

Nigel Farage's  
election  
surprise

MAIN STORIES P4



On the trail of  
the hardest-  
working royal

LAST WORD P44



Farewell to  
rugby league's  
"Mighty Atom"

SPORT P22



# THE WEEK

8 JUNE 2024 | ISSUE 1491

THE BEST OF THE BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

## The Trump verdict

### A shocking first for America

Page 4





BIOCERAMIC  
MOON **S**WATCH  
COLLECTION

MISSION TO THE SUN



Ω  
OMEGA  
x  
swatch® 

Only available in selected Swatch Stores



BIOCERAMIC  
MOON **S**WATCH  
COLLECTION

MISSION ON EARTH



Ω  
OMEGA  
×  
swatch® 

Only available in selected Swatch Stores



## What happened

## Farage's comeback

Nigel Farage stunned Westminster on Monday by announcing that he had decided to return to front-line politics, by taking over as leader of his Reform UK party for the next five years. Less than a fortnight after he'd said that he planned to sit out the UK general election in order to focus his attention on Donald Trump's campaign in the US, Farage declared that he'd changed his mind – "It's allowed you know" – and would be standing for the seat of Clacton, in Essex. "Nothing works" in Britain, said the former Brexit Party and UKIP leader; it was up to him to lead a "political revolt".

Farage's surprise announcement landed between two major polls indicating that the Conservative Party is on course for a punishing defeat in July's election. A detailed YouGov survey suggested that Labour would win 422 seats to the Tories' 140, giving Keir Starmer's party a majority of 194 – the biggest of any party in a century. On Tuesday evening, Rishi Sunak and Starmer took part in the first head-to-head televised debate of the election, in which they clashed over tax, immigration and the NHS. Neither of the men emerged as a clear winner of the event.



Leading a "political revolt"

## What the editorials said

Sunak's election campaign got off to a bad start, said The Independent, and things have gone downhill ever since. The Government has unveiled a series of policies aimed at the Tory base – tax protections for pensioners, new penalties for fly-tippers, caps on work and family visas, new clarifications on trans rights – but they've "all failed to move the dial". And now, to compound the Government's misery, Farage has come along to steal more disgruntled voters. "Election night 2024 is shaping up to be one long ticker-tape of 'Portillo moments'."

The Tories will dismiss Farage's return as "the cavortings of a fringe political narcissist", said The Times, but it presents a major problem for their party. While he may have a poor record at winning parliamentary contests, having failed seven times to bag a seat in Westminster, he's a "formidable" campaigner with a gift for "guerilla politics". Farage says Reform could secure more votes than the Tories in the coming election, said The Daily Telegraph. "Judging by the latest opinion polls, this is not a fanciful boast." Support for the party has been running at around 12%, and that figure is rising now that Farage is at the helm. "The stakes in this election have just risen dramatically."

## What happened

## The Trump verdict

Donald Trump became the first former US president to be convicted of a criminal offence when a New York jury found him guilty last Friday on 34 felony counts of falsifying business records, with an intent to conceal the violation of campaign finance and tax laws. The case centred on a \$130,000 payment made to the adult-film actress Stormy Daniels, shortly before the 2016 election, to stop her speaking publicly about an alleged sexual encounter she'd had with Trump in 2006. At his sentencing hearing on 11 July he could be jailed for up to four years, but is more likely to receive a fine or community service.

In an explosive press conference, Trump – who has already vowed to appeal – called the trial "rigged" and "disgraceful", and claimed that the US had become a "fascist state". Senior Republicans lined up to support him, and his presidential campaign secured \$53m in donations within 24 hours of the unanimous verdict being declared.



Declared the trial "rigged"

## What the editorials said

"No one in America, not even a former president, is above the law." That was the "historic message" delivered by 12 jurors last week, after ten hours of deliberation, said the FT. This case showed that, despite the strains on it, America's judicial process can still function correctly. Yet since the constitution doesn't bar a convicted felon from running for president, the verdict does not remove the risk of Trump being re-elected in November. He is facing far more serious charges, related to his alleged attempts to overturn the 2020 election, said the LA Times. But by dithering on his absurd claim to immunity, the supreme court has helped in his efforts to delay those trials until after the poll.

Normally a criminal conviction would be fatal for a presidential candidate, said The Wall Street Journal. "But normally a prosecutor wouldn't have brought this case." Falsifying business records is usually a fairly minor misdemeanour. But prosecutors managed to elevate the counts to felonies in this case, by claiming that Trump had fiddled the books to sway the 2016 election. That was "a legal stretch" that looked politically motivated.

## It wasn't all bad

Tesco is "tattooing" information onto its extra-large avocados in an effort to reduce the number of stickers it uses as labels. The process involves using a laser to etch words and numerals on the fruit by removing a thin layer of its skin. As part of the scheme, which is being trialled in around 270 Tesco stores in the southeast of England, plastic trays for some packs of avocados are also being replaced by recycled cardboard, which could save more than 20 million pieces of plastic a year.

**Three of the military horses that galloped riderless for miles through London in April, after being startled by building works, have fully recovered, and are now expected to take part in next week's Trooping the Colour. The other two horses (right), including Vida, the grey that was seen covered in blood, are still recuperating, but are said to be doing well and enjoying the summer in the Chilterns. "Seeing them running, rolling and generally having fun... is a real joy," said the CEO of The Horse Trust, which has been caring for them. Three of the soldiers who were thrown from the horses are also back on duty, and the other two are expected to return to work in due course.**



A 91-year-old man from Surrey has become the first patient in England to receive an artificial cornea. Cecil Farley was facing a year-long wait for surgery after a human cornea transplant failed. But his ophthalmologist had read that artificial corneas were producing good results, so suggested he have that procedure instead. The cornea was put in place using a gas bubble, and fixed to the eye with a single stitch. "I can still see my wife after 63 years of marriage, we can just carry on as normal and live life as fully as we can," Farley said.



## What the commentators said

Clacton is “fertile terrain” for a politician like Farage, said Matthew d’Ancona in the Evening Standard. The constituency was represented, between 2014 and 2019, by the UKIP MP Douglas Carswell. But Farage will still need to overturn a 24,702 Tory majority to claim the seat, so his victory is not assured. Even if he falls short, though, his return as Reform leader is going to have a big influence. He has declared this the “immigration election”, and is “aiming his fire at what remains of the technocratic centre-right” in the hope of bringing about a major realignment of British politics. His genial manner and trademark grin mask “ruthless intent”.

Farage “means business”, agreed Philip Johnston in The Daily Telegraph. He wants to replicate the revolution that rocked Canada in 1993, when a long-serving Conservative administration was obliterated in an election, losing all but two of its seats. It was undone by a new party of the populist Right called Reform, after whom Farage deliberately named his own outfit. Its leader, Stephen Harper, went on to lead the Conservatives and become prime minister. Farage is looking ahead to the election after this one, said Simon Heffer in the same paper. He believes that Labour, held back by fiscal constraints, will have a very short honeymoon period, and that Reform’s agenda will become even more appealing to disillusioned Tory voters. In truth, Reform is “already like the conservative party that many Conservatives would like to have”.

The Tories could certainly do with some of Farage’s charisma, said Rosa Prince on Politico. Watching Sunak and Starmer in their debate on Tuesday – a pair of “intelligent, hard-working and slightly robotic technocrats” with “careful side-partings” – was not a thrilling experience. They are a little boring, said Daniel Finkelstein in The Times, but “I am ready for boring”. For the past decade, British politics has been in a state of chaos, amid endless feuding and leadership elections. We’ve had five different prime ministers. The last thing we need is another charismatic politician spouting simplistic promises that sound good but don’t add up in practice. This country has had enough of “politics as entertainment. It’s time to return to seriousness.”

## What next?

In the TV debate, Sunak repeatedly claimed that Labour would cost households £2,000 more in tax. Sunak said the figure – dismissed by Starmer as “garbage” – came from an analysis by “independent Treasury officials”, but that claim has been challenged. In a letter to Labour earlier in the week, the chief Treasury civil servant James Bowler wrote that the Tories’ figures included costings that had come from other sources and they “should not be presented as having been produced by the civil service”.

The latest polls suggest that 12 Tory Cabinet ministers could lose their seats on 4 July, including Jeremy Hunt, Grant Shapps, Johnny Mercer and Penny Mordaunt.

## What the commentators said

Trump isn’t the first serving or former president to have committed crimes, said Adam Smith in The Sunday Times. Andrew Jackson killed a man in a duel; Warren Harding was up to his neck in corruption. But Trump is the first to be convicted. His critics have hailed the jurors’ verdict as a triumph for the rule of law; but to his defenders, it’s proof “that the rule of law is already dead”. Watch Fox News, and you’ll see a “depiction of a dystopian America in which a corrupt Biden administration uses a politicised justice system to silence its opponents”. That is not far from what happened, said William A. Jacobson and Kemberlee Kaye in The Daily Telegraph. Biden himself may not have been involved, but the case was brought by a Democrat district attorney who’d pledged to “get” Trump. It relied on a “novel and untested legal theory”; and the jury was drawn from an overwhelmingly Democrat area. The “whole thing stinks”.

Nonsense, said Adam Serwer in The Atlantic. Trump was tried by a jury in the city in which his offence took place, as required by law, and the jurors were vetted by his defence team. During his trial, he repeatedly violated gag orders. Yet he was treated with remarkable leniency by the judge. The US justice system is more political than some – and Trump himself has made good use of this. More serious cases against him have been delayed by Republican federal judges and, as president, he packed the supreme court with right-wing justices. His conviction isn’t in any case likely to harm his electoral chances, said Frank Luntz in the FT. His supporters have been galvanised by the trial, and he continues to lead Biden in most national polls. But the election may be determined by moderate and independent voters in swing states, said Andrew Neil in the Daily Mail, and some might now gravitate Biden’s way. Either way, the future looks perilous. If Trump loses, and his conviction is then overturned, there will be mayhem. If he wins, he “will go on the rampage seeking revenge”, and “that too would rip America apart”.

## What next?

Trump’s sentencing is due to take place just four days before the Republican National Convention, where he is set to be named as the party’s presidential nominee. He will have 30 days to lodge an appeal after sentencing. Legal analysts say he has several credible avenues for appeal, but warn that the process is unlikely to be completed before polling day.

Most experts believe that Trump’s status as a non-violent offender with no prior convictions means that he is unlikely to be given a jail term; but his behaviour during the trial may count against him.

## THE WEEK

Every week, the polling industry makes a series of apparently precise claims about the state of public opinion in Britain. Only when elections come round do we get a sense of how accurate these polls are: not very. They got the 2015 general election totally wrong, predicting a hung parliament, not a Tory win. Nearly all pollsters called the Brexit referendum of 2016 as a win for Remain. After the 2017 election, in which the Labour vote was heavily underestimated, the British Polling Council asked pollsters to publish this caveat in the small print: “On the basis of the historical record of the polls at recent general elections, there is a nine in ten chance that the true value of a party’s support lies within four points of the estimates provided by this poll, and a two in three chance that they lie within two points.” Or, to translate: hopefully we’re somewhere in the right area, but... Nevertheless, because horse races are more fun than policies, polls profoundly shape electoral reporting, and can distort whole campaigns. In 2015, the commentariat was talking about coalitions and minority governments, not a Cameron government and the coming EU referendum. This time, it’s generally said that Labour has a big lead, of perhaps 20 points. That may be right, or it may be significantly wrong. Some nations, such as South Korea, ban polling in the run-up to the vote. The best argument for political polls is that they are better than the alternative: spin and wild conjecture. Even so, it’s remarkable that we put so much faith in this imprecise science.

**Theo Tait**

Editor-in-chief: Caroline Law  
Editor: Theo Tait  
Deputy editor: Harry Nicolle Managing editor: Robin de Peyer Assistant editor: Leaf Arbuthnot  
City editor: Jane Lewis Contributing editors: Simon Wilson, Rob McLuhan, Catherine Heaney, Xandie Nutting, Digby Warde-Aldam, Tom Yarwood, William Skidelsky  
Editorial: Anoushka Petit, Tigger Ridgwell, Amelia Butler-Gallie, Louis Foster Picture editor: Annabelle Whitestone  
Art director: Katrina Fiske Senior sub-editor: Simmy Richman Production editor: Alanna O’Connell  
Editorial chairman and co-founder: Jeremy O’Grady

Production Manager: Maaya Mistry  
Account Directors: Aimee Farrow, Amy McBride  
Business Director: Steven Tapp  
Commercial Head, Schools Guide: Nubla Rehman  
Account Executive (Classified): Serena Noble Advertising Director – The Week, Wealth & Finance: Peter Cammidge

Managing Director, News: Richard Campbell  
SVP Subscriptions Media and Events: Sarah Rees

Future PLC, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR

Editorial office: 020-3890 3787

editorialadmin@theweek.co.uk

**FUTURE** Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.  
Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)  
www.futureplc.com  
Chief Executive Officer: Jon Steenberg  
Non-Executive Chairman: Richard Huntington  
Chief Financial and Strategy Officer: Penny Laidlaw-Bland  
Tel: +44 (0)2025 442 244



## Controversy of the week

## Starmer's purge

Whatever one thinks of Diane Abbott, there is no doubt that the Labour MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington “occupies a special place in British history”, said *The Times*. As the first black female MP, elected to the Commons in 1987, she “blazed a trail” for women from ethnic minorities. Her politics have often been extreme; and Keir Starmer, who has worked hard to “rid Labour of the stain of antisemitism” from the Jeremy Corbyn years, was “bound to act harshly” when she wrote a letter to *The Observer* last April, claiming that minorities such as Jews and Travellers could not suffer from racism, and likened the prejudice they face to the experience of redheads. Abbott duly had the party whip removed. What was not justified was a 13-month inquiry, even though she had promptly apologised. She was left to languish, before being told, last week, that the whip had been restored but that she would not be able to stand again as a Labour MP. After the inevitable outcry, and days of confusion, Abbott was told that, in fact, she could run again in her constituency. What a “dog’s breakfast”.



Starmer with Abbott: “avoidable mess”

It was “an almighty, avoidable mess”, agreed Ben Kentish in *The i Paper*. Taking so long to investigate one short letter “reeks of prevarication, indecision and ineptitude”. Even so, the row may yet work in Starmer’s favour. One major task that Labour faces in this election “is to hammer home the message that it has changed” since the Corbyn era. Most voters won’t care about “the murky intricacies” of the party’s disciplinary processes. All they’ll hear are stories about “a close ally of Corbyn” being banished. “What better way to highlight the journey Labour has been on?” But Abbott wasn’t just punished as a symbol of the Corbynite past, said Fraser Nelson in *The Daily Telegraph*. It’s the “future threat” that Starmer is worried about. This is why a series of charismatic left-wing parliamentary candidates, such as Faiza Shaheen in Chingford, and Lloyd Russell-Moyle in Brighton, have been purged and replaced with Starmer loyalists – “Starmtroopers”, as they are now known. Worryingly, the leader seems to be building “a party without diversity of thought or internal debate”. Tony Blair, for instance, tolerated “a much broader church than Starmer is building now”.

Starmer hasn’t had it all his own way, said John Rentoul in *The Independent*. His deputy, Angela Rayner, made a “dramatic intervention” in the Abbott row, saying: “I don’t think there’s any reason why she shouldn’t stand as an MP.” The message was clear: the “boys” in the leader’s office had gone too far, the purge of left-wingers was excessive. With luck, it will be a salutary moment for Starmer, said Polly Toynbee in *The Guardian*. At this “epochal moment”, he should have “grander” aims than factional infighting and dispatching “irritants”. Next month, and in the future, he will need “support from liberal-left and green-inclined voters”. Starmer must “beware of alienating them pointlessly”.

## Hospital cyberattack

The NHS declared a “critical incident” this week after several major hospitals in London were affected by a cyberattack. Reportedly, the hackers targeted software used by a private lab that has partnered with NHS hospitals to provide pathology services. With blood test results not coming through, operations had to be rescheduled and blood transfusions delayed. The list of affected hospitals includes Guy’s, St Thomas’ and King’s College. GP services in several boroughs were also disrupted. The hackers are believed to have demanded a ransom to remove a piece of software that had locked the Synnovis partnership’s IT system. Cybersecurity experts said they suspected that Russian cybercriminals were behind the attack.

## Junior doctors’ strike

Junior doctors in England will stage a five-day strike in the run-up to the general election on 4 July, the British Medical Association announced last week. It said that the doctors would walk out from 27 June to 2 July, owing to the failure to reach a deal on pay. Rishi Sunak suggested that the strike had been timed to damage the Tories’ electoral chances. The doctors are seeking a 35% rise; it will be their 11th walkout since March 2023.

## Spirit of the age

Almost half of British adults are trying to supplement their income by taking on a “side hustle”, research has suggested. According to a poll commissioned by the software company Sage, 47% of adults have more than one income stream, such as selling used clothes; and 10% are actively looking for one. The average amount that 16- to 34-year-olds pocket from their side hustle is £546 a month.

The number of children who enjoy writing in their spare time has fallen to a record low, as they spend more time on smartphones and other devices, a survey by the National Literacy Trust (NLT) has found. Fewer than three in ten (28.7%) of children aged eight to 18 say they enjoy writing when they’re not at school, down from 46.8% in 2010.

## Good week for:

**Rupert Murdoch**, the 93-year-old media mogul, who tied the knot for the fifth time. His bride is Elena Zhukova, 67, a retired scientist. The pair met at a family event last year.

**China’s space programme**, with the landing of its Chang’e-6 lunar probe on the “dark” side of the Moon. The robot touched down on Sunday and gathered samples of rocks and soil, before lifting off again on Tuesday. China is the only country to have landed a probe on the Moon’s far side, and now looks set to be the first to bring samples back from there.

**City lawyers**, who can now hope to start their careers on salaries exceeding the prime minister’s. According to new analysis, newly qualified solicitors at several US firms with offices in the City of London are paid upwards of £170,000.

## Bad week for:

**Marylebone Cricket Club**, after its former president told an audience at the Hay Festival that it stinks of “privilege and classism”. The writer and actor Stephen Fry said the MCC had a “public face that is deeply disturbing”, and characterised its members as “beetroot-coloured gentlemen” in blazers. He was taking part in an event about diversity in cricket. Some MCC members have since called for his membership to be suspended.

**Britain’s honeybees**, with reports that Asian hornets have survived a British winter for the first time. Sightings of the hornets – which lurk outside the entrances to hives in order to feast on honeybees – reached a record high last year, and beekeepers have warned that they could soon become established in the UK.

## Poll watch

**42%** of British adults say they’ve decided how they’re going to vote in the election. **27%** say they’re leaning towards a party but may change their mind; **13%** say they’ll probably vote but are completely undecided about whom to vote for; **13%** say they probably won’t vote. *Lord Ashcroft/Daily Mail*

Only **23%** of 18- to 26-year-olds support the Tories’ plan for a new form of national service; by contrast, **63%** of those aged 75 and over do. Across all adult age groups, **40%** support the idea, and **37%** oppose it. *More in Common/The News Agents*

**50%** of Americans agree with the jury in New York’s decision to convict Donald Trump. **27%** disagree, and **23%** are unsure. *ABC News/Ipsos*



## Paris

**Coffin threat:** Five coffins draped with French flags were dumped next to the Eiffel Tower this week, each inscribed with the words “French soldiers of Ukraine” – an apparent reference to President Macron’s recent refusal to rule out sending French troops to Ukraine. The French authorities suspect the three men arrested in the case – a Bulgarian, a German and a Ukrainian – had all been paid by Russian security services as part of a concerted dirty tricks campaign. One of them is also linked to the vandalising of the Holocaust Memorial in Paris last month, when 35 red hands were painted on the monument. A leaked French intelligence memo also implicates Russia’s security service in another recent incident: the stencilling of 250 Stars of David on walls in the city shortly after the start of war in Gaza last October. France’s minister for foreign affairs, Stéphane Séjourné, has accused Moscow of seeking to destabilise and divide French society.

## Reichertshofen, Germany

**Deadly floods:** Torrential rain last weekend caused severe flooding across southern Germany: in the states of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, rising waters overwhelmed dams and inundated entire villages. At least four people have died – three of them residents trapped in the basements of their houses, the other a firefighter in a rescue boat that capsized. Thousands of others have had to abandon their homes; and farmers warn that the floods may have devastated much of this year’s harvest. Such events can no longer be seen as a “one-off”, said Chancellor Olaf Scholz, addressing the nation from Reichertshofen, a flood-hit area north of Munich, and underline the need for greater urgency in addressing climate change. Germany’s flood-response protocols have improved since the disastrous 2021 floods in the Rhineland, when 184 people died.

## Ciudad Real, Spain

**Rape row:** In a highly controversial ruling, a Spanish court has acquitted a 20-year-old man who raped a 12-year-old girl and made her pregnant, on the grounds that the relationship reflected “the cultural reality of the gypsy community”. The age of consent in Spain is 16, but the court in Ciudad Real held that, in this case, the sex was “always consensual within the framework of a romantic relationship”, adding that the two were “close in age and maturity”. The acquittal follows several other recent trials of child sexual abusers of Roma origin, in each of which verdicts reflected the judges’ assumptions about Roma culture – a trend condemned by the Ministry of Equality and by the Gypsy Secretariat Foundation. The latter insists that gypsy culture “does not include abuse or the violation of rights”, and that the law should be applied “for the protection of women, including gypsy women”.



## Brussels

### EU elections:

Voting for the 720 members of the European Parliament kicked off this week, with 373 million people eligible to vote over a four-day period. Parties of the hard-right are set to make

big gains: they lead the polls in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium and several other places. Green parties are set to fare badly and could lose up to a third of their seats. The make-up of the new parliament could torpedo Ursula von der Leyen’s chances of getting re-elected as European Commission president. She needs the backing of a majority of MEPs to stay in post: her majority in 2019 was just nine MEPs.

## Mannheim, Germany

**Mass stabbing:** A police officer has died after a man wielding a knife attacked and injured six people at an anti-Islam event in the city of Mannheim. Video footage showed the suspect, a 25-year-old Afghan who came to Germany in 2014, stabbing a group of activists who had unfurled an Israel flag and a banner reading: “Stop Political Islam!”. The police officer, 29, was stabbed in the head and neck as he tried to help one of the victims; he died in hospital two days later. The suspect was shot and detained by police. Among the victims was activist Michael Stürzenberger, 59, a leading member of Pax Europa, the group organising the event, which campaigns against what it calls the “creeping Islamisation” of Germany.



## Venice

### Noise reduction:

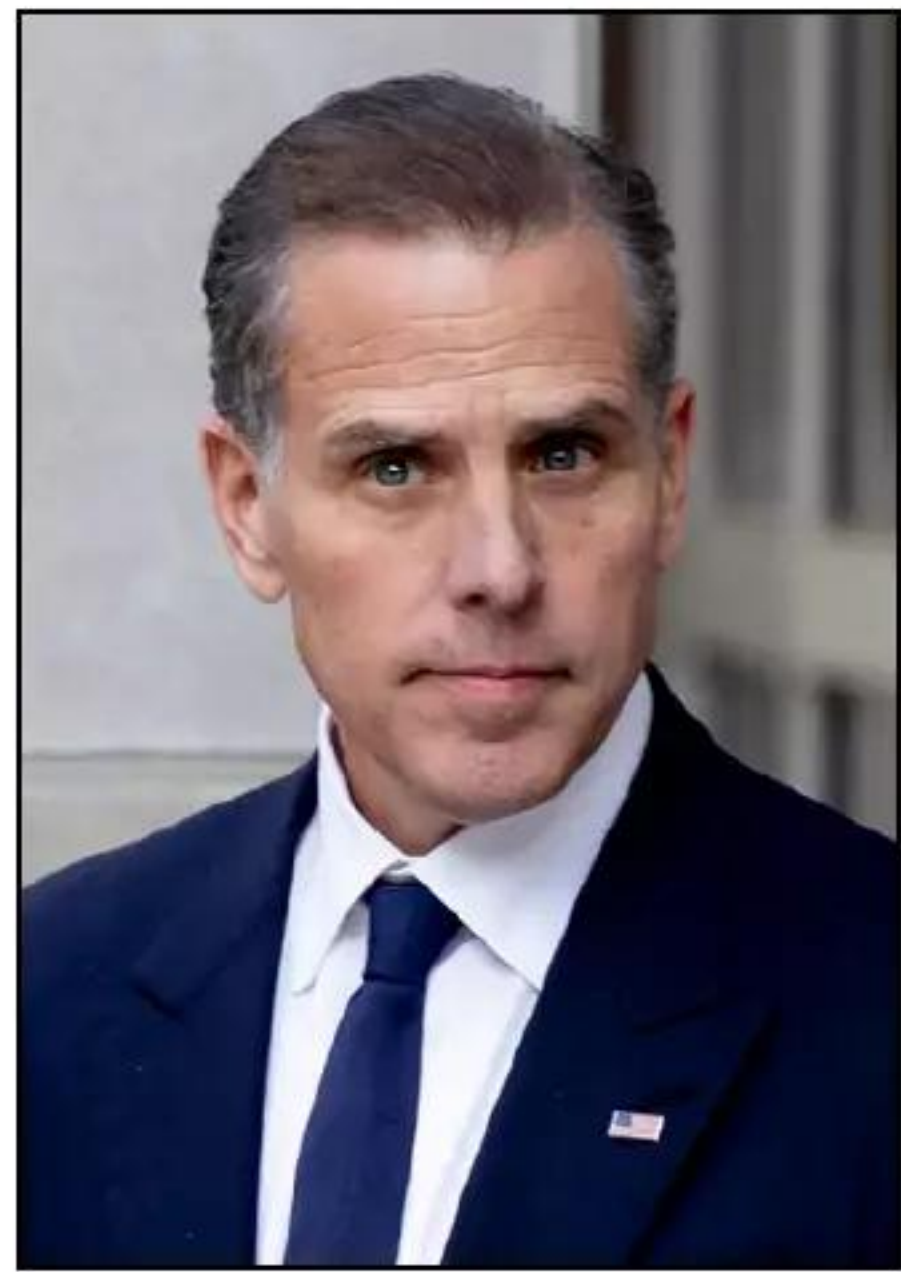
Loudspeakers have been banned in Venice and tour groups limited to 25 people, as the

authorities strive to ease the pressure of mass tourism on the city. Roughly 50,000 people live in the historic centre, and many complain that the influx of 25 million visitors a year makes life unbearable. The new rules are intended to ease the passage of pedestrians through the narrow streets and reduce “confusion”. Other recent measures include rerouting giant cruise ships to a nearby port (following a ban on docking in Venice), limits on the spread of souvenir stores, and a €5 entrance fee for daytrippers visiting on peak dates.

## Kyiv

**Peace summit:** Ukraine’s President Zelensky has accused Russia and China of neutering the multinational peace summit, aimed at resolving the conflict in Ukraine, that he has arranged in Switzerland later this month. So far, 106 nations have said they’ll participate but, according to Zelensky, presidents Putin and Xi have refused to do so. Speaking at a security conference in Singapore this week, Zelensky claimed that Russia, backed by China, had threatened to block exports of agricultural and chemical goods to any country choosing to attend the summit. He went on to describe China as “a tool in the hands of Putin”, accusing it of supplying Russia with microelectronics, machine tools and other “dual-use” goods that could be used in weapons manufacture. Beijing rejects the charge, but also says it was not attending the summit because Zelensky allegedly hadn’t invited Russia.





### Wilmington, Delaware

**Trial begins:** The trial of Hunter Biden got under way this week, creating an unwelcome distraction for President Biden as he sought to capitalise on Donald Trump's criminal conviction. Joe Biden's only surviving son, Hunter, 54, is accused of violating federal gun laws by allegedly lying about his illegal use of drugs while attempting to buy a gun in Delaware in 2018. He has pleaded not guilty, but could go to jail if convicted. As the trial began, Joe Biden released

a statement professing his "boundless love" for his son, who is facing a second trial in September on federal tax charges.

### Washington DC

**Turning up the pressure:** Days after unveiling a new plan for a ceasefire in Gaza (*see page 20*), President Biden hinted this week that Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu was prolonging the war "for his own political preservation". In an interview with Time magazine, Biden said that he could not comment on the notion, but that there was "every reason" to draw that conclusion. Although he later played down his remarks, Biden is said to have been growing increasingly impatient with Netanyahu, and his unveiling of the peace plan has been seen as an attempt to put pressure on the Israeli leadership. Netanyahu has been urged to reject the plan by hardliners in his coalition, while the centrist Benny Gantz has warned that he will leave government if Netanyahu does not come up with a plan for Gaza's postwar governance this week.

### Washington DC

**Border crackdown:** Joe Biden has signed an executive order to dramatically tighten the US's southern border. Under the terms of the order, if unauthorised entries exceed 2,500 a day, on average, for seven days, newly arrived asylum seekers will not have their claims processed, and will be deported within hours or days. (Normally, those who claim asylum are released into the US to await court appearances.) Since daily totals already exceed that number, the order could go into immediate effect; processing would only restart once numbers have fallen back below 1,500. Some exceptions apply, including for unaccompanied children. Biden had been facing intense political pressure to limit crossings before November's presidential election. However, the order is likely to face legal challenges from rights groups.



### Mexico City

**Historic win:** Mexico has elected its first-ever female president in a landslide vote. Claudia Sheinbaum (pictured), a climate scientist and former mayor of Mexico City, will succeed her mentor, left-wing populist Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who cannot seek a second term. She won more than 59.4% of the vote in Sunday's poll, leaving her closest rival, the centre-right Xóchitl Gálvez, trailing on about 31.4%. Her Morena party also performed strongly in elections

to the houses of congress – and looked set to clinch a two-thirds super-majority in both. This could allow Obrador to push through controversial constitutional reforms, including the introduction of directly elected judges, before he leaves office on 1 October.

