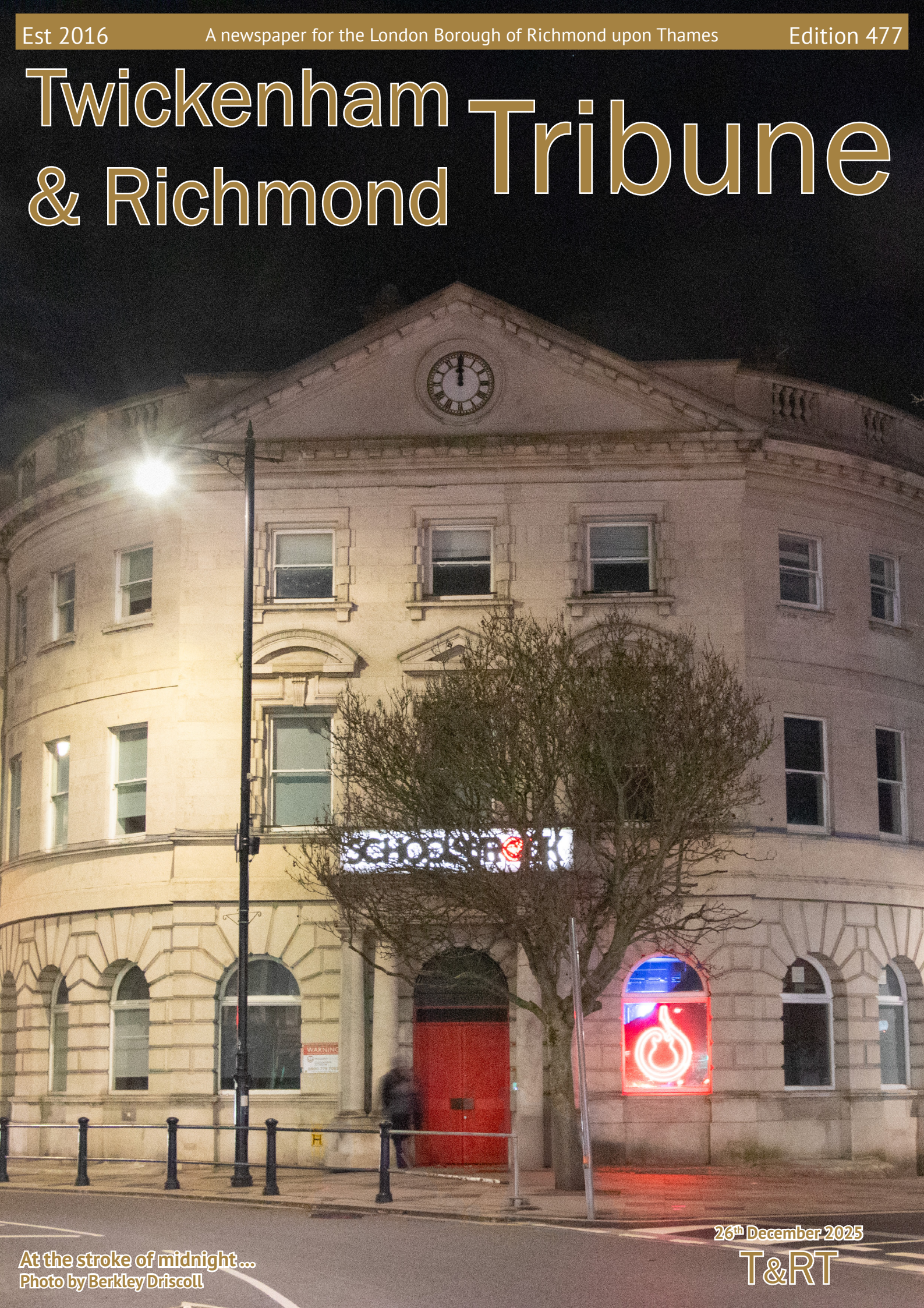
Est 2016 A newspaper for the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Edition 477

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



At the stroke of midnight...
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

26th December 2025
T&RT

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Editors: Teresa Read, Berkley Driscoll

CONTACT DONATE ADVERTISE

Wishing everyone a

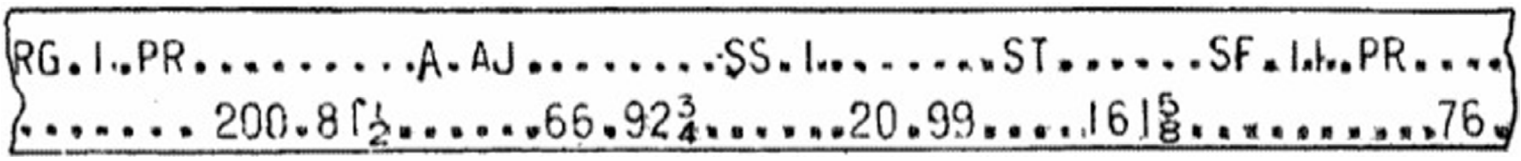
Happy New Year

From all of us at the

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune

2026





TickerTape - News in Brief

South Western Railway

There will be **line closures** between **London Waterloo and Clapham Junction from Saturday 27 December 2025 to Friday 2 January 2026**

Queenstown Road station will be also be **closed** for the **whole of this period.** Please use other nearby stations.

Saturday 27 December 2025

- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will start from **Surbiton.**
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Wimbledon** services will only run between **Clapham Junction and Kingston via Richmond.**
- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**

Sunday 28 December 2025

- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will start from **Surbiton.**
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Wimbledon** services will only run between **Clapham Junction and Kingston via Richmond.**
- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.

Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 December 2025

- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will start from **Surbiton.**
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Wimbledon** services will only run between **Clapham Junction and Kingston via Richmond.**
- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**

Wednesday 31 December 2025

- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Wimbledon** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**

Thursday 1 January 2026

- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will start from **Surbiton.**
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Wimbledon** services will only run between **Clapham Junction and Kingston via Richmond.**
- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.

Friday 2 January 2026

- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Wimbledon** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will start from **Clapham Junction.**



Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 307

Kew Road - Richmond

By Alan Winter

I thought we could have a look at this part of the Kew Road as it was about 125 years ago. This section opposite today's Railway Station and down to the Orange Tree pub was the subject of two early postcards published around the 1900 period that eventually found their way into the Richmond Local Studies Collection.

