

# Twickenham & Richmond Tribune





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HM Treasury

Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

# TickerTape - News in Brief

## Upcoming closure required on A316 London Road roundabout for TfL works

The next phase of Transport for London (TfL) works on the A316 London Road roundabout will begin on **Saturday 5 April**.

The next phases of work will focus on the north and south islands of the roundabout. These works are scheduled from Saturday 5 April until Thursday 17 April.

### What the TfL works mean for residents

For safety reasons, a temporary north/south directional closure of the roundabout will be required during this period. Traffic on London Road (north/south movements) will be diverted to the adjacent roundabouts on the A316, at either Whitton Road or St Margarets Road.

However, east/west movements on the A316 will be retained at all times.

Please plan your journeys accordingly.

Find out more about the [A316 roadworks](#).

To streamline works, Richmond Council will be constructing two new zebra crossings during the TfL closure on London Road. These crossings will be at the junction of Ivybridge Close and Fulwood Gardens and will replace the existing pedestrian traffic islands.

Shift patterns have been extended until 7pm to ensure the necessary works are completed whilst London Road is closed at the roundabout. These works will also involve localised pavement widening and carriageway resurfacing later in the summer.



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darryl parkin

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*The Tree Agency*

# Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 295

## Twickenham Ferry – A Song

By Alan Winter

In recent years I have shown many postcards of the 3 ferries that we have had in Twickenham during the last 140 years or so. They were The Twickenham Ferry at the bottom of Lebanon Park Road, Hammerton's Ferry which was once operated from the same place before relocating to the Warren path next to Marble Hill Park where it still remains in use today. The third ferry was of course the chain ferry that crossed the water between Eel Pie Island and the Embankment before the bridge was built.

So, what else can we say about them? We can read about them in a famous novel or learn the words and sing the song! Here goes...

### Twickenham Ferry

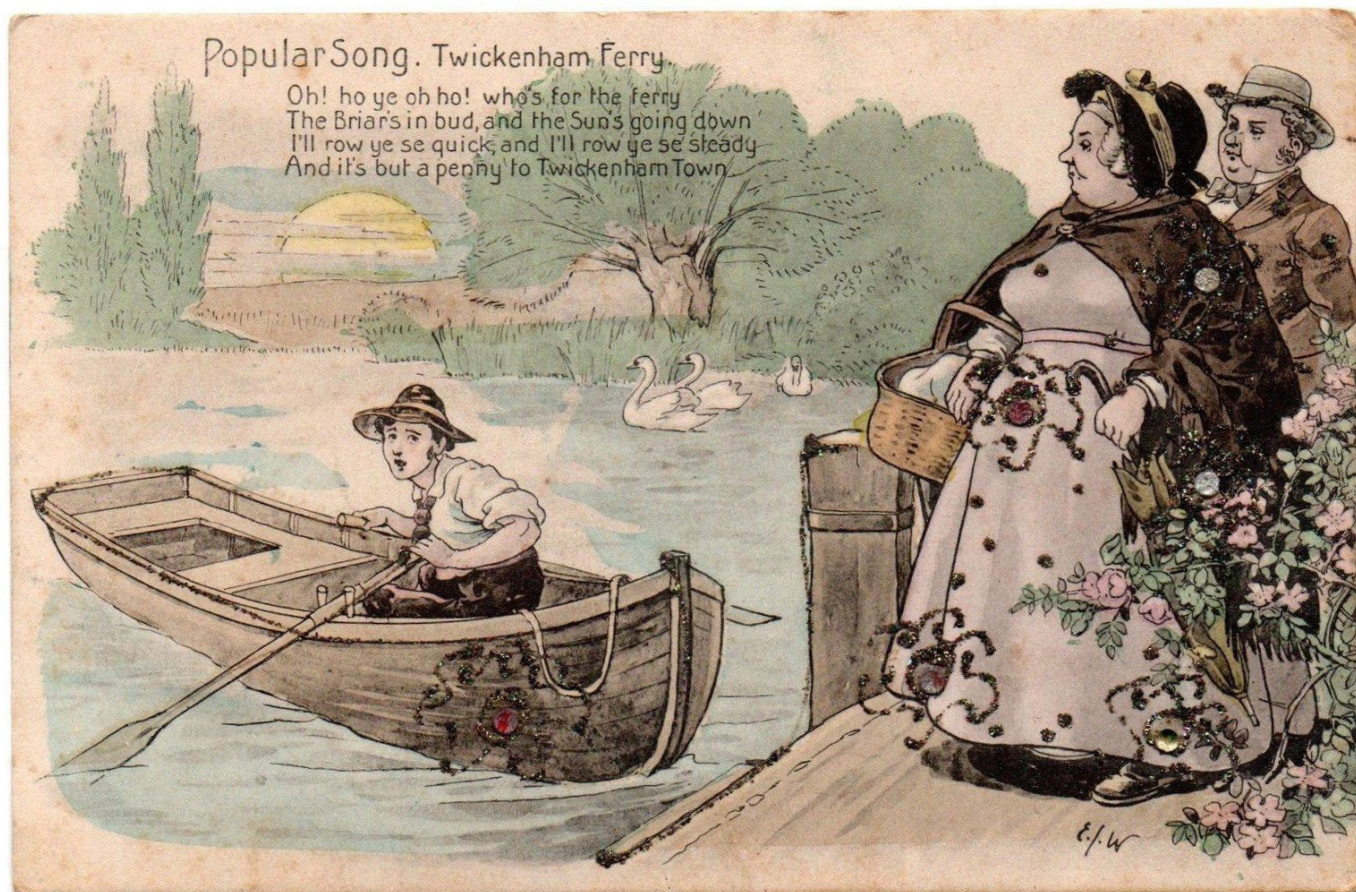
"Ahoy! and O-ho! and it's who's for the ferry?"  
(The briar's in bud and the sun going down)  
"And I'll row ye so quick and I'll row ye so steady,  
And 't is but a penny to Twickenham Town."  
The ferryman's slim and the ferryman's young,  
With just a soft tang in the turn of his tongue;  
And he's fresh as a pippin and brown as a berry,  
And 't is but a penny to Twickenham Town.

"Ahoy! and O-ho! and it's I'm for the ferry,"  
(The briar's in bud and the sun going down)  
"And it's late as it is and I have n't a penny—  
Oh! how can I get me to Twickenham Town?"  
She'd a rose in her bonnet, and oh! she look'd sweet  
As the little pink flower that grows in the wheat,  
With her cheeks like a rose and her lips like a cherry—  
"It's sure but you're welcome to Twickenham Town,"

"Ahoy! and O-ho!"—You're too late for the ferry,  
(The briar's in bud and the sun has gone down)  
And he's not rowing quick and he's not rowing steady;  
It seems quite a journey to Twickenham Town.  
"Ahoy! and O-ho!" you may call as you will;  
The young moon is rising o'er Petersham Hill;  
And, with Love like a rose in the stern of the wherry,  
There's danger in crossing to Twickenham Town.

Theophile Julius Henry Marzials. (1850 - 1920)  
Belgian/ English poet and songwriter.





Twickenham Ferry features in Charles Dickens' novel *Little Dorrit* when Arthur Clennam visits Meagles and crosses to Ham and back one morning. It is further commemorated in the above song of 1878 written and composed by Theo Marzials (1850–1920).

My two postcards this week provide the opening verse for the song with a word or two's difference. You can also find a version on YouTube if you want to hear the song as sung by soprano Miss Maude Willey.

My search for old postcards continues. I am always looking for old postcards and old photograph albums etc. The postcards can also be British or Foreign, black and white or coloured and of places or subjects.

If you have any that are sitting unwanted in a drawer, in a box in the loft or in the garage or under a bed, please contact me on 07875 578398 or by email on [alanwinter192@hotmail.com](mailto:alanwinter192@hotmail.com). I would like to see them and I pay cash!





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# College, Community and Campaign in Collaboration

From Mike Pemberton, Save Our Lands And River (SOLAR)

Last Friday saw the celebration of a creative collaboration between Richmond Upon Thames College and local community campaign group Save Our Lands And River (SOLAR). In the garden of The Anglers pub by the Thames at Teddington weir the competition winning entry, a sculpture “Withering Time”, was unveiled.

Jo Terrell, Head of School for Creative Industries at the College, said *“All three students Kayla Sylvan-Mcdonald, our winning designer behind ‘Withering Time,’ and her brilliant teammates Farhat Barmak and Simran Thandi are considering a career in interior design and architecture. By capturing a moment suspended in time, the students aim to inspire contemplation about the future changes facing our local eco-system not least in the face of Thames Water’s proposed TDRA.”*

The TDRA plan, Teddington Direct River Abstraction, proposes taking water from the river and replace it with treated effluent pumped from Mogden Sewage Works into the river just above Teddington weir.

Jo says the winning team *“believe that creativity and expertise in design has the power to influence lives, shape communities, and inspire positive change. This design aims to draw attention to the environmental implications of the TDRA scheme, prompting viewers to consider its potential impact.”*



Ben Walton, Manager at The Anglers said: *“As a local pub that serves the local community we have been delighted to be involved in this project. Given our location, so close to the river, we have a determination to see a healthy River Thames and their determination, ensuring we challenge anything, such as TDRA, that will cause long term environmental damage for local people, wildlife and water safety”.*

Emma Tolhurst of SOLAR said of the winning team *“Their professionalism as a team, their creativity, and their infectious enthusiasm just lit up the conversation. Not only did they hit every part of the brief, but they also designed a full-blown marketing campaign and activated it with the broader college students to sign the petition and engage in the campaign. It’s been amazing. Their ideas, the staff’s guidance, and the spirit of collaboration reminds us what happens when you bring a village together. Something truly extraordinary.”*

In late June/July Thames Water are required to hold a major consultation to inform and invite views on the proposed TDRA in locations affected in the boroughs of Hounslow, Richmond and Kingston. The dates and locations are yet to be announced.

Photo: Celebrating the unveiling - the students, College staff, SOLAR members, local MP and councillors

Hi there

### **Twickenham Pool**

I just wanted to share my memories of Twickenham pool.

As a fresh faced 17 year old in April 1976, I got my first job as a locker attendant at the pool. My brother, in his early 20's, had worked there the previous year as a lifeguard and had returned for the 1976 season.

We cleaned the entire complex, dug all the weeds out of the paving slabs around the pool and got the pool ready for opening in early May.

What followed was the glorious summer of '76! Endless sunshine and record breaking temperatures. The queues outside started forming early and would stretch all the way along the river to The Barmy Arms. Many of the staff, including me, worked double shifts as the demand was so high, 8am to 8pm every day.

The pool had a wonderful family atmosphere and, as your article says, people would come and spend all day there.

One of the happiest times of my life, never to be forgotten.

Many thanks for bringing this all back to me.

