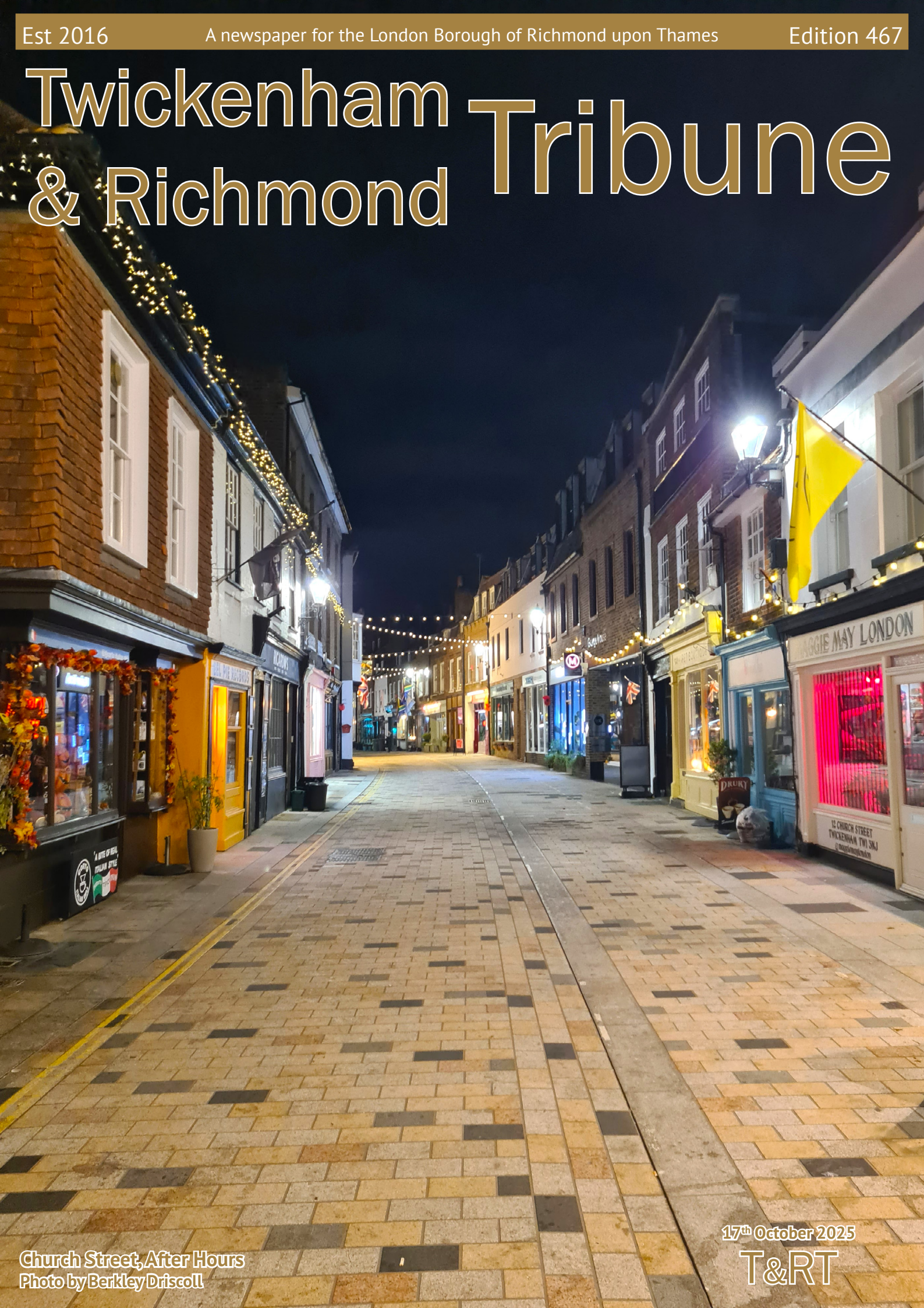
Est 2016 A newspaper for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Edition 467

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Church Street, After Hours
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

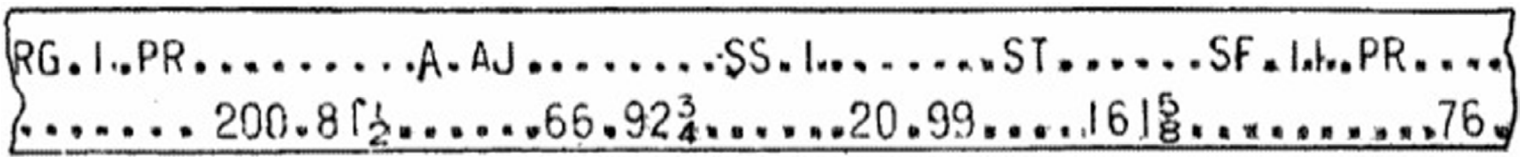
17th October 2025
T&RT

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Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

CONTACT DONATE ADVERTISE



TickerTape - News in Brief

It has been heartwarming to see the enormous number of tributes that have been sent in to the Tribune following the sad passing of Teresa Read.

I know Teresa would have been surprised, but grateful.

Thank you for the many donations that have been made to the Tribune in Teresa's memory.

Many have asked about details of Teresa's funeral, which I give below.

Committal
Thursday 30th October 2025, 3:20pm
Mortlake Crematorium, Kew Meadow Path, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4EN

You can find more information HERE


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The Tree Agency
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One in Two Richmond Roads Are Substandard, Report Reveals

By James Knight

Liberal Democrat councillors in Richmond upon Thames have been left red-faced after official transparency data undermined their central claim to be delivering a "super investment" in the borough's crumbling roads and pavements.



Despite flooding the borough with leaflets promoting a £23 million resurfacing programme, the council's own highways report shows that nearly half of all roads and footways remain in poor condition and that Liberal Democrat–controlled Richmond is performing worse than neighbouring Conservative-run Surrey, exposing as false the Lib Dems' repeated claims of outperforming them.

The Liberal Democrats had hoped to present themselves as road repair champions, with Cabinet member Councillor Alexander Ehmann declaring, "*We don't point at potholes — we fix them.*" But that message has collided head-on with hard evidence.

Official Report Lays Bare Road Crisis

According to Richmond's June 2025 Highways Maintenance Transparency Report, the scale of the challenge remains substantial:

- 44 % of A roads require resurfacing or structural repair
- 43 % of B and C roads are in similar disrepair
- 50 % of unclassified residential roads are below standard
- 49 % of pavements need renewal or patching

In plain terms, almost every second road or footway in the borough is substandard, a reality that sits awkwardly alongside recent political messaging.

Surrey outperforms Richmond.
In a notable contrast, neighbouring Surrey, often used by Liberal Democrats as a negative comparator, comfortably outperforms Richmond in road conditions overall. The county's latest highway maintenance transparency data shows that only 4% of A roads and 5% of B and C roads need extensive work. Even among unclassified roads, just 22% fall below standard, less than half of Richmond's rate.

While Richmond focuses on quick repairs, Surrey quietly adopts a more strategic, preventative approach. Over the past five years, Surrey has resurfaced over 486 miles of road, improved 229 miles of footways, and introduced new technologies, including AI-driven defect detection and longer-lasting patching methods, Underscoring the gulf in delivery between the two councils.

Perhaps more impressively, it has achieved this while managing a road network more than ten times the size of Richmond's, and subject to far higher usage levels and without resorting to self-congratulatory headlines.

Spin over substance?
Richmond's road maintenance challenges are not new. The council has acknowledged operating in a state of "managed decline," where deterioration outpaces repair. Until this year, the vast majority of its maintenance budget was consumed by reactive pothole repairs rather than structural renewal. In 2024 to 2025, two thirds of spending was reactive, a model many experts consider inefficient and unsustainable.

Only in the current financial year has the council rebalanced its approach, with 74 % of spending now aimed at preventative works. Yet the promised improvements remain largely aspirational, while the official data continues to show the borough falling behind.

Others have questioned whether the £23 million figure is itself misleading. Spread across three years and heavily front-loaded with catch-up work, it appears less a visionary strategy than a case of political damage control, especially with local elections looming in May 2026.

Who do voters trust to deliver?
As residents prepare to return to the polls, the condition of local infrastructure is once again coming under scrutiny, and glossy promises are wearing thin. Voters are not looking for slogans. They are looking for value, competence, and results.

Residents expect honesty and value for money, not just headlines. The real test of leadership is whether our streets are functional, safe, and reliable, not how glossy the next leaflet looks.

In the end, it will be up to voters to decide who they trust to deliver, not just promise, the practical, visible improvements that communities need.

You can read the Richmond Highway Maintenance Transparency Report HERE and the Surrey County Council's one HERE.

Dear Tribune,

A Sad Day for Richmond.

Like many of my friends and neighbours, I was extremely saddened to hear that the founder of the Tribune, Teresa Read, had passed away.

I first heard of the Tribune from a friend who said that it was unique in being truthful by publishing the real views of local residents instead of the usual self-aggrandising politics with which we are constantly bombarded.

The effort required to publish a weekly newspaper is hard to imagine so we should all be grateful to Teresa for her courage and strength of character in doing so.

But the Tribune is much more than weekly news.

Teresa's Tribune is practically the only place in which the voices of local residents can be heard.

It was, and is, the light at the end of the long, dark tunnel of life in our borough.

Long may it continue to be her great remembrance.

Thank You, Teresa.