Postcard 1 shows the taxi ranks outside the station pretty much as they are today with the main change being that the internal combustion engine originally invented in 1897 had yet to take our roads over from horses and carriages.



This part of Kew Road showing the Station Hotel in the left-hand foreground was known as The Crescent. About 65 years later of course it became the weekly home of a very young band called the Rolling Stones who are still rocking today!

Richmond Station originally opened on the east side in 1846 with trains running through to Nine Elms. Two years later a second station for the Windsor Line was opened on the west side.



Postcard 2 from the same period shows the precursor of the 65 bus standing outside the Orange Tree Public House. A previous hostelry on the site was frequented by the poet James Thomson. It is now a popular haunt of rugby crowds, many of whom meet up there before and after the game on match days at Twickenham Stadium. The Orange Tree achieved new fame when the fringe theatre opened its doors on the first floor in 1971. Now, 55 years later it is still one of the most popular of London's suburban theatres.

A Happy New Year to all our readers. I will be back taking a look at old postcards showing bits and pieces of the Borough now and again in 2026.

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020 8744 0474 Escapology Experts
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020 8744 0474
www.crusadertravel.com



Merry CHRISTMAS

Festive Greetings & Warm Wishes

Thank you for your support and for being part of our community.

As we look ahead to 2026, were thankful for the opportunity to stay in touch and hope the coming year brings wonderful moments your way.

May this festive season bring joy, love and happiness to you and your loved ones.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

With heartfelt appreciation
Bruce, Courtney and Iryna





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Robbery at the Museum of Richmond, Saturday 13 December 2025

From The Museum of Richmond

The Museum of Richmond can confirm that the theft of nine artefacts from its collection took place on 6th December, 2025. The historic pieces were on loan from St Mary Magdalene Church (part of Richmond Team Ministry) and Richmond Charities (Hickey's Almshouses Chapel) and include precious items such as a pair of Charles II silver flagons, a William III Britannia silver tazza (cup), and a Charles II silver sideboard plate.

We are deeply saddened by this appalling act and are working closely with the local authorities and the police to provide our full support to the ongoing investigation. In parallel, we are reviewing our security procedures in partnership with lenders to ensure that all loaned items continue to receive the highest level of care and protection.

These historic pieces represent an important part of Richmond's heritage, and their loss is felt profoundly by the Museum, Richmond Team Ministry, Richmond Charities and the community.

We urge anyone with information that may assist the investigation to contact the police.

We have provided a list and details of the stolen items, which can be seen at the following LINK.









The Museum of Richmond remains committed to safeguarding the heritage entrusted to us and will share further updates when we can.

CAD # 6752/8DEC
Reference Number – 01/8297284/25
art&antiques-scd6@met.police.uk

MUSEUM of RICHMOND

Meet & Deep Christmas Day Community Party!



























Mayor announces the Christmas window winner

From The Mayor of Richmond

There were plenty of delightful displays of Christmas spirit but there can only be one winner.

The Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Penny Frost, was delighted to visit Walters Bistro in Barnes, this year's winner of the Christmas windows competition, to present the owners with a hamper.



123 local businesses entered this year's competition and hundreds of residents and visitors voted to help the favourite festive window display win.

Thanks to all those involved in bringing the festive spirit to the streets of Richmond.

#ShopLocal this gifting season

Our small businesses are at the heart of our community and help to create vibrant, unified neighbourhoods.

This holiday, why not save on travel and delivery costs and visit your local stores to give some extra support to our fantastic independent businesses?

Browse the vast selection available in each of our town centres and find the hidden gems in your area on the Shop Local website.



Drag Story Time and the Question We Keep Avoiding

By Micheal Jones

On a December morning outside Richmond Theatre, a children's story session prompted a police presence more commonly associated with football fixtures. Protesters from Turning Point UK gathered to oppose a drag-themed storytime aimed at families, while counter-protesters assembled under anti-fascist banners. The event went ahead. No arrests were made. But the symbolism was hard to miss: a children's hour had become a proxy battleground in a wider cultural war.

Supporters of Drag Story Time were quick to dismiss the controversy. Britain, they argued, has long embraced men in dresses as family entertainment. Pantomime has done so for generations. To object now must therefore be prejudice or imported culture-war politics. The comparison is superficially comforting, but it does not survive close inspection.

Why the Pantomime Analogy Fails

Pantomime is a theatrical genre with settled conventions. It is scripted, exaggerated, and unmistakably comic. Parents choose to attend, usually at Christmas, fully aware of what the experience entails. Crucially, pantomime does not present itself as educational. Its cross-dressing is a comic device, not a prompt for discussion about identity, gender, or social norms.

Drag Story Time is framed differently, and the organisers are explicit about this. According to the Drag Tales website, the aim is to help children "understand diversity", to learn about "gender fluidity", and to see drag performers as "just as normal as anyone else". Children are encouraged to ask questions about drag, gender expression, and why performers dress as they do. The sessions are described as a space to "play and learn" about difference. That distinction matters. One is entertainment. The other is moral and social instruction.

Good Faith Is Not the Same as Neutrality

This does not mean that organisers are acting in bad faith. Many performers clearly believe they are offering kindness, creativity, and reassurance to children who feel different. Many parents attend in good faith, seeing the events as harmless and joyful. Those motivations should not be caricatured.

But good faith does not remove the need for scrutiny. When an activity is presented as educational and value-forming, it becomes legitimate to ask who has authorised that role, and on what basis.

The language used by organisers closely mirrors a broader intellectual current shaping contemporary debates around identity. It emphasises fluidity, challenges inherited norms, and treats early exposure as a means of shaping attitudes. The aim is not simply tolerance of difference, but the normalisation of particular ideas about sex and gender at an age when children are still forming their understanding of the world.

The Question of Parental Authority

This brings parental authority into focus. In a plural society, parents are generally assumed to have primary responsibility for their children's moral formation, especially on questions

with long-term implications. Drag Story Time, when hosted in theatres, libraries, or other civic venues, shifts some of that authority towards institutions and organisers. Attendance may be voluntary, but the endorsement is public, and the framing is explicitly educational.

Supporters often respond that parents who object can simply keep their children away. That answer is only partly adequate. The concern is not only about access, but about legitimacy. When publicly facing institutions promote value-laden instruction about identity, they are no longer neutral hosts. They are participants in a cultural project.

