A DAVID and Goliath clash has broken out in Kensington and Chelsea with small businesses on the King’s Road who say a Crossrail station would close them down now at war with big businesses who say the controversial rail plan would be great for the area.

In an “uprising” against proposals for a £1.2 billion Crossrail station in the King’s Road, 80 small and medium-sized businesses in Chelsea have come together to oppose it, claiming that their business rates will rocket by 50 per cent if the project goes ahead and many could be forced to close.

In a letter to this newspaper, copied to London Mayor Boris Johnson, Chelsea’s local businesses say a Crossrail 2 station “would put many of our futures at risk”.

The letter comes a month after another letter signed by the bosses of the borough’s cultural institutions and big businesses like Harrods claimed that a station in the King’s Road would “ensue the long-term success of Kensington & Chelsea”.

That letter was signed by 46 cultural, business and health chiefs including Sir Michael Dixon, director of the Natural History Museum, Nigel Hunt, CEO of the Saatchi Gallery, Joseph Cooper, and borough leader Nick Paget-Brown. Moreover, our planning enforcement team is now the toughest in London and many a developer has learnt this is not the place to bend the rules.

SUPPORTER: Many small and independent traders in the King’s Road, one of the favourite shopping haunts of the Duchess of Cambridge, fear the Crossrail station plan will savage their business.
Obesity figures offer food for thought

SOME 500 fast-food takeaways in the capital have signed up to an initiative that encourages them to sell healthier food, the Mayor of London announced this week.

The mayor also revealed that JJ Food Service, one of the largest suppliers of food to takeaways, is now promoting the Healthier Catering Commitment to the 13,000 restaurants they count as customers. JJ will encourage them to buy healthier ingredients and cooking products, meaning a potentially huge change in the food that takeaways across London sell to their customers.

Recent research in Tower Hamlets revealed one fast-food takeaway selling a portion of chips totalling 1,385 calories, 93 per cent of daily recommended intake, and 69g of fat. Their research showed that portion sizes are increasing as takeaways compete for custom.

Poor eating habits are widely regarded to be one of the main causes of obesity. Londoners living or working close to clusters of takeaway outlets are twice as likely to be obese and more likely to eat unhealthy food. Over half of the adult population in London is either obese or overweight.

In young Londoners, one in five is obese and one in three is either obese or overweight.

Since 2012, the mayor has supported environmental health and public health teams to deliver the Healthier Catering Commitment for London. 500 restaurants in 22 boroughs have signed up to the voluntary scheme that incentivises food outlets to make small changes to improve the quality of the food they sell.

Mayor Boris Johnson said: “It is terrible that a city, and indeed as a nation, we are getting fatter. Through my mayoralty I’ve invested in grassroots sports and food programmes to get Londoners healthier and fitter, but we still need to do more to tackle our expanding waistlines.”

“Life in a busy city means that we inevitably enjoy fast food, whilst take-away businesses make a great contribution to London’s economy and this scheme ensures takeaway food can be a healthier option.”

Rosie Boycott, Chair of the London Food Board said: “Getting JJ’s on board is a massive step forward for the Healthier Catering Commitment and I am encouraged that they are taking a lead to change the terrible health outcomes of so much of London’s fast food.

“However, I would like to see even more changes to how takeaways operate. In important parts of the capital there are up to 40 fast food takeaways within half a mile of schools and many of them entice children by cutting their prices at school leaving time. Sadly, we can do nothing to stop them and at that moment all action is voluntary, but this must change in the future.”

To help make London’s takeaways healthier, supplier JJ Food Service will offer a 10 per cent discount off five Healthier Catering Commitment items for a full three months to customers who are signing up to the Healthier Catering Commitment food award.

Terry Larkin, Group General Manager, JJ Food Service, said: “We are delighted about our partnership with the London Food Board and the Healthier Catering Commitment. Through making some changes to the menu as well as increasing healthier options available, we want to encourage fast food businesses to purchase healthier products which, in turn, we hope will have a positive impact on what customers eat.

The mayor’s Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC) is a voluntary scheme for food outlets in London to encourage them to improve their food offering. Participating restaurants, such as the Valley Café in Charlton, are awarded with the HCC logo.

Mehmet Manyera, owner of the Valley café a HCC registered business, said: “At Valley Café, we are working with the Healthier Catering Commitment and are applying it to the way we prepare and cook our food. The café is really busy and doing well and we are delighted.”

The Healthier Catering Commitment is just one of the mayor’s initiatives to get Londoners eating good quality, affordable food.

In 2012 the mayor produced the Takeaway Toolkit to help boroughs work with takeaway businesses to make for healthier, as well as with schools to reduce the amount of unhealthy food children consume from takeaway food shops.

The London Healthy Workplace Charter, co-ordinated by the Greater London Authority, provides the framework to support employers to develop good practice by promoting health in their organisations in a practical way.

The Healthy Schools scheme supports pupils to make healthier food choices and be more active.

The London Food Flagship programme has established two Food Flagship boroughs, Croydon and Lambeth.

In January City Hall, the home of the Greater London Authority, introduced a 10p charge on all added-sugar soft drinks sold in the building’s café, with proceeds going to health campaigns.

FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE
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City of Westminster

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Household recycling, waste and rubbish 020 7641 2000 Business line: 020 7641 7000 General Enquiries: 020 7641 7000

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Electoral Services 020 7361 3444 elect@rbkc.gov.uk

Education 020 7361 3009 education@rbkc.gov.uk

Environmental Health 020 7361 3002 environmentalhealth@rbkc.gov.uk

Family Information Services 0207 361 3302 fis@rbkc.gov.uk

Housing 020 7361 3008 housing@rbkc.gov.uk

Libraries 020 7361 3010 information@rbkc.gov.uk

Parking - general enquiries 020 7361 3004 parking@rbkc.gov.uk

Parking - penalty charges 020 7361 4383 parking@rbkc.gov.uk

Parking - permit (new applications) 020 7361 4381 residentparking@rbkc.gov.uk

Patient Advice & Liaison Service 020 8962 4547 planning@rbkc.gov.uk

Patient Advice & Liaison Service 020 8962 4547 Registrars 020 7361 4100 chelsea.registeroffice@rbkc.gov.uk

Streetline 020 7361 3001 streetline@rbkc.gov.uk

Social Services 020 7361 3013 socialservices@rbkc.gov.uk

Tell Us Once 020 7361 3940
King’s Road war of independents

Dear Sir,

We, the undersigned, wish to express our opposition to the planned Crossrail 2 station on the King’s Road. We are not celebrities. We are small and medium sized businesses in Chelsea who are concerned about our livelihood and the preservation of the neighbourhood we love.

Chelsea already has excellent transport links, with access to two tube stations and five bus routes. It remains a cultural gem in West London with a unique village atmosphere that must be preserved.

Crossrail 2 will force business rates up by 50 per cent and put many of our futures at risk. It will also radically alter Chelsea’s unique character, to the detriment of our community. People live, work and visit here because it is not like anywhere else in London – and we don’t want that to be ruined.

We are aware that big businesses, many of whom are not even based in Chelsea, have teamed up with property developers to support the station. However, representing businesses that actually operate on or near the King’s Road, we oppose a Chelsea Crossrail station.

Signed

Debashish Lank, Owner
Adam Pogonowski, Owner
Allison Rodger, Owner
Anaia Dement, Owner
Andreas Georgiou, Owner
Angelo Gibson, Owner
Andrea Castiglione, Owner
Anthony Hemmings, Owner
Gail Steele, Manager
Bernard Chauchet, Owner
Ian Towning, Owner
Said Cynus, Owner
Ludmila Grecova, Supervisor
Mrs Varda, Manager
Ren Goldsmith, Owner
Billy Tosson, Owner
Paul Feldman, Owner
Billy Fineberg, Owner
S A Newton, Owner
B Patel, Owner
Paul Dowling, Owner
Mira Sadi, Manager
Leila Moghadam, Director
Fleur Bird, Owner
Eliza Poklewski Koziell, Owner
Julia Bannister, Owner
Gita Raja, Owner
Pankaj Patel, Owner
Rufus Achille Albanese, Owner
Roddy Baldwin, Director
Kelly Gittins, Manager
H Hemmings, Owner
E Khadria, Owner
Suteanu Florentina, Manager
Adrian Spurdon, Manager
J Osborne, Owner
J Clampton, Manager
Jane Taylor, Owner
O Banana, Owner
John McFalle, Manager
John Tomlinson, Owner
Tariq Ayub, Manager
Taraneh Varadi, Assistant Manager
Michele Damiano, Owner
Sue Barnes, Managing Director
Umberto Salini, Managing Director
Lilli Gardner, Director
Lucie Rydlova, Owner
Sarah Mahaffy, Owner
Michael Hopper, Owner
Maxius Stalorits, Franchise Owner
Ann Le Nguyen, Manager
Patrick Alvarado, Partner
Oliver Borrow, Manager
J Osborne, Owner
Patrick Baty, Manager
Maxime Holders, Franchise Owner
Philippa Lepley, Owner
Paul Headford, Manager
George Khachte, CEO
Production Manager Chelsea
Freddy Simpson, Manager
Richard Lehane, Owner
Ivana Vykavcova, Manager
Sayed Mirha, Manager
Emmanuel K, Manager
H Schumi, Manager
Lorraine Fraser, Owner
Danny Lavello, Owner
T Thomas, Owner
Nick Wilkins, Manager
Simonne Smith, Manager
Rob Conghin, Owner
Jim Hoey, Manager
Liza Reynolds, General Manager
T N Richards, Owner
Claire Zurz, Manager
Mobby Moss, Owner
Adam Smith, General Manager
Roberto Colusa, Manager

FROM PAGE 1
MD of the Imperial College Union, and Lesley Watts, CEO of the Chelsea & Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

But signatories of this new letter opposing the proposed King’s Road station include local restaurateurs, florists, butchers, printers, couturiers, publicans, opticians, chemists, fishmongers, hairdressers, newsagents, stationers and estate agents.

The local small and individual businesses criticise the big organisations based in Knightsbridge and South Kensington for “joining King’s Road property owners and developers in supporting King’s Road station – despite them not even being in Chelsea”.

A spokesman for the No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign added: “The big institutions’ support for a King’s Road station was met with widespread criticism from local campaigners, who said it was no business of companies based more than one mile away to comment on the Chelsea proposals, especially when they have their own underground stations nearby.”

Rob Conghin, owner of the Flower Yard, said: “It’s all well and for the likes of Harrods. They are a massive business based in Knightsbridge. But we are small businesses actually trading in Chelsea – and if this Crossrail 2 station is built on the King’s Road we will go out of business.”

Mobby Moss from Vanilla Hair said: “My business won’t be able to cope with the King’s Road being at least partially closed for a period of eight years while this station is built. When it’s finally finished, we certainly won’t be able to cope with the chain stores and increased rent and business rates that will come in as a result.”

The small businesses join more than 10,000 individuals as well as the Brompton and Marsden hospitals in opposition to the rail plan, which they say leave Kensington and Chelsea council “supported only by major property interests for a new £1.2 billion mega station on the King’s Road.” Local businesses say a station on the King’s Road in Chelsea will result in higher rents, according to a Crossrail report, 50 per cent higher business rates upon completion. Businesses will also see reduced takings during eight years of construction, with road closures forcing shoppers elsewhere.

The letter states: “We are not celebrities. We are small and medium sized businesses in Chelsea who are concerned about our livelihood and the preservation of the neighbourhood we love.

“Chelsea already has excellent transport links, with access to two Tube stations and five bus routes. It remains a cultural gem in West London with a unique village atmosphere that must be preserved.

“Crossrail 2 will put many of our futures at risk. It will also radically alter Chelsea’s unique character, to the detriment of our community. People live, work and visit here because it is not like anywhere else in London – and we don’t want that to be ruined.

“We are aware that big businesses, many of whom are not even based in Chelsea, have teamed up with property developers to support the station. However, representing businesses that actually operate on or near the King’s Road, we oppose a Chelsea Crossrail station.”

Chris Lenon, Chair of the No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign, demanded that Transport for London and Kensington and Chelsea council put local opinion first and warned councillors who ignored it would be challenged for their seats at the next election.

“It is now time for TfL to listen. Over 10,000 people, more than 75 local businesses and our two local hospitals all oppose Crossrail 2 coming to Chelsea. The plans must be scrapped,” said Mr Lenon.

