Labour reject rock music icon but sign up mysterious Mr Fluff

Leadership contest dubbed ‘shambolic’ as Kensington’s Brian Eno is banned from joining party while ‘115-year-old’ rogue applicant is welcomed in...
AMBITIOUS EAST-WEST CYCLE SUPERHIGHWAY NEARS COMPLETION

Prepare to enjoy the ride of your lives

NEW proposals for the last remaining central London section of the Mayor’s flagship East-West Cycle Superhighway have been published.

The plans provide a trial two-way segregated cycle track on Spur Road, in front of the Queen Victoria Memorial at Buckingham Palace, closing the last gap in the route and providing continuous fully-segregated and protected cycling across central London from Tower Hill, through Parliament Square to Hyde Park Corner and Lancaster Gate.

They provide a safer route for cyclists through one of central London’s most intimidating gyratories, which is also one of the Mayor’s 33 “Better Juncions” where major improvements for cyclists have been pledged.

The Mayor, Boris Johnson, said: “This is the final jigsaw piece in what will be one of the world’s great cycling routes. The new East West superhighway will be a treasured part of our new network, running through the heart of the capital and past the front door of some of our most loved landmarks, such as the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace.”

Public consultation on the Spur Road proposals will run until October 4.

The proposals include major benefits for pedestrians and visitors to the Changing of the Guard ceremony, with better pedestrian crossings and almost 900 square metres of new footway to accommodate growing crowds. Cycle-pedestrian conflicts will be reduced by the separation of the existing cyclist and pedestrian tracks on Constitution Hill. The cycle track will also improve the experience for visitors enjoying St James’s Park and Green Park, creating a new buffer between the parks and the noise and fumes of vehicles. The proposals involve the removal of traffic lanes on Spur Road but would have little or no impact on traffic on this short stretch.

There will also be segregated cycling facilities either side of the proposed new segregated Spur Road section. Proposals for a new two-way segregated track on Birdcage Walk, also using removable bollards, were consulted on in February and March. The Birdcage Walk plans do not involve the removal of any traffic lanes; Birdcage Walk already has three lanes, of which only two are used by traffic.

The consultation report on those proposals within St James’s Park was published this week. It shows strong public support for the proposals, with 71 per cent of respondents to the consultation supporting or partially supporting them. TfL will implement these proposals, including the Birdcage Walk section with a few minor changes, not affecting the segregation element.

A route via Horse Guards Road and the existing off-road cycle track on The Mall to Constitution Hill was also included in the February and March consultation.

There was less support for this – people preferred the more direct route via Spur Road, which was announced this week – but this route will still be implemented for use on the Central London Grid network of “Quietway” cycle routes.

It will also serve as a superhighway diversion route on the few days – roughly once a month on average and then mainly outside of peak times – when the Spur Road area is closed for ceremonies.

The Mayor’s East-West Superhighway, Europe’s longest substantially-segregated urban cycle route, will run for 18 miles from Barking to Acton using the existing Cycle Superhighway 3 from Barking to Tower Hill, then new segregated lanes on Upper and Lower Thames Streets, the Victoria Embankment, Parliament Square, Birdcage Walk, Spur Road (subject to consultation), Constitution Hill, South Carriage Drive, West Carriage Drive, Lancaster Gate, Westbourne Terrace and the A40 Westway.
Film maker urges change of direction for Crossrail

BY GEOFF BAKER

OSCAR-WINNING Chelsea resident Sir Alan Parker has joined the 3,000 locals fighting against plans for a Crossrail 2 station in the King’s Road – slamming the idea as “mindless”.

Sir Alan, the winner of 19 BAFTA awards, 10 Golden Globes and 10 Oscars, has put out at Transport for London and Kensington and Chelsea Council for putting the village on the road to destruction.

“Crossrail in the King’s Road is a mindless idea that will destroy the unique character of Chelsea,” he said. “It’s not sensible, not needed and not wanted.”

Sir Alan said, the director of hit movies including *Midnight Express*, *Fame*, * BUGSY MALONE*, The Commitments*, Eva*, *Angela’s Ashes* and *Pink Floyd – Comfortable Boots*.

Sir Alan’s attack comes as Chelsea’s anti-Crossrail campaigners say that the former homes of *Winnie-the-Pooh* creator AA Milne and painter Augustus John will be placed at risk as they lie along the proposed Crossrail 2 line.

Campaigners warn that boring the twin tunnels could cause damage to these houses and many others – and deep excavation for the station will be needed for the many of the new development.

A Freedom of Information request by the No Crossrail In Chelsea group has found that 600 insurance claims remain outstanding from property owners as a result of settlement damage caused by tunnel or station construction.

Chelsea has 240 listed buildings that will be put at risk by the construction, 34 of which are on the King’s Road itself, say the campaigners. So, the Crossrail 2 station being built in Chelsea has picked up a pace in recent weeks, as celebrities Lloyd Grossman, Felicity Kendal and now Sir Alan Parker – and now Sir Alan – have joined more than 3,000 local residents and business owners in calling for the plans to be ditched.

The No Crossrail in Chelsea group opposes plans for a Crossrail 2 diversion through Chelsea and wants the route from Victoria to Clapham Junction to be direct.

“A Crossrail station would seriously damage the feel of Chelsea, ruining the unique charm of the King’s Road and its independent businesses, creating yet another cloned High Street and a disruptive nighttime economy,” said a spokesman for the group.

The chairman of the No Crossrail in Chelsea campaign, local resident Chris Lenon, said: “It will be a travesty of Chelsea’s most famous buildings are damaged by the unnessary and unwanted diversion of Crossrail 2 through the village.”

A formal consultation of local residents, businesses and stakeholders is due to take place in September. A decision on the final route of Crossrail 2 is due to be made following this study.

If given the go ahead, station construction would take place starting in 2022 during which the King’s Road will be closed for five years, causing traffic congestion on Chelsea Embankment, Fulham Road, the roads between and further north.

The Mayor of London, Boris John son, has suggested the concerns of Chelsea residents may be listened to. He wrote: “There has not been a defini tive decision taken on Crossrail 2’s station location, and nor will there be until there is a full consultation with the public.”

Labour reject rock icon but welcome Mr Fluff

FROM PAGE 1

ing such a high-profile supporter who would have influenced many to join the Labour cause.

Mr Eno has blasted the Labour government’s intransigent view, that all solutions are in terms of the environment, and says he will continue to campaign for Mr Corbyn to be elected leader.

Mr Eno told this newspaper: “My feelings about Jeremy Corbyn are pretty straightforward: I wanted to support Jeremy Corbyn, a man with whom I’ve spoken to in many demonstrations and who chaired the Stop the War Coalition, of which I am a member and a financial supporter.”

“I supported the Lib-Dems in two elections because they stood for certain things that I believed in strongly. Most importantly for me, they were against the Iraq War. It was that war more than anything else that disillus ioned me about Labour. The unhealthy coalition with the Tories to make that war of choice happen disappointed me greatly.”

“I voted Labour in every election until the Iraq War, after which I switched to the Lib-Dems.”

“I still believe that the position they took then was the right one, and I still believe that voting for them in 2010 was a reasonable decision. However, the time Labour was still resolutely New Labour and unwilling to admit that they’d made a monumental blunder.

“Corbyn voted (and demonstrated) against that blunder and his views on most other things are entirely consistent with mine. And, I might add, with what the Labour Party claims to stand for.

“I don’t feel it necessary to make a beating-breathing recantation and say I was wrong about the Lib-Dems because I don’t think I was.

“My main intention was, and still is, to keep the Lib-Dems as a party and to find a proper Opposition in this country. Labour, in my opinion, was not a proper Opposition for at least a decade. Now there is the chance that they can be again, and that’s what I want to support.”

“And, yes, I still have respect for Jeremy Corbyn, another person who’s been on many of the same demos) recently wrote a newspaper article which captured the thing perfectly: you don’t know how to harness the support you’re getting, you’ve got a造成 the closure the garden revenue The world-famous Troubadour became a Mecca for music fans as the London birthplace of rock heroes. Bob Dylan performed one of his first gigs in London there in 1962, when he played under the name of Blind Boy Grunt. Paul Simon played there in 1965 and it was a favourite venue of Jimi Hendrix. Paul lived in the Sixties.

Mr Eno said: “I’m afraid to see a London of today which is less open to young rock talent.”

KPH ‘fights on’

THE current management of Portobello’s historic KPH is still battling to keep control of the famous club.

Although the owner Steven Archer continues to take legal action against the KPH next month, after a long and costly court case, manager Vince Power says he will continue running the 150-year-old landmark bar as it is.

Mr Power said: “We have applied for permission to appeal. The fight to keep the KPH stayin as it goes on and we have a lot of support for this from the community.”

Mr Archer said that if he wins the legal tussle he will keep the pub as a pub but will refurbish the building.

Artist backed

A YOUNG, up-and-coming artist has been awarded a three-year bursary and studio space as part of a council’s artists’ studio programme.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea’s artists’ studio programme has announced two new bursary schemes, one for visual artists and one for fashion designers. Earlier this year, Under 21 Under 21 has been selected to receive the visual artists’ bursary.

Graduating from the Royal College of Art in 2013, with an MA in Sculpture, Emma Gemmell is a mixture of sculpture and performance.

Chelsea Arts Club Trust generously offered three years, at the rate of £10,000 p.a. The generosity of the trust is matched by the council, which will cover the rent and rates on each studio.
New music festival just days away

The first Kensington Olympia Festival of Music and the Arts gets under way in a few weeks’ time – in the beautiful parish church of St Matthew, Kensington Olympia, on the corner of Sinclair, Mabro and Fielding Roads.

The week of concerts, art exhibitions, school events, architectural walks and literary talks kicks off on Saturday, September 12 and runs to Sunday, September 20. On the first Saturday the monumental Bach Mass in B minor is performed by The Oxford Spezatzi soloists, chorus and orchestra under its director Nicholas Munday. They are young professionals – mostly lawyers, doctors and accountants – who come together to put on high quality concerts for their own enjoyment and that of their loyal followers.

The Festival of Music and the Arts also sees historical and architectural walks through the local neighbourhood led by Caroline MacMillan, who has lived in west London most of her life and for several years has been guiding walks in the area.

The Monday evening concert is Songs from the Shows hosted by Duncan Day who is rapidly establishing himself as a host and producer on the London scene. On Tuesday morning literary historian Isabel Raphael gives a talk on literary HammerSmith.

In the evening, one of the country’s leading choral groups, The Erebus Ensemble, appear on the latest leg of their 2015 tour entitled ‘A Tale of Two Traditions.’

For information about all the events, including ticket prices – which are all bookable online – go to www.kofma.co.uk or just turn up on the day.

Anxious moments as unfaithful are exposed

THOUSANDS of residents of Kensington and Chelsea could be quaking in fear that partners will discover their affairs after membership details of a love cheaters’ website were made public.

Last week hackers dumped on the internet all of the names of members of the Ashley Madison infidelity site.

The Canada-based online dating service, which boasts a slogan ‘Life is short – have an affair’, has 37 million members in 46 countries – and rather a lot in Kensington and Chelsea, it appears.

In fact Ashley Madison claims that the royal borough has more adulterers than anywhere else in London.

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POST office branches in the Royal Borough have not had a good innings in recent years. Since 2004 we have seen nine closures across the borough, in spite of concerted campaigns by residents and councillors to keep them open.

Last March I wrote to Post Office boss Paula Vennells to protest at the closure of Kings Walk Post Office. The lease on the building had expired. I explained that it was an enormous loss to Chelsea residents, many of whom are elderly, do not own a car and are dependent on their local office and asked if it was possible to look for alternative locations or talk with Cadogan Estate to see if another site could be found. The solicitors reply acknowledged that the closure would create difficulties for some customers but offered no hope that it would find another site.

Now it seems there is another closure on the cards, this time the Earls Court branch at 185 Earl’s Court Road.

The Post Office is proposing merging the Earls Court branch with the Kensington High Street branch and says that the proposed merger is part of its on-going plans to create a network that is sustainable and modern.

It argues that the number of customers using Earls Court has declined over the past five years and the branch is no longer commercially sustainable.

While I have sympathy for any organisation working to meet the challenges of operating in the twenty-first century, I have real concerns about the loss of another local post office and the impact this will have on residents.

Also, given the lengthy queues witnessed in the branch, the idea that it is ‘not profitable’ does stretch credibility.

Local councillors from Earl’s Court ward have already met with Post Office officials to hammer home what a valuable community asset this branch is for an area that is home to a high number of supported and sheltered housing complexes. Not only that, but there are a number of new residential developments planned for the area.

The Post Office has already started a 12-week consultation on the proposed merger and I urge all residents to respond to it.

Be sure to remind your neighbours and friends, who may be on holiday now, to respond before Wednesday, September 16. You can find details of it here www.postofficeviews.co.uk/liveconsultation.php by searching ‘Earls Court’. You can question Post Office officials yourself at a public meeting the council is organising on Tuesday 8 September at St Cuthbert’s Church, Philbeach Gardens, SW5 9EB. It will start at 7pm.

