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# THE WEEK

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THE BEST OF THE BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

## The betting scandal Another crisis for the Tories

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## THE MOONWATCH IN WHITE

Inspired by its history of space exploration, the most iconic chronograph on Earth now has a white dial. The Speedmaster Moonwatch has borrowed its latest look from the colours of astronaut spacesuits, while adding a glossy lacquered finish for the very first time. The white dial and red touches are also a tribute to the ALASKA I prototype that OMEGA produced in 1969, creating an authentic link to the Speedmaster's pioneering past. Worn on a comfortable and vintage-style bracelet, this stainless steel Moonwatch shines the spotlight on a new era of adventure.

  
OMEGA

## What happened

## The betting scandal

The Tories' election campaign was thrown into further disarray by a string of fresh reports about party insiders who had bet on the date of the general election. The story began a fortnight ago when The Guardian revealed that Craig Williams – a Tory candidate and Rishi Sunak's parliamentary private secretary – had staked £100 on a July election three days before the PM named the date. This wager prompted Ladbrokes to alert the Gambling Commission, which launched an inquiry into last-minute bets on the election date. Last week, more people were drawn into the scandal, including an unnamed police officer in Sunak's bodyguard unit, a second Tory candidate named Laura Saunders, and two Tory Party officials.

Sunak bowed to pressure on Tuesday and withdrew party support from Williams and Saunders. He had previously insisted that he would await the outcome of the Gambling Commission inquiry. Labour, which criticised him for not acting sooner, on the same day withdrew support from one of its candidates, Kevin Craig, after he admitted betting against himself. Alister Jack, the Scottish Secretary, admitted placing three bets on the election date, one of which was successful.



Craig Williams: staked £100

## What the editorials said

For understandable reasons, the Tories stopped sharing a campaign advert last week that featured a roulette wheel and the slogan: "If you bet on Labour, you can never win." The timing of the ad was particularly unfortunate, said The Independent, but in keeping with a hapless campaign that appears to be in a state of "accelerated meltdown". The damage done by this latest row, which follows the controversy over Sunak's early return from the D-Day commemorations, could "hardly have come at a worse moment". It's disastrous for the Tories, agreed the FT. For many undecided voters, this will be "a final straw".

The facts behind the scandal remain unclear, said The Guardian. Some of those involved have expressly denied wrongdoing, and it has yet to be established that any of them were privy to inside information about the election date. What is evident, however, is Sunak's poor leadership in the matter. Why did he take so long to withdraw support from Williams' and Saunders' candidacies, hiding behind the need to wait for the regulator's findings? It was an indefensible stance when the protection officer had been suspended, the two Tory officials – the party's campaign director and chief data officer – had taken leave of absence, and Williams had already admitted to a "huge error of judgement".

## What happened

## A dangerous deal?

President Putin issued a challenge to the US and its allies last week by agreeing a mutual defence treaty with North Korea. Under the "comprehensive strategic partnership" signed with President Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang, the two countries commit to supporting each other in the event of an outside attack. The pact also allows for the export of advanced Russian military technology to North Korea, and the provision of military assistance if the other is at war. The US says North Korea has already sent millions of shells to Russia for use in Ukraine.

Kim described the deal as "peace-loving and defensive", but South Korea warned it would escalate tensions across the region. Putin said that supplying weapons to Pyongyang would be an appropriate response to the decision by Nato nations to provide Ukraine with missiles capable of hitting targets inside Russia.



Putin and Kim in Pyongyang

## What the editorials said

"The Putin-Kim bromance is a dangerous liaison" that has implications for the entire world, said The Independent.

The "real prize" sought by Kim is access to Russian expertise in nuclear weaponry. And if he were to learn, for example, how to launch intercontinental missiles from submarines, it would bring a "nuclear conflagration in East Asia" one step closer. For the North Korean regime, accustomed to diplomatic isolation, the pact represents a "significant boost", said The Observer. As for Putin, he can chalk it up as another major staging post in his effort to build an "anti-democratic, anti-Western international alliance".

"A red line" has been crossed in Russia's relations with South Korea, said The Chosun Ilbo (Seoul). Putin has shown himself willing to ignore the UN sanctions on Pyongyang that Russia itself helped to introduce as a permanent member of the Security Council. So far, South Korea has held off supplying its world-leading weaponry to Ukraine. In the light of Putin's "betrayal", it is now seriously reconsidering that decision.

## It wasn't all bad

A man who spent ten days lost in California's Santa Cruz Mountains was found alive this week – unharmed but 13kg lighter. Lukas McClish, 34, set off for a three-hour hike equipped with a torch and a pair of folding scissors; but for reasons that are not clear, he had no water, and was not wearing a shirt. He survived by foraging berries, and using his boot to scoop water out of creeks. He said he'd been shouting for help for 48 hours when rangers found him.

**Wildcats that were released in the Cairngorms in a bid to save the species from extinction in the UK have had kittens. The 19 captive-bred wildcats were fitted with GPS tracking collars, and set free in sites across the national park last summer. Conservationists began to suspect that some of the females had had kittens when their activity suddenly changed; then footage of kittens playing in long grass was captured by camera traps. It is a "major milestone", said Helen Senn of Saving Wildcats. "These births demonstrate that the process of breeding wildcats for release into the wild is working."**



A British teenager with severe epilepsy has become the first patient in the world to be fitted with a brain implant designed to keep seizures under control. Oran Knowlson, 13, developed epilepsy at the age of three, and had several seizures a day – sometimes hundreds – until a neurostimulator was implanted under his skull, as part of a trial at Great Ormond Street Hospital. His daytime seizures have now reduced by 80%. "The future looks hopeful, which I wouldn't have dreamed of saying six months ago," said his mother Justine.

## What the commentators said

“Political betting is not big business,” said Gus Carter in *The Spectator*. Less than half-a-million pounds has been wagered on the outcome of this election, whereas some £300m is put on the Grand National each year. But plenty of people in Westminster do bet. “A member of the Remain campaign is rumoured to have put £5,000 on Leave.” A House of Lords staffer told me that he bet against a candidate in the Tory leadership race as he knew there was loads of dirt on him. There’s a difference between betting on the basis of an educated hunch, or gossip, and insider trading, but the line between them can sometimes be “difficult to discern”.

You’d have thought that well-connected Tories would at least have had the sense to realise that betting on the election date looked bad, said Oliver Duff in *The i Paper*. In the “global league table of political scandal”, this is admittedly minor stuff. But it is “damaging in its simplicity”, as it requires no background knowledge to grasp and speaks directly to “the principles of trust and decency”. It’s the “arrogance” that offends, as much as the potential criminality, said Tom Harris in *The Daily Telegraph*. Thanks to the actions of these politicians, the Tories will be “synonymous with corruption and venality” for yet another generation of voters.

Michael Gove likened the affair to the “Partygate” scandal, said Gaby Hinsliff in *The Guardian*, when Tory politicians were likewise accused of operating outside the rules they set for others. The figures involved in the current scandal are relatively small. Williams bet £100, which at 5-1 odds would have won him £500. Yet the absence of massive rewards somehow only makes the affair more tawdry. “It’s on a par with raiding the office stationery cupboard after being sacked, and stupidly getting caught on the way out.” Given how much trouble the Tories were in already, this scandal may not in the end make that much difference to their electoral performance, but it has diminished Westminster as a whole by reinforcing the perception that “politics is just a game to elites”. This is the worst aspect of the affair, agreed Sam Power on *The Conversation*. It will lead more voters to believe that politicians are “all in it for themselves and, more worryingly, that they are all as bad as each other”.

## What next?

*BBC Newsnight* has revealed that up to 15 Tory candidates and officials are being investigated by the Gambling Commission, which wrote to all licensed bookmakers requesting information on anyone who stood to gain more than £199 by betting on the timing of the election. The Met Police says five further officers may be implicated.

The commission has the power to void bets that involve the use of inside information and can itself prosecute people for cheating, though it usually works with the Crown Prosecution Service. For charges to be brought under the Gambling Act, there would need to be evidence that a punter gained an “unfair advantage” as a result of information they knew to be “restricted”.

## What the commentators said

Arriving in Pyongyang for his first state visit in 24 years, Putin was given a “welcome fit for a tsar”, said Mark Galeotti in *The Daily Mail*. The streets were lined with “thousands of North Koreans” who cheered “fanatically” as he and his fellow dictator waved from the sunroof of a blacked-out Mercedes. But the “farcical display of idolatry” disguised a sinister shift. Having once been at the “top table of diplomacy” and a member of the G8, Russia is now, like North Korea, a pariah, sorely in need of friends. This is a relationship “forged of desperation” on both sides, said Con Coughlin in *The Daily Telegraph*. To prop up its basket-case economy, North Korea has accepted Russian oil, food and cash; in return it has sent Moscow arms for its war in Ukraine. Earlier this year, the US estimated that it had shipped 10,000 containers of munitions. As Moscow’s battlefield losses mount, it is running short of manpower too, said Robert Fox in *The Evening Standard*. In time, North Koreans may be sent over to toil in Russian factories.

“The elephant in the room” during the talks in Pyongyang was China, said Nectar Gan on CNN. It is the largest trading partner of both North Korea and Russia. Neither heavily sanctioned regime can afford to lose its goodwill, but President Xi will be eyeing this new alliance warily. What Xi wants, as he grapples with a host of domestic challenges, including a slowing economy, is “stability”. He does not want an emboldened Kim stirring up trouble on the Korean peninsula, said Katie Stallard in *The New Statesman*, or the start of a regional arms race that could see Japan or South Korea equipping themselves with nuclear weapons. Even so, last week’s pact reflects a worrying trend, said Max Boot in *The Washington Post*. “Russia, Iran, North Korea and China are all working together, to a greater or lesser degree, to challenge the US-led, rules-based international order.” A new “alignment of evil” is forming.

## What next?

The US sent a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to South Korea this week for trilateral naval exercises intended as a show of force by Washington, Seoul and Tokyo. In a joint statement, the three countries condemned in the “strongest possible terms” the “deepening military cooperation” between Moscow and Pyongyang.

Putin has warned of retaliation if South Korea makes “the big mistake” of sending lethal weapons to Ukraine. Under its current policy, Seoul only allows exports to countries that are at peace.

## THE WEEK

Partygate; crumbling public services; now the betting scandal. Trust in our politics is at an all-time low, the latest British Social Attitudes survey tells us: 79% are dissatisfied with how we’re governed. So what to do? In a joint letter to *The Times* this week, a covey of the great and the good – past and present mandarins, CEOs of prestigious NGOs, etc. – advanced their own remedies for restoring that trust. All entailed granting greater oversight of politicians – the appointments they make, their codes of behaviour – to civil servants and quangocrats: to folks like themselves, in short. Maybe that would help, but it does presuppose the problem lies solely with our elected, not our unelected, officials. I’m not so sure. This week we learn that the Government recently destroyed a staggering £1.4bn of PPE items bought during the pandemic from an NHS supplier called Full Support Healthcare. Public ire has been directed at the profits made by that supplier, whose owners bought a yacht and a £30m villa in Barbados shortly after: but the real scandal lies in the procurement protocols – devised by civil servants – that resulted in this epic waste. Last week we also learnt that four out of five locum GPs in England can’t find work in an NHS desperate for their services, because the rules of the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme – devised by civil servants – bar GP practices from using that extra money to employ doctors. To restore trust in government, maybe it’s our civil servants who need more oversight from our politicians.

**Jeremy O’Grady**

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## Controversy of the week

## Assange freed

“Finally,” said Duncan Campbell in *The Guardian*. “After more than five years locked inside HMP Belmarsh, Britain’s most secure prison, and seven years confined to the Ecuadorean embassy in London, Julian Assange can breathe some fresh, free air.” But “why, for heaven’s sake, has it taken so long”? It was the culmination of a 14-year saga, said James Landale on BBC News. Assange was first arrested in 2010, over allegations of sexual assault in Sweden. After he was ejected from Ecuador’s embassy – he had jumped bail and sought asylum there – and imprisoned, the US then sought to extradite him on charges related to WikiLeaks’s 2010 release of a vast cache of classified files leaked by the US military analyst Chelsea Manning. The deal that led to his liberty was “months in the making”. Under the agreement with US prosecutors, he pleaded guilty to one charge of violating the 1917 US Espionage Act; all other charges were dropped. The final hearing took place in the Northern Mariana Islands, a US territory in the Pacific, because Assange refused to set foot on the US mainland. He was then flown to his native Australia.



Assange: pleaded guilty to one charge

“Being at liberty is not equivalent to innocence or exoneration,” said *The Times*. Assange’s supporters hail him as a hero of press freedom, who exposed dangerous abuses during the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11. He is nothing of the sort. WikiLeaks “purloined” and put into the public domain, unredacted, hundreds of thousands of classified documents. Assange’s supporters often cite footage of a US air strike that killed Iraqi journalists. “But this genuinely newsworthy finding is exceptional.” WikiLeaks damaged US national security. It also “recklessly endangered the lives of dissidents; it is unknown how many lie dead.” The names of more than 100 Afghans who passed information on the Taliban to Western intelligence agencies were released. Later, in 2016, WikiLeaks also conspired with hackers to steal documents from the US Democratic Party, aiding Kremlin efforts to interfere in the presidential election. Assange is “the author of his misfortunes”.

It is “depressing but unsurprising” to find that, even now, “long-discredited untruths” about WikiLeaks are still being repeated, said Patrick Cockburn in *The i Paper*. A 120-strong Pentagon team sought to discover how many people had been endangered by its leaks; they found no evidence that anyone had died. What Assange did was “no different” to what Daniel Ellsberg, the Pentagon Papers whistleblower, did. He has ended up a “pariah”, partly because of the sexual assault cases, which expired. Whatever Assange was – publisher, journalist, anarchist, impresario – “he was not a spy”, said Alan Rusbridger in *The Independent*. And it was quite wrong to prosecute him as such. It’s good news that he is free, but the case sets a worrying precedent – for the US, and for the free world.

## Climate protests

Two Just Stop Oil protesters were arrested last week for spraying orange powder paint on parts of Stonehenge in Wiltshire. A video clip of the incident showed Niamh Lynch, 21, and Rajan Naidu, 73, covering three stones before being stopped by members of the public. There were fears that the powder would harm or discolour rare lichen on the stones, but English Heritage said they had managed to remove it using blown air and that there appeared to be no damage. Separately, tens of thousands of people took part in the Restore Nature Now march in London last Saturday. Backed by various groups, including the National Trust, the RSPB and Extinction Rebellion, it called on the UK’s political leaders to do more to restore and protect the natural world.

## Junior doctors’ strike

A five-day strike by junior doctors in England was due to start on Thursday, their 11th walkout since March 2023. It will end on 2 July – two days before the general election. The British Medical Association has said that it will not rule out more industrial action if its pay demands aren’t met. However, it will have to re-ballot its members in September to secure a mandate for further strikes.

## Spirit of the age

A new downbeat aesthetic has taken hold in parts of the fashion world, reports *The Guardian*. The look is varied, but its disparate elements – camouflage, combat boots, grungey plaid, goth-inspired make-up, bleached eyebrows and T-shirts emblazoned with nihilistic slogans – project the same grotty, greasy, crumpled energy. “I used to wipe away stains but now I don’t mind a little oil or a little spaghetti on my shorts,” a fashion-conscious 20-year-old told the paper. “I think it’s chic.”

Nearly all couples in the UK now live together before getting married, data from the Office for National Statistics has shown. In 1994, 59.6% of couples had shared a home before tying the knot; by 2022, that had risen to 91.3%.

## Good week for:

**U-turns**, after Volvo announced that its estate cars – beloved by the English middle classes for decades for their size, sturdiness and safety – would go back on sale in Britain, 11 months after they were axed. Confirming the reintroduction of its V60 and V90 models, the Swedish manufacturer said that it had experienced a “resurgence in demand” for its “estate products”.

**Queen**, after the rights to the band’s back catalogue, plus limited other rights, were reportedly sold to Sony for £1bn – a music industry record. This surpasses the sum paid for half of Michael Jackson’s catalogue, which is believed to have sold for \$600m.

## Bad week for:

**Northamptonshire Police**, with the dismissal of its chief constable for lying about his military record. Nick Adderley wore a medal issued to veterans of the Falklands War, though he was only 15 at the time; he claimed to have attended the Britannia Royal Naval College, when in fact his application had been rejected; and said that he’d spent ten years in the Royal Navy, when he had actually served two. He also falsely claimed to have been a lieutenant (he was an able seaman), and to have worked as a military negotiator in Haiti: he’d never set foot in the country.

**Princess Anne**, who was admitted to hospital with head wounds and concussion. It is not clear what happened (there were apparently no witnesses), but it seems that she was struck by a horse while walking on her Gatcombe Park estate. The Palace issued a statement saying the 73-year-old was “recovering well” but was being kept in hospital for a few days “as a precaution”.

## Poll watch

**66%** of adults in the US want their country to strengthen its commitments to address climate change, as do **73%** in China, **77%** in India and **93%** in Italy. Across 77 countries, **72%** are in favour of a quick transition away from fossil fuels, including in fossil fuel-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia (**75%**) and Nigeria (**89%**).

*United Nations Development Programme/University of Oxford*

**53%** of British adults don’t think they’d have anything in common to talk to Rishi Sunak about, if they met him at a party.  
*Public First/Daily Telegraph*

**43%** of undecided voters say that a large Labour majority would be “a bad thing for the country”.  
*YouGov/Times*



### Brussels

#### New Nato chief:

The outgoing Dutch PM Mark Rutte has won the race to become the next secretary general of Nato. Rutte (left), who announced his retirement from Dutch politics last year after 14

years at the helm, is a strong critic of the Kremlin and supporter of Ukraine, but is also known as a “Trump whisperer”, ever since Trump called him a “nice guy” at a tricky Nato summit in 2018. Seen as less hawkish than some Eastern European contenders for the job, he clinched it when Romania’s president, Klaus Iohannis, quit the race. Rutte’s four-year term will begin in October, when the current secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, stands down.

### Paris

**Macron isolated:** President’s Macron’s gamble in calling a snap parliamentary election – the first round is on Sunday – looks to have badly misfired. Polls suggest Marine Le Pen’s hard-right National Rally (RN) could win 35% of the vote, and that MPs from his own Renaissance party will lose dozens of seats. The RN also made the political weather this week when its president and would-be PM, Jordan Bardella, unveiled its manifesto: it calls for tough policies on immigration, a “big bang of authority” in schools and a clawback of France’s contributions to Brussels. Senior members of Macron’s party – including the prime minister, Gabriel Attal, and finance minister, Bruno Le Maire – have been so incensed at Macron’s failure to consult them on his election gamble (which has been called “reckless”) that they have publicly distanced themselves from him.

### Barcelona, Spain

**No more Airbnb:** Barcelona is to enact a complete ban on Airbnbs and other tourist rentals in an effort to tackle what its mayor, Jaume Collboni, has identified as by far the city’s “biggest problem”: soaring housing costs for local people. The boom in short-term rentals has caused rents to rise by 68% in the past ten years, while house prices have risen by 38%. Many residents, young ones in particular, are being forced out of the city as a result. Barcelona introduced a licensing system for Airbnbs in 2011, and in 2015 banned the short-term rental of single rooms. But Collboni says his administration will now refuse to renew licences for the 10,101 apartments currently approved for short-term rental: all should be gone by 2029. Although opposition politicians have attacked the proposal as “ideological”, it has wide support: a “Let’s put a stop to tourism!” demonstration is being planned for 6 July.

### Geneva, Switzerland

**Hinduja verdict:** Four members of the UK’s richest family, the Hinduja, have been sentenced to jail by a Swiss court for exploiting Indian staff at their Geneva mansion. Prakash Hinduja, 78, and his wife Kamal, 75, were sentenced to four years and six months, and their son Ajay, 56, and his wife, Namrata, 50, to four years. Prosecutors said staff were brought from India and paid between £195 and £350 a month, far below the local minimum wage. Their passports were confiscated on arrival, their wages were paid in rupees and they were hardly allowed to leave the house, where they slept in the basement. One servant worked for up to 18 hours a day, seven days a week. The accused, who were not present in court when the verdicts were delivered, have already said they’ll appeal. The Hinduja’s fortune is estimated at £37bn, with business interests including oil and gas, banking and healthcare.

### Berlin

**Russian sabotage:** German police have launched a fresh investigation into a huge fire that broke out at an arms factory in Berlin in May – it’s now thought that Moscow was behind it. The factory belongs to the defence manufacturer Diehl, – which supplies arms to Ukraine. The fire caused tens of millions of euros of damage and took 200 firefighters days to combat. Initially attributed to a technical fault, it’s now suspected of being an arson attack by agents in the Kremlin’s pay, one of a growing number of attempts to sabotage Nato infrastructure in Moscow’s strategy of hybrid war against the alliance. It’s also thought that German nationals, many with links to criminal networks, are being paid in cryptocurrency to carry out the attacks.



### Sevastopol, Ukraine

**US blamed:** Russia is holding the US responsible for the Ukrainian missile strike on Sevastopol this week, in which at least four people were killed (two of them children) and 150 injured by falling debris resulting from the attempt to shoot the missiles down. Russians still flock to Crimea for their summer holidays, and most of the wounded were on a beach. Moscow is treating this as a provocative escalation of the conflict, saying that, although the US and its allies have officially banned Ukraine from using their weapons to strike Russian territory, the five US-supplied ATACMS missiles used in the strike were programmed by US specialists and guided by US satellites. But as the US sees it, Russia illegally annexed Crimea in 2014, so it should not be seen as Russian territory.

Meanwhile, in the north of Ukraine, Washington has given Kyiv permission to use US weapons to strike against the Russian forces that launched a cross-border offensive towards Kharkiv in early May. That air support has enabled Ukraine to push Russian forces back and has even led to Russia evacuating residents from areas on its side of the border. However, Russia still continues with its bombing of Kharkiv (above), and has renewed its attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure, which began three months ago, and which have now taken out over half of Ukraine’s power-generation capacity.



**Washington DC**

**Trump funding boost:** Donald Trump's campaign raised a total of \$141m in May – boosted by a \$50m donation from the billionaire businessman and banking heir Timothy Mellon. That money was donated the day after Trump's conviction for falsifying business records, when his campaign team recorded around six times more donations than usual. Trump's total for the month dwarfs that of the Biden campaign, which raised just \$85m. However, Biden is believed to have

raised tens of millions this month, including \$20m from media magnate and former New York mayor Mike Bloomberg.

**Washington DC**

**Extreme weather:** More than 44 million people across the US were living under some kind of heat warning at the start of the week, while in the Midwest, floodwaters forced thousands of people from their homes. In northern Iowa, where at least 13 rivers, including the Big Sioux, burst their banks, one entire town had to be evacuated. Meteorologists said that parts of the Midwest had had eight times more rain than usual for the time of year, with more forecast. But along swathes of the east coast of the country, intense heat was the problem: residents of the heavily populated area between Washington DC and New York experienced days of sweltering temperatures, and daily records (some a century old) fell in cities including Philadelphia (36.7°C) and Baltimore (38.3°C).

