected: Kingston's Designated Bathing Water site

21 August 2026 Health Advisory: Blue-Green Algae detected in the River Thames

On 17 August 2026 the Environment Agency notified Kingston Council that water samples from the Ham and Kingston Designated Bathing area on the Thames failed the limit for concentrations of potentially toxic Blue-Green Algae. In high concentrations the algae can be harmful to people and animals.

The Environment Agency updated the council on 20 August 2026 to confirm that the bloom is present between Sunbury Lock and Teddington Lock, spanning the stretch of the River Thames flowing through Kingston.

The algae may look like green or blue paint on the surface of the water and river bank.

You can't tell if an algae is toxic just by looking at it, so it's safest to assume it is. Keep pets and children away from the water. Avoid skin contact with the water or algae.

The bloom is exacerbated by the current drought conditions, with slower flowing warmer water in the river. Given the current weather forecast the Blue-Green Algae bloom may continue for some weeks.



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The Tree Agency

The Local Picture Postcard Page - Part 340

Pearce Newsagents. 16, King St, Twickenham – Part 2

By Alan Winter

Last week we looked at three postcards published by Pearce the stationers and newsagents of 16 King Street Twickenham during the 1950s and 1960s. I know they produced a set of central Twickenham postcards at that time numbered 1-10. Last week we looked at No.1, King Street, No.2 York Street and No. 3 London Road.

This week we can look at the next two in the series which were No. 4, York House and No.5 which is of the statuary in York House Gardens.

I am currently missing postcard number 6 from the series and have never even seen it so if anyone can tell me what the photograph portrayed I would be very grateful.

There can be very few readers of this column who have not stood in front of Twickenham's famous Naked Ladies in York House Gardens and wondered about their origins. We may never actually get to know the whole story as the early days of the statues are cloaked in mystery.



This is what we do know. The statues were designed and sculptured in Italy. They are of a monumental scale with several of the individual blocks weighing over 5 tons. The larger than human size statues depict eight [Oceanids](#) and a pair of aquatic horses. They are made from Carrara marble which is quarried in the city of the same name in the northernmost tip

of modern day Tuscany. The marble is of a high quality popular for use in both sculpture and building décor.

By the end of the 19th century, Carrara had become a cradle of anarchism in Italy, in particular among the quarry workers. According to a New York Times article of 1894, workers in the marble quarries were among the most neglected labourers in Italy. Many of them were ex-convicts or fugitives from justice. The work at the quarries was so tough and arduous that almost any aspirant worker with sufficient muscle and endurance was employed, regardless of their background.

Anyway, back to the statues and the story of how and when they arrived in Twickenham. Originally they were part of a larger set of statues that was subdivided after the suicide of the initial purchaser, the celebrated fraudster Whitaker Wright, who committed suicide by ingestion of a cyanide capsule upon being convicted of fraud. It is not certain where he acquired the statues, or who carved them.



The statues were then acquired from the estate of Whitaker Wright and brought to their current location in York House Gardens by the Indian financier and philanthropist Ratanji Tata (1871 – 1918) who had bought York House from the duc d'Orléans in 1906. By the end of 1909 he had had the gardens redesigned in the Italian style and the statues set in a rockery with waterfalls behind a pond.

Originally some of the ladies were holding pearls, but much of this detail has now been lost. There have been various theories as to the intended subject matter, with Pearl Fishers, Pegasus,

Naiads and the birth of Venus all having been suggested in addition to the usual attribution as Oceanides. For want of anything more official, they have become known as 'The Naked Ladies'.

Ratanji Tata (known as Ratan), had inherited great wealth from his father. He and his brother devoted their lives to philanthropic works of a practical nature and to the establishment of various industrial enterprises including the manufacture of steel and development of hydro-electric power for developing the resources of India.

Sir Ratan Tata, who was knighted in 1916, did not confine his benefactions to India. In England, where he made his permanent residence at York House, he founded in 1912 the Ratan Tata department of social science and administration at the London School of Economics, and also established a Ratan Tata Fund at the University of London for studying the conditions of the poorer classes. Sir Ratan was for several years a noted host for London High Society, with King George V among the guests at his garden parties in Twickenham. He died on 5 September 1918 at St Ives in Cornwall and was buried in the family mausoleum at Brookwood Cemetery in Woking.

The statues came into the *de facto* possession of Twickenham Council in 1924 when they purchased York House for their new town hall. The statues had been left behind by the previous owners, as they had been unable to find a buyer despite putting them up for auction.

In the Blitz during the Second World War, there was concern that moonlight reflecting on the statues would give a navigation mark to the Luftwaffe. So as part of London's Blackout measures the statues were covered with a "grey sludge".

As a result of local government reorganisation in the 1960s Twickenham became part of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, but the town hall remains at York House and the gardens continue to be open to the public.

The statues have gone through at least one major restoration to remove graffiti and the wartime grey cement, and reverse the effects of vandalism by replacing lost fingers, pearls and even a hoof. In 1983 the statues were protected with a Grade II listing by English Heritage.

The Naked Ladies are today one of the many visitor attractions of Twickenham. They have had a popular award winning beer named after them courtesy of the town's own brewery 'Twickenham Fine Ales' and are a popular backdrop for wedding photos.

So, if you can find me postcard number TW6. please let me know on alanwinter192@hotmail.com

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SOLAR's e-petition for higher standards of sewage treatment gets big push

From Mike Pemberton, a founder member of SOLAR Save Our lands And River

Local campaign group SOLAR is getting great community support for its recently launched e-petition for a parliamentary debate Ensure new sewage treatment infrastructure meets higher standards as in the EU - Petitions – but needs another big effort. Please click on.

Numbers registering support are over 40,000. 100,000 is the end-October requirement to qualify for a parliamentary debate. However, the government has made an interim response to the petition as the registered support has passed 10,000. The government response is set out beneath the full petition statement referenced above.

Much of what SOLAR addressed in the full petition statement is referred to, but future action only indicated in directional terms. Recommendations in last year's government Independent Water Commission's final report included a number of issues SOLAR has been pushing for. The interim statement to the petition states "The Commission's report recommendations are the basis for the ongoing development of new legislation, and this government intends to bring forward a water reform bill early in this parliament to reform the water sector and ensure it delivers for customers and the environment." Hopefully this should be positive support for the actions required by the petition, which itself requires another big push to tell the government there is a big demand for improvement in sewage treatment infrastructure that cannot be ignored.

Momentum is [building](#): Help SOLAR's petition push for stronger protections for our rivers AND help stop the Thames sewage pump - Save Our Lands & River has been opposing Thames Water's Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) proposal for three and a half years. SOLAR's key issues with TDRA are:

- in times of drought, predicted six weeks a year average, water would be abstracted above Teddington lock and transferred to E London, and replaced with treated sewage pumped in above Teddington weir from Mogden sewage works
- Thames Water's trial plant for this new process has failed to demonstrate it can remove microplastics, emerging pollutants (forever chemicals PFAs and PFOs), antibiotics and hormones
- trial results would not meet the standards now required in 27 European countries
- the scheme is planned for an 80 year life – equivalent to three generations!
- the Thames in times of drought at its most vulnerable - river levels low, flow slow, oxygen levels low and water temperature high – worst conditions for aquatic life and humans to receive hot treated sewage
- abstraction and treated sewage outfalls to be sited on Burnell Open Space riverside next to recently government designated Bathing Water Status stretch
- greener, better value for money alternatives are available

PLEASE SUPPORT the [PETITION](#) and share with others - just click on Ensure new sewage treatment infrastructure meets higher standards as in the EU - Petitions

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Cargo Bike Fair rides back into Richmond this September

From Richmond Council

Richmond's Cargo Bike Fair is returning this September – bigger and better, and as one of just five flagship hubs for the London Cycling Festival.

Taking place on Sunday 20 September from 11am to 4pm outside Richmond Station, the free, family-friendly Council event will bring together residents, businesses, cycling experts and community groups to showcase how cargo bikes can transform everyday journeys.

Councillor Alexander Ehmann, Deputy Leader of Richmond Council and Chair of the Transport and Air Quality Committee, said: *"We're delighted to bring the Richmond Cargo Bike Fair back for a second year following the fantastic response to our inaugural event. Being selected as one of just five flagship hubs for the London Cycling Festival makes this year's event particularly exciting. With Car Free Day just around the corner, it's a great opportunity to show how cargo bikes can help people swap short car journeys for a cleaner, healthier and often more enjoyable way of getting around."*



Following the success of last year's inaugural fair, this year's event will be the only London Cycling Festival event dedicated to cargo bikes, cementing Richmond upon Thames' reputation as the cargo bike capital of London.