Activism, Amplification, and Distortion

The wider activist context makes this unavoidable. Contemporary trans activism is explicit about its goals. It argues that children should be supported to question their sex, to socially transition where appropriate, and, for some, to pursue medical pathways before puberty starts. Drag Story Time does not itself advocate medical intervention, nor does it instruct children to change gender. But it does present gender as self-defined rather than biologically rooted, and it introduces that framework very early.

That is a political act, even if it is done gently.

The Richmond protest illustrates how quickly this debate becomes distorted. Local reporting confirmed that Turning Point UK activists were present to oppose the event because it was aimed at families and very young children, prompting a counter-protest and a significant police presence. National figures associated with UKIP and Turning Point UK have also amplified opposition online.

These links are then used to collapse all criticism into extremism. This is convenient, but not serious. The presence of organised activists does not exhaust the category of concern. It allows institutions to avoid engaging with parents who are neither activists nor ideologues, but who are uneasy about how and when contested ideas are introduced to children.

What the Debate Is Really About

Invoking pantomime serves the same function. It reassures without explaining. Pantomime does not invite children to question their sex. It does not claim to teach about gender fluidity. It does not position performers as guides to identity formation. Drag Story Time does all three, according to its own materials.

The persistence of the pantomime analogy reflects a reluctance to confront the real issue. This is not a dispute about taste, nor about whether drag is offensive. It is a dispute about authority. Who decides what children are taught about themselves, and under what conditions?

That question deserves a more honest answer than analogy or denunciation.

THE ULTIMATE NYE PARTY

Countdown to 2026 with us!

Don't miss this exclusive
New Year's Eve Disco by
our regular DJ Marcus

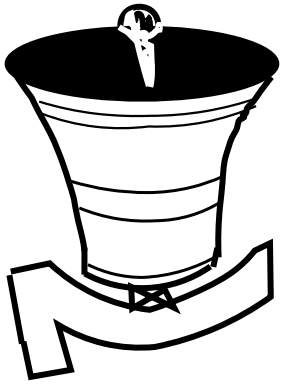
31st December | Doors 8 PM

Teddington Constitutional Club

Join us for:
Music/Drinks and seeing in the New Year Together
All Members welcome with a max of 3 Guests each
Free Entry!

TCC
TEDDINGTON
CONSTITUTIONAL
CLUB

Ringing the Changes
(on a peal of eight bells)



Church
bells
call
the
faith-
ful
to
pray:

towers and steeples gently sway.

Cathedral bells suffuse the Close
with peals that summon Trollope's ghost.

'Call changes' are in belfries rung,
'Whittingtons', 'Queens' and 'Ti-ttums' done.

Bell ropes are pulled and 'sallies' caught,
change ringers follow 'methods' taught.

Bronze bells swing and, by clappers met,
resound until all eight are 'set'.

Bells can herald change in your life:

Wed-
ding
bells
greet
hus-
band
and
wife.

Muffled, the bells that mourn the dead,
sad as voices that tributes led.

Christmas Eve bells ring out good cheer,
ringers' muscles fuelled with beer.

Peals of hope every New Year soar.
Peals of joy mark the end of war.

Notes (for those who wish to read them):

* *Each line of the poem has eight syllables, approximating to the rhythm of a ring of eight bells.*
* *Ringing of church bells in England is usually 'full circle', i.e. a bell is swung through just over 360 degrees in one direction and then back through the same arc in the opposite direction, controlled from below by a rope, one ringer per bell.*
* *'Change ringing' is changing the order in which bells sound, to create musical variation. 'Call changes' are where one of the ringers calls out each change, to which the 'band' of ringers then gives effect. 'Methods' are memorised patterns of change ringing.*
* *'Whittingtons', 'Queens' and 'Tittums' [pronounced 'Tee-Tums'] are established patterns of call changes.*
* *A 'sally' is a woollen grip woven around part of each bell rope, which has to be caught and controlled by the ringer as the bell rope descends.*
* *A bell is 'set' when, at the top of its swing, its ringer lets it settle back, at just over 360 degrees, against a device that stops it from rotating further. Bells are left in the 'set' position during breaks in change ringing. At the end of the session, bells are 'rung down' and left hanging vertically.*
* *A full explanation of 'Change Ringing' can be found on-line in Wikipedia.*

© James Haydn 2025

Twickers Foodie – By Alison Jee

'Twixmas' Recipe Ideas

It's that strange time of year when we tend to languish longer in bed, stay up later binge-watching various TV series (well you might not, but I do!). And foodwise, we've probably had enough of turkey, but may well have lots of leftovers to use. Christmas isn't Christmas for me without a few pickled walnuts - they are a must for Boxing Day lunch with cold turkey and ham and they have a host of other uses too.

And another way to use those pickled walnuts is with this delicious stew - perfect for popping into the oven before a nice long walk - or an ideal supper for New Year's Eve.

Beef & Pickle Stew
Serves 4 Preparation **time**: 30 minutes **Cooking time**: 3 – 4 hours
Allergens: Gluten, Celery, Nuts



- 1kg Stewing Steak
- 1 tbsp Flour
- 1 Onion, chopped
- 2 Carrots, chopped
- 2 Celery sticks, chopped
- 2 cloves Garlic, crushed
- 125g Button Mushrooms
- Few sprigs Fresh Thyme
- 500ml Beef Stock
- 100ml Red Wine

- ½ Jar Opies Cocktail Onions, drained
- 1 Bay Leaf
- ½ Jar Opies Pickled Walnuts, brine reserved
- Handful of Parsley, chopped

1. Dice the stewing steak into 1cm chunks and coat in flour. Heat 1tbsp oil in a casserole dish and brown the meat on all sides. Remove with a slotted spoon.
   Heat the oven to 160°C.
2. Add more oil into the pan if needed and then add all the vegetables and thyme, cook on a low heat until soft. Add the stock, wine, bay leaf and pickled walnut brine.
3. Season well and place in the oven for 3-4 hours until the beef is beautifully tender. Stir in the pickled walnuts and cocktail onions and allow to heat through. When ready to serve scatter over the parsley.

Potted Cheese

If you find you have a mix of random cheese pieces that don't look good enough to put out on a cheeseboard, try making potted cheese. It's so delicious and keeps for ages, and perfect for spreading on a mini cracker to whip up a plate of canapes - in no time at all.

