

Twickenham & Richmond TRIBUNE

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19th November 2021

T&RT

TickerTape - News in Brief

St Richard Reynolds School Streets scheme to be made permanent

The St Richard Reynolds School Streets scheme will be made permanent following agreement from Richmond Council's Transport and Air Quality Committee on 18 November 2021.

School Streets is where a road(s) around a school temporarily closes to motor vehicles to make it safer for school children, while encouraging parents and children to choose climate friendly travel methods, like walking and cycling.

The School Street area at St Richard Reynolds is made up of several streets surrounding the school, including Copthall Gardens, Clifden Road and Station Road.

Cycling schemes made permanent in Hampton and Barnes

Cycling measures on Hampton Court Road and Castelnau Road have been made permanent following agreement at Richmond Council's Transport and Air Quality Committee.

The measures, which were introduced to support social distancing and make cycling safer during the COVID-19 pandemic, are also part of the Council's wider action plan on tackling the climate emergency.

The Council used Experimental Traffic Management Orders (ETMO) to quickly implement new schemes without prior consultation, with funds available from the Government. The new schemes were then monitored for the first six months through a formal consultation period.

Castelnau Library closed temporarily

The library will remain shut until Sunday 28 November for essential works.

During this time, Click and Collect, browsing, computers and other services will be available from East Sheen Library, Sheen Lane Centre, SW14 8LP. No Castelnau loans will be due back during the closure period.

For more information go to the [Libraries](#) page.



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TwickerSeal and some chums were enjoying messing about on the river next to Twickenham Riverside. As they looked across to the site of the council's proposed housing estate, they couldn't help but lament the lost opportunity to create an exciting heart for Twickenham and a destination for residents across the borough.

TwickerSwan asked if the others had noticed the rather aggressive stance the council and its acolytes were taking recently? It seems that anyone who dissents and dares to point out the deficiencies of the council's plans are fair game for attack. The Twickenham Riverside Trust and its trustees have been particularly singled out, because they dared to follow the Charity Commission's guidelines and object to the council replacing the Diamond Jubilee Gardens with an obviously inferior offering. This paper and its readers who have contributed letters have also been scathingly attacked by councillors and party apparatchiks, including those behind the disgraceful Piat d'Or Tweet ridiculing residents dealing with anti-social behaviour.

TwickerDuck suggested that they are starting to show their true colours and that the politics are more important to them than residents' interests. TwickerSeal wondered whether they had finally noticed the Emperor's New Clothes, or lack thereof, and were starting to get worried?



Covid – 19

By Teresa Read

World Health Organization

Weekly Epidemiological Update: 16 November 2021

Overview

During the week 8 to 14 November 2021, the increasing trend in new global weekly cases continued, with over 3.3 million new cases reported – a 6% increase as compared to the previous week. The Region of the Americas, the European and the Western Pacific Regions all reported increases in new weekly cases as compared to the previous week, while all other regions reported stable or declining trends. Similarly, the European Region reported a 5% increase in new deaths, while the other regions reported stable or declining trends. Globally, just under 50 000 new deaths were reported, similar to the previous week. As of 14 November, over 252 million confirmed cases and over 5 million deaths have been reported.

Total cases to 19 November 2021

Richmond upon Thames	24,856 (23,921 previous week)
Kingston upon Thames	23,995 (23,280 previous week)
Hounslow	43,345 (42,514 previous week)
Wandsworth	44,725 (43,710 previous week)

Note: flu vaccinations are particularly important this year as influenza and Covid-19 are circulating at the same time. Some pharmacies provide a flu vaccination service as well as GP surgeries. Covid booster vaccinations are available from various GP surgeries and via www.nhs.uk. Check websites for information.

IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK

The Washington Post: South Korea pushes booster shots as COVID-19 spread worsens

CNBC: Germany announces new Covid restrictions for the unvaccinated as infection rate hits record

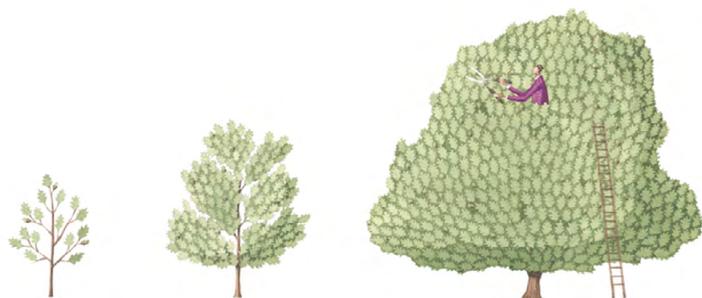
CNN: Austria announces Europe's first nationwide vaccine mandate and reimposes lockdown as Covid-19 soars

Reuters: New Dutch coronavirus cases hit record high

World Health Organization: Countries with High Numbers of Deaths and the UK Red List.

(Deaths Worldwide 5,120,712).

USA	759,388	Iran	128,531
Brazil	611,478	Colombia	127,865
India	464,623	Argentina	116,294
Mexico	291,241	France	115,871
Russian Federation	260,335	Germany	98,538
Peru	200,695	South Africa	89,515
Indonesia	143,709	Spain	87,775
The United Kingdom	143,360	Poland	79,994
Italy	132,965	Ukraine	79,506



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The Tree Agency

Railway to nowhere

By Simon Fowler

It's not hyperbole to say that the railway transformed Richmond and Twickenham. The railway from London arrived in Richmond in 1846 crossing the Thames two years later towards Twickenham and points west

A decade earlier in 1836 there was much discussion about the construction of a City and Richmond Railway. The grand idea was to unite all the railways then being built into London into one terminus south of the Thames near Southwark Bridge. The new station would have been within easy walking distance of the City.

It was intended that the construction of the line would have been funded by revenues from an initial branch line to Richmond. In the company prospectus investors were promised eye-watering dividends of up to 30 per cent per annum. In fact, not a penny was paid out nor a brick laid, the company eventually collapsed amidst an acrimonious legal dispute over unauthorised expenditure by the secretary, which had bankrupted the railway.



The prospectus suggested that just over a million people a year would pay a shilling each to travel from Southwark to Richmond and another 700,00 passengers nine pence each to travel the slightly shorter distance from Richmond. These figures which were clearly conjured out of thin air. As the railways was still very new nobody had any idea how popular they would be. A shilling was getting on for a day's wage for labourer, so the directors were looking towards a more affluent clientele.

The line would have been constructed across the built-up parts of London on nearly two thousand arches. An advertorial in *The Times* described the arches striding through the Borough traversing 'Blackfriars Road by a splendid arch' and ending near Vauxhall Bridge where the railway would divide into various branches to Southampton, Brighton and Richmond. The company even published a lithograph showing the railway cutting through Lambeth and Battersea. Copies can be found online.

From the map which came with the prospectus the line of the railway to Richmond would have been almost identical to the one that was constructed in the mid-1840s, using the flat terrain along the Thames with stops in Putney, Mortlake and Richmond.

The directors suggested that 'passengers would have been conveyed to the city in 25 minutes' – comparable to the journey time today. When the line was eventually built, it actually took forty minutes to get to Waterloo, still considerably faster than the two hours it previously took. And in more comfort too.

Like so many railway companies of the period, the City and Richmond never raised enough capital. It was a preposterous idea, as each of the companies which they hoped to link preferred to build their own terminuses. Something which passengers still rue today.

Should the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Restart the Official Notice Period for the Compulsory Purchase Order on Twickenham Riverside?

A letter has been sent by Ardent to some residents on behalf of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

The address previously given by the council for the relevant Secretary of State is incorrect.

Residents who have posted their objections to the Compulsory Purchase Order, as instructed, are now asked to email them to pcu@communities.gov.uk – this could cause a problem for residents who do not use the internet.

We are told that the new postal address to send objections is as follows:

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham, B2 4BH



201 Borough High Street
London
SE1 1JA
t. +44 (0) 20 3693 2500
e. info@ardent-management.com

IMPORTANT – THIS COMMUNICATION AFFECTS YOUR PROPERTY

18th November 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES (TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2021 (the "Order")

NOTICE OF MAKING THE ORDER

We write further to our letter dated 22nd October 2021 confirming the making of the London Borough of Richmond (Twickenham Riverside) Compulsory Purchase Order 2021 and enclosing a copy of the Order Map, the Statement of Reasons and a formal notice identifying how and where the CPO documents can be viewed and objections can be made.

We are writing to inform you that the address to which objections should be sent has been updated and that objections can be submitted via email. The details are:

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Planning Casework Unit, Department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities, 23 Stephenson Street, Birmingham B2 4BH or to PCU@communities.gov.uk

If you have already submitted an objection it would assist the Secretary of State if you could forward a copy to the email address above. If you have not yet submitted an objection please use the correspondence details above in place of those set out in the previous notice you received.

Yours faithfully,

Ardent Management Limited

For and on behalf of The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames



www.ardent-management.com

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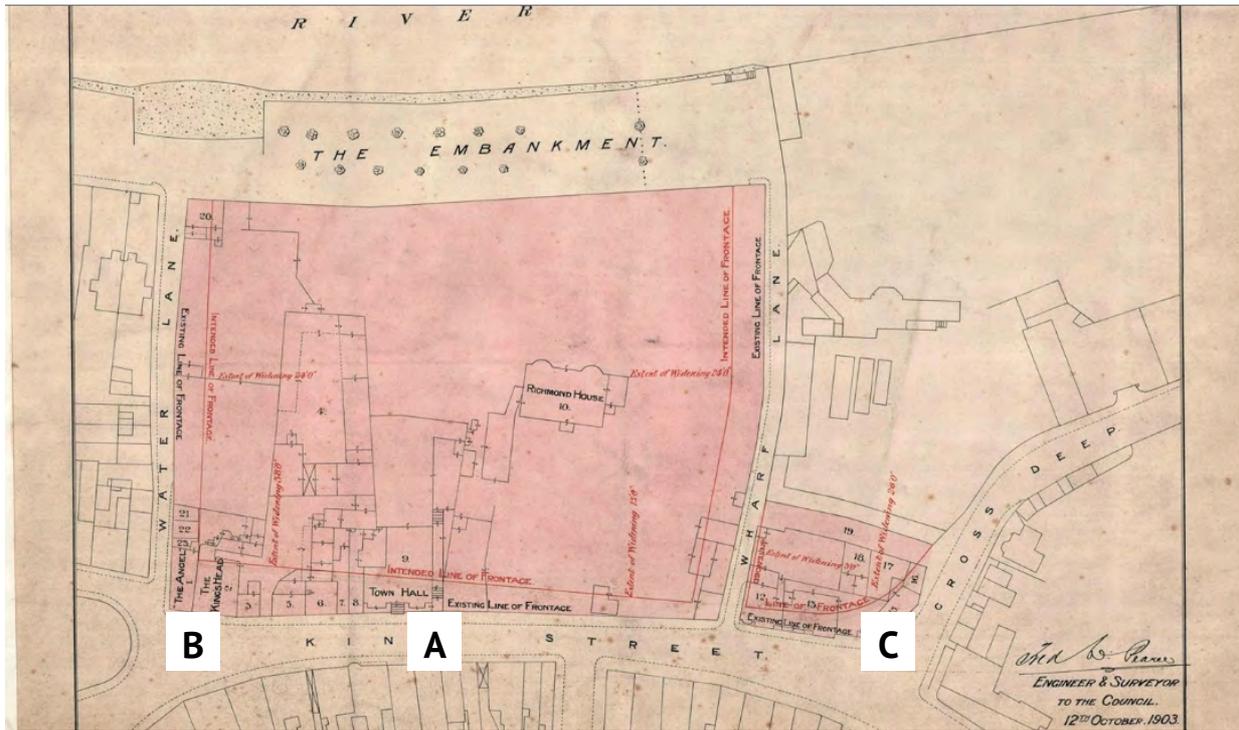
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Once upon a time King Street Twickenham

By: TwickWatch

One hundred and eighteen years ago, in 1903, the local Twickenham council believed it had a good idea to widen King Street, Water Lane and Wharf Lane to create public facilities between there and the river! A substantial site it would acquire on behalf of the residents, land and premises for the purposes of street widening and sites for public offices, fire station, technical institution, store yard depot, stables, sanitary conveniences, public walks and pleasure grounds - the map extract below was drawn in 1903 by the Council Engineer & Surveyor. Resistance from property and landowners to the voluntary sale of their assets to the Council, was overwhelming, when the proposals were publicly presented in 1904. From then until the present day there has been disagreement as to the best use of this important land.



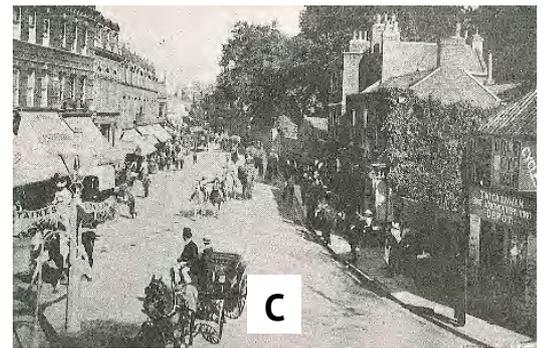
Land & Premises proposed to be purchased – Water Lane, Wharf Lane & Kings Street to be widened - Courtesy of Richmond Local Studies



1927 Entrance to Richmond House [right] Barclays Bank [distance] - Courtesy of Richmond Local Studies



1927 The Angel and Kings Head PHs [left] - Town Hall spire [right] - Courtesy of Richmond Local Studies



View from Cross Deep - Sanger's Circus Parade with elephants - Courtesy of Richmond Local Studies

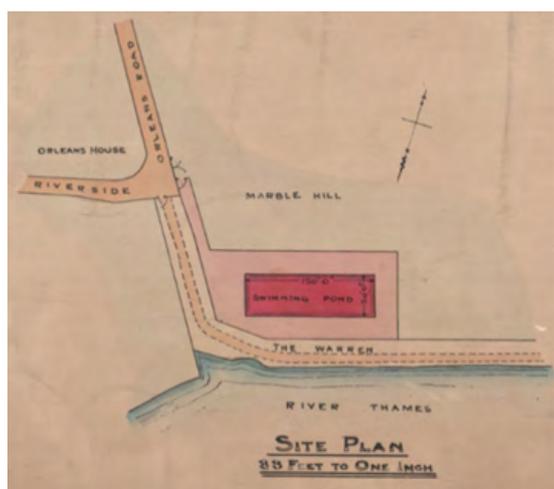
After lots of talk, propaganda and resistance, it wasn't until February 1908 that any further positive action was taken. The council minutes record "That it is necessary, in the interest of the town that immediate steps should be taken to widen and improve Water Lane, as the chief approach to the River and the Embankment and to secure in connection with such widening and improvement the pulling down and rebuilding on new frontage lines, the premises at the corner of King Street, including the Kings Head public house report as to the estimated cost of the acquisition by agreement or otherwise of the lands required for this purpose....."

