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NHS mistakes cost my baby her father

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The Daily Telegraph

NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

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Starmer paves the way for tax rises

Manifesto will not rule out increasing capital gains, fuel duty or council tax

By **Ben Riley-Smith** POLITICAL EDITOR

LABOUR'S election manifesto will not rule out increases in council tax, fuel duty and capital gains tax, Sir Keir Starmer admitted last night.

The Labour leader repeatedly declined to rule out tax rises if he became prime minister after the general election, during a Sky News election programme.

During the interview with Beth Rigby, Sir Keir was repeatedly asked to explicitly promise that there would be "no tax rises" if he won the general election on July 4. The Labour leader declined to do so.

Instead, he promised "no tax rises for working people", leaving open the possibility of increasing taxes on wealth.

At one point, Sir Keir said: "I'm not going to sit here tonight and write the next five years' worth of budgets, and you would not take me seriously if I did."

He took a similar approach when pressed to rule out increases in council tax – something Welsh Labour is looking at raising – capital gains tax and fuel duty. On council tax, he said: "That is not in our manifesto. That is not a choice we are making." And on fuel duty, he said: "That has to be decided budget by budget."

But there was no explicit promise the three taxes would not be raised. Rigby pointed out that "no plans" for such moves meant they "might" happen. The remarks were leapt on by the Conservative Party, with Rishi Sunak saying: "He's failed to rule out raising taxes. Again. Labour will raise your taxes."

Sir Keir was also put on the spot about his past support for Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader whom he once said would make a "great prime minister". Asked whether he meant those words, Sir Keir declined to say yes. Instead, he said he always believed that Labour was going to lose the election under Mr Corbyn.

Last night, Bridget Phillipson, the shadow education secretary, was pressed on ITV on why Labour did not support the Green Party's wealth tax on the mega-rich. She responded: "I don't believe that we need to set out wider plans in that area."

Sir Keir will today launch the Labour election manifesto in Manchester, where he will attempt to rebut attacks on tax by insisting that "wealth creation" would be his priority in Downing Street. The Labour leader will say: "This is a manifesto for wealth creation – that is our number one priority".

He will also call Labour "the party of wealth creation".

The manifesto is expected to explicitly rule out increases in the rates of income tax, National Insurance, VAT and corporation tax.

The Labour leader will say at the manifesto launch: "Some people say that how you grow the economy is not about how you create wealth, but how you tax it, how you spend it, how you slice the cake... So let me be crystal clear, this manifesto is a total rejection of that argument."

The focus on wealth is unusual for a Labour leader. The party has historically focused on the redistribution of wealth through taxation. However, there are echoes of the comment made by Lord Mandelson, one of the architects of New Labour, about how he was "intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich".

It speaks to Sir Keir's attempt to occupy the centre ground and make Labour electable again.

Mr Sunak also faced tough questioning in the Sky News programme. He admitted he had not managed to cut NHS waiting lists and said immigration to the UK was too high.

Taxes have become one of the most contested policy areas in this election, with the Tories focusing on the issue as they try to shrink Labour's 20 percentage point opinion poll lead.

The Conservatives will today announce their "family business tax guarantee", pledging not to raise employer National Insurance, capital gains tax and corporation tax, and will call on Labour to do the same.

Sir Keir has attempted to counter the criticism on tax by pointing out that the fiscal burden as a share of GDP has been rising to its highest level since the Second World War under the Tories. He said: "We've got the highest tax burden for 70 years and I think working people shouldn't pay more tax. We will not raise their tax."

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Calls to ditch MP over election 'flutter'



MATTHEW HORWOOD

Craig Williams, Rishi Sunak's aide, bet £100 on a July election three days before it was announced by the Prime Minister

By **Dominic Penna, Fiona Parker** *and* **Camilla Turner**

RISHI SUNAK'S parliamentary private secretary placed a £100 bet on a July election three days before it was announced.

Craig Williams, who is seeking re-election in Montgomeryshire and Glyndwr, has confirmed he is under investigation by the gambling watchdog after he "put a flutter" on a July poll.

According to *The Guardian*, the gambling watchdog was alerted to the case after the 39-year-old placed a bet with Ladbrokes on May 19. On May 22, Mr Sunak called a snap election for July 4. He said: "I put a flutter on the general election some weeks ago. This has resulted in some routine inquiries... I will fully cooperate with these. I don't want it to be a distraction from the campaign. I should have thought through how it looks."

It is understood that the Conservative Party will not take any action against Mr Williams now, but will wait until the Gambling Commission inquiry concludes. Even if the party cut ties with him, he would still appear on the ballot paper as the Tory candidate because it is too late for that to be changed. Oliver Lewis, Reform UK's candidate for the Montgomeryshire and Glyndwr seat, called on the Tories to withdraw their support for Mr Williams. "This is completely tawdry, low-grade behaviour by somebody who was at the right hand of the Prime Minister," he said.

Jonathan Ashworth, the shadow paymaster general, said claims of Mr Williams placing a £100 bet on the general election were "utterly extraordinary".

A Conservative spokesman said it was a personal matter for Mr Williams to deal with and that the party would not comment until the inquiry was over.

Sunak 'not giving up' despite fears of super-majority

By **Tim Sigsworth**

THE Labour Party will not win a super-majority at the general election, Rishi Sunak has insisted.

The Prime Minister played down warnings from Grant Shapps, the Defence Secretary, that Labour could be on course to win by an extraordinary margin on July 4. He said he had "absolutely not" given up on winning what would be a surprise election victory.

Mr Shapps suggested yesterday that a super-majority for Sir Keir Starmer could be a possibility and warned that voters needed to ensure a "proper system of accountability" in the next Parliament. He was referring to a Tory social media advertisement that suggested the party could be reduced to just 57 seats and be overtaken by the Liberal Democrats.

However, Mr Sunak insisted this would not be the outcome. The Prime Minister said: "That's not what I'm saying. And every time someone says something to me about a poll I always give you guys the same answer which you've heard me say multiple times. The poll that matters is the one on July 4."

Pressed on if he had given up on winning, Mr Sunak said: "No, absolutely not." He added: "What you saw yesterday is, we put the manifesto forward which has got a very clear set of tax cuts for the country, tax cuts at every stage of your life. Whether you're working, setting up a small business, tax cuts when you're trying to buy your first home, tax cuts for pensioners, and tax cuts for families. And I'm really energised to now have a chance to put our very clear plan to the country."

57

The number of seats the Tories could be left with after the election, according to the party's own advertisement

Sir Keir has enjoyed a lead in the polls of at least 20 points throughout the campaign so far.

Mr Sunak's promises of £17 billion of tax cuts and an increase in defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2030 have not proved enough to reduce Labour's lead.

Mr Shapps, the Defence Secretary, had told Times Radio: "I think the simple point is that if you want to make sure that in this next government, whoever forms it, that there is a proper system of accountability, then we would argue that you don't want to have somebody receive a super-majority.

"And in this case, of course, the concern would be that if Keir Starmer were to go into No 10 – it will either be Rishi Sunak or Keir Starmer there is no other outcome to this election – and that power was in some way unchecked, it would be very bad news for people in this country.

"A blank-cheque approach, allowing someone to do anything they wanted, particularly when their particular set of plans are so vague."

NEWS

Treatment delays hit 380k cancer patients

More than 380,000 patients have had to wait longer than two months to start cancer treatment since NHS targets were last hit in 2015, analysis has found. Cancer Research said the "election must be a turning point for cancer" as it published figures showing the scale of the delays. Another report, by the Royal College of Radiologists, showed that half of cancer centres are experiencing "routine" weekly delays to treat patients amid a "staggering" shortfall in radiologists and cancer specialists.
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NEWS

Letby caught virtually red-handed, court told

Convicted multiple murderer Lucy Letby was caught "virtually red-handed" as she attempted to kill a premature baby on the neonatal ward at the Countess of Chester Hospital where she worked, a court has heard. The 34-year-old was discovered by a doctor standing over the cot of an infant, known only as Baby K, having allegedly dislodged her breathing tube and switched off the alarm monitors, it was claimed during her retrial at Manchester Crown Court.
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MATT



'There should be a limit to how often the Lib Dems are allowed to dump Ed Davey into lakes and rivers'

WORLD

Russian warships sail 30 miles off Florida

A Russian frigate armed with hypersonic missiles docked in Cuba as Moscow's navy carried out missile drills in the Atlantic in a show of force amid rising global tensions. The Admiral Gorshkov frigate was accompanied by the Kazan, a nuclear-powered submarine and two supply vessels, one a military tug and the other a fuel carrier as it sailed within 30 miles of Florida. The move marks one of the largest Russian deployments to the Caribbean island in years.
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BUSINESS

Mexican billionaire buys 3pc stake in BT

Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim has bought a £400 million stake in BT, weeks after Allison Kirkby, the chief executive, unveiled a bold shake-up of the telecoms giant. Latin America's richest man, worth $93 billion (£72 billion), on Tuesday disclosed a 3.2 per cent stake in the FTSE 100 group, making him one of BT's largest shareholders. The swoop by Mr Slim, who made his money in telecoms, is likely to prompt speculation about his intentions.
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Treatment delays hit 380k cancer patients

Charity calls for election to be turning point, with almost 60pc still waiting too long for treatment

By **Michael Searles**
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

MORE than 380,000 patients have had to wait longer than two months to start cancer treatment since NHS targets were last hit in 2015, new analysis has found.

Cancer Research UK said the "general election must be a turning point for cancer" as it published figures showing the scale of the delays. The report is one of three released today showing the state of cancer care, before the publication of monthly NHS waiting time data.

Another report, by the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR), revealed that half of cancer centres are experiencing "routine" weekly delays to treat patients amid a "staggering" shortfall in radiologists and cancer specialists. The third report, from charities including Young Lives vs Cancer and the Teenage Cancer Trust, said children were being "failed by the system", with half not getting enough support during treatment.

Cancer Research UK said the NHS target to treat 85 per cent of patients within 62 days of an urgent referral was last met in December 2015.

It said a lack of staff and diagnostic equipment were to blame. Recent improvements mean the proportion of people starting treatment within two months rose slightly to 68.7 per cent in March from a low of 59.1 per cent in January last year.

However, Michelle Mitchell, the charity's chief executive, said each case was someone "facing unbearably long waits for their treatment to begin"

She said: "The general election must be a turning point for cancer. Any incoming UK government must make tackling cancer waits a top priority, and pledge to meet all cancer waiting time targets by the end of the next parliament.

"To do this, all political parties should commit to a long-term, fully funded strategy to back cancer research across the UK and improve and reform cancer services in England, in order to provide our health service with much-needed equipment and staff."

The Government rowed back on its "war on cancer", declared by Sajid Javid as health secretary in February 2022, instead deciding to include the disease in a "major conditions strategy", to the disappointment of cancer experts.

The Conservative manifesto restated this plan to incorporate cancer as one of six major conditions it wanted to tackle.

The Liberal Democrats said they would introduce a 10-year dedicated cancer plan and make the 62-day target a "legal guarantee". Labour did not commit to a cancer strategy before its manifesto launch, but it has previously said it plans to double the number of MRI and CT scanners, purchase AI-enabled scanners and deliver 40,000 extra appointments a week.

Picture imperfect
Tourists clamour to secure a shot of the *Mona Lisa* in the Louvre in Paris. The Leonardo da Vinci portrait is the main draw for 80 per cent of the museum's nine million annual visitors – on some days, 25,000 people queue to catch a fleeting glimpse of it.



GAVIN RODGERS/PIXEL8000

Millions of children not safe online despite Ofcom rules

By **Charles Hymas**
HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

MILLIONS of children under 13 will be exposed to harmful content on social media despite a crackdown by the online watchdog leading peers and campaigners have warned.

Eight peers including Baroness Morgan, a former culture secretary, Lord Bethell, a former health minister, and online campaigner Baroness Kidron have written to Ofcom warning its draft children's code fails to enforce minimum age limits on social media sites.

Their letter said this would mean millions of children under the age of 13 would continue to be exposed to products and content that even the social media platforms deemed inappropriate.

"We are bewildered at the decision to do nothing at all to protect children under 13, and at the same time give regulated companies safe harbour," it said.

"After so many years in the making and so many promises to parents and children, the failure to use your powers in full will undermine faith in a regulatory solution altogether."

The problem stems from Ofcom's decision not to require the social media companies to apply "highly effective" technology when determining the age of children.

Officials say the only way to guarantee a child is 13 or over would be to ask for physical ID such as credit cards or passports but many teenagers do not have them. This would mean children could be denied access simply because they do not have the necessary ID. However, alternative methods such as age assurance technology where a child's age is assessed through facial or behavioural characteristics are not judged to be precise enough by Ofcom.

Such measures like physical ID will only be required of platforms like pornography sites where the minimum age is set at 18.

Seven in 10 university courses held on web

By **Poppy Wood** EDUCATION EDITOR

MORE than two-thirds of pupils are still being taught online as part of their undergraduate degrees, a survey has revealed.

A poll of more than 10,300 university students by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) found 69 per cent are still receiving some lectures online.

The independent think tank's annual student satisfaction survey said it marked a drop since 2022, when 90 per cent of students reported being taught partially online. But HEPI said it was "striking" that a "significant proportion of online delivery remains" and looks "set to stay in place".

The think tank's annual survey of students found that five per cent of undergraduates polled between January and March this year reported still receiving around half of their education online. A further four per cent said that between 91 and 100 per cent of their degrees were still being delivered online.

It comes amid criticism that the university sector has been too slow to ditch measures introduced while campuses remained shuttered in the pandemic.

More than 150,000 students are seeking legal action against their universities for lost learning during the pandemic and subsequent years, arguing they have little to show for their mounting student debts.

A lawsuit initially filed by 924 students from University College London (UCL) is set to go to trial later this year after talks between both sides failed. The students argue that the university breached its contract with them from 2018-22 with lecturer strikes and Covid-related closures. They are demanding compensation of about £5,000.

Arrest over Mone PPE case

By **Daily Telegraph Reporter**

A MAN, 46, has been arrested in a PPE investigation into a consortium linked to Baroness Mone.

The suspect, from Barnet, north London, was arrested as part of the National Crime Agency (NCA) investigation into PPE Medpro.

He was held at his home yesterday morning, the NCA said.

The NCA is carrying out an investigation into suspected offences in the procurement of personal protective equipment contracts by PPE Medpro.

Baroness Mone, 52, and her husband Doug Barrowman, 59, have faced controversy over the so-called "VIP lane" contracts granted to some suppliers during the coronavirus pandemic.

PPE Medpro, a consortium led by Mr Barrowman, was awarded Government contracts worth more than £200 million to supply PPE after Baroness Mone recommended it to ministers.

The Department of Health and Social Care has issued breach of contract proceedings over the 2020 deal to supply PPE gowns. Both Baroness Mone and Mr Barrowman deny any wrongdoing.

NEWS BULLETIN

Nine-hour BA 'flight to nowhere' for passengers

Passengers were stuck on a nine-hour British Airways flight from London to Texas which turned back halfway.

BA195 left Heathrow at 10am on Monday and reached Newfoundland when a technical issue forced it to return. Passengers travelled 4,834 miles to land back in the UK at 7pm.

BA apologised for the "disruption" and rebooked customers on alternative flights to Houston. The plane had been approaching Canada when one of its Rolls-Royce Trent engines flagged a warning message, *The Times* reported.

It is not believed to have posed an immediate safety risk, but the crew chose to return to the UK to carry out inspection and engineering work.

Pharmacies to go dark in protest against losses

Pharmacists across the UK are set to black out their shops in an "unprecedented" one-day protest over mounting financial losses.

Chemists in communities around Britain are set to black out windows, turn off lights and wear black next on June 20 because of "real-terms" funding cuts. The industry is unable to strike like other NHS staff because they are independent businesses but believe that the sector is in a "state of emergency". The National Pharmacy Association said three in four community pharmacies were running at a loss because funding has not kept pace with the costs of drugs and providing additional services.

Ex-NCA officer admits viewing indecent images

A former National Crime Agency (NCA) officer has pleaded guilty to viewing indecent images of children on his work computer.

Adam Taylor, an intelligence officer, had hundreds of such pictures on laptops and tablets. At Southwark Crown Court yesterday, Taylor, 40, admitted two counts of misconduct in public office, three counts of making indecent photographs of children and one of possessing an extreme pornographic image. Judge Cole ordered a pre-sentence report and adjourned sentencing to Aug 2 at the same court. The court heard Taylor, of Waltham Abbey, Essex, was dismissed for gross misconduct.

Cost blamed as estate flies fewer England flags

A London council estate renowned for displaying hundreds of St George's Crosses during football tournaments has cut back on flags for Euro 2024, with residents blaming soaring costs.

Kirby Estate, in Bermondsey, often has up to 700 England flags and banners adorning balconies and walkways when the team play.

But with England's Euro 2024 opener against Serbia on Sunday, the number of flags on the estate has fallen to 60 this year, with organisers saying the cost has increased ninefold. "We used to buy them for 33p a flag, and we can't get them for less than £3 a flag now," resident Chris Dowse, 45, said.

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Love story
Swift and Healy's relationship

January 2023
Taylor Swift makes a surprise performance at The 1975's concert in London, sparking dating rumours that had originally surfaced when the pair met for the first time in 2014.

May 6 2023
Healy attends Swift's Eras Tour in Nashville before they are pictured holding hands for first time in New York's Casa Cipriani.

May 13 2023
Healy attends an Eras Tour concert again, this time with Swift's father in Philadelphia.

May 15 2023
The couple are spotted leaving a recording studio together in Greenwich Village, New York.

June 5 2023
Swift and Healy break up with sources saying the pair were "just having fun".

July 26 2023
Swift gets a shout-out from football player Travis Kelce on his New Heights podcast. It is believed that the pair start dating weeks later.

April 19 2024
Swift sings about Healy and their short-lived romance on her newly released album, The Tortured Poets Department.



GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY

Swift's 'tortured poet' finds new muse

On the day US singer is in London between tour dates, her ex-boyfriend reveals his engagement

By **India McTaggart**
ENTERTAINMENT CORRESPONDENT

FRESH from of a successful three-day stint of shows in Edinburgh, Taylor Swift landed in London to recharge and catch-up with friends before the next British leg of her Eras tour.

But the same day the American pop star, 34, was pictured back in the capital also coincided with her ex-boyfriend Matty Healy's partner sparking engagement rumours across the pond.

The 1975 frontman's whirlwind romance with Swift ended in June last year and was apparently heavily referenced in her new album released two months ago.

Healy has now proposed to his partner of nine months, Gabbriette Bechtel, the Los Angeles-based model. The pair teased their engagement on social media while attending a Charli XCX concert together, with Bechtel sharing pictures of a black diamond ring to her 820,000 followers on Instagram and Healy reposting.

They were then pictured together in New York yesterday as Healy's mother, Denise Welch, confirmed their engagement by saying Bechtel, 26, is "everything I would want in a daughter in law".

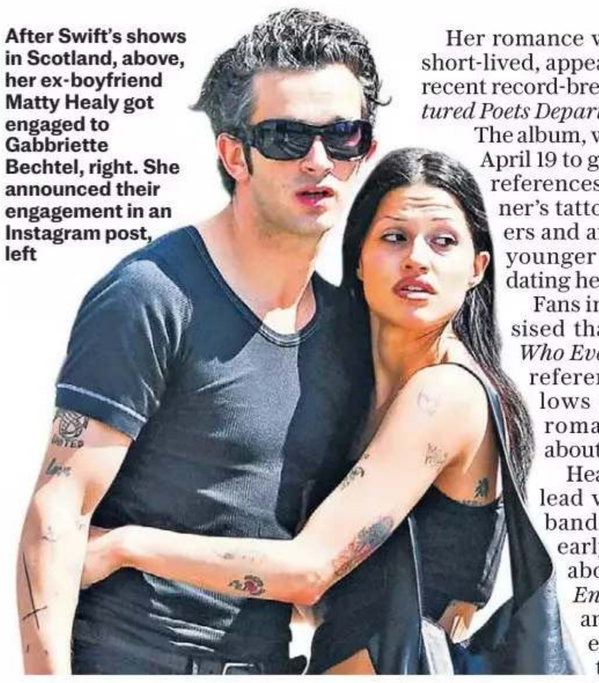
Speaking on *Loose Women*, the *Coronation Street* actress said: "We couldn't be happier ... She is from Los Angeles, she is absolutely gorgeous."

Healy's mother went on to explain to her ITV co-stars that the couple had broken the news to their loved ones a few weeks ago, saying: "I have known for a few weeks that Matty got engaged. They went over to see their friends Charli [XCX] and George [Daniel, The 1975 drummer] in New York."

The news came as his Swift was seen dining out in Notting Hill's Casa Cruz with friends Kate Moss, Cara Delevingne, Phoebe Waller-Bridge and others amid a break in her tour.



The star, who has been dating the Kansas City Chiefs star Travis Kelce for 10 months, will return to the capital later in the month after performing in Liverpool and Cardiff.



After Swift's shows in Scotland, above, her ex-boyfriend Matty Healy got engaged to Gabbriette Bechtel, right. She announced their engagement in an Instagram post, left

Her romance with Healy, although short-lived, appeared to feature in her recent record-breaking album *The Tortured Poets Department*.

The album, which was released on April 19 to great fanfare, includes references to her former partner's tattoos, love of typewriters and an apparent dig at his younger love interests after dating her.

Fans immediately hypothesised that *The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived* in particular referenced the highs and lows of the pair's short romance, which lasted about a month.

Healy, who has been the lead vocalist for the rock band The 1975 since the early 2000s, was asked about Swift's album by *Entertainment Tonight* and responded: "I haven't really listened to that much of it, but I'm sure it's good."

He began dating fellow singer Bechtel in September, at a similar time as Kelce and Swift went public with their high-profile romance, after she was pictured attending one of his football games.

Healy introduced his now fiancée to his parents five months into their relationship when they went to see the *Loose Women* star's show *The Gap* in Manchester.

The mother of two revealed that her son had the distinctive engagement ring specially made for Bechtel, saying: "Black diamond, he had it made for her and I couldn't be more thrilled."

The couple have made several public appearances together, including at his band's concerts and during Fashion Week.

Bechtel, who is known mononymously as Gabbriette, was born in Orange County, California in 1997 and began a successful modelling career after moving to Los Angeles and being cast in a Blood Orange music video.

Queen jokes she may nudge out King as garden museum patron

By **Victoria Ward** DEPUTY ROYAL EDITOR

THE Queen has joked that she wants to "nudge" the King from his position as patron of the Garden Museum, which she admitted she could not resist visiting every time she was asked.

Her Majesty described the museum, on the south bank in central London, as "such a special place" as she made her third visit in just over 12 months.

She was visiting a new exhibition about the gardens of four leading female members of the Bloomsbury Set, including Virginia Woolf and her lover, Vita Sackville-West.

The Queen praised the "wonderful" exhibition, which she said was "so important" because women gardeners were "quite often" eclipsed by men.

"I know my husband is the patron but I might have to nudge him," she joked.

"I'd quite like to take that one away from him because it's such a special place that every time I'm asked, I just have to come back again."

Shane Connolly – the royal florist who created the floral displays for the Coronation – was also at the museum alongside gardener Alan Titchmarsh, the president of the museum.

Titchmarsh said after the visit: "We would be very happy to have the Queen and the King as patron, either or both. We just love that she loves to come."



Alan Titchmarsh, the museum's president, said 'we just love' that the Queen attends

The Gardening Bohemia exhibition focuses on writer Woolf and her garden at Monk's House; her sister Vanessa Bell, the artist, whose garden and studio was at nearby Charleston; Vita Sackville-West, the garden designer and writer, and her gardens at Sissinghurst Castle; and Lady Ottoline Morrell, the arts patron and photographer who presided over Garsington Manor.

Speaking to an audience of gardeners and curators, the Queen said: "I think this wonderful exhibition celebrating women's gardening is so important... I hope it attracts many visitors.

"I'm so glad that you are celebrating all the women who are these great gardeners because we do love gardening, as a gardener myself.

"It's quite often the men who get celebrated and not the women, so I think you're doing a brilliant job here by sharing what they do." The Queen, who is patron of the Charleston Trust which safeguards Charleston, in East Sussex, appeared particularly taken with a pair of colourful gardening boots that belonged to Lady Ottoline, loaned to the museum from Fashion Museum Bath.

"They are really beautiful, wonderful stitching. I'll have the boots, they are really cool," she said.

Fly the flag Prince heads to Euros

The Prince of Wales will travel to Germany to watch the England men's football team at Euro 2024, but will not watch their opening game against Serbia. Kensington Palace has confirmed that the Prince, who is president of the FA, would see England's second match – against Denmark – next Thursday. Harry Kane, England's captain, called the Prince "a big supporter", saying he had "been to a few camps now before the major tournaments and it just gives us extra motivation".

Rescue dog adoption rises when they are kept with close friends

By **Joe Pinkstone**
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

RESCUE dogs are less stressed and adopted more quickly when buddied up in shelters, a study has found.

Dogs are often kept on their own while awaiting rehoming to prevent the spread of disease and prevent violence.

However, a study of 61 dogs in a shelter in Montana found that buddied-up dogs are adopted in less than a week – and four days quicker than when alone.

Stress levels of the animals were determined from video recordings of the dogs and scientists also looked at the level of the stress hormone cortisol in canine urine.

Data show paired animals showed fewer stress-related behaviours and had lower cortisol levels than solo prospective pets.

"Overall, we found well-matched pair-housing can have both proximate and ultimate welfare benefits for shelter dogs," the researchers from Virginia Tech wrote in their paper.

Workers at the shelter screened dogs for sociability and those who were dog-friendly and over six months of age were included in the project.

Small and big dogs were paired with animals of comparable size and breed and scientists monitored behaviour for a week. Videos showed lonely dogs staring more into the eyes of passers-by, licking their lips more, and standing up on their back legs against the kennel wall.

Dogs on their own also whined more, played with a toy more often and spent longer with their ears pinned back against their skull.

"We found benefits of pair-housing for dogs in several of our experimental measures. All of these point to the welfare benefits of pair-housing for shelter dogs," the authors wrote in their paper, which is published in *Plos One*.



Scientists noted that dogs show signs of enjoying each other's company

The paper continued: "The effect of pair-housing dogs was also apparent in dogs' length of stay, with pair-housed dogs having a shorter length of stay by four days on average compared to single-housed dogs."

The scientists also said that the dogs also showed signs of enjoying each other's company, with dogs sharing a kennel often choosing to be close to each other.

"Dogs might find comfort in having a kennelmate," the authors wrote.

They added that while each dog had its own bed they saw anecdotal evidence that many of the paired animals chose to sleep together in one bed.

Almost half of the pairs of dogs also played with each other at some point during the experiment, the scientists said.

The authors warned close care is needed to ensure that dogs sharing kennels get on well, and not all animals will be suited to the living arrangement, but also said that it could be beneficial for some animals.

General election

Sunak admits voters have right to be angry

Prime Minister aware of missteps on migration, NHS, partygate and D-Day, but hails economy

By **Nick Gutteridge**
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

RISHI SUNAK said last night that he understood why Brexit voters were "frustrated and angry" by the more than doubling of net migration since the EU referendum.

The Prime Minister accepted that immigration was "too high" and added that he appreciated "people's cynicism" about his promises to bring it down.

During a televised interview, he also admitted he could "absolutely understand people's frustrations" with both himself and the Tories as he acknowledged public fury over NHS waiting lists, partygate, and his decision to leave the D-Day commemorations early.

He made the remarks as he was questioned over the Tories' record during a Sky News "leaders' event" last night.

Mr Sunak was confronted with figures that show net migration has run at 1.9 million over the past three years, compared with 836,000 in the three years up to the Brexit referendum.

The statistics caused gasps from the audience in Grimsby, where 70 per cent of people voted for Brexit following promises it would bring migration down.

"I'm sure people feel frustrated and angry about it," the Prime Minister responded, adding: "Immigration is too high – I'm not making any bones about that."

Mr Sunak appeared to blame Boris Johnson, the former prime minister, arguing that the number of visas being issued had fallen during his own 18 months in office.

He said it came down by 10 per cent last year and was set to fall by a further quarter this year after he launched a crackdown on people bringing dependants to the UK.

Confronted by the failure of successive Tory leaders to meet their pledges on migration, he added: "I can completely understand people's cynicism about this.

"I've had this job for 18 months. Numbers were down last year, they are down considerably at the start of this year and they'll keep coming down."

Mr Sunak also insisted the first flight of asylum seekers would take off for Rwanda on July 24 as planned, and said that more would follow.

Asked if he was confident the scheme to deport small boat arrivals would finally be up and running this summer, he said: "Yes. What we've done is already started detaining people, airfields are on standby, planes are booked."

He denied suggestions that he had called the snap election because he feared that his main border policy would fall foul to further delays.

Mr Sunak said he had decided to call the election because he felt that he had stabilised the economy sufficiently to start making promises about future tax cuts.

"An election is an important moment for our country and my priority when I got this job was to restore economic stability," he said.

"To me, with that economic foundation established, it was the right moment to have an election."

During the interview, the Prime Minister also pledged to keep cutting taxes for workers, admitting that the burden on working families was "too high".

He insisted that the tax burden would come down by 1 per cent by the end of the decade, denying claims that it would continue to rise regardless.

Mr Sunak also issued another public apology for his decision to leave D-Day commemorations early to film an interview with ITV.

The Prime Minister was heavily criticised by veterans and members of his own Cabinet after he skipped a ceremony involving Emmanuel Macron and Joe Biden.

He said: "The last thing that I wanted to do was to cause anyone – particularly our veterans' community – any hurt or upset.

"It was a mistake and that's why I apologise unreservedly and I'm deeply sad to have caused people hurt and upset by that."

GENERAL ELECTION 2024

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PM's view What Sunak offered up on key issues

On taxes
Taxes for working people will continue to go down. The tax cuts that we've announced reduce the tax burden by about one percentage point of GDP a year compared to the Spring Budget last year

On doctors strikes
Everyone knows the impact the industrial action has had ... Having resolved all the industrial action except the junior doctors, what we're now seeing is waiting lists coming down

On NHS waiting lists
"We've not made as much progress on cutting waiting lists as I would have liked. It has proved more difficult for a number of reasons, obviously recovering from the pandemic was not easy

On D-Day
The last thing I wanted to do was cause anyone, particularly our veterans community, any upset. It was a mistake and that's why I apologised deeply for that

On migration
It's too high. I've been clear that it's too high. I'm sure people feel frustrated and angry about it



Rishi Sunak agreed that the burden on working families was 'too high', as Sir Keir Starmer, right, defended his tax raid on private schools

STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA

None the wiser, but at least the good folk of Grimsby and Cleethorpes had a laugh

Sketch



By **Madeline Grant**

Last night's debate was being broadcast for Sky. The upside of this was that the Prime Minister could presumably watch it on playback after the tragic privations of his Sky+ free childhood were made clear to the general public.

The downside was that it meant being grilled by Beth Rigby. Strictly, this was not a debate at all, but a "leaders' event" as Sky anchors insisted on referring to it, in the manner of an abattoir owner calling their place of work a "fresh meat provision centre".

In the "spin room", presenters attempted to inject a bit of tension into proceedings. "The question, Sophy, is will this define the election campaign?" one anchor wondered aloud. (I'm going to go with... no). "The people of Grimsby and Cleethorpes have no time for the waffly answers," said another. Well, whether they liked them or not, they were going to get them.

Wes Streeting was also spinning hard. "These are the sorts of interactions Keir really enjoys", he said, of fielding tricky questions from Joe Public. This was probably an attempt to make Sir Keir Starmer seem normal but in fact made him sound like a sadomasochist.

Next we were shown a dramatic intro video featuring clips of the two leaders, interspersed with action-movie music and weird heartbeat sounds, which gave the impression we were about to watch *ER*. That illusion was quickly shattered as the broadcast cut to an angry mob outside the venue chanting abuse at them.

'It's not often you see such raw, unfiltered job satisfaction'

Having drawn the short straw, Starmer went first; legs crossed, hands clasped awkwardly. It took about two minutes for Beth Rigby to fillet him. She began by prodding Starmer on his "catalogue of broken promises" over the years. Had he meant it when he said Jeremy Corbyn would make a good leader, asked Beth. No, insisted Starmer, "I was certain we would lose."

Things grew more awkward as Starmer insisted that he'd kept most of his 10 pledges from the 2020 Labour leadership race. "I think you've dropped six or seven of them actually," giggled Beth, having an absolute whale of a time. It's not often you see such raw, unfiltered job satisfaction.

Starmer grew tetchier with every interruption, and they came every five seconds. Would he rule out a review of council tax? "Beth you're pushing me over and over again on tax," he snapped, his rictus grin morphing into a grimace.

Under the cosh, Starmer placed his hands on his heart – a surefire sign of impending insincerity. "I ran a public service for five years, I know what it is to be a public servant," he keened. "My wife worked in the NHS." The audience groaned. Pompousness didn't go down too well with the people of Grimsby and Cleethorpes. Nor did Starmer's nth rendition of "My dad was a toolmaker", which drew gales of laughter.

The first audience question was about regenerating Grimsby town, and the questioner had little time for Starmer's corporate word-salad of an answer. "How are you gonna fund it?" she snapped. Sir Keir came back with more Deloitte away-day chat: "We need resource, decision-making to come." The questioner stared mutinously into the middle distance.

Fresh from his daily, entirely-self-imposed waterboarding of headlines, it was Sunak's turn in the hot seat. Rigby's first question was about the D-Day debacle. The PM sorrowfully reiterated his apology and asked, once again, the audience to forgive him. Beth, perhaps not wanting to kick a dog when he's down, unexpectedly reverted into therapist mode. "How were you feeling? Did you feel really awful?"

'It was brutal viewing; imagine a live-cam at an abattoir, only bloodier'

But Beth's demeanour quickly changed – from shrink to Rottweiler – when she moved on to Sunak's record on reducing debt. "No tricks, no ambiguity?" she said. Sunak simply repeated "no tricks, no ambiguity" and the audience burst into laughter. This soon turned into resounding boos when Sunak mentioned the junior doctors' strikes, and heckling when he mentioned tax cuts. It was brutal viewing; imagine a live-cam at an abattoir, only bloodier.

Perhaps the most agonising moment came in Beth's final question. Could the Prime Minister think of anything he could say that might humanise him to the audience? It was the equivalent of a political Turing-test; prove to me that you're not a robot, Wall-E.

Such questions are always execrable. But the PM's answer of "I eat too much Haribo and drink Coke" somehow topped it.

Starmer: I backed Corbyn because I thought he would lose

Labour leader says that his wife would have preferred him to stay a lawyer than to have strayed into politics

By **Genevieve Holl-Allen**
POLITICAL REPORTER

SIR KEIR STARMER has said that he backed Jeremy Corbyn at the 2019 election because he did not believe he would win.

The Labour leader, who served in Mr Corbyn's shadow cabinet, said that he was "certain" that his party would lose to Boris Johnson and that was why he supported him.

Asked by Sky News's Beth Rigby about his support for Labour's former leader, Sir Keir said: "I was certain that we would lose the 2019 election.

"I did campaign for Labour, of course I did, I will openly say I campaigned for Labour, I wanted good colleagues to be returned into the Labour Party."

Asked again about backing his predecessor, he said: "I honestly didn't think we had a chance at that election."

It comes after Sir Keir accused the Conservatives of producing a "Jeremy Corbyn-style manifesto" that would "load everything into the wheelbarrow" without it being fully costed.

His remarks came despite him backing Mr Corbyn's manifestos in 2017 and 2019.

When running in the Labour leadership contest in 2020, Sir Keir said that he would not "trash" the record of Mr Corbyn, who is now standing against Labour as an independent in Islington North.

At the Sky event in Grimsby last night, the Labour leader also admitted that his wife would have preferred that he remained a lawyer rather than working in politics, after his time serving as the director of public prosecutions for five years from 2008.

"My wife was reading adverts in the papers about well-paid lawyers' jobs and I said: 'No, I want to serve my country.'"

He added: "She thought it would be far better to continue being a lawyer on a reasonable salary and not have all the challenges that you get as a politician."

Sir Keir also revealed that his biggest fear, if he were to become prime minister, would be how it would affect his children.

"My only real fear is the impact it's going to have on them," he said, saying that it was why his children have never been named in public or been part of any photoshoots. He added: "I want them to be able to walk to school and have their own lives, unaffected."

The Labour leader faced questions about his personality from both Rigby and a member of the audience, who claimed he seemed like a "political robot".

Sir Keir laughed and then paused for a few seconds, appearing flummoxed by the question, which then was met by laughter from the audience.

He responded: "I came into politics quite late in life, I'd done other things beforehand, but I took the approach I couldn't make the changes I wanted to by not coming into politics."

Asked if he thought he had changed, Sir Keir said he was "much clearer in my own mind that the country must come first".

The Tories quickly leapt on Sir Keir's delay in responding to the question, sharing the clip on social media with the caption: "ERROR 404 – STARMER DOES NOT COMPUTE."

Sir Keir clashed with a junior doctor during the *Battle For Number 10* programme on Sky News.

Answering a question about the junior doctors' strike, the Labour leader said: "Well, we won't be able to do anything unless we win the election.

"We've obviously only been in opposition so far. I have been frustrated, if I'm honest, that these strikes have gone on as long as they have gone on.

"The strikes are very bad for patients. People are very anxious about the strike. I don't think doctors want to be on strike."

Sir Keir said: "Instead of arguing about who gets in the room first to negotiate with the doctors, we would roll up our sleeves in a grown-up way, get in the room and settle this dispute so that patients can get the care they need, doctors can get back to work, and the country can move forward, because we can't go on like this any more."

Responding to a follow-up question from the doctor, Sir Keir said: "Pay, progression, conditions, all of that can be negotiated.

"On the 35 per cent, I don't think we can afford that as a country because of the damage that's been done to the economy. I don't want to pretend to you that we can."



Starmer's say How the Labour leader responded

On taxes
No tax rises for working people... No tax rises needed in the plans in our manifesto, no tax rises for working people, no rises in income tax, National Insurance or VAT

On doctors strikes
Instead of arguing about who gets in the room first to negotiate with doctors, we would roll up our sleeves in a grown-up way so patients can get the care they need, doctors can go back to work and we can move forward

On private school VAT
We will get rid of the tax break on private schools and use that money directly to fund teachers in our state secondary schools. That's a political choice, it's actually a tough choice

On if there is a trust issue with Labour
No, because I decided 'country first, party second'... I dragged my party back to the service of working people because I want to put a Labour Party in front of people here in Grimsby and across the country that they know is credible

Sir Keir too stiff and Sunak too sorry ... neither leader raised the stakes

Analysis



By **Gordon Rayner**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

THIS has been by far the toughest examination Sir Keir Starmer has undergone on live TV since this election campaign started.

Within the space of a few minutes, the Labour leader refused to rule out tax rises and defended his support of Jeremy Corbyn in 2019 by saying that he was convinced his party was going to lose.

He was laughed at, heckled and challenged by the people of Grimsby on a distinctly uncomfortable night for him.

Sky's Beth Rigby brought a no-nonsense approach to ceremonies, pushing Sir Keir into places he did not want to go and repeatedly challenging him on whether he could be trusted. She reminded him that he had campaigned for Mr Corbyn, then expelled him; had made a series of Left-wing promises then dumped them, in a career of "broken promises and changed positions".

Ms Rigby reminded him that in 2019 he told people that Mr Corbyn would make a good prime minister, and she asked him if he genuinely believed that.

"I was certain that we would lose," he replied. So does this mean that Sir Keir didn't really think Mr Corbyn would make a good PM, even though he said it?

"I fought for the Labour Party – I honestly didn't think we had a chance of winning that election," was his evasive reply. The inference was clear, and it was an astonishing thing to say.

Ms Rigby pressed on by tackling Sir Keir on tax. Does he have plans to increase taxes if he becomes the prime minister?

There would be "no tax rises for working people – no tax rises in the plans in our manifesto, no tax rises for working people, no rises in income tax, National Insurance or VAT".

Ms Rigby told the audience "when someone says 'no plans' it means they might". The audience clapped.

Pressed on whether capital gains tax, council tax or fuel duty might increase, Sir Keir would only say he was not going to write five years' worth of budgets there and then – in other words, he won't rule it out.

The audience laughed when he told them "my father was a toolmaker" and one questioner told him he was robotic and answered questions like a solicitor – in other words, he didn't.

Told by Ms Rigby that some people say he is boring and stiff, and challenged to "tell me something that will change people's minds", Sir Keir replied: "All my life I've believed in service..."

The audience started to get fidgety. But could the Prime Minister do any better?

This should have been a chance for Rishi Sunak to get on the front foot after Sir Keir was roughed up by Ms Rigby, but instead he spent much of his time apologising.

He was sorry for his D-Day gaffe. He was sorry for the high tax burden. He was sorry for people's experience in the NHS and he could "understand people's frustrations" over record migration. Mr Sunak seemed honest, he seemed genuine and he seemed chastened.

> 'Mr Sunak's delivery was muted even when he talked about "bold plans" in his manifesto'

But what he didn't seem was optimistic or excited about the future, or in any way convinced that he is going to be the prime minister after people go to the polls on July 4.

Rather than selling a vision of a better future to come, he spent the whole evening talking about the past, and explaining why things hadn't gone as well as hoped over the past 14 years.

Even his own time in No 10 got a downbeat review from him. "It hasn't been an easy 18 months in general," he said.

Mr Sunak's delivery was muted even when he talked about "bold plans" in his manifesto, as if he had spent so much time apologising that he was unable to change up to a positive tone of voice.

Unlike Sir Keir, none of his answers in the early exchanges were revelatory.

Ms Rigby asked whether his decision to leave D-Day early might be terminal, and he replied: "It was a mistake and that's why I apologised unreservedly for that.

"I was incredibly sad to have caused hurt and upset, I hope people can find it in their hearts to forgive me."

It was uncomfortable for him to have to revisit the D-Day error, but it was familiar stuff, as were Ms Rigby's questions about his five pledges on stopping the boats, bringing down NHS waiting lists and improving the economy.

There were no mis-steps – it was just that the whole tone of his appearance was rather glum.

Mr Sunak had not made as much progress on NHS waiting lists as he would have liked. Net migration was "too high".

He wanted young people to be able to buy a house, while accepting they currently cannot.

Towards the very end of the audience questions, Mr Sunak was apologising for partygate.

Having told the audience he eats far too many Haribos, there should have been a sugar rush from Mr Sunak, but with 22 days until polling day he seemed lacking in energy.

Mr Sunak will need to learn how to sell the benefits of his manifesto, rather than apologising for the past, before he makes his next appearance on live television.



CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES

The eyes have it Akshata Murty, Rishi Sunak's wife, pays close attention to a performance by Year 3 pupils during a visit to Shinewater Primary School in Eastbourne, East Sussex, yesterday.

'Super-majority' warning betrays Tory doubts

Analysis



By **Ben Riley-Smith**
POLITICAL EDITOR

Party's outlook is bleaker than it has let on as it tries to weaponise prospect of 'blank cheque' for Starmer

IN THE past couple of days, the Conservative Party's campaign machine has turned up the dial on one particular argument.

It is subtle, but no less significant for that. So far in the race, Rishi Sunak has insisted that only the Tories can lower taxes, protect pensioners, keep the UK secure and the like. The Tories will keep arguing that Sir Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, has no plan for government, that you cannot be sure what you will get given his past record of about-turns.

Something else, though, has been expressed in recent days: the idea that Labour could be heading for a huge victory and that people need to vote Tory to provide some accountability.

A hint of this could be found at the Tories' manifesto launch on Tuesday. It came in a section where Mr Sunak talked about the consequences of handing a "blank cheque" to Sir Keir. He said: "If Labour win this time, they'll change the rules so that they are in power for a very long time." He also warned of Labour doing "whatever they want to our country".

The Prime Minister is talking about the possibility that Sir Keir will win successive elections, the obvious implication from his being in power "a very long time" comment. Not just five years, but possibly 10. The remarks contained a degree of opaqueness. Mr Sunak, after all, is the party's key "message carrier" and must continue to project some optimism about their chances of victory.

But adverts uploaded to social media by the party in recent days are much more explicit about what could be coming. One video conjures up the prospect of the Tories finishing third behind the Liberal Democrats.

Another advert shows Sir Keir being held aloft on the shoulders of Nigel Farage, the Reform UK leader, and Sir Ed Davey, the LibDem leader. The tagline reads: "With the Liberal Democrats on board with everything Keir Starmer wants to do... A vote for Reform or the Liberal Democrats means you'll have no-one holding Keir Starmer to account on your behalf."

> 'The shift suggests the Tories are leaning into the idea that Labour is going to win – and win big'

And then, like a final piece of the jigsaw slotting into place, Grant Shapps, the Defence Secretary, used his broadcast round yesterday to raise the prospect of a Labour "super-majority". Mr Shapps told Times Radio: "If you want to make sure that in this next government, whoever forms it, that there is a proper system of accountability, then we would argue that you don't want to have somebody receive a super-majority."

He added: "A blank cheque approach, allowing someone to do anything they wanted, particularly when their particular set of plans are so vague."

Mr Shapps, who is valued in Downing Street for his ability to stick to a specific message, is unlikely to have acted without consultation.

The Prime Minister appeared to balk when Mr Shapps' "super-majority" point was put to him when campaigning on the Tory battle bus yesterday. Mr Sunak said: "That's not what I'm saying. And every time someone says something to me about a poll I always give you guys the same answer which you've heard me say multiple times. The poll that matters is the one on July 4."

But this should not be mistaken for a rift. It is a tactic often used in political campaigns: the leader projecting a more upbeat vision, while others deliver a harsher message.

The shift suggests that the Tories are leaning into the idea that Labour is going to win – and win big. That they are going to crush them more comprehensively than ever before in history. It is a rare thing for a party to deliberately elevate the idea that they are about to be heavily defeated. Usually it is the opposite, insisting that victory is within their grasp with just a few more votes.

> 'It is rare for a party to elevate the idea they are about to be defeated. It is usually the opposite'

It suggests that Tory strategists are not convinced their messages are getting enough voters to support them. The polls indicates as much.

