**ULTIMATE LOCAL CANDIDATE’ LINES UP FOR RIFKIND’S SAFE TORY SEAT**

BOROUGH Councillor Victoria Borwick is now the front-runner to be picked as the new Conservative candidate for Parliament – with her popularity increasing as indignant calls grow locally for Downing Street to butt out of the selection process.

Lady Borwick - Kensington and Chelsea councillor for the Abingdon ward, Deputy Mayor of London and the most senior woman in the capital’s politics - says she is “the ultimate local candidate.”

This Tuesday Kensington Tories will be given a list of six preferred candidates drawn up by Conservative Central Office after talks with leaders of the local association of the Party. Senior Kensington Tories will reduce this to three candidates and it is understood that they will then pitch for the post at a closed-doors meeting of local Party members at the Town Hall on Friday, where a vote will be taken to elect the replacement for Sir Malcolm Rifkind.

Lady Borwick (pictured), who has served on Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council since 2002, is campaigning on her superior local knowledge.

She said: “I feel I know Kensington inside out”. She added: “I have lived and worked in this wonderful part of London all my life and raised my four children here. I have been a councillor for more than 10 years and a member of the GLA for seven years. There is hardly a street I haven’t canvassed. As a school governor for Goldborne and Maxilla under the Westway, I am not just talking about the leafy parts of the borough. I regard myself as the ultimate local candidate.”

“In political terms, I love getting my hands dirty – so much so that I have even been lowered through a manhole into the new Thames Sideway sewer.

“I am fiercely opposed to Labour’s mansion tax, which would hit Kensington very hard and penalise many cash-poor, asset-rich people who bought homes 20 to 30 years ago and now face an extra annual tax of £10,000 a year or more. I would do all I can to stop it.”

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**ACTION FOLLOWS FATAL ACCIDENTS**

Basements: Safety squads get tough

GOVERNMENT safety squads are to swoop on iceberg homes in Kensington and Chelsea this week following the shock revelation that 44 men have been killed or seriously injured whilst building billionaires’ basements.

By LWN reporter GEOFF BAKER

Teams from the Health and Safety Executive have targeted the borough for a 48-hour scrutiny of safety standards which the national regulator says “are often poor”.

The swoop will be welcomed by hundreds of residents who are concerned about the safety of building work on some 400 basements at luxury homes in the borough.

Many residents are already up in arms in protest against the vibration, noise, dust and parking suspensions caused by the underground enlarging of rich men’s homes.

Now they will be alarmed to discover that many deaths have happened because of basement works caving in.

“Construction inspectors will be focusing on sites in Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham in a bid to improve safety in the increasingly-popular basement sector,” said the HSE.

“This action follows a number of fatal accidents, as well as serious injuries, in the capital in recent years relating to basement projects.

The HSE said: “Over the past 10 years we have received reports of 17 construction workers having died as a result of an excavation collapsing, whilst in the same period 27 were seriously injured”.

Restriction on ‘dig-downs’

The borough has become a boomtown for big basements over the past 15 years. In 2001, the number of planning applications to the borough council for basement developments was 46. In 2013 the number of applications had rocketed to 450.

Safety fears have already caused Kensington and Chelsea borough council to act by slapping a restriction on new “dig-downs” to just one storey beneath ground level.

Three years ago Goldman Sachs boss Christoph Stanger had to apologise and offer compensation to neighbours after a basement excavation at his £7 million home in Palace Gardens Terrace caused cracks to appear in adjoining properties.

The HSE squad will spend two days touring the royal borough this week and they have warned that they will not hesitate to take action including prosecution if they find work is unsafe.

Last December building boss Conrad Sidebottom, a company director with Siday Construction, was jailed for three years for manslaughter after builder Anghel Milosavlevici was crushed to death at a basement excavation in Fulham. Sidebottom and safety consultant Richard Goldberg, who has been convicted of failing to take reasonable care for Milosavlevici’s health and safety.

“The construction of basements in London is increasingly widespread,” said inspector James Hickman, who will be leading the HSE team on the probe of safety standards in Kensington.

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**INSIDE YOUR BRIGHT NEW LOCAL**

Why the Queen is paying a private visit to Battersea Dogs Home

- see page 13

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**Kensington & Chelsea NEWS**

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Thursday, March 12th 2015
Huge increase in number of street trees in the capital

We’re planting 20,000 trees in London

The Mayor’s Street Tree scheme marks the planting of a record number of 20,000 trees along London’s roads. Aimed at brightening up congested high roads and enhancing the environment, this is a huge milestone in the scheme which has resulted in a variety of trees such as birches and oaks being planted across London boroughs.

Street trees are planted on pavements and along highways to clean the air, keep the city cooler in the summer and increase green space. Boroughs have all seen a huge increase in the number of trees appearing along their streets in the past two years, with 300 in Lambeth, 400 in Islington and over 1000 in Ealing.

Matthew Pencharz, the Mayor’s Senior Adviser on Environment & Energy planted the first of 20,000 trees delivered in the area over the past two years by the scheme. He was joined by the Streatham Bridge Business Association, a collective of community groups who have received a total of £135,000 from the Mayor’s fund to help brighten up Streatham - including a summer planting on Streatham High Road, where new trees are transforming the area.

Matthew Pencharz said: “This is a fantastic scheme that has improved with the aesthetic of busy streets across the capital. The 20,000th tree symbolises the amazing work carried out by local businesses, boroughs and individuals passionate about improving their area. By planting thousands of trees, we are making the air cleaner and ensuring a better quality of life for Londoners.”

Anthony Ellis, a spokesman for the Streatham Bridge Business Association said: “Working cooperatively with Lambeth Council and Transport for London, the Street Tree Initiative has contributed to the renewal of three large public places in Streatham, and planted trees on more than sixty residential streets. Streathamites will benefit from this new streetscape for decades to come.”

The Mayor’s Street Tree Initiative, in partnership with the Forestry Commission and Greenwork London, is part of the Mayor’s commitment to maintain London’s status as one of the greenest and leafiest cities and encourage London individuals, businesses and community groups to plant more trees.

Craig Harrison, London Manager for the Forestry Commission, said: “The Mayor’s Street Trees will improve London’s landscape now and for generations to come – not only making streets more attractive but providing other benefits such as shade and air quality improvement.”

This is part of the Mayor’s wider plans to make London a greener city including delivering 100 Pocket Parks and funding tree and woodland projects via the Community Grant Scheme which is engaging communities and volunteers across London. The Mayor leads the RE:LEAF partnership of organisations involved in London’s trees and woodlands, and through this partnership has delivered a range of projects including planting 10,000 trees in Ealing last December.

The Mayor’s Street Tree Initiative, delivered in partnership with the Forestry Commission, was open to all London boroughs and private landowners who own or manage public realm (including businesses, registered social landlords, etc.). It was also open to civil society organisations and community groups working on behalf of boroughs and private landowners. The Mayor has spent £5.7m on the Street Tree Initiative since 2006 with over £5m having been matched by the recipients of the grant. For more information visit: http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/environment/greening-london/re-leaf/mayors-street-tree-initiative
Surge of complaints over No 10 favouring Rifkind’s successor

FROM PAGE ONE
Support for Lady Borwick is growing in tandem with a surge of complaints that Central Office and the Prime Minister’s Office is taking a big hand in proposing favoured, but non-local, candidates for the safe Tory seat.

Among Downing Street favourites for the job are Laura Trott, the Prime Minister’s adviser on women’s issues, Clare Fогes, the Prime Minister’s speechwriter, and Philippa Stroud, policy adviser to Iain Duncan Smith. Celebrity candidates have also been suggested, including former Olympian rower James Cracknell, footballers Sol Campbell and Frank Lampard and ex-Newsnight pin-up Jeremy Paxman.

But Downing Street’s interference has annoyed Kensington Tories who say they should be allowed to pick their own candidate themselves without any nudgeing from the Prime Minister’s team.

The call for Downing Street to stay out of the selection process has been backed from former Conservative Party Chairman Lord Tebbit, who said such interference would never have happened in his day.

And Sir Richard Storrey, a former newspaper magnate who lives in the Royal Borough, in a letter to this newspaper (see below), has described the action of Tory Party chairman Greg Shapps as a “Putin-style grab”.

Local blog sites are awash with complaints from Kensington Conservatives who resent “being bcuppy mothered” by Tory Central Office.

The most-read political blog in the royal borough, From The Hornet’s Nest, which has 2,000 views every day, is peppered with comments from locals who are outraged by the interference.

One post: “It is an abomination that Cameron and Cetral Office can dictate to Kensington who we must have as our MP. What a cheek.”

Another wrote: “The Association should take a stand and tell Central Office to sod off. The idea of having speech writers from Cameron’s team and a celebrity footballer and Olympic rower offered us is worse than an insult.”

“What on earth does the Eton set in Conservato think they are up to?” Has someone told them that feudalism ended 500 years ago? Kensington is not the gift of a load of chumps who do not know the price of milk”, posted another.

Another Kensington resident led the local tide by posting “The only serious contender who can do this job for local residents is Victoria Borwick. Cameron and his team should stop trying to control everything they know nothing about.”

Tory Association has democratic right to chose its own candidate

A RECENT public opinion poll showed that people regret the narrow experience of MPs. Even Mr Cameron, speaking recently in the House of Commons, accepted the desirability of MPs having a broad experience.

Yet The Times of February 25th reports that the Conservative Campaign Headquarters intends that one of two party apparatchiks, with no apparent valid experience, should be foisted on to the shortlist of Conservative candidates in Kensington & Chelsea constituency for the General Election.

Further, by what right does the Party’s chairman, Mr Shapps, do a Putin-style grab of the Kensington & Chelsea Conservative Association and usurp its democratic right to select its own candidates and deny local democracy?

I shall be most unlikely to support a Shapps nominee and most certainly will not vote for a party apparatchik.

SIR RICHARD STORREY Bi CBE
Zeiland House W8

Have your say on basements

ANYONE who wishes to comment on Kensington & Chelsea’s Borough Council’s new draft Supplementary Planning Document on Basements has until Wednesday, April 1st to do so.

In January the council adopted a new policy for dealing with planning permission for basement development, Policy CL7: Basements, which forms part of the Local Plan.

The council has now produced a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on basements. This document provides more detailed guidance and advice on adopted Core Strategy Policy CL7: Basements. It is designed to help applicants make successful planning applications and for residents to understand the various issues that the council will consider in assessing planning applications.

It will replace the existing SPD on Subterranean Development, 2009.

A six-week consultation began in February and finishes on April 1st.

The Draft Basements SPD and an online response form are available at www.rbkc.gov.uk/planningconsult

We will take action where lives are at risk

FROM PAGE ONE
Cameron and Chelsea.

“Often it is carried out under existing homes as owners seek to increase their living space without a house move.

“The work is technically-challenging and can carry substantial risk. Standards are often poor and often vulnerable sections of the labour market are recruited.”