**Los Angeles, California**

**Synagogue protest:** President Biden and the governor of California, Gavin Newsom, have condemned a pro-Palestinian protest outside a synagogue in Los Angeles that led to violent clashes with pro-Israel counterprotesters. "Intimidating Jewish congregants is dangerous, unconscionable, antisemitic and un-American," said Biden. Scores of protesters, some masked, had gathered outside the synagogue in a largely Jewish neighbourhood of LA, which was hosting an event promoting purchasing property in Israel. The protest organisers claimed that some of the property was on stolen Palestinian land. Protesters tried to block the entrance to the event, and one allegedly sprayed a Jewish man with mace; supporters of Israel then arrived, leading to a series of brawls.

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

**Biblical law:** The Ten Commandments must be displayed in all classrooms in Louisiana, according to a bill signed into law last week by the state's Republican governor, Jeff Landry. The law – which stipulates the use of a "large, easily readable font" on a poster measuring at least 11x14 inches – is being seen as a test case by Christian nationalists. A lawsuit seeking to block it has already been launched in a federal court in Baton Rouge, and lawyers have predicted that it will end up in the supreme court. The plaintiffs say the law is unconstitutional because it pressurises students into religious observance and to follow a particular faith's scripture.

**Lima**

**Rape verdict:** Ten former soldiers have been convicted of crimes against humanity for raping women and girls during Peru's civil war in the 1980s and 1990s. The case, brought by nine women from rural Andean communities, is the first to address the systematic use of

sexual violence during the Peruvian state's long-running conflict with Maoist Shining Path guerrillas; prosecutors estimate that at least 5,300 women and girls were abused, most of them by the army. Campaigners hailed the verdict as a milestone, but said the sentences, of between six to 12 years in jail, were too lenient.

**Ottawa**

**Terror ruling:** Canada has become the fifth country in the world – after the US, Sweden, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia – to designate Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation. Ottawa cited the IRGC's involvement with "terrorist entities" including Hezbollah and Hamas, and urged its citizens in Iran to leave. Canada broke off diplomatic ties with Tehran in 2012, and its current government had been under intense pressure to go further since the IRGC's downing of Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 shortly after takeoff from Tehran in January 2020. Of the 176 people killed, 138 had ties to Canada. The move, which has been welcomed by some members of Canada's Iranian diaspora, will increase the pressure on other countries, including Britain, to proscribe the IRGC – an elite force that answers directly to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei.

**Port-au-Prince**

**Kenyan police fly in:** Around 400 Kenyan police officers arrived in Haiti this week – the first part of a planned 2,500-strong, UN-backed force that will seek to restore stability to the crisis-racked Caribbean nation. Criminal gangs had been growing in power in Haiti since the assassination of President Moïse in 2021; then, in March, they freed 4,700 prisoners from jails and seized control of most of the capital. Kenya first offered to lead a force to combat the violence in Haiti last year, but it was held up by a domestic legal challenge. It will send 1,000 police; the rest will come from Jamaica, Chad and other countries. The mission will provide a significant boost to Haiti's 9,000-strong police force; but it is risky – no previous interventions there have ended well.

## Jerusalem, Israel

**Peace plan rejected:** Benjamin Netanyahu has said that he will not agree to a permanent ceasefire deal in Gaza, casting doubt on the viability of the peace plan unveiled by President Joe Biden last month. In a televised interview, the Israeli PM said that the most intense phase of the assault against Hamas was coming to an end, and that he would agree to a “partial” ceasefire to allow for the return of some of the 120 hostages still held in Gaza. However, he said the war would continue, to achieve the “goal of eliminating Hamas”. Days later, Washington said that Hamas had rejected the peace plan in part, which the US said had been “proposed by Israel”.

Separately, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) said it was investigating an incident in which soldiers drove through the occupied West Bank with a wounded Palestinian strapped to the bonnet of their vehicle. The IDF originally described the man, Mujahid Abadi (above), as a suspected militant, but later said he’d not posed any threat to its forces and had been injured by crossfire during a raid. Clips of the incident prompted claims that the soldiers had been using him as a human shield. Violence has surged in the West Bank since 7 October, with 500 Palestinians killed and at least 14 Israelis.



## Mecca, Saudi Arabia

**Hajj deaths:** More than 1,300 people have died while completing this year’s Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. Able-bodied Muslims have a duty to perform the five-day pilgrimage at least once in their lives, and many wait until relative old age to do so. But even for the young and healthy, it is arduous, involving miles of walking each day – and when it falls in the summer, that can mean being exposed to extreme temperatures for long periods. Pilgrims with official permits are able to make use of facilities such as air-conditioned tents and buses, but places are expensive and limited (to 1.8 million this year). As a result, many opt for cut-price tickets sold by unauthorised operators who don’t provide the transport or accommodation pilgrims need to cope in the heat. This year temperatures exceeded 51°C.



## Taipei

**Capital offence:** Beijing unveiled new sentencing guidelines last week that make “die-hard” support for Taiwanese independence a capital offence. Taipei was quick to respond, saying that Beijing has “no legal jurisdiction at all over Taiwan”. China has lately been ramping up pressure on Taiwan with military drills and coastguard patrols. This week, officials in Edinburgh dropped plans for a “friendship” deal with a Taiwanese city, owing to fears of a blow-back from China.

## Makhachkala, Russia

**Terror attacks:** Gunmen attacked two Orthodox churches, a synagogue and a police post in the Russian region of Dagestan on Sunday, killing at least 20 people, including a priest and 15 police officers. One of Russia’s poorest areas, Dagestan has a history of unrest, but the apparently coordinated attacks in the cities of Makhachkala and Derbent were the deadliest in the mostly Muslim region for 14 years. Officials described them as “acts of terror”. Coming just three months after 145 people were killed in an attack on a Moscow concert hall claimed by Islamic State, the incident has stoked fears Russia may be facing a renewed Islamist threat, while its security and intelligence agencies are stretched by the war in Ukraine.

## Nairobi

**Bitter protests:** At least 20 people were reported to have been killed by police in Nairobi this week during major anti-government protests, sparked by plans for tax hikes amid a cost-of-living crisis. Thousands of people had gathered outside parliament, calling for the resignation of Kenya’s president, William Ruto, as MPs gathered to debate the finance bill. Scores were hurt in clashes with police, who were accused of using brutal tactics in an effort to dispel an initially peaceful crowd. As tensions rose, protesters stormed the parliament; and the police opened fire with live rounds.



## Second Thomas Shoal, Philippines

**Sea spat:** A Filipino sailor lost his thumb this month during the latest clash with Chinese forces in the South China Sea. Testifying to a senate inquiry, the sailor said he and his crew were conducting a resupply mission to the Second Thomas Shoal – a reef where a grounded ship is kept permanently manned, to stake the Philippines’ claim to the surrounding waters – when Chinese coastguards rammed his rigid inflatable, tearing his thumb off; they then towed the boats away, with his crew’s possessions on board. Beijing blamed Manila for the clash.

**Richard Coles' faith**

Having retired as a priest in 2022, Richard Coles recently revealed that, for years, he'd lied to Anglican officials about his sex life, by maintaining that he and his late husband David were celibate. He is aware that "rather a lot of people" were offended by this, he told Louise Carpenter in *The Daily Telegraph*; but he feels that in the Church, people "never really understood the choices you have to make if you are gay and in a relationship. When [honesty] could cost you your job, your home, your career, your parish, your parishioners." Today his cassock is hanging in a wardrobe; but his faith is still a big part of his life. "One of the practices of a priest that I try to observe is the daily examination of my conscience," he says. "At the end of every day, I look back and think, 'In what ways did I fall short of the glory of God today?' There's a long list. It's good to do it because we need to be aware of what we do and how our actions affect other people. And more than that, our own silliness. I think about my own silliness. I need to check that."

**An amputee's optimism**

When the Conservative MP Craig Mackinlay was rushed to hospital with sepsis in September, the condition was so serious, he was given a 5% chance of survival. He was placed in an induced coma; his legs and arms were amputated; and he had to spend eight months recovering in hospital.

Yet today, he considers himself lucky. "I'm blessed because I've got life, and it could very easily have gone the other way," he told Tom Newton Dunn in *The Times*. "I've also still got my elbows and knees, which is important for using prosthetics. There are plenty of people worse off than me. Every day people are diagnosed with terminal illnesses. I've been unwell, and I'm only going up on the other side." And he prefers not to see himself as disabled. "I'm just temporarily incapacitated."

**The late nature lover**

Martin Amis lived to read and write, and was no fan of the great outdoors, his widow, Isabel Fonseca, wrote in *The Sunday Times*. But in January last year, when he learnt that his cancer was terminal, he moved with his family to Florida and became, to his surprise, "a regular outdoorsy guy". Barefoot and tanned, he would wander around the garden, "observing it as a novelist, with a fresh and loving eye". From the comfort of a lounge, he would monitor butterflies, or watch iguanas as they pulled themselves out of the pool by their shoulders ("like boys", he observed). Under the Florida sun, he put his work aside to spend time with his family, believing in the end that what mattered most was "how things went with the women and the children". He was racked with nausea and pain, yet he remained, she says, "generous. Determined. And always elegant."



When Katharine Hamnett started out in fashion, she was wide-eyed and optimistic. "Naive, actually," she says. "Totally f\*\*king oblivious." But the label she founded in 1979 was a hit, and before long, its lines were being widely copied. So she decided to make the most of it, by emblazoning her T-shirts with large-print slogans about ethical and environmental issues she felt needed attention. That way, "I'd be thrilled if they were replicated." Soon, though, it occurred to her that if she was going to champion such causes, she'd better check in on her own industry. She wasn't worried, she told Michael Segalov in *The Observer*. "I just assumed it's fashion: we couldn't be doing anything that wrong making clothes." But then, in 1989 the research was commissioned, "and, oh my God, that was a wake-up call: thousands of farmers dying every year from accidental pesticide poisoning... Every single material had a huge footprint: leather, PVC, viscose, Teflon – even bamboo is a total greenwash. Dying and tanning processes? A nightmare." She blew the whistle – the first in the industry to do so. She thought her clients and buyers would be as shocked as she was. But most didn't seem to give a damn. "That's when I realised what business I was really in. A rotten, stinking cesspit, responsible for countless people living in the worst conditions and the destruction of the planet."

**Castaway of the week**

This week's edition of *Radio 4's Desert Island Discs* featured the boxer Anthony Joshua

- 1 *Waiting in Vain* by Bob Marley, performed by Bob Marley and The Wailers
- 2 *Hometown Glory*, written and performed by Adele
- 3 *Water No Get Enemy* by Fela Kuti, performed by Fela Kuti and Africa 70
- 4 *Eye of the Tiger* by Frankie Sullivan and Jim Peterik, performed by Survivor
- 5 *One More Chance Freestyle* by Christopher Wallace, Sean Combs, Reginald D. Ellis, Norman A. Glover, Carl Thompson and Skrapz, performed by Skrapz
- 6 *Shut Up*, written and performed by Stormzy
- 7 *Love Theme from The Godfather*, written and performed by Nino Rota
- 8\* *Agape*, written and performed by Nicholas Britell

**Book:** a Bear Grylls survival book

**Luxury:** a punchbag

\* Choice if allowed only one record

**Viewpoint:****The "genny lec"**

"If you've spent any time online recently, you may have noticed that some grown adults have regressed to a kind of cutesy, baby language, even while discussing serious topics. The cost-of-living crisis is the 'cozzie livs'; the upcoming general election is the 'genny lec', and a mental breakdown is a 'menty b'. New phrases are created and submitted online for approval faster than you can say 'panny d' (yes, for pandemic). Some people find this cringe, or even offensive. I say, rejoice in these daft expressions from a nation of punmakers and word-players. They are a source of national pride. Or should I say nashy p?"  
*Coco Khan in The Guardian*

**Farewell**

**Sir Howard Bernstein**, head of city council hailed as the "maker" of modern Manchester, died 22 June, aged 71.

**Geneviève de Galard**, French nurse known as the "Angel of Dien Bien Phu", died 30 May, aged 99.

**Sir Martin Jacomb**, City grandee who was one of architects of the financial "Big Bang", died 8 June, aged 94.

**Sir Larry Siedentop**, political philosopher who turned a cool eye on the 21st century EU, died 13 June, aged 88.

# Tax and spend: the trillion-pound question

What do the two main parties' manifestos say about their tax plans? And do their sums add up?

## Will taxes rise after the election?

Yes, whoever wins. On the face of it, the Tories are touting a £17bn package of tax cuts, the biggest being a cut in the main rate of national insurance (NI) for employees. Labour promises to get by with limited tax increases, worth £8.6bn, and has specifically ruled out hikes on “working people”: income tax, national insurance and VAT. But the consensus among economists is that neither major party is being honest with voters. Current government plans imply large real-terms cuts over the next few years in spending to departments that aren't protected by specific commitments (i.e. Health, Education and Defence). Barring an implausible uptick in growth, both parties face shortfalls if they are to avoid real-terms cuts to “unprotected” services such as courts, prisons, policing, legal aid and further education by the end of next parliament in 2028/29, says the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). Tory plans imply a £10bn-£20bn shortfall forecast; Labour would need an extra £6bn-£16bn.



Starmer and Reeves: do their figures match their plans?

## Why are public finances under pressure?

It is widely acknowledged that public services are crumbling after years of austerity, and that local councils face a funding crisis. Yet the UK's economic situation is still very tight. Extra borrowing to finance the fallout from the Covid pandemic and the Ukraine War energy shock, along with high interest rates and persistently low growth, have pushed up the ratio of debt to national income to an uncomfortable 97.9% of gross domestic product (GDP). Tax cuts are a tall order. But that's a difficult message for an electorate already labouring under a tax burden now at its highest level since the Second World War. Hence both parties' reliance on stealth taxes to fill the coffers, particularly the dark art of “fiscal drag”.

## What exactly is fiscal drag?

Freezing tax thresholds, rather than raising them with inflation, so that more people are drawn into paying higher taxes – even though tax rates ostensibly remain unchanged. In the aftermath of Liz Truss's disastrous mini-Budget in autumn 2022, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt froze both the tax-free “personal allowance” (currently at £12,570 for those earning under £100,000) and the higher-rate 40% tax threshold (£50,270) until 2028. Labour has confirmed that it will leave these thresholds untouched. The upshot, according to the Office for Budget Responsibility, is that some 7.5 million Britons will have moved bands by 2028, generating an increase in Treasury tax receipts of over £34bn a year from 2028. It's a classic example of “the art of taxation”, as Louis XIV's finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, described it: “plucking the goose so as to obtain the largest possible amount of feathers with the smallest possible amount of hissing”.

## What would Tory tax cuts do?

Most workers would be better off as a result of the manifesto plan to cut the main rate of NI by two further percentage points (from 8% to 6%)

– worth around £450 for a worker on a typical salary of £35,400 (though they would lose £150 to fiscal drag). The Tories have also promised a “triple lock plus” on pensions, which will raise the tax-free allowance to keep it untaxed – a bung to older voters that could backfire if it draws attention to the fiscal drag dogging everyone else. The Conservatives also plan to boost the housing market by permanently abolishing stamp duty for first-time buyers on homes worth less than £425,000, though critics point out this would likely add to housing demand when the problem is lack of supply.

## How would they pay for this?

They say that this £17bn package of last-minute goodies will be paid for by a lightning-fast £12bn reduction in the welfare bill, and a £6bn clampdown on tax avoidance/evasion. Growing health-related benefits are likely to be the main target. But this would involve, say, getting roughly one million people (19% of the total) off health-related benefits, or applying big cuts to all claimants' payments, says the IFS. This seems implausible.

## Do Labour's plans hold water?

Not as so far stated. Keir Starmer and shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves have said that they have “no plans” for tax rises beyond a handful of announced measures – including VAT on private school fees, ending the use of offshore trusts to avoid inheritance tax, clampdowns on “non-doms” and private equity bonuses, and a bigger windfall tax on energy companies. Critics think that is disingenuous. Although Rishi Sunak's claim that Labour would raise taxes by £2,000 “for everyone” has largely been debunked, this manifesto is notable for what isn't included. Though some hikes have been ruled out, others have been left on the table. Labour's tax-raising plans are “trivial” considering its ambitious proposals, says Paul Johnson of the IFS – for instance, to spend £17.5bn over five years on its “green prosperity plan”, and the likely pressure it will face to increase spending on public services.

## Where would the necessary cash come from?

Changes to wealth taxes, such as inheritance tax (IHT) and capital gains tax (CGT), and a revamp of pension rules look like the most fruitful sources. An easy win would be to remove the exemption of pension funds from IHT introduced in 2015, or targeting the £15bn in annual tax relief currently handed back to higher-rate taxpayers who save into pensions. Attention has particularly centred on CGT (currently charged at 10-28%, compared with the current 45% top rate of income tax) on the sale of assets including shares, property and businesses – though Starmer made a rare clarification: that the party would not charge capital gains tax on the sale of primary residences. Labour has been outflanked on the Left by the Lib Dems, who have pledged an additional £27bn in spending for health and public services, funded by a rise in CGT and various levies.

## Balancing the government books

In 2023/24, UK government spending was estimated to be £1.2trn, some £17,000 per person, and around 45% of the total size of the economy, as measured by GDP. (By contrast, in 2022, the US spent 36% of GDP, Germany 49%, and France 58%.) Around two-thirds of the total is “day-to-day” spending on public services, such as health (the biggest, at just over £200bn), schools and prisons. Around a quarter is spent on social security, such as universal credit and the state pension (which costs £124bn, the largest item in the welfare budget). The remainder can be split into interest on government debt (around 8% of the total in 2023/24, above the recent norm because of high interest rates) and government investment (around 5%).

By contrast, the government's total income in 2023/24 was nearly £1.1trn. About two-thirds of receipts came from three sources: income tax (£277bn), national insurance contributions (£180bn) and VAT (£170bn). Corporation tax contributed £103bn, and council tax £45bn. About £95bn was generated from “other sources”, largely income from public corporations such as social housing. The deficit, the difference between public spending and receipts, was £121bn.

## It's voters who are guilty of abuse of office

**James Marriott**

*The Times*

Amazing what politicians have to endure these days, says James Marriott. Over the past month, I've seen Keir Starmer subjected to countless derisive and prurient questions by interviewers, I've watched him being scolded over his stance on Gaza by a camera-wielding member of the public, I've listened as "aggrieved listeners addressed him with brisk overfamiliarity as 'Keir'" on a radio phone-in. "Michelle from Reigate demanded to know why he hadn't responded to her email." You might call this democracy in action, but the tone of "hectoring aggression" with which we now confront politicians is actually undermining the system. It's ineffective against shameless ones such as Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson, who laugh off the hostility or use it as an excuse to skip interviews; but it leads conscientious ones to become "wary and dull, terrified to say anything at all". It's imperative we treat our politicians with a measure of respect, even while subjecting them to scrutiny. If not, we'll end up in a situation where good people won't run and only rogues and attention-seekers stand for office.

## Being "woke" is simply good business

**Martha Gill**

*The Observer*

"Woke capitalism" – the growing tendency of the corporate world to champion liberal social values – comes in for a lot of stick these days, says Martha Gill. It's just hardheaded business trying to look trendy, goes the complaint. Stop pandering to youth. But the truth is that companies are simply moving with the times. It's hard to overstate how far social attitudes have shifted in recent years. In 1983, half the British public reckoned same-sex relationships were "always wrong"; asked the same question again two years ago, just 9% felt that way. In 1999, only one in ten of us felt it was OK to have casual sex; in 2022, 42% did. Forty years ago, 75% thought that ironing, in a heterosexual relationship, was the woman's preserve; only 16% do so now. Britain, along with much of the Western world, is "becoming ever more liberal", so the fact that companies will often pitch their appeal to those born in this climate is only natural: they want to sell things to Generation Z, and attract and keep them as employees, not repel them. After all "you can't fire a whole generation".

## Don't let the judges steal our democracy

**Andrew Neil**

*Daily Mail*

"I'm beginning to wonder if it really matters who we vote for on 4 July," says Andrew Neil. For, increasingly, it's unelected judges, not politicians, who call the shots in our country. Take energy policy and the issue of whether the UK should exploit its own oil and gas reserves. The parties disagree on this: the Tories in favour, Labour against. No matter: judges have effectively decided the question for them. Last week, the Supreme Court ruled that Surrey County Council was wrong to have approved the expansion of a local oil well as it had only considered the environmental impact of developing the field, not indirect effects from the later burning of the oil. The ruling could well put the kibosh on any new oil and gas exploration in the UK. Yet the Tories can hardly complain: they invited this intervention by introducing a legally binding net-zero target that covers emissions generated within our borders, thus making judges the arbiter of all future decisions. And though Labour may be happy with this ruling, a Keir Starmer government may soon curse the growth of judicial activism when it starts trying to streamline the planning system and kickstart growth.

## Good reasons to feel sunny about energy

**Editorial**

*The Economist*

The rise of solar power is one of the wonders of the modern age, says *The Economist*. First developed by scientists at Bell Labs 70 years ago, solar panels now provide the world with 5.5% of its electricity – which is about three times as much energy as the US consumed back in 1954. And this growth is "nowhere near over". Installed solar capacity doubles roughly every three years, thus growing tenfold each decade. "The next tenfold increase will be equivalent to multiplying the world's entire fleet of nuclear reactors by eight in less than the time it typically takes to build just a single one of them." The more panels we make, the cheaper they become, which in turn leads to more demand and more production. Such virtuous circles usually run up against constraints, but in the case of solar, none exist: all you need is "silicon-rich sand, sunny places and human ingenuity, all three of which are abundant". The exponential growth of solar power is thus set to continue. And the copious amounts of cheap energy it will provide – for cooling homes, purifying or desalinating water, creating fuels through electrolysis – will transform the world.

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

Parisians are threatening to poo in the River Seine, to protest against the amount of public money that has been spent improving the quality of its water ahead of the Olympics, instead of on other services for the city. The hashtag *JeChieDansLaSeine*, meaning "I shit in the Seine", has gained traction on social media, with locals vowing to carry out their dirty protest on the day that Paris's mayor, Anne Hidalgo, takes an inaugural dip. More than €1.4bn has been spent cleaning up the river, which is due to host triathlon and open-water swimming races.



An Ed Sheeran superfan has married a professional Ed Sheeran lookalike. Amanda and Ty Baron-Jones met at a Sheeran gig, and married in Manchester at a wedding filled with other lookalikes, including David Beckham, Prince Harry, Jack Sparrow and Gordon Ramsay. The couple walked down the aisle to Sheeran's song *One Life*, and had the songwriter's lyrics etched onto their cake. "It was the best day of my life," said Amanda.

An eight-year-old Pekingese has been crowned the world's ugliest dog. Wild Thang, of Coos Bay, Oregon, was diagnosed as a puppy with canine distemper, which prevented his teeth from growing, and caused a muscular disorder in one of his legs. Before winning the contest in California, he had fought for the title four times. His victory won his owner Ann Lewis \$5,000. "Even ugly dogs are lovable," she said.