Kind regards

David Stratton

Dear Editor,

### **Things we actually want?**

What a beautiful juxtaposition of photographs in your last issue showing the former Ice Rink and Outdoor Swimming Pool. A time when civic pride was the order of the day.

If only we had a development site, close to the river and town centre, where similar facilities could be provided and which would benefit local people and regenerate the area.

I believe some people have decided that is a silly idea and tell us what we really want is luxury housing, a pub and restaurant. Because we don't have enough of those uses. Oh, and no public toilets because we have too many of those. I know, incredible isn't it. I wonder who those folk are - Councillors? Greedy developers?

What a tragic and stupid mistake they are making.

Regards

W Stewart



Dear Sir

## Twickenham Riverside

As a resident of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames who has spent many years watching the life cycle of our indigenous birds, I am shocked and appalled that the Council has seen fit to destroy over seventy shrubs and trees on Twickenham Riverside during the bird breeding season.

I visited Twickenham Riverside this week – Jubilee Gardens – and found that the oasis in our town had been stripped of most living trees and shrubs. I can verify that I have nesting birds nearby – the young have not yet left the nest.

So how can those responsible for the Twickenham Riverside “site”, now a lucrative cash cow for the Council, cut down the living trees and shrubs on Diamond Jubilee Gardens at this time of year. Trees should not be cut down during nesting season surely.

I understood that an ecologist should visit the site first but whoever undertook the survey must have been short-sighted.

Local children are also dismayed that their play area in land bought by the Council originally for the residents of the Borough has disappeared.

Is this what happens when we elect people to run our borough who do not share our heritage? Money, profit and political advantage are ALL.

They sold our ice rink, destroyed the famous Twickenham outside pool, and have now destroyed an area of prized heritage, an environmental haven in an outer London borough bought for the residents of the Borough.

Let us hope that next time there is an election we vote for those who have real sympathy for our environment and heritage and not those who see our environment and heritage in £££s.

Yours faithfully

Disgusted – Twickenham  
(Name and address supplied)

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# Home Ownership Should Be Rewarded – Not Taxed Into Extinction

By Jonathan Hulley, Conservative Parliamentary Spokesperson for Twickenham

It is no April Fool's joke – on April 1, 2025, new stamp duty land tax (SDLT) thresholds will come into effect, delivering yet another blow to first-time buyers and home movers alike. While Labour pushes forward with even more taxes on aspiration, the Liberal Democrats have once again stood by with hardly a murmur – thus helping to enable these changes.



This is no accident. The Liberal Democrats have a long tradition of supporting higher taxes on land and property. At their spring conference not long ago, Liberal Democrats were filmed proudly singing “The Land,” a radical anthem from the early 20th century that demands land value taxation and wealth redistribution through punitive land taxation. What once sounded like fringe political theatre now looks uncomfortably close to the party policy.

They have previously championed a so-called “mansion tax” despite the fact that homes labelled as such often include modest family houses in London and the South East. Now, they're pushing for a full council tax revaluation – a move that would disproportionately impact areas like Twickenham. Families already stretched by high living costs could see their bills soar simply for living in homes they've worked hard to afford.

Given this backdrop, it's no surprise the Liberal Democrats are remaining silent about Labour's new stamp duty thresholds. For them, this isn't a flaw in the system – it's a deliberate choice. They are ideologically comfortable with taxing homes, land, and ownership itself. They simply lack the courage to be honest about it doorstep.

The facts are stark. Stamp duty receipts fell from £15.36 billion to £11.62 billion between 2022 and 2023, marking a 24% drop that reflects a cooling property market, as high mortgage rates, inflation, and the cost of living weigh on buyers. However, instead of providing relief, Labour – with the tacit support of the Lib Dems – is increasing taxes again.

**Here's how the current and future stamp duty thresholds compare for previous homeowners buying their main property:**

The rate on each 'portion' steps up, so you pay 0% on the first £125,000, 2% on the next £125,000, etc.

*Until 31 March 2025:*

- Up to £250,000 (**up to £450,000 for most first-time buyers**): **Zero**
- £250,001 to £925,000: **5%**
- £925,001 to £1.5 million: **10%**
- Over £1.5 million: **12%**

*From 1 April 2025:*

- Up to £125,000 (**up to £300,000 for most first-time buyers**): **Zero**
- £125,001 to £250,000: **2%**
- £250,001 to £925,000: **5%**
- £925,001 to £1.5 million: **10%**
- Over £1.5 million: **12%**

The worst hit? First-time buyers. Currently, they pay no stamp duty on homes worth up to £425,000. However, that threshold will drop to £300,000 on 1 April 2025. A 5% rate will now apply to homes priced between £300,001 and £500,000; any home over £500,000 will lose all first-time buyer relief. This is a disaster in high-cost constituencies like Twickenham, where starter homes frequently exceed the cap.

This represents a direct attack on aspiration, penalizing those who act responsibly: saving, planning, and investing in their future. Furthermore, it is facilitated by the silence of the Liberal Democrats.

In October of last year, Labour raised the surcharge on additional properties from 3% to 5%. Now, with the reintroduction of the 2% band, even more people will feel the squeeze. The inevitable result? Increased pressure on those just on the verge of spreading their wings and leaving home. Their wings have been clipped with fewer rental properties on the market, higher rents, and increased property purchase costs. Many young adults will have to live cooped up with Mum and Dad even longer, putting their lives on hold.

The damage extends beyond the housing market; there are environmental costs as well. High stamp duty actively discourages individuals from relocating closer to work, resulting in longer commutes and increased carbon emissions. It also dissuades older adults from downsizing, compelling them to heat and maintain large homes they no longer need, while younger families find themselves stuck in cramped flats that they have outgrown. If we are genuinely committed to building sustainable communities, we must minimize the barriers that prevent people from moving when their circumstances change.

This tax hike is not only bad policy; it is also bad politics, supported by a Liberal Democrat party that pretends to care about fairness but consistently endorses policies that punish success and penalise homeowners.

But the bigger battle lies ahead. In Twickenham and beyond, voters must decide whether they want a party that believes in a property-owning democracy, or one that views homeownership as a taxable vice. Labour is clear in its position – and the Liberal Democrats have shown us theirs through inaction. Conservatives will always back aspiration, lower taxes, and the dream of owning a home. That's the choice.



# Friendship Concert

From Richmond in Europe Association

On Sunday 27 April 2025 the Richmond in Europe Association will host an international concert with musicians of the Royal Academy of Music in aid of the charities Home-Start and Richmond Borough MIND, which are supported by the Association's patron, the Mayor of Richmond. The concert recognises Richmond's connections with our twinned towns of Fontainebleau in France and Konstanz in Germany, and forms part of a series of events culminating in a weekend of celebration on 6th-8th June 2025 to reaffirm our enduring friendship embodied in the twinning.

The concert follows on from the very successful 'Togetherness' concert which was staged in April 2024 and will once again take place at St Mary's Church Twickenham. The ensemble of singers, Regina Gössel, Milette Gillow, Clara Orif and Elinor Popham, accompanied by pianist Jack Redman, will perform songs and arias in French, German and English, reflecting the language of the twinned towns, on a theme of friendship and the sense of belonging and connection across cultures that music can provide.

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5.30-7.15pm  
Sunday 27th April 2025  
Tickets £20 per adult  
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St Mary's Church  
Church Street  
Twickenham  
TW1 3NJ

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## Event details:

- Date: Sunday 27 April 2025
- Time: 5.30 to 7.15pm
- Location: St Mary's Church, Twickenham, TW1 3DT
- Price: £20 for adults, free entry for those aged 18 and under

## Buy your tickets at:

[Mayor's charity events - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)



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# A Housing Plan Adrift

By James Knight

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2025** - L&Q Housing Association came under critical examination this week during the **Adult Social Services, Health and Housing Committee**, as councillors, community groups and residents raised concerns over the housing provider's performance in the borough.

The council hosted the session to review L&Q's response to its obligations under the **Social Housing Improvement Plan (SHIP)**, a local framework to improve housing services. Despite efforts to maintain a constructive tone, the session exposed several areas of concern, particularly around service delivery, repairs, community engagement and L&Q's broader strategic approach to the borough.

## **Richmond 'Not a Priority'**

The revelation that Richmond is not considered a "core borough" by L&Q was a flashpoint. This classification appears to exclude the area from receiving support through the housing association's community investment programme, sparking frustration among councillors and residents who viewed it as a form of institutional neglect.

The council and voluntary sector organisations present questioned how such a decision could be justified, considering that the borough provides not only a willing partnership but also match-funding opportunities for community-led projects. The perceived lack of investment was seen as incompatible with the needs of vulnerable tenants in the area, who frequently encounter the same challenges as residents in more heavily prioritised areas.

## **Repairs and Communication Shortfalls**

Much of the meeting focused on the ongoing challenges residents encounter in obtaining repairs. Despite L&Q's multi-billion-pound capital works programme and the use of artificial intelligence to predict issues such as damp and mould, the day-to-day service continues to be inconsistent. Residents report long wait times, repeated visits from incorrect contractors, and inadequate follow-up communication.

Communication emerged as a significant weakness. While L&Q has emphasised digital tools like online portals and emails, councillors and voluntary groups argued that these methods do not meet the needs of residents who lack internet access or digital literacy. It was noted that a considerable proportion of tenants in some areas remain digitally excluded, yet little provision is made for face-to-face contact beyond a single half-day surgery each week.

## **Complaints and Anti-Social Behaviour**

Councillors were also concerned about L&Q's management of complaints and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Although some reforms have been implemented, including monthly reviews of complaints, many cases seem to stall for weeks or even months without resolution. In instances of ASB, existing staff are reported to be overstretched, handling case volumes that significantly exceed sustainable levels.

The association acknowledged the challenge and confirmed plans to recruit additional ASB officers over the summer. However, committee members expressed concern about the interim period, particularly given the serious nature of some ASB cases and their impact on tenant well-being.

## **Data Gaps and Lack of Local Oversight**

A recurring frustration during the meeting was the absence of Richmond-specific data. L&Q's representative, although professional and receptive to feedback, could not address several questions because of restricted access to figures or strategic details. Requests for timelines, property condition statistics, and local decarbonisation plans mostly went unanswered.

Several committee members emphasised the need for greater transparency and direct engagement from senior L&Q representatives at future meetings. The lack of detailed, borough-level information indicated the broader disconnect between the organisation's corporate policies and the lived experiences of tenants in Richmond.

## **A Need for Rebuilding Trust**

Although the meeting maintained a respectful and solution-focused tone, the underlying message was clear: L&Q's current approach to Richmond is lacking. While council officers, residents, and voluntary sector representatives demonstrated a strong willingness to work collaboratively, they voiced frustration that their efforts were not met with similar commitment from the housing provider.

