

Twickenham & Richmond TRIBUNE

Contents

- TickerTape
- TwickerSeal
- COVID-19
- Sacked for having a baby
- 73-year-old climber
- Letters
- The times they are a-changin'
- Thoughts on E-Scooters
- Confused? You've every right to be!
- Twickers Foodie
- Review
- Travel News
- WIZ Tales: Serbia
- Remember The Holocaust
- Football Focus
- Brentford FC Annual Financial Results

Contributors

- TwickerSeal
- Simon Fowler
- Jubilee Sailing Trust
- Alison Jee
- Mark Aspen
- Bruce Lyons
- World InfoZone
- Doug Goodman
- Richmond College
- St Mary's University
- James Dowden
- Brentford FC
- RFU
- NAO
- LBRuT

Editors

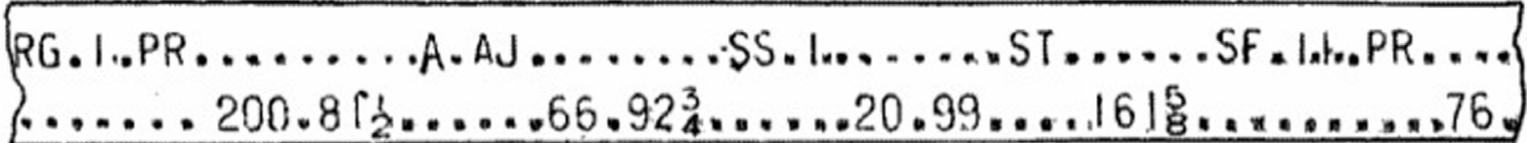
- Berkley Driscoll
- Teresa Read



21st January 2022



Robin chit-chat
Photo by Berkley Driscoll



TickerTape - News in Brief

Tube strike

There is planned strike action every Friday and Saturday night between 20:30 and 04:29 the following morning until Sunday 19 June.

If these strikes go ahead, normal services are expected on the Victoria line, while we expect the Central line to run a regular service through central London, with at least two trains per hour.

Customers using Victoria or Central line services on Friday and Saturday nights between 19:00 and 06:00 the following morning are advised to [check before they travel](#). Customers can use the [TfL Go app](#) to check when the next services will be.

All other Tube lines will run their normal daytime services during these strikes, with the last Tubes in central London leaving around 01:00 and starting again at 05:30.

Night Overground services between Highbury & Islington and New Cross Gate will not be affected by this action, though there will be no Night Overground service this Friday night (21 January)/Saturday morning and Saturday night/Sunday morning due to engineering work on the track.

For full information on these strikes, please visit [the website](#).

London Overground Sunday 23 January

No service between **Richmond** and Camden Road until 11:00

Use alternative Tube services and the rail replacement bus service.

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TwickerSeal was wandering along the Embankment by the wonderful Diamond Jubilee Gardens, when TwickerMole popped up!

TwickerMole was feeling very worried about all the news he had been hearing. A big bullying administration was threatening an invasion to annex a small sovereign territory! It seems this administration has been spouting lots of propaganda to justify this incursion, although it was obviously just a means to suit its own political and economic goals.

I know, said TwickerSeal, Russia is

Russia? Exclaimed TwickerMole, no I'm talking about the council and their goal to grab the Diamond Jubilee Gardens and build a huge block of private luxury flats. It's an affront to democracy!



COVID 19

Teresa Read

World Health Organization

Weekly Epidemiological Update

18 January 2022

Globally, the number of new COVID-19 cases increased in the past week (10-16 January 2022), while the number of new deaths remained similar to that of the previous week. Across the six WHO regions, over 18 million new cases were reported this week, a 20% increase, as compared to the previous week. Over 45 000 new deaths were also reported. As of 16 January, over 323 million confirmed cases and over 5.5 million deaths have been reported worldwide

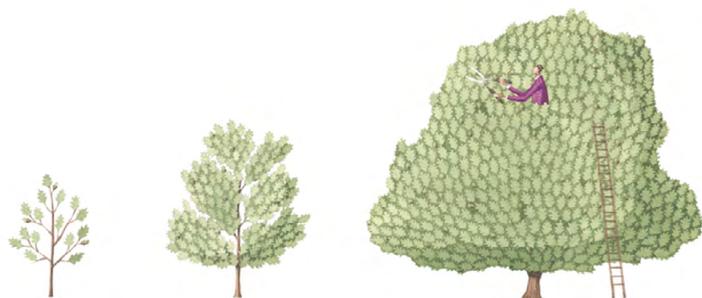
Despite a slowdown of the increase in case incidence at the global level, all regions reported an increase in the incidence of weekly cases with the exception of the African Region, which reported a 27% decrease. The South-East Asia region reported the largest increase in new cases last week (145%), followed by the Eastern Mediterranean Region (68%). New weekly deaths increased in the South-East Asia Region (12%) and Region of the Americas (7%) while remaining approximately the same as the previous week in the other regions

Statement of the Emergency Committee convened by the WHO Director General Regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic 19 January 2022

The Committee unanimously agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic still constitutes an extraordinary event that continues to adversely affect the health of populations around the world, poses a risk of international spread and interference with international traffic, and requires a coordinated international response.

Local Covid total cases to Friday 14 January 2022

Richmond upon Thames	45,759 (43,298 previous week)
Kingston upon Thames	41,950 (39,866 previous week)
Hounslow	71,391 (67,445 previous week)
Wandsworth	84,607 (81,111 previous week)



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COVID IN THE NEWS

Evening Standard, 21 January 2022: BA.2: New form of Omicron variant under investigation with more than 100 cases in London, says UKHSA

Sky News, 21 January 2022: COVID-19: What new Omicron sub-lineage might mean for the UK - and its exit from latest COVID wave

BBC News, 20 January 2022: Coronavirus: Austrian parliament approves mandatory vaccination order

Gulf News, 20 January 2022: Cheap version of Merck COVID-19 pill to be made for poorer nations

BBC News, 19 January 2022: Sadiq Khan: Masks to remain on London transport despite end of plan B

Economic Times, India Times, 19 January 2022: India extends international passenger flight ban till February 28 amid Omicron surge

English Mathrubhumi, 19 January 2022: India extends ban on international commercial flights till Feb 28

BBC, 18 January 2022: Beijing city urges end to overseas deliveries over Omicron

Support for long COVID patients available at Richmond clinic

In the borough of Richmond upon Thames, an estimated 3,000 people have long COVID and Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare's Long COVID Service is supporting some of these people.

The service has slashed its waiting list and hopes to help even more people cope with their symptoms.

People get help with managing their symptoms, learning how to cope when the brain isn't processing properly, getting the right amount of rest, and increasing chances of recovery. The team also give advice on self-care, sleep, diet, mood, work, exercise and other activities.

Patients start with an initial assessment and personalised plan to address their main concerns and goals. Treatment is one to one and in a group.

If you are an adult registered with a Richmond GP practice, they or another health professional can refer you to the service.

View more information on [long COVID service](#).



Sacked for having a baby

By Simon Fowler

The 1920s is rightly celebrated as the decade of women's freedom.

But this freedom was strictly limited as Twickenham teacher Isabel Turnage discovered in November 1926.

In 1923 Dr Turnage was appointed headmistress of the County School for Girls in Clifden Road. To the consternation of the governors, she soon married. Women elementary teachers had to resign on marriage, but a loophole allowed secondary teachers to continue in the classroom.

What was worse three years later she had a baby son, Peter John. It was expected that middle class mothers stayed at home with their children rather than return to work. Instead, after three months' paid maternity leave, Isabel petitioned the school's governors to be allowed to return to the classroom, saying that: 'My married life is not [their] business, so long as I make proper provision for my child.'

However, they dismissed her with six months' salary, out of which she had to pay for a surrogate teacher, saying that: 'the cares and responsibilities of motherhood are incompatible with the welfare and supervision of the large number of girls attending the school.' Their chairman Dr J R Leeson grumbled that Dr Turnage had been well treated: 'In all she has received nine months' salary for which we have received no service.'



A newspaper photograph of Dr Turnage with her son

The story was picked up by the national press. The *Daily Chronicle* complained that as her husband worked, she should not: 'in the difficult conditions of today, many homes find it impossible to secure even one job.'

Even some in the women's movement were unsympathetic. An unnamed lady: 'well known as a good friend to professional women' told the *Manchester Guardian* that she thought 'there was no real hardship to Mrs Turnage...because a teacher so capable would have no difficulty in getting another post which would not interfere with her care of the baby.' And suggested that there were plenty of suitable women teachers to fill the vacancy.