He added: “Contractors are failing to appoint a competent temporary works engineer to design suitable propping to support excavations and existing structures.

“Likewise, on many projects, basic safeguards are missing, such as edge protection to prevent falls from height.”

In 2013-14 in the UK, nine builders died after falling from height.

“All too often little thought is given to providing proper welfare facilities for site workers,” said Mr Hickman.

“Where we find poor practice that is putting lives at risk we will take action, including stopping work and prosecuting those responsible.”

 Plenty to do in Holland Park

WALKS, talks and a chance to get hands-on experience of conservation work in Kensington’s Holland Park can all be found in this year’s Ecology Service events programme.

There is plenty to do in the 55-acre park which includes semi-wild woodland, formal gardens and sports areas. Walks on offer cover a wide range of topics including: amphibians, bats, bees, birds, dragonflies and flora.

Once a month there is also an opportunity for residents to get involved in practical conservation work and help maintain the park.

Task Force 4 Nature volunteer days take place on the third Saturday of each month. People keen to volunteer should meet at the Holland Park Cafe at 10.30am and expect to finish work at 3.30pm.

On the first Saturday of each month the Friends of Holland Park organise a bird and nature walk from 9am to 10.30am. People interested in taking part should meet at the Holland Park Cafe.

For schoolchildren the Ecology Centre run popular half-term and school holiday activities where youngsters can take part in a range of creative activities and explore the park and wildlife areas.

Sessions last two hours and cost £4.30 for residents and £5.50 for non-residents.

For more information on the Ecology Events Programme email ecology@rbkc.gov.uk or go to www.rbkc.gov.uk/eco
Boris backs innovation in the High Street

SMALL businesses and community groups on London’s high streets are set to receive a share of up to £9 million of funding from the Mayor of London to help revitalise and potentially reinvent the way we use our high streets.

In an innovative move the Mayor has allocated a portion of the funding through crowdfunding website Spacehive, where community groups are able to post their ideas and ask for financial support. It is the first time the Mayor of a major European city has used a civic crowdfunding website to directly pledge money for community projects. 83 groups submitted ideas and the Mayor will be pledging up to £20,000 each to 17 of these projects.

The grants awarded through the Mayor’s High Street Fund today will be invested in 42 high streets across London, including 25 larger borough-led projects and 17 community-led projects. This investment has levered around £20 million of match funding from local authorities and private sector partners.

As well as crowdfunding projects from community groups, the Mayor is funding 28 larger borough-led projects with up to £2 million each, including £125,000 for the borough to work alongside the Westway Trust, a social enterprise developing space beneath the Westway flyover with activities, facilities and services to support the local community. The project will deliver a temporary building to provide workspace and attract more visitors throughout the week, whilst linking two adjacent high streets. This will act as the first step in a larger regeneration initiative and act as a way to test and trial the ambitions of a forthcoming masterplan.

The Mayor said: “The imagination, enterprise and creativity of Londoners has shone through in the array of ideas that were put forward to the High Street Fund. London’s high streets are no longer about retail alone and I am thrilled to be supporting projects that seek to diversify and unlock opportunities in our most prized urban assets.”

The High Street Fund is the latest in a series of funding rounds, which started in 2011 with the Outer London Fund, aimed specifically at helping London’s high streets to adapt and thrive. These initiatives are part of the Mayor’s £129 million investment in high streets that has already helped 56 high streets across London and attracted £56 million of match funding from public and private sector partners. The £9 million fund has a target to deliver:

- 543 jobs (created or safeguarded);
- support to 920 businesses;
- 52 apprenticeships;
- 34,555 m2 of public space improvements;
- reactivation of 24,446m2 of empty shop space;
- 141 buildings improvements;
- 111 new start-up businesses.

For those who missed out, there is still over £285,000 available in the second round of community-led Spacehive projects. To be considered for support, ideas should be posted on the Mayor’s Spacehive page and be actively crowdfunding before the next round of pledges on Monday 29 June.

Local businesses urged: Act now to get a government grant to boost your business with Superfast Broadband

London businesses are being urged to act now to get a government grant of up to £3,000 to upgrade their internet speeds. And with the Government’s rollout of superfast broadband predicted to create 20,000 jobs and add £6.3 billion to the UK economy a year by 2024, it’s clear that businesses have a lot to gain.

Currently, London is one of only 22 cities where businesses are eligible to apply for connection vouchers worth up to £3,000 boost their broadband.

There are now 3,672 businesses in London who have grants to upgradethanks to the connection vouchers scheme. London is doing well, securing a good share of the 10,000 vouchers issued overall, but local businesses still have time to access their share of the funding.

Businesses like video production house Kinamo, based in Tech City, have already seen the benefits. Kinamo’s business means that it is constantly uploading videos for its clients to review and upload again after each new round of editorial changes has been made. That’s huge amounts of video data each week. “Our reaction time has to be really quick,” explains Kinamo’s other co-founder Phil Doherty. Kinamo used broadband connection vouchers to install a wireless solution which gave Kinamo a dedicated connection. “What had taken us eight hours to upload now took us ten minutes,” says Doherty. “It was the perfect solution.”

Ed Vaizey, Minister for the Digital Economy, said: "Thousands of businesses have already taken up their vouchers and are now enjoying all the benefits of a faster internet connection. I encourage all of London’s businesses to do the same and ensure their business is properly equipped to meet the challenges of the digital age.”

Superfast broadband will mean you can do business faster, contact customers more quickly and it’ll be easier for you to keep up with and install the latest technology - future-proofing your business and making sure you can keep up with your customers’ demands - and your competitors.

Each Voucher covers up to £3,000 of installation costs but businesses can also apply as a group to connect bigger or more complicated premises. Once installed, businesses pay the line rental and VAT.

To apply for a broadband grant is easy, businesses simply enter their postcode at www.connectionvouchers.co.uk to check eligibility, choose a supplier and fill in an application form or pick an off the shelf deal with no forms to fill in. Commercial landlords can also apply.

I’m happy serving the residents of Kensington

Leader of Kensington and Chelsea, Cllr Nick Paget-Brown, opens up about the race to be the Conservative candidate for Kensington

A s the world and his wife now know, Sir Malcolm Rifkind is to stand down at the next general election and one of the most desirable parliamentary seats in the country is therefore up for grabs.

There is at least one formidable lady who has already asked me straight out whether I harbour any such ambitions, ”I told her truthfully, “I am perfectly happy serving the residents of Kensington and Chelsea in my present capacity”. I went on to remind her that I did fight a Parliamentary seat once in Don Valley – but Don Don Valley fought back.

In truth, we have plenty of enormously talented local people who have an unrivalled knowledge of issues in Kensington and I really hope that, at last, one of them will get a chance to represent the seat in the Commons. Over the last week, I have been working on my book and the Council’s budget so that is. By the time you read this, the Council will have voted on, and hopefully approved our budget for 2015-16.

Here we are, five years into austerity, fifty million quid down on our grant from central government, but your council tax hasn’t gone up a whit, our rubbish is still collected twice a week, all our libraries remain open and we are one of the few remaining boroughs in the country still meeting the ‘moderate needs’ of people requiring social care. And all of that while we are busy building new schools, leisure centres and homes for your children and grandchildren.

This has been achieved by careful management of resources, making our property assets work harder and saving costs by partnering with our neighbouring boroughs.

So whoever it is that ends up being the Conservative candidate for Kensington is going to be very lucky: not only will they have the chance to represent a beautiful London borough that actually is vibrant, they will be dealing with a hard-working and effective Council that is maintaining good services and building for the future. No wonder would-be Tory MPs the length and breadth of the land are looking on wistfully.
Air pollution is big killer

PRESSURE is growing to permanently close Oxford Street to all vehicles including buses and taxis after new data has revealed that air pollution is now London’s second biggest killer – causing the deaths of 20 people every day.

Research shows that Londoners are 57 times more likely to be killed by the capital’s dirty air than by a road accident.

Figures from the campaign group Clean Air In London have revealed that an estimated 7.5 million people are being killed each year by air pollution – far more than the GLA estimate of 4,300 – 144 each week.

The capital’s lethal air is killing more than four times the number who die from liver disease.

Only cancer kills more people in London each year. Annual death rates reveal:

- Murder – 93
- Road deaths – 130
- Liver disease – 1,600
- Strokes – 2,000
- Heart disease – 3,200
- Air pollution – 7,500
- Cancer – 13,600

With 600,000 vehicles driving into central London each day and 8,765 buses in the capital, transport has turned the city into a killing zone – with the worst blackspots being Oxford Street, Shepherd’s Bush, Putney High Street and Merton Road.

The air in Oxford Street is now so bad it is illegal. In January it became the first area of London to breach legal limits set by the EU for permissible annual levels of nitrogen dioxide.

Now GLA Green Party members Jenny Jones and Darren Johnson are calling on London Mayor Boris Johnson to ban all vehicles from Oxford Street.

“The air quality situation in Oxford Street has become so bad that it must be closed to traffic. The sheer number of vehicles combined with the height of buildings either side means that Oxford Street has become a pollution corridor.”

Jenny Jones said the air quality in Oxford Street was “disgraceful” and she is calling on the Mayor to set up an early warning system to protect pedestrians, joggers and cyclists.

“We need emergency measures in the run-up to and during dangerous pollution episodes,” she said.

“These should include a smog forecast and alert system that informs the public and particularly vulnerable people such as asthmatics, with more detailed messaging and resources at schools, hospitals and emergency services.”

“This could encourage behaviour change to reduce pollution, such as not driving, and reduce harm, such as not doing vigorous exercise near main roads.”

The Mayor’s office has now made air pollution in the capital a high priority and is to aid hundreds more “clean” buses by next year.

“We take air pollution very seriously,” said a spokesman.

“Since 2006 we’ve put 1,200 hybrid buses on London’s roads. Hybrid electric buses use a mix of an electric battery pack and a diesel engine for power and this significantly cuts air pollutants. By next year we will have 1,700 in the fleet, including 600 of the cleanest and greenest bus of its type.”

“We have also taken more than 6,000 of the oldest, dirtiest taxis off the roads by introducing London’s cleanest and greenest bus of its type.”

The London Air Quality Network is producing daily pollution reports online at its website www.londonair.org.uk. The network is managed by the Environmental Research Group at King’s College London.

Dr Frank Kelly, of the research group, warned: “Because air pollution is an invisible entity, not many people really understand the challenge that it is having to their own health and to their children’s health.”

Air pollution – 7,500
Cancer – 13,600
Heart disease – 3,200
Strokes – 2,000
Liver disease – 1,600
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M urder – 93
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Air pollution – 7,500
Cancer – 13,600

Oxford Street has long been accused of “m isleading” Londoners over the garden bridge maintenance costs.
London Weekly News

City living, local life

Abingdon

ABINGDON  ward councillors have focused attention on supporting small improvements to the local area that would achieve high impact. They contributed towards a review of Abingdon’s Conservation Area Policy via the Edwards Square and Scarsdale Abingdon Association by funding an architectural historian to assist in the review. Councilors also funded a volunteer-maintained weather station in Pembroke Square and match funded the enhanced community gardens surrounding Chatsworth Court Garden by the Earl's Court Road. Councillors also committed to supporting young people via coordinating the promotion activities for young people with the sponsorship of a dance class for young people with the sponsorship of a dance class for young people.

