

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



The last doggy paddle of summer, Richmond
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

9th October 2026

T&RT

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RFU

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TickerTape - News in Brief

Don't miss the Mayor's charity Halloween quiz!

From the Mayor of Richmond upon Thames

On Friday 30 October, the Mayor of Richmond upon Thames, Councillor Nancy Baldwin, will be hosting a fun and spooky Halloween quiz at York House.

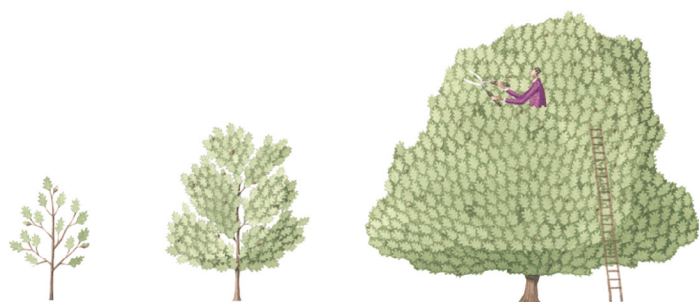
Enjoy a lively evening while helping to raise vital funds for the [Mayor's chosen charities](#) Cocoon Care After Care and Skylarks. Gather a team of up to eight, test your knowledge and get ready for a spooky challenge. For the truly brave, come in fancy dress! The best costume will win the Mayor's prize.

With Sidra's delicious Middle Eastern food, a bar and a raffle, you won't want to miss the fun. Come along, enjoy yourself, flex your brain muscle and support two important local causes.

Councillor Nancy Baldwin, Mayor of Richmond upon Thames, said: "I hope residents will gather their bravest teammates and join me at York House for a spooktacular evening. Every ticket sold will help Cocoon Care After Care and Skylarks continue their vital work supporting local children, young people and families."

- **Date:** Friday 30 October 2026
- **Time:** 7pm
- **Location:** Clarendon Hall, York House
- **Tickets:** £27 per person

[Book tickets for the Mayor's Charity Halloween Quiz](#)



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The Tree Agency

The Local Picture Postcard Page - Part 347

Barnes High Street – Pre World War 1

By Alan Winter

I thought we could look at something a little different this week. By looking at these postcards that were all published before the first world war (1914-1918) we are looking at Barnes High Street before anyone alive today would have seen it.



The main features are the narrower width of the High Street and the fact that horse drawn vehicles were the main source of transport for both goods and people.

Our motorised world had only recently begun at this time and vehicles powered by the internal combustion engine were still a rare sight on our roads.



The majority of shops seen are no longer there and the odd public houses are the only functional buildings remaining that you might recognise.



Next week I will show you postcards of Barnes High Street that were published after the war. Many of you will recognise some of the buildings and shops on those.



Local Postcard Annual Available for Christmas!

The Twickenham and Richmond Tribune will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary in November. I have been with it since the first few editions in 2016 and have now clocked up some 350 columns featuring old local post cards that were published between 1890 and the 1990s. The Tribune covers the whole of the LBRUT area, and I have supported that with columns featuring postcards from Twickenham, Richmond, Teddington, St. Margarets, Hampton, Hampton Hill, Hampton Wick, Hampton Court, Whitton, Kew, Barnes, Mortlake, East Sheen Petersham and Ham over the years.

Many people have suggested that we publish a book of these postcard columns and Editor Berkley Driscoll and I have been working on this project for a few months. More details to follow but the book is scheduled to be ready in November to coincide with the Tribune's 10th Anniversary. It will make an excellent local Christmas present and purchasing details will be announced shortly.

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Help Final Push Now for Higher Sewage Treatment Standards

From Mike Pemberton, SOLAR

SOLAR – local campaign group **Save Our Lands And River**, has entered its final month petitioning the government for a parliamentary debate on higher standard sewage treatment. With outdated systems and regulation, communities, recreational and environmental groups are increasingly alarmed by the impact on our rivers, lakes and seas.



Your voice can help secure the debate needed to protect our waterways. Please add your support to the final push by **Scanning the QR code below or clicking on** [Ensure new sewage treatment infrastructure to meet higher standards as in the EU - Petitions](#)

The petition calls for new sewage infrastructures to meet higher standards, already used in the EU, along with tougher controls on emerging pollutants such as forever chemicals and micropollutants. This push comes as the government is considering new watersector legislation, making public pressure especially timely.

SOLAR founded more than three years ago in opposition to Thames Water's Teddington Direct River Abstraction scheme, also opposed by Richmond and Kingston councils, favours greener, more cost-effective alternatives [SOLAR Campaign News - Save Our Lands & River from Thames Water](#)



SOLAR

SAVE OUR LANDS
AND RIVER

A Little Less Scrutiny, Please, We're Liberal Democrats

By James Knight



Richmond's Full Council meeting found Gareth Roberts navigating the awkward consequences of his party's principles, while the Mayor demonstrated that some questions are considerably more welcome than others.

Poor old Councillor Gareth Roberts. Leading the only council in the country where every elected member belongs to your own party ought to be one of the more agreeable occupations in British local government. There are no opposition councillors to ambush you, no hostile benches demanding explanations and precious little prospect of losing a vote. Unfortunately, governing remains inconvenient, particularly when the policies your party once advocated look less attractive when applied to your own residents.

Richmond's Full Council meeting on 6 October offered an entertaining illustration of the problem. The Liberal Democrats found themselves defending wealthy homeowners against additional taxation, proclaiming their enthusiasm for welcoming refugees, and discussing a railway extension that their leader, despite also sitting on the London Assembly, had yet to raise in a published written question. Each position had its merits, although taken together they suggested that the distance between the dream and administrative reality can be considerable.

The evening began with a dignified tribute to the late Councillor Robin Brown, whose contribution to the borough was warmly remembered. It was a reminder of the seriousness of local public service, though the atmosphere grew less solemn when the Mayor turned to the inconvenient business of public questions. Councillor Nancy Baldwin had evidently decided that democracy would proceed more efficiently if residents confined themselves to asking questions, without the tiresome preliminary business of explaining them.

Questions, Please, Not Statements

"I'll be quite strict about that," the Mayor warned, explaining that supplementary questions must arise directly from the original question or answer and must not be preceded by statements. When Martin Baker attempted to set out the background to a question about

the proposed Vine Road climate refuge and expenditure on professional consultants, she interrupted him. “Mr. Baker, I am very strict about these questions,” she reminded him, suggesting that questions should begin with such words as who, what, when or where.

Martin Baker has become a familiar figure at Richmond Council meetings, asking the sort of detailed questions about spending, planning and decision-making that administrations do not always find convenient. He is not easily satisfied with general assurances, preferring figures, explanations and an account of how public money has been spent. In a council chamber where political opposition is conspicuous by its absence, such persistence can make a resident rather more troublesome than an entire row of opposition councillors.

The Mayor was, of course, entitled to insist on orderly proceedings, although her intervention had the effect of curtailing Mr Baker just as he was setting out the background to his question. This contrasted unfavourably with the more accommodating reception the Council Leader’s political question received. One could almost detect an emerging principle of Richmond democracy: the more searching the question, the less time available to explain it. Mr Baker’s difficulty may be that he mistook the public questions session for an opportunity to get answers.

Later, Council Leader Gareth Roberts demonstrated a more effective approach, asking Councillor Fiona Sacks to condemn what he called the “disgraceful scaremongering about immigration” by the Barnes Conservatives. Their apparent offence was having the temerity to ask who would occupy the proposed bed spaces in an emergency climate refuge on protected Metropolitan Open Land at Vine Road. Councillor Sacks needed little encouragement, accusing them of portraying immigrants and homeless people as a danger before proclaiming Richmond’s commitment to refugees. “The right way, the Liberal Democrat way, is to help them up,” she declared.

It was a splendidly economical arrangement. The Leader supplied the accusation, his colleague the condemnation, and the Mayor allowed the exchange to proceed. Strictly speaking, Roberts framed his intervention as a question related to the original discussion about refugees, but Richmond’s own procedural rules say councillors’ questions should primarily seek information or press for action rather than convey political opinions. Mr Baker had been interrupted while attempting to explain a question about public expenditure; Roberts had successfully invited a political denunciation. The distinction may have been entirely procedural, although it was not immediately obvious to the casual observer.

The Perils of Being Welcoming

Councillor Sacks delivered her declaration of Liberal Democrat virtue with the confidence of someone addressing a congregation already convinced of its own righteousness. Richmond was a Borough of Sanctuary, its administration compassionate, its commitment to vulnerable people beyond question. It was all terribly uplifting, especially when the practical difficulties of accommodating asylum seekers were being confronted elsewhere. In neighbouring Spelthorne, Liberal Democrats have themselves raised concerns about asylum accommodation at the Stanwell Hotel, while their colleague Calum Miller MP has challenged government proposals near Bicester. Evidently, the moral high ground becomes rather less comfortable when it happens to be in your own backyard.

Unfortunately for Gareth Roberts, Labour has begun questioning whether affluent boroughs should shoulder more responsibility for accommodating asylum seekers. Borders minister Anna Turley has argued for a fairer distribution, raising an intriguing prospect for Richmond. The borough's formidable property prices may previously have provided some practical insulation from the pressures of asylum accommodation, but ministers' proposed approach could change that. Richmond's prosperity may no longer be the protective barrier it once seemed, and welcoming asylum seekers could become far more complicated if ministers decide that affluent boroughs should accommodate them at scale.

Poor Roberts must wonder whether each Full Council meeting is adding another grey hair. The Mansion Tax has already illustrated how an attractive political principle can become an administrative headache when applied to Richmond residents. Immigration may provide the next instalment. Should the Home Office come knocking, Councillor Sacks might discover that questions about location, consultation and local services are not necessarily evidence of hostility towards immigrants, but precisely the sort of questions a council is supposed to answer.