If you cannot make the meeting, email your questions and concerns directly to com- postoffice@postoffice.co.uk or phone 03457 223344. Whichever channel you choose please do take time to let the Post Office know your views.
A PLAGUE of tropical ants is threatening Westminster – huge colonies coming from abroad are spreading over central London and bringing the risk of bites, stings and fatal disease.

Office workers, hotel guests, hospital patients and people living in flats are being warned to watch out for the tropical ants which experts say can completely take over a large office block in less than six months.

Pest experts say species from all over the world, relatively unknown in this country until recently, are now establishing large colonies with up to 200 queens – and carrying the risk of deadly disease.

Multiple-occupancy buildings such as blocks of flats create perfect living conditions for the insects and, because they’re so difficult to contain, “it’s feared the problem is likely to get worse,” said a spokesman for pest control experts Basis Prompt.

“Pharaohs and Argentine ants have been in the UK for decades, but the newcomers, which include Ghost, Big-Headed and Crazy ants, are now emerging and could pose a threat to public health.”

Some will bite or sting and they can carry a wide range of disease organisms such as streptococcus, which causes infections. They can also contract salmonella, which makes them particularly dangerous if they contaminate food.”

Salmonella is responsible for around 80 deaths in the UK each year. The streptococcus bacteria can cause meningitis, pneumonia and endocarditis, an inflammation of the heart that can lead to heart failure. Children are especially at risk of streptococcus. The bacteria is responsible for some 30 young deaths a year, with another 200 left with disabilities including blindness and cerebral palsy after contracting the bug.

Pest control companies have reported a large increase in the number of tropical ant infestations in Britain in the last three years, but now the problem has become so big that they are issuing public health warnings.

The ants plague is being blamed on the continuing growth of world trade and people unknowingly bringing queen ants back in their luggage after trips abroad.

“Queen species that were once contained to their own parts of the world now seem to be on something of a global tour,” said Basis Prompt ant controller David Cross.

“The population of tropical ants in London is certainly growing all the time and we’re now seeing many more problems with colonies of certain species than we have witnessed in the past.”

Most arrive here via container ships from different parts of the world either in food or soft furnishings. Others are brought in by people who travel abroad and come back with a queen in their luggage. And once they’re established, they become ever more prevalent.

“A single seed colony can populate a large office block, almost to the exclusion of all other insect pests, in less than six months.

Mr Cross said blocks of flats, hostels, hotels, hospitals and prisons are also ideal homes for the insects.

“Most tropical ants can’t live outside and need warmth to survive so they can thrive in places where heating is on all the time. Areas around heated water pipes in particular provide them with an ideal environment and they’ll often be found foraging for protein or sugars around bins or behind fridges.”

They’ll generally head to areas where food is manufactured or prepared, which is why hotels, pubs, restaurants and cafes are at risk too.”

Colonies of some tropical ants can contain up to 200 queens – which makes treatment of an infestation particularly difficult. The pest experts are warning the public not to try to remove ants’ nests themselves as they could spread the flies.

Here’s what to watch for...

Pharaoh ants

Typically 2mm long, they are light yellow to reddish brown in colour with a darker abdomen. The origin is unknown, but they’ve now been introduced to virtually every area of the world and are notorious for being a major indoor nuisance, especially in hospitals, prisons, other institutions that are permanently heated. They are increasingly common in urban housing blocks, but are rarely found in conventional housing.

Infestations often consist of more than one nest and ‘satellite nests’ can spread throughout buildings and complexes.

Argentine ants

A DARK ant which was once native to South America. The invasive species became established in Mediterranean countries before spreading to the UK recently.

Worker ants are around 3mm long, with queens – there are often as many as eight for every 1,000 workers – two to four times that length. They will set up home in the ground, cracks in concrete walls, spaces between timbers, even among human belongings.

Ghost ants

SO named because their legs and abdomen look transparent, with only the head and thorax being dark brown in colour.

The colouring makes this tiny ant (1.5 mm) seem even smaller. The tropical species, now found in the UK, is sometimes known as the ‘corps’ ant, because of the unpleasant smell they secrete then crushed. They exhibit a need for moisture, and although colonies are usually established outside, they can readily set up camp inside domestic houses during drier months.

Becoming more common particularly in centrally-heated buildings, there can be many more than one queen in a colony - a fact which makes them tricky to eradicate and which means their control must be left in the hands of professional operators.

Crazy ants

ORIGINALLY native to Argentina and Brazil, the name comes from the fact they’re prone to sporadic movements. They are 3.2mm long with a slender, long-legged body covered reddish-brown hairs.

Colonies have multiple queens, which makes them difficult to fully exterminate, and they do not use centralised nests or mounds, living instead under stones or piles. Strangely – and dangerously – they are attracted to electrical equipment and can cause short circuits and even fires by chewing through insulation.
Holidaymakers get away – and abandon dogs

HOLIDAY-MAKERS jetting off for their summer break have been outraging hundreds of pet owners by dumping their pets at Battersea Dogs Home to almost burst at the kennels. Battersea has seen a 204% increase this year in the number of intake calls during school summer holidays.

The world famous rescue centre has seen a surge in the number of abandoned pets as owners head to summer holidays – with 716 calls in one fortnight from vacationing callers wanting Battersea to take care of their pets while they are off to sun themselves.

“We’ve been full to near capacity,” said a spokesman.

“A one-year-old German Spitz was brought to Battersea by his owners who were going on holiday and had no one to take care of him. They said they had already sacrificed a holiday the previous year and didn’t want to do the same again.”

Woodford-Price, Battersea’s Intake Co-ordinator, said: “It’s holiday season and people don’t always take pets into account when they’re booking to go away. So it’s rescue centres like Battersea who end up taking their pets in and finding new homes for them.

“We’ve had people confuse us with boarding kennels, asking if we can take their pet for a fortnight while they go away, and others that blatantly bring in a ‘stray’ dog and send someone else to claim it back a week later.

“Dogs brought in under such false pretences are potentially taking the space that another genuinely needy dog might otherwise have occupied.”

Battersea is urging prospective dog and cat owners to think about the responsibility and commitment pets bring with them.

“Pets aren’t disposable, so if you are planning a holiday make sure to plan for your pet too, with either boarding kennels or a pet sitter,” said a spokesman.

Marines prepare to do battle in capital’s great river marathon

IT all began with 72 sailing enthusiasts choosing 20 different boat types representing six countries. These included an Hawaiian outrigger war canoe, Viking longboat, Norwegian seaman, Canadian C-8 canoe and a Chinese dragon boat.

They were propelled by barely teenage sea scouts, hardened offshore rowing veterans, police officers, pub regulars, the armed forces, boating societies and museum staff. Anyone in fact who enjoyed the thrill of the river.

That was in 1988. Today The Great River Race, from Millwall on the Isle of Dogs through to the winning post at Richmond via Westminster, Lambeth, Battersea, Putney, Hammersmith, Chiswick and Kew, has become an annual tradition called London’s River Marathon.

This year the tough guys – the Dutch Marines – will be taking part in a head-to-head challenge against the Royal Navy, who have promised at least one of its fleet will be the Royal Marines.

By the time the Dutch reach the start at Millwall, they will just have completed a charity row of over 220 miles across the North Sea, perhaps providing the Royal Marines with a slight advantage over the 21.6 mile course.

On Saturday, September 12, more than 300 boats carrying 2,400 competitors racing for 35 trophies, will compete for what has become the biggest and most prestigious event of its kind in Europe.

The race has gone from strength to strength since 1988. It has quadrupled in size and has attracted fascinating entries such as a magnificent replica 54’ bronze age Greek galley; canvas and tar Irish naomhogs of the type reputed to have crossed the Atlantic in the eight Royal Oak built in Co Down, Northern Ireland, at the beginning of 1800s.

The race has attracted a stellar cast of celebrities who have come along to fire the cannon to get the race under way. This has included Sting, Jerry Hall, Sir Steven Redgrave, June Brown (EastEnders’ Dot Cotton), Sir Trevor MacDonald, Jane Horrocks, Virginia Bottomley MP, William Franklin, Tony Banks MP, Dame Tanni Grey Thompson and many more. Furthermore it really has become truly international event with crews coming from America, Canada, Croatia, Poland, Holland, Italy, Sweden, France, Germany, Ireland, and the Channel Islands, as well as over the coming year, and to build up a better picture of the scene.

By the tim e extended, 17 inches; it had five rows of teeth, and from that circumstance was supposed to have been five years old.

“When it was taken on shore and opened, they found in the inside a silver watch, a metal chain and a cor-nelian seal, with some fragments of gold lace, supposed to have been used by an unfortunate who had fallen overboard”.

Although no sharks have yet been seen recently, 10 years of public sightings show that large marine mammals are regularly found in the River Thames.

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) has received records of 2,732 animals being spotted over the decade.

Seals were the most common animals seen, with many spotted around Canary Wharf. The public also reported seeing 444 porpoises and dolphins and 49 whales. Seals were seen as far upstream as Teddington and Hampton Court Palace. Dolphins and porpoises were spotted at Teddington Lock, with large pods spotted close to Kew Gardens and Deptford.

Joanna Barker, ZSL’s European conservation projects manager, said: “Many people looking into the Thames see a murky, dirty environ-ment. “But beneath the waves it is full of life. We have a huge range of fish and invertebrates, and also top predators.”

Just 50 years ago, the Thames was so polluted it was declared “biologi-cally extinct”, too dirty for anything to survive there.

But the public sightings confirm that the river is springing back to life. And many animals are venturing further into the English capital’s waterway.

A whale even visited central London in 2006, but the bottlenose did not survive. Other, healthier whales have been seen around Gravesend. In fact we got the抖 best public sightings in central London suggests the fish stocks are moving in to support the world’s marine predators,” said Miss Barker.

“So we think that London and the Thames Estuary is an important en-vironment for these species and we are keen to get more sightings year on year, and to build up a better picture of the places that marine mammals are using.”

The public are being asked to send their sightings to ZSL at w w w.zsl.org.
Family musical is great – but ticket prices are horror show, say parents

THOUSANDS of London children face the prospect of a disappointing Christmas this year as sky-high prices for the West End’s latest festive show are way beyond the pockets of ordinary families.

Parents have reacted in uproar over the £240 price tag for a best seat at the forthcoming Elf The Musical – dubbed “Wealth The Musical” by disgruntled mums and dads.

The much-anticipated new production – which stars former Girls Aloud idol Kimberley Walsh opens at the Dominion Theatre on October 24 for a limited run until January 2.

The cheapest seats – right at the back of the 2,160-capacity theatre – are selling for £51.80, plus up to £16.25 in booking and other fees.

But Elf visitors who don’t want to watch the stage adaptation of the 2003 hit movie in miniature could have to fork out up to £1,000 for a family of four night out in the better seats.

And those prices, say protesting parents who have furious complaints on social media about the soaring cost of a West End spend, is out of reach for the many who will be pestered by their children for seats to the Santa-themed show.

Before Elf opened its box office, the most expensive ticket was £202 for The Book Of Mormon, which was charging £152 last year.

Now the musical about an over-sized pixie has topped that with a price believed to be the highest in West End history. The show is a Theatre Royal Plymouth production, where it ran last year with top price tickets at £42.50.

The producers of Elf, which also stars Ben Forster and Joe McGann, have defended the prices as a simple case of supply and demand.

In a statement they said: “Ticket prices are set according to the commercial terms and budgets for the show. These prices – like all things – will fluctuate depending on supply and demand. Elf is a large-budget show with only a 10-week run in the West End and we have been delighted with the interest shown in this London premiere run.”

Defenders of the rising price of a night out at West End theatres have also pointed out that many top concerts in the capital can cost more. Two years ago the best seats for Barbra Streisand’s shows were selling at £450.

By GEOFF BAKER
geeoff@londonweeklynews.co.uk

Free celebration of African culture

LONDON will celebrate African culture on October 10 with a free event in Trafalgar Square.

Everyone is invited to attend Africa on the Square, which follows on from the huge success of last year’s inaugural event and is sponsored by Lebara and Air France and supported by media partner The Voice.

The stage line-up, compiled by Esther Alade and Usifu Jaloh, the Cowfoot Prince, reflects the diversity of London African communities. Performers include: Alfa Sackey and Afrik Bawantu (Ghana); Saidi Kanda and Mvula Mandomdo (Tanzania); Kuar Collective (Ethiopia); Tony Dudu and The Gumbe Jazz (Guinea Bissau) and Abdoulaye Samb and Minjnaray (Senegal). Kemi, winner of the talent competition held at the event last year, will make a special appearance on the day. There will be a West African drumming circle, plus African acrobats and dancers. DJ Abrantree, one of the most recognisable voices and personalities on the urban and African music scene, will DJ the event and introduce guest artists Zafi B and Moelogo.

There will be an exclusive fashion show directed by Africa Fashion Week London. There will be an African market selling a range of African themed products, including fashion and arts and crafts, plus food stalls, and a host of activities for children and families to get involved in, such as hair braiding, face-painting, mosaics-making and bakith-making.

The event is programmed by Open the Gate.

A highlight will be Africa on the Square Talent Showcase giving aspiring performers aged 16 to 25 the opportunity to perform in front of a live audience, with an overall winner being selected by the audience.

Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: “London’s diverse African communities play a key role in all aspects of life in the capital, particularly in its culture scene thanks to their thriving and colourful traditions.

“I am delighted that this celebration of African culture in Trafalgar Square is returning following the huge success of last year’s event.”

For information go to: www.london.gov.uk/africa

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Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: “London’s diverse African communities play a key role in all aspects of life in the capital, particularly in its culture scene thanks to their thriving and colourful traditions.

“I am delighted that this celebration of African culture in Trafalgar Square is returning following the huge success of last year’s event.”

For information go to: www.london.gov.uk/africa
Free ride to confidence for cyclists

MORE people took to their bicycles on London’s roads last year – the highest since records began.

The number of cyclists on roads in Westminster increased by 20 per cent from the previous year and the uptake is predicted to grow further this year.

A Westminster City Council spokesman said: “It is easy to see the appeal – regular cycling can help you improve fitness, is an easy way to fit exercise into your daily routine and is also a greener and more economical mode of travel.

“Despite this, the number of people attending free cycling training on Westminster roads, called the Cycle Confident initiative, has not increased on a similar scale.

“While group training for novice cyclists has increased by 20 per cent, alarming, the uptake of free one-to-one training has decreased by 15 per cent.”

Commenting on the disproportionate uptake in training, Cllr Heather Acton, Westminster City Council cabinet member for sustainability and parking, said: “We are delighted that more people are cycling in Westminster; our 2014 cycle strategy aimed to open the city up to more cyclists and it seems to be working.

“However, it is a real concern that the increase in the number of cyclists on our roads does not correlate with the uptake of free cycle training. We’ll continue to urge cyclists to register for our free cycle training, which is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in Westminster, so that they feel equipped to enjoy their bikes on our roads in this unique area.”

Westminster City Council has produced videos of real cyclists on Westminster roads. In a series of nine videos, cyclists ride about Westminster streets on their everyday routes with their bikes fitted with cameras, capturing the scenarios cyclists find themselves in.

“The videos also offer commentary on the situation, giving practical advice. The nine cycle safety videos produced illustrate the following issues:

- Safe cycling in Westminster
- Mixing with pedestrians
- Right turns at junctions among vehicles
- Cycling in busy pedestrian areas
- Negotiating pinch points and being aware of spacing on the road
- Cycling around parked vehicles
- Turning right on busy roads
- Complex intersections and junctions
- Passing stopping vehicles.

The aim of the videos is to display the practical skills needed in the various situations and to foster a mutual understanding and respect when sharing the road.

Highlighting the situations that may arise on Westminster roads, the city council is encouraging cyclists to brush up on roads skills and increase their confidence on the bike with a free cycling course.

The courses are free and open to anyone who lives, works or studies in Westminster and teach the techniques needed to cope with traffic, road positioning, signaling and general cycle safety. Courses take place in various locations, and complete novices can join a free group training session to build up confidence in an off-road area.

Cllr Acton said: “These videos offer a unique perspective from the cyclist, showing real situations that happen on our network of roads and junctions. They are intended to help increase cycling awareness for all road users.”

This year’s GCSE results day highlighted the fact that we may have won a battle in the struggle for more apprenticeships, but there’s still a long way to go before we win the war.

It’s taken long enough, but finally it’s commonly accepted that vocational training is a bloody good way to make something of yourself – just ask my recruitment department, they’ve been swamped with hundreds of applications from school leavers!

Without blowing my own trumpet too much, I’m a prime example, and there are many more. Lord Bamford, the chairman of JCB, Sir Terry Matthews, chairman of Mitie and former F1 team principal Ross Brawn, to name a few – are all former apprentices. I think you’d agree they’ve all done all right for themselves.

For far too long young people have been hoodwinked into believing that securing a university place was the Holy Grail, and a sure-fire way of walking into a well-paid job. I’ve been arguing the opposite for a while now, but research from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development which revealed that many graduates, a staggering 38.8 per cent, are not in employment, and 26.6 per cent are in jobs where they have over-qualified, is finally starting to make an impact.

If you’d have switched on the TV on Thursday morning, it was hard to miss the fact that the message has been received loud and clear; there has been a significant shift in the attitude of our school leavers. They’ve begun to see that there are options – like apprenticeships – other than university that will provide a more direct gateway to a career for life, which avoids racking up huge debts.

The interest in vocational learning and apprenticeships is an encouraging step in the right direction. However, there is still a severe provision failure that must be addressed.

In the previous academic year 120,000 under 19s started an apprenticeship. Compare this with the 400,000 young people already accepted onto university courses this year and it’s clear to see that enough isn’t being done to support the growth of apprenticeships.

I’d take on upwards of 40 new tradesmen tomorrow if I hadn’t already dried up the supply of sufficiently skilled workers in the capital. I’ve even resorted to widening my search area to the north of the country, in the hope candidates would relocate. There just aren’t enough quality tradespeople to go around and this hampers the historic lack of vocational training.

That’s why I’ve been calling for a fully-funded national apprenticeship scheme, which would rebalance the UK’s training provision and in due course, eliminate our skills gap. It would cut youth unemployment and get youngsters into a skilled career for life – it’s a no-brainer but something we’re still yet to see brought in.

Following the appointment of Michelle Mone as the “start-up tsar” maybe it’s an appropriate time to give vocational learning the same attention and support. I say we bring in an apprenticeship tsar to shake it up – I’d be more than happy to throw my hat into the ring.

Views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of this newspaper

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER & PIMLICO

Writing for the London Weekly News every week, London’s most outspoken entrepreneur

Charlie Pipes Up!

This country needs an apprenticeship tsar – I’m the man for the job!

T

HIS year’s GCSE results day highlighted the fact that we may have won a battle in the struggle for more apprenticeships, but there’s still a long way to go before we win the war.

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This great new venue will be open to all

Angela McConville, Chief Executive of Westway Trust, announces a new venue on the Westway estate and explains that it will do much more than showcase great art...

This week I am thrilled to welcome an exciting new enterprise – the Westbank - into the fold.

Westbank are the new tenants of the café, art and event space on the first floor, 3-5 Thorpe Close, formerly known as The Flyover and before that the Inn on the Green.

It will be run by entrepreneurs Tommy Blaquiere and Paul Saunders, who have successfully operated the West Bank Gallery in Westbourne Grove for the past four years. Their gallery showcases and promotes street, urban and contemporary art and Tommy and Paul typify the creativity, energy and commitment we are ever seeking to attract to and support on the estate.

When the venue opens next month it will be available for a wide range of community events on at least one day and an evening every week plus a Saturday evening and a Sunday afternoon every month. This commitment is written into the contract between Westbank and Westway.

These community events may include live music; performance – such as dance, theatre, singing; arts and crafts workshops; community art exhibitions; community meetings; training; social events and cultural programmes; screenings and launch events. These are just examples – Westbank and Westway are open to all suggestions for events from any of the many diverse groups in our local community.

If you have an idea, we want to hear about it! Tommy and Paul are investing heavily in a refurbishment which will make the venue attractive and suitable for a wide range of uses.

In addition to the community events, Westbank will provide art shows, workshops, parties and events, and will have a new fully-licensed bar, cutting edge sound system and acoustics and a balcony with aerial sculptures, from which people can experience a bird’s eye view of Portobello Green. The café will serve healthy food such as salads, shakes, smoothies, soup and wraps – simple, nice and no doubt hugely popular, especially with users of the Westway Sports and Fitness Centre.

The new enterprise will create full time jobs and up to 20 part-time positions, including sound engineers, music teachers, bar staff and security.

Westbank has already demonstrated its commitment with its track record in helping to tackle social issues. Earlier this year it ran a tri-borough anti-knife crime campaign where young offenders were taught street art and graffiti, coming up with a logo that said “Say no to knife crime”. It has also hosted charity art auctions and run graffiti courses for Stoke Mandeville Hospital and Age UK.

Our agreement with Westbank for their new venue here in Thorpe Close epitomises our broader goals for estate management and promotion of enterprise opportunities, across the whole area.

We pride ourselves on our role as a socially responsible landlord. Through good stewardship and collaboration with the community, we want to ensure that this vibrant part of London thrives – socially, as well as economically.

The Westway is already home to 122 companies, employing over a thousand people. We build relationships with and support, businesses that recognise the importance of, and play a role in, promoting social and economic wellbeing. We follow three basic principles when developing a partnership – organisations must demonstrate sound financial management and business acumen; make a positive contribution to the local culture and economy; and enable community involvement/ activity.

Organisations must also celebrate and encourage local talent, enterprise and entrepreneurship on the estate.

Our Creative Employment Programme, which provides local apprentices for local young people, is a good example.

We organise opportunities, for local enterprise organisations as much as possible.

Westbank, which was selected from a shortlist of seven organisations and individuals to take over the venue, has embraced all aspects of our philosophy.

This latest addition to the estate is incredibly positive for the area. Over the next 15 years our ambitious improvement programme, through sensitive design, will provide more retail and trader space; create a dramatically enhanced public realm; and deliver more exciting enterprise opportunities like this one that our community can be proud of.
Play area with a history lesson

THE Royal Parks has unveiled its newest playground project following a major £390,000 investment along the River Thames.

Two new projects have been completed at Horseferry and Horse Guards playing areas in Westminster and Kensington Gardens, as part of the UK’s biggest playground programme in a generation.

At Horseferry, the £140,000 Horseferry Playground has been extended, and further additions includes timber horse sculptures, little houses, additional seating and a refreshment kiosk. Metal railings, which separate the playground from the newly refurbished toilets, have been designed by artist Chris Campbell and are based around a River Thames theme. They depict events such as The Great Fire of London and Lord Nelson’s Funeral Barge, and includes views of the River Thames where landmarks such as St Paul’s Cathedral and The Shard are visible.

The Horseferry Memorial was constructed in the 1920s, to commemorate Henry Spencer’s generous gift to the children of the area, which has also been refurbished and relocated to the northern end of the playground.

At Horse Guards, the £250,000 Horse Guards Play Area, which opened in 2004, has been extended and improved following a £150,000 investment. It is the third phase of the Project, which was led by The Royal Parks, The London Marathon Charitable Trust, The City of Westminster and Phab, a series of events have been organised by TRP’s Community and Engagement team, and over the last five years which has also seen five of its other parks benefit from improvements.

The new Horse Guards Play Area features dance chimes that represent Big Ben. The contemporary and innovative playgrounds have also been installed in The Regent’s, Greenwich and Hyde Parks, and the upgrading of playgrounds has taken place in Bushy and Richmond Parks.

To celebrate the opening of the Horseferry Playground, which was funded by The Royal Parks, The London Marathon Charitable Trust, City of Westminster and Phab, a series of events have been organised by TRP’s Community and Engagement team, and over the last five years, which has also seen five of its other parks benefit from improvements.

More information can be found on the Royal Parks website.

Cunning fraudsters jailed

Two men who conned more than a quarter of a million pounds out their victims with a courier fraud scam have been jailed at Southwark Crown Court.

Both men had previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit fraud—covering 27 offences committed over a ten-week period between August 13 2014 and October 22 2014, targeting victims who were elderly or otherwise vulnerable.

Mominur Rahman, 19, of no fixed abode, was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment. Abdul Moubi, 23 of Frederick Street, Bloomsbury, was sentenced to three years and eight months imprisonment.

Detective Constable Will Richards, from Westminster Borough’s Serious Acquisitive Crime Unit, said: “This was a cruel and cunning scam, and the only people who should feel humiliated by it are those responsible.

These crimes were clearly well planned and practised. Abdul Moubi kept victims on the phone for several hours and did his best to prevent them from discussing what was happening with their families.

He was careful to use genuine information and police jargon into his conversations. He provided victims with contact details and reference numbers, even inviting some to attend bogus court hearings at Southwark Crown Court.

I hope that today’s result will increase public awareness of this type of crime. I would encourage anyone who receives an unsolicited call from someone purporting to be a police officer or bank employee to be wary and be sure to obtain the caller’s full details.

“Make sure their call has been disconnected by waiting at least five minutes before calling back on an official telephone number and listen for the dial tone. Do not hand over any money or items purchased as a result of this type of call.”

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The suspects would convince victims that they had been fraudulently charged on their bank accounts and ask for their assistance with the police investigation.

To reassure victims that the call was genuine, the bogus officer suggested that they hang up and ring their bank or the police back straight away, but the fraudster would not disconnect the call. Instead, they would pose as bank officials or police officers and pretend to answer the call and verify the bogus officer’s story.

The suspects would convince victims that corrupt employees at banks, currency exchange shops and high-end jewellers were involved. They persuaded the victims to assist the bogus police investigation by going to these venues and withdrawing large quantities of cash or purchasing foreign currency and expensive watches.

Having obtained the victims’ banking information the suspects used it to move money between a victim’s accounts to trick them into believing police had given them money to withdraw or pay the bogus officer/officers.

Vic tims were targeted repeatedly over a number of days, with one 85-year-old victim giving the suspects £25,000 over a three-day period.