Others were more sympathetic. Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, who had supervised Miss Soar's PhD thesis, said: 'Motherhood is not really a whole-time occupation as the best as to what is best for the child should rest with the parents and not with their employees.'

Dr Isabel Turnage returned to work in 1929 at London University's Institute of Education and later taught in Kingston. It was not until the 1950s that married women were allowed back in the classroom after having their families.

Incidentally a new exhibition 'The 1920s: Beyond the Roar' opens today at The National Archives in Kew. Based around the 1921 Census the exhibition recreates the fascinating world of the 1920s through the lens of the Archives' vast and diverse collection.

Details at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20s-people/the-1920s-beyond-the-roar/about-the-exhibition

73-year-old climber to tackle Mount Kenya in “inspirational” fundraising feat

A 73-year-old climbing enthusiast is set to reach new heights – after pledging to climb Mount Kenya to raise vital funds for charity.

Graham Strudwick from Twickenham, London, will climb the 17,057ft African mountain, starting on February 18th, in aid of the Jubilee Sailing Trust (JST) – a charity which changes lives through adventure and exploration at sea.

An avid sailor, Graham, an off-shore Yacht Master and chair of the JST London branch, made the decision to fundraise for the global sailing charity after partaking in 17 of its voyages over the last 21 years. Trips that have totalled a remarkable 15,700 miles and 30 weeks at sea.

Graham said: “My first voyage on Tenacious was from Edinburgh to London and I keep coming back because of the people involved with the charity.



“What I like about the JST is that it is extremely clear about the role it plays in people’s lives. It’s a charity which welcomes participants of all abilities, and some of my favourite memories have been of witnessing the positive changes I’ve seen in people over the years. Their self-belief after experiencing time on Tenacious, is wonderful to see.”



In between voyages, Graham found a love of rock climbing at the age of 68 to help maintain his physical health and wellbeing. It was from this that the idea of climbing a mountain for the charity began to appeal to him.

Once the decision had been made, choosing where to achieve this incredible feat came naturally to Graham. After growing up in Africa as a child, and regularly visiting for work in the years that followed, Graham’s heart remained in the continent that he still refers to as “home”, and Mount Kenya became the obvious choice.

As a boy of 11, and living in the foothills of the mountain, Graham would often spend his time looking up at the African peak’s majestic height,

full of wonderment and awe. And as an adult, he has often revisited Kenya with his family to enjoy the country's rich landscapes and wildlife.

"Africa gets in your blood," he added. "I was born there and then lived there for nine years of my life before the age of 14. The music, the people, the smell, everything is just wonderful."

Training for the mountain climb has already started, with Graham and his climbing partner, Roger, hitting the gym regularly as well as challenging themselves on the climbing wall twice a week, completing 3–4-hour sessions at a time.

"We are really trying to push ourselves to improve not only our strength, but also our stamina. When we attempt the real ascent, we will be climbing for the best part of two days, apart from just one night's sleep."

Hoping to raise £3,000 for the Jubilee Sailing Trust, Graham will spend five days trekking and acclimatising in Africa before starting the alpine rock climb. There are two peaks to conquer, and he hopes to be at the top of the highest peak by February 26th.

Money raised from the climb will go directly to the sailing charity's 'Pulling Together' Appeal, a rolling appeal designed to help maintain a funding flow for Tenacious' maintenance, repairs and improvements.

Patrick Fleming, CEO of the Jubilee Sailing Trust, said: "We are in awe of the grit and determination that Graham is showing as he gets ready to conquer the second highest mountain in Africa. It is incredibly inspirational.

"Without people like Graham, the Jubilee Sailing Trust could not be where it is today and for that we are extremely grateful. We would like to wish Graham and Roger the very best of luck for their climb and look forward to hearing all about it."

To donate to Graham, please visit <https://jubileesailingtrust.enthuse.com/pf/graham-strudwick>

To learn more about the Jubilee Sailing Trust, please visit www.jst.org.uk



Dear Sir,

Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.

This old proverb came to mind when I saw a recent LibDem leaflet about Twickenham Riverside. There were very many inaccuracies, which I may return to another time, but the ones that really need challenging are three statements: the Riverside “has been allowed to go to waste”, it was time to “end 40 years of Riverside dereliction” and the Tories “would not invest in the area at all”.

In 2002, when the Conservatives took over a Twickenham Riverside that had been derelict for decades they built the Jubilee Gardens, the Sunshine Cafe and the popular children’s playground.



Between 2010 and 2012 the Conservatives opened up: first, a small seating area above the flood plain overlooking Eel Pie Island Bridge and the area where people feed the ducks.

Second (in 2011) a small garden adjacent to the Sunshine Cafe (now the petanque area)

and overlooking the river.



Third (in 2012) the newly built Diamond Jubilee Gardens (opened by HRH Princess Alexandra.)



The LibDems now plan to demolish all of these and put this 5 storey block of private flats in their place.



Let’s not forget that the Conservatives also added to their impressive track record the restoration of the Embankment Riverside walk in front of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens and the building of the much loved Champions Wharf and Play Beach next to York House Gardens. They also bought the Santander block of buildings to enable an all-encompassing plan for the derelict Water Lane area.

And over the past 40 years of so called “dereliction” on Twickenham Riverside, apart from their many failed schemes, what have the LibDems got to show for their various times in office? Using a term in current usage to describe their achievements on “one of the most potentially beautiful spots on the tidal Thames” they can be summed up as Diddy-Squat, or if you prefer – Zero, Zilch, Nothing, Nada.

With best wishes,
Sue Hamilton-Miller, Twickenham

Council Leader urges people to keep up effort to tackle COVID-19

Richmond Council Leader is urging Richmond residents to keep up efforts to stop Coronavirus spreading as the government announces the lifting of Plan B restrictions from next week (27 January).

Cllr Gareth Roberts says though COVID-19 rates in Richmond upon Thames have fallen over the last week, they still remain high, and we should all consider keeping up measures such as mask wearing indoors after they are no longer mandatory. He said: *“It is really good news that the number of cases has fallen nationally, and also in Richmond, from the peak of 1,786 per 100,000 in a week to our current figure which is around 916. But we must remember that this case rate is still incredibly high.*

“High cases matter because although some people might experience this as a fairly mild disease, many people won’t.

“Yes, the number of people being hospitalised isn’t as high, but there are many people who have still had a nasty illness. There is strong evidence that COVID-19 can cause an illness which lasts for many months in some people.

“COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease and so many people are having to take time not just off work but also out of their usual life by self-isolating, even if they have milder symptoms. Although the policy change means that some people can leave self-isolation early, many people are finding that they are still infectious (LFT-positive) and are having to remain self-isolated for 10 days.

“Vaccination has also been key to reducing the spread but most importantly reducing the proportion of people who are now dying from COVID-19, which is excellent news; but many in the borough are still to have the jab.

“So, even though Plan B is ending, we still need to be doing what we can to reduce the impact of this highly infectious disease. Many residents have expressed their concern regarding the ending of wearing of face coverings in indoor settings and on public transport. I share that concern. I would remind them that while the requirement to wear masks and face coverings may have been removed there is nothing to stop residents from continuing to wear them if they so choose. Certainly, I will continue to wear a mask on public transport and in shops and supermarkets until such time as numbers fall substantially.”



Timetable for changes

From 19 January:

- The Government advice to work from home if possible is lifted. (Staff should await guidance from their employers)

From 20 January:

- Face coverings will no longer be advised for staff and pupils in secondary school and college classrooms

From 27 January:

- Face coverings will no longer be advised for staff and pupils in communal areas of secondary schools, nor for staff in communal areas of primaries
- There will no longer be a legal requirement to wear a face covering in any setting. However, the government suggests you continue to wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces where you may come into contact with other people you do not normally meet.
- Venues and events will no longer be required by law to check visitors’ NHS COVID Pass. The pass can still be used on a voluntary basis.

“THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’ IN TWICKENHAM”

BOB Dylan fans are invited on a trip down memory lane at The Exchange, Twickenham, on Saturday 5th February.

There, The Bob Dylan Story await to take you on a musical journey back to Dylan’s prime.

“Bob” and “The Band” capture classics including Like A Rolling Stone, Blowin’ In The Wind, Knocking On Heaven’s Door and Subterranean Homesick Blues to perfection in this affectionate trawl through the best of Bob’s impressive back catalogue.



With a story arc that begins with JFK’s inauguration and returns full circle to his 1963 assassination, the show uses evocative visuals and fascinating anecdotes to plant 1960s-era Dylan back on stage for one evening.