The Mansion Tax Comes Home to Bite

If immigration provided the evening's most animated exchange, the Mansion Tax offered an equally uncomfortable moment for Roberts. Councillor Richard Pyne asked how many Richmond homes would be affected if Labour reduced the proposed tax threshold from £2 million to £1.5 million. Councillor Jim Millard estimated that another 4,300 properties would be caught, bringing the total to around 9,200. Pyne condemned the prospect as "this unjustified tax", while Millard warned that many residents were "house rich but they are often cash poor". Suddenly, taxing expensive homes was not quite the attractive proposition it had once appeared.

This was particularly awkward for Roberts, who had championed changes to the taxation of valuable properties only the previous year. The Mansion Tax also has impeccable Liberal Democrat ancestry, having been enthusiastically promoted by former Twickenham MP Vince Cable. Yet here were Roberts's colleagues explaining why taxing people simply because their homes had become valuable was unfair. One could almost imagine Roberts looking around the chamber, listening to his colleagues denounce a tax his own party had once championed, and wondering quite when the Liberal Democrats had started sounding so much like the Tories they so enjoy condemning. There is, however, a delicious historical irony. In an interview with Cratus, Roberts recalled beginning his political life as a Conservative activist, describing it as the world's worst teenage rebellion against his Labour councillor father. Perhaps, after all these years, the rebellion has come full circle.

The Liberal Democrats may now be discovering that a Mansion Tax is considerably easier to campaign for than to defend once the bills arrive. After decades of championing the idea, they appear anxious to distance themselves from a policy that could prove electorally radioactive in Richmond. Taxing the rich sounds splendid, until the voters discover that the rich means them.

Gareth Roberts Misses His Connection

Transport gave Gareth Roberts another awkward moment. Councillor Andrew Duncan asked

whether he would use his positions as Council Leader and London Assembly member to campaign for the proposed West London Orbital railway to be extended to Twickenham. Roberts occupies the rather fortunate position of being able to lobby the Mayor of London directly, without having to write to his Assembly member. He is, after all, his own Assembly member.

However, there was a small problem with the timetable. An examination of Roberts' published transport questions at City Hall found not a single one concerning the proposed extension to Twickenham. The Council Leader was being asked to campaign for a railway which, judging by his written questions, had yet to depart from Richmond. He may have raised it through other channels, but one might reasonably expect a London Assembly member campaigning for better rail connections to have asked the Mayor about them.

This raises the question of whether Roberts has rather too many destinations on his political itinerary. Running Richmond Council is hardly a part-time occupation, while representing southwest London at City Hall brings responsibilities of its own. Holding both offices undoubtedly offers advantages, provided there is sufficient time to exercise the powers that come with them. Perhaps Roberts has simply missed his connection. But with no published written question to the Mayor about the proposed extension, it looks as though West London has been left waiting on the platform by the very Assembly member elected to represent it.

The Comforts of Agreement

Elsewhere, Roberts warned that government funding reforms could cost Richmond £29 million a year by 2028/29. "This is not fair funding," he declared, with understandable indignation. Yet financial pressures ought to make scrutiny of the council's own spending more important, not less. Instead, several councillors appeared content to invite colleagues to celebrate their achievements. It was all terribly agreeable, although one wondered whether the questions had been distributed with the answers already attached.

In most council chambers, an administration congratulating itself can expect somebody opposite to enquire what went wrong, what it cost and whether the results justified the expense. Richmond, having no elected opposition, must rely upon Liberal Democrat councillors to perform this occasionally disagreeable duty themselves. The evening even featured a motion defending public participation in planning, a splendid principle which sat rather awkwardly alongside the Mayor's earlier determination to shut down Martin Baker's supplementary question.

Poor old Roberts must be discovering that governing is considerably less comfortable than campaigning. The Mansion Tax has become an awkward inheritance, immigration may yet present another test, and his two political offices have produced no published written question about extending the West London Orbital to Twickenham. Meanwhile, Richmond's council chamber remains a wonderfully harmonious place, where Liberal Democrats congratulate one another, political opponents receive a thorough dressing down and the occasional troublesome resident is reminded of the rules.

The message from Richmond Town Hall appears reassuringly simple: everyone is welcome to ask questions, provided they do not ask anything too difficult.

Christmas at Kew, the UK's original festive light trail, is right around the corner, with tickets selling fast

From Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Christmas at Kew, the UK's original festive light trail, returns from 13 November 2026, transforming London's largest UNESCO World Heritage Site into a spectacular after-dark celebration of light, nature and seasonal wonder. Showcasing new installations and world premieres, this unique seasonal event allows visitors to experience Kew Gardens in a new light. Tickets for the iconic Christmas trail are selling fast, but there's still time to join the festive fun – several November dates are available and offer a wonderful way to get into the holiday spirit.



L-R: credit RG Live by Luke Dyson, credit Ines Stuart-Davidson © RBG Kew, credit RG Live by Luke Dyson

Visitors will encounter 30 immersive installations, large-scale artworks, and atmospheric soundscapes, including new commissions from internationally acclaimed artists, alongside returning seasonal elements, creating a three-kilometre festive light trail around the Gardens. Visitors will encounter glowing tunnels, sculptural light works and choreographed moments that highlight both the landscape and the spirit of the season, blending spectacle with the beauty of nature by night.

New Adult-only evenings

For the first time, Christmas at Kew will introduce dedicated adult-only evenings on Thursday 3 December and Wednesday 9 December. Open to visitors aged 18 and over, the evenings offer a chance to experience the trail in an adult-only setting - perfect for festive celebrations with friends, colleagues or partners. With all the magic and creativity of the main event, these evenings offer a unique way to enjoy Christmas at Kew.

VIP Exploration Lounge Experience

Visitors can experience Christmas at Kew in style while taking a break at the VIP Exploration Lounge, located midway along the festive trail. Enjoy exclusive access on select nights only – with strictly limited capacity for an intimate, adults-only experience (18+). Your visit includes a complimentary drink of your choice, with a paid bar available for additional refreshments. Hosted inside Davies Exploration House, one of Kew's horticultural glasshouses, this is a rare chance to relax and enjoy your festive treats from the food stalls in the dry and warm - soak in the surroundings before continuing your journey through the trail.

Anytime & Any Day Tickets

Back by popular demand, Anytime and Any Day tickets are returning this year, with options for adults and children. Limited Anytime tickets are available and provide entry only on the date selected, at any time. Any Day, Anytime tickets allow entry at any time on any day the event is open, with no need to choose a date in advance - offering maximum flexibility.

Early Quiet Access Sessions

Early Quiet Access Sessions return and are proving popular once again. Tickets are still available for 16 and 26 December, giving visitors with hidden or visual disabilities the chance to enjoy a calm, crowd-free experience and take in the sensory magic of Christmas at Kew. These sessions must be booked in advance.

World premiere installations

This year sees the world premiere of new installations and immersive artworks created exclusively for Christmas at Kew. At the Treetop Walkway, the Infinite Choir by Squidsoup will take the form of a sound and light installation that plays with space, and Drift, inspired by seeds carried on the wind by Studio Vertigo, will see illuminated spheres rising almost 2 metres into the air. A new work by French collective TILT features larger-than-life blooms programmed to music, and ITHACA studio is creating a new animated willow tree with light resembling water cascading from its canopy to the ground, drawing inspiration from Kew's historic tree collection, which has not appeared on previous Christmas at Kew trails.



Christmas at Kew - credit Ollie Dixon

At the start of the trail, visitors will be welcomed through a festive gateway of oversized gifts, illuminated arches and a seasonal arrival moment featuring Father Christmas. Elsewhere, visitors will encounter festive details, including Candy Cane Lane, a Gingerbread Walk, life-sized Nutcracker figures and giant glitter balls. Surrounding Kew's iconic Victorian glasshouse, the Temperate House, are brand-new towering monoliths by Squidsoup called 'New Life, New Love, New Dawn' that will lead to Pagoda Vista, set to light up the winter night. Looping around the glasshouse, the Skirt Trees will replicate the symbolic Nutcracker character, the Sugar Plum Fairy, and add sparkle to the Garden's tree collection.

At the back of the remarkable Palm House, visitors will encounter a dynamic Neon Tree, one of

Kew's 11,000 trees, in the Botanic Gardens. Continuing the festive trail, visitors will encounter the TILT Animated Flower Garden, Light Rain and Sweetie Roundabout, providing a variety of festive experiences to capture and take in. The Palm House Pond display will return for 2026, with a new water fountain display across the Pond and on the adjacent lawn, showcasing giant chandeliers and rounding off the trail in style. Visitors can also learn more about the [Palm House renovation project](#), with a bespoke series of projections telling the story of London's living rainforest and the vital need to conserve it for future generations.

Festive favourites

Alongside a host of new artistic commissions, visitors can once again enjoy the much-loved experiences that have become synonymous with Christmas at Kew. Returning favourites include the majestic Christmas Cathedral, inviting guests to wander beneath its glowing arches, and the atmospheric Fire Garden, where dancing flames will create a mesmerising contrast to the winter night. Elsewhere, the sparkling Pealight Tree returns, decorated with thousands of twinkling lights by Kew's expert arborists, the Tree Gang, and the neighbouring Bubble Walk featuring bubbles of all shapes and sizes bursting in the night sky.

Food and drink

A range of festive food and drink options will be available throughout the trail, including seasonal street food, warming winter treats and indulgent festive favourites. Visitors can enjoy everything from toasted marshmallows and hot chocolate to savoury bites and, for adults, mulled wine. The Botanical Brasserie will offer festive menus for those looking to make an evening of their visit.

Retail

Visitors are welcome to stop by the Victoria Plaza Shop, located near Victoria Gate, which offers a range of new and exclusive items, including festive treats such as the Lucy Loveheart mugs and tote bags, cocktail advent calendars, and Christmas cheeseboard chutneys, as well as stocking fillers like Kew's midnight palm print drinking bottle, Henry Moore keyrings, Kew botanical baseball caps, and Winter at Kew jar candles, all available to purchase. It provides an opportunity to secure Christmas presents early or to take something home to remember the time in the Gardens. Kew Members receive a 10% discount upon purchase.