## Heatwave: the politics of climate change

It looks like America is in for a rough summer, said Eugene Robinson in [The Washington Post](#). An unusually early heatwave settled over the Midwest and Northeast last week, “roasting half of the country, day after day”. The National Weather Service issued its first-ever excessive heat warning in northern Maine, where temperatures reached 35.5°C. Chicago hit a new daily temperature record of 36.1°C. In California, meanwhile, firefighters have battled to contain several huge wildfires, one of which spread over nearly 10,000 acres, and another of which, north of Los Angeles, forced the evacuation of 1,000 people and scorched more than 15,500 acres. All this, and it’s not even July yet.



A flooded street in Hollywood, Florida, this month

swamp and sitting atop porous limestone. Florida’s Republican governor, Ron DeSantis, is taking action to counter the threat posed by the changing climate with a \$1.8bn resilience fund to help communities adapt. He won’t, however, discuss the root causes of the threat. Last month, he signed a bill that would make references to climate change “largely verboten” in state statutes. “We don’t want our climate policy driven by climate ideology,” he said.

The political divide over this issue is stark, said Paul Waldman on [MSNBC](#).

You seldom hear Republicans claim that climate change is a “hoax” any more, but they still “oppose every means of confronting it”. President Biden has taken unprecedented action against climate change, enacting over 100 new environmental policies and pumping billions of dollars into clean technologies. Should Donald Trump get re-elected, he will likely take a very different approach. Project 2025, the governing blueprint drafted by his allies, proposes eliminating a range of programmes, offices and agencies devoted to the issue. Biden’s “climate fanaticism will need a whole-of-government unwinding”, it says. The stakes in November’s election will be high indeed.

In southern Florida, the problem isn’t heat but rain, said Mario Alejandro Ariza in [The Atlantic](#). More than 20 inches of it fell on the region in a matter of hours earlier this month, leaving parts of Miami waist-deep in water. Meteorologists said that “rain bombs” were a once-in-200-years event, but it’s the fourth such disaster to hit the area in as many years. The combination of extreme rainstorms and rising sea levels is making life increasingly precarious for Miami, a city built on a drained

## Elect Trump, and save journalism

**Timothy Noah**

*The New Republic*

Whether you were a fan of the Trump presidency or not, says Timothy Noah, there’s no denying that the constant stream of scandals were a boon for the floundering journalism trade. During the administration’s first three months alone, CNN’s total daily viewership rose 21% among Americans aged 21 to 54, making it the network’s most-watched first quarter in 14 years. The New York Times enjoyed a similar “Trump bump”, netting an extra 308,000 digital subscriptions. “Newspapers, television, all forms of media will tank if I’m not there,” Trump boasted at the end of his first year in office. He had a point. Traffic to mainstream news sites has plunged since Joe Biden entered the White House. CNN’s web visitors are down 30% since 2020; Fox News’s are down 34%. The Los Angeles Times and Wall Street Journal are laying off staff in droves. The New York Times is still doing OK, but that’s largely thanks to *Wordle* and other popular puzzles. The paper is “now a gaming company based on customer time spent”, according to the investor Matthew Ball. My better self recognises that a second Trump term would be terrible for America. But part of me can’t help thinking: bring him back! “Let’s make print circulation, unique views and cable ratings great again!”

## A terrible advert for liberal rule

**Nicholas Kristof**

*The New York Times*

Liberals like me need to face a “painful fact”, says Nicholas Kristof: the parts of America where we enjoy the greatest political control – cities on the West Coast – are a terrible advert for our politics. In too many cases, these places showcase “a version of progressivism that doesn’t result in progress”. For example, West Coast liberals are more likely to believe that “housing is a human right” than conservatives in Florida and Texas, but “less likely to actually get people housed”. The two states with the highest rates of homelessness are California and Oregon. Drug overdoses rose last year in every Democratic state on the West Coast. The homicide rate in Portland, Oregon, last year was more than double that of New York City. The root of the problem is that West Coast liberals these days are more concerned with the “ideological purity” of policies than their outcome. A clear case in point was Oregon’s decision, as a gesture of support to trans children, to take money from the tight education budget to put tampons in boys’ lavatories in primary schools, including in kindergartens. That’s what happens when politicians enjoy one-party rule and start thinking that good intentions are enough. Liberals need to get their act together. Less purity and more pragmatism please.

## Trump’s VP: the guessing game

**Jackie Calmes**

*Los Angeles Times*

The guessing game is under way, says Jackie Calmes. With Donald Trump indicating that he’ll announce his choice in mid-July, journalists are busy speculating about who he’ll pick as his running mate. We do this every four years – and we always get it wrong. In 1988, George H.W. Bush confounded the pundits by choosing Dan Quayle. “Bush not only didn’t name the best senator,” exclaimed one reporter, “he didn’t name the best senator from Indiana!” Because candidates typically look for a partner who complements them, the media was caught out again in 1992 when Bill Clinton selected Al Gore – “a fellow southerner, Boomer and moderate Democrat”. Eight years later, Gore picked Joe Lieberman, a candidate on few journalists’ radar. On the GOP side, meanwhile, George W. Bush surprised everyone by passing over the prospects that his adviser Dick Cheney was vetting and tapping Cheney himself. Trying to guess who the “ever-erratic” Trump will pick is a mug’s game. The real question should be: who would want to be his running mate, given how Trump “rewarded former vice-president Mike Pence for his four years of emasculating sycophancy”. On 6 January 2021, he abandoned Pence to the mercy of the mob that wanted to hang him.

## Israel's second front: will it wage "total war" in Lebanon?

Over the past eight months, the world's attention has been focused on Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza, but fighting on its "second front", at the country's northern border with Lebanon, is now intensifying, said Amy Mackinnon in *Foreign Policy* (Washington). The conflict between Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group, and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) has simmered for months, displacing 140,000 people on both sides of the border. In recent weeks, though, Hezbollah's rocket attacks and Israeli air strikes on Lebanon have escalated. Israel's foreign minister, Israel Katz, said last week that the cabinet was contemplating "total war", in which "Hezbollah will be destroyed and Lebanon will be hit hard". But Israel would also be "bloodied" by such a war. Hezbollah, probably the "most heavily armed non-state actor in the world", is a far more formidable foe than Hamas. It is thought to have 130,000 rockets and missiles, which could quickly "overwhelm" Israel's defences. Israel estimates it could knock out a vast amount of its infrastructure in days: oil refineries, airbases, even the nuclear research facility at Dimona. Last week, Hezbollah published drone footage of Haifa Port, Israel's largest, to demonstrate its ability to "reach deep into the country". Like Hamas, it has an extensive tunnel network, and unlike Hamas it is not geographically isolated: it has direct ground and air supply routes from its backers in Iran.

Even so, Israel's leaders are seriously considering a major offensive, said Chuck Freilich in *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv). The damage to northern cities and towns is "significant and worsening", and more than 60,000 evacuees have been unable to return home. "Following the trauma of 7 October, the Israeli public has had enough of the endless rounds of limited warfare, which merely yield limited periods of calm until the next round." By contrast, the 2006 war with Lebanon – when Israel responded to a Hezbollah cross-border raid with a ground invasion – created a "balance of terror" that held for 16 years. Arguably, a "massive show of force" would "fundamentally change the



Hezbollah: a far more formidable foe than Hamas

situation" – and it would clearly be better for the "day of reckoning" with Hezbollah to come before Iran has developed nuclear weapons. Some argue for a smaller campaign, designed to push the enemy back from the border, said Ron Ben-Yishai in *Yediot Ahronot* (Tel Aviv). But that would do "nothing to change this strategic threat". If the IDF thinks that Hezbollah can be defeated in a short time through a comprehensive air and ground attack, "this should be done immediately" – even though, on the home front, Israel is likely to endure a heavy missile and drone barrage.

Israel would have to "launch attacks against missile batteries embedded in the Lebanese population", said David Bedein in *The Times of Israel*. Heavy civilian casualties would be a certainty. "Jews in Israel and abroad are not ready for this scenario." The 2006 war killed hundreds and levelled large parts of Beirut's Hezbollah-controlled southern suburbs, said *Ya Libnan* (Beirut). The city's airport was "knocked out", along with bridges and other infrastructure. Nearly a million people fled their homes. And there is an alternative to war: Hezbollah has signalled its openness to a ceasefire agreement, "but has said there will be no discussions until Israel halts the Gaza offensive". Any conflict would be likely to spread, said *L'Orient-Le Jour* (Beirut). Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, has threatened a war "without rules or limits", saying that Cyprus – which hosts US and British forces – would be targeted.

In Israel, meanwhile, Benjamin Netanyahu said that once the most intense phase of the war in Gaza was over, Israeli forces would "face north". So far, both sides have kept to an "undeclared" set of rules, said *The Economist*. Hezbollah has only attacked bases and targets close to the border; Israel has "responded with targeted strikes on Hezbollah operatives". It seemed that both sides of the border were not inclined "towards letting the conflict explode". Now, it seems, all bets are off.

### THE PHILIPPINES

## Put not your trust in the United States

*Asia Times*  
(Hong Kong)

Ukraine, Gaza, Taiwan: that's where people tend to focus when gauging America's status as a reliable ally, says Grant Newsham. But the country where that reputation now faces its sternest test is the Philippines, and there it's "going down the drain". Despite having a long-standing mutual defence treaty, the US has already "sold out" the Philippines to China. It did nothing to help when, in 2012, the Chinese occupied the Scarborough Shoal – a reef in the Philippines' territorial waters; then, in 2016 it did nothing to help enforce the international ruling that backed Manila's position in the dispute. And now it's letting Manila down yet again. The latest flashpoint is the Second Thomas Shoal, a reef inside Philippine waters where Chinese vessels have been ramming Filipino boats and attacking their crews with knives, axes and lasers. But there's been no help forthcoming from the US, so Manila may be forced into a humiliating deal. It feels betrayed. God knows how Tokyo, which has a similar defence treaty with the US, must be feeling. If the US fails to take action in a situation such as this, its reputation as a reliable ally will be shredded – "not just in Manila or Asia, but worldwide".

### ITALY

## Turning a blind eye to a form of slavery

*La Stampa*  
(Turin)

The whole of Italy is talking about the death of Satnam Singh, says Marco Revelli. The migrant worker from India was working on a farm in central Italy when his arm was torn off after becoming trapped in a plastic wrapping machine. Had his employers rushed him to hospital, he'd still be alive. Instead they dumped him outside his house, laying his severed limb beside him. Despite being airlifted to a hospital, he died two days later. This barbarity occurred not in some remote area in the deep south, but 50km from Rome. Singh was yet another victim of the *caporalato* (master gang) system under which unscrupulous "corporals" recruit migrant workers – often illegally and without giving them contracts – and pay them between €25 to €30 for a 13-hour day. It's hardly a secret: some 230,000 such workers are employed in Italy's agriculture sector, a quarter of its workforce. But where were the inspectors who are supposed to prevent this sort of modern "slavery"? Why are the local authorities and the national farming association only now wringing their hands? We've all been looking the other way. "These slaves of the post-modern age only become visible when they die."



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Minds alive



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## What the scientists are saying...

### Hope for a PCOS breakthrough

A drug that is already used to treat malaria has been found to be effective against polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), a painful condition that is a leading cause of infertility, and which affects an estimated 10% of women worldwide. Sufferers of PCOS experience hormone imbalances, including the over-production of testosterone, which leads to symptoms such as irregular periods, acne and an excess of body hair. They are also prone to insulin resistance, which puts them at higher risk of diabetes and heart disease. Existing treatments only ease the symptoms, and do not work for everyone. But when, for a small clinical trial, 19 women took the anti-malarial drug dihydroartemisinin for three months, all of them experienced a drop in their testosterone levels and 12 saw their menstrual cycles return to normal. In tests on animals, the drug restored fertility. It seems to work by blocking an enzyme called CYP11A1 that is crucial for testosterone production in the ovaries. "It's a tremendous potential breakthrough," Dr Channa Jayasena, a reproductive endocrinologist who was not involved in the research, told *The Guardian*. "It's very rare that you get a brand new development in a really important condition, so this is big." Larger trials are now needed to confirm the findings.

### A headset to fix a broken heart

For some people the pain of a relationship ending can be so severe, it has been given its own clinical name: love trauma syndrome, or LTS. Symptoms include depression, anxiety, insomnia, obsessive thoughts, increased suicide risk, and feelings of helplessness and guilt. But now help is at hand for the broken-hearted.



*Weight training: the key to healthier old age?*

A small study has shown that wearing a headset that uses weak electrical currents to stimulate two parts of the brain associated with regulating the emotions – the ventrolateral prefrontal cortex (VLPFC) and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) – can alleviate these symptoms. The study, published in the *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, involved 36 LTS patients who wore the headsets twice a day, for 20 minutes, over five days. At the end of the period, and a month later, the individuals who had one or other of those two brain regions stimulated felt significantly better than the people in a control group whose headsets had been switched off. Stimulation of the DLPFC had the strongest effect.

### Older people should pump iron

Golf, swimming and bowls all have their place, but it seems that weight training may be the key to a healthier, fitter old age.

A study has found that building muscle has benefits that last for years, making strength training particularly beneficial for older people. For the study, researchers in Denmark recruited 450 recent retirees with an average age of 71, and assigned them to one of three groups: some went to a gym three times a week for 12 months, where they took part in a supervised strength-training programme involving heavy weights; others followed a less strenuous resistance-training routine, involving body-weight exercises and resistance bands; the rest were asked to do no more exercise than usual. Four years later, the participants who'd regularly lifted heavy loads (typically 80% of the maximum weight the person was physically able to lift) were the only ones to have maintained the leg strength they had at the start of the study. Leg strength, said the study authors, is vital for a range of everyday tasks and activities, and also reduces the risks of falls while doing them. Previous studies have linked it to a reduced risk of early death.

### Children make men more fanciable

Women find men more attractive when they see them with children, a new study has found. For the research, 360 heterosexual women were shown photos of male models alone or interacting with a child and asked to rate them for attractiveness on a scale of 0 to 100. Analysis of the results suggested that the men photographed with children were deemed to be 21.5% more attractive, on average, than those pictured without. To explain this, the researchers cited the parental investment theory. This posits that the burden of having offspring is greater for women – owing to pregnancy and breastfeeding – making a man with a nurturing side a more attractive prospect.

## Is vitamin D critical to longevity?

Women live significantly longer than men. In 2021, global life expectancy for women was 73.8 years, whereas for men it was 68.4. There are some well-known explanations for this: men tend to indulge in riskier behaviour; women tend to smoke and drink less. But the gender gap exists in other species too – which indicates that biology also plays a role. Now, a new study has suggested that the difference lies in the sperm and egg cells.

The research, at Osaka University in Japan, involved turquoise killifish, a small freshwater species that lives a few months. As in humans, female killifish tend to live longer than the male fish, but when researchers removed their germ cells – which develop into eggs in females or sperm in males – the females lived less long and the males lived longer. Further research revealed that the females without germ cells had reduced oestrogen signalling, which would increase their risk of cardiovascular disease, while the males had more of a substance that activates vitamin D. To see if it was this factor that was driving the males' added longevity, the team then gave vitamin D to male and female fish, and found that it extended the lifespan of both. "I think this research will be a stepping stone to understanding the control of ageing in humans," senior author Prof Tohru Ishitani told *The Guardian*.



*Killifish live for only a few months*

## Cancer care is years behind

UK survival rates for prostate, breast, cervical and bowel cancer are lagging years or even decades behind those in some Scandinavian countries, an analysis of new figures has found. For instance, women in Sweden who were diagnosed with bowel cancer in the late 1990s had a better chance of surviving for the next five years than women in England who were diagnosed between 2016 and 2020. Less than 60% of women diagnosed with bowel cancer in England live for at least five years, compared with 72.7% in Denmark, 71.7% in Norway and 70.6% in Sweden. Bowel cancer survival in men lags 15 years behind Sweden, and cervical cancer survival rates were higher in Norway in the mid-1990s than in England decades later. The picture in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is similarly bleak, with survival rates in those countries lagging ten to 15 years behind Sweden and Norway.

### Pick of the week's Gossip

The four members of Abba didn't choose the group's name, **Björn Ulvaeus** has revealed on the *Rosebud* podcast. They were all well known in Sweden, and so they initially released their music as Agnetha, Benny, Björn and Anni-Frid. But DJs on the radio and people in the office "got tired of saying that – 'Agnetha, Benny, Björn and Anni-Frid' – as you can imagine. And so they just abbreviated it to the initials Abba." Ulvaeus didn't approve. "I thought it was such a stupid name. And it is. I had thought we should have a cool name like the Rolling Stones... The Northern Lights was one of our thoughts – and here we are with Abba."



When **Justin Timberlake**, 43, was pulled over on suspicion of drink-driving in the Hamptons last week, the 23-year-old arresting officer did not recognise him, and appeared never to have heard of him. At one point, Timberlake muttered under his breath that his arrest was going to "ruin the tour". "What tour?" the cop asked. "The world tour," the singer replied.

Critics have complained that **Tom Bower's** new hatchet job on **David and Victoria Beckham** (see page 23) is mainly just a rehash of old tabloid stories, but Bower does come up with the odd juicy titbit, says Hannah Betts in *The Daily Telegraph*. For instance, he reports that the former Posh Spice behaved so "capriciously" during the making of her 2007 reality TV show *Coming to America* that the exasperated crew eventually chorused: "So tell me what you want, what you really, really want!"

## The SNP: a lacklustre manifesto?

The Tories aren't the only ones facing the prospect of "electoral Armageddon" next week, said John Crace in *The Guardian*. Things are also looking bleak for the SNP. The latest polls suggest that, in the face of a Labour resurgence, the scandal-racked party could win just 15 of the 57 Scottish seats in Westminster, down from their current 43. The SNP's election manifesto, unveiled last week by the party's new leader, John Swinney, is unlikely to transform the situation. It sounds just like the last one, and the one before that. There is the usual demand for Scottish independence. The same talk of joining the EU. Predictably, it calls for an end to austerity, including a £10bn increase in health funding in England – which would generate an extra £1bn for Scotland through the Barnett formula. It's hard to be inspired by such familiar fare from the party that has been governing Scotland for 17 years.

Voters are "getting weary of this kind of politics", said *The Scotsman*. They want their elected leaders to improve Scotland's substandard public services, not spend more time and energy – and taxpayers' money – on fighting Westminster. The SNP missed a good opportunity to set a new course, agreed *The Times*. "A government that cannot build



Swinney: the usual demands

ferries for its far-flung islands, introduce legislation that will stand up in the courts, bring down waiting lists or improve the performance of its schools should surely explain how it intends to reverse those failures."

The margin in many Scottish seats is very narrow, said Andrew Grice in *The Independent*, so the SNP may yet do better than expected. And even if Scottish voters do swing behind Labour next week to "get the Tories out", there's no guarantee they'll help it regain power from the

SNP at the 2026 Holyrood elections. "Scots are not yet emotionally invested in Labour", and remain split down the middle on the question of independence. What's really noticeable about the political mood north of the border today, said Gerald Warner on *Reaction*, is just how little interest there is in the Westminster election. It is viewed with the same indifference as elections to the EU parliament. "Scots have come to regard Holyrood elections as the ones that matter." This is an alarming development for those who believe in preserving the United Kingdom. For it suggests that the "separatist mindset" is now embedded among Scotland's voters, and that if the SNP are "ever able to cobble together a plausible fiscal scenario for independence, the Union will be in serious danger".

## Electoral reform: has its time come?

If the polls are right, this general election could deliver the most "lopsided" results in modern history, said *The Guardian*. The Labour Party looks set to enter Downing Street with "a record number of seats and an immense majority", despite receiving slightly fewer votes than Jeremy Corbyn in 2019. The latest YouGov MRP poll projects Labour taking 39% of the vote, and winning 425 seats, its largest-ever number; the Tories, with 22%, would have only 108 seats. Our first-past-the-post (FPTP) system is notoriously unfair to third parties, but this time the outcome would be particularly "skewed". Nigel Farage's Reform UK, according to YouGov, would come third, with 15% of votes, but would win only five seats; by contrast the Lib Dems, with only 12% of the vote, would get 67. In short, this election "could make the case for proportional representation (PR)".

FPTP has long been defended on the grounds that it roots MPs in their local community and provides stable governments, said Tim Stanley in *The Daily Telegraph*. "PR was for foreigners, typically Italian, who like being governed by chaotic coalitions" collated from party lists. But that case now looks less convincing. "The two-party system is dying." Smaller parties have emerged to represent "the disenfranchised" and "the discontented": the SNP, Reform UK, the

Greens. Yet elections are still delivering results as if we were living under two mass-membership parties, circa 1945. Curiously, this is one part of the political system Keir Starmer doesn't want to reform. "Votes for 16-year-olds, Lords reform, yes." But why would he "tinker with an electoral system that hands him Napoleonic powers"? Still, the Lib Dems, long the victims of FPTP, have shown a way to adapt to it, said Andrew Adonis in *Prospect*. Experts in "tactical opposition", they have built up their support so that it is concentrated in a hundred or so seats, mainly in the southwest and the Home Counties.

FPTP has always had its "quirks", said John Burn-Murdoch in the *FT*. But the "mismatch between votes and seats" is becoming much harder to wave away. And it's not clear that it "ensures greater political stability" and moderates the influence of extreme parties, as its defenders claim. Analysis by the group Make Votes Matter shows that governments actually stay in power longer under PR than under FPTP. And if next week it deprives smaller parties of seats, its effect will be to boost populists like Farage by leaving "millions of voters with a justifiable sense of having been screwed by the system". It's time for change. "The make-up of Britain's Parliament should reflect the views of Britain's voters, not the peculiarities of its electoral system."

## Farage: sympathy for the Kremlin?

Nigel Farage built a thriving political brand on the idea that he's a "fearless defender of democracy" and a "patriot who is fighting for freedom", said Ian Birrell in *The i Paper*. What grim hypocrisy, then, that he "has sided with an enemy of our nation" – and dismissed the right of nations in eastern Europe to defend themselves against Russian aggression. In a BBC interview last week, the leader of Reform UK claimed that the West had "provoked" Vladimir Putin into invading Ukraine, by letting former Soviet satellites join Nato and the EU. It's a shameful claim, which parrots Kremlin propaganda. Farage has form when it comes to giving succour to Putin, said Andrew Neil in the *Daily Mail*. In 2014, after the annexation of Crimea, he praised the tyrant as the world leader he most "admired". This penchant for strongmen is a curious feature of the "populist Right" shared by Donald Trump: true conservatives need to condemn it.