Just chuck the pieces of cheese in a blender, add a pickled walnut or two, a splodge of mustard (depending on how spicy you like things) and a few drops of Worcestershire sauce. If it needs loosening slightly, just add a little olive oil. Taste to adjust seasoning.





Hey presto! You have a perfect topping for crostini or for a sandwich filling.

Happy New Year!

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HO HO HO!!

by Bruce Lyons

It`s that time of year again PEAKS as the travel trade call the week between Christmas & New Year.

Some say, as they do of the Good Friday/Cyber Monday it a delusion really, but others find it a magical way to get a fantastical dream vacation into Budget.

Turn Boxing Day into Booking Day ✓



That is EasyJet inviting you to save 20% off flights and up to £600 off holidays and giving thousands of free Children places too. Club Med have similar offers but see to differentiate with the Free Kids, to qualify they need to be under 4 for Ski and only under 6 for Sun !! Make of that what you wish - they also have a clear cut off date (which EasyJet do not) which is 16th of January.

So whilst I have no intention of boring you here with a whole list of % and variations to the offers I will just mention some of the principle contenders.



TUI & Olympic for Beach Sun, GAdvnetures and Intrepid for a vast selection of Adventures A Rosa for River Cruising, BA & Virgin for flights.
Most of the "offers" have some BOOK BY date so best to start looking now.

What stands out from the plethora is the Adventure section you can even get up to 35% off Antarctica and Arctic trip for late 2026/7.

We`ll be open Today (Saturday) from 10.00 till 17.00 - so stop by for a little post Xmas therapy.

Wishing you all the best for 2026; Bruce, Courtney & Iryna

Crusader Travel Ltd
58 Church Street
Twickenham
TW1 3NR Tel: 020 8744 0474

Christmas day in my shop...

By Deep Patel

~Life through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper~

So Christmas has passed and we had a fantastic community Christmas party in our newsagents Meet & Deep on the Hampton Road, we were blessed with hundreds of people literally, not only from the local community but also from further away...how far I hear you ask? How does Egypt sound to you? I jest not...one woman who was American came to our party and said she had heard about our party and was on a stop-over in the UK on her way from Egypt to the USA!!! She gave my mother a gift, it was a black stone pyramid and it was still covered in fine Egyptian sand, probably from a street side seller as the wind there is known for carrying sand... so we had a "bit of Egypt" literally in our shop on Christmas day!

The Christmas party is always a lot of fun, as you may (or may not know), there is actually only one day off each year that a newsagent can have...that is Christmas day (because it is the only day that newspapers are not printed...but we open our shop to welcome everyone in our community to be a part of our Christmas as we can't think of anything nicer than spending Christmas with those who want to spend it with us too. When people think of these types of events, the mind often conjures up images of elderly people perhaps, but we had more younger people too, one 16 year old who was alone with their step-dad and had nowhere to go, and there was another two 18 year olds who were sharing time with others who came and it was so nice to be with all enjoying the day together in this way. Christmas is often said to be "a time for family" but some people don't have family, and it can be a very difficult day, what with no public transport, no shops open and limited ways to interact with others. We also had many families visiting us, many who do have others to be with, couples, parents with their children, some even with four generations of family and we were so incredibly honoured to host this for everyone in the community.

Aside from the popularity of my mother's samosas and my father's great-great grandmother's blend of masala chai, Simon Couper (the Vicar of the Holy Trinity church on Twickenham Green) came on an official visit to light a candle of peace in front of the statue of the Virgin Mary and a crucifix that belonged to the late Bishop of Mauritius. It was a lovely poignant moment for all that were there when our shop (which was full of guests) fell to complete silence for the Vicar to give a universal blessing to all those present and those who were not present from our local community and further out that 2026 be a blessed and peaceful year for us all. It was beautiful as many approached me after and said they loved the way it was a blessing open to all, those of faith and those of no faith or those that don't believe too, just a moment of wishing positivity on all who were present and all in our community in general.

We had one mature lady who lives alone and has no family. She was born on Christmas Day so we got her a cake and placed candles on and surprised her as my mother walked out from behind the shop counter and we all sang happy birthday to her...the entire shop full of customers! The lady was so happy and she made a wish as she blew out the candle and everyone in the shop was so happy to be with her on her birthday too!

We advertised the closing of the party would be at 4pm, however we stayed open until 5:30pm

as people were enjoying it! After we shut, we tidied up, got out of our fancy-dress and sat down on the sofa only to fall asleep. The next day one of my cousins was talking to me about our community Christmas party and said it all sounded lovely, but that they felt sorry for me and my family that we didn't get to do anything for ourselves on Christmas day...this got me thinking. It then occurred to me that in actual fact, although "on paper" it may look like myself and my family didn't get to do anything for ourselves for Christmas, but thinking about it...we got to spend Christmas with over 200 people, some of which were our close friends and customers but some who would have had no one to be with if we were not open, we got to share our food to so many in the community as well as make so many people smile, laugh, dance and feel like they have "had a Christmas"...and if that is not what Christmas is about...I don't know what is?... Another moment in deep contemplation that once again made me mutter those words softly under my breath...I'm so grateful for being a shopkeeper in Twickenham...

Happy festive period everyone...cherish and enjoy the rest of it...



Above: Myself and my family dressed up and ready for the party...if you missed it this year... please come next year...there will be a samosa, masala chai and a hug waiting for you...x

Remember...

"In the joy of others is our own"

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...

Virtually ALL creatures will go without you needing to harm them and you too will have good karma if you try this...high-frequency plug-in pest stopping plugs...buy ones with good reviews online and follow the instructions, we stock them at Meet & Deep Newsagents here too, they work really well to keep ALL "pests" away, without harming any...good karma always!
For ANY specific tip to stop any "pest" or insect KINDLY (for good karma/blessings), email me: thedeepatel@gmail.com or join my Facebook page: "INSECT LOVERS UNITE"

Infernal Nonsense = Jolly Good Evening

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

H.M.S.Pinafore

by Arthur Sullivan, words by W.S. Gilbert
English National Opera at the London Coliseum until 7th February



This ship-shape revival of what Major General Stanley in *The Pirates of Penzance* called 'infernal nonsense' sails triumphantly back into the Coliseum. Nothing very demanding, but lavish sets and costumes that equal Julian Clary's Palladium panto shows in their colourful splendour. And stuffed with great comic gags. Over stuffed perhaps? "No, never! What, never? Well, hardly ever!"