However, in February 1923 a fortuitous letter to the council, arrived from the Ministry of Transport stating that provision should be made for future road widening, King Street now being classified as part of the A305

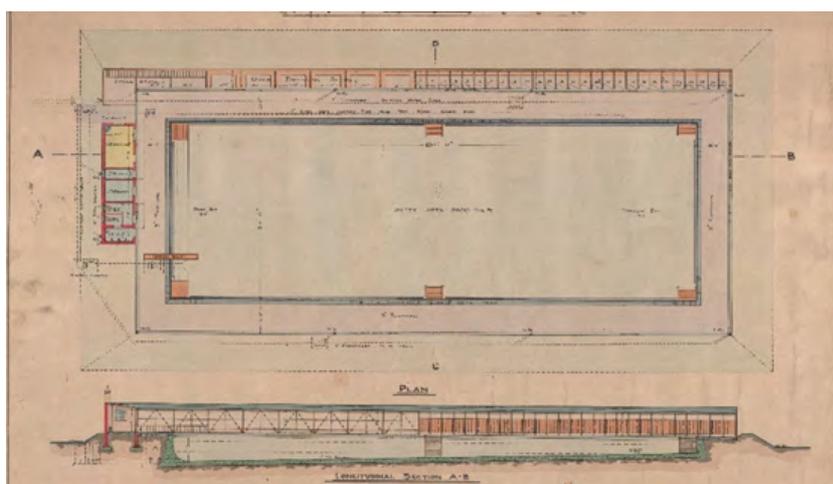
under the new road classification scheme. At a meeting in May 1923 the council unanimously resolved “that notice in writing be served upon the owners of properties on the South side of King Street Twickenham and lying between Water Lane and Wharf Lane as shown on the plan, signed and dated by the surveyor on 9 May 1923.” It was recommended at the same time that the Council make an order for the compulsory acquisition of Richmond House and lands.

Unlike in 1904, property and land owners being advised of the intention, generally showed an empathy to the proposal. Watney, Combe, Reid and Company Limited for instance, advised they were the owners of 1-4 King Street and the stables and 2-6 Water Lane. They expressed they were “in sympathy” with the scheme. At this point the proposed building line was extended to Cross Deep. A public inquiry was held on 18 September 1923.

Negotiations for land and premises continued through to 1925. By October 1926 final purchases were being finalised. In 1937 King Street Parade shops, with flats over, were built, with a rear service road to present the street-scene as we currently know it.



Proposed site of bathing pool – courtesy of Richmond Local Studies



Proposed full size open-air bathing pool – courtesy of Richmond Local Studies

It is interesting that in 1906 efforts were being made by swimming clubs in the Thames Valley to induce the London County Council to arrange for a proper bathing place at the recently publicly acquired Marble Hill Estate. It was not until October 1912 Twickenham Urban District Council approached the London County Council for a piece of land for an open-air swimming bath on the Marble Hill House estate in a convenient position adjoining the river and affording such other facilities required in connection with it. This ran on for decades until it fizzled out after World War II and was overtaken by the building of an outdoor swimming pool on the original King Street development site in 1935, arising from a public petition in 1928. The open-air pool was open from 1935 to 1981. The baths were closed for financial reasons in 1980 and were demolished in September 2004. There followed a number of ambitious redevelopment proposals over the years to build over most of the land.

From 1981 the site remained unused, becoming derelict. Several attempts at development were made by councils of all persuasions. In 1990 a Marks & Spencer Store was proposed, resulting in a Public Inquiry, under a Planning Inspector, permission was refused. At the Public Inquiry in 1991, recommending rejection, the Inspector held that contiguity with the village and the river should determine the nature and scale of any future development of this land. Commercial ambitions were to be kept subordinate. However, the reverse was proposed, twice. A major scheme of mainly commercial development was published in 1999 and abandoned in the face of public hostility. Then, claiming to be an opportunity for the “regeneration” of Twickenham a further scheme was proposed. This took the form of a health club incorporating a small swimming pool, and a cinema complex. Although commercial, these could not succeed without additional funding from the building and sale of 46 flats, some restaurants and shops.

Further information;

Council Planning Application - http://www2.richmond.gov.uk/plandata2/Planning_CaseNo.aspx?strCASENO=21/2758/FUL

Compulsory Purchase Order - https://richmond.gov.uk/media/22607/cpo_and_schedule_as_made_by_lbrut_october_2021.pdf

Cop Out 26

By Lucilius

Governor Ralph Gobbets returns to The Democratic Republic of Transfluvia after a very rewarding trip to Glasgow for COP 26. Back in his palace in Katchwimen, the capital, he looks out of the window across his garden with its larger-than-life statues of the women from whom the capital gets its name, spoils of the many Bilnoc Wars. Cllr Rutt, director of the Department of Heritage Destruction is hurrying across the garden on his electric pogo stick for his weekly audience with the Governor.



Photography by Andrew Beech

- Rutt: Governor Gobbets, how good to see you're back. What a privilege for you to represent Transfluvia in the international summit.
- Gobbets: Yes, they were honoured to have the chance to meet me. I felt in my ... milieu.
- Rutt: How was the conference?
- Gobbets: Well, you know, good COP, bad COP.
- Rutt: Oh, dear, how could it have been bad?
- Gobbets: President Sliden was meant to speak with me, but I couldn't wake him up.
- Rutt: I saw the television pictures of you looking so alert, between him and Goliath Rottenborough, our own Transfluvian environmentalist.
- Gobbets: Transfluvian somnambulist! He was asleep too. But did it look good for the PR?
- Rutt: Your new teeth whitening sessions certainly paid off.
- Gobbets: On the good side, I did speak to President Mycronie. He knows all about pétanque. But even he couldn't fail to be impressed when I told him about our new underwater pétanque, such heathy sport for our Transfluvian peasants, and our glorious new People's Doubly Joyous Gardens. "Continuez à faire-flotter le drapeau" he said.
- Rutt: Ooo! It makes me shiver when you speak French.
- Gobbets: However: we were there to save the planet. Bolster our climate emergency.
- Rutt: I was wondering when we were going to muster all those emergency electric bikes.
- Gobbets: Trees, they are the problem. There are too many of them. I was sitting there in Glasgow, between Sliden and Rottenborough, alert, listening to how trees give off all this carbon dioxide, or was monoxide, during the night.
- Rutt: Follow the science. Mind you, I glaze over when they babble on about all that technical stuff.
- Gobbets: Don't just listen to them, act. Follow those Firkin Architects. The thirty-seven trees, knock 'em down, fell 'em. Kill, kill, kill!
- Rutt: Are you OK? Eh, um ... what about the arbour of pleached limes? The ones the gardeners want us to keep.
- Gobbets: Gardeners? Who runs this country? Did the gardeners vote for us, in days when we had elections? Did they hell. Tell the gardeners to go pluck themselves.
- Rutt: No sooner said than done. Hee, hee. We were forced to do it, let's not forget.
- Gobbets: Look, time's up. There are so many good COP ideas, electric skateboards, pedestrian-free pavements, La Mancha windmills, rainbow crossings. I'll instruct you some more at next week's audience. Now I've an appointment at noon with my ego masseuse.

Dear Tribune,

Twickenham Riverside.

Richmond Council leader Gareth Roberts has yet again claimed the support of 'countless residents' for his Council's plans for Twickenham Riverside (Liberal Democrat newsletter, 23.9.2021).

This is similar to its so-called consultation from 6 January 2021 until 3 February 2021 in which a mere 0.3% of the population was regarded by him as 'broad public support'.

The Council's compulsory purchase order for Twickenham Riverside smacks of desperation simply because any scheme that truly had broad public support would not need to be compulsory.

The Council's utter contempt for its residents was also demonstrated in yesterday's meeting about the closure of Burtons Road in Hampton in which the meeting's chairman showed complete disdain in his appallingly cursory dismissal of a very polite and eloquent speaker:

Transport and Air Quality Committee 18 November 2021, 6:00pm

https://richmond.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/616968

(Elapsed time 0:13:30 ~ 0:25:00)

Other speakers made the point well that the Council is simply not representing those whom it was elected to represent.

It is amazing that Council leaders do not realize that arrogance and bullying are hardly likely to endear them to residents come next May's election.

Pride may well come before a fall.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Jay, Hampton

Dear Sir,

Twickenham Riverside disabled parking

Someone has pointed out to me that the Council has said that people living in the accessible flats that are proposed on Twickenham Riverside will be eligible for parking permits. I'm told that "accessible" means the flats that a wheelchair can get into, so the people may already have a Blue Badge or need a parking space so may apply for one.

I think there are only 3 disabled parking places planned in the whole area between Water Lane and Wharf Lane and I have counted 5 flats that will be accessible; does this mean that those living around the Embankment and on Eel Pie Island who already have Blue Badge status will also have to compete for these places or will more be created? There is a mention of a couple more being added on Water Lane, but they would be in the area that floods regularly and where the lorries need room to make three point turns to exit the site. Where does that leave those who are disabled when they want to visit Twickenham Riverside and find the disabled parking places are already full of the cars of the residents with Blue Badges?

Yours sincerely,

A Borough resident
(Name and address supplied)

Dear Tribune,

Twickenham Riverside and the CPO

I write regarding the future of Twickenham Riverside and the CPO in respect of Diamond Jubilee Gardens (DJG). On November 12th you published, in my view, a reasoned statement from the Council, alongside a number of other pieces opposed to the CPO, including some that appear to cast the Twickenham Riverside Trust and the good people of Twickenham in the role of victim, oppressed by a bullying and incompetent Council.

The latter cannot stand unchallenged. It appears to me that it is not the Council that is acting inappropriately, but the Trust which, it might be said, is failing to represent the interests of the people of wider Twickenham for whose benefit it is responsible for safeguarding and promoting the amenity of the riverside.

It does not appear to have engaged with them in any meaningful way in refusing the Council's offer for re-providing the gardens and then appealing the CPO, or weighed the benefits to the community of a scheme enabled by the realignment of the DJG, integrating it with space freed up by the welcomed removal of parking and through traffic.

It seems to have considered the re-provision offer against the existing gardens in the most literal and limited way. Despite the Trust saying that they do not wish to disrupt the scheme, refusal looks like a "wrecking motion" to me. It's a matter of conjecture why they would do this.

A few points;

The scheme foisted on us by previous Conservative administration under Lord True was, contrary to relevant European procurement rules, arrived at without any open process for selecting architects, gifted to the Quinlan Terry practice and then by some unknown process, transferred to son, Francis Terry, and his new practice.

The scheme was produced without prior open engagement with the public and other stakeholders, with no agreed design brief. The response was overwhelmingly negative. Attempts to re-work the scheme were rejected because they failed to provide a "whole site" solution including the "award winning" (prize for the use of concrete in garden design) DJG neither did it remove parking and through traffic from the riverside as many wanted.

Campaigners suggested to voters in the local elections of May 2018, that if this was a key issue for them and they wanted the plan taken off the table and replaced with one arrived at via an open competition process, with a proper brief and stakeholder engagement, they should vote for parties who promised to do this. In exercising their democratic rights, that's what the electorate overwhelmingly did.

True to their word and despite the distraction of a pandemic, the incoming Lib Dems followed the suggested process and have;

- Produced a comprehensive design brief involving a Stakeholder Reference Group and Design Group which included members of the Twickenham Riverside Trust.
- Engaged RIBA to run an independent design competition attracting a very healthy response from some of the country's best architectural practices.

- Selected 5 practices to work up schemes, with Hopkins a clear winner.
- Oversaw production of a detailed scheme offering a balanced mixture of housing, both for sale (to help underpin the costs) and affordable rented, set alongside retail, work and hospitality spaces, that opens up the riverside to the town with a car free, accessible and landscaped open space for public amenity and multiple use that is designed as a such and not just a space that is defined by the happenstance of the former swimming pool.

Of course, no scheme is going to meet everyone's wishes and requirements, but this one has attracted widespread support and takes us further than previous administrations, Lib Dem and Conservative, managed in the past 40 years. We must not let perfection be the enemy of the good or allow this scheme to be taken off the rails due to narrow interests.

The refusal of the Trust to accept the offer, its withdrawal from negotiation when the door is still open and failure to publish for scrutiny the advice it commissioned from surveyors (and the brief for that commission), paid for from public funds, is unhelpful.

Combined with mischievous claims about flood plains and deforestation of the site, lack of accessibility, traffic fumes and other myths and fancies, there seems to be an agenda here which is not just about DJG re-provision.

I think the Trust underestimates the intelligence of the people of Twickenham who, I believe, do not want further delay and have faith in the process followed and the result produced. We cannot afford another 4 years delay, let alone another 40.

I think Cllr Hodgins, who I have seen as a level headed and considered leader of the Conservative Group, has misread the situation and that few locally will support his party in next year's elections if siding with those who wish to derail this scheme for whatever reason. Their memories of his party's handling of the issue last time in power are too fresh.

I urge the TRT to get back on board and work with those of us who wish to raise this scheme from good to excellent and utilise the open and built spaces together to maximum effect.

We need to see more input from the Trustees in generating a truly vibrant riverside, not just resisting change or seeing its duties fulfilled by putting on an event from time to time. If it can't deliver this they should step aside and leave it to others who are willing and able to.

Ben Makins, Twickenham

Letters published do not necessarily reflect the views of the Twickenham & Richmond Tribune, its Publisher, its staff or its advertisers.

Letters of approximately 500 words of body text will be printed at our standard 14pt font size, which will publish as a single page.

All letters must be submitted by the end of Thursday, prior to publication the following day on Friday.

The Tribune prefers letters to include the writer's name, but will publish anonymously provided details are supplied.

Eel Pie Artists Winter Open Studios 2021

All being well this bi-annual event will take place in the Eel Pie Boatyard the weekend of the 4-5 December. 11am - 5pm. Visitors are invited to view and purchase a wide selection of art and craft work direct from the artists. Refreshments available.