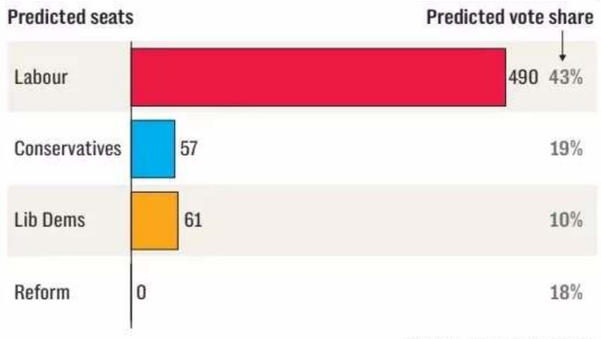
The Tories, of course, will have their own private polling, more detailed than the nationwide surveys we see.

They will also be conducting focus groups, allowing a deep dive into voter thinking. It appears the Tories have decided that by pushing the idea that Sir Keir is about to win a knock-out victory, they can motivate some voters to come back to them.

It is a strategy based on being in a position of weakness. The voters are expecting Labour to romp to victory – so why not weaponise the possibility?

Campaigns have multiple messages. The Tories will keep promising low taxes. The Prime Minister will keep saying his party can win. But this change suggests the expectations inside Conservative campaign headquarters are much bleaker than they are letting on.

Tories warn of Labour 'super-majority'



SOURCE: CONSERVATIVES HQ

UK must be prepared to leave ECHR if no reform, says Mordaunt

By **Charles Hymas** *and* **Dominic Penna**

BRITAIN must be prepared to leave the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) if it is not reformed, Penny Mordaunt has said.

The Commons leader told *The Telegraph* that "as someone who campaigned to leave the EU, if you want to reform the practices of such institutions you have to be prepared to leave them. I would, as my record shows."

Her declaration is more explicit than other Cabinet ministers and the Conservative manifesto which simply states that a Tory Government would choose the UK's border security over the "jurisdiction of a foreign court, including the European Court of Human Rights".

Rishi Sunak failed to say at the Tory party's manifesto launch on Tuesday whether he would be prepared to pull out of the ECHR if it failed to reform.

Ms Mordaunt has been identified as a potential standard-bearer for Tory moderates in any future leadership contest in which Right-wingers such as Kemi Badenoch and Suella Braverman would start as favourites.

Mrs Braverman and Robert Jenrick, the former immigration minister who is expected to be another leadership contender, have both called for the UK to quit the ECHR.

Ms Mordaunt gave her comment in response to a leaked tape of a question-and-answer session at a fundraising event in Enfield North in April where she appeared to play down the possibility of leaving the ECHR.

Asked whether leaving the ECHR could be a game-changer in the general election, she said the manifesto needed to be "quite radical" but "it doesn't necessarily mean tearing up everything".

She pointed to "really important things" other than border control that the ECHR and Strasbourg court underpinned, such as the Good Friday agreement and property rights.

However, she also warned that the ECHR could face a Brexit-like "event" if it did not reform.

"The lesson of Brexit is that if change is not a process, it becomes an event and I think that there needs to also be some reflection in these institutions if they want to continue as they are about how they are actually going about their business," she told the audience.

She told the audience in Enfield North that she had already had a meeting with the manifesto's authors. It is understood she suggested it should adopt the same stance. She went on to say that the ECHR and Human Rights Act had made it hard to protect the UK's borders and deliver the Rwanda deportation scheme, adding that security and immigration would be a "defining" issue in the election.

When asked during the 2022 Tory leadership race whether she would take the UK out of the ECHR, she said: "No." She was knocked out in the fourth round.

Union urges Starmer to cut 'unviable' net zero plans

By **Camilla Turner**

LABOUR'S net zero plans are "unviable" and must be dropped from the manifesto, the GMB union has warned.

Sir Keir Starmer's pledge to convert Britain to clean power by 2030 – five years earlier than the Conservatives – will lead to "power cuts and blackouts", the union said.

GMB, which represents more than half a million workers including many in the oil and gas sector, passed a motion at its annual congress this week in Bournemouth urging the Labour party to change course.

It will be seen as a last-ditch attempt by GMB, a major Labour donor, to influence the party ahead of its manifesto launch today.

The motion pointed to its attempts to "persuade the Labour Party to drop its commitment to net zero electricity generation by 2030 on the grounds that it was simply not viable", adding: "The Labour Party has not walked away from this unviable commitment."

Labour's plans to decarbonise the electricity grid five years earlier than the Conservatives' 2035 target forms part of its proposals to meet the overall 2050 net zero target.

The GMB criticism echoes the comments by Claire Coutinho, the energy secretary, who said Labour's plans were "simply ideological". "They're pretending that they can decarbonise the grid by 2030, a target which no other major economy has," she said.

Sir Keir has said that his plans were in "sharp contrast to the desperation" shown by the Tories.



JACOB KING/PA

Splash down Sir Ed Davey, the Lib Dem leader, falls in the water on an assault course in Henley-in-Arden, Warks.

Labour VAT raid may close half of small prep schools

By **Henry Bodkin** SENIOR REPORTER

HALF of small prep schools could close within a year of Labour taking office because of the party's proposed VAT raid, the sector's leader has warned.

Dominic Norrish, the chief executive of the Independent Association of Prep Schools, said vast numbers of the traditional junior schools, many in rural settings, would become unviable "overnight" if faced with the 20 per cent tax. About 500 prep schools in the UK cater for 200 or fewer pupils, with many operating on extremely fine margins. It is suspected a significant number are operating at a loss.

Mr Norrish said because independent schools are wary of revealing financial vulnerability for fear of putting off parents, Labour had "no idea" the damage their flagship election pledge could do. Approximately 250 schools comprising a total of about 50,000 pupils are feared to be at immediate risk.

He called for the party to promise in its manifesto, which will be published on Thursday, to exempt schools of 200 or fewer pupils.

"You have a tranche of schools that are currently running a deficit and they would collapse straight away – they would simply cease trading," he said.

"Looking at schools with fewer than 200 children, I'd say about half of them are at risk of closure."

A Labour spokesman said: ""Labour will invest in delivering a brilliant state education for children in every state school by recruiting over 6,500 new teachers, funded by ending tax breaks for private schools."

Extra guard for Reform leader after campaign trail attacks

By **Amy Gibbons**
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

NIGEL FARAGE has been offered additional private security by the Home Office after a milkshake and other objects were thrown at him while he campaigned.

A cup and another object were thrown at the Reform UK leader while he was on top of a party battle bus in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, on Tuesday.

This followed an incident last week in which a milkshake was thrown over the 60-year-old as he left a Wetherspoon pub in Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Two people have been charged over the incidents.

It is understood that the Home Office has been in touch with the Reform UK leader to offer additional private security. Police chiefs say it is difficult to work out the intentions of people in crowds when would-be MPs are out campaigning, but that the candidates may not want to be put in a bubble as they try to speak to the public.

Speaking to reporters in Kirkby, Ashfield, on Tuesday, Mr Farage said he was "having to think twice about what I do".

The attacks were condemned by a charity set up in memory of the murdered MP Jo Cox, which called them an "affront to democracy".

Su Moore, chief executive at the Jo Cox Foundation, said such behaviour was a "really serious issue" that could lead to more extreme violence.

In an interview with the BBC, she encouraged members of the public to engage with candidates, but insisted "there is a way of doing that without that tipping over into abuse". She said: "There is a place in all elections for robust debate, absolutely, but physical violence against candidates is an affront to democracy."

The Jo Cox Foundation was established in memory of Ms Cox, the former Labour MP for Batley and Spen, after she was murdered by the far-Right extremist Thomas Mair in 2016.

In the run-up to the general election, the charity has been urging candidates to "reject intimidation and abuse" by signing up to its "civility pledge", committing them to acting with integrity, honour and compassion, and behaving respectfully towards others.

Urging respect for candidates with respect, Ms Moore said: "I think people forget that they are people with families. Over the next couple of weeks you are likely to see your candidates out and about and, yes, do engage with them, but there is a way of doing that without that tipping over into abuse."

It comes after the head of the Electoral Commission warned that candidates had been forced to seek counselling after being traumatised by abuse on the campaign trail. A survey of hundreds of candidates standing at the local elections in May found nearly half had experienced intimidation or abuse, while a majority of women said that they avoided campaigning alone.

Speaking to the BBC after the attacks on Mr Farage, Ms Moore said: "People don't realise how serious this is because it isn't just a bit of heckling out and about in public or some cross words exchanged on social media."

Telegraph readers' support for Farage soars

Backing for Reform doubles and party leads way among those aged 50 to 65, survey reveals

By **Ollie Corfe**

SUPPORT for Reform UK among *Telegraph* readers has doubled over the first three weeks of the general election campaign, polling reveals.

A survey of 1,490 readers over three days from June 6 to 9 found the proportion planning to vote for Nigel Farage's party has gone from 17 to 31 per cent.

Demographic breakdowns of voting intention show Reform in the lead among ages 50 to 65, with a 39 per cent share – a shift from 23 per cent before Mr Farage announced he was taking over as party leader and standing as an MP. While this isn't the case for over-65s, the gap halved over the week leading up to the latest poll.

The crossover in support for Conservatives and Reform is substantial: about half (49 per cent) of readers currently planning to vote Reform would cast their ballot for the Conservatives if the party wasn't fielding a candidate in their constituency.

Mr Farage's return has had a significant impact. In a week since Mr Farage's announcement, support for Reform has risen by 11 percentage points.

More than two in five readers (42 per cent) claimed they were more likely to vote for Reform now that he has taken the reins of the party from Richard Tice.

The edge he commands over his opponents is clear. Two-thirds of readers (66 per cent) agree that Mr Farage is a strong leader, three times the proportion of those who would say the same for the Prime Minister (22 per cent).

In particular, readers are convinced of his ability to mobilise the electorate.

While just 20 per cent believe Rishi Sunak can "connect with voters" – falling to 16 per cent for Sir Keir Starmer, the Labour leader – 77 per cent think Mr Farage can.

The Conservative leader is ahead of his Right-wing rival in trustworthiness, by a margin of 48 to 38 per cent. But even here, a majority remain unconvinced Mr Sunak is trustworthy.

The poll also reveals that whereas just shy of 8 in 10 *Telegraph* readers (78 per cent) backed Boris Johnson in 2019, support for the Conservatives has collapsed by 40 percentage points.

Support for the Tories has worsened since Mr Sunak called the snap poll, having dropped 8 points from 46 to 38 per cent.

However, the survey contains good news for the Prime Minister about his performance in the first head-to-head debate against Sir Keir. While only 55 per cent reported that they tuned in, 37 per cent claimed Mr Sunak came out on top, compared to only 4 per cent for his opponent.

There is also widespread support among *Telegraph* readers for a number of policies put forward by the Tories – and a stark rejection of Labour proposals.

Mr Sunak said the "current confusion around definitions of sex and gender" could not continue, and as such pledged to redefine the Equality Act so the protections it awards apply only on the basis of biological sex.

Some 85 per cent of readers declared themselves on board with this. The Liberal Democrat manifesto, for its part, includes a pledge to recognise non-binary gender identities in law.

Likewise, the introduction of a "quadruple lock", or "triple lock plus", which would increase the personal tax allowance for pensioners by at least 2.5 per cent or the highest of earnings or inflation so that the state pension is never taxed, has the backing of 70 per cent of readers.

A majority (55 per cent), also agree with the reintroduction of mandatory national service, with 23 per cent disagreeing and 19 per cent unsure.

The position is clear once again when it comes to Labour's plan to impose VAT on private school fees. The policy – which could see up to 40,000 fee-paying pupils flock to the state sector, threatening to overwhelm the best schools in some areas – was rejected by 73 per cent of readers.



Dame Andrea Jenkyns chose eye-catching pictures of herself with Nigel Farage for her Leeds South West seat publicity

Tory MP cosies up to 'Nigel' not Sunak in campaign flyer

By **Will Hazell**
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER Conservative minister has caused controversy by putting a picture of herself with Nigel Farage on her election leaflet.

Dame Andrea Jenkyns, who is standing for election in the new seat of Leeds South West and Morley in West Yorkshire, included a photograph of herself with the Reform UK leader on her campaign material.

Rishi Sunak, her party leader, does not appear, nor is the Conservative Party mentioned.

Dame Andrea is on the Right of the Tory party and was a fervent supporter of Boris Johnson, who appointed her minister for skills, further and higher education after a mass exodus of ministers from his administration in July 2022.

Dame Andrea's campaign leaflet shows her posing next to Mr Farage – who took over as leader of Reform this month – at his birthday party in a London restaurant in April.

The decision to highlight her friendship with Mr Farage is likely to be part

'I like and respect Nigel and we had the chance to form a genuine Conservative alliance'

of an effort to neutralise the threat of Reform in her constituency. Last week, Dame Andrea posted on X bemoaning the fact that Reform had decided to run "in constituencies where genuine Conservative are seeking re-election".

"I like and respect Nigel, and we had the chance to form a genuine Conservative alliance around the country and keep out the socialists," she said. "But by voting Reform you will see dozens of genuine Conservatives that have been fighting for your interests leave Parliament and be replaced by Starmer's socialists."

Dame Andrea was reappointed after the election of Liz Truss as Tory leader but was sacked when Mr Sunak entered No10. With Sir Simon Clarke, she was one of only two Tory MPs to publicly reveal that she had submitted a letter of no confidence in Mr Sunak to the backbench 1922 Committee.

In a response to the Guido Fawkes website, which broke the news of the leaflet, a spokesman for Dame Andrea said: "Andrea is above all, a patriot. For the avoidance of any doubt, Andrea is a lifelong Conservative and is standing for the Conservative Party in the forthcoming election."

Starmer to allow councils a free hand on LTNs and target fix for million potholes

By **Genevieve Holl-Allen**
POLITICAL REPORTER

LOCAL councils will be able to continue imposing low-traffic neighbourhoods under a Labour government, Sir Keir Starmer has said.

The Labour leader said that LTNs were a "good idea" in certain areas and said that it would be for "local authorities to decide" where they are implemented.

Asked whether he would take action to block LTNs, he said: "I think this is very much a matter for local people in their area to decide, according to their local council. So I don't think the Government should be dictating what happens."

When questioned about whether he believed LTNs were beneficial, he said: "Outside a school, do I think it's a good idea to have low traffic? Yes, I do. And I doubt that there's a parent across the country that would say they want to get rid of low traffic outside of schools. It's been in place for a very, very long time.

"When we were taking our children to primary school, I was very pleased to know that it was a low traffic area."



West London residents march in protest at disruption caused by spread of LTNs

The Telegraph revealed in March that there had been plans for councils ignoring local opposition to LTNs and 20mph zones to be stripped of their powers to issue fines.

It comes as Louise Haigh, the shadow transport secretary, declared that Labour "is the only party truly on the side of drivers" as she and Sir Keir visited a training college for vehicle maintenance and repair in Grimsby, Lincs.

Labour has pledged to fix a million more potholes if it gets into government and crack down on car insurance costs.

Asked about whether 20mph zones should be implemented in England, as they have been in Wales to widespread opposition, Sir Keir said: "I think it's a matter for local authorities, local elected individuals to decide."

New parliament set for significant rise in MPs from ethnic minority backgrounds

By **Charles Hymas**
HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

THE next parliament is on course to be the most ethnically diverse ever, a study has found.

Research for British Future, a think tank, suggests there will be an increase of between 20 and more than 30 MPs in the number of candidates elected from an ethnic minority background on July 4. Both of the main parties have chosen record numbers of ethnic minority candidates, with Labour's accounting for one in five (19.8 per cent) and the Conservatives for one in seven (13.7 per cent).

It will mean minority representation will have increased from zero to nearly one in seven MPs (14 per cent) during 43-year-old Rishi Sunak's lifetime – and in the space of Diane Abbott's 40-year political career. That would match the 14 per cent of the electorate who are classed as ethnic minorities.

There were 65 ethnic minority MPs before Parliament was dissolved last month, a proportion of 10 per cent.

Sunder Katwala, of British Future, said: "Britain is closing the gap between the diversity of Parliament and the electorate much faster than anyone thought possible. Better representation doesn't in itself guarantee strong party cultures or the right party policies on inclusion. Our race debates today often feel as polarised as ever. But a stronger share of voice does make a difference. So this milestone in representation remains something to celebrate – few, if any, other Western democracies are keeping pace with Britain's progress."

The research by Number Cruncher Politics compared six different scenarios from a Tory majority mirroring 2019 to a Labour landslide with the Conservatives reduced to only 100 MPs.

The highest proportion – 100 MPs from ethnic minorities, or 15.4 per cent of the total 650 MPs in the Commons – would be with the Labour landslide.

A Labour majority of 100 would mean 94 or 14.5 per cent; a majority of 50 would be 89 or 13.6 per cent; and a majority of one would also result in 89. A hung parliament would again generate 89 ethnic minority MPs, while a Tory majority mirroring 2019 would return 88 ethnic minority MPs.

The smaller parties have fewer ethnic minority candidates. The Lib Dems have selected 66 (10.5 per cent); the SNP three of 57 candidates (5.2 per cent); the Green Party 55 (8.9 per cent); and Reform 32 (5.2 per cent). Plaid Cymru and the UUP have each selected one.

IN BRIEF

Kinnock: leave wiggle room for tax rises

Labour should leave room to raise taxes if it forms the next government, Lord Kinnock has suggested.

The former Labour leader said "every government needs room to manoeuvre" in office, in an apparent warning to Sir Keir Starmer to keep his options open. Lord Kinnock said the party has shown "immense, understandable caution in costing its program, and in the constraints that it's imposed on itself so far as tax policy is concerned". But he added: "Five years is a very long time in a fiscal regime: Neither voters nor politicians can escape that reality." Labour has so far ruled out raising income tax, national insurance and VAT.

Give smaller parties fairer deal, says survey

More than half of voters think smaller parties should have a fairer deal at elections, according to research.

A National Centre for Social Research report found 53 per cent of those surveyed said the system of voting should be changed "to allow smaller parties to get a fairer share of MPs", compared with 40 per cent who want to keep the current system. The annual survey, conducted between Sep 12 and Oct 31 last year, also found 45 per cent of respondents "almost never" trust governments to put the needs of the country above their party's, a figure that was up from 40 per cent in 2009 in the wake of the MPs' expenses scandal.

Quarter of Tory voters want party wiped out

A quarter of those who voted Conservative in 2019 say the party deserves to lose all its seats at the general election, polling has found.

Nearly half of all voters also think the Tories deserve to be totally wiped out. Public First surveyed 2,011 British adults between June 7 and 9 on what they expect and hope will happen when voters go to the polls on July 4.

Forty-six per cent of people agreed that the Tories "deserve to lose every seat they have", while only 35 per cent disagreed. Even when asked to type in the ideal number of seats they would like to see the Tories win – to make sure people were not exaggerating – 24 per cent said precisely zero.

Avanti contract at risk if Labour wins election

Labour has said it would urgently consider stripping Avanti West Coast of its train operating contract if it won the election. Office of Rail and Road (ORR) figures show Avanti had the third worst reliability of operators in Britain in the year to the end of March. *Telegraph* analysis of ORR data shows Avanti fully or partially cancelled 8.4 per cent of its planned trains last year.

Louise Haigh, Labour's transport secretary, told Sky News that she will likely be "seeking advice early on whether Avanti has been in breach of its contract given the woeful service".

Avanti West Coast – owned by FirstGroup – was approached for a comment.

Swinney backs Sturgeon over ITV election job

The Scottish First Minister has controversially backed Nicola Sturgeon after she was made an election night analyst for ITV.

John Swinney said Ms Sturgeon's "huge wealth of experience" would make her ideal for the role. Yet in 2019 the SNP demanded the resignation of Ruth Davidson, the then Scottish Tory leader, for performing exactly the same job – for a fee of £7,500.

"She has no need to ask me to [take the job], she's entitled to do it as she's an independent individual," Mr Swinney said. Sources have said any payment for Ms Sturgeon's ITV appearance will be disclosed on the Holyrood register of interests.

Hunt: My seat could be won on 1,500 votes

Jeremy Hunt has predicted his political fate could be determined by "1,500 votes or fewer" as he faces a tight re-election battle.

The Chancellor won his seat of South West Surrey in 2019 with a majority of almost 9,000, with the Liberal Democrats in second place. But that seat has been abolished and Mr Hunt is now standing in the newly created constituency of Godalming and Ash. He told Bloomberg: "There's all to play for. This seat is probably going to be won or lost by the Conservatives by 1,500 votes or fewer."

A YouGov poll has suggested the Liberal Democrats candidate Paul Follows is on course to win the seat.

Letby 'caught red-handed trying to kill newborn'

Doctor says convicted killer was seen dislodging breathing equipment from prematurely born baby

By **Martin Evans** CRIME EDITOR

CONVICTED multiple murderer Lucy Letby was caught "virtually red-handed" as she attempted to kill a premature baby on the neonatal ward at the Countess of Chester Hospital where she worked, a court has heard.

The 34-year-old was discovered by a doctor standing over the cot of an infant, known only as Baby K, having allegedly dislodged her breathing tube and switched off the alarm monitors.

As the baby's oxygen levels plummeted, rather than shouting for help or trying to resuscitate her, Letby was observed by a consultant "doing nothing", it was claimed.

Jurors at her retrial at Manchester Crown Court, were told Letby's status as a "multiple murderer and attempted murderer" was an important piece of evidence when assessing whether she was guilty of this single additional offence.

The former nurse, from Hereford, stood trial on the same charge last year but jurors were unable to reach a verdict and were eventually discharged.

Opening the prosecution case in the retrial, Nick Johnson KC, explained to the jury: "As you probably already know there was another very long trial about a year ago. In that, Lucy Letby was convicted of seven murders and seven attempted murders. Those seven attempted murders related to six children."

He said this case related to a single offence of attempted murder against Baby K, who had been born extremely prematurely at just 24 weeks and six days in February 2016.

Mr Johnson said despite being born so prematurely, Baby K had been doing "remarkably well", but had required help with her breathing and had a tube inserted into her main airway.

The jury was told that Baby K was being looked after by two nurses in Nursery One, while Letby had responsibility for two other children in Nursery Two.

But shortly after 3.40am on Feb 17 2016, the two nurses caring for Baby K had temporarily left the nursery, leaving Letby alone with her.

"It was about this time that Baby K collapsed," Mr Johnson told the jury.

The court heard that the heavily sedated infant was attached to a ventilator to help her breathe and to other machines that monitored her heart and blood oxygen levels.

Those machines were alarmed so that if there was an issue the alarms would have sounded, but the jury was told on this occasion they had not.

Mr Johnson said: "The reason the alarms did not sound was that somebody had disabled them. So when Dr [Ravi] Jayaram walked into the nursery he saw Lucy Letby was standing over Baby K. Her saturation blood levels were falling but the alarm was not sounding . Not only that but Lucy Letby was doing nothing."

> 'Despite responsibility for two babies in nursery 2, she was also making Baby K her business'

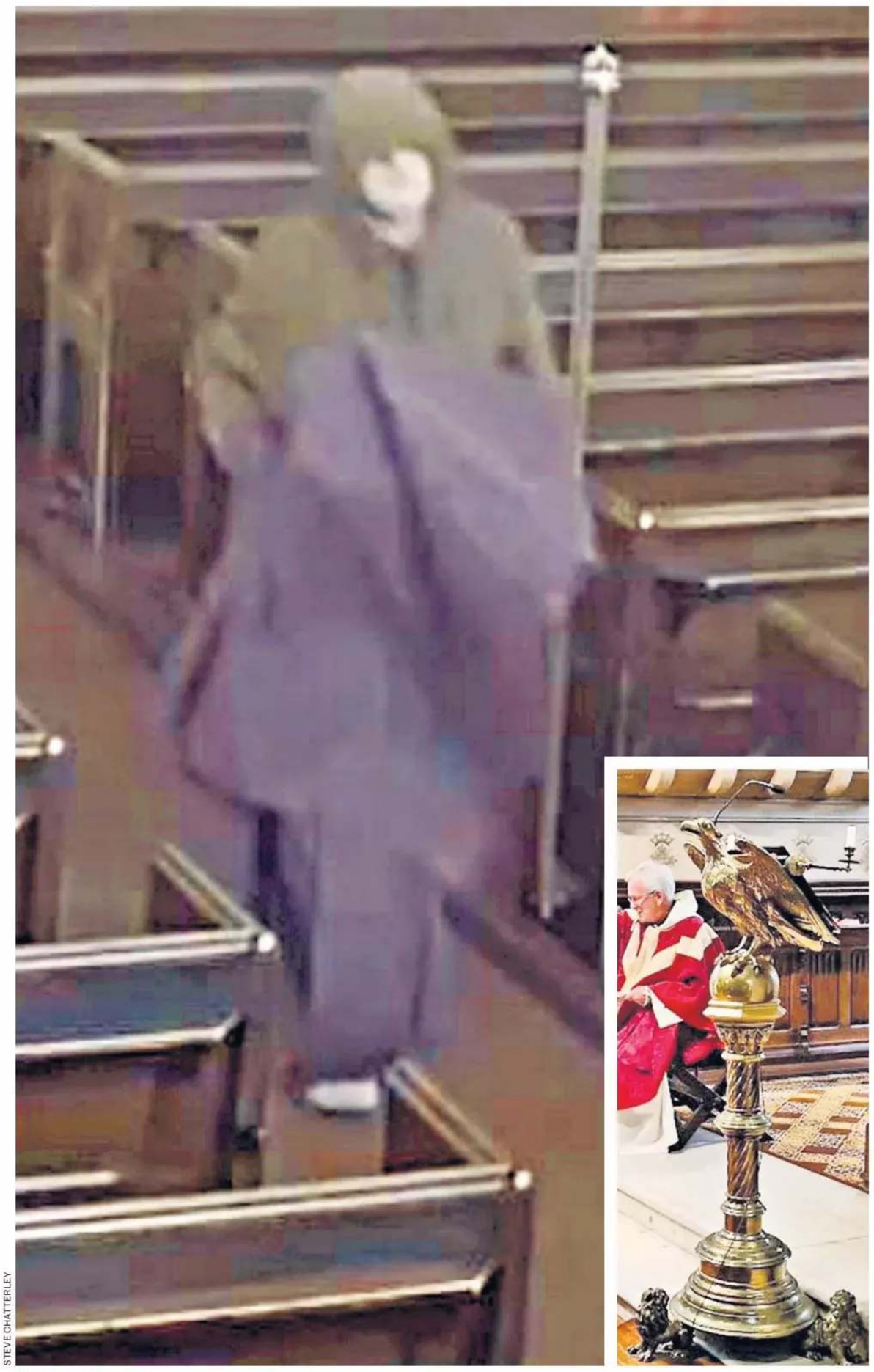
The prosecutor explained that the reason Baby K's oxygen levels were falling was that her ET tube had become dislodged. He went on: "We suggest the fact Lucy Letby was doing nothing... is evidence you can conclude it was Lucy Letby, the convicted murderer, who had displaced the tube."

"We say Lucy Letby was caught virtually red-handed by Dr Jayaram."

Arrangements had been made to transfer Baby K to a more specialist hospital, but before that could happen there were two more desaturations, the court heard.

Mr Johnson said despite not having responsibility for Baby K, the evidence would show that Letby had been there on both occasions. "Despite having responsibility for two babies in nursery 2, she was very much making Baby K her business," he said.

Letby denies one charge of attempted murder and the trial continues.



STEVE CHATTERLEY

Bold as brass A thief is spotted by CCTV stealing an ornamental eagle from a church. Footage shows the individual walking down the aisle of St Augustine's in Edgbaston, Birmingham, before removing the brass figure, wrapping it in a blanket and leaving.

Don't feel sorry for us, says grandmother of boy killer

By **Connor Stringer** SENIOR REPORTER

THE grandmother of one of Britain's youngest killers says people should not feel sorry for their family.

The woman, who is the paternal grandmother of one of the two 12-year-olds found guilty of the murder of teenager Shawn Seesahai with a machete, said: "Don't feel sorry for us."

Speaking to *The Telegraph*, she suggested that the family will cope "with whatever comes our way" ahead of the sentencing of her grandson next month.

He, along with his friend, are believed to be the youngest defendants convicted of murder in Britain since Robert Thompson and Jon Venables, both aged 11, were found guilty in 1993 of killing two-year-old James Bulger. They are also thought to be the UK's youngest knife murderers ever.

After refusing to answer police questions in the aftermath of the murder, the boys both gave evidence to jurors, blaming each other for inflicting the fatal blow.

The grandmother told *The Telegraph*: "In my grandson's case he told the truth, he was at the place where something (the fatal attack) happened, he was truthful but the events surrounding it are not for me to comment on at this time, but I will be doing after he is sentenced.

"We cope with whatever comes our way, we rally around as a family together. I have always told my family to tell the truth, that is important."

Seesahai, who had only been in the country for six months and was originally from the British Overseas Territory of Anguilla in the Caribbean, was attacked as he discussed plans for Christmas with a friend in a park in Wolverhampton last November.

The fatal wound to his back was more than seven inches deep and the blade went through his heart and almost came out of his chest.

He died at the scene after the attack, in which the boys used a 17in-long blade.

Shortly before the fatal encounter, his attackers, who "often" carried a machete, were passing it between one another at Stowlawn playing fields in East Park, Wolverhampton.

The victim's friend told the trial he was forced to run for his life but Seesahai stumbled as he tried to flee from the boys.

As well as failing to summon help for Seesahai, the youths showed no remorse for what they had done in the 24 hours before their arrest - with one cleaning the machete with bleach and hiding it under his bed.

The pair, who told the court they played video games in the hours after the killing, will be sentenced on July 30.



Deaths of fentanyl murderer's relatives under police review

By **Will Bolton** CRIME CORRESPONDENT

DETECTIVES are reviewing the deaths of the father and grandfather of a man who fatally poisoned a married couple with fentanyl.

Luke D'Wit was sentenced to life in prison in March for the murder of Carol Baxter, 64, and her husband Stephen, 61.

Police are now exploring whether D'Wit, 34, was also responsible for the death of his father, Vernon, who had been prescribed fentanyl before he was found dead at his home in 2021.

Officers "will not hesitate to act" if they uncover fresh evidence, an Essex Police spokesman said. As part of their review, detectives have also been re-examining how D'Wit's grandfather died.

At Chelmsford Crown Court, jurors were told D'Wit, a "nerdy and weird" loner, spent almost a decade ingratiating himself with the Baxters before "scheming and planning their demise".

The couple were discovered slumped in their armchairs in their home in the seaside village of West Mersea, Essex, by their daughter on April 9 last year.

In the months before giving the couple a fatal fentanyl dose, D'Wit created fake identities of doctors to trick Mrs Baxter into taking medication that left her with dementia-like symptoms.

> 'Until the day he was arrested, I thought he was a polite nice lad. I just can't understand it'

The court heard he would film her and giggle at the footage, after making her drink "health drinks" that would supposedly help with her thyroid condition, but were laced with drugs.

As the couple lay dying, D'Wit watched remotely via cameras installed in the property. After they died, a fake will was discovered naming D'Wit as the director of the couple's business.

D'Wit had extracted the fentanyl from patches originally prescribed to his father, the trial heard. Mr Justice Lavender said following the death of D'Wit's father in 2021, the murderer had retained the drug "in abundance".

The judge said that while D'Wit had hoped for financial gain, the primary motivation may have been a "desire to control others". He added: "Deciding whether another person lives or dies is the ultimate form of control."

Harry Baxter, the couple's son, said: "We were all dolls in his dollhouse, victim to his manipulation."

Residents of West Mersea struggled to accept that D'Wit, who grew up on the island, could have been responsible.

A close friend of the D'Wit family, who did not wish to be named, told *The Telegraph*: "I've known him for 30 years, I knew him as a little boy, he used to come round to our house. Throughout that time up until the day he was arrested, I thought he was a polite nice lad. I just can't understand it".



CHAMPION NEWS

Maya Meron is to get a payout from Heartcore studio in Hampstead, north London

Violinist damaged elbow at 'favourite' Meghan gym class

By **Daily Telegraph Reporter**

A BBC Proms musician fractured her elbow taking part in Meghan Markle's "favourite" gym class.

Violinist Maya Meron also sustained abdominal injuries when a machine at the Heartcore studio in Hampstead, north London, allegedly collapsed.

The 44-year-old had sued for £100,000 and is to get a payout following a settlement. Court papers state she developed a hernia following the March 2019 incident and is unable to play.

Founded by trainer Jessica Blum, 49, Heartcore is pilates-based. Participants use an in-house designed machine, the "Coreformer". The apparatus is bed-like, with moving parts and includes resistance springs.

Several celebrities are fans, including the Duchess of Sussex, who called the classes her "favourite workout" in a 2019 *Vogue* editorial. Yet Mrs Meron, who has played with the London Symphony Orchestra, alleges a locking bar on the Coreformer collapsed to ground level while she was leaning on it.

A full assessment of damages and costs will be heard at a later date.

Hancock 'libelled me to devastating extent', says ex-MP

By **Daily Telegraph Reporter**

MATT HANCOCK, the former health secretary, libelled parliamentary candidate Andrew Bridgen to a "devastating extent" by accusing him of anti-Semitism on social media, the High Court has been told.

The former North West Leicestershire MP is bringing a case against Mr Hancock over a post on X, formerly Twitter, last year, after Mr Bridgen posted a comment on Covid vaccines.

The High Court in London previously heard that, on Jan 11 2023, Mr Bridgen shared a link to an article "concerning data about deaths and other adverse reactions linked to Covid vaccines", and stated: "As one consultant cardiologist said to me, this is the biggest crime against humanity since the Holocaust."

Hours later, Mr Hancock shared a video of himself asking Rishi Sunak a question in the Commons, with the caption: "The disgusting and dangerous anti-Semitic, anti-vax, anti-scientific conspiracy theories spouted by a sitting MP this morning are unacceptable."

Mrs Justice Collins Rice will hand down her judgment in writing at a later date.

Hijab-clad American flew to UK to carry out assassination

Midlands businessman and son hired woman to kill rival clothes boutique owner in Birmingham

By **Patrick Sawer**
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

UK POLICE are hunting an American woman who flew to Birmingham to carry out a contract killing disguised in a hijab.

Aimee Betro, 44, was hired to kill Sikander Ali, a clothes boutique owner, on the orders of business rival Mohammed Aslam, 56, and his son Mohammed Nazir, 30, a court heard.

Betro disguised herself in a hijab before trying to gun Ali down outside a house in Acocks Green, Birmingham on Sept 7, 2019. The would-be hit woman fled the scene when her gun jammed, but later returned in a taxi and fired three shots at the property before texting Mr Ali's father Aslat Mahamud: "Stop playing hide and seek" and "Where are you hiding?"

She then ordered the taxi driver to take her to a McDonald's in Bordesley Green. No one was hit.

Betro flew back to the US two days after the attempt. Nazir and Aslam were found guilty of conspiracy to murder on Monday after Birmingham Crown Court heard they had held a grudge against Mr Ali's family following a violent dispute at his boutique clothing store in Birmingham on July 21, 2018.



Mohammed Aslam plotted with his son Mohammed Nazir to kill their rival

West Midlands Police said yesterday their efforts to find Betro "continue".

The incident had left Nazir and Aslam injured, with the windows of their shop left smashed and the interior "trashed".

In order to get revenge in September 2019, the pair flew Betro over from the States to Birmingham in a bid to kill Mr Ali and his family. On Sept 6, Nazir and Aslam travelled from their home in Derby to Birmingham, with Nazir spending more than two hours in the Rotunda hotel with Betro.

Birmingham Crown Court heard how Betro – disguised in a hijab – arrived at the property in a Mercedes shortly before he pulled up in an Audi.

Kevin Hegarty KC, prosecuting said: "As he did the would-be assassin came from the driver's side of the Mercedes.

"As she left the Mercedes she left the driver's door open. She walked quite calmly towards Sikander Ali and was pointing a gun at him at head height.

"As she got closer to Sikander Ali he saw her and he saw the gun and she pulled the trigger to fire the gun at him. Mercifully and luckily for him the gun jammed." Mr Hegarty said Mr Ali rapidly reversed his car and drove off at speed, while Betro abandoned her Mercedes nearby.

Jurors heard Betro had bought the Mercedes from a dealer in Birmingham after flying from Chicago to Manchester, via Atlanta, on August 22 – 16 days before the shooting

Betro later sent Aslat Mahamud a text saying: "You want to rip me off, you want to be a drug kingpin go look at your house. I will show you. Watch your back. I will be shedding blood soon".

Mr Mahamud replied: "What are you talking about? I'm a family man. I have never sold drugs in my life."

West Midlands Police, with the assistance of Derbyshire Police, were able to piece together Aslam and Nazir's involvement in the attempted assassination through their phones, CCTV and financial investigations.

Nazir was found guilty of conspiracy to murder, and possession of a firearm with intent to cause fear of violence on Wednesday June 5.

He was also found guilty of perverting the course of justice and illegally importing firearms over a plot to bring guns into the country and then blame it on another person to frame them. According to a tip off to police the guns had been sent by Betro from Illinois.

Aslam was found guilty of conspiracy to murder. He was cleared of a firearms offence. The pair will be sentenced on August 9.



ANDY RAIN/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Pretty in pink Nicola Coughlan attends a screening of Season 3 Part 2 of *Bridgerton* at Leicester Square in London yesterday. The Irish actress, who rose to fame in the comedy hit *Derry Girls*, stars as Penelope Featherington in Netflix's record-setting period drama.

Escape to Chateau host stands firm over 'bullying' rant

By **Blathnaid Corless**

ANGEL STRAWBRIDGE, the *Escape to the Chateau* star, has refused to apologise for a foul-mouthed tirade against a producer that was revealed in a leaked audio recording.

Speaking for the first time since the incident, she said there had been a "tsunami of untruths" surrounding the release of the tape.

In the audio, Strawbridge, 45, calls a show producer a "f----- up little c---" . It followed a bullying scandal which led to Channel 4 cutting ties with her and her co-host husband Dick in May last year after six years and nine seasons.

She has now said that while she wishes the incident had never happened, she will not apologise for what she said.

She told Elizabeth Day's podcast *How to Fail*: "I was the one in the wrong for losing my temper, but do you know what, I will not apologise – he was so disrespectful in our house, he was so upsetting to me, my family, and I stand by what I did.

"If I was to apologise and say, 'I'm sorry for using bad language and chucking you out,' it would just be disingenuous to me." She added: "Would I like to erase that? Yeah, I'd love to. But I would also like to erase what he was doing because my rage just didn't pop out of nowhere."

Giving her recollection of the events, which Strawbridge recalled happened about six years ago, she said: "His behaviour was completely unacceptable, but it didn't just happen in one little moment, it happened over lots of different occasions."

Strawbridge said she has not listened back to the recording of her rant as it makes her feel "a little bit sick".

"But obviously all of my friends have, and they're like 'I can hear you' – he actually took out what he said – 'I can hear you gradually getting more angry, more angry, more angry'.

"And then I just say 'get out of my f-ing house'. I can't even remember what I said. I think I said a really bad word beginning with c, I think that's how p---ed off I must have been."

Strawbridge can be heard saying in the recording, which was obtained by entertainment website Deadline, Strawbridge can be heard saying: "Who is that inspired by when you're f---ing working at the chateau? Just tell me that and then you can f---ing leave and this is me f---ing angry because I think you're a f----ed up little c---."

Allegations of bullying by the couple towards producers emerged in 2021 as a former crew member likened working with the them to an "abusive relationship". Channel 4 and production firm Two Rivers Media last year confirmed ties with the couple were severed following an investigation.

Angel and Dick Strawbridge have previously denied allegations that they bullied or were aggressive towards crew members.

The couple are back on screens in *Secret France*, on Channel 4, which was filmed before the station cut ties.



Angel Strawbridge, the presenter

BBC could air Mosley's unfinished series as tribute

By **Craig Simpson**

MICHAEL MOSLEY's unfinished series could be aired by the BBC as a tribute to the late doctor.

The health expert died in 40C (104F) heat on the Greek island of Symi, and was found dead just yards away from the beach resort of Agia Marina on Sunday.

He had been due to complete *Just One Thing*, a 10-part series based on his podcasts.

The BBC may release the unfinished production, which covered subjects from yoga to volunteering, in a tribute to Dr Mosley, according to reports.

According to an announcement in April 2024, the series would see "Michael travel across the UK to find the simplest and most surprising ways audiences can improve their health and wellbeing".

The 67-year-old doctor had begun work on the show which was set to include visits to the Lake District, Edinburgh, Cambridgeshire and Glasgow.

TV insiders have told *The Sun* that: "The BBC are now considering how usable the footage they have is and will of course consult with his family."

Dr Mosley said at the time the project was announced that, in keeping with his TV work, the "idea behind the series is that we show people that making a few simple changes can lead to big improvements in their mental and physical well being".

Just One Thing had been scheduled to air in the second half of 2024, and may not have been the only project lined up for the TV doctor. It has been reported that he had also been approached about appearing on the next series of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

The BBC has pledged to broadcast two programmes in Dr Mosley's honour, with the BBC Two special *Michael Mosley – The Doctor Who Changed Britain* set to air tomorrow.

That will be preceded on BBC Sounds by *There's Only One Michael Mosley*, featuring the last interview he gave, at the Hay Festival on May 25.

Charlotte Mooore, chief content officer at the BBC said Dr Mosley was "a brilliant science broadcaster and programme maker, able to make the most complex subjects simple, but he was also passionate about engaging and entertaining audiences, inspiring us all to live a healthier, fuller life".



Wreck of Shackleton's last voyage discovered

By **Rozina Sabur** DEPUTY US EDITOR

THE ship on which Ernest Shackleton made his final voyage has been rediscovered off the coast of Canada.

Shackleton suffered a fatal heart attack on board the Quest in 1922, aged only 47, while trying to reach the Antarctic for a fourth expedition.

The vessel remained in use for another 40 years until it sank, but its link to the British-Irish adventurer has made the wreck legendary. Locating Quest represents the "last discovery in the Shackleton story", Alexandra Shackleton, his granddaughter, said.

Shackleton has been lionised as a lead figure of the so-called "heroic age" of Antarctic exploration.

"His final voyage kind of ended that heroic age of exploration, of polar exploration, certainly in the south," said David Mearns, who directed the search.

He told the BBC the Quest was "in the pantheon of polar ships".

The 111ft-long schooner-rigged steamship was initially built for seal hunting, but continued sailing in various capacities for decades after Shackleton's death. By 1962, the ageing vessel had returned to its original purpose and was being used by Norwegian sealers when thick sea ice pierced its hull and sent it to the sea floor off the coast of Newfoundland, Canada.

All its crew were rescued, but the wreck has remained a last mystery of the age of polar explorers, until it was rediscovered in the depths of the Labrador Sea on Sunday by a team led by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

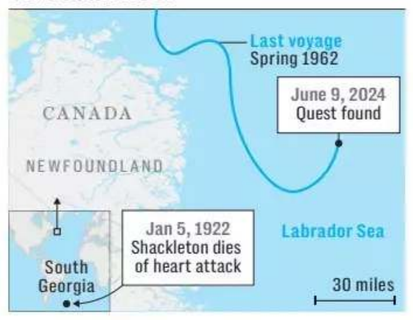
Other than damage to its mast, the vessel appears to be broadly intact.

Alexandra, the famed explorer's closest living relative, told the BBC: "It completes the circle."





Where ship was discovered on ocean floor





ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY VIA GETTY IMAGES

Quest is stuck in ice on the 1922 voyage during which Shackleton, top right, suffered a fatal heart attack; the wreck of the vessel, which went down in 1962, was found off the coast of Newfoundland using sonar imaging

Crypto trading addicts pile pressure on NHS

Service chief says it cannot 'pick up the pieces' of problem as young gamble on investment market

By **Laura Donnelly** HEALTH EDITOR

UNREGULATED gambling on cryptocurrency is heaping demand on NHS gambling clinics, the head of the health service has warned.

Amanda Pritchard called for regulatory action to stop young people getting "hooked" on new forms of betting, saying the NHS could not afford to keep "picking up the pieces" of societal problems.

Counsellors are treating increasing numbers of people who have attempted to get rich from trading in cryptocurrencies, such as bitcoin, as well as from those gambling on the market, or using the currency to place bets.

Ms Pritchard said that 15 specialist gambling clinics created across the country were responding to a "real and growing social need" for treatment, describing the addiction as "a cruel disease which has the power to destroy people's lives".

But she told the Confed Expo conference of NHS managers that the health service could not become an "expensive safety net" for the problems created by society.

The health chief said: "As a society we need to ask, are we okay to just continue picking up the pieces while the methods employed to keep people hooked get ever more sophisticated.

"Ever more opportunities spring up for younger people to get addicted to gambling including – as I've heard from staff when I visited the national problem gambling clinic earlier this year – on unregulated cryptocurrency markets."

She said the NHS, which was already "damaged, but not destroyed" by pressures post-Covid, could not afford to become an "expensive safety net".

"That kind of service is what the NHS was born as, but it shouldn't be our ambition now," she told health service managers.

Last year, the Treasury select committee called for trading in bitcoin and other speculative cryptocurrencies to be regulated as gambling to avoid consumers from being lulled into a false sense of security about the risks posed by the $1.2 trillion market.

It quoted a 2022 survey which found that about one in 10 adults in Britain hold or have held cryptoassets, most commonly in the form of currency.

The same report found that the most common reason for holding cryptoassets was that they were a "fun investment" with anecdotal evidence of children speculating on the markets.

Ms Pritchard said: "The addictive habit sees people investing their own money in something with no fixed value, with the NHS left to pick up the pieces. This growing problem could create further demand for the health service.

The health chief also warned that the NHS was dealing with a "rising tide" of patients suffering from illnesses fuelled by obesity.

Highlighting new figures, showing record numbers of patients have been identified as "pre-diabetic" – meaning they are at high risk of developing the condition, she said.



Toxic 'forever' chemicals found in blood of parliamentarians

By **Emma Gatten**
ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

TOXIC "forever" chemicals have been found in the hair and blood of MPs, peers and environmentalists at levels that could be a risk to their health.

