

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



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TickerTape - News in Brief

South Western Railway enters public ownership

From Sunday 25th May 2025 the operation of all SWR services has transferred into public ownership and is being managed by DFTO (DfT Operator Ltd).

The transfer does not impact on your planned journeys, tickets or timetables and all current tickets remain valid.

For any questions relating to your journey, please get in touch with SWR customer service centre on 0345 6000 650.

DFTO is the Government's rail Owning Group and delivery partner for its flagship Public Ownership Programme. It was given a mandate by the Government to bring all currently privately-owned train operators into public ownership, contributing to the government's long term plan to reform Britain's railways.

The Government's vision is to provide a railway that works better for both passengers and taxpayers across Great Britain.

Ultimately, all train operators across the country will operate under one banner – Great British Railways – delivering a single, integrated railway, making train travel better value for passengers and simpler to everyone.

Why are South Western Railway the first to transfer?

The Government is bringing rail operators into public ownership at the end of or at a break point in their national rail contracts. As SWR's National Rail Contract expires on 25 May 2025, SWR are the first to transfer.



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

Teddington RNLI Open Day Ahoy!

From Teddington RNLI

Teddington RNLI is inviting everyone to visit the lifeboat station and enjoy a day of river-themed fun and activities on Sunday June 8th from 12.30 pm until 3.30pm.

- Climb aboard a lifeboat and its tractor
- See lifesaving demonstrations
- Enjoy food and drink from local outlets: Shambles, Ruba, The Anglers and The Wharf, as well as RNLI volunteer-made cakes, tea, coffee and cold drinks
- See the inaugural Teddington Duck Race supported by Teddington Together, representatives of Teddington independent businesses who put on Teddington Lights Up each year.
- Meet firefighters and see a fire engine
- Play water safety themed games
- Take your own souvenir photos in RNLI kit

Come and meet the volunteer crew, local traders and our neighbours.

Did you know:

- All of the crew at Teddington RNLI are volunteers
- About thirty men and women are active crew members
- About sixty people volunteer at the station
- The RNLI is a charity and receives no government funding
- The RNLI celebrated 200 years last year
- Supporting your local RNLI station is as easy as visiting on the Open Day.



Teddington RNLI

OPEN DAY

SUNDAY 8 JUNE

12:30-3:30PM

Fairmile House,
30 Twickenham Rd, TW11 8AB

- Duck Race on the Thames
- Local Food & Drink Stalls
- Lifeboat Demonstrations
- Fun Activities for All Ages

Support your local volunteer crew

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL IS OUR PROTECTION AT SEA

You could provide the kit and training that keeps volunteer crews safe, day and night

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Dear Tribune,

Letter to the Tribune entitled “Kew Cycle Lane”

I feel it necessary to respond to the letter from Kate of Richmond, published in last week’s edition. Aside from it being yet another inaccurate and rude personal attack on me, I will focus my remarks on the facts regarding the matters raised about Kew Road.

1 - The cycle lane is a very well used (and supported) facility.

Cycle lane usage data from November 2021 showed there were, on average, over 3,500 usages of the lane per week, compared to 556 when we recorded benchmark data in 2018.

Back in 2022 when the decision was made to make the scheme permanent, the council undertook MRS market research of a representative sample of borough residents and found 58% approval for the measure.

2 - The cycle lane has improved the road and reduced speeds.

The lane’s introduction was part of a package of measures, including 20mph on Kew Road, which have seen a 8.7mph reduction in mean speeds along the Kew Road.

This road has been materially improved by the choices this Council made.

3 - The parking on Kew Road destroyed a viable cycle lane.

The Council removed the previous ‘parking lot’ on Kew Road, which functioned at the loss of a cycle lane - instead forcing cyclists into the centre of the road. The previous arrangements offered taxpayer subsidised free parking to visitors at the loss of this paint-only cycle facility (which was parked over every day).

4 - The free parking on Kew Road undercut Kew Garden’s own facility.

The above parking, by the way, because of its free nature, undercut the paid-for-parking provided by Kew Gardens in their own car park - thereby doing quite the opposite of what is alleged - in fact, depriving Kew Gardens of parking revenues. Not to mention the incongruousness of a parking lot outside an institution committed to environmental sustainability.

As to the request for coach parking bays on Kew Road, the request was considered in detail and eventually refused in favour of alternatives, for three clear reasons.

1 - The Council knew that the facility of new coach PARKING on the Kew Road would significantly compromise the cycle lane by forcing cyclists to move out into the carriageway (around coaches) for hundreds of meters in a new mid-section of a segregated cycle lane. The high-sided nature of coaches also had the effect of obscuring forward visibility for those same cyclists.

2 - The Council provided alternative rearrangements of the road layout near Kew Garden’s historic main gate (Elizabeth Gate) to allow for a number of coaches to drop-off and collect.

3 - I’d also like to make clear that the Council engaged TfL over a considerable period to petition for the intermittent use of existing bus stops as short-stay drop-off facilities for Kew coaches. Thanks to the combined efforts of myself and (crucially) Cllr Roberts, this was eventually agreed to (in addition to the facilities at Elizabeth Gate).

Facts matter and these are compelling reasons why we did what we did.

It is also worth noting that Kew Garden’s last published annual report 23/24, showed that their visitor numbers had gone up, rather than down.

I suggest the Tribune spends a little more time ensuring that the personal attacks and ‘critiques’ offered in incognito letters at least stand up to the lightest of fact checks.

Yours,
Cllr Alexander Ehmann,
Chair - Transport and Air Quality Committee, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Dear Editors,

LBRuT Anagrams



So that's us tlod!

Sue Hamilton-Miller
Twickenham

Sir,

Flag Flying

Richmond Council has reportedly ordered 1,000 flags to mark the “reconfirmation” of its town twinning agreements – with a third of them being EU flags.

It is worth reminding the Council that **EU flags do not benefit from deemed consent** under national planning regulations. Displaying them, especially in significant quantity and on public buildings, requires express consent – something any local authority ought to know.

This is the same council that vigorously prosecutes residents for minor planning breaches, from modest dormer windows to garden outbuildings. The contrast could not be starker: one rule for the public, another for the Council itself.

Local government should lead by example – not flout the rules when it suits a political statement.

Yours faithfully,
G Robertson, Twickenham

“All Talk, No Track” Liberal Democrat Rail Failures Leave Twickenham Commuters Stranded

By Jonathan Hulley, Conservative Parliamentary Spokesperson for Twickenham

The Twickenham Liberal Democrats have spent years complaining about cancelled trains and timetable changes.

But what they have not done is offer any genuine solutions.

While they are quick to criticise operators like South Western Railway, they have remained silent regarding the hard work involved in modernising the railways.

Let us be clear. You cannot enhance reliability unless you increase capacity. This requires investment in track, signalling, and infrastructure at key pinch points such as Waterloo station.

Munira Wilson MP has not presented a serious case in Parliament for those upgrades. She and her Liberal Democrat parliamentary colleagues have been absent when it comes to revitalising Crossrail 2, the only long-term solution to relieve pressure on our overstretched rail network in South West London.



Worse still, the local Liberal Democrats have done nothing to advocate for a rail link from Twickenham to Heathrow. This is a common-sense connection that would reduce car journeys, support local jobs, and improve access to Britain’s global gateway. It is not even on their radar.

Sitting on the Fence While Services Decline

The Liberal Democrats like to pretend they are the party of common sense. However, when it comes to rail, they have been sitting on the fence for over a decade.

They oppose full-scale nationalisation yet do not support genuine private sector investment either. They speak of fair fares but present no plan to address congestion or modernise infrastructure. They are more concerned with positioning than with policy. Our community bears the cost.

Now that South Western Railway has been brought into public ownership by Labour, the Liberal Democrats cheer from the sidelines, pretending it is a victory.

However, under private operation, passenger numbers more than doubled, and investment flooded into the network. Renationalisation will not build a single mile of track, and there is no indication that Labour or the Liberal Democrats comprehend this.

Twickenham Needs Leadership, Not Liberal Democrat Drift

Over the next four years, Twickenham requires more than reactive politics and photo opportunities. It demands serious leadership on transport.

Labour’s much-heralded first renationalised train, on the 25th May, the 05:36 from Woking to Waterloo, ended in embarrassment when it transpired that the final leg of the journey would be a **bus replacement service**. It could not have been more symbolic. Big promises at the front, chaos at the back. Yet the Liberal Democrats, instead of standing up for local commuters, applauded from the sidelines.

As the Conservative Parliamentary Spokesperson for Twickenham, I will continue holding the Liberal Democrats to account. I will make the case for real investment in capacity, connectivity, and commuter reliability. Twickenham deserves more than slogans. It deserves a transport strategy that actually works.

SATURDAY 7TH JUNE
11AM – 3PM

summer
fête

SUMMER
FEST

ST MARY'S SUMMER FAIR

ST MARY'S CHURCH, CHURCH STREET,
TWICKENHAM TW1 3NJ

Donate to fundraiser supporting Teddington's historic church

From St Mary with St Alban Church

On Friday 30 May, Father David of St Mary with St Alban Church will climb to a height of 12,000ft and jump out of a plane with a parachute, all to raise urgent funds for vital community facilities.

Every penny of sponsorship will go toward building essential facilities at Teddington's St Mary with St Alban Church, benefiting everyone in our community.

[Donate now](#)

Father David said: *"I've bought a bucket and a shovel. And some paper towels. Other than that – it's all with God!"*

Planning permission to revitalise St Mary with St Alban Church, Teddington's treasured 800-year-old landmark, is set to expire this December. This project aims to create a welcoming community space that unites people of all ages and ensures the church continues to serve future generations.