All welcome including dogs and children must be supervised at all times. Numbers admitted to individual studios may be limited and face masks are requested.

High tides are at 2pm Sat and 3pm Sunday for about an hour - wellies advised.

Please check for updates regarding Covid restrictions

To contact individual artists please see our web site: www.eelpieislandartists.co.uk or Facebook Page: Eel Pie Artists



An interview with David Anstruther

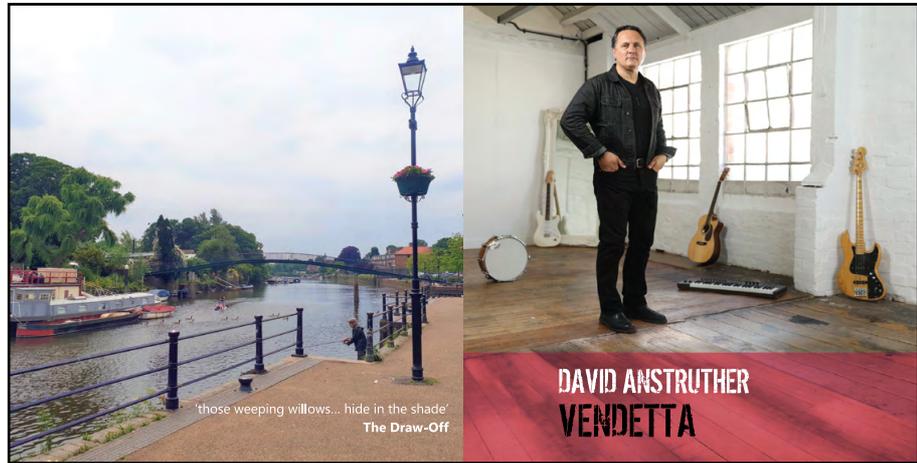
By Berkley Driscoll

I was privileged to meet up with Twickenham's latest singer / songwriter sensation, David Anstruther. Many locals will already know David through his successful estate agent business, David McGeachie Property, as well as his regular appearances in Twickenham's live music scene. But I wanted to find out more about David's new persona and introduce him to our readers.

When did you get into playing an instrument and what instruments did you play? Are you self-taught?

The first thing I did was play the drums; my dad would play Neil Diamond and Glen Campbell records and I would bash along to them on the sofa with a pair of spoons. I was only 7 or 8 and then my mum and dad got me a drum kit when I was about 9 and then I got drum lessons in the

early 70s. When I was about 12 my great uncle, who was a musician, showed me some chords on guitar, so I got into guitar! Through my teens I played drums and guitar, then I bought a bass guitar and played my first gig at 17 in a theatre in Scotland.



Where does the name David Anstruther come from?

Anstruther is the name of a little fishing village in Scotland, in Fife, and we used to go there on holiday every year when I was a child. Very happy memories. I have a business under my real name and I had to be distinct from that and the name reminds me of happy things, which I think is a good idea.

Who were / are your music inspirations and heroes?

I was into glam rock - Slade, The Sweet, Mud ... all that. Later on, we had our own pop stars such as the Bay City Rollers. But in the mid 70s my uncle introduced me to more serious music - Genesis, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin etc. But in the mid to late 70s the punk thing was starting and I really liked loads of those bands as well ... The Clash, Elvis Costello. So, I've always been into all kinds of music really. And even into Kraftwerk and electronic music, so I've always had a mixed taste. There was a big Soul phase in the 80s and then there were the New Romantics and I got into Duran Duran, Japan. So mixed tastes really.

Why is the album called Vendetta?

I had a song based around a bluesy guitar riff. I already had a lot of words to the song and I heard the word Vendetta and I just thought it would just fit with the other lyrics. But it's a good word, a powerful word so I thought I'd name the song after that and then build the song's lyrics around the word vendetta. I then thought that was a really good one-word title for an album.

How was it performing everything yourself, did you miss having other band members? Did it give you more freedom?

There was the freedom and this project was about me wanting to do everything myself. In the future I'm going to bring in friends of mine who are great musicians. This time I wanted to do everything myself. You've got complete freedom, but it does take time. Every single thing I did myself; I wanted this to be a statement about me. It takes ages, but very satisfying.

DAVID ANSTRUTHER VENDETTA

This album is dedicated to my wife Claire. And to my Mum, Elizabeth and Dad, Eddie, for their help and encouragement of my music throughout my life. And to Twickenham.

All songs written, performed and recorded by D.A. in Twickenham, SW London, UK, 2019-2021. Music and composition copyright David Anstruther, 2021. All rights reserved. Mastered by Jovan Radujko in Vienna. Design and artwork by Damian Edwards & D.A. Portrait photography by Paul Harries www.paulharries.com. Photo of Eel Pie Island bridge, Twickenham; D.A. Thanks to Matt Early for YouTube & Spotify work.

Thank you for production advice and encouragement to Pete Hawkins, Major Baldini, Suzi and Sid Brown, Dave Bascombe, Rick Cassman, Jez and Charlie and colleagues at Charlie Chandler Guitar Experience and the studio gear guys at Guitar Guitar, Epsom.

Thanks also for encouragement / help to Diane and Tony Morgan, Eleanor, Andy, Olivia, George and Kitty, Russ Stewart, Grace McGeachie, Patrick McNamee, Jackie, Mark, Hannah and Sam, my Uncle John and Auntie Jean, Gordon Campbell, Eel Pie Records, Berkeley Driscoll.

John Huggins, Jules Gardner, Steve Crickmer, Graham Martin, Roland Fordrey, Rav and Ivy Panesar, Calum McCann, Jamie Tarrant and Jovan.

Hello to Kev, Ray, Monte, Geri and the Groovies and all the Sunday jammers of South West London and beyond.

RIP my friend Douglas Doig who was the first person to say they liked my stuff.

A special Thank You to Jana Yell at Yell Music publishers for her encouragement and help in recent years.

PLEASE LIKE MY FACEBOOK PAGE
David Anstruther Music and leave a review there - that would be very much appreciated.

News of live gigs, lyrics and random videos will be there too.

Also, please subscribe to my **YouTube Channel**
All these tracks plus other songs are available at Spotify.
Contact: info@davidanstruther.com

Finally, Thank YOU for reading this and for having a listen to my songs.

D.A., Twickenham, August 2021

davidanstruther.com

The Draw-Off (A Twickenham song)

I walked down to the river and stood there
Stared at the water and hoped for some
help from above
The Swan beach was quiet at that time of day,
The odd passing bicycle making its way
Canadian geese were flying and
playing and calling

Later I sat near the Barmy,
and watched boats go past me
Most of the time there is someone
just chugging along
It was good for my head just sit to
still down there
And wait for the answers to somehow appear
Like Betty and James, earnestly doing
the crossword

Then I remembered what Gordon said
Take your time you'll find that it's all
inside your own head
Those weeping willows hide in the shade
The surface is calm and there's no breeze today

He said
You remind me of when every year,
they let the whole river run dry
They can see what's all hiding down there
In the sunshine it's hard to deny
Take the towpath to Richmond and see,
you might get some ideas on the way

Have a good look at what lies beneath
Cos they're starting the draw-off today

Left The Three Kings and wandered
down Church Street.
It was chucking-out time at The Pie
A woman was sitting outside with her boyfriend
He popped in the Club and she started to cry
I said
You remind me of when every year,
they let the whole river run dry
They can see what's all hiding down there
With the roof off it's hard to deny
Take a walk down to Teddington Lock,
you might get some ideas on the way
Have a good look at what lies beneath
Cos they're starting the draw-off today

From the Island, hear Frankie and Ben
with guitars out
As they sang the blues it made sense to me:
It reminds me of when every year,
they let the whole river run dry
I can see what's all hiding down there
In the sunshine it's hard to deny
I took the towpath to Richmond and yes,
I got some ideas on the way
I'll have a good look at what lies beneath
'cos I'm starting my draw-off today

Are you particularly proud of The Draw-Off? What was its inspiration?

That's the main song on the album I would say. Its ultimately about Twickenham, but I didn't want to come up with something too literal. The chorus came to me one day and I built the song around that. Its basically a love letter

to Twickenham; I've lived here nearly 25 years, I love it, I love the river. There's a little bit of meaning in there about looking beneath the surface; but I've left it a bit vague and I think its good for people to put their own interpretations on things.

What's next, another album?

I have tons and tons of songs. I already know what the next album is going to be and I'm definitely going to do another one in spring next year. This isn't just a one-off thing, it's the start of something. It will be a mix of sounds, but it won't just be a repeat. There'll be some rhythms and sounds that weren't on this one

Will you be performing your own music live?

100% yeah! I've got a band together to play the songs live. There are lots of open-air events in Twickenham next year and I'd love to get out there and play my stuff with a band. I'm happy to play covers, but there's no satisfaction like playing some of your own stuff.

Anything else you'd like to add for our readers?

The album is on streaming on Apple, Amazon and Spotify, but the guys in the Eel Pie Records shop kindly agreed to sell my digipack CD and it is now the best-selling album by any local artist they've ever had. So, thank you to anyone who bought the album!

View the David Anstruther website [HERE](#)

Vendetta is available on Spotify / Apple / Amazon etc and in low price CD Digipak from Eel Pie Records in Church Street and the Eel Pie Island Museum on York Street.

Remembrance service in Radnor Gardens

By Doug Goodman

Crowds gathered by the war memorial in Radnor Gardens on Sunday to take part in the annual remembrance service.

After a service conducted by the Revd. Jeff Hopkin Williams from St. Mary's Church in Twickenham wreaths were placed on the memorial by veterans, council members and the public.



The Christmas Shopping Weekend returns to Orleans House Gallery

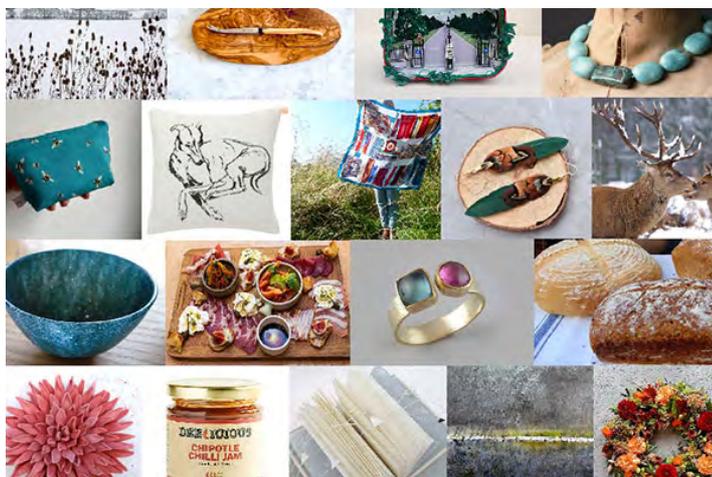
The hugely popular annual Christmas Shopping Weekend at Orleans House Gallery will return this year on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 December.

This year's event will run from 10am to 5pm each day, and will be bigger than ever before, showcasing over 40 independent makers, designers, artists and artisans selling their unique and often handmade products in addition to a delicious food market in the Stables Courtyard. There will also be festive musical performances throughout the weekend and creative sessions for the whole family.

The event will be free to attend and offers residents the opportunity to support small business and shop local, whilst enjoying a fun, free and festive family day out. The gallery exhibitions will remain open throughout the weekend, alongside the on-site café for snacks, festive treats, hot drinks and some warming mulled wine!

For more information you can visit the [gallery website](#), and updates and timings will be announced via social media in the run up to the event, so follow to stay up to date.

Please note there will be no on-site parking available across the weekend, but the 'Visit' section on the gallery website has all the information you need on other ways to get there.



Friends of Marble Hill seek new Committee members

The Friends of Marble Hill Committee is looking to relaunch to have the right blend of skills and knowledge to support updated objectives now that the Marble Hill Revived Programme is entering its final stages.

These objectives are to:

- Connect the local community and the Marble Hill site so they value, use and want to protect it
- Provide a communication channel to promote and receive feedback independently of English Heritage
- Recruit new members with a passion for Marble Hill who have experience of doing the following roles: Chair, Secretary (to take minutes of meetings and maintain the membership register) and people to join as General Committee members.

General Committee members are sought with skills and experience in: communications, including the management of social media and website design, market research, marketing and promotion, events management, education and volunteer management.

Candidates will stand for election at the Annual General Meeting on January 26 2022. An agenda and details of how to take part will be made available separately in early January.

If you are interested in knowing more about what being on the Committee involves or would like to stand for election as a Committee Member, please contact friends@friendsofmarblehill.org.uk by November 30 2021.



Kew

Kew Community Centre Christmas coffee morning raising funds for local charity
The Avenue Club and Kew Community Trust will hold their next coffee morning on Wednesday 1 December, in the main hall at the Kew Community Centre, TW9 2AJ. Everyone is invited to drop in for a friendly cuppa, from 10am to 12.30pm. Come alone or bring your friends (and well-behaved dogs are welcome too!). With the busy Christmas season coming why not take this chance to take a break from your usually Wednesday routine and come and join us?

View full details of the event [HERE](#)

Teddington

Teddington Christmas Lights Up

The Teddington Christmas lights will be turned on on Thursday 25 November with a special event for all residents.

After a tough 18 months, Teddington Together have worked extremely hard with both the traders and Council to ensure this year's Teddington Christmas Lights Up goes ahead and is better than ever.

Teddington Together have announced that for the first time ever Stanley Road will be joining Broad Street, High Street, The Causeway, Park Road and Church Road to make it bigger and better.

The High Street and Church Road will be closed at 3pm with the event starting at 5pm and the official lights being turned on at 6.30pm on the High Street. The roads will reopen at 9pm.

Check out this year's poster for full details of the event [HERE](#)

Barnes

Christmas cards in aid of local charities

Two new Christmas cards are available through St Mary's online shop this year with all money raised being shared with local charities including FiSH, Castlenau Community Centre, AGE UK and Glass Door.

Cards bought by residents living in SW13 and SW14 will be delivered free by volunteers. Outside this area the cards will be posted. Prices range from £5 down to as little as £1.50 per pack of 10 cards.

The card featured was painted by Anna de Polnay, member of the Barnes Artists Group, and depicts walkers with their dogs around a wintry Barnes Pond.