Brompton & Hans Town

BROMPTON AS THIS year we all reflect and commemorate the sacrifice of past generations, £500 was allocated by Hans Town for the Chelsea Society’s ‘Chelsea in The Great War’ exhibition, remembering the contribution of both those who lined up to enlist at Duke of York Square HQ and those who stayed at home. Two young volunteers were also employed in a £2,000 memorial restoration of Holy Trinity Church on Cottage Place. Kensington and Chelsea has for hundreds of years provided a welcoming home for a vast array of notable people from around the world. Last Year, Hans Town gave £50 to the Nubian Jak Community Trust to put up a Blue Plaque for one of the notable residents.

Camden

CAMPDEN The Campden Ward Society was officially launched in the presence of the Mayor at the time, Cllr Christopher Buckmaster and Cllr Robert Freeman. Since the first meeting in January 2013 they have engaged with 40% of the residents of the ward aged over 65, an increase of 10% since 2013. To date, they have helped the project amongst the older residents of Campden Ward more interesting speakers, including Honor Blackman, Lord Malcolm Forbes and local historian Melanie Backe-Hansen were invited to speak, and local residents more interesting speakers, including Honor Blackman, Lord Malcolm Forbes and local historian Melanie Backe-Hansen were invited to speak, and local residents more interesting speakers, including Honor Blackman, Lord Malcolm Forbes and local historian Melanie Backe-Hansen were invited to speak, and local residents.

Chelsea Riverside

CHELSEA RIVERSIDE The councillors of Chelsea Riverside have funded a number of projects that celebrate the heritage of the area and remember local history. Councillors granted funds towards a plaque in Westfield Park to commemorate the sacrifice of generations, £500 was allocated by CHELSEA RIVERSIDE Ward councillors to joint-fund “Childhood Memories from War/Childhood Revisited,” staged at St. Cuthbert with St Matthias Primary School and Earls Court Community Centre. As part of one of the funded projects, Year 5s at St. Cuthbert with St Matthias Primary School were treated to a workshop based on the Opera Holland Park production of ‘Alice in Wonderland’. With enormous enthusiasm and minimal props, the team from Opera Holland Park enchanted children from Mr. Abrahams’ class; by a third of the way through the workshop the children had learned a song, with associated movements, and were singing in 4-part harmony.

Earls Court

EARLS COURT The Earl’s Court councillors have focused on activities for young residents by supporting the Earl’s Court Drama Workshop and Earl’s Court Community Trust. As part of one of the funded projects, Year 5s at St. Cuthbert with St Matthias Primary School were treated to a workshop based on the Opera Holland Park production of ‘Alice in Wonderland’. With enormous enthusiasm and minimal props, the team from Opera Holland Park enchanted children from Mr. Abrahams’ class; by a third of the way through the workshop the children had learned a song, with associated movements, and were singing in 4-part harmony.

Gambol

GOLBONE The Gambol ward councillors have focused on supporting local residents to celebrate the local area.

Notting Dale

NOTTING DALE Silchester Residents’ Association were awarded £3,000 by councillors as part of improvements to the internal layout and external works at the road at the Finsbroke House. The refurbished residents’ facilities will be a significant addition and educational and recreational use for local residents and use for family events, becoming a focal point for social activities organised by the RA. Thanks to funding from Notting Dale councillors, pupils from Thomas Jones primary school were able to participate in the Food Explorers’ programme in association with the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation.

Redcliffe

HAVING received £1000 youth drama project in exploring children’s experience of World War One, new projects are being sought to bring the Redcliffe community together. As the 100th anniversary of The Great War is taking place, and nobody who fought in that war is still alive, councillors allocated the Earl’s Court Community Trust £1,000 to educate local youths through drama about the lives past generations lived.

Royal Hospital

ROYAL HOSPITAL From street parties and memorials for the Great War to a drop in centre for the homeless, £13,631.74 was allocated for projects last year. Councillors have recently proposed a survey of the ward that will help discover the priorities of residents and set the agenda for Royal Hospital’s City Living. Local Life for the years to come.

St. Helen’s

ST HELENS In partnership with Notting Dale, St. Helen’s councillors have already contributed towards the successful ‘Food Explorers’ initiative, which took place at Oxford Gardens School, in association with the Kensington and Chelsea Foundation. The Food Explorers week at Oxford Gardens included trips to Phoenix Farm, Jamie Oliver’s Recipie and Whole Foods Market for hands on cooking demos and lessons.

Stanley

STANLEY COUNCILLORS wanted to involve residents in identifying priorities. So a co-produced survey was sent to all households in the ward. As a result, Stanley Ward councillors supported the production of a leaflet for young peoples’ uniformed organisations and funded two garden projects in Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. £5,000 was given to the Chelsea and Westminster Foundation to transform the Hospital’s garden into a community kitchen garden. Another £3,000 was granted to create an edible garden on the hospital’s third floor.
KENSINGTON & Chelsea Borough Council is heading for a showdown with lively residents fighting proposals to demolish and redevelop Chesterton Square and Broadwood Terrace because the council needs more homes and the money.

Residents of the square and terrace above the council’s offices and depot in Pembridge Road are furious that the council wants to tear down the 1960s’ social housing in a property development aimed at making up shortfalls in homes and in the town hall coffers.

The residents claim that the development will destroy the community and that it is being driven by a plan to build up to 176 ‘luxury flats’ which could be lucratively sold for big money.

But the council says a redevelopment would replace the 116 present homes with 300 affordable new ones and is offering a cash-back bonus to residents whom they promise would be re-homed onsite.

The council says it is “under fierce pressure to provide more housing and to find new income”. It is cash short because of continued cuts in Government funding, and is consequently slashing its spending by £15 million this year, for the fifth year running.

It has also warned that due to Government screw-tightening, it is planning to dip heavily into its reserves – which will plunge from last year’s balance of £186 million to £105 million by 2018.

Redevelopment of the housing in Pembridge Road would bring much-needed cash to the council, it says, help see “the great demand for new housing of all types across the borough”.

But residents are mobilising to form a protest group and they aim to try block the council’s scheme by gaining listed status for Chesterton Square and Broadwood Terrace.

“The council’s scheme by gaining listed status for Chesterton Square and Broadwood Terrace. ‘Why seek to demolish a community and homes of historic and social importance for yet another luxury development?’ said a spokesman for the protestors.

“Isolation and loneliness have gained epidemic proportions in the city and you cannot just recreate a strong community overnight – particularly one that has taken years and loneliness have gained epidemic proportions in the city and you cannot just recreate a strong community overnight – particularly one that has taken years to develop and which was based on thoughtful and imaginative planning.

“We are very angry about this and the fact that the council has ignored all of our comments and concerns. They don’t listen and they don’t want to listen. All they care about is money.

“This is an enormous site and its demolition would create maximum disturbance and increase the traffic and pollution in the area.”

In defence of the development, the council says on its website that one of the main reasons for it is “the council’s current financial position”.

In another post it claims: “The Pembridge Road sites are very large and important council assets with a lot of potential. Right now they are badly underused and becoming more so. In addition Kensington and Chelsea is increasingly short of housing. It is these issues rather than any financial target that is driving this review.”

The council, which claims that the buildings are “deteriorating”, also argues that rather than cut the stock of affordable housing, the development would double it – and allow the building of more than 150 private homes.

“No loss of residential use will be acceptable on this site, in fact an increase in the number of homes, both private and social, is likely to be sought,” says the council.

“The council pledged there will be extensive consultation with residents and if the development plans go ahead, up to 116 new affordable homes could be provided on the site, double what is currently there.

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There could also be up to 176 new private homes for sale or rent. Residents argue that Chesterton Square and Broadwood Terrace are an aesthetic asset to the area and

they have applied to the Government’s watchdog for historic buildings for protective status.

“The housing development has been described as an oasis and the gardens in the sky, it has won a number of awards over the years. It is much-valued today and it is an example of social housing, now successfully integrated with private ownership, that really works.

“An application has been made to English Heritage for listing of the housing element. Support has been expressed for the application by residents and local societies including the local conservation association, Kensington Society, the 20th Century Society and the Earl’s Court Society.

“The council says: “We are currently awaiting a decision [from English Heritage] and expect to hear the outcome by the Spring. Once we know the outcome, the selection and formal appointment of the design team will be progressed, so more detailed design and consultation work can then take place.”

The council says if the scheme is approved, all secure tenants will be rehoused, “ideally in a brand new home on the redeveloped estate, or elsewhere in the borough if they prefer”.

It adds: “They will be entitled to a Home Loss Payment of £4,900 plus a Disturbance Payment to cover the reasonable costs of moving home. All resident leaseholders will have their property purchased at the full market value.

“They will also be entitled to an additional ten per cent of the market value up to a maximum of £20,000 and a Disturbance Payment to cover the reasonable costs of moving. In addition the Cabinet agreed the council will develop an offer of an equity share for all resident leaseholders to enable them to purchase and live in one of the new properties on the site. This means the existing mixed community of council tenants and resident leaseholders will be protected and able to continue living on that site, if they so choose.

“Non-resident leaseholders will have their property purchased at the full market value with the owners entitled to a basic loss payment of 7.5 per cent of the value up to a maximum of £75,000 plus the reasonable costs of acquiring a new investment property. Non-resident leaseholders will be entitled to apply to become resident leaseholders if they wish to obtain the same compensation as resident leaseholders”.

“Pembridge Road costs a great deal to run and we simply don’t need to continue using much of the depot or offices anymore,” said the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen.

“What we do need is new affordable homes and new income to help protect our front line services. If at the same time we can dramatically improve the streetscape and local environment of this corner of the borough that would be a tremendous bonus.

“But we won’t be taking this development forward unless we can be sure we are being fair to our existing tenants and leaseholders.

“We have put together a cash-incentive compensation package which responds to the concerns and worries residents have expressed over the last 18 months. We will make sure to protect the strong mixed-community that currently lives there.”

The council pledged there will be extensive consultation with residents and if the development plans go ahead, up to 116 new affordable homes could be provided on the site, double what is currently there.

“There could also be up to 176 new private homes for sale and rent. In addition, there may be office space and new retail units at ground floor level. The existing nursery will be retained and as part of the design process, the viability of a new school building will be explored.”
City’s youngsters going to the polls to elect their own youth council

THOUSANDS of Westminster youngsters will go on line this week to elect their own council.

City kids between the ages of 11 and 18 will be voting for the Youth MP and deputy Youth MP to represent them on the Westminster Youth Council.

