London’s key role in battle for power

Lib Dems target capital’s ‘Remain’ seats ● Labour hope Sadiq can help

BY LWN REPORTER
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BIG-HITTING Liberal Democrats who made their names in the coalition government are aiming to return to power by contesting London’s overwhelmingly Remain-voting seats.

It was reported this week that Sir Vince Cable will stand in Twickenham, Ed Davey will stand again in his old Surbiton seat and Sir Simon Hughes will fight again for Southwark.

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron said the party has been preparing for a snap election since last June, and will make opposition to Brexit the standout issue of the seven-week campaign, a strategy that has already brought them huge success in the Richmond Park by-election, in which the party defeated Zac Goldsmith.

“This election is your chance to change the direction of our country,” Mr Farron said. “If you want to avoid a disastrous hard Brexit, if you want to keep Britain in the single market, if you want a Britain that is open, tolerant and united, this is your chance. Only the Liberal Democrats can prevent a Conservative majority.”

A party spokesperson said more than 1,500 people had joined the party in the hour after the election was called.

The 2015 election was devastating to the Liberal Democrats, reducing it from 57 MPs to eight, with its traditionally left-leaning voters punishing it for enabling Tory policies under David Cameron’s government.

Meanwhile, London’s Labour MPs elected just two years ago are wondering if their Parliamentary careers are about to come to a juddering halt.

The party’s poor showing in the opinion polls – with leader Jeremy Corbyn unable to lift their fortunes – suggests a number of MPs in marginal seats are at risk following Theresa May’s snap election call.

Four Labour MPs who took seats from the Tories in 2015 with majorities of less than 1,500 are thought to be especially vulnerable.

Rupa Huq (Ealing Central & Acton) is most at risk, with its traditionally left-leaning voters punishing it for enabling Theresa May to call a June 8 General Election.

Former Energy Secretary Ed Davey will be hoping to recapture Kingston & Surbiton where Conservatisve James Berry has a majority of 2,017.

TURN TO PAGE 3
LOVELIEST of trees, the cherry now... wrote A.E. Houseman and in the springtime it is hard to disagree, sorrows Nick Paget-Brown. Strolling up to Notting Hill Gate the other day I decide to go the back way, by which I mean I walk by Vicerage Gate rather than Kensington Church Street. I’m glad I did. Vicerage Gate leads you to the white stucco terraces of Palace Gardens Terrace, Brunswick Gardens and Berkeley Gardens, which at any time are some of the quietest and most beautiful streets in the borough. In the early spring sunlight, however, they are absolutely stunning and the reason is that the cherry trees are in blossom.

Brunswick Gardens is one of the quietest and most beautiful streets in the borough of Kensington and Chelsea. In the early spring sunlight it is absolutely stunning and the reason is that the cherry trees are in blossom.

I can’t imagine borough without its cherry trees

So it is no accident of nature that the streets of the Royal Borough still have so many beautiful blossom trees but the result of careful planning and investment by, yes, you’ve guessed it – the Council.

In fact, over the past decade or so we have replaced more than half of the oldest and most dis eased cherry trees in a phased programme that keeps each spring in Kensington and Chelsea as blossom as the last – weather permitting of course.

As regular readers of this column will know, the Council has many things to attend to, like building new homes and new schools, looking after vulnerable residents and much, much else besides and the money we have for doing all that has been shrinking year on year. But things would have to get a lot, lot worse before we would ever contemplate a Kensington and Chelsea without its cherry trees.
Will the capital be election central?

FROM PAGE 1

ajority of 2,834. Both will take encouragement from the Richmond Park by-election in 2016 where Lib Dem Sarah Olney ousted Zac Goldsmith after running an anti-Brexit campaign.

Sir Simon faces a tougher challenge in Bermondsey and Old Southwark where Labour’s Neil Coyle defends a majority of 4,489.

Both Lib Dem challengers and sitting Labour MPs will hope the Tories’ commanding lead in the polls will be offset by Londoners’ support for the EU. Almost 60 per cent of London voters backed the Remain campaign in the 2016 referendum.

Under Ed Miliband Labour secured 43.7 per cent of the vote in the capital while the Conservatives mustered just 34.9 per cent, helping Labour take a total of seven seats off the Lib Dems and Tories.

But recent polling suggests the party is currently the first choice of only 37 per cent – just three points above the Tories who are polling in line with their 2015 performance. Having secured his own personal landslide last May, it’s likely this group of Labour marginal MPs will lean heavily on London Mayor Sadiq Khan to help shore up their support and save their seats. Expect to see lots of photo-ops with the anti-Brexit Mayor in these seats.

 Luckily, given that local government publicity rules will soon silence City Hall, Mr Khan will have plenty of time to pose for pictures with his colleagues.

Whether his personal popularity can outweigh Mr Corbyn’s negative impact on the party’s support will make the race in London especially interesting.

But the far earlier than expected general election doesn’t only free up the mayor to campaign for his colleagues, it also risks upsetting any plans he has to become London’s next mayor.

Had events run their expected course, his term at City Hall would have expired on the same day as the 2020 general election, when some claimed he’d then seek to return to the Commons and stand in the resulting Labour leadership election, becoming a one-term mayor.

In contrast to Labour, the Conservatives are confident of victory.

But they to move sharply away from their vow to slash immigration this week as a Cabinet minister declared the issue was “not about numbers”.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley, a close ally of the Prime Minister, appeared to suggest there will be no specific promise on immigration levels in the Conservative manifesto.

Business leaders welcomed her comments as a sign that Mrs May will not endanger the economy by attempting to cut net immigration below 100,000.

Interviewed on Sky News, Mrs Bradley was asked if the Tories still thought that cutting immigration to the “tens of thousands” was achievable. She replied: “What we need is to have the right people, to attract the brightest and best. It’s not about putting numbers on it, it’s about making sure that we can deliver where industry needs skills, where the brightest and best want to come to Britain.

“We want to be an attractive place that people want to come and work, to deliver that strong economy that pays for those public services that we all value so much.” The comments are another sign that Downing Street is rowing back on so-called “hard Brexit” commitments which, for example, mean extending European free movement rules by up to three years after Britain leaves the EU.

Sean McKee, policy director of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was pleased. He said: “We absolutely agree that securing the skills for London is not about numbers. It is about securing the skills that the UK and London needs.” Tory Right-wingers were giving Mrs May the benefit of the doubt this morning. Brexit-backing MP Philip Davies said Mrs Bradley’s comments showed the Government was wary of “over-promising”. He added: “It is obviously essential that immigration comes down. That’s one of the reasons people voted to leave the EU.”

Tory Right-winger Peter Bone MP said he was not alarmed, and it was sensible to allow “doctors and nurses” to come in to staff the NHS, for example. He added: “I think that my people expect immigration to fall substantially.”

Labour MP Chuka Umunna said Mrs May should lose no time in abandoning David Cameron’s aim of cutting numbers to the tens of thousands. “She should have dropped that ludicrous pledge when she became Tory leader. It is unachievable and it undermines trust in the system when, year after year, they fail to meet the target.”

Although ministers stress they will have “control over numbers after Brexit, official figures show that non-EU immigration — over which the Government already has full control — has been massively above target for years. In the year to September 2016, net immigration stood at 273,000. That comprised 165,000 EU citizens, who enjoy free movement, and 164,000 non-EU citizens who do not.
Underground workers to stage 24-hour walkout after sacking

BY LWN REPORTER
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DISGRUNTLED London Underground staff are to stage a 24-hour strike and take other forms of industrial action in a dispute over the sacking of a colleague.

Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union based mainly at London Bridge will walk out at 10pm on May 7 and launch what they say is an indefinite campaign of action, including not servicing ticket machines and not challenging passengers who refuse to produce a valid ticket.

The RMT says a worker was sacked and two others disciplined for tackling a fare dodger said to have attacked other station staff.

LU disputes the union claims.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said: “Our members have voted for action in support of their victimised colleagues at London Bridge and with LU making it absolutely clear they have no interest in the principles of natural justice we have no option but to move to a campaign of industrial action.

“This is one of the most appalling abuses of the LU disciplinary procedure that RMT has ever come across.

“This was a shocking, violent incident and those that bore the brunt of it should have been supported and commended by the company.

“Instead they have been sacked or disciplined in what is the most appalling multiple miscarriage of justice.

“LU have flouted their own zero tolerance policy, their own duty of care to their staff and have sent out a message to fare dodgers and yobs that staff can be treated as punch bags with impunity.

“That is an outrage that has enraged every single Tube employee who risks their neck on the stations and platforms against a backdrop of a growing pattern of abuse and violence.

“London Underground should do the decent thing - reinstate our member, lift the disciplinary process, the decision to dismiss this member of staff has been upheld.

“Our investigation clearly showed that no member of staff was assaulted, nor was the incident prompted by staff defending a colleague.

“We take a zero tolerance approach to violence against our staff but we also expect our employees to adhere to acceptable standards of conduct and behaviour when dealing with members of the public.

“In this case, those standards were not met. We urge the RMT to withdraw this unjustifiable action which will only result in needless disruption to Londoners.”

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More complaints are made about drivers

THOUSANDS of stoners gathered in London’s Hyde Park on Wednesday to defy police and smoke cannabis.

Despite police warnings not to smoke drugs in the park, pot-enthusiasts descended in their thousands for the annual pro-Marjuana rally.

The smocky protest is held annually on April 20, because the date is 420 known as the ‘perfect time to spark up a joint.

The smokers are calling on the Government to legalise the Class B drug and risked arrest by using the illegal drug at the event.

24-year-old construction worker James Adams came straight after work and was still wearing his hi-vis jacket. The Wandsworth resident said: “I’m here to smoke a bit of bud. It’s nice bud here. It’s all about love and peace. Everyone’s happy. Once people start fighting then you can say it’s bad but it’s not.

“It’s calm, cool relaxed. Everyone’s in a good vibe. It’s so different compared to other drugs. If everyone was taking coke there would have to be a stage and pumping music and people would be going a bit crazy in the morning.”

His friend, Yusuf Mohammed, 28, also in construction and from Wandsworth, said: “I don’t smoke anything but weed. I like it because it’s got love and I wanted to come and see it. This is the first time we’ve come to the event.

“We’ve had some laughs and met some nice people. I might have one while I’m here.”

A 19-year-old politics student from the University of Aston also went to the event but didn’t want to be named. He said: “It’s a nice day, I’m on my fifth joint. I like weed because it’s a form of relaxing.”

The west London resident was amazed with how many people showed up for 420.

He said: “Last year it got a lot of publicising and this year it’s really big. We’ve been here an hour and I’d say 3,000 people have walked by. It’s a pleasant and peaceful atmosphere.”

Before the huge celebration of cannabis culture the Met Police tweeted: “A reminder for those attending the rally at Hyde Park today, officers will be enforcing drugs legislation #420”

But that didn’t stop thousands of people gathering to enjoy the day.

Pete, a 28-year-old concierge said: “It’s just a celebration of the plant that I enjoy. It’s nice to see so many people getting together in one place and celebrating one thing.

“I don’t think it would do much harm if it were legalised. It does way more good than harm in the States and so many people here smoke it anyway you might as well. The attitude towards weed is relaxed here.”

Weed day ‘takes place on April 20 or in the day American format 4/20 and fans of the drug spark up at 4.20pm.

The origins of 420 are unclear but some claim it comes from California in the 1970s where a group of teenagers would meet up to smoke at 4:20pm.

The event’s organiser in London Eric Shepperd told the London Free Press: “It’s not just dirty hippies that smoke marijuana. It’s older people, it’s businesspeople, it’s academics – all sorts of people use cannabis in a responsible and active way.”
THIR best preserved Arts & Crafts home in Britain reopened this week after an 18-month closure for vital restoration work.

Emery Walker’s House at 7 Hammersmith Terrace was the home of one of the key members of the Arts & Crafts movement, a close friend of William Morris and father of the Private Press movement.

The contents of Sir Emery Walker’s riverside home – around 6,000 items – were restored for cataloguing and conservation. This allowed vital repair work, including the replacement of the roof, to be carried out, creating a safer environment for the house’s remarkable collection. The project has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Arts & Crafts Hammersmith project, a joint initiative with the William Morris Society, for which matching funding has been found from charitable trusts and individual donations.

The collection has now been returned to the house in a time capsule which is packed with Arts & Crafts treasures, including one of the largest in situ collections of Morris & Co wallpapers in the world.