The second new card shows a colourful nativity scene and was designed and created as a window display by Eloise Christie, aged 9.

St Mary's Cookbook is also available via the shop for £2.50, along with a number of other cards. Buy online [HERE](#)

NOVEMBER FOOD AND DRINK NEWS

Quite a Scottish theme for this column, as of course, it's St Andrew's Day at the end of November.

Thistly Cross Cider is made in Dunbar and already enjoys a massive following with cider aficionados. The company has just launched two cider liqueurs – a first for Scotland – and they're really smooth and not sickly sweet. Both varieties have an abv of 20%, and are blended with the cider maker's real fruit, slow-fermented ciders. Traditional Cider Liqueur is warming, delicious and can be sipped on its own or with ginger ale. Scottish Fruits has the company's Scottish Fruits cider (elderflowers, blackcurrants, strawberries and apple), can be drunk solus or lengthened with elderflower pressé or more cider. In 50cl bottles with presentation box £28.75 (free UK delivery) from thistlycrosscider.co.uk they'll certainly warm your winter evenings or make a lovely gift.



To Edinburgh now, and Port of Leith Distillery, for a really delicious, multi award-winning Scottish gin: **Lind & Lime**. If the beautiful bottle isn't enough to tempt you, its contents will! London Dry in style, with juniper at the forefront, there are hints of lime and pink peppercorns. All ingredients are certified organic and the bottle has a natural cork stopper. It really is a lovely, smooth, deliciously complex gin (44% abv) produced and bottled at the Tower Street Stillhouse in Leith. [£35 for 70cl](#)

We couldn't leave out whisky, the best known Scottish tippie: The **Glenrothes 12 year old** is a top example of careful cask finishing in former sherry barrels. Part of the Soleo Collection, the range takes its name from the sun drying of grapes in sherry production. This smooth single malt has golden malt, toffee and stem ginger notes, complemented by rich dried fruit and spice nuances. It has a long, sweetish finish with a lingering spice. £38.75 (70 cl 40% abv) this fabulous, ultra smooth, whisky is available from [Master of Malt](#).



While enjoying these lovely drinks, one really should enjoy a rather special snack, and I've found a range of nuts that one usually finds in top hotels, like The Savoy, Claridge's and The Ritz. The multi award-winning range of nuts from **Cambrook Foods** is now available in gift sets, just in time for festive indulgence. These nuts are extraordinarily good and varieties such as Baked Truffle (a selection of different nuts) and Hickory Smoked Seasoned Almonds and Cashews take the cocktail hour to another level! Gift packs are available from £14 Lakeland, NOTHS, Yumbles and other sites including of course [Cambrook Foods](#). After all, a good drink deserves the best accompaniments!

Bonne Maman, a name already associated with top quality preserves and desserts, has introduced two unusual and rather tasty chutneys: Violet Fig with Shallot, and Onion with Sichuan Pepper. Full of flavour and subtle contrasts, they'll add a certain 'je ne sais quoi' to a festive cheese or charcuterie board. Available now in Waitrose and Sainsbury's, Bonne Maman Chutneys are £2.60 for a 210g jar.



Christmas in Church Street

By Shona Lyons of the Church Street Association

CHRISTMAS IN CHURCH STREET
TWICKENHAM
21 November 12 until 6pm

CHURCH STREET
Twickenham

FACE PAINTING ★ BALLOON MODELLING
★ STREET FOOD ★ FESTIVE CHEER
JEWELLERY ★ POTTERY ★ PUNCH & JUDY
★ STALLS ★ CAROLS ★ MUSIC ★
ARTS & CRAFTS ★ @ChurchStTwicker

There will be lots of things to look forward to this Sunday at our craft fair in [Church Street of Twickenham](#)! Organised by the Church Street Association Church Street of Twickenham, it will be on the same day as the [Discover Twickenham Lights On](#) event taking place at the stage by Barclays Bank, and also the wonderful Church Street Businesses will be getting into the spirit with exciting offers and displays, so with all the crafts on offer too, this will be a great day for Christmas Shopping!

Here is a little insight into the stalls and activities that you will find at the craft fair that day:

1. Janey from [JLT Crafty Designs](#) Designs a long standing local crafter and many times a stall holder at the fair who loves making things with her hands. & [Classic Becca](#) selling Lifestyle and home accessories handmade in her West London Twickenham home studio with an Eclectic range of art, crafts and textiles.

2. Kelly from [@Nastore Shop](#) with hand made &

holistic scented candles and soaps free from any harmful additives or palm oil and without any plastic packaging. Many specially designed with Christmas Gift giving in mind.

3. Amy Francis & Michael Clements and the good folk from [RNLI Teddington Lifeboat Station](#) Charity, please give generously to these local heroes who give their time selflessly to save others.
4. Geoff & Kathryn Malvis from [Twickenham Gin](#) Artisan producers of small batch gin. They have gone back to the early days of London Dry Gin and the birth of rugby to craft their recipe.
5. Mark Planck from The Crunch Crew a. Local Twickenham Jeweller specializing in silver.
6. Djamel Cheurfa from his own company [La crepe des delices](#) a favourite at our fairs, who feeds everyone including the hungry bands!
7. [Claudia A Moretti](#) local & very accomplished Richmond Potter & artist. Here she has brought lots of her exquisite pottery pieces all heavily inspired by the local nature of trees and leaves etc found in landscapes on her doorstep.
8. Diane Denham [Diane Denham Designs](#) a Twickenham crafter and regular frequenter of local craft fairs with her beautifully designed handmade purses and bags, with great attention to detail and quality using stunning & eye catching materials.
9. Ebru Alkanat who was born in Istanbul. She graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Textile Arts in 2000 going on to complete a master's degree at Marmara University, Institute of Fine Arts. She worked as a design director for some of the leading garment brands in Turkey & has received awards from the British Council Alkanat

reflects her works on sustainable textile and natural fabric to her collections.

10. Local Twickenham Charity [Porridge and Rice](#) - fighting poverty through education - feeding and nutrition programme - holistic support to improve conditions for very poor children in Kenya. Raising money from hand made crafts of soap, cards, earrings and other crafts.
11. [Monkey Sox](#) James + Lianne, husband + wife. James is a doctor, Lianne a designer. Following James diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in July 2016 they wanted to create an inspiring way to raise awareness and funds for the MS community. Launching in September 2018, they committed themselves to inspire an active lifestyle for all and open conversations about MS. Monkey Sox are designed to be odd but co-ordinated. This represents how the body acts and feels different left to right when living with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Their technical yarns and constructions allow you to enjoy the benefits of optimal comfort and support so you can focus on your best performance yet. 50% OF PROFITS DONATED. So far they have donated over £16,000 to their 3 partner Multiple Sclerosis charities to fund research, care and lifestyle support.
12. Sarah Jane Meagher with her stall for her company @Animal care and pet therapy, Animal lover and healer; ex vet nurse; Student with the Healing Animals Organisation. She is selling lots of pet treats and snacks as well as promoting her pet therapy company.
13. Artist @Natasha Shah Liptich another regular frequenter of Church Street Craft fairs with her art works inspired by children
14. Famous local artists Simon and Sheba CASSINI from Eel pie Island. Simon Cassini. They will have lots of Tea towels and painted pots and cups and plates etc all beautiful designed and painted with their take on Twickenham iconic scenes
15. Local Charity [Crossway Pregnancy Crisis Centre](#) was founded in 1999, to support women and their partners facing the trauma of an unplanned pregnancy or pregnancy loss. They became a charity in 2005. Based in Twickenham they work in the boroughs of Richmond, Hounslow and Kingston.
16. [Alessandra Muin](#) another regular in our craft fairs providing delicious Italian Street Food from her company @Fruliamo
17. [Flutes and Fizz Prosecco Van hire](#) serve an array of deliciously crafted cocktails, wine, Spirits and draught beer or cider from their beautifully converted 3-wheel Piaggio Ape fitted with a finely-tuned fizz dispenser, creating perfectly chilled sparkling wine, on tap!
18. [Shona Lyons](#) Lyons who makes hand crafted and bespoke cards from a wide range of materials. She like to use quite expensive materials to craft her cards that often take several days in the making. Also sharing her stall is Dave Hobbs a local wood craftsman who make beautiful handcrafted wooden cups, bowels and other wooden table ware and utensils.
19. Jackie Shields and her own face Painting Company @About Faces, and also @Graham Lee's Magic will also be there with his popular balloon Modelling a small donation would be appreciated to help the Church Street Association Church Street of Twickenham with funds for this event.
20. Maggie who is taking over from ToesandKnees. She was a very good friend of the recently deceased Tony and has decided to take his shop on and will be selling vintage clothing which is her passion.
21. [St Margaret's Elastic Band](#) the Square at 1.30pm and [Richmond Music Trust](#) with Christmas carols and popular jazz numbers both conducted by local impresario Roger Perrin.
22. Punch & Judy by the @LondonPunch. He will be towards the bottom part of the street near the church where there is more room, and has brought his Victorian themed Punch Booth and Puppets for Christmas themed Punch and Judy shows at 12pm and 1pm and 2.30pm.

Shops open late

CHURCH ROAD

Pony rides from Park Lane Stables

Outdoor stalls

Abercorn Arms - Santa's Grotto and live music.

Roan Records - Live music, coffee, beers and wine.

Sidra - Live falafel making demonstration and samples.

Vidatherapy - 20mins mini treatments for £15 - reflexology, head, neck and shoulder massage. Lucky dip for the kids. £5 off vouchers for 2022. 20% discount on Vidatherapy products.

BROAD STREET

Bar Estillo - 'Afternoon in Paris' jazz band playing live.

Happy Potter - Design your own stockings workshop 4pm - 7pm.

Hogarth - 45's band playing live.

Simply Skin - Offering 10% off all products.

Ribs & Burgers - Serving mulled wine and milkshakes.

Teddington Carpets - Raffle to win hampers and selling Charlie Gard merchandise and cupcakes.

Sims - Serving Christmas nibbles.

FIELD LANE

The Builders Arms - Live music from Jason Darling. Kid's activities in their special Christmas garden. Surprise visit by Santa. Mince pies and mulled wine.

STANLEY ROAD

Stanley School Choir singing outside Premier Wines at 4.45pm

Clarendon Choir singing outside Premier Wines at 5.30pm

Caffe Toscana - Opening late and serving hot drinks.

John Barbers - Opening late

Perfect Pooch & You - Open till 7pm. 10% off all bookings made on the night for the following week. Serving mulled wine and mince pies.

Phil Irwin - Open late and serving mince pies and giving away balloons.

Teddington Con Club - Indoor market, bottle tombola, silent auction, face painting and live music.

The Red Lion - Serving mulled wine and mince pies

York Pet Suppliers - Opening late

PARK ROAD

Teddington Rugby Club stall handing out balloons

The Park - Fire engine from Twickenham Station located outside. Live music from Salvation Army Band and Carl Speck's Community Choir

The Adelaide - Serving mulled wine

VICTORIA ROAD

The Railway - Steak and mussels night along with special cocktails.



#TLU2021

WWW.TEDDINGTONTOGETHER.ORG



Teddington Xmas Lights Up

25 NOVEMBER 2021
5.00PM - 8.30PM

LIGHTS SWITCHED ON BY
CELEBRITY PAUL MERSON &
DEPUTY MAYOR OF RICHMOND
ELMFIELD GARDEN
6.00PM - 6.30PM

ORGANISED BY



ILLUSTRATION BY HELEN TRAVERS. PRINTED BY ACTION GRAPHICS

What's On

ELMFIELD GARDENS STAGE (OUTSIDE SORTING OFFICE)

- 5.30pm - Event begins
- 5.35pm - Performance from OKMT
- 6.00pm - Carl Speck Community Choir
- 6.30pm - Lights turned on
- 6.40pm - Performance from singer Claire Bender
- 7.25pm - The fabulous Faketan Band
- 8.30pm - Event ends



CHURCH ROAD STAGE

Live music from local artists:

- Jesse Rose
- Von Harle
- Donya Pearl
- Alan Dublon
- Tina Keet
- Mayan
- Acoustic Loose Rooster
- Unstill Waters

LANDMARK ARTS CENTRE

- The Harlequins Rugby stall
- Local artisan makers
- Richmond Art Society
- Winter expo opening
- Dragon Drama performing

Fire engine outside The Park
5.30pm - 6.30pm

TEDDINGTON CON CLUB INDOOR MARKET
STANLEY ROAD

Stalls including

- Axelina Productions
- Cuppa Chai
- Fenton Yard Flowers
- Fudge Delights
- German Sausage
- Green Sparrow Foods
- Handmade Soaps
- Illustrations by Heather
- Jo Chastys Creations
- Marmalade Care
- Pipsy Duffy
- Scentsy
- Silk Scarves
- Spanish Gastro Larder
- The League of Friends
- The Sugar Boy
- Toast Deli

Bottle Tombola

Silent auction

Face painting

Live music from

- The Wensleydale Band
- Holt 45's

Shops open late

HIGH STREET

Children's rides

Outdoor stalls

RNLI Crew - located opposite M&S.

Teddington Choral Society outside Dexters.

RUILS stall selling Richmond Borough Monopoly Game next to the Teddington Arms.

United Response stall in front of Cedar Car Park.

Richmond Music Trust Jazz Band playing outside Shambles

100 High Street - Open later. Special offers on the night

114 - Serving gin and hot gin punch. Cento Uno pop up serving Panozzos.

Budgens - Live music from The Clique Duo, Krispy Krems Donuts and raising funds for the Clc Sergeant charity.

Cafe Benedict - Festive spiced hot chocolate with toasted marshmallows (with rum for the adults) and Xmas ginger bread treats. Xmas cocktails.

Chase Buchanan - Prosecco, mince pies, balloons and decorate the gingerbread man.

Collecterie - Serving fizz and Christmas spiced biscuits.

Dexters - Colouring competition for children to collect. Guess the house price. Mince pies, sweets and mulled wine.

Fallow Deer - Olliv's Donuts for one night only! Serving mulled wine, gin and cider, plus foodie treats and gifts.

Featherstone Leigh - Mulled wine, pin the nose on the reindeer/heart on grinch. Christmas cooking for the kids. All funds raised will go to Great Ormond Street.

Girasole - Hot Italian toddlers and hot chocolate for kids. 6pm - 9pm food promos. £30 for two includes sharing plate with a glass of wine each or £20pp for starter and pasta or baked dish with a glass of wine.