Last year 14,000 of them made their voices heard. They have until midnight on Sunday (March 15th) to vote with the result being announced on Monday, March 23rd.

These are the six candidates and their manifestos:

Aby Murray

THINGS don’t have to change the world to be important. I believe any one action that benefits any one person is important. I’m standing to be Youth MP for Westminster because this is our youth, we deserve our say, I want to be your voice.

Enkuush Mergen

I DON’T plan on making any false promises; I just want to help you, help yourself. The fact that there is such a lack of opportunities for young people needs to be addressed. Sure, there are a few activities on, now and again, but is the quality of those activities as high as they could be?

Marie-Verity Pernthaller

IF YOU elect me I will work hard to make sure that you know about all the opportunities available to you. According to a survey done by the Westminster Youth Council last year, money, fear of crime and getting a job were the main concerns young people raised. I will address these issues by working with schools and through social media.

Mohamed Hammada

WHAT do you want to be when you get older? Want to be a success? Want to improve your skills, qualifications and job prospectus? Some young people have big dreams and others are still wondering what theirs will be. That’s fine and everyone should be able to be a success, but there’s a problem. There are loads of young people not being able to reach those dreams.

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Reema Begum-Miah

I BELIEVE that everyone is equal and has a right to succeed in life. The fact that they are young shouldn’t be a barrier. We need to work together to make Westminster a better place and safe for everyone, no matter where you come from, religion, race, gender and age.

Semhar Teklu

WE ARE the generation of the future. We can have an impact on the world for better or for worse. There are so many issues that need to be reflected and addressed such as youth unemployment, bullying, the environment and lack of social clubs and they need to be looked into and raise awareness on it.

● For more information on the Youth Elections, Youth Council and other ways to get involved, contact Email: searnshaw@westminster.gov.uk

Charlie Pipes Up!

We may lend a hand but we're not social workers

THERE is no doubt that 24,000 people dying of cold in a country that isn’t really that cold by world standards is shocking, in fact staggering, but ... and there’s a big but here and ... what kind of idiot thinks that it’s okay to run a society where you don’t even park the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff?

No, as I told Nick Ferrari on LBC Radio last week, some nutter at NICE - whoever they are - is marking out a space for the plumber’s van at Beachy Head!

Don't get me wrong, when my tradespeople come across someone who is in trouble at home during a visit of course they will help, what else would they do? And I don't mean just if they're too cold either. We've jumped started cars, rescued pets from trees and under furniture. One time one of our plumbers was flying around in a loft space for half an hour trying to catch this lady's parrot. And yes, on occasion we’ve called a doctor, found missing bottles of heart pills and called 999 when things really looked bad.

We also prioritise heating calls to elderly people and families with young children when it’s cold out and demand is high.

But that doesn’t mean we need a law that actively says to plumbers and other trades people: "You're not just responsible for getting the taps fixed and the boiler running, you are now the front line of defence, the safety net when all the other social services have failed."

Because that is the same as admitting that looking after vulnerable people’s welfare isn’t just the preserve of the various social services, but that it’s somehow, in law, the role of the plumber, and that’s just plain wrong!

Like I’ve already said, as caring, compassionate human beings plumbers will do the right thing, but making them an official safety net admits the existing net is broken, and is the first step to re-leasing those whose job it is to catch at risk people from their responsibilities.

No, the best and most important thing a plumber can do when a house is cold, because the heating is down, is fix the boiler, always has been, always will be!
Ladbrooke Grove railway bridge to get makeover

LAD BROKE Grove London Underground Bridge needs a facelift.

The multi-coloured panels on the bridge are starting to look tatty and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea are giving residents the chance to choose a new design to replace them.

Council officers were out and about consulting on the proposed new designs on Saturday at a stall under the Westway and beside Sainsbury’s Local. 165 Ladbrooke Grove, repeating the exercise.

Kensington community

☐ GREEN fingered volunteers are needed at the St Charles wellbeing centre to create an eternal herb garden. Works starts on Wednesday, March 26th and then every Wednesday, 2 pm to 4 pm. All ages welcome and all materials provided.

☐ A new youth cafe has been set up at the St Charles open age cafe. Open to youngers aged 12 to 14, there will be cooking lessons and the chance to talk about health concerns in a confidential space. Further details are available from Marie Mulcahy on 0779 221 6159 or by emailing mulcahymary@yahoo.co.uk

☐ IF you have an event you want to publicise send details to www.editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Three different ways to treat your mum

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WEST 2 JEWELLERS

PAWNBROKERS West 2 Jewellers, on the Edgware Road, first opened its doors in 1946 but Mark Zolan acquired the business 30 years ago and has been running it ever since.

Affiliated to the National Pawnbrokers Association, West 2 deal in all types of secondhand jewellery and watches with very competitive rates so you may well pick up a bargain for that special gift for your mother.

West 2 also carry out watch repairs.

GERTRUDE’S FASHIONS

ESTABLISHED in 193, Gertrude’s Fashions stock classic lines such as Basler, Eugene, Lucia, Rabe and Gerry Weber so it’s ideal place to spoil your mum. And anyone who mentions this feature when purchasing will receive a ten per cent discount.

Gertrude’s in Victoria has a large and varied stock in sizes 10 to 22 and pride themselves on their friendly and informative service. Samples can be acquired at cost price.

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ON THIS special day treat your mum to a delicious Chinese meal at China Boulevard by the Thames in Wandsworth. For bookings, telephone 020 8774 9878.

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Enjoy a Wonderful Mother’s Day at China Boulevard

15th March 2015

LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

London Weekly News, Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Thursday, March 12th 2015

Editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

London Weekly News 9

West 2 Jewellers

191 Edgeware Rd London

W2 1ET

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www.west2jewellers.co.uk

west2jewellers@yahoo.co.uk

A WEBSITE that collects and publicises information on the accessibility of shops, restaurants, pubs, clubs, public buildings and stations for disabled people, will continue to receive funding from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Disabled Go’s website provides access information for a range of buildings, highlighting potential issues for disabled visitors. It aims to maximise independence and choice for disabled people in accessing their local area and the places everyone wants to visit.

Previously the website focused on people with mobility issues but now provides a range of access information for people with other disabilities and impairments as well.

Kensington and Chelsea was one of the first councils to support this project and today many other boroughs both in and outside London subscribe to the scheme.

Developed by disabled people for disabled people – Disabled Go is unique among national access information providers because it:

- Visits and surveys every venue on its website in person
- Use a survey method that over 800 groups of disabled people have contributed to
- Has a national network of steering groups that guide its work and support the continuous development of its service
- Offers a standardised service – from Aberdeen to Portsmouth its trained surveyors use the same high standards and pan-disability survey template to ensure that all its guides are accurate, reliable and presented in a user-friendly format.

Councillor Gerard Hargreaves, Cabinet Member for Voluntary Organisations and Resident Engagement, said: “I am very pleased that at a time of shrinking budgets we are able to continue our support to Disabled Go. Its website is an excellent source of practical information for disabled people about access to a wide range of commercial and public buildings in the borough.”

More information and details of access to 125,000 places of interest in the UK and Republic of Ireland are available at www.disabledgo.com

In the borough, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) has been pushing for better access to disability-friendly places of interest since 2006.

Councillor Terry Oliver, Cabinet Member for Voluntary Organisations and Resident Engagement, said: “I am very pleased that at a time of shrinking budgets we are able to continue our support to Disabled Go. Its website offers a national network of steering groups that guide its work and support the continuous development of its service.”

The development of its service is primarily driven by a survey template to ensure that all its guides are accurate, reliable and presented in a user-friendly format.

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IF you have an event you want to publicise send details to www.editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Green fingered volunteers are needed at the St Charles wellbeing centre to create an eternal herb garden. Works starts on Wednesday, March 26th and then every Wednesday, 2 pm to 4 pm. All ages welcome and all materials provided.

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Holland Park student wins coveted culinary prize

TALENTED young chefs from west London cooked against the clock to compete for the coveted prize of Young Chef of the Year 2015.

Taban Roosta, who is in Year 9 at Holland Park School, took the title with her expertly cooked menu of chicken roulade stuffed with fresh tarragon and pork sausage with rocket and a balsamic reduction, followed by tonka beans panna cotta with orange cake and cherry coulis.

All the competitors put in hours of practice and competed at their own schools for a place in the finals. Taban said the competition had inspired her to do more cooking at home. She said, “It was amazing. I got some really good tips on presentation. I'm really proud of what I made and that people really liked it. I didn't expect to win. I'll cook the dish again when I have visitors at home.”

David Chappell, Associate Head of Holland Park School, said: “We are incredibly proud of our students’ culinary achievements and delighted to see Taban take first prize in this prestigious competition. Her skills in the kitchen are quite simply phenomenal and I don't doubt she may one day trade up to a Michelin Star!”

The final took place at Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College’s training restaurant on Thursday, February 26th.

The competitors were judged by local star chefs Danny Bohan of the River Café, Anna Lotito of Mamma Anna & Co and Gerrard Madden of Fulham Football Club. All said that every finalist cooked top-quality, restaurant-standard food.

Anna Lotito said: “It was such a pity only one student had to win as everyone was at an outstanding level. The presentation, flavour and cooking skills using meat and fish is not something to be taken for granted. They were focused, precise – and very polite.”

All the finalists won a trophy, a Westfield London gift card and a River Café cookbook.

The ten runners-up, who also all produced top quality meals, were:

- Tyrenne Hawkins of The Bridge AP Academy
- Salsabeel Montague of Fulham Cross Girls’ School
- Isabella Vranic of Godolphin & Latymer School
- Jack Fernandes and Brandon Da Silva of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College
- Reece Clarke and Jack Bannister of Holland Park School
- Rianna Aniaker - Griffiths and Luca Carozzi of The Moat School
- Heidi Clark of Woodlane School.

Win a football kit for your primary school

CALLING all primary schools in Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham.

The London Weekly News is running a competition to win a full kit with four footballs. If you have a school team all you have to do is send in a photo of the team and tell us in no more than 100 words why you should win it. Our sports staff will choose the best and we will arrange for a former England player to visit your school and present the kit.

All those who enter will win a football.

Send your photo and reason why you should win it by email to: editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

We want to hear from you...

It’s not just the big stories that happen in London that we want to hear about.

There’s a brilliant community spirit in Central and West London. If you help to run a local organisation make sure your events are featured in our newspapers.

Email your news items and photos (jpeg format) to:

editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

CAN BRAIN STIMULATION MAKE YOU HAPPY? - CALL FOR STUDY VOLUNTEERS

Researchers at Goldsmiths University are recruiting volunteers to take part in a locally approved study.

We are looking for anyone aged over 60, without memory problems.

If you would like to find out more please contact Carys Evans: Tel: 020 7919 7374 or email: c.evans@gold.ac.uk
Christ Church Bentinck Primary School
celebrating diversity of community

PUPILS, parents and staff from Marylebone’s Christ Church Bentinck Primary School came together to celebrate the diversity of their community last week - raising an impressive total of over £800 in the process.