The council's investment in initiatives such as the Tenant Champion and Community Ambassador schemes demonstrates its efforts to enhance conditions for social tenants. However, progress will rely on L&Q fulfilling that ambition with transparency, responsiveness, and a readiness to reevaluate how it distributes support.

## **Commentary**

While the meeting highlighted serious and legitimate concerns about L&Q's performance in Richmond, it also raised questions about the effectiveness of local leadership in holding the housing association to account.

Councillor Jim Millard has made resident engagement a flagship issue. However, despite repeated warnings over the past year – from residents, community groups, and fellow councillors – there has been limited progress in compelling L&Q to provide borough-specific data, meaningful investment, or senior-level accountability.

This latest session saw familiar concerns raised again: chronic repair delays, insufficient support for vulnerable tenants, and vague commitments with no clear timelines. Yet the chair's tone remained largely conciliatory, with little evidence of the strategic pressure or assertiveness needed to drive real change.

If Richmond is to move beyond mere words and workshop initiatives, it will require stronger leadership from the council. This means not just listening to residents, but delivering measurable improvements on their behalf – and insisting that major housing providers like L&Q treat Richmond not as a peripheral obligation, but as a place deserving of equal standards and serious investment.

You can see the papers for the meeting and the webcast by following this [LINK](#)



# The Royal Parks apprenticeship scheme seeks new talent to help care for London's green spaces

The [Royal Parks charity](#) is searching for six new horticultural apprentices to join the teams helping to shape the most famous collection of urban parks in the world, including [The Regent's Park](#), [St James's Park](#), [Greenwich Park](#) and [Bushy Park](#).

The charity cares for London's [eight historic Royal Parks](#), and its [apprenticeship scheme](#), in partnership with the charity's landscape contractors, takes on a cohort of new paid horticultural apprentices every year to learn from experts, and to pave the way for a promising career in the industry.

Applications for the scheme are now open and will close on April 20, 2025.

[Apply to become a Royal Parks' horticultural apprentice](#)

Apprentices on the scheme study for two years to achieve a Level 2 qualification in Horticultural Operations. They will then have the option to continue for a third year and complete the RHS Level 2 Certificate in Practical Horticulture.



Successful applicants will work in one of the Royal parks for four days a week alongside the horticultural teams and landscape maintenance contract partners, and study at Capel Manor College in The Regent's Park for one day a week.

The scheme is open to applicants of all ages, whether they are leaving school, looking for a career change, or already working within the horticultural industry. Applicants should have a passion for gardening, be eager to learn, and have a positive, can-do approach.

Rupert Lovibond, 41, is a second-year apprentice at Bushy Park. He said:

*"I was at a point where I was no longer happy with my job, and I thought, there has to be more to life than this.*

*"I started thinking about what I really loved and enjoyed doing during lockdown, and that was gardening. I thought, why didn't I look into this further, turning my passion into an actual livelihood?*

*"I found out about the apprenticeship scheme and just went for it. It's really created a passion within me, which I suspected might be there, but I didn't really know.*

*"I'm 41 now and it's really changed things around for me, massively. I like making a difference.*

*“Getting that feeling every single day changes your life, it changes who you are as a person.”*

Daisy Cox, second-year apprentice at St James’s Park, said:

*“I really enjoy the varied nature of the apprenticeship. You learn so much within such a quick period.*

*“If you’ve got the idea in your head that working outside, working with plants is for you, you should apply, because you don’t know until you’ve tried how much you’ll love it.*

*“A lot of people do the apprenticeship and then move towards something else, because there are a lot of different opportunities that it opens up. I really enjoy working outside, and that’s something I’ve realised from doing the apprenticeship.”*

Pam Steer was previously a teacher, until she decided she wanted to do something ‘completely different’. Now a first-year apprentice at Bushy Park, Pam said:

*“I like working outside, I’m a trained forest school leader, and so I decided to apply for the apprenticeship.*

*“I love it. Every day I come to work with a big smile on my face. It’s the most beautiful place to work, and I just love my job. I’ve learned so much. I’d love to just create more beauty for people to appreciate when they come to the park.”*

Joseph Coffey, Greenwich Park third-year apprentice, first got into horticulture after finishing his undergraduate degree, helping a friend with her gardening business over the summer. Joseph said:

*“I just really enjoyed it. With all the jobs that I did previously, I just kind of had this feeling that I’d much rather be doing gardening.*

*“There’s a lot of people here who’ve been doing this for years and years, so it’s a good place to learn. With horticulture, the things you can go into are endless, really.*

*“It’s a very unique experience and lifestyle, especially living in London, there are not many places where you have such large green spaces that you can work in. It can be hard work but it is fun.”*

The scheme dates back to the 1960s, and former apprentices who have worked within The Royal Parks have gone on to become park managers, supervisors, head gardeners or contract managers at the charity, while others have gone on to work at high-profile locations such as Buckingham Palace and other prestigious gardens worldwide.

Adam Stoter, Assistant Park Manager at The Royal Parks, who oversees the apprenticeship scheme, said:

*“The Royal Parks apprenticeship scheme is a fantastic opportunity to gain hands-on experience working in some of the most iconic green spaces in London. Our apprentices develop invaluable horticultural skills while contributing to the care and preservation of these historic landscapes.*

*“Whether you’re starting out or looking for a career change, this scheme opens doors to a rewarding future in horticulture.”*



# Hampton North Finally Gets a Pharmacy

## But Only After Months of Delays Caused by LibDem Bungling

By Nupur Majumdar, Hampton North Conservatives Spokesperson

After over a year without a local pharmacy, Hampton North is finally welcoming back a much-needed service. A new pharmacy is opening, and while this is positive news, it follows months of unnecessary disruption, all resulting from the Liberal Democrat-led council's failure to plan effectively and act when it was most crucial.

The problems began when two Boots pharmacies serving the Hampton area closed, with one of them in Hampton North, where the impact has been felt the hardest.

Residents suddenly found themselves without access to essential pharmacy services. For older people, those with mobility issues, and families juggling childcare and work, this wasn't just an inconvenience – it was a serious health risk.

Pharmacies are legally required to provide three months' notice before closure, and in this case, that notice was given. Liberal Democrat-run Richmond Council received it but took no action. There was no contingency plan, no engagement with local residents, and no clear communication with the NHS or other segments of the health system. This situation represented a complete breakdown in leadership.

Even more concerning is the debacle over the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) – the essential planning document that determines whether areas like Hampton have adequate pharmacy provision. The latest version, published in August 2023, failed to even reference the impending closures. At the very moment Hampton was losing its pharmacies, the Council was still claiming there was "no significant need" for new provision. NHS England had to use that flawed assessment to reject an application from a new provider who was ready and willing to step in.

At one point, the Liberal Democrats' preferred solution for the vacated Boots Pharmacy unit was a fish and chip shop. What a woeful indictment of the council that would have been!

Throughout this period, local Conservatives in Hampton North have campaigned tirelessly to keep this issue on the agenda. We have raised it in public meetings, supported struggling residents, raised a petition signed by hundreds of residents and advocated for the urgent approval of a new pharmacy. We did not let this matter fade because we understood how vital this service is to the health and well-being of our community.

The return of a pharmacy to Hampton is a welcome development, but it should not have taken this long. The failures here were not inevitable; they stemmed from inadequate leadership, management, coordination, communication, and a lack of urgency from those who should have known better.

The Liberal Democrat-run council's failure to act upon receiving the closure notice clearly indicates a larger issue. Richmond is one of the few UK councils without a scrutiny committee. Without proper oversight, decision-makers can become complacent, allowing problems that should have been identified early to slip through the cracks. This culture of complacency fosters inefficiency, and when it comes to something as crucial as healthcare, it leads to significant consequences for local residents.

Hampton deserves better. We need a council willing to submit to scrutiny, responds swiftly to problems, and prioritise residents—especially regarding something as essential as access to healthcare. I will continue to advocate for that and for a system that works for everyone in our community.





# Learn about swifts and become a swift saver

From Barnes Common

Barnes  
Common

On Saturday 12 April, join Barnes Common for a conservation talk on swifts.

With the arrival of spring, let's hear from Edward Mayer, the founder of [Swift Conservation](#) and a leading expert on swifts, about these amazing birds.

Swifts only spend 3 to 4 months with us each summer, between April/May and August. While they are here they bring spectacular aerial action and excitement to our urban lives. They prefer houses and churches as their nesting areas, squeezing through gaps to nest inside the roof, but with building renovations, more and more nesting sites are lost. Swifts are now on the red list of conservation concern, declining by 62% between 1995 and 2021.

Come along to the talk to find out more about swifts and how you can help them. Tea and biscuits will be served.

Event details:

- **Date:** Saturday 12 April 2025
- **Time:** 11am
- **Location:** Barnes Green Day Centre, SW13 9HE
- **Price:** from £11.50

[Book tickets for the save our swifts talk](#)



# Council Reports Now Require a Translator: With Richmond Council Obsessed with ‘Equity’, ‘Lived Experience’ and ‘Safe Spaces’

By James Knight

Richmond Council’s **Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sport Committee** met this Wednesday, accompanied by several reports filled with progressive buzzwords. One strategy included over ninety of these buzzwords—have been using AI to generate their ‘word salad’ reports again?

## **Waste Not, Want Not?**

At the top of the agenda was Richmond’s “Roadmap to a Low Waste Future,” a blueprint designed to reduce the borough’s environmental footprint. While Richmond boasts a 77% dry recycling capture rate, the total volume of waste—especially food—remains stubbornly high. The Greens took delight in reminding everyone how the recycling rates have declined under the Liberals’ watch.

The Council plans to trial soft plastics and film and to expand food waste collections, particularly for flats, alongside a new communications initiative aimed at enhancing public compliance. A cross-party working group will oversee progress, though whether it will a difference remains to be seen. Officials were keen to emphasise the “circular economy,” but with upcoming financial penalties, the risks—and costs to residents—may increase significantly if targets are missed.

## **More Events in Parks**

Across London, councils have faced criticism for converting public parks into private playgrounds, renting them out for loud concerts and festivals to generate revenue. Residents living near some parks in Lambeth have expressed their concerns, stating that their parks feel like “weekend nightclubs” during summer.

A new draft of the Events Policy introduces caps on event frequency, audience size, and noise; a stronger emphasis on community impact; and requirements for discounted tickets and environmental safeguards. This shift reflects the growing public frustration with the creeping commercialisation of local green spaces. Residents near sites like Richmond Green have expressed concerns about being treated like collateral in a quest for cash.

Many in affected areas have criticised the policy as a public relations exercise. Several new council strategies, like the one for Richmond Town Centre, envision a much more intensive use of Richmond Green for public events and concerts.

## **Women & Girls Participation Push**

The Committee also presented its flagship strategy to boost sport and physical activity among women and girls. Launched with the Women’s Rugby World Cup in mind, the plan includes female-focused coaching, safer venues, and inclusive access initiatives.