“Our council arrogantly dismisses our campaign as being supported by just a few rich celebrities. Their views demonstrates a willful disdain for their own electorate and business community. This letter shows how wrong they are.”

“The scale of the uprising in Chelsea has now become evident. Our message to the council is clear. Change now, listen to your voters and withdraw your support for Crossrail in Chelsea.

“If you don’t, we will be running candidates against you at the next local elections.”

No Crossrail in Chelsea campaigners presented their 10,000 strong petition to the Mayor of London last week.

Transport for London say 19,000 people responded to their recent public consultation on the entire Crossrail 2 route. The No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign has copies of 8,000 responses opposing the King’s Road station and says it is aware of a further 1,500 supporting an Imperial Wharf station instead.

“This means that more than half of the whole of London oppose Crossrail 2 in Chelsea,” said the spokesman.
Top of the table!

TWO talented Royal Borough primary school teams swept all before them at the 2016 Jack Petchey London Under-11 Table Tennis Championships. Ashburnham Primary School’s boys were crowned Under-11s champions after the team battled its way through to face Whitgift Primary School from south London in what proved to be a thrilling final.

All the boys, Harry, Abed, Boubacar, Mohammed and William, played their part in a tense final which finished all square — with Ashburnham getting the judges’ decision via a count-back. The borough had more joy when the Fox Primary girls’ team demolished all its opponents without dropping a single set. Having taken the national gold medal last year, the girls seemed to be sending out a message that they have no intention of relinquishing their title.

All five girls — Rose, Valentina, Nadia, Louise and Colette — have improved considerably since their 2015 gold medal run, so it will be a very good team if it stops them being among the top of the national medals this year.

Councillor Emma Will, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea’s cabinet member for education, said: “I want to congratulate the Ashburnham boys and the Fox girls on their brilliant performance. It is no small matter to come out on top in such a hard-fought competition and I wish them all the best when they fly the flag for Kensington and Chelsea in future tournaments. I also want to thank their teachers, coaches and parents for all the support they give to the teams.”

All attention now turns to Bournemouth, where next month the Fox girls and Ashburnham boys will seek to extend their winning run by becoming South of England Champions.

Authors put children on write lines

MORE than 1,000 pupils from 13 schools in Kensington and Chelsea took part in the Mayor of the royal borough’s Nordic Literature Festival.

With the generous support of the Danish, Estonian and Swedish embassies, a series of workshops — running from February 8 to 11 — provided an opportunity for children to engage with some of the foremost Nordic children’s authors, illustrators and translators.

Danish author Janne Teller gave a talk about her award-winning novel Nothing on February 8 and to pupils from Holland Park School the following day. The talk was fascinating and the choice of book timely, as Nothing has recently been adapted as an opera, to be performed by Glyndebourne Youth Opera as part of the YOUTH Opera’s 30th anniversary. It is being premiered on the main stage at Glyndebourne at the end of this month.

In a separate session Swedish author Josefine Roos had pupils thinking about the way children can become stereotyped on the basis of their gender. Children were encouraged to think about what they might do to free themselves from this stereotyping.

With Swedish writer and illustrator Sarah Sheppard, children glimpsed the world of dinosaurs, sharks and an essential map for explorers.

The highly acclaimed Swedish writer Martin Widmark, one of the giants of contemporary children’s fiction, talked about his books, particularly his Detective Bureau series. He also talked to an adult audience about his internationally famous programme for improving reading comprehension and literacy skills amongst schoolchildren.

Teachers from schools taking part were impressed and spoke about the sessions as “very inspiring”, saying that “the children absolutely loved it” and that it was “wonderful for them to have the opportunity to meet such talented authors and illustrators.”

Good place for a chippy

KENSINGTON Place is set to reopen The Notting Gill Chippy on Thursday, March 3. Located on Kensington Church Street, adjacent to the main restaurant, the pop-up will once again tempt Londoners and tourists alike with classic British chutney.

The menu will also include the dessert, pineapple fritters served with vanilla ice cream,

Our planners deserve credit

WHEN you live cheek by jowl in a small, tightly packed borough like ours, one council department that can end up having quite an impact on your life is planning.

Planners and the planning committee make decisions about all sorts of things that can lead to delight or dependency — depending on what side of the application you sit.

So I suppose it’s inevitable that there will be the odd grumble or complaint. But, while I readily accept people’s rights to let off steam and to raise concerns, I have far less patience with those who, the moment a decision goes against them, take to the internet to trounce anonymously the planning department.

It should go without saying that anyone with an iota of evidence of corrupt practices shouldn’t waste their time with anonymous trolling but should instead call the police. But I’m not expecting that to happen anytime soon because I don’t believe such evidence exists. Everything points to our planning department being entirely upstanding and doing a difficult job.

And that’s not baseless assertion. The data is there for anyone to see.

Kensington and Chelsea is one of the most expensive and contested development areas on the planet but 92 per cent of major applications get dealt with within 13 weeks, which is amongst the fastest in the country and in the capital.

About eight out of ten regular applications are dealt with within eight weeks. On the face of it that is an average performance but when you factor in that many of those applications relate to basements, listed buildings and conservation areas, it’s pretty impressive.

As for those alleged errant decisions, well over the last couple of years less than one per cent of 6,000 decisions were appealed, and of those appeals we won 65 per cent of them. What that should tell you is that against the most well-lawyered developers and occupiers in the world, our decisions hold up.

Moreover, our planning enforcement team is now the toughest in London and many a developer has learnt that Kensington and Chelsea are not the place to bend the rules. Take stop notices, which can bring work to a halt on site when serious planning breaches occur. Our team issues more such notices than any other council in England. So much for being coy with developers.

And so much too for those trolls who, when things don’t go their way, attack good, conscientious officers from the anonymous caverns of the web.
Hospitals braced for doctors’ exodus

BY LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

In the whole of Wiltshire children’s services have just been sold off to Virgin Care, the whole of Devon has been sold off to Virgin and Sittingbourne in Kent has just been sold off too.

When the NHS is being sold off, private companies do not want our complex long-term physical or mental health patients.

“What they want is the lovely little non-urgent clinics which are now in the weekends and they can buy off.”

Meanwhile, Jeremy Hunt has been reportedly tipped for the sack in David Cameron’s next reshuffle after failing to head off the junior doctors’ strikes.

According to The Sunday Times “senior Tories say Chancellor George Osborne, wants Boris Johnson to take over as Health Secretary in what allies of the London mayor view as ‘literally a hospital pass’ designed to dent his leadership hopes.”

“One Cabinet minister said Hunt is vulnerable because he ‘was sent to health to keep the NHS out of the headlines – and instead we’ve got the first doctors’ strike in a generation’.”

The Sunday Times claimed a close ally of the Prime Minister has sounded out Tory MPs about Mr Johnson taking over from Mr Hunt later this year.

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Breaking news: drivers’ pet hates

LONDON’S young drivers have revealed what they most hate about motoring in the capital – passengers passing wind in their cars.

A Car Loan Warehouse survey of London drivers has revealed that those aged 18 to 24 are most likely to kick up a stink over bad-mannered passengers forcing them to open all the windows.

Forty per cent of young drivers said it was their pals letting off that made them maddest when on the road. For older drivers, their passengers leaving a mess of food wrappers in their cars was the biggest bugbear for men – with 39 per cent hating that – and most women [52 per cent] hate it most when passengers distract them when they are driving.

Other annoyances include the traditional irritation of backseat drivers [31 per cent cannot stand them], children asking ‘are we there yet?’ [25 per cent], passengers putting their feet on the seats [19 per cent], and passengers eating and drinking [17 per cent].

Others include passengers slamming doors, changing the radio station without asking, not chipping in for petrol and those that leave nail clippings in their cars.

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LONDON WIDE

Hospitals braced for doctors’ exodus

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By LWN Reporter
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

NHS hospitals in London face a mass resignation of junior doctors and an influx of trainee medics from abroad as health chief Jeremy Hunt pushes through his highly-unpopular Saturday contract.

More than 4,500 junior doctors currently working in the capital say they will quit the health service because the Health Secretary is trying to impose his controversial Saturday working plan, causing an emergency staffing shortage.

Mr Hunt said he had “no choice” but to stick to a tough line on the Saturday working plan, which is fiercely-opposed by the doctors’ British Medical Association.

But junior doctors in the capital say that as the Saturday working plan is to be imposed regardless of their protests, then 90 per cent of them will quit – causing chaos in hospitals and risking a temporary close down of many departments until health chiefs can re-staff with doctors hired from abroad.

A poll of junior doctors taken last week before Mr Hunt forced through his new deal revealed that 90 per cent would consider resigning if the Government imposed the contract, which will take effect this summer.

According to figures obtained from NHS London, that would mean the loss of at least 4,500 junior doctors across the capital.

Junior doctors are now looking to leave London and complete their training in hospitals where Mr Hunt’s contract has no effect – Scotland and Wales and abroad, principally to Australia and New Zealand.

During last Wednesday’s strike, one junior doctor protesting on Westminster Bridge told the BBC: “We re-apply for jobs every couple of years. I’m meant to be applying for my speciality training next year, but I know of just a handful of people who are going to be reapplying.

“We’re just going to leave. Everyone I know is going to Australia or New Zealand.

“Out of the class of 21 junior doctors I work with only two are applying for jobs here next year, the rest of us are having a year out of training and that is pretty representative of how people are feeling.”

Faced with mass resignations, the NHS would have to hire in thousands of foreign trainee doctors in order to maintain normal service.

However, this could be an attractive option for cost-slash health chiefs because foreign trainee doctors working in London are subsidised by their countries’ governments and so come at a much lower cost to the NHS than employing British trainees – who cost almost £300,000 each to fully train.

Last year the NHS hired in around 3,000 doctors from overseas, from more than 25 countries including India, Poland, Greece, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Hungary and Romania.

Dr Mark Porter, BMA Chair of Council, said: “It is not surprising that many junior doctors are thinking of leaving the NHS when the Government imposes such unfair contracts.

“Junior doctors already work weekends for patients and the Government’s recognition of this in England is to propose cutting fair weekend pay rates in the very medical specialties where patients rely most on weekend working.

“In putting politics before people’s health, the Government is trying to do with this whole bringing care into weekends is not to increase emergency care because of course we do that already.

“What they are trying to do is to introduce elective non-urgent clinics into weekends.

“The NHS is sold off to private hands, which is no secret.

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Fair puts art in the heart of Chelsea

BY LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

THE Chelsea Art Fair will be celebrating its 21st birthday at the Chelsea Old Town Hall from Thursday, April 21, to Sunday, April 24.

Organisers say the "chic boutique" fair has established itself as the London art fair which brings first class modern and contemporary art to the heart of Chelsea with a particular focus on three-dimensional art.

The fair offers a wide selection of artists represented by around 35 of the most respected modern and contemporary art galleries from around the UK.

A spokesman said: "This fair is all about quality and while the majority of works will have price tags from £500 to £50,000, some sculptures on view will exceed that.

"Galleries tend to bring their highlights to Chelsea, with many of the works shown for the first time in London. Works by well-known artists can be found next to some great new discoveries, which make this fair such a magnet for connoisseurs."

"All galleries are selected by fair director Ben Cooper and a number of artists, who are more than happy to look at the art and talk to dealers, as well as visitors from all over London, Britain and abroad."

Art fair opening times are: Thursday, 11-8, Friday and Saturday 11-7, Sunday 11-5. Tickets cost £6. Latest information and e-tickets can be found on www.chelseaartfair.org or on Twitter and Facebook.

The Rainbow Trust cares for families who have a child with a life threatening or terminal illness, providing bespoke emotional and practical support for the whole family, whenever and wherever it is needed. Today they are the only organisation that provides support directly to the whole family, helping them to keep hold of a normal life as much as possible.

Rainbow Trust has nine teams of Family Support Workers who are there to help 24 hours a day from diagnosis, through treatment, and for some, through bereavement and beyond. They stay as long as the family needs them.

For further details visit www.rainbowtrust.org.uk.

Airp ort link consultation

RESIDENTS and businesses are being invited to have their say at a series of public consultation events on Network Rail’s updated plans for a new link connecting the rail network from the Westcountry to Heathrow.

The proposed link, subject to planning permission, includes a 5km tunnel from the Great Western main line to Heathrow Terminal 5, enabling passengers throughout the West to travel to the airport from Reading, Twyford, Maidenhead and Slough, without the need to change at Paddington station.

