Raise the Colours (RTC)

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Semantic Summary

Raise the Colours (RTC) is a British far-right group that evolved from a summer 2025 flag-display campaign in Birmingham suburbs into an anti-migrant vigilantism operation with documented violence, international incidents, and a cascade of criminal charges against its core membership. Founded by Ryan Bridge and Elliott Stanley — with roots in the decentralised flagging movement originated by former EDL member Andy Currien — RTC built a Facebook following of approximately 180,000 while its members attached Union and St George's flags to lampposts, then escalated to travelling to northern France to slash migrant boats and harass refugees, resulting in a French government ban on 10 RTC-linked activists. By mid-2026, the group was in internal collapse: co-founder Stanley had vanished from public view, founding member Billy Allison was charged with murder after pub owner Matt O'Gara died from a punch outside his Lichfield bar, and RTC organiser Ben Cullen was charged with making indecent child images. Co-founder Bridge faced multiple arrests for racially aggravated harassment, wounding, and common assault, while a High Court injunction obtained by Oxfordshire County Council in June 2026 prohibited Bridge, Cullen, Trudy Wells, and Kevin Good from flag-raising activities. The group has documented links to Tommy Robinson, Britain First, football hooligan firms including the Birmingham Zulu Warriors, and neo-Nazi elements, with Reform UK ties through Cullen. RTC's trajectory illustrates the rapid radicalisation arc from symbolic nationalism to cross-border vigilantism and serious violent crime.

Type: Far-right street-level activist group

Raise the Colours (RTC) is a far-right British street-level group founded in August 2025 by Ryan Bridge and Elliott Stanley, emerging from a decentralised flag-display movement originated by former EDL member Andy Currien. Beginning as a patriotic flag-raising campaign in Birmingham suburbs, RTC rapidly escalated into anti-migrant vigilantism in northern France, where members filmed themselves destroying migrant boats and harassing refugees on Normandy beaches. The group has around 180,000 Facebook followers and maintains links to Tommy Robinson's network, Britain First (which donated 75% of its flag stock), football hooligan firms including the Birmingham Zulu Warriors and Chelsea Headhunters, and Reform UK via Ben Cullen. By mid-2026, the group was in internal collapse: co-founder Stanley disappeared, multiple members defected citing extremism, and core figures faced serious criminal charges — Billy Allison charged with murder, Ben Cullen charged with making indecent child images, and Ryan Bridge arrested for racially aggravated harassment, wounding, and common assault. In June 2026, Oxfordshire County Council

secured a landmark High Court injunction against four RTC members, the first of its kind. The group's trajectory from symbolic nationalism to violent extremism and criminality has been extensively documented by HOPE not Hate, the BBC, The Guardian, and Le Monde. **Status:** Active (ongoing legal cases, internal defections) **Founded:** August 2025 **Founders:** Ryan Bridge, Elliott Stanley (co-founders); Andrew "Andy" Currien (originator of Operation Raise the Colours decentralised flagging movement) **Location:** Birmingham (origin), spread across West Midlands, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, and southern England **Social Media:** Facebook (~180K followers), Instagram, X (Twitter) **Slogan:** "Stopping the boats"

Overview

Raise the Colours (RTC) is a British far-right group whose members attach Union and St George's flags to lampposts and public infrastructure — and whose activities escalated from flagging into anti-migrant vigilantism in France, street confrontations in English towns, and a series of serious criminal charges against its members.

What began in summer 2025 as a "patriotic" flag-display campaign in Birmingham suburbs rapidly evolved. By late 2025, RTC members were travelling to northern France to slash migrant boats and harass refugees. By spring 2026, the group's co-founder was arrested for wounding, a founding member was charged with murder, and a leading Oxfordshire organiser was charged with making indecent images of children.

The group has been characterised as far-right by HOPE not Hate, the BBC, The Guardian, Le Monde, and Wikipedia. Despite claiming to be a "grassroots movement for unity", RTC has been linked to Tommy Robinson's network, Britain First, football hooligan firms, and neo-Nazi imagery.

As of June 2026, the group is in a state of internal collapse. Co-founder Elliott Stanley has not been seen in months. Former members have publicly defected citing extremism. Multiple members face active criminal proceedings.

> **"From pastors to flagshaggers, the hard right has a history of pedophilia. Raise the Colours figure, Ben Cullen, accused of making indecent child images."** — Bluesky post, 30 June 2026

Origins and Founding

The flag-raising movement began as a decentralised campaign called **Operation Raise the Colours** in August 2025, originated by former English Defence League member **Andrew "Andy" Currien**. Multiple independent groups and individuals adopted the name.