Hampton Estate Agents - Real reindeers outside. Serving mulled wine and popcorn.

Heirloom - Monkey Sox stall located outside the front of the shop.

Holmes & Daughters - Memorial Christmas Tree will be available for families to place a tag in memory of a loved one.

House of Cats - Free glass of Prosecco with every shellac treatment on the night.

King's Arms - Selling hotdogs, burgers and mulled cider outside the front of the pub.

King's Head - Serving mulled wine and Peroni from the terrace.

La Pesca - Serving pumpkin soup, Baileys hot chocolate and a selection of festive cocktails.

Montpellier - Playing vintage 78 records on a 1907 gramophone and promoting gifts for £10.

Nicholls Jewellery - 10% off on the night.

Nova Fortuny - joining forces in store with **The Wharf Restaurant** serving fizz and canapés from 6-8pm. Exclusive discounts available. Please contact Nova Fortuny or The Wharf for special invitation.

Piazza Firenze - Serving slices of pizza for donations to Shooting Stars Charity

Refill Larder - 10% off on the night.

Ruba - Live Chawarma cooking.

Shambles - Serving mulled Vermouth and Chiacchiere. 10% off Flascanaro Panettone, all flavours and sizes.

Starbucks - Open till 9pm and serving free drink samples.

Studio 148 - 20% off on menswear and 10% off accessories. Live music from Maisie Johnson.

Teddington Hardware - DJ live music.

The British Legion - Open evening to look around club. Mulled wine on sale. Make a donation for a baked potato.

The Cut - Serving wine to parents and candy for the kids.

The Dress - Live models in the window.

The Good Wine Shop - Serving mulled wine outside and wine bar inside running as usual. Discounted Christmas cases on show.

Teddington Arms - Serving mulled cider/wine

Toni & Guy - 10% off products, electrics and hair brushes.

Waterstones - Opening late

Wonderlust - Offering Prosecco and discounts to customers.

Reindeers outside Hamptons Estate Agent



Radiant Vermin

by Philip Ridley

Progress Company at Progress Theatre, Reading until 20th October

Radiant Vermin is a morality tale, in which a young couple are offered a free house in a rundown estate by the mysterious Mrs Dee. The house needs a lot of work. No problem for a young couple, you would think, notwithstanding that Jill has a baby on the way. Except that they need it done quickly and their DIY skills aren't really up to it. This is all well and good until the husband, Ollie accidentally kills a vagrant whom he finds in the kitchen. There is, of course, a minute's consternation (66.6 seconds to be precise) before a piece of magic happens and the kitchen is transformed. They realise that the entire house can be done out, room by room, provided someone dies in each room. There are a lot of homeless vagrants around, and so plenty of people who could die without too many questions being asked.



With the baby on the way, the couple naturally want the best for their child, but how far are they prepared to go to provide it? It would be a completely different play if they hadn't gone all the way, of course. But the question asked is how different are we? Who hasn't made an immoral choice to make their lives better? Arguably, we do it all the time, and if, as Jill and Ollie do, they consider the vagrants worthless people, who would miss a few?

This play is uproariously funny in places ...ouch, making us question our materialism very effectively. The play also required a certain amount of audience participation. We were asked to vote, for example, on whether the next death should go towards a new nursery, or a garage for the Lamborghini that had been magicked into existence.

nursery, or a garage for the Lamborghini that had been magicked into existence.

Everyone has his price

Read Nick Swyft's review at www.markaspen.com/2021/11/13/radiant-vermin

Photography by Mark Peace



The Dragon of Wantley

by John Frederick Lampe, libretto by Henry Carey
Richmond Opera, at Normansfield Theatre

Take a bawdy mediaeval poem about a raging dragon and a drunken knight, rewrite as an early Georgian burlesque opera, mount in a beautifully bijou mid-Victorian theatre, for a 21st Century audience; then you know you are in for a now-for-something-completely-different experience. Richmond Opera calls it “bonkers”.



Johann Friedrich Lampe came from Hanover with Handel to a successful music career in England.

Lampe’s biggest London hit was his 1737 *The Dragon of Wantley*, a risqué comic opera, a spoof on the Italian opera conventions and a political satire. The production was the biggest success of the time, beating even *The Beggar’s Opera*, which is far better known today.



The Dragon of Wantley is based on an ancient folk ballad about a fearsome dragon, living in the Peak District, which devours everything. A drunken womanising knight, Moore of Moore Hall, emboldened with the promise of a beautiful young maiden’s favours, slays the monster. Wearing a special suit of armour bristling with spikes, he kills the dragon with a well-aimed kick at the only part of the dragon’s body not protected with scales, as the ballad puts it ... in his “arse-gut”! Baritone George Priestly,

who plays Moore is too slim to be a Falstaff and too young to be a Don Quixote, but his acting pulls in something of each, and he clearly enjoys playing the roué. When it comes to the battle, he eschews a spear in favour of “six quarts of ale and one of *aqua vitae*”. (That is 70 units!) But he has his bespoke armour, as spikey as a silvered conker shell.

When *The Dragon* finally appears, one feels almost sorry for the poor beast. After the big puff (so to speak) he has had, he is not quite the anthropophagous monster we were led to believe. Lampe’s genius is to score *The Dragon* for a countertenor. Mark Fletcher is superb as *The Dragon*, the clarity of his voice having a hint of pathos. After a struggle, the fatal blow in the fundament does it for *The Dragon*. The creature’s dying words (“... your toe”) hang in the air long after his demise.

Read Mark Aspen’s review at www.markaspen.com/2021/11/15/dragon-wantley

Photography by David Dearlove



The Ghost Train

by Arnold Ridley

The Questors, at the Judi Dench Playhouse, Ealing until 20th November

As Marie Curie famously said, “Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood.” But can you keep your head when surrounded by the inexplicable? That is, in some ways, the theme of *The Ghost Train* - if a comedy thriller can be said to have anything as grandiose as a theme. The play was originally written in the 1920s and has been in almost constant production since, both on stage and screen. The three act structure is an anthology of genres: a comedy of manners instigated by the overnight stranding of six passengers in an out-of-the way station; a ghost story; and a good old fashioned thriller.



This production leans heavily into the spooky, and also relishes the opportunity for a bit of sumptuous costume drama. In fact the entire venue pays homage to the heyday of the railway, and the Grapevine Bar is offering themed cocktails - the All Change and the Ghost-tini - that definitely added to the atmosphere, if not to the ease of composing this review the next morning!

This production will delight anyone who enjoys a classic Christie. There are several clues for those with a sleuthsome bent and, as in the best mysteries, a red herring or two drawn across the tracks. Despite the genre-blending and the comic elements, playwright Arnold Ridley - and director Simon Rudkin - play absolutely fair with Knox’s rules of detective fiction. And while the play admits of a supernatural explanation, with a lovely reference to Conan

Doyle, it acts as a timely reminder that those who would seek to terrify you often have their own ends in sight.

And regarding the cocktails: beware the Ghost-tini. It may be sweet and sparkling, but it packs a wallop.

Read Emma Byrne’s review at www.markaspen.com/2021/11/13/ghost-train

Photography by Robert Vass





HMS Pinafore

by Arthur Sullivan, libretto by W. S. Gilbert

Opera Anywhere, The Players Theatre, Thame, 13th November then on tour until June 2022

“We sail the ocean blue” ... Well, crossed the Chilterns actually. Saturday’s port was Thame where Opera Anywhere offloaded its cargo to a packed audience, a rollicking performance of *HMS Pinafore*. Beware, its songs are the material of ear worms. Like it or not you will leave the theatre humming them.



The ‘Ruler or the Queen’s Naveee’, The Right

Hon Sir Joseph Porter (Mike Woodward) is to marry Captain Corcoran’s (Sam Young) beautiful daughter Josephine (Catrin Lewis), but she is in love with one of the sailors, Ralph Ratstraw (Tristan Stocks), who also loves her. Sir Joseph might be an obvious villain, but *HMS Pinafore* is not intended to take sides in the class war of the time, and he is presented as a well-meaning bumbling fool in G&S’s gentle lampoon.



The real villain is Dick Deadeye (Mark Horner) who attempts to thwart the plans of the lovers. The rest of the cast, in the shape of the remainder of the crew of the Pinafore (Maciek O’Shea), Sir Joseph’s ‘aunts, sisters and cousins’ (Hannah Ambrose) and of course ‘Little Buttercup’ (Vanessa Woodward), provided excellent comedic support.

However one cannot marry below one’s station, and after a bit of class shuffling appropriate spouses are found for all. Sir Joseph marries his first cousin Hebe (Freya Jacklin) rather than the beautiful Josephine, the former Captain Corcoran can now marry his ‘Little Buttercup’, and Josephine, of course, marries Ralph, newly promoted to Captain. Thus we can all leave with the requisite feel-good glow. Whether they remain happily married or not after such hasty courtships is a subject for a different kind of drama, and we are not to know if the Pinafore then foundered on rocks because Ralph knew nothing about being a ship’s captain.

Music Director and pianist Nia Williams, together with Nick Planas on various wind instruments, were good enough to make one wonder why a full orchestra was ever needed.

Read Nick Swyft’s review at www.markaspen.com/2021/11/15/pinafore-oa

Photography by John Alcock



Stones in His Pockets

by Marie Jones

Teddington Theatre Club at Hampton Hill Theatre until 20th November

Hollywood has come to Hampton, as two extras muddle through the filming of a costume drama in County Kerry, Ireland. Over the course of two hugely enjoyable acts, *Stones in his Pockets* deflates every romantic notion you have ever had about film-making, painfully, plausibly.

Given that the setting is a film with a cast of hundreds, it's appropriate that this play has a cast of two, playing dozens.



Brendan Leddy plays Charlie, a video shop manager driven out of business by a corporate competitor, who has packed a tent and left his home to “do Ireland”, washing up on the film set apparently by chance. Ian Kinane plays Jake, a local man with a restless soul. Both Jake and Charlie are played to perfection, two laddish men in their 30s who drink and exchange banter and ogle the actresses. They both begin the play apparently carefree, but it becomes evident that both are deeply dissatisfied with their aimless lives.

But while Jake and Charlie are both a pleasure to watch, Ian and Brendan also play a dozen other characters, switching effortlessly into fresh personas with a little twirl, and an instant shift in stance and voice.

As a result of the minimalist staging, the transitions between characters and between scenes are instantaneous and the pace is blistering. Wesley Henderson Roe's direction never lets the energy drop once, the two actors only pause for laughs, which come frequently.

But as it progresses, the play begins to explore the impact that the Hollywood production is having on the small farming community. However, instead of picking an easy villain, *Stones in his Pockets* tells a wider story of dwindling prospects for young men.

This this is a top-notch production of a splendid play.



Read Andrew Lawston's review at www.markaspen.com/2021/11/18/stones-rvvl

Photography by Sarah J Carter

TRAVELLER'S TALES 110

MEMORABLE BEACHES



Doug Goodman recalls some of his favourite beaches

Most foreign business travel consists of transfers to a city hotel then an exhibition or conference with little time to relax and see the sights. The advantage of working in the travel business is that you travel to the hotels and resorts that you might well choose for your own holiday. To write about a place and take travel press to see the destinations requires advance knowledge and so I was fortunate to see many beautiful locations during 50 years of globe-trotting. Some hold happy child-hood memories, some have great historic interest and other are simply perfect for their sun, sea and sand.



Fossils from Lyme



Greatstone in Kent



Evacuation from Dunkirk



Normandy Invasion

Lyme Regis on the Dorset/Devon border is my favourite place for long weekend breaks. It has the famous Cobb harbour dating from the 13th century, two small beaches and long rocky ones where you can find fossils. If you search the area between Lyme and Charmouth at low tide you're almost certain to find an ammonite or a belemnite- especially after a rough sea. Above, part of the beach is a former Victorian tip where all sorts of scrap iron, pottery, bottles and other rubbish falls onto the rocks below. I have found many coins and musket balls while searching the area. In Kent I enjoyed the wilderness of Romney Marsh and the wind-swept beach at Greatstone where at low tide the sea seems to recede to the horizon. I spent happy holidays there from age 2 to 16 playing in the sand dunes and swimming in the sea. I remember finding barbed wire and shrapnel left over from the defences against invasion in 1940 and removing part of a crashed German fighter buried in the sand.



Mallorca, Hotel BonSol



Costa Blanca, Benidorm



Kefalonia, Myrto Beach

Abroad, but quite close to home after a DFDS ferry crossing from Dover, is the famous evacuation beach. Here in 1940, as Germany conquered France, 338,000 Allied troops were evacuated by British warships and the 'Little Ships' from Dunkirk. The wide sandy beaches are popular with the locals for

sporting activities and ideal for children. Another historic area is Normandy where 156,000 troops landed on five beaches on June 6th 1944 to begin the liberation of Europe. I attended a very moving ceremony on Juno Beach on the 74th anniversary of the D-Day landings and visited Arromanches to see the remains of the wartime Mulberry Harbour.

Mallorcan beaches can be quite crowded in high season but there's one spot which is tranquil, where you can relax by the waterside with a drink and a book. The Hotel Bonsol in Illetas is family-run and it's a special place I've been visiting for 40 years. If you like busy night-life and crowded beaches then Benidorm on Spain's Costa Blanca is the place to be. It's moved upmarket in recent years and caters for every taste. Its beaches are very safe, have Blue Flag awards, lifeguards and sea-going chairs for disabled visitors. The beach at Myrtos in Kefalonia is reached by a narrow winding road or a long walk but the effort is rewarded by the sight of golden sands and a crystal-clear sea. It's been named as one of the world's most beautiful beaches. In the film Captain Corelli's Mandolin, starring Penelope Cruz, John Hurt and Nicolas Cage, the scene where a mine explodes on a beach was filmed at Myrtos.

TROPICAL PLACES

Three tropical beaches are on my 'must return to' list. After a hot, dusty four day safari in Kenya the clean sandy beaches of the Indian Ocean, near Mombassa, were welcome places to relax. Locals sold hand-carved souvenirs, camels could be hired and boat trips to snorkel or scuba dive were plentiful. The Seychelles, south-east of Kenya must rate as the ultimate tropical islands. The beaches are perfect and the palms trees provide shade from the burning sun. Watch out for falling coconuts! Light aircraft will take you to remote islands to see exotic birds, giant tortoises and steamy jungles. Coral litters the beach and the clear blue sea is about 32 degrees centigrade. Accommodation ranges from cottages with thatched roofs to luxury hotels, Lizards kept me company in my room and giant spiders – quite harmless I was assured – spun webs in the nearby trees.



