

Twickenham & Richmond TRIBUNE



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11th March 2022



Church Street supports Ukraine

Photo by Berkley Driscoll

TickerTape - News in Brief

Residents upset as council denies Prosperity Restaurant business rate relief

The owners of the Prosperity Restaurant and Café in Twickenham have been making extraordinary efforts in recent weeks to provide a collection, sorting and distribution point for the residents of Richmond borough to make donations of clothes and other items to assist the people of Ukraine affected by the war in their country; their incredible efforts have been reported on national news, in print and on television.

It appears that a request to the council to grant the Prosperity Restaurant and Café a temporary Discretionary Business Rates Relief was denied by the council this week.

View the BBC article [HERE](#)

UPDATE: It is understood that the Council is looking into the situation.

Minor engineering works expected on Richmond Bridge this weekend

Civil engineering works on Richmond Bridge are due to take place this weekend with minor traffic disruptions expected in the area.

These works are being undertaken in order to prepare the area for the installation of a zebra crossing nearby.

The works will be completed in two stages with kerb works taking place this weekend and remaining works set to be completed on 20 March in the early hours of the morning.

The works will be carried out between 8am and 12am on Saturday 12 and 8am to 3.30pm on Sunday 13 March. There will be traffic controls in operation whilst works are carried out.

Alan Benson MBE to receive Freedom of the Borough

The Leader of Richmond Council has announced the Council's intention to offer 'Freedom of the Borough' to Alan Benson MBE. Alan is Disability Campaigner and Trustee of local charity Ruils, in recognition of his dedication to championing the rights of disabled adults and children, particularly in Richmond upon Thames.

Alan is a leading disability campaigner featured on the Shaw Trust's Disability Power 100 list of the most influential disabled people. He also sits on the Board of Transport for All, London Travel Watch, and co-chairs the Department for Transport's Inclusive Transport Stakeholder Group.



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TwickerSeal bumped into some of his chums on Twickenham Riverside. They were enjoying the lovely Embankment with its Pin Oaks and the calm, safe Diamond Jubilee Gardens.

TwickerMole popped up and asked if everyone had seen the latest missive from the Lib Dems? It seems that they are still banging on about that old chestnut '40 years of riverside neglect'!

Oh, come on, quacked TwickerDuck, surely they don't think residents will fall for that one? All they want to do is build a massive block of luxury flats on the riverfront – actually, directly on the Diamond Jubilee Gardens which are designated as Public Open Space and held in trust by a charity.

Oh come on, sighed TwickerSwan, look at the facts. In the last 40 years the Lib Dems were in power for six terms and the Conservatives were in power for only three terms. In all that time the only improvements to Twickenham Riverside were made by the Conservatives (er, Diamond Jubilee Gardens for example).

TwickerDuck was confused. So the Lib Dems were in power for most of the last 40 years, but are blaming others for 'neglect'. But when they were in power, they didn't do anything?

Oh no, said TwickerSeal. They did do something. They put in proposals for private housing on the riverside. Oh, so no change there muttered TwickerDuck forlornly.



COVID 19

Teresa Read

World Health Organization Weekly Epidemiological Report

Globally, during the week of 28 February through 6 March 2022, the number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths has continued to decline by 5% and 8% respectively, as compared to the previous week. Across the six WHO regions, over 10 million new cases and over 52 000 new deaths were reported. As of 6 March 2022, over 433 million confirmed cases and over 5.9 million deaths have been reported globally.

At the regional level, while the Western Pacific Region continue to report an increase (+46%) in the number of new weekly cases, all other regions reported decreases. The number of new weekly deaths increased in the Western Pacific (+29%) and the Eastern Mediterranean (+2%) Regions, while decreases were reported by the African Region (-39%), Europe Region (-15%), the Region of the Americas (-9%) and South-East Asia Region (-3%).

Joint statement on the prioritization of monitoring SARS-CoV-2 infection in wildlife and preventing the formation of animal reservoirs (Food and Agriculture Organization, World Organisation for Animal Health and the World Health Organization)

... “In addition to domestic animals, free-ranging, captive or farmed wild animals such as big cats, minks, ferrets, North American white-tailed deer and great apes have thus far been observed to be infected with SARS-CoV-2. To date, farmed mink and pet hamsters have been shown to be capable of infecting humans with the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

It is also crucial to safely dispose of uneaten food, masks, tissues, and any other human waste to avoid attracting wildlife, especially to urban areas and, if possible, keep domestic animals away from wildlife and their droppings.

Countries should also adopt precautions to reduce the risk of establishment of animal reservoirs and potential acceleration of virus evolution in novel hosts, which could lead to the emergence of new SARS-CoV-2 variants. Such measures will preserve the health of precious wildlife as well as humans.”



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

The Treehouse
25 King Edwards Grove
Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9LY
Telephone 020 8274 0107
Mobile 07960 123580
Fax 020 8274 0119
info@thetreeagency.co.uk
www.thetreeagency.co.uk

Total cases Locally

Richmond upon Thames	58,895	(57,409 previous week)
Kingston upon Thames	52,921	(51,526 previous week)
Hounslow	87,177	(85,893 previous week)
Wandsworth	105,023	(102,737 previous week)

COVID IN THE NEWS

Reuters, 11 March 2022: England's COVID R number rises, cases could be growing.

Sky News, 10 March 2022: COVID-19: Royal Cornwall Hospital suspends all visiting after 'significant increase' in patients testing positive.

Nature, 10 March 2022: Kids show mysteriously low levels of COVID antibodies

Imperial College London, 10 March 2022: Coronavirus infections remain high while Omicron 'stealth variant' rises – REACT (coronavirus monitoring programme)

CNA, 10 March 2022: China's daily local symptomatic COVID-19 cases nearly double to 402

UN, United Nations News, 9 March 2022: Two years on, COVID-19 pandemic 'far from over' ("**and it will not be over anywhere until it's over everywhere**", said WHO Director Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus on Wednesday.)

Jed Mercurio and Munira Wilson join the Landmark's Thank You event

Twickenham MP, Munira Wilson, and Line of Duty writer/producer and Landmark patron, Jed Mercurio, were among the 130 strong guest list at an evening reception held by The Landmark Arts Centre in Teddington.

The event, held on Thursday 3 March, was held for donors and supporters of the emergency crowdfunding campaign, launched in April 2020, to save the centre from permanent closure due to the impact of Covid-19.

Centre manager, Lesley Bossine, outlined the ongoing significant and expensive challenges the organisation still faces surrounding the maintenance and upkeep of the Grade II* listed building.

Guests at the event were also able to enjoy a preview of the Surrey Sculpture Society showcase exhibition, as well a performance by one of the Landmark's resident choirs, the Landmark Singers.



The Landmark Arts Centre is an independent charity (1047080) dedicated to offering a wide range of arts education activities for children, young people and adults providing an annual programme of live events including music, comedy, poetry, and dance as well as art fairs and exhibitions.

The Bloody Code

By Simon Fowler

Today the courts pass out much harsher sentences for murder and other crimes relating to the body than to property. But two hundred years ago, crimes against property were severely punished, as the result of a series of acts of parliament which became known as 'the Bloody Code'.

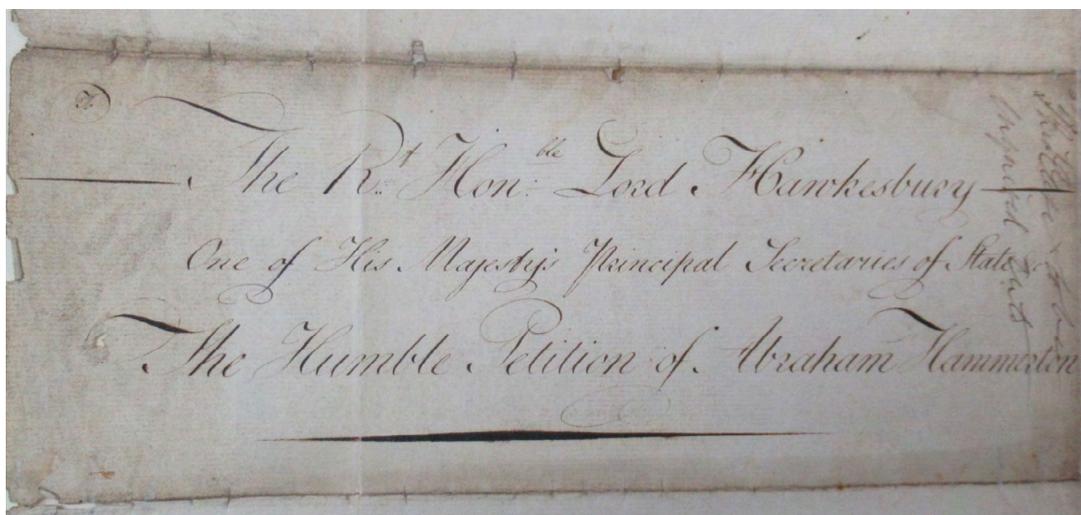
Twickenham-born Abraham Joseph Hammerton was a waterside labourer who discovered what the Bloody Code meant first hand. At the time he broke the law Hammerton was aged 28 and was married with five children.

In October 1801, Hammerton and another man, William Rolls, appeared at the Old Bailey accused of stealing 'a hempen sack, value 1s 6d, and four bushels of barley, value 22s' from John Cook a local brewer. They were stored on a barge.

On discovering the theft Cook accused the two men, both of whom denied the charge. Cook told the court: 'Hammerton, I can scarcely say, did deny it, he was very modest about it.' The two had tried to run away but were caught. In their defence they produced witnesses who attested to their good behaviour. This did not sway the court, who sentenced them both to seven years transportation.

It was then common for prisoners' friends and family to petition the Home Secretary to commute or reduce the sentence, Rolls was successful. Hammerton was not, at least initially. It is not clear why. It may be because it took nearly three years for it to be presented.

The petition for Abraham was prepared by the vicar of Twickenham Charles Duval, and signed by the curate and churchwardens. It said that the prisoner now had 'a proper sense of his crime' and his subsequent remorse. And noted the 'extreme hardships and distress through being deprived of the support they used derive from his industry.'