Sheinbaum, who will also become Mexico's first Jewish leader, has vowed to build on the "advances" made by Obrador: among other things, he raised the minimum wage and expanded welfare programmes during his six years in office. But she faces significant challenges. She inherits Mexico's worst budget deficit since the 1980s, and will come under intense pressure to tackle cartel-related violent crime: nearly 220,000 people were killed or went missing during Obrador's presidency, and at least 36 candidates were murdered during the campaign for these elections.

### New York

**Christie's hack:** The auction house Christie's confirmed last week that hackers had been able to access data on up to half-a-million of its clients. Signs that something had gone awry first appeared in early May, when Christie's website went down shortly before its major spring auctions in New York. It downplayed this as a "technology security incident", and moved its catalogues onto another site, so that the sales could go ahead. But on 27 May, the ransomware group RansomHub said it had acquired "sensitive personal information" on 500,000 Christie's clients; and this week it claimed it was going to start auctioning the data. Experts have speculated that the firm had rejected a ransom demand because the hackers had not accessed any sensitive financial information. However, the firm has already been hit by a class action lawsuit, citing its failure to protect its customer data.



### Brasília

**Dengue surge:** The WHO has estimated that Brazil has had 6.3 million cases of dengue fever so far this year, putting it on track to exceed official worst-case forecasts for 2024. A number of Latin American nations, including Honduras, Paraguay and Argentina, have seen surges in cases of the mosquito-borne virus, which causes symptoms including headaches, fever and vomiting. In January, Brazil's health ministry warned that the country could see between three and five million cases in 2024, up from a record 2.9 million in 2023. But six months on, infections have already exceeded that; and there have been some 3,200 confirmed deaths. Scientists say the surge is driven by warm wet conditions exacerbated by the El Niño phenomenon.



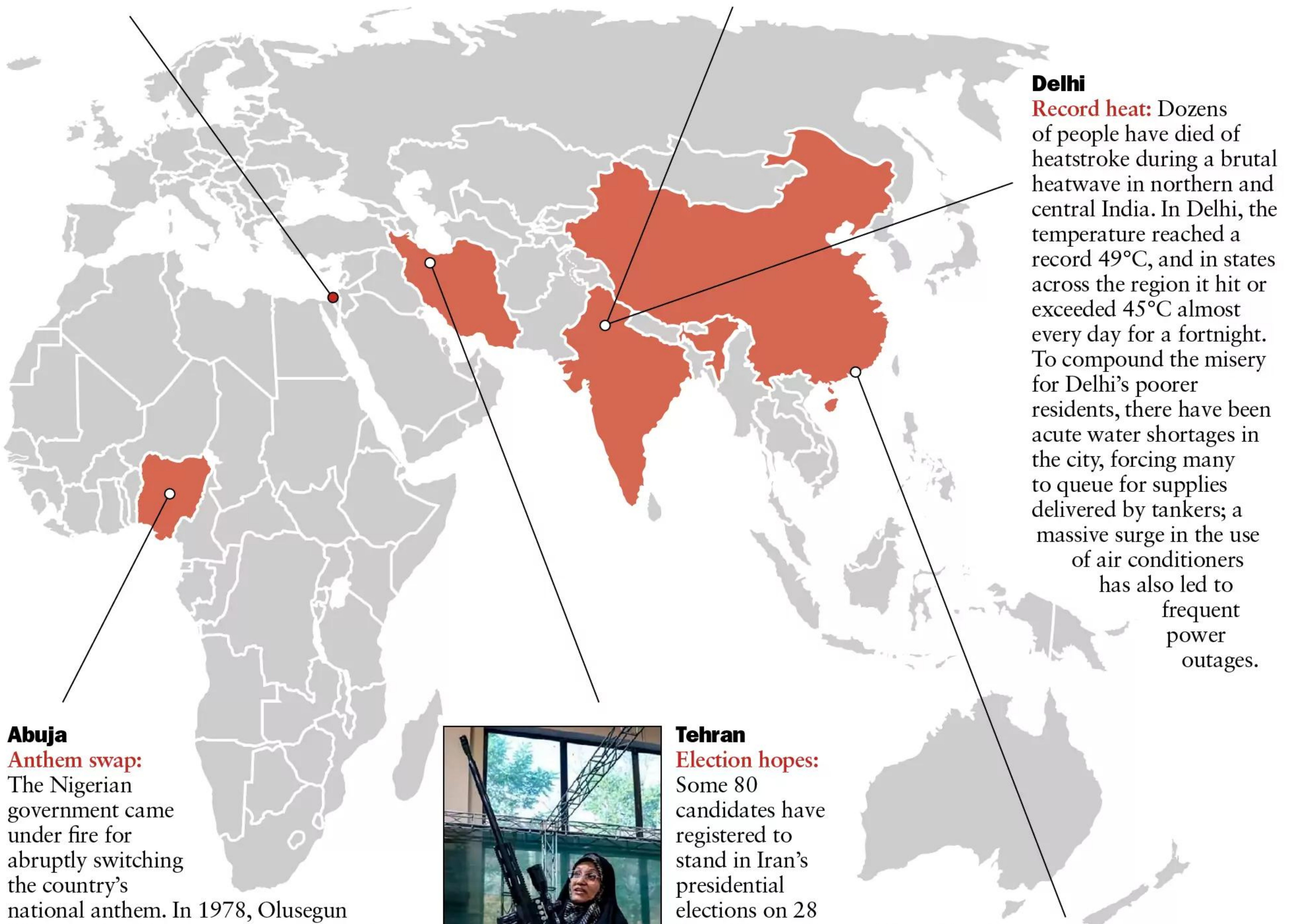
## Gaza Strip, Palestinian Territories

**Hostage deaths:** The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) has confirmed the death of four more of the hostages who were seized by Hamas on 7 October. One of the dead was identified as Nadav Popplewell, 51, a British-Israeli citizen who was abducted, along with his mother, from their home in the Nirim kibbutz. She was released in November. The other three were Yoram Metzger, 80, Amiram Cooper, 85, and Chaim Peri, 79 – who were all taken from the Nir Oz kibbutz. A military spokesman said that Israeli intelligence had established that all four died in the area of Khan Younis several months ago. The spokesman did not specify how they died. Hamas seized about 250 hostages on 7 October, when it also killed some 1,200 people. Of the roughly 120 hostages who remain in Gaza, some 80 are believed to be still alive.

## New Delhi

**Election surprise:** Voters in India have defied pollsters' expectations by depriving the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) not only of a predicted landslide, but also of its parliamentary majority. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had started the six-week election with the target of winning 370 seats for his Hindu nationalist party (up from 303 in 2019), and 400 for his BJP-led NDA alliance; and exit polls suggested that he would achieve something approaching that. But instead, the BJP looks set to emerge with just 240 of 543 seats, far less than the 272 required for a majority; and the NDA 292. The result still delivers a third term for Modi, but it means that, for the first time, he is reliant on his junior partners.

Equally surprising was the showing of the Indian National Congress party, which took at least 99 seats, up from 52, and of the INDIA opposition alliance to which it belongs, which took 234. This week, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh described the result as a "moral and political defeat" for Modi, while its former president, Rahul Gandhi, thanked India's Dalits and other vulnerable groups for deserting the BJP, so depriving Modi of the super-majority he needed to reform the constitution.



## Abuja

### Anthem swap:

The Nigerian government came under fire for abruptly switching the country's national anthem. In 1978, Olusegun Obasanjo's military government brought in a new anthem, *Arise, O Compatriots*, which urged Nigerians to "serve our fatherland". But a bill rushed through parliament last week replaces it with the previous anthem, *Nigeria, We Hail Thee*, which was written by a British expatriate, Lillian Jean Williams, and adopted in 1960 when Nigeria won its independence. Critics described the move as a cynical distraction from Nigeria's economic crisis, which has spiralled during President Bola Tinubu's first year in office, and said the colonial-era anthem had been foisted on the country without consultation.



## Tehran

### Election hopes:

Some 80 candidates have registered to stand in Iran's presidential elections on 28 June. They will now be vetted by a "guardian council", before the supreme

leader, Ali Khamenei, proposes a final candidate list on 12 June. Zohreh Elahian (pictured), a hardline MP who has advocated for the execution of women's rights protesters, is among four women to have registered. Other aspiring candidates to replace Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed in a helicopter crash last month, include Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who served as Iran's president from 2005 to 2013.

## Delhi

**Record heat:** Dozens of people have died of heatstroke during a brutal heatwave in northern and central India. In Delhi, the temperature reached a record 49°C, and in states across the region it hit or exceeded 45°C almost every day for a fortnight. To compound the misery for Delhi's poorer residents, there have been acute water shortages in the city, forcing many to queue for supplies delivered by tankers; a massive surge in the use of air conditioners has also led to frequent power outages.

## Hong Kong

**Activists convicted:** Fourteen pro-democracy activists have been found guilty of "subversion of state power" by a court in Hong Kong. The defendants, who could now face life in jail, were among 47 people who were accused – days after Beijing's new hardline security law was imposed – of trying to "overthrow" the government by organising a primary election in 2020 to increase their chances of gaining control of the local legislature. The idea was that they would then demand democratic reforms. Two were acquitted, and the remaining 31 had already pleaded guilty.



**Reviving Charles I**

Over the past eight years, Daniel Williams, a history enthusiast from Sutton Coldfield, has spent much of his time dressed up as Charles I, visiting more than 70 sites in the UK linked to the monarch, says BBC News. Sporting a luxuriant beard and bedecked in finery, he has been everywhere from Dunfermline Palace in Scotland, where Charles was born, to Aston Hall in Birmingham, where he spent a night in 1642. Williams' aim is to "help the great history and heritage of this country get more of a stage". He was inspired to start when a friend noticed he looked like Charles; but he says he has to psych himself up "tremendously" to get into character, before he can spend a whole day as the king. "I learnt very fast that there's a feeling of deflation afterwards, a bit like maybe a rock star when they come off the stage. It's all about performance and embracing the public," he says. "At some point, thankfully, I can switch off and go back to Daniel, which is crucial really when you're going to a place like Greggs for a sausage roll."

**Reg Dwight's Tupperware**

When the legendary soul singer Patti LaBelle was touring England in the 1960s, says Simon Hattenstone in *The Guardian*, her pianist was one Reg Dwight – known today as Elton John. "Every night after the show we'd go to my flat, play cards and I'd win pounds," she says. "I'd always send him

home with Tupperware, with something to eat for the night or next day." Fast forward to the noughties, and she joined Elton for a duet in Vegas. "At the end, he took off this huge diamond ring shaped like a cross. I said, 'Elton, don't forget your bling.' He said, 'It's yours. I'm giving it to you for all your Tupperware.'" Does she still wear it now? "It's too big!"

**The king of paparazzi**

Last month, the photographer known as the "king of paparazzi", Rino Barillari, was punched by Gérard Depardieu after snapping the actor having lunch with a woman in Rome. It isn't the first time Barillari has been in the wars: now 79, he thinks he's been put in hospital 164 times in the line of duty, broken 11 ribs and had 76 cameras smashed. He began as a pap in his teens, he told Tom Kington in *The Sunday Times*, after being dispatched to Rome to find work. "My mother said I was too smart and if I stayed in Calabria I would end up in the Mafia." Some celebrities cooperate – "You would pose like a boxer when you saw Richard Burton, raising your fists, and he would do the same and you would have your picture." But he has also resorted to subterfuge to snag a picture, dressing as a priest, or dating nurses to get into hospitals. What about the Princess of Wales, who died being chased by paparazzi? "It was her bodyguards' fault," he insists. "I cried when she died, and tied a black ribbon around the lens of my camera."



Colin Smith was one of more than 30,000 people in the UK infected with HIV and hepatitis C by contaminated blood products in the 1970s and 1980s, says Lara Wildenberg in *The Sunday Times*. Diagnosed with haemophilia soon after his birth, he was entrusted to the care of the leading specialist Arthur Bloom. "We were elated," his mother Janet recalls. "You couldn't get a better doctor." Colin's father remembers Bloom calling his patients "my boys", and coming across as "the nicest guy in the world". At 12 months, Colin started being treated with Factor VIII, a blood product his parents were told might save his life. In fact, it was infected with two diseases that would kill him in 1990, when he was seven. Colin was in so much pain at the end that he had to be picked up using sheepskins. At the public inquiry into the blood scandal, Bloom was singled out for failing to heed repeated warnings. "We've always said, since day one, [Colin] was used as a guinea pig, a lab rat," says his father. When the inquiry ended last month, other campaigners greeted the couple with hugs. "I've got bruises where people have just cuddled me," Janet says. His chair, Brian Langstaff, "came up to me and gave me the biggest real proper cuddle and he didn't let me go. It was real feeling. He pulled away a little bit, looked me in the face and he said, 'You're the ones that have kept me going.'"

**Castaway of the week**

*This week's edition of Radio 4's Desert Island Discs featured the actress Rebel Wilson*

- 1 *Just the Way You Are* by Bruno Mars, Philip Lawrence, Ari Levine, Khalil Walton and Khari Cain, performed by Bruno Mars
- 2 *Greatest Love of All* by Michael Masser and Linda Creed, performed by Whitney Houston
- 3\* *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life* by Eric Idle, performed by Monty Python
- 4 *I Missed the Bus* by Jermaine Dupri, performed by Kris Kross
- 5 *We Belong* by David Eric Lowen and Dan Navarro, performed by Pat Benatar
- 6 *Let Me Entertain You* by Guy Chambers and Robbie Williams, performed by Robbie Williams
- 7 *Can You Feel the Love Tonight* by Elton John and Tim Rice, performed by Elton John
- 8 *Here Comes the Sun* by George Harrison, performed by The Beatles

**Book:** *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl

**Luxury:** a bath tub and bath salts

\* Choice if allowed only one record

*Correction: John Boyne's choice of String Quartet No. 4 last week was incorrectly attributed to Michael Tippett. The composer was, in fact, Noah Max*

**Viewpoint:****Labour's VAT raid**

"Of course Labour's plan to charge VAT on private school fees is all about throwing a bit of red meat to the Left. But I wish I could sympathise with private schools more than I do. The policy would strike me as a bit more of an outrage had private schools not spent the past 30 years steadily pricing out the middle classes. Since 2003, the real-terms fees rise has been 55%. What the independent sector has been crying out for is a Ryanair or a Lidl: a chain providing education at an affordable price. Normally, the private sector undercuts the costs of the state sector, but private schools are an exception: they've become interested only in providing an upmarket product." *Ross Clark in The Spectator*

**Farewell**

**Belinda Bellville**, couturier who made Diana, Princess of Wales a fashion icon, died 5 May, aged 94.

**John Burnside**, award-winning poet, memoirist, novelist and academic, died 29 May, aged 69.

**Rob Burrow**, rugby star and motor neurone disease campaigner (see page 22), died 2 June, aged 41.

**Albert S. Ruddy**, TV sitcom writer and Oscar-winning producer of *The Godfather* and *Million Dollar Baby*, died 25 May, aged 94.



# Members **first.**

At Nationwide, our members enjoy exclusive products, rates and rewards.

We offer members £200 when switching a current account to us online.

Our new Member Exclusive Bond pays 5.5% AER/gross a year (fixed) for 18 months on balances up to £10,000.

Nearly 4 million of our members will receive our £100 Fairer Share payment this year.

Our customer service is the best of any high street banking provider.

And every one of our branches will remain open until at least 2028.

Membership. It's at the heart of what makes us a good way to bank.



**£200 Member Switch:** To qualify you must be a UK resident aged 18+ and have held a qualifying mortgage, savings or current account on 31.03.24. Complete a full switch online to a FlexPlus, FlexDirect or FlexAccount and move 2 active direct debits, within 28 days of applying. If you've switched a sole or joint current account to us and previously benefited from a Nationwide current account switch offer since 18.08.21, you won't qualify for this offer. Eligibility criteria and terms apply, see [nationwide.co.uk](https://nationwide.co.uk). **Member Exclusive Bond:** Available to UK residents aged 16+ who held a current account, savings account or mortgage on 22.05.24, and at time of applying. Branch and Online versions available. No withdrawals until the 18-month term ends. Interest is paid annually on the anniversary of account opening and at maturity. T&Cs at [nationwide.co.uk](https://nationwide.co.uk). AER stands for Annual Equivalent Rate and illustrates what the interest rate would be if interest was paid and compounded once each year. Gross a year is the interest rate without tax deducted. The £200 Member Switch and Member Exclusive Bond are available for a limited time only and may be withdrawn at any time. **Nationwide Fairer Share payment** T&Cs apply. Qualifying current account and either qualifying savings or mortgage required on 31.03.24. Visit [nationwide.co.uk/fairer-share](https://nationwide.co.uk/fairer-share). **Our Branch Promise** excludes circumstances beyond our control. Branch opening hours may vary. For verification see [nationwide.co.uk/ourpromise](https://nationwide.co.uk/ourpromise). **Best customer service:** As reported by The UK Customer Satisfaction Index (January 2024), published by The Institute of Customer Service. Banking high street peer group includes: Bank of Scotland, Barclays, The Co-operative Bank, Halifax, HSBC, Lloyds Bank, Metro Bank, NatWest, RBS, Sainsburys Bank, Santander, Tesco Bank, TSB and Virgin Money. Information correct as at 23.05.2024. Nationwide Building Society. Head Office: Nationwide House, Pipers Way, Swindon, Wiltshire SN38 1NW.



# TAILORED HOME INSURANCE RIGHT DOWN TO THE FINEST DETAIL

For high-value properties and contents, including valuables, fine art and collections, choose NFU Mutual Bespoke Home Insurance.

To discuss our highly rated home insurance with our dedicated specialists, visit: [nfumutual.co.uk/bespokehome](https://nfumutual.co.uk/bespokehome)  
or call: 0808 303 7471



**NFU Mutual**  
BESPOKE INSURANCE



# The greatest seaborne invasion in history

*Eighty years ago this week, the Allies carried out the D-Day landings – a crucial turning point in the Second World War*

## Why did the Allies wait until 1944?

The Americans had been pushing for an invasion of northwest Europe from soon after they joined the War in 1941. There was great pressure, too, from the Soviet Union, which was desperate for its allies to relieve the pressure on the Eastern Front. But the British felt that the Allies lacked the resources for a successful invasion – a limited raid on Dieppe in 1942 involving mostly Canadian troops had ended in disaster – and persuaded the Americans to delay. Yet by 1943, the Allies had made considerable headway in the Mediterranean campaign. That November, Roosevelt and Churchill promised Stalin that they would open a new front the following spring, with the intention of pushing the Germans out of France and the Low Countries. They started planning for an invasion, code-named Operation Overlord.



US troops land on Omaha Beach, 6 June 1944

## What did those preparations involve?

A military build-up of astonishing dimensions. In the first half of 1944 alone, about nine million tonnes of supplies and equipment crossed the Atlantic from North America to Britain. More than 1.4 million US servicemen arrived here ahead of the invasion; by 1944, two million troops from a dozen countries were stationed in the UK. The planners also had to decide where on the French coast the landings would take place. They had to be sure beaches could handle the weight of tanks, so they sent men to swim ashore and collect sand samples; to analyse the coastline, they gathered postcards and holiday snaps from members of the public who'd been to France before the War. Calais seemed too obvious a target, so they settled on Normandy, which offered strong opportunities for further attacks on German-held ports. The invasion date was set for 5 June (see box). And to stop the Germans getting wind of what all this activity signified, they set up Operation Fortitude.

## What was Operation Fortitude?

"The most ambitious deception plan in the history of warfare," in the words of historian Antony Beevor. The planners – helped by their double agents – created a vast web of disinformation to fool the Germans into thinking they were planning an invasion at the Pas-de-Calais, hundreds of miles from Normandy, as well as an attack on Norway. They used fake radio transmissions; they set up inflatable tanks and other decoys along the Kent coast to draw attention away from Southampton, where a large part of the invasion force was mustering. And they were so successful that a month after D-Day, the Germans were still convinced an attack on Calais was in the works. The deceptions continued into the early hours of D-Day itself when, far up the coast from the real invasion point, RAF planes released metal strips – which German radar mistook for a naval convoy – and dropped dummy parachutists to simulate the start of a land invasion.

## How did the real invasion begin?

With an airborne assault. At midnight, Allied bombers began attacking

targets along the Normandy coast and further inland. At the same time, more than 18,000 paratroopers landed near the beaches in order to capture bridges and road crossings, and provide tactical support for the infantry that would be arriving on the beaches. In the early hours of 6 June, thousands of landing craft – part of the largest invasion fleet in history – began transporting men and equipment across the Channel. (It was so choppy, men vomited up their dinner.) At daybreak, after prolonged bombardment of the Germans' coastal defences, troops began charging ashore. In the course of the day, 132,000 landed on five code-named beaches: the British on Sword and Gold; the Canadians on Juno; the Americans on Omaha and Utah.

## What resistance did they face?

The deception campaign had its desired effect: the Germans were caught totally off guard. And at this point in the War, the Allies had achieved supremacy at sea and, crucially, in the air, allowing extensive bombardment. Even so, Germany had the more experienced troops (hardened by the Eastern Front campaign), as well as superior tanks and machine guns. The troops defending Omaha Beach were particularly well-organised and disciplined, and the six-mile stretch of coast soon became a bloodbath. "Men were tumbling like corn cobs off a conveyor belt," one sergeant recalled – hundreds were mowed down by machine guns before they reached the shore. Allied casualties, though light for such a decisive achievement, were many: at least 10,000 on D-Day itself (including 4,414 dead), of whom 2,700 were British and 6,600 American. German casualties were between 4,000 and 9,000.

## Did the Allies meet their objectives?

Not exactly. By the end of D-Day, the Allies had hoped to have a liberated zone covering 50 miles of Normandy's coast and another stretching inland. In the event, although some troops did manage to advance inland, the Allies had only secured four isolated beachheads, each surrounded by German positions. On the other hand, casualties were lighter than expected, and the beachheads

allowed the Allies to pour in men and equipment. By the end of the month, 850,000 men and 570,000 tonnes of supplies had landed in Normandy.

## Was D-Day a turning point?

Yes, although arguably the next three months were equally critical, and certainly more bloody. The Allies, facing fierce resistance, struggled to advance through Normandy's distinctive landscape – sunken lanes bordered by high hedgerows. Their advantages – in air power, artillery, and crucially, numbers – prevailed: by the end of August, Paris had been liberated and the German army was in retreat from France. The Battle of Normandy as a whole came at a cost of casualties comparable, briefly, with the Eastern Front: 220,000 Allied servicemen, 290,000 German, and 20,000 French civilian deaths. The campaign was certainly the Allies' most significant victory of the War.

## A crucial weather forecast

The weather forecast for D-Day was perhaps the most important ever made. A team of meteorologists, led by Group Captain James Stagg of the RAF, were tasked with identifying the dates when the conditions at Normandy would be optimal for landing. The key requirement, as one of them recalled, was that it had to be "a quiet day with not more than moderate winds and seas and not too much cloud for the airmen, to be followed by three more quiet days". But there also had to be a full Moon, to provide light for the aircraft pilots and paratroopers. Stagg's team came up with four suitable dates in June, and the planners chose 5 June.

Days before the invasion was to begin, however, Stagg warned that the weather was about to take a bad turn. It duly did – and on 4 June, the invasion was delayed. At this point, German forecasters assumed that a further fortnight of stormy weather would rule out any chance of an imminent invasion, so many German troops were given leave – Field Marshal Erwin Rommel went home for his wife's birthday. But Stagg's team predicted the weather would lift slightly on 6 June, and the Allies – taking a "very great risk", as Churchill later put it – decided to go for it. It was a gamble that paid off.



## The reckless timidity of our political class

**Martin Sandbu**

*Financial Times*

The other lot will put your taxes up – but don't worry, we won't. That's the cry from the two main parties in this election; and it's just what the country doesn't need, says Martin Sandbu. Labour once had plans to borrow big in order to invest in green energy and infrastructure; but now that interest rates are no longer near zero, it has ditched them and is making a thing of its commitment to stability. It's a needless retreat. Britain's poor infrastructure is a major drag on productivity: investing to upgrade it would deliver a far higher rate of return than the 2% real annual rate at which the Treasury can borrow long-term. Labour's commitment to fiscal rectitude also blinds it to the need for major tax reform – for example, lowering the main rate of VAT while shrinking the high threshold for VAT liability; or, better yet, combining income tax and national insurance “into a simple, uniformly progressive system”. These are both revenue-neutral reforms that would do wonders for growth. But they'd create losers as well as winners, so Labour hasn't dared propose them. In failing to do so they have botched the chance to deliver the change the UK so badly needs.

## A system that's hard to use and easy to cheat

**Libby Purves**

*The Times*

It's a pitifully complicated business, claiming benefits, says Libby Purves. To apply for universal credit (UC), you need to assemble loads of receipts, invoices and rent slips, know which household expenses are eligible, remember exact dates, and wrangle with online helplines. And ironically, the very complexity of the system also renders it vulnerable to abuse by those who can master its complexities. Last week, five Bulgarian fraudsters were jailed for stealing an astonishing £54m from the Department for Work and Pensions through bogus claims. Forging documents at scale, organising everything through a filing system of “claim packs” and colour-coded ring binders, they milked it for cash. The DWP requires claimants to photograph themselves beside an open front door to prove they live where they say they do, so the fraudsters used Photoshop to make the doors appear ajar. Wouldn't we be better off, one can't help wondering, with a “simpler, less IT-dependent” welfare system that deployed actual humans to check front doors? An effective benefits system should be one that's easy to use for those in need, and hard to cheat. We've got the opposite.

## This is no country for young people

**Sam Ashworth-Hayes**

*The Daily Telegraph*

When the assembly of Athens met in ancient times, young citizens weren't permitted to speak until the over-50s had had their say; and without meaning to, we've adopted a similar system in Britain today, says Sam Ashworth-Hayes. Demographics and politics have combined to turn the country into “a boomerocracy”. As our population has aged, the preferences of older voters – who have less incentive to push for investment projects that “create costs today for payoffs in the future”, and whose interests are better served by rising asset prices and more spending on the NHS and the state pension – have begun to take precedence over those of younger ones. Little wonder, then, that we're failing to build enough houses and haven't created a new reservoir since 1992. “Short-term thinking is increasingly baked into the centre of our government.” All this makes it hard for younger people to get ahead and start their own families, and reinforces the cycle. It's no coincidence that “millennials are the generation most dissatisfied with democracy in British history”. A political system that denies decent life chances to the young is a dangerously precarious one.

## How Anglo-Saxon became a dirty word

**Hilbert Vinkennoog**

*The Independent*

For a classic example of how an innocent term can overnight be turned into an unmentionable one, says Hilbert Vinkennoog, you can't do much better than the new dirty term in academic circles: “Anglo-Saxon”. A vocal clique of scholars has deemed it troublingly racist. And in apparent deference to their complaints, Cambridge University Press is changing the name of its journal, Anglo-Saxon England (which it has run for 50 years), to Early Medieval England and its Neighbours. The objectors insist that the term “Anglo-Saxon” was rarely used by the Anglo-Saxons themselves, but they did use it; whereas the term they want to replace it with, “English”, had a quite different meaning at the time. We're also told that the term's co-option by white supremacists in the US has contaminated it. Absurd. We don't talk of “Early Classical Italians” just because Mussolini sought a “New Rome”. Enough. Let's not mess with “well-established terminology to satisfy a few disgruntled voices who haven't done their homework”.

### IT MUST BE TRUE... I read it in the tabloids

A priest in Florida has been charged with biting a woman during a fight that erupted while he was administering Communion. The incident occurred when Father Fidel Rodriguez, a vicar in the city of St Cloud, refused to give the woman a Communion wafer, possibly – according to a witness – because he was bothered by her revealing clothing. The woman then reportedly tried to grab the wafers and crush them in her fingers, leading Rodriguez to bite her hand. He had been “trying to protect the Holy Communion from this sacrilegious act”, his diocese explained.



A man accused of driving without a licence dialled into his remote court hearing in Michigan while behind the wheel of a car. Corey Harris, 44, joined the hearing on Zoom and was asked by the judge: “Mr Harris, are you driving?” He replied: “I'm pulling into my doctor's office actually,” he said, casually. The judge waited until Harris had parked before ordering him to report himself to a local jail later that day. It turned out, though, that Harris was the victim of a clerical error; his licence had been reinstated.

Two-thirds of residents in a mountain village in northern Italy are standing in its local elections this weekend. Ingria, near Turin, has just 46 residents, though a further 26 people registered to vote from abroad make up its electorate. In all, 30 people are competing for positions on its council, including Igor De Santis, who is hoping to be elected as mayor for the fourth time in a row – but hasn't secured the support of his mother, who is backing another candidate.



## The flag furore: the justice, his wife, and the Maga radicals

As the ultimate arbiters of US law, on whose rulings presidential elections can hang, supreme court justices are meant to be models of integrity and impartiality, said Ankush Khardori on **Politico**. Who, now, could claim that Justice Samuel Alito fits that description? He has attracted criticism in the past for going on luxury holidays with conservative donors who have business before the court; he also allegedly leaked the result of a major case to conservative activists before the decision was announced. And he now stands accused of flying insurrectionist flags linked to the far-right. The New York Times has revealed that an upside-down Stars and Stripes flew outside his Virginia home after the 6 January attack on the Capitol; and that an “Appeal to Heaven” pine tree flag was raised at his New Jersey beach house last summer. Both are seen as symbols of the Trumpist “Stop the steal” movement.



Alito's inverted Stars and Stripes: “legitimately” weird

was used in the revolutionary war and references a 1689 work by John Locke about the right to overthrow tyranny. Just because “some bozos brought it to the 6 January Capitol riot”, it doesn’t mean that it and Alito are extremist. To listen to critics, you’d think Alito was flying a swastika, said Dan McLaughlin in **National Review**. The “Appeal” flag was personally approved by George Washington in 1775 and, until this week, had flown at San Francisco’s City Hall without controversy for 60 years.

