Demands for safety blitz on reckless landlords

RIDING HIGH: The Mayor of Hammersmith and Fulham hopped on her bike during a town hall event to improve youngsters’ unhealthy lifestyles.

Councillor Mercy Umeh used pedal power to prepare a smoothie as more than 130 people came together to share their health and fitness initiatives. Children from across the borough took part in the event last weekend with the help of healthcare professionals, chefs and food bloggers.

Charity challenge

A CHARITY boss from Fulham is to take on a double header of daring feats in a bid to help war veterans find a home in west London.

Ex-serviceman Andy Fryer will cycle 100 miles around the capital before abseiling down the side of one its tallest buildings, Broadgate Tower.

PAGE 3

Playground campaign

A DEDICATED mother has raised thousands of pounds to pay for a disability-friendly playground in Shepherd’s Bush after fronting a successful campaign inspired by her nine-year-old daughter.

Hayley Wedgbury, whose daughter Mia has cerebral palsy, led a community appeal to revamp the playground in Wormholt Park.

PAGE 4

RENTERS’ groups have urged town hall chiefs to come down hard on dodgy landlords, after it was revealed that the lives of thousands of private tenants are being put at risk because of missed gas safety checks.

Some part-time landlords in west London are failing to protect their tenants by renting out properties without the required safety certificates, according to British Gas.

It said there was a “growing breed” of landlords who were unaware of the need for annual checks and warned that renters were vulnerable to boiler breakdowns and gas leaks, as well as carbon monoxide poisoning and explosions.

British Gas said as many as a quarter were unaware of the legal requirement to carry out safety checks.

Rosie Walker, from campaign group Renters’ Rights London, told London Weekly News that landlords were not fulfilling their “moral duty” to look after tenants.

“These figures don’t surprise me at all – most landlords are not really aware of what their legal responsibilities are,” she said.

“There is a long way to go in educating landlords. They think they can collect the rent and not follow standards but it is their legal and moral duty to provide a safe home for tenants.”

Under rules introduced last year, landlords can no longer enforce a section 21 eviction without a valid gas safety certificate for the property.

Ms Walker said this had curbed the number of sudden and unfair evictions but called for councils to get tougher on rogue landlords by adopting stricter licensing schemes.

She added: “In London landlords are collecting high rents without doing very much but standards are appallingly low. They should be playing by the rules.

The British Gas survey suggested that tenants’ lives were being “put at risk” due to landlords’ cavalier approach to gas safety.

All landlords have a legal responsibility to carry out annual checks using a registered engineer.

But the survey found that more than a quarter were completely unaware of the requirement.

One private landlord, who rents out a two-bedroom apartment in Fulham Broadway through travel site Airbnb, admitted that she did not know about the safety rules.

According to British Gas, around a third of part-time landlords also believed that failing to
Courage to talk about mental health can begin to end stigma

The Duchess of Cambridge, along with Prince William and Prince Harry launched Heads Together, their ambitious new campaign to end stigma on mental health, earlier this month. This will be the biggest project they have undertaken together to date, and will see them working in partnership with a team of inspiring charities to change the national conversation on mental wellbeing.

HOPES deferred makes the heart grow sick but longing fulfilled is a tree of life. So says an ancient proverb dating back to the Bronze Age.

Hopelessness is a common feature we can all experience at times of mental stress. Stigma identifies us as different; someone with something to be avoided at all costs.

It leads to covering up reality in euphemisms and innuendo. We speak in hushed voices and sidelong glances. It always relates to ‘them’ and never ‘us.’ Changing stigma will take effort and courage. It is changing because brave people are starting to speak openly about their mental health.

Language dictates culture and currently we all find it of hope starts with not being alone. So, anything we write must be in the first person. It is our shared issue. I may have a mental health problem; it is us who need to take action; it is our friends and family who are suffering.

Having established we are not alone, we can believe there is help for us. We can challenge the stigma that poor mental health is always for life. For some, like physical health, there may be life-long consequences. But for all there is much we can do to help and for many of us it will be a one-off episode from which we recover.

During my worst time I pushed my friends and family away because I thought it would be easier to take my life if I had no one to live for. Fortunately for my friends and family did fight my battles despite endless attempts to self-destruct.

NHS England has been running a mental health awareness campaign in London designed to improve peoples understanding of complex conditions and encourage those who suffer with stress, anxiety or depression to seek help.

Dr Phil Moore, the co-chair of the London Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network, is a committed campaigner on mental health.

Deputy chair of the Kingston clinical commissioning group, he is also a trustee and chairman of several charities and voluntary organisations, while working as a GP trainer and honorary teaching fellow at Imperial College and a visiting fellow in healthcare management at the University of Surrey.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, he calls on the capital to show courage in the fight against mental health stigma.

Read Deena’s and Luke’s stories on Pages 6 & 9
Students’ summer ball is the really wild show

DLD College London students had a magical evening at their fourth annual summer ball, which was held at the UnderGlobe, below Shakespeare’s Globe, in the heart of Bankside.

The Westminster Bridge-based students took to the red carpet to celebrate the end of their academic year and enjoyed a wonderful Enchanted Forest theme night. When guests entered the venue they walked down the grand sweeping staircase, where they were greeted with a prosecco and canape reception. They could also take photographs with half human, half animal “Humanimals” who provided the entertainment. This was an ultra-realistic and highly visual spectacle, adding to the wild element of the Enchanted Forest theme.

There was a vintage pop-up photographic studio for everyone to enjoy throughout the evening – which was beautifully dressed with a picnic fence and ivy all around. It was also equipped with fun props and had unlimited photographs for the students to take away with them. Everyone also enjoyed dancing the night away to popular band Pop London.

A delicious two-course dinner was served and the Ladies and Lords in waiting, Royal Court 2016, were announced and presented with rosettes.

Following the food, guests cheered as the Prom King and Queen were crowned and the prestigious title of Valedictorian was awarded. Seventeen-year-old Isabel Zentner was overwhelmed when she was given the crown for Prom Queen and Karabo Sankoloba, 20, was given the title of Prom King on top of already being named Valedictorian.

Principal Rachel Borland said: “It was a magical evening, which all the students thoroughly deserved. It is a time to celebrate their achievements and to relax now the hard work is over.

“The theme truly was enchanting, it was a stunning venue and everyone enjoyed celebrating the end of the academic year together.”

The Humanimal entertaining the crowd

From Queen Isabel Zentner with Prom King Karabo Sankoloba

Pictures: Leo Wilkinson Photography

Jet-set seniors

ELDERLY people are becoming London’s most intrepid globetrotters, according to new research.

A poll of almost 9,000 people over 50 showed that one in 10 will travel on three city breaks a year. The survey, by Saga Travel Insurance, debunks the myth that older people hide away indoors because of their retirement age.

Among the reasons given for the increase in summer trips for over 50s to visit were Paris, Barcelona, Rome, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Prague and Berlin. Edinburgh and York were also popular, with places such as the Scottish capital being highlighted as havens for over 50s keen to absorb themselves in the hustle and bustle of Europe’s major cities.

Planning role

WEST London’s representative in City Hall has been awarded a key planning role after being appointed to the London Assembly earlier this month.

Conservative Tony Devenish was appointed as chairman of the Environment and Transport committee following his election victory on May 6. Councillor Devenish will lead a Westminster councillor will lead members in directing the Transport Plan and making decisions on major developments.

“The planning committee has a vital role to play in developing London over the coming decades,” he said. “By 2036 the population will have reached 10 million and we need to find sensible and sustainable housing solutions to cope with this increase. I intend to fully scrutinise the London Plan to ensure it is delivered efficiently and infrastructure Londoners want and need.”

Shock at primary school air pollution

FROM PAGE 1

In Kensington and Chelsea, where 70% children at 25 primary schools have been using playgrounds nearby heavily-polluting traffic, the Labour Group is now calling on local parents to keep their children away from the playgrounds, exposing our most vulnerable kids to polluted air and putting them at greater risk of respiratory conditions like mine.

The previous Mayor was too slow on this issue and the Government has been hopelessly inactive and it’s Londoners who are suffering as a result. We need to speed up our efforts so I’ll be launching a consultation before the summer to kick-start the process. As well as my proposals, I’ll be seeking views on other ways we can do more to clean up the city’s air.”

The proposals in the Mayor’s consultation will include:

- Extending the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to cover the North Circular Road and the South Circular Road and the possibility of bringing forward the introduction of this legislation.

The Mayor added: “I have been elected with a clear mandate to clean up London’s air – our biggest environmental challenge.

“I too know from personal experience that the city’s air is damaging people’s health as I only recently started suffering from asthma as an adult. Many pollution hotspots in London are around schools, exposing our children to dangerously polluted air and putting them at greater risk of respiratory conditions like mine.

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It's people power as we all step on the gas

SHoppers on Oxford Street will soon be taking the first steps to helping London lead the world with a revolutionary new energy source – by powering the street with their feet.

The pioneering Pavegen Street, developed by Prime Minister David Cameron as being one of the brightest new companies in Britain – is to install its energy-making floor tiles so that pedestrians can light the street with their footsteps.

In a tie-up with the New West End Company and Transport for London, Pavegen is to install 200 of futuristic floor tiles in Bird Street, off Oxford Street, so that the 80,000 people who use the route each day can power up the area.

Pavegen tiles are high-tech flooring tiles that generate electricity by converting each footfall. The prototype tiles, created in 2009, generated 7 watts at 12 volts DC from each step, enough to power a street lamp for 50 seconds.

But at the launch of a new improved product in Piccadilly last week, Pavegen founder and CEO Laurence Kemball-Cook, unveiled new tiles which will generate 200 times more energy. The installation of the tiles in Bird Street will be the first step in covering the whole of Oxford Street with Pavegen after new London Mayor Sadiq Khan finalised his promise to pedestrianise the street.

The London-based company announced the installation of Pavegen in three prime centres.

“We have 80,000 people a day walking on Oxford Street and we will be installing 200 Pavegen generators which will power all the lighting the area,” said Mr Kemball-Cook.

More tiles will be installed at the Westfield Stratford City shopping centre, the Olympic site which is visited by 45 million people a year. The tiles will cover the entrances to the centre, powering the lift.

Pavegen has also signed a deal with the US Government to install its system into the Dupont centre in Washington DC and is also installing its system in Rio de Janeiro and Milan. Both Heathrow and Harrods have also installed Pavegen tiles to cut their energy costs. It is the aim of Mr Kemball-Cook to one day convert every street and road in Britain – and around the world – to the ingenious new power source. As Pavegen use increases and the price of the product comes down, it could be fitted into everyday footwear.

“Lighting accounts for nearly 20 per cent of all electricity consumed worldwide. We have to find new seamless ways that people can live in harmony with energy sources that are right next to them,” he said. “Pavegen is so much more than a pavement that creates energy, we could be in every building, in every road and even in every shoe. We want to make our product the same price as normal flooring. We want to be the Intel inside the smart cities of the future. We’re talking about decentralised power generation, power which is where and when it’s needed.”

Councillor Peter John, the executive member for children, schools, employment at London Councils – the body representing the city’s local authorities – said the move was “great news for London’s schools”.

“Money set aside to help schools with their energy costs of around £500 million – should now be used to level up functions across the country, ensuring no child is disadvantaged by the introduction of the national funding formula,” he added.

Currently all schools can choose no energy source or the Academy status. However, those deemed to be struggling or failing could use Pavegen to convert.

The Government faced criticism when it announced it intended to force change on high-performing schools.

Kevin Courtney, deputy education secretary of the National Union of Teachers – the UK’s largest teachers’ union, said: “This is a huge government U-turn and it is a testament to the campaigning of teachers and parents.

“Within a week of the White Paper being published, protests and demonstrations occurred across the country organised by NUT and its local branches and a petition calling for a halt to the proposal to force all schools to sign up. That petition reached 150,000 signatures each, and 200 parents met at the NUT headquarters. This was an unprecedented outcry.”

This is the third U-turn by the Department of Education in recent months and happened just days after the threat of industrial action by head teachers.

Top-up pops

CONVENIENCE stores are cashing in on the ‘top-up shopping’ trend with one in 20 people visiting them as their local supermarket, according to new research.