Ryan Bridge and Elliott Stanley — two men from Birmingham and north Worcestershire — formed **Raise the Colours** as a formalised group in response to this broader decentralised movement. The group began collecting financial donations to fund flag purchases and cherry-picker hire.

Bridge told the BBC his grandparents had a tea service featuring Prince Charles and Princess Diana, adding that "as a cub scout he walked down the high street waving the same colours". Stanley told The Telegraph in September 2025: "I started the movement in south Birmingham and it's gone national."

Membership and Structure

RTC has no formal legal structure. Bridge told reporters he was registering with Companies House in October 2025, but as of November 2025 no company had been registered under the name.

The group is built around a core of named individuals, with fluid membership and a social-media-driven following of ~180,000 on Facebook.

Core members (identified by HOPE not Hate and media investigations):

- **Ryan Bridge** — Co-founder, Birmingham. Multiple arrests. Currently isolated after members defected.
- **Elliott Stanley** — Co-founder. Runs a tanning business. Former director of Sex Doll Official. Absent from RTC activity since early 2026.
- **Billy Allison** — Founding member, Solihull. Charged with murder of pub owner Matt O'Gara (May 2026).
- **Ben Cullen** — Oxfordshire branch leader. Charged with making indecent child images (June 2026). Subject of High Court injunction.
- **Trudy Wells** — RTC Oxfordshire admin. Named in High Court injunction.
- **Kevin Good** — Witney, Oxfordshire. Named in High Court injunction (did not attend court). Previously jailed 9 years for violent assault (2017).
- **Jordan Wheatley** — Stafford area. Alleged involvement in West Midlands drugs gang (HOPE not Hate).
- **Mark Keating** — RTC "head of security". Filmed in violent confrontations in Stirchley.
- **Julian Joseph Keane** ("JJ"/"Elon") — RTC driver. Organised protests against asylum-seeker accommodation in Sutton Coldfield.
- **Ross Childs** — Lichfield anti-migrant activist. Performed at Tommy Robinson's 2025 Christmas carol event.
- **"Angloid"** — 18-year-old ethnonationalist who espouses Great Replacement theory on X.

Former members who have left (cited in The i Paper, June 2026) include **Danny "Tommo" Thomas**, who fell out with Bridge and Stanley after the France trips, and multiple unnamed figures who said the group had become "the Ryan Bridge show" and was about "boosting his social media popularity".

Activity Timeline

August–October 2025: Flagging Phase

Flags appear on lamp posts across Birmingham suburbs (Stirchley, Harborne, Moseley, Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Blackwell) and Worcestershire villages. Council highways authorities warn the group they are breaking the law. Residents report feeling intimidated.

November–December 2025: France Vigilantism

RTC members travel to northern France, film themselves searching for and slashing migrant boats, and harassing refugees in Calais and Paris. They state the "indigenous white population" is being "replaced in our own country". The group is joined by Tommy Robinson associate Danny Thomas and former football hooligan Jason Marriner.

Le Monde reports: "Although these British far-right activists remain few on the ground, their Facebook group Raise the Colours counts nearly 180,000 followers."

January 2026: France Travel Ban

The French interior ministry bans 10 RTC-linked activists from entering France. The group is accused of "searching for and destroying small boats" and engaging in "propaganda activity".

March 2026: Ryan Bridge Arrested in Oxford

Bridge arrested on suspicion of racially aggravated harassment after an RTC flagging visit to Oxford.

May 2026: Stirchley Hit-and-Run and Billy Allison Murder Charge

- A van with RTC logos hits a pedestrian in Stirchley, breaking his leg. The driver leaves the scene.
- Police seize a van from the location of Bridge's business the following day.
- Bridge arrested in London on suspicion of wounding.
- Billy Allison charged with murder and Section 18 GBH after pub owner Matt O'Gara dies from a punch outside his bar in Lichfield.
- HOPE not Hate publishes "Raise the Colours: Who are the playground bullies plaguing British streets?" — the most comprehensive public profile of the group.

June 2026: High Court Injunction, Brighton Arrest, Internal Collapse

- **3 June** — RTC members attend the Henry Nowak murder far-right convergence in Southampton.
- **4 June** — The i Paper reports vigilantes defecting from RTC, citing extremism. A former member says: "I genuinely wish I had never entertained doing what we did."
- **14 June** — Ryan Bridge arrested again at an anti-immigration protest in Brighton on suspicion of common assault.
- **23 June** — Oxfordshire County Council secures High Court injunction against Bridge, Cullen, Wells, and Good. They agree to stop raising flags on public infrastructure.
- **27 June** — The Guardian reports the injunction as a landmark legal victory, noting contractors removing flags wore balaclavas and used unmarked vans to avoid confrontations.
- **30 June** — **Ben Cullen charged with 3 counts of making indecent images of children** (Categories A, B, C). Due at Reading Crown Court 1 July 2026.