This will mean faster, more convenient journeys for passengers, with travel times expected to be around 26 minutes from Reading and seven minutes from Slough.

Shorter, more direct journeys to and from London Heathrow are also promised, providing “a significant opportunity for businesses across the Thames Valley, M4 corridor, South West and South Wales, enabling these businesses to save time and money, increasing their productivity and helping to deliver economic growth in these regions”.

Mark Langman, Network Rail’s managing director for the Western route, said: “This proposed link presents many opportunities for residents and businesses based across the Thames Valley, M4 corridor, South West and west. It will not only provide millions of passengers with faster journeys, but it will also help to relieve congestion at London Paddington and open opportunities for thousands of businesses, enabling them to become more competitive and increasing economic growth.”

Big match for racism victim

THE commuter racially abused by Chelsea supporters has been blocked from boarding a Paris Metro train has accepted an invitation from French club Paris St Germain to watch the London club’s Champions League tie in the French capital.

Souleymane Sylla, a French-Mauritian, will watch the last-16 first leg at Parc des Princes next week, the Press Association reported.

Mr Sylla was so traumatised by Chelsea supporters and blocked from boarding a Paris Metro train has accepted an invitation from French club Paris St Germain to watch the London club’s Champions League tie in the French capital.

Souleymane Sylla, a French-Mauritian, will watch the last-16 first leg at Parc des Princes next week, the Press Association reported.

Mr Sylla was repeatedly pushed backwards off a carriage amid chants of “we’re racist, we’re racist, and that’s the way we like it” as Chelsea supporters travelled to their club’s February 17, 2015 match with PSG. Chelsea condemned the incident and five men were given football banning orders of up to five years last July. All received lifetime bans from the club.

Mr Sylla was so traumatised he had to take six months off work, and he used the Metro for the first time since the incident a few days ago.

He declined an invitation from Chelsea to attend the return leg in London in March 2015, as he said the ordeal was too raw. The club extended their offer as an open invitation, which remains in place.

London Weekly News Tuesday, February 16th 2016 editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

LO N D O N  W I D E
TH E C... year’s Chelsea A rts Fair. A bove right: Janet G olphin, The Red Rug, £2,950 at Russell G allery @ ChelseaA rtFair

London Weekly News Tuesday, February 16th 2016 editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk
LONDON WIDE

Let’s get on with Crossrail says Boris

BY LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

LONDON Mayor Boris Johnson MP this week urged the Government to give the green light to taking Crossrail 2 forward and commit the necessary funding for the new rail line in next month’s budget.

He has also warned that any delay will result in £4 billion in lost economic benefit every six months.

Speaking in Westminster, Mr Johnson said that if Crossrail 2 is to be running when it is needed in 2030, not only is funding required for detailed technical work, but the Government must also allow for Parliamentary time to seek the necessary powers.

Crossrail 2 will see a tunnel built from Wimbledon to New Southgate and Tottenham Hale, linking railways in Surrey and Hertfordshire. It will enable up to 270,000 additional people to enter central London every weekday morning at peak time and transform connections across London and the wider South East.

The mayor’s comments came in the week Transport for London (TfL) made its final bid to the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) for development funding. The total estimated boost of the project to the UK economy has been estimated by accountants KPMG at up to £102 billion, as well as supporting over 200,000 new homes and jobs.

The mayor called on the Government to bring forward legislation in 2018 to ensure that the bulk of the Parliamentary work is completed in the course of this Parliament and to provide the necessary development funding in next month’s budget to allow that timetable to be met. Securing this funding would mean that TfL and Network Rail can progress with a full-scale technical development of the railway immediately.

With London’s population rising from 8.6 million today to an expected 10 million by 2030, and significant population growth also expected across the entire South East of the country, supporters of the project say the new rail line is vital to relieving increasing pressure on London’s transport network. They say Crossrail 2 will transform connections and reduce journey times from the Solent to the Wash.

TfL has already set out how London could pay for half of the cost of Crossrail 2 through a number of mechanisms already being used successfully to pay for Crossrail 1. TfL’s latest position goes further, proposing a London ‘gain share’ deal that could make a significant additional contribution to the cost. Gain share deals capture the increased tax generated through growth in jobs and homes that a new railway creates, such as additional stamp duty. The Chancellor has already agreed similar deals with nine other cities.

Mr Johnson said: “If we want Crossrail 2 to be taking people to work in the early 2030s when it will be desperately needed, there is no time for delay and we need to continue at full-throttle with our development work this year.

For that, we need serious funding in next month’s budget. We also need a commitment from Government to bring forward the legislation to give us planning powers as soon as possible. Only with that will we be able to start digging early next decade and have the new trains running to meet the needs of the region’s rapidly growing population.

“Moreover, Crossrail 2 can pay for itself. We are proposing a new mechanism to fund this major project. We are offering a conditional funding deal based on the impact Crossrail 2 will have.

“We want this to be independently assessed because we believe the extra growth from Crossrail 2 will more than pay for the scheme itself. Other cities have struck gain-share deals like this with Government and London is up for the same.”

Capital arrivals’ compelling view of their new home city

LONDON is a kaleidoscopic, ever-changing city as more and more people make it home.

Ben Judah, an acclaimed foreign correspondent hailing from the capital, does an exceptional job in his new book, This Is London: Life And Death In The World City, exploring the lives of those arriving looking for a better life, immersing himself in their world.

From cold, hungover mornings at Victoria Station, the capital’s Ellis Island, to sleeping rough with Romanian beggars in a subway at Hyde Park Corner, the writer goes above and beyond to tell the stories of London’s seen but unheard.

The book is a wonderfully-written, fascinating account of modern-day life, offering a glimpse of the world from those arriving in the city hoping for a better life.

The overriding assessment is negative, whether it be the disillusioned Nigerian police officer claiming “the English are vanishing” or the Roma gypsy vanishing “or the Romani gypsy crush you or London can transform you.”

The book lacks a look at the transformative effect life in the city can have, but this is an important, detailed read on the stories of those often unheard.

Judah was born in London. He has travelled widely in Russia, Central Asia and the Levant. His writing has featured widely, including the New York Times, the Evening Standard, the Financial Times and Standpoint.

His first book, Fragile Empire, was published by Yale University Press in 2013.

This Is London: Life And Death In The World City by Ben Judah, is published by Picador, priced £18.99 (ebook £7.19)

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**Rush for one-bed homes sends property market into overdrive**

BY LWN REPORTER  
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

The number of new buyer registrations and tenancy agreements in London has soared in the last 12 months, as buyers and renters hunt for one-bedroom homes, according to estate agent Marsh & Parsons.

The agents’ latest London Property Monitor guide shows that the number of new buyers registering last month was 24 per cent higher than in the same month in 2015 like-for-like. Sought-after outer London areas are experiencing the highest New Year demand from interested buyers, with Barnes and Bishops Park among the strongest rises in the number of buyers registering to buy property.

However, this sudden surge in demand for ‘prime’ London properties is contrasting with a continued shortage of housing stock in the capital.

The supply of homes in ‘prime’ London fell 12 per cent year-on-year in the last three months of 2015. This has led to intense competition to own a home in the capital, with 13 buyers for every property in ‘prime’ London at the end of last year.

Peter Rollings chief executive of Marsh & Parsons, said: “The London property market has begun 2016 with a spring in its step. The New Year always tends to bring a resurgence in purchase activity, as buyers shake off the last of the Christmas holiday haze and re-focus their attention on climbing up, or onto, the ladder. “But the figures we’re currently seeing are strong even by those standards. Private buyers, landlords and other investors are rushing to secure their preferred property before the 1st April Stamp Duty hike.”

In the lettings market, increased demand has led to a burst of activity. The number of tenancies agreed in the first two weeks of 2016 was up 44 per cent compared to the same period in January 2015 on a like-for-like basis. Sought-after areas of central London in particular enjoyed solid lettings growth, as agreed tenancies surged by 91 per cent. The central zone is expected to see faster rental activity in 2016 than it did last year, when a slowdown in corporate lettings resulted in cooler annual rental growth of 0.6 per cent. Meanwhile, what is known as ‘outer prime’ London saw steadier expansion in tenancy agreements – of 23 per cent – in January 2016 on a year-on-year basis.

One-bedroom properties are the main drivers of this strong growth in lettings activity and property demand. These smaller homes have seen the biggest rise in value of any property type in ‘prime’ London over the past year, with average prices increasing 3.1 per cent between Q4 2014 and Q4 2015 – equating to a real-term rise in value of £18,417. By contrast, average Prime London property prices saw only a 1.7 per cent increase over the same period, across all property types.

Meanwhile, the typical rental value of one-bed lets across ‘prime’ London has risen by six per cent over the course of 2015 – from £1,392 to £1,453 per week – compared to an average of 1.9 per cent across all property types. Within the central area, one-bedroom lets experienced even faster growth of seven per cent.

Mr Rollings said: “Prime London lettings activity has seen strident start-of-year growth, especially in the prime central area. This can largely be accounted for by the sudden surge in corporate tenancies, after the sector experienced a somewhat flat 2015. Multinational organisations are currently engaged in a large-scale start-of-year talent hunt and so are snapping up the best places to house their brightest new recruits. The rise in the value of one-bed lets and purchase properties indicates supply remains an issue, as developers are still not being sufficiently incentivised to build the homes the capital requires. But with housing already a big issue in the London mayoral election campaign, the Government might be spurred to act on the shortage as we head deeper into 2016.”

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**Changes loom for film studios**

The owner of London’s Pinewood Studios – home to the James Bond and Star Wars films – could be sold as the company looks to “maximise value” for shareholders, it was reported this week.

Pinewood Group told the Press Association it had appointed the Rothschild investment bank to carry out a strategic review of the business that “could include a sale of the company”, which has a market value of £258 million.

The group, which also includes Shepperton Studios, has made more than 2,000 films and 800 TV shows over the last 80 years.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens, one of the biggest grossing films of all time, was made there as was last year’s 24th official Bond film, Spectre.

Last April, the group completed a £30 million planning to build five new sound stages at Pinewood, due to be completed in June. But the group wants further funds to continue to expand the business and reward existing investors, which include insurer Aviva.

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**Wet Wet West as legends line up for Royal Hospital**

One of the summer’s treats for 20,000 music goers in and around the capital, Live At Chelsea organisers say they are delighted to announce that legendary British band Wet Wet Wet will headline on Saturday, June 18 at the historic home of the Chelsea Pensioners.

The news follows the earlier announcement that seminal British R&B group Simply Red will perform on Sunday, June 19. Having sold over 15 million records worldwide, enjoyed numerous No 1 singles amongst their 30 UK chart hits, 2016 is a particularly significant year as the band celebrate the 20th anniversary of their classic smash hit album, Picture This. Bringing some of their most well known songs to the unique setting of the courtyard of The Royal Hospital Chelsea, expect to hear the classics Julia Says, Don’t Want To Forgive Me Now, and of course, one of the longest-standing No 1 singles in British chart history, Love Is All Around.

As the only concert series staged at this venue, Live At Chelsea is hosted in a fully-seated auditorium in the Royal Hospital Chelsea’s central courtyard. The hospital itself was founded by King Charles II in 1662 and is home to the Chelsea Pensioners, 300 retired soldiers.

A portion of the ticket sale proceeds will also go towards funding their care, as well as helping to fund the ongoing maintenance of the Grade I listed site. Tickets, priced from £40, are available at www.liveatchelsea.com

To find out how you can help the Royal Hospital Chelsea visit the website: www.chelsea-pensioners.org.uk
**Cabbies’ cycle highway legal move rejected**

*BY LWN REPORTER*

CABBIES lost a High Court challenge last week which could have disrupted completion of London mayor Boris Johnson’s £47 million flagship east-west cycle superhighway.

The Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA) asked a judge to declare that the continued construction of the segregated cycling route linking Westbourne Grove and Tower Hill via the Victoria Embankment without planning permission “constitutes a breach of planning control”.

But Mrs Justice Patterson rejected the application.

Steve McNamara, LTDA’s general secretary, accused Mr Johnson of rushing through the scheme as an ill-judged “last hurrah” before he leaves office.

The cabbies say the scheme is causing massive delays in central London because of the amount of road space it is taking up. The LTDA asked the judge, at a recent hearing in London to grant a judicial review against Transport for London (TfL) and the mayor to force a reconsideration of the whole project.

TfL is the highway authority for Greater London Authority roads. Its legal team argued that it would be “inappropriate” for the court to make a declaration as it would usurp the powers of local planning authorities.