Liberals are clutching at straws, said **The Wall Street Journal**. It was apparently Alito’s wife who raised these flags – and there was no sinister intent. She flew the first one during a feud with an abusive neighbour (an inverted Stars and Stripes is an international signal of distress). As for the “Appeal” flag, it

To claim that flying this flag proves Alito has become “a Maga radical” is a stretch, agreed Jonah Goldberg on **The Dispatch**. But regardless of his motivation, for a supreme court justice to have an inverted Stars and Stripes outside his house was “legitimately” seen as weird. At the least, it suggested the appearance of inappropriate partiality. For that reason alone, Alito should recuse himself from hearing Trump’s election cases, said Ruth Marcus in **The Washington Post**. He knew the upside-down flag was inappropriate. “As soon as I saw it, I asked my wife to take it down,” he’d said (it seems she refused to do so, for several days). “If he was alarmed then”, American voters have “every reason to be alarmed now”.

## How college sports have been despoiled

**Christian Schneider**

*National Review*

College sports are a big deal in America, says Christian Schneider. Their popularity derives not just from the skills on show on the field, but from nostalgia. We cheer on our alma mater because the players study in the same buildings we once sat in, hang out in the drinking spots we once frequented. When they succeed, “we, as alumni, get to credit all the college memories we made with producing a superior brand of athlete”. But recent rule changes affecting college sports are destroying this romantic link. First came the US supreme court decision allowing college athletes to be paid for the use of their name, image and likeness. Then came the “transfer portal”, allowing athletes to swap between colleges without penalty. And now, the body overseeing university sports has agreed a \$2.8bn settlement with thousands of former and current athletes, effectively giving top athletes at elite colleges a hefty wage on top of their bursaries. “The ‘amateurism’ that provided the glue between sports and schools is now gone.” College sports will soon just be a minor league for higher-level professional sports leagues, populated by mercenaries with no real link to the colleges they play for. “So enjoy your last few years rooting for old State U.”

## We enjoy our hatred far too much

**Peggy Noonan**

*The Wall Street Journal*

I’ve noticed a new mood in America lately, says Peggy Noonan. The nation has long been divided along political lines, but it seems we no longer mind disliking our ideological opponents. On the contrary, we’ve started revelling in the estrangement. “Nobody’s trying to win anybody over” any more. We’re just trading accusations and abuse from a position of mutual contempt. The Left has gone from regarding Trump as a criminal to regarding his supporters in the same way. They’re “toothless, smelly Walmart shoppers”. Trump supporters, meanwhile, charge the other side with being “bad human beings – selfish elites who have no feeling for, no affiliation with, the common man”. In some ways, it was ever thus. In politics, as in sport, “booing the other team is part of the fun of being at the game”. But people are particularly enjoying their hatred today, I think, because it’s taking their mind off “a tragedy”: the tragedy that, at this crucial historical moment, the US is having to choose one of two old men, “each in his way an embarrassment”, as its next leader. America is not about to descend into a civil war, but it’s not going to get anywhere while it remains mired in this climate of mutual animosity. We have to be “more generous” and “stop enjoying our hate so much”.

## Going woke doesn’t sell like it used to

**Michael Serazio**

*Vox*

Among the many norms the Trump presidency upended, says Michael Serazio, were the conventions of advertising. Where once companies had steered clear of politics, many suddenly felt the need to take a stand on issues. Levi’s demanded gun control; Nike took up the Black Lives Matter cause; Airbnb weighed in on the subject of welcoming migrants; a frozen-meat brand warned about the perils of disinformation on social media. “Every single ad, like, every chewing gum brand was trying to say something about immigration, because you wanted to be relevant,” noted an advertising strategy director. But the corporate embrace of social activism didn’t last. Most brands are steering clear of politics today. This is no doubt partly down to the backlash against Bud Light, which has reportedly lost a billion dollars in sales since its fleeting partnership with the transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney. But it’s mainly a response to general public fatigue with preachiness. Back in 2020, a marketer claimed that consumers “expect brands to be able to make the change in the world that the government institutions cannot”. That’s a delusion. Advertising doesn’t lead public sentiment; it follows it. The bottom line is, “activism ain’t selling like it used to”.

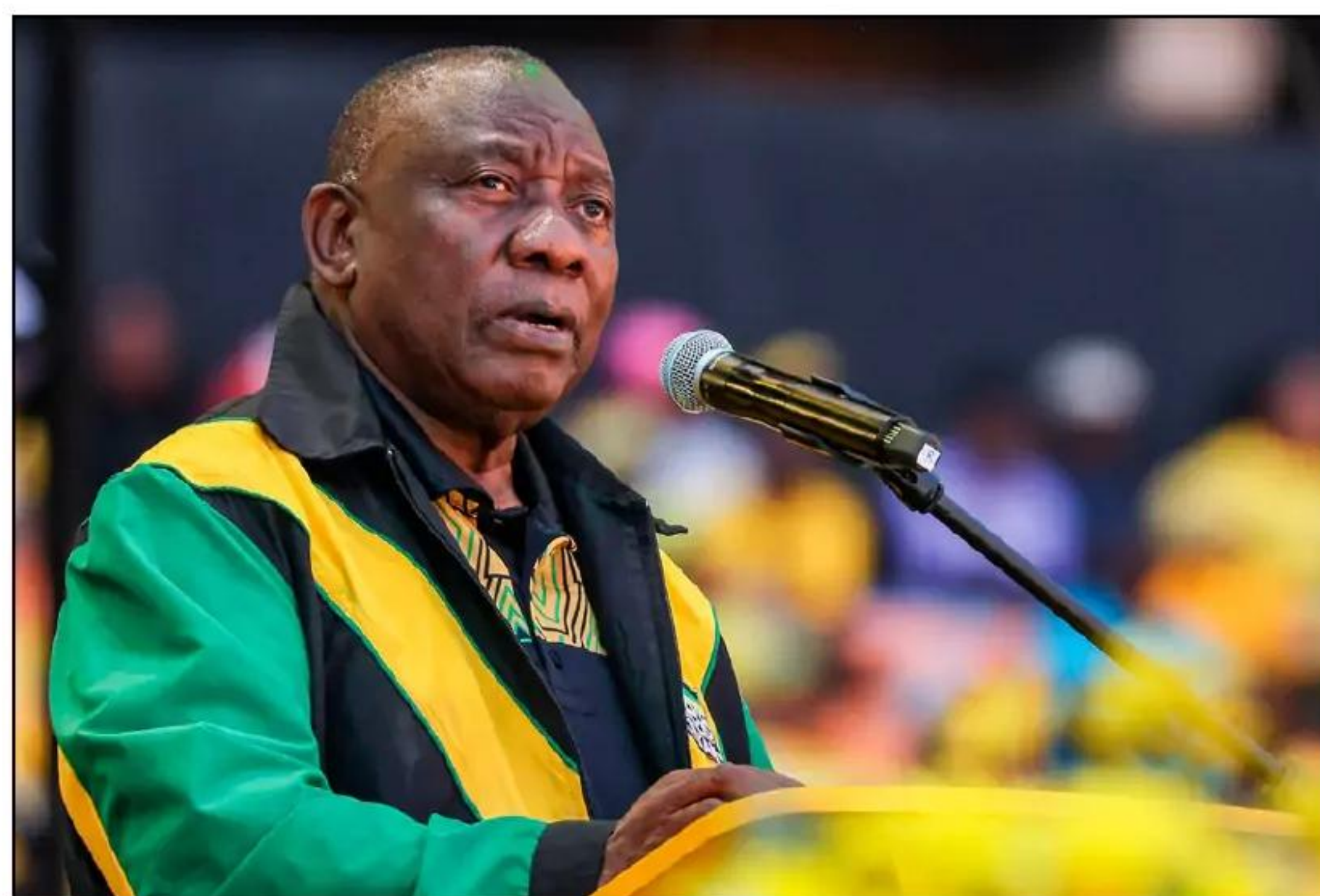


## South Africa's historic election: the humbling of the ANC

They're calling this "the year of elections", said John Micklethwait on [Bloomberg \(New York\)](#). And with good reason. About 40% of humanity will have had the chance to vote in 2024, and the contests in India, the US and UK are all being hailed as "historic". Yet the one that truly deserves that label has received the least attention: South Africa's. Wednesday's election was the most important since the 1994 contest that ended Apartheid and swept Nelson Mandela and his African National Congress party to power. The ANC has ruled South Africa ever since. Alas, it has become a byword for rampant corruption and appalling inefficiency, said Benjamin Fogel in [The New Statesman](#). This reached its peak under Jacob Zuma, who in 2018 was forced to stand down as a result; but the renewal promised by his successor and bitter enemy – the-trade-unionist-turned-millionaire Cyril Ramaphosa – never materialised. In fact, "the ANC of 2024 has devolved into an array of mafia-like factions that strive to turn political power into profit". No wonder polls in the run-up to these elections suggested voters were set to end the ANC's extraordinary 30-year period of political dominance.

And so it has proved, said Tim Cohen in the [Daily Maverick \(Cape Town\)](#). For the first time since 1994, the ANC has failed to win a majority: it won just 40.2% of the vote, a precipitous fall from the 57.5% of the 2019 election. Yes, it's still the largest party: its nearest rival, the pro-business Democratic Alliance (DA) took 21.8%. But its well-worn strategy of handing out goodies to its core vote has failed to bring it outright victory. Stand by for a long period of horse trading and coalition talks.

The ANC deserved to be punished, said Hanna Ziady and Gertrude Kitongo on [CNN \(New York\)](#). It first came to power promising to build "a better life for all", yet over the past decade, the average South African has become significantly poorer. A third of the country's workforce is now unemployed, a higher proportion than in any other nation tracked by the



The ANC's Cyril Ramaphosa at a pre-election rally in Soweto

World Bank. In a population of 60 million, a mere seven million are taxpayers, while some 18.4 million are on welfare benefits. Much of this is a direct result of economic mismanagement. State contracts at hugely inflated prices have routinely been awarded to failing companies in exchange for bribes. The worst offenders have been in the energy sector, where capacity has collapsed to such a degree that "load shedding" – rolling power cuts to prevent power plants from collapsing – is now a feature of daily life. And it's the young who are hardest hit, said

Naledi Ngqambela on [Independent Online \(Cape Town\)](#). Youth unemployment is over 45%: those who do work mainly have precarious jobs in the informal sector. The young aren't just disenchanted with their government, but with democracy itself.

And with the ANC being forced into coalition to remain in power, South Africa's democracy is indeed at a crossroads, said Andrew Donaldson on [Politicsweb \(Johannesburg\)](#). It could join forces with the DA, but that's anathema to many in the ANC who revile it as a pro-Western liberal outfit catering to "white interests". It could turn to Zuma's newly formed MK party, which won an unexpected 14.6% of the vote, its appeal stretching well beyond its core Zulu constituency. A partnership with Zuma's "raggedy-arsed mob" seems unlikely, however, given his corrupt reputation and his hatred of the ANC's Ramaphosa. Then there's the Marxist-Leninist EFF party, an alliance with which would quickly turn South Africa into Venezuela. The most likely prospect, though, said David Pilling in the [FT](#), is that "the ANC will lean on a plethora of smaller parties": as a result of South Africa's PR voting system, some 50 parties were on the ballot, each appealing to different, mainly ethnic, identities. Still, whatever the outcome, there is cause for optimism, said [The Sowetan \(Johannesburg\)](#). Before the election it had been widely feared that the nation would descend into violent chaos. That it has passed peacefully underlines South Africa's status as a maturing democracy.

### TAIWAN

## The threat to democracy from within

[Liberty Times \(Taipei\)](#)

China has been rattling its sabre in the Taiwan Strait again, says Wu Sezhi. The inauguration of the island's independence-leaning president Lai Ching-te has prompted China to conduct more military drills there. The more alarming threat to our democracy, however, comes from within. Lai's Democratic Progressive Party lost its majority in January's elections, and two opposition parties – the pro-China Kuomintang, and the populist People's Party – have now joined forces to ram through new laws boosting the power of MPs at the president's expense. The most troubling of their reforms, passed in defiance of constitutional norms, is the introduction of a vaguely worded criminal offence: "contempt of congress". It's not hard to imagine this being used to silence political opponents, aiding Beijing in its bid to bring Taiwan under its control. Unsurprisingly, this power grab has led to ugly rows in parliament and to the biggest protests seen in Taiwan in a decade. The anger is fully justified. "We must not give up resistance, otherwise democratic Taiwan may be doomed."

### GERMANY

## Spare us from performative anti-fascist fury

[Die Welt \(Berlin\)](#)

It's easy to see why a video of people singing a Nazi slogan on a German island was met with disgust, says Ulf Poschardt. The footage, which surfaced last month, showed drunken partygoers chanting "Germany for the Germans – foreigners out"; some even performed Nazi salutes. But hasn't the outrage been just a tiny bit "excessive"? Chancellor Olaf Scholz quickly felt moved to comment on the video, labelling the behaviour of those involved "unacceptable"; other politicians followed suit. Even Germany's national rail company, Deutsche Bahn – never one to miss its chance to "preach political correctness" – felt compelled to weigh in. Before long, several of the "hooligans" identified in the video had lost their jobs; yet even that didn't quell the flow of performative fury from self-styled "anti-fascists". As the trial by media continued, several outlets even declared themselves so troubled by the historical issues raised by the footage that they were no longer going to pixelate the faces of those involved. Apparently, the usual rules of "media ethics" don't apply here. I get why this has happened: "the fiction of Germany as a racist backwater" serves liberals' agenda well. But is it really that brave to style yourself as an anti-fascist in modern Germany? I mean, "who isn't?"




SAFARIS • FLIGHT-FREE TRAVEL • SABBATICALS • ROAD TRIPS • FAMILY HOLIDAYS

 ORIGINAL TRAVEL

A DIFFERENT TAKE ON  
TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL

© Lucy Laught



 **ABTA**  
ABTA No.Y5632

+44 (0) 20 3974 6717 • [WWW.ORIGINALTRAVEL.CO.UK](http://WWW.ORIGINALTRAVEL.CO.UK)





# Holy SH\*\*!



Or perhaps that should be “Unwholly SH21”? Because to mark the 10th anniversary of our five-day chronometer movement, Calibre SH21, we’ve subjected it to open-heart surgery. Between The Twelve X (Ti)’s front and rear sapphire crystals, we’ve re-forged and skeletonised components with custom-made, diamond cutters. Then sculpted them to a precise, polished finish using re-programmed state-of-the-art CNC machinery. This industrial evolution extends to the outside with a 41mm case made from Grade 2 and Grade 5 titanium. Its top ring is rhodium. And it premieres a new micro-adjustable bracelet. When you find out how much it costs, we swear you’ll love it. (And maybe utter the odd expletive yourself.)

Do your research



[christopherward.com](http://christopherward.com)





## What the scientists are saying...

### The sharp rise in teen vaping

A dramatic rise in vaping among young people can be clearly traced back to the introduction of disposable e-cigarettes, a new study warns. The analysis, published in *The Lancet*, looked at data from surveys carried out before and after single-use e-cigarettes became available in summer 2021. This showed that the number of 18- to 24-year-olds who vape more than tripled over this period, from 9% in May 2021 to 29% in May 2023. Smoking rates did fall slightly, from 25% to 21%, but the popularity of disposable vapes, which are cheap and often come in bright colours and fruity flavours, meant that nicotine use rose overall in young adults – many of whom may “otherwise have avoided nicotine entirely”, said the researchers, from University College London. Among older adults, rates of vaping also increased, albeit not as sharply; overall nicotine intake also went up. The authors argue that urgent action is needed to curb the rise in the use of disposable vapes, such as an excise tax, or changes to packaging and sales rules. Legislation that would have banned their sale has been shelved in the run-up to the general election.

### How the monkey got his big nose

The male proboscis monkey's enormous nose has long been believed to help it attract mates, but the reasons why have been unclear. To come up with an answer, researchers in Australia used 3D scans to carry out a detailed study of the monkey's nasal structure. This showed that males' noses are 29% bigger than females'. The nasal cavity, the bony chamber that sits behind the fleshy nose, is 26% bigger in males; it is also longer and lower and, by acting a little like a trumpet, allows them to emit louder and deeper calls. These



*A male proboscis monkey's nose is key to mating*

“honks and nasal roars” help the males assert health and dominance, says the report in the journal *Scientific Reports*. The study also confirmed that the nasal anatomy only reaches full size once the males become sexually mature – an indication that the body part is key to successful mating. The researchers suspect that the distinctive noses evolved so that males could be heard in the dense forests and mangroves they live in. Females might then have started to select bigger-nosed males – and this in turn would have driven the evolution of even larger noses.

### Semaglutide and kidney disease

Semaglutide, the key ingredient in the “skinny jab” Wegovy, is used to treat diabetes as well as aid weight loss – and, last month, it was proved to provide protection against heart attacks and strokes. Now, a new study has found that the benefits extend to kidney disease. For

the research, 3,533 adults with chronic kidney disease and type 2 diabetes took either semaglutide or a placebo once a week for about three years. Analysis of the results showed that those taking the drug were 24% less likely to die from kidney problems during this time. They were also less likely to progress to kidney failure or need a transplant, and they had a better quality of life. Why exactly the drug benefits kidneys is unclear, but it may reduce inflammation. “The benefits that we saw are bigger than we dared hope,” said study lead author Prof Vlado Perkovic. More than seven million Britons have chronic kidney disease. The condition, which can occur as a complication of diabetes, kills about 45,000 a year.

### The plight of the earthworm

Earthworms play a crucial role in keeping soil nutritious and oxygenated; they're also an important food source for birds, hedgehogs, frogs and the like. So it is little wonder that a decline in their number is causing concern. According to an extensive analysis of historical data published in the journal *PLOS One* in 2023, Britain's population of earthworms has fallen by about a third over the past 25 years. This is likely to have already had a knock-on effect on crop yields, as well as on the birds and small mammals that depend on them. The tilling and ploughing of soil can deprive worms of the dead leaves and straw that they live on. Yet a year after the data was published, little work has been done accurately to assess the health of the UK's earthworms and the effects on its soil, Dr Jackie Stroud, a soil scientist at the University of Warwick, told *The Times*. Dr James Pearce-Higgins, a zoologist involved in last year's study, said that new research was needed “really, really urgently”.

## Crows can count up to four

Crows are well known to be clever: they can recognise human faces, and turn twigs into tools for digging food out of tight spots. Now it seems that they can count, too. In fact, they are almost as good as human toddlers at counting aloud (up to the number four, at least). For a study carried out by the University of Tübingen's animal physiology lab in Germany, researchers used three carrion crows that had already been trained to caw on command. They were shown the numerals one to four on a screen and were taught the right number of calls for each one. Then they were presented with a series of numbers, and were rewarded with a mealworm or other treat each time they correctly emitted the corresponding number of caws. Over time, the birds became rather good at the task, making the correct number of noises for the number “one” 98% of the time. For “two”, it was 63%, for “three” it was 52% and, for “four”, 40%. The scientists could even tell how many calls a bird was going to make from listening to its first caw – a finding that suggests that the crows were planning their answers ahead.



*Carrion crows: will caw for mealworms*

### Skin cancer rates

The number of people diagnosed with melanoma skin cancer in the UK has risen by almost a third in the past decade – and is expected to top 20,000 for the first time this year. The biggest increase was in adults over 80, among whom rates increased by 57%, while the smallest rise – of just 7% – was in people aged 25-49. Cancer Research UK, which carried out the analysis, said that young people today are likely more aware of the importance of staying safe in the Sun than the older generation were when they took advantage of the boom in cheap package holidays that occurred in their youth. The ageing population and increased awareness of the signs and symptoms of skin cancer will also have contributed to the rise in cases. There is good news, too: patients are now more likely to survive the disease than ever before, with nine in ten living for at least ten years after their diagnosis.



### Pick of the week's Gossip

The LBC host **Iain Dale** abruptly withdrew his bid to become the Tory candidate for Tunbridge Wells last week, less than 48 hours after it emerged that he has not always been very fond of the town. In a 2022 episode of his podcast *For the Many*, Dale said he'd lived in Tunbridge Wells for 25 years "slightly against my will", because it's where his partner is from. "I've never liked the place," he added. "Still don't, and would happily live somewhere else."



**Keir Starmer's** chief of staff **Sue Gray** has a fearsome reputation, reports *The Guardian*. Junior shadow ministers have learnt that you "don't say no" to Gray, and she is said to be in such control that, at an event last year, she took it upon herself to answer a question that had been addressed to her boss. She inspired similar awe when she was at the Cabinet Office. "She used to have these cats," an official recalls. "Somehow we convinced ourselves they were her familiars, and whenever they would walk into a room we would all stop talking."

Former Tory minister **Ken Clarke** does own a mobile, says Christopher Hope in *The Daily Telegraph* – but he is not minded to check for messages. "Hello, this is Ken Clarke's voicemail," says his greeting. "You're very reckless ringing up because I tend to collect these about once every six months, so don't rely on my having received any messages that you leave after the tone. Leave a message if you like – you never know, you might be lucky. Bye!"

## Gaza: Biden's push for peace

Eight months after Hamas "unleashed the dogs of war" with its murderous attacks of 7 October, Joe Biden gave a speech last week in which he argued, with "unusual clarity", that it was time for the Israeli government to seek peace, said *The Independent*. An "indefinite war in pursuit of an undefined notion of total victory" is not in Israel's interests, he said: it will not bring the hostages home; it will not lead to an "enduring defeat" of Hamas; and it will not bring "lasting security". At the same time, Biden unveiled a peace plan he said had been proposed by Israeli negotiators. "Familiar in shape", the deal starts with a six-week ceasefire – which would be extended if talks on a lasting peace were ongoing; a partial withdrawal from Gaza of Israeli forces; the return of some hostages; and a surge in aid. Biden said he had "urged" the Israeli leadership to "stand behind" the plan, arguing that Hamas no longer has the capacity to stage a repeat of 7 October. But within hours, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu had distanced himself from it, saying that any plan that did not involve the destruction of Hamas militarily was a "non-starter".

This was Biden's "most decisive intervention" in the conflict to date, said Jasmine El-Gamal in *Haaretz*. And its timing, with a US election



*Biden: a "decisive intervention"?*

looming, and days after global outrage was stoked by the death of dozens of displaced Gazans in a fire that followed an Israeli air strike, was significant. Biden is a "friend of Israel", but the war is becoming too heavy a burden for his presidency to bear. His support for it has enraged many US voters, and it is destroying his hopes for a "region-wide normalisation" to counter Iran. His speech was a gamble, however: if Hamas rejects the deal, Biden will have to stand by Israel. If Israel formally rejects it, he'll face yet tougher decisions.

Netanyahu is facing a tough choice of his own, said Mark Almond in the *Daily Mail*: if he scorns Biden's deal, he risks losing vital US support. If he accepts it, his far-right coalition partners may collapse his government – leaving him exposed to the corruption charges that have dogged him for years. The opposition leader, Yair Lapid, has offered a solution: he has said that if the PM accepts Biden's deal, and the hardliners leave, he'll prop up the coalition. But Netanyahu will be wary of how long Lapid's support would last. Might it be long enough to allow Donald Trump, who has vowed unswerving support for Israel, to be returned to the White House? It seems the future of Biden's ceasefire depends on the "survival calculations of one man".

## Attacks on Russia: how will Putin react?

Better late than never, said *The Daily Telegraph*. For weeks, President Zelensky has been begging Washington to allow Ukrainian forces to use US-supplied missiles against targets inside Russia. The ban on doing so had left Ukraine's second city, Kharkiv, exposed to a cross-border bombardment and led to "the patently absurd scenario that Moscow's forces could gather, unmolested, as little as four kilometres from the targets in Ukraine they were about to attack en masse". Last week, under pressure from European allies, President Biden relented, permitting Kyiv to use US weapons against military targets inside Russia – but only in areas bordering the Kharkiv region. Elsewhere, their use will still be limited to Ukrainian territory.

The easing of restrictions will be of "significant tactical benefit" to Ukraine, said Matthew Savill on *Rusi.org*. Its forces have been hitting targets in Russia throughout the war, but these have taken the form of risky sabotage operations or long-range drone attacks. As Ukraine's drones are slow and have a limited payload, such attacks rely on sheer numbers to beat defences and are often of limited effectiveness. Kyiv needed firepower it could "bring to bear rapidly and with little warning". It now has that (and has already used it to strike targets in Russia). This will complicate matters for Russia and provide

"some immediate relief to Ukrainian forces", but it won't, in itself, transform Kyiv's position.

Biden's move was prompted by concerns that Ukraine is "gradually losing the war", said Gideon Rachman in the *FT*. It also reflects the fact that the US and its allies are less worried than they used to be about President Putin's nuclear sabre-rattling, now that they've called his bluff so many times already in Ukraine. But some Western officials remain uneasy about the idea of Western-supplied weapons striking Russian territory. They fear it could lead Moscow to "make what it regards as a symmetrical response – involving counterstrikes on Nato territory". Caution is warranted in this situation, said *The Washington Post*. The Biden administration is right to impose strict conditions on how its weapons are used. It wouldn't want them to be deployed in ill-advised attacks, such as Ukraine's recent drone strike on Russian early-warning radars that help safeguard against a mistaken nuclear launch. On the other hand, giving Kyiv the means to stop Russia raining bombs on civilians in Ukrainian cities seems fully justified. Kyiv should be given "leeway" to use the weapons in other areas, within the same constraints. It's a calculated risk well worth taking to help Ukraine defeat an egregious act of cross-border aggression.



## The Lib Dems: a “Tory removal service”

The Lib Dem leader Ed Davey has come up with a novel way of ensuring that his party gets news coverage during the election campaign, said Jawad Iqbal in *The Spectator*. “His wheeze is to ensure that, each and every day, he is pictured doing something silly.” One day last week he repeatedly fell off a paddleboard on Lake Windermere in Cumbria, to highlight the issue of sewage discharge. The next day, he freewheeled down a hill in Powys, to launch the party’s Welsh campaign. The day after that he rode down a children’s water slide in Somerset in a rubber ring. The message that time was “anyone’s guess”. The Lib Dems used to be a serious party, said Tanya Gold in the *Evening Standard*. They opposed the Iraq War; they took a stand on civil liberties. Today, under Davey, they’re “shameless and embarrassing”.



Davey: a vibes-based strategy

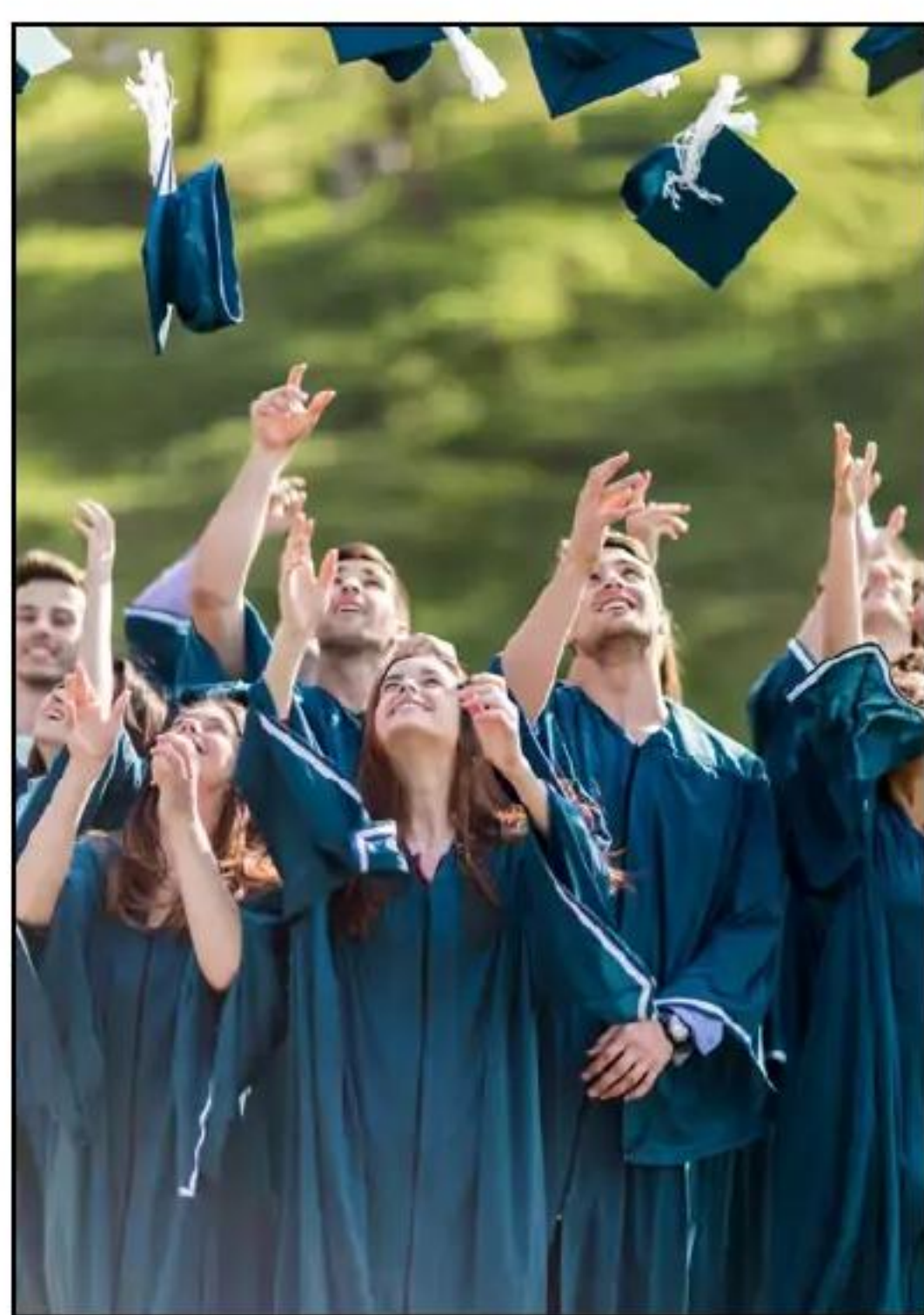
“The Lib Dems are due a bit of fun,” said Andrew Rawnsley in *The Observer*. Their spell in coalition with the Tories proved disastrous for the party: at the 2015 election, they went from 57 seats to eight. And 2019 was little better: they chased a lot of seats, only for their leader, Jo Swinson, to lose her own. This time they have what one Lib Dem strategist calls a “small but perfectly formed” list of targets. Davey is pitching his party as a “Tory removal service” in

Conservative seats where the Lib Dems are the main challengers. Polls suggest that several high-profile Tories could be duly removed: Education Secretary Gillian Keegan (Chichester), Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer (Ely and East Cambridgeshire), perhaps even Chancellor Jeremy Hunt (Godalming and Ash). Davey is fishing “among two pots of voters”: “estranged” Tories, and Labour supporters who can be convinced to vote tactically. These “liberal, centrist folk” in relatively affluent areas are animated by the main themes of the Lib Dem campaign: “the dilapidated state of public services and the befoulment of our waterways”. If all goes well, the Lib Dems could quadruple their seats from 11 to more than 40. This would allow them to supplant the SNP as Britain’s third-largest party.