Find out more at [St Mary with St Alban Church](#).



'A sign of shared values': Richmond Station mural marks 65 years of twinning

From Richmond Council

A commemorative mural was unveiled this morning at Richmond Station, celebrating 65 years of civic and cultural partnership between the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and its twin towns: Fontainebleau in France and Konstanz in Germany.

Now on permanent display near the station's main entrance, the mural honours decades of exchange in education, culture, and community life.

Speaking at the unveiling, Councillor Gareth Roberts, Leader of Richmond Council, said the mural is a celebration of shared values and lasting friendships. *"Richmond has always looked outward, and we're part of a wider international tradition of cooperation rooted in mutual respect, peace and cultural exchange. "Town twinning strengthens shared learning between communities, creates opportunities for young people, and connects our borough to a wider global story of collaboration."*



The unveiling ceremony was also attended by the Mayor of Richmond Councillor Penny Frost, local councillors, representatives of South Western Railway, civic guests, and Alan Mockford, Chair of the Richmond in Europe Association, who said: *"Twinning brings people together. Trains also bring people together – what better location could there be for this stunning mural of our three European towns than the beautiful Art Deco foyer of Richmond Station."*

The mural was commissioned and funded by the Richmond in Europe Association, supported by Richmond Council, and designed in a 1930s style by the Council's graphics team to complement the station's architecture and ongoing refurbishment.

The Richmond Brass Band added a celebratory note with a specially arranged fanfare blending French, German and English musical themes – a nod to the borough's multilingual partnerships.

Today's unveiling is one of the highlights in a year-long celebration of Richmond's European partnerships. Festivities began earlier this year – including the May Fair's European theme – and will continue throughout 2025.

A key moment will be the Twinning Reaffirmation Weekend from 6–8 June. Hundreds of visitors from Fontainebleau and Konstanz are expected to join Richmond residents for a packed programme of cultural activities, shared learning, and renewed pledges of friendship.

More than 50 events are planned across the borough – from joint concerts and school exchanges to sports fixtures, heritage tours and informal gatherings – celebrating the depth and diversity of Richmond's international links.

Coalition Government Fifteen Years On

Nick Clegg, the Coalition, and the Rise of Technocratic Politics

By James Knight

Fifteen years after the formation of the Conservative–Liberal Democrat Coalition government, Nick Clegg returned to the political stage with a characteristically polished defence of the most consequential partnership in modern British politics. Speaking at the Institute for Government, the former Deputy Prime Minister portrayed the 2010–2015 government as a moment of necessary stability, reform, and pragmatism. Yet, buried beneath the reflection was a deeper problem: the Coalition’s legacy may not only be economic restraint, but also the long tail of political disillusionment it helped to unleash.

Why Labour Lost and the Coalition Was Formed

To understand the formation of the Coalition, it is essential to recall the chaos of 2010. The economy was reeling from the financial crash; the public was enraged by the MPs’ expenses scandal; and Labour, under Gordon Brown, had lost both its mandate and its credibility.

The result of the General Election yielded no overall majority, prompting the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives to unite in order to steady the ship as the bond markets hovered. Clegg depicts those five days of negotiation not as opportunism but as



crisis management of the highest order. Yet this technocratic instinct—the impulse to stabilise and manage rather than inspire—has since become the defining characteristic of Western liberalism. As politics has been reduced to policy and government to administration, a space has opened for populist movements that promise to upend the status quo. From Trump in America to Farage in the UK, this backlash is no longer fringe. It is the inevitable response to a politics that asserts people are wrong rather than inquires about what they want.

What the Coalition Did

Clegg is correct that the Coalition exceeded expectations. It lasted a full term and implemented substantial reforms: the pupil premium, same-sex marriage, investment in renewable energy, and pension adjustments. It also oversaw a halving of the deficit and a return to growth. Critics may complain about austerity, but as Clegg states, even Labour had committed to significant spending cuts before leaving office. The Coalition’s fiscal programme was stringent, but not as extreme as the mythology suggests.

Clegg's Defence and His Swipe at the Lib Dems

Clegg's speech was more than a reflection; it served as a warning to his own party. While he praised Ed Davey's electoral achievements, Clegg questioned the party's intellectual direction. The Liberal Democrats, he contended, now focus more on the redistribution of wealth than its generation. Growth has become an afterthought, not a mission. In a rare moment of candour, he accused all major parties of failing to represent the private sector.

This is a valid critique. The Lib Dems have grown comfortable attacking Labour from the left, but they lack a serious economic proposition. Clegg—ever the economic liberal—knows that wealth must be created before it can be divided.

Technocracy & Populism

Yet the speech also exemplified the Coalition's greatest weakness: its technocratic soul. Clegg offered facts, figures, and well-reasoned arguments. But what was missing, as ever, was emotion. Politics, at its core, is not management. It is the contest of values, identities, and visions of the good life. The Coalition governed competently, but it failed to tell a story people could believe in.

In reducing politics to a toolkit of administration, the technocratic approach has often dismissed dissenting voices not with rebuttal, but with ridicule. It breeds a culture of managerial superiority, where those who disagree are treated not as opponents in a debate, but as obstacles to be managed. This dynamic is not just undemocratic, it is combustible.

Across the democratic world, it has lit the fuse for a populist revolt. Trump in the United States and Farage in Britain are not accidents; they are symptoms of a system that has failed to listen. Ironically, most people are not ideologues. They are pluralistic by nature, willing to tolerate a range of views. But when politics becomes a lecture delivered from above, even the tolerant grow weary. It is not disagreement they reject, it is condescension.

Post Democracy

This is the problem with technocracy. Reducing politics to a game of expertise and balance sheets strips away the opportunity for ordinary people to feel heard. The left-leaning political scientist Colin Crouch called this the era of "post-democracy," where elections still occur, but power resides elsewhere. The result? A public hungry for disruption, leading to the rise of UKIP, Brexit, and now Reform.

Clegg's defence of the Coalition might persuade Westminster insiders, but for many voters, it represented a government that lacked emotional resonance and, more troublingly, democratic legitimacy. No one voted for a Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition, and key Lib Dem promises, such as opposition to tuition fees, were quickly abandoned. This left a sour taste that technical competence could not wash away. In hindsight, the Coalition embodied the post-political instinct to govern without seeking permission. As politics became managerial, voters felt excluded. This disconnection contributed to the populist revolts that followed, such as Brexit. If today's political class wishes to rebuild trust, it must offer more than just good governance; it must speak with conviction—and with consent.

You can see Nick Clegg's speech by following the link [HERE](#)

News from Holy Trinity Church

Eco Church - "Get on your bike"

You've heard the phrase "Get on your bike"!! Well, as part of our Eco Church programme, we are keen to promote cycling as much as we can. There are several plans in the pipeline and one of them is cycle racks. Do you cycle to church, or would you if you could? Would you find a small cycle rack useful? Where is the best place to put it. Please let us know your thoughts. Email ecochurch@htchurch.org.

Foodbank Focus: June

A list of items currently being requested by the local foodbank can be found by clicking [here](#). Donations can be deposited in the foodbank tubs outside the vicarage, 7:00am to 8:00pm.

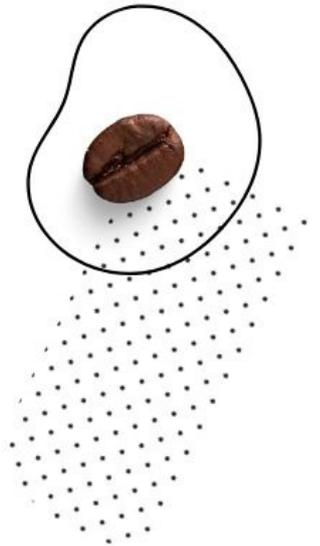


THE GREEN POP UP CAFE

THURSDAYS

10.30-12.00

The Green Room
Holy Trinity Twickenham
Twickenham Green
TW2 5TS



A community space where
everyone is welcome to pop in
for refreshments, friendly chat and activities



HOLY TRINITY TWICKENHAM

Explore what's on to celebrate Twinning Reaffirmation Weekend

From Richmond Council

Get ready to immerse yourself in the festivities and join the fun as we mark 65 years of our European partnerships with Konstanz in Germany and Fontainebleau in France.

To honour the 65th anniversary of our international partnerships, local societies, organisations, clubs and networks have partnered with peers in our twinned towns to organise over 50 borough-wide activities. While some activities are already underway, the major celebrations take place during the Twinning Reaffirmation Weekend from 6 to 8 June, followed by a series of summer events running through to the end of July.

Our [Twinning Reaffirmation Event Map](#) is now available online, and you can pick up paper copies at Twickenham Civic Centre, York House, the Visit Richmond kiosk in Richmond Station and at our 11 local libraries. Find out more about the [Twinning Reaffirmation](#).

Here are some unmissable events during the reaffirmation weekend:

6 June: Welcome gathering on Richmond Riverside

Start the reaffirmation weekend with a warm welcoming gathering on Richmond Riverside, hosted in partnership with the [Richmond in Europe Association](#). Enjoy live music, scenic views, and the chance to meet guests from Fontainebleau and Konstanz. This relaxed and friendly evening will celebrate international friendship and community spirit. Find out more about the [welcome gathering](#).

6 to 7 June: OSO Outdoor Stage events

Celebrate the reaffirmation weekend with live music at OSO Arts Centre's Outdoor Stage on Barnes Green! Enjoy Maybe Oasis, a top tribute to Britpop legends; dance to Cat's Country Band bringing Nashville vibes to London; and sing along with the FABBAGIRLS, one of the UK's leading ABBA tribute acts. Find out more about the [OSO Outdoor Stage events](#).