Mark Lowe QC, for the LTDA, said the association had consistently opposed the cycle superhighway on behalf of its 10,000-plus members.

Mr Lowe told the judge that the project had gone ahead without planning permission or an environmental impact assessment (EIA) as required by the EU EIA Directive.

Construction work started around April last year, but he said there was no evidence that the question of whether an EIA or planning permission were needed had been properly considered.

TfL was asked why permission had not been sought, it described the superhighway as “works of improve-ment” not requiring permission or an EIA, said Mr Lowe.

He asked the judge to rule that TfL had no right to cycle superhighway was a “development” as defined under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and not exempt from the need for permission, especially as it was likely to give rise to “signifi-cant adverse environmental ef-fects”.

Dismissing the LTDA case, the judge ruled the TfL did not err in law, and was not irrational in reaching its conclusion that there was no significant adverse environmental effect from the propos-als as a whole”.

The judge also declared: “That is not to say that it may not be required for certain minor works within the scheme (that information is not before the court), or that it may not be required for other cycle super-highways or for parts of them in the future. Each scheme will need to be judged on its own facts.”

When the legal challenge was first announced, many cyclists threatened on Twitter to withdraw their custom from black cabs, and some said they would use rival Uber instead.

Howard Carter, general coun-sel at TfL, said: “The east-west cycle superhighway will make London’s roads safer for all, par-ticularly cyclists.”

The mayor’s cycling commis-sioner Andrew Gilligan said: “Once again, the courts have in the clearest terms upheld our right to improve London for cy-cling. This is the third legal chal-lenge to TfL-funded cycle schemes to have been dismissed in the last few months.

“It means we can now be con-fident of finishing the Embank-ment/Upper Thames Street superhighway on schedule in April, finishing the whole super-highway in summer, and ending the temporary delays that have occurred as a result of the con-struction works.”

Leon Daniels, managing di-rector of TfL Surface Transport, said: “The court agreed with us that planning permission was not required for the construction of the route to date, and dismissed all aspects of the LTDA’s claim. Construction continues to progress well and we are working hard to manage areas of tem-porary congestion around the construction sites.”

**ANGER: Cabbies objected to cycle highway proposals**

A NY time you spend vis-iting the Westway estate you’ll see cyclists of all ages using the car-free areas as a safe and quick way to get around, there are always a great many bikes locked up outside the two sports and fitness buildings, Bikeworks, a tenant on site, fixes and maintains bikes on a daily basis and BMXers make good use of the skate park at Bay 66.

It’s clear cycling is already a big part of life under the Westway but new proposals mean it could become a bigger part of life above us as well.

There has been a lot of dis-cussion about the East-West Cycle Superhighway proposed by the Mayor of London (TfL). The route would run from Acton to Paddington, including a completely segregated stretch of the Westway flyover. According to TfL this would “provide a clearer and safer route for cyclists through west Lon-don, separated from other vehi-cles.”

London has seen a consider-able cycling boom in recent years and large parts of London have, or will soon have, new infrastructure to make cycling a normal part of the way we get around the area.

As I said in my column last week, pollution from the Westway is a key issue for people in the area and a new cycle path here might get some motor traf-fic off the road reducing both air and noise pollution. It would also give people who live and work in the area an alter-na-tive way to get to and from the area.

How the route would be linked to the local area is not included in the plans and this is something that will need to be addressed. It’s not good enough that local cyclists would have to use busy roads and junctions to join the links to other parts of London and there is much happening under the Westway that cyclists might miss if they cannot easily get on/off the Cycle Superhighway.

There is the potential for this new infrastructure to reach a million cyclists and that could bring new audiences into the area to buy things in our shops and at the market, experience the culture of the area or use the sports facilities.

The quality of the routes cre-at-ed so far has been high that gives me some confidence in the ability of TfL to create a useful network here, but we need to see the detail. I would hope that bringing a Cycle Su-perhighway to the area will be accompanied by additional cycling infrastructure throughout the area.

We already see many cy-clists using paths through the Westway estate. I hope that, as we continue to make the estate more accessible, we find ways to make better infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians.

The plans have received ten- sive support from Mayoral candidates Sadiq Khan and Zac Goldsmith as well as many businesses and environmental and cycling campaign organi-sations. It is clearly an impor-tant topic not just in London, but also locally. I have already heard from local politicians, residents and local cycling campaigners who want to ex-press their views to us.

Westway Trust will be mak-ing a submission to the consul-tation and raising the issue in meetings with TfL. I’d like to know what you’d like us to say. Is a Cycle Superhighway on the Westway a good idea? What cycling infrastructure would help you get around? How could cyclists be encour-aged to visit local shops and the market?

Will Hoyles in our team is collecting views of local peo-ple. If you have an opinion and would like to share it with us please contact Will on will.hoyles@westway.org. We look forward to hearing from you.
Mayor feels the heat over solar energy

BY LWN REPORTER
editorial@londonweeklynews.co.uk

ANXIOUS London Assembly members have called on the mayor to do more to support the capital’s renewable energy industry.

They want Boris Johnson to again lobby the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to meet with a cross-party delegation of Assembly Members. A motion was agreed which calls on the mayor to encourage the Government to prioritise the future sustainability of London’s energy supply and its renewables industry.

Mural Qureshi AM, who proposed the motion said: “The mayor should be championing clean energy, not only because of its environmental benefits but because of the jobs that come with it. Instead the industry is falling behind in the capital and costing significant numbers of jobs.”

“Not only has the mayor refused to even consider the idea of a London feed-in tariff to boost the solar industry, he now appears to be trying to block London Assembly Members from sharing their views by excluding them from his meeting with the Energy Secretary.”

Stephen Knight AM, who seconded the motion said: “London has the potential to become a global leader in the use of solar power, but currently has the lowest amount of installed power capacity of any region in the UK. Turning this situation around is vital to reducing the capital’s dependency on fossil fuels and supporting London’s renewable energy companies.”

“It is time that the Government were asked once again to rethink its damaging decision to cut the solar feed-in tariff, which will undermine the move towards the wider adoption of solar power in London.”

The full text of the motion is:

“This Assembly notes the recommendation from the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to the Chair of the Assembly regarding the cuts to the solar feed-in tariff and the motion passed by the Assembly on 4 November 2015.

“This Assembly believes the decision to press ahead with the FIT is a short sighted decision which will seriously hamper efforts to make London a global leader on solar power. The Assembly further notes:

■ The UK is the only member of the G7 to increase fossil fuel subsidies whilst simultaneously attacking the renewables sector.

■ London has the lowest amount of installed solar power capacity of any region in the UK.

■ The mayor’s statement in the London Infrastructure Plan that there will be “up to a 20 per cent increase in (energy) demand in the capital by 2050”.

■ Analysis by the Solar Trade Association shows that almost 1,800 jobs have been lost in the UK solar industry, with many thousands more expected to go.

“This Assembly was disappointed the mayor failed to stand up for London by taking forward the Assembly’s suggestion of leading a delegation to meet with the Secretary of State. The London Assembly represents the views and interests of over 8.5 million Londoners. The Secretary of State’s decision to shun London’s democratic institutions by refusing to meet a cross-party delegation of Members and entrepreneurs sends the strongest message possible that the future sustainability of London’s energy supply and its renewables industry are a matter of worryingly low priority to the Government.”

“Although the Government has made its decision, this Assembly asks that the mayor consider this request again, so to impress on the Secretary of State the likely impact of these changes.”

Met chief announces review of sex abuse cases

AN independent review is to scrutinise controversial historical sex abuse investigations such as the probe set up to examine claims of a VIP paedophile ring in Westminster.

Under pressure Scotland Yard chief Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe this week called in High Court judge Sir Richard Henriques to examine a number of investigations involving non-recent sexual claims against public figures.

The Met has faced heavy criticism over one investigation, known as Operation Midland, which saw the home of 92-year-old Lord Bramall raided before the case was eventually abandoned.

Sir Bernard’s announcement came amid conjecture about how for long his contract as Commissioner will be renewed.

He said: “We are not afraid to learn from the past, learn these things better, and that’s why I’ve announced the review into how we have conducted investigations into non-recent sexual allegations involving public figures. I am pleased that Sir Richard brings an independent legal mind to advise us whether we can provide a better balance between our duty to investigate and the interests of suspects, complainants and victims.”

Key findings of the review will be published later in the year, although the full report will remain confidential.

An Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse is already being led by Justice Lowell Goddard, and is expected to cost £18 million in its first year, but Sir Bernard said this probe will look at police procedure, not evidence.

Operation Midland was launched in November 2014 following allegations that boys were sexually abused by a paedophile ring centred around Westminster more than 30 years ago.

There were claims that sex parties were held at the exclusive Dolphin Square apartment block near the Houses of Parliament.

The inquiry centred on allegations by a man known as Nick, and was also looking into the alleged murder of three young boys.

Former Tory MP Harvey Proctor, who denied any involvement and claimed he was the victim of a homosexual witch hunt, has been interviewed under caution twice but has not been charged.

Former prime minister Edward Heath and ex-home secretary Lord Brittan, both now dead, were also named in connection with the probe. Operation Midland, which had cost £1.8 million as of November last year, has come under intense scrutiny in recent weeks after the Met announced that D-Day veteran Lord Bramall would face no further action over historical child abuse allegations.

The development sparked calls for police to offer an apology to the former armed forces chief and prompted questions over the veracity of Nick’s allegations.

Firefighters will support paramedics

FIREFIGHTERS will be called to attend life-threatening medical emergencies as part of a plan to support stretched ambulance crews and cut response times.

A trial in Lambeth, Wandsworth and Merton will involve firefighters attending around 30 ‘red call’ events a week.

During the four-week trial, fire crews will be sent to heart attacks and other serious medical incidents alongside paramedics.

They already carry defibrillators and are trained to provide immediate emergency care but will now be tasked with providing immediate life support until ambulance crews arrive.

The plan is designed to save lives but concerns have been raised that firefighters will be overstretched and stations left short of fire cover.

Keith Nisbet, a Fire Brigades Union representative in Lambeth, warned that response times for fires could increase as a result.

“From our own perspective there is a fear that this is being used to pressure up the ambulance service,” he said.

“The problem arises when you are available for fire cover and you get a call to attend a medical emergency. Then you are looking at other stations to cover your ground, which means attendance times are going to increase.”

The London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service are expected to launch the trial next week.

The FBU, which has previously banned its members from the practice of ‘co-responding’ and voiced concerns about the level of training for firefighters, has now agreed to go ahead with the trial.

Asked about the concerns over fire cover, an LFB spokesman said the trial would not affect crews’ ability to attend fire incidents.

Artist draws a blank

ARTIST Tracey Emin’s plans to knock down a listed 1920s building and put up a modern five-storey space for her to live and work look set to be thrown out by planners.

The Turner Prize nominee’s proposal to Tower Hamlets council in July to demolish a building in Spitfields, London, and replace it with a large house connected to her studio drew opposition from conservationists, residents and local heritage groups.

Planning officers, who have now studied the application in detail, said that although they felt the proposed new design by David Chipperfield Architects, had considerable architectural merit it was not exceptional enough to overcome the loss of the existing building.

In a report to the development committee they recommended that her plans should be rejected.

The full text of the motion is:
Red carpet treat for youngsters

HUNDREDS of pupils descended on the Odeon in Leicester Square for an exclusive screening of the Minions movie last week.

The event was organised by Variety, the Children’s Charity, as part of its Great Days Out programme, which helps sick, disabled and disadvantaged children make the most of their childhood by taking them on memorable days out.

Variety Great Days Out, formerly known as Variety at Work, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Since its inception in 1966, the programme has taken over two million sick, disabled and disadvantaged children and young people on days out and to exciting events across the country. In celebration, there will be numerous events for children held across the UK throughout this year.

Last week 850 children – many of whom have never been to the cinema – had the opportunity to watch the films and meet characters from the popular Minions movie.

The group was drawn from 24 schools across London, Middlesex, Surrey and Buckinghamshire. The Odeon kindly donated its flagship Odeon Leicester Square venue, which is famed for red carpet premieres that have seen the likes of Harrison Ford, Tom Cruise, Emma Watson and Angelina Jolie take centre stage.

Pamela Sinclair, chief Barker of Variety, said: “We’re absolutely thrilled to host so many of you at this marvellous event, to celebrate our 50th Anniversary of Variety Great Days Out. Many of these children will never have been to the cinema and so this is a very important part of our commitment to helping children make the most of their childhoods.”