With Car Free Day taking place the following week, the fair will give visitors the chance to see first-hand how cargo bikes can provide a practical, affordable and greener alternative to the car – from the school run and weekly shop to carrying equipment and making business deliveries.

Against the backdrop of the Richmond Cycle Hub, a stone's throw away from Richmond Train Station, visitors can test ride a wide range of cargo bikes, meet retailers and cycling experts, and discover how these versatile bikes can make everyday journeys easier.

There will be something for everyone, including:

- Test rides of leading cargo bike brands
- Expert advice on cycling, safety and maintenance
- Dr Bike mechanic services and police bike marking
- Adapted cycles for people with limited mobility
- Children's cycling activities and skills sessions
- Family-friendly entertainment and activities
- Live music from The Basement Door
- Food from cargo bike vendors and a food truck
- Opportunities to meet local cycling groups and organisations

Councillor Ehmann added: *"Whether you want a more connected way to travel with your children, an easier way to carry your shopping or tools, or a greener way to make deliveries for your business, cargo bikes can offer a practical solution to many everyday journeys. We want as many residents and businesses as possible to come along, try one for themselves and discover the benefits."*

From replacing short car journeys to simply enjoying a fun day out, the Richmond Cargo Bike Fair is the perfect chance to discover what cargo bikes can do.

Join us on Sunday 20 September and see why more people are choosing pedal power for everyday journeys.

Letters

Dear Tribune,

Are We Being Served?

Last week's Tribune article by James Knight rightly highlighted the problems of litter and dirt in our borough.

It also reported apparently aggressive responses by Councillor Michael Wilson.

I have seen his behaviour before, directed at a Conservative councillor, and have borne the brunt of it myself.

Some time ago I politely asked a perfectly reasonable question in an online council meeting and was immediately subjected to an unwarranted, personally offensive tirade by Cllr Wilson, all apparently condoned by the chairman of the meeting, the mayor of Richmond, and Council Leader Gareth Roberts, both of whom failed to moderate his rudeness. When I tried to reply to this insult the chairman cut me off.

My neighbours who watched all this were appalled.

Also some time ago, I was shocked to see several large, industrial bins overflowing onto a huge pile of rubbish including a mattress, all scattered along the pavement outside the front door of a restaurant in Twickenham. I have no idea why customers would go into a restaurant having been forced to walk past a foul-smelling, unhygienic pile of filth but they seemed perfectly happy to do so.

I contacted Richmond Council, and it was cleared up but it should not have been there in the first place in the same way that rubbish bins on Richmond Green should not have been left overflowing onto the grass with birds and vermin feasting off the contents.

Of course, one cannot blame the Council for the disgusting behaviour of the public but one CAN blame the Council for not clearing it up for days.

I've seen similar filth right outside Richmond station, greeting visitors to the so-called 'Best borough in London'. But rather than deal with all that, Richmond Council enforcement officers recently preferred to fine a woman for rightly pouring her coffee dregs down a drain rather than take them on the bus and inconvenience other passengers.

No wonder our high streets are dying.

It is an odious and unacceptable habit of councillors and politicians to constantly blame the previous political party instead of getting on with their job of dealing with the problems. After all, that's what they are paid for. Maybe it's the only way they can deflect criticism of their own inadequacies?

Such childish, petulant whining about other parties merely wastes their time and our money and hardly endears them to residents. Voting for these people is a perfect example of '*The triumph of hope over experience*' (Oscar Wilde).

As a British Airways pilot flying around the world, I do not blame God for bad weather or other problems.

I just get on with the job for which I am paid, namely, looking after the people who place their lives in my hands.

Politicians should do the same.

And mind their manners.

Michael Jay, Hampton.



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Share your memories of Richmond's music scene

From Preface Morn

Did you spend time at Eel Pie Island, the Crawdaddy Club, or around Richmond's music scene? Preface Morn would love to hear your stories.

Preface Morn, a disability-led integrated dance theatre company, is creating Voices of Richmond, a new performance celebrating Richmond's musical heritage. As part of the project, they're speaking with local people whose memories, experiences and stories will help shape the work.

They're holding relaxed, informal conversations to collect memories of Richmond's music scene. With your permission, these can be audio recorded, video recorded or simply documented through notes. You can choose to remain anonymous or, if you wish, your voice or video may become part of the final performance.

Whether you have vivid memories of legendary gigs or simply remember what Richmond felt like during that time, they'd love to hear from you.

To find out more or arrange a chat, contact Niall Cullen, Artistic Director of Preface Morn:

- Email: prefacemorn@gmail.com
- Telephone: 07789552583



Council “regrets error” over parking consultation

From Hampton Wick Association

Following HWA intervention, council admits representations from public were not included in its report.

Council withdraws decision and will fully consider all feedback from residents in a new report.

The council recently published their decision to press ahead with significant changes to our local CPZ parking zone following a consultation which took place earlier in the year. The HWA had protested that the consultation was not fit for purpose, being unclear and in parts misleading. The council officials did not agree and carried on with the consultation.

On 29th July, they published their decision to go ahead with all their proposed changes, leading to significant loss of overnight / off-peak parking in Hampton Wick. They had made no amendments at all to their original proposals, and they stated that they had received only seven responses to the consultation.

We were very surprised at the apparent low response rate and we asked local people if they recognised their submissions in the seven cited. We very quickly heard from 13 residents whose responses were “missing” from the council’s report. Something was clearly very wrong.

HWA intervenes

The HWA wrote to the council to say that in the light of these “missing responses” the report and the decision based on it should both be withdrawn. We gave them a deadline of 5pm on 14th August to respond, failing which we would issue a Pre-Action Protocol letter preceding an application to the High Court for a judicial review.

This was not an idle threat, nor one that we made lightly. We prepared the Pre-Action Protocol letter, with supporting evidence, so that we would be ready to take action.

At 4.27pm on 14th August the council responded to our letter!

Council admits error

They said: “Following an investigation, we identified that responses submitted through the new online consultation form were not included in the published report.”

They have committed that “all responses received to this consultation, including those not included in the original report, will be reviewed and an updated report published which will include consideration of all feedback received.”

Value of local knowledge

We hope that the council will realise the value of the informed local feedback provided by residents, which can differentiate between areas where, for instance, double-yellow lines may indeed be needed for safety reasons versus areas where no problems are caused by having single-yellow lines which provide valuable overnight and off-peak parking for residents and businesses. We trust that this will result in a more carefully thought-through set of proposals rather than the blanket, one-size-fits-all approach of the current plan.

We have written back to the council listing all the consultation responses that we know about which we hope will be helpful to them as they track down all of the rest of them. There must be many more residents whose responses were missed beyond those whom we managed to reach directly.

We do not know whether any other consultations may have been affected by the council’s faulty online form.

The council say the new CPZ report will be published within 7-10 days.



Gareth Roberts Set the Yardstick. Does He Still Measure Up?

By James Knight

The Richmond leader once attacked his predecessor for dividing his attention. Eleven years later, his own expanding portfolio puts that judgment under scrutiny.

Gareth Roberts receives at least £141,000 a year from known publicly funded positions, holds an expanding portfolio of political and professional responsibilities, and has registered 31 hospitality engagements in the latest year.

Eleven years after criticising a predecessor for dividing his attention between Richmond and Westminster, residents are entitled to ask whether the Liberal Democrat council leader is now expecting them to accept a standard he once rejected.



There is no suggestion that Mr Roberts has concealed his positions or breached hospitality rules. The question is whether one person can give sufficient attention to every commitment, particularly when senior Liberal Democrats have previously described leading Richmond Council as a full-time job.

The standard Roberts set in 2015

In December 2015, Mr Roberts criticised the then Conservative council leader, Lord True, for combining leadership of Richmond Council with regular attendance at the House of Lords. With pressure on school and nursery places, controversy over Twickenham Riverside, the merger with Wandsworth and financial problems at Achieving for Children, he said Lord True should “focus more on local rather than national issues.”

Former Liberal Democrat council leader Serge Lourie described leading Richmond as “a full time job” and said he had found it difficult enough without other responsibilities. Lord True responded that he worked hard, could conduct council business from Parliament and should be judged by his performance rather than his location.

Mr Roberts was not persuaded. His argument was that serious local pressures required Richmond’s leader to concentrate more closely on the borough. At 44, he set a clear political test. At 55, he now faces it himself.

A portfolio extending beyond Richmond

Mr Roberts combines leadership of Richmond Council with membership of the London Assembly, where he also chairs the Environment Committee and directs scrutiny of the Mayor’s environmental policies.