The house has extended its tour season until November 25.

Tour guide Angela Clarke leads a guided tour. Here, in the Drawing Room, she is drawing the attention of the group to pieces once owned by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
Driver who raged at DJ loses appeal

BY LWN REPORTER
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A DRIVER who threatened to knock out radio DJ Jeremy Vine during a foul-mouthed rant caught on camera has been jailed after her appeal against her conviction failed.

Shanique Syrena Pearson, 22, threatened to knock out the BBC Crimewatch presenter in an abusive rant seen by millions after a video clip posted online by the Radio 2 DJ went viral.

Pearson was also seen making a ‘gun’ gesture at Mr Vine as he cycled home after presenting his daily Radio 2 show.

Mr Vine told a court how he was scared and feared for his safety as he was confronted by the furious motorist.

Mother-of-one Pearson appealed her conviction for one count of driving without reasonable consideration for other road users, and one of using threatening and abusive or insulting words or behaviour.

But she lost her appeal at Isleworth Crown Court and she was sentenced to a total of nine months in jail.

The altercation with Mr Vine took place last August when she was already serving a suspended sentence for driving while disqualified and causing actual bodily harm and resisting arrest.

Judge Phillip Matthews told Pearson the suspended sentence would be activated.

Sentencing her, he said: “This is a bad case of loss of control by you, letting your anger take hold. It has happened in the past.”

For the offence of using threatening and abusive or insulting words or behaviour, involving Mr Vine, she was jailed for one month.

For the charge of driving without reasonable consideration for other road users and a charge of driving without valid tax, to which she previously pleaded guilty, she received no separate punishment.

The court heard in October 2015, at Isleworth Crown Court she was sentenced to 18 months, suspended for 18 months for theft, assault causing ABH and resisting arrest for an offence dating back to December 2012.

She was stopped walking out of a shop in The Kings Road after being suspected of shoplifting, and kicked and bit the member of security and tried to bite a community police officer.

In mitigation the court heard since that offence she had become a mother and in the past had suffered domestic abuse.

Last week the suspended sentence was reactivated and she was sentenced to eight months to run consecutively, giving her a total of nine months.

Pearson, of Vauxhall, south London, was also ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £130 but no order was made for the costs of the appeal.

The mum-of-one was heard crying as she was led from the dock to the cells to begin her sentence.

Jail sentence ‘a warning’

POLICE say the jail sentence for a woman driver who threatened to knock out Crimewatch presenter Jeremy Vine should act as a warning that road rage is ‘unacceptable’.

Shanique Syrena Pearson, 22, was jailed for a total of nine months after threatening the presenter during an abusive rant seen by millions after a video clip posted online by the Radio 2 DJ went viral.

Detective Inspector Driss Hayoukane, of Notting Hill CID, said: “Road rage incidents like this are completely unacceptable.

The mum-of-one was heard crying as she was led from the dock to the cells to begin her sentence.

Screening test reduces newborn infections

A SIMPLE screening test for pregnant women reduced the rates of life-threatening infections in newborn babies by more than 80 per cent.

Research at Northwick Park Hospital in London shows that testing for group B Streptococcus reduces the rate of the infection in their babies by 83 per cent.

The results, published in the BMJ Open come just days after the National Screening Committee said there was “insufficient evidence” to introduce GBS screening for medical reasons in the UK.

Group B Strept causes deadly diseases such as sepsis – blood poisoning – pneumonia and meningitis, which can claim the life of a baby in just one week.

Previously Northwick Park Hospital had recorded the highest rates of group B Strept infection in newborn babies, almost three times the national average, despite following national guidelines.

To combat this worrying figures, Dr Gopal Rao, Consultant Microbiologist at the hospital, set up the screening programme in his busy UK multi-ethnic community to see whether this would help reduce the rate of group B Strept infection.

More than 6,000 pregnant women chose to have the test. This involved taking two simple swabs (which the majority of women chose to do themselves at 35 to 37 weeks of pregnancy) – after being given information about group B Strept.

Dr Rao said: “Our hospital’s rate of group B Strept infection was much higher than the national average, despite carefully following national guidelines. This meant we were seeing more and more babies sick with group B Strept infection.

“I looked at international evidence showing how well screening worked overseas, and wondered if it could work as well in the UK.”

“Our pilot study has demonstrated that not only is screening doable in a UK setting, it had an even greater effect than we had expected. We are delighted with our findings, and hope comparable results can be seen across the UK.”

During the 22-month study, only three newborn babies developed group B Strept infection and only one of those mothers had been screened.

This was a fall in the rate of group B Strept infections in newborn babies of 66 per cent overall, and 83 per cent in babies born to screened mothers.

Experts in the field have welcomed the research.

Professor Philip Steer, editor emeritus of BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, said: “This study reinforces international evidence that antenatal screening for group B Strept carriage is best practice.”

Professor Steer explained: “This, coupled with the appropriate use of antibiotics, is highly effective at preventing group B Strept infection in newborn babies.”

Murder probe: police seek two suspects

TWO suspects wanted in connection with the murder of a Romanian man shot dead two days after arriving in London have been named by police.

Ionut Lazar, 28, was fatally shot in the chest when a group of men forced their way into an address in Shepherd’s Bush.

Six months on from the murder, detectives have appealed to the public in help in tracing Adam Adeniran, 22, and 23-year-old Nadir Munasar.

Emergency services rushed to the scene on October 22 last year where the victim was found unconscious after suffering severe gunshot injuries.

Despite efforts by paramedics he was pronounced dead at the scene at around 2.40am.

Scotland Yard have released mug shots of the two suspects and say they should not be approached by the public.

A post-mortem examination two days after his death at Fulham Mortuary established the victim died as a result of a bullet wound to the chest.

Adeniran, of Shepherd’s Bush, is described as black, about 5ft 8ins, of slim build, with short dark hair.

A Met Police spokesman said: “Adeniran and Munasar are wanted in connection with the murder of 28-year-old Ionut Lazar who was fatally shot only two days after he arrived in the UK from Romania.

“On Saturday October 22nd, 2016, police were called by paramedics at 2.40am to reports of a male unconscious at a residential address in Askew Road, Shepherd’s Bush.

“Officers attended and Ionut was found suffering from a gunshot wound to the chest. He died at the scene a short while later.

“A post-mortem on October 24th at Fulham Mortuary established the cause of death as a bullet wound to the chest.

“The two men detectives are keen to trace and speak with in connection with the incident are:

Adam Adeniran is described as a black male, about 5ft 10ins, of slim build, with a black afro, a brown beard and a scar half-an-inch in length on the bridge of his nose. He has links to the Westminster and west London area.

Nadir Munasar, of White City Estate, is described as black, about 5ft 9ins, of slim build, with short dark hair.

Adeniran and Munasar should not be approached by members of the public.”

Three people have already been charged with Mr Lazar’s murder.

Nadir Munasar and Adam Adeniran are wanted in connection with the murder of Ionut Lazar.
Sadiq aims to ensure markets thrive

BY LWN REPORTER
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The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has announced plans to recruit a team of industry experts and business leaders to help preserve and grow London’s vibrant markets.

The London Markets Board – the first of its kind in the capital – will ensure that markets continue to flourish, supporting growth in high streets and town centres, and remain vibrant attractions for all Londoners and visitors to the capital.

In London there are over 250 street markets, which are an important part of English culture. The Mayor wants to recognise their national value as he looks forward to the biggest-ever St George’s Day celebrations in London this weekend.

The number of markets is increasing in London. In 2010 there were just 102 – and the Mayor has pledged to do all that he can to ensure their re-vival continues and that they remain a vital part of life in the capital. Since his election less than a year ago, he has invested in London’s markets through the High Street Fund and London Regeneration Fund, as well as garnering support for community-run markets through his Crowdfund London initiative.

The Mayor has tasked City Hall, Planning, on the delivery of a London markets strategy, and on action to support and promote the capital’s wholesale, street and covered markets.

Mr Khan, said: “I’m a proud Londoner and a proud Englishman who has grown up with traditional street markets. Markets are deeply woven into the tapestry of English culture and nowhere is that more true than here in London. They are far more than a place to do your shopping – they are places where people meet and talk.

“I promised to be the most pro-business Mayor that London has ever seen which is why, as we lead up to St. George’s Day, I have pledged not just to preserve and protect London’s markets but also to set up our very first London Market Board to help ensure that these spaces thrive for the benefit of local entrepreneurs, small businesses and everybody who visits them.”

As well as setting up the London Markets Board, the Mayor has tasked City Hall with examining the social and economic value of markets in London. A major report – ‘Understanding London’s Markets’ – to be published later this year will outline the value markets bring to local communities and London as a whole in relation to employment, skills and training, community cohesion, health and well-being and culture. It will include the first ever map of all of London’s markets, which will be published online, allowing people to search for local markets and filter by functions such as market type and opening times.

In December 2016, the Mayor opened Well Street Market in Hackney, which re-launched thanks to money from his Crowdfund London scheme. The Mayor pledged £20,000, along with £6,000 from Hackney Council, to reach a total fundraising target of £81,134 needed to open the community market, where local people access healthy, affordable, good quality food as well as a Student Makers Market and live music stage.

The London Regeneration Fund is investing £1 million in Romford Market to build a high quality new market house, reposition and modernise the site, create a cluttered market place, and allow for a larger number of traders to operate. Romford Market was established in 1247 by Royal Charter as a sheep market. Cattle trading ended in the late 1950s but the market continues to act as a focal point of the town, attracting customers from around London and beyond.

Sue Terpilowski OBE, London Policy Chair, Federation of Small Businesses, said: “Markets play an integral role in the fabric of London society. They are more than just a place to do business – they are a place to socialise, are part of our capital’s heritage and provide cultural benefits to London’s tourism. They provide a good starting point for many new businesses as they discover key intelligence about their target market. It is a great way to learn about customers and business skills and are an integral part of the growth journey for many businesses.”

Graham Wilson OBE, Chief Executive of the National Association of British Market Authorities, said: “London has a rich variety of markets and the Mayor’s decision to establish a Markets Board recognises the importance of markets and the vital role they play in many aspects of London life. The Markets Board will provide an ideal opportunity to raise the profile of markets and address some of the issues that are important in securing a successful future for markets. The Markets Board is the beginning of a new era for markets and one that everyone associated with markets welcomes with great anticipation.”
Police warn they may be forced to shoot terrorists at the wheel

BY LWN REPORTER
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Police have warned they may have to shoot terrorists who use cars as weapons when carrying out attacks.

After the outrages in Westminster and Nice and Berlin, the tactics of armed officers in such circumstances will reportedly have to change.

Simon Chesterman of the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) said officers had previously been told not to shoot drivers of moving vehicles because of the risk of potential additional dangers.

He said: “We’ve seen some very horrible and different tactics lately involving vehicles. We used to talk about not shooting at a moving vehicle because of the danger we might cause if we fired at a driver. But if the weapon is being used as a weapon in the first place, there aren’t any tactics available in relation to stopping it, particularly a very large lorry.

“Driving a vehicle in front of it for example is not going to stop it. So you need to shoot the driver.”

Officers now have ammunition to penetrate doors and windows, he added.

Four innocent people were killed on Westminster Bridge when Khalid Masood mounted the pavement in a car and drove into pedestrians on March 22.

Mr Chesterman added: “We have the ability to move much quicker to resolve situations. Previously the approach was to locate, contain and neutralise. Now it is to locate and confront.

Our tactics are more aggressive.”

It comes as the NPCC announced that since last year the number of firearms offices in England and Wales has increased by 468, largely financed by a £143 million Home Office programme.

The plan is to recruit around 1,500 extra officers in total by the end of next year, across the 43 Home Office forces. Some of these will specialise in responding to ongoing terrorist incidents.

Mr Chesterman acknowledged that with armed policing being a voluntary role, recruiting, training and retaining officers remained a challenge.

“Officers who serve as part of firearms units are volunteering for an immensely difficult and dangerous role that will put them in harm’s way.

“They naturally have concerns about the impact their job might have on their families. They need to know they will be supported in the rare instance that they might discharge their firearm,” he said.

Ferrari crash driver charged

The driver of a £208,000 Ferrari has been charged following an incident that left seven teenagers injured.

Witnesses described “horrible” scenes after the incident, involving a 2015 Ferrari 458 Speciale and several people on a pavement in Battersea, south London, just before Christmas.

Seven teenagers were taken to hospital following the incident, two of whom – a 17-year-old boy and 16-year-old girl – were detained for further treatment.