Parliamentarians including the Conservative Philippe Dunne and Labour's Alex Sobel as well as environmentalists had hair and blood samples tested for a range of substances.

They found levels of "forever chemicals" used in items such as waterproof clothing and food packaging, in all participants. This included three "over levels of concern" for specific chemicals, as defined by the Human Biomonitoring Commission in Germany.

Per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS), known as forever chemicals because they do not break down naturally in the environment, is the umbrella term for more than 4,000 different compounds.

They have been linked to immune system disruption and named as possible carcinogens and have previously been found in drinking water sources and soils across the UK.

> 'I was shocked to be told I was one of the most chemically polluted individuals in the study'

All of the subjects also tested positive for hormone-disrupting substances such as those found in cosmetics and paint, and heavy metals including those found in tooth fillings.

The study was commissioned by charity Wildlife and Countryside Link, which is calling for the Government to tighten regulations on chemical use.

Ben Goldsmith, a financier and former adviser to Defra, had both his hair and blood tested, and said he was "shocked to be told that I was one of the most chemically polluted individuals in the study."

"On PFAS 'forever' chemicals alone I was over what are deemed 'levels of concern', which could create increased health risks," he said. Mr Goldsmith added that "avoiding toxic chemicals is pretty much impossible, it turns out.

"These are now in everything, in our food, our water and consumer goods such as toiletries, cosmetics, food packaging and even the pans we cook in."

Wildlife and Countryside Link wants the Government to phase out PFAS, ban endocrine disruptors, remove heavy metals from use in dentist fillings and limit pesticide use.

It said "chemical cocktails" that have been found in more than 1,600 UK river and groundwater sites were contributing to the decline of wildlife and aquatic environments.

It also warned that British wildlife including insects, birds of prey, and dolphins are being harmed by toxic chemicals, with effects such as reduced reproduction, growth and development.

Hospital hit by cyber attack asks staff to donate blood

By **Michael Searles**
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

ONE of the hospitals affected by a cyber attack has asked its staff to donate blood amid fears the disruption could last for months.

The NHS issued an urgent plea for members of the public with blood type O to donate on Monday after a pathology service provider was hit by a Russian cyber gang.

King's College Hospital in London has encouraged its staff to donate as part of the NHS campaign, with experts warning that it may take months for services to be restored.

Julie Lowe, the deputy chief executive of King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, said in an internal memo to staff: "NHS Blood and Transplant is calling for O blood type donors (both positive and negative) to book appointments in order to support the response to the ransomware cyber attack incident. Staff are also encouraged to donate blood as well."

A spokesman for the hospital said: "Like all hospitals, we are supporting the NHS Blood and Transplant's campaign to encourage people with O blood type to book appointments and donate, and we are encouraging staff to do the same if they choose."

It has been more than a week since the ransomware attack against Synnovis, which provides blood test services to King's, Guy's and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust, and other NHS services in south-east London.

The attack has seen procedures and operations cancelled as well as routine blood testing paused. Emergency care is unaffected, the NHS has said.

Hospitals affected have used "mutual aid" arrangements with neighbouring hospitals to transfer the care of some patients, including inpatients with heart conditions.

In the internal memo from King's College Hospital, first seen by Bloomberg, Ms Lowe also said: "We still do not know when Synnovis' systems are likely to be restored, so we should expect to be dealing with this incident for the rest of this week, and beyond."

Ciaran Martin, the former head of the National Cyber Security Centre, told *The Guardian*: "We should not be surprised that the time it takes to completely recover services is in the weeks or even months."

Edinburgh fringe head defends Bailie Gifford sponsorship

By **Daniel Sanderson**
SCOTTISH CORRESPONDENT

THE head of the Edinburgh Fringe festival has defended a deal with Bailie Gifford warning that investing in the arts is becoming unattractive to potential sponsors.

Shona McCarthy, chief executive of the world's largest arts festival, said cultural events were operating in a "fevered environment" in which they were expected to be "the most values-driven organisations on the planet" while still balancing the books.

She defended the tie-up between the Fringe and Bailie Gifford, the Edinburgh investment firm, which sponsors its community engagement work.

The company recently cut ties with a series of book festivals in the wake of pressure from a campaign called Fossil Free Books, which claimed it has links to Israel's military campaign and investments in oil and gas firms.

Baillie Gifford has insisted it has been unfairly targeted, saying it invests far more in green energy companies and claims accusations that it was a large investor in occupied Palestinian territories were "seriously misleading".

Russian warships dock off coast of Cuba

Show of force comes after US authorised Ukraine to use its weapons to strike cross-border targets

By **Simeon Tegel** *and* **Rozina Sabur**

A FRIGATE armed with hypersonic missiles docked in Cuba as the Russian navy carried out missile drills in the Atlantic in a show of force amid rising global tensions.

The Admiral Gorshkov frigate was accompanied by the Kazan, a nuclear-powered submarine and two supply vessels, one a military tug and the other a fuel carrier as it sailed within 30 miles of Florida.

Washington responded with submarine hunter spy planes and sea drones to track as one of the largest Russian deployments to the Caribbean island in years.

The arrival of the warships in Cuba has echoes the Cold War, when the communist regimes in Moscow and Havana competed with the West for geopolitical power – and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis almost triggered nuclear Armageddon.

The navy flotilla represents the most significant Russian naval deployment to the Caribbean island for years.

But the Biden administration has downplayed the significance of the visit from the Gorshkov and the Kazan, emphasizing that neither vessel is carrying nuclear weapons and that Moscow has the right to hold war games in international waters.

"Russia's deployments are part of routine naval activity which pose no direct threat or concern to the United States," an official from US Northern Command told *The Telegraph*.

However, the Pentagon has sent three guided-missile destroyers and several Boeing P-8 maritime reconnaissance planes to shadow the convoy, as it skirted close to the Florida coast.

US intelligence has assessed that the Gorshkov may be armed with Zircon hypersonic missiles. They are among the Russian military's most modern weapons and have a range of just over 600 miles. They can hit both land and sea targets.

That means that southern Florida, including Miami – just 230 miles from Havana – is now well within range.

But Evan Ellis, a professor at the US Army War College, dismissed the Russian warships presence in Cuba as "pure kabuki theatre", whose significance was symbolic rather than strategic, aimed largely at a domestic audience within Russia.

The Admiral Gorshkov fired a 21-gun salute as it entered the port of Havana yesterday morning.

Cuban forces reciprocated by discharging canons from an 18th Century Spanish fort overlooking the harbour. The deployment allows Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, to project strength on the world stage – even as the Russian military has become bogged down in a war of attrition in Ukraine that has exacted a huge toll in lives and hardware and shown up its limitations in combat.

"It's clear that Russia doesn't have the sustainable capability to project significant military force into the Western Hemisphere," Dr Ellis said, noting that the deployment is a "protest response" to the Biden administration authorising Ukraine to use US-supplied weapons to strike inside Russia.

Analyst Steffan Watkins added: "I think it's as much for domestic audiences as sabre-rattling.

"It's still a tiny fraction of the sort of naval activity the Soviets had in the Atlantic during the Cold War, based on declassified CIA reports from the time."

Dr Ellis also highlighted that the frigate and submarine were accompanied by a tug. That, he said, reveals the dilapidated state of the Russian navy, which has fared disastrously in the war in Ukraine, with even Russia's Black Sea flagship, Moskva, being sunk by Kiev in 2022.

"The fact that they are sending a tug tells you everything. They can't even rely on the Cubans or the Venezuelans if their ships break down," he added.

The two vessels are expected to stay in Havana for five days, with civilians even allowed to tour the frigate. They will then take part in war games with the Cuban navy. They may also then visit Venezuela, another of Russia's handful of allies, all with floundering economies, in Latin America.



YAMIL LAGE/AFP VIA GETTY

The Russian nuclear-powered submarine Kazan arrives at Havana's harbour

'I think it's as much for domestic audiences as sabre-rattling'

Israeli hostage brainwashed into thinking nobody cared about him

By **Nicola Smith** *in Jerusalem*

AN ISRAELI hostage freed last weekend believed his rescuers had come to kill him because of eight months of brainwashing by Hamas, his mother has revealed.

Yevgenia Kozlov told *The Telegraph* her son Andrey, 27, had been subjected to both psychological and physical torture after being kidnapped from the Nova music festival on Oct 7 where he had been working as a security guard.

For the first two months his hands and feet were bound and on occasion his captors piled up to ten blankets on top of him in high temperatures and refused to let him use the lavatory.

But the mental abuse was particularly harrowing, she said.

"He said he was brainwashed ... they told them that nobody wants them, that nobody is fighting for them," said Ms Kozlov, adding that her son's captors tried to convince him and the three men he was being held with that their families had moved on and their girlfriends were dating other men.

"They said that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) wants to kill them and that this will be the solution for the war. So, at the moment when the IDF came, Andrey thought that they came to kill them."

On Saturday, Israeli commandos launched a daylight raid in Nuseirat to retrieve four hostages.

Video footage shows the squad shooting its way through incoming automatic gunfire to reach a low-level apartment block where Mr Kozlov, Almog Meir Jan, a 22-year-old, and Shlomi Ziv, 41, were being held prisoner.

All three, as well as Noa Argamani, 26, the female hostage who was imprisoned on her own in a nearby apartment block, were returned to Israel on Saturday. Mr Kozlov, an Israeli-Russian, and his fellow captives appeared terrified, with their hands in the air, leaning into a nearby wall when the IDF arrived to retrieve them.

'My son said the soldiers that rescued him were like superheroes and that he finally felt safe'

"It took him a while to understand that the army came to bring them back to Israel. It was only after a soldier said to them that they love them and they will be fine, that they will be safe. It was only after these words he believed," Ms Kozlov said of her son.

"He said that he wanted to touch the soldiers, to hold their arms or clothes just to feel safe like a baby. He said the soldiers were like superheroes and that he felt safe finally."

The commando squad then had to fight its way back out of the building while protecting the hostages.

In the fierce crossfire, their commander Arnon Zmora, 36, a married father of two, was mortally wounded.

Under a volley of bullets and rocket-propelled grenades from Hamas fighters their extraction vehicle broke down, forcing the group to take refuge in a nearby building where they requested air cover.

Multiple rockets struck the crowded streets, causing widespread carnage as civilians fled in terror. The Gaza health ministry estimated at least 274 people were killed but the IDF put the death toll closer to 100.

The hostages were whisked away to a helicopter that awaited them on the beach. It was not until they were safely in Israeli airspace that Ms Kozlov, at home in Russia, received the call she had been longing for.

"They said we have some news so please sit down, so I threw down my phone because I didn't want to hear any bad news. I started to cry, 'no, no, no!' And then they shouted from the phone, 'we have good news, please answer!'," she said.

Packing to catch a flight to Israel, Ms Kozlov said the first item she threw into her suitcase was her tennis racket. "I love tennis but for the whole eight months I didn't touch it, I didn't let myself enjoy life, to do the thing I love," she said. Describing the first video call with her newly released son, who lives in Rishon LeZion, a coastal town south of Tel Aviv, Ms Kozlov said: "He was shouting, 'Mummy, I survived twice, and I am home, I am home!' We couldn't really speak.

"We were both shouting and crying and smiling and it was full of happiness, and I couldn't stop laughing.

"I was really excited and wanted to come and hug him physically."

She was initially apprehensive about how his ordeal may have changed him but "then I saw my son and despite this horrific experience, I could feel that this is my boy", she said.

"The first sentence he said to me is that he always knew he would be back. That is the reason he never said goodbye on Oct 7, he never sent a message with some sad news."

She said he had remained strong by writing a diary, trying to keep his mind busy and exercising in the confined space.

"He said it actually brought him energy to fight and to have this hope to know that he will be back home," said Ms Kozlov.

Other media reports say the three hostages taught each other Hebrew and Russian and forged a strong bond that helped them endure the tough conditions.

But Dr Itai Pessach, a member of the team at Sheba Medical Centre who treated the hostages, told *The Wall Street Journal* their initial healthy appearance was in part due to the adrenaline and jubilation they experienced during their escape.

He revealed that closer examination showed signs of muscle atrophy and malnutrition and that their weight had likely fluctuated due to fear and maltreatment.

As elated as Ms Kozlov and her family were at Andrey's release, she said they also felt guilty in front of families who had lost loved ones in the Oct 7 attack or who were waiting for news about hostages who were still being held in Gaza.

"The story is not finished. We have 120 more people, we have to fight for them and bring them in any way possible – if it is a deal or another operation," she said.

"Every day someone can lose their life."

She thanked everyone involved in her son's rescue and paid tribute to Mr Zmora, the officer who lost his life.

"I was destroyed physically and mentally when I knew that this soldier was killed during the operation. I have no words to describe what I feel regarding this situation. I feel that I owe my life and my kid's life to this guy, and it is terrible."

Mr Kozlov's father, Mikhail, said when he wrote on social media that he was devastated about Mr Zmora, someone replied to say: "Now Andrey knows the name to choose for his son in the future."



Andrey Kozlov, centre, is reunited with his mother, Yevgenia, and the rest of his family

Blinken: Hamas amendments to peace proposal are unworkable

By **Nicola Smith** *in Jerusalem*

HAMAS has sent back an "unworkable" counter offer to a US-backed ceasefire proposal for Gaza, Antony Blinken warned yesterday.

The US secretary of state said "the war will go on" because Hamas were unable to agree to the plans. He added that Hamas had "made a choice to continue the war that they started".

Full details of the deal and the amendments have not been made public. The US has said Israel accepted the deal, but Israel has not publicly backed it.

Hamas said it had submitted what it called a "positive" response that opened a "wide pathway" for agreement on the plan.

A speech by Joe Biden almost two weeks ago outlined the broad proposal, which would involve an initial six-week ceasefire with Hamas and Israel releasing hostages or Palestinian prisoners respectively. This would evolve into a permanent end to hostilities, before a reconstruction effort in the Gaza Strip.

'Hamas waited nearly two weeks and proposed more changes. As a result, war will go on'

Mr Blinken told reporters in Doha, Qatar, yesterday that after the deal was proposed, "Hamas waited nearly two weeks and then proposed more changes". "As a result, the war will go on," he said.

An official with knowledge of the talks told *The Washington Post* Hamas' amendments included a "timeline for a permanent cease-fire" and the "withdrawal of Israeli troops" from the Strip.

It comes after leaked notes from Yahya Sinwar, the Hamas military leader, suggested he was prolonging the war to improve his negotiating position.

In a message to ceasefire negotiators obtained by *The Wall Street Journal*, Sinwar said: "We have the Israelis right where we want them."

Hungary will not have to send aid to Kyiv in Nato deal

By **Joe Barnes**
BRUSSELS CORRESPONDENT

HUNGARY will not have to contribute money or military personnel to support Ukraine under a Nato carve-out deal negotiated with the bloc.

The concession was granted to Budapest to ensure smooth passage for the Western alliance's planned "Mission for Ukraine", which will raise and co-ordinate an estimated €40 billion (£33.7 million) in military support for Kyiv.

In exchange, Hungary will not veto any Nato plans to support Ukraine, despite prime minister Viktor Orban's criticism of the war and soft stance on Vladimir Putin.

Under the plans, Nato would take over some work from a US-led coalition known as the Ramstein group, which is made up of more than 50 countries supporting Ukraine. Nato will not take over any role in assisting Ukraine's armed forces with targeting advice or battle plans, as this could escalate tensions with Moscow.

Mr Orban has refused to supply arms to Kyiv, but assured Jens Stoltenberg, Nato's secretary-general, that he would not stand in the way of plans to support Ukraine if they were "voluntary".

Mr Orban said: "I have asked the secretary-general to make this clear that any out-of-area military operation can be voluntary. Therefore, Hungary has been granted the guarantees that she requires."

Mr Stoltenberg said at a press conference in Budapest that he expects "allies to agree on a leading role for Nato in coordinating and providing security assistance", adding: "I'm glad the prime minister and I have agreed the modalities for Hungary's non-participation for support to Ukraine."



Macron urges moderates to unite against hard-Right

French president fears his party cannot hold its own against Le Pen's National Rally in snap election

By **Henry Samuel** *in Paris*

EMMANUEL MACRON called on France's moderate parties to back him in the battle against the hard-Right yesterday as he faced an internal backlash over his decision to hold a snap election.

In a combative two-hour press conference, the French president urged the Socialists and the Greens, as well as the main-stream Republican conservatives, to form a "new project ... a coalition to govern". Mr Macron's appeal reflects the fact his Renaissance party alone appears highly unlikely to beat Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN), which is polling in first place according to a survey released on Wednesday.

The RN is expected to win 31 per cent of votes in the first round national vote on June 30, while Mr Macron's party is projected to claim 18 per cent, the Elabe poll finds. Mr Macron appealed to "political leaders who do not recognise themselves in the extremist fever" to join his ticket.

France's mainstream parties have worked together since the end of the Second World War to block the hard-Right from power, after the RN's predecessor collaborated with the Nazis.

Yesterday, the Republican party decided to remove its leader, Eric Ciotti, over his decision to break the so-called "cordon sanitaire" and seek an alliance with Le Pen.

Reports in the French media before Mr Macron's speech revealed fierce splits within his camp over the decision to call an election, with some describing him as a "sorcerer's apprentice" playing with the future of France.

"Macron is guilty of hubris because he has never previously experienced electoral failure. Hence his headlong leap forward. He's in denial", one MP cited by *Le Parisien* complained.

Mr Macron defended the decision in his press conference. "What would you have said ... if I stood before you with 50 per cent of the French people voting for the extremes and exclaimed, "we're not changing a thing, we're carrying on'? You would have said, 'this guy's out of touch'," he said.

Those against it were members of "the political system" who wanted to keep their jobs, he asserted.

Edouard Philippe, Mr Macron's former prime minister and a potential successor in the 2027 presidential election, appeared to suggest it would be better if Mr Macron kept out of the race altogether. "I'm not sure it's entirely healthy for the president of the republic to run a legislative campaign," he said on BFM TV on Tuesday night.

> 'Macron is guilty of hubris because he has never lost an election before, hence his headlong leap forward'

Yesterday, Mr Macron insisted he was merely setting out a "line" and would pass over to his popular 35-year-old prime minister Gabriel Attal, who will lead the legislative campaign.

He ruled out debating against Ms Le Pen, who he said dreamed of a "rematch" of the presidential elections she twice lost to him and dismissed "rumours" he would resign if his party's alliance lost as "absurd".

The Republicans were in disarray yesterday, as the party fired Mr Ciotti after an emergency meeting only for him to announce minutes later he was staying put and calling the committee's decision "a flagrant violation of our statutes" that was illegal and void.

As the row erupted, Mr Ciotti closed the party's headquarters near the National Assembly due to "security fears".



SECRETARIA DE PRENSA DE LA PRESIDENCIA/REUTERS

Marked men New inmates are stripped before being admitted to the Terrorism Confinement Centre in Tecoluca, El Salvador. The jail opened last year as part of a crackdown on gangs. More than 70,000 arrests have been made within two years.

Hiker missing on Greek island hit by heatwave

By **Nick Squires**

A RETIRED American policeman has gone missing while hiking on a small Greek island as a record early heatwave hits.

Eric Albert Calibet went missing just days after the British celebrity doctor Michael Mosley died after going for a walk across rugged hills on the island of Symi in the Dodecanese. He has been missing since Tuesday when he set off on a hike on the rugged island of Amorgos in the Cyclades group of islands.

It comes as Greece is set for its earliest recorded heatwave, which has forced the closure of the Acropolis and some schools as the mercury pushed to 43C (109F) in Athens.

Authorities on Amorgos released a photo of the missing 57-year-old American to help with search and rescue operations on the island, which has a network of well-maintained hiking trails.

He set off from the village of Aegiali, in the north of the island, and was heading for the town of Katapola, the main port. The hike takes around four hours under normal conditions. It is a well known and well-maintained trail.



A rescue operation has been launched on the island of Amorgos for Eric Albert Calibet, who has been missing since Tuesday

When he failed to turn up, a friend reported him as missing. The island is subject to a "severe high temperature warning" this week.

A search operation has been launched, with additional emergency personnel arriving from the nearby island of Naxos.

The American is well known on Amorgos, having visited the island several times.

Calliope Despotidi, the deputy mayor of Amorgos, told Greek Reporter, a news website that she was concerned that scorching temperatures may have been a factor in his failure to turn up at his destination.

"He may have lost consciousness because of the heat and hopefully found shade in one of the caves along the route," Ms Despotidi said.

The high temperatures were expected to continue today, driven by southerly winds from North Africa.





KENA BETANCUR/GETTY

Top dog Chestnut's road to guzzling glory

55
World records held

76
Number of Nathan's Famous Hot Dogs and buns he ate in 10 minutes (2021) – a world record

20,000
Total calories eaten during his 2021 hot dog challenge

141
His world record for hard-boiled eggs eaten in eight minutes (2013)

103
Number of Krystal Burgers eaten in eight minutes (2007) – a world record

30
His world record for 8oz gyros eaten in 10 minutes (2016)

Hot dog eating champ banned in vegan row

Joey 'Jaws' Chestnut cut out of Coney Island contest for promoting a plant-based sausage

By **Lilia Sebouai**

THE reigning champion of the world's most famous hot dog eating competition has been banned for endorsing a vegan brand.

Joey "Jaws" Chestnut is known for his unparalleled ability to scoff dozens of hot dogs at Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest, an annual competition that draws thousands to Coney Island in Brooklyn, New York.

Mr Chestnut, widely considered the greatest professional eater in history, will not be allowed to compete in next month's contest after he agreed to a sponsorship deal from plant-based Impossible Foods.

George Shea, the chairman and co-founder of Major League Eating – the governing body for Nathan's contest – said that a key condition for all competitors is to "not represent a rival hot dog brand".

He said: "It would be like back in the day Michael Jordan coming to Nike, who made his Air Jordans, and saying, 'I am just going to rep Adidas too.' It just can't happen."

A statement for Major League Eating said that Mr Chestnut, who has taken the prize 16 times, was welcome to rejoin the competition, but only if he dropped his vegan sponsorship.



Joey Chestnut, main, holds the world record after eating 76 hot dogs. He has endorsed a vegan hotdog brand, left

"Joey Chestnut is an American hero. We would love nothing more than to have him at the Nathan's Famous International Hot Dog Eating Contest," MLE said. "We hope he returns when he is not representing a rival brand."

Mr Chestnut's deal with Impossible, which is trying to attract more meat eaters to its new plant-based hot dog, does not prohibit him from entering eating competitions, including Nathan's, which is held annually on July 4.

"We love Joey and support him in any contest he chooses. It's OK to experiment with a new dog. Meat eaters shouldn't have to be exclusive to just one wiener," the fake meat company said in a statement.

Mr Chestnut, 40, holds the world record for hot dog eating, having devoured 76 at the 2021 contest.

He has also set other eating records, including downing 141 hard-boiled eggs in eight minutes, 30 Gyros in 10 minutes and 182 chicken wings in 30 minutes.

Mr Chestnut said on social media that he was "gutted", when he learned of the ban. He said: "To set the record straight, I do not have a contract with MLE or Nathans and they are looking to change the rules from past years as it relates to other partners I can work with.

"Rest assured that you'll see me eat again soon!! STAY HUNGRY!"

Dion took enough pain drugs 'to kill you' after muscle spasms

By **Daily Telegraph Reporter**

CELINE DION said she took enough doses of medication to "kill you" as she sought relief from muscle spasms in the years leading up to her diagnosis of stiff person syndrome.

The music superstar, whose best-known hits include *My Heart Will Go On*, *Think Twice* and *It's All Coming Back To Me Now*, revealed her diagnosis in December 2022 as she cancelled her Courage World Tour.

Stiff person syndrome is a rare neurological disorder that causes progressive muscular stiffness. It can cause spasms that can be "abdominal, can be in the spine, can be in the ribs", Dion said.

Dion told the *Today* host Hoda Kotb on NBC that before her diagnosis, she was taking diazepam, known as Valium, to help relax her "whole body" in order to perform on stage – but that she was not aware of the consequences.

"I did not know, honestly, that it could kill me," Dion said. "I would take, for example, before a performance, 20 milligrams of Valium and then just walking from my dressing room to backstage, it was gone already."

Dion said as her body became accustomed to the medication, she felt symptoms again after 20 minutes and thus raised her dosage. "You get used to it, it doesn't work," she told NBC.

The singer revealed she was taking up to 90 milligrams a day, an amount that can "kill you", she said.

With the help of doctors, Dion weaned herself off the medications, "especially the bad ones", during the pandemic. "I stopped everything because it stopped working," she said.

On reflection, Dion said she should have taken the time to "figure it out" instead of pushing through performances. However, it coincided with the period in which her late husband, Rene Angelil, "was fighting for his own life".



'I Am: Celine Dion' documents the singer's battle with stiff person syndrome

He died in January 2016 from throat cancer. Dion said: "I had to hide. I had to try to be a hero."

Explaining her decision to publicly reveal her health battle, she added: "Lying for me, the burden was too much ... I could not do it any more."

Despite her diagnosis, Dion said: "I'm going to go back onstage, even if I have to crawl. Even if I have to talk with my hands. I will. I will.

"I am Celine Dion, because today my voice will be heard for the first time, not just because I have to, or because I need to. It's because I want to. And I miss it."

Dion has documented her health battle in a Prime Video film called *I Am: Celine Dion*, which is set to air on June 25. Directed by Irene Taylor, the Oscar-nominated filmmaker, it will offer a behind-the-scenes look at the Canadian singer's life since being diagnosed and the lengths she has gone to in order to carry on performing.

There is currently no cure for stiff person syndrome, but there are ways for the disease to be treated including through the use of muscle sedatives and relaxants.

Too hot to handle: noodles recalled over poisoning risk

By **Our Foreign Staff**

DENMARK'S food agency has recalled South Korean instant ramen produced by a brand popular in the West, warning noodle lovers that they were so hot they might cause "acute poisoning".

Three Samyang Foods noodle products were assessed to have dangerous levels of capsaicin, the active component of chilli peppers, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration said in a statement on Tuesday.

The three products from the Samyang instant ramen line – Buldak 3x Spicy & Hot Chicken, 2x Spicy & Hot Chicken, and Hot Chicken Stew – were being withdrawn from sale in Denmark.

The ramen varieties can be found in some British shops. The capsaicin level in a single packet was "so high that they pose a risk of the consumer developing acute poisoning", the Danish body said.

"If you have the products, you should discard them, or return them to the store where they were purchased," the statement added. It urged parents to contact the poison control hotline if children showed "acute symptoms".

Samyang products are hugely popular across the world, with the company's operating profit hitting a record high of more than $110 million in 2023.

Samyang Foods said it was the first time its products had been recalled because they were deemed too hot, adding it would work to better understand the regulations in export markets.

"Currently, the products are being exported around the world, but this is the first time they have been recalled for this reason," a spokesman said.

Samyang Foods saw its stock price soar 70 per cent in recent months after its Buldak Carbonara ramen went viral on TikTok. The product became so popular in the US that there have been reports of shortages, with celebrities posting online about searching for more than 30 minutes to find it.

Pope repeats homophobic slur weeks after apology

By **Nick Squires** *in Rome*

POPE FRANCIS said there is "an air of faggotry" inside the Vatican just weeks after he had to apologise for using the homophobic term, according to leaks from the Holy See.

The pontiff used the offensive term during a closed-door meeting with priests in Rome on Tuesday, sources told Ansa, a national news agency. "In the Vatican there is an air of faggotry," he said, using a slang word *frociaggine*, which is seen as derogatory in Italian.

The Pope reportedly said if a young man wanting to become a seminarian, or trainee priest, is homosexual it would be better to choose a different career.

He caused offence last month when he first referred to "faggotry", saying too many young seminarians were gay.

The Vatican had to issue an apology, saying the Pope "never intended to offend or express himself in homophobic terms".

A bench.

You can find one in just about every park, bus stop and train platform in the UK. They are as functional as they are familiar, but behind their simple design lies something more. An invitation to talk. After all, a bench is made for sharing and when people come together on a bench, it becomes an opportunity for a conversation.

Today, there's a lot to talk about: energy costs, climate change, the cost of living and of course, the weather. But the one thing no one seems to be talking about is living longer and what that means for retirement. As 1 in 3 children born today have a good chance of living to 100, we need to ask ourselves, are we ready?

With a longer life comes a lot more things to think about. Over half of us aren't confident we can afford to retire by 65. It's time we started talking about that. We need to talk about it.

Let's talk about why almost 18 million people don't think they can save for the retirement they want. Let's talk about how more than 750,000 people over 50 are not working but would like to. Let's talk about the 7 million retirees who expect to rely on financial support from a partner, family or friends. It's time we started having these conversations.

Let's talk about savings.

Let's talk about pensions.

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Comment

Middle-class vandalism is tearing apart our social fabric

JEMIMA LEWIS



What I don't get about attacking art – other than the actual point of it – is why this crime should be so difficult to foil.

Video footage of the latest stunt shows a couple of mild-looking young men approaching Jonathan Yeo's portrait of King Charles, getting out the necessary kit, and then plastering an image from *Wallace and Gromit* over the King's face. While all this is going on, you can hear gasps and giggles from the other gallery-goers – but no alarms going off, no security guard thundering in to overpower them, not even so much as a disapproving tut.

One gets the sense that the malefactors themselves feel a bit mystified by this inaction. Having been asked to leave by the gallery owner, Philip Mould, they are reported to have waited outside for two hours, perhaps in anticipation of being arrested. But the police never turned up.

Mould is a private gallerist, entitled to handle such irritants however he chooses. The same cannot be said for the British Library, where last month two elderly women reportedly attacked – very, very slowly – the Magna Carta display case. The video of this incident (there is always a video; the last redoubt of the cowardly bystander) is even weirder, not least because of the respectful hush that prevails throughout. As befits a library, I suppose.

There was a beefy security guard right there at the scene, presumably because the most important document in British history is thought to be worth protecting. Yet he seems to have stood and watched as the little old ladies – one of them a vicar, in a dog collar – are said to have pulled a chisel out of a handbag and allegedly hammered it repeatedly into the glass case surrounding Magna Carta. At one point, to be fair, he did get on his walkie-talkie to summon back-up, not wanting to take on such dangerous outlaws alone. But in the video I saw, the only people he seemed to tell off were the bystanders filming the incident.

Did the rules change without us being informed? Is deference to alleged vandals now standard protocol? I can understand why institutions, including the police, might prefer to downplay these stunts, for fear of making things worse. Like parents tiptoeing backwards from an angry teenager, hands aloft, they are afraid of inflaming the righteous, shape-shifting sense of grievance that animates this kind of activism.

But for those of us who cling, wanly, to the idea of a rules-based civic order, such timorousness is alarming. If supposed miscreants of this calibre – a pair of Adrian Moles and their trendy grans – are now considered too forbidding to tackle, who or what will protect us from more serious threats?

The social fabric is a delicate material, woven from multiple layers of trust and inhibition. To feel safe, we need to know that the rules are clear, universally understood and reliably enforced. Most of our impetus to obey the rules is internal, but it can disappear quickly if civilians don't have faith in institutional enforcement.

A new poll by Neighbourhood Watch has estimated that 28 per cent of crimes went unreported last year, because the victims didn't think anything would be done. It would be a stretch to pin the blame for this on the British Library, or any of the institutions attacked by apparent middle-class vandals. But it all contributes to a gathering mood of dysfunction – of a social fabric becoming alarmingly frayed.

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Britain faces a populist tsunami far greater than anything seen in Europe

Sir Keir Starmer's coming super-majority could be the last hurrah of the failing, neo-Blairite political order

ALLISTER HEATH



Be in no doubt: the next few years are going to be calamitous for Britain. Almost everything that is bad today will get worse, and everything that, for now, is still working will be vandalised or destroyed. The public is clamouring for change, but there will be no great rupture under Sir Keir Starmer's Labour, no break with the dismal status quo, just a further acceleration in our national decline.

We should be grateful for small mercies. Jeremy Corbyn would have imposed full-on socialism; many of his allies wanted to ban private schools altogether and savagely expropriate wealth. Starmer will misinterpret his likely super-majority as an endorsement of technocratic rule, giving him carte blanche to double-down on the neo-Blairite consensus that has been hegemonic in the UK since 1997, with an added dollop of class warfare, punitive taxation and wokery.

But Starmer's plan stands no chance of success. It will merely make a bad situation worse, further ruining an already broken Britain, and will be remembered as the last hurrah of an ancien regime that never learnt from its mistakes. Our taxes will go up to even more extortionate levels, especially on capital and property, making it even less worthwhile to work, invest or create; our drift to European-style social democracy will accelerate; our ultra-regulated economy will carry on stagnating in terms of per capita GDP, delivering paltry wage growth and ensuring children can no longer expect to be better off than their parents.

The NHS, pensions and the welfare state will career ever-faster towards bankruptcy; immigrants will arrive at extraordinary rates, fuelling problems of integration and exacerbating the housing crisis; the gap between London and the rest will grow; the somewheres will still be pitted against the anywheres; the education system, state and private, will be trashed by egalitarian fanatics.

Quangos and human rights lawyers will be handed even greater powers. The woke revolution will tear through more institutions; the family will continue to wither, intensifying the baby-bust; criminals will run riot; energy costs will rocket further in a mad rush to net zero, while the war on mobility will be intensified; and our Armed Forces will remain preposterously small. There is a small chance that Labour might improve the housing crisis, but if so it is concealing its real plans. Our foreign policy will worsen substantially, especially vis-à-vis the Middle East, and a hideous anti-Semitism will continue to gnaw away at our society.

Nobody of a conservative bent should wish for a Labour victory, or for a 1906-style Tory defeat or worse. It would be a catastrophe were the Lib Dems to become the official opposition. Starmer's popularity will undoubtedly collapse in two to three years' time, when it becomes apparent that he doesn't have any answers, but by then great damage will have been done.

Yet the terrible truth is that it is the Tories' embrace of neo-Blairite ideas, camouflaged by a thick coat of blue veneer, that is the fundamental reason they are set to be rejected by the electorate. Bad ideas never work, regardless of which rosette is pinned on them. Britain needs a cultural conservative, free-market and democratic revolution, a massive shock to the system, not a narrow choice between bad and worse.

The Tories, especially those who saw themselves as the heirs to Blair, have only themselves to blame for the fact that Nigel Farage is now polling almost as highly as them. There is no future for the Tory party unless it breaks with today's pseudo-centrism and invents a new mass-market Thatcherism for the modern era.

If that doesn't happen, Britain will go the way of much of Europe, where the mainstream centre-Right and centre-Left stand utterly discredited for failing to fix any of their countries' economic or cultural problems, and are being replaced by radical parties, some sensible (such as Giorgia Meloni's in Italy) and some unpalatable (such as the AfD in Germany, which is rife with extremists).

Growing up in France, I dearly hoped that the centre-Right would pull itself together, and reform France's failing institutions, economy and society, lest demagogues of the far-Left or Right fill the vacuum instead. It never did, and now, 30 years later, and after a succession of useless centre-Right and centre-Left presidents, it is too late. Les Republicains, the successor to de Gaulle's party, are down to 7 per cent and are tearing themselves apart over their leader's decision to subordinate himself to Marine Le Pen's party in the forthcoming general election. This is one possible nightmarish future for our own Tory party.

France's anti-establishment rage has been building for much longer than Britain's, partly because it never had a Thatcher and because it has mismanaged mass immigration to a far greater degree than we have. Emmanuel Macron, a narcissist who pretended to break the Left-Right dichotomy, was the last chance for France's old order, just like Boris Johnson and now Starmer were the final hope for the Tory-Labour duopoly.

Macron blew it spectacularly, his record of abject failure crowned by a humiliating downgrade of France's national debt. In a fit of pique, dressed up as a Machiavellian calculation, he decided to take his ungrateful country down with him days ahead of the Paris Olympics.

There is a high chance that Jordan Bardella, Le Pen's 28-year old number two, will be prime minister after July 7. The consequences will be nuclear. There were runs on the pound after the Brexit vote and Liz Truss' budget; with no franc, a Rassemblement National victory would see the markets turn on French IOUs. Protestors will descend on to the streets. In time, if Le Pen's party survived contact with reality, her proposed referendum on migration would amount to the start of a Frexit in all but name, blowing up many of Starmer's assumptions.

Britain has been lucky with its populists in recent years. Farage is a real conservative who would have been at home in Thatcher's Tories and who, unlike many European Right-wingers, believes in free markets and a smaller state. But far less salubrious characters and parties could easily start to spring up when the next government fails, as it inevitably will. The Tories have a duty to the country not to go the way of France's Gaullists, and instead to help reunite the mainstream Right to defeat the neo-Blairite consensus for good.

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There is no future for the Tory party unless it invents a new mass-market Thatcherism for the modern era

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It's over for the SNP, and voters have finally realised

The electorate is at last tiring of the Scottish Nationalists' excuses for their own awful failures

ALAN COCHRANE



At last the penny seems to have dropped. Hard evidence has emerged that voters have finally cottoned on to an awful truth – at least for John Swinney, leader of the SNP and First Minister of Scotland – that he can't keep "passing the buck" and blaming London and other parties for the shortcomings of his own government.

The accusation came from a Glasgow mother who said that she was "sick" of him blaming everyone else, instead of accepting his responsibility for poor performances in wholly devolved areas such as education and health. In the same BBC debate between Scotland's political leaders this week, a young man in the audience joined in the criticism of the SNP when he expressed his "anger" at seeing boarded up businesses and the number of beggars in the streets, when all the nationalists could talk about was independence.

Swinney had sought to use the programme to defend his party's record, blaming any deficiencies on the British government or other parties. But in the hour-long debate, this mother and young office worker separately demonstrated that Scottish voters are increasingly accepting that the SNP's perpetual excuses are threadbare. The anger displayed may also be a confirmation of opinion polls, which suggest that Swinney's party is heading for a major defeat on July 4.

The attacks on Swinney were on a par with the embarrassment suffered by Gordon Brown following the then Labour prime minister's run-in with Gillian Duffy, the Rochdale woman who Brown condemned as "bigoted" when she confronted him about several issues, including immigration, during the 2010 election campaign. He hadn't known that his words were being picked up by a TV microphone, but Swinney's comeuppance occurred in the full glare of TV cameras during the Scottish leaders' hustings in Glasgow.

The blistering verdict of this Glaswegian mother took him by surprise when she insisted that he should accept responsibility for the SNP's failure in areas, especially education and health, which were entirely the responsibility of his government.

While the First Minister fended off attacks by Tory and Labour leaders by saying that most Scottish problems were the fault of the UK Government, his principal critic stormed: "I want a direct answer. Glasgow parents and Scottish parents are sick of you passing the buck. We're sick of hearing it's Westminster's fault that education is in crisis. We're sick of hearing what Labour and the Tories would do. We want to know what you and your party are going to do to fix what's happening in education right now."

And when Swinney tried to dodge her barb, this lady shouted out: "Stop passing the buck."

The First Minister said that Scottish independence would enable him to tackle such problems, even though education and the NHS are wholly devolved. He described independence as a "beautiful proposition". But this led to him being attacked by his other audience critic who said that, thanks to the SNP, independence dominated the political debate. In a jibe about the prospect of Swinney's position as First Minister being short-lived, he added: "Tidy the flat before you move out, John."

Both Douglas Ross, the outgoing Scottish Tory leader – at least that's what he says is his current position – and Anas Sarwar, of Scottish Labour, blamed Swinney for seeking to shift the blame for his government's failures in education and the NHS when he had all the necessary powers.

This Scottish leaders' debate may have given traditional SNP voters pause for thought as the July 4 election date draws near, but there was another leader, or in her case co-leader, who did her party no favours with an extraordinary performance. It was more of a confused and noisy rant against all the other participants than a considered offering of alternatives from Lorna Slater of the Greens. I'm sure she did promise that a vote for her party would lead to more roads being built, even though I understood that the Greens didn't like roads because cars and lorries run on them.

But I'm grateful that the excellent moderator, Stephen Jardine of BBC Scotland, allowed Ms Slater her say. Otherwise all those EV driving residents in the middle-class ghettos of Glasgow and Edinburgh – from whence the Greens derive much of their support – wouldn't have known what they're voting for.

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THE DAILY TELEGRAPH
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Why should anyone believe Sir Keir now?

The latest televised event involving the leaders of the two main parties raised more questions than it answered about Labour's plans should it win power on July 4.

Sir Keir Starmer was challenged over his previous support for Jeremy Corbyn, who he said in 2019 would make "a great prime minister". Sir Keir was evasive about this as about much else, having changed tack many times during his political career. Indeed, his platform for the Labour leadership was significantly more Left-wing than the policies he espouses today.

"I have changed my mind," he said. But why should anyone believe him now? Sir Keir was insistent that he was being "absolutely clear" about his economic plans, but has said there will be no income tax rises for "working people" without defining who they are or what levels would be immune.

Sir Keir said Labour's manifesto would focus on "growing the economy" and creating wealth, but the people most likely to be hit by any tax rises are the entrepreneurs and better paid. He also doubled down on the plan to impose VAT on private schools.

These are key differences between the two parties which need to be exploited to the full by the Conservatives. It also reinforces the importance of Labour not being given a "blank cheque", as Rishi Sunak has warned.

However, the Prime Minister said earlier that he did not share the view of the Defence Secretary Grant Shapps that Labour was on course for a "super-majority". Mr Sunak perhaps realised that such talk risks being seen as a concession weeks before the votes are counted on July 4.

On Sky, Mr Sunak once again performed well, coming across as less robotic and more personable than Sir Keir, prepared to answer critical questions directly. However, he was required to defend his record since becoming Prime Minister, notably over NHS waiting lists and the small boat crossings.

He was also asked why net migration has more than doubled since the Brexit vote in 2016, with Grimsby heavily in favour of leaving the EU. This is a major problem for the Tories because it is fuelling support for Reform UK.

The latest YouGov survey puts the Conservatives on 18 per cent, just one point ahead of Reform UK. If Nigel Farage's party takes most of its support from the Tories then dozens of seats will fall to Labour.

The irony is that Sir Keir could end up with one of the biggest majorities ever recorded on a lower share of the vote than that achieved by Theresa May in 2017 or Boris Johnson in 2019.

The YouGov poll puts Labour on 38 per cent, indicating a steady decline in support since the election was called. Yet the pollster projects that Labour will have 422 seats in the Commons, an increase of 220 on the last election.

Since a low turnout is also expected, it is not inconceivable that Sir Keir will have the backing of only around a quarter of the total electorate, such are the vagaries of our first-past-the-vote system.

No party in recent British history has won with more than 50 per cent of the vote. The Conservatives in 1955 came close with 49.6 per cent but Labour had 46 per cent. The difference today is the existence of smaller parties like the Liberal Democrats, the SNP and Reform UK taking votes from the big two.

Mr Shapps is correct to say that a party with a super-majority will usher in a very different country. They usually do. The 1945 Labour government brought in the NHS, largely unreformed to this day, planning laws that are still largely in place, and nationalised industries which lasted until the late 1980s.

Mrs Thatcher from 1983 onwards was able to put her own stamp on the country with two large majorities, unravelling Labour's union laws and privatising much of British state owned industry. Tony Blair had the opportunity to use his majority to reform the health and welfare system but ducked the challenge. Instead Blair introduced tax credits, extending welfarism, and put the "human rights" agenda at the very heart of British law.

Sir Keir, a self-professed socialist who supported Mr Corbyn's 2019 bid to be prime minister, may go much further than Blair. Mr Shapps said it would be "very bad news" if he entered No10 with "unchecked" power. What exactly would Labour do with such a mandate? We may look in vain at its manifesto today for any enlightenment.

Put out more flags

An idea of the venue for England's first tussle in the Euros on Sunday is to be had online with the Streetview facility. There's the stadium at Gelsenkirchen, the canal and the church of St Augustine with its 300ft spire, near which it is somehow no surprise to see a Christmas market. Similarly, back in Blighty, it seems only natural to see on Streetview hundreds of flags with the Cross of St George on the walls of the Kirby Estate in Bermondsey. The image is left over from the 2018 World Cup. But some Bermondsey folk complain at the cost of putting up so many flags. Certainly it would be no loss if during the tournament they did without those overprinted with the word England – an affront to vexillology, even to the country. Then, if thwarted by expense, Bermondsey's sporting patriots could make their own flags.

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Who'd believe politicians' tax pledges when Britain is drowning in debt?

SIR – While the main parties squabble over the question of taxation (Letters, June 12), it is sobering to note that in 2023-24, despite income tax raising £277 billion, national insurance £180 billion and VAT £170 billion – a total of £627 billion – the Government found it necessary to borrow a further £121 billion, or almost 20 per cent of the amount raised by these taxes.

This pushed the national debt up to £2.65 trillion, or 100 per cent of GDP, the highest it has been since the end of the Second World War.

Could any politician run a corner shop, or even a household budget?
Neil Russell
Portsmouth, Hampshire

SIR – Rishi Sunak has no chance in this election while the Chancellor refuses to unfreeze income tax thresholds.

Until he does, nobody will believe a word the Tories say about being a party of low taxes.

His refusal also shows that the pain of high taxation will be with us far into the future, undermining hope and aspiration.
Howard M Tolman
Great Cornard, Suffolk

SIR – The obvious mantra for an incoming Labour government would be "levelling down". Education will suffer thanks to larger class sizes, and the housing market will stagnate as investors retain their properties rather than face increased capital gains tax.

Rachel Reeves, the shadow chancellor, has been clear that she will not raise taxes on working people, but has shrouded her plans for a tax raid on personal wealth. For example, many pensioners own buy-to-let properties as part of their pensions, and these will undoubtedly be affected.

Sir Keir Starmer admits he is a socialist, and we should fear his colleagues, many of whom are unreformed Corbynites. They would aim for a wealth tax, such as the 1 per cent on individual assets worth over £10 million proposed by the Green Party. This will raise revenue for a few years, but once capital has diminished due to forced sales needed to pay the tax, the cash cow will begin to run dry.

Socialism of this type results in failed states like Cuba, where life is very hard. Voters: beware the levelling down agenda.
Catherine Langham
Blandford Forum, Dorset

SIR – This election has been sadly lacking in humour – from candidates and hecklers.