The Church of England school, which had an excellent Ofsted report in 2013, caters for 235 children from ages 3 to 11, has hosted its annual International Evening for the past thirteen years, both as a fundraiser and as a means of highlighting the wide range of backgrounds catered for.

Families packed out the school hall to sample international cuisine and watch performances from pupils and staff - who brought the house down with an impeccably choreographed dance by Don Rae, to Bruno Mars’ Uptown Funk, earning them the plaudits of local MP Karen Buck...who took to Twitter to pay tribute to the school’s “top teachers”.

The climax of the evening was a bumper raffle, with prizes including a signed Arsenal Ladies shirt, a Kindle Fire tablet worth over £100, and family tickets for the London Eye.

Big celebration

Speaking on the night, Christ Church Bentinck Headteacher Sandra Tyrell paid tribute to the hard work of those involved and said that the event was a great example of community values.

She said: “Our international evening is always a huge success, and it’s a big celebration of the diverse community that we have here.”

“It’s an important fundraiser for the school. We charge a small ticket fee for entry, and the families provide the food from all the different continents - tonight we had byriani, curries, fajitas, noodles - a great reflection of the community that we serve here.”

“It was good to see Karen Buck and members of the council here to provide us with support. We’ve had raffle prizes donated from local businesses, charitable organisations, staff have donated prizes - people have come together for our big community event.”

Words and photos by PATRICK MAGUIRE

The Schools Page
London’s housing crisis: only 18,750 new homes built last year

OVER 800 Londoners attended an event organised by the capital’s leading landlords, to help people find a home to rent, buy or exchange.

Led by Peabody, which provides a home for one in every 100 Londoners, the Southwark-based event brought together a range of experts showcasing the different housing options available for those who need to move for work, family or retirement reasons, or who are interested in buying a home.

Those attending had the opportunity to meet housing partners representing 200,000 homes including: Family Mosaic, L & Q, Affinity Sutton and Amicus Horizon, the UK’s main exchange providers House Exchange and HomeSwapper and the Mayor of Lon-
don’s housing mobility schemes; Share to buy and Housing Moves.

Mutual exchange was recognised as the quickest way to guarantee a move, with Housing Exchange report-
ing a 324 per cent increase in registrations following the event.

The event coincided with the release of new government figures which show that just 18,750 homes were built in London in 2014, more than a 37,500 shortfall on the 56,400 experts predict is needed every year to keep pace with new households forming.

Stephen Howlett, Peabody Chief Executive, said: “London’s housing crisis can only be tackled by driv-
ing up the supply of new homes across all tenures. We’re doing our bit by building 8,000 new homes to rent and buy, and also freeing up existing homes for people who need to move.

With thousands of Londoners living in overcrowded or unsuitable conditions, and others living in homes which are too large for their changing needs, this event has really helped raise awareness of new opportunities and advice to help people find their ideal home.”

Alison Muir, Head of Neighbourhoods at Peabody said: “This event was incredibly well received and the fantastic turnout shows how important it is to keep families facing homelessness informed of the housing options and opportunities available to them. By having several key providers in one room; we hope it will help encourage lots of future moves.”

Peabody has been creating opportunities for Lon-
doners since 1862, when it was established by the American banker and philanthropist, George Peabody. Their mission is to ensure that as many people as pos-
sible have a good home, a real sense of purpose and a strong feeling of belonging.

They work solely in London, with a presence in the majority of London boroughs, owning and managing around 27,000 homes, providing affordable housing for over 80,000 people. The development pipeline of 8,000 new homes across the capital means that Peabody will provide a good home to one in 100 Lon-
doners.

As well as bricks and mortar, Peabody provides a wide range of community programmes for residents and neighbourhoods, including help with employment and training, health and wellbeing projects and family support programmes.

Skyscraper race raises £250k for Shelter

CELEBRITIES Shayne Ward and George Clarke joined the ranks of nearly 1,000 run-
ers to race up London skyscraper, Tower 42, in support of housing and homelessness charity, Shelter.

Now in its seventh year, Vertical Rush retained its title as the UK’s tallest and toughest tower-running challenge with 10 top ranked athletes taking to the stairs of Tower 42 to compete in the Vertical World Circuit of tower-running events, which stretch from Brazil to Beijing.

The elites included 73 year old Orval Martins - the oldest person to ever attempt Vertical Rush – who flew all the way from Sao Paulo in Brazil to take part. In spite of his jetlag, Orval still managed to finish with an impressive time of 11 minutes 52 seconds.

Even the celebrity runners were feeling ultra-competitive with George Clarke climbing all 932 steps of Tower 42 in just 9 minutes and 29 seconds, narrowly beating Shayne Ward by a mere 77 seconds.

Professional football freestyler Ash Randall also drew looks of awe with his ball skills, as he managed to balance a football on his neck to the top of the 600ft tower.

Looking to raise a massive £250,000, this year’s race will make a huge difference to Shelter’s emergency help line as it struggles to keep up with growing de-
mend.

Amazing adrenalin rush

Shayne Ward said: “I can’t believe that I got up there so quickly as a first-timer - my legs are definitely going to be paying the price for it tomorrow! But it was an amazing adrenalin rush reaching the top.”

George Clarke said: “This is the second time that I’ve been daring enough to take on Tower 42, and so I’m chuffed that I managed to bag myself a decent time. But I am even more delighted to be working with Shel-
ter again to help them be there for the thousands of families facing homelessness right now.”

Campbell Robb, chief executive of Shelter, said: “It’s been amazing to see so many people geared up and ready to take on the UK’s tallest stair-running chal-
lence for Shelter today. Having done it twice myself, I know just how tough it is!

“All of the money raised by our incredible runners will allow us to be there for even more families fight-
ing to keep their home. Our advisors can make the dif-
ference between a family losing their home and keeping it – so we’re extremely thankful to everyone who’s taken part.”
Animal lover the Queen to visit Battersea Dogs’ Home

By Geoff Baker

He is the Chelsea Pensioner of the Battersea Dogs and Cats Home and next week when The Queen comes to visit he’ll be hoping to be Ma’am’s best friend.

Poor Harry the nine-year-old Staffie currently holds the title of Battersea’s least-wanted dog. Of all of the 5,400 dogs that the world’s most-famous animal shelter re-homes each year, Harry is the one that everybody passes by – and by the time Her Majesty arrives next Tuesday (March 17th) he’ll have been at Battersea for more than 100 days. The average stay is only 29.

This will be only the third time that The Queen has visited the dogs’ home. She last visited in 1991, when she opened new kennels, and that’s what she will be there to do again, officially opening 56 new kennels to add to the 258 that Battersea has for the capital’s unwanted dogs and the 70 pens it keeps for discarded cats.

But Britain’s most-famous animal lover, and Battersea’s royal patron, is not expected to be planning to take another dog back to her family of four corgis and dorgis at the palace as she has recently revealed that she is of an age now when one does not take on more pets.

That’s a blow to Harry, who so dislikes the company of other dogs that Battersea has just placed him with a foster family as he waits, and waits, to be somebody’s someone to love.

“Harry is an affectionate old boy who came to us as a stray and who is unfortunately finding kennel life a bit tough,” said a Battersea spokeswoman.

“He is quite set in his ways but he’s eager to please and to learn. He’s looking for new owners to help him learn some

WILL publicity from HM The Queen’s visit to Battersea help Harry, currently the dog who has been there longest, to find a new home?

Inside London’s new weekly

The unsung hero of Comic Relief

New image of the Queen for our coins

page 15

THE paper serving ROYAL London

Westminster & Pimlico News (established 1857) • Chelsea News (established 1857)
• Kensington News (established 1869)
Battersea’s royal patron grew to love dogs as a child

FROM page 13
owners to help him learn some basic manners and boundaries, but he loves to please his handlers and with some consistency and a cuddle we know that Harry will settle into home life nicely.”

Harry has had a long time of rejection possibly because so many people believe that Staffies are threatening. As a recent report in this newspaper revealed, Staffordshire bull terriers are being regarded to be status dogs for people who want to look aggressive. As a recent report in this newspaper revealed, Staffordshire bull terriers are being regarded to be status dogs for people who want to look aggressive.

But Battersea says the public perception of Staffies has got it all wrong.

“This much-maligned breed deserves a better, deal,” say staff at the rescue home. “Contrary to reports in the media, they are softer than you might think. The Kennel Club itself describes them as extremely reliable, highly intelligent and affectionate, especially with children.

“In fact, due to their gentle behaviour and affinity with children, they are often described as ‘the nanny dog’.”

Heartstrings

However, The Queen is not looking for a nanny. But it will be hard for this great animal-lover to pass without some tugging on her heartstrings among the new residents who are the latest in the more than three million animals that Battersea has homed in its 155 years.

The Queen has had pet dogs for almost all of her life. When she was just three her uncle, the then Prince Of Wales, gave her her first dog, a Cairn terrier.

But it’s corgis who have been her dearest love, ever since she first fell for the breed – which Welsh folklore has it were the mounts that fairies would ride into battle - when playing as a child in Hyde Park with one owned by Viscount Weymouth, later the Marquess of Bath. In 1933, after some pestering, her father got the family’s first corgi, called Dookie, and when Her Majesty was 18 she was given her own, whom she named Susan.

Susan was the first of some 30 corgis which The Queen has owned. She has also had labradors, a golden retriever, a cocker spaniel and a shih-tzu, but it’s corgis that have become synonymous with the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II.

Susan even went on The Queen’s honeymoon with the Duke of Edinburgh, who will be accompanying Her Majesty on the Battersea visit, and like all of the royal corgis since, was only ever fed the freshest – not canned – food.

At Battersea they get through 32 tonnes of biscuit each year to feed the unwanted dogs. At the palace, Willow and Holly the corgis and Candy and Vulcan the dogs dine a bit differently. “One day they’ll get chuck steak, boiled and served with chopped cabbage and rice, the next day they’ll have poached chicken or liver,” revealed one former royal chef.

The royal pets are walked every morning by a footman. They bound into The Queen’s room when she rises for breakfast and she walks them every day after lunch. At bedtime, they each sleep in wicker baskets that are raised off the ground to avoid draughts. When they die, they are buried in a special corgi cemetery at Balmoral.

Over the years they have become as symbolic of The Queen as her crown. In 2002, to mark Her Majesty’s Golden Jubilee, a silver crown was minted depicting The Queen with a corgi on her lap and Monty even got to be a movie star – when he appeared to an audience of billions alongside The Queen and actor Daniel Craig in the famous James Bond skit produced for the London Olympics.

Poor old Harry has never even appeared in a selfie, let alone in a movie, but he’s still hoping that his winsome portrait in Battersea’s gallery of “owners wanted” will attract anyone who has a heart – especially before the surge of new, younger animals comes to Battersea at any moment. For it’s only now that dogs and cats’ home steels itself for the usual intake of Christmas presents with whom people have become bored.