At London Councils, he serves as vice-chair and sits on the Executive, the smaller senior body helping to lead the organisation representing the capital’s boroughs. His place on the wider Leaders’ Committee follows from being a borough leader, but the vice-chairmanship and Executive position bring additional London-wide responsibilities.

Mr Roberts also undertakes Local Government Association peer-review work, sits on the Liberal Democrats’ Federal Council, declares private work through Fieldmonkey and serves as a trustee of the Royal Parks Board, Orleans House Trust and Richmond Voluntary Fund.

These appointments may bring Richmond influence, experience and useful contacts. Their potential value does not remove the question of how much time they consume when taken together.

At least £141,000 in public remuneration

Mr Roberts receives Richmond Council allowances as councillor and council leader, a London Assembly salary and £13,055 for his London Councils work during 2025-26. Those known public payments amount to approximately **£141,400 a year**. The calculation excludes income from Fieldmonkey and any payments arising from LGA peer assignments. On the available figures, Mr Roberts is likely to be among London's highest-remunerated serving councillors. His known publicly funded income also places him broadly among the top two per cent of UK taxpayers by individual pre-tax income.

There is nothing inherently wrong with being well paid for demanding public work. Substantial remuneration does, however, create a substantial obligation to demonstrate attendance, results and value for money.

Public registers do not show how Mr Roberts divides his working time between Richmond Council, the London Assembly, London Councils, LGA assignments, party governance and private work. Residents therefore cannot easily judge whether responsibilities overlap or whether the balance remains appropriate.

Outside work requiring days, not hours

The LGA peer-review work illustrates the scale of some commitments. A published corporate peer challenge at Torbay Council included Mr Roberts in a team examining leadership, governance, finance and organisational capacity.

The exercise required three and a half days on site, drew evidence from more than 40 meetings and involved discussions with more than 120 people. The team also undertook research and reviewed documents before delivering its findings.

That is serious work, not an honorary title. It may provide insights for Richmond, but it also requires preparation, travel and concentrated time away from the borough.

His Federal Council position is also more than decorative. The body scrutinises the Liberal Democrats' Federal Board, considers whether decisions follow party strategy and can require responses from the board. Chairing an Assembly committee and helping lead London Councils similarly involve papers, inquiries, meetings and political decisions. Every appointment may have merit, but every appointment draws on the same finite supply of time.

Hospitality rises from 8 events to 31

Mr Roberts's public engagements have expanded alongside his formal responsibilities. Between July 2023 and July 2024, he registered eight hospitality events. The number rose to 15 in the following period and then to **31** between July 2025 and August 2026, almost quadrupling in two years. The latest register records hospitality worth **£1,197.80**, with two further events carrying no stated value. Many entries are conventional civic receptions, business gatherings, charity functions and local government events, while others are entertainment.

They include two Maroon 5 tickets valued at £182.90, two Duran Duran tickets worth £159.90, a £100 ticket to Harlequins' Big Game, a Women's Rugby World Cup Final ticket and two tickets to Christmas at Kew worth £55. Those five entries account for £562.80, almost half the register's declared value.

All were publicly registered, and there is no evidence in the material reviewed that rules were breached. The declarations do not, however, explain the official purpose of every invitation, why some included a second ticket or how 31 engagements were accommodated alongside Mr Roberts's wider responsibilities.

The Royal Parks connection

The Royal Parks invitations are notable because Mr Roberts is also a trustee of the Royal Parks Board. Across the three registers, its hospitality has included concerts, theatre, Winter Wonderland tickets and a chairman's lunch.

An earlier declaration explained that Winter Wonderland tickets were standard offerings to trustees, both in recognition of their unpaid contribution and to enable them to assess events taking place in the parks. The latest Maroon 5 and Duran Duran declarations simply record two tickets, their provider and value. The register does not state who used the second tickets or describe the trustee purpose served by attending the concerts. That does not establish impropriety, but it shows why recording a value is not always enough to judge whether hospitality was justified.

The same defence he once rejected

Mr Roberts can argue that his London-wide positions increase Richmond's influence, that LGA work brings useful experience back to the borough and that modern technology allows council duties to be performed from many locations.

The difficulty is that these arguments closely resemble Lord True's defence in 2015. Lord True said he worked very hard, could conduct council business from Parliament or while travelling, and should be judged by his results.

Mr Roberts's response was that the pressures facing Richmond meant its leader should focus more on local rather than national issues. He did not accept that energy, technology or wider influence settled the question. The comparison is uncomfortable because the standard does not come from Mr Roberts's opponents. It comes from Mr Roberts himself.

Richmond still requires sustained leadership

Richmond continues to face pressures involving housing, homelessness, SEND provision, road maintenance, planning, council finances and shared services. External appointments may help address some of those problems, but they may also divide attention, increase diary pressure and leave more responsibility with deputies and senior officers.

Residents should not be expected to assume that every additional title benefits the borough. They are entitled to ask how many days are spent on LGA assignments, how much time is devoted to private work, what the attendance record is for each public position and which duties are delegated when commitments clash.

Those questions are particularly reasonable when known public remuneration exceeds £141,000 and places the recipient broadly among the country's top two per cent of taxpayers by individual pre-tax income.

Judged by his own yardstick

The word hypocrisy should not be used lightly. Politicians are entitled to change their minds, and circumstances can change with them. But when a politician applies one standard to an opponent and later appears to expect a different standard for himself, the public is entitled to notice.

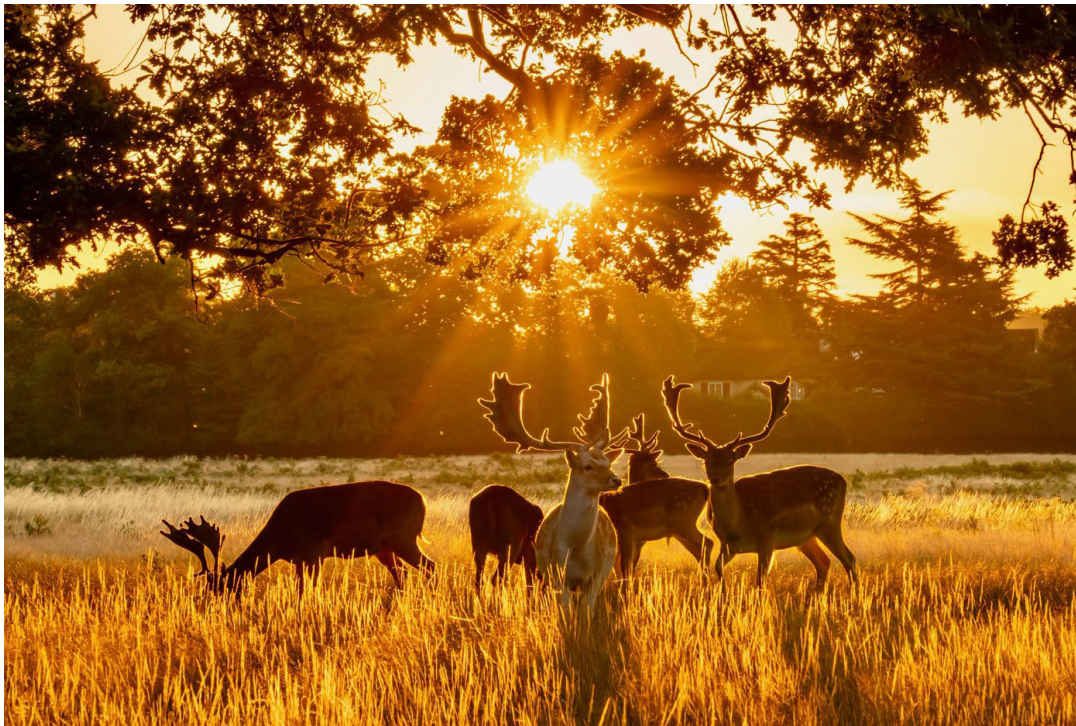
In 2015, Gareth Roberts argued that Richmond's leader should focus more on local than national responsibilities. He now combines borough leadership with City Hall, London Councils, LGA, party, private and trustee commitments, while receiving at least £141,000 from known public positions and registering 31 hospitality engagements in the latest year.

The question is not whether every role can be justified separately, but whether the complete portfolio is compatible with the focus Mr Roberts once said Richmond deserved. He created the yardstick, and Richmond residents are entitled to use it.

Royal Parks statement in response to videos of people feeding deer

From The Royal Parks

A Royal Parks spokesperson said: “We are shocked and alarmed to see that more videos and photographs are circulating online of park visitors feeding and approaching deer in Bushy Park, just days after we warned of the dangers of getting too close to the deer, and after a man in Richmond Park was injured by a stag this weekend.