I well remember Harold Wilson speaking at Watford Technical College in the campaign of autumn 1964. We'd had a long spell of hot sunny weather, and Mr Wilson remarked: "The Tories think they can get re-elected because we have had eight weeks of sunshine". Then, *sotto voce*: "And 13 years of moonshine".

Come on, candidates – let's have some spark.
Robin Platt
Wokingham, Berkshire

The battle to see a GP

SIR – Amanda Pritchard, the CEO of NHS England, plans to introduce health MOTs for over-65s, in order to reduce hospital admissions and better coordinate treatment and care for the elderly (report, June 12). This would not be necessary if the public could access GPs more easily. Currently, getting an appointment is ridiculously difficult, particularly for older people.

Instead of directing ever more resources towards huge hospitals and holding conferences for hospital managers, Ms Pritchard would do better to concentrate her efforts on ensuring that GPs perform their primary role. Their surgeries are the gateway to the NHS and should be staffed and resourced accordingly.
Mick Richards
Worcester

Broadband imbroglio

SIR – BT was ready to connect our new superfast broadband and digital voice telephone line. A date was arranged, and in the days leading up to our appointment we received six telephone reminders, six text reminders and at least a dozen emails setting out exactly what was going to be done and what was required.

Our visit lasted five minutes as the two engineers could not locate the new fibre cable in the road and no cable had been laid from the road to our house.

The pigeon is now back in training.
Raymond Kite
Keston, Kent

A lender be

SIR – The most efficient way of disposing of unwanted books (Letters, June 12) is to lend them to someone. I guarantee you'll never see them again.
John Hammond
Dufftown, Banffshire

Where is the summer?

SIR – Midsummer's Day approaches, and the druids are gathering down here in the Pewsey Vale.

Summer, though, seems far off. Nights are distinctly chilly, and early mornings little better.

I have resorted to log fires and generous whiskies in the evenings. The winter duvet and heavy tartan rug provide night-time warmth. Gone, it seems, are the joys of garden suppers, bottles of chilled rosé and nothing more than a cool linen sheet.

English summer – where are you?
Nick Crean
Marlborough, Wiltshire



ALAMY

Sugar-coated: a scorpion lollipop on the menu at pop-up Café de Mort in London

The principal threat to children's dental health

SIR – The Labour plan for health is reported to include a commitment to bring in supervised toothbrushing for three- to five-year-olds.

Dentists – indeed, all dental care workers – have spent hours and hours over many decades trying to teach that toothbrushing per se does not prevent the primary disease of decay in children. Only dietary control – such as limiting sugar between meals – has any effect on caries.

What causes tooth decay? Sweets, biscuits, juices, to name a few.

Toothbrushing does not prevent decay. It does help cement a lifetime morning and evening regime – but parents can do this, and it doesn't really need to be efficient in the three-to-five age group.

Toothbrushing is much more important in adults as it helps prevent gum disease. Oral hygiene in adults is a far more laudable aim. Spending valuable health resources on toothbrushing for three- to five-year-olds is a total waste.
David Burton BDS
Dorking, Surrey

End the scourge of slapdash housebuilding

SIR – I am filled with despair when I hear that party manifestos include proposals for building thousands of new houses (report, June 7), as there is never any mention of, or planning for, all the services that these new homes will need.

While the aim is admirable, it simply creates more problems to build houses in areas where there are not enough school places or adequate roads, or dentists and doctors with spaces.

We need planning for proper communities, not just acre after acre of homes with no facilities.
Sara Farrands
Beccles, Suffolk

SIR – There is an overlooked matter that contributes to the current housing crisis: the proliferation of Airbnb properties.

They hollow out countryside villages and towns and devalue next-door properties.

Airbnbs should be limited to a room or rooms in the owner's house. If there were such a limit, many more houses would be available for purchase or long lets.
Catherine Holme
Enstone, Oxfordshire

SIR – One major cause of the housing crisis in this country is the expansion of higher education from the 1990s onwards.

Now, nearly every town or city has its own university. A substantial proportion of housing in those places is given over to student accommodation, thus obviously contributing to a shortage of non-student rental housing.
David Kemball-Cook
St Albans, Hertfordshire

Waiting for probate

SIR – If inheritance tax has to stay (report, June 12), why can't we get probate before paying the taxman?

Probate now takes so long to get that heirs face having to take out expensive loans over an extended period of time. This becomes an extra financial drain on estates.

I would vote for any party that dropped inheritance tax, not just for financial reasons but because it is an extra emotional burden at the lowest point in our lives – when we have lost a loved one.
Sheila Crimmin
Bromley, Kent

Positive green policies

SIR – The sharp decline in the popularity of Green parties in the EU (report, June 11) is a consequence of their negative approach.

Too often they advocate for a decline in living standards – by, for example, making meat more expensive – and spend their time telling people to stop doing things like flying. The childish and futile actions of activist groups such as Just Stop Oil add to the perception that environmentalists have no realistic solutions to the problems the world faces.

We need a more optimistic vision that decouples economic growth from harming the environment. Such an approach would advocate for more nuclear power and for genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Nuclear power can provide the plentiful, clean, safe and reliable energy that we need, while helping to tackle climate change. GMOs – with higher yields and less pesticide use – can help feed a growing population while using less land. GMOs can also help mitigate climate change, as well as adapt quickly to a warming climate.
Mark Dawes
London E11

A worthy candidate

SIR – It is wrong to suggest that Caroline Newton was "parachuted in" as the candidate for the Henley and Thame constituency (report, June 8).

After our MP, John Howell, announced in April 2023 that he was standing down at the general election, there followed a rigorous selection process, involving 108 approved applicants, resulting in Caroline being chosen as the Conservative candidate by a significant majority of members present at a special general meeting held in February 2024.

Caroline was born and brought up in the constituency, and, apart from postings to Eastern Europe when she was in the diplomatic service, she has lived and continues to live there. She has also served as an Oxfordshire county councillor and a South Oxfordshire district councillor. These are not the actions of someone who needs to be shoe-horned in.
Deborah Simmons
Campaign Manager, Henley and Thame

Dumplings squared

SIR – In Shanghai we went to a restaurant in Nanjing Dong Lu. In my basic Mandarin I attempted to order some steamed dumplings (Letters, June 12), to no avail.

My wife decided to order by sign language and pointed at a picture of seven dumplings on the wall, then held up seven fingers. They acknowledged her positively.

About 15 minutes later a procession of seven waitresses emerged from the kitchen carrying seven platters of seven dumplings. We had a great time giving almost all of the 49 dumplings away to other customers.
Graham Smith
Valley, Anglesey

Hamas terrorists are playing the West for fools

The group's leaders aren't interested in the lives of Palestinians, only in their own self-preservation

CON COUGHLIN



Ending the suffering endured by ordinary Palestinians in the eight months since Hamas terrorists launched their devastating attack against Israel on October 7 has been the driving motivation behind Western efforts to resolve the conflict.

While securing the release of the estimated 120 or so Israeli hostages still being held captive by Hamas is another important consideration, trying to prevent Palestinian civilians from experiencing further bloodshed seems to have been foremost in the minds of those seeking to implement a ceasefire in Gaza.

The Biden administration, in particular, remains so invested in reaching a ceasefire that it secured backing from the United Nations Security Council prior to secretary of state Antony Blinken undertaking yet another diplomatic mission to the Middle East, his eighth since the Gaza conflict erupted.

Previous US initiatives have invariably ended with talks breaking down, generally blamed on the intransigence of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. His insistence on continuing with Israel's military campaign to wipe the terrorist organisation off the face of the earth, even if Hamas leaders were to agree to release all the remaining Israeli hostages, is constantly cited as the reason for the failure of diplomatic efforts to result in a truce.

Yet, as is now becoming increasingly evident, it is not Netanyahu's uncompromising approach that is thwarting peace efforts. It's the fanaticism of Yahya Sinwar, the Hamas terrorist mastermind behind the October 7 atrocities.

The 61-year-old hardman, who once boasted of strangling one suspected Palestinian collaborator to death with his bare hands, prides himself on the profound understanding of Israel's counter-terrorism mindset he acquired during the 22 years he spent in an Israeli prison for killing two Israeli soldiers and four Palestinians in the 1980s.

Known as "The Butcher of Khan Yunis" after the Gazan enclave where he was born, one of Sinwar's key calculations when planning the October 7 attacks appears to have been that the inevitable military response it would provoke from Israel would ultimately play to Hamas's advantage.

And, judging by the tranche of leaked messages Sinwar is said to have sent to other Hamas commanders in recent weeks, his ploy has worked a treat. Thanks to Sinwar's weaponisation of the Gaza conflict, Israel generally attracts the lion's share of global criticism for its handling of the war. The devious methods employed by Hamas in the interests of its own self-preservation, meanwhile, rarely attract the scrutiny they undoubtedly merit.

This is despite the fact that Hamas uses Palestinian civilians as human shields, and schools and hospitals as command and control centres. One of the more glaring examples of Hamas's cynical duplicity emerged at the weekend when it was revealed that a Palestinian journalist, who regularly wrote articles for the Western media condemning Israeli "genocide" in Gaza, himself appeared to have been using his home to hold Israeli hostages abducted during the October 7 attacks.

The willingness of Hamas commanders to indulge in the inhumane exploitation of Gaza's civilian population is evident in Sinwar's messages, where it is clear he is seeking to use the mounting Palestinian death toll to stall ceasefire talks.

According to details obtained by *The Wall Street Journal*, Sinwar believes that the Palestinian fatalities, caused in part by Hamas's willingness to conduct its terrorist operations in densely populated civilian areas, "are necessary sacrifices". The global criticism that is directed against Israel for its handling of the Gaza conflict means that, from Sinwar's warped perspective, "we have the Israelis right where we want them".

The callous disregard shown by Hamas leaders like Sinwar for the Palestinian people they are supposed to protect is instructive, and it's an outlook that Western negotiators need to take on board in their efforts to agree a ceasefire.

From the start of the conflict, it is clear that Sinwar's sole ambition has been to ensure that Hamas survives in some shape or form in Gaza once hostilities have ended, even if this means that only a tiny fraction remains of the estimated 24 battalions of fighters Hamas had at its disposal at the start.

This explains why, every time the likes of Blinken arrive in the region bearing new ceasefire offers, the Hamas leadership immediately resorts to its maximalist demand that it will only accept the ceasefire terms if Israel agrees to undertake a complete military withdrawal from Gaza. Not even the most conflict-averse Israelis are likely to support a deal that would enable Hamas to continue terrorising Israel's southern border.

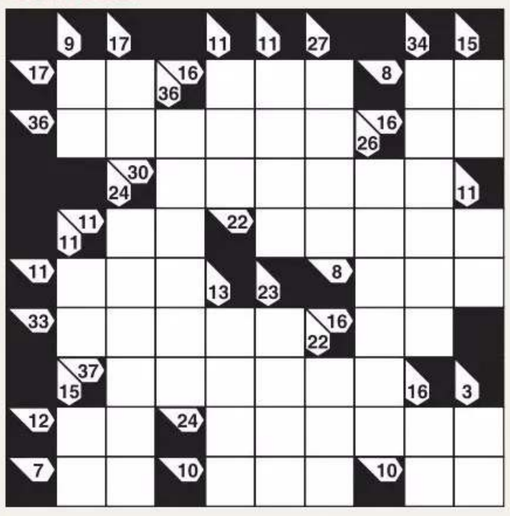
The other consideration that must be taken into account is that any ceasefire deal that enables Hamas to maintain any vestige of control in Gaza would be seen as rewarding its leaders for committing gross acts of terrorism. Certainly, now that Sinwar's contemptuous attitude towards the welfare of the Palestinian people has been exposed, Western policymakers should understand that Hamas, not Israel, is the real obstacle to achieving a lasting peace in Gaza.

Puzzles, Mind Games & Telegraph Toughie

KAKURO

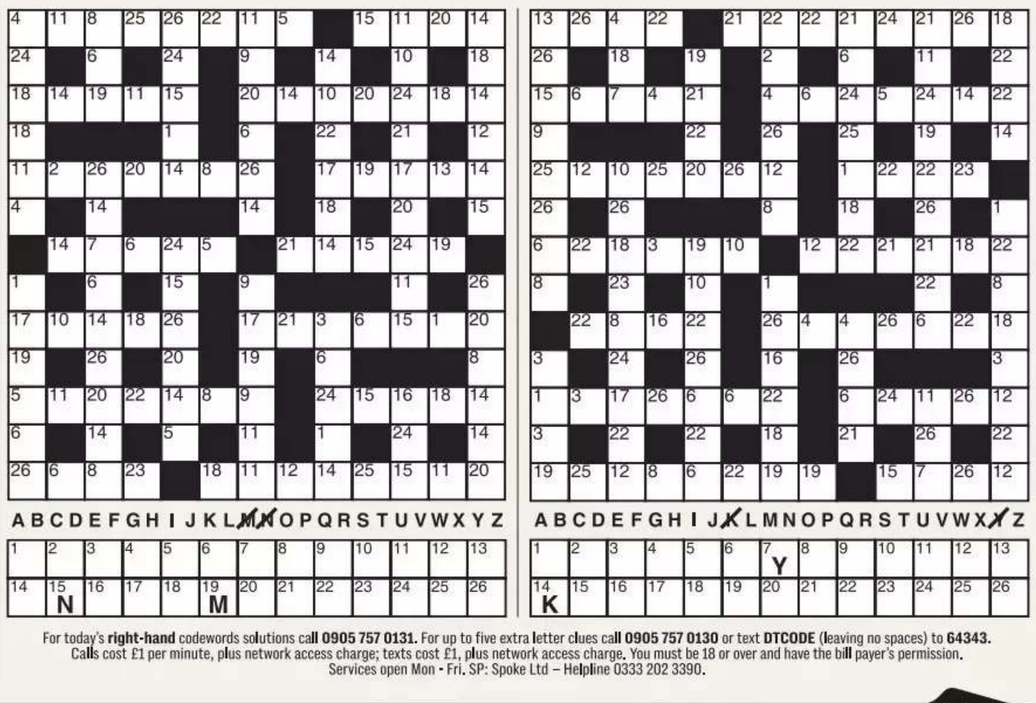
To solve kakuro you must enter a number between 1 and 9 in the empty squares without repeating a digit. The clues are the numbers on the black squares and are the sum of the solution numbers. The clue pointers indicate the direction of the answers. A block of two squares with a clue of 3 will solve as 2,1 and a 5 will produce 4,1 or 2,3. A 4 can only be 1,3, never 2,2. *Solution tomorrow.*

TOUGH NO 5050



CODEWORDS

Numbers are substituted for letters in this crossword grid. In the smaller key grid some letters are solved. Use these as clues to complete your first word. This will solve more letters that you can then enter in the grids. *Solutions tomorrow.*

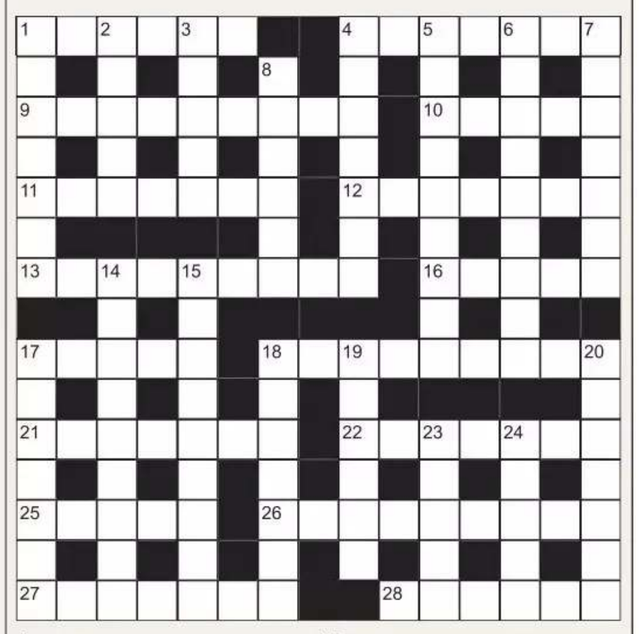


For today's **right-hand** codewords solutions call **0905 757 0131.** For up to five extra letter clues call **0905 757 0130** or text **DTCODE** (leaving no spaces) to **64343.** Calls cost £1 per minute, plus network access charge; texts cost £1, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Services open Mon - Fri. SP: Spoke Ltd – Helpline 0333 202 3390.

Notes

TELEGRAPH TOUGHIE

NO 3287
SILVANUS



Across

1 Risk keeping new barman (6)
4 Falling back, individual decked by hard weapon, candlestick (7)
9 Modified Mini actor gives undertaker (9)
10 Shakespearean role foremost of thespians needs one day (5)
11 Film expert cheers before movie over (7)
12 Justification in underdogs playing without half of side? (7)
13 Witness reportedly spotted Charlotte? (9)
16 Back hosting Oscars, already under way (5)
17 Article stolen from grubby pawnbroker (5)
18 Farm some hated being dilapidated (9)
21 Barrister was able mostly to tackle three points (7)
22 During particular crisis, whiskey's required for student, delivery person (7)
25 Palm species briefly turned into essential oil (5)
26 Histrionic display from each artist performing American ignored (9)
27 Mishandle man consumed by drink (5,2)
28 See someone getting out, possibly caught? (6)

Down

1 Two lambs gambolling, not ultimately all animals (7)
2 Gluttonously eat biltong or get sandwiches? (5)
3 Around six, approximate arrival time for musical (5)
4 Boss Jürgen Klopp perhaps cycling? (7)
5 Subjects in newspapers printed countrywide (9)
6 Feature of flower covering sultanate, calendula essentially (5,4)
7 On time deliver small electronic telephone component (7)
8 Aim straight (6)
14 Come across European nobleman punching retired Frenchman (9)
15 Bats rest here with another tiny mammal (4,5)
17 Spies stopping second large Greek character lifting manuscripts (7)
18 Churchill, topsy-turvy to some extent in summit (7)
19 Representative recalled repeatedly being exposed (6)
20 Backstage, one assisting actor that's tall and wooden? (7)
23 Suggested going north, denying Victor unknown rehab treatment (5)
24 Disdain or occasionally close to disrespect for Wally (5)

Toughie No 3286

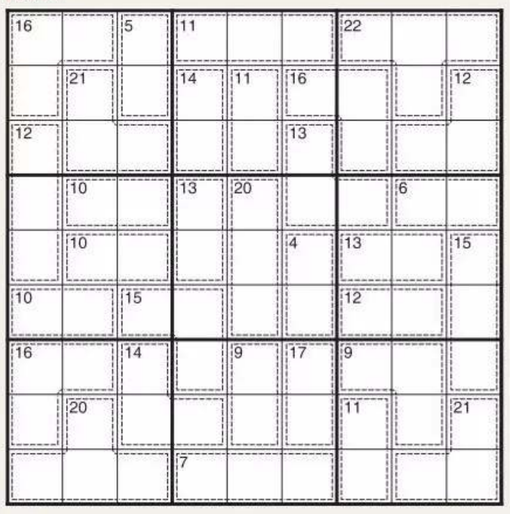


Help with clues
Single clues 0905 757 0126.
All Across/Down clues 0905 757 0127.
Calls cost £1/minute, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Service open Mon-Fri. SP: Spoke Ltd – Helpline 0333 2023390.

KILLER SUDOKU

Your clues are the caged numbers that represent the sum of the numbers within the cage. As in standard sudoku, each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9. *Solution tomorrow.*

TOUGH



SUDOKU

To solve this puzzle each 3 x 3 box, each row and also each column must contain all the numbers from 1 to 9. There are numerous strategies to help you solve sudoku. *Solutions tomorrow.*

REGULAR NO 6620

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

TOUGH NO 6620

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

Sudoku Solution For today's tough sudoku solution call **0905 757 0136.** Calls cost £1 per minute, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Services open Mon – Fri. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.

PANAGRAM

Create words of four letters or more, always using the centre letter. Proper nouns and plurals are not allowed, and you can only use each letter once per word. Can you find the nine-letter Panagram? *Solution tomorrow.*



Up to 9 words - Word Finder, 10 - Wordsmith, 20 - Word Wizard, 30 - Word Master, 40 - Word Genius, 50 - Word Perfect

ANAGRAMS

Each of the anagrams below spells out the name of a mythical creature. *Solution tomorrow.*

SCRUB 'ERE _ _ _ _ _ _ _
RUIN MOAT _ _ _ _ _ _ _
OF THY RATIO _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

MIND GYM

NO 4344

Start on the left with the given number and work your way across following the instructions in each cell. Target time: 30 seconds. *Solution below.*

BEGINNER									ANSWER
108	3/4 OF THIS	DOUBLE IT	-78	÷12	X BY ITSELF	+23	÷8	2/3 OF THIS	x11.5	
INTERMEDIATE										ANSWER
11	x13	TRIPLE IT	-285	÷9	X BY ITSELF	225% OF THIS	-338	HALVE IT	4/7 OF THIS	
ADVANCED										ANSWER
312	÷13	x11.75	TRIPLE IT	-174	÷3	7/8 OF THIS	√	x27	-155	

The Telegraph · NEWSLETTER

Politics

Get expert analysis on the election from our political insiders, delivered to your inbox every weekday

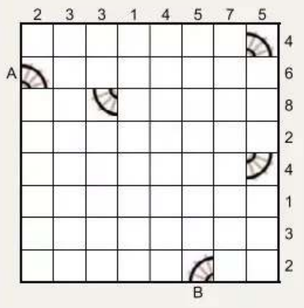


Scan the QR code to sign up or visit telegraph.co.uk/politicsnewsletter

To scan the QR code, open your phone camera, point it at the code and tap the banner that appears on screen. On older phones, you may need to download a QR code reader first.

TRAIN TRACKS

Lay down tracks to allow a train to travel from A to B. Only use straight and curved rails and the track cannot cross itself. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each column and row. *Solution tomorrow.*



MINI SUDOKU

Fill in the grid in such a way that every row and column and every 2 x 3 box contains the numbers 1-6. *Solution tomorrow.*

MODERATE NO 4111

		5		1	
6			2		4
		4			
			5		
4		1			
	6				

PLUSWORD

NO 753

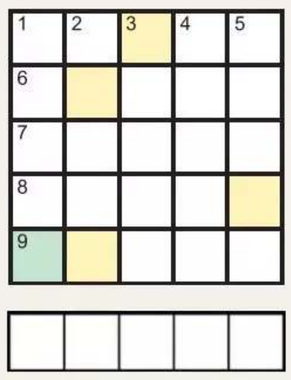
Solve the crossword, then use letters in the shaded squares to complete the additional PlusWord. A letter in a green square appears in the same column in the PlusWord as it does in the crossword; a letter in a yellow square appears in the PlusWord, but in a different column than it does in the crossword.
There is only one possible answer for the PlusWord; it may be that the PlusWord contains letters that aren't found in the crossword, but it can always be worked out logically without guessing.
Solution tomorrow.

Across

1 Lightning shafts
6 Poppy product
7 ___ Cara, *Fame* singer
8 Of birth
9 Hallowe'en costume often using a white sheet

Down

1 Spring sound
2 ___ Winfrey, US TV presenter
3 Deceive
4 Fish; aunts (anag.)
5 Liquify ore to produce metal



Play PlusWord for free online at telegraph.co.uk/pw or scan the QR code

WORD LADDER

Change just one letter to go from the top word to the bottom word. Each step must be a valid word and you cannot change the order of the letters. There are clues below for each rung, but they are not in order. For an extra challenge, try to complete the puzzle without using the clues. *Solution tomorrow.*

CONFUSED, SLED, HAUL, MISLAY, THEATRE BOX



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THE SOLUTIONS

Yesterday's solutions

Sudoku Regular and Tough No 6619

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

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

Word Ladder: Dray, drat, brat, boat, coat, cost, cast, cart.

Anagrams: 1. Limousine 2. Winnebago 3. Stagecoach.

Panagram: Manhandle, landman, headman, manned, maenad, lamedh, handle, anadem, named, medal, maned, lamed, laden, haled, hadal, eland, daman, amend, aland, ahead, adman, aahed, nada, mend, meld, mead, made, lend, lead, land, lade, held, head, hand, hade, dhal, dean, deal, damn, dame, dale, dahl, ahed.

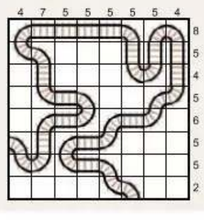
Today's Mind Gym
Beginner: 69 **Intermediate:** 68 **Advanced:** 223

PlusWord No 752

S	H	R	U	B
C	A	U	S	E
A	B	D	U	L
T	I	D	A	L
S	T	Y	L	E

Spade

Train Tracks



Killer Sudoku

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

Mini Sudoku No 4110

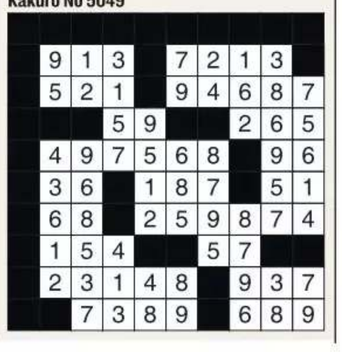
1	4	6	5	3	2
3	2	5	4	1	6
4	6	1	2	5	3
5	3	2	1	6	4
2	1	3	6	4	5
6	5	4	3	2	1

Codewords 1 and 2

1 O	2 N	3 G	4 C	5 U	6 A	7 Y	8 F	9 Z	10 M	11 H	12 E	13 S
14 J	15 K	16 X	17 V	18 I	19 L	20 W	21 Q	22 B	23 R	24 T	25 P	26 D

1 Z	2 L	3 O	4 K	5 Q	6 A	7 V	8 J	9 R	10 X	11 M	12 B	13 G
14 P	15 W	16 Y	17 I	18 C	19 N	20 D	21 S	22 F	23 E	24 T	25 U	26 H

Kakuro No 5049



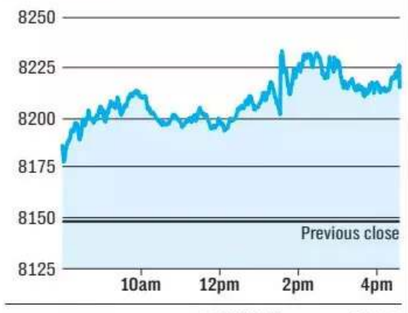
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Business



MARKETS

FTSE 100



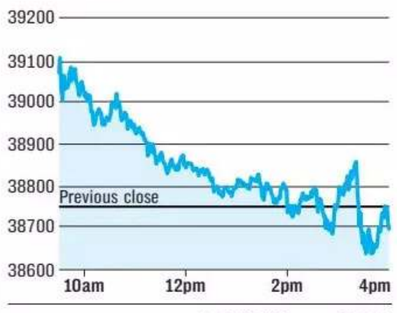
8215.48
+67.67 (+0.83pc)

52WkHigh	8474.41	
52WkLow	7215.76	
Yield	3.73pc	-0.03
P/E Ratio	13.69	+0.11

BIGGEST RISER
Rentokil Initia
472¼p
+57 (+13.73pc)

BIGGEST FALLER
Legal&Gen
229¾p
-13¼ (-5.47pc)

DOW JONES



38712.21
-35.21 (-0.09pc)

52WkHigh	40077.40
52WkLow	32327.20

FTSE 250	20497.40	+230.55 (+1.14pc)
FTSE All Share	4482.40	+38.33 (+0.86pc)
FTSE All Share Yield	3.67	-0.03
FTSE Eurotop 100	4139.09	+40.78 (+0.99pc)
Nikkei 225	38876.71	-258.08 (-0.66pc)
EURO STOXX 50	5034.43	+69.34 (+1.40pc)
S&P 500	5421.03	+45.71 (+0.85pc)
Nasdaq	17608.44	+264.89 (+1.53pc)

CURRENCIES

£$
Rate
1.2840
Change
+1.29¢

£€
Rate
1.1837
Change
-0.17¢

Page 22

COMMODITIES

GOLD
$2322.86
(£1809)
+6.92 (+0.30pc)

BRENT CRUDE
$82.60
(August)
+0.68 (+0.83pc)

Page 22

Black stuff
World faces 'staggering' excess of oil by end of decade, International Energy Agency warns

Page 19

Disruptive technology
Can artificial intelligence help humans invest faster, more accurately or at lower cost?
Tom Stevenson

Page 21

Billionaire Carlos Slim buys £400m stake in BT

Mexico's richest man joins rival telecoms magnate Patrick Drahi on investor list to reignite bid rumours

By **Michael Bow**

MEXICAN billionaire Carlos Slim has bought a £400m stake in BT weeks after Allison Kirkby, the chief executive, unveiled a bold shake-up of the telecoms giant.

Latin America's richest man, worth $93bn (£72bn), on Tuesday disclosed a 3.2pc stake in the FTSE 100 group, making him one of BT's largest shareholders. The swoop by Mr Slim, who made his money in telecoms in Latin America, is likely to prompt speculation about his intentions.

James Barford, at Enders Analysis, said: "He might want some influence over the company's strategy."

Mr Slim joins rival telecom magnate Patrick Drahi and former German monopoly Deutsche Telekom as major BT shareholders. French billionaire Mr Drahi is BT's biggest investor with a 24.5pc stake. Deutsche owns 12pc.

Mr Drahi's stake-building prompted takeover speculation last year, something he has always denied.

Mr Slim's investment may reignite bid chatter. He previously took a 21pc stake in Dutch telecom company KPN through America Movil before launching a failed takeover in 2013. The Mexican has also tried to buy Telecom Italia and Portugal Telecom.

A spokesman for Mr Slim's Grupo Carso told the *Financial Times* the move was a "financial investment, like many the group makes".

It comes weeks after Ms Kirkby announced a new strategy at the phone and internet provider. Ms Kirkby, who took over in February, plans to double cash flow over the next five years, slash £3bn of costs and boost the dividend.

The announcement of the new strategy last month triggered the company's biggest one-day share price increase for 24 years.

James Ratzer, an analysts from New Street Research, described Mr Slim's investment as a "vote of confidence".

Shares in BT rose 1pc after the shareholding, made through the billionaire's vehicle Inbursa, was revealed in a stock market filing.

A BT spokesman said: "We welcome any investor who recognises the long-term value of our business. We have frequent communication with all of our shareholders and meet major investors on a regular basis. We look forward to engaging with Inbursa, just as we do with all investors."

Previously the world's richest man, Mr Slim controls America Movil, the largest mobile phone operator in Latin America. The businessman also has interests in banking, energy and construction.

A fine-art lover with a fondness for cigars, Mr Slim's business interests are chiefly in the Americas but he has also made forays into Europe.

He also owns a significant chunk of Telekom Austria and is the group's largest shareholder through America Movil.

Mr Ratzer said: "Mr Slim's track record in European telecoms is mixed and arguably without any clear industrial strategy, other than trying to pick up assets he thinks are cheap."

He added that Mr Slim's presence on BT's share register would likely be welcomed as it would help to balance out the influence of other significant shareholders.

"For BT, having a new angle in play can only help. There might even be a chance that Slim has bought some of these shares from Drahi."

Mr Barford said the Mexican tycoon may have been attracted to the potential payouts on offer from BT.

The rollout of fibre broadband has restrained BT's ability to pay large dividends for many years but this project is scheduled to end in 2026. Many investors see potential for BT to start paying out more cash once it is concluded.

Mr Barford said: "You can see the appeal of BT to a long-term investor."

It comes as overseas investors circle UK telecom companies, many of which are valued more cheaply than peers elsewhere. United Arab Emirates-based telecoms group e& recently acquired a 14pc stake in Vodafone, while Xavier Niel, the French billionaire founder of Iliad, also owns 2.5pc in the group.

Mr Slim was the world's richest man between 2010 and 2013, and is currently the 17th wealthiest person, according to Bloomberg.



MANUEL VELASQUEZ/GETTY

Carlos Slim at a match between the Diablos Rojos baseball team and New York Yankees. The tycoon is a keen fan of the sport

Sickness to drive welfare bill up £20bn by 2030

By **Szu Ping Chan** *and* **Melissa Lawford**

SURGING sickness benefit claims will drive an increase in Britain's welfare bill of more than £20bn a year by 2030, new analysis shows, as the country grapples with a worklessness crisis.

The Resolution Foundation said the nation's worsening health and a rise in pension payments would lead to a significant increase in welfare spending.

In total, more than 90p of every extra £1 spent on benefits will go towards either the state pension or disability and incapacity claims.

The foundation said Britain's ageing population and a commitment by both the Tories and Labour to keep the triple lock on pensions will increase the welfare bill by £9.5bn in real terms between 2024-25 and 2028-29.

Spending on non-pensioner disability and incapacity benefits is forecast to increase by £9.7bn in real terms over the same period, says the foundation, whose former chief executive Torsten Bell is running to be a Labour MP.

It came after the Office for National Statistics figures showed Britain's economy flatlined in April with almost a quarter of all working-age adults now classed as inactive.

The foundation noted that the number of people claiming health-related benefits has now climbed above 10m for the first time, up from 7.4m when the Tories took power in 2010.

While some of these claimants are in employment, a record 2.8m adults are now out of the jobs market because of long-term health conditions.

The foundation expects the number of people claiming disability and incapacity benefits to "continue on an upward trend". Average payments are also set to increase as the number of people suffering with multiple conditions becomes more common.

The overall benefits bill is forecast to rise from £306bn in 2024-25 to £326bn in 2028-29, the foundation said.

Rishi Sunak has pledged to cut welfare spending by £12bn a year by the end of the next parliament if the Tories win the election.

Forecasts by the Department for Work and Pensions show the number claiming the state pension is on course to increase by a further 500,000 by the end of the decade to 13.2m people.

Meanwhile, a Gallup survey has found engagement at work has fallen steadily over the last decade, with just one in 10 UK workers putting in extra effort at their jobs.

It comes amid a rise in what has been dubbed "quiet quitting" by TikTok, where workers, particularly younger ones, refuse to go above and beyond and instead do the bare minimum.

Fed forecasts just one rate cut this year as inflation fight 'not over'

By **Szu Ping Chan** *and* **Chris Price**

THE chairman of the US Federal Reserve has warned the battle to tame inflation is not over as policymakers signalled the central bank would cut rates only once this year.

Jerome Powell said inflation was "still too high" after Fed rate-setters voted unanimously yesterday to keep interest rates at a 23-year high of between 5.25pc and 5.5pc.

The decision to hold rates came just hours after official data showed US inflation fell faster than expected in May, sending stocks to a fresh record and prompting investors to ramp up bets on a September reduction in borrowing costs. Mr Powell said "considerable progress" had been made to bring down price pressures. However, he said recent data had "not given us confidence" to cut rates yet.

Figures published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics earlier in the day showed inflation fell to 3.3pc in May, compared with 3.4pc in April. Economists had expected the rate to remain unchanged. Mr Powell welcomed May's faster drop but said policymakers were looking for more consistent signs that the economy was cooling.

"We see today's report as progress and building confidence, but we don't see ourselves as having the confidence that would warrant beginning to loosen policy at this time," he told reporters. "It's probably going to take longer to get the confidence we need to loosen policy."

The Fed's latest move comes a day after strong UK wage data all but ruled out an interest rate cut by the Bank of England next week, though British policymakers are under pressure to start reducing borrowing costs to support the sluggish economy.

US stocks had risen to fresh record highs ahead of the Fed decision and markets held on to most of their earlier gains despite Mr Powell's caution.

The S&P 500 was trading up more than 1pc as the Fed chief was speaking. Britain's blue-chip index and the mid-cap FTSE 250 closed up around 1pc, while French stocks also ended the day higher following two days of decline sparked by Emmanuel Macron's decision to call a snap election.

3.3pc
US inflation last month, down from 3.4pc in April, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Fresh Fed forecasts showed policymakers revised up their outlook for inflation over the next two years. While the Fed left its growth forecasts unchanged for the next three years, policymakers now expect inflation to fall more slowly towards its 2pc target.

At the same time, they predicted more rate cuts next year, with four now expected in 2025 rather than three as was previously forecast.

Policymakers are attempting to steer inflation back towards target while trying to prevent the economy from slipping into recession.

Inflation was sent lower in April by a big drop in fuel prices. The closely watched core inflation reading, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, also fell from 3.6pc to 3.4pc, below analyst estimates.

Daniel Mulholland, senior managing director at Crews & Associates, said: "This is a very weak report. The Fed is fully in play for a September cut now."

Paul Ashworth, chief America economist at Capital Economics, said: "We still need several more months of this, but the fundamentals are encouraging."

The pound jumped 0.9pc against the dollar following the figures.

Money markets are now fully pricing in a quarter of a percentage point reduction in US interest rates by November.

The Fed's decision to keep rates on hold follows months of data highlighting stubborn price pressures in the world's biggest economy.

America added 272,000 jobs in May, far more than expected, even as unemployment ticked up slightly to 4pc.

MG caught in EU crackdown on EVs

By **Matt Oliver**

BRITISH car brands including MG and Lotus have been caught up in a European Union crackdown on Chinese electric vehicles (EV).

Brussels has announced tariffs of up to 48pc on EVs made in China, including those manufactured by MG, Volvo and BYD, in a row over what the EU claims are unfair subsidies from Beijing. The measures offer protection for European carmakers, who have complained they are being undercut unfairly. However, the tariffs threaten to push up the price of EVs for drivers in the bloc.

It also risks a diplomatic spat with China. Beijing has reacted angrily to the threat of a proposed EU crackdown and warned it will impose its own tariffs in retaliation.

Imported EVs already face tariffs of 10pc in the EU but the European Commission said yesterday it was prepared to impose extra duties on Chinese manufacturers of between 17pc and 38pc.

The provisional measures were introduced following an eight-month investigation that found electric car makers in China "benefit from unfair subsidies". A spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry said the decision was "a typical case of protectionism" and warned it would damage trade ties.



Why main parties' growth pledges are doomed

Greater investment is needed but the Tories and Labour are hamstrung by fiscal rules, reports *Melissa Lawford*

When the Office for National Statistics's chief economist described Britain's growth at the start of the year as "gangbusters", Rishi Sunak wasted no time in taking advantage. In an interview with BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme in May, the Prime Minister pointed to it as evidence that his economic plan was working.

"The facts are the facts," Sunak said. "I think he used the term 'gangbusters', so I will leave it at that."

At the time, figures had shown the economy expanded by 0.6pc in the first quarter of the year.

But just a month after that much-heralded data, the picture is very different. New gross domestic product (GDP) figures published yesterday show the economy flatlined.

Major slumps in construction and manufacturing caused monthly GDP growth to be 0pc in April.

It is just a snapshot and the quarterly growth figure may yet prove to be stronger. But it is a blow to Sunak, who seized upon momentum in the economy as one of his reasons for calling the snap election.

April's GDP number is one of the last pieces of economic data that will be released before the vote, bar inflation figures next week.

"In terms of influencing the actual election results, this is pretty much it, the public have everything they need," says Paul Dales, chief UK economist at Capital Economics.

It is not just the Tories who will be looking woefully at April's GDP figures: Labour has pledged to make Britain into the highest sustained growing economy in the G7 – a promise that also now looks difficult to achieve.

The data underline the difficult economic inheritance faced by whoever wins the election on July 4.

Britain will still be grappling with all of the same economic problems immediately after the vote. Productivity growth is in the doldrums, investment is the lowest in the G7, economic inactivity has hit a fresh 13-year high and many parts of the economy are struggling under the weight of high interest rates. The UK may be clear of recession, but the outlook is sluggish.

"We do not think the 0.6pc expansion seen in the first quarter will be repeated any time soon," says Chris Hare, senior economist at HSBC.

Easing inflation and interest rates, which are expected to start falling soon, should provide a small boost to the economy in the second half of the year. "Whoever becomes the next government might actually be in a position where the economy isn't going gangbusters, but at least it's got a little bit of a tailwind," says Dales.

But there will be no structural change in the economic outlook.

Dales says: "We're talking about a sort of cyclical pick-up owing to temporary influences on the economy fading away. When that happens, the economy can grow at what you might call its medium-term growth rate. The Bank of England thinks that is 1pc. We think it's maybe around 1.5pc."

This kind of growth rate is not "normal" for Britain. In the years before the financial crisis, annual GDP growth was around 2pc. In the 1980s it was around 2.5pc. Growth of between 1pc and 1.5pc would be a return to the very sluggish rates recorded pre-pandemic.

If Labour wants to achieve its goal of "the highest sustained growth in the G7", it will face an uphill struggle.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has forecast UK real GDP will climb by 8.2pc between 2024 and 2028.

This will be behind the US and Canada, where the economies will expand by 10.6pc and 9.7pc respectively, according to the Resolution Foundation's analysis of IMF forecasts. To achieve its aim, Labour would need to add an extra 2.5 percentage points to GDP growth over the next four years.

"To get the growth rates up, you need sustained changes in the growth rates of productivity and labour force," says Dales.

Productivity growth in the UK since the financial crisis has been the slowest for 200 years and Britain is one of the only developed economies where the employment rate has fallen since the Covid pandemic. To really tackle long-term growth, the next government will need to tackle a multitude of problems but the biggest focus should be on boosting investment, says Dales.

"The one thing that is really, really problematic is that in the UK the investment rate is much lower than in every other G7 economy," says Dales.

However, boosting investment requires money. "The restriction here is the fiscal situation," says Dales. Both Labour and the Tories are hamstrung by their fiscal rules. Both have promised to get debt falling as a share of GDP over a five-year period. To do this, the Government will need to raise more in tax than it spends. No government has achieved this in the past two decades, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) has pointed out. Paul Johnson, the IFS director, has warned that any new government will either need to borrow more, which both parties are loath to do, or cut public spending, which will bring massive strain on public services, or raise taxes.

Simply put, there is no spare money to invest if the next government wants to lead from the front. Labour hopes to boost the economy by other, cheaper means. Sir Keir Starmer has pledged to "get Britain building again".

He says his party will "bulldoze" the planning system and unlock unused areas of land on the greenbelt to build new homes. However, April's GDP data casts doubt over this strategy. Construction output slumped by 1.4pc and private house building plunged by 4.4pc. The building industry is on its knees, as companies grapple with high interest rates and inflation in build costs. The Construction Products Association has also warned that the sector does not have the staff necessary to build Labour's promised 300,000 homes per year.

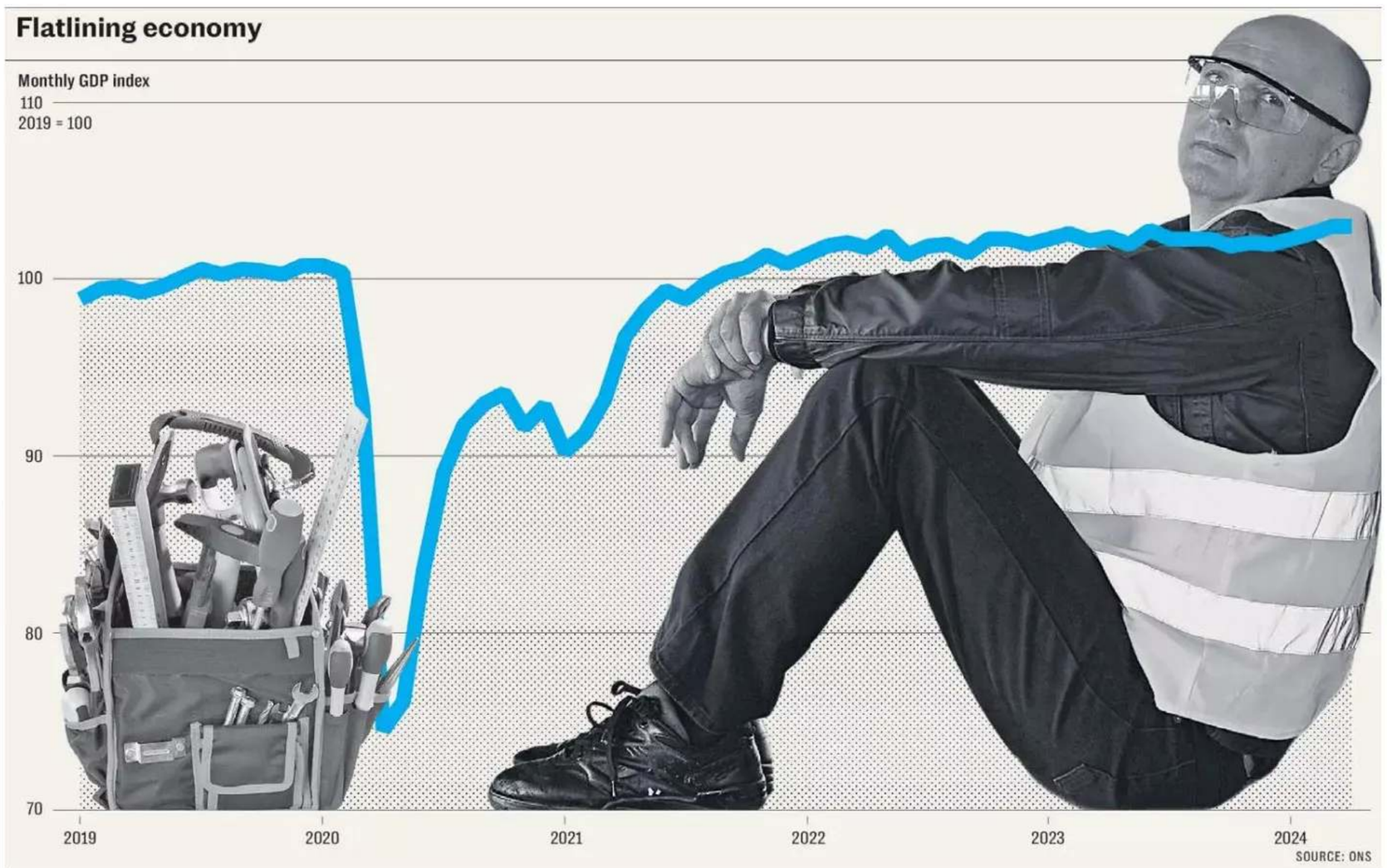
When Sunak seized on the phrase "gangbusters" last month, the ONS was quick to distance itself from the comment. The agency issued a statement clarifying that the word was "certainly not intended as a comment about the overall state of the economy".