Yet in a move that rather undercuts that message, the Council has quietly scrapped leisure centre concessions for the over-60s. The decision was justified in the name of “intergenerational fairness”—a phrase that glosses over the historic economic disadvantage many older women continue to face. This is not simply a theoretical concern. Many of these women entered the workforce before equal pay legislation had any real bite and now live on smaller pensions as a result. For them, affordable access to leisure facilities is not a luxury—it’s a vital support for physical and mental health.

## **Rhetoric Meets Reality**

Throughout the meeting, the Liberal Democrat-led committee struck a familiar tone—earnest, progressive, and laden with fashionable terminology. Terms like “intersectionality,” “safe spaces,” and “social value” flowed freely. Yet for many residents, the concern is not the Council’s commitment to trendy causes, but its neglect of long-term public policy aims such as easing pensioner poverty and sex-based rights such as women not having to compete against men that causes the most concern.

You can see the papers for the meeting and the webcast by following this [LINK](#)

# Next week at Richmond Council

On Monday evening, the **Transport and Air Quality Committee** will meet to discuss (1) a ward concern about Railshead Road, (2) the 2025-30 Air Quality Action Plan, (3) a Pavement (vehicle) crossover review, (4) planned highway works for 2025/26. The meeting will commence at 7 pm, York House, Twickenham.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

On Wednesday evening, the **Planning Committee** will meet to decide the following applications: (1) an application to replace the café at Roehampton Gate, Richmond Park, (2) converting the former police station in Hampton to a care home, (3) for Hampton Prep School to increase its roll from 144 to 176.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

For guidance on how to participate at different types of council meetings, such as speaking or asking written or verbal questions, please click [HERE](#)

## Join new Fitness Friday sessions at ETNA Centre

From ETNA Community Centre

Whether you want to build strength or get your heart pumping with boxercise, ETNA have got you covered.

Introducing Fitness Friday - a brand-new fitness initiative at ETNA Community Centre!

Starting on Friday 4 April and costing just £30 for six classes, participants can choose from one of two sessions.

Choose from either:

- Strength and Conditioning with Byambaa from 2 to 3pm
- Boxercise with Mickey from 3 to 4pm

All adults are welcome to attend, with concession rates available for benefit recipients.

Booking is required - secure your spot now!

[Book online](#)





## Shiuli - A Jewel In Twickenham's Crown

**Shiuli** has now been open in Twickenham for four years. It was launched during the pandemic by chef Alfred Prasad, who had previously maintained the Michelin star at Tamarind restaurant. It opened quietly, without fanfare, since when it has continued to build a loyal customer base locally. It serves contemporary, healthy, Indian food, and I was delighted to be invited recently to a special press event, where we were treated to a fabulous evening with Chef Prasad showcasing his signature dishes.



First of all though, we were treated to a gin tasting with Robert Blackwood, of The Gin Chronicles fame, where he explained the wealth of botanicals in the bespoke Shiuli gin, created by **Bone Idyll Distillery** in Kingston. The gin is superb and a testament to the skill of the distillery team headed by Sam Berry.

But we were there for the food too, and what an amazing spread ensued. We started with an assortment of starters to share: Grilled Scallops, Burrata Chaat and Soft-shell crab Koliwada.



The Seared scallops (on tomato thokku with mixed peppercorns; coconut milk pearls) were cooked to perfection. The Burrata Chaat...what can I say? India meets Italy! It was an absolutely delicious medley of flavours and textures with chickpeas, pomegranate and sev all enhanced by the richness of the burrata. And the soft-shell crab was a triumph - the last time I tasted one as good as this was cooked by chef Atul Kochhar, quite a few years ago.





Our main courses were equally delicious...I had Malabar Prawn & Mango and my husband had Skinny Makhni Chicken. Both were incredibly fragrant, and surprisingly light, due to Alfred's healthy take on Indian cuisine. These were accompanied by Alfred's signature roasted broccoli. I can honestly say it was just packed with flavour, and cooked to the ideal state of crispiness, then sprinkled with a hazelnut crumble. It lifted this veg to new heights. Also served was grilled okra (a veg I rarely choose, as it can be so slimy) but



again this was crispy and totally divine.

The Truffle sea salt naan that I tasted had layers of spicy deliciousness and was incredibly light and fluffy.

Not surprisingly, we were pretty 'pogged out' with this



fabulous array

of food, and while there were a number of options offered from the dessert menu, we were given the chance to try a new dessert from the Spring menu. We shared this: It was a wonderfully light and flavoursome ode to the Alphonse mango. And, like the rest of the meal, it was so good.

The prices at Shiuli aren't cheap, but you do get a tip top level of Indian food (and Shiuli is also highly rated by my Indian friends).

If you're watching your budget, there is a great value set menu at £18 for two or £22 for three courses available at lunchtimes Friday and Saturday and early dinner (5-6 pm) Monday to Saturday.

And, of course, you can add many of those delicious side dishes as extras ...and I'd urge you to do so!



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# You don't always have to go on a cruise

By Bruce Lyons of Crusader Travel

Mind you, of course, there is nothing wrong with cruises.

Cruise Ships have changed, there are so many kinds now, ones with sails, family cruises, small ships, yachts even, expedition boats of all shapes and sizes. We sell fly cruises or no fly cruises from UK ports. You only have to ask, and the choice is yours.



But it isn't cruises I wanted to write about. What has struck me most of late, is the yearning for new experiences and what is most evident is that the 80's and 90 yr olds who were wary of travelling before and often felt unsafe because of their age and they gave up travel, often as they feel they may be a liability. Well, the good news is that you don't have to miss out on those exhilarating pleasures, times have changed.

Today with modern communications you never need to be out of contact, moreover disabled travellers can travel comfortably too. Everywhere you go our industry has adapted towards making your journey comfortable and safe, and as an agency we also monitor our emails 18 hours a day, just in case your journey is disrupted. Your needs are recorded on your booking so, for instance when you check in there are notes in your booking and if you needed mobility assistance – the notes are all there, you don't have to travel to the airport and ask. So you are never out of touch and if there are travel disruptions we usually know before you do!

I wrote the other week about our 90-year-olds travelling on a very adventurous trip to Galapagos on an Expedition Cruise Ship and stopping off in the islands before continuing for an up-country Amazon Safari. These are typical of the current times, with many people who in their younger years did many adventurous things and explored the world but in later years felt they needed a little bit more security and came to us as they know we are always there as back up just in case! This lovely couple didn't need us, but we were watching out and that is the way it can be today, Snags can be unsnagged with just a message to us on your iPhone, we are never far away. Heathrow shut down – yes, we had some but quickly resolved – at least our people weren't diverted to Beijing!!!





## Trump's Heard Island and McDonald Islands tariffs

Note the date of the following headline – the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025 and not the 1st April: *tariffs target Heard Island and McDonald Islands* - Australian territory inhabited by penguins. April 3 2025 in CBS News.



I doubt whether Trump will live this one down. He says so many things that just seem to come into his head without much thought, but this latest error will outlast his term of office.



Rolling Stone states "Donald Trump's new global trade war declaration will place tariffs on America's economic allies and Arctic waterfowl, but not Russia".

Countries throughout the world are reeling with the news of the Trump trade war but I doubt whether the penguins will change their way of life.

Trump has made his bed and now he must lie on it, even if it is a bed of nails.

## Hungary in the News

An Emerging Wind Of Change In Hungary

Hungary has been led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán since 2010 (previously holding office from 1998 to 2002). Orbán was re-elected as prime minister in 2014, 2018, and 2022.



In July 2024 Orban met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, a visit heavily criticised by EU leaders and Ukraine's government.

In the spring of 2024 tens of thousands of people took to the streets in opposition to the Viktor Orbán government, a movement against alignment with Russia that has led to mass demonstrations in countries such as Georgia where people have marched against the government ceaselessly for over 128 days throughout the cold days and nights.

During the last week protestors have blocked bridges in Budapest. Although Orbán rushed to the capital in a motorcade his attempts to outlaw protests were ignored. Victor Orbán has been labelled as merely Putin's "bag man". Protestors in Georgia and Hungary have planned joint demonstrations against their governments.

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



# Spring comes to Eel Pie

By Shona Lyons



I always know Spring has definitely arrived when the tree opposite bursts into the most beautiful cloud of white flowers.

This year it seems the blossom has been like no other, and even as soon as you clamber over the bridge you are greeted with beautiful cherry blossom by the

communal notice board.

We have planted lots of bulbs by our office and hope that the cheery blooms lift everyone's spirits.

It definitely feels like Spring is in the air, even

our little kitten seems to be loving this wonderful weather.

We are all so lucky to live in this idyllic part of London, with all this green around us, beautiful riverside paths and parks.



Whenever I turn on the news, all the destruction with internecine strife & their incumbent wars with whole countries laid to waste, rain forest degradation, global warming, forest fires, floods horrifies me but when I sit with my cup of coffee in the morning's peace, surrounded by the bird song of the morning chorus, and have the incredible privilege to watch the dawn unfolding in front of my eyes, it almost feels that all these terrible things I see on the TV are in another hellish world entirely and I am here, in Paradise.



# The teachings of a daffodil...

By Deep Patel

~ Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



I am seeing them all over Twickenham and every other customer seems to be carrying a bunch...what exactly is the story behind the good old daffodil?

An elderly gentleman stopped at our shop to drop in a little bunch of daffodils in for my mother, as a little gift (they made her so happy) but the girl waiting in line behind him told me she hates daffodils, I asked why as they aren't bad...she told me they make her nervous...I then thought perhaps she has a phobia...unsure of whether I should ask more, I decided to be brave and ask...she said they make her nervous as they remind her that exams are approaching...as each year when she sees them, exams are always approaching due to the way that the academic calendars are planned.

Another woman came into the shop and said she always buys herself a bunch of daffodils to cheer herself up and that they reminded her that better times were on the way...a real symbol of hope and a true promise of positivity. What else did this humble flower remind my customers of?

A mature gentleman came to my shop and said a daffodil symbolises, birth, death, rebirth...the entire circle of life...forcing its way through the hard icy ground to tower above the grass and burst into pretty yellow trumpets announcing the end of winter and start of Spring...and after the message has been given, the humble daffodil collapses onto itself and renews the soil with its leaves and takes a rest, ready to reappear the following Spring...year...after year...after year...

That afternoon, it occurred to me that the daffodil is therefore a perfect symbol of life... death... rebirth... resilience...faith...and hope...in a way, the underlying themes discussed by all the major religions of the world...

**Remember...**

***“Be like a daffodil...”***

CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK:

FOR ANY HOME OR GARDEN “PEST” ...