Sandra Botterell, Executive Director of Marketing and Commercial Enterprise at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, said: *"There's no doubt that Christmas at Kew is a firm favourite of the seasonal calendar, and the experience this year promises to be just as enchanting as always. With a freshly designed route, and a spectacular selection of new installations for 2026, we're very excited to be welcoming visitors to Kew Gardens to enjoy the beauty of nature by night once again."*

Supporting Kew's mission

Every ticket purchased for Christmas at Kew helps to support RBG Kew's mission to create a thriving planet powered by plants and fungi. As a world-leading scientific organisation and conservation charity, Kew is working to understand and protect plant and fungal diversity, helping tackle biodiversity loss and address some of the most urgent environmental challenges facing our planet. By visiting Christmas at Kew, guests directly support this vital work and help safeguard nature for future generations.

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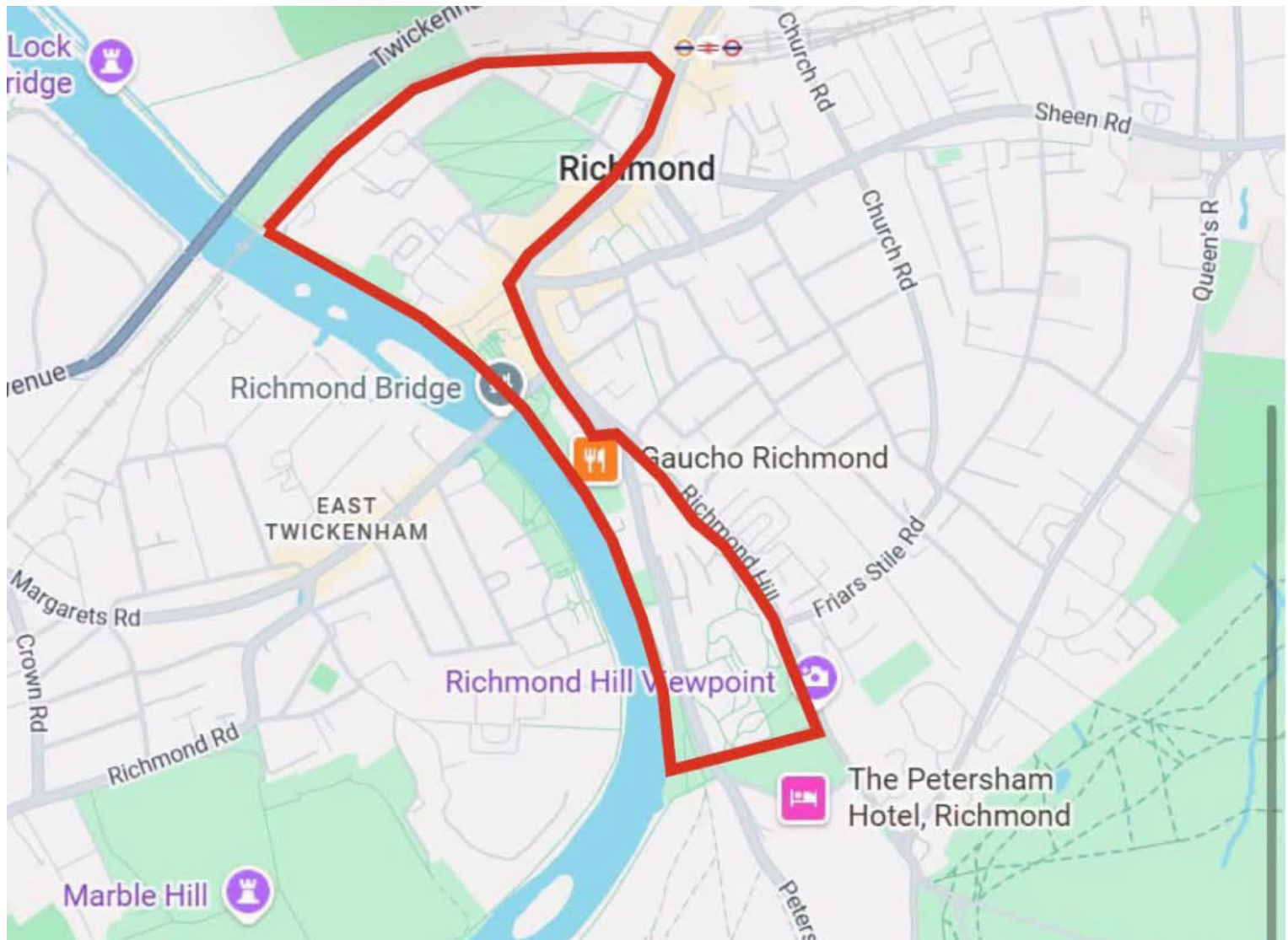
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Richmond Green Dispersal Order

From the Metropolitan Police

To help prevent anti-social behaviour and keep Richmond Green safe for everyone, a Section 35 Dispersal Order will be in place from 1600hrs on Friday 9 October 2026 until 0700hrs on Sunday 11 October 2026.



The order is being introduced following recent incidents involving large gatherings, underage drinking, drug use and the misuse of fireworks. It forms part of a wider policing and safeguarding operation, alongside youth engagement and diversionary activities delivered with our partners.

Under these powers, officers can:

- Direct individuals causing, or likely to cause, anti-social behaviour to leave the area.
- Require individuals not to return to the designated area for a specified period.
- Seize alcohol from underage persons.
- Seize items linked to anti-social behaviour, including fireworks where appropriate.

Dedicated officers will be on patrol throughout the weekend to monitor and enforce the dispersal order, engage with young people and provide reassurance to residents and visitors.



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Saddle up, Santa! Richmond's ultimate feel-good festive ride is back

From Njinga Cycling

For the past 13 years, hundreds of cycling Santas have wrapped up warm, hopped on their bikes, and pedalled 15.5 km - bringing some early Christmas spirit to the winter streets, and gifts to Shooting Star Children's Hospice.

Njinga Cycling has already delivered nearly 8,000 presents and raised over £60,000 for this amazing charity.

This year, they want you to be part of the magic on Saturday 5 December. It's not just a charity ride - it's a big, festive social on wheels, and they'd love for you to join in.

The ride is free to enter, all they ask is that you bring an unwrapped gift for the children and rock a smashing Santa suit.

Families are welcome. Children aged 12 and over can ride alongside an adult, with fantastic reindeer ride captains and motorbike outriders keeping everyone safe along the route.

The grand finish is at the Turks Head pub where you can warm up with free food and hot drinks, before continuing a free after-party with a DJ, fun festive games and a fundraising raffle with brilliant prizes up for grabs.

Prizes are on offer for best outfit and best decorated bike.

You can find [out more and register your place.](#)



Richmond Green Dispersal Order Sparks Debate Over Policing and Youth Behaviour

By James Knight

Police act over drinking, drugs and fireworks, as residents question the decline of neighbourhood policing and the lack of affordable places for young people.

Richmond Green, one of the borough's most iconic public spaces, is subject to a police dispersal order this weekend following concerns about large gatherings, underage drinking, drug use and the misuse of fireworks. The decision has prompted a lively debate among residents about public safety, parental responsibility and the disappearance of traditional neighbourhood policing.

The Metropolitan Police announced that a Section 35 Dispersal Order would operate from 4pm on Friday 9 October until 7am on Sunday 11 October. Officers can direct individuals causing, or likely to cause, antisocial behaviour to leave the designated area and prevent their return for a specified period.



Police say dedicated patrols will operate throughout the weekend, supported by safeguarding measures and activities intended to engage young people. The announcement, shared by the Richmond Society, has attracted contrasting reactions from residents.

Whatever Happened to the Local Policeman?

For some, the announcement revived memories of an era when police officers were familiar figures on Richmond's streets.

Debbie Percival recalled a local policeman whose authority apparently required little more than a bicycle and a firm word. "Does anyone remember years ago when the local policeman, Bill Burgess used to patrol the streets on his push bike," she asked. "He handled wayward kids single handedly!! One word from Bill and they were shaking in their boots."

Isabel Neuwirth questioned whether special powers should be necessary. "Isn't this the sort of thing police were able to do without so called dispersal orders?" she asked. "Why not bring back a proper police station and put our police back on proper shifts?"

Their comments reflect wider concerns about the visibility of neighbourhood policing. Although dispersal orders provide officers with specific preventative powers, some residents clearly miss the reassurance of a regular police presence.

Have Young People Got Anywhere to Go?

Others questioned whether moving young people away from Richmond Green would address the underlying problem. "Richmond has had these problems for 50 years. How about they give the kids a

place to go rather than dispersal?” asked Lewis Henry, recalling similar behaviour around Richmond Riverside more than two decades ago.

Julie Brait Clarkson remembered a time when young people could enjoy inexpensive entertainment at local dance halls, music venues and coffee bars, including Eel Pie Island and the Hammersmith Palais. “Now where are they meant to go if they haven’t got a ton of money?!?” she asked.

It is a reasonable question. Richmond is an affluent borough, but that does not necessarily mean its teenagers have affordable places to socialise. Public spaces inevitably become gathering points, although the overwhelming majority of young people cause no trouble.

Council’s Approach Under Scrutiny

The concerns extend beyond Richmond Green. During 2025, Green councillors raised concerns about young people congregating in parks and open spaces around Ham and Richmond, questioning the council’s response to antisocial behaviour.

The latest police intervention brings renewed attention to how the borough manages its public spaces. While policing remains the responsibility of the Metropolitan Police, Richmond Council also plays a role in prevention, youth provision and park management.

The Richmond Society has previously called for greater police visibility following incidents on Richmond Green, including fires requiring the attendance of the Fire Brigade. It also highlighted the role of Parkguard, the council’s contracted parks security service.

Parents, Police and Public Safety

Other residents placed greater emphasis on parental responsibility. “Enough of this nanny state! Here’s a radical idea... how about parents actually start parenting and taking responsibility,” wrote Melissa Payne.