In October 2014, Rahman was detained after going to a victim’s address to collect £3,000. Moubi was arrested shortly afterwards. Officers found mobile phones used to contact victims in Moubi’s bedroom. Images found on a phone and a tablet computer contained some of the victim’s personal and account information. A gold Rolex watch, worth £20,850 taken from an 80-year-old victim in September 2014 was recovered from a chest of drawers.

Moubi and Rahman were charged on October 23 last year.

Detective Constable Will Richards, from Westminster Borough’s Serious Acquisitive Crime Unit, said: “This was a particularly unpleasant version of the courier fraud scam that exploits its victims’ sense of public duty and preparedness to go to extraordinary lengths to help the police. Beyond their significant financial losses, these offences undermine victims’ self-confidence and trust in others. Many were left feeling vulnerable and humiliated.

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From Fulham to a world of horror: Caroline has bestseller in her grasp

BY PAUL LAGAN

MOVE over Stephen King, there is a new horror writer on the block and she's a Fulham girl through and through.

Olympic silver medallist Caroline Sztaba has just produced her first horror novel, Nephilim Rising, and it is convinced it’s Tales from the Book of Magic, her collection of short stories about the dark arts, which went to No 1 in the Kindle downloads chart, Nephilim Rising will also be a bestseller.

"Tales from the Book of Magic is in a similar style to the TV series Tales of the Unexpected, where there is always a twist at the end," Caroline tells me at the book launch at the Chelsea Penner pub in the Fulham Road.

"They are for people aged 15 and upwards; it's real hardcore, but it's been No1 in the Amazon Kindle downloads for young teens in the occult section, so they seem to like it. The youngsters really like short stories.

"But the novel Nephilim Rising is definitely for the 18+ category."

Nephilim Rising is my first attempt at a novel and I'm quite nervous about it, it's quite different to the short stories. Graeme Parker, my husband Kensington Gore, said that short stories are harder to do, but I don't think that's true. I do get into it.

So, what are we to expect from Nephilim Rising?

"It's all about half Angels, half human called Nephilims," she said. "When God sent the Flood it was to destroy the Nephilim. They were born of angel and human and were giants. They aren't nice at all - they killed and ate people and were horrific. So God unleashed the flood to get rid of them. But some were spared. The book is about the bloodline that survived. But now they are much-changed about the bloodline that survived."

"I have lived in Fulham all my life, I'm a Fulham girl through and through," she confesses.

"Even when I was at St John's Primary School I used to tell horror stories. I used to have ghost parties with the other kids. I do a really good witchy laugh."

Will there be a return to the iconic characters in Nephilim Rising?

"The book has a great ending but I've left open the possibility of a second book. If people want it, I will write it. I even have a great character I'm keen to introduce into it."

Caroline already has another novel written and is keen to let a select few people have a look at it and give her some feedback. Some already have.

"I've actually just finished my second novel," she said. "People want me to add some more murders into it, so I'm having a bit of a think about it. It's more of a crime thriller but definitely has an overtime of the supernatural about it. People seem to like murders.

"Also I have added a few characters of people that havestiously names have changed but they know who they are and are happy to be in it."

"One of my friends has stipulated they want to be murder victim number two."

"It's based in Southampton in the 1980's. There is a great deal of authentic local language in it - that has given my editor a bit of a headache. I've compiled a glossary of terms so they know what I'm talking about."

"What's the best place to get Nephilim Rising then?"

"As far as getting the books into book stores, it's a bit of a Catch-22 situation," said Caroline.

"Many shops only want to take on well-known authors but we are plugging away and getting the name out there. All my children's books under my Caroline Maiby authorship are really children's books - they love Rufus. But the horror books are great."

"People seem to like murders. It's important that those chaps now know that Caroline Maiby and CSztaba are two different names, but I think people can make the connection."

To buy Caroline's books, go to Amazon, the Facebook page and on the Kensington Gore publishing website at www.kensingtongorepublishing.com

COMPETITION

We have a copy of Nephilim Rising and two copies of Tales from the Dark Magic to give away to lucky readers.

To have a chance of winning, answer this question correctly. Where did Caroline see a ghost?

Send your answer, including your name address and telephone number, to Tariq Lagan, South London Press, 23 Streatham High Road, Streatham, London SE21 8PU. Closing date for entries: September 3, 2015.
Top achievers with a capital A

STUDENTS from Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea schools are celebrating after the GCSE results were announced last week – with one pupil winning 12 A*s.

At Holland Park School there were some excellent results across every subject and more students achieving the very highest grades than ever before.

The proportion of students that gained the prestigious English Baccalaureate (C or above in English, mathematics, science, history or geography and a language) was 62 per cent, almost 20 per cent higher than last year, a figure more normally associated with a selective or private school. 73 per cent of students gained five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics and 70 per cent of all grades were A* – B.

Amid some exceptional individual results Edisher Kapiani gained 12 A*s, and an A in AS mathematics one year early.

Commenting on the results, head teacher Colin Hall, said: “I am, as ever, immensely proud of the achievements being celebrated today. Staff and students have worked hard and it is a pleasure to see their collaborative efforts rewarded.”

Students at Chelsea Academy were celebrating just the second set of GCSE results for the school which opened in 2009.

There were some outstanding results in further mathematics and French with 100 per cent of students getting A* to C in both subjects. 63 per cent of students achieved five A* to C grades including English and mathematics. 83 per cent of students achieved A* to C grades in both science and computing. There was success in languages as well where 96 per cent of students achieved A* – C in Spanish.

Notable performances included:
- Driston Ferras with ten A* and four A grades
- Tatjana Radivoj with 12 A*
- Dreensha Gashi with nine A* and five A grades
- Rebecca Dawson with eight A* and five A grades

Matt Williams, Principal of Chelsea Academy, said: “I am really pleased with the strong set of GCSE marks obtained by our students. In a time of increased scrutiny of written examinations and changes to assessment structures, it is great to see that the hard work and dedication of staff and students has resulted in some excellent results.”

“Our Modern Foreign Languages department has produced exceptional GCSE and A-level results and I am delighted that our science specialism continues to produce significantly positive grades. It is pleasing that so many department areas have improved on their results from a year ago and it shows that our broad curriculum offer will ensure success in science, the arts, humanities or languages.”

“With our strong A-level results last week and GCSE results today I must congratulate all of our students and say thank you to our talented staff for the support and encouragement they give on a daily basis.”

At Sion-Manning School Rama Abubaker achieved 11 GCSE A/A* grades and she will now move to Holland Park School’s sixth form to study A levels. Rama was one of seventeen students who achieved over ten GCSEs at the highest grades. The majority of these students will be staying on at Sion Manning’s sixth form at St Charles.

Fifty three per cent of the school’s students achieved A* to C including English and mathematics.

Head teacher, Paul Kehoe, said “After a difficult year with significant changes in leadership and governance we have managed to stabilise our GCSE results and we are looking forward to further improvements next academic year.”

At St Thomas More Language College 59 per cent of students achieved five A* to C grades including English and mathematics.

Commenting on the results, head teacher Dr Trevor Papworth, said: “The school is particularly pleased to see a number of excellent individual performances in the GCSE results. Students really lived out our motto in striving for excellence in everything they did with their time here at St Thomas More Language College.”

Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School enjoyed another fine year with 82 per cent of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs graded A* to C, including English and mathematics. Headmaster, Paul Stubbings, said: “This has been a momentous year for Cardinal Vaughan, one in which the performance of our pupils in public examinations once again outstrips national averages. Congratulations to all concerned.”

Councillor Emma Will, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea’s Cabinet Member for Education, said: “Congratulations to all our GCSE students on some really good results. Clearly we have some exceptional individual performances to celebrate. I would like to thank teachers across the borough for all their hard work and wish them well for next year’s efforts.”

By GEOFF BAKER
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A TEAM: Fatimah Sharif, 18, left, and Lakshmi Magon, 18, A-level students from Burlington Danes Academy.

SUCCESS: A-level scholars Mairead Watson, 18, left, and Raluca Vasile, 19, from Phoenix High School, Hammersmith, celebrate their exam success.

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All of us have a role protecting royals’ privacy

By Geoff Baker

THE Americans have a good word for them – pedorazzi.

That is the deliberate term of abuse for the swarm (yep, that was deliberate too) of invasive, insensitive and almost-universally detested photographers who have alarmed and infuriated the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge by their harrying of Prince George in the hope of snapping an exclusive shot for those readers of way-down-market, mainly-foreign magazines and websites who, let’s be honest, have to be somewhat thick or suspect to feel that they have the divine right of trollish intrusion into the life of an infant whom they will never know nor are ever likely to meet.

In their recent open letter to the press and public on the constant nightmare of dealing with the pedorazzi – a term coined by actresses Kirsten Stewart and Halle Berry after their own daily run-ins with the hoodie snappers who hunt their Hollywood children – the Duke and Duchess were wise to point the finger of blame not just at, but beyond the photographers themselves, and to include the readers of the magazines which publish such seedy voyeurism.

It was a brave move as those readers will not like it, being ousted as vicarious weirdos, and one doubts whether even a direct appeal from leading members of the Royal Family will have much effect on deterring their feral craving to pry.

But they, the readers, are of course the problem; without...
Even this family has right to privacy

ROYAL LONDON

FROM PAGE 13

their demand there would be no supply and as long as there are enough of them to make a profit for dodgy publishers, the practice, like the publication of pornography, will continue. The demand is the motor in this long-running saga and appealing to the better nature of people who quite probably have no such nature will achieve little.

Because the demand exists, little is going to stop the paparazzi either. It’s like appealing to slaughterhouse workers to give up their work because of the obvious moral issues involved in that horrendous trade. They will just say they are doing their job.

But as the Kensington Palace press office admirably, but optimistically, attempts to diminish demand through its call for public debate on this important matter—a debate which may lead to a proposal in the next Queen’s Speech for more sophisticated privacy laws—those in the front line, the Duke and Duchess and their security squads, could turn to new James Bond-style technology which could stuff the paparazzi.

As the famous grow increasingly irritated by the plague of paps/peds photographing their children, a little-known industry is growing with the aim of inventing technology that will help secure their privacy.

Two American inventors recently patented a device that could stop people from taking a picture without permission. The gadget, not yet in the shops, is likely to have huge appeal to celebrities.

The patent, filed by Keele Lamentance Jackson Jr., and Wilbert Leon Smith, is for a handheld device that uses a combination of techniques to intentionally obscure unwanted photographs, rendering them all but useless. Jackson and Smith’s gadget has a built-in beam of light and is covered with reflective surfaces.

“Essentially functioning as a slave flash, whenever a flash fires in your direction, it’ll blast light back, horribly over-exposing the image and keeping your privacy,” said the editors of the photography website Imaging Source.

Privacy-seekers are also very interested in work at the College of Computing in Georgia, USA, where a team has developed a gadget that can detect the presence of a digital camera or camcorder and keep it from capturing usable images.

The College of Computing has created a system which combines methods of detecting a stills or video camera and the means to automatically prevent it from taking pictures in one new ‘toy’, which uses infrared light to spot cameras.

To block the camera from taking pictures, the device uses a projector that emits a narrow beam of white light directly at it. The beam saturates the camera with varying intensities of light, forcing its electronics to constantly adjust, and ultimately producing large white splotches that cover about one-third of the recorded image, resulting in a low-quality recording or photograph which won’t be worth a euro to the picture editor of Low Life International.

Boltons are now working on making a pap-blocking gadget as small as possible, so that it can be unobtrusively fitted as a badge to a hat or to fit on the lapel of the suits of the famous and their security teams.

For the lowdown on this new technology, the Cambridges need only to hop over the fence and knock on the door of their neighbour Ivan Abramovich at his mansion in Kensington Palace Gardens. The Russian billionaire is said to be ahead of the pack in using the latest high-tech to protect his privacy. He has already fitted an anti-paparazzi shield to his £560m yacht Eclipse and is thought to have installed the technology at his £90m London home too.

His privacy force field works by using lasers to sweep the surroundings and when they detect a camera, they fire a bolt of light right at it to obliteraate any photograph.

However, if the Duke and Duchess were to use pap-buster kit it may need a change in the law first. The photo magazine Amateur Photographer asked a London lawyer about the legalities of destroying photos from afar and in his opinion, “intermediating with goods belonging to someone else, or altering their condition, is a trespass to goods and would entitle the photographer to claim compensation without having to prove loss.”

That legal opinion could of course be argued by our learned friends, who would doubtless point out that a grab-shot of somebody else’s child, taken not only without permission but in the face of the publicly-expressed disapproval, not only does not constitute property but could be widely considered to be theft.

To bolster this, the Cambridges could follow the example of rock stars and patent both themselves and their children’s names. Why would this strengthen any claim to invasions of privacy, it could also give them greater power to block the pile of souvenir tat which is produced for any anniversary by those wanting to cash in on the royal family.

However, there is a more important issue than that raised in the Duke and Duchess’s statement on privacy, and it is security.

