

Life in UK's smelliest village

Features



The Daily Telegraph

NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

Homeowners face council tax raid under Labour

Shadow Treasury minister suggests party could raise property levies on the wealthy, in leaked recording

By Gordon Rayner ASSOCIATE EDITOR

A LABOUR frontbencher has expressed frustration at the "out of date" council tax system and hinted that a tax raid on wealthy people's homes is coming.

In a leaked recording, Darren Jones, the shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, admitted that Labour could not talk openly about revaluing homes for council tax because no party that did so would get elected. He also suggested the whole council tax system "needs to be changed" in comments that have been seized upon by the Conservatives.

The Tories say Mr Jones, who is likely to be second in command at the Treasury if Labour wins the election, has been "caught saying the quiet part out loud" and that Sir Keir Starmer intends to increase taxes on people's homes, cars and pensions. Labour described it as "scaremongering nonsense".

As Britain goes to the polls, Mr Sunak warned voters not to "sleepwalk into a Labour super-majority" and insisted the election was not a foregone conclusion. He said: "Telegraph readers know the Conservatives, the party of Margaret Thatcher and Nigel Lawson, will always represent their values. We will cut taxes for every generation, make sure work always pays, support families, safeguard drivers' freedoms, secure our borders, boost our national security and preserve our precious countryside for future generations."

A final opinion poll for this newspaper has predicted the largest Labour majority in history, with Sir Keir's party winning 39 per cent of the vote and the Tories 20 per cent. Another poll predicted Labour would win the biggest majority of any party since 1832, and others this week have suggested the Conservatives could end up with as few as 64 seats.

Yesterday, analysts at the investment bank Citi forecast that Labour would launch a £15 billion tax raid on pensions, capital gains and inheritance if the party won a large majority.

Tax has been central to the election campaign, with the Conservatives insisting that families will pay more than £2,000 more under Labour. Sir Keir has ruled out increases to income tax, VAT or National Insurance, but has refused to make any commitments to freeze or cut other taxes.

Mr Jones has previously been recorded saying that Labour's green

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energy plans will cost "hundreds of billions" and that inheritance tax will be used to "redistribute" wealth. His latest comments were made at a coffee morning in the Bristol area on May 18, just four days before the election was called.

The Labour frontbencher was asked by a voter about the prospect of council tax rises on 700,000 homes worth more than £1 million.

Mr Jones replied: "There'll be people in this village that will pay a lot more council tax than they currently do, many of them older people. So the fact is, again, I get the frustration but you live in a capitalist democracy."

"So that requires people to vote for you to have power, to hold power, in order to be able to do things within a framework people are willing to work within. Now, you can say that the whole system is like c-p and needs to be changed."

When he was asked about increasing council tax "for those people who can definitely afford it" and then "pour[ing] that money back into working-class people", he replied: "And I agree with you that the council tax system is very out of date."

He went on: "Let me be frank with you about council tax, right. Any party [that] has ever suggested revaluing council tax has never been elected. They just haven't."

When the questioner pointed out that Labour had a huge poll lead, Mr Jones replied: "They won't if they start telling everyone they have to pay more council tax."

Laura Trott, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said: "Labour have been caught saying the quiet part out loud. Darren Jones admitted that talking about any of their secret taxes on the family home before the election would cost them votes. The real risk of a Labour super-majority cannot be clearer. A vote for anyone other than the Conservatives will deliver a Labour government, intent on taxing your home, your pension, your car - even your children's education."

A Labour spokesman said: "If the best of the Tories can offer on the day of the election is a recording of Darren Jones explaining why Labour has no plans to raise council tax, then it shows the utterly desperate state they are in."

"Any other interpretation of his words is entirely false, scaremongering nonsense."

King Cav rides into Tour history



Sir Mark Cavendish has become the most successful Tour de France stage winner, claiming his 35th victory yesterday and surpassing the legendary Belgian Eddy Merckx. The Manx cyclist delayed his retirement plans by one year to take part in the race and break the record. Sport: Pages 2-3

Legal threat over postal vote chaos

By Madeleine Ross

NEWLY elected MPs face having their victories challenged in the courts over postal ballot chaos, lawyers have said.

Voters in as many as 120 constituencies have been affected by delays in deliveries and printing, with many of the problems blamed on the short election timescale. Thousands are thought to have not received their ballots in time for today's election, leaving many unable to vote.

With analysis showing that as many as a quarter of marginal constituencies are affected, the runners-up in close

seats could mount a legal challenge that may result in a by-election.

Tom Cross, a barrister at IKBW, said: "We are in territory here from some of the reports where there may well be credible challenges, but it depends on the margin of victory."

Those who have received their ballots but have not been able to post them back before the 10pm deadline can hand in their votes at a polling station or council office. For those whose postal votes are yet to be delivered, a replacement can be issued as late as 5pm today. However, those who have not received a ballot paper and are unable to travel to

'We are in territory here from some of the reports where there may well be credible challenges'

get one face being disenfranchised. Campaigners have warned that the crisis could particularly affect elderly voters without the means to travel. Dennis Reed, the director of Silver Voices, urged stranded voters to ask activists for a lift to the polling station.

Telegraph analysis has found that of the 129 marginal constituencies with a majority of less than 5 per cent being contested in today's election, 34 have experienced issues with postal votes, including delays and votes not turning up.

Postal vote chaos Q&A: Page 6

Biden 'considers standing down' from White House race

By Tony Diver US EDITOR in Washington

JOE BIDEN has for the first time said that he is considering ending his presidential campaign, according to reports.

After days of criticism over his disastrous performance in last week's debate against Donald Trump, the US president told allies he "knows if he has two more events like that" then he is in a "different place", according to a report in *The New York Times*. Mr Biden's White

House team is hoping that he can recover his campaign with an energetic appearance at two rallies and in a TV interview this weekend.

It came as a poll by Siena College found that Mr Biden had dropped three points in a head-to-head race with Trump since last Thursday's event, and is now six points behind.

Aides say that the 81-year-old leader is "well aware of the political challenge he faces", but a spokesman described the claim he was considering giving up

the Democratic nomination as "absolutely false". Another source told CNN the US president would consider dropping out if "the polls are plummeting, the fundraising is drying up, and the interviews are going badly".

Democrats have been clamouring for Mr Biden to give up his campaign and speculation is mounting that he could be replaced by Kamala Harris, the vice-president. The Republican Party has begun putting out attack adverts about Ms Harris, suggesting that she was an

"enabler in chief". The pair met for lunch at the White House yesterday before appearing on an all-staff call with their team.

Mr Biden said on the call: "I am running. I am the leader of the Democratic Party. No one is pushing me out."

The leaked suggestions that Mr Biden was actively considering ending his campaign prompted speculation by some analysts that the White House would use the next few days as a test of Mr Biden's viability as the Democrat

nominee. Campaign rallies in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, two key swing states, will be followed by an interview broadcast on ABC News on Sunday.

Aides reportedly hope that they will help Democrats set aside concerns about his age and mental agility.

However, the calls for Mr Biden to reconsider his campaign continued yesterday, amid reports that some House Democrats are going to call for him to stand down. Two Democrat congressmen, Lloyd Doggett and Raul Grijalva,

have called on Mr Biden to make the decision to withdraw, while two other sitting Democrats have said they think he will lose the election to Trump.

Last night, Mr Biden hosted Democratic governors, including several politicians touted as his replacement, at the White House for a meeting about the crisis. Karine Jean-Pierre, Mr Biden's spokesman, said he was "absolutely not" going to leave the race.

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Andy Murray is a grumpy hero

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MATT

I don't want Labour to have a super-majority, so can I see how everyone else has voted?

NEWS

I killed my dying son, admits mother on radio

A mother has admitted live on radio to ending the life of her terminally ill son when he was seven years old. Antonya Cooper, from Oxfordshire, said she was potentially admitting to manslaughter, but added that authorities would have to act fast as she was suffering from her own terminal cancer diagnosis. Ms Cooper, 77, whose son, Hamish, had stage-four cancer before his death in 1981, told BBC Radio Oxford she would happily face the consequences for ending his life. Page 10

FOOTBALL

Southgate weighs up three at the back

Gareth Southgate is considering a switch to a back three for England's Euro 2024 quarter-final against Switzerland on Saturday as the manager desperately seeks an improvement in performance. It is understood that he has played with a back three in training this week in preparation for a game in which he will be forced to make at least one change in defence, with Ezri Konsa first in line to replace the suspended Marc Guehi. Sport, Page 1



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Weight-loss jab linked to risk of going blind

Doctors under scrutiny after three patients develop rare sight-loss condition within a week

By Michael Searles
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

WEIGHT-LOSS injections have been linked to a seven-fold increase in a rare sight-loss disease, a study has found.

Doctors at Massachusetts Eye and Ear

hospital in Boston looked into a potential connection after three patients on the popular injections Ozempic or Wegovy, containing the drug semaglutide, developed the rare condition within a week.

They found that people with diabetes taking semaglutide were at least four times more likely to be diagnosed with non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION), while people who were overweight or obese taking the drug were more than seven times as likely to develop it.

NAION is uncommon but can cause irreversible blindness in about 10 in 100,000 people.

It occurs from a lack of sufficient blood flow to the optic nerve and those afflicted typically suffer sudden vision loss in one eye, without any pain, and often on waking up.

There is no treatment for the condition and vision often does not improve.

The doctors looked back through six years of data involving almost 17,000 patients and cross-referenced those on semaglutide for diabetes or weight loss.

Joseph Rizzo, of Harvard Medical School, said: "The use of these drugs has exploded throughout industrialised countries and they have provided very significant benefits, but future discussions between a patient and their physician should include NAION as a potential risk. It is important to appreciate, however, that the increased risk relates to a disorder that is relatively uncommon."

Prof Rizzo said the visual loss caused by NAION could progress over many days before stabilising.

The researchers compared patients who had received prescriptions for semaglutide with those taking other diabetes or weight-loss drugs.

Among 16,827 patients, 710 had type 2 diabetes, and 194 of them were taking semaglutide. Some 979 patients were overweight or obese, and 361 were using semaglutide. There were 17 cases of NAION in diabetes patients on semaglutide – a rate of 8.9 per cent – compared with six cases in patients on other drugs at a rate of 1.8 per cent.

A similar trend was observed in overweight and obese patients, with 20 people on semaglutide developing NAION, or 6.7 per cent, compared with just three on other drugs, at 0.8 per cent.

The researchers said the number of cases seen over the six years was relatively small, and that the hospital saw an unusually high number of people with rare eye diseases because they are a specialist service.

Prof Rizzo said: "Our findings should be viewed as being significant but tentative, as future studies are needed. This is information we did not have before and it should be included in discussions between patients and their doctors."

Graham McGeown, honorary professor of physiology at Queen's University Belfast, said: "This research does suggest an association between semaglutide treatment and one form of sight-threatening optic neuropathy, but this would ideally be tested in larger studies."

The study was published in *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

NEWS BULLETIN

Boy, 17, drowns on trip to celebrate end of term

A school pupil has drowned during a school trip to the seaside.

Emergency services were called to the beach at West Wittering, West Sussex, at about 1pm yesterday.

The 17-year-old boy, who got into difficulties in the water, was part of a group from Uxbridge College in west London, who were visiting the area to celebrate the end of term.

He was airlifted to hospital where he was pronounced dead. Dylan McTaggart, the college principal, said: "This was a tragic accident that has had a huge impact on everyone here."

"Our priority now is to look after all those affected. We have enlisted the help of qualified counsellors."

Potato thieves deprive honesty box of £400

Thieves responsible for stealing £400 of potatoes from an honesty box stall are "not nice", according to the farmer they have repeatedly targeted.

John Hardy, 71, said he was left "feeling sick" after more than 200 bags of produce were taken from his stand without any money being left. A picture of the honesty box stall after the apparent thefts shows a sign that reads "Bags not paid for this time 218" and "not nice".

The unmanned stand at the entrance to his farm near Boston, Lincs, allows members of the public to buy potatoes in exchange for putting £2 in a cash tin. He said: "People need to have more of a conscience."

Husband strangled wife in front of children

A husband who strangled his wife in front of her two children while her lover watched helplessly on a video call has been convicted of her murder.

Aminam Rahman, 46, stuffed Suma Begum, 24, into a suitcase before throwing it into the river Lea, which runs through east London. Her decomposed body was found on the river bank 10 days later by a mudlark.

Yesterday, Rahman was found guilty by an Old Bailey jury of murdering his wife on April 29 last year. The court heard his attack on Ms Begum was witnessed by her children, aged two and four months, and by her boyfriend Shahin Miah, 24.

Rahman will be sentenced on July 31.

Payout for family years after asbestos death

The family of a woman who died from washing her husband's asbestos-contaminated work clothes has been awarded compensation.

Joan Davies washed David's overalls after working at Pembroke Power Station between 1969 and 1982. She would shake off his overalls before washing them in the garage.

Mr Davies died aged 89 from mesothelioma, a cancer of the lung associated with asbestos. Mrs Davies died 10 years later, also at 89, with the same condition. Her son Jeff Davies, 63, took legal action to investigate how their mother was exposed. He said: "Asbestos cancer can strike anyone, even years down the line." The family secured an undisclosed sum.

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Feather in her cap The Queen leaves St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh having been awarded Scotland's greatest order of chivalry. She and the Duke of Edinburgh, who both have strong connections with Scottish charities, were made members of the Order of the Thistle along with other leading figures.

Marine took own life after losing piece of kit

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

THE loss of a piece of equipment by a Royal Marine recruit contributed to him taking his own life on a railway line, a coroner has concluded.

Connor Clark, 18, had scaled a razor wire fence at the commando training centre in Lympstone, Devon, before being struck by a train on the morning of June 12 2021.

The teenager had made comments about being called a "failure" and the "worst recruit", amid worries about misplacing a blank firing adapter.

Philip Spinney, senior coroner for Devon, Plymouth & Torbay, said there was evidence Mr Clark had been looking for the equipment as he was set to have an inspection on the day he died.

Mr Spinney said Mr Clark had become "overwhelmed with the situation" and had left the camp and ended his life. "I attach no criticism to the

training staff in relation to the loss of the blank firing attachment," he said. "I conclude that Connor losing his blank firing attachment probably contributed more than minimally to the cause of his death."

Mr Spinney said Mr Clark had died from multiple severe injuries as he recorded a conclusion of suicide.

The teenager, from Norfolk, was three weeks into a four-week recruit orientation phase (ROP) course. Fellow recruits said he had suffered more "thrashings" – a physical punishment for making mistakes – than anyone else.

The officer in charge of the ROP, Major Mark Thrift, denied he had called Mr Clark the "worst recruit", but accepted he told him he was failing the course.

An internal review concluded Mr Clark should have received a mental health assessment.

Two days before Mr Clark died, he

had gone to the sick bay seeking treatment for a wound to his elbow. He told medical staff he had initially cut his elbow falling against a radiator, but then admitted he had self-harmed.

Mr Spinney said the failure to hold a case conference or inform Mr Clark's chain of command about the self-harming "probably or more than minimally contributed" to his death.

"Connor was finding some aspects of the course difficult. Connor's own perception of his performance on the course probably or more than minimally contributed to his death."

"Connor losing his blank firing attachment probably contributed more than minimally to his death."

"The response by the Commando Training Centre to the information that Connor had gone missing from the camp was inadequate. It cannot be said this made any contribution to Connor's death."

Police 'frustrate' Slater father

By Albert Tait in Tenerife

JAY SLATER'S father has questioned why two grown men took his son to a remote cottage in Tenerife before he disappeared.

The missing British teenager left a music festival in Playa de las Americas with two British men before he vanished on June 17.

The 19-year-old was last seen in Masca, a small mountain village nearly 20 miles away, walking up a steep road.

The Guardia Civil scoured the nearby Rural de Teno national park for 13 days before calling the search off on Sunday.

The force has insisted the two men last seen with Mr Slater "don't have any relevance" to the case and has allowed them to return to the UK.

But Mr Slater's father, Warren, 58, said he "can't understand" why the men had travelled with his son to Masca, saying: "You just don't disappear."

Speaking to *The Telegraph* yesterday, he said: "My only question is, and this is where you start the investigation from, why did two grown men take a young boy to a valley to a bed and breakfast? I can't understand that."

"Why? You need to ask them why and then start from there. Spanish police must know. It is frustrating. It's a language barrier and you can't get mad at Spanish police because they don't like it."

Mr Slater spoke to *The Telegraph* after spending two hours searching the natural park in north-west Tenerife where his son vanished. He was joined by his other son, Zak, 24, and Mr Slater's uncle, who did not want to be named.

Mr Slater said he felt "in the dark" about the police investigation.

He said: "The police are just doing their own investigations. They're not telling us anything. They're not telling you lot (the press) anything."

Andy's late-night text won Emma court date

Murray to team up with Raducanu in superstar mixed doubles pairing for his SW19 swansong

By Simon Briggs and Fiona Tomas

A LATE-NIGHT text has brought about a crowd-pleasing combination at Wimbledon: Andy Murray and Emma Raducanu on the same mixed-doubles team.

"It was quite late when I sent the message," Murray revealed yesterday, shortly after a training session at Aorangi Park. "It would have been after 9pm so I was a bit worried she might have been in bed. But I got a quick reply. She said: 'Yeah, let's do it.' That was it."

Here was an eye-catching move from Murray, who was forced to withdraw from the singles event on Tuesday after failing to recover completely from surgery on a spinal cyst only 10 days earlier. He had already entered the men's doubles alongside brother Jamie. But the partnership with Raducanu will offer Murray another spin of the dice

as he looks for one final roof-raising win at Wimbledon where he claimed singles titles in 2013 and 2016.

"We'd spoken about it a few years ago during the Covid year [in 2021] but obviously both of us were doing quite well in the singles and it didn't happen," Murray explained.

"Yesterday I was chatting to my team and we were discussing mixed. Last night I messaged her coach [Nick Cavaday] and asked if he thought it might be something she'd be up for doing. "He said it was worth asking, so I did, and she said yeah, she'd be up for it."

"It should be fun. I have played mixed doubles a few times when I was young and the last time was with Serena [Williams]. I really enjoyed it, it's something we rarely get to do. And to get a chance to do it with Emma... well, it's my last chance to do it, so it should be good."

When asked how long it took her to accept Murray's offer, Raducanu said she accepted after 10 seconds.

"For me, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Some things are bigger than just tennis. Some things are a memory that you're going to have for



Andy Murray and Emma Raducanu are to play mixed doubles at SW19

the rest of your life. To play at Wimbledon with Andy Murray, those things don't come by very often.

"At the end of my career, I know I'm going to have that memory of playing Wimbledon with Andy Murray on a home slam." But will she be voting

today? "I'll have a lie-in, then I'll come to practise. I didn't even know it was tomorrow, to be honest."

Asked if the pair would practise together, Murray said: "I don't think so. We'll warm up for the match, but obviously her priority will be her singles practices, and we'll work around that."

And how about their chemistry? "I don't know, hopefully good. She's obviously unbelievably competitive and likes playing in the big stadiums so I expect she'll deal with that really well."

Raducanu, who breezed past Elize Mertens 6-1, 6-2 on Centre Court said: "I couldn't say no. Andy's a hero so for me it's a real gift and honour."

Murray has run one successful mixed-doubles campaign on SW19's courts, when he and Laura Robson landed the silver medal at the London Olympics in 2012. He also entered the Wimbledon mixed-doubles in 2019 with Williams. The pairing won two rounds before coming unstuck against Bruno Soares and Nicole Pietrangeli.

He and Williams differed on which portmanteau name they should use, however, with Murray preferring Ser-

andy and Williams suggesting Murena. In the case of this new partnership, options might include Raducandy or Marucanu. Calling them the Randies, however, might give the wrong idea.

As the 2021 US Open champion, Raducanu makes for a high-profile partner. Yet her doubles experience is limited with one tour-level match in Washington DC two years ago.

She and Clara Tauson, a Dane, lost 6-4, 6-1 against Lucie Hradecka and Monica Niculescu.

While Raducanu tends to like playing from the baseline, Murray suggested that she should be able to adapt.

"A lot of the skills from singles translate well to doubles," he said. "A few things are different, particularly against players who are move a lot at the net. But she's a brilliant returner and great ball striker so I'd imagine she'll deal with returning the guys' serves well."

The pair have been drawn to face Marcelo Arevalo and Shuai Zhang in the opening round. The match is likely to be played tomorrow or Saturday.

'She's a great ball striker so I imagine she'll deal with returning the guys' serves well'

Sport: Pages 6-9

Female tennis stars stretch strict dress code to limit

By Max Stephens

FOR 147 years, Wimbledon has enforced one of the strictest dress codes in sport.

But today, the tournament's leading women are doing their best to push the draconian and archetypically-English rules to their limit.

From frills to wedding dresses, it is clear that times have changed since the petticoats and corsets of the 1900s.

When Naomi Osaka, the four-time Grand Slam winner, took to Centre Court this week in a custom-made Nike tank top with cross-body ruffles, right, Wimbledon's own website said the outfit "wouldn't look out of place in the Met Gala".

The only hint of colour was small flecks of green on her Nike shoes, and an olive-coloured Tag Heuer Aquaracer watch.

Wimbledon's sole concession to its all-white rule came last year when it allowed women to wear dark undershorts to alleviate concerns of competitors on their period.

Coco Gauff, the World No2 from the US, admitted in a press conference yesterday following her victory over Romanian Anca Todoni, that she had to be creative when trying to stamp her personality on her outfit.

Gauff, 20, who wore a redesigned crop top said to be inspired by Serena Williams' own sportswear at Wimble-

41,115

Number of visitors to Wimbledon on the second day of the tournament. It was 1,000 more than on the first day

don in 2019 said: "Honestly, Wimbledon - there's not too much you can do in the colour department."

"We just tried to do something different with the cut of the dress. Like, I like to wear crop tops a lot."

"That cut is kind of, like, supposed to be like a crop top, an elegant Wimbledon type way, I just think of Wimbledon as a tradition."

"Even with my nails, I always usually get like French or white here just to match that elegance of it. Yeah, so I think that was the inspiration from it."

Gauff, who plans her Grand Slams outfits up to two years in advance, added: "The only thing you can really do here is play with the texture."

"Maybe next year, I'll try to put more texture into it. Not much you can do here. But I do appreciate the elegance of it all."

Marta Kostyuk victory over Slovakia's Rebecca Sramkova in the tournament's opening round was given an added flair when it emerged the Ukrainian had won while wearing a near exact copy of



Naomi Osaka on Centre Court. Maria Kostyuk, left, wore a dress inspired by her bridal outfit when she married George Kyzymenko last year, below left



DANIEL ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES

her wedding dress, designed by Wilson, the tennis racket manufacturer.

Kostyuk, ranked 18 in the world, told *Vogue*: "We were just talking about the wedding, and the dress - all of us: my agent and my team and some friends and some people from Wilson - and we were like, 'Why not be the first brand in tennis to make a wedding dress?'"

Figures released yesterday showed almost 41,115 visitors came to Wimbledon on the second day of the tournament, 1,000 more than on the opening.

On Centre Court, Theresa May, the former Conservative prime minister, was seated with a Pimm's alongside tennis great Maria Sharapova and the Duchess of Gloucester.

Courting controversy Stars not playing by the rules in SW19

Since 1877, Wimbledon players have been forced to wear all white. The only concession is a 1cm single trim of colour around the neckline and cuff of the sleeves.

In 2023, officials relaxed the dress code to allow women to wear dark coloured

undershorts to reduce anxiety about playing while on a period.

Over the years players have tested the dress code. Venus Williams was forced to change her bra midway through a match in 2017 after officials said the pink straps were against the rules.

In 1985, Anne White wore a full body white catsuit to Wimbledon that outraged her opponent Pam Shriver who asked officials that she never be allowed to wear it again.

In 1919, Suzanne Lenglen scandalised the press at Wimbledon with

her "indecent" outfit. The French star wore a low-neck dress with short sleeves, a calf-length skirt and silk stockings just above the knee. And in 1934, Eileen Bennet Whittingstall became the first female to wear shorts on Centre Court.

Marbella council makes a splash over plans to fine holidaymakers who pee in the sea

By James Badcock

MARBELLA has announced it will fine beachgoers who urinate in the sea €750 (£635) for anti-social behaviour.

According to a new decree passed by Marbella council, "physiological evacuation in the sea and on the beach" will be considered an anti-social act and a breach of local regulations subject to a fine, with repeat offenders liable to pay a €1,500 penalty.

The move has been met with ridicule in Spain, with commentators pointing out that it is almost impossible to enforce. Nacho Abad, a Spanish TV presenter, admitted to urinating in the sea and offered viewers advice on how

to do so, suggesting they should pull down their swimwear before doing so.

"I recommend doing it that way, otherwise your swimsuit smells terrible," Mr Abad said on his *En Boca de Todos* daytime show on the Cuatro TV channel.

"Who is going to realise someone is taking a leak, the jellyfish?" joked one beachgoer in Marbella interviewed by Cuatro.

Other tougher rules in Marbella's new decree include a ban on dogs swimming in the sea outside of specific dog-friendly areas of the beach.

Marbella is not the first Spanish seaside resort to attempt to stop people attending calls of nature amid the

waves. In 2022 the city council in Vigo, Galicia, passed regulations including the same €750 fine as Marbella for anyone caught relieving themselves in the sea.

It is not clear whether anyone has been hauled up under such a rule.

Smoking while sunbathing has also been targeted by local authorities in recent years, with Barcelona's city beaches and others in the Balearic Islands having become smoke-free zones in recent years.

There is still no nationwide ban on smoking in public open-air spaces in Spain. Most resorts punish anyone leaving cigarette butts or any other litter on the sand.

Royal Society of Literature in dumbing down row after lowering bar for entry

By India McTaggart
ENTERTAINMENT CORRESPONDENT

THE Royal Society of Literature (RSL) has been accused of weakening its criteria for fellows in an attempt to become more inclusive.

The 200-year-old organisation, founded by George IV in 1820 to "reward literary merit and excite literary talent" and which has the Queen as a patron, has been criticised for its management's attempts to change its time-honoured fellowship system.

In a letter signed by former presidents Dame Marina Warner and Colin Thubron, seen by *The Times*, the society is accused of diluting its fellowship

requirement of two works of "outstanding literary merit". It states there are "ongoing misgivings about some aspects of the RSL's management" and signatories have renewed demands for an extraordinary general meeting.

It comes after the RSL, whose former members include Henry James, W B Yeats, Thomas Hardy and T S Eliot, faced controversy in 2020 when it stated its intention to allow the public to choose its fellows in an effort to become less "formidably elitist".

Historically, fellows were elected by current fellows, and must have published two works of literary merit. Nominations must be seconded by an RSL fellow, then presented to the RSL coun-

cil, which holds a vote. Writers such as Philip Hensher have questioned the more inclusive approach, saying some authors benefitting are "expensively educated and privileged [and] not very good".

Don Paterson, a writer and poet, asked Molly Rosenberg, the RSL director, to explain "how some (often indisputably talented) writers who gained their fellowship [via the new scheme] apparently managed this without two works of 'outstanding literary merit'".

In a statement, the society told *The Times* the requirements for fellowship "have not changed, nor will they, and the new fellowship election process is in keeping with our constitution".

Labour 'plotting £15bn tax raid' after big win

Pensions, capital gains and inheritance all easy targets if Labour Party achieves landslide, warns Citi

By Szu Ping Chan

RACHEL REEVES will launch a £15-billion tax raid on pensions, capital gains and inheritance this autumn if Labour wins a supermajority, a leading City forecaster has warned.

Analysts at the investment bank Citi said the shadow chancellor was likely to bow to demands for higher public spending, adding that Labour could extend a stealth raid on workers' pay packets if it won the election.

Benjamin Nabarro, its chief UK economist, said Labour would "ultimately tax and spend more than the current baseline", warning that the "rot" of low growth in the UK economy had become

entrenched by a wave of post-crisis regulation.

It said the next five years were likely to lead to a "painful, but also probably unavoidable" path to higher taxes under Labour.

Mr Nabarro said making big reductions to reliefs on pension contributions, inheritance tax and capital gains were easy targets for the party, raising up to £8 billion a year alone amid widespread fears that Ms Reeves is plotting a fresh raid on retirement pots.

Mr Nabarro said: "We therefore expect some further tightening in the autumn."

"The most likely revenue candidates could be changes in pension contribution relief after Rachel Reeves ruled out changes in the lifetime allowance, reform to capital gains and changes to inheritance tax. These are in addition to revenue changes in Labour's manifesto."

Ms Reeves has repeatedly refused to

'We would not rule out changes to various tax thresholds – including income tax'

rule out an increase in capital gains tax but insisted Labour has "no plans" to increase the levy.

Labour has ruled out increasing income tax, National Insurance and VAT but senior party figures have repeatedly failed during the campaign to rule out other tax rises.

Mr Nabarro said he believed Labour could be plotting other tax rises. "Wider reforms – such as changes to council tax – will probably take longer. We would not rule out changes to various tax thresholds – including income tax. But in total, we think a total tightening of £15 billion in an October budget is not an unreasonable base case here."

Jeremy Hunt, the current Chancellor, has already presided over a six-year freeze in income tax thresholds that will drag millions of people into higher tax bands by the end of the decade.

Citi issued its analysis days after a leaked recording revealed Labour is considering an inheritance tax raid to

"redistribute" wealth if it gets into power.

Darren Jones, the shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, suggested that higher death duties would be used to tackle "inter-generational inequality".

Pat McFadden, Labour's national campaign coordinator, failed to rule out such a move yesterday.

He told *Good Morning Britain*: "From that moment we've said that nothing in our manifesto requires us to raise any taxes beyond the very specific things that we've set out in the manifesto, and that remains the position on this as with anything else."

Bim Afolami, economic secretary to the Treasury, said: "Labour are plotting a hidden tax raid that is not in their manifesto and if they are given a supermajority on Thursday they will be free to impose it."

Citi noted that even a Conservative majority was likely to involve "some [fiscal] tightening" but this would come

GENERAL ELECTION 2024

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"in fits and bursts". Warning that the UK's tax and spending outlook remained "dark", Mr Nabarro added that Labour would also have to increase defence spending, putting further pressure on Whitehall budgets.

"Demand for additional spending remains significant. In recent years, performance indicators for the public sector have deteriorated."

"Metrics such as waiting times for A&E, elective surgery, or the gap between reported offences and prosecutions have all widened," he said.

"Other historical supports such as trend reductions in defence spending are also likely to reverse – we think any government will now likely increase defence spending to 2.5 per cent GDP by 2030."

Citi also warned that the end of an era of ultra-low interest rates and cheap public borrowing for the UK would also keep borrowing and therefore Britain's debt burden high.

Fears private healthcare will face levies to fund the NHS

By Charlotte Gifford

LABOUR could increase taxes on private healthcare as well as education to raise millions for the NHS, analysts have said.

They warned the party could revive Jeremy Corbyn's 2017 pledge to increase a levy known as insurance premium tax (IPT) if it wins the general election.

In a surprise appearance on Tuesday, Boris Johnson said that attacking private healthcare would be on Sir Keir Starmer's agenda in government.

"Labour are so cocky that they're barely concealing their agenda anymore," said the former prime minister at a rally in central London.

"And we can see what it is: racking up taxes on pensions, on property, persecuting private enterprise, attacking private education and private healthcare, with all the pointless extra burden that will place on the taxpayer."

Wes Streeting, the shadow health secretary, says the Labour Party has "no plans" to introduce VAT on private healthcare. But experts said tax rises for those choosing to go private were "perfectly possible" under a Labour government and the move could raise £550 million a year for the NHS.

Brian Walters, of insurance broker Regency Health, said: "Jeremy Corbyn proposed to increase this tax (IPT) from 12 per cent to 20 per cent in the run-up to the 2017 general election and, although this hasn't been reprised by Keir Starmer, there is a worrying parallel with Labour's private school policy."

Tackling NHS delays could reduce the vast numbers of patients going private but this is likely to require a huge cash injection, he added.

Scott Harwood, of accountancy firm RSM, said: "Given the similarity in demographics, the Labour Party might look at private healthcare in the same way they view private schools. If they decide to tax both, it could increase government revenue."

Introduced in 1994, IPT has been described as Britain's "hidden-in-plain-sight" tax because many people do not realise they pay it. In 2023-24, Britons paid £8.15 billion in IPT, up 11.4 per cent year on year as insurance premiums and demand for private healthcare surged due to NHS backlogs.



A lot to chew on Rishi Sunak waits as Becky Holt, Britain's "most tattooed mum", appears on ITV's *This Morning*. Later, the Prime Minister said his favourite meal was a sandwich, though on election nights he likes pork pie. Ms Holt called Mr Sunak "gorgeous" and said she would "love to give him a good sandwich".

Opposition will hit the ground running and delay recess to rush through policies

By Amy Gibbons
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR will delay MPs' summer recess if it wins the election to give more time to set out the party's first steps, Sir Keir Starmer has confirmed.

The Labour leader said it "seems obvious" the party will need to "extend" the parliamentary timetable ahead of the summer break to help with a slew of radical policy pledges including boosting hospital appointments, recruiting more teachers and launching a new "border security command" to tackle the small boats crisis.

It was reported on Tuesday Labour was planning to push back the summer recess, which was due to start on July 23,

until the end of the month. Sir Keir confirmed yesterday there would be a delay, saying: "How much legislation will be through by the end of July is questionable because the timetable is very tight,

'The timetable is very tight, although it seems obvious to me that we'll have to extend it'

although it seems obvious to me that we'll have to extend the timetable."

If Labour wins on July 4, some of Sir Keir's first tasks will involve choosing his Cabinet and working on the King's Speech, which sets out the govern-

ment's legislative agenda. Jonathan Ashworth, the shadow paymaster general, has said Rishi Sunak's Rwanda scheme would be scrapped "on day one", while Sir Keir has said he will kick-start reforms to the planning system "straight away". The Labour leader has also pledged that his plan to impose VAT on private school fees would be rolled out immediately.

Asked about his plans on a visit to Wales, Sir Keir said: "I've set out what the first steps will be that we will be working on, so you can expect action on the 40,000 appointments in hospitals and the recruitment of the teachers that we need, the police that we need on our streets, the setting up of GB Energy, the border security command."

Starmer will not rewrite Equality Act's definition of 'sex' to protect women

By Daniel Martin
DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

SIR KEIR STARMER has refused to rewrite the Equality Act to protect women, despite changing his view on whether biological men should be banned from using female lavatories.

The Labour leader attempted to clarify his party's stance after a week of confusion when he said on Monday that he believed trans women with a gender recognition certificate should not be able to use women's facilities.

A week earlier, his education spokeswoman had refused eight times to answer the question. The Tories say that for public bodies to protect women, the Equality Act must be rewritten to

make it clear that "sex" in the legislation means "biological sex" and not the gender with which a person identifies.

This would make it clear that public bodies can stop trans women entering women's lavatories or changing rooms, as well as preventing them from joining all-female sports teams.

At the moment the Equality Act, written in 2010, just uses the word "sex". But since then, with the rise of gender ideology, the word has become ambiguous.