But with such a profile-raising and promotional visit from The Queen next week, the renewed attention may win him someone yet.

To see all about Harry and the other dogs and cats now needing a loving home, go to www.battersea.org.uk
NEW IMAGE of the Queen to go on coins

Is there a fortune at the bottom of your purse?

Before you use that 50p in your pocket to buy a packet of crisps in the pub tonight, have a good look at it first - as you could be parting with £120.

As a new head of The Queen on coins has just been unveiled by the Royal Mint, everyone is being urged to check their change as there could be a windfall in that purse.

The Royal Mint advises that the public keeps a special eye out for the 2009 50p which it issued to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. On the tails side it features a pagoda encircled by a vine and if you have one of the only 210,000 minted, best pay on a card for those crisps because the coin is worth at least £120.

And it’s not such a long shot that might find one in your change – the Royal Mint says that one in every 300 people will find the Kew coin in their pocket at some time.

But there’s even rarer – and more valuable – coins to be found in an old handbag yet.

More rare than the Kew coin are a couple of other 50ps. Look out for the 1992 coin minted to mark the UK presidency of the EC Council of Ministers. Only 109,000 were issued and although it is the old size 50p and was demonetised in 1998, collectors would still like to get their hands on one on eBay.

Also worth putting up on eBay if you find one is the 2012 50p which was issued to mark the swimming Olympics of the 2012 London Games. The original design of the tails side had waves obscuring a swimmer’s face. Although it was redesigned to make the swimmer image clearer, some of the first design are still in circulation and worth a bob or two.

Check your 20p pieces too. In 2009 the Mint changed the date on coins around, switching it from tails to the head side. But 100,000 20ps were minted in error without the date on either side – it will be worth at least £100 if you’ve got one.

The other peculiarity of the coin that will make it somewhat distinctive to anyone with big enough pockets to carry it, is the weight – officially recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as the world’s largest coin, it weighs 3.215 troy oz or just over 15 stone.

Whilst the chances of finding any such thing dropped in the back of the car are zero to minus infinity, there’s hope yet for rare coin hunters who head down to HMS Belfast at her mooring at The Queen’s Walk.

Last month The Royal Mint announced the release of a £2 coin to commemorate the role of the Royal Navy in World War One. The Royal Mint deliberately made it to be rare, by minting only 100 of

By Geoff Baker

Even better, go through all those 2p coins that you’ve kept in a jar and have a good look at any minted in 1983. That was the year when, after a decade of decimalisation, the Government decided to stop printing ‘New Pence’ on the coin and put ‘Two Pence’ instead. If you find a 1983 2p marked ‘New Pence’, put it somewhere safe as it is worth £700.

But for a chance to cash in rare change for really big money you need to go back to the old money, get up in the attic or down the back of an ancient sofa for pre-decimal coins. What you’re looking for is a 1933 penny.

Only a handful of pennies were minted in 1933; one is in the British Museum and another in the Royal Mint Museum. A few more were buried under the foundation stones of a couple of churches and the University of London building in Bloomsbury. In 1970, thieves dug under the foundation stone of the Church of The Cross in Midleton, Yorkshire, and lifted the penny put there. It has never been found, so it is out there somewhere – with a value of at least £80,000 on it.

Rarer still, and worth an even bigger windfall, is a gold sovereign minted in 1936 to mark the coming coronation of King Edward VIII. But in 1936 the king abdicated and the coins were never issued – all except two. One is still somewhere unknown. The other sold at auction last year for £516,000.

But for the really big money – and the coin least likely in the entire world to be found in any wallet without it being extremely noticeable – we need to look for The Queen’s head printed on a dollar coin from the Royal Canadian Mint in 2007. Only five were made and The Queen has one of them.

A few things will make it obviously the find that it is – on the tails side it bears maple leaves, it is made of pure gold and it’s not just ‘a’ dollar coin but a one million dollar face value coin. One of four ‘in circulation’ sold at auction in 2012 for £2.6 million.

The gold sovereign minted to mark the planned coronation of King Edward VIII. He abdicated and the coins were never issued

THE new head of The Queen to go on our coins - the fifth representation since the beginning of her reign

the coins in a partnership with HMS Belfast and its visitors’ shop.

“Some visitors to the shop may find one of the coins in their change,” teased the Royal Mint.

CELEBRATING the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew - the 2009 50p piece and the 1992 coin marking the UK presidency of the EC Council

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The unsung heroine of Comic Relief

By Geoff Baker

THIS year it’s the big one; the biggest, reddest one of them all. For this year’s Red Nose Day could mark the day when Comic Relief achieves an astonishing feat – of raising £1 BILLION since it all began 30 years ago.

What a difference a day makes.

So far, since Comic Relief was launched on Christmas Day 1985 with a report from a refugee camp in the Sudan screened on Noel Edmonds’s Late Late Breakfast Show, big-hearted people have raised a total of £960 million.

If this Friday’s Red Nose Day follows its own trend - £100 million raised in 2013, £108 million raised in 2011 - then the best idea in the history of comedy will pass the billion mark.

Whilst it is not for scruffs like me to teach David Cameron or Ed Miliband how to suck eggs, in the light of this highly-probable achievement one would have thought it blindingly-obvious to whomever is in Downing Street after the election that knighthoods should be handed out at The Queen’s Birthday Honours in June to the founders of Comic Relief and its wacky child Red Nose Day - Richard Curtis, Ben Elton and Lenny Henry, the three wise men who taught a nation to give a care for a laugh.

But another big gong should go to an unknown London charity worker, Jane Tewson – for she was the inspirational woman who began it all.

Few have ever heard of Jane Tewson. Even fewer have heard that the idea for Comic Relief came to her after she died and had an out-of-body experience.

Hers is a story as remarkable as the charity movement that she inspired.

Live shows

It started in Soho in 1981. Jane, a severe dyslexic who had attended lectures at the University of Oxford whilst working as a cleaner in the city, set up the London Charity Projects to help Soho’s homeless. To raise funds, she persuaded comedians, musicians and other performers to create live shows in aid of the needy.

In 1985, inspired by the humanitarian triumph of Bob Geldof’s Band Aid, Jane went to the Sudan to work in a refugee camp and there she contracted cerebral malaria – and died.

She was pronounced clinically dead for some moments. As doctors around her anguished over the lack of drugs in the camp which could have saved her, Jane had the strangest sensation of leaving her body and looking down on the scene.

But some higher power had something more in store for her yet and she saw herself re-enter her body. She came round and survived.

Propelled by the strangeness of the miraculous experience, Jane returned to London and met up with Richard Curtis with an idea.

As it happens with good ideas, Curtis had been thinking on similar lines since he too had had a life-changing experience whilst visiting Ethiopia during the famine.

“I remember seeing a child being weighed in a pair of suspended plastic pants,” he said.

“She was so thin that she fell through the left hand hole, landed on the floor in a heap, and everyone fell about laughing.

“I thought it extraordinary that they still had the capacity and desire to find something funny in such tragic circumstances.”

After talking with Jane and remembering the Ethiopian scene, the vision of Comic Relief was born.

“I thought that laughter would be a good idea for raising money and the best way would be to get my friends to be as funny as could be,” said Curtis.

The concept of persuading everyone to wear a plastic red nose was initially dismissed as “an atrocious idea because it would just remind everyone of Italian clowns”, but Curtis and his comedy pals persisted and tens of millions of noses have been sold since.

This year, the Tube, trains, buses, offices, schools and pavements of the capital will be full of people wearing red noses, there are nine new noses to buy for Comic Relief’s 30th year.

And as this is the big year, Comic Relief is throwing everything they’ve got at the TV marathon fundraiser on Friday when both BBC1 and BBC2 will be turned over to the best of British fund-raising, which will be screened live for the first time from The London Palladium.

All of the big stars are turning out for the show, which traditionally smashes viewing figures – they’ve even got James Bond, as Daniel Craig will be appearing in a special 007 film made for Comic Relief.

Lenny Henry, Davina McCall, Claudia Winkleman, David Walliams and John Bishop will host the Red Nose Day fundraiser, which will include highlights like Rowan Atkinson reviving Mr Bean for the first time in eight years. Dawn French returning in a one-off Vicar Of Dibley and Walliams, McCall and Bishop teaming up with Eddie Izzard to recreate Monty Python’s famous Four Yorkshiremen sketch.

Unique appearance

There will also be the finale of celebrity Bake Off, the climax of The People’s Strictly, Sam Smith singing, a Phoenix Nights special from Peter Kay, Dermot O’Leary climaxing a 24-hour dancing marathon – which the public can witness by going along to the piazza at New Broadcasting House – and a unique appearance from this year’s man of the moment, Professor Stephen Hawking performing with Walliams as Lou the carer in the return of Little Britain.

As ever, the public’s part is crucial to Comic Relief’s success. This year’s theme is Make Yourself Funny For Money – painting and decorating your face, take a Selfie, text to 70011 to donate £1 and get a link back from Comic Relief to where you can post your face on a site alongside the famous.

And hopefully at some time during the night a double-kissed cast of stars will announce that Comic Relief is now the billionaire of giving.

DESERVING OF A KNIGHTHOOD: Richard Curtis, Lenny Henry and Ben Elton

JANE Tewson

Red Nose Day for Comic Relief, Friday March 13th BBC1&2.

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JOHN Torode and Gregg Wallace may have spent the past decade hosting MasterChef together, but don't expect them to hang out, Ant and Dec-style, when the cameras stop rolling.

"We're like an old married couple who travel away from each other all the time," says Torode, when asked why their partnership works so well.

"We don't really spend time together. I have no idea where he is when we're not filming, we have very different lives, different tastes, we listen to different music, I'm cool and he's a bit old and doddery..."

The pair "never try and impose our views on each other", adds the 49-year-old, who returns for a new instalment of the BBC One cookery show this month.

"The only things he imposes upon me are his stupid jokes."

As always, viewers can look forward to "a couple of twists and turns" in series 11, which features 40 amateur cooks competing over 24 episodes.

The most notable twist is a reinvention test, which sees heat-stage hopefuls taking the main ingredient from their signature dish and turning it into a brand new plate of food.

If they impress the judges, and get through another two-course challenge, they'll make it into the quarter finals, and finally, at the end of the gruelling seven weeks, 2015's champion will be crowned.

Torode, who grew up in Maitland, in Australia's New South Wales, says he still gets inspired by the home cooks who enter.

"This year, more than ever, we've seen such a diverse group of cooks with really different ideas, with food from all around the place - from people cooking street food to really elegant fine dining, to brilliant stuff from Austria and Germany, through to Japan, India, France, China, Malaysia, Russia."

Torode also has MasterChef to thank for his romance with actress and cookery writer Lisa Faulkner, who he met when she competed in - and won - Celebrity MasterChef in 2010.