Nursery fee loans proposal could help City Hall staff back to work

By Geoff Baker

CITY Hall is pressing for a loans scheme for all new parents on its staff to cover £1,200 nursery fees and help them return to work.

Assembly members say the scheme, which would add to other staff loans for home deposits, travel season tickets, gym memberships and renting bicycles – is needed because nursery fees are preventing new parents from going back to their old jobs.

The Assembly is calling on the Mayor of London to introduce childcare payments in the hope that the Greater London Assembly will set an example to other employers in the capital to follow suit.

Last week the Assembly agreed a motion for the GLA to lead the way in reducing the barriers that prevent people from returning to the workplace.

Caroline Pidgeon, who proposed the motion, said: “At present registration fees and one month’s deposit to secure a nursery place can result in parents facing over £1,000 before they have even returned to work. These costs can provide a real deterrent to parents, and particularly mothers, who are considering returning to work.

“At a time when London businesses are cying out for skilled workers to fill their vacancies we must find ways to remove any barriers for parents returning to work.

“It is time the Mayor provided an example to London employers by introducing a loan scheme to help Greater London Authority staff with the initial costs of childcare registration. If the initiative was rolled out across London it could make a dramatic change in the opportunities for working parents.”

The full text of the motion reads: “This Assembly notes that the cost of childcare is one of the most serious issues facing Londoners.

“At a time when London businesses are cying out for skilled workers to fill their vacancies we must find ways to remove any barriers for parents returning to work.

“If the Mayor would then be in a position to lobby London businesses to make every effort to assist parents within their workplace, pointing to the GLA as a model of best practice.

“This Assembly further notes that loan schemes already exist for GLA staff for tenancy deposits, travel season tickets, bicycle purchase and gym membership as part of the wider package of staff benefits yet there is no help for parents with the initial costs of childcare.

“This Assembly believes that the GLA should set an example in its role as an employer and that greater efforts should be made to adopt family friendly employment practices, such as offering more part-time and flexible roles, to ensure that the barriers that many parents face upon returning to the workplace are reduced.

“The Mayor would then be in a position to lobby London businesses to make every effort to assist parents within their workforce, pointing to the GLA as a model of best practice.”

Action call on jam-packed Tube trains

THE “alarming” number of Tube delays caused by overcrowding has doubled in the past two years – with the jam-packed Jubilee Line proving to be a nightmare for anyone wanting to get anywhere in a hurry.

An investigation by London Assembly Member and Lib-Dem candidate for London Mayor Caroline Pidgeon has revealed that Underground passengers lost 260,355 hours last year due to Tube overcrowding.

The figures show that the reliability of travelling by Tube is getting worse – as in 2013 the number of lost customer hours due to too many passengers, or not enough trains, was 130,813.

The figures reveal that the best line to catch in order to get anywhere on time is the Metropolitan, which only suffered one incident and 343 lost hours for customers last year. But worse betide anyone hopping on the Jubilee line – where last year there were a frustrating 90 incidents, causing travellers delays and the loss of more than 129,000 hours.

Commenting on the figures obtained from Mayor of London Boris Johnson, Caroline Pidgeon said: “These figures demonstrate that improvements to the Tube are in some cases not even keeping up with the rising demand for travel created by London’s booming population and record number of tourists.

“The delays caused by overcrowding on the Jubilee Line are especially alarming.

“There is a vital need to maintain investment in improving the Tube. However, we also need to go further and consider imaginative policies to manage demand on the Tube.

“A good start would be to encourage more people to start their journeys earlier in the morning by offering half price Tube travel to those starting before 7.30 am. Pressure on the Jubilee Line could also be reduced if a much needed pedestrian and cycling bridge to Canary Wharf to Rotherhithe was built.”

But the mayor rebuffed alarm over the “sardine canneries”, blaming the problem on too many people wanting to use the Underground.

“Crowding is more often than not a consequence rather than a cause of delays,” he said.

Uber snub

BLACK cab drivers in London have rejected an offer from Uber allowing them to use its app to pick up passengers without paying commission.

Uber announced that its drivers will not have to pay a fee for the first year of using its service, with the promise that “black cabs and Uber can co-exist.” The Uber app allows users to select and pay for a black cab in the same way as a regular Uber car.

But the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (LTDA) said it would be “amazing” if any drivers take up the offer.
NOW the fun is going to start. Buckingham Palace has announced that the royal family’s principal funsters – Prince William and Prince Harry – have joined the team organising The Queen’s big day as joint-presidents of The Patron’s Lunch and her other birthday celebrations.

The lunch, at which 10,000 people will sit down in the Mall for a picnic with The Queen to mark her 90th birthday on June 12, was previously been planned only by her other grandson, Peter Phillips, writes Geoff Baker. But now with the Fabulous Windsor Boys on board, the party is set to swing and it is hoped that they will inspire communities across London to dream up best of British ideas for how to turn not just the Sunday picnic but the whole of summer into a fun-filled celebration of Her Majesty’s 90 years.

The current plan is for towns, villages and communities across the nation to hold their own street parties and get-togethers in tandem with The Patron’s Lunch.

But the new thinking is, we can do better than that. This is Britain, the birthplace of global ingenuity, so let’s put our collectively-brilliant minds to work to come out with imaginative ways of marking the most special birthday of the longest-reigning monarch of all time.

Besides the two young princes, Prince Charles, the Duchess of Cambridge and other royals are joining the big birthday project and the Government has got onboard too.

The Communities Minister Greg Clarke has been instructed by the Cabinet to whip up birth-day fever and his department is now mobilising to remove councils’ red tape that could stand in the way of roads being closed for street parties and bands playing music at local celebrations.

“The Queen’s 90th birthday is a truly national event and provides a great chance for all of us to reflect on the extraordinary service her Majesty has given this country for more than six decades,” said Mr Clarke.

“The Patron’s Lunch on the Mall will be a fitting way to celebrate this historic milestone – but your community can get involved and honour the Queen through your own street party too. Local people are being invited to run their own street parties and reignite the great British community spirit in honour of Her Majesty.

“There were almost 10,000 applications to councils to hold street parties for the Diamond Jubilee. I want to encourage all councils to once again get behind local people’s plans to bring out the bunting by blowing away bureaucracy barriers that could stop anyone holding a street party.”

The Department of Communities and Local Government has produced a step-by-step kit for how to get your local party going and the guide is available on its website.

The Department is also working to ensure that the capital and the nation is completely spruced up for The Queen’s birthday, with a campaign called Clean For The Queen.

“When The Queen came to the throne litter was not the problem it is today,” said a spokesman for the nationwide spring clean.

“Food packaging, plastic bottles, takeaway meals and cigarette butts have all since contributed to a growing menace that affects our wildlife, streets, countryside and sense of pride.

“What better way could we show our gratitude to Her Majesty than to clean up our country? We are calling on individuals, volunteer groups, local council, businesses and school to do their bit and join the Clean For The Queen weekend on March 4, 5 and 6.”

Organisations all over the UK are now dreaming up other ideas for how best to mark Her Majesty’s birthday. Among them are plans by more than 250 communities to set Britain ablaze, with huge bonfire beacon that will be lit across the land on her actual birthday, April 21 – although, oddly, in the capital only the Tower of London and the boroughs of Barnet and Merton are so far listed as taking part.

At the same time, the royals are rolling up their sleeves to help the celebrations. The Duchess of Cambridge is to give her first-ever solo TV interview for a two-hour ITV film all about The Queen. Kate is to reveal for the first time what it’s like living and working with The Queen and how it feels to have Her Majesty as your mother-in-law.

Prince Charles, the Duchess of Cornwall, Prince William, Prince Harry and other royals will also contribute personal insights for the film, which is set to be the royals’ most revealing portrait of the boss of the family that they themselves refer to as “The Firm”.

“We’ve been fortunate to have the participation of so many members of the royal family to mark this historic milestone in the life of the Queen,” said Nick Kent, executive producer of the project.

“It’s a remarkable story of an extraordinary life which in so many ways reflects the changing face of the nation.”

Prince Charles’s charity, The Prince’s Trust, is run-
we’re having a party!

ning – or rather pedalling – with “the 90 theme” by organising a ninety-mile Palace To Palace bike race, in which thousands of cyclists will be invited to take part in the run from Windsor Palace to Buckingham Palace. In keeping with the spirit of the ninety theme, royal watchers have come up with a bunch of other ideas for the birthday celebrations:

- 90 goals from 90 teams. In 2011 Premier League teams scored a record 41 goals on one day. In 1963, the old First Division scored 66 goals on a Saturday. Our modern players can do better than that. For Saturday April 23, the closest match day to The Queen’s birthday on April 21, get the FA [of which Prince William is president] to pick 45 games which will be charged with notching up at least 90 goals between them. And if they’re not up to it, bring on Geoff Hurst in the closing minutes at West Ham.

- Get the Royal Astronomical Society [one of more than 600 organisations of which The Queen is patron] to pull their telescopes out and create two new constellations – because there are currently 88 official constellations in the heavens and if astronomers were to identify two more, one in the shape of an X and one in the shape of a C, it would make 90 – and XC are the Roman numerals for 90.

- Never mind a piffling 40-gun salute, this is the woman who has set the bar for the most years as monarch in 1,000 years who we’re celebrating. And let’s have a 90-gun salute in the Park. Ask for it in extra gunpowder.

- Get the nation to vote on the 90 women who have also best-shaped the reign of Elizabeth II. Do an exhibition hauling them all at Westminster Hall.

- A 90-overs Test match between England and a side made up of 90 of the best performers of the Commonwealth, with a knighthood for the first man to notch up 90 runs.

- 90 amateur golfers equipped with just a nine iron and a putter playing off nine tees at the course at St Andrew’s each aiming to play the back nine in exactly 90, not less than 90 but exactly 90, and in less than 90 minutes.

- A new £90 coin. The Royal Mint is producing a new commemorative £5 coin to mark The Queen’s birthday but that’s boring, let’s have a £90 coin.

- Land Rover is one of the official partners of The Patron’s Lunch. The last of the iconic Land Rover Defenders rolled off the production line last month. So get one back, deck it out with all sorts of special features, uphol-

- A BBC documentary special – 90 Views Of The Queen. 90 people [some famous, some not] saying how The Queen has bettered their lives. The BBC is understood to be already working on something like this.

- Another partner of The Patron’s Lunch is PG Tips. They produce a special commemorative edition, a blend of the finest leaves from nine nations of the Commonwealth and call it Royal Nine Tea.

- A 90-vessel birthday flotilla on the Thames – only don’t ask Her Majesty or The Duke of Edinburgh to sail in it without hot water bottles as they got chilly the last time a similar flotilla was launched for her diamond jubilee. And don’t let the BBC’s juvenile commentators go anyway near it this time.

- The Queen has sat for 139 portraits in her time. Pick the best 90 and put them on as a special birthday exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery.

- With the permission of the Duke of Edinburgh, who has a vast private collection, an exhibition of the 90 best royal-related cartoons of Her Majesty’s reign. Publish them as a commemorative book, with all profits to the Prince’s Trust or some such.

- A 90-gogs Royal Variety Performance. Let’s make the Royal Variety show a laugh for a change. It’s meant to be a fun evening, not a free showcase for the latest pop band and performing pets. Get our best comedians to tell 90 jokes over 90 minutes.

- Tributes at the Chelsea Flower Show of inspired and artistic exhibits of 90 different types of roses. The Queen’s favourite flower. Meanwhile, the Government is now looking on what present to give Her Majesty for her 90th, or – the actual word for it – the nonagintennial occasion of her birth. Traditionally, the official stone for a 90th birthday is either granite or “j o u b l e s a p p h ire”.

- PARTY PLANNERS: Princes William and Harry will make the birthday celebrations for their grandmother go with a swing. Inset left: a ‘last of the line’ iconic Land Rover Defender would make a useful present for Her Majesty – the tartan which only Her Majesty is permitted to wear – and present it as a special gift for her to drive around her estates in the car she most enjoys.

- A new race for the Epsom Derby to celebrate Her Majesty’s lifelong love of horse racing. The current Derby is 2,650 yards long. Create a new ‘sprint of sprints’ over a length of 1,980 yards [90 chains] and call it The Queen Elizabeth 90th Cup. And let her win it – as although her horses have won more than 1,600 races, she has never won The Derby.

