GRASS ROOT MEMBERS LIVID OVER SACKING

Labour dismiss council leader

KENSGTON and Chelsea’s lead champion of the poor and needy Emma Dent Coad has been sacked as Leader of the royal borough’s Labour Group in a shock “Night of the Long Knives” move.

Grass roots members of the Labour Party are said to be “livid” that the council group has fired one of the most senior councillors in the capital and the woman generally held to be most responsible for Kensington’s successful 6% swing to Labour in the general election.

“Emma has been stabbed in the back - it is unthankful and outrageous”, said one leading Labour insider.

The move has also been condemned by David Kear, chairman of Kensington Constituency Labour Party, which has an oversight responsibility on behalf of local members on the work of the Labour Group of councillors.

Mr Kear said: “This has been a huge surprise and a shock to me and to Labour Party members. We have seen Emma and her team perform in Council and meetings, and worked alongside her during the election campaign. She is known to be hard-working and fearless, and her dedication to residents has no limit.

“We are very unhappy about what has happened, and how it has happened. The Labour Party should be working together, locally as well as nationally, and not tearing itself apart for personal objectives and petty jealousies.”

Councillor Dent Coad was the accomplished architect of the election campaign of the Labour candidate for Kensington, Dr Rod Aboubrah. Under her guidance, Labour has become more popular locally than at any time since 1992, with Dr Aboubrah winning 10,838 votes, backed by 31.1% of the electorate.

Dr Aboubrah said: “I am saddened and surprised to hear that Cllr Emma Dent Coad has been deposed as Labour Group Leader in RBKC. In October 2013 I was selected as the Labour Party Candidate for Kensington. From then onwards I worked closely with Cllr Dent Coad and the rest of the Labour Group on RBKC as well as the local constituency party.

Excellent leader

“Cllr Dent Coad was not only an excellent Labour Group Leader in the Council. Not only did she improve the lives of many residents in Kensington through her hard work and political acumen by holding the Tories to account and exposing their maladministration in Kensington and Chelsea, but she also co-ordinated the 2014 local council campaign with our organiser Ashley Wise where Labour gained four additional councillors, increasing the Group by 50%.

“She then went on to co-ordinate the General election campaign in Kensington where we achieved the best result for Labour in living memory with a 6% increase in our vote, especially impressive given the national context.”

As the councillor for the Golborne ward and Labour Group leader Ms Dent Coad has repeatedly proved to be Labour’s strongest voice on Kensington & Chelsea borough council, where her passion, honesty and intellect has even won her the respect of the council’s top Tories. The shock axing of Ms Dent Coad came at a Town Hall Council meeting on Monday night, with new leader Cllr Pat Devlin expected to be strongly supported by Labour’s rank and file.

EXCLUSIVE

By Geoff Baker

Labour Group leader Ms Dent Coad has repeatedly proved to be Labour’s strongest voice on Kensington & Chelsea borough council, where her passion, honesty and intellect has even won her the respect of the council’s top Tories. The shock axing of Ms Dent Coad came at a Town Hall Council meeting on Monday night, with new leader Cllr Pat Devlin expected to be strongly supported by Labour’s rank and file.
**Blueprint aims to unlock growth and reduce traffic congestion**

**Bold vision for London’s roads network**

The Mayor of London has revealed further details of plans to deliver his bold vision for the future of London’s road network, aimed at reducing congestion, creating new public spaces and encouraging more people to walk and cycle.

The Mayor, who has visited Boston as part of a trade mission to build economic and cultural ties with key cities in the United States, unveiled proposals to redesign a number of key road networks in the capital in order to unlock growth and make the capital a more attractive place to live and work.

The news comes after the Mayor visited the Central Artery-Tunnel Project, also known as the Big Dig, which is recognised as the largest and most complex highway project undertaken in the US. It replaced Boston’s deteriorating six-lane elevated Central Artery with an eight lane state-of-the-art underground highway. This resulted in significantly reduced traffic congestion and led to substantial regeneration on the surface and surrounding areas.

The Mayor and TfL have considered more than 70 locations across the capital where the introduction of tunnels, fly-unders and decking could deliver benefits that are in line with the Mayor’s 2050 Infrastructure Plan and the recommendations of the Roads Task Force.

Now the Mayor has unveiled five locations which have subsequently been identified as being suitable for further feasibility work by TfL:

- A minor tunnel at the A13 in Barking Riverside – By creating a new tunnel for the A13, a huge amount of land could potentially be opened up for future development whilst reconnecting the Borough of Barking with the new Barking Riverside development, which is the location for just under 11,000 new homes.
- A fly-under at the A316 at Chalkers Corner - A small flyunder would reduce severance and radically improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians and remove a major pinch point for traffic along the A316.
- A fly-under at the A4 in Hammersmith – By replacing the existing viaduct with a new tunnel, the town centre would be reconnected with the River Thames, creating new opportunities for development and open space.
- Decking or a mini-tunnel at the A406 in New Southgate – by building over this junction on the North Circular, land would be unlocked for new homes and connect the area around the proposed Crossrail 2 station.
- London’s road network, aimed at reducing congestion, creating new public spaces and encouraging more people to walk and cycle.

London’s current Inner Ring Road is facing increasing pressure for change. As he previously set out in the 2050 Infrastructure Plan, the Mayor believes that a replacement ring road, in the form of an inner orbital tunnel or two cross city tunnels, could enable more efficient and reliable vehicle movement. It would also reduce congestion in central London by up to 20 per cent and free up space on the surface which could support the creation of 170,000 additional jobs.

Boris Johnson, said: “Rebuilding some of our complex and aging road network underneath our city would not only provide additional capacity for traffic, but it would also unlock surface space and reduce the impact of noise and pollution. I am inspired by what the ambitious people of Boston have achieved here at the Big Dig, both in terms of reducing congestion and how they have dramatically improved the quality of life on the surface. In London we face similar challenges on our roads, but this could also be a fantastic opportunity to better shape our city and support economic growth.”

London is a rapidly growing city with a population expected to reach 10 million by the early 2030s and nearly 11.5 million by 2050. With 24 million journeys already made by people and freight on the capital’s roads every day, radical steps are going to be needed to tackle growing congestion in the future.

Funding for such schemes would require new and innovative approaches that enable the positive benefits of each scheme to be captured, including the value generated from new development sites in these areas. TfL will now work with local boroughs to progress these proposals further, including working up more detailed costs and possible funding options and an indicative programme of delivery if funding can be secured. This further analysis will be presented to the Mayor later this month.
By Geoff Baker

A WOMAN who made false statements in a claim for Housing Benefit relating to a flat in North Kensington that she had never lived in, was sentenced to four months in prison, suspended for one year, at Hammersmith Magistrates’ Court last week.

Holli Carpenter of Rayleigh Gardens SW2 had earlier pleaded guilty to nine charges under the Fraud Act on 14 April 2015 at the same court.

The court heard an investigation into Holly Carpenter had begun after the owner of a flat in Ledbury Mews West W1 applied to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea for a housing permit.

A routine check was made on the occupants of the property which showed Carpenter had registered as living there for a housing benefit claim. The owner was able to verify that this was not the case. Further enquiries revealed Carpenter had also made a housing benefit claim relating to her residency in the London Borough of Lambeth. Enquiries revealed she had obtained all her documentation including a water bill and tenancy agreement to support her claims.

Carpenter, Deputy District Judge Watton said the case was serious enough for a custodial sentence but she would not go to prison. He said that she had showed sophistication in furnishing false statements with the intention of defrauding.

But he gave her credit for her early guilty plea and no previous convictions and noted the fact that she had made full admissions when she had been questioned by the police. He said his sentence was based on the view that she falsely claimed she had made a honest claim for the benefit.

As a result of her fraudulent claim Holly Carpenter was paid £2,984.53 housing benefit from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea that she was not entitled to. She had also been granted housing benefit and council tax benefit and £150.42 council tax benefit from the London Borough of Lambeth.

As well as the suspended sentence Holly Carpenter was ordered to make a contribution to costs of £250 and pay an £80 victim surcharge. The prosecution said that she was a leading member of the Labour group in the council and had been a member of the executive.

It is an insane decision. Of all of the people who knocked on 30,000 doors she is gutted and furious,” said a source. “She was a leading member of the Labour group in the council and had been a member of the executive. But she is just the one who has fought the hardest for the poor, the disadvantaged and the otherwise helpless of the borough. Without her voice as the standard bearer for the needy, who are they going to turn to?"

Another Labour heavyweight said: “People are already starting to pick away at Emma’s reputation, they are saying she was tyrannical and ruthless, but that is nonsense. People say that the Labour grandees didn’t like her because she is not the sort who will swan around in the Mayor’s Parlour drinking champagne with the Tories in the Town Hall. People are putting it about that Emma is a charismatic enough leader did not cozy-up sufficiently with the Tories in the Town Hall. Poor Emma is guttered and furious,” said a source. “It is a News Their from Kensington & Chelsea story that the leader who was the one who has fought the hardest for the poor, the disadvantaged and the otherwise helpless of the borough. Without her voice as the standard bearer for the needy, who are they going to turn to?"

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Property expert is new councillor

THE Conservative group on the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council has been strengthened by the landslide victory election of property investment expert Mr Kim Taylor-Smith as the new councillor for the Stanley ward.

Mr Taylor-Smith won the seat recently vacated by the resignation of the popular and acclaimed veteran of the royal borough council Sir Merrick Cockell, who represented the key Stanley ward since 1986.

Sir Merrick, a former Leader of the royal borough council, was knighted in 2010 for his services to local government.

Elected Leader in 2000, Sir Merrick’s record of success at the Royal Borough helped establish him as a leading figure in UK local government. From 2006 to 2010 he was chairman of London Councils, the representative body for the capital’s 32 local authorities. And in 2011, he was chosen by other council leaders to head up the Local Government Association, the national voice for England’s councils.

At the time of his stepping down as Leader of the Royal Borough council in 2013, Sir Merrick was highly-praised by local government tsar Eric Pickles. “He is a true public servant and a local champion,” said Local Government Secretary Mr Pickles.

“Under his leadership the council achieved some incredible things for the residents of Kensington and Chelsea. The Tri-Borough initiative he helped spearhead is a shining example of shared services savings to all in local government.”

Sir Merrick led Kensington and Chelsea during a period in which it was repeatedly recognised as one of Britain’s best performing local authorities, consistently achieving some of the highest resident approval ratings in the capital while its residents have enjoyed one of the lowest council taxes in the country.

