

**Columnist**

**Jo Collins**



**Chickenshed Theatre**

It is so exciting that from this week Chickenshed has a new artistic director – Lou Stein. Lou will be leading the artistic vision and direction of our company and taking it to the next step of what has been our remarkable journey to change people's lives through theatre. When Mary Ward and I founded Chickenshed 42 years ago, little did we think that this company would reach the heights that it has. It's been quite a journey from the old chicken barn on Lady Elizabeth Byng's Wrotham Park estate to our amazing, purpose-built theatre complex. We are not "retiring", but are taking on the role of guardians and ambassadors. We are still heavily involved and are thrilled to welcome Lou, who will lead our talented team of theatre-makers. Lou is a hugely respected director and writer. He founded the renowned Gate Theatre in Notting Hill and served as an inspirational and extremely successful artistic director at the Watford Palace Theatre. His first task will be to oversee our brand new and original new play *In The Absence Of Silence*, which opens in our studio theatre on April 27. Since our announcement we have received messages of love and congratulations from such amazing friends as Dame Judi Dench, Sir Kenneth Branagh, Sir Derek Jacobi, Lord David Puttnam, Jeremy Irons, Sir Cliff Richard, Christopher Biggins, Richard O'Brien, Melanie Hill, Geoffrey Palmer, Claire Skinner and Michelle Collins – the list is so long. Although these are all people you will recognise we are also thrilled that local community support has been tremendous and both Mary and I thank you from the bottom of our hearts for believing in Chickenshed, and for having us in your community.

**This is an unpleasant taste of things to come**

DUE to road works in Green Lanes Palmers Green, close to The Alfred Herring, we have been given a taste of things to come. For a week from March 21, the road width was comparable to having cycle lanes. This created vastly increased congestion, far greater levels of pollution and a traffic hold-up from the North Circular to Winchmore Hill. On the bus I was on it took 45 minutes to get from Hedge Lane to just past Aldermans Hill.

The bus then had to change destination by only going one stop more and turn around, leaving a load of passengers having to then wait and try to get on any following buses. The traffic jams each morning must have made hundreds, if not thousands, of people late for work and children late for school and led to missed hospital and doctor's appointments, job interviews and other important meetings. Doctors, nurses, police officers, social workers etc must have been

delayed from getting to where they needed to be and emergency vehicles unable to get through the traffic quickly. But never mind – the few cyclists were OK. They didn't wait patiently, safely with everybody else, they just disregarded the Highway Code and laws of the road by riding on pedestrianised areas (pavements) and went through red lights. **T Jones Windsor Road, Palmers Green**

**Help bridge funding gap**

I WOULD like to invite readers to sign up for the 2016 London Bridges Challenge, which is open for applications. It is taking place on Sunday, October 9, and thousands of people will walk 10 miles across 13 of London's most iconic bridges, including London Bridge, Waterloo Bridge and finally crossing Tower Bridge to raise money for Diabetes UK.

The London Bridges challenge is for a good cause – and is also a great day out for family and friends. Diabetes UK supports 3.9 million people in the UK living with diabetes – a serious condition which, left undiagnosed or poorly managed, can lead to devastating long-term complications, including blindness, heart disease and stroke.

Walking is also a great way to keep physically active and this, combined with a healthy diet, can help you maintain a healthy weight and reduce your chance of getting type 2 diabetes.

For people already living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes, getting plenty of exercise and following a healthy diet is also key to managing their condition.

Find out more at [https://www.diabetes.org.uk/Get\\_involved/Fund\\_raising-events/bridgeschallenge/](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/Get_involved/Fund_raising-events/bridgeschallenge/) – or you can email [londonbridges@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:londonbridges@diabetes.org.uk), or call our events fundraising team on 0345 123 2399.

**Claire Lubbock Diabetes UK Fundraising**

**Clubs have vital role to play in child protection**

THE Adam Johnson case has pulled into sharp focus the way child protection and safeguarding is considered by some football clubs.

This is even more worrying when you consider the importance football plays in the lives of many young people and the responsibilities players have as role models.

Johnson's behaviour throughout this sordid affair has been inexcusable and made worse by his not guilty pleas, which forced his young victim to suffer the harrowing experience of giving evidence in court.

However, the NSPCC's concern lies not in the behaviour of a single individual – although that is itself horrifying – but in the approach taken by Sunderland Football Club when confronted with a serious child protection issue.

We are worried this could be a cultural problem within football as a whole and find it concerning clubs may not see incidents such as these as a child protection issue.

This is not only about one rogue player who behaved badly, but a club that seemingly did not have child protection priorities embedded into its culture.

It was not equipped to handle

these allegations and seemingly did not deal with them appropriately, or indeed seriously.

Furthermore, it is concerning if this is being forgotten by a club at the top level of football.

Clubs should be reminded of the high profile their players hold, be aware of their organisational safeguarding responsibilities to young people and be prepared to act decisively.

The NSPCC has written to the

Football Association to hammer home the message that this kind of behaviour should not be tolerated at any level and certainly not brushed under the carpet.

We want to work with the FA to ensure that its strong measures are embedded into the culture of every club in the country.

**Colin Peak NSPCC Regional Head of Service for London & the South East**

**Why it's a resounding no from us**

I READ with great interest the letter from Keith Bilton ("How hard did they look?", March 9) and as a supporter of keeping the green belt intact I felt compelled to write.

I am extremely concerned about the tactics of Wren Academy. They are relentlessly pursuing the fields on Enfield Road as their preferred site for the large school and so-called "community facilities".

They have, I believe, advised the EFA (Education Funding Authority) – the government department responsible for purchasing land to build schools on – that this is the only suitable land available for the school.

Is this really the case, or is it as previously stated an attempt to offload land the London Diocese no longer wants and can make a nice profit on?

In the run-up to the mayoral elections, I am heartened to read that all candidates openly agree that London's green belt be given the strongest protection as there are alternatives available.

I wholeheartedly agree and so do more than 5,000 supporters of Enfield RoadWatch, the local campaign group. In addition 82 per cent of Enfield residents, who responded to the recent Local Plan consultation process, stated that they did not want the green belt built on.

I would like to remind the Wren Academy and the London Diocese to remember its Christian values and take note of this resounding "no" from the Enfield community to the unnecessary building on the green belt.

**Angie Kealy The Ridgeway, Enfield**

**YOUR LETTERS: GUIDELINES**

Write to **Letters to the Editor, The Advertiser, 187 Baker Street, Enfield, EN1 3JT**, or email them to [letters.enfield@nlhnews.co.uk](mailto:letters.enfield@nlhnews.co.uk). Please keep letters below 300 words. You must include your name and full address, though your house number and postcode will NOT be published. Names and addresses will only be withheld from publication in exceptional circumstances. Include a daytime phone number for verification. We reserve the right to edit letters.

**Why are they never caught?**

I AM puzzled as to why reckless drivers never seem to get caught for doing 70mph or more in what is supposed to be a 30mph limit in the Hadley Wood area.

Can anyone shed any light on the matter?

**Jeremy Platten Newmans Way, Hadley Wood**

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