Sprinkle talcum powder around where they come (but not directly on them) and they will stop without having to harm or kill them...you will get blessings in your life or have good karma for choosing a kind way too! This remedy also works to deter virtually any insect without harming them...like it & share it! For more tips, email: [InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com](mailto:InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com) or join my Facebook group: “Insect Lovers Unite” Thank you!

## *La Traviata*

by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Francesco Maria Piave

## *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*

by Giacomo Puccini, libretti by Luigi Illica and Guiseppe Giacosa

Sembla and Ellen Kent with the Ukrainian Opera and Ballet Theatre at Richmond Theatre and on tour until 14<sup>th</sup> May

"If you have tears prepare to shed them now." No, not Mark Antony, but local audiences as the indefatigable director Ellen Kent made her annual outing to Richmond Theatre, with three of opera's biggest weepies. All are heartwrenching.

These are three big tragedies, with three big heroines, and all three die for love. No wonder these are amongst the most popular performed operas.

*La Traviata* and *La Bohème* have autobiographic hints. Verdi's second wife may have been the inspiration for *La Traviata*'s Violetta, and Puccini's own bohemian student days in Paris certainly inspired *La Bohème*. In these two operas, the tragic heroines Violetta and Mimi, each die of consumption, as tuberculosis used to be called. In *Madama Butterfly* the faithful loving Cio-Cio-San takes her own life.

Sembla's Spring tour of Britain packs in a punishing schedule of the three operas, played in rep by the same performers, who take varying principal roles.

Violetta, the courtesan who tries to escape her glammers, but shallow, high-life for the love of a bourgeois young provincial is portrayed by Viktoria Melnyk with a deep understanding of her character, making her internal conflicts truly believable. Her lightly decorated coloratura soprano brings out the dichotomy in Violetta's aspirations. Melnyk is also one of the strongest actor in *Bohème* where she brings a layer of authenticity as Musetta in her on-off relationship with Marcello, one of the four bohemian artist friends.

Iurie Gisca plays a flustered and enamoured Marcello, the young painter, but ages up in *Traviata* to make a very imposing Germont, the father of Violetta's young lover, Alfredo. His richly sonorous singing voice is matched by his acting, in which every posture speaks the softening attitude of Germont, as he comes to realise her true nature.





Hovhannes Andriasyan, as Alfredo, is fulgurant in the beautiful duets with he has with Violetta, but leaves Melnyk to do the heavy lifting as far as the acting is concerned. However, he comes not his own in *Butterfly* as Pinkerton, the insensitive American naval officer, where Andriasyan's fine voice with its lovely tenor bloom is used with impressive musical taste.



The Korean soprano Elena Dee as makes quite an impression as the innocent Cio-Cio-San, the eponymous Madame Butterfly, who is brutally betrayed by Pinkerton. Dee has both vocal sweetness and power, free of fluttering or curdling, although she is somewhat generically operatic rather than authentically Japanese. Dee's big moment is as Mimi, the impoverished terminally ill seamstress in *Bohème*, who becomes part of the poor but happy lives of

the quartet of students of the arts. Her voice soars throughout, lending both joy and pathos to Mimi's short love story.

In the supporting roles, Yelyzaveta Bielous impresses as Madame Butterfly's maid and confidant Suzuki, while as Violetta's friend, Flora in *Traviata*, her melliferous mezzo-soprano has an animalistic charm.

Picking up the passion of all three operas is the tireless conductor Vasyl Vasylenko and the Orchestra of UOBT, dynamically speaking Verdian language in *Traviata*, but a little more laid-back in the two Puccini operas.

One cannot doubt the commitment of this earnest and hard-working company, which produces memorable gems. Its members hail mainly from the Ukraine, and from Moldavia and other East European countries, as well as further afield. And the audiences can share in their resilience and pride and as, after the curtain call, we all stand for the Ukrainian National Anthem, which is quite another weepie moment ... .. and another reason, if you catch the tour, to bring an ample supply of handkerchiefs.



Read Mark Aspen's review of *La Traviata* at [www.markaspen.com/2025/03/25/traviata-ek](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/03/25/traviata-ek); Eleanor Lewis's review of *La Bohème* at [www.markaspen.com/2025/03/26/boheme-ek](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/03/26/boheme-ek); and Patrick Shorrocks's review of *Madama Butterfly* at [www.markaspen.com/2025/03/27/butterfly-ek25](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/03/27/butterfly-ek25)

Photography courtesy of Sembla

# My Fair Lady

by Alan Lerner and Frederick Loewe

Questors Productions at the Judi Dench Playhouse, Ealing, until 5<sup>th</sup> April

"All I want is a room somewhere". With a production as well-beloved as *My Fair Lady*, there is nowhere for performers to hide, as the audience can be seen silently singing along, but Michelle Spencer's lavish production sees a confident cast take on the show with great energy and gusto. Musical Director Tom Arnold has assembled a talented band who do full justice to Loewe's music.

All moves at a brisk clip, helped by Robert Spencer's ingenious set design, complemented by wonderful lighting design by Martin Walton, a highlight being the moon shining through Higgins' windows.



Linguist Henry Higgins wagers his friend Colonel Pickering that, with vocal coaching, he can pass off Covent Garden flower seller Eliza Doolittle as a duchess. Kirsty King plays Eliza, in the show's most demanding role, as she convincingly transforms through several social classes. She gives a fantastic performance, both as an actor and as a singer, most notably with a powerful rendition of *Wouldn't It Be Lovely*.

Playing Henry Higgins, Ant Foran is full of vigour and energy, driving the show's pace. The third wheel of the Wimpole Street household is Colonel Pickering, played with charm by David Leonard as he tries to encourage Higgins to moderate his behaviour; as does Lesley McCall in a wonderfully understated performance as the resigned housekeeper Mrs Pearce.

Luke Baverstock shines as Freddy Eynsford-Hill, again both in singing and acting. Meanwhile, Mrs Higgins, the sober voice of reason, is portrayed by Patricia O'Brien as a stern figure who still has a twinkle in her eye, however much her son exasperates her.

Robert Vass takes on the key role of Alfred Doolittle, Eliza's father, and he captures the role of the loveable rogue completely, turning in a show-stealing and toe-tapping rendition of *Get Me to the Church on Time* with the ensemble. The ensemble do a terrific job, bringing movement and energy to numbers including *With a Little Bit of Luck* and *Get Me to the Church* in a variety of spectacular costumes.



All the stops pulled out for this *My Fair Lady*, and a happy audience spills from the theatre now openly humming or whistling those favourite songs.

Read Andrew Lawston's review at [www.markaspen.com/2025/03/29/fair-lady-q](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/03/29/fair-lady-q)

Photography by Carla Marker



# Turandot

by Giacomo Puccini, libretto by Giuseppe Adami and Renato Simoni  
Instant Opera at Normansfield Theatre, Teddington

Move China to a striking dystopian future, set in 2184 in the Asimovian-sounding 'Eastern Hemisphere Central Sector 52/08 - 93/54'. This premise of this *Turandot* adds a distinct visual texture. Half the theatre is filled with the forty-strong orchestra, under the direction of the acclaimed conductor Alice Farnham, and an impressively large cast. Packed almost to bursting with the musical and dramatic performers, the space teems with movement and melody, as they navigate a world steeped in a Blade Runner aesthetic.



Whilst the storyline remains largely traditional, the costuming leans heavily into this vision: steely greys and blues dominate, save for the striking white robes of the Emperor. The dancers of Kingston Ballet School enrich the production, feeling almost extraterrestrial in their whimsical choreography. Director Valeria Perboni's overwhelming sense of spectacle creates an impressive feat.



Nicholas George takes the role of Ping, with Richard Miles and Gary Ruston as his fellow ministers, Pang and Pong, forming a trio that provides moments of Marx brothers levity amidst the opera's intensity. Nicola Said's portrayal of the tragic Liù is tender and truly affecting.

The outstanding performances of the two leads, however, have the stage blasting off like the Starship Enterprise going in to hyperspace, elevating an already intriguing and vastly enjoyable production. Anando Mukerjee, as Calaf, delivers an outstanding performance, bringing not just vocal power as a tenor but an undeniable magnetism. His rendition of *Nessun Dorma* is a highlight of the evening. Eleanor Greenwood shines as the titular Turandot, her commanding presence matched by a voice that soars effortlessly over the ensemble with an incredible delicacy and balance.

The futuristic setting may not fundamentally reshape the opera's storytelling, but it offers a visually compelling interpretation, and one that frames *Turandot* as a tale of power and resistance in a world on the brink. The chaotic fullness of the stage adds to the opera's relentless energy, a dynamic interplay of voices, movement, and orchestration that leaves a lasting impression. The dystopian undertones are always secondary to the operatic talent, but the sheer force of this *Turandot* left me satisfied, yet strangely overwhelmed, and the final reprise of that famous aria continued in my mind as I stepped out into the streetlights of suburbia.



Read Brent Muirhouse's review at [www.markaspen.com/2025/03/30/turandot-io](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/03/30/turandot-io)

Photography by Jon Lo Photography

# ‘A Dozen Free Range Poems’

by James Haydn

Available at ‘THE OPEN BOOK’, 10 King Street, Richmond, TW9 1ND

This collection of 12 poems, by a local writer, is offered for sale by the Mayor’s Appeal Fund for a **minimum donation of £8.00** per booklet, plus any extra donation you may feel able to make, all of which will go to the Mayor’s two chosen charities, as the author has borne the production costs.



The Mayor’s chosen charities are:  
**Richmond Borough Mind and Home-Start RKH**

*Payments in Cash preferred (sorry, no cards).*

*Alternatively, payment can be made on the Mayor’s section of the Council website by selecting ‘Make a donation’ or following this QR code or link:*

[www.richmond.gov.uk/council/councillors/mayor#donation](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/council/councillors/mayor#donation)





# A Dozen Free Range Poems

This is a poem about early Spring, from local writer James Haydn's poem collection 'A Dozen Free Range Poems', which is on sale at 'The Open Book' independent bookshop (10 King Street, Richmond, TW9 1ND) in aid of the Mayor of Richmond's Appeal Fund's chosen local charities

## Goat Willow

We thought the willow had died,  
but the bees around her catkins -  
emerging, fluffy, in early spring -  
told us that she was alive.

She's a goat or pussy willow,  
dug from a field in Wales.  
A fragrant companion on the journey back,  
replanted behind our London home.

The willow appears to be female;  
Ruth-like amongst alien trees,  
gleaning what light can be had,  
alone with the dews of hiraeth.

She is, however, a hardy tree.  
Where sycamores steal the sun,  
a branch is withered dry;  
but on her other side, stems reach

high and asymmetrically.  
Willows bend, but do not break,  
they say, at least not easily:  
resilience in metaphor.