Michael Jay
Hampton

Parents And Children Protest Road Safety Outside Primary School

From Laura Kerry

There was a strong turnout at a community protest this morning. Many local families and residents were joined by Munira Wilson MP, Gareth Roberts AM, and local councillors, to call for urgent action to protect children, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Over 2,500 residents have signed a petition demanding safety improvements to the A316 at St Margarets Roundabout, but after years of delays and dismissive responses from TfL and Sadiq Khan, local people have taken to the streets.
This campaign follows an incident in January 2024 when a local mother and her three children were nearly killed by a driver who crashed through the barriers bordering the road. (Parent available for comment).

Residents say:

- Crossings remain unsafe - children walking to St Stephen's Primary are still unable to cross safely in the time allowed.
- Speed limits ignored - the 30mph limit is still not communicated; GPS remain wrong, speeding and light jumping continues.
- School warning signs missing - despite commitments, no new signs have been installed as term begins.
- Barriers inadequate - pedestrians are not protected from vehicles when caught in the middle.
- Cycle lane conflict - lack of segregation continues to cause dangerous pedestrian–cyclist clashes. Richmond Council have offered to fund this, but TfL still stall.

Local resident and petition organiser, Laura Kerry said *"We've tried engaging with TfL for years. Our concerns are delayed, minimised, or dismissed while children walk to school at daily risk. This is not acceptable."*



Gareth Roberts, AM and Leader of Richmond Council said *"Residents have absolutely had enough of being repeatedly fobbed off. This roundabout is clearly dangerous. We've already had some horrible near misses. It's an accident waiting to happen, so this total lack of urgency and action we've seen from City Hall is just inexplicable. The Mayor and TfL have had years to fix this – the delays and excuses have got to stop before someone gets seriously hurt or even killed here"*

Katie Mansfield, local councillor, added *"Safety cannot be an afterthought. Residents have spoken with one voice. We need concrete timelines and real action now."*

Mrs Bachour, Headteacher of St Stephens Primary School said "For a significant amount of time, St Stephen's has been concerned about the crossing outside our school. There have been close-call incidents where individuals, including young children and parents, have narrowly avoided being struck by a vehicle. It is only a matter of time before a tragic accident occurs." (full statement available on request)

Residents are calling on Sadiq Khan to commit to:

- Clear timelines for safer crossings, extended 30mph zone near walking routes and school signage.
- Urgent review of barriers and
- Implementation of a segregated cycle lane.
- Transparent engagement that delivers results, not delays.

Richmond residents urged to check eligibility for Council Tax Reduction

From Richmond Council

As part of ongoing efforts to support local households navigating the rising cost of living across London and the wider UK, Richmond Council is contacting residents who may be eligible for Council Tax Reduction.

The scheme can reduce Council Tax bills by up to 100% for those on low incomes or certain benefits, helping to ease pressure on already stretched household budgets.

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Leader of Richmond Council, said: *"We know that many households – including here in Richmond upon Thames – continue to feel the pressure of rising costs. Council Tax Reduction is one of the most direct ways we can help residents manage those pressures and ease the burden on household budgets."*

Households across the country continue to face economic strain. One in four people in the UK are grappling with financial pressures, according to recent research from the Financial Conduct Authority, with many missing payments, struggling to keep up with commitments, or lacking savings to help them through difficulties.

This year, Richmond Council is stepping up its support, running a borough-wide awareness campaign to make sure residents know what help is available – ensuring no one misses out on vital assistance.

To make sure Council support reaches those who need it most, the Council uses the Low Income Family Tracker – a data tool that helps identify residents who may be missing out on support. This proactive approach has already unlocked more than £8 million in savings for vulnerable households in recent years.

Councillor Jim Millard, Lead Member for Finance, added: *"It isn't always possible to identify everyone who qualifies, which is why we're now writing directly to households across the borough to encourage them to check and apply. Even a small reduction can make a real difference."*

Firoozeh Fattahi, Project and Development Manager at Citizens Advice Richmond agreed: *"We see first-hand the challenges residents face in managing household bills – especially Council Tax – amid the cost of living, echoing a trend we're seeing nationwide. Working alongside Richmond Council, we encourage anyone in the borough unsure about whether they may be eligible for Council Tax Reduction to get in contact – even a brief conversation with an adviser can provide valuable guidance and reassurance."*

Residents can also use the Council's online calculator to check eligibility in around 10 minutes. Applications can be made online at www.richmond.gov.uk/benefits, or by calling 020 8891 1411 to request a paper form.

Anyone who needs help completing an application can contact the Council's benefits team by calling 020 8891 1411, emailing benefits@richmond.gov.uk, or using the online contact form.

For support and information:

- Visit the Richmond Cost of Living Hub for help with household bills, employment, and local services
- Sign up for cost of living updates direct to your inbox

Ombudsman Rebukes Richmond Council for Failing Homeless Father and Child

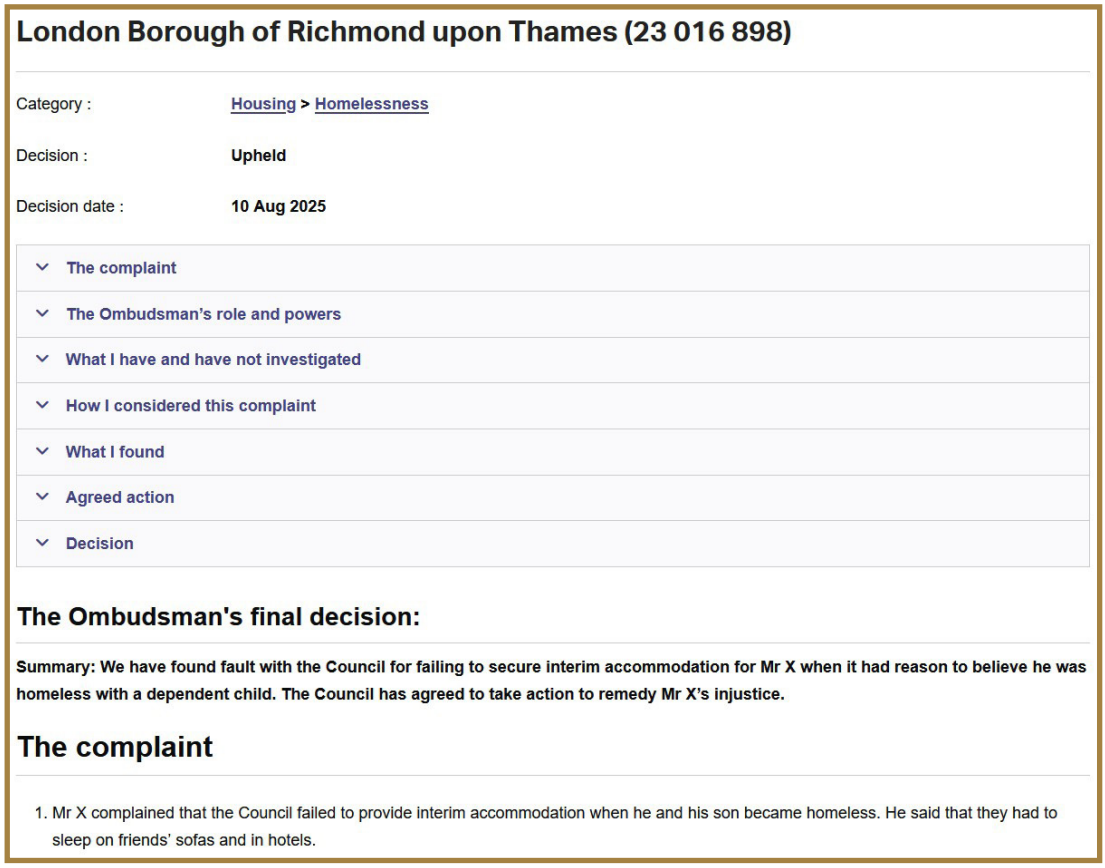
By Michael Jones

Ombudsman finds council at fault

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has found Richmond Council at fault for failing to house a homeless father and his young son, despite clear evidence that they were in priority need.

In a decision published on 10 August, the Ombudsman concluded that the Council had "reason to believe" the pair were homeless and should therefore have secured interim accommodation under the Housing Act 1996. Instead, the family were left for five months without support, moving between friends' sofas and budget hotels.

According to the Ombudsman's report, the father – referred to only as *Mr X* – first approached the Council in October 2023. Although his former partner confirmed that their son regularly stayed with him, Richmond officials disputed the arrangement and refused to provide temporary housing. It was not until March 2024, after further intervention, that accommodation was finally offered.



London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (23 016 898)

Category : Housing > Homelessness

Decision : **Upheld**

Decision date : **10 Aug 2025**

- The complaint
- The Ombudsman's role and powers
- What I have and have not investigated
- How I considered this complaint
- What I found
- Agreed action
- Decision

The Ombudsman's final decision:

Summary: We have found fault with the Council for failing to secure interim accommodation for Mr X when it had reason to believe he was homeless with a dependent child. The Council has agreed to take action to remedy Mr X's injustice.

The complaint

1. Mr X complained that the Council failed to provide interim accommodation when he and his son became homeless. He said that they had to sleep on friends' sofas and in hotels.

The Ombudsman said the delay caused "avoidable distress and uncertainty", including disruption to the boy's education and mental health. The Council has since agreed to apologise and pay £1,000 to Mr X for time spent in unsuitable accommodation, along with additional compensation for distress.