7 June: York House Art Exhibition

Discover international creativity at York House Art Exhibition! This free event will showcase inspiring works by artists from Richmond's twin towns, Fontainebleau and Konstanz, alongside local talent. Find out more about the [York House Art Exhibition](#).

7 June: Future Sounds Fest

This free, family-friendly event celebrates cultural exchange and international friendship, through vibrant music and dance by youth groups in Richmond, Konstanz, and Fontainebleau. Come along and experience the energy, talent, and unity of the next generation of performers! Find out more about [Future Sounds Fest](#).

7 June: French coffee morning

Residents of all ages and levels of French are invited to practise their French conversation over tea, coffee and traditional pâtisseries at ETNA Community Centre. [Register for the French coffee morning](#)

8 June: Celebration Parade and Reaffirmation Picnic

Our [Celebration Parade](#) will feature local and visiting clubs, societies, and performers, including the spectacular flag-throwers from Konstanz. After the parade, residents and visitors are invited to York House for our [Reaffirmation Picnic](#), an afternoon of live music, community spirit, and a ceremony celebrating Richmond's cherished friendship with Konstanz and Fontainebleau.



Liberalism's Illiberal Turn

Cowling's Warning Revisited

By James Knight

Nick Clegg's recent speech defending the Coalition era served as a reminder of how contemporary liberal left politics frequently conceals itself behind a façade of moderation. While Clegg advocated for competence and economic focus, the real issue today is not the policy; it is the growing intolerance within liberal culture itself. Beneath the polished rhetoric lies a worldview that increasingly insists on conformity, often in the name of inclusion.

Cowling's Prophecy

Maurice Cowling, the conservative historian from Cambridge, foresaw this shift decades ago. He warned that liberalism, far from being neutral, would evolve into a moral project—one that enforces conformity whilst pretending to value tolerance. Cowling believed that as liberalism matured, it would shed its humility and reveal its desire to dominate public life. Today's Britain exemplifies what he meant, not only in government but also across education, law, and culture.

Faith, Identity, and Exclusion

Consider Catholics who hold traditional beliefs about marriage. Their views are no longer challenged; rather, they are deemed unacceptable. Speaking openly or wearing a crucifix can now even lead to job loss or impede one's ability to hold public office in some cases. A subtle form of discrimination has emerged, disguised as diversity and inclusion. Meanwhile, the Liberal Democrats campaign against faith-based school admissions, not out of a commitment to fairness, but to diminish the Church's influence, as it no longer aligns with their political agenda. It is a modern echo of the time before the Catholic Emancipation Act when religious belief excluded individuals from full public participation.

The Liberal Response

Liberal parties and activists argue that they are not suppressing dissent but rather protecting vulnerable groups from discrimination. They regard policies on diversity and inclusion as essential for creating a society where everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, or belief, can live freely and safely. In their view, restricting faith-based admissions ensures equal access rather than attacking religion. What critics perceive as silencing, supporters interpret as establishing fair boundaries around public life.

A Shrinking Civic Space

Yet critics like Cowling remind us that even well-intentioned rules can lead to new exclusions. This approach to liberalism, they argue, narrows debate, simplifies moral complexity, and



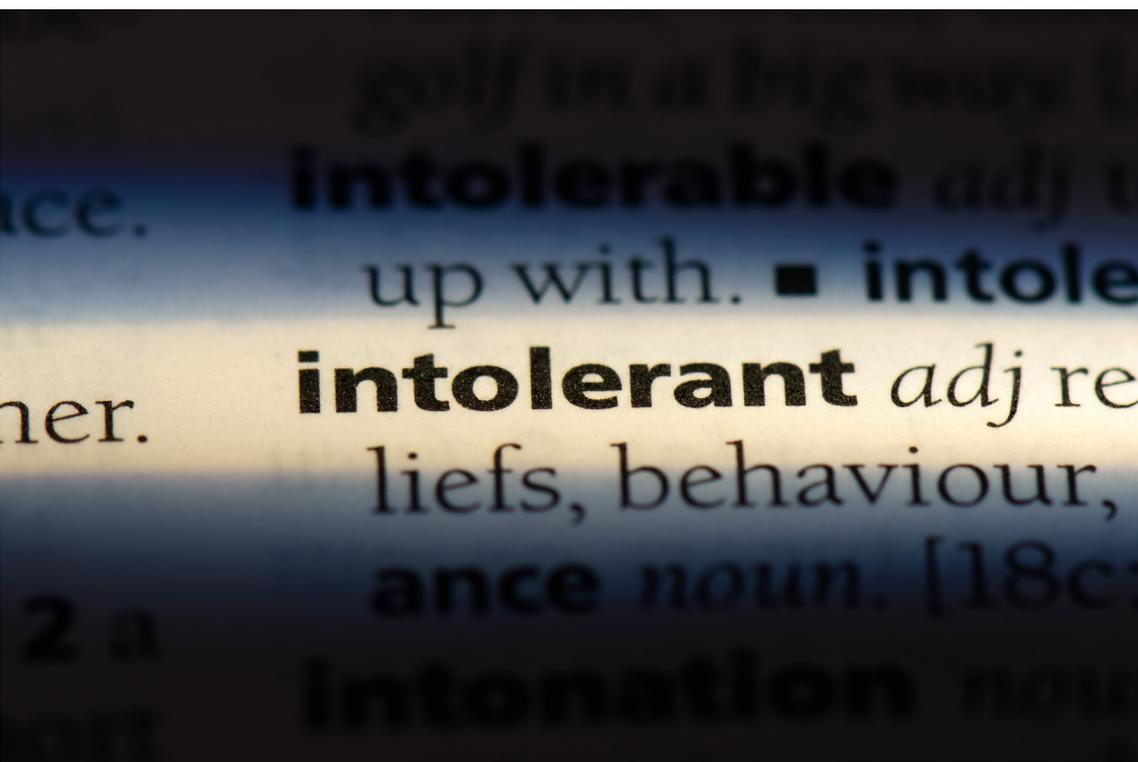
Maurice Cowling
© Cambridge Newspapers Ltd

sidelines those whose values do not conform to the prevailing orthodoxy. The challenge lies in balancing equality with pluralism to create a civic space where individuals of good faith can disagree without fear of exclusion.

The irony is that most people are far more tolerant than their institutions. They can accept disagreement and are pluralists at heart. However, when politics transforms into administration and morality is enforced by unelected bodies and institutional codes, the space for genuine difference diminishes. When that happens, liberalism begins to resemble the very thing it once opposed. Where it once defended dissenters, it now seeks to oppress them.

Intolerance Locally

This growing intolerance is perhaps most stark in the way the Liberal Democrats conduct themselves locally, often with the most senior figures setting the tone. The case of David



Campanale, a respected Anglican layman deselected as their candidate in Sutton & Cheam, sent a clear message: traditional religious convictions are no longer welcome. When even the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, feels compelled to say it is now “impossible to represent the Lib Dems as a Christian,” it speaks volumes about the narrowing space

for faith in public life.

In our community, party activists deride and belittle those who supported leaving the EU or believe that single-sex spaces should be protected, labelling them as ignorant or regressive instead of engaging in open debate. Even their Green Party allies, seemingly partners in shared environmental goals, have been charged with Stalinist extremism in the council chamber; an attempt to discredit rather than to disagree.

In Eighteenth-century Britain, dissenters were formally excluded from public life not through violence, but through legal codes, moral suspicion, and cultural mockery. Today, the mechanisms are subtler yet no less real: policy guidelines, social pressure, and digital shaming enforce new orthodoxies. Then, it was the Test Acts. Now, it is institutional intolerance masquerading as inclusion. If liberalism is to mean anything, it must begin by respecting the consciences and convictions of those it now seeks to marginalise.

Delight in the history and charm of Petersham Common Woods

From Petersham Common Conservators

In April this year, Richmond upon Thames reached a milestone of 60 years as a borough. The people, places and history of our borough make it special. A short film has been produced celebrating one of our natural spaces, Petersham Common Woods.

Watch the [film](#) to learn more about this cherished woodland is steeped in history and has a prosperous future thanks to the dedication of local volunteers.

Discover Petersham Common Woods

This woodland has deep historical roots. Once owned by Chertsey Abbey and later passed to the Crown in 1415, the land was gifted to the Council in 1901 by the Earl of Dysart. Today, it remains a vibrant sanctuary, shaped by centuries of care and sustained by the dedication of local volunteers and community support.

Petersham Common Woods hosts a rich, layered ecosystem. The upper canopy includes oak, ash, field maple, and hornbeam - some over 500 years old. Beneath, saplings and brambles attract nesting songbirds and small mammals. Over 200 species of forest flora cover the ground, contributing to a highly diverse ecological environment.



Nurtured by volunteers

The upkeep of this woodland is managed by the [Petersham Common Conservators](#) whose volunteers plant, compost, improve water drainage and collect litter. The beautiful woodland needs regular care - such as managing ivy growth and supporting healthy biodiversity - to remain in balance.

Local residents, schools, clubs and park groups all play a role in maintaining the Common. Their dedication reflects a strong community spirit and a shared commitment to preserving this unique green space.

Join the effort

Volunteering here is a rewarding way to connect with nature and help protect a living part of Richmond's heritage. Find out more about [volunteering in parks](#).

Next week at Richmond Council

On Tuesday, 3rd June, the **Regulatory Committee** will convene to discuss the proposed Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to ban vehicle idling in the borough. The meeting will commence at 7 pm at York House.