*Explaining not excusing?*

Farage has been condemned, from across the political spectrum, as "an appeaser, a disgrace, an apologist for Putin, an insult to Ukraine", said Simon Jenkins in *The Guardian*. But we should be clear about what he was saying. He offered an explanation, not an excuse, for Russia's invasion – which he clearly condemned. And far from

Farage has it back to front. "Countries join Nato not to antagonise Russia, but because they are threatened by it." And the right of sovereign nations to determine their own destinies is a fundamental right, for which Ukrainians are currently fighting and dying. The facts are clear. In 1994, Ukraine gave up its Soviet-era nuclear weapons in return for Russian promises never to use economic or military might against it. In 1997, Nato and Russia signed an agreement that imposed no restrictions on new Nato members. Farage's "justification" of Putin's aggression is wrong-headed and "inflammatory", agreed *The Sunday Times*. Let this be a "wake-up call" for those Conservatives "flirting" with Reform UK. "A lurch into Faragism would doom them to a long, lonely spell on the opposition benches."

being an extremist position, his view is a mainstream one within Western scholarship. Many "neo-realists" of the Henry Kissinger school argued at the time, and later, that allowing Nato to expand right to Russia's borders in the Baltic and Black Sea would be unacceptable to many, and would boost the country's "chauvinist – and belligerent – right-wingers". Farage may be wrong, but his views are not beyond the pale.

He is wrong, said *The Economist*. His views are both inaccurate and dangerous.

## Cybercriminals: the attack on the NHS

"It is a truth of the technological age," said *The Times*: "the greater our dependence on computer systems, the more vulnerable we are to the dangers of their infiltration." In recent years, cybercriminals have attacked countless UK organisations, from British Airways to the British Library – stealing data and/or paralysing IT systems, then demanding ransoms to put things back to normal. But even by these gangs' "low moral standards", this month's attack affecting seven NHS hospitals was "vicious". The hackers, a seemingly Russia-based group called Qilin, encrypted and stole reams of data from Synnovis, an NHS healthcare company that processes 100,000 blood tests a day. As a result, more than 3,000 operations and appointments have had to be cancelled; and last week, the hackers started posting sensitive patient data online – "presumably in fury that Synnovis had not yet paid the £40m ransom".



*Test results severely delayed*

The NHS Trusts and GP surgeries affected by this attack have been left reeling, said *The Economist*. C-sections and cancer referrals have been delayed; hospitals have had to resort to

paper records; diagnostic tests are piling up. But this is not the first time the NHS has been disrupted by cybercriminals. In 2017, a major global attack involving a piece of North Korean malware called WannaCry affected hospitals and even ambulance services. And it is unlikely to be the last: attacks on healthcare systems and other vital infrastructure are on the rise, and it's doubtful the "cash-strapped" NHS will be able to make its IT systems bulletproof against them.

Some cybergangs are vulnerable to law-enforcement operations, said Mark Galeotti in *The Spectator*; but Qilin has little to fear. The group never attacks in Russia and some experts think it has direct links to Russia's security services. It's more likely it is just a criminal gang that is being allowed to act with impunity while the chaos it spreads serves Moscow's interests. But since the mass expulsion of Russian intelligence officers from Europe, Russian crime groups have been used for covert operations; and should the Kremlin find it has need of Qilin's skills, or data it has stolen, a criminal gang could easily become a "government asset".

## Wit & Wisdom

"As everyone knows who has ever heard a piece of gossip, we do not 'own' the facts of our lives at all."

*Janet Malcolm, quoted on Bookforum*

"Good ideology; wrong species."

*Biologist E.O. Wilson on communism, quoted in The Spectator*

"Stronger than all the armies is an idea whose time has come."

*Victor Hugo, quoted in The Washington Post*

"Theology is necessary because man is by nature a fanatic."

*Gerhard Ebeling, quoted on ABC*

"We were told that our campaign wasn't sufficiently slick. We regard that as a compliment."

*Margaret Thatcher, quoted on Bloomberg*

"The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls."

*Pablo Picasso, quoted in The Times*

"All sorts of allowances are made for the illusions of youth; and none, or almost none, for the disenchantments of age."

*Robert Louis Stevenson, quoted on Forbes*

"Better a spectacular failure, than a benign success."

*Malcolm McLaren, quoted on Lifehacker.com*

"One can be bored until boredom becomes a mystical experience."

*Logan Pearsall Smith, quoted in The NY Times*

### Statistics of the week

37% of households in Scotland in 2022 were made up of just one person, living alone, compared with 30% in England, 32% in Wales and 31% in Northern Ireland.

**BBC News**

Around 90% of the 110,000 cars made by Aston Martin since the firm was founded in 1913 are still on the road.

**Motor1.com**

## Euros Group C: England underwhelm once again

After the slog of their opening Euro 2024 ties against Serbia and Denmark, it was “universally accepted” that England needed to “reinvigorate their fans” by producing a rousing performance against Slovenia on Tuesday, said David Hytner in *The Guardian*. And on a “claustrophobic and emotional night” in Cologne, there were definite signs of improvement. Gareth Southgate’s men “brought greater intensity” than previously and played higher up the pitch. For the first time at this tournament – other than in their excellent opening half-hour against Serbia – they “looked like a team”. Yet by the end of the game, the “overriding emotion” remained one of frustration. Against the lowest-ranked team in their group, England could only eke out a 0-0 draw. Once again, there was a predictability to their play, a basic lack of “zip and incision”. The England fans did their best – they belted out songs for much of the second half – but with no goals forthcoming, they ultimately turned on England’s coach: when Southgate ventured out to thank them after the game, he was jeered and pelted with plastic cups.

Southgate made one change to his starting line-up, calling an “end to the Trent Alexander-Arnold midfield experiment” by replacing him with Chelsea’s Conor Gallagher, said Ian Ladyman in the *Daily Mail*. But that experiment didn’t work either, and after an



Mainoo: making the difference

“anonymous” first half, Gallagher was replaced by Kobbie Mainoo. Finally, that did make a difference, said Jonathan Northcroft in *The Times*. The Manchester United youngster “changed England’s dynamic” by pushing into the final third and producing some fine link-up play with Jude Bellingham and Bukayo Saka. Southgate’s other substitutes also impressed, especially Chelsea forward Cole Palmer, who “took to the stage with the sort of nonchalant confidence you knew he would”, and was soon “dribbling and weaving” his way across the pitch. Yet for all that England dominated possession, they failed to produce a single “clear-cut chance, never mind a goal”.

And that has to be a major worry, said Oliver Holt in the *Daily Mail*. By virtue of topping their group, England will play a “lucky loser” in the last 16 – and to their great good fortune, they’re on the side of the draw that doesn’t feature Germany, Portugal, France and Spain. However, if they keep playing like this, they’re going to lose against whoever they play. It is utterly baffling, said Barney Ronay in *The Guardian*. England had 17 games between the last World Cup and these Euros, so why do they still have no functioning midfield? And “why has the attempt to find one become a kind of desperate speed dating exercise?” While it’s “never too late to fix things”, England are fast approaching a moment of reckoning.

## Euros Group A: yet another painful exit for Scotland

Around 100,000 members of the Tartan Army descended on Stuttgart last Sunday, ahead of Scotland’s third and final group match at the 2024 Euros, said Jason Burt in *The Daily Telegraph*. They were there because they knew that if their team beat Hungary, they would almost certainly progress to the knockout stages. And that would be a first for a country with a notably “sorry record” at major finals: in 11 appearances prior to the 2024 Euros – starting at the 1954 World Cup – they’ve never once made it out of their group. Alas, this time was to be no different, said Michael Grant in *The Times*. Over the course of a “painful night”, not only did Steve Clarke’s team fail to score, they failed to prevent Hungary snatching a last-gasp victory with a goal in the 100th minute – the latest goal ever scored in a group match at the Euros. Scottish fans ended the night feeling aggrieved: substitute Stuart Armstrong had been brought down by Hungary’s



Gunn collides with Varga

Willi Orbán as he ran through on goal in the 80th minute, yet the referee had “waved play on” and VAR made the decision not to intervene. A furious Clarke later described it as “100% a penalty”.

The “harsh reality” is that Scotland didn’t deserve a knockout place, said Ewan Murray in *The Guardian*. They badly lacked creative potency – across three games, “two wild deflections from defenders” constituted the sum total of their scoring tally. And despite knowing that they needed to beat Hungary, they managed just one shot on goal. In a “tournament laced with exciting matches”, this one proved a “grim slog” – the only thing that marked it out was the horrific injury to Hungary’s Barnabás

Varga, who was knocked unconscious when he collided with Scotland’s goalkeeper, Angus Gunn. Hungary confirmed that the striker will need surgery, having broken several bones in his face.

## A World Cup fairytale for Afghanistan’s cricketers

Fifteen years ago, Afghanistan’s national cricket team were toiling in the lower echelons of the international game, facing the likes of Uganda and Papua New Guinea, said Geoff Lemon in *The Guardian*. That was to be expected, as cricket only began to take root in the country in the mid-1990s, when Afghans who’d developed a passion for the game in refugee camps in Pakistan returned home. But since their first one-day international in 2009, the team have made incredible progress, upsetting several major nations, Sri Lanka, England and Pakistan among them. And last Sunday, they pulled off an even bigger victory, with a 21-run win over Australia in the Super 8 stage of the T20 World Cup. Afghanistan’s total of 148/6 was



Naib: a touch of cramp

powered by a partnership of 118 by ever-reliable openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran. Their bowlers then made short work of Australia’s batsmen, dismissing them for 127, paceman Gulbadin Naib taking four wickets.

Then, in their next match, Afghanistan won a dramatic victory over Bangladesh, said Jasper Bruce in the *Daily Mail*. Defending just 115, they bowled Bangladesh out to win by eight runs, Naveen-ul-Haq taking the last two wickets

in two balls in the penultimate over. The victory – somewhat marred by accusations that Naib had faked a bout of cramp towards the end of the match to secure a time-wasting advantage – means Afghanistan have qualified for a “fairytale semi-final berth”.

## Sporting headlines

**Rugby union** England beat Japan 52-17 in the first match of their summer tour. They play two Tests against New Zealand next month.

**Football** 2022 World Cup semi-finalists Croatia were denied a place in the knockout stages of the Euros when Italy scored an equaliser against them in the 98th minute.

**Cricket** England made it through to the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup. They will face India on Thursday.

**Formula 1** Max Verstappen won the Spanish Grand Prix, narrowly beating Britain’s Lando Norris, who’d begun the race in pole position.

# Pick of the week's correspondence

## A new political contract

*To The Times*

James Marriott is surely right when he argues that politicians deserve to be treated with an appropriate degree of respect and without point-scoring questioning by journalists in radio and TV interviews.

However, the quid pro quo is that the electorate has an equal right to be treated honestly, and to not have its intelligence insulted by politicians not answering questions put to them, promising what they and the electorate know cannot be achieved, and talking over each other in public debates. This would represent a new and more effective contract between politicians and the electorate.

*Prof David T. Llewellyn, Ruddington, Nottinghamshire*

## Build up, not out

*To The Economist*

It is an unpopular opinion these days, but green belts are doing their job well ("Labour's growth plan"). The nearest bit of green belt to central London is about 30 minutes by Tube, and most of it is over an hour's commute. People don't want to live out there. They want to live 15 minutes away from their work, in places with good infrastructure and connectivity.

I sometimes take the train into Paddington. The last 20 minutes of this journey travels through seemingly endless areas of low density, low-rise Victorian or postwar housing sprinkled with industrial parks and office blocks, exactly what the green belt was created to arrest. Rather than allowing this urban sprawl to resume its outward creep, it is much more sensible to modernise the areas that people already reside in.

The quest to build on green belts has become an end in itself and its proponents have lost sight of the real aim, which is to provide affordable housing in places where people want to live. Britain's cities don't need to grow wider, they need to grow taller.

*Nick Lott, South Hams, Devon*

## Sing and you're winning

*To The Times*

Martin Samuel is spot on in his scepticism as to the value to cities of hosting football

## Exchange of the week

### Did the West provoke Putin?

*To The Daily Telegraph*

Nigel Farage's explanation – not justification – for Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine is an uncomfortable truth that other leaders are too quick to dismiss. As Russia's empire disintegrated, it was given the clear impression there would be no Nato expansion towards its borders, not least in the assurance offered to Mikhail Gorbachev in 1990 by the then US secretary of state James Baker ("not one inch").

Despite this, three former members of the USSR and all of its former Warsaw Pact satellite states joined Nato. Little consideration was given to the long-term implications of this huge geopolitical shift.

*Rear Admiral Philip Mathias (retd.), Southsea, Hampshire*

*To The Daily Telegraph*

Nigel Farage has obviously not read the 1994 Budapest Memorandum signed by Bill Clinton, John Major and Boris Yeltsin. Under its terms, in return for Ukraine giving up its nuclear weapons, the signatories agreed, among other things, to respect its independence, sovereignty and existing borders.

Surely that sovereignty must extend to Ukraine's right to seek membership of the EU and Nato, which cannot be interpreted as "provocation". I am afraid that Mr Farage's comments, however well intended, will have only emboldened Putin.

*Sir Gerald Howarth, Chelsworth, Suffolk*

*To The Times*

Nigel Farage believes that Nato's alleged belligerence led President Putin to invade Ukraine. Is it not more likely that the lack of response from the West to Russia's annexing of Crimea in 2014 encouraged him to bide his time and invade Ukraine when he felt the time was propitious?

*Diane Hayes, Maidenhead, Berkshire*

tournaments. A few years ago I attended a presentation of economic data from Turin that compared the hosting of a football tournament with an international choirs festival.

The latter generated far more income and none of the expenditure on security. And yet nations fall over themselves to host sporting events, while cutting funding for the arts.

*Mark Pemberton, arts consultant, London*

## On diversity and humility

*To The Daily Telegraph*

I am a grandmother of three, one of whom is trans. Michael Deacon implies I might be a proponent of gender ideology ("Tony Blair's bizarre statement on trans rights..."). I see things differently.

I made the uncomfortable decision to put to one side the sanctity of my own opinions and instead respectfully engage with my grandchild. I have gained much as a result. I now understand that my grandchild bears a terrible burden navigating life in a context that

is antithetical to their very existence. Consequently, I live daily with a visceral fear for their safety and future.

History, across multiple cultures, demonstrates that gender diversity is not a new phenomenon; affording any public space to those that embody this reality, is.

My decision to learn to live with my own discomfort and listen has taught me many things, above all, perhaps, humility – a quality we would all benefit from cultivating.

*M. McTeague, Bristol*

## Cost-free NHS relief

*To The Times*

Emma Walmsley is right to highlight the benefits the NHS could gain from a greater focus on preventing disease. It was disappointing, however, that the steps she suggests to enable this are to increase clinical trial and regulatory capacity, streamline systems to attract more research, and improve access to medical innovations.

While commendable, where is the mention of the virtually

cost-free population-level changes to prevent disease?

For obesity, for example, this would involve applying measures against highly processed foods that have proved successful against tobacco. She presents disease prevention as a problem that is solvable simply through a greater use of drugs. But then, as chief executive of GSK, she would say that, wouldn't she?

*John Britton, emeritus prof. of epidemiology, Hoveringham, Nottinghamshire*

## An economic correction

*To The Economist*

Does your assertion that "a proliferation of old folk means more people saving for retirement" get the logic upside down? A rising ratio of pensioners to workers means there will be fewer people toiling to save for their old age, and more older folk will be spending their nest-eggs. The balance of savings to investment will be skewed towards lower savings and thus a higher neutral interest rate.

In the same vein, the balance of aggregate demand (all people consume) to aggregate supply (only those who still work) will shift towards less supply and hence more price pressures. At the margin, low birth rates helped explain why inflation and interest rates were so low over the past 15 years while the baby boomers were still working and saving.

But with ever more pensioners, brace yourself for somewhat sticky inflation and higher rates for longer.

*Holger Schmieding, chief economist, Berenberg, London*



"The Little Dutch Boy, 2024"

© PRIVATE EYE

# Go with the slow



loaf  
Beds, Sofas and Supplies for Loafers

## Review of reviews: Books

## Book of the week

**The House of Beckham**

by Tom Bower

HarperCollins 384pp £22

The Week Bookshop £17.99

If you judged David and Victoria Beckham from their Instagram posts, you'd assume that theirs is a "love story for the ages", said Anita Singh in *The Daily Telegraph*. In countless shots taken at home or on holiday, they gaze adoringly into each other's eyes, seemingly as loved-up as they were 25 years ago, when they were married in "matching outfits of Ribena purple". Or they're surrounded by their four children, looking like a close-knit clan. Yet according to Tom Bower's *The House of Beckham*, this "happy-families image" is pure fabrication, said Hannah Betts in the same paper. Bower, a veteran biographer, portrays their relationship as a "devil's bargain", designed to prop up their staggeringly profitable global brand. Posh and Becks, he says, don't actually like each other very much, and as individuals they leave a lot to be desired: "David is stingy, squeaky-voiced and volatile. Victoria is a tuneless, furious-faced WAG whose fashion line is a much-puffed vanity project." While Bower scores highly "in terms of research and truth-telling", he struggles to get past the "ghastliness of his subjects"; the narrative is "oddly flat".



There's little in this book that's revelatory, said Camilla Long in *The Sunday Times*: mostly, it's "culled from available records". Yet the details are still "kind of gripping", from David's multiple alleged affairs – he emerges as a "shagging automaton" – to the many ways in which the Beckhams are money-obsessed: neither apparently likes tipping in restaurants, and every business decision David has ever made can, it seems, "be traced back to his desire to avoid tax". No less entertaining are his "superhuman" efforts to get a knighthood. "Unappreciative c\*\*ts," he thundered, when the honours committee turned

him down. "His leaked emails will simply never get old."

The Beckhams are certainly shielded by a "staggeringly slick" PR operation, said Katie Rosseinsky in *The Independent*. Yet Bower's efforts to pierce it are not terribly effective. This is an underwhelming and "overly long tome", which rehashes stereotypes that have always existed in the media – David as airhead, Victoria as "thin and miserable". By the end, the couple "seem no more real" than they did at the book's start. All the real details about David's affairs are 20 years old, said Zoe Williams in *The Guardian*. Beyond that, Bower relies on insinuation: David "appeared to be smitten" by an aristocratic party girl, or "attracted the attention of a glamorous Australian bikini model". It's not so much a take-down, as an "epic symphony of snide".

**The Cleopatras**

by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones

Wildfire 384pp £25

The Week Bookshop £19.99

"Cleopatra may be the most written-about woman in history, and is certainly the most famous female ruler of any kingdom," said Toby Wilkinson in *The Daily Telegraph*. We tend to think of her as an anomalous figure, but as Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones shows in this entertaining and often "juicy" book, she was actually "by no means unique". She was preceded by six other Egyptian queens, all bearing the name Cleopatra.

These Cleopatras "have long been confined to the footnotes of history, but here they emerge as fascinating figures in their own right". Moreover, Llewellyn-Jones argues, they greatly influenced the seventh (and final) Cleopatra (pictured), who was indebted to them for both her "self-image" and her "political strategy".

The Cleopatras were part of the Ptolemaic dynasty that took power in Egypt following Alexander the Great's conquest of the country in 332BC, said Lucilla Burn in the *TLS*. The first Cleopatra was a Seleucid – Greek-Syrian – princess who married Ptolemy V in 193BC. She and her successors embraced the "excesses of the Ptolemaic court: the incest, conspicuous consumption, and extravagant expenditure on ritual and processions". Llewellyn-Jones details the many "cold-blooded ways" in which the Cleopatras dispatched inconvenient relations – in the case of Cleopatra III, by arranging for her mother, Cleopatra II, to be sent a "beautiful ivory and ebony casket" on her 50th birthday containing the "mangled body" of her own son. Yet despite such behaviour, Llewellyn-Jones urges us to "admire the achievements of the Cleopatras". They were, after all, the "first women we know to have grasped genuine political power for themselves" – and without their "formidable" achievements, Cleopatra VII would "never have come so close to having the Roman empire at her feet".



## Novel of the week

**Scaffolding**

by Lauren Elkin

Chatto &amp; Windus 400pp £16.99

The Week Bookshop £13.99

This entertaining debut novel by the critic Lauren Elkin is a "brainy sex comedy" set in pre-Covid Paris, said Anthony Cummins in *The Observer*. Its narrator, Anna, is a Franco-American psychoanalyst whose lawyer husband is away for the summer, on a job in London, "leaving her to oversee the long-planned knocking through of a wall in their Belleville apartment". Anna feels lonely and adrift, until she meets Clementine, an art history postgraduate who has just moved into the same building. Clementine challenges many of Anna's assumptions – about property ownership, psychoanalysis, marriage – and also "widens" her "sexual horizons", drawing her into a ménage à trois with her boyfriend.

Elkin's prose can be clumsy, and at times this novel feels overly introspective, said Ellen Peirson-Hagger in *The i Paper*. But as it develops, it becomes a "truly fascinating" study of the messiness of the human condition. In non-fiction books such as *Art Monsters* and *Flâneuse*, Elkin has shown herself to be an "astute" thinker; here, she proves equally "inventive" as a novelist.

THE WEEK Bookshop

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Opening times: Monday to Saturday 9am-5.30pm and Sunday 10am-4pm

## Musical: Kiss Me, Kate

Barbican Theatre, London EC2 (020-7870 2500). Until 14 September Running time: 2hrs 40mins ★★★

Cole Porter's 1948 musical *Kiss Me, Kate* is a giddy love letter to the theatre, said David Jays in *The Guardian*. Filled with "falderol frivolity" and glorious songs – *Too Darn Hot*, *So in Love* and more – the show is a Broadway classic, and Bartlett Sher's "exhilarating" and luxurious revival should prove a big summer hit for the Barbican. A witty spin on *The Taming of the Shrew*, the set-up is that a divorced couple – producer/director/actor Fred and his movie star ex-wife Lilli – are opening in a musical version of the Shakespeare play. As their tempestuous offstage and onstage relationships intertwine, the "characters bicker in dialogue but unpack their hearts in song".

Now best known for his role in TV's *Line of Duty*, Adrian Dunbar is "unorthodox casting" as the monstrously egotistical Fred, said Clive Davis in *The Times*. He's not the "most potent of singers" or athletic of dancers, but his "light comic touch" serves him well. Meanwhile, the part of Lilli is taken by the Broadway star Stephanie J. Block – and she delivers a "knockout turn", said Marianka Swain in *The Daily Telegraph*. Her acting is brilliantly nuanced, and her singing "simply divine". Elsewhere, Peter Davison is a "hoot as the general with a roving eye", Charlie Stemp supplies "sensational tap dancing and cheeky charisma",



Block and Dunbar charm in a giddy love letter to the theatre

and Georgina Onuorah, as the ingénue Lois, is magnificent and "very much in charge", making *Always True to You in My Fashion* a "girl-power triumph".

For me, the evening lacked "pizzazz", said Nick Curtis in *The Evening Standard*. Where it should have been "fizzy and light", it felt "solid and serviceable", and there was precious little chemistry between Block and Dunbar, the latter seeming "uncomfortable and off the pace throughout". Block is sensational, said David Benedict in *The Stage*. And Nigel Lindsay and Hammed

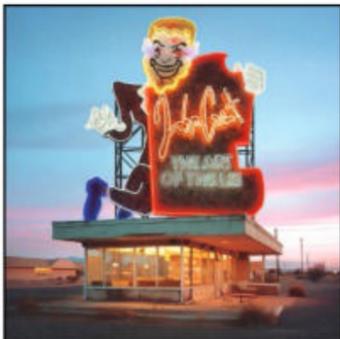
Animashaun as the stagestruck gangsters bring the house down with their *Brush Up Your Shakespeare*. But when it is the gangster subplot and the "glorious costumes" that steal the show, you know that something has gone awry.