Eye witnesses described what they saw as the incident unfolded near the world famous Battersea Dogs & Cats Home on Monday, December 12. One person was found on the other side of the two-metre railings.

The Ferrari driver stopped at the scene and was initially arrested on suspicion of causing serious injury by dangerous driving.

Now police have charged 36-year-old Andrew Kwon in connection with the incident.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: “Andrew Kwon, 36, of Gatliff Road, Chelsea, has been charged with driving without due care and attention.

“This follows a collision in Battersea Park Road on Monday December 12th. Seven people were taken to hospital for treatment to injuries – all were subsequently discharged.”

Kwon has been bailed to appear at Wimbledon Magistrates’ Court in June.

Oxford Street: fewer buses

The number of buses on London’s Oxford Street will be almost halved to reduce congestion and air pollution.

Transport for London (TfL) confirmed that 23 bus routes will be altered, reducing the amount serving Europe’s busiest shopping district by 40 per cent.

Some buses will start and finish at Park Lane, Trafalgar Square and Tottenham Court Road rather than travelling along Oxford Street.

The changes will be implemented this summer, ahead of the east-west Elizabeth line rail link opening in December 2018.

Mayor Sadiq Khan has pledged to pedestrianise Oxford Street by 2020.

Leon Daniels, TfL’s director of surface transport, said: “As our city changes around us, we need to ensure the bus network changes too. Making sure we have the right level of buses in central London is key to keeping our city moving.”

Jace Tyrrell, chief executive of New West End Company, said: “It is essential that these genuine traffic reductions to ensure the West End retains its position as a world class retail destination.”

Pop star under fire over Bridge video

SINGER Nicki Minaj has come under fire for releasing her new music video featuring scenes on Westminster Bridge just weeks after the terror attack.

The video for No Frauds shows the star rapping while sitting on the bridge and wearing a headress and slinky, beaded outfit.

It had been reported that Minaj would be cutting the scenes, which were filmed a day before the attack, from the video, which also stars Lil Wayne and Drake.

But the film, which shows the Houses of Parliament in the background and opens with a shot of Big Ben, still features the London landmark.

@beverley2007 said on Twitter: “Out of all the places in London who’s choice was it film at Westminster?”

@ethanxrih wrote: “I thought Nicki was editing out those shots of Westminster bridge.”

@Catlow added: “Nicki Minaj by Westminster Bridge in her new vid ... too soon?”

But Becki @bexa wrote: “I’m confused, why are people upset Nicki Minaj has Westminster Bridge in her music video? Seriously.”

Five people were killed, including Police Constable Keith Palmer, and dozens of others were injured when Khalid Masood, 52, drove a car into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge before entering the grounds of the Palace of Westminster with a knife, where he was shot dead.

After the attack, the US rapper wrote: “May God protect everyone in London. Hate hearing this sad news. Sending my condolences to the victims’ families.”

Hold the hoses

The current spell of dry weather could lead to drought and even a hosepipe ban, the Environment Agency warned.

Officials have admitted that the dry weather could lead to “drought management measures”, especially in the South East.
Antiques quarter revamp bid

BY LWN REPORTER
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A PLAN to rejuvenate a struggling “hidden gem” arts and antiques district in Marylebone and turn it into a thriving Portobello Road market has been supported by Westminster councillors.

An ambitious strategy for the cluster of up to 100 dealers in the east end of the street has more than 20 antiques shops and the 41-year-old Alfies Antiques Market arcade — the biggest of its kind in London.

Dealers hope the project will draw in wealthy shoppers from St John’s Wood, Regent’s Park, Fitzrovia and even Mayfair, who have never before visited one of central London’s least affluent quarters close to the once notorious Lisson Green estate.

Dealer Leon Young, who has run Young & Son in Church Street for the past 17 years and leads the dealers’ association, told Antiques Trade Gazette: “This event is a pilot and if it is a success it could become a regular event. Following a difficult period when there were losses on the street, we have now turned a corner. Westminster have responded to the dealers and listened.”

The east end of the street has more than 20 antiques shops and the 41-year-old Alfies Antiques Market arcade — the biggest of its kind in London.

Seized three monkey skulls, but Bezovski had not been prosecuted.

Ms Loftus said: “Police attended the shop on May 2009 and seized three monkey skulls that were being offered for sale; the skulls were donated to the natural history museum.

“He was not prosecuted. “He has continued to commit this offending.”

She added: “It is difficult to put a value on these items as they are unique and it is difficult to find comparable pieces.

“Other items were sold in the shop including python and crocodile skin bags, those items came to around £4,000.”

The freshwater crocodile Sunda False Gharial is native to the rainforests of south east Asia and listed as a vulnerable species on the red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The Knifetooth Sawfish lives in the Indo-Pacific from the Red Sea to Australia while the endangered Green Turtle is one of the world’s largest sea turtles.

The fashion label was set up by Bezovski and co-owner Marian Pejsoisky and has a keen interest in fashion accessories along with art and music. The Knifetooth Sawfish lives in the Indo-Pacific from the Red Sea to Australia while the endangered Green Turtle is one of the world’s largest sea turtles.

Sasko Bezovski leaves Hammersmith Magistrates Court last week. The vegan fashion guru, who is co-owner of clothing label Kokon to Zai, left, admitted illegally selling the skulls and shells of endangered animals from his boutique. The products were sold as fashion accessories alongside items from top designers.

Picture: SWNS

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Hammesmith Magistrates Court last week. The vegan fashion guru, who is co-owner of clothing label Kokon to Zai, left, admitted illegally selling the skulls and shells of endangered animals from his boutique. The products were sold as fashion accessories alongside items from top designers.

Picture: SWNS

Sasko Bezovski leaves Hammersmih Magistrates Court last week. The vegan fashion guru, who is co-owner of clothing label Kokon to Zai, left, admitted illegally selling the skulls and shells of endangered animals from his boutique. The products were sold as fashion accessories alongside items from top designers.
Patrick goes to Antarctica in family car

BY LW N REPORTER
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The great-grandson of legendary explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, Patrick Bergel from London, has become the first person to travel across Antarctica – in a family car.

By LW N Reporter

The great-grandson of legendary explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, Patrick Bergel from London, has become the first person to travel across Antarctica – in a family car.

The car they used for the expedition was a “pretty standard” Hyundai Santa Fe, which used the factory-spec 2.2-litre diesel engine, gear box, front differential and driveshaft.

Engineers had to fit the Santa Fe with special tyres which run on one-tenth of the normal road tyre pressure so they can get on top of the snow rather than plough through it. The suspension had to be adjusted to cope with the new tyres.

The only other modifications were to increase the size of the fuel tank and convert it to run on Jet A-1 fuel which was the only fuel available on the continent.

Patrick was helped by Gisli Jonsson, from Arctic Trucks, who prepared the event and is one of Antarctica’s most experienced driving experts.

Gisli said: “People who have a lot of experience of Antarctica know what it does to machinery: basically, anything and everything falls apart. Even the big machines crash up and break apart.

This was the first time this full traverse has ever been attempted, let alone done before. A lot of people thought we would never even make it and when we returned they couldn’t believe we’d actually done it.”

Patrick added: “Some sections were unbelievably beautiful and only a few dozen people actually get to see the Trans-Antarctic Mountains.

That was the point at which nobody in a wheeled vehicle had been beyond.

“Getting to the South Pole was a special moment. The fact that this was a place my great-grandfather tried to get to more than once and I was there, it felt like a genuine connection.

“It is quite something to have been the first to do this in a wheeled vehicle, but what we did was one thousand times as hard as what they did. But it’s still quite something to be the first to do this in a wheeled passenger vehicle. I felt quite sad to be leaving the place as well as glad to have been there. I’d love to go back.”

The great-grandson of legendary explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, Patrick Bergel from London, has become the first person to travel across Antarctica – in a family car.

Pictures: SWNS

Londoners calling time on boozers

LONDON has lost one in four of its pubs – more than 1,200 boozers – in just 15 years, reveals a shock new report.

The old fashioned East End boozer – epitomised by the fictional Queen Vic in EastEnders – is dying out with the worst hit areas losing over half their pubs since 2001, according to figures from London Mayor Saadiq Khan’s office.

Barking and Dagenham has lost 56 per cent of pubs in the borough since 2001, while Newham saw 52 per cent of its watering holes shut down and Waltham Forest lost 44 per cent.

But hipster hangout Hackney, also in East London, bucked the trend by gaining a pub in the borough in the whole of the capital that actually saw an INCREASE in the number of pubs since 2001 with numbers rising by three per cent.

There were 4,835 pubs in London 15 years ago, but by last year this had plummeted by 25 per cent to 3,615 – an average loss of 81 pubs per year, or more than six per month.

Other badly-affected boroughs include Croydon and Lewisham in south London, which saw 45 per cent and 41 per cent respectively of pubs close, along with Hounslow in west London which lost 42 per cent of its boozers.

Landlords Michael and Linda Norris, who have run The China Hall pub in Rotherhithe, south east London, for 34 years are among pub owners facing a threat to their livelihoods from property developers.

Boasting a history of nearly 300 years, the pub was sold to developers in 2013, who recently offered them a new 10-year lease for double what they currently pay, meaning they faced losing both their home and livelihood from the much-loved pub.

Historically, a driving influence of pub culture can be found in everyday London life – from the five tube stations and multitude of areas around the capital named after pubs, to the tales of iconic English characters who have frequented and been inspired by the many drinking establishments across the city.

But the dramatic decline in the number of pubs in the capital shows they are threatened by a lot of issues, including rises in business rates, conflicts with residents and developers and a relaxation of permitted development rights in 2015 – which allows certain types of development to go ahead without planning permission.

Property company CLTX has been told that it must rebuild ‘brick by brick’ a historic popular pub that it demolished illegally in July last year.

The Carlton Tavern in Maida Vale, west London, was demolished by the developer and it was ordered to rebuild the Grade II listed pub by Westminster Council.

Wandsworth Council also ordered Udhayam Amin to rebuild the demolished Alchemilla in London Road in July 2015.

Geoff Strawbridge, the Campaign for Real Ale’s regional director for Greater London, said: “Pubs play a vital part in many people’s lives, providing a place to meet and socialise and feel part of a community.”
A SERVICE of thanksgiving to celebrate the life of a Chelsea Pensioner who founded the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, was held at St Paul’s Church, Knwoyshur, Shropshire on Wednesday, April 12.

Major Coles MBE TD, who was affectionately known as Major Hedgehog, died on March 23 at The Royal Hospital Chelsea, where as a Chelsea Pensioner he had resided for the last four years of his life.

A large congregation attended the church was at full capacity. The service was attended by a host of civic dignitaries, serving and former military personnel, several deputy lieutenant and justices of the peace.

As well as senior current and former councillors and representatives from numerous organisations and bodies. Pensioners from The Royal Hospital Chelsea donned their distinctive scarlet coats and tricorn hats and travelled from London accompanied by Major Coles’ Captain of Invalids, Major Philip Shannon.

Local branches of the Royal British Legion joined forces to form a guard of honour as the coffin, draped with the Union Jack and carrying Major Coles’ tricorn hat and medals laid on a velvet cushion, entered the church followed by Major Coles’ three children and six grandchilren.

At the graveside, Royal British Legion Standards were raised and lowered to The Last Post and Reveille.

Major Coles was buried next to his wife Pam who died in 2011 and his son David who died aged three and a half in 1976.

Major Coles’ family said they were deeply touched by the kindness and support they had received. Major Coles’ eldest daughter Annie said: “I have never been more proud, my father was a wonderful man who worked tirelessly for the local community and for the County of Shropshire, he will be greatly missed.”

Tributes are paid to Chelsea’s ‘Major Hedgehog’

Major Adrian Coles MBE TD, the Founder of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, died last month

BY LWN REPORTER
edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

LONDONERS who cycle to work are reducing the risk of cancer and heart disease by 90 per cent, according to new research.

A study of more than 264,337 participants from UK Biobank, which contains detailed information on adults aged between 40 and 69.

They were asked questions about their usual mode of commuting to work and then followed up for five years. The new cases of cancer, heart attacks and deaths in that period were assessed and related to their method of transport.

The results suggest policies designed to make it easier for people to commute by bike may present major opportunities for public health improvement.

The study analysed data from 264,337 participants in the UK Biobank, which contains detailed information on adults aged between 40 and 69.