For details, click [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](#)



TEDDINGTON DUCK RACE

AT THE RNLI OPEN DAY 12:30-3:30
SUNDAY 8TH JUNE, RACE START TIME 2:30

SPONSOR A DUCK

£3.50 A DUCK ♥ £10 x 3 DUCKS ♥ £15 x 5 DUCKS

PROCEEDS TO SUPPORT THE TEDDINGTON CHRISTMAS LIGHTS UP EVENT & TEDDINGTON RNLI



THANKS TO OUR LOCAL TRADERS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THE EVENT. **SCAN THE QR CODE TO SPONSOR A DUCK AND SEE ALL THE AMAZING PRIZES THAT HAVE BEEN DONATED. FOOD & REFRESHMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE AND MUCH MORE.**

LOCATION - OPPOSITE THE WHARF RESTAURANT. FAIRMILE HOUSE, TWICKENHAM ROAD, TEDDINGTON, TW11 8BA



EVERY QUACK MATTERS!

Kitchen Update

When I'm in Mallorca I enjoy a delicious snack called Pa amb oli. It's so simple, just crusty bread, spread with crushed garlic, grated tomatoes and drizzled with extra virgin olive oil. It's not difficult to make here, of course, but this handy **Kilner® Multi-Purpose Grater** makes it all the more simple to prepare. Designed with a clever oval shape, it allows for a natural back-and-forth grating motion, making it easy to extract maximum flavour and texture from your ingredients. The sharp grating teeth easily break down food, while the built-in trough collects the juices, keeping every drop of goodness in one place. Simply use the tipping handle to pour liquids through the integrated spout—no mess, no fuss! Perfect for grating garlic and ginger or pureeing soft fruits like apples, pears, and kiwis, and of course tomatoes, this multi-purpose



tool helps retain essential vitamins and nutrients. It's dishwasher safe too and costs just £9.50 from Amazon.



I'm such a fan of these **OXO Silicone Reusable Bags**. The handy flat bags are easy to stack in the fridge or freezer, while the standing bags sit upright, keeping food fresher for longer to help reduce waste. A secure seal ensures food is stored safely, while the wide grab tabs make them easy to open, fill and close. Dishwasher, freezer, and microwave safe. The collection includes six bags in various sizes available in an Oat colourway. As well as being perfect for storing food, they're also really useful when travelling to stop any spills. Prices start from £12 (Snack Bag) to £25 (Stand-Up 1.8L). Available from John Lewis and Amazon

Another great new product from **OXO: Twist & Stack Containers**. These sleek, stackable containers are made from durable Tritan plastic and feature a twist-lock lid with a silicone gasket, ensuring a 100% leak proof seal. The interchangeable lids fit all container sizes, so there's no more searching for the right fit. With a soft-touch grip, the lids open effortlessly while keeping food intact, and the transparent design lets you see what's inside at a glance. Plus, they're stain-resistant and dishwasher, microwave, and freezer safe. £19 (350ml), £22.50 (550ml) and £27.50 (900ml) from John Lewis & Amazon.



Cordless appliances make kitchen surfaces look so much tidier. And cordless products with a separate battery have been launched by KitchenAid with its **KitchenAid Go Cordless System**. The **new KitchenAid Top Down Chopper** (RRP £99 - battery not included - but sold separately) is designed for quick, efficient, and mess-free food prep. Featuring a multi-purpose stainless steel S-blade and a 0.83L bowl, it precisely cuts ingredients with ease. One-Touch Control allows you to press and hold for a continual run to purée and mince, or pulse for a rough chop. It's perfect for everything from fruits, nuts, and veggies to garlic and herbs. The convenient Top Down Design allows you to chop and prep with ease, then store leftovers in the same bowl, with the included lid, ready for later use. It's dishwasher-safe for easy clean up and available from kitchenaid.co.uk There is also a juicer in this range and the same battery works on both products.



This October iconic British manufacturer **Dualit** celebrates its 80-year anniversary. Founded in 1945 by Max Gort-Barten, it began as a small engineering company, quickly gaining a reputation for robust, handcrafted products. The Classic Toaster, which first launched in 1952, is instantly recognisable in kitchens worldwide for its distinctive retro design and durability. It combines traditional craftsmanship with modern innovation, with each part being fully repairable or replaceable. They're hand-built by the same person from start to finish in the West Sussex factory, and even feature the name of the assembler on the base plate. To mark this milestone anniversary, Dualit is introducing an exclusive limited edition of the Classic Toaster, adorned with the Union Jack design as a tribute to the brand's British heritage. This celebrates Dualit's legacy. **Limited Edition Dualit Four-Slot Classic Toaster** in Union Jack is £244.99 Available from Dualit.com JohnLewis.com and independent retailers.

Just in time for summer entertaining season, **CASO Design** has introduced two sleek, space-savvy appliances designed to take the stress out of hosting:

The VinoCase Tabletop Wine Cooler (£109.99) – precision-chills your wine or fizz to the perfect serving temperature, right on the table. Unlike conventional chillers, it pairs advanced temperature control with whisper-quiet performance at just 28dB, allowing conversation to flow uninterrupted. Sensor-touch controls and a clear LED display offer effortless adjustment, while its compact interior accommodates bottles up to 9cm in diameter - making it the perfect companion for relaxed entertaining.



And **The IceChef Compact Ice Maker** (£119.99) – delivers crystal-clear ice in just six minutes, from kitchen to patio and everywhere in between. Combining German engineering with clever design, they're ideal for everything from a garden party to spontaneous BBQs. It offers two cube size options and operates quietly at just 42dB. Its 1L water tank, transparent viewing window, and smart alerts make operating it effortless, while features like the self-cleaning function and removable ice tray simplify clean-up. Lightweight and portable, the integrated carrying handle makes it easy to move the party from kitchen to patio-wherever the celebration calls

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Traveller's Tales 170

Cruising On the Rhone

Doug Goodman Relaxes on a River Cruise



One day I might take a cruise on a big ship although the thought of being with hundreds or even thousands of other passengers doesn't really appeal. However, river cruising on small ships is appealing. After a Volga cruise seven years ago and a Dutch arts cruise two years ago it was time to take to the water once again. The itinerary on Riviera Travels' History and Art of The Rhone beginning in Avignon and ending in Lyon was ideal.

The week-long trip took in Arles, Vienne, Tain L'Hermitage and Chalon sur Soane with tours in each place as well as in Avignon and Lyon. Excursions to The Pont du Gard Roman aqueduct, the Ardeche Gorges, the caves at Chauvet and a visit to Beaune were all included. The distance covered was about 500 kms on the gentle Rhone and Soane. The 110 meter long ship Lord Byron was built in 2012 and carried 132 passengers who were looked after by 41 crew. A buffet breakfast, lunch in the main restaurant or a light meal in the bar and dinner provided satisfying international cuisine. A typical dinner consisted of several choices: chicken, shrimp or Caesar salad or soup; sole meuniere or chicken or grilled salmon or pasta; chocolate pudding or ice cream and cheese. Chardonnay and Merlot accompanied the meal. High tea on several occasions with an array of sandwiches and delicious cakes kept hunger away until 19.00 dinner time. Wines, beer, spirits and soft drinks were free at lunch and dinner and in the bar from 18.00. Coffee and tea with cookies were available at all times in the small lounge at the stern. Cabins were small but comfortable and well-appointed with safe, coffee machine, kettle, big screen TV and a large panoramic window. I would have liked a separate balcony but the ship was built without any.



Lord Byron



Welcome drink

TRAVEL BY TRAIN

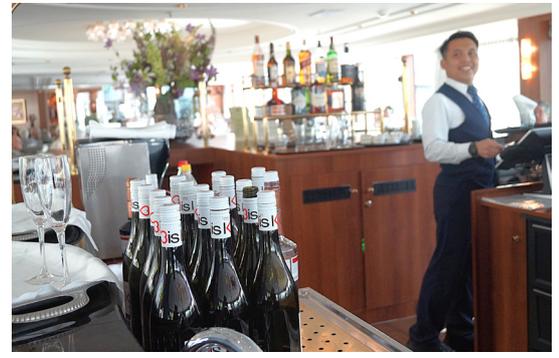
St Pancras station was predictably packed for the bank holiday weekend for the 13.00 Eurostar to Lille. To ensure rail connections worked I enlisted the help of Crusader Travel. Bruce and Shona planned the travel perfectly allowing plenty of time for connections at Lille for the TGV. Journey time from Twickenham to Avignon was 12 hours which included 90 minutes wait at Lille and an hour's delay. All four train journeys were packed but as we had left it late to book, the outward journeys were in business class - expensive but very pleasant. When booking a 'package' holiday I like to add on a few extra days before and after the set arrival and departure dates to see sights not included in the holiday or to visit friends. This was the case as we were greeted by old friends on arrival in Avignon for three days with them in Villeneuve Lez Avignon. When the cruise ended in Lyon other friends met us at the quayside for a three day visit. But more about these two cities and the other cruise highlights in future features.



Lounge



Chefs on Parade



The Bar

WELCOME ABOARD

We were delivered to the ship in our friends' old Jaguar. Lord Byron was moored only five minutes' walk from the city walls and from the top deck there were splendid views of Avignon's top attraction Le Palais des Papes. A welcoming drink, luggage whisked away and introduction to key staff by Cruise Director Andreea and Cruise Concierge Andre were carried out just before rooms were available. The top deck had plenty of space for relaxing in the sun or shade. While the temperature hovered around 20 degrees Centigrade and the sun was hot the Mistral wind, which blows from the Alps to The Mediterranean, was at times chilly. A splash pool, mini putting green and bicycles were at guests' disposal.