Julie Courtis cautioned against treating the dispersal order as evidence of an unprecedented deterioration in Richmond’s public life. She recalled that similar powers have been used across the borough for many years to address teenage gatherings, drinking and associated safeguarding concerns. “It’s nothing new, not a sign of creeping authoritarianism, if anything it is about creeping affluence,” she observed.

The announcement also prompted questions about Richmond’s reputation for safety. Clive Delves asked: “This is the Richmond which just got awarded a prize for being the most peaceful borough in London?” Others wondered whether the order would simply move the problem elsewhere. “They will go somewhere else,” predicted Amanda Lawrence, while Judy Astley asked: “Could we have one for Twickenham Embankment too please?”

A Problem That Cannot Simply Be Dispersed

The police have clear reasons to take concerns about underage drinking, drugs and fireworks seriously. Residents should be able to enjoy Richmond Green without intimidation, while young people deserve protection from behaviour that may place them at risk.

Yet the public reaction reveals a wider question about how Richmond manages its public spaces. Visible policing, parental responsibility and affordable youth provision are not competing priorities. All have a part to play. The immediate test will be whether the order prevents disorder this weekend. The longer-term challenge is ensuring that the same problems do not simply return. Richmond can disperse a gathering. It cannot disperse the underlying problem quite so easily.

It's Spooky Season.... HALLOWEEN PARTY

It's that time of year again... and we're getting ready for one hell of a spooky night!

Join us Saturday 31st October from 8pm for an evening of banging tunes, dancing, spooky surprises, plenty of drinks and a few tricks along the way! Expect a proper Halloween party atmosphere, with creepy decorations, a fang-tastic disco and plenty of reasons to stay out for just one more drink...

Fancy dressing up? Go for it!

Not your thing? No worries—Just bring yourself, your mates and your party spirit!

So round up the gang, grab your best drinking buddies and come join us for a night of boos, booze & Halloween mischief! Don't miss it... it could get scary!

Saturday 31st October | From 8 till late!



Our Halloween decorations are always a scream, make sure you pop along to the pub in October to see this year's display!

ONLY IN THE PUB: A CELEBRATION OF CASK ALE

Only In The Pub is back! Our celebration of cask ale shines a light on the craft, care and passion that go into brewing and serving the perfect pint.

Over the next five weeks, we'll be bringing a selection of exclusive new brews to the bar, alongside the return of seasonal favourites such as Red Fox.

And that's not all — the Magic Stamp is back too! With the app, you'll receive a digital stamp every time you enjoy a cask ale. Simply ask a member of our friendly team for more information and start collecting your stamps.



Download the Magic Stamp app to earn free pints!

DUBOIS V WARDLEY 2

Get ready for the upcoming rematch between Daniel Dubois and Fabio Wardley. Dubois will be defending the WBO heavyweight championship that he won from Wardley earlier this year. Watch the action live in the pub on Saturday, October 17, with the main event ring walk expected around 10:30pm. It's one not to miss!

HARLEQUINS RUGBY

Harlequins face two more exciting fixtures as they take on Sale Sharks and London rivals Saracens this October. First up, Quins travel to face Sale Sharks on the 11th October at 3pm. Watch all the action here, live on our big screens. Or why not gather some friends and elevate the experience by booking one of our Garden Pods - with their own TVs and heater, it's the perfect place to watch the match. The action then returns to The Stoop for the London Derby on 25th October, as Saracens journey south of the river to take on Harlequins at 3pm. Come

LIVE SPORT FOR OCTOBER

Premier League:

Sunday 11th

Liverpool V Man City KO 4:30pm

Sunday 18th

Nottingham Forest V Arsenal KO 5:30pm

Sunday 24th

Chelsea V Tottenham KO 5:30pm

Champions League:

Tuesday 13th

Arsenal V Lille KO 8pm

Wednesday 14th

Paris V Man City KO 8pm

Wednesday 21st

Bayern Munich V Arsenal KO 8pm

join us at the pub to watch the action live, or pop in before and after your visit to the Stoop. We're proud to offer fast, friendly service without ever compromising on quality, so you can always count on a great pint, perfectly poured, served with a smile.

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Next Week at Richmond Council

Richmond Council faces a busy week, with decisions on a 90-bedroom hotel in Hampton Wick, a controversial Twickenham pub licence and plans for a new family hub at Heatham House on protected Metropolitan Open Land. Meanwhile, the Council has failed to publish the agenda for Monday's Orleans House Trust meeting, despite its own five-working-day publication deadline.

Monday: Orleans House Trust **2pm, Salon, York House, Twickenham**

The Orleans House Trust meets on Monday afternoon, but the Council has failed to publish an agenda. The Council's website states that meeting papers will be published five clear working days beforehand, meaning they should have been available by Monday 5 October.

With the meeting just two days away, residents have no way of knowing what trustees intend to discuss or whether decisions affecting the historic Orleans House estate are proposed. The omission raises questions about transparency and the opportunity for public scrutiny.

Monday: Licensing Sub-Committee **7.30pm, Virtual Meeting**

Councillors will decide whether The Crane & Tap at 1 Brewery Lane, Twickenham, should be allowed to relax restrictions on alcohol sales during major events. The pub wants to remove a condition requiring alcohol to be served alongside a table meal on event days, replacing it with a capacity restriction.

Residents living above and around the premises strongly oppose the change, warning that it could turn the establishment into a predominantly drinking venue. Objections describe alleged breaches of existing licence conditions, excessive noise, customers gathering in communal areas and disturbances continuing into the early hours.

Councillors must balance the business's desire for greater flexibility against residents' concerns about noise and public nuisance.

Wednesday: Planning Committee **7pm, York House, Twickenham**

Three applications come before the Planning Committee, including a substantial redevelopment at Kingston Bridge House in Hampton Wick.

Councillors are being recommended to approve a retrospective change of use from student accommodation to a 90-bedroom hotel and 22 apartments, including four affordable homes. The scheme also involves extensions and external alterations.

The affordable housing provision amounts to just 18 per cent of the proposed apartments, raising questions about the balance between commercial development and housing need.

In Twickenham, councillors will consider the Council's own proposals for Heatham House Youth Centre, involving a new building and refurbishment of an existing garage to accommodate a Family Hub and outdoor nursery on protected Metropolitan Open Land.

A third application concerns whether to confirm a Tree Preservation Order protecting a horse chestnut in the rear garden of 19 Queens Road, Twickenham.

Thursday: Health and Wellbeing Board 1.30pm, York House, Twickenham

Richmond's Health and Wellbeing Board will review progress on the borough's five-year health strategy, *18 Steps to Health and Wellbeing*.

The midpoint review identifies weaknesses in performance monitoring, gaps in accountability and risks arising from changes to NHS structures. Members are being asked to endorse revised reporting arrangements intended to provide clearer evidence of results.

The Board will also examine progress on special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including efforts to improve outcomes for children while making the system financially sustainable.

Reports on safeguarding vulnerable children and adults are also on the agenda.

The underlying question is whether Richmond's health and social care strategies are delivering measurable improvements for residents.

Council papers

[Orleans House Trust, 12 October \(agenda not published\)](#)

[Licensing Sub-Committee, 12 October](#)

[Planning Committee, 14 October](#)

[Health and Wellbeing Board, 15 October](#)

A Riot of Tomatoes & Microgreens

I started with some tiny little seedlings that I was given by Suttons and Thompson & Morgan at the Garden Press Show earlier this year. They were planted in paper cups and had to survive the journey home packed into a carrier bag. These tiny plants lived on our kitchen table until my husband felt that they were strong enough to replant. We eventually planted them directly into the ground in our greenhouse. One was a heritage variety called Froglet from Suttons, and the other was another tiny seedling called Meltaway from Thompson & Morgan.

Froglet: This is described as ‘A little tomato with a big personality! Tomato ‘Froglet’ is a charming heirloom-type mini plum variety, producing masses of sweet, bite-sized greeny yellow fruits perfect for summer snacking. With its high-yielding nature and reliable performance, Froglet is a fun and flavoursome addition to the vegetable garden, bringing delicious homegrown harvests to gardeners of all ages.’



Meltaway: Described as ‘A true breakthrough in tomato breeding with the launch of Tomato ‘Meltaway F1’. A world-first cherry tomato that’s virtually seedless and skinless, with a soft, sweet texture that genuinely melts in the mouth. The very first variety from its top-secret breeding programme, and proof that after supplying gardeners since 1855, Thompson & Morgan is still innovating!’

“It’s remarkable, these tomatoes are sweet, gummy and pure in flavour,” says Peter Freeman, New Product Development Manager at Thompson & Morgan. “Even people who don’t usually like tomatoes went back for more.”



Readers, we are so delighted with both of these varieties. Froglet in particular has gone crazy - filling the greenhouse and escaping through the top window and cascading down the sides.

[Meltaway](#) has been slightly overwhelmed by Froglet, but it’s holding its own and the tiny little fruits are a stupendous burst of intense tomato sweetness.

We’ve been eating tomatoes for months now and I’ve air dried some of the Meltaway in the air fryer, packed them in olive oil and stored them in a jar for those cold winter days when tomatoes have little flavour. They will be delicious popped on top of scrambled eggs. Others have been skinned and made into tomato sauce to freeze for winter casseroles and pasta dishes. I’m about to embark on some Froglet chutney (that will keep people wondering when they see that name on my chutney labels!) and we’ve shared so many bags of them with friends and family.



Interestingly though, my husband decided this year that he wouldn’t pinch out the new growth as is usually the received wisdom. He let them grow freely and I have to say that we’ve been truly overwhelmed with our tomato crop this year.

We also grew some other varieties of the more ‘run of the mill’ sort to great success, but these two new varieties were a revelation to us and we’ll definitely be buying them next year. Froglet is only available currently from Suttons Retail so you’ll have to look out for (or order if not in stock) the seeds (or seedlings) at your local garden centre next spring.