Lauded by critics and fans as “superb”, “inspiring and moving” and “heartbreakingly fabulous” The Bob Dylan Story is fronted and produced by Dylan fan Bill Lennon, whose other touring credits include Keef Rickard in The Counterfeit Stones and James Taylor in You’ve Got A Friend: The Music of James Taylor & Carole King.



“It’s an evening of good old-fashioned nostalgia,” he explains. “We really do transport our audience back to a time when Bob reigned supreme, with all his greatest hits and the stories behind them.

“And just like Dylan’s famous Mr Tambourine Man, we can’t wait to play these classic songs for the good people of Twickenham the way they remember hearing them first time round.”

**The Bob Dylan Story is appearing at The Exchange, Twickenham on Saturday 5th February at 7.30pm. Tickets are available at www.exchangetwickenham.co.uk or from the box office on 020 8240 2399.*

Thoughts on E-Scooters

Teresa Read

Bristol is a vibrant city, a young city with a large student population. Named as the UK's first cycling city it is not surprising that Bristol decided to become a city to embrace an e-scooter trial.

Spending time in the city centre it is impossible to miss the use of the city's e-scooters and the rental e-scooter parking areas. In Bristol e-scooters can only be used in cycle lanes and roads but there are areas in the city where e-scooters are not permitted.

However, the Swedish company Voi Technology withdrew some of the e-scooters in Bristol following a fire in a user's home. A special team had to be brought in to deal with the e-scooters battery which was producing smoke as lithium batteries contain "hazardous materials" subject to the Department of Transportation's Hazardous Materials Regulations

In Merseyside a headline on 21 December 2021 in Liverpool World highlighted battery concerns *"e-scooters 'safe' despite battery-related blazes in London and Bristol, claims Voi"*

It seems that different types of batteries can be used to power an e-scooter but lithium batteries have the longest life. However, there are environmental costs to lithium mining including contaminated soil and toxic waste.

Chile has the world's largest known reserves of lithium; there are also significant reserves in Argentina, Australia and China, but it has been estimated that there could be a lithium deficit in the next ten to twenty years. Thus, the race is on to find alternative sources to power vehicles in the future.

Richmond Rugby host Bedford Blues this weekend

Richmond Rugby are back in action this weekend following their 31-12 victory over London Scottish last weekend.

Richmond Rugby will take on Bedford Blues at the Athletic Ground in Richmond this Saturday 22 January 2022.

Show your support for your local team this Saturday as Richmond Rugby take to the field in the next round of the RFU Championship. Kick-off is at 3pm.

Tickets can be bought online. They will also be available on the day at the gate but only card payments will be accepted.

Buy tickets for Richmond vs Bedford Blues [HERE](#)



York House Gardens gets 'Hope is everything' bench from Netflix

Netflix has donated 25 benches to councils across the UK to mark the launch of After Life Season 3, in association with Campaign Against Living Miserably.

After Life is renowned for its scenes showing the leading character, Tony (Ricky Gervais) on a bench at his local churchyard, as he continues to grieve for his wife Lisa, played by Kerry Godliman. The bench serves as a place for Tony to reflect, share, listen and, ultimately, to grow and find hope for the future.

Now, to mark the launch of the final series of much-loved series of After Life, Netflix has donated a bench to Richmond Council as a point of interest to create a space for communities to visit. The benches have been commissioned alongside suicide prevention charity Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) - who offer help, advice and information to anyone who is struggling or in crisis. Those who visit a bench will be able to access resources from CALM via a unique QR code with the wording 'Life can be tough, but there's always hope. Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) is by your side', and online by visiting [CALM website](#).

The bench is inscribed with a quote from After Life 'Hope is Everything' and is located in York House Gardens, Twickenham, TW1 3DD.

It is important to reach out and get help if you are experiencing feelings of anxiety, loneliness or depression. Support is available for whatever you are going through.

Find out more about [mental health services in Richmond](#).



Royal Photographic Society Award-Winning Photographer brings first solo exhibition to Richmond

Orleans House Gallery are delighted to announce that from the 17th of March until 12th June 2022 Dexter McLean, a photographer with cerebral palsy, will bring his award-winning project Tower Avenue to the gallery. Tower Avenue is a striking portraiture series focusing on members of the community where Dexter grew up in Jamaica. This will be Dexter's first solo show, and the first time the images from Tower Avenue have been displayed as one collection.

Dexter McLean first began creating the ongoing Tower Avenue project in 2019. Inspired by a sense of togetherness and the importance of familial networks, the project features black and white photographic portraits of an intergenerational community living in Olympic Gardens, Kingston. Dexter's familiarity with the characters of the neighbourhood and his determination to capture the reality of the place and people in this close-knit community has created a striking series of intimate and powerful portraits. His method hangs between portraiture and documentary, capturing individual personalities within society. His long-term ambition is to create a collective portrait documenting the disabled community in Jamaica, drawing on his own experience of living with cerebral palsy, to challenge historical representations of black and disabled communities. Not only does Dexter aim to challenge media misrepresentations, through his work he hopes to inspire young disabled people to follow their dreams.



'Jay Jay', 'Junior' and 'Gregory'- Dexter McLean 2020
Copyright © and courtesy Dexter McLean

Dexter and his family moved to the UK when Dexter was just 9 years old. A country of rich cultural and musical heritage, Jamaica also had limited provision for disabled citizens which led to a challenging childhood. His interest in photography began aged 13 when he was gifted a small digital camera. Dexter went on to complete a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Photography at Middlesex University. His work was quickly noticed, and he featured in the Taylor Wessing Portrait Photography Prize 2016 exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. Now, as an adult, Dexter is determined to capture the real lives of the ordinary people of Jamaica and defy the expectations of Jamaica's disabled community.

In November 2021 Dexter was awarded the Hood Medal from the Royal Photographic Society. The prestigious award was established in 1933 and recognises photography and public service, it is awarded to bodies of work raising awareness of current issues. Dexter's documentary and portrait work in support of the disabled community has distinguished him as a hugely exciting, socially engaged, contemporary photographer.

Dexter's show will open at Orleans House Gallery on the 17th of March and is free to visit for all visitors. Orleans House Gallery is an accessible venue and Tower Avenue will be designed to ensure everyone is welcome to visit. Further access information can be found on the Orleans House Gallery website. A programme of public talks, exhibition tours, photography workshops and online videos will also accompany the exhibition, including a panel discussion with Dexter and the curatorial team at Autograph Gallery, London; and a special edition of our free monthly family activity 'Let's Get Creative'. There will also be a chance for visitors to the gallery to own a piece of Dexter's fantastic work where a number of limited-edition prints will be for sale.

Tower Avenue is curated by Dexter Mclean with Richmond Arts Service Exhibitions Programmer Andy Franzkowiak.

Cllr John Coombs, Spokesperson for Art, said: *"This is a fantastic opportunity for residents and visitors to the borough to see an award-winning and powerful exhibition at Orleans House Gallery. If you haven't been to the gallery in Twickenham before, it's set in beautiful gardens overlooking the River Thames with a wonderful Café and an amazing programme of exhibitions for everyone to enjoy. Dexter Mclean's exhibition is sure to be a highlight this year so make sure you visit!"*

Further exhibition information can be found at [Tower Avenue – Orleans House Gallery](#)

Looking for a new bicycle? Try Before You Bike

Try Before You Bike offers residents the chance to try a brand new or nearly new bike for a small monthly fee with no deposit or hidden fees.

Richmond Council and Try Before You Bike are working together to make cycling affordable, safe and accessible.

Try Before You Bike is a flexible, affordable and supportive bike scheme to help get you in the saddle. Try out a new or nearly new bicycle for a small monthly fee.

If you fall in love with your bike then why not buy it at a discounted price. Try Before You Bike offers residents interest free payment plans or Cycle to Work schemes. If you wish to continue to hire the bike you can do so by simply carrying on and enjoy your bicycle.

If the bicycle isn't for you, simply let Try Before You Bike know and there is free collection of your bike and with nothing further for you to pay.

There is a free helmet available with every delivery whether you buy the bike or not and there is free delivery to your door by a qualified cycle instructor who will help you get started.

Find out more about [Try Before You Bike](#) and get cycling now.



New monthly Kids' Book Club from Barnes Children's Literature Festival

The Barnes Children's Literature Festival has launched a fun new monthly book club for children called London LitSoc.

Every month the Festival will recommend a book which will be followed by an event with the author, where the children can ask their own questions and share their ideas with their book club friends.

