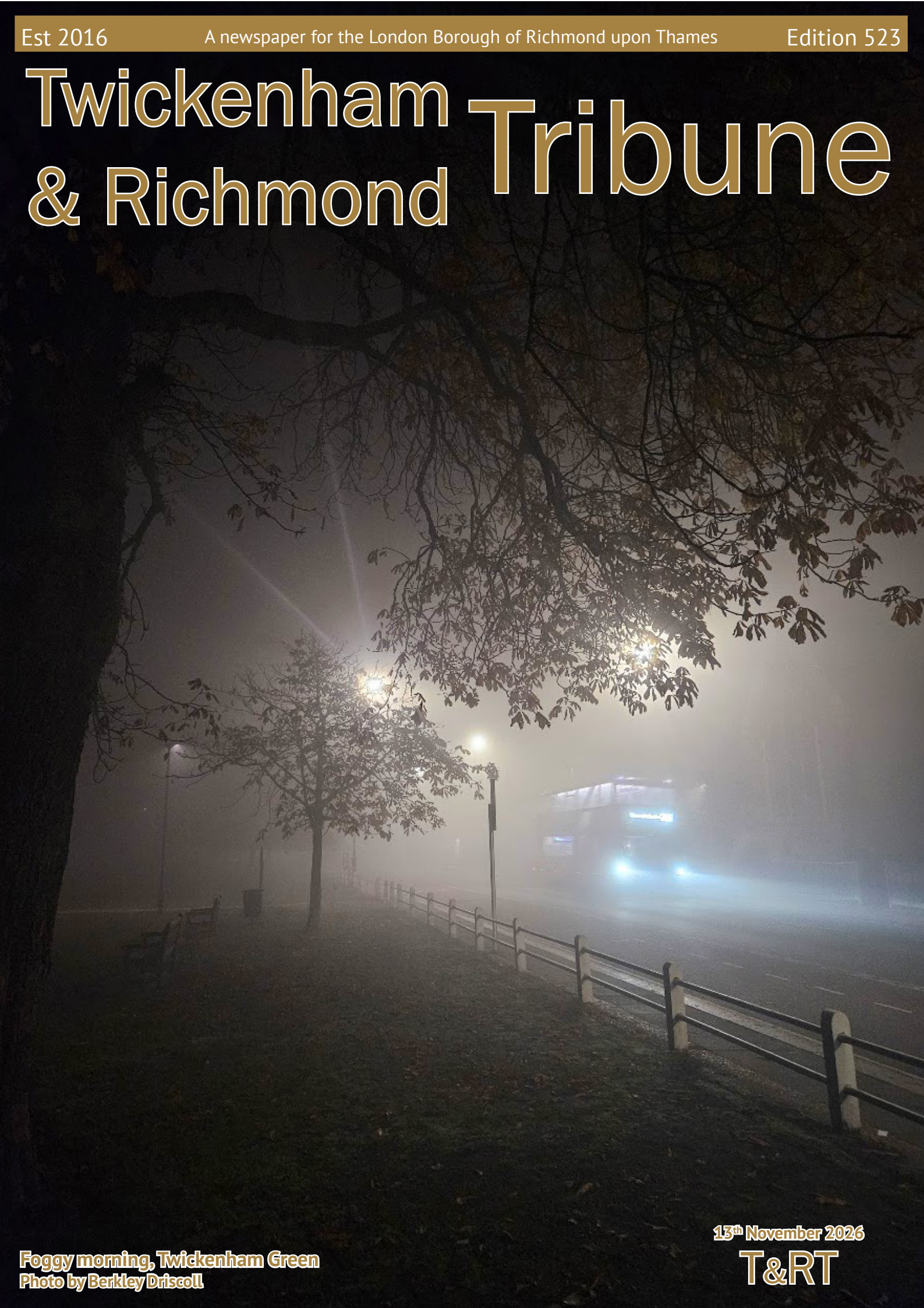
Est 2016 A newspaper for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Edition 523

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Foggy morning, Twickenham Green
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

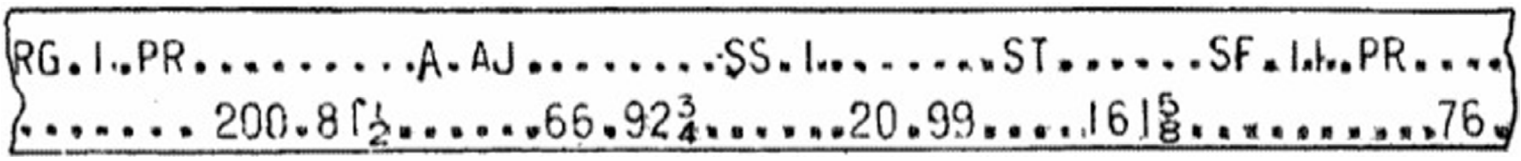
13th November 2026
T&RT

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Editors: Teresa Read, Berkley Driscoll

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TickerTape - News in Brief

Rugby at Twickenham Stadium

From RFU HomeTurf

England v Japan
Saturday 14th November
Kick off 16:40

We estimate that Whitton, Rugby & London Roads will close 14:40-16:40 and again from 18:10-21:00. If we can close later and reopen earlier then we will do so - we will post live updates on the day

CPZ operates 11:00-23:00

South Western Railway

Altered train services due to Rugby at Twickenham **Saturday 14 November**

London Waterloo to Shepperton

- Between **1142 and 2312***, **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services will be diverted via **Twickenham**.
  * Between **1242 and 1512,** services will depart at **xx15 and xx45.**
- Between **1041 and 2211**, **Shepperton to London Waterloo** services will be diverted via **Twickenham.**

London Waterloo to Reading

- Services will depart **earlier** from **Reading** through most of the day (at **xx05 and xx35**).
- Trains departing **Reading** between **1730** and the end of service will call additionally at **Putney.**

The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

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www.thetreeagency.co.uk

The Tree Agency

The Local Picture Postcard Page - Part 352

Water Lane - Richmond

By Alan Winter

Our postcards this week take us down Water Lane in Richmond. This was once known as Thames Lane or Town Lane and was the route from the Town Wharf into the town. From medieval times onward, it served as the primary route for moving goods, coal, and supplies from river barges up into the town. It led to the old ferry. It ran alongside a small stream going to the river.



This lane has a specialised cartway of twin lines of granite bricks and setts between the brick lines of stone, so that carts could go down in the mud at low tide before the weir was built and goods could be loaded over the side of boats.

At the bottom of the lane was Collins Brewery. It was established by John and William Collins around 1715 and closed in 1860. It was the first Richmond brewery.

The brewery site later became the Water Works. This was a municipal works set up by Richmond Vestry with a pumping station. A well was sunk beneath it and a bore hole. The well reached an impressive 1,447 feet below ground. It had a Boulton and Watt engine. The name "Water Lane" was partly to reassure locals that their tap water came from this deep well rather than the polluted Thames.

The pumping station was only used as a standby after 1931. In 1967, electrically driven booster pumps were installed to pump water from the Hampton mains to the Richmond Park reservoirs under the river. There is an identical turret on the opposite side of the river. It Closed in 1980.

Ellis & Co. Wine importers turned the former brewery buildings into a wine and beer store.



The White Cross Pub is located right on the Thames at Water Lane. It has been a prominent riverside landmark since the 18th century, famous for its terrace that famously floods during high spring tides. Water Lane is also the home of the old Watermans pub which sits opposite the entrance to the Curzon Cinema these days.



Our first postcard shows a view of the lane looking down to the river in about 1913. My thanks to Richmond Local Studies for the use of this image. The second is a very busy image of the lane when Ellis & Co Wine merchants were working at peak volumes in the 1960s and early 70s. Finally there is a photo of the Watermans Arms as was before it closed and re-emerged as The Watermans in recent years.

Keep an eye out for a forthcoming book published by the Twickenham and Richmond Tribune. It will be a sample of the 350 local postcard columns that I have written over the last ten years and will contain several hundred pictures of this borough's local postcard views over the last 120 years. An ideal Christmas present! Coming soon.

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Twickenham Riverside Reaches New Heights as Costs and Controversy Mount

By James Knight



Richmond Council has celebrated a major construction milestone in its £67 million redevelopment of Twickenham Riverside, although questions remain over escalating costs, the financial burden on taxpayers and the controversial transformation of the town's historic waterfront.

The long-awaited redevelopment reached its highest structural point this week, with councillors and representatives of Kier Construction attending a traditional topping-out ceremony on Tuesday 10 November. The scheme will provide 45 new homes, half designated as affordable housing, alongside shops, cafés, landscaped gardens, children's play facilities and improved public access to the Thames.

Council Leader Gareth Roberts welcomed the occasion, declaring: "After so much planning and hard work, we can now see a new riverside taking shape, and there is a great deal to celebrate." He added that the Council was creating somewhere residents could be proud of for generations to come, reflecting the administration's ambition to transform a prominent but long neglected part of Twickenham town centre.