Kenya



Seychelles



India, Tamil Nadu



Canada, Cortes Island

On a tour of the State of Tamil Nadu on India's east coast in the Bay of Bengal there were vast sandy beaches between Mammalapuram and Pondicherry – the town with interesting French influence. No habitation was apparent for miles and then a fishing boat on the sand and tiny villages by the sea would come into view. The legacy of Pondicherry's French colonial past is seen in the architecture, street signs, police uniforms and some of the best croissants to be found outside France. Its beaches were best avoided.

Cortes Island is my final favourite spot with its pebbly beaches covered with sea-smoothed driftwood and large numbers of oysters to collect. Cortes is on the Canadian Pacific Coast a day's journey by three ferries and a very long drive or a 50 minute flight from Vancouver. On a headland above the sea, facing east towards the Rockies, friends had built a cabin as a holiday home. Watching whales and seals passing through the inland waterway, eagles fishing, and drinking the local Okanagan wine with barbecued oysters was idyllic and so peaceful that it was difficult to leave after four days to head north toward Alaska for bear watching and visits to First Nation communities.

It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas

Travel news by Bruce Lyons



Well, I hope Bing Crosby is right.

Around us Christmas Trees are going up over the Shops, and shop windows are full of Festive Fayre. This weekend we have "Lights On" and the thoroughfares are all sparkling with lights.

Many of our clients are again hopeful of meeting up with Friends and relatives, at this special time of year. Be careful though – as the scientists keep telling us – we are not out of the woods yet.

The good news is that the NHS app will now display your booster – an innovation that may prove valuable as many countries are now insisting on having three jabs, as always read the small print & the different rules for children.

The other important thing to note is that some countries are having surges of infections like Austria that has gone back into lockdown or Morocco, which has suddenly denied entry to highly infected countries – like ours!

But for now Dear Reader many destinations are open – Best for short haul Winter Warmth is the Red Sea Countries – Egypt, Jordan and Israel & The Canary Islands, these are all good to go at last. Israel is a really good choice with that wonderful mix of Ancient and Modern cultures and it's 4 seas; The Dead Sea, The Red Sea, The Mediterranean and The Sea of Galilee and their different climates too.

Why not spend Holiday Time in the eclectic cities of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Eilat, all perfect for short stays or try the Beaches of Sharm and Hurghada – enjoy snorkelling in Coral Seas or diving in magical undersea; Learn to Dive in Eilat, not without reason dubbed "The Underwater Classroom of the World. Visit Petra, the fabled Nabatean City or Wadi Rum & The Pillar of Wisdom immortalised by Lawrence of Arabia.



Need it hotter? short haul is Gambia, a good bet for value sun or further afield the following are now open; Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Dubai are all good as is Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

There's a lot of choice – even The United States of America. But don't be surprised if prices are a bit higher than you expected, hopefully you have put a bit aside for your special celebration.

Skiing is still on though perhaps not Austria, but it seems likely that Italy, Switzerland, France and Spain will be OK or Canada which is having great offers in Whistler, their award-winning destination.

Don't forget, when booking, check the rules – but every operator now offers similar attractive conditions, similar to BA's Book with Confidence. Summer 2022 – Heavily booked is all I can say, people are desperate for a change of scenery, not surprising really!

Bruce (Crusader Travel 58 Church Street 0208 744 0474)

WIZ Tales - Climate Change and Polynesian Islands

By Teresa Read

This week I shall look at three Polynesian islands which I have not covered in this column, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Wallis and Futuna.



Cook Islands



Niue



Wallis and Futuna

The **Cook Islands**, which has the world's largest marine reserve, consists of fifteen islands spread over more than seven hundred and seventy thousand square miles in the South Pacific. These islands will become increasingly affected by climate change: rising sea levels, flooding and more violent storms

<https://worldinfozone.com/gallery.php?country=CookIslands>

Niue is an island between Tonga and the Cook Islands and was formed over an inactive undersea volcano. Niue is one of world's largest coral islands; protected areas include Anono Marine Reserve.

Like many islands, climate change would threaten Niue's underground freshwater supplies and cyclones will become more frequent and more severe.

<https://worldinfozone.com/gallery.php?country=Niue>

Wallis and Futuna consists of Wallis Island (Ile Uvea), Futuna Island (Ile Futuna), Ile Alofi and twenty islets in Oceania.

Only a small part of the original forest remains on Wallis and Futuna with Futuna particularly prone to erosion. Coral bleaching is a serious threat.

A number of people from Wallis and Futuna have moved to New Caledonia, mainly to find employment.

<https://worldinfozone.com/gallery.php?country=WallisFutuna>

New Caledonia



<https://worldinfozone.com/facts.php?country=NewCaledonia>

Local singer-songwriter wins Powerjam Young Songwriter's Competition

My name is Elizabeth Pass and I'm a 16-year-old local singer-songwriter. I recently won the first prize (worth £1,000!) at the Young Songwriter's Competition, launched by Powerjam, a Twickenham based not-for-profit rock & pop band project for ages 9-18 led by music industry professionals.

My original song, 'Now I'm Falling', will be released on all streaming platforms on December 1st, through Powerjam Recordings.

My music teacher encouraged me to enter the competition. I didn't really believe that anything would really come out of it, so it was a completely unexpected surprise to find out I won a professional recording and release of my original song! I remember my mum coming in to tell me and it just didn't feel real!

Written during the pandemic, 'Now I'm Falling' echoes the feeling of nostalgia for the simpler times and the intense desire to reconnect with someone you love.



For more details and to hear 'Now I'm Falling', please visit:

<https://www.powerjambands.com/nifepk>

and follow Powerjam:

www.instagram.com/@powerjam_band_project

www.youtube.com/powerjambandproject

www.facebook.com/powerjambandproject



REMEMBER! THE POST BOX

By Doug Goodman

On November 23rd 1852 the first pillar box was erected in Jersey. Today there seems to be one on almost every street corner and it's estimated that 100,000 exist in the UK.

Let's hope that at some time in the future we don't have to 'remember' the post box. As communication by text and email grows the use of the post box for letters and postcards decreases. The existence of the phone box is under threat as mobile phones remove the need for pay phones. Some phone boxes it's reported are never used. And now there's a move to preserve the iconic red phone box. Perhaps there's a need to start a 'protect our post boxes' campaign.

Post boxes come in different shapes and sizes and in Twickenham we have the full range: from Victorian specimens to a gold box in honour of local Olympic star Mo Farah. If you think of the work involved in collecting, sorting, transporting and delivering our mail then the cost of a first class stamp is good value. But we've come a long way from the first box in Jersey and the original penny post. When you post your letter in your local box on Tuesday wish it a happy 169th birthday. By Doug Goodman.



Woodland Trust to establish new 70-acre woods for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

A plan to create dozens of 70-acre woods in celebration of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 has been unveiled by the Woodland Trust.

The United Kingdom's largest woodland conservation charity is calling on landowners to help mark Her Majesty's 70-year reign as part of The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) – a unique tree-planting initiative which is inviting people from across the UK to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'.

Creating up to 70 'Platinum Jubilee Woods' supports the Woodland Trust's long-term mass scale woodland ambitions and will help tackle the climate and nature crisis.

"This is an exciting and ambitious project that will be a fitting way to celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service," said Dr Darren Moorcroft, chief executive of the Woodland Trust.

"We want landowners to play a crucial role in this incredible initiative which will not only be a fantastic living and growing legacy for Her Majesty but will also help fight climate change and create essential new woodland habitats."



The QGC is encouraging everyone to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees during the official planting season until March 2022, with tree planting to start again in October through to the end of the Jubilee year.

Colonel Dan Rex, chief executive of The Queen's Green Canopy, said: *"We are delighted that our partners, the Woodland Trust, are leading this significant and ambitious contribution to The Queen's Green Canopy. We appeal to all landowners who may have land available to support this important initiative."*

As part of its 70-acre woods plan, the Woodland Trust will offer expert advice on planting the right trees in the right place, as well as guidance on management, financial support and grant applications.

Trees can play a huge part in tackling climate change and the Woodland Trust is aiming to establish at least 50 million new trees by 2025.

Dr Moorcroft continued: *"Not only do we need more trees, what we have are still at risk and nature is in decline. The woods and trees we establish today will join our army of existing trees which are working tirelessly to clean our air, improve our mental health and capture carbon – as well as providing safe places for our wildlife to flourish. We remain one of the least wooded countries at 13% woodland cover, compared to an average of 37% in the rest of Europe. But we can all play a role in increasing tree numbers to help nature recover and to help tackle the climate crisis."*

Trees are only part of the solution in the ongoing fight to reduce global CO₂ emissions, but to help reach the UK government's 2050 target to become carbon net zero the UK's woodland cover needs to increase from 13% to at least 19%.

Woods and trees can help prevent flooding, cool city temperatures, reduce pollution and keep soil nutrient rich.

The UK is also facing a nature crisis. But restoring precious habitats and planting new native woodland with UK-grown trees, will extend and create havens for wildlife and boost biodiversity.

The Woodland Trust is a leading delivery partner of The Queen's Green Canopy. Schools and community groups are able to apply for up to three million free saplings in tree packs, through the Free Trees for Schools and Communities Scheme.

If you would like to get involved in the Woodland Trust's Platinum Jubilee Woods initiative, you can contact us to find out more by emailing QGCWoods@woodlandtrust.org.uk. Please send a brief description of the planned wood along with the location and a map.



**WOODLAND
TRUST**

FOOTBALL FOCUS

By James Dowden



BRENTFORD FC

UP NEXT FOR BRENTFORD

Opponent: Newcastle United (A) Saturday 20th November 15:00 St James' Park

Nickname: The Magpies

Competition: Premier League – Matchday 12

Opponent record: P11 W0 D5 L6 GF12 GA24 (19th in Premier League)

Manager: Eddie Howe



Interesting fact: Newcastle United's official club photographer in 1908, Gladstone Adams, on his way home from their FA Cup final, came up with the idea of windscreen wipers.

Hampton & Richmond Borough

Match abandoned after floodlight failure

Hampton & Richmond Borough saw their National League South fixture at the Beveree Stadium against Braintree Town abandoned after X number of minutes following a floodlight failure. The Beavers, who were trailing 1-0 at the time following a first half goal from Khale Da Costa, will be forced to play the match against after the lights were unable to be repaired. The rescheduled date for the game has been confirmed for Tuesday 7th December with a 7:45 kick off.



Beavers win against Romans

Bath City 1-3 Hampton & Richmond Borough

Hampton & Richmond Borough's long midweek trip to Bath was rewarded after the away side emerged victorious by a 3-1 score line. Goals from Niko Muir and Jake Gray put the Beavers in a strong position and despite a late strike from Jordan Dyer, Jerome Slew scored the third to round off the win and secure all three points.

The Beavers started the game well at a ground that they have traditionally struggled. Ryan Gondoh was dangerous in the early stages and his cross was diverted onto the post by Bath defender Zak Delaney as the home side survived an early scare.

The Romans themselves then hit the woodwork soon after. Joe Rayner struck the

crossbar and then Alan Julian made an excellent save to push Elliot Frear's strike from range.

With a little over five minutes to play in the first half the Beavers broke the deadlock through Muir. Tyrell Miller-Rodney claimed the assist as he put the cross in for Muir to finish clinically.

Things got even better for Hampton & Richmond seven minutes into the second half when Gray doubled their lead. A shot from Gondoh couldn't be held by goalkeeper Ryan Clarke and Gray was alive to the danger to make the simple finish.

The Romans did reduce the deficit with ten minutes to play when Alex Fletcher scored past Julian after a crossed had been whipped into the box.

In the end it proved to be a mere footnote as Slew sealed all three points minutes later. Miller-Rodney once more got the assist as his cross into the box following a pacy counterattack, which was finished off by Slew as the Beavers travelled back with all three points.

Beavers drawn against Plymouth Parkway in FA Trophy

Hampton & Richmond will make the long journey down to Plymouth for the Second Round Proper of the FA Trophy following the draw which paired them against Plymouth Parkway.

The Beavers will travel to Bolitho Park to take on the Southern League Division One South team as their FA Trophy campaign gets underway.

The tie is due to take place on Saturday 27th November with a 15:00 kick off.

UP NEXT FOR HAMPTON

Opponent: Billericay Town (H) Saturday 20th November 15:00 New Lodge

Nickname: Ricay, The Blues

Competition: National league South – Matchday 13

Opponent record: P13 W2 D1 L10 GF13 GA31 (21st in National League South)

Manager: Jody Brown

Interesting fact: They are the second most successful club in FA Vase history, having won the competition on three occasions.

England v South Africa - team announcement

Eddie Jones has named his England side to play South Africa this weekend.

England will take on the world champions at Twickenham Stadium on Saturday 20 November (3.15pm KO).

Courtney Lawes (blind-side flanker) will captain the side for a second time. Tom Curry (No. 8) and Henry Slade (outside centre) will be vice-captains. Jamie Blamire will start as hooker, with props Bevan Rodd and Kyle Sinckler joining him in the front row. Locks Maro Itoje and Jonny Hill complete the tight five and Sam Underhill is at open-side flanker.

Joe Marchant returns to the side on the right wing, Jonny May is on the left wing and Freddie Steward is at full back. Manu Tuilagi is at inside centre, Marcus Smith is at fly half and the side's most capped-player Ben Youngs (111) is at scrum half.

Hooker Nic Dolly could make his England debut, as he is named as a finisher – alongside Joe Marler, Will Stuart, Charlie Ewels, Sam Simmonds, Alex Dombrandt, Raffi Quirke and Max Malins.

Eddie Jones said: *"This is our biggest game of the season and the final game of the autumn campaign and we want to finish with a bang.*

"We've been really pleased with the preparation this week and how the team has continued to develop over the past month.

"Now we want to put on our best performance this autumn in front of a capacity 82,000 crowd at Twickenham."

The non-selected players will return to their clubs on Thursday, as per an agreement with clubs, PRL and the RPA.

England v South Africa is live on Amazon Prime Sport and TalkSPORT.