Chronic under delivery and special measures

The case comes at a time when Richmond's wider housing record is already under scrutiny. Despite being one of London's most affluent boroughs, Richmond ranks 31st out of 32 boroughs for affordable housing completions and last overall for net new homes delivered. Only 39 affordable homes were built last year, compared with more than 1,000 in neighbouring Hounslow.

That chronic underperformance prompted the Government to place the borough under special measures following the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) measurement for 2022/23, which found that Richmond had delivered just 60 per cent of its required housing over the previous three years. Falling below the 75 per cent threshold triggered a "presumption in favour of sustainable development" — effectively stripping the Council of some control over planning decisions — and forced it to publish a Housing Delivery Test Action Plan earlier this year. The plan concedes that the borough's delivery has fallen well short of national targets and that more than two-thirds of Richmond's land is constrained by conservation or open space designations.

Liberal Democrat leadership under pressure

While the Council's leadership — headed by Cllr Gareth Roberts, the Liberal Democrat Leader of Richmond Council and now also the Liberal Democrat London Assembly Member for South West London — has frequently emphasised its liberal and internationalist outlook, championing closer ties with the EU, calling for expanded refugee routes, and styling Richmond as a Borough of Sanctuary, critics say those ideals are contradicted by a local planning policy that resists growth and restricts supply. The result, they claim is a borough that speaks of welcome but delivers little capacity to house those who need it.

Richmond's administration has also faced repeated criticism for scaling back or rejecting housing schemes on heritage or design grounds, including major developments at the Stag Brewery and the former Homebase site, both of which were delayed for years after intervention by the Greater London Authority.

A borough caught between principle and delivery

The Ombudsman's decision thus lands in a borough where policy ambition and delivery remain profoundly misaligned. Richmond Council has accepted the findings in full and says it has reviewed its procedures to ensure such failures are not repeated.

Yet the underlying issue persists. In a borough proud of its sanctuary status, a father and child were left without a home for nearly half a year — a quiet but telling reminder that compassion in rhetoric counts for little without the homes to sustain it.

You can read the Ombudsman's report HERE

Next week at Richmond Council

On Tuesday evening, the Policy and Performance Review Board will meet at 7 pm at York House, Twickenham. The agenda includes 1) management of highway grass verges, 2) community toilet scheme, 3) how to make it easier for residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, and 4) how to roll out more use of AI across the council.
For more 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

Twickers Foodie – By Alison Jee

Lucky Oxshott! A Review of The Victoria



Oxshott is somewhere we tend to pass through as a shortcut to the M25, but we always say that it looks such a pretty village and vow to return. Well reader, we certainly will be back very soon, as we've just discovered the most fabulous pub - The Victoria - one that serves seriously superb food.

It has a very cleverly designed interior with areas discreetly curtained off, but it's a classic old English pub with a roaring log fire and the tables comfortably spaced to allow a degree of conversational privacy. It's dog friendly too, and is a nice mixture of village pub and restaurant. We were greeted by another Alison, who lives locally and who gave us some background in the building and the owners. It's not part of a large group - a nice change in the current climate. The back area of the pub, which leads to a pretty garden - has just been decorated to reflect the autumn and it was so pretty.







I settled down with a really good Negroni and soon we were greeted by Daniel Lee, the executive chef, who joined the pub just over a year ago. His stellar background includes senior roles at Seasons Kitchen and Farm Shop, Warbrook House and Pennyhill Park Hotel and he chatted to us about the menu, which changes seasonally and indeed daily, depending on which produce is available. On his suggestion, we ordered starters that were signature dishes...and we weren't disappointed.

My mushroom parfait, with sweet and sour onions and brioche was incredible. I don't think I've ever encountered such depth of flavour in a single mouthful. It was incredibly light in texture, but also very rich, and it was sprinkled with mushroom powder. The intensity of flavour was reminiscent of foie gras, but of course this dish was vegetarian.



My delicate (but more than adequate) portion was totally eclipsed by my husband's starter: crispy pig's head, apple, beetroot, cashew emulsion, basil ... a giant croquette. The portion was very generous (and with a veggie side would in fact make a delicious light lunch). He described it as 'a pulled porkesque rissole' and loved it.



Our starters were accompanied by warm, wonderfully crusty, yet fluffy sourdough, and delicious Ampersand butter.



Daniel had suggested the special pie of the day: fallow deer and Barkham Blue cheese. It is a serving for two, but he insisted that it would be fine for one of us to have it and take the remainder home to enjoy later. That was all the encouragement needed by my pie-loving partner. It arrived resplendent in a piping hot skillet on a wooden board with a central marrow bone topped with crispy onions. It was beautifully seasoned and the blue cheese added a depth and umami note to the filling. It was a triumphant testament to 'proper pies' and a good portion of it was consumed.



I chose another signature dish of English Iberico pork served with sauerkraut, caramelized apple and black pudding with cider jus. This was served with an incredibly crispy slice of puffed pork skin on top, and the slices of pork were delicately pink and tasted wonderfully porcine. The black pudding was crispy and tasted homemade (or at least from an artisan supplier).

The sides we had to accompany our mains were creamed leeks and sweet and sour braised red cabbage. Both were slightly al dente and very good. It made a nice change not to have the cabbage stewed to oblivion as is so often the case.

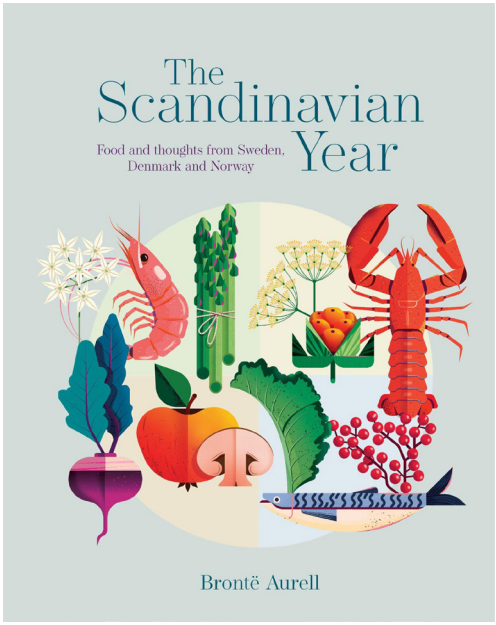
I enjoyed a glass of the house Merlot with my meal and my husband (our driver) just had sparkling water. Needless to say, after this fabulous repast, neither of us had room for any dessert. I'm reliably informed, though, that the sticky toffee pudding is fabulous, but we will be returning soon, as we both feel we've discovered a real culinary treasure. I understand it's famed locally for Sunday lunch, but booking is advised.

I suspect it will be awarded a Michelin star ere long, as it certainly deserves it. (and if you were wondering, the pie was still absolutely superb reheated the next day, and was more than enough for supper for two)

Twickers Foodie – By Alison Jee

The Scandinavian Year

As regular readers will know, I'm such a fan of Scandi food, so when I discovered that **Brontë Aurell**, the Danish-born owner of London's much-loved **ScandiKitchen,** had a new cookbook coming out, I was very keen to review it. ***The Scandinavian Year*** has been published this week - a beautifully written and photographed journey through seasonal Nordic recipes, traditions and rituals. It follows the Scandinavian year from start to finish: delicious winter warmers, springtime baking, midsummer feasts, and fresh summery dishes for next year. It's a hardback, month by month journey through Scandinavia that will make you very keen to book a trip to experience some of that Nordic culture for yourself. But in the meantime, you can always visit one of her two ScandiKitchens in London (Fitzrovia and Victoria) for a spot of delicious food and some Scandi food shopping.



Published by **Ryland Peters & Small at £25**, this is a stunning collection of over 140 Scandinavian recipes.
Here are a couple to whet your Scandi appetite:

ROASTED BEETS WITH DILL (Rødbeder med dill og feta) SERVES 2 AS A SIDE

"An inexpensive and quick side dish to make. You can, of course, roast or boil fresh beetroot for this but I often make this after coming home from work and needing to fix dinner in a jiffy, so I just use pre-cooked beetroot from the supermarket. The nuts can be varied, based on what is hiding in your cupboard – hazelnuts and walnuts are earthy, pecans also work well, as do flaked toasted almonds."

- 250-g packet cooked beetroot
- 1–2 tablespoons runny honey
- a knob of butter
- a glug of oil
- 50 g feta cheese, crumbled
- 10 g fresh dill, chopped
- 25 g toasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped
- rocket leaves, to serve
- pea shoots, to garnish
- salt and freshly ground black pepper



1. Preheat the oven to 200∞C/180∞C fan/400∞F/Gas 6.
2. Cut the beetroot into quarters, then add to an ovenproof dish and drizzle with the honey and a small knob of butter. Season. Roast in the preheated oven for around

15–20 minutes until slightly caramelised.

3. On a serving plate, arrange the rocket leaves, then add the beetroot. Scatter over the feta, dill and hazelnuts. Garnish with pea shoots and serve immediately. I rarely add any dressing but if the beets have gone a little dry, I sometimes add a drizzle of good extra virgin olive oil.

VARIATIONS No dill? Parsley works, as do chervil and tarragon. If you want to roast your own beetroot, I find it easier to pre-boil them on the stove, then peel and cut before roasting.