When Sir Keir was asked whether Labour would change the Equality Act in the light of his recent change of heart, he said: "I don't think the Equality Act does need to be amended in that regard." A Tory source said that if the Equality Act was working, then nurses

would not be being forced to change in a room with a biological man.

"Keir Starmer is embarrassing himself going round and round in circles on this," the source said. "He has no idea and will just say whatever he thinks is the easiest thing to get him out of a tight spot. JK Rowling knows it. Labour MP Rosie Duffield knows it. Keir Starmer cannot be trusted on these issues."

Rowling, the Harry Potter author who was a Labour donor, has said she cannot vote for Sir Keir's party until it changes its stance on single-sex spaces.

Sir Keir made the comments amid reports that Labour could bring in Harriet Harman, the former deputy leader, to be chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

We will begin the hard work to make our streets safer from day one

Commentary

By Yvette Cooper

"THERE'S just no respect anymore." Those were the words of a businesswoman I spoke to in North Wales. Like so many, she was deeply frustrated about crime and antisocial behaviour in her town centre, and the lack of local police to help turn it around. Today as millions cast their vote in the election, the choice is clear – more of the same chaos and decline with the Conservative Government, or change with Labour. The

Conservatives' record on law and order is grim. Ninety per cent of crimes go unsolved. Arrests have halved since 2010. Despite ministers' promises to reverse their own police cuts, there are 10,000 fewer neighbourhood police on the streets. Chaos in the criminal justice system – including long court delays and the failure to build promised prisons – is making things worse. After 14 years of Conservative Government, more criminals are being let off and more victims are being badly let down.

Crimes that hit at the heart of local communities have increased sharply in the past two years but the Government is showing no leadership. Town centre criminal damage has risen. Street crime has shot up and mobile phone

snatch thefts have near doubled in a year. Shoplifting has soared. Yet shopworkers say that nothing is done.

Serious violence has risen, too, with knife crime up by 80 per cent in seven years. Some young people talk about carrying a knife in the same way as carrying a phone. Three years after the murder of Sarah Everard which should have been a watershed moment, we've seen little progress on tackling violence against women and girls.

This can't go on. If the Conservatives are rewarded at the ballot box today, nothing will change.

Labour is determined to put law and order at the heart of what we do. We will start by rebuilding neighbourhood policing with our Community Policing Guarantee, putting 13,000

neighbourhood officers and PCSOs back on Britain's streets and a named officer for every community. We've set out a fully funded plan based on the work of the independent Police Foundation to save up to £400 million on wasteful contracts and duplication across 43 police forces, putting money back into the front line. We will work with neighbourhood police to curb antisocial

Labour wants a named Pc for every community

behaviour, with powers to tackle off-road bikes and town centre crime.

Tackling knife crime must become a mission, not just for Government but for us all. That means laws to stop dangerous weapons being sold online, including sanctions for tech execs who don't comply. We will set up a bold Young Futures programme to prevent young people being drawn into crime, with 100 youth hubs and youth mentors in A&E,

custody suites and pupil referral units. Time once again to be tough on crime and tough on its causes.

Nor can we tolerate the persistent violence against women and girls where too little is done to stop domestic abuse or to bring sex offenders to justice. Labour will put rape and domestic abuse specialists in every police force. And we will act to drive up police standards.

Safety on our streets matters too much to continue with the drift and incompetence the Conservative Government embodies. If Labour is elected today, the hard work to rebuild respect, to restore law and order and to make people feel safe on our streets again will begin on day one of a new government.



End-of-the-pier approach as Farage boxes clever

Sketch



By Madeline Grant

Great entertainer comes out swinging in Essex, with outrage to the fore and a nicely lubricated audience

NIGEL FARAGE darted around in a boxing ring with heavyweight champ Derek Chisora. On the outside of the building the words ONWAY UNTS hung perilously against the grey Clayton skies. No, you're not having a stroke: welcome to the mad final day of the election campaign.

Conway Units was the location, a storage facility on the outskirts of Clacton with a boxing gym in it. Unfortunately the Clacton breeze had removed some of the letters and so it read ONWAY UNTS, like the sign at Fawley Towers. On the way, we passed scores of Reform UK posters and enough St George's flags to give Emily Thornberry an aneurysm.

Inside, every inch of wall was emblazoned with motivational posters. This was the gym "where winners train and losers complain", which was on brand for Farage; pure Trumpian syntax. (Presumably though, for balance, those with boxing-related head injuries communicate only *à la* Biden.)

As Mr Farage arrived, he was met by the eerie sight of a cavalcade of children sparring into midair. The photographers who flocked to him studiously ignored the ghost-fighting under-16s. Sounds of clacking cameras mingled with the grunts of the young boxers and the trainer barking out orders. A confused German TV anchor looked over and wondered what on earth was happening.

Farage, in his Mr Toad blazer, tried on some boxing gloves whilst sandwiched between a man who was about 7ft tall and wearing a cavernous white hood and Derek himself who, in an elaborate metaphor for Reform's campaign, was wearing what looked like a Union Jack hachimaki, the kamikaze headband, along with a boxing robe that said "Reform UK: Nigel's security". Banzai!

Things grew even more surreal at Farage's final event of the day – a rally at Clacton pier. It wasn't quite as well-attended as the previous one last month, but there must have been hundreds, if not over a thousand people milling around. Better numbers, certainly, than you can imagine other politicians mustering at present.

Mr Farage rolled up in a giant armoured car to *Without Me* by Eminem. "Nigel! Nigel! Nigel!" yelled the crowd as his head suddenly popped out of the rooftop like a perma-tanned jack-in-a-box. People accuse us of importing US politics; today Nigel was doing it without any shame.

It wasn't clear whether the armoured car had Russian number plates but it would be unlikely to assuage any moderate fears about his agenda. But moderate fears did not appear to be top of Uncle Nige's agenda: we heard about immigration (obviously but, alas given the record of the other parties,



unusually, about the calamity of public services and how our schools train young people to hate the country they are from.

The crowd drank it in, literally and metaphorically. Earlier on, the local pub Spoons had been packed to the gunnels with people in Reform rosettes getting a few drinks in before the rally. Some had clearly had more than a few. I was standing near a particularly well-lubricated super-fan who bellowed or heckled his agreement to pretty much everything Farage said. "We neeeded you!" he'd yell.

Mr Farage's performance was pure panto, featuring audience participation and numerous comedy heroes and

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage spars with British heavyweight boxer Derek Chisora during his visit to a boxing gym in Clacton, Essex. The two later shared a joke, right



villains. The first great "Booo!" of the evening came for the state broadcaster, which Mr Farage described as "the real enemy". ("F--- the BBC!" yelled the inebriated super-fan.) There was heckling and hissing for Rishi Sunak, for the D-Day debacle, for Keir Starmer.

"Talk about boring, God help us," sighed Farage, for whom end-of-the-pier entertainment comes naturally. By and large, attendees were drawn from the ranks of the older and the very young which, ironically, makes Reform the only party whose rallies mirror their voting demographics. A jarring mixture of tracksuited 17-year-olds bearing Reform placards and tweedy gents from the Shires. Inevitably a few skinhead

types were there, but by and large what was notable about the crowd was that they seemed normal people, not the gang of hand-picked wonks and activists who tend to accompany Rishi and Keir. Doubtless some will describe them in scaremongering terms as heralds of the Right and monstrous exceptions to general civility. In truth they are neither: not necessarily angry, but people who feel sidelined because, well, they are.

As a Labour supermajority dawns near with a grim inevitability, it is likely that things will only get worse for the good people of Clacton. Whether Uncle Nige MP can assuage this in any way remains to be seen...

A Starmer landslide would be a disaster for Nato, warns Shapps

By Daniel Martin
DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

LABOUR'S refusal to commit to spending 2.5 per cent of national income on defence would be a disaster for Nato, Grant Shapps has warned.

The Defence Secretary said it would provide evidence to Vladimir Putin that the West was "throwing in the towel" over Ukraine.

He also suggested that, further down the line, it could give a newly-elected president Donald Trump the impression that European countries were unwilling to fund their own defence – one of his previous criticisms of Nato.

Security has become a major dividing line between the Tories and Labour, with Rishi Sunak attacking Sir Keir Starmer's party for refusing to match his pledge to increase defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2030. Mr Shapps, who is battling to keep his seat

of Welwyn Hatfield, said it was still not too late to stop "Starmergeddon", saying it would be "dangerous" for the country for Labour to have unchecked power.

But most polls predict that tomorrow's election will lead to a huge majority. In an interview with *The Telegraph*, Mr Shapps said: "I'm genuinely concerned about this. I know Keir Starmer is going round saying the right thing, but that is different to taking action and committing the money that is needed. He has not committed to 2.5 per cent

Grant Shapps says he is 'genuinely concerned'



with a timeline if he gets into office on Friday. It means that on his first day, he will be asked what budget he needs to cut next year: should it be spending on defence? Spending on Nato?

"It will be embarrassing when we have already told Nato's secretary general Jens Stoltenberg that the UK will commit to 2.5 per cent by 2030, and then as one of the first acts of the new Labour government be to renege on this pledge. It will send a very strong signal to the rest of Nato, as well as being damaging to Britain. It's also naive in a dangerous world."

He added: "Putin is look-

ing for the West to throw in the towel, and he was clear this would never happen under the Conservatives.

"Not having a timetable for 2.5 per cent takes away from our moral leadership and our military leadership, and it would be a disaster for the alliance for the government to renege on the pledge. All this would be in a context where Trump and others will look at Europe's desire to contribute to their defence. Britain should be leading by example, helping to bounce others into increasing their contribution."

Mr Shapps pointed to defence and pensions as reasons to back his party tomorrow and avoid heralding in a so-called supermajority under Labour. He said Labour's refusal to rule out a so-called retirement tax was "scaring the life" out of pensioners in his constituency.

Sir Keir has refused to back the Tory pledge to bring in a "triple lock plus"

for pensioners, which states that older people will not have to pay income tax on their state pension. Forecasts show that the state pension will soon rise above the threshold at which people start to pay income tax.

"Something that comes up on every doorstep is Labour's failure to back our

'I tell people that Keir will tax their home, their job, their car and their pension. This last one really bites'

triple lock plus plan," he said. "It is scaring the life out of pensioners in this country. Pensioners will be trapped into paying income tax on it, and it shows that the Conservatives are the only party who will protect pensioners.

"They haven't forgotten 75p, they haven't forgotten how Labour raided

their private pensions. I tell people that Keir will tax their home, their job, their car and their pension – and it's the last one that really bites."

Gordon Brown faced criticism as chancellor in 1999 when he only put up the state pension by 75p. Two years earlier, he scrapped tax relief on dividends that pension funds received on their investments.

With polls predicting Labour to win as many as 430 seats on Thursday, Mr Shapps said: "It is in no one's interest to see unchecked power. The polls show a majority which is not like Boris's, it's bigger than Blair's. It would be a blank cheque for the Labour leader to cause havoc.

"I think that is a dangerous place for a country to be in, but it's not too late to stop Starmageddon.

"You can still stop it tomorrow and ensure a proper opposition or better still a Conservative government."

Labour sends activists to target Muslim-heavy areas

By Charles Hymas
HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

LABOUR is deploying activists in seats with large Muslim populations in an attempt to stave off challenges by pro-Palestine candidates.

The party is telling volunteers to stay and campaign in 23 seats where Muslims make up more than 10 per cent of the population, according to a website where activists put in their postcode and are advised where to focus their efforts. It is also deploying activists from outside the area in two seats that it won in 2019 in Oldham East and Saddleworth, which is 21 per cent Muslim, and neighbouring Rochdale, where Left-wing firebrand George Galloway is running on a pro-Palestine ticket for his Workers Party of Britain.

Sir Keir Starmer has been criticised by some traditional Labour supporters for only gradually shifting the party's

position towards supporting a ceasefire in Gaza. His stance led to 10 front-benchers quitting in November.

Since its council losses in some Muslim areas, the party has explicitly said it was committed to recognising Palestine as a state, though many feel it should go further by backing an end to arms sales to Israel. In the May local elections, Labour lost control of Oldham council after ceding seats to three independent councillors who ran on a pro-Palestine platform. In Oldham East, Workers Party candidate Shanaz Saddique is eating into the Labour vote, while Nigel Farage's Reform UK is taking chunks out of the Tory vote. Ukip got nearly 20 per cent of the vote in the traditionally Labour seat in 2015.

Ms Saddique told the *Financial Times* she believed there was a credible chance she would win the seat, noting that losing control of the council was a "huge slap in the face" for Labour.



The vote boat

A yacht covered in slogans for the Reform party has been parked at Sir Keir Starmer's London home. Some of the messages claim the Labour leader is planning a "Ulez cash grab across Britain" and urges voters to support Reform UK. It is not clear if Reform was responsible. *The Telegraph* understands the incident has been reported to the police as intimidatory.

General election

Waving goodbye Big-name Tories on the way out

Grant Shapps
Welwyn Hatfield

Current majority
21%

Expected defeat margin
15.7%



Simon Hart
Caerfyrddin

Current majority
18.4%

Expected defeat margin
17.9%

Michael Tomlinson
Dorset & North Poole

Current majority
30.4%

Expected defeat margin
16.1%

Johnny Mercer
Plymouth Moor View

Current majority
29.2%

Expected defeat margin
13%



David TC Davies
Monmouth

Current majority
21%

Expected defeat margin
15.7%

Alex Chalk
Cheltenham

Current majority
1.7%

Expected defeat margin
37.8%

Victoria Prentis
Banbury

Current majority
26.7%

Expected defeat margin
7%



Jeremy Hunt
Godalming and Ash

Current majority
14.6%

Expected defeat margin
15.8%



Final polls signal a Labour super-majority and the extinction of the Tory big beasts

MRP surveys make dire reading for Conservatives, who are set to be left with a rump of just over 100 MPs

By Nick Gutteridge
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR is set to clinch an unprecedented super-majority as the Tories crash to their worst ever result, the final megapolls of the election show.

Three MRP surveys released yesterday afternoon all predict that Sir Keir Starmer is on course to enter No 10 with a majority of more than 200 MPs.

In contrast, the Tories would be reduced to a rump of just over 100 MPs – a historic low for the party – as a slew of Cabinet ministers lose their seats.

The final polls paint a dire picture for Rishi Sunak and come after one of his own top team admitted that Labour was destined for a huge victory.

Mel Stride, the Work and Pensions Secretary, warned that Sir Keir was on course to win “the largest majority any party has ever achieved”.

MRP surveys – standing for multilevel regression and post-stratification – involve taking a much larger sample size than for normal polls and using a formula to calculate projected results for all 650 seats. They are considered more

reliable than conventional polls and have correctly forecast recent elections, including the surprise 2017 hung parliament.

Each of the final three megapolls of the campaign makes for grim reading for the Government.

More in Common
Result: Lab 430, Con 126, Lib Dem 52, SNP 16

More in Common’s survey, which was carried out for *The News Agents* podcast, finds that Labour is set for a landslide majority of 210.

The Tories would be reduced to just 126 seats, with Cabinet ministers including Jeremy Hunt, Grant Shapps and Johnny Mercer being ousted.

The Liberal Democrats would have their best night since 2010, returning 52 MPs. In Scotland the scandal-hit SNP would suffer heavy losses, with its representation in Westminster slashed by two-thirds from 48 to 16.

Reform would only win two seats despite gaining 13 per cent of the vote, with Nigel Farage triumphing in Clacton and Lee Anderson holding on in Ashfield.

The poll is the third MRP published by More in Common and shows how the Tory position has deteriorated throughout the election campaign.

In the first survey published on June 3, the Conservatives were set to win 180

seats, whilst in the second, released on June 19, they were on 155. Labour has been the main party to profit, with its projected number of MPs rising from 382 in the first survey to 406 in the second and now 430.

Focaldata
Result: Lab 444, Con 108, Lib Dem 57, SNP 15

Focaldata released the second MRP poll which showed the Conservative suffering an even worse result, hanging on to only 108 seats.

The pollster predicted that Labour would return 444 MPs to Parliament, which would give Sir Keir a super-ma-

majority of 238. On a cataclysmic night for the Tories, the silver lining would be leadership contenders Penny Mordaunt and James Cleverly clinging on.

Like the More in Common survey, Focaldata’s also predicts a surge for Sir Ed Davey’s Lib Dems, poised to win 57 seats. Its wins would mostly come across the Blue Wall and would include taking the constituencies of Mr Hunt and Alex Chalk, the Justice Secretary.

The SNP would be reduced to 15 seats while Reform would win two, though according to this survey Mr Farage would suffer defeat in Clacton.

It is the second MRP poll that Focaldata has published. The first, on June

24, showed the Tories on 210 seats and Labour on 450.

YouGov
Result: Lab 431, Con 102, Lib Dem 72, SNP 18

The final MRP poll was published by YouGov and it is the worst of the three for the Tories, who are projected to barely scrape into three figures.

According to the pollsters, the Conservatives will win just 102 seats, leaving Labour with a majority of 212 – the largest for any party since 1832. Sir Keir would sit at the head of 431 MPs, the largest number in Labour history.

It would be the worst ever result for the Tories, with a dozen Cabinet ministers losing their seats under this projection, including Ms Mordaunt.

Mr Sunak’s party would be squeezed from both sides, with the Lib Dems winning 72 seats and Reform UK taking three constituencies.

The SNP would be reduced to 18 seats, with all three polls predicting a bad night for the nationalists.

It is the third MRP of the campaign published by YouGov and yet again the trend shows that Tory support has ebbed away over the past six weeks.

In the first survey released on June 3, the party was on track to win 140 seats, whilst in the second on June 19 it was projected to hold on to 108.

Meanwhile, *Telegraph* analysis

reveals that while a majority of people polled appear to want change, far fewer truly want Labour.

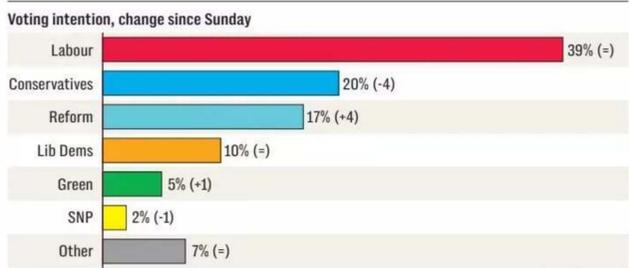
More than one in five voters (22 per cent) plan to vote tactically today, according to YouGov. This is especially true of Labour’s backers – almost a third of whom (29 per cent) would rather vote for someone else, but will not do so in order to prevent another party from winning (almost always the Tories).

The pollster found the party’s share of national voting intention to be more inflated by tactical voters than any other. YouGov’s final MRP poll handed the party 431 seats. However, if all of the party’s tactically minded supporters actually voted for their first preference, this tally falls to 310. The Conservatives’ seats, meanwhile, go up from 102 to 188.

Among those voting Labour for tactical reasons, the largest share (42 per cent) would rather be voting Green, with 34 per cent for the Liberal Democrats and 5 per cent for Reform. In other words, just 71 per cent of those likely to cast a ballot for Labour actually want the Labour candidate to win.

Even after adding to this the 16 per cent of people voting strategically for other parties in their constituency who would really rather vote Labour – for example, for the Lib Dems where they stand a better chance of beating the Conservatives in the South West – very few may wake up satisfied on July 5.

Red letter day looms for Labour



I’m ready to govern, says Starmer as Sunak urges voters to ‘save Britain’

By Ben Riley-Smith, Amy Gibbons and Dominic Penna

SIR KEIR STARMER has said he is ready to govern as the final opinion polls predicted a historic majority for the Labour party at the general election.

Britain will go to vote today with a string of opinion polls pointing to a Labour majority in the House of Commons greater even than Sir Tony Blair won in 1997, when New Labour swept into power.

As campaigning drew to a close last night, Sir Keir, the Labour leader, declared he was “ready for government”.

Sir Keir said: “Nothing is going to be easy, almost everything is in a pretty poor state, but we have to be ready for it and I’m confident we will be.”

“So while we have not been getting ahead of ourselves, we have been preparing hard on the basis that this needs to be hitting the ground running on day one, which is what we intend to do.”

Labour was predicted a House of Commons majority of 210 seats by pollsters More in Common and 238 seats by

Focaldata. The final YouGov poll predicted a majority of 212, which would represent the largest majority won by a party since 1832. In 1997, Sir Tony won a majority of 179 seats.

The final *Telegraph*-Savanta poll of the campaign indicated a similar result, with Labour on 39 per cent of the vote, the Conservatives on 20 per cent, Reform on 17 per cent and the Liberal Democrats on 10 per cent.

Rishi Sunak last night warned voters not to hand Labour “unchecked power”, claiming his Cabinet had not given up despite Mel Stride, the Tory Work and Pensions Secretary, all but conceding victory yesterday morning, saying Labour appeared to be on course for the biggest majority in history.

Mr Sunak argued that the result was not yet a “forgone conclusion”.

In a final message to *Telegraph* readers, the Prime Minister said there was still a chance to stop Sir Keir from winning a “super-majority” and having “carte blanche” to change Britain.

Mr Sunak said: “The five years ahead will be the most transformational for a

generation. They bring great risks but great opportunities too if we take the bold action to seize them.”

“To do that, we need a government with a clear plan to build for a brighter future for the whole country. Despite 14 years to come up with ideas, Labour have no plan for what they’d do with power, beyond hiking taxes.”

“*Telegraph* readers know the Con-

Have your say What to do to ensure your postal vote is counted

What should I do if I have not received my postal vote? If you are yet to receive a ballot in the post, you will still be able to vote in the election.

Anyone in this situation must request a replacement postal ballot pack from their local authority

in person, which can be done until 5pm today.

To do this, you will be required to show ID at your local authority’s election office – not a polling station – usually located at their main council building or town hall. If able to attend an election office, most local

authorities offer voters the option of completing their replacement ballot on site and handing it back immediately to ensure it is counted.

Voters may also nominate someone to collect this replacement pack on their behalf and one person can drop off up to five

completed postal vote packs for friends and family.

Information on where to find your constituency’s election office is on the Electoral Commission website.

Can I return my postal vote to a polling station? If you are still

concerned about your postal vote being counted, voters may hand it in to their local polling station or ask a trusted person to do so.

If opting for the latter, whoever returns your vote will be asked to complete a form at the polling station.

The deadline for

delivering a postal vote by hand will be before the polls close at 10pm and this is provided you have already received the ballot.

Is it too late to post my vote? Yes. Royal Mail set a deadline of yesterday to ensure votes arrive on time.

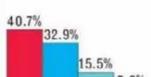
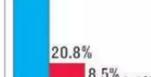
Labour with no restrictions and zero accountability. With such a majority, they would have a blank cheque to raise tax. They would have carte blanche to expose our children to dangerous gender ideology and re-enter EU by the back door, surrendering our Brexit freedoms and making us a rule-taker from Brussels once more.

“Don’t let anyone tell you result of this election is a foregone conclusion. As few as 130,000 votes are set to determine the outcome. So vote Conservative today as the last opportunity we may have to stop Starmer’s super-majority taxes.”

Mr Sunak also used a closing campaign speech in Southampton to declare “we have 24 hours to save Britain from a Labour government”.

Sir Keir issued his own final pitch to the county: “Today, Britain can begin a new chapter. An age of hope and opportunity after 14 years of chaos and decline. This is a great nation, with boundless potential. The British people deserve a government that matches their ambition. Today is the chance to begin the work of rebuilding Britain with Labour.”

Your all-night guide Key battlegrounds in race for No10

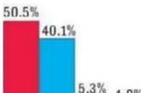
<p>Exit polls</p> <p>10pm</p> <p>Released as soon as polls close tonight, this survey of voters taken from 150 constituencies will give a strong indication of the likely overall result</p>	<p>1 Blyth and Ashington</p> <p>11.30pm</p> <p>New boundaries No previous data</p>  <p>A new constituency where veteran Labour MP Ian Lavery is seeking re-election, it is expected to be the first constituency to declare its result.</p>	<p>2 Houghton and Sunderland South</p> <p>11.45pm</p> <p>Labour majority 3,115 votes 2019 vote share</p>  <p>Represented for the past 14 years by shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson, who is defending a majority of 3,271. It may provide a guide as to what to expect in seats where Labour has small majorities.</p>	<p>3 Basildon and Billericay</p> <p>12.15am</p> <p>Conservative majority 20,412 votes 2019 vote share</p>  <p>There is the potential for an early shock in this traditionally safe Tory seat as Richard Holden, the Conservative Party chairman, finds out whether he has done enough to win after being parachuted in from North West Durham.</p>	<p>4 Swindon South</p> <p>12.30am</p> <p>New boundaries No previous data</p>  <p>Sir Robert Buckland, the former justice secretary, is also at risk of losing to Labour's Heidi Alexander, who needs a 5.7 percentage point swing to clinch the seat.</p>	<p>5 Rutherglen</p> <p>1am</p> <p>New boundaries No previous data</p> <p>The first results from Scotland will provide an early indication as to how the SNP may fare following a difficult couple of years for the party, which has seen it change first minister twice and tank in the polls.</p>
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24 Ilford North

6.30am

Labour majority
5,218 votes
2019 vote share

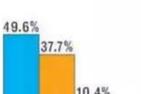


One of the very last batch of declarations will be in Ilford North where Wes Streeting, the shadow health secretary, is standing for Labour.

23 Wokingham

6am

Conservative majority
7,383 votes
2019 vote share



The Liberal Democrats have the potential to pull off a final upset in the true blue Tory heartland of Wokingham, which until this election was represented by Sir John Redwood, the head of the No 10 policy unit under Margaret Thatcher.

22 South West Norfolk

5.30am

New boundaries
No previous data

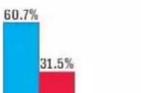


Traditionally among the safest Tory seats but it remains to be seen whether Liz Truss, the former prime minister, will be able to weather the storm.

21 Plymouth Moor View

5.15am

Conservative majority
12,897 votes
2019 vote share



After an ill-tempered battle with fellow veteran Luke Thomas, who is the Labour candidate, Johnny Mercer, the veterans' minister, will learn whether he still has the support of his constituents in Plymouth Moor View.

20 North East Somerset and Hanham

4.30am

New boundaries
No previous data

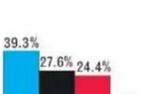


How the Liberal Democrats have fared will be increasingly obvious from the results in North East Somerset and Hanham, currently held by Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg

19 Ashfield

4.30am

Conservative majority
5,733 votes
2019 vote share

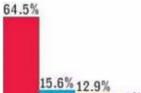


Reform's only current MP, Lee Anderson, a former deputy Tory chairman who crossed the floor in March following his suspension, is hoping the former mining town of Ashfield will stick with him after his change of allegiances.

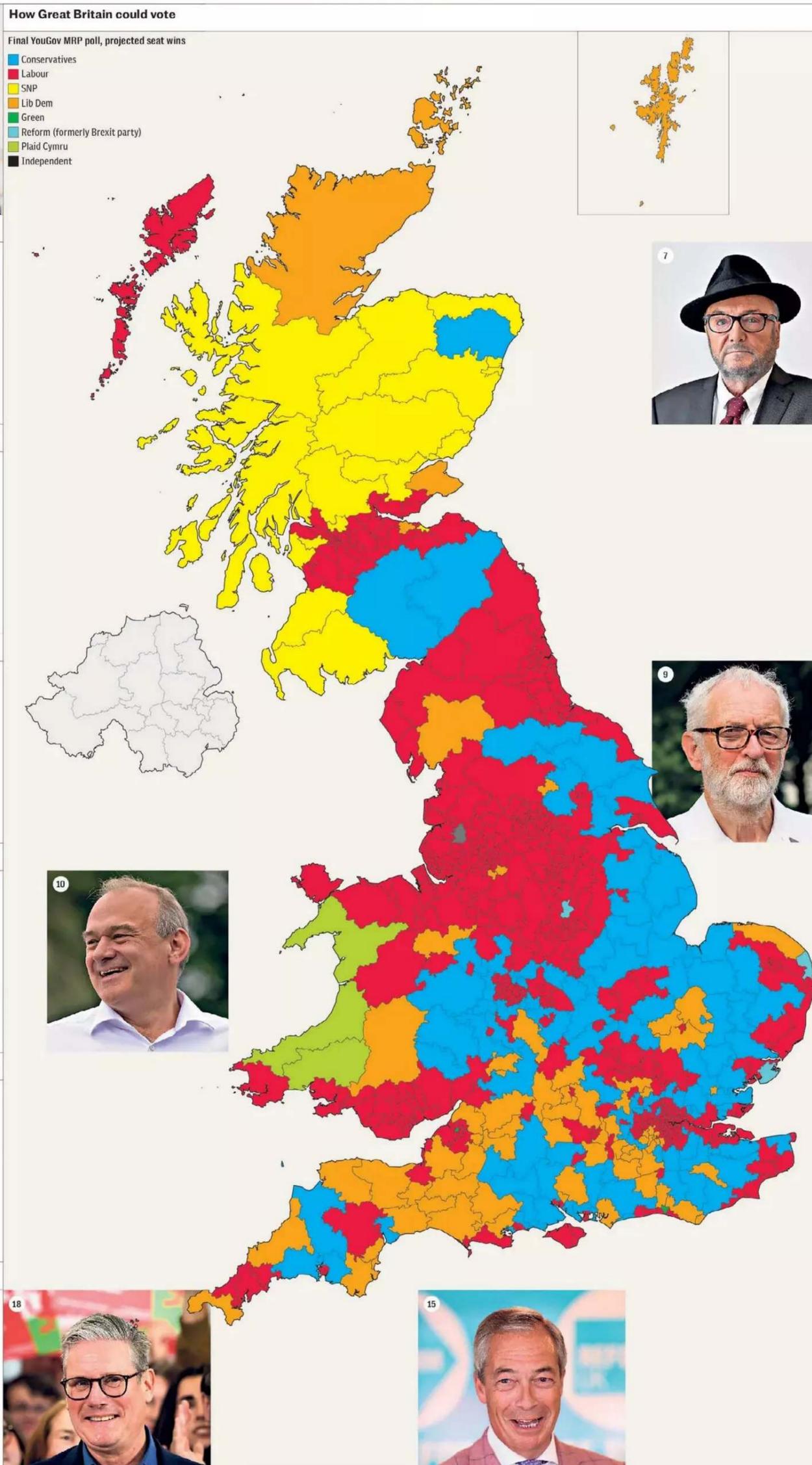
18 Holborn and St Pancras

4.15am

Labour majority
26,763 votes
2019 vote share



Sir Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, will find out how he has fared in Holborn and St Pancras, although his re-election in a safe Labour seat is expected to be a formality.



17 Birmingham Ladywood

4am

New boundaries
No previous data



Shabana Mahmood, the Labour MP in Birmingham Ladywood, has faced a backlash from voters over the party's stance on Gaza, and the results here will reveal how independent pro-Palestinian candidates have fared.

16 Boston and Skegness

4am

Conservative majority
25,621 votes
2019 vote share

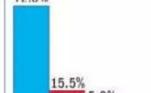


Richard Tice, the Reform chairman, is hoping to unseat former Tory minister Matt Warman by the seaside in Boston and Skegness.

15 Clacton

4am

Conservative majority
24,702 votes
2019 vote share



Reform UK leader Nigel Farage will hope he has won a seat in the Commons at the eighth time of trying as the result comes in for Clacton.

14 Richmond and Northallerton

4am

New boundaries
No previous data



Could we be in for the mother of all political upsets? Rishi Sunak could become the first ever sitting Prime Minister to lose their seat at a general election, so all eyes will be on the count.

6 North West Essex

2am

New boundaries
No previous data

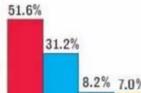


Currently represented by Kemi Badenoch, the Business Secretary and the bookmakers' favourite to succeed Rishi Sunak as Tory leader.

7 Rochdale

2.30am

Workers' Party majority
5,697 votes
2019 vote share

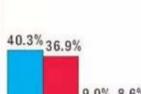


Workers' Party candidate George Galloway shocked Westminster by winning a by-election in February with a campaign heavily focused on Gaza. Labour, however, is hopeful that it can win the seat back.

8 Burnley

2.45am

Conservative majority
1,352 votes
2019 vote share

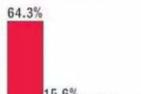


The results in Burnley, which returned a Conservative MP for the first time in 109 years in 2019, will provide an indication of how Mr Sunak's party is faring in the Red Wall seats that were so crucial to Boris Johnson's triumph.

9 Islington North

3am

Labour majority
26,188 votes
2019 vote share

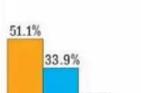


Jeremy Corbyn, the former Labour leader, will find out how he has fared against his old party as he stands as an independent in Islington North.

10 Kingston and Surbiton

3.15am

Lib Dem majority
10,489 votes
2019 vote share



Sir Ed Davey, the Liberal Democrat leader, will learn how he has performed in Kingston and Surbiton.

11 Bristol Central

3.15am

New boundaries
No previous data



Labour is projected to perform well nationally, but its shadow culture secretary Thangam Debbonaire faces a tense moment as the Greens seek to deliver an upset in her Bristol Central constituency.

12 Godalming and Ash

3.30am

New boundaries
No previous data

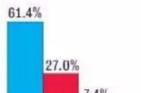


Jeremy Hunt, the Chancellor, will find out if he has done enough to keep his seat after facing a challenge from the Liberal Democrats.

13 Portsmouth North

3.30am

Conservative majority
15,780 votes
2019 vote share



Penny Mordaunt, the Leader of the Commons, is touted as a potential future Tory leader but faces a tight battle in her Portsmouth North constituency.

By Jordan Young and Rachel Slater

Gaiman accused of sex assault by two women

Good Omens writer denies claims by fan and nanny who were in consensual relationships with him

By Anita Singh
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

NEIL GAIMAN, the best-selling author, has denied allegations of sexual assault against two young women.

In an investigation for a Tortoise podcast co-hosted by Rachel Johnson, sister of Boris Johnson, two women claim that Gaiman engaged them in sado-masochistic acts and told them to call him "Master".

Gaiman strenuously denies the allegations and said all sex with the women – one a fan whom he met at a book signing, the other who briefly worked as the family nanny – was consensual.

The first woman said she was hired by Gaiman's then wife, the musician Amanda Palmer, in 2022 to look after the couple's son.

The woman, named Scarlett, claimed that Gaiman sexually assaulted her within hours of their first meeting, stripping naked and joining her in the bath. She was 22 and he was 61.

Gaiman said that the incident amounted to only "cuddling" and "making out", and that he had established consent for this.

On another occasion, Scarlett alleged that the sex between them "was so painful and so violent" that she lost consciousness.

"The pain was celestial," she said. When she asked him to stop, Scarlett said, "he laughed and said I needed to be punished, and used his belt on me." Gaiman denies the allegation.

The relationship continued for another month before Gaiman left New Zealand for the UK, the woman said.

During that time, she sent him numerous messages indicating that she consented to the sexual activity.

She also claimed that she was required to sign an NDA after she stopped working as the family's nanny.