Cal McCrystal is back to revive his 2021 production, which is tweaked to accommodate Mel Giedroyc in two roles not envisaged by Gilbert (the Cabin Boy and Aunt Melanie). She gives good value and only upstages the cast when supposed to, adding to the fun without upsetting the balance. McCrystal can overdo the comic business, with flying seagulls and an enormous cat that gets kicked overboard, but his gags provide easy laughs without distracting from the music. Sometimes he even lets the music speak for itself, as in Captain Corcoran's *Song to the Moon*, where Sullivan's marvellous melody is allowed to breathe and to attain an almost Verdian eloquence, even as Gilbert's words gently undermine it.



The substantial chorus of sailors and Sir Joseph Porter's crinolined sisters, cousins, and aunts sing superbly and show off the choreography to excellent effect. The ultra-versatile ENO orchestra under Matthew Kofi Waldren plays stylishly and idiomatically. What a pleasure to hear *Pinafore* done properly with a full orchestra. Although cautious and well-mannered at first (such a pleasure to hear singers who choose not to belt), things are a lot less inhibited later, when the cast seem more willing to let their hair down.



John Savournin's Captain Corcoran displays an effortless command of the stage, combined and so completely inhabits the role that he barely seems to be performing at all. And he can tap dance! He truly is a national treasure. Neal Davis provides a vocally strong Sir Joseph Porter. The admirable Marcus Farnsworth as the Boatswain is so good that you wish he had more to do. Trevor Eliot Bowes is a wonderfully nasty Dick Deadeye, and Thomas Atkins and Henna Mun are a delightful pair of lovers.

Take along you sisters and your cousins and your aunts for a jolly good evening and a perfect Christmas treat

Read Patrick Shorrock's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/12/05/pinafore-eno-25

Photography by Craig Fuller

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

Cinderella

by Harry Michaels and Alan McHugh
Crossroads Pantomimes at Richmond Theatre until 4th January



Glistening glinting glitter and scintillating sparkle embellishes this traditional *Cinderella* panto. The setting is not shoehorned into sci-fi, or horror history or rock 'n' roll rollick. But there's fantasy from the fairy godmother, scares from the (s)catty sisters and bold bangers from the band. The only shoehorning is the ugly sisters squeezing soapbox feet into the lost slipper.

Musical director Pierce Tee conducts the half-dozen musicians from the keyboard with great panache. His versatile players, doubling instruments, give a wonderful (em)bracing sound. The dancers, choreographed by Stephen Mear, busily transmogrify between roles, including dancing pumpkins and polar bear jockeys!



Helen George takes maternity leave from her TV role and, in the more glamorous role of Fairy Godmother, she certainly delivers. There's a hint of allure in her opalescent split skirt, but her obstetric approach is business with sympathy: push, push and all will come out right.

As Buttons, Charlie Stemp has an endearing balance of playfulness and pathos. His energy is boundless and his resilience enviable. His tongue-twister relay with the Ugly Sisters and the Baron is hilarious, a furious dance-off with Dandini exemplary, then with Fairy Godmother, there's the "Musculator", which has to be seen to be believed.

Cinderella's father, Baron Basil, is played with pragmatic aplomb by Basil Brush. We saw him first in 1962 and, do you know, he never seems to age! His Terry-Thomas top-drawer accent lends a risqué air, ideal for the panto where vulpine quick-fire pays dividends. Boom-boom!



A sweet Cinderella, Hope Dawe portrays an innocence tempered with feistiness, yet with a naïve vulnerability that contrarily keeps her trusting the Ugly Sisters. Newcomer Tom Major makes a confident and regal Prince Charming, bringing fresh wholesomeness to the character.

The gorgeously brash, camp Ugly Sisters are a Jack Sprat pair: Jak Allen-Anderson tall, lean, imposing; Stephen Guarino short, stocky, solid. Guarino gives gusto to vulgar Verruca, and Allen-Anderson's Hernia has stylish repulsiveness. Both have their work cut out with quick changes between increasingly outlandish frocks and millinery. They are also ultra busy finding double-entendres. Some are even subtle, so be quick.

Director Gary Wilmot's high-energy *Cinderella* that has that odd mixture of lip-smacking vulgarity and sweet romantic glamour, the essence of panto. And you'll be wiping away tears of laughter.

Read Mark Aspen's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/12/14/cinderella-rt-25/

Photography by Ian Olsson

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

Beauty and The Beast

by Loz Keal
Exchange Players at The Exchange Theatre



In the fairytale Forest of Forever, The Enchantress draws us in with the tale of *Beauty and the Beast*. Helen Geldert opens in the role with the smooth handling of a complex detailed song, *Wow*. Loz Keal's impressive adaptation of this traditional story fully uses its potential in the hands of director-choreographer Samantha Pears.

Colourfully attired John Wilkinson and Dave Hannigan bring genuine humour and villainy to the bicker sisters, gold-digger Hope and the equally avaricious Grace.

Enthusiastic young actors from the Twickenham Youth Theatre, all in full command of their roles, form the ensemble. In a clever move, they wear silver tabards that indicate the household object they are playing, although they look rather plain next to the splendidly dressed cast.



Kieran Rose beautifully depicts Silly Billy, while Dandy Andy, his sidekick, matches him word for word in a deft performance by Cameron Christie, which includes a clever flamingo routine.

The spoilt Prince is played with charm by Meaghan Baxter. This doomed prince's metamorphosis into The Beast is executed with great skill by Matt Ludbrook. He hints at Hogwarts' Hagrid, for the beast is not enough of a villain to be booed. Ludbrook's Beast comes into his own with a great *Monster Mash* number, and excels as the character develops.

As the pace and tension grows, and shedding rose petals become a poignant backdrop image, the musical numbers also become stronger. Helen Gelert, the musical director, produces great memorable moments. A poignant version of *Something Stupid* with the two sisters and their timid fiancées, and a very full-on scene at The Fiddle Inn are winners. Backed by the TYT Chorus, *The Boy Does Nothing* is performed by powerfully voiced Freya Broe as Hoover.



Ellie Armstrong, playing Beauty, is much more than her title role. Earthy and entertaining, with a strong singing voice and great dance skills, Armstrong's characterisation of Beauty delivers a lot more than just a dewy-eyed heroine.