The study suggests that shoppers are looking for convenience stores rather than supermarkets for certain items, according to new research.

The research, by consumer analysts Mintel, shows almost half of all adults (45 per cent) say they regularly visit convenience stores to do a ‘top-up’ shop, while 25 per cent (seven per cent) visit such outlets for their main weekly or monthly shop.

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Mr Kemball-Cook, one of London’s bright new inventors who has so impressed David Cameron that the Prime Minister has been taking him on his trip to trade exhibitions across Europe, explained that Pavegen has huge advantages over traditional power systems, as all it needs is to work is people.

“Solar energy is restricted, when the sun is not shining there’s no power. The same with wind energy, when the wind is not blowing there’s no power,” he said.

“But with the power of foot-steps not a step is wasted.”

A public exhibition of Proposals for the Notting Hill Gate Estate

Frogmore invites you to a public exhibition to view our proposals for the office environment in the heart of Notting Hill Gate.

Proposals include refurbishment of the existing office space at upper floor levels with re-cladding of the building façade and reconfiguration of office accommodation.

Frogmore have been working with architects Squire and Partners to shape plans for the existing 1960s buildings to provide a refreshed gateway to Notting Hill.

Members of the project team will be on hand to discuss the proposals and to take through the designs, answer any questions and listen to your feedback.

The exhibition will be held at 160-162, Notting Hill Gate, London. W11 3QG on:

WEDNESDAY 25 MAY, 6-8PM
THURSDAY 26 MAY, 5-8PM
SATURDAY 4 JUNE, 10AM-2PM

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For more information please contact Mike Lee at 020 7928 8888

London's leading service company all day - every day!
BY GEOFF BAKER 
geo@londonweeklynews.co.uk

ORGANISERS of this week’s Chelsea Flower Show have warned gardeners not to buy tickets from touts as they could be fakes.

"Touts are attempting to sell £33 tickets to the show for £162 online, but the Royal Horticultural Society has issued a ‘buyer beware’ alert.

The RHS is urging gardeners not to buy tickets from touts and warning that anyone with tickets that turn out to be fakes will be denied entry.

A spokesman said: “We urge people not to be tempted to buy tickets from touts as you can’t be guaranteed that the tickets they are selling are authentic and you may be refused entry to the show.

"We still have tickets available for Friday and Saturday and you can order them through our website. Public tickets are being sold from £33 and funds raised will help us deliver our charitable objectives.”

Visitors to Chelsea will this year experience an exhibit in the spirit of the Tower of London’s poppy display as a breathtaking show of thousands of handmade poppies will adorn a vista of quarter of a million poppies in excess of a final total of in memory of Syrie Barnardo, pictured in 1890.

The launch of the rose at Chelsea – one of west London’s most eagerly-anticipated annual events – will be a fitting tribute to Syrie, whose name means to “bring love and a new start in life”.

It’s long-lasting flowers are said to give off an appealing aroma that Barnardo’s chiefs hope will entice visitors as the iconic show kicks off this week.

Phil Harkness, managing director of Harkness Roses, said: “Syrie Barnardo’s is an outstanding charity that has proved itself to generations of children.

"I hope ‘Sweet Syrie’ will provide pleasure in many gardens, act as an aide-memoire to gardeners across the country and help keep a living awareness of Barnardo’s for years to come."

Phil has collaborated with the 500 Poppies Project on the design of his spectacular tribute garden. The design stems from an installation at Melbourne’s Federation Square on Anzac Day 2015.

The creators of the 500 Poppies project, Lynn Berry and Margaret Knight, initially set out to crochet 120 poppies to honour their fathers who both fought in the Second World War, but this quickly escalated into a final total of over a million poppies from an estimated 50,000 contributors.

The poppies have been handmade as a tribute to those who served in all wars.

Don’t miss our LWN next week for a full report and pictures from the show.

Here’s the famous Crown Jewels as you’ve never seen them before – crafted entirely out of flowers. Renowned floral artist and five times gold medal winner at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Joseph Massie was commissioned to create The ‘Grown Jewels to celebrate Queen Elizabeth’s 90th birthday. The giant ‘Grown Jewels scene, made out of 2,500 flowers grown from seeds, features oversized depictions of the St Edward's Crown, the Sceptre with a cross and the Sovereign’s Orb. The masterpiece is housed on a soil display cushion within a glass display box. The work was commissioned by high street retailer Wilko.

Children’s charity on scent of Chelsea boost

BY JACK DIXON 
jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk

THE Chelsea Flower Show bursts into full bloom once again this week – but the occasion will be extra special for supporters of a leading children’s charity.

A unique new rose has been grown especially for this year’s show as part of a fundraising effort for the Barnardo’s charity.

'Sweet Syrie' is being launched at Chelsea this week to honour the work of the charity’s founder Thomas Barnardo.

And it will be a sweet-smelling double celebration for the organisation as it marks its 150th anniversary.

“Syrie and Thomas’ philanthropic work sowed the seeds that grew into the charity Barnardo’s is today,” said chief executive Javed Khan.

“This beautiful, strong rose is a fitting tribute to her tireless work, helping children off the streets of London to a sweeter future. “Every ‘Sweet Syrie’ bought will help us raise money so we will always be there for the UK’s most vulnerable children – then, now and always.”

Syrie worked alongside her husband Thomas as he set about helping east London’s destitute children in the late nineteenth century.

She continued to support the charity’s vital work after Thomas died in 1905, making sure that girls as well as boys received its help.

It was Syrie’s determination to do more for those in need that led to the charity opening its first home for girls – the ‘Girls Village Home’ in Barkingside.

The launch of the rose at Chelsea – one of west London’s most eagerly-anticipated annual events – will be a fitting tribute to Syrie, whose name means to “bring love and a new start in life.”

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The Sweet Syrie rose, top, in memory of Syrie Barnardo, pictured in 1890.
‘Peggy’ hails nurse who helped tell cancer story

BY JACK DIXON
jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk

DAME Barbara Windsor says she will be “eternally grateful” to a west London nurse who helped her tackle a complex breast cancer storyline on the set of EastEnders.

Specialist Dr Vickki Harmer advised the legendary actress, who plays Peggy Mitchell, as her on-screen character battled the illness.

Dr Harmer, a team leader at the Imperial College Healthcare Trust’s breast care unit at St Mary’s Hospital, was guiding a hand on the set as the former Carry On star’s character wrestled with cancer before leaving the soap permanently after 22 years.

During filming, Dr Harmer worked closely with the production team and actors to ensure the programme gave a realistic and credible portrayal of breast cancer.

She also worked on-set with the wardrobe, props and hair and make-up departments to make sure every scene was up to scratch.

“I was delighted to be asked on advice on such a momentous storyline,” she said.

“EastEnders has a long history of accurately portraying breast cancer storylines, which ensures that the public watching at home are receiving accurate advice about breast cancer.

“I am exceptionally proud to be given the opportunity to ensure these important storylines remain as true to life as possible.”

Dr Harmer is used to working on the small screen, having already advised on several storylines for film, television and radio drama.

Peggy’s breast cancer storyline has been been used as a platform for several storylines for the television show’s Coronation Street, BBC Radio 4’s The Archers, and recently lent a single cameo to the short film Already, starring Drew Barrymore and Toni Collette.

And this was her second appearance on the EastEnders set after she advised on the Carol Jackson breast cancer storyline in 2013.

Dame Barbara, whose portrayal of feisty pub landlord Peggy Mitchell over more than two decades has made her one of the soap’s most iconic characters, reserved the highest praise for Dr Harmer.

“Having a qualified cancer nurse on set such as Vickki has been a great sense of comfort to me as an actress,” she said.

“Approaching such a serious and sensitive health matter is very daunting as you wish to get things right as a mark of respect for the people who are affected by this awful illness.

“I think it’s imperative that television, film and-theatre companies continue to seek professional advice and work alongside such people and organisations when dealing with health matters. I will be eternally grateful to Vickki for her guidance.”

Don’t pull a sickie, recovery can begin in the workplace

LONDONERS should stop pulling sickies and get back to work if they want to shake off a cold, new research suggests.

A report by the Institute for Employment Studies claims that a lack of productivity at work ‘can be a bigger burden on the employer than staying at home.

The institute also found that fighting through a cold or seasonal bug can increase the chances of making a speedy and sustained recovery, reducing the amount of time it takes to get back to full working order.

Dr Garrow said managers should be encouraged to look out for employees’ “best interests” by working with occupational health and human resources advisors.

“‘They need to feel confident that they are acting appropriately and giving correct guidance to their staff,” she added.

Professor Stephen Bevan, head of human resources research at the institute, challenged employers to help people with health problems feel more confident discussing them with their boss.

He said: “For some conditions a good-quality job and a supportive boss can have genuinely therapeutic benefits and, for many people, being away from work for weeks can undermine their physical and psychological health.”

Seniors enjoy 5am moment

CLUBBERS were left stunned when an elderly couple turned up at a world-famous London nightclub - and danced until 6am.

The Polish pair downed a shot of tequila and high-fived the DJ before hitting the dancefloor until daylight.

They were visiting their daughter in Watford and had read a good review of trendy Fabric nightclub in a Polish paper.

Party-goers at the club in Farringdon, central London, were gobsmacked when the couple, in their late 70s, started walking down the stairs as the DJ ended the set.

Promoter and DJ Jacob Huxley, 35, who has worked at the club on Sundays for nearly 10 years, described the couple’s appearance as “the best thing I had seen in all my time there.

He said: “Right at the beginning of the night he saw them slowly making their way down the stairs because the woman was ‘a little bit ill’ - it looked like they were lost.

“They were Polish and couldn’t speak English, so I walked up and asked security if they were OK - and they told they had tickets.

“I ran down to welcome them - I was just so astounded they were there. I gave them the tequila shot each and the woman gave me a high five and then they both went on the dancefloor.”

He said that the man did a lot of the dancing, but the woman did leave her crutches on one side and joined him for a few tracks.

Later during the night, a weekly club night called WetYourSelf, Jacob found a friend who spoke Polish so went with him to chat to the couple and find out more about them.

Translating his friend told him that they were visiting their daughter who lived in Watford and, as they enjoyed discos in Poland, decided to come to Fabric as they had read a good review about it in the paper.

Faulty dryer triggers fire

LONDON fire chiefs have renewed an appeal against dodgy appliances after a tumble dryer burst into flames.

Beauticians had a lucky escape after the machine caught fire when fluff from towels came into contact with the dryer’s heating element.

The smoke alarm alerted the couple’s neighbour, who called out the fire service.

The dryer involved is currently subject to a product recall, the brigade said.

Two fire engines and ten firefighters were called to the scene in Harrow, north London, to deal with the fire. There were no injuries.

A London Fire Brigade spokesperson said: “Thankfully the smoke alarm alerted the people in the shop to this particular fire and everyone got out safely.

“Using faulty electrical appliance like a tumble dryer is really dangerous but it’s not easy to find out whether a product is on the recall list.

“Only 10-20 per cent of them ever get returned or repaired so that means most faulty white goods continue to be around, putting their owners at risk of a fire like this one.

“We are calling on the Government to introduce a single, publically accessible register of recalled products to make it easier for consumers to check out their kitchen goods.”

Dr Vickki Harmer, inset, advised Barbara Windsor as her screen character confronted cancer
Pub demolition ‘an act of vandalism’

BY LW N REPORTER edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

An historic west London pub that survived the Blitz was flattened by developers as it was being considered for listed building status, a public inquiry was told.

The demolition of the Carlton Tavern in Maida Vale was described as an “act of vandalism on a beautiful building” by “thugs and vandals.”

The pub, which was the only building left standing on Carlton Vale after a Nazi bombing raid during the Second World War, was under consideration for listed status at the time it was bulldozed.

Following the demolition, Westminster City Council made an unprecedented legal decision to issue an enforcement notice ordering the developers to rebuild it brick by brick.

The council previously refused permission for CLTX Ltd to pull down the 1920s tavern to make way for a new building with a new pub and 10 flats.

The developer has appealed against both the planning decision regarding the development of the site and the terms of the enforcement notice, and no work has started to rebuild the pub.

Both appeals are being heard by the Planning Inspectorate at a public inquiry at Westminster City Hall.