PISTACHIO CAKE (Mazarin med pistasche) SERVES 6–8

"Across the Nordics, you will find cakes named mazarin in various guises, supposedly named after a 17th-century French-Italian cardinal. Traditionally, a mazarin cake is made with marzipan (or ground almonds), but I have adapted this one to be made with pistachios. It's a simple cake and always served cooled (or even cold), never warm out of the oven, so you can easily make it the day before. If you prefer a more traditional mazarin cake, change the pistachios to ground almonds and add 2-3 teaspoons of almond extract to the batter."

- 200 g shelled pistachios
- 175 g butter, softened
- 200 g caster/granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract or vanilla sugar
- 4 eggs
- 75 g plain flour
- 50 g cornflour
- a pinch of salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder



TOPPING

- 120 g chocolate
- (60% cocoa solids is fine)
- 20 g butter
- chopped pistachios, to decorate
- 25-cm/10-inch round baking pan, greased

1. Preheat the oven to 175°C/155°C fan/350°F/Gas 4.
2. In a food processor, whizz the pistachios until finely ground.
3. In a stand mixer, cream together the butter and sugar, then add the ground nuts, vanilla and the eggs, one by one, ensuring the mixture is incorporated after each addition of egg. Sift the dry ingredients into the mixture and fold in, then pour into the prepared baking pan.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for around 35 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool completely in the pan before turning out onto a serving plate, upside down.
5. For the topping, melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of hot water, then add the butter and stir to mix. Spread thinly over the top of the cooled cake.
6. Decorate with chopped pistachio nuts.

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Travelling News from Crusader

by Bruce Lyons

It`s been a busy Summer down here in the Square.  Summer is always busy, but 2025 was mega busy. Perhaps because there are fewer of us around on the high street, maybe because we`re good and try hard to get it right - but also because we had some changes.

We always have a hectic time with the Great River Race, which- over time - has become an International Event and this year the New England rowers came here “en masse” and we had over 80 rowers here as well as the usual Dutch crews- along with over 1000 rowers bus to the City along with some 400 rooms booked in the borough hotels - all good for the local economy!!

Our Summer travel bookings were amazingly diverse - Sun Sea & Sand and a huge amount of Adventure - The industry as a whole is aware that families look for more “experiences” and that is the best news ever as there is nothing as good as seeing how other communities live, eat and enjoy their country.

Shona has gone to pastures new and we wish her well with her Art that she so wants to pursue and I know she will succeed, thanks for her help all these years.

So, we have had some changes - the Team is now Courtney, who many my remember from 16 year ago , when I was in urgent need of help I found her in the USA with her Dad (she is American, but she was homeward bound anyway, fantastic, and was soon alongside helping out with our complicated “back office” and with a massive Great River Race soon upon me. Iryna (the Ukrainian - who helped last year) returned and helped me get that under control.



All these changes happened at very short notice, so I overworked and had to take a “holiday” in Kingston Hospital, but all is under control now And we, all three, are working hard on your Winter 2025 and Summer 2026 plans, Iryna, who back in Ukraine had her own travel agency has joined our “team” and is now working on the Travel side as well. It was a bit hectic, but all under control now.

We have heaps of unusual enquiries, be it Campervans in Iceland, Whale Sharks in the Far East, 2 weeks in the Philippine Islands and more!!!

So, try us and see if we can deliver your dream holiday - we’re waiting.

Happy Diwali
Bruce

But what would THEY want?

By Deep Patel

~Life Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



This week has been a bit of an odd week for me in my shop, maybe due to changes in the daylight (when it gets dark sooner I always find it makes us all feel a little "off" initially at least). To top that, I was having a conversation with a lovely person who had sadly lost someone very close to them. Death can really affect people differently. In my shop I get to be a part of so many lives from so many different backgrounds and cultures and that's partly why I find it so enriching being a community shopkeeper, people can come in and out of my shop to buy a can of fizzy drink and a newspaper, or a chocolate bar and tell me about their lives too. I have recently had a few customers who have lost people close to them, and something I hear all the time of that really upsets me is how the families of those around the person who has passed away treat others who were close to that person.

You have got to ask yourself when the children of those who have passed never seem to find the time to visit them or even make a phone call to check on them when the person was alive, yet somehow are there like bees to honey when the person passes away... I mean I am not a judgmental person at all, but this is a very common story sadly and like the old saying goes, people begin to show their true colours. There has to be a limit right? I mean the person is already grieving and feeling lost enough as it is, that's when others who were related to the person who passed away should come together to support each other, isn't that what the person who passed away would want most? To see all their loved ones, nearest and dearest coming together to support each other emotionally as well as practically, yet so many do the complete opposite and create undue stress and anxiety at a time that is already arguably one

of the hardest times of a person's life. Why do these others do that and then claim to "love" the person who passed away? If they really loved them, would they not do what the person who passed away would want for most?

To support others who were also a part of that person's life and raise the vibration of positive healing energy for all. Anyone who genuinely loves someone who passes away will do that, but those who are spending more time doing the opposite, and causing friction and pain to others who are also mourning should perhaps ask themselves that if they were never a part of that person's life when they were alive, if they never visited them when alive and if they couldn't even pick up the phone once in a while to check in on them, why suddenly show so much interest when they have gone when all that remains is their assets? I get very upset when I see this happening to my customers and it happens to so many of them, all time, it's not nice and can you imagine how the person who has passed spirit would be feeling? I am usually powerless in these situations as I am not family of those people, so I sit back down silently behind my counter onto my stool and say a little prayer, that may those who are falling into ignorance at this time be guided to bring peace to each other rather than create conflict. Things have to be done, but there is always a kinder way.

After all, the loss of a loved one reminds and teaches us that "life is too short"...we all have two choices...to be reasonable, support and love each other or create misery and pain, anxiety and fear for others who are also mourning...ask yourself...what would the person who has passed away want you to do? After all this is about them and should be, otherwise everything else is just ego, and none of us can escape our own karma, so whenever we have an opportunity... make it good...share love and support to those around you who may also be facing difficult time...you never know when it could be your own turn to be on the receiving end, my message this week is simply to...be kind...we are all humans after all and all hurt...love and be loved... peace will reign and ease the pain and all who show love will be blessed from above...to all my customers whom I spoke to on this topic during this past week, when I close my shop tonight, I will pray for the peace of your loved ones and even more for the families of those loved ones here to understand and support each other, because it's only when we support each other that the person who has passed away will truly feel peace...at that is all that matters in the end... peace and love to you all.

Remember...

"if you are hurting...others may be too...be kind"

CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK:

FOR LITTLE BEETLES...
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

Mark Aspen
www.markaspen.wordpress.com
Expressing the art of the theatre critic

Mozart's Women – A Musical Journey

English National Opera and Factory Films at the London Coliseum



It's not often you get to hear an entire evening of Mozart's female divas, but this occasion proved to be just the ticket for a binge of 18th Century arias, duets and small ensembles.
Mozart's Women was performed by a carefully curated ensemble of rising young singers, and accompanied by the ENO orchestra under the assured baton of Clelia Cafiero.

In a bold staging choice by Artistic Director Annilese Miskimmon, the musicians were assembled on stage rather than in the pit. They were framed by red velvet drapery and resplendent chandeliers that transformed the Coliseum into a glittering salon. This glamorous evening, hosted by *Desert Island Discs* presenter Lauren Laverne was enchanting from the outset. Whilst providing narrative interludes introducing each piece, she guided the audience through Mozart's life and his relationships with his women.



Mozart loved women. He was fascinated, intrigued and betrayed by them so it's no wonder the real women in his life were depicted on stage. There were clearly two kinds of women – those who were real and those who were imaginary, the latter no doubt inspired nevertheless by mothers, sisters and lovers.

Underpinning Mozart's ascent to stardom was his devoted mother Anna Maria. She was the driving force behind his success. It was her personal sacrifices that led to her untimely death, aged 58, in a cold and dank Parisian hotel room. Anna Maria was remarkable. With no formal education, yet she married well to court violinist Leopold Mozart. Their two prodigiously gifted children fleetingly propelled them into the highest cultural circles in Europe. Drifting through the performance in period costume, a silent young Wolfgang Mozart served as a gentle reminder that the prodigy composed his first opera *Bastien und Bastienne* at the astonishing age of twelve.



But the most influential women in Mozart's life was his beloved wife Constanze Weber. Not only was she a fine singer but a perfect companion and observant advisor. For her, the sisters in *Così fan tutte,* whose fidelity is tested by their suitors, go from 'carefree society girls to distraught neurotics'.

Mozart may have written for the stage, but it is his women who continue to command it. This elegant evening proved their brilliance, both musically and emotionally.

Read Helen Astrid's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/15/mozarts-women

Photography by Chris Lobina, (c) Sky Arts

Mark Aspen
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Expressing the art of the theatre critic

Inspector Morse: House of Ghosts

by Alma Cullen, based on characters by Colin Dexter
Production Solutions at Richmond Theatre, and on tour until 11th April 2026



It is tempting to re-title this much anticipated adaptation of a TV favourite, "*An Inspector Makes Noises Off*". The opening scene involves a production of *Hamlet*, playing at an Oxford theatre. Suddenly, an authoritative voice calls out from the (actual Richmond audience) to halt the action, and Morse marches from his seat waving his warrant card. Immediately *Hamlet*'s director strides from the back of the auditorium with equally authoritative protestations. A loud burst of *Morse* TV theme lets us know that things have now really begun.