In their statement on the problem with the pap pests, the Cambridges said: “One recent incident – just last week – was disturbing, but not at all uncommon. A photographer rented a car and parked in a discreet location outside a children’s play area. Already concealed by darkened windows, he took the usable image of hanging sheets inside the vehicle and created a hide stocked with food and drinks to get through a full day of surveillance, waiting to hope in capture images of Prince George. Police discovered him lying down in the boot of the vehicle attempting to shoot photos with a long lens through a small gap in his hide.”

But what was of greater significance was a second statement, in response to the Palace and from the Met.

In their statement, the police said: “The covert actions of photographers have at times caused concerns during police protection operations when they have been considered a possible security threat. Our role is to maintain security for those who choose to use covert tactics when a police operation is in place.

“At a time when the national security threat level from international terrorism is at severe, all officers are at a heightened level of readiness. Officers involved in the security of protected people are armed and have to constantly assess security risks. Photographers using covert tactics often come to the attention of armed officers who take steps to stop and verify the details of those who raise suspicions. Photographers are potentially putting themselves at risk from armed intervention where our armed officers perceive a risk to the personal safety of their principal, the public and themselves.

“When assessing potential threats armed officers have to make split second decisions regarding their use of force in order to protect their principals, the public and their colleagues.”

In other words, if this plague by paps continues, somebody is going to get shot.

Now whilst the knee-jerk reaction from many to a pap getting Tazed or copping a bullet may be “good, serves them right”, on the matter of assaults the law is not always obeyed by common sense—witness the number of home-owners who are charged after attacking an armed burglar in self defence—and nobody wants to see protection officers in court for doing their job.

However, if Kensington Palace was to change its PR approach to the paps problem it may have more success. Whilst appealing to the sympathy of the public is entirely understandable and let’s face it, if the paps hounded our children as they do Prince George a good many of us would beat them with a big stick – it is not likely to have great success, because the sort of people who delight in devouring the truly intimate moments of the famous are not going to be swayed by their gawking by appeals to their questionable decency.

Also, how are we to know what is the strength of the public response to the appeal? As far as I am aware there is no survey being done, no numbers counted, no petition raised, so what tangible evidence will be provided?

And even if there was evidence, even if a national survey showed that 95% of the public said yes, of course it is wrong to hunt and harry a young mother and her child for the commercial profit that comes from vicarious delight—and it is wrong, it is a brutal bullying—would that stop the minority of couldn’t-care-less readers from buying these offending magazines?

I doubt it, the nobility of human spirit is not that universal anymore.

But the “that’s life” argument is no justification for this young mother to have to continue to endure being daily tormented solely for the entertainment of someone who wants something “juicy” to read with their kebab and chips, and, rather than a privacy plea, a case made for security and the maintenance of public order could have greater effect.

It will be interesting to see, when Parliament resumes in September whether any MP or peer has the guts to make a stand on this key issue; the kernel of it is not Catherine’s and George’s royal status, it is the protection that any young mother desires to expect for her child.
**The most memorable of moments**

We remember meeting the Queen

by Geoff Baker

HAVE you ever met The Queen? If so, the BBC would like to talk to you.

On September 9 Her Majesty marks a royal milestone when she becomes the longest reigning monarch in British history, breaking the record held by her great-grandmother Queen Victoria.

To commemorate the remarkable reign of an unparallelled woman, BBC TV is to make a special film which celebrates The Queen through the memories of those who have met her during the past 63 years of her rule.

The BBC wants to interview those who have shared a majestic moment and is asking for photographs, selfies and any memory of the occasion.

“Have you met the Queen?” asks the BBC on its Have Your Say site. “Did you meet her in 1952 after she became Queen? Or have you met her more recently? Do you share any notable dates with the Queen?

Were you born on April 21, 1926? Did you get married on November 20, 1947? Whatever your story, share your anecdotes with us. Send us your snaps of when you met the Queen, we’d love to see your photos of your encounter. Did you manage a selfie with the monarch?”

Those who have met The Queen are asked to send their memories of the moment to haveyoursay@bbc.co.uk.

In the meantime, for those who have yet to have the privilege of the ‘Ma’am and Me’ experience, here’s what people say it feels like.

**Helen Mirren:** “I was terrified. There are certain people who can deal with meeting The Queen, but the vast majority of us get queeze-itis. You just — you cannot think of anything to say. I am genuinely always astounded by her aura, her twinkle, her presence. It never fails to surprise me and again it’s what everyone says when they meet her — it was what overwhelmed me the first time I met her.”

**Carla Bruni:** “It was an incredible experience. It was very… exceptional. What happens with the Royal Family is that they’re so kind and they make you at ease. They make you feel comfortable. So it wasn’t difficult; it was a wonderful experience. I’ll never forget it.”

**Simon Pegg:** “I was star-struck by The Queen. I met her at a royal gala performance of the Narnia film I did. I’ve known her all my life — she’s been my idol. That’s been the highlight of my career so far. It was an incredible experience. It was so unexpected.”

**Kristin Scott Thomas:** “I was so overwhelmed by the whole thing that I turned into a jellified five-year-old and was unable to get a word out. I’m sure I got the protocol all wrong and curtained at the wrong moment. She has the most extraordinary aura. When she walked into the room, you really sensed, ‘This is The Queen!’”

**Sussannah Leigh** revealed that when she met The Queen she learnt that Her Majesty liked Elvis Presley. The actress said: “I met her at the premiere of the Born Free film. She asked me all about Elvis Presley. I said that Elvis would love to come to England. Later on, I told him that he was going to get an invitation to the Palace, but he didn’t get one. So I contacted the Palace and discovered that one had been sent. Apparently it went to his manager, Colonel Parker, who felt that Elvis couldn’t travel. So Elvis never got to go to the Palace.”

**Sir Paul McCartney:** “She’s fabulous, I’ve got a lot of time for her. She is the rock’n’roll queen. Weirdly enough, it is one of the things she reigns will be remembered for. Queen Elizabeth I, we remember Raleigh; Queen Elizabeth II it’s gonna be the Beatles. I remember watching her coronation on TV as an impressionable 10-year-old in 1953; to kids of our generation, she was a very attractive young woman, taking on this huge responsibility. She seemed very human. We all felt really proud of her. I’m a big fan.”

**Judas Priest singer Rob Halford:** “That was very surreal, going to Buckingham Palace. It was for a music business reception, the first time the Royal Family, The Firm, as it’s called, wanted to give a nod to the music industry in general.

My mother was more excited about it than anyone else, but it was magical for me, too, because I’m a royalist. I love the royal family, for all its imperfections, but to actually meet The Queen, that was a thrill and a memory I’ll always cherish. She asked me, ‘Why is heavy metal so loud?’ I said, ‘You have to have it loud to bang your head, Your Majesty.’ She sniffled at that.”

**Miley Cyrus:** “I met The Queen and President Obama when I had to perform for them. It was kind of insane for me to be meeting them. That was kind of crazy. Actually meeting her was scarier than the performance.”

**David Cameron:** “My audiences with Her Majesty last for an hour. It never needs anyone to come and wrap up, the conversation naturally comes to an end. I’m very conscious as prime minister that I’m her twelfth. She started with Winston Churchill. She’s heard it all before, but I think prime ministers find it very valuable to try and explain the difficult decisions and problems the country faces in the presence of someone who’s heard and seen all these problems before.”

**Tony Blair:** “I have enormous regard and admiration for her. What I found to be her most surprising attribute is how streetwise she is. Frequently, throughout my time as prime minister, I was stunned by her total ability to pick up the public mood. I once asked her to call me Tony. She declined, saying she preferred to address me as Prime Minister.”

**Joan Collins,** who plays a Queen Mother in the controversial TV series The Royals: “The Queen has always been friendly with me. The last time I met her was at the Palace after a theatrical performance of some students. She loves the theatre. We discussed Pygmalion.”

**Niall Horan of One Direction:** “Meeting The Queen was mind-blowing. Cheryl Fernandez-Versini:** “The Queen is so delicate. She has hair like candy floss and tiny little dancing shoes.”

**David Beckham:** “I spent a beautiful evening at Buckingham Palace, my nan and grandad would have been proud. She is the most amazing woman. I’m a real royalist. The fact that I’ve been able to meet the Queen, that’s the best thing I’ve ever done. She’s amazing.”

**Film director Steve McQueen** met The Queen at a reception at Buckingham Palace. Her Majesty, who was given an honorary Bafta following her movie debut as a Bond Girl in the film clip for the London Olympics, told him: “I can’t help but look at mme, which I keep on the television.”

**Boris Johnson:** On a tour of the Olympic Park Her Majesty told London Mayor Boris Johnson: “It all seemed to go very well last night. But I didn’t see my bit.” Boris told her: “You were brilliant Ma’am,” and she responded: “It was a bit of a laugh.”

**Daniel Craig,** who starred alongside The Queen in the legendary Olympics skit: “I think she did fantastically well. It was the best way we could have kicked off the opening ceremony.

“It was quite surreal to be in the Palace acting with The Queen and I was just proud to be a small part of it. It was very relaxed and she was lovely.”

**Pleased to meet you, Ma’am!** Celebrated actress Helen Mirren and acclaimed broadcaster Sir David Attenborough meet the Queen

**Photo David Crump/PA pool**

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Serving the Heart of London
The greatest news show on the planet has a problem – who can replace “The Tiger”?

That’s the dilemma now facing forward-planning executives at the BBC as they debate the future of the Today programme, the flagship show that sets the nation’s news agenda over breakfast every morning.

The Tiger, of course, is Today’s most senior presenter, the iconic John Humphrys. And although he has given no indication yet that he wants to give up getting up to be in the newsroom at 4am for every shift, the BBC knows that preparations must be made for that day – and it appears to be making them.

Last week Humphrys celebrated his 72nd birthday. In this era of the peppy pensioner it’s no great handicap; it puts him at the same age as Muck Jagger and a year younger than Sir Paul McCartney, and they’re still rocking.

But even tigers come to the time when they no longer want to be burning bright and the BBC now has to consider its options for when that happens. Some believe that Humphrys will continue to corner and trap his prey of truth-dodging politicians and stubborn-on-message spokespeople until 2017, when he will achieve his 30th year with Today.

Others think that he could pack it in now. After all, to be an “old” of The Shard – he could go out after achieving his greatest ambition, to interview the Queen.

Her Majesty has never given a press interview, but next year she will mark her 90th birthday and that could provide the milestone moment for the increasingly-open monarch to tell as she sees it at last.

Royal-watchers believe that the ravens will flee The Tower accompanied by flying pigs and a cow jumping over the moon before that ever happens – not least as Humphrys believes that “nothing should ever be off-limits in an interview”, but that does not stop Britain’s No 1 woman from hoping.

Indeed, during a recent private lunch with The Queen at Buckingham Palace, Humphrys ventured to ask if she might consider an-on-the-record chat. “She said ‘No’ and ‘What’s more, if one were to do an interview it would not be with you’,” Humphrys told a meeting of The Media Society.

Like most of the nation’s thinkers, The Queen listens to Today every morning, joining the programme’s seven million followers who tune in for the best briefing in the business on what is, or will become, important that day. Like the rest of us, it will be difficult for Her Majesty to imagine buttering the toast without the soundtrack of Humphrys mauling some deluded unfortunate who thinks that he can get the better of the old reporter’s razor-sharp perception.

But if the writing is not yet on the wall for Humphrys, there is certainly some scribbling going on which indicates that change at Today is going to come.

The first sign of this came recently when Humphrys’ co-host Jim Naughtie announced that he was to leave the show after 21 years.

Naughtie has just turned 64, making him considerably younger than Humphrys, but he is leaving Today to become a Special Correspondent for the BBC, joining the class of John Simpson and David Dimbleby as the very highest-calibre of its journalists who can be trusted to have the wisdom, insight and experience to cover and commentate on the nation’s most important occasions.

Typically, the BBC announced Naughtie’s departure with cannon fire of accolades from the top brass.

Tony Hall, Director-General of the BBC, said: “Jim has been the emotional heart of the Today programme for a generation. His persistent and inquisitive questioning has given millions of listeners a greater understanding of the stories of our time. Above all he’s a writer and reporter at heart – he can bring to life a vivid scene on the radio better than anyone.”

James Harding, Director of News, said: “Jim brings a range of passions and interests, a host of intelligence and understanding to the BBC. Joining the class of Jim Naughtie and Justin Webb, Sarah Montague, Mishal Husain, Matthew Parris and Nick Robinson – our incoming replacement Nick Robinson – has illustrated the changes at Today, he has illuminated the national conversation on politics and world affairs, the arts, with culture for more than 20 years.”

And Gwyneth Williams, Controller of BBC Radio 4, added: “Jim has been a leading Radio 4 presenter for as long as I can remember and I want to thank him for his many years on Today. Our discerning audience trusts his judgement and we all respond to his inimitable enthusiasm and verve. His is an elegant pen and Jim has made good writing his signature.”

All of which praise rather begs the obvious question, if he’s so great – which Naughtie undoubtedly is – then why is the BBC letting him leave Today?

The answer appears to be that the BBC is quietly making plans for a big shake-up of its flagship show, and for evidence of that we need only to look at the heavy hints dropped in an interview with Naughtie in the BBC’s own house magazine, The Radio Times, conducted by its own news specialist, The Media Show host Steve Hewlett.