The petition reflected the high regard that Abraham was held in. Half a dozen local watermen said he was of good character. And they all offered to 'employ him again if [he] wanted assistance.' Even the victim of the crime John Cook wrote that 'I have no objection whatsoever to [his] liberation.'

While the petition was being collected, Hammerton experienced the full horrors of the prison system first hand. Abraham initially spent time at the New Prison in Clerkenwell, before being moved to Newgate and finally enduring several years on the Retribution hulk– a former warship moored off Woolwich. It was here that prisoners were kept before being transported to Australia.

We don't know what happened to Abraham, although fortunately he was eventually pardoned. A report submitted to the Home Secretary in September 1804 by Captain Reid, who commanded the Retribution, noted that his 'conduct has been singularly proper, being always greatly attentive and I think has the appearance of the true penitent.'

Spring Fever

By Lucilius

There is a hint of spring in the air as Cllr Rutt, director of the Department of Heritage Destruction drives across the gardens of the Katchwimen Palace on his Tilia pavement electric motorcycle, crushing any emerging shoots that look like they might grow into trees. He is coming for his weekly audience with the Governor Ralph Gobbets and is quite excited. He rushes into the Audience Chamber.

Gobbets: Hmm. Don't forget to genuflect, Rutt, as you enter the presence. I might have been in the middle of my toilette. Fortunately, I have just finished buffing my fingernails ... dammed solar batteries seem to run out in the winter.

Rutt: Sorry Governor Gobbets, Your Excellency ... pity about the batteries. Still Spring is coming and I just have heard some exciting news. I really, really wanted to tell you about it.

Gobbets: Well? Spit it out.

Rutt: The UK has just followed our example. Their new Highway Code orders all cycles to ride in the middle of the road. Coming round to our way, aren't they?

Gobbets: Where The Democratic Republic of Transfluvia leads, others follow. You dolt, I read that too. You don't think I sit around polishing my nails all day, do you? Their Highway Code is a weak watered down version of ours. They still allow pedestrians to use the pavements, getting in the way. And they tolerate cars! We don't.

Rutt: Except for the Governor and Councillors ... and demolition vehicles of course.

Gobbets: What the hell is that infernal row?

Rutt: It's Vice Governor Hammer, with Herman his Rottweiler. He seems a bit annoyed. *(The door to the Audience Chamber bursts open and they barge in.)*

Gobbets: Come, come Axel, you forgot to genuflect.

Hammer: Gen-U-what? Oh, Herman can do that. *(Kicks dog.)*

Rutt: Oh, oh, er, nice to see you Vice Governor. Nice spring day, isn't it?

Hammer: Pillocks!



Rutt: Oh, yessss?

Hammer: Pillocks. A pillory and stocks all in one, that's what we need for that that witless, inept opposition, always asleep at the wheel. Why do we still bother with an opposition?

Gobbets: It's a quaint old custom, Axel. Keeps the subjects quiet and makes them think they have a say.

Hammer: That's the problem. Just come from the Transposition Committee. We were wasting our time in "debating". Discussing what: Button Lane

Gobbets: What, the one down next to that stinking little river, the one where we've banned cars and pedestrians to make room for all powerful and rechargeable. They're not still whingeing about that.

Hammer: Worse. Their Cllr Lacram wanted to have a vote on it!

Rutt: What a cheek!

Hammer: I'd already turned off his mic' so I could tell him he was asleep at the wheel. He kept on about democracy. Then the plebs in the gallery joined in!

Gobbets: Did you explain we are a Democratic Republic, which means "cratic", ruling by, "demo", demolition?

Hammer: Did I ruck! I told them I was going to irritate them all by being crisp and clean! Then I crisply and cleanly pulled the plug on the loudspeakers and set the Rottweiler on the lot of them; didn't I Herman?

(Herman tries to bark, but is still reeling from Hammer's kick, so just growls weakly.)

Gobbets: We must get in there and expel them. Crisply and cleanly. We like clean don't we Rutt?

Rutt: Yes, Your Excellency, er Excellencies. Lots of concrete, none of those filthy trees. None of those snotty children in their "playgrounds", none of those elderly sorts who can't ride an electric skateboard. Liberty! Democracy! Sanitary! That's what we want! *(He is suddenly conscious that the others are staring at him)* Er, whoops, sorry, I got carried away!

Gobbets: No, no, Rutt, that's the spirit. We mustn't let them get away with it. What will they want next?

Rutt: Er ... riverside gardens?

Tweet of the week

Ironic post from the leader of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Council who is hell-bent on selling off public open space, which is currently protected by a charitable trust, for luxury housing.



Gareth Roberts ✓

@Gareth_Roberts_



Important update, here, on the campaign to stop @SadiqKhan flogging #Teddington Police Station off for luxury housing. @munirawilson and @TRLibDems

Mayor to host Spring Quiz

Get your quizzing team ready to join us for the Mayor's Spring Quiz in aid of this year's Mayor's charities, Habitats & Heritage and A Dose of Nature.

Teams of between six and ten players are welcome to sign up for the Mayor's spring themed charity quiz. Tickets are priced at just £20 which includes a buffet supper at the event.

The quiz takes place on Friday 25 March 2022 in the Clarendon Hall, York House in Twickenham with doors open at 7pm and the quiz beginning at 7.30pm. There will also be a cash bar and raffle on the night.

Buy your ticket [HERE](#)

All proceeds raised will go towards supporting this year's Mayor's charities, Habitats & Heritage and A Dose of Nature.

These charities have been chosen to help raise awareness of the impact of climate change and biodiversity loss within the borough, and also the practical and realistic steps residents and businesses can take to make a positive difference.



Richmond chef in Roux Scholarship semi-finals

A young chef from Richmond has won through to the semi-finals of a competition to find Britain's best young chef. The Roux Scholarship has been running more than 30 years and is judged by Michel Roux Jnr (BBC Saturday Kitchen, Kitchen Impossible, Masterchef), Brian Turner CBE (BBC's Ready, Steady, Cook and Saturday Kitchen) and James Martin (BBC Saturday Kitchen, This Morning and Saturday Morning with James Martin) among many other Michelin-starred chefs.



Kamil Nowak (originally from Poland) now works at the Michelin-starred 'The Dysart Petersham' in Richmond.

He is competing in the regional final in London on Thurs 24th March, 2022.



<https://www.rouxscholarship.co.uk/meet-our-regional-finalists-2022/>

Mayor of Richmond upon Thames plants new oak tree to mark the Queen's Green Canopy

The Mayor of Richmond upon Thames, Cllr Geoff Acton, planted a new oak tree on Moormead Recreation Ground to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

This year is the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years on the throne. The Queen's Green Canopy is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee this year which invites everyone from across the United Kingdom to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'.



This morning (11 March), The Mayor was joined by the Leader of Richmond Council, Cllr Gareth Roberts, as well as local residents at Moormead Recreation Ground for the planting of the new oak tree.

New trees have now been planted in every ward of the borough to mark the Platinum Jubilee with all new trees being species that are native to the UK.

The newly planted trees are easily identifiable with special Platinum Jubilee tags.

Twickenham Riverside

The Twickenham Society

On page 48 of the “LBRUT Transport Review – WSP Response” (one of the latest LBRUT documents to be added to the planning application for Twickenham Riverside) you will find a list of some of those societies who have objected to the plans. Under “The Twickenham Society” there is reference only to a lack of a socio-economic assessment. However, on the subject of roads and transport, we also raised the following objections:

There are no external safety audits to back up the change from one way to two way traffic on Water Lane and Wharf Lane, especially at the junctions on King Street.

There are no external safety audits to support the lorry turning circles at the bottom of Wharf Lane and Water Lane.

There is no external safety audit to support the turning circle for lorries located between the children’s playground and the cafe on the Service Road.

There is no Socio-economic assessment to back up the removal of so much pay and display parking, which could affect the local businesses in the town and on Eel Pie Island – in particular its boatyards and riparian clubs.

These concerns still remain.

In the interests of clarity the committee would like to draw attention to the following points that we also raised and placed on the planning portal, following a meeting of our Members in 2019.

The buildings are too high, in particular the Wharf Lane building.

The buildings are too intrusive, especially in an historic Conservation area adjacent to the River Thames and opposite Eel Pie Island.

There is a lack of empathy of the architecture with the surrounding area.

There is no viability assessment.

The Diamond Jubilee Gardens have not been re-provided according to the needs set out in the RIBA Brief, but are disjointed and are partly on the flood plain.

The event space/public square is now on a road on the flood plain and with lorries running through it.

Private flats and affordable housing should not be segregated.

The Twickenham Society is also concerned at the Council’s lack of transparency. There are many people who don’t have computers or aren’t computer literate so are unable to respond to this planning application. Many of them are elderly and disabled who appreciate the secure, safe Diamond Jubilee Gardens and its Café Sunshine: they have been disenfranchised by the difficulty of not being able to be informed about these plans. In spite of the Brief saying “accessibility for all should be the cornerstone of any design” much of the site will be inaccessible to small children and those with mobility problems. This should not be an excuse to remove two of the mature hornbeams from the back of the site in order to create a disabled parking place.

And finally, where is the destination point to attract people to the town?

All these issues still need to be resolved.



Road closures this Saturday ahead of Six Nations match at Twickenham Stadium

Twickenham Stadium will host the England vs Ireland match this Saturday 12 March, with kick off at 4.45pm. Gates will open from 1.15pm and it will be a full capacity match of 82,000 fans.

It is expected that Whitton, Rugby and London Roads to be closed from 2.45 to 4.45pm and again from 6.30 to 9pm. The RFU will enable residential access where possible. A full CPZ will be in place from 10am to 10pm.

There will be shuttle buses in operation from Old Deer Park and Hounslow which residents are welcome to use. The buses will only take cash fares and it is a flat fare of £3 return.

If you have any issues on the day, then please send an email at twickenhamcommunity@rfu.com

The RFU will also post live traffic updates on their [Twitter feed](#).

The RFU will have a matchday helpline for enquiries - 07894 814180 - which will be staffed from 2.30 to 9pm. If you need to notify an ongoing incident, call 999 and the police will respond.