Morse has been at the theatre with Ellen (Teresa Banham), whom would prefer to refer to as "a friend". Their interesting relationship deserves exploration. They were at Oxford together, as coincidentally, was the play's director. The plot unfolds around both contemporary (1987) relationships and those between Morse and his fellow students of 25 years ago, the "ghosts" of the title and an echo of *Hamlet*'s play within a play.



There are some stock characters, older actress Verity, propped up by alcohol and Justin, the sensitive young lead (an endearing double act between Charlotte Randle and Spin Glancy). Robert Mountford clearly has a ball playing the bullying, egotistical director, Laurence, with an extrovert rich-American wife Harriet.

Anthony Banks' direction seems strangely laboured. Morse, Lewis and their foibles are well known to their audience, who surely are able to see a bit of nuance. Alma Cullen is an accomplished TV writer, but writing for the stage can be tricky. Locations are not an issue on screen, whereas on stage a fair few scene transfers are clunky. There is a lack of balance here, particularly the Hamlet element, which suggests the play doesn't know what it wants to be. Is it a parody or to be taken seriously? Tom Chambers, though not aiming for a John Thaw impersonation, has acquired his mannerisms, but he plays the sensitive, clever, somewhat tortured detective with a skill that rather elevates him over the rest – it's a great performance but it adds to the imbalance.

The Morse 'brand' may be strong enough to sustain this production, and its audience seemed willing to go with what they saw, but the TV version stays favourite.

Read Eleanor Lewis's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/18/morse-ghosts

Photography by Johan Persson

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The Sicilian Vespers

by Giuseppe Verdi, libretto by Eugène Scribe and Charles Duveyrier
The Royal Ballet and Opera at Covent Garden



The 1855 operatic French-Italian mongrel, *Les Vêpres siciliennes*, is on it's third outing at The Royal Opera House. The bloodlines of this four-hour behemoth are genetically far apart. Verdi, at the top of his form, produced a wonderful score that does not have the fully composed-through music of his contemporaneous, *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, and *Il Travatore*, yet as high as any of his work. The other bloodline is an outdated operatic straitjacket, the genre Verdi was reacting against. Napoleon III was heading a prosperous, rapidly industrialising country, that had opera at its cultural heart. So bigger, the better, which meant a five act grand opera, usually based of a quasi-historical event, a ballet after the interval; in total a dramatic spectacle.



It's an operatic opportunity to embrace and savour Verdi despite the deficiencies in the plot. The music is coupled with an expensive set, an opera house with ballet barres and mirrors, and tiered seating with ornate gold-leaf balconies; plus lavish costumes, rare in these financially strained times.

Sefan Herheim, the director, moves the setting from the 1282 revolt in Sicily to a representation L'Opéra Garnier in the 19th Century. The action is moved to the conflicts between artists and the public – a simile that's stretched to incomprehension.

Speranza Scappucci never flags, conducting with verve and precision. She brings warmth and contrast out of the orchestra, supporting the singers and fully revealing the Verdi score, which is enhanced by a Degas-inspired corps de ballet with its fine technique and poise.



The lovely Lebanese-Canadian Verdi specialist Joyce El-Khouri, playing Helene, her debut in this role, is excellent and sings superbly, rising to the Fourth Act challenges. As Henri, Valentyn Dytiuk lacks gesture, but more than makes up for it in the last two acts where his qualities become apparent. Quinn Kelsy, playing Guy de Montfort, is a star throughout, and Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, as Jean Procida, although at home on the stage, is perhaps the weakest of the very strong cast.

This *vêpres siciliennes* makes a great night of well-conducted Verdi, with a strong cast, and an attractive set, enlivened by the omnipresent ballerinas. However, Herheim's interpretation does add confusion rather than clarity to a long evening.

Read Michael Rowlands' review at www.markaspen.com/2025/10/01/vepres-roh

Photography by Tristram Kenton

Mark Aspen
www.markaspen.wordpress.com
Expressing the art of the theatre critic

Top Hat

by Irving Berlin, adapted by Matthew White and Howard Jacques
Kenny Wax for Chichester Festival Productions at the New Wimbledon Theatre until 18th October and then on tour until 11th April 2026



Chichester Theatre's musicals tend to be outstandingly good and often transfer from the south coast. Recent examples include *Crazy for You*, *South Pacific*, and *Oliver*. If this version of *Top Hat* isn't quite at that level, it's still a damn good show and makes for an enjoyable evening.

Part of the reason, dare one say, is Irving Berlin's songs. Yes, *Puttin' on the Ritz*, *Cheek to Cheek*, *Let's Face the Music and Dance* are all classics, even if some of them, after a good start, fade into the agreeable dance music that populates so much of the show. There is something inexorably magnolia at the heart of his writing; tension and spice that would make a number truly memorable are often missing. Never was there a show where the dramatic stakes were so low. We know all will be well as soon as the heroine realises that the hero isn't her friend's husband.



Kathleen Marshall's direction and choreography is slick and efficient and makes the most of the chorus numbers. Peter McKintosh's stylish set looks enables the many rapid scene changes. Yes, all is admirable and impressive, but somehow still a bit processed and unexciting.

Philip Attmore is a bit smug and arrogant, but this is arguably part of the character, yet he seems to be a bit heavy footed when it comes to tap dancing. He wasn't helped by the wide trousers that Yvonne Milnes favoured for the men, although her costumes were otherwise rather splendid. The ensemble did a great job at switching from being individuals to members of a well-drilled chorus line. Lindsay Atherton, a last-minute substitution, fitted in well as Dale Tremont. James Hulme and Sally Ann Triplett provided some effective comedy and much needed edge. *Outside of That, I Love You* was the best number in the show. James Clyde as the lugubrious butler Bates made the most of his terrible jokes. Alex Gibson-Giorgio did the best he could with the embarrassingly stereotyped Italian fashion designer.



Top Hat is a lovely lavish show, but remains at heart something to take your grandmother to.

Read Patrick Shorrock's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/10/15/top-hat-nwt
Photography by Johan Persson

A Tale for Winter

at the Mary Wallace Theatre
October 25th - November 1st

From October 25th to November 1st the Richmond Shakespeare Society will be presenting Shakespeare's rarely performed THE WINTER's TALE.





King Leontes mistakenly suspects Queen Hermione of adultery, his jealousy unleashing catastrophic repercussions - a wife lost, a child lost, a chastened king in mourning. But years later and in another country, truths are revealed, lovers united, reconciliations made.

The threads of high tragedy, romantic idyll, bucolic humour - and a malevolent bear - are spun and, later, drawn together in this enchanting and not-to-be-missed tale - THE WINTER's TALE.

Booking now at www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk

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

Rehearsal photography – COLIN ROGAL

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TW1 3DT

James Bradwell to star as Sergeant Gavin Troy in Midsomer Murders

Adapted for the stage and directed by Guy Unsworth. Based on the Caroline Graham novel and the ITV series

James Bradwell (Lord Basilio in Bridgerton) will star opposite Daniel Casey (Inspector Tom Barnaby) as Sergeant Gavin Troy in the world premiere of Guy Unsworth's stage adaptation of Midsomer Murders: The Killings at Badger's Drift, based on the book by Caroline Graham, The Killings at Badger's Drift, and the television series Midsomer Murders produced by Bentley Productions [for ITV] in association with All3Media International.

The tour will open **at Richmond Theatre on 24 October**, with a national press night on Thursday 30 October, and the tour has been extended through to June 2026. New dates have been added to the tour, in Cambridge, Oxford and Dublin.



The residents of Midsomer will be played by a multi-roling ensemble of actors: Nathalie Barclay, Chandrika Chevli, John Dougall, Julie Legrand, Rupert Sadler, Chris Agha and Rhîan Crowley-McLean.

When well-loved spinster Emily Simpson is found dead in the picturesque village of Badger's Drift, her friend Lucy Bellringer refuses to accept it was an accident. DCI Tom Barnaby and Sergeant Gavin Troy are called in to investigate, uncovering a world of hidden passions, long-buried secrets and deadly rivalries.

With eccentric villagers, shocking twists and an unforgettable reveal, The Killings at Badger's Drift is a classic whodunit that will keep audiences on the edge of their seats. Bringing to life the wit, charm and chilling suspense of the beloved television series and original series of books, this gripping and thrilling new show will entrance theatre audiences.

James Bradwell's theatre credits include The Beautiful Future Is Coming (Traverse, Bristol Old Vic), The Garden of Words (Park Theatre), Not Yet Midnight (Royal Court), Corrina, Corrina (Headlong, Liverpool Everyman), My Night with Reg (Turbine Theatre), Romeo & Juliet, Richard III (Shakespeare's Rose Theatre) and Read Not Dead (Shakespeare's Globe).

Midsomer Murders: The Killings at Badger's Drift will be directed by Guy Unsworth, with design by David Woodhead, lighting design by Matt Haskins, sound design by Ella Wahlström, music by Max Pappenheim and casting by Ginny Schiller CDG.

Local MP Visits Sue Ryder's Twickenham Shop for Hospice Care Week

National palliative care and bereavement charity, Sue Ryder was delighted to welcome the MP for Twickenham, Munira Wilson, to its Twickenham shop, to mark Hospice Care Week.

The Sue Ryder shop plays a vital role in raising funds to provide end-of-life care to people in their own homes and the charity's hospices, as well as funding its free bereavement support.

During the visit, Munira Wilson MP was given a tour of the shop, met with staff and volunteers, and learnt more about the important contribution local people make by donating unwanted items, shopping sustainable, and giving their time.