The first meeting will be held on Saturday 5 February 2022 when the children will be joined by the British Book Award winners MG Leonard and Sam Sedgman to discuss *Danger at Dead Man's Pass* from their smash hit series *Adventures on Trains*.

All book club events will be held at St Paul's School in Barnes. The monthly book club is suitable for children 9-12 years.

Find out more about [Kids' Book Club](#).



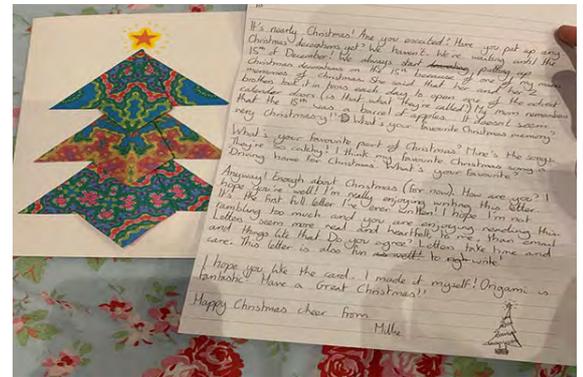
Age UK Richmond create collection of inspired memories from older people

Earlier in the year, Age UK Richmond set a writing challenge asking older people in the borough to write about a memorable moment.

Forty entries cover encounters with stars, hardships endured, being evacuees, school days, wins, ponies, photobombing in the thirties and much more. Some of the contributors had never written before, but common to all was a memorable moment to recount.

As part of Richmond's Full of Life Fair in October 2021, Age UK Richmond held book readings at their centres in Whitton, Barnes and Twickenham. Some of the writers read their own stories and spoke about how much they enjoyed being a part of the project. Those listening were moved and inspired.

Age UK Richmond is selling the books for £5 a copy. Email mt.keegan@ageukrichmond.org.uk to arrange a purchase.



Local Rotary Club thanks residents for their generosity

The Rotary Club of Twickenham upon Thames took to the streets of Twickenham and Whitton this Christmas and were overwhelmed by the kindness that they received and the donations received over the Christmas period.

The donations that form an essential part of the club's annual income and which will enable them to continue their work in the community assisting worthy causes in the coming months of 2022.

The Christmas activities included walking the streets from 1 to 17 December 2021 and two Saturday static collections in Whitton High Street. Their evening activities included a Santa Claus mobile sleigh with Father Christmas.



The end result was the huge sum of £10,089 which makes all the sore feet worthwhile.

The Club is an evening club, started in 1978 and meets on a Monday evening. If you would like to be part of this fundraising team and meet like-minded people in a social setting then visit the Rotary Club of Twickenham website to find out more or call 07738710170 or email chack@onetel.com

BURNS' NIGHT - "SLÁINTE MHATH!"

You may have noticed haggis appearing in the butchers and supermarkets and that the pubs are offering special Scottish menus. That's because, of course, it's Burns' Night on January 25 and each year we seem to embrace the Bard of Ayrshire more! As well as the classic haggis, with its 'neeps' and 'tatties', there is other delicious Scottish fare to make a fabulous feast - venison and salmon immediately spring to mind.

Whisky, of course, widely regarded as the Scots' national drink (as well as Irn-Bru!) pairs surprisingly well with many foods, including cheese. One of our favourites is **Highland Park**. This award-winning 10 year old single malt Scotch from Orkney has been matured predominantly in sherry wood and gives notes of oranges, vanilla cream and smoky heather peat. Tesco and other stockists £34 rrp for 70cl.



Another less expensive, but still excellent 'snifter' is the well-known brand Bell's. **Bell's Aged 8 Years** is the latest innovation from this distillery and its great value for a malty, spicy and smooth dram. Best enjoyed neat, or over ice, it's also good for cocktails or a Whisky Mac. It is well worth trying at £18 rrp for 70 cl (Sainsbury and Ocado).

If you're lucky enough to have been invited to a Burns Night dinner party, you might like to take a rather special chocolate gift for your host - but you'd better order it soon! **William Curley**, the award-winning Scots chocolatier, has - in honour of the occasion

- launched a limited-edition box of Scottish inspired couture chocolates and also Glenmorangie Whisky Truffles. His final Burns' Night special is a Black Bun inspired Bouche - a crispy layer of praline feuilletine, topped with spiced ganache and whisky soaked sultanas. Available from his shops in Soho and Harrods or order online from williamcurley.co.uk before Monday 24 January for next day delivery.



Did you know that the world-famous haggis producer Macsween of Edinburgh produces 1000 tonnes of haggis a year? And around a third of this is consumed during Burns' celebrations - that's around 1.6 million portions of haggis! Well, Edinburgh based online drinks specialist **Flavourly** has partnered with Macsweens to produce a limited edition Haggis beer specially for Burns' Night. The **Haggis Spiced Pale Ale** is brewed by Scottish brewery **Cold Town Beer** and uses the exact secret spice blend used by Macsween. **Cold Macsween Beer** (4.3% abv) is from £19.99 for 6 - 330ml cans inc. free delivery exclusively from Flavourly where other Scottish beers are also available.

And if you're planning your Burns Night supper, Twickenham's wonderful [Brown's Artisan Butcher](#) is again stocking haggis and offering a free pack of traditional veggies to accompany it! Or if planning to go out, check out [The Crown](#) in Twickers, [The Lion](#) in Teddington, [The Wych Elm](#), [The Canbury Arms](#) or [Browns](#) in Kingston or the [Wheatsheaf](#) in Esher.



La bohème: Preview

Normansfield Theatre, Teddington from 28th – 30th January 2022

Opera critic Thomas Forsythe discusses Instant Opera's forthcoming production of Puccini's *La bohème* with its Artistic Director Nicholas George

TF: Good evening, Nick. I hear there is some exciting news: one of the cast of *La Bohème* has just become a father a fortnight before opening night.

NG: Good evening, Thomas. Yes, wonderful news and a tonic to the entire cast in these challenging times.



TF: That's marvellous news, and just as Instant Opera's own "new baby" is due at the end of January, a second generation *La bohème*, reviving the successful 2019 production. Can we expect a clear family resemblance between the two productions?

NG: Completely. It's a carbon copy of the 2019 production, which sold out weeks before the opening night. We may add a few surprises here and there, but what is also exciting is the fabulous cast of new singers that have joined some of the original cast – the audiences are in for a treat!

TF: Instant Opera's *La bohème* is set in 1973 in Amsterdam, not as Puccini saw it, the Paris of 1830. Will the atmosphere be different?

NG: The book is of French origin, the music and text Italian, but the themes and heart of *La bohème* are eternal. Paris became yet another 'world city' during the latter half of the twentieth century. Amsterdam followed a different bolder, controversial, path; arguably more convincingly than even the swinging sixties in London.

TF: With all its snow and cold rooms, this opera is a great one for winter, but what would you say to the non-operagoer? Puccini is a must-see, but why should they go and see *La Bohème*?

NG: Come and ward off those the January blues with a fantastic immersion in glorious music and heart-warming drama. Normansfield Theatre is the perfect place to be introduced to this full-on, wonderful opera!



Read the full interview at www.markaspen.com/2022/01/20/boheme-io-prev

[Instant Opera's *La bohème*](#) returns to Normansfield Theatre on 28th, 29th & 30th January. [Tickets remain available](#) as we go to press.

Photography by Marc Haegermann and Jonathan Lo.



Dark Sublime

by Michael Dennis

Progress Company at Progress Theatre, Reading until 22nd January

How many young men would take the trouble to track down Jacqueline Pearce, who played Servalan in the 80's science fiction series *Blakes 7*? Actually, probably quite a lot, and if you are one of those, this play is definitely for you. Read *Dark Sublime* for *Blakes 7*, and you're there.



It is about the relationship of one such fan with his idol. The actor in question, in the world of the play, is Marianne Hogg (Melanie Sherwood) who played the evil Ragana in the series *Dark Sublime*. It is, however, more about Marianne and her issues, than it is about the fan, Oli (Dean Stephenson). He adores her because of who she is, and she adores him because he is her only fan. Marianne lives with a female companion, Kate (Ali Carroll), and their unstable relationship provides a brooding backdrop to the action, which Oli inadvertently draws out.



At just under three hours, this is an ambitious production, both for the team and the audience. Like a long novel, if you're not in the right frame of mind from the start, you will find your concentration flagging. This may have been true during the first act; however, the second act brings the play together very well. It opens with Oli presenting at the convention he has put together, essentially in Marianne's honour, and it is very funny. This, and other scenes, leave us wondering if the atmosphere of, say, a *Star Trek* convention are as cheesy. One hopes not, but it probably is!



