



## Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we wrap up another year, we are pleased to share some highlights from 2025. Thanks to the dedication of the Parks team, our volunteers and the support of the community, there has been a lot of good work to maintain and improve our beloved green space.

### 1. New Noticeboards:

At the start of the year, two new noticeboards were installed on The Green which our volunteers are keeping updated with community notices.

If you would like to add to the noticeboard, let us know.



### 2. Community Events:

Several events were held throughout the year which brought the community together:

- **High Tide Festival:** Held on July 27th, this vibrant festival featured stalls and a music stage, drawing crowds and fostering a party spirit. We are grateful to local businesses for their generous prize donations for our raffle.
- **Solstice Yoga:** A new addition to our calendar, this early morning open-air yoga session, led by instructors from The Hare and The Moon, celebrated the summer solstice. It was very well attended, and we hope to see it again next year.
- **Halloween Treasure Hunt:** Another first was a treasure hunt for children and families around Twickenham Green, kindly organised by The Hare and The Moon and supported by The Prince Blucher and The Friends of Twickenham Green.

### 3. Environmental Initiatives:

The warm, dry and very sunny weather made for a great summer, however these conditions were challenging for The Green. Along with Parks and the Cricket Club, the Friends of Twickenham Green have been actively engaged in initiatives to improve and preserve the condition of The Green, including

- **Grass Management:** Re-seeding was undertaken after the summer, with additional re-seeding planned for spring. Consideration is also being given to planting coarser grass varieties for greater resilience.
- **Saplings Watering:** The involvement of our volunteers in regularly watering saplings has been crucial this year. Thanks to all those who dedicated time to this effort – the saplings all look to have survived!
- **Shrubberies:** We are pleased to report that pollinators have been replanted and are thriving in the shrubbery behind Arthurs. The roses behind the pavilion put on another magnificent display this year.
- **Water Capture Solutions:** Ideas for water capture solutions such as rainwater collection from the cricket club pavilion and the use of water drained from fire service vehicles are being explored.
- **Litter Clean-Ups:** Two litter clean-up events were organized in spring and autumn.

#### 4. Local History:

Our members continue to unearth fascinating pieces of local history about The Green and neighbourhood, with a real gem from a former resident, Harry Shaw, who sent us his recollections of being a schoolboy during the Second World War and of spending nights in the air raid shelters on Twickenham Green. We're immensely grateful to Harry for sharing his memories and photographs with the Friends. The full article is attached for those interested in reading more.

#### 5. Friends of Twickenham Green Committee Vacancies:

Would you like to be more involved?

We currently have some committee vacancies, including that of a liaison officer, so if you would like to participate in the work The Friends undertake on The Green, then please get in touch.

For more information or to express interest, please email [friends@fotg.uk](mailto:friends@fotg.uk)

#### 6. Friends of Twickenham Green Christmas Meeting:

The next members meeting with an end-of-year celebration will be held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 7:30pm in the cricket pavilion. The first drink is on us and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Thank you for your continued support to Twickenham Green. Together, our aim is to ensure that our community space remains vibrant and welcoming for all.

With best wishes for a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year ahead,

#### The Friends of Twickenham Green

Website: <https://fotg.uk/>

Email us: [friends@fotg.uk](mailto:friends@fotg.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofTwickenhamGroup>

X (Twitter): <https://x.com/FOTG2014>

## A Look Back: The Enduring History of Twickenham Green's WWII Air Raid Shelters



This article is part of an ongoing project to document the history of Twickenham Green and its role during World War II. At the heart of this history lies the remarkable story of the air raid shelters, remnants of which still lie beneath the Green today. We are grateful for the contributions of local residents who have shared their experiences.

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### Foreword from Howard Roberts, Environment Officer, Friends of Twickenham Green

When I first moved here over thirty years ago, a dry spell would reveal an odd shape near Arthur's restaurant on Twickenham Green. It looked like a large letter 'Q'—a square with a diagonal line. Rumours circulated about a World War II air raid shelter under the Green, but no one knew for sure where it was. Some thought a sinkhole near the cricket square had revealed an old brick structure, but that turned out to be a forgotten Victorian sump.