The Rising Cost of Regeneration

Behind the celebrations lie substantial questions about the financial consequences of the redevelopment, whose estimated cost has risen through successive revisions to approximately £67 million. Although the Council describes the project as an investment, concerns remain that the residential and commercial buildings will cost considerably more to develop than the value ultimately recovered through property sales and rental income. If realised, that shortfall would represent a substantial cost to taxpayers rather than a financial return, raising questions about the distinction between commercial development and expenditure undertaken principally for wider public benefit.

The annual cost of financing borrowing associated with the project has reportedly risen from approximately £900,000 to £1.85 million. These financing commitments place pressure on the Council's revenue budget, which also funds everyday public services. That distinction matters when Richmond Council is currently making deep cuts to council services following reductions in the main Government annual revenue support grant. Money committed to financing the redevelopment cannot simultaneously be spent on maintaining roads, supporting local amenities or protecting other services.

The controversy is compounded by the alternative that was available. A substantial public riverside park could have provided gardens, recreational space and improved access to the Thames at potentially considerably lower cost, without the expense of constructing residential and commercial buildings. Such an alternative would not have delivered the same housing or business accommodation, but it raises an important question about the Council's priorities and whether the additional benefits justify the financial commitment. The issue is not whether regeneration is desirable, but whether this particular approach represents the most effective use of scarce public resources.

A Riverside That Divided Opinion

The redevelopment has also attracted criticism over its architectural design, the removal of all the trees on the site and the changing character of Twickenham's historic waterfront. The Council's use of compulsory purchase powers and its prolonged disagreements with the Twickenham Riverside Trust have added to the controversy, raising wider questions about the relationship between local authorities and community organisations seeking to influence major public developments.

Supporters argue that the scheme will revitalise an underused site, bringing new homes, businesses and public spaces into the town centre. Critics question whether its scale, appearance and cost represent an appropriate transformation of one of the borough's most prominent locations. The disagreement reflects a broader tension between the desire to regenerate urban spaces and the responsibility to preserve the distinctive character of established communities.

Deputy Council Leader Jim Millard nevertheless welcomed the construction milestone, describing the scheme as delivering much-needed affordable housing, opportunities for local businesses and a welcoming riverside open to everyone. Kier Construction, which is delivering the project, also celebrated reaching its highest structural point as an important achievement in one of Twickenham's largest regeneration schemes for a generation.

The True Cost of the Development

The topping out ceremony marks genuine progress after years of planning and disagreement, but completing the buildings is only one measure of success. The eventual financial return, the quality of the finished public spaces and the continuing cost of servicing the Council's borrowing will provide a more meaningful assessment of whether the development has fulfilled its promises.

With Richmond facing growing financial pressures, the true cost of Twickenham Riverside must be considered not simply in terms of its construction budget, but also in the services, amenities and alternative investments that public money might otherwise have supported. The Council may ultimately deliver an attractive new riverside, but that achievement will not, by itself, establish that the expenditure represented good value.


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Council Gambles with Bus Improvements

By James Knight



Richmond councillors reject £50,000 bus improvement proposals in a standoff with TfL, despite warnings that their demand for additional Superloop stops is unlikely to succeed.

Richmond Council has rejected proposals to improve three bus services in an attempt to force Transport for London to add Superloop stops, despite warnings from officers that its demands were highly unlikely to succeed. The decision raises questions about whether councillors are pursuing a credible negotiating strategy or engaging in political posturing at the expense of existing passengers.

At its Transport and Air Quality Committee meeting on 9 November, councillors voted against recommendations from their own officers to develop a £50,000 programme of improvements intended to reduce delays on the SL7, 285 and N285 services. The proposals included changes to parking restrictions, junction layouts and highway pinch points to improve journey times and reliability.

TfL unlikely to agree to additional stops

At the centre of the dispute is the SL7, which operates between West Croydon and Heathrow but passes through Hampton and Hampton Hill without stopping. Its only stops within Richmond borough are in Broad Street, Teddington, leaving a five-mile gap before the next stop at Hatton Cross. Councillor Carey Bishop, representing Hampton North, argued that residents were being denied access to a service passing through their neighbourhoods. "It goes straight through our borough, yet people in Hampton and Hampton Hill cannot get on," she told the committee.

Councillor Bishop proposed additional stops near Sainsbury's on Uxbridge Road, highlighting the area's relatively poor public transport accessibility. However, officers reported that TfL had already indicated additional stops were "highly unlikely", noting that similar requests from other boroughs had previously been rejected.

Council rejects improvements despite acknowledging benefits
Rather than proceeding with the improvements, committee chairman Councillor Alexander Ehmann argued that the Council should withhold its cooperation to gain leverage over TfL. Although acknowledging that the measures were "clearly a worthwhile endeavour", he suggested their benefits were relatively modest compared with securing another stop. "Yes there will be some residents that can and will benefit from such changes but it is such a small element overall of improvement for our residents that I think that we have to hold out for the greater good which is an additional bus stop."

He delivered an uncompromising message to TfL: "You can't have what you want until you give our residents what they deserve." Councillors subsequently voted against the officers' recommendations, effectively putting the proposed improvements on hold while the Council seeks concessions from TfL. The confrontation was ironic: as chairman of the committee overseeing the Council's transport service, Councillor Ehmann led the rejection of proposals developed by officers working under that committee's supervision. In effect, he was opposing the work of the very service he oversaw.

The decision is particularly significant because the improvements would have benefited not only the SL7 but also the established 285 and N285 services. Officers confirmed that the £50,000 allocation was specifically designated for bus priority measures and could not simply be transferred to unrelated projects. It remains unclear whether TfL will retain the funding, redirect it elsewhere or withdraw it. Nor was evidence presented that rejecting the improvements would persuade TfL to reverse its position.

Alternative proposals could also improve hospital bus journeys
The meeting also revealed a potentially more constructive approach. During the public speaking session, a resident questioned whether reducing congestion around Sandy Lane and the Kingston Bridge approach could produce journey time savings sufficient to accommodate an additional SL7 stop. Such improvements could also benefit the 481, which provides an important public transport connection to West Middlesex University Hospital.

Officers confirmed that improvements around Sandy Lane and Church Grove were already being examined under a separate programme. Yet the committee did not establish whether the combined journey time benefits of these different schemes had been assessed or used to strengthen the Council's case to TfL. Reducing delays elsewhere could potentially offset the additional time required for another stop, allowing the Council to pursue faster journeys and improved accessibility together rather than treating them as competing objectives.

Political standoff risks leaving passengers worse off
Councillor Bishop's underlying concern is legitimate. An express bus that passes through a community without stopping offers little direct benefit to residents unable to board it. Equally, the Superloop network is intended to provide faster journeys across outer London, and TfL must consider the cumulative impact of additional stops. Reconciling those objectives requires evidence about passenger demand, journey times and the potential benefits of coordinated highway improvements.

Instead, councillors have chosen a confrontation whose outcome remains uncertain. If TfL refuses to reconsider, Richmond could be left without either the additional stop or the proposed improvements to existing services. The Council has acknowledged that its decision will delay benefits to passengers, yet has offered no clear evidence that its negotiating tactic will succeed.

The question is whether Richmond has strengthened its bargaining position or simply made bus passengers pay the price of a political standoff.

The Rifleman Pub is open again in Fourth Cross Road, Twickenham!

From Alan Winter

After much local support, the Rifleman opened its doors again in the last week.



New licensee Chris Williams and his team had spent a fortnight or so on polishing and painting inside and out.

A good job well done and last Thursday the doors opened at 4 O'clock for the locals to try an interesting new range of ales including the popular award-winning Naked Ladies from the Twickenham Brewery and then from 8.00 with music from Mandolin Jack and his team of local musicians.

Pub opening hours are:

- Monday - Thursday 4.00-11.00 pm
- Friday and Saturday 12.00 noon - 11.00pm
- Sunday 12.00 noon - 10.30pm

Look out for regular music nights on Thursdays and Quiz nights are also on the way soon.

Richmond's New M&S Food Supermarket to Open on 25 November

By Michael Jones



Richmond's new M&S Food supermarket will open on Wednesday 25th November, marking Marks & Spencer's return to George Street after the closure of its traditional department store earlier this year.

The extensively refurbished premises at 13 George Street have been converted into a new supermarket-style M&S Food store, a departure from the smaller Simply Food outlets traditionally associated with convenience shopping.

The larger format is designed to accommodate a more comprehensive grocery range, bringing the in-store offering closer to the weekly supermarket shop available through Ocado, in which Marks & Spencer holds a 50 per cent stake through its Ocado Retail joint venture. The transformation reflects the retailer's ambition to compete more directly with established supermarkets, rather than remain principally a destination for ready meals, sandwiches and speciality foods.

Marks & Spencer has traded in George Street since 1956, becoming one of Richmond's most established retailers. Its withdrawal from clothing and homeware sales reflects a wider restructuring of the business, with the company increasingly concentrating its full-line stores in larger, more accessible premises, including out-of-town retail parks offering free car parking. The change follows the closure of House of Fraser in 2020, leaving Richmond without two of the department stores that once formed the backbone of its retail offer.