As Leader he was the driving force behind the ambitious “Renewing the Legacy” programme, the largest building programme in Kensington and Chelsea since the post war slum clearances.

He personally led the long campaign for a new second school in Chelsea which, in 2010, delivered the Chelsea Academy. The school won the Public Building of the Year Award in 2011 and was rated as “outstanding” by Ofsted.

He was also closely involved in the project to rebuild Holland Park School. Pupils took up occupation of their new school at the end of 2012. From the outset the Council set out to build a school “to match the very best in the country”.

The scheme was funded by a private land deal so profitable that it also paid for two affordable housing schemes and contributed significantly to the costs of the new academy for North Kensington currently under construction.

Shock discovery

Amongst a number of other public realm projects, Sir Merrick led the team responsible for the multi-award winning Exhibition Road streetscape scheme. An early test of his leadership was the shock discovery that the Home Office had placed Kensington and Chelsea on a list of the 20 areas most affected by the drug crack. Crack dens were springing up in the Royal Borough almost weekly and the authorities appeared impotent to deal with the crisis.

Sir Merrick was one of the principal architects of the 2002 “crack house protocol”, a unique and highly controversial commitment to close crack houses and evict the tenants within six weeks of the crack trade being confirmed as active at the premises.

He also authorised the council’s pioneering use of “£222 injunctions” to ban dealers from the borough. A series of evictions and injunctions swiftly followed and the crack den crisis eased.

In more recent years he helped design the council’s response to the financial crisis and the consequent dramatic falls in Government funding. A key element of that response was the influential “Tri-Borough initiative”, a radical “back office” and service sharing arrangement with Westminster and Hammersmith & Fulham that yielded £10 million worth of savings to the council by 2013.

Mr Taylor-Smith polled 2,349 votes in the election of the new Stanley ward councillor, beating the Labour candidate, Isabel Atkinson (693 votes) into second place.

Mr Taylor-Smith is a director of the Piccadilly-based commercial real estate company, Palace Capital. He has more than 30 years’ experience as a company director for a range of businesses, with a particular background in property management, investment and development.

Mr Taylor-Smith served as finance director and laterly chief executive of Birkby plc, a manager of workspace (IMEX) and indoor markets (Inshops), between 1983 and 1999, at which time it was acquired by Mentmore plc, at that time Europe’s leading records management and self storage company.

Following the acquisition of Birkby by Mentmore, Mr Taylor-Smith was appointed as the chief executive of the enlarged group, where he remained until 2001. Since 2001, Mr Taylor-Smith has undertaken property investment projects, established a serviced business centre operation and taken on various business advisory contracts and interim management appointments.

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**We are bringing forward plans for hundreds of new homes to help ease the housing crisis**

CLINT Eastwood has starred in a great many films and such is his screen presence that only very rarely do other actors manage to upstage him. One of the few who has managed to do so is Donald Sutherland; the film was Kelly’s Heroes, a WWII crime caper made in 1970.

Sutherland plays Sergeant Oddball, a sort of beatnik or hippie who hates “negative waves” and also happens to drive a tank.

When asked why he is relaxing in a deck chair when there is Nazi gold to be stolen, the dishevelled Sergeant Oddball explains that his immediate priorities are “drinking wine, eating cheese and catching some rays…”

Point is it was re-minded of Sergeant Oddball by a recent visit to the council’s press office. I had ventured there in search of help with the launch of some typically bold and transformative initiatives.

Sadly that help was not to forthcoming. It was still “purdah” you see, that pre-election period when council press officers are forbidden by law from doing anything at all that might even slightly affect the public’s voting intentions.

“I’d like to help you Nick but I just can’t,” smirked a semi-remicpant press officer.

“It’s these damned purdah rules you see.” H’m.

Anyway, the elections are now over – congratulations again to our MPs, Victoria Borwick and Greg Hands and also to Kim Taylor-Smith, our new councillor for Stanley ward – and so the Council is gradually returning to business as usual. That means I shall finally be able to bring you news of all those bold initiatives I mentioned.

Special needs school

There will be fresh announcements galore about our fabulous school building programme. You may already know about the rebuilding of Holland Park, the new Kensington Aldridge Academy, and the new Middle Row Primary now called Ark Brunel. But we also have plans for a brand new Marlborough Primary, a new school for children and young people with special needs, a new Barly Primary, plus major refurbishments and expansions at the excellent Fox and Colville primaries.

In addition, there will be announcements about how, in the challenging development environment that is Kensington and Chelsea, we are bringing forward plans for hundreds of new homes to help ease the housing crisis.

There will also be announcements about improvements in the care of older residents and much else besides.

Here’s hoping our residents will see that rather than “negative waves” their Council is still full of energy and ideas for making things better.

NEWS FROM KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

With election purdah over we can get on with exciting plans

To contact the Leader of the Council, Cllr Nick Paget-Brown, email theleader@rbkc.gov.uk
The show WILL go on

WESTMINSTER’S tipped-for-the-top favourite busker nearly lost the chance of her big break this week – by almost breaking her neck instead.

Singer-songwriter Emily Lee – tipped for stardom by music business chiefs – was rushed to hospital with a suspected broken neck after a wrong-footing at a rehearsal for her EP launch show sent her tumbling down the stairs.

Emily, the Embankment busker whose unique and poignant ballads have built her a fan-club following of 70,000-strong, was preparing for her May 26th gig at The Water Rats in Grays Inn Road, when she tripped and her highly-promising career looked to be over.

She was taken by ambulance to University College Hospital, where doctors feared she had snapped her spine and would be left paralysed.

“I fell down my stairs, smashing my shoulder and snapping my neck back,” said Emily, 28.

“I spent five hours at UCH where the staff said my neck could possibly be broken – and I was crying and saying ‘but I have to play my guitar, I’ve got a big show to do!’

But luckily her injuries were not as severe as doctors first feared.

“I had a suspected breakage of two vertebrae in my neck, but I’ve actually been left with a massive strain caused my whiplash along my neck, right shoulder and back,” said Emily.

And in true showbiz tradition, she is vowing the show must go on! Tuesday’s gig to launch her first EP, ‘Don’t Forget To Love’.

“The sprains on my neck and shoulder are healing quickly, I’m a bit stiff but I’ve been able to play guitar again and sing, although very softly as the muscles in my neck still feel a bit tender,” said Emily.

“But I’m getting stronger every day and I’ll be in top form for my show at The Water Rats – the launch is going ahead. It’s very exciting to have my first EP at last and I can’t wait to get onstage.”

For more details on Emily’s upcoming gigs and record release, go to www.emilyleemusic.co.uk

Emily is expected to introduce £30 billion in welfare cuts, fears are rising among observers that factions among the capital’s anti-Government majority will explode and start riots in central London this summer.

London politicians, journalists and social observers are privately saying that they fear groups like Class War – whose march banners include the slogan “We must devastate the avenues where the wealthy live” – will turn on “soft” unprotected targets like Kensington.

“The way things are going, we are in for a summer of serious civil unrest,” said one senior London politician.

“I can see it all coming, you can feel it in the air and this time the mob is targeting the rich.”

As the cuts in public spending bite, support for Labour is expected to soar in the capital in all tiers of representation. Labour already controls 20 of London’s 33 borough councils [60%], plus four Mayor-led authorities, and it is expected to strengthen its influence on the city at the London Assembly elections next year.

Labour currently has 12 of the 25 Assembly members and bookmakers have made Labour politicians the three front-runners to take charge of City Hall, replacing Boris Johnson as Mayor of London at the next election for the capital’s top job.

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By Brian Jaquest

As teenagers, my friends and I were drawn to the Portobello market to hang out and be seen. Then in the early 70s, after having shared a photographer’s studio in Hampstead, I decided I needed my own space. There in the Evening Standard newspaper was an ad for Folly Mews, Portobello Road. It had been on the market for six months and was just meant for me, so in 1972 I moved into a very neglected building that needed some TLC.

My work consisted of still life pictures for the London advertising agencies but in between commissions I would arrange with the market guys, stallholders, buskers or any interesting person, to take their picture. My idea was that the people living or working in ‘the Lane’ were the backbone of the market and so rather than the impersonal approach with a long lens from the other side of the road, I decided to make my portraits more personal and the subjects more important by photographing as many of them in the studio as I could.

I think my first picture was in 1974 of Margo and her mother Rosy with their horse, which in the past would pull the stall into position, in the road. One of the very funny moments was when I photographed Charlie, the newspaper vendor. I decided he needed to be seated in his little hut. And so my assistant and I used a sack barrow to wheel it from the corner of the street to the Mews. From one of the stallholders came the cry: “What’s up Charlie, going on holiday?”

The Lane after five decades still has a hold on me and so an art director and I are working on a book of the people who make the Portobello what it was and is today; a street where people of all nationalities, market traders, buskers, antique dealers and tourists all rub shoulders peacefully together.
Full steam ahead for the Tattershall Castle

FLOATING bar and restaurant the PS Tattershall Castle has lowered the gangplanks and welcomed customers aboard on completion of a £1.8 million refurbishment that has given the paddle steamer, moored at Embankment, a new lease of life ahead of the key summer trading period.

Pub and bar operator TCG closed the flagship on January 1st ahead of a journey to Hull, the city where the Tattershall Castle spent 39 years as a passenger ferry across the Humber. Repairs, including strengthening of the hull, repainting and interior redesign, were carried out at the MMS shipyard in Hull and then at Tilbury Dock, before the ship returned to its berth opposite the London Eye in April.

Back in London, the Tattershall Castle was handed over to its new ‘skipper’, Craig Taylor, who was previously manager at two of TCG’s successful Soho pubs and a new ‘crew’ has been recruited and trained.

In addition to the exterior works, which included repainting the ship’s distinctive funnel in red, blue and yellow, and installing LED lights for extra standout at night, the main lounge area – now called the Wardroom - has been redesigned, creating cabin-style booths that can be booked for drinks or meals. The main bar has been refurbished to accommodate an extended drinks range, the original engine room has been restored and made visible, allowing enthusiasts to view it more clearly and the function space, now named ‘Steamers’- has been upgraded for private events and performances of the popular Boat Show Comedy Club.

