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INSIDE

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TRIBUTES TO VIRUS VICTIM



Grieving husband dies from Covid-19 one year after wife lost cancer battle - as tributes pour in for Wycombe Wanderers fan

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Traveller, 32, left stranded abroad



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Trading estate to become homes?



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PM Boris Johnson recovers in Bucks



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Diving trip turns to nightmare amid Philippines coronavirus lockdown

Hazlemere man stranded abroad - with no way out

By Jenny Maclean

GETTING stranded on a remote island in the Pacific Ocean - sounds idyllic, right?

That's exactly what's happened to Sam, 32, a solo traveller from Hazlemere - and it's not nearly as enjoyable as it sounds.

Sam left the UK on February 26 and flew to Cebu international airport in the Philippines for what was meant to be a three-and-a-half week holiday.

Little did he know he would get stuck in Duain, and face the possibility of not making it home for his birthday in May, or to meet his new niece.

The UK government organised a flight on April 4 from Manila to London. However, with no way to get to Manila, this didn't help Sam and the two other British citizens he's stranded with.

In fact, they received a message from the British Embassy advising them to simply "stay put for the next two weeks and keep safe". On top of that, the flight cost £1,300 - around triple the cost of a regular flight.

His only option is to book a new flight home from Manila, pass a medical screening in order to travel to Cebu and wait for enough people to register for a sweeper flight to Manila.

However, if the plane isn't full it won't fly, which means he could easily miss his international flight home (at great expense).

In addition, you can't book the sweeper flight from Cebu to Manila in advance - only when you get to Cebu airport.

"Plus, all of the hotels in Manila are closed," Sam said.

"Which means if your flight is



Sam (in blue) and his family

cancelled, you're sleeping in the airport. I hear eight days is the current record.

"We are well and truly stuck," he continues.

To make matters worse, he found out on April 6 that transport to Cebu and a flight to Manila had been organised for April 7 - which wasn't communicated to him by any of the three organisations he's registered his details with, including the British Embassy.

Instead of emailing or texting him, the information was simply posted on the Embassy's Facebook page.

On April 3, the Philippines

went into enhanced quarantine, meaning Sam is now confined to a small dive resort. Only one person from each household or resort is allowed out for supplies.

Sam's MP Steve Baker said there's "a limit to what can reasonably be expected of the Foreign Office".

Sam said: "It would be great to get home. I've got a new baby niece I'm probably not going to see for the first time till she's two or three months old at the earliest, and if this continues it will be a lot longer."

"I know everyone is on lockdown back home, but at least I'd feel a lot closer to family."

Latest death tolls and case figures from Bucks hospitals

THIRTY NINE people have died in hospital at the Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust as of 5pm on Wednesday (April 15).

That was an increase of five compared to Tuesday, when there were 34. A week ago, there were 24 deaths. They were among 1,319 deaths recorded across the South East.

Of the 24 trusts across the South East, the Bucks Healthcare trust has the 16th highest death toll. Daily death counts are revised each day, with each case backdated to the actual date of death.

This means some of the deaths that were first recorded in the last 24 hours may actually have taken place days earlier.

Only deaths that occur in hospitals where the patient has tested positive for Covid-19 are recorded, with deaths in the community excluded, such as those in care homes.

Meanwhile, 521 people had been confirmed as testing positive for Covid-19 by 9am Wednesday morning (April 15) in Buckinghamshire, up from 492 the same time on Tuesday. A week before, there were 342 cases.

Tributes to dedicated Wanderers fan who died after battle with coronavirus

A LIFE-LONG Wycombe Wanderers fan has died after contracting coronavirus.

Martin North, who lost his wife to cancer a year ago, passed away last week (week commencing April 6).

He was cremated on Friday morning.

In a statement, Wycombe Wanderers said: "Wycombe Wanderers were distraught to hear of the sad death of Martin North, who passed away this week after contracting coronavirus."

"Martin was a lifelong fan of the Chairboys and lost his wife to cancer only a year ago."

"He was a friendly face for many in the local community, attending matches both at Loakes Park and Adams Park, and working in the area for many years."

"He was cremated on Friday morning, but sadly no guests



Martin North

were permitted to attend due to the social distancing guidelines.

"Close friends plan to arrange a gathering to celebrate his life once the restrictions are lifted."

"Our thoughts are with Martin's friends and family at this terrible time."

The club has said a gathering to remember Martin's life will be arranged once public events are allowed to resume.

Following his death, many fans have paid tribute to Mr North, who lived in Wellesbourne Gardens in High Wycombe.

Speaking on Facebook, Katie Jude said: "Such sad news."