“The BBC has had to start thinking about the next generation [of Today listeners],” wrote the highly-informed Hewlett. “The conversation about the next generation may have started many months ago with Naughtie, but many years before that among the BBC hierarchy.”

And, referencing the time last year when Naughtie was assigned to step off Today to expertly present Good Morning Scotland during the Scottish independence referendum, Hewlett added: “That was seen in some quarters as a sign of things to come, that in order to ring the changes at Today Naughtie might be the first to move on.”

“Ring the changes,” “thinking about the next generation,” “a sign of things to come,” “the first to move on”, these are not phrases which inspire confidence that the BBC is not about to dramatically change the sound of Today as we know it.

At times the BBC is like the Russian FSB secret service, it is stealth-like in its long-planning and its think tanks will have long ago rehearsed for the scenario it faces now – a Government aggressively attempting to clip its wings.

Already the BBC has had to pretend to be happy with the Government dumping on it the £725 million cost of providing free licence fees for the over-75s. Now the Justice Secretary Michael Gove has delivered another kick to its head by suggesting that non-payment of the licence fee should no longer be a criminal offence.

If that proposal goes ahead and the licence fee is made the same sort of matter of conscience as buying a poppy for Remembrance Day, it will spell disaster for the BBC. For whilst it can appeal all it likes to the better nature of viewers and listeners to play the game and pay the fee, those of us on planet Earth know it just won’t happen; in this get-away-with-it-if-you-can society an awful lot of people will try it on and cost the BBC the loss of many millions in programming budget.

The thinking in one quarter is that, with a large anti-BBC grudge inside the Commons that is still simmering from the blasting it got from the Beeb over The BBC’s expenditure during the Iraq War, plus numerous Newsnight and Today interviews which have proved various politicians to be less than paragons of genius, the Corporation is going to have to, if not butter up Parliament, at least take a less-aggressive approach to getting the elected on behalf of the electorate.

The Tiger of course is unlikely to have much truck with popular appeal in any Independent interview about whether Newsnight should ease up on politicians in order to stop scaring them from appearing on the programme, he said: “If the price is that you then go easy on them, then I think it’s too high a price.”

The man for whom nothing is off-limits added: “Interviewing politicians is an important bridge which the electorate and their political leaders; we have to distil the national argument, to represent the voters’ concerns.”

The message I get from listeners is that they are distinctly unenthused about the idea that we engage conversational politics out there was suspicion people want more persistence.

“I don’t know of any politician – a serious politician in a serious interview – who doesn’t want to be pressed. Politicians are fighters, without exception, that’s what they do. You don’t get to be an MP, let alone a cabinet minister, unless you are tough and willing to fight your corner. There isn’t a single politician out there who isn’t engaged in this sort of combat and relishing it, otherwise you wouldn’t stay in the job.”

But with its lifetime licence fee now increasingly under threat, the BBC is clearly having to consider whether it is in its economic best interests to stick at its helm an Achilles who can so effortlessly make mincemeat and buffoons of those who sign its cheques, or whether a more emollient Today host might suit these unsteady days.

In other words, is the time looming when The Tiger may have to move over for a Tigger?

But the problem with that thinking is that, outside of its populist ‘family show’ shows like The One Show and Saturday Live, the BBC doesn’t have many Tiggers in its fold. Its other Today hosts – Justin Webb, Sarah Montague, Mishal Husain, Martin Newshound and Naughtie’s incoming replacement Nick Robinson – can all deliver a good kick when required and even the programme’s perky occasional sports presenter Sonali Shah is no interview masher.

Beyond Today, there are few obvious Tiggers either. The World Tonight’s Ritala Shah is a fearsom e prober, as are The World At One’s Carolyn Mair, Radio 4 regular Matthew Parris and Woman’s Hour’s Jenni Murray. And we can’t be anyone who mistakes Ed Miliband’s Mair’s gentle voice on PM for indicating a soft time if you’re up to no good. In fact, if any doves at the BBC do want to bow to political pressure for a Today tone-down there’s probably only one man for the job – Alan Partridge.

Imagine news show without its head scrutineer...

Today’s tough question: could it thrive without Humphrys?
On yer bikes robbers are told

By Peter Faulkner

POLICE officers from Westminster and and other parts of London have started a blitz on the rising theft of powered two wheelers (PTW).

In a new crackdown, the campaign aimed at raising awareness among bike owners in Westminster and neighbouring boroughs was stepped up a gear when officers carried out two days of checks on parked mopeds. They set up a decoy operations using powered two wheelers and high visibility patrols which were carried out in key hot spots right across the borough.

Officers also handed out leaflets and using the hashtag #secureyourbike tweeted crime messages from their @MPSWestminster twitter account, about keeping PTWs out of criminals hands.

Westminster Police have been assisting in Operation Venice, a London wide operation targeting the theft of PTW.

Westminster Detective Inspector Dave Bolton said: "Officers have been trying to promote vigilance around motorcycle bays and ask that if anyone sees motorcycles being tampered with or being loaded into the back of a van to call 999 immediately.

"We are also engaging with riders and highlighting the importance of securing their vehicles to the ground anchors.

"It is with the assistance of the public that we will challenge these criminals and protect bikes from being stolen."

"We will continue to work with the local authority and other partners to make the City of Westminster a safer place to live and visit."

Officer also assisted PTW owners to encourage them to consider additional measures to secure their mopeds and scooters, such as using fitted anchors, security loops, disc and chain locks, and audible alarms.

In terms of thefts, there were in excess of 9,900 moped, scooter and motorcycles reported stolen across London in the 12 months from April 2014 to March 2015. This equates to around 27 PTWs being stolen in London every single day.

It is difficult to determine the overall cost of PTW associated crime to victims, but police say that if an average value of £3,000 is applied to each moped, scooter or motorcycle stolen, then the total theft value during the last financial year is more than £28 million pounds.

Criminals steal PTWs to commit other crimes such as other vehicle theft, robbery, serious youth violence, and gang related incidents.

Mobile phone crime and 'snatch' by thieves on bikes/mopeds are also a particular problem in certain areas.

Monthly figures for moped/motorbike associated crimes committed this year are showing an increase, from 241 in January to 392 in June. Intelligence suggests that organised crime groups are targeting new powerful motorbikes which can cost up to £15,000, and be broken down into parts and re-sold.

These are usually stolen by being lifted into the back of vans, the cutting of chains, forcing and breaking of steering locks to wheel away, or sometimes even by using the propulsion of another scooter.

Under Operation Venice during the last few months officers have been conducting targeted operations, mass checks on parked up mopeds, raids on individuals suspected of stealing PTW vehicles or using them to commit crimes.

Around 150 offenders have been identified so far as being heavily involved in PTW associated crime - and these same 150 individuals have been arrested almost 500 times between them over a ten week period between the 20th April and 12th July.

Steps PTW owners can take to reduce the risks of theft:

Parking - choose designated parking with a stand and security loop, or areas with lots of people, good lighting and CCTV

Locks - use more than one lock, focusing on disc locks and chain locks, fitted tight to the bike and through difficult to remove parts

Time - when leaving your bike for a long period or overnight, lock it to something secure and use a motorbike cover.

Attention - use audible alarms to draw unwanted attention to the thieves

Marking - choose to mark your bike parts with the vehicle identification number (VIN) number, your postcode or registration number

Insurance - some companies will offer discounts on your insurance if you invest in certain security measures.

Secure back wheel of motorbike or moped, rather than front wheel as front wheels are generally easier to remove.

A typical target for potential thieves

TRADE Standards officers in Westminster, Chelsea and Hammersmith will be getting an alert from their Essex colleagues this week about a new and rather unique scam.

The target is not a householder, but churches, schools, surgeries and properties with car parks.

Cold callers have been asking owners if they need white lines painted in their car parks, allegedly claiming they have been working on nearby roadworks and have surplus paint. But the white line offer is nothing but white lies.

The common claim to offer bargain rates and quote vague or misleading figures, before reaching an expensive final cost.

In some cases the lines have been painted without permission and the owners have then demanded money for the work.

So if your premises have car park space be prepared for a visit from the white line traders who will simply leave your bank account in the red.

HAVE you bought your ticket yet for next month’s One Direction concerts at The O2 Arena? If you have then check them.

If not be aware that online fraudsters are selling the e-tickets on Twitter and Facebook for around £50. The tickets have a face value of £65 + service charge and sell for around £200 on secondary websites.

Original tickets are usually photocopied and sold on over and over again by fraudsters. They do this by copying the bar code and make dozens of counterfeit copies which are then sold to other victims.

If you buy one of these tickets you would be refused entry into a venue.

Advice

Always check with the event organiser for official ticket distribution lists and never buy from unauthorised sources.

Pay for tickets by credit card as the card issuer is generally easier to remove.

Always check the address in Sheerness,Kent.

The FCA said the company claims to be registered by the Financial Services Authority, but is not authorised by them. Citigroup also use an address in Sheremness,Kent.

The FCA is also warning about the activities of Stanley Ball Limited of Hanover Square, Mayfair, because they have cloned the name of the genuine company to try and tempt investors.

If in doubt ring the FCA on 0800 111 6768 (freephone) or 0300 500 8082 before you part with any of your savings.

NEXT MONTH: Exposed - how fakes cost jobs and lives
FORGET coffee, tea or an icy shower, if there’s anything guaranteed to give restaurant owners Mitch Tonks and Matt Prowse a boost in the morning, it’s their breakfast grappa.

Since travelling around Europe some years ago, on the hunt for culinary inspiration for their celebrated Seashorse restaurant in Devon, the two friends have continued the boozy morning ritual, which is popular in food markets in Italy and Spain.

“We like our little drink in the morning,” says Tonks, laughing.

“It’s quite enjoyable,” adds the award-winning chef, who fronted Good Food series, Mitch And Matt’s Big Fish Recipes, with former rugby star Matt Dawson.

“The secret is, it’s only one drink, and for some reason, some days it’s better than others. Some days you don’t really get it, and other days you get really quite smashed and I’m not sure why.”

While the pair’s customary drink, which they quaff alongside their morning coffee, has raised a few eyebrows, it’s part and parcel of the jovial atmosphere they hope to create in the restaurant, with dancing on tables and musical interludes from their maitre d’ Mark Ely encouraged.

“It doesn’t really sound like it’s a very professional place,” says Prowse with a laugh. “It has a life of its own.”

Friends since the late Nineties, Tonks and Prowse – whose experience in kitchens began with pot-washing for a local eatery when he was 13 – have just released a new recipe book, aptly named The Seashore, which they serve in their restaurant.

And while they are both knee-deep in seafood these days, this wasn’t always the case.

“I was working as a head chef at a restaurant in Bath and Mitch came to sell me fish,” explains Prowse of how their partnership began.

“He set up his fishmongers there after giving up his previous life as an accountant in London. He came into the restaurant one day, trying to sell me fish, and that was it, we just hit it off. We decided to start running cookery classes.”

While he and Tonks, who “wasn’t having a great time” as an accountant and quit aged 27, bonded over their love of seafood, they’re well aware that many people don’t share their enthusiasm for fish.

“It smells. It’s full of bone. It’s going to stick in your throat and you’re going to be dragged to hospital to get rid of it,” explains Prowse, with a weary sigh.

“Everything you hear about fish, whether it’s sustainability or cooking it, is all negative. But it’s not. It’s an easy thing to cook. Very simply with the sustainability thing, just find yourself a good fishmonger and trust they’re doing that bit for you.

“Buy the freshest fish you can find, cook it really simply and you’ll have the best meal ever. That’s all we do in the restaurant. Sometimes you feel like a fraud because it is so easy, but behind the scenes it’s not!”

Fancy trying your hand at some simple fishy dishes? Here is a recipe from The Seashore to try at home that will get you started...

### SEA BASS WITH BRAISED COURGETTES
(Serves four)

- 1 lemon, cut into wedges, to serve
- Preheat the oven to 200C/Gas 6.
- Heat the 100ml of olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Add the garlic and sweat for a minute without colouring. Next, add the courgettes and basil, then season with salt and white pepper and mix well.
- Cook the courgettes for about 15 minutes, stirring regularly until most of the water from the courgettes has evaporated and they have stewed some completely broken down. Take off the heat and set aside.
- Heat a large ovenproof frying pan over a medium heat. Place the sea bass in the pan and cook for about five minutes, or until the flesh turns white and flakes easily.
- To serve, reheat the courgettes over a low heat until they are just warm.
- Add a good squeeze of lemon and put a generous spoonful of the warm salad on top and serve with a lemon wedge.

### SEASONAL FAVOURITE: Pigeon and blueberry salad – made to a recipe by Mark Hix.

WE are now knee-deep in the season of the pigeon. They have spent weeks now munching on all the berries the hedgerows have to offer. It is the perfect time to make use of them.

If you can get your hands on little wild blueberries, you will find they are even better for this than their larger, cultivated brethren.

Once you’ve made this dish, you can take the pigeon bones and boil them for a nice broth for future use.