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- CELEBRATION IDEAS: Roses, the Queen’s favourites, and an exhibition of her best portraits.
Clarkson turns to fast women

ADS’ TV hero Jeremy Clarkson is set to bump Chris Evans in the race to be king of the road by putting fast women for hire eagerly-awarded new Amazon car show.

Following the BBC’s plan to speed ahead in the TV ratings war by signing Friends star Matt LeBlanc as Evans’s co-driver for Top Gear, Clarkson’s team is considering turbo-charging the essential testosterone factor of his show by hiring glamorous women drivers for a regular slot.

Clarkson, who will be presenting his £165 million budget series with his sidekicks James May and Richard Hammond, is having to dream up new ideas for the motoring programmes because copyright prevents him recreating any of his old Top Gear strands.

“All of the previous ingredients – the Stig, the Star in a Reasonably Priced Car and the Cool Wall – belong to the BBC, so we have had to start from scratch,” says Clarkson.

“But we have, though. It’s going to be all new, new segments, new ideas. Everything is different.”

One of the new ideas is for a “burn-off” featuring some of the world’s leading women rally and racing drivers and among names in the frame for that are Inessa Tushkanova and Maryeve Dufault. Inessa is well known to East European readers of Playboy, as the rally driver and model has appeared on the covers of its Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Russian editions.

The Ukrainian-born racer is a rising star of the European rally championships and TV executives believe she and the likes of Maryeve, the Canadian driver in the NASCAR stock car racing series, could be just the thing to attract a wider international audience to the new Clarkson show.

They are also rumoured to be considering Milka Duno from Venezuela, a highly-successful driver in the Indy Car Series and Dayton, Danica Patrick, the most successful American woman in open-wheel racing, US drag racer sisters Courtney and Brittany Force.

“These girls are some of the fastest and most accomplished in the world, there certainly wouldn’t be any jokes about women drivers if they join Jeremy’s new show,” said a source.

Hammersmith anticipates Hawley’s hymn to the hills

JOURNEYMAN songwriter Richard Hawley’s latest album may be a hymn to the rolling hills around his hometown of Sheffield but fans in the capital will no doubt be whisked away when he returns to the Hammersmith Apollo next week.

The flagbearer for an unlikley ‘crooner revival’, Hawley’s vintage rock ‘n’ roll style and rich, world-weary drawl have kept a hardcore following fixed for well over a decade. His well-received seventh album, Hollow Meadows, includes a carousel of sweetly subtle rock ballads characteristic of Hawley’s well-rehearsed rough-round-the-edges appeal.

A throwback to late-1950s guitar heroes Duane Eddy and Hank Marvin, the familiar pluck and twang is recognisable on all of Hawley’s records. With fellow Sheffield sons the Arctic Monkeys - who famously lauded Hawley’s album Coles Corner when accepting their Mercury Prize award in 2006 – counted among his biggest fans, the 49-year-old is fast approaching national treasure status.

But like all great underdogs, Hawley is never one for melodrama.

“I became a musician to avoid having a career,” he says of his early adventures in the business. “It was just: ‘I’m not going down t’ pit and I’m not going down t’ steel works’. Maybe I can write a few tunes, play a few pubs and I won’t have to do any actual work.”

Richard Hawley is performing at the Eventim Apollo in Hammersmith on Tuesday February 23.
BY NICKY SWEETLAND AND JACK DIXON  ● EDITED BY GEOFF BAKER

S ERENA Morton’s Ladbroke Grove gallery is among those leading a new wave of Seventies New York nostalgia which is now exploding worldwide with the start of Chelsea resident Sir Mick Jagger’s TV series, Vinyl.

The drama, created and produced by Sir Mick and set within the murky world of the record business in 1970s New York, started screening this week in the USA, Australia and on Sky Atlantic in the UK.

The 10-part series stars Sir Mick’s son James, acting opposite Hammersmith-born Juno Temple as Kip Stevens, lead singer of an early punk band called The Nasty Bits.

Vinyl is set for huge success because not only is it airng across America on the mighty and influential HBO channel but it is also at the forefront of a host of shows celebrating the Big Apple in the Seventies.

Besides Vinyl, at least five other 1970s New York-based dramas are shortly to hit our screens and the fashion industry is expected to reflect the revival with this autumn/winter season’s look being all about loon pants, hut pants, huge sideburns and Afghan coats.

Cannily, Serena Morton has anticipated the new TV trend and fashion with the exhibition of Disco, photographs from the book by top lensman Bill Bernstein, who uniquely recorded the New York disco scene of the Seventies when he was in Manhattan at the time when it became the epicentre of the poser-dominated movement at legendary clubs like Studio 54, a favourite at the time of Sir Mick, Andy Warhol, Debbie Harry, Grace Jones, Al Pacino, David Bowie, Truman Capote, Brooke Shields and Elton John – and where.

Bianca Jagger once caused a sensation by posing on a white horse led by a naked man.

Although the Disco exhibition closed last week after a six-week run, it was extremely well-attended and with Bernstein’s book selling fast to jet set and art veterans of the era, it can only be a matter of a short time before TV executives pick up the rights in order to base yet another Seventies drama on the life of the rock captured in Bernstein’s stunning photography taken on the disco floor.

As Horse Meat Disco DJ James Hillard writes in the book’s foreword, “These shots capture the very essence of what going out was, is, and should be, all about. They showed the true democracy of the dance floor where anyone could be a star, as long as they had the right attitude and shirt. The pictures in this book are a document of an incredibly exciting and creative time, not only in music, but also in social, political and fashion history too.”

Here’s betting ten bucks that Disco follows Vinyl as a new TV drama. Good to see West London influencing the New York scene and TV trends.

VICE LINE-UP: Pictured left to right are Mackenzie Meehan, Emily Tremaine, Jack Quaid, Juno Temple, Ray Romano, Bobby Cannavale, J.C. MacKenzie, Max Casella, Griffin Newman, P.J. Byrne

Picture courtesy of HBO

Fearless Goulding ‘scared’ of Grammy awards gig

ELIE GOULDING has said she is scared at the prospect of singing at the Grammy Awards because “America is just a whole other game”.

The west London resident singer will perform alongside some of the biggest music stars in the world on the show which last year was watched live by 25 million people.

She joins Adele, Rihanna, Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift and The Weekend on this year’s line-up. Goulding is nominated for best pop solo performance for her 50 Shades Of Grey soundtrack hit Love Me Like You Do.

Speaking to Lorraine Kelly on ITV’s Loose, she said: “It’s the first time I’ve been nominated. I’ve been before and it’s an amazing night, but this year I’m also performing, so it’s quite scary. “America is just a whole other game with music. I’m going out there in a few days and it’s going to be a hectic week. But they have parties and stuff, so I’m sure it will be balanced out!”

On the prospect of performing for the music industry rather than fans, she said: “It is scary in that respect. “But I want to prove myself, and sing a song that I’m so proud of, and so proud to sing and perform – so I’m looking forward to it.”

Goulding, pictured, is not afraid to push herself – and her views forward.

She recently tweeted her frustration at policies by Hackney council to cut down people sleeping rough, saying that the growing number of homeless people in London was “shameful”.

Now Chelsea and Kensington council have told people not to give food or money to homeless people because they say the money will fund something it shouldn’t, but actually that’s just the act of kindness, the communication that could save someone’s life. It’s a ridiculous campaign and I completely condemn it.”

Monk business

PAUL Weller and Noel Gallagher to Join The Monkees? Now there’s a question that we fans of Britpop never expected to be ever asking, but apparently the Modfather and his Modson have come together to write a new song for an upcoming album for what remains of the Sixties TV bubblegum band.

Rolling Stone has confirmed that Weller and Gallagher have paired up to compose a track for Good Times!, the summer release to mark the 50th anniversary in June of the band now represented by Micky Dolenz and Peter Tork. Hey Hey It’s My Wonderwall.

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Pharmacy a ‘pillar of the community’

BY JACK DIXON
jack@londonweeklynews.co.uk

A FAMILY-RUN pharmacy in Shepherd’s Bush has been named the best in the UK by industry experts. The Bush Pharmacy, in Uxbridge Road, made it third time lucky to win the Best Independent Community Pharmacy prize at the SMART awards, having twice finished as runner-up at big industry events.

Co-manager Sailesh Pindolia, whose father Kishor set up the business 30 years ago, collected the prestigious award at the ceremony in Birmingham last week.

He paid tribute to the hard work and dedication shown by long-serving members of his staff.

“Everything we achieve starts with our staff,” he said. “We have had the same people here for a long time so they know their patients.

“Every day we see a unique problem and it keeps us on our toes. Shepherd’s Bush is an entertaining place to work too, so they never get bored!”

Sailesh joined the pharmacy eight years ago and the father-and-son team now share management duties.

The popular pharmacy had previously put itself forward for the independent Community Pharmacy ‘pillar in the community’.

“It was great to rub shoulders with the big players in the industry. That was quite humbling for us. Chris Higgins, who has been a customer at the pharmacy for 14 years, said the award was well-deserved.

“I was suffering with a knee injury after damaging my cruciate ligaments but with their help I made a full recovery.

“They always give great advice and the staff are friendly and provide a good service.”

Win! Brand new album by Lee Mead

STAR of stage and screen Lee Mead will once again bring some enchantment to Chelsea next month as he launches his new album with a two-night residency at The Pheasantry on the King’s Road.

Entitled Some Enchanted Evening, the album follows a mini tour of the same title which the singer completed last year and boasts some reimagined takes on classic musical songs from yesteryear.

Mead, who won the BBC1 talent search to find the leading man for the revival of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat in 2007, will be playing at the west London venue from March 4 to 6.

The album is set to be released on February 26 and we have three copies to give away to some lucky readers.

If you would like to be in with a chance of winning, simply send an email with LEE MEAD COMP as the subject heading along with your name, address and phone number to the following email address: competitions@londonweeklynews.co.uk. Closing date for entries is midnight on February 20.

Terms and conditions apply:
- Only one entry per person
- Each prize consists of one signed CD
- There is no cash alternative to the prize stated, and the prizes are non-transferable.

Prize consists only of the elements expressly detailed above; no other elements or expenses. The promoter’s decision is final and binding. No correspondence will be entered into.

By entering this competition you are agreeing to allow your details to be shared with the promoter in order for them to contact the winners.
Start Up-Grow-Accelerate
Wandsworth enterprise 2016 week
A week of inspiration, information, ideas and networking to help you start or grow your business in Wandsworth
29 February - 5 March

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Tech Tuesday

Wednesday 2
Women's Enterprise Day

Thursday 3
Wandsworth Business Forum

Friday 4
Youth Enterprise Day & Creative Enterprise

Saturday 5
Young Enterprise Trade Fair

For info and bookings visit
www.wandsworthenterpriseweek.biz
(t): (020) 8871 6808
(e): wew@wandsworth.gov.uk
FORMER prison warder and X Factor winner Sam Bailey will draw upon all of her ‘inside’ knowledge next week when she takes to the stage to play the role of Matron Mama Morton in Chicago.

The singer, who just last year showcased her musical theatre capabilities in a special one-night-only concert at the Lyric Theatre, takes on the part of the wily guard in the nationwide tour which comes to the New Wimbledon Theatre from the February 22 to 27, writes Nicky Streetland.

Bailey won ITV’s prime time talent show back in 2013 and is known for her powerhouse vocals, which she hopes will perfectly fit into her new musical theatre setting.

She told me: “Hopefully this is one of many shows that I’ll do; reputable shows. The plan is to keep building up my musical theatre repertoire and just carry on going and enjoying it.”

Bailey has always been a big fan of musicals, which is why she has worked so hard to hone her talents in readiness for her theatrical debut. Although she would cite Les Miserables as being ultimately her favourite, the star has loved getting better acquainted with the Kander and Ebb classic show based in the American prohibition-era.

“I didn’t know the truth behind the show, which was quite interesting to find out. I’d been behind the show, which was quite interesting to find out. I’d been

Sam gets inside job

to see Chicago in the early 2000s. It’s an incredible show and my goodness the dancing and all the staging is so clever, it really is.”

Bailey’s character was portrayed by hip hop superstar Queen Latifah in the 2002 Academy Award-winning film version, which also starred Catherine Zeta-Jones, Renée Zellweger and Richard Gere.

Her main theme tune, When You’re Good to Mama, suits the earthiness of Sam’s vocals although the former jail attendant is keen to assure people that the entertaining dramatisation is a far cry from the reality of prison life.