At the time of the demolition Historic England was considering recommending the pub for Grade II listing, as part of a national project looking at inter-war public houses.

Representing the council Saia Kahir Sheikh QC said: “The demolition took place without prior notification, with all fixtures in situ and in full knowledge of Historic England’s assessment of the pub for listing.

“It was a flagrant breach of planning control and building regulations with the single aim of frustrating the designation of the pub as a Grade II Listed Building, which Historic England has confirmed it would have been ‘very likely to recommend.’

“Following the wanton destruction which had initially taken place, the council sought and obtained interim and final injunctions from the High Court to prevent any further destruction and the removal of materials from the site.”

The lawyer added: “Neither must the appellant be able to benefit from the consequences of its unlawful actions in demolishing the Carlton Tavern by using this as a justification for not rebuilding it.

“In addition to the heritage harm caused by the demolition, weight must also be given to the loss of community facility, which has since been registered as an asset of community value.”

Rupert Warren QC, representing the developer, told the inspectorate the enforcement notice was “disproportionate” and called for the original plans for the site to be granted planning permission.

He said: “The structure when demolished was not listed or in a conservation area, but the enforcement notice seeks what is described as a “facsimile” reconstruction.

“The appeal is based on the proposition that such an exercise would be disproportionate and unjustified.”

He added: “Whether the building would have been listed is now a matter of opinion. It is no part of the council’s or Historic England’s case that any reconstruction would be listed.

“The appellant’s evidence is that a facsimile would be unlikely to be exact, would not reproduce the essential historic or architectural qualities of the unlisted building and would be disproportionate to the benefit thereby gained.”

He argued that the developer’s original scheme, which was refused on the grounds of affordable housing contributions, “would bring benefits in planning terms” and asked the planning inspectorate to approved the proposals for the site.

The inquiry also heard from Dr Nigel Barker, of Historic England, who set out some of the main reasons why the pub was being considered for listed status and why the building should be rebuilt.

He said the pub was a strong candidate for listing at Grade II and its special interest was both “historic and architectural.”

Dr Barker said: “There is sufficient evidence to restore the main interior spaces for example the public bar, the saloon, the luncheon and the tea rooms, which illustrate the historic interest of the tavern as an example of an improved public house.

“The recovery of the architecture and design of the building is therefore achievable. Reinstating the building would once again enable people to be connected to the place, recovering some historic value and for people who use the pub for whom it figures in their collective memory it would restore some communal value.

“The rebuilding of the Carlton Tavern to match in facsimile the building as it stood prior to its demolition would therefore result in meaningful heritage restoration.”

The inspectorate also heard from John Simmance, of the Friends of the Carlton Tavern, who described the developers as “thugs and vandals.”

Describing the demolition, he said: “It was an act of vandalism on a beautiful building.”

He added: “Since I was a kid, that pub stood there for the local community, and historically it was a beautiful pub.”

Since the pub was demolished it has been listed as an Asset of Community Value.

The hearing continues.
Sound ideas make us resilient to...

BY JACK DIXON
jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk

PEOPLE often fall back on their favourite songs during a moment of crisis – a soothing tune or a well-written lyric can be the perfect remedy for stress, pain or sadness.

But a group of singers in Westminster believe that music can be even more than that: a bona fide medical treatment for those living with long-term mental health conditions.

Composer Sergio Lopez Figueroa runs regular ‘Humming in Harmony’ workshops at the Westminster Music Library in Buckingham Palace Road. The sessions are built upon a series of vocal exercises designed to train the brain to block out extraneous sound and focus on the here and now.

A key part of the practice is group humming and participants are encouraged to build delicate vocal harmonies together.

Mr Figueroa, 50, says the simple process of making music can go a long way to healing the mind – primarily in a therapeutic sense but also by furnishing our artistic creativity. He believes humming can be used alongside other mindfulness techniques to counter stress, anxiety and post-traumatic conditions.

“There are lots of treatments available but there are none that bring physical and mental wellbeing together,” he said.

“I believe that through mindfulness exercises and the power of singing we can actually change our bodies physically. This is not like face-to-face group work where people discuss their problems. It is more about abandoning thought and giving way to feeling.”

Mr Figueroa, who lives in Pimlico, says the workshops have helped people cope with everything from basic breathing problems and recurring headaches to crippling social anxiety disorders and work-related stress. He wants to carry out more research into ways that music can be harnessed to heal the mind, warning that mental health issues at work are costing London’s economy millions of pounds every year.

“We are talking about a huge loss to the economy but this type of activity might be very useful,” he said.

“It does not matter where you are on the scale – a top tier chief executive or an entry-level employee – everyone can benefit from this type of treatment.

The humming gives people a sense of place and belonging, encouraging them to build meaningful relationships in a social environment. We see people who are often withdrawn and quiet become more expressive as they gain confidence and find their voice.

This aim of empowering people to help themselves - rather than telling them what to do in a patronising tone - is a totally new approach to mental health.

Mr Figueroa was born in Gran Canaria before moving to Italy and then to the UK to study music.

He runs the free workshops in Westminster alongside his day-to-day role as a learning support assistant at Lambeth and Southwark College, as well as commissioned work as a composer.

He first became aware of the healing power of music as he struggled with his own physical and mental health problems. After being dealt a double diagnosis of diabetes and a congenital heart condition, he developed debilitating stress and anxiety issues. Inspired by the music of Bach, he turned to sound as a means of coping with his difficult circumstances.

He says the vibrations caused by constant humming can be healing in themselves, with one lady claiming to have been cured of a migraine after just one session.

But the longer-term benefits are linked to relaxation, focusing the mind and switching off from the hustle and bustle of our busy lives.

“I love London but it is a stressful place to live,” he added. “People here are working under pressure and the living conditions for many are horrible.

“It is a busy and noisy city – but this practice is about embracing the idea that you can hum to the sounds around you and not fight with the environment.”

Mr Figueroa says he wants to make London the world’s first “humming city” by rolling out the workshops across the capital. His regular sessions attract groups of between eight and 12 people – but he currently receives no funding support for the exercise, despite its mental health benefits.

He now wants to work with people who have long-term health conditions as well as specific groups, such as breastfeeding mothers, to discover more about the potential of musical healing.

“Music is part of everyone’s life and we invite people to bring their own songs to the group, songs that have made a difference in their lives,” he added.

“Not being heard is a big part of the problem for many people who live with mental health conditions. I want to help people connect with themselves and their musical being because everyone can have this experience.”

For more information about the group visit http://bit.ly/1TbDUWAH or the ‘Humming in Harmony’ Facebook page.

Composer Sergio Lopez Figueroa runs regular ‘Humming in Harmony’ workshops at the Westminster Music Library.
the challenges of mental health

The Mental Health Foundation has shared some of the personal stories of people in west London whose lives have been challenged by mental health problems. The charity is focusing on how strong relationships can be fundamental to our emotional wellbeing. Getting along with our friends and family, the charity says, is as essential to our lifestyle as eating healthily and taking regular exercise.

Here, Deena and Luke tell of their struggles with depression and how they fought to overcome their issues.

Deena

MY name is Deena. I am 26 years old and have a borderline personality disorder and have battled with mental health problems for 14 years. During this journey I have been exposed to numerous drugs, taking therapies including dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) and psychotherapy, and at the hardest point been sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

Despite this rocky road I have, to the outside world, managed to maintain a ‘normal’ life. Building a toolbox of coping strategies that work for me has been crucial. I grew up in a loving family, with close relationships with all my siblings and parents. But from a young age I displayed signs of BPD. My father worked abroad and the separations at the end of holiday visits were extremely hard. I would cry from the moment I left him, all through passport control, security, duty-free and on the plane.

Relationships at school also started to become difficult. I became withdrawn and would go from feeling extremely low to intensely anxious in what seemed like a split-second. I could not cope with these internal emotions and started to self-harm. I also experienced suicidal thoughts.

In my second year of university things started to crumble. Slowly relationships broke down, due to a serious self-harm act in my final year. I was devastated that my university years had ended up being alone and felt that the disease had won and I had failed.

During my worst time I pushed my friends and family away because I thought it would be easier to take my life if I had no one to live for.

Deena found that building a toolbox of coping strategies helped her deal with mental health problems.

Deena

During my worst time I pushed my friends and family away because I thought it would be easier to take my life if I had no one to live for.

As an endurance athlete, my life online and in the flesh may look and sound perfect to many. But after suffering in silence for nearly a decade, it’s only been over the past 12 months that I have felt the courage and strength to speak openly about the darkest side of my life.

What has triggered this newfound strength? I mainly put it down to the constant relationships I have had with friends and family members over the years. The strength I have today from these relationships has enabled me to speak openly about what I go through. One particular friendship has been quite unique and helped me through some difficult times.

There were several moments over the past few years when I was having some extremely dark thoughts, and although I never spoke specifically about the battles I was having, I simply around to listen and chat when I needed him.

He knew me well, and would make me laugh as we share a very similar sense of humour. But at the same time he would know when it wasn’t time to joke, and would just listen. Knowing I had Darrell in my corner made me feel like I was needed on this planet, and although I never opened up to him about my ongoing battles with depression, having someone to simply speak with about anything but the destructive conversations that were constantly going on in my head was paramount to helping me eventually talk to others – about what I have been experiencing.

My journey is far from over but I would urge anyone who is suffering in silence to simply meet up and chat with a close friend, or another human being, as having a connection with someone can go along way to helping anyone feel supported.

Luke

In a time where many of us get a glimpse into each others lives via social media, it may be easy to assume that someone’s life is extremely happy. And it can take many years before someone feels able to speak openly about depression and the daily struggles that go with it.

I feel fortunate to have grown up in a loving family with the essentials needed to live a healthy life. But on a daily basis the negative destructive voices that project loudly between my ears are a constant.

College makes students’ wellbeing a top priority

“I have students who come to stay with us from Mozambique, South Africa, anywhere in the world, and they are thrown straight into a stressful course,” she said.

“Young people are not yet hardened under serious pressure can take it toll, so we try to encourage them to just stop working from time to time.”

The college also hosted a de-stress event during the week, offering free ice cream to students and providing a forum for them to share tips to help its members learn to cope with the stresses and strains of coursework deadlines. Volunteers on the college’s members’ council also held a special reading material targetted at training the brain to switch off from study.

College chaplain Jennie Hogan said the support network was particularly important for the hundreds of overseas students arriving in London for the first time.

“It’s time to recognise the global body of evidence which tells us that people who are more socially connected with family, friends or their community are happier, physically healthier and living longer, with fewer mental health problems.”

“Invest in relationships that fuel happier lives

NEARLY half of all adults regret not investing more time in the relationships that matter to them, new research reveals.

A YouGov survey of over 2,000 adults commissioned by the Mental Health Foundation found that people identified maintaining healthy relationships as more important to their wellbeing than eating the right food, exercising and avoiding negative habits, such as smoking.

Survey respondents were four times more likely to make a New Year’s resolution to improve their physical health than to build relationships with their family and friends.

Women were found to put much more emphasis on the importance of having close friends, while the survey also revealed a generational difference, with 18 to 34-year-olds more likely to recognise the value of friendships compared to those over 45.

The Mental Health Foundation commissioned the survey after conducting an extensive review of global evidence, which overwhelmingly pointed to good-quality relationships being key in helping people to live longer and happier lives.

Jenny Edwards CBE, the charity’s chief executive, said: “It’s time to recognise the global body of evidence which tells us that people who are more socially connected with family, friends or their community are happier, physically healthier and living longer, with fewer mental health problems.”

“Relationships require reflection, time, nurture and grace. Modern life often reduces the space to do this. Too many of us are worried about our time with people we care about under stress – be it exams, work commitments or financial pressures. We need to give ourselves permission to spend more of our time on the friendships and relationships that are core to our wellbeing.”
Get me to the bridge on time! New crossing may be top wedding spot

BY GEOFF BAKER

AS work is to start soon on building the Garden Bridge, the first pictures of the structure in bloom have been released – as hopes rise that the glorious river crossing could become London’s No 1 wedding spot.

Following the decision by new Mayor Sadiq Khan last week to give the £175 million bridge the final go-ahead, organisers have revealed images of how the oasis of beauty in the middle of the Thames will enchant the capital.