Volunteers also spoke about the benefits of being part of the Sue Ryder shop team, from making new friends to developing skills and confidence.



The MP also met Sue Ryder's Policy Manager, Nina Trendell, who outlined the valuable role the charity's shop plays in the local community, offering shoppers' affordable pre-loved options and the local community volunteering and employment opportunities, all of which helps support the charity's care.

Munira Wilson MP also heard how Sue Ryder is calling on the government to improve the provision of palliative and end-of-life care to ensure no one faces death or grief alone.

Munira Wilson MP said:
"It was fantastic to visit the Sue Ryder shop today and meet with the amazing volunteers and shop staff, as well as learn more about the palliative care and bereavement support the charity provides.
"Not only does this shop raise funds for the charity's important work, but it offers brilliant volunteering opportunities and helps the environment by enabling the reuse of perfectly good items that might have ended up in landfill."

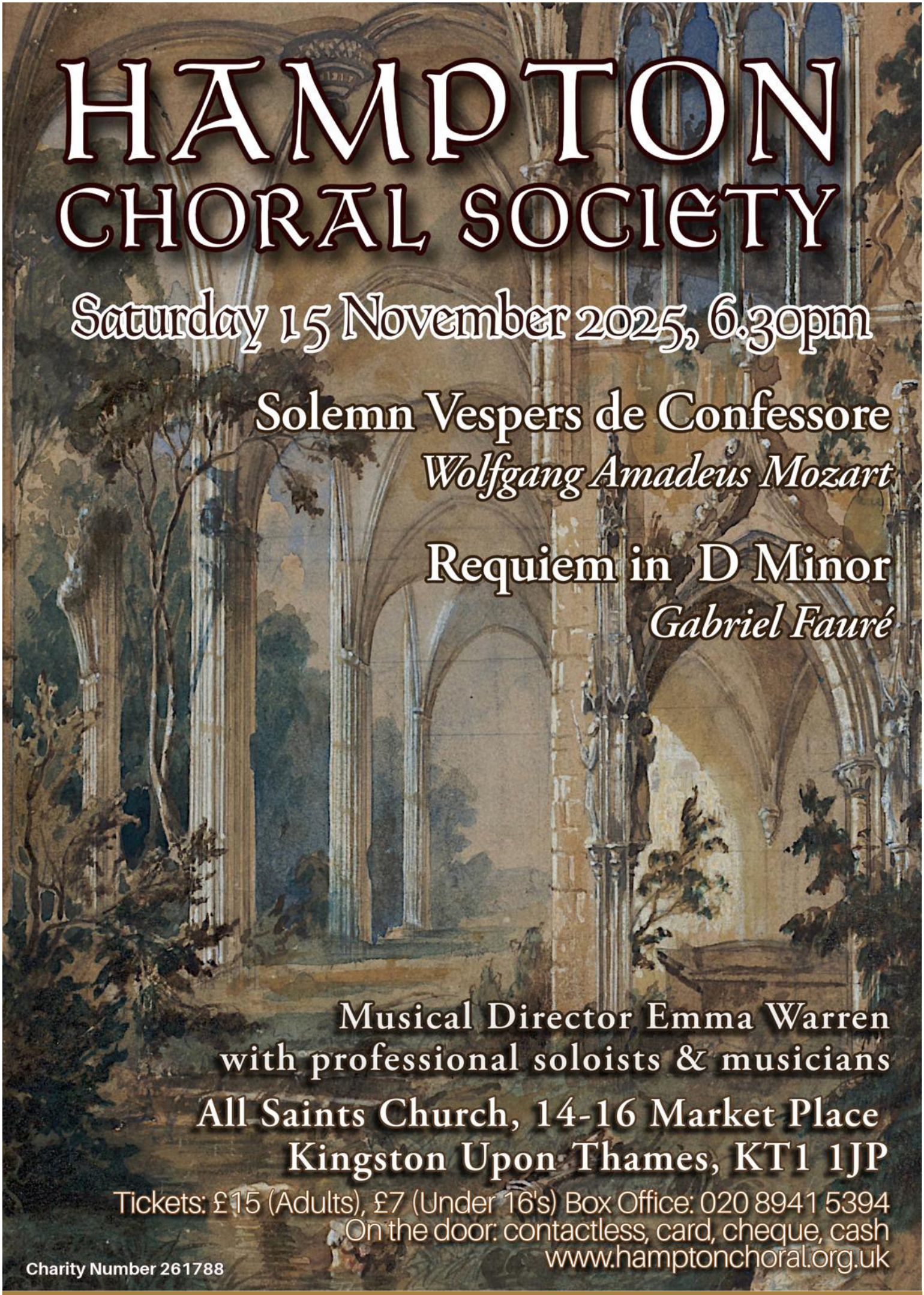
Commenting on the visit, Sue Ryder's Policy Manager, Nina Trendell said:
"We are grateful to Munira for visiting our shop to hear about the positive impact we have on the local community. Our shop not only gives pre-loved items a new lease of life, which benefits the environment, it also provides volunteering opportunities and helps us raise the funds to help Sue Ryder ensure that no one faces dying or grief alone.

"We'd love to welcome more people to our shop. Whether it's pre-loved shopping with us, donating unwanted items, or volunteering your time, your support really does make a real difference."

The Sue Ryder Twickenham shop is located at 76/80 Heath Road and opens from Monday to Friday between 9.30am-5pm and Sundays from 10am-4pm.

For more information and to find out about volunteering opportunities, visit sueryder.org/shop

Because no one should face death or grief alone


HAMPTON
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Saturday 15 November 2025, 6.30pm
Solemn Vespers de Confessore
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
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Gabriel Fauré
Musical Director Emma Warren
with professional soloists & musicians
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On the door: contactless, card, cheque, cash
www.hamptonchoral.org.uk
Charity Number 261788

Barnes runner takes on Great South Run in memory of his father

From Leukaemia Care

This weekend, 44-year-old Jens Kleyenstuber from Barnes, London, will be lacing up his running shoes to take on the Great South Run in Portsmouth - a 10-mile challenge he's completing in memory of his late father, who died from acute myeloid leukaemia (AML).



Jens, a father of one and who works in finance for the Cornerstone Healthcare Group, is raising funds for Leukaemia Care, the national charity dedicated to supporting people, and their families, affected by blood cancer.

Two years after being diagnosed with AML, Jens' father sadly passed away, and his memory has been the driving force behind Jens' months of preparation. Despite facing his own physical challenges, including a serious leg injury that left him with 15 screws and a plate in his knee, Jens has spent the past five months training steadily for the event.

Jens said: *"Two years after being diagnosed with AML, my father's brave battle came to an end. He was a profound influence in my life - the cornerstone of who I am. Running these 10 miles is my tribute to him and to everyone affected by blood cancer. Supporting Leukaemia Care feels like the most meaningful way to honour his memory. A few years ago, I suffered a severe accident that led to a reconstructed tibial plateau. At the time, my surgeon told me I'd be lucky to walk normally again. Taking on the Great South Run is not just about fundraising, it's about proving what's possible."*

The Great South Run, held annually in Portsmouth, is one of the UK's most popular running events. Thousands of participants take part each year, enjoying a fast, flat 10-mile course that passes through Portsmouth's historic dockyard and along the scenic seafront.

Colin Dyer, chief executive of Leukaemia Care, said: *"We are incredibly grateful to Jens for taking on such a remarkable challenge in memory of his father. His story is a powerful reminder of the resilience and determination shown by so many touched by blood cancer. Every pound Jens raises helps us continue providing vital emotional, financial, and practical support to those affected by leukaemia and other blood cancers."*

Jens added that he's been overwhelmed by the generosity of his friends and contacts, many of whom have donated after hearing his story. *"Most of them know what my dad meant to me,"* he said. *"Their support has been amazing."*

To support Jens' fundraising efforts for Leukaemia Care, visit: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jenskleyenstuber

Leukaemia Care
YOUR Blood Cancer Charity

St Mary's University

Guardians of Creation Project from St Mary's University Features on Vatican's Laudato Si' Action Platform

St Mary's University, London's Guardians of Creation Project has been featured on the Vatican's Laudato Si Action Platform, which supports Catholic institutions and individuals in working towards ecological sustainability inspired by Pope Francis's encyclical Laudato Si'.



The contribution by Dr Jakub Kowalewski, Senior Laudato Si' Research Fellow at St Mary's, explores lessons from the Guardian of Creation Project, and reflects on how faith communities can respond to the environment with hope, collaboration and intergenerational solidarity.

In Lessons from the Guardians of Creation Project, Dr Kowalewski shares insights from parish and school workshops on integral ecology across England, including

- The power of small actions for long term change.
- The importance of listening to young and older people.
- The role of collaboration and networks.
- Pope Francis's call for intergenerational solidarity for environmental justice.

Through its research, partnerships and educational outreach, St Mary's University continues to provide a leading role in the Church's response to climate change and ecological degradation. The Guardians of Creation Project's inclusion on the Vatican's Laudato Si Action Platform underscores the international significance of its work.

For more, read Dr Kowalewski's full article on the Laudato Si' Action Platform: Lessons from the Guardians of Creation Project.

About the Guardians of Creation Project

St Mary's Guardians of Creation Project is an interdisciplinary and multi-institutional research programme, which looks at multiple pathways to sustainable and ecological change in the Catholic Church.