Dales says: "Gangbusters is not the phrase to use to describe the UK economy right now."

'To get the growth rates up, you need sustained changes in productivity and labour force'

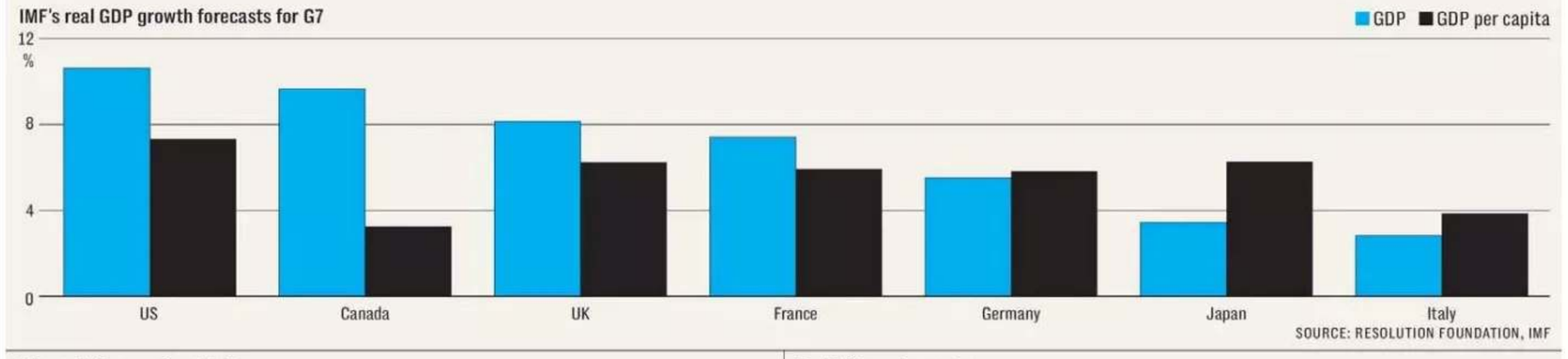
'In the UK, the investment rate is much lower than in every other G7 economy'

Flatlining economy



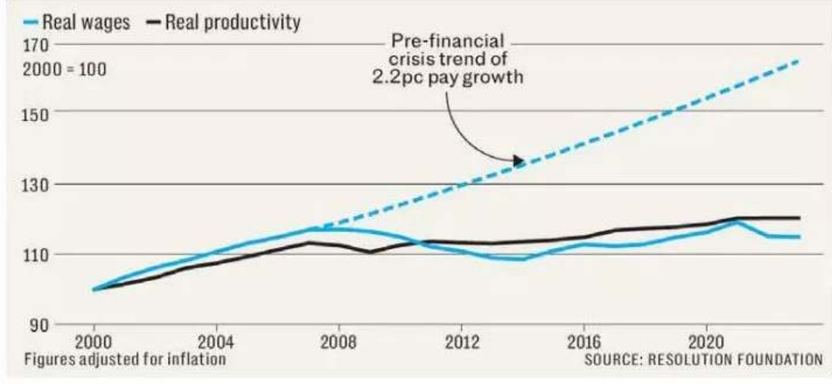
SOURCE: ONS

Uphill struggle



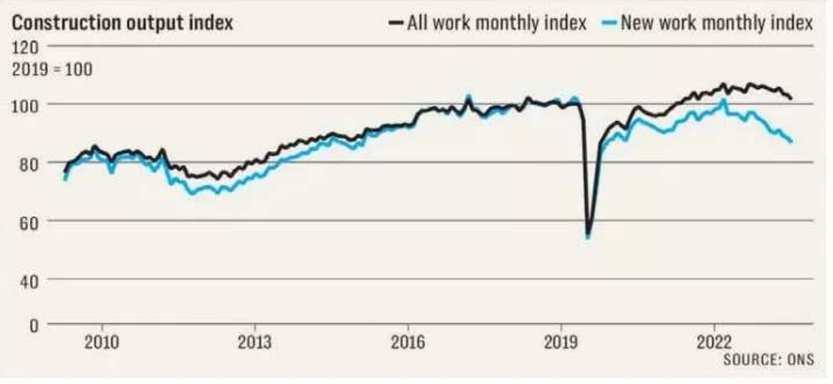
SOURCE: RESOLUTION FOUNDATION, IMF

Sluggish productivity



Figures adjusted for inflation
SOURCE: RESOLUTION FOUNDATION

Building downturn



SOURCE: ONS

L&G launches £200m share buyback amid overhaul by new chief

By **Michael Bow**

LEGAL & GENERAL has launched a £200m share buyback as part of a sweeping overhaul by its new chief executive.

The insurer will reward investors by purchasing shares in the second half of this year, marking the FTSE 100 group's first buyback since 2007.

António Simões launched the initiative to reward investors as he laid out a major shake-up to slim down the bloated organisation. The most eye-catching move was the merger of its alternative asset management, Legal & General Capital (LGC), into the larger fund manager Legal & General Investment Management (LGIM).

The move is designed to remove some duplication across the two businesses. No major job losses are expected from the merger.

Mr Simões took over from veteran chief executive Sir Nigel Wilson in January with a mandate to revive the company's flatlining share price.

However, investors were initially unimpressed by Mr Simões' plan, sending shares down 5pc. Some investors had pencilled in up to £400m in a buyback. Dividend per share growth was also slightly lower than forecast, with L&G aiming for 5pc this year but only 2pc until 2027.

The Portuguese former banker shrugged off the initial reaction and said he intended to pursue his strategy of putting more money aside to invest in the business.

L&G is a major purchaser of corporate pensions schemes, known as bulk annuities, and Mr Simões said he wanted to focus on investing in this area.

"I am not going to judge necessarily the strategy or the business on how the shares have reacted," he said. "We're striking the right balance between a £200m share buyback and distributing more to shareholders over the next three years and, at the same time, pursuing growth. That was never going to please everybody."

As part of the LGIM shake-up, Michelle Scrimgeour will step down from her role as the £1.2 trillion fund group's chief executive. The company is hunting for her replacement.

LGC will largely be folded into LGIM but some "non-core" divisions will be moved to a new division called Corporate Investments Unit run by finance chief Jeff Davis.

Cala Homes, the 10th largest housebuilder in the UK, will be moved into the unit with a view to selling the business. There are other LGC investments poised to move into the division but affordable house building has been kept by Mr Simões.

This will now come under the LGIM umbrella.

Truck stop
The rear trailer of a lorry is partially swallowed by a sinkhole in Madera, California. The road is expected to be closed for several weeks for repairs.


JAM PRESS/CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

Revolut signs 10-year lease on Canary Wharf skyscraper

By **Matthew Field**

REVOLUT has signed a 10-year lease on a skyscraper in the heart of Canary Wharf in a lift for the financial district.

The financial technology business has taken the top four floors of the recently refurbished 30 South Colonnade – now known as YY London with a move-in date earmarked for May 2025. Despite allowing many of its 10,000 staff to work from home, Revolut said it planned to use the building for product launches and team meetings.

It wants to hire a further 1,500 staff globally by the end of 2024.

The high-profile deal is a boost for Canary Wharf, which has faced a string of high-profile exits post-pandemic. Magic Circle law firm Clifford Chance and HSBC are among the residents planning to leave once their leases end.

Revolut, last valued at £24bn in a 2021 funding deal, has always been based in Canary Wharf.

It began life based in a start-up incubator at One Canada Square in 2015 and Revolut's previous London office was at Westferry Circus, also in Canary Wharf.

Shobi Khan, the chief executive of Canary Wharf Group, said: "Revolut's phenomenal rise is a powerful testament to the extraordinary environment we have created." The new office will increase Revolut's office space in London by more than 40pc to 113,000 sq ft.

EY boss who backed failed break-up plan steps down

By **Adam Mawardi**

THE UK boss of EY who backed the firm's failed break-up plans has quit abruptly. Hywel Ball, chairman and managing partner of EY's UK and Ireland offices, yesterday triggered a leadership race at the "big four" accountant after he said he would step down.

An EY spokesman said: "As part of the planned leadership transition for Hywel Ball, we can confirm our internal selection process will begin in the second half of 2024."

The professional services firm informed its partners and staff of the decision yesterday.

Mr Ball's exit comes months after EY extended his leadership term by an extra year to June 2025 despite the firm's policy requiring partners to step down at the age of 60.

The date of Mr Ball's official departure is yet to be confirmed, but the 61-year-old will reportedly remain at the firm to hand over to his successor.

It comes just over a year after EY ditched its historic plans to separate its accounting and more profitable consulting business globally.

Mr Ball, as chief of EY's largest firm outside of the US, was a vocal champion of the project, codenamed Project Everest. He previously said that the split would "redefine the profession" and address regulatory concerns that blocked EY from providing both audit and non-audit services to the same client. However, the break-up proposals were shelved in April 2023 after months of internal disagreement from US bosses about how much of the tax division would remain in the audit business.

EY, which operates as a global network of independent member firms, reportedly spent $600m (£470m) and more than a year working on the abandoned plans. The accounting giant borrowed more than $700m to spread the costs of Project Everest across more than one financial year.

$600m
EY's spending on plans to separate its accounting and consulting businesses, before the proposals were shelved

EY has cut thousands of jobs across its offices and slashed bonuses as part of belt-tightening measures since scrapping the costly separation plans.

Mr Ball was appointed to the top job in 2020, having served as EY's UK audit head and managing partner of the firm's assurance arm.

EY said that the role of UK chairman and managing partner will now be separated, in line with the audit watchdog's governance rules.

‘Staggering’ excess of oil by 2030, warns IEA

New projects are driving production of fossil fuels, but net zero ambitions threaten to create a glut

By **Jonathan Leake**

THE world will face a “staggering” excess of oil by the end of the decade, the International Energy Agency (IEA) has said, as producers continue to plough money into new projects despite the shift to net zero.

The IEA said an “unprecedented” glut of oil by 2030 would disrupt management of the market by Opec+, the Middle East-dominated oil cartel.

It would also create huge challenges for the booming US shale industry, the success of which has made America the world’s leading oil producer.

The IEA’s Oil 2024 report said rising sales of electric vehicles, the increased adoption of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, and the reduction of demand from China would leave the world with more oil than it needs by the end of the decade.

The report said: “A ramping up of world oil production capacity, led by the United States and other producers in the Americas, is expected to outstrip demand over the 2023-30 forecast period.”

This will “inflate the world’s spare capacity cushion to levels that are unprecedented”, it added.

The IEA said the world would have “a staggering 8m barrels per day above projected global demand” by the end of the decade. “This would result in levels of spare capacity never seen before other than at the height of the Covid lockdowns in 2020,” it added.

If the projections prove correct, they would have significant geopolitical ramifications. A glut of oil would significantly diminish the power of Middle Eastern producers, who have for decades held sway over prices through the Opec cartel.

The power of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition has already diminished in recent years as US shale producers have ramped up supply.

Fatih Birol, the IEA’s executive director, said: “We expect that beyond 2024 oil demand growth will continue to slow down and before 2030 will hit a plateau and peak.”

He said the increased adoption of electric cars was one of three “key drivers” of the shift.

Mr Birol said: “We expect more than one out of five cars sold in the world will [soon] be an electric car and indications we are getting from the market confirms this number may be even slightly higher ... Electric cars are becoming cost-competitive to the internal combustion engine.”

He added: “The second driver comes from electricity generation. Today, the Middle East and some North African countries use significant amounts of oil to generate electricity – about 1.5m barrels per day.



STUART CONWAY

A report suggests that oil production from rigs in the North Sea will dramatically fall by 2030

“That is driven mainly by Saudi Arabia. Iraq, Kuwait and others. And we know that there are strong plans in place to replace the oil used for electricity generation by renewables or natural gas.”

Mr Birol said the slowdown in oil demand from China was also crucial, linked to a predicted slowing of economic growth from 6pc a year to 4pc.

He said: “China is the largest oil importer of the world and the Chinese economic slowdown means a slowing down of oil demand.”

The combination of these factors will lead to “a major, major surplus”, Mr Birol said. He added: “In my view, it might be one of the highest in history.”

Last year, the world consumed about 102.2m barrels of crude oil per day. This is still expected to rise to about 105.4m barrels by 2030 – meaning greenhouse gas emissions will also keep rising. However, crude oil production is expected to rise much faster, reaching 113.8m barrels a day by 2030.

The IEA’s regional analysis shows that the biggest reductions in demand will come from North America, where overall demand is expected to fall by 1.5m barrels a day by 2030. Similarly, demand in Europe will fall by about 1.1m barrels a day.

Mr Birol said the growth in supply was being driven by multiple oil producers but especially those in North America. US crude oil production has risen from about 5m barrels a day in 2010 to 13m in March 2024, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

The IEA chief called on governments and energy companies to adjust their policies and business plans to reflect the “new realities” of the markets.

Toril Bosoni, the IEA’s head of oil industries and markets, said: “We do see the risk for increased refinery closures in Europe and the US.”

> ‘A ramping up of world oil production capacity is expected to outstrip demand’

North Sea decline Lack of investment and green policies blamed

Despite a looming global glut of oil, fossil fuel production from the North Sea has a bleak future, the International Energy Agency has warned.

Its latest report suggests UK oil production will plummet from 710,000 barrels a day to about 570,000 by 2030 with more declines to follow, largely due to lack of investment.

The IEA said the predicted slump was partly down to political opposition to oil and gas.

It said: “The North Sea is on the front line of the energy transition, with secure, stable and low-carbon production; yet faces some of the world’s greatest opposition to hydrocarbon extraction.

“North Sea assets are currently in sharp focus as a UK general election looms and Norwegian courts put the brakes on a handful of petroleum developments.

“The UK’s five-year production decline is expected to ... continue its downward path through our forecast period.”

While work on some new fields is starting up, such as Neptune’s Seagull project that started up last year and Shell’s Penguins redevelopment, this is “not sufficient to offset years of weak investment”, the IEA said. Separate figures from the North Sea Transition Authority, the UK regulator, show UK crude oil production roughly halving each decade.

The UK consumes the equivalent of 1.3m barrels of oil products a day.

Most of it is used in transport, as diesel and petrol for vehicles and trains, or as aviation fuel. Overall, it accounts for about 38pc of total energy supply.

Putin’s Gazprom ordered to pay €13bn to German energy giant

By **Jonathan Leake**

RUSSIAN energy giant Gazprom has been ordered to pay €13bn (£11bn) to Germany’s Uniper after it failed to fulfil gas orders since the war in Ukraine.

The ruling allows the business to formally sever long ties with Gazprom.

It brings an end to the dispute between Gazprom and Uniper, as the latter was largely reliant on Russian gas until supplies were disrupted in the wake of the invasion two years ago.

The business was only saved thanks to an €8bn bailout by the German government in September 2022, which led to it being nationalised.

Uniper is a power generator with assets across Europe, including in the UK where it is responsible for 7pc of the country’s electricity.

The €13bn award stems from an arbitration hearing earlier this month, during which Gazprom was accused of breaching gas supply contracts. European gas prices rose by 2.6pc following the decision, as energy traders signalled fears of disruption to Russian deliveries of gas elsewhere in Europe.

Yesterday, Uniper said: “Uniper decided today to terminate its long-term Russian gas supply contracts and thus legally ended the long-term gas supply relationship with the Russian state-owned company Gazprom Export.” Since both are owned by their respective governments, some have seen the legal battle as more than a traditional corporate dispute.

2.6pc

The rise in European gas prices following the decision, as energy traders feared disruption to Russian deliveries of gas

However, there are doubts as to whether Vladimir Putin will ever allow Gazprom to pay the money owed – especially as it would be passed to the German federal government.

Michael Lewis, the Briton last year appointed as Uniper’s chief executive, said: “This ruling provides legal clarity for Uniper. With the right of termination that we received in the arbitration ruling, we are ending the contracts with Gazprom Export. Uniper’s legal position was also confirmed on the issue of damages. Any amounts would flow to the German federal government.

“From today’s perspective, it is not yet clear whether significant amounts are to be expected.”

Uniper operates roughly 22.5 gigawatts of generation capacity.

Mr Lewis said the cuts in Russian gas supplies to Europe had forced Uniper to seek gas on global markets at inflated prices – prompting the company’s state bailout. He said: “Uniper has worked hard to diversify its gas business and is now well positioned with its global LNG portfolio and pipeline gas supplies from various regions.”

Outgoing Dr Martens boss to forgo bonus after profits fall

By **Daniel Woolfson**

THE outgoing boss of Dr Martens has waived his bonus after overseeing a turbulent period for the British boot brand during which profits fell by more than 40pc.

Kenny Wilson, the chief executive, said he will receive his annual base salary for the latest financial year, which amounts to £787,000. This means missing out on up to £3.6m in performance-based payments, as Mr Wilson could have received up to £4.4m if all performance targets were met.

As well as financial targets, this also included goals for environment, sustainability and governance (ESG) initiatives, which the company hit. This entitled Mr Wilson to a bonus worth £122,750, although he elected not to receive the payment.

It comes after a turgid year for the boot maker, which has encountered severe challenges in the US, its largest global market, and been forced to issue numerous profit warnings.

Dr Martens has struggled against fewer wholesale orders, soaring costs and stock issues across the Atlantic, warning in April that its outlook for 2025 remained “challenging”. It recently unveiled plans to strip as much as £25m of costs from the business after profits fell by more than 40pc in 2024 from £170m to £97m.

Lynne Weedall, the chairman of Dr Martens’ remuneration committee, said: “Considering the disappointing financial performance, our executive group have taken the decision to waive their entitlement to a bonus in respect of the [financial year’s] strategic objectives.”



Kenny Wilson could have received up to £4.4m in pay and bonuses if all performance targets had been met

The boot brand’s value has collapsed since it listed in London in 2021, falling from as much as 500p per share to its current price of 83p. Some shareholders have argued it would be better off as a private company.

Mr Wilson is to be replaced by Ije Nwokorie, the chief brand officer, by the end of this financial year.

Candidates lined up to succeed Train at asset manager

By **Michael Bow**

STAR stock picker Nick Train has lined up a string of successors to take over his eponymous fund manager after delivering poor returns for investors.

A listed investment trust run by his Lindsell Train fund said that a new leadership team was “evolving”, adding that its future “lies with a new generation of leaders and their lieutenants”.

In its annual report, the Lindsell Train Investment Trust pinpointed fund manager James Bullock and business heads Jessica Cameron and Joss Saunders as the heirs to Mr Train and co-founder Michael Lindsell’s group.

Mr Bullock, who joined in 2010, became the first person to independently manage a Lindsell Train fund two years ago when he was given responsibility for the firm’s North American Equity fund.

Mr Saunders is chief operating officer and joined the company in 2021 while Ms Cameron is head of marketing and client services.

Mr Train was forced to apologise recently for his poor run of form. The trust cut its investment value in Lindsell Train to £69m from £85m last year.



Coffee House Shots *Live*

Election aftermath

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Tue 28 **Ilha Grande, Brazil**

Wed 29 **Parati, Brazil**

Thu 30 **Ilhabela, Brazil**

Fri 31 **Sao Paulo (from Santos), Brazil**

FEBRUARY 2025



Sat 1 **Balneario Camboriu, Brazil**

Mon 3 **Punta Del Este, Uruguay**
Spend the day enjoying this beautiful, chic beach resort, its marinas and interesting shops. See amazing works by Dali, Chagall and Miro at the Ralli Museum. Or venture into the equally stunning countryside and visit a cattle station

Thu 6 **Puerto Madryn, Argentina**

Sun 9 - Mon 10 **Ushuaia, Argentina** (overnight)
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Fri 14 **Montevideo, Uruguay**

Sat 15 **Buenos Aires, Argentina** (overnight)
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Can AI make better investments than humans?



TOM STEVENSON

This feared tech won't replace the speculator, but rather we should treat it as a labour-saving device

As with many conversations I have with investors these days, this one quickly turned to AI. The recently retired fund manager I was talking to put it well: "A car won't go by itself; it needs to be driven or at least to be told where to go. But if you want to get to Manchester, it's a lot easier by car than on foot."

And that is the nub of the AI question for high-value-added intellectual activities like investment. It's not really about whether the AI can do it better than the human, but how the AI can help the human to do it faster, more accurately or at lower cost. A lawyer at the same lunch added that, when he started out, a key part of the trainee's job was "discovery" – poring over reams of documents to find the information for their boss to interpret. Same thing in investment – where, quaintly it now seems, a company I used to work for had the catchline "the information advantage". By that, it meant a big team of numerate but relatively unskilled youngsters trawling through annual reports to populate a database with financial ratios that in turn enabled investors to do the real work of picking stocks.

One of the most interesting potential uses of AI is in the expensive, resource-heavy business of investment analysis. Can the machines really do it better? The answer is both yes and no.

The reality of that "information advantage" was that it was the difference between a little bit of pretty basic knowledge and none at all. The effort that went into generating that marginal edge was significant, expensive and time-consuming. It is work that AI promises to do in a fraction of the time for a fraction of the cost. Like the thousands of people who used to work with horses in 19th-century London or New York, those data grunts will have to find a new way to earn a living.

So, AI is potentially a labour-saving device – a multi-purpose vacuum cleaner or dishwasher. Another way in which it could improve our lives as investors is by eliminating many of the unhelpful behavioural biases that cloud our ability to make good decisions. People are generally more interested in stories than data. AI doesn't care.

A recent study of AI and stock picking from Chicago University's business school tested whether the revolution could move yet further up the food chain than the data gathering that provided my former employer's information advantage.

It looked to see if artificial intelligence could take on the analysts looking to turn basic financial data into predictions about the future direction of corporate earnings.

This is a key part of the investment process for active fund managers, providing the raw material for their stock selections. The study found that machines did it slightly better.

More interestingly, it found that portfolios constructed using those earnings predictions performed better in a statistically significant way too. It's early days yet, but the jobs at risk in a whole range of professional settings are getting progressively more senior,

> 'It could improve our lives by eliminating the biases that cloud our ability to make good decisions'

and worryingly quickly. One danger of AI is that it makes the complex business of managing our money seem easier than it probably is. Ask a simple question of an AI tool and it will, as if by magic, come back with an answer that appears to be your silver bullet. You want 10 income stocks with a dividend yield above that on a cash fund? Here you go. A portfolio of growth stocks trading at less than 10 times expected earnings? Try these.

Actually, this is not new. Thirty years ago, the first screening software emerged that allowed investors to plug in a set of criteria and spit out a shortlist of potential investments. The problem for most of us was the cost of these services. AI democratises the process. But it also turns it into a black box. I trusted the numbers that underpinned my Online REFS stock screening software because I could see my young colleagues putting them into the system. When I ask Chat GPT a question, I have absolutely no idea where it has gone to find the answer.

AI plays on our predilection for short cuts. We want that list of 10 stocks to be the answer, so it is tempting not to ask too many questions. But as they used to say in the earlier days of computing: garbage in, garbage out.

I am excited by what AI promises for investors, but I am also relieved it arrived at the end of my career and not the beginning. Many of the things I have been paid to do over the past 35 years or so are of little value today. To continue the horsey analogy, I've adjusted a lot of bridles and cleared out plenty of stables. Now I need to understand internal combustion, or move aside.

I am confident, however, that there will always be things that people do better. We are social animals. I want the investors managing my money to be AI-enabled but human. I want my financial adviser to ask after my kids. I don't just want the car, I want someone to show me how to drive it.

The AI revolution is at least as disruptive as the internet boom that preceded it. It will be divisive. It is great news for a small number of people who are already highly skilled and highly paid. It will be painful for a much greater number whose contribution is no longer so highly valued. Winner takes all is not a recipe for social cohesion. But it's not going away.

Tom Stevenson is an investment director at Fidelity International. The views are his own.

Tunnel of love
Some 300 Eurotunnel employees marked the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Channel Tunnel yesterday by taking part in the Tunnel Run and Walk event. Starting from inside the service road tunnel, they had the choice of 30km, 10km or 5km to reach Folkestone from Calais. They were joined by chief executive Yann Leriche. The 31-mile-long (50km) structure was opened by the late Queen on May 6 1994.



EAMONN MCCORMACK

Labour's capital gains tax plans will give Middle England a simple choice: emigrate or give up



ANNABEL DENHAM

Hostility towards wealth, business and landlords is poised to intensify – to the detriment of all of us

Britain is at its most dangerous economic juncture for decades. We are living so far beyond our means that we're becoming detached from reality.

GDP flatlined in April and our best case scenario for 2024, a full two years after the pandemic ended, is 1pc growth. Total government revenues from taxes and other sources are scheduled to reach 41pc this year compared with 37pc in 2019-20 and 32pc in the 1990s. Yet, still, politicians are in denial. How else to explain the insistence that the problems facing the country can be resolved with the old saw of "taxing the rich"? They're all at it: the Greens with their wealth tax and the Lib Dems with their plan to impose a 500pc council tax surcharge on second homes. In their 80-page manifesto, the Tories failed to mention "success" once, other than in self-congratulatory references to their own, questionable record.

An extra three million workers will be pulled into the 40pc rate of income tax over the next five years thanks to fiscal drag, and another 400,000 will be paying the 45pc rate of income tax. Jeremy Hunt abolished the non-dom regime in March, rehearsing the tired line that those with the "broadest shoulders" should pay more. The IFS now calculates just 1pc of taxpayers pay 29pc of all income taxes.

Yet Labour looks poised to double down. Hostility towards wealth, business and landlords will intensify. The party is promising a "proper" windfall tax on North Sea oil and gas companies, which already face a headline rate of 75pc. They will impose VAT on private school fees and replace the Tories' "semi skimmed" non-dom measure with a "full-fat" one.

And why wouldn't they? Raising taxes has never been so politically easy. The consensus now is that, with high levels of debt and no scope to slash public spending, after the election Treasury coffers will need to swell regardless of who is in power.

That our ageing population necessitates higher tax revenues and, in any case, people would rather fiscal headroom was spent on public services than cutting taxes. Against this backdrop, reports have emerged that Labour may soon bring capital gains tax (CGT), levied at a variety of rates ranging from 10pc to 28pc depending on the asset class and the taxpayer's income, in line with income tax. Shadow ministers have issued non-denial denials, but the first salvo in class warfare is almost always to raise taxation on capital gains. Much like windfall and wealth taxes, it has superficial appeal. Why should people pay less tax on asset sales than others do on income?

But there's a reason why Larry Summers said in the 1980s that eliminating it in the US could increase

> 'Hiking CGT diminishes the incentive to save, leading to lower growth and lower living standards'

both output and consumption. That reason was laid bare in 1990, when the federal government took in 10pc less revenue at the 28pc rate than it had done five years previously at the 20pc rate. Hiking CGT diminishes the incentive to save, leading to lower long-term growth and, ultimately, lower living standards. Since the tax is levied at the point of sale, it creates a "lock-in" effect, as people stop selling to postpone the tax. When those assets include small businesses that might benefit from new management, the problem is obvious.

Under Hunt's chancellorship, the annual allowance has been slashed from £12,300 to £3,000. It hasn't been indexed since 2008, meaning it's not just real gains being taxed, but inflation, too. None of this is to mention that, typically, these assets are purchased using income that has already been taxed.

As Art Laffer has warned, raising the CGT rate lowers total profits, lowers total investments, and reduces wages and total employment. As a result, it lowers income tax receipts, payroll taxes, profits taxes, sales taxes and property taxes. It also means fewer job opportunities and higher welfare payments. How would Labour square this with promises to be "on the side" of working people?

But here's the question that ought to give Starmer prickles of cold sweat: what happens when the tiny section of the population that funds the government's largesse decides to walk away? In a globalised economy, money is mobile. It was reported last year that the UK is leading the world in the number of high net-worth individuals leaving the country. Every person who leaves drains us of tax revenue and spending power. And the more super-rich individuals who leave, the more middle earners will be pulled into paying higher taxes.

Perhaps the Left will reassure themselves that emigration is difficult for Middle England. Costs may be prohibitive. Those with young families will not rush to pull their children out of school. Those nearing retirement may want to see their grandchildren grow up. But there is an alternative for hard-working Britons worried they have become the nation's rhetorical punch bag, who are watching, powerless, as politicians clobber them with higher taxes and lambast them for refusing to pay their "fair share". They could give up. Some 54pc of UK households (36m people) already receive more in benefits, including the imputed value of health and education, than they pay in tax. Why not join their ranks?

The mood in Britain is clear: higher taxes on the rich and more burdens on businesses to pay for an unreformed public sector and a soaring benefits bill.

When you allow people to keep more of what they earn, they work more. When you raise taxes, you get less risk-taking, and less wealth generated. As bad as the situation has been over the past 14 years, Labour will make it far worse.

Starling Bank sets aside £14m for bad loans

By **Michael Bow**

STARLING Bank has set aside £14m to cope with souring mortgage and business loans after predicting a gloomy outlook for the UK economy this year.

The digital lender, founded by the Welsh businesswoman Anne Boden, increased provisions by 40pc to £47m amid expectations that more businesses will struggle to pay back some of their loans.

The £14m increase in impairments and loan write-off provisions reflects a switch in the mix of lending away from business loans to mortgages, which generally attracts more credit risk.

Although gross lending fell at the bank, from £4.9bn to £4.7bn, mortgage lending increased overall by £400m to £3.8bn. Starling, which has 4.2m customers and was founded a decade ago, is often touted as a candidate to list on the London stock market.

The company has previously signalled that it is keen on floating in the capital.

Economic forecasts largely determine the amount of money that banks set aside to deal with customers not paying them back.

Starling's bad loans provisions were based on a "pessimistic" economic outlook for the UK".

This includes muted GDP growth, higher interest rates for longer and stickier core inflation.

The bank said in its annual report: "The outlook remains challenging in the United Kingdom due to ongoing uncertainty regarding the residual impact of the cost of living on affordability, which is anticipated to lead to increasing loan balance arrears and low growth." Separately, Starling booked a separate £2.1m provision on loans made during the Covid-era Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

The privately owned lender grew its balance sheet rapidly through the scheme, issuing around £1.6bn of bounceback loans. The provision is the first time Starling has taken a provision on bounceback loans.

Overall the bank was profitable for a third year in a row after pre-tax profits rose 55pc to £301m. Revenues rose by 51pc to £682m.

Raman Bhatia, Starling's new chief executive, takes the reins in a fortnight's time. He joins from energy group Ovo.

David Sproul, the chairman, said Starling was now an "established part of the UK banking scene".

Apple vies to be world's most valuable again

By **Alex Singleton**

APPLE briefly regained its crown as the world's most valuable company yesterday, displacing Microsoft from the top spot as the iPhone maker pushed ahead in a race to dominate AI.

Shares in Apple jumped as much as 5.9pc to an all-time high, giving it a market value of $3.37 trillion (£2.63 trillion) and overtaking Microsoft's capitalisation for the first time in five months.

Apple's shares, however, closed up 2.9pc, valuing the company at $3.27 trillion. Microsoft's market capitalisation stood at $3.28 trillion.

Apple stock had already added more than 7pc on Tuesday, a day after it unveiled a range of AI-enabled features and software enhancements for its devices, a move that several analysts said would power iPhone sales.

The tech giant had fallen behind rivals such as Microsoft and Alphabet, the Google owner, in launching generative AI features, a key reason Apple's shares had been growing more slowly than its competitors. Apple's shares have risen about 16pc over the past year, while Microsoft has added about 33pc and Alphabet 44pc.

A week ago, chip maker Nvidia overtook Apple to become the second most valuable company after surpassing a $3 trillion valuation.

Nvidia rose above Apple amid soaring demand for its artificial intelligence processors, which accelerate systems such as ChatGPT. It was in third place, worth £3.08 trillion, yesterday.

Apple shares had lagged behind while Google added its Gemini chatbot app to its smartphones and Microsoft worked with OpenAI, the ChatGPT maker, to incorporate AI into Windows.

Apple beat market expectations in its quarterly results last month, as it announced a record $110bn share buyback plan. And on Monday it revealed its AI plans, introducing Apple Intelligence, which will run across apps on iPhones. Analysts believe the AI features will help rejuvenate stalling iPhone sales.

An estimated 270m iPhones have not been upgraded in four years, which Dan Ives, a Wedbush Securities analyst, believes will be cut by the new functionality.

"We estimate 15pc-plus of the Apple installed base will upgrade to iPhone 16 as Apple Intelligence is the killer app many have been waiting for," he said.

Apple's surging share price comes as the technology-focused Nasdaq index hit a record high yesterday on fresh signs of cooling inflation.

Markets

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Government securities

52 week High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/-	Flat Yield	Rdm Yield
102.30	99.20	Treas 5% 25	100.11	+0.05	4.99	4.87
112.21	100.63	Treas 6% 28	108.02	+0.50	5.55	4.03
106.59	90.79	Treas 4¼% 32	101.68	+0.87	4.18	4.00
106.09	94.06	Treas 4¼% 36	100.15	+1.17	4.24	4.23
110.73	96.88	Treas 4¾% 38	103.97	+1.35	4.57	4.38
Index Linked Securities						
385.52	371.32	Treas 2½% IL 24	385.38	+0.03	0.65	2.07
352.43	325.85	Treas 4⅛% IL 30	344.20	+1.99	1.20	0.37
243.64	239.45	Treas 2% IL 35	247.77	+2.56	0.81	0.68

10-year Government Bonds

	Yield%	Spread vs Bunds	Spread vs T-Bonds
France	3.13	+0.60	-1.13
Germany	2.53	-	-1.73
Japan	0.98	-1.55	-3.28
Great Britain	4.12	+1.59	-0.14
United States	4.26	+1.73	-

The share prices, price-earnings ratios and dividend yields below are supplied by Interactive Data (Europe) Ltd. The yields are calculated using historic dividend payments divided by the closing share price multiplied by 100.

Aerospace & defence +0.60%

52 week High	Low (p)	Stock	Price (p)	+/-	Yld	P/E
575	266¾	Babcock Intl ●	537½	+2½	0.3	-77.9
1415¼	883¼	**BAE Systems**	1388½	+4½	2.2	22.7
464	292¼	QinetiQ ●	456¼	+1¾	1.8	18.9
472¼	143¾	**Rolls-Royce**	469¾	+4¾	–	16.3
183	146¾	Senior ●	160	-1	1.4	21.3

Banks +0.85%

224¼	128¼	**Barclays**	208¾	-¾	3.8	7.5
989½	278	Close Bros ●	452	+5%	–	8.3
725¼	572¼	**HSBC**	681½*	+4¼	7.1	7.6
57¾	39¼	**Lloyds Bk Gp**	55	+1%	5.0	7.2
329¾	168	**NatWest Group**	310¾	+6¼	5.5	6.5
423	257	Santander	390½	-1	3.1	23.1
796	571	**Standard Ch**	741¾	+20%	2.9	8.8

Beverages +0.64%

3509	2563	**Diageo**	2611	+16½	3.0	15.8

Chemicals +0.37%

6032	4018	**Croda Intl**	4270	+17	2.6	34.9
1917½	1428½	Johnson Mat ●	1627*	+8	4.7	27.8
1632	1152	Victrex ●	1218*	-2	4.9	17.2

Construction +2.59%

391½	291½	Balfour Beatty ●	353¾*	+2¾	3.3	10.0
582¾	384½	**Barratt Dev**	509¾	+13¼	5.5	9.6
2898	1903	Bellway ●	2800*	+80	4.0	9.4
5360	3634	**Berkeley Grp**	5210	+100	1.8	12.2
244	170	Boot H	210	+5	3.5	10.7
88	40¾	Costain	83	+¾	1.4	10.2
1029¾	737¼	Grafton Gp ●	982	+17	3.7	14.1
2605	1640½	Morgan Sindall ●	2580	+30	4.4	10.1
1506	925	**Persimmon**	1498	+56	4.0	18.7
750	423¾	Redrow ●	719	+24½	3.5	7.9
153¾	98¼	**Taylor Wimpey**	152¾	+4½	6.3	15.4

Electricals +2.57%

240	135	Dialight	189	+13	–	–
958	586	discoverIE Grp ●	717	+3	1.7	44.3
2463	1802	**Halma**	2350	+76	0.9	37.9
4500	2823¾	Renishaw ●	3985	+25	1.9	25.0
2489¼	682½	XP Power	1596	+40	1.1	-35.2

Electricity +18.98%

637½	395¼	Drax Group ●	504	+10¾	4.6	3.5
1052½	645	**Nat Grid**	877¾*	+14¾	6.7	15.4
1932½	1485	**SSE**	1771	+1	3.4	11.3

Engineering / Industrial +0.28%

89¾	63½	Coats Group ●	83¾	+1%	2.7	30.6
870	212	Cropper J	315	-5	2.2	58.3
7300	4200	Goodwin	6400	+120	1.8	30.9
1911	1429	**IMI**	1841	+15	1.5	20.1
1719¾	1291	**Mondi**	1469½	-9	4.2	16.1
76¼	48¼	Severfield	71¾	-¾	4.9	10.2
1776½	1517½	**Smiths Gp**	1724	+19	2.5	26.3
415	260½	**Smith (DS)**	358¾	+2½	5.0	10.0
3910	2528	**Smurfit Kappa**	3542	-48	3.7	14.3
11480	7900	**Spirax Gp**	8695	+80	1.8	34.8
2210¼	1652½	**Weir**	2090	+24	1.8	23.7

Food producers +0.57%

2765	1849½	**Ass Brit Fds**	2506*	-11	2.1	18.7
2830	2065	**Coca-Cola HBC**	2706*	-2	2.9	18.5
4570	3158	Cranswick ●	4260	-5	2.1	20.2
957	614	Hilton Food ●	871*	+10	3.7	21.5
98¼	48	REA Hldgs	97	+1¾	–	-3.8
4418	3680½	**Unilever**	4393	+36	3.4	20.2

Gas & Water +1.18%

173¾	115	**Centrica**	132¼*	-¼	3.0	1.9
802	532¾	Pennon Gp ●	590	+8	7.5	-163.9
2770	2243	**Severn Trent**	2419*	+37	4.8	47.4
1139½	896¾	**Utd Utilities**	1019½	+21¾	4.9	54.8

General financial +1.23%

234⅞	156¼	Ashmore ●	180¼	+¾	9.4	14.5
300¾	164¾	Bridgepoint Grp ●	213¾	+4¾	4.1	23.7
1151	676¾	**Hargreaves L**	1064	+5	3.9	15.6
831½	600½	IG Group ●	800½	+13	5.7	9.2
2448	1244¾	**IntermediateCp**	2352	+82	3.4	14.2
567	419	Investec ●	541	+19	6.4	5.1
66¾	40	IP Group ●	46¾	-¾	2.7	-2.8
865	519	Liontrust	774	+14	9.3	12.6
60	30	Lon. Fin. & Inv.	50½	–	2.4	11.5
11080¼	7784	**Lon Stock Ex**	9404	+62	1.2	67.7
241½	181½	**M&G**	203¾	+4¾	9.7	-3.1
279¼	200½	Man Group ●	255¾	+1¼	5.1	16.5
124½	71¼	Quilter ●	118¼	+¾	4.4	38.1
2490	1750	S & U	1890	-5	6.3	9.0
470	346½	**Schroders**	382¼	+9¾	5.6	15.5
218½	43⅛	Vanquis Banking Gp	52¾	+⅛	11.3	-22.0

Healthcare +0.09%

371¼	306¾	**Haleon**	320¾	-¾	1.9	28.1
1269	887	**Smith & Nep**	1015½	+7	3.0	43.2

Household goods +0.24%

2289	1002½	**Burberry**	1031	+21½	5.9	13.9
129¾	24¼	McBride	120	+1½	–	-18.2
190	81½	PZ Cussons ●	104	-¾	5.0	12.0
6104	4102½	**Reckitt Benck**	4390	+2	4.4	19.2

Information technology +0.99%

389	224½	Aptitude Sftwre	362*	+2	1.5	50.1
1285	860¾	**Sage Gp**	1048*	+11½	1.9	50.5
205	79¾	Spirent ●	183¾	-¾	1.7	54.9

Insurance +0.37%

238	134¾	abrdn ●	151	+2¾	9.7	–
2870	2010	**Admiral**	2576	+13	4.0	23.2
501¾	366	**Aviva**	476¼	+8¼	7.0	12.6
701½	485¾	**Beazley**	673	+8½	2.1	5.4
240¾	132½	DirectLineIns ●	195¾	-3¼	2.0	12.3
1277⅞	926	Hiscox ●	1140*	+25	2.6	7.1
690	525	Lancashire Hldg ●	605	+15	2.6	5.8
259	203¼	**Legal & General**	229¾	-13¼	8.9	31.3
564¾	436½	**Phoenix**	490¾	+6	10.7	-35.6
1153	684¾	**Prudential**	725¾	+16	2.3	15.0
1185½	393¾	**St. James's Place**	533	+25	4.5	-296.1

Investment trusts +1.62%

52 week High	Low (p)	Stock	Price (p)	+/-	Yld	NAV
3083	1837½	**3i**	3082	+112	2.0	2096
349	276¾	3i Infrastructure ●	327	-1	3.6	365
798	528	abrdn New India	796	+2	–	947
1264	978	Alliance Trust ●	1188*	+8	2.2	1262
380	242½	Allianz Tech Trust ●	380	+12	–	416
417½	321¾	Asia Dragon Trust ●	398	-1	1.7	450
243	175	Baillie Giff China	200	-2	1.0	227
101¼	75¼	Baillie Giff Euro Gwth	98¾	+1½	0.4	114
84½	60	Balanced Comm Prp ●	76*	+1½	6.9	107
117¼	91½	Bankers Invstmt Tst ●	112¾	+1¾	2.3	127
1048	715	Biotech Growth	979	+10	–	1051
127	104	BlackRockEnrgy&Res	117	-2	3.8	133
159⅞	131¼	BlckRock FroInv	146½	-1½	4.5	161
653	457½	BlckRck Grt Euro ●	627*	+6	1.1	658
208	170	BlckRck Inc&Grth	204	+1	3.6	221
207	172½	BlckRckSustAmInc	193*	–	4.1	215
1520	1146	BlackRock Small ●	1460*	+4	2.9	1636
643	503	BlkRk Throg Tst ●	622	+4	2.4	687
644	490	BlackRock Wld M ●	557*	+9	6.0	577
1365½	964	Brunner ●	1310	+5	1.8	1407
3700	3110	Caledonia ●	3390	-90	2.1	5373
429½	371½	City of Lon ●	420	+5	4.9	426
206	151½	CQS Nat Res G & I	192	-1¾	2.9	210
255¾	206	CT Glbl Mgd G	254	–	–	259
121¼	98	CT Glbl Mgd I	119	–	6.2	115
516	406	CT Priv Eq Ord	472	+6	5.9	684
340	266⅝	CT UK Cap & Inc	331	+3	3.7	341
95½	71	CT UKHighIncTst	91	-1¼	6.2	96
590	448⅝	Dunedin Ent	502½	-7½	2.0	626
746	612¾	Edinburgh Inv Tr ●	729*	+9	3.7	797
157¾	120¾	Edin Worldwide ●	146¼	+3¾	–	163
92¼	73	European Assets	91¼	+¾	6.5	102
1058	825¾	**F&C Inv Trust**	1006	+14	1.5	1124
549⅞	473¾	Fidelity Asian V	518	–	2.8	563
246	181¼	Fidlty Chna Sp Sits ●	216	-2½	3.0	243
412½	311½	Fidelity Euro Tst ●	400	+5	2.1	413
187	151	Fidelity Japan Tst	174	+1½	–	195
316	252	Fidelity Sp V ●	303*	+1½	3.1	329
920	788¾	Finsbury Gwth ●	849	+11	2.3	917
168⅛	128¼	Gibl Smal Co Trust ●	162	-¾	1.5	180
177	136	Hend High Inc	160½	+½	6.5	176
176	148½	Hend Intl Inc	165½	-¾	4.6	189
902	626	Hend Smaller Co ●	869	+10	3.0	985
238	169	Hend Opp	228½*	-5½	3.1	248
2230	1590	Herald Inv ●	2165	+30	–	2462
504	348½	HgCapital ●	477	-1	1.4	508
150⅜	111	HICL Infrastructure ●	121¾*	+2	6.8	158
1276	1046	ICG Enterprise Tst ●	1232	–	2.7	1913
748	623	JPM Claverh'se	732	+20	4.7	762
110½	84¾	JPM Eur G&I	107½*	+1	4.0	118
553	435	JPM Japanese ●	526	-2	1.2	575
337	283¾	JPM Jpn SmCp G&I	295	+1	4.8	337
729¾	551¼	**Land Secs**	642½	+14	6.2	–
131½	103¼	Lowland Inv	127	-½	5.0	144
254	179	Majedie	242	–	3.1	271
399	294⅝	Mtn Currie Port	385	+5	1.1	388
249⅞	177¼	Mercantile InvTr ●	238	+5	3.2	266
593	476	Merchants Tst ●	564	+2	5.0	572
1218	880	Monks ●	1164	+10	0.3	1299
904	766⅝	Murray Income ●	864*	+11	4.4	957
269	218½	Murray Intl ●	248½	+3	4.7	275
64¾	52	Northern 2 VCT	54½	–	5.7	59
86¾	82½	Northern 3 VCT	84½	–	5.3	92
60½	54	Nthn Venture	57½	–	6.3	63
390	338	Pacific Assets	373	–	1.1	420
336	245¼	Pantheon ●	322	-½	–	490
145	87	PremierMitonGlb	104*	–	7.3	120
2030	1696	RIT Cap Ptnrs ●	1790	+20	2.2	2511
290	260½	Ruffer Inv Pref ●	271½	+1	1.3	287
464	382	Schroder Asian TR	450	+4	2.6	482
540	450	Scot American ●	510*	+6	2.8	556
946⅛	632¼	**Scot Mortgage**	903	+10¾	0.5	984
151¼	101⅞	Shaftesbury Capital ●	142¾	+3¼	2.2	3.1
1438	1162¼	Smithson Inv Tst ●	1386	+18	–	1553
227	207	STS Global Income	216*	-2	3.0	218
167⅜	140⅞	Tmpletn Em Mt ●	158	+2	3.2	184
345	253	TR Property ●	327	+7	4.8	352
135	121	UIL Fin ZDP 2024	132½	–	–	136
121	105	UIL Fin ZDP 2026	117	+½	–	135
241	203¼	Utilico Emerg	219*	–	3.9	269
270	209	Witan ●	260	+2½	2.4	281
358½	286	Worldw HealthTr ●	356	-2½	0.8	391

Net Asset Values © 2024 Morningstar Estimated at previous day's close see www.Morningstar.co.uk.