They don’t deserve to, said Josiah Gogarty in *The New Statesman*. Davey’s Lib Dems “are unambitious lightweights”. Their plan for water pollution is to appoint environmental experts to water companies’ boards, “and various other bits of regulatory deckchair-rearranging”; that’s hardly a policy. Theirs is a “vibes-based electoral strategy”. But third parties “have to be all things to all undecideds”, said *The Economist*. And they’re often squeezed out of the news agenda. Hence, presumably, “all the clowning around”.

## Universities: are students being let down?

Going to university is not merely “a crude financial calculation”, said *The Times*. But it is, today, “a serious financial undertaking”. The average student can expect to leave with student debt amounting to £45,600. And, unfortunately, many universities recruit young people onto sub-standard courses that will not boost their long-term earnings, and which offer little in the way of educational value. Only 27% of the 2022/23 intake are expected to earn enough to pay off their loans; many will pay an effective graduate tax for their whole lives. This is why Rishi Sunak has pledged that, if re-elected, his government would shut down failing degree courses. About 130,000 “low-value” university places would be cut, saving the taxpayer £910m by 2030, which would be used to fund 100,000 new apprenticeships over the next parliament. Such a bold recalibration of UK higher education “would be welcome”.



...with £45,600 of debt

But the point of a degree isn’t to train you up for a job, said Ryan Coogan in *The Independent*. It’s to cultivate the mind, and “a variety of skills” that can be applied across a range of roles. That is a “noble ideal”, said Michael Deacon in *The*

*Daily Telegraph*. But it made more sense when far fewer people went to university, and nearly any degree was a ticket to a well-paid job. If that is no longer the case, and the result is just “vast” debts, then it looks like unaffordable “luxury thinking”.

Politicians have been whipping up worries about “Mickey Mouse” degrees for years, said Kenan Malik in *The Observer*. Yet they never deign to specify which courses should be scrapped, for the good reason that assessing the value of academic study is very complex. Policymakers judge courses by metrics such as drop-out rates and future job prospects. Yet the highest drop-out rates are in computer sciences, business, engineering and technology – all potential pathways to lucrative careers. Meanwhile, in 2022/23, almost half of apprentices (45%) dropped out before completion. No wonder, when many of them received no on-the-job training, and were simply deployed into low-skill positions “while being paid far less than the national minimum wage”. These exploitative “Mickey Mouse apprenticeships” are the real “national scandal”.

## Wit & Wisdom

“The only thing I can control is how hard I work.”  
*Kobe Bryant, quoted in The Daily Telegraph*

“If you can’t annoy somebody with what you write, I think there’s little point in writing.”  
*Kingsley Amis, quoted in The Knowledge*

“In Hollywood, a marriage is a success if it outlasts milk.”  
*Rita Rudner, quoted on iNews*

“Irreverence is easy – what’s hard is wit.”  
*Tom Lehrer, quoted on The Conversation*

“Whoever you vote for, the government always gets in.”  
*Old anarchist slogan, cited in The Daily Telegraph*

“Love is only a dirty trick played on us to achieve continuation of the species.”  
*W. Somerset Maugham, quoted in The Times*

“Talent hits a target no one else can hit; genius hits a target no one else can see.”  
*Arthur Schopenhauer, quoted in Forbes*

“We sleep safely at night because rough men stand ready to visit violence on those who would do us harm.”  
*Winston Churchill, quoted in The Washington Times*

“Dressing well is a form of good manners.”  
*Tom Ford, quoted on Medium*

“As Andy Warhol once observed, everyone will eventually be married to Rupert Murdoch for 15 minutes.”  
*Joyce Carol Oates on X/Twitter*

### Statistic of the week

Since 2015, there has been a 60% increase in the number of schoolchildren in England with the highest levels of assessed special educational needs. This has taken up nearly half of the £7.6bn increase in school spending in the same period.  
**IFS/The Guardian**



## Rugby league: the extraordinary courage of the “Mighty Atom”

The rugby league player Rob Burrow liked proving people wrong, said Riath Al-Samarrai in the Daily Mail. Growing up in West Yorkshire, he was repeatedly told he was too small ever to make it as a rugby player. Yet the “Mighty Atom”, as he was soon nicknamed, went on to become a legend of the sport, playing for Leeds Rhinos for 16 years and winning eight Super League Grand Finals and two Challenge Cups. He also had a successful international career and won the player of the series award when Great Britain trounced New Zealand in 2007. Burrow retired in 2017: two years later he was diagnosed with motor neurone disease and was told by doctors that he had less than two years to live. Yet despite becoming a prisoner in his own body, Burrow defied the experts and the “savage cruelties” of the condition for another four-and-a-half years. But, on Sunday, he finally died at the age of 41.



Burrow in 2008: “magic”

Rugby has always loved the “little guys”, said Owen Slot in The Times – those who, thanks to their courage and skill, can “mix it, undaunted, with the behemoths of the game” – and at just 5ft 5in, Burrow was a “bristling, bustling” scrum-half whose balance and pace meant he could “skip in and out of the giants who liked to rule the playing field”. His highlight reel is “crammed with magic” – not least his celebrated try in the 2011 Grand Final against St

Helens, when he sprinted from the half-way line while dodging six challenges from opponents.

In the past few years, this extraordinary man became even more “loved and exalted” than he was as a player, said Donald McRae in The Guardian. That’s because of the fearlessness he displayed not only in coming to terms with his MND, but in turning himself into a figurehead for the campaign to raise awareness of this devastating condition. And in this he was greatly assisted, said Oliver Brown in The Daily Telegraph, by his former Rhinos teammate Kevin Sinfield, for whom “no sacrifice seemed too great” to help his ailing friend in his fundraising efforts: at one point, Sinfield ran seven “ultra” marathons in seven days. Together, the pair raised more than £15m for MND charities. The most moving moment of their

collaboration came at the end of last year’s inaugural Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon, when Sinfield paused just before the finish to lift Burrow out of his wheelchair and cradle his body across the line. It was an “image of unfathomable power” – and a testament to the “unbreakable bond” between the two men, for whom the term “brothers in arms” could have been invented. “My final message to you is whatever your personal battle, be brave and face it,” Burrow said in his final speech, recorded by the BBC. “In a world full of adversity we must still dare to dream.”

## Football: Real Madrid reign supreme in Europe

Over the past decade, no team in world football has been more adept than Real Madrid at winning games they looked to be losing, said Sam Wallace in The Daily Telegraph. And so it proved once again in the Champions League final on Saturday night: though Real’s opponents, Borussia Dortmund, put in a “fine performance” and were the better side for most of the match, it still didn’t seem like a surprise that they ended up on the losing side. Real’s 2-0 victory was marked by a characteristic “economy of effort”, both their goals coming in the final 20 minutes – a header by veteran right-back Dani Carvajal and a coolly taken finish by their “great young Brazilian”, Vinícius Júnior, the stand-out player of the final. Remarkably, this was Real’s sixth Champions League title in the past ten years – and a record-extending 15th overall (AC Milan, the next most successful team in the competition, have won it seven times).



Vinícius Jr: the stand-out

This was an uncharacteristically quiet night for Jude Bellingham, said Jonathan Northcroft in The Sunday Times. But naturally, the England midfielder still found a “way to take centre stage”, intercepting a “tired” pass by Dortmund’s Ian Maatsen to play in Vinícius for his goal. Aged 20, Bellingham now has a “European title in his hands and the world at his feet”. And next season, he’ll be joined by French striker Kylian Mbappé, who is moving to Real on a free transfer, said Ian Hawkey in The Times. The deal sends a “message to all the would-be builders of European Cup dynasties” – that none of them is nearly as “well set up as Madrid”. They are a side packed with brilliant young talents: in five years’ time, Vinícius will be 28, Bellingham 25 and Mbappé 30.

And they also have the Turkish winger Arda Güler (currently 19) and, from next month, Brazilian wunderkind Endrick. As far as is possible for any team, they appear to be “future-proofed”.

## Late chilly nights at Roland-Garros

Novak Djokovic’s five-set victory over Lorenzo Musetti in the third round of the French Open was notable for its surprising closeness, said Tuminia Carayol in The Guardian. Yet something else was still more striking: its remarkably late finish. Having arrived on court at 10:30pm, after a rain-interrupted day, the pair battled for over four hours and left the court at 3:08am – the latest finish in the tournament’s history. But such finishes are increasingly common in tennis: at last year’s Australian Open, Andy Murray finished a match at 4:05am; and in Mexico in 2022, a match finished at 4:55am.

When managed properly, and in the right climate, night sessions can be “magnificent occasions”, said Simon Briggs in The Daily



Djokovic: a 3am victory

Telegraph. But they aren’t always fair on players, as late finishes can badly mess up their schedules. And they seem especially misguided at Roland-Garros, a tournament that had always been played in daylight hours until night play was introduced in 2021. Early summer nights in Paris are decidedly chilly, and in such conditions, the already slow clay courts become more sluggish still. Red clay – the “earthiest of surfaces” – “glows magically in the sun”, but “becomes lifeless when viewed under artificial light”. No wonder, then, that night matches have become hated by players at Roland-Garros. “There’s not a lot of people and you’re, like, in the dark,” as the Russian teenager Mirra Andreieva put it. “It’s so depressing.”

## Sporting headlines

**Cricket** England and Scotland’s ICC Men’s T20 World Cup opener in Barbados was abandoned owing to rain.

**Football** England beat Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-0 in a friendly on Monday night.

**Golf** Yuka Saso of Japan won the Women’s US Open for the second time.

**Gymnastics** Simone Biles won a record-breaking ninth US national title, finishing six points clear of Skye Blakely.

**Tennis** Novak Djokovic withdrew from the French Open with a knee injury before his quarter-final match.



# Pick of the week's correspondence

## Clearing the backlog

*To The Daily Telegraph*

I can do better than Alisdair Keats-Rawling's 12-week wait for an echocardiogram (Letters). I have just received a letter from Bedford Hospital stating that "due to the current situation, the waiting time for your echocardiogram is approximately 95 weeks".

I suppose that waiting for patients to die before they are seen is one way of clearing the backlog.

*Julie Findlay, Cardington, Bedfordshire*

## The cost of education...

*To the Financial Times*

If Labour is elected and imposes VAT on school fees, the simple solution would be for the schools with charitable status to tell fee payers that, in future, schools will not invoice parents for fees or extras but instead will request a donation.

For example, if a year's fees were £40,000, schools would request the donor to sign a standard Gift Aid declaration and make a donation of £32,500. The school would then claim the 25% Gift Aid rebate, thus providing just over the required figure of £40,000.

*Wayne Kitcat, Abinger, Surrey*

## ...should be borne by all

*To The Independent*

When state schools had their budgets slashed by George Osborne, they had no choice but to cut costs, just as teachers at those schools who had their pay frozen also had to make cuts at home. With a finite amount of money available to spend on education, and 14 years of inherited problems, I don't accept the argument that private schools should be unable or unwilling to cut their costs and pass price increases on to parents. The idea that it is somehow unfair that they should be exempt from making the same tough decisions that 95% of headteachers have had to make in state schools for the past 14 years is ridiculous.

*John Murray, Bracknell*

## A lesson from Singapore

*To The Economist*

The list of measures through which Lee Kuan Yew transformed Singapore should also include the public ownership of land. The Land

## Exchange of the week

### What's the matter with our doctors?

*To The Times*

Your report of a GP surgery using the ambulance service every morning to cope with the 8am deluge of telephone requests for appointments is not a success story, but a response to the failure to provide sufficient appointments with a GP who is a fully trained registered medical practitioner. Time and again it has been shown that continuity of care with "my doctor" improves mortality and reduces the risk of hospital admission. If patients know they can get a prompt appointment whenever they phone they will not need to enter the daily morning lottery.

We were promised thousands of extra doctors years ago but they have failed to materialise. Until such time as the funding model changes to allow this additional recruitment, the safe care of patients will continue to be at risk.

*Dr Jeremy W. Tankel, GP, London*

*To The Times*

Dr Jeremy Tankel says we are short of doctors in general practice because of a failure of recruitment. In fact, we train lots of doctors (and nurses). However, as indicated by the 40% or so of doctors who, in a Nuffield Trust study, chose not to work for the NHS within five years of completing their training, and the many who prefer conditions in Australia, the failure is not recruitment but retention.

*Dr Jane Stanford, London*

*To The Times*

A key factor causing problems for patients needing a GP appointment is that the vast majority of GPs now work part-time. As an example, the website of a local practice lists ten doctors, excluding trainees, who in total provide 54 sessions a week, when full-time doctors would provide 100 sessions. Until doctors accept that practising medicine should be a full-time commitment for most of them, there will be no improvement in the service to patients, no matter how much funding is thrown at the NHS.

*Clive Layton, Abbess Roding, Essex*

Acquisition Act of 1966 allowed the state to acquire land for any public purpose at existing-use value. By 2002, 90% was in public ownership, and had been used to create industrial and commercial parks, affordable housing and outstanding public transport and infrastructure.

The leasehold premiums paid continue to contribute to the investment income coming from state-fund managers, now contributing 20% of the country's operating budget. Lee was determined that any uplift in land value after development would accrue to the state rather than private interests.

Land is perhaps a country's most valuable asset, and its value should be used to defray public expenses, as supported by Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Milton Friedman, Joseph Stiglitz and others.

*Dr Andrew Purves, University College London*

## Beyond the law

*To The Times*

If a defendant had been found guilty by a jury at a Crown Court here, and stood on the courtroom steps afterwards and announced to the waiting press that the judge was corrupt, the trial was rigged and political, and that he was a very innocent man, what would have happened next?

Put another way, what does a defendant have to do in the US to be in contempt of court?

*Chris Moorhouse, Southampton*

## Theatrical manners

*To The Guardian*

In addition to the increasing frequency of smartphone use in theatres and concerts, another insidious practice is the standing ovation. Originally, I believe, accorded only to extraordinary performances, these are now initiated by a handful of theatregoers who

think that this is the normal way to applaud a curtain call.

Perhaps theatres should offer "standing ovation" seats on the left half of the theatre while the rest of us can sit on the right.

*Karl Sabbagh, Defford, Worcestershire*

## The tipping point of tips

*To The Spectator*

I was pleased to see that others are also frustrated with the tipping culture in the US.

My own tipping point came in 2017 when I visited a bar in Las Vegas. I sat down and ordered my drink via an iPad, watching as a robot arm sprang to life to mix my drink. The robot slid the drink over for me to collect. And, you guessed right, it asked for a tip.

*John Watson, Australia*

## My very own Magwitch

*To The Times*

Universities have other uses than providing well-paid jobs. I left school at 16 in 1963 to work in a factory. On the bus to work one day, the man next to me asked if the book I was reading (*Great Expectations*) was for my A levels. I said I read Dickens for pleasure. He gave me his number and asked to meet my father.

The next week we went to the college where he was head of the English department. He assured my father that if I went to university I would not "end up marrying a dustman". My father, a socialist, rose to his feet. "Some of my best friends are dustmen. Georgina, we're leaving." He later relented: I went to the LSE and Oxford and didn't marry a dustman.

*Gina Armstrong, Brockenhurst*



© PUGH/DAILY MAIL



## Happy joints: Beat joint discomfort with the world's most scientifically studied turmeric supplement.

Featured in 45 human studies involving over 2,000 people, this highly bioavailable formulation, developed in Cambridge could have transformative effects on your joint health

**T**he NHS reports around 10 million people in the UK have a condition that affects their joints, most commonly in the knees, hands, wrists, shoulders, feet and back.

From genes to diet to lifestyle and even the weather, has an influence on our musculoskeletal health – but good nutrition is always essential.

A diet rich in fruits, dark leafy vegetables and oily fish brings helpful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. A growing number of people are also turning to turmeric-based products and nutritional supplements for extra support.

But not all turmeric supplements are created equal. Many focus on one key active ingredient called curcumin – but it's very difficult for our bodies to absorb, and unless it's made 'bioavailable', it can pass through the gut unused, even if we take lots of it.

To overcome these challenges, scientists in Cambridge developed a unique supplement called Turmeric+ Gold, featuring the world's most scientifically researched bioavailable curcumin formulation, and users are saying that restoring their joint health can be life changing.

FutureYou Cambridge receives hundreds of 5-star Trustpilot reviews for Turmeric+ Gold, like Sylvia Pilgrim from Manchester 'The difference it made was unbelievable!' she said.

Turmeric+ Gold was developed by FutureYou Cambridge, a British developer of innovative supplements backed by extensive scientific research.

The company needed to overcome the key challenge with turmeric: making the curcuminoids much easier for our bodies to absorb. They wanted an alternative, better solution to the black

pepper formulations so often used, one that would be rich in the full bouquet of curcuminoids.

So the nutritional experts at FutureYou Cambridge used a patented Curcuma Phospholipid Complex formulation called Meriva® that makes curcumin 30 times more absorbable than standard turmeric powder.

'Our advanced formulation works by using plant based lecithin to mimic the way the body naturally absorbs curcuminoids after eating turmeric cooked with fat,' explains Dr Miriam Ferrer, PhD, from FutureYou Cambridge. 'But it delivers far more than you'd normally get from a meal – the equivalent of 150g of raw turmeric in a single tablet.'

It's also enhanced with vitamins C and D which contribute to normal function of cartilage and normal muscle function.\*

**'Soon after taking it I experienced that 'light-bulb' moment - I realised my knees felt like they used to. I take Turmeric+ Gold religiously now.'**



### TRY IT TODAY FOR JUST £5

To claim your 28 day Turmeric+ Gold subscription trial (worth £23) visit

**FutureYouOffers.co.uk**

or freephone  
**0800 808 5740**  
quoting code

## TGT240

Your first box costs £5 (Inc. free delivery). Subsequent subscription orders will cost £23 and be delivered every 28 days. You can amend, pause or cancel your subscription at any time, without obligation.



Developed  
in Cambridge



Science you  
can trust



Letterbox  
Friendly



100% satisfaction,  
guaranteed



Award-winning  
Customer Care



EXCELLENT  
Over 10,500 reviews

**FutureYou**  
CAMBRIDGE

\*Turmeric+ Gold contains vitamin C which contributes to normal collagen formation for the normal function of cartilage and bones. Vitamin D contributes to the maintenance of normal muscle function. Introductory offer valid for new UK customers only. Offer expires 31st July 2024 and cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotions. Cancel any time, without obligation. See FutureYouHealth.com/TGT240 for full terms and conditions.



# Review of reviews: Books

## Book of the week

### Naked Portrait: A Memoir of Lucian Freud

by Rose Boyt

Picador 416pp £22

The Week Bookshop £17.99

Rose Boyt was 18 when she posed naked on a sofa for *Rose*, 1978-79 (right), a painting by her father, Lucian Freud. “Nothing had been discussed,” her memoir *Naked Portrait* begins. “I just assumed I would be naked.” As one of Freud’s 14 acknowledged children by various women, Boyt was “grateful for any attention from her father”, said Laura Freeman in *The Sunday Times*. While he painted her in “full-frontal sprawl” during nocturnal sittings that lasted for months, they talked about art, literature, and Freud’s childhood glimpse of Hitler in Berlin. The painter comes across as “a charismatic monster”, with a talent for inspiring “abasement” in the women in his life. “I can’t think of an art book with an opening page like it,” said Freeman. “The writing is hypnotic and compulsive, the set-up compelling.” But the intensity proves “unsustainable”.

Boyt’s own life to that point is evidence of Freud’s “incorrigible selfishness” and “terminal irresponsibility”, said Peter Carty in *The i Paper*. Her mother, Suzy, was a student at the Slade School



of Art in the 1950s, when Freud was a lecturer there. The school expelled her for getting pregnant by Freud, who wasn’t fired or even challenged about his behaviour. Days after Rose was born, Freud showed up with two lobsters and made Suzy, who was allergic to shellfish, get up and cook them. Despite Freud’s great wealth, Rose grew up in bohemian poverty, not helped by her mother’s impulsive nature, which led her to swap the family home for a long voyage on a leaky cargo ship when Rose was seven. As a “comprehensive and honest chronicler of her family history”, Boyt is compelling. But she has “unburdened herself of everything. Unfortunately this includes large amounts of unrelated

autobiographical material.” Most of this “should have been cut”.

Not so, said Evgenia Siokos in *The Daily Telegraph*. Some of the best chapters detail Boyt’s life as an art-world It girl in the late 1970s. When Boyt isn’t “being complimented on her Vivienne Westwood bondage trousers by Francis Bacon”, she’s being taken to Studio 54 by Andy Warhol. Some of it is admittedly not so “gossip-worthy”: there are long diary excerpts and details of her therapy. “It seems like tedium, but it’s a strength... *Naked Portrait* is a hall of mirrors with the young Boyt at its centre... Its events juxtapose, clash and occasionally confuse, painting a portrait of Freud that’s even more revealing than his nude depiction of Rose.”

### In My Time of Dying

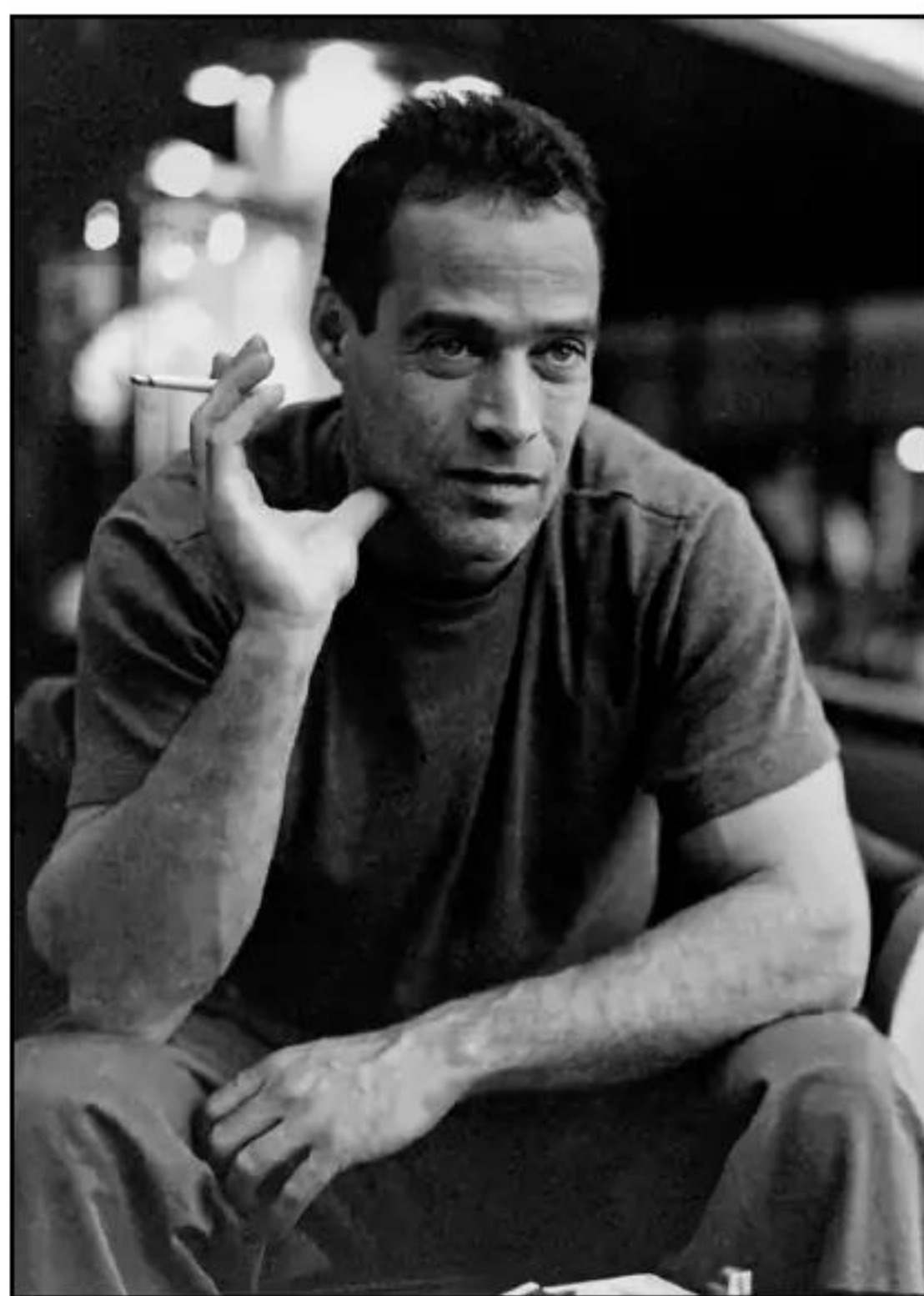
by Sebastian Junger

4th Estate 176pp £16.99

The Week Bookshop £13.99

Sebastian Junger, the author of *The Perfect Storm* and of award-winning reportage from Afghanistan, has been shot at by the Taliban, and a bomb once exploded in his Humvee. But on 16 June 2020, he “found himself face-to-face with mortality in a way he’d never been” before, said Elisabeth Egan in *The New York Times*. While staying with his wife in his remote cabin on Cape Cod in Massachusetts, Junger (pictured) experienced abdominal pains that spiralled into unconsciousness. Luckily, an ambulance was summoned; he nearly died of what turned out to be a ruptured pancreatic artery. About a third of his new memoir, *In My Time of Dying*, recreates this experience as “a terrifically detailed medical thriller, as suspenseful and pacy as an episode of peak-era *ER*”, said Simon Osborne in *The Guardian*. But there’s more to the book than that. While only seconds from dying, he had a vision of his father, eight years dead and a lifelong atheist, offering reassurance. On recovering, he dealt with anxiety and depression by hoovering up research on near-death experiences, which turn out to be remarkably similar across most cultures. The book is fascinating, but also “troubling”. “Junger has joined a blessed cohort of people who have seen death and returned to describe it.”

“It sounds cruel to say this, given that Junger was 58 with two young daughters,” said Janice Turner in *The Times*, “but I’m glad this happened to him.” Few other authors have “such passion for granular detail, intellectual heft and boundless curiosity that if they delve into the semi-supernatural, woo-woo world of near-death experience, you will follow them eagerly and trust what they find”. The resulting book is “oddly reassuring”, especially for “those lacking the consolation of religious belief”.



### Novel of the week

#### Parade

by Rachel Cusk

Faber 208pp £16.99

The Week Bookshop £13.99

The novelist and memoirist Rachel Cusk is “an acquired taste worth acquiring”, said Kate Kellaway in *The Observer*. Since reinventing herself with the novel *Outline* in 2014, she has grafted fiction onto autobiography “with a fluency that made you wonder why more novels were not written this way”. *Parade*, a mosaic of stories about sex, death and gender, featuring disparate artists who are all referred to as “G”, is “a brilliant, stark and unsettling feat”, approaching its subjects with an “intellectual intensity” rare in English fiction.

“I have admired, sometimes loved, all of Cusk’s books,” said Johanna Thomas-Corr in *The Sunday Times*. This one, however, is a plotless, introspective, humourless piece of writing “about how hard it is being Rachel Cusk”. It’s “simultaneously cold and histrionic, hermetic and inert, rather like that scene in *Being John Malkovich* where everyone has John Malkovich’s face only much, much less funny”. Reading *Parade* is “like walking over shards of broken glass”. It doesn’t feel “bracing”, though – “it feels unnecessary”.

**THE WEEK** Bookshop

To order these titles or any other book in print, visit  
[theweekbookshop.co.uk](http://theweekbookshop.co.uk) or speak to a bookseller on **020-3176 3835**  
Opening times: Monday to Saturday 9am-5.30pm and Sunday 10am-4pm



Theatre: *Bluets*

Royal Court Theatre, London SW1 (020-7565 5000). Until 29 June Running time: 1hr 20mins ★★★

The Royal Court's new artistic director, the playwright David Byrne, has launched his tenure with a production "so technically sophisticated that it leaves the head spinning, but so full of poetic feeling that it penetrates the heart", said Sarah Crompton on What's on Stage. Adapted from Maggie Nelson's book of prose poems, *Bluets* has been staged by director Katie Mitchell using her "live cinema" concept – a mix of live action and video screens. The result is an "experimental and engrossing" evening, which takes us inside the head of a woman who is heartbroken and unmoored, and obsessed with the colour blue – and whose consciousness is embodied on stage by three actors: Emma D'Arcy, Kayla Meikle and Ben Whishaw. *Bluets* "isn't always easy to fathom". But it's "stylish and full of wonder", and a "compelling portrait of sadness".