The other product I discovered at the show is a wonderful range of microgreens from DT Brown. When most people think of microgreens, varieties such as cress typically spring to

mind. But there is actually a wide range of different microgreen types to choose from. If you're looking for a new indoor gardening project, microgreens offer an opportunity to grow all kinds of interesting things and are the perfect way to introduce your children to the green, green world of gardening.

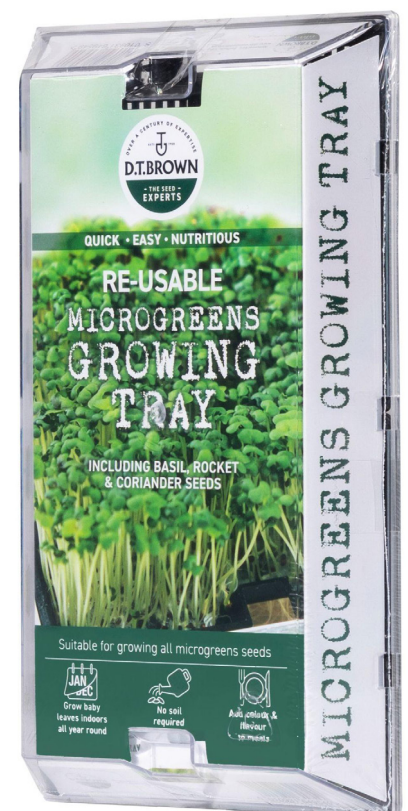
Microgreens are actually quite a broad category of plant. They're essentially young seedlings of vegetables and herbs, making it possible to grow smaller versions of larger veg or stick to naturally smaller varieties. It's also possible to grow your favourite larger-leaf salad vegetables as microgreens. For example - lettuce, rocket, kale, or spinach. By harvesting the leaves of these plants when they're just young seedlings, you'll get a regular supply of tasty greens. The leaves may be small, but they're tender and mild-flavoured. There's also the nutritional boost of eating seedlings, which are known to have more concentrated nutrients. This means more vitamins and minerals for you.

The benefit of growing larger-leaved plants as microgreens is you can do it all year round. You'll have fresh, healthy, and tasty greens even if you don't have access to the garden, or the cold weather makes it impossible to grow full-sized plants.

Did you know that you can also grow microgreens from some other vegetable seeds such as carrots, beetroot or chard seeds? You don't need to grow the actual vegetable though. To save you space on your windowsill, you simply grow the tasty little shoots. Some of the best examples of these kinds of microgreens are Chard Bright Lights. They have the same flavour as chard, as well as attractive red and yellow coloured stems. Similarly, carrot microgreens have an intense carrot-like flavour. These feathery leaves can be added to everything from soups and stews to salads, and work particularly well in pestos. What's more, they're packed full of vitamins and antioxidants.

Lastly, we have microgreen types that come from the seeds of other baby vegetables. A great example is baby broccoli plants, which you'll harvest once the seedlings are no more than a few centimetres tall. You'll be amazed at how much they taste like broccoli but without the bitterness of the full-grown vegetable. They have an appealing texture and can be added to any meal. Also, they're nutritious and easy to grow. Another popular choice is pea shoots, which you may have spotted on restaurant menus. Pea shoots can be grown easily at home from a number of pea varieties, and have a fresh, slightly sweet taste with a very mild pea flavour.

I'd suggest you start your microgreens journey with a [growing kit](#) from DT Brown. It will allow you to grow fresh microgreens indoors all year round. The kit includes basil, rocket and coriander seeds together with a reusable tray with two growing sections. There's no soil required and you can harvest from approximately 5cm high. Once you've gained confidence with that you can add to your collection with all numbers of seed varieties from DT Brown with prices from around £4.



The Spirit of Christmas

Autumn seems to be well and truly here now, and our thoughts will soon be turning to Christmas and the festive season. That means that it will soon be time to visit the **Spirit of Christmas Fair** at Olympia!



It's one of my favourite shows, and this year it celebrates 25 years of welcoming some 50,000 Christmas enthusiasts, foodies, and gift hunters annually, all eager to shop from an unrivalled collection of over 600 small, vetted independent businesses.

This milestone anniversary coincides with an exciting new chapter for Olympia, London which has just completed its landmark £1.3 billion transformation. I reviewed the amazing **Idalia Restaurant** there a few months ago. The historic 140-year-old destination has evolved into one of the capital's most vibrant hubs, making it the ultimate backdrop for visitors to discover and celebrate the season after visiting the Fair.

In an age of impersonal mass production, the Fair celebrates individual craftsmanship and authenticity. If jaded by hours of fruitless online shopping, it offers the ability to be inspired and reignites the benefit of in-person browsing. It also offers the rare chance to give a present with a rewarding backstory, where you can meet the maker or seller and find something that you couldn't on the high street.

The multiple categories include fashion, gifts, health, wellbeing, pets, home and baby and incorporating artisan food and drinks. However tricky, there is, I'm sure, no one that the Fair can't provide a Christmas present for. And for those of us who like to be organised, the whole present list can be ticked off in one day, complete with decorations, tablescaping ideas and wrapping accessories.

The Fair's success over the years is partly down to the carefully chosen exhibitor line up which last year saw over 700 new applicants and just 112 accepted. This year 30% will be new brands.



As well as the buzz of buying in a festive atmosphere, there are also three **Louis Roederer Champagne Bars**, and a previously sold-out restaurant run by **Chef Kate Austen**, returning for the second year, serving all day dining and cream teas. Other chances to press pause momentarily on shopping are offered by the popular workshops and live music which are included in the ticket price.

And your ticket includes entry to the Luxury Travel Fair:

Condé Nast Traveller presents the Luxury Travel Fair alongside the Spirit of Christmas Fair from 5-8th November 2026. Visitors can meet face-to-face with specialists and leading tour operators from over 80 travel brands.

The Spirit of Christmas Fair runs from 2-8 November Tickets from £23 advance or £27 on the door www.spiritofchristmasfair.co.uk

SPECIAL OFFER for 25% discount use the code PTPRAJ

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Dracula

by Bram Stoker, adapted by Nick Lane

Blackeyed Theatre at the Reading Rep Theatre until 10th October

With all the menace and Gothic atmosphere expected from Stoker's enduring tale, this *Dracula* has drawn closer to the action. Every shadow seems darker and every approaching footstep more threatening. It feels enticingly immediate, as though Dracula has slipped free from the stage and entered the room beside us.

Faithful to the essential shape of Stoker's novel, it moves from Jonathan Harker's ominous journey into Transylvania, through the voyage of the *Demeter*, Lucy Westenra's corruption and the final pursuit of the Count. Letters, journals and direct address allow the story's many perspectives to unfold with clarity. Despite the amount of narration, under Hal Chambers' direction scenes form and dissolve with remarkable fluidity, carrying us effortlessly between countries, characters, and time.



The production's sinister tone is created by heightened physical performances, but these never obscure the humanity beneath the Gothic surface. Instead, they make moments of fear, loss and regret resonate more deeply.

Victoria Spearing's multifunctional set is deceptively simple, yet wonderfully evocative. A wall-like structure formed from wooden crosses variously suggests buildings or furniture, a train a ship or a coffin. Each new setting grows organically from the last, assembled by the company as part of the action. The voyage of the *Demeter* is particularly inventive.

The cast construct the ship while singing a sea shanty, then establish its daily routines through repeated, synchronised movements. As the weather worsens and crew members vanish in sudden blackouts, the familiar actions become increasingly frantic and difficult. Rain, waves and flapping sails surround the remaining sailors until the captain stands isolated: the final victim. The sequence is economical, precise, and deeply unsettling.

Tristan Parkes' soundscape is vital to the production's atmosphere. Wolves snarl beyond locked doors, bats beat their wings in the darkness and thunderclaps punctuate moments of revelation. Oliver Welsh's lighting is equally accomplished, moving from the warmer tones of Mina and Lucy's friendship to cold washes, flickering firelight and looming shadows, as the wooden structure casts distorted patterns across the stage.

Dracula is a slick, atmospheric and exceptionally well-crafted piece of ensemble theatre that brings Stoker's world vividly to life. It feels less like an old story than a reminder to check what may be waiting just behind us.

Read Sam Martin's review at www.markaspen.com/2026/09/30/dracula-rr

Photography by Harry Elletson



The Brown Suite

music and lyrics by James Brown, Sam Cooke and Etta James

Fundamentally Dance at Richmond Theatre and on tour until 22nd May 2027

The Brown Suite, a funk-soul dance musical, tells how Nahum McLean and Darius Drooh met in 1970s in The Ailey School in New York and discovered a shared enthusiasm for the music of James Brown. They describe their 2023 jointly choreographed duet, *Death of the Bachelors* as being “pulled forward” by Brown’s music.

The show seeks to depict the evolving relationships, connections and tensions within a group of friends, and uses a fusion of dance styles from ballet to hip-hop.



The characters drift individually towards the titular *The Brown Suite* club, loosely based on Smalls Paradise, a rare mixed-raced club established in a 7th Avenue basement in 1925. The characters make their way there, each showing off their moves. Their interactions suggests loose cohesion as a social group.

It's A Man's World provides backdrop for the woes building between Ray (Darius Drooh) and Angela (Monique Jonas), the established couple in the group, and it is a nicely observed depiction of irritations and subsequent pacifications.

A blokey duet between Ray and Julian (Hugo Bragg), with the pair “goofing off”, getting drunk and showing off dance moves describes a friendship solely through synchronised movements, making a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

The pairing of Leila Wright as Denise and Lukas Hunt as Marcus has perhaps the most dramatic impact in physicality and contrasting style. The on-going seduction, and the question of who’s zoomin’ who remains tantalising. Building on his ballet background, Wright flits between street dance and an achingly elegant extension, whilst Hunt’s angular muscularity belies a fluidity and fluency that is genuinely impressive.

Joshi Harriette’s minimalist set and lighting indicates both domestic living and club spaces, whilst keeping clear space for dance numbers. Costumes by Maybelle Laye look great, work well for movement and are period appropriate.