“Mama Morton’s a game player, she’s a businesswoman. Her role in the prison is obviously to keep the girls locked up, but at the same time she’s making money, so she’s pulling lots of favours in. She’s doing favours for people and earning money in the process, so it’s nowhere near what prison’s like now. But it’s so interesting to learn about how Chicago was in the 1920s.”

The musical is based on a play of the same name by Maureen Dallas Watkins, a reporter who wrote about the colourful criminals she came across as part of her journalistic career.

Sam has found the history behind the story an important part of forming her characterisation.

“It was a true story about a woman who was a reporter called Mary. She wrote a diary of all the different passionate murders and trials that went on in the court room.”

The West End revival of Chicago ran for nearly 15 years and Sam attributes much of the show’s success to the fabulously memorable score, which includes the famous standards All That Jazz, Cell Block Tango and Roxie.

“The music is so important in Chicago. It’s almost like it’s another character. In most musicals it’s all about the voices and the colours but Chicago is pretty much a black box. It’s all about the music, the dancing; the performing and the timing.”

Bailey will be joined on stage by Celebrity Big Brother housemate John Partridge, who plays the suave lawyer Billy Flynn. Partridge reached the final of the Channel Five TV show and so has missed a large chunk of the rehearsal process.

Sam laughs and tells me: “He has loads of catching up to do!”

Chicago runs at the New Wimbledon Theatre from the February 22 to 27. For more details you can visit the website at tickets.com
BY NICKY SWEETLAND

ONE of the most hotly anticipated shows to open this year is Motown the Musical.
The show, which opens in March, follows the legendary career of Berry Gordy and the creation of his musical empire, Motown Records.
The show is based on Gordy’s 1994 autobiography To Be Loved: The Music, the Magic, the Memories of Motown, and premiered on Broadway in 2013 to critical acclaim receiving four Tony nominations, writes Nicky Sweetland.
Producers of the London premiere will be hoping for the same response and with a cast hand picked by Gordy himself, and a plethora of hugely popular hit songs, Motown the musical is set to be a popular choice with theatre goers this year.

Clapham resident Cedric Neal takes the leading role of Berry Gordy when it opens at the Shaftesbury Theatre and he told me how the rehearsals have been going.

“The rehearsals could not be going any better. The bond that is known as the Motown family bond has already been formed with the entire cast. It’s one of those experiences that comes very few times within a lifetime. Everyone’s on the same page and shooting towards the same goal.”

Berry Gordy founded the Motown record label back in 1959 and is credited with changing the shape of the music industry both in America and across the rest of the world. Neal, who was born in Dallas, grew up with Motown and is extremely passionate and knowledgeable about the style of music which launched the careers of Michael Jackson, The Temptations and the Supremes, to name but a few.

Cedric says: “It introduced what’s called cross over to the world of music where black artists, who at the time were recording what was known as race music, were introduced to white audiences and accepted by white audiences and on pop stations.

“It introduced us to iconic superstars like Michael Jackson, The Jackson Five, Dianna Ross, The Supremes, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, Martha Reeves and The Vandellas – and it just tells a story about a young black man in Detroit, Michigan, who wanted to make people as happy as his childhood idol did – who was Joe Louis – and he decided to do it to music.

“Playing such a legend of the music industry must be a frightening prospect but Cedric feels his is a slightly easier burden than some of his co-stars.

“It’s a daunting task but it’s a task made comfortable by the fact that he (Gordy) is so involved and is still as excited about his story being told as the first day when they started workshops on Broadway six years ago.”

“Mike-star Lucy St Louis is weighted with not only playing a living legend but one that is recognisable for her sound and her look. Although I’m playing a living legend, I don’t have the weight that she has because not many people know his tendencies or his habits so I can get away with artistic licence in how I portray Mr Gordy on stage.”

With over 40 classic songs such as My Girl, What’s Going On, Dancing in the Street, I Heard It Through The Grapevine and Ain’t No Mountain High Enough, this explosive event is the next chapter of Motown’s incredible history, but one that has been a part of Cedric’s life and has influenced him throughout his career.

“It’s just something that has affected my sound as I was growing up. One of my favourite singers of all time is David Ruffin, the lead singer of The Temptations. When I got my first pair of glasses I had to get these black horn-rimmed glasses because that’s what David Ruffin had.

“When I moved to New York from Texas I quickly became known as the soulful man from Texas because my sound was so influenced by Motown artists like Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder.”

Motown opens at the Shaftesbury Theatre on March 8. For more details visit the website motownthemusical.co.uk

Talk of the town

Sensational story of the soundtrack to our lives

Kerry agrees festival date

THE ‘First Lady of the West End’ is to sing at Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.

Organisers of the festival have signed up Kerry Ellis, who has starred in smash-hit musicals in the West End and Broadway in New York and is a long-term collaborator of Queen guitarist Brian May.

She will be topping the bill in the Voices of Musical Theatre concert on Wednesday, July 6, when she’ll be sharing the stage with Britain’s Got Talent winners Collabro, the classical and musical theatre boy band.

Kerry, 36, made her name in productions like Wicked, Cats, Les Misérables, My Fair Lady and We Will Rock You.

She is the latest top name to be announced for the 2016 festival. Classical singer Katherine Jenkins will raise the curtain on Tuesday, July 5.
Talk of the town

I Loved Lucy *****

DON’T come to the new play at the Jermyn Street Theatre as an impartial observer.

In fact, I’ve been excited about watching it from the moment it was announced that the intimate venue would put on Lee Tannen’s affectionate tribute to the legendary Lucille Ball, writes Nicky Sweetland.

Ball was one of the most recognisable figures of American television and her I Love Lucy sitcom was watched by 40 million viewers per year at the height of its popularity. I watched the black and white re-runs of the show as a child and have always had a real admiration for the star who had the most impeccable comic timing and lovable onscreen persona.

This play is based on Tannen’s best-selling memoirs and follows the writer’s relationship with Ball over the last ten years of her life when much of her time was spent shunning the limelight and indulging her obsession for the icon turns into a once-in-a-life time friendship.

Matthew Bunn plays Tannen, a slightly geeky and awkward writer whose admiration for the icon turns into a once-in-a-life time friendship. Bunn is adorable as the enthused young author and perfectly conveys both his love for the TV star and the complicated and very special relationship which develops when a fan becomes a friend.

Sandra Dickinson shines as Ball, with a wonderfully pregnant and yet somewhat vulnerable portrayal of a falling star.

Together the pair establish the perfect on-stage chemistry and make the audience feel like a fly on the wall witnessing a unique and intimate collaboration.

An intriguing and lovely portrait of the Hollywood megastar, this is a must-see for fans but also for anyone who wants to enjoy a funny but touching story of friendship.

The End of Longing *****

MATTHEW Perry, the star of the hit TV show Friends, made his return to the London stage last week in his self-penned play The End of Longing.

The play marks Perry’s writing debut and although it is not meant as an autobiographical piece, it has obvious reflections of the actor’s somewhat troubled past, writes Nicky Sweetland.

There are parallels with the American TV show which made Perry a household name, with the same charming quips and slick changes between character plots.

The simply awesome stage design by Anna Fleischle also helps to facilitate a big impact – giving the play a Hollywood feel – and although there are some very American references which may be lost on some, the story is still relevant within most friendship circles.

Perry plays a pessimistic alcoholic in a story which follows two sets of friends, who after meeting at a bar, couple up and become intertwined in a tale of love and companionship. A brutally honest insight into a life as – or with – a drunk, this play will resonate with many as Perry encapsulates the torment of addiction, with all of the aspects of denial and depression wonderfully and painfully portrayed both within the script and during the star’s performance.

His muse, Stephanie, is played with suave expertise by Jennifer Mudge, who pitches the frustrations of those mired within one of life’s hidden professions with absolute aplomb and yet still maintains the timing necessary to keep the dialogue light and amusing.

Lloyd Owen as the lovable hulking dim-wit Joseph is the perfect antidote to Christina Coles’ neurotic Stevie, who spends much of the show ranting before eventually giving in to the wiles of the gentle giant. Laughter loud funny but with a big conscience, The End of Longing takes you to the very extremes of human emotions and is an impressive piece of theatre which I would highly recommend.

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The End of Longing is being staged at the Playhouse Theatre.
**WINE & DINE**

Back on screens with her new Foolproof Cooking series, Mary Berry's year has started as it means to go on – busily. She tells Cornwallis-colour – without rodicent on spirilizers, doing Paul Hollywood's ironing and plans to escape to the coast.

In 45 years of writing cookery books, Mary Berry has seen many a newfangled device bid for a permanent space on her spotless worktops. But the latest one – the spirilizer – hasn’t passed the all-important Berry test. “Everybody said, ‘What about these spirilizers, what are they like?’ So I brought several in and tried them and then used them in the programme, just because people are talking about them and they want to see people like me using them,” says the 80-year-old, reining for her new show, Mary Berry’s Foolproof Cooking.

“I think it’s quite fun, if you want something light that spins the vegetables out and looks attractive,” she adds, before concluding: “I expect it’ll be something here today and gone tomorrow.”

Incidentally, she’s not much of a fan of “superfood’ veg kale either, calling it “strong and bitter”. She’s certainly earned the right to express an opinion, with yet another cookbook now added to her ever-expanding collection.

The one that accompanies the BBC Two series takes her total to about 70, all kept in what one can only imagine is a very sturdy bookcase in her immaculate Buckinghamshire home.

“I can never remember which recipe is in which book,” she admits, although she does refer back to them for her favourite dishes.

The idea for Foolproof Cooking came from her love of helping budding chefs nail even the smallest details in the kitchen.

“I wanted to give every possible detail with the recipes, so I included tips all the way through the book,” she explains. “So in every recipe, it says, ‘Mary’s foolproof tip’. Like, it’s important to use smoked paprika rather than the hot variety, which has more chilli powder in it and can make [a dish] too hot.”

The series so far has seen the Great British Bake Off judge visit a garlic farm and go lobster fishing on the isle of Wight, dine at London restaurant Rules to see how they make their famous Beef Wellington – and then recreate her own version at home (“Mine’s much easier”) – as well as catching crayfish in Oxfordshire.

“I’ve always liked fishing, but I everyone thought I’d do it,” says Berry.

To demonstrate, she tells me about a scene in which book, “We’ve got a lot of people coming on Sunday for lunch and I’ve already made the cottage pies.”

“They’re in the fridge, ready, because you never know what’s going to happen!”

Doesn’t cooking for family gatherings feel like a bit of a busman’s holiday?

“Oh no, no, no!” Berry insists.

“There’s usually something in the fridge that’s ready,” she adds.

**MARK HIX’S RECIPE OF THE WEEK**

Breast of chicken with ginger and wild garlic broth

Serves two

BLACK garlic is produced down my way on the South West Garlic Farm and lends itself to all sorts of things including marinades or glazes like this.

**Ingredients**

- 2 chicken breasts
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cloves of black garlic
- 2 tbsp treacle or honey
- A handful of wild garlic leaves and stems
- 2 chicken breasts
- 4 cloves of black garlic
- 2 tbsp treacle or honey
- A handful of wild garlic leaves and stems

**Method**

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6. Make a paste with the black garlic, honey and soy in a small bowl. Brush the breasts with this mixture, place them on a baking tray lined with foil and put in the oven for 20 minutes.

**SLOW GOOD: Shoulder of lamb**

**Recipe**

Shoulder of lamb (leg works well too)

- 2 large tins of haricot beans
- Half to three quarters pint red wine
- 2 large onions, roughly chopped
- 10 shallots, roughly chopped
- 6 tomatoes, quartered
- 3 tablespoons tomato purée
- Salt
- Black peppercorns
- 10 whole cloves garlic
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 branches rosemary

Method

Ask your butcher to cut off knuckle before cooking. Caramelize the shallots in oil before adding the garlic, then the onions and finally the haricot beans. Add the wine, shallots, salt, pepper and rosemary and braise slowly for two hours. Add the tomatoes and continue cooking for another hour.

**MARK’S FINEST: Breast of chicken with ginger and wild garlic broth**

**MARK HIX’S RECIPE OF THE WEEK**

Breast of chicken with ginger and wild garlic broth

Serves two

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Hammersmith & Fulham Council

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London Weekly News 25

Tuesday, February 16th 2016

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MIDDLESEX have re-signed Australia batsman Adam Voges as their overseas player for all formats in 2016. The 36-year-old, who has had spells at Lord’s in each of the last two seasons, has committed to spend two periods of the campaign at the Home of Cricket.