Two oven-ready pigeons 60-70g butter, softened Salt and freshly ground black pepper A small handful of blueberries (about 40-50g) A few handfuls of small, flavoursome salad leaves and herbs For the dressing 1tbsp red wine vinegar ½ tsp Tewkesbury or Dijon mustard 4 tbsp rapeseed oil Preheat the oven to 240C/gas mark 8, season the pigeon and rub the breasts with butter. Roast for about 12-15 minutes, keeping them pink in the middle, then allow them to rest.

Meanwhile, make the dressing by whisking all of the ingredients together and seasoning to taste.

To serve, remove the breasts from the carcass, cut them into half a dozen slices and remove all of the leg meat and shred it. Arrange the leaves on four serving plates with the pigeon and blueberries, and spoon over the dressing.
Welcome back, Mrs Johnstone

A s one sixth of Irish super group The Nolans, Maureen Nolan is no stranger to the stage and this year is once again to play the coveted role of Mrs Johnstone in the Willy Russell Classic musical, Blood Brothers.

Nolan, 61, first played the role back in 2005 and was the fourth of her sisters to do so, earning them an entry into the Guinness Book of World Records. I spoke to Maureen at her Blackpool home about returning to the role for the tenth year and about what the show means to her.

“I absolutely love it. I saw it 18 times before I was in it and it just struck a chord like it does with so many people. It’s got everything. First of all the root of it is the fantastic story by Willy Russell and with that story I don’t think you can do wrong. With the fantastic songs it just grabs people and there is something in it that you can relate to.

The story follows the Johnstone twins, separated at birth, and their differing paths through life until their eventual demise. The revival of Blood Brothers played for 24 years in the West End with more than 10,000 performances. Maureen played the part for two years in the West End.

She explained: “It just pulls you in and you feel like you love the boys because you feel like you’ve grown up with them and that makes the ending all the more traumatic.”

This tour will open at The New Wimbledon Theatre in September before it again travels the country playing to hardcore fans and newly found followers. Maureen plays the twins’ mother, who has the unenviable task of choosing one of her babies to give away in the hope that she can manage to still provide for the rest of her considerable brood. With a plot line that would melt the heart of even the hardest of theatregoers, I ask Maureen how she manages the emotional roller coaster which the role demands and how she recovers after the performance.

“I remember for quite a while in the West End, as soon as the curtain came down I would be literally shaking. I’ve learned to absolutely give it my all at the end and go to that horrible place which I have to go to and then just snap out of it quicker. I remember at Leeds Grand watching my sister Berni and I just remember looking at the faces of the audience. They were all so moved. Every night I remember that and think about the people who will be watching for the first time and enthralled like I was.”

Blood Brothers is at the New Wimbledon Theatre from September 8 to 12.

Mind over matter? Cloud has it covered

MASTER of deduction Colin Cloud will bring his tour to the Leicester Square theatre this autumn following run away successes around the country, writes Nicky Sweetland.

The former forensic science student, dubbed by some as the Hipster Sherlock Holmes, will bring his show to the West End for just two nights in October as part of his much anticipated UK tour.

If, like me, you’re wondering what a forensic mind-reader is, well, it’s someone who can tell what you’ve had for lunch, where you’ve been that day, what you do for a living, the car you drive, even your PIN code, just from looking at you! Or so they say.

Colin, pictured, mixes both mind magic and brain science and became the runaway success of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2014 with 23 sold-out performances and multiple five-star reviews.

He is also about to embark on his first TV series appearance on an NBC and Universal production in America.

Colin Cloud: Forensic Mind-Reader will play at the Leicester Square theatre on the 28th and 29th October. For more details visit colincloud.com
Cost of a ticket could be bad for your Elf

FULL casting has been announced for the musical Elf, which is likely to be a big hit in the West End this Christmas, writes Nicky Sweetland.

But amidst all of the excitement a rumble started to reverberate around the theatre-going community when it was announced that top-price tickets for the show would cost a whopping £240.

The production is based on the 2003 film of the same name, which starred Will Ferrell as the child who is adopted by Santa’s helpers, only to return to the human world and struggle to fit in. The heart warming and hilarious comedy was a big hit on Broadway and enjoyed a limited but very successful run at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth last year.

The cast will be led by ITV’s Superstar winner Ben Forster as Buddy the Elf, alongside former Girls Aloud star Kimberley Walsh, who will play the role of Jovie. The show will open with a glittering charity gala performance on November 5, with proceeds going to the Alzheimer’s Society, and will then run throughout the Christmas period.

It was hoped by many that this would be the perfect London Christmas treat this year, but with top tickets for a family of four costing nearly £1,000, most will not be priced out of the trip, again leaving the theatre-going community facing criticisms of elitism.

Many West End shows offer a day seat scheme that allows devotees but less wealthy fans to queue at the box office on the day of the show for hugely discounted tickets. I’ve done this several times and as long as you are prepared to be bumped in by early morning beggars who are looking for money for a cuppa, it is well worth doing. As yet however, no such scheme has been announced for Elf.

 Elf will run at the Dominion Theatre from October 24 to January 2

Show many to enjoy!

THIS September actress Nikki Patel will star at the Old Vic theatre as the lead in new play Future Conditional, written by acclaimed playwright Tamsin Oglesby and directed by Matthew Warchus.

Nikki, pictured, who started her career 10 years ago in Coronation Street, plays Alia, a young Pakistani refugee who faces the challenge of convincing the system to take lessons from a school friend.

Nikki will make the transition from screen to stage later this year as she leads a new and significant phase for the Old Vic, moving on from artistic director Kevin Spacey to award winning director Warchus.

“I am honoured to be cast in a production directed by Matthew Warchus,” she says. “I hope that through this production we will raise the awareness of equality of education for women around the world.”

The comedy drama, Future Conditional, will also star actor and comedian Rob Brydon and will run from Tuesday, September 1 to Saturday, October 3.

Nikki is also due to star in new drama The Five, airing on Sky Living in late 2015.
**Love affairs on a wing and prayer**

FROM the producers of the sensational production *Birdsong* comes *Flare Path*, which heads to Richmond Theatre for one week only next month.

It stars Leon Ockenden as Peter Kyle, Olivia Hallinan as Patricia Graham and Philip Franks as Squadron Leader Swanson. They will be joined by Alistair Whatley, who recently appeared in *Birdsong* at Richmond Theatre.

Based on its writer Terence Rattigan’s experiences as a tail gunner during the Second World War, *Flare Path*, written in 1941, paints an evocative portrait of life in wartime Britain for the life-and-death existence of the RAF bomber crews and their wives and sweethearts who were left awaiting their return.

Philip Franks, best known as Charley in *The Darling Buds of May*, will play the squadron leader. The acclaimed actor is keen to remind me that the TV show which launched the career of *Hollywood* favourite Catherine Zeta Jones was 25 years ago.

Franks is now also lauded for his work as a director, including how authentic it is. However, it’s also about an extraordinary love triangle that could have been written yesterday. It’s about people under pressure, people in wartime, the fragility of life and everyday miracles, I suppose.”

*Flare Path* tells the story of former actress Patricia, the wife of RAF pilot Teddy, whose marriage is tested to the limits by the surprise arrival of Patricia’s ex-lover and Hollywood idol Peter Kyle. An unexpected and dangerous mission over Germany puts Patricia at the centre of an emotional conflict as unpredictable as the war in the skies.

Philip explains: “There are a lot of young people facing death and he’s a kind of parent figure I suppose. He doesn’t fly himself. He feels very strongly for all these people and unfortunately is often in the position of bringing bad news.”

This new production of *Flare Path* will be directed by Justin Audibert, who is currently directing *The Jew of Malta* for The Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford.

*Flare Path* opens at the Richmond Theatre on September 2.

POPULAR APPEAL: Sheridan Smith stars in Funny Girl at the Menier Chocolate Factory.

**Talk of the Town**

The entertainment scene across London

Smith proves to be box office record breaker

SHERIDAN Smith has once again proved her stage popularity, with ticket sales for her latest show breaking box office records.

The new production of *Funny Girl* at the Menier Chocolate Factory has become the theatre’s fastest selling show ever, with tickets for the limited run selling out within just a few hours.

The revival of the classic musical, which most famously starred Barbara Streisand, is to play at the intimate venue from November 20 to March 5, with rumours of an extension and possible West End transfer already rife.

The show is loosely based on the life and career of the comedienne Fanny Brice and her stormy relationship with entrepreneur Nicky Arnstein. Streisand shared the Best Actress academy award for the role, which she had previously played on Broadway. With the classic showstopper *Don’t Rain on My Parade*, double Olivier award winner Smith is likely to once again show why she is the star everyone wants to see.

The 34-year-old actress achieved critical acclaim for her portrayals in the TV dramas *Mrs Biggs* and *Cilia* as well as being awarded an OBE in the New Year Honours for services to drama. With the sad news of Cilla Black’s death and the subsequent rumours of a musical about her life, all eyes will be on Smith as she takes on Fanny Brice, one of the most coveted and applauded roles in musical theatre.

**New app may be just the ticket with show fans**

A BRAND new way to get tickets for top West End shows has been launched, writes Nicky Sweetland.

Ahead of its American counterparts on Broadway, TodayTix is a mobile ticketing app which uses the latest technology to offer a paperless alternative to the way we would usually book seats.

TodayTix has teamed up with the Adelphi Theatre, Really Useful Theatres venue (founded by Andrew Lloyd Webber), which was due to start using the app when the hit Broadway musical *Kinky Boots* started previews on August 21.

Rather than collecting tickets, users will be sent a unique barcode image on their smartphone which the theatre will then scan straight from the mobile device.

The company hopes to roll out the technology across other venues in the West End over the next 12 to 24 months.

*Kinky Boots* stars Kilian Donnelly and Matt Henry in the very British tale of a gentleman’s shoe factory. The show, with book by Harvey Fierstein and music by Cyndi Lauper, has taken the US by storm, with both the Broadway production and a nationwide tour.

TodayTix hopes to harness the growing movement towards spontaneous leisure time planning, with tickets being available for the week ahead and up to an hour before showtime. I’m going to be reviewing the app in a few weeks time and will be very interested to see how it works.

The TodayTix app is available for download free of charge for iOS and Android devices via the Apple Store and Google Play.
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1. The Council of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham hereby gives notice that in order to facilitate Thames Water repair works in the above named road, it made an Order the effect of which would prohibit traffic in the above named road.
2. Whilst works are in progress, or whilst the authorised traffic signs are displayed, no person shall cause any vehicle to proceed, stop, wait, load or unload in the westbound lane of Gonville Street.
3. An alternative route for traffic in article 2 would be in place via Fulham Road and Putney Bridge Approach.
4. Exemptions would be provided in the Order to permit reasonable access to premises, so as far as is practicable without interference with the execution of the said work and for vehicles, any vehicle being used in connection with police, fire or ambulance purposes and anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform.
5. The Order would come into operation on Wednesday, 19th September 2015 and would be valid for a maximum period of 18 months or until works are completed, whichever is the sooner.
6. Works would be expected to commence on Wednesday, 19th September 2015 and last for 3 days. The dates specified are for guidance and informative purposes only and works may extend outside these dates.

Dated this 17th day of August 2015.

Chris Baird
Head of Transport Policy & Network Management
Transport & Technical Services

Section 17 Licensing Act 2003
Licensing Authority for the purposes of this new Premises Licence Notice is hereby given that (1) Nathan Lowry Shepherds Market Fine Wine has applied to the City of Westminster on (2) 18th August 2015 for a new premises licence for (3) 21 & 23 Shepherds Market, London W1J 7PN.

The proposed application (4) the provision of regulated entertainment / provision of late night refreshment / for the sale by retail of alcohol.

Any person who wishes to make a representation in relation to this application must give notice in writing of his/her representation by (5) 18th September 2015 stating the grounds for making said representation to: Licensing Service, 14th Floor, City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1.

The public register where applications are available to be viewed by members of the public can be accessed online by visiting www.westminster.gov.uk/Licensing and following the link to the public register.

The Licensing Authority must receive representations by the date given above. The Licensing Authority will have regard to any such representation in considering the application. It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in or in connection with an application for premises licence and the maximum fine on being convicted of such an offence is £5000.

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Austin shines on Stan’s day

CHARLIE Austin delivered a timely reminder to would-be suitors of why he was the second best English goalscorer in the Premier League last season with two goals in QPR’s 4-2 home victory against Rotherham United on Saturday.

It was also the perfect riposte to West Ham chairman David Sullivan’s claim last week that QPR’s biggest asset would be too risky a signing due to his knee problems.

Rotherham sensed no hint of danger when Austin controlled goalkeeper Robert Green’s goal-kick on his chest midway in the opponent’s half. But the burly No 9 brushed off the challenge of a few defenders as he advanced to the edge of the penalty area and sent another defender the wrong way before his right foot shot squirmed into the net, much to the embarrassment of the visiting keeper.

Austin’s second was a penalty but he also set up QPR’s goal first by brushing off his marker and then lay-off a short pass into the path of his countryman.

While Austin anticipated, Rotherham was no doubt pleased to extend his goal tally to four in four matches at the start of this season, in his heart of hearts he must know that there is much more career satisfaction – not to mention a hefty pay rise – to be gained from scoring against Manchester United than Rotherham United.

