

Twickenham (660) : Opening

Waitrose Twickenham opened on 11th July 2000. The following appeared in The Gazette at the time.

New south-west London branch is 'a credit to everyone concerned' Twickenham's stylish transformation

Waitrose Twickenham opened in fine fettle last Tuesday as the march of Somerfield supermarkets joining the Partnership regiment continued at full pace.

The new branch, in the heart of Twickenham's busy shopping area and with a large multi-storey car-park close by, has the full range of service counters; a spacious fruit and vegetable department: a service counter providing everything from special orders to home delivery: a smart coffee shop— which was already proving popular with customers on opening morning— and an extensive range of meals-in-minutes.

"We are close to a heavily used railway station and expect to do a good trade in prepared meals as people call in on their way home from work." says Bob Griffin, Branch Manager. We will also be very busy at lunchtime as some 8,000 people work in Twickenham, and from the four weeks I spent here before the shop opened I know that an awful lot of them are looking for something to buy to eat for lunch as well as doing more general food shopping.

"I am very pleased with the layout and merchandising of our meals section and I'm sure Twickenham customers will be impressed with the imaginative range of easily prepared meals we have on offer."

Mr Griffin, who is seconded from Waitrose New Malden, lives close by at West Drayton and knows the area well.

"Earlier in my career I worked for W H Smith and at one stage I used to manage the bookshop at Twickenham railway station, so it is a bit like coming home."

There are a number of Waitrose branches close by. Including Kingston and Richmond, but Mr Griffin is not worried about competition from his colleagues. "I'm sure it will work to our advantage. Our name and high standards are already known to customers, but anyone who lives this side of the Thames won't have to fight their way through the heavy traffic across the bridges.

"Having seen this shop before our refurbishment work started I can't believe how good it looks— my congratulations go to everyone involved."

Bill Bishop, Head of Selling Services (Waitrose), agrees that the transformation between the old Somerfield and the new Waitrose is particularly startling at Twickenham. "We always knew that it was going to be difficult to give this shop a Waitrose 'feel', but the team of Partners managed to overcome all the difficulties and we now have a splendid new branch."

The branch's ex-Somerfield Partners (most of the 120 original staff have stayed to work in the refurbished shop) are also enjoying the transformed supermarket.

Brent Adams, who looked after the small Somerfield restaurant, is now a Trainee Manager in charge of the smart Waitrose Coffee Shop. “The space and the position at the front of the shop is the same but everything else is radically different” says Mr Adams “All the equipment is new, and with our excellent bakery and patisserie assortment we are able to offer a brilliant range of light refreshments. Many of my regular customers have already commented on the stylish new look.

Supermarket Assistant Pat Lovelace is a former Partner (she worked at Waitrose Chiswick) who is returning to the fold. “I was working for another local retailer when I heard about the Waitrose takeover, and I applied right away. I enjoyed working at Chiswick and I am very happy to be working for Waitrose again,” says Mrs Lovelace, whose son, David, works at Waitrose Banstead.

Mark Price, Director of Selling and Marketing (Waitrose) sees Twickenham as an excellent addition to the supermarket division. “The new shop is a credit to everyone concerned,” he says.

Its arrival is certainly seen as a plus by local businesses. “Waitrose will draw new customers into Twickenham,” says John Austin, Twickenham Town Centre Manager. “It is going to be a real asset to our town,”