Ben Whishaw in a "compelling portrait of sadness"

The production is "clever, culturally aware, technologically adventurous and discombobulating", said Nick Curtis in the Evening Standard. The actors stand at workstations, kitted out with scripts, microphones, cameras and various props that are swapped in and out. It's highly complex – the actors must interact with recorded film played on screens behind and above them – but "flawlessly done". And though "always distinct", the trio

do "generate a single identity through fragmented snapshots". This is "intense, static and pretty dense" theatre, said Sarah Hemming in the Financial Times – "more of a collage than a conventional drama. But it has its own cumulative beauty."

There are moments of "magic", said Dominic Maxwell in The Sunday Times. But though I was glad to have seen *Bluets*, I was also "glad when it ended". The evening has a "sheen of proficiency", said Clive Davis in The Times, and the casting of Whishaw will help sell tickets. But it lacks the verve of Mitchell's hit *Little Scratch*,

which was a similar project. It's all too fragmentary and the actors are hemmed in by the demands of the video design. We've had a lot of cameras on stage lately. Maybe it's time for a break.

## The week's other opening

**Coram Boy** Chichester Festival Theatre, West Sussex (01243-781312). Until 15 June

This adaptation of Jamila Gavin's children's book about 18th century foundlings was a hit at the National in 2005. It's "knottily plotty", but has the "propulsive watchability of a page-turner" – and has Handel's "heavenly" music (Daily Telegraph).

## Podcasts... Bad ideas, furies, and new comedy

The intriguing premise of *The History of Bad Ideas*, a new series of Professor David Runciman's podcast **Past Present Future**, is "to take bad ideas seriously", said James Marriott in The Times. A century on, for example, the case for women's suffrage seems "logical, unanswerable and morally virtuous". But at the time, as Helen Lewis shows in her fascinating episode on the "anti-suffragettes", the case against letting women vote had its own complex, if flawed, logic, and "attracted intelligent and civilised advocates, including many women". Some argued that women were "above political partisanship"; others that because women didn't serve in the military, they shouldn't vote on laws that had to be defended with force. The episode shows how a bad idea "can be quite easily decked out in sophisticated argument". Other instalments feature historian Christopher Clark on antisemitism, geneticist Adam Rutherford on eugenics, and economist Helen Thompson on the gold standard. The series is "gripping. A shadow history of the modern mind."

The British journalist Nicky Woolf is a specialist in internet subcultures whose last two podcasts were *Finding Q*, about the origins of the QAnon conspiracy theory, and *The Sound*, about the phenomenon of Havana syndrome, said Miranda Sawyer in



Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested in 1914

The Observer. His excellent new six-parter, **Fur & Loathing**, is about the biggest chemical weapons attack on US soil in 50 years, for which no one has ever been charged. In 2014, at a hotel in Illinois, potentially deadly chlorine gas was released at a convention of "furries" – people who like dressing up in cartoony animal costumes. Nineteen people were hospitalised, yet – in part because the victims were wearing silly costumes – the attack was treated by federal investigators more as a prank than a life-threatening criminal act. Woolf combines in-depth investigation with a light touch to create a "strangely gripping show that uncovers more than you might imagine (and, no, that's not a furry joke)".

Great news for comedy fans, said Patricia Nicol in The Sunday Times. John Dredge and his collaborators have returned, after a very long gap, for a sixth series of their "very funny and utterly bizarre comedy",

**The John Dredge Nothing To Do With Anything Show**. It's "well worth the wait, especially if you like your comedy daft and Pythonesque". Meanwhile, to mark the centenary of Tony Hancock's birth, BBC Sounds has put out 81 original episodes of *Hancock's Half Hour* from the 1950s. On **The Missing Hancocks**, 23 episodes of the show that had been wiped by the BBC are recreated by a cast headed by Kevin McNally.

Stars reflect the overall quality of reviews and our own independent assessment (5 stars=don't miss; 1 star=don't bother)





## Young Woman and the Sea

2hrs 9mins (PG)

*Daisy Ridley stars in a stodgy biopic*

★★★

In the past six months or so, we have had no fewer than three films about female open-water swimmers, said Brian Viner in the Daily Mail. The latest stars Daisy Ridley as Trudy Ederle, the New Yorker who, in 1926, became the first woman to swim across the Channel. “It was a remarkable accomplishment, even more so as only five men had done it before her, and the fastest of them took two hours longer than she did.” The story begins in Brooklyn in 1914, with Ederle struck down by the measles. Her parents think she’s going to die, but she proves she is made of sterner stuff: “she not only recovers, but resolves to learn to swim”, though her father (Kim Bodnia) considers it an “indecent” pursuit for a girl. From here, the story “cleaves to the standard trajectory of such biopics” – with our “tenacious” heroine facing various setbacks, but showing again and again that “nothing is jolly well going to stop her”. The film “deserves credit” for reviving interest in Ederle’s achievements; but it’s a bit of a belly-flop: “stolid”, inelegant and surprisingly devoid of historical context.

The drama was conceived as just another piece of “streaming content” for Disney+, said Danny Leigh in the Financial Times. But the finished product “charmed test audiences” so much that it was given a theatrical release. And while it does rather prettify the tale (New York’s tenements “twinkle so vividly you want to pack a bag and move in”), “it would take a churl to object to the schmaltz”; and Ridley is in top form here. It’s “impossible not to root for Trudy”, said Charles Bramesco in The Guardian. But she’s flatly drawn, as a gleaming “mascot for all that is good and right”. We don’t learn much about who she really was, or what drove her.



## The Beast

2hrs 26mins (15)

*Léa Seydoux travels through time in a French “arthouse epic”*

★★★★★

Based on a novella by Henry James, this “arthouse epic” was rejected by the 2023 Cannes Film Festival – “for being too nuts?” – and went on to become “the most provocative movie of last year’s Venice selection”, said Kevin Maher in The Times. Finally, it’s out in British cinemas, and the key to enjoying it is to not seek to understand it, but to simply “feel it”. Léa Seydoux plays Gabrielle, a woman living in the year 2044 in a Paris taken over by AI. In order to secure a promotion at work, she decides to have her DNA “purified” via an injection to the brain that pings her back to 1910, on the eve of the great flood of Paris, and then to California in 2014, before an incel terrorist attack. In both periods, she meets Louis (George MacKay), who is locked in a “transtemporal romance” with her that “replicates the same tensions and unfulfilled longings across the centuries”. At the heart of the film is the notion that “our DNA becomes infected with the extreme emotional experiences of our previous selves”, and though this is admittedly a somewhat “dopey” idea, it proves rather ingenious. As for Seydoux, who is alone on screen for “enormous chunks of time”, she is “majestic”.

With its time-hopping, two-and-a-half-hour running time and “endless recurring symbolism” – dolls, pigeons and knives crop up a lot – “The Beast is, well, a bit of a beast”, said Steph Green in Empire. But it’s a “wholly original work” that feels exquisitely attuned to “current-day neuroses”; and its themes are timeless. “The Beast sails bravely through different philosophies and timelines”, said Victoria Luxford in City AM, but “nothing comes together quite as cohesively as you would hope”. And though it grapples with big questions, its sheer bleakness “overrides everything else”.



## Hard Miles

1hr 48mins (12A)

*Conventional drama about a cycle ride across America*

★★★

Matthew Modine – who made his name in such 1980s films as *Birdy* and *Full Metal Jacket* – delivers one of his “best performances for a long while” in this “impressive” sports drama based on a true story, said Matthew Bond in The Mail on Sunday. He plays Greg Townsend, a metalwork teacher at a young offenders’ correctional facility in Colorado, who decides to drag four inmates on a 762-mile cycle ride to the Grand Canyon. Among them are wannabe gangster Atencio (Damien Diaz) and Smink (Jackson Kelly), who has an eating disorder. “A passionate cyclist”, Townsend embarks on this odyssey hoping that it will be of some help to his charges; but, inevitably, things “do not go smoothly”. The film doesn’t have a vast budget, but it shows how much of an impact you can make if “you have a strong story and quality acting”.

*Hard Miles* is wholly predictable, with each plot point unfolding “exactly on cue, with no surprises or upsets”, said Cath Clarke in The Guardian. Still, “I warmed to its sensitivity”, and to its insistence that these difficult boys are in fact “vulnerable and scared” (a point “undermined only slightly by the fact that the actors playing them look well into their 20s”). To its credit, the film also “never tries to pretend” that a cycling trip will lead the boys to redemption, suggesting more modestly that it might boost their “self-esteem”. I found it rather a “yawn”, said Wendy Ide in The Observer. Sure, the “cinematography makes the very most of the awesome vistas”, but “the screenplay makes heavy weather of a route that takes in pretty much every uplifting sports movie cliché going”.

## Eric: strange drama with Benedict Cumberbatch and a hairy monster

On paper, Netflix’s six-part series *Eric* “sounds barmy”, said Anita Singh in The Daily Telegraph. Set in a “gritty, pre-gentrified” 1980s New York, it stars Benedict Cumberbatch as Vincent, “a puppeteer whose nine-year-old son goes missing on the way to school”, and who “responds to this trauma by striking up a relationship with an imaginary monster” called Eric. Vincent doesn’t know or care that nobody else can see or hear this large furry creature, “because he is losing his mind”: while his wife (Gaby Hoffmann) “waits by the phone or hands out missing posters on the street”, he goes off the rails, at one point snorting cocaine with Eric in a nightclub lavatory. Yet weird as its premise may be, the series is “inventive” and “assured”, and Cumberbatch is superb.



“Certainly brave”

I’m afraid I found the series a “heavy-handed, tangled mess”, said Dan Einav in the Financial Times. Written by Abi Morgan (*The Split*, *The Iron Lady*), “the script often has all the subtlety of a hulking blue monster on the subway”. It doesn’t help, either, that scenes depicting parental grief or marital strife “are frequently undermined by a shaggy 7ft puppet popping up just moments later”. As a drama, *Eric* “is certainly brave”, said Carol Midgley in The Times. But it’s also a jarring mish-mash of tones and genres: “sometimes you get the darkest of noir, sometimes comedy, sometimes violence and sometimes a Disney-ish schmaltz”. As I watched it, I asked myself, “If it wasn’t for Benedict Cumberbatch, would you carry on watching this?” The answer was “no”.



## Exhibition of the week **Judy Chicago: Revelations**

*Serpentine Gallery, London W2 (020-7402 6075). Until 1 September*

For 60 years, the American feminist artist Judy Chicago has been making “thunderous art driven by the certainty that men are bad and women are good”, said Waldemar Januszczak in *The Sunday Times*. Born Judith Cohen to liberal Jewish parents in Chicago in 1939, she adopted the name of her home city “as an act of American camouflage” and, from the 1960s, sought to create a form of art that went against the grain of tasteful, male-dominated modernism. Once derided by the art establishment, Chicago’s angry, unsubtle and frequently thrilling work is finally getting the recognition it deserves. This new exhibition confirms her as an artistic “pioneer” possessed of a “particularly intense” imagination. Taking as its starting point an unpublished illuminated manuscript from the 1970s that retells the *Book of Genesis* from a feminist perspective – it begins in a paediatric unit – the show contains some 200 paintings, drawings and installations created over the course of her career. Its exhibits tear “into men and their history with unconfined zest”; the result is a “weird” and “impactful” event.

“Intense” is the operative word here, said Alastair Sooke in *The Daily Telegraph*. Much of the work in this “absorbing” show revolves around childbirth, an “iconographic void within art history”, which Chicago “admirably sought to fill”. A case in point is 1982’s *In the Beginning*, a 32ft-long



*Detail from Peeling Back (1974): “trippy, glowing with vibrations”*

“primordial panorama” in which “a newborn suckles on lava-coloured nipples” and tiny creatures “spew from a suggestive chasm”. Or there’s *The Crowning* (2010), a work at once “like a vorticist painting and a Mayan relief”: an “unforgettable” vision of a baby’s head emerging during birth. This is a sometimes “mesmerising” show, even if Chicago’s depictions of men as “grimacing, nose-picking, sloppily urinating horrors” are “caricatured and ludicrous”, and her thoughts on climate change “have the nuance of a placard”.

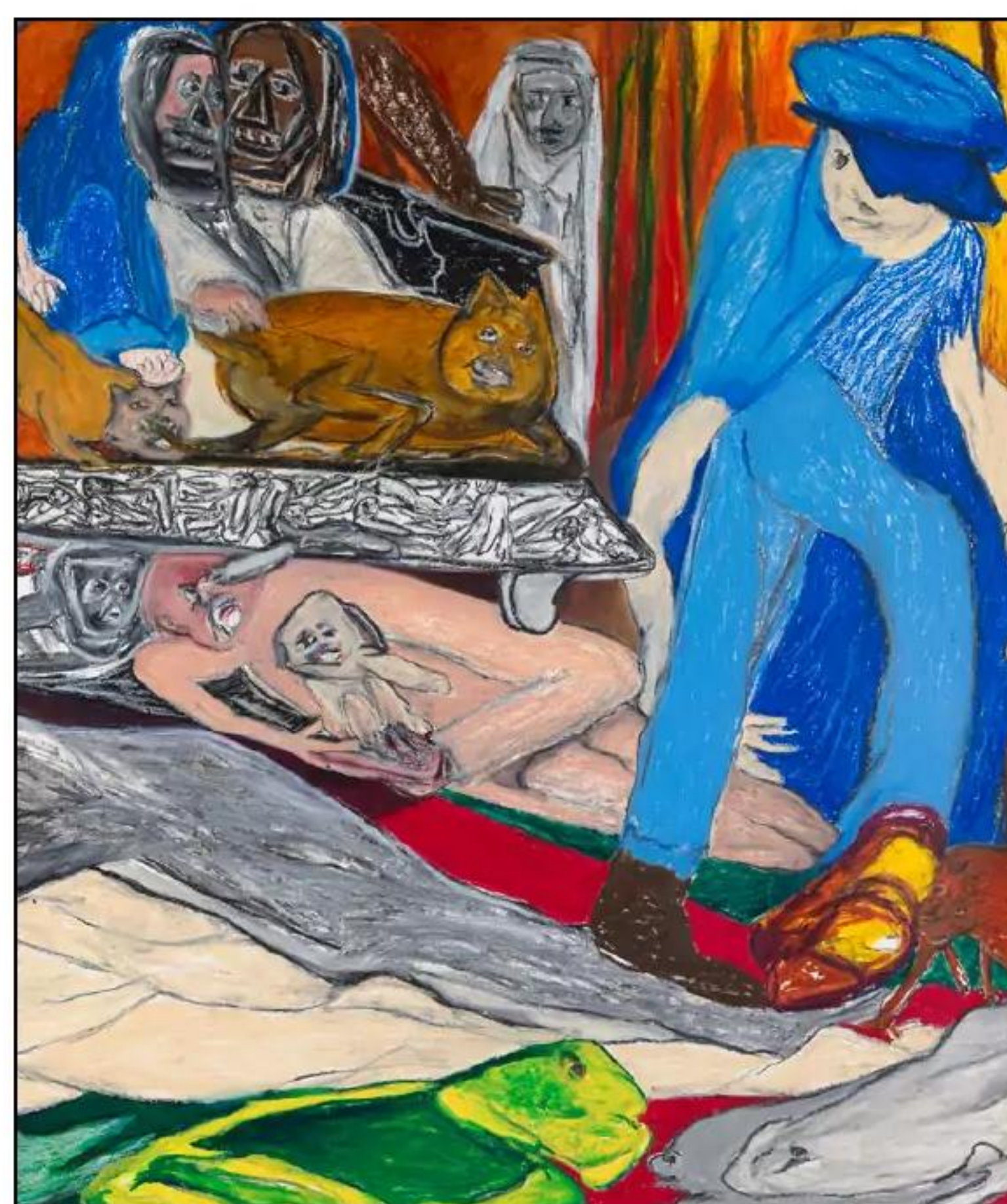
Chicago can be “crude” and sometimes unforgivably “twee”, said Laura Cumming in *The Observer*. *What if Women Ruled the World?* (2023), for instance, is a vast, winsome series of quilted hangings that imagines a planet governed by “peace, love and female understanding”. Yet, by and large, her aesthetics and her graphic style are insistently compelling throughout. Early works such as 1974’s *Peeling Back* are “trippy, psychedelic, glowing with vibrations, yet immaculately graphic”, her “beautifully smooth gradations of colour” and “distinctive cursive script” a delightful expressive reaction to 1960s minimalism. A series of silhouette drawings, meanwhile, is “terrific, hazy around the edges, pin-sharp with the shapes of women in labour, or childbirth”. Perhaps most importantly, Chicago’s art always “holds itself open to dispute”: my advice is to “take a friend”, consider what you see, “then go ahead and argue”.

## Where to buy...

*The Week reviews an exhibition in a private gallery*

**Jacqueline de Jong**  
at Pippy Houldsworth Gallery

Much like her US contemporary Judy Chicago, the Dutch artist Jacqueline de Jong (b.1939) has always created anarchic, politically charged work that ignores received ideas of good taste or fashion. This show, *La Petite Mort*, brings together a new series of paintings created in response to the war in Ukraine alongside a handful of pieces dating from her days as a 1960s radical. What’s immediately clear is that her youthful anger remains unblunted: all her paintings give us the same claustrophobically framed menageries of Boschian man-monsters, warped perspectives and toxically bright colours. The difference is that while the early pictures were explicitly absurdist, the new works could almost pass for realism. Figures bunch closely, as flames



*Sneaky Guardian (2024), detail*

engulf the borders of one painting; while another sees a stretcher-bearer tiptoeing his way over what appear to be naked corpses. The closer you look, the scarier the best of these works become. Prices on request.

6 Heddon Street, London W1  
(020-7734 7760). Until 6 July

## A rediscovered Caravaggio

“Four centuries after it was painted... and three years after it came perilously close to going under the hammer for just €1,500, a lost, luminous and lovingly restored Caravaggio has gone on display at the Prado in Madrid,” says Sam Jones in *The Guardian*. The *Ecce Homo*, “painted in the Italian master’s dark and desperate last years”, was spotted by experts at the museum in an auction catalogue, where it had been attributed to the circle of the 17th century Spanish artist José de Ribera. They rang Spain’s culture ministry, which slapped an export ban on it, allowing experts to undertake “a painstaking examination and restoration”. It has since transpired that the work was owned by Spanish viceroys in Naples. It shows Christ being presented to the crowd by Pontius Pilate (*Ecce homo*, “Behold the man”, being his words, as reported by John’s gospel). Spanish media states that the new owner is a British national who lives in Spain, who paid €36m.







## Best books... Kate Mosse

The bestselling author picks five favourites. Her latest novel, *The Ghost Ship* (Pan Macmillan £9.99), is out this month in paperback, and she is speaking at *The Queen's Reading Room Festival* on 8 June ([thequeensreadingroom.co.uk](http://thequeensreadingroom.co.uk))

**Little Women** by Louisa May Alcott, 1868 (Vintage £6.99). This is *the* girls' coming-of-age novel, documenting the lives of the March sisters – Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy – their family and friends; a story of love and loss, of the challenges faced by women in a changing world. It is the writer and independent-thinking Jo who guides the reader, and her voice is as fresh now as it ever was.

**Montaillou** by Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 1975 (Penguin £12.99). This is a pioneering work of microhistory, shining a spotlight on a tiny and isolated village in Ariège from 1294 to 1324. Based on the records of inquisitor Jacques Fournier, who prosecuted and victimised

Cathars in southwest France during the 13th century, this extraordinary book puts ordinary people centre stage and was an inspiration for my Grail novel *Labyrinth*.

**The Bluest Eye** by Toni Morrison, 1970 (Vintage £9.99). Morrison's astonishing and powerful debut novel is set in Ohio in 1941 and tells the story of a young African-American girl named Pecola. A story of race and poverty, of incest and violence, of powerlessness, it is unflinching, brilliant and life-changing.

**Life After Life** by Kate Atkinson, 2013 (Transworld £9.99). A dazzling tour de force, a novel that repeatedly

loops back in time to describe alternative possible lives for its protagonist, Ursula Todd, starting with her birth in 1910 and going up to the 1960s. Intricate, beautifully written, shimmering with texture and detail, it's exceptional.

**Silent Spring** by Rachel Carson, 1962 (Penguin £10.99). This elegant and accessible book of environmental conservation documented the harm caused by the indiscriminate use of pesticides. Although the chemical industry attempted to silence her, Carson's work brought environmental concerns to the broader public and led to a ban on DDT. Groundbreaking and brave.

Titles in print are available from The Week Bookshop on 020-3176 3835. For out-of-print books visit [biblio.co.uk](http://biblio.co.uk)

## The Week's guide to what's worth seeing

### Showing now

Studio Ghibli's 2001 animation **Spirited Away** comes to the stage in a "lavishly imaginative" production, complete with puppets (Guardian). Until 24 August, London Coliseum, London WC2 ([londoncoliseum.org](http://londoncoliseum.org)).

L.S. Lowry, master of the industrial landscape, also enjoyed painting seascapes, as revealed by a "small but immaculately curated exhibition", **Lowry and the Sea** (Daily Telegraph). Until 13 October, The Granary Gallery, The Maltings, Berwick-upon-Tweed ([maltingsberwick.co.uk](http://maltingsberwick.co.uk)).

Robert Mapplethorpe, Cindy Sherman and Richard Avedon are just three of the names included in **Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection**, the V&A's largest-ever photography exhibition. Until 5 January 2025, V&A South Kensington, London SW7 ([vam.ac.uk](http://vam.ac.uk)).

### Book now

"When in doubt, revive **Swan Lake**," said the FT of this summer's productions. There's English National Ballet's version at the Royal Albert



Ryan McGinley's *Dakota Hair*, from *Fragile Beauty*

Hall (12-23 June; [ballet.org.uk](http://ballet.org.uk)) and the Xi'an Acrobatic Troupe's "glorious (if bonkers)" take at Sadler's Wells (21-29 June; [sadlerswells.com](http://sadlerswells.com)).

**Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre** returns with three crowdpleasers: a new adaptation of *The Gangs of New York* (19 July-31 August); a children's production of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (27 July-22 August) and *The Importance of Being Ernest* (9 August-1 September). Grosvenor Park, Chester ([storyhouse.com](http://storyhouse.com)).

## Television

### Programmes

**Tom Jones: Later... with Jools Holland** Jones joins Holland to co-host the final episode of the series, with performances by Harry Styles, Noel Gallagher and FKA twigs. Sat 8 Jun, BBC2 20:30 (60mins).

**Jana: Marked for Life** New Swedish crime drama. Jana, a newly appointed prosecutor, investigates the murder of an immigration official – and a family friend. Sat 8 Jun, BBC4 21:00 and 21:50 (50mins each).

**On Thin Ice: Putin v Greenpeace** Six-part series using unseen footage to document Putin's brutal crackdown on a 2013 protest on a Russian oil rig. Sun 9, Mon 10 & Tue 11 Jun, BBC2 21:00 and 21:30 (30mins each).

**Chinook: Zulu Delta 576** In 1994, a helicopter crash in the Mull of Kintyre killed six of Northern Ireland's top intelligence officials; the BBC investigates, 30 years on. Thur 13 Jun, BBC2 21:00 (60mins).

**King Otto and Football's Greek Gods** The sporting fairy tale of how German football coach "King" Otto Rehhagel led Greece's team to becoming the unlikely champions of Euro 2004. Thur 13 Jun, BBC4 21:00 (90mins).

### Films

**The Big Country** (1958) Epic western. When he marries the daughter of a landowner, a retired sailor (Gregory Peck) finds himself entangled in a family feud. Sun 9 Jun, BBC2 12:15 (160mins).

**Darkest Hour** (2017) Gary Oldman won an Oscar for his portrayal of Winston Churchill, as he deliberates whether to lead Britain to war. Sun 9 Jun, BBC1 20:00 (120mins).

### New to streaming TV

**Jim Henson: Idea Man** Ron Howard's endearing documentary about the man behind *The Muppet Show* is an "immense delight" (New York Times). On Disney+.

**The Sympathiser** A "smart, stylish" adaptation of Viet Thanh Nguyen's novel about a North Vietnamese spy who flees to America (FT). On Sky Atlantic/NOW.

## The Archers: what happened last week

At the T20 cricket, Harrison apologises to Pat and asks Tracy to become team vice-captain. He tries to reach out to Fallon by sharing a poem. Vince learns that deliveries are going missing and tells Freddie to get to the bottom of it. Freddie goes out with Casey Meats' driver Jason, who talks about the overtime cash he needs for his family. Lynda comes up with an idea to mark the D-Day anniversary and, with her usual powers of persuasion, gets Chelsea, Fallon and Ben involved. Fallon opens up to Lynda and says she misses Harrison, who's still sleeping on the sofa. There's more trouble for Lillian as Jakob diagnoses a horse at The Stables with a contagious disease – he recommends a full lockdown. Vince and Freddie try to spot a pattern in the missing deliveries to see who might be responsible; Vince suspects driver Antonio, who has a criminal record. Freddie enlists Ben and Chelsea's help to follow Antonio's van; when another van pulls up and the meat is handed over, he's horrified to see the thief isn't Antonio, but Jason.



## Fabulous farmhouses



▲ **Cambridgeshire:** Lode Hall, Three Holes, Wisbech. A substantial Grade II Georgian farmhouse in grounds of approx. 3.5 acres. 9 beds (2 en suite), 3 bath/shower rooms, kitchen/breakfast room, 4 receps, garden. £1.2m; Cheffins (01353-654900).

▼ **Cumbria:** East Catholes, Millthrop, Sedbergh. Traditional Grade II Dales farmhouse with fishing rights on the River Dee and land totalling 14 acres. 4 beds (2 en suite), family bath, kitchen, 2 receps. £850,000; Fine & Country (01539-733500).



► **East Sussex:** Henley Down Farm, Catsfield, Battle. Charming detached Grade II period house set in gardens of about 0.8 of an acre. There is planning permission for an annexe. Main bed with dressing room, 4 further beds, 2 baths, kitchen/breakfast room, 3 receps, study, double garage, natural pond, outbuilding. £900,000; Batcheller Monkhouse (01424-775577).



▲ **Lincolnshire:** Washdyke Farm, Fulbeck, Grantham. This beautiful Grade II farmhouse dates back to 1837 and is set in 2.77 acres in a sought-after village. 4 beds (2 en suite), family bath, kitchen, 3 receps, garden, outbuildings. £925,000; Savills (01522-508909).







▲ **Wiltshire:** Slate Farm, Wanborough, Swindon. An attractive Grade II Georgian farmhouse with the potential for an annexe. 7 beds, 3 bath/shower rooms, kitchen, 4 receps, grounds of 0.45 of an acre. OIEO £1m; Fine & Country (01672-511211).

◀ **Gloucestershire:** Manor Farm, Cheltenham. Stunning 331-acre rural estate in prime Cotswold countryside. 6-bed farmhouse, 2 semi-detached stone cottages, 3/4-bed detached bungalow, barn, outbuildings, paddock, agricultural land and woodland. £7.5m; Knight Frank (020-8106 1362).



▲ **Berkshire:** Lower Lovetts Farm, Knowl Hill. A charming Grade II 16th century cottage and its cabin, and two barn accommodations, set within an open landscape looking southward amid more than 20 acres of land. 5-bed cottage, 3-bed cabin, 1-bed barn, courtyard garden, triple garage, kitchen, outbuildings, garden. £2.6m; Inigo (020-3687 3071).



▶ **Northamptonshire:** Lilac Farmhouse, Brackley. Grade II property standing in grounds of 0.67 of an acre. 5 beds, 2 baths, kitchen/breakfast room, 3 receps, garden, orchard, greenhouse. £930,000; Hamptons (01295-296702).

◀ **Devon:** Westmoore Farm, Diptford, Totnes. Secluded Grade II 6-bed farmhouse, offering five letting barn conversions, stabling for 6 and a lake; in all, about 9.58 acres. £2.06m; Rendells (01803-863888).







## Cobham, Surrey

6 bedrooms | 7 bathrooms | 4 reception rooms | Swimming pool | Wine cellar | Cinema room | Gym | Gardens and grounds | Freehold | Council Tax band H | EPC B

An exceptional home, designed by Hugh Petter from Adam Architecture, located within the exclusive Eaton Park private estate.

**Guide price £6,850,000**

**Knight Frank Cobham & London**

[george.pratt@knightfrank.com](mailto:george.pratt@knightfrank.com)

020 7861 1166

[charles.davenport@knightfrank.com](mailto:charles.davenport@knightfrank.com)

01932 591602



## Glendene, Wimbledon SW19

4 bedrooms | 2 bathrooms | 3 reception rooms | Share of freehold: 975 years remaining

Service charge: £8,161 per annum | Ground rent: peppercorn | Council Tax band F | EPC D

A well-maintained, south west-facing penthouse apartment with far-reaching views over the All England Lawn Tennis Club and Wimbledon Park.

**Guide price £1,500,000**

**Knight Frank Wimbledon**

[chris.burton@knightfrank.com](mailto:chris.burton@knightfrank.com)

020 8946 0026



### Why Greek food is having “a moment”

Its culinary offerings have long been viewed with considerably less excitement than those of France and Italy, says Tony Turnbull in *The Times*. Yet now, in Britain, Greek cuisine is finally “enjoying a moment in the sun”. According to the London-born, Greek-Cypriot food writer Georgina Hayden, our curiosity about Greek food was slow to develop because of the package-holiday boom of the 1970s and 1980s. “Somewhere like Italy was more middle class, so its food was put on a pedestal,” she says. By contrast, an “anglicised” version of Greek food – “all kebabs and grilled meat” – became the norm in Britain. But now, a new generation of “well-travelled diners” is discovering “how elegant and varied Greek food can be”. Exemplifying this trend is London-based restaurateur David Carter, of Smokestack and Manteca fame, who was blown away by what he ate while visiting the Greek islands in 2022. He has now opened two Greek-inspired restaurants on the same site in Borough Market: Agora, a casual ground-floor taverna, and the “smarter, fish-leaning” Omá upstairs. Both have had rave reviews. Like other new-wave Greek restaurants, both venues “take in the food of the whole Aegean”, including the Turkish coast, so offer “incredible variety”.