One of the things that lifts the play is that it is peppered with very funny one liners. The one that comes to mind is when Oli reassures Marianne by telling her she is not 'complete shit', to which she replies that it is one of the best reviews she's had!

Read Nick Swyft's review at www.markaspen.com/2022/01/18/dark-sublime

Photography by Aidan Moran



Raymonda

by Tamara Rojo after Marius Petipa, music by Alexander Glazunov
English National Ballet, London Coliseum until 23rd January, World Premiere.

The Crimean War in the mid-1850s saw the advent of war photography, with the appointment of Roger Fenton as the first official war photographer. His photographs are one of many inspirations for ENB's *Raymonda* and the setting for its World Premiere. The colour palette is the sepia of early photographs, muted and richly mellow. In this ballet there are episodes and set-pieces that shout to be captured on photographic plates. The narrative becomes more immediate, real and impelling; and Glazunov's score ranges from the serene to the triumphant, with lilting lyricism and marvellous melodies.



Tamara Rojo has gone back to Marius Petipa's original 1898 choreography; quite literally, by retrieving his production notation, now held in Harvard University. Petipa set his narrative for *Raymonda* in the Crusades, currently a culturally delicate area (the same problem that Glyndebourne neatly side-stepped in its [2019 production of Handel's opera Rinaldo](#).) The Crimean conflict offers a more nuanced presentation. Now women could follow the army, not as vivandières, but as wives, as observers, and as nurses. Florence Nightingale immediately springs to mind, another inspiration for the setting.

When we first see the eponymous Raymonda, the ladies of her well-to-do family sew warm clothes for the soldiers, but she clearly wants to do more. When her fiancé John de Bryan leaves for the battlefield, Raymonda decides to go with him. Her rebellious streak is clear, but she is held in check by the mores of society. She finds herself attracted to another officer of an allied army and Raymonda's fate becomes a poignant story of what might have been.

Raymonda is the culmination of Tamara Rojo's decade as Artistic Director of ENB before she moves on to become the artistic director of San Francisco Ballet. Her outstanding career is crowned by her debut in directing and choreography, and it is a sublime triumph.

Read Mark Aspen's review at www.markaspen.com/2022/01/19/raymonda



Photography by Johan Persson

CONFUSED – YOU`VE EVERY RIGHT TO BE!

Travel notes by Bruce Lyons



This week top of the list is, thanks to Novak Djokovic`s drama in Melbourne, is the question, where can I go on vacation if I`m not vaccinated? Yes, there are destinations that have been opened, well known destinations that you can go to (you`ll still need a negative PCR to show on arrival) like Mexico, Dominican Republic, Spain – several European Destinations and more. BUT it is also true that some destinations like Mauritius & Israel that have just re-opened their borders will not allow any unvaccinated adults to visit and this is like to go on for a good while – especially as new Countries try to re-open.

We all read about the tragedy in Tonga and the Underwater Volcano and the difficulty the helping nations had getting supplies to the disaster areas. I know we are working here with travellers, but all these protocols and disciplines are creeping into all our daily lives. I don`t know how many times we have spent hours trying to get exasperated relatives to see their loves ones these last 18 months only to find at the last minute the rules have been changed.

Now, at last the return to UK protocols are changing and getting easier (and cheaper) to comply with but it is far from over. Some countries require a PCR to be shown on arrival – even if you are triple jabbed – and some of these are only to be done 24hr before departure.

Now, as people are travelling again and focussed on the Covid-19 issues some have overlooked getting Visas (we had one of those) or renewing their passports – this is very important as everywhere there is a shortage of staff – we will surely soon hear of Passport backlogs – so do it now I say and taking a car overseas – just check on google what you need for the car and whether you need an international driving licence.

Best places to go just now Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico and many European Destinations and remember we still have 10 days to go till the end of January. There are still Sales ON 10/20/30 +% DISCOUNTS ON OFFER free children places OR £100/£200/£300 OFF AND MORE –

As long as Grant Shapps and Sajid Javid hold their nerve it will get better and we are being asked daily now for February School Breaks, Easter Holidays and May School Breaks but they are becoming short supply – especially the May date – as it coincides with the Platinum Jubilee
And also, perhaps, because the Med is hot by then

So my advice if you want to get a bit of warmth get down to it now – check everything is OK for you in the Destination you are planning to visit – you wouldn`t want to end up in a Hostel like Novak did and then get deported!

Book that precious trip with ATOL protection & let us make sure you have all the information you need regarding PCRs, passports, Visas, driving licences etc. We have actually got quite a lot of people away these past few months with no mishaps BUT with a lot of help. Take the stress out of travel and come and have a chat with us at 58 Church Street!



WIZ TALES - Serbia

Teresa Read



Serbia, one of the countries of former Yugoslavia, and under the control of the Ottoman Empire for almost five centuries, continued to have a troubled history in the twentieth century; it became the Republic of Serbia in 2006.

Belgrade, the capital city and one of Europe's oldest cities, began as a fortress on the Sava River. Throughout the centuries the fortress was rebuilt and became one of the major strongholds of Europe.

World Heritage sites include the Orthodox Studenica Monastery that dates back to the twelfth century.

The Royal Family Karadjordjevic of Serbia is related to the British Royal Family through Queen Victoria and the Greek Royal Family.

In January 2022 Novak Djokovic, Serbia's tennis star, made world headlines when he entered Australia to defend his tennis title but had failed to satisfy the Australian authorities about his Covid-19 vaccination status.

Djokovic was deported on 16 January 2022 for failing to comply with Australia's Covid-19 vaccination rules.



L-R: HRH Prince Philip, Crown Princess Katherine's daughter Mrs. Alison Garfinkel, HRH Crown Princess Katherine, HRH Crown Prince Alexander II and HRH Prince Alexander at the famous Kopaonik ski resort



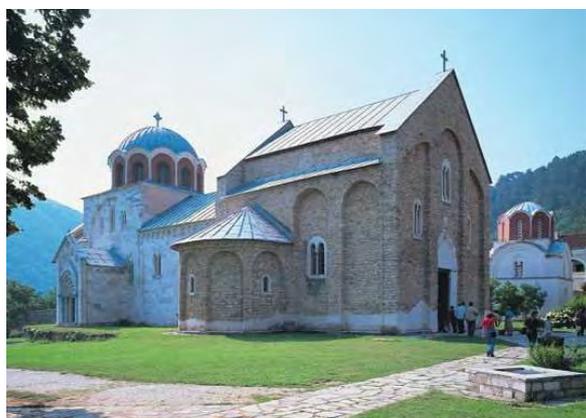
Belgrade



Danube River



Dundjerski Castle



Studenica Monastery



Zlatarsko Lake



Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery

Information about Serbia: <https://worldinfozone.com/country.php?country=Serbia&page=2>

Photographs with thanks to the Royal Family Karadjordjevic (2003 worldinfozone.com)

REMEMBER THE HOLOCAUST

By Doug Goodman

Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27th is dedicated to the millions of Jewish and other people who suffered under Nazi persecution during WW2. Also remembered are those who suffered in Cambodia, Rwanda and Bosnia. The date chosen commemorates the 27th January 1945 when Russian troops liberated the concentration camp at Auschwitz as they advanced through Poland. The sign, some 50 kms. from Warsaw, says 'Oświęcim' the Polish name for the World Heritage Sites of Auschwitz/Birkenau. It is estimated that of the 1.3 million people who were sent to the camp 1.1 million perished. Visiting Auschwitz on a day trip from Warsaw is an experience that should not be missed.