ENGLAND XV

15. Freddie Steward (Leicester Tigers, 4 caps)
14. Joe Marchant (Harlequins, 6 caps)
13. Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs, 42 caps)
12. Manu Tuilagi (Sale Sharks, 45 caps)
11. Jonny May (Gloucester Rugby, 68 caps)
10. Marcus Smith (Harlequins, 4 caps)
9. Ben Youngs (Leicester Tigers, 111 caps)

1. Bevan Rodd (Sale Sharks, 1 cap)
2. Jamie Blamire (Newcastle Falcons, 4 caps)
3. Kyle Sinckler (Bristol Bears, 46 caps)
4. Maro Itoje (Saracens, 50 caps)
5. Jonny Hill (Exeter Chiefs, 11 caps)
6. Courtney Lawes (C) (Northampton Saints, 89 caps)
7. Sam Underhill (Bath Rugby, 26 caps)
8. Tom Curry (Sale Sharks, 35 caps)

FINISHERS

16. Nic Dolly (Leicester Tigers, uncapped)
17. Joe Marler (Harlequins, 73 caps)
18. Will Stuart (Bath Rugby, 14 caps)
19. Charlie Ewels (Bath Rugby, 25 caps)

20. Sam Simmonds (Exeter Chiefs, 8 caps)
21. Alex Dombrandt (Harlequins, 3 caps)
22. Raffi Quirke (Sale Sharks, 1 cap)
23. Max Malins (Saracens, 9 caps)



Red Roses name team to play USA

Head coach Simon Middleton has named his matchday squad to take on USA at Worcester Warriors' Sixways Stadium on Sunday (21 November, kick-off 2.45pm and live on BBC Two).



Lydia Thompson is set to earn her 50th cap at the club she has represented throughout her career, while Rowena Burnfield is poised to reach the same milestone as she's named in the matchday squad for the first time since February 2019. World Rugby Player of the Year nominee Zoe Aldcroft captains the side for the first time with Gloucester-Hartpury team-mate Connie Powell and Harlequins scrum half Lucy Packer named among the finishers and in line for their first caps. Prop Maud Muir is awarded her first start at tighthead prop and is joined by Vickii Cornborough and Lark Davies in the front row.

Harlequins' Sarah Beckett makes her first appearance of the autumn internationals after returning from a knee injury. Fresh from scoring a double on her debut, Heather Cowell starts on the left wing while Harriet Millar-Mills lines up alongside Aldcroft in the second row. Regular wing Abby Dow starts at full-back for the first time in her senior England career while Helena Rowland and Lagi Tuima form the 10-12 axis.

Sadia Kabeya retains her place at openside flanker while Worcester Warriors' Alex Matthews is at blindside flanker. Scrum half Leanne Infante is vice captain and Holly Aitchison starts at outside centre, the position she occupied in England's two victories over New Zealand to open the autumn international period. Sarah Hunter, Sarah Bern, Hannah Botterman, Zoe Harrison and Ellie Kildunne are among the finishers.

Tickets are still available for the Red Roses' final autumn international and can be purchased [here](#).

Middleton said: *"Earning 50 caps is a huge achievement and we're made up for both Lydia (Thompson) and Rowena (Burnfield) Lydia has been an important part of our team for a long time and it's fitting for her to reach this milestone at the stadium and club she's always called home. It's been great to have Rowena back in the squad. She's an incredibly tough and combative player and we need those types in our team. She's also an incredibly versatile player who can play in the second row or at flanker which is a huge benefit in any team. It'll be a special and proud day for both players and their loved ones. Leadership comes in many different forms. Zoe Aldcroft has her own style based around actions not words. It's a style that resonates with our coaching team and one that is massively respected across the squad, so from that side it was a simple choice for us and in line with how we have approached this series of games. It gives us and her more key learning and development opportunities. Zoe is one of the first names on our team sheet. Her leadership in our forward pack, set piece and in particular the lineout is exceptional. She thoroughly deserves the opportunity to lead her country out. We're also pleased to name Connie Powell and Lucy Packer among the finishers. Both have worked extremely hard in camp with us.. Any team coached by Rob Cain will bring an unpredictability and his USA will be no different. We know we're in for a tough game and will have to be ready for anything and that adds another dimension. Worcester Warriors are a fantastic club with a great history. Their support is hardcore and have stuck by them through thick and thin. That doesn't happen unless the fans are passionate about their rugby and we recognised that when we were looking at potential venues. This is a great place to play. We're all looking forward to running out for our final autumn international at Sixways on Sunday and hope to end the year on a high."*

England team to play USA

15. Abby Dow (Wasps, 21 caps)
14. Lydia Thompson (Worcester Warriors, 49 caps)
13. Holly Aitchison (Saracens, 3 caps)
12. Lagi Tuima (Harlequins, 11 caps)
11. Heather Cowell (Harlequins, 1 cap)
10. Helena Rowland (Loughborough Lightning, 9 caps)
9. Leanne Infante (vc; Bristol Bears, 47 caps)
1. Vickii Cornborough (Harlequins, 63 caps)
2. Lark Davies (Loughborough Lightning, 34 caps)
3. Maud Muir (Wasps, 3 caps)
4. Harriet Millar-Mills (Wasps, 65 caps)
5. Zoe Aldcroft (C; Gloucester Hartpury, 27 caps)
6. Alex Matthews (Worcester Warriors, 44 caps)
7. Sadia Kabeya (Loughborough Lightning, 1 cap)
8. Sarah Beckett (Harlequins, 21 caps)

Finishers

16. Connie Powell (Gloucester-Hartpury, uncapped)
17. Hannah Botterman (Saracens, 25 caps)
18. Sarah Bern (Bristol Bears, 39 caps)
19. Rowena Burnfield (Wasps, 49 caps)
20. Sarah Hunter (Loughborough Lightning, 129 caps)
21. Lucy Packer (Harlequins, uncapped)
22. Zoe Harrison (Saracens, 33 caps)
23. Ellie Kildunne (Harlequins, 17 caps)

TEDx returns to Kingston Upon Thames!

Looking for Insights on how to cope with life or how others have done so? Then don't miss the upcoming TEDx event scheduled for Sunday 30th January 2022 at Rose Theatre Kingston.

*"If there's one thing the history of evolution has taught us, it's that life will not be contained. Life breaks free, it expands to new territories, and crashes through barriers painfully, maybe even dangerously, but, uh, well, there it is - **Life, uh, finds a way.**"*

Jeff Goldblum, the actor, was correct, and his point is as relevant now as it was back in 1993.

The world has changed dramatically since our last event in January 2020. We've all encountered situations that forced us to evolve and cope in different ways. Whether wonderful or devastating, by design or by accident, life finds a way to surprise, challenge and disrupt.



'Life Finds a Way' is the theme of the TEDx Talks 2022 event on 30 January at Kingston Upon Thames' Rose Theatre.

Exciting speakers on the agenda include Ali Hendry, a holistic coach and journalist who offers insights and personal anecdotes about a most complex human emotion as she elaborates on a Survivor's Guide to Jealousy.

Dr Douglas Vakoch is president of METI International, a San Francisco-based scientific organisation that transmits powerful, intentional radio signals to nearby stars, in the hope of eliciting a reply from extraterrestrial civilization. His talk offers lessons for living our daily lives in the face of uncertainty and the need for commitment: Embracing Uncertainty: Searching for Life beyond Earth

Owen O'Kane's talk explores how a piano became his salvation whilst growing up in a war zone and dealing with bullying. His experiences of adversity taught him how life finds a way, sharing his lessons, alongside his piano. Owen is a Psychotherapist, Sunday Times Best Selling Author and former NHS Mental Health Lead.

To find more details on the fabulous list of speakers and buy tickets, please go to:

[Attend - TEDxKingstonUponThames](https://www.tedxkingstonuponthames.com)

From coffees and teas to 250,000 trees

Customers of two pubs in South-West London help offset daily CO2 emissions

Climate change has been at the forefront of both news coverage and people's minds recently, particularly following the COP26 summit, but customers of two pubs in South-West London have been helping to offset daily CO2 emissions and may not even realise they have done so!

The Beech House in Hampton Hill and White Swan in Twickenham near Cosgrove are part of The Oakman Group which has joined forces with the not-for-profit organisation, Tree-Nation, to plant trees in nominated plantations across Madagascar and Tanzania for every hot drink sold across their 36 venues in England.



Incredibly, in less than four months since launching their collaboration, sales of tea, coffee, hot chocolate, and kids' drinks, will mean 250,000 trees will have been planted by Christmas time.

“Our target is to plant a million trees a year which will offset more than 25,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide during their lifetime. Reaching 250,000 will mean we are right on target, and with winter ahead of us we expect sales of hot drinks to increase,” said Oakman Group CEO, Dermot King.

He added: “We aim to run a business that we, and our customers, can be proud of. It's important that we try to leave things a little better than we found them for our neighbours, guests and the wider community.”

- 250,000 trees will cover more than 100 hectares which equates to over 100 rugby pitches or 10 London O2 Arenas.

“We will also plant 100 additional trees every time we open a new pub,” added King. “With 10 new sites in our pipeline in the next 18 months, that's another 1,000 trees.”

An extended range that the group has just launched means that even more hot drinks will be sold in the coming months. As well as the popular seasonal tippie mulled wine, the menu now includes cinnamon latte, gingerbread latte, and orange hot chocolate.

You can learn more about the ongoing project by visiting www.oakmaninns.co.uk/tree-nation where there is also a counter which regularly updates the number of trees planted from sales of hot drinks, as well as a link to see pictures and updates from the Oakman forests in Madagascar and Tanzania.

Scientists develop single blood test to measure T-cell and antibody response to SARS-CoV-2

Sensitive test can also distinguish between immune response induced by vaccination and infection

A test to measure both the T-cell and antibody response to SARS-CoV-2 in a single blood sample has been developed by scientists at Cardiff University.

The unique approach can also be used to measure the immune response brought about by vaccination and previous infection.

It was developed in collaboration with Wales-based biotechnology company ImmunoServ Ltd and is [outlined in a study published in the journal Immunology](#).

Dr Martin Scurr, a research associate at Cardiff University's School of Medicine and lead author on the study, said: *"COVID-19 infection rates remain alarmingly high – and it is clear infection even after vaccination is an issue. To help control future outbreaks and identify at-risk individuals, it is important to understand the exact make-up of the immune response to COVID. Our test accurately detects both the T-cell and antibody response to the virus in one blood sample. Together these indicators represent a powerful measure of immunity from COVID-19. The test can be made widely available, is easy to employ and cost effective, and should play a very useful role in monitoring this pandemic, for instance by identifying individuals at greater need of booster jabs."*

Antibody testing was seen as crucial to easing lockdown during the pandemic – but antibodies are just one arm of the body's immune response and in some individuals this response is weak and short-lived. Scientists believe T-cell immunity plays a much greater role in protecting people from future infection, however large-scale testing has proven more challenging.

In this study, the researchers took a small sample of blood from individuals of all ages, 68 with underlying cancer and 231 healthy donors. They stimulated T-cells with small pieces of the virus called peptides; the T-cells recognise these peptides if the individual has been previously infected (or vaccinated) and produce chemicals named cytokines which can be easily measured.

The study also monitored the size of the T-cell and antibody responses in a group of individuals tested before, during and after the UK's COVID-19 vaccination campaign. While both vaccine doses were required to maximise the T-cell response against the virus, the study found previously infected individuals required only one dose to achieve comparable immune responses.

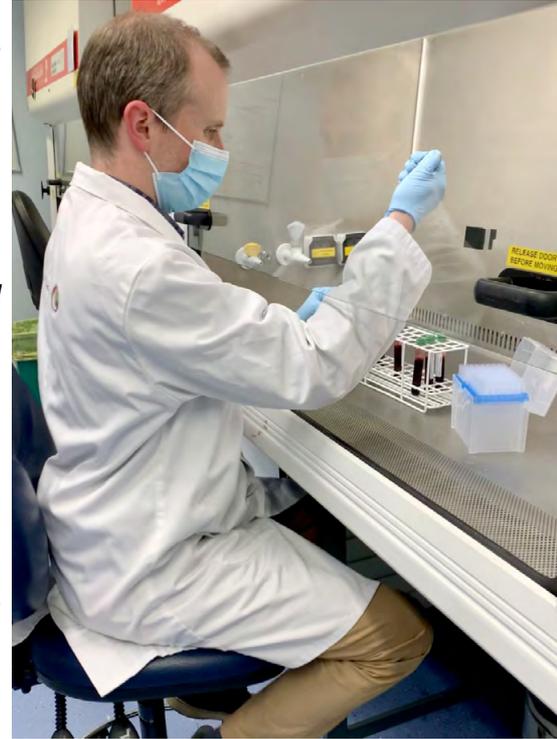
The test proved most useful in monitoring immune responses in patients considered more at risk from COVID-19, even after vaccination. The study found the second vaccine dose was essential for cancer patients. Among cancer patients recruited from Velindre Cancer Centre in Cardiff, two doses induced T-cell and antibody responses to equivalent levels as healthy donors. However, it is clear that in some cancer patients there is a dramatic fall of in immune responses at three months, not seen in healthy controls, and highlights the importance of monitoring these responses.

Professor Andrew Godkin, co-senior author from Cardiff University and the University Hospital of Wales, said: *"Without this sort of information there is uncertainty around whether repeated booster vaccinations will be required in future, and who in particular will need them. This data is crucial for understanding how and when to offer re-vaccinations to different groups."*

The research team will also monitor whether T-cell and antibody responses induced by vaccination can protect against SARS-CoV-2 mutant variants, including the Delta variant that is currently the most prevalent in the UK.

Danny Altmann, Professor of Immunology at Imperial University, said: *"This study is important in both demonstrating the ease of measuring immune responses using a whole blood approach, but also the importance of monitoring susceptible individuals and healthy controls for differences in vaccine response and future potential loss of protection. Long-term monitoring will be crucial to understand and quantify this problem."*

The research was funded by UK Research and Innovation as part of its response to the pandemic, along with the Medical Research Council and Cancer Research Wales.



New report reveals shocking number of excess deaths caused by crowding in Emergency Departments last year

A new report by the Royal College of Emergency Medicine '[Crowding and its Consequences](#)' has found that at least 4,519 patients have died as a result of crowding and 12 hour stays in Emergency Departments in England in 2020-2021.

The new report investigates the extent of harm that crowding causes and applies NHSE's own findings from the Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) program which found that one in 67 patients staying in the Emergency Department for 12 hours come to excess harm.