Marc Batten as the long-suffering Mr Full and Sally Halsey as Dame Di provide great entertainment as they confidently build an excited audience into an all-in sing-along finale, leading to *All I want for Christmas is You*, the culmination of this ambitious and artistically winning production of *Beauty and The Beast*.

Read Heather Moulson's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/12/22/beauty-beast-xp

Photography courtesy of the Exchange Players

Kettner Concerts in Twickenham

MILDA DAUNORAITE

a piano recital

THE FORERUNNERS

Beethoven
Bagatelles Opus 33

Schubert
"Wanderer" Fantasy

Poulenc
Improvisations

Ravel
Valses Nobles et Sentimentales

Messian
Regard de l'Esprit de Joie from Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus



Saturday, 24 January 2026, 6.00 pm

Doors open at 5.30 and the concert will be followed by a complimentary drinks reception

Milda Daunoraite is blazing a trail following her acclaimed Wigmore Hall debut recital in 2025, critics praising her scintillating playing, sheer enjoyment and exhilaration of her 'joie de vivre'. The young Lithuanian pianist and final year student at the Royal Academy of Music is presenting a varied and engaging programme for Kettner Concerts in Twickenham.

St Mary's Church
Twickenham
Church Street TW1 3NJ

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kettnerconcerts.co.uk
Book tickets on Eventbrite.co.uk
or scan the qr code

St Mary's University

St Mary's University congratulates Bishop Richard Moth on his appointment as Archbishop of Westminster

St Mary's University, London, warmly welcomes today's announcement that Bishop Richard Moth has been appointed Archbishop of Westminster.

Bishop Richard has served the University with distinction as Chair of the Board of Governors for 14 years, providing thoughtful leadership, wise counsel, and a strong sense of continuity grounded in St Mary's founding mission and values. His longstanding support for Catholic education has been felt across the University community.



Professor Anthony McClaran, Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University, said:

"On behalf of everyone at St Mary's, I am delighted to congratulate Bishop Richard on his appointment as Archbishop of Westminster.

As Chair of our Board of Governors, he has provided steady leadership, sound judgement, and a deep understanding of the University's mission and purpose. His contribution to St Mary's over many years has been greatly valued, and we are grateful for the care and commitment he has shown to our community. On a personal note, I am immensely grateful for the encouragement and support that Bishop Richard has given me since I became Vice-Chancellor in 2020.

We look forward to continuing our close relationship with him in his new role, and we wish him every success as he prepares to take up this important appointment."

Professor McClaran also paid tribute to Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who has served as Archbishop of Westminster since 2009 and as Chancellor of St Mary's University since 2015, thanking him for his leadership and longstanding support of the University.

St Mary's University remains committed to serving students and wider society through high-quality education shaped by inclusion, purpose, and a strong sense of community. The University looks forward to welcoming Archbishop Moth to campus as he begins his new role.

Bishop Richard Moth appointed new Archbishop of Westminster - Diocese of Westminster

St Mary's University Twickenham London

Richmond's athletes invited to apply for GLL Sport Foundation Awards 2026

From Richmond Council

For the first time, talented athletes in Richmond upon Thames will have the opportunity to apply for support through the GLL Sport Foundation (GSF) Awards 2026, the UK's largest independent athlete support programme.

The scheme offers a comprehensive package to help athletes reach their full potential, including:

- Financial grants
- Free access to gyms, pools, and other sports facilities
- Physiotherapy and lifestyle mentoring
- Mental health and wellbeing support

Richmond is home to many talented athletes. Earlier this year, Team Richmond achieved a superb silver in the Jubilee Trophy rankings of the London Youth Games.

Councillor Alan Juriansz, Lead Member for Sport at Richmond Council, said: *"We are delighted that athletes in the borough can now benefit from this fantastic programme. Sport plays a vital role in our community, not only in promoting health and wellbeing but also in inspiring ambition and achievement. This aligns perfectly with our Richmond Moves for a Healthier Borough strategy, which aims to make physical activity accessible for everyone. The GLL Sport Foundation will help remove barriers for talented athletes and ensure they have the resources they need to succeed."*



Celebrating its 18th year, the GSF programme is bigger than ever, with a record £2 million of grants and benefits available in 2026.

The GSF has supported some of the UK's most successful athletes, including Tom Daley, Ellie Simmonds, Anthony Joshua, and Kimberley Woods. At the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, past and present GSF athletes won 77 medals, showing the impact of the scheme.

GLL Regional Director Tony Wallace, said: *"Our GSF Awards provide a lifeline to individual athletes as well as inspiring other young people in local communities. We encourage as many talented athletes as possible to look into the scheme and find out how they may benefit from our support."*

This year's awards coincide with the start of a new 10-year partnership between Richmond Council and GLL, which brings significant investment and improvements to Pools on the Park and Teddington Pools and Fitness Centre, helping to ensure that the borough's athletes train in modern, inclusive and high-quality facilities as part of our wider commitment to health and wellbeing.

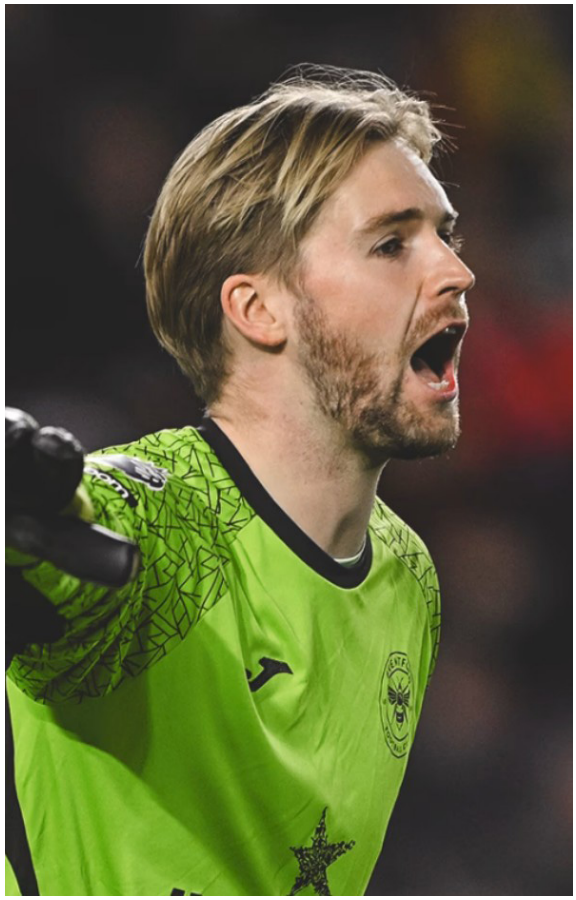
Applications close on 20 February 2026. Successful applicants will gain access to 250 sport and leisure facilities across the UK operated by GLL under its "Better" brand including Pools on the Park and Teddington Pools and Fitness Centre.

