

STOP PRESS: EMERGENCY STATEMENT ON PUBLIC HEALTH

Following the Prime Minister's somewhat contentless closing speech at the Labour Party Conference, Health Secretary Wes Streeting attempts to draw attention to himself by issuing this Bulletin:

ROMANTIC POET HEALTH ALERT:

Psychic Experts warn the public may be put in danger by a repetition of the still-unexplained epidemic that wiped out a generation of Romantic Poets almost exactly 200 years ago.

“It is possible these events may repeat themselves as *psychic echoes*,” warns an untrained epidemiologist.

The Victims were:

1821 John Keats – who had recently 'worked' in a hospital.

1822 Percy Bysshe Shelley – drowned in a 'storm'. [Though, suspiciously, his body was disposed of before an autopsy could be performed. (Burnt, in fact. Though presumably he was full of water. I'd call that suspicious, or what?)]

1824 'Lord' Byron – Died of a fever trying to 'start a revolution.'

This tight grouping of fatalities with such diverse causes is statistically very unusual if, and it is a big 'if', we assume they were accurately reported.

“Can we take this on trust?” asked Streeting. “Bearing in mind that no one likes smart-arse poets at the best of times and that the self-proclaimed Romantics openly wallowed in their reputation as 'sex'n'drug machines?' Not healthy at any time. Especially not in the forthcoming era of austerity. So we advise the public is to follow these simple rules:

1 Don't leave home before the end of 2025, if you can avoid it. You may have a hidden full, or partial, poetic medical precondition, and be unaware of it.

2 Avoid the company of Poets, or those purporting to be Poets. (Wise at any time.)

3 Avoid both 'classical' and 'popular' songs and other musical forms that employ rhythm, metaphor, or simile.

4 Don't work in a hospital, go out in a 'storm', or foment a revolution.

5 If you find yourself compulsively rhyming or using metaphors etc, isolate yourself until the symptoms abate.

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