Media +2.18%

52 week High	Low (p)	Stock	Price (p)	+/-	Yld	P/E
849	580¼	**Auto Trader**	827¼	+13	1.2	29.4
620½	365	Bloomsbury	606	-4	2.4	15.2
865¼	684	**Informa**	847*	+20½	2.1	28.1
82½	55½	ITV ●	78½	+1¾	6.4	15.1
1046½	806¼	**Pearson**	960¾	+13¾	2.4	18.1
92¼	58½	Reach	88¾	+2	8.3	13.0
3573	2432	**RELX**	3572*	+81	1.6	38.0
603	457¾	**Rightmove**	573	+20¾	1.6	23.4
878⅝	656	**WPP**	764*	+11	5.2	12.3

Mining +0.40%

2613	1630	**Anglo Amer**	2374½	+15½	3.2	–
2425	1280	**Antofagasta**	2073	+6	1.4	31.4
2707½	2157	BHP Group	2250	+24	5.4	11.3
132¾	77¼	Centamin ●	114¾*	+½	2.7	18.5
81	81	Evraz #	81	–	–	0.5
679¾	435¼	**Fresnillo**	554½	+3½	0.8	22.5
506¾	365¼	**Glencore**	462⅞	-2⅝	2.2	17.5
191⅜	68¼	Hochschild Mng ●	179¾	+3¼	–	-23.1
470	291	Kenmare Res	340	+4	13.3	3.1
5910	4509½	**Rio Tinto**	5249	-2	6.5	10.9

Oil & Gas -0.40%

562¼	441	**BP**	464¾*	-3½	4.9	6.8
18¾	11⅛	EnQuest	14¾	-½	–	-11.9
461	190	Hunting ●	413½	+1½	2.0	7.2
87½	8¼	Petrofac	15¼	-1	–	-0.3
2961	2251	**Shell**	2744½*	-6	3.8	12.2
211¼	124	Wood Grp (John) ●	199	-1¾	–	-15.9

Pharmaceuticals +0.39%

12704	9461	**AstraZeneca**	12466	+90	1.9	41.7
2544	1478	Genus ●	1780	+2	1.8	35.0
1823½	1302¾	**GSK**	1605*	-10	3.7	13.2
2222	1711	**Hikma**	2010	+37	2.8	30.0
1938	1125	Indivior ●	1298	-12	–	–

Property +4.10%

11	6¾	Alina Hldgs	8	–	–	22
50¾	37½	Assura ●	39¾*	+½	8.5	–
1272	901	Big Yellow Gp ●	1198	+6	3.8	–
446¾	287½	Brit Land ●	437¼	+13¾	5.2	–
63¾	48¾	Cap&Regional	60	–	9.5	–
2452	1766	Derwent Ldn ●	2380	+84	3.3	–
400⅞	291	Gt Portland Est ●	346½*	+11	3.6	–
278¾	215¾	Grainger ●	239½*	+6	2.9	68.4
30	20½	Hammerson ●	28½	+⅛	5.3	–
283	181	Helical	219½	+5	2.2	-1.4
944¾	675	**Segro**	914	+18¼	3.0	–
165	110	Town Centre	150*	-2½	–	–
173	121¼	Tritax Big Box ●	156¾	+4¾	4.7	180
93	68	Warehouse REIT	81¾	+1¾	7.8	126

Retailers +1.01%

25⅞	13	Brown (N)	19¾	+1¾	–	-113.7
81¼	43	Currys ●	79¼	+½	1.3	-1.8
1335½	959	Dunelm ●	1080	+12	7.2	14.4
949½	673	**Frasers Group**	874	+9¼	–	8.2
3006	2244	Greggs ●	2846	+32	2.2	20.2
244¾	136	Halfords	145¾	+1¼	6.9	9.3
937	605	**Howden Joinery**	895	+35	2.3	19.2
177¾	103	**JD Sports Fash**	124¾	+¾	0.7	12.1
274	198¼	**Kingfisher**	263¼*	+8¾	4.7	14.5
314	183¾	**Marks & Spen**	302¼*	+5¼	1.0	13.8
8½	3½	Mothercare	4¾	–	–	–
9530	6362	**Next**	9176	+142	2.3	16.0
1017	332¼	**Ocado**	348¾	-2¾	–	-9.1
814	280½	Pinewood Tech	396	+6	–	3.4
161½	100¼	Saga	119¾	+2¾	–	-1.5
311⅛	243¾	**Sainsbury J**	256⅞*	-¾	5.1	43.5
1655	1069	Smith WH ●	1200	+18	2.6	19.7
316⅛	217½	**Tesco**	302¼*	-¼	4.0	18.0

Support services +3.50%

6180	4437	**Ashtead Gp**	5760	+164	1.4	20.1
3306	2680	**Bunzl**	2988*	+30	2.3	19.0
34¾	12¾	Capita	14	...	–	-1.3
20¾	12½	Carillion #	14¼	–	–	0.5
6075	4145	**DCC**	5680*	+80	3.5	17.2
107	29¼	De La Rue	93¾	-¾	–	-3.3
191¼	130¼	Essentra ●	168¾*	+1	2.1	93.6
3796	2366	**Experian**	3779	+100	1.2	37.0
17810	11490	Ferguson	16225	+575	1.5	21.4
5145	3746	**Intertek Group**	4862*	+76	2.3	26.4
211	122½	Int'l Workplace ●	181½	+5	0.6	-8.5
172	99	Johnson Serv	159¼	-⅝	1.8	24.9
125	90¾	MITIE Gp ●	117¾	+¾	3.4	12.0
663¾	387¼	**Rentokil**	472¼	+57	1.8	31.2
619⅜	394	Ricardo Gp	492	+4	2.5	-56.6
472	344	Robt Walters	423	+1	5.6	21.0
193⅛	135¼	Serco Group ●	172⅞	+¾	2.0	9.5
39⅞	25¾	SIG	27¼	+½	–	-7.2
934¼	684¾	Travis P ●	840½	+20½	2.1	46.4

Telecommunications -0.45%

147⅞	101¾	**BT Group**	129¾	+1¾	6.2	14.9
1900	1356	Telecom Plus ●	1880	+22	4.4	21.7
82½	62¾	**Vodafone**	69*	-1¼	11.0	19.4

Tobaccos -0.08%

2742	2233	**Brit Am Tob**	2381	-7	9.9	-3.7
2006	1553½	**Imp Brands**	1990*	+12	7.5	7.9

Transport +0.99%

340	197¼	Int'l Dist Services ●	332	+2%	0.6	-22.7
445	310	ZIGUP ●	419½	+7	5.9	7.0

Travel & Leisure +0.09%

1388	793	Carnival ●	1180	+20½	–	-252.5
591½	350	**easyJet**	464¾	+5½	1.0	10.8
1414½	643¾	**Entain**	690¼	+¾	2.6	-4.6
189	128½	FirstGroup ●	157¾	-7¼	3.5	13.4
17980	12020	Flutter Entrtmt	14215	-260	–	-26.5
730	522	Fullers 'A'	720	–	2.3	55.5
187⅝	137	**IAG Intl Cons Air**	169¾	+2¾	–	3.7
8790	5184	**Intercont Hotels**	8194	+194	1.5	23.7
314½	194¾	Mitchells&But ●	305½	–	–	-436.4
119⅜	49	Mobico Group ●	51	+¾	–	-1.7
620	365½	Playtech ●	462	-9	–	15.8
104⅜	60¾	Rank Group	76	-3	–	-3.7
687	375	TUI AG	603	+8½	–	8.9
862½	587	Wetherspoon ●	746	+6	–	15.7
3714	2848	**Whitbread**	3004*	+22	3.2	18.7

AIM +0.95%

62½	23¾	Afentra	58	–	–	-62.1
1150	840	Arbuthnot	942½*	–	5.0	4.2
2300	1425¾	BrooksMacdonald	2010	-30	3.8	17.5
⅞	⅛	Cambria Africa #	¼	–	–	-9.6
235	150¼	Central Asia Met	204½	+3	8.8	12.8
444¾	126¾	Ceres Power	191¼	-¼	–	-6.8
1508	947	Churchill China	1110*	+10	3.2	15.8
470	290	CML Micro	355	–	3.1	11.7
860	430	Cohort	800	+42	1.7	28.7
1⅛	⅛	Deltex Medical	⅛	–	–	-1.0
122⅞	72	Eleco	113	–	0.7	35.3
67	23¼	Futura Medical	36½	-¼	–	-16.4
41¼	14	Hornby	22	–	–	-6.3
228½	180	James Halstead	191½*	+3¼	4.3	18.8
77⅞	33¼	LifeScienceREIT	36¼	+1	5.5	81
550	183¾	Mpac Group	501	-2	–	38.2
1086	522	MS Intl	1010	–	1.6	39.5
90	48¼	Premier Miton	72	–	8.3	28.8
64	10¾	SRT Marine Sys	28½	+3¼	–	–
74	37	Tribal Gp	53¼	-¼	1.2	21.3
34	14	Union Jack Oil	18¾	–	1.4	23.3
2	¾	Xtract Resources	1	–	–	-4.7
1240	919	Young & Co – A	950	-10	2.2	18.7
890	580	Young & Co – N/V	628	–	3.4	12.4

The Alternative Investment Market is for young and growing companies. Shares may carry higher risks than those with a full quotation, and may be difficult to sell.

Americans +0.41%

52 week High	Low	Stock	Price	+/-	Grs Yld	Cvr
45½	23⅛	Alcoa $	40¾	+½	1.0	9.4
244¾	140⅞	Amer Express $	225¼	+1¼	1.2	4.3
40¼	25	BankAmerica $	39¾	+⅞	2.4	3.0
267½	159¾	Boeing $	182¾	-2¾	–	–
382	223¾	Caterpillar $	328¾	+1¾	1.6	4.3
171¼	139⅞	Chevron $	154⅛	-2¾	4.2	1.7
75½	56¼	Coca-Cola Euro $	74½	+⅞	2.7	0.9
95⅝	67⅞	Colgate Palm $	93¾	-⅝	2.1	1.6
82⅞	61½	DuPontDeNemrs $	80½	+⅞	1.9	0.6
123¼	95¼	Exxon Mobil $	111¼	-1	3.4	2.1
35⅞	14⅞	Foot Locker $	25⅞	+½	–	–
180⅝	102¾	Gen Electric $	161⅝	+1¾	0.2	12.0
396⅞	274¼	Home Depot $	346	+10¼	2.6	1.7
211	174⅞	Honeywell $	208¼	-1¼	2.1	2.0
39½	25¼	HP $	36½	+¼	3.0	2.7
199⅛	129¼	IBM $	169⅜	+⅝	3.9	1.3
51¼	29¾	Intel $	31	...	1.6	1.9
46⅞	30¼	Intl Paper $	45	...	4.1	0.3
205⅞	135¼	JP Morgan Ch $	193	-1¾	2.4	3.6
176	143¾	Johnson&Johns $	145⅞	-⅞	3.4	1.4
35	27¾	Keurig Dr Pep $	33¾	-⅛	2.6	1.8
88⅛	67¾	Manpower $	72⅝	+2	4.0	0.4
30	21¾	Marathon Oil $	28	-⅜	1.5	5.6
302⅞	245¼	McDonalds $	255½	+1½	2.6	1.8
133⅛	99¼	Merck $	130¾	-1¼	2.4	0.3
433⅝	309½	Microsoft $	438¼	+5¼	0.7	3.9
40⅝	25¼	Pfizer $	27¼	-¼	6.0	0.0
169	141½	Procter & Gamble $	165⅝	-1⅝	2.4	1.6
108¾	68½	Raytheon Tech $	107	...	2.4	1.0
348½	251¼	Rockwell $	264½	+9	1.9	2.1
338⅛	175⅜	Trane Tech $	328¾	+3¾	1.0	2.8
181⅞	58¼	Wal Mart Strs $	66¼	-½	1.3	1.3
123¾	78¾	Walt Disney $	101⅛	+¼	0.7	1.2
19¾	12	Xerox Hldgs $	14½	+⅝	6.9	1.5

Buy this investment trust, a 'bond proxy' offering a 7pc yield on a 22pc discount

GAVIN LUMSDEN
QUESTOR
TRUST BARGAINS



HICL Infrastructure offers an attractive margin over gilts and its stock buybacks are designed to narrow the wide share price discount

HICL Infrastructure
BUY
It could generate a return of 9pc a year even if the discount does not disappear

The decision of central banks in Canada and Europe to cut interest rates this month means it is probably only a matter of time before the Bank of England follows suit and lowers the Bank Rate from 5.25pc.

That will be a huge relief to investors in infrastructure funds, which, along with real estate investment trusts, have struggled as rates were aggressively raised from near-zero in December 2021 to their current level last August.

Funds such as HICL Infrastructure, a £3.2bn investment trust first tipped by this column in 2014, are sensitive to rises in the yields on government bonds, which increase when interest rates go up. With 58pc of its portfolio invested in public-private partnerships (PPP) managing the fabric of schools, hospitals, police stations and barracks, social infrastructure funds such as HICL have long been viewed as "bond proxies". The government-backed revenues they receive from long-term contracts averaging 14 years does make them comparable to a bond paying regular, fixed levels of income.

And with 64pc of assets in the UK, movements in gilts, or UK government bonds, are highly influential on HICL. It is no coincidence that the period from August to October 2022 – when 15-year gilt yields doubled to 4.8pc, largely in response to the uncosted mini-Budget of Liz Truss – marked a high point in the share price. From 176p in early September 2022, when the shares stood on a premium of 8pc above the value of the trust's assets, HICL has tumbled by a third to 121.8p, where it languishes 22pc below analysts' latest estimate for net asset value (NAV) of 156.8p per share.

Fortunately, annual results published last month had encouraging news. While the NAV fell 4.1pc in the 12 months to March 31, as high interest rates knocked its income-producing assets, the rate of decline slowed to 0.75pc in the final three months.

More positively, the company announced it would increase its quarterly dividends to a total of 8.35p per share next year, putting it on a forecast covered yield of nearly 7pc and ending what will be five years with the payout stuck at 8.25p.

HICL also reminded shareholders it had sold nine infrastructure projects for £500m, either at or above their previous valuation. In addition, the completion of two disposals of stakes in the Northwest Parkway toll road near Denver, Colorado, and the transmission link to Hornsea II in the North Sea, the world's largest offshore wind farm, meant its expensive overdraft, or credit facility, could be repaid.

Savings from that combined with an increase in the inflation-linked revenues from HICL's contracts and the Channel Tunnel HS1 rail link resuming distributions to its shareholders, including HICL, were factors in the decision to lift next year's dividend.

With cash continuing to flow, HICL was able to launch a £50m share buyback designed to narrow the wide share price discount.

Edward Hunt, the fund manager, said the disposals and addition of three new investments had improved HICL's ability to deliver income and capital growth. He said the portfolio was split between high-yielding, mature PPP investments and younger projects of up to 48 years that could generate 7pc annual growth. All this pleased Capital Gearing Trust, a defensive £1bn global portfolio also tipped by Questor, which lifted its small stake in HICL from £4.4m to £7.7m last year. Chris Clothier, the co-manager, said Capital Gearing was positive on the sector and increased its holdings in infrastructure funds to 8pc from 6pc.

Mr Clothier said HICL could generate a return of 9pc a year even if the discount did not disappear. "We think the board is increasingly focused on capital discipline, which, one way or another, will be positive for shareholders," he said.

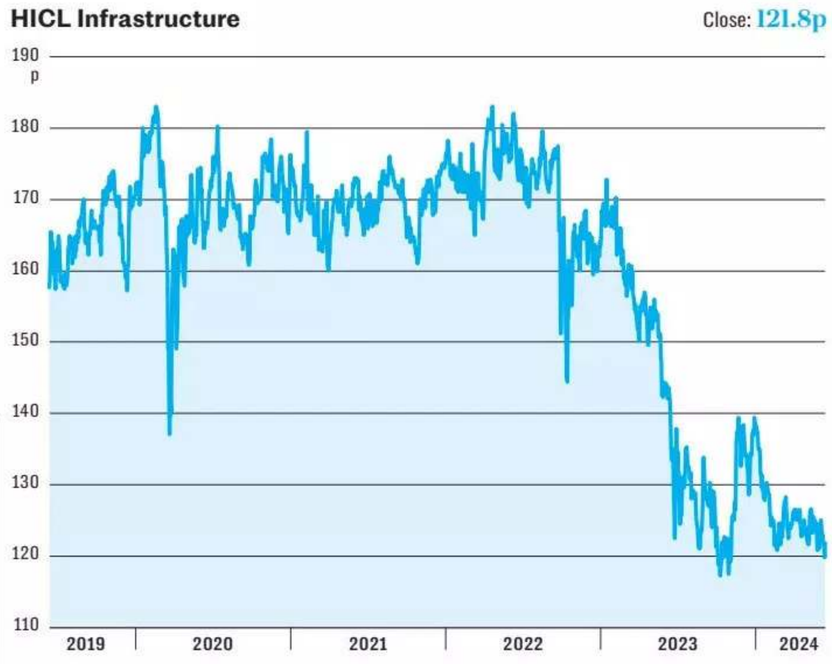
> 'The board is focused on capital discipline, which, one way or another, will be positive for investors'

Iain Scouller, an analyst at broker Stifel, agreed. Despite inflation nearing the Bank's 2pc target, having fallen from an 11pc peak 20 months ago, he believed gilt yields could stay above 4pc owing to high government borrowing, forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility to hit nearly 99pc of GDP next year.

Nevertheless, he rated HICL and other infrastructure funds a "buy", including BBGI which Questor backed in April, saying their dividend yields offered an attractive margin over gilts, especially with their shares on wide discounts. That's a view Questor shares.

Questor says: buy
Ticker: HICL
Share price at close: 121.8p

Gavin Lumsden is editor of Citywire's Investment Trust Insider website



Key numbers

- **Market value: £2.4bn**
- **Year of listing: 2006**
- **Discount: 22pc**
- **Ave discount over past year: 21pc**
- **Yield: 6.8pc**
- **Most recent year's dividend: 8.25p**
- **Gearing: 19pc**
- **Annual charge: 1.14pc**

Read Questor's rules of investment before you follow our tips: telegraph.co.uk/go/questorrules

DFS blames Red Sea disruption for delays and falling profits

Furniture chain DFS has warned over its profits amid a plunge in demand and delays caused by disruption caused by Western vessels coming under attack from Iran-backed Houthi rebels in the Red Sea.

The company said it meant as much as £14m of deliveries would have to be pushed into the next financial year.

It has also been hammered by higher shipping costs, because they are having to take extreme detours to avoid passing through the Suez Canal.

DFS said yesterday that it now expected sales for the year to June 30 to come in at £995m to £1bn, with underlying pre-tax profits expected to fall by £12m. The warning comes as demand for furniture and upholstery has dropped to a "record" low at 10pc.

Whisky maker Whyte & Mackay in talks to avert strikes

Fresh talks between whisky maker Whyte & Mackay and the GMB union are taking place as the drinks manufacturer seeks to avert strikes at three of its distilleries.

GMB members at the company's Dalmore and Invergordon distilleries in Ross and Cromarty and Tamnavulin in Moray voted to walk out after receiving a pay offer they described as an "insult" at a time, they said, the company was making record profits.

The walkouts are due to begin on June 24, followed by 11 days in July and two weeks in August. However, talks between the two sides are taking place this week in an attempt to resolve the dispute, with the company saying it has plans to "mitigate" the impact of strikes if no agreement is reached.

Law firm lines up £100m class action against Entain

Law firm Fox Williams is proposing a £100m group litigation claim against Entain for "failure to report honestly" on alleged bribery and corruption at its former Turkish business.

It said the claim against the Coral and Ladbrokes owner would "offer institutional investors the opportunity to recover substantial losses but more importantly serve to improve transparency and governance within the UK's gambling sector".

It comes after the gambling giant agreed with HMRC to pay £585m in penalties and "disgorgement" of profits following an investigation.

An Entain spokesman said: "Entain is not aware of any issued claim of this kind against the company. We would defend any such action robustly."

Ørsted says storage system will stabilise UK energy supply

Renewables group Ørsted is to install a Tesla-made energy storage system in East Anglia that it said would increase stability of the country's energy supply and reduce price volatility.

The Danish company said the Tesla Megapack would give Britain one of the largest battery energy storage systems in Europe. It said that the 600 MWh facility would hold the energy for 80,000 UK homes for a day.

The storage will be in Swardeston, Norfolk, at the onshore converter station of the Hornsea 3 offshore wind farm. Duncan Clark, Ørsted's UK boss, said: "The battery will help ensure that renewable energy is used in the best possible way by storing it when demand is lower and then releasing it back into the system when it's needed."

FedEx to cut 2,000 jobs as demand dips for courier services

FedEx will shed up to 2,000 jobs in Europe as part of a cost-cutting drive in response to low demand, the courier has announced.

The goal is to eliminate between 1,700 and 2,000 administrative and commercial jobs, with the exact plans for each country being decided "with differing timelines across the region".

The cuts come as FedEx doubles down on slashing costs amid falling revenues. FedEx said the latest jobs cull, which is subject to consultations, will help it save between $125m (£97m) and $175m a year, from 2026-27.

The staff reductions come three years after it announced 5,000 job losses in Europe following its acquisition of rival TNT Express. It employs 50,000 people across Europe.

Rentokil boosted as billionaire investor Peltz takes stake

Billionaire Wall Street activist Nelson Peltz has taken a significant stake in Rentokil, prompting speculation the pest control business could be pressured to quit London's stock market for New York.

Mr Peltz's Trian Fund Management, which snaps up shares in companies before agitating for change, has bought into the FTSE 100 business to become a top 10 shareholder. Shares rose more than 14pc following the announcement. A Trian spokesman said the fund had "reached out to Rentokil to discuss ideas and initiatives to improve shareholder value".

A spokesman for Rentokil said: "We don't comment on any shareholder's position. We consider and welcome input from all of our shareholders."

An URGENT appeal to Daily Telegraph readers

In just **one day**, people can lose everything and become refugees...

MAKE TODAY THE DAY YOU DECIDE TO HELP.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, exists to protect refugees. The number of people needing protection is growing rapidly, leaving UNHCR's lifesaving humanitarian work seriously underfunded. Recent years have seen multiple emergencies where, in just one day, people's lives have changed forever as they were forced to flee their homes and become refugees.

On **24 February 2022** Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, displacing millions of people. Tatiana, from Kharkiv, describes the scene she woke to:

"We looked out the window and saw smoke, fire, explosions. In an hour or two there were tanks under our windows. We realised we had to leave but had nowhere to go. We didn't know what to do. We didn't know where we were going."

On **6 February 2023**, a series of earthquakes killed over 55,000 people in Türkiye and Syria, and destroyed tens of thousands of homes. UNHCR teams on the ground sprang into action, providing items such as 31,600 tents, 45,000 sleeping bags and over 100,000 thermal blankets in Türkiye.

Just two months later, on **15 April 2023**, the escalation of conflict in Sudan saw millions forced to flee in fear of their lives. UNHCR's emergency response teams welcomed refugees at Sudan's borders, providing them with shelter and lifesaving essentials.



A UNHCR team member leads Rohingya refugees to safety after they were forced to flee their homes in Bangladesh to escape violence.

Türkiye/Syria and Sudan were amongst 43 emergencies declared in 2023. Many, such as Sudan, are continuing to force more people from their homes. That's why **UK for UNHCR is asking Daily Telegraph readers if you will make today, 13 June 2024, the day that you take action to help refugees.**

A gift of £96 today could provide a family of four with a lifesaving Emergency Rescue Kit containing the essentials they need to survive far from home.

When bombs are falling and bullets flying, people often escape with only the clothes on their backs. Your support today can ensure that the next day people are forced to flee, UNHCR can be there to provide the humanitarian aid that could save their lives.

£96 could help provide a family of four with a lifesaving Emergency Rescue Kit, containing essentials such as warm clothes, shoes, bottled water and high-energy food.



Give now at
unrefugees.org.uk/oneday-telegraph
Call **0800 029 3883**, or **fill in the form below**

I would like to give: ☐ **£96** ☐ **£192** ☐ **£288** ☐ **Other £** _____

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to **UK for UNHCR** OR
☐ I would like to make a donation by debit/credit card

Card no. Expiry date

Signature Date

☐ Tick here, if you don't want to receive an acknowledgement by post P24ODADT1

Title First name Last name

Address

Postcode

Provide your details below to receive updates by email and/or phone on the impact of your support and how you can donate and help in other ways.

Email

Phone

Please return this form along with your cheque to:
Freepost UK FOR UNHCR (you don't need a stamp)

Increase your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate *giftaid it*

☐ I would like UK for UNHCR to claim Gift Aid on this donation (currently 25p for each £1 donated), as well as any donations I make in the future and have made in the past four years to UK for UNHCR, until I notify you otherwise. I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand that council tax and VAT do not qualify. If your circumstances change or you have any questions, please contact our **Supporter Care Team** on **0800 029 3883** or email **supportercare@unrefugees.org.uk** The Gift Aid claimed will be used to fund the whole of UK for UNHCR's work.

Respecting your personal data: We will use your details to process your donation and to keep you up to date with our work, fundraising activities and other events. You can read more about how we use your data in our Privacy Policy **unrefugees.org.uk/privacy-policy** You can opt out of any communications at any time by contacting our **Supporter Care Team** using the details above.

Scan this QR code to donate online

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

A minimum of 75% of your gift will directly help displaced and refugee families, funding Emergency Rescue Kits and other humanitarian interventions.

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency
United Kingdom for UNHCR

United Kingdom for UNHCR is a registered charity in England and Wales (1183415). P24ODADT1

Court & Social

Court Circular

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
June 12th
Her Excellency Ms Katerina Stavreska was received in audience by The King this afternoon and presented the Letters of Recall of her predecessor and her own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from the Republic of North Macedonia to the Court of St James's.

Her Excellency Mrs Ismara Mercedes Vargas Walter was received in audience by The King and presented the Letters of Recall of her predecessor and her own Letters of Credence as Ambassador from the Republic of Cuba to the Court of St James's.

Mr Victor Manuel Brizuela Fonseca was also received by His Majesty.

Sir Philip Barton (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs) was present.

The Queen, Patron, this afternoon visited the Garden Museum, 5 Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1, and viewed the "Gardening Bohemia: Bloomsbury Women Outdoors" Exhibition.

The Princess Royal, on behalf of The King, held an Investiture at Windsor Castle this morning.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
June 12th
The Duke of Edinburgh, Colonel, Scots Guards, this morning visited the Regimental Headquarters at Wellington Barracks, Birdcage Walk, London SW1.

His Royal Highness, Patron, the London Gardens Society, having been received by the Earl Cadogan (Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London), this afternoon visited the Museum of Brands' Garden at 111-117 Lancaster Road, London W11, a public display in Portland Road, London W11, and Pembridge Square Gardens, London W2.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Chairman, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, this evening attended the Founder's Fund Dinner at the Peninsula Hotel, 1 Grosvenor Place, Hyde Park Corner, London SW1.

The Duchess of Edinburgh, Royal Colonel, The Queen's Own Yeomanry, this morning visited The Queen's Own Yeomanry and 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment at North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Forward Holding Base Sennelager, Germany.

Her Royal Highness, Colonel-in-Chief, afterwards visited The Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers at Normandy Barracks, Paderborn.

The Duchess of Edinburgh this afternoon arrived at Heathrow Airport, London, from Germany.

Mr Alexander Stonor and Captain Paige Welsh were in attendance.

Her Royal Highness this evening attended a Reception to commemorate Yazidi survivors of conflict related sexual violence given by the Ambassador from the United States of America (Her Excellency Ms Jane Hartley) at Winfield House, Regent's Park, London NW1.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
June 12th
The Princess Royal, Chancellor, University of London, this afternoon attended the School of Advanced Study Thirtieth Anniversary Reception at Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1, and was received by Ms Roxane Zand (Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London).

Her Royal Highness, President, The Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth Study Conferences, this evening attended a Dinner at Brunswick Group, 16-17 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
June 12th
The Duke of Kent, Joint President, the Scout Association, this morning received Mr Matthew Hyde upon relinquishing the appointment as Chief Executive at Kensington Palace.

Today's birthdays

Lord Hylton is 92; **Lord King of Bridgwater**, former Conservative Government Minister, 91; **Capt Sir Norman Lloyd-Edwards**, RNR, Lord-Lieutenant for South Glamorgan, 1990-2008, 91; **Sir Andreas Whittam Smith**, First Church Estates Commissioner, 2002-17; Editor, *The Independent*, 1986-94, 87; **Mr Gwynne Howell**, operatic bass, 86; **Mr Malcolm McDowell**, actor, 81; **Mr Ban Ki-moon**, Secretary General of the United Nations, 2007-16, 80; **Prof Dame Christine Beasley**, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health, 2004-12, 80; **Mr David Curry**, former Conservative government minister, 80; **Mr Colin Skellett**, Chief Executive, Wessex Water, 79; **Prof Geoffrey Crossick**, Professor of the Humanities, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 78; **Sir William Proby**, Chairman, National Trust, 2003-08, 75; **Mr Nicholas Brown**, MP, 1983-2024; Government Chief Whip 2008-10, 74; **Mr Alan Hansen**, former Scotland and Liverpool footballer; TV pundit, 69; **Mr Peter Scudamore**, racehorse trainer; National Hunt jockey, 1979-93, 66; Lord Justice Lewis, 64; **Dame Sarah Connolly**, mezzo-soprano, 61; **Miss Kathy Burke**, actress and director, 60; and **Ms Giedre Rakauskaite**, rower; Paralympic gold medallist, mixed coxed four, Tokyo 2020, 33.

Today is the anniversary of the birth of WB Yeats in 1865. It is also the anniversary of the birth of Basil Rathbone in 1892 and Dorothy L Sayers in 1893.

Other notices

SUFFOLK LIEUTENANCY
The Lord-Lieutenant for Suffolk, Clare, Countess of Euston, has announced the following new Deputy Lieutenants for Suffolk:
Mrs Yvonne Gilchrist-Mason and Dr Nikolaos Savvas.

Life peers

Baroness Freeman of Steventon, of Abingdon in the County of Oxfordshire, is the gazetted name, style and title of the life barony conferred upon Dr Alexandra Lee Jessica Freeman.
Baron Tarassenko, of Headington in the City of Oxford, is the gazetted name, style and title of the life barony conferred upon Mr Lionel Tarassenko.

Luncheon

Civic and Charities' Luncheon Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers
The Master, Mr Mike Gibbons MBE, presided at the Civic and Charities' Luncheon of the Worshipful Company of Tax Advisers yesterday at Founders' Hall. The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor Alderman Professor Michael Mainelli was the guest of honour, accompanied by the Lady Mayoress. Alderman Simon Pryke also attended.

Bridge news

The European Bridge League, in conjunction with RealBridge, has held an international online Women's teams, **writes Julian Pottage, Bridge Correspondent**. Forty-six teams competed, including three from England, one from Scotland and one mainly from Wales. The format was a qualifying round followed by A, B, C and D finals with eight teams in each for the leading 32 teams, plus a Swiss teams for the remaining 14 teams.

One English team, Fiona Brown, Helen Erichsen, Sally Brock, Diana Nettleton, Nevena Senior and Nicola Smith, who had come second in the round robin, finished third in the A final.

The Scottish team of Liz McGowan, Fiona McQuaker, Sheila Adamson, Abigail Milne, Anne Symons and Sam Punch, who had come third in the round robin, finished sixth in the A final.

The mainly Welsh team of Mia Deschepper, Ceri Pierce, Fu Cheung, Gilly Clench, Liz Commins (England) and Diana Kurbalija came second in the C final.

Two English teams finished in the Swiss teams. The team of Allison Green, India Natt, Bridget Rampton, Debbie Sandford, Kath Stynes and Hanna Tuus came second, while the team of Valerie Constable, Lesley Harrison, Sue Millard, Alison Pritchard, Judith Sanis, Ros Wolfarth and Pat Emery came third.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The Daily Telegraph.

LONDON, FRIDAY JUNE 13, 1924

STRANDED AT WEMBLEY

MAKING A NIGHT OF IT.

WORKERS – WHO WORK.

BY OUR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE.

There is no doubt about it – I must have slept. Whether it was the effect of dinner at the Lucullus, or the result of autointoxication – induced by the bewitching picture of the illuminated lake and by the distant music of the dance band on the island – it would be profitless to speculate. There I was, in the secluded rock garden of the Empire Exhibition – and my last train well on its way to Baker-street. Obviously the only sensible course was to make a night of it.

In spite of my predicament I was glad that, at last, I was awake. Some dreams seem more real than reality itself, and the thought of the dream that woke me makes me shiver as I describe it. It appeared to me that, as I walked along Dominion Way, the lions which guard the gates of Canada deserted their pedestals, and, in company with the moose and the buffalo, exchanged opinions concerning the variety of humans who had gazed upon them during the day. Then they caught sight of me. Fortunately they were unable to decide the appropriate fate for the violator of their midnight council, and, pending the settlement of the point, agreed to treat me as a suspected person and to immure me in Queen Mary's Dolls' House until the morning.

Forthwith in a body we crossed the lake, but our journey along Main-avenue was destined never to be completed. A most frightful noise broke out in the rear, and then I saw two monster locomotives bearing down upon us. The "Flying Scotsman" and the "Caerphilly Castle" had left their rails in the Palace of Engineering and had determined to settle once for all which was the better of the two – the L. and N.E. Railway or the great iron road to the West. A cinema record of all the bad deeds of my life seemed to flash before me in a second. But the "settling day" had not yet come. Just as those giant engines were towering above me one of Tex Rickard's cowboys came galloping from out the void and, neatly roping both their funnels, pulled them up with a jerk.

"THE EMPIRE ASLEEP."

Then I woke up – to find, as it seemed, that the Empire had gone to sleep. That was an arresting thought. I had always supposed that when Old England was abed her sons in the West and the East were very wide awake indeed. But there were Canada, Australia, the West Indies, New Zealand, and all her other children, slumbering with their Mother beneath the mantle of night – which only now and again was riven by a furtive moon that was playing hide and seek with the lowering clouds. I looked about me. For a time no other waking creature was in sight. The graceful dome of the Taj Mahal, the minarets of Malaya, and the imposing façades of Anglo-Saxon architecture were no longer mirrored by reflected light in the waters of the lake, the existence of which was only betrayed by an occasional sinister gleam. And to intensify the eeriness of the scene the wind-bells in the Burmese pagodas sent forth a weirdly fascinating call. Throughout the night, until the darkness finally had flown, I was not permitted to forget that

The temple bells were ringing
On the road to Mandalay.

Yet the impression of an Empire asleep was as far from the truth as the ominous metaphor that one might make of it. Every great building had its watchmen, and every avenue of the smaller ones was guarded by a ceaseless patrol – as vigilant in the ways and byways of this minature Empire as are the outposts of its world-wide prototype. And as the night grew older there grew with it the sound of a restless activity, which extended from New Zealand to India, and took in the greater Dominions on its way. It told the story of the road-builders who, since the days of the Romans, have ranked high among Imperial architects.

THE ROAD BUILDERS.

They came before midnight, and they worked until long past dawn, with little rest – for these were not mere London roadways; they were Imperial thoroughfares, and the work had to be finished by the morning. In the Southern Run these men with picks and shovels uncovered a broken drain pipe four or five feet down. They worked as though they were "digging themselves in" beneath the fire of hostile artillery, and by the time the ponderous steam roller had come into action they had relaid a perfect road, complete with concrete ballast, metal, and dressing for the surface.

At the other end of the lake more men were repairing the "tarmac" covering before the Taj Mahal, and a fussy little petrol-driven roller was doing its best to drown the noise raised by the voice of its bigger brother quite half a mile away. There were other squads – in Kingsway and Dominion Way – some labouring by the light of an electric standard, some beneath an acetylene flare; but the picture they presented seemed unfamiliar and incomplete. I had never before seen roadmen working without their retinue of idle onlookers; and it occurred to me that the Exhibition resembles the Empire, not only in its polyglot population and its infinite wealth, but also because it has no use for shirkers.

But the roadmen are not the only workers who at Wembley destroy the illusion of "an Empire asleep." Almost as soon as the last belated visitor has departed lumbering lorries thunder through the roads, refilling the Empire's depleted larder and removing the debris of the past day's feast. And then there are the carpenters, the builders of kiosks, the painters, the menders of signs and posts, all of whom have to work against the coming of the light – and, often enough, have not sufficient light to work by. Truly the British Empire never sleeps – even at Wembley.

Bridge Hand

Welcome surprise

By **Tom Townsend**

Dealer South
Vulnerability All

	♠ J 3 ♥ A 10 7 ♦ K J 3 ♣ J 9 7 5 3	
♠ 9 4 ♥ Q 9 6 5 3 2 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ Q 2	N W E S	♠ 6 2 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ Q 10 5 ♣ K 8 6 4
	♠ A K Q 10 8 7 5 ♥ none ♦ A 7 6 2 ♣ A 10	

West	North	East	South
			2♣(1)
pass	2♦(2)	pass	2♠
pass	3♣	pass	3♠
pass	4♦(3)	pass	4♥(3)
pass	5♥(3)	pass	6♠
pass	pass	pass	

(1) Strong and artificial
(2) Normal waiting response
(3) Control-showing (cue-bids)

Contract 6♠
Declarer South
Opening Lead ♠9

FROM the EBU Mixed trials for Buenos Aires, site of the World Bridge Games in October. Other than the Black team which took down the Open trials, most of the top English players appeared in this. Many of us were playing in first-time partnerships. For the most part, these functioned no worse than the full-time Mixed pairings. North-South for Knottenbelt were Heather Dhondy and your columnist, East-West for Nettleton were Stefano Tommasini and Marusa Gold.

Playing weak twos in spades, would you open the South hand 1♠ or 2♣? With near enough game in my own hand, four and a half key cards and four first-round controls, 2♣ felt routine. The other South players, astonishingly, preferred 1♠. How would they have felt if it had gone "all pass"?

The 2♣ start made it easy to reach 6♠, missed by two of the 1♠ merchants. This was a good slam, but how would you play it on a trump lead?

On any other lead, a heart for example, South just needs a normal diamond break. He parks the ♣10 on the ♥A, takes ♦AK in some order, and gives up a diamond. Assuming they break 4-2, South ruffs his fourth diamond high and draws trumps.

Gold's trump lead, threatening to snuff out the diamond ruff, was more challenging. South won in hand and played ace and another club, looking to develop the club suit.

West took the ♣Q and switched to a heart. This was a most welcome surprise. South took the ♥A, discarding a diamond, and used his extra entry to ruff a club (high of course). He crossed back to the ♠J, drawing trumps, and ruffed out the ♣K. Now the ♣J was his 12th winner.

West should have kept up her good work with a trump continuation. South takes the ♠J and cashes the ♥A, discarding a diamond. When East plays low on the ♣J, South has a decision. Should he run it, playing for split club honours? Or ruff it and run trumps? This needs the ♣K to fall, or a diamond finesse or squeeze. As Jon Snow used to say on election night – "too close to call".

Final Result 6♠ made, N/S +1430
Par Result same

Chess

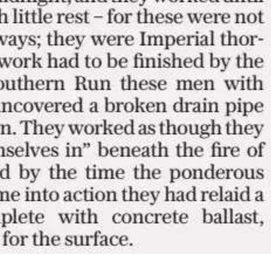
Carlsen's home win

By **Malcolm Pein**

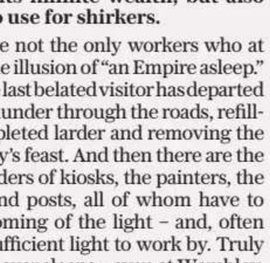
MAGNUS Carlsen won a sixth Norway Chess title at the weekend, as he secured another victory in an Armageddon play-off to finish two points clear of Hikaru Nakamura. Carlsen overcame Fabiano Caruana in the 10th and final round, while Nakamura was crushed by Ding Liren, also in Armageddon, after all three Classical games were drawn for the fourth day in a row. Carlsen's final tally of 17.5/30 was two points better than Nakamura's, under a complicated scoring system that rewarded victory in a Classical game with three points and a win in Armageddon with 1.5.

Only Michael Adams has played **6.c4** before, and that was in a random online game. Black is three moves from castling, so opening lines makes sense. Pragg – Giri, Chessable Masters Rapid 2023 continued 5...Qa5+ 6.Nc3 Ne4 7.0–0 Nxc3 8.Bxc6+ bxc6 9.bxc3 and Black lost in 24 moves, although 9...Qxc3 or 9...g6 both look playable.

R Praggnanandhaa – H Nakamura
London System 10' vs 7'
1.d4 Nf6 2.Bf4 d5 3.e3 c5 4.Nf3 Nc6 5.Bb5 Qb6 6.c4 Bg4 7.Nc3 (7.Qa4!? looks good and if 7...Bxf3 8.dxc5! Qxc5 9.b4 Qb6 10.c5 Qd8 11.Bxc6+ or 7...cxd4 8.exd4 a6 9.Ne5 Bd7 10.Nc3 with pressure on Black's position) **7...e6** (7...cxd4 8.Qxd4 Qxb5! 9.Nxb5 Nxd4 10.Nfxd4 Rc8 might not be too bad) **8.0–0 a6?! 9.dxc5! Qxc5** (9...Bxc5 10.Na4 Qa7 11.Bxc6+ bxc6 12.cxd5 is similar) **10.Na4 Qa7 11.Bxc6+ bxc6 12.Rc1** (12.cxd5 Nxd5 13.Qc2 was also good. White has a lead in development and pressure on the c-file) **12...Be7**



13.cxd5! Nxd5 (13...cxd5? 14.Rc7) **14.h3 Bxf3** (14...Bh5 was better to encourage White to make a concession and break the pin with after g2–g4) **15.Qxf3 Rc8 16.Be5 0–0** (16...f6 17.Bd4 Qb8 18.Rfd1 0–0 is even worse then 19.Qe4 e5 20.Rxc6!) **17.Rc4 c5 18.Rfc1 Nb6 19.Qg4 g6 20.Nxb6 Qxb6 21.b4 Rc6 22.bxc5!?** (22.Qf3 Rfc8 23.Bd4 wins a pawn) **22...Qb7?** (Now it's easy for White, he has a superior position and a pawn. After 22...Rxc5 23.Rxc5 Bxc5 24.Qe4 intending Rb1 and g2–g4 White has control) **23.h4 f6 24.Bd6 f5** (24...Bxd6 25.Qxe6+) **25.Qg3 Rd8 26.h5 g5 27.e4 fxe4 28.Qe5 Qd7** For today's puzzle, what was the decisive blow?