The disappearance of these two established department stores reflects the wider restructuring of Britain's high streets, driven by online shopping, changing consumer habits and the growing attraction of out-of-town retail parks. For traditional shopping centres such as Richmond, the cost and lack of parking present an additional competitive disadvantage. The result is a gradual narrowing of the town's retail offering, particularly in clothing and homeware, as the balance of the high street shifts towards food, hospitality and leisure.



The new M&S Food supermarket represents a substantial investment in George Street and will strengthen Richmond's grocery offering. However, its opening also underlines how profoundly the town's shopping centre has changed, with two of its best-known department stores having disappeared from the high street in little more than six years.



Local Postcard Annual Available for Christmas!

The Postcard Pages

A history of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames seen through the pages of the Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



The Twickenham and Richmond Tribune celebrated its 10th Anniversary on 11th November. To celebrate this, we are publishing a book based on the Postcard Pages, which have featured in the Tribune.

More details to follow but the book is scheduled to be ready towards the end of the month. The book will be an A4 hardback, with approximately 240 pages.

It will make an excellent local Christmas present and purchasing details will be announced shortly.







London Activates Emergency Cold Weather Plan as Temperatures Fall

Micheal Jones



The Mayor of London and London borough councils have activated the capital's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) for the first time this winter, as temperatures are forecast to fall to freezing over the weekend.

The emergency measures came into effect on Friday 13 November and are expected to remain in place until Monday 16 November. Councils and homelessness charities are opening additional emergency accommodation to provide people sleeping rough with somewhere warm and safe to stay.

Mayor Sadiq Khan warned that "freezing temperatures can put lives at risk", adding that emergency accommodation could provide the first step towards securing permanent housing. He said: "We want people to get the support they need to find a longer-term place to stay."

London Councils' Executive Member for Housing and Homelessness, Cllr Anthony Okereke, described the emergency measures as "a crucial part" of protecting vulnerable Londoners, but stressed that councils must look beyond immediate assistance. "It is vital that we help people into safe, settled accommodation for the long term," he said.

Under the protocol, emergency accommodation is made available when temperatures are forecast to reach 0°C or below. This winter, some boroughs are trialling an enhanced system allowing accommodation to open during prolonged cold weather, even when temperatures remain above freezing.

Last winter, the protocol was activated for 11 nights, with London boroughs providing emergency accommodation to 1,491 people.

Residents who encounter someone sleeping rough are encouraged to report their location via StreetLink, enabling outreach teams to locate them and offer assistance.

Twickenham Welcomes Its Newest Shop

By Doug Goodman

On Tuesday Shooting Star, Twickenham's newest charity shop, opened for business. At 74 Heath Road the shop is already well stocked with a range of Christmas gifts but relies on us for donations. This is the ninth Shooting Star shop in the south west and, like all the other establishments, aims to raise money to support children with life limiting conditions and to raise awareness of the need to provide support for them and their families.



Shooting Star in Twickenham



Meet the Team – Joe, Malak shop manager, Mahima and Helen

The official opening will be on 19th November when customers are invited to a 'sip and shop' event – enjoy a drink while you buy your Christmas presents. Shooting Star's Children's Hospices are looking for volunteer retail assistants to join the team in Twickenham. Contact: www.shootingstar.org.uk/volunteer

The Christmas Window competition is back for a third year

From VisitRichmond



This festive season, celebrate with VisitRichmond by entering and voting in the festive Christmas Shop Window competition, back for a third year.

Last year, we had over 100 entries, and we're aiming for even more this time around. If you own a local business and want to showcase your festive spirit, sign up by 20 November.

You'll receive your Christmas window sticker with a QR code between 14 and 30 November to display for customer voting.

Voting runs from 1 to 18 December. Shoppers simply scan the QR code on their favourite window to cast their vote.

The winning business will be announced on 22 December and awarded a festive Christmas Hamper along with a special visit from Madame Mayor.
Find out more about the Christmas Shop Window Competition.

Christmas Lights Return Across Richmond Borough

By Michael Jones



Christmas celebrations are returning to town centres across Richmond borough this November, with festive events planned in Richmond, Twickenham, Teddington and Hampton Hill, bringing seasonal entertainment and a welcome boost for local businesses.

The festive season began on **Friday 13 November** with **Kew parade** turning on its lights. Temporary one-way arrangements will be introduced on Lichfield Road, alongside extended controlled parking zone restrictions operating from 10am until 11pm.

Richmond town centre will hold its Christmas celebrations on **Thursday 19 November**, organised by Richmond Business Improvement District (BID). George Street will be closed to traffic between 4pm and 7pm, allowing residents and visitors to enjoy the festivities, with local diversions in place.

Twickenham follows on **Friday 20 November**, when historic Church Street will host the town's Christmas celebrations. The street, known for its independent shops, restaurants and traditional character, will be closed from 10am until midnight, although the junction between Arragon Road and Church Lane is scheduled to reopen at 8.30pm.

Teddington will host its celebrations on **Thursday 26 November**, with extensive traffic restrictions across the town centre. Cedar Road car park will be closed throughout the day, while The Causeway and Church Road will close from 3pm until 8.30pm. Broad Street will experience a brief traffic restriction around 4.30pm, with High Street and Station Road also closing during the evening to accommodate the festivities.

Hampton Hill rounds off the November celebrations on **Friday 27 November**, when High Street will be closed between Park Road and Uxbridge Road from 5.30pm until 8.30pm, allowing the town centre to host its seasonal event.

The celebrations provide an important opportunity for local businesses, particularly independent retailers, to attract visitors during the crucial Christmas trading period. They also help sustain the distinct character of the borough's town centres, bringing residents together at a time when traditional high streets face increasing competition from online shopping and out-of-town retail parks.

Whitton Christmas Event Cancelled Amid Controversy

Whitton will miss out on its traditional Christmas lights switch-on this year after the Whitton Business Association cancelled the event amid financial difficulties and controversy over its management. Although a scaled-down display of Christmas lights will still illuminate the High Street, the association cannot afford the costs of closing the road and obtaining the necessary insurance for a public event that would attract large crowds. The cancellation follows a period of political controversy surrounding the association, which was chaired last year by Liberal Democrat Whitton councillor Kuldev Sehra, amid concerns that local Liberal Democrats had gained too much influence over an organisation intended to represent independent traders.



The cancellation is a disappointment for residents and businesses, depriving Whitton High Street of an important community event. It also raises questions about the governance and political independence of trader associations and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) that operate in the borough. While neighbouring town centres prepare for their festive celebrations, Whitton will have to settle for a more modest display, with the association hoping to restore the traditional switch-on event in 2027, subject to securing sufficient funding.

November update on the Teddington Launch Lock refurbishment project

From the Environment Agency

Over the summer and autumn, the Environment Agency's (EA) project team have continued to reinforce and rebuild key sections of the lock chamber walls.

This included the removal of damaged elements and the construction of several new elements to bring the 100-year-old lock up to modern standards.

The team have also completed the construction of the various mechanical and hydraulic elements which will move and hold the lock gates during operation. This includes hydraulic lines, cables, and pedestals which the lockkeeper will use to operate the lock.

EA's construction partner, BAM, have also now installed both sets of refurbished lock gates, the head and tail gates. This is a key milestone in the refurbishment. The team will shortly begin the necessary on-site operational tests while completing the smaller remaining elements of the project.

The testing programme will take account of the annual Port of London Authority drawdown, which commenced on 5 November. The team will test the gates to ensure they function correctly. The gates will be tested in wet and dry conditions to assess their full operability. This means the lock chamber will need to be filled and drained several times. Testing will also be carried out on the new mechanical and electrical equipment to make sure everything is working properly.

The refurbishment of the lock's supporting structures and gate mechanisms has required extremely high levels of precision and accuracy, with tolerances of just ±1mm in many cases. The lock is over 100 years old, and its structure and condition could only be fully assessed once it was dewatered and surveyed.

These surveys revealed differences from historical records, requiring ongoing design adjustments during construction. Prolonged hot and dry weather also affected concrete works because of the impact of heat on concrete strength and the ability to work with concrete in such high temperatures. Unfortunately, these challenges have resulted in some delays.



The lock is expected to be operational again in early 2027, with works continuing at the site throughout winter 2026/27.

Further updates on the work will be available on the EA's Thames Area Asset page.

If you have any questions about the works, please email the project team on enquiries_thm@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Richmond's Roads Continue to Deteriorate as Council Faces Tough Questions

By James Knight



Richmond's roads were ranked the second worst in England in an analysis of official government figures last year, yet despite eight years of Liberal Democrat control and repeated promises of improvement, the Council has failed to include road condition among its principal performance indicators.

The issue came under scrutiny at Monday's Transport and Air Quality Committee meeting, when a local resident challenged councillors over the continuing deterioration of the borough's highway network and questioned how the administration intended to demonstrate that its policies were delivering results.

An analysis of official government figures published by *The Times* in 2025 placed Richmond second only to Derbyshire for poor road condition. The Government's latest assessment has again classified Richmond's road condition as red, while the Council's own figures show that the proportion of A roads assessed as amber or red increased from 35 per cent to 41 per cent between 2024 and 2025. The figures suggest that, notwithstanding increased expenditure on maintenance, the condition of some of Richmond's most important roads is continuing to deteriorate.