“Those who cycled the full length of their commute had an 40 per cent lower risk of heart disease, cancer and overall mortality over the five years of follow up.”

“If these associations are causal, these findings suggest that policies designed to make it easier for people to commute by bike, such as cycle lanes, city bike hire, subsidised cycle purchase schemes and increasing provision for cycles on public transport may present major opportunities for public health improvement.”

The greater benefits seen with cycling compared with walking may be because cyclists covered longer distances, the intensity of the effort is more and they had higher levels of fitness.

Dr Gill said: “We have shown in cycling reduces the risk of premature death from all causes, including heart disease and cancer.

“Cyclists get bigger benefits to their health than walkers, and there are probably a number of reasons for that.

“What we need now is a step change in the way we develop transport systems like we have seen in the Netherlands and Scandinavia where cycling is normal and cities are built around it.

“This is the biggest study into modes of commuting and their effect on health than all the previous ones put together and shows conclusively that cycling to work reduces the risk of cancer and heart disease.

“The main benefits to health are seen in cycle commuters in middle aged and older people. It is no use doing plenty of physical activity when you are young if you don’t keep it up.

“Going to the gym becomes more difficult as we get older because of time constraints so building exercise into your daily routine is a way of getting around this.”

Co-author Dr Carlos Colchero said: “Walking to work was associated with lower risk of heart disease, but unlike cycling was not associated with a significantly lower risk of cancer or overall death.

“This may be because walkers commuted shorter distances than cyclists – typically six miles per week, compared with 30 miles per week – and walking is generally a lower intensity of exercise than cycling.”

A study of 40,500 middle aged Danes last year found those who consistently spent 90 minutes on their bike a week were 24 per cent less likely to develop angina or have a heart attack over the next 20 years. And those who spent just half an hour cycling a week had a 14 per cent reduced risk.

Runway fight: councils pay

FOUR councils under Heathrow Airport’s flight path spent £350,000 on legal fees challenging the planned third runway, according to BBC.

Hillingdon Council’s leader said it would provide funding to challenge if it no longer takes to win this battle.

Wendover, North Ricmmond and Hillingdon councils spent £300,000 from their general funds on legal action.

Windsor and Maidenhead Council spent £50,000 from its development fund.

The details were obtained using Freedom of Information law.

Council general funds are where money for most council services is drawn, with funds raised from council tax and central government grants.

The four councils failed in an attempt to challenge the decision on the third runway at the High Court in January.

Robert Barnstone, of the No 3 Runway, London Councils said “Heathrow expansion cost British taxpayers up to £18 billion in the next 60 years for infrastructure upgrades that would be required to deliver the project.

“We already know the Government has already spent more than £10,000 per day in 2015 and 2016 on assessing Heathrow expansion, not to mention the cost of the glamorous consultation that has been running for the past two months.”

The four local authorities are expected to launch legal action on the government’s plans for Heathrow expansion later this year.
London slumps in survey of best cities for millennials to call home

BY LWN REPORTER
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LONDON has been ranked only 16th - below Lille, Zurich and Montreal – in a global league table of the best places for millennials to live in.

The capital scored particularly badly – coming 90th out of the 100 cities analysed – for the availability of affordable housing, and a lowly 81st for the number of music festivals compared with its population.

It failed to top any of the 16 categories but came second for “tourism” behind only Venice and equal third for “nightscene” behind only Venice and Paris. But bizarrely London compared with its population, the number of music festivals – judged on the scale of availability of Uber, and existence of a bike-sharing scheme – behind relatively tiny cities such as Auckland in New Zealand and Brno in the Czech Republic.

On immigration tolerance, London, one of the world’s most famous diversities communities, did even worse, and was ranked only 51st.

The capital also came only 34th for the availability of affordable housing, and a lowly 81st for the number of music festivals compared with its population.

The study, which surveyed 2,006 people working both part and full time across the UK, found the number of people who worry about taking a lunch break in London – 19 per cent – is higher than any other region in the UK and the national average of six percent.

Almost one in five Londoners say that they’re too scared to take a lunchbreak at work for fear of being judged negatively by their colleagues, according to research by wellbeing charity CABA.

New police chief to take modern route

THE new Scotland Year chief, Cressida Dick, has pledged to modernise the Met. She wants to see more digital policing to help put more people in touch with local officers.

She has also promised a more open police force with plans to increase the number of ways the public can report a crime, police officers will be given more technology to help investigate offences.

“T here are such opportunities for people to interact with police through the digital sphere that we have not achieved yet.”

She also added: “We are having more online reporting and we have people filling forms remotely. I think it opens up a whole new way of interacting with us.”

Ms Dick, who has worked for both the Met and the Foreign Officer, also told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme that she was unsure whether the numbers proved a “trend” due to changes in how the force records crime.

“ But if it is the case that gun crime and knife crime is going up then that is of huge concern to me,” she added.

“It will mark my commissionership, trying to bear down on violence in general and those two crimes in particular.”

Mayor warns bus operators on living wage

THE Mayor of London has demanded that all bus companies working with Transport for London ensure all of their staff are paid the London Living Wage after it was discovered that some trainee drivers were not receiving it.

Every bus company is being ordered to guarantee their drivers the full amount – currently £9.75 an hour – under the new Living Wage deal.

It was discovered that a number of the trainee drivers were actually being paid less than the wage of £9.75 an hour by their bus company, and then given a bonus when they qualified to drive taxis.

The number of trainees affected is likely to be several hundred. Some 2,000 people have been through six-week driver training courses in the last 12 months.

Sadiq Khan and TfL are furious that the practice has been going on, and are demanding that any company involved rectifies this right immediately. It is a contractual requirement that these trainee drivers are paid the London Living Wage, and the companies are being told they must act now.

Last year, the Mayor announced an increase in the London Living Wage from £9.40 to £9.75 to help London workers. He also secured a fairer system for bus drivers’ pay to ensure consistency for drivers working across all of London’s bus companies and a new starter driver minimum wage of £23,000.

Mr Khan said: “I’m absolutely furious if even a single trainee bus driver is still being paid below London’s Living Wage.

We’ve worked hard to ensure drivers are treated fairly and get the pay they deserve, so to hear that any company may have broken their contractual obligations is completely unacceptable. I thank the Unite union for helping to bring this to my attention and I expect this to be put right immediately.”

Claire Mann, TfL’s Director of Bus Service Delivery and Operations, said: “Payment of the London Living Wage (LLW) has been a contractual requirement for all bus companies operating in London for some time. We expect the LLW to be paid to all of their staff, including trainee bus drivers.

‘We have contacted all of the companies involved to remind them of this and seek urgent clarification that this is being adhered to.”

Statue project

LONDON Mayor Sadiq Khan has announced that Turner Prize-winning artist Gillian Wearing has been commissioned to create the statue of suffragist leader Millicent Fawcett in Parliament Square.

Gillian will take this milestone project forward with funding from the Government, following the Prime Minister’s announcement of support for the statue earlier this month.

The statue will be both the first of a woman, and the first created by a woman, to stand in Parliament Square.
Chelsea’s colour wonder show promises to be full of surprises

BY LWN REPORTER
edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

FLOWERS, the Queen and 6,000 sandwiches – the famous Chelsea Flower Show is just around the corner.

But what can we expect from this year’s event and how can gardening enthusiasts get hold of tickets?

The colourful event will run from Tuesday May 23 to Saturday May 27.

If previous events are anything to go by, it will be treat on the taste buds as well as the eyes.

At the 2015 event, 23,823 glasses of champagne were served, along with 6,000 sandwicthes and baguettes and 41,447 cakes and baked goods.

On May 23, Chelsea show visitors will be transported to the colourful gardens of Spain, Mexico, Canada, Bermuda, China and Japan, among others.

Guests can explore the Great Pavilion, which will house 100 displays from the world’s best nurseries and florists.

There will also be a range of show gardens to give visitors inspiration for their own outdoor spaces.

This year there will also be a garden dedicated to the 1.7 million British and Commonwealth citizens who died in the First and Second World Wars.

TV horticulturist David Domoney has designed the commemorative space, working with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission who look after 23,000 cemeteries and memorials of those who died.

The event kicks off at 8am each day, and runs all day until 8pm on the weekdays and 5.30pm on the Saturday.

If you are looking to bag yourself some beautiful flowwers to take home, you will need to go towards the end of the event to make a purchase.

Flowers go on sale around 4pm on the Saturday.

Tickets are now on sale.

Currently non-members can buy up to four tickets for the show, for the Thursday May 25, Friday May 26 and Saturday May 27 shows.

RHS members can buy tickets for all of the days of the show, with discounted prices on offer.

Tickets are priced by time of entry.

For non-members, a full day costs £63 in advance, £41 for a 3.30pm entry and £35 for a 5.30pm entry.

For RHS members, a full day costs £49 in advance, £38 for a 3.30pm entry and £27 for 5.30pm entry.

On the preview days, Tuesday and Wednesday, RHS members pay £61 for all-day entry, £39 for 3.30pm and £29 for 5.30pm.

Only children over the age of five are allowed to the event, and they must buy an adult price ticket.

As the event is in central London, it is recommended that people use public transport to reach the event.

The closest underground tube to the event is Sloane Square, which is a 10-minute walk away from the venue.

You can pre-book for parking in Battersea Park, which is a 20-minute walk away, or take a shuttle bus from Victoria.

The shuttle will run throughout the day from 7am to 8pm during the weekdays, finishing at 7.20pm on the Saturday.

The shuttle service costs £10 for a return ticket of £1 for one way. Alternatively, check out TFL website for public buses to the area.

One of London’s finest townhouse hotels, The Kensington, says it will be inviting hotel guests and members of the public to celebrate the Chelsea Flower Show in style. From May 15 to 27, The Kensington has partnered with Perrier-Jouët champagne to launch a pop-up bar outside the hotel’s entrance, as well as an exclusive, floral-inspired Champ-agne pairing dinner on Thursday May 25.

M the Hotel general manager Mary Berry will swap her cooking utensils for gardening tools to help create a garden for the Chelsea Flower Show.

The 82-year-old will join radio host Chris Evans to work on an allotment-style garden filled with more than 50 types of fruits, vegetables and edible flowers, including leeks, beetroot, rhubarb and violas.

Miss Berry, who keeps a beautiful garden at her Buckinghamshire home, promised the plot would feature some of the ‘tastiest plants growing in the UK today’.

Gum wars

CHEWING gum makers must step up and foot the cost of cleaning up the discarded blobs plaguing virtually every London’s high streets, council bosses say.

Gum spat out by their chewers gets trodden into pavements and roads making it difficult for street cleaners to get rid of the unsightly mess. Although the average cost of each stick is just three pence to buy, it costs councils up to 50 times that to clean.

They have to use specialised equipment to remove the hardened non-biodegradable gums at a cost of £1.50 per square metre at an annual bill of over £60 million a year.

Recent research by Keep Britain Tidy found 99 per cent of main shopping streets and 64 per cent of all roads and pavements are stained by gum.
Terror victim’s wife flies home

THE injured wife of a man killed in the Westminster terror attack has returned home to the United States.

Melissa Cochran had been visiting London from Utah with her husband Kurt, 54, to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary when they were caught up in the carnage on Westminster Bridge.

Her brother Clint Payne has since said doctors cleared his sibling to fly back home to the Salt Lake City airport on a Westward flight last week, and revealed that she is healing faster than medics had anticipated.

During the 82-second atrocity on March 22, Kenton Ronald Masood drove a rental car into unsuspecting pedestrians before fatally stabbing PC Keith Palmer, 48, in the Palace of Westminster’s forecourt.

Mrs Cochran, 46, suffered a broken leg and rib and a cut to her head during the attack, while her husband died after being thrown from the bridge.

Three others, retired window cleaner Leslie Rhodes, 75, Aysha Frade, 44, and Romanian tourist Andreea Cristea, 31, also died as a result of Masood’s murderous rampage.

On April 5 Mrs Cochran, who attended in a wheelchair, joined the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry at a service for the families and survivors of the attack, held at Westminster Abbey.

In an interview with the BBC, she described her husband as the “love of my life”, and said she does not feel “any ill will” towards Masood.

It’s official! Air pollution really gets up Londoners’ noses

AIR pollution in London really does get right up people’s noses, causing year-round sniffles, a study shows.

Living in towns or cities full of toxic fumes pumped out by the current smog-smogging factories and power plants may be the reason for walking about with a soggy nose all the time.