Answer:
29.h6 Bf8 30.Qxg5+ Kf7 31.Bxf8 0–1

Announcements

Email: announcements.ads@telegraph.co.uk **Book online:** announcements.telegraph.co.uk

Anniversaries

Diamond weddings

CHAPMAN - ABRAHAM.—On 13th June 1964, at St Mary's Church, Old Harlow, Charles to Cleone. Congratulations on your Diamond Wedding Anniversary, with love from all your family.
Online Ref: WO023145

Deaths

BOYLE.—Dermot MBE. Died peacefully at home on Friday 31st May 2024, aged 85 years. Beloved husband of Julie, devoted father to Jonathan, Anthony and Charlotte, and loving grandfather to eight grandchildren. A private funeral will be followed by a Service of Thanksgiving in Winchester Cathedral on Friday 19th July at 2.30 p.m. Donations, if desired, to United Kingdom for UNHCR can be made at www.steelsfunerals.co.uk
Online Ref: WO025534

FANSHAWE.—Robert Geoffrey, aged 62, very unexpectedly. Younger brother of Liz, Penny and John. Funeral at Wessex Vale Crematorium on Thursday 20th June at 1 p.m. No flowers but donations to British Heart Foundation may be sent to A.H. Freemantle, Funeral Directors, 46 South Street, Titchfield PO14 4DY.
Online Ref: WO025561

GOORD.—Joy 'Pamela' died at Furness General Hospital on 29th May aged 91 years of Grange-over-Sands. All enquiries regarding funeral arrangements to Little and Caine, Grange-over-Sands. Tel: 015395 33550.
Online Ref: WO025402

HANMER.—Michele. A much loved wife, mother and stepmother who had suffered from Leukemia for many years. Sadly, she succumbed on 22nd May 2024. There will be a small Cremation Service for family and close friends on 4th July 2024 at Gedling Crematorium (NG4 4QH) at 12 noon and a Thanksgiving Service for her life at Holy Trinity Church, Southwell (NG25 0LD) at 2 p.m. on Monday 15th July 2024. Family flowers only but donations in lieu for the Haematology Unit, City Hospital, Nottingham, may be sent to DH Hall, Southwell, NG25 0EN.
Online Ref: WO025506

LINDECK.—Belinda, died peacefully aged 87 on 30th May 2024 after a short illness. Much loved sister and aunt. Funeral St Cuthbert's, Philbeach Gardens, London, 11 a.m. on 25th June.
Online Ref: WO025452

LISCOMBE.—Janet Linda (née Simpkins), died on 2nd June 2024. Widow of Sandy McDowall and Michael Liscombe. Retired nursery teacher at The Granville and St Hilary's in Sevenoaks, she was immensely proud of all "her girls." Much loved Mum, Stepmum and adored Gran, she will be hugely missed. Funeral at Bluebell Cemetery, Halstead on 27th June at 1.45 p.m., all who knew her are welcome. No flowers please, "far too wasteful" but donations if desired to The Salvation Army via Just Giving using the following link https://www.justgiving.com/page/lindsay-howie-1718015108546
All enquiries to Welham Jones Funeral Directors on Tel: 01732 742400.
Online Ref: WO025493

PASCOE.—David, died peacefully in Kingston Hospital on 27th May, aged 84. Beloved husband of Christine, father of Zoe. Born and educated in Plymouth. After a degree in petroleum engineering/geology at Imperial College, worked in the oil industry, became MD of Superior Oil and was active in local community conservation issues. A clever, funny, characterful and kind man, sadly missed by his wife and daughter and also by his loving sister and sister-in-law. Private funeral. Donations to Alzheimer's Research UK.
Online Ref: WO025523

SMITH.—George. "Gerry" died suddenly on 15th April 2024. Funeral will be held on Thursday 27th June at 1.30 p.m. at Boston Crematorium, Lincs. All enquiries to Lincolnshire Co-op Funeral Service, Boston.
Tel: 01205 362512.
Online Ref: WO025521

TAYLOR.—Dr Pauline died peacefully in Ringmer, on 29th May, aged 98 years. Service of Thanksgiving at St Mary the Virgin Church, Ringmer on 21st June at 11 a.m. Family flowers only, please, but donations to her chosen charities may be sent to Grace – Independent Funeral Directors, The Weald, Broyle Place, Ringmer, BN8 5SD. Tel: 01273 813333.
Online Ref: WO025494

THOMPSON.—Sarah (née Hedley-Whyte) died peacefully on Friday 31st May. Funeral at Darlington Crematorium on 28th June at 1 p.m. Enquiries: Seaton Leng & Son.
Tel: 01325 465647.
Online Ref: WO025559

WATERS.—Stephen Russell died on Thursday 23rd May aged 69 years witty and brave to the end, unwilling departure for Joan his partner of 40 years, and many friends. Funeral Service on 17th June, 2.30 p.m. at North Cadbury Church, Somerset.
Online Ref: WO025522

WHEELER.—Dame Margaret (née Brain). Died peacefully at home in East Devon on 5th June 2024, aged 92 years. Beloved wife of the late Peter Wheeler, much loved auntie and great friend to many, she will be missed deeply by all who knew her. Her funeral service is in Exeter on Friday 21st June. Enquiries to Luxton Funeral Service, Ottery St Mary, Devon EX11 1BE.
Tel: 01404 812646.
Online Ref: WO025533

In memoriam their name liveth for evermore

HAWKINS.—In proud and loving memory. Lt-Cdr F.W. Hawkins RN and 175 crew of HMS Boadicea all killed in action on 13th June 1944. From his family.
Online Ref: WO025292

Personal

Text for the day

HOLD FAST the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.
2 Timothy 1.13-14 (AV)

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SANDRA HURST! To our great friend, we want to wish you an amazing 60th. Sending you hugs and kisses, love from your girl group.
Online Ref: WO025569

TERRY BOWFRAIRS To our wonderful father, grandfather and friend, Happy Birthday! Lots of love from all your family and friends all over the world.
Online Ref: WO025568

Messages

GRATEFUL THANKS as always to St Jude for prayers answered. TY and PY.
Online Ref: WO025570

General personal

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Legal Notices

CR-2024-001748

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES COMPANIES COURT (ChD)

IN THE MATTER OF RM INFRASTRUCTURE INCOME PLC AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Part 8 Claim Form was on 10 June 2024 issued in His Majesty's High Court of Justice for confirmation of the cancellation of the share premium account of RM Infrastructure Income PLC (the "Company").

AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the Claim Form is directed to be heard before the Insolvency and Companies Court Judge at the Rolls Building, 7 Rolls Building, Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1NL on 2 July 2024. The hearing may take place remotely.

Any creditor or shareholder of the Company desiring to support or oppose the making of the Order for the confirmation of the cancellation of the Company's share premium account should appear at the time of the hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose. If the hearing is held remotely, any creditor or shareholder who wishes to appear should contact steven.gibbon@justice.gov.uk in advance of the hearing.

A copy of the said Claim Form will be furnished to any such person requiring a copy by the under-mentioned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge.

DATED this 13th day of June 2024

Travers Smith LLP
10 Snow Hill
London EC1A 2AL

Tel: 020 7295 3000

Solicitors for the said Company

General personal

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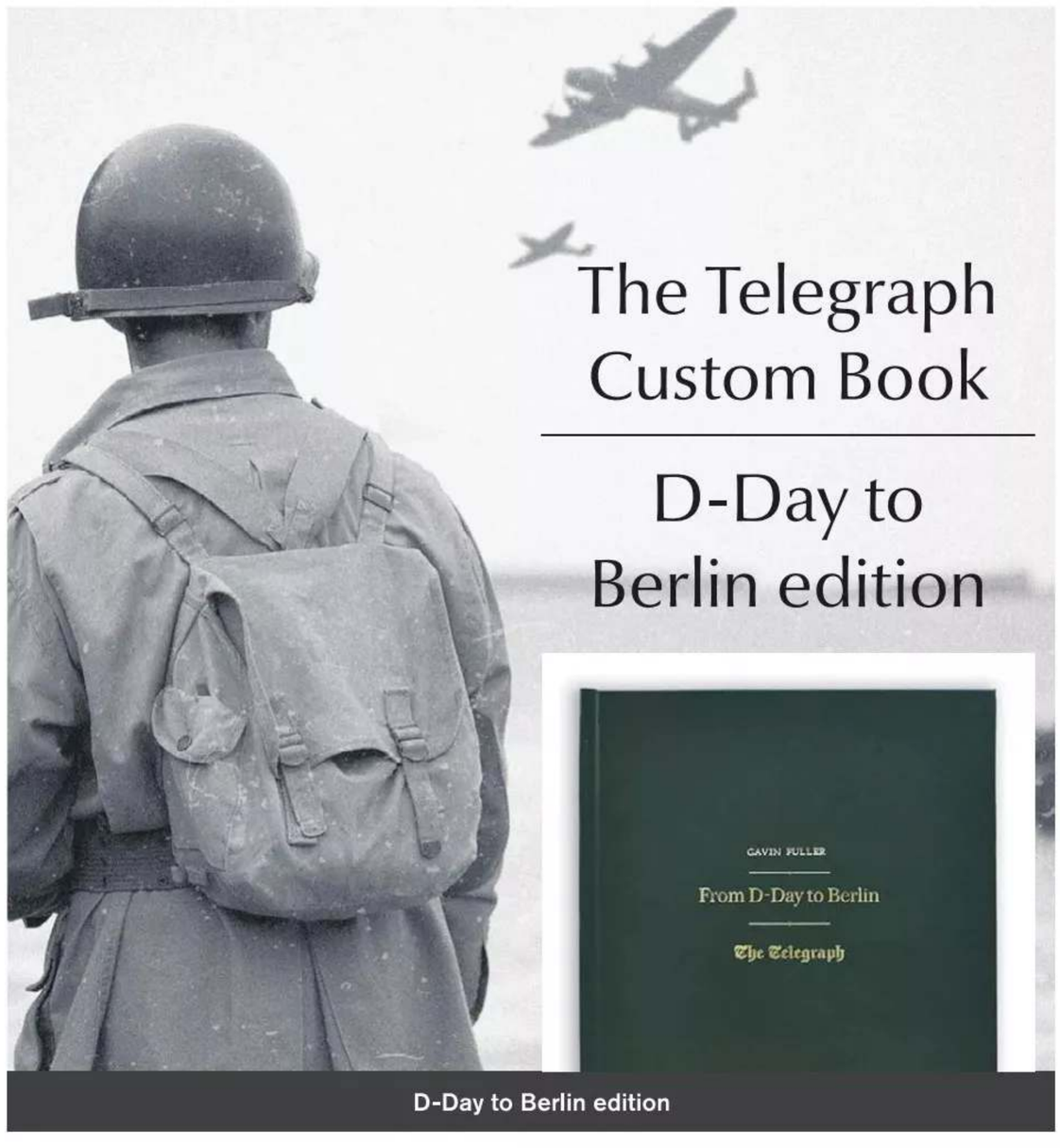
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Françoise Hardy

French 'yé-yé' singer-songwriter whose beauty and melancholy made her a 1960s idol

FRANÇOISE HARDY, who has died aged 80, was an intoxicatingly romantic French chanteuse and idol of the early Beatles era; one of the biggest "yé-yé" stars in her native land, she also enjoyed several British hits in the mid-1960s, many of them gentle and sultry ballads such as *Tous les Garçons et les Filles, Et Même* and *All Over the World*, before making a comeback 30 years later with *Le Danger* (1996), an album that placed her sensuous voice and mysterious French lyrics in a contemporary soft-rock setting.

She wrote most of her material herself, which in the early 1960s was unusual for any pop star, let alone a woman. No matter how jaunty her songs, they often evinced a kind of dreamy sadness. "I walk down the streets, my soul in sorrow," ran one plaintive line in *Tous les Garçons*.

Such wistfulness contrasted nicely with the perfectly pitched style, poise and captivating beauty that made her the French cover girl of the 1960s. It was a combination that caused a generation of male adolescents on both sides of the Channel to fall head over heels in love with her – or more precisely, as the critic Sean O'Hagan suggested in *The Observer*, "with the idea of her that the songs suggested".

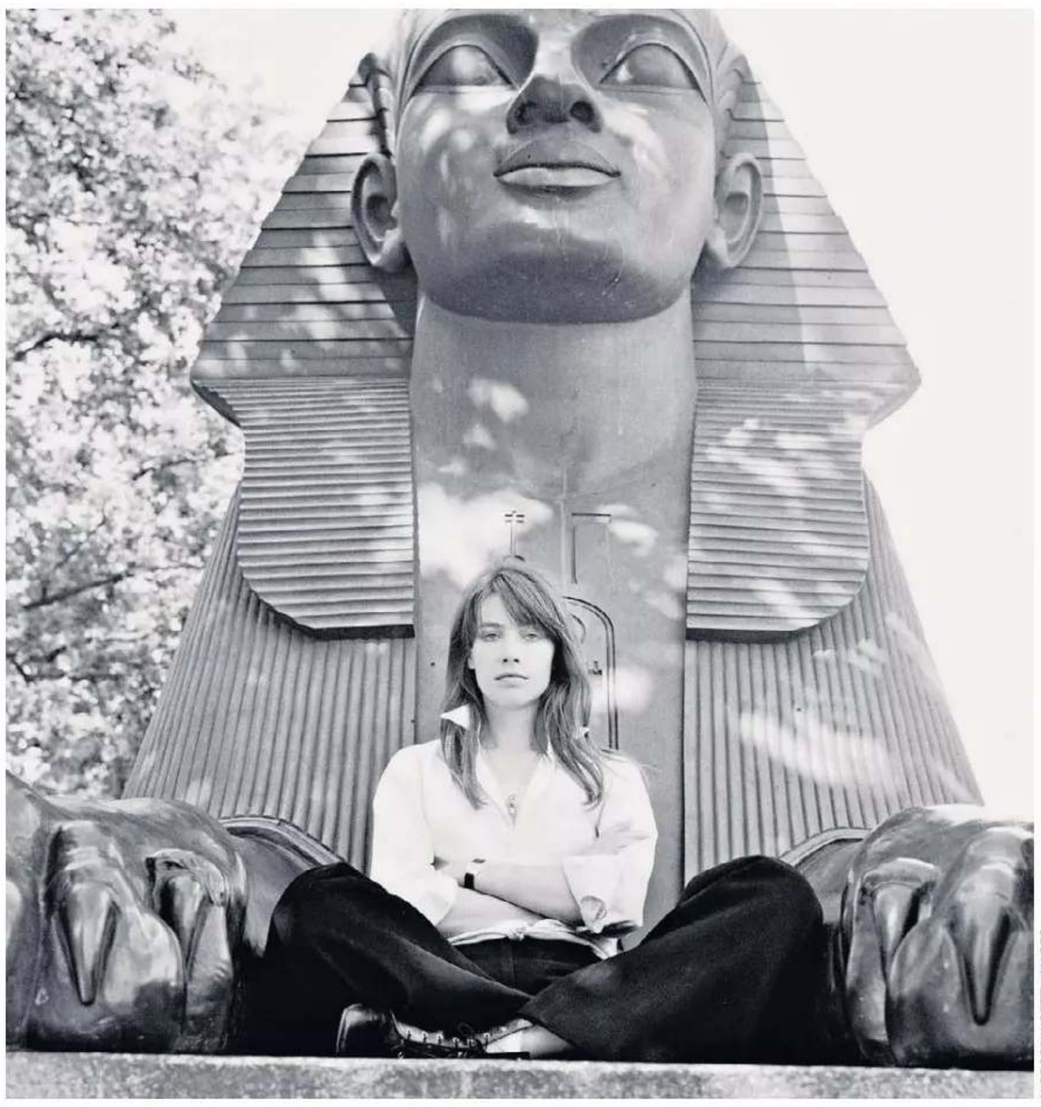
Among the countless men who idealised her was Salvador Dalí, with whom she ate ortolans, a French delicacy, for the first and only time. David Bowie confessed to being "passionately in love with her"; Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones tried and failed to seduce her; Mick Jagger described her as his ideal woman; and Bob Dylan honoured her in a poem scribbled on a record sleeve.

He need not have bothered. "I had no interest in him as a man, only as an artist," she told *The Daily Telegraph* in 2005. "He took me to his hotel room after inviting me to a show in Paris and played me two tracks he hadn't yet released... but he wasn't very attractive."

In her early years Françoise Hardy collaborated with Serge Gainsbourg; after her 1990s renaissance, she duetted with Damon Albarn, Iggy Pop and Julio Iglesias. She also had a fondness for the music of the Jesus and Mary Chain and Cigarettes After Sex, the cult Brooklyn band whose sound, she said, "I have been looking for all my life".

She had long since abandoned live performance, feeling that her voice and stage manner were not up to it. Her final appearances were in 1967, including one at the Savoy Hotel in London where she wore a metal dress designed by Paco Rabanne that, despite its brevity, weighed 16kg.

"If I could sing like Céline Dion, it would have been different," she once said, forever self-critical.



MIRRORPIX/GETTY IMAGES

Françoise Hardy on the Thames Embankment in 1970: Mick Jagger described her as his ideal woman

Françoise Madeleine Hardy was born during an air-raid in Nazi-occupied Paris on January 17 1944, the elder of two daughters of Madeleine Hardy, an accounts clerk, and her married lover, Étienne Dillard, who was largely absent during his daughter's childhood.

He did, however, insist that Françoise and her sister, Michèle, who was later diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, were educated at Institution La Bruyère, a Catholic school run by Trinitarian nuns, where the shame of being from a single-parent family created in her an acute lack of confidence that decades of fame and wealth failed to dent.

Her early stomping ground was a *quartier* of the ninth arrondissement known as La Trinité, with its own claim to *chanson* fame.

Here was the parental apartment of Lucien Ginsburg, as Serge Gainsbourg was then known, and elsewhere in the quartier lived Jean-Philippe Smet (or Johnny Hallyday) and Claude Moine (Eddy Mitchell of the Chaussettes Noires), both of whom Hardy remembered leading local bands of proto-rockers.

In 1959 her father reappeared to present her with a guitar as a reward for passing her baccalaureate. Inspired by *Salut les Copains*, a teen-oriented radio programme broadcast on Europe 1 that would become the launchpad for the Beatles-inspired French wave of "yé-yé" pop, she taught herself three chords. Soon she was using song-writing as a form of therapy, composing a series of unremittingly sad numbers.

Signed by Vogue Records in 1961, she recorded *Tous les Garçons*, her own composition, during "three hours with the worst four musicians in Paris".

On returning from holiday in Austria the following summer she discovered that it had become a hit, and by mid-1963 sales of *Tous les Garçons* had reached two million copies, with the French press observing that she had sold more records in 18 months than Edith Piaf did in 18 years.

Roger Vadim, the film director credited with creating Brigitte Bardot, took her under his wing, pledging to maintain her "girl next door" image, though almost immediately her long, straight hair was tied up, her slacks replaced with a dress and her absence of make-up corrected.

She appeared in *Château en Suède* (1963), his sex comedy set in a Swedish castle, and a handful of other films including John Frankenheimer's sports drama *Grand Prix* (1966), Frankenheimer having spotted her emerging from a London nightclub, but she never pursued a serious acting career.

Françoise Hardy represented Monaco at the 1963 Eurovision Song Contest in London, singing *L'amour s'en va* and coming joint fifth alongside the French entry. That autumn she released her second album, *Le Premier Bonheur du Jour*. By then she was at the front of the "yé-yé" wave, but whereas other yé-yé girls such as Sylvie Vartan and Brigitte Bardot largely dealt in frivolity, Françoise Hardy's music retained its distinctively thoughtful, melancholic quality.

Despairing of French recording facilities, she took to working in London, where she acquired a British following. *Tous les Garçons* reached No 36 in the British charts in 1964 and *All Over the World*, her plaintive English-language single, made the Top 20 and stayed in the charts for 15 weeks, becoming possibly her best-known recording internationally.

Her other albums included *Comment te dire adieu* (1968), *Message personnel* (1973) and *Clair-obscur* (2000), none of which made quite the same impact on the English-speaking world.

Her penultimate album, *L'amour fou* (2012), its words half-spoken and half-sung, was conceived as the resigned and philosophical soundtrack to a novel of the same name that she published two years later.

During lulls in her musical career, some of which were prolonged, Françoise Hardy found a rewarding distraction in astrology and at one time devoted four years to the most exhaustive of her several books on the subject.

She was a Capricorn, which explained her shyness, she said, because "when the sun is in Capricorn you are not there... you are below the horizon, you are invisible."

Her final album, *Personne d'autre*, was released in 2018 featuring 10 original songs, including one in English, *You're My Home*. Many of its lyrics deal with her advancing years, coping with lymphatic cancer and facing up to her own mortality.

"Time is accelerating nowhere," she sang on *Un seul geste*, while both *Train spécial* and *Le large* sounded like forlorn goodbyes. Nevertheless, she retained her air of slim and elegant Parisian chic.

Her memoir was translated into several languages including English, in which it was published as *The Despair of Monkeys and Other Trifles* (2018), the title coming from the name of a monkey puzzle tree she often visited in the Parc de Bagatelle. Its hard, sharp leaves, she said, reminded her of "men who have caused me despair".

Françoise Hardy's partner in the 1960s was the photographer Jean-Marie Périer, whose unsmiling pictures of her, hair falling over her shoulders and eyes fixed on some distant point, adorn her early record covers.

In 1981 she married Jacques Dutronc, her fellow singer-turned-actor with whom she had previously had a son, the jazz guitarist Thomas Dutronc.

They lived in a spacious, split-level minimalist apartment close to the Arc de Triomphe, though like her own father Dutronc was often absent, spending much of his time at their Corsican retreat, and they subsequently formally separated, though never divorced.

Dutronc and her son survive her.

Françoise Hardy, born January 17 1944, died June 11 2024





Ahmad Shah Khan

Crown Prince of Afghanistan who chose American suburbia

AHMAD SHAH KHAN, who has died aged 89, was for more than 80 years Crown Prince of Afghanistan, a country which has moved in the past half-century from a constitutional monarchy through a Soviet-backed dictatorship to the theocratic rule of the Taliban.

He was the second son of Zahir Shah, the last reigning king of the Barakzai dynasty, who was ousted in a coup in July 1973 while in Rome for cataract eye surgery. The usurper, Mohammed Daoud Khan, Zahir's cousin and brother-in-law, abolished the monarchy and declared Afghanistan a republic. The king sent his abdication from Italy the following month, saying that he respected the will of the people.

Ahmad had become heir apparent at the age of eight after the death of his elder brother, Akbar, in 1942, and served several times as regent when his father was abroad. He was one of 14 members of the royal family held under house arrest after the coup but was allowed to join his family in Rome nine days later.

His parents spent their exile in Olgiata in the north of the capital, an area dubbed "the Roman Beverly Hills", the king tending his garden, playing chess and golf and pursuing his hobby of photography. He received financial support from the Shah of Iran.

He made headlines again in 2002, when he returned to Afghanistan on an Italian military plane at the age of 87 following the overthrow of the Taliban by United States and allied forces.

He was welcomed at Kabul airport by Hamid Karzai, the president-to-be, who later declared him "Father of the Nation", a title first given to the founder of the Durrani dynasty, the predecessor of the Barakzai, in the 18th century.

There was speculation that Zahir could be a figurehead for national reconciliation but that came to nothing. He moved into the Arg, his old palace in Kabul, where he died in 2007, and was buried, like his wife, Humaira, in the royal mausoleum.

Ahmad, by contrast, chose to remain in the obscurity into which he had slipped, living in Alexandria in the American state of Virginia and writing Sufi poetry during his long exile.

Many were doubtful of Zahir's potential to bring stability to Afghanistan, and their scepticism was compounded by what the Canadian journalist Mark Steyn termed the "noted indifference of his sons".



He did not return with his father to Kabul in 2002

In *The Face of the Tiger*, a collection of essays written in 2001 and 2002, Steyn described Ahmad as "happy writing poetry in suburban Virginia" and the next in line as a successful sitar player in Canada, adding that "when a throne is no longer competitive with playing Ravi Shankar medleys on the frozen tundra you've got problems."

Ahmad Shah Khan Zaher was born on September 23 1934 in the Arg-i-Shahi Palace, Kabul, the third of King Zahir's and Queen Humaira's eight children. He was educated at the Estequal High School, a Franco-Afghan *lycée* whose former pupils include Ahmad Shah Massoud, the anti-Soviet resistance leader assassinated in 2001, and at the College of Military Science in the capital.

Like his father, who had studied in France at the Pasteur Institute and Montpellier University, Ahmad was sent abroad to further his education, first at Oxford University, then at the Institut d'études politiques de Paris. Returning home, he joined the Afghan foreign ministry.

In 1961 he married Princess Khatul Begum, a descendant on her mother's side of King Nadir Shah, Zahir's father, who was assassinated in 1933. The ceremony took place in the Chihil Sutun (Forty Columns) Palace, on the outskirts of Kabul, a building erected in the late 19th century by Abdur Rahman Khan, the Emir of Afghanistan.

Ahmad and Khatul had two sons and a daughter.

Ahmad Shah Khan, born September 23 1934, died June 4 2024

Nicholas Ball

Actor known for his 1970s Cockney private eye in the ITV series *Hazell* co-written by Terry Venables

NICHOLAS BALL, who has died aged 78, was best known as the seedy East End private detective James Hazell, a former police officer who has been battered by life, other people too much booze, in the 1970s ITV drama *Hazell*, which attracted audiences of up to 17 million.

Ball then spent three decades in relative obscurity but made a noisy comeback as the murderous Garry Ryan, a former rock star and chairman of Earls Park FC, in *Footballers' Wives* (2006), which led to the role of the vicious gang lord Terry Bates in *EastEnders* (2007-09), attacking Peggy Mitchell (Barbara Windsor) while smashing up the Queen Vic pub.

The character of Hazell first appeared as "the biggest bastard who ever pushed your bell-button" in a 1974 novel, the first in a series written jointly (under the name of PB Yuill) by the Scottish journalist Gordon Williams and the footballer Terry Venables, who lent Hazell his Cockney grit.

When the idea was adapted for the small screen, the then-unknown Ball beat John Nettles to the part, and went on to play Hazell with tongue-in-cheek humour and a cutting condescension that often earned him a smack in the mouth from those who did not always see the funny side of things. The wise-cracking voiceover narration was an *hommage* to the classic American hard-boiled novels of Raymond Chandler.

Hazell ran to 22 hour-long episodes, shown between 1978 and 1979. In one, his character, who drives a Triumph Stag, is hired by a newspaper to secure a murder confession from a gangster and almost becomes a victim himself. In another he has several dead bodies to contend with – though these are animals rather than people, after his character becomes involved with an attractive taxidermist whose shop has been vandalised. The show also featured one of the first regular gay characters in British series television, in the form of Hazell's office landlady (played by Barbara Young).



SHUTTERSTOCK

Ball as Jim Hazell: he left after 18 months, complaining that 'people were beginning to tinker with it, saying there was too much sex, violence and smoking'

But after 18 months Ball quit the show, claiming that *Hazell* was becoming too politically correct. "People were beginning to tinker with it," he said, "saying there was too much sex, violence and smoking." He also found the production too studio-bound, saying that the cameras should be out and about in London. "You can't go down dark alleys in studios, you find the studio wall," he explained.

While Ball's departure marked him out as "difficult", the actor himself insisted that the move showed just how much he cared: "I just decided not to do any more. Now, when I hear that some actor is difficult to work with, I know it probably means that they care about what they do."

John Nicholas Ball was born at Leamington Spa on April 11 1946. The family soon moved to Bow, east London, where he picked up his Cockney twang, and then to Hastings.

He trained at the Old Vic in Bristol and found early work in radio and television, including BBC One's Elizabethan-era whodunnit *The Queen's Traitor* (1967) and as Terry Craddock in the television series *The Gold Robbers* (1969), before returning to the theatre in the West End musical *Isabel's a Jezebel* (1970), Galt MacDermot's much-hyped follow-up to *Hair*, but it was a turkey that closed after only 61 performances. Ball was also a founding member of David Hare's Portable Theatre Workshop Company, staying with them until 1974.

He made his big-screen debut as Arthur in Stuart Cooper's D-Day film *Overlord* (1975). Word then reached him of plans for a new detective series called *Hazell*. "So I said, 'Well, why aren't I up for it?' to the producer. She said: 'You are!'" he recalled.

Thereafter his career floundered and eventually he took off to the US, working in fringe theatre, his jobs including getting the gigs, employing the director and the writer, and bringing everything together. "I actually went for a month, but I kept falling in love over there," he recalled. "Sitting in LA, I thought, 'I could go back home, it's November, go down the old Kent Road on a cold and miserable day. Or I could go for lunch in Malibu.' No contest!"

Even in these "lost" years Ball never considered abandoning acting. "I've always loved it and still do," he told the *Liverpool Daily Post* in 1997 when relaunching his career in *Thief Takers* as DC Nick Hall, an old-style copper who returns to head the armed robbery squad after a mysterious posting in Hong Kong. To prepare for the part he trained with the rest of the cast at a shooting range. "I blew the hell out of the centre target – I've still got the target to prove it," he boasted.

Elsewhere he was seen in episodes of *Coronation Street*, *Hammer House of Horror*, *The Young Ones*, *Red Dwarf*, *Cold Feet* and *Holby City*. In 2019 he played Lenny Henry's manager in a television advert for Premier Inn.

In 1978 Ball married the comedian and psychologist Pamela Stephenson; they had met on the set of *Not the Nine O'Clock News*. She left him a year later for Billy Connolly. He is survived by his second wife, Ayda.

Nicholas Ball, born April 11 1946, died June 6 2024

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Television reviews

Slick thriller given polish but hard to care about its hero



Jake Gyllenhaal (centre) takes the lead in glossy remake Presumed Innocent

Presumed Innocent (Apple+ TV) is a remake from two modern masters of entertainment. Its executive producer is JJ Abrams, who along with all his film franchise blockbusters wrote the seminal TV drama *Lost*. Its showrunner is David E Kelley, who gave us *Ally McBeal* and *Big Little Lies*. With such a pedigree, a TV version of Scott Turow's bestselling 1987 legal thriller is bound to be a slamdunk, is it not?

Turow's original premise remains robust. Hotshot Chicago state lawyer Rusty Sabich (Jake Gyllenhaal) takes charge of the prosecution following the savage killing of his colleague, Carolyn Polhemus (Renate Reinsve). It's soon revealed that they once had a romantic dalliance, and his creepy rival in the state attorney's office, Tommy Molto (Peter Sarsgaard), is quick to charge Rusty with murder.

The source material runs to 500 pages, and now gets more room to breathe over eight episodes than it had in the 1990 film starring Harrison Ford. What the script does with this is to introduce a bunch of twists, misdirections and elongated therapy scenes, while much more time is spent with the Sabich family – including Rusty's mainly loyal wife, Barbara (Ruth Negga), and their two teenagers. This is a mixed blessing as all drift through the story looking, for the most part, glacially untraumatised by the extent of Rusty's serial betrayals.

Then there are the plot's high-octane absurdities. In any sort of reality, all attorneys would have to recuse themselves, but this is a disbelief-suspending telenovela about alpha-dog workplace combat. Bill Camp and O-T Fagbenle, huffing and snarling as former and current state attorneys, are excellent value.

Another change ensures Carolyn, glimpsed in flashbacks, is no mere male-fantasy figure, as played in the Hollywood version by Greta Scacchi. In the novel she has had affairs with half the office. Here she's more hotshot than sexpot. There's no avoiding one old trope, though: her body, much photographed, is found nearly naked and grotesquely hogtied. Some female characters are allowed more agency, principally Noma Dumezweni, who is glorious as a tough-as-boots trial judge.

The final episode has not been made available for review, so it's not clear if the original mega-reveal is still in situ. But what is clear is that, however much you may have rooted for him in *Brokeback Mountain* and *Source Code*, Gyllenhaal endows Rusty with such a massive payload of narcissism that you really wouldn't object if he got banged up for good. ***Jasper Rees***

Early in the latest season of superhero satire **The Boys** (Amazon Prime Video), it is revealed that Homelander, the show's sociopathic answer to Superman, is suffering the ravages of ageing. Greying hair, a midlife crisis – this psycho-in-Spandex (a grippingly unsettling Antony Starr) is struggling to hold it together. The same might be said for *The Boys* itself, which arrived with a thunderclap in 2019 when caped crusaders were ripe for parodying.

Five years on, is there any fun left to poke? Everyone is fed up with Marvel movies – including many of the actors who star in them. Setting aside Ryan Reynolds's giggle-a-minute *Deadpool & Wolverine*, this summer will be the first in living memory in which the box office is untroubled by heroes in Lycra.

In these changed times, *The Boys* must learn to fly on its own – and series four suggests that it is starting to lose altitude. As before, its calling card is a jokey mix of ultra-violence and sexual depravity – one set-piece winks towards B-movie *The Human Centipede* (if you don't know, don't Google). But the formula is starting to feel played out (not even hush-hush celebrity cameos can spruce it up).

As the action begins, American democracy is threatened by incoming Vice President Victoria Neuman (Claudia Doumit), who is secretly a "supe" (as these maniacal superheroes are known) who can cause heads to explode at a distance. The outlook is grim. It gets worse when you realise the only people standing in her way are The Boys – a rag-tag gang who have made it their mission to take down the supes and their evil corporate backer.

It's clear that the show is not afraid to take on US politics. The previous season ended with the alt-right Homelander zapping a protester on live television with his laser eyes to cheers from his MAGA-like supporters. In an echo of Donald Trump's legal headaches, this series begins with the stained Superman stand-in on trial.

Until this year's *Fallout* adaptation, *The Boys* was Prime Video's biggest hit. With its work now done, it might be best served by fastening its cape and soaring into the sunset. ***Ed Power***

Presumed Innocent ★★★
The Boys ★★★

What to watch



THE TRUTH VS ALEX JONES
Sky Documentaries, 9pm



Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones falsely claimed that the Sandy Hook school shooting was a hoax

This jaw-dropping feature-length documentary follows the defamation trial of conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who falsely claimed that the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting was a hoax. The details of the massacre (in which 26 people, including 20 young children and six adult staff members, died) are shocking enough, but to see them juxtaposed against footage of Jones shamelessly mocking grieving parents is monstrous beyond belief. It's a depressing insight, too, to the dark fringes of conspiracy culture in the US, where not even the senseless murders of children and innocent teachers can persuade the all-powerful gun lobby to consider restrictions. Jones, who started his career as a journalist before swapping mainstream publications for his far-Right Infowars site, which regularly publishes conspiracies, comes across as a twisted individual. One sole consolation is knowing, as we do, the outcome of the trial: he was ordered to pay the families $1.5 billion in compensation for his suggestion that their grief was fake, intended to score political points for the Democrats. The families, some of whom contribute here, say that they were harassed for years by conspiracists because of Jones's lies. ***Poppie Platt***

COMEDY

The Outlaws
BBC One, 9pm
The third episode of Stephen Merchant's sharp comic thriller finds the gang under pressure to betray the framed Rani (Rhianne Barreto). According to the wavering John (Darren Boyd): "She couldn't look more guilty if she wore a T-shirt that says 'I heart stabbing!'" There is also good news tonight for those looking forward to the return of Christopher Walken's conman, Frank – even if it is Jessica Gunning's (*Baby Reindeer*) police officer Diane who steals the show.



Chinook: Zulu Delta 576: marking 30 years

DOCUMENTARY

Chinook: Zulu Delta 576
BBC Two, 9pm
It has been 30 years since the Mull of Kintyre Chinook helicopter crash, the RAF accident which wiped out a generation of Northern Ireland's top intelligence personnel. Their families are still asking what went wrong. This affecting two-part documentary charts their fight for answers.

DRAMA

Bridgerton
Netflix
After being away from our screens for less than a month, the buzzy Regency bonkbuster returns to conclude the second part of series three. The headline is Colin Bridgerton's (Luke Newton) engagement to Nicola Coughlan's wallflower-turned-society darling Penelope Featherington. The big question for these four remaining episodes, however, is how that will be affected by her secret identity as scandal-sheet author Lady Whistledown. See Features, p10, for full review.

FACTUAL

The Supervet: Noel Fitzpatrick
Channel 4, 8pm
Is it a sick bird? Is it a poorly great Dane? No, it's supervet Noel Fitzpatrick! He returns for a new set of challenges, beginning with a special on rescue animals. This means revisiting past patients such as three-legged rescue dog Bran, who now requires surgery so complicated that Fitzpatrick must conduct an ethics review to justify the risks.

Bridgerton: can Luke Newton get his happy ending?

POLITICS

The ITV Election Debate 2024
ITV1, 8.30pm
Following last week's heated head-to-head General Election debate between Rishi Sunak and Keir Starmer, ITV opens the floor to multiple political parties. Moderated, once again, by Julie Etchingham, the 90-minute debate will feature representatives from the Tories, Labour, Liberal Democrats, SNP, Reform UK, the Greens and Plaid Cymru. Conservative Leader of the Commons Penny Mordaunt will face off against Labour's Deputy Leader Angela Rayner, with tax, Sunak's D-Day fiasco and education sure to pop up. ***Stephen Kelly***

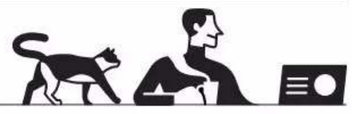
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The Telegraph Newsletter Politics

Radio choice



Open Country
Radio 4, 3pm

Anneka Rice and renowned artist Maggi Hambling take us on a joyously eccentric outing this week, as they travel the highways and byways of Suffolk talking art, landscape and inspiration. Unlikely as the pairing might sound, the *Challenge Anneka* host has for years been part of a painting group run by Hambling and they have a strong bond that translates well to radio. Warmth, humour and colour fill every exchange as they make their way from a ditch in Hadleigh to Hambling's famed scallop sculpture on Aldeburgh beach, via Sizewell power station and her garden studio near Saxmundham. Refreshing, good-natured fare. ***Gerard O'Donovan***

RADIO 1
FM 97.6-99.8MHZ

6.57am Newsbeat **7.00** Radio 1 Breakfast with Matt Edmondson **10.30** Newsbeat **10.32** Rickie, Melvin and Charlie **12.45pm** Newsbeat **1.00** Dean and Vicky **3.00** Radio 1's Pop Anthems **3.30** Newsbeat **3.32** Going Home with Vick, Katie and Jamie on Radio 1 **5.45** Newsbeat **6.00** Radio 1's New Music Show with Jack Saunders **8.00** Radio 1's Rave-Up with Arielle Free **10.00** BBC Introducing Dance **11.00** Radio 1's Residency **1.00am** Radio 1's Chillout Anthems **2.00** Turn It Up: A Short History of Drum & Bass **2.15** Turn It Up: A Short History of Drum & Bass **2.30** Turn It Up: A Short History of Drum & Bass **2.45** Turn It Up: A Short History of Drum & Bass **3.00** Radio 1 Relax **4.00** Radio 1 Dance **5.00 - 6.33am** Radio 1 Early Breakfast with Maia Beth

RADIO 2
FM 88-90.2MHZ

6.30am The Zoe Ball Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine. Current affairs chat **2.00pm** Scott Mills. Music and chat **4.00** Sara Cox. Music and chat **6.30** Sara Cox's Half Wower. Sara plays the biggest and best tunes to get listeners dancing **7.00** Jo Whiley's Shiny Happy Playlist **7.30** Jo Whiley. With guest Stephen Fry **9.00** The Country Show with Bob Harris **10.00** Trevor Nelson's Magnificent 7 **10.30** Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation. The DJ introduces a mix of soulful tunes **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Sounds of the 90s with Fearne Cotton **4.00 - 6.30am** Owain Wyn Evans

RADIO 3
FM 90.2-92.4MHZ

6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live **4.00** Composer of the Week: Gibbons **5.00** In Tune **7.00** Classical Mixtape. A sequence of music **7.30** Radio 3 in Concert. The BBC NOW with works by Jennifer Higdon and William L Dawson **9.45** The Essay: Bohemians in T-Shirts. Michael Goldfarb on the importance of Charlie Parker and Miles Davis **10.00** Night Tracks. A soundtrack for late-night listening **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30 - 6.30am** Through the Night

RADIO 4
FM 92.4-94.6MHZ; LW 198KHZ

6.00am Today **9.00** In Our Time **9.45** NatureBang **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** This Cultural Life **11.45** Book of the Week: All That Glitters **12.00** News **12.04pm** The Bottom Line. Business issues that matter **12.32** Sliced Bread. The scientific evidence behind a product's bold claims **12.57** Weather **1.00** The World at One. Presented by Sarah Montague **1.45** Understand: The UK Election. Adam Fleming looks at why people vote the way they do **2.00** The Archers **2.15** Drama: The Queen of the Isle of Wight. By Barney Norris **3.00 Open Country** The landscapes and seascapes that have inspired the artist Maggi Hambling. Last in the series **See Radio choice 3.27** Radio 4 Appeal. On behalf of Sand Dams Worldwide **3.30** Word of Mouth. Michael Rosen explores the mysterious rules of word order. Last in the series **4.00** The Briefing Room. David Aaronovitch discusses a story in the news **4.30** BBC Inside Science. The latest scientific research **5.00** PM. Presented by Evan Davis **5.57** Weather **6.00** Six O'Clock News **6.30** Rhysearch. Rhys James privacy issues and technology. Last in the series **7.00** The Archers. Debate rages at Grange Farm **7.15** Front Row **8.00** The Media Show **9.00** Loose Ends **9.45** Empire of Tea **9.59** Weather **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: The Photographer **11.00** The Today Podcast **11.30** The Bottom Line: The Decisions That Made Me a Leader **12.00** News and Weather **12.30am** Book of the Week: All That Glitters **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News Briefing **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45 - 6.00am** Farming Today

RADIO 5 LIVE
MW 693 & 909KHZ

6.00am 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Adrian Chiles **1.00pm** Nihal Arthanayake **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport. Mark Chapman and guests preview Euro 2024 **9.00** 5 Live Golf. Day one of the US Open **10.00** Gordon Smart: Live from Euro 2024 **11.30** Johnny I'Anson **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo **5.00 - 6.00am** Wake Up to Money

CLASSIC FM
FM 99.9-101.9MHZ

6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Dan Walker **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Dan Walker **10.00** Alexander Armstrong **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00 - 6.30am** Early Breakfast

WORLD SERVICE
DIGITAL ONLY

8.00am News **8.06** The Inquiry **8.30** Business Daily **8.50** Witness History **9.00** The Newsroom **9.30** The Documentary: Greening the Hajj **10.00** News **10.06** The Media Show **10.30** Happy News **11.00** The Newsroom **11.30** The Global Story **12.00** News **12.06pm** Outlook **12.50** Witness History **1.00** The Newsroom **1.30** The Food Chain **2.00** Newshour **3.00** News **3.06** The Inquiry **3.30** World Business Report **4.00** BBC OS **6.00** News **6.06** Outlook **6.50** Witness History **7.00** The Newsroom **7.30** Sport Today **8.00** News **8.06** The Documentary: Greening the Hajj **8.30** Science in Action **9.00** Newshour **10.00** News **10.06** The Inquiry **10.30** The Food Chain **11.00** The Newsroom **11.30** World Business Report **12.00** News **12.06am** The Media Show **12.30** Unspun World with John Simpson **1.00** News **1.06** Business Matters **2.00** The Newsroom **2.30** Tech Life **3.00** News **3.06** Outlook **3.50** Witness History **4.00** The Newsroom **4.30** Heart and Soul **5.00 - 8.00am** Newsday

RADIO 4 EXTRA
DIGITAL ONLY

6.00am Paul Temple and the Gilbert Case **6.30** A Change in the Weather **7.00** Patterson **7.30** Dad's Army **8.00** The Break **8.30** These Days **8.45** Exile **9.00** Rhysearch **9.30** Soundstage **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Great Lives **10.30** Shakespeare in India **11.00** Paul Temple and the Gilbert Case **11.30** A Change in the Weather **12.00** Patterson **12.30pm** Dad's Army **1.00** The Break **1.30** These Days **1.45** Exile **2.00** The Unbelievable Truth **2.30** The Leopard in Autumn **3.00** Thackeray **3.45** Monsoon Selection Board **4.00** Great Lives **4.30** Shakespeare in India **5.00** Paul Temple and the Gilbert Case **5.30** A Change in the Weather **6.00** Patterson **6.30** Dad's Army **7.00** The Break **7.30** These Days **7.45** Exile **8.00** The Unbelievable Truth **8.30** The Leopard in Autumn **9.00** Thackeray **9.45** Monsoon Selection Board **10.00** Rhysearch **10.30** The Guns of Adam Riches **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview **11.00** Clare in the Community **11.30** And the Winner Is **12.00** Great Lives **12.30am** Shakespeare in India **1.00** Paul Temple and the Gilbert Case **1.30** A Change in the Weather **2.00** Patterson **2.30** Dad's Army **3.00** The Break **3.30** These Days **3.45** Exile **4.00** The Unbelievable Truth **4.30** The Leopard in Autumn **5.00** Thackeray **5.45 - 6.00am** Monsoon Selection Board

Today's television

Main channels

FV Freeview FS Freesat (AD) Audio description (R) Repeat (S) Subtitles (SL) In-vision signing

BBC One

6.00 am Breakfast (S) **9.30** Morning Live (S) **10.45** Scam Interceptors (S) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (S)
12.15 pm Bargain Hunt (AD) (R) (S)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather (S)
1.35 Regional News; Weather (S)
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather (S)
2.00 Rip Off Britain (S)
2.30 Animal Park (AD) (R) (S)
3.00 Escape to the Country (R) (S)
3.45 Garden Rescue (R) (S)
4.30 The Finish Line (S)
5.15 Pointless (R) (S)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather (S)
6.30 Regional News; Weather (S)



The Outlaws

7.30 EastEnders It's the day of Keanu's funeral (AD) (S)
8.00 Question Time Fiona Bruce chairs the topical debate, inviting panellists Kate Forbes MSP, Douglas Ross MSP, Anas Sarwar MSP, Stephen Noon and Iain Anderson to answer questions from the audience (S)
9.00 The Outlaws The police close in on the gang **See What to watch** (AD) (S)
10.00 BBC News at Ten (S)
10.30 Regional News; Weather (S)
10.40 Not Going Out Lee and Lucy plan a friendly night of quizzing with Toby and Anna in the pub (R) (S)
11.05 Newscast **11.35** Rebus **12.30 - 6.00am** News

BBC Two

6.45 am Escape to the Country (R) (S) **7.30** Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure (R) (S) **8.00** Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (AD) (R) (S) (SL) **9.00** News (S)
12.15 pm Politics Live (S)
1.00 Impossible (R) (S)
1.45 Mastermind (R) (S)
2.15 Mastermind (R) (S)
2.45 Five Bedrooms (AD) (R) (S)
3.30 Stanley Tucci: Searching for Italy (AD) (R) (S)
4.15 Great Bear Stakeout (R) (S)
5.15 Flog It! (R) (S)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games (R) (S)
6.30 Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure (S)



Springwatch

7.00 Mississippi: Earth's Great Rivers A journey along the American river (AD) (R) (S)
8.00 Springwatch The team looks back on highlights of the series. Last in the series (S)
9.00 Chinook: Zulu Delta 576 Part one of two. A look at the 1994 helicopter crash in the Mull of Kintyre **See What to watch** (S)
10.00 Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing (AD) (R) (S)
10.30 Newsnight (S)
11.05 The Misadventures of Romesh Ranganathan **12.05am** Sign Zone: The Panorama Interviews with Nick Robinson **12.35** Sign Zone: Blood on the Dance Floor – Spotlight **1.35** Sign Zone: Doctor Who **2.20** Sign Zone: Lost Boys and Fairies **3.20 - 6.30am** This Is BBC Two

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain (S) **9.00** Lorraine (S) **10.00** This Morning (S)
12.30 pm Loose Women (S)
1.30 News; Weather (S)
1.55 Regional News; Weather (S)
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal (AD) (R) (S)
3.00 Lingo (R) (S)
4.00 Tipping Point (R) (S)
5.00 The Chase (R) (S)
6.00 Regional News; Weather (S)
6.30 News; Weather (S)



The ITV Election Debate 2024

7.30 Emmerdale Belle finds herself in danger (AD) (S)
8.30 The ITV Election Debate 2024 Julie Etchingham hosts a multi-party debate between leaders or representatives from the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the SNP, Reform UK, the Greens and Plaid Cymru **See What to watch** (S)
10.10 News; Weather (S)
10.45 Regional News; Weather (S)
11.00 Emergency Nurses: A&E Stories **12.00** Shop on TV **3.00am** In for a Penny **3.35** Unwind with ITV **5.05 - 6.00am** Katie Piper's Breakfast Show

Channel 4

6.30 am Cheers (R) (S) **6.55** Cheers (R) (S) **7.20** Everybody Loves Raymond (AD) (R) (S) **7.45** Everybody Loves Raymond (AD) (R) (S) **8.10** Everybody Loves Raymond (AD) (R) (S) **8.40** Everybody Loves Raymond (AD) (R) (S) **9.10** Frasier (AD) (R) (S) **9.40** Frasier (AD) (R) (S) **10.10** Frasier (AD) (R) (S) **10.40** Frasier (AD) (R) (S) **11.10** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) (S)
12.05 pm Channel 4 News (S)
12.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (R) (S)
1.10 Car S.O.S (AD) (R) (S)
2.10 Countdown (S)
3.00 A Place in the Sun (R) (S)
4.00 A Place in the Sun (S)
5.00 Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (S)
6.00 Four in a Bed (R) (S)
6.30 The Simpsons (AD) (R) (S)



The Supervet: Noel Fitzpatrick

7.00 Channel 4 News (S)
7.55 Party Election Broadcast (S)
8.00 The Supervet: Noel Fitzpatrick New series. An update on some of the animals Noel has treated since 2014 **See What to watch** (AD) (S)
9.00 The Fall: Skydive Murder Plot The trial reaches a dramatic conclusion. Last in the series (AD) (S)
10.00 We Are Lady Parts The band record their debut album (AD) (S)
10.35 We Are Lady Parts Last in the series (AD) (S)
11.20 Celebrity Gogglebox **12.25am** Sky Coppers **1.15** Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back **2.00** Queenie **2.30** Queenie **2.55** Queenie **3.20** Queenie **3.45** Iris Prize Best British Shorts **4.15** Grand Designs Australia **5.10** Kirstie's House of Craft **5.25** Frasier **5.50 - 6.30am** Countdown

Channel 5

6.00 am Milkshake! **9.15** Jeremy Vine (S) **11.15** Storm Huntley (S)
12.45 pm Friends (AD) (R) (S)
1.10 Friends (AD) (R) (S)
1.40 5 News at Lunchtime (S)
1.45 Home and Away (R) (S)
2.15 FILM: The Gold Digger Killer (2020, TVM) Thriller starring Julie Benz (S)
4.00 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (R) (S)
5.00 5 News at 5 (S)
6.00 Party Election Broadcast
6.05 Police Interceptors (R) (S)
6.55 5 News Update (S)



Belmarsh: Serial Killers & High Security

7.00 The Motorway Hotel Elton John tribute act Paul is expected to drop in (S)
7.55 5 News Update (S)
8.00 Happy Campers: The Caravan Park A 15-year-old dislocates his knee and has to make a trip to A&E (S)
9.00 The Hotel Inspector Alex Polizzi returns to Loughborough Grange (S)
10.00 Belmarsh: Serial Killers & High Security Part two of two (R) (S)
11.05 FILM: King of Thieves (2018) Drama starring Michael Caine **See Film choice 1.15** PlayOJO Live Casino Show **3.15** Secret Scotland with Susan Calman **4.05** The Railways That Built Britain with Chris Tarrant **4.50** Wildlife SOS **5.15** House Doctor **5.40** Entertainment News on 5 **5.45 - 6.00am** Paw Patrol

Film choice



Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa *(2013)*
BBC Three, 9pm ★★★

Films based on sitcoms tend to play broader than the real series, and this feature-length outing for Steve Coogan's fading gasbag is no exception. The plot sees Alan held hostage at a radio station in Norfolk. Catchphrase-hunters will be happy ("That was soft-rock cocaine enthusiasts, Fleetwood Mac"). But Partridge loses the potency when talk shifts to action.



