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French elections Marine Le Pen's far-right party makes major gains in first round of voting



Comeback kings! England scrape through with dramatic victory

Goals by Jude Bellingham and Harry Kane save England's blushes after the side was seconds away from going out

LABOUR'S CLASS WAR

Don't blame us for VAT raid on private schools: it's their fault

Shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson tells fee-paying schools their inflation-busting fee increases have 'priced out the middle classes'

EXCLUSIVE

DAVID MADDOX
POLITICAL EDITOR

Labour has hit back following criticism of its plans to impose VAT on private schools, saying that inflation-busting hikes in school fees are to blame for pricing out middle-class families. In an interview with *The Independent*, shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson said the fee increases had made it politically easier for Labour to impose 20 per cent VAT on fees to fund 6,500 more state-school teachers. She said: "I think private schools, because they've whacked up their fees way beyond inflation ... have priced themselves out of the reach of many middle-class parents." Ms Phillipson said she does not begrudge people choosing private education.

Editorials

The main parties must not let Farage poison the well of British politics

Nigel Farage is a skilful communicator whose role in securing and winning the 2016 Brexit referendum means he has wielded more influence over the course of British politics than many prominent figures in the established parties.

It seemed he was repeating the trick after returning to the front line to lead Reform UK after Rishi Sunak wrongly calculated that he would sit out the general election. The one big change in the opinion polls was the rise of Reform, mostly at the Conservatives' expense. But Mr Farage's party has slipped back after two unforced errors. Firstly, his ludicrous assertion that the West provoked Russia into launching its war in Ukraine.

Secondly, the revelations about the indefensible racist views of some Reform candidates and supporters. Three candidates were disowned by Reform at the weekend for offensive remarks. Mr Farage said "perhaps a dozen" have been dropped and insisted at a rally in Birmingham yesterday that "the bad apples are gone," but *The Spectator* magazine has listed allegations against 18. As ever, he blames someone else: in this case, a vetting company paid £144,000 which he claims did not do its job.

The most damaging allegations came from *Channel 4 News*, which went undercover on Mr Farage's campaign in the Clacton constituency. Andrew Parker, a volunteer canvasser, was filmed suggesting that army recruits should shoot migrants arriving on British beaches as target practice and called Mr Sunak a "fucking P***."

Mr Farage has called this "the biggest smear stitch-up I have ever seen," pointing to Mr Parker's work as an actor (though Mr Parker, who has apologised for his remarks, says his main job is in property). *Channel 4 News* said it did not pay Mr Parker and stands by "our rigorous and duly impartial journalism which speaks for itself". Its strong reputation for such reporting is beyond doubt.

The Reform leader declined to appear on the BBC's *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* programme because the corporation did not apologise for what he called a "rigged" audience when he

appeared on *Question Time* on Friday. The BBC insists the audience represented a mix of views.

Like his friend Donald Trump, Mr Farage likes to play the victim of conspiracies against him. He claims he "destroyed" the fascist British National Party but admits some of its supporters have rallied behind Reform because they have nowhere else to go. He professes to be "colour blind," and yet he wants to abolish anti-discrimination laws.

As with Mr Trump, some of his followers will believe his conspiracy theories, but they are fanciful. Mr Farage is not as innocent as his cheeky chappie act suggests. He has fanned the flames of prejudice and turned a blind eye to intolerable statements by Reform supporters and candidates until media disclosures forced his hand. His mask slipped when, after Mr Sunak left the D-Day commemorations early, Mr Farage said it "shows the man doesn't understand. He is not patriotic, he doesn't care about our history, our culture."

The prime minister was right to hit back powerfully at Mr Parker's indefensible attack on him, using the word "P***" himself and describing the impact on his two daughters.

Whatever the criticism of Mr Sunak's record, he will be remembered as Britain's first British Asian prime minister. That his appointment did not cause a stir was a testament to the UK's success in building a multi-ethnic, multi-faith country. Yet Mr Farage's nasty "dog whistle" tactics pose a threat to that society and the main parties need to wake up to it.

Both the Tories and Labour were reluctant to attack Reform in this election. The Tories feared it might be seen as criticising their disenchanted supporters tempted by Reform. Sir Keir Starmer's party was quietly content to let Reform inflict most of its damage on the Tories. Belatedly, the two main parties turned their guns on Mr Farage over the Ukraine war and the Channel 4 exposé.

The turn of events should prompt a rethink by those Conservatives, including Suella Braverman, who would welcome Mr Farage back with open arms. A link-up with Reform after the election and lurch to the populist right might please some Tory activists, but deserting the centre ground would be bad for the UK and electorally perilous for the main centre-right party.

When this election is over, neither the Tories nor Labour can afford to take their eye off the Farage show. The dangers of ignoring the far right have been illustrated in France and Germany, where it has helped the worrying rise of National Rally and Alternative fur Deutschland respectively. The Tories should keep Mr Farage out, and Labour must not let him become a focus of opposition to a Starmer government.

The other parties must call out Mr Farage for what he is rather than let him continue to poison the well of British politics.

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News/ Exclusive

Private schools ‘priced out’ middle classes, says Labour

Bridget Phillipson defends plan to charge VAT on school fees



The shadow education secretary says above-inflation increases by private schools have made it politically easier for Labour to introduce the policy (PA)

DAVID MADDOX
POLITICAL EDITOR

Labour has hit back at criticism of its plans to impose VAT on private schools, blaming inflation-busting hikes in school fees over the years for “pricing out the middle classes”.

In an exclusive interview with *The Independent*, shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson suggested that above-inflation fee increases by private schools had made it politically easier for Labour to impose 20 per cent VAT on fees in order to fund 6,500 more state-school teachers. She said private schools had already "priced out" middle-class families.

"I think private schools, because they've whacked up their fees way beyond inflation, year after year, have priced themselves out of the reach of many middle-class parents who would, in the past, have looked to independent schools and might have considered it as an option," she said.

Ms Phillipson said she holds no grudge against parents who choose private schools, but believes it is a question of priorities. "I respect the rights of parents to decide where they choose to educate their children. If they determine that the best place for their child is within a private school, that's absolutely their right," she said.

"I just believe that we need to make sure we're prioritising public money, and we shouldn't be giving unjustified tax breaks to private schools, who are their own businesses and can make choices about how they manage their budgets and can plan accordingly."



Starmer and Phillipson walk with pupils during a visit to a school in Northamptonshire (PA)

Private school fees rose by 8 per cent for the 2023-24 academic year, with a place at a day school now costing on average £18,000 a year, according to recent figures. The figures, from the Independent Schools Council (ISC), also showed a drop in enrolments at private schools, which the organisation says is driven by concern over costs.

Barnaby Lenon, the chair of the ISC, said Labour's plan to charge 20 per cent VAT on fees is "looming large in parents' minds" and that schools are concerned about pupil recruitment and retention.

Ms Phillipson said that the plan to bring in 6,500 new teachers will be "a day-one priority" and that the VAT on independent school fees will be announced in Rachel Reeves's first Budget. It is expected that the measure will affect fees from September 2025. She said that her own experience at school had made her determined to improve state education.

She was at school getting ready to start her GCSEs when Tony Blair came to power with his mantra of "education, education, education", and found that it gave her a route out of a deprived area in the North East – first to study at Oxford University, and from there to being on the verge of becoming one of the top ministers in the first Labour government in 14 years.

"I was 13 in 1997 when Labour got elected, and it felt that we mattered once more. As a young woman growing up in the northeast of England, it had been pretty tough for quite a long time," she said. "Our schools had really struggled, and it felt that, for once, we had a government that was going to be on our side, determined to deliver better life chances, and invested in education to make that a reality.



Phillipson and Starmer visit a nursery while on the campaign trail in June (Reuters)

“I’m determined that, as education secretary in the next Labour government, if we win the trust of the British people, I’ll renew ‘education, education, education’ for the next generation of children and young people, who deserve a better start in life than is the case right now.

“I believe that the town that you’re from, the family into which you’re born, shouldn’t determine what you should go on to achieve. Yet, for too many children in our country right now, it does limit the opportunities that are available for them. And I’m determined to change that.”

Ms Phillipson has spoken before of how she grew up in a council house in Washington, near Gateshead, with no upstairs heating. Her mother, a single parent who founded a charity for women who suffered domestic abuse, wanted the best for her daughter, getting her violin lessons as well as a role as an extra in the children’s TV drama *Byker Grove*.

Ms Phillipson has spoken of being “ostracised and bullied” at school because she was poor. School, though, would become a path to success.

“Education transformed my life, and the brilliant education I had at local state schools made all the difference. The teachers that supported me were amazing, talented, and really inspiring people, and I want to make sure that we are supporting the

amazing people working right across our schools, who've been under enormous pressure, and that we attract more people into teaching – that teaching, once again, becomes the go-to destination for our best graduates."

She remembers one teacher – Zahida Haq, who taught Spanish and started the school's first girls' rugby team – with particular fondness, saying that she helped her and others to broaden their horizons.

BRIDGET PHILLIPSON'S TOP 5 BOOKS FOR KIDS

- **The Tiger Who Came to Tea, by Judith Kerr**
- **Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak**
- **Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (as it's the first one), by JK Rowling**
- **The Story of Tracy Beaker, by Jacqueline Wilson**
- **Noughts & Crosses, by Malorie Blackman**

"She was an amazing teacher, and has gone on to become a fantastic school leader, and now works on supporting schools to improve, schools that have been experiencing some challenges. She was brilliant, not just because she had a real passion for our subject, but because she believed in us and wanted the best for us.

"She came from a very similar background to all of us in that room. She grew up nearby on a council estate, and had broadened her horizons through education."

Ms Phillipson's early life experience is one of the reasons she is looking to expand the provision of free school meals for all

primary school children – a policy championed by London mayor Sadiq Khan – which would end the stigma for those whose families cannot afford to feed them.

“I spent part of my childhood on free school meals. Our situation improved over time. As I got older, we had more money coming in. But when you’ve only got one income, when you’re in a single-parent family, that’s always going to be tougher.”

The Labour manifesto has pledged to introduce free breakfast clubs for all primary school pupils.

“I believe that our commitment to universal free breakfast clubs will make a really big difference, not just in making sure that children start the day having had a good breakfast,” she said. “The evidence is clear about the wider benefits that breakfast clubs deliver – improved attendance and behaviour, and better academic outcomes alongside that.”

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News/ Exclusive

Worst-hit schools revealed as spending power slashed



Royal visits are always welcome but what schools in England really need is to have the budget to tackle a myriad of problems (PA)

ALICJA HAGOPIAN
DAVID MADDOX

Seven in 10 schools across England have been hit by cuts and can't afford the same essential running costs as when the Conservatives came to power in 2010, new analysis shows.

Some 13,000 schools across the country were subject to cuts over the period, with the worst hit – Dunraven Secondary School in Lambeth – seeing its real-terms spending power slashed by a total of £4,093,473 this year when compared to 2010.

Hundreds of schools have lost over £1m in real-terms funding compared to 2010, according to calculations by the National Education Union (NEU). On an individual level, some 2,000 schools have lost more than £1,000 in real-terms budget per pupil under the Tory government.

Shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson told *The Independent*: "I wish that I could commit to solving all of that if Labour wins the next election, and fixing it quickly, but I do have to be upfront about the scale of the challenge.

"There will be that immediate investment of cash that we will make ending the tax breaks that private schools enjoy. But beyond that, we do need to get our economy growing so we have more to invest in our public services."

A Conservative spokesperson said: "Under Rishi Sunak and the Conservatives, we are boosting school funding to the highest level ever in real terms per pupil, driving up standards across the country up from 68 per cent of schools being rated good or outstanding under Labour to 90 per cent today with children in England named 'Best in the West' for reading."

Headteacher Claire works in an infant school in Milton Keynes. The school has lost out on £1,214 in real-terms funding for each pupil compared to 2010, according to NEU calculations, a dip of 13 per cent.



Keir Starmer and Bridget Phillipson during a campaign visit to a Nuneaton primary school (PA)

Claire doesn't believe that either political party is tackling the budget problem. "On a national level, I think funding just needs to be completely relooked at for schools… it doesn't feel like it's on the agenda for this election at all. I don't feel that it's a priority for any of the major parties."

The NEU has created the single-issue School Cuts social media campaign for the general election, which the union says has reached upwards of seven million people. The union is encouraging a letter-writing campaign to local candidates. The NEU calculates real-term cuts to schools by determining core funding and then outlining school expenditure each year, adjusting for inflation and other price shocks.

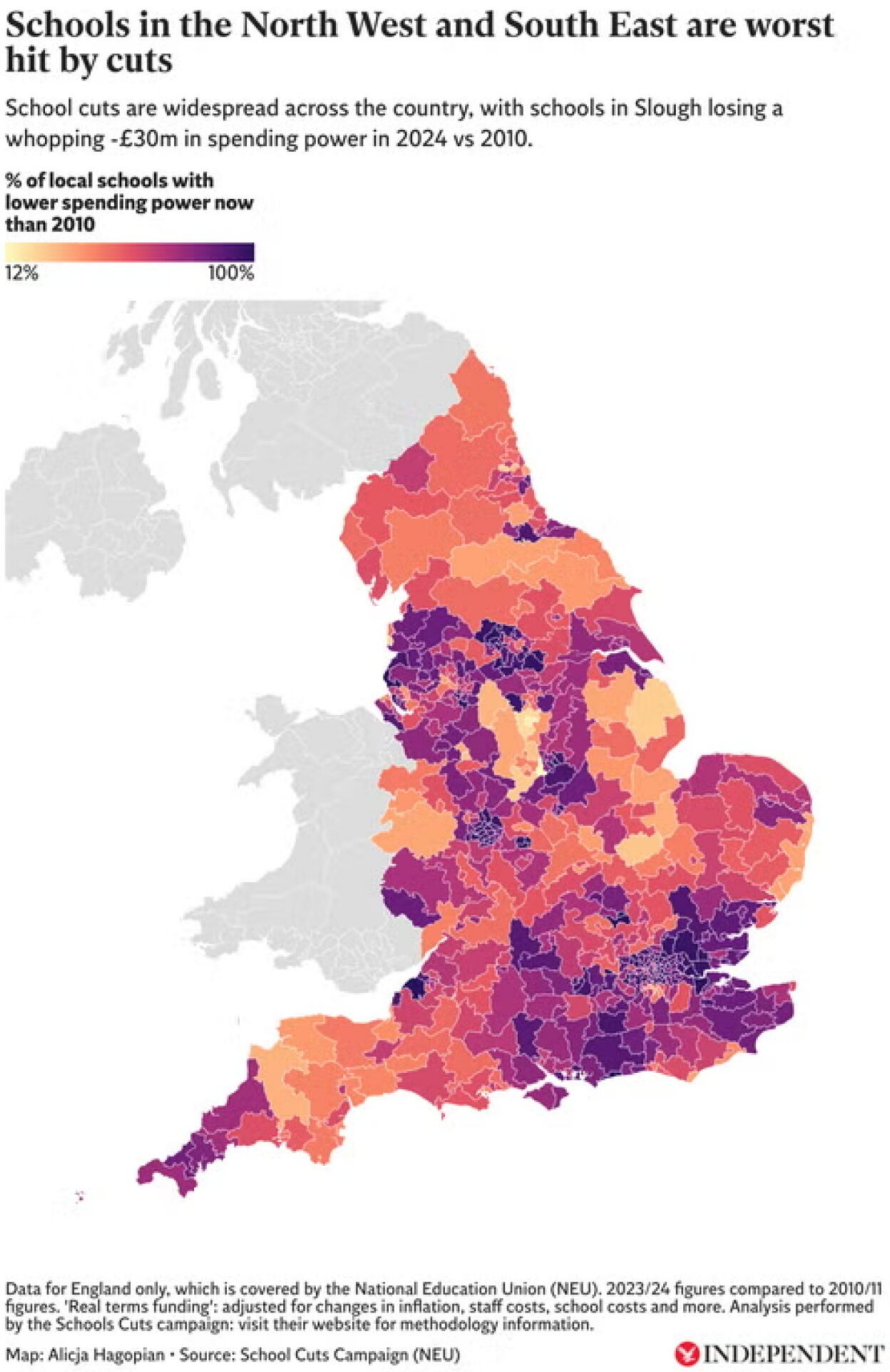
Daniel Kebede, general secretary of the NEU, said that the impact of Conservatives' education cuts is clearly visible in schools. "The truth is, 14 years of government cuts to schools have left education in crisis, and children are paying the price. We can all see the consequences: larger and larger class sizes, burned-out teachers leaving the profession, and buildings literally falling apart."

He added: "The government is failing a generation of children."

Government cuts to funding, in addition to a spike in children with special educational needs at mainstream schools, means

that schools have been forced to make drastic decisions on what they can provide to students.

Teachers like Claire are seeing that lack of resources widens the divide between children from high and low-income households, the latter of whom don't get access to the same experiences, such as school trips. "What's really worrying me is if we can't give children access to resources and experiences, that's going to affect their education. We won't be able to close that privilege gap, between those that can and those that can't. The cycle is just going to continue and repeat itself."



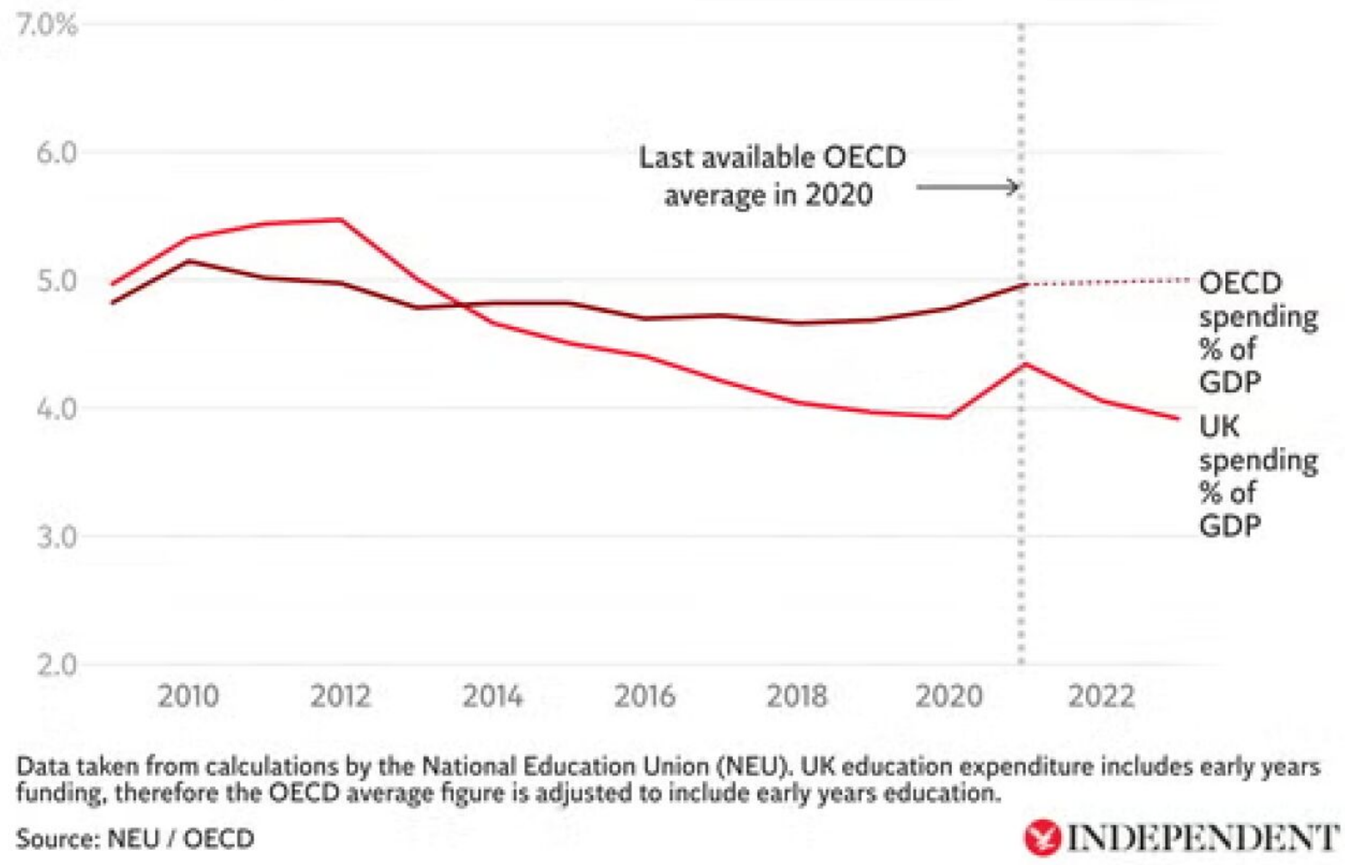
The above map from NEU data shows that schools have been impacted in all areas of the country, with most local schools facing budget squeezes in constituencies in the North West and South East.

Schools in Slough, Bethnal Green and Stepney have lost close to £30m in real terms, comparing 2023-24 levels to 2010-11 levels. Meanwhile, London boroughs top the list of constituencies worst hit by cuts, with 17 having lost over £1,000 on average per pupil. These take in constituencies such as Hackney North and Stoke Newington, Clapham and Brixton Hill, Tottenham, and the Cities of London and Westminster.

Claire's school in Milton Keynes is struggling with monetary pressures on all sides, with a capital budget of just £5,000 for the whole school. Her only avenue for major costs like leaks and asbestos checks is the local council, which says it doesn't have the money either. "It's like a brick wall, basically," she said.

The budget is so small that the school can no longer afford to pay the caretaker. Now, teachers and office staff take out the bins themselves, perform health and safety checks, and pick up essential items after school.

In an effort to get by, Claire says that the school relies on some goodwill: volunteer groups have come to paint the building, for example, and teachers' husbands have even done repairs when needed. "Saying it out loud, I think, oh my God. We just get on with it," said Claire.



In a recent report, the Institute for Fiscal Studies said that “no real-terms growth in school spending per pupil over 14 years is historically unusual”.

Over her 11 years at the school, Claire has noticed a huge drop in resources and budget, particularly when it comes to IT and school trips. “When I first started, we had a full suite of computers in the ICT room. The budget was in a surplus. We had an extension done at the time to make one of the classrooms bigger. There were significant pots of money, and we just don’t have that luxury any more. It’s just gone.”

The ratio of pupils to teachers has gone down, too; and staff are juggling multiple roles, without having the pay or qualifications to match. “Lots of children are coming into school with significant speech and language difficulties. The services are not there in the NHS to support that. So we’ve got teaching assistants being expected to act like speech and language therapists when they’re not qualified to do that.”

She added: “Schools and teachers are becoming almost social workers, to support families that are living in poverty.”

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Sunak says he's proud of his campaign... and he will win



Why does it always rain on me? The Tory election campaign started badly with a rain-drenched PM and then got worse (Getty)

KATE DEVLIN
WHITEHALL EDITOR

Rishi Sunak has said he is "proud" of his disastrous election campaign and claims he will win Thursday's general election.