A Manifesto Promise Without a Measure

The resident questioned why road condition had been omitted from the Council's proposed performance indicators for 2026/27, particularly when the Liberal Democrats had made improving roads and pavements one of their five principal priorities at May's local elections. The apparent contradiction raised a question of accountability: how could residents judge whether the administration was delivering its election promise when the condition of the roads was not among the measures against which its performance would be assessed?

Committee chairman Councillor Alexander Ehmann challenged the need for another indicator, pointing out that the Government already publishes road condition information and suggesting that a separate council measure could introduce conflicting methodologies.

Eight Years of Liberal Democrat Control

The discussion became more contentious when Councillor Ehmann defended the administration's record by highlighting increased highways expenditure. He said annual spending had risen from approximately £1.6 million when the Liberal Democrats took control in 2018 to more than £7 million in recent years, presenting the increase as evidence of the administration's commitment to repairing Richmond's roads.

The resident challenged the comparison, arguing that the chairman was comparing historical revenue expenditure with more recent capital spending, without including earlier capital investment or adjusting for inflation. Councillor Ehmann strongly disputed that interpretation, maintaining that the administration had substantially increased investment to address longstanding deterioration inherited from previous administrations.

Nevertheless, much of the exchange centred on the administration's spending record and the condition of the roads it had inherited, rather than the original question of why road condition had been omitted from the proposed performance framework. The distinction is significant. The Liberal Democrats have controlled Richmond Council since 2018, giving the administration eight years in which to establish its highways priorities, allocate resources and implement its maintenance programme.

Spending More, But Are Roads Improving?

Despite the concerns raised, committee members offered little further scrutiny of the omission before approving the proposed indicators.

For residents travelling along Richmond's deteriorating roads, the central question is not simply how much money the Council spends, but whether that expenditure is producing better roads. Eight years after taking control, and with road improvement now a principal manifesto commitment, the administration faces a straightforward test of accountability: if improving road condition is a political priority, why is it not also a measure of political performance?

MONTHLY EDITION

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Weekend of 27th -28th
England V TBC

Football

Thursday 12th
England V Croatia KO 7.45pm

Sunday 15th
Spain V England KO 7.45pm



We're looking forward to more match-day revelry in Twickenham.

We're getting ready for a huge month of rugby, with the Autumn Internationals bringing a packed schedule of action every weekend. We'll be showing every game live on our big screens, giving you the perfect place to catch all the action without the expense of a match ticket.

On Twickenham match days, our garden bar will be open, doubling our pouring capacity to keep queues moving and pints flowing. Expect quality, perfectly poured drinks and always served in a glass.

Heading to Twickenham? Make us your destination for a pre-match pint and a post-match catch-up. Not going to the stadium? Settle in, grab your spot and enjoy the rugby alongside fellow fans in the comfort of the pub.

Great rugby, proper pints and a brilliant atmosphere — join us this November for another fantastic season!



Our pergola area is getting weather proofed for larger gatherings

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS

The weather is turning colder, and before you know it, you'll be settling in with a glass of mulled wine by our roaring log fire, surrounded by the festive magic of the best-decorated pub in town!

But that's not all we have in store this Christmas. We're gearing up for a fabulous festive season packed with live music nights, comedy, a craft market and more to get you in the holiday spirit.

Still planning your Christmas party? There's still time to get booked in! Ken is busy weatherproofing our pergola to make it extra cosy for those larger parties, so there's no excuse not to get everyone together for a festive celebration.

So, what are you waiting for? Get in touch and book your spot before the diary fills up!

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JANE CARRICK

We are very sorry to share the news of the passing of our lovely regular, Jane Carrick. We will remember Jane for her kindness, her cheery spirit and the warmth she brought to those around her. She will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by all of us here at the Prince Albert.

THE PRINCE ALBERT, TWICKENHAM TW2 5QB | princealbert@fullers.co.uk | 020 8894 3963

Next Week at Richmond Council

By James Knight



Six months after Richmond's Liberal Democrats won re-election promising to protect public services through efficiency savings and modernisation, councillors will consider proposals to restructure libraries, increase leisure charges and review financial support for community organisations.

Tuesday: Adult Social Services, Health and Housing Committee
7pm, Salon, York House, Twickenham

Richmond Council's growing homelessness costs will come under scrutiny, with a projected £3.25 million overspend across housing and adult social care, up from just £514,000 three months earlier. Housing accounts for £2.7 million of the shortfall, largely reflecting the continuing cost of temporary accommodation.

The Council was accommodating 817 households in temporary accommodation in August, at an average net annual cost of £16,860 per household. Councillors will consider a strategy to lease properties from private landlords for at least ten years and one day, including accommodation outside the borough. The Council argues that longer leases would reduce reliance on expensive nightly accommodation, although the arrangements would create substantial financial commitments extending well beyond the current budget period.

Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing will report on its performance as a social landlord. While overall tenant satisfaction has improved, complaints handling remains a concern. Across the organisation, only 37 per cent of tenants were satisfied with complaint handling in the previous reporting period, while the proportion of Ombudsman findings involving maladministration has subsequently fallen from 76 to 58 per cent. Richmond-specific survey results are based on small samples, making firm conclusions difficult.

Councillors will also consider awarding a new seven-year contract for health visiting and school nursing services, costing Richmond approximately £3.5 million annually. The report reveals that the proportion of children requiring targeted or specialist support has risen from 3 to 13 per cent since 2019, despite falling birth rates. Health visitor caseloads of 350 to 400 children also exceed the professional recommendation of 250.

South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust will present its annual performance report, including developments in mental health services, patient care and inequalities. The committee will also consider new performance indicators for housing and adult social care, alongside a Co-

production Charter intended to give residents and service users greater influence over decisions affecting their care.

The meeting highlights the challenge facing the Council as it seeks substantial savings while demand for housing, health and social care services continues to place pressure on its finances.

Click here for the papers and webcast.

Wednesday: Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee
7pm, Salon, York House, Twickenham
The future of Richmond's libraries will be among the most significant issues before councillors, with the Council seeking at least £500,000 in annual savings by 2028/29. Options include relocating or consolidating libraries, changing staffing arrangements and exploring outsourcing. No closures have been approved, but the proposals raise questions about maintaining accessibility in a borough where 48 per cent of adults use libraries, compared with 31 per cent nationally.

Councillors will also consider increases in leisure charges expected to generate an additional £196,000 annually. Standard allotment rents would rise by 21.5 per cent, while the automatic 50 per cent discount for residents aged over 60 would be abolished. Pensioners who do not qualify for the replacement means-tested concession could face increases of approximately **143 per cent**, with a five-rod plot rising from around £62 to £150 annually.

Other increases include 29 per cent for adult football and rugby pitches, 69 per cent for cricket pitches and up to 20 per cent for outdoor swimming at Pools on the Park. Some library concessions for older residents would also disappear. The Council argues that the changes reflect rising costs and a fairer approach to concessions, although they contrast with the Liberal Democrats' manifesto emphasis on affordable recreation and community participation.

The committee will consider £273,000 in additional waste and recycling expenditure, including £120,000 for two enforcement officers and £65,000 for communications, potentially including £40,000 for advertising on refuse vehicles. Funded through recycling-related grants, the programme also includes improved collections for flats above shops and measures to encourage food-waste recycling.

Part of Crane Park could be designated a Local Nature Reserve, strengthening recognition of its ecological importance. However, the Council's wider conservation programme will now rely heavily on external funding.

An independent review of cemetery provision estimates that Richmond and Twickenham cemeteries have approximately 1,459 potential new grave spaces, representing just seven to ten years of capacity. Teddington Cemetery is identified as the principal location for future provision, with a borough-wide strategy expected next spring.

The committee will also examine a projected £1 million overspend across its services, including waste management, parks and libraries, adding to the financial pressures facing the Council.

Click here for the papers and webcast.

Thursday: Finance, Policy and Resources Committee
7pm, York House, Twickenham
Richmond Council's worsening financial position will come under scrutiny, with the latest figures showing a projected £5.9 million overspend for 2026/27, almost double the £3.1 million forecast

three months earlier. The Council had already budgeted to use £15 million of reserves to balance its finances, but the latest projections would increase that requirement to nearly £21 million.

Councillors will also consider appointing Newton Consulting as an external implementation partner for the Council's £39 million Transformation Programme. The consultancy would help deliver £21.3 million in annual savings by 2030/31, principally through changes to adult and children's social care and temporary accommodation. The proposals include reducing reliance on residential care, changing care arrangements and lowering accommodation costs.

The programme is considerably larger than the approximately £30 million in annual savings outlined in the Liberal Democrats' election manifesto, which emphasised administrative efficiencies, digital technology and improved productivity. Although the Council argues that changes to services can improve outcomes while reducing expenditure, councillors must consider the extent to which savings will affect frontline provision.

Another report recommends writing off £3.78 million in debts considered irrecoverable, in addition to approximately £5 million already written off under delegated authority. The total of £8.78 million includes unpaid business rates, council tax, adult social care charges and temporary accommodation debts. The Council attributes the increased write-offs partly to a deliberate review of historic debts rather than a deterioration in current collection performance.