The second woman, an American known only as K, was an 18-year-old fan of Gaiman's writing when she first met

him at a book signing in Florida in 2003. She maintained contact with him and a sexual relationship began when she was 22. He was then in his 40s.

K alleged that, during a trip to Cornwall in 2007, she told Gaiman that she did not want to engage in penetrative intercourse because she had a urinary tract infection. However, he went ahead and the act left her "screaming" in agony. Gaiman said the allegation is false.

K maintained friendly contact with Gaiman after their relationship ended in 2008 but told the podcast: "As I got older, I realised that 18-year-olds and 20-year-olds, when you're in your 40s, look like kids."

She added: "As the MeToo stuff became more nuanced, that was when I was like, wait a minute, something like that happened to me."

She did not report Gaiman to police.

'The pain was celestial... he laughed and said I needed to be punished, and used his belt on me'

Scarlett did in October 2022, eight months after her brief relationship with the author ended.

New Zealand police did not move forward with the investigation and did not interview Gaiman, although he told the podcast that he had offered to meet with officers.

The 63-year-old author is globally renowned for works including *The Sandman*, *American Gods* and *Good Omens*, as well as many popular works for children. His books have been adapted for film and television.

He and Palmer announced their split in 2022. Previously they had spoken of having an open marriage.

The investigation began after Scarlett got in touch with Rachel Johnson via Instagram and told her version of events.

Tortoise said that the investigation looked into "the greyest of grey areas when it comes to our sex lives – the area with the scope for genuine misinterpretation, but also the possibility of serious abuse".



Neil Gaiman is alleged to have engaged in rough intercourse with two women who claimed it amounted to sexual assault

Prime suspect in McCann case 'unlikely to face trial'

By Rob Hyde

THE main suspect in the Madeleine McCann case is unlikely to ever face trial for her disappearance after winning a new legal battle, his lawyers have said.

Christian Brückner won a bid to have an arrest warrant against him dropped in a separate ongoing sex offences trial.

The move is a technicality because Brückner remains behind bars, as he is serving a sentence for the rape of a 72-year-old American tourist in 2005.

However, his lawyers believe that the court decision to drop the warrant could be a sign that he will be acquitted at the sex crimes trial – and cast doubt on the prospect of there ever being a trial in the McCann case.

The warrant was cancelled at the request of the defence because there was no longer an "urgent suspicion" that Brückner committed the five offences, the court in Brunswick said in a statement.

Brückner, 41, is the man who German investigators believe abducted and killed McCann, then aged three, in Portugal in 2007.

The public prosecution office in Brunswick named Brückner as the prime suspect in the McCann case in 2020. But it still has not formally charged him as it searches for more evidence. Brückner has denied any involvement in the crime.

The 47 year-old, who is nearing the end of a seven-year sentence, is currently on trial at Brunswick regional court for five other offences which also took place in Portugal, including three rapes and two acts of exposing himself to children.

Philipp Marquort, defending, said that the lifting of the arrest warrant meant it was unlikely there would ever be a trial against his client in the case of McCann. The ongoing trial uses many of the same witnesses who would appear in that later trial and has been described as a "test run".

"The important difference the news makes is that we now know that he, our client, will be not found guilty of these sex offence charges," Marquort said.

"This is because if the court had decided to convict him for one, two, three, four or five of the charges, they could not have revoked the order of arrest. But instead, we are reaching the end of this trial, and all of the major evidence has been heard, and now the court made the decision to revoke the arrest warrant, which is a reflection of how lacking the evidence against our client is. And based on this, I believe they probably won't then even place any charges against my client in relation to the Maddie case."

A verdict in the ongoing trial is expected in the autumn.

American 'hitwoman' who flew to UK in hijab held in Armenia

By Patrick Sawyer and James Kilner

AN AMERICAN woman allegedly hired to take part in the assassination of a Birmingham businessman has been arrested by police in Armenia.

Aimee Betro went on the run within days of an alleged attempt on the life of Sikander Ali, a clothing store owner in September 2019.

She was detained in a dawn raid after being tracked down to a rented one-bedroom flat on the outskirts of Yerevan, the Armenian capital.

Armenian police said the 44-year-old, allegedly recruited by Mohammed Nazir, 30, and his father Mohammed Aslam, 56, to shoot Mr Ali, will be extradited to face criminal proceedings.

A police spokesman said: "Of course, she will be extradited to the UK as Armenia is a member of Interpol and is obligated to do so."

Nazir and Islam were both found guilty of conspiracy to murder at Birmingham Crown Court last month. They will be sentenced next month.

The hearing was told Nazir and Aslam had held a grudge against Mr Ali's family following a violent dispute at his boutique clothing store in Birmingham on July 21 2018. It resulted in the two men sustaining injuries and the shop windows being smashed.

Seeking revenge, the pair flew Betro from the United States to kill Mr Ali and his family, the court was told. She wore a hijab to disguise herself and stayed at a number of hotels in Birmingham, Derby, Brighton and London while she was in the UK.

On the morning of Sept 7, she



Aimee Betro went on the run after an alleged attempt on the life of a clothing store owner in Birmingham in 2019. She was arrested in a one-bed flat on outskirts of Yerevan, the Armenian capital

allegedly tried to shoot Mr Ali outside a house in Acocks Green, Birmingham, but the gun jammed, the court heard.

She later returned to the house by taxi and allegedly fired three shots at the property before ordering the driver to take her to a McDonald's in Bordesley Green. No one was injured.

Jurors were told that Betro fled back to her native Wisconsin two days later before going to ground.

Her mother, Jeanne Johnson, 62, appealed in *The Telegraph* for her

daughter to hand herself in, saying: "She has nowhere else to go. She's got to stop running."

It is understood a combination of background details in Betro's Instagram selfies and sunset photos taken from her living room window helped trace her to a gated housing complex on the northern outskirts of Yerevan.

It is thought that Armenian officers arrested her after acting on an extradition request submitted through Home Office channels by West Midlands Police.

Met officer arrested over rape claims

By Gwyn Wright

A METROPOLITAN Police firearms officer has been arrested on suspicion of rape and other offences, the force said last night.

The officer, who has not been named but is an inspector in the force's Specialist Crime Command, was arrested on June 24.

The Sun, which first reported the arrest, said the offences are alleged to have been committed over a 10-year period and that colleagues watched as the man was taken into custody at a firearms training base.

A source told the newspaper he was arrested at a base in Gravesend, Kent.

The officer was bailed until September pending further inquiries and has been suspended from duty.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) watchdog has been

'The offences are alleged to have taken place between 2013 and 2023. He has been bailed to return'

made aware of the arrest. The Met said: "A serving Met officer has been arrested on suspicion of rape and other offences."

"The officer, an inspector in the Met's Specialist Firearms Command, was

arrested on June 24. The offences are alleged to have taken place between 2013 and 2023.

"He was bailed to return in mid-September, pending further inquiries. He has been suspended from duty."

An IOPC spokesman told *The Sun*: "We received a mandatory conduct referral from the Metropolitan Police Service on 26 June 2024 following the arrest earlier that week of a Met officer on suspicion of multiple offences."

"After carefully considering the referral we decided, given the officer has already been arrested and interviewed by the Met's Directorate of Professional Standards, that the Met should continue with its investigation."

UK NEWS WEBSITE OF THE YEAR 2023 **The Telegraph** UK NEWS WEBSITE OF THE YEAR 2024

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Rise in dog attacks part and parcel of postman's job

By Alex Barton and Eleanor Mann

POSTAL workers are being attacked by dogs more often amid a big increase in the number of parcels being delivered.

Royal Mail has said dog bites were up by 15 per cent, with more than 2,206 incidents in the year to March.

The figure equates to an average of 42 attacks a week in the UK, with some leading to debilitating injuries, it said.

Around half of dog attacks (49 per cent) took place at the front door, with 26 per cent of incidents occurring in the garden. About 18 per cent of attacks were nips through the letterbox.

Prof Carri Westgarth, senior lecturer in human-animal interaction at the University of Liverpool, said the rise in the attacks may be explained by an increase in the number of parcel deliveries. She said: "Bites happen for many reasons, but increased bites to delivery workers are likely due to us receiving more parcels these days, meaning we need to open the door more frequently."

Parcel volumes have increased to 3.6 billion in 2023, up from 2.6 billion in 2019, according to Ofcom data.

Prof Westgarth said a rise in the number of dog owners could also explain the growing number of bites. There are about 13.5 million pet dogs in the UK.

Dog attacks on Royal Mail staff resulted in more than 2,273 days of absence in 2023-24. The postal service appealed to dog owners to ensure their pets posed no threat.

Lizz Lloyd, health and safety director at Royal Mail, said: "Think twice when the postman calls. Dog attacks can have life-changing consequences for victims, even when the physical injury is not significant."



CRAWFORD COUNTY SHERIFFS OFFICE

Close encounter

A UFO-style car pulled over by police on a motorway in Crawford County, Missouri, made this officer's day. The car was created by a man from Indiana and was on its way to a festival linked to extraterrestrial activity in Roswell, New Mexico, renowned as the scene of an alleged UFO crash in 1947.

Capt Tom's daughter barred as charity trustee

Couple disqualified by regulator amid inquiry into the foundation set up in veteran's name

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

CAPTAIN Tom Moore's daughter and her husband have been disqualified from being charity trustees amid an ongoing inquiry into the foundation set up in the war veteran's name.

A statement from the Ingram-Moore family said Hannah and her husband Colin had been served an order of dis-

qualification as trustees by the Charity Commission.

Despite the option to appeal, the family said they have made the "extremely difficult decision" not to do so, saying the "profound emotional upheaval and financial burden make such a course of action untenable".

The Captain Tom Foundation was set up in May 2020 after Sir Tom's fundraising efforts in the first Covid-19 lockdown.

The foundation has been the subject of an investigation by the charity watchdog, amid concerns about its management and independence from Sir Tom's family. The Charity Commission

opened a case into the foundation shortly after the 100-year-old died in 2021, and launched its inquiry in June 2022.

The family said they "fundamentally disagree" with the watchdog's decision, and described the ongoing inquiry as having been a "harrowing and debilitating ordeal", as well as voicing concerns that the commission's investigations had become a "relentless pursuit".

In a statement, they said: "The disqualification has been imposed without the conclusion of the statutory inquiry into The Captain Tom Foundation."

"The Commission's failure to conclude the inquiry prolongs our deep

distress and hinders our ability to move on with our lives, extending the pain and impact on our family and our father/grandfathers' legacy."

"It has been a harrowing and debili-

'The failure to conclude the inquiry prolongs our distress and hinders our ability to move on'

tating ordeal that has gone on for over two years. We are increasingly concerned that the Charity Commission's process may have evolved into a relent-

less pursuit, and question whether it is a tactic by the Commission to make our lives more difficult, by suspending us in constant fear and mental anguish."

They added that they had "fully co-operated with the commission at all times" and said both Mr and Mrs Ingram-Moore had "never accessed or made any payments from the charity's bank account" while independent trustees had "maintained full control over the charity's finances since inception".

A lawyer for the family has previously stated that the foundation could shut down.

Speaking in October last year during an appeal hearing against the demoli-

tion of a spa pool block at the home of the Ingram-Moores, Scott Stemp, their barrister, said the charity was "unlikely to exist" in the future.

The family lost that appeal and a digger was seen tearing down parts of the unauthorised building earlier this year.

Sir Tom raised £38.9 million for the NHS, including Gift Aid, by walking 100 laps of his garden before his 100th birthday at the height of the first national Covid-19 lockdown.

He was knighted by the late Queen during an open-air ceremony at Windsor Castle in summer 2020.

The Charity Commission has been contacted for comment.



The Telegraph



The UK is about to enter a nightmare much darker than anyone yet realises

ALLISTER HEATH
PAGE 14

I killed my terminally ill son, admits mother on live radio

Antonya Cooper says any possible prosecution must be swift as she herself is fighting incurable cancer

By Alex Barton

A MOTHER has admitted live on radio to ending the life of her terminally ill son when he was seven years old.

Antonya Cooper, from Abingdon in Oxfordshire, acknowledged she was potentially admitting to manslaughter, but said authorities would have to act fast if they chose to prosecute as she was suffering from her own terminal cancer diagnosis.

Ms Cooper, 77, whose son, Hamish, had stage-four cancer before his death in 1981, said she would happily face the consequences for ending his life.

Aiding assisted suicide can be prosecuted with a maximum prison sentence of 14 years in England and Wales.

Hamish was five when he was diagnosed with neuroblastoma, a rare cancer that mostly affects children, and was initially given a prognosis of three months to live. After 16 months of "beastly treat-

ment" at Great Ormond Street Hospital, his life was extended but he was left in great pain, Ms Cooper said.

Hamish died at home on Dec 1 1981 after Ms Cooper administered morphine to ease his pain. The mother likened his death to an "amputation" and said she would "never get over" it.

Speaking to BBC Radio Oxford, she said: "He was expressing that he had pain and I said, 'Would you like me to take the pain away?'"

"He said, 'Yes, please, Mama', and so I gave him a dose of morphine sulphate through his Hickman catheter.

"We had watched him brave through all that beastly treatment, we had had him for longer than the original prognosis, so the time was right."

Ms Cooper added: "The simplicity of it is that you suffer an amputation and it takes you time to learn to live with that amputation. You never get over it because you've lost that limb, it's gone for ever, but you learn just to cope."

After Hamish's death, Ms Cooper had four more children and helped to launch what is now known as Neuroblastoma UK - a charity dedicated to find-

Antonya Cooper, below; and in 1981 with son Hamish. 'I was not going to let him suffer,' she said



ing a cure for the "aggressive" childhood cancer. She claimed Hamish knew she was intending to end his life, when he asked her to stop the pain.

She said: "I feel very strongly that at the point of Hamish telling me he was in pain, and asking me if I could remove his pain, he knew, he knew somewhere what was going to happen."

"But I cannot obviously tell you why or how, but I was his mother, he loved his mother, and I totally loved him, and I was not going to let him suffer, and I feel he knew where he was going."

Asked if she understood she was potentially admitting to manslaughter or murder, Ms Cooper replied: "Yes."

However, given that she is facing her own incurable cancer, she said authorities would have to take swift action if they chose to bring charges.

"If they come 43 years after I have allowed Hamish to die peacefully, then I would have to face the consequences. But they would have to be quick, because I'm dying too," she added.

Ms Cooper is having chemotherapy after being diagnosed with breast and pancreatic cancer, which has spread to her liver.



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National Trust turfs out its artificial grass

By Emma Gatten
ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

THE National Trust is to rip up fake grass at its properties to improve its environmental credentials.

Artificial turf installed more than a decade ago at Cliveden in Buckinghamshire will be replaced under plans by the charity to remove fake grass on all of its estates.

Less than 1 per cent of sites run by the body have fake grass, which is made of plastic and it is easier to maintain. But the charity said it would no longer install artificial grass, which has been criticised as being bad for insects and water drainage, as well as creating non-recyclable waste and microplastic pollution. It can also melt, or be too hot to touch in very high temperatures.

At Cliveden, the National Trust said the decision was made to use artificial grass because the area of the garden had more than half a million visitors a year, and often became "muddy and unpleasant".

"We recognise that it was the wrong decision though, and we're keen to rectify this," a spokesman for the charity said.

"Maintaining healthy grass can sometimes be challenging, such as in areas with high footfall or difficult drainage."

"However, it is National Trust policy not to install artificial turf and we do not

endorse its use, which can have effects on the environment and biodiversity.

"It is worth noting that artificial grass is not without its own maintenance requirements."

The heritage conservation organisation is now exploring options in conjunction with Historic England for a replacement for the artificial turf that will fit the "historic spirit" of the estate, which was acquired by George Villiers, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham, in 1666.



Fake grass was installed in 'high traffic' areas at Cliveden

The current house on the estate was built by architect Charles Barry for the 2nd Duke of Sutherland, after two previous iterations were destroyed by fires.

Yorkstone paving, which is used in the entrance to the estate's Long Garden, is being considered as a more suitable and durable alternative to the artificial grass.

The charity has applied for permission with Buckinghamshire council to make the changes to the garden.

Growing a beard puts you within a whisker of settling down

By Joe Pinkstone
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

MEN may be more likely to grow a beard when they are ready to settle down, a study has found.

Beards require more care and attention than being clean-shaven, scientists say, and they believe men who are prepared to invest time, effort and money into growing facial hair are more likely to swap single life for domestic bliss.

A study led by the University of Padua, in northern Italy, asked more than 400 men aged between 18 and 40 about the motivation for having a beard, and found the willingness to groom a beard was linked to an individual's social goals.

"Regarding fundamental social motives, men having more facial hair reported less mate-seeking motivation, but more mate-retention and kin care motivation," they said.

"Having more facial hair may be used by men to inform other people that their social motives shift from focusing on the mating market to focusing on long-term romantic relationships and family."

Scientists asked men to rank in order of importance certain life goals, such as spending time with parents and staying in a long-term relationship.

"We detected that older men have more facial hair than younger men, which corresponds to previous studies showing that people perceive men with more

'Men having more facial hair reported less mate-seeking motivation'

facial hair as older," the scientists added.

"As the first study on facial hair enhancement motivation in men, we found that facial hair may simultaneously signal higher competitiveness and higher willingness to form coalitions and to affiliate."

Study co-author Professor Peter Jonason told *The Times*: "They are less likely to have a fast life history strategy and instead tend to invest in others both romantically and familiarly."

The study is published in the journal *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*.

Harris emerges as favourite to stop Trump

US ELECTIONS 2024

Republicans turn fire on vice-president in case Biden is forced to quit race for the White House

By Tony Diver

REPUBLICANS have launched a campaign attacking Kamala Harris after she emerged as a favourite to replace Joe Biden in the White House race. As leading Democrats scramble to decide who could replace the US president as their nominee following his disastrous TV debate against Donald Trump, his vice president has been boosted by a new CNN poll. It shows she would be more likely to win key demographics, including ethnic minority voters and independents.

Ms Harris has already received the backing of Jim Clyburn, an influential congressman who said he would support her run for president if Mr Biden pulled out of the race.

"I'm going to be for Biden if Harris ain't there, and I'm going to be for Harris if Biden ain't there," he told USA Today. Other Democrats have been even more outspoken, with former Ohio congressman Tim Ryan calling on Mr Biden to stand aside and make room for Ms Harris.

"We have to rip the Band-Aid off! Too much is at stake," he wrote on X, formerly Twitter, adding that Ms Harris has "significantly grown into her job".

He claimed: "She will destroy Trump in debate, highlight choice issues, energise our base, bring back young voters and give us generational change. It's time!"

Republicans have come out on the offensive, launching "Stop Kamala" adverts in response.

"House Republicans are sharpening our knives if extreme House Democrats dump Joe Biden – or we will remind voters Kamala Harris is next in line if they don't," said the National Republican Congressional Committee. One



A 'Stop Kamala' advert launched by the Republicans that pokes fun at the vice-president

advert pokes fun at Ms Harris and says that she is not competent concluding: "This November: Vote Republican. Stop Kamala."

Polls suggest that Ms Harris would do just as well against Mr Trump as any of the other potential contenders and choosing the vice president as the nominee would spare having to explain to grassroots supporters – a significant

number of whom are African American – why they had overlooked the chance to elect the nation's first female black president.

Allowing Ms Harris to take on Trump directly would also probably give her access to the funds raised by the Biden campaign because she is on the campaign ticket with him.

She has also pushed past Mr Biden as a more likely US president, second only to Mr Trump, according to the betting markets at BoyleSports.

Ms Harris has not said anything in public, except to express loyalty to her boss after they had lunch together on Wednesday.

"Look, Joe Biden is our nominee," she said in an interview with CBS News. "We beat Trump once, and we're going to beat him again, period."

Ms Harris conceded Mr Biden had a "slow start" in the debate but insisted "it was a strong finish".

The Biden campaign has maintained that replacing the president as the candidate would result in "chaos".

Support for Ms Harris among Democrats has not been unanimous however, with Dmitri Mehlhorn, an adviser to a

'If Joe has to go, it's gonna be Kamala and if it's Kamala, it's gonna be harder'

major Democrat donor, pointing out that the vice-president is unpopular in key swing states.

On a call with donors, he is reported to have said: "Kamala Harris is more threatening to those swing voters than a dead Joe Biden or a comatose Joe Biden," he said. "So if Joe has to go, it's gonna be Kamala and if it's Kamala, it's gonna be harder."

Mr Biden has blamed jet lag for his poor debate performance last Thursday after two overseas trips earlier in June.

Speaking at a campaign event in McLean, Virginia, he admitted the debate against Donald Trump did not go well. "I didn't have my best night, but the fact is that you know, I wasn't very smart," he said.

"I decided to travel around the world a couple times, going through around 100 time zones... before... the debate."

He added: "Didn't listen to my staff and came back and nearly fell asleep on stage. That's no excuse but it is an explanation."

The president travelled to France and Italy during two separate trips in the space of two weeks before flying back to Los Angeles.

Soldiering on Jill Biden makes a campaign stop yesterday at a summer camp in Middleville, Michigan. The US first lady has rejected the idea that her husband Joe should end his attempt at a second term on health grounds.



AP/CARLOS OSORIO

Democrats call on Biden to drop out as they abandon belief in victory

Analysis

By Tony Diver US EDITOR

A GROWING number of Democrats want their president to drop out of the race for the White House as they no longer believe he can beat Trump. Joe Biden spent the whole of the last election campaign trying to shrug off his nickname "Sleepy Joe". Now, the idea that the 81-year-old president often gets tired is not just an accusation by Republicans. It is a political fact.

At a Democrat donor event in Virginia on Tuesday, Mr Biden told his supporters he "nearly fell asleep on stage" at his disastrous head to head with Trump last week. "I didn't have the best night," he said. That extraordinary admission came after a

challenge to his leadership from the president's new political opponents – in his own party.

Dubbed the "bedwetting brigade" by Mr Biden's allies, a growing number of Democrats no longer believe he can beat Trump in November.

"The bedwetting brigade is calling for Joe Biden to drop out," wrote Rob Flaherty, Mr Biden's deputy campaign manager, after the debate. "That is the best possible way for Donald Trump to win and us to lose."

An increasingly loud portion of the party, however, feel that it is Mr Biden staying in the race, not leaving it, that makes a Trump victory most likely.

A source close to the president told the New York Times the president believed he had just four days to save his campaign by performing well at two campaign rallies and in a television interview this weekend.

As Democrats squabble over what to do next, three main factions have emerged. The first group believe the

election is doomed if Mr Biden remains the party's nominee and should drop out immediately to be replaced by a younger candidate.

They include former aides of Barack Obama, who worked with Mr Biden in the White House but have never believed strongly in his electoral strengths. "You're going to hear

'Anyone trying to prolong the inevitable here is putting us on a giant death march toward the end'

discussions that I don't know will lead to anything, but there are going to be discussions about whether he should continue," David Axelrod, a former senior adviser to Mr Obama, said following the debate.

Van Jones, another former Obama aide, said he is happy to be classed as a "bedwetter". "I'm sitting here where

I'm in Pampers," he said. "Behind closed doors, what people are worrying about is what the polls are going to show in the battleground states a week from now."

Other prominent voices are Democrat donors who have contributed to the \$91million (£71million) Biden-Harris election war chest but think they stand no chance against Trump.

On a call with the Biden campaign this week, one donor simply asked: "Can the president make it through a campaign and another term?" Another asked for their money back.

"Anybody trying to prolong the inevitable here is just basically putting us on a giant ****ing death march towards the end," a major donor told the Politico news site. "Our only hope is that he bows out, or dies," another insider said as the dust settled on the debate. "Otherwise we are ****ing dead."

On Tuesday, Lloyd Doggett of Texas

became the first sitting Democrat to add his name to the pile of anonymous quotes from colleagues about the issue. He said Mr Biden should make the "painful decision to withdraw".

So far, only Mr Doggett has publicly called for Mr Biden to stand back, but plenty of Democrats make the same argument behind closed doors.

'Our only hope is that he bows out – and we have a brokered convention – or he dies'

The second camp of worried Democrats say Mr Biden has some time to recover from his TV performance, but think he should spend more time reassuring allies in the party before making a decision.

The group includes JB Pritzker, the governor of Illinois, who convened a call with fellow Democrat governors

on Monday to discuss the situation. After hearing that most of the attendees had not spoken to the president, he arranged a meeting between Mr Biden and his allies at the White House on Wednesday night.

The third group of Democrats have already accepted that the White House is lost – but think Mr Biden must now do more to take the House at the same time. If Trump wins, they argue, it is vital that the Democrats have control of the legislature to oppose his "extreme" and "unhinged" policy plans.

The "frontline" group of House Democrats are organising a private letter to be sent to Mr Biden urging him to protect their jobs at all costs.

Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, a representative from a marginal district in Washington state, said: "We all saw what we saw, you can't undo that, and the truth I think, is that Biden is going to lose to Trump."

A senior Democrat told Politico: "The House is the last firewall, folks."

I wasn't taking a bite out of a Korean dog – it was a Patagonian goat, insists RFK Junior

By Ben Smith

ROBERT F KENNEDY JNR has been forced to deny that he took a bite out of a dog carcass on a trip to Korea.

The presidential candidate reportedly posed with the barbecued remains of the animal in a photo taken in 2010 – the same year he had a tapeworm removed from his brain.

Mr Kennedy, 70, insisted that he had

eaten a goat and that the picture had been taken in South America.

Vanity Fair reports that he recommended to a friend a restaurant in Korea that serves dog on its menu and texted the same individual a picture of him posing with the barbecued animal.

The photograph shows Mr Kennedy smiling and pretending to take a bite out of the carcass, which has been skewered on a large stick. "It's me in a

campfire in Patagonia on the Futaleufu River eating a goat, which is what we eat down there," he told Fox News, hitting out at Vanity Fair's "lack of sort of journalistic standards".

However, the magazine cites a vet who identified the carcass as canine, noting that it had 13 pairs of ribs – including a tell-tale "floating rib" found in dogs.

Goats also have 13 pairs of ribs,

although floating ribs – meaning they are not attached to the sternum or another rib – are a rare characteristic.

Elsewhere in the article, Mr Kennedy is accused of sexually assaulting a 23-year-old when he was a married 45-year-old father of four.

Mr Kennedy called the claims "a lot of garbage" but declined to comment on specific allegations.

He added: "I have said this from the beginning. I am not a church boy. I am not running like that. I had a very, very rambunctious youth.

"I said in my announcement speech that I have so many skeletons in my closet that if they could all vote, I could run for king of the world."



Robert F Kennedy Jr sent this picture of himself eating a barbecued animal to a friend

China helps Russia to develop deadly drones

Beijing no longer 'neutral' says Nato, as it assists Putin in building Iranian-style kamikaze air weapons

By James Kilner

RUSSIA and China are working together to produce a version of Iran's Shahed drone that could be used on the battlefields of Ukraine, European intelligence sources have said.

The drones themselves are still in the "test and development" phase and have not yet been deployed in Ukraine, the sources told Bloomberg.

However, sending drones would be a major escalation in China's support for the Kremlin war machine, as it has previously only provided "non-lethal" aid, such as microchips and tools for

tank-making. One source told Bloomberg that the US still doesn't consider China to be sending lethal aid but conceded that "other nations may have a different interpretation".

Russia has used Iran's kamikaze Shahed drone extensively to terrorise Ukrainian cities.

It is now building a factory in the central city of Kazan to produce its own version, but is still reliant on imports at present.

Western officials declined to give specifics on China's drone programme but Bloomberg reported that Chinese factories are developing a drone called the Sunflower 200, similar in appearance to Iran's Shahed. Sunflowers are a national symbol of Ukraine.

Russia has used Iran's kamikaze Shahed drone extensively to terrorise Ukrainian cities.

It is now building a factory in the cen-

tral city of Kazan to produce its own version - but its military is still reliant on imports at present.

As well as sending rifle sights and equipment to produce tanks to Russia, China has started sending satellite images of battlefields in Ukraine.

Julianne Smith, US ambassador to Nato, said this highlighted Beijing's role as an ally of the Kremlin. "Here at Nato, we're making sure that we can expose the fact that China is no longer a neutral player," she said.

Since Vladimir Putin launched his full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, China has become Russia's most important trade partner.

Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, last month accused China of keeping the "Russian defence industrial base going" by providing 70 per cent of its machine tools and 90 per cent of its microelectronics.

'We're making sure we can expose the fact that China is no longer a neutral player'



Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin meet yesterday in the Kazakhstan capital Astana

Russia now also sells most of its oil and gas to China at a discounted price, and Chinese banks provide critical infrastructure for Russia's financial institutions to trade roubles for yuans.

The head of Russia's civilian nuclear power programme even said on yesterday that he was flying to China next

week to start a joint project to build a nuclear power station on the moon by 2036.

China's diplomatic support and the Russia-China "no limits" special relationship have also been vital for the Kremlin. China helped to pressure smaller countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East to boycott a Ukrainian-organised peace summit in Switzerland last month.

So important has China become for Russia that Alexander Stubb, the Finnish president, said Beijing could close down the Russian economy at any moment and force the end of the war.

"One phone call from president Xi Jinping would solve this crisis," he told Bloomberg this week.

Xi and Putin met yesterday in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, at the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, a military-economic alliance led by China and Russia hinged around former Soviet Central Asia.

Turkey has also been invited to this year's summit and Yuri Ushakov, a Russian presidential aide, said that Putin's meeting with Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkish president, would deal with "all the important issues, including sensitive ones".

Mr Erdogan hosted failed peace talks between Ukraine and Russia in 2022. Turkey has been vital for Ukrainian and Russian grain exports during the war.



Farewell kiss

Haneen Shehada, the sister of Mohammad Shehada who was killed in an Israeli airstrike, kisses his rifle during the funeral of four Palestinians in Nour Shams camp, in Tulkarm, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Beijing expands Cuba spy bases to within 70 miles of Guantanamo

By Simeon Tegel

CHINA now has four electronic listening posts in Cuba including one just 70 miles from the US base in Guantanamo, new satellite analysis shows.

The findings mean that Beijing may be tuning in to highly sensitive communications by the US military across the entire lower 48 states, especially in southern states such as Florida and Texas, brimming with army, navy and

air force bases. The fresh analysis of existing satellite imagery, which is titled "Secret Signals, Decoding China's Intelligence Activities in Cuba", comes from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a Washington DC-based thinktank.

It looks at four sites, Bejucal, Wajay and Calabazar, all near Havana, and, on the other side of the Caribbean island, El Salao, near Guantanamo.

The military base at Bejucal, in the

hills above the capital, is notorious for hosting Soviet nuclear weapons during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the flashpoint that most historians regard as the closest the world has ever come to nuclear war.

The CSIS researchers note that Cuba, whose state-run economy is on the brink of collapse, has both ideological and practical reasons for helping Beijing snoop on the US. China, meanwhile, in addition to the strategic

'Florida is home to the Southern Command headquarters and multiple submarine and other bases'

advantages offered by the island's proximity to the US, wants to prop up one of the few remaining fellow communist regimes.

"Florida alone is home to the major

space-launch complex at Cape Canaveral, the headquarters of both the US Southern Command and Central Command, and multiple submarine and other bases," the report warned.

But China is not the only adversary of the west with a military footprint in the Caribbean.

Yesterday, it was confirmed that the Admiral Gorshkov, the Russian frigate that recently docked along with a nuclear-powered submarine in Cuba, is now

in Venezuela. Caracas has not publicly announced the warship's arrival but it was spotted from a distance by journalists at a military facility in the port city of La Guaira.

In Havana, civilians were even allowed to tour the frigate. But the Maduro regime's secrecy around the Gorshkov's visit intensifies the mystery over the strategic purpose of the Russian vessel's presence in the autocratic South American nation.

The Nazi sympathiser, the hostage-taker and the 'ghost': Meet Le Pen's candidates in French election

By Vivian Song

A NAZI sympathiser, a convicted hostage-taker, and a "ghost" contender whom no one has ever seen are among the candidates running to represent Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) in the French parliament.

With just a few days remaining before the run-off election on Sunday, the hard-Right RN has been forced to engage in damage control after the emergence of embarrassing photos and compromising information about some of its candidates.

Ludvine Daoudi, a candidate for the constituency of Caen, was forced to withdraw from the race after photos of her wearing an officer's cap with a swastika symbol at a weapons fair surfaced on social media.

Ms Daoudi had obtained 20 per cent of the vote in the first round, finishing third in her constituency.

Meanwhile, Elodie Babin, the RN

candidate in the constituency of Loiret in north-central France has qualified for the second round without ever appearing in public since the election was called.

Dubbed the phantom or "ghost candidate" by local media, Ms Babin managed to win 33 per cent of the vote despite her conspicuous absence and refusal to speak with the media.

Her husband Aleksandar Nikolic, a recently elected MEP, told the radio station France Bleu that his wife was suffering from Covid.

The no-show is a recurring pattern among RN candidates across the country, many of whom have declined invitations to engage in public debates because they "have no time" or do not want to "waste time".

France Bleu Gascogne, a local radio station, has described the phenomenon as being "unprecedented".

In Jura, Thierry Mosca, a 65-year-old who is under state guardianship, is



Ludvine Daoudi; Marine Le Pen, leaves the RN party's HQ in Paris yesterday, right

running to represent the constituency as an RN candidate despite his theoretical ineligibility.

An investigation over undeclared work was also dismissed last month owing to his "deficient mental state", according to AFP.

Annie Bell, the RN candidate for Mayenne in north-west France, was jailed in 1995 after she and her husband held an official at the local town hall hostage for three hours at gunpoint.

A shot was fired during the incident, but there were no injuries.

At the time, the couple were in serious financial debt. *Ouest-France*, the local paper which broke the story, reported. Bell was jailed for 10 months for armed kidnapping.

An archival news report said: "Under a crushing debt, a couple of entrepreneurs took the secretary general of the town hall hostage for several hours."

During the scuffle, Bell took out the rifle under her coat and fired a shot.



YOUNG VAL/EPAP/REUTERS/GETTY IMAGES



Red alert An air tanker drops fire retardant chemicals over Calistoga in northern California, where wildfires have forced 13,000 people to flee their homes. Yesterday firefighters were battling to control more than a dozen blazes with temperatures above 38C (100F) forecast. Officials have warned people against the illegal use of fireworks during the July 4 holiday.

Greek surveyor murdered in mafia-style hit

Execution-style attack was carried out by gunman on a motorcycle as the victim sat in his car in Athens

By Nick Squires in Rome

A GREEK surveyor was shot in a mafia-style execution on the streets of Athens amid suspicions he was killed as part of a feud over a property development.

A gunman on a motorbike drew up to a BMW driven by Panagiotis Stathis and opened fire with a 9mm pistol, shooting at least a dozen times. It appeared to be a professional hit.

In a chilling audio recording obtained by Greek media, the gunman can be heard firing multiple times, then reloading a magazine and shooting more rounds into the vehicle. Police recovered 20 bullet casings from the scene.

The attack happened on Tuesday outside Mr Stathis's company head-

quarters in the Athens suburb of Psychiko. Footage from CCTV cameras showed that the gunman had waited for his target for about an hour. His motorbike had false registration plates.