Air quality in London breached EU standards within the first five weeks of the year and the capital has even recorded worse pollution than Beijing.

Campaigners have called for diesel cars to be scrapped as the growing popularity of woodburning stoves has also been blamed for the worsened conditions.

Breathing in dirty air has long been linked with nasal and sinus problems and new scientists have proved it, dubbing it “asthma of the nose”.

Experiments on mice found those exposed to concentrated levels of smog particles for 16 weeks had four times more white blood cells indicating inflammation in fluid flushed out from their noses.

Professor Murray Ramamathan, of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, said: “We’ve identified a lot of evidence breathing in dirty air directly causes a breakdown in the integrity of the sinus and nasal air passages in mice.

“Keeping this barrier intact is essential for protecting the cells in the tissues from infection or irritation from other sources - including pollen or germs.”

Researchers know smog, ash and other particulates from vehicles and industrial smokestacks raise rates and worsen symptoms of asthma - which affects the lungs in the lower respiratory tract.

But they had little evidence of similar damage to the upper respiratory system - which includes the nose and throat.

The new findings published in the American Journal of Respiratory Cell and Molecular Biology have broad implications for the health and well-being of people who live in large cities and industrial areas with polluted air.

Prof Ramamathan said: “In the US regulations have kept a lot of air pollution in check but in places like New Delhi, Cairo or Beijing - where people heat their houses with wood-burning stoves - and factories release pollutants into the air our study suggests people are at higher risk of developing chronic sinus problems.”

It’s estimated more than 12 percent of adults suffer from chronic sinusitis that can cause congestion, pain and pressure in the face and a stuffy, dripping nose. It may lead to depression, lost productivity and chronic fatigue.

In the study the researchers exposed 38 male mice to either filtered air or concentrated Baltimore city air, with white blood cells, or eosinophils, and exposed mice.

The researchers used water to flush out the noses and sinuses of the mice, and then looked at the inflammatory and other cells in the fluid under a microscope.

Further tests on the cells flushed out of the nasal and sinus passages also found proteins considered direct biomarkers for inflammation.

“Those attract white blood cells called eosinophils and some were up to ten times higher in the pollution exposed mice,” said Prof Ramamathan.

Prof Ramamathan said: “Inflammation that attracts eosinophils is what happens in the lungs of people with asthma so essentially the chronic exposure to air pollution in mice is leading to a kind of asthma of the nose.”

His team also examined layers of cells along the nasal passages and sinuses under a microscope and found the surface - or epithelium - was, notably, 39 to 49 percent thicker in mice that breathed polluted air.

“A thicker epithelium is another sign of inflammation in humans and other animals,” said Prof Ramamathan.

His team will continue to study the specific molecular changes that occur when the sinus and nasal barriers are breached because of air pollution - as well as investigate possible ways in which to repair them.

The World Health Organisation says 92 percent of the world’s population lives in places where air quality levels exceed its safety limits.

They also claim that some three million deaths a year are linked to exposure to outdoor air pollution.

Cycling could save your life

CYCLING to work almost halves the risk of cancer and heart disease, according to new research.

A study of more than 250,000 British people found those who got on their bike were 41 percent less likely to suffer a premature death.

Their risk of developing a tumour or heart attack was reduced by 45 and 46 percent, respectively, according to the findings from the UK Biobank, compared to those who took a “non active” commute such as the train or bus.

The findings add to mounting evidence of the dramatic benefits of exercise to health. Meanwhile, people who walked to work were 27 per cent less likely to suffer cardiovascular disease and 36 per cent less likely to die from it.

But it did not protect against cancer - or premature death overall.

The study analysed data from 264,337 participants from UK Biobank, which contains detailed information on adults aged between 40 and 69.

They were asked questions about their usual mode of commuting to work and then followed up for five years.

The new cases of cancer, heart attacks and deaths in that period were assessed and related to their method of transport.

The results suggest policies designed to make it easier for people to cycle by giving them dedicated bike routes and cleaner busses, could benefit from cycling.

Dr Gill of the Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences at the University of Glasgow, said: “Cycling all or part of the way to work was associated with a lower risk of adverse health outcomes. Those who cycled the full length of their commute had an over 40 percent lower risk of heart disease, cancer and overall mortality over the five years of follow up. If these associations are causal, these findings suggest that policies designed to make it easier for people to commute by bike, such as cycle lanes, cycle hire, subsidised cycle purchase schemes and increased provision for cycles on public transport may present major opportunities for public health improvement.”

The greater benefits seen with cycling compared with walking may be because cyclists covered longer distances, the intensity of the effort is more and they had higher levels of fitness.

Dr Gill said: “What we have shown is cycling reduces the risk of premature death from all causes, including heart disease and cancer. Cyclists get bigger benefits than just walking, and there are probably a number of reasons for that.

What we need now is a step change in the way we develop transport systems like we have seen in the Netherlands and Scandinavia where cycling is normal and cities are built around it.

“It is the biggest study into modes of commuting and their effect on health than all the previous ones put together and shows conclusively cycling to work reduces the risk of cancer and heart disease.”

The NHS advises that people do 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week, such as walking or cycling, or 75 minutes of strenuous exercise such as running or football.
Queen’s favourite birthday presents

BY LWN REPORTER
edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

As the Queen celebrates her 91st birthday, the world’s most important people have been wracking their brains over this simple question – what exactly do you get the Queen for a present?

Our head of state – the most popular woman in the world – is said to like practical gifts, but not overly extravagant ones.

The monarch’s sons and daughter have apparently delighted the royal matriarch over the years with household items such as a washing-up apron and a casserole dish, while the Duchess of Cambridge once presented her with some home-made chutney.

Kate revealed she was left stumped over what to buy the Queen for Christmas

“I thought I’ll make her something’, Which could have gone horribly wrong. But I decided to make my granny’s recipe of chutney, “ the Duchess said.

“I was slightly worried about it, but I noticed the next day that it was on the table."

The Duke of York bought the Queen her first mobile phone many years ago, while former US president Barack Obama once gave her an iPod. As Elizabeth II marks her birthday, here are some of her favourite presents over the decades, as chosen by the Press Association.

PEGGY THE PONY
Princess Elizabeth’s first horse – a Shetland pony called Peggy – was a gift from her grandfather, King George V, when she was four years old.

She started riding lessons when she was three-and-a-half, and when she was five her mother led her on Peggy to a meet of the Pytchley Hounds at Boughton Cover.

Peggy inspired the Queen’s lifelong love of horses. The Queen still rides and is a horse racing and breeding expert.

SUSAN THE CORGI
Eighteen-year-old Elizabeth was thrilled to be given her first Pembroke Welsh corgi – which she named Susan – by her parents for her birthday. Synonymous with the breed, the Queen has owned more than 30 during her reign and many were descended from Susan.

The Queen’s first corgi was rather partial to going for servants’ legs and once bit a royal clockwinder on the arm – but Susan was so loved by the Princess that she even accompanied her on her honeymoon in 1947.

The Queen now has only one corgi left, Willow, as well as Candy and Vulcan – two dorgis – a cross between a corgi and a dachshund.

BIG MOUTH BILLY BASS
The Queen was so amused by Billy Bass the singing fish – a mounted fish which moves and mimics the words to Take Me To The River or Don’t Worry, Be Happy – that she was apparently given six more for Balmoral. She was introduced to the gift, which became popular in the 2000s, by the Princess Royal – and one apparently stands on top of the grand piano in the Queen’s Scottish home.

She was also sent a Rocky Lobster, a lifesize singing crustacean which performs Do Wah Diddy Diddy and Rock The Boat, and the Queen is said to sing along to the tunes.

A VENTRILOQUIST
Prince Harry delighted his grandmother with a special birthday gift on her 90th birthday by arranging to perform a short cabaret with ventriloquist Nina Conti at the Queen’s party.

Harry had the Royal Family in fits of laughter as he acted as Conti’s dummy during the Windsor Castle bash.

SENTIMENTAL JEWELLERY
A suite of sapphire gemstones was given to Princess Elizabeth on her wedding day by her father.

George VI’s gift to his eldest daughter in 1947 – 70 years ago – was a glittering necklace, dating from 1850 and made of 16 large oblong sapphires surrounded with round diamonds, with a pair of matching sapphire and diamond drop earrings.

The Queen has added a tiara and bracelet to the collection, and has worn the jewels many times.

Our monarch by numbers

As the Queen celebrates her 91st birthday, here’s a look at Elizabeth II in numbers.

1 ranking in the list of world’s longest-serving current monarchs. She moved to first place after the death of the King of Thailand in 2016.

2 number of dogs the Queen has left – one corgi, Willow, and two dorgis, Candy and Vulcan.

4 children – The Prince of Wales, the Princess Royal, the Duke of York and the Earl of Wessex.

8 grandchildren – Peter Phillips and Zara Tindall, the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Harry, Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie, and Lady Louise Mountbatten-Windsor and Viscount Severn.

5 great grandchildren - Isla and Savannah Phillips, Prince George and Princess Charlotte, and Mia Tindall.

13 prime ministers in office since the start of her reign.

The first was Winston Churchill (1951-55).

16 number of countries of which she is monarch - the UK and 15 Commonwealth realms.

16 general elections during the Queen’s reign so far. The upcoming June 8 vote will be the 17th since she acceded to the throne.


23 number of waxworks Madame Tussauds has created of the Queen.

22 age when Princess Elizabeth had her first child, Prince Charles.

25 age when she became Queen on February 6, 1952.

37 age when the Queen had her last child, Prince Edward, in 1964.

65 years on the throne so far. The Queen reached her Sapphire Jubilee in February 2017.

70 years of marriage the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh are due to celebrate this November - their platinum wedding anniversary.

72% proportion of her life that Elizabeth II has been Queen.

601 charities, organisations and military regiments of which the Queen is patron. She handed over 25 patronages last year.

660 investitures - the Queen has personally held more than 660 investitures since the start of her reign.

23,816 days on the throne on April 21, 2017.

1,450,000 approximate number of people who have attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace or the Palace of Holyroodhouse since 1952.

£1,771,441 the Queen’s earnings from race horse wins since 2013 in GB flat races.
Royals return to the classroom to promote mental health campaign

**BY LWN REPORTER**
edi@londonweeklynews.co.uk

THE Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry have started to school children to understand mental health by encouraging them to talk about it.

The royal couple appeared fascinated as the young people sat around a table filled with an array of buttons, switches and lights, as senior production staff over-saw the programme.

The presenters were behind glass in a studio and William joked: "Funny thing to be locked in a box talking to a big red microphone."

While Theakston quipped: "I'm not sure the royal party has been this close to a Spice Girl.

The Cambridges and the prince were visiting the school to officially launch the institutional which opened its doors to pupils last September and to promote their Heads Together mental health initiative.

William, Kate and Harry have spent the past few days championing their Heads Together campaign, which aims to encourage the nation to talk about their mental health problems or be a sympathetic ear for someone in need.

On Wednesday Harry commented on his decision to speak out about the issues he faced after his mother’s death, saying it was “only right” he aired his experiences as he wanted to encourage others to “smash that stigma” around talking about mental health.

He was praised by the duchess, who described him as “brilliant” for revealing in an interview with The Daily Telegraph that he spent nearly 20 years “not thinking” about the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, and eventually got help after two years of “total chaos”.

Heads Together is a mental health campaign led by the Royal Foundation in partnership with YoungMinds and seven other charities. It aims to challenge mental health stigma and change how it is perceived. It was made the 2017 Virgin Money London Marathon Charity of the Year and will be working alongside ten runners with mental illnesses during the annual race.

Heads Together commissioned a YouGov poll which found nearly half (46 per cent) of 5,003 adults, questioned in February, have talked recently about mental health, with a quarter chatting about their own psychological problems.

Since April 2016 the royals have been heavily involved in the campaign. The trio have been part of the campaign to work against the negative attitudes to talking about mental health. They commissioned ten films of celebrities talking about their problems and the times when talking about it made a huge difference.

The royals said: “Since we launched Heads Together last May, we have seen time and time again that shattering attitudes to mental health starts with simple conversations.

“Accessibility to Heads Together is the key to changing perceptions. We hope these films show people how simple conversations can change the direction of an entire life.”

**Prince Harry’s plea endorsed by experts**

MENTAL health experts have joined Prince Harry in appealing to men to stop suffering in silence, and to seek help, as statistics show they often fail to do so – with deadly consequences.