The main menu retains pub food favourites such as Fish & Chips and the Club Sandwich, while adding a number of new dishes such as sharing platters and mussel pots in three different sauces. The drinks offer now includes a range of UK and imported craft beers including Beavertown Neck Oil on draught and Curious IPA, Little Creatures and Goose Island in bottle. The flagship cask ale is London Pride, with the Tattershall Castle being the only place actually on the Thames where the iconic Fuller’s beer is served.

TCG chief operating officer Nigel Wright said: “Refurbishing the Tattershall Castle presented some unique challenges compared to pubs on dry land and the project was several years in the planning stage before committing to it. The final result is nothing short of spectacular and we are grateful to everyone within TCG, the team at the shipyard in Hull and other specialists, who have helped us to reopen today.

“We’re delighted to have played a part in preserving the PS Tattershall Castle’s status as a London icon and making sure that it is ready to serve the capital’s residents and visitors for many more years.”
Transport expert is new member of City council

THE Conservative group on Westminster City Council has been strengthened by the election of transport policy adviser, writer and lecturer Jacqui Wilkinson.

Jacqui Wilkinson was elected to be the councillor for the Westminster North, Kensingtion, Chelsea and Fulham ward, replacing the outgoing Cllr. Charlie North, who has decided not to stand again.

Mrs Wilkinson was chair of the Urban Design Group and a non-executive director of the Mayor of London’s Call Centre for the re-election of Boris Johnson as Mayor of London in 2012. Her particular political interests are transport, planning, the environment, local government and communities.

The City’s newest councillor joined the Civil Service after university where she worked in the Department for Transport and the Highways Agency, in Bedford and London and with the EU.

For most of her career, she specialised in highways, having worked closely on a wider variety of activities with Ministers including taking legislation through Parliament and with select committees. Between 2000 and 2008, she developed and managed projects promoting sustainable travel and transport.

She brought together experts to develop and implement transport policy, practitioners, officials and politicians need to understand both the technical issues and the insights provided by public management academics.

Mrs Wilkinson was chair of the Cities of London and Westminster Women’s Group and vice chair of the Cities of London and Westminster Conservative Association and of Churchill Ward. She ran the highly successful Conservative Christian Fellowship.

She joined the Civil Service after university where she worked in the Department for Transport and the Highways Agency, in Bedford and London and with the EU.

In the local election for the Westminster North, Kensingtion, Chelsea and Fulham ward, Mrs Wilkinson won 2,397 votes. The Labour candidate Sophia Eglinton won 1,216 votes and the UKIP candidate Mohammed Ali Batti was voted for by 207 people.

This has had a positive effect on the UK’s entrepreneurial community.

Last week I attended two events at each end of the country and found no evidence of a north-south divide when it comes to enthusiasm and dedication to business from entrepreneurs.

In a week’s time my autobiography, Bog Standard Business (which, by the way, features some of my favourite Real Business columns and can be ordered at www.bogstandardbusiness.co.uk) is published and I’ve been invited to talk about it at a number of events.

I started off in my own manor, taking part in the Great British Business Show at London’s ExCel before heading north for my first ever visit to Newcastle-upon-Tyne to take part in the Entrepreneurs’ Forum Conference, called Together We Can Take on the World.

The atmosphere at the ExCel was pretty buoyant, which is what I expected, both as a result of the election and because London is booming at the moment.

Heading up to Newcastle on the East Coast Main Line, I wasn’t sure if I would be greeted with similar enthusiasm. I couldn’t have been more wrong.

The image we Londoners have of Newcastle is not always positive. Geordies have a reputation for drinking and being on the dole – perhaps not helped by programmes like Geordie Shore – but last week my mind was opened and I have to say it is a brilliant city full of great architecture, friendly people and a very dynamic and growing economy.

The Entrepreneurs’ Forum has about 300 members, which support each other to drive the growth of private, owner-managed businesses in the north.

Hundreds of business owners were in attendance at its event and they were really fired up about making a success of their business and the opportunities a growing economy will create. These were the people helping the North East economy defy expectations with the fastest rate of business start-ups in England, helping them tackle the highest unemployment rate in the country. There was no sense of a northern chip on the shoulder from a group of people going to government cup in hand. Their only message to the Government was that these guys can be the fuel that drives the Northern Powerhouse and are doing all they can to help the Prime Minister and the Chancellor achieve their objective of ensuring the economic gains of this recovery reach the parts of the UK that other recoveries haven’t.

This ‘Heineken’ approach to spreading wealth requires smart and targeted devolution and the encouragement of entrepreneurialism. Having visited the land of Newcastle Brown Ale and Ant & Dec, I can’t see any reason why Newcastle and the wider North East region should not only be an important part of the Northern Powerhouse, but the whole UK economy.

As a result of my mini-tour of the country I am more confident than ever that the UK’s enterprising business people have what it takes and the new Conservative Government will create an environment that will help them thrive.

“I’ve dipped my toe in Britain’s entrepreneurial pool and the water’s lovely!”

Views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of this newspaper
**UNDER THE WESTWAY**

Setting out our stall in Portobello Market

Angela McConville, Chief Executive, Westway Trust, looks forward to hearing the views of the residents and traders who live and work under The Westway.

Next Friday, my team and I will be setting out our stall with the first of what we hope will be weekly appearances at Portobello Market. I’m really looking forward to talking further with market traders, locals and visitors, sharing ideas and providing information about our long-term ambitions to regenerate the Westway area. Understandably a lot of the focus is likely to be on the plans to improve the run-down area where Portobello Road meets the flyover.

I want to reassure local people that planned improvements for Portobello Village can only begin to take shape once the views of locals, traders and business owners have been heard. What I can say so far is that our proposals want to deliver a broad range of spaces, including for independent traders, makers, cafes, bars, new homes and an events area. We also really want to open up the Portobello Green, so that many more local people and families can enjoy it.

I am optimistic that these improvements will support the local economy, not least because new business will mean the area will be busy and flourishing on a daily basis and not just three days out of seven which is currently the case.

I’m hoping that the market stall will give me and my team the opportunity to tackle some of the myths surrounding the proposals we have set out for Portobello Village. There has been a lot of false rumour and, perhaps we could have avoided that at the Trust by communicating our intentions better.

The first myth I would like to bust is this: we are not going to lose the vintage markets, which are integral to the area. On the contrary, we want to protect existing traders and encourage more market traders by improving trading conditions and the infrastructure to support them.

Secondly, we want to strengthen the independent character of the area. We do not intend, as has been claimed, to create a miniature version of the Westfield shopping centre in Shepherd’s Bush and its global High Street brands. To achieve this we are working with our existing market operators and business tenants in the area; we will also offer reduced rates for small businesses getting started with us.

Thirdly, we are a charity, not a property developer. We have been custodians of the land under the Westway for decades, we hope to be here, and part of this community, for the next 100 years. We are not motivated by profit. We work for the local community and all rents we collect will be invested back into the local community.

Portobello Village has the potential to deliver a huge boost to an economically deprived area. Experts have calculated that our proposed investment in Portobello Village would create around 180 new jobs and boost the local economy by £11m a year.

We are now busy with the next stages of the consultation process, and it will be painstaking in its detail and thoroughness. We will be speaking to residents on their doorsteps, carrying out workshops for local groups and surveying market traders on their trading environment.

I don’t believe in doing this job from behind a desk. I am always meeting local people to hear their views. And from now on you can come and visit our weekly stall on Fridays at the Portobello Market. I look forward to talking to you there.

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**WHITSUN HOLIDAY**

**FUN FAIR**

**Thursday 21st May - Monday 25th May**

**Blackheath Common Shooters Hill Rd SE3 0QS**

**This voucher can be redeemed once, which entitles two people to ride for one fare. Not valid on Thursday**

**Thurs 21st May**

**All Rides £1**

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**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

*SIR - We were very interested to see Westway Trust’s new column Under The Westway in your paper last week.

However, we would question how deeply in tune with the needs of the community* Westway Trust actually is. The plans for the “Portobello Village” development were commissioned seemingly with no consultation at all, and unsurprisingly have been met with huge local opposition, including a 16,000-strong petition, and the formation of a newly formed community group, “Westway 23”.

“Destination Westway”, and “Portobello Village”, while laudable in their aims, smack of so much of the bland, top-down, corporate-driven development currently threatening so many of London’s most vibrant areas and damaging communities, from Soho to Brixton.

Besides the initial plans for the Portobello Village development, we have concerns regarding some of Westway Trust’s current activities and plans right across the 23 acres, and the lack of transparency regarding these. So many really excellent and valuable community amenities are right now being closed or threatened with closure by Westway Trust, including the Westway Stables, Maxilla Nursery, Acklam Village, and The Flyover.

It is difficult to understand how the destruction of these amenities can be justified, given Westway Trust’s obligations to the community, and it is concerning that we are all largely in the dark as to Westway Trust’s future plans for those spaces.

Perhaps Angela McConville will clarify, in her next column, the background and rationale for these decisions and whether Westway Trust is listening to the concerns of the community.

Portobello Café Society

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**London Weekly News**

**Thursday, May 21st 2015 editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk**
£10 million upgrade for Notting Hill School

FOLLOWING the granting of planning permission in March for the expansion of Fox Primary School, work will begin this month on the £10 million project which will mean the high-performing primary school in Notting Hill will increase its intake to two-form entry and will also bring the building up to modern teaching and accessibility standards.

The school will expand from 315 to 420 pupils over seven years, new teacher training facilities would be available and running costs reduced.

The first part of the project is the excavation of the unusable embankment to the west of the school, where the expanded building will be sited.

When work is complete, Fox will have a new hall and studio, which will be larger than the current hall and support a wide range of activities more easily.

In addition, the classrooms will be rearranged to provide a more flexible and efficient use of space that meets current teaching needs. This will make it easier to provide group support to the most able pupils and also to those who find a particular topic difficult.

Outside there will be a garden terrace which will provide the school with a quiet space and support ecology lessons. The children will be able to work on an allotment and the whole area will encourage bees and other wildlife.

Welcoming the decision Councillor Emma Will, Cabinet Member for Education, said: “I’m delighted that planning permission has been given for this much needed expansion and renovation of Fox Primary School. It is one of the top performing primary schools in England and the fact that more children will have the opportunity to be taught in such a high performing school is great news.

“I am sure the children and staff will enjoy the new facilities they will have in 18 months time.”

To find out more and keep up to date on what is happening at Fox you can go to www.rbkc.gov.uk/foxprimary

The work at Fox is part of a much larger investment by the Council in schools and infrastructure across the borough.