Mr Stathis, 54, was a surveyor who was involved in property development on Mykonos, Paros, Ios and other islands in the Cyclades, where there is intense competition over building permits and land. Hotels, villas and restaurants can be hugely lucrative on the islands, which attract crowds of big-spending visitors during the summer months.

Oligarchs, celebrities and yacht owners flock to Mykonos, meaning that the tiny island of turquoise bays, windmills and dazzling white, sugar-cube houses now accounts for 0.5 per cent of Greece's GDP.

The island attracts more than two million visitors each year. But the tourist boom has fuelled rampant illegal construction. "This place is full of mafia. They build wherever they like and



Panagiotis Stathis, a father of two, may have crossed the wrong person in his job surveying plots of land

they're ruining the island," a taxi driver told *The Telegraph* recently. "Mykonos has lost its soul."

There was speculation that Mr Stathis, a father of two, may have crossed the wrong person in his work surveying plots of land.

He had been involved in the construction of beach bars which had come under scrutiny from town planning authorities, Greek media reported yesterday.

He had recently bought a plot of land near Agios Stefanos beach, on the west coast of Mykonos, which had led to an altercation with locals, the newspaper *Kathimerini* reported.

"The homicide department is looking into his personal and professional life in order to identify the perpetrator of the murder," a spokeswoman for Greek police told *The Telegraph*.

Detectives want to question Mr Stathis's family and work colleagues about who might have wanted him dead, she said.

The surveyor had been due to attend a Mykonos council meeting tomorrow to discuss a new zoning plan on the island.

In 2021, he was assaulted on Mykonos and made a complaint to the police. An investigation was launched, but no arrests were made.

Last year, an archaeologist who clashed with property developers over the protection of ancient sites on Mykonos was subjected to a savage beating.

Manolis Psarros was attacked by a group of assailants as he left his house in Athens in March, leaving him with broken ribs, a fractured nose and severe bruising to his face.

Mr Psarros worked for the archaeological service of the Cyclades Islands, trying to ensure that new properties comply with laws intended to protect ancient sites. He believed the attack was related to two businesses in Mykonos which he found had encroached on archaeological sites.

'This place is full of mafia. They build wherever they like and they are ruining the island'

"The assault was professional," Despina Koutsoumba, the head of the Association of Greek Archaeologists, said after the attack.

"Our colleague had no other contact with people who could organise such a hit, other than his occupational involvement in cases of illegal development carried out by business interests in Mykonos."

Last year the Greek government announced that it would use artificial intelligence and aerial photographs to detect illegal developments on Mykonos.

"Obviously, matters in Mykonos have got out of hand," Kostas Skrekas, the then environment minister, said at the time. "The aim is to systematically check all illegal construction on the island."

In March last year Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the prime minister, sent dozens of extra police officers, as well as building inspectors and financial crime investigators, to Mykonos.

Girl, 12, thought to be victim of a crocodile

By Andrea Hamblin in Melbourne

A 12-YEAR-OLD girl who disappeared in remote northern Australia on Tuesday was killed by a crocodile, police believe.

Yesterday, Northern Territory (NT) police were searching crocodile-infested waters near Nganmariyanga, a small Aboriginal community 220 miles south-west of Darwin, in the hope of finding the child's body.

Brent Potter, the NT police minister, said officers had been authorised to remove a crocodile seen in Mango Creek as they entered the "recovery stage" of the search.

"It's a tragic incident for any parent or family member to lose a young child, and especially in the circumstances like that taken by a crocodile," Mr Potter told local media. "I know the search and rescue team are currently out there with members from the Wadeye police station and they'll continue to do that to find that croc."

He added: "We live in a place where crocodiles occupy our water places. It is a tragic event."

The child was reportedly last seen cooling off in the creek as the temperature climbed to over 30C on Tuesday.

Members of the public called police about 5.30pm and began searching the water before official rescue teams arrived.

A popular swimming hole for the 450 residents of Nganmariyanga, the creek is considered safe during the dry season from May to October.

In the wet season, however, crocodiles can swim into nearby watering holes from the Daly River, which is home to both freshwater and saltwater species.

Crocodile numbers have climbed to about 100,000 in the NT since Australia banned culling in the territory in 1971. Before then, the population had dropped to about 5,000. Although the number has risen, experts have stressed that fatal attacks have remained rare as a result of local management and a ban on swimming during heavy rain.

In the NT, fatalities peaked in 2014 when four people were killed. Since then, there have been two fatal attacks. Calls for a government cull were reignited last July when a 2m-long saltwater crocodile attacked a man while he was swimming, along with a dozen others in a popular water hole.

Following the attack on the 67-year-old man in Litchfield National Park, Natasha Fyles, NT's chief minister, said she would be "formally contacting the Commonwealth" to raise the prospect of culling crocodiles.

"I think it's time for us to consider: do we need to go back to culling, considering the significant increase in the crocodile population, and the impact it's [having], not just on our tourists and visitors, but also locals," Ms Fyles said.

More than 3,000 crocodiles have been relocated or killed after being considered a threat to people in NT waterways since 2012, according to government data.



Acrobatic display A red squirrel swings between a pair of lupins in a garden in Bispgården, central Sweden.

Bankrupt Giuliani stocks up on bronzer

By Lorna Petty

RUDY GIULIANI, the bankrupt ally of Donald Trump, bought bronzer and anti-shine make-up in a \$2,000 Amazon spree.

The former mayor of New York purchased a pack of cheap ties, dress socks, "deep bronzer" tanning lotion and anti-shine makeup in May, despite declaring bankruptcy at the end of last year.

His creditors have accused him of "gross mismanagement" of his affairs and called on a judge to appoint a trustee to oversee his finances.

They expressed concerns at the "troubling quantity of Amazon and Apple transactions", calling his spending habits "egregious".

Mr Giuliani filed for bankruptcy in December after being ordered to pay \$148 million in a defamation case to two Georgia election workers who he falsely claimed tampered with votes in 2020.

In total, he owed about \$153 million to around 20 individuals and entities, including millions of dollars in legal fees and unpaid taxes.

It came as Mr Giuliani was disbarred in New York on Tuesday after a court found he repeatedly made false statements about Trump's 2020 election loss.

The Manhattan appeals court ruled that Mr Giuliani, who had his New York law licence suspended in 2021 for making false statements about the election, is no longer allowed to practise law in the state, effective immediately.

"The seriousness of [the] respondent's misconduct cannot be overstated," the decision reads. Mr Giuliani "flagrantly misused" his position and "baselessly attacked and undermined the integrity of this country's electoral process".

Mr Giuliani's online purchases were made public by bankruptcy court filings, prompting mockery from some commentators, who accused him of hypocrisy as he laments the decline of American manufacturing but buys cheap imported goods in bulk.

Although his bankruptcy settlement gave him a spending sum of \$43,000 a month, Mr Giuliani said he spent nearly three times that amount in January.

Mr Giuliani's creditors have asked the judge to appoint an independent bankruptcy trustee to manage his personal and business finances, and stop him from exceeding his spending limits.

The judge overseeing his case has so far been "disturbed" by his lack of progress, but Heath Berger, the former mayor's lawyer, said things are "finally on track".



Mr Giuliani was disbarred in New York on Tuesday over his false claims about Donald Trump's election loss

Comment

Good literature can't survive the obsession with 'inclusivity'

RUTH DUDLEY EDWARDS



The Royal Society of Literature no longer seems to be interested in free speech – which should be its touchstone. Like the Society of Authors, which lost many members in consequence, it was swept up by the same grey, threatening, censorious, self-righteous, puritan ideology known to its disciples as equality, diversity and inclusion and to its critics as wokery.

In 1820, King George IV, who had many deficiencies, but was clever and cultured, set up the Royal Society of Literature to “reward literary merit and excite literary talent”, and since then it's chugged along, devoting itself to “the advancement of literature”. The criterion for being elected to its distinguished fellowship was to have produced two substantial literary works of “outstanding” merit.

I still remember the ecstatic reaction of my dear friend the novelist Jill Neville when she was elected in 1995. This acknowledgement by her peers validated all those years of labour for small financial rewards. It brought serious kudos.

Latterly, under the council chaired by the energetic novelist and free speech campaigner, Lisa Appignanesi, and successive presidents – the fine travel writer Colin Thubron and the multi-talented Dame Marina Warner, the first woman in that role – the Royal Society began a successful drive to rejuvenate itself through its “40 under 40” scheme. But after the poet Daljit Nagra succeeded Appignanesi as chair of a more diverse council, and Bernardine Evaristo, the Booker Prize winner and campaigner for inclusion of “writers and artists of colour” became the first black president, the pace of change became a gallop.

In August 2022, Appignanesi says that she and a group “including the

former president, chairs and fellows” suggested after the attempted murder of Salman Rushdie that the Society have an evening of readings in his support, but was told that it was not a political organisation and therefore had to remain “impartial”. The direction of travel of the organisation further became clear when, in July 2023, it announced an “unprecedented change” to the election process for new fellows, along with many new appointments. The requirement to maintain standards seemed to vanish.

There has been an almighty uproar, which is why the Society's council has referred itself to the Charity Commission and presumably why the home page now says: “The RSL upholds freedom of expression and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

But it speaks to a wider crisis within the publishing world, which is being reshaped in the image of publishers' inexperienced, woke staff. They hardly seem to care that “inclusive” literature can often be far less popular among readers than the pale, male and stale writers they are desperate no longer to publish.

I looked up the reactions of writers in 1989 when Ayatollah Khomeini issued his fatwa against Rushdie. The brilliant but nasty Roald Dahl said: “[Rushdie] knew exactly what he was doing and cannot plead otherwise. This kind of sensationalism does indeed get an indifferent book on to the top of the bestseller list – but to my mind it is a cheap way of doing it”.

It gave me a good laugh when recalling that Dahl's own work has been heavily rewritten by sensitivity readers.

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The UK is about to enter a nightmare much darker than anyone yet realises

A Labour landslide with the Lib Dems as the official opposition will turn us into a Left-wing one-party state

ALLISTER HEATH



I hope you enjoy horror films, dear readers, for British politics is about to be turned into an infernal, soul-destroying hellscape worthy of the sickest of Hollywood minds.

The next few years won't merely be “a little bit worse”, as many delusional voters of a centre-Right persuasion have sought to convince themselves. The imminent Labour ascendancy will be truly calamitous. Every conservative nightmare will come true, and more besides. The Left-wing stormtroopers who are about to seize the keys to No 10 will enjoy almost unimaginable power, and will be far more competent at wielding it to annihilate their enemies than the Tories ever were.

Consider the following, all too possible apocalyptic scenario. On Friday morning, we could wake up to not just the greatest Labour landslide in history, but also to the Liberal Democrats as the official opposition. It would represent the Conservative Party's greatest humiliation since its foundation in 1834. Sir Keir Starmer as Labour prime minister would face the clownish Ed Davey of Post Office scandal fame as leader of the opposition at Prime Minister's Questions. The Tory leader, whoever he or she may end up being, would be left with two questions at the end of the session, by which time

most viewers would have lost interest. The shadow chancellor would be a Lib Dem.

With Labour massively ahead in every poll, the real race is for second place in terms of seats in the House of Commons, and it could be nail-bitingly close, thanks to the Conservative Party's epic implosion. Survation, the pollster, believes that there is only a 53 per cent chance the Tories will end up with more seats than the Lib Dems, a vanishingly small margin of error. YouGov predicts that the Tories will be just 30 seats ahead of Davey's rabble.

Even if the Tories do edge it by a few seats – say 10 or 15 – their status as the official opposition, and the funding and privileges that come with it, would remain extremely precarious. The likely scale of the defeat will be crushing for remaining Tory MPs. Former top ministers will become obscure non-entities overnight. They will lose their ministerial cars and special advisers, and many will become the butt of jokes. Few will even return their calls.

The blame game will be savage. The Tory party will tear itself apart, perhaps even finally realising that it can no longer be the home of both Left-wing, high-tax, woke Remainers and Right-wing, low-tax, anti-woke Brexiteers. Some Tory MPs may join the Lib Dems, and others defect to Reform UK, further diminishing the party's parliamentary numbers and potentially jeopardising its status as the official opposition.

Or take another scenario: what if a bunch of disillusioned Labour MPs eventually decide to quit their gargantuan group and join the Lib Dems instead? The Lib Dems could suddenly overtake the reduced Tory rump. The Conservative parliamentary

group will need to be much larger than the Lib Dem one if they are to be confident that they can stay the official opposition for the remainder of the next Parliament.

If the Lib Dems were to overtake the Tories in terms of seats on Friday, the implication would be that the combined centre-Right parties – Tory, Reform and Northern Irish unionists – would account for just 10 per cent of the total in the House of Commons, with 90 per cent of MPs explicitly Left-wing, an unprecedented imbalance. Britain's system of parliamentary checks and balances would thus lie in tatters, and we would effectively become a one-party state, or at least a state where almost every politician thinks in exactly the same way. Lib Dems, after all, tend to be Left-wingers who find it easier, for industrial or cultural reasons in places such as Surrey, to be elected under a yellow rather than a red rosette.

The Tories would be hammered when it came to the allocation of select committee positions. The Public Accounts Committee would automatically be chaired by the Lib Dems. What would pass for parliamentary scrutiny would amount to airing Left-wing grievances on repeat: Starmer would be attacked for not spending enough, for not rejoining the EU, for not punishing Israel for fighting evil terrorists, for not hiking taxes.

Centre-Right and free-market voices and positions would be almost entirely absent. What is left of the Tory Right and Nigel Farage and his small number of Reform MPs would do their best, but they would be shouting from the outside in. As far as the Civil Service would be concerned, the Overton window will have slammed shut, and the views of millions safely ignored.

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Ditto the BBC. If you think the broadcasters are too Left-wing today, be aware that it could be far worse were the Lib Dems to become the Opposition. *Question Time* would end up pitting a Labour MP against a Lib Dem, with Tories regularly excluded. Airtime balance on TV and the radio would consist in various shades of Left-wing opinion, with an occasional Tory or Reform panellist screamed down by everybody else.

There is little doubt that a Tory party relegated to third place in Parliament would embolden Labour in the most dangerous possible way. There is already talk of Starmer appointing Harriet Harman to the crucial role of chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, replacing Lady Falkner, one of the heroes of the anti-woke fightback. A ruthless purge is clearly on the cards, with the already tiny number of non-Leftists in the public sector set for the chop.

Labour, cheered on by the supposed Lib Dem opposition, would be emboldened to move faster and further in a socialist and woke direction. It would seek to leverage the Equality Act to conscript every company in the fight against “social inequality” via “positive discrimination”. It would double down on net zero and the war on cars. It would start copying EU rules, just for the sake of it. It would find it much easier to jack up taxes in its first Budget, including on wealth, inheritance and property. It would turn a blind eye to illegal immigration, and would gradually further increase legal immigration, egged on by radical open-border activists within the Left's parliamentary ranks.

The best that can be hoped for now is that the Tories become the official opposition. Can that really be too much to ask?

Former top ministers will become obscure non-entities overnight, the butt of jokes

Labour's plan for Britain should terrify us all

I understand some may be tempted to back Reform, but doing so would help put Starmer into No10

PRITI PATEL



If Sir Keir Starmer is prime minister this weekend, then the newly-elected Labour government will set Britain on a path backwards and towards bankruptcy.

Throughout the election campaign, Starmer, his deputy, Angela Rayner, and Labour candidates across the country have relentlessly talked down Britain, aided and abetted by their allies in the media and the Left-wing institutions that infect our country.

But despite the difficulties and challenges our country has faced from the Covid pandemic, war in Ukraine and global inflationary pressures, Labour stands poised to inherit a country on the way up.

Inflation is down to target and lower than in the Eurozone and the US. Our

economy is growing and, since 2010, our growth has outperformed that of our major European neighbours. We fixed the financial mess left by Labour and brought the deficit down from an unsustainable level, where one pound in every four spent was borrowed.

We have new post-Brexit trade deals in place that should support an expansion in exports and trade with fast-growing parts of the world. While our public services face pressures, the NHS has more doctors and nurses, with new investments in diagnostic centres, cancer treatments, dementia support and mental health making a positive difference to many.

Teacher numbers are rising, with almost 2,000 added a year on average, far more than the pledge made by Labour, and education standards have risen, with children in England now among the best readers in the Western world. We have a high level of employment and welfare reforms that have led to 800 people a day on average finding work.

British workers have benefited from higher wages, lower tax rates on household incomes and higher pensions, while we have unleashed the power of business and enterprise to secure investment and jobs.

Conservatives have also made our country safer with more police on our

streets and new laws to punish offenders and support victims, and we have a comprehensive plan to secure our borders and tackle the difficulties posed by illegal migration.

This progress will be threatened should a Labour government be elected. The party's manifesto is the flimsiest produced by a potential incoming administration, but what they want for our country should frighten us all. Our countryside is at risk from Labour's plans to bulldoze over our green spaces and green belt.

Businesses face being squeezed by a new avalanche of red tape as Labour obeys the demands of its trade union paymasters and Brussels. Eco-zealots like Ed Miliband and Sadiq Khan will push forward a net zero agenda that will punish motorists with higher taxes on fuel and the risk of Ulez-style road pricing schemes, while households will pay through the nose for their green schemes. Older people living on the state pension face being dragged into paying income tax, while working-age families and the self-employed will not benefit from the reductions in National Insurance contributions the Conservatives planned.

The defence, safety and security of our country will also be at risk. Labour MPs that will be elected have opposed the nuclear deterrent, and like Starmer

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backed Jeremy Corbyn to be prime minister twice. Starmer has also opposed the strong measures we have put in place to punish criminals and secure our borders. The British people should never forget that Starmer campaigned to keep murderers and sex offenders on our streets.

With such a shameful record, it is no wonder that Starmer has been evasive and secretive about his plans. His change of position on his support for Corbyn demonstrates that he cannot be trusted and will never be straight with the British people.

Labour's campaign has been based on desperately blaming the Tories for the challenges that Britain faces and putting blatant political opportunism above having a clear and costed plan for the future. And while I know that many of our supporters may be tempted to vote Reform, that party has no vision for the future of Britain. Voting for them would only serve to give Starmer an extra hand up into No10.

A vote for Labour will mean an uncertain and unsafe future, higher taxes, the destruction of the countryside and an erosion of our values. It's only by voting Conservative that Britain's future can be secured.

Priti Patel is running to be re-elected as Conservative MP for Witham

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Letters to the Editor



ESTABLISHED 1855

Don't risk handing the UK to the Left

The eve-of-poll rhetoric within the Conservative Party could not have been more contrasting. On the one hand, Boris Johnson summoned up the can-do optimism that propelled him to a famous victory in 2019 by insisting that Labour could still be beaten.

This was followed by a grim forecast from Mel Stride, the Work and Pensions Secretary, that Labour was heading for the biggest ever parliamentary majority, greater even than the 1931 National government coalition led by Ramsay MacDonald. It won 67 per cent of the popular vote and 554 of the 615 seats, a result described by one observer as "the most astonishing in the history of the British party system".

However well Labour does today, that will not happen. Yet Sir Keir Starmer may find himself with a majority of more than 200 on a smaller share of the vote than his party achieved under Jeremy Corbyn.

Mr Johnson's 11th hour intervention in the campaign demonstrated what it has lacked – something to lift the spirits of voters, warn starkly of the dangers of socialism, and offer a conservative message of hope. There has been too much defeatism recently, driven by polls that may yet be proven wrong.

Even as he tore into Labour, Mr Johnson must have realised it was all too late, but the charge sheet he laid at the door of the likely incoming government was all too accurate. He predicted "uncontrolled immigration, mandatory wokery and kow-towing to Brussels", adding: "If you actually want higher taxes – if you feel you have a few thousand to spare – then vote Labour."

Above all, he highlighted Labour's attack on aspiration, something socialists have never understood and which they will suppress with new taxes on wealth, pensions and property.

Several tax rises have already been announced by Sir Keir, including on private schools, non-doms, private equity and energy companies. He and Rachel Reeves, the shadow chancellor, have been careful to rule out raising income tax and VAT, though even these pledges will fall by the wayside if the vaunted economic growth on which much of the party's programme for government is based fails to materialise.

Analysis from the Institute for Fiscal Studies has indicated that public spending is likely to be £80 billion higher per annum in real terms by the end of the decade than it was prior to the pandemic, with health and defence putting particular pressure on the exchequer.

Since Labour will not cut spending on social programmes and benefits and has promised not to borrow more, it will need money from somewhere. The middle classes, who already pay the lion's share of income taxes, will be the milch cow, with pension funds and property the targets.

Labour has accused the Conservatives of "lying" about its tax plans, even though everyone knows that it will need to raise money from somewhere.

This is the message Mr Johnson somewhat belatedly tried to get across to the Tory supporters planning to desert the party and vote for the Lib Dems or Reform or not at all. "Too many good, kind, moderate Conservatives are about to vote for other parties and thereby get the opposite of what they really want," he said.

It is not inconceivable, if the worst happens for the Tories, that they could end up the third party, with the Lib Dems as the official opposition. This would, indeed, bring about Mr Stride's 1931 analogy since there would be no opposition at all, just a coalition of similarly-inclined parties with no effective bulwark to a Labour juggernaut.

It is testament to the failure of the Conservatives to shore up their own base that so many supporters seem willing to risk their livelihoods and those of their children by conniving in the election of the most Left-wing government since the 1970s.

Mr Sunak, who called this election six months earlier than he needed to, has failed to make inroads into Labour's lead, even as the latter began to slide in the polls, because Reform started to eat away at Conservative support when Nigel Farage entered the campaign.

The Tories have also been reluctant to campaign on their record, preferring in recent weeks to focus on warnings that their opponents would be worse and must be denied a so-called "super-majority".

But while it risks sounding defeatist, it is nonetheless true. Labour would be worse for millions of people who would consider themselves among the middle classes or who aspire to be so. It would be worse for small businesses who are the backbone of the economy, for entrepreneurs who are the seedcorn of the future, and for anyone who thinks the best state is a smaller state.

Apart from when he replied "yes" when asked if he was a socialist, Sir Keir has sought throughout this campaign to give the impression that his party has metamorphosed into a revival of New Labour, with him cast as the new Tony Blair. He must have uttered the word "change" thousands of times over the past week.

But his party's instincts are less Blairite and more Wilsonian. The interventionist and high taxing years of the 1970s will return with a vengeance. Only a vote for the Conservatives can avoid this fate.



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The hero of 2019 has left the Conservative Party reeling in 2024

SIR – Coming from the former prime minister who did nothing with Brexit, didn't "level up" anything, promoted incompetents and disregarded his own laws during Covid lockdowns – making him ultimately responsible for the Conservatives' dire opinion poll ratings – Boris Johnson's warning about a Labour super-majority (report, July 3) is beyond irony.

As my late father would say, he's never been in a road accident, but he's seen many in his rear-view mirror.

Michael Heaton
Warminster, Wiltshire

SIR – That the Conservatives thought it wise to involve Boris Johnson, who is tainted by Partygate, in their election campaign at the last minute is as counterintuitive as Nicola Sturgeon, who is still under police investigation, campaigning for the SNP on the streets of Govanhill.

Utterly bizarre.
Martin Redfern
Melrose, Roxburghshire

SIR – Sir Keir Starmer might be glowing with the prospect of a general election win, but he would be well advised not to be too boastful.

If he achieves such a victory, it will not be a consequence of his charm or his manifesto. Everyone simply despises the Tories – and they brought that on themselves.

Mick Ferrie
Mawnan Smith, Cornwall

SIR – Our vote today should not be a recriminatory one, but a vote for the future of our country.

Freda Gittos
St Briavels, Gloucestershire

SIR – After six weeks of wall-to-wall election coverage, leaders' debates and grillings by our finest broadcast interviewers, I can honestly say I have learnt nothing new. Is it because the party leaders are so well trained, or do we miss the knowledge and abilities of broadcast interviewers of the past? To my mind, Sir Ed Davey, the leader of

the Liberal Democrats, with his various antics, has unwittingly summed up what our political leaders think of the electorate.

Simon Tuck
Seer Green, Buckinghamshire

SIR – I have not listened to any of the political broadcasts or debates. The result of the election will be what it will be, but at least I've remained sane.

Margaret Scattergood
Solihull

SIR – Amid forecasts of a low turnout for what is surely one of the most important general elections in decades, it seems incredible that the future of the UK could be determined by the none-of-the-above/can't-be-bothered-to-vote brigade.

Having a vote in a democracy is a very precious gift, and I would urge all to use it. If you do not, you cannot possibly complain about the outcome.
John Firrell
Litton Cheney, Dorset

SUVs at Wimbledon

SIR – There is a primary school up the road from us in Wimbledon, and large SUVs are prevalent – frequently carrying just one small child as a passenger.

Apart from their overwhelming mass, these juggernauts are too large to park considerably in the residential road. Andrew Copeman (Letters, July 3) is right: owners using them on urban roads are selfish and irresponsible.

The same goes for players and officials connected with the Wimbledon tennis tournament, as they clog up local roads by using SUVs for transporting themselves to and from the courts.

Tony Parrack
London SW20

Southgate's swan

SIR – Many of England's supporters, and all of the experts, have misunderstood Gareth Southgate's masterplan for his team.

This is clearly based on the tale of the ugly duckling, in which an unprepossessing creature at the beginning of its life (England in the early stages of Euro 2024) develops bit by bit into a beautiful swan (England after Jude Bellingham's wonderful equaliser against Slovakia) before progressing all the way to victory in the final.

Is Mr Southgate our very own Hans Christian Andersen, the master footballing storyteller of our age?
Andreas Smith
Bishop Auckland, Co Durham

SIR – I've watched two England matches so far and have been disgusted at the way players feign injury and claim free kicks for the slightest contact.

This behaviour is obviously supported by management and coaching staff. It is ruining what once was a great game.

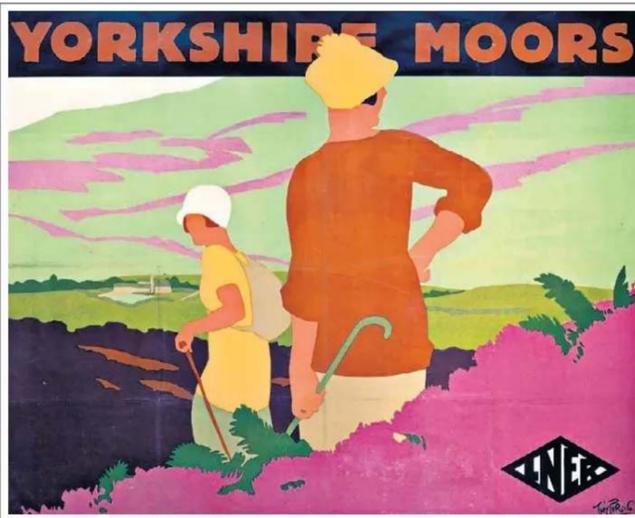
Malcolm Allen
Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire

Regimental reggae

SIR – The piper (Features, July 3) from my old regiment, the Queen's Own Highlanders, had come a long way to perform at my wedding and reception in Sussex in 1989.

Later I asked Piper Mackenzie if he'd be happy to stay on and play with a Caribbean band at the dance in the evening. We all danced to rousing versions of the reggae classics – played on steel drums and accompanied by a solo bagpiper.

Alasdair Ogilvy
Stedham, West Sussex



More trekking: a 1920s LNER poster promoting rail travel to the Yorkshire Moors

Life lessons on the Duke of Edinburgh trail

SIR – While walking the Ridgeway last weekend, I saw many groups of youngsters out on their Duke of Edinburgh expeditions.

This is excellent. However, I'm sure the late Duke would have had something to say about the school minibuses acting as water refill points, complete with generators so that the groups could recharge their mobile phones.

What are we teaching our

youngsters about harbouring their resources for the day ahead, when they know that water and electricity are just around the corner? Real life is not like that, as many a climber and walker knows.

Isn't it time to look at how we are teaching our youngsters life skills and self-reliance, rather than simply providing for their every need?
Liam Mackinnon
Sturminster Newton, Dorset

The case for free entry to national museums

SIR – I worked in national and independent museums from 1979 to 2010.

Contrary to William Sitwell's assertion that free admission was brought in by New Labour ("Freeloading tourists are taking embattled British taxpayers for fools", Comment, July 2), it had existed earlier but was ended when Margaret Thatcher decided that market forces should apply to our great national institutions, many of which subsequently introduced entrance charges to cover the loss of government funding.

The British Museum, National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery remained free to enter, but the Victoria and Albert Museum introduced a voluntary charge initially and, in 1996, a £5 entrance fee. It saw a drop in attendance of 50 per cent.

The flooded basements, uncatalogued collections, loss of artefacts and all the other excuses given by

museums for their parlous state are less about money than the result of an emphasis on exhibitions over care and conservation of collections.

There are no knighthoods in accounting for objects or stopping the roof from leaking. Reputations are built on the next mega-show, when all the luvvies can get together, pat each other on the back, sip champagne and polish their CVs for the next appointment.

Curators, however, are stewards of our heritage and their concerns should not come second to the ambitions of their bosses and trustees.

The collections in our national museums are owned by the British people – and free access is their right. I fail to see why tourists should be charged, especially when they contribute significantly to our economy precisely because of our cultural offering.

Dr Michael A Fopp
Soulbury, Buckinghamshire

We are in danger of becoming a global irrelevance

A Starmer government will obsess over woke priorities abroad while jeopardising our alliance with the US

CON COUGHLIN



No sooner will our new Government have been formed after today's general election than it will find itself facing intense scrutiny over its likely approach to the many global challenges that lie ahead.

First stop for the newly-elected prime minister will be a visit to Washington DC on Tuesday to attend the 75th anniversary celebrations for the creation of Nato, the transatlantic partnership in whose creation Britain played a pivotal role. While Joe Biden will inevitably attract much attention in the wake of his faltering performance in his debate with Donald Trump, there will also be great interest in how the new British government intends to address a range of major issues.

Other leaders of the 32-member alliance will be keen to divine its position on pressing issues such as the war in Ukraine, the Gaza conflict, Iran's nuclear ambitions, and China's increasingly aggressive posture.

During Rishi Sunak's premiership, the British position has remained broadly consistent, even if it is

generally acknowledged within Whitehall that playing the global statesman has never been Sunak's strongest suit. Supporting Ukraine in its war against Russia, insisting on Israel's right to self-defence after the October 7 attacks, and confronting the aggressive instincts of authoritarian regimes those in like Iran and China have been the central pillars of British policy since Sunak took office.

Unlike Boris Johnson, though, whose emphatic leadership on the Ukraine issue helped to rally Western support for Kyiv, Sunak has preferred to concentrate on key domestic issues, an approach that has resulted in a noticeable decline in Britain's status as a major world power. Maintaining British influence in world affairs is, after all, a vital prerequisite for justifying the UK's privileged position as one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

Whether Britain will experience a revival in its global standing with the formation of the next government will depend on its willingness to address a wide range of national security issues, especially if Sir Keir Starmer replaces Sunak as prime minister.

Throughout the election campaign, Starmer has gone out of his way to stress that Labour has moved on from the anti-American, anti-Nato, pro-nuclear disarmament, anti-Israel stance that defined the Jeremy Corbyn era. Starmer's desperation to promote his party's rediscovered pro-Nato, pro-nuclear deterrence credentials was very much in evidence last weekend in

his intemperate response to accusations by Johnny Mercer, the Conservatives' combative veterans minister, that voting Labour "would put us all in danger".

Denouncing Mercer's comments as "desperate stuff", Starmer stressed that a Labour government had been in power when Britain signed the Washington Treaty in 1949 formalising its Nato membership, and that his party was committed to the construction of four new nuclear submarines to maintain the nuclear deterrent for decades to come.

Even so, lingering suspicions remain that a Labour government could pursue radically different policies on national security issues, especially if it succeeds in winning a super-majority. Starmer himself has given clear signals that his priorities will be to strengthen relations with Europe and the "global south", the loose collection of countries that want to challenge the West's dominance. Boosting climate change cooperation is another fanciful Starmer conceit, one that will remain unattainable so long as anti-Western, autocratic regimes such as Russia and China maintain their commitment to fossil fuels.

As for Labour's commitment to the nuclear deterrent, this was somewhat undermined by deputy leader Angela Rayner's recent musings on the subject when she declared her main interest was in multilateral nuclear disarmament. This is similarly unrealistic so long as the likes of Russia, China and Iran are focused on developing their nuclear arsenals.

A plan for pubs

SIR – Looking at the number of pubs that are closing and hotels that are struggling, the hospitality industry (Letters, July 3) appears to be collapsing.

Why, then, has the Government not reduced VAT on the service industries – and in particular the hospitality sector? Several countries in Europe have much lower VAT rates for sectors where labour is intensive.

A 5 per cent VAT rate for pubs and hotels would mean that more punters struggling with the cost of living could enjoy a pint and a meal out.

There would be more tourists bringing in income through transport and events, and more jobs would raise associated tax revenue and reduce unemployment costs.

It should be a no-brainer – not only bringing financial rewards for the Exchequer, but also brightening the lives of many people.

Stewart H Macdonald
Cardross, Dunbartonshire

SIR – When he was a teenager, our younger son, now in his mid-forties, worked in hospitality at Royal Ascot. The pay was abysmal but the tips were generous.

A bottle of champagne was about £30. On a number of occasions he was given a £50 note and told to keep the change.

Duncan Rayner
Sunningdale, Berkshire

PoW common ground

SIR – My late father was a prisoner of war for five years (Letters, July 3). Although he was reluctant to discuss this part of his life, I eventually found out that he was taken prisoner by the Germans in 1940, aged 19.

Along with many others he was sent by train to East Prussia. The goods train was packed with prisoners. There was no food or sanitation.

Initially he was put to work building roads, and later he was billeted at a farm. The farmer and his wife treated him well, and, from what he told us, he became fond of them.

In 1945 the Russians were advancing westwards and he was forced to join the Long March across the Vistula, eventually arriving back in Germany. After being flown from there to England by the Americans, he spent three months in hospital. He was one of so many young men who had incredible stories to tell but couldn't share them with others.

After the war he befriended a German PoW who had worked on a farm in Somerset and stayed on. They had a lot in common.

Jan Branson
Burford, Oxfordshire

SIR – My late father, Joe Franklin of the London Rifle Brigade (Post Office Rifles), was taken prisoner by the Germans at the Battle of Crozat Canal in March 1918.

He subsequently worked on a farm, where he was well treated. His job involved caring for the farm horses, and this gave him great regard for farming in general.

Ray Franklin
Bridgwater, Somerset

Drip of the iceberg

SIR – Several years ago our son was disrupted at his desk at home because of something dark and sticky dripping through the light recess above him. He tasted it and discovered it was honey (Letters, July 2).

The next step involved removing half the ceiling to extricate the honeycomb. It was so enormous that it filled two large boxes. A very messy and expensive business.