The prime minister has come under fire in recent weeks for a series of calamities that included a rain-soaked announcement of

polling day, leaving D-Day commemorations early, and a gambling scandal.

But in a crunch interview with just days to go before the vote, Mr Sunak told the BBC's *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* "this campaign is something I am very proud of" as he sought to disparage Labour's plans. He also said he believes he will win the election. Asked whether he thought he would still be prime minister on Friday, he said: "Yes. I'm fighting very hard and I think people are waking up to the real danger of what a Labour government means."

The Leave-campaigning Tory leader also admitted that Brexit has been bad for many British businesses. He was confronted by comments by his ministerial colleague Kevin Hollinrake (holding the brief for enterprise, markets and small business) that there was "no doubt" exporting to the EU had been made more difficult by the UK's exit.

Mr Hollinrake had said: "There's no doubt, for some businesses, it is more difficult to trade with the European Union. There is no doubt that is the case." The minister then went on to pick out businesses in the food and drink sector, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises.



Business minister Kevin Hollinrake admits Brexit was bad for many firms (Good Morning Britain)

Asked about those remarks, the prime minister said: "Of course when you leave the single market and the customs union that is going to change our trading relationships. But we have the

deepest bilateral free trade agreement with the European continent that any nation has anywhere around the world."

He also claimed the UK is a "better place to live" in now than it was when the Tories took office in 2010, although he pointed to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine as he conceded "the last few years have been difficult for everyone".

But he was then asked to look at a screen on which viewers' comments were projected. One of them, Sheila, told the PM: "Our biggest worry is not about tax, it's about having the basics." An at times tetchy PM also became involved in a spat with the BBC presenter, who at one point told him: "That's not what I said prime minister."

He also claimed there was a "clear difference" between his handling of the racism row surrounding Tory donor Frank Hester and how Nigel Farage responded to racist comments made about the PM by a Reform UK canvasser.

On the programme, he was shown a message from a viewer who expressed concern that Mr Sunak's stance on racism had not been zero tolerance and who pointed to the Hester row. The donor, from whom the party has continued to accept donations, allegedly said Labour MP Diane Abbott "should be shot" and that she made him "want to hate all black women".

Mr Sunak said: "I think it's reasonable when someone is genuinely contrite about what's happened, accepts what they've done is wrong, then that apology is accepted. The difference here is... Nigel Farage has just described these comments as 'inappropriate'.

"They're not inappropriate. They were vile and racist and wrong, but he's only said that they're inappropriate. The person who made them has only apologised to the Reform party for the impact it's had on them. It's a very clear difference. There's no contrition or remorse or acceptance of what's happened in that case."

Earlier, Mr Sunak claimed Sir Keir Starmer could inflict "irreversible damage" on the UK within 100 days of entering

Downing Street. The PM said Labour “cannot be trusted” and predicted a plan to impose VAT on private schools would cause “chaos” for families.

Meanwhile, Labour said Sir Keir‘s first steps would be restoring economic stability and cutting NHS waiting lists as “the work of change begins”. The Labour Party leader said his party offered voters hope for a better future. After the PM’s interview, Jonathan Ashworth, Labour’s shadow paymaster general, said: “It’s excruciating to watch Rishi Sunak just gloss over the concerns of ordinary working people.

“Rishi Sunak has no remorse for his record: prices are up in the shops, NHS waiting lists have rocketed, and mortgages have soared. He just doesn’t understand what the Conservatives have inflicted on voters over the past 14 years. Britain simply cannot afford five more years of the Tories. Their pie-in-the-sky, unfunded manifesto risks heaping £4,800 more onto family mortgages.”

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News/ Exclusive

Blue wall voters targeted by Lib Dem ads to oust Tories



Chancellor Jeremy Hunt has spent £100,000 of his own money to try to save his seat (Photos PA)

KATE DEVLIN

Voters in the blue wall have seen an average of eight Liberal Democrat adverts as the party steps up its bid to oust high-profile names like Jeremy Hunt, according to sources.

The Lib Dems are climbing in the opinion polls, with some even suggesting they could be fighting for second place in the event

of a Tory meltdown. Forecasts indicate the party could take more than 50 seats on Thursday after a campaign noted for leader Sir Ed Davey's stunts.

Sir Ed has fallen into Lake Windermere to highlight the sewage problems in UK waterways and attempted to conduct an interview on economic policy while being spun around on a fairground Twister.

Mr Hunt, who has spent £100,000 of his own money trying to save his Surrey seat, concedes he is in trouble. Recently he estimated that just 1,500 votes would define whether he won or lost.

The Lib Dem adverts are also being targeted in seats held by other top Tory names, including the education secretary Gillian Keegan and the justice secretary Alex Chalk, but there is no doubt replacing the chancellor would be a coup.

A Liberal Democrat source said that the party had focused on reaching people in blue wall seats, Tory heartlands in the south of England, from the start. "It's vital in these final few days of the campaign that voters know that they need to vote Liberal Democrat to kick out the Conservatives in seats where we're the main challengers," they added.



Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey falls off a paddleboard during a campaign visit to Streatley, Berkshire

"The results in many of these seats will be really close, it could come down to just a few hundred votes. The difference between

the Conservatives clinging on and suffering a historic defeat will come down to how many people vote tactically in these seats and lend us their vote on the day."

Party insiders fear younger voters in some seats are unaware that the Lib Dems are the main challengers to the Tories. Older people who have lived in an area for a while are more likely to know who is second in their seat.

But the party's fears centre on voters who have moved out of cities like London in recent years, especially after Covid. These voters, often sympathetic to Labour, could switch to the Lib Dems, the party believes, but only if they are aware of which party is most likely to keep the Tories out.

In the first week of the campaign, party sources say they reached two million voters in its top blue wall seats. Digital ads have been seen over 40 million times since the election was called, while voters in blue wall seats have seen a Lib Dem ad an average of eight times each so far in this campaign.

The party has also run more than 1,200 variations of ads targeting switch voters, largely with messages about the NHS.

In what has been dubbed the "TikTok election", the Lib Dems have reached 4.7 million people, around 80 per cent of whom are under 35. It's a key group for the party as a recent YouGov poll suggested almost one in four 18- to 24-year-olds say they plan to vote Lib Dem, sources said.

The Conservatives were approached for comment.

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News

Farage ‘deeply malign actor’ says former defence attache

Reform leader ‘working against Britain’s security interests’ as Litvinenko’s widow ‘disgusted’ by his comments about Putin



Nigel Farage is under fire for defending his ‘admiration’ for the Russian president (AFP/Getty)

TOM WATLING

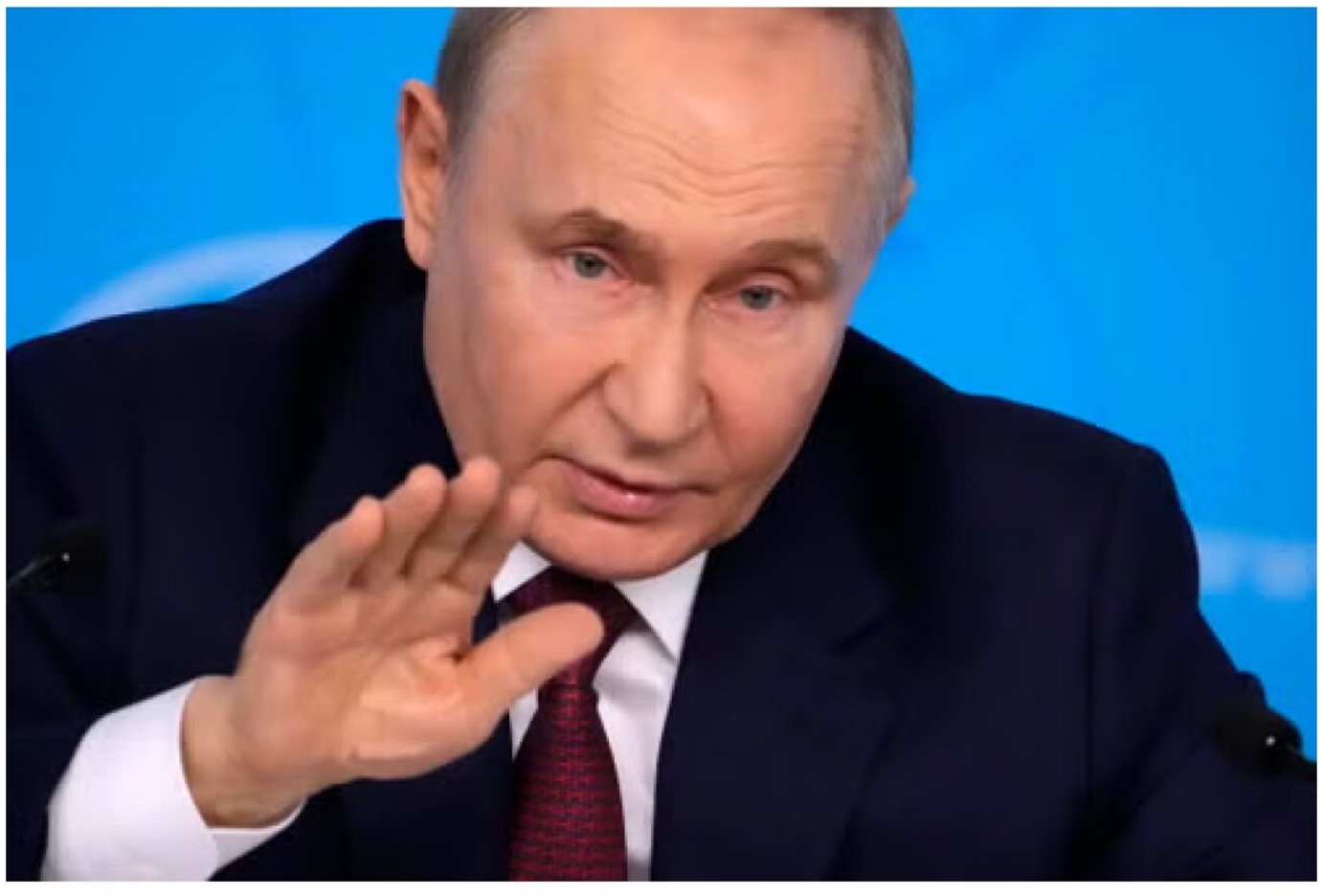
Russian dissidents living in the UK have hit back at the “deeply offensive” words of admiration for Vladimir Putin spoken by Nigel Farage and another Reform UK candidate.

The criticism comes as a British former defence attache who was previously stationed in Moscow described Mr Farage and his party, now third in the polls, as "deeply malign actors ... working against the security interest of our country".

When asked about the accusations, a Reform UK spokesperson burst into laughter before suggesting that Julian Malins, a Reform party candidate who recently bragged about meeting Mr Putin and said that he "seemed very good", was merely a highly intelligent and "eccentric sort of character".

Mr Malins later sought to clarify his comments, saying that Mr Putin is a "popular" president and therefore a "good Russian president", but adding that he is not a good man "in the Christian sense".

Three dissidents, as well as the newly knighted Sir Bill Browder – who was Russia's biggest foreign investor before being exiled by Mr Putin – told *The Independent* that comments made by Mr Farage and Mr Malins were an affront not only to them but to the British passport holder Vladimir Kara-Murza, a journalist and political activist who is serving a 25-year prison sentence in a Siberian solitary confinement cell for speaking out against the invasion of Ukraine.



One Reform UK candidate recently bragged about meeting Putin and said he 'seemed very good' (AP)

After the death of Alexei Navalny in a Russian penal colony, Mr Kara-Murza's family now fear he will be Mr Putin's next target.

In a BBC interview on 21 June, Mr Farage defended comments he had made in 2014 about the Russian president, saying that he had "disliked Putin as a person but admired him as a political operator because he's managed to take control of running Russia".

Marina Litvinenko, whose husband Alexander, a former Russian spy, was killed in 2006 after he defected and moved to the UK, said she felt "disgusted" by the comments made by Mr Farage and Mr Malins.

"It made me feel very disgusted because we already know how many criminal cases have been opened against Putin; how many people, because of his personal order, have been killed; and how many people, now, have been imprisoned. Talking about Putin as a great leader, for me it was absolutely unbelievable."

She added that the party spokesperson's description of Mr Malins as merely an "eccentric" was playing down the seriousness of the situation. "I don't think we should say it is not serious, that it is just eccentric, because the times are very serious at the moment."



Marina Litvinenko attends the funeral of her husband Alexander in December 2006 at Highgate cemetery (Getty)

Grigory Chkhartishvili, a Russian-Georgian author better known by his pen name Boris Akunin, who in January was designated a foreign agent by the Kremlin for opposing the war in Ukraine, described Mr Farage and his Reform UK party as "Putin

understanders". "The dictator knows he can count on their support, his general message being 'Xenophobes and morons of the world, unite!'" he said.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who was once Russia's richest man before he was arrested on trumped-up charges of fraud and tax evasion, for which he served 10 years in prison, applauded the right of Mr Farage to voice opinions he himself vehemently opposed but urged the Reform UK leader to consider the case of Mr Kara-Murza.

Mr Kara-Murza, who lived in London as a teenager before returning to Russia to join the opposition against Mr Putin, was arrested in April 2022 and jailed the following year. He is now serving the longest political sentence since the era of Joseph Stalin.

Sir Bill – whose tireless efforts to free Mr Kara-Murza, among other humanitarian endeavours, earned him a knighthood in the King's honours list earlier this month – suggested that the comments made by Mr Farage and Mr Malins were "offensive to anyone who has been victimised by Putin". He described their ideas about the Russian president as "idiocy" and "nonsense".



Russian opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza sits on a bench inside a defendant's cage during a hearing at the Basmanny court in Moscow on 10 October 2022 (AFP/Getty)

After Mr Farage defended his "admiration" for Mr Putin, he went on to say that the West had "provoked" the Russian leader into invading Ukraine. He doubled down on those comments a

day later, having been criticised by both the prime minister Rishi Sunak and the Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer for "playing into Putin's hands". Mr Farage said that he could "not be blamed for telling the truth".

John Foreman, who served as a defence attache in Moscow from 2019 to 2022, suggested that the remarks were "akin to blaming a rape victim for being attacked".

"There's a tendency to regard Farage as naive and cartoonish," he said. "He's a deeply malign and misinformed actor, who acts – willingly or unwillingly – against the security interests of our country.

"Farage is no democrat. To me, he is a wannabe, fundamentally ignorant, Mosley-like figure – a plastic patriot, who wraps himself in the flag but only serves himself, not his country. A man who admires authoritarianism and strongmen would weaken our national security by striking an unjust peace deal with Putin over the heads of Ukrainians.

"For all his beer and fags, he is outwith the proud tradition of the UK [of] standing up to tyranny."



Ukrainian soldiers from the 43rd Artillery Brigade fire a self-propelled howitzer towards Russian positions, on the front line in the Donetsk region of Ukraine (AP)

When asked to respond to these claims, a Reform UK spokesperson laughed and said: "What, a party that wants to increase defence spending up to 3 per cent compared to parties

that have been cutting defence spending, and we're the threat to national security? You've got to be kidding me.

"There's no praise for Vladimir Putin. There's criticism of his behaviour and his actions. Christ alive. Are you taking the tablets?"

Asked about the comments made by Mr Malins, the spokesperson added: "Yes he's an eccentric sort of character, but he is a single candidate. He's a KC, probably more intelligent than you and me put together. However, a very eccentric one. He has eccentric views on foreign policy. They are not ones that the party or Farage shares."

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‘Infamy, infamy’: Clacton’s conspiracies and bad actors

Tory MP Giles Watling and Nigel Farage’s election agent give the inside story on what really happened in the ‘P-word’ row



Reform UK leader Nigel Farage has accused Channel 4 of hiring an actor to discredit his campaign to win Clacton (PA)

DAVID MADDOX

As you drive into Clacton there are scores of pro-Farage Reform posters asking people to “save Britain” in what is becoming a struggle for the soul of right-of-centre politics.

Only as you travel out to the more genteel areas of the constituency, like Frinton, do they give way to “I stand with Giles” boards. But Giles Watling, the Tory MP defending his Clacton seat, may be the only Conservative candidate in this election with a wide coalition of support across the country willing him to win.

In the wake of the *Channel 4 News* expose of the Reform Clacton team and the racist comments by one of the canvassers Andrew Parker, Watling received a telephone call from Tony Blair’s former spin doctor Alastair Campbell, in normal circumstances no lover of Tories.

“Alastair wanted to know how he can help me stop Farage,” Mr Watling explained to *The Independent*. “I have had a lot of surprising people like that offering their help from across politics because they know I am the only one who can stop him [Farage] from getting into politics.”

He has even had a video message from Boris Johnson who appeared to be willing to forgive Watling for turning against him over Partygate if it helped stop Farage from winning. It says a lot that two men who detest one another – Campell and Johnson – should unite around Watling.



Giles Watling is defending his Clacton seat for the Tories

In contrast, Farage is set to deploy Ann Widdecombe, the former right-wing Tory minister turned Brexit Party MEP and Reform UK supporter, to persuade the locals to back him.

Less than 24 hours after the call from Campbell, Watling was at the Great Bentley show in the constituency where he ran into two young female Labour activists whose candidate, Jovan Owusu-Nepaul, now seems to have unofficially ducked out of the race. “They both told me they are thinking of voting for me. Obviously, I was only too happy to encourage them.”

Before becoming an MP, Mr Watling was a well-known actor for more than 50 years, appearing in popular programs like *Bread*, *’Allo ‘Allo!* and *Grange Hill*. He quips: “I never saw myself being cast to play the role of St George to slay the dragon. But here I am.”



Farage’s Clacton headquarters is in a former Chinese restaurant (David Maddox)

The row surrounding the appearance of another actor – Andrew Parker, the alleged Reform canvasser – has galvanised what

seems to be a battle for the very heart of right-of-centre politics in Britain which is being played out most of all in Clacton.

Parker's use of the racist "P-word" about Rishi Sunak played out on the *Channel 4 News* sting has confirmed the belief of Watling and those supporting him that "there is something dark about the politics of Farage and the people he attracts".

Reform has made an official complaint against Channel 4 and accused it of "political interference", noting that Parker is an actor and alleging he was hired to discredit the Reform campaign in Clacton.

Channel 4 News has denied this, as has Parker, although he initially also denied being an actor. But the "conspiracy theory nonsense" has certainly not convinced Watling.



Andrew Parker the actor who is at the centre of the row (Channel 4)

"There's always an excuse. It's always somebody else's fault. It's like Farage wants to blame the vetting company for his awful candidates making racist remarks or supporting Hitler. The fact is these people are always attracted to his politics.

"I know I am up against it with someone with such international celebrity but there's a real danger of people following someone with a ready smile and that sort of politics. It's like what happened in the 1930s."

A few minutes walk from Watling's campaign office opposite Clacton Town Hall is the former Chinese restaurant on Pier

Avenue, near the seafront, being used as the campaign headquarters where *The Independent* met Peter Harris, Farage's election agent.

While Watling's HQ was relatively quiet, a steady stream of volunteers in Farage's "people's army" were going in and out of the Reform base. There were also journalists and cameras outside the front door and round the back who were being carefully kept out.



Peter Harris, Farage's election agent (David Maddox)

Mr Harris, a local independent councillor who quit the Tories after Watling helped oust Johnson but had previously run Labour close in 2015 in Dagenham as the Ukip candidate, is one of the reasons Farage chose Clacton. In order to win while also campaigning as leader of a party, Farage needed an organised ground campaign; with Peter Harris, he has an effective and experienced operator.

"It was the honour of my life to be asked to be Nigel's election agent. This could be the biggest thing yet, maybe only second to the EU referendum result."

Harris had been forced to have a difficult conversation with his family when Farage decided to run. They were supposed to be on "the holiday of a lifetime" in Japan visiting his son and instead were forced to postpone the trip.

But the night before we met, he had wondered if all his efforts and sacrifices had come to nothing when *Channel 4 News* broke its inside investigation into the campaign team, revealing appalling racism from Parker.



Ann Widdecombe is set to be deployed by Reform in Clacton (@reformparty_uk/Twitter)

Harris admitted to having a sleepless night on Thursday. “I could not believe it. What this guy said was utterly despicable. I was just completely shocked and disgusted. What a total lowlife.” Harris was actually shaking with anger. “We have had so many good and decent people come from this area and around the country wanting to help and this guy poisons everything.”

But then claims about Parker began to emerge in the morning. It turned out he was a professional actor who was “well spoken” but could do “gruff voices” and specialised in playing villains on his profile.

Not surprisingly, the talk in Reform’s HQ by Friday morning was of a conspiracy, although the party has yet to produce concrete evidence to suggest that this is the case.



Farage on the amusement arcade in Clacton (AP)

Harris added: “I have told our volunteers to remember we will be the most scrutinised local campaign in history. Other parties make mistakes and have bad apples, but ours will be blown up much more than the others because Nigel is our candidate.”

Other campaigners were pointing out that Giles Watling, the Tory MP defending the seat, was also an actor and wondering if he had something to do with the conspiracy, with no evidence to back that up.

In some ways the truth no longer mattered; it had become the latest chapter in the great establishment conspiracy to stop Farage after the EU, banks, the mainstream media, Westminster politics and the rest.

And a quick straw poll in Clacton town centre suggested it had made little difference. Shrugged shoulders and a constant, “I didn’t see it” were the main responses.

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Anger as Rees-Mogg films at children's church service



Gideon Davey (left with his daughter Ottilie) was furious that the politician used the communion as a backdrop for his recording (Gideon Davey)

ALEX ROSS

Candidates can turn up just about anywhere on the campaign trail but families were shocked when Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg walked into their children's first holy communion.

Sir Jacob had permission to appear with his family and a film crew for a mass at St Joseph and St Teresa Church in Somerset

earlier this month, but while a sign had been put up, the families of some dozen children did not know about it.

Parents, including Gideon Davey, whose 10-year-old daughter Ottilie received her first holy communion, initially believed the film crew was there on behalf of the church. “This spiritual and deeply personal occasion will forever be stained by a selfish and self-promoting stunt,” he said.

The reason for the film crew accompanying the Conservative candidate for North East Somerset and Hanham has been kept under wraps, though earlier this month it emerged Mr Rees-Mogg was in talks with Discovery+ over a fly-on-the-wall documentary.



The politician’s appearance was described as ‘a selfish and self-promoting stunt’ by the furious parent (Gideon Davey)

He was also joined by the team while canvassing in Longwell Green, on the edge of Bristol, for the general election on 4 July. Pollsters are projecting he will lose his seat in a Tory wipeout. *The Independent* contacted the Clifton diocese, which confirmed permission had been sought and granted by the parish priest.

Spokesperson Phil Gibbons said: “All GDPR requirements were adhered to and no parishioners were filmed in the church. I have written confirmation from the producer that the only people to be featured are the Rees-Moggs.”

But the assurances have not eased the concerns of Mr Davey, who said the service followed weeks of preparation for his daughter. The day was even more poignant for his family, with his brother stepping in as godparent for his own wife, who had recently died.