Two big games at the Athletic Ground this weekend

Richmond Rugby and Richmond Women are both in action this weekend at the Athletic Ground in Richmond.

Richmond Rugby men's team will take on Hartpury University on Saturday 12 March as they look to make it two wins in a row. Kick-off is at 2pm. Tickets are [available to buy online](#), and are priced at just £10 with free entry for under 16's. Tickets will also be available at the gate but only via card payment.

The following day, Sunday 13 March, Richmond Women will take to the field for their final home league game of the season as they take on Reading Abbey Ladies. Kick-off is 2.30pm with free match entry for everyone. Get out and support your local teams this weekend!



The Liberal Democrats in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Need to Brush Up On Their Local History

By Teresa Read

I have just received the *South Twickenham Comments* from the Liberal Democrats and am concerned that the authors know little about local history - or perhaps they cannot count:

This political party insists on repeating that there has been forty years of neglect on Twickenham Riverside which is untrue.

FACT

TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE: In 2005 the children's playground, café and toilets were opened, along with a new retaining wall. Landscaping was carried out at the front of the site. The [award winning] garden area hosted an array of plants selected to provide an attractive environment for bees and butterflies; overall, the first positive steps since the pool site closed in 1980.

FACT

In the Spring of 2011, Boris Johnson, the then Mayor of London, took part in a tree planting ceremony relatively near the café; the following year the gardens (Diamond Jubilee Gardens) were opened by HRH Princess Alexandra.

The Diamond Jubilee Gardens was awarded the Sustainable Landscaping Award by London in Bloom in 2013

FACT

A Charitable Trust was formed in 2014 with a 125 year lease designed to protect the Diamond Jubilee Gardens ... **And in January 2014 Diamond Jubilee Gardens, in Conservation Area 8 Twickenham Riverside, was designated a Public Open Space.**

FACT

Refurbishments and improvements have taken place on Twickenham Embankment with new planting and trees especially chosen for the riverside conditions.



*The 'neglected' riverside
Photo by T Read*

Dear Editors,

Support for Ukraine

I have been very moved seeing the magnificent achievements of Prosperity Café and Restaurant in setting up the collection to help their beleaguered compatriots in Ukraine, and by the fervent response of the people of Twickenham to assist them. Similar appeals, I know, are operating across the borough.

In 1914 the United Kingdom was moved by compassion for the dispossessed people of Belgium, and welcomed a quarter of a million refugees. Twickenham and Richmond can take particular pride in supporting one of the largest (perhaps the largest) community of Belgians for the duration of the First World War.

I would like to call on all concerned residents of Richmond upon Thames to call upon our government to show the same generosity to the destitute people of Ukraine today.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Baker, East Twickenham

Dear Sir,

Black Poplar in Diamond Jubilee Gardens

I am very concerned to learn that a tree kindly provided for the opening of Diamond Jubilee Gardens by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and planted on her behalf by Princess Alexandra is to be moved unceremoniously "elsewhere".

It was advertised that on Friday 11th March a tree from the Queen's Green Canopy initiative is to be planted by the Mayor, Geoff Acton in Moormead Recreation Ground. It is surprising that a tree should be donated to the London Borough of Richmond in view of its previous "care" of the aforesaid tree.

It is felt by some to be very disrespectful to Her Majesty to remove the tree from the area for which it was intended.

Diamond Jubilee Gardens was named during the year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and marked by the planting of the black poplar.

Name and address supplied.

FOR INFO

Black poplars receive protection under the Countryside and Wildlife Act, 1981, as other wild plants in the UK. Tree Preservation orders and the 1967 Forestry Act may prevent the felling of trees. There is a London Species Action Plan for the Black Poplar, which was produced by the London Biodiversity Partnership.

To the Editor,

Review the 20mph blanket speed limit

May 5, is the next Richmond upon Thames London Borough Council election.

Shortly, we will no doubt start to see candidates at our doors waving their banners and promissory notes. There will be party flyers jamming our letterboxes, all promising to make our lives richer should we vote for a particular candidate.

The one promise I want to see is 'To undertake a review of the blanket 20mph limit and reconsider its use on main roads'.

I would also like to see a cost-benefit analysis, £800,000 or more of my money was spent on something that in part I did not agree with. I would like to know now, before the election, before those who spent my money vacate their seats which they may not be returning to. It is not enough that they hide behind a manifesto promise from 2018.

I want to know which of the many benefits that were to flow from a blanket limit have materialised. I want to see real evidence. Not an extrapolated estimate of a 1mph reduction in mean speed across the borough due to the limit, nor an extravagant claim of a significant reduction in NO2 between the first quarters of 2020 and 2021 resulting from the blanket limit that failed to acknowledge the considerable reduction in traffic volume during that period caused by COVID restrictions.

The blanket limit was not voted for, nor supported by, tens of thousands of residents, including me, who ended up paying for it. Once we have seen the figures, we can judge for ourselves whether or not the expenditure on a manifesto promise was value for money or whether it was serious financial mismanagement.

The 20mph blanket limit is a crude misplaced tool. It is in part based on contentious claims regarding pollution reduction at lower speed, dubious use of statistics and partly projected fears about road safety. Mostly it is a cynical attempt by some councillors to enforce social change, to make residents choose 'active alternative travel choices' that coincide with party policy.

The blanket limit ignores DfT guidance that recommends different speed limits for roads with different functions; it clearly recommends a 30mph limit on main roads that have the primary function of traffic movement. The council would have us believe setting the limit on main roads was because "A blanket 20mph is cheaper to roll out in terms of signage and in getting the public to adjust to" as they "would have to install measures to 'slow down' at each sign change e.g. Expensive and awkward 'humps' which are unpopular with both the public and the Emergency services".

Continued: Review the 20mph blanket speed limit

They spent £800,000 on what? Speed signs and gallons of white paint?

Setting 20mph limits on residential roads is recommended in DfT guidance and no doubt would be widely supported. 20mph zones and 20mph restrictions near vulnerable places are not difficult to manage and along with any necessary constraints will largely achieve the aim. Variable limits are not a problem for most of the world, as are 20mph limits during school start and finish times, Monday to Friday during term-time only, where schools are on main roads. Did those councillors not seek any advice at all from experts in that field?

Main roads are designed to carry traffic at 30mph. Visibility, parking, pavement widths, pedestrian crossings, refuges, etc have all been carefully planned over many years to make these roads as safe as possible with 30mph traffic. DfT statistics indicate that a clear majority of drivers comply with a 30mph limit. Setting a 20mph limit was forecast in several studies to fail and be ignored by a significant majority. And so it has been.

A message for residents, particularly those who are also motorists: Make sure you are not crapped on again at the next election by those same councillors.

A message for candidates: Promise the review and reconsideration of main road limits or perhaps not bother wasting your time standing for election.

Review the 20mph blanket speed limit

www.reviewthe20.info

Yours sincerely,

Brian Shepherd

Dear Tribune,

Richmond Council declares support for people of Ukraine

Good news from Richmond Council!

https://www.richmond.gov.uk/news/march_2022/richmond_declares_support_for_people_of_ukraine

York House in Twickenham will be lit blue and yellow as a demonstration of the borough's support for the people of Ukraine.

I'm not sure whether that will be a great help to refugees.

Name and address supplied

Dear Sir,

Traffic Mayhem today!

Leaving aside the question of whether the new crossing on Richmond Bridge is actually needed or not, how stupid to start the works on a Saturday when both Brentford Football Club and the RFU stadium are packed to capacity and we have over 100,000 extra people in Richmond and Twickenham.

London Road is already going to be closed on the Isleworth and Brentford route to traffic with buses on diversion for a period. What idiot(s) decided it would be a good day to slow down traffic flow over Richmond Bridge as well!

If you live in Twickenham and are going to Brentford tomorrow by bus, the only 2 routes to Kew Bridge where the Bees play are on a 267 through London Road or over Richmond Bridge to catch a 65 bus.

Would the person responsible for starting the crossing works on Richmond Bridge on one of the 2 or 3 busiest traffic days of the year in the area please let us know why such a decision is made? Don't you look at what else is happening on the roads or don't you care?

The obvious time to do something like this is in the early hours of a Sunday morning. Life isn't difficult if you think things through you know. I will no doubt feel better about all this if Brentford beat Burnley.

Come on you Bees!

Yours sincerely,

Alan Winter
Hampton Road,
Twickenham.

Dear Sir,

IDLE CHATTER

While walking along Hampton Hill high street at the weekend, when about to pass the junction to Penny Farthing Mews, I happened to look up. I could hardly believe my eyes.

Very nice of Richmond Council to screw on a sign saying:

‘NO IDLING ENGINES - FIXED PENALTY £40’

Unfortunately, it faces inwards! Being edge on, it’s practically invisible from the road.

Why is this sign facing the pedestrians and not the traffic? Perhaps the council expects pedestrians to switch off their legs?

In any case, it is pointless on a road where nobody will switch off because it has normal through traffic.

Just who is responsible for wasting our Council Tax on this stupid sign while ignoring the rail level crossings which really matter? as yes, it’s the Roads & Transport Department.

Perhaps the chairman of the transport committee would like to get down there and screw things up properly?

Yours sincerely,

S. Weaver
SW14



Seen from the pavement



Seen (or UNSEEN) from the road

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.

Join the board of The Barnes Fund and help to support the people of Barnes

The Barnes Fund are currently seeking three voluntary trustees to join their board. Whether you are an experienced trustee, or want to join a board for the first time, The Barnes Fund would love to hear from you.

The Barnes Fund are a local charity that makes grants to help those in need in Barnes and provides, at Walsingham Lodge, a sheltered housing community comprising of almshouses for people on low incomes and five leasehold bungalows. Three of the present trustees are due to retire in the coming months.

Trustees set the vision and lead the charity, deciding how it is run and ensuring it does what it was set up to do. Tasks include strategic decision making, governance and shaping of new projects. To be considered for the role residents must be a resident of Barnes, demonstrate an understanding of some of the challenges facing Barnes people and the organisations that exist to improve their lives.