Voges, who will captain Middlesex in the County Championship, took his Test batting average to 97.46 when he was out for 239 in Australia’s first Test in Wellington, New Zealand on Sunday.

His innings, one of the major factors in a runaway Aussie victory at the Basin Reserve, briefly elevated his average above that of the legendary Sir Don Bradman.

Middlesex have also announced Dawid Malan and James Franklin will skipper the side in the T20 Blast and One-Day Cup respectively. They replace England limited-overs captain Eoin Morgan, who has given up the roles.

Voges, who has played 14 Tests for Australia since making his debut in June 2015, will fill his spots at Middlesex around his international commitments and the availability of big-hitting New Zealand star Brendon McCullum, who has signed a deal to play limited-overs cricket for the club.

He will initially be available from the start of the season until early June, and is expected to return in mid-August.

“Adam’s return is something we are all delighted with,” managing director of cricket Angus Fraser said.

“He may not have spent a huge amount of time with us but during the time he has been with us he has made an extremely positive impression. He continues to show what a truly quality player he is.”

New Zealand skipper McCullum will join Middlesex at the conclusion of his commitments in the Indian Premier League. The 34-year-old could potentially appear in seven T20 matches and four in the 50-over One-Day Cup.

FOOTBALL FIXTURES
Saturday, February 20
FULHAM v Charlton Athletic, 3.00
Bolton Wanderers v QPR, 3.00

Sunday, February 21
Manchester City v CHELSEA (FAC 5), 4.00
Tuesday, February 23
Leeds United v FULHAM, 7.45
Sheffield Wednesday v QPR, 7.45

‘Unacceptable’ R’s are taken apart

MANAGER Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink said Saturday’s embarrassing 3-1 home defeat by local rivals Fulham was “totally unacceptable”, while Queens Park Rangers chairman Tony Fernandes described himself as “embarrassed”.

Hasselbaink also apologised to Hoops fans, who booed their team off at half-time with the visitors already coasting to a 3-0 lead.

Substitute TJornro Cerny’s goal in added time was an irrelevance.

“I must say sorry to the fans. We let them down and we let ourselves down and it wasn’t good enough. It’s a bitter pill to swallow. This result is hard to take,” he said.

“We now have to look to try and put this right.”

“We never got started. We’ve had quick starts in the past but that didn’t happen today. That’s two steps back.

“I must say credit to Fulham – they were the better team in the first half, and in parts of the second. They changed their formation a little bit – and we couldn’t cope. It just wasn’t good enough.”

Re-focus

“We need to go back to the start and re-focus and get back to work again to put this right, because this wasn’t anywhere near the standards we all expect.

“We’ve done well in previous games, we did really, really averagely today. And Fulham capitalised on that. To be fair to Hasselbaink, he has inherited a mess. Rangers could barely string two passes together and their midfield gave their direct opponents, Scott Parker, Jamie O’Hara and the impressive Tom Cairney, the freedom of west London in which to control and dictate the game. The possession stats, 60/40 per cent in Fulham’s favour, told the story.

“At half-time, German striker Seb Poulsen was replaced by new signing Connor Washington, who at least managed to force Fulham keeper Andy Lonergan into making a rare save. Fellow newcomer sub Nasser El Khayati also added a bit of much needed nous and invention in the third last but it was too little too late.

“Later, at least Poulsen had the good grace to admit to his Twitter followers in every game that he had played poorly, though he could have been speaking for the whole team.

“The injured Ale Faurlin was sorely missed but his absence was no excuse for this gutless performance.

“Fernandes urged his Twitter followers to overreact to the result but it is surely the minimal right of every football fan to express their team’s fortunes to get 100 per cent.

“A sizeable proportion of disgruntled fans wearing blue-and-white among the crowd of 17,335 had left their seats long before the final whistle in W12.

“Right from the outset, Rangers never looked like averting the 4-0 caging they received at Craven Cottage last September. Their team has been drastically weakened since then and if it wasn’t already obvious that replacing Charlie Austin’s goals tally will be a mammoth task, Saturday’s derby emphasised it.

“Capitalising Instead of building upon the previous week’s 1-0 home win over Ipswich Town, R’s dropped to a 4-1 in the table by capitalising to another woeful London derby defeat with a limp display against a side that outplayed them in every department.

“Saturday’s visit to beleaguered-bottom-of-the-table Bolton Wanderers provides R’s with an ideal opportunity to get back into winning mode, before a more daunting trip to promotion-chasing, in-form Sheffield Wednesday next Tuesday.

“QPR club representatives will meet with the Supporters’ Consultation Committee on Wednesday, March 2.

“Rangers’ CEO Lee Hoos said: “We are a club that encourages constructive feedback from our supporters and that’s the main purpose of the Supporters’ Consultation Committee.

“We will meet with the committee, as well as the regular contributors from the fans’ websites, in early March to discuss a variety of issues. I’m sure 2016-17 season tickets will be on the agenda again.

“In the meantime, should fans wish to express their views or raise issues for discussion at the Supporters’ Consultation Committee meeting, please contact customer services manager Andy Rees via email at andyr@qpr.co.uk.

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LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW With Tony McDonald

GARY Cahill will replace the injured Kurt Zouma

Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

Cahill steps in

Although Fulham fans should not have been looking anywhere else but focusing on winning something before the end of the season.

“It is such a short career, which is why I said a few weeks ago that I want to play football and not let it pass me by, by missing games. It’s down to whoever that individual is. It’s down to their goals and their ambitions and the club’s vision.

“This club doesn’t need to sell itself to anybody. Everyone has their ambitions but it will be dictated by the club, as everyone is under contract,”

continued Jokanovic. “My obligation is to try and find a weakness in the opposition.”

Fulham were dealt a blow early on when young Dane Lasse Vigen Christensen limped out of the action in the fifth minute when what Jokanovic confirmed was a hamstring strain.

On Saturday, Fulham will be looking to record their first home league win of 2016 when second-bottom Charlton Athletic venture across from south London desperate for points to ease their relegation fears.

Whites go back on the road next Tuesday with a visit to Leeds United.
CHELSEA finish the most important week of their calamitous season so far with a double blow

Frankly, it’s an irrelevance that the young French defender is out for six months. Chelsea have already done their business in that department for next season, with the signing of USA star Matt Miazga. The club’s intention is to dump Terry and work on the partnership of Gary Cahill with Zouma, with Miazga playing in domestic cup matches before pushing the other two for a league starting spot.

Stalling tactic

Chelsea’s insistence that it’s not all over for Terry and that the club will wait until a new manager is appointed before deciding his fate, is simply a stalling tactic designed to quell any dissent from fans. The coming weeks will see an orchestrated increase of pressure by them to force Roman Abramovich into a U-turn. The chances of success are slim. But, as we have seen from Liverpool fans’ success in forcing a volte-face from their hierarchy over ticket prices, anything is possible.

LWN Sport went to press before Tuesday’s Champions League last 16 first leg encounter with Paris St-Germain but it was highly unlikely that Terry would have recovered sufficiently in time to step out into the cauldron of the Parc des Princes. In fact, Sunday’s meeting with Man City at The Etihad might also be a game too soon. Should Chelsea lose it, then Terry’s love affair with the FA Cup will have come to an abrupt and disappointing end.

Terry, 34, has won five FA Cups in his haul of 14 major trophies spanning a 21-year career in SW6.

Interim boss Guus Hiddink is relishing the task of lifting Blues as far as the Premier League table is possible and the weekend thrashing of the Magpies was a welcome boost – his first home league win since succeeding Jose Mourinho in December.

Victories have been in short supply and despite the easy win on a run of 10 league games without defeat, Blues are still languishing in 12th place.

“We have been telling people we are unbeaten but this was our first home win since I arrived in December,” he said. “We were unbeaten but we were not really proud of that.

“After the recovery from December to now, there have been too many draws. We wanted to have the status of unbeaten but with victories. That is why it was good to get the three points.”

Even so, Hiddink and his players were not entirely happy.

“The only thing we are not happy with, and that’s a good sign, is that we conceded a goal,” he said.

“We were sloppy in losing possession but we did not defend well either. I was pleased to see the players were not happy – that’s a good signal.”

Hiddink confessed that it’s a difficult job juggling the pressure of the lowly league position with the expectations of extended cup runs, both domestically and in Europe.

“It is about fitness and freshness,” he insisted. “The team was very fresh against Newcastle, they love to play football but they worked very hard as well, with a high intensity.

“We have a massive game coming up at the weekend and we have a bit of damage with John Terry. He has a muscular problem and I hope we will not have more damage.”

Hiddink resisted the chance to play a weakened team against Newcastle despite the visitors’ own parlous league position.

AFTER months of anguish, frustration and anxiety, long-suffering Fulham fans were finally beaming again this week after seeing their side complete a richly deserved west London derby double over Queens Park Rangers in the most emphatic fashion.

Saturday’s thumping 3-1 victory at Loftus Road may not have looked, on paper, quite as comprehensive as their 4-0 humiliation of Hoops at Craven Cottage last September, but it was every bit as convincing.

What a way for Sivisla Jokanovic to earn his first win in seven matches as Fulham’s head coach, ending a winless run that stretched back to December 23.

First-half goals from Ross McCormack, Moussa Dembele and Tom Cairney, scored in 12 minutes before the break, sent rampant Whites on their way to a memorable win, before Tjaronn Chery netted for Rangers in injury-time.

“We put in some brilliant performances to win the match,” said Jokanovic afterwards. “The only disappointing thing was that we conceded, but we kept a clean sheet.

“We can do better but at the end I can be happy for my players and our supporters. It’s only one game, so it’s important to keep working hard and try to win the games in front of us.”

The three points lifted Fulham to 18th place, ahead of last Tuesday’s rearranged trip to Blackburn Rovers, played after LWN went to press.

“Nothing is easy,” said Jokanovic. “We’re working hard in training and at the end of it we got a present today. It’s good for our confidence and we’re a good football team, which is a positive. We’ll enjoy this for a few hours and then look at what’s in front of us.”

Find balance

“This team can score goals, they did before I arrived here, we need to find the balance to be more solid in defence.”

Chery’s late goal was the 50th conceded by Whites in 30 league matches – their last clean sheet achieved way back in mid-October – and must have been a minor irritation to Jokanovic. But this was a day for Fulham fans to celebrate, not grumble about.

Deploying a back three strengthened by the arrival of Austrian debutant Michael Madl alongside Dan Burn and Fernando Amorebieta, Fulham dominated from the off, out-playing Rangers with a neat passing game that the hosts never came close to matching and made a mockery of the visitors’ lowly league position.

Cairney’s delightful, defence-splitting pass to set up McCormack for his 18th goal of the season embodied all that was good about Fulham as a creative attacking force. The in-form Cairney, 25, is one of the best passing midfielders in the Championship and his goal – a close-range follow-up after Dembele’s shot had rebounded from the post – was no less than his accomplished performance deserved.

Like his fellow goal scorers, Cairney is likely to be targeted by clubs who believe they have more to offer than Fulham. In the meantime, he, McCormack and Dembele will be buoyed by having got on the score-sheet again and more of the same in the last few months of the season will only enhance their status and, in the case of the former two, their transfer value.

PEDRO scored twice in Blues’ 5-1 victory against Newcastle

London Weekly News

Thursday, February 18th, 2016

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This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

‘UNACCEPTABLE’ SAYS HASSELBAINK – page 27

Focus on Craven Cottage

By TONY MCDONALD

Fulham’s derby delight

High pressure

“We brought in three players but I did not underestimate them,” he said. “Newcastle were not short of quality, because they have made some good signings in the (transfer) window. What we did well in the first part of the game was not let them come into it. We surprised them with high pressure and then we forced two, even three, goals within a short period.

“If I had rested players, they would have come more easily into their game.

“It was one of the best performances this season. The way we started the game was great. We spoke before that although the ship is settled and we’ve been on a good run, we’ve had a lot of draws along the way and we needed to turn them into wins. We went about our business well, it is a fantastic result.”

A couple of players coming into top form at the business end of the season are last season’s player of the year, Eden Hazard, and triple Champions League winner with Barcelona, Pedro, who scored twice against Newcastle. Diego Costa, Willian and Bertrand Traore completed the route.

“I’m happy Eden played 90 minutes against Newcastle,” said the Dutchman. “He was out for many weeks with two injuries. That is why we brought him to a high level step by step.”