The report also provides comprehensive analysis on a variety of data points:

- Four-hour target
- 12-hour waits
- Decision-to-admit (DTA) waits and admissions
- 12-hour DTA waits vs. 12-hour time-of-arrival waits
- Time to initial assessment for ambulance arrivals
- Time to treatment
- Median total time patients spend in Emergency Departments
- Ambulance handover delays
- Bed availability
- Length of hospital stays

Dr Adrian Boyle, Vice President (Policy) of the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, said:

"To say this figure (4,519 excess deaths) is shocking is an understatement. Quite simply, crowding kills. For many years we have issued warnings about the harm that dangerous crowding causes, but now we can see the number of excess deaths that have occurred as a result. This will not surprise any member or fellow of the Royal College.

"[October 2021](#) saw an unimaginable 7,059 12-hour stays from decision to admit, the highest number ever recorded, 40% higher than September 2021 which was the previous highest on record. The number of 12-hour stays has risen drastically for six months and is very likely to rise again in coming months. The picture is more bleak as [Hospital Episodic Statistics](#) show that 12-hour stays from time of arrival are 21 times higher than 12-hour DTA stays. We now know that at least one in 67 of these patients are coming to avoidable harm. It is appalling.

"The situation is unacceptable, unsustainable and unsafe for patients and staff. Political and health leaders must realise that if performance continues to fall this winter: more and more patients will come to avoidable harm in the Emergency Department; staff will face moral injury; and the urgent and emergency care system will be deep into the worst crisis it has faced. This potential trajectory is supported by the recent [report by the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives](#) that found that as many as 160,000 patients annually, may be coming to harm as a result of delayed ambulance handovers. We continue to urge the Secretary of State to meet with us to discuss patient safety and the unprecedented pressures facing the urgent and emergency care system.

"[RCEM CARES: The Next Phase](#) outlines our system-wide plan to improve patient care. In the short-term Trusts must safely expand capacity where possible. They must maximise the use of services such as Same Day Emergency Care and Discharge to Assess. Trusts must focus on promoting flow through the hospital, ensuring patients are discharged in a timely way once their treatment is complete.

"In the long-term, the government must restore bed capacity to pre-pandemic levels, across the UK an additional 7,170 beds are required. The government must ensure that social care is resourced to support patients both when leaving hospital and once they are back in the community, this would help to reduce long hospital stays and prevent successive trips to the Emergency Department.

"Lastly, as a matter of urgency the government must publish a long-term workforce plan, this must include actions to retain existing staff who are reaching burnout as well as to recruit new staff. Across the UK there is currently a shortfall of 2,000 – 2,500 WTE Emergency Medicine consultants, as well as shortages of essential Emergency Medicine nurses and junior and supporting staff.

"This is the beginning of a long winter and an extremely challenging time for the current workforce as pressures will rise and patient safety will continue to be put at risk. These pressures may currently be facing urgent and emergency care and the ambulance services, but the solutions and actions must be system-wide and joined-up. It is up to the government, NHS leaders, and all of us to work together to put a stop to dangerous crowding; avoidable harm; preventable deaths; ambulance handover harm; and to ensure that we keep patients safe and deliver effective urgent and emergency care."



Government's preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic

- lessons for government on risk management

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the UK's vulnerability to an emergency that affects the whole of government, society and the economy, and the need to strengthen national resilience to prepare for future risks of this scale, according to the National Audit Office (NAO).

Like many other governments across the world, the UK government was underprepared for a pandemic like COVID-19 and will need to learn lessons from its preparations for and handling of whole-system risks. This will include deciding what level of preparations it will need to make.

The government has had a national risk assessment in place since 2005. This is updated regularly and identifies the key risks facing the UK or its interests overseas.¹

Since before the pandemic, stakeholders have identified areas for improvement in the government's approach to risk assessment. This includes more thorough analysis of high-uncertainty risks (where estimating the likelihood is difficult); risks that may materialise beyond a two-year timeframe; and the impact of multiple risks happening at once.² The Cabinet Office is currently reviewing aspects of the methodology that it uses to assess risks to the UK.

Since 2008, the government's National Risk Register (the Register) has identified an influenza pandemic as the UK's top non-malicious risk. Prior to the pandemic, the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) had identified a pandemic as a significant risk to its operations. Other departments had identified risks relating to the possible consequences of a pandemic. At the local level, all community risk registers identified an influenza pandemic as a significant risk.

Government prioritised preparedness for a flu pandemic and for an emerging high-consequence infectious disease - a very infectious disease that typically causes the death of a high proportion of the individuals who contract it, or has the ability to spread rapidly, with few or no treatment options - such as Ebola. Government did not develop a specific pandemic preparedness plan for a disease with characteristics like COVID-19, which has an overall lower mortality rate and widespread asymptomatic community transmission. However, some preparations that government had put in place were used in the COVID-19 response, such as the personal protective equipment (PPE) stockpile.

Government was not fully prepared for the wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on society, the economy and essential public services. For example, it lacked detailed plans on shielding, employment support schemes and managing the disruption to schooling. Departments' pandemic plans and business continuity plans set out some, but not all, of the responses required to maintain operations during the pandemic.

Government did not act upon some warnings from the pandemic simulations carried out prior to COVID-19. Simulation exercises such as Winter Willow (2007) and Exercise Cygnus (2016) were based on an influenza pandemic but highlighted general issues around planning, coordination and capability that apply to pandemics more broadly. Winter Willow highlighted the need for better-coordinated plans. Cygnus highlighted the difficulties of extensive homeworking, but these were not evident in most pandemic plans reviewed by the NAO.

Preparations for EU exit enhanced the crisis capabilities and risk planning of some departments but meant that government paused work on other emergency preparations. For example, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat allocated 56 of its 94 full-time equivalent staff to prepare for potential disruptions from a no-deal exit, limiting its ability to focus on other risk and contingency planning at the same time.

The NAO recommends that government strengthens its preparations for system-wide emergencies. For example, the Cabinet Office should establish who leads and manages system-wide risks, and strengthen oversight and assurance arrangements over preparations for system-wide emergencies. It should also work with other government departments to ensure that their risk management, business continuity and emergency planning are more comprehensive, holistic and integrated. Lessons learned from simulation exercises should also be promptly disseminated and implemented across government.

Gareth Davies, the head of the NAO said:

"This pandemic has exposed the UK's vulnerability to whole-system emergencies, where the emergency is so broad that it engages all levels of government and society. Although government had plans for a flu pandemic, it was not prepared for a pandemic like COVID-19 and did not learn important lessons from the simulation exercises it carried out.

"For whole-system risks, government needs to define the amount and type of risk that it is willing to take to make informed decisions and prepare appropriately."

Click here for the [full report](#) and here for the [PAC Chair's statement](#).



National Audit Office

www.RichmondTribune.com

Managing tax debt through the pandemic

Tax debt is more than double pre-pandemic levels, and current staffing at HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is unlikely to be enough to manage the increased tax debt workload, according to the National Audit Office (NAO).

As the country went into lockdown in March 2020 HMRC paused most of its debt collection activity. During this pause, it changed how tax debt was collected, including the tone of communications and the pace of pursuit. To support businesses and individuals, payments of VAT and Self Assessment income tax were also deferred. As the UK emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, HMRC needs to pursue tax debt while allowing taxpayers time to recover their finances.

Total tax debt rose to £42 billion in September 2021, from £16 billion in January 2020. Total tax debt peaked at £67 billion in August 2020. More debt has been repaid as extensions for VAT and Self Assessment passed, and the economy has reopened. HMRC forecasts total tax debt will fall to £33 billion by March 2022, but this assumes the COVID-19 pandemic has not changed repayment behaviour.

Up to 2.4 million more taxpayers are in debt to HMRC following the COVID-19 pandemic, and those who were already in debt owe more. The average amount taxpayers owe has increased by 60%, from around £4,300 to £6,800. Older debts, which are often more difficult to collect, have increased in value from £2.5 billion in 2019-20 to £4.4 billion in 2020-21.

HMRC has prioritised which debts to chase based on the likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on an individual's ability to pay. However, those whose ability to pay was considered the least impacted often had larger debts. HMRC categorised debtors into high-medium and low-impact groups. Business taxpayers in the low-impact group had debts around 50% greater than business taxpayers in the high-impact group. Self Assessment taxpayers in the low-impact group did not have access to COVID-19 grants that Self Assessment taxpayers in the high-impact group could draw on.

Tax debts are normally meant to be cleared before the next tax period, but this may be unrealistic for many taxpayers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. HMRC has made it easier for taxpayers to agree longer repayment arrangements. The average duration of repayment plans increased from around 5 months pre-pandemic to 12 months in July 2021. A strong focus on repaying tax within specified timeframes may not be appropriate. Leading debt management practitioners outside government tend to focus on agreeing affordable repayment plans that can be sustained.

Research with stakeholders indicates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on taxpayers is polarised, with some groups shoring up their bank balances, and others more badly affected. The NAO focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on two groups of taxpayers: companies that are wound up and reformed specifically to avoid paying debts, and vulnerable taxpayers. HMRC had a limited understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect the amount of specialist work needed to support these groups.

Pre-pandemic, HMRC achieved workforce efficiencies, but it did not close the gap between new tax debts and debts collected. HMRC reduced the number of staff working on debt management by 18% from 4,857 to 3,975 between 31 March 2014 and 31 March 2020, helped by a new telephony system and improvements to business processes. HMRC maintained its rate of debt collection at around two thirds of new debt created each year. This suggests HMRC could have achieved more with greater capacity.

HMRC is unlikely to have enough staff to manage the increased tax debt that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. HMRC intends to recruit 1,000 full time staff in 2021-22, however, it told the NAO that once staff turnover is factored in, this resource will only address current staffing shortfalls. HMRC forecasts that it will have twice the usual level of debt to manage at the end of March 2022. New debtors may require more support in the short term to agree payment plans.

The NAO recommends that HMRC develops a revised strategy for recovering tax debt in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This should consider the varying impacts of the pandemic on different taxpayers, and should identify which taxpayers are more able to pay, and those most severely affected by the pandemic.

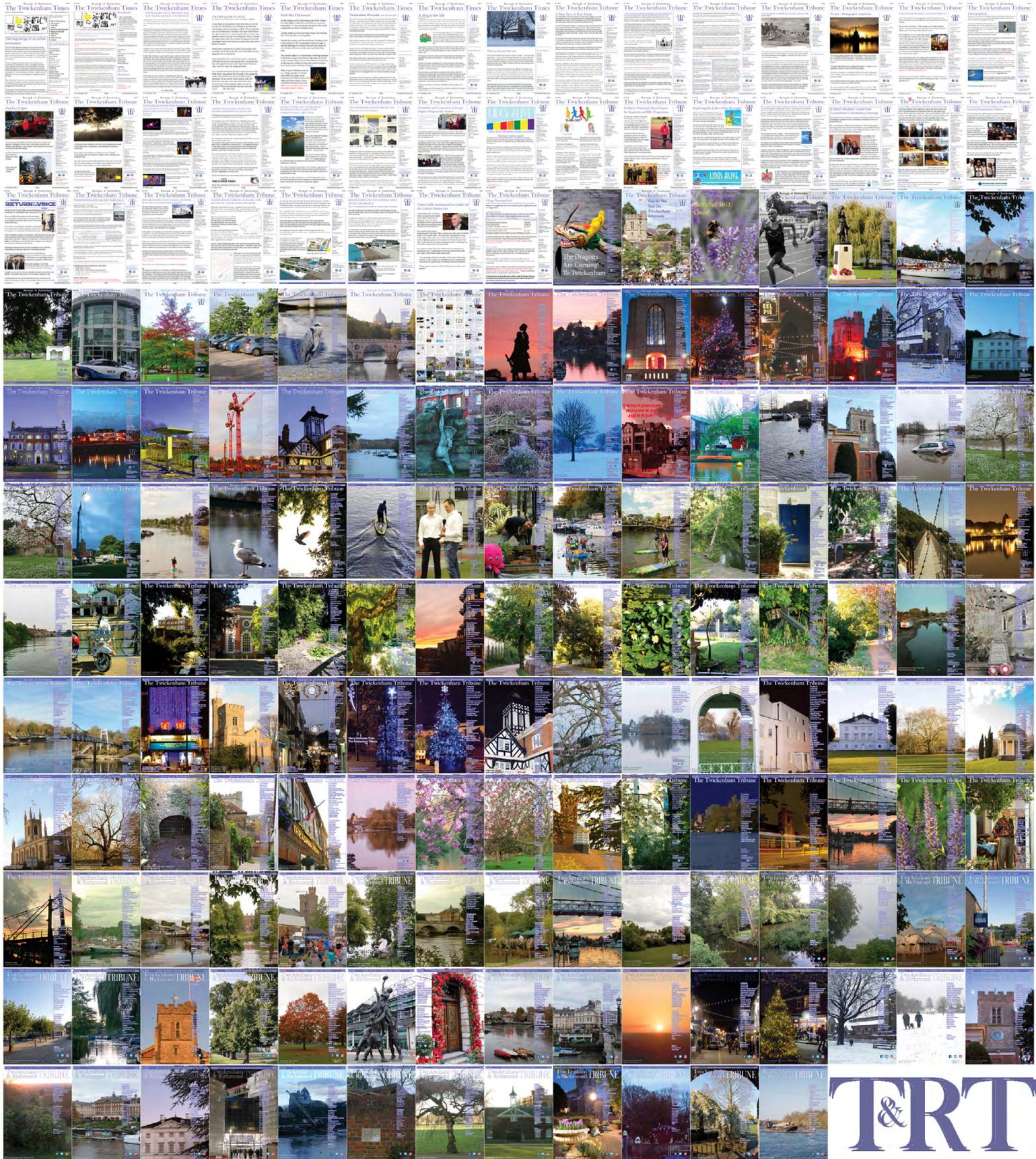
Gareth Davies, the head of the NAO said:

“HMRC faces several years of managing a far greater level of tax debt than it has seen in recent times, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some debtors have already been able to repay their tax debt quickly, but an unknown number of taxpayers have been badly affected and will struggle to do so. HMRC needs to significantly increase its capacity if it is to meet the changed scale and nature of the challenge.”



Click here for the [full report](#) and here for the [PAC Chair's quote](#).

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