In an attempt to break the stigma surrounding the issue, the heir to the throne revealed he underwent counselling to cope with negative feelings following the death of his mother when he was 12 years old.

He told The Telegraph how instead of being open about his grief he “shut down all his emotions” to the point where he was “very close to a complete breakdown on numerous occasions”.

“My way of dealing with it was sticking my head in the sand, refusing to ever think about my mum, because why would that help?” he said. “And then [I] started to have a few conversations and actually all of a sudden, all of this grief that I have never processed started to come to the fore and I was like, there is actually a lot of stuff here that I need to deal with.”

Prince Harry said he finally acted when his brother, Prince William, pushed him to address the issue.

He said he has met with a professional “more than a couple of times” and described the experience as being “great”.

He is now encouraging more people to reach out to others in times of need and to normalise the conversation about mental health.

“The experience I have had is that once you start talking about it, you realise that actually you’re part of quite a big club,” he said.

**The Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry arrive at The Global Academy in west London**

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IMBLEDON-BASED actor Cameron Blakely is bringing his strange family to town – and the kooky clan are likely to leave a riot of mirth in their wake.

Cameron will join the cast as the head of the household Gomez for the UK premiere of the musical stage adaptation of The Addams Family, which comes to the New Wimbledon Theatre in May.

Originally a cartoon strip in The New Yorker, the morbid dynasty was turned into a hit television series in the 1960s and went on to achieve further notoriety when adapted into a film franchise in the 1990s, which starred Angelica Huston as Morticia, Christopher Lloyd as Uncle Fester, Christina Ricci as Wednesday and Raul Julia as Gomez.

The cast for the musical, which will visit Wimbledon as part of a nationwide tour, is no less impressive and Cameron is joined by EastEnders star Samantha Womack, YouTube sensation Carrie Hope Fletcher and comedian Les Dennis, who has shaved his head in readiness to take on the role of the frightful Uncle Fester.

Cameron told me about the family and said: “They’re sort of stuck really. The minute you go into their house, you don’t know what century you’re in and you wonder how long they have been around.

“There’s something quite vampiric about them as well as romantic, with this honour, this code they all have.

“They are a fully functioning family as oppose to other families who think of themselves as normal and are actually completely dysfunctional.”

We meet the family a few years on from their last adventures and the melancholic Wednesday is 18.

She has fallen in love for the first time with a respectable young man, something which has the potential to rock the tight-knit family unit. So Gomez is forced to keep her relationship a secret.

“Any one can relate to. Anyone who’s a parent can definitely relate to this story.

“They just happen to be the Adams Family so they happen to go for things that are dark and interesting and m acabre undertones. With all of the things and favourite characters also involved, including Pugsley, Lurch and, of course, crazy Uncle Fester, the musical promises to be cacophony of calamity.

Cameron told me about the family and said: “It’s got beautiful music, it’s really funny and it’s very moving as well, almost to the point that you can forget it’s The Adams Family. We have wonderful people in it and a wonderful team behind it.

“Visually it’s stunning, it’s creepy and it’s kooky and everyone will love clicking their fingers.”

The Addams Family will run at the New Wimbledon Theatre from May 16 to 20. You can find more details at theaddamssfamly.co.uk.

Audra McDonald is riding high on a wave of success.

But there is nothing wooden about this diva and alongside her friend and fellow Broadway star Will Swenson putting in a guest appearance, the show had the real feel of a family affair.

Audra is speaking of the voice of the wardrobe in Disney’s Beauty And The Beast, from The Sound Of Music were performed with an ultimate grace and Audra’s strong traditional soprano voice completely satiated the auditorium.

The real highlight, however, was the encore when the acclaimed soloist sang Summertime from Gershwin’s Porgy And Bess. As soon as she hit the first note a collective gasp rang around the auditorium, such was the quality of the vocal.

Audra is returning to London this year to play Billie Holiday in Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill – and from this display it looks like a show not to be missed.
Talk of the town

PREVIEW
Toy Soldiers
at The Hospital Club, Covent Garden

THE Hospital Club in Covent Garden will host the first solo exhibition in the UK by club member and photographer Simon Brann Thorpe, entitled Toy Soldiers. As part of the Photo London VIP Programme, it is also a first solo showing for Toy Soldiers as a body of work, an important dialogue on war and conflict through conceptual art in this critical time of socio-economic conflict and upheaval.

Recently receiving two nominations for the Prix Pictet Award, Toy Soldiers is a unique collaboration between a military commander and Simon in the creation of a unique allegory of modern warfare. The series stages real soldiers, posed as toy soldiers, in this investigation into the impact, legacy and dehumanising effects of war.

Toy Soldiers is a powerful conceptual project on war and conflict that blurs the boundaries between documentary photography and art. Simon explores the paradigm of colonial conflict through our cultural notions of freedom, nationhood and entertainment.

He creates a critical lens through which we view the projected metaphor of war games and reality reconstituted on to the little-known conflict in Western Sahara, known as Africa’s last colony. Sofia Vollmer Maduro, a Prix Pictet judge, said: “By captivating the viewer with the seemingly playful device of Toy Soldiers, Simon’s images successfully counteract our growing desensitisation to images of conflict. Upon careful viewing, these striking images reveal their poignant message on the fate of victims of warfare, while alerting us to the impact on society of current trends that view war as a game.”

Photo London was created to give London an international photography event befitting the city’s status as a global cultural capital. Now in its third edition, Photo London has established itself as a world-class photography fair and as a catalyst for London’s dynamic photography community. Toy Soldiers will be on display at The Hospital Club Gallery from May 19 to 21. See thehospitalclub.com for more details.

LONDON’S largest free bridge-to-bridge festival is returning for a third year – and it promises to be bigger and better than ever. Set against the backdrop of some of the capital’s most iconic riverside landmarks, the London Bridge City Summer Festival will run from Thursday June 1 to Thursday August 31 and will provide a picturesque central setting for an array of food, drink and live entertainment throughout the season.

The festival’s programme will include large screens showing films and live streaming Royal Opera House performances, fitness and dance classes, Nightspot Cinema and more. Sports fans can kick back in the sunshine and enjoy live screenings of Wimbledon, the World Athletics Championships, and the ICC Cricket Champions Trophy. Cycling café Look Mum No Hands will be screening the Tour de France at a pop-up bar and hosting cycle speed dating.

For visitors seeking fun for all the family, there will be children’s workshops, a lawn library, urban gardening, The Flying Seagull Circus, Gods & Monsters theatre production and performances and workshops from London Urban Arts. The Fantasy High Street will also be putting on an immersive Mad Hatter’s tea party for children.

This unmissable schedule of entertainment will take place at four distinctive locations, running from London Bridge to Tower Bridge, the amphitheatre-style steps of The Scoop, the beautiful historic architecture of Hay’s Galleria and the riverside promenade at The Pier.

London Bridge City will also host the return of the London Riviera, this year celebrating all things Mexican and featuring delicious dishes from Taco Revolution. Each venue will be bustling with activity seven days a week, from 10am until 10pm.

Summer revelers are invited to party it up en masse with some saucy action every Friday in June at The Scoop.

Full schedule breakdown and festival programme will be confirmed at the end of April. See lbcsummerfestival.com.

PREVIEW
Driftwood – by Casus at Underbelly Festival

INTERNATIONAL circus sensation Casus will bring their thrilling new show Driftwood to London for the first time, following rave reviews at the 2016 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

The show will be performed as part of the Underbelly Festival and promises to be a colourful and turbulent concoction in which audiences can watch Casus bring a blank canvas to life and revel in our innate need for human contact.

Unique acrobatic shapes, signature to Casus, abound in this journey of explosive encounters, hidden looks and humorous discoveries.

The company of Driftwood includes Johnny Brown, Jonah Bonaventura, Shannon Vitali, Sarah McDougall and David Trappes.

Knee Deep, the previous show from Casus, won international accolades including best circus and physical theatre at the Adelaide Fringe Awards 2016, and was described as awe-inspiring by The Guardian’s Lyn Gardner.

Driftwood will run for a limited season, from May 4 to June 4. You can find further details at underbellyfestival.com.

Nicky Sweetland previews LONDON BRIDGE CITY SUMMER FESTIVAL

Photo: Carnival Cinema

Casus bring Driftwood to the Underbelly Festival.
F OR someone who writes musicals, the ultimate goal is for one of your shows to be presented in the West End or on Broadway. As of next month, the British songwriting partnership of George Stiles and Anthony Drew will have not one but two of their shows in town when The Wind In The Willows joins Half A Sixpence.

With theatrical impresario Cameron Macintosh intent on the West End return of their stage adaptation of Mary Poppins, it looks like the revered musical coupling are on track to score a hat-trick of hits over the next 12 months.

But it’s not just the big-budget theatrical spectaculars where their hearts lie, however, and one of their first musicals, Honk!, has been enjoying an acclaimed run at the Union Theatre.

The show, which won an Olivier Award for best musical, beating The Lion King and Mamma Mia! when it was produced at the National Theatre in 2006, follows the story of the Ugly Duckling.

Lyricist Anthony told me of his surprise at the phenomenal success of the simple musical tale.

He said: “We originally wrote it in 1996 for the Watermill Theatre in Newbury. The Watertmill theatre had ducks on its pond and so it felt like the perfect match.”

The production at the trendy South London Off-West End venue has been getting rave reviews and Anthony is pleased with the results that director Andy Room has achieved.

“I saw it a few nights ago and what he’s done with it is ever so imaginative.”

Honk! isn’t the duo’s only musical with creatures at its centre, with adaptations of The Three Little Pigs, Goldilocks And The Three Bears, The Three Billy Goats Gruff and Rudyard Kipling’s Just So Stories among their other works.

Anthony gained a degree in zoology before he decided to become a wordsmith. I asked if this is perhaps the reason that so many of their shows have a distinctly animal association.

He laughed and told me: “It was never my intention to get a degree in zoology just so I could write rhymes with every animal I could think of. It is a little by accident that there have been so many of them...”

He told me that they were offered Babe The Pig but turned it down and decided to take on the task of turning The Wind In The Willows – which opens at the London Palladium this summer – into a musical because they were looking to do another collaboration with Julian Fellows.

Julian had previously written the book for their stage reworking of Mary Poppins – and Anthony told me: “The Wind In The Willows felt a perfect fit for Julian and I just knew that George and I would know what to do with it.”

Leading comedian, actor and presenter Rufus Hound stars as the amazing Mr Toad in the new musical based on Kenneth Graham’s much-loved children’s classic. And producer Jamie Hendry has pledged to provide readers of all ages the opportunity to enjoy The Wind In The Willows by sending free copies of the novel to every school and library in London.

George and Anthony’s other huge West End success has come in the shape of a somewhat unlikely remake of a show which was originally written as a star vehicle for Tommy Steele.

The fabulous revamp of Half A Sixpence has become a real favourite with London the-atre-goers and has made a star of its leading man Charlie Stemp, who was recently nominated for an Olivier Award for his efforts.

It wasn’t a show the pair initially jumped at the opportunity to redo, however. Anthony explained: “Cameron Macintosh had been on our backs for years and I’d seen productions of it and just thought ‘It’s not one of my favourites’. David Heneker, who wrote the original, was so sweet to us in our early years and once we got into it we found we loved it more and more. It was a lovely job to do and we’re really proud of it.”

There are also some really exciting plans on the horizon which will further help to establish George and Anthony’s West End domination, with two new musicals expected to hit the London stage over the next 12 months.

The first is based on a novel by Terry Ronald entitled Becoming Nancy, which Anthony explained is a very British story set in East Dulwich.

“It’s about a boy at a comprehensive school who wants the part of Pin in the school production of Oliver! but actually gets cast as Nancy because of his good singing voice. It’s very funny and very rude.”

The other show in the pipeline will have musical-theatre fan girls squealing with anticipation as the songwriting duo have developed a musical based on the 1991 film Soapdish, which they hope will be led by Broadway superstar Kristin Chenoweth.

The show is in collaboration with the original screenplay writer, Robert Harling, who also wrote the screenplay for Steel Magnolias. Anthony said: “It’s kind of ready to go. We’ve done a couple of workshops in New York with Kristin Chenoweth and we’re hoping that’s going to happen, also potentially over here in the next 12 months.”

“She (Kristin) wants to do an original role in a musical again because she hasn’t originated a role since Wicked. She’s got such an amazing voice and after the first workshop we literally wrote another song for her, so she can show off her vocal pyrotechnics.”