The committee will also consider consulting on a new property and rent framework for charities and voluntary organisations occupying Council-owned premises. The proposals could have significant consequences for community groups benefiting from subsidised rents, although no individual rent increases are being approved at this meeting. The review raises questions about how the administration will reconcile financial pressures with its manifesto commitment to support community organisations.

Other business includes the annual statement of developer contributions collected through planning agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy, together with proposals to allocate neighbourhood infrastructure funding to local projects. Councillors will also consider providing £60,000 towards a community energy and building decarbonisation fund, and whether the Council should support renewing the Be Richmond Business Improvement District for another five years.

Together, the week's reports illustrate the difficult choices facing Richmond Council. The Liberal Democrats argue that reductions in government funding make substantial savings unavoidable, a position acknowledged in their election manifesto. However, the distinction between improving administrative efficiency and changing the cost or availability of public services is becoming increasingly important.

Click here for the papers and webcast.

Have your say:
Council meetings are open to the public, and residents can attend, apply to speak on agenda items or submit written questions. Those wishing to speak must register with Democratic Services by noon on the preceding working day, while written questions of up to 100 words must be submitted by noon two working days before the meeting.

Residents can also contact councillors serving on the relevant committee directly to raise concerns or express their views ahead of decisions. Further details, including how to participate, are available on the Council's *Participating in Council Meetings* page.

Twickers Foodie – By Alison Jee

So Long Solan...It Was So Good!



Having told you about the forthcoming **Solan In Residence** pop-up Italian/Polish dinner with **Georgio Santorsola and Agata Tomczak**, we thought we should check it out and report back. I'm delighted to report that it was a really lovely evening.

On arrival at The Crown Café we were shown to a table adjacent to the kitchen, which was great as we could watch all the busy food prep first hand.

There was a welcome cocktail called Ora D'Oro to welcome us. Now, I'm generally not much of a cocktail fan, but this one was really very good indeed. It had Drambuie, Grand Marnier, Benedictine, thyme, honey, lemon and prosecco. It was a generous glass that tasted really refreshing. They served my husband a Garden Spritz with Seedlip Garden 108, elderflower and soda.

We enjoyed these with warm sourdough, balsamic and olive oil, plus a rather unusual dip made from corn husks.

I'm not going to go into full detail as to every course, suffice to say that everything was beautifully presented and packed with unusual ingredients. The courses kept coming and our server Robyn was great at explaining all the different aspects of each dish.

Here are just some images from our meal - In Residence is planning a few more Twickenham dinners in St Margarets, including **Chino Gonzalez** providing **The Argentinian Taverna on 11 December** and **Norman Musa with a Makan Makan** menu next March (date to be confirmed).





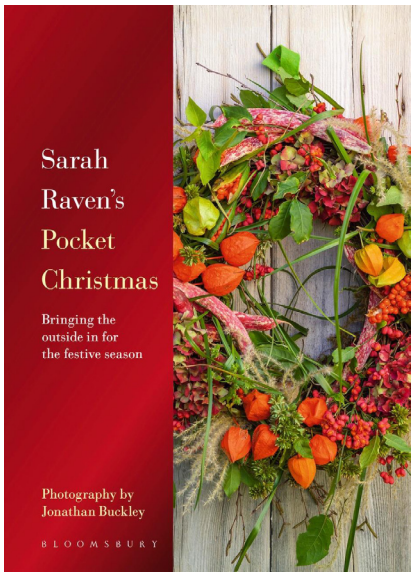




I'd urge you to add your name to the mailing list and experience one of these unique dining experiences for yourself. in-residence-dining.com

Twickers Foodie – By Alison Jee

Sarah Raven's Pocket Christmas



Sarah Raven has led the way over the last three decades in introducing a new kind of productive gardening which fuses intense colour, elegance and do-ability, bridging all kinds of gardening from dark rich dahlia glories to subtler smoky modern colours of poppies, roses, sweet peas, and all kinds of vegetable deliciousness.

Her newly published book ***Sarah Raven's Pocket Christmas Bringing the outside In*** is published by Bloomsbury at £16.99 for a nice little hardback. With photography by Tom Buckley, it contains stunning floral arrangements, recipes and tips for making the most of your flowers and foliage in the festive season. Sarah offers maximum-impact, minimum-fuss ways to bring the outside in this Christmas.



Inside you'll find her tips for planning ahead and arrangements for any occasion, whether you're looking for instant party flowers or more extravagant arrangements. The book also includes recipes for drinks, treats, canapés and edible gifts to delight, as well as forced bulbs to grow and give as presents.

It will make a lovely gift, and to demonstrate its appeal, here is a delicious recipe from the book.

Rose Turkish delight

"In my view, as well as tasting quite delicious, Turkish delight has a wonderful texture and looks beautiful; but to some people, it's a mouthful of rose-flavoured soap! If you know someone who appreciates it, this makes a lovely Christmas present."



For about 60 × 4cm squares:

- 50g powdered gelatine
- 8 teaspoons rose water
- 900g caster sugar
- 50g whole pistachio nuts
- 4–6 drops of natural red food colouring
- 2 teaspoons cornflour
- 6 tablespoons icing sugar

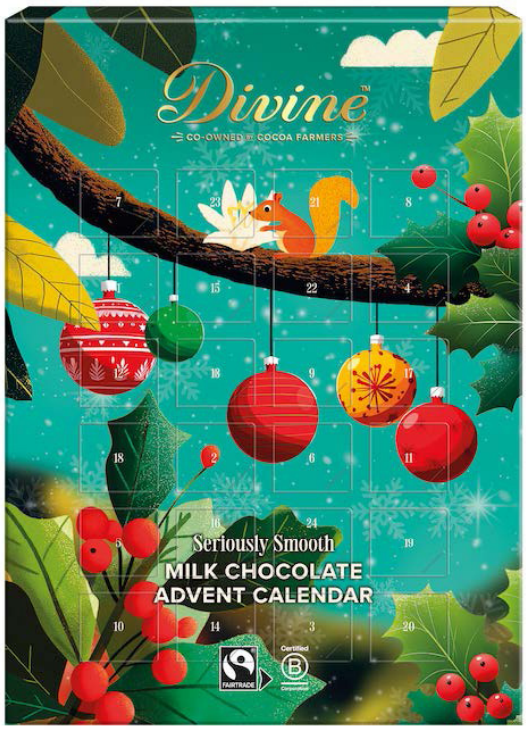
1. Lightly oil a baking tray measuring 23cm × 30cm. Mix the gelatine, 310ml water and the rose water in a large saucepan and add the sugar. Warm this over a gentle heat and stir until the sugar and gelatine have completely dissolved. Bring to the boil without stirring and then simmer for about 20 minutes.
2. Remove from the heat, add the nuts and food colouring, stir and then leave the mixture to cool for a couple of minutes. Pour it on to the baking tray and leave to set for 24 hours. Cut into squares.
3. Sift the cornflour (which helps to keep it dry) and icing sugar together and toss the squares of Turkish delight in it.

Stored in an airtight container, layered with greaseproof paper, this will last at least a year.

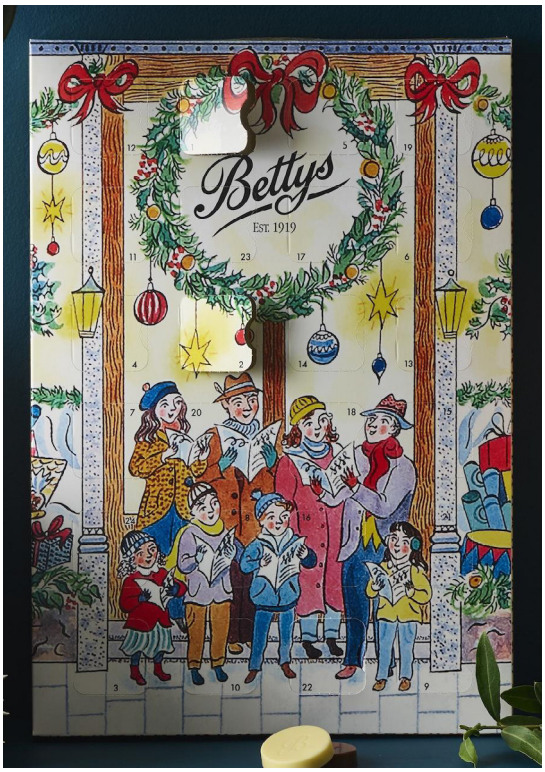
Twickers Foodie – By Alison Jee

Advent Calendars For Foodies (And Their Pets)

I can't believe it's nearly Christmas already and the shops are filling up with all sorts of festive paraphernalia, including, of course, Advent calendars. My usual moan that it's almost impossible nowadays to find one that actually recognises the whole 'raison d'etre' of the Advent season, still stands. One can still find them on various charity websites, and Marks & Spencer still has at least one chocolate one that shows a nativity scene. That said, there are still some lovely 'countdown to Christmas' calendars and here are a few of the ones I'd suggest you consider.