“This is highly dangerous behaviour. Deer in Bushy and Richmond Parks are wild animals and should never be fed, approached or touched. Repeated feeding can cause deer to lose their natural wariness of people and seek out food from visitors, creating risks for both people and wildlife. Getting this close, and offering food, puts people at real risk of serious injury.

“This weekend, an incident occurred in Richmond Park which resulted in a man being injured by a stag, after the stag approached his picnic group looking for food. We understand from the police that thankfully the injuries were not life-threatening. Sadly, the stag’s behaviour meant that it had to be put down as it was deemed to be a danger to visitors. We suspect that this particular stag may have learnt to associate visitors with food. If visitors follow our advice and do not feed or interfere with the deer, it is highly unlikely that they will exhibit this type of behaviour.

“Our advice is simple. Keep at least 50 metres away, never feed or touch the deer, and if one comes towards you, put all food and packaging out of sight and move away slowly and calmly. Do not try to move the deer away yourself.

“Between them, Richmond Park and Bushy Park cover 3,600 acres. Our staff and volunteers do a great job of speaking to visitors, and we have signage across the parks, but we cannot be everywhere at once. We need everyone who visits to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to keep themselves, other visitors and the deer safe.

“If you witness someone putting themselves, others or the deer at risk, please do not try and intervene but report it immediately to the police.”



THE
ROYAL
PARKS

Lebanon – A Culinary Celebration

I adore Lebanese food. I'm a regular shopper at our local Mediterranean food stores and am a great fan of local Lebanese restaurants, like Sidra and Ruba. This fabulous book - published this week, is arguably the only Lebanese cookbook you'll need. **Lebanon** by Anissa Helou is published by Bloomsbury at £30 and is packed with fascinating insights, cultural history, and over 160 sumptuous recipes by legendary Guild of Food Writers' Lifetime Achievement winner Anissa. From colourful small plates and ivory dips to luscious stuffed vegetables as well as more elaborate preparations for impressing, this is a comprehensive collection of recipes

which make up Lebanon's rich tradition of cooking, suitable for any occasion.



Born in Lebanon to a Syrian father and Lebanese mother, Anissa is the author of numerous award-winning cookbooks, including Feast which was chosen by the New Yorker as one of the 10 best cookbooks of the century so far.

For the price of a takeaway, I'd urge you to invest in a copy of Lebanon, but here to whet your appetite are a couple of recipes:

Beet Dip MÜTABBAL SHMANDAR - SERVES 6

"I first learned how to make this dip in Aleppo, where I used to lead culinary tours before the uprising. One of the highlights of my tours was a cooking lesson with Maria Gaspard, a charming woman chef who taught my groups all kinds of fabulous dishes, including this one, which is also widely made in Lebanon. Not only is it very beautiful with its vibrant purple color, but it is also delectable. Maria boiled the beets, but I like to roast them so they don't get watery and their flavor is more intense."

- 1 pound 5 ounces (600 g) beets
- ½ cup (80 ml) tahini, or to taste
- 1 clove garlic, peeled, minced to a fine paste
- Juice of 1½ lemons, or to taste
- Sea salt
- Extra virgin olive oil to drizzle over the dip
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped flat-leaf parsley or slivered pistachios for garnish



1. Preheat the oven to 450°F (220°C).
2. Wash the beets and cut any excess stalks but without cutting into the beets. You do not want them to bleed during baking. Wrap each beet with aluminum foil and place on a baking sheet. Bake in the preheated oven for 1 to 1½ hours depending on their size, until soft but not mushy.
3. Remove from the oven onto a large cutting board. Unwrap each, then peel and cut into chunks. Place in the bowl of a food processor. Add the tahini, garlic, and lemon juice and process until you have a smooth purée.
4. Transfer to a large mixing bowl. Add salt to taste and more lemon juice and/or tahini if you feel the dip needs it. Spread in a shallow round or oval serving bowl, making grooves here and there. Drizzle a little olive oil in the grooves and sprinkle with the chopped parsley or slivered pistachios. Serve with good bread.

Green Bulgur Wheat “Risotto” MAFRÜKEH - SERVES 4-6

“Another interesting dish from Deir Intar down south, where the bulgur wheat is cooked with greens and a tomato sauce. Again, I had never come across it before, having only had bulgur wheat cooked in a fresh tomato sauce. However, the addition of scallions and herbs here makes for a fresher and more intriguing combination.

Also, it is served like tabbūleh and is scooped with fresh vine leaves when in season or raw cabbage leaves, a kind of cooked tabbūleh, as it were.”

- ½ cup (80 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 1½ cups (250 g) coarse bulgur wheat, soaked in cold water for 30 minutes
- 1 bunch scallions
- (about 100 g), trimmed, sliced fairly thin
- 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley (about 200 g on the stalk), washed, dried, most of the stalks discarded, finely chopped
- ¾ bunch mint (about 150 g on the stalk), leaves only, washed, dried, finely chopped
- ½ cup tomato paste, diluted in 3 cups (750 ml) water
- Sea salt
- Fresh vine leaves or cabbage leaves to scoop the mafrükeh

1. Put the olive oil in a medium wide pot and place over medium heat. Drain the bulgur wheat and add to the pot. Stir for a couple of minutes, then add the scallions, parsley, and mint. Mix well, then add the diluted tomato paste. Season with salt to taste.
2. Cover the pan and let bubble for 10 to 15 minutes, until the bulgur wheat has absorbed all the liquid and is done.
3. Wrap the lid with a clean kitchen towel and put it back over the pot. Let cool.
4. Serve at room temperature with either vine leaves if they are in season or cabbage leaves.



Summer Drinks and Festival Fun

Not long now till another - and the final for a while - bank holiday weekend. I thought it appropriate to suggest some summer drinks, as well as remind you about a great food festival.

Regular readers will know that I'm rather partial to a good gin and here's a fabulous new one I've discovered: **Portofino Dry Gin**. Using a medley of botanicals that convey the sensations and fragrance of Portofino, its initial notes are from fresh lemon and crisp juniper that transport you to the hills of Portofino. They give way to a universe of Mediterranean flavours: from the wild rosemary and lavender perfumes of the coastal scrub to the sweet and delicate notes of marjoram and sage that evoke the taste of traditional Ligurian cuisine. Strong: 43%ABV, and really rather special, it's available from Amazon or Master of Malt for around £43 a bottle. Not surprisingly, it's won hosts of awards. It's really worth trying.



Nothing says summer like a delicious, refreshing Spritz serve, which can be enjoyed over long lunches, sun drenched afternoons or golden hour gatherings. **Cotswolds Distillery** has recently launched **Cotswolds Wild Spritz**, the distillery's take on an English aperitivo, offering a distinctive, refreshing and bittersweet taste. Hand-crafted at the distillery, using classic English botanicals including lavender, hops and lemon balm and lifted with bright, distilled fresh orange peel, it offers a balanced serve with a drier, more refined profile than others I've tried - and it's inspired by the beauty of our English countryside. It works brilliantly with English sparkling wine or other fizz or top up with tonic or soda water. £25 for 70 cl ABV 30% [cotswoldsdistillery.com](https://www.cotswoldsdistillery.com)

Limoncè is an award-winning limoncello liqueur, produced using Femminello Sicilian lemons, which are world-renowned for their superior quality and taste. Limoncè is top selling Limoncello in Italy and is free from artificial flavours and colouring. It's delicious served neat and on the rocks, but also makes a refreshing spritz if mixed with soda and prosecco or cava. **Limoncè Limoncello** RRP: £15 for 50cl | ABV: 25%.

Available from: Ocado and Amazon

There's something rather special (in my opinion) about a crisp, dry, Spanish white wine. Possibly just because I have so many happy memories of summers at my sister's place in Mallorca, but I do find they are reliably good, and reasonably priced.

For example, produced in Spain's **D.O. Rueda region** in Castilla y León, **Verdejo** wines are crisp, vibrant and full of citrus, stone fruit and subtle herbal notes.





They're also growing in popularity here, with exports to the UK up +6.65% year on year to more than 1.31 million bottles. One bottle attracting plenty of attention, particularly across social media, is **Four Lines Verdejo**, available at Asda, Morrisons and Sainsbury's for around £10. It's generated thousands of comments from shoppers raving about the wine. It's a beautifully balanced and easy drinking Verdejo, with ripe lemon and delicate tropical fruit on both the nose and the palate. Harmonious, refreshing with a herbal twist of fennel on the finish.