Thesca Poynton-Taylor
Penn, Buckinghamshire

Then there is David Lammy, Labour's maverick shadow foreign spokesman, who, having joined Rayner in voting against the renewal of Trident in 2016, is a leading candidate to take up residence in King Charles Street next week if Starmer wins the election. Lammy's predilection for making gaffes, such as describing former US president Donald Trump as a "woman-hating, neo-Nazi sympathising sociopath", has seen him keep a low profile during the campaign for fear of alienating potential Labour voters.

This has not stopped him from persisting with controversial declarations, such as saying Britain would comply with an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for war crimes. Official UK policy is to challenge the court's move.

Starmer's refusal to confirm that Lammy is in the running to be our next foreign secretary suggests the Labour leader is having second thoughts about the appointment, a consideration that assumes even greater significance if Trump is re-elected US president in November.

If the new British government has any genuine intention of reviving our status as a leading world power, at the very least it requires politicians who can work with our allies, instead of antagonising them.

READ MORE at telegraph.co.uk/opinion

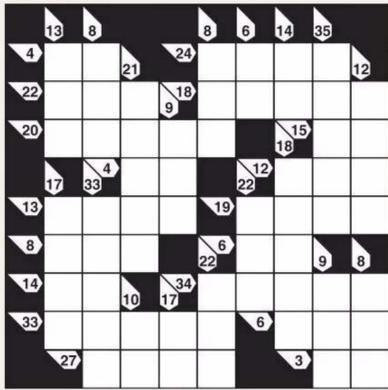
Puzzles, Mind Games & Telegraph Toughie



KAKURO

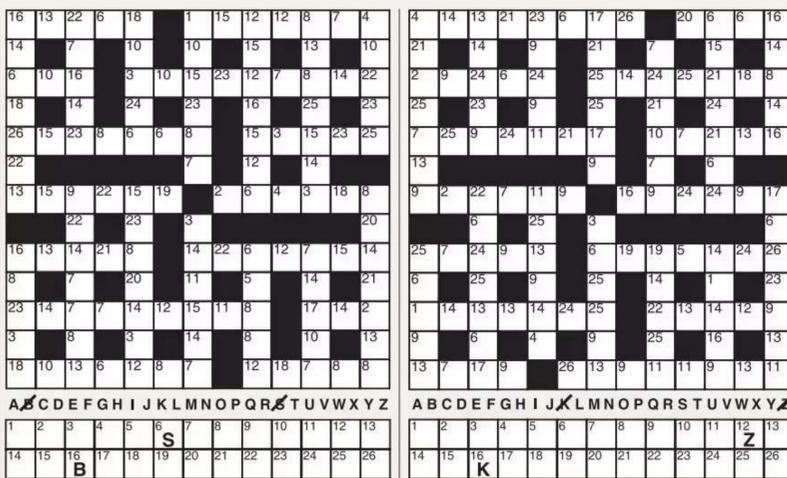
To solve kakuro you must enter a number between 1 and 9 in the empty squares without repeating a digit. The clues are the numbers on the black squares and are the sum of the solution numbers. The clue pointers indicate the direction of the answers. A block of two squares with a clue of 3 will solve as 2,1 and a 5 will produce 4,1 or 2,3. A 4 can only be 1,3, never 2,2. *Solution tomorrow.*

TOUGH NO 5071



CODEWORDS

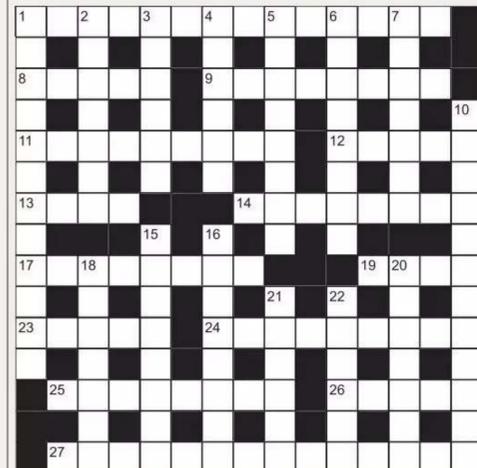
Numbers are substituted for letters in this crossword grid. In the smaller key grid some letters are solved. Use these as clues to complete your first word. This will solve more letters that you can then enter in the grids. *Solutions tomorrow.*



For today's right-hand codewords solutions call 0905 757 0131. For up to five extra letter clues call 0905 757 0130 or text DTCODE (leaving no spaces) to 64343. Calls cost £1 per minute, plus network access charge, texts cost £1, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Services open Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm. Spoke Ltd - Helpline 0333 202 3390.

Notes

NO 3299 SILVANUS

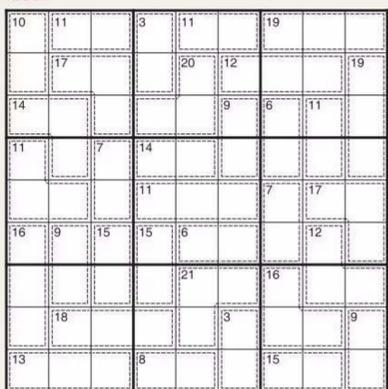


- Across**
- 1 Old City firm with current employees ignoring exercise (14)
 - 8 Lay to rest playwright needing no introduction (5)
 - 9 *Guardian* setter perhaps spy previously? (8)
 - 11 Dip in river over, English giggle briefly about dressing (9)
 - 12 Renegade ignominiously assumes stoop (5)
 - 13 Picked up method to make dairy product (4)
 - 14 Bond girl at dances right away will draw in males (8)
 - 17 Outside huge capital city discovered curious flower garden (8)
 - 19 Direct actor in starring role (4)
 - 23 Greeting to welcome American radio broadcaster who made a pilgrimage? (5)
 - 24 Serious birdwatcher's location maybe on island (2,7)
 - 25 Regular selections from long list helps main back complaint (8)
 - 26 Against relative getting trumpet? (5)
 - 27 Lack of appreciation from Angus left nurse disconcerted (14)
- Down**
- 1 Embarrassing link defended by church dignitary (12)
 - 2 Flipping apple tart intentionally contains salt! (7)
 - 3 Risk of art they nicked being damaged (6)
 - 4 Mathematician requires extra time working (6)
 - 5 Origin of item wrongly printed in bold (8)
 - 6 Snake concealed itself inside piano, twisted round (8)
 - 7 Eleventh-century Pope possibly having a long mane of hair? (7)
 - 10 EU set for arrangement with distant country (6,6)
 - 15 Force rising French street fashion designer to show coolness (8)
 - 16 Boxer dog given giblets periodically eating remains (8)
 - 18 Jazz band member mentioned is upwardly mobile (7)
 - 20 Government sacks four for effect (7)
 - 21 Exonerate aristocrat following plea, case dismissed (3,3)
 - 22 Student impulse for cycling in slush (6)

KILLER SUDOKU

Your clues are the caged numbers that represent the sum of the numbers within the cage. As in standard sudoku, each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9. *Solution tomorrow.*

TOUGH

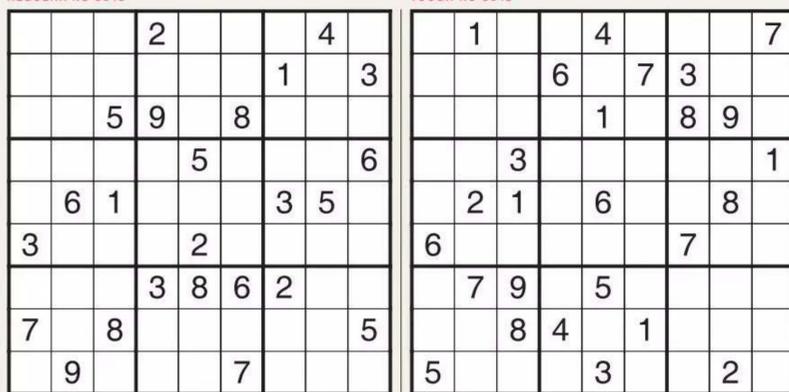


SUDOKU

To solve this puzzle each 3 x 3 box, each row and also each column must contain all the numbers from 1 to 9. There are numerous strategies to help you solve sudoku. *Solutions tomorrow.*

REGULAR NO 6641

TOUGH NO 6641



Sudoku Solution For today's tough sudoku solution call 0905 757 0136. Calls cost £1 per minute, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Services open Mon - Fri, 9am - 5pm. Spoke Ltd - Helpline 0333 202 3390.

PANAGRAM

Create words of four letters or more, always using the centre letter. Proper nouns and plurals are not allowed, and you can only use each letter once per word. Can you find the nine-letter Panagram? *Solution tomorrow.*



Up to 6 words - Word Finder, 7 - Wordsmith, 15 - Word Wizard, 22 - Word Master, 30 - Word Genius, 38 - Word Perfect

Toughie No 3298



Help with clues
Single clues 0905 757 0126. All Across/Down clues 0905 757 0127. Calls cost £1/minute, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Service open Mon-Fri, 9am - 5pm. Spoke Ltd - Helpline 0333 2023390.

ANAGRAMS

Each of the anagrams below spells out the name of a colour. *Solution tomorrow.*

- NON MANIC
- GAIN LOAM
- ENATE GRIN

MIND GYM

NO 4359

Start on the left with the given number and work your way across following the instructions in each cell. Target time: 30 seconds. *Solution below.*

BEGINNER		TRIPLE IT		HALVE IT		6/7 OF THIS		X BY ITSELF		ANSWER
18	2/3 OF THIS	x3.25	-61	HALVE IT	6/7 OF THIS	-15	X BY ITSELF	+75		ANSWER
INTERMEDIATE		TRIPLE IT		75% OF THIS		X BY ITSELF		HALVE IT		6/7 OF THIS
14	x11	-334	+6	X BY ITSELF	-74	HALVE IT	6/7 OF THIS			ANSWER
ADVANCED		TRIPLE IT		5/6 OF THIS		X BY ITSELF		HALVE IT		6/7 OF THIS
204	+17	x9.75	-267	5/6 OF THIS	x6.7	-245	+16	X BY ITSELF		ANSWER

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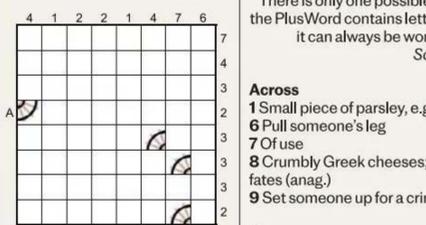
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*Collected as £82.37 for your first month and then £83.33 each month thereafter

TRAIN TRACKS

Lay down tracks to allow a train to travel from A to B. Only use straight and curved rails and the track cannot cross itself. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each column and row. *Solution tomorrow.*

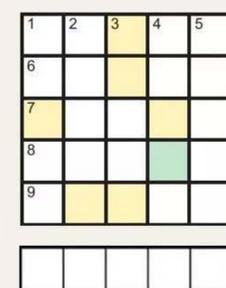


PLUSWORD

NO 774

Solve the crossword, then use letters in the shaded squares to complete the additional PlusWord. A letter in a green square appears in the same column in the PlusWord as it does in the crossword; a letter in a yellow square appears in the PlusWord, but in a different column than it does in the crossword. There is only one possible answer for the PlusWord; it may be that the PlusWord contains letters that aren't found in the crossword, but it can always be worked out logically without guessing. *Solution tomorrow.*

- Across**
- 1 Small piece of parsley, e.g.
 - 6 Pull someone's leg
 - 7 Of use
 - 8 Crumbly Greek cheeses; fates (anag.)
 - 9 Set someone up for a crime
- Down**
- 1 Cram
 - 2 Parker, Spider-Man
 - 3 Cucumber-based condiment
 - 4 Second-most popular religion globally
 - 5 Honking birds



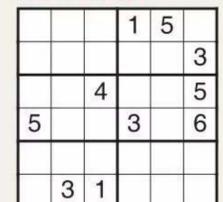
Play PlusWord for free online at telegraph.co.uk/pw or scan the QR code



MINI SUDOKU

Fill in the grid in such a way that every row and column and every 2 x 3 box contains the numbers 1-6. *Solution tomorrow.*

MODERATE NO 4126



WORD LADDER

Change just one letter to go from the top word to the bottom word. Each step must be a valid word and you cannot change the order of the letters. There are clues below for each rung, but they are not in order. For an extra challenge, try to complete the puzzle without using the clues. *Solution tomorrow.*

- FORLORN, GANG, HOVEL, BOND, JOIN, RUN DOWN



THE SOLUTIONS

Yesterday's solutions

Sudoku Regular and Tough No 6640

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

Word Ladder: Gulf, gull, pull, pall, pave, cave.

Anagrams: 1. Fault plane 2. Ocean basin 3. Archipelago.
Panagram: Fittingly, flitting, tiding, tiling, niftily, lignify, lifting, flying, flitting, fitting, tingly, tiling, flying, flinty, filing, tying, nifty, lying, liny, liny, liny, glint, flint, fling, fitly, titi, tiny, tint, ting, tilt, liny, lint, ling, lift, inti, inly, gilt, gift, flit.

Today's Mind Gym

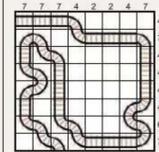
Beginner: 156 Intermediate: 78 Advanced: 196

PlusWord No 773

H	A	I	K	U
E	L	L	E	N
I	L	I	A	D
D	I	A	N	E
I	N	C	U	R

Duchy

Train Tracks



Killer Sudoku

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

Mini Sudoku No 4125

4	5	3	2	6	1
6	1	2	5	4	3
2	6	4	3	1	5
5	3	1	4	2	6
1	4	5	6	3	2
3	2	6	1	5	4

Codewords 1 and 2

D	N	E	B	Y	P	I	J	X	V	L	G	O
K	F	M	S	R	H	C	T	V	Z	G	A	W
L	A	X	O	H	G	R	O	D	K	T	B	F
E	Y	C	M	I	V	P	Z	S	J	U	W	N

Kakuro No 5070

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

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Business



MARKETS		CURRENCIES		COMMODITIES	
FTSE 100 8171.12 +49.92 (+0.61pc)	BIGGEST RISER Intl Cons Air 173³/₈sp +9 (+5.51pc)	BIGGEST FALLER JD Sports Fash 112⁷/₈sp -4 ³ / ₈ (-4.00pc)	£\$ Rate 1.2761 Change +0.85¢	GOLD \$2354.64 (£1845) +24.77 (+1.06pc)	Milan in the money How Giorgia Meloni made Italy a magnet for the super-rich just as Britain turned its back on wealthy
DOW JONES 39308.00 -23.85 (-0.06pc)	FTSE 250 20529.42 +334.95 (+1.66pc)	FTSE All Share 4463.09 +33.43 (+0.75pc)	£€ Rate 1.1811 Change +0.11¢	BRENT CRUDE \$87.34 (September) +1.10 (+1.28pc)	Shirking from home Remote staff are watching TV rather than working, and doing so at the expense of the rest of us Matthew Lynn
Nikkei 225 40580.76 +506.07 (+1.26pc)	FTSE Eurotop 100 4078.58 +22.38 (+0.55pc)	EURO STOXX 50 4965.80 +59.47 (+1.21pc)	Page 22	Page 22	Page 21
S&P 500 5537.02 +28.01 (+0.51pc)	Nasdaq 18188.30 +159.54 (+0.88pc)				

Royal Mail faces surging debt bill after takeover

Buyout risks trebling borrowing costs owing to the billions being taken on in financing £3.6bn deal

By Ben Marlow

THE future of Royal Mail is set to be hamstrung by surging interest payments after Daniel Křetínský's debt-fuelled takeover of the postal service.

The £3.6bn offer from Mr Křetínský – known as the “Czech sphinx” – for Royal Mail's parent company International Distribution Services (IDS) risks trebling its borrowing costs as a result of the billions of pounds being taken on to finance the deal, calculations show.

The revelation will fuel concerns that Royal Mail's modernisation and investment plans will be jeopardised by its debt burden, and that its service obliga-

credit rating is expected to be downgraded as a result of it being swallowed by EP Group – a move that is likely to further push up its cost of borrowing.

Ratings agency S&P has said it is minded to lower the rating on IDS a notch to BBB-, leaving it one level above non-investment or speculative grade.

Mr Křetínský's snoop will result in the Royal Mail falling into private hands for the first time in its 508-year history.

The full extent of Mr Křetínský's reliance on the international credit markets to fund his bid was revealed in hundreds of pages of documents filed with the London Stock Exchange last week. To finance his raid, Mr Křetínský has turned to some of the world's largest financing houses: BNP Paribas; Société Générale; Citibank; and Unicredit.

Together, the quartet has agreed to provide four separate loans. This includes a £1.1bn loan, a bridging loan of £750m, another bridging credit line of £500m and a revolving credit facility of £500m. Although interest rates are starting to come down from the peaks of last summer, they remain the highest they have been since the global financial crash more than 15 years ago.

IDS has also warned that change of control clauses in the company's lending agreements mean more than £1.4bn of existing bonds may have to be repaid and a £925m loan facility could also be pulled. Analysts think it is unlikely lenders will call their debts in but EP has said it stands ready to provide a funding backstop, highlighting the uncertainty created by its buyout.

The tie-up is set to cost the two sides a combined £146m in fees to an army of bankers, brokers, lawyers, PR professionals and other consultants who helped negotiate the deal.

Martin Seidenberg, IDS's German chief, who took charge only last year, is in line to scoop more than £5m if the sale goes through. A maximum payout of up to £5.4m is dependent on the takeover completing and Mr Seidenberg hitting performance targets.

An EP spokesman said: “Our offer is structured to maintain IDS's investment grade credit rating. IDS and Royal Mail will be backed by the significant financial resources of EP Group and we have made legally binding commitments which completely ringfence the Royal Mail business.”

£2.9bn

The fresh loans being loaded on to IDS's balance sheet, which is already weighed down by more than £2bn of existing debt

tions could be affected as well. The deal will result in close to £2.9bn of fresh loans being loaded on to IDS's balance sheet, which is already weighed down by more than £2bn of existing debt.

Sources close to Mr Křetínský's EP Group have indicated that it expects the finance package that has been clinched with four large investment banks to come with an average borrowing rate of just under 6pc a year.

That would leave the UK company grappling with as much as £170m of additional interest payments, on top of nearly £100m that it accumulated last year. Yet bond analysts fear EP is being too conservative in its estimates.

One debt market expert pointed out that IDS is paying 6.7pc a year on £250m of outstanding bonds. “Clearly this [the bid financing] is a riskier structure than that,” they said. Meanwhile, it is thought that a slew of one-off fees on the lending facilities could add tens of millions of pounds more to the final bill. The two sides have also disclosed that IDS's



Hawksmoor on sale for £100m as veganism boom fades

By Daniel Woolfson

HIGH-END steakhouse Hawksmoor is in talks to sell itself for up to £100m amid waning enthusiasm for veganism.

Investment bank Stephens has been reportedly hired to seek a buyer for Hawksmoor, which has been majority controlled by British private equity firm Graphite Capital since 2013.

Hawksmoor was founded in Shoreditch, east London, in 2006 and was credited with helping to revive the steakhouse concept in Britain.

A Telegraph review of the chain's Covent Garden branch, which opened in 2010, said: “The steak isn't just great; it's the best in London.” The chain has since expanded to 13

branches, including an outpost in Dublin and two in the US, which is a stronghold of steakhouses. Hawksmoor's New York restaurant, opened in 2021, won plaudits from *The New York Times*, which said it was “more than a case of bringing coals to Newcastle.”

Hawksmoor opened a new location in Chicago last week and proceeds from any sale are expected to fund further expansion. Founders Will Beckett and Huw Gott are expected to retain their stakes, should a sale be completed. Hawksmoor did not comment on the report of a sale, which was first reported by the *Financial Times*.

However, Mr Beckett said: “We've got a great relationship with Graphite and together we are getting to know

Hawksmoor was founded in east London by Will Beckett, left, and Huw Gott

the US investment community in more depth. As that continues, an opportunity may emerge that we wish to explore together.” Graphite Capital declined to comment.

Attempts to find new investment come as diners return to meat after a short-lived boom in veganism faded. Consumers are losing interest in fake meat alternatives amid questions about their health benefits and an uptick in veganism seen during the pandemic has failed to maintain momentum.

Several formerly vegan-only restaurants have introduced meat on to their menus to attract customers. Nomas Gas-

trobar in Macclesfield, Cheshire, said it was adding sausages and bacon to its menus in January, after some customers refused to pay the full price when they realised options did not include meat.

Nick Allen, the chief executive of the British Meat Processors Association, said: “Nobody in the meat industry is losing sleep about the rise of veganism at the moment.” He said members were experiencing a “resurgence” in demand for steaks across both restaurants and supermarkets.

Hawksmoor is expected to post underlying earnings of £10m for the year to the end of June, compared to £7m in 2022 and £2.9m in 2021.

Sales have risen 25pc at rival steak chain Gaucho over the past two years.

Ratcliffe delays launch of electric SUV

By Matt Oliver

SIR JIM RATCLIFFE'S car company has delayed production of its electric SUV, blaming a lack of consumer demand and tougher net zero rules expected to come into force under a Labour government.

Less than five months after unveiling the Fusilier, Ineos Automotive has said it will hold off from launching the SUV because of a “lack of long-term clarity” from policymakers.

The vehicle had been expected to take advantage of a so-called range extender – a small petrol-fuelled combustion engine that would have been able to top up the charge of the battery. But the company expects this to fall foul

‘We are delaying for two reasons: consumer uptake of EVs, and uncertainty around tariffs and taxation’

of bans on the sale of new petrol cars coming into force across Europe in 2035, with Sir Keir Starmer's Labour Party vowing to bring the UK's ban forward by five years to 2030 if it wins.

Ineos has not revealed a new timeline for when it will launch the Fusilier, as first reported by Bloomberg. The vehicle had been slated for release in 2027.

Sir Jim, the petrochemicals tycoon who also co-owns Manchester United football club, first outlined plans for the

electric SUV in February. The Fusilier was envisioned as an electrified version of Ineos's Grenadier and buyers would have had the option of an all-electric version or a hybrid model with a small petrol engine.

The battery-only version was to have a range of at least 248 miles (400km) while the range-extender version would have a battery range of about 168 miles, supplemented by the petrol motor. Sir Jim argued the range extender option would assuage fears of “range anxiety”.

However, this week the company told Bloomberg: “We are delaying the launch of the Ineos Fusilier for two reasons: reluctant consumer uptake of EVs, and industry uncertainty around tariffs, timings and taxation.”

Jessops hit with winding up petition

By Hannah Boland

JESSOPS, the camera retailer owned by *Dragons' Den* star Peter Jones, has been hit with a winding up petition from the taxman.

The company was issued with the demand from HM Revenue & Customs this week, according to court filings, in a dispute said to be over unpaid taxes.

Winding up petitions are a legal means to force companies into liquidation to recoup monies owed.

They are used to force the issue of unpaid debts and are often resolved before a company is placed into administration, meaning Jessops may not end up being liquidated. HMRC said it could not comment on matters related to indi-

vidual companies. Jessops was contacted for comment.

The threat of liquidation follows years of turmoil at Jessops, which has struggled to make a profit and has called in administrators three times since late 2019. It has been through a series of restructurings, including closing the majority of its stores as more customers switch to buying electronics online.

Jessops has been owned by Mr Jones since 2013 through his PJ Investment Group business. The entrepreneur, who is an investor on the BBC's *Dragons' Den*, initially bought Jessops out of administration.

Mr Jones has struggled to make a success of it as the rise of high-powered smartphone cameras has undercut sales

and as much of the market has shifted online. Earlier this week, Jessops reported a loss of £1.2m for its most recent financial year despite taking actions that “streamlined” its business.

Sales fell to £19.9m for the year to Oct 1, compared to £21.6m a year earlier. Jessops said it was trying to make its business “more accessible” to younger customers and engage with “content creators at an early stage in their imaging journey”, referencing those who use cameras to post photos and videos to platforms such as Instagram and YouTube.

Jessops was founded in Leicester in 1935 by Frank Jessop and grew to be a fixture of Britain's high streets, expanding as cameras became cheaper.

Cashless wishing well isn't coining it

By Pieter Sneyvangers

THE Roman Baths Foundation has seen donations plummet after banning people from throwing coins in its “wishing well” and asking for contactless payments instead.

Donations have fallen tenfold since the charity stopped the popular feature in March 2022. Its most recent accounts show it collected

£9,490 in donations in 2023/24, a fall from £104,129 in 2018/19 – the last full year its small pool was open as a wishing well.

Bath and North East Somerset council, which oversees the charity, banned the practice of throwing coins in its pool in part due to a “notable decline in the use of cash” since the pandemic.

Other reasons the council concluded it was “no longer a viable income source” were it

took too long to drain the bath to collect the coins and the process “wasted water”.

A spokesman for Bath and North East Somerset Council said: “The tradition of throwing coins into the water had begun to damage the 2,000-year-old structure of the circular bath, putting the monument at unnecessary risk.”

The bath was used as a cold plunge pool, or frigidarium, in Roman times.



Why macho EV industry is driving women away

'Hypermasculinity dominates so much car advertising' and the problem is getting worse. By Matt Oliver

The car industry's "woman problem" has long been a subject of criticism, from macho advertising to the lack of female-shaped crash-test dummies.

It was hoped that the dawn of electric vehicles (EVs) might offer a useful moment to turn the page – but on current trends, electric car cheerleaders risk being disappointed.

Worrying research by online dealer Auto Trader shows the problem is getting worse, not better.

"We imagined there was going to be this great moment for some of that gender imbalance we've seen in the past to be redressed with EVs," says Catherine Faiers, chief operating officer of Auto Trader.

"Slightly depressingly, we have found the exact reverse. Women feel even more left behind by the EV transition and find it even more daunting. That's due to a combination of a lack of confidence, very technical language being used and horror stories they've read about. So this is a real challenge for the industry."

Male-orientated marketing has long been an issue for carmakers, despite progress in recent decades.

Elon Musk was criticised for what was regarded as the highly masculine design of Tesla's Cybertruck – an angular, shiny beast of a vehicle that he boasted was big enough to "mount a missile launcher".

Musk also said the vehicle was bulletproof and this claim has spawned a genre of online videos where men try and destroy the car using everything from flamethrowers to axes.

Research by advertising agency CPB

(now Forsman & Bodenfors) last year found that half of women still felt the automotive industry didn't understand them, with eight in 10 unable to name any brand that did a good job of communicating with them.

"Think of the hypermasculinity that dominates so much car advertising – all moody mountainscapes and powerful machines dramatically conquering icy roads," wrote Helen James, chief executive of Forsman & Bodenfors, for an article in *MarketingWeek*.

Yet there's no inherent reason that women should be any less interested in EVs, Auto Trader's Faiers points out, given that they hold half of all UK driving licences. Despite this, a survey of 4,000 drivers last year and more recent focus groups by Auto Trader found evidence that women were less confident about making the switch to electric than men.

Part of this comes down to views about the whole car-buying process, which was disliked by one in two women. Many aren't as excited as men by the research phase, either, Auto Trader said, partly because there's a lack of comprehensive motoring coverage in many lifestyle magazines aimed at women.

One female survey respondent said: "I find websites dedicated to cars really quite overwhelming. They are heavy on the information, difficult to read and filled with jargon." There was also low trust in dealerships, where some women felt they would be pressured into making a purchase they weren't sure about. Yet the strongest push factor came from a worry about EVs that is common to both sexes: range anxiety. Women are even more concerned about this than men, Auto Trader's study found.

"Women are much more likely to be doing high-dependency journeys, where they've got other people such as kids, family and friends in the car," Faiers says. "So actually, the fear of running out of charge or the fear of tech not working is really amplified for them in that buying journey."

For example, whereas 39pc of men agreed an EV "might not be charged



Elon Musk's claim that Cybertruck was bulletproof has inspired videos of men trying to destroy it

when I need it" this rose to 49pc among women.

Auto Trader said this likely reflects the outsized role many women still play in the home, taking on more childcare duties, organisation of family calendars and chores than their male counterparts on average.

Despite modern progress towards sex equality, some 63pc of women told the British Social Attitudes Survey that they still did more housework than their male partners last year.

Many are shouldering the lion's share of chores such as childcare and cooking duties on top of work commitments, a situation described as a "second shift" by social scientists.

This comes through in Auto Trader's research, with women in focus groups expressing concerns that something could go wrong with their EV at a vital moment.

"There was a fear that came through really strongly: what if I need to take my child to hospital, or my dad's ill and I've got to do something?" says Marc Palmer, the head of insights at the company. "These are things they wouldn't ordinarily say about petrol or

diesel cars and it's really holding them back in making a switch."

In the survey last year, one female respondent said: "I can't help worrying about what might happen if I forget. I might end up stranded in an emergency."

Another gave a more specific example: "Our youngest daughter has health issues. We need to know we can get in the car and go to the hospital quickly. It would be a disaster if we had an EV and it hasn't charged properly."

Women also shared concerns with men about whether there were enough public charge points, while worrying more about issues of safety.

"Sometimes charge points are poorly lit or tucked away in the background," says Palmer.

While 53pc of men said they felt safe using public charge points, only 43pc of women said the same. Over-55s were the most concerned, with only 33pc agreeing they felt safe doing so.

Meanwhile, the disparity in housework duties translated to another concern: some women felt that buying an EV would simply add more work – such as keeping it

charged – to their already-long list, says Auto Trader.

"This is just another thing to worry about that I know will fall to me," one female survey respondent said.

However, Auto Trader also found that once women tried EVs and purchased them they became much more positive. Many highlighted the savings they made on fuel, the quieter ride and the modern technology.

This was particularly the case after they went on test drives, despite a reluctance among some to do so.

Not having to visit petrol stations was also cited as a bonus by one third of women. "I think [the concerns] are down to misunderstandings rather than women not liking EVs," says Fiona Howarth, chief executive of Octopus EV, which offers electric cars on lease.

"Electric vehicles are fantastic for women. Women are often the quiet decision-makers at home, so they're likely to be the buyers and the budgeters – they're almost twice as likely as men to take charge of household budget."

"So actually, things like being able to run the car on a fraction of the cost

of their petrol car is a really attractive benefit.

"And any working mum will tell you she wants a few extra minutes back in her day, so the convenience of not having to go to a petrol station and fill up a car is a great win – because the car will just fill up while you're spending time with your kids or doing some of the other things you've got to do."

To improve female attitudes to EVs, carmakers should focus on what women who drive them actually find they like, says Auto Trader.

That means showcasing them in more places, including women's magazines, hammering home the message about cost savings, encouraging women to go on test drives and making home charger installations as easy as possible.

"It is a massive technology shift and you have to reverse all of your thinking around how you use the car, how you fuel the car, how you pay for the car," says Faiers at Auto Trader. "And the industry has effectively carried on using all of the old highly technical language. "This is a moment where we should be changing the game."



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How Meloni lured the super-rich back to Milan

The Italian city is poised to usurp London as the go-to destination for millionaires, writes Michael Bow

When Giorgia Meloni took to the stage to deliver a landmark tax speech to Italian legislators earlier this year, she launched an impassioned defence of how the ultra-rich should be treated. Dressed in a sober black blazer and talking with trademark briskeness, the prime minister urged Italy's ruling elite to "put those who create wealth in the best conditions to produce it".

"The more wealth that is produced, the more the state can use its share of that wealth to provide the solutions citizens are waiting for," she said. "The purpose of a tax system is not to stifle society, but rather to help it prosper."

The message underlined Meloni's fierce attempt to shake Italy out of years of stagnation and return it to its post-war economic heyday. Now, as Sir Keir Starmer mulls a series of wealth tax rises on the ultra-rich in the UK, and France battles political uncertainty, her reforms to put Italy back on the map are bearing fruit.

In recent months there has been a growing proportion of the super-rich flocking to Italy, drawn by Meloni's reform agenda.

The Milan stock market, a barometer for confidence in Italy, is also outstripping its European rivals this year, with the Italian economy growing faster than industrial powerhouse Germany.

The shake-up marks a stunning reversal of fortunes for a country once derided by critics as an economic basket case.

To achieve this turnaround, Italy has sought to appeal to the billionaire and millionaire classes by introducing a €100,000 (£85,000) annual flat tax charged on income earned abroad.

The attractiveness of this flat tax on foreign earnings has already led to an influx of people seeking to take advantage of the scheme – more than policymakers were expecting.

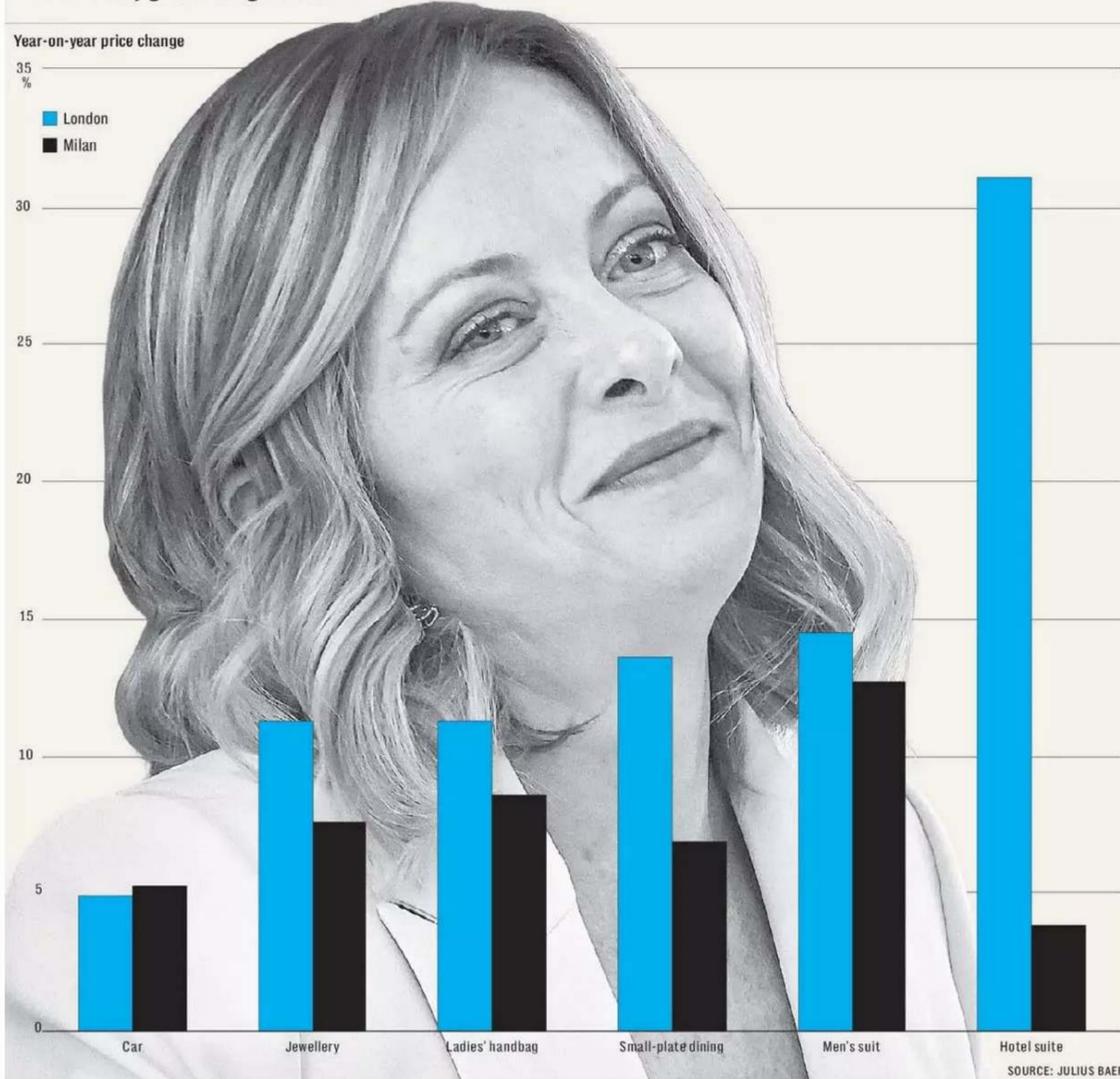
In total, the number of people moving to Italy who qualified for the scheme reached 4,000 last year, Bloomberg reported – with this figure expected to rise by another 2,000 in 2024.