Cruise Director Andreea and Cruise Concierge Andre



Captain Michael



Vinnie and Cabin Staff

Captain Michael Fouquet told me that that we would pass through 12 locks during the 500 kms week-long cruise. The crew and staff were superb and looked after everyone with great care. Daily bulletins outlined exactly the places to be visited and evening briefings described the distance and number of steps to be covered on foot. The excursion groups were divided into 'normal' pace and 'slow' pace. While the whole team worked hard and always with a smile special praise goes to Andreea and Andre for their enthusiasm and knowledge. The cabin staff under the direction of Vinnie kept the rooms spotless and the head chef, Julian, with a team of 10 provided so much tasty food. Julian, like Andreea and Vinnie, was from Romania and he told me that in the future he plans to build a house in Transylvania and open a restaurant. I'll be there! After each dinner guests moved to the lounge and bar area where entertainment consisted of piano music, a quiz, display of dance styles and chatting to new acquaintances. The week on The Rhone passed much too quickly and I was envious of the new passengers, who boarded as we left the ship. They were heading south to The Camargue on a ten day cruise.



Delicious Tea



Top Deck



Farewell Drink

The cruise was organised by Riviera Travel: www.rivieratravel.co.uk

Next time: Historic Avignon, Arles, Vienne and a 'pilgrimage' to Tain L'Hermitage where I spent time in a local school at the age of 14 and 'discovered' red wine.

Diego Garcia

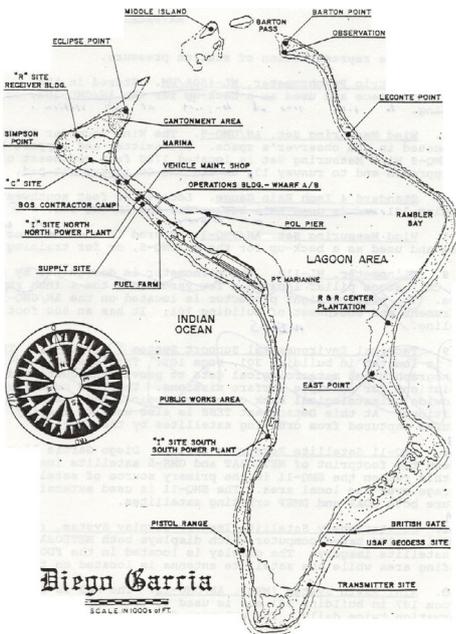
Teresa Read

In 1814 France ceded Mauritius and the Chagos islands, an agreement in the Treaty of Paris, to the British. Diego Garcia is the largest island in the Chagos Archipelago.

Britain separated the Chagos islands from Mauritius in 1965 and in 1968 leased Diego Garcia to the USA for fifty years.

In October 2024 the British government announced that it would transfer the Chagos Islands to Mauritius subject to finalisation of a treaty; the island of Diego Garcia would be leased back to the UK for at least 99 years. In 2025 Sir Keir Starmer, the UK Prime Minister, agreed a 3.4bn pound deal to hand over sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, although retaining control of a UK-US military base on Diego Garcia. The use of Diego Garcia as a base was agreed by the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The agreement included a £40m trust fund to support Chagossians.

Note: £165m in each of the first 3 years; years 4 to 13 £120m a year; further payments indexed to inflation



A map of military installations on Diego Garcia in 2002



Diego Garcia



B-2 bomber takeoff, B-52 bombers on tarmac on Diego Garcia



Sunset at Cannon Point

Background country information from World InfoZone: <https://worldinfozone.com/facts.php?country=Mauritius>

What do you need?

By Deep Patel

~Life Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



As a shop keeper, my job is asking that very question, “What do you need?” ...I probably ask that question (in some form or another) around 200 times a day every day of my life. In short, I am forever asking people what they need; it’s a big part of my job right? That’s what I am meant to do, ask people that very question, however this past week I have been thinking more and more about that question, and it all started with a young boy who visits my shop often.

It has been half-term holidays in Twickenham this past week and towards the end of the week the kids are all getting bored and even more demanding in asking their parents for extra treats when they have a little family visit to Meet & Deep Newsagents...I sit behind my counter and watch at the negotiations that are sometimes so intense that they make those that we see in parliament seem soft...the negotiations usually focus around parents limit of each child choosing one treat only, and each child pushing to have three...a chocolate, soft drink and comic...the negotiations begin with three items requested by the children versus one item granted by the parents...the children usually come up with 101 reasons as to why they need all three treats, whereas the parents come up with only one solid reason why they don’t... “because I said so”...As you can imagine, the dialogue continues for quite some time and I get front row tickets from the balcony view (well, my shop counter) to see as the negotiations in real-time as they unfold...

It usually all ends in tears (of the children, although I have had a few isolated incidents where it was the parent whom started to cry which was super uncomfortable to watch)...there is accompanied kicking, screaming, shouting and even a few swear words –and that’s just from the parents...the kids can be just as bad! The resolution is normally a compromise...”ok you can have two treats but you will share the second one with your brother okay?”...both parties (eventually) leave my shop happy...and that makes me smile in the end...but what REALLY opened my eyes and made me smile even more this week was still to follow.

I had just served 2 teenagers who had been given £10 each for sweets and spent the lot within seconds creating a solid mountain of treats galore on my shop counter. I asked them if they

were happy with their choices and they sort of shrugged and still looked a little glum...behind them waiting to pay was another young boy, he carefully looked at the shelving where all the chocolate bars were displayed and then he counted the coins he was holding in his hand and told me he had 75 pence. He then asked me what chocolate he could buy for that. I showed him a few at 70 pence. He smiled and immediately grabbed 3 mini-Cadbury Fudge bars (25p each) and he shouted out a cheer of "YES! I DID IT!" ...

I was thinking at that point, what's so great about three small Cadburys Fudge bars and why not just buy a larger bar instead with his 75 pence? So I asked him why...He laughed and said "No...I prefer three mini chocolates because then I can give one to my sister and one to my brother, so we all win!" I was shocked and pretty much lost for words (yes, it does happen occasionally). What a contrast to the two boys I served just before him (who spent £10 each on a mountain of treats and still were unhappy) to this boy who split 75 pence between his sister and brother and was still beaming a huge smile from ear to ear. After he paid, I asked him would he not have preferred to have had enough money to buy a bigger chocolate bars for each of them and he replied with an immediate "no". I asked him why not (who doesn't ask for more chocolate?) ...he said "because we only NEED a little bit each for an after meal treat that's all, it's meant to be a treat...not a meal!". He left the shop so happy as if he had won the lottery or something.

An elderly man was standing behind this last boy waiting to be served, I sold him his newspaper and he said "that little boy has understood what takes some people a lifetime to understand". He went on to say "we humans are the only species that take MORE than we NEED of everything that we can get, we have a house with enough room for all of our family to live and sleep, yet we seek bigger houses, we have a enough clothes to clothe ourselves, yet we buy many more, we have enough food to sustain good health, yet we buy much more and stack our cupboards high only to throw much of it out as the date passes"...he explained to me "if we all just took what we NEED rather than what we WANT, imagine how much more simpler and happier our lives would be?"...

He got me thinking, just like the little boy who purchased the three mini fudge bars did too, that although I spend most of my day as a shop keeper asking people what they need, perhaps they already have what they need and perhaps having that, and more importantly being content, appreciative and satisfied with what they already have in life was the true key to happiness...less is more...

Remember...

“...It's what you already have in life that matters the most...not what you don't...”

CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK:

FOR ANTS...

Sprinkle baby powder, cinnamon powder or rosemary 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 or join my Facebook group: "INSECT LOVERS UNITE". Thank you.

Grave Mistake

by Matthew Ballantyne and Toby Hampton

Ru Lawrence and HT Productions at The Hope Theatre, Islington until 7th June

Although its title tempts fate, *Grave Mistake* entices the audience right from its first line. Under co-writer Toby Hampton's detailed direction, it moves at a swift pace. Full of witty punchlines and unfortunate misunderstandings, the material accelerates nicely into black farce.

Despite robbing her younger sister of her inheritance, and dragging the family funeral business to ruin, Regina is a surprisingly likeable character. In this lead role Gabrielle Nellis-Pain is, so to speak, ... monumental. She creates a poignant figure and carries the witty lines and drink-fuelled antics throughout this clever production.



Put-upon Harriet, the younger sibling who has bottomless patience, is intelligently played by Laurel Marks. Marks nicely unpicks the character as the play goes on, fighting to save their 150-year-old family business from Regina's gin bar aspirations. It particularly needs saving from well-meaning Malcolm, the unpaid 'intern'. Gabriel Fogarty-Graveson works very hard and creates a clever combination of sincerity and naivety, while being charmingly conniving.

Molly-Rose Treves is awe-inspiring as she covers the roles of Mrs Clarke, Mrs Farrington and Rev Plumpkin. The latter is particularly hilarious as the lofty, and unlucky, vicar. Excelling as the haughty and odious Mrs Farrington, and the

grieving earthy Mrs Clarke, Treves has a natural humour and a real gift for comedy. Her delivery boy role is brief but also very humorous.

In the very small auditorium, the single set of a high street funeral parlour, a setting that houses turmoil, is very nicely lit. The vital connecting doors are put to good use as two funerals are conducted simultaneously. There is the nice touch of a coffin in the second half, which is rather Ortonesque, but makes a necessary connection to the main action.

Although this witty piece would benefit from a larger space, this production works very well. And although it could face difficulties with how to conduct the ending, the skilful cast pulls it off smoothly and with great class. I'm dying to see it again.