QPR’s resolve is likely to be severely tested in his week as several Premier League clubs weigh up their options. Crystal Palace have emerged as the new favourites to sign the striker who scored 18 Premier League goals last season, while Newcastle United and AFC Bournemouth are also being linked with the 26-year-old who has one year left on his contract in SW12.

But it is easier to imagine Austin heading across the capital to West Ham to replace David Sullivan made (on a fans’ podcast) what the QPR striker described as “an outrageous offer to sign him professionally.

Austin responded with a statement, saying: “I feel I have no option but to respond to the inaccurate, misleading and unfounded innuendo.”

It is one of a number of inaccurate reports about my so-called injury problems made during the summer.

“The record, there is nothing wrong with my ‘ligaments’, as has been suggested.

Match sharpness

“My strength and performance in pre-season has been excellent and with two goals in my last two games I don’t think there is any doubt that my match sharpness is as good as ever.”

“Like many professional footballers, I have the legacy of injuries picked up over my career but the effort on my day-to-day training and on match day is in existence.”

“I am fit, strong and looking forward to Saturday’s home game against Rotherham.”

While R’s fans are bracing themselves for Austin’s anticipated departure before the summer transfer window closes next Tuesday (Sept 9), they are already discovering potential new heroes.

Attacking left-footed midfielder Ferry undertook his promise by twice popping up in Rotherham’s penalty area to score a goal in each half.

CHRISS Ramsey dedicated his team’s win over Rotherham to Stan Bowles on the day the club celebrated its greatest ever player at Loftus Road.

Head coach Ramsey said: “It was a wonderful dedication to that Stan Bowles. I think Stan would have been happy with that sort of score.”

“Stan Bowles put QPR on the map, let’s make no mistake. He’s a legend here. Legend is.

BIG-time Charlie: Will Austin make a quick return to the top? Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW
With Tony McDonald

earlier this summer regarding the 66-year-old’s ill-health, the outlook of appearing and support for the popular markiev – who made 315 appearances for the Hoops, scoring 97 goals between 1972 and 1979 – has been quite overwhelming.

The Bowles family are encouraging supporters to split their donation between the GoFundMe account – for Stan’s daily welfare and ongoing care – and the Just Giving Alzheimer’s Society page, supporting the UK’s leading dementia support and research charity, to help raise awareness of the condition.

Tracy Bowles, Stan’s daughter, said: “Raising awareness of Alzheimer’s is so important to the family. We’ve seen how it can affect a loved one and we want to raise as much money as possible so everyone is fully aware of the condition and the impact it can have.”

She added QPR is Stanley’s club and the support we’ve had from everyone connected to the club and the trust, has been incredible over the last few days.

“There are some basic needs that are essential for Stan and the family in terms of his daily welfare and working with the trust, we can hopefully improve his quality of day-to-day living and future care.”

“I can thank everyone enough for their support so far – it just goes to show what a wonderful club QPR is.”

The GoFundMe page has been set up by Stan Bowles’ family, in conjunction with QPR, to provide fans and Rangers and the Trust in London with plenty of help and support for the former R’s star.

Saturday, August 29

CHELSEA v Crystal Palace

Rotherham Utd v Fulham

Huddersfield Town v QPR

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

MIDDLESEX maintained their hopes of winning the LV= County Championship by forcing a 71-run win against Durham on Monday to close the gap on leaders Yorkshire.

Neil Dexter led the charge for the visitors by making 112 not out in an imposing total of 280 all out at Chester-le-Street. An impressive strike rate of 79.43, the highest six and 16 fours off 141 balls. With the in-form Dawid Malan weighing in with 63, Middlesex left Durham needing 308 for victory but the loss of both openers set a huge setback.

They were reduced to 134-5 at the close on Sunday and 174 runs short of the target.

Despite a battling 95 from Scott Borthwick, Middlesex paceman James Harris took 5-7 and the home side were bowled out for 236 on the final morning.

Having begun the game 38 points behind Division One leaders Yorkshire, who have a game in hand, and having failed to earn any first-innings batting points, victory was vital for Middlesex, who meet the defending champions at Headingley on September 9. Before then, they face Warwickshire in Birmingham from next Tuesday (Sept 1).

Middlesex concluded their Royal London One-Day Cup fixtures with an easy victory over Glamorgan by eight wickets at Lord’s, where Malan again starred with 156 not out.

BEN FOakes produced his most outstanding batting performance since joining Surrey from Essex at the end of last season to help put his side top of Division Two, one point ahead of Lancashire.

Although he will have drawn Championship match against Gloucestershire was badly affected by the weather – rain washed out any hope of play on Sunday and Monday – Foakes occupied the crease for five-and-a-half hours to record a brilliant career-best 140 not out for the visitors, who posted a challenging 349-6 in response to the home side’s 233 all out.

The 22-year-old’s biggest ever haul and his fifth first-class century came in 212 balls and included 19 fours, although credit should also go to 17-year-old Sam Curran who also impressed in their third wicket partnership.

However, for cutting a wide ball straight into the hands of the fielder at point when just one run short of his maiden first-class 50 in only his third match.

In the One-Day Cup, Surrey lost by three wickets to Somerset at Taunton, where Steve Davies’ 111 included 13 fours as Surrey posted 267 all out in the first innings. Rory Burns (76) and Gary Wilson (59) were the only others to give him any support – seven extras was the visitors’ fourth highest score.

At Bristot the next day, Surrey held up their ODC campaign by beating Gloucestershire by 12 runs. In a much more solid team performance, Burns top-scored with 95, with Sam Curran (42) and Wilson (37) also among the runs as Surrey posted 290-8 from their 46 overs.

Gloucestershire lost wickets at regular intervals before being dismissed for 279 with one ball remaining.

Surrey resume their second division Championship title challenge action against Derbyshire at The Kia Oval next Tuesday (Sept 1).

JOSE Mourinho cut a forlorn figure despite seeing his team win their first three points of the season with a hard-fought 3-2 win at The Hawthorns.

“In my dreams we will be invincible,” he said. “But we were in the game.”

Mourinho was clearly unhappy about the sending off of John Terry in the second half when he saw his side to 10 men for the second time in three league matches – the first such punishment coming against Swansea on the season’s opening day.

But the Portuguese manager was reluctant to talk about it – or was he?

“I don’t want to make a comment,” he said. “If I do, then I have to say something about the game – you know people can see and other things we can see. And many things happened.”

In a barely concealed criticism of referee Mark Clattenburg’s performance, Mourinho then listed decisions that smacked of inconsistency.

“One striker pushed a defender – it’s a foul or it’s not a foul,” he said. “Referee stops the game in midfield and a foul is a yellow card or not a yellow card. The penalty: he should have given it to us or let Azpilicueta shoot. But what if he misses the target? It’s not a goal nor a penalty.”

Adapted well

So I prefer to focus on this. And for us, at 3-1, it was short at 11-11. With the chances we created and the spaces we found, and attacked their defensive line, it was short at 3-1. And then when one player loses, and we are getting used to it, we adapted well. But they got a goal back when it is the game open.

“But I am happy because we controlled the game well. That was the point. We had the best chances to score another goal. I am happy with the spirit of the players, they really want to win.”

Terry was red-carded by Clattenburg for hauling back Salmon Rondon. Did Mourinho blame Terry? Did he hold a grudge?

“No, I don’t,” he said. “The ball is in space behind the full-back. The full-back is pressing high but their striker makes the movement – and then Mr Clattenburg decides it’s a red card.”

Mourinho is frustrated about the decision but feels an appeal, while justified, won’t go Chelsea’s way.

“Normally it’s a waste of time for us to appeal,” he said, having recently lost his appeal against Thibaut Courtois’ dismissal against Swansea. He recalled other examples.

“I think we should appeal but when (Nemanja) Matic got sent off against Burnley last year, it was a waste of time. When (Diego) Costa got sent off against Liverpool, it was a waste of time.”

Mourinho was pragmatic as ever, knows that these sendings-off can happen at any time and he and his players need to be prepared for it.

“I train 10 against 11,” he said. “I’m not joking. We have to do it. We did it already in pre-season in Canada. We have to be ready.”

“We have to know what to do when it’s 10 men when we are waging war.”

And when you are losing, 10 men when we are chasing a result, 10 men when we are defending, 10 men.

The difference between the West Brom and Swansea games was exactly that. Against West Brom, we had 10 men but we wanted to change the result into a win. Against West Brom, we were winning and wanted to keep the result. We need to be clear about it, we do it in training. That is the only thing we can do that’s in our hands.”

CHELSEA Ladies beat Ronaldo rivals Arsenal 2-0 on Sunday to go three points clear at the top of Women’s Super League 1.

An own goal from Gemma Bonner and a late goal set the Blues on their way before Gemma Davison and Willow Gorringe also scored a penalty in the second half to keep them ahead of Sunderland with just three league games left of their season.

Paul Lagan
Spanish pair spark Blues

CHELSEA got their Premier League title defence up and running at West Bromwich Albion with a win that had its roots in Spain. Cesar Azpilicueta scored his first league goal for Blues in Saturday’s 3-2 win in the West Midlands, where the high level of performance from new boy Pedro brought renewed hope for fans following a disappointing campaign to this season.

Left-back Azpilicueta, 25, a £6.5m buy from Marseille in August 2012, is facing pressure for his defensive berth by the signing last week of Baba Rahman, so it was not a surprise to see the Spain defender get forward and show Jose Mourinho his attacking prowess too.

His goal proved to be the decisive strike in a game littered with defensive errors which saw five goals, a missed West Brom penalty and the sending off of Blues’ skipper John Terry. Chelsea had just one point from two games prior to their visit to The Hawthorns. Azpilicueta said: “It was important for us to get the win. It was a difficult place to go to and we had a few difficulties in the game. We had to fight until the end.” Fellow Spanish international team-mate Pedro, a £24m purchase from Barcelona in midweek, produced the perfect debut, scoring the opener and setting up number two for Diego Costa. Azpilicueta was not surprised by his compatriot’s impact on the game.

Hungry to win
“I know him very well,” he said. “And I know he would fit very well in the team. I know his ambition, he is hungry to help the team and to win trophies. But to start like that in his first game is amazing.”

“I know Pedro from the national team and he is a top player. He played for Barcelona for many years and he will fit into the Premier League and our team. He knows a few of the players already and I think he is going to do a really good job.”

Pedro has won the World Cup and European Championship with Spain, plus three Champions League titles and numerous domestic trophies with Barca. Does Azpilicueta think he can get even better?

“Yes he will. He has only trained with us for one week. He has just played his first Premier League game and has already scored, so I’m sure he will get better.”

Has he offered any advice on the Premier League?
“He doesn’t need any advice,” he said. “He has won so much at international and domestic level, he has all the experience. Of course, there are a few details about playing in England – there are a few differences like the pace and how the opposition always push until the end, especially when they are losing. But honestly, there is not much to say to him. He scores goals, he does everything.”

Has the addition of Pedro and Rahman given the whole squad a lift after their poor start?
“They are both really good additions to the squad. They will help us to become a better team. It will help everybody. We will have more competition and that can only benefit the club.”

“We know in football you can’t rely on what you did in the past, you have to prove yourself every day. We won the league last season but we have to show that we are ready to perform in every game. Azpilicueta is naturally a right-back but has also proved a success at left-back and has Mourinho’s confidence, to the extent that he has seen off Ashley Cole and Felipe Luis. Now he has Baba after his place. What are his thoughts on that challenge?

“I’m confident that I will keep working and doing my job,” he insisted.

“I know that competition is good for the team. There are a lot of great players around me and young players too. They are all going to compete for a place. At the end, hopefully the whole team will be better and I hope to improve.

“I have played more games on the left on Chelsea but I’m always ready to play wherever the manager wants – even in goal! I will let the manager decide.”

Pedro scored the opener and just as crucially, set up the second. Mourinho was happy with his £21m signing from Barcelona but he had worked all week preparing the winger for the rigours of the Premier League.

“He is a very good player,” said Mourinho, “but there is always a question mark about new players coming into the league from another country. How many top players come to England and don’t perform immediately?” he suggested. “Then people are critical and say: ‘Oh, was he a bad buy?’. How many of them? We have examples of that at our club and there are lots of examples in other clubs too. So it’s very nice for Pedro to come in straight away and to perform the way he did.

“I expected that of him, because he had a good pre-season with Barcelona. He played three competitive matches – two Super Cups against Bilbao and a European Super Cup against Sevilla – so he came to us with good minutes on the pitch, he had intensity. So it was not a question of his condition for us. It was a need to get the right understanding with the players and we worked, tactically, every day with him since he came, for him to try to understand the team and for the team to understand him – what he needs, what he wants – and I think it was a very good performance.”

Juan Cuadrado is expected to join Juventus this week on a season-long loan. The former Fiorentina wide man, signed by Blues in February for £26m in a deal that also saw another flop, Mohamed Salah, move to Fiorentina, is in Italy preparing to sign for the Italian champions.

Blues have completed the signing of Brazil under-20 striker Kenedy from Fluminense for an undisclosed fee. The 19-year-old is expected to be farmed out on loan, like most young players signed by the club.