Since becoming prime minister two years ago, Meloni has sought to build upon the pro-business tax regime introduced by her predecessor Matteo Renzi.

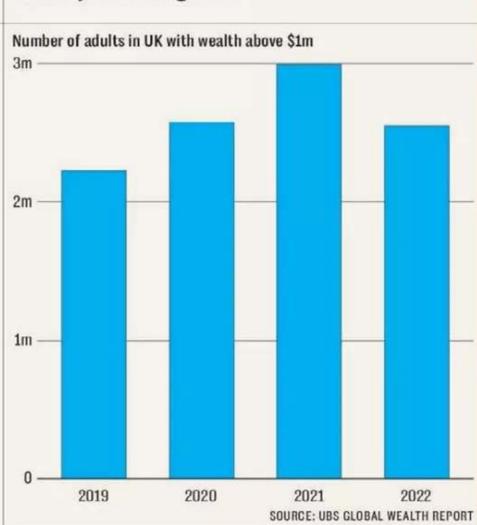
However, her policies have been given renewed appeal as a growing number of the super-rich are quitting Britain in search of lower-tax economies overseas.

Driving this shift has been the UK's move to abolish non-dom status, a

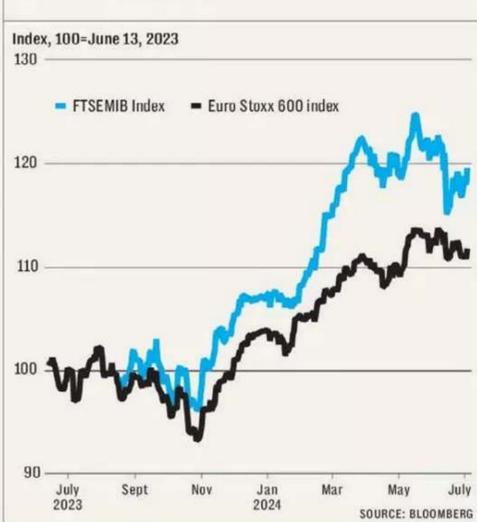
Price of luxury goods rising slower in Milan



Wealthy are fleeing Britain



Italy's stock market boom



'The purpose of a tax system is not to stifle society, but rather to help it prosper'

policy first proposed by the Tories but soon set to be toughened up by Labour if it succeeds at the general election today. Under non-dom plans laid out by the Tories in the Budget, individuals who arrive in the UK will not have to pay any tax on overseas earnings for four years. After this, they will pay ordinary income taxes on their overseas earnings. However, if Labour clinches power on July 4 it plans to go further. Fears of a tax clampdown have already led to many well-heeled investors choosing to set up trusts to shelter their non-UK wealth from UK taxes, while others have quit the country altogether. Peter Ferrigno, director of tax services at Henley & Partners, said that the Italian tax regime was "attracting a lot of interest" owing to some of the UK changes. According to Henley & Partners,

which advises high-net-worth individuals, Italy is expected to lure an additional 2,200 millionaires in 2024, making it the wealthy's most desired country destination in Europe. Ayesha Vardag, a City lawyer who represents the super-rich in lucrative divorce battles, said she has seen a flood of clients quitting Britain amid fears of Sir Keir raising taxes. As well as moving to the likes of Dubai and Monaco, she adds that Italy has emerged as "one of the main beneficiaries". Paris too has often been where most billionaires flee when the UK targets their taxes. However, the political chaos engulfing France because of the popularity of the hard-Right National Rally has cast a shadow over the City of Light. In contrast, Meloni and Italy appear increasingly a safe haven. Despite fears about her populist

allegiances, Meloni has ruled as a Right-wing moderate, toeing the line in Brussels, supporting Nato and keeping markets happy with her economic policies. And while Italy still has Europe's largest debt pile at €2.9 trillion, her pro-growth agenda has kept investors on-side. Yet it is not all to do with economics, as other, softer considerations are also making Milan the new go-to destination for the super-rich. While London may boast small pockets of luxury in tiny districts such as Mayfair and New Bond Street, Milan oozes luxury brands at every turn, further tempting the high rollers to decamp. Milan is home to elite fashion brands such as Bulgari, Gucci, Versace and Prada. Sports car manufacturers including Lamborghini and Ferrari also populate the industrial north. Adding to the city's appeal is the fact that prices for luxury goods and

'The Labour tax proposals have accelerated people's plans to move and they want to move quicker'

Michelin-starred food are rising slower in Milan than they are in London. This is evidenced by recent figures from private bank Julius Baer, which found that jewellery prices rose 7.6pc in Milan last year versus 11.3pc in London. That is without taking into account the policy of VAT-free shopping, which Britain has abandoned in recent years. All of this is fuelling Milan's bid to usurp London as the playground for the filthy rich, as Italian tax breaks are now as in demand as Gucci handbags. Should Sir Keir gain power today, the expectation is that this shift will only gain more traction. "The Labour tax proposals have accelerated people's plans to move and they want to move quicker," says Nimesh Shah, the chief executive of accountancy firm Blick Rothenberg. "I've never been so popular with Italian advisers, they are knocking down my door."

London-listed games maker in £2.2bn private equity takeover

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

THE video games developer Keywords Studios has backed a £2.2bn takeover bid in a move that will see yet another London-listed company taken private. Dublin-based Keywords, which is listed on London's junior Aim market, has backed a cash bid worth £24.50 a share from the Swedish private equity firm EQT.

The bid price – worth £2.2bn including debts – marks a 66.7pc premium to Keywords' closing share price on May 17, the day before EQT first approached it. It is also higher than the initial proposal, but lower than a £25.50 approach put forward in May. EQT previously made four unsolicited takeover proposals for Keywords, which had been rejected by the company.

Don Robert, Keywords chairman, said: "On balance, the board believes that this offer represents a good opportunity for Keywords Studios shareholders to realise value for their investment in cash upfront at a significant premium."

The takeover will deal yet another blow to the London Stock Exchange, which has seen a raft of firms either go private or switch their listings overseas. Major businesses that have left include the Irish construction giant CRH and Paddy Power-owner Flutter, which has switched its primary listing to New York.

Keywords' decision to accept the takeover bid follows a share price slide in 2023. While gaming boomed during



London-listed Keywords Studios develops games, audio and art for Epic Games, the maker of Fortnite

lockdowns, developers have struggled post-pandemic as people have returned to more normal patterns of playing. EQT said it believed the takeover could help Keywords "increase the pace of its growth and fulfil its long-term potential". Jean Salata, chairman of EQT Asia, said: "As a private company under EQT's ownership, Keywords Studios will be well positioned to make the long-term investments required for the transition to next-gen video gaming and for global expansion. We plan to draw on our experience in the services and technology sectors to support management and invest further in innovation, talent, and M&A to accelerate Keywords Studios' current strategy." The private equity company has a

track record of investing in technology businesses, having spent more than \$37bn (£29bn) on 116 tech investments. Keywords develops games, audio and art for Fortnite-maker Epic Games and Call of Duty-maker Activision Blizzard. It was set up in 1998 and now has operations in 26 countries. Mr Robert said: "Whilst the board expects the continued execution of Keywords Studios' strategic objectives and its leadership position to create significant value, the board is also mindful of the near-term challenges in the broader video games and entertainment industries, as well as other longer-term uncertainties, which have caused volatile returns for Keywords Studios' shareholders over the past 15 months."

British stocks are 'benefiting' from French election chaos

By Eir Nolsøe

BRITISH stocks are benefiting from political turbulence in France, a City investor has said. In recent weeks there has been a flood of investment into UK markets, with funds seeking stability amid the chaos of Emmanuel Macron's snap election.

Isabel Albarran, investment officer at Close Brothers Asset Management, said there has been a sharp rise in demand for UK assets, which are increasingly being viewed as a safe haven.

This has been driven by uncertainty surrounding France's election, she said, which is in contrast with Labour's expected victory at the polls today.

Ms Albarran said: "Sell-side firms we speak with have seen a steady pick-up in UK net inflows in the last month."

"One firm reported net inflows of c.£350m [£276m] last week, 20 times the net inflow of the week after the UK election announcement."

She added that another bank had reported "a fourth straight week of outflows" from the Euro Stoxx 50, Europe's blue-chip index.

Turmoil has been reflected across French banking stocks, which have fallen 9pc since Mr Macron called his snap election last month.

This has led to hedge funds seeking to profit from the turmoil, she said.

Ms Albarran, whose firm manages £17bn of assets, said: "There have been especially hedge funds taking selling positions in the euro, so caution on

European assets in general and then we have also seen a bit of a hit for eurozone financials as a result."

British banks have been the biggest beneficiaries from this, Ms Albarran added.

It comes as separate figures for June showed that the amount of money flowing out of the British stock market has slowed significantly since the start of the year. The second half of June also saw less selling than the first, according to the largest global fund network, Calastone.

Market jitters sparked by France's election have calmed somewhat after the results from the first round of the parliamentary elections failed to give Marine Le Pen's National Rally an outright majority. However, the outlook for the French economy still looks challenging given its growing debt pile.

Ms Albarran said: "A lot of the optimism about France had relied on Mr Macron being able to continue to deliver legislative reform. That is going to be really difficult if you have a parliament that is at odds with you."

That is compared

to recent stability in the UK, which Ms Albarran said is a "demonstration of what markets do and don't like".

British equities have long been considered cheap compared with stocks in other markets, fuelled by a discount post-Brexit. While there is still a long way to go to close that gap, Ms Albarran said a large Labour majority would increase demand for UK stocks.

She said: "Markets like stability and clarity from a political perspective. The fact that we have seen a bit more interest over recent weeks is quite encouraging. If the UK is in a period of political stability, especially if it can deliver better growth, then it might look a more attractive prospect if Europe suddenly is in a more existential crisis."

Keith Balmer, at Columbia Threadneedle Investments, shared this sentiment. He said: "With the expectation of a two-term Labour government, the least that we should hope for is greater stability and longer-term planning. This should attract international investors back to the UK."



Emmanuel Macron's snap election shocked markets

EU lawmakers urge Brussels to weaken 2035 ban on new petrol car sales

By Matt Oliver and Chris Price

EUROPEAN UNION lawmakers are calling on Brussels to weaken a 2035 ban on new petrol car sales, in the latest blow to the bloc's net zero agenda.

Members of the centre-Right European People's Party (EPP), the biggest grouping in the European Parliament, are preparing to challenge the policy in the wake of last month's elections. A

draft proposal by the party pledges to revise "the rules for CO2 reduction for new cars and vans to allow for the use of alternative zero-emission fuels beyond 2035", according to Reuters.

Any move to weaken the net zero car rules risks isolating Britain, with Sir Keir Starmer's Labour Party – which is on course to win today's general election – pledging to bring forward a ban on new petrol cars to 2030. No further

details were set out by the EPP but the suggestion is likely aimed at providing a lifeline for combustion engine cars via carve-outs from the 2035 ban for so-called e-fuels, which are synthetic fuels that emit no carbon dioxide.

The European Commission has pledged to set out a route for e-fuels to be used post-2035 after Germany warned earlier proposals would hurt its domestic car industry. The EPP said it

also wanted to allow development of "cutting-edge combustion technology".

Its proposals will pile pressure on Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, who is seeking to win support from the European Parliament amid a recent surge by Right-wing parties.

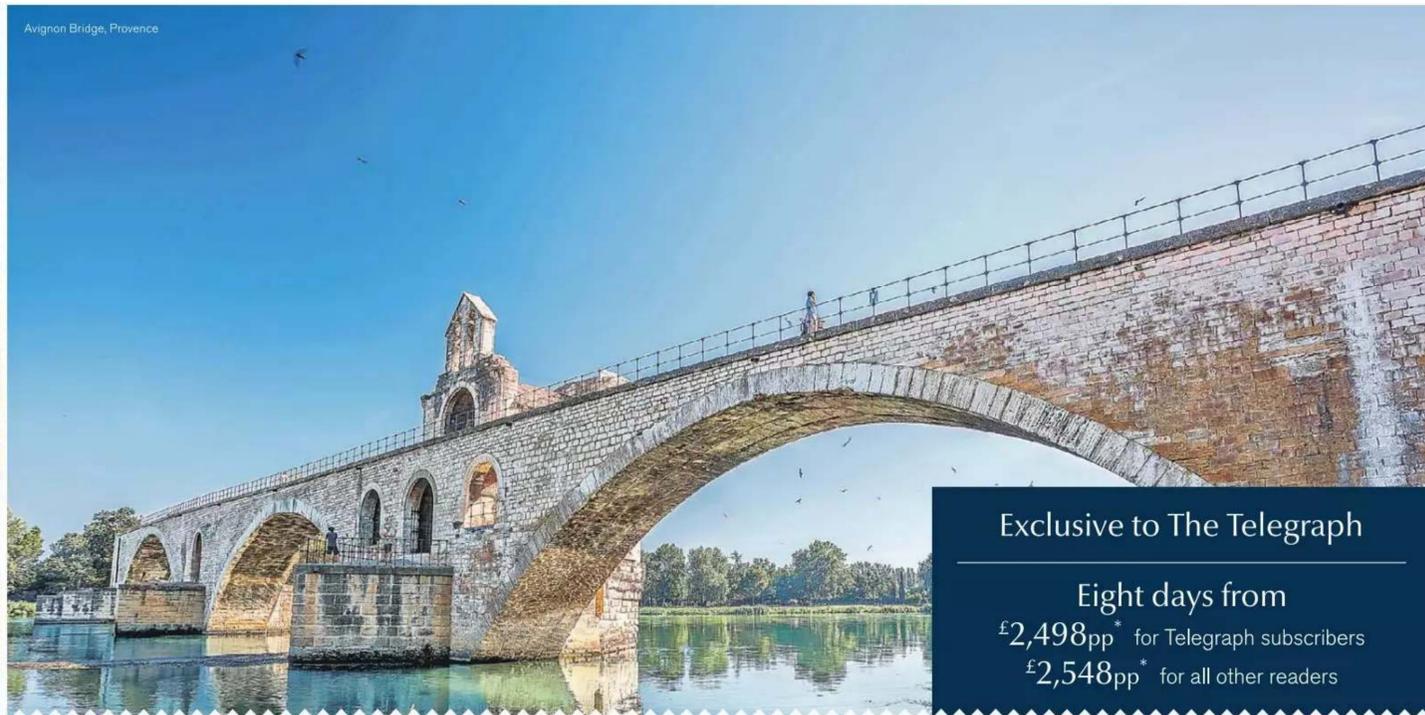
Her job has become harder following a row with Giorgia Meloni, the Italian prime minister, which has weakened

her support among European MPs. The EPP won the biggest share of any group in last month's European Parliament poll with 188 out of 720 lawmakers, cementing its influence in the assembly.

At a meeting in Portugal this week, lawmakers from the group are discussing their aims for the parliament's latest five-year term. They are pursuing the policy change against the backdrop of slowing electric vehicle sales in Europe.

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WFH is a conspiracy against the rest of us

MATTHEW LYNN



Staff who turn on the TV while switching off from their job will bring Britain to the brink of bankruptcy

It is not just when there is a major football tournament on – a time when, in fairness, it has long been acceptable to forget about the spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations for a couple of hours. According to a survey out this week, a staggering 82pc of people who are meant to be “working” from home admit to watching television on their employer’s time.

But why would anyone be surprised by that anymore? In reality, we are on a slippery slope towards HWAA (“hardly working at all”), with staff becoming more and more brazen about slacking

off. Eventually, this is going to crush the economy.

We have been lectured for years about the benefits of WFH. We’ve been told it will improve morale, save time (and money) on commuting and, most importantly, boost productivity. The incoming Labour government would like to enshrine in law an automatic right to ask to skip the office a few days a week, making it very hard for companies to say no.

The public sector unions have already made it routine for many people working for the Government. Gradually, the idea of showing up at your desk from Monday to Friday is being consigned to the past.

Funnily enough, however, the HR consultants who champion WFH didn’t include “watching more TV” among its many apparent benefits. And yet over four fifths of the 2,000 home workers surveyed this week confessed to watching two hours of TV a day while still on company time. This figure rises to almost three hours for workers in London.

Even leaving aside the revelation

that 15pc of these viewers are watching *Come Dine with Me*, which unless they work at a bad restaurant hardly seems likely to improve any relevant skills, there are two big problems with the results of this poll. The first is that, with up to 28pc of the average working day distracted by having a TV show on in the background, staff are clearly not as productive as they would be if they were in a normal office.

If you have ever wondered why you were put on hold halfway through a discussion on your mortgage renewal options, perhaps you now have an answer. A contestant just gave an incorrect response on *Tipping Point*.

How do we reconcile this with the insistence that staff are better motivated, and more productive, away from the grind of the office? As many managers have feared, some are simply lounging around, their laptops nowhere in sight.

The second, and perhaps more worrying, problem is the attitude toward this paid slacking off. Staff are becoming more and more brazen about how working from home is just

an excuse to HWAA. Seriously, what possesses people to tell a survey that they watch TV for two hours of a working day? Last year, a survey found nearly a quarter of Gen Z employees gamed on the clock. We can only assume that they no longer care anymore, don’t worry about feeling any sense of shame, and have retreated into an entitled cocoon where that is considered normal.

‘We are on a slippery slope towards “hardly working at all”, with staff more brazen about slacking off’

This country is on a slippery slope. How long before we have a “right to watch TV”? A “right to switch off”, another regulation Labour previously proposed, could quickly be turned into a right to ignore customers or your boss until *Loose Women* has finished. Working from home will be turned into working from the beach during the summer months. And work-life

balance will be taken to mean that everyone is allowed to go to the gym or walk the dog in office hours. It will keep on escalating.

The blunt truth is this: when people started working from home in huge numbers during the pandemic the legacy of office life lingered for a while. People respected that it was a privilege, and exercised a degree of discipline and restraint.

As the experiment progresses through its fifth year, standards are slipping. With every month that passes, new attitudes towards work are becoming entrenched.

We can see the results of it everywhere. Productivity has stagnated. In the public sector, which accounts for roughly 40pc of the economy, output per person has flatlined. Meanwhile, levels of innovation are falling, customer service is declining, and companies are struggling to maintain profits with staff who are hardly even bothering to pretend to work anymore.

It doesn’t have to be like this. Greece this week became the champion of

working harder, legislating for a six-day week. Employers will now be allowed to add an extra shift to the standard week, a move the government quite rightly believes will boost the country’s productivity. It is possible to push back against the constant drive to work less and less.

The difference, of course, is that Greece came close to national bankruptcy a decade ago and had to be bailed out by the rest of the eurozone. Ever since then, its centre-Right government has been trying to figure out ways of improving output.

One conclusion is clear. The reluctance of many people to put in a proper day of work and the determination of the unions to carve out more and more rights is not set in stone. It can be reversed by a government that sets a clear goal and has the courage to force it through. The trouble is, it may well take the threat of bankruptcy to make that happen. But it is getting closer all the time – although presumably all those people watching *Come Dine with Me* won’t actually notice until it is too late.

Kelp yourself

A worker harvests kelp in Lidao Township of Rongcheng City, in east China’s Shandong Province. Nearly 90pc of about 10,000 hectares of kelp in the city have been harvested and the annual output is expected to reach 1.7 million tons.



The US stock market’s exceptionalism is approaching its dramatic denouement

TOM STEVENSON



It has rarely been sensible for investors to place bets against Uncle Sam. But times are changing

The investment focus naturally shifts to the US on Independence Day but more so than ever this year as the completion of elections here today and in France at the weekend moves the political spotlight across the Atlantic too.

Another reason to turn our attention to the US market this week is the end of a remarkable first half of the year in which Wall Street has continued to lead the charge.

The first six months of 2024 has been the 21st best first half for

US shares since 1900, according to analysis from Goldman Sachs. Over the past 12 months, the performance of the S&P 500 has been roughly twice as good as its counterparts in Europe, Japan and Asia.

Global equities have not had a 5pc peak-to-trough retreat since the correction last autumn, in large part due to the performance of US shares, which account for nearly two thirds of the total value of the world’s stock markets. There has only been a handful of periods in the past 30 years when we have gone this long without such a pullback in markets.

This is not by itself a reason to worry. In fact, strong first-half years often set investors up for a rewarding second half too. Since the beginning of the 20th century, shares have only fallen seven times in the second six months after a strong opening to the year. The last time this happened was nearly 40 years ago in 1986. The second-half return after a strong first half is higher than the average for all years too.

The relative performance of US shares during the latest market rally should be seen in the context of a longer-run period of much stronger returns for Wall Street than for other markets around the world. The US outperformed other markets from the early 1990s until the financial crisis in 2008, but then it fell further and so had delivered comparable returns to its peers in the 30 years prior to the bottom of the market in 2009.

Since the start of the long post-crisis bull market, however, the US has parted company with the rest of the world. The period since 2009 has been one of unparalleled US market dominance.

To a large extent this has been justified by economic and corporate fundamentals. Not only has the US economy been the world’s largest but its stock market, except for a brief moment during the Japanese bubble in the late 1980s, has also been far and away the world’s biggest.

With many non-US companies choosing to list in New York, the value

of its stock market has risen over the past 50 years from less than half of GDP to 170pc of it. The rest of the world’s markets represent just 60pc of global GDP.

The performance of US shares has also been justified by stronger corporate earnings growth. Since the financial crisis American shares have consistently outperformed those in the rest of the world but so too has the profitability of American companies. American market exceptionalism has been a reflection of exceptional American growth.

Indeed, America’s exposure to the “growth” investment style has been a massive boon to US investors. The period from 2009 to the start of the monetary policy tightening cycle in 2022 represented the longest unbroken outperformance of growth over value in the past 50 years. Wall Street has more exposure to the world’s fastest-growing sectors and companies and less exposure to its laggards. While justified, the success of the

US stock market makes it relatively vulnerable going forward, however.

In terms of the most widely used valuation measure – the price-to-earnings ratio – American shares are more expensive than at almost any point over the past 20 years. And they are much more expensive than other markets on the same basis.

US shares are priced at more than 21 times expected earnings. Even stripping out the big technology companies, the ratio is over 18. That compares with 13 in Europe, 12 in emerging markets and just 11 here in the UK.

There is a negative correlation between the starting valuation of an investment and subsequently realised returns over a 10-year period. Expensive markets on average underperform cheaper ones eventually, even if in the short term a high valuation has little predictive power.

Another risk with the US stock market is its relatively high concentration. To be fair, this is a feature of other markets too, but the issue is more notable in the US.

In the year to date, two thirds of the market’s return can be attributed to just the biggest seven shares. It is possible that these mega-cap companies will continue to dominate, but the US bull market is increasingly

dependent on them doing so. Concentration has not been this high since 1929 and that, as we know, did not end well.

The continuing success of the US stock market is also highly dependent on sentiment remaining positive towards the AI investment story. And on the AI winners continuing to be the same companies that investors have identified as beneficiaries to date.

The market may have got it right but as the performance of the AI-focused stocks and the rest diverges, the overall market risks increase.

The positive earnings growth narrative hangs on the 30pc growth forecast for the big tech stocks being delivered. The rest of the market is expected to grow profits at a much more modest 5pc, and the relative outperformance of the most defensive sectors suggests the risks are to the downside.

It has rarely been sensible to bet against Uncle Sam. Investment success in recent years has largely been a reflection of how much US exposure you have had in your portfolio.

Diversification has not served investors particularly well, but I suspect it will from here.

Tom Stevenson is an investment director at Fidelity International. The views are his own

Vodafone and Three strike deal with VMO2

By James Warrington

VODAFONE and Three have inked a deal with a rival network operator that could help to win approval from regulators for their £15bn tie-up.

The two companies are currently facing an in-depth investigation by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) into their planned merger, which will create the UK’s largest mobile network.

Regulators are examining whether the deal will push up prices for consumers, while rivals have also raised concerns about mobile spectrum holdings and the impact on existing network sharing agreements.

Vodafone said it had agreed to sell some spectrum to Virgin Media O2 (VMO2) once the merger is approved. Vodafone and VMO2 have also extended

their existing mast-sharing agreement for more than a decade, while the deal will be expanded to include Three once the merger goes ahead.

Karen Egan, the head of mobile at Enders Analysis, said the agreement “largely addresses” the spectrum issue. She added: “Vodafone and Three’s 46pc share of spectrum if the merger goes ahead would likely have been problematic for Ofcom.

Lutz Schuler, the chief executive of VMO2, said: “We believe that this new agreement addresses the issues we have voiced and the CMA outlined in its initial decision, and will now continue our engagement with the regulator in this spirit.”

The CMA has until Sept 18 to carry out its in-depth review into the merger, which will reduce the number of UK network operators from four to three.

Vodafone and Three have pushed back against claims that the deal will lead to higher bills, arguing they need greater scale to compete with rivals VMO2 and BT-owned EE.

The two companies have pledged to invest £11bn in their combined 5G network once the deal has completed.

However, both VMO2 and EE have previously warned that the combined company would have a stranglehold over spectrum, the term used to refer to radio frequencies allocated to mobile operators and other communications businesses.

Following the merger, Vodafone and Three will hold almost 50pc of all mobile spectrum and an even greater proportion of so-called C-band frequencies, which are considered ideal for 5G.

The sale of spectrum to VMO2, will be subject to approval by Ofcom.

Jeff Bezos to offload £4bn in Amazon shares

By James Titcomb

JEFF BEZOS, Amazon’s founder, has revealed plans to sell \$5bn (£4bn) worth of shares days after the online retailer’s value passed \$2 trillion for the first time.

Amazon said in a stock market filing that Mr Bezos, 60, planned to sell 25m shares, worth around \$4.9bn.

It would take his share sales this year to more than \$13bn after he sold over \$8bn worth of shares in February.

Mr Bezos, the world’s second richest person with a \$222bn fortune, uses part of his fortune to fund Blue Origin, his rocket company. Last week, Blue Origin won part of a \$5.6bn contract with the US Space Force, the space arm of the US military, to launch satellites.

Mr Bezos has now sold off about a fifth of his Amazon stake in the past five years. He relinquished a quarter of his

shares in 2019 as part of his divorce from Mackenzie Scott.

The billionaire stepped down as Amazon chief executive in 2021 but remains its executive chairman.

Mr Bezos said in 2017 that he was investing about \$1bn a year in Blue Origin, which he founded in 2000.

The company’s financial demands may have increased since then. In May it launched its first crewed mission in more than a year when it flew seven private astronauts to space.

Mr Bezos has also vowed to put billions into philanthropy including environmental causes. He has also built a lavish property portfolio and owns a \$500m superyacht.

He has recently moved to Florida, which would save him hundreds of millions of dollars in capital gains taxes. Amazon’s shares have climbed by

32pc this year on growing sales in its online retail division and optimism around its cloud computing business amid the artificial intelligence boom.

Its profits trebled in the first quarter of the year to \$10.4bn.

Mr Bezos and his girlfriend Lauren Sánchez were engaged last year.

Amazon declined to comment on the share sale. The tech company, which Mr Bezos founded as an online bookseller in 1994, is currently the fifth most valuable company in the world, behind Microsoft, Apple, Nvidia and Google’s parent company Alphabet.

All five businesses have seen their share prices propelled higher this year amid excitement about the potential for AI. Amazon plans to spend \$100bn over the next decade on data centres to help power AI, *The Wall Street Journal* reported earlier this week.

Markets

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Government securities

High	Low	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
102.30	99.20	Treas 5% 25	100.08	-0.00	5.00
112.21	100.63	Treas 6% 28	107.95	+0.30	5.56
106.59	92.22	Treas 4% 32	101.52	+0.65	4.19
106.09	94.06	Treas 4% 36	99.87	-0.86	4.26
110.73	96.88	Treas 4% 38	103.64	+1.02	4.58

Index Linking Securities

High	Low	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
386.76	371.32	Treas 2% 1L 24	385.93	-0.08	6.55
352.43	325.85	Treas 4% 1L 30	341.87	+1.16	1.21
243.64	239.45	Treas 2% 1L 35	245.00	+1.51	0.82

10-year Government Bonds

Country	Yield%	Spread vs Bunds	Spread vs F-Bonds
France	3.20	-0.65	-1.16
Germany	2.55	-	-1.81
Japan	1.07	-1.48	-3.29
Great Britain	4.16	-1.61	-0.20
United States	4.36	-1.81	-

The share prices, price-earnings ratios and dividend yields below are supplied by Interactive Data (Europe) Ltd. The yields are calculated using historic dividend payments divided by the closing share price multiplied by 100.

Aerospace & defence

High	Low	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
575	266% ¹	Babcock Intl	526% ¹	+4% ¹	0.3
1415% ¹	883%	BAE Systems	1277% ¹	+9%	2.3
464	292%	QinetiQ	449	+10	1.8
488%	143%	Rolls-Royce	456%	+9%	-1.5
183	146%	Senior	163%	+3%	1.4

Banks

High	Low	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
224%	128%	Barclays	218%	+7%	3.7
989%	278	Close Bros	461	+5	-
725%	572%	HSCB	685%	+3%	1.1
57%	39%	Lloyds Bk Grp	55%	+1	4.9
329%	16%	NatWest Group	321%	+4%	5.3
423	27%	Santander	368%	+7%	3.3
796	57%	Standard Ch	722%	+10	3.0

Beverages

High	Low	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
3509	2452	Diageo	2508%	+5	3.2
63%	29%	Balfour Beatty	374%	+5%	3.1
582%	384%	Barratt Dev	487	+9%	5.7
2898	1903	Belway	2614	+56	4.2
5360	3801	Kierley Grp	4067	+66	2.7
229	170	Booth H	205	-	3.6

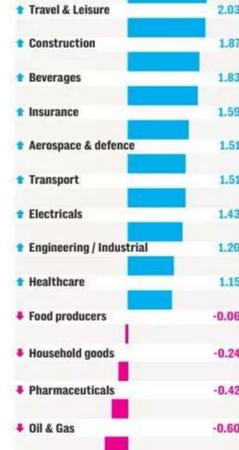
Chemicals

High	Low	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
6032	3849	Croda Intl	4090	+131	2.7
1917%	1428%	Johnson Mat	1625	+47	4.7
1632	1114	Victrex	1150	-6	2.2

Construction

High	Low	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
391%	291%	Balfour Beatty	374%	+5%	3.1
582%	384%	Barratt Dev	487	+9%	5.7
2898	1903	Belway	2614	+56	4.2
5360	3801	Kierley Grp	4067	+66	2.7
229	170	Booth H	205	-	3.6

Winners and losers (pc)



52 week High Low (p) Stock Price (p) +/- Yld P/E

88	44%	Costain	86%	+2%	1.4	10.7
1029%	737%	Grafton Grp	937%	+4%	3.8	13.5
2705	1655%	Morgan Sindal	2595	+4	4.0	14.2
1506	925	Persimmon	1421	+3%	4.2	17.8
750	423%	Redrow	690	+15	3.6	7.6
153%	98%	Taylor Wimpey	147%	+2%	6.5	14.9

Electricals

238	135	Dialight	193%	-9%	-	-
900	586	discover:Grp	692	+12	1.7	42.7
2750	1802	Halma	2717	+36	0.8	43.8
4296	1802	Renishaw	3720	+70	2.0	23.3
24894	682%	XP Power	1452	+30	1.2	-2.0

Electricity

637%	395%	Drax Group	522%	+2%	4.4	1.7
1020%	645	Nat Grid	912%	+19%	6.4	3.0
1932%	1485	SSE	1814%	+29	3.3	11.6

Engineering / Industrial

89%	63%	Coats Group	79%	+1%	2.8	28.9
870	212	Cropper J	315	-15	2.2	58.3
8400	4200	Goodwin	8160	-	1.4	39.5
1911	1429	IMI	1780	+11	1.6	19.5
1739%	1304	Mondi	1542%	+2%	4.0	16.9
79%	48%	Snerfield	74%	-1	5.0	14.3
1776%	1517%	Smiths Grp	1723	+32	2.5	26.3
429%	260%	Smith (DS)	426	+4	1.2	15.2
3920	2529	Smurfit Kappa	3508	+14	3.7	14.1
11280	7900	Spirax Grp	8985	+130	1.9	34.4
2220%	1652%	Weir	1964	+6	2.0	22.3

Food producers

2765	1907%	Ass Brit Fds	2479	+13	2.2	18.5
2930	2065	Coca-Cola HBC	2682	-2	2.9	18.3
4570	3158	Cranwick	4500	+50	2.0	21.4
957	615	Hilton Food	904	-2	3.5	22.3
99	48	REA Hldgs	88%	+2%	-	-3.5
4464	3689%	Unilever	4302	+8	3.4	19.7

Gas & Water

173%	120	Centrica	138%	+2%	2.9	2.0
775	522%	Penon Grp	585	+21%	7.6	162.5
2761	2243	Severn Trent	2407	+57	4.9	42.2
1139%	896%	Utd Utilities	984%	+26	5.1	52.9

General financial

234%	156%	Ashtrom	173%	+3%	9.7	14.0
300%	164%	Bridgeway Grp	232%	+12	3.8	25.8
1169	676%	Hargreaves L	1115	-7	3.9	16.3
850%	600%	IG Group	833	+12	5.5	9.6
2448	1244%	Intermediate C	2208	+36	3.6	13.3
601%	428%	Investec	587%	+13%	5.9	5.6
66%	40	IP Group	43%	+%	2.9	-2.6
865	519	Liontrust	666	+3	10.8	12.0
73%	30	Lon Fin & Inv	69%	+4	1.7	5.4
11080%	7784	Lon Stock Ex	9238	+10	1.2	66.5
241%	181%	M&G	206	+3%	9.6	-3.1
279%	200%	Man Group	246	+6	5.3	15.8
124%	71%	Quilter	115%	+2%	4.5	37.8

52 week High Low (p) Stock Price (p) +/- Yld P/E

2450	1750	S & S	1915	+25	6.3	9.2
470	346%	Schroders	374%	+8%	5.7	15.2
200%	43%	Vauxley Banking Grp	49%	-%	12.2	-20.5

Healthcare

371%	306%	Haleon	326%	+3%	1.8	28.6
1264%	887	Smith & Neph	996%	+13%	3.1	41.7

Household goods

2275	844%	Burberry	877%	+29%	7.0	11.8
145	24%	McBride	139	+1	-	-21.1
169%	81%	PZ Cussons	103	+2	5.1	11.8
6006	4102%	Reckitt Benck	4231	+27	4.5	18.5

Information technology

389	224%	Aptitude Sftware	373	-4	1.4	51.7
1207%	892%	Sage Grp	1081	+6	1.8	52.1
205	79%	Spirant	181%	+%	1.7	53.8

Insurance

238	134%	abrdn	155%	+4%	9.4	-
2870	2010	Admiral	2973	+30	4.0	23.1
501%	366	Aviva	474%	+5%	7.0	12.6
715	485%	Beazley	654%	+4	2.2	5.2
240%	132%	DirectLifeIns	196%	+1%	2.0	12.4
1227%	926	Hiscox	1105	-3	2.7	6.7
690	527%	Lancashire Hldg	590	+12	2.7	5.6
259	203%	Legal & General	230%	+4	8.8	31.4
564%	436%	Phoenix	536	+10	9.8	-38.8
1123	684%	Prudential	720%	+19%	2.3	14.8
1185%	393%	St. James's Place	567%	+13%	4.3	-309.7

Investment trusts

3180	1843%	3i	3008	+37	2.0	206.4
349	289	3i Infrastructure	328	+4	3.6	359
826	528	abrdn New India	822	+2	-	988
1264	980	Alliance Trust	1210	+8	2.1	1278
418	242%	Allkare Tech Trust	403	+8%	-	438
417%	321%	Asia Dragon Trust	412	+6	1.6	46.3
243	175	Baillie Giff China	195	+1%	1.0	216
101%	75%	Baillie Giff Euro Geth	96	+%	0.4	112
84%	60	Balanced Comm Prp	82%	+%	2.1	284
117%	91%	Bankers Investm Trst	114%	+1%	2.3	129
1048	715	Biotech Growth	958	+22	-	1054
127	104	BlackRockEmerg&Res18%	121	+2%	3.8	132
159%	131%	BlackRock Frolw	145%	+%	4.6	16.0
653	457%	BlackRock Grt Euro	624	+4	1.1	653
208	170	BlackRock Legal	196	-	3.8	22.0
207	172%	BlackRockSustAmrc	196	-	4.1	216
1520	1146	BlackRock Small	1458	+22	2.9	1609
643	503	BlackRock Thng Trst	608	+5	2.4	674
635	490	BlackRock Wld M	607	+21	5.7	573
1385%	964	Brammer	1350	+30	1.8	1413
3700	3110	Caledonia	3520	+65	2.0	5325
43%	331%	China of Lon	42%	+%	1.0	242
206	151%	CQS Nat Res & G	189%	-	3.0	211
256	206	CT Gld Mgd G	252	-	-	260
121	98	CT Mgd Mtl	113	+%	6.5	114
516	406	CT Priv Eq Ord	453	+6	6.2	686

Net Asset Values @ 2024 Morningstar Estimated at previous day's close see www.Morningstar.co.uk.