Internal Collapse

By June 2026, RTC was in significant decline:

- **Elliott Stanley** (co-founder) — "has not been featured in months" (The i Paper)
- **Danny Thomas** — left the group after falling out with Bridge
- **Multiple former members** — defected, with one telling The i Paper: "It's a shame because it was something that was patriotic, but I'm even questioning what patriotism is now"
- **Isolation** — Bridge appears to be increasingly isolated, with family members telling him they were glad he had been arrested
- **New recruits** — newer faces appearing in RTC videos include a man who posted content with "Aryan Power" banners and neo-Nazi symbols

Political Stance and Connections

RTC has been characterised as far-right by monitoring organisations, media, and Wikipedia. It has links to:

- **Tommy Robinson** — has shared the group's social media posts
- **Britain First** — donated 75% of its flag stock to RTC operations in August 2025
- **Reform UK** — Ben Cullen specifically noted as having "close ties to Reform UK" (Eynsham Parish Council, Dec 2025)

- **Football hooligan firms** — Bridge associated with Birmingham Zulu Warriors; group appealed to "firms" to join France vigilante actions
- **Restore Britain** — some former RTC members became backers

The group has been criticised by Church of England bishops for co-opting Christian imagery. Its website states it is a "grassroots movement that has grown into a campaign to cover Britain in symbols of unity and patriotism".

Key Criminal Charges Against Members (as of 30 June 2026)

Member	Charge	Status
Billy Allison	Murder + Section 18 GBH (Matt O'Gara)	Remanded in custody, trial Oct 2026
Ryan Bridge	Racially aggravated harassment (Oxford)	Pending
Ryan Bridge	Wounding (Stirchley hit-and-run)	Pending
Ryan Bridge	Common assault (Brighton)	Pending
Ben Cullen	3x making indecent child images (Cat A, B, C)	Due 1 July 2026
Kevin Good	Previously served 9 years for violent assault (2017)	Served

Media Coverage

Key investigative sources:

- **HOPE not Hate** (May 2026): "Raise the Colours: Who are the playground bullies plaguing British streets?" — comprehensive member-by-member investigation
- **HOPE not Hate** (Jan 2026): Press briefing on RTC France activities
- **The i Paper** (Jun 2026): "Vigilantes defect from Raise the Colours as it descends into anti-migrant extremism"
- **The Guardian** (Jun 2026): Coverage of High Court injunction and Oxfordshire council's legal victory
- **BBC News** (May 2026): "How the row over flags in Birmingham reached boiling point"
- **Le Monde** (Dec 2025): "On France's coast, far-right British activists try to stop migrant crossings"
- **Byline Times** (Jun 2026): "The Neo-Nazi and Far-Right Coalition that Converged on Southampton over Henry Nowak's Murder"

- **Birmingham Dispatch**: Investigation of Bridge's business dealings

Related Profiles

- Ryan Bridge
- Billy Allison
- Ben Cullen
- Trudy Wells
- Kevin Good
- Jordan Wheatley
- Mark Keating

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- The Guardian: "'Not a culture war': the council that won its case over England flags on lampposts" (27 Jun 2026) https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2026/jun/27/oxfordshire-council-high-court-injunction-raise-the-colours-nationalist-flags
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- BBC News: "The questions about St George's and union jack flags lining English streets" (24 Aug 2025) https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx271162ee3o
- BBC News: "'Incomprehensible void' left by death of Lichfield pub boss" (29 May 2026) https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9365119eyqo
- Le Monde: "On France's coast, far-right British activists try to stop migrant crossings" (7 Dec 2025) https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2025/12/07/on-france-s-coast-far-right-british-activists-try-to-stop-migrant-crossings_6748242_7.html
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Notes

- As of 30 June 2026, RTC has three active criminal cases against core members (murder, indecent child images, multiple assault/wounding charges)
- The group's Facebook page still has ~180K followers but internal membership has collapsed
- Oxfordshire County Council's High Court injunction is the first of its kind in the UK and may set a precedent for other councils
- Bridge has attempted to distance RTC from Ben Cullen following the child image charges, claiming Cullen was "not affiliated" — contradicting extensive photographic evidence
- The group's shift from flagging to vigilantism in France represents a significant escalation pattern tracked by multiple international media outlets

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