Reda Heather Moulson's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/05/29/grave-mistake

Photography by Cam Harle

Joseph K And The Cost Of Living

at the Mary Wallace Theatre
the Embankment, Twickenham. May 31st-June 7th

"Someone must have made a false accusation against Joseph K for he was arrested one morning without having done anything wrong." Franz Kafka - The Trial

In Kafka's dystopian novel THE TRIAL an unassuming bank clerk is arrested one morning without explanation, forcibly detained, imprisoned and subjected to a show trial. The nature of the alleged charges are never revealed to him and, without representation or right of appeal, Joseph K struggles to defend himself against a labyrinthine legal system and impenetrable bureaucracy. Published in 1925, the novel uncannily predicted some of the more unwelcome aspects of existence in the century which was to follow.



Emily White's witty and incisive adaptation offers four parallel reflections of Joseph and intertwines the torments of discrimination and injustice with the perplexities of modern living. Join us in celebrating its Centenary in Maxina Cornwell's physical and exhilarating production.

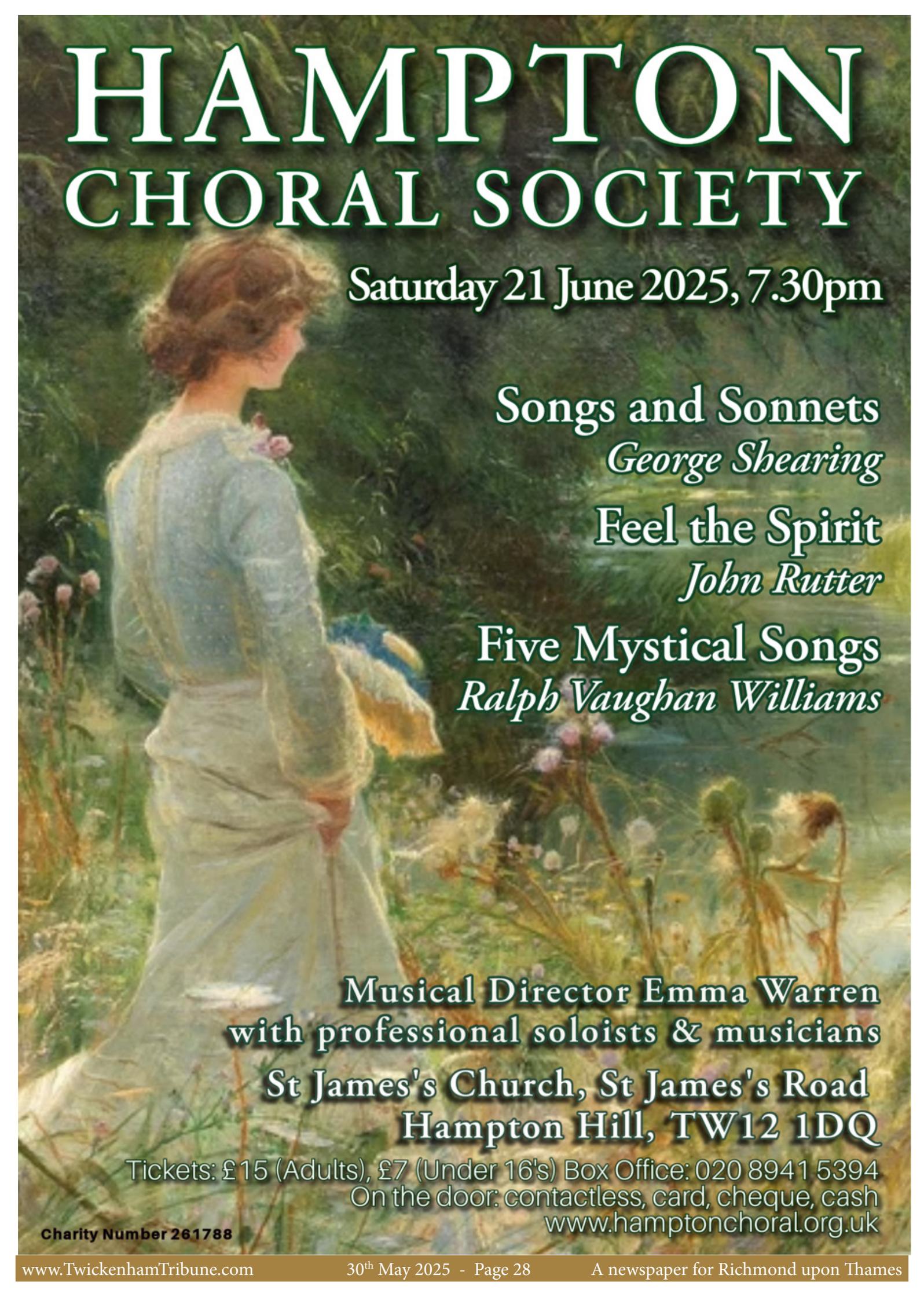


Joseph K And The Cost Of Living plays at Twickenham's Mary Wallace Theatre from May 31st - June 7th

Booking at www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk

Visit the Mary Wallace Theatre on Twickenham's Embankment, close to the Barmy Arms.





HAMPTON CHORAL SOCIETY

Saturday 21 June 2025, 7.30pm

Songs and Sonnets
George Shearing

Feel the Spirit
John Rutter

Five Mystical Songs
Ralph Vaughan Williams

**Musical Director Emma Warren
with professional soloists & musicians**

**St James's Church, St James's Road
Hampton Hill, TW12 1DQ**

Tickets: £15 (Adults), £7 (Under 16's) Box Office: 020 8941 5394
On the door: contactless, card, cheque, cash
www.hamptonchoral.org.uk

Charity Number 261788

Shooting Star Children's Hospices opens its doors to the community in Hampton this June

Shooting Star Children's Hospices is inviting the local community to step inside Shooting Star House in Hampton on **Friday 13 June**, to see the vital work the charity does supporting families who have a child with a life-limiting condition, or who have been bereaved.

Open to the public for one day only, this event offers visitors a unique opportunity to explore the hospice's welcoming facilities, meet dedicated staff members and discover the wide range of services the charity provides to families across south-west London, north-west London and Surrey.



The Open Day will feature two free sessions, with light refreshments and family-friendly activities available throughout the day. Visitors can book a free time slot in advance to secure their place.

Shooting Star House is the charity's Outreach, Therapies and Family Support Centre, providing essential services including bereavement counselling, creative therapies, sibling support groups, drop-in sessions, and interactive play. These services offer a vital lifeline to families navigating the unimaginable, ensuring they are supported every step of the way.



Georgina Goddard, Head of Supporter Engagement at Shooting Star comments: *"Our Open Day is a wonderful opportunity to meet some of our Shooting Star community and supporters face-to-face and showcase the amazing impact their support has on our services."*

This Open Day also marks the start of Children's Hospice Week (16–22 June), a national awareness campaign celebrating the incredible work of children's hospices across the UK.

To book your free place, visit: www.shootingstar.org.uk/event/open-day-shooting-star-house

Open Day:

Friday 13 June: Sessions: 10am-11am and 11am-12 noon.

Shooting Star House, The Avenue, Hampton, TW12 3RA

Entry is free – visit: www.shootingstar.org.uk/event/open-day-shooting-star-house/





Welcomes you to our...

OPEN DAY



2025

SUNDAY
29TH JUNE
11AM - 3PM

FREE ENTRY

*For all ages & abilities!
Parent and/or guardian must be present at all times for all under 16's participating.*

A volunteer led members club where everyone has a passion for the water! Come along, get involved & most of all have fun!



COME AND TRY DINGHY SAILING & PADDLEBOARDING
MEET THE MEMBERS AND EXPLORE
THE CLUB'S TRAINING, CRUISING,
YACHTING & OUR MEMBERSHIP

*Buoyancy aids provided & wear clothes you don't mind getting wet!
Snacks & drinks available for sale.*



Visiting Times for the Public: Sun 12 - 4pm and Wed & Fri 8-11pm.
More information: www.twickenhamyc.co.uk



St Mary's University

St Mary's to host England Universities Wheelchair Rugby League match against UK Armed Forces as part of the 175 Anniversary

St Mary's University, Twickenham, is proudly hosting a landmark Wheelchair Rugby League fixture on Saturday 31 May at 7pm between the newly formed England Universities Wheelchair Rugby League team and the UK Armed Forces Wheelchair Rugby League team. The match is part of the University's 175th anniversary celebration.

university staff in a single showcase match. The enthusiasm encouraged national organisers to move forward with launching a student team.

Andrew Reid-Smith, Head of Sport, said, "It's wonderful to see the students building on the recent festival and working with great partners

to develop the first ever England Universities fixture. It is an incredible opportunity for St Mary's students to play against a UK Armed Forces side, and I'm sure it will make for an exciting match."

"The momentum we built from that first celebration event was the turning point" said Kevin Rudd, Head Coach, "Thanks to

the University's support – facilities, staff, and volunteers – we've created a team that will inspire future generations of wheelchair rugby players across the country."

The team was developed by Chris Bryde, founder of the team who now serves as Team Manager. Chris and his colleagues have worked closely with the Rugby Football League and England Wheelchair Rugby League to establish the squad.

St Mary's students, including members of the Men's Rugby League team, have been a great support in developing the new team, along with the Elmbridge Eagles Rugby League club, which provided access to specialist equipment during the months of training.



**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**



St Mary's University, Twickenham, is proudly hosting a landmark Wheelchair Rugby League fixture on Saturday 31 May at 7pm between the newly formed England Universities Wheelchair Rugby League team and the UK Armed Forces Wheelchair Rugby League team. The match is part of the University's 175th anniversary celebration.

This match marks the first-ever fixture for the England Universities Wheelchair Rugby League team, which represents a step forward in inclusive sports.