Divine Chocolate is not only excellent chocolate, but it's a group of cocoa farmers in Ghana who voted to set up their own chocolate company and launched the first farmer co-owned Fairtrade chocolate brand. In the past the Advent calendar was one of the few with a nativity scene, but sadly no longer. However, they do have a milk and a dark chocolate one that's suitably festive, excellent value at £7.50, and available online or from Oxfam shops.



If you have links to Yorkshire, how about counting down to Christmas with a **Bettys** Chocolate advent calendar? It's filled with Swiss milk and white Chocolate Coins and illustrated by Yorkshire artist Emily Sutton. Discover a delicious Swiss Milk or White Chocolate Coin each day, crafted from smooth, creamy chocolate and embossed with the iconic Bettys 'B'. And if you want to send one to someone, there's a facility for a personalised gift message at checkout. It's £25 from bettys.co.uk



If chocolate isn't your choice, here's a Matcha Tea Advent calendar from Bird & Blend. Hand-packed and filled with their tasty new, limited edition & fan favourite matchas using ceremonial grade matcha as their base, you can sip your way to Christmas. This year for the first time, it also contains a tasty hojicha blend. There's 48 cups of matcha & hojicha with 24 unique flavours. It's not cheap at £55 (but the contents are worth £80) From birdandblendtea.com



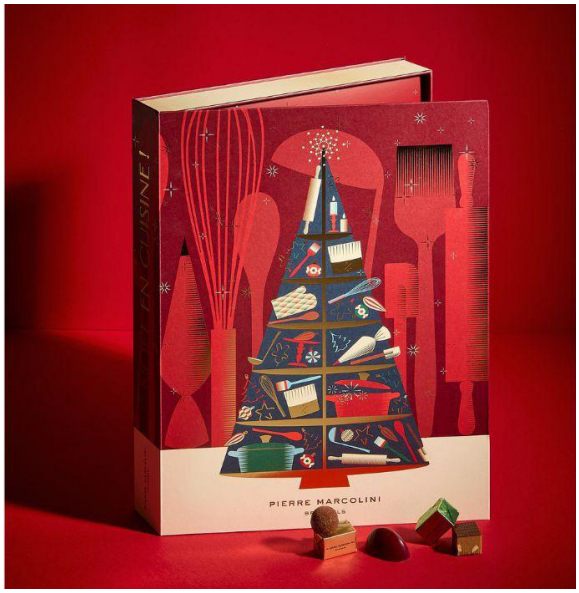
Artisan chocolate maker **Chococo** always has an excellent one. It was one of the first, if not the first, artisan chocolate companies in the UK to offer assorted fine chocolates for Advent back in 2005. This year there are two Advent Calendars to choose from, the classic selection of 25 different flavours and this smaller, vegan-friendly, plant-based selection of 14 different flavours. They contain new flavours, all crafted with Chococo's sustainable, slave-free Direct Trade chocolate from Colombia and Ecuador and hand-decorated with natural colours. At £37.50 for each type, they are the same price as last year (something quite extraordinary currently!) and have a host of delicious chocolates, many of which are Great Taste award winners. 100% of their packaging is plastic-free and is recyclable, compostable or reusable. They also only work with vegan-friendly natural colours – no azo colours or titanium dioxide. They are available now at chococo.co.uk and the last order date for the calendars will be Wednesday 25th November 2026



For one of the very best selections of unusual and top quality calendars, I'd suggest you check out the range at **Sous Chef**. There really is the most fantastic range, of 27 different ones, no less, including Italian, Belgian, French, German and Danish ones, with prices starting from £25 (up to £250 if you're feeling very flush!). My favourite liquorice company Lakrids, has two to choose from including this beautiful one at £75.



There is also this lovely German one, a Lebkuchen and biscuit Advent calendar, where you can count down the days to Christmas in traditional German style! Behind each door is an individually wrapped sweet treat, made using age-old German recipes. You might find a cinnamon star, a chocolate-covered Elisen bar or a chewy spiced Lebkuchen. £60 from Sous Chef



Belgian chocolatier extraordinaire **Pierre Marcolini** has one with a selection designed to spark curiosity and surprise the palate day after day, right up to 24 December. And even beyond, because the 25th deserves its own surprise too. The calendar comes with recipe cards for inspiration, cooking and extending the indulgence well beyond the festive season. It's £55, and available from its stores (there's a new one in Regent Street near the Cafe Royal) or online with shipping within 48 hours.

And of course there are other 'Countdown to Christmas' calendars available from places like Marks & Spencer, Lidl, Waitrose, Tesco and Asda. But I would urge you to check the ingredients carefully as so much mass produced chocolate now has a host of 'nasties' included.

For our Furry pals too

If you're a dog owner, you might like to indulge your pet with this **Advent Calendar for Dogs from Denzels.** He or she can enjoy Denzel's North pole sorting office with 24 doors of mail, full of treats to dig into! There are six festive flavours to taste-test and sort all the way to the big day. Plus it's 100% plastic-free and the pouches are biodegradable. Available from Denzels, Ocado or Pets at Home at £15



And let's not forget those feline friends. **Lily's Kitchen** has one with a selection of tasty bits filled with proper turkey, made with a soft centre and crunchy shell. It's made with proper meat and offal, and natural ingredients and is suitable for cats older than 6 months. £8.50 from Lily's Kitchen or currently on offer at £6.50 from Ocado.



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Black Friday Good Friday Friday 13th Good Luck! Your Holiday Wish List just got cheaper

By Bruce Lyons

For decades we read about Black Fridays being fakes or scams and the media loved to make fun of them, and I too was also suspicious till three years ago. Then I started to take a keen interest as I found some of the more exciting vacations (and often expensive) could in those narrow windows be booked with amazing savings - and I booked some for my clients.



African Safaris with hundreds of £££££ `s off Expedition cruises @ 35% Discounts - G Adventure, Exodus, Explore and Intrepid all offer between 20 to 25% off selected departures.

How to take advantage, well the first rule is to be a little flexible, either on the date or the budget - even the duration.



The supplier may be using Black Friday to launch a new itinerary, or a new Safari Camp even a new product style and you can be the benefactor.
It really is important to have an "open mind " you may be able to experience somewhere or something you always wanted to at an affordable price.



As it is Friday 13th today Jules Verne has just slashed 13 of their small group tours - now, book by 30th November



Looking for a bit of excitement call. All the offers come with book by dates Antarctic; Greenland, Falklands; Northwest Passage and a host of others.

Call me for more details and book some fun.
Crusader Travel, 58 Church Street, Twickenham TW1 3NR - 020 8744 0474

Mark Aspen
www.markaspen.wordpress.com
Expressing the art of the theatre critic

Six Lethargies, a Preview

BalletBoyz at the BalletBoyz Studio, Kingston



The remarkable contemporary dance company BalletBoyz opened its splendid studio space in Kingston to the press last week, giving a peek into rehearsals for its major new work, *Six Lethargies*, which has its world première at Sadler's Wells next week.

It was a great privilege to witness incredible dancing talent choreographed by Iván Pérez and Seirian Griffiths. Three female and five male dancers introduced a typical rehearsal process. It was impressive to experience the relaxed atmosphere, and the professionalism and respect of these unique participants was utterly absorbing.

One was reluctant to leave the rehearsal room, especially after having the opportunity to talk with the innovative founders of the company, which is now in its 25th year, Michael Nunn and William Trevitt, together with the two wonderful choreographers. We were told we had witnessed a sequence of the middle point of the *Six Lethargies* concept, the most inter-related and intense point of the production.

After a discussion on the set and backdrop, the concept and the narrative line were presented. The aim is not to get caught up about drama, just to explore what it makes one feel as a human being, and the hope that people will come away with an experience. (Well, I already had.)



This is an ambitious production for BalletBoyz with almost four dozen dancers, often on stage together. Musical director Keaton Henson will work with 37 onstage string players. Rehearsing for seven weeks, the company have been taking on the vast subjects of visceral emotions, gravitational feel and embrace, and looking at ways to grow. The dancers will be bringing in their own interpretations for the five performances at Sadler's Wells.



It is an amazing and clever concept, and the sense of uplift in this small community was tangible, giving an unmissable ripple of intensity.

This intensive preview look into *Six Lethargies* allowed one to look through a macro lens to view life evocatively with all its ambiguities.

Read Heather Moulson's preview at www.markaspen.com/2026/11/04/6-lethargies-prevw

Photography by Alex Storey

Six Lethargies runs at the Sadler's Wells theatre from Wednesday 18th to Saturday 21st November. Learn more about it at www.sadlerswells.com/whats-on/balletboyz-six-lethargies

Mark Aspen
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Speculations On the Unexplained Deaths of Several American Icons

by Torben Betts

Wild Yak Productions at the Marylebone Theatre until 17th January 2027



The deaths of Marilyn Monroe and John F Kennedy are well-trodden ground, but do journalist Dorothy Kilgallen, Lee Harvey Oswald, and Robert F Kennedy also have icon status?

Speculations moves between three conversations, aided by Lee Newby's brilliant revolving set. The play receives a slick and well-engineered direction from Trevor Nunn, along with bouts of menace, but its approach is low key and nuanced.