For more information and to apply, visit the GLL Sport Foundation website.

Match Preview: Brentford v Bournemouth

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford host Bournemouth at Gtech Community Stadium in the Premier League on Saturday afternoon (3pm kick-off GMT) in what is the Bees' final fixture of 2025.



Keith Andrews' side won 2-0 at Wolves last weekend, while the Cherries go into the match having drawn 1-1 with Burnley at home last time out.

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of the game.

Pre-match Analysis

Stephen Gillett, *Playmaker Stats*: Expect late drama at the Gtech

Those tempted to dash out of the Gtech early to continue their Christmas plans be warned: Brentford and Bournemouth both like to strike late.

Last season, the Cherries were unrivalled when it came to scoring goals in the dying moments of games, Andoni Iraola's side notching nine in stoppage-time alone.

While the south-coast club have retained their knack for late drama – Eli Junior Kroupi's fantastic strike in a topsy-turvy 4-4 draw with Manchester United the latest example – their hosts on Saturday have been even more ruthless as the clock ticks down.

With 11 goals after the 75th minute during the current campaign, the Bees have consistently stung opponents in the closing stages, Keane Lewis-Potter sealing all three points in the latter part of the 2-0 win over Wolves at Molineux last weekend.

Although we profile the intriguing midfield battle between Mathias Jensen and Alex Scott in this week's matchday programme, Saturday's clash will also see two of the Premier League's hottest attacking properties face off.

Alongside Manchester City's Erling Haaland, Thiago is currently one of only two players to reach double figures for goals in the Premier League this term. His 11 top-flight strikes to date have showcased the Brazilian's ability to finish clinically with either foot – and Bournemouth have suffered first-hand this season, the no.9 on target in the Bees' 2-0 Carabao Cup win over the Cherries in August.

In Antoine Semenyo, however, Bournemouth have another of the stars of the 2025/26 campaign so far. One of three players to hit 10+ goals for the Cherries last term – along with Evanilson and Justin Kluivert – the Ghana international has eight Premier League goals already to his name this season and enters this weekend's encounter fresh from finding the net against Manchester United and Burnley in his last two outings.

Thiago and Semenyo have been in scintillating form, but neither of them can compete with Bournemouth's teenage forward Kroupi when it comes to strike rate.

Still only 19, Kroupi excelled on loan last season in his native France, netting 22 goals in 30 Ligue 2 games for Lorient, and he has enjoyed a sensational maiden campaign in the Premier League. Pacy and direct, Kroupi has scored five goals for the Cherries already this term, and only Haaland (77 minutes) has a better minutes-per-goal rate than the French Under-21 international (90 minutes).

Bournemouth have evolved into one of the top flight's most intense pressing teams, and Saturday's clash is likely to be a game of cat and mouse for both sides in their own halves.

This season, the Cherries rank top for Passes Per Defensive Action (PPDA) – a metric which measures pressing intensity – and have forced 125 high turnovers, so Brentford head coach Keith Andrews will need to prepare his backline accordingly.

As two of the best counter-attacking sides in the Premier League this season, how Brentford and Bournemouth cope in transition is likely to prove crucial.

The Cherries currently lead the top tier for goals from counter attacks, with seven, but the Bees (five) are hot on their heels and pose a genuine threat on the break. Both teams' 'rest defences' will therefore need to be at their best.

Hold on to your hats and stay in your seats - an entertaining clash is on the cards.

Scout Report
Dan Long, *Sky Sports*: Positive signs for Bournemouth despite winless run

In recent years, it seems every time I write about how Bournemouth have been getting on before their next meeting with Brentford, the club records they have equalled or set take centre stage. But, truthfully, the continuous improvement is too impressive not to mention - so here we go again...

Last season was only the Cherries' eighth in the Premier League. They set a new record for not only the number of wins (15), but also fewest defeats (12), most goals scored (58) and fewest goals conceded (46), not to mention most points (56) and a joint-highest finish (9th).

Qualifying for Europe still evaded them - Nottingham Forest in seventh picked up nine points more - which was sadly an inevitable consequence of recording only four wins across the last 15. But they came closer than ever before and to even be in the conversation remains unbelievable to those who were there in the dark days of 2008/09, when Bournemouth were close to relegation out of the Football League.

The success of last term shone a spotlight on the talent in Andoni Iraola's squad, though, which meant a summer of change. With Kepa Arrizabalaga's loan return and the sales of Dean Huijsen to Real Madrid, Milos Kerkez to Liverpool and Illia Zabarnyi to Paris Saint-German, four of the first-choice back five were gone in a flash.

While the necessary replacements were found and signed, an even more key piece of business was tying down Antoine Semenyo to a new contract. The Ghana international scored 13 goals and provided seven assists in 42 games in all competitions, which reportedly attracted interest from Manchester United, Liverpool and Tottenham.

He may not stay at the Vitality until the end of that deal in 2030, and BBC Sport recently reported there is a £65m clause that can be activated during the first two weeks of the January transfer window. But, for the time being, Bournemouth still have their star man - and Ghana's failure to qualify for the

Africa Cup of Nations means they did not lose the 25-year-old for the festive period.

They will be hoping that bonus can help improve fortunes over the next few weeks as results have started to dip. Five wins and three draws in the first nine had the Cherries as high as second at the start of November, but, despite a remarkable 4-4 draw against Manchester United recently, they are now eight games without a win.

The goals-per-game average has slipped from 1.78 to 1.53 – and that was aided greatly by the four they plundered in that gripping clash at Old Trafford.

But even given how their position in the table has changed significantly in just under two months, there is no huge cause for concern. Their home record is in the top 10, they have lost the fewest games of any team in the bottom half currently and there are just seven points separating them from Chelsea up in fourth.