Perhaps she has grasped the  
elder's roots, or sends messages  
via bees, in pollen code, to other  
lonely trees in nearby Kew.

v2 © James Haydn, 2024

## Notes:

*The willow was growing in the middle of an overgrown field in West Wales. I brought it - her - back to Richmond-upon-Thames in our car, her fragrance displacing the smell of combusted M4 air.*

*For 'Ruth,' please see 'Exodus' (Second Book of the Bible, Old Testament). 'Hiraeth' is a Welsh word, probably not fully translatable, but denoting a feeling of longing for one's homeland of Wales.*

*An elder tree stands a few metres from the willow. It's known that trees join roots with other trees and transfer nutrients to a tree in distress. A fine thread-like fungus, mycelium, is also known to link tree roots underground in what has been described as a 'wood wide web'.*

*Willows have male and female types, and rely on bees to transfer pollen from the male to the female, which procreates by shedding seeds. To avoid in-breeding, female willows can analyse pollen and 'reject' any that is too close to their own genetics. I have used some poetic license in the final stanza, in that our willow, being female, could only receive 'messages', not send them.*

*Kew Royal Botanic Gardens are about half a mile from our home.*

*The poem was first written and published in 2020, during Covid lockdown, in response to a request from the London Welsh Centre/Canolfan Cymry Llundain for contributions to an online presentation of writing on 'International Dylan Thomas Day' (14th May). I have since made a few changes.*

© James Haydn, 2025

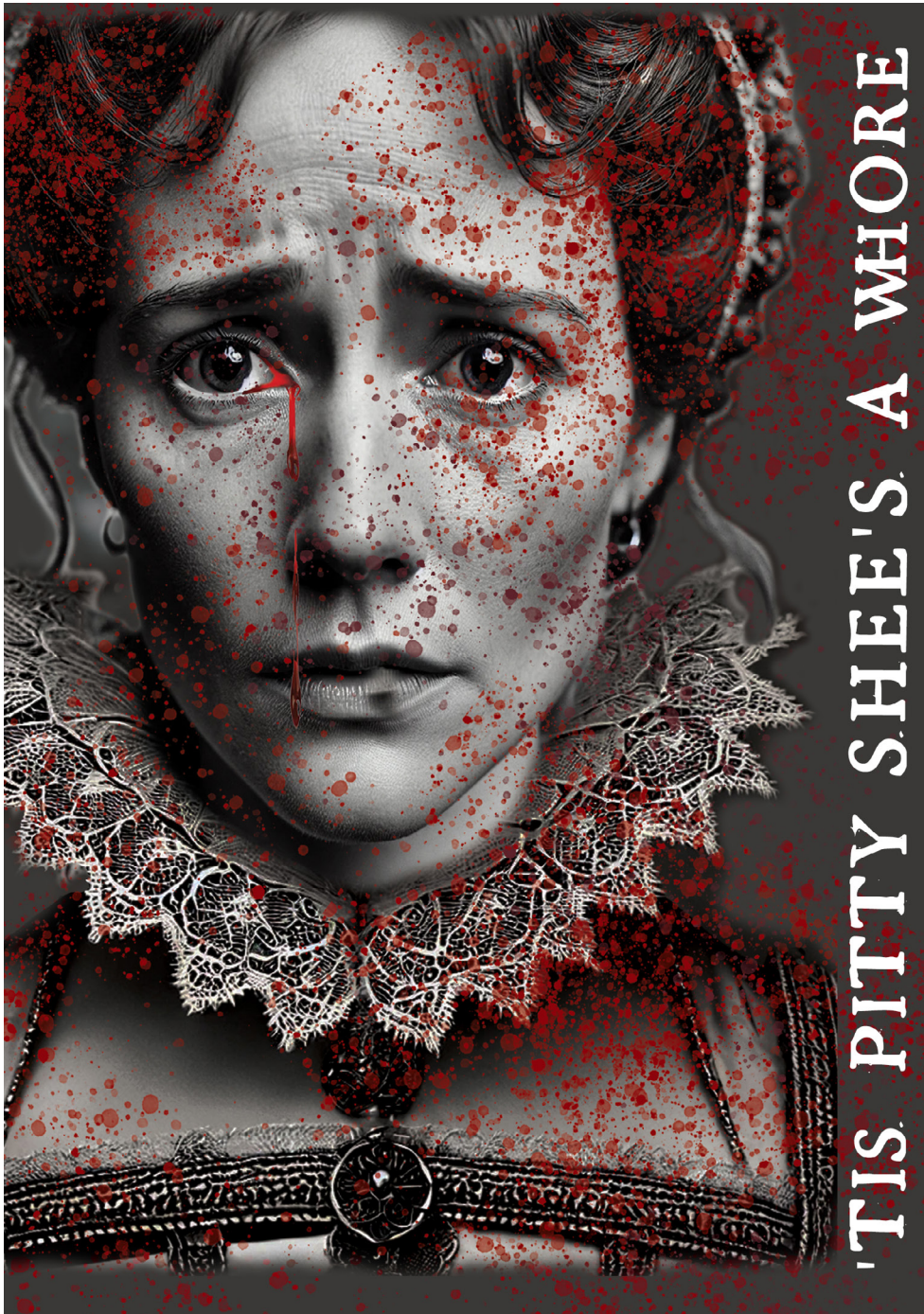
# 'Tis Pitty Shee's a Whore

April 19<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> at the MARY WALLACE THEATRE

Forbidden love. Deadly consequences.

A tale of a passion that defied morality, *'Tis Pitty Shee's a Whore* is one of the most shocking and daring plays of the Jacobean era. When Giovanni and Annabella, bound by blood yet led by desire, succumb to their forbidden love, they set in motion a spiral of betrayal, vengeance and ruin.

John Ford's masterpiece burns with poetic intensity, gripping drama and characters as haunting as Shakespeare's finest.



With a villain as cunning as Iago and a tragedy as devastating as *Romeo and Juliet*, this rarely-performed play delivers an unflinching insight into love's most dangerous depths.

Dare to witness a story too bold for its time.

*'Tis Pitty Shee's a Whore* plays at the Mary Wallace Theatre on Twickenham's Embankment, close to the Barmy Arms, from April 19-26<sup>th</sup>

Booking now open at [richmondshakespeare.org.uk](http://richmondshakespeare.org.uk)





# Captivating shows await in Barnes

From OSO Arts Centre

In the upcoming weeks, enjoy three captivating performances at OSO Arts Centre.

## Things I Know to be True

This April, OSO Artistic Director Lydia Sax returns to direct this London revival of Andrew Bovell's 'gently magical' (The Times) play, for the OSO's first-ever in-house production. As beautifully touching as it is funny and bold, 'Things I Know to be True' tells the story of a family through the eyes of four grown siblings. Each struggles to define themselves beyond their parents' love and expectations. It is a complex and intense study of the mechanics of a family that is both poetic and brutally frank.

- **Date and time:** 5 and 6 April at 3.30pm, and 9 and 10 April at 7.30pm
- **Location:** OSO Arts Centre, Barnes, SW13 0LF
- **Price:** from £17.85

[Book tickets for Things I Know to be True](#)

## Born in the USA

This multi-layered, humorous and intensely moving solo play, by award-winning actor-playwright Richard Vergette, is a timely exploration of how populist politics seduce the disillusioned and the disaffected.

- **Date:** Wednesday 30 April to Friday 2 May
- **Time:** 7.30pm
- **Location:** OSO Arts Centre, Barnes, SW13 0LF
- **Price:** from £15

[Book tickets for Born in the USA](#)

## Into the Melting Pot

This May, award-winning music and theatre company, The Telling (What the Dickens?, Creating Carmen) will present 'Into the Melting Pot', a concert play where music and theatre collide, by Clare Norburn and BAFTA-nominated BBC director, Nicholas Renton.

- **Date and time:** Saturday 3 May at 7.30pm and Sunday 4 May at 3.30pm
- **Location:** OSO Arts Centre, Barnes, SW13 0LF
- **Price:** from £18.70

[Book tickets for Into the melting pot](#)



# St Mary's University

## St Mary's Academic Expert Discusses Upcoming Beatles Film Collection on Sky News

Dr Richard Mills, Programme Director and Associate Professor of English Literature and Popular Culture at St Mary's University, Twickenham, appeared on Sky News last night to share his thoughts on the upcoming biographical film collection about The Beatles.

the unique approach to storytelling the biographic could bring.

Expressing his enthusiasm for the films, Dr Mills said: *"Presenting their stories from four distinct perspectives is an innovative and radical approach to examining these pop culture icons"*



*"For the first time, we will see their existence not as a polished narrative but as a fragmented story, shedding new light on the experiences of these young, bewildered men and how their personalities influenced the way they saw the world*

*and dealt with the pressures of sudden and overwhelming fame."*

[Dr Richard Mills](#), Programme Director and Associate Professor of English Literature and Popular Culture at [St Mary's University](#), Twickenham, appeared on [Sky News](#) last night to share his thoughts on the upcoming biographical film collection about The Beatles.

Sky News, known for inviting experts to comment and analyse the latest UK headlines, invited Dr Mills to share his insight on how the films will focus on each of the iconic band members to give a fresh perspective on their individual journeys to fame.

Dr Mills, an expert and author on The Beatles and popular culture, delved into the personalities of the band members, and

In addition to his academic work, Dr Mills is a passionate lecturer at St Mary's University, where he teaches courses in [English, Creative Writing, Film and Media](#), and Postgraduate Sports Journalism. His expertise extends to his writing, including his books *The Beatles and Black Music* and *The Beatles and Fandom: Sex, Death and Progressive Nostalgia*.

Dr Mills' insights into this unique film series highlight that there is still much to explore around The Beatles and pop culture and how it is presented in different medias.

[Watch full interview](#)



**St Mary's  
University**  
Twickenham  
London



# Princess Alice Hospice launches new adapted menus for people with eating, drinking and swallowing difficulties

In 2012, Princess Alice Hospice was one of the first English hospices to directly employ a speech and language therapist, as part of the wider holistic support they provide to people with life-limiting illnesses. Today, Gemma, Senior Dietitian, and Juliet, Senior Speech and Language Therapist, continue to provide specialist dietetic and speech therapy support to people at the Hospice.

Eating, drinking and swallowing is an essential part of most people's day and is often taken for granted, but for some people it is not that straightforward. Difficulties in these areas is known as dysphagia, which can affect a person's quality of life and lead to other health complications.

To coincide with this year's Nutrition and Hydration Week in March, clinical colleagues at the Hospice were invited to sample modified menus that had been created by Development Chef, Chris.



**Gemma said:** "Chef Chris skilfully and thoughtfully prepared 3 dishes for us to try as part of the soon-to-be-launched In-Patient Unit menu. He presented a vegan curry, salmon, mashed potato and broccoli and cottage pie in 3 different levels, IDDSI 6,5,& 4. All dishes had the same beautiful flavour and were presented to match. We eat with our eyes, after all. What surprised most staff who were perhaps initially reluctant or less keen to try the puree was just how wrong they were. Chris's purees were something to be enjoyed and something to be very proud to serve to our patients who present with swallowing difficulties."