### A fruit with a divisive sourness

Despite being one of the few fruits Britain has in abundance in early summer, it's rare



*Gooseberries pair well with anything sweet*

to find gooseberries in supermarkets, says Rosanna Dodds in the FT. “One reason is that this little round fruit, which grows in dense, thorny bushes, is tricky to harvest.” Another is that the gooseberry is divisive: though enthusiasts like me prize its unusual flavour, others find it off-puttingly “sour and sharp”. Gooseberries first appear in late spring – picking up from when forced rhubarb leaves us – and grow “happily and hardily until August”. Gooseberries are a staple of several “creamy, classically British desserts”, including fools, syllabubs and possets. To make gooseberry fool, simmer 300g of green berries with three tablespoons of sugar and a few splashes of water for around eight minutes, until the fruit starts

to lose its shape. Chill this mixture, then fold it into 350ml of whipped double cream. The gooseberry “also has its savoury uses”: its sourness means it pairs well with anything sweet (onion confit, for example), and it also cuts through oily fish – as reflected in its French name of *groseille à maquereau* (mackerel berry).

### Orange wine goes mainstream

A few years ago, orange wine was rarely available outside specialised wine shops, says Mina Holland in *The Guardian*. Now, M&S, Waitrose and Majestic all stock it, and Ocado has reported a 99% jump in sales from a year ago. This might, then, be the summer that orange wine “goes fully mainstream”. But what exactly is orange wine? Essentially, it's white wine made like a red wine: after being pressed, the grapes are left to macerate in the wine with their skins on (and sometimes their stalks too). In a sense, this makes orange wine the opposite of rosé, which is essentially red wine treated like a white wine, with skin contact kept to a minimum. Orange wines are renowned for their often “funky” character – some taste closer to cider than wine – and this can be off-putting to older drinkers, who tend to have fixed ideas about what they “think of” as wine. But orange wine is being eagerly embraced by younger drinkers, who also like the fact that its “blingy” appearance plays out well on social media. As Frederic Grappe, of wine supplier Dynamic Vines, puts it: orange wine is “definitely here to stay”.

## Broad bean, ricotta and lemon dip with flatbreads

Broad beans are a great summer vegetable (but it's also fine to use the frozen option, says Tom Kerridge). Ricotta gives this dreamy dip a lovely light, creamy texture and the minty, zesty flavours and whack of roasted garlic take it to another level. Making your own flatbreads to go with the dip is fun, too.

*Serves 4 as a lunch or starter*

**Flatbreads:** 280g self-raising flour 250g natural yoghurt 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil 1 tsp salt **Broad bean dip:** 500g freshly podded (or frozen) broad beans 1 preserved lemon, deseeded and roughly chopped 150ml extra-virgin olive oil 200g ricotta 6 roasted garlic cloves a handful of mint leaves, plus an extra few for the topping finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon salt and freshly ground pepper

- To make the flatbreads, place all the ingredients in a large bowl and mix together to form a smooth dough. Tip out onto a lightly floured surface and knead well for a few minutes. Wipe out the bowl and place the dough back in it. Leave to rest for 30 minutes.

- Meanwhile, bring a medium pan of water to the boil, add the broad beans and blanch for 2 minutes, then drain and refresh in cold water. Gently squeeze the beans out of their skins.

- For the broad bean dip, put 400g of the beans into a food processor; set aside the rest for the topping. Add the preserved lemon, 100ml extra-virgin olive oil, the ricotta, roasted garlic and mint to the processor. Add the lemon zest and half the lemon juice and season well with salt and pepper. Blend until smooth, then spoon into a serving bowl.



- In another bowl, mix the rest of the broad beans with the remaining lemon juice and extra-virgin olive oil. Roughly tear a few mint leaves and add these, along with a little salt and pepper. Stir well and spoon over the broad bean dip.

- To cook the flatbreads, heat up a griddle pan over a medium-high heat. Divide the dough into 4 even-sized pieces and shape into balls. Roll each one out thinly on a lightly floured surface to a round. Cook on the hot griddle, one at a time, for 1-2 minutes on each side. Keep warm, wrapped in a tea towel, while you cook the rest.

- To serve, cut the warm flatbreads into wedges and place on a serving platter with the broad bean dip.

*Taken from Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain: A Journey Through the Best of British Food by Tom Kerridge, published by Bloomsbury at £25. Photography by Cristian Barnett. To buy from The Week Bookshop for £19.99, call 020-3176 3835 or visit [theweekbookshop.co.uk](http://theweekbookshop.co.uk).*



## The best... products to attract wildlife to your garden



◀ **Wildlife World Wood Butterfly Barn** Feed and provide shelter for all types of butterflies, moths, lacewings and other pollinating insects with this wooden house. It has slatted areas for resting butterflies, and a reservoir to hold fruit or sugar water for feeding (£22; johnlewis).



▶ **Bee Cups** Attract tiny pollinators to your garden with this colourful set of miniature ceramic cups, which can be placed in the soil. Each one holds a teaspoon of water and mimics a flower to attract bees (£35 for five; uncommongoods.com).



◀ **Poppy Seed Head Fat Snax Feeder** Not only are these steel stakes the perfect size to hold a fat ball to attract different species of birds, they are useful for staking out plants in your borders too (£20; rhsplants.co.uk).



▲ **Wildlife World Echoes Ceramic Bird Bath** This frost-resistant glazed terracotta bird bath has a ripple-step design to give extra grip for wild birds (£45; amazon.co.uk).



▼ **Eco Frogilo Frog House** Sturdy and robust, this will provide a safe and durable home for frogs and toads throughout the year; it is designed to protect them from predators and garden tools (£26; arkwildlife.co.uk).



◀ **Hedgehog House** Hedgehogs provide a natural form of pest control, so encourage them into your garden with this sturdy wicker hut, which will protect them from predators when they're sleeping or hibernating (£30; aplaceforeverything.co.uk).



▶ **Roamwild PestOff Squirrel-Proof Bird Feeder 2.0** Cleverly crafted to prevent squirrels from accessing the birdseed, this heavy-duty feeder has metal baffles and holds two litres of seed (£35; roamwildproducts.co.uk).



◀ **Beehive** Inspired by an encounter with a tired bee, this award-winning bee-saving kit contains an emergency solution of syrup to revive exhausted insects (£11; beehive.com).



▲ **Veta Vera Grass Bird Nester** Handwoven by artisans in Ghana, this 25cm x 18cm nesting basket has a loop for hanging from branches in a sheltered spot (£59; toa.st).



## Tips... how to negotiate a pay rise

- Choose your moment. Find a time when your manager isn't too busy. Obviously, if the firm is making redundancies, it's best to wait. Start by emailing to ask for a meeting to discuss pay, so she or he isn't blindsided.
- Get prepped before the meeting. Keep a "loud list" of your achievements and how you are bringing value to the company.
- Research the typical salary for your role in your location. There is plenty of free data about salaries, by role and area, online.
- If you feel awkward, rehearse your opening lines. Remember everyone has these discussions; you're not being rude.
- Come to the meeting with a number in mind. Give your boss that number, and then be quiet. Let them fill the awkward silence.
- Avoid getting emotional, and stay calm and logical; you'll achieve more. Think hard before issuing an ultimatum.
- If you get turned down, ask your manager to explain their reasoning: what would you have to do to get a rise? It might be something that can be easily rectified.

SOURCE: GQ

THE WEEK 8 June 2024

## And for those who have everything...



Miu Miu has started a new trend of "underwear as outerwear", and according to the Lyst Index, which analyses online shopping behaviour, these unisex swim briefs are currently the third-hottest fashion item in the world. They come in a range of colours, from canary yellow to pillar box red. **£600; miumiu.com**

SOURCE: THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

## Where to find... magical outdoor entertainment

Set in pristine woodland near Southwold, Suffolk, **Thornington Theatre** was built during the pandemic in an old WWII bomb crater, using local timber. The 360-seat venue hosts plays and talks throughout the summer (until 31 Aug; thorningtontheatre.co.uk).

**Brighton Open Air Theatre**, a 400-seat amphitheatre with a diverse repertoire from theatre and comedy to drag and circus acts (until 22 Sep; brightonopenairtheatre.co.uk). This year's programme at the amphitheatre in the Explorers Garden at **Pitlochry Festival Theatre** in Perth and Kinross includes a magical adaptation of *The Secret Garden* (12 Jul-22 Aug; pitlochryfestivaltheatre.com). Hidden in a glade, **Kilworth House Theatre**, in Lutterworth, Leicestershire, has dramatic sail-shaped canopies to shelter the audience (18 Jun-25 Aug; kilworthhouse.co.uk).

The historic **Minack Theatre** is cut into the rugged cliffs in Porthcurno, Cornwall. Bring a cushion, as seating is on stone benches or grass (until 12 Oct; minack.com).

SOURCE: THE SUNDAY TIMES



## This week's dream: the wild mountains and coast of Campania

The Italian region of Campania is best known for Naples and the Amalfi Coast, but south of them lies another glorious and much less touristy area. With its “cinematic” coastal scenery and wild mountains, the Cilento region is a dream for hikers, says Nina Burleigh in *The New York Times* – or for anyone looking to “*staccare la spina*” (“unplug”). Most of it lies within the Parco Nazionale del Cilento, Vallo di Diano e Alburni, Italy's second-largest national park – “699 square miles of beaches, cliffs, emerald vales, river gorges and mountain meadows”. It's full of historic villages and fishing towns, and near its northern end sits ancient Paestum, site of some “stupendous” Greek temples – among the best-preserved in the Mediterranean – that inspired 18th century architects across Europe.

After the Second World War, the US army doctor Ancel Keys bought an old villa here and devoted his life to studying the “salubrious effects” of local eating patterns on the heart. In the fishing hamlet of Pioppi, there's a museum devoted to the



*The Temple of Neptune: one of Paestum's “stupendous” Greek temples*

favourite walks was that from the hamlet of Sassano through the Valle delle Orchidee, where rare species of wild orchids bloom in profusion in May – “an astonishing spectacle”. And as for the Certosa di Padula, Italy's largest monastery, it almost defied belief – a baroque building of immense grandeur hidden away “beyond a maze of farm roads”, deep in the mountains.

Mediterranean diet he made famous, and the region still produces “some of the finest basics of Italian cuisine” – including wonderful extra-virgin olive oil, fresh seafood and excellent cheeses (the road to Paestum is “lined with shops selling mozzarella from the milk of Asian buffalo, possibly first introduced to Italy by the Greeks”). Indeed, among all the reasons to come hiking in the region, none is better than the chance to eat and drink lots of Cilento food and wine.

I stayed in the fishing port of Acciaroli, swimming in the “cold silvery bay” each morning and then heading out in a rental car, armed with a guidebook called *Secret Campania*. Among my

## Getting the flavour of...



### A family holiday in Jersey

Fed up with too many samey holidays in Cornwall, we took our teenagers to Jersey instead this year and had a wonderful time, says Louise Carpenter in *The Times*. This beautiful Channel Island is easy to reach by plane or car ferry from mainland Britain but feels refreshingly different, as it's close to, and in some ways more reminiscent of, France. Our hotel, the Atlantic, struck us as faintly Mediterranean, with its palm trees, “glistening” pool and sea-view balconies. It was the ideal base for a laid-back long weekend on the island, during which we avoided serious sightseeing (Jersey has some splendid castles) in favour of surfing lessons on the “gorgeous” beach of St Ouen's Bay, and a trip to Les Écréhous. Six miles away by boat, these rocky islets are home to countless seabirds and have a hauntingly wild and lonely air.

### Greece's wondrous wetland

With its flamingos and wild horses, Greece's

Axios Delta National Park is often likened to the Camargue. But unlike its French counterpart, this vast wetland sees “only a smattering of tourists each year”, says Heidi Fuller-Love in *The Sunday Telegraph* – and its restaurants, serving fresh fish and mussels, are a lot less expensive too. It's a “paradise” for birdwatchers, with some 330 avian species (I spotted a white-tailed sea eagle, spoonbills, avocets, and more). And it is home to much other wildlife too, including wolves and otters, as well as the horses, which were released in the 1960s when farmers switched to tractors. There aren't many hotels, so I stayed half-an-hour's drive away in the “lovely, lively” city of Thessaloniki, where there are lots of stylish places to eat (I can recommend Olympos Naoussa, Orizontes Roof Garden and Poster).

### An enchanting city in Poland

The Polish city of Wrocław is a “magical” place, says Laura Moser in *Travel + Leisure*, thanks in part to its complex and sometimes tragic history. It stands at a “tortured crossroads of Europe”, and has had many rulers – “Bohemians, Habsburgs, Prussians, Nazis, Communists”. Before the region's borders were redrawn in 1945, it lay in Germany and was known as Breslau. All but levelled by Soviet bombs, its historic heart (pictured) has been painstakingly rebuilt, and makes for fascinating wandering, with an air of Vienna in parts, and of Prague and even “Manhattan” (owing to its Communist-era skyscrapers) in others. But Wrocław is also one of Europe's fastest-growing cities, and feels “thoroughly of the future” too, with excellent restaurants and a lively cultural scene (don't miss the National Museum, with its superb collection of contemporary Polish art).

## Hotel of the week



### The Georgian *Santa Monica*, Los Angeles

With its iconic turquoise art-deco facade, “Santa Monica's First Lady” was a “star magnet” when it opened in 1933. Later, it got a little tired, says Lizbeth Scordo in *Condé Nast Traveller* – but a revamp has restored the old magic. “Velveteen opulence and whimsical hedonism” predominate, from the powder-blue bellboys' uniforms to the pastel decor in the 84 rooms, and the champagne buttons that guests in suites can press to summon a bar cart. There are two restaurants – one with “Italian-meets-SoCal dishes” and a lovely ocean-front terrace, the other, a “speakeasy-style” basement joint with a 1918 Steinway. *Doubles from £550; thegeorgian.com.*

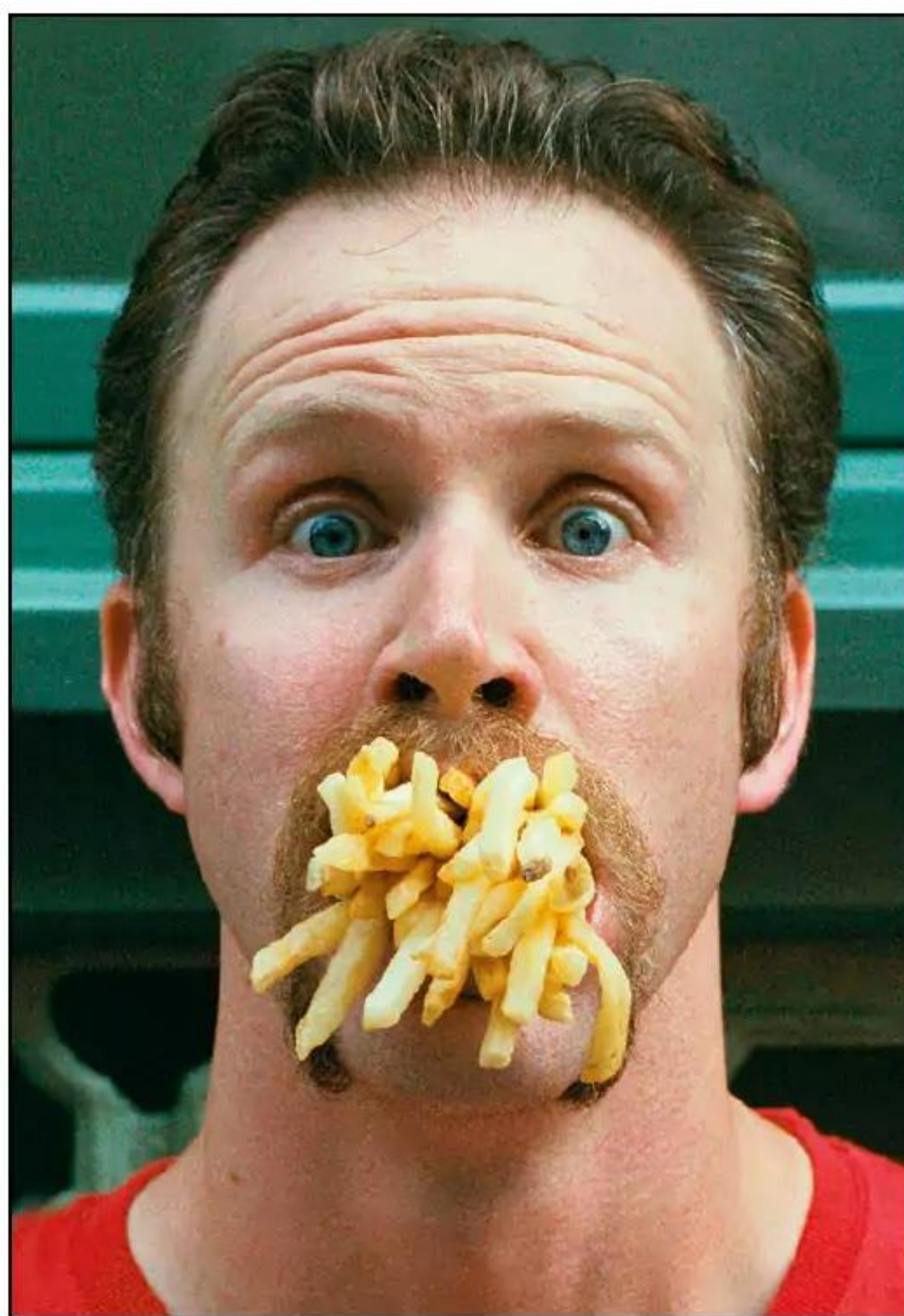


## Filmmaker who shone a spotlight on McDonald's

**Morgan  
Spurlock**  
1970-2024

Morgan Spurlock, who has died aged 53, “owed his career to a Big Mac”, said The Times. In 2002, he saw a TV news story about two young women who were suing McDonald's for allegedly misleading them about the nutritional content of its burgers and fries, causing them to gain excess weight. In response, a spokesman for the fast-food giant insisted that McDonald's food could not be linked to obesity, because it was healthy and nutritious. This gave him the idea for a documentary, in which he would test that claim by eating only food from McDonald's for 30 days. The rules he set himself also stipulated that if he was asked by the server if he'd like to “super-size” his food or drink, he'd always say yes; and he'd adjust his exercise routine, so that he took only the 5,000 steps that is the US average. “Let's find out, I'm ready,” he said cheerily to the camera, at the start of the project. Within a few days, he was vomiting, depressed and developing “McSweats”. By the end, he was 24.5lbs heavier, and his body fat levels were up 7%. He had lost his sex drive; and though he felt “grossed out” by the idea of fast food, he was also craving it. It took him 14 months to lose the extra weight, and he claimed that he was thereafter more prone to gaining weight, because his body had lost its “resiliency”.

The resulting documentary, *Super Size Me*, cost about \$60,000 to make and grossed \$22m. It was nominated for an Oscar, and made Spurlock – instantly recognisable with his wide smile and walrus moustache – a household name. It also put renewed focus on the impact of McDonald's in a country where a quarter of people visited a fast-food restaurant every day. McDonald's withdrew its super-size option six weeks after the film premiered, having



Spurlock: developed “McSweats”

introduced a new Go Active! menu at the time of the film's release. Spurlock wasn't the first to warn about the dangers posed by multinational giants, said The Daily Telegraph: Naomi Klein's book *No Logo*, and Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, preceded his film by some years. Neither of them, however, had anything like its impact. Yet many raised doubts about the film. Of course, it was hardly news that a diet consisting of nothing but vast mounds of chips and burgers would be bad for the health, said The Guardian. Spurlock did not help his case by refusing to release logs of his diet; and the revelation that he had been drinking during the shoot further reinforced the view that he was a flashy showman, more interested in entertaining viewers with “gonzo” stunts and grizzly factoids than in asking serious questions about why and how fast-food restaurants have become so ubiquitous, in low-income neighbourhoods in particular.

Spurlock was born in West Virginia, where his father ran a car-repair shop and his mother worked as a teacher. He loved *Monty Python* as a child, and recalled practising “silly walks” aged six or seven. After graduating from NYU, he hoped to become a film director. But after a stint working as Woody Allen's assistant on *Bullets Over Broadway*, and Luc Besson's on *Leon*, he moved into reality TV. He made some 70 films and TV shows after *Super Size Me*, ranging from *Where in the World Is Osama Bin Laden* (2008), to *One Direction: This Is Us* (2013); but in a blogpost in 2017, he admitted that he'd been accused of rape at college, and had paid off an assistant who'd accused him of harassing her. “I have been unfaithful to every wife and girlfriend I have ever had,” he also wrote, explaining that he had been sexually abused in his youth. The result, said The Washington Post, was “career death”.

## Memory keeper of the Spanish Civil War

**Ángeles  
Flórez Peón**  
1918-2024

Ángeles Flórez Peón, who has died aged 105, is thought to have been the last living republican militia woman of the Spanish Civil War. Known as Maricuela, she served on the front line against General Franco's nationalist forces; after the republican defeat, she spent four years in prison and 55 years in exile. Late in life, her memoirs helped to make her “a symbol of the Spanish women who fought against fascism”, said The Daily Telegraph.

Ángeles Flórez Peón was born in Blimea, in Asturias in northern Spain, in November 1918, to a miner and a midwife. “I never had a doll and I never went to school,” she said; she eventually learnt to read in prison. During the general strike of October 1934, her eldest brother was among the 24 “martyrs of Carbayín” murdered by government troops. “They killed them with bayonets,” she said. “When they found my brother's body, his jaw was missing.” The episode inspired her to join the Socialist Youth. When civil war broke out in July 1936, Flórez Peón was playing the protagonist Maricuela in the play *Arriba los Pobres del Mundo! (Up With the Poor of the World!)*, and the character's name stuck. She enlisted in the militia. “I never picked up a rifle,” she said in 2016. “I was in charge of making food and taking it to the trenches among the bullets and bombs.” To her regret, women were withdrawn from the front and she served instead as a nurse in a field hospital in Gijón. In 1937, Franco's forces made gains across Asturias and guerrilla lines finally collapsed. In October, she



Flórez Peón: learnt to read in prison

was arrested at home during dinner. “They took my sister and me... We were not even 20,” she remembered. She was accused of killing two soldiers and, after a 15-minute trial, was jailed for 15 years. From her cell at Saturrarán women's prison, she could hear prisoners being taken out to be shot. “What truly keeps me alive and active is the desire to remember all those women who were tortured, murdered without trial and erased from history,” she said later. In 1939, her boyfriend, Quintin Serrano, was shot and killed.

In 1941, Flórez Peón was released on parole, and joined her sister in the Basque town of Baracaldo, said The Washington Post. In 1946, she married Graciano Rozada Vallina, a miner and union official. “I'm not going to be a piece of furniture at home,” she warned him on their wedding day. Arrests and disappearances continued, and the following year he fled to France. Flórez Peón followed with her young daughter at Easter 1948. They were smuggled out of Spanish waters in the bottom of a boat, covered by an oilcloth. In France, the couple led Spanish exiled political groups until the transition to democracy began after Franco's death in 1975. She did not, however, return to Spain until after her husband's death in 2003, when she “became a caretaker of stories she feared were in danger of being lost”, about women in the civil war. She published two memoirs, in 2009 and 2013. Flórez Peón is survived by a daughter and a son. “Those who thought she was immortal were wrong,” said her son José Antonio Rozada at her funeral. “She was merely indestructible.”



# Companies in the news ...and how they were assessed

## GlaxoSmithKline: trial by Zantac



Shares in GSK plunged this week after a US judge ruled the UK pharma must face “trial by jury” over the alleged cancer-causing properties of its heartburn drug, Zantac, said City AM. Some £7bn was wiped off GSK’s value after a Delaware court allowed about 80,000 lawsuits to go ahead in a ruling that “could open the floodgates for further claims”. GSK is appealing the decision. Launched in 1983, Zantac was a blockbuster – “one of the first-ever drugs to reach over \$1bn in yearly sales”. GSK

later sold the rights to Pfizer and other pharma companies, but concerns surfaced in 2019 after a chemical called NDMA, which causes cancer, was detected in some doses. Tests showed that ranitidine, the active ingredient in Zantac, could change to NDMA when exposed to heat. GSK insists there is “no reliable evidence” that ranitidine increases the risk of any cancer, said Lex in the FT. But worries about liabilities have “dogged” GSK’s shares since 2022, when a Morgan Stanley note estimated the bill could reach \$27bn. Although estimates have come down since, “the uncertainty is an unwelcome old foe” that chief executive Emma Walmsley “can ill afford”. “European pharma companies without obesity-drug candidates find it hard enough these days to compete for investor attention.” Without a resolution in sight, “Walmsley’s task has just become harder”.

## Royal Mail: life with Kretínský

Daniel Kretínský’s £3.6bn offer for “the deeply troubled” Royal Mail has been the talk of the City, said Oliver Gill in The Sunday Times. The most oft asked question: “Is this guy crazy?” In the past two years, Royal Mail has been losing over £1m a day: its only “saving grace”, financially, has been its overseas parcel delivery arm, GLS. Some have painted Czech-born Kretínský, whose takeover has been tacitly approved by both the Tories and Labour, as “a corporate raider” who will carve up the business and flip it. While conceding there are qualms over what he calls Royal Mail’s “foreign moment”, he insists he’s there for the long-term. His first move will be to invest £400m – much of it on “delivery lockers and pick-up spots” – to stop the rot. The bid is still subject to a review under the National Security and Investment Act, but since Kretínský passed a previous investigation 18 months ago, “the commonly held view is that he should sail through”. Kretínský’s people paint him as “a benevolent industrialist with sacks of spare cash”, said Ben Marlow in The Daily Telegraph. Yet “the loan component of the deal alone should ring alarm bells”. Two-thirds of the offer is “in the form of entirely new debt”. This is “a textbook private-equity bid in everything but name” – with all the corresponding risks.

## Great British Energy: white elephant?

Keir Starmer has vowed “to close the door on Putin”, should Labour win power, with a new state-owned clean energy company that would protect the UK from the sort of price “spikes” that followed the invasion of Ukraine, said Nina Lloyd in the Evening Standard. GB Energy, headquartered in Scotland, would be funded through a higher windfall tax on big oil and gas firms, with an initial £8.3bn capitalisation over the Parliament. The one flaw in the proposal, said Matthew Lynn in The Daily Telegraph, is that it is “a dangerous con”. GB Energy is the rump of Labour’s original plan to spend £28bn a year on green projects, and is “woefully under-capitalised”. There’s “surprisingly little detail” on what technologies will be prioritised, or how they will be built at scale. Moreover, it now turns out that GB Energy is only going to be an “investment vehicle”. There’s already plenty of private capital available for “compelling” proposals. It’s likely that GB Energy “will be left with the projects where the maths doesn’t stack up”. Starmer’s plan shows a “profound lack of seriousness”. Gas prices spiked again this week over supply issues in Norway. “Our energy security remains as precarious as ever”, and Labour will make it worse.

## Monzo: pink profit

The challenger bank with the distinctive coral-coloured cards has passed a milestone, said Ben Martin in The Times. The nine-year-old business has just posted its “maiden annual profit”, following what chief executive TS Anil calls “a landmark year”. But there are complications – not least “a surge in provisions for possible bad loans” as the digital bank’s lending book grows and arrears rise. Monzo has pushed into the “buy now, pay later” industry via its “Flex” product. Anil insists the bank is “incredibly disciplined”, and that a 75% jump in bad-debt provision is commensurate with the 84% increase in Monzo’s total lending balances. With 9.7 million customers – and counting – an international push is now on the cards, starting with a new office in Dublin.

## Seven days in the Square Mile

Canada became the first G7 nation to cut its main interest rate in the current cycle: lowering the rate to 4.75%, having held it at 5% since July last year. The European Central Bank was also expected to start lowering rates at its meeting this week, marking its first cut in five years – amid hopes the move will breathe life into the eurozone’s housing markets, business investment and consumer spending. London markets held steady following the first television debate of the election campaign. The price of oil fell sharply after Opec+ members agreed to raise production, falling to \$76.39/barrel by Wednesday.

Hedge funds were reported to be scaling back or ditching bets against London-listed stocks after being burnt by a wave of takeover deals. M&A involving a UK target is 84% higher than a year ago, according to the London Stock Exchange. The two most shorted stocks remain BT and Abridn.

McDonald’s lost an EU legal battle over its “Big Mac” trademark. The fast-food giant will be restricted to enforcing it on traditional hamburgers (and not chicken burgers) following a complaint by the small Irish chain Supermac’s. Shares in US meme stock GameStop soared again after a Reddit account associated with “Roaring Kitty” trader Keith Gill, appeared to show he had purchased a sizeable stake. The trial of Mike Lynch, the former Autonomy chief, neared its conclusion. A US jury is deliberating fraud charges originating from the company’s sale to Hewlett-Packard in 2011. New banknotes featuring the portrait of Charles III entered circulation.

## Trainline’s reprieve

Shares in Trainline plunged by nearly 10% in April when Labour announced plans to bring the railways into public ownership, says Oliver Gill in The Sunday Times. But the London-listed ticketing app has won a reprieve – and a tidy bit of business to boot.

Labour has confirmed there are “no plans” to revive the current government’s proposal for “a national retailing app” for train tickets, meaning Trainline will now play “a pivotal role” in Labour’s plans “to accelerate the death of paper tickets” on a “nationalised” railway. Investors, however, seem unimpressed. Having jumped by over 20% over the past year, shares have been stuck in a siding as of this week.