Ranging from the brand new Kensignton Aldridge Academy and Kensington Leisure Centre to new primary schools such as Ark Brunel (Formerly Middle Row Primary School), Marlborough Primary School and a new Children’s Centre.

Academy turns red - not blue

By Paul Lagan

WHILE the country elected the Conservatives as the national Government, students from Pimlico Academy bucked the trend and, in their own school election, returned Labour to the seat of power.

Labour won by a landslide at the Lupus Street school, pushing the Tories, Lib Dems and Greens into also rans.

But more importantly, students got a feel for the democratic process they will experience for real in a few years’ time.

The election was organised by Pimlico Academy’s Eloise Harris, raising aspirations tutor, and Heather Lawrence, the school’s head of science.

“We were very keen to hold our own election to ensure that our students become fully engaged with our democratic processes,” said Miss Harris.

“We wanted to ensure that on reaching 18 they are eager and ready to take a full and active part in choosing who governs us.”

Ballot boxes were placed all around the school with the different parties campaigning actively during break and lunchtimes as well as speaking in house assemblies.

Throughout the lead-up to the general election, pupils had lessons on politics, voting and public speaking.

Ms Green, Principal of Pimlico Academy, said: “It is very important to us that our students recognise the importance of focusing on their futures from the moment they join us. This is just one of the many different initiatives we use to achieve that.”

Pimlico Academy students helped at elections being held for younger pupils at their sister primary schools.

Pupils at Millbank and Pimlico Primary held their own special general election on May 7.

Teachers decided rather than voting for traditional political parties that students would canvas, debate and then vote from the following four parties - Tomorrow, Transform, Progress and Vision.

So students from Pimlico Academy got involved to help them with their campaigns and with the voting.

Kelly Loen, Principal of Pimlico Primary, said: “Although our pupils are very young, we recognise the importance of focusing on their futures from the moment they join us. We have had many conversations about the election and we even have some pupils with ambitions to be Prime Minister in years to come.”

Bake sale for earthquake fund

RAISING money for the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund, last week sixth form students from the Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School held their own charity cake sale in the school playground, staff room and sixth form common room for staff and pupils to bake, eat cake and donate to this urgent cause.

From a Coca-Cola chocolate cake to Rocky Roads and classic cupcakes, the range of homemade sweet treats was fantastic with everything sold out within the 20-minute morning break time, raising £300 for the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund.

Cooking their way around the world

WORMHOLT Park Primary School in Westminster will be holding a Community Food Day on Thursday, June 4th.

Following on from the success of their Eid celebrations some of the ‘cooking-loving’ parents decided they would like to share their culinary traditions to celebrate the diversity of the school but bring it together for a fun, educational and tasty event.

Christine Koreski, EAL co-ordinator said: “This will be a time to share culinary culture from around the world, including the UK. We hope to enjoy traditional dishes from the many parts of the world represented in our pupil, parent and staff population.

“This will be an occasion for all to wear traditional dress and share food, music and dancing if possible.”

Festival of literature at prep school

PUPILS at Kensington Prep School enjoyed a feast of literature last week with visits from children’s authors including Andy See, Dave Shelton, Christopher William Hill and Karen Wallace.

The children learned about many different writing styles and illustration techniques from the commercial world to non-fiction in workshops led by the authors.

Pupils are pictured, below, with Andy Seed, winner of the 2015 Blue Peter Book Award for best book with facts.
**Belgravia Books Ebury Street**

Belgravia Books is an independent bookshop owned by an independent publisher.

We sell books. Actual physical, tangible books. We sell fiction and classics, children’s books, cookbooks, narrative non-fiction, poetry, history and biography. We sell books you have always been meaning to read as well as books you did not know you needed to read (and there are plenty of them).

We are a small shop, with around 4,000 titles in stock at any one time, and there are many thousands more available to order – if you want it, and it is currently in print, we should be able to get it for you at no extra cost.

As an independent book shop we try to offer books you might not have known about, such as beautiful editions of classic biographies, novellas from all over Europe and short stories you can post to people.

As an independent publisher we specialise in the best French writing for an English reading audience. Naturally we sell our own titles in the shop, but beyond that we ensure we have a broader range of books translated into English as well as books from other independent publishers.

We are open from 9.30 am to 6 pm weekdays and 11 am to 5 pm on Saturdays. National Book Tokens are accepted and sold.

And if you are unable to make it to the shop in person you can visit – and buy through – our website.

**Telephone:** 020 7259 9336

**HEADLINES OF WESTMINSTER**

**HORSEFERRY ROAD**

At HEADLINES HAIR AND BEAUTY salon, situated on Horseferry Road, you will be treated by experienced, friendly staff.

In our colour range we use Redken, Cromatic, Schwarzkopf, L’Oreal. We also retail quality affordable products such as Paul Mitchell, Redkin, Taylor of Old Bond Street, Fudge, Armagan Oil.

We pride ourselves on keeping you waiting. And we will listen and ask enough questions until we are sure we fully understand each other to achieve customer satisfaction, which for us is paramount.

Headlines also offers full beauty, manicure and pedicure services as well as microdermabrasion, a rejuvenating treatment.

A glance at HEADLINES’ web site will testify how popular the salon’s stylists are with a number of comments from satisfied customers. Here’s a good example: “I’ve been having my hair cut, coloured and styled by Justin for 10 years now. It’s great to find a hairdresser I really like and trust. I can honestly say I haven’t had a cut, colour or style from Justin that I’ve not liked. He is also great for giving tips and advice on products and styling. I’ve introduced a few friends to Justin and would definitely recommend to others.”

**Telephone:** 0120 7222 2687

**GEES CHEMIST**

Lupus Street, Pimlico

The owners of GEES CHEMIST have been serving the community for more than 35 years and wish to continue to do so in their new Pimlico location, close to the Marven Road medical centre.

Gees Chemist is part of a two branch pharmacy chain based in South West London. Our second branch is in Belgravia.

As an independent pharmacy we dispense many of the prescriptions we have in stock which means you won’t have to wait for your repeat prescription to be prepared.

We are open from 9.30 am to 6 pm weekdays and 11 am to 5 pm on Saturdays. National Book Tokens are accepted and sold.

And if you are unable to make it to the shop in person you can visit – and buy through – our website.

**Telephone:** 020 7834 6059
Salute to war veterans who put youth first

MORE than 100 guests came together to celebrate a very special birthday when one of Fulham’s oldest youth clubs marked 70 years in the borough.

Members both past and present gathered at the Brunswick Club to honour its contribution to the community over the last seven decades.

The club, based in Haldane Road, was launched by former prisoners of war to offer a range of activities for the borough’s youngsters.

And it is still going strong today, with dozens of junior members making the most of its vast range of sporting and creative opportunities.

Specially-invited guests from all corners of the country joined the party earlier this month to reminisce about the club’s early days, while looking ahead to the future.

During the celebrations, special tributes were paid to the Brunswick’s founding members – the British prisoners of war held at Oflag, near Brunswick in northern Germany, during the Second World War.

The club was named after the camp, where around 3,000 soldiers – many of them British – were held for much of the conflict.

Speaking to more than 100 guests during the celebrations, club manager Danny Volino said the founders would never be forgotten.

“The men who first opened the doors of the Brunswick were heroes,” he said. “And for the past 70 years we have tried to make them proud.

‘Heroic service’

“All they wanted was to make this area of Fulham, which has seen its hard times as well, a better place. But while we remember the past, tonight is about the future. We want to ensure the club sees another generation of young people come through its doors, and a new generation of subscribers to help us continue our good work.”

Today the Brunswick is a dedicated youth club, providing a safe and friendly environment in which youngsters can develop creative, sporting and social skills.

Open six days a week, the popular club offers a range of educational and leisure facilities for its 750 members aged eight to 19.

Thousands of pounds were donated to the club at the anniversary event, where former members from decades past were given tours of the modernised premises.

Ex-members from all over the country returned to celebrate the 70th birthday, with many donating momentos from previous generations for the club’s collection.

Brunswick trustee Michael Dunning said: “Our only wish as trustees is that the club remains open for at least another 70 years.”

Councillor Alan De’ath, Hammersmith and Fulham Council’s Armed Forces Champion, added: “The Brunswick Club is one of many examples of the positive contributions veterans have made locally after their heroic service.”
Britain’s most senior old warrior, the Duke of Edinburgh, is set to be “called up” again, to lead a campaign to make sure that the Forgotten Army are finally saluted with full honours by the nation at their last-ever march.

The Burma Star Association is poised to turn to its Patron Prince Philip for help to give veterans pride of place on the 70th anniversary of VJ Day this summer. Although the hugely-important anniversary is just 14 weeks away, so far the Government has announced no plans and confusion reigns over how the significant date will be marked in London.

Plans for other anniversaries this year such as those of the Battle of Waterloo and Magna Carta were announced a year ahead. But nothing official is yet in place for VJ Day. Saturday August 15th will mark the 70th anniversary of the actual end of World War II, better known as VJ Day – Victory over Japan Day – the day when the Emperor of Japan surrendered and ended conflict on the bloodiest battlefront of the entire war.

The Government is vaguely promising “a day of major events” and says these “will be announced in coming weeks”, but time Let’s not deny the Forgotten Army their final march past

Photo: Ray Tang/REX/Shutterstock

THE Duke of Edinburgh may be called upon as Patron of the Burma Star Association for help to give veterans a 70th anniversary VJ (Victory over Japan) parade this summer

Photo: Ray Tang/REX/Shutterstock
As Britain celebrated VE Day soldiers in the Far East

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It is especially running out for most veterans of the war against Japan – whose average age is 93 – who are wondering just when Whitehall will put together a suitably rich and proper programme of commemoration and remembrance.

The British Forces over there, unlike their comrades fighting in Europe, had no leave during which they could go home, even if it was a just a few days. They were there for the duration; their only hope of seeing England was in victory.

As Lord Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander of the Southeast Asia Theatre, once famously remarked to them with bitter irony in Burma in 1943: “I understand you believe you’re the forgotten army. That’s not true. The truth is, nobody’s bloody well heard of you”.

Now the Burma Star Association is hoping that, if necessary, Prince Philip – the Royal Navy veteran of the Battle of Crete, the Battle of Cape Matapan, of convoy escorts and the invasion of Sicily, and who saw action in the Far East with the Pacific Fleet – could help bring pressure to bear on the baby-boomers in Whitehall to pull their fingers out.