The following day, Chris presented colleagues with samples from a new smoothie and milkshake menu for In-Patient Unit patients.

**Gemma said:** "These drinks will really nourish and provide many options to suit different taste, nutrition and hydration needs. Each smoothie has been double checked by Juliet, our senior speech and language therapist, to ensure we can offer naturally thickened fluids that are tasty, smooth and refreshing. From a dietitian's point of view I am proud to be able to offer naturally nutritious drinks that can support our patients at a time when eating and drinking is compromised. The 'Beetroot and Berry' was an overwhelming surprise star and the 'Pineapple and Banana' was a fabulous combination, delicious and refreshing."



The Hospice will be introducing these options to people on the In-Patient Unit soon, who will be able to order their preferred menu choice digitally by using an iPad, where possible.

Alongside the tasting events, the Hospice took the opportunity to promote their two new Nutrition Champions, who both work on the In-Patient Unit. Patrick, Senior Healthcare Assistant and Juliet, Healthcare Assistant. They will be trained by Gemma to improve people's ability to access delicious and nutritious food and fluids that best match their needs and are most appropriate for their stage of life.

# Teddington Ladies win League title and historic promotion to top flight

Teddington Women's 1st X1 went into a nailbiter of a weekend for their last game of the 24/25 Conference East season, level at the top of the table on 40 points with Hampstead and Westminster Women's 2nd XI.

For Teddington to secure the title, they needed to win against London Wayfarers, while Hampstead and Westminster had to lose or draw.

Eighteen minutes into the nervy match on a fine Spring day, it was the opposition who opened their account first with a well-worked penalty corner goal, but Teddington responded swiftly, equalising with their own penalty corner finish from Blackwood just two minutes later. The teams went in level at half-time in an end to end battle. The second half saw Bisdee draw the first blood scoring from a penalty corner, giving Teddington a 2-1 advantage, but Wayfarers quickly hit back, finding the back of the net just four minutes later to level the score.



With just over a quarter remaining, THC knew they had to press on. Dougan scored the third goal for Teddington, putting them 3-2 up, but the worry was the goal difference might not be enough to clinch the title if Hampstead

were to emerge victorious. With 12 minutes left on the clock, Robson secured a fourth goal for Teddington, establishing a strong lead, but they had to soak up a lot of pressure before the final whistle.

Running out 4-2 winners, the Teddington women were left in agonising suspense, anxiously awaiting the crucial update from the other fixtures. How had Hampstead fared? Had Old Georgians, placed 8th in the table, managed to secure an unlikely win or draw? Then came the news - Hampstead had drawn 2-2, and with that result, Teddington Women's 1st XI had made history.

The tireless dedication and hard work throughout the season had paid off. Both coach Taj Dogra and player-coach Ruth Evans were overjoyed to have led the team to the league title. Proud Champions at the oldest hockey club in the world!





# Vintage 1987

From England Rugby

They didn't run out of the players' tunnel onto the Twickenham pitch, they didn't hear the roar of the crowd, they didn't see their names on the big screen.

They played, according to one of them, in front of "two men, a dog and our mums and dads."

But a group of women who represented England in their very first international when they defeated Wales at Pontypool Park in 1987 have their names forever etched at The Home of England Rugby.

They were there in 2023 to see their names on an honours board in the England changing room opposite all the male players. They now call themselves The Vintage Roses and according to the Cambridge dictionary, one meaning of vintage is something of high quality and lasting value. It seems an apt title.

Karen Almond is player number 1 on the board. In 1994, she became the first English player – male or female – to lift a XV's World Cup. Pip Atkinson-Kennedy is number 2. She also coached, played and captained England Sevens in the inaugural Hong Kong Sevens.

Sally Cockerill is number 3, a flanker for Newport, who still has the match programme from that first Test and was there with seven other former Loughborough students.



One of those fellow students was Chris Gurney, number 5 on the board, Richmond flanker Tricia King is 7, Suzy Hill, who played scrum half, is 8. And Sam Robson, from Loughborough and Wasps is number 11.

Another Wasps player Claire Vyvyan is 13, and Emma Mitchell, who played scrum half and was another Loughborough player, is

number 19. She captained her country and won 57 caps over 15 seasons.

Janis Ross, Sarries captain and blind-side flanker is number 20 and Wasps and Saracens prop Fiona Barnett is number 26.

Karen Almond led the squad into the England changing room, international caps were worn, faded white shirts were pulled from rucksacks and someone played a video of the inaugural Test on her phone. They looked for their names, their numbers. They reminisced and lined up in the players' tunnel.

Karen Almond, who had travelled from her home in New Zealand, said: *"Seeing our names there is emotional. I never thought I'd see it in my lifetime, but I always hoped we'd have some recognition. This is amazing."*



Emma Mitchell agreed: *"When our playing numbers for England were being researched, I thought they would appear somewhere and it's perfect that our names are here. From Karen at 1 to May Campbell at 255, every woman who has played for England is here and I think it's brilliant."*

And there too among the Vintage Roses was Peter Kennedy, who coached the team between 1999

and 2002, including to two Grand Slams, as well as coaching Saracens women.

*"They were great to coach," he recalls. "They had no preconceptions and just soaked it all up. "When I was in the Pioneers' Room at the record-breaking England v France Grand Slam in April, there were so many people there who'd been involved in the women's game over the years. The biggest crowd in the days when I coached was 5,000 in Paris, almost all French, and we won."*

*"To see Twickenham with a crowd of almost 60,000 for that Test, and to know the work taking place in clubs like Exeter, Harlequins and Ealing Trailfinders is just amazing."*

Anyone who has played for the Red Roses and retired can join the group of Vintage Roses. Sarah Hunter already has, and the pioneers who were there at the start welcomed her to a vintage being celebrated at last. Pretty sure they'll drink to that!





# Match Preview: Brentford v Chelsea

Written by Brentford Football Club

**Analysis, team news, match officials and more.**

**Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's Premier League game against Chelsea at Gtech Community Stadium on Sunday (2pm kick-off BST)**

Brentford face Chelsea at Gtech Community Stadium in the Premier League on Sunday afternoon (2pm kick-off GMT).

The Bees have lost just one of their last six matches against their west London rivals, which was the 2-1 defeat in the reverse fixture at Stamford Bridge earlier this season. Enzo Maresca's side beat Tottenham Hotspur 1-0 in the Premier League on Thursday evening.

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know before the Bees' latest test.

## Pre-match Analysis

Stephen Gillett, Playmaker Stats: Damsgaard v Caicedo the key battle on Sunday

Brentford host Chelsea at Gtech Community Stadium on Sunday, looking to replicate their formidable away form against the Blues on their own patch.

The Bees have won on three of their last five visits to Stamford Bridge, memorably inflicting a 4-1 hammering on the Blues back in 2022 while current England manager Thomas Tuchel watched on from Chelsea's dugout.

However, despite a couple of draws in the sides' last two meetings in TW8, Brentford are yet to beat the Blues at home since they were promoted to the Premier League.

With a European spot still an outside possibility, Thomas Frank and his side will target three points this Sunday from what promises to be an intriguing tussle.

Although Man City still top the Premier League charts when it comes to ball possession and pass completion in 2024/25, Chelsea (58 per cent possession and 87 per cent pass completion) rank second to the Citizens in both stat categories.

It will be interesting to see, therefore, whether the Bees - who shaded possession in their 2-1 midweek reverse at Newcastle - opt to try and wrestle the ball off their London rivals, or cede possession and play more directly.

Interestingly, Kevin Schade (70) took more touches than any other attacking player for the Bees against the Magpies, and his growing influence in a creative sense was illustrated by the fact that no player at St. James' Park played more key passes than the German international (three).

Schade almost earned Brentford a point late on with a shot, which was kept out by the legs of Nick Pope, and he popped up on both flanks to whip in a number of dangerous crosses.

The 23-year-old's aerial prowess is also an increasingly potent weapon for the Bees: Schade now ranks 12th in the Premier League for aerials won this season.

Elsewhere, Bryan Mbeumo's coolly converted penalty brought up the Cameroon international's 16th top-flight goal of the season, and the Brentford man is now two clear of Chelsea dangerman Cole Palmer (14) in the Premier League goal charts.

Without a goal in his last 11 games in all competitions, Palmer is currently on the longest dry patch of his

Chelsea career, but the England star will have recovered from the muscle injury that saw him rested during the recent international break.

The Blues' leading scorer ranks top for shot-creating actions (154) and second for key passes (73) in the top flight this season and - with Palmer no doubt keen to end his goal drought - keeping Chelsea's no.20 quiet is a priority for the Bees on Sunday.



Another key match-up at the weekend will see Brentford playmaker Mikkel Damsgaard pitted against Chelsea's midfield anchor Moisés Caicedo. Arguably the Blues' Player of the Season to date, the Ecuadorian provides bite and composure in the middle of the park and, with 41 interceptions made and 88 tackles won, he is Maresca's enforcer.

Caicedo's athleticism and will to dominate will be tested by Damsgaard, however. The Dane (10) ranks second to only Liverpool's Mo Salah (17) in the Premier League for assists this term, and his ability to find a yard of space and dissect defences is up there with the best in the division.

An entertaining encounter appears on the cards and Brentford have a huge incentive to dent their visitors' Champions League hopes - as a win for the Bees would cut the gap between the two sides to just five points.

#### Scout report

Dan Long, Sky Sports: Chelsea's form slightly stuttering after superb start

Around the end of 2024, Enzo Maresca was consistently asked - maybe too often - in his press conferences whether Chelsea were in the Premier League title race.

The Blues were second in the table going into the visit of Brentford on 15 December, having

won nine of their first 15 games, so it was a valid question. But, each time, the Italian calmly batted away the suggestion.

*"When you start to think in two days, three days, one month, two months, it's the beginning of the bad time,"* he said on one occasion. On others, he pointed to the fact that he was just a matter of months into his project at Stamford Bridge, while the likes of Pep Guardiola and Mikel Arteta were several years deep into theirs at Man City and Arsenal.

Some said his words were to shield his players from the pressure of such a challenge, others agreed he was simply stating a fact, nothing more. But his words were soon validated and, when the form began to stutter after a 2-1 win over the Bees, there was not such a comedown as he had not talked the suggestion up.

Chelsea didn't win any of the next five. They drew against Everton, Crystal Palace and Bournemouth, lost against newly-promoted Ipswich, then were beaten by west London rivals Fulham at home for the first time since October 1979.



Since then, they have beaten Wolves, West Ham, Southampton and Leicester, as you would expect a team challenging at the top end of the table to do. But they have also lost to Man City, Brighton, Aston Villa and Arsenal - those are the real challenges that properly put title credentials to the test.