## The week's other opening

**Some Demon** Arcola Theatre, London E8 (020-7503 1646) until 6 July, then Bristol Old Vic (01179-877877), 9-13 July With frequent "one-line zingers" to lighten the sombre subject matter, Laura Waldren's "astonishing" debut – set in a treatment centre for eating disorders – is simultaneously "educational, informative and hugely entertaining" (*Daily Telegraph*).

## Albums of the week: three new releases

**John Grant: The Art of the Lie**  
Bella Union  
£13



"A rule of thumb with Colorado singer-songwriter John Grant is that the catchier the tune, the darker the message," said Ed Power in *The i Paper*. Now a citizen of Ireland, he specialises in "noir-ish" electronic pop that is "sweet on the outside but with a midnight black centre", and on his "enjoyably fraught and tumultuous" sixth album he keeps faith with that successful formula. Its "devilishly addictive" songs combine "candy-cane melodies with often stark lyrics" about the personal and the political (such as his anger about the situation in America).

With its appealing combination of humour and solemnity and richly eclectic mix of styles, this is Grant's "best album since his 2010 debut", said Tony Clayton-Lea in *The Irish Times*. *All That School For Nothing* and *It's a Bitch* are funk tunes; *Meek AF* has a "tough groove" with an energising mid-song rap; while *The Child Catcher* is a "spooky, slow-motion slice of ambient pop". This is an idiosyncratic but compelling collection; Grant's passion laced "with sincerity and warmth".

**Sam Morton: Daffodils & Dirt**  
XL  
£11



Albums by famous actors don't usually turn out well, said Will Hodgkinson in *The Times*. Efforts by Jared Leto, Russell Crowe and other "starry types" to show us their love of blues or country have served as a good argument "for sticking to the day job". But the British actress Samantha Morton's venture into music turns out to be "a different proposition entirely". Her "eerie, unnerving" debut, made in collaboration with Richard Russell, recalls "PJ Harvey at her most intimate", or even "the Velvet Underground in their quieter moments".

Recording under the name Sam Morton, the duo have produced one of the best contributions yet to the recent resurgence of trip-hop, said Shaad D'Souza in *The Observer*. The songs are inspired by Morton's difficult childhood, first living with abusive parents, and then in care; and so the lyrics are often raw. But the result is not "unrelentingly dark"; on the contrary, Russell's production "captures a sense of mystery and wonder, even hope, that makes these songs feel almost like fables". It's a dreamy, intoxicating listen.

**Sibelius, Prokofiev 1, Violin Concertos**  
(Janine Jansen)  
Decca  
£12



Janine Jansen's first concerto recording in nine years proves more than worth the wait, said Erica Jeal in *The Guardian*, thanks to her "remarkable" freewheeling connection with conductor Klaus Mäkelä and his Oslo Philharmonic. Together, they bring expansive daring to the Sibelius – Jansen "hurtles down the bobsleigh run of the finale at breathtaking speed" – and spellbinding storytelling to Prokofiev's *Concerto No. 1*.

What unites the pieces is "the way they relate so dramatically to their cultural landscapes", said Edward Seckerson in *Gramophone*. Jansen strips them of all "performance adornment" and takes them back to their "elemental roots". In the Sibelius, she becomes a "voice of nature" – the cadenza "most definitely a rant in praise of and in defiance of the elements" – while the orchestral climax is "nature roaring back its affirmation". And I make no apology, by the way, for the "purpler aspects of this review". This is bold, truly thrilling playing, by turns dreamy and hair-raising, that cannot help but "elicit a rush of feeling".

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



## The Bikeriders

1hr 56mins (15)

*Violent, high-octane drama starring Tom Hardy and Jodie Comer*

★★★★

The American director Jeff Nichols went rather quiet after producing two “impressive” films in 2016, *Loving* and *Midnight Special*. Now, he has come “roaring back onto the scene with *The Bikeriders*”, said Robbie Collin in *The Daily Telegraph*. Inspired by the photographer Danny Lyon’s 1968 book about a notorious biker gang in Chicago, it delivers a “grubbily glamorous blast of underworld machismo” reminiscent of mid-career Scorsese: think wildly charismatic performances, “jabs of barbarous violence, and a skin-fizzingly sharp jukebox soundtrack”. Tom Hardy stars as Johnny, the leader of the fictional Vandals gang. The voice-over, though, comes from Kathy (a superb Jodie Comer), who is in love with Benny, Johnny’s closest confidant, played by Austin Butler. “The plot, insofar as there is one, traces Hardy’s rise and fall”, as his club slips ever deeper into violent crime; but the film “is less interested in telling a story than pinning down a particular time, place and attitude – and does so with such pungent precision, you can all but smell it”.

Butler’s “vain performance, all scowl and hooded eyes, threatens to tip the film into pastiche”, said Matthew Bond in *The Mail on Sunday*. And the story’s episodic structure does rather drain it of “immediacy and narrative drive”. But Comer disappears brilliantly into her character, “while Hardy quietly delivers one of the best performances of his career as the ageing tough guy who knows his time will soon pass”. This “well-crafted” film has much to recommend it, said Deborah Ross in *The Spectator*. But be warned: it’s exceedingly violent. “If you are squeamish, I reckon you’ll spend a good 30% of the two-hour running time looking down into your lap.”



## Green Border

2hrs 32mins (15)

*Distressing film about migrants seeking to cross into Europe*

★★★★

The fury that radiates off the veteran Polish director Agnieszka Holland’s film *Green Border* “is so intense that you can almost feel it encasing you in its heat”, said Manohla Dargis in *The New York Times*. “A brutal, deeply affecting drama” rooted in real events, it follows refugees from the Middle East and Africa as they attempt to enter the European Union via Belarus and Poland. The film is mainly set “in the so-called exclusion zone” between the two countries, a “haunted, contested, dangerously swampy slice of land” patrolled by armed guards, who show no mercy to those migrants who are unfortunate enough to be caught by them. The characters include a “tense” Syrian couple (Jalal Altawil and Dalia Naous) who are travelling with their family; and Leila (Behi Djanati Atai), “a middle-aged Afghan gutsily making the journey alone”. The cruelty they and others encounter is shocking, but “the rigour of Holland’s filmmaking, and the steadfastness of her compassion, help steady you as a viewer. Pay attention, you can almost hear her whispering in your ear: pay witness.”

“There are important films that are tough to watch,” said Alistair Harkness in *The Scotsman*, “and then there’s *Green Border*.” A contender for “the most distressing film ever made”, it forces us “to confront the fact that this isn’t some atrocity in Europe’s dark and murky past”, but a “humanitarian crisis, happening right now”. Shot in black and white, the film is “expertly made”, said Kevin Maher in *The Times*. But the screenplay “rams manifestos into the mouths” of its characters, whose fates are sadly predictable. “If a pregnant woman appears, she’ll be beaten by a psychotic border guard. If there’s a cute kid, he’s going to die.” After a while, alas, “compassion fatigue” risks setting in.



## The Exorcism

1hr 35mins (15)

*Russell Crowe gives his all in a second-rate horror movie*

★★

Like “other dethroned A-listers”, Oscar-winner Russell Crowe is now “headlining B-movies he once would have balked at”, said Benjamin Lee in *The Guardian*. Earlier this year, he starred in *The Pope’s Exorcist*, which proved such a hit that *The Exorcism*, a film he made in 2019 but which was delayed by Covid, is now being given a theatrical release. It is directed by Joshua John Miller, whose father Jason starred as one of the priests in *The Exorcist* (1973), and in it, Crowe plays Anthony, a washed-up actor who has landed a role as a priest in a film very like *The Exorcist*. “As the shoot begins, Tony’s clouded mind starts to affect the movie, haunted by abuse, addiction and, you guessed it, something far darker.” The early stages of his descent are intriguing, but the ending, “all deafening sound and fury, could be from any old exorcism movie”, and in between there is just a boring mess. Sadly, “a cursed movie about a cursed production” turns out to be “a cursed viewing experience”.

The film’s premise – an alcoholic actor who is grappling with demons, then becomes possessed by demons – is promising, said Alissa Wilkinson in *The New York Times*. But there is a “bizarrely choppy feel to the movie, as if an hour or so had been pulled out in an attempt to slim down an overstuffed story”, draining the whole thing of meaning and tension. *The Exorcism* collapses in on itself by the time it reaches its “climactic demon expulsion”, said Clarisse Loughrey in *The Independent*, but the great thing about Crowe is that he commits “whatever the circumstances” – and here, he “never falters. If exorcisms become a full-time gig for him, you won’t see me complain.”

## Federer: Twelve Final Days – adoring film about the tennis legend

The British director Asif Kapadia has made “dazzling films about Ayrton Senna, Amy Winehouse and Diego Maradona”, said Brian Viner in *The Daily Mail*. His latest, co-directed by Joe Sabia, follows “the great Roger Federer from the announcement of his retirement in 2022 to his valedictory tennis tournament at the O2 Arena less than a fortnight later”. Kapadia’s previous subjects were “tormented or tragic or both”, whereas the Swiss maestro is well-adjusted, with a family – “supportive parents, lovely wife, two sets of twins” – that seems “like a kiss from the gods”. All of which makes him, alas, “an insipid choice for a behind-the-scenes documentary”, which turns in this case into “an 88-minute rhapsody”. It’s enjoyable if you revere Federer, as I do, but it’s still “too adoring by half”.



Well-adjusted and “controversy-free”

It’s true that, like its subject, “the film is not particularly revolutionary or groundbreaking in its approach”, said Wendy Ide in *The Observer*. “But again, like its subject, it is a work of unmistakable quality and class. With warm contributions from many of the greats of the men’s game – Borg, McEnroe, Nadal, Murray and Djokovic all appear – and glimpses of Federer’s family life, this will be a must-watch for tennis fans.” Federer has always been a “controversy-free zone”, and a “model of Swiss neutrality”, said Raphael Abraham in *the FT*; so

anyone hoping for indiscretions will be disappointed. Kapadia’s film is also sorely lacking in tension. But it’s quite stirring at points. “If you’re a fan, pack a hanky or three. If you’re not, pack one anyway for the scenes involving his children.”

## Exhibition of the week **Roger Mayne: Youth**

*The Courtauld Gallery, London WC2 (020-3947 7777, [courtauld.ac.uk](http://courtauld.ac.uk)). Until 1 September*

*Roger Mayne: Youth* is the first photography exhibition ever staged at London's Courtauld Gallery, said Charlotte Jansen in *The Guardian*. It features 60 works by Mayne, a self-taught photographer "known for his documents of working-class children on the poor and battered streets of postwar London". Born in 1929, he was an Oxford chemistry student when he identified photography as his calling. In the 1950s, he set up in the slums of North Kensington and began documenting the world he saw around him. Mayne "sought to embed himself in the communities he photographed", and although the bombed-out streets he worked in were "virtually uninhabitable", he saw that the area was "vibrating with life". The pictures he took there focused particularly on the local children who used the streets and ruined buildings as a "playground". His work captured both the "harsh reality" of their circumstances, and their "playful innocence in the face of it". This show is a fine tribute to a photographer who helped "to shape the visual identity of postwar Britain".



*Goalie, Street Football, Brindley Road (Paddington) 1956*

The era "of smog and food rationing" Mayne captured might feel "unimaginably remote", said Mark Hudson in *The Independent*. Yet the people and places in these images are "all so vividly captured, you can practically taste the acrid fug of massed coal fires". His most famous photos, taken in North Kensington

slums between 1956 and 1961, are extraordinarily evocative – timeless, even. In one, boys twist and turn "on a heap of old mattresses"; another, *Girl Jiving, Southam Street*, sees its subject sporting a man's jacket, looking lost in a personal "world of rhythm". As the children he photographed became teenage Teddy Boys and Teddy Girls, Mayne kept up with them. Yet while there are some "remarkable" images among these later pictures, they feel "slightly more conventional". Other shots of domestic life with his daughter Katkin and wife Ann are "excellent" compositions, but they "lack the electrifying tension" of his most celebrated work.

Mayne had a very different upbringing from the poor but uninhibited children he photographed, said Florence Hallett in *The i Paper*. He was "sent away to boarding school" at a young age and "experienced none of the freedoms" enjoyed by his subjects. Although his pictures appeared regularly in the press in the 1950s and 1960s, he saw

himself not as a journalist, but as an artist. His images are full of unusual flourishes: the curving line of a pavement kerb against a "pale expanse of road"; and "textured details of stone and brick, corrugated iron, graffiti and flaking paint" become subjects in themselves. More importantly, however, Mayne's "striking, often beautiful pictures of children, are real, unaffected, and never sentimental". This is an absorbing show. Do not miss it.

## Where to buy...

*The Week reviews an exhibition in a private gallery*

### **Dora Maar**

*at Amar Gallery*

Dora Maar (1907-1997) is one of the saddest figures in art history. Raised in Argentina and France, she studied at Paris's *École des Beaux-Arts* and became a highly respected avant-garde photographer, producing strange, monochrome images that saw her classed as a fellow traveller of the surrealist movement. All was well until she met Pablo Picasso in 1935 and embarked on a relationship that would diminish her reputation and drain her of her creative force. This exhibition, *Behind the Lens*, brings together a fine selection of some of Maar's most memorable images, from eerie, X-ray-like abstract compositions made of thin strings of white light, to architectural images, to portrait photography – notably several rarely seen shots of Picasso, the context



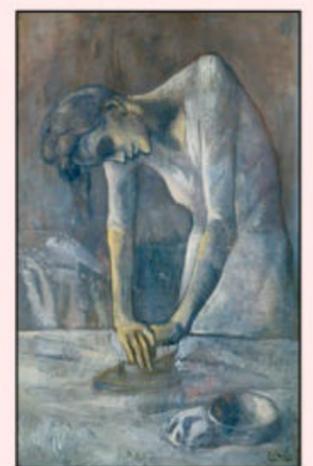
*Compositions (detail, circa 1980)*

endowing his likeness with malevolent force. The hang is odd, interspersed as it is with inspirational quotes and snatches of biography, but the pictures themselves are exquisite at best, and never less than historically interesting. Prices on request.

12-14 Whitfield Street, London W1 ([amargallery.com](http://amargallery.com)). Until 18 August

## The case of *Woman Ironing*

The descendants of a German-Jewish art collector have failed in their attempt to claim a Picasso owned by New York's Guggenheim Museum since 1979, said Samuel Lovett in *The Times*. A lawsuit filed last year in Manhattan alleged that *Woman Ironing* (1904), pictured right, was sold under duress by Karl Adler and his



wife in 1938. Thomas Bennigson, one of Adler's great-grandchildren, and seven other heirs sought compensation of up to \$200m. The Adlers ran a leather manufacturing company in Baden-Baden, and bought *Woman Ironing* in 1916. After the rise of the Nazis, the family were stripped of their wealth and rights. The painting was sold to the dealer Justin Thannhauser for 6,887 Swiss francs. The lawsuit described the sale as "forced" and the price as "well below" market value. The judge found that the plaintiffs had failed to establish duress surrounding the specific sale. The fact that they had waited 40 years to challenge the museum's ownership also did not weigh in their favour.



## Best books... Nina Stibbe

The writer and author of the bestselling *Love*, Nina chooses her favourite diaries. Her latest book *Went to London, Took the Dog: The Diary of a 60-year-old Runaway* (Picador £10.99) is out now

**The Diaries of Samuel Pepys**, edited by Robert Latham, 1825 (Penguin £18.99). The Restoration, the Great Plague and the Fire of London are the backdrop, but for me it's Pepys' vivid and frank descriptions of his personal life that enchant – romantic entanglements, haircuts, ailments and, on 25 September 1660, his first “cup of tee (a China drink) of which I never had drank before”.

**Forbidden Notebook** by Alba de Céspedes, translated by Ann Goldstein, 1952 (Pushkin £9.99). A new translation of a forgotten novella in diary form. It's 1950 and, on a whim, 43-year-old housewife Valeria Cossati buys a notebook and

begins in secret to record daily events in her life. One reviewer called it “the female *Stoner*”.

**The Diary of a Nobody** by George and Weedon Grossmith, 1892 (Penguin £8.99). On the rare occasion I meet anyone who hasn't read this, I recommend they do so immediately and envy them the laughter and joy to come. The diary records the everyday life of London clerk Charles Pooter over the course of 15 months. Pooter is ordinary and recognisable with a healthy self-regard bordering on delusional.

**Theft by Finding – Diaries Volume One** by David Sedaris, 2017 (Little, Brown £10.99). It's not surprising that genius

chronicler of the everyday Sedaris is a habitual diarist, nor that his diaries are a mix of the exquisite, bizarre and mundane. Entries show him variously polishing jade, tidying apples, watching a stranger eating a sandwich with his eyes closed and trying assorted recreational drugs.

**The Diary of a Provincial Lady** by E.M. Delafield, 1930 (Penguin £9.99) This fictional diary chronicles life in a middle-class household in rural Devon at the beginning of the Great Depression. The protagonist anxiously and comically tries to keep up appearances, but when the bills come in she sneaks off to the pawnbrokers in a hat.

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

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

### Showing now

**Bradford Literature Festival** celebrates its tenth anniversary with talks by Lemn Sissay, Ruby Wax, Mary Beard and Kate Mosse, among others. Until 7 July, at venues around Bradford city centre ([bradfordlitfest.co.uk](http://bradfordlitfest.co.uk)).

The artist **Keith Haring** started out in the 1980s by pasting drawings on paper on blank advertising panels on the New York Subway. A selection of the surviving pieces – “witty, poppy, but somehow ethereal” – are on show in Glasgow (Guardian). Until 5 September, The Modern Institute ([themoderninstitute.com](http://themoderninstitute.com)).

### Book now

The **Gone Wild** family festival has four days of live music – with acts including Scouting for Girls and Sam Ryder – plus outdoor activities such as quad biking, open-water swimming and raft-building. 8-11 August, Holkham Hall, Norfolk ([norfolk.gonewildfestival.com](http://norfolk.gonewildfestival.com)).

The RSC and Wise Children's production of **The Buddha of Suburbia**, adapted from Hanif Kureishi's autobiographical 1990 novel,



*The Buddha of Suburbia: the RSC has “nailed it”*

is transferring to London for a limited run. Adapter-director Emma Rice has “nailed it” (Daily Telegraph). 22 October-16 November, Barbican, London EC1 ([barbican.org.uk](http://barbican.org.uk)).

**Isle of Wight Open Studios** sees local artists throw open the doors of their studios to welcome in members of the public. Visits are free, but it's worth checking ahead which studios are open when. 23 August-8 September, Isle of Wight ([isleofwightopenstudios.co.uk](http://isleofwightopenstudios.co.uk)).

## Television

### Programmes

**Skint: The Truth About Britain's Broken Economy with Tim Harford** The *More or Less* presenter looks at what the numbers tell us about the state of the economy, and how it might be fixed. Mon 1 Jul, C4 21:00 (60mins).

**The Baby Scandal that Shocked the World** Film about the “cash for babies” scandal, when two couples – one in Wales and the other in the US – paid to adopt the same set of twins. Tue 2 July, Channel 5 21:00 (125mins).

**Storyville: Inheriting the Castle** Documentary about an Argentinian maid whose employer gave her a mansion deep in the Argentine Pampas as a reward for her work. Tue 2 Jul, BBC4 22:00 (75mins).

**Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain** The chef hits the road in a 1950s food truck to learn what it takes to produce the food on our plates. His stops include Cambridgeshire and Kent. Thur 4 Jul, ITV1 20:30 (30mins).

### Films

**North by Northwest** (1959) Cary Grant plays a New York advertising executive in Hitchcock's evergreen suspense thriller. Sun 30 Jun, BBC2 15:00 (135mins).

**My Week with Marilyn** (2011) Enjoyable drama based on Colin Clark's memoir of meeting Marilyn Monroe on the set of *The Prince and the Showgirl*. Mon 1 Jul, BBC1 23:20 (90mins).

**Zola** (2020) Fast-paced and well-acted film based on a stranger than fiction saga, involving gangsters and pimps in Florida, that originated as a series of tweets. Fri 5 Jul, Film4 00:10 (105mins).

### New to streaming TV

**The Man with 1000 Kids** Docuseries about a Dutch sperm donor who has been accused of deceiving women into having his babies on a mass scale. On Netflix.

**Sometimes I Think About Dying** “Perceptive” romcom, starring Daisy Ridley, about a loner with a morbid imagination who finds love (Guardian). On Mubi.

## The Archers: what happened last week

Fallon tells Paul about her drunken night out; she feels as if a reset button has been pressed. Tony blows up at George for falling asleep against a bale. At a GP appointment with Azra, Paul explains that he has spots in an embarrassing place; could his newly opened relationship be to blame? As it turns out, they're just insect bites, but Azra suggests that Etienne and Paul give safe sex a go anyway. Alice goes to the police station to be formally charged, and Adam learns she's had a drink in the toilets. At The Stables, Justin starts interviewing candidates to replace Alice, even if it's just on a temporary basis. Jakob successfully carries out a procedure on Oliver's horse; it looks like the outbreak of strangles at The Stables has been contained. Fallon's birthday is ruined when Harrison gets a text from Alan about the memorial prayer next week. Alice is shocked to be told by Jakob that he's hunting for a replacement for her. At the magistrates' court, she pleads not guilty, to Adam's shock. But Alice believes she just wouldn't have driven after drinking so much – right?

## Splendid Georgian houses



▲ **Norfolk:** Gurney's Manor, Hingham. Grade II manor house with an impressive Georgian facade set in more than 16 acres of parkland. Main suite, 7 further beds, 4 baths, kitchen/breakfast room, 3 receps, study, 4-bed self-contained cottage, outbuildings, garden, paddocks, parking. £2.35m; Strutt & Parker (01603-883607).



▲ **Somerset:** Cheddon Corner, Taunton. A stylish house set in mature gardens. 7 beds, 5 baths, kitchen, 6 receps, gym, pool, 1-bed self-contained cottage, garden. £2.5m; Knight Frank (01392-848846).

► **Hampshire:** Chesil Street, Winchester. This charming 18th century town house is close to the city centre. 6 beds, 3 baths, kitchen, 4 receps, games room, garden. £1.65m; Savills (01962-834057).



▲ **Kent:** Royal Naval Dockyard, Isle of Sheppey. Built in 1826, this elegant property is located in the Historic Quarter of the former Royal Naval Dockyard. 6 beds, 2 baths, kitchen, 3 receps, coach house, garden. £700,000; Fine & Country (01732-222272).





◀ **Somerset:** Millards Hill, Trudoxhill, Frome. Picturesque Grade II house set in 44 acres of parkland with far-reaching views towards King Alfred's Tower. 9 beds, 5 baths, 2 kitchens, 4 receps, 2-bed self-contained cottage, outbuildings, garden, swimming pool, stables, parking. £3m; Knight Frank (01225-325993).

▼ **Dorset:** Bournemouth Road, Blandford St. Mary. An eye-catching Grade II property with original period features, next to the River Stour. The house is approached along a private gravel road leading to a walled courtyard. 4 beds, 3 baths, 3 receps, kitchen, 2-bed self-contained annexe, garden, parking. £1.25m; Symonds & Sampson (01258-452670).