“You can imagine how upsetting this intrusion was for him,” Mr Davey said. He said he first became aware of the film crew at the beginning of the service when family and friends spotted the cameras at the back of the church.

The filming, said Mr Davey, then focused on Mr Rees-Mogg walking down the centre of the church to receive communion. Only at the end of the service, when the politician was interviewed on camera outside, did Mr Davey realise the film crew was at the location for him.



The film crew was with the Tory politician as he canvassed in Longwell Green last week (The Independent)

Mr Davey, who lives in the Somerset village of Pilton, said: “Permission or no permission, what happened wasn’t right.

“It’s important for people to know how low influential and powerful elected members of parliament can behave and totally disregard the privacy of the public’s right to worship. This was a special day for so many families who didn’t expect, or want, the service to be hijacked in such a way.”

Mr Rees-Mogg, who lives in Gournay Court in West Harptree, has been the MP for North East Somerset since 2010. That constituency has now been abolished and he is contesting the newly created North East Somerset and Hanham.

The Independent contacted Mr Rees-Mogg, who said the matter was being dealt with by the television production company, Optomen. The company's spokesperson said it did not wish to comment.

Also standing for the seat at the general election are Dan Norris (Labour), Dine Romero (Liberal Democrat), Paul MacDonnell (Reform UK), Edmund Cannon (Green Party), Nicholas Hales, (Independent) and Barmy Brunch (Monster Raving Loony Party).

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Inside Corbyn's fight to win a seat without party backing



Jeremy Corbyn posing with activists from Green New Deal (Joe Middleton)

JOE MIDDLETON

It has been seven long years since the White Stripes song "Seven Nation Army" became an anthem for a new generation of Labour voters.

In 2017 the chant “Oh Jeremy Corbyn” rang out at music festivals and political rallies as young people got behind the socialist firebrand. But fast forward to 2024 and not only is Mr Corbyn not Labour leader, he is no longer a member of the party he championed for 40 years, and is instead running as an independent.

Unfortunately for the man who has served Islington North since 1983, not all of his supporters appear to know that, and that could at least partly explain why the veteran campaigner appears to have a real fight on his hands despite winning a majority of 26,000 in 2019.



Then Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn with shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer at a press conference in London in 2019 (PA)

A Survation poll commissioned for left-wing news website Novara Media just over a week before polling day showed that he is on 29 per cent, 14 points below Labour rival Praful Nargund.

When *The Independent* visited the constituency to speak to the former Labour leader on the campaign trail, we found at least some voters who were still not aware he had been expelled from the party by his successor Keir Starmer.

Among them was Darren, 49, who said: “I’ve been a Labour voter all my life and I’ll be backing Jeremy again, he’s a brilliant MP and takes principled stands on things unlike others who I think are in it for the money.”

Whether any voter confusion about which party he represents will translate to the ballot box will be answered on 4 July. But in the meantime, the trip to north London was a chance to see how, for some, his rather unlikely rock star persona remains undiminished.



Corbyn prepares to dance alongside a young environmental activist on the campaign trail (Joe Middleton)

Soon mobbed by a crowd, the 75-year-old is stopped and asked for selfies as dozens of people gather on Navigator Square, at Archway, to help his campaign.

Four children wearing Arsenal shirts join Mr Corbyn in cheering "Up the Gunners" as their parents take pictures and he chats to them about how they are getting on at school. Their beaming parents thank him and say they will vote for him.

Next he greets young people from Green New Deal Rising and dances alongside one of the activists. The clip is later uploaded to TikTok overlaid with the viral "Is somebody gonna match my freak?" song.

Through a megaphone he reaffirms his values to the crowd, including his staunch opposition to privatisation of the NHS and support for the Palestinians.



The veteran MP retains his support among the young, including Elva O’Donovan and Toni Kazmeier, who travelled up from Brighton to support his campaign (Joe Middleton)

Elva O’Donovan, 21, and Toni Kazmeier, 22, joined the canvassing having travelled up from their Brighton home to support him.

“His policies are very appealing to young people on climate change and his stance on Gaza is a really important reason that I support him,” Ms O’Donovan says. “He wants to tax the rich, he’s a socialist, he has a lot of integrity as well, his stances never change, he’s a man of the people.”

Speaking to *The Independen*t, Mr Corbyn acknowledged his campaign has faced challenges after Rishi Sunak’s surprise announcement in May that a general election would be held in July. But with help from his dedicated army of supporters, he has been getting the word out despite the absence of the Labour Party machine.



Corbyn is standing as an independent but do his constituents all know that? (PA)

“We’ve got huge amounts of people helping, we’ve built the campaign in less than four weeks,” he says. “We’ve had hundreds of people volunteering, we have knocked on probably 25 to 30,000 doors already.”

Mr Corbyn admitted that some constituents did not know he had been expelled from Labour, but added that after weeks of campaigning “more realise I’m independent and that my values are the same”.

Groups of canvassers, including his son Tommy Corbyn, head off to talk to constituents as cars beep their horns in support and another enthusiastic voter runs up to shake Mr Corbyn’s hand.



Shoaib Malik would prefer that Corbyn was still Labour leader (Joe Middleton)

Heading towards Archway Station there are dozens of placards supporting the incumbent. Hussain Mohammed, 42, who works at Cafe Metro, said Mr Corbyn had been an "outstanding" local MP. "Jeremy Corbyn is loved here," he says. "He's a professional and anytime you have a problem he will look to help. He is a wonderful man and regular customer; he was here a few days ago."

Paul Renford, 47, who lives locally, said much the same: "Everyone loves Jeremy. He helped me a couple of times and is a local person. There are not a lot of candidates who are authentic and that work hard for you."

Shoaib Malik, 30, who runs Golden Dry Cleaners on Holloway Road, said: "I feel like he understands the concerns of regular local people, small businesses and the NHS. He's on the side of people who cannot afford to send their children to private school. He's a fantastic candidate and I would prefer him as leader rather than Keir Starmer."

The candidates for Islington North are Vikas Aggarwal (Liberal Democrat); Jeremy Corbyn (Independent); Karen Harries (Conservative); Paul Josling (Independent); Sheridan Kates (Green); Praful Nargund (Labour); Martyn Nelson (Reform UK).

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Why Starmer's pre-election rally was no victory parade



Stars including Bill Bailey rubbed shoulders with the Labour leader at Saturday's event (PA)

KATE DEVLIN

On Saturday evening, Sir Keir Starmer addressed hundreds of Labour activists in a large hall in central London. The Labour leader knows the opinion poll shows power is within his grasp. Forecasts suggest he could even make history with the largest ever Labour majority in parliament – winning by even more than Tony Blair achieved with his 1997 landslide.

Yet the event had an air of deliberate caution, tempered by fears of comparisons with 1992 and that the feeling a Labour government is already guaranteed will see the party leak votes to the Lib Dems and the Greens.

What was the event?

Sir Keir and his deputy Angela Rayner spoke to around 400 activists at an invite-only meeting at the Royal Horticultural Halls, a short walk from 10 Downing Street, the house he is on course to make his home on Thursday.

But he warned Labour activists the "hardest mile" was still ahead and asked them to imagine waking up to another five years of Tory government. That "could happen", he said, because polls suggest millions of people have yet to decide how they will vote.

Despite the modest and understated air of the event, the excitement in the room was clear. When London mayor Sadiq Khan arrived about 10 minutes before kick-off, the tension that had been building up in the room could be contained no more. A huge round of applause burst out. It took him almost a full five minutes to take his seat because of the number of people queuing up to shake his hand.

Similarly, Rachel Reeves was greeted like a pop star. Young women lined up to meet and talk to the politician set to overturn 800 years of history and become the UK's first female chancellor.

And what of the actual superstars?

During the event, the party unveiled a headline-making endorsement from showbiz legend Sir Elton John. But he was far from the only one. The party also secured the backing of the actor Kit Harington, who plays Jon Snow in *Game of Thrones*. And James Norton. And a dragon from *Dragons' Den*. And on and on it went.

But even these big names were wheeled out in what seemed a deliberately modest way. Most appeared on video, although comedian Bill Bailey was in the hall. And even the screens, a

couple of which were dotted around the room, were smaller than you might expect. More small screen than “big screen”, the kind of thing you might expect to see in a primary school hall.

Why was it so low key?

For a couple of reasons. Sir Keir is serious about his message that he wants to end politics as soap opera and bring back the return of grown-up government.

But he also wants no comparisons with the infamous Sheffield rally in 1992. Then, at a similar stage in the campaign, Neil Kinnock told around 10,000 in Sheffield Arena: “We’re all right!” The event has gone down in history as one where a party’s optimism about the result allowed it to get carried away.

But there are also fears the belief Labour are a shoo-in will lose them votes. At the rally, Sir Keir pleaded with voters to give him a “clear mandate” to govern, large enough to implement his agenda. Senior party figures worry many people who might be included to vote for them will not come polling day – precisely because they think a Labour government is already guaranteed.

Under those circumstances, smaller parties like the Lib Dems and Greens could pick up more votes. This could help those parties to win some seats – or allow some Tory candidates to come up the outside lane. Either way, expect to hear plenty of Labour figures saying election victory is by no means in the bag over the next few days.

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News

Pop, politics and Pyramid Stage record-breakers

Another colourful weekend of Glastonbury music concludes



The festival was headlined by Dua Lipa, top left, Coldplay, top right, and SZA (Getty/PA)

ROISIN O'CONNOR

Glastonbury 2024 drew to a close on Sunday night, after a packed weekend of live performances and debates ahead of this week's general election.

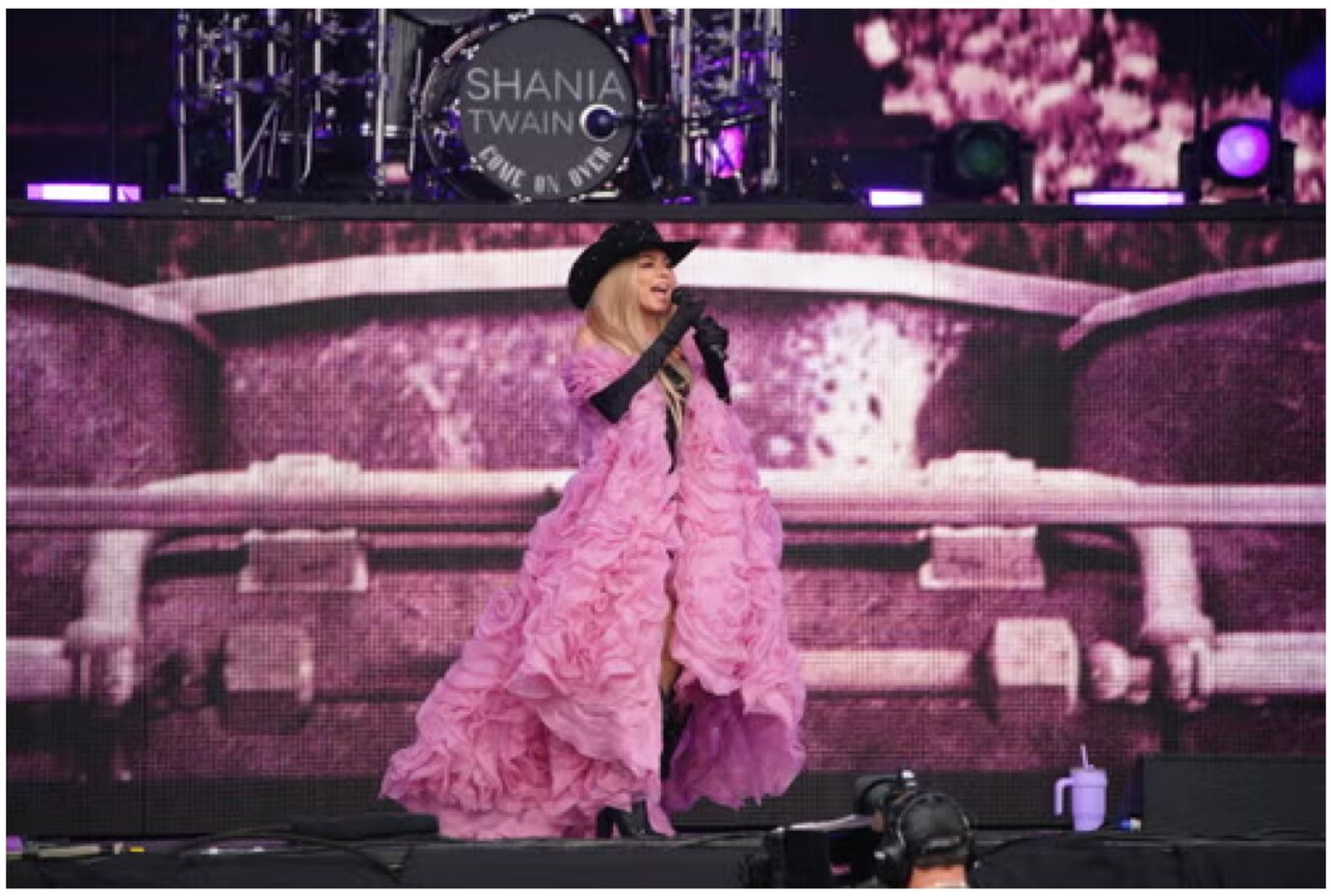
The annual festival at Worthy Farm seemed to end on a high note despite the annual grumbles, as organiser Emily Eavis defended what many deemed to be an underwhelming lineup.

Some argued that booking Coldplay, returning to headline for a record-breaking fifth time, was a cop-out. Others scratched their heads over SZA, arguably a much bigger star in her native US than here in the UK. Dua Lipa's latest album, meanwhile, had failed to produce the kind of megawatt hit that promised to get the Pyramid Stage crowd energised.

The Independent's critics disagreed with that consensus. Covering the 28-year-old Lipa's set, Jazz Monroe praised the pop singer for her moments of "cheeky theatricality" and a celebration of alternative culture that saw her bring out a "comically low-key guest", Tame Impala's Kevin Parker, who produced her latest record *Radical Optimism*.

Mark Beaumont gave Coldplay's Saturday night show five stars, moved by a surprise appearance by *Back to the Future* star Michael J Fox during a poignant rendition of "Fix You", as well as guest performances from Laura Mvula and rapper Little Simz.

Some sets were blighted by sound issues. Glastonbury did a disservice to two of its veteran performers, Shania Twain and Cyndi Lauper, as both artists appeared to be affected by technical difficulties during their own performances on the Pyramid Stage.



Shania Twain performing on the Pyramid Stage (PA Wire)

In the Legends Slot on Sunday, country-pop star Twain was seen fiddling with her mic box and in-ears, as she gestured repeatedly to the sound crew. However, this was resolved when she was practically drowned out by the euphoric singalong to “Man! I Feel Like a Woman” as the closing song in her set.

Critics also complained that Glastonbury organisers had failed to spot the true crowd-pleasers on its lineup, with pop-punk queen Avril Lavigne and Nineties trio Sugababes drawing huge numbers on the smaller stages. “This is a brilliant show, but Glastonbury must learn lessons from a year that has vastly underestimated the appeal of pop nostalgia, and overestimated the interest in many performing over at the Pyramid,” Adam White wrote of Lavigne’s slot.



Avril Lavigne kicks up a storm on the Other Stage at Glastonbury Festival 2024 (Getty Images)

The famously left-leaning festival didn’t shy away from politics over its five days. Despite MPs being forced to pull out ahead of the general election on 4 July, stars engaged in debates about everything from the climate crisis to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Musicians were more succinct: rock band Idles raised eyebrows as they led their audience in chants of “F*** the King” while a small boat with models depicting young refugees – later revealed to be the work of enigmatic street artist Banksy – was floated

over the crowd. Damon Albarn appeared to swipe at both Joe Biden and Donald Trump after their dismal CNN performance, as well as calling on his audience to express their support for Palestine.



A Banksy work appeared in the crowd during IDLES's Glastonbury 2024 set (X/Twitter/ @MrCarb1)

On Sunday, under grey skies, One Direction star Louis Tomlinson became the festival's unlikely hero, as he brought a TV to the fields so football fans could tune into England's Euro 2024 game against Slovakia. "You are the god of this festival," an enthusiastic BBC reporter told him.

The festival came to a close as US R&B star SZA took to the Pyramid Stage, performing to an unusually sparse audience for a headliner, as she was faced with a number of other major sets on other stages around Worthy Farm. The Grammy winner seemed undeterred, putting on a dazzling show and only pausing to help rescue fans who needed help in the crowd.

"Though not yet a household name in the UK, she is the perfect conduit for our heightened empathy," critic Jazz Monroe wrote in his review. "Too cerebral to raise the Pyramid roof but potent enough to eke out our last reserves of euphoria."



Too cerebral to raise the roof, but potent enough

Not a household name, but SZA is a massive artist who gave a stellar performance to a modest audience. By Jazz

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News

Family of missing teen vow to continue looking for him

Spanish police stand down search for Jay Slater after 13 days



The teenager's family and friends have said they will stay in Tenerife until he is found (Supplied)

HOLLY EVANS

The family of Jay Slater have vowed to continue searching for the missing teenager, despite Spanish police calling off their operation after 13 days. The 19-year-old from Lancashire disappeared near the remote village of Masca in Tenerife, after

setting off on what should have been an 11-hour walk back to his accommodation.

Despite the efforts of mountain rescue teams, the Guardia Civil and volunteers, no trace of the apprentice bricklayer has been found in the mountain region. After Jay was reported missing on 17 June, his family and a number of close friends flew out to the island to assist in the search, and they have vowed to remain there until he is found.



The search has now been called off by the Guardia Civil (PA)

Rachel Hargreaves, a close family friend who has joined Jay's parents on the largest of the Canary Islands, told *Mail Online*: "No one is leaving until we find Jay." She added: "We stay and we do what we need to do. Nothing has changed. We will continue to search for him."

A Guardia Civil spokesperson said yesterday: "The search operation has now finished, although the case remains open." Helicopters, drones and search dogs were all deployed in the effort to find Jay, and officers were seen combing through the rugged terrain in the hope of finding the teenager.

On Friday, the force had appealed for volunteers, such as firefighters and individual volunteers who have expertise, to assist in a *busqueda masiva* – a massive search – on Saturday. However, Jay's father, Warren Slater, revealed that he was "disappointed" that just six volunteers turned out to join in the search for his son.



Casa Abuela Tina in Masca, Tenerife, where the missing British teenager was staying before he disappeared (PA)

The search in the village of Masca, near to Jay's last-known location, took in a steep rocky area, including ravines, trails and paths.

Jay attended the NRG music festival in Playa de las Americas with two friends before his disappearance, and his last known location was the Rural de Teno park in the north of the island. He had travelled to an Airbnb in Masca during the early hours of the morning with two older men, who had rented the property. A police spokesperson later said they had been ruled "not relevant" to the case.

On Friday, Jay's friend Brad Hargreaves told ITV's *This Morning* that he had been on a video call with Jay before his disappearance and had seen and heard the teenager leave the road. He said: "He was on the phone walking down a road, and he'd gone over a little bit – not a big drop, but a tiny little drop – and he was going down, and he said 'I'll ring ya back, I'll ring ya back' because I think someone else was ringing him."



Brad Hargreaves said he could see Jay had gone off-road during a video call before he went missing (This Morning)

He confirmed he could see his friend's feet "sliding" down the hill and could hear he was walking on gravel. But Mr Hargreaves said he and his friend were both laughing at that point. He added: "He didn't seem concerned on the phone until we knew how far away he was."

The last person to speak to Jay was his friend Lucy Law, who described a frantic phone call with him at 8.50am. She said he had told her he was "lost in the mountains, he wasn't aware of his surroundings, he desperately needed a drink and his phone was on 1 per cent". Ms Law set up a GoFundMe appeal titled "Get Jay Slater Home", which had raised more than £43,000 as the police search came to an end.

Jay's mother, Debbie Duncan, travelled to the island as the search took place. She said the money raised online would be used to support mountain rescue teams and to cover her own accommodation and food costs.

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Woman charged over video ‘showing sex in prison cell’

Footage alleged to involve a prison officer and an inmate



A police investigation has been launched after officers were made aware of the video said to have been filmed inside HMP Wandsworth (Photos PA)

MARYAM ZAKIR-HUSSAIN

A woman has been charged in relation to a video shared on social media that allegedly showed a prison officer having sex with an inmate in a cell. Linda De Sousa Abreu, 30, of Fulham in southwest London, has been charged with misconduct in public

office, the Metropolitan Police said. She remains in custody and will appear at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court later today.

A police investigation was launched on Friday after officers were made aware of a video said to have been filmed inside HMP Wandsworth. An arrest was made later that day and Ms De Sousa Abreu was charged on Saturday, police added.

In a statement, a Met Police spokesperson said: "A police investigation was launched on 28 June after officers were made aware of a video filmed inside HMP Wandsworth. A woman was arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office later that day."



Daniel Khalife allegedly strapped himself to the underside of a food delivery van

HMP Wandsworth was in the headlines last year following a nationwide manhunt for inmate Daniel Khalife in September 2023. The 22-year-old former member of the Royal Signals allegedly strapped himself to the underside of a food delivery van in an attempt to escape, before being arrested four days later in Chiswick after he was pulled from a bicycle by a plainclothes counterterrorism officer.

Khalife is due to go on trial at the Old Bailey in October after pleading not guilty to charges alleging he escaped from HMP Wandsworth. He has also pleaded not guilty to three other charges, in alleged breaches of the Terrorism Act, Criminal Law Act, and Official Secrets Act.

These respectively include charges that he elicited or attempted to elicit information of a kind likely to be useful to a potential terrorist, in August 2021, and that he placed “three canisters with wires on a desk in his accommodation” to cause alarm that the object was “likely to explode or ignite”, either on or before 2 January 2023.

Both incidents are alleged to have taken place at Beacon Barracks in Staffordshire. The fourth charge sees Khalife accused of obtaining, collecting, recording, publishing or communicating information that could be useful to an enemy, between May 2019 and January 2022.

The trial in October is scheduled to last for eight weeks.

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News

The battle for SW19's green and pleasant heritage park

Plans to expand the All England Lawn Tennis Club have led to a protracted battle over planning, reports **Joe Middleton**



The AELTC wants to build 38 new courts, including a third show court with a seating capacity of 8,000 and a retractable roof (PA)

Strawberries and cream, Pimms, and Murray Mound are phrases reserved for one of the great British sporting spectacles: Wimbledon. Thousands of people will soon descend on SW19 to breathe in the captivating atmosphere and see tennis's top stars, such as Novak Djokovic, Carlos Alcaraz and Coco Gauff.

The competition will get underway today, and as people walk towards the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) along Church Road, they will spot a bit of land that used to be a golf club. This land has been the subject of a contentious planning row.

AELTC bought the lease for the neighbouring Wimbledon Park Golf Club for a reported £65m in 2018, and has ambitious plans for the site, which also incorporates Wimbledon Park Lake. It wants to build 38 new courts, including a third show court with a seating capacity of 8,000 and a retractable roof, as well as designated north and south player hubs, while also providing publicly accessible parkland.