“The association is somewhat anxious that proper plans are organised and announced for a major commemoration of VE Day in London,” said a source.

“At the moment, they are finding it rather difficult dealing with younger officials who were not there in the war and who don’t understand what these men went through.

“There’s a bit of a feeling about those who are meant to be organising the event that the left hand doesn’t know what the right hand is doing.”

Infamously over the years the authorities have failed to “get it right” for VE Day.

Ten years ago insensitive Government officials upset the veterans of the war in the Far East by initially planning for the 60th anniversary of the end of the war to be held a month early because the House of Commons is in recess in August.

Five years ago, the BBC upset veterans by delaying live coverage of the 65th VE Day service to an inconsequential digital news channel, a snubbing which caused uproar at the BBC’s deafness to the Burma Star motto, “when you go home tell them of us, that for your tomorrow we gave our today”.

Some observers are wondering if Foreign Office officials are uneasy about the impending anniversary as it will cause much embarrassment to Japan, the UK’s seventh-biggest trading partner. British exports to Japan are worth some £9.9 billion a year.

Honoured properly

The Royal British Legion is keen that VE Day is commemorated as a date of national significance and that veterans of the war in the Far East are remembered and honoured properly.

“A national programme of commemorative events is being planned for this important anniversary. The key objective is to ensure that VE veterans - often referred to as the Forgotten Army - are not forgotten on this day, and that they are given every possible opportunity to participate”, says the Legion.

However, confusion abounds of just what the programme will involve.

Up until last Monday, the Legion was saying on its website that the proposed VE Day events would include: a national service of remembrance at The Cenotaph, a veterans’ parade, a veterans’ reception and an evening fly-past by wartime aircraft.

The Legion’s website also announced proposals to illuminate all of the central bridges over the Thames in poppy-red light on August 15th.

The Legion said the plans had “yet to be confirmed by the Government”. However, last week all mention of a Cenotaph service, veterans’ parade and reception, a fly-past and lighting the bridges was removed from the Legion’s website and the remaining details are only for a commemoration service for former POWs at St Martin’s in The Fields and a service and wreath-laying at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Clearly, if plans for a veterans’ parade, Cenotaph remembrance and lighting the bridges of the Thames have been dropped, there risks being up-roar – not least as it is highly unlikely for significant numbers of veterans to be around for an 80th anniversary of VE Day.

This year’s event could transform into a chance to mark – and to tell their stories.

Until recently many veterans of WW2 have traditionally not wanted to talk about the war or of the POW camps. But that silence is now ending. As old soldiers near the end of their days, many are wanting to tell others, in particular schoolchildren, of their experiences so that generations will learn and, by learning, hopefully never allow a repeat of the most dreadful times of the 20th Century.

“For the allied Far East Prisoner of War life was extremely hard,” says the Legion.

“The prison camps became infamous for the harsh treatment administered to their inmates. Torure and even executions were commonplace. Food was strictly rationed – all that many men had was a little rice and boiled river water. All the prisoners
Far East were still fighting and still dying...

FROM page14
suffered with diseases such as malaria, beri beri and dysentery.

“Despite their weakened state the men were put to work as forced labour. The construction of the 258-mile Thailand-Burma railway, also known as the Death Railway, was the most notorious. Around 16,000 allied POWs died from overwork and malnutrition.

“Around 300,000 soldiers in the Far East became POWs; only 200,000 would survive to see victory over Japan.”

If Whitehall officials are worried about embarrassing Japan in all of this and events for VJ Day are down-graded, the Burma Star Association may have to appeal to the Duke of Edinburgh for help.

“It is not difficult to imagine that if the idea to light the bridges is a runner, then calls will come for other of the capital’s riverside landmarks, the Eye and the Houses of Parliament, to be red-lit too,” said an observer.

River of blood
“The reflection of the light on the water could make it look like a river of blood was flowing through London. That might upset some but it would be an apt and poignant reminder of what went on in the war against Japan.

“It is vitally important that the VJ vets are allowed this moment of the march, the red river and other big events and that their stories are allowed to be heard and understood. The Duke of Edinburgh will get that better than some baby-boomer official in Whitehall.

“It is essential, for the dignity of the veterans, the honour of the dead and the importance of the lesson to history, that this time – no matter which trading partner it may or may not bother – we get it right.”

WHERE TO SEE YOUR FAVOURITE ROYAL

FULL details of future and recent events in the ever-busy diaries of the many members of The Royal Family are available from the official website www.royal.gov.uk but here’s the London schedule for the week ahead for Where To See A Royal.

● Tuesday, May 19th
The Duke of Edinburgh, as Patron of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, will hold a reception at Buckingham Palace.

The Earl of Wessex, as President of the King George’s Fund for Sailors, will attend the AGM at Mansion House, Walbrook EC4.

The Earl of Wessex, as Trustee of the Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Foundation, will attend a dinner at The Savoy Hotel.

The Duchess of Gloucester will attend a dinner to mark the Asian Women of Achievement Awards at the London Hilton.

● Wednesday, May 20th
The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will give a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

The Princess Royal, as Patron of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Learning, will attend a seminar at Central Hall Westminster, Storey’s Gate.

The Princess Royal, as Patron of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, will open new Harrow Citizens Advice Bureau, Station Road.

The Princess Royal, as President of The Royal Society for the encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, will attend the RSA President’s Lecture and Dinner, John Adam Street, London WC2.

The Duke of Kent will attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

The Princess Royal will attend the centenary celebrations of Lycée Francais Charles de Gaulle School, Cromwell Road SW7.

The Princess Royal, as President of UK Fashion and Textile Association, will attend an awards ceremony and dinner at Tobacco Dock, Porters Walk E1.

● Tuesday, May 26th
The Duke of Edinburgh, as Patron of London Youth (the Federation of London Youth Clubs), will visit The Dome, Weedington Road NW5 and Wac Arts, Hampstead Town Hall Centre, Haverstock Hill NW5.

The Princess Royal, as President of the Animal Health Trust, will chair the Council of Management Meeting at the Kennel Club, Clarges Street W1.

The Princess Royal, as President of the City and Guilds of London Institute, will attend a Reception at Fishmongers’ Hall, London Bridge.

The Princess Royal, as Patron of Catch22, will attend a staff conference at the Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore SW7.

CHRIS IS RACING TO BEAT PARKINSON’S

The Princess Royal, as President of The Royal Society for the encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, will attend the RSA President’s Lecture and Dinner, John Adam Street, London WC2.

The Duke of Kent will attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

The Princess Royal will attend the centenary celebrations of Lycée Francais Charles de Gaulle School, Cromwell Road SW7.

The Princess Royal, as President of UK Fashion and Textile Association, will attend an awards ceremony and dinner at Tobacco Dock, Porters Walk E1.

● Tuesday, May 26th
The Duke of Edinburgh, as Patron of London Youth (the Federation of London Youth Clubs), will visit The Dome, Weedington Road NW5 and Wac Arts, Hampstead Town Hall Centre, Haverstock Hill NW5.

The Princess Royal, as President of the Animal Health Trust, will chair the Council of Management Meeting at the Kennel Club, Clarges Street W1.

The Princess Royal, as President of the City and Guilds of London Institute, will attend a Reception at Fishmongers’ Hall, London Bridge.

The Princess Royal, as Patron of Catch22, will attend a staff conference at the Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore SW7.

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Keeping the home fires burning

Even the Queen served in World War II

by Geoff Baker

With World War II and, in particular, the women of World War II much in our minds just now, it is appropriate that ITV’s Home Fires has shot straight into the top 10 TV ratings as the new big hit drama.

More than filling the void left by the end of Call The Midwife, Home Fires is brilliantly revising memories for millions and is educating whole new generations to exclaim, “Grandma, you did WHAT in the war?”

The drama follows a group of inspirational women in a rural Cheshire community with the shadow of World War II casting a dark cloud over their lives.

Their isolated village couldn’t feel further away from the impending bloodshed and battlefields and yet it is not immune from the effects of war. As the conflict takes hold, and separates the women from their husbands, fathers, sons and brothers, the characters find themselves under increasing and extraordinary pressures in a rapidly fragmenting world.

By banding together as the Great Paxford Women’s Institute, they help maintain the nation’s fabric in its darkest hour, and discover inner resources that will change their lives forever.

The pivotal role of women has often been overlooked in popular wartime drama. And yet without the women who left their homes to build bombs and tanks in factories, help feed the nation as Land Girls and serve in all of the Armed Forces, the war would have been lost.

It was the women of London who built Waterloo Bridge, who ‘manned’ the searchlight stations during the Blitz and helped put out the firestorms in the auxiliary fire service.

Even The Queen served. As second subaltern, service number 230873, the then-Princess Elizabeth joined the Women’s Auxiliary Territorial Service, driving Army trucks and servicing them as a trained mechanic. Clearly she is proud of her part, as to this day in Buckingham Palace’s official online biography of Her Majesty it says: “The Queen is the only British monarch in history properly-trained to change a spark plug.”

But Home Fires also scores as it is bucking the trend by giving strong, well-written roles to older actresses. As has well-written roles to trend by giving strong, mature women in its craze.

Francesca Annis, Ruth Gemmell and Claire Rushbrook – have been given top billing in this heavily-trained to change a scores as it is bucking the Majesty it says “The Queen is the only British women in London who built Waterloo Bridge, who ‘manned’ the searchlight stations during the Blitz and helped put out the firestorms in the auxiliary fire service.

The series is first set in 1939, which was just 21 years after the end of the First World War and that affects the fear that grips many of the mothers of the village, who are terrified that their sons may have to fight.

“It’s important to realise these women would have lived through that first war and that on the village war memorial are the names of the dead who we knew and loved,” says Samantha.

“A lot of singing. But there’s far more to the WI in this period than just jam making. The vision was much bigger than it might seem at first. The WI was the contact the government used for evacuees because they were the people who knew which house could accommodate how many people.”

“The series is first set in 1939, which was just 21 years after the end of the First World War and that affects the fear that grips many of the mothers of the village, who are terrified that their sons may have to fight.

“It’s important to realise these women would have lived through that first war and that on the village war memorial are the names of the dead who we knew and loved,” says Samantha.

Vivid memory

“Those of a certain age in Great Paxford have an absolutely vivid memory of that time and know what war is. Many of the men will also have served before. This generation is completely aware of the realities.”