## Issue of the week: Shein's London float

*Could a potential mega-listing save the City, or land it with a giant problem?*

"In fashion and environment circles its name is close to a dirty word." But to teens and TikTokkers on a tight budget, said Harriet Walker in *The Times*, Shein is a veritable treasure trove – and it seems that Britain's politicians agree. News that the Chinese-owned fast-fashion giant will file a confidential prospectus with the City regulator this month brings the prospect of a London listing closer. And now we learn that members of the shadow cabinet, as well as Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, have met Shein's executive chairman Donald Tang. The retailer could be valued at around £50bn – making it Britain's largest-ever stock market float. It's obvious why post-Brexit politicians and the beleaguered City want Shein here. The question is: "do the rest of us?"



*Shein: a veritable treasure trove*

the Xinjiang region have proved particularly controversial. Shein claims it is "strengthening governance and compliance" and has "been at pains to improve its environmental record". Despite the bad smell, this "mega listing" would be a lifeline for a financial centre desperate to rebuild its reputation, said Bloomberg. The City has seen its share of IPOs dwindle to the lowest in decades and has lost "its crown as Europe's largest equity market by valuation". It might even compensate for the "painful snub" of losing home-grown chipmaker Arm to New York. Just a 10% slice of Shein would make it London's largest first-time share sale since commodities giant Glencore floated in 2011.

A float would put an end to retail's "longest running will they/won't they IPO saga", said Mark Faithfull in *Forbes*. Shein is courting London because its preferred option, New York, turned a cold shoulder, owing to the "increasingly frosty business relationship between the US and China". Although now based in Singapore, the fashion giant, which posted profits of more than \$2bn last year, still sources much of its ultra-cheap stock from China – prompting questions about conditions in supply chains. Reports that it used cotton from forced labour in

Be careful what you wish for, said Michael Bow and Hannah Boland in *The Daily Telegraph*. Attracting Shein could be a boost to UK plc. But some in the City view its arrival here as "a sign of how desperate London is", and are sceptical about whether investors will embrace it. Many fund managers would rather see "a steady stream of smaller companies coming to market" than an iffy behemoth like Shein, which risks ruffling the feathers of London's other listed retailers. This could prove an own goal for the City if the listing is derailed. "If a £50bn float goes awry, it would only deepen the chill running through the London market."

## Making money: what the experts think

### ● India's upset...

If India's election shock was a stunning blow for Narendra Modi, it has also proved a roller coaster for investors, said Mint.com (India). Ahead of the results, both the country's benchmark indices – the Sensex and the Nifty 50 – "closed at record highs", prompting Hedonova investment chief Suman Bannerjee to observe that "the markets are riding a wave of optimism". Any surprises, he added, "might trigger volatility". And how. After Modi's BJP lost its majority, the stock market "took its worst tumble in four years", said John Power on Al Jazeera, with both indices closing nearly 6% down, erasing almost \$400bn in a day. Investors fretted that Modi's need to negotiate with coalition partners could mean he'll have "to compromise on aspects of his economic agenda" – making it more difficult to pass reforms related to land, labour and capital regulations. "Perhaps more than anything else, though, markets hate uncertainty" – of the kind delivered in spades by this "unemphatic outcome".

### ● ...and bounce-back

"The good news for most investors is that the broader economic growth story of the



*Apple's Tim Cook with "El Loco"*

past few years looks intact," said Lex in the FT: even if "Modi-affiliated stock market darlings" such as Adani Enterprises – owned by his long-term chum Gautam Adani and up 7,000% since 2014 – "may have had their best days". Indeed, the consequent recovery rally was so strong that

the Nifty 50 jumped by 3.4%, its biggest daily gain since 2021, said Bloomberg. Strategists saw the sell-off as a fantastic chance to accumulate more shares cheaply. For the moment at least, there is "relief for frazzled Modi bulls".

### ● Don't cry

As eccentric world leaders go, Javier Milei is "right up there", said William Turvill in *The Sunday Times*. Nicknamed "El Loco" (the crazy one), the Argentinian president carried a chainsaw during his election campaign last year, "indicating his desire to slash public spending" and kickstart the country's flailing economy. But are foreign investors getting the message? In an effort to drum up support, Milei headed to Silicon Valley last week to court Big Tech – pitching the country to high-profile leaders such as Apple's Tim Cook. This approach has worked for Japan in the past. But Argentina under a maverick? It's a big ask.

## Dr Copper

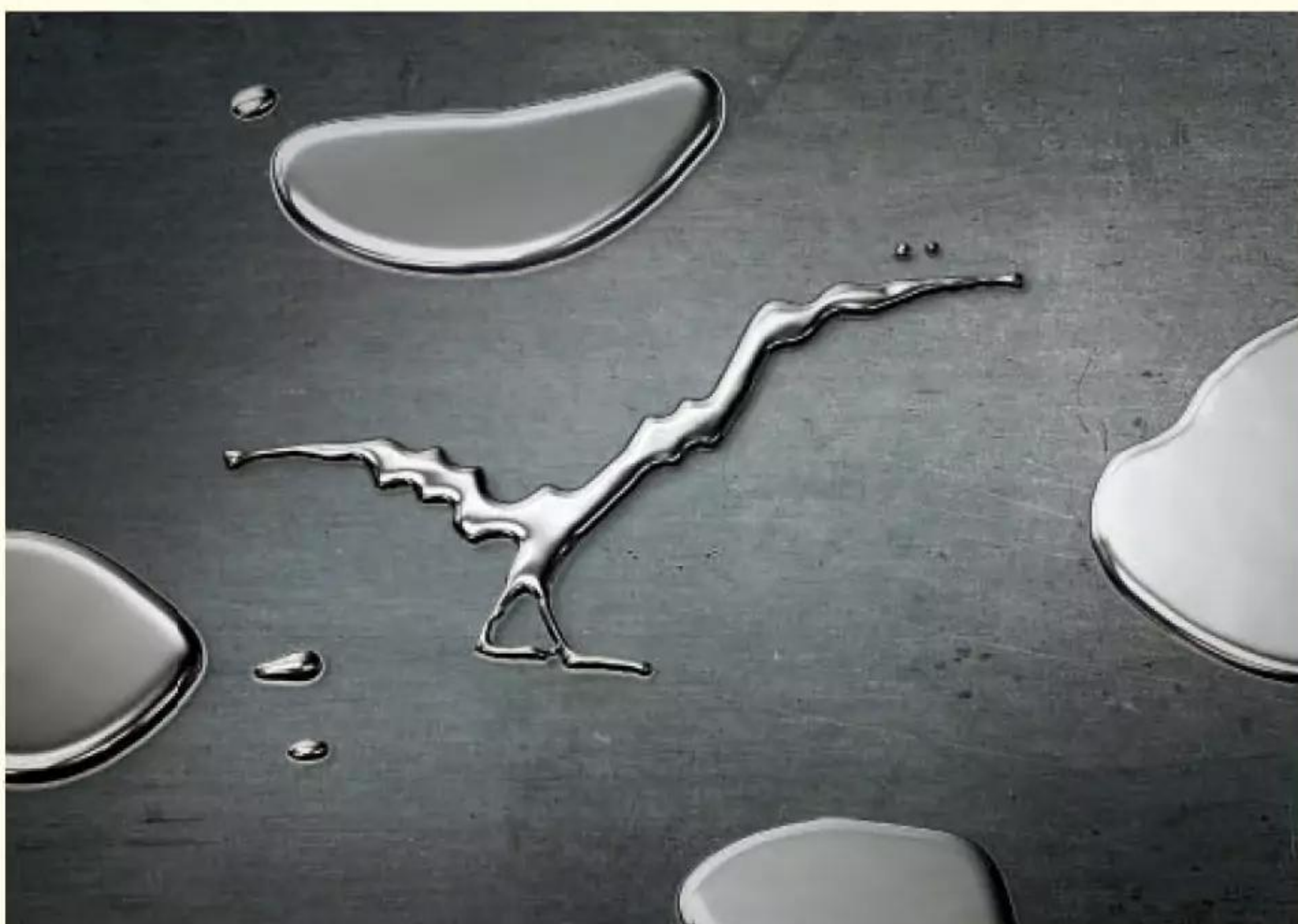
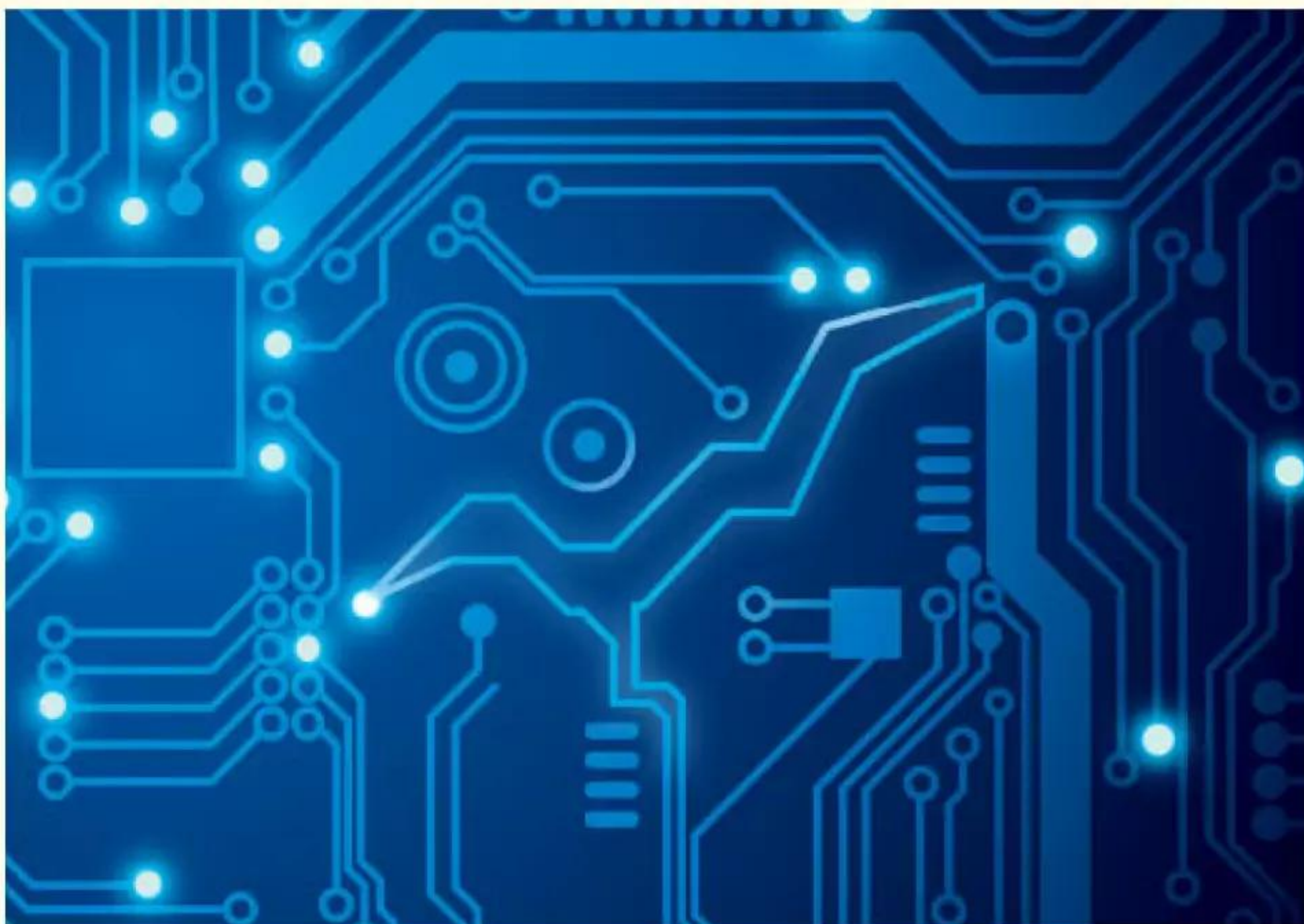
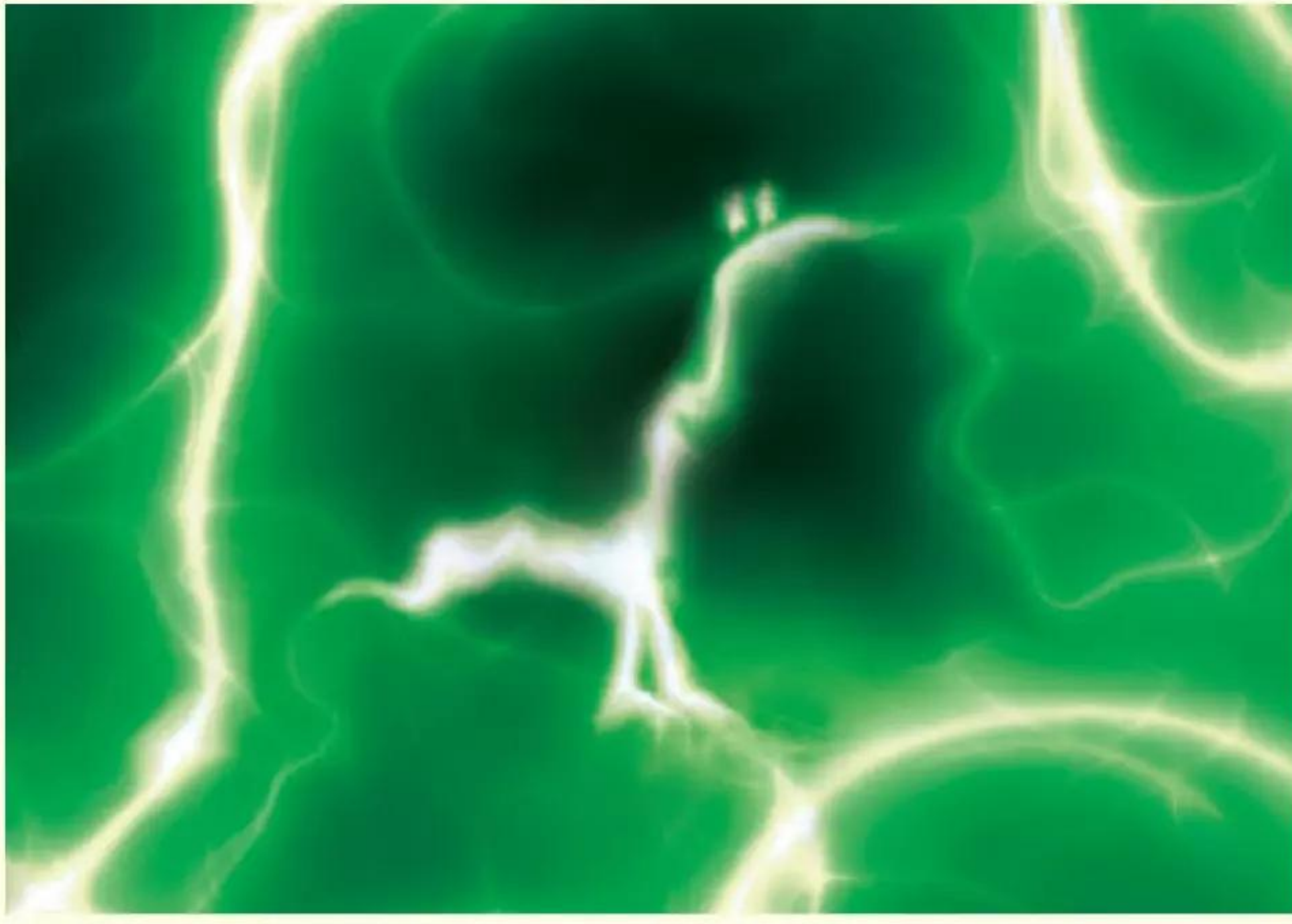
*BHP has aborted its £38.6bn bid for the FTSE-listed miner Anglo American. But the main prize – copper – is booming, said Lex in the FT. Prices of "the red metal" are up by about a fifth this year; hedge fund manager Pierre Andurand reckons they could almost quadruple to \$40,000/tonne in the near future. Police report a 20% rise in the theft of copper cable in southern England.*

**Staying power** It dug humanity out of the Stone Age and its industrial applications made it "a proxy" for economic health – hence the nickname "Dr Copper". The current boom reflects its role powering the energy transition. The "greening economy" should see demand double by 2035, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights.

**Threats** The market is greatly influenced by the world's biggest consumer, China, which "front-ended" a lot of buying last year. And "political risk stalks the sector". Last year, Panama shut down one of the world's biggest mines over environmental concerns.

**Joining the party** Investing in copper is expensive and difficult. So buy "the picks and shovels". UK-listed Glencore and Antofagasta both have copper interests; or check out US-listed Freeport-McMoRan and Southern Copper. Since "no miner is always free of controversy", you should diversify. Several UK-compliant exchange-traded funds "pool together copper miners".





After more than  
*two decades* of hunting  
PROFITS, we're  
ready for whatever  
the future holds.

“HISTORY”, so the saying goes  
“does not repeat itself. It rhymes.”  
Something that's important to  
remember, when it comes to understanding  
Profits. In more than two decades of  
hunting we've experienced financial crises,  
international conflicts, a technological  
revolution and – of course – a global  
pandemic. All of which have confirmed to  
us that the fundamental tenets of the Profit  
hunters remain sound. Whatever the world  
throws at them. **Your capital is at risk.**



[www.artemisfunds.com/profit-hunting](http://www.artemisfunds.com/profit-hunting)

For further information talk to your financial adviser, or visit [artemisfunds.com](http://artemisfunds.com). Issued by Artemis Fund Managers Limited  
which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.





MT22  
Sky

READERS OFFER

100% COTTON

## FLAT FRONT CHINOS

only **£50** buy 2 for £90  
**SAVE £10**

**PETER CHRISTIAN**  
*Gentlemen's Outfitters*

Our pure cotton flat front chinos are cut with no pleats, giving a flatter, slimmer profile. The perfect everyday, year round casual trouser. They feature our clever expanding waistband for an extra two inches of comfort.

- 100% cotton
- French bearer fly for a trim flat front
- 2 buttoned hip and 2 deep side pockets
- Hidden, expanding comfort waistband allows for 2" of flexibility
- No Quibble Money Back Guarantee\*\*

Waist: 32 34 36 38 40  
42 44 46 48 50 52"

Leg: 28 30 32 34"

Colours: Brick, NEW Sand, Green, Stone, Royal, Mustard, Tan, Sky, Navy

"Excellent fit, high quality and stylish."  
John

★★★★★  Trustpilot  
RATED EXCELLENT

**FREE  
DELIVERY\*  
& RETURNS\*\***

Use promo code  
**43X23**

Order Flat Front Chinos (MT22)

Use code **43X23** for **FREE P&P**

**[peterchristian.co.uk](http://peterchristian.co.uk)**

Call us **01273 493 393** Mon-Sun 24 hours a day

Order by post – Cheques payable to Peter Christian.  
Quote **43X23** and send with your order to:  
Freepost PETER CHRISTIAN

**Go Online or Call for a Free Catalogue**

\*Free UK delivery (normally £5). Offer ends midnight 07/08/24. £50 Minimum spend applies. This offer may not be used in conjunction with any other offer. \*\*Free returns within the UK only and subject to items being in perfect condition, in their original packaging and returned within 30 days.  
A Division of Hills of Bramley Ltd. Co Reg No 04767802





## Services have triumphed since Brexit...

**Chris Dorrell**

*City AM*

Is it time to ditch the doom and gloom about Brexit? In a rare piece of good news for the Government, an in-depth study has suggested that the UK's services economy "has been more resilient than almost all other advanced economies" since the vote to leave the EU, says Chris Dorrell. Exports of services have increased by nearly 29% since February 2020, according to UK in a Changing Europe (hardly a eurosceptic think-tank), with "business services" powering the way. The boom has been driven by accountancy, management consultancy and legal services, which unlike finance are "less reliant on EU membership" and generally less regulated than financial services, so Brexit has imposed fewer barriers. Still, better news on services merely highlights the damage Brexit has done to trade in goods. Had UK exports to the EU grown in line with intra-EU trade, they would have been 27% higher in August 2023. The report also notes that much-vaunted "Brexit freedoms", such as free trade agreements, are much harder to realise in the current, "less open", global economy. Britain has long been a services-led economy, but Brexit has "exacerbated that shift".

## ...but the consultants are feeling the heat

**Rana Foroohar**

*Financial Times*

Management consulting is in trouble, says Rana Foroohar. "Disruption is coming to bite the industry that made a cult of it." The signs are everywhere. Bain and McKinsey are offering workers "financial incentives to leave"; Deloitte and EY are reorganising. "There's a new sense of penny-pinching where things had once been flush." Even former strengths – such as broad international footprints – are now suspect. A Missouri senator is pushing for "a bill to ban McKinsey from US government work" because of its business links to China. Populist politicians aren't the only sceptics. Academics and industry insiders have also weighed in, with critiques such as the bestselling *The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens our Businesses, Infantilizes our Governments and Warps our Economies*. This is "a many-sided crisis": while AI is "knocking out a lot of what freshman consultants used to do", there's more competition at the top from boutique risk analysis firms. Perhaps a recession will give the industry new life: "management consulting often makes money by telling companies to cut staff". Don't count on it, though.

## The battle to shake up the cloud

**Katie Prescott**

*The Times*

Back in 2013, a series of jazzy government-sponsored TV adverts encouraged Britons to "SWITCH!" their bank accounts to a different provider. The impetus, says Katie Prescott, was a finding by the Independent Commission on Banking that people "were more likely to get divorced than to break up with their bank". On average, people switched every 26 years. In 2024, a parallel can be drawn with cloud computing which, like banking, is "a boring but essential business service, dominated by a handful of players". The UK competition regulator is now quite rightly investigating the power that Amazon and Microsoft, which have 80% of the market, wield. It looks like the same old story of inertia and fear: businesses worry about the impact of switching platforms on their tech infrastructure – reporting that the faff involved simply "outweighs the benefits". Ten years on, what happened with the banks? The switching system works well for those who use it, but most people still don't. As with banking, it appears the regulator has "a long slog ahead" if it wants to shake up the cloud.

## No one is worth \$56bn, not even Musk

**Matthew Lynn**

*The Sunday Telegraph*

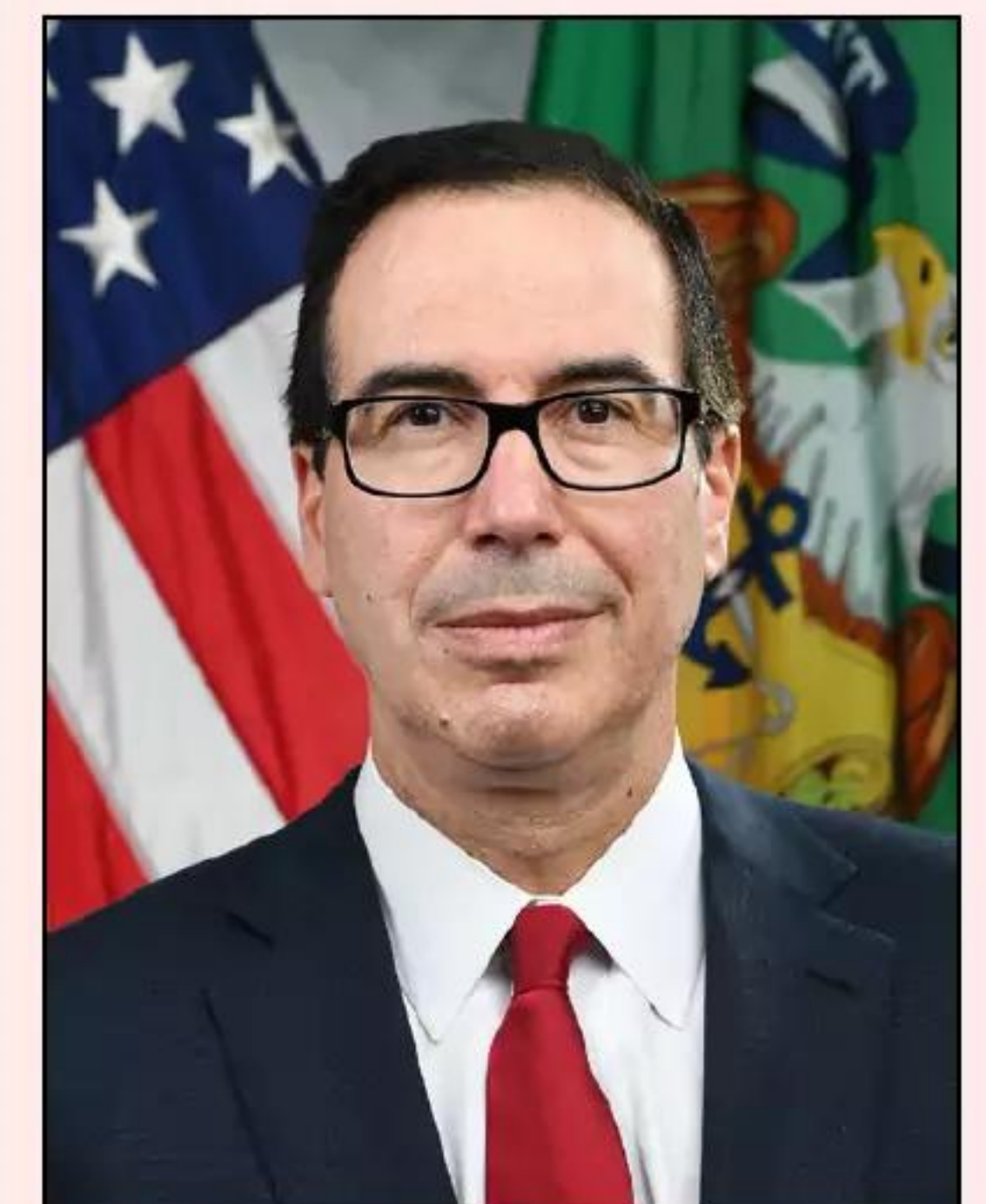
Tesla boss Elon Musk is pulling out the stops to win shareholders' backing for his bumper \$56bn pay package when they vote on it later this month, says Matthew Lynn. He's rallying the troops with offers of exclusive factory tours, "a blue tick" on X/Twitter, "or even a trip in one of his space rockets". It's shaping up to be an epic contest, and shareholders are lining up on either side of the issue. Musk himself has hinted he may "go off and concentrate on his other businesses" if he doesn't get the reward he thinks he deserves. In fairness, if anyone is entitled to a pay package of that size, it is probably Musk. He co-created a company whose value surpassed \$1trn (admittedly briefly) and upended the global car industry. Still, investors should have no qualms about calling his bluff. The pay deal diverts too much money away from shareholders, who have already lost out in recent stock market falls. "Perhaps most significantly, the company is clearly losing its edge." Musk is unquestionably "one of the great entrepreneurs of the century". But "no one is ever worth that kind of money".

## City profiles

**Sam Altman**

The OpenAI chief "has a day job and a side gig", said The Wall Street Journal. "Only one of them is making him rich" – and it isn't his role leading the AI revolution. Sam Altman, 39, owns no stake in the ChatGPT startup, last valued at \$86bn, "saying he doesn't want the seductions of wealth to corrupt the safe development of artificial intelligence". He earns an annual salary of just \$65,000. But he compensates with an "opaque" investment empire that is now "raising questions of conflicts". Altman has stakes in 400-plus companies – including Airbnb, Stripe and Reddit, whose shares popped 10% on news of an OpenAI partnership. He has quietly become "one of Silicon Valley's most prolific investors", said The Times. Naturally, he has pledged to give "most" of it away.

**Steve Mnuchin**



Donald Trump's former treasury secretary is creating almost as much noise as his old boss, said Bloomberg. "Four years in government" and "a war chest of foreign money" (much of it from the Gulf), have "positioned him to chase his most audacious deals yet". Via his private equity firm Liberty Strategic Capital, Mnuchin is chasing banks and cybersecurity firms, and recently "set his sights" on a TikTok takeover. No wonder Trump has just joined the platform. The impeccably connected Mnuchin, 61, followed his father into Goldman Sachs and later started a hedge fund. When he agreed to lead campaign fundraising for Trump, "old Wall Street friends were baffled – though not for long". His signature was soon adorning new dollar bills. He hasn't ruled out a repeat, if summoned.





We buy fine wines  
& spirits.

Free, no obligation valuations

020 7377 8097

thelondonwinecellar.com | wine@thelondonwinecellar.com

Unit 2 and 3 Granita Court | 9 Cross Lane | London | N8 7GD



You keep  
the wicket,  
we'll keep  
the lawn green

We provide a premium  
lawn care experience.

We seed them, feed  
them, even control  
the weeds. So, you  
don't have to.

For a **FREE** lawn analysis visit [greenthumb.co.uk](https://www.greenthumb.co.uk) to contact your local team.



Alan Titchmarsh's  
**GARDENING CLUB**

Brought to you by  
**GreenThumb**  
LAWN TREATMENT SERVICE



Who's tipping what

The week's best shares

**Auto Trader Group**  
*The Times*  
The online car marketplace's "largely fixed" cost-base has helped it scale profits quickly – the core business has margins north of 70%. Not cheap, but "high quality" – with sales up 14% and "promising avenues" for growth. Buy. 825p.

**JP Morgan Global Growth and Income**  
*The Times*  
This "well-established" investment trust aims to beat global market benchmarks and has, so far, delivered. Holdings include Microsoft, Amazon and Nvidia. Trades at a "modest premium". Yields a prospective 3.4%. Buy. 540p.

**Schneider Electric**  
*The Times*  
This French energy firm majors on digitising industrial processes: products include EV chargers, high-voltage grid kit and software. Growth is fed by megatrends – data-centre investment, decarbonisation and AI. Buy. €227.45.


**International Consolidated Airlines Group**  
*The Daily Telegraph*  
The BA owner's Q1 profits have jumped to €68m (from €9m last year), thanks to recovering global travel, and debt is down. Should benefit from falling inflation and rate cuts. "Dirt-cheap." Buy. 173.7p.