52 week High Low (p) Stock Price (p) +/- Yld NAV

340	266%	CT UK Cap & Inc	325	-	3.8	333
95%	71	CT UKHighIncTrst	88%	-4%	6.3	96
590	448%	Dunelm Int	502%	+%	6.8	98
746	612%	Edinburgh Inv Tr	726	+6	3.7	798
157%	120%	Edin Worldwide	147	+%	-	165
880%	64%	Europa Assets	87%	+1%	6.8	98
1058	85%	F&C Inv Trust	1010	+6	1.5	1143
549%	473%	Fidelity Asian V	504	-	2.9	562
246	181%	Fidelity China Sp Sfts	201%	+1	3.2	222
412%	311%	Fidelity Euro Trst	394	+6	2.1	412
186%	151	Fidelity Japan Trst	172	-	-	197
316	252	Fidelity Sp V	304%	+5	3.1	329
920	788%	Finsbury Grp	844	+10	2.3	193
168%	128%	Gld Small Co Trst	162%	+2%	1.7	173
177	136	Hand High Inc	157%	+1%	6.6	175
127%	148%	Hand Int'l Inc	196%	+%		

Keep a keen eye on this newly combined investment trust about to hit the FTSE 100

GAVIN LUMSDEN
QUESTOR
TRUST BARGAINS



After 100 years on the London exchange, Witan is about to wind itself up and transfer its assets to Alliance Trust in a £5bn merger

Consolidation in the fragmented £273bn investment trust sector has taken a decisive turn with two of the biggest listed global funds held by private investors agreeing to merge. Witan, a £1.6bn investment trust named after the advisory council that served Anglo-Saxon kings, has agreed to combine with Alliance Trust, its £3.4bn arch-rival based in Dundee in the largest merger of its kind in the UK. After 100 years on the London Stock Exchange, Witan will wind up, its assets transferred to Alliance which will issue new shares to Witan shareholders by October.

Both trusts take a "multi-manager" approach, employing between six and 10 external fund managers to run the bulk of their assets. It is hoped the new Alliance Witan, as the merged company will be called, will be a more effective "one-stop shop", providing investors all the equity exposure they need in one place.

With a market value of about £5bn, Alliance Witan should gain promotion to the FTSE 100 index of top UK listed companies, putting it just behind F&C, the UK's oldest investment trust.

Elevation to the FTSE 100 will raise Alliance Witan's profile and make its shares easier and cheaper to trade as the company taps a deeper pool of investors. Both sets of shareholders will also benefit from a cut in management fees which should reduce

Alliance Witan HOLD

Elevation to the FTSE 100 should make the shares easier and cheaper to trade

total ongoing charges to less than 0.6pc a year compared with Witan's current 0.76pc and 0.62pc for Alliance.

Willis Towers Watson (WTW), Alliance Trust's investment adviser, will contribute about £7.5m to ensure its shareholders are not burdened with merger costs. Witan is funding its expenses through a tender offer that will enable its shareholders to sell 17.5pc of their shares for 2.5pc less than their underlying net asset value (NAV).

Given the shares stand on a 6pc discount to NAV that's an attractive offer, although Witan shareholders might have expected a bigger exit of about 25pc. However, that might have jeopardised Alliance Witan's chances of securing FTSE 100 membership.

Andrew Ross, Witan's chairman, was "delighted" at the deal which, he said "allows the continuation of our multi-manager approach at lower fees and in a larger, more liquid vehicle".

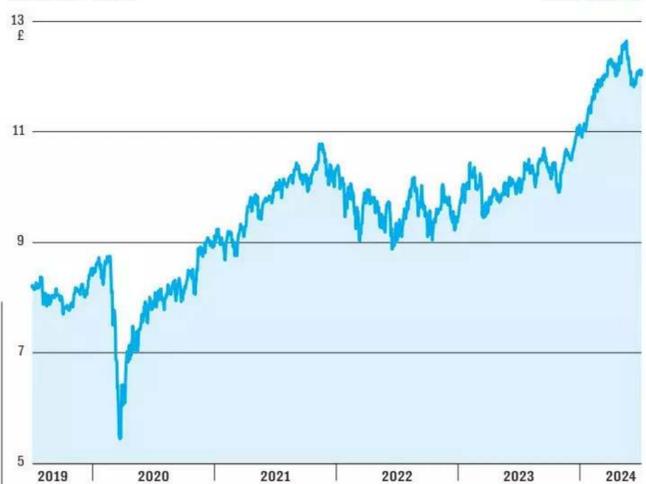
Alliance has agreed to raise its dividends to ensure investors in the slightly higher-yielding Witan do not see a drop in income. Both funds are "dividend heroes", having grown their annual payouts by 56 years and 50 years respectively, so are anxious to avoid cuts in distributions.

Nevertheless, for Witan this transaction is an admission of defeat. The decision to roll into Alliance Trust followed a strategic review prompted by the planned retirement of chief

Alliance Trust

Close: **£12.10**

Key numbers



- ◆ Estimated market value*: £5bn
- ◆ Year of listing: 1888
- ◆ Discount: 6pc
- ◆ Ave discount over past year: 5.4pc
- ◆ Yield: 2.2pc
- ◆ Forecast dividend*: 26.82p
- ◆ Gearing: 4pc
- ◆ Estimated annual charge*: 0.58pc

*Forecasts are for the merged trust. Other figures for Alliance Trust

executive Andrew Bell, who strengthened its investment strategy after taking over in 2011.

Unfortunately, Witan's performance was badly hit after Bell mis-timed a shift to growth fund managers who suffered in the 2021-22 sell-off. Returns were also weakened by a big holding in the GMO Climate Change fund, also knocked as interest rates rose.

Consequently, it was overtaken by Alliance Trust, which hired WTW seven years ago to follow in Witan's footsteps. After a slow start, its team, led by chief investment officer Craig Baker, proved more adept at navigating the shifts in world stock markets. Lately the portfolio has benefited from its panel of fund managers having a bigger weighting to the buoyant US market and large "Magnificent Seven" tech stocks such as Google-owner Alphabet and chip maker Nvidia.

Since April 2017 when Alliance changed its mandate, it has grown its assets by nearly 102pc, or 10.2pc a year,

'Alliance has agreed to raise its dividends to ensure investors in Witan do not see a drop in income'

trouncing Witan's underlying investment return of 60.6pc, or 6.8pc a year. However, Alliance has not met its stretching target of beating the MSCI World index by 2pc a year over three-year periods, with its returns merely matching the benchmark.

This is still an historic achievement for Alliance, which before its conversion to a multi-manager fund, was a poor performer that looked like becoming a takeover target itself after losing a bruising battle with hedge fund activist Elliott Management. Alliance is well placed now to play a significant role in the retail investment market. Witan shareholders should be confident about the merger and other investors should put Alliance Witan on their watch lists. A weakening in the share price before or after the transaction completes could provide a good buying opportunity.

Gavin Lumsden is editor of Citywire's Investment Trust Insider website

Read Questor's rules of investment before you follow our tips: telegraph.co.uk/go/questorrules

Thousands of Tesco workers to share £30m windfall

More than 20,000 Tesco workers are set to share a £30m windfall from maturing share schemes.

The company revealed that the employees will receive the payout following a "strong performance" from its Save as You Earn colleague share schemes. It said it will be mainly workers on its shop floors and in its distribution centres who benefit from the cash boost. Workers have benefited from the recent improvement in the FTSE 100 group's share price, which sits above 303p after a 20pc increase over the past year.

Employees who joined the schemes can buy shares at a discounted price, of 188p or 198p each, and either keep them for the longer term or sell on for a profit.

Topps Tiles sales slide as homeowners put off repairs

Topps Tiles sales dropped as the retailer suggested it is seeing a small improvement in "challenging" market conditions.

Like-for-like sales fell 9.7pc in the third quarter compared with the same period last year. The slump was worse than the 9.2pc decline seen in the first half of its financial year, but Topps said sales "stabilised" through the quarter.

It told investors: "Market conditions have remained challenging overall, with subdued demand in the domestic repair, maintenance and improvement sector, especially for bigger ticket projects."

The London-listed company added that recent data on inflation and consumer spending "provides some confidence in a cyclical recovery".

Service sector slows down ahead of the election

The services sector continued to lose momentum last month as companies and consumers held back ahead of the general election.

The S&P Global UK services PMI dipped to a seven-month low of 52.1 in June, although for the eighth month in a row it was above 50, indicating growth in the sector.

Joe Hayes, at S&P Global, said: "We are seeing some evidence of a pre-general election seize up... with growth in business activity slowing to a seven-month low in June as the prospect of a change in government led to the adoption of a 'wait-and-see' approach. Nevertheless, we're on track for another quarter of GDP growth, albeit one that will be less punchy than the first quarter's 0.7pc."

Wizz Air boardroom shake-up after its president departs

The president of Wizz Air has stepped down in a move that has triggered the promotions of three executives at the low-cost airline.

Robert Carey, who previously worked at Delta Air Lines and easyJet, will leave the Hungarian carrier to "pursue other interests".

Michael Delehant, the chief operations officer, will become senior chief commercial and operations officer, while Diarmuid O'Conghaile, the managing director of Wizz Air Malta, will become chief operating officer. Mauro Peneda, head of operations control, will take on Mr O'Conghaile's role.

József Váradi, the chief executive, will take on Mr Carey's commercial leadership role until October.

Former Wandisco boss floats new company IntelliAM

The former chief executive of Wandisco has made a return to the stock market with a float of Yorkshire software business IntelliAM.

IntelliAM went public yesterday at a valuation of £17.9m on the Aquis Exchange, marking a comeback for David Richards, its chairman, after his dramatic exit from Wandisco last year.

Mr Richards left Wandisco shortly after it discovered an alleged \$15m accounting fraud, forcing it to suspend its shares. His departure was not connected to the investigation into the fraud, which is ongoing, but the company said it was in its "best interests" to bring in new leadership.

The new business claims it will use machine learning to manage machinery and manufacturing assets.

Weak jobs growth fuels hopes of rate cut in the US

The US private sector added fewer new jobs than expected last month in a further boost to hopes that interest rate cuts are on the way.

Companies added 150,000 positions to their payrolls in June, according to the ADP National Employment Report.

It was lower than the 165,000 expected and below the upwardly revised 157,000 added in May.

Meanwhile, the number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits inched up last week. Jobless claims for the week ending June 29 rose by 4,000 to 238,000 from 234,000 the previous week, data from the US Labor Department showed.

The jobs market is considered a key risk to inflation by the US Federal Reserve.

RAJA FASHIONS - BESPOKE TAILORING

Hong Kong's most respected bespoke tailor comes to the UK, blending expert craftsmanship with contemporary style for men and women.

Elevate your wardrobe with a custom-made suit by Raja Fashions – the destination for expertly crafted, contemporary suits – at a range of prices to suit any budget. We're thrilled to announce that this Jul and Aug, the globally acclaimed tailor will be hosting appointments for UK-based clients at various locations.

Helmed by master craftsman – and one of Hong Kong's finest and most respected bespoke tailors – Raja M Daswani, Raja Fashions has never wavered in their commitment to exceptional quality, expert craftsmanship, and exquisite fabrics. The company, founded by Mr Daswani's grandfather in 1957, has been suiting discerning men and women for three generations.

Raja Fashions works with each and every client to craft beautiful, custom-made garments made from the finest materials. His team's on-hand expertise and guidance, clients may choose from over 20,000 fabrics – from beautiful in-house wools to prestige cloths from the likes of Harrisons, Zegna, Guabello and E. Thomas – to suit any budget.

Raja Fashions is once again bringing their inimitable bespoke tailoring to the UK, hosting appointments at different locations in Jul and Aug. Prices begin at just £70 for a custom-made shirt and £550 for an entirely hand-finished suit, made using British or Italian 100% superfine merino wool, and complete with every refinement – from handmade buttonholes to knee linings and double-thickness pockets.

To book your fitting, please email appointments@raja-fashions.com, or call 07570885242. Please visit our website – www.raja-fashions.com – for appointment locations and more information.

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<p>BRISTOL (12-13 July) Delta Hotels by Marriott Bristol City Centre</p>	<p>LEEDS (10-11 July) Hilton Leeds City</p>	<p>MANCHESTER (8-9 July) Hilton Manchester Deansgate</p>
<p>CARDIFF (27-28 July) Hilton Cardiff</p>	<p>LONDON (24-26 July) Hotel Novotel London Tower Bridge</p>	<p>OXFORD (18-19 July) Old Bank Hotel</p>
<p>EXETER (14-15 July) Mercure Exeter Rougemont Hotel</p>	<p>LONDON (4-7 July) Hilton London Euston</p>	<p>READING (22-23 July) Pentahotel Reading</p>
<p>GUILDFORD (20-21 July) Guildford Harbour Hotel</p>	<p>LONDON (29 July-1 Aug) Hilton London Paddington</p>	<p>SOUTHAMPTON (16-17 July) Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Southampton</p>

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Court & Social

Court Circular



PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE

July 3rd

The King and Queen, accompanied by the Prince William, Duke of Rothesay and the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, this morning attended a Service in St Giles' Cathedral for the Installation of Her Majesty as a Royal Lady of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, the Baroness Black of Strome and the Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws as Ladies of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, the Duke of Edinburgh as a Royal Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle, and Professor Sir Godfrey Palmer as a Knight of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle.

Their Majesties and Their Royal Highnesses were received at St Giles' Cathedral by the Chancellor of the Thistle (the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry) and the Reverend Dr George Whyte (Interim Moderator and Locum of St Giles).

Master Alexander Trotter of Mortonhall, younger (Page of Honour to the King) was in attendance.

A Guard of Honour was mounted at the West Door by The King's Body Guard for Scotland,

Wedding

Mr O.S. Mulry and Miss D.H. Adams

The marriage took place on Saturday, June 22, 2024, at All Saints' Church, Thurleston, Devon, between Oliver, son of Mr and Mrs John Mulry, of Speen, Buckinghamshire, and Devon, daughter of Mr and Mrs Dane Adams, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

Online ref: W0026239

Diplomatic news

Mr Nick Abbott has been appointed Ambassador to the Republic of Albania in succession to Mr Alastair King-Smith, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Abbott will take up his appointment during September 2024.

Mr Colin Wells has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Kingdom of Eswatini in succession to Mr Simon Boyden, who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Wells will take up his appointment during August 2024.

Ms Juliana Correa has been appointed Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala and non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras in succession to Mr Nick Whittingham. Ms Correa will take up her appointment during October 2024.

Senior appointments in the clergy

The King has approved the nomination of **The Rev Can Dr Stephen Edwards**, Interim Dean of Worcester, to be appointed as Dean of Worcester in succession to The Very Rev Peter Atkinson following his retirement.

The King has also approved the nomination of **The Rev Dr Joseph Kennedy**, Vicar of Oxton St Saviour in the Diocese of Chester, for appointment to the Suffragan See of Burnley in the Diocese of Blackburn in succession to The Right Rev Philip North, following his translation to the See of Blackburn.

Bridge news

Last week the highest score in the English Bridge Union's High Noon Fast Games was 70.83%, writes **Julian Pottage**, Bridge Correspondent. The pair achieving this score was Richard Holt partnering a BBO Robot on Sunday.

The highest score in the EBU morning Relaxed Games was 73.61%, which Tony Williams and Carol Aitken achieved on Thursday. The highest score in the EBU evening Relaxed Games was 73.75%, achieved by Jane Cocker and Linda Bamford on Tuesday.

Bridge Hand

Old tip but golden

By Tom Townsend

Dealer East N/S vulnerable

♠ 10 8 3	♠ K 7 6 5
♥ K 9 7 4 2	♥ J 8 6 3
♦ J 3	♦ 10 9 5
♣ 6 3	♣ K 4

♠ Q 9 4 2	♠ A 10
♥ A K 8 7 2	♥ A 9

West	North	East	South
pass	2♦(2)	pass	1♦(1)
pass	pass	pass	3NT

(1) Normally five
(2) Invitational by agreement

Contract 3NT by South
Opening Lead ♠4

FROM 127 starters, eight teams remain in the NICKO. This is the EBU National Inter-Club Knockout. They are Petersfield, Worcester, Oxford, Coventry, Mayfield, Manchester and two Young Chelsea (YC) squads.

In Round Five, YC "G" beat Allendale (Dorset). South here was Ben Norton, in 3NT for the 10. Forced to guess at trick one, he went wrong and played the ♥5. It was pointless to duck East's ♥1, so he aced it and ran diamonds. Per Patrick Jourdain in his old Bols tip: "with eight winners and five losers in 3NT, play off your winners early." Even if the defenders keep the right cards, they may inform you with their discards.

West quickly pitched two spades (upwards) and a club. East a heart and a spade. Ben drew some

Royal Company of Archers, with the Colour of the Royal Company, accompanied by the Pipes and Drums of The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland and the Band of the Royal Regiment of Scotland in Parliament Square West.

The King and Queen gave a Lunch Party at the Palace of Holyroodhouse for the Knights and Ladies of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle.

The following were invited: the Lord and Lady Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord and Lady Wilson of Tillymore, the Lord and Lady Steel of Aikwood, the Lord and Lady Robertson of Port Ellen, the Lord and Lady Cullen of Whitekirk, the Lord and Lady Hope of Craighead, the Lord and Lady Smith of Kelvin, the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry and Mrs Henry Trotter of Mortonhall, Sir Ian and Lady Wood, Lady Elish Angiolini and Mr Domenico Angiolini, Sir George and Lady Reid, the Baroness Black of Strome and Mr Donald Findlay, the Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws and Professor Iain Hutchinson, Professor Sir Godfrey and Lady Palmer, the Dean of the Thistle (the Very Reverend Professor David Fergusson), Mrs Christopher Roads (Secretary of the Thistle), Dr Joseph Morrow (Lord Lyon King of Arms) and Rear Admiral Christopher Layman (Gentleman Usher of the Green Rod).

The King and Queen this afternoon attended a Celebration at Edinburgh Castle to mark the Nine Hundredth Anniversary of the City of Edinburgh and were received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of

the City of Edinburgh (Councillor Robert Aldridge, the Rt Hon the Lord Provost) and Lord Lyon King of Arms (Dr Joseph Morrow).

The Governor of Edinburgh Castle (Major General Alastair Bruce of Crionaich) surrendered to The King the Keys of the Castle which His Majesty returned to him. The King and Queen viewed dance performances, visited stalls showcasing Scottish charities and organisations and Edinburgh's culture, education and diversity, and met members of the local community.

Mr John Swinney MSP (First Minister of the Scottish Government) was received by The King this evening.

The King was represented by Commodore Jonathan Handley RN (Gentleman Usher) at the Funeral of Commodore Laurie Hopkins RN (Gentleman Usher) to the late Queen and Extra Gentleman Usher to The King which was held at St John the Baptist Church, Westbourne, Hampshire, this afternoon.

ST JAMES'S PALACE

July 3rd

The Duke of Edinburgh, Colonel, Scots Guards, this afternoon visited the Scots Guards Club, 2 Clifton Terrace, Edinburgh.

KENSINGTON PALACE

July 3rd

The Duke of Gloucester, Patron, the Museum of London, this morning received Mr Clive Bannister (Chairman) and Miss Sharon Ament (Director).

His Royal Highness, Grand Prior, the Most Venerable Order of

the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, this evening held a Dinner at Windsor Castle.

The Duchess of Gloucester, Honorary President, today attended the Lawn Tennis Association President's Lunch and afterwards attended the Championships at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Wimbledon, London SW19.

Today's birthdays

Prince Michael of Kent is 82.

The Duke of Abercorn, Chancellor, Order of the Garter, 90; **the Rt Rev Graham Dow**, Bishop of Carlisle, 2000-09, 82; **Lord Goodlad**, High Commissioner to Australia, 2000-05, 81; **Sir Dennis Byron**, President, Caribbean Court of Justice, 2011-18; President, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 2007-11, 81; **Sir Philip Craven**, President, International Paralympic Committee, 2001-17, 74; **Lord Maude of Horsham**, former Conservative Government Minister, 71; **Miss Jenny Seagrove**, actress, 67; **Ald Sir Peter Estlin**, Lord Mayor of London, 2018-19, 63; **Ms Pam Shriver**, former tennis player; now commentator, 62; **Sir Alex Younger**, Chief, Secret Intelligence Service, 2014-20, 61; **Lord Justice Bourne**, 60; and **Miss Francesca Hayward**, Principal Dancer, Royal Ballet, 32.

Today is Independence Day in the United States. It is also the anniversary of the birth of Giuseppe Garibaldi in 1807.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The Daily Telegraph

LONDON, FRIDAY JULY 4, 1924

COMMUNIST TEACHING IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

NEW TEN COMMANDMENTS CORRUPTING YOUNG MINDS.

Revelations with regard to the sort of teaching that goes on in Communist Sunday-schools were made yesterday in the House of Lords when Lord Damesfort brought forward his Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching to Children Bill. The bill proposes to prevent the perversion of the minds of children under 16 years of age by seditious and blasphemous teaching or literature by making the teachers liable to be dealt with summarily instead of by the present method of indictment. Lord Damesfort explained that there was no interference with the teaching of Socialist or any other political propaganda conducted on constitutional lines. What he aims at is to stop the Communist efforts to corrupt the minds of the young by inculcating revolutionary doctrines and holding up religion to contempt in language of the grossest scurrility. As an example of what goes on in these Sunday schools Lord Damesfort quoted from a Glasgow publication, which laid down that the duty of Communists should be to teach children to be real live red-hot revolutionaries.

A pamphlet also emanating from Glasgow provided a set of commandments which included such stuff as "Thou shalt not be a patriot, for a patriot is a national blackleg;" "Thou shalt teach revolution, for revolution means the abolition of the present political state and the end of capitalism and raising in their place an industrial republic." In a London Communist school in July, 1922, a teacher justified the murder of Sir Henry Wilson. The number of Communist schools Lord Damesfort estimated at about thirty-five, of which there were about fifteen in London. His object was to stop the unutterable baseness of preying on the impressionable character of children and poisoning their minds.

"VICIOUS AND IMMORAL."

Opposition to the Bill came from the Lord Chancellor, who considered that the existing law is sufficient to meet the purpose. He explained that it is not the law that everything said must be in accordance with Christianity, and so long as opinions were advocated in decent terms no one had a right to interfere. Hard words break no bones, he commented. His main objection to the bill was that it gave magistrates power to convict on matters of opinion which should be tried by a judge and jury. He believed that there were very few Communist Sunday-schools where objectionable doctrines

were taught, and if they were to try to suppress them by legislation he was afraid people would rally to them because of the interference with freedom and liberty.

The Earl of Balfour pointed out that the bill did nothing to interfere with free discussion, but sought only to protect the young who had no power to protect themselves. That the teaching in the proletarian schools is not only anti-Christian, but that it is vicious and immoral, was the opinion of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He had seen publications which were so vile as to be unquotable. They included the teaching of free love in the widest and most animal sense. He suggested that the parents of many of the children who attended Communist Sunday schools were ignorant of the character of the education which was given. He warned the House, however, that Socialist and proletarian schools must not be lumped together. Complaint was made by the Duke of Atholl that existing powers were not used. With great vigour Lord Parmoor argued that the law should not be changed. It was difficult, he said, to separate matters of opinion from sedition and blasphemy, and it should not be left to obscure magistrates to adjudicate on the point. His reply to Communist teaching is to provide proper teaching.

The Government challenged a division on the bill, but the second reading was carried by 102 votes to 20.

ELECTION THIS YEAR.

BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT

According to the "Labour Press Service," issued from the headquarters of the party in Eccleston-square, the President of the Board of Trade has been indulging in a prophecy concerning the next appeal to the country. Mrs. Webb writes a monthly letter to the Labour women of Seaham, the constituency represented by her husband, and the latest letter contains an interview with Mr. Webb.

"We may have a General Election either at the end of the summer session or when Parliament reassembles in the autumn, perhaps at the end of November," the President of the Board of Trade is reported as saying. He explains that the General Election will come if the two Housing Bills are defeated.

Some Unionists, prominent members of the party, too, have a suspicion that if Mr. Ramsay MacDonald meets with success in connection with the efforts about to be made to achieve a European settlement it may influence the Labour-Socialist party to decide upon an early election. The Housing Bill is expected to be placed upon the Statute Book before Parliament adjourns next month, and the view taken is that, as it will fail to produce houses, the Government may well determine not to wait until it has begun to prove itself a failure.

There is no doubt that the Labour-Socialist party have in mind the possibility, or even the probability, of an autumn election. "We are not going to be caught napping," one of their officials remarked last night.

Chess

Record breaker

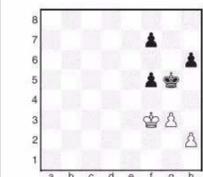
By Malcolm Pein

FAUSTINO Oro has become the youngest ever International Master, aged 10 years, 8 months and 16 days. The Argentinian shared first at a Barcelona Chess Club closed tournament with a score of 6.5/9 to secure his third norm. Astonishingly, Oro learned to play the game only four years ago, and he has already beaten Magnus Carlsen at Bullet.

Fabiano Caruana took the lead of the Grand Chess Tour's Superbet Classic in Bucharest, with a well-crafted victory over local player Bogdan-Daniel Deac that took him to 3/4. Caruana's live rating moved back over 2800.

Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa defeated Anish Giri, who stranded one of his rooks mid-board and lost the exchange. Eventually, holding two rooks vs rook and bishop, Pragg managed to exchange a pair of rooks, which secured a winning position.

In the third round, Pragg failed to win a king and pawn endgame, clearly unaware of the key idea. Gukesh - Pragganandhaa, after 57...Kg6-g5:



58.h3 (if 58.Ke3 Kg4 59.Kf2 f4 is easy) 58...Kf2? 58...h5! 59.Ke3 f4+ 60.gxf4+ Kh4 wins and 58...h5!

Answer: 58.h3 (if 58.Ke3 Kg4 59.Kf2 f4 is easy) 58...Kf2? 58...h5! 59.Ke3 f4+ 60.gxf4+ Kh4 wins and 58...h5!

Announcements

Email: announcements.ads@telegraph.co.uk Book online: announcements.telegraph.co.uk

Deaths

BOLTON.—Lyndon, after stoically enduring the effects of a severe stroke for eight years, died peacefully on 20th June aged 87. Much loved husband to Diana, father to Lyndon and William, and grandfather to Louisa and Grace. On 11th July following 10.45 a.m. Committal at Mintlyn Crematorium, King's Lynn, Funeral Service will be held at 12.30 p.m. at St Margaret's, Burnham Norton, Norfolk. Family flowers only, donations if desired to the Stroke Association. Online Ref: W0026268

CARTLIDGE.—Dr John, 02/08/1934 - 21/06/2024. It's with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Dr John Cartledge, John, formerly of Mount Drive, Nantwich, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family in the care of Cedar Court Nursing Home aged 89. A loving husband to Faith, much loved father to Edwin, James and Tom, brother to the late Michael and loving grandfather to Florence, Harry, Ned and Wilf. John was a kind friend to many and will be very sadly missed by his loving family and all who knew him. John's Funeral Service will take place at St Mary's Parish Church, Nantwich, CW5 5RG on Monday 15th July 2024 at 1 p.m. followed by a private family burial. The wake will take place at the Crown Hotel, Nantwich. Please make any donations in memory of John to either Blind Veterans.org.uk or Dementiauk.org For any enquiries, please contact Gavin Palm Funeral Directors, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 5QL. Tel: 01270 624453. Email: gavinpalm@btinternet.com Online Ref: W0026273

LAING.—Susan (née Kirkby), On July 2nd, aged 76. Much loved wife of the late Martin, adored mother of James and Kate, and loving grandmother to Olivia, Toby, Tilly and Harry. Funeral Service at St James' Church, Castle Acre, Norfolk, on Thursday July 11th at 2.30 p.m. Family flowers only. Donations if desired, to either Pancreatic Cancer UK and/or National Garden Scheme, may be given at the service or sent c/o Fakenham and District Funeral Services Ltd, Wessingham, PE32 2TF. Tel: (01328) 838838. Online Ref: W0026317

LOMAS.—Peter F. (FCA) former finance director of Next plc and Grattan plc, died peacefully on Wednesday 26th June 2024, aged 85 years. Requiem Mass at the Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church, LS16 6HW on 19th July at 11 a.m. Family flowers only, donations to Kidney Research Yorkshire. Online Ref: W0026348

MARX.—Anthony George (Tony), Much loved husband, father and Grampy died peacefully on 25th June, aged 88 years and will be dearly missed. Information regarding Tony's funeral (no black please) will be placed online at https://anthonymarx.muchoved.com where you may also make a donation in lieu of flowers for Alzheimer's Research UK. Enquiries to Hemming & Peace Funeral Services, 67 High Street, Alcester, B49 5AF. Tel: 01789 766750. Online Ref: W0026311

NIXON.—Peter David, aged 87 of Saltburn-by-the-Sea. For 59 years the dearly loved husband of Gill, proud father of 4 boys, Joanna and Kate. Loving father-in-law and grandfather. Funeral Service and Cremation at Kirkeatham Memorial Park at 1.30 p.m. on Friday 5th July. No flowers. Donations, if desired, to be shared between the British Heart Foundation and Saltburn 500 Club. Enquiries to Harry Thompson Funeral Service, Saltburn. Tel: 01287 624474. Online Ref: W0026328

ROBERTS.—David Nicholas died on 10th June 2024 aged 75. Dearly loved husband of Pippa, devoted twin brother to Phillip and precious uncle to Alex and Nick and to their children Toby, Gemina, Finley and Leo. A Funeral Service will be held at Mortlake Crematorium at 12 noon on Friday 19th July 2024. No black and no flowers, please. Donations, if desired, to Multiple Sclerosis Society. Online Ref: W0026212

ROSEBERY.—The Rt Hon Earl of, Neil Archibald Primrose, DL. Peacefully on 30th June 2024 aged 95 at home, Neil Rosebery, beloved husband of Deirdre, much loved father of Lucy, Jane, Emma, Caroline and Harry, and loving grandfather and great-grandfather to all his family. Service will be held at Dalmeny Church in due course. For details, please enquire through office@roseberystates.co.uk Online Ref: W0026306

SHARP.—Dorothy Bertha Merriton. A loyal friend to many, and loved aunt, died peacefully at home on June 25th, after a short illness, a few days after her 96th birthday. Funeral Service at St Mark's Church, Regent's Park NW1 7TN on Tuesday July 16th at 12.30 p.m. Donations in her memory to the Samaritans c/o Leverton & Sons Funeral Directors, 212 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BD. Online Ref: W0026277

SNOWDEN.—Neville died peacefully aged 96 on 18th June. Much loved and missed by his family and friends. A Service of Thanksgiving to be held at 12 noon, 25th July at St Mary's Church, Sheet. Family flowers only, charitable donations if desired to Petersfield Open Air Swimming Pool or Perennial gardens and horticulture can be made online at www.michaelmiller.co.uk donations, search Snowden. Online Ref: W0026217

WATSON-LEE.—Pamela Margaret. Passed away peacefully in Bembridge on 24th June 2024, aged 98. Wife of the late Rex Watson-Lee, and much loved by her sons Mark and Peter and her five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. A long and full life well lived. Memorial Service to take place on 26th July 2024 at 2 p.m., Holy Trinity Church, Bembridge and afterwards at the Bembridge Sailing Club. All enquiries to Weaver Brothers FD. Tel: 01983 872598. Online Ref: W0026128

In memoriam

JOWETT.—Richard RJ. Died on 3rd July 2010. Remembered with affection, Anne. Online Ref: W0026314

Personal

Text for the day

I URGE, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 (NIV)

Birthdays

HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY ALISON MONTAGUE from all the family and your friends. A double celebration as your daughter Katherine marries Peter Jönsson on Nybrostrand beach in Sweden on your big day. Enjoy the festivities! Online Ref: W0025813

General personal

TOFFEE LOG GLASSES Thinking of you Tony McBry. JDH xxx Online Ref: W0026259

General personal

The Telegraph

1960s

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Robert Towne

Celebrated screenwriter who won an Oscar and Golden Globe for *Chinatown* and also left his mark on the script for *The Godfather*

ROBERT TOWNE, who has died aged 89, was a celebrated Hollywood scriptwriter best known for his 1974 film *Chinatown*, which is now recognised as a classic of modern cinema.