One such reality was that women also had to learn how to fight, and learning the face of the threatened German invasion and learning how to fire a gun during filming was startling for Samantha.

“I’m terrified of guns, very frightened.”

“I’ve used hand guns on stage a couple of times and I did a series called NCIS Manhunt with David Suchet which involved a lot of gun action - and I hated doing the scenes involving guns.

“But for some reason it all seemed a lot calmer in Home Fires, set at a time when women feared they might be the last line of defence in the event of a Nazi invasion.”

As Frances Barden, she plays a woman whose husband Peter (Anthony Calf) is away running a Liverpool factory, leaving her with a household that includes gardener Thumbs (Tum Whelan) and his wife Cookie (Jacqueline Palm), but ultimately left to defend herself.

But Frances is the person who would be at the front door holding the gun if the Germans invaded. It’s all very real to her. Which is why she and her younger sister Sarah (Ruth Gemmell) take part in rifle practice, aiming at an unfortunate scarecrow in a field.

“The village is near an air base and Liverpool is nearby, a major port and a target for the Germans. So you begin thinking you’re living in this little rural idyll but that’s not the case. We filmed a church in one of the Cheshire villages. One side had stained glass windows and the other side had plain glass - because a bomb fell on it.

“When people think of bombing during the Second World War they tend to concentrate on big cities. But these small villages could also find themselves in the firing line.”

As the series opened in 1939, Joyce Cameron (Francesca Annis) is the long-standing President - chairwoman - of the Great Paxford’s Women’s Institute.

“At that time the ‘lady of the manor’ would traditionally be the chair. But Frances thinks there’s been a slight snobishness to the way Joyce has chaired and feels the WI could be socially more embracing,” says Samantha.

“Frances is very outspoken and driven. And sometimes she drives across people. It’s always with the best intentions. She doesn’t think she’s going to upset people when she has a really good idea. So Frances acts before she thinks and she challenges Joyce, almost without meaning to. There’s a definite headstrong quality to her.”

Cast members look the part in a series of period outfits because many of them originally.

“The costumes are stunning. Absolutely extraordinary. Everyone looks real. Although you have to breathe in quite a lot because people were smaller than today. A lot of the clothes you wear now, they are amazing jackets and fabrics”, said Samantha.

The real life Cheshire village of Bunbury is the main location used for Great Paxford and it is now set for an influx of visitors.

“The villagers have been wonderful to us and some have been extras. Every location you walk into is an immediate indication of who lives there. They are all different and a reflection of the characters who live in them. It’s just another aspect of the production that has been done brilliantly,” said Samantha.

“I hope viewers will see Home Fires as a really gripping drama telling various personal stories.”

Home Fires ITV Sunday 9pm
Sharp rise in people living on houseboats

SOARING house prices and sky-high rents are causing London’s canals to clog up as increasing numbers of home-seekers are choosing to live on the water.

In the last five years there has been an increase of almost 40 per cent in the number of houseboats on London canals as more and more people fail to earn the £77,000 salary that is now needed to be a first-time buyer on dry land in the capital.

Officials say the sharp rise in the numbers of people forced to live on a boat because they cannot afford a house is putting a strain on London’s waterways.

There are now 3,200 houseboats on the capital’s canals. The Canal and River Trust says numbers have increased by 36 per cent since 2010 and the figure rises by five new boats every week.

The surge in houseboats is being driven by the notorious cost of living in London. Whereas the average price for a four-bed home in Kensington and Chelsea is now more than £1.7 million, a four-berth houseboat can be bought for £35,000.

As this newspaper exclusively revealed two weeks ago, property prices in London are now so steep that accountants KPMG estimate that a first-time buyer needs to earn £76,971 a year to afford a home on land.

But increasing numbers of people opting to live on the canals are squeezing the system with more and more people having to share the same space and facilities.

The Canal and River Trust looks maintains more than 100 miles of waterways across the capital including the Grand Union Canal, Regent’s Canal and the River Lea navigation, although not the River Thames.

“Now there is more and more pressure on the system,” said trust spokesman Jo Coggins.

“Sheer economic factors are obvious and they make buying or renting a boat in Zones 1 or 2 much cheaper than buying or renting a house or flat but people must remember the hidden costs.”

Waterway licences, safety certificates, insurance and mooring fees are all additional costs for people living on canals and rivers. Boat maintenance and planning supplies like water, fuel and toilet amenities are also regular costs.

Boats without a permanent home mooring are only supposed to stay in one location for 14 days but not everyone keeps to the rules, making it harder for others to find a free spot.

Alan Wildman, of the Residential Boat Owners Association, said the influx of people thinking the waterways were a cheaper way to live were starting to cause congestion.

“Canals are not housing estates on water, they are there for navigation,” he said.

Cabbies united in getting mayor to act over boom in number of mini-cabs

By Geoff Baker

LONDON taxi drivers are launching a campaign to get Boris Johnson sacked as Mayor of London in protest against him allowing a boom in mini-cabs.

The cabbies’ “union”, the United Cabbies Group, is planning a series of traffic-stopping daily demonstrations as part of its action to try to get the Mayor thrown out of office.

“All of the improper decisions and strategies in relation to the London Taxi trade are ultimately made by Boris Johnson,” says the UCG.

“During his seven-year tenure as Mayor he has allowed the issuance of tens of thousands of private hire licenses, some estimates say there are now 100,000 private hire vehicles in London.

“At the same time he has failed to enforce private hire regulations, meaning that many vehicles are operating like a taxi, but without any regulation and without the same overheads that taxi drivers are forced to pay.

“The Mayor has also said he believes that the Uber payment method constitutes a meter, which therefore means that he accepts it is not legal yet he has taken absolutely no action against it.

“He has implemented an improper and unlawful taxi age limit, and he has submitted a written report to the Environmen
tal Audit Committee Air Quality Inquiry confirming that a new Euro 5 vehicle would create five times as much pollution as a 15-year-old vehicle. He then implemented the London taxi age limit scrapping the less polluting 15-year-old taxis falsely claiming it would reduce pollution.”

Demonstrations

The cabbies’ group adds: “This whole issue has been at great cost to thousands of taxi drivers and it looks certain that a new 10-year age limit could be imposed to boost sales of unaffordable range extended electric vehicles from Boris’s Chinese mates.”

In a bid to try put public pressure on Major Johnson, the cabbies are planning a series of traffic-snarling demonstrations this summer which would cause chaos in the capital.

In an advisory to its members the UCG says: “One option of direct action will be flash demos on a daily basis simultaneously at multiple locations, ideally roundabouts. A few taxis staying on a roundabout for 10 minutes will create significant attention across London which the media will report. They will ask why taxi drivers are protesting and what it is about.

“Boris Johnson will then face a tough choice: resign immediately or risk ongoing protests. The only way that there will be any change if there is a Mayor in place who will take proper action. The only way this will happen is if the taxi trade takes immediate direct action with a clear objective - sack Boris.

“If the Mayor resigns or is sacked there will need to be an immediate Mayoral election. The taxi trade will be able to vote for a Mayor who gives guaranteed commitments to make the changes required at TFL.

“It is unlikely that a new Mayor could make the situation any worse than it already is but there is every chance that a new Mayor could make changes for the bet-ter.”
Gluten free and flavour-full

by Kate Whiting

From your first spoonful of cereal at breakfast, to that lunchtime sandwich and cupcake teatime treat, much of what we eat every day contains wheat, and with it, the protein that forms gluten.

Now imagine you are Italian and you'd grown up eating pasta and pizza. You'd trained as a chef to cook the meals you love and then one day, you're diagnosed with coeliac disease and have to stop eating them altogether.

This is exactly what happened to 63-year-old Giancarlo Caldesi, who runs the only Italian cookery school in central London plus two restaurants with his British wife Katie, and who also has type 2 diabetes. 'I close my eyes and think of original pizza in Naples - best pizza ever - and it makes me want to sit down and cry,' admits the father of two boys, when we meet in the cookery school La Cucina Caldesi, off Marylebone Lane.

Just the day before, after a three-year struggle with "debilitating" symptoms, he'd finally had the official diagnosis from his doctor following positive blood test results. Caused by the immune system reacting to gluten, coeliac disease affects one in 100 people, with symptoms including bloating, diarrhoea, constipation, tiredness, mouth ulcers, a decline in weight, loss of hair and anaemia.

The only treatment is to entirely cut out gluten from the diet, which includes cutting wheat, barley and rye, in order to manage symptoms and avoid serious long-term complications.

His own experiences have spurred Giancarlo and his wife on to create a New Food, New You' cookery course, to show people that it is possible to cook gluten (and sugar) free meals that are still tasty and satisfying.

While Katie does most of the teaching, Giancarlo pops in from the restaurant to make sweet fresh almond milk from whole nuts.

"One of the major problems with any disease is that you think everything is normal. You eat something and then you have to run to the loo, you think that's normal. You tend to find excuses for yourself all the time and you don't find the truth of what is really wrong," he says.

"It's like the engine of a Ferrari, where you get that clean beautiful sound and then you put some sugar or gluten into it, some ghastly stuff, and suddenly that beautiful sound is gone and you know something is not right.

"When you eat the wheat, it makes you feel very sleepy, also your intestines are no good, you rush to the toilet - it's very debilitating, because you have to think of quick exits. You feel foggy and fuzzy and my arthritis was getting stronger and stronger."

Together, Giancarlo and his artist wife, who met in 1997 when she came to paint a mural at his first restaurant, devised a menu that is tasty and wholesome, filling but not draining.

Over a buzzy four hours, we make 10 recipes, some from ancient Rome, such as Laguna Seeded Wine Crackers with gluten-free ground flaxseeds and buckwheat flour, a delicious cake with no sugar or gluten, with the very tempting sounding title Black Bean and Sweet Potato Chocolate Mud Cake - and my personal highlights, Sweet Potato and Buckwheat Pizza and Courgetti (recipe below).

The latter, 'spaghetti' made from courgettes, is something of a revelation. Very quick and fun to make, using a spiralizer which shreds the courgette into curly strips, it tastes like a healthier version of spaghetti or spirals, non-stick suction feet, a sleek stainless steel and black design, and the basis of a healthy meal in seconds. It's really easy to clean and pack away too.

And also now, if I eat something wrong, I know immediately because of the pain. And I don't eat those things, because I have decided to be well is worth the pain. And I don't eat those things, because I have decided to be well is worth the pain.