Sadiq Khan said the Garden Bridge could rival New York’s High Line

The Garden Bridge, which will be covered with 2,500 square metres of planted green space, will link London’s creative South Bank to Temple tube station and beyond into the heart of Covent Garden.

Construction is due to begin this year, with the bridge being opened to the public in 2020. It will sit proudly alongside London’s most famous garden enthusiast, The Queen, performing the ceremony.

The Queen is a huge fan of roses and organiser say typically-scented rose bushes will bloom on the bridge.

Visitors will be able to meander across or stop, sit and take in brand new views of London – and will be able to picnic there.

Organisers have announced that contrary to rumours, picnicking on the bridge will be welcome.

There will be 270 trees, 2,000 shrubs, hedging plants and climbers, over 2,000 perennials, ferns and grasses and 64,000 bulbs.

Award-winning landscape designer Dan Pearson has created five distinct landscape areas for the Garden Bridge, taking inspiration from plant cultivation in London over the centuries.

They include the wild marshland on the South Bank, through to the ornamental gardens of the North Bank and are designed to respond to the climate along the length of the Bridge.

Dan Pearson said: “I am thrilled to be bringing Great Britain’s passion for gardens, gardening and horticulture to life on the Garden Bridge, using London’s unique horticultural story to help inspire the design.

“There are so many exceptional moments from gardens past and living green spaces around us today and the Garden Bridge will complement and continue this rich history of horticultural excellence in London.”

“Whatever the season, the planting will provide year round colour and interest with spring blossom and flowering bulbs, high summer flowers, autumn colour and winter interest from evergreens, scented shrubs and bulbs.

“An abundance of nectar-rich, flower, berries and fruit will also create somewhere attractive to wildlife and the planting will also enhance and frame beautiful new views up and down the river.”

The five landscape areas start with the South Bank which will include species once common on Lambeth Marsh and central London.

Next, the South Glade will be woodland featuring plants known for spring blossom and autumn fruit.

The Scarp will be the central span and most challenging part of the Bridge, designed to create an environment similar to a cliff top landscape. The North Glade will be a second woodland area which takes inspiration from the parks and gardens of old London, with clipped plants to create defined forms.

The final North Bank landscape will echo nearby Temple, London’s oldest and most historic with scented late winter and early spring flowering shrubs.

The Garden Bridge will be open 365 days a year from 6.00 am until midnight, apart from just several days when it will close early in the evenings for fundraising events. Organisers had planned to close it for functions for 12 days a year, but new Mayor Khan says he wants fewer closures.

The bridge will be entirely free to cross – with no tolls – cyclists who push their bikes across can use it and will feature lifts for disabled access to the peaceful green platform. Some 3,380 people per hour are expected to cross the bridge – which is expected to become the most must-see bridge in London.

A spokesman said “this will be a bridge for everyone” and confirmed that applying for a special licence enabling the bridge to be used for private fundraising events will be “one of the options” that the bridge team is now to explore.

The Mayor described the Garden Bridge as a project that could rival New York’s High Line, a public park that was built on a disused railway line thirty feet above street level in Manhattan, but warned that the Bridge “must be a genuinely public and open space for all Londoners, rather than a closed and private space”.

The Mayor has insisted the Garden Bridge Trust make a series of amendments to its plans to make the Garden Bridge more accessible, in exchange for his continued support for the project. His demands include:

- The Bridge to be closed for fewer hours each time it has to close for fundraising events so that the Bridge can still be used in the morning and evenings – the current plans are for it to be closed from midnight to midnight.
- A guarantee that children at local schools on either side of the bridge will get to visit the Garden Bridge and be involved in planting and maintenance of the programme of events for local school children.
- The Garden Bridge Trust to build a strong working relationship with all of London’s parks, so that seeds and plants grown on the Garden Bridge can then be replanted in parks across the capital – or it has positive benefit for all Londoners.

The Mayor criticised the previous City Hall administration, saying “the early days of this project clearly fell short of our expectations on transparency”, and pledged to “let the sunshine in”.

The Mayor confirmed previously undisclosed full business plan for the Garden Bridge and endorsed the funders of the Bridge.

Mayor Khan said: “The Garden Bridge could rival New York’s High Line. But it must be a genuinely public and open space for all Londoners, rather than a closed and private space.”

“I expect the Garden Bridge Trust to ensure that the Bridge be closed fewer days each year for private fundraising events and fewer hours when they do. I also want a guarantee that an ongoing programme of visits will be laid on for local school children.”

“The Trust must also look to strengthen working relationships with parks across all over our city, so that seeds and plants grown on the Garden Bridge can then be replanted in parks across the capital – ensuring it has a positive benefit for all Londoners. The early days of this project clearly fell short of our expectations on transparency. I am determined to run the most open and transparent administration London has ever seen and I will let the sunshine in on it.”

A DESPERATE mum ended up having to call the plumber for help after her pet chinchilla got trapped behind her toilet.

Sooty, aged one, made a mad dash for freedom through a nook behind the toilet – leaving his owners baffled as to where he had gone.

After an extensive search of the family home in Richmond, Justine Panay decided to call engineers from plumbing company Dyno to help find the pet, which belongs to her son Tom.

Engineer Jordan Baker helped look behind the toilet, microwave and dishwasher and was about to give up hope before he suggested one further check in the kitchen using specialist CCTV equipment.

Eventually, the cheeky chinchilla was found holed up behind the kitchen cabinets and, after an hour and a half of coaxing, was brought back to safety.

Justine said: “I can’t say enough about Jordan, he was amazing. Tom’s in the middle of his GCSEs and losing Sooty would have been devastating. Jordan said: “It might not be in the training manual, but we’re always ready for anything.”

Breakthrough for depression

A HALLUCINOGENIC compound derived from magic mushrooms could be used as a potential treatment of depression, according to researchers conducting a small feasibility study.

The small feasibility study, involving people with treatment-resistant depression, found that psilocybin was safe and well-tolerated. And, when given alongside supportive therapy, the compound helped reduce symptoms of depression in about half of the participants three months after treatment.

The research group, whose findings were published in The Lancet Psychiatry, warned that strong conclusions cannot be made about the therapeutic benefits of psilocybin.

But they said the findings show that more research in the field is now needed.

Study lead author Dr Robin Carnahan, of Imperial College London, said: “This is the first time that psilocybin has been investigated as a potential treatment for major depression.

Treatment-resistant depression is extremely disabling and extremely difficult to treat. “New treatments are urgently needed, and our study shows that psilocybin is a promising area of future research.”

“The results are encouraging and we now need larger trials to understand whether the effects we saw in this study translate into long-term benefits.”

Cancer risk

CANCER deaths could be almost halved if Britons ate more fruit and vegetables, exercised more and cut down on boozing, according to new research.

The country’s second biggest killer-behind heart disease-can be prevented simply by lifestyle changes, which also includes not smoking and maintaining a healthy weight.

A study of about 136,000 people found up to 40 percent of cases may be prevented if the public stick to the advice.

Factors in the world around us, from diet, to sunlight, cigarettes and disease, play a far bigger role in fuelling the disease than dodgy DNA, it said.

A HALLUCINOGENIC compound derived from magic mushrooms could be used as a potential treatment of depression, according to researchers conducting a small feasibility study.
COUNCIL chiefs have praised North Kensington’s “remarkable” new-look Grenfell Tower, which has been transformed with a £10 million refurbishment.

Funded by the Kensington and Chelsea Council as part of a wider £67 million investment of the area, the improvements include the installation of insulated exterior cladding, new double-glazed windows and a new communal heating system.

“All of this will greatly enhance the energy efficiency of the tower and help reduce residents’ living costs. There will also be an impressive new foyer,” said a council spokeswoman.

“Nine much-needed new homes were also developed from unused spaces in the building which is managed by Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO).

There are also new facilities at the Dale Youth Amateur Boxing Club and Grenfell Under 3s Nursery. These, along with the new Kensington Aldridge Academy and the Kensington Leisure Centre, with its café, have helped to transform the neighbourhood.

“Grenfell Tower is a prominent 129 apartment tower block on the Lancaster West Estate in North Kensington and was built in 1974. It is next to the Kensington Aldridge Academy and the Kensington Leisure Centre.

Work on the £28m academy began in December 2012 and has created a striking new academy serving the local community, with all of the students living less than a mile away. The site was gifted by the council, which also contributed £10.4m towards the construction costs.

Nearby stands Kensington Leisure Centre which is the result of a £29.4m cash injection from the council. These two projects represent a £57.4m investment in the area and are part of the council’s ongoing commitment to regenerating the north of the borough.
A TALENT artist has created a stunning mural of the Leicester City team to honour the Premier League champions.

Richard Wilson, 42, has spent six hours a day for the past three weeks painting the 12ft (3.6m) tall masterpiece on a wall in the city - and he isn’t even a Foxes supporter.

The PQR fan, from Wembley, north London, took time off from his job as a van driver to work on the impressive mural on Glenfield Road behind an electrical store.

It depicts Claudio Ranieri, Kasper Schmeichel, Riyad Mahrez and Wes Morgan but Richard plans to immortalise the entire title-winning team on the 164ft (50m) wall.

His artwork has attracted hundreds of Leicester supporters who take photographs at the site on a daily basis – and even The Tinkerman himself has posed for a snap.

Richard said he decided to travel over 100 miles to undertake his project after Leicester beat Swansea 4-0 to inch closer to their 5,000-1 championship win.

He travelled armed with just his paint cans and ladders after being inspired by the ultimate underdog story during the fairy-tale Premier League season.

He said: “I’m not from Leicester and I’ve never been a Leicester City fan but I’m a fan of football and what they did was amazing.

“People really have been wonderful. People keep asking me if it will wash off.

“People keep asking me if it will wash off. It’s permanent though. It might fade, but it’s permament.

“I just wanted to start with a picture of Claudio Ranieri with the City flag but it snowballed from there.

“I found this wall and it only adds to it all that Claudio Ranieri comes across as such a lovely man, a real character.

“So, I took a couple of days off work and headed up the M1 to Leicester.

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AFTER the songs, image is all in rock and roll. A side from Brian... knife.

On this performance, Cohen could yet have a big role to play among the capital’s pop glitterati.

JACK DIXON

employed all of the PRs and earth to push that image, the packaged a totally-credible plastic most important in the fashioned his image to be Bowie admitted, he deliberately record sales and concert tickets. As photographers who captured Denis O’Regan – are to come together to reveal a unique collection of images from their private archives for a new exhibition opening in the West End next month.

The exhibition, David Bowie: Fame, Fashion, Photography, will run June 7 to 9 at The Hub in Heddon Street, opposite the famous Ziggy Stardust plaque, which was erected to mark the spot where Bowie posed for the cover of his

The exhibition is the result of a five-month labour of love by PR and marketing ace Susie Howard, who was responsible for the plaque going up in Heddon Street in 2012. Susie brought onboard lifelong Bowie fan, Spandau Ballet’s Gary Kemp, to select the music to accompany the show and worked on getting it with the V&A team behind the acclaimed David Bowie exhibition.

But most importantly, she worked with three of the best photographers in the rock business - Chalkie Davies, well-known to readers of the old NME and The Rock’s fizz: Bands break out their own bubbly

Clearly all of the rock god acts will be competing hard to win the crown as the best act in the unprecedented show, but who will win the award for the best backstage bar – because most of the bands have their own name tipple.

The Who’s frontman Roger Daltrey has announced plans to launch a limited edition champagne to mark the band’s 50th anniversary.

The bubbly entailed Champagne Cuvée Roger Daltrey, will be available to buy soon for £85 a pop, with a percentage of the proceeds going to Teen Cancer America, which was founded by the band.

“I am very excited to have this opportunity to express my passion for champagne through this limited edition cuvée. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do,” said Roger.

The Champagne is produced by Charles Orban Champagne, a family vineyard in the village of Troissy, situated on the left bank of the Marne. Produced from a blend of three grape varieties, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, it is said that the cuvée has a creamy texture with fine, lively bubbles. A limited-edition ice bucket, made by L’Orfèvrerie d’Angouleme, will also be made available. Like the bottle itself, the buckets are moulded and decorated with The Who logo as well as Roger Daltrey’s signature. The champagne ice bucket is available in ten colours in a limited edition, each of which is numbered and priced at £650.