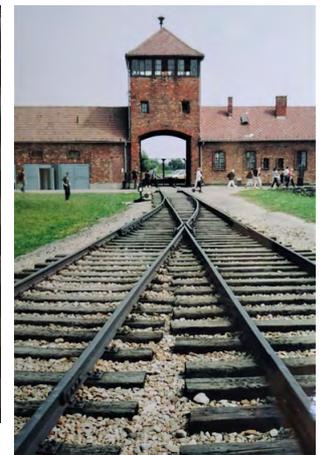
Remains of Warsaw Ghetto in 1964



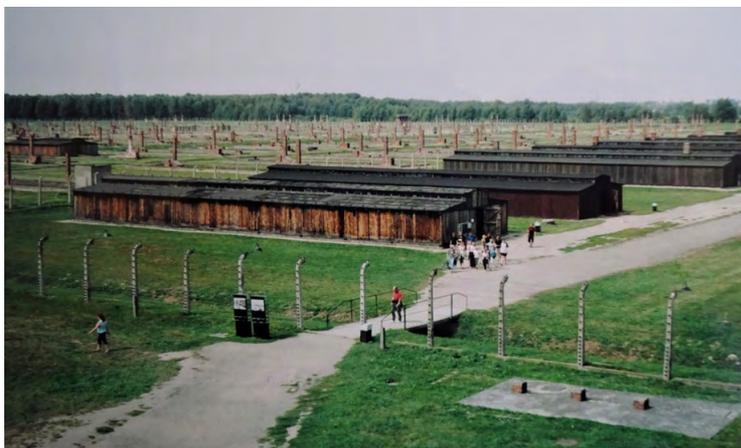
Polish for Auschwitz



Entrance Gate



Rail Terminus



Camp Huts



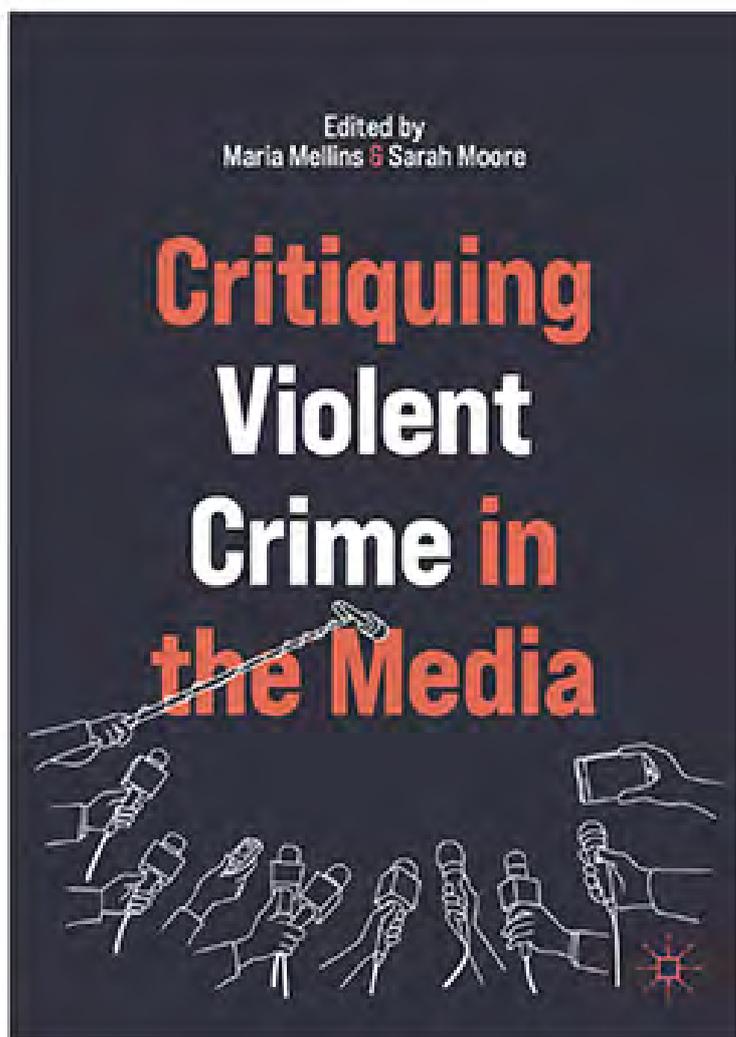
Wire and Watch Towers

St Mary's University

St Mary's Associate Professor Publishes book on Crime in the Media

Dr Maria Mellins, Associate Professor in Criminology and Sociology at St Mary's University, Twickenham has published a new edited textbook *Critiquing Violent Crime in the Media* in collaboration with Sarah Moore.

The book, published by Palgrave Macmillan, explores how representations of crime in the media have informed and misinformed understanding of crime and society, focusing on various crimes including stalking, human trafficking and serial murder.



There are a total of 14 chapters written by several academics from St Mary's and other institutions including fellow St

Mary's academics Dr Carole Murphy on human trafficking and coercive control, Farhana Irshad on digital detectives and online spaces, and Bridgid Cherry on representations of homicide in the media.

The chapters cover themes including gender, representations of victim-survivors and consumer culture.

Author Dr Maria Mellins said:

“We are very pleased to have published *Critiquing Violent Crime in the Media*, which will be used as a textbook for Crime in the Media modules on undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

It will also be used as a resource for researchers and professionals.

The project has been very collaborative, Sarah and I would like to thank the authors who have written such accessible, valuable chapters.

I hope the book provides an important contribution to research and helps students to engage and reflect in the classroom.”

The book is available for purchase on the [Palgrave Macmillan website](https://www.palgrave.com/9781137000000).



**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**

College media students launch Equality, Diversity and Inclusion campaign

Creative Media Production and Technology Level 2 students were tasked with creating a media campaign promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) community. The brief was set by College Principal and CEO, Jason Jones.

Within the brief the students were asked to create a logo, short film and complementary poster campaign, which included original photographs and graphics, for display in the notice boards around the College building.

Creating the short film was a group project, focussing on and making sure each student's voice was heard through the campaign. The winning film was produced by, Shawayne Taylor, Sunal Fernando, Luca Horton and Ergys Mataj.

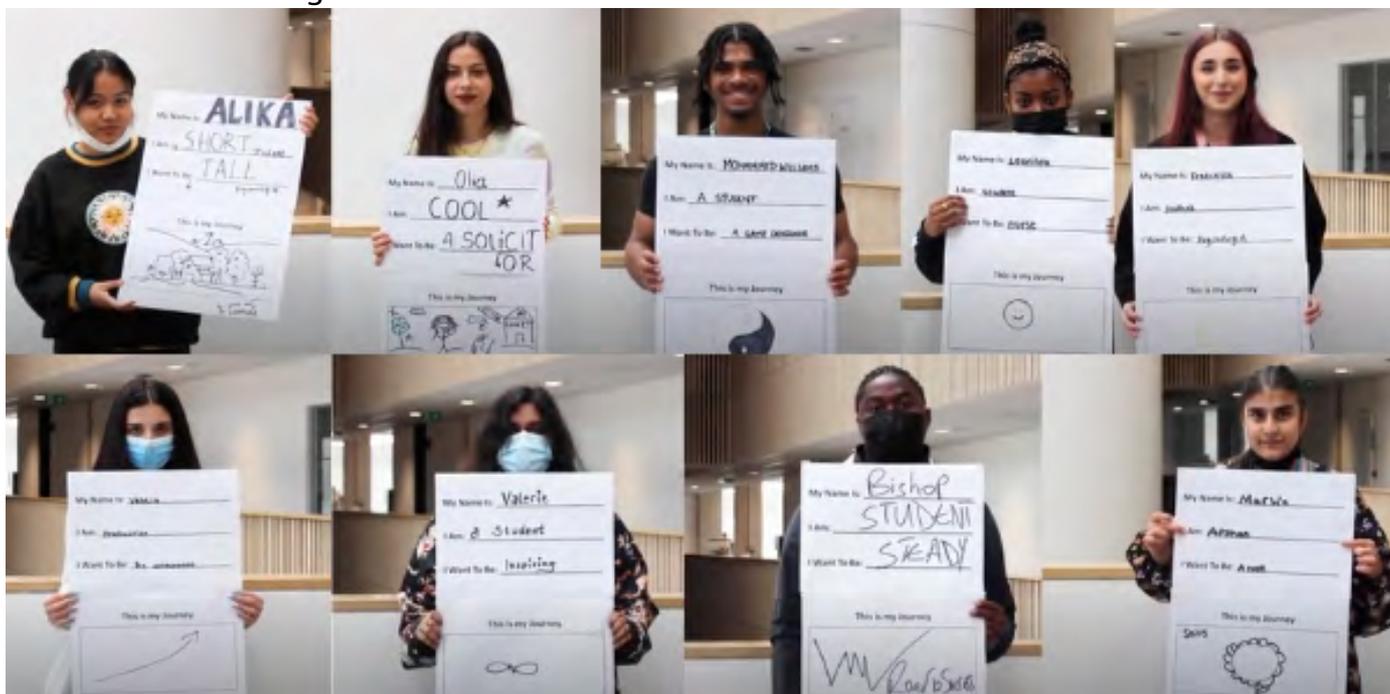
The film shows how much equality and diversity is valued at RuTC by students and highlights the benefits of having an equal and diverse space for everyone.

Group project winner, Sunal Fernando explains the inspiration behind the logo design, "The whole College community was our inspiration, the logo is a collage of various different skin tone, which come together as a large circle to show that even though we're different, we come together at RuTC."