HIS is a great salad to serve on its own, as a meat or fish garnish or as part of a buffet or even picnic. You can pick and choose which beans or pulses you want to use - it's a good dish to use up odds and ends in your larder before you re-stock.

The salad will be at its best after leaving it at room temperature for a couple of hours, giving it the occasional stir.

Put the courgettes through the spiralizer on the finer cutter to form long strips like tagliatelli. Mix all the ingredients together for the sauce in a large serving bowl.

Heat the extra-virgin olive oil in a large frying pan over a gentle heat. (Giancarlo does this from the pan, leaving any water from the courgetti in the pan and stir into the sauce. Top with spoonsfuls of ricotta and Parmesan, if using. Serve straight away.

Recipe, pictured left, courtesy of La Cucina Caldesi. To find out more about the 'New Food, New You' cookery course, visit caldesi.com
Carrie - frightening and exceptional

My first visit to The Southwark Playhouse was to see Carrie: The Musical, based on Stephen King’s best-selling novel, and revised since its short run on Broadway in the late eighties.

The Playhouse is reasonably sized for a fringe venue and has a real avant-garde feeling around the place. I hadn’t queued for the unreserved seating so ended up in the very stage left of a performance area which plays to three sides and which proved to be a more than adequate vantage point for the evening’s show.

The fantastical story, made even more famous by the 1976 cult film and subsequent remakes, follows 17-year-old misfit Carrie White, whose overzealous sermon preaching mother has hindered her natural emotional development. The meek and tortured Carrie hides a dark secret which proves to have cataclysmic consequences when unleashed at the senior prom.

This honest and powerful portrayal of high school brutality, is painful and yet compulsive viewing for anyone who has ever had to endure bullying.

Evelyn Hoskins as Carrie is truly astounding as the tormented soul who yearns for normality. Her sensitive and yet potent portrayal is so heartfelt that you can’t help but empathise with her. Miraculous vocals, resonate from her slight frame and soar throughout the auditorium, conveying the very essence of her tragic and crucified spirit.

Powerhouse Kim Criswell as the odious mother is fabulously foreboding and also shows an exquisite vocal range. In fact, all of the singing is exceptional which, when you consider that this was a professional debut for some, bodes extremely well for the fresh and youthful cast.

From Hoskins’ very first song “Carrie” I utterly fell in love with the score which has bags of sentiment but also enough realism to feel current and, although the band under the musical direction of Mark Crossland were a little overpowering in places, makes for what is a beautifully crafted musical.

This is a fantastic production and I would urge everyone to get a ticket before it’s too late.
Sprinkling a little more stardust

HOAGY Carmichael was one of the most prolific and celebrated composers of the 20th century and his is to be music immortalised in a new musical at the St James Theatre this autumn.

The show, Stardust Hill, will contain some of the bandleader’s most famous titles including Stardust and Georgia on My Mind - two of the most recorded American songs of all time.

Carmichael’s son, also called Hoagy, is co-producing the show with Robert MacIntosh and took some time to talk to me about the project.

“It’s a show which revolves around the four decades of my father’s musical career, the 20s, 30s 40s and 50s,” he said.

“I was known to be a chronicler, if you like, of those eras. He wrote about what he saw and felt and the musical moods of our country is in those songs.

“Dad wrote really prolifically in all of those eras. The story itself is going to give you a very strong feeling of where you are and in what decade you are in, all told through music. I suspect you’ll reach for a handkerchief in the World War. Two segment. I promise you’ll also laugh, there are poignant moments and there are laughable silly ones like Huggin’ and Chalkin’?”

I admit I don’t know what that is so Hoagy gives me a wonderful little rendition of the song that starts “I gotta gal who’s mighty sweet”.

He continues: “These songs are strong enough that if we position them in a way, which I think we have, we let the songs tell the story.

“There’ll be lots and lots of dance and digital work. We’re going to use projections so we’re going to put the audience in the fields of France during the second World War.”

By Nicky Sweetland

I asked why the show is having its world premiere in the UK rather than America, where the music has its origins.

“People in this country are very receptive to Dad’s music. It costs less to produce here than it does in the States and they have a marvellous theatre.”

James Bond author Ian Fleming was quoted on more than one occasion to say that Hoagy senior was what he wanted his 007 character to look like. I asked his son about the suave and dapper family looks.

“He would be thrilled to hear you say that, believe me,” said Hoagy junior. “Dad dined out on that for years - he grew into his looks put it that way.”

When I asked Hoagy what sets this show apart from others and why people should see it, he replied: “Because my father knew how to rearrange seven notes into melodies.”

Stardust Road opens at the St James’ Theatre on October 27th.

COMPOSER, pianist, singer, actor, and bandleader Hoagy Carmichael

‘Like no other place I know’

BELGRAVIA’s Osborne Gallery is currently holding an exhibition of new paintings of the Chelsea Embankment.

The exhibition of 200 oil paintings by Londoner Garry Pereira runs until June 5th.

“Chelsea Embankment is a magical place which holds lots of memories for me,” said Garry.

“I remember from being a small child, walking with my Grandad through Battersea looking across, he would always tell me various tales of famous stars who lived there. Now I love the walk along here - the tidal water and air, the cars darting along the foreground. To me the colours are always transient and fascinating, it is full of hope and energy and is really like no other place I know.”

One of Garry Pereira’s paintings of Chelsea Embankment featured in the exhibition

Art Book Fair
May 22nd to May 24th 2015
Book fair with the opportunity to buy important out-of-print and new publications on art, photography, fashion, counterculture and design, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Nash House, The Mall, London.

House of Lords v House of Commons Tug of War
June 2nd 2015
Westminster College Garden, Great College Street, Westminster.
Gates open 5.30pm, matches 6.30pm
Raising funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Beating Retreat: Waterloo Remembered at Horse Guards Parade
June 10th and 11th 2015
Dating back to the 1690s, this ceremonial musical event is a pageant of precision drill, horses, cannons and fireworks set to music. The event brings together The Massed Bands, Drums, Pipes and Corps of Drums of the Household Division with The King’s Troop Royal Horse Artillery and visiting military bands from around the world. For 2015, the Bands of the Troupes de Marine and the Legion Etrangere (French Foreign Legion) participate in the First World War and D-Day

Chelsea Embankment
Until June 5th 2015
200 new paintings of the iconic Embankment on show at the Osborne Gallery, Belgravia.

Art Antiques London
June 12th – 18th 2015
Albert Hall Memorial West Lawn, Kensington Gardens, SW7 (opposite the Royal Albert Hall)
Website: www.haughton.com
Set in the beautiful parkland of Kensington Gardens, the Fair’s Pavilion is positioned next to the Albert Memorial and opposite the Royal College of Art and The Royal Albert Hall; it is the first fair to take place on the historic site of the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Olympia International Art & Antiques Fair
18th – 28th June 2015
Olympia National, Olympia London, Hammersmith Road, W14. Website: www.olympia-art-antiques.com
Over 160 of the world’s leading antiques specialists dealers will be present at the Olympia International Art & Antiques Fair, which is now in its 43rd year. With pieces ranging from £100 to £1 million, the Fair offers the most diverse variety of high quality, vetted art, antiques and collectors’ pieces than any other event in London

Lunchtime Lectures
June 25th 2015

Andre Rieu’s 2015 Maastricht Concert at Vue Fulham Broadway
July 17th - 23rd
The king of waltz performs in his home town joined by his famous Johann Strauss Orchesra.

Buckingham Palace summer opening
August 1st to September 27th 2015
Visit Buckingham Palace, the official London residence of the Queen, this summer. Buckingham Palace is one of the world’s few remaining working royal palaces - don’t miss the chance to see it.

Explore the lavishly furnished State Rooms, containing some of the greatest treasures from the Royal Collection. Highlights include: Paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Vermeer, Poussin, Canaletto and Claude Sculpture by Canova and Chantrey Exquisite examples of Sèvres porcelain Some of the finest English and French furniture in the world

Rooftop Cinema
Until September 30th 2015
Fancy catching a film without having to sit in a stuffy cinema? Until the end of September, Rooftop Film Club is offering a season of classic, cult and recent releases on top of two of London’s finest rooftops: the Queen of Hoxton bar, club and art collective in Shoreditch and former Victorian factory the Bussey Building in Peckham.

On Peckham Common, cineastes can sample delicious food, sup cold drinks and watch fabulous movies as the stars come out to shine – all augmented by a huge screen, high-quality wireless headphones and comfy seats. Last summer saw more than 200 sold-out screenings, so book soon! commemorations.
**All change in Saigon**

It's all change at the Prince Edward Theatre this week.

Well, not all change, but the multi award winning production of Miss Saigon is welcoming some new faces to its glittering alumni. Joining Olivier nominated Jon Jon Briones and What's On Stage winner Eva Noblezada will be, among others, Siobhan Dillon who will take on the role of Ellen in the classic musical based on Puccini’s Madame Butterfly.

Dillon shot to fame following her performance in the BBC talent show to find a Maria in 2006. Since then she has enjoyed West End success in some of the biggest shows in town including Legally Blonde and Ghost the Musical, as well as playing Sally Bowles in the UK touring production of Cabaret.

I spoke to Siobhan just before her opening night and she told me what it's like to join such a highly acclaimed production.

"It’s daunting, and when you take over from anyone it’s always a challenge. One is not to listen too much to what they’ve done previously, to try and make it your own and secondly Ellen is an iconic role so there are a lot of aspects to it that are quite scary and it’s just incredible to be asked." Siobhan plays Ellen, wife of a GI Chris, who has returned from war-torn Vietnam leaving behind Saigon bar girl, Kim whom he has fallen in love with.

We meet Ellen two years later when Chris is told Kim has had his child and the couple have to come to terms with the fallout of the complicated situation. The heartbreaking story of lost love makes this one of the most powerful pieces of musical theatre ever written.

I asked Siobhan what it’s like taking on the role of Ellen who is often unfairly seen as the baddie.

"I’m not going to lie it has definitely been something that has been playing on my mind quite a lot. I’ve been going through scenes and stopping halfway through, looking at our director and saying, ‘do I come across as being really mean there?’"

"In the original version of the story Ellen hardly featured at all but in this version of Miss Saigon she’s got a lovely song and a little bit more time to explain herself. She’s got a bit more time to warm to the audience, they’ve got more time to warm to her and so that is a blessing, although ultimately she is the one who says lets go back to America and leave Kim and her child. She thinks she’s doing the right thing."