Cohen returns to fray with fresh impetus

REVIEW Thomas Cohen Rough Trade East

THOMAS Cohen’s artistic rebirth has been a test of personal character as much as creative endeavour. The south east London singer was thrust into mourning and the shock death of Peaches Geldof, his former wife and the mother of his two children, in April 2014. The couple’s growing celebrity status coincided with the rapid rise and sudden disintegration of Cohen’s previous band, art-rock shoegazers S.C.U.M, who were hailed as the next big thing in 2011 before splitting barely a year after the release of their debut album. It appears, however, that the singer has emerged from the two-year grief cycle in a reflective and surprisingly chipper mood.

Cohen’s first forays as a solo artist are impressively mature - his fragile, achingly vocals steering stripped back compositions that ape Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds and the more sombre Suede numbers.

Cohen, dressed in flamboyant glam pop garb, is a polished performer too. Dropping his guitar for the two closing numbers, he dances across the Rough Trade stage channeling a Bowie-esque androgyny.

The London singer’s spirited renaissance is testament to his personal growth since Geldof’s death. His songwriting is snappier and more defined than with S.C.U.M, and the piercing honesty cuts through like a hot knife.

On this performance, Cohen could yet have a big role to play among the capital’s pop glitterati.
HE BBC would like you to meet its first bi-sexual pin-up, or at least its first since the days of Larry Grayson, writes Geoff Baker.

TV chiefs are entirely confident that, as each-way-swinging Philippe I in its lascivious new blockbuster Versailles, actor Alexander Vlahos will have men and women alike drooling over the screen in the drama about the French court which is currently being promoted as “the raunchiest series ever shown on the BBC” and has been condemned by at least one Conservative MP for bringing “porn” to primetime, which should assist the ratings nicely.

Welsh-born Alexander, known best to viewers as Mordred in Merlin, says the drama, which is said to boast “the most-graphic sex scenes ever in British TV history” will be something of an eye-opener.

“It’s going to blow UK viewers’ socks off,” says Alexander, “it’s very rock and roll.”

“Philippe is the younger brother of Louis XIV, the King of France. He is a 26-year-old ennui-ante dandy, but he’s also described as a warrior so he has a sort of duality in his personality.

“Although he’s homosexual, he has a wife, Henriette – the sister to Charles II of England. She’s also the King’s mistress, so they really were one of the first dysfunctional families.”

Alexander says he was inspired by the late, great and at times gender-confusing David Bowie to play the part in which he is being tipped by TV bosses to “beat all other TV pin-ups and even prick Poldark”.

He explained: “Philippe wears women’s clothes, and he was brought up wearing women’s clothes from the age of three months old so he wouldn’t be a ‘threat’ to Louis and the crown. “But in doing so it’s actually made him more powerful, more extraordinary I guess. He’s a gift of a character to play. When I first got the part they described him as a 17th century David Bowie. When I read that I thought, I can do that. That description really sums him up. Funnily enough, our director for in certain scenes would give me notes along the lines of ‘do you think you could do this a bit more like Iggy Pop? Do you think you could do it a bit more like The Stooges?’ He wanted me to be a bit ‘out there’, a bit little bit otherworldly.”

However, even just the trailers for the epic period drama are proving a bit too “out there” for clean-up TV campaigners.

Conservative MP Andrew Bridgen is not impressed by the coming flesh fest.

“There are channels where, if you wish to view this sort of material, you would have to pay for it,” he said.

“BBC viewers don’t have a choice. They have to pay for it,” he said.

BBC viewers don’t have a choice. They have to pay for it whether they approve or not. Is this an example of the BBC dumbing down and seeking more sensationalised programming? That’s an arms race to the bottom – quite literally in this case.”

Norman Wells, director of the Family Education Trust, isn’t happy either.

“Public service broadcasting is meant to be for the public benefit, but it is very difficult to see whose benefit is being served by showing such highly-graphic and explicit scenes on TV,” he said.

The answer to that, of course, is that it will be to BBC’s considerable benefit as the ratings will shoot through the roof to levels last achieved when Natalie Dormer spent most of the series peeling off to bed Henry VIII in The Tudors.
Chinese take away any ill-feeling

BY GEOFF BAKER
geoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

As the row between China and the UK continues to rumble on, everyone’s ears over who is the “rudest” and least cultured – all The Queen’s men or all of President Xi’s – now Her Majesty is set to get a visit from a party of 7,000 Chinese who want to look around her house.

Relations between the two powers took a bit of a dent when the proclaimed “Golden Age” was made to look to be a bit of an age of Fools’ Gold following Her Majesty’s remark that some of Xi’s staff were “very rude to the ambassador”, namely Barbara Woodward, Britain’s first female ambassador to China.

In retaliation and amid suspicions that The Queen’s videoged conversation with Met police commander Lucy D’Orsi – the cop in charge of security for Xi’s state visit – was some sort of set-up, an official Chinese newspaper responded by blaming the British Press for whipping up the diplomatic storm.

In a melt-down display of not mixing its words, The Global Times, published by the ruling Communist Party’s official People’s Daily, let rip at oiks like me, saying “The disrespectful gossipers in the UK are making a huge boost for London society.”

The Queen and wants to bring thousands of his staff to Buckingham Palace. Mr Li Jinyuan is the boss of Tiens, a multinational conglomerate, mainly operating in biotechnology, logistics, finance, property, international trade, retail, e-business, education and tourism, based in the Chinese port city of Tianjin.

Mr Li likes to reward his hard-working staff with regular trips aboard. This month he spent £5.5 million taking a party of blue-uniformed 2,500 staff on a five-day, all-expenses-paid visit to Spain.

Now he has told The Times – the London Thunderer, not the Chinese one interested in dentistry – that for his next trip he hopes “to bring 7,000 workers to the UK, turning Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London into a blur of blue”.

Mr Li said: “We are planning a trip to Britain in the next two years. The UK is the most important country in Europe. It is the mother country for culture”.

Although Mr Li’s claim contradicts the Chinese media’s assertion that China’s claim to the culture crown is somewhat more long-standing, the trip is bound to provide a huge boost for London hotels, restaurants and shops including Buckingham Palace’s own gift shop, where sale items like a stick of lip balm in the shape of a uniformed policeman (£5.95) will doubtless settle the argument of who is the most cultured.

It added: “However, we believe that with constant contact with the 5,000-year-old civilisation of the East China they will make progress.”

The Global Times also said that it was inconceivable that British officials had intentionally leaked the video because such a move would be “truly boorish and rude”.

Putting my fangs in their glass by the bed, it must be said that the Chinese do have a point as the whole sequence of the controversial video does have the look of possibly being a setpiece. The equerry who introduces Her Majesty does seem to know all about Commander D’Orsi’s “rude” experience and he encourages the officer to relate her story to The Queen as the palace cameraman stands just feet away.

Although officials may deny that anyone realised the cameraman was actually recording the meet and greet – in which Commander D’Orsi complained that Xi’s visit was “quite a testing time for me” and revealed that in the planning of the visit Chinese officials at one point walked out, saying that the trip was off – anyone born this side of the invention of the Box Brownie knows that modern cameras do tape both sound and vision. So that whole “we had no idea” line seems to ring a bit thin.

In itself, the conversation in which The Queen makes no more damming a condemnation of the Chinese treatment of Commander D’Orsi than to comment that it was “extraordinary”, a polite remark which is hardly up there with “you should have hit them with a brick, love”, is not anything to go to war about.

But history has a part in this and it should not be overlooked. For it was not that very long ago, during the reign of Her Majesty’s great-great-grandmother in fact, when the British forced upon China one of the greatest outrages ever perpetuated under the guise of a trade agreement, namely The Opium Wars.

In essence, the Opium Wars came down to this:

Britain wanted to trade with China in the 19th century. China said “no thanks”. Britain said, “we don’t just want to trade with you, we want to sell you opium which we’re making our colonists grow in India”.

China said, “are you mad? We don’t want to become a land of junkies, do you take opium in Britain?”

Britain said, “of course not, but we demand that you do, because you’re only Chinese, you’ll love it”.

“Bog off”, said the Chinese, “opium will destroy our society.”

“We don’t care”, said the Brits, “and what’s more, if you don’t start taking our opium in return for your tea and silver, we will send our gunboats in and blow you to pieces”.

Which is pretty much what happened.

So to put it into historical context, the Chinese reaction to getting a little bad-mouthed by the Brits is a bit as ours would be occasionally as when the Germans start bossing us about and we rapidly wonder into becoming Alf Garnett, with all of that “who won the war?” lark.

However, all’s well that ends well and now the bruised relations between China and the UK are about to be salved through the intervention of a Chinese billionaire who is a huge fan of The Queen and wants to bring thousands of his staff to Buckingham Palace.

Mr Li Jinyuan is the boss of Tiens, a multinational conglomerate, mainly operating in biotechnology, logistics, finance, property, international trade, retail, e-business, education and tourism, based in the Chinese port city of Tianjin. Now he has told The Times – the London Thunderer, not the Chinese one interested in dentistry – that for his next trip he hopes “to bring 7,000 workers to the UK, turning Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London into a blur of blue”.

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Landmark victory for Fab Four

BY GEOFF BAKER
god@londonweeklynews.co.uk

THE Beatles have beaten the Royal Family in a new chart which reveals which “home” foreign tourists most want to visit.

The Fab Four’s old stamping ground, The Cavern Club in Liverpool, has come out on top of Buckingham Palace in a survey of the greatest British landmarks.

The Trip Advisor’s top 10 list of the Travellers’ Choice Awards for UK Landmarks, places the Palace at No 10 – with the Cavern at No 9.

Between July 1963 and August 1963, The Beatles made 592 appearances at the Cavern, putting the former jazz dive on the map as the birthplace of rock and roll and establishing it as the most famous club in all the world.

Although no Beatle has performed in the Scouse cellar since Paul McCartney played there in 1999, the club has become a shrine for visitors from all over the world and more than 800,000 fans each year eagerly trek down the stairs just so they can be in the room “where it all began”.

Buckingham Palace has been the official home of the British monarch since 1837, when Queen Victoria came to the throne.

Each year it draws an estimated 15 million visitors to its gates to admire the Changing of the Guard and, when open to the public during The Queen’s summer holidays in August and September, it attracts more than 400,000 inside to view the State Rooms.

Among the visitors to the Palace over the years were The Beatles themselves, when they were awarded their MBEs in 1965 and during which visit they all shared a cigarette in the royal toilets to calm their nerves – and not a cannabis joint as was later rumoured.

Understandably, the Cavern’s directors are cock-a-hop at beating the Palace in the visitors’ poll.

“We’re delighted and excited to be named in the UK’s Top Ten Landmarks for 2016,” said Bill Heckle, who co-owns The Cavern Club with fellow Scouser Dave Jones.

“The Cavern has seen a record number of visitors in 2015, with 800,000 people from all over the world who made their way down the winding steps of our world famous club to discover and experience the powerful sound that was and still is The Cavern Club.

“The ethos of the Club has always been ‘Then, Now and The Future’ and we look forward to celebrating The Cavern’s 60th birthday in January 2017.”

With a host of special events taking place during our year-long celebration, we anticipate to welcome even more visitors and hope that they too feel inspired to share their experiences on Trip Advisor.”

But Mr Heckle, who has visited Buckingham Palace on three occasions, admitted that he was a little red-faced that the Cavern has been rated above Her Majesty’s home.

“I was invited to meet The Queen’s PA, who is a Scouser, during a couple of trips to London on business with Apple Corps, The Beatles’ company, and I’m a bit embarrassed that we’ve beaten the Palace because their toilets are better than ours,” he quipped.

Will a royal runner go the extra mile in London Marathon 2017?

HOPES are rising that next year’s London Marathon could star at least one royal runner, writes Geoff Baker.

The official charity for the 2017 Virgin Money London Marathon has been named as Heads Together, a campaign set up by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry.

The excellent campaign, designed to raise much-needed awareness and funds for mental health charities and their vital work, is a partnership between inspiring charities with decades of experience in tackling stigma, raising awareness, and providing vital help for people with mental health challenges.