▼ **Wiltshire:** Rock Cottage, Turleigh. Built from Bath stone, this delightful house has a wealth of period features, including a parterre garden. Main suite, 3 further beds (1 en suite), family bath, kitchen, 4 receps, parking. £1.45m; Hamptons (01225-685280).



◀ **Kent:** Pennis House, Fawkham. An attractive Grade II house set in 3.5 acres of mature gardens. 4 beds, 3 baths, kitchen, 4 receps, 2-bed self-contained coach house, tennis court, swimming pool, outbuildings, garden, parking. £2.095m; Knight Frank (01732-744476).

# Discover the unseen USA

**For live music, fine wines and culinary experiences you just won't find anywhere else, the USA has the capacity to surprise – and delight.**

**F**ew places in the world can offer a holiday that mixes towering forests and towering skyscrapers, white sand beaches and white snowy mountains, or blue prairie skies with the world's best blues music. The USA does exactly that – and more. The incomparable Floridian theme parks and the sizzling New York night life are often the first port of call for visitors, but the more you look, the more you'll discover of this endlessly fascinating country. There's a world of music, food and culture to discover in a host of destinations across the USA, things which you quite possibly never knew existed. So if you're looking for fresh inspiration, or simply don't know where to start, here are a few suggestions for music, culture and food that will take you beyond the gateways.

## Feel the music

Jazz, rock, country, R&B, house... the USA's contribution to world music is legendary, and cities like Memphis, Nashville and New Orleans are all must-see destinations for those who want to go on a pilgrimage to the places that spawned their heroes.

But to see live bands of all kinds playing in person, there's one place that should be top of your list: Austin, Texas. This endlessly charming city has carved out a reputation as the 'Live Music Capital of the World', with more venues per head than anywhere on the

planet. What's on offer is as varied as it is extensive: Austin has everything from dive bars and discos to world-renowned festivals and outdoor concerts, with artists belting out everything from jazz and R&B to disco and pop. Try the Broken Spoke for country music (the likes of Willie Nelson and Dolly Parton have played here), The Victory Grill for soul or R&B – while Johnny Cash fans absolutely have to visit the Mean Eyed Cat.

## Something on your plate

Visitors from Europe tend to stereotype American food as giant portions and cheese-on-everything, but that does a huge disservice to the country, and ignores the fact that the US is home to one of the world's great culinary treats: authentic barbecue. Debates over which cities and states do it best are the stuff of flame wars (pun intended) across the internet, but you won't go far wrong. For brisket, sausage and ribs, The Southside Market & Barbecue in Austin is the oldest barbecue joint in America and still as good as it gets, with a menu that retains influences of the German and Czech settlers who helped make the place what it is.

If you're more of a classic barbecued lamb fan, the cast-iron favourite destination is Kentucky – and The Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn in Owensboro is one

of the temples of the art of smoked meat that falls apart as you eat. It's celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and is still so popular with locals and visitors alike that they go through 10,000lb of meat each week. Wash your BBQ mutton down with a few slugs of the state's other great contribution to global cuisine – bourbon – and a good time is guaranteed.

## The good life

Culture and sophistication in the USA doesn't begin and end with the world-famous spots in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. For art lovers, for example, The Dali Museum in St Petersburg, Florida, is arguably the best collection of the Spanish surrealist's work in the world, while for a different pace of life the Shindig on the Green folk festival at Asheville, South Carolina, brings the town alive with bluegrass music, dance and storytelling in a mountain setting.

For a truly cultured, relaxing holiday, however, head to California. From sun-kissed beaches and ancient redwood forests to the charming towns of the wine country, it's a part of the world that offers a true taste of the finer things in life. Oenophiles will find countless producers in the state's six wine regions, where over 100 varieties of grape are expertly blended to produce some of the world's finest vintages. And even those who don't partake will love the small town charm of places like Calistoga, full of friendly, unique places to soak up the atmosphere. As always with the USA, there really is something for everyone.

Find out more about the other side of the USA at [visittheusa.co.uk](http://visittheusa.co.uk)

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### The booze cruise in reverse

The merits of English wine – especially the sparkling variety – are well established, says Victoria Moore in *The Daily Telegraph*. “But there’s something else that English wine producers are quietly doing extremely well.” In recent years, wine tourism has become “essential” to the English wine industry – so much so that it now accounts for a quarter of producers’ revenues. And these days, when you visit a vineyard, you can expect more than just a tour and a tasting. Many estates now have restaurants or cafés. A “wine-loving day-tripper could practise yoga among the vines at Tinwood Estate in West Sussex or glamp beside the vineyards at Yorkshire Heart near York.” At Albury Estate in Surrey, visitors can “take a wildlife walk through the chalk grassland and spot barn owl boxes and blue butterflies”. When asked what has inspired their tourist ventures, producers often talk about things they’ve seen in California or South Africa. France, by contrast, seldom gets a mention – except as an example of “how *not* to do things”. Yet the French are not impervious to the charms of English vineyards. “We do get a lot of visitors from over the Channel,” says Jack Merrylees, of Balfour Winery in Kent. “Something of a booze cruise in reverse.”

### The River Café opens a café

There are “usually two obstacles” to eating at The River Café, says Hannah Evans in *The Times*. Ruthie Rogers’ iconic Italian



Rogers in the “laid-back” River Café Café

restaurant on the Thames can get booked out months in advance, and for some it is forbiddingly expensive: a bowl of spaghetti alle vongole costs £35, while *secondi* start at £53. But now you can sample its food for a fraction of the price, and without having to plan ahead. Rogers’ latest side project (following on from the online shop she opened in 2020 and her podcast, *Ruthie’s Table 4*) is The River Café Café – a “laid-back” café located next to the original, in the office formerly occupied by her late husband, the architect Richard Rogers. Unlike its grown-up sibling, the actual café serves food all day, and doesn’t take reservations. In the morning, it serves coffee and Italian pastries. From lunch

onwards, it offers light sharing plates – Cantabrian anchovies, wood-roasted tomatoes – and it adds in cocktails, homemade crisps and classic River Café desserts in the evening. Prices are modest, compared with next door: most dishes are under £10, and the most expensive – *vitello tonnato* – is £26. “We wanted something that is accessible and not just for special occasions,” Rogers explains.

### How the humble cracker pushed up

Crackers were once the most basic of foods, “defined by their cheapness”, says Bee Wilson in *The Wall Street Journal*. The ones I remember from my childhood – Cream Crackers, water biscuits, Ryvita – were “dry, dull things”, which only “tasted OK” if you added plenty of cheese. Even Ritz crackers weren’t ritzy. Such products betrayed the cracker’s origins as a “survival food”, designed to be eaten on the move, in extreme weather. But recently, crackers have become swanky. At top restaurants, gourmet puffed crackers – dyed black with squid ink or purple with beetroot – are now a common amuse-bouche. Crackers for cheese have also been transformed: on a cheeseboard these days you’re likely to find “tiny rectangular toasts flavoured with cherries or hexagons blackened with charcoal”. If you love the flavour of luxury crackers, but not the price tag, consider making your own – they sound tricky, but are actually quite simple. Google “Ottolenghi’s chickpea cracker” for an excellent, gluten-free starting point.

## Recipe of the week: braised baby gem, pancetta and peas

Cooked lettuce is ideal for summer days when the weather is that of a damp autumn, says Ceri Jones. This dish, a variation on a French-style recipe for braising lettuce with peas and sometimes bacon, uses just a little pancetta: it’s a really good example of how meat can be used in small quantities to add depth of flavour without distracting from the veg. Serve with bread to mop up the juices.

Serves 2 as a main

100g diced pancetta 2 baby gem lettuce (approx. 100g each), sliced into quarters through the core 2 spring onions, finely sliced  
1 x 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed 160g frozen peas 200ml chicken stock 2 tbsp crème fraîche  
1 tbsp finely chopped herbs (e.g. tarragon, mint or parsley, or a combination) salt and pepper

- Warm a lidded, deep, wide frying pan over a medium-high heat (no oil required) and cook the pancetta cubes for around five minutes, until they are browned.
- Remove using a slotted spoon and leave the fat in the pan. Cook the baby gem lettuce wedges in the pancetta fat, cut-side down for around 90 seconds on each flat side, until just starting to char. Use tongs to lift out of the pan, and set aside.
- Lower the heat, and put the pancetta back into the pan, along with the spring onions and soften for a minute or so. Next add the chickpeas, frozen peas and chicken stock, then nestle the charred lettuce back in, cut side up. Bring to a bubble, cover the pan with a lid and simmer for around



- ten minutes, or until a knife glides easily through the stalk of the thickest wedge of lettuce.
- Remove the lid, and if the stock needs reducing, cook uncovered for a few minutes more. Dollop in the crème fraîche, and gently shake the pan to dissolve it into the sauce.
- Add the chopped herbs and season to taste – it may already be salty enough because of the pancetta, but you can afford to be liberal with the pepper.
- **Tip:** serve with a good portion of mashed potatoes for something more substantial.
- **Tip:** try substituting the baby gem lettuce with larger romaine, cos or wedges of endive.

Taken from *It Starts with Veg: 100 Seasonal Suppers and Sides* by Ceri Jones, published by Pavilion Books at £20.  
To buy from *The Week Bookshop* for £15.99, call 020-3176 3835 or visit [theweekbookshop.co.uk](http://theweekbookshop.co.uk).

## The best... first cars to buy second-hand



### ▲ Renault Twingo GT (2008-2014)

Quite nippy and fun to drive, with a turbo-charged 1.2-litre petrol engine and 99bhp, the Twingo GT sits in insurance group 17, so is still a realistic prospect for a first car if you're looking for something a bit more sporty. At 980kg, it's light, with great acceleration; handling is decent in spite of its soft suspension, and it's exceptional value for money (from £2,000).

► **Vauxhall Corsa (2006-2014)** Cheap to buy and run, plus easy to drive, the third-generation Corsa makes a lot of sense as a first car. It won the What Car? Car of the Year trophy in 2007, thanks to its spacious interior, well-built dashboard and generous list of equipment. It has a high safety rating, and is relatively cheap to insure, particularly if you get the 1.0-litre model. Look out for sticky and juddering clutch pedals, leaky radiators and notchy steering (from £1,500).



◀ **Volkswagen Up! (2012-2016)** The charming VW Up! is cheap to buy, insure and run. It falls in group two for insurance, does 50mpg, and spare parts are widely available. With one of the longest wheelbases in its class, it handles well, and two adults can sit comfortably in the back. It may be "comedically slow", but the 1.0-litre engine sounds great (from £2,700).



### ▲ Ford Fiesta (2008-

2017) The Fiesta was Britain's best-selling car for years for good reason: it's good-looking, great to drive and cheap to run, and has an excellent safety rating. Avoid the 1.0-litre turbo as the timing belt needs changing every ten years, and look out for moisture or damp inside, notchy steering and vibration (from £1,500).

► **Kia Rio (2011-2016)** The Rio isn't as well known as other cars on this list, but it's a "sensible choice", with a very good safety record and low insurance, particularly for the 1.25-litre engine. You get "a lot of car for your money", and a well-maintained Rio should be "pretty dependable". Watch out for glitchy stop-start systems and rattling behind the dashboard (from £2,000).



◀ **Toyota Yaris (2011-2020)** The compact Yaris has a great reputation for reliability. The interior plastics are slightly cheaper than those in some rivals, but it can match the best in its class in crash tests. With small engines, insurance costs are low and fuel consumption is "meagre". Check for rust on the boot and number plate, and misfiring engines (from £3,500).

## Tips... how to prepare for disasters

- Have a "go bag" ready in your car with a phone charger, battery pack, clothes, a wash bag, glasses and pills. Keep the tank filled with petrol. Store water, a foil blanket and a torch plus some food in your car, and keep plenty of cash and your passport handy.
- Invest in a power bank or a small generator for power cuts.
- If the mobile phone network goes down, you'll need a radio to hear emergency updates. A wind-up one is ideal.
- Make sure that you have enough food for at least 72 hours that doesn't need cooking. Don't forget some treats.
- You can buy bottles to purify any water (from £22.50; watertogo.eu).
- Get a gas camping stove, spare canisters and matches. If there is good ventilation, you can use it inside. A Kelly Kettle can boil water in minutes using sticks as fuel.
- Make sure you have powerful torches and lamps in good order. Stock up on batteries.
- Talk through what you would do in various emergencies with your family.

SOURCE: THE TIMES

## And for those who have everything...



The first motorised suitcase, the Modobag can travel at speeds of up to 8mph for six miles on a single charge. Available to order from the US, it is relatively lightweight if you need to pull it, plus it comes with a double USB charging port and optional GPS tracking.

**from \$1,295; modobag.com**

SOURCE: EVENING STANDARD

## Where to find... the UK's best dog-friendly beaches

**Holkham Beach, Norfolk**, is dog-friendly all year round, but dogs have to be on leads from 1 April to 31 August to protect nesting birds. Walk along boardwalks through pine forest to the beach, which has a good café. There's lots for dogs to explore in the grassy dunes at **Bamburgh, Northumberland**, a swath of soft sand backed by an imposing castle. Beware of adders in warmer weather. Catch a steam train from Hythe to the shingle beach at **Dungeness, Kent**, and see the former home of artist and activist Derek Jarman, plus the bleak, black lighthouse. The Britannia Inn ([britanniadungeness.co.uk](http://britanniadungeness.co.uk)) does excellent fish and chips.

**Broad Haven South, Pembrokeshire**, on the Wales Coast Path, has views of the dramatic Church Rock in the distance. Access it over the dunes via the trails at Bosherton Lakes. The crescent-shaped **Man O'War Beach, Dorset**, is a lovely sheltered spot for swimming. Walk along the coastal path for views of the stone arch at Durdle Door.

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN

## This week's dream: an epic family road trip across Namibia

The landscapes of Namibia are “monumental” in scale. You can drive across the country’s wilderness areas for hours without passing another vehicle, and yet, in recent years, “incredible” lodges have opened in some of its most remote corners. My husband and I chose a road trip around Namibia as our first “long-haul family trip”, says Gemma Bowes in *The Times*. It proved to be just the sort of “big adventure” we’d been hoping for. On a ten-day loop from the capital city, Windhoek, we covered about a thousand miles, and only once found ourselves driving after dark (something to avoid as animals often lie on the “sun-warmed” roads at night).



*The towering dunes of Sossusvlei: sand “as soft as powdered milk”*

At Dead Valley Lodge, we watched the towering dunes of Sossusvlei change colour at sunrise – “crimson, straw and dried apricot” – and the children ran barefoot across them, “leaping and sliding” in sand “as soft as powdered milk”. Nearby lies Dead Vlei, the “ghost” of an ancient lake in whose “jigsaw-cracked” mud the skeletal remains of millennia-old trees still stand, having

in floor-length gowns. In the region’s rocky desert, we spotted elephant and giraffe, but equally “fascinating” was the Damara Living Museum, where local people demonstrate ancient hunter-gatherer traditions, and explain them in the click language of Khoekhoe. *Expert Africa (expertafrica.com)* has a ten-night trip from £11,168 for a family of four.

been charred by the sun before they could decompose. At Okonjima, we were transfixed for 20 “magical” minutes by the sight of a leopard stalking a herd of antelope; and at Kwessi Dunes, we saw ostriches, zebra, and oryx with “theatrical spiral horns”, and at night gazed through a telescope at the Milky Way, which appeared as bright as “strip lighting”.

The “sea-misted” town of Swakopmund provided a “surreal” interlude, with its bierkellers and Bavarian-style architecture – a legacy of German colonial rule. From there, we drove to Damaraland, passing stalls run by Himba women, their bodies painted in red ochre, and Herero women

## Getting the flavour of...



### Sea-swimming in Puglia

They were once a place of exile (most recently, for gay men under Mussolini’s rule), and even today, Puglia’s Tremiti Islands are “no high-roller’s paradise”. But they are beautiful, laid-back and, with their “warm, clear waters” (pictured), they’re a great place for a sea-swimming holiday, says Will Hide in *The Sunday Telegraph*. On a week-long trip with SwimTrek, guests stay at the “simple, charming” Hotel La Vela, and go for two guided swims of 2-3km each day, with a “pleasantly languid” pause for lunch at a restaurant in between. Groups comprise up to 15 people, and are accompanied by a support boat, so if you want to hop out of the water at any point, you can. The sea is often alive with fish, the surroundings are lovely (towering cliffs and “tranquil”, forested coves), and there’s a great sense of freedom (for which I felt grateful, given the islands’ tragic past). *The trip costs from £1,190, excluding flights (swimtrek.com).*

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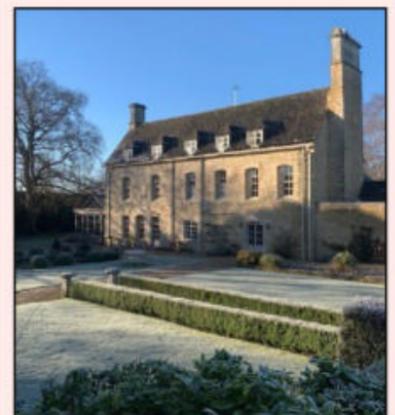
### Looking for Kafka in Prague

It is 100 years since Franz Kafka’s death, aged 40, from tuberculosis, and the city where he lived – Prague – is celebrating the centenary with lectures, exhibitions and other events. But for fans of the writer, a Kafka-themed tour of the Czech capital can also yield insights, says Paul Sullivan in *The Guardian*. Kafka grew up in the Jewish ghetto, and its “labyrinthine, claustrophobic” topography surely “leaked” into his writings. The ghetto is long gone, but you can still see the houses where he lived later in his life, along with the “striking” art nouveau cafés (Louvre, Slavia, Arco, Savoy) he frequented; and even the office, up a spiral staircase, where he worked as a legal clerk (now the Kafka Suite in the Century Old Town hotel). Finally, don’t miss the Franz Kafka Museum, which holds many of his letters, diaries and more.

### The beautiful birds of coastal Bulgaria

It’s not the most glamorous seaside spot in Europe, but Bulgaria’s Black Sea coast is a birdwatcher’s dream, says James Litston in *The Sunday Telegraph*. In spring (April and May) or late summer (August and September), a huge array of migratory species pass across it, many in their thousands, and a great place to spot them is from the shores of the lakes around Burgas. (You can stay in nearby Nessebar, which has “cheap and cheerful” Soviet-era beach hotels and a “charming” old town.) Among the biggest beasts are flamingos, pelicans, spoonbills, storks and eagles, and there’s no end of “colourful” smaller species too, including rollers and golden orioles. If you can, book a day’s guided birding with the founder of the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, Petar Iankov, whose email address is [poda@bspb.org](mailto:poda@bspb.org).

## Hotel of the week



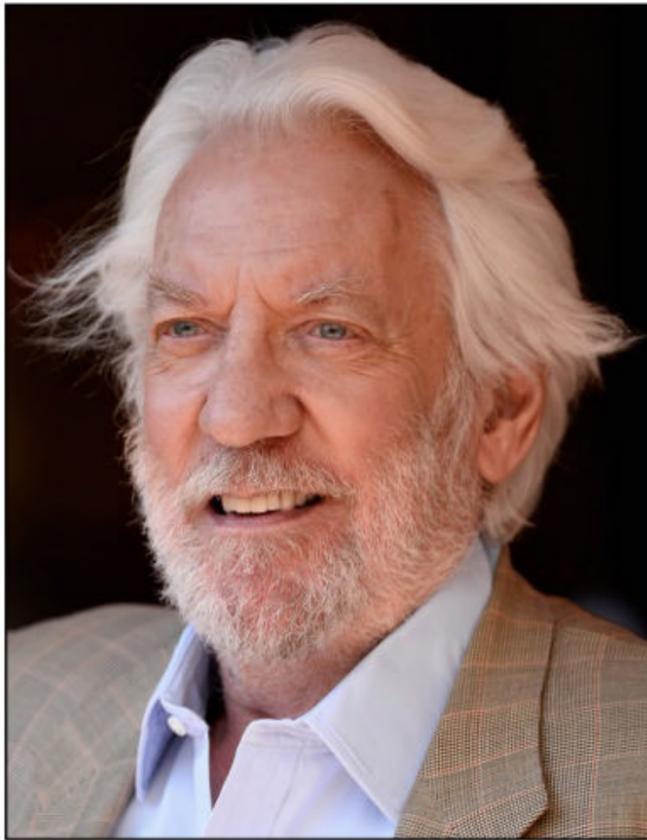
### The Rectory Crudwell, Gloucestershire

Despite its “super-smart” decor, this hotel in the Cotswolds village of Crudwell has an air of “laissez-faire informality” that makes it feel like “a home away from home”, says Susan d’Arcy in *The Sunday Times*. It occupies a Georgian manor house, and many of its 18 rooms have original beams, elegant fireplaces and lovely views, but their “Scandi-influenced” decor is “sinfully decadent”. All have free-standing baths – a boutique hotel “prerequisite” these days. There’s a “moody” bar, an airy restaurant offering modern British cuisine of “refined informality”, and a lovely garden with a pool. *Doubles from £170 b&b; [therectoryhotel.com](http://therectoryhotel.com).*

## Brilliant Canadian actor who was overlooked at the Oscars

**Donald Sutherland**  
1935-2024

When Donald Sutherland was a young man, contemplating a career in the theatre, he asked his mother if he was good-looking. “No, but your face has a lot of character,” she replied. This was arguably an understatement, said *The Daily Telegraph*. The Canadian actor, who has died aged 88, was among “the most distinctive-looking men ever to make it as a leading Hollywood star”. Six-foot four-inches tall, rakish and loose limbed, he had unruly hair, “big ears, a toothy grin, prominent pale blue eyes and a hang-dog expression”. He was no one’s idea of a pin-up, and on screen he could be menacing or just vaguely unsettling. A producer once rejected him for a role saying: “This part calls for a guy-next-door type. You don’t look like you’ve lived next door to *anyone*.” And yet, blessed with a “lugubrious” baritone voice that was as “instantly recognisable as James Mason’s”, Sutherland was also capable of exuding “a brooding sexual magnetism which many women found irresistible”.



Sutherland: “a brooding sexual magnetism”

Admired for his range, and the subtlety of his performances, he appeared in more than 100 films. Directors loved him for his chameleon-like ability to slip into a role and his willingness to accept direction. He’d not always been so malleable, he said. He believed that in Robert Altman’s 1970 comedy-drama film *M\*A\*S\*H*, he had been too insistent on playing the irreverent army surgeon Hawkeye Pierce in his own way. It was when he was cast in Nicolas Roeg’s Venice-set horror film *Don’t Look Now* (1973) that he came to the conclusion that “film acting is about the surrender of will to the director”.