Under the proposals, originally submitted in 2021, the grounds would almost triple in size, allowing Wimbledon to host the qualifying tournaments in SW19 rather than at their current venue a couple of miles away in Roehampton.



AELTC has bought the lease for the neighbouring Wimbledon Park Golf Club (AP)

The work is projected to be completed in 2030, delivering an increase in the capacity of the championships from 42,000 to 50,000 along with “benefits relating to heritage open space, recreation and community”. However, the application is in gridlock. The ambitious scheme has not gone down well with some residents, who have set up a campaign group, Save Wimbledon Park, to object to the development and garnered thousands of petition signatures.

Among the members of the group is Christopher Coombe, a retired lawyer who specialised in commercial property. Speaking to *The Independent*, he sets out the case against the development.

"The first thing is that it's green belt land, and should not be built upon; the second thing is, it is a Grade-II-star-listed heritage park, and if [it might] cause harm to the heritage, that development would not be allowed unless it was clearly outweighed by lots of benefits. We say there is no weighting to the benefits [AELTC] are offering.

"The third point is, environmentally, it's what's called an irreplaceable habitat. It was parkland, it should remain parkland, and the planning rules say you shouldn't develop irreplaceable habitat." Mr Coombe adds that the group believes a restrictive convenant applies to the land, meaning that it can only be used for recreational purposes and cannot be developed.



An artist's impression of the proposed new show court in Wimbledon Park (AELTC)

Iain Simpson is chair of the Wimbledon Park Residents Association, another local group that is incensed by the application.

He told the *Daily Mirror*: "The size of the development is just totally unacceptable. It's a ridiculous application. If you think of all the obstacles lying in front of them, in terms of development, it's just a smack in the face for anything that we could possibly

rely on in terms of legal obligations. Basically, nobody trusts them any more."

After being approached for comment, AELTC said that a number of residents support the proposals, as does the Wimbledon Park Heritage Group, a local independent group. The Wimbledon Park Heritage Group said: "I'm writing to let you know that the Heritage Group is now in support of the All England's latest offering, which goes well beyond anything I ever imagined they would offer.

"The support for facilities in the public park is just amazing. And then, considering that this valley has been dedicated to sport for over 100 years, well, this development is the final chapter. Yes, there is a Capability Brown heritage associated with the park, but with the exception of the lake, all of the ground has been changed to suit the golf course etc."



AELTC hopes the development will increase the capacity for the championships to 50,000 (PA)

The long-running saga has already been through multiple twists and turns in the planning system. The AELTC application was passed by Merton Council in October last year, but the site is also partially in Wandsworth, which refused the application. The decision has now been referred upwards to the Greater London Authority; eventually, it could well end up in the hands of whoever ends up being the relevant secretary of state after the general election.

In May, AELTC made a further effort to win over disgruntled locals, with the inclusion of four more acres of public parkland, bringing the total to 27 acres.

Chair Debbie Jevans said: “I am delighted that, following the many thousands of conversations we have had with local people about our plans, and working with the Greater London Authority, we are now able to propose even more green space for Londoners to enjoy, on land that has been inaccessible to the public for more than 100 years. We continue to be committed to delivering significant social and environmental improvements, as well as creating hundreds of jobs and generating millions of pounds in economic benefits.”

The Save Wimbledon Park group was unimpressed, and said the changes were “extremely disappointing” and that the area would still become “a huge industrial tennis complex”.

This quarrel over planning is one of many difficult situations that the incoming government will have to tackle... and for the residents of SW19, the battle will continue.



Questions to answer over Djokovic’s form and fitness

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Pictures of the Day



Puppy love

Dogs with rainbow-coloured costumes at an LGBT+ Pride parade in Bangkok to celebrate Thailand's passing of the marriage equality bill, which made it Asia's third territory to legalise same-sex unions. *Reuters*



Leader in the pack

The peloton, with France's Romain Bardet wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey (centre), rides during the second stage of the Tour de France from Cesenatico to Bologna, Italy. *AP*



Wheelie-dealer

Italy's Francesco Bagnaia in action during the MotoGP race of the Motorcycling Grand Prix at the TT Circuit Assen, Netherlands. *EPA*



Back to the future

A voter in costume uses a polling booth in the communal workshops where the polling station has been set up during the town of Rodemack's medieval festival, in northeastern France. *AFP/Getty*



Officers' mess

Police clean the street after floods in Zhenyuan county, in southwest China's Guizhou province. *EPA*

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Home news in brief



The man who arranged the acid attack on Katie Piper will be considered for parole this month (PA)

Ex-boyfriend of TV presenter set to make case for release

The man behind the acid attack on TV presenter Katie Piper is up for parole. Daniel Lynch, a martial arts expert who is a former boyfriend of Piper, was convicted of arranging for Stefan Sylvestre to throw the corrosive liquid at the former model in March 2008, leaving her blind in one eye.

Lynch was jailed for life with a minimum term of 16 years in May 2009 at London's Wood Green Crown Court for the rape of Piper and for telling Sylvestre to throw acid on her. Sylvestre was given a life sentence, with a minimum term of six years, in

2009 and released on licence in 2018. In 2022, he was recalled to prison for breaching his licence conditions, with police issuing an arrest warrant after it was thought he had left the UK. A spokesperson for the Parole Board confirmed yesterday that there will be a private hearing for Lynch on 23 and 24 July.

Following the trial, Piper, now 40, waived her right to anonymity as a rape victim, and her recovery featured in a Channel 4 documentary. She went on to found the Katie Piper Foundation to support burns victims. Piper, who has undergone more than 250 operations over the past decade, hosts a podcast, *Katie Piper's Extraordinary People*, is a panellist on *Loose Women* and presents *Katie Piper's Breakfast Show*, both on ITV.

Some ultra-processed foods are nutritious, study finds

Limiting ultra-processed foods (UPFs) may not always result in a healthy and nutritious diet, experts have said. UPFs are widely viewed as unhealthy because they contain high amounts of saturated fat, sugars and salt. But scientists said cutting down on UPFs may not necessarily lead to a healthier diet – because the system used to label foods based on the level of processing, known as Nova, does look at nutritional values.

For example, some packaged foods such as unsweetened apple sauce, filtered milk, liquid egg whites, and some brands of raisins and canned tomatoes can be classed as ultra-processed, even though these are "nutrient dense", the team said. The researchers also found certain foods that are labelled as minimally processed by Nova can be more expensive, have a shorter shelf life, and provide a poor diet.

Presenting the findings at the American Society for Nutrition conference in Chicago, Dr Julie Hess, a research nutritionist at the United States Department of Agriculture, said: "This study indicates that it is possible to eat a low-quality diet even when choosing mostly minimally processed foods. It also shows that more-processed and less-processed diets can be equally nutritious (or non-nutritious), but the more-processed diet may have a longer shelf life and be less costly."

Job Centre security staff begin week-long strike

Security guards at Job Centres begin a week-long strike today in an escalation of a pay dispute. The GMB said around 1,500 of its members employed by G4S will walk out. The union said 90 per cent of the guards are paid the minimum wage.

GMB national officer Eamon O'Hearn said: "If the Department for Work and Pensions and G4S want to end this dispute, make sure these guards are paid enough to live on. G4S has been handed millions by the government, yet our members can barely afford to feed their families."

G4S said its pay offer was for a 6.5 per cent rise from April 2023, and an average 9.3 per cent increase from December 2023 to April 2024. A G4S spokesperson said: "Our dedicated security colleagues do a great job, sometimes in difficult circumstances. We urge the GMB to present our offer to our employees, which is both above minimum wage and inflation. We are keen to bring this dispute to an amicable conclusion."

The Department for Work and Pensions said benefit payments and its telephone services will not be affected by the strike. Job Centres will remain open where it is safe to do so.

Online child abuse in Scotland increases by fifth in a year

Reports of online child sexual abuse and exploitation in Scotland increased by 21 per cent in a year, according to Police Scotland. According to data obtained by the force, between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, 2,055 cyber-enabled sexual crimes against children were recorded, an increase of 364 when compared with the previous 12-month period. Offences included coercion to see or hear sexual images or content, indecent communication and the possession or distribution of child abuse images.

The majority of perpetrators of online sexual abuse are male (90 per cent). Most victims are female (54 per cent). The University of Edinburgh's Childlight initiative estimates that 300 million children a year worldwide are victims of online sexual abuse and

exploitation, and the National Crime Agency says between 1.3 per cent to 1.6 per cent of UK adults pose varying degrees of risk to children.

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Far right in France leads after first round of voting

National Rally wins 34.5 per cent of vote, exit polls suggest



Marine Le Pen addresses jubilant party supporters in Henin Beaumont yesterday (Reuters)

HOLLY EVANS

Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally has taken a strong lead in France's first round of parliamentary elections, following an unusually high turnout among voters.

Exit polls showed that the nationalist leader's party won 34.5 per cent of the vote, while current president Emmanuel Macron's Together coalition slumped to third place on 22.5 per cent.

Speaking at an election party in the northern town of Henin Beaumont, Ms Le Pen said: "Democracy has spoken, and the French people have placed the National Rally and its allies in first place – and has practically wiped out the Macronist bloc. Nothing has been won – and the second round will be decisive."

The elections were called just three weeks ago after Mr Macron's party suffered heavy defeats in the European parliament election earlier in June by the National Rally, which has historic ties to racism and antisemitism and is hostile toward France's Muslim community.

Mr Macron, in a written statement, called for a "broad" democratic alliance against the far-right and said that the high voter turnout spoke of "the importance of this vote for all our compatriots and the desire to clarify the political situation".

Meanwhile, Ms Le Pen said that an "absolute majority" at parliament would enable the far right to form a new government with party president Jordan Bardella as prime minister in order prioritise France's "recovery".



Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte cast their votes yesterday (Getty)

Projections by polling agencies suggest the National Rally stands a good chance of winning a majority in the lower house of

parliament for the first time, with an estimated one-third of the first-round vote, nearly double their 18 per cent in the first round in 2022.

Their success now leaves open huge questions on how Mr Macron will share power with a prime minister who is hostile to most of his policies.

The two-round elections that wrap up on 7 July could impact European financial markets, Western support for Ukraine and the management of France's nuclear arsenal and global military force.

However, many French voters are frustrated about inflation and other economic concerns, as well as Mr Macron's leadership, seen as arrogant and out-of-touch.

Ms Le Pen's anti-immigration National Rally party has tapped that discontent, notably via online platforms like TikTok, and led in pre-election opinion polls.



The far-right leader says her party has 'practically wiped out' Macron's centrist coalition (Reuters)

A new coalition on the left, the New Popular Front, also poses a challenge to the pro-business Mr Macron and his centrist alliance Together for the Republic.

His election call was a gamble that French voters who were complacent about the European election would be jolted into turning out for moderate forces in national elections to keep the

far right out of power. Instead, pre-election polls suggested the National Rally had a chance at winning a parliamentary majority.

In that scenario, Mr Macron would be expected to name 28-year-old Mr Bardella as prime minister in an awkward power-sharing system known as “cohabitation”.

While Mr Macron has said he will not step down before his presidential term expires in 2027, cohabitation would weaken him at home and on the world stage.



Was Macron right to warn of risk of ‘civil war’ in France?

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US to remove $320m Gaza aid pier until aid flows again



A US army vessel is seen moored at the pier, which has been beset by problems (AP)

STAFF

The pier built by the US military to bring aid to Gaza, at a cost of $320m, is being removed to protect it from the weather – and officials say they are considering not reinstalling it unless aid begins flowing out into the population again.

While the military has helped deliver desperately needed food via the pier, the vast majority of the food is still sitting in the

adjacent storage yard because of the difficulty that agencies have had moving it to areas in Gaza where it is most needed. That storage area is almost full.

The pier has been instrumental in getting more than 6.8 million kilograms of food into Gaza but has faced multiple setbacks. Rough seas damaged the pier just days into its initial operations, but the bigger challenge has been that humanitarian convoys have stopped carrying the aid from the pier's storage area further into Gaza, to get it into civilians' hands, because they have come under attack.

The US officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military movements. Humanitarian aid groups stopped distributing supplies that arrived by sea on 9 June due to security concerns and have not started again.

US officials say the pier may not be reinstalled unless aid agencies reach an agreement to begin distributing the aid again. Meanwhile, food and other provisions shipped from Cyprus are piling up on shore, and soon the secure area on the beach in Gaza will reach capacity.

AP

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World news in brief



Kevin Spacey and Jet Jandreau at the premiere of ‘Peter Five Eight’ (Invincible Films)

Spacey’s not a ‘real monster’, says co-star

Jet Jandreau, who co-stars in Kevin Spacey’s first American film since his career was derailed by sexual assault allegations, says she doesn’t consider him “in the category of real monsters”.

Jandreau said extensive discussions took place before Spacey was cast in *Peter Five Eight* by director Michael Zaiko Hall. She said: “He’s one of the greatest actors of our time, and it was a thrill to work with him.

“I had a chance to talk with him and his management before filming, and my mind was put at ease.” Jandreau said that after speaking to Spacey, she came to feel that “a lot of what had been said about him was blown out of proportion”.

Indian school bus buried by landslide but all survive

A school bus full of pupils has been buried by a landslide in India, with all onboard miraculously surviving. A hillside weakened by heavy rain collapsed on a mountain road in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, at 3pm on Saturday.

Officials said all the children climbed out of the vehicle. The driver and two staff suffered minor injuries. The region has been battered by heavy monsoon rain in recent days, with several other landslides reported.

Philippines fireworks factory blast kills five

Five people, including a child, died in a firework warehouse blast in the Philippines on Saturday. Another 38 were injured in the incident, with eight in critical condition.

The blast happened around 4pm local time, creating a 20m-long crater. Some 15 other buildings were damaged, including a soft drinks factory, several homes, and a grain and flour warehouse.

Cohen regrets asking Oprah if she had slept with a woman

Andy Cohen has revealed his biggest regret is asking Oprah Winfrey if she had ever slept with a woman. The awkward moment came during a 2013 episode of his *Watch What Happens Live* talk show.

In a new interview with *Entertainment Tonight*, Cohen said: “It’s gone brilliantly and I ask her if she’s ever had sex with a woman. I mean, couldn’t I leave it alone?” After the question, Winfrey stared at Cohen and said: “No, I have not. Thank you.”

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Voices

Was Macron right to warn of risk of 'civil war' in France?



Marine Le Pen may have been handed a gift by an impulsive Emmanuel Macron (AP)

RICHARD OGIER

Macron the self-aggrandiser? Impulsive seeker of the media "buzz"? It always seemed that the French president's most hectoring critics portrayed him thus, despite cutting unemployment to record lows, enabling business and being a major, ideas-driven figure on the world stage. And yet dynamic Emmanuel Macron lent

credence to the view of him as an unusually narcissistic leader last week, when he raised the spectre of "civil war" should either the extreme right or left win snap parliamentary elections in France, the first round of which was yesterday.

On a podcast, the centrist president said the solutions of the far-right National Rally (RN) to problems of crime and immigration "categorise people in terms of their religion or origins, and that is why it leads to division and to civil war". Meanwhile, he suggested the hard-left France Unbowed – leaders of the four-party New Popular Front (NFP) – advocated a particular brand of identity politics "solely categorising people in terms of their religious outlook or the community they belong to", which could also lead to civil war.

The president or-elsing the electorate ("Vote for my centrist alliance or there'll be chaos") seemed a bit rich, given that the elections are the result of his wager on dissolving the National Assembly after his centrist alliance got a shellacking in the European parliamentary elections on 9 June. Was he obliged, as he said then, to call for "clarity" in a national poll? No, he was not. So if he suffers a knockout blow in voting and in round two next Sunday (7 July), it will be of the president's own doing.

If elections are free and fair, the electorate is always right (unless you're Donald Trump). But Macron, face to the wind, is asking for "clarity" when all the indicators suggest that he'd best better not. Why would the far right win resoundingly three weeks ago, and President Macron turn the tables now? Opinion polling suggests the French are less keen to turn tables than upend them. Last-stage polling gave 36 per cent of the vote to the RN (including minor-rung allies), the NFP 29 per cent, and Macron's centrists 19.5 per cent.

Why would the far right win big three weeks ago, and Macron turn the tables now? Polling suggests the French are less keen to turn tables than upend them

The president's civil war comments were roundly condemned as excessive by the political class and beyond, but have served to focus minds on the fact that unsavoury elements still lurk in the ranks of the party political extremes. A lengthy investigation in *Le Monde* reminded readers that the RN has nominated, or renominated, a veritable bevvy of candidates with a "close interest" in collaborationist Vichy France – among their motley number, assorted anti-vaxxers, conspiracy theorists and apologists for Putin's Russia, all of whom the newspaper named.

By way of example, one did a year in prison for "armed violence" committed while putting up posters in 2000. He had previously founded a bookshop specialising in hard-right literature. Another, in the 10th arrondissement of Paris, was nominated "despite major earlier concerns about her use of antisemite slogans". Still another had his nomination withdrawn at the eleventh hour after it was discovered he'd published the Twitter message in 2018 (later deleted): "Gas brought justice to the victims of the Shoah."

Professor of criminology Alain Bauer said a new (or renewed) brand of unrest could not be ruled out due to what he called a gradually intensifying "rage-osphere" in France. Recent rioting usually involved three or four nights of violence, and then pillage. Noting that even a cursory look at social media showed sections of the radical left would "enter into resistance" if the RN emerged triumphant, we could begin to see the kind of sustained and structured violence currently occurring in the French overseas territory of New Caledonia. Gracious.

Why all this? Why would Macron bring populism knocking at the door in France after the shambles (to put it charitably) of Brexit, and the possibility of Trump again in the White House, with a war raging in Ukraine, and the fast approach of the Paris Summer Olympics?

Macron said something needed to be done after the EU poll, or he'd be hectored as indifferent to its outcome – and that "thing" would be parliamentary elections. But at what cost? A hung parliament is the most likely outcome on 7 July, to replace the current hung parliament, so in a sense simply adding to the existing cacophonous political malaise. Except – and this is a big one – with more far-right deputies in the House, with a majority or not, than at any time since 1940.

Richard Ogier is a journalist and consultant based in Strasbourg

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Voices

Don't be afraid of getting the house tipple (and other tips)



Next time you're out with friends, pass on the pinot and take a punt on something you don't know (Getty)

ROSAMUND HALL

Ordering a bottle of wine from a restaurant can sometimes feel like trying to crack the Enigma code. The process can feel so shrouded in mystery that it can often be tempting to bask in the safety of a familiar name. But I'm here to tell you that good value doesn't always lie in safety.

Before I go on, it's important to understand how *most* wine list pricing works. On average, restaurants work on a gross profit margin of around 75 per cent on wine. Before you feel shocked about that number, just look around at your surroundings next time you're out for a meal – they have staff to pay, rooms to heat and (hopefully) a modicum of profit to make too.

So, you can estimate that if you're ordering a £32 bottle of wine, then the restaurant probably paid £8 for it. If you're in a super fancy place, you should be prepared to accept super fancy prices. But there are tricks you can use to find a bargain.

If you go out for dinner with me, you might instinctively hand me the wine list, sit back and relax, with the expectation that because I'm an "expert" I'll know exactly what to pick. However, while I may have a larger and deeper wine knowledge than some, that doesn't mean I have an encyclopaedic knowledge of *all* producers and their wines. In fact, the glorious thing about my chosen career is that it should keep me entertained for a lifetime – I can't possibly ever come close to knowing *everything* about wine.

While I can have a pretty good stab at ordering something tasty from a wine list, it does come with inherent pressure, especially if I'm ordering for a crowd. There's a range of tastes and budgets to appease. So, how do I navigate a list?

Firstly, I don't pick the wine that's second from the top of the list – unless, of course, I really like the sound of it. There is a common misconception that the top-but-one spot offers diners the best choice – you don't look like a cheapskate for ordering the "house" wine, but you're not breaking the bank by heading any further down the list.

Unfortunately, it's often a space where less-than-scrupulous establishments may prey on your vulnerability. I've often heard about sommeliers actually putting a lower-price wine there, and charging more for it. It's a shameful practice, but definitely believable.

So if you're looking to play it safe, go for the house wine – any decent restaurant should be proud of its house pour. It's a

reflection of the business as a place and should be delicious and excellent value for money.

If something stands out as being rather specialist, then chances are they’re the passion of whoever wrote the list and are probably great value for money

Next up, don’t order chablis. I very rarely order wine from a famous region – forget names like Bordeaux and anything from Burgundy. Why? It’s not because I don’t love these wines but because being safe and familiar often means higher prices.

I was shocked recently to see a very entry-level picpoul de pinet on a list for £48. It was a blatant way to rip off people who were looking for a familiar name. By the same token, I advise you to avoid pinot grigio and malbec, too.

I always seek out the lesser known, and you should too. Look for unfamiliar grape names and regions. I know it might sound bold but there’s a high chance the sommelier loves those wines and knows they’re rather esoteric, and has most likely priced them accordingly.

Some of my best wine choices have been when I’ve gone off-piste – think unpronounceable Greek names, countries not necessarily famed internationally for wine – Romania makes some great-value pinot noir, for example. If something stands out as being rather specialist, then chances are they’re the passion of whoever wrote the list and are probably great value for money.

Of course, there’s the really obvious tip – just ask! More importantly than that, state your budget. Sommeliers aren’t multimillionaires who don’t understand the real world and the financial pressures we’re all facing – they’re normal people just like you and me. Say what you’re after, and how much you’re

willing to spend. It's their job, and they'll enjoy the challenge of finding something that you're going to love.

Finally, if you've got a very special bottle at home that you fancy enjoying with something a little more polished than your usual spag bol, then you can always enquire about corkage. It's not something that many restaurants shout about, but many do offer it, with prices starting as low as £10 and normally averaging at about £25 (although, as with anything, expect to pay more in a Michelin-star restaurant).

I really believe the UK is one of the best places in the world to drink wine. While they may be getting more expensive (thanks, Brexit and taxation), some of the most exciting wines being produced globally are imported to our shores and are just waiting for you to discover them.

So next time you're out with friends, pass on the pinot and take a punt on something you don't know – that parellada or pignoletto may just be the tastiest wine you've ever had.

Rosamund Hall (DipWSET) is a freelance writer and wine expert

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Voices

Six things everyone can do to ensure their financial health



When it comes to managing your money, even small steps can make a big difference (Alamy/PA)

TALIA LODERICK

Mortgage costs are up. Private rents are sky high. The cost of living is, well, costly. You may be asking yourself how you can better manage your money in these challenging times. Well, it's the first day of July, and the midpoint of the year seems like as good a time as

any for a reset. Here are six things you can do right now to improve your financial wellbeing.

Think big

Let's acknowledge that being "good" with money isn't just about learning the practical stuff. After all, with the abundance of resources available to us online, we aren't exactly short of information on how to budget and save. The fact is, our emotions and beliefs can affect how we approach out finances just as much as our practical knowledge can.