"Equality and diversity are really important now, especially after the Black Lives Matter movement – we know that even in College, we have disadvantaged groups, from ethnic groups to class and income."

"The College is a really diverse place; we have students of all ages coming from all over London – it was just a matter of illustrating that in a video."

The EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) campaign will run throughout this term and will be promoted via the College's social media channels.



Richmond Borough Mind's It's Time to Talk workshop

Thursday 3 February 2022 is Time to Talk Day and Richmond Borough Mind is aiming to help local organisations establish a proactive approach to supporting employee wellbeing and prevent mental ill health.

Richmond Borough Mind aim to establish a proactive approach through their new workshop around how to have those, sometimes uncomfortable, conversations.

The 90-minute online workshop looks at why stigma still exists and addresses the myths of talking about mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Buy your tickets for [It's Time to Talk workshop](#)

Contact training@rbmind.org to organise an in-house workshop for your organisation or team.



Richmond Hearing Voices Friendship Group

The Hearing Voices Friendship Group supports residents who hear voices and those who support them.

The group currently meet online from 11am to 1pm on the last Thursday of each month and offer information, support and understanding.

For further information please contact Wendy Micklewright on wmicklewright@yahoo.co.uk.

View more [details about the group](#).



BRENTFORD FC ANNOUNCE ANNUAL FINANCIAL RESULTS

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 published

Football and operational highlights

- Historic promotion to the Premier League secured following victory in the Sky Bet Championship Play-Off Final.
- We bid a fond farewell to Griffin Park our home since 1904, albeit our fans were denied the opportunity to say a proper goodbye.
- Our new home, the Brentford Community Stadium, opened on 1 September 2020.
- We faced significant operational challenges as a result of COVID-19 with much of the season being played behind closed doors.
- Praise given to the support of the fans with over 11,000 premium and season tickets sold in 2020.
- Commercial Partners stood by the Club throughout the pandemic with no refunds requested.

Financial highlights

- Turnover increased to £15.3m (2020: £13.9m).
- The estimated negative financial impact of COVID-19 during the 2020/21 season was approximately £2.8m (2020: £1.0m).
- The Group's operating loss before player trading was £53.1m (2020: £34.1m).
- The profit on disposal of players was £44.3m (2020: profit of £24.9m).
- The Group's loss before taxation was £8.5m (2020: loss of £9.1m).
- The Group's loss after tax was £2.4m (2020: loss of £10.3m).

[Brentford FC Ltd Group Accounts_2021.pdf](#)

Brentford FC has today published the annual results for the year ended 30 June 2021. These accounts show turnover increasing to a record high of £15.3m (2020: £13.9m). This has been driven by increases across EFL and FA revenues, other football revenues (including monies from live TV coverage) and commercial income. It is also despite a sharp reduction in ticketing income due to matches being played behind closed doors or in front of a significantly reduced



capacity as a result of the pandemic.

The estimated negative financial impact of COVID-19 on the 2020/21 season is approximately £2.8m (2020: £1.0m). This figure is a net figure and primarily comprises lost matchday revenue, offset by a reduction in matchday operating costs and grant income.

The financial statements for the year under review show a group operating loss, before player trading, of £53.1m (2020: loss of £34.1m). The current year's loss arises following a season where virtually no matchday income was generated due to COVID-19 restrictions preventing supporter attendance at the vast majority of games. The current year's loss also includes one-off bonuses paid out to players and staff following our successful promotion to the Premier League in May 2021.

Our player trading drove a significant profit on the disposal of player registrations of £44.3m (2020: profit of £24.9m). The principal contributors to this were the sale of Ollie Watkins to Aston Villa and the sale of Said Benrahma to West Ham United. These two transfers continue to provide evidence of the strong work done by the Club to recruit and develop talent.

The knock-on impact of this was that the loss before taxation was £8.5m (2020: loss of £9.1m) - a significant reduction on the operating loss. This loss before taxation would have been a profit of approximately £3.5m were it not for promotion-related payments totalling £12.0m.

Matthew Benham's total investment in the group on 30 June 2021, comprised of equity and loans, stood at £104.1m (2020: £103.0m). This sum includes £22.4m (2020: £21.3m) of secured loans specifically in relation to the Brentford Community Stadium project.

Cliff Crown, Chair, said: "The 2020/21 season was a momentous one for Brentford FC, on and off the field with the Club realising its ambition of promotion to the Premier League.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank Matthew Benham for his unwavering commitment to the Club and congratulate Thomas Frank, Brian Riemer, the players and all the Club staff, both on and off field, my fellow Board Directors and everyone who has contributed to the best season the Club has experienced in the last 75 years.

"Our fans also deserve a special mention. Their support made a huge difference on and off the park and we will continue to do our very best to make them proud. On behalf of the Club, I want to thank each and every one of them.

"It has never been more self-evident that our togetherness and determination to achieve our goals was the key factor in our success."



England Men Sevens squad named for Malaga

England men's Sevens head coach Tony Roques has named his squad for the forthcoming Malaga Sevens (21-23 January, broadcast live on www.world.rugby).

Drawn in Pool A, England take on Fiji, Scotland and Dubai winners South Africa in Spain where Malaga will host the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series for the first time.

The squad is formed from a mix of Premiership, university and core contracted sevens players as the England Sevens programme relaunches in 2022. 2021 Olympian and 2018 Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Alex Davis is named as captain for the upcoming season while Tom Bowen is set to earn his 50th cap for England having reached the World Series milestone with GB Sevens last year.

In exciting new partnerships Joe Browning (Leicester Tigers) and Harlequins duo Hayden Hyde and Will Trenholm are selected for their England Sevens debuts. Ed Coulson and Will Homer have been awarded core contract status, and join fellow contracted players Jamie Adamson, Jamie Barden, Max Clementson and Freddie Roddick. Also named are Blake Boyland, Calum Randle, who impressed head coach Roques at recent camp opportunities

Roques said: *"This is a new team with a lot of young players. We've got 10 players making their debut in an England Sevens shirt which is an exciting opportunity for this group to perform on the World Series. We'd like to thank wider stakeholders who have shown support and collaboration to give players the chance to show what they can do in this environment and hopefully develop them as people and players. The links with Premiership clubs, national league clubs and universities is a really positive step forward. These players, combined with the experience of some of the core group have formed a really exciting group in the last few weeks and come together in such a positive way in a short period of time."*

On Alex Davis becoming England Sevens captain, Roques added: *"Alex Davis has been on an amazing journey, overcome so much, played in the Olympics and now is captain of England Sevens. I'd also like to congratulate Tom Bowen on his 50th England cap. It's a huge achievement and one we're looking forward to marking with him. We're really looking forward to getting out to Spain and beginning this new journey as England Sevens."*

Davis said: *"First of all I'd like to congratulate all of our new caps who will be representing England for the first time. I remember the feeling very well and so I hope they're proud of their achievement. I'm honoured to have been asked by Rocky (Tony Roques) to captain the side. Having been involved in a strong sevens programme prior to the pandemic, it's apparent to us that starting new will have its challenges but we're aiming to create a great environment that allows everyone to thrive at every opportunity. We're really excited to play in Spain and enjoy ourselves on and off the pitch."*

England Men 7s squad for Malaga

Jamie Adamson*
Jamie Barden
Blake Boyland*
Tom Bowen
Joe Browning*
Max Clementson*

Ed Coulson*
Alex Davis (C)
Will Homer*
Hayden Hyde*
Calum Randle*
Freddie Roddick*
Will Trenholm*



*Denotes England Sevens World Series debut

England Women Sevens squad for Malaga named

Head coach James Rodwell has named his England Women Sevens squad for the forthcoming HSBC World Sevens Series tournament in Malaga (21-23 January and live on www.World.Rugby).

Drawn in Pool C, England face France, Russia and Brazil at Estadio Ciudad de Málaga.

Abbie Brown and Megan Jones will co-captain the group with Abi Burton, Grace Crompton, Alicia Maude, Isla Norman Bell and Emma Uren also included. Ellie Boatman and Heather Cowell have also joined the core contracted group and compete in Spain.

Meanwhile, Gloucester-Hartpury duo Tatyana Heard and Kelly Smith, Saracens' Chantelle Miell and Loughborough Lightning's Georgina Tasker have all been selected after impressing during training camps. The group will then head to Seville for the second of the back-to-back Spain tournaments (28-30 January).

Rodwell said: *"We are starting a new journey with the England rose on our chest which gives us great pride. To go out and wear an England shirt again at the start of a new programme with England returning in a really big year for sevens including a home Commonwealth Games is exciting.*

"We have a number of returning faces from the GB programme and they will have hopefully learned from that experience and will take that into this England programme.