After reading the script, based on a Daphne du Maurier story, he’d agreed to appear in the film, but suggested to Roeg that he give it a happier ending. “Do you want to do it or not?” Roeg demanded. “Because that’s the film.” Sutherland went on to deliver one of his most “memorable performances” as the father grieving his drowned child – even if it was rather overshadowed by speculation about his lengthy and unusually realistic sex scene with Julie Christie, his on-screen wife. Christie has never categorically denied that they had sex on camera, but Sutherland insisted that they had not. A humorous and thoughtful man, he said that the two had only just met when they had to walk naked onto the set. “We laid on the bed and the director said, ‘All right, Julie pull your knees up to your shoulder. Donald take your mouth and slide it down the inside of her left thigh.’ It went on like this for 12 hours. Neither of us could speak afterwards.”

Donald Sutherland was born in New Brunswick in 1935, to Frederick, a salesman, and Dorothy (née McNichol), a maths teacher. A sickly child, who suffered from polio and rheumatic fever, he grew up mainly in Nova Scotia. While at high school, he became, aged 14, Canada’s youngest radio DJ, though he had his sights set on being a sculptor. He caught the acting bug while studying engineering and drama at Toronto University, and in 1957 he travelled to England to study at Lamda. After a year he dropped out, and with his first wife, Lois Hardwick, he joined a repertory theatre in Perth. In the early 1960s he started to win roles in British TV shows such as *The Saint*, and he also appeared

in a West End play with Rex Harrison. His first film was Warren Kiefer’s *Castle of the Living Dead* (1964). But his breakout role was as a dim-witted soldier in the 1967 war film *The Dirty Dozen*, said *The Times*, about a group of military prisoners who are freed to take part in a perilous wartime mission. It featured several established stars, but Sutherland recalled that he was in the “bottom six”, there to make up the numbers, and he had almost no lines until one of the other actors refused to take part in a scene. At that point, the director Robert Aldrich turned to him and said: “You with the big ears – you do it!” The film was a hit and his Hollywood career began.

At first Hollywood didn’t really know what to do with Sutherland, said *The Washington Post*, and kept casting him as comic “boneheads” in films such as *Kelly’s Heroes*. But his role in the counterculture film *M\*A\*S\*H*, set during the Korean War but with a feeling of Vietnam, established him as a star for the new decade. In 1970, he split up with his second wife, the actress Shirley Douglas, with whom he had had twins: Kiefer and Rachel. Soon after, he embarked on an affair with Jane Fonda, his co-star in *Klute*; and together they toured the US with an anti-war revue that he had co-written.

“Directors loved him for his chameleon-like ability to slip into a role and his willingness to accept direction”

In Bernardo Bertolucci’s 1976 film *1900*, he played a fascist who smashes a boy’s brains out (“And I turned down *Deliverance* and *Straw Dogs* because of the violence!”), and he was the scientist who realises

what’s going on in 1978’s *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. At around the same time, he was offered a share of profits in return for two days’ filming on *Animal House*. Famously, he accepted instead a flat fee of \$35,000, and so missed out on about \$20m. In 1980, he was quietly brilliant as the concerned father in Robert Redford’s hit drama *Ordinary People*. But while three other members of the ensemble cast were nominated for an Oscar, he was overlooked. After that, the phone “mysteriously stopped ringing”. Nevertheless, he kept going up for roles, and appeared – among other things – as a German spy in *Eye of the Needle* and as a middle-class South African slowly turning against Apartheid in *A Dry White Season*. In 1991, there were many who felt he should have won an Oscar for his single scene in Oliver Stone’s *JFK*. But again, he was not even nominated.

Carrying on working well into his 80s, he became known to new generations of cinemagoers playing a warmly paternal Mr Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), and President Snow in *The Hunger Games* films. Snow is evil, but Sutherland took care not to deny the character humanity. He told the *New York Observer*: “Do you think Lyndon Johnson felt he was the villain, destroying a million Vietnamese? George W. Bush or Dick Cheney – they don’t think of themselves as villains... Snow thinks it is expedient. He’s trying to control an empire.” Along the way, he was in quite a few flops, too, including Hugh Hudson’s *Revolution*; and turned down some hits. As he explained, actors can only judge so much from the script. He was married for the last five decades of his life to the French-Canadian actress Francine Racette, with whom he had three more sons, Roeg, Rossif and Angus (whose middle name is Redford). Like Kiefer, they were named in honour of film directors. He was finally awarded an honorary Oscar in 2017.



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

## Nvidia: Nvidiaaaaaaargh

Plenty of investor newbies have been buying into Nvidia after a “hot tip” from a friend. They were rewarded last week when the roaring ascent of the US chipmaker saw it leapfrog Apple and Microsoft to become the world’s biggest company, with a market capitalisation that peaked at \$3.5trn, said The Economist. But what a fall from grace followed. In just three trading sessions, the poster child of the AI revolution lost a staggering \$430bn which, said Bloomberg, was “the biggest three-day drop – in terms of nominal value – ever seen on the US stock market”. Many investors, it seems, decided the time was ripe to take profits. Wall Street traders have been “turning to technical analysis for clues on where the bottom may be”, said Jeran Wittenstein and Ryan Vlastelica on Bloomberg. The more sanguine, such as Oppenheimer’s Ari Wald, believe that despite big price movements, “the long-term up trend remains intact”. Even after its bruising fall, “Nvidia is still up 139% this year”. The sums involved are stark, said Patrick Tooher on ThisIsMoney.co.uk. At the peak of last week’s frenzy, the value of Nvidia, Microsoft and Apple combined topped \$10trn. “If the trio of tech titans were an economy”, they would be “the world’s third largest” – ranking “only behind the US and China in size”.

## Hargreaves Lansdown: founders’ dilemma

Peter Hargreaves jokes that when he worked at a small financial firm in Bristol in 1979, the only colleague “who would have a drink with him after work” was a bloke called Stephen Lansdown. “That friendship,” says Jill Treanor in The Sunday Times, “led to a business partnership” that changed the way we invest. Hargreaves Lansdown grew into the UK’s largest online broker, and a “stock market darling” in its own right – valued at more than £10bn five years ago. But now the firm has agreed to takeover talks with a private equity consortium valuing it at just £5.4bn. The rot began with HL’s embroilment in the Neil Woodford funds collapse, and continued as nimbler rivals such as AJ Bell stole a march. Sniffing weakness, the bidders – Luxembourg-based CVC, Sweden’s Nordic Capital and an offshoot of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority – have pounced. Plenty of shareholders are in a pother, said James Warrington in The Daily Telegraph. The latest to sound the alarm is Lancaster Investment Management, which is concerned about the “value of the offer” and the “impact on the London Stock Exchange” if HL goes private. Hargreaves and Lansdown are both retired but, with a combined 26% stake, they still “hold the key to the future” of their firm, said Jill Treanor. Which way will they jump?

## YouGov: shock result!

We’ve been learning a lot from YouGov during the election campaign. But the pollster’s own affairs are far from peachy, said Jessica Newman in The Times. More than 40% was wiped off the research group’s shares following a profit warning which, as Peel Hunt analysts observed, was rather “larger than we expected”. It doesn’t have much to do with politics. The group – founded in 2000 by Stephan Shakespeare and Nadhim Zahawi (later the chancellor) – makes most of its revenues from consultancy services, here and abroad, said Lex in the FT. “Its bread and butter is providing businesses with insights into customer behaviour.” The irony is that “the uncertainty being whipped up by 2024’s endless elections” has prompted clients to tighten belts. Hence this drubbing.



## Seven days in the Square Mile

The Bank of England’s monetary policy committee kept **rates** on hold at 5.25% for its seventh consecutive meeting. But the minutes from the meeting suggested the decision was “finely balanced” – encouraging traders to price in a chance of a quarter-point cut at the BoE’s August meeting. Mounting hopes that the economy will improve over the coming year propelled UK **consumer confidence** to its highest level since 2021, according to the GfK index. In a further sign that economic growth is continuing to gain momentum, the ONS reported that **retail sales** rebounded strongly in May, driven by non-food transactions.

The **Japanese yen** fell to its weakest level since 1986, slumping to 160.62 per dollar – fanning speculation that the authorities might be forced to support the currency. The sell-off is down to the vast gap between interest rates in Japan (where borrowing costs remain near zero) and the US, which has yet to cut rates. The eastward expansion of Europe’s single currency suffered a setback after Bulgaria and Romania failed economic tests to join the **euro**.

Human rights groups urged the FCA to block the London IPO of the fast-fashion giant **Shein**. Energy supplier **Octopus** said it would repay the full £3bn of state support it received to take over the collapsed supplier **Bulb** in 2021. **VW** announced a \$5bn investment in Tesla rival **Rivian**. **YouTube** entered talks with record labels to license their songs for AI tools that clone popular artists’ music.

## Carlsberg/Britvic: “Danish raiders” seek juicy prize

“Has Carlsberg had one too many?” That’s what shareholders fear, said Lex in the FT. They marked down the Danish brewer’s stock by up to 8%, wiping £1bn off its value, on news of two unsuccessful takeover bids for the British soft drinks champion Britvic. Carlsberg isn’t “chasing a dud” – the maker of Tango, J2O and Robinsons Fruit Shoot is a “well-run” consumer staples business. “The problem is with Carlsberg’s hazy logic.” As beer-drinking declines, it is losing “share of the throat” in many markets. Still, rather than taking a £3.1bn gulp of Britvic, investors would “prefer to take the money” in the form of share buybacks.

After suffering “a serious setback in Russia” when the Kremlin took control of its ops last year, Carlsberg is casting around for new opportunities, said Alex Brummer in the Daily Mail. Not least gaining “an opening to the Brazilian market” (where Britvic has a growing presence) “on the



Britvic: holding out for a fizzy offer?

cheap”. The Britvic board should remember that London shares, including their own, are still “grotesquely” underpriced; they should “stand firm” against the “Danish raiders”.

Carlsberg has already overcome one potential hurdle by securing an agreement from PepsiCo, for whom Britvic provides bottling facilities, to waive “a change-of-control clause”, said Sabah Meddings on Bloomberg. Under UK takeover rules, it now has until 19 July to make a third offer “or walk away”. Let’s hope Britvic directors “have stiffened their resolve with something stronger than a Fruit Shoot”, said Nils Pratley in The Guardian. Having already rejected offers valuing the business at £12 and £12.50 a share, they should hold out for a “fizzy” £14 before surrendering independence to Carlsberg’s “beyond beer” strategy. “Remember, you only get to sell the company once.”

## Issue of the week: can Labour build better?

*New houses and infrastructure are critical for growth. But there are entrenched obstacles*

“When the inquest is held into the Conservative implosion of 2024,” said *The Times*, “exhibit one will be the party’s betrayal of that most basic of British aspirations: home ownership.” Labour’s promise to build 1.5 million homes, and “a constellation” of new towns, is therefore both necessary, and a wise attempt to become “the champion of property-owning democracy”. The housing famine is a huge drag on the economy – expensive homes, owned or rented, “mean more household income is being diverted away from consumer spending”. Still, it won’t be easy. “Labour must bulldoze not only the land needed to build these promised homes but the thicket of restrictive regulations” that “strangle proposed developments”. Given a shortfall of around four million available homes, “there is no time to lose”.



Starmer: “champion of property-owning democracy”?

Investors view entrenched attitudes as the real problem, said Chris Dorrell in *City AM*. Dominic Veney of Pension Insurance Corporation – one of the UK’s biggest infrastructure investors – has dubbed Britain “a Banana economy” whose ethos is “build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything (or anybody)”. He argues there’s “no shortage of domestic capital to support viable projects” – around £200bn could be directed to infrastructure projects in the coming decade as insurers take on legacy pension

schemes. “There just aren’t enough viable projects to invest in.” Labour’s own proposed infrastructure investment vehicle, the “National Wealth Fund”, will “hardly blow the doors off”, said Nils Pratley in *The Guardian*. It plans to invest just £7.3bn over the next parliament to accelerate growth in the green economy – ports, clean steel, gigafactories, carbon capture and green hydrogen. But it will at least set a template for public-private cooperation. “The core part of the mission is to attract £3 of private investment for every £1 of public investment” – a ratio that looks “achievable”.

Energy infrastructure will be critical to Labour’s building plans, said Andrew Orlowski in *The Daily Telegraph*. The lack of it “is already blocking more development than an army of Nimbys could”. The Greater London Authority has told developers that no new housing can be built west of London until 2035, because the grid is already at full capacity: “data centres along the M4 corridor have nabbed all the power”. Yet surely the most intractable obstacle is “lawfare”, said Robert Colville in *The Sunday Times*. Building anything in this country involves “an extraordinary amount of legislation, regulation and contestation”. If Keir Starmer wants to deliver growth, “he’s going to have to put his fellow lawyers firmly back in their box”.

## Making money: what the experts think

### ● Sceptr’d isle...

Shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves believes Britain could become a “safe haven” for investors, as France, the EU’s second-largest economy, plunges into political uncertainty, said Mehreen Khan in *The Times*. Plenty of analysts, and the money markets, seem to agree. The pound has strengthened to a 22-month high against the euro – “driven by flight to quality on French political concerns”, according to Bank of America strategist Agne Štengeryté. Analysts at UBS, meanwhile, reckon the UK could emerge as “an island of stability” in Europe – an idea endorsed by the bond giant Pimco, which has welcomed the likelihood of a large Labour majority, claiming that the party’s promised policies would offer “a limited difference to the fiscal outlook”.



An “island of stability”?

UK debt markets are certainly relaxed, said Alice Atkins on Bloomberg: a key gauge of UK bond volatility is “close to the lowest level in more than two years”. But perhaps we shouldn’t be too complacent. That’s certainly the opinion of Pictet’s gilts expert Jon Mawby, who argues that the UK yield curve will steepen after the election as investors price in higher risk for long-term

### ● The shadow of Truss

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gilts. “Mawby’s view pits him against most bond investors”, who are betting that “memories of the turmoil” created by Liz Truss’ unfunded tax cuts two years ago will deter any “excessive” Labour spending. The counter-argument is that the party will have no choice but to

borrow to fund policy pledges. Mawby argues that the comparatively small size of the UK debt market makes it vulnerable to “bond vigilantes” protesting against government largesse. That, arguably, makes it “more prone” to the sort of runs “we saw with Liz Truss”.

### ● Rich exodus?

Advisers to the wealthy are warning that rich people are contemplating leaving the country, “in expectation of harsher tax conditions”, said Emma Agyemang in the *FT*. Do the claims stack up? “You can always find an advisor that has a client leaving the country,” said Helen Miller, head of tax at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, who has yet to see “any reliable evidence” of an exodus. Clare Munro, of Weatherbys Private Bank, agrees. While some non-dom clients are reviewing their location, these tend to be people with “shallow roots in the UK”.

## Summer reading

### The Trading Game: A Confession

by Gary Stevenson (Penguin £25). Stevenson’s “darkly funny” account of his rise from east London poverty “to the bonus-driven, burn-out world of high finance”, said *The Guardian*.

**When Women Ran Fifth Avenue** by Julie Satow (Doubleday \$32.50). A glittering portrait of the golden age of department stores and the women who ran them – when “American apparel-makers emerged from the shadow of Paris and came into their own”, said Bloomberg.

**The Shortest History of Economics** by Andrew Leigh (Old Street £14.99). A concise, readable history. “Invaluable” for “anybody trying to understand how humanity moved from hunter-gatherer bands to today’s hi-tech world economy”, said Martin Wolf in the *FT*.

**The Formula** by Joshua Robinson and Jonathan Clegg (Octopus £22). The riveting story, by two Wall Street Journal reporters, of how Formula 1 became “the world’s fastest growing sport”, said CNBC. Replete with “fast cars, engineering geniuses, driver rivalries and glamorous settings”.

**Extremely Hardcore: Inside Elon Musk’s Twitter** by Zoë Schiffer (Penguin Putnam £26.99). This “sharp and deeply sourced” fly-on-the-wall account charts Musk’s bruising takeover of X/Twitter, said the *FT*. It analyses how and why his libertarian views have hardened.

## Labour's options on Brexit

**Phillip Inman**

*The Observer*

Labour's plans to re-engage with Brussels will be welcomed by all those who viewed Brexit as "an act of self-harm", says Phillip Inman. But how might Britain's relationship with the EU actually change? So far, Labour has put forward only "tentative proposals tackling discrete issues", such as easing border checks on animal products and forging a "bespoke" deal for the chemicals industry. It has ruled out rejoining the single market and customs union. That, however, might change. Among potential options is a "Norway-style deal", enabling access to the single market without losing "formal sovereignty". But since this would involve paying up, without any vote on how rules are made, it's far from ideal. The more radical alternative of rejoining the EU is even more fraught. While the economic benefits would be "considerable" – the independent OBR estimates that the impact of Brexit has been a 4% hit to GDP, or around £100bn – it would involve a costly annual fee (similar to France's €21.6bn payment) and considerable political opposition, even if EU leaders agreed to reopen negotiations. As ever in this debate, there are no easy answers.

## NatWest's supermarket sweep

**Alex Brummer**

*Daily Mail*

It's back to basics for Sainsbury's, which has just announced it will sell its banking business to NatWest for £2.5bn, to streamline operations and refocus on groceries. It's the end of an era, says Alex Brummer. "The transaction means that the fashion for retailers becoming banks is largely over." M&S saw the light two decades ago when it handed the keys to its banking unit to HSBC; earlier this year Tesco unloaded its bank to Barclays. It's good to see that NatWest, under new CEO Paul Thwaite, is "showing some boldness" about expanding the business after spending years "jettisoning enterprises" – including, alas, the fintech superstar Worldpay. Even so, his claim that NatWest has "a successful integration" record will raise some eyebrows. "In its previous incarnation" as RBS, "the bank notoriously executed one of the worst deals in UK financial history when it bought ABN Amro". The Sainsbury's deal will boost NatWest's credit card and lending ops, but it's hardly a game-changer. It's time banks thought "more broadly" about what they do. "More, rather than less, customer services offered through depleted branches would be a great start."

## Echoes of Libor in the oil market

**Javier Blas**

*Bloomberg*

"Something is rotten" in the oil market, says Javier Blas. Last week, the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission fined Trafigura Group for manipulating the US fuel-oil market – soon after cases involving rivals Glencore and Vitol. "Three major scandals", involving the industry's biggest players, suggest these are not "one-offs". They indicate "a systemic problem" – similar to the 2012 Libor affair, when traders were found to have colluded to manipulate interest rates. The oil cases were largely ignored: fuel oil, used for power stations and ships, is "a relatively obscure corner of the market"; and the news coincided with all three trading houses admitting to "more egregious conduct", such as bribery and money laundering. But the issue is still important. "Unless regulators impose tougher penalties, oil traders will continue to dismiss fines as the cost of doing business." At least US regulators are taking action. The lack of enforcement elsewhere suggests that either "non-US traders are completely honest and transparent, or they're just not getting caught. Hmm."

## Cynicism is bad for business

**Harry Wallop**

*The Times*

The British Social Attitudes survey has found that, as a nation, "we have never been as cynical about our ruling class", says Harry Wallop. This malaise has "bled into our views about business and bosses". Britons still have a higher opinion of business than politics, but most believe that companies serve "only certain groups of people". It's no surprise, when you consider our sewage-dumping utilities or "the horrors" unearthed at the Post Office. Even so, we should try to curb our cynicism. In a new book, *Hope for Cynics*, Stanford psychology professor Jamil Zaki argues that it's bad for business, and bad for our health. The key mistake, he argues, is confusing cynicism with scepticism. "Cynicism is a lack of faith in people; scepticism is a lack of faith in our assumptions." His case study is Microsoft which, under Satya Nadella, went from a cynical culture to a trusting one. But the lesson applies to us all. Most people running a business want to sell a great product. "That does not need to be your final opinion, but there's no harm in it being your starting position."

## City profile

**Sir Will Lewis**

The past has returned to haunt Will Lewis, the British newspaper and PR man appointed by Jeff Bezos to turn around The Washington Post. US journalists have been raking over his former career and questioning his ethics – including his role in the phone-hacking scandal that rocked Fleet Street more than a decade ago, said Mike Allen on Axios. Lewis, 55, who joined the Post as publisher and CEO last November, is currently in the surreal position of being investigated by his own newspaper. In response to "a list of detailed questions" from Post reporters earlier this month, he "declined to comment".



"The newsroom revolt" at the loss-making broadsheet has been brewing for months, said the FT: fuelled by Lewis's replacement of top journalists with his own hires. His sometimes abrasive manner hasn't helped. "People are not reading your stuff," he told staff at a recent meeting. "I can't sugarcoat it anymore." Bezos, who bought the Post in 2013, reportedly hired Lewis for his "entrepreneurial skills". A former business journalist, who became the youngest-ever editor of The Daily Telegraph (where he broke the 2009 MPs' expenses scandal), he later joined Rupert Murdoch's News International. In 2020, he founded a PR firm, WJLP – orchestrating the failed "save big dog" operation when former UK PM Boris Johnson was accused of flouting Covid rules. Lewis's pick for editor of the Post, the Telegraph's Robert Winnett, has withdrawn, said Politico, after doubts were raised about his journalistic ethics. The question now is whether Lewis himself can "ride out the storm".

## Who's tipping what

### The week's best shares

#### Allison Transmission Holdings

*The Daily Telegraph*  
Rising US defence spending is a growth opportunity for this specialist automatic gearbox-maker, which has customer relationships in diverse markets – supplying trucks, school buses and off-road industrial vehicles. Buy. \$74.41.

#### B&M European Value Retail

*The Sunday Times*  
Sales growth at this discount retailer has slowed, and costs have risen due to the acquisition of 40 Wilko stores. Still, the chain has scaled up and is highly cash-generative, with 11%+ margins. Buy. 469p.

#### Bodycote

*The Times*  
The metal processor has a recovering aerospace and defence arm, and an industrial division serving the EV and hybrid vehicle market. New technologies are delivering higher growth and fatter margins. "Underestimated." Buy. 727p.

#### Greencoat UK Wind

*The Mail on Sunday*  
This "cheap fund with a green focus" – on UK onshore and offshore windfarms – was hit when interest rates began rising in 2021. Now it should gain from a "clear tailwind". Yields 7.45%. Buy. 135p.

#### Halma

*Investors' Chronicle*  
The safety products conglomerate is benefitting from the global obsession with regulation and safety, while its decentralised and geographically diverse model bring resilience. Revenue growth and impressive margins should continue. Buy. £26.60.

#### Picton Property Income

*The Daily Telegraph*  
This Reit's £525m portfolio has beaten its benchmark for 11 years in a row. Prospects "look bright" given the split: 59% industrial, 30% office, and 7% retail warehouse. Yields 5.5%. Buy. 66.7p.

### Directors' dealings

#### Breedon



Chair Amit Bhatia has increased his stake in the building materials group via his Abicad Holding – buying a further £4.8m-worth of shares. Earnings have been under pressure, but the BMC Enterprises buyout provides route into the US market.

SOURCE: INVESTORS' CHRONICLE

### ...and some to hold, avoid or sell

#### Berkeley Group

*Investors' Chronicle*  
The housebuilder has struggled with high costs, lack of demand and an uncertain regulatory environment. Yet the prospect of rate cuts and easing planning rules are positives. Landlord plans have potential. Hold. £48.16.