Emotions such as fear, despair, guilt, shame, sadness and anger can all influence our behaviour with money. Beliefs such as "I can't be better with money because I wasn't taught how growing up", or "I don't deserve to spend money on myself" can also impact our financial health. Writing down your answers to the following questions in this self-awareness activity can help you start to understand why you do what you do – and don't do – with money:

- What's your earliest memory of money
- What did you learn about money from your parents/guardians
- What does money mean to you now
- How do you feel when you think about money
- How much time do you spend looking at your finances in a typical month

No really, think BIG

Working out what matters to you most in life and linking that to how you manage your money is the starting point of financial wellbeing. For some it's family, for others it's adventure. Perhaps it's community, freedom or growth. Aim to identify around five core values. In a world full of options, temptations, and other people's expectations, getting clear on what matters to you most can help you prioritise how you spend your time and your money.

Once you've identified what those values are, ask yourself: how do I want to spend, save, and invest my money in line with this? For example, if "family" is one of your core values, then family holidays may be important to you. However, this can range from low-cost days out close to home, to camping trips, to all-inclusive holidays abroad. You should always prioritise those things that matter most to you, but on the other hand, just because you value something doesn't mean you have to break the bank.

If you are struggling to cover basic outgoings such as your mortgage or rent, bills, and minimum credit card or loan repayments, that's a sign to seek help

Know your numbers

How much does it cost to be you? The roof over your head, the food you eat, the bills you pay, the clothes you wear, the car you drive. You get the idea. Work out where your money *actually* goes – not just where you think it goes.

You can track your spending for a set period – say, a month. Alternatively, you can look back and review your past spending (which is easier if you do most of your spending by card). Whether tracking or reviewing, simply make a note of everything you spend money on. Suspend judgement and get curious. Ask yourself: where does my money *actually* go?

Budget

Once you've worked out where your money is going, you can use this data to produce an informed budget. A budget is your estimate of money you have coming in minus money you have going out for a set period (for example a month or week depending on your income and outgoings cycle).

It is also a forward planning tool. Done in advance, it will tell you if there's enough money coming in to cover your planned outgoings. If yes, great. If not, you can adjust accordingly. A budget helps you prioritise spending and consider the big picture, in terms of putting money aside now to achieve future financial goals.

Build a financial buffer

Think of your savings as a financial buffer – your first line of defence against financial stress. You've probably heard that having savings put aside to cover your monthly outgoings for three to six months is a good safety net.

Try not to get bogged down in thinking that if you can't save a lot, there's no point saving a little. After all, you need to save that first £1 to get to your first £1,000. Start small and repeat the action. That's how to build a savings habit. And if you need to use your savings, then they've worked as intended. Rebuild when you're ready and able.

Know when to seek help

Whatever your income, if you're struggling to cover your basic monthly outgoings including mortgage/rent, household bills, and minimum credit card or loan repayments, that's a sign to seek help.

The financial guidance website MoneyHelper has a debt advice locator that lists where you can access free debt advice. Remember: while these may seem like small steps, they are crucial to taking control of your financial future. When it comes to managing your money, even small steps can make a big difference.

Talia Loderick is a money coach who helps people to understand and take control of their finances. Her website can be found here

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Voices

Is it time we talked about an upper age limit for politics?



Old and older: Donald Trump and Joe Biden at the first presidential debate (Getty)

WILL GORE

It's been a bad few days for the elderly. In the US, last week's televised presidential debate between septuagenarian Donald Trump and octogenarian Joe Biden would have served better as an advert for a nursing home than for either of those two men to re-enter the White House.

Meanwhile, on this side of the Atlantic, undercover reporters from *Channel 4 News* filmed a campaigner called Andrew Parker, whose campaigning for Reform UK used racist language rarely heard among political canvassers. Nigel Farage claims the whole thing was a set-up; Channel 4 disagrees. But one thing's clear – Parker genuinely is an old 'un. Indeed, in an interview with Sky News, that fact seemed to form part of his defence. "I'm an old man," he said. "And I still use old words." Well, that's one way to put it.

You might think these three are exceptions to the rule. Most people in their dotage are delightful, quietly getting on with their retirement by making jam and sucking on endless Werther's Originals, or volunteering with local charities, where they like to teach the paid employees a thing or two…

We also cannot ignore that these three examples are all men. And it does seem to be a particularly (though not uniquely) male tendency to become an ever more braggadocious know-it-all as time goes on.

Still, with apologies to women and to the silent majority of charming old folk, it seems to me that it might be necessary to take some steps to limit the damage that pensioners are currently causing around the world. Just as we have minimum age restrictions, so we should consider upper limits in various arenas.

The most obvious one is politics. Has there ever been a great world leader who came into office after the age of 80? Scratch that, make it 75. Gladstone's fourth term as British prime minister in the 1890s had one or two bright moments, but he didn't have to go on the telly.

Has there ever been a great world leader who came to office after 80? Gladstone's fourth term as PM had its bright moments, but he didn't have to go on the telly

Article Two of the US constitution provides that the president must be at least 35 when they take office. Adding an upper age of 75 would rule out both of the current contenders very comfortably, and would hardly be at odds with history. The only US presidents who have been elected after the age of 70 in the past are – you guessed it – Biden and Trump.

So, that deals with politics, but there may be more issues to consider. If we're going to keep oldies out of the world's parliaments, congresses and assemblies, they'll have time on their hands – but that time may not be well spent on the roads. I know, I know, there are lots of people out there who put their decades of experience behind the wheel to good use, navigating the highways and byways at sensible speeds and with wonderful manners. But even though over-seventies in the UK must now complete a health declaration when they renew their driving licence, that doesn't seem to include a requirement that they will remember to use their mirrors and not hog the middle lane. So, let's just draw a line: mandatory testing at 70, and an enforced end of the road at 85. Frankly, I'm being generous.

It's not only the post-pensionable who we need to think about. By the time people reach 60, nightclubs ought to be out of bounds. Don't worry though – barn dances and village hall discos are still open to all.

I even have my doubts about the age-appropriateness of big music festivals to be honest, but I realise that if you start preventing the over-sixties from going to Glastonbury, you're ruling out not only true ancients like Paul McCartney and the

Rolling Stones, but even the likes of Blur (Dave Rowntree was 60 in May – sorry Dave). So, more thought will be needed on this one. Maybe you can attend if you promise not to wear double denim.

I'd also like to see a ban on over-sixties using the term "woke" because the only ones who throw it out there do so as an act of abuse and think they're being funny and/or clever. Commenting on young people's penchant for avocados can also fall under this regulation.

Thinking about a soft pear brings me back to Biden and Trump, a pair of old men whose apparent softness of mind is causing America and the rest of the world such anxiety. If we can't get a ban on elderly statesmen through by November, let's hope the presidential hopefuls take heed of the blunt words uttered by another old politician, Charles de Gaulle: "Old age," he said, "is a shipwreck." Biden and Trump should get out of the political water before it's too late.

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We must radically revise our attitude towards higher taxes

As the day approaches when we get to choose how we want to be governed, maybe it's time to rethink our attitude towards taxation.

The Conservative obsession with lowering taxes has been followed (unwillingly but necessarily) by Labour. And the "high taxes bad – low taxes good" mantra has become an article of faith. Instead, we could think of taxes not as a necessary evil, but as the cost of having a decent society – the price for investing in ourselves and enjoying a standard of public services taken for granted by so many other countries that we should consider to be our peers. And clearly the burden of taxation must be shared fairly, with those who have the means to do so shouldering their share of the load.

It's unfortunate that the debate has sunk to the playground level of Conservatives taunting Labour as to which taxes they will raise, while Labour keeps resolutely quiet. But I can accept the rationale – Labour must win in order to begin the slow task of rebuilding the fabric of our society and our nation. I do hope that after they have won, Labour can start to treat us like grown-ups and explain how we will all need to play our part in the task ahead.

And that part is on us – to acknowledge that you can't expect European levels of public services and infrastructure at US levels of taxation, and turning away from the false premise that lower taxes are by definition a good thing. And above all, on Thursday, to vote accordingly.

Anne Wolff *Maidenhead*

A return to sanity

I was heartened to see *The Independent* back Labour at the coming election. While the party under Starmer has let me down repeatedly over these past few months, I can't deny that they are the best positioned to defeat the Conservatives and restore an element of common sense to our democracy.

I live in hope that once they are in power, they will drop the facade of simply being "Tory lite", and finally do the things that need to be done to restore this nation to its former if not glory then at the very least functionality.

Stephen Bloom *Canterbury*

It's time for Farage to do the right thing

How very heartening it is to see the speed with which Nigel Farage has removed from his party those “bad apples”, of whose opinions he was unaware. Of course, their membership of Reform would have been the fault of the “vetting company”; Rishi Sunak, for calling the election at such short notice that no one from any party could be expected to know their candidates; or maybe Channel 4, or the BBC – indeed, anyone but himself as party leader.

So can we now expect the rapid dismissal of Reform’s co-deputy, Ben Habib, who told Julia Hartley-Brewer earlier this year that immigrants in small boats should be left to drown? I’m sure Nigel will do the right thing!

Sue Breadner *Isle of Man*

Trump doesn’t do facts – neither do his voters

David Nelmes’s letter imploring US voters to look at the facts is laudable but naive (yesterday). Trump supporters are not interested in facts. They lap up his lies and distortions without thinking. They believe the last election was stolen without a shred of evidence, and continue to listen to his outrageous statements about the economy, and insinuations about Biden and his family.

Trump is not stupid but he knows what stupid people want to hear

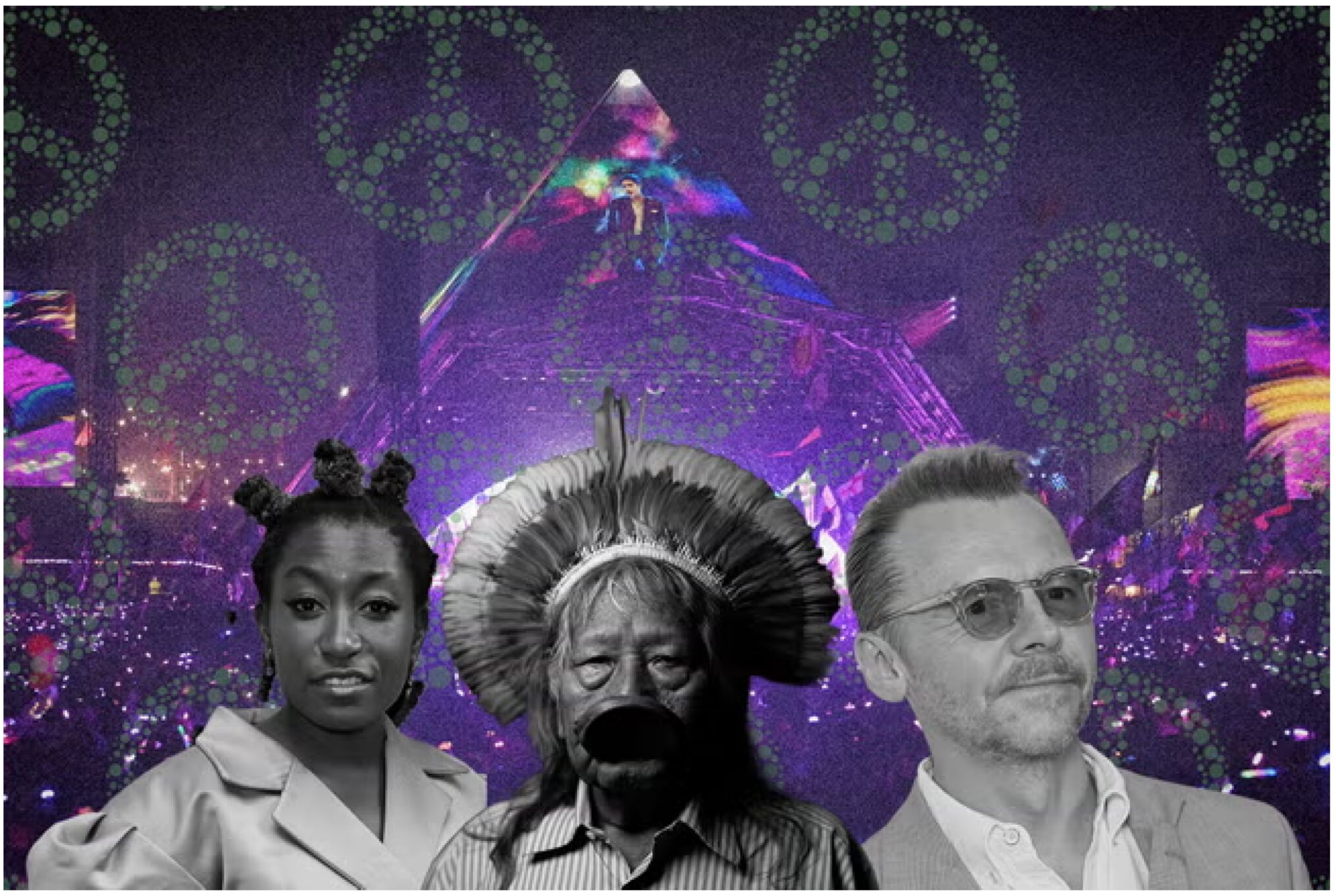
Jack Liebeskind *Cheltenham*

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‘We can’t let ourselves feel hopeless about the climate’

As the general election looms, **Mark Beaumont** talks climate activism with Simon Pegg, Sophie Duker and Will McCallum on location in the Greenpeace Field at Glastonbury Festival



Taking a stand: Sophie Duker, Chief Raoni and Simon Pegg (iStock/Getty)

Five days to save the planet? Perhaps not, but glancing around at the Vote for Climate slogans emblazoned across the Greenpeace Field from Terror Slide to Rave Tree is a wake-up call that 4 July might prove a make-or-break point in the fight against environmental devastation.

“This election is going to be a fairly defining one for the climate,” says Greenpeace co-executive director Will McCallum, sat in the shadow of the gigantic tree-cum-DJ booth that symbolises this party’n’politics heart of Glastonbury Festival. “This government is going to oversee most of the transition, or not. And what we’re seeing is that none of the major parties are really prioritising climate.”

Even before the election was called, the activists who bring this vital and wonderful space to life each year were engaged in a 2024 campaign called Project Climate Vote, intended to alert the major parties to rising public concern.

“It’s very clear that, at a leadership level, it’s not one of the things they think people care about when they’re voting,” McCallum argues. “So this was a campaign to get people to vocalise what they say in the polls on the doorstep: to actually say, ‘The climate is something that I think about when I’m voting.’”

It also aims to combat voter apathy on this long-fuse topic: “We wanted to use this field as a chance to say to people, ‘Next week is one of those major chances where you can make a difference.’”



Jane Goodall and Raoni were at this year’s festival to discuss the climate crisis (Getty)

The message, as ever, comes wrapped in one of the most enjoyably inventive, eclectic and unmissable schedules on site. At any time of the day or night you might stumble on a

Confidence Man takeover, a Frank Turner secret set, or, as on Friday, a legendary meeting between iconic activist and primatologist Dr Jane Goodall and Indigenous Brazilian environmentalist Chief Raoni.

“It was very, very special,” McCallum grins. “Particularly because Greenpeace had actually, earlier this year, taken both of them separately over the Amazon to look at the illegal gold mining, and so they came together and talked about their experiences with us.”

On Saturday afternoon, we catch comedian Sophie Duker hosting an improvised comedy challenge contest called Miss (Burning) World, involving Ivo Graham and Olga Koch making each other outfits from recycled toilet paper, and, at one point, Graham interrupting proceedings to point out this writer in the crowd and effuse about my frontline role in the vicious Interpol versus Editors debate that tore apart the pages of *NME* in 2006.

“Obviously, we are in times which are quite bleak for various reasons to do with climate but also have to deal with the world as it is under capitalism, with wars and genocides,” Duker – a Glastonbury virgin keen to hunt out the Green Fields’ mythical nudist sauna – says backstage.



Duker: ‘This field is an amazing place to be’ (Getty)

“But I think that having a moment of silliness opening this Saturday, and seeing people in a different, unrehearsed,

unprepared context, it was a high-concept, ambitious experiment. To take us out of the stresses that we might have, and be a bit camp and silly on stage, under budget.

“This field is an amazing place to be, and it’s interesting seeing how you can contribute with your own quite weird skill set to a general ambience of joy.”

The Greenpeace Field is increasingly a place for big onsite names to gather to chill, discuss issues, and conscientiously rave. “It’s nothing but hippies here. The best people in the world,” says regular Simon Pegg, holed up in the tree trunk colosseum The Hive and throwing himself into the election debate.

“Our choices have become so narrowed,” he argues. “I’m a lifelong Labour voter. There are certain things about Labour that I’m not that keen on, but if anything, I just want the Tories out. There are things that I would hope, once Labour get into power, that they can be swayed on, or perhaps rethink certain things. But we’re in a better position if they’re in power than we are if the Tories are, because we’ve had such a long period of chaos, and exploitation, and self-serving boneheaded politics.”

The rise of Reform UK in the polls has the terrifying knock-on effect of popularising Nigel Farage’s disastrous idea to scrap all net-zero ambitions in order to fund his immigrants-out agenda. Might such thinking be dangerous if it takes hold?



Pegg: ‘We’ve had such a long period of chaos, exploitation and self-serving politics’ (WireImage)

“This happens in times like this, populist thinking, because it’s very much a gut reaction. It’s all about very broad adversaries and simple solutions,” Pegg says. “But I hope that the majority of people see him for what he is. He’s a sinister character, and his ideas are anti-human. I would hope that most people see sense, but I don’t blame anyone for being fooled by it. Sometimes, when you’re desperate, you just want to hear what you want to hear.”

McCallum finds hope in the gradual rise of the Greens. “They are aiming for four seats this election,” he says, “but I think, everywhere, what we’re seeing is people are actually keen to talk about what parties want to do about climate change. The Green Party feel able to answer those questions, the Lib Dems feel able to answer those questions. Why aren’t we seeing it from the two major parties?”

He’s particularly frustrated by watching entirely reasonable questions on climate issues batted away during televised leaders’ debates: “I saw the prime minister answer by saying, ‘Green will raise your bills.’ That is the only answer that they have, and that is deeply depressing.”



Fatboy Slim performs at the Rave Tree in the Greenpeace Field at Glastonbury in 2023 (Greenpeace)

McCallum refuses to be ground down by the political sidelining of the climate crisis, however. “We’re never hopeless. We’re

very much in the business of summoning hope because that's the only way we will see change happen...

"People understand that climate change is happening. They understand because their town has flooded, they understand because there's been a heatwave, or because they've got relatives living in other countries where there are far more severe climate impacts. But what they don't realise is that, if politicians don't do something about it, this isn't going to change – it's only going to get worse."

"I always vote Green because I live in Brighton and we get Green," says Orbital's Paul Hartnoll, hanging out in The Hive ahead of his Park Stage show and discussing ways to lessen his carbon impact, from heat pumps to solar panels and electric cars. "I hear that Bristol might be going Green as well. If we get two or three Green voices in parliament, you want those voices needling away all the time."

Glastonbury 2024 is perhaps the most high-profile advert for sustainability the planet has ever seen. From its vast recycling plant to booking the most carbon-neutral stadium act in the world in Coldplay, it's leading the way in tackling the ethical dilemmas of a private-jet-addicted music industry.

"The most exciting thing, given the campaign against Barclays at all of the other festivals around the country, is to come to a festival that does not take corporate sponsorship in that way," says McCallum. "Where there aren't these big fossil-fuel giants, there aren't the big banks, you're not walking around absorbing advertising. That's what makes Glastonbury special."



Other festivals have been hit by campaigning over corporate sponsors with links to fossil-fuel giants (Getty)

How could other festivals follow suit? “They can have more campaigning on site. People think of festivals as escapism, they think of it as leaving behind the world out there to come and just have a hedonistic time.

“But actually, so many people come here to be restored, to be inspired, to feel hopeful. And I think the more festivals can see that message all around the site, and invite groups like us on to talk about these things, the more hopeful and inspired people feel when they leave the site. Then they can go on to more activism, or to better choices.”

And if 4 July, as widely expected, doesn’t usher in a new era of vastly accelerated climate action in Downing Street, the grassroots battle continues. “We can’t let ourselves feel hopeless,” says Pegg. “The trouble is that the effects of climate change impact places that are of little economic value to the powers that be. But we have to keep at it because the moment we give up, that’s it.

“There is a genuine desire out there to survive. Surely we must all, somewhere, feel the desire to kick back against anything which is jeopardising our future. We’ve just got to keep fighting.”

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Should Aer Lingus book me on another airline's flight?



Work to rule: pilots from Ireland's national airline go on strike in Dublin (PA)

Q I'm due to be flying with Aer Lingus in the next few weeks. On their website, the options available for passengers whose flights are cancelled include requesting a refund, having a voucher and being booked on another Aer Lingus flight if one is available. Is Aer Lingus required to get me to my destination on the same day, even if it involves using another airline? If so, how do I get them to do that? I'm flying Dublin to Heathrow, so BA is available as an alternative.

Mary K

A Ireland's national airline is cancelling around 26 flights a day at the moment as a result of a "strict work to rule" by pilots belonging to the Irish Air Line Pilots' Association. I can see no significant progress on the dispute.

Many of the cancelled flights are between Dublin and London Heathrow – six today alone. As you say, Aer Lingus is required to get you to your destination on the same day. The airline warns: "While we will endeavour to reaccommodate customers where possible, the levels of disruption may not make this possible."

That does not look helpful but your first step should be to call the airline in Ireland on 01 761 7834 or in the UK on 0333 004 5000. If you want an alternative flight and there is one on Aer Lingus on the same day, you have little choice but to accept it – or take a refund (ignore the voucher offer, which has no advantage for you). You could instead book a flight on Ryanair to a different London airport.

If, though, Aer Lingus does not have seats available on the same day, then you can look on British Airways to see what options there are. Invite Aer Lingus to buy the ticket for you, as it is required to do. If the carrier declines, then you can book it and claim the additional cost back from Aer Lingus. This may be a tedious process but the airline cannot reject a reasonable claim.

I am contacting Aer Lingus to ask why the option of being rebooked on another airline is not made clearer; at present, all I can see is a link to the European legislation.

Email your question to s@hols.tv or tweet @SimonCalder

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Section 2

ON THIS DAY



The battle of the Somme in the First World War started on this day in 1916 (Getty)

Canada Day

1804: George Sand (Amandine Aurore Lucile Dudevant), French romantic novelist who adopted her masculine pseudonym for the novel *Indiana*, was born. She is remembered for her long list of lovers, including Chopin.

1837: Compulsory registration of births, marriages and deaths came into effect in England and Wales.

1858: Charles Darwin presented his theory on evolution and natural selection to the Linnean Society in London.

1867: The Dominion of Canada was established by the British North American Act. It comprised 4 million people and four provinces – Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

1872: Louis Bleriot, aviation pioneer, was born in Cambrai, France. He was the first person to come to Britain without arriving by sea.

1912: The British Copyright Act came into force, protecting an author's works for 50 years after their death.

1916: First day of the battle of the Somme in the First World War. In less than 24 hours there were 60,000 British casualties.

1969: Prince Charles was invested as Prince of Wales by the Queen at Caernarvon Castle.