The Graduate *(1967)*
BBC Four, 10.30pm ★★★★★

"Mrs Robinson, you're trying to seduce me... aren't you?" stutters Dustin Hoffman to sultry middle-aged Mrs Robinson (Anne Bancroft). Mike Nichols won an Oscar for his drama (while Hoffman was nominated), based on Charles Webb's novel, about a boy who loves a girl (Katharine Ross) but instead sleeps with her bored, predatory mother. Almost six decades on, it's still icily compelling.



King of Thieves *(2018)*
Channel 5, 11.05pm ★★★

Based on the true story that shocked the nation back in 2015, this thriller brings a raft of British prestige acting talent including Michael Gambon, Jim Broadbent, Michael Caine, Tom Courtenay and Ray Winstone together to dramatise the famed Hatton Garden safe deposit burglary, where £14million was stolen. The exceptional cast stands out and keeps the drama ticking along nicely.



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Freeview, satellite and cable

FV Freeview FS Freesat (AD) Audio description (R) Repeat (S) Subtitles (SL) In-vision signing

BBC Four

FV 9 FS 173 SKY 116 VIRGIN 108

7.00 pm Great British Railway Journeys
7.30 Villages by the Sea
8.00 A House Through Time
9.00 King Otto & Football's Greek Gods
10.15 FILM: The Graduate (1967) Comedy drama starring Dustin Hoffman **See Film choice**
12.00 The Sky at Night
12.30 am Queen Victoria's Letters: A Monarch Unveiled
1.30 Great British Railway Journeys
2.00 - 3.00am A House Through Time

ITV3

FV 10 FS 115 SKY 119 VIRGIN 117

11.35 am Heartbeat
12.40 pm Heartbeat
1.40 Classic Emmerdale
2.10 Classic Emmerdale
2.40 Classic Coronation Street
3.10 Classic Coronation Street
3.40 Inspector Morse
5.55 Heartbeat
6.55 Heartbeat
8.00 Vera
10.00 Wire in the Blood
11.50 The Royal
12.45 am Upstairs, Downstairs
1.50 Unwind with ITV
2.30 - 6.00am Teleshopping

ITV4

FV 26 FS 117 SKY 120 VIRGIN 118

11.30 am BattleBots
12.25 pm The Return of Sherlock Holmes
1.35 Magnum, PI
2.35 Kojak
3.40 Minder
4.50 The Sweeney
6.00 River Monsters
6.30 British Touring Car Championship Highlights
8.00 Isle of Man TT
9.00 FILM: Moonraker (1979) Adventure with Roger Moore
11.40 pm FILM: Mechanic: Resurrection (2016) Action
1.30 am The Sweeney
2.25 Auto Mundial
2.50 Unwind with ITV
3.00 - 6.00am Teleshopping

Sky Arts

FV 36 FS 147 SKY 130 VIRGIN 123

Noon The Joy of Painting
12.30 pm The Joy of Painting
1.00 Tales of the Unexpected
2.00 The South Bank Show
3.00 The Art Mysteries
4.00 Discovering: Peter Ustinov
5.00 The Joy of Painting
6.00 Tales of the Unexpected
7.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents
8.00 Painting Birds with Jim and Nancy Moir
9.00 Discovering: Michelle Pfeiffer
10.00 John Wayne: America at All Costs
11.00 Dr Jack and Mr Nicholson
12.00 Katharine Hepburn: Call Me Kate
2.00 am Mae West: Dirty Blonde
3.05 - 4.05am A Play in a Day

Sky Atlantic

SKY 108

11.10 am Billions
12.15 pm Game of Thrones
1.20 The Sopranos
2.25 The Sopranos
3.30 Six Feet Under
4.35 Six Feet Under
5.40 Billions
6.45 Billions
7.50 Game of Thrones
9.00 House of the Dragon: War Room
10.00 Band of Brothers
11.20 Succession
12.30 am The Pacific
1.40 The Wire
2.50 - 4.00am Game of Thrones

Film4

FV 14 FS 300 SKY 313 VIRGIN 428

11.00 am Pool of London (1951, b/w) Ealing thriller
12.45 pm It Should Happen to You (1954, b/w) Comedy starring Judy Holliday
2.30 The Ghost and Mrs Muir (1947, b/w) Romantic fantasy starring Gene Tierney
4.35 Daleks' Invasion Earth: 2150 AD (1966) Sci-fi adventure sequel starring Peter Cushing
6.20 Only the Brave (2017) Drama starring Josh Brolin
9.00 Scream (2022) Horror sequel starring Neve Campbell
11.15 Monster (2003) Drama starring Charlize Theron
1.25 - 3.50am To Live and Die in LA (1985) Thriller

Drama

FV 20 FS 158 SKY 143 VIRGIN 116

11.40 am The Bill
12.40 pm Classic EastEnders
1.20 Classic EastEnders
2.00 London's Burning
3.00 Lovejoy
4.10 Tenko
5.15 Birds of a Feather
6.00 Waiting for God
6.40 Are You Being Served?
7.20 Last of the Summer Wine
8.00 Father Brown
9.00 A Small Light
10.10 New Tricks
11.35 Soldier, Soldier
12.35 am Lovejoy
1.45 David Copperfield
2.35 - 4.00am Classic Holby City

Dave

Noon Storage Hunters UK **2.00pm** Extreme Fishing with Robson Green **3.00** Top Gear **5.00** Hairy Bikers' Best of British **6.00** Rick Stein: From Venice to Istanbul **7.00** Would I Lie to You? **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **9.00** QI XL **10.00** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **11.00** Taskmaster **12.00** Mock the Week **12.40am** Would I Lie to You? **1.15** Alan Davies: As Yet Untitled **2.25** Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish **3.10-4.00am** World's Most Dangerous Roads

GOLD

Noon Last of the Summer Wine **12.40pm** The Green Green Grass **1.20** My Hero **2.00** Still Open All Hours **2.40** Dad's Army **3.20** Are You Being Served? **4.00** Last of the Summer Wine **5.20** Still Open All Hours **6.00** The Green Green Grass **6.40** Dad's Army **8.00** Only Fools and Horses Christmas Special. Del and Rodney's Christmas celebrations are disrupted by the unexpected arrival of their estranged father. Festive special from 1983 **8.40** The Thin Blue Line **9.20** dinnerladies **10.00** The Royle Family **10.35** Bottom **11.15** The Office **11.55** Only Fools and Horses Christmas Special **12.35am** The Thin Blue Line **1.15** dinnerladies **1.55** The Royle Family **2.35** Bottom **3.05-4.00am** The Office

ITV2

Noon Dress to Impress **1.00pm** Deal or No Deal **2.00** Family Fortunes **3.00** Veronica Mars **4.00** Dawson's Creek **5.00** Dress to Impress **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.00** Deal or No Deal **8.00** Bob's Burgers **9.00** Love Island **10.05** Tell Me Everything **11.05** Family Guy **12.05am** American Dad! **1.05** Bob's Burgers **2.05** Don't Hate the Playaz **2.45** Unwind with ITV **3.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

More4

11.25am Find It, Fix It, Flog It **12.30pm** Come Dine with Me **3.10** Four in a Bed **5.50** Chateau DIY **6.55** Car S.O.S **7.55** Grand Designs **9.00** 24 Hours in A&E **10.00** Rescue: Extreme Medics **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E **1.15am** Rescue: Extreme Medics **2.20** 24 Hours in A&E **3.25-3.55am** A Place in the Sun

PBS America

11.50am Pan Am: Crossing the Pacific **1.00pm** Beautiful Serengeti **1.30** Israel: A Twice Promised Land **2.40** Ku Klux Klan: An American Story **3.50** The War **5.00** Pan Am: Crossing the Pacific **6.15** Israel: A Twice Promised Land **7.25** Ku Klux Klan: An American Story **8.35** The War **9.40** Pan Am: Crossing the Pacific **10.55** Military Masterminds **12.00** Beautiful Serengeti **12.35am** The War **2.00-6.00am** Teleshopping

Talking Pictures TV

24 hours, including at:
11.30am FILM: The Green Cockatoo (1937, b/w) Crime drama starring John Mills **12.50pm** Stage 7 **1.20 FILM:** The Big Boodle (1957, b/w) Crime thriller starring Errol Flynn **3.00** Crown Court **4.30** Danger UXB **5.30** Colonel March of Scotland Yard **6.05 FILM:** Sea Devils (1953) Swashbuckling adventure starring Rock Hudson and Yvonne de Carlo **7.50** What's On TPTV with Noel **8.00** The Brothers **9.05** Van der Valk **10.10 FILM:** The Falcon and the Snowman (1985) A FBI employee decides to become a Russian spy. Espionage thriller with Timothy Hutton and Sean Penn **12.50am FILM:** Woman on the Run (1950, b/w) Crime drama starring Ann Sheridan **2.25-4.25am FILM:** Hannibal Brooks (1969) Second World War comedy starring Oliver Reed

Yesterday

Noon Great British Railway Journeys **1.00pm** Antiques Roadshow **2.00** Bangers & Cash **4.00** The World at War **5.00** World War Weird **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** Canal Boat Diaries **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics **9.00** Bangers & Cash **11.00** Abandoned Engineering **12.00** Great British Railway Journeys **1.00am** Abandoned Engineering **2.00** Scouting for Toys **3.00-6.10am** Teleshopping

Sky Sports Main Event

10.00am Live Tennis. The Libema Open. Coverage of day four of the WTA and ATP grass court events, held at Autotron Rosmalen in s-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands **12.30pm** Live US Open Golf. Coverage of the first day of the Major, held at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina **8.00** Live ICC Men's T20 World Cup. England v Oman. Coverage of the Group B match at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in St George, Antigua **11.00** Live US Open Golf. Coverage of the first day of the Major, held at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina **1.00-5.30am** Live ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Afghanistan v Papua New Guinea. Coverage of the Group C match at Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba

Sky Sports Premier League

Noon Gary Neville's Soccerbox **1.00pm** Premier League Best Goals **2.00** Premier League Highlights **5.00** Premier League Review **7.00** Premier League Icons **7.30** Premier League Stories **8.00** SSN Euro Report **10.30** Back Pages Tonight **11.00** Class of '92: Full Time **12.00** PL Retro **2.00-4.00am** Premier League Years

TNT Sports 1

11.00am Ultimate Pool **12.30pm** TNT Sports Reload **1.00** MLB Highlights **2.00** Training Day **2.30** Premier League Legends **3.00** Original Documentary **4.15** Premier League Stories **4.45** Euro 2024 – Agree or Disagree **5.00** NBA Action **5.30** MLB: Off the Bat **6.00** Live MLB. Baltimore Orioles v Atlanta Braves (start-time 6.05pm) **9.15** MLB: Off the Bat **9.45** Euro 2024 – Agree or Disagree **10.00** UFC: The Ultimate Fighter **11.00** UFC **2.00am** Gallagher Premiership Rugby Union **3.30-4.00am** NBA Action

Discovery

Noon Wheeler Dealers **1.00pm** Barnwood Builders **3.00** Gold Rush **5.00** Homestead Rescue: Raney Ranch **6.00** Demolition Down Under **7.00** Kindig Customs **8.00** Supertruckers **9.00** Expedition From Hell: The Lost Tapes **10.00** Naked and Afraid XL **12.00** Gold Divers **1.00am** Expedition From Hell: The Lost Tapes **2.00-4.00am** Naked and Afraid XL

Sky Cinema Premiere

24 hours, including at:
10.50am My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3 (2023) Romantic comedy starring Nia Vardalos **12.25pm** Meg 2: The Trench (2023) Thriller sequel starring Jason Statham **2.25** Blue Beetle (2023) Fantasy adventure starring Xolo Maridueña **4.35** Am I OK? (2022) Romantic comedy drama starring Dakota Johnson and Sonoya Mizuno **6.20** Bonus Track (2023) Comedy starring Joe Anders **8.00** Meg 2: The Trench (2023) When a mining operation unleashes a school of megalodon sharks, rescue expert Jonas Taylor attempts to save the day. Thriller sequel starring Jason Statham **10.00** The Royal Hotel (2023) Two backpackers take a job in an Australian pub and are confronted by the unruly locals. Thriller starring Julia Garner **11.45** The Exorcist: Believer (2023) Horror sequel starring Leslie Odom Jr **1.45-4.05am** Ride On (2023) Action drama starring Jackie Chan

Sky Documentaries

Noon MoviePass, MovieCrash **2.00pm FILM:** Val (2021) Documentary focusing on the daily life of actor Val Kilmer **4.00** The Directors **5.00** Discovering: Joseph Cotten **6.00** The Eighties **7.00** Branson **8.45** My Icon: Nasser Hussain **9.00 The Truth vs Alex Jones See What to watch 11.15 FILM:** After Truth: Disinformation and the Cost of Fake News (2020) The ongoing threat caused by misinformation on American democracy **1.15am FILM:** Inventing Truth: The Relotius Affair (2023) Documentary about a journalist exposed as a fraud **3.15-5.00am** A Crime on the Bayou

Sky History

Noon The UnXplained with William Shatner **1.00pm** Pawn Stars **2.00** Auction Hunters **3.00** Shipwrecks: When History Resurfaces **5.00** Pawn Stars **6.00** American Pickers **7.00** Forged in Fire **8.00** Swamp People **9.00** Swamp Mysteries with Troy Landry **10.00** Adventure Gold Diggers **11.00** Rust Valley Restorers **12.00** Pawn Stars **2.00am** Mafia Killers **3.00-4.00am** Swamp People

Sky Max

Noon The Flash **1.00pm** MacGyver **3.00** Hawaii Five-0 **4.00** S.W.A.T. **5.00** DC's Legends of Tomorrow **6.00** Stargate SG-1 **8.00** A Discovery of Witches **9.00** The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live **10.00** A League of Their Own: Mexican Road Trip **11.00** The Walking Dead **12.00** S.W.A.T. **12.55am** Entourage **2.05** Road Wars **3.00-4.00am** Hawaii Five-0

Variations

Northern Ireland

BBC One: 6.55 - 7.30pm Party Election Broadcast **10.40 - 11.20** The View **11.50** The Traitors US **12.50am** Rebus **1.40 - 6.00am** BBC News
BBC Two: No variations
UTV: 6.20 - 6.30pm Party Election Broadcast **11.00** UTV Life **11.30** Rare Breed – A Farming Year **11.50pm - midnight** Hidden Northern Ireland

Scotland

BBC One: 11.15am Bargain Hunt **12.00 - 1.00pm** First Minister's Questions **7.25 - 7.30pm** Party Election Broadcast
BBC Scotland: 7.00pm Scotland's Biggest Families **8.00** Beechgrove Garden **8.30** Landward **9.00** The Nine **10.00** The All Star Euro Sketch Show **10.30** Late Night at the Euros with Compston and Smart **11.00** Two Doors Down **11.30** That Was the Team That Was **midnight** Close
STV: 6.20 - 6.29pm Party Election Broadcast **3.35 - 5.05am** Night Vision

Wales

BBC One: 6.55 - 7.00pm Party Election Broadcast
BBC Two: 7.00pm The One Show **7.30 - 8.00pm** Digging for Britain: The Greatest Discoveries
ITV1 Wales: 6.20 - 6.30pm Party Election Broadcast

ITV1 Regions

No variations

S4C

6.00am Cyw **12.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **12.05pm** Bois y Rhondda **12.30** Heno **1.00** Ein Llwybrau Celtaidd **1.30** Cerys Matthews a'r Goeden Faled **2.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **2.05** Prynhawn Da **3.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **3.05** Cynefin **4.00** Awr Fawr: Shwshaswyn **4.10** Awr Fawr: Nos Da Cyw **4.15** Awr Fawr: Ein Byd Bach **4.25** Awr Fawr: Blero yn Mynd i Ocido **4.40** Awr Fawr: Dal Dy Ddannedd **5.00** Stwnsh **6.00** Dan Do **6.25** Darllediad Etholiadol **6.30** Arfordir Cymru: Bae Ceredigion **6.57** Newyddion S4C **7.00** Heno **7.30** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **8.00** Pobol y Cwm **8.25** Rownd a Rownd **8.55** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd **9.00** Y Byd Ar Bedwar **9.30** Drych: Chdi, Fi Ac IVF **10.30** Y Llinell Las **11.30** Grid **11.45 - 12.20am** Ffasiwn Drefn

Weather & Crosswords

Forecast

General situation

Low pressure approaching from the west will spread spells of rain northeastward across the United Kingdom today and tonight. A brisk wind will occur in many areas.

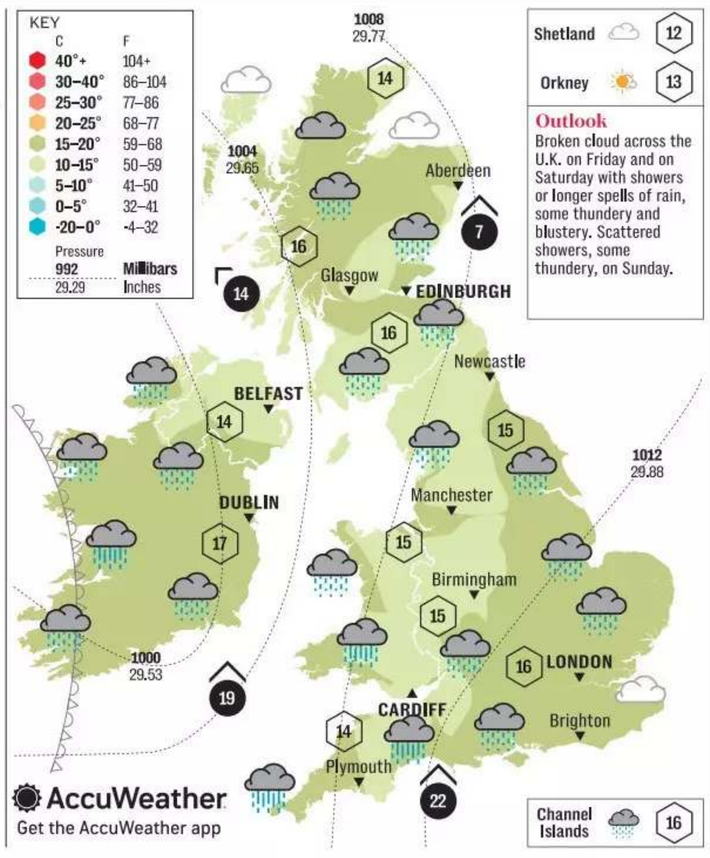
◆London, Cent S England, Channel Is, SW England, E England, SE England, E Anglia, Midlands: Broken cloud and becoming breezy today with spells of rain late. A gentle to moderate SW to S wind. Max 58-62F (15-17C). Periods of rain tonight. Min 50-55F (10-13C).

◆NW England, Lake Dist, IoM, Cent N England, NE England: Broken cloud today with rain arriving in the afternoon. A moderate S wind. Max 46-60F (8-16C). Rain tonight. Min 42-55F (6-13C).

◆Wales: Spells of rain today. A moderate to fresh S to SW wind. Max 46-58F (8-15C). Showers tonight. Min 41-55F (5-13C).

◆N Ireland: Rainy spells and breezy today and tonight. A moderate S to SE wind. Max 48-58F (9-15C). Min 40-52F (4-11C).

◆SW Scotland, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, W Isles, SE Scotland, NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, Orkney, Shetland: Broken cloud today; afternoon rainy spells. A gentle to moderate S to SE wind. Max 45-60F (7-16C). Rain tonight. Min 38-52F (3-11C).



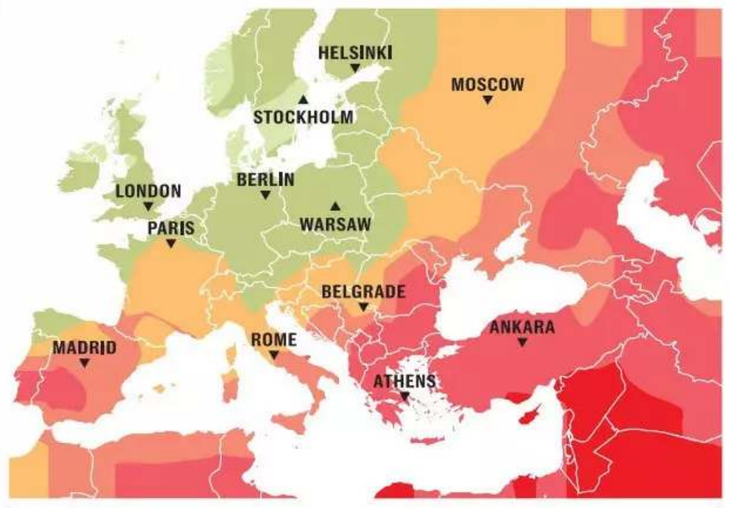
Outlook
Broken cloud across the U.K. on Friday and on Saturday with showers or longer spells of rain, some thundery and blustery. Scattered showers, some thundery, on Sunday.

Four day forecast



European readings
Last night's report for 24 hours to 6pm

	Max °C	Min °C	Daytime weather
Akrotiri	31	24	sunny
Alicante	22	17	storms
Amsterdam	14	10	showers
Athens	38	24	sunny
Barcelona	21	15	p/cldy
Bari	28	19	sunny
Belgrade	28	18	rain
Benidorm	22	16	storms
Bergen	12	8	windy
Berlin	19	7	showers
Biarritz	19	12	p/cldy
Bodrum	38	21	sunny
Bordeaux	22	13	p/cldy
Brest	16	7	p/cldy
Brussels	15	7	showers
Bucharest	33	19	showers
Budapest	23	15	showers
Cagliari	29	19	sunny
Chamonix	17	6	showers
Copenhagen	16	11	showers
Corfu	30	19	cloudy
Cork	16	7	p/cldy
Corsica	23	16	p/cldy
Crete	36	24	sunny
Dublin	15	5	cloudy
Dubrovnik	28	21	sunny
Faro	23	17	sunny
Florence	27	17	sunny
Frankfurt	19	7	sunny
Funchal	22	17	cloudy
Gdansk	19	9	p/cldy
Geneva	20	7	sunny
Gibraltar	26	17	sunny
Hamburg	14	10	showers
Helsinki	18	11	showers
Innsbruck	22	8	showers
Istanbul	33	24	haze
Kyiv	21	15	rain
La Rochelle	19	10	sunny
Lisbon	22	15	p/cldy
Locarno	20	12	rain
Luxembourg	16	7	p/cldy
Madrid	25	13	p/cldy
Majorca	24	18	showers
Malaga	28	18	p/cldy
Malta	37	23	cloudy
Marseille	25	15	windy
Menorca	22	16	rain
Milan	26	14	showers
Monaco	23	17	p/cldy
Moscow	27	18	rain
Munich	18	9	p/cldy
Naples	30	20	sunny
Nice	23	17	p/cldy
Nicosia	41	22	sunny
Oporto	22	12	sunny
Oslo	17	8	showers
Palermo	28	22	windy
Paris	18	7	p/cldy
Perpignan	23	15	showers
Prague	18	10	showers
Reykjavik	15	9	rain
Rhodes	38	24	sunny
Riga	21	10	showers
Rome	24	18	sunny
Saint Malo	16	8	p/cldy
Salzburg	16	9	rain
Santander	19	11	p/cldy
Santiago/Comp.	19	10	p/cldy
Sofia	32	15	sunny
St. Petersburg	21	13	showers
Stockholm	18	7	showers
Strasbourg	21	8	p/cldy
Tenerife	25	19	windy
Tirana	35	18	p/cldy
Toulouse	20	12	cloudy
Valencia	22	16	showers
Venice	24	17	showers
Vienna	18	12	cloudy
Vigo	23	11	sunny
Vilnius	21	10	p/cldy
Warsaw	19	8	cloudy
Zagreb	18	13	showers
Zurich	19	8	p/cldy



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British readings
Last night's report for 24 hours to 6pm - *estimated readings

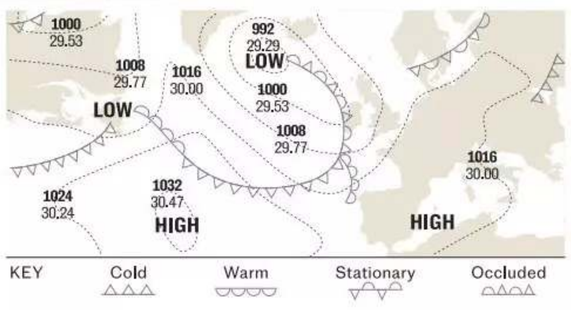
	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max/Min °C		Daytime weather
Aberdeen	0.0	0.02	12	7	cloudy
Aberystwyth	4.1*	0.00	14	4	cloudy
Antrim	1.1	0.00	14	9	cloudy
Aviemore	0.1	0.00	12	5	cloudy
Barnstaple	8.6*	0.00	16	6	p/cloudy
Barrow-in-Furns.	6.4*	0.00	13	8	cloudy
Basingstoke	3.7	0.00	16	7	cloudy
Bedford	0.9*	0.04	16	9	cloudy
Belfast	0.0*	0.00	15*	10*	cloudy
Berwick	1.4	0.00	13	7	cloudy
Birmingham	8.4*	0.00	16	9	p/cloudy
Bodmin	5.9*	0.11	18	8	cloudy
Bournemouth	2.8	0.00	17	4	cloudy
Braintree	1.1*	0.03	15	6	showers
Brecon	2.7*	0.00	14	2	cloudy
Bridlington	0.0*	0.03	14	9	showers
Brighton	2.8*	0.00	17	8	cloudy
Bristol	3.1*	0.00	15*	7*	sunny
Camborne	9.4	0.01	16	10	p/cloudy
Cardiff	0.8	0.00	15	6	cloudy
Carlisle	3.1*	0.00	14	8	cloudy
Catterick	0.2	0.02	16	8	showers
Cheltenham	2.6*	0.00	16*	9*	cloudy
Chester	5.3	0.00	14	8	cloudy
Coventry	0.8*	0.03	16*	9*	cloudy
Doncaster	0.6*	0.09	14*	9*	showers
Dover	0.7*	0.00	14	8	cloudy
Dundee	3.2	0.00	14	8	cloudy
Eastbourne	0.1	0.06	15	8	cloudy
Edinburgh	2.0	0.00	16	8	cloudy
Epsom	1.4*	0.03	16	5	showers
Falmouth	4.5*	0.01	16	9	cloudy
Farnborough	7.9*	0.00	17*	6*	p/cloudy
Fort William	2.0	0.00	14	4	cloudy
Glasgow	0.9	0.00	16	8	cloudy
Great Malvern	3.7*	0.00	17	3	cloudy
Grimsby	0.6*	0.00	13	8	cloudy
Guernsey	9.7*	0.00	16	10	p/cloudy
Hereford	6.2*	0.00	17	3	cloudy
High Wycombe	1.3*	Trace	16*	8*	cloudy
Holyhead	4.2	0.00	14	6	cloudy
Huddersfield	1.1*	0.02	13	7	cloudy
Ipswich	0.8	0.01	14	6	showers
Isle of Man	0.9	0.00	13	8	cloudy
Isle of Skye	1.4*	0.06	11*	4*	showers
Isle of Wight	5.0*	0.00	16	10	cloudy
Isles of Scilly	3.3*	0.00	18	11	cloudy
Jersey	8.6	0.00	16	9	p/cloudy
Keswick	2.4*	0.00	14	6	cloudy
Kew Gardens	1.1*	0.00	16*	10*	cloudy
King's Lynn	0.1*	0.00	16	9	cloudy
Leeds	1.4*	0.03	14*	8*	cloudy
Leek	0.6*	0.00	13	7	cloudy
Leominster	3.9	0.00	16	2	cloudy
Lincoln	0.3	0.00	14	9	cloudy
Liverpool	5.3	0.00	14	8	cloudy
London	1.3	0.02	16	8	showers
Manchester	3.3	0.00	15	8	cloudy
Middlesbrough	0.5*	0.08	12	7	showers
Newcastle	7.6*	0.04	13	8	p/cloudy
Newquay	9.4	0.01	16	10	p/cloudy
Nottingham	0.6	0.00	15	9	cloudy
Orkney	0.1	0.13	11	7	showers
Oxford	3.1	0.00	17	9	cloudy
Perth	2.4*	0.00	16	7	cloudy
Peterborough	1.5	0.00	17	8	cloudy
Plymouth	3.8*	0.00	17	9	cloudy
Portsmouth*	1.6*	0.00*	16*	8*	cloudy
Prestwick	7.3	0.00	14	4	p/cloudy
Ramsgate	0.4	0.00	15	9	cloudy
Rhyl	1.9*	0.00	13	6	cloudy
Rugby	0.5*	0.00	16	9	cloudy
Salisbury	2.7*	0.00	17	6	cloudy
Scunthorpe	0.4*	0.10	15*	9*	showers
Sheffield	0.6	0.09	14	9	showers
Shetland	0.0*	0.07	9	6	showers
Shrewsbury	3.3	0.00	14	4	cloudy
Skegness	0.1*	0.02	13	8	showers
Southampton	8.5*	0.00	16*	9*	p/cloudy
Southend-on-Sea	0.9	0.02	15	8	showers
Stockport	3.3	0.00	15	8	cloudy
Stornoway	2.3	0.00	12	7	cloudy
Swansea	5.0*	0.00	15*	6*	cloudy
Swindon	3.4*	0.00	13	7	cloudy
Thirsk	0.0*	0.02	16	8	cloudy
Tiree	0.0*	0.00	13	8	cloudy
Weymouth	7.3*	0.00	15	9	p/cloudy
Whitehaven	7.0*	0.00	13	8	p/cloudy
Windermere	4.6*	0.00	13*	7*	cloudy
Worcester	3.9*	0.00	17	3	cloudy
Yeovil	3.3	0.00	16	5	cloudy
York	0.3*	0.05	15*	8*	showers

World readings

	Max °C	Min °C	Daytime weather
Accra	30	24	cloudy
Addis Ababa	28	14	p/cldy
Adelaide	16	8	cloudy
Alexandria	31	23	sunny
Algiers	25	15	p/cldy
Amman	36	21	sunny
Anchorage	9	6	showers
Ankara	33	15	sunny
Ascension Is.	29	25	p/cldy
Auckland	16	8	cloudy
Baghdad	45	28	haze
Bahamas	30	26	cloudy
Bahrain	42	32	haze
Bamako	38	26	storms
Bangkok	35	28	p/cldy
Beijing	37	21	p/cldy
Beirut	29	23	sunny
Bermuda	28	23	showers
Bogota	19	10	cloudy
Bridgetown	31	27	p/cldy
Brisbane	24	11	windy
Buenos Aires	18	14	cloudy
Cairo	38	24	sunny
Canberra	13	-3	sunny
Cape Town	19	11	showers
Casablanca	24	14	p/cldy
Chicago	29	19	sunny
Christchurch	9	-5	p/cldy
Colombo	31	27	storms
Damascus	39	19	sunny
Dar es Salaam	31	22	p/cldy
Dhaka	36	28	p/cldy
Dubai	40	30	sunny
Falkland Is.	6	3	showers
Harare	22	5	sunny
Havana	31	26	storms
Hong Kong	32	28	storms
Honolulu	25	24	showers
Jakarta	33	26	storms
Jeddah	40	30	sunny
Jerusalem	32	20	sunny
Johannesburg	17	2	sunny
Kabul	36	15	p/cldy
Karachi	34	29	windy
Kolkata	36	28	p/cldy
Kuala Lumpur	32	25	storms
La Paz	14	0	p/cldy
Lahore	48	30	sunny
Lima	18	16	p/cldy
Los Angeles	19	16	p/cldy
Maldives	33	28	cloudy
Manila	34	26	storms
Marrakesh	29	15	cloudy
Melbourne	14	8	showers
Miami	28	25	storms
Montego Bay	33	28	storms
Mumbai	33	28	p/cldy
Nairobi	26	12	p/cldy
New Orleans	32	26	showers
New Delhi	45	29	haze
New York	22	16	p/cldy
Ottawa	19	13	p/cldy
Perth	20	11	showers
Port-of-Spain	32	25	p/cldy
Rio de Janeiro	27	21	sunny
Riyadh	44	31	haze
San Francisco	17	12	sunny
Santiago	11	7	cloudy
Seattle	13	11	p/cldy
Seoul	30	17	sunny
Seychelles	29	25	storms
Singapore	31	27	storms
Sydney	19	10	windy
Taipei City	31	28	windy
Tangier	24	17	sunny
Tel Aviv	33	22	sunny
Tokyo	29	21	p/cldy
Toronto	21	11	p/cldy
Tunis	30	21	p/cldy
Vancouver	15	10	p/cldy
Washington	26	16	p/cldy
Wellington	12	5	sunny
Winnipeg	20	9	storms

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather.com** ©2024

Atlantic front



Noon today: Low pressure will approach the U.K., with a front nearing western France and northwest Spain.

Sun & moon (Greenwich)

Sun rises	0444
Sun sets	2120
Moon rises	1158
Moon sets	0117
First quarter	June 14

Yesterday

Warmest	Bodmin 18C (64F)
Coldest	Cairngorm Summit -2C (28F)
Wettest	Lerwick 0.44 in.
Sunniest	Stansted 10.8 hr.

Lighting up

Aberdeen	2206 to 0413
Belfast	2202 to 0448
Birmingham	2131 to 0444
London	2120 to 0444
Manchester	2138 to 0441
Penzance	2133 to 0512

High water

Aberdeen	0649	3.6m	1940	3.3m
Belfast	0430	3.3m	1713	2.8m
Cardiff	--	--	1221	9.5m
Dover	0433	5.5m	1652	5.7m
Falmouth	1038	4.1m	2252	4.3m
Harwich	0505	3.4m	1713	3.4m
Holyhead	0337	4.8m	1620	4.3m
Hull	--	--	1125	6.1m
Liverpool	0421	7.9m	1654	7.4m
London	0709	6.1m	1914	5.9m
Portsmouth	0443	3.9m	1729	4.1m
Southampton	0342	3.7m	1004	1.6m

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Pollen count

Grass and weed pollen are very high. Tree pollen is low and fungal spores are moderate.

Provided by the National Pollen and Aerobiology Research Unit

Sea forecast

S North Sea: A moderate to strong south-southwesterly wind today. Seas will be rough. Visibility will be good.

Dover Strait, English Channel: A gentle to fresh southwesterly wind today. Seas will be rough on the east and will be slight on the west. Visibility will be good.

St. George's Channel: A near gale to gale southerly wind today. Seas will be moderate. Visibility will be fair.

Irish Sea: A fresh to near gale southeasterly wind today. Seas will be rough. Visibility will be poor.

Nature Notes

Cocaine smugglers harm bird habitats

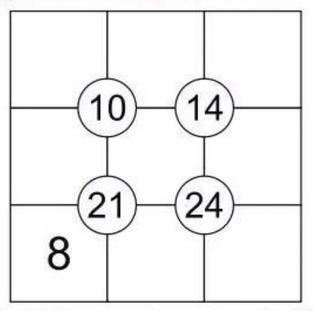
Rampant cocaine smuggling is threatening "critical" bird habitats, a study has warned.

Trafficking of the illicit drug harms the environment and threatens habitats important to dozens of species of migratory birds, say scientists.

Two-thirds of the areas that are most important to forest birds – including 67 species of migratory birds that breed in the United States and Canada and overwinter in Central America – are at increased risk from cocaine smuggling activities, according to the report published in the journal *Nature Sustainability*.

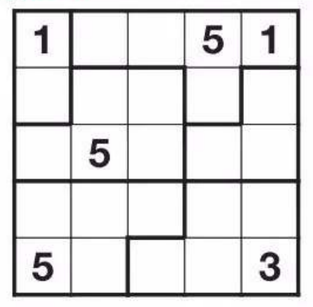
Prof Amanda Rodewald of Cornell University, said: "When drug traffickers are pushed into remote forested areas, they clear land to create landing strips, roads and cattle pastures. Those activities – and the counterdrug strategies that contribute to them – can deforest landscapes and threaten species."*

Sujiko® MODERATE NO 4896



To play Sujiko, enter the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the total in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding squares. Today's solutions appear tomorrow.

Suguru NO 1984



The aim of Suguru is to fill the grid so that no same digit is touching. A two-cell outlined block contains the digits 1 and 2; a three-cell block contains 1, 2, 3; and so on. The same digit must not appear in neighbouring cells, not even diagonally.

Yesterday's solutions:

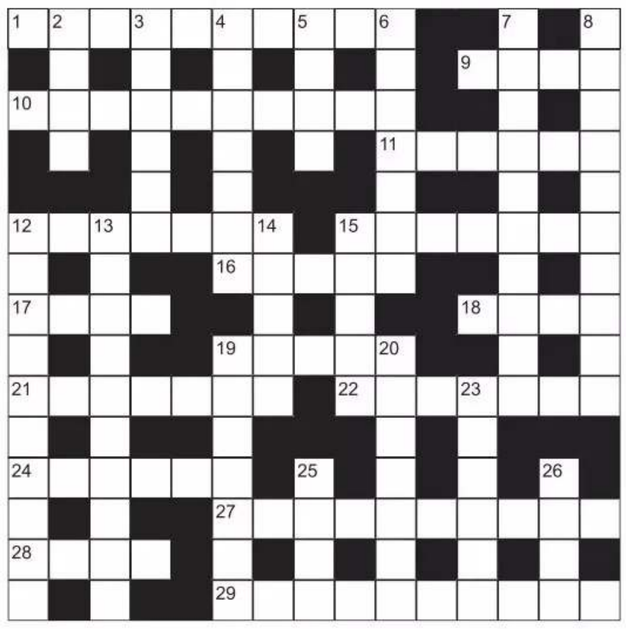
Sujiko 4895: 586 / 941 / 327

Suguru 1983:

2	4	2	4	5
1	3	1	3	2
5	2	5	4	1
1	4	3	2	3
3	2	1	4	1

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Crossword 30,639
telegraph.co.uk/puzzles



Across

1 Conquering savage circling rocky hill (10)
9 Seabird shot according to report (4)
10 Agent making for unlikely setting in winter? (10)
11 Rugby students perhaps that were in maul, rolling? (6)
12 Be left at home, by husband, with back strain (7)
15 Tax period (7)
16 & 17 Land in Spooner's municipality in Holland? (5,4)
18 Kippers found here: tucked in? (4)
19 News boss trapped in vehicle in Lebanese wood? (5)
21 This for leverage in constant dispute with lawyers (7)
22 Communists to miss a broadcast (7)
24 Incredibly small alpha male in charge (6)
27 Odious sailor: another interrupts oilmen working (10)
28 Let us discuss our starters – here's game (4)
29 Slowly move cart back for logging business (10)

Down

2 Legal institutions in north and south (4)
3 Left-winger hiding short-lived pain (6)
4 Unusual coin in dish (7)
5 Sign enigmatic sea captain put up (4)
6 Concealment the last resort? (7)
7 Sewer from Main Street runs through dining room (10)
8 Opposition wants taxes introduced to an island (10)
12 Broken cabinet lid giving grounds for charge (10)
13 Difficult situation for an opener? (3-2-3-2)
14 Cosmetic lotion not rejected by the late monarch (5)
15 Sons with 100 sheep get lost (5)
19 Boo queen on visit? (7)
20 Skin not tanned? (7)
23 Disrepute in Football Association? Well I never! (6)
25 Middle of plot with American soil (4)
26 Speak as drunk in Paris on consuming litres (4)

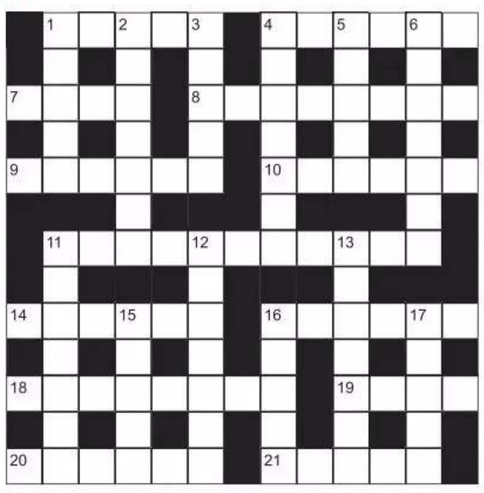
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Help with today's clues Single clues **0905 757 0120.** All Across/Down clues **0905 757 0121.** Calls cost £1/minute, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Services open Mon-Fri. SP: Spoke – Helpline **0333 202 3390.**

Quick Crossword

Across

1 *Pit worker* (5)
4 *Looking-glass* (6)
7 *Shout out* (4)
8 Assign (8)
9 Conclusion (6)
10 Plaid (6)
11 Continually (3,2,3,3)
14 Defuse (6)
16 Gentle gust (6)
18 Sore calf (anag.) (8)
19 Weeps convulsively (4)
20 Eco-politicians (6)
21 African carnivore (5)



Down

1 Floridian city (5)
2 Fully in (anag.) (7)
3 Arrive at (5)
4 Civilian force (7)
5 Happen at intervals (5)
6 Pariah (7)
11 German car pioneer (7)
12 Formidable foe (7)
13 Supervise (7)
15 Concur (5)
16 Soup (5)
17 Striped equine (5)

Help with today's Quick Crossword clues Single clues **0905 757 0122.** Solution **0905 757 0123.** Calls cost £1/minute, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Services open Mon-Sat. SP: Spoke – Helpline 0333 202 3390.

Yesterday's Quick Crossword Solution

Across: 1 Thief, 4 Fought, 8 Ops, *(The Four Tops)* 9 Anglicise, 10 Spaghetti, 12 Too, 13 Rut, 14 Snags, 15 Act, 16 Rib, 18 Associate, 20 Short wave, 22 Ire, 23 Detest, 24 Sleet. **Down:** 1 Trouser press, 2 Instant, 3 Flash, 4 Fig, 5 Unifies, 6 Hoist, 7 Below the belt, 11 Thaws, 14 Startle, 15 Avarice, 17 Bloke, 19 Chess, 21 Ant.

Solution No 30,638

C	A	S	T	I	N	G	D	I	R	E	C	T	O	R
O	■	H	■	N	■	L	■	C	■	N	■	A	■	O
M	O	O	N	S	H	I	N	E	■	B	O	R	E	D
M	■	O	■	P	■	B	■	B	■	L	■	O	■	S
A	S	T	R	A	Y	■	D	R	Y	O	U	T	■	■
■	■	■	■	D	■	S	■	E	■	C	■	C	■	S
M	A	S	T	E	R	P	L	A	N	■	W	A	S	P
A	■	W	■	S	■	R	■	K	■	B	■	R	■	U
D	I	E	T	■	L	I	K	E	M	I	N	D	E	D
E	■	E	■	P	■	N	■	R	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	T	R	O	U	G	H	■	B	Y	P	A	S	S
B	■	M	■	L	■	R	■	F	■	A	■	L	■	U
O	B	E	L	I	■	O	N	I	O	N	D	O	M	E
N	■	A	■	S	■	L	■	N	■	I	■	H	■	D
D	U	T	C	H	E	L	M	D	I	S	E	A	S	E

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		P&P	£4.95	£4.95
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