The Barnes Fund are also seeking to identify a future Chair of the board. If you think this could be you, then please let the team know in your application. Applicants of all ages and backgrounds are welcome. View full details of the [voluntary trustee roles](#) including job descriptions and information on how to apply.

The deadline for applications is midnight on Monday 4 April 2022.

If you are interested in applying but would like an informal chat before doing so, contact the Executive Director, Katy Makepeace-Gray by emailing executivedirector@thebarnesfund.org.uk



London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Council

Members Questions 8th March 2022

Question to LBRUT Council in response to an article in the Twickenham & Richmond Tribune suggesting that Committee Chairs should attend courses to uphold standards of behaviour.

Question 7(t)

Councillor Marcel has given notice to ask the Leader of the Council:

*“Does he agree with a resident who wrote into the **Richmond and Twickenham Tribune** recently who was concerned about the discourtesy shown by the Chair of the Transport and Air Quality Services Committee (at 2:06 of the most recent committee meeting), citing “It is probably unlike anything you have seen before”, and what action is he therefore taking to refresh training for committee Chairs to ensure this council upholds high standards of behaviour?”*

View question list:

<https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/documents/s95687/List%20of%20Members%20Questions%20-%208%20March%202022.pdf>

View meeting agenda:

<https://cabnet.richmond.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=173&MIId=5287>

Ed's note: It just shows dear readers, write letters and you will be heard.

Alzheimer's Society to be Richmond's running charity of the year

The Richmond RUNFEST and timeoutdoors' Kew The Run have announced Alzheimer's Society as their charity of the year for 2022.

By 2025, there will be over one million people with dementia in the UK. Money raised from the two events taking place at Kew Gardens will raise vital funds towards defeating dementia through research and offering life-changing support to those who need it most.



The inaugural Kew The Run will take place on 10 and 11 April 2022 with entries about to sell out in the next couple of weeks.

Do not worry though, as the Richmond RUNFEST will be back on 10 and 11 September 2022. For details of how to enter the races or become an official charity runner for RUNFEST's official charities, visit the [RUNFEST website](#).

Help protect Richmond Park's vulnerable skylarks

Last year with the Royal Parks, the Friends of Richmond Park launched a campaign to help protect the park's skylarks population, which begin their breeding season in March, and helped to stabilise numbers despite the huge numbers of visitors to the park during the pandemic.

A short film featuring Friends of Richmond Park Patron Clare Balding OBE asks park visitors to help protect skylark breeding grounds by following simple rules. View the film [HERE](#)

Park visitors will now see signs and some fencing in three key breeding territories with visitors asked to:

- Keep to main footpaths only
- Keep dogs on short leads

The three areas are:

- Crown Field, opposite Roehampton Gate car park (beyond Beverley Brook) just south of the playing fields
- Lawn Field, between Lower Pen Pond and White Lodge (Royal Ballet School)
- The Bog, between Holly Lodge and Bog and Sheen Gates



There will be police and Volunteer Rangers visiting these areas to observe compliance and answer any questions.

Students create pop art-inspired mural on STEM campus hoardings

Art and Design Level 2 students at Richmond upon Thames College were recently commissioned to make the hoardings surrounding the college's greatly anticipated STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) Centre more 'visually appealing'.

The students put significant effort into ensuring the mural reflected the subjects that will be taught within the STEM Centre and agreed that the style will follow a 'pop art' theme.

The students were able to practice drawing various science and technology objects at the Museum, something they were previously unfamiliar with.

At the Serpentine Gallery, students researched the work of famous French Pop Art artist, Hervé T el emaque, studying his style and technique to recreate for themselves on the STEM hoardings surrounding the building site.



Next steps for Moormead Pavilion redevelopment

Richmond Council has met with representatives of the community to discuss plans for the redevelopment of Moormead Pavilion on Moormead Recreation Ground in St. Margaret's.

Council members and officers met with representatives from the Moormead Community and Sports Pavilion Charity and Friends of Moormead on Friday 4 March 2022 to discuss the best approach to move forwards and ensure the redevelopment project meets the needs of the local community and the Council.

In January, the Council's Planning Committee gave approval for the redevelopment plans, which proposed a new pavilion featuring toilets, a cafe and sports storage space - subject to further discussion and agreement on how it would be delivered.

The Council had already allocated a provisional £150,000 for some form of pavilion improvement on Moormead, and a future report to the Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee will set out how and when this funding could be drawn down for the approach now being considered.



Cllr Julia Neden-Watts, Chair of the Council's Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee said:

“There is rightly a lot of local interest in the project. A new pavilion will be a great asset in the community, and it is important to get it right and ensure it benefits the broadest range of park users.

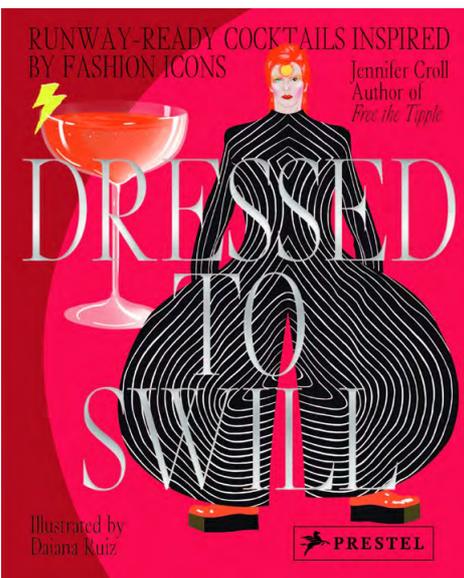
“Our conversation with the community groups last week was very constructive. We agreed that a partnership-based approach is necessary to maximise the potential of the scheme. We will work together to find a viable approach to meet the needs of community and to help the scheme attract external funding through grants.

“Within the Council, we will progress approval for the initiation of the scheme through our relevant Committees over the summer and set out how the Council's funding allocation will be spent. We will also work with the community representatives to feed back on their business plan for the construction and operation of the building.”

MOTHERING SUNDAY GIFT IDEAS

At least we are permitted to visit our mothers this year for Mothering Sunday (on March 27)! The pubs and restaurants are open again (phew!) already promoting their special Mothers' Day menus. No doubt we will be seeing some of those great-value family roast meal deals in the major supermarkets nearer the time as well. But many of us will still be wanting to arrange for a postal gift - just in case that lateral flow test suddenly flags positive! I've been doing some research on interesting gifts for Mothers' Day to help inspire you (or if you're the mum, allow you to drop some heavy hints in plenty of time for them to be actioned!)

Gin is affectionately known as 'Mother's Ruin' but it can, of course, be a mother's salvation too! And for a gin fan, I can't think of a better gift than the newly launched **Mainbrace Gin**. Launched to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, it's infused with coastal botanicals from Cornwall, and imbued with seaweed to give an umami note with slight saltiness. In my opinion, it's seriously good and it needs nothing more than ice and tonic (and the sun to be over the yardarm). Available from [Mainbrace](#) at £35 a bottle



If she's a cocktail fan, as well as a fashion aficionado, then look no further: this book is sure to be a great hit. **Dressed to Swill** has just been published and it's a delight. It's a collection of 60 easy cocktails with a twist: each one offers a generous measure of sartorial history, with recipes inspired by style icons from the 20th Century to today. A citrus-heavy toddy for Marlene Dietrich; a sweet and powerful mix with a pep of espresso for Cindy Crawford and so on. And a short biography of each icon introduces their cocktail. Published by Prestel, at £9.99 and written by Jennifer Croll, it is beautifully illustrated by Daiana Ruiz and is like giving not one, but 60 cards!

Breakfast in bed's always a treat, and what could be better than home-made croissants or pains au chocolate? I've discovered a brilliant company, **Tarla Bakes**, that started during lockdown, offering letterbox kits for home baking. I recently tried the Almond Croissant kit and was so impressed. The kit contained six ready-cut triangles of paper thin dough, a piping bag pre-filled with almond crème patisserie, flaked almonds and a nifty spray bottle of glaze for the perfect finish. Reader, it was a doddle, and the results were stupendous! From just under £15 (inc nationwide delivery) for a kit to make six pastries, [Tarla Bakes](#) offers the ideal way to share a fun and easy baking experience with the children and give mum (and yourself!) an indulgence.





Fancy some great coffee to go with those pastries? Then check out **Paddy and Scott's** range of craft coffee brew bags, gift boxes, tasting kits. Noting that the coffee supply chain is full of people taking a cut of the farmer's hard work, this highly ethical company decided to cut out middlemen and shorten the distance between grower and drinker - by taking on its own coffee farm in Meru, Kenya. [Paddy and Scott's](#) even has a blend called Lunch Box coffee, that provides a school meal for a needy child in a coffee-growing region of the world for every bag sold. Check out the website for gift ideas, such as this Brew Bag Tote Giftbox for £29.99

If planning to post a sweet gift this Mothers' Day, you should check out the **My Baker** website. The company has a range of letterbox treats (including some gluten free) for nationwide delivery that are sure to surprise and delight the recipient. Batches are freshly made, and despatched twice a week. Not wanting to miss out on trying different things, my attention went to the Heavenly Traybake Selection Box (containing Millionaire's shortbread, Millionaire's Flapjacks and Tiffin) or a dozen assorted macarons, both at £26. But if you want to push the boat out and arrange for something a little bit more spectacular, you can order a range of cakes to be delivered (as opposed to posted). That's because My Baker is a 'virtual bakery' - with no physical shop front, and orders fulfilled by a network of carefully chosen local independent bakers and bakeries that meet the strict quality guidelines. So have a look at the website [here](#) for some spectacular cakes curated for Mothers' Day (including the 'Mother of All Cakes - pictured - at £78) that have been developed alongside the company's network of talented bakers.



These are all fabulous, but they rely on an adult purchasing them. And to be honest, for those youngsters with pocket money budgets, she'll be just as pleased with a home-made card and a bunch or two of daffodils!



EQUIPMENT WORTH THE INVESTMENT!

Now, I have to admit that over the years, I've sometimes been a bit of a cheapskate when it comes to cooking equipment. Just recently I've been trying some top quality kitchen hardware, and boy, I've discovered that it really is worth spending a little bit more to get a top quality product.