It sounds like the pair’s domination of the musical-theatre world in London is only set to increase over the next few years, which has come of something of a surprise to the talented team.

Anthony said: “George and I were saying it’s as if our careers have been the wrong way round. We are both now in our mid-50s and we are more prolific now than when we were in our 20s. I guess it’s just the way that it works. It takes an awful lot of time to establish a reputation and to establish the trust with producers to start producing your work. It’s a ruse that so many came along at the same time last year, with Half A Sixpence transferring, The Wind In The Willows at the same time and Cameron bringing Mary Poppins back.

“It looks like we are going to have two or three shows on in the West End, which we never dreamed we’d get.”

Honk! completed its run at the Union Theatre on Saturday. Half A Sixpence continues at the Noel Coward Theatre – see halfasixpence.co.uk/?s=ppc. The Wind In The Willows begins previews at the London Palladium on June 17 – see windinthewillows themusical.com.
MORTGAGE lending was down by nearly a fifth in March compared with a year earlier, figures from banks and building societies show.

An estimated £21.4 billion worth of home loans were handed out last month – marking a 19% decrease compared with March 2016, the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) said.

The CML said mortgage lending appears to be in “neutral gear” – and it does not expect the general election on June 8 to have a marked effect on lending.

The sharp year-on-year fall in lending was expected, the CML said.

In spring 2016, there had been significant increases in activity as borrowers rushed to beat a stamp duty hike that was imposed on people buying second homes, including buy-to-let investors, on April 1 2016. The mortgage lending total for March 2017 was still a 19% jump compared with the previous month, with £17.9 billion worth of home loans advanced in February.

The CML said in total, around £29.1 billion worth of mortgages were handed out in the first three months of 2016, marking a 4% decrease on the fourth quarter of last year and a 6% decrease on the £36.7 billion lent in the first quarter of 2016.

CML senior economist Mohammad Jamei said: “Mortgage lending appears to be in neutral gear.

“Our gross estimate for March is £21.4 billion and this is broadly in line with average monthly lending over the past year.

“Within this aggregate level, there has been a shift towards first-time buyer and re-mortgage customers, away from home movers and buy-to-let landlords.

“We expect this profile to continue over the short term, as low mortgage rates encourage existing borrowers to re-mortgage and government schemes help first-time buyers.

“We do not expect any marked effect from the general election.”

Howard Archer, an economist at IHS Markit, said: “We share the CML’s view that June’s general election is unlikely to materially affect the housing market.

“Consequently, we believe house price gains over 2017 will be limited to no more than 2.5% - and there is a very real possibility that it could come in lower than that.”

Jonathan Harris, director of mortgage broker Anderson Harris, commented: “The mortgage market continues to tick along with competitive products on offer to those borrowers who are getting on with the business of buying and selling, or re-mortgaging their homes.”

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**Public Notices**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND Fulham**

**TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC**

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate utility repair works to be carried out in the above named road, it made an Order the effect of which prohibits vehicular traffic in a section of the above named road.

2. Whilst works are in progress, or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in a section of Munster Road between its junctions with Fulham Road and No. 55 Munster Road.

3. An alternative route for traffic in article 2 would be in place via Fulham Road, Rostrevor Road, Swift Street, Felden Street, Durrell Road, and Hestercombe Avenue.

4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so far as it is practical without interference with the execution of the said work and for vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.

5. The Order will come into operation on the 6th May 2017 and will be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.

6. Works are expected to commence on Saturday 6th May 2017 and last for 3 days. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 18th day of April 2017

Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle
Chief Transport Planner
Transport and Highways

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**NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND Fulham FOR LICENSE UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003**

Circo Gastra of 1A Eyot Gardens, London, W6 9TN has applied to the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham for the variation of a premises license at Mari Deli 1A Eyot Gardens, London, W6 9TN.

Variation sought to include the sale by retail of alcohol on the premises.

No changes to existing permitted hours for licensable activities.

Current license permits: Sale by retail of alcohol. Off the premises.

Anyone wishing to make a representation about this application must give notice in writing specifying the grounds on which the representation is made to the Licensing Authority, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Licensing Team, PO Box 66532, London W8 9GL or licensing@lbhf.gov.uk.

Representations must be received by 3rd May 2017 and the applications heard by a Licensing Sub Committee of the Council.

Dated this 18th day of April 2017

Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle
Chief Transport Planner
Transport and Highways

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**TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC**

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate utility repair works to be carried out in the above named road, it made an Order the effect of which temporarily suspends the loading bay on the above named road.

2. Whilst the event is in progress, or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, the loading bay on the south-western side of Beadon Road, alongside the Lyric Square, shall be suspended.

3. An alternative route for traffic in article 2 would not be required.

4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so far as it is practical without interference with the execution of the said work and for vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.

5. The Order will come into operation on the 26th April 2017 and will be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.

6. The event will commence on Wednesday 26th April 2017 and last for 1 day. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 19th day of April 2017

Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle
Chief Transport Planner
Transport and Highways
LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH AND Fulham ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 SECTION 14(1) (AEGON TENNIS TOURNAMENT)

TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate works connected with the AEGON Tennis Tournament, it intends to make an Order the effect of which would prohibit vehicular traffic, suspend sections of parking bays, extend Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) D operational hours within part of the existing boundaries of CPZ D, and change the way traffic flows in sections of roads as listed in the articles to this notice.

2. During the event or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in Palliser Road, the north-eastern kerb line of Comeragh Road and its south-eastern boundary.

3. During the event or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in Palliser Road, between its junctions with Comeragh Road and its south-eastern boundary.

4. During the event or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, wait, load or unload in Palliser Road, between its junctions with Comeragh Road and its south-eastern boundary.

5. During the event or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in Palliser Road, between its junctions with Comeragh Road and its south-eastern boundary.

6. During the event or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in Palliser Road, between its junctions with Comeragh Road and its south-eastern boundary.

7. During the event or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in Palliser Road, between its junctions with Comeragh Road and its south-eastern boundary.

8. During the event or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in Palliser Road, between its junctions with Comeragh Road and its south-eastern boundary.

9. During the event or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in Palliser Road, between its junctions with Comeragh Road and its south-eastern boundary.

10. Within the times and conditions specified in Articles 3 to 9 inclusive, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, wait, load or unload in:

   (a) Palliser Road, its south-western kerb line, from its southern extremity, northwards to the common boundary of No. 7 and 9 Palliser Road;
   (b) Palliser Road, its north-eastern kerb line, from its southern extremity, northwards to a point 75 metres north of its junction with the northern kerb line of Comeragh Road;
   (c) Comeragh Road, its south-eastern kerb line, from its junction with the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, north-eastwards to its junction with south-western kerb line of Gladestanes Gardens;
   (d) Comeragh Road, its north-west kerb line, from a point opposite the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, eastwards for a distance of 10.00 metres;
   (e) Comeragh Road, its north west kerb line, from a point opposite the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, eastwards for a distance of 5.00 metres;
   (f) Comeragh Road, its south-eastern kerb line, from its junction with Gladestanes Gardens to the common boundary of Nos. 97 and 89 Comeragh Road;
   (g) Comeragh Road, its north-east kerb line, outside Nos. 46 to 52 Comeragh Road;
   (h) Gladestanes Gardens, from its junction with Comeragh Road to the common boundary of Nos. 3/4 Gladestanes Road;
   (i) Gladestanes Road, its south-western kerb line, from its junction with Comeragh Road to the south-eastern boundary of No. 71 Comeragh Road;
   (j) Gladestanes Road, its south-western kerb line, a section of 15.00 metres outside Baron's Court Mansions;
   (k) Perham Road, both sides, between its junction with Gladestanes Road and its south-western extremity;
   (l) Comeragh Road, its northern kerb line, between Nos. 183 and 187 Greyhound Road;
   (m) Greyhound Road, its southern kerb line, from its junction with Musard Road to the common boundary of Leighton Mansions and Kingsley Mansions;
   (n) Musard Road, the south-western kerb line, from its junction with Greyhound Road to No. 1 Musard Road.

11. Between the hours of 8am-6am every day of 18 month(s) of the period from 24th April 2017 to 17th April 2018, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, wait, load or unload in:

   (a) Palliser Road, its south-western kerb line, from its southern extremity, northwards to the common boundary of Palliser Road and the east side of Comeragh Road;
   (b) Palliser Road, its north-eastern kerb line, from its southern extremity, northwards to a point 100 metres north of its junction with the northern kerb line of Comeragh Road;
   (c) Comeragh Road, its south-eastern kerb line, from its junction with the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, north-eastwards to its junction with south-western kerb line of Gladestanes Gardens;
   (d) Comeragh Road, its north-west kerb line, from a point opposite the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, eastwards for a distance of 10.00 metres;
   (e) Comeragh Road, its north west kerb line, from a point opposite the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, eastwards for a distance of 5.00 metres;
   (f) Comeragh Road, its south-eastern kerb line, from its junction with Gladestanes Gardens to the common boundary of Nos. 67 and 69 Comeragh Road;
   (g) Comeragh Road, its north-east kerb line, outside Nos. 46 to 52 Comeragh Road;
   (h) Gladestanes Gardens, from its junction with Comeragh Road to the common boundary of Nos. 3/4 Gladestanes Road;
   (i) Gladestanes Road, its south-western kerb line, from its junction with Comeragh Road to the south-eastern boundary of No. 71 Comeragh Road;
   (j) Gladestanes Road, its south-western kerb line, a section of 15.00 metres outside Baron’s Court Mansions;
   (k) Perham Road, both sides, between its junction with Gladestanes Road and its south-western extremity;
   (l) Comeragh Road, its northern kerb line, between Nos. 183 and 187 Greyhound Road;
   (m) Greyhound Road, its southern kerb line, from its junction with Musard Road to the common boundary of Leighton Mansions and Kingsley Mansions;
   (n) Musard Road, the south-western kerb line, from its junction with Greyhound Road to No. 1 Musard Road.

12. The hours of 8am-6am every day of 18 month(s) of the period from 24th April 2017 to 17th April 2018 shall be extended to cover:

   (a) Palliser Road, its south-western kerb line, from its southern extremity, northwards to the common boundary of Palliser Road and the east side of Comeragh Road;
   (b) Palliser Road, its north-eastern kerb line, from its southern extremity, northwards to a point 100 metres north of its junction with the northern kerb line of Comeragh Road;
   (c) Comeragh Road, its south-eastern kerb line, from its junction with the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, north-eastwards to its junction with south-western kerb line of Gladestanes Gardens;
   (d) Comeragh Road, its north-west kerb line, from a point opposite the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, eastwards for a distance of 10.00 metres;
   (e) Comeragh Road, its north west kerb line, from a point opposite the north-eastern kerb line of Palliser Road, eastwards for a distance of 5.00 metres;
   (f) Comeragh Road, its south-eastern kerb line, from its junction with Gladestanes Gardens to the common boundary of Nos. 67 and 69 Comeragh Road;
   (g) Comeragh Road, its north-east kerb line, outside Nos. 46 to 52 Comeragh Road;
   (h) Gladestanes Gardens, from its junction with Comeragh Road to the common boundary of Nos. 3/4 Gladestanes Road;
   (i) Gladestanes Road, its south-western kerb line, from its junction with Comeragh Road to the south-eastern boundary of No. 71 Comeragh Road;
   (j) Gladestanes Road, its south-western kerb line, a section of 15.00 metres outside Baron’s Court Mansions;
   (k) Perham Road, both sides, between its junction with Gladestanes Road and its south-western extremity;
   (l) Comeragh Road, its northern kerb line, between Nos. 183 and 187 Greyhound Road;
   (m) Greyhound Road, its southern kerb line, from its junction with Musard Road to the common boundary of Leighton Mansions and Kingsley Mansions;
   (n) Musard Road, the south-western kerb line, from its junction with Greyhound Road to No. 1 Musard Road.

13. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so far as it is practical without interference with the execution of the said work and for works vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.

14. The Order would come into operation on Tuesday, 03rd May 2017 and would be valid for a period of 18 months of the period from 24th April 2017 to 17th April 2019. The works for the build/breakdown would be expected to commence on certain dates falling between 04th May 2017 and 14th July 2017. The tournamnet dates to which the restrictions apply are indicated in the details to this Order. The dates are subject to change. Please refer to the drawing for the full dates.

15. The works for the build/breakdown would be expected to commence on certain dates falling between 04th May 2017 and 14th July 2017. The tournamnet dates to which the restrictions apply are indicated in the details to this Order. The dates are subject to change. Please refer to the drawing for the full dates.

16. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

17. Dated this 13th day of April 2017

Nicholas Burton-Boyle

Chief Transport Officer

Transport and Highways

LONDON WEEKLY NEWS 25
Transport for London Notice

MAYOR OF LONDON TRANSPORT

FOR LONDON

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984

THE A3212 GLA ROAD (CHELSEA EMBANKMENT, ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA) (TEMPORARY BANNED TURN AND PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC AND STOPPING) ORDER 2017

1. Transport for London hereby gives notice that it intends to make the above named Traffic Order under section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for the purpose specified in paragraph 2. The effect of the Order is summarised in paragraph 3.

2. The purpose of the Order is to enable carriageway works to take place on A3212 Chelsea Embankment.

3. The effect of the Order will be to prohibit any vehicle from:
   (1) Stopping on Chelsea Embankment outside Nos. 14-16 Chelsea Embankment;
   (2) Entering, exiting, stopping or proceeding on Royal Hospital Road at its junction with Chelsea Embankment;
   (3) Turning right into Royal Hospital Road from Cheyne Walk.

4. The prohibitions will not apply in respect of:
   (1) any vehicle being used for the purposes of those works or for fire brigade, ambulance or police purposes;
   (2) anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform or a person authorised by Transport for London.

5. At such times as the prohibition is in force an alternative route will be indicated by traffic signs.

   [For vehicles wishing to enter Royal Hospital Road via Chelsea Embankment] Chelsea Bridge Road onto normal route of travel
   [For vehicles wishing to enter Chelsea Embankment via Royal Hospital Road] Lower Sloane Street, Sloane Square, Kings Road, Oakley Street onto normal route of travel

Dated this 25th day of April 2017
Mufu Durowoju
Network Impact Management Team Manager, Road Space Management - Operations, Transport for London
Palestra, 197 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8NJ

MAYOR OF LONDON

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
with two games left to play, Queens Park Rangers are still seeking the elusive point that will ensure another season of second-tier football in W12, writes Tony McDonald.

Rs will hope to avoid a nerve-jangling test in their final game at Nor- wich on May 7 by securing the result required in Saturday’s final home fixture of the Championship campaign against fellow strugglers Not- tingham Forest.

It’s been a miserable end to Ian Holloway’s first season back at QPR.

Last Saturday’s 3-1 defeat in the West London derby at Brentford was their sixth in succession and has seen them slide to 19th place (sixth from bottom) – five points clear of the dreaded drop zone.

But Rangers can’t expect an easy ride against the side that are one place and two points below them in the table. Of the sides in the bot- tom three, Blackburn Rovers could squeeze out of the drop zone by a point in the unlikely event that they win both of their last two matches (they have just one of their last 10) and QPR lose theirs.

In Holloway’s own words, Rs might not be enough to keep them up if Rovers beat Aston Villa at home and also win their final game at Brent- ford for goals, but more than QPR score in their final two matches.

At Griffin Park, Joel Lynch’s 62nd-
minute goal, a near-post header from Luke Freeman’s free-kick, couldn’t even be described as a con- solidation effort, because by then Brentford were out of sight after Yoann Barbet and Jota (twice) had netted for the hosts.

To rub salt into Hoops’ wounds, this was Bees’ first league double over their near-neighbours in 52 seasons – since 1964-65.

And the stats continue to pile up against Holloway, who now has a worse losing record (16 defeats in 28 matches) than his two predecessors, Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink (13 in 42) and Courtois (9 in 39).

Ollie, pictured, who had not lost a match at Brentford in seven previ-ous visits as manager, said: “Unfor- tunately, we’ve still got some work to do. We went from having the best record in the league to not playing in six. Five or six games ago, we had one win to get. And we still need it. “The fans are upset – and so am I. Obviously, I’m disappointed for the team, Today, we had to deal with how Brentford play, which is very good. They played well, I have to say that. I can’t argue with the effort but we missed the opportunity when we won the ball back. We didn’t break well enough, we kept giving it away. When we did get the ball, I was disappointed in our own-attack. And when we did get it right, we didn’t score.”

The reserve beat a developing Buxton side 22-8 in a spirited contest.

Hoists were able to use their physicality to overcome their opponents as a team full of new players started to build partnerships in which they will look to develop in their next game.

MoM was Marc Brune, who made a remarkable transition from wing to prop forward. The Frenchman carried hard and effectively which the platform for the players to convert out wide.

Hills’ next game is in two weeks’ time (May 6) against Richmond at Twickenham C.

The club is proudly supported by Belushis Hammersmith, Anglo Pacific, Element Construction and Stoke Travel.

THE UNDER-11s will face Manchester City at Stamford Bridge tomorrow night (Weds, 7:45pm) in the semi-final of the FA Youth Cup.

The tie is perfectly balanced fol- lowing the 1-1 draw in Manchester last Tuesday.

Jody Morris’s side will be looking to secure their place in the trophy for a fourth time in five years.

When I looked behind me and saw the ball just on the line, I was happy to grab it because there were obviously other players running for the ball. Last year, that would have been a goal but the year we are hav- ing, a lot of the time things are on our side, they are going the other way around.”

The reserves beat a developing Buxton side 22-8 in a spirited contest.

Hoists were able to use their physicality to overcome their opponents as a team full of new players started to build partnerships in which they will look to develop in their next game.

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The club is proudly supported by Belushis Hammersmith, Anglo Pacific, Element Construction and Stoke Travel.
The final masterplan

THRASHING Spurs is always a good way to start the working week, which hopefully will end on Sunday with six more league points to bag, writes Paul Lagan.

The fact Tottenham were beaten in an FA Cup semi-final made it all the more sweeter for the Chelsea faithful who packed Wembley Stadium to see Blues win 4-2 - they were never behind and finished with two sensational goals, the second a world-class strike from Eden Hazard.

Chelsea will face Arsenal, who beat Manchester City in the other semi-final, in the final on May 27.

But tonight (7.45pm), Blues are at home to Southampton, followed by Sunday's (2.05pm) visit to Everton.

Chelsea head coach Antonio Conte revealed his managerial nous for us, it’s very important to prepare very well. We haven’t a lot of time, it won’t be easy but, for sure, it’s a crucial moment in the league.

Former Juventus star Conte is used to playing for cups in a glittering playing and managerial career but he believes the FA Cup is special.

“It’s always nice to play in important games and for big trophies,” he said.

“When you’re young and looking at the Premier League, you want to play in FA Cup finals and to play for a title. It’s a good achievement and hopefully we can win the trophy.”

The win over Spurs, who are four points behind Blues in the Premier League title race, should give the players renewed confidence following their most recent loss to Manchester United. Conte agrees: “It doesn’t give us three points in the title race,” he said, “but, mentally, it’s a good thing. Spurs had won seven league games in a row, were on a good run and have been scoring so many goals. In the last few weeks they have been doing very well and if they had beaten us at Wembly, they would be feeling even better.

“Now it is going to be hard to the end. Maybe we have an advantage. We still have a four-point lead.”

GOALKEEPER Thibaut Courtois is a man used to fighting for titles and is as excited at the prospect of a league and cup double with Chelsea as he was while chasing Spanish and European glory during his three seasons on loan to Atletico Madrid.

The gap between Chelsea and Spurs has narrowed from 10 to four points in recent weeks and the 24-year-old Belgium No1 thinks the race for the title has seen a shift in favour of the North Londoners.

“Just as we did between October and January, when we had a run of a lot of victories, they have been doing that now,” he said.

“But we play against Crystal Palace, Manchester City, Bournemouth and Manchester United in the space of a few weeks, you can always drop points. OK, we didn’t expect to lose the Palace game but you can lose at Manchester United. We didn’t play our best game but these are the facts we had to face.

“It was important we beat Totten-

ham (in the FA Cup semi-final). We have to do the same against Southampton and then we can go to Everton with a good feeling, because that will be very tough too.

“They are doing very well. The two games coming up will now be very, very important.”

Courtois missed the 2-0 defeat at Old Trafford because he injured himself while playing basketball during a promotional shoot for a club sponsor.

“It was very hard to miss that game,” he said. “I have to thank the medical staff at Cobham for getting me fit for the Spurs match. I tore an ankle ligament and I think it’s incredible to be able to play after one-and-a-half weeks.

“So how did it happen? I was just catching the ball,” he said. “A pass from Azmir Begovic. I jumped to get it, like I have done a million times at training, and I just landed badly. I twisted my ankle. I swelled really quickly. I thought my season was over. In those initial moments, you always fear the worst. But medical man Paco said straight away that he would get me ready as soon as possible and I am very happy to have made it to Wembley.”

So will he be steering away from any more extracurricular activities? No, is the short answer. But Courtois explained: “There are things we do during the season, commercial activities. It was just unfortunate that happened. I have done worse things in goalkeeping drills that might injure me but nothing hap-

It was just silly.

“I know playing basketball doing commercial activities sounds very bad and stupid but it’s what we do a lot. It’s part of our job as well. It’s just unfortunate. It’s a fact of life in sport that you can get injured but, luckily, I only missed one game.

“That’s what we do with Chelsea. Obviously there will be more things but I don’t think there will be any-thing with the ball, so no-one else gets injured. I don’t think there is a need to cancel those activities because that is part of the partnership the club has with certain brands.”

Courtois revealed after Saturday’s semi-final that he was not fully re-

covered.

“When I had to kick, there was a bit of pain,” he said. “Obviously. I had to stand on my right foot, which was not easy at times. But in goal I felt very good and when you play with adrenaline, you feel good and you forget.

“I’m getting better every day, so hopefully soon I will be able to play without the need for any strapping.”

Having won the Europa League (2012), Copa del Rey (2013) and La Liga (2014) with Atletico, Courtois is used to challenging for silverware in

Fulham one victory from the play-offs

LIKE a thoroughbred race horse timing his late surging run to perfection, unstoppable Fulham are coming up fast on the rails to rein in their Championship promotion rivals as the season enters its crucial final furlongs, writes Tony McDonald.

With two games of the regular campaign left to play, the West Londoners have galloped into sixth place and could finish third in the final table if they extend their impressive run of four consecutive victories and their closest challengers continue to stumble towards the finish line.

On Saturday, Whites came from behind to win 4-1 at Huddersfield Town and close to within two points of the fifth-placed Terriers and their fellow Yorkshiremen, Sheffield Wednesday.

More importantly, Fulham have put some daylight between themselves and fadiuming Leeds United, who have fallen three points and a place behind them after two successive losses and only one win in their last six.

Because free-scoring Fulham, the Championship’s top scorers, have the best goal-difference record of the four teams occupying the play-offs berths, they know that one win from their last two scheduled matches – Saturday’s West London derby at home to Brentford and what could be a decisive finale in front of a sell-out crowd at Sheffield Wednesday on May 7 – would put them beyond the reach of Leeds and clinch a play-off semi-final slot.

With Brighton & Hove Albion having already secured automatic promotion and second-placed Newcastle United almost certain to join them in the Premier League next season whatever happens, it is how it looks for the next five teams below them, with their remaining fixtures to come (current position in brackets):

3rd Reading – 79 pts & +1 GD
4th Sheff Wed – 76 pts & +15 GD
5th Huddersfield – 78 pts & +2 GD
6th FULLHAM – 76 pts & +27 GD
7th Leeds – 73 pts & +14 GD

Huddersfield have a game in hand on the other four teams, which they play tonight.

Tuesday April 25

Wolves (18th) v Huddersfield
Saturday April 29

FULLHAM v Brentford (9th)
Birmingham (21st) v Huddersfield
Ipswich (16th) v Sheff Wed
Leeds v Norwich (6th)
Reading v Wigan (23rd)
Saturday May 6

Sheff Wed v FULLHAM
Burton (18th) v Reading
Huddersfield v Cardiff (13th)
Wigan (23rd) v Leeds

Fulham showed what they are all about at Huddersfield, who have not beaten them in their last 11 league meetings, dating back to September 1993.

The afternoon began badly when Chris Long’s 14th minute put the home side ahead from the penalty spot in four minutes. But the visitors responded in style and had levelled their 2-1 deficit before half-time with goals from Scott Malone, a Tom Cairney penalty and Stefan Johansen.

Head coach Slavisa Jokanovic enthused: “We conceded an early goal but our team showed resilience, character and confidence and started to be braver and stronger,” Jokanovic said.

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