After beating Tottenham on Thursday evening, they are 21 points behind leaders Liverpool with only 24 points left to play for so, even if they are not mathematically out of it, common sense says otherwise.

*"What I can say between the first game against Arsenal and today's game is: I don't see a big difference between us and them,"* said Maresca after the 1-0 defeat to the Gunners before the international break. *"This means, since I arrived, I have a feeling we are on the right path. And we are very close."*

The battle to finish in the top four or five is hotting up, with 10th-placed Bournemouth only five points behind the Blues in sixth, so more consistent results in the final weeks will do them well, especially as their final four opponents are Liverpool, Newcastle, Manchester United and Nottingham Forest.

That is a clear priority, but so is the Conference League. They won the group stage at a canter - winning all six games and scoring 26 goals - beat Copenhagen 3-1 on aggregate in the last 16 and now face Legia Warsaw later this month for a place in the semi-finals. It will come as no surprise that Maresca's side are still odds-on favourites.

So now they are targeting a first top-four finish since 2021/22 and European glory, too. Do they have what it takes to achieve both?

### **In the Dugout**

Enzo Maresca

Enzo Maresca played in the academies of AC Milan and Cagliari in his native Italy before turning professional in 1998... with West Brom.

After a season-and-a-half at the Hawthorns, the midfielder signed for Juventus. He only played 37 league games for the club in four years, though, and spent time on loan at Bologna and Piacenza.

Maresca - a 15-time Italy U21 international - then spent time at Fiorentina, before joining Sevilla in 2005. It was in Spain that he spent the most successful years of his career.

Across a four-year period, he won the UEFA Cup twice, the Copa del Rey, the Spanish Super Cup and the UEFA Super Cup.

He went on to play for Olympiacos, Malaga, Sampdoria, Palermo and Hellas Verona, then retired from professional football on his 37th birthday in February 2017 and was appointed assistant at Ascoli four months later.

Less than a year after starting work as Man City's Elite Development Squad manager, Maresca was headhunted by Parma in May 2021, but he lasted only 14 games as head coach before he was sacked.

He later returned to City as Pep Guardiola's assistant but departed again one year later to take up the vacant managerial position at Leicester.

In June 2024, after leading the Foxes to the Championship title, he was announced as the successor to Mauricio Pochettino on a five-year contract at Chelsea.



# Next stop: Brazil!

From The Earthshot Prize



THE  
EARTHSHOT  
PRIZE

The Earthshot Prize is heading to [Rio de Janeiro](#) this November!

As we hit the halfway point of the Earthshot Decade, this year's Prize in Rio will once again spotlight 15 brilliant Finalists, with **five Winners each receiving £1 million** to scale their impact.

Watch how **Prince William** shared the news with the Earthshot community.



## Why Brazil?

Home to the **Amazon Rainforest** and **nearly 20% of the world's biodiversity**, few places understand the power of nature-based solutions like Brazil.

Across the country, environmental leaders and Indigenous communities are showing how **restoring the planet can go hand-in-hand with creating jobs** and building strong local economies.

It's this spirit of innovation, action and hope that makes Brazil the perfect destination for us in 2025.

**More details will be shared soon!**

But for now, bookmark our [Rio de Janeiro 2025 page](#) and save space in your diaries for November!





# Government calls ‘last orders’ on red tape choking pubs, clubs, and restaurants in major boost to the British night out

Pubs, clubs and restaurants are set to be released from burdensome red tape which has stifled business as Government ‘backs the British night out’.



*The Chancellor holds a hospitality roundtable  
Picture by Kirsty O'Connor / Treasury*

Action includes moves to improve the application of licensing laws and strengthening businesses’ competitiveness, giving diners, pub and party-goers more time and more choice to enjoy what British hospitality has to offer.

It includes a landmark pilot that could see more alfresco dining and later opening hours in London, as the Mayor of London is granted new “call in” powers to review blocked licensing applications in nightlife hotspots.

If successful, this approach could be rolled out to other mayors across England, working closely with their own local police forces.

The package of measures will seize the opportunities on offer in the UK hospitality sector, which employs over three million people and is worth around £62 billion to the British economy. It comes as the Government continues to go further and faster to drive economic growth and get more money in working people’s pockets, a key focus of the Plan for Change.

Businesses have long indicated that the current licensing system lacks proportionality, consistency, and transparency - creating barriers to growth and investment for business.

Blockers to growth include businesses being banned from extending licensing hours for late night drinking and anti-competitive blockages from other businesses.

**Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, said:**

*“British businesses are the lifeblood of our communities. We want them to Our Plan for Change will make sure they have the conditions to grow – not be tied down by unnecessarily burdensome red tape. We’ve heard industry concerns and we’re partnering with businesses to understand what changes need to be made, because a thriving nighttime economy is good for local economies, good for growth, and good for getting more money in people’s pockets.”*

**Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, said:**

*"We promised to clear the way to economic growth in our Plan for Change and that's exactly what we're doing. We're already reforming planning to back the builders, not the blockers. Now we want to do the same for the nighttime economy which has been neglected for so long."*

*"Our pubs, restaurants, and live music venues are the beating heart of our cultural life, so it is vital they are given every chance to survive and thrive."*

*"That's why it's time to give the Mayor of London new powers to back the capital's pubs and clubs, as part of our plan to give mayors the tools they need to drive growth. Too often, we have seen the complaints of a vocal minority of objectors promoted over the need for our country to grow - we are determined to change this."*

Nick Mackenzie, CEO of Greene King and Chair of the British Beer and Pub Association, Kate Nicholls, National Chair of the Institute of Licensing CEO of UKHospitality, Michael Kill, CEO of Night Time Industries Association, and the police are all working with the Government to rapidly explore and evaluate better licensing options for businesses right across the UK.

The group aims to transform the licensing system to one that better supports business growth and confidence, creating a better hospitality experience for Britons and visitors, whilst ensuring public safety and community interests remain adequately protected.

It will report back in six weeks with solutions informing the Government's work to kickstart economic growth as part of the Plan for Change.

**Business and Trade Secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, said:**

*"Businesses in our retail, hospitality and leisure sectors are foundational to our economy and our high streets. They are big employers in every community across the UK, offering accessible jobs and opportunities and providing spaces where communities can come together - they are the glue that binds us together as a society."*

*"These measures will ensure that we support these vital sectors by delivering a business environment as part of our Plan for Change that allows them to operate profitably so that they can provide the jobs, investment and growth communities across the country need."*

In addition to these steps, a new £1.5 million Hospitality Support Scheme has been launched to help get existing projects over the line and fill job vacancies in the sector.

This includes supporting the delivery of hospitality training facilities in prisons, which will help to address skills gaps and provide prison leavers with a fresh start and opportunities on release, reducing unemployment and the £18 billion cost of reoffending.

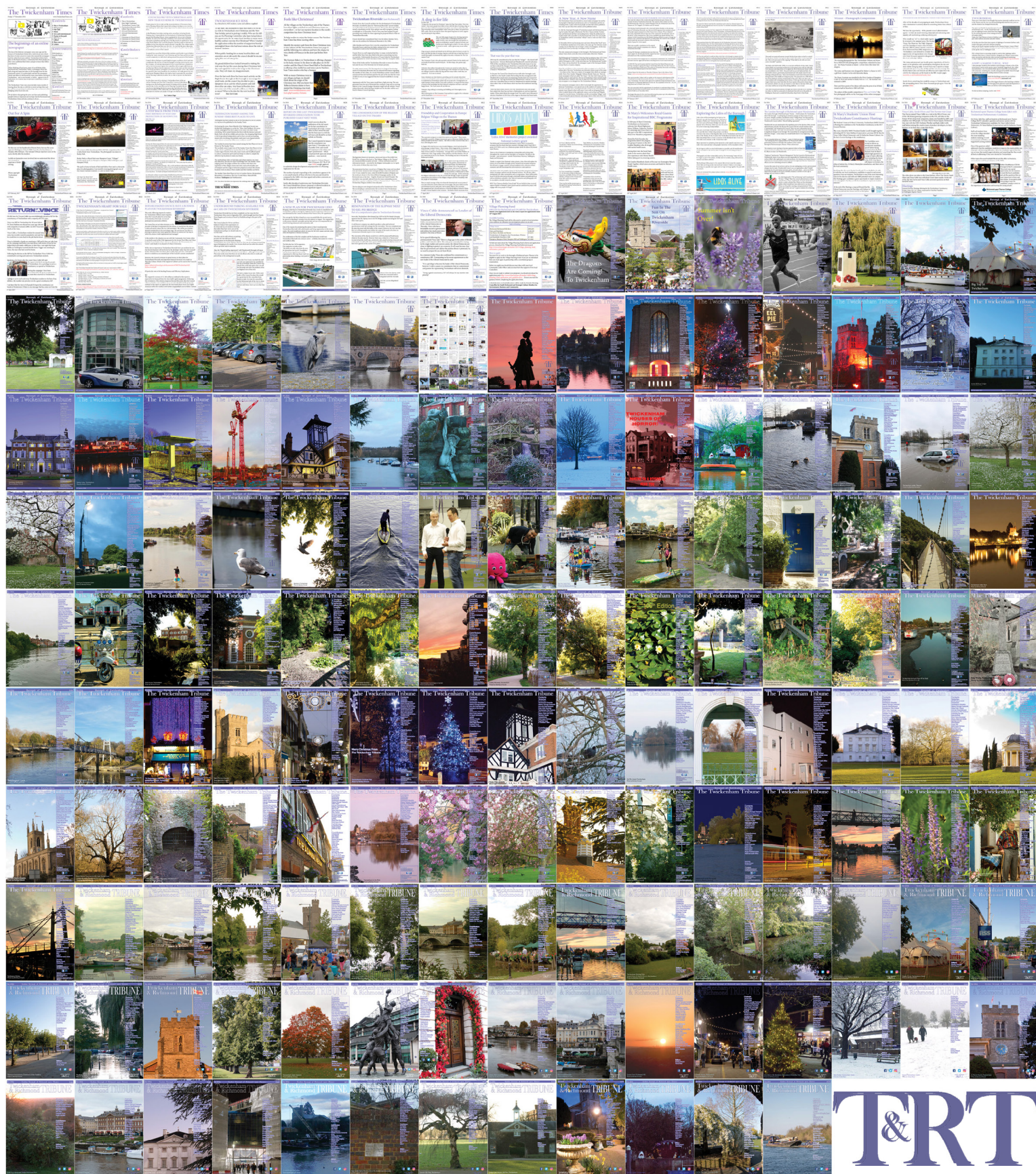
These new steps are part of the Government's wider work to kickstart economic growth, boost productivity and put more money in working people's pockets as part of the Plan for Change.



**HM Treasury**



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