When it comes to pans I've had dozens! A Michelin-starred chef once told me that in his restaurant kitchens they always used cheap non-stick frying pans and threw them away after a year or so. In his opinion there weren't any really good, non-stick pans that kept their non-stick surface. Well, I now can beg to differ, as I've discovered the 'Rolls Royce' of non-stick, courtesy of another Michelin-starred chef - Gordon Ramsay, no less! A North American company called HexClad developed its own, patented, hybrid cookware and being resident in California, Ramsay heard about the pans so bought some for his home kitchen. To cut a long-ish story short, he's now working in partnership with HexClad and is an investor. He's also using their pans in his London restaurant and his cooking academy in Woking.



HexClad's distinctive laser-etched hexagon pattern is durable and high-performing due to the series of peaks and valleys it creates. The peaks are stainless steel, to give a golden-brown sear and protect the pan against peeling and flaking. In the valleys is the non-stick surface, which provides easy cleaning, and the ability to cook with less butter, grease or oil. And it's scratch resistant, metal utensil safe, oven safe, dishwasher safe and PFOA-free - plus compatible with all induction, gas, ceramic and electric hobs. What more could you want, or need?

I've used these pans and I have to say that they take non-stick cooking to a different level - stratosphere even! As with most top quality products, sadly they're not cheap (prices from £79), but Danny Winer, the co-founder and CEO of HexClad says that these pans are designed to last a lifetime.

So maybe consider treating yourself, or giving them as a present or adding to a wedding list? The pans are available to buy directly from the HexClad website www.hexclad.co.uk and on Amazon.



Letters and Longings

by Emma Louise Tinniswood

Step on Stage Performing Arts at Hampton Hill Theatre

With white costumes whose simplicity matched the mood of this grim era, each scene of *Letters and Longings* is striking in its own way. Tableaux from talented young actors in front of a curtain-less set with a pensive blue backdrop, is simple yet effective, bringing this dark, vibrant piece alive.

Henrietta Vansittart, one of the first female engineers and inventor of the Lowe-Vansittart screw propeller, tells her story of the uphill climb and frustrations she went through to be heard.

She was the first woman to present technical drawings before a scientific institution. Set in the inventor's last days in an asylum in 1883, Charlotte Williams plays Henrietta, one of our forgotten female inventors. Charlotte's performance is clear, concise and confident. The atmosphere crackles with poignancy as Henrietta's story is told, amongst those of other women inmates' own humiliations.



Henrietta's younger self is played impressively by Tilly Cooke, and the two performers act as one. Well-written scenes detail Henrietta's devotion to her frustrated inventor father, her unhappy marriage, and her passionate affair with novelist and politician, Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Henrietta's life story is presented with razor sharp vignettes and good strong pacing. Affecting the cold demeanour of the period, the white-coated Nils Collins particularly stands out as Doctor George.

Step on Stage's production of *Letters and Longings* had great award-winning success at the Woking Festival last year. Using a big cast to its full potential, and with an overall stark and chilling design, it is an absorbing piece. We came out of the theatre enlightened, and cheering for them all. All in all, it is fifty-five minutes of joy.

Read Heather Moulson's review at www.markaspen.com/2022/03/09/letters-long

Photography courtesy of Step on Stage





Cluedo

by Sandy Rustin

Kilimanjaro Theatricals at Richmond Theatre until 12th March, then on tour until 15th July

An apt response while applauding the curtain-call of *Cluedo* would be, “What just happened?” An apt answer would be “Whatever it was, it was thoroughly entertaining!”

Cluedo is cleverer and funnier than anyone might expect. Set on a stormy night in a country house, six strangers have been invited for dinner and told to assume the board game’s character names, but not reveal their true identities. Their task is to find out who is blackmailing them. The house has a cook, a French maid who is not French, and Wadsworth



the butler. What follows is beautifully choreographed chaos – literally choreographed by Anna Healey, who has the cast making graceful, balletic arcs with chairs as they swirl about the stage between scenes. In neat contrast, the frenzied plot perfectly fits David Farley’s design, the entrance hall empty, with many rooms to be opened but only partly glimpsed.

An ensemble piece, including Michelle Collins (*Eastenders*) and Daniel Casey (*Midsomer Murders*), *Cluedo* is a testament to the collective comedic skill of the cast, all of whom have their moment, but Jean-Luke Worrell as the butler is a pleasure. Amongst his many other skills he’s very witty with his white-gloved Marcel Marceau hands. There is no weak link in this cast though, everyone plays their part with integrity, deadpan delivery and perfect timing.

Cluedo is flawlessly directed by Mark Bell, so anyone familiar with *The Play That Goes Wrong*, or *One Man Two Guvvors* will recognise features of its anarchic comedy, where you’re safe to accept the often risky statement “guaranteed entertainment”.

There is an elegance that enhances the whole thing: the white gloves, the mime, the slo-mo and the occasional striking of tableaux. There is ridiculousness delivered with a dead straight face, and tiny details to love. Artful and silly without being cynical, it takes a lot of talent to do it so well.

Read Eleanor Lewis’ review at www.markaspen.com/2022/03/09/cluedo



Photography by Craig Sugden

The Republic of Georgia – the green light

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova have joined Ukraine in speeding up applications to join the European Union. This is sparked by fears that the Russians will not stop at Ukraine.



Georgia, along with Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina, has formally stated a desire to join NATO. (Sweden and Finland have also shown an interest in NATO membership).



In 2014 Georgia signed an association agreement with the European Union. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Georgia has followed Ukraine's example of making an "immediate" application for EU membership.

The Republic of Georgia is bordered by the Black Sea, Russia, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan. At the beginning of the nineteenth century most of present-day Georgia became part of the Russian Empire.

Georgia declared independence after the Russian Revolution but in 1922 became part of the USSR together with Armenia and Azerbaijan to form the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. Reorganisation within the USSR in 1936 led to Georgia becoming the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic.



Towards the end of 1991 the USSR was dissolved and Georgia became independent. Independence was followed by civil war in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. As a result of the 2008 Russo-Georgian War Georgia lost control of parts of these states. This situation has been described as Putin's green light for expansionism, followed by occupation of the Crimea and support of Ukraine's Donbas region in 2014.

Georgia: More information and photographs

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

Easter activities for kids at Ham Youth Centre

Achieving for Children (AfC) and Ham Youth Centre have announced their Easter holiday programme of activities for 10 to 19 year olds that will run over the Easter holidays.

Young residents will be able to choose from a wide range of exciting activities and workshops designed for 10 to 19 year olds. All activities are free and are run by qualified youth workers tutors and coaches.

Healthy lunches will be provided. The youth club is open from 12 noon to 4pm each day with young people allowed to drop in any time. Throughout the week there will be lots of exciting activities such as table tennis, arts and crafts, cooking, pool, computer games, badminton, dodgeball and basketball.



There are also a number of additional courses on offer which must be booked as spaces are limited. The courses will run from Monday 6 to Thursday 14 April. View the full programme of events and book your child's place [HERE](#)

For more information email ben.skelton@achievingforchildren.org.uk or call Ben on 020 8288 0916.

Join the six-week The Blue Prescribing Project

The Blue Prescribing Project is a wetland health programme specifically designed to promote a range of mental and physical health benefits through facilitated wetland nature engagement.

Delivered in a peer support setting, individuals are equipped with tools to self-manage their mental health and wellbeing in a positive way while improving their confidence. The project is co-designed and delivered by Mental Health Foundation and WWT with the aim to improve health by harnessing the link between people and nature.

The wetland-based health programmes are delivered both online and face to face at London Wetland Centre. The programmes enable people to be active, take notice of wildlife and connect with other people in wetland settings, all to help people improve their mental health.

Referral to the Blue Prescribing Project is through social prescribing agencies, link workers, community groups and voluntary sector. Individuals that meet the eligibility criteria may self-refer.

Make a referral [HERE](#)

For further information phone 020 7803 1196 , 07901 620 230 or email blueprescriptions@wwt.org.uk.



Memories of Kiev in 1960

By Jeremy Hamilton-Miller

In August 1960 I had just left Cambridge, and decided to join a trip, organised by the National Union of Students, to visit the USSR. We proceeded by train to Moscow, thence to Sochi, and ended in Kiev. In Moscow the atmosphere was a little frosty, as a US spy plane (the U2, piloted by Gary Powers) flying at 80,000 ft had been shot down a few days previously.

I am reminded of my 3 days in Kiev (called now Kyiv), as the city is so much in our minds at present, and wonder how changed are the sights I saw more than 60 years ago. At that time Ukraine was an integral part of the USSR, not a sovereign state, as it is now.

We all felt less constrained in Kiev than we had been in Moscow, where we had had to stay as one party within the sight of our two minders at all times. The residents were very friendly but the language barrier prevented more than smiles and handshakes; there was clearly a shortage of consumer goods, as we were approached in our hotel by a man who gave us a huge bunch of flowers and offered to buy shirts – I asked for 30 roubles (£1.20 at the going rate), but he was shooed away by our guide before the transaction could be completed. We heard later that the ladies in our party had had similar requests for their garments.



Ukraine Pavilion in the Exhibition of Soviets' Economic Achievements, Sept 1960
Photo by Jeremy Hamilton-Miller

We had a coach tour of Kiev, seeing the University, the Khrushchev Stadium (now called Kyiv Central Stadium, where the opening ceremony of the 1980 Olympics was held), the memorial

to Jaroslav the Wise (who founded the city in the 9th Century), and a panoramic view across the River Dnieper. It is a beautiful city.

In the evening three of us went out informally with our guides and sampled some local wine (“Crimean Riesling”).

The next day we spent time at the Monastery of the Caves; the portion above ground was in ruins, but below ground in the catacombs monks were living, a few devout citizens were praying, and most bizarrely, in a totally black chamber, we found the mummified bodies of former monks lying in niches carved from the rock. Later we went into the Cathedral of St Sophia, built one thousand years ago, now a museum, full of wonderful icons and frescoes, some dating from the 11th Century. Finally, St Andrews Church, still a place of worship buzzing with activity, again full of icons and paintings.