#### Coral Products

*The Mail on Sunday*  
This small plastics firm has customers including Tesco, BT and the MoD. The strategy of simplifying into two divisions – flexible, for food packaging; and rigid, for industrial use – is producing green shoots. Hold. 13p.

#### Hilton Food Group

*The Mail on Sunday*  
The innovative meat and fish packer is recovering from soaring inflation and energy prices. Profits are up 20%, and there should be more to come under new boss Steve Murrells, who turned around the Co-op. Hold. 899p.

#### Chipotle Mexican Grill

*The Times*  
As hungry US punters switch to healthier eating, shares in the burrito shop (with 19 UK sites) have outpaced favourite tech stocks such as Amazon and Apple. On track to open around 300 new restaurants. Hold. \$34.28.

#### Fuller, Smith & Turner

*Investors' Chronicle*  
The premium pub and hotel company's sales and profits are up, thanks to the return of more workers to London offices. Selling non-core pubs and boosting investment in its estate, while buying back shares. Hold. 730p.

#### Tesco

*The Mail on Sunday*  
Tesco's hefty 28% market share is way ahead of other food retailers. Scale brings clout with suppliers, while its Clubcard is an "invaluable resource" for promotions. The Euros are boosting bangers and booze sales. Hold. 309p.

### Form guide

Shares tipped 12 weeks ago

#### Best tip

**Walmart**  
*The Times*  
up 12.05% to \$67.42

#### Worst tip

**SSP Group**  
*The Sunday Times*  
down 30.16% to 153.1p

### Market view

"The UK public is 'voting in a knowledge vacuum'."

**The Institute for Fiscal Studies, argues both main parties have "ducked" revealing how they will pay for their spending promises. Quoted on Bloomberg**

## Market summary

### Key numbers for investors

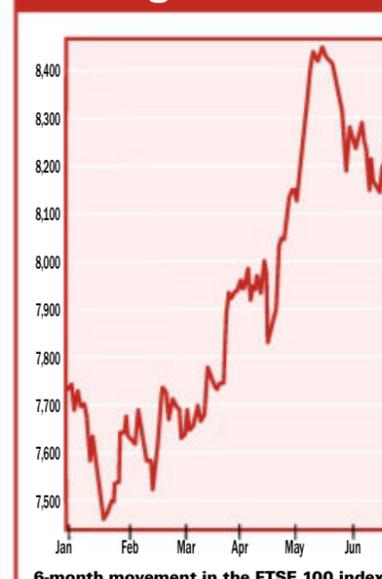
	25 June 2024	Week before	Change (%)
FTSE 100	8247.79	8191.29	0.69%
FTSE All-share UK	4493.07	4467.95	0.56%
Dow Jones	39107.10	38791.56	0.81%
NASDAQ	17711.22	17849.89	-0.78%
Nikkei 225	39173.15	38482.11	1.80%
Hang Seng	18072.90	17915.55	0.88%
Gold	2328.75	2319.90	0.38%
Brent Crude Oil	85.42	84.86	0.66%
DIVIDEND YIELD (FTSE 100)	3.59%	3.62%	
UK 10-year gilts yield	4.18	4.14	
US 10-year Treasuries	4.25	4.23	
<b>UK ECONOMIC DATA</b>			
Latest CPI (yoy)	2.0% (May)	2.3% (Apr)	
Latest RPI (yoy)	3.0% (May)	3.3% (Apr)	
Halifax house price (yoy)	1.5% (May)	1.1% (Apr)	
£1 STERLING:	\$1.267	€1.185	¥202.569
			Bitcoin \$61,610.80

### Best and worst performing shares

WEEK'S CHANGE, FTSE 100 STOCKS		
RISES	Price	% change
Phoenix Group	526.50	+8.70
JD Sports Fashion	127.05	+7.80
Prudential	744.00	+6.30
Smith (DS)	370.80	+5.80
Anglo American	2520.00	+5.50
<b>FALLS</b>		
Ocado	290.40	-17.90
Berkeley Group	4654.00	-7.10
Convatec	231.40	-5.60
Marks & Spencer Gp.	287.70	-4.40
B&M Eur Value Retail	456.60	-3.50
<b>FTSE 250 RISER &amp; FALLER</b>		
Britvic	1160.00	+20.30
Spectris	2790.00	-13.00

Source: FT (not adjusted for dividends). Prices on 25 June (pm)

### Following the Footsie



# Turtle blood, sharks and “I spy”: 38 days adrift on the Pacific Ocean

*In 1972, 12-year-old Sandy Robertson and his family were hundreds of miles from land when their schooner was attacked by orcas. They sought refuge first in a life raft, and then in a tiny dinghy, which became their home for several weeks. By Amy Maynard*

For Sandy Robertson, 15 June 1972 began as a calm day afloat on a small patch of the mighty Pacific Ocean, 200 miles west of the Galápagos. The then 12-year-old was at the helm of the *Lucette*, an ageing, 43ft wooden schooner, with his older brother Douglas by his side. Along with the rest of their family, the boys were sailing around the world, and the going on this particular morning was good. “Everyone’s spirits were high,” says Sandy, now 64. “We were looking forward to the journey ahead.”

Sandy’s twin brother Neil, parents Dougal and Lyn, and Robin Williams, a 22-year-old Welsh statistician who had joined the family on their adventure across the world’s largest body of water, were below deck at the time as the *Lucette* made headway for French Polynesia. But the tranquillity wasn’t to last. Without warning, there was a crash, sending the mug of coffee Sandy was holding flying through the air. Douglas was knocked off his feet. “I thought, ‘Oh my God, I have hit something and Dad is going to kill me,’” says Sandy. In fact, something had hit them, three times in quick succession. “I turned around in the cockpit and saw a pod of killer whales in the ocean,” says Sandy. The *Lucette* had been attacked by orcas. Within seconds, it became clear that the boat was sinking.

It was four years earlier, while following Sir Robin Knox-Johnston in the 1968 round-the-world yacht race from their home in Staffordshire, that Sandy and his family were first inspired to embark on an escapade of their own. Dougal, a farmer who had served in the Merchant Navy, and midwife Lyn had married almost two decades before, in 1951. Four children followed. But by the time they watched Sir Robin complete the first single-handed non-stop circumnavigation of the globe, they had grown tired of eking a living out of their dairy farm near the market town of Leek. Within two years, they had sold up and invested their life savings in the *Lucette*, a 50-year-old, 19-ton schooner. On 27 January 1971, their sailing dream finally came to fruition when they set off from Falmouth harbour on the journey of a lifetime. Daughter Anne, then 18, Douglas, then 17, and twins Sandy and Neil, then 11, all had zero sailing experience. The family did prepare, however, by having their appendixes removed to avoid any bouts of appendicitis during their trip.

The first leg – a journey of more than 820 nautical miles to Lisbon – was blighted by gale-force winds, and Lyn, Anne and the twins were crippled by seasickness. But by the time the family had



*In Falmouth, before departure (l-r): Douglas, Neil, Lyn, Sandy, Dougal and Anne*

*“It was 9:55am and suddenly there was an almighty crash. Douglas was screaming: ‘Whales! Whales!’”*

sisters, Edna and Mary – from a local school. After arriving in Colón, in Panama, in March 1972, Dougal set about turning the *Ednamair* into a sailing dinghy. It was also where the family met Robin, who was backpacking around the world and asked if he could tag along in return for giving the twins maths lessons. Dougal and Lyn quickly took him up on the offer. They set off in mid-May and by 1 June 1972, the family and their plus-one

had reached the Galápagos Islands, where they immersed themselves in the flora and fauna. The visit would prove to be their last moments on land for nearly six weeks. The boat “was in perfect working order” as they set off from the Galápagos on 13 June 1972, Sandy says. But within two days disaster struck when a trio of orcas delivered a series of blows to the *Lucette*. “It was 9:55am and... suddenly there was an almighty crash and the cup of coffee was airborne,” says Sandy. “Douglas was screaming, ‘Whales! Whales!’” Water began flooding into the *Lucette*, forcing Dougal to try to plug one of several holes created by the orcas with a pillow. But realising he was fighting a losing battle, he gave the command to abandon ship and freed the inflatable life raft and the *Ednamair*, which were tied together. Within little more than a minute, the family and Robin had gathered all they could in their arms and leapt into the ocean.

Panicked, the group scrambled their way to the life raft one by one. All of them were barefoot, and dressed in shorts and T-shirts. As they regrouped, they picked through the supplies they had managed to scoop up before abandoning the *Lucette* – among them a bag of onions, ten oranges, six lemons and a fishing line. The 8ft by 6ft life raft was equipped with a survival pack including flares and a knife, as well as rations of a day’s worth of food and water for ten people. “I saw the top of the *Lucette*’s mast disappearing under the water,” says Sandy.

reached the Portuguese coast, they had discovered their sea legs. Over the course of the next six months, they travelled coast to coast, journeying from Lisbon to Las Palmas, on Gran Canaria, followed by the Caribbean. It was there, in the Bahamas, that Anne met a man and fell in love. After travelling with the group for a while, he and Anne abandoned the trip, returning to Nassau. The rest of the family went on.

In July 1971, the Robertsons arrived in Miami, where they met a fellow sailing family who kindly gave them their life raft. Dougal also bought a 10ft fibreglass dinghy, which they named *Ednamair* – after Lyn’s

had reached the Galápagos Islands, where they immersed themselves in the flora and fauna. The visit would prove to be their last moments on land for nearly six weeks.

Before the family began their fight for survival, they bickered. There was no help on the horizon, they had no map, no compass. “Blame was being levelled. Mum told Dad he had put us at risk,” says Sandy. Sparked into action, Dougal hatched a plan to sail north, towards an area known by sailors as the doldrums – a belt around the Earth near the equator, where rainstorms are almost constant. “That was our point of call for collecting water to drink,” says Sandy. But the journey would take more than two weeks, meaning survival in the meantime depended on capturing the little rainwater they could using a catchment panel on the raft. Dougal rationed it stringently – allowing for one sip each per hour. At their lowest point, the group of six were surviving on only a mouthful each a day.



*The group being rescued by a Japanese fishing boat*

Food supplies soon dwindled. After about six days, a precious stash of glucose sweets and high-protein biscuits was almost all gone. A week after being forced to abandon the *Lucette*, the group saw their first glimpse of hope – it proved to be fleeting. “A cargo ship passed us, about a mile or so away. Dad sent flares up, but it just sailed by,” says Sandy. Later the same day, the group managed successfully to catch their first turtle using the raft’s rescue line. Almost every part of the animal was devoured. “Dad pumped the blood into a jar. He drank the first mouthful and then passed it round. If you were last to drink, the serum had separated and you had to put your finger in and whisk it around before you drank it,” says Sandy. “We would also roll the eyeballs around our mouths for ages until the membrane dissolved and they popped. They tasted salty.”

The group also made their way through every last morsel of the oranges and the onions. “We ate every last bit – the skin, the lot. Nothing was wasted. If I eat an orange or a red onion now, I go straight back to the life raft,” says Sandy. Lyn did her best to comfort the others, using bits of sail to craft makeshift bedding and rubbing turtle oil into their skin to help keep them warm at night, when the days gave way to plummeting temperatures. Despite her best efforts, conditions were becoming increasingly wretched. There was a constant pool of saltwater mixed with human excrement and turtle offal in the bottom of the raft which left them all with boils.

On day 15, the group finally reached the doldrums. But there was little respite to be found. “The seams started to wear and water started coming in,” says Sandy. “You were sitting there with it up to your chest.” Equally worrying was what was going on outside the raft. The minnows the group had been catching were attracting bigger fish and with them sharks, which began circling the vessel, occasionally nudging it. It was at this point that the group made the decision to jump ship to the bailed-out *Ednamair*. Once aboard, they adapted their survival tactics, using the dinghy’s mast to hang up the fish they caught, allowing them to dry in the sun and therefore last longer. “One of the nicest things we ate on board was some flying fish we found inside a dorado’s stomach. It tasted marinated and all the scales had come off,” says Sandy. “Also, the best-tasting meat was the stuff that was green and slimy, essentially rotting – it was soft and tasted beautiful.”

Despite routine catches, the group was losing weight fast. They talked about food for hours on end, taking it in turns to reveal what their first meal would be if they made it to land. “Mine was steak, egg and chips and a can of Coke. We also invented a café called ‘Dougal’s’ and we would take it in turns to invent a menu,” says Sandy. The six leant on such games in an effort to keep morale from hitting rock bottom – “I spy” among

them. “We weren’t allowed to do anything outside the dinghy as it was invariably only something beginning with S. Sea, sky, sun...” says Sandy.

But while spirits were generally high, logistics proved a challenge. Fitting six people in a 10ft boat meant that they were literally sitting on top of one another, and it was impossible to jump into the water when nature called. “The freeboard was four inches above the level of the sea, so we couldn’t get out to go to the loo because we would have sunk the dinghy,” says Sandy. “So we had to go where we were and it just covered

everybody.” There wasn’t much sleep. “We took it in turns to sit on the centre thwart because it was so cold at night and this meant you avoided the water in the bottom of the boat,” says Sandy. Day 28 brought with it enormous swells – 20ft waves that crashed around the boat, requiring it to be constantly bailed out.

Salvation finally came early on the evening of 23 July 1972 – day 38, when the group spotted a boat while playing a game of I spy. The boat, a Japanese fishing vessel, was on its way to the Panama Canal. Its watchman fortuitously saw the red arc of the distress flare lit by Dougal. “They came alongside but they couldn’t speak English,” says Sandy. With the *Ednamair* surrounded by sharks, the rescuers hurriedly dropped a rope ladder into the water, allowing Sandy and his twin brother to escape the dinghy first. After feeding them a meal of bread and butter accompanied by black coffee, their saviours were quick

to usher the group into the showers. “We were covered in boils, sores and excrement,” says Sandy. “The skin was peeling off our fingers. We had no idea we smelt.”

*“Dad pumped the turtle blood into a jar. We’d also roll the eyeballs around our mouths until the membrane dissolved and they popped”*

The *Ednamair* was bobbing around some 300 miles west of Costa Rica when the group was rescued. (Dougal pleaded with the Japanese crew to bring the dinghy on board. Kindly, they agreed.) They had travelled more than 750 miles by raft and dinghy in total. The Japanese boat ferried them to Panama City, where they were immediately checked over by medics. All of the group had also lost a considerable amount of weight – up to 13kg (28lb 10oz) each – while at sea. After almost a month spent recuperating in Panama, it was eventually time to travel back to Britain onboard the *MV Port Auckland*.

Looking back now, Sandy says the family struggled upon their return, shuffling between staying with cousins to living in a hotel, a caravan and then rented accommodation. And sadly, Lyn and Dougal’s marriage didn’t last. “Dad ended up moving to Greece to write his book, *Survive the Savage Sea*, and we would visit in the school holidays. He then moved to France,” says Sandy. Lyn eventually returned to Dougal’s side when he became terminally ill later in life. She nursed him right up until his death in 1991, and seven years later, was buried alongside him.

Sandy went on to become a mechanical engineer. He and his wife Deborah, 61, now have nine grandchildren. The brothers remain close and still keep in touch with Robin, who lives in Bristol. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Sandy says his experiences more than half-a-century ago have come to define his life. “Man is a hunter,” he says. “There is a drive within you to stay alive. My attitude is now do or die, get on with it.” Besides, he says, no matter how difficult life on land occasionally gets: “Worse things happen at sea.”

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



# THE WEEK Junior

## UK General Election 2024 What do kids want to know?

Across the country, families are discussing the ins and outs of the election — who they might vote for and what the outcome could mean for the future. It's a lot for children to take in, and it's their future we are all shaping.

They're likely to have lots of questions about what's happening. So, over the coming weeks, *The Week Junior* will help explain it. We'll take the complex and confusing bits and make them clear, accessible and interesting.

Jargon will be busted, tricky parts of the process will be simplified and the key players introduced.

A general election is a chance to inspire young people and show them that coming together, debating topics, and campaigning for what you believe in really can make a difference.

The magazine will also help children develop essential life skills such as debating and expressing their views, as well as giving readers a chance to share the issues that are most important to them. Make sure the children in your life don't miss out.



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## THE WEEK CROSSWORD 1420

Two Connell Guides and three Week-branded items will be given to the sender of the first correct solution to the crossword and the clue of the week opened on Monday 8 July. Send it to The Week Crossword 1420, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6JR, or email the completed grid/listed solutions to [crossword@theweek.co.uk](mailto:crossword@theweek.co.uk). **Tim Moorey (timmoorey.com)**



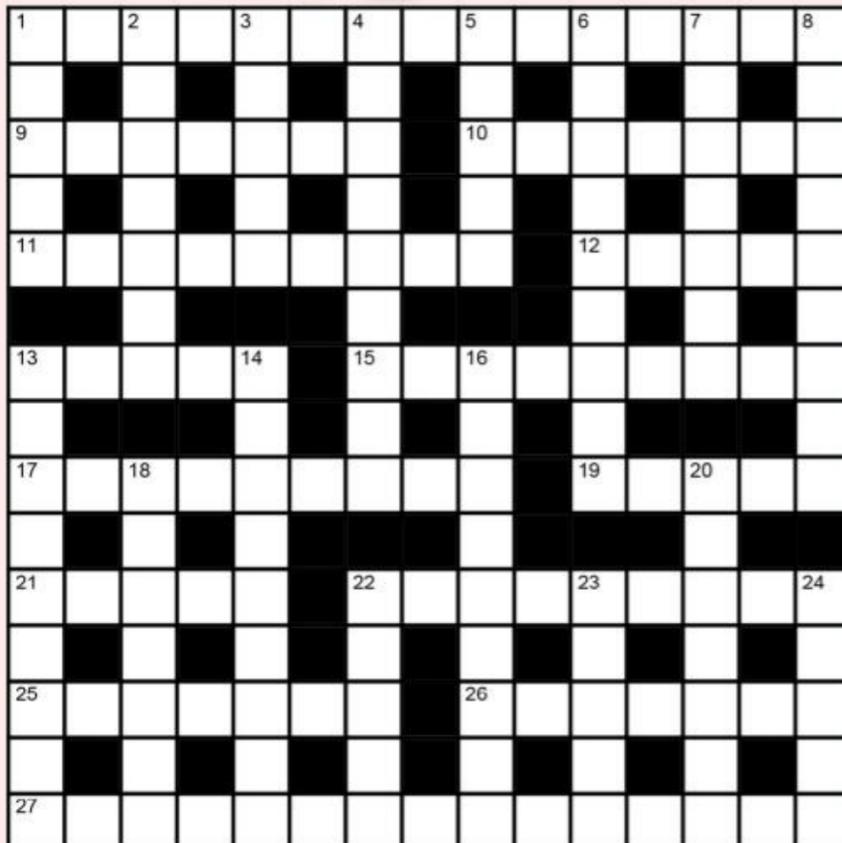
This week's winner will receive Week-branded items including a notebook, coffee mug and tote bag, as well as two Connell Guides (connellguides.com).

### ACROSS

- 1 Some NHS cuts may be bound up with this (8,7)
- 9 Splendid addition to a cake (7)
- 10 Spurs ground limits restricting United (7)
- 11 Box at Lord's perhaps for Dick Hill (9)
- 12 Intends to convey great wealth (5)
- 13 Second eleven get very angry (5)
- 15 Rent again up in large country (9)
- 17 Tess in turn right away showing eccentricity (9)
- 19 Money in Peru changed by European? (5)
- 21 Publicity in a post office gets agreement (5)
- 22 Bruce clan building is an eyesore (9)
- 25 Working, as many nuns are (2,5)
- 26 Old man taking advantage of intermission (7)
- 27 Machines that can get you mad, or insane debt! (3-5, 7)

### DOWN

- 1 Organisation accused falsely? (3-2)
- 2 Is out to make a speech without preparation? That's better (7)
- 3 Cut rump of steak terribly fine (5)
- 4 Dark part of moon shows something terrifying (9)
- 5 Puzzle is more upmarket but not hard (5)
- 6 Play on air around Thailand once for large part of Turkey (4,5)
- 7 Chap turned up in new suit to give a big wave (7)
- 8 Check on country put in again (9)
- 13 Disguised as Roman in a republic (3,6)
- 14 Cavalier or Daimler? You wouldn't buy either this way! (4,5)
- 16 Top grub as out to lunch here? (9)
- 18 First class work in hotel abroad (3-4)
- 20 Dad is one to embrace child's game from India (7)
- 22 Hack against interrupting nurse (5)
- 23 Increase to exclude parking is a reversal of policy (1-4)
- 24 Spades put to the bottom of grassy plant borders (5)



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Tel no \_\_\_\_\_  
 Clue of the week answer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Clue of the week:** Mad dog had a trilby, for the midday sun? (5,8 first letters B,D) *Filbert, The Independent*

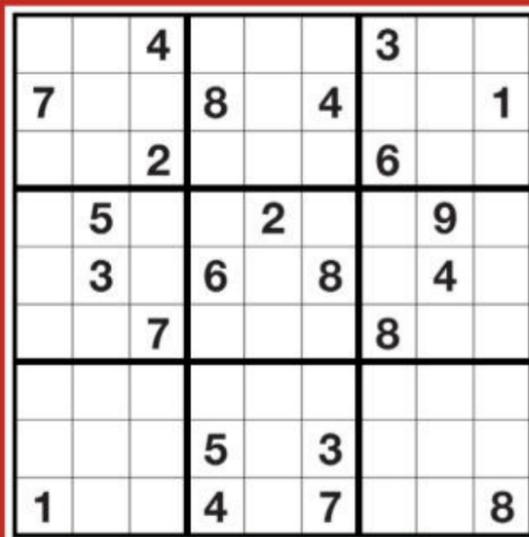
### Solution to Crossword 1418

- ACROSS:** 1 Coax 3 Brass tacks 10 Burlesque 11 Arson 12 Inept 13 Imposter 15 Leonine 17 Tetrode 19 Tweaked 21 Bar-bell 22 Befriend 24 Debut 27 Entry 28 Snow-white 29 Springtime 30 Blue  
**DOWN:** 1 Cabriolets 2 Agree 4 Requite 5 Stewpot 6 Tears 7 Casserole 8 Sank 9 Heat sink 14 Hello there 16 One better 18 Turn down 20 Deep-set 21 Bad form 23 Rayon 25 Brill 26 Mews

**Clue of the week:** Boxer knocking the stuffing out of Teddy boy (5)  
**Solution:** TYSON (T[edd]y + son = boy)

**The winner of 1418 is Robert Barker from Bridport**

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### Sudoku 962 (very difficult)

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

#### Solution to Sudoku 961

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



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## Charity of the week



SameYou is a brain injury recovery charity that works to develop better mental health recovery treatment for survivors, raises awareness and advocates for change. Emilia Clarke survived two life-threatening brain haemorrhages while working on *Game of Thrones*, and the response to Emilia sharing her story and becoming a founder of SameYou revealed the huge unmet need worldwide. Nearly one in three people will have an Acquired Brain Injury at some point in their lifetime, but research reveals that 45% of stroke survivors feel abandoned once they have left hospital. We deliver real-time group rehabilitation services to revolutionise care. **Please visit [sameyou.org](http://sameyou.org) to find out more.**

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