Another excellent Verdejo is this **Beronia Rueda Verdejo**: a pretty, pale yellow wine with subtle greenish hints. Intensely aromatic, it displays notes of fennel, white flowers, and fresh grass over a rich background of stone fruits. On the palate it's dry and full of flavour, with a balanced acidity and a certain bitterness typical of this grape variety. It's a great stand alone aperitif and it pairs well with food. Available from Waitrose, Sainsbury and Majestic for around £11.50-£12 a bottle.



Festival Fun

And finally, don't forget that over the bank holiday weekend (29-31 August), there's the annual **Hampton Court Palace Food Festival** hrpfestivals.com/hampton-court-palace In this spectacular historical setting, the glorious grounds of Henry VIII's former palace, you can try new dishes, discover a new favourite flavour, while away the hours with some traditional garden games, enjoy the sweet melodies from the live music performers and tick off your cultural visit. There will be loads of street food and drink stalls, so take your picnic blanket and make a day of it. For tickets and further info see link [here](#)



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The Barber of Seville

by Gioachino Rossini, libretto by Cesare Sterbini after Pierre Beaumarchais
Opera Kipling at The Gatehouse Upstairs, Highgate

Rossini's well-known comic opera, *The Barber of Seville*, follows Count Almaviva's spirited attempts to win the heart of the young, beautiful and wealthy Rosina. With the scheming barber Figaro at his side, Almaviva works to outwit her controlling guardian, Dr Bartolo, who plans to marry her himself for her fortune.

The energetic and inventive Opera Kipling has placed its version in the mod era in the 1960s, allowing for some colourful costumes and a cheeky burst of sixties song in the second act. The staging seems Italian even though the opera is set in Spain, and there is a hint of *la dolce vita* about proceedings. The use of props is deliberately sparse, save for an inflatable chair that becomes a recurring device for moments of exaggerated physical comedy. Accomplished Musical Director Giannis Giannopoulos delivers a beautiful rendition of the score with just a piano and a moment of guitar playing.



The five strong cast throw themselves into the piece with gusto. Figaro is portrayed by the assured Alexander Jones, who delivers his resonant bass lines with real aplomb. Laura Curry as Rosina brings plenty of enthusiasm to the role, although occasionally struggling to reach the higher notes.

Geoff Clapham as Don Basilio is the standout of the production, delivering his role with rich, resonant bass-baritone warmth. He sustains every note with impressive control and brings a deft, genuinely comic touch to his performance. Rounding out the cast are Robert Tilson as a bland Count Almaviva and Massimo Modoni as a comically grotesque Don Bartolo. Both deliver solid performances, though Modoni deserves particular recognition for impressively tackling quick-fire lyrics in one especially demanding section.

Opera does have something of an image problem and is often branded as elitist. Opera Kipling aims to create "small, affordable and above-all accessible productions for modern audiences", with some success. The production is fun and funny, the music is wonderful and there are some rousing duets. The ensemble pieces raised the roof of the small theatre, and there is so much talent on stage. This more than okay, because what OK deliver is entertaining, imaginative and accessible opera, and the *Barber of Seville* is a solid addition to their repertoire.

Read Fi Mead-McNish's review at www.markaspen.com/2026/08/10/barber-seville-ok

Photography courtesy of OK

MESSE de TOURNAI

*The first unified choral setting of the Mass Ordinary
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Tickets: £4.50 on the door



Fri. 21st August
6:00pm  
Pusey House,
Oxford  

Sat. 22nd August
  3:00pm
St Mary the Virgin,
Mortlake, London



World's oldest boat race to take place on the River Thames

From Oxford Rowing

On Wednesday, 2nd September 2026, the River Thames will once again host the oldest boat race and one of the longest-running sporting events in the world, the 312th Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager. This year, three maritime professionals will compete against each other along the fast-flowing tidal Thames in single sculls. Over the course, they will pass under eleven of London's most iconic bridges, racing upriver over 4 miles and 5 furlongs (7.44 km) between London Bridge and Cadogan Pier in Chelsea. The winner will be awarded one of the City of London's most prestigious accolades: the Red Coat and Silver Badge.

28-year-old Charlie Milward, from Poplar, Blackwell and District Rowing Club, will row on Station 1 in Red. Charlie came third in last year's race and works for Woods' Silver Fleet in central London. On Station 2 in Orange is first-time competitor Callum Howard from Globe Rowing Club. Callum is 21 years old and works at HCH on cargo barges around Purfleet, Erith and Tilbury. He was apprenticed by his father Nick Howard, who also competed in the Doggett's Race in 1999, finishing a close second.

Making his third appearance in the race will be Jack Finelli on Station 3 in Green, Jack trains at both Gravesend Rowing Club and Medway Towns Rowing Club. He came 2nd in last year's race and now works for Cory Environmental as a Lighterman.

The oldest boat race in the world, Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager was established in 1715 and has now been contested by watermen and lightermen for more than 300 years, making it the oldest continuous sporting competition. Combining tough competition, heritage, and pageantry, the Doggett's Wager is one of the UK's most unique events, with winners going on to long careers on the water, and in some cases racing for Great Britain, or ceremonial duties for the Royal Family. It is organised collaboratively by The Fishmongers' Company and the Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames and is overseen by race Umpire Bobby Prentice, the Bargemaster to the Fishmongers' and a former Doggett's winner, who set the course record of 23 minutes 22 seconds, in 1973.

This year's race gains additional significance with the involvement of Sean Collins, CEO of Thames Clippers and Master of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen, who is also a Doggett's winner from 1990. Collins has devoted his career to preserving the rich traditions of the Thames' working river community while fostering innovation within London's contemporary river transport network.

He said: *"Traditions such as the Doggett's Coat and Badge are not merely about reflecting on the past; they emphasise the transmission of skills, values, and pride that have shaped the Thames over the centuries. The Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager serves as a tangible connection between the waterage skills of yesteryear and the competencies of future watermen."*

Spectators can enjoy this prestigious race from any of the 11 Thames bridges all the way to Chelsea, with the pageant commencing from London Bridge at approximately 12.30pm and the Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager starting at 1.15pm.

Event Details

- What: 312th Doggett's Coat and Badge Wager
- When: Wednesday, 2nd September 2026 – Race at 1.15pm
- Course: London Bridge to Cadogan Pier, Chelsea
- Organisers: The Fishmongers' Company & The Company of Watermen & Lightermen
- Special Guests: Sean Collins – Master of the Company of Watermen & Lightermen, CEO of Thames Clippers, and 1990 Doggett's Winner.

More info [HERE](#)

Kew Gardens' giant waterlilies hold impressive 102kg in 2026 Waterlily Weigh-Off

From Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Kew's submission to the annual [Waterlily Weigh-Off](#) is here, with a single leaf of a *Victoria boliviana* waterlily holding up 102kg (224.87lbs) in the Princess of Wales Conservatory.

The results of this feat can now be viewed on Kew's social media channels, including the official Instagram page and Facebook page, and [have been teased in the past week](#).

The Weigh-Off, which is organised each year by Denver Botanic Gardens in Colorado, sees public gardens and zoos from around the globe gun for glory by loading up their lily pads with a variety of weights. The results of this year's competition will be announced on Friday 28 August.

Past submissions have seen horticulturists use everyday objects ranging from buckets of coins and gym equipment through to iconic beverages and even their own bodies, and more than 40 organisations took part in 2025.

This year, Kew's botanical horticulturists Aidan Pike and Martin Silnevs threw down the gauntlet when Silnevs mounted the waterlily pad, placing a total weight of 102kg (224.87lbs) on the leaf when accounting for his gear, waders and plastic base.



He was then joined on the pad by Pike, staying up for several seconds before the leaf buckled and took on too much water. The leaf was then carefully carved up and taken to Kew's Compost Corner, ensuring the green waste would be recycled and reused as mulch.

The duo also tested another of the plant's pads by lading it with stacks of tinned baked beans, recording a total weight of 81 kg (178.5 lbs) before it gave out.

Martin Silnevs, Botanical Horticulturist, said of the attempt: ‘Stepping onto the waterlily pad felt so surreal and was, indeed, a real leap of faith! It’s all very counterintuitive to think a delicate waterlily could support a weight over 100kg, and yet, it did.

‘The experience made me appreciate the ingenuity, resilience and beauty of nature even more. Fun exercises like the Waterlily Weigh-Off just go to prove that nature has a way of defying our expectations and reminding us just how extraordinary the world around us truly is.’



In 2025, [Kew entered the Weigh-Off](#) with a weight of 76.5 kg (168.7 lbs), after loading up a lily pad with a combination of barbells, bricks and metal weights. You can also read the [full list of last year’s results here](#).