"We also have some very exciting young players coming through who we have the opportunity to develop and bring them into a professional environment. I'm looking forward to seeing them play on the World Series.

"Spain is a new tournament on the series for both the women's and men's teams. The excitement of getting back playing after the Christmas break with a new group is one everyone is looking forward to. The energy coming into camp from January has been brilliant, despite some challenges. We're looking to make England proud back on the series again and can't wait to get going."

Co-captain Brown added: *"We're all super excited to have the opportunity to put on an England shirt again and wear the rose.*

"We've got a big year ahead of us, with a home Commonwealth Games plus a lot of new talent coming through, so Spain will be interesting to not only see where the team is at but to showcase where we want to take England Sevens too."

England Women 7s squad for Malaga

Ellie Boatman
Abbie Brown (C)
Abi Burton
Heather Cowell
Grace Crompton
Tatyana Heard

Megan Jones (C)
Alicia Maude
Chantelle Miell
Isla Norman-Bell
Kelly Smith
Georgina Tasker
Emma Uren



Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system

The Ministry of Justice has made limited progress on its Female Offender Strategy to improve outcomes for women in the criminal justice system because it has not prioritised investment in this work, according to a report from the National Audit Office (NAO).

Women in the justice system have distinct needs and worse outcomes than men. They are more likely than men to have specific vulnerabilities that drive their offending, including experiences of trauma and abuse, and they also pose less of a serious risk to the public.¹ In 2018, the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) published the Female Offender Strategy (the strategy) to reduce the number of women entering the criminal justice system, and increase the proportion of women offender managed in the community. The strategy contained over 50 commitments which ranged from publishing guidance for police working with vulnerable women, to creating residential women's centres (RWCs) as an alternative to prison.

The female offender programme (the programme) was established to oversee the strategy, but the Ministry decided against setting targets for the programme's main objectives - such as how many women it expected to divert from the criminal justice system or give community sentences - because they would depend on actions from independent bodies, including the judiciary. Without clearly setting out the scale of its ambitions, the Ministry could not estimate what funding would be required to deliver the programme, or what savings the programme might achieve.

The Ministry allocated limited funding and resources to the programme because it prioritised other strategic aims, including dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The only funding it initially made available was £5.1 million in 2018-20 for supporting women's services in the community. Across the 2020 and 2021 single year Spending Reviews, the Ministry allocated to the programme just £13.1 million of the minimum £40 million that the programme team initially estimated it would need for certain aspects of the programme. The programme team focused funding on developing community options for women, in part because it was the most urgent need.

Despite its focus on community options specifically for women, the Ministry has made limited progress. Funding to providers for women's services was restricted to short-term grants of less than a year because of the constraints of the government's one-year Spending Reviews. Providers told the NAO that this made it difficult to plan ahead and sustain services. The Ministry's plans to pilot five residential women's centres have also been considerably delayed because of difficulties finding a site for its first centre in Wales, and resource issues. Only £500,000 of an expected £3.5 million will be spent on these centres in 2021-22.

The Ministry does not have a good understanding of whether it is making progress towards the strategy's wider aims. No performance measures were set for the strategy, which means the Ministry cannot identify if trends in the data on women in the criminal justice system align with its objectives. As a result, the Ministry's ability to make joined-up decisions has been limited. Its plans to create an additional 500 prison places for women, for example, did not consider any likely change in demand that might come from more women being managed in the community.

The women's prison population has decreased, but the NAO did not find evidence that this was caused by the system beginning to work as the strategy intends. The female prison population decreased by 16% between June 2018 and September 2021. Most (81%) of the decline occurred between March and December 2020; data suggests this was probably because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including fewer opportunities for crime and a significant reduction in court activity. The remaining 19% of the decrease happened outside this period, and did not coincide with decreases in arrests, or increased use of community options - as set out in the strategy's aims.

The NAO recommends that the Ministry puts in place specific goals for the strategy's main objectives, and makes a full assessment of the funding required to meet its aims. It should also set out how it will measure progress and evaluate the success of the programme.

Gareth Davies, the head of the NAO said:

"The Ministry of Justice has not made the Female Offender Strategy a priority. The strategy is intended to improve outcomes for women, but a lack of clear goals makes it hard to evaluate progress. Even in the areas where it focused attention, such as developing community options for women, delivery has been disappointing.

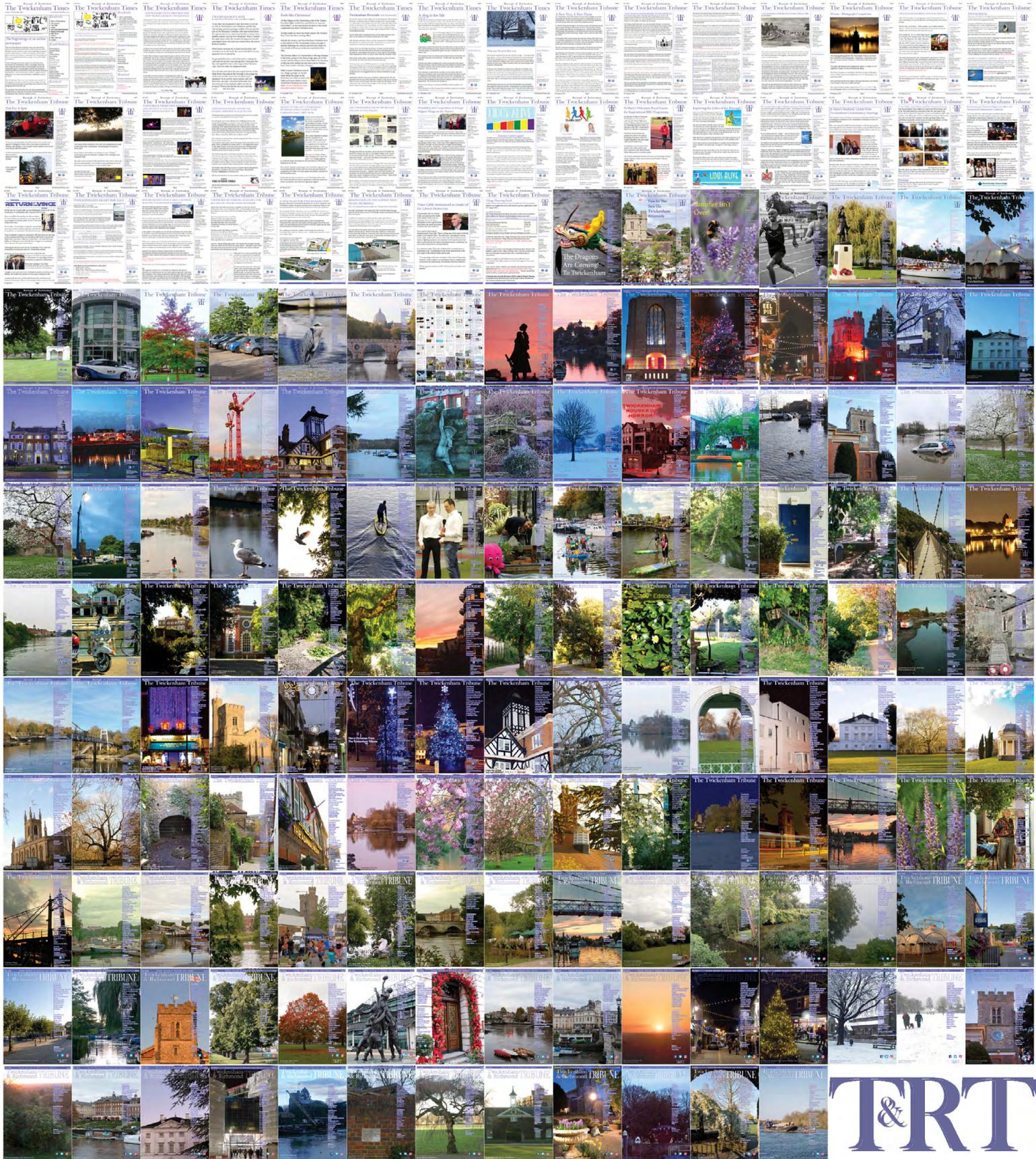
"The Ministry of Justice must clarify its aspirations and priorities for women, and match these to clear actions and funding, to improve how the criminal justice system treats women."



National Audit Office

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

272 editions of the **Twickenham & Richmond Tribune** online - Lots to read: News, Reviews, History, Sports and On-going Sagas in the Borough of Richmond upon Thames



Half Page

Quarter Page
Landscape

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