A few years ago, I received a book called 'When The Bombs Fell' and finally started finding some answers. By the end of 1939, Twickenham Green had two public air raid shelters. The larger one could hold over 600 people and stretched from the Jack and Jill School to the junction of First Cross Road and Staines Road. The second, which could accommodate over 300 people, was next to the old public toilets, now Arthur's. It is the remains of this second shelter that are still visible during dry spells, a testament to its enduring presence.



An aerial photograph from 1946 confirmed this, showing both shelters and how the eastern part of the Green had been converted into allotments for the "Dig for Victory" campaign. The allotments remained until the early 1950s.



After identifying the shelters, we asked for eyewitness accounts. We received several, but the most detailed came from Harry Shaw. In this year of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, we are thankful for Harry's memories, which remind us of the sacrifices his generation made. It's a sad reality that cities in Europe are still suffering from air raids today, and it seems we have learned so little.

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## Harry Shaw's Memories

In 1939, when I was six, I remember the public conveniences and a horse trough at the eastern end of the Green. The air raid shelter was built behind these, and an air raid warden would open it every evening at 6 p.m. During the heavy bombing from 1940 to 1942, my family—my dad, mom, sister, and I—would walk from our home on Warwick Road to the Green's shelter. Dad would carry a mattress, Mom the blankets, and my sister and I would carry the pillows.



The shelter itself was not a pleasant place. It was damp, smelly, and claustrophobic. There were narrow benches on either side, and my dad would sit in a deckchair he brought along. The raids usually started around 10 p.m. and the "All Clear" signal would sound around 4 a.m. We would then walk home through Knowle and Colne Roads around 6 a.m., get a quick wash, eat a porridge breakfast, and then head to school.

Walking home one morning, we were faced with the aftermath of a bombing on Colne Road, with wreckage and bodies. My mom would always say, "I wonder how the cat is," as we walked home. Our cat, Fluff, was always there waiting for his food.

Life changed when we were issued a **Morrison indoor shelter**. This was a great relief, and we no longer had to make the nightly walks to the public shelter, even though the raids, including V1 and V2 bombs, continued. I recall only one V2 bomb hitting Hampton Wick.



As a child, I went to Briar Road School and later Archdeacon Cambridge Junior School. I also played cricket on the Green when I was at Hampton Grammar School, which is why I feel a strong attachment to the area.

I also have some other memories from that time:

- A bomb landed at the junction of Pope's Avenue and Twickenham Green, creating a large crater that broke the water main and damaged the war memorial near the church.
- Incendiary bombs were a "curse". They would go through slate roofs, setting fire to the loft spaces. I remember two roof fires on Warwick Road because of them. They were often found on roads and in gardens, and many that didn't go off were still dangerous.
- I remember seeing the beams of searchlights and hearing the distant "thump" of anti-aircraft guns from Richmond Park. Shrapnel, which are bits of exploded shells, would rain down on us during some raids. I even had a box of shrapnel I collected from our road.
- We would regularly see prisoner of war trains stopped by a signal near Marsh Farm Road. The glum-faced prisoners would look out, and a guard at each end of the carriage would sometimes chat with us kids. They were on their way to the Kempton Park Prisoner of War Camp at the racecourse.
- After the war, the large house at 69 The Green, behind the Cricket Club, was a British Restaurant. We were served tinned Snoek mackerel, which the government had purchased from South Africa. It was a disaster; it tasted horrible, and even the cats wouldn't eat it.



My parents eventually moved to Hampton Hill, and I joined the RAF. I married my wife, Margaret, in St. Mary's Church in February 1959. We have been married for 66 years and have lived in France for the last 26. Please safeguard The Green for us and everyone else who has benefited from this wonderful amenity over the years.