The *V. boliviana* is one three giant waterlily species currently on display in Kew’s Princess of Wales Conservatory, alongside the Santa Cruz waterlily (*V. cruziana*) also from South America, and *Eurayle ferox* from Southern (India) and Eastern (China to Japan) Asia.

Only described as new to science in 2022, it is the largest of the three known *Victoria* species and [holds three Guinness World Records™ titles](#) for ‘largest species of waterlily’, ‘largest waterlily leaf’ and ‘largest undivided leaf’.

The largest recorded specimen of *V. boliviana* was measured at La Rinconada gardens in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia at 3.2m across.

Victoria waterlilies are incredibly buoyant thanks to the large channels in the veins of the leaf that fill with air to keep it floating on the surface of water and help oxygenate the roots. The leaves are also covered in defensive spikes that help protect them from fish, birds and other potential predator.

The Princess of Wales Conservatory is the only place to see these giants next to each other while the historic Waterlily House undergoes a facelift as part of the wider Palm House renovation project. The Waterlily House, completed in 1852, is on track to reopen in the spring of 2027 thanks to a landmark £5 million grant from The Julia Rausing Trust.

Royal
Botanic
Gardens **Kew**

Feel appreciated by doing something worthwhile in Kew

From Kew Neighbourhood Association

Would you like to feel appreciated by doing something worthwhile in your local community? That's how Kew Neighbourhood Association Office Volunteer, David feels about his three hour volunteer role, once a fortnight.

KNA currently has vacancies for a three hour per fortnight Office Volunteer Role - 9.30am - 12.30pm. Option to work in their small office or from home. Are you good on the phone? Able to learn an online database system? Enjoy being part of a small team? Kew Neighbourhood Association needs you as part of the team.

KNA's Office Volunteers are the link between KNA's 40+ Driving Volunteers and 200+ beneficiaries in Kew – who are often older and with limited mobility. Their beneficiaries phone the KNA Office requesting to go to medical appointments and to get The Avenue Club. The role of the Office Volunteers is to link Volunteer Drivers with people in Kew who need transport.



One of the most rewarding aspects of David's volunteering is knowing that practical help can make a real difference. He understands that a lift to hospital is about far more than transport alone. For many people, it offers reassurance and the comfort of knowing someone is there to help.

The sense of community within KNA is an important part of David's experience. He describes the organisation as friendly and supportive, and values the opportunities for volunteers to meet, exchange ideas and enjoy time together. Christmas gatherings and everyday conversations in the office are all part of what makes the role so enjoyable for him.

His message to anyone considering volunteering is clear: it is worthwhile, appreciated and a wonderful organisation to be part of.

"It's an opportunity to use my office skills whilst helping the local community. It's lovely to speak with our clients." - KNA office volunteer.

To find out more phone Ana Golikova, KNA's Co-ordinator, on 07949 001 378 or email mail@kna.org.uk.

Hampton boy, 10, sets out to become youngest person to walk the entire Thames

From Matt Kent

Ten-year-old Hampton resident Ellis Kent is taking on an extraordinary 185-mile challenge with his dad, Matt, walking the entire length of the River Thames from its source near Kemble in Gloucestershire to the Thames Barrier in London.



The pair set off on 19 August and are aiming to reach the Thames Barrier on 4 September, completing the journey in 17 days while raising money for Cancer Research UK.

If successful, Ellis is aiming to become the youngest person ever to walk the entire route in one continuous journey.

Ellis lives in Hampton and goes to school in Teddington, giving the challenge a particularly strong local connection. After almost two weeks walking downstream through the Cotswolds, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Surrey, Ellis and Matt will return to their home borough towards the end of the challenge before continuing through London to the finish.

Their ambitious fundraising target is £50,000 for Cancer Research UK.

The challenge has a deeply personal motivation. Ellis and his family have experienced the impact of cancer first-hand, including the loss of his grandmother three years ago, and the walk is intended to raise both money and awareness for Cancer Research UK.

Over the 17 days, Ellis will walk an average of around 11 miles a day, with some considerably longer stages. The pair will carry equipment, camp on parts of the route and stay at a mixture of campsites, pubs and hotels, many of which have generously offered support.

Their journey takes them through Cricklade, Lechlade, Oxford, Benson, Streatley, Sonning, Hurley, Maidenhead, Runnymede, Shepperton and Teddington, before heading through central London towards the Thames Barrier.

Matt said: *"Ellis has grown up beside the Thames in Hampton, so there is something very special about walking the whole river and eventually arriving back into his home borough on foot. We wanted to create an adventure he would remember for the rest of his life, but also use it to do something genuinely worthwhile. If we can raise a significant amount for Cancer Research UK along the way, that would make all those miles incredibly worthwhile."*

The father and son will document the challenge throughout the 17 days, sharing the highs, lows and memorable moments from the Thames Path.

Ellis and Matt are due to arrive at the Thames Barrier on Friday 4 September to complete their 185-mile Source to Sea journey.

View the JustGiving page [HERE](#)



Twickenham Sea Cadets seeks new Chairperson

One of the UK's leading Sea Cadet units seeks new Chair of Trustees to lead next chapter in charity's illustrious history

Twickenham Sea Cadets, consistently recognised as one of the best Sea Cadet Units in the country over the last decade, is seeking a new Chair of Trustees to guide the Unit Management Team into its next chapter of growth and community impact.



The announcement comes as current Chair, Chris McLaughlin, steps down after a successful tenure of 8 years, leading the charity's governance through a period of major milestones.

Based at TS Saumarez on the River Thames in Teddington, Twickenham Sea Cadets is an independent local charity providing life-changing opportunities for young people aged 10 to 18. Through a wide range of activities, including rowing, sailing, powerboating, seamanship, drill, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, and peer leadership, the charity helps enthusiastic young people develop vital life skills, confidence, self-discipline, and qualifications such as BTEC and CVQO.

Reflecting on the role, outgoing Chair Chris said: *"Leading the Unit as Chair is both an honour and a genuine privilege. During my time as Chair, I have thoroughly enjoyed leading our Trustees on key projects, including advancing plans for the future of our premises, changing the Charity's legal structure, retiring our Property Trust, and completing major capital projects like the refurbishments of our flagship boat, The Whaler, and our slipway. Most importantly, I have loved working alongside our Commanding Officers and incredible volunteers to ensure they have everything required to deliver one of the best Cadet experiences in the UK."*

I am hugely proud that the Unit has been recognised for its impact and success over the past few years, including as Canada Trophy winner in 2023, awarded to the UK's leading Sea Cadet Unit, the first time in our Unit's 94-year history, and as recipient of the King's Award for Voluntary Service in 2025. Our volunteers and cadets are exceptional, and we now need a Chair who can support the Unit in its continued success."

The role offers an exceptional personal and professional development opportunity for an ambitious professional or community leader looking to gain high-level governance and executive leadership experience, expand their network, and further develop their management skills. Prior Trustee experience is not required; Chris himself stepped into the role at age 27, just 10 months after becoming a Trustee, with no previous governance background.

"The core of the role comes down to building a strong partnership with the Commanding Officer, collaborating with fellow Trustees, setting clear ambitions, and maintaining oversight of our financial, legal and regulatory duties," Chris added. *"The Marine Society & Sea Cadets provides extensive guidance and support on policies, processes, and operational requirements, and our Unit Management Team is experienced, proactive, and effective in their respective roles."*

Twickenham Sea Cadets is inviting applications from individuals across the Richmond upon Thames Borough and wider West London area who possess strategic vision, strong interpersonal skills, and a passion for youth development to guide the Unit Management Team to achieve future success.

To request the full candidate pack or arrange an informal conversation about the role, please contact Chris directly via email - twickenhamseacadetschair@gmail.com.

Students celebrate excellent results in GCSE and Level 2 exams

From Richmond upon Thames College

Students from Richmond upon Thames College are celebrating another year of outstanding GCSE and BTEC Level 2 exam results.

Across the College, hundreds of our amazing students sat GCSEs and Level 2 qualifications, including BTECs, in a variety of subjects, and achieved fantastic results, with many learners making impressive progress from a wide range of starting points.

High achievers

HRUC (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge College) students achieved GCSE pass rates of:

- 100% in English Language
- 99.4% in Mathematics
- With an overall GCSE pass rate of 97.2%
- While BTEC students achieved an overall pass rate of 94%.

Their high achievement rates are as inspiring as the students themselves – we're proud of our Level 2 students as they graduate into our Level 3 and A-Level programmes, apprenticeships and employment.

Top marks for our students

Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) GCSE students achieved:

- 100% pass rates in English Language, Sociology and Citizenship
- 97% in Mathematics
- An overall College pass rate of 97%.