Heads Together aims to raise awareness of mental wellbeing and help tackle the stigma that prevents people from talking about issues or getting help. Charity runners who choose to support the Heads Together campaign as part of the 2017 Virgin Money London Marathon will be raising vital funds for: Best Beginnings; CALM; Contact (military mental health roundtable); Place2Be; The Mix; YoungMinds; and local branches of Mind.

Now there is growing hope that at least one of the young royals will put their feet where their hearts are and enter for the marathon, the rigors of which may not be beyond the likes of super-fit Prince Harry.

Clearly, nothing would draw more attention to the admirable aims of Heads Together, nor would raise more money for it on one of those Just Giving sites, than if Harry or William were to run in the marathon.

Whilst not wanting to teach the keener PR minds of Kensington Palace how to suck eggs, if the three royal patrons of Heads Together were to put their legs together and enter as some sort of relay team, each taking on 8.73 miles of the 26.2-mile race, it would cause a media sensation that would attract massive coverage all over the UK and around the world.

Sadly, massive media coverage and the visceral shift in public awareness is what the aims of Heads Together very much needs, for the problem of mental health in London and across the UK is one of the nation’s gravest crises, as the statistics alone testify:

Ten per cent of London children and young people aged five to 16 suffer a diagnosable mental health disorder that’s three in every school class – 1 in 12 children and young people self-harm, over the last 10 years there has been a 63 per cent rise in hospital admissions for children self-harming, 75 per cent of imprisoned young offenders have at least one mental health disorder; 20 per cent of adolescents experience a mental health problem in any one year, the cost of treating mental health in the UK and the loss of productivity because of it is estimated to be between £170 billion and £300 billion and every year hundreds of children commit suicide because of their despair brought about by mental ill health.

There is much to be done and to be run for.

Prince Harry’s participation in next year’s London Marathon would do wonders for charity fundraising.
The classic tale of Holly Golightly is being given a new lease of life as Breakfast at Tiffany's becomes a... LONDON WEEKLY NEWS TUESDAY MAY 24 2016

Sir Ian McKellen
Four Femmes swinging it with wit and glamour

Four Femmes swinging it with wit and glamour

The two are tenants in an apartment building in Manhattan when they meet. It is 1943 and so the world is at war.

Matt said: “It’s basically about two people who are at a time in the world when massive, massive changes are going on and it’s about those two people trying to find their place in it and not just necessarily conform to what everyone else does and is expected to do.”

The play also stars the multi-award-winning Pixie Lott as Holly Golightly and features opulent costumes and luxurious sets, as is beffiting the era.

Matt describes one particular section, which perfectly depicts the lavishness of Holly’s lifestyle.

“There’s a party scene where Holly wears a long gold ballgown and it’s just amazing. Its dripping with diamonds and really, really beautiful.”

The production features memorable songs from the era, but is not, as some have been led to believe, a musical. Instead the stunning and stylish play aims to capture the essence of the era and the complicated lives which the characters shared.

“One think people are expecting to see the film and some people are expecting to see a musical because of Pixie’s name attached to it,” said Matt.

“If people are open to having their expectations challenged, then it’s great and we’ve had wonderful responses from our audiences.”

Matt Barber stars in Breakfast at Tiffany’s at The Theatre Royal Haymarket from June 19. To book visit www.breakfastattiffanys.co.uk

McKellen on theatre tour

SOCIETY of London Theatre has partnered with VoiceMap, the immersive audio walking tour company, to produce the Official London Theatre Audio Tour with Ian McKellen – a free audio guide to the West End.

London becomes the stage with the internationally renowned actor, a six-time Olivier Award winner, assuming the role of director and guiding visitors through iconic and lesser-known sites around Theatreland.

Throughout the tour, listeners will hear anecdotes and fictional stories about McKellen’s time on stage and the history that has shaped London’s world-famous theatre district.

The tour begins and ends at TKTS in Leicester Square where free WiFi is available to download the app.

Ian McKellen said: “I know when I’m in a strange city that wandering around with your nose in a guidebook isn’t the best way to appreciate what’s going on. The important thing when you’re walking around a city like London is to look up and down the alleyways and round the corner. With a guide in your ear all this is much easier.”

VoiceMap is an audio tour app that uses GPS to play stories about your surroundings at exactly the right time. As you walk it uses your location and offline maps to play audio automatically. Once downloaded, the tour is not reliant on data or WiFi.

To download install VoiceMap for iPhone or Android, sign up with email or Facebook, then look for ‘Theatreland Tour with Ian McKellen’ in the London menu. Download all the files with WiFi, then put on a headset and start walking. VoiceMap works offline and doesn’t require any data.

Four Femmes swing it with wit and glamour

THE irreverent, yet hugely talented Four Femmes on the Thames will again perform their very unique style of cabaret at Brasserie Toulouse Lautrec, in Kennington later this month writes Nicky Sweetland.

The group, who met at drama school, have spent the past five years honing their individual style of musical entertainment and were named as the Best Musical Comedy act at the Musical Comedy Awards in April.

The ladies perform songs from the 1840s to modern day classics, with tight harmonies and a very ‘Femme’ twist.

Offering their take on life, love and London living through comedy and song, the group combine their performance skills with original writing to make a glamorous but naughty show.

The fabulous four are Katy Baker (Femme Filthy), Emma Drysdale (Femme Free-Spirit), Grace Rowe (Femme Fanciful) and Abbey Mordue (Femme Frivolous). They are supported by a band of Homo led by Gavin Whitesworth, who also arranges the music.

The songs “The Shard and Women Up have become YouTube sensations. Katy has been hugely inspired by the late Victoria Wood, which is evident in the style of her cleverly crafted and often ridiculous lyrics.”

Katy said: “We’ve got a new song called Has he got a mate? and it’s basically about a best friend being jealous because her friend has got a date. What happened to the Real Men? is about Tinder dating, while another is Treat me like you Treat your Phone that’s a fun one with disco style and Come Visit me in Zone Three which was one we performed as part of the comedy awards.”

The Four Femmes on the Thames will be performing at Brasserie Toulouse Lautrec on the May 28. For information or ticket details visit the website: brasserieitoulouselautrec.co.uk

Charlie De Melo, Matt Barber and Pixie Lott in Breakfast at Tiffany’s Picture: Sean Ebsworth Barnes

Four Femmes

Four Femmes

Talk of the town

TUE

THE classic tale of Holly Golightly is being given a new lease of life as Breakfast at Tiffany's becomes a play writes Nicky Sweetland.

Written by Truman Capote and so memorably portrayed by Audrey Hepburn in the iconic 1961 film, the play will take up residence at the Theatre Royal Haymarket next month, following a nationwide tour. The fantastic story, set in 1940's New York is told through eyes of a young writer, played by Downtown Abbey's Matt Barber, who talked to me about the production. Adapted by Pulitzer Prize finalist and Tony and Olivier Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg and directed by Nikolai Foster, the play is based on the original 1958 book by Truman Capote rather than the famous film adaptation and Matt said it has a much grettier and less romantic soft focus to the plot.

"Truman Capote wasn't a fan of the film," Matt said. "It's a different story essentially. The film's great but it's a very, very different type of thing. It does truly feel like the character I play is the voice of Truman Capote and it feels like the younger him is struggling to come to terms with the world he's in and the hand he's been dealt because homosexuality was illegal at that point."

Matt trained at Bristol Old Vic after graduating from Durham University with a BA in Classics and Philosophy. He has worked extensively across the industry and is probably best known for his role as Atticus Aldridge in the last two seasons of the multi-awarding-winning ITV series, Downtown Abbey. Matt's character is the narrator of Breakfast at Tiffany's but is never officially given a name, although the vivacious Holly dubs him Fred. At the beginning of the play, we see a more mature 'Fred' reminiscing about his past.

Matt said: "The older version of him is looking back on the story with irony and a little bit of amusement. He has quite a lot of self-deprecation and then a massive dose of nostalgia, because of this wonderful woman he met. 'Th relationship between Fred and Holly is the stuff of pop culture legend, with the narrator fascinated by the socialite's curious lifestyle which involves escorting wealthy men. Truman Capote was always adamant she was not a prostitute but instead dubbed her an 'American geisha'."

Throughout the production features Nicky Sweetland. The Four Femmes on the Thames will again perform their very unique style of cabaret at Brasserie Toulouse Lautrec, in Kennington later this month writes Nicky Sweetland. The group, who met at drama school, have spent the past five years honing their individual style of musical entertainment and were named as the Best Musical Comedy act at the Musical Comedy Awards in April. The ladies perform songs from the 1840s to modern day classics, with tight harmonies and a very 'Femme' twist. Offering their take on life, love and London living through comedy and song, the group combine their performance skills with original writing to make a glamorous but naughty show. The fabulous four are Katy Baker (Femme Filthy), Emma Drysdale (Femme Free-Spirit), Grace Rowe (Femme Fanciful) and Abbey Mordue (Femme Frivolous). They are supported by a band of Homo led by Gavin Whitesworth, who also arranges the music. The songs 'The Shard and Women Up have become YouTube sensations. Katy has been hugely inspired by the late Victoria Wood, which is evident in the style of her cleverly crafted and often ridiculous lyrics." Katy said: "We've got a new song called Has he got a mate? and it's basically about a best friend being jealous because her friend has got a date. What happened to the Real Men? is about Tinder dating, while another is Treat me like you Treat your Phone that's a fun one with disco style and Come Visit me in Zone Three which was one we performed as part of the comedy awards." The Four Femmes on the Thames will be performing at Brasserie Toulouse Lautrec on the May 28. For information or ticket details visit the website: brasserieitoulouselautrec.co.uk
RING your little monsters to the Lyric, Hammersmith this half term for a show which promises to be a roaring success writes Nicky Snowflax.

The creative team behind the smash hit show Aliens love Underpants are bringing their brand new ferocious family show Monstersaurus to the Lyric.

With crazy creatures made from wacky ingredients and plenty of immersive audience participation, the show, based on the book by Clare Freedman and Ben Court, is the perfect way to give little ones their first experience of the theatre.

Cast member Mark Collier said: ‘It’s about a little boy called Monty, who’s very bright and who’s a scientist. He decides to create some monsters.’

Monty finds a science book in his bedroom called ‘Make a Monster Friend if you Dare’.

He dares and creates some fantastical beasts, which are portrayed on stage with state-of-the-art puppety, made especially for the production by acclaimed designer Scott Brooker.

Mark said: ‘There’s one monster called Bogablob, who’s a big slimy naughty monster and then there’s a dust monster who goes around making the house dusty. The two monsters start fighting so Monty, with help from the audience, of course, has to create a mega monster and that’s when Monstersaurus himself comes on to try and solve the problem.’

Packed with magic and mayhem, the show also features original music and plenty of audience participation.

Mark said: ‘It’s lots of fun, there’s lots of drama, song, dancing and puppets. It’s got everything in 50 minutes.

‘Also, as there should be with all good young people’s theatre, there’s plenty for the parents as well.’

Monstersaurus runs at the Lyric, Hammersmith from May 31 to June 4.

If you would like further information visit the website lyric.co.uk

Monty's marvellous Monstersaurus

Menier steps back Into the Woods

STEPHEN Sondheim’s acclaimed musical will return to the London stage this summer when Fiasco theatre bring their production of Into the Woods to the Menier Chocolate Factory.

Using ten actors, multiple musical instruments and boundless imagination, this fairytale classic is reimagined as never before. This production, which received the 2015 Lucille Lortel Award for Best Revival, will include the original US cast. Featuring the timeless songs Children Will Listen and No One Is Alone, this Tony Award-winning musical was recently made into a successful Disney feature film starring Meryl Streep, James Corden and Johnny Depp. Into the Woods will run at the Menier Chocolate Factory from 12th July until the 17th September. For more details you can visit the website menierchocolatetheatre.com

Great Gem South of the River

With a cool art decor combining British, Italian and Eritrean Atmosphere

“Amazing food and owner”

Amazing food as always. Extra special on Wednesday night. As Shewa (owner) had recently become a grandmother we were invited to pick a small piece of paper and could only look at it once the bill arrived. The piece of paper read “Samuel” Shewa then informed us we had picked the right name and had the meal on the house.