And best of all, breaking some of the club records they set last season is still very possible. Watch this space.

In the Dugout
Andoni Iraola

A right-back by trade during his playing days, Andoni Iraola came through the ranks at Athletic Bilbao and made his debut during the 2003/04 La Liga season, following two years in the Segunda Division with Bilbao's B team and a year with Basconia – effectively the club's C team – before that.

Over the 10 seasons that followed his debut year, Iraola astonishingly missed only 26 league games, during which time he was part of the squad that finished as runners-up in the Copa del Rey twice, once in the Europa League and once in the Spanish Super Cup. Between 2008 and 2011, he earned seven senior caps for Spain.

He featured considerably less during 2014/15 - his final season at San Mamés – but captained Lehoiak in his final game for the club, in a third Copa del Rey final defeat, this time against Barcelona.

Iraola then signed for New York City of the MLS, where he spent 17 months, before retiring in November 2016. Just over 18 months later, he was handed his first managerial role with AEK Larnaca, but lasted only until January 2019 after winning 12 of his 29 matches in charge of the Cypriot First Division club.

That summer, he joined CD Mirandés where, in his only season, he masterminded a run to the semi-final of the Copa del Rey for only the second time in the club's history.

In August 2020, he took over at Rayo Vallecano, whom he led to promotion from the Segunda Division in his first season in charge. Los Franjirrojos finished 12th in their first season back in La Liga and 11th in the next, which led to an approach from Leeds United, which was rebuffed by the club's board.

However, he left at the end of the campaign when his contract expired and joined Bournemouth in June 2023. The 43-year-old – who is out of contract in the summer of 2026 – is the sixth longest serving manager in the Premier League, having been in the job just over two-and-a-half years.

Sue Ryder Offers 24/7 Bereavement Support This Christmas

From Sue Ryder

The national palliative care and bereavement charity, Sue Ryder, is reminding the local community that its Online Bereavement Community is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the festive period for anyone who might be experiencing grief.

Last December saw over **33,000** visits to the community, including a **30%** increase on people posting on Christmas Day compared to the previous year.



For many, Christmas can be an especially difficult time, with feelings of grief and loneliness intensifying and with some other bereavement services operating reduced hours or closing.

The charity knows that **88%** of people feel alone in their grief so whether someone is struggling during a quiet moment, finding celebrations overwhelming, or simply needs to talk, the community offers a place to be heard and supported.

The Sue Ryder Online Bereavement Community provides free, peer-to-peer support, allowing people who are grieving or caring for someone at the end of their life to share feelings, exchange messages and connect with others.

Roz's husband died in November 2024. She describes Sue Ryder's Online Bereavement Community as a 'lifeline' over the Christmas period.

"Nobody knows what you are going through and I think Christmas just magnifies everything. There is an expectation of jollity, happiness and togetherness, which can be really hard. I remember walking into town the morning after my husband had died and the Christmas decorations were already up. It was like being on the outside of a snow globe looking in.

"The online community is a lifeline at a time which is, aside from those personal anniversaries, probably the hardest of the year. It's a bridge of support, of validation and recognition. You can be in the same room as someone who is very empathetic, but they don't have to be sitting beside you, they are holding your hand through the screen."

Seaneen Molloy, Online Community Manager, commented: *"This year, we are marking 10 years of our Online Bereavement Community. Over the past decade, it has offered comfort, connection and understanding for thousands of bereaved people.*

"Grief doesn't stop at Christmas. Our online community is there day and night, offering people a safe space to talk and connect with others. No one should feel they have to face grief alone this Christmas, and the support our members generously give and receive each day is what makes the community so special. In fact, 72% of our members say the community helps them feel less alone."

Sue Ryder is encouraging anyone who is struggling with grief this Christmas, or who know someone who is, to visit the Online Bereavement Community for support: sueryder.org/FindSupport

If you feel you are at risk of harming yourself or feel in need of immediate, emergency support, please call 999, call Samaritans on 116 123 or text SHOUT to 85258.

Because no one should face death or grief alone

Tax Minister and Bingo Association celebrate scrapping of Bingo Duty

From HM Treasury

Bingo clubs across Britain are celebrating the scrapping of bingo duty as UK tax minister Dan Tomlinson and the Bingo Association's Paul Swindon joined players in London.

They visited Buzz Bingo Tooting during the Christmas bingo bonanza season following the Chancellor's Budget announcement that bingo duty would be scrapped from April 2026.

They met Jeeva Jeevahan, General Manager at Buzz Bingo Tooting, alongside some of the club's regulars, with Tomlinson calling the duty scrapping a 'full house win' for the around 250 clubs across the country while Swindon praised the measure as 'transformative' for the sector's survival.

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Dan Tomlinson, said: *"This is a 'full house win' for bingo clubs and the communities who rely on them. Bingo clubs are about much more than just the numbers – they're about community, friendship and fun. Scrapping this tax recognises the important role these venues play."*

Bingo has been a popular part of British culture since the 1960s, when purpose-built bingo clubs sprang up across towns and cities following the legalisation of commercial gaming, becoming a staple of high streets and a social hub for millions.

Bingo duty is currently charged at 10% on profits - its removal will go towards supporting the 7,000 jobs in the sector, and ensuring bingo remains part of British life for the foreseeable future.

The move is part of a wider gambling tax package announced by Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, at Budget aimed at creating a fairer and sustainable system that will raise over £1 billion a year to go towards the country's priorities – cutting the cost of living, cutting debt and borrowing, and cutting NHS waiting lists.

Paul Swindon, Head of Governance and Compliance for the Bingo Association: *"This visit by the Exchequer Secretary is a clear demonstration of the Government's recognition of the important role bingo clubs play in communities across the country. The decision to abolish Bingo Duty was a transformative moment for our sector and a powerful vote of confidence in the unique community value we provide."*

"After years of rising costs and economic pressure, this change gives clubs the stability and headroom they need to reinvest, modernise and secure thousands of jobs. It ensures that bingo clubs can continue to thrive as safe, affordable and much-loved spaces at the heart of British life."

"We welcome the Government's willingness to listen and to act. This visit shows a genuine commitment to understanding how bingo clubs support local economies and bring people together, and it will make a real difference to the communities we serve."

HM Treasury

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Published by:
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Registered in England & Wales
Reg No 10549345

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