The Brown Suite may not obviously break new ground, as say with *Stomp*, but the subtleties are there and it is a joyous celebration of dance, incorporating diverse styles that feel natural and sympathetic.

Rumours abound that I might be seen attempting soul moves in my kitchen, should a James Brown make itself felt. I couldn’t possibly comment.

Read Vince Francis’ review at www.markaspen.com/2026/10/03/brown-suite

Photography by Deborah Jaffe



Toy Soldier

by Helen Goodman & Joseph Dewey

Stephen Leslie Productions at the Union Theatre, Southwark until 18th October

We glimpse snatches of grainy newsreel. We shudder at the sound of heavy mortars, of a ship being shelled, a fireball exploding, lives extinguished.

We hear Tears for Fears' chart topper, its haunting lyrics part of the soundtrack to an arresting new play, *Toy Soldier*. Its last line could well be an anthem for war, or at least a reason for it. "Everyone wants to rule the world".

What rang true in 1982 when Britain went to war to secure the Falkland Islands from their brief Argentine invasion still rings true today in most areas of conflict. But *Toy Soldier* is very much not a war play, but about a family at war, torn by war.

In this taut drama an impressionable teenage boy and his elder sister struggle through the turmoil and terror as family histories and tensions, an alcoholic father and disturbed mother shutting herself away on their sheep farm, are laid bare.



There's a lot to unpick in this tightly constructed play, which co-writer Goodman directs. A rich vein of talent is mined in the actors playing Jane, the sensitive and caring sister, Billy, whose fraternal ties are stretched to breaking point; and the Argentinians, a dark-hearted glacial-eyed extremist and Alejo, a soldier cowering as warships and planes battle in the South Atlantic.

In the atmospheric designs, one can almost feel the bitter chill of a South Atlantic winter wind sweeping a desolate landscape under constant bombardment.

A young Billy plays with his tiny model soldiers, a truculent teen in his father's oversized camouflage jacket who vows to "join the Army to get our island back". Will he get his chance? The Falklands still has an impact on Britain, as Argentina's soccer team unfurls a banner claiming the Falklands, while their President Javier Milei attempts to halt oil projects in our waters.

This play ends in 2002, twenty years later, when the Falklanders were celebrating Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee. It is a time for Jane to pack up the family home. Secrets are revealed, trauma revisited, promises broken and dying moments relived. Cruelty and compassion live side by side with the harsh reality of those haunting lyrics.



Reda Gill Martin's review at www.markaspen.com/2026/10/06/toy-soldier

Photography courtesy of Stephen Leslie Productions

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**18TH
NOV** CECI KEIFFER
EARLY MUSIC DUO | WEDS 12:00

**6TH
NOV** DAVID HEDLEY
OBOE&PIANO | FRI 18:00

**20TH
NOV** STEPH GOODWIN
JAZZ SINGER | FRI 18:00

**11TH
NOV** WEST LONDON TUBA QUARTET
BRASS QUARTET | WEDS 12:00

**25TH
NOV** CHRIS MURPHY
BARITONE&PIANO | WEDS 12:00

**13TH
NOV** ALEXIA & WILL
PIANO DUO | FRI 18:00

**27TH
NOV** THE NEW EDEN CONSORT
VOCAL ENSEMBLE | FRI 18:00

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Vision board? Personalised card? Unleash your creativity at the Fixery

From The Fixery

Get creative with rescued materials at a free relaxed zero-waste paper cutting session at [The Fixery](#).

Taking place in the beautifully restored Grove Gardens Chapel, this free session offers the chance to cut, stick, arrange and create using magazines, paper and other materials that have been saved from going to waste.

Whether you choose to make a collage, greeting card, vision board, mood board or something entirely unique, the session is all about exploring ideas and enjoying the creative process. There is no set project, theme or creative instruction. Simply bring an open mind and see where your imagination takes you. If you have a particular idea in mind, you are welcome to bring reference images to inspire your creation.

All materials have been reclaimed and rescued from the bin, helping to give unwanted items a new purpose. A4 paper, magazines and a variety of other paper resources will be available to use, although participants are welcome to bring their own materials or glue if preferred. The glue provided is non-toxic.

At the end of the session, you'll be able to take your creation home with you to display, frame, give as a gift, use as a vision board, or simply enjoy as a reminder of the time spent making something new from materials that might otherwise have been thrown away.

Look out for the large The Fixery banner when you arrive.

Date: Sunday 18 October

Time: 2 to 4pm

Location: The Fixery, Grove Gardens Chapel

[Book your free place](#) through Eventbrite.



Save The Palm House: Kew launches £1m public appeal to protect Britain's iconic glasshouse

From The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (RBG Kew) is calling on the nation to help save one of Britain's most iconic landmarks with the launch of a major public appeal to raise £1 million towards the renovation of the historic Palm House.

The Victorian glasshouse, which has stood at the heart of Kew Gardens in London since 1848, is one of the world's most famous glasshouses. But after almost 180 years exposed to extreme heat and humidity, it now faces an urgent need for major renovation.

The total project is expected to cost £66 million. Kew has secured approximately half of the funds, and is now asking the public to come together to help raise £1 million towards securing the Palm House's future.



The Palm House is far more than just a beautiful Victorian landmark. Behind its famous glass walls is a living collection of tropical plants from around the world, including plants that are rare, threatened and even extinct in the wild.

These plants support Kew's research into preventing biodiversity loss, conservation, food security and novel ways to protect the future of our planet. Built at a time when Victorian engineers were pushing the boundaries of what was possible, the Palm House was a building of the future. Kew now wants to give it a future of its own and safeguard the building and its invaluable collections for generations to come.

The planned renovation will preserve the Palm House's extraordinary heritage while bringing this landmark into the 21st century through pioneering sustainable engineering. Improvements will include new glazing, a move to renewable heating systems and the integration of rainwater harvesting tanks, with Kew aiming to create the first carbon neutral glasshouse of its kind.

Richard Deverell, Director of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew said: *“For generations, the Palm House has been a place where people encounter the extraordinary diversity of life on Earth. It is a building that has inspired wonder for almost 180 years, but its future cannot be taken for granted. We have reached an important milestone, with half of the funding already secured thanks to generous philanthropists, grants and individuals. Now we are asking the public to help us raise the next £1 million. Every donation, however large or small, will help protect this extraordinary building and the collection within it for generations to come.”*

There are many ways to support this vital renovation through the landmark appeal: by making a direct donation, sponsoring a pane of glass or sponsoring a tropical plant species, like Clay's hibiscus (*Hibiscus clayi*) or the giant dioon (*Dioon spinulosum*). Donations up to £300,000 will be matched, and all funds raised will support the Palm House Renovation Project and help ensure future generations can continue to discover, study and be inspired by tropical plants.

To provide insight on the Palm House and the importance on rainforest plants, a You Gov survey commissioned by RBG Kew has found that people recognise rainforests as vital ecosystems but overlook the plants that underpin them, with seven in ten Britons unaware of the role tropical rainforests play in providing medicines. The findings expose a stark gap between public concern for the world's tropical rainforests and understanding of the plants these ecosystems are built on.

The research found that nearly two-thirds (64%) of Britons consider tropical rainforests among the most important habitats in the world to protect. Yet only 30% associate them with medicines despite the fact around a quarter of all modern medicines are derived from tropical rainforest plants. Furthermore, almost a quarter (22%) fail to associate rainforests with commodities such as coffee and chocolate, despite the vital role that rainforests play in the origin and the future resilience of these globally important crops.

Tom Pickering, Head of Glasshouses at RBG Kew, says, *‘Rainforests capture people’s imagination because of the remarkable diversity of life they support. However, this research suggests many people are less aware of the extraordinary plants these ecosystems rely on or their essential medicinal value.*

‘At a time of accelerating climate change and biodiversity loss, understanding the far-reaching importance of rainforests has never been more critical. We depend on them for the regulation of our climate, their resources, medicines and as homes for millions of people.’

To find out more visit www.kew.org/appeal

Royal
Botanic
Gardens **Kew**

Barnes Common Autumn Fayre

From Barnes Common Ltd

To celebrate Apple Day and all things autumn, we invite you to join us for the Barnes Common annual Autumn Fayre, a community event for all on Saturday 17 October 2026.

Bring your apples for juicing in a traditional apple presser. Don't worry if you don't have an apple tree, there'll be apples available for you!

There'll also be a range of other fun stalls and activities including:

- Fungi and nature walks
- Family activities
- Sustainable marketplace
- Pumpkin decorating
- Nature table
- Conkers competition
- Our important machines
- Pizza, cakes and snacks

Fees apply to some walks and activities, and tickets can be purchased on the day (card and cash accepted) or in advance via [Eventbrite](#).

Entry to the Fayre is free but please consider donating to support our activities. As a small charity, we rely on the generosity of our supporters, for which we are hugely grateful. Your donations, however big or small, make a difference and enable us to further our vision to provide a flourishing network of green, blue and dark spaces within our local, urbanised environment, where both wildlife and local communities thrive.



Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear sturdy footwear.

This is a busy event with children and food, so not ideal for dogs. Please keep your dog on a short lead if you decide to bring them.

All activities meet at the Vine Road Recreation Ground near the Pavilion. Find all the Autumn Fayre events and tickets on Eventbrite and our website.

Cambrian Community Centre decamps for winter refit

From Cambrian Community Centre

Building work for the refurbishment of the Cambrian Community Centre will start on Monday 26 October 2026 and is set to continue until the end of February 2027. This will transform the centre into a modern, accessible, better designed community space.

Scheduled activities will mostly continue at the centre until building work begins.

The centre's gym and community activities will continue throughout the four-month refurbishment period in accessible venues nearby.

Temporary relocation of the centre's flagship community gym lies at the heart of its 'dispersed' activities. The gym will be installed in a great space at St Matthias Church at the top of Church Road during the building works. This is well served by the 371 bus.

The gym equipment will move there and, most importantly, the Centre's specialist gym instructors Vicki, Sarah and Becky will be on hand every weekday from 9am to 3pm (5pm on Thursdays) and Saturdays from 9am to 1pm to provide guidance and encouragement so that centre users need not interrupt their exercise programmes.