In the evening, we were treated to a reception organised by the local branch of the Young Communists (Komsomol and Pioneers), at the Palace of Culture, advertised as “an evening of Ukrainian folk dances”, that turned out to be embarrassing and boring in equal parts. We had speeches from various young workers telling us how they spent their days; presentation of bouquets followed, and a sing song and a children-type game – we were expected to join in with everything. More songs and then a propaganda film, all in the local language. Eventually we got to the folk dancing; when this was over we were allowed to leave. We learned later that the organisers of the trip assumed that we were all true communists, and so would thoroughly enjoy the evening’s programme. – which could hardly have been further from the truth! They must have been very disappointed by our evident lack of enthusiasm.



*Russia Kiev war memorial
Photo by Doug Goodman*

On September 3rd we had to leave, but there was time for a trip along the River Dnieper and a quick last shopping expedition. I bought a 78 rpm gramophone record – a 1957 Soviet song Podmoskovyve Vechera, later (1962) made a top twenty hit in the UK by Kenny Ball as Midnight in Moscow.

That night and the next we travelled back towards Warsaw, with a stop at Brest Litovsk (the USSR-Poland border) for the train carriages to be transferred from the broad Soviet rail gauge to the narrower European one. Finally leaving the Iron Curtain and reaching Berlin was a relief. In 1960, when we were there, although Berlin was divided, the E-W border shown only with rows of nails in the cobbles; the infamous Berlin Wall (demolished in 1989) was built in 1961.

Now, more than 61 years later, I wonder with sorrow how much destruction has been wrought on this ancient and proud city.

хай живе україна

TRAVELLER'S TALES 118

SITES AND SIGHTS

Doug Goodman describes some of the most significant places and things he's seen

Foreign travel provides the opportunity to visit some fascinating places and see some amazing sights. I was asked recently to name some of those I've experienced during 60 years of globe-trotting and compiled a list of nearly 100 memorable places and people I met. I found that many were military history sites or memorials and often people associated with conflict who had a story to tell. I whittled this down to a top-ten from Cambodia, China, Romania, France, Belgium and Russia – all of which have stayed in my memory.

CAMBODIA

Let's start at a very strange museum a short distance from the city of Siem Reap. Visitors head for the stunning temples at Angkor Wat but I had heard about a spot near the airport which had a collection of military hardware from the Viet Nam War and the Khmer Rouge conflict. It was a huge graveyard of wrecked tanks, guns and aircraft in a neglected state. I was met by Bik Hour an English speaking guide who had fought against the Chinese-backed Khmer Rouge. He described the laborious task of mine clearing, demonstrated some weapons and gave me a short history of Cambodia. He had lost his parents during the terror and joined a mine-clearing squad after the conflict ended. I asked him about the dangers of so much unexploded ordnance still littering the countryside: he didn't reply but simply rolled up his trouser leg to reveal an artificial leg. I found his story very moving and admired his determination to make his country a safer place.



Cambodia, Khmer Rouge Survivor



'I Told You Not to Load Another Bag of Cement'

On my return to Siem Reap in the Tuk-Tuk I had hired for the day for \$10 I passed a crowd of locals observing a rather poorly loaded lorry. It was clearly the last sack of cement that broke the lorry's back.

ROMANIA

Romania's Transylvania region is known for its vast forests, bears, traditional villages and large castles. The most beautiful and forbidding castle is in Bran and dates from 1212, built to guard the pass through Bran Gorge. Vlad Dracul, a national hero who helped defeat and expel Ottoman invaders in medieval times is associated with the castle. Vlad was known as The Impaler because he drove stakes through the bodies of prisoners. Thanks to Bram Stoker,

author of the Dracula horror stories, the castle is now visited by tourists seeking the Dracula legends – much to the amusement of Romanians. On a drive into The Carpathians Mountains motor transport gave way to horse-carts. With the help of an interpreter I was able to discover much about the rural way of life from a farmer and his wife as they fed their horse by the roadside. They were almost self-sufficient: grew all their own fruit and vegetables, made their own wine and owned several large fields. Horse transport was sufficient for all their travel, the summer climate was ideal but in winter's heavy snow, life could be tough.



Romania Bran Castle



Romania Harvest Time

FRANCE

On a visit to Normandy I was struck by the remains of huge concrete piers on the beaches around Arromanches. Towed there in 1944 from UK ports these Mulberry Harbours, as they were known, enabled Allied Forces to land their troops on D-Day, June 6th on the Normandy coastline with great success. Particularly poignant were the poppy crosses on the beach to commemorate the landings to liberate France. The WW1 Thiepval Memorial in Northern France dominates the battlefields and has the names of over 73,000 troops killed during the five months of the Battle of the Somme in 1916 who have no known grave. Its size and grandeur, even after many pilgrimages to the site, stay with me and the discovery of my uncle's name engraved on one of the pillars was a heart-stopping moment.



France Normandy D-Day Beach



Belgium
Poperinge
Execution



France Thiepval

Across the Belgian border stands Ypres, the scene of immense destruction throughout WW1. Nearby is the town of Poperinge where Talbot House is situated. 'Toc-H' was a refuge set up in 1915 by Tubby Clayton, who opened the large house as a sanctuary for all troops regardless of rank. Styled as 'every man's club' it had restrooms, canteen, chapel and library where every effort was made to help the soldiers forget the terrible conditions prevailing in the trenches. It remains very much as it was over 100 years ago and is open to visitors. I was shown an

execution post in the town where men were shot after being found guilty of desertion, mutiny or cowardice in the face of the enemy. It was horrific to think that the military commanders shot 322 British conscripts and volunteers during and immediately after the war.

SIEGE

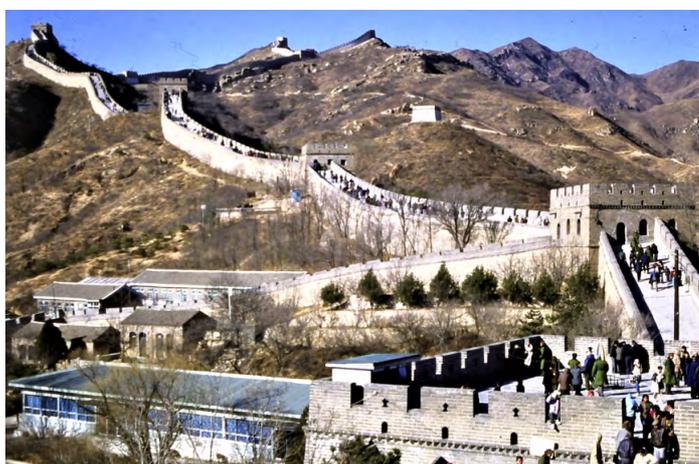
In the Museum of the Siege of Leningrad in Russia's second city St. Petersburg the story of the epic battle, which took place in the Second World War, is dramatically told. The Nazis intended to destroy all traces of the city and its people in an attack which lasted 872 days. On 8th September 1941 the most destructive siege in history began and by the time the Red Army drove the enemy away over one million soldiers and civilians had died. Extreme starvation was responsible for so many death especially in winter 41/42 when the temperature hit minus 30 degrees centigrade. Services and transport stopped and 100,000 citizens were perishing each month as the food ration fell to 125grams of bread per day – half of which was sawdust. In the museum I remember staring at the piece of bread on the scales and trying to imagine what it must have tasted like.



Russia Siege Ration

THE WALL

Walking along the Great Wall of China north of Beijing was a tremendous experience. The best preserved sections were built during the Ming dynasty between 1368 and 1644 while the earliest parts date from the 7th century BC. To protect the borders of ancient China from nomadic invaders sections of the wall were constructed over a very long period reaching over 13,000 miles in Length. Many of the sections have fallen down but the best preserved parts of the remaining 5,500 mile long fortification can be visited.



China The Great Wall



Cambodia Cigarette Maker

CIGARETTE MACHINE

I'll never forget my encounter with Mrs Tun at her tobacco shop in Battambang Cambodia. I began with a personality from Cambodia so we shall end with another – a 75 year old lady with six children who has spent her whole life rolling cigarettes by hand. She sits at a little stall making 1500 cigarettes a day, six days a week and sells a bundle of 30 for \$1. She told me that she enjoyed her work, lived comfortably from cigarette sales and had put all her children through school and further education on the proceeds. I bought some of her stock for friends who were not greatly impressed with the quality of Cambodian tobacco. But to meet such an industrious lady, who will be 84 by now and probably still busy making cigarettes for the heavily-smoking local population, was a great privilege.

The Battle of the Premiership Clubs quiz - Red Cross calls on rugby community to continue its support for Tonga

Former England star Ugo Monye and Wales legend Scott Quinnell co-host quiz in aid of the Red Cross with fantastic prizes to be won including tickets to 2022 Women's Six Nations, 2022 Autumn Nations Series and 2023 Guinness Six Nations.



As other world news rightly receives the headlines today, it is important to remember that just over a month ago the country of Tonga was cut off from the rest of the world after an enormous volcanic eruption and subsequent tsunami left thousands of people in need of humanitarian support.

There was significant damage to homes with some houses completely wiped out, as well as vital infrastructure. Thousands of people were left without access to safe and clean drinking water due to the saltwater flooding from the tsunami and widespread ashfall from this volcanic eruption. Many of these challenges still remain in what will be a long road to recovery for the South Pacific nation, but as communities continue to recover and rebuild, Tonga Red Cross staff and volunteers continue to assist people through the delivery of drinking water, temporary shelters and other critical relief supplies across the country's many islands.

The rugby community has already responded emphatically for the people of Tonga. The Six Nations launched a *Together For Tonga* campaign, donating an initial £100,000 to the Red Cross response, encouraging fans from across Europe to get involved, while local clubs have also responded in their droves, raising vital funds for a country that has such close ties with the world of rugby.

Now we're calling on all rugby fans to play their part once again by joining the battle of the Premiership clubs, an online rugby quiz hosted by Ugo Monye and Scott Quinnell. You'll also have the chance to win amazing prizes including Six Nations tickets for 2023.