2007: A ban on smoking in public places came into effect across England, spelling an end to drinkers having a cigarette in pubs, bars and clubs.

On this day last year: The press watchdog upheld a complaint that a Jeremy Clarkson opinion column in *The Sun* was sexist towards the Duchess of Sussex, describing some of the comments about her as "pejorative and prejudicial".

Birthdays

Leslie Caron, actor, 93; **Debbie Harry**, rock singer, 79; **Trevor Eve**, actor, 73; **Dan Aykroyd,** actor, 72; **Pamela Anderson**, model and actor, 57; **Missy Elliott**, singer/rapper, 53; **Ruud Van Nistelrooy**, former footballer, 48; **Liv Tyler**, actor, 47.

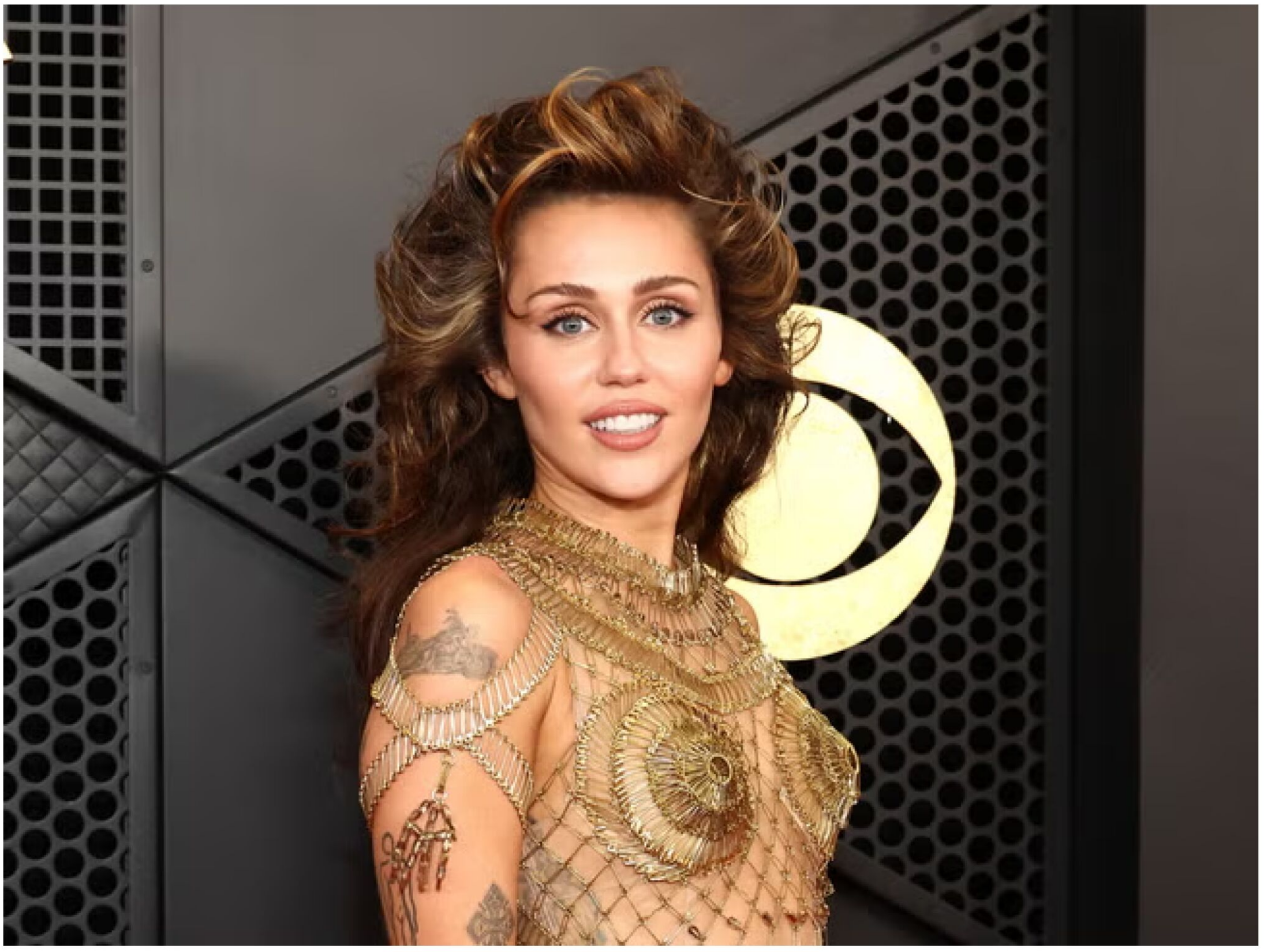
PA

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THE EGO HAS LANDED

In a world of social media and selfies, it can be tempting to diagnose everyone with narcissistic traits. **Helen Coffey** asks experts about the reality of narcissism in its different forms



Miley Cyrus says she's a narcissist but maybe she's just normal (Getty/The Recording Academy)

"I inherited the narcissism from my father," Miley Cyrus said in a recent interview. The singer was telling David Letterman about her childhood during an episode of the Netflix interview

series *My Next Guest Needs No Introduction*, describing how she and her five siblings had moved from Tennessee to Los Angeles to facilitate her career in show business. Siblings the *Hannah Montana* star didn't "know anything about" or even think about at the time, she said. "I was moving to LA, and that's all I really knew," she added.

Her admission prompted much speculation: is narcissism really something you can inherit genetically, like being able to roll your tongue or having red hair? And is it even possible for someone to be a narcissist if they're self-aware enough to start considering that they may be one in the first place?

The word "narcissist" is bandied about with increasing regularity these days, casually levelled at an entire generation of selfie-taking social media addicts as well as being the topic of innumerable TikTok videos telling you the signs to watch out for. But beware of making sweeping armchair diagnoses. The first thing to remember is that narcissism is a spectrum. There's a difference between someone who is narcissistic or displays some narcissistic traits, and someone who has narcissistic personality disorder, or NPD, a mental health condition recognised by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).

Helen Villiers is a psychotherapist and, along with Katie McKenna, co-author of the recent bestseller *You're Not the Problem: The Impact of Narcissism and Emotional Abuse and How to Heal*. She highlights five main traits she would expect to see in individuals with NPD. "They are: grandiosity, entitlement, exploitation, impaired or motivational empathy and impaired self-awareness."

The first is a feeling of specialness compared to everyone else; the second refers to feeling like you deserve to get anything you want; the third is about using people to get what you want; the fourth involves a lack of empathy or emotional manipulation, using someone else's empathy against them; and the last is a tendency to blame external factors and other people for problems, never taking responsibility for your own failings.

We all have these traits to some degree – and what's interesting is that they aren't all inherently unhealthy if kept in check. In fact, some narcissistic traits, in moderation, can be positive and even integral to living a rich, full life.



Snapping selfies isn't necessarily a sign (iStock/Rohappy)

"There's healthy entitlement, when it doesn't come at a cost to other people," explains McKenna. "For example, if there's a promotion at work and someone feels a healthy entitlement to go for it because they've worked hard enough to get it. The difference with unhealthy entitlement is that the person won't care what they have to do, or who they have to exploit, to get it – and won't care if they're qualified or not."

Grandiosity can also be healthy, giving you a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. "A healthy example is being able to sit here and talk with confidence on a subject we have expertise in," says Villiers. "But someone with an unhealthy sense of grandiosity would read a Wikipedia page and say they're an expert. These traits can show up as healthy or unhealthy. And, when they're unhealthy, they can be extremely toxic to the people around you."

Dr Craig Malkin, a leading clinical psychologist, Harvard Medical School lecturer and the author of *Rethinking Narcissism*, draws a clear line between healthy and unhealthy narcissism. "When I looked at all the research, it became clear that the core of narcissism is something called self-enhancement. And self-enhancement is the drive to feel special, exceptional or unique. It's not self-esteem. It's not self-confidence. It's a slightly overly positive view of self."

While this can obviously be unhealthy when taken to extremes, "the vast majority of happy, healthy people around the world self-enhance. They don't view themselves as average," says Malkin. "They see themselves as special, slightly above average – and that, in and of itself, is not a problem." Furthermore, moderate self-enhancement is associated with positive outcomes. "When people moderately self-enhance, they're able to give and receive in relationships," he adds. "They persist in the face of failure, and might even live longer, according to some research studies on health outcomes correlated with self-enhancement."

In fact, if narcissism is a spectrum, then those at the opposite end from people with NPD – those who don't self-enhance at all – tend to "suffer", according to Malkin, with increased anxiety and depression. "They suffer from what's called the 'sadder but wiser' effect. They might have a more realistic or slightly dampened sense of self, but they struggle; and, interestingly, they tend to fall into relationships with extremely narcissistic friends and partners who are more than happy to take up all the space that people who don't self-enhance are willing to cede."

You can think of overt narcissists as oblivious narcissists because they don't have much self-awareness or capacity to reflect; their defences are really pretty rigid in the extreme

Dr Craig Malkin, clinical psychologist

Self-enhancement only becomes a problem, he argues, when it's addictive and rigid, and when people use it "as a kind of self-soothing – when, instead of turning to people and relationships for care, connection and mutual emotional involvement, they rely entirely on a sense of value and feeling good about themselves by self-enhancing". Clearly, when this happens and narcissism tips into something problematic – when it reaches the extreme levels where someone is diagnosable as having NPD – it can hugely hurt others, and often results in unhealthy and even abusive relationships.

Within NPD, there are different types of narcissist, whose behaviours are distinctive; it might not always present in the ways we imagine. There is the classic caricature, called the "overt" or "extrovert" narcissist: the person who wants to feel like they're the cleverest, richest, most talented, important or attractive person in the room; the person who chases wealth, status and power at all costs (here's looking at you, Mr Trump).

But then there's the "covert" or "introverted" narcissist, whose drive to feel special ploughs negative furrows instead. They feel like their pain marks them out, that they're more sensitive than others, that no one understands them. And the "communal" narcissist is different again, describing those who feel special by virtue of their helpfulness or altruism – the person who believes that no one does as many good deeds as them.

The question of whether nature or nurture creates a narcissist is still up for debate. "With all personality disorders, it seems to be a combination," says psychotherapist Nicholas Rose. "Regarding NPD, if someone had a struggle in life, maybe they had an early childhood struggle, or found it hard to get attention, or conversely received an awful lot of attention, that would have affected how they felt. Chemicals are released in the body; habits can form." He stresses that, while it's often "seductive" to look for a specific childhood trauma to pin the blame on, in reality "it's usually a lot more complex".

"With personality disorders, it usually means there have been ways of being for a long time, involving a complex interplay

between our experiences and who we are," he adds. "It takes time, compassion and curiosity to work through."



Narcissists have a desire to feel more special than everybody else (Getty/iStock)

A genetic predisposition can be negated by a parenting style called "authoritative parenting", according to Malkin, which is "warm and structuring and tends to foster what we call 'attachment security'." Without this attachment, natural narcissistic traits can be exacerbated.

But is a narcissist ever able to recognise that they're a narcissist? Absolutely, says McKenna, though it will manifest differently depending on what kind of narcissist they are. "There's a huge misconception that if someone questions whether they're a narcissist, then they can't possibly be one – that's not true," she says.

The overt narcissist might proudly admit to this label, saying "Sure I am, and it's got me to where I am today." The covert, conversely, may tend to "weaponise someone's empathy against them", McKenna says – asking "How could you say that to me?" if they're accused of narcissism by a loved one, attempting to make the accuser feel guilty rather than genuinely reflecting or accepting accountability.

Often, narcissism has developed as a defence mechanism – one that's so strong, it's tricky to break through. As a result, a low proportion of narcissists end up engaging in talking therapy, the

treatment recommended by the NHS for NPD, though covert narcissists are far more likely than overt narcissists to go down this route. “You can think of [overt narcissists] as oblivious narcissists because they don’t have much self-awareness or capacity to reflect; their defences are really pretty rigid in the extreme, and they’re far less likely to say they have a problem and come into psychotherapy,” says Malkin.

It means the people who end up seeking help are often not the narcissists themselves but their partners or family members. A lot of the discourse and resources online also revolve around those who are in some kind of relationship with a narcissist – how to tell if a partner has NPD, for example. And of course, the welfare of potential victims of emotional abuse needs to be prioritised. But the conversation doesn’t always leave much room for empathy when it comes to narcissists themselves.

“One thing that’s often overlooked is that their lives can be very painful,” Rose says thoughtfully. “Although, in one way, narcissists are seen as very strong and resilient, on the other hand there is a lot of loneliness, frustration and confusion – a lot of questioning about ‘Why is my life like this?’”

Narcissism isn’t inherently abusive but abuse is inherently narcissistic. As soon as you’re abusive, you’re forgetting about the needs and feelings of someone else

Dr Malkin

He explains: “The way I think about it is this: is being a bully ever good for the bully? I can’t see it. I always see different behaviours as a manifestation of underlying pain, a discord of some sort. The way to engage hurt and pain is not through direct assault but through compassion and curiosity.”

It’s not to say that people in psychologically damaging or emotionally abusive relationships shouldn’t remove themselves from the situation; more that labelling, and jumping to write people off, can be problematic in its own way. “If you’re in an abusive relationship, the abuse needs to end first,” says Malkin firmly. “It doesn’t matter what’s causing it. Don’t diagnose your friend or partner. Ask yourself if you’re safe emotionally and physically, and if the answer is no, it doesn’t matter what their diagnosis is, you need help ending that relationship and distancing from the person until they overcome their tendency to abuse.”

He’s also uneasy with the common conflation of narcissism and abuse. “Narcissism isn’t inherently abusive,” he argues. “But abuse is inherently narcissistic. As soon as you’re abusive, you’re forgetting about the needs and feelings of someone else; you’re acting as though you’re so special that you should be able to do anything you want.”

While not everybody believes that narcissism or NPD can be “cured” as such – and none of the experts I’ve spoken to would ever recommend hanging around in a toxic dynamic in the vain hope that someone might one day change – Malkin certainly believes that positive outcomes are possible for those who engage authentically with the therapeutic process. “I see a number of people with narcissistic personality disorder,” he says. “There’s hope for people who come in for genuine treatment and stick with it.”

As for Cyrus, the Grammy winner may well just have been a regular teen all along, whatever she might have told Letterman. “She was a young teenager when the family moved to LA and, developmentally, teenagers don’t tend to consider people outside their own experience. We don’t expect to see that,” says

Villiers. So go easy on yourself, Miley – and maybe leave the diagnoses to the professionals.

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ACES OF SPADES

Adele Cardani takes us on a tour of six of the loveliest green spaces you can visit, from the garden of England to up North



The ‘epitome of the English garden’: the Rose Garden at Sissinghurst, Kent (Sissinghurst Castle)

With the sun well and truly shining, there’s nowhere better to be than one of Britain’s lush horticultural gems. From pristinely manicured palace grounds to rambling wildflower meadows, I’ve rounded up the loveliest green spaces for you to explore on your next day out or long weekend getaway.



Is Mr Darcy in? Chatsworth House stands overlooking its spectacular and inspiring grounds

Chatsworth Estate, Derbyshire

This 105-acre garden is the product of nearly 500 years of careful cultivation, by 17 generations of the Devonshire family. The landscape features sweeping lawns, grand waterworks, and historic sculptures, alongside a fragrant rose garden, dramatic rock garden, and a winding hedge maze.

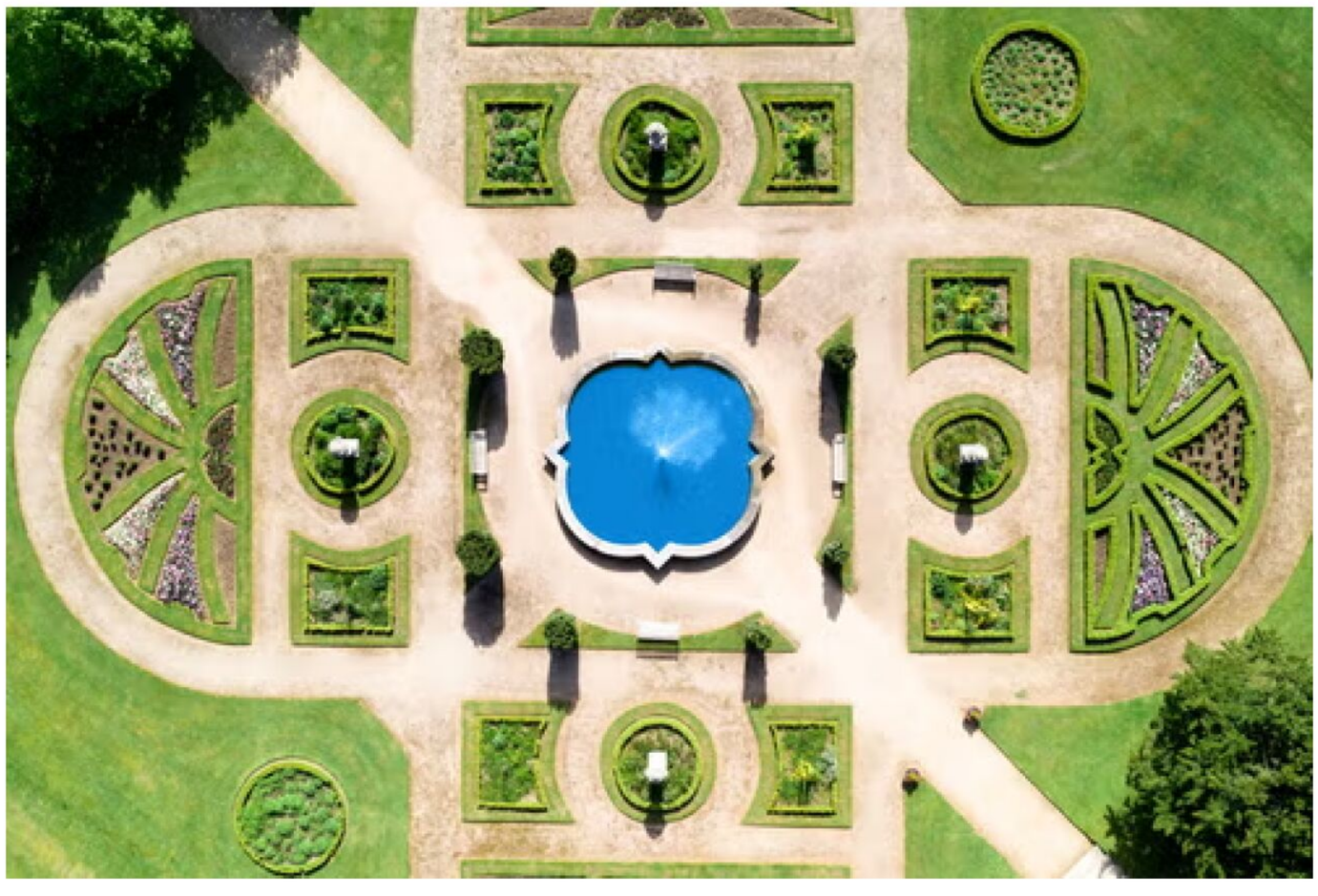
A must-see for bibliophiles – it is believed that Jane Austen based her idea of Pemberley, the home of Mr Darcy, on Chatsworth House. As such, Chatsworth served as a backdrop for the 2005 film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.



Ashridge House brings fairytales to life

Ashridge House, Hertfordshire

Originally the site of a monastery, then a royal residence for Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, and now a fairytale wedding venue, Ashridge House is home to 190 acres of grade II registered historic gardens. Humphry Repton, the greatest landscape artist of his day, was commissioned to design the formal gardens, and they remain intact today as the finest surviving example of his work.



Eight rose beds are arranged around the historic central fountain, surrounded by a yew hedge (Ashridge House)

The grounds include Italian gardens, the Rosary and Fernery, an herb garden, Lady Bridgewater's vibrant flower garden, and the Monk's Garden – which features an armorial design representing the four notable families who have been associated with the property.

This summer, from 4 August – 15 September, the creators behind Europe's largest street art festival, Upfest, will transform these regal gardens into an urban canvas – highlighting the beauty in contrasting old and new.



The Cottage Garden at Sissinghurst (Sissinghurst Castle)

Sissinghurst Castle, Kent

Distinguished writers Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson fell in love with Sissinghurst Castle in 1930, determined to revitalise the estate (circa 1500s) from its then ruinous state. In the process, they created a series of walled gardens which are now regarded as “the epitome of the English garden”.

Perfect for a summertime visit, in June the fragrant Rose Garden comes into full bloom. Then, in July and August, the Cottage Garden, which is known for its fiery sunset hues, stands in stark contrast to the ethereal White Garden, which shimmers with moonlit planting. Finally, towards the very end of summer, the sunflowers and herbaceous blossoms surge skyward.



A winding pathway inviting you to explore the Sub-Tropicana Garden at RHS Harlow Carr (Neil Hepworth)

RHS Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire

Sitting on the edge of Harrogate, Harlow Carr boasts an impressive 58 acres of gardens and 15 acres of park and woodland. First, visit Streamside, one of the oldest and most iconic areas of the garden, lush with vibrant moisture-loving plants.

Next, stop by the Kitchen Garden, which is packed with local varieties of fruit, vegetables, and herbs, alongside unusual crops used for traditional weaving and dyeing. Then, explore the Sub-Tropicana Garden where winding pathways are surrounded by flowering plants more typically found in the tropics of Asia and South America. This reaches its peak in late summer when exotic salvias, dahlias, gingers, and cannas are in full bloom.



The eccentric topiary at Levens Hall would make even Edward Scissorhands green with envy

Topiary Gardens at Levens Hall, Cumbria

The Topiary Garden is probably the best-known feature of this stately home. Dating back to 1694, it holds a Guinness World Record for the world's oldest topiary garden. Today, visitors can revel in a variety of eccentric geometric shapes and varying hues of greenery.

The garden features giant chess pieces, mushrooms, lopsided lollipops, a toppling wedding cake, four peacocks, an arch

named after Queen Elizabeth and her maids of honour – and even amusing contemporary pieces such as Darth Vader and Homer Simpson.



Discover rare and threatened plants in the impressive Temperate House at Kew Gardens (Gareth Gardner)

Kew Gardens, Richmond, London

Housing the world's most diverse collection of living plants, Kew Gardens is London's largest Unesco world heritage site. Here you'll find a massive Victorian glasshouse, showcasing rare tender plants, situated next to a Rose Garden (boasting more than 170 different species of the flower).

There's a Mediterranean Garden bursting with plants from the sun-kissed shores of southern Europe, as well as a tranquil Japanese Landscape, with an entrance that's reminiscent of a traditional tea garden. With such a vast botanical collection, spread across 300 acres of land, expect to spend at least three to four hours at Kew Gardens.