The project provides guidance on how faith-based organisations can respond effectively to the ecological crisis. Through collaboration with dioceses, schools, and religious orders, the initiative supports the development of sustainability strategies rooted in Catholic social teaching.
Guardians of Creation Project

Free education resources

Additionally, the project has released free teaching toolkits for educators, which provides read-made lessons plans and materials that explore the Catholic Church's approach to ecology.

Find out more.

St Mary's University Twickenham London

Squads Confirmed for Women's Pathway Positional Camps

The England Rugby Women's Pathway have announced two groups for the opening positional camp of the 2025/26 season.

Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre will host the camp for the U18 to U23 age-grades from this Friday (17th), aiming to increase understanding of the requirements of their specific positions in the senior professional environment.

England U20 Women's head coach LJ Lewis and England U18 Women's head coach James Cooper will be joined by 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup winning coaches Sarah Hunter, Nathan Catt, Louis Deacon and Lou Meadows across the weekend. The core coaching group will be joined by other coaches from across the wider pathway and consultants focusing on specific areas of the game.

Bespoke programmes for the respective 37 forwards and 28 backs centre around positional skill refinement including breakdown, set-piece, kicking and passing. These will all be aligned to the key identified game moments outlined in the pathway curriculum.

Following this week's meeting, Cooper and Oli Perry's U18 Women's team will reconvene at Loughborough University on 7th November for the first meeting of a wider emerging England player group.

LJ Lewis said: *"Heading into a fresh campaign, we're incredibly excited and motivated after an historic summer by our Red Roses.*
"As a pathway, we want to maximise our players' technical understanding of their positional demands, with this weekend a crucial touchpoint in their development and opportunity for players to take ownership over their own journey.
"Our purpose across the weekend is to increase the understanding of positional and unit skillsets and demands for our best pathway talent. We are excited to have the Red Roses coaches across the camp to help players gain a deeper understanding of the unique physical, tactical, and technical requirements of their specific positions."

Charlie Hayter, RFU Head of Women's Performance, said: *"The Women's Pathway is committed to inspiring and equipping players to grow as world-leading rugby players for future generations.*
"This camp is a stepping stone in building on the legacy of the Red Roses' success last month, providing young players with high-calibre, detailed coaching that will benefit the players and our system in the short and long-term.
"Whether it's their first or one of many pathway camps, we encourage the invited players to seize the camp as a quality learning opportunity and engage in various elements across the weekend."

England Rugby Women's Pathway forwards positional camp squad (includes club or PDG site and school/ college)
Jasmine Adonri (Trailfinders)
Kacey Andrews (Emma Mitchell PDG) *
Holly Bagnowiec (Jo Yapp PDG, Hartpury College) *
Lukcyana Baleisolomone (Maggie Alphonsi PDG, Oaklands College) *
Tamsin Baynes (Loughborough Lightning)
Joia Bennett (Saracens)
Gabriella Brown (Trailfinders)
Grace Clifford (Loughborough Lightning)
Kayhne Farimo (Karen Almond PDG, Bishop Burton College) *
Chloe Flanagan (Saracens)
Hannah Foley (Maggie Alphonsi PDG, City of Oxford College) *
Zara Green (Harlequins)
Haidee Head (Trailfinders)
Elizabeth Hirons (Nolli Waterman PDG, Exeter College) *
Rose Hooper (Nolli Waterman PDG, Exeter College) *
Darcy Howchin (Jo Yapp PDG, Hartpury College) *

Aisha Jah (Bristol Bears)
Hayley Jones (Trailfinders)
Grace Keel (Nolli Waterman PDG, SGS)
Honey Kerslake (Nolli Waterman PDG, Exeter College) *
Olivia Lloyd (Jo Yapp PDG, Hartpury College) *
Freya McGinley (Trailfinders)
Sophie McQueen (Gloucester-Hartpury)
Alesia de Mello Leitao (Becky Essex PDG, Loughborough College) *
Aisla Merryweather (Surrey University)
Annabel Meta (Trailfinders)
Maddy Page (Harlequins)
Heidi Pashaei-Tarighoun (Bristol Bears)
Lilly Plowman (Exeter Chiefs)
Ruby Ross (Becky Essex PDG, Oaklands College) *
Demelza Short (Bristol Bears)
Saffiya Smaili (Emma Mitchell PDG, Hartpury College) *
Isabel van der Straaten (Bristol Bears)
Jodie Verghese (Saracens)
Ruby West (Emma Mitchell PDG, City of Oxford College) *
Amelia Williams (Loughborough Lightning)
Ruby Winstanley (Harlequins)
**denotes U18 player*

England Rugby Women's Pathway backs positional camp squad (includes club or PDG site and school/college)
Ashton Adcock (Loughborough Lightning)
Isla Apiafi (Hartpury College) *
Reneeqa Bonner (Bristol Bears)
Charlotte Brookes (Rachael Burford PDG, Cranleigh School) *
Molly Bunker (Gloucester-Hartpury)
Ella Cromack (Harlequins)
Millie David (Bristol Bears)
Isabel Fortune Davis (Karen Almond PDG, The Sheffield College) *
Elizabeth Duffy (Sale Sharks)
Izzy Firth (Nolli Waterman PDG, Exeter College) *
Alice Fleming (Jo Yapp PDG, Hartpury College) *
Maddie Flutey (Exeter Chiefs)
Beth Hall (Nolli Waterman PDG, Exeter College) *
Megan Howells (Jo Yapp PDG, CIty of Oxford College) *
Millie Hyett (Gloucester-Hartpury)
Jemma Jo-Linkins (Saracens)
Sereana Matebalavu (Nolli Waterman PDG, Millfield School) *
Amelia MacDougall (Saracens)
Carmela Morrall (Loughborough Lightning)
Lavinia Natui (Becky Essex PDG, Oaklands College) *
Sarah Parry (Harlequins)
Tilly Pulfer (Exeter University)
Dita Shaw (Rachael Burford PDG, Worthing College) *
Solana Shaw de Leon (Harlequins)
Summer Smith (Maggie Alphonsi PDG, City of Oxford College) *
Hannah Smyth (Gloucester-Hartpury)
Molly Symonds (Emma Mitchell PDG, Trowbridge) *
Eva Wood (Sale Sharks)

**denotes U18 player*

Match Preview: West Ham United v Brentford

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford travel to London Stadium on Monday (8pm kick-off GMT), live on *Sky Sports*.

The Bees have won three of their four Premier League visits to the Hammers, who are set for their first home game under Nuno Espírito Santo. Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know before kick-off.



Pre-match Analysis

Stephen Gillett, *Playmaker Stats*: Set-pieces have been costly for West Ham

West Ham head coach Nuno Espírito Santo will be looking to instil some much-needed defensive stability when the Hammers host Brentford this coming Monday.

Nuno has overseen a 1-1 draw with Everton and a 2-0 defeat against Arsenal since succeeding Graham Potter in the dugout, and his first order of business is to shore up the Premier League's leakiest defence.

This season, the Hammers have shipped more goals (16) than any of their top-tier rivals and currently have the worst goal difference (-10) in the division.

Tipped to return to a back three, after trialling a 3-5-2 formation in a behind-closed-doors friendly during the international break, Nuno has a track record of improving teams defensively.

The Hammers have already conceded eight goals from set-pieces this term - twice as many as any other Premier League team - and tightening up in that area will be a priority for the east Londoners.

Fortunately, the Portuguese head coach's record suggests he is just the man for the job.

Under his guidance last season, Nottingham Forest scored more goals from corners, throw-ins and free-kicks (17) than any other top-tier side and conceded just nine from them - the same number as eventual champions Liverpool.

Brentford, meanwhile, have long been strong in this department. Even though Keith Andrews' side have only scored once from a set-piece in the league this season (Fábio Carvalho's late leveller against Chelsea), almost half (47%) of their set-piece deliveries have led to a shot - the highest rate in the league.

A fascinating derby awaits, with both sides keen to hit the ground running after the recent international hiatus. It could prove a cagey tactical battle, with both teams looking to remain solid at the back while springing forward on the counter.

This could bode well for the visitors, as no side has scored more Premier League goals on the counter attack than Brentford (3) this term - just one shy of the four they managed on the break in 2024/25.

Perhaps the key dilemma facing Andrews and his coaching staff is how to amplify the trends in many of their early-season statistics.

When it comes to the quality of the chances they are creating, the expected goals metric shows that the Bees are out on their own this season: their xG-per-shot of 0.17 is the best in the top flight.

Similarly, the west Londoners' shot-on-target percentage of 42% is the cream of the crop.

On the other hand, Brentford have taken just 55 shots in total in league play, their 7.86 shots-per-90 trailing behind their Premier League peers.

It's a classic 'quality versus quantity' conundrum for the Bees, in many ways, and Andrews' side will look to boost the latter without sacrificing the former under the lights at London Stadium.

Scout Report
Dan Long, *Sky Sports*: Hammers must pick up results quickly

Graham Potter said it was *"like Christmas for adults"* when he spoke after being appointed West Ham manager, on a two-and-a-half-year deal on 9 January.

That initial novelty wore off pretty quickly, though, as he lost his first game in charge against Aston Villa in the FA Cup third round and took only four points from his first five Premier League games in charge.

Potter's side did achieve back-to-back league victories for the first time in almost a year when they beat Arsenal and Leicester in February, but they only picked up two wins from the final 11 to finish 14th for the second time in the last three seasons.