Additional venues include the Grove Gardens Chapel (home of The Fixery) in Lower Grove Road, a short walk from the Centre, which will host Drawing, Choir and Pilates classes on Mondays. The nearest 371 bus stop is Park Road.

Gentle Yoga will continue at its usual time of 10am on Monday at Richmond Library Annexe in Quadrant Road in Richmond town centre. The Gentle Weights class keeps its Thursday 12.30 to 1.30pm slot in Ham Library Annexe in Ham Street, served by the 371 bus. The Dickson House Atrium, facing Cambrian Square, will host Cardiac classes on Friday 1.30 to 2.30pm.

The Wednesday café will be paused while the centre's kitchen is out of use. But the Food Hub will offer supermarket surplus and donated food including fruit, vegetables and pastries in Cambrian Square just behind the Centre. A visit to the hub can be combined with a cup of tea at our social space at Grove Gardens Chapel on Wednesday lunchtime.

"We look forward to welcoming you to the renewed, improved centre in the spring, and to joining us in developing exciting new projects for the year ahead," said Sue Pendle, Chair of Trustees at Cambrian Community Centre.

Full details of alternative locations are on [the centre's website](#).

Singer-Songwriter Marsha Swanson Launches TroubleChutes:

A Music-Led Project Helping Children Explore and Discuss Their Emotional World From TroubleChutes

TroubleChutes, a new music-led emotional literacy resource, has been launched to help primary-school children explore feelings and experiences they may struggle to put into words. Created by singer-songwriter and psychologically informed creative practitioner Marsha Swanson, it combines 15 professionally recorded original songs with illustration and guided discussion pointers, covering subjects from jealousy and bullying to divorce and grief.



Pupils at St Mary's Hampton CE Primary School taking part in TroubleChutes

Rather than teaching children a prescribed emotional response, TroubleChutes uses songs and their characters as a starting point for discussion, with listening, drawing, movement and performance offering different ways to participate. The children can respond to somebody else's jealousy, sadness or exclusion and reflect on whether that connects to their own experiences. Psychologically informed but designed as a universal resource, it is based on the principle that emotional literacy is relevant to all children, not only those who have reached a threshold for therapeutic or clinical support.

The resource arrives against the backdrop of 2025 research from the [National Literacy Trust](#) which found that, while 81.4% of 8 to 18-year-olds surveyed believed they were good at listening to others and understanding their point of view, fewer than half (44.8%) felt they were good at expressing their own feelings.

TroubleChutes grew out of Swanson's long-standing use of music to open up conversations with children about difficult feelings and experiences, informed by her First-Class Honours degree in Psychology and more than two decades of work across educational, charitable and

specialist therapeutic settings. Wanting to make that approach available for others to use, she began developing it into an accessible emotional literacy resource. The pandemic reinforced the need for the work while giving Swanson the opportunity to bring together collaborators, record the songs and develop the material into a cohesive resource that teachers could use independently

Swanson said: *“Children don’t always have the language to explain what is happening for them emotionally, but they can often recognise something in a song first. That little bit of distance can make difficult subjects easier to think about and talk about. Rather than telling them what they should feel, TroubleChutes aims to give children the space to understand what they feel and to hear how others in their peer group may experience the same situation completely differently.”*

Unlike many educational music resources, TroubleChutes is written and recorded by working musicians, with a contemporary sound intended to stand as music in its own right and sit closer to the music children might encounter outside the classroom. The recordings feature musicians including drummer Martyn Barker, pianist Clifford Slapper, guitarist Tony Qunta and producer and bassist Henry Thomas, known for BBC RockschooL.

The release of *Something Real* as a standalone single in July drew praise from music publications internationally, including EARMILK, Atwood Magazine, France’s Indie Chronique, Australia’s TAGG and Milwaukee-based Breaking & Entering. Atwood Magazine praised Swanson’s “thoughtful songwriting” and described the track as transforming a profound idea into something “warm and accessible”. Producer Stuart Epps, known for his work with Elton John and Led Zeppelin, contributed additional production and mastering to the single.

The project’s visual world is being developed with award-winning Iranian filmmaker and animator Sam Chegini who created the accompanying *Something Real* video, released in August, blending live footage with watercolour textures and dreamlike visual effects. Chegini was recently the subject of a BBC Persian documentary about his work as a music video director.

The approach behind TroubleChutes has developed through Swanson’s work with children across contrasting school settings around the country. As it took shape as a structured resource, TroubleChutes material was incorporated into a wider nurture programme at Oasis Academy South Bank Primary in Waterloo, where feedback was gathered from pupils, parents and teachers. A Year 3 teacher reported that participating pupils appeared *“more confident and motivated in class and outside in the playground”*.

More recently, St Mary’s Hampton CE Primary School became a TroubleChutes Ambassador School, helping to refine the final stages of the resource and collaborating on the filmed pilot with pupils. Swanson also provided staff training, with the school saying it was *“incredibly excited to be one of the first schools to access and use this innovative resource.”*

TroubleChutes was developed and published in partnership with specialist mental-health publisher Karnac Books and is designed for flexible use across whole-class, small-group and one-to-one settings, as well as assemblies and alongside PSHE, music and literacy. A filmed pilot featuring primary-school children is being presented to broadcasters.

Princess Alice Hospice urges local people to help ensure hospice care is there for everyone who needs it

Princess Alice Hospice

£29,000 a day. That's how much Princess Alice Hospice has to raise from its community every day of the year to continue providing its vital palliative and end of life care services to local people.

As Hospice Care Week 2026 highlights unequal access facing people at the end of life, Princess Alice Hospice wants everybody in their local area to be able to receive the hospice care they deserve. But right now, 1 in 3 people don't get the care they need at the end of their lives.



This Hospice Care Week, 5 -11 October 2026, Princess Alice Hospice has joined UK hospices to say: 'Don't leave hospice care to chance.' Nationally, government funding covers only 40% of the cost of care provided by adult hospices. For Princess Alice Hospice, that figure is just 23%. This means they rely heavily on their local communities to raise the money needed to provide vital care. Local communities give generously to support their hospices, from taking part in fundraising events and challenges to volunteering their time and

making donations. This generosity is what helps hospices provide vital care every day, and Princess Alice Hospice is grateful.

Nigel Seymour, Chief Executive of Princess Alice Hospice, says: *'We simply couldn't do what we do without the incredible support of our local community. In my 20+ years with the Hospice, I can't remember a more challenging year. Our costs are rising, more people need us, and our community's ability to donate or raise funds is being stretched further, too. We're so grateful for their support – whether it's a gift in a Will or a visit to our High Street shops, playing our Lottery, volunteering, or taking on a sporting challenge, it all makes a vital difference. We urge the government to provide a fairer and more sustainable funding package to us – and all hospices – so we can continue to serve local people who need us in the years to come.'*

Nationally, nearly 6 in 10 hospices have either made or are considering cuts to frontline services, meaning in many areas the chance of being able to access hospice care is shrinking. Hospices are underfunded, underutilised and under more pressure than ever. But one thing that is certain is rising demand for their care. Hospice UK has found that up to 90% of people who died would benefit from palliative care, and this will only increase.

Nigel Seymour says: *'The idea for our hospice was a response to an urgent need in our community over 40 years ago. Today, that need is greater than ever, as are the financial challenges we face. This is a rallying cry to ask our incredible community to do what they can to continue supporting our work. Everyone deserves high-quality hospice care, whoever they are, and wherever they live, and we need to ensure our vital care will be here for local people for many more years to come.'*

Support Princess Alice Hospice: www.pah.org.uk/how-you-can-help



Lynde House Celebrates Chef Jit as Employee of the Month for September

From Lynde House Care Home

Lynde House Care Home recognises the dedication, creativity and passion of its talented chef.

Lynde House Care Home in Twickenham is delighted to announce Chef Jit as its Employee of the Month for September, recognising his outstanding contribution to the home and the enjoyment he brings to residents and colleagues through his culinary skills.

Chef Jit plays an important role in daily life at Lynde House, preparing delicious meals with care, creativity and dedication. His passion for food helps make mealtimes an enjoyable and special part of the day, bringing comfort, pleasure and opportunities for residents to come together.

One of Chef Jit's particular highlights is his wonderful baking. His beautifully presented cakes and delicious homemade treats add an extra touch of sweetness to birthdays, celebrations and special occasions, bringing smiles to residents and colleagues alike.

His commitment to creating food that looks as good as it tastes reflects the care and attention, he puts into his work every day.

The Employee of the Month recognition celebrates not only Chef Jit's culinary talents but also the positive difference he makes to life at Lynde House.

The team at Lynde House would like to congratulate Chef Jit on this well-deserved recognition and thank him for his hard work, dedication and for making so many moments at the home that little bit sweeter.

Congratulations, Chef Jit, on being our September Employee of the Month!

Lynde House Care Home is run by Barchester Healthcare, one of the UK's largest care providers, which is committed to delivering high-quality care across its care homes and hospitals. Lynde House provides nursing care, residential care, respite care.



Red Roses' WXV Global Series Touring Squad Confirmed



Thirty-two players have been selected for the Red Roses' WXV Global Series matches in North America.

The squad, consisting of 18 forwards and 14 backs, will be captained by Megan Jones and contains a total of 1,168 caps.

Of the 32 selected, 24 players featured across the wins over Australia and New Zealand, and the draw with Canada in September.

Delaney Burns (foot), Haidee Head (knee) and Sophie McQueen (shoulder) were ruled out of selection due to injury while Marlie Packer will not travel to remain with her partner Rosie Galligan ahead of the birth of their first child together.

John Mitchell's side are set to renew their Test series with Canada in Toronto on Friday 16 October, before a third Test with Kévin Rouet's team in Ottawa a week later. They will end the tour in New Jersey against USA.

The Red Roses will spend two days training at Allianz Stadium prior to travelling to Toronto on Thursday.