The revival of Miss Saigon opened in May 2014, and is mostly unchanged from the original production which ran at The Theatre Royal Dury Lane from 1989 to 99. The character of Ellen however, has benefited from the addition of a new song titled Maybe. Siobhan said: "I absolutely love it. It’s difficult to try and act through that song because it’s so beautiful. It shows a more understanding side of Ellen."

"I really enjoy ‘Maybe’, and there are so many new answers in there that I’ve yet to discover. I just love building on performances and working with different ideas."

Miss Saigon’s other new cast members include Chris Peluso as Chris and Natalie Mendoza as Gigi. Siobhan said: "Myself and Chris are coming into half half new and old ensemble so you feel very well supported but there’s also a freshness. Being with Chris is nice because it’s always nice to be in the same boat as the person you’re acting opposite."

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- Offset Quadrants From £299
- 1200x800 & 1200x900 With Tray & Waste
- Corner Unit & Basin Only £99
- Steel Baths 1700x700 £75

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**Veggie taster menu and a Eurovision sing-song**

BRING your talent and taste-buds to celebrate Eurovision at the Coach and Horses this week.

One of Soho’s most iconic pubs is turning itself over to all things Eurovision this week with a special taster menu and a twist on the usual singalong.

The Coach and Horses on Greek Street, which offers an extensive vegetarian and vegan menu, is celebrating National Vegetarian Week by adding an international feel to the menu as a salute to the kitset contest which takes place on Saturday night in Vienna.

Organiser of the event Jess Fox said: “Bring your teams, your hunger and your songs. We are showcasing the best examples of vegetarian and vegan food from across Europe in a traditional pub environment. The special taster menu is £20 and you get six different dishes from Greece, France, Italy, Germany, Spain and the UK."

The usual Wednesday and Saturday singalong will have a different flavour with local singing songs from favourite Eurovision shows.

Landlord Alastair Chanuts said: “We do a piano singalong anyway. They’re really good fun. Very old fashioned round the piano and off we go, so to have Eurovision at the same time as National Vegetarian Week seemed to tie in really nicely.”

Asked about which songs he will be singing at Saturday night’s party; “I think I’d have to go for Bucks Fizz or Abba.”

The events, which started on Monday, will continue until Sunday 24th, with a special Eurovision party and singalong on Saturday night. The taster menu is available throughout the day.

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**Discount Bathrooms**

- Meridian £129
- Roma £199.99
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- A Wide Variety Of Mirrors Available Soon

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**The entertainment scene across London**

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**SIOBHAN Dillon**
PORTOBELLO and GOLBORNE Market celebrates its 150th anniversary this year!

LONDON’S Portobello and Golborne Road market is one of the world’s best loved markets. On busy Fridays and Saturdays, the market stretches a mile along Portobello Road and continues around the corner into Golborne Road. Hundreds of traders sell all sorts of everything, old and new, and there’s plenty of delicious food.

Though rightly famous for antiques, the market is a haven for lovers of fashion, food, books, music, vintage and more. It’s the place for anyone who wants to find something really unique or just loves a great bargain.

Surrounding Portobello market are lots of unique independent shops. On Saturdays all the antiques arcades open, with literally hundreds of specialist dealers in a maze of kiosks to explore. If you like shopping without knowing exactly what you’ll find, you’ll love Portobello and Golborne market. It’s real London with loads of character, a melting pot of people from all over the world, filled with treasure and bargains to discover.

Love the streets you shop in: shop Portobello & Golborne Market!

May 2015 events:

FOUR different themed Love Your Local Market walking tours on 15, 16, 22 & 23 May (Awesome Antiques, Brilliant Bargains, Extraordinary Edibles and Fabulous Fashion).

Tickets are £5 and include a free 150 year edition Notting Hill Shopping bag and hot drink upon completion of the tour. Participants can choose from Barista’s Fusion (Fridays only), Bluebelles, Cafe Eve, Golborne Deli, Kipferl, Lowry & Baker, Orange Coffee, Pedlars (15 & 16 May only), Snaps & Rye, and possibly one or two more. Book tickets at www.rbkcmarkets.eventbrite.com

Special stalls in Tavistock Square W11 for Love Your Local Market: a Youth Enterprise Market on 16 May and a Community Market on 23 May.

Official anniversary celebration on Saturday May 30th (the 150th day of our 150th year). The market stalls and shops will be festooned with 2km of bespoke 150-year bunting and dozens of market stallholders are offering exclusive one-day-only promotions, from discounts, multi-buy offers and gifts-with-purchase to limited-edition signed artwork and a raffle with 2 prizes of £50 worth of antique toy soldiers. Shoppers should look out for stalls displaying ‘Exclusive 150 year celebration offer’ signs and ask traders for details. There will be other mini-events including:

- A costumed performance of Victorian songs by Radio Days Music at the junction of Portobello Road and Lonsdale Road from 12 noon.
- A day-long display of antique and vintage bicycles from the Veteran Cycle Club in Tavistock Square W11.
- Free ‘Dr Bike’ bicycle tune-ups sponsored by BikeMinded in Tavistock Square W11.
- A free ticketed ‘instameet’ organised by @igerslondon (already sold out but hopeful participants can join the waiting list at www.meetup.com/InstagramersLondon)
- A 2pm cake-cutting ceremony in Tavistock Square W11 with a spectacular birthday cake donated by Hummingbird Bakery.

For further details follow @rbkcmarkets on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram or visit www.shopportobello.co.uk
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CHINESE GLASS FRONTED CABINET (shrift). Harvey Nichols, 25 years old. Need own transport. £30. Tel: 07970 956 759

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Closing date: Sunday 31st May 2015.

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A bridge too far for kids

By LWN reporter Paul Lagan
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

“Against West Ham, in the first half we were stiff and struggled to get into any rhythm. We played three at the back, as we needed to win in order to put pressure on Manchester United at the top of the table. But that didn’t work.”

“West Ham’s wide players were very positive, so we changed it to four at the back, our normal shape, and then we were more competitive. In the second half, we had more than enough chances to win the game but just didn’t take them.”

Sucker punch

“At times we were gambling to score the winner and were caught with a sucker punch. But it was a good finish by the lad. I suppose you can’t say they didn’t deserve it on the night.”

“I’m proud that our young players took their challenge for the league title to the second last game of the season against a team that plays players who are in their first team, in the Premier League, week in and week out.”

“Our boys had a fantastic season. It was just physically a step too far at the end.”

Philosophical Viveash said: “The U-21s compete in a league where you play no games for five weeks, then many games in a short space of time. There are so many things (the organisers) have to look at to improve all areas of the game.”

“You have to look at when you play, at the standards of players you are trying to produce, then you need the standards of the people working in the game to be of the same (high) calibre as the players on the pitch, and we are not getting that either.”

He continued: “If you are talking about trying to produce world class talent, then you need certain players to be protected on the pitch. And they are not getting that protection.”

“And that’s on both sides, not just ours. There is a lot of talent at West Ham and Man United. So that is also important. Protect them on the pitch, create the right environment to allow them to play and give them the tools to succeed - such as how many games to play and when you play them.”

“It’s not angry. This year has been a good step forward in the U21 game, the standard has been much higher. There isn’t enough games and when they come, they have been too infrequent. Well, they have been for us.”

There are only 12 teams who play 22 matches each in the top division of the U21 section but with many players also playing in lower age groups, the games can mount up.

“That’s part of being with a successful academy,” said Viveash.

“If you have the same group of players playing across different age groups, for the U21s, U19s and U18s, that’s what happens. You have 18-year-olds playing in the FA Youth Cup, the UEFA Youth Champions League and the U21 league. If you are just playing in one competition, it’s easier.”

So could Chelsea help ease their own fixture congestion problem by restricting younger aged players from moving up?

“Every model is different,” he said. “Every club has its own model. We certainly need to look at that, like all clubs should. We also want to challenge the players too. The fact that some of them have played 50 games is what happens when you go into the (professional) league. And these players want to play in league football and all the other competitions.”

Under-18s boss Joe Edwards has described this group of players as “special” and believes some will play first team football with Chelsea.

“I agree with him,” said Viveash. “This group would not have taken the destiny of the league to the penultimate game of the season if they weren’t special. What they have given away, age-wise, shows how special they are, because they are competing against older, experienced players and doing well. That’s what we want from them – to challenge the best players in the best competitions.”

“But you are going to pay for it somewhere along the way. And we have paid for it, physically, towards the end of the league season.”

Chelsea’s youth players retained the FA Youth Cup and won the Youth Champions League this term and were close to the title with U21 Premier League.

“Two games ago, we had put ourselves in the position to achieve that,” he said. “We had the opportunity to do it. But then we hit the wall. Hopefully next year there will be more improvements and better scheduling by everybody, which will allow preparation time for the players as well. We want to develop their skills as well as playing games.”

“We certainly hope that some of these players, including those who are involved at West Bromwich Albion on Monday night, will be part of our first team in the future.”

Focus on Craven Cottage

By TONY MCDONALD

Fulham regulars at Craven Cottage will be surprised that Ross McCormack has been named Fulham’s 2014-15 Player of the Season.

The 19-goal striker polled a huge 58.7 per cent of supporters’ votes to win ahead of Marcus Bettinelli and Lasse Vigen Christensen.

Following his summer arrival from Leeds United in a £11m deal, McCormack got off the mark for Whites with the winner against rivals Brentford in the Capital One Cup in August, before notching his first league goals in a 5-3 defeat at Nottingham Forest three weeks later.

But it was the turn of the year when the goals really started flowing. The 28-year-old striker found the net five times in January, including a hat-trick in the 3-2 victory over Forest at Craven Cottage.

He ended the season in scintillating form, too, with seven goals in his final seven games, notably notching another treble in Whites’ final home match of the season against play-off finalists Middlesbrough.

After his victory was confirmed on Friday, McCormack said: “I’m delighted to win the Player of the Season award, it means a lot to me after a tough season. I played over 50 matches and really enjoyed it and now I want to score more goals next season.”

Settle quickly

“I’d like to thank my team-mates for helping me settle in quickly and the fans for voting for me.”

McCormack’s closest contender in the poll was goalkeeper Bettinelli whose breakthrough campaign with Fulham didn’t go unnoticed as he took 18.5 per cent of the votes.

Christensen, who produced a series of promising displays before injury curtailed his progress, came in third with 6.5 per cent of fans’ votes.