The first conversation is between Dorothy, preoccupied with her investigations into the deaths of Marilyn and JFK, and her (fictional) young babysitter Flo. Keen to get into journalism, Flo doesn't realise its dangers or moral dilemmas. Unaware of the dark side to the Kennedys, she avidly supports Robert. Flo is winningly played by Gloria Obianyo as naïve but cunning, with an eye on the main chance.



The second conversation takes place earlier between Robert and Marilyn in her bedroom, where their relationship is on its last legs. Robert realises that it would ruin his career if his affair became publicly known. Marilyn becomes unable to disguise her awareness of his inadequacies as a man, lover, and politician. Natalie Dunne superbly conveys Marilyn's fear, anger and frustration, as she tries to break free of this powerful slimeball. Jolyon Coy's Robert is astonishingly weak and insipid, and this is exactly what the writer intends.



The third conversation is between Lee Harvey Oswald and Mafia boss Carlos Marcello, who has it in for the Kennedys and plays on Lee's support for Cuba. It shows how easy it is for a cunning older man (Ferdy Roberts, low on outward malevolence) to corrupt an innocent all-American boy (Joseph Potter).

The first conversation is arguably the most interesting but also the least convincing. There are fascinating parallels between Marilyn and the less well-known Dorothy. They both endanger themselves by possessing information that will expose corrupt powerful men. Janie Dee provides an elegant and low-key Dorothy, well able to present a polished façade, whilst giving finely tuned glimpses of fear and uncertainty.

There is plenty to think about here. *Speculations* seems very obvious, sensible, and appropriately nuanced, but does very little to shake an audience's preconceptions. Is there actually any evidence for any of this. Or is it just speculation?

Read Patrick Shorrock's review at www.markaspen.com/2026/11/05/speculations

Photography by Helen Maybanks

Mark Aspen
www.markaspen.wordpress.com
Expressing the art of the theatre critic

The Hired Man

book by Melvyn Bragg, music and lyrics by Howard Goodall
Luck Penny Theatre at St James's Church, Hampton Hill

Prolific composer Howard Goodall created an award-winning musical adaptation of prolific broadcaster Melvyn Bragg's novel *The Hired Man*, a dramatised account of the life of his grandfather in early 20th century Cumbria. Now, 42 years later, Luck Penny Theatre, a collective of local theatre talent, mounted an impressive revival to commemorate Remembrance Day.

St James's Church was transformed with a thrust stage down the aisle, tiered seating, and a bar selling Cumberland Ale from Jennings Brewery. The Royal British Legion lent its support, and poppies decorated the church, foreshadowing the darker turn of the show's second act.



John Tallentire is the eponymous "hired man", a farm labourer working for shillings to support his young wife Emily, and later his children May and Harry. John's life is consumed by his work, but Emily has a fling with a local man, Jackson Pennington. Having established these characters in a fairly condensed part of their lives, the second act spans a greater timespan, including the First World War and its aftermath.

Condensing a broad novel into a musical means it whips through the years at a dizzying pace, lingering only over the sequences during the Great War. Nigel Cole's direction is fittingly fast-paced and taut, the cast whirling around, moving rustic furniture to create inns, farms, and "hiring ring" where labourers negotiate with prospective employers. Movement Director Gita Singham Willis boosts this pace with frenetic choreography and Musical Director Nic Luker is given the task of filling St James's Church with Goodall's music. With a large cast and a full choir, the production triumphs, as the modest six piece band achieves an orchestral sound in the bigger numbers. Alan O'Connor's inspired lighting pinpoints domestic scenes, while breaking out the effects for the wartime sequences. As a deeply personal story expands into its historical context, there is the powerful overall feel of a West End musical extravaganza inside a community-filled church.



The cast are uniformly strong singers, with Jacob Taylor and Clair Jardella leading the cast with great gusto as John and Emily Tallentire. Joe Black plays John's roguish brother Isaac with relish, and is rewarded with a strong character arc in the developing story. Daniel Powell is glorious as the socialist firebrand Seth, John's other brother. The contrast between the three siblings is striking, but their chemistry makes them a convincing family unit.



Jackson Pennington is the closest *The Hired Man* has to a villain, the rakish son of John's employer who has an affair with Emily, but who genuinely adores her. Amin Houta pulls off a complex character with panache, and seems to be an audience favourite.

Jasmine Lord-D'Souza is absolutely delightful as Sally Edmondson, a young girl with her eye on Jackson. Her duet with Emily, "Who Will You Marry Then" is a particular highlight with its two great voices, a catchy folk-infused tune, and playful lyrics.

Rachael Rajah shines throughout the second half as May Tallentire, Emily and John's spirited daughter, while Stanley Clement is quietly compelling as the earnest Harry Tallentire.

The Hired Man is a triumph, an ambitious production full of talented musicians, singers, and actors, that makes the most of St James's as its grand venue, filling it with rich melodies and soaring choruses. It's a story of family life that still resonates. The audience was clearly deeply moved, with many moving outside after the final bow to "get some fresh air" and wipe away a few tears.

Read Andrew Lawston's review at www.markaspen.com/2026/11/06/hired-man

And here's something to brag about.

Both author Lord Bragg and composer Howard Goodall arrived on the opening night to see the show and sup the ale. It was the night our critic Andrew gave his five-star review. But there is no need to take his word for it, as Howard Goodall himself wrote about the evening:



"Such a memorable and emotional performance, beautifully presented and sung with such heart and commitment. Leadership, vision and skill were everywhere to be seen - in every loving detail and thought. A huge thank you from your very grateful composer."

Photography by Louise Ellard Turnbull

Exchanged at the Exchange

Mark Aspen
www.markaspen.wordpress.com
Expressing the art of the theatre critic

Poetry Together in Conversation with Gyles Brandreth
Dukes Education at the Exchange Theatre, Twickenham

On a wet Remembrance Day morning, the Exchange's cavernous auditorium filled with several hundred eight to eleven year-old schoolchildren.



The insightful poet Kate Wakeling cued a day of fascinating poetry participation. Interacting with the young audience, we all became drawn together and the generation barrier was broken down.

Poetry Together encourages younger and older generations to connect and recite poetry together . . . over tea and cake. The sharp edge of the project takes schools into care homes, church groups and charities nationwide.



It was a great privilege therefore to have the opportunity to speak to the founder himself, the amiable Gyles Brandreth. Asked about the origins of *Poetry Together,* he said he was inspired by the benefits that poetry brought for old and young people. Being very aware of the decline in enjoyment in reading amongst children, this project was conceived some ten years ago. *Poetry Together* reaches out and goes on the road to make poetry live and in colour.

Poetry lover Brandreth explained his simple concept, that all ages could learn a poem by heart, then gather together for tea, cake and sharing. A way to re-embrace language and to strengthen communities, it also is a great way to counteract the screen culture that has unwittingly overtaken us all. Brandreth is himself a writer of poetry collections, including the wonderful *Dancing by the Light of the Moon.* It was impossible to resist asking who his influences were growing up. Great poets were mentioned such as Edward Lear, A.A. Milne and T.S. Elliot. The latter he had met as a child.

Together with poets Kate Wakeling and Rhiannon Oliver, Brandreth hosts the performance sessions, along with engaging and interactive workshops. Quite a feather in its cap, *Poetry Together* is graced with the strong support of Her Majesty Queen Camilla.



The project is run by Dukes Education, which is investing in Kneller Hall School, opening in 2027 in the former Royal Military School of Music in Whitton.

The frenetic busy-ness day continued with performances, poetry sessions, workshops and activities. With so many children totally absorbed, it was proof enough that the concept of *Poetry Together* works. It was a fascinating exchange at The Exchange.

Read Heather Moulson's conversation at www.markaspen.com/2026/11/11/poetry-together

Photography courtesy of Dukes Education


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Emma Warren
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All Saint's Church, 14-16 Market Place
Kingston Upon Thames, KT1 1JP
Tickets: £15 (Adults), £7 (Under 16's) Box Office: 020 8941 5394
On the door: contactless, card, cheque, cash www.hamptonchoral.org.uk
Charity Number 261788
Hampton
Choral
Society

The People Hive ~ Art Competition using postage stamps

From Paul Leonard

If you have an artistic talent, why not pop into the People Hive in Twickenham? Regular donations of postage stamps have been compiled and each person is welcome to take a 100g bag of stamps, to be used in any way that promotes your enthusiasm for art.

The competition runs until 11th January 2027 and will be judged by the 'Stamp Detectives'.







The winner will receive a voucher for £100 that can be spent on any items for sale at the People Hive.

The People Hive

8 Heath Road,
Twickenham, TW1 4BZ

Tel: 020 8977 5447

Our Gallery Shop Hours are
Mon – Sat 11am – 5pm,
Sunday 11 am to 4pm

Web site = The People Hive |

St Mary's University

St Mary's and Royal Artillery unite for second annual Remembrance Rugby event

St Mary's University joined the Royal Artillery at Larkhill yesterday for the second double-header Remembrance Trophy fixtures, a sporting partnership that brings students and military personnel together to honour those who have served and remember those who have sacrificed.