**Sanderson Design Group**  
*The Sunday Times*  
Hit by a slow UK housing market and high inflation, the wallpaper and fabrics group has slashed inventory to boost margins, expanded in the US, and is pocketing record licensing revenues. Buy. 106p.

**Shaftesbury Capital**  
*The Daily Telegraph*  
Online shopping and hybrid working present risks for this trust, which owns and manages prime London retail, leisure, office and residential sites worth £4.8bn. But London retains it "pulling power", and rate cuts would be a boon. Buy. 142p.

**Directors' dealings**

**Marlowe**



Former Tory deputy chair Lord Ashcroft has spent £18.8m on shares in the health and safety firm he will now chair, taking his holding to 15.8%. This precedes a round of divs and buybacks following the £430m sale of Marlowe's risk and compliance services division.

SOURCE: INVESTORS' CHRONICLE/THE TIMES

...and some to hold, avoid or sell

**Anglo American**  
*Sharecast*  
Jefferies has downgraded the miner following rival BHP's abandoned £39bn pursuit last week, and slashed its target price from £32 to £27 – citing economic risk and regulatory concern about its demerger/disposal programme. Hold. £24.90.

**Severn Trent**  
*Investors' Chronicle*  
The water utility has hit its leakage reduction targets as it continues a costly infrastructure rebuild. Political risk rises in an election year, and debt remains a problem, but falling inflation helps. Hold. £24.02.

**Victorian Plumbing Group**  
*Investors' Chronicle*  
Margins are up at the online bathroom products retailer, thanks to higher own-brand sales and lower shipping costs. The acquisition of rival Victoria Plum will boost market share but hit profitability until cost-cuts are finalised. Hold. 94p.

**Fevertree Drinks**  
*Sharecast*  
Market research and "demand normalisation" have prompted Goldman Sachs to downgrade the tonic-maker. Sales growth is expected to be below consensus in the US and to remain soft in the UK. Sell. £11.80.

**Tate & Lyle**  
*Investors' Chronicle*  
The food ingredients firm has recorded a "handsome" profits rise, despite falling volumes. Still facing headwinds, but the sale of its remaining stake in the Primient joint venture will aid long-term strategy and fund a buyback. Hold. 702p.

**Wizz Air**  
*Investors' Chronicle*  
The airline's first profit in four years was a "formality", given a 21% uplift in passenger numbers and fleet efficiencies. But while shares may still look a bargain, the balance sheet is weak. Sell. £20.84.

**Form guide**

Shares tipped 12 weeks ago

**Best tip**  
**McBride**  
*The Sunday Times*  
up 35.64% to 127.5p

**Worst tip**  
**Elf Beauty**  
*The Mail on Sunday*  
down 5.56% to \$189.74

**Market view**

"It's more promising than China in terms of growth."  
**Vincent Juvyns of JPMorgan Asset Management urges investors to look beyond the turmoil in India.**  
Quoted on Bloomberg

Market summary

**Key numbers for investors**


	4 June 2024	Week before	Change (%)
FTSE 100	8232.04	8254.18	-0.27%
FTSE All-share UK	4496.88	4506.79	-0.22%
Dow Jones	38504.38	38921.61	-1.07%
NASDAQ	16761.28	17010.38	-1.46%
Nikkei 225	38837.46	38855.37	-0.05%
Hang Seng	18444.11	18821.16	-2.00%
Gold	2337.70	2342.70	-0.21%
Brent Crude Oil	77.23	84.11	-8.18%
DIVIDEND YIELD (FTSE 100)	3.58%	3.52%	
UK 10-year gilts yield	4.27	4.38	
US 10-year Treasuries	4.34	4.50	
UK ECONOMIC DATA			
Latest CPI (yoy)	2.3% (Apr)	3.2% (Mar)	
Latest RPI (yoy)	3.3% (Apr)	4.3% (Mar)	
Halifax house price (yoy)	1.1% (Apr)	0.3% (Mar)	
£1 STERLING:	\$1.278 €1.175 ¥199.444		Bitcoin \$70,944.00

**Best and worst performing shares**

WEEK'S CHANGE, FTSE 100 STOCKS		
RISES	Price	% change
Auto Trader Group	825.80	+12.78
Fraser's Group	897.00	+9.32
Entain	714.00	+5.93
EasyJet	485.50	+4.70
Rentokil Initial	424.00	+4.20
FALLS		
Ocado Group	353.70	-13.82
Antofagasta	2135.00	-7.62
RS Group	697.50	-7.43
Fresnillo	568.50	-7.41
GSK	1615.00	-7.18
FTSE 250 RISER & FALLER		
Pets at Home	319.20	+12.60
Mobico	52.75	-11.00

Source: Refinitiv/FT (not adjusted for dividends). Prices on 4 June (pm)

**Following the Footsie**



6-month movement in the FTSE 100 index



# On the road with Princess Anne, Britain's hardest-working royal

*In recent years, Princess Anne has taken on more official engagements than any other member of the royal family. Hannah Furness tries to keep up*

The Princess Royal is standing up a 42ft tower, looking out to sea in a northwesterly force-six wind. Her hair, that neat up-do that has barely changed in 40 years, does not move, even as a gust blows a seagull past her eyeline. "It's quite exposed," she says with understatement, then gets on with peppering her hosts with questions about tides and volunteer timetables. Outside the watchtower, her arrival in the Lancashire seaside town of Fleetwood on a Tuesday morning has caused the smallest of stirs. A handful of dog-walkers gaze at her, camera phones aloft, and she offers them a brief wave. Inside, the volunteers of the National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) could not be more excited for a visit from their royal patron.

The chairman, Stephen Hand, launches into a stream of compliments about the Princess's work. "If I haven't made the point clearly enough," he finishes, "we love her."

This is her first engagement on a day that will see her travel 421 miles from Gloucestershire to Lancashire, then Merseyside, and back again via helicopter and Range Rover. It is one of ten engagements in this typical week; she will complete about 450 this year. "She's a dynamo," says the CEO of The Pony Club. "The best president imaginable," agrees the chairman of Carers Trust. "She should be queen," offers a member of the public. This is said at least once a day.

Not for nothing does she have the reputation as Britain's hardest-working royal. In numbers of engagements, she and the King vie for the top spot each year. While he and the Princess of Wales have taken time off from public engagements to undergo cancer treatment, the 73-year-old Princess Royal has ploughed on with her head down. In the middle of April, she granted vanishingly rare permission for The Daily Telegraph to follow her on the road, for a snapshot of her work. I've spent seven years writing about the royal family, travelling across the UK and the world to watch them at work, but Princess Anne's no-fuss, no-frills team is unlike anything I've seen up close before. Professional and precise, she barely stops – every hand is shaken and every minute counts.

The Princess's diary is set months in advance. Twice a year, her office sends an invitation to 300-plus organisations she is affiliated with, asking for their requests for her time. Typically, she'll receive 1,000 to 1,200 requests a year – some suggest a visit, others ask her to write forewords to books, or ask for meetings. All are compiled into a database, arranged by date and region, and



*The Princess Royal attends the 30th anniversary of the Sefton Carers Centre*

printed neatly in a book for the Princess to study. "[She] goes through everything required and decides what she's going to do and when," says a member of the team. A planning meeting follows – and "once [the programme is] set, she sticks to it." Her staff then go through it again to add last-minute audiences into the gaps. "The week is there to be filled," one long-serving team member tells me. "If she's got a free hour-and-a-half in London, we'll look again to see what else to add."

The Princess's team is small but mighty. There's her private secretary, Colonel John Boyd, who is fresh from 32 years in the British Army; her deputy private secretary, Commander Anne Sullivan; as well as five programme managers tasked with ironing out the schedule, right down to how long the Princess can spend talking to each person. They are aided by 13 ladies-in-waiting, spread geographically, who accompany her out and about. "You never quite know what she's going to say yes to, but it's never an outright no," says the long-serving team member of her schedule. "She's probably been to more industrial estates than any other royal."

*"The week is there to be filled,' one member of her team says. 'If she's got a free hour-and-a-half in London, we'll see what else to add'"*

The Princess's week had started at Gatcombe Park, her Gloucestershire home. On Monday, the Princess's assistant, Donna, welcomed a group of eight representatives from the Royal Dairy Innovation Award with a cup of tea and a biscuit. The Princess joined them once they were settled, in a homely barn conversion with framed seascapes on the walls. She reassured them that it's "not going to be one of those formal events", then started grilling them about the Nova Scotian dairy industry and on-shore salmon farming. Ash Amirahmadi OBE, winner of the prestigious Princess Royal Award, was there to collect the certificate honouring his leadership in the dairy industry. Afterwards, he told me: "I come across eminent scientists and business leaders and not many have a better understanding of the food system than the Princess Royal."

In Fleetwood, the wind whips across the sandy beach and the Princess Royal doesn't flinch. She is there with a handful of volunteers from the NCI, celebrating its 30th anniversary. With an average age of 69, these are the local "eyes and ears" that saved 22 people from trouble in the water last year by raising the alarm. The visit has an air of a diligent business manager checking in on a regional branch. Nothing needs explaining to the Princess, a keen sailor and lighthouse aficionado, and she speaks sparingly. Questions and remarks are formed from



one or two words: “Since?” “Previous experience?” “Quite handy.” She has a reply to everything, having travelled every inch of Britain in the line of duty.

John Bradford, who at 77 is the longest-serving volunteer, waits on the tower to shake her hand, but he is accidentally missed. The Princess is swept on to the next part of the engagement, presenting long-service awards and meeting 25 more volunteers in a nearby hall, accompanied by her new lady-in-waiting Dolly Maude, a midwife and friend of Zara Tindall who wastes no time in charming the room. When her team discover someone has been missed out, they tell the Princess, and Bradford is whisked into the last line-up. “I’m very glad you made it in,” the Princess tells him, spending an extra few moments in conversation. Then, duties completed, she disappears to a back room where sandwiches are on offer. Ten minutes later, she’s back on the road.



Awarding Paul Hollywood his MBE

It is a cliché that the royal family thinks the world smells of fresh paint. The corridors at her next engagement in Merseyside have the distinct smell of bleach, but at the Wrea Green Equitation Centre in Preston, it is quite the opposite: a muck heap has been left intact. The hosts deem futile any attempts to fool the Princess into thinking it didn’t exist. She is, after all, a life-long equestrian.

Skipping the champagne reception and tea party, put on to celebrate 25 years of the Pony Club Centre Membership Scheme, the Princess instead strides around the yard watching the young riders. She tours the stables and classrooms, then she holds a presentation of commemorative plaques to 20 proprietors, each of whom has a different chat with her. Her third engagement of the day is Sefton Carers Centre in Waterloo, Merseyside, which supports unpaid carers. Some of those assembled remember the Princess from 30 years ago, when she opened the centre. She is back to celebrate the anniversary, and hails a stream of people with a cheerful, “I haven’t seen you for a while,” and, “This has changed a bit.” Everyone gathers in horseshoe shapes – her preferred arrangement for talking – and she ploughs on with gloved handshakes, getting through five large rooms of people. Among them are two men in their 90s who care for their wives with dementia, and teenagers who look after siblings and parents before and after school.

Some are nervous; a few curtseys are a little shaky. The Princess has a neat trick: her questions get more specific – no opinions are required, just short, easy-to-recall facts: “Where do you live?” “How long have you been coming here?” Her own opinions are brief, delivered as common sense. On hearing that GPs don’t see the same families from cradle to grave any more, so find it difficult to support carers, the Princess says: “That’s part of the way people live their lives.” She spends a few extra moments talking to the building’s cleaner, loudly declaring her “very important”. She has another habit, shared with King Charles, of ending engagements by turning back for one last comment, leaving the impression she wishes she could stay. Before she leaves, she is presented with a large rose planter. “Oh my word, a monster!” she marvels. “What a lovely thing... I hope the helicopter can cope.” By the end of the day, in small heels and with the briefest of breaks, she has spoken to at least 250 people. If she’s flagging, it doesn’t show.

Wednesday, Windsor Castle, 11am. Standing on a dais in the Grand Reception Room, the Princess is ready for a full day of investitures. She is one of only three members of the family who perform them, and while the King and the Prince of Wales

have been needed at home, she has been carrying the load. Some 140 people will receive an honour today. She talks to Paul Hollywood, being made MBE, about her love of Chelsea buns. Diana Parkes, a domestic-violence campaigner, is made a CBE. She finds immediate common ground with the Princess via a family member who sold her horses. One of the investitures team tells me quietly that “you can always tell when it’s HRH” on duty, because the day takes longer. In theory, the Princess has her deputy private secretary on hand to jog her memory with details about people as the Lord Chamberlain announces each name. In practice, says a long-serving aide, she sends investiture notes back with her own comments about where she has met people before and which of her patronages they have links to. This is the case “95% of the time”. “She’s got such a great brain. We often hear, ‘You must have briefed her really well,’ but no, it’s all her. She makes it very easy in that respect.” After the 90-minute session has overrun slightly, she takes lunch in the private apartments before repeating it all in the afternoon.

Thursday, London’s Guildhall. The Princess Royal arrives via train for The Lord Mayor’s Big Curry Lunch, a City fundraiser for military veterans. She has no entourage, only her protection officers and one lady-in-waiting. Guests are an eclectic mix – a pearly queen mingles with barristers and bankers, alongside the military. Lunch is served on long tables. The Princess sits with servicemen and women, eating from an identical plate piled high with Indian food. She is soon plied with goodie bags, including matching socks for her and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, her husband.

At 7pm, the Princess Royal walks into the White Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace. Tonight, she is hosting a black-tie dinner to celebrate The Duke of Edinburgh’s Commonwealth Study Conferences, which brings together future leaders to address problems facing the world. She delivers an eight-minute speech, then stays on for dinner, sitting at a round table and entertaining guests until long after sunset.

Friday morning and the Princess is back at it with an investiture. There are 79 people this time, with their families, in the Throne Room at Buckingham Palace. Neil Constable, former CEO of Shakespeare’s Globe, is here to receive his OBE for services to theatre. He says afterwards that the “professional” Princess knew the brief so well that she could make conversation about both his previous job and his next, at The Musicians’ Company. She “made it a very special day”, he tells me.

At this point, I close my notebook. Everyone – kindly, warmly, generously – is saying the same thing, and we have run out of superlatives. The job, too, must get repetitive, but you would never know it. In continually asking questions, the Princess has found a way to keep interested even after all these decades. She treats her work as a “nine-to-five job”, one palace source tells me. “Except it doesn’t often finish at five.” Over five days, I have barely seen her sit and haven’t seen her accept a single cup of tea while working. The week after we meet, the Princess will be in Windsor, Shropshire, Cambridgeshire, London and Cornwall. After that, she will go from the Royal Windsor Horse Show to Canada for a three-day trip with Sir Tim. She will be 75 next year but shows no sign of slowing down. I am half her age – and after barely a week of trying to keep up with her, I’m off for a lie-down.

*A longer version of this article appeared in The Daily Telegraph*  
© Telegraph Media Group Limited 2024



Unique. Unforgettable.

*Extraordinary.*



Book your villa with

**Oliver's Travels**  
— WHY DO ORDINARY? —

[www.oliverstravels.com](http://www.oliverstravels.com)  
0333 888 0205

## ANGLOfRENCH PROPERTIES

EXTRAORDINARY HOMES.  
EXCEPTIONAL HOLIDAYS.



Chateaux, Manoirs, Country Houses and Villas in  
South West France, Provence, the Côte d'Azur  
and Italy.

[www.anglofrenchproperties.com](http://www.anglofrenchproperties.com)  
[jack@anglofrenchproperties.com](mailto:jack@anglofrenchproperties.com) | 01258 817 110

# Fashion City

How Jewish Londoners  
shaped global style

**BOOK NOW**

📍 Canary Wharf

**MUSEUM  
OF LONDON  
DOCKLANDS**



## THE WEEK CROSSWORD 1417

Two Connell Guides and three Week-branded items will be given to the sender of the first correct solution to the crossword and the clue of the week opened on Monday 17 June. Send it to The Week Crossword 1417, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR, or email the completed grid/listed solutions to [crossword@theweek.co.uk](mailto:crossword@theweek.co.uk). **Tim Moorey (timmoorey.com)**



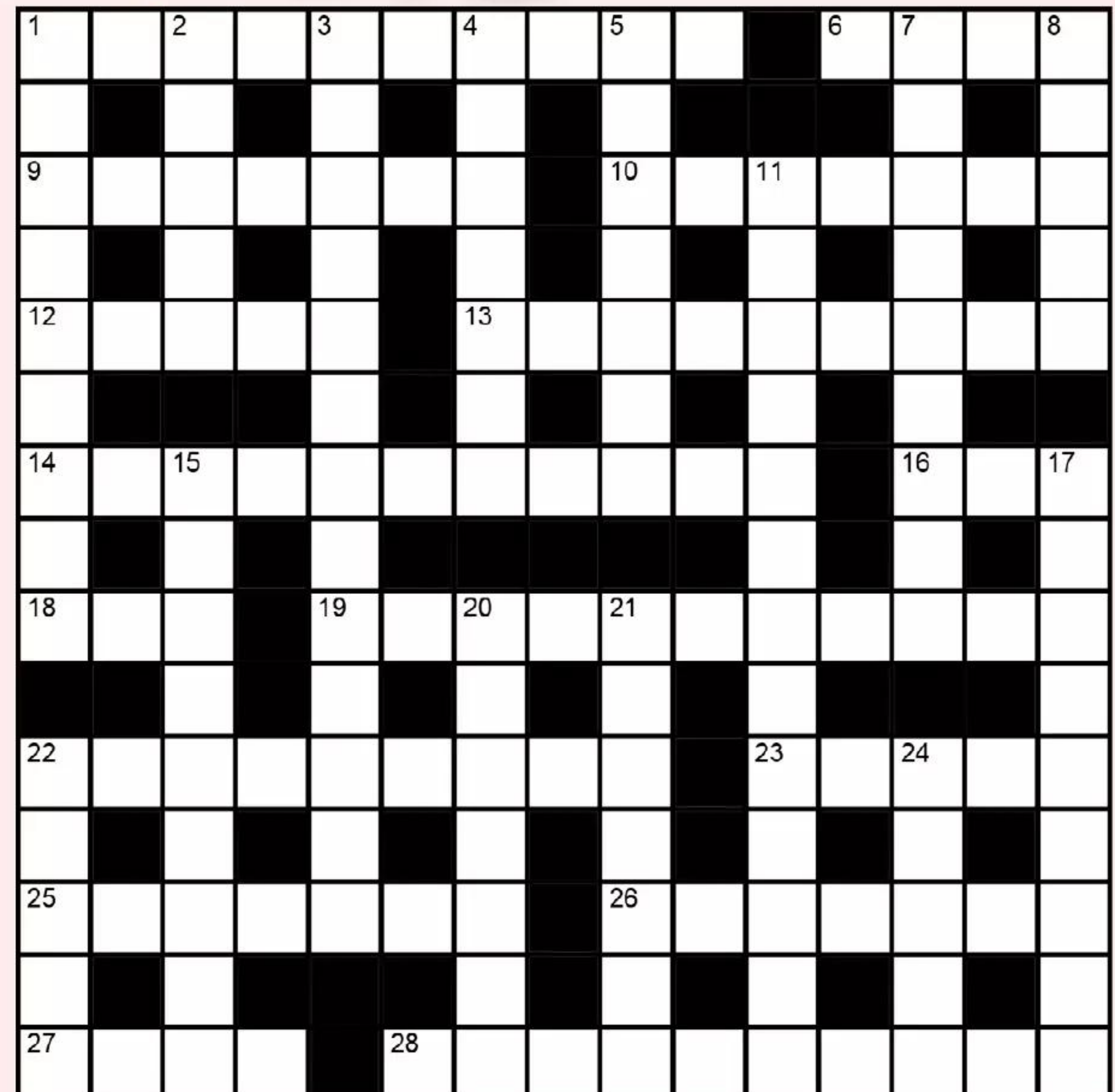
This week's winner will receive Week-branded items including a notebook, coffee mug and tote bag, as well as two Connell Guides ([connellguides.com](http://connellguides.com)).

### ACROSS

- 1 What could be the aim on table dance after protest (6,4)
- 6 Partner for life in branch (4)
- 9 What starts this clue is excellent (7)
- 10 Paper trousers for scruffy types (3-4)
- 12 Partly clear the ground (5)
- 13 Leader, one in oil trade supply (9)
- 14 Check the lights for international events (4,7)
- 16 Mamma's partner turning up in the end (3)
- 18 Broadcast what causes inflation (3)
- 19 Competitors in spectacles seen around Jersey (4-7)
- 22 Hard blows for some in agriculture (9)
- 23 Coarse in part of the course (5)
- 25 Unfinished limited company scrutiny getting acclaim (7)
- 26 Bid satisfying liberal Americans? (2-5)
- 27 Getting a lot of rubbish, time for Democrat with money? (4)
- 28 Sketching by Penny at home could end up on a board (7,3)

### DOWN

- 1 Horse and cart ordered for band that's often moving (9)
- 2 Agreement in Berlin for each one who can't be serious (5)
- 3 Have what it takes from hot-dog seller's tasks ordered? (3,3,7)
- 4 Most daring veteran in prime (7)
- 5 Girl has bust of more than ordinary protuberance (7)
- 7 Showing no feeling, prisoner grabs one twice (9)
- 8 Herb is a comic character (5)
- 11 Anagram to do is quick: I'm a kindly person (4,9)
- 15 Containers producing any scraps up the wall (5,4)
- 17 Out of form, one's lacking in seamanship when on the rocks (9)
- 20 Sheraton Hotel's head sacked if represented as this? (3-4)
- 21 Fair number put on short week a moment ago (4,3)
- 22 Work during strike and leave (3,2)
- 24 Appropriate hunting pursuit but it's banned (5)



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tel no \_\_\_\_\_

Clue of the week answer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Clue of the week:** Lamb possibly? Try it without sauce initially (8, first letter E) *The Times*

### Solution to Crossword 1415

**ACROSS:** 1 Chap 3 Dogs dinner 10 Means test 11 Lewis 12 Liege 13 Thirteen 15 Clobber 17 Hack-saw 19 Nickers 21 Analyst 22 Vestment 24 Truth 27 Outre 28 Vice squad 29 Brandishes 30 Span

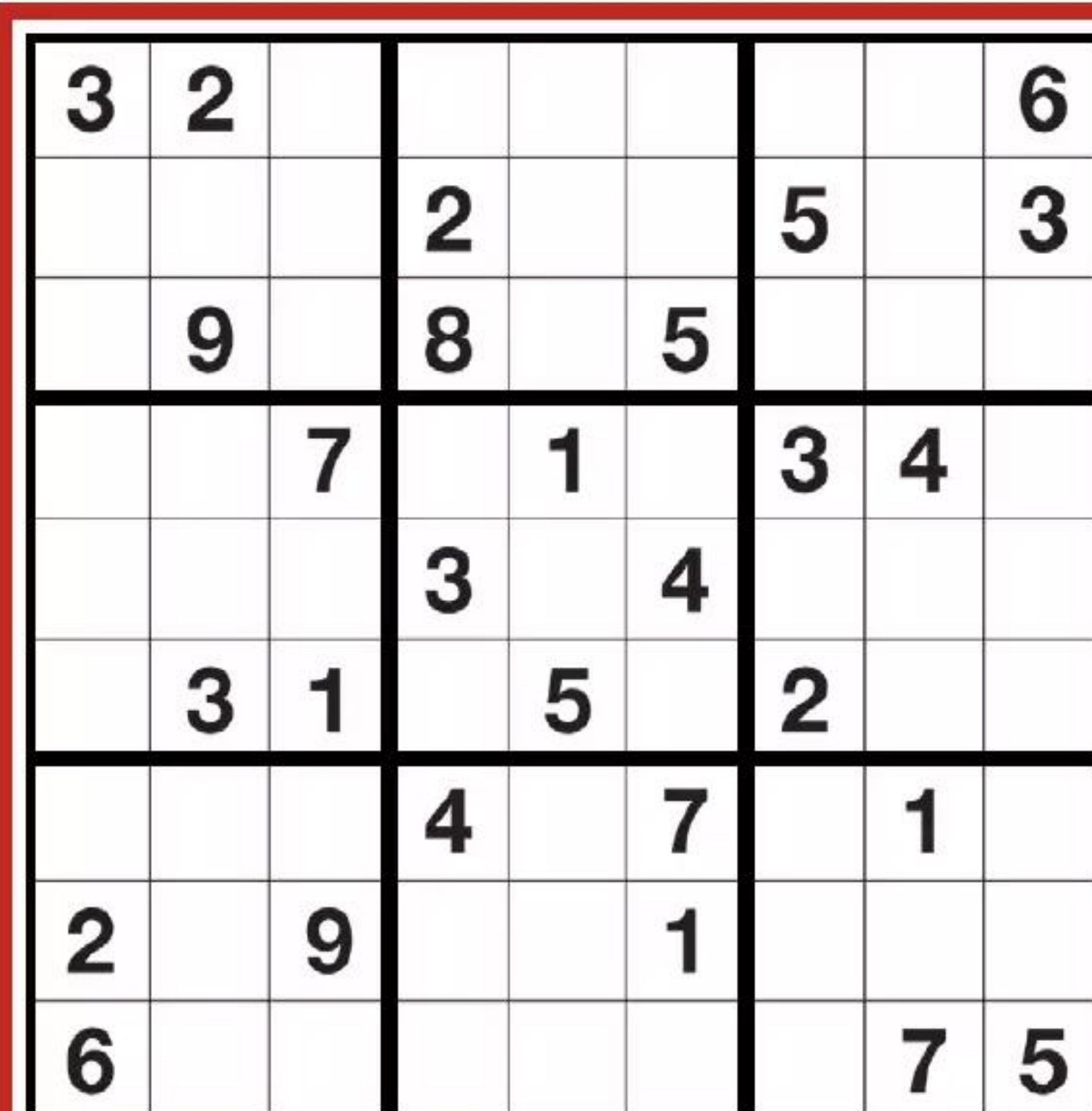
**DOWN:** 1 Complacent 2 Apace 4 One-star 5 Scottish 6 Inlet 7 New Jersey 8 Rash 9 Assemble 14 Switched-on 16 Orchestra 18 Chartist 20 Sheaves 21 Autocue 23 Tweed 25 Usurp 26 Boob

**Clue of the week:** Playing organ in church - is it Bliss? (9)

**Solution:** IGNORANCE (anagram of ORGAN IS + CE)

**The winner of 1415 is Cameron Cleland from Dingwall**

The Week is available from **RNIB Newsagent** for the benefit of blind and partially sighted readers. 0303-123 9999, [rnib.org.uk/newsagent](http://rnib.org.uk/newsagent)



### Sudoku 959 (easy)

Fill in all the squares so that each row, column and each of the 3x3 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9

#### Solution to Sudoku 958

5	7	1	2	4	9	3	6	8
4	6	2	1	8	3	7	9	5
9	8	3	6	7	5	4	1	2
1	5	8	3	6	2	9	7	4
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	8	3
7	3	9	4	1	8	2	5	6
2	1	6	7	5	4	8	3	9
3	9	5	8	2	1	6	4	7
8	4	7	9	3	6	5	2	1



For binders to hold 26 copies of The Week: [modernbookbinders.com](http://modernbookbinders.com), £12

## Charity of the week



The Climate Coalition is the UK's largest group of people dedicated to action on the climate and nature crises. Along with our sister organisations, we are a group of more than 130 organisations. We want the next generation, at home and abroad, to benefit from a better future than the one we're facing. Our campaign The Great Big Green Week, the UK's biggest-ever celebration of action to tackle climate change and protect nature, is taking place between 8 and 16 June. The Great Big Green Week sees communities, schools, businesses, churches, mosques and more join together in a wave of support for action to protect the planet. **Find an event near you or get involved at [greatbiggreenweek.com](http://greatbiggreenweek.com).**

## THE WEEK every day of the week



Stay informed about everything that matters with our new daily digital editions and enjoy a digest of the most important, interesting stories - along with the liveliest commentary and analysis.

✓ Online at [TheWeek.com](http://TheWeek.com) ✓ In our app ✓ Via subscriber newsletters

Subscribers with digital access can explore our daily editions straight away. Print subscribers can try 3 months free, visit [theweek.com/createaccount](http://theweek.com/createaccount)



The Week is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (which regulates the UK's magazine and newspaper industry). We abide by the Editors' Code of Practice and are committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism.

If you think that we have not met those standards and want to make a complaint please contact [editorialadmin@theweek.co.uk](mailto:editorialadmin@theweek.co.uk). If we are unable to resolve your complaint, or if you would like more information about IPSO or the Editors' Code, contact IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or visit [www.ipso.co.uk](http://www.ipso.co.uk).



FROM AI TO VR:

# FINDING WINNERS FROM THE TECH REVOLUTION

The Liontrust Global Innovation team believes we are in the early stages of a new technology cycle driven by AI. They believe this has the potential to increase productivity, earnings and growth rapidly for the winners of this transformation, which will be both leaders and disruptors. For more information on the new cycle, Fund, investment process and performance, please visit [liontrust.co.uk/global-technology](https://liontrust.co.uk/global-technology)



Past performance does not predict future returns. You may get back less than you originally invested.

[liontrust.co.uk](https://liontrust.co.uk)

**LIONTRUST**  
COURAGE · POWER · PRIDE

**Capital at risk.** This marketing communication does not form part of a direct offer or invitation to purchase securities. Before making an investment decision, you should familiarise yourself with the different types of specific risks associated with the Global Innovation Team. This information can be found in the final Prospectus and Key Investor Information Documents (KIIDs) available on our website: [liontrust.co.uk](https://liontrust.co.uk). This advertisement is a financial promotion under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 which has been approved and issued by Liontrust Fund Partners LLP (2 Savoy Court, London WC2R 0EZ), authorised and regulated in the UK by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN 518165) to undertake regulated investment business.