Former England star and quiz co-host, Ugo Monye, "The world can feel a very scary and hopeless place at the moment but it was incredibly heartening to see how the rugby family came together following the terrible disaster in Tonga earlier this year. If you want to continue that support and have a lot of fun at the same time, please come join us on March 9th."



Former Wales and British & Irish Lions player Scott Quinnell, "I'm delighted to be co-hosting this event. Join us for a quiz like no-other! During it we'll hopefully be raising a lot of money for this fabulous charity and the Red Cross response to the devastation in Tonga."

Photos by Fraser Logan Photography

The event was held on Wednesday 9th March at The Cabbage Patch pub, Twickenham.

Match Preview: Brentford vs Burnley

By [Brentford FC](#)

All the build-up to tomorrow's visit from The Clarets

We return to TW8 tomorrow to take on Burnley, fresh from our 3-1 victory over Norwich City last time out. The Clarets currently occupy the final relegation spot but do still have games in hand on those around them. Get all the build-up to tomorrow's Premier League action below.



THE OPPOSITION

Burnley have kept chipping away and chipping away as they seek to preserve the Premier League status they have held since 2016.



The Claret were rock-bottom in mid-January, not helped by being six games behind some sides due to weather and Covid-19 postponements. Since then, Burnley have lost just three of their last nine to cut the gap to safety to a point, still with a couple of games in hand on most of those around them.

It has been a season of fine margins for The Clarets. Sean Dyche's men have won the fewest top-flight games (three), recording a joint league high 12 draws, but their 11 defeats is fewer than ninth-placed Aston Villa and as many as Wolves in eighth. Until their 4-0 reverse against Chelsea last time out, Burnley hadn't lost a Premier League game this term by more than two goals.

The big bit of January business for The Clarets saw New Zealand international striker Chris Wood move to Newcastle United, his spot up front filled by 6' 6" Wout Weghorst. Summer-arrival Maxwell Cornet (above) leads their scoring charts with six.

Burnley average the second-lowest number of shots per game (10.2), netting the second lowest number of goals (22). Dyche's side enjoy the lowest amount of possession in the top flight (38.1%) while their position as the Premier League's most frequent crossers is coupled with winning the most aerial duels per game (23).

THE GAMEPLAN

Writing for [Hot Off The Press](#), The Athletic's Andy Jones, said: «It will be 4-4-2. One selection issue will be who they put up front with Weghorst (above), though Maxwell Cornet and Jay Rodriguez have rotated over the last two weeks. The difference for Burnley this time to the last time they played Brentford is that whipped ball round the corner to get in behind, which Burnley used really effectively at Turf Moor; there will still be an element of that, especially if Cornet plays up top or at wide on the left, but they want to play mixed football, so they will also look to play into and off Weghorst. They are going to be compact, defend the box well and force Brentford out wide because that is how Tarkowski and Mee love defending. You know what you are going to get with Burnley, it is just whether you can stop it and impose your own game on them.»

TEAM NEWS

It's as you were from Norwich City for The Bees with Josh Dasilva (suspended) and Julian Jeanvier (knee) the only players set to miss out.

Ben Mee (knee) has not recovered in time, The Clarets' captain joining Johann Berg Gudmundsson, Matej Vydra, Erik Pieters and Dale Stephens on the absentee list.

MATCH FACTS

- Burnley are unbeaten in their last four Premier League matches in London, beating Fulham in May and drawing with Chelsea, Arsenal and Crystal Palace this season. The Clarets last had a longer unbeaten top-flight run in the capital between August 1965 and December 1966 (eight matches).
- Brentford's 3-1 win at Norwich last time out ended a run of eight league matches without a win, while they scored as many goals in that victory as they had in their previous seven league contests combined. The Bees are looking to secure consecutive Premier League victories for the first time.
- Since the start of 2018/19 (when he moved to Peterborough), Brentford's Ivan Toney has scored 93 goals in all competitions, with only Mohamed Salah and Harry Kane netting more for English league sides in that time. Toney has also produced five hat-tricks in that time, with no player netting more in all competitions.
- Burnley are looking to complete the league double over Brentford for only the second time in their history, though the other occasion was in the last campaign in which they met (2015/16 in the Championship).



Photos © Brentford FC

England team announcement: England v Ireland, Guinness Six Nations

Eddie Jones has named his England side for their Guinness Six Nations tie against Ireland this weekend.



England take on Ireland at Twickenham Stadium on Saturday 12 March (4.45pm KO) and will look to make it three wins in a row.

Courtney Lawes will continue to captain the side at blind-side flanker. Vice-captain Tom Curry, who has completed his return to play protocols, will join at open-side flanker and Sam Simmonds will be No.8.

Props Ellis Genge (vice-captain) and Kyle Sinckler join hooker Jamie George (vice-captain) in the front row. Locks Maro Itoje and Charlie Ewels complete the tight five.

Harry Randall is at scrum half and Marcus Smith is fly half while vice-captain Henry Slade (outside) and Joe Marchant (inside) are at centre.

Jack Nowell is at left wing, Max Malins is at right wing, while Freddie Steward is full back.

Alex Dombrandt has rejoined the squad following a period of isolation due to a positive COVID test and is named as finisher, alongside Joe Launchbury who is in line to make his first international appearance since England's win over France in the Autumn Nations Cup final in December 2020.

Jamie Blamire, Joe Marler, Will Stuart, Ben Youngs, George Ford and Elliot Daly make up the finishers.

Jones said: *"We've been looking at this game as a semi-final. Ireland are the most cohesive side in the world right now and it will be a good test this weekend. We've prepared really well for this game. We did some good team togetherness work in Bristol and had a solid week of training on the pitch here. We are looking forward to going after them in front of a great home crowd at Twickenham. It's been special having 82,000 supporters back in for our Six Nations games and it will be a great Test match for them."*

England v Ireland is live on ITV and BBC Radio 5 Live.

ENGLAND XV

15. Freddie Steward (Leicester Tigers, 8 caps)
14. Max Malins (Saracens, 13 caps)
13. Joe Marchant (Harlequins, 10 caps)
12. Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs, 46 caps) (VC)
11. Jack Nowell (Exeter Chiefs, 37 caps)
10. Marcus Smith (Harlequins, 8 caps)
9. Harry Randall (Bristol Bears, 4 caps)

1. Ellis Genge (Leicester Tigers, 34 caps)
2. Jamie George (Saracens, 64 caps) (VC)
3. Kyle Sinckler (Bristol Bears, 50 caps)
4. Maro Itoje (Saracens, 54 caps)
5. Charlie Ewels (Bath Rugby, 29 caps)
6. Courtney Lawes (Northampton Saints, 91 caps) (C)
7. Tom Curry (Sale Sharks, 39 caps) (VC)
8. Sam Simmonds (Exeter Chiefs, 12 caps)

FINISHERS

16. Jamie Blamire (Newcastle Falcons, 5 caps)
17. Joe Marler (Harlequins, 77 caps)
18. Will Stuart (Bath Rugby, 18 caps)
19. Joe Launchbury (Wasps, 69 caps)

20. Alex Dombrandt (Harlequins, 7 caps)
21. Ben Youngs (Leicester Tigers, 115 caps)
22. George Ford (Leicester Tigers, 79 caps)
23. Elliot Daly (Saracens, 55 caps)

Ministry of Defence: The Ajax programme

Delivering the Ajax programme will be a significant challenge for the Ministry of Defence because of failures that have led to delays and unresolved safety issues, according to the National Audit Office (NAO).

The MoD has a £5.522 billion contract with General Dynamics Land Systems UK (GDLS-UK) for the design, manufacture and initial in-service support of 589 Ajax armoured vehicles. At December 2021, the Department had paid GDLS-UK £3.167 billion. At this point, GDLS-UK had designed the vehicles, built 324 hulls, and assembled and completed factory acceptance testing of 143 vehicles. The Department had received 26 Ajax vehicles, as well as associated training systems and support.

The Ajax programme has encountered significant problems and the MoD does not know when it will be delivered. The Department's initial planning assumption was that the vehicles would be in service in 2017. It subsequently set an initial operating capability (IOC) date of July 2020, which it then pushed back to June 2021, but missed. Concerns about excessive noise and vibration levels remain unresolved, and the MoD has not yet set a new IOC target date. It has no confidence that the April 2025 target for full operating capability (FOC) is achievable.

The delays will have important operational impacts for the Army. The Army's plans rely on delivering a network of digital capabilities by 2030, centred around Ajax, Boxer and Challenger 3 armoured fighting vehicles. However, the delays to the Ajax programme mean it is not clear how the Army will achieve its planned restructuring by 2025.



The MoD transferred financial risks to GDLS-UK by agreeing a firm-priced contract to deliver the Ajax vehicles, but this may not protect it from further expenditure. Ajax will be delivered late, leaving the Army to operate with ageing armoured vehicles, which are expensive to maintain.

The MoD's original requirements for Ajax were highly specified, and its management of design changes has led to disputes and delays. Around 1,200 capability requirements were set, making Ajax more complex than other armoured vehicles. The MoD and GDLS-UK did not fully understand some of the requirements, which led to many changes to the design specification. This caused disputes, and the time taken to agree design changes contributed to programme delays.

The MoD and GDLS-UK did not understand the scale of work or technical challenge, which meant that sufficient contingency was not built into the programme schedule. Milestones were missed because it took longer than GDLS-UK expected to undertake design work, complete testing, resolve defects and manage supply chain disputes. GDLS-UK told the NAO that this was because the MoD's standards were not fully defined and subject to change. However, the Department repeatedly found GDLS-UK's safety documentation insufficient.

The MoD has not managed the programme effectively. It did not establish effective governance arrangements or the necessary resources to manage the programme. There were multiple lines of reporting and complex assurance arrangements; insufficient senior management time; a high turnover

of senior staff; an under-resourced programme management team; and an ineffective programme board. The MoD and GDLS-UK reset the contract in 2018, but this did not resolve the programme's underlying problems.

The MoD knew of noise and vibration issues before soldiers reported injuries but was not aware of the severity of potential problems. Reporting of issues identified in trials was limited and slow, meaning that safety concerns were not shared or escalated by the Army or Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S). The Army's trials team began reporting injuries from July 2020, but one month later the Army and DE&S signed off safety documentation that said, with some limitations on use, the vehicles were safe to commence training.