The idea of this fixture was sparked by the success of an earlier event held at St Mary's during the 175th anniversary year, which brought together England internationals, community players, student athletes, and

Hilton Hotels Deliver Careers Talks to Catering and Travel & Tourism Students

Earlier in May, representatives from Hilton Syon Park visited Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) to present career options and opportunities to both our Catering and Travel & Tourism students.

The HR Manager, Operations Manager and Chef de Partie from the Hilton Hotel in Syon Park spoke to our eager students in The View restaurant on campus, explaining various opportunities available to them within the Hilton company. Students were also given the chance to ask questions related to job prospects and work experience.

The Chef de Partie, Clifford, who is one of our alumni students, also had a private talk with our Level 3 Catering students to facilitate part-time job opportunities for the summer.



Following up from this meeting, next academic year, a group of students will be visiting the hotel facilities with a view of taking on work experience opportunities.

Catering Lecturer, Daniele Giraud, commented on the day:

“Guests were thoroughly impressed by the facilities and the professionalism and commitment of our students. It was a truly valuable experience for the learners. We are proud to offer industry links such as this through the college.”

[Browse the range of courses we offer and apply for entry here.](#)



Dan Cole announces retirement from rugby

Dan Cole's Memorable Matches

Dan Cole, England Men's second-most capped player, announced that he will be retiring from rugby at the end of the season. A stalwart of the England team since making his debut 15 years ago, here are some of the tighthead prop's most memorable moments in an England shirt.

Debut in 2010

Having made his way through the pathway setup with appearances for England U19s, U20s and latterly England Saxons, Cole made his senior team debut in 2010 against Wales in the opening round of the Six Nations.

He came on as a replacement for David Wilson in the 60th minute, and England, captained by Steve Borthwick, went on to win 30-17. He played in each of England's subsequent games in that year's edition of the tournament, and scored his first international try against Ireland in what was also his first start at Twickenham.

50th cap in 2015

Cole reached a half-century of England caps in 2015 when England hosted France in the Six Nations Championship. Starting alongside Dylan Hartley and Joe Marler in the front row, he helped his side towards a 55-35 victory over Les Bleus.

Jack Nowell and Ben Youngs both scored braces, with Billy Vunipola, George Ford and Anthony Watson also finding the whitewash. England finished the tournament as runners-up to Ireland based on points difference following wins over France, Scotland, Wales, and Italy. Cole's 2015 performances earned him a spot in Stuart Lancaster's squad for the Rugby World Cup that same year.



Grand Slam & whitewash down under

The first season of the Eddie Jones era saw England go unbeaten in the 2016 Six Nations. Cole featured as a starter in each of the games, which saw a first England Grand Slam since 2003.

He also scored a try in their final round against France, barging over from short range for England's second of the game.

With momentum on their side, England looked to maintain their international dominance in the summer when they travelled to Australia for a three-Test series against the Wallabies.

They returned home 3-0 victors having secured a whitewash of victories Down Under. Cole started every game of the series to help his side on their way and scored a try in the opening ten minutes of play in the first Test.

Back-to-back

England's Six Nations title defence of 2017 came during a period of dominance for the team, who came into the tournament with 14 consecutive wins under their belt. They would go on to equal the record for the most wins in a row (18) with their 61-21 victory over Scotland in round four.

Once again, Cole was at the heart of England's endeavours, starting every Test and he also scored a try in their 36-15 win over Italy off the back of a driving maul.

Dylan Hartley fed Maro Itoje at the back of the lineout, and with the ball secured by Cole at the base, the forward pack rumbled closer to the line. Romain Poite had a good angle of the grounding and awarded the try.

World Cup final & return

Four years on from their 2015 Rugby World Cup campaign, England reached the final of the 2019 tournament following a sublime performance against the All Blacks in Yokohama, in which Cole was instrumental.

This milestone would be his first ever appearance in an international final, and despite Kyle Sinckler being named in the starting lineup ahead of him, an early injury forced Sinckler off the field and left Cole with 78 minutes of World Cup final rugby to be played.

The loss looked to be Cole's last Test match until Borthwick drafted the Leicester man back for the 2023 Six Nations, and he entered the Calcutta Cup match on the hour mark to earn his 96th Test cap, making an immediate impact by winning a scrum penalty.

After that narrow loss, Cole went on to feature in the wins over Italy and Wales, as well as the showing against France.

Another medal and Six Nations campaign

Six months later, Cole played a pivotal role in England's campaign at the 2023 Rugby World Cup, participating in five out of the seven matches.

England's journey began with a battling 27-10 victory over Argentina, during which Cole played 50 minutes as his team won despite an early red card for Tom Curry.

Cole missed the games against Japan and Chile, but returned to beat Samoa and Fiji before playing 56 minutes as England faced an agonisingly narrow defeat against South Africa in the semi-final. However, the side bounced back to secure a third-place finish by triumphing 26-23 over Argentina in the play-off and Cole added a Bronze medal to his 2019 Silver.

With a number of senior players moving on after the World Cup, Cole continued to offer his experience throughout the 2024 Six Nations, where he was an ever-present for England.

The veteran prop played in every match of the tournament, including the nail-biting wins against Italy, Wales and Ireland. Despite their solid performance, England narrowly missed out, placing third after a dramatic 33-31 loss to France in the final game of the tournament.

He retires with 118 England caps and as the second-most capped England Men's player.



Every Brentford player on international duty this summer

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford midfielder Frank Onyeka could feature for Nigeria against Jamaica on Saturday when Gtech Community Stadium plays host to a Unity Cup double-header; Trinidad & Tobago and Ghana will also be in action this weekend, with tickets still on sale; Onyeka, who spent the season on loan with Bundesliga side Augsburg, is one of 15 Bees on international duty across May and June

Brentford midfielder Frank Onyeka could feature for Nigeria when Gtech Community Stadium plays host to a Unity Cup double-header on Saturday.

The 27-year-old, who spent the season on loan at Bundesliga side Augsburg, started on Wednesday evening as the Super Eagles defeated Ghana 2-1.

Nigeria, who have since called up Brentford B defender Benjamin Fredrick for the first time, will now face Jamaica to decide the winner of the Afro-Caribbean tournament, which is taking place for the first time since 2004.

[Secure your tickets for the Unity Cup here](#)

Onyeka and Fredrick are two of 15 Brentford players who could represent their countries over the coming weeks.

Here are all the Bees on international duty (kick-off times shown in BST).

Frank Onyeka and Benjamin Fredrick - Nigeria

Unity Cup

Ghana (N) - Wednesday 28 May, 7.45pm

Jamaica (N) - Saturday 31 May, 6pm

International friendlies

Russia (A) - Friday 6 June, 6pm

Mikkel Damsgaard and Christian Nørgaard - Denmark

International friendlies

Northern Ireland (H) - Saturday 7 June, 6pm

Lithuania (H) - Tuesday 10 June, 6pm



Nathan Collins - Republic of Ireland

International friendlies

Senegal (H) - Friday 6 June, 7.45pm

Luxembourg (A) - Tuesday 10 June, 7.45pm

Mark Flekken - Netherlands

FIFA World Cup qualifying

Finland (A) - Saturday 7 June, 7.45pm

Malta (H) - Tuesday 10 June, 7.45pm

Kristoffer Ajer - Norway

FIFA World Cup Qualifying

Italy (H) - Friday 6 June, 7.45pm

Estonia (A) - Monday 9 June, 7.45pm

Hákon Valdimarsson - Iceland

International friendlies

Scotland (A) - Friday 6 June, 7.45pm

Northern Ireland (A) - Tuesday 10 June, 7.45pm

Ethan Pinnock - Jamaica

FIFA World Cup qualifying

British Virgin Islands (A) - Saturday 7 June, 8pm

Guatemala (H) - Wednesday 11 June, 12am

CONCACAF Gold Cup

Guatemala (N) - Tuesday 17 June, 3am

Guadeloupe (N) - Saturday 21 June, 12.45am

Panama (N) - Wednesday 25 June, 12am

Yoane Wissa - DR Congo

International friendlies

Mali (H) - Thursday 5 June, 7pm

Madagascar (H) - Sunday 8 June, 3pm

Marley Tavaziva - Zimbabwe

International friendlies

Burkina Faso (N) - Friday 6 June, TBC

Niger (N) - Tuesday 10 June, TBC



Government completes exit from NatWest

The government has sold its remaining shares in NatWest Group (formerly Royal Bank of Scotland, RBS) – ending public ownership that began when it stepped in to protect millions of savers and businesses during the financial crisis.

That intervention prevented the UK economy and financial system from going over the edge – protecting millions of savers, businesses and jobs.

Over 2008 and 2009, the government provided £45.5 billion to stabilise RBS (now NatWest), which at the time was one of the largest banks in the world- with over 40 million customers and operations in more than 50 countries.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, said:

“Nearly two decades ago, the then Government stepped in to protect millions of savers and businesses from the consequences of the collapse of RBS. That was the right decision then to secure the economy and NatWest’s return to private ownership turns the page on a significant chapter in this country’s history. We protected the economy in a time of crisis nearly seventeen years ago, now we are focused on securing Britain’s future in a new era of global change.”



Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Emma Reynolds said:

“Bringing NatWest fully back into private ownership marks a significant milestone for the UK banking sector following the financial crisis.

“Since coming into government, we have halted the NatWest retail share sale, which could have cost taxpayers hundreds of millions. Instead, we put taxpayers first by only selling NatWest shares at market value – securing more money to invest in vital public services.”

To date, £35 billion has been returned to the Exchequer through share sales, dividends and fees. While this is around £10.5 billion less than the original support, the alternative would have been a collapse with far greater economic costs and social consequences.