Had Ipswich, Leicester and Southampton not struggled quite so badly, a return of 37 points with three games to play might have put them right in the thick of the relegation battle.

In only six of their 29 seasons in the Premier League, up to the end of last season, had they lost more games (17) and in only five of those 29 had they conceded more goals (62).

"I'm excited about the whole season ahead," Potter told the club's official website two days before the first game of the season at newly-promoted Sunderland. And why would that not have been the case? The Hammers had a positive pre-season on the pitch and in the transfer market.

But they were humbled by the Black Cats. Then thumped 5-1 by Chelsea. Then knocked out of the Carabao Cup by Wolves. A 3-0 win at Nottingham Forest - in a game that was still 0-0 after 83 minutes - should have provided a springboard going into the international break, but further defeats to Tottenham and Crystal Palace followed.

Potter was sacked on 27 September after less than nine months. He was in charge for three games more than Julen Lopetegui (25 vs 22), yet won one game fewer (6 vs 7). No permanent manager in the club's history has a lower win ratio than his 24 per cent.

18 days after his own departure from Nottingham Forest, the same day, Nuno Espírito Santo signed a

three-year contract to replace Potter at London Stadium.

The Portuguese has only taken charge of two games so far, both of which came within a week of his arrival so, arguably, he cannot be judged yet. But the October international break will have been utilised well; it is the perfect time for any manager to get ideas across uninterrupted.

And he needs to start picking up results quickly; West Ham will stay among the bookies' favourites for relegation until they do.

In the Dugout
Nuno Espírito Santo

Once signed by José Mourinho during his time at Porto, Nuno Espírito Santo had a long career as a goalkeeper - though often played second fiddle - primarily spent in Portugal and Spain, with time in Russia at Dynamo Moscow during 2005 and 2006.

Nuno retired in 2010, after his second spell at Porto, but quickly went on to become a goalkeeper coach at Malaga and then Panathinaikos, working with his former manager Jesualdo Ferreira each time. He returned to Portugal to take on his first managerial role with Rio Ave in the summer of 2012 and remained at the club for two years.

He was then hired by Valencia, whom he guided to a fourth-place finish in La Liga in 2014/15, though he resigned less than four months into the following campaign after three defeats in their first five Champions League group matches, as well as five wins from the first 13 league matches, which left them languishing in ninth when he departed.

Porto decided to take a chance on their former player in 2016/17, yet he only saw out half of his two-year deal as the club opted to replace him the following summer after he failed to deliver silverware, despite losing only six of his 49 games in charge.

The 51-year-old is perhaps best known for the four years he spent at Wolves. He joined the club at the end of a chaotic 2016/17 campaign - during which they had three permanent managers - and led them to promotion out of the Championship at the first time of asking.

In 2019/20, Wolves recorded their joint-highest Premier League finish (7th) and their highest points tally (59), as well as reaching the quarter-final of the Europa League.

Having left Molineux by mutual consent in June 2021, Nuno went to Tottenham and started well with three-straight Premier League wins. Ultimately, he lasted only four months in the job, having followed up those victories with five defeats in the next seven.

He then spent 16 months in Saudi Arabia, guiding Al-Ittihad to the Saudi Pro League title and Saudi Super Cup, and returned to England just before Christmas 2023, having been dismissed little over a month earlier, to join Nottingham Forest.

In his first season at the City Ground, Nuno helped Forest retain their Premier League status by a margin of six points and in his one and only full season there, he guided the club to their highest finish since 1994/95 and Europe for the first time since 1995/96. He was sacked on 9 September, but signed a three-year deal at West Ham 18 days later.

Chancellor's new investment fast track to make Britain top destination for global investors

The Chancellor has launched a new one-stop support service to make the UK more attractive to global investors and create jobs and opportunities for working people across the UK.

The new 'concierge' service will help global financial services firms pick locations, navigate regulation and get to grips with the Britain's business environment – removing barriers to investment in the UK.

The Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced the fully operational Office for Investment: Financial Services during the IMF's Annual Meetings in Washington DC.



The free service, delivered by the Office for Investment, is a partnership between HM Treasury, financial regulators and the City of London Corporation and delivers on commitments made in Reeves' Mansion House speech to reduce regulatory uncertainty and make Britain the best place in the world to invest and do business.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves said: *"We said we would make it easier to create jobs and grow a business in our country and we're delivering. This service will drive investment across our United Kingdom, making sure that the world's most innovative businesses can access the talent found in every corner of our country and that working people feel better off."*

Financial services employ 1.2 million people across the UK, with more than half of those jobs located outside London. The Chancellor's Leeds Reforms outlined her vision to strengthen Britain's position as a global financial hub, and overseas investment – particularly from the US – helps deliver on the government's plan for national renewal.

The Office for Investment: Financial Services will draw on the strengths of our financial services clusters - from Leeds to Liverpool and Belfast to Bristol - to actively promote actively promote investment opportunities and help deliver the infrastructure that matters to working people across all of the UK's nations and regions.

These deeper financial services links between the UK-US come after an historic State Visit, which renewed the special relationship between the two countries for a new era.

A record £150 billion of inward investment from US companies was secured, creating more than 7,600 high-quality jobs across the UK in places like Glasgow, Warrington and the Midlands. The first ever UK-US tech agreement was also signed, focused on developing technologies which will drive growth like AI, quantum and nuclear.

HM Treasury

New Private Gynaecology Clinic Opens in Richmond Amid Long NHS Waits

From London Gynaecology

With over a third of women on gynaecology waiting lists in southwest London waiting more than 18 weeks, London Gynaecology, one of the most trusted names in women's healthcare, is opening a new private clinic in Richmond on 20th October to provide faster, specialist care.

Earlier this year, Richmond emerged as the UK's number one town for women embracing motherhood in their late 30s and 40s, with most babies born to women over 35 and one in ten births to women aged 40 or over. With more women starting families later in life, demand is rising for personalised gynaecology services such as fertility checks, menopause support, and reproductive health advice. The new London Gynaecology clinic in Richmond is designed to meet this demand, offering expert care close to home.



Full Range of Women's Health Services

Located on Paradise Road in the heart of Richmond, the clinic offers a full suite of gynaecology services, including early pregnancy care, fibroid treatment, menopause management, endometriosis care, and sexual health support, to name just a few. The team is led by senior NHS consultants with extensive expertise and a strong commitment to patient-centred care.

Free Menopause Drop-in Event

The launch coincides with World Menopause Day. So, to mark the opening, London Gynaecology Richmond hosts today a **free menopause drop-in session at 2pm**, led by Dr Claire Phipps, an experienced and supportive GP and BMS menopause specialist. The session will give local women the chance to ask Dr Phipps questions and receive expert guidance in a supportive setting. With limited places contact London Gynaecology to secure your spot.

Dr Claire Phipps said: *"We know many women in Richmond struggle to access timely care — whether for menopause, fertility concerns, or gynaecological issues. This clinic is designed to provide a welcoming, accessible space for local women to get the answers and support they need."*

London Gynaecology's CEO and Richmond resident, Geoff Bamber, added: *"Our ambition has always been to deliver first-class gynaecology care with compassion at every stage of a woman's life. Expanding into Richmond allows us to support more women with faster access to specialist care in their local community."*

About London Gynaecology

Founded in 2010 by husband and wife team, Mr Narendra Pisal and Mrs Pradnya Pisal, London Gynaecology has grown into the UK's largest dedicated gynaecology practice, with locations at The Portland Hospital, Harley Street, Moorgate, and now Richmond. The practice is known for combining cutting-edge medical expertise with dedicated, personalised care.

Photo: London Gynaecology Richmond Launch - staff including CEO Geoff Bamber and co-founder Mrs Pradnya Pisal

Scrapping Congestion Charge Discount For Electric Cars 'Treats Private Hire Drivers As Second Class Citizens

London Mayor Sadiq Khan's plan to make drivers of electric vehicles (EVs) pay the Congestion Charge treats private hire drivers like second class citizens, GMB Union has warned.

The Cleaner Vehicle Discount (CVD), which allows people with electric vehicles to drive for free in London's congestion zone, is due to be scrapped in its current form in December.

More than 100,000 private hire drivers in London will face higher charges under the new proposal.

A recent poll of Uber drivers suggests proposals to rollback the discount could push more than half existing EV private hire drivers back to petrol vehicles - risking a slowdown in London's electrification progress.

Warren Kenny, GMB Regional Secretary, said:
"From delivery drivers to private hire vehicles to essential workers, the transition to electric vehicles has been both steady and welcome, reducing pollution from vehicles in the city centre.

"At this crucial juncture, it's vital that we don't have mixed messages from TfL – and removing the EV exemption for the congestion charge does exactly that.

"Offering better discounts to some driver groups over others will create a two-tier system in London. Over 100,000 private hire drivers – all everyday Londoners – are set to be impacted by the higher charge and lowest discounts. Why is the Mayor driving this wedge between workers?

"Now more than ever, this is not the time to treat essential worker groups as second-class citizens.

"TfL is publicly writing pro-green cheques that its actions simply can't cash if these charges come in."

Michael Dnes, Spokesperson for Electric London, said:
"The Cleaner Vehicle Discount has been crucial in driving London's shift to electric vehicles in a more equitable way.

"This move risks creating a two-tier system, undermining progress and sending mixed messages on TfL's green commitments. We urge the Mayor to preserve the CVD to ensure fairness for all workers and maintain London's leadership in sustainable transport."

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