"I had the pleasure of meeting Martin and his beautiful wife many times as I had my eldest the same time they had their eldest."

"Sending you love and blessings at this difficult time."

"Thinking of you all."

Vanessa Gray said: "So sad, condolences to his family."

Jabeen Afzal then added: "Rest in peace Martin. Our condolences to his family and loved ones."

Ferida Akhtar then added: "Rest in peace Martin."

"So sorry to hear this sad news."

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SPORT

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FOOTBALL: Chairboys wait for decision on season League campaign 'to finish in just 56 days'



Wycombe have only lost two league matches at Adams Park all season

THE Football League season is set to be completed in a 56-day period with clubs being advised to give their players holiday and not to return to training until May 16.

A letter sent to all 71 EFL clubs by the league's chairman, Rick Parry, outlined the plan of playing the remaining 341 games, including playoffs, behind closed doors over the course of 56 days.

If the current campaign had been completed as normal, the remaining fixtures would have been played in 73 days up until the Championship Play-Off Final on May 25.

Prior to the suspension of the EFL, Wycombe Wanderers sat in eighth place on 59 points - just one point off the play-off spots.

The Chairboys are one of three clubs to be stuck on 59 points but have two games in hand over their promotion-pushing rivals.

Parry wrote: "Clubs should be advised not to recommence any training activity with players until

By Robert Folker

16 May, at the earliest.

"Whenever the decision is taken that it is safe to resume, we currently estimate that the league will require approximately 56 days to complete the outstanding matches in the season [including play-offs].

"We are committed to ensuring that clubs are provided with an appropriate notice period to ensure [they] are able to prepare operationally given the scale and impact of the postponements.

"It is our working assumption at this stage that matches will be played behind closed doors when we eventually return and as part of our contingency planning we are absolutely mindful of the need to try and mitigate the cost of this to clubs as best we can.

"No decision has been taken on the likely venue as it will depend on the circumstances at play at the time."

The letter also suggested that the beginning of the following season could be postponed because the current campaign is set to be finished later than expected.

Parry continued: "Looking more long-term, the EFL must remain mindful of the implications that the extension of this season may have on the commencement of the 2020-21 campaign.

"Although we will ensure there is a suitable break between the two, so as to allow clubs and staff sufficient time to regroup and prepare accordingly."

The loss of match day revenue has hit EFL clubs hard, and the Premier League have advanced funds totalling £125million to the EFL and National League to help during these testing financial times.

The letter said: "In respect of the Premier League's decision to advance £125m of funds to both the EFL and the National League, the EFL Board has taken the decision to put on hold the forwarding of

advanced monies while additional clarity is sought on other financial matters, particularly in respect to player wages.

"Achieving a solution for April payroll has to be the priority at present though, understandably, our aim is to provide clubs clarity for planning purposes beyond this as quickly as possible.

"How and when we return (including training) is clearly subject to change and any decisions will be taken in conjunction with the government and relevant health authorities.

"I think there will be a sigh of relief as and when we reach that point, and what is clear right now is that Covid-19 continues to present hugely challenging and uncertain times for everyone, and our thoughts are with all those directly affected by the pandemic."

Wycombe have 10 games left of the season and are only three points off the automatic promotion places before the suspension.



Gary Meakin

Teenage scheme launched

THE CLUB HOPE TO NURTURE THE NEXT GEN OF FOOTBALL STARS IN BUCKS

BEACONSFIELD Football Club has launched a scheme to develop and nurture young footballers aged between 12 to 16.

Led by first team manager Gary Meakin, he will be supported by a team of UEFA and FA qualified coaches, sports scientists and medical specialists.

Parents are invited to email the club for more information once the suspension of football activity due to the coronavirus pandemic has been lifted.

The club will then provide more details on trials where parents will also be invited to attend a presentation at Holloways Park, the club's stadium.

Vice chairman of the club Peter Bromage-Smith, said: "The club's strategy is to provide young players with a structured pathway from U13, through the age groups to U18, U23 and finally into the First Team.

"Additionally, at age 16, boys and girls can apply to our academy for a full-time BTEC education program.

"The most talented will be supported to attend professional trials which reflect their ability, attitude and progress."

Director of coaching Gary Meakin added: "We will launch Boys U15 and U16 teams in the forthcoming season, with trials beginning this July, and we will introduce Girls and the remaining Boys age groups in season 2021/22.

"Each player will be assigned a personal development plan which will include nutrition guidance.

"This is a great opportunity for young, talented footballers to play at a professionally run club with top class facilities and mix with players at all levels."