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Too cerebral to raise the roof, but potent enough

Not a household name, but SZA is a massive artist who gave a stellar performance to a modest audience. By **Jazz Monroe**



SZA headlines on the Egyptian palace-themed Pyramid Stage last night (AP)

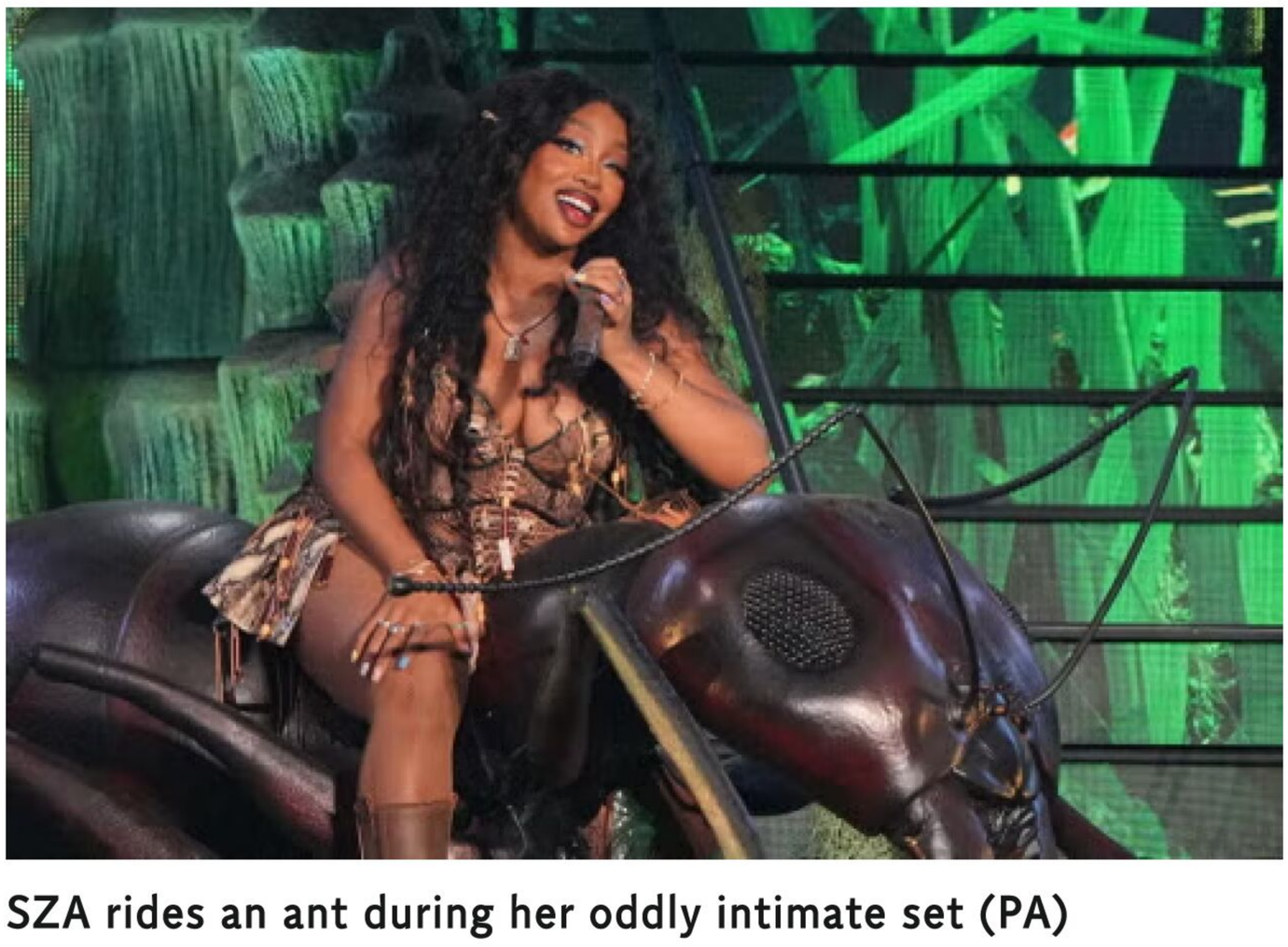
★★★★☆

For many a Glastonbury headliner, the Sunday night crowd is the ripest of low-hanging fruit. Survivors are sleepless, restless and mentally depleted, vulnerable to the laziest heartstring thrums and the faintest pangs of nostalgia.

But an artist like SZA, the 34-year-old singer born Solána Imani Rowe, offers neither. After Dua Lipa's laser-guided precision and Coldplay's pyrotechnic catharsis, SZA – a Grammy-sweeping R&B phenom with an arsenal of candid heartbreakers – is perhaps a tough sell, less cultural colossus than a secret shared between millions.

But a four-day stint in the world's largest and most beloved green-field music festival brings a few benefits. Along with the pinballing emotions come fellow feeling and fraternity. Though not yet a household name in the UK – "SZA who?" asked the uninitiated – she is the perfect conduit for our heightened empathy, too cerebral to raise the roof but potent enough to eke out our last reserves of euphoria.

Rising from a stage set that is part ice cave, part ancient Egyptian palace, she begins by slingshotting from the string swells of "PSA" into a frenzied "Love Galore", wearing a tasselled bronze dress and backed by a clan of piston-pumping dancers.



SZA rides an ant during her oddly intimate set (PA)

She sings lines such as "Why you bother me when you know you got a woman?" as if, like the knackered weekenders in attendance, she were in the midst of some devastating fever dream.

The high-octane production and live band continue the trajectory from *CTRL* – her quietly star-making 2017 album – to

2022 follow-up *SOS*, the US chart-topper that rescaled her bedroom confessionals for supersized intimacy. Every musical flourish comes with fairy lights, each pregnant pause stretched like a balloon ready to pop.

The crowd – one of the sparsest in recent memory – has plenty of room for fans to act out theatrical serenades and, amid the pop-punk blaze of "FWF", form dozens of micro mosh pits.

Seemingly acting out her own madcap fairytale on the elaborate set, SZA straddles a giant model ant, grinds a throne-shaped humanoid, twirls dual katanas for a dance sequence and ascends a lifesize tree trunk in fairy wings before busting into her verse from Drake's "Rich Baby Daddy". The choreography is reliably intense, sometimes distracting from the intoxicating melisma and half-rapped confessions that, given her full attention, frequently leave you breathless.

A medley of Doja Cat collaboration "Kiss Me More" and a surprise cover of Prince's "Kiss" is perfectly timed, hitting just as night falls and the crowd starts hungering for a party.

But highlights like "Supermodel" – a snapshot of social anxiety, status anxiety, petty jealousy and self-recrimination delivered in a tone of ennui and apology – could not more sharply contrast the empowerment anthems of contemporaries like Friday night headliner Dua Lipa. No room for *Radical Optimism*, as Lipa's second album title has it. SZA is the ambassador for radical nihilism.

By closer "Twentysomethings", she has brought her contingent of diehards to a dream state of ecstasy and emotional ruin, albeit without straining to make new converts. That she made us work for it, rather than spoon-feeding us fireworks and feels, makes this melancholy, oddly intimate spectacle hit just that little bit harder. For one night, at least, the secret was out, allowing SZA and Glastonbury's downtrodden faithful to suffer in solidarity.

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Grouchy pop-punk queen deserved a bigger billing

Festival underestimates appeal of nostalgia as Avril Lavigne delivers in her customary laconic style, reports **Adam White**



Now 39, Lavigne still kicks up a storm on the Other Stage yesterday (Getty)

★★★★★

There comes a point at Glastonbury where it becomes easier to give up about a mile away from the stage. Much like Sugababes'

overcrowded set, the grouchy, nostalgic pop-punk queen Avril Lavigne is one of the festival's must-see acts, yet is shoved on a too-small stage in front of an overwhelming sea of people. Janelle Monae, over on the Pyramid Stage at the exact same time, is the unlucky recipient of poor planning – a genius pop star performing to a barely-there crowd. It's not great.

In difficult circumstances, crowd-control at Glastonbury do a brilliant job, keeping everyone safe and herding thousands of people in front of the Other Stage and the surrounding areas. Everybody seems to be able to see, and – unlike the Sugababes over at West Holts on Thursday – there are no reports of people being told to back away. Lavigne herself is overwhelmed.

"I can't believe it's taken me 22 years to play Glastonbury," she says. "It's about time."

This is a brilliant show, but Glastonbury must learn lessons from a year that has vastly underestimated the appeal of pop nostalgia, and overestimated the interest in many performing over at the Pyramid.

That said, there is something incredibly special about being, more or less, a million miles away from the Other Stage and singing in unison with a small country of people in their late twenties and early thirties, to whom Lavigne is something of a god.

All of us stuffed at the back of the crowd, near the food vendors and the toilets, know absolutely every word of an artist who, for all the cynical mockery she experienced at the beginning of her early fame, directly spoke to a generation.

"Did anyone here have a copy of my first album, *Let Go?,*" Lavigne asks at one point. It takes some resistance for the crowd to not scream back, "Duh".



Lavigne retains the petulant performance style that has always defined her (Getty)

Lavigne is now 39, but retains the laconic, vaguely petulant performance style that has always defined her. She moves slowly across the stage, sings powerfully but largely statically. “Here’s to never growing up”, she once sang. She was at least being honest.

“Girlfriend” kicks things off with bratty brilliance, before Lavigne segues into “What the Hell”, another mid-career track about as synonymous with a particular moment in time as a My Chemical Romance patch and far too much brain power spent ranking the Wentz brothers.

There are more sing-alongs to the evocative rock ballad “My Happy Ending”, and a massive, audible “aww” when the beautiful strings first kick in for “I’m with You”, one of those formidable gut-wrenchers comfortably sitting in the new millennium power ballad canon.

There is a rich power to the plainness of Lavigne’s lyrics, which resist flowery metaphor in favour of direct translation of commonplace woe: “Isn’t anyone trying to find me?/ Won’t somebody come take me home?” she sings on “I’m with You”.

“It’s a damn cold night / Trying to figure out this life…”

She’s never been considered much of a songwriter, or even particularly important in the grand scheme of coming-of-age

music, but it'd be lovely if her Glastonbury set serves as a reminder of her appeal and her importance.

"Sk8r Boi" – that genius combination of head-banging brilliance and deep Y2K cringe – brings the set to a close, Lavigne grinning from ear to ear. Even pop-punk's greatest miserabilist can't resist the joy radiating from this crowd.

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Twain’s rip-roaring rodeo

Canadian country star Shania Twain brings a healthy splash of theatricality to the Pyramid Stage, reports **Louis Chilton**



The singer-songwriter belts out another classic in front of the huge crowd yesterday (Getty)

★★★★☆

Don’t take this as an invitation to stop reading, but this entire review could probably be condensed into one word: “Yee-haw.”

As Shania Twain struts out onto Glastonbury’s Pyramid Stage, before a bouncing human prairie tufted with kitsch cowboy hats,

it feels like you are about to witness the detonation of a hundred-megaton Weapon of Mass Camp.

Wearing an ostentatious pink coat and black sequined dress, and flanked by a procession of decorative horse heads on raised sticks, the Canadian country-pop icon seems to gesture to her pre-announced intention to "borrow" a horse and ride it onto the festival's biggest stage. "I'll have to find out if I'm allowed," she told the BBC last week. We can only assume she was not.

But even *sin caballo,* this is a Legends slot with a healthy splash of theatricality. Perhaps the most reliably entertaining fixture on the festival's main stage, the so-called fourth headline slot has in recent years been filled by such musical goliaths as Dolly Parton, Yusuf/Cat Stevens and Kenny Rogers.



Twain struts her stuff on the Pyramid Stage yesterday (Reuters)

In terms of hits, Twain is as much of a Very Big Deal as any of them: one of the elite strata of the biggest-selling artists of all time. Her setlist is accordingly showy. From the thumping opening chords of "Don't Impress Me Much", it's immediately clear we're in for a set of relentless, earwormish hits.

On record, Twain has a voice that is sharp and singular, with the clarity of cut glass. It's been altered somewhat by her decades-long struggle with Lyme disease – a condition that began when she was bitten by a tick while on horseback – but it's still

remarkably forceful. When she wants, she can still belt, albeit with a trace of wavering vibrato.

What significant faults there are to be found in the set seem largely out of Twain's control. "Up" is so bassy as to almost drown out completely her brilliant backing band – the livewire, soloing fiddles being a particular highlight.



Brilliant and camp: Twain sings along with the crowd (Getty)

The mix is considerably cleaner on "I'm Gonna Getcha Good", and, after a few subtle interventions from Twain, the sound seems to improve as the show goes on. "You're Still the One" is performed sitting down, and kicked off via a tuneful crowd singalong.

"Country music" is often a term so broad as to be functionally meaningless: the idea that one genre could encompass something as gentle and soulful as the music of Gillian Welch, and as brash and plastic as that of Morgan Wallen, is absurd.

But Twain's sound manages to straddle the spectrum. Its poppier moments – the pulsating "You Win My Love", for instance – are garish, sure, but in a way that is joyous and buoyant. On tracks such as the infectious love ballad "Forever and Always", from the 2002 album *Up!*, Twain cuts through the spurs-and-Stetson artifice with a rendition that's sincere and stirring.

“I’m feeling frickin’ amazing!” she screeches at the crowd, as the set canters towards its climax – an effervescent performance of “Man! I Feel Like a Woman!” Despite the hangovers, sunburn and physical exhaustion, Twain’s Pyramid Stage rodeo seems to have left pretty much everyone who watched it feeling the same way.

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Crowe's shockingly good set adds the feelgood factor

The 'Gladiator' star charged enthusiastically through covers of Dire Straits and Johnny Cash, along with some original songs, on the Acoustic Stage. **Louis Chilton** was charmed



There's something heartening about seeing Russell Crowe live out his rock-star dreams in front of a large and adoring crowd (russellcrowe/X/AP)

He may have had a *Beautiful Mind*, but does he have a beautiful voice? The idea that Russell Crowe can't sing is one of those snarky takes that's been etched into stone, thanks largely to the Australian actor's breathy Javert in *Les Misérables* (2012). And

yet, as he marched out onto Glastonbury's tented Acoustic Stage on a sun-baked Saturday afternoon, to perform with his Indoor Garden Party music project, you would have thought he was every inch the rock star.

It's easy to be cynical about Crowe's reinvention as a blues-rock crooner; the words "vanity project" hung in the air like the dust that was, by this point in the weekend, filling festivalgoers' lungs in every mud-caked thoroughfare.

The Nice Guys star, a busker in his youth, is not the first actor to have reached for the mic at Worthy Farm. Jeff Goldblum regaled Glastonbury crowds in 2019 with a set of easy-listening jazz numbers — as well as the theme from *Jurassic Park*, because, well, this was Jeff Goldblum after all. But Crowe, to his credit, took the brief seriously: there were to be no *Gladiator* motifs, no rotely warbled "One Day More".

Ahead of the gig, he told Sky News: "Chuck all the celebrity bullshit aside, or the fame for doing some other job. You'll see a serious band and it's full of monster musicians who know what they're doing."

Watching him charge enthusiastically (if a little bit David Brentishly) through covers of songs such as Dire Straits's "Romeo and Juliet" and a boldly re-arranged "Folsom Prison Blues", as well as his own compositions, I found it hard not to be swept along by the pure exuberant eccentricity of it. Speaking between songs, Crowe was incredibly charismatic, delivering name-dropping anecdotes; doing impressions; embarking on an unexpected rant against the city of Southampton. (And his singing was pretty good!) This was, in a peculiar way, exactly what Glastonbury is all about.

The festival's Acoustic Stage is a billing that, for many musicians, represents a lifelong career goal. For Crowe to stroll into a plum set simply – or, if we're being generous, partly – by virtue of his Hollywood celebrity, represents on some level the creeping commercialisation of the UK's foremost left-wing, ostensibly anti-capitalist music festival. But in another sense,

there's something heartening about seeing Crowe live out his rock-star dreams in front of a large and adoring crowd.

Big, glittery acts such as Dua Lipa or Coldplay may dominate the headlines and TV coverage, but the festival belongs just as much to the unknowns

Glastonbury has always been a music-first festival, but it's never just about the music. The yearly feral scramble for tickets always takes place long before the lineup is announced; people want to come for the community, the enormity, the vibes. It celebrates not just musicians but the abstract and specific joy of live music, the sheer vibrant act of performance. Crowe, bearded and imposing – one might even say gladiatorial – was as alive and present on stage as he's ever been.

Earlier in the weekend, before any of the big acts had played so much as a note, the festival's founder (and formerly the nation's most famous farmer, until Jeremy Clarkson purloined his crown) Sir Michael Eavis came out onto the Park Stage to perform a short set of cover versions – Neil Young's "Journey Through the Past" and Elvis Presley's "Suspicious Minds" among them.

Eavis, now 88 years old, sat in a wheelchair and sang words from printed lyric sheets; it was profoundly moving. Like Crowe, Eavis is no great singer. (Though also like Crowe, he was girded by a group of uber-competent instrumentalists.) But music is often about more than just God-given pipes. It is an art form that is, or should be, available to anybody. Can't write music? Play covers. Can't sing? Just give it the old college try.

Big, glittery acts such as Dua Lipa or Coldplay may dominate the headlines and TV coverage, but the festival belongs just as much to the unknowns. A couple of hours before Crowe's set, the Acoustic Stage also played host to Fun Lovin' Crime Writers. You most likely haven't heard of them: they're a band comprising professional genre novelists, playing earnest if unvarnished covers of big, foot-stomping hits: Talking Heads; Elton John; The Beatles.

Wearing a bespoke shirt reading "The Gang Plays Glastonbury" in the style of an *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* episode title, singer Chris Brookmyre looked genuinely buzzing to be there, as did the rest of them. They're one of hundreds of barely known acts to litter Worthy Farm's myriad stages; this giddy excitement to be playing there is something they all have in common. Among artists perhaps even more than punters, Glastonbury is a superspreader event for broad, goofy grins.

Crowe's set obviously did not have the same power to it as Eavis's; the history and significance of the octogenarian organiser imbued his appearance with a rare and delicate heft. But it was, in its own way, a potent deconstruction, an eschewing of celebrity in favour of something real, and immediate, and earnest. Actors spend their lives wearing masks; Crowe here was showing his real face. "Can he sing?" is not the right question at this point. So here's a better one: are you not entertained?

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Bellingham heroics saves England from sorry defeat

England Bellingham (90+5), Kane (91 ET)	2
Slovakia Schranz (25)	1



‘Who else?’: Jude Bellingham applauds the fans after the match last night (PA)

MIGUEL DELANEY

The sort of moment that makes it all worth it, and maybe helps England find their true worth as a team.

If Gareth Southgate's side had to put everyone through one of the worst displays of his entire tenure – that also looked set to end it – that at least produced one of the great tournament moments. Jude Bellingham's divine intervention also keeps them in Euro 2024, after a scarcely credible 2-1 extra-time win over Slovakia. "Who else?" the 21-year-old said in celebrating his spectacular 95th-minute winner. How else? Can there be a better way to offer a moment of salvation than a spectacular overhead kick with almost the final touch of the game?

To say it was something out of nothing would be extreme understatement, given that this was maybe the entire Southgate era saved, and that out of a poor personal and collective performance.

This was why the manager kept Bellingham on. He is capable of doing that. England should still be doing much more of it. Maybe this is the turning point for both the Real Madrid forward and the team. That is the potential effect of moments like this, and how they can spark a team. The power could certainly be felt in the stadium, as well as the relief.

The impact could similarly be witnessed on both sides. Slovakia immediately went from lifting themselves off their knees in disappointment to having to stop a set-piece. They failed, as an English side with a new energy saw substitute Ivan Toney tee up Harry Kane for the match-winner. The captain needed that as much as anyone else, in what is maybe another influential moment. Maybe he will now find more goals, and life. There's new hope for what's next, rather than gloom.

On an evening when there was so much history swirling around, and Southgate came so close to being consigned to the national team's football past, there were obvious precedents to draw on. One was from a tournament that has already been discussed in how England can grow late into a campaign, which was David

Platt's extra-time match-winner against Belgium at the same stage of the 1990 World Cup. That goal was even as spectacular as this, too. Can this be similar?

The very fact all this is being said during such a stirring victory illustrates how much still has to change.

The goal won't magically solve everything. England's quarter-final opponents, Switzerland, will be looking at this and seeing potential flaws to exploit all over the pitch.

This win might still be just putting off the inevitable rather than a moment of fate. It could be just the set-up for worse rather than salvation.

That is entirely dependent on Southgate's decisions from here on in. He must now surely accept this system just doesn't work.



Ivan Schranz of Slovakia celebrates scoring his team's goal (Getty Images)

The potential loss of the game came when this was how the players were set up, and that was when they looked their worst.

There were huge gaps all over the pitch, and especially in front of an exposed defence. That isn't to blame any individual player, but merely to state it is a product of what was wrong. Almost nothing in it works. Declan Rice found himself 15 yards in front of where he should have been for the Slovakian goal, which had already been repeatedly warned.

The move that worked for the goal had been tried minutes before, too. For this, Ondrej Duda easily won a duel against a listless-looking Foden. The ball was played up to Juraj Kucka and his physicality, with David Strelec's finesse caused problems. After exposing Kyle Walker with one pass, England's entire defence was undone. Schranz was played in and, even though he could have had a penalty from a panicked and desperate challenge, but he stayed on his feet to put the ball beyond Jordan Pickford.

It was coming, and no less than Slovakia deserved.

This is what Switzerland will be focusing on. Southgate instead needs to focus on what works, although that remains unclear.



Bellingham and Kane address the supporters after the game (EPA)

What was successful in desperately chasing a 1-0 deficit against a weaker side in a last 16 game isn't necessarily what is required for a hugely testing quarter-final against a surging Swiss team.

The balance of the attack clearly needs to be altered. As to whether that is bringing in Cole Palmer or Anthony Gordon or both remains to be seen. Although England had improved when the former came on, it wasn't like that was where the goals or even really the pressure had come from. Slovakia had been relatively comfortable in the final moments of normal play, although tiring.

Rice hit the post with a long shot. Milan Skriniar was having to stretch that bit more to meet headers.

England eventually won a throw, which Walker launched. It was as rudimentary as you could get for a moment of salvation that was as spectacular as you can get.



Kane after scoring the winner yesterday (FA)

Bellingham has represented a tactical issue in himself and where he goes, but he more than solved it here.

The next goal did seem inevitable. Within minutes of extra-time restarting, Kane had plundered a header.

England were really through from that moment, even though there was still 25 minutes of needless retreat. Some things don't change. Slovakia had given all they can, mind. England need to find much more.

At the least, nothing about their tournament now seems predictable, right down to Southgate's line-up. He has to change, and it might well change Euro 2024.

Bellingham, fittingly, might already have turned everything on its head.

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Southgate gets lastminute lifeline to redeem himself



Gareth Southgate triumphed in his game of brinkmanship: part by accident, part by design (FA)

RICHARD JOLLY
SENIOR FOOTBALL WRITER

There was a minute left to run on Gareth Southgate's reign, the clock ticking down on a dismal tournament that seemed a demoralising end to the second-finest tenure of any England manager. Until an airborne Jude Bellingham intervened. Until Bellingham underlined that he has that combination of talent,

technique and temperament to offer the promise of greatness. There had been reasons for Southgate to replace him: booked for a rash lunge at Lukas Haraslin, he had been unwise enough to lay his hands on the referee. He had endured a poor game.