While BTEC Level 2 students achieved a:

- 96% pass rate in Business
- 95% in Applied Science (Extended Certificate)
- 95% in E-Sports
- An overall pass rate of 93%.

I'm very happy with my results

Miri of RuTC achieved top grade 9s in all her GCSEs,

saying: *"I'm very happy with my results and I am now hoping to continue on at Richmond upon Thames College studying STEM related A-Levels. My time here so far has been great!"*



We are so proud of our students

Gavin Hughes, Principal of Richmond upon Thames College, said: *"Congratulations to all our students who have worked extremely hard to achieve these results. Such excellent results demonstrate Richmond upon Thames College's position as one of the best performing FE colleges in England, with student pass rates regularly exceeding 90%. We offer a wide range of pathways, and help each student find the right route to achieve their goals, whether that's going on to university, an apprenticeship or straight into a career. We are so proud of all they have accomplished and look forward to welcoming many of them back in September for the next step in their education journeys."*

[Click to find out more about enrolling at Richmond upon Thames College](#)



Waldegrave celebrates 2026 GCSE results

Today Waldegrave School is celebrating GCSE results.

Ms Tongue, Headteacher, said

"We are all immensely proud of our students who received their GCSE results today. I have seen them work incredibly hard during their time at school and am impressed with the progress they have made since joining in September 2021 supported by the whole Waldegrave community of staff and families. This cohort has always also supported each other; our students are finishing year 11 not only with a great set of results but with a group of friends for life."

- 51% of all grades achieved by students were grade 7 or above.
- 77% of students achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths at grade 5 and above.
- 86% of students achieved at least 5 GCSEs, including English and Maths at grade 4 and above.



Mrs Dhir, Head of KS4 commented

"Celebrating with our students this morning has been a real joy and a wonderful reminder of what they can achieve. It has been both an honour and a privilege to work with such a great Year 11 cohort, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish every one of them every success as they move on to the next chapter of their educational journey"

Ms Tongue added,

"The rest of the week will be incredibly busy as we enrol students into our sixth form. Regardless of where our students' journeys take them next, they will always be part of the Waldegrave community and we look forward to hearing about their future successes. We are really pleased that so many of our students will return to us for A-level studies and are excited to welcome new students into the Sixth Form."

Please note applications to join our Sixth Form for the 2026/27 academic year have already taken place, with enrolment underway from today. Full details of the application process for next year can be found on the Sixth Form Applications webpage [here](#).

Match Preview: Brentford v Tottenham Hotspur

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford open their 2026/27 Premier League campaign against Tottenham Hotspur at Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday afternoon (5.30pm kick-off BST, live on *Sky Sports*).

Keith Andrews' side will be looking to make a winning start, as the Bees begin their second season under the head coach.

Analysis, team news, match officials and more - here's everything you need to know ahead of the game.

Pre-match analysis

Stephen Gillett, *Playmaker Stats*: Brentford's attacking threat meets De Zerbi's possession game

Boosted by a strong pre-season and some exciting summer arrivals, Brentford will take on Roberto De Zerbi's new-look Tottenham in their Premier League opener this Saturday.

The Bees completed their preparations for the new campaign in emphatic style with a [7-0 win over Bundesliga outfit Eintracht Frankfurt last weekend](#). Spurs also enjoyed an unbeaten pre-season, recording four wins and three draws across seven games ahead of their first full campaign under De Zerbi.

A flurry of competitive debuts could be on the cards at Gtech Community Stadium. Brentford fans will be eager to see [Jaidon Anthony](#), [Callum Wilson](#) and highly-rated Mali international [Mamadou Sangaré](#) in red and white, while Tottenham have invested heavily in reshaping a squad that has finished 17th in each of the past two Premier League campaigns.

Shortlisted for the 2025/26 Manager of the Season award in his first campaign as Brentford head coach, [Keith Andrews](#) moulded the squad he inherited from Thomas Frank into a durable, athletic outfit possessing one of the most clinical strike forces in the top flight.

[Igor Thiago](#) came of age last season with 25 goals across all competitions, spearheading a formidable attacking trident alongside [Kevin Schade](#) and quicksilver wide man [Dango Ouattara](#).

The Bees ended the campaign with the best shot-on-target percentage of any team in the Premier League (36.3 per cent), while Thiago's shot-conversion rate (26.19 per cent) was the highest of any forward in the division.

New signings Anthony (eight) and Wilson (seven) plundered 15 league goals between them for Burnley and West Ham respectively in 2025/26, and their arrivals will add further firepower this season. The pair also offer distinct threats: Anthony scored all but one of his top-flight goals for the Clarets from open play, while Wilson netted more goals from set-pieces than any other player in the league.



Sangaré, meanwhile, scored a screamer for the Bees against Eintracht last weekend, and his potential midfield battle with Spurs' big-money signings Sandro Tonali and Mateus Fernandes could be one of the game's most intriguing contests, though the Portuguese is nursing a calf problem.

The 24-year-old Mali international won the Marc-Vivien Foé Award, presented annually to the best African player in Ligue 1, and his ability to break up play and distribute intelligently was showcased by a raft of league-leading stats in France last term.

Andrews and De Zerbi will look to bed in their new faces and implement the tactical tweaks they have been fine-tuning during pre-season, and an intriguing battle lies in store.

He was renowned for the possession-based game he implemented at Brighton, and with technicians such as Tonali, Fernandes and James Maddison in the middle of the park, Tottenham are likely to favour a more controlled approach than was on show as they battled for Premier League survival at the end of last season.

In De Zerbi's final season with the Seagulls in 2023/24, Brighton averaged over 60 per cent possession and recorded a pass-completion rate of 89 per cent, bettered only by Pep Guardiola's Manchester City side (91 per cent).

It will be fascinating to see how Andrews and his Italian counterpart on Saturday deploy their new personnel and freshen up their tactics as both sides look to start the 2026/27 campaign on a positive note.

Scout report

Dan Long, *Sky Sports*: New-look Spurs aim to move on from season of turmoil

Tottenham were 12th in the Premier League table after the goalless draw with Brentford on New Year's Day.

Their results had been consistently inconsistent, yet there were no alarm bells and they were just four points behind fifth-placed Chelsea.

But that was to be the first in a run of 15 league games without a win. From there, they dropped like a stone, despite beating Borussia Dortmund and Eintracht Frankfurt to finish fourth in the Champions League phase.

Thomas Frank lasted only seven more league games. An injury nightmare played a significant role, with Mohammed Kudus, Rodrigo Bentancur, Richarlison, Ben Davies, Lucas Bergvall, Pedro Porro and Kevin Danso sidelined in January alone. Spurs fans called for Frank's dismissal after the 2-1 home defeat to Newcastle on 10 February, and their wish was granted the following day.

Igor Tudor was appointed as his successor on a deal until the end of the season. The club made no secret of the fact he was brought in as a firefighter, after similar recent roles at Juventus and Lazio. "His mandate is straightforward - bring organisation, intensity and competitive edge to the squad at a decisive stage of the campaign," read a statement.

If anything, he added further fuel to the fire. In his first game, Spurs lost 4-1 to Arsenal in the north London derby and they had taken only one point from five league games by the March international break. He left by mutual consent on 29 March, just 44 days after his arrival. They were only one point above the relegation zone at that point.

The third man to lead the club was former Brighton boss Roberto De Zerbi. He signed a five-year deal. It was a show of faith that they believed he was the man who could finally get them out of the mire. And they were right.

Despite slipping into the bottom three after a 1-0 defeat away at Sunderland in his first game, Spurs picked up 11 points from the last 18 available. They survived by the skin of their teeth, finishing 17th for the second season in a row, and just two points ahead of West Ham.

Those at the top knew the club could not get into a similar situation again, and the owners, the Lewis family, injected £100 million in June, reportedly as “working capital”, not just for use in the transfer market. They had already put in another £100m within the nine months prior, and the investment into the playing squad this summer has reflected their commitment.

At the time of writing, Spurs have signed six first-team players - including Sandro Tonali, Mateus Fernandes and Jan Paul van Hecke. Further additions are said to be being targeted.

As Sam Tabuteau alluded to in Hot off the Press, they are showing the ambition of a top-six club. Now they need to prove they can be just that for the first time since 2023/24.

In the dugout

Roberto De Zerbi

Roberto De Zerbi turned professional at AC Milan in 1998 and forged a nomadic career as an attacking midfielder in the lower reaches of the Italian football pyramid.