The event celebrated the partnership between St Mary's and the Royal Artillery, providing an opportunity for both communities to come together through sport, remembrance and reflection. The day began with a Remembrance Service, which was led by Colonel Martin Wells and featured a military Pipe Major, and a bugler who played The Last Post before a two -minute silence at 11am. Following this, the team captains laid wreaths at the Royal Artillery's War Memorial.

The players were piped onto the pitch for each match by the Pipe Major, who then played the national anthem after the pre-match handshakes. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Jo Blunden and Head of Sport St Mary's, Andrew Reid-Smith, were then invited to fire a 25-pound artillery gun to formally start each match.

The double-header saw St Mary's women's and men's rugby teams take on their Royal Artillery counterparts. In the women's match, St Mary's secured a 31-27 victory, while the Royal Artillery claimed victory in the men's match with a 38-8 win.

Beyond the results, the matches provided an opportunity to celebrate the values shared by both organisations. Sport is an important part of St Mary's identity, offering students opportunities to develop skills and qualities including leadership, respect, teamwork, discipline, resilience and courage. These values closely reflect those upheld by the Royal Artillery, playing sports a natural foundation for the partnership.

Jo Blunden, Deputy Vice-Chancellor at St Mary's University said: *"St Mary's staff and students were honoured to be guests of the Royal Artillery yesterday. Our shared values of excellence and respect were evident in the sportsmanship displayed by both teams, and we look forward to welcoming the Gunners back to St Mary's next year."*

The event builds on the relationship between St Mary's and the Armed Forces community. The University recently became signatories to the Armed Forces Covenant and is developing new academic programmes to support the defence workforce in the UK. Last year, the University welcomed the Royal Artillery for its the inaugural Remembrance Trophy fixtures as part of its 175th anniversary celebrations. During these celebrations, four Rugby World Cup winning St Mary's alumnae were recognised for their contribution to women's rugby as members of the



Red Roses and were awarded Honorary Doctorates in Sport.

The second Remembrance Rugby trophy matches mark another important milestone in this relationship, with both organisations pleased to see the occasion develop into an annual tradition. The day was a powerful demonstration of the friendship between St Mary's University and the Royal Artillery, bringing both communities together to remember, reflect and celebrate the shared values that unite them.

St Mary's University Twickenham London

Beyond the poppies: Veterans' Foundation® helps The Poppy Factory continue its mission to transform veterans' lives

Support from the Veterans' Foundation is helping the 104-year-old charity expand its Navigator service, supporting veterans facing complex challenges to rebuild confidence, improve wellbeing and move towards employment.

Every year, veterans at The Poppy Factory produce the Remembrance wreaths and poppies seen at commemorations across the country. But behind these familiar Remembrance traditions is a mission that began more than a century ago.

Founded in 1922 by Major George Howson MC, The Poppy Factory was established to provide employment for disabled veterans returning from the First World War. Today, it continues his vision, helping veterans overcome barriers and rebuild their lives through work.

The Veterans' Foundation has awarded The Poppy Factory grants totalling £162,000 in recent years. In 2018, two £5,000 grants went towards their employment service for veterans. In 2024, they received a one-year salary grant of £25,000 and in 2025, a grant of £132,000 was awarded to be paid over two years and cover the cost of two new full-time navigator posts to help expand the charity's Navigator programme, a specialist pre-employment service for veterans facing multiple complex challenges.



Through up to six months of tailored, one-to-one support, Navigator helps veterans rebuild confidence, improve wellbeing and reconnect with their communities through meaningful activities. When ready, they can progress into The Poppy Factory's Employment Service.

Amanda Shepard, Chief Executive of The Poppy Factory, said: *"Our founder, Major George Howson, created The Poppy Factory to give injured veterans the opportunity to work, rebuild their independence and find a sense of purpose. His mission remains at the heart of everything we do.*

"We simply couldn't have trialled, consolidated and launched Navigator without the significant support of the Veterans' Foundation. Some veterans need help to rebuild their confidence, wellbeing and support networks before they can take steps towards employment. Navigator gives us the time to help lay those foundations."



In 2025–26, 167 veterans accessed Navigator, up from 100 the previous year. Of these, 73 achieved their personal goals, 39 progressed to the Employment Service and 13 moved into employment.

One veteran who has experienced the difference Navigator can make is Ian Stowe. After more than 20 years serving in the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Ian left the Army in 2023 and experienced homelessness and unemployment.



With Navigator's support, Ian rebuilt his confidence and established an Armed Forces drop-in at Tranmere Rovers. Its first meeting attracted more than 50 people, bringing veterans together in his local community.

Ian said: *"I'll always encourage other veterans to contact The Poppy Factory. Having someone alongside you who understands can make a huge difference."*

Jane Gurney, CEO of the Veterans' Foundation, said: *"We're so proud to support The Poppy Factory and its vital work helping veterans get back on their feet through tailored, one-to-one support. Navigator gives those facing the greatest challenges the support they need to at that time to rebuild their confidence, reconnect with their communities and take steps towards employment."*

More than 100 years after Major Howson established The Poppy Factory, the Veterans' Foundation is helping the charity continue his vision: ensuring veterans have the support and opportunity to build a future through meaningful activity and employment.

THE POPPY FACTORY

A successful fundraiser Teddington's Elleray Centre

From the Elleray Centre



On Saturday November 7, local bluesman Dave Kelly performed to a sell out crowd at Teddington's Elleray Centre. As well as playing plenty of the blues for which he is so well known, he included in his set a number of country pieces, some 60s and 70s British pop and even a few requests from a very appreciative audience.



It was the Centre's first music based fundraiser and we're sure it won't be the last! The event was organised by Trustees Rob Dollery and Michael Hill and all proceeds raised will be put towards the Elleray Social Club that is based at the Centre.

So many thanks to everyone who came, to all the volunteers who helped to make it such a success and of course to Dave Kelly for giving everyone such a great evening!

The Elleray Centre


Richmond
Team Ministry
Army Band
The Honourable
Artillery
Company
DECEMBER 5TH
2.30PM
Free entry with collection
St Mary Magdalene, Richmond
Family favourites, band specials with a
Christmas twist

England Team To Play Japan

England men's head coach Steve Borthwick has named his team to face Japan in Round 5 of the Nations Championship on Saturday 14 November at Allianz Stadium, Twickenham (kick-off 4.40pm GMT).

Maro Itoje captains a side featuring 10 personnel changes to the starting XV that beat Australia last Sunday.

Ellis Genge, Luke Cowan-Dickie, Asher Opoku-Fordjour, George Martin, Henry Pollock, George Ford, Will Joseph, Max Ojomoh, Cadan Murley and Freddie Steward all come into the starting line-up.

Elsewhere, scrum-half Archie McParland is set to make his England debut off the bench.

"Japan are a very well-coached side who will challenge us in different ways, and we know we'll need to bring intensity throughout the game," said Borthwick.

"The atmosphere at Allianz Stadium last week was incredible. The players really fed off the energy in the stadium, and we're really looking forward to being back on Saturday."

On McParland's potential debut, Borthwick added:
"We're all delighted for Archie. He's had some bad luck with injury, so it's especially pleasing to be able to name him in an England matchday 23 for the first time. He's an outstanding young talent who has worked hard to get to this point, and we're all excited to see how he goes."

Following the Japan fixture, England take on New Zealand at Allianz Stadium in Round 6 before Finals Weekend from Friday 27 to Sunday 29 November.

All of England's Nations Championship fixtures will be broadcast live and exclusively on ITV1.

ENGLAND v JAPAN
Saturday 14 November 2026
Allianz Stadium, Twickenham
Kick-off: 4.40pm GMT

15. Freddie Steward (Leicester Tigers, 44 caps)
14. Will Joseph (Gloucester Rugby, 1 cap)
13. Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs, 78 caps)
12. Max Ojomoh (Bath Rugby, 2 caps)
11. Cadan Murley (Harlequins, 7 caps)
10. George Ford (Sale Sharks, 108 caps) – vice-captain
9. Jack van Poortvliet (Leicester Tigers, 28 caps)

1. Ellis Genge (Bristol Bears, 84 caps) – vice-captain
2. Luke Cowan-Dickie (Sale Sharks, 62 caps)
3. Asher Opoku-Fordjour (Sale Sharks, 8 caps)
4. Maro Itoje (Saracens, 103 caps) – captain
5. George Martin (Saracens, 25 caps)
6. Alex Coles (Northampton Saints, 23 caps)
7. Ben Earl (Saracens, 55 caps)
8. Henry Pollock (Northampton Saints, 14 caps)

Replacements:
16. Theo Dan (Saracens, 20 caps)
17. Emmanuel Iyogun (Northampton Saints, 1 cap)
18. Joe Heyes (Leicester Tigers, 26 caps)
19. Arthur Clark (Gloucester Rugby, 1 cap)

20. Ben Curry (Sale Sharks, 15 caps)
21. Greg Fisilau (Exeter Chiefs, 1 cap)
22. Archie McParland (Northampton Saints, uncapped)
23. Marcus Smith (Harlequins, 54 caps)

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Published by:
Twickenham & Richmond Tribune (in association with World InfoZone Limited)
Registered in England & Wales
Reg No 10549345

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