But there was an instance of brilliance; a bicycle kick, an injury-time equaliser, a lifeline, a goal that may reshape England's history as well as Southgate's time in charge. "Who else?" Bellingham shouted. The evidence of the previous 94 minutes was that no one was likely to score for England. The closest they came to a first-half shot on target was when, after 10 seconds, Dennis Vavro belted the ball at Harry Kane's head and it rebounded 30 yards to Martin Dubravka. For much of it, they were simultaneously going nowhere, going backwards and going out. But Bellingham's European Championship has now included two glorious goals, albeit with too little in the 347 minutes that separated them.

And Southgate looked in thrall to his supposed superstars, ignoring the evidence of the game, hoping against hope they would deliver, relying on reputations. But some reputations are forged for a reason. Southgate had looked passive for much of a traumatic night in Gelsenkirchen. Yet here he is, in a fourth consecutive quarter-final, after goals from Bellingham and Kane. He triumphed in his game of brinkmanship: part by accident, part by design.

It is safe to say the masterplan probably did not include Bukayo Saka playing right wing-back and Eberechi Eze filling in on the left. When England searched for replacements to the injured Luke Shaw, few considered the Crystal Palace winger. Yet when England scored their winner, Saka and Eze were his wing-backs. Southgate, the manager often deemed too cautious, ended up going for broke: to save his job, to salvage England's Euro 2024.



The head coach with his saviour Jude Bellingham (Reuters)

It was a close-run thing. The last sound he may have heard before the final whistle was of boos, when he took off Phil Foden. Who, at that stage, had looked the best of the front four, the undroppables and, it appeared, the incompatibles. While others called for revolution at half-time, Southgate sent the same side out again. He was widely thought to have delivered the most pertinent criticism of Sven-Goran Eriksson from within the dressing room – "We needed Churchill, we got Iain Duncan Smith" – and he risked looking like the Swede: wedded to the big names, unable to muster a rousing half-time team-talk.

The accusation is that England are constrained in Southgate's straitjacket. Certainly their four performances in Euro 2024 have been mediocre at best. Yet there was some imagination to Southgate's eventual switches: first Cole Palmer came on – making Saka the second of the night's left-backs – followed by Eze and then Ivan Toney.

If the Brentford striker was to be involved on such a stage, the impression was that it would be as a specialist penalty taker. He emerged instead as a target man. After Eze's miscued volley, he headed the ball back across the box for Kane to apply the finishing touch. The two goalscorers then posed for the picture, arms outstretched. It was one indelible image of the night.

The other was Bellingham, his feet higher than his head, turning the game, reversing a trend. Southgate's side have lost leads in crucial knockout ties: to Croatia, to Italy. He has been faulted for the changes he didn't make, for delaying too long and letting the tide turn. Here he took off Kane and Bellingham: but not when trailing 1-0, but leading 2-1 after their comeback. Ezri Konsa, who will rarely replace Bellingham, became the fourth left-back of the evening.

And England saw off Slovakia; just. In Southgate's time in charge, they have prospered by beating the lesser sides in knockout ties. They have never come as close to winning one. So much for being in the easy half of the draw. England contrived to make it look fearsomely tough. Admittedly, Southgate had never described it as such. As confusion became contagious, errors infectious, they lacked the clarity of thought that had marked Southgate's most successful sides. England had a paralysing sense of uncertainty, looking slow against Slovakia.

But they insist they have spirit and, belatedly, they proved it. They have Southgate, a manager who was first an asset and then seemed to be inhibiting them. And they had Bellingham, the man for the moment. This was his version of David Beckham against Greece in 2001, rescuing a wretched display with individual inspiration. And ensuring that, unconvincing and underwhelming as England remain, they are still in Euro 2024.

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Spain turn on the style as Germany challenge awaits

Spain Rodri (39), Ruiz Pena (51), Williams (75), Olmo (83)	4
Georgia Le Normand (18 og)	1



Nico Williams was the standout player for La Roja last night (Getty)

KARL MATCHETT

Two sides who could scarcely have more different tactical ideas and playing styles. Two sides who have polar opposite histories, in international footballing terms, too.

Georgia's men's side had never been to a major international tournament before this summer, let alone scored a goal or won a game. Or even, if we can entertain such fanciful notions, of reaching the knockout stage. Spain won the European Championship as recently as 2012, reached the semis last time out and were world champions only 14 years ago.

Football heritage and history isn't only made up of the men's Euros and World Cup, though, so the true contextual national gap is even wider: Georgia's women have never been to a tournament either, whereas La Roja are the reigning world and Women's Nations League champions. There is quite simply an enormous gap between the two, a chasm so large in football terms that it almost defies explanation.

But for 21 minutes at Euro 2024, there was an almighty shock on. For 21 awe-inspiring minutes, an incredible dream received the most raucous, sensational backing from the stands and one of the very biggest of favourites were truly, visibly shaken.

There's another difference between the two nations though, and this one ultimately played to Spain's advantage: while Georgia's approach is heavily emotional, feeding on the frenzied support and the insatiable excitement at launching anything as mundane as a counterattack, Spain's players are more assured and expectant, comfortable in the knowledge that the game is long and they can control most of it. That comes from experience. That comes from time at the top.

Most of all, that comes from winning.

Rodri, as he has so often, played the part of chief rescuer, though Nico Williams was the true star of the show. Five minutes on from giving his teammates a double-handed "*calma, calma*" sermon – while in possession, no less – Spain's defensive midfielder took the ball on the edge of the Georgia box and

planted a shot so far into the bottom corner of the net that even the excellent Giorgi Mamardashvili couldn't reach it, an equaliser six minutes before the break.

Spain needed that; while they had absolutely dominated right from kick-off, the previous 10 minutes had grown more strained, more frantic, going to ground more easily in search of cheap wins and looking around in frustration at each other when yet another 60-yard counterattack somehow left them two-vs-two at the back.



Georgia took a shock lead early on (Getty Images)

That was a direct result of the opener, Robin Le Normand the unfortunate defender who bundled into his own net under pressure, meaning Georgia led the tie after 19 per cent possession and precisely zero shots. It was also the first time Spain had conceded at Euro 2024, and therefore the first time they have had to come from behind.

Turkey might just be a nose in front in tournament terms for wildest and noisiest fans, but Georgia added a whole lot of cumulative decibels to their tally in Cologne: non-stop pre-match, rousing at kick-off, explosive every time they had reason to cheer their team on thereafter, and plenty of times when they really didn't.

The Georgian fans might scream loudest when Khvicha Kvaratskhelia gets on the ball, but in this game as in their previous ones, Georges Mikautadze was often the best outlet,

the most daring and dangerous runner, the forward with the eye for a pass as well as for a gap in the defence.

Even so, the No 7 almost had the entire stadium on their feet to applaud him minutes after the restart, Kvaratskhelia dancing past two challenges and shooting from fully 50 yards with Unai Simon out of his goal, missing the post by only a whisker.

It did miss, though – and within minutes it was 2-1 in the other direction.

Lamine Yamal had looked a little off-kilter in the first half, perhaps the still-16-year-old just slightly unnerved for once by either occasion or atmosphere, but he certainly didn't hide and soon showed his class. First, his free-kick was brilliantly parried away by the overworked Mamardashvili. Then the winger was found again by another sweeping pass, tucked in on his left foot and delivered the perfect cross to the far post, with Fabian Ruiz given the task of nodding in from close range. Even then the Georgia No 1 almost stopped it, but it would only have been delaying the inevitable at this point.



Nico Williams celebrates after scoring Spain's third (Getty Images)

Spain sensed their moment, and pressed the advantage. Dani Olmo came on and almost buried a low strike soon after. Yamal missed a sitter, after a defensive lapse. Georgia made subs to keep the energy and intent up, but forays forward were ever-

more infrequent by the time they passed the hour mark and cost them once they had to start to overcommit.

Williams was irrepressible all night long, beating his man and linking play, setting up chances and keeping the tempo high. He deserved to get on the scoresheet after earlier assisting Rodri and duly did so, hammering in a brilliant solo third on the counterattack before Olmo hit a fourth.

For Georgia, this was simply a step too far after a truly historical summer. For Spain, this was a new test in so many ways, but they've come through it in familiar style: by simply winning.

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Questions to answer over Djokovic's form and fitness



Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic ahead of this year's Wimbledon, where the Spaniard lifted the title 12 months ago (Photos Getty)

JAMIE BRAIDWOOD
AT WIMBLEDON

Alexander Zverev may have been missing something when he declared Wimbledon as the "most open Championships that we've had in 20 years". Last year, Carlos Alcaraz became the first man other than Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal or Andy Murray to win the Wimbledon title since 2002, a victory

that signalled the start of a new era. But Djokovic, the man Alcaraz described as “superhuman” after returning from knee surgery in just three weeks, is still here. From looking out of Wimbledon, his recovery from a torn meniscus defies belief.

A shot at a record eighth title remains alive thanks to a surgeon hailed by Djokovic as his “MVP”. When the 37-year-old withdrew from his French Open quarter-final after slipping on the Paris clay, his chances of being fit for Wimbledon appeared slim. He was given a timescale of three to six weeks after undergoing surgery. Wimbledon just made the cut.

But Djokovic needed to come back sooner than that. Nothing was left to chance as he consulted a range of voices who had recovered from similar procedures. As he looked for reassurance, Djokovic spoke to fellow players Taylor Fritz and Stan Wawrinka, as well as others outside tennis, such as the former Milan and PSG striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic and downhill skiing champion Lindsey Vonn.



Djokovic has trained with a brace on his right knee after undergoing surgery three weeks ago

Encouraged by what he heard, Djokovic got to work. The Serbian now appears to have won his race with time to spare. He arrived at Wimbledon last Sunday and was so confident about his condition after hitting on the grass that he flew to Munich on Tuesday for Serbia’s final group game against Denmark at Euro 2024. A day later, Djokovic was back in Wimbledon for more practice. He has played “intense” sets with Jannik Sinner, Daniil

Medvedev and Emil Ruusuvuori. There has been no pain, swelling, or inflammation. Djokovic's knee, in other words, feels good to go, his body ready for the start of another gruelling two weeks.

But the form of the 24-time grand slam champion remains a different question, one that has been overshadowed by his fitness race. Djokovic has not reached a final this year, let alone won a tournament. His comprehensive defeat to Sinner in the Australian Open semi-final perhaps said more about the Italian's rise than Djokovic's waning powers, but his run of form from Indian Wells into the clay-court swing featured uncharacteristic defeats in early rounds. Djokovic's surprise split from coach Goran Ivanisevic and other members of his team has been followed by a title drought and others, in return, are sensing an opportunity.

What is not in doubt is the hunger and drive to win an eighth Wimbledon. Simply appearing at the Championships proved too big a pull for Djokovic to ignore, even if it required rushing back from knee surgery to do so. At 37 and with the Olympic Games coming up in late July, Djokovic's insistence to return to Wimbledon even surprised his wife Jelena, who questioned why he was taking a chance on his fitness by coming back so quickly. Djokovic admitted his decision was "less of a rational and logical explanation" and "more of an inner feeling and sensation". Even playing remains a risk, as much as it has impressed the likes of Alcaraz.



Carlos Alcaraz is the defending champion and will attempt the Roland Garros-Wimbledon double

The Spaniard is the favourite but returning as defending champion brings different pressures and expectations. His build-up has been different, too, given he went that bit deeper at the French Open, where he won his third grand slam title after coming from two sets down to defeat Zverev in the final, and went out early at Queen's following defeat to the British No 1 Jack Draper. Alcaraz, too, is attempting to pull off the rare feat of winning Roland Garros and Wimbledon in the same summer, a double that has only been achieved by legends of the sport.

Alcaraz, though, is set to take to it with the same infectious spirit that lifted him to the Wimbledon title and ended Djokovic's supremacy on Centre Court. "Let's say I'm going to try," he smiled. "Obviously, I want to put my name on that short list to win Roland Garros and Wimbledon in the same year. I know that there's going to be a really difficult and big challenge for me, but I think I'm ready to do it."

Should Alcaraz return to the semi-finals, there is a good chance he will face world No 1 Sinner after the top two players in the game landed in the same half of the draw. Sinner and Alcaraz's trajectories can often mirror each other and there are further similarities ahead of Wimbledon. Now, it is Sinner who arrives at SW19 as a grand slam champion for the first time, and having won his first grass-court title in Halle last week.



Jannik Sinner arrives in SW19 as the men's No 1

“I feel like, especially on grass when you have a good confidence with also yourself, it can help you,” Sinner said. “Obviously, last week for me was an important week. Last year, I played semis here, so in my mind, I know that I can play also some good tennis on this surface.” Sinner, too, has recent experiences to learn from, which has been a key part of the Italian’s rise to world No 1 over the past year. It was the 22-year-old’s straight-sets defeat to Djokovic in last year’s semi-finals that drove the Italian to search for further answers in his game and led to his big breakthrough at the Australian Open.

Could someone else have theirs at the All England Club? Zverev could afford to act with a certain bullishness as he arrived at Wimbledon, declaring he could win it despite having never made it past the fourth round. “It’s the first time I really feel like I’m here to be a competitor, to maybe win the title,” said the German fourth seed, who has reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open and French Open final. “After Roger came Rafa, Novak, Andy. It was always a very limited amount of guys who were actually able to compete and to win the tournaments. I really feel it’s different this year.”

Andy Murray will make a decision on whether to play singles at Wimbledon this evening, ahead of what are expected to be his final Championships, but revealed he still does not have “100 per cent feeling” in his right leg after undergoing an operation to remove a spinal cyst last weekend.



Andy Murray played a set at the All England Club yesterday

The two-time Wimbledon champion is scheduled to face Tomas Machac in the first round tomorrow and although the 37-year-old says his condition is “getting better every day”, Murray confirmed there is a risk the wound in his back reopens by returning to competitive action so soon after surgery.

Murray is determined to appear at Wimbledon for one final time before retiring and has received a wildcard to play doubles with his brother Jamie, which is less demanding physically. The doubles competition starts later in the week and would allow Murray to bid farewell to Wimbledon if he is not fit enough for singles.

“It’s been obviously a tough 10 days or so since Queen’s,” the former world No 1 said. “Had the operation on the back, which wasn’t insignificant. I’ve just been trying to do everything that I can to try and get ready to start the tournament here.

“I don’t know if that’s going to be enough. I’ve been practising for the last few days. I played a set today. It went pretty well, but I still don’t have 100 per cent sort of feeling and sensation in my leg yet.

“It’s getting better every single day. Like I said a few days ago, I want to give it every single chance that I can to get there. I’m going to play another set again tomorrow. I’m doing some physical testing in the morning to see sort of how far off I am from a physical perspective. Then I will probably make a decision tomorrow evening after that.”

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Russell gifted Austrian win after Verstappen collision



George Russell won a dramatic Austrian Grand Prix at Red Bull Ring yesterday (Getty)

ALAN BALDWIN
PHILIP DUNCAN
IN SPIELBERG, AUSTRIA

Mercedes' George Russell celebrated a surprise Austrian Grand Prix win yesterday after Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen and McLaren's Lando Norris collided late in the race while fighting for the lead.

Norris was left demanding an apology from a “reckless, stupid and desperate” Verstappen following their dramatic coming together. Oscar Piastri finished second for McLaren, 1.906 seconds behind, with Ferrari’s Carlos Sainz taking third at Spielberg’s scenic Red Bull Ring.

The gifted victory was a first for once-dominant Mercedes since November 2022, when Russell also triumphed in Brazil 33 races ago, and only the second of the Briton’s Formula One career. “It’s not over until it’s over,” said a jubilant Russell after a race that saved its excitement for the last 20 laps, when the simmering battle between Verstappen and Norris suddenly boiled over.

“The team have done an amazing job to put us in this fight. You’ve got to be there at the end to pick up the pieces and that’s where we were,” added Russell. “I knew it [the collision] was a possibility. You are always dreaming.”

The race will be remembered for Norris’s electrifying duel with Verstappen which ended with the British driver out of the race and Verstappen’s driving – blasted as “dangerous” by his rival – back in the spotlight.



Max Verstappen leads the field into turn one (Getty)

Prior to the 71-lap race, Norris might have considered Verstappen his closest ally among the grid’s 20 drivers. But when asked if their friendship might now be affected, a

forthright Norris replied: “It depends what he says. If he says he did nothing wrong, then I will lose a lot of respect for that.

“If he admits to being a bit stupid, running into me, and just being a bit reckless, then I will have a small amount of respect for it. I expected tough, fair, respectful on-the-edge racing, and I don’t feel like that is what I got. It seemed a little bit desperate from his side and it didn’t need to be that way.”

Verstappen, who finished fifth, still extended his championship lead to 81 points over Norris. Russell had started third, with Verstappen on pole and Norris alongside the Red Bull on the front row, but the win was handed to the Mercedes driver after 64 of the 71 laps.

Verstappen was more than seven seconds clear of Norris when a slow 6.5-second final pitstop on lap 52 allowed Norris, who stopped at the same time in 2.9 seconds, to come right back at his rival. On lap 55, Norris made his first bid for the lead at turn three but Verstappen put his Red Bull on the apex to stay ahead. “He reacted to my move and you are not allowed to do that,” protested Norris.

Three laps later and Norris was at it again. He launched his McLaren down the inside of Verstappen at the third bend but he carried too much speed, and the Red Bull man swooped back ahead.



A rueful-looking Verstappen with Aston Martin’s Lance Stroll (Getty)

Norris was on the radio, taking aim at Verstappen's tactics. "He cannot keep moving after I move," said the Englishman. "It is just dangerous. We will have a big shunt."

With eight laps to run, an increasingly frustrated Norris tried for a third time. Defending his position, Verstappen ran off the road at the third corner, and he re-joined the asphalt with his lead still intact. "He has to give the position back," said Norris, who was now on the ragged edge, and about to be handed a five-second penalty for repeatedly exceeding track limits.

Verstappen hit back over the radio. "He forced me off," said the Dutchman. "He just divebombed me again. That is not how you overtake."

On the next lap, the inevitable happened as the two drivers collided. Again, at turn three, Norris moved to Verstappen's outside, but the Dutchman jinked ever so slightly to his left and banged rear wheels with the McLaren.

Verstappen suffered a left-rear puncture and Norris's tyre was also shredded. The two limped back to the pits for repairs and Russell charged into the lead. Verstappen emerged in fifth but Norris' race was over.

The four-man panel – including former British driver Johnny Herbert – took a dim view of Verstappen's driving, hitting him with a 10-second sanction and two points on his licence. Verstappen was deemed "predominantly at fault" for the collision.

"I expect a tough battle against Max," said Norris. "He has always been like that. I expect aggression and I expect him to be pushing the limits, but there are times when he goes a little bit too far. It is only one incident, but I am disappointed. He ruined my race and he destroyed my car."

Verstappen, who had multiple collisions with Lewis Hamilton during their 2021 championship battle, described his punishment as "ridiculous" over the radio. "I did not move under braking," he said. "A few of his moves were late divebombs. He was sending it up the inside and hoping I would

steer out of it. That is not how you race. Ten seconds seemed severe for me. It didn't feel like there was anything aggressive that went on."

Verstappen was then asked if it will be difficult to move past his collision with Norris.

"It should not be," said Verstappen. "We are racing drivers and we don't want to crash. When you are fighting for the lead you have tough battles. I am annoyed and he is annoyed and that is fair. We will speak but now is not the right moment. It is better to cool down. I cannot comment on how that will evolve. It will just come naturally."



Lando Norris demanded an apology after his collision with Verstappen (AP)

While Russell took over at the front, Piastri – demoted from third to seventh in Saturday's qualifying – swept past Sainz at turn six on lap 65 before a virtual safety car was deployed due to debris on the track. That created some more nervous tension but in the end, Russell's win was safe.

"I know it's only my fourth podium in F1 but so close to a win, it hurts a little bit," said Piastri.

Mercedes' seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton was fourth, despite a five-second penalty for crossing the white line at the pit lane entry. Nico Hulkenberg was sixth for Haas, 16.8 seconds behind Verstappen after the penalty was applied, in a

major boost for that team, while Red Bull's Sergio Perez finished seventh and Kevin Magnussen eighth for Haas.

Daniel Ricciardo gave Red Bull-owned RB two precious points in ninth, a day before his 35th birthday, and Pierre Gasly took the final point for Renault-owned Alpine after a lively earlier battle with teammate Esteban Ocon.

Red Bull now have 355 points to Ferrari's 291, McLaren's 268 and Mercedes' 196. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finished 11th after having to pit for a new front wing following a squeeze with Piastri and Perez into the first corner. Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso set the fastest lap but without taking a bonus point as the Spaniard finished 18th.

After the most dominant season in F1 history last year, with Red Bull winning 21 of 22 races, four different teams have now won in 2024. Verstappen has won seven of the 11 but Ferrari and McLaren have also celebrated success with Silverstone next weekend likely to be another close battle.

PA

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Sport

Sports news in brief



Tadej Pogacar is the new leader of the Tour de France (AP)

Pogacar takes yellow jersey but Vauquelin wins stage two of Tour

Tadej Pogacar assumed the leader's yellow jersey, as Kevin Vauquelin won stage two of the Tour de France from a breakaway in Bologna, yesterday.

Pogacar, a little over a month from his dominant victory in the Giro d'Italia, ignited his bid to double up in the Grand Tours with an attack late on the second ascent of the steep San Luca climb. Asked if he had wanted to go for the stage win, Pogacar said: "No, because the breakaway was too hard and in this

weather, this heat, it would be unnecessary to kill my teammates." *PA*

Jones heads Team GB Olympic taekwondo squad

Double Olympic champion Jade Jones will spearhead Great Britain's four-strong taekwondo challenge at Paris 2024. The 31-year-old Welsh athlete will equal Sarah Stevenson's record of four Olympic Games for the squad.

"This will be my fourth Olympic Games, fifth including the Youth Olympics," said Jones, who became Britain's first taekwondo gold medallist at London 2012, retaining her title in Rio de Janeiro. "This one feels extra special, almost like the very first again when I was 19." *PA*

Radical changes by England for Test side vs West Indies

England have unveiled a radical shake-up of their Test side, dropping Jonny Bairstow, Ben Foakes and Jack Leach, and calling up three uncapped players.

Wicketkeeper-batter Jamie Smith is joined by two new seamers, Gus Atkinson and Dillon Pennington, for the forthcoming series against the West Indies, while spinner Shoaib Bashir has been preferred to his Somerset teammate Leach in a changing of the guard.

In what appears to be a watershed moment for the team, and the first stage of Bazball 2.0, head coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes have carried out major surgery on their squad. *PA*

Pereira beats Prochazka to retain UFC belt

Alex Pereira's remarkable MMA run continued on Saturday, as the Brazilian knocked out Jiri Prochazka for the second time in seven months, retaining the UFC light-heavyweight title.

In the final second of round one, Pereira dropped Prochazka with a signature left hook. Then, in the opening moments of round two, Pereira dropped the Czech with a head kick. Pereira then finished the former champion on the canvas with a ground and pound.

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