"She's such an amazing cook. She's so great and so generous, and she's pretty good-looking as well. The old man did all right!" says Torode.

The TV judge would never criticise his former contestants' food, however - including Faulkner's.

"Can you imagine me going to somebody's house, or to Lisa, and saying, 'Well I think this would work, maybe if you did this... That would be the must thing in the whole world.'"

Torode is also working on a new book, My Kind Of Food, due out later this year, "about the food I cook at home - clams and spaghetti, really good salad, curry and pies".

And later this year, he'll celebrate his 50th birthday. The chef, who has four children from two previous relationships, insists he's not bothered about the landmark birthday.

"Turning 40, I hated. Turning 50, I'm fine about. I am what I am. I don't feel old, I feel great," he says.

"I'm very, very happy, I'm very privileged to do things like MasterChef. I'm travelling the world, writing books. I'm doing all right."

"MasterChef starts this week on BBC 1"
Students bring classics to the masses

By Patrick Maguire

A DAPTING, producing, directing and starring in a sell-out West End run of a two-thousand year old Greek tragedy sounds like a job for the professionals - but bringing the work of Euripides to a modern audience has been all in a term’s work for a hardy band of University College London students who are now set to take a stunning production on tour to the British Museum and Athens.

Run by the university’s department of Greek and Latin - consistently ranked among the best in the country - UCL’s classical play is a tradition of almost 30 years and has become an institution in the academic world. Working in their own time, students stage a production of an Ancient Greek play in English at the famous Bloomsbury Theatre, handling all aspects of production - from acting and directing to lighting and make-up.

Since 1987 UCL has taken ancient drama from the page to the stage, providing an important educational resource for generations of school pupils and launching careers in the performing arts for many of those involved - Tim Rice-Oxley of platinum-selling rock band Keane provided the music for the 1997 incarnation.

World leading academics

Students and staff also come together to provide a comprehensive programme of educational resources and public lectures to accompany their production - including discussion panels and special talks featuring world-leading academics from London universities for the hundreds of pupils and teachers from around the country who take in the UCL Greek Play as part of GCSE and A-Level study.

2014 saw the broad, bawdy burlesque of the comic poet Aristophanes capture the imagination of theatre-goers (and Boris Johnson, who hosted an extra performance for schoolchildren at City Hall), but last month’s sell-out run of Euripides' Bacchae saw students return to tragedy with a modern take on bloody, ritualistic tragedy pitting savagery and raw sensuality against civilisation and rationality that proved especially popular with the thousands of people who flocked to see five performances over three days between February 10th and 12th.

The play sees Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, ritual madness and fertility, seek revenge against Pentheus, King of the city of Thebes - who, in typically Greek and bloody fashion, is murdered by his own mother.

By Patrick Maguire

Enormous success

Directed by second-year English student Emily Louizou, a Greek native, the production was lauded as “mesmeric” and “brilliant” in the press and has been hailed as an “enormous success” by senior academics at the college.

Professor Gesine Manuwald, Head of Greek and Latin, paid tribute to “a professional performance attended by record audiences”.

She said: “The UCL Greek play has been an institution in the capital’s cultural calendar for over 30 years and is a great way of bringing literature and themes from the classical world to a broad audience, including school groups and interested members of the general public.”

“It is so much more fun to experience a Greek tragedy by watching it rather than by reading the words on the page, which cannot really do justice to the impact of a dramatic production. Since this year’s team had chosen a timeless staging and highlighted the key questions about human behaviour inherent in the tragedy, even a play about ‘Bacchae’ felt very relevant to all who watched it.”

Leading man Adam Woolley, a second year classicist, agreed, saying: “Performing in an ancient tragedy is so helpful to someone academically studying the classics.”

“I think the fact that our Greek play has become an annual traditional is a useful way for UCL to keep in touch with schools, making it easier for the keen kids who have their hearts set on classics to get their first flavour of university life. Perhaps it’s also the first taste some of them get in ancient theatre in performance - it’s our responsibility to fire their interest if there is any hope of them splashing their cash on West End and provincial runs of ancient works in future!”

Though the boards of the Bloomsbury are free from the incest, murder and tragic twists of Greek drama until next year, the massive success of the Bacchae has not yet peaked.

After a flood of positive reviews and record ticket sales, the production will be revived not only in the hallowed halls of the British Museum in July, but also at the International Festival of Ancient Drama in Messene, Greece, in April - no mean feat for a bunch of stressed students working around degree commitments.
Piano Brothers hit the high notes

By Geoff Baker

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EVEN years ago a brilliant classical pianist from Kensington called Dominic Ferris wrote to his principal at the Royal College of Music to say thank you very much for his first year’s degree studies but he would not be studying anymore as he was joining a rock band instead.

The magic-fingered young player who regularly played the organ at services in large churches and cathedrals in London and around the South East joined a band exotically called Purple Melon and began to let his hair down.

After some months of gigs around Birmingham and London, Dominic began to wonder if he was cut out for this rock and roll stuff and he left. It was a good call; another letter to the RCM got him back in class and two years later he graduated with a First.

In final year he met up with another piano playing student, Indonesian-born Elwin Hendrijanto, and they formed the unusual idea of two players performing virtuoso piano versions of the music of today.

They dubbed themselves The Piano Brothers. Their first public performance packed-out the RCM concert hall performing Bernstein’s Symphonic Dances from ‘West Side Story’ for two pianos.

Royalty heard of them and they were hired to play for the international press launch of the Royal Wedding at Lancaster House.

Next they recorded their first EP at Abbey Road Studios in February 2012, which brought them to the attention of Steinway & Sons. Steinway’s managing director, Craig Terry, hosted an event for The Piano Brothers in March 2013 at Steinway Hall in Marylebone Lane, where they performed such an electrifying concert of original piano arrangements of the songs of Adele, Muse and The Lion King that Craig Terry said of the evening: “The Piano Brothers’ performance was so creative and exciting I didn’t want it to ever end.”

Later that year, Dominic and Elwin were approached by Steinway & Sons to compose the music for a short film called ‘The Making of A Steinway B’, which demonstrated the building process of a Steinway grand piano in the world-famous Hamburg factory.

In January 2014, Dominic and Elwin performed the piano parts for the music of the opening ceremony of the Sochi Winter Olympics, recorded at Abbey Road Studios.

Last summer, The Piano Brothers made their official public London debut at Kings Place. Featuring EMC Strings, The Piano Brothers played a tour de force featuring their trademark fiery arrangements of modern classics.

On March 29th, The Piano Brothers will perform for the It’s All About Piano festival at the Institut Français in South Kensington. It is expected to be a sell-out as the brothers are clearly going places.

Tickets £15, £8 students, from 0207 871 3515.

Going green for the craic

I

f they all turn up it will be a squeeze; Trafalgar Square has an official capacity of only 12,000 and there’s reckoned to be around 900,000 ethnic Irish in London, 12 per cent of the population.

Some sources say that the number of Londoners of Irish descent is 5.5 million – 77 per cent of the population – but that may be a bit of blarney.

But hey, who cares about the stats – it’s St Patrick’s Day celebrations in town on Sunday, March 15th, and even Nelson on his column will be turned green for the craic.

As it’s Mother’s Day too and the Irish love their mums, there could be even more turning out than the 125,000 who joined the celebrations all over the centre of town last year.

The floats and walkers for this year’s parade will begin to gather at 10am outside Green Park Tube station.

At noon and led by boxer Barry McGuigan, the parade will set off up Piccadilly, along Lower Regent Street, the Mall and Cockspur Street, up around Trafalgar Square and finish up in Whitehall.

In Trafalgar Square there will be a children’s marquee with various workshops offering various activities including decorating your own leprechaun hat, making your own pot of gold, making a rainbow paper chain to cover the huge tent, photo booths in which to dress up as Grace O’Malley and Fiona McChuaill characters, green face painting and Irish-themed nail stickers – and a fancy dress competition for the best leprechaun.

The square will also host an Irish food and drink market and a live music stage for performances from Damien Dempsey, The Corosnas, Divine Comedy, Sharon Shannon, the cast of The Commitments from the West End musical, The Saw Doctors and Riverdance.

Meanwhile, at the Prince Charles Cinema in Leicester Square from 12.30 pm until 5pm there’s a 14-film festival celebrating the best of Irish movies, including Anywhere But Here, Home, Boogaloo and Graham, Sophie At The Races and The Legend Of Longwood. And more music – and much dancing – will be hosted at Westminster Cathedral Hall, the venue for this year’s Irish Tea Dance from 2-6pm.

A very great deal of Guinness will also be flowing everywhere, perfect for the 6pm toast to St Patrick when Nelson’s Column will be lit-up green.

As they say in Ireland, if you’re passing – don’t.

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TALK OF THE TOWN

WITH so many revivals and long-running musicals in the West End, it is always good to see something new.

A world premiere for Seasons of Love - a new musical - took place for one night only, at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

With music by Mark Leddy, this ambitious project brought together renowned choreographer Gareth Walker and designer Mark Cunniffe who were the creative team behind the London Olympics closing ceremony.

Guest stars included chart-topping singer Claire Richards, from the pop group Steps, nineties pop sensation Chesney Hawkes and Mark Read, a former member of the boyband A1.

The show is set in present day Ireland and follows three love stories over four seasons and different stages of life.

Although billed as a musical, this was actually more a rock ballet with songs. The songs, were great and the dancing was astounding, but after the first half hour I did feel as if I was waiting for the story to start.

Once I had come to grips with the fact that it was obviously a dance show, with no real story to follow, I watched and enjoyed all of the elements of stage design and choreography along with some good performances by the guest singers.

Although seeming to lack confidence in parts, Chesney Hawkes sang well and his duets with Claire Richards were excellent. Richards showed her fantastic vocal range and her contribution was the musical highlight for me.

Mark Read had a great voice, but I did feel his performance was very much like that of a boyband concert, lacking any real connection to the other performers or the production in general.

Dueting with Reed, Hayley Sanderson showed some great class in her performance during the autumn section and Ambra Cassetteri and Patrick Smyth also sang with great depth and emotion.

However, I found some of the movement of the singers a bit cheesy, particularly the walking forward in unison, which happened numerous times, often leading the audience to think it was the end of the show.

Sensitive portrayal

The dance highlights were many but, if forced to choose, I would say Martin Fenton stood out. His command of the stage and fabulously sensitive portrayal of his character was excellent.

The lighting and projections were good and went some way into establishing which season the audience was meant to be watching, but I still only counted three rather than four, and found the whole thing rather confusing.

In all this was a great spectacle of dance, design and music. I feel with some development it could be a very good show, but it needs something more to pull all of the elements together and make it an easier watch for the audience.

Jerry's Girls 'put on their Sunday clothes'

I love a good musical revue and this one based on the songs of composer/lyricist Jerry Herman, really appealed to me. With so many wonderful Broadway show tunes on the list and some performers I really admire, my expectations were high.