“Good food, good service, great owner”

Not one for reviewing normally. But have to say this is my favourite place in the area. The food is consistently tasty and authentic/homemade. The staff are always friendly. Shewa took it upon herself to arrange a birthday cake for my wife! Can only recommended the Blue Nile.

“Amazing local find”

After seeing a bbc news article about this place in my home town myself and a friend went last week to check it out. The first time I’ve eaten Eritrean food and I will be going back! It was delicious and made a nice change from all the other restaurant options out there.
CHILDREN can get up close to fictional favourites and top authors and make journeys of discovery at a festival within a festival just for them.

Greenwich Book Festival, hosted by the University of Greenwich, is to be held on the Old Royal Naval College on Friday, May 27 and Saturday, May 28. The event, which began life after a chat between two mums at the gates of Sherrington Primary School in Charlton and is now in its second year, has always been aimed at children as much as adults.

Following their conversation the mums, publisher Auriol Bishop and journalist and author Patricia Nicol, discovered that Alex Pheby, the head of creative writing at the University of Greenwich, had the same thoughts and the trio launched the event last year.

University of Greenwich, had the here.”

Audience have a hand in shaping Smith’s new play

Who star Matt Smith is set to return to the London stage this summer as part of a devised project at the Royal Court called Unreachable.

The actor, who was succeeded by Peter Capaldi as the iconic television time lord, previously performed at the Sloane Square Theatre in 2007 when he appeared in Polly Stenham’s That Face.

Writer and director Anthony Neilson also returns to the Royal Court and will enable the actors to create the play in the rehearsal room. Throughout the rehearsals, online content based on the ideas the company are experimenting with will be posted on the site to build a collection of references that will offer audiences an insight into the process of devising work, themes and images that will shape the finished product.

Smith, who most recently starred in American Psycho at the Almeida Theatre, will be joined by Amanda Drew, Tamara Lawrence, Jonjo O’Neill and Richard Pyros. Unreachable will run at the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs at the Royal Court from 2nd July to 8th August.

Educational Insight Workshops will be available for any schools attending this production.

You can view the rehearsal contact and found out more details by visiting the website unreachabletheplay.com
Omelette soufflé with raspberries

You can use any seasonal berries you wish - such as blueberries, strawberries, blackberries or a mixture. It’s crucial that you serve this straight from the oven.

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 Burford Brown egg whites
250g raspberries

For the custard

The zest of 2 lemons
100ml milk
200ml single cream
4 Burford Brown egg yolks
50g caster sugar
1tsp flour
1tsp cornflour

For the sauce

100g fresh raspberries

Method

First, make the custard: put the lemon zest, milk and cream into a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove the custard from the heat and give it a final mix with a whisk. Transfer to a clean bowl, cover the surface of the custard with cling film to prevent a skin forming, then leave to cool.

To make the sauce, blend half of the raspberries in it. Spread on top of the custard and mix it well with the whisk.

To serve

Icing sugar, optional
100g raspberries

Jersey Royals are back in season - and Jimmy Doherty couldn’t be happier. The TV host and food fan tells Gemma Dunn why this humble veggie is the star of the show

He might be known for his rare-breed pigs, but entomologist-turned-farmer Jimmy Doherty’s latest initiative lets his veggie sidekick - the humble potato - do the talking.

“[The] Jersey Royal is an iconic food item and something we should celebrate,” the 40-year-old enthuses about his collaboration with the seasonal spud.

“If the Italians or French had this, they would be going on about it all the time.

Since taking on a 100-acre farm more than 10 years ago, which was famously documented in BBC Two series Jimmy’s Farm, Doherty has made a name for himself in the world of TV, appearing in shows including Food Unwrapped and Jamie and Jimmy’s Friday Night Feast with childhood friend Jamie Oliver.

Add to that three books and a number of free-range food products, and it stands to reason that he’s the ideal patron to champion the unique Jersey crop - or as he dubs it, “the champagne of potatoes”.

“As a kid, having Jersey Royals with your spring lamb was pretty important,” he muses. “I’m a big believer in seasonality.”

Available from April until the end of June and delivered to supermarkets within 48 hours of being gathered up, the TV foodie is also a firm believer that these potatoes - and other varieties - should be a diet staple.

“We forget potatoes are full of vitamin C, antioxidants and fibre, and we’re moving to other carbohydrates like rice and pasta,” he says. “We should go back to eating lots of potatoes.

“It’s about portion control, that’s all,” he adds, in response to any spud critics, and the father-of-three certainly practises what he preaches at home.

“My kids get excited about food. Understanding where food comes from is a very natural part of their life, and it should be the case for everyone.

It’s an ethos he looks to implement at Jimmy’s Farm, which today boasts a nature trail, butterfly house, award-winning restaurant, science and food festivals - and a zoo licence in the pipeline.

“If never ends!” Doherty admits, laughing. “There are 30 full-timers, and I’ll tell you what, dealing with pigs is a lot easier than dealing with people!”

Hammersmith and Fulham for the year 2012-13

Belinda Donovan is an experienced chef who was trained at the prestigious La Varenne cooking school in France. She compiled the Hammersmith and Fulham Cook Book in 2013 and is a regular writer of cookery columns and reviews. An enthusiast for all things Fulham, she has also written articles about the area’s rich local history. She is currently a Conservative councillor for the Addison ward and served as Mayor of Hammersmith and Fulham for the year 2012-13

The best part of all is that at the back of the shop is their test kitchen where, every day of the week except Monday, they try out the latest recipes from new cook books on their very willing customers. Turn up at midday or thereabouts and, for a very reasonable price, you can try the menu of the day.

You can also gorge on their freshly baked cakes and delicious cappuccino.

Eric Treuille says that Books for Cooks has a twitter account, sign up to this and they tweet you the days menus.

In addition to the winter they have Supper Clubs with details of these on their website.

Very reluctantly I prize myself away from this cook book heaven carrying their latest Books for Cook Book - one they produce with recipes from all the best new cook books. I can’t recommend Books for Cook books highly enough.

Belinda Donovan

Omelette soufflé with raspberries

Next time you are visiting Portobello Road, why not head to Books for Cooks at 4 Blenheim Crescent and you will not be disappointed!

Eric Treuille runs Books for Cooks and we both have a link with the wonderful and inspirational Anne Willan.

Anne owned and ran La Varenne where I trained as a chef and Eric worked alongside her helping her with her cookery books as a food stylist. He also worked at Gordon Bleu, so he has a long pedigree in the culinary world.

Books for Cooks is an Aladdin’s Cave of every cook book you can imagine. In the unlikely event that you can’t find that Cook Book you have been trying to track down for ages, they will order it for you.

The food and drink page for West London

MARK HIX’S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Belinda Donovan

Omelette soufflé with raspberries

You can use any seasonal berries you wish - such as blueberries, strawberries, blackberries or a mixture. It’s crucial that you serve this straight from the oven.

Serves 4

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For the sauce

100g fresh raspberries

Method

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To make the sauce, blend half of the raspberries in it. Sprinkle with icing sugar if desired, and serve the sauce separately.

To serve

Icing sugar, optional
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3. The Publishers reserve the right to alter the rates and to withdraw any half-page and page supplements.

4. The Publishers reserve the right to refuse an advertisement or to vary in any way they may see fit any advertisement which, in their opinion, whether written or otherwise, has been accepted for publication.

5. Whilst every effort is made to minimise errors in advertisement, mistakes do sometimes occur in advertisements, and the Publishers should therefore check their advertisements and inform us of any immediately. Responsibility cannot be accepted by the Publishers for any errors or omissions of more than one incorrect insertion. Typographical or minor changes, which do not affect the value of the advertisement, do not affect for repetitive services.

6. All gross advertising rates (except classified lineage and sent direct) are subject to and include a VAT of 20% and where the Gross Advertising Board of Finance surcharge, payable by the advertisers to help Finance the self-regulatory system administered by the Advertising Standards Authority.

7. At all rates quoted are subject to VAT at the rate currently in force for advertising services advertised.

8. Should the rate for advertisements be altered the price for advertisements by the Publishers shall be revised upwards or downwards; and the Publishers shall have the right to cancel the unexpired portion of the order.

9. The Publishers reserve the right to determine the acceptance of these conditions.

10. Restrictions are agreed at the discretion of the Company.

11. All accounts must be settled within the terms agreed by the Company and the Customer.

12. A Statement of truth in breach of the agreed terms, the Publisher shall be entitled to vary a 10% surcharge on the value of the advertisement, which surcharge may be increased at the discretion of the Publishers, and all costs and disbursements incurred by the Publishers in respect of complaints or proceedings by reason of the breach of any condition of these conditions shall be payable by the Publisher as damages of any loss suffered by the Publishers as a result of the breach of these conditions.

13. Regular monthly accounts that are in breach of the agreed terms may be suspended for a period of 30 days. The current base rate for each month that the account is overdue and disbursements that has been allowed will be stopped, and any such accounts may be charged in accordance with the County Court Act 1947. Where an advertisement is accepted by the Publisher but not broadcast or not broadcast according to the Publisher's instructions, the advertiser shall not be liable for any damages, losses, or costs incurred by the Publisher as a result of the breach of these conditions.

14. All accounts must be settled within the terms agreed by the Company and the Customer.

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17. The Publishers reserve the right to alter the rates and to withdraw any advertisements in electronic form only subject to certain criteria.

18. Further terms and conditions available on request.

19. The copyright of advertisements produced wholly or partially by the Publishers belong to the Publishers. Advertisers may not reproduce any advertisements without the express permission of the Publishers. Beeton News.

20. Data Protection and Privacy.

21. The Publishers reserve the right for the receipt of bona fide answers and are not available for distribution of Trade canvassing material. Original trade canvassing material is required at all times. All such material shall be returned by post to the Publisher.

22. Personal details provided by the Publishers are subject to the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

23. Data controller will use your information for administration and analysis. We may share your information with other trade Beeton Newspaper companies or carefully selected third parties. We, or they, may send you details of other goods and services, which may be of direct interest. The information you provide may be held on computer, hard copy or electronic record, or both. We may share your information with others in order to provide you with our services. We may use your information to provide statistical information about our users or customers, but this will not identify you. We may use your information to enhance our ability to provide the service that you have requested and any other service that you may request in the future. We may also use your information to provide the service that you have requested, and any other service that you may request in the future. We may use your information to provide the service that you have requested, and any other service that you may request in the future. We may use your information to provide the service that you have requested, and any other service that you may request in the future.

24. Data controller will use your information for administration and analysis. We may share your information with other trade Beeton Newspaper companies or carefully selected third parties. We, or they, may send you details of other goods and services, which may be of direct interest. The information you provide may be held on computer, hard copy or electronic record, or both. We may share your information with others in order to provide you with our services. We may use your information to provide statistical information about our users or customers, but this will not identify you. We may use your information to enhance our ability to provide the service that you have requested and any other service that you may request in the future. We may also use your information to provide the service that you have requested, and any other service that you may request in the future. We may use your information to provide the service that you have requested, and any other service that you may request in the future. We may use your information to provide the service that you have requested, and any other service that you may request in the future. We may use your information to provide the service that you have requested, and any other service that you may request in the future.
TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC

1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate Tower Crane Strengthening Works, it intends to make and order the effect of which would prohibit traffic in sections 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 Overstone Road between its junctions with Glenthorne Road and No. 1 Overstone Road.

3. An alternative route for traffic in article 2 would be in place via Glenthorne Grove, Adie Road, Southerton Road, Kilmarsh Road and Ifley Road.

4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises in the vicinity 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 would come into operation on the 18th June 2016 and would be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.

6. Works would be expected to commence on Saturday 18th June 2016 and last for 2 days, with back up dated to the 27th June 2016, and 1st to 9th July 2016. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 18th day of May 2016.
Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle
Chief Transport Planner
Transport and Highways
26 London W eekly N ew s Tuesday, M ay 24th 2016 editorial@ londonw eeklynew s.co.uk ... is published.
Dated this 9th day of May 2016
Nicholas Ruxton-Boyle
Chief Transport Planner
Transport and Highways

2. The general effect of the Hammersmith and Fulham (Waiting and Loading PLACES, ZONE "U") (AMENDMENT No. *) ORDER 20**

50 - 53 Westburn Road

22 Felden Palace
London W6 1TA

2016/0219/FUL
Erection of a roof extension involving an increase in the rear floor level to form part of the existing back garden, and to create a single roof storey over the rear part of the existing building, in connection with a reconfiguration of the rear of the garden from a shed over the garage to use as habitable accommodation at ground floor level.