The Office for Budget Responsibility are clear on this point: the cost of doing nothing would almost certainly have been far greater than the difference between the capital injected and proceeds returned. Allowing the bank to fail would have devastated people’s savings, mortgages and livelihoods – and shattered confidence in the UK’s financial system.

Since taking office in 2024, the government has prioritised securing value for taxpayers – scrapping plans for a retail sale that could have cost hundreds of millions of pounds due to the need to sell shares at a discounted price to attract retail buyers. Instead, shares were sold only at market price and when it represented value for money – helping fund the Plan for Change to invest in the NHS, education and defence.

The government has now exited all banking sector interventions made during the financial crisis.



HM Treasury

Announcement on new powers for councils to increase building – LGA response



Responding to the news that the Government is set to give councils more powers to reclaim sites from developers where they do not meet agreed timescales for build out, Cllr Adam Hug, Housing spokesperson for the LGA, said:

“We are pleased the Government has acted on the LGA’s call for it to be easier for councils to penalise developers and acquire stalled housing sites or sites which have not been built out to timescales contractually agreed, ideally with the recovery being made at pre-planning gain prices.”

“Local government shares ambitions to boost housebuilding and work hard with communities and developers to deliver new sites. Too often they are frustrated when developers do not build the homes they have approved. While intervention of this sort is a last resort, this move is crucial to help ensure meaningful build out of sites.”

“The ability to apply a ‘Delayed Homes Penalty’ is a power that councils have been asking for and means that local taxpayers are not missing out on lost income due to slow developers, but it must be set at a level that incentivises build out.”

“Private developers have a key role in solving our chronic housing shortage but they cannot build the homes needed each year on their own. Ahead of the Spending Review, we have also set out the measures needed to empower councils to also be able to build more affordable, good quality homes quickly and at scale.”



COVID-19 - Global Situation

World Health Organisation

Situation at a glance

Since mid-February 2025, according to data available from sentinel sites, global SARS-CoV-2 activity has been increasing, with the test positivity rate reaching 11%, levels that have not been observed since July 2024. This rise is primarily observed in countries in the Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asia, and Western Pacific regions. Since early 2025, global SARS-CoV-2 variant trends have slightly shifted. Circulation of LP.8.1 has been declining, and reporting of NB.1.8.1, a Variant Under Monitoring (VUM), is increasing, reaching 10.7% of global sequences reported as of mid-May. Recent increases in SARS-CoV-2 activity are broadly consistent with levels observed during the same period last year, however, there still lacks a clear seasonality in SARS-CoV-2 circulation, and surveillance is limited. Continued monitoring is essential. WHO advises all Member States to continue applying a risk-based, integrated approach to managing COVID-19 as outlined in the Director-General's Standing Recommendations [1]. As part of comprehensive COVID-19 control programmes, vaccination remains a key intervention for preventing severe disease and death from COVID-19, particularly among at risk groups.

Description of the situation

There has been an increase in SARS-CoV-2 activity globally, based on SARS-CoV-2 data reported to the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) from sentinel surveillance sites. As of 11 May 2025, the test positivity rate is 11% across 73 reporting countries, areas and territories. This level matches the peak observed in July 2024 (12% from 99 countries) and marks a rise from 2% reported by 110 countries back in mid-February 2025 (Figure 1). The increase in test positivity rate is mainly being driven by countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the South-East Asia Region, and the Western Pacific Region.

Countries in the African Region, European Region, and the Region of the Americas are currently reporting low levels of SARS-CoV-2 activity with percent positivity from sentinel or systematic virological surveillance sites ranging from 2% to 3%. However, some areas—particularly in the Caribbean and Andean subregions in the Region of the Americas showed increasing trends of SARS-CoV-2 test positivity as of 11 May. Publicly available wastewater monitoring data from countries in the European Region and the Northern America subregion remain low and, at present, do not indicate any upward trend in SARS-CoV-2 activity as of 11 May 2025.

The reporting of COVID-19 associated hospitalizations, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admissions, and deaths is very limited from the countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the South-East Asia Region, and the Western Pacific Region and does not allow for evaluation of the impact on health systems by WHO.

SARS-CoV-2 Variant Evolution and Circulation

SARS-CoV-2 continues to evolve, and between January and May 2025, there were shifts in global SARS-CoV-2 variant dynamics. At the beginning of the year, the most prevalent variant tracked by WHO at the global level was XEC, followed by KP.3.1.1. In February, circulation of XEC began to decline while that of LP.8.1 increased, with the latter becoming the most

detected variant in mid-March. Since mid-April, the circulation of LP.8.1 has been slightly declining as NB.1.8.1 is increasingly being detected.

The most recently designated variant under monitoring (VUM) is NB.1.8.1, which is a descendent lineage of XDV.1.5.1, in turn a descendent of JN.1, with the earliest sample collected on 22 January 2025. In comparison to the currently dominant SARS-CoV-2 variant, LP.8.1, NB.1.8.1 has the following additional spike mutations: T22N, F59S, G184S, A435S, V445H, and T478I. Spike mutations at position 445 have been shown to enhance binding affinity to hACE2 receptor, which could increase the variant's transmissibility; mutations at position 435 have been shown to modestly reduce the neutralization potency of class 1 and class 1/4 antibodies; mutations at position 478 have been shown to enhance the evasion of Class 1/2 antibodies.[2]

As of 18 May 2025, 518 NB.1.8.1 sequences were submitted to GISAID from 22 countries, representing 10.7% of the globally available sequences in epidemiological week (EW) 17 of 2025 (21 to 27 April 2025). While the percentage remains low, this presents a significant rise from 2.5% four weeks prior in EW14 of 2025 (31 March to 6 April 2025). Between EW14 and EW17 of 2025, increased circulation of NB.1.8.1 was detected in all three WHO regions that are consistently sharing SARS-CoV-2 sequences, i.e. from 8.9% to 11.7% for the Western Pacific region, from 1.6% to 4.9% for the region of the Americas, and from 1.0% to 6.0% for the European region. There are only 5 NB.1.8.1 sequences from the South-East Asia Region, and none from the African Region or the Eastern Mediterranean Region.



COVID-19 Vaccination Update

From the latest available global data covering the period between 1 January and 30 September 2024, overall COVID-19 vaccine uptake among high-risk groups remains low, with significant disparities across regions and income levels. Among older adults[3], just 1.68% were reported as having received a dose so far in 2024 up to 30 September 2024 across 75 reporting Member States, and among health and care workers, uptake stood at 0.96% across 54 reporting Member States. An estimated 39.2 million individuals, across 90 reporting Member States covering 31% of the global population, had received a dose in 2024 through 30 September 2024, including 14.8 million in the third quarter. Uptake was notably higher in the Region of the Americas and the European Region, with older adult coverage reaching 5.1% in the European Region and 3.6% in the Region of the Americas compared to less than 0.5% in other regions. A similar disparity was observed when comparing countries by income level. High and upper middle-income countries (HIC/UMIC) reported higher vaccine uptake among older adults with 4.3%

and 1.2% respectively, compared to less than 0.5% in low-income countries (LIC) and lower middle-income countries (LMIC). Similar patterns were seen among health and care workers, with uptake in the Region of the Americas (2.8%) far exceeding the less than 0.5% seen in other regions. Among income groups, UMICs reported 2.1% coverage, compared to just 0.3% in LICs and 0.1% in LMICs. Complete vaccination data for 2024 is being collected now and will be released in mid-July 2025.

Currently approved COVID-19 vaccines continue to provide protection against severe disease and death. To ensure approved vaccines remain effective, the WHO Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Vaccine Composition (TAG-CO-VAC) continues to monitor and review the impact of SARS-CoV-2 evolution on the performance of available vaccines. In May 2025, [TAG-CO-VAC advised that monovalent vaccines targeting the JN.1 or KP.2 lineages remain appropriate](#). They also noted that vaccines targeting the LP.8.1 lineage can be considered as a suitable alternative. Vaccination should not be delayed. However, in anticipation of access to latest variant-containing vaccines, there is a greater benefit in ensuring that persons at high risk of developing severe COVID-19 receive a dose of any available vaccine as compared to delaying vaccination.

Overview of selected WHO regions

Eastern Mediterranean Region

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, sentinel surveillance data have been reported from 12 countries via test positivity rates from sentinel sites in 2025. The test positivity rate increased from 4% in EW13 to 17% in EW17 and then declined to 15% in EW19. Following lower circulation in the first ten weeks of 2025, a sharp upward trend surpassed the levels of last year (11% in EW17 2024). Across the region, recent reports of increases in circulation have been observed in five countries to date, including Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Pakistan.

South-East Asia Region

In the South-East Asia Region, sentinel surveillance data have been reported by eight countries in 2025. Since the beginning of April, the test positivity rate increased from 0.5% in EW15 to 5% in EW19. Although at a lower level, a similar upward trend was observed during the same period in 2024, with rates rising from 4% in EW15 to 6% in EW19, and further to 10% by EW24. The recent increases are observed in the Maldives and Thailand. As per published national reports, a rise in COVID-19 case detections was observed in India [4] in EW20 and Thailand [5] between EW16 to EW20.

Western Pacific Region

In the Western Pacific Region, sentinel surveillance data have been reported by ten countries and areas via test positivity rates from sentinel sites in 2025. In the past month, the test positivity rate increased from 5% in EW14 to 11% in EW19. Following lower circulation in the first ten weeks of the year, a sharp upwards trend reached similar levels as last year (10% in EW18 2024). The recent increases have been observed in four countries and areas to date: Cambodia, China, Hong Kong SAR and Singapore.

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