Featuring songs from classic musicals including Hello Dolly!, Mame, Mack and Mabel and La Cage Aux Folles, Jerry’s Girls is written for an all-female cast and captures the true spirit of the great American musical.

Created by Jerry Herman and collaborator Larry Alford in 1981, Jerry’s Girls originated as a cabaret presentation at a nightclub in New York. This new London production boasted three seasoned West End performers, Ria Jones, Anna-Jane Casey, and Sarah-Louise Young.

Jones, fresh from her recent tour as one third of the West End Women, alongside Joanna Ampil and Kerry Ellis has the most wonderful way of engaging an audience. Her interpretations of show stopping numbers such as ‘I Won’t Send Roses’ and ‘I Am What I Am’ were pure musical theatre heaven and will go down in my memory as one of the best performances I’ve ever been fortunate enough to witness.

I asked Jones what it was like singing such memorable and famous songs.

“I’ve always been a fan of Jerry Herman’s wonderful scores,” she said. “I also love that he writes such great songs for older female characters, like Mame and Dolly - such powerful ballads and feel good tunes. It’s wonderful singing hit after hit each night.”

Jones wasn’t the only one showing her star quality. Casey’s ‘If He Walked Into My Life’ from Mame was an absolute joy.

Although I have highlighted the more sensitive numbers, this show also pitched a throng of hilarious numbers which, at times, left the audience laughing so loudly it must have been difficult for the cast not to join in.

Young showed her exceptional comedic qualities with ‘Take It All Off’ and when Jones interjected with her ‘Put It Back On’ the audience were delighted.

With excellent musical and sometimes stage support from musical director Edward Court and woodwind virtuoso Sophie Byrne, this was an absolute treat.

Court said: “We’re really lucky to have some of the best songs written for musical theatre all in one show. Jerry’s music is from the great Broadway tradition of the ‘showtune’ - there are some classics that everyone will know and a few surprises along the way. It has been a treat to work with such strong material and of course the three wonderful ladies we have as Jerry’s Girls!”

With Michael Ball soon to star in a revival of Mack and Mabel at the Chichester Festival Theatre, it seems Jerry Herman’s music is very much back in vogue.

This production runs for just two weeks, but if you can get there, it’s one not to be missed.
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**Annual Leave:** 26 days per year plus bank holidays

**Closing Date:** Applications must be received by 9am on Monday 6th April 2015

**CV’s will not be considered.**

Request an application pack by calling 020 7450 8000 or emailing enquiries@leathermarketjmb.org.uk

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**Alleyne’s School**

Townley Road, Dulwich, London SE2 8SU

**Clubhouse Manager**

(Part time, flexibility essential)

This leading HMC co-educational school seeks a Clubhouse Manager to run an off-site sports facility and bar, used predominantly by former pupils and by third parties booking the premises for a range of events.

The chosen candidate will coordinate the premises in addition to managing several bar events and cleaning staff. They will also ensure that the facilities are maintained to the highest standards and successfully manage relationships with a wide range of users from within the school and local community.

The chosen candidate will have excellent organisational and communication skills and will be used to working independently. It is vital that candidates can work flexibly as a large amount of work will need to be carried out at weekends and evenings. Previous experience of running a similar amenity or experience in an events or catering background would be advantageous.

The salary for this post will be in the range of £22,000-£28,000 per annum.

**Closing date for applications:** Monday March 23rd at 5pm

Full job description and application details may be downloaded from our website www.alleynes.org.uk, by contacting Human Resources on 020 810 3016 or bethmin@alleynes.org.uk

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. Alleyne’s is an equal opportunities employer.

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**School Chefs/Cook & GA’s Required**

Biggin Hill & West Wickham & SEI School Term Time Working - Perm positions

See www.industriesforschoolers.co.uk

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**Curtain Fixers required for International Curtain Company based in SW1**

Some experience of woodwork and knowledge of power tools would be an advantage, though training will be given.

Good communication skills also essential. Full driving licence (preferably over 25 years old, for insurance purposes) and DBS checks required.

Please contact Suzan Akehurst on 020 8671 7629
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LEE TERRACE, BLACKHEATH, SE13 5DL - WWW.SJBLACKHEATHMINI.CO.UK

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020 8318 6868 www.stephenjamesblackheathbmw.co.uk

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Official fuel economy figures for the BMW range available on the Motability Car Scheme: Urban 34.9-64.2 mpg (6.1-4.4 l/100km), Extra Urban 55.4-83.1 mpg (5.1-3.4 l/100km), Combined 45.6-74.3 mpg (6.2-3.8 l/100km). CO2 emissions 145-99 g/km. Figures may vary depending on driving style and conditions.

*The facilities offered are for the hire (leasing) of goods. The Motability Contract Hire Scheme is administered by Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1378888), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9SA. To qualify you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance, the Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), War Pensioners’ Mobility Supplement (WPMS) or the Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP), which will be taken in lieu of the four weekly rental. Terms and conditions apply and are available on request. Model shown: 114i Sport 5-Door Sport Hatch available with £799 advance payment. BMW EfficientDynamics reduces emissions without compromising performance developments and is standard across the model range.
R's ROBBED OF PENALTIES

As for the Saints, they have the

and wouldn't Mourinho be ecstatic if his

on Southampton by

the biggest calls, the careers

it very well, but if you are a

2019-20 season.

Prop Jacob Bray was unable to maintain his

RUGBY UNION

Hammersmith & Fulham... 3

LOFTUS ROAD

LORIOUS weather at Hurlingham Park

was more than twice in any of their last 10

Champions League

loving rugby and after the first five

LONDONER

incidents. If you can't get to the match, sit down

saw him race over the line in what was his final
game for the club.

Hammersmith & Fulham... 3

LORIOUS weather at Hurlingham Park

mattered for everyone to settle with the

Hammers shot to

and explain the outcome of all these

and

was to back Under 2.5 goals in Chelsea’s

front of the Sky cameras.

In fact, Villa’s progress to the FA Cup semi-final means that R’s league visit to Villa Park – scheduled for Monday, April 20 – must be re-arranged. QPR have announced that they are offering reduced priced tickets, with a discount of up to £10, for Hoops’ fans to watch the replay at the new West Midlands ground.

Local clubs, Forfar Athletic and Kilmarnock, will also

If you look hard enough, you might

in the position we’re in, when goals go in there are always going to be people that get the blame, or people who are

Night

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Blues heading towards glory

JOSE Mourinho puffed out his cheeks, quickly followed by a huge sigh of relief as the final whistle went at Upton Park.

It signalled that three vital points were heading across London to SW6 after Chelsea’s 1-0 win at West Ham on Wednesday of last week.

That Eden Hazard close-range header ensured the Blues remain five points clear at the top of the pile, ahead of Manchester City with a game in hand.

With 10 league games to go, many pundits have already crowned Chelsea kings. At Wembly last week, after Chelsea’s 2-0 Capital One Cup final victory over Spurs, one venerable sage from a national broadsheet told me that the Blues had effectively won two titles that day.

He was, of course, also referring to Man City’s earlier defeat at Liverpool, which he felt made Chelsea unsailable at the top of the Premier League.

But a closer inspection of the fixtures will show plenty of potential banana skins to be hurdled before any such coronation can take place.

Chelsea have to face Manchester United at home and Arsenal away. For those games one would anticipate that Chelsea will perform close to their maximum but a short trip to QPR is never a stroll in the park at the best of times – and that’s one match that could prove problematic.

They also have to go to struggling Hull City and Leicester City and have tricky home matches against Southampton and Stoke City.

Chelsea will hope to extend the points gap over Man City to eight when they play their catch-up match at bottom-placed Leicester on April 29. If everything goes to plan, Mourinho will be looking to have achieved enough points to be league champions by May 9.

He is working to be at least nine points clear of the nearest challenger before Chelsea entertain Liverpool at the Bridge on that date.

A win against the Scousers, with two matches remaining, away to WBA and at home to Sunderland, would ensure that Chelsea couldn’t be caught.

The other reason why he wants the title wrapped up by then is that the Champions League semi-final, first leg takes place the following week. By winning at that point, he will be able to focus all his player resources on those semi-final matches and, hopefully, the final.

While Mourinho professes to ‘just take one game at a time’, he will have worked out, to within a few points, just where his side should be at any given stage of the season. As the season pans out, he has adjusted those estimates and, currently, it’s believed that he sees the Liverpool game as the title-winning match.

If Chelsea do reach the European final in Berlin, Germany on June 6, let’s hope that club owner Roman Abramovich remembers to take a proper suit with him.

At West Ham, he apparently wasn’t dressed in the formal attire needed to enter the directors’ lounge at Upton Park. By all accounts his plane was late arriving in London and he couldn’t change into appropriate clothing in time.

Well aware of the dress code, Abramovich did the honourable thing and initially stayed outside the room.

That was until West Ham’s Vice-Chairman Karren Brady found out and instructed that he be let in. Can you imagine that happening anywhere else in the world? Nope, me neither, but that’s English football for you.

LWT went to press before Wednesday’s (March 11) return Champions League round-of-16 match against PSG at Stamford Bridge. We speak today to a Bratislav Ivancovic header that earned them a 1-1 draw in the first leg in Paris a couple of weeks ago, the expectation was that the Blues, rather than Les Bleus, would progress to the quarter-finals.

On Sunday, Chelsea take on Southampton in one of those potential banana skin games. It’s an early afternoon kick-off and the Blues will be hoping to go one better than the 1-1 draw achieved at St Mary’s at the end of December. The Saints are currently seventh, having flirted with the possibility of finishing in the top-four for much of this campaign.

One man who will get a roasting reception is Saints’ left-back Ryan Bertrand. The Southwark-born defender joined Southampton on loan from Chelsea before penning a permanent £10m deal in January.

As the understudy to Ashley Cole, he was a tad hard down by when he was unable to cement the left-back berth at Stamford Bridge permanently after Cole’s contract expired and he left the club to join Roma.

Ryan has the distinction of being the first player to make his Champions League bow in the final – the epic 2012 victory against Bayern Munich, which Chelsea won 4-3 on penalties after extra-time and is indelibly carved in Blues’ history.

WHILE Chelsea’s first team are performing to expectations, their younger players have had mixed results of late. The development squads fall into three age groups – the U21s, U19s and U18s.

The U21s have lost four on the spin and sit in fourth place. But with 21 points, they are only two adrift of leaders Manchester United.

The U19s play in the UEFA Youth League and are doing well. They topped their group stage and dispatched Zenit St Petersburg 3-1 in the knockout stage. On Tuesday, they contested the quarter-final against Atletico Madrid.

The U18s, who take part in the FA Youth Cup, will have to do well to overcome Spurs in the semi-final, second leg at Stamford Bridge next Wednesday (March 18). The north Londoners took a 2-0 lead in the first leg at White Hart Lane last Thursday but the Blues have a fine pedigree in this competition. In the past seven years Chelsea have reached five finals and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27