26 - 28 - 36 Gletonrhyde Road

2016/0205/FUL
Existing single storey rear extension to the side of the house to form part of the existing back garden, and to create a single roof storey over the rear part of the existing building, in connection with a reconfiguration of the rear of the garden from a shed over the garage to use as habitable accommodation at ground floor level.

1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham proposes to make an application to the powers granted by sections 40,41,46,49 of, and Part IV of Schedule 9 to, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended.

2. The general effect of the Hammersmith and Fulham (Waiting and Loading Restriction) (Consolidation) Amendment No. (*) Order 20** would be to further amend the Hammersmith and Fulham (Waiting and Loading Restriction) (Consolidation) Order 2015 so that waiting and/or loading restrictions would be imposed and/or introduced and/or revoked in certain lengths of Black's Road, Bicklow Road, Bloomsfield Road, Farm Lane, Parsons Green, Hamilton Road, Rycroft Road, Du Cane Road, Australia Road, Adele Road, Althea Street, Hammersme Grove, Goldhawk Road, Greenside Road, Wetey Road, Seagrove Road, Fourpenny Shop Road, Dobbey Street, London W12 0LA.

3. The general effect of the above proposed Parking Places Zones A, I, M, U, O, 2, V would be to further amend each of their parking places so that parking places would be amended and/or introduced and/or revoked in various streets as set out in Schedule 5 to the Orders.

4. The general effect of the Hammersmith and Fulham (London Cycle Hire Scheme)(Amendment No. *) Order 20** would be to: a) remove the Order in line with the on-street London Cycle Hire locations for all roads within the Borough for which the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (London Cycle Hire Scheme) (Consolidation) Order 2009 so that a London Cycle Hire would be unobstructed on Goldhawk Road.

5. The general effect of the Hammersmith and Fulham (Loading Bay)(Amendment No. *) Order 20** would be to further amend the Hammersmith and Fulham (Loading Bay) (Consolidation) Order 2009 so that a Loading Bay would be unobstructed on Goldhawk Road.

6. A copy of the proposed Order, the Councils statement of reasons for proposing to make the Orders and documents giving more detailed particulars of the proposed Orders, can be inspected during normal office hours, Mondays to Fridays inclusive until the end of a period of 6 weeks beginning with the date on which the Orders were made, or as the case may be, the Council decides not to make the Orders.

7. Any person wishing to object to the proposed Orders or make other representations in connection with their making should write to: Transport and Technical Services Group, Highways and Engineering Division, Environment Department, Town Hall Extension, King Street, Hammersmith, W6 9JU until the expiration of 21 days from the date on which the notice is published.

This date 9th May 2016

SIGNED:

Councillor the Hon Michael Maguire
Chair of Transport Services

8. Anyone who wishes to make representations about these proposed applications should write to: Planning, Civic Church Gardens 3rd Floor, Goldhawk Road, London W12 0LA. You can view applications, make comments and check the progress of your application online by going to the Council's website: www.bgl.gov.uk/planning. You can also E-mail comments to planning@bgl.gov.uk.
CHES LEA from back page
Hiddink has twice stepped in as interim manager and Conte will have him casting a shadow, albeit a thin one on his first campaign in the capital.

Hiddink’s role will be advisory and he will attempt to forge a link between the club and some of its former high-profile players such as Didier Drogba and Petr Cech.

“Technical advisor is a big title,” he said, “but I will indeed hold an advisory role. I want to involve former Chelsea players. I spoke with Drogba and I have spoken with Cech. These guys are true Chelsea legends and have had such an impact at the club. “Chelsea are an old club but they have only been there at the highest level for about 15 years or so. These older guys want the best for Chelsea and can do a lot for the club once they have ended their active careers.”

One might go for a commercial career, another might pursue a job as assistant manager and another might be interested in a scouting position. You can make such good use of guys like them. I have the freedom to approach former players for things like that.”

But the Dutchman will also form part of the so-called ‘pathway strategy’ that will try to propel more academy players towards the first team.

“Often see young players struggle to make the step up to the first team,” he said. “You have to slowly ease them into it, or they will do too much. “I did that with Bertrand Traore and Ruben Loftus-Cheek, but more players should be making the step up,” Hiddink added.

CHELSEA Ladies have had a miserable week following their lacklustre FA Cup final defeat to Arsenal. They lost 2-0 at home to undefeated league leaders Manchester City on Thursday.

Chelsea boss Emma Hayes said: “It’s been a tough week for the team. The difference between the two teams is that they took their chances and we didn’t. We had as many, if not more, opportunities. “I was pleased with the performance, I thought we played well. I’m not disappointed with the performance or the effort from the players. But if you make one or two errors against the top teams, that can be the difference.”

They then play Ukraine on June 16 in Lyon before taking on world champions Germany in Paris five days later.

It will be a fairytale end to the season for Kent-born, former postman Sebastian Polter as his lone striker, so Washington will have a massive onus to prove to his club manager if he gets the chance to shine for Northern Ireland in the days and weeks ahead.

Limited
His opportunities have been limited under Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, the man who brought him to Loftus Road. Despite being handed Charlie Austin’s No.9 shirt in 2016, Washington has started only seven Championship games for Rangers. He was used as a substitute in eight other matches, but took five goals in those 15 appearances.

Hasselbaink tended to favour the more physical attributes of German centre-forward Azhar Mahmood (facing camera) leads the Surrey celebrations after clinching victory in their first T20 game of 2016 at Essex Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

Azhar’s in the mood

IF T20 is cricket’s super-fast modern game played mainly by and for youngsters, then no-one bothered telling wily veteran Azhar Mahmood.

The 41-year-old, Pakistan-born all-rounder turned back the clock on Friday night to outshine bigger names and lead Surrey to victory by eight runs against Essex in their opening Blast southern group game.

Coming in at No.7, Mahmood top-scored with 42 as the visitors struggled to reach 170-8 after being put in to bat at Chelmsford.

Power hitting, athletic fielding and rapid running are fundamental requirements of the shortest white ball game but Mahmood showed that there is no substitute for a sharp brain and experience too.

With just three balls of a finely balanced match remaining, he sent down a carnary slower delivery to Matt Quinn – and waited gleefully at the other end of his run-up for the ball to drop comfortably into his safe hands.

Caught and bowled, game over.

Mahmood’s in the mood for youngsters, then no-one

for one’s County Championship quest for a first County Championship win of the season in Manchester against last season’s second division title winners Lancashire. They return to the Kia Oval on Thursday (26th at 6.30pm) for their first home game in the T20 Blast against Glamorgan. On Saturday (28th) they head down to Somerset for the start of another CC1 match.

International promise

Mahmood won’t enjoy too many more nights like this, but 21-year-old Curran simply oozes international promise. After contributing Surrey’s joint second highest batting score of 32, he took three important wickets, after younger brother Tom had struck first to dismiss Ravi Bopara and later removed Zaidi, ibw.

On Sunday, Surrey resumed their quest for a first County Championship win of the season in Manchester against last season’s second division title winners Lancashire. They return to the Kia Oval on Thursday (26th at 6.30pm) for their first home game in the T20 Blast against Glamorgan. On Saturday (28th) they head down to Somerset for the start of another CC1 match.

Rayner takes six-fer

MIDDLESEX had to settle for their fifth consecutive County Championship draw when last week’s London derby against Surrey ended in stalemate thanks to rain that prevented any play on the fourth and final day at the Kia Oval.

Small consolation for Middlesex is that they picked up 10 points – one more than their local rivals.

The game was already heading for a draw before the weather intervened after Surrey openers Rory Burns (55) and Arun Harinath (37) batted out the last 45 overs on day three to extend the hosts’ total to 98-0.

Middlesex had taken control from the start by dismissing 39 all out in their first innings, with Nick Gubbins impressively leading the way on 91. Most credit for restricting Surrey to 242 in reply and enforcing the follow-on goes to spinner Ollie Rayner, who enjoyed a rare spell in the limelight by taking six wickets at a cost of just 79 runs from 36.3 overs.

Although no Surrey wickets fell in their second knock, Rayner was again outstanding with the ball, conceding a meagre 12 runs from his 11 overs, including four maidens. How frustrated he must be that his home Lord’s wicket does not offer the same deception. On Sunday, Middlesex commenced their CC1 game with Somerset at Lord’s – the first of five home matches in a row, although the following two are away from the Home of Cricket. Hampshire provide the opposition for Middlesex’s first T20 Blast match of the season when they visit Uxbridge this Friday (27th at 5.30pm) and the same visiting side will be donning their whites on Sunday when the teams meet again for day one of their CC1 clash at Merchant Taylors’ School, Northwood.

With just three balls of a finely balanced match remaining, he sent down a carnary slower delivery to Matt Quinn – and waited gleefully at the other end of his run-up for the ball to drop comfortably into his safe hands.

Caught and bowled, game over.

Rayner takes six-fer
Terry has big point to prove

JOHN Terry is currently on holiday, probably at a beach taking Instagram pictures of himself with wife and family beside him, secure in the knowledge that in a couple of weeks’ time, he will roll up at Chelsea’s Cobham training ground, ahead of the rest, and prepare for the biggest battle of his extraordinary Chelsea career.

As LWN Sport revealed last week, Terry was seriously undecided as to whether he would accept the Jersiary offer from Roman Abramovich and stay for another year – his 22nd in SW6 – or head to China, where massive financial incentives awaited him on and off the pitch.

In the end, he chose to stay and fight for his place and reputation.

Even at 35, Terry firmly believes he can convince new Blues boss Antonio Conte that he and A.N. Other will be his preferred centre-back partnership.

Conte, whose title is significantly head coach and not manager, will adopt an ‘open mind’ attitude to whatever squad the club presents to him when he arrives to take his first training session following his stint as Italy manager at Euro 2016.

New contract
Speaking after announcing his intention to stick around, Terry said: “I am delighted to sign a new contract with the club. Everyone knows I’m Chelsea through and through.

“I am looking forward to next season under the new manager and hopefully we can make it a successful one.

“Also, a special mention to the fans for their continued support. You’re the best in the world.”

Terry has made 703 first team appearances, including a record 570 as captain since his debut in 1998.

He has also won four league titles, five FA Cups, a Champions League, Europa Cup, three League Cups and made 78 England appearances.

Chelsea will return to action, following their worst season since 1996, on July 16, when a short pre-season trip to Austria will see Blues face Rapid Vienna. Then it’s an outing against RZ Pellets before they head to the US on August 4 for a three-game run out against Liverpool, Real Madrid and AC Milan.

With the league season not starting until August 13, Chelsea will have plenty of time to head to Russia for a friendly against CSK Moscow on a date to be confirmed.

Before then, a host of players are expected to leave The Bridge to make way for the biggest revamp of the squad under Abramovich’s tenure.

It remains to be seen if Real Madrid come in for Thibaut Courtois and an excellent Euro 2016 with Belgium will certainly aid the goalkeeper’s cause.

His number two Asmir Begovic has all but accepted that he will never be the first choice at Chelsea and is expected to leave after just one season, should a suitable offer hit the table.

This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

Focus on Craven Cottage

FULHAM head coach Slavisa Jokanovic continued his summer rebuilding programme with the permanent signing of Michael Madl from Sturm Graz.

The central defender, who arrived in SW6 at the end of January on a loan deal, has signed a new two-year contract that theoretically ties him to the club until the summer of 2018.

Speaking to the official website (www.fullhamfc.com), Madl said: “I’m delighted to have completed the permanent move to Fulham and would like to thank the fans, players and staff at SK Sturm Graz for an amazing time there.

“I’ve enjoyed the past five months – the Fulham fans have made me feel so welcome from the very first day.

“I’m looking forward to a new exciting season in the Championship and I’m confident that I can be part of something special with the club.”

Although capped 11 times at under-21 level, Madl still awaits his senior debut for Austria.

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