The MoD is taking steps to resolve the noise and vibration issues, but they continue to represent a significant risk to the programme. The Department and GDLS-UK continue to disagree on the safety of the vehicles and whether the levels of noise and vibration breached contractual requirements. It is likely to take until late 2022 to agree on solutions, increasing schedule and cost pressures.

It is not yet clear whether the programme's issues are resolvable. It is a year behind the revised 2021 schedule, trials involving Army crews have been stopped, and safety issues remain unresolved. GDLS-UK has continued production without receiving any payment in 2021, with the MoD having paid GDLS-UK £1.1 billion less than scheduled at December 2021. The programme team is exploring how to recover the programme but will not agree a revised target date for IOC until noise and vibration issues are resolved. The Department will need to consider carefully whether the programme can deliver the intended capabilities but does not expect to be in a position to do so until late 2022.

The MoD also faces significant challenges in delivering supporting programmes that will allow it to use Ajax as intended. This includes new communication systems, training facilities and infrastructure projects to store the vehicles. In particular, the MoD is planning to enhance Ajax's digital capability through the delivery of the Morpheus programme. However, this programme has had significant cost increases and is running at least three years late.

The NAO recommends that the MoD should agree a credible delivery plan to IOC and FOC with GDLS-UK, including considering what contingency is needed to resolve existing issues and manage unknown risks. The MoD should also ensure there is a clear process for reporting, considering and implementing safety recommendations.

Gareth Davies, the head of the NAO, said:

“The Ministry of Defence and GDLS-UK's approach was flawed from the start. They did not fully understand the scale or complexity of the Ajax programme and a series of failures have led to delays and unresolved safety issues that will have a significant impact on the Army's ability to use the vehicles. We have seen similar problems on other defence programmes, and the Department must demonstrate that it understands the fundamental improvement required in its management of major programmes.”

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



National Audit Office

Regulating the financial sustainability of higher education providers in England

Universities' finances proved more resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic than had been feared but challenges remain in the medium-and long-term. As the Office for Students develops as a regulator, it will need to do more to communicate with higher education providers and other stakeholders to build a shared understanding of the aims and means of financial regulation in the sector, according to the National Audit Office (NAO).

The Office for Students (OfS) has regulated the higher education sector since 2018 and is sponsored by the Department for Education (the Department). The OfS's objectives include helping students access education, ensuring they have a high-quality experience, making sure they can progress into employment or further study, and ensuring they receive value for money. Should higher education providers become financially unsustainable or unviable, students would be adversely affected in all these areas. The COVID-19 pandemic added to existing financial stress in the sector, and began when the OfS was still relatively new.

The proportion of higher education providers with an in-year deficit increased from 5% in 2015/16, to 32% in 2019/20. Financial stress is not confined to one part of the sector; the 20 providers that have had a deficit for at least three years range in size from 200 students to more than 30,000. During 2020/21, 33 out of 247 providers (13%) had forecast that, by the end of the year, they would not have enough money to continue to fund at least 30 days' expenditure from their cash or credit facilities.

Short-term financial risks in the higher education sector are dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but medium- and long-term risks are more deep-seated. The pandemic meant higher education providers had to invest in new ways of teaching, while dealing with risks that they would lose income from a fall in international student fees, conferences, accommodation and research. Some providers are highly dependent on fees paid by international students and face financial risks that pre-date the pandemic. In addition, valuations of pension schemes (particularly the Universities Superannuation Scheme) indicate that higher employer contributions will be needed.

The OfS makes good use of the financial data it collects, analysing it in a systematic way to identify which providers require closer scrutiny. In addition to collecting detailed annual financial and performance data, the OfS requires providers to report events such as breach of conditions associated with loans, changes to teaching provision, or other events that might increase financial risk. During 2021, the OfS identified 98 out of 245 providers (40%) for detailed review of their financial viability and sustainability. The OfS has undertaken some financial analysis and scenario modelling of key risks but it does not yet have an integrated model to assess the impacts of long-term financial stress in the sector. Its heavily data-driven approach to assessing financial risk does not yet have the full confidence of all providers. As at December 2021, the OfS had made 10 providers subject to enhanced monitoring because of concerns about increased risk to their financial viability.

The Department and the OfS have not yet been successful in achieving a good understanding among providers of why the OfS collects all the data it does, and how it uses it. The sector bodies and providers that the NAO spoke to said the OfS did not routinely speak with most higher education providers, leading them to doubt whether the OfS had all the information needed to put financial data into context. The OfS considers it has engaged with providers sufficiently to understand risks to their financial sustainability. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the OfS spoke to most higher education providers to understand how they were responding to new pandemic-related risks, which was well received.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the OfS found that it needed stronger powers to intervene to protect students' education if providers were at risk of going out of business. It found there were common weaknesses in student protection plans - including providers being over-optimistic about the risks they faced, lack of detail about what specific actions providers would take, and weak refund and compensation policies. Student satisfaction fell sharply between 2020 and 2021, when pandemic lockdown measures were in place. In a survey in early 2021, 33% of undergraduates said they thought university offered good value for money and 54% thought it did not. In April 2021, the OfS adopted new powers that allow it to direct providers at risk of market exit to implement specific measures to protect students.

A-level grade inflation distorted the higher education market, and increased financial risk for some providers. The Department's adoption of grades assessed by schools and teachers in place of examinations in the summers of 2020 and 2021 meant more students were eligible for places at their first-choice provider. This caused challenges for both oversubscribed and undersubscribed universities.

The NAO recommends that the Department works with the OfS to agree how best to measure the impact of the regulatory regime for the higher education sector. OfS should communicate more effectively to build trust in its approach as a regulator, and should be more ready to share sector insights to improve efficiency in the sector.

Gareth Davies, head of the NAO said:

“While no higher education providers have failed under the regulation of the Office for Students, the number in deficit has risen significantly. Sector-wide issues that were causing financial stress before the impact of COVID-19 have not gone away and will continue to add pressure.

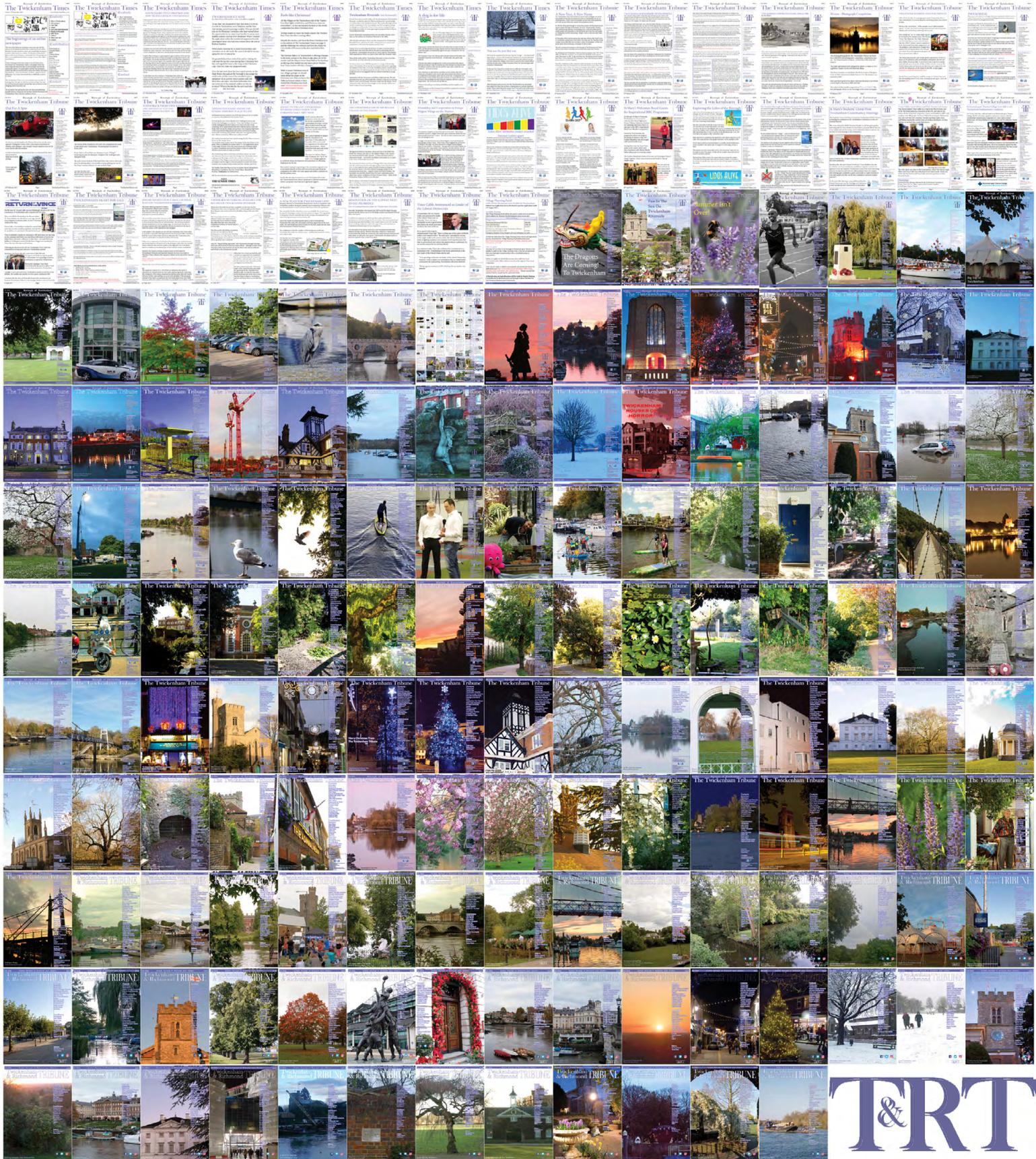
“The sector's financial sustainability can have a profound impact on the value for money of education for two million students every year. The Office for Students should improve how it communicates with individual providers to build trust in its approach. As it matures as a regulator, it should also be making better use of its insights to reduce risks that could lead to financial failure.”

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



National Audit Office

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