Mitchell said: *"Our last two Tests against Canada and New Zealand have been humdingers that could have gone either way; they were hugely important to our development towards 2029. Playing quality opposition and learning to adapt under pressure will help us raise our level and improve our game. "The 32 players travelling to North America have a great opportunity to elevate our connections as a squad because playing away from home requires togetherness. We have shown a real hunger to compete and improve, and we're excited to rip into our preparations and continue our rivalry with Canada in Toronto."*

Red Roses squad for the tour to North America

Forwards

Christiana Balogun (Bristol Bears, 1 cap)
Sarah Bern (Bristol Bears, 87 caps)
Hannah Botterman (Bristol Bears, 65 caps)
Abi Burton (Trailfinders Women, 12 caps)
May Campbell (Saracens, 7 caps)
Mackenzie Carson (Gloucester-Hartpury, 31 caps)
Kelsey Clifford (Saracens, 25 caps)
Amy Cokayne (Sale Sharks, 94 caps) – vice captain
Maddie Feaunati (Exeter Chiefs, 30 caps)

Bryony Field (Saracens, 3 caps)

Daisy Hibbert-Jones (Loughborough Lightning, 1 cap)
Lilli Ives Champion (Loughborough Lightning, 11 caps)
Sadia Kabeya (Loughborough Lightning, 34 caps)
Haineala Lutui (Loughborough Lightning, 4 caps)
Alex Matthews (Gloucester-Hartpury, 84 caps) - vice-captain
Maud Muir (Gloucester-Hartpury, 56 caps)
Demelza Short (Bristol Bears, 4 caps)
Morwenna Talling (Sale Sharks, 32 caps)

Backs

Holly Aitchison (Sale Sharks, 50 caps)
Jess Breach (Saracens, 59 caps)
Zoe Harrison (Saracens, 73 caps)
Tatyana Heard (Sale Sharks, 37 caps)
Natasha Hunt (Gloucester-Hartpury, 91 caps)
Megan Jones (Trailfinders Women, 41 caps) - captain
Ellie Kildunne (Bristol Bears, 65 caps)

Claudia Moloney-MacDonald (Exeter Chiefs, 43 caps)
Lucy Packer (Harlequins, 47 caps)
Flo Robinson (Exeter Chiefs, 6 caps)
Helena Rowland (Loughborough Lightning, 54 caps)
Emma Sing (Gloucester-Hartpury, 17 caps)
Mia Venner (Gloucester-Hartpury, 5 caps)
Bo Westcombe-Evans (Trailfinders Women, 2 caps)

Red Roses' WXV Global Series away matches

- Canada v Red Roses, Friday 16 October, KO 7pm ET, BMO Field, Toronto, Canada
- Canada v Red Roses, Friday 23 October, KO 7pm ET, TD Place, Ottawa, Canada
- USA v Red Roses, Friday 30 October, KO 5.15pm ET, Sports Illustrated Stadium, New Jersey, USA

Match Preview: Aston Villa v Brentford

Written By Brentford Football Club

Brentford return to Premier League action following the international break with an away fixture against Aston Villa on Saturday afternoon (3pm kick-off BST).

The Bees are unbeaten in seven matches across all competitions this term, while Villa got on the board with a 3-2 victory against Tottenham Hotspur last time out.

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: Bees' impressive numbers from season so far

Brentford return to action after an extended international break looking to harness the momentum built by their best-ever start to a Premier League season.

The Bees signed off in style three weeks ago, sweeping Chelsea aside 3-0 at Gtech Community Stadium to move fourth in the table and extend their unbeaten start to seven games across all competitions.

Keith Andrews' side have spent just three minutes and 10 seconds behind in the Premier League this term, while their intensity without the ball has been equally striking: Brentford rank second in the division for sprints, with September Player of the Month nominee [Kevin Schade](#) and [Igor Thiago](#) both among the competition's five most prolific sprinters.

The Bees also appear to have honed one of their traditional strengths. Brentford lead the

league for set-piece xG and xG per corner, with [Jaidon Anthony](#)'s opener against Chelsea the latest evidence of their threat from dead-ball situations.



At the other end of the pitch, Brentford have posted some encouraging defensive numbers.

Only Everton and Leeds (three goals apiece) have conceded fewer than the Bees (four) over the first five games of the season, with [Vitaly Janelt](#) and [Kristoffer Ajer](#) among their standout performers.

Janelt has made more interceptions (16) than any other Premier League player this term, while Ajer currently ranks fourth in the division for both clearances and aerial duels won.

Both return from productive international breaks on a personal level: Janelt made his senior Germany debut in a 2-0 win over Serbia, while Ajer scored a thunderous volley in Norway's 2-1 defeat to Portugal last weekend.

Ajer has been colossal at the back alongside either [Jannik Schuster](#) or [Nathan Collins](#), and the Bees' collective strength in the air may be significant on Saturday.

Brentford have won more aerial duels per game (21.6) than any team in the Premier League this season, while Saturday's opponents Villa have won fewer (9) than any other side.

After winning the Europa League last season, Villa are a team in transition. With the likes of Morgan Rogers, Ollie Watkins, Ezri Konsa, Youri Tielemans, Lucas Digne and Emiliano Martínez all departing Villa Park in the summer, the Midlands have endured a slow start and currently rank bottom of the top flight for both shots (9.6) and shots on target (2.4) per game.

However, there were signs that Villa's new-look squad was starting to click in their 3-2 victory over Spurs.

Japan international Zion Suzuki has made a positive impact between the sticks for the Villans, the 24-year-old former Parma keeper making some outstanding saves in the win at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Johan Manzambi and Nicolas Jackson also scored their first Premier League goals in Villa colours in north London, with the lively forward duo offering plenty of encouragement that they can play important roles for Emery this season.

In addition to beating the Midlands club on penalties in the Carabao Cup, Brentford completed

a league double over Villa last season.

Intriguingly, the Bees recorded their two lowest possession shares of the entire 2025/26 league campaign in those 1-0 victories (24 per cent at home and 28 per cent away), showcasing their resilience and ability to hurt teams without much of the ball.

With Emery's side no doubt eager to avenge three defeats last term, it will be fascinating to see whether Andrews takes a similar approach at Villa Park or looks to impose the high-energy, front-footed football that has served Brentford so well this season.

Scout report

Dan Long, Sky Sports: The rebuild for new-look Villa

For the second time in three seasons, Aston Villa finished fourth last term as they continued to reestablish themselves as one of the Premier League's heavy hitters.

Between 28 September and 27 December, Unai Emery's side won 12 of their 13 league games and, for long periods, looked capable of finishing in the top three for only the second time in their history.

Results were far too inconsistent throughout the second half of 2025/26 for that - they won six of the last 18, for context. But Champions League qualification was secured again. Not that they needed their league position to secure it, mind you.

In the Europa League, they thrived, which was hardly a surprise, given Emery had four previous triumphs in the competition on his CV: three with Sevilla, one with Villarreal.

12 wins from 14 games took them to the final in Istanbul, where Freiburg were no match. By the time Morgan Rogers scored in the 58th minute, it was 3-0 and game over. That night in May, Villa won their first major trophy since the 1995/96 League Cup.

"We played in a very serious way this year," said Emery afterwards. "This final is the confirmation of how we are progressing."

The problem for Villa was that the cost of their success was rapidly increasing. With two prior fines handed down for breaching UEFA's squad cost ratio (SCR) regulations, they knew they had to take action to comply.

Cue a very hectic summer transfer window, during which the spine of the team was sold: Youri Tielemans to Manchester United, Ezri Konsa to Arsenal, Emi Martínez to Chelsea, Ollie Watkins to Al Hilal and, most notably, Morgan Rogers also to Chelsea for £117m - the all-time record fee paid for an English player.

They reportedly spent more than £250m on replacements, including Johan Manzambi, who starred for Switzerland at the World Cup, striker Nicolas Jackson from Chelsea and Japan international goalkeeper Zion Suzuki.

It was a rebuild in the truest sense of the word.

Emery's new-look team took four games to score their first Premier League goal of the season and five to pick up their first Premier League win, against Tottenham just before the international break.

But they are up and running in cup competitions after a 3-1 win victory against Coventry City in the Carabao Cup and a 3-2 win over Club Brugge in the Champions League league phase.

There are signs the new team is beginning to gel - and if Emery can replicate anything close to last season's success in spite of the wholesale changes, it could be one of his finest achievements yet.

In the Dugout

Unai Emery

Having taken charge of more than 1,000 matches over the last 22 years, Unai Emery is one of the most experienced managers currently working in the Premier League.

After a career as a midfielder, mostly playing in the second tier of Spanish football, the Spaniard had a pretty quick transition into management, having suffered a serious knee injury in his early 30s. He helped the now-defunct Lorca Deportiva gain promotion in 2004/05 and got Almería into La Liga for the first time in 2006/07, before an incredible eighth-place finish the following campaign.

In 2008, his exploits saw him move on to Valencia, whom he guided to three straight third-place finishes from 2010 to 2012, before a forgettable six-month spell in Russia with Spartak Moscow. He returned to Spain in January 2013 and guided Sevilla to three-successive Europa League titles.

Two years and seven trophies with Paris Saint-Germain followed, with Emery then trusted by the Arsenal board to become the successor to Arsène Wenger, which was, to an extent, a poisoned chalice. The Europa League king guided the Gunners to the final in 2019, where they were beaten by Chelsea in Baku, Azerbaijan, but he was unable to help them finish higher than fifth for the first time in four seasons.

He was dismissed after 18 months in November 2019 and appointed by Villarreal in July 2020, with - you've guessed it - a fourth Europa League triumph 10 months later, by way of a penalty shoot-out win over Manchester United in Gdańsk, Poland.

Emery turned down an approach by Newcastle United in November 2021, but came back to England to replace Steven Gerrard at Villa Park in October 2022. The 54-year-old - under contract until the summer of 2029 - reached 200 games in charge of Aston Villa last month and is the club's longest-serving manager since Ron Saunders, who left in February 1982 after more than 350 games.



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