After six loan spells away from the San Siro, he left for Foggia, then played for Arezzo, Catania and Napoli, before further loans at Brescia, Avellino and Romanian outfit CFR Cluj, whom he joined permanently in 2010 and spent two years with. He retired in 2013 aged 34 after a short spell back in his homeland with Trento.

Almost immediately, De Zerbi took his first job in management with Darfo Boario. He returned to Foggia in 2014 and spent another two years at Stadio Pino Zaccheria, guiding the Rossoneri to the Coppa Italia Serie C in 2015/16, his second season in charge. He was then fast-tracked to Serie A when Palermo came calling. However, that stint will not be remembered fondly by either party, as he lasted just 13 games, only one of which his side were victorious in.

After time at Benevento, it was at Sassuolo that he really settled. He spent just shy of three years in charge and oversaw top-eight finishes in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 seasons. In May 2021, he was announced as the new Shakhtar Donetsk manager but, after 10 months, one Ukrainian Super Cup and 20 wins from his 30 games in charge, he departed as a result of the Russian invasion and, two months after that, was installed as Graham Potter's successor at Brighton in September 2022.

De Zerbi took the Seagulls into Europe for the first time in 2023/24 and guided them to the last-16 of the Europa League, before leaving by mutual consent in June 2024. He quickly returned to management with Marseille, whom he guided to second in Ligue 1 in his only full season in charge.

He left in February 2026 and signed a five-year deal at Tottenham a matter of weeks later, helping keep them in the Premier League last term.



Temporary pause to the Freedom Pass online portal

Due to service upgrades, the Freedom Pass online portal will be unavailable from **5pm on Monday 31 August until 9am on Tuesday 15 September**.

Anyone who needs to apply for a Freedom Pass, request a replacement or update their details is encouraged to do so before the portal closes.

The upgrade will make it easier and faster for residents to apply online, track the progress of their application, and will strengthen the long-term reliability and security of the service.

Existing Freedom Passes will continue to work as normal throughout the upgrade, and eligibility for the scheme is not changing.

Customers who are unable to apply before the closure will be able to apply when the service reopens on **Tuesday 15 September**, or by using a paper application form. Those received during the closure will be prioritised when processing resumes.

Cllr Paul Osborn, London Councils' Executive Member for Transport and Environment, said:

"We'd like to thank Londoners for their patience and understanding while we carry out this important upgrade. The changes will help us deliver a more resilient service in the future, while ensuring customer records are transferred safely and securely."

"I'd like to reassure customers that existing Freedom Passes will continue to work as normal – no one is losing their entitlement. If you're unable to apply before the portal closes, you'll still be able to apply when the service reopens on Tuesday September 15."

Customers moving from a 60+ Oyster card should also note that passes no longer transfer automatically to an Older Person's Freedom Pass. Anyone reaching Freedom Pass age will now need to submit an application. This change reflects updated data-sharing arrangements with Transport for London and does not affect eligibility for the Freedom Pass scheme.

Further information about applying for a Freedom Pass and moving from a 60+ Oyster card is available on the [Freedom Pass website](#).



TfL encourages parents and guardians not to miss out on free or discounted travel for their children

As the summer holiday draws to a close and Londoners prepare for the start of the new school term, Transport for London (TfL) is reminding parents and guardians to apply for their child's Zip Oyster photocard and check that existing cards are still valid so they can continue to benefit from free or discounted travel across London.



Zip Oyster photocards are available for children and young people aged 5-10, 11-15 and 16+, providing free or discounted travel on buses, trams and trains across London. The photocard has an administration fee and parents can apply online through the [TfL website](https://tfl.gov.uk/zip-oyster). Once their photo and documents have been accepted, the Zip Oyster photocard will usually arrive within two weeks.

For school children, a Zip Oyster photocard helps them travel independently while giving families peace of mind that they can spend less getting to school or visiting friends.

The 5-10 Zip Oyster photocard allows free travel on all bus, Tube, tram, DLR, London Overground, Elizabeth line (except West Drayton-Reading) and most National Rail services in London. The 11-15 Zip Oyster photocard gives free bus and tram travel, child-rate pay as you go fares on Tube, DLR, London Overground, Elizabeth line, London Cable Car and most National Rail services in London as well as 50 per cent off adult rate fares on the [Uber Boat by Thames Clippers River Bus services](https://tfl.gov.uk/uber-boat).

Parents and guardians are also reminded to check whether their children could be eligible for 16+, 18+ or apprentice Oyster Photocards as well, which offer further discounts to those in education or undertaking apprenticeships.

Emma Strain, Customer Director at TfL, said: *"With the new school year fast approaching, it's important that parents and guardians check their child's Zip Oyster photocard and make sure they apply for a new or updated card if needed. Ensuring that their Zip photocards are valid before the start of term will help children continue to benefit from affordable travel across London's Tube, bus and rail network."*

As London continues to come alive with a packed calendar of events and activities this August, the Mayor and TfL are also encouraging Londoners and visitors alike to take advantage of the Weekend Hopper fare to explore the capital's world-class attractions, outdoor events and cultural performances. The offer, which is running every weekend until 31 August - including the bank holiday Monday, means that for the first time ever, anyone travelling on buses and trams on a Saturday or a Sunday during the summer holidays can make unlimited bus and tram journeys throughout the day for just £1.75. Simply touch in using the same card or device for all journeys and the Weekend Hopper fare will be applied automatically. The Weekend Hopper fare also applies to discounted-rate fares. Over the last four weekends of the offer, around half of all bus and tram users in London benefitted from the Mayor's Weekend Hopper, saving 4.2 million customers around £9 million.

More information about Zip Oyster photocards and how to apply is available on the TfL website at tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel.



Dog owners urged to take care as blue-green algae found at London bathing spot

With potentially toxic blue-green algae now found at London's first official bathing spot, here's what dog owners need to know about the serious risks it can pose to pets.

While the algae can cause skin irritation and illness in humans, it can be fatal to dogs if ingested, sometimes within a short time.

Dr Sean McCormack, Head Vet for the leading dog food subscription brand [Tails.com](https://tails.com), explains how to spot blue-green algae and why it poses such a serious risk to pets.

What is blue-green algae, and how does it differ from green algae?

"While blue-green algae sounds the same as green algae, the two are vastly different. First and foremost, blue-green algae is a form of bacteria that is sometimes referred to as 'cyanobacteria', and most of the time cannot be seen by the naked eye. However, blue-green algae can sometimes be identified if it clumps together and blooms because, more often than not, water will turn a pea-green soup colour. Green algae is more of a stringy-like substance that can be draped over sticks and picked up more easily.

Why is it dangerous to dogs?

"As we're in the warmer months of the year and spend more time outdoors with our canine companions, it is important that pet parents are aware of the dangers blue-green algae can pose to dogs.

"While blue-green algae may not look dangerous because a lot of shallow water is filled with green stuff, it can actually be toxic to dogs if they swim in or drink from contaminated waters. This is because blue-green algae blooms produce harmful toxins that can stop a dog's liver from functioning properly. Not only that, but in some cases the bacteria can be fatal to dogs and cause long-term health problems depending on how much is consumed, and how quickly you are able to get to a vet.

"If you're planning on taking your dog swimming or near open water this summer, then stay vigilant and ensure that they don't come into contact with anything that could potentially pose a threat to them. Even if you aren't sure whether the green stuff you see in a lake is blue-green algae, it's better to assume it is than harm coming to your pup. After all, we know how much our dogs love to sniff and explore when out walking. You could even consider taking your pooch to a dog-friendly pool or lido this summer, if you want to take them swimming without the added risk of blue-green algae poisoning."

What should you do if your dog has encountered blue-green algae?

"If you think that your dog has encountered blue-green algae or swallowed water containing toxins from its bloom, then you should call your vet immediately. Unfortunately, there is no antidote for blue-green algae poisoning in dogs, so the sooner that your pet is able to receive treatment, the less likely they are to experience long-term implications.

"The treatment provided will depend on how severe the poisoning is. The vet may be able to induce vomiting to remove the bacteria from their stomach before it takes hold, while in more severe cases where your dog has collapsed or had a seizure, more intensive care may be required. In a lot of circumstances, blue-green algae can cause fatal liver failure in your dog, so to avoid any threat of it harming your pet, make sure to steer clear of waters you think may be contaminated with the bacteria.

What are the signs and symptoms your dog has ingested blue-green algae?

"When our dogs encounter blue-green algae, they may experience some of the same symptoms we do, including vomiting, but they can also have a lot more severe side effects. These are the most common symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Lack of appetite
- Diarrhoea
- Seizures or fits
- Weakness, collapse or unconsciousness
- Confusion or acting disoriented
- Excessive drooling
- Difficulty breathing properly

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