The film depicts the venality behind the development of Los Angeles in the late 1930s. A private eye, J.J. Gittes (Jack Nicholson), accidentally uncovers a web of familial corruption as he probes the lives of Evelyn Mulwray (Faye Dunaway) and her tycoon father Noah Cross (John Huston).

The film won both the Golden Globe and the Academy Award for best screenplay and is now a film-school set text, something which Towne found mysterious. "What I hit upon just by a kind of monkey-at-a-typewriter trial and error – that somebody can extrapolate a formula from it astounds me," he told *Vanity Fair*. "Maybe there are rules, and maybe I stumbled across them, but I don't even know what 'story-sense' is. I had the same hard time [on later work] that I had on *Chinatown*."

In its final form, the film diverges from Towne's script, which originally killed off John Huston's character at the end. Instead, the director, Roman Polanski, insisted that Faye Dunaway should be killed – an ending that Towne described as "so cynical it works against itself".

Chinatown came in the middle of a string of hits for Towne, starting with *The Last Detail* (1973) and ending with *Shampoo* (1975). As a script doctor, he also left his mark on other New Hollywood classics, including *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Parallax View* and *The Godfather* (for which he was uncredited), and in the 1990s enjoyed a renaissance as Tom Cruise's screenwriter of choice, following *Days of Thunder* (1990) with *Mission: Impossible* (1996) and its first sequel.

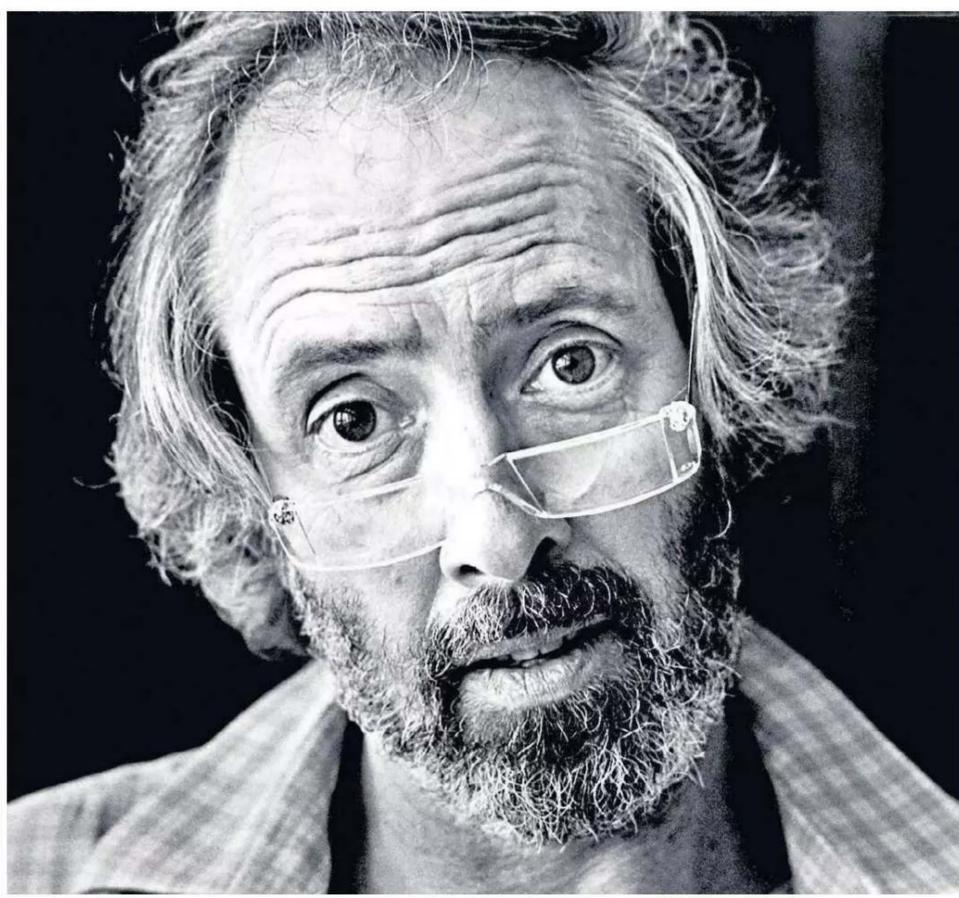
But Towne also had his share of frustration and failure. A number of his films were badly received, or else he had taken his name off the credits because he was unhappy with the end result.

Greystoke, a project which he had been nurturing for years, was eventually taken out of his hands and made by the British director, Hugh Hudson. Towne credited his work on the final screenplay, which received an Oscar nomination, to his Hungarian sheepdog, PH Vazak. Neither of them saw the film.

Although one of the most successful screenwriters of his generation, Towne's spasmodic career showed as well as any other the unpredictability of film-making. The painful process of watching his scripts being destroyed by Hollywood producers eventually led Towne to direct his own films, but these also met with little success.

Robert Burton Towne was born on November 23 1934 in Los Angeles. His father was a woman's clothier of Russian-Jewish descent who changed his name from Schwartz to Towne after he bought the Towne Smart Shop in San Pedro, California, a port just south of Los Angeles, where Robert and his younger brother grew up.

Towne harboured aspirations to be a writer from a very early age, writing his first story when he was six. The



Towne, above; right, Jack Nicholson in *Chinatown* and, far right, Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty in *Bonnie and Clyde*

multi-ethnic surroundings in which he was brought up had a profound influence on his later work. As he recalled to John Brady in *The Craft of the Screenwriter* (1981): "I grew up amidst fishermen, Mexicans, chief petty officers in the merchant marine with three-day growths of beard who could come up and wheeze on you."

That atmosphere permeates the setting of Towne's *Chinatown*, a southern California just beginning to decay into suburbia, a Los Angeles where one could still smell eucalyptus, pepper trees, and water coming out of the ground. After high school, Towne studied English and philosophy at Pomona College in Claremont. He worked for a time in military intelligence and as a real-estate salesman before joining a commercial tuna-fishing operation.

Towne first became interested in screenwriting in 1958 when he began taking a Hollywood acting class taught by Jeff Corey. Among the students who attended Corey's workshops during the late 1950s were James Coburn, Richard Chamberlain and Jack Nicholson, who became Towne's roommate.

One of Corey's exercises, at which Nicholson excelled, influenced



Towne's evolving feel for dramatic structure. "You are given a situation and told that you must talk about everything but the situation to advance the action," Towne explained to Brady.

"Take a very banal situation – a guy trying to seduce a girl. He talks about anything but seduction, anything from a rubber duck he had as a child to the food on the table... It's inventive, and it teaches you something about writing."

Watching such improvisations over a period of several years, Towne learnt "the power of dealing obliquely or elliptically with situations, because most people rarely confront things head on. They're afraid to." That

experience also gave Towne a sense of Nicholson's specific strengths that proved invaluable in their later work together.

Towne's first break came from the filmmaker Roger Corman who directed Towne's screenplay *The Last Woman on Earth* (1960), a science-fiction thriller about a love triangle between a woman and two men who survive a nuclear war. Towne, who had not finished the screenplay by the time shooting began, was cast as one of the two men; Corman's budget did not otherwise allow him to keep the screenwriter on location.

The two continued to work on other films during the 1960s, including *The*

Tomb of Ligeia for Corman's Edgar Allan Poe series. Towne expanded the story to include elements of hypnotism and necrophilia from other examples of Poe's work, creating a bizarre vision of a man who maintains a relationship with his first wife through the corpse of his second. The film received the best reviews of any of Corman's Poe films, and Towne claimed that he had expended more effort on that script than on any other.

In 1967 Warren Beatty hired Towne to rework the script of the film *Bonnie and Clyde*. He tightened the relationship between the two outlaws who were originally part of a ménage à trois with their driver and he re-arranged certain scenes to heighten the tension. Towne emphasised the inevitability of the outcome, posing the question in the script "when would it happen" rather than "whether it would happen".

Although he was much in demand after that, Towne was too ill to write a complete script. Until his condition of continuous exhaustion was diagnosed in 1972 as a mixture of allergies, Towne was convinced that it was a psychological problem, "writer's hypochondria".

Towne then went on to write a series of unsuccessful films. *Villa Rides* (1968), which he wrote with Sam Peckinpah, he later described as a "textbook on how not to make a movie". In 1971 he rewrote the screenplay for *Cisco Pike* but removed his name from the credits after a dispute with the director. With *The New Centurions* (1970) he took his name off the credits because he disliked the film so much.

Although he went uncredited for his work on *The Godfather* (1972), Francis Ford Coppola publicly acknowledged Towne's assistance when accepting the Academy Award for best screen adaptation. Towne's most famous contribution to the film was the tomato patch scene in which Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando) passes on his domain to his son (Al Pacino).

With his technique of conveying a situation while avoiding any direct mention of it, Towne wrote a scene that was ostensibly about the succession of power but covertly about the great love between father and son.

The screenplay for *The Last Detail* (1973), written at the request of his friend Jack Nicholson, earned Towne his first Oscar nomination.

In the film two seasoned sailors (Nicholson and Otis Young), charged with transporting a young man (Randy Quaid) to prison for an eight-year sentence, choose to give him a taste of life before fulfilling their mission. With *The Last Detail* Towne became one of Hollywood's hottest writers, commanding up to \$150,000 for adaptations and \$300,000 for original scripts, plus a percentage of box-office receipts.

After the even greater success of *Chinatown*, Towne wrote a succession of screenplays, including *Shampoo*, *Marathon Man*, *Heaven Can Wait* and *Reds*, while setting up *Greystoke*, in which he planned to make his directorial debut.

The first hour of the film would be without dialogue, presenting the interaction of the apes with the hero, Tarzan, "for whom the life of the ape was no less important than the life of a human being," Towne said.

He finally decided to direct *Personal Best* first, as a practice run before tackling the larger *Greystoke* project. A film about the romantic relationship between two female athletes (Mariel Hemingway and Patrice Donnelly), it ran into budget difficulties and Towne was forced to give up the *Greystoke* project in order to finish the film. He described this as the most difficult decision he had ever had to make.

Tequila Sunrise (1988) was Towne's second outing as a writer and director. Although the film had the potential to be a success, with Michelle Pfeiffer and

Mel Gibson as the leads, it failed to live up to expectations. Reviews were mixed, with most critics praising the screenplay but finding the direction confusing at best.

In 1990 Towne wrote the screenplay for Tom Cruise's *Days of Thunder*. Although his script was described as over-mechanical, "dealing not only in stock cars but also in stock characters" according to *The Daily Telegraph*, Cruise and Towne went on to make several bona fide critical and box-office hits.

A 1990 sequel to *Chinatown*, however, named *The Two Jakes*, written by Towne and eventually directed by Nicholson, was a disaster. Towne fell out with *Chinatown*'s original producer Robert Evans, who was set to play the other Jake, because Evans could not act – a crisis that came to a head when Evans refused to have a period haircut because it would reveal the stitches from the plastic surgery he had recently had in Tahiti.

When shooting finally began, after a delay of five years, Towne would fax the final pages of the script from Bora Bora. As a result, he also fell out with his old roommate Nicholson.

Shortly before he died, Towne told *Variety* that he had completed the scripts for a forthcoming *Chinatown* prequel television series for Netflix, directed by David Fincher.

Robert Towne married, first, in 1977, the actress Julie Payne, and had a daughter, the actress Katharine Towne. That marriage was dissolved in 1982 and two years later he married, secondly, Luisa Gaule, with whom he had another daughter, the writer and director Chiara Towne.

Robert Towne, born November 23 1934, died July 1 2024

Vincent Duggleby

Doyen of financial journalists who created Radio 4's *The Financial World Tonight* and *Money Box*

VINCENT DUGGLEBY, who has died aged 85, began his career with the BBC as a sports reporter but became one of the most recognisable voices on radio as the creator and presenter of Radio 4's long-running series *Money Box*.

In 1977 Duggleby was working as founding editor of *The Financial World Tonight* when he had the idea of developing a programme devoted to personal finance.

Labour was in power at the time and Britain was subject to the austere discipline of the International Monetary Fund. Sterling was weak and the stock market had crashed. The basic rate of tax was 34 per cent on income above £845 a year, rising to 83 per cent at £21,845, and with inflation at 15.6 per cent people, savers in particular, were understandably worried about their financial security.

Although a couple of national newspapers had personal finance sections – notably *The Daily Telegraph*, which had launched its "Family Money-Go-Round" in 1968 – the area was generally neglected by both newspapers and broadcasters.

Duggleby designed *Money Box*, with its blend of news, original journalism and information, and fought to bring it to the airwaves. It made its debut in October 1977, with Peter Hobday and Louise Botting as its first presenters. Pink Floyd's *Money*, with its cash-register sound effects, was its theme tune (later replaced by Instant Sunshine's *Money Matters*).

The programme quickly proved a big hit, attracting a faithful weekly audience of more than a million listeners. Duggleby often contributed to the programme and became co-presenter between 1981 and 2014, alternating with Louise Botting, then Alison Mitchell and later Paul Lewis.

Duggleby was a master of forensic detail and a brilliant live broadcaster, skills shown to best effect on Budget Day, when he explained the implications on Radio 4's *PM*, *The Financial World Tonight* and the *Midnight News*, before hosting *Money Box Budget Call* the next day.

With his relaxed, easygoing manner, enthusiasm and grasp of detail, he had the gift of helping people understand concepts that might have tested a trained accountant.



Presenting *Money Box* with Louise Botting in 1983; the original theme tune was Pink Floyd's *Money*

Money Box went on to pick up numerous awards and spawned a range of spin-offs including the weekly phone-in *Money Box Live*, which Duggleby launched in 1990, *Inside Money* and *Money Box Investigates*.

Duggleby was named Best Financial Journalist of the 1980s by the Unit Trust Association and 1992 Broadcaster of the Year by the FT Harold Wincott Foundation. In 1997 he was named Best Personal Finance Broadcaster by the Association of British Insurers.

Charles Vincent Anstey Duggleby was born on January 23 1939 to Bernard Duggleby and Vivien, née Hawkins, and educated at Blundell's School, Tiverton, and Worcester College, Oxford.

His career as a journalist began before he went up when, aged 18, he reported on rugby union for the *Bristol Evening Post*, of which his uncle was chairman and managing director, and he worked briefly as a sub-editor at the *Daily Express*.

In 1963, after graduation, he joined the

BBC Home Service, first presenting a jazz programme before moving to the Radio Sports Unit where, until 1966, he presented *Sports Session*, a Saturday-evening round-up. For a short time he also presented *Playtime*, a compilation of "records for the young" on the Light Programme.

In 1969 he fronted *Sport Service*, Radio 3's Saturday afternoon of live sport which ended with *Sports Report*, also working as deputy editor of the show under Angus Mackay.

In 1970, when Saturday-afternoon sport moved to Radio 2, Duggleby moved to news and current affairs, reporting on the Troubles in Northern Ireland and becoming deputy editor of *The World Tonight*.

Apart from regular reports on fluctuations in the stock market, the BBC at the time broadcast little in the way of analysis of the intricacies of the financial markets. But in 1971, when a long postal workers' strike badly affected the City of London, Duggleby commissioned a piece on

it for *The World Tonight*, and in 1973 he created *The Financial World Tonight*, with himself at the helm – the start of business programming on Radio 4.

In a blog, Bill Rogers, a friend and former colleague, recalled Duggleby telling him that since inflation was on the up, he had gone out and bought at least a dozen of the same grey suit, storing them in his garage, reasoning that although prices were likely to increase, he was unlikely to change size. In 1989, when *The Financial World Tonight* moved to an earlier slot on Radio 4, Duggleby hosted the *Financial Week on Fridays*.

In 1975 Duggleby published *English Paper Money*, an essential guide for collectors, now in its 10th edition, in which he listed all banknotes produced by the Bank of England from 1694, plus forgeries and publicity "skits", and included such fascinating details as the fact that there were half-crown notes issued up to 1941, and that between 1797 and 1829 618 people were hanged for forgery of paper money. In 1984, with Louise Botting, he published *Making the Most of Your Money*.

As well as his work on the BBC, Duggleby wrote for national newspapers. During the 1980s he was a regular contributor to the *Telegraph's* Family Money-Go-Round column; he later wrote on personal finance for *The Independent*. He also served on the Royal Mint Advisory Committee and for many years on the Council of the Royal Philatelic Society, of which he became treasurer and then vice president.

In 2005 when Duggleby was appointed MBE for services to financial services, he joked that it stood for "Money Box Expertise": "That is what I hope we have brought to the public. It is very pleasing that it should be recognised."

In his *Who's Who* entry Duggleby listed his recreations as philately, classical jazz and genealogy, and in 2005 he published *Days Beyond Recall: a brief history of the Duggleby family*.

In 1964 he married Elizabeth Frost, who survives him with their two daughters.

Vincent Duggleby, born January 23 1939, died June 7 2024

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Television reviews Anita Singh



Bagpiping history lesson squeezes out more than hot air



Sky's documentary series is a respectful mix of traditions and storytelling

Settle down to **Battle of the Bagpipes** (Sky Arts) and enjoy Scotland's most mellifluous sound. No, not the music, but the voice of actor Bill Paterson providing the narration for this series which follows civilian and military pipe bands as they each compete for glory.

Bagpipes are not universally loved. In one of those quotes that makes the rounds online without anyone being quite sure where it originated, Alfred Hitchcock supposedly said: "I understand the inventor of the bagpipes was inspired when he saw a man carrying an indignant, asthmatic pig under his arm. Unfortunately, the man-made sound never equalled the purity of the sound achieved by the pig." Perhaps Hitchcock had encountered a particularly bad busker. Bagpipes can sound beautiful when played well – think of Queen Elizabeth II's piper performing *Sleep, Dearie, Sleep* at her funeral.

I think the late Queen would have enjoyed *Battle of the Bagpipes*. It combines the stories of pipe bands from Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Armed Forces with a history of the instrument, which has been a favourite of the royals since the days of Queen Victoria. As documentaries go, it is a very traditional documentary, which picks out some individual stories –

a soldier who can play the pipes but can't master the Highland dancing; an American teenager who has come all the way from California to join the Inveraray & District Pipe Band – but resists any temptation to make this all about the personalities.

Instead, it emphasises the effort that goes into reaching the top level of competition, with pipe majors who give it everything. Some are hard taskmasters, others take a more relaxed approach. There are also plenty of youngsters involved, with the cameras following one school band. Most of the youngsters are following a family tradition, but one 15-year-old picks up tips from YouTube.

And we learn that a love of the bagpipes extends across the world. The Sultan of Oman was so taken by the sound that he ordered all of his regiments to have pipe bands. This was a problem for the mounted regiment on camels, because the sway of the animals meant that the blowpipe was literally knocking the riders' teeth out. McCallum Bagpipes of Kilmarnock duly invented a flexible blowpipe to circumvent this problem. "We call it the 'camel-friendly blowpipe,'" explained the McCallum boss. "We sent it to them and they absolutely adored it – especially the guys that were losing their teeth."

Sperm banks are a pretty surreal way to find the father of your baby. Browse an online catalogue, select your favourite characteristics and place your order. In **The Man with 1,000 Kids**, Netflix's latest stranger-than-fiction documentary, one woman explained why she chose a particular donor. "He had curly hair, bright blue eyes, a good set of teeth." It sounded like she was judging at Crufts.

The donor in question was Jonathan Jacob Meijer, a Dutchman whose hair seemed to be a selling point for many prospective parents unable to have children of their own. Meijer had other things going for him too: in videos he posted from his travels, he seemed like a happy-go-lucky type, albeit one who talked about cryptocurrency. He had helped a couple of people to have children before, he told John and Joyce; their baby would be his third.

He also told that to Suzanne and Natalie, and Laura and Kate, and Vanessa, and Nicolette. And, it turned out, hundreds of others. When he finally wound up in court, Meijer admitted to fathering "nearly 600" children, but one guess puts the number as high as 3,000.

This story is told from the point of view of the parents who were duped by Meijer. At first, it treats their tales in a jaunty way, including Joyce's tale of driving home with the sample in a container clamped between her thighs – only to get lost, panic that it would deteriorate and somehow inseminate herself on the hard shoulder.

But the horror slowly dawns. Nicolette discovered that a colleague at the school where she worked had also used Meijer. Then a second colleague noted that their children looked alike. And so it went on. The film-makers illustrate this growing network by having baby-face emojis pop up on a map. Soon, that map is covering many more countries, including Britain.

The film-makers try too hard to turn this into a *Tinder Swindler*-style tale of women exacting revenge, and there is a late twist. But even without that it's a decent tale that prompts bigger questions about the donor industry. Meijer declined to be interviewed, so we can only guess at his motivations.

Battle of the Bagpipes ★★★★★
The Man with 1,000 Kids ★★★★★

What to watch

ELECTION NIGHT
BBC One, BBC Two, ITV1, Channel 4 & Sky News, from 9pm



Will Rishi Sunak and Keir Starmer still be smiling after the election results start to roll through?

If the pollsters are to be believed, the 2024 General Election promises to be one of the most extraordinary nights in recent political history, with Keir Starmer's Labour Party expected to achieve an unprecedented landslide. But which channel will you watch the results on? The BBC's coverage will begin on BBC One (in England; BBC Two otherwise) at 9.55pm, with Clive Myrie and Laura Kuenssberg analysing the

results with the help of an array of familiar faces, including Jeremy Vine. Meanwhile, on ITV1 (9.50pm), Tom Bradby welcomes former Chancellor George Osborne and former Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to dissect the result. Sky's Kay Burley will be joined by Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham and Ruth Davidson, the former Leader of the Scottish Conservatives, from 9pm.

Channel 4, unsurprisingly, have gone for something different. **Britain Decides...** will be led by Krishnan Guru-Murthy and Emily Maitlis, alongside *The Rest is Politics* podcast hosts Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart. There will be big name political guests (former culture secretary Nadine Dorries, for instance) but also contributions from the cast of *Gogglebox*. How late will you stay up?
Stephen Kelly

COMEDY

Douglas Is Cancelled ITV1, 9pm
Steven Moffat's cancel culture satire continues. Tonight sees Douglas (Hugh Bonneville) being prepared for a potentially gruelling interview. The main theme, though, is the tug-of-war between his formidable wife Sheila (Alex Kingston) and his manipulative co-anchor Madeline (Karen Gillan). Stay tuned until the end for a superb cliffhanger.



Douglas Is Cancelled: Alex Kingston plays wife Sheila

comedy retrospective takes a stroll through the 1980s. There are obvious picks – *Not the Nine O'Clock News* and the trailblazing significance of Lenny Henry, both comedically

and personally – alongside a welcome spotlight on the quietly bold ITV comedians Hale and Pace, who inspired a flood of complaints with their microwave cat sketch.

FACTUAL

Gardeners' World BBC Two, 8pm
Tonight's special edition comes from the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival. Nick Bailey and Rachel de Thame will share highlights of the best gardens, gold medal winner Tom Massey provides tips on designing your own and Arit Anderson talks sustainable planting.



Supermarket Own-Brands: The Big Taste Test Channel 5, 8pm

This fizzy one-off special investigates the relationship between well-known food and drink brands and their cheap supermarket knock-offs. Can a panel of taste testers tell them apart and convince viewers to swap to cheaper alternatives? In the case of Coca-Cola, you might be surprised. Other brands tested include Honey Cheerios, Jaffa Cakes and McDonald's flagship burger, the Big Mac.

Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain ITV1, 8.30pm
Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge takes to the road in this tasty new series, which is themed around



Susan Calman hops between the Channel Islands

what it takes to produce the food on our plates. Tonight he drives his 1950s food truck to Kent and Cambridgeshire. While travelling around the latter he visits one of the country's biggest farms to trace the origins of a delicious beetroot and pearl barley salad.

Susan Calman's Grand Day Out Channel 5, 9pm
Affable comedian Susan Calman sets off on a new series of charming travelogue adventures. Tonight she hops between the Channel Islands, beginning with Jersey. Here she samples Jersey Royal potatoes and explores the third largest tidal range in the world. Meanwhile, on petite neighbour Guernsey, she receives the honour of firing the island's traditional noon day cannon. **SK**

The Telegraph
Extra

Subscriber offers, events & competitions

Telegraph Book Club: Rory Stewart
Online at 7pm on 10 July

Join former Cabinet minister Rory Stewart for a special Q&A with a free ticket. Get the searing inside story of our broken politics, find out his views on the election results, and hear tales from his new book *Politics on the Edge*.

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To scan the QR code, open your phone camera, point it at the code and tap the banner that appears on screen. On older phones, you may need to download a QR code reader first.

Event format and schedule subject to availability. Tickets are non-transferable and there is no cash alternative. Image credit: Tom Campbell.

The Telegraph

Money Confidential

Radio choice

<p>General Election 2024 Radio 4, 5 Live and LBC, from 9.45pm</p> <p>General Election fever also takes over the radio today. Nick Robinson and Rachel</p>	<p>Burden anchor Election 2024 (Radio 4 & Radio 5 Live, 9.45pm) analysing news as they come in with a host of reporters, commentators and politicians. Of the</p>	<p>independent stations, LBC is notably high-powered with its through-the-night show Britain Decides (10pm) hosted by Andrew Marr, Shelagh Fogarty, Jon Sopel and Lewis Goodall.</p>	<p>Alternatively, escape politics with Radio 3 in Concert (7.30pm) and the world premiere of Rufus Wainwright's <i>Dream Requiem</i>, narrated by Meryl Streep. Gerard O'Donovan</p>
<p>RADIO 1 FM 97.6-99.8MHz</p> <p>6.57am Newsbeat 7.00 Radio 1 Breakfast with Greg James 11.00 Rickie, Melvin and Charlie 12.45pm Newsbeat 1.00 Matt and Mollie 3.00 Radio 1's Rap Anthems 3.30 Newsbeat 3.32 Going Home with Vick, Katie and Jamie on Radio 15.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Radio 1's New Music Show 8.00 Radio 1's Rave-Up with Arielle Free 10.00 BBC Introducing Dance 11.00 Radio 1's Residency 1.00am Radio 1 Dance Presents 2.00 Glastonbury 2024-Live Sets 2.30 Glastonbury 2024-Live Sets 3.00 Radio 1's Chillout Anthems 4.00 Radio 1 Early Breakfast with Arielle Free</p>	<p>Strauss 5.00 In Tune 7.00 Classical Mixtape. Featuring Brahms's Hungarian Dance No.5 7.30 Radio 3 in Concert Rufus Wainwright's <i>Dream Requiem</i> from Paris See Radio choice 9.45 The Essay: Forever Songs. Musician Karine Polwart recalls an unexpected musical collaboration 10.00 Night Tracks. Sara Mohr-Pietsch presents a soundtrack for late-night listening 11.30 'Round Midnight 12.30 - 6.30am Through the Night</p>	<p>Election 2024 See Radio choice 12.48am Shipping Forecast 1.00 Election 2024 5.20 Shipping Forecast 5.30 - 6.00am Election 2024</p>	<p>Report 4.00 BBC OS 6.00 News 6.06 Outlook 6.50 Witness History 7.00 The Newsroom 7.30 Sport Today 8.00 News 8.06 The Documentary: Sir Frank Worrell 8.30 Science in Action 9.00 Newshour 10.00 News 10.06 The Inquiry 10.30 The Food Chain 11.00 The Newsroom 11.30 World Business Report 12.00 News 12.06am The Media Show 12.30 Happy News 1.00 News 1.06 Business Matters 2.00 The Newsroom 2.30 Tech Life 3.00 News 3.06 Outlook 3.50 Witness History 4.00 The Newsroom 4.30 Heart and Soul 5.00 - 8.00am Newsday</p>
<p>RADIO 2 FM 88-90.2MHz</p> <p>6.30am The Gaby Roslin Breakfast Show 9.30 Vernon Kay 12.00 Tina Daheley. Tina Daheley sits in for Jeremy Vine, live from Cardiff 2.00pm Scott Mills. Music and chat 4.00 Sara Cox. Music and chat 6.30 Sara Cox's Half Wower. Sara plays the biggest and best tunes to get listeners dancing 7.00 Nick Grimshaw's Shiny Happy Playlist. Nick Grimshaw sits in for Jo Whaley with favourite album tracks and musical gems 7.30 Nick Grimshaw 9.00 The Country Show with Bob Harris. With exclusive music from Riley Green and Lainey Wilson 10.00 Trevor Nelson's Magnificent 7. Uplifting tunes and essential throwbacks 10.30 Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation. The DJ introduces a mix of tunes 12.00 Phil Williams 3.00am Alternative Sounds of the 90s with Dermot O'Leary 4.00 - 7.00am Owain Wyn Evans</p>	<p>RADIO 4 FM 92.4-94.6MHz; LW 198kHz</p> <p>6.00am Today 9.00 In Our Time 9.45 NatureBang 10.00 Woman's Hour 11.00 This Cultural Life 11.45 Obsessed with the Quest 12.00 News 12.04pm The Bottom Line. Business issues that matter 12.32 Sliced Bread. Greg Foot examines the latest ear plugs to hit the market 12.57 Weather 1.00 The World at One. Presented by Sarah Montague 1.45 Buried: The Last Witness. A friend casts doubt on Douglas's honesty and Michael Sheen gives his verdict 2.00 The Archers. Lillian doesn't know where to turn and Alice confronts her past 2.15 Drama: Assisted. By Greg Wilkinson 3.00 Rambblings. Clare Balding explores Moyle Hill in Co Donegal with motivational speaker Nikki Bradley 3.27 Radio 4 Appeal. On behalf of Just Like Us 3.30 Feedback. Listeners' views with Andrea Catherwood 4.00 The Briefing Room. David Aaronovitch discusses a story in the news. Last in the series 4.30 BBC Inside Science. Marnie Chesterton explores the science of summer 5.00 PM. Presented by Evan Davis 5.57 Weather 6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.30 Rhysearch. Rhys James considers cross-national pride 7.00 The Archers. It's crunch time for Alice 7.15 Front Row. Anita Desai's book <i>Rosarita</i> and film <i>The Nature of Love</i> 8.00 The Media Show 9.00 Loose Ends 9.45</p>	<p>RADIO 5 LIVE MW 693 & 909kHz</p> <p>6.00am 5 Live Breakfast 9.00 Nicky Campbell 11.00 Adrian Chiles 1.00pm Tennis. Clare McDonnell and Gigi Salmon present coverage from day four of Wimbledon 2.00 Tennis. Katie Smith presents coverage from day four of Wimbledon, where the second round of the men's and ladies' singles competition is scheduled to continue 9.00 5 Live Formula 1. The 5 Live Formula 1 team preview the 2024 British Grand Prix 9.45 - 6.00am Election 2024 Rachel Burden and Nick Robinson host a special General Election 2024 programme See Radio choice</p>	<p>RADIO 4 EXTRA DIGITAL ONLY</p> <p>6.00am Monk's Hood 6.30 Bolt 7.00 Patterson 7.30 Dad's Army 8.00 For the Love of Leo 8.30 The Confession 8.45 Valley of the Dolls 9.00 Rhysearch 9.30 Parkmasters 9.45 Daily Service 10.00 Great Lives 10.30 Sexton's Tales 11.00 Monk's Hood 11.30 Bolt 12.00 Patterson 12.30pm Dad's Army 1.00 For the Love of Leo 1.30 The Confession 1.45 Valley of the Dolls 2.00 Genius 2.30 Gilbert Without Sullivan 3.00 Dick George - Private Investigator 4.00 Great Lives 4.30 Sexton's Tales 5.00 Monk's Hood 5.30 Bolt 6.00 Patterson 6.30 Dad's Army 7.00 For the Love of Leo 7.30 The Confession 7.45 Valley of the Dolls 8.00 Genius 8.30 Gilbert Without Sullivan 9.00 Dick George - Private Investigator 10.00 Rhysearch 10.30 The Guns of Adam Riches 10.55 The Comedy Club Interview 11.00 Detective Sergeant Nick Mohammed 11.30 I've Never Seen Star Wars 12.00 Great Lives 12.30am Sexton's Tales 1.00 Monk's Hood 1.30 Bolt 2.00 Patterson 2.30 Dad's Army 3.00 For the Love of Leo 3.30 The Confession 3.45 Valley of the Dolls 4.00 Genius 4.30 Gilbert Without Sullivan 5.00 - 6.00am Dick George - Private Investigator</p>
<p>RADIO 3 FM 90.2-92.4MHz</p> <p>6.30am Breakfast 9.30 Essential Classics 1.00pm Classical Live 4.00 Composer of the Week: Richard</p>	<p>CLASSIC FM FM 99.9-101.9MHz</p> <p>6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Dan Walker 9.00 The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Dan Walker 10.00 Alexander Armstrong 1.00pm Anne-Marie Minhall 4.00 Margherita Taylor 7.00 Relaxing Evenings. Presented by Zeb Soanes 10.00 Calm Classics 1.00am Bill Overton 4.00 - 6.30am Early Breakfast</p>	<p>WORLD SERVICE DIGITAL ONLY</p> <p>8.00am News 8.06 The Inquiry 8.30 Business Daily 8.50 Witness History 9.00 The Newsroom 9.30 The Documentary: Sir Frank Worrell 10.00 News 10.06 The Media Show 10.30 On the Podium 11.00 The Newsroom 11.30 The Global Story 12.00 News 12.06pm Outlook 12.50 Witness History 1.00 The Newsroom 1.30 The Food Chain 2.00 Newshour 3.00 News 3.06 The Inquiry 3.30 World Business</p>	

Today's television

Main channels

BBC One

6.00 am Breakfast (S) **9.30** Morning Live (S) **10.45** Scam Interceptors (S) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (AD) (S) **12.15 pm** Bargain Hunt (AD) (S) **1.00** BBC News at One; Weather (S) **1.25** Regional News; Weather (S) **1.35** BBC News at One; Weather (S) **1.45** Wimbledon 2024 Coverage of day four of the prestigious grass-court tournament from the All England Club, where second-round matches are scheduled to be played in the men's and ladies' singles (S) **6.00** BBC News at Six; Weather (S) **6.30** Regional News; Weather (S)



Wimbledon: Britain's Jack Draper

7.00 Wimbledon 2024 Further coverage of day four of the Grand Slam tournament from the All England Club, where the second round of the men's and ladies' singles is scheduled to conclude (S)

9.25 Not Going Out Lee's father announces his engagement (R) (S)

9.55 Election 2024 Live coverage of the results, with Laura Kuenssberg and Clive Myrie. Political editor Chris Mason leads the correspondents reporting from each corner of the United Kingdom See What to watch (S)

2.00 - 6.00am Election 2024 See What to watch

BBC Two

6.45 am Beechgrove Garden (R) (S) **7.15** Garden Rescue: Top of the Plots (R) (S) **8.00** Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (AD) (R) (S) (SL) **9.00** News (S) **11.00** Wimbledon 2024. Coverage of day four (S) **3.00 pm** Wimbledon 2024 Further coverage of day four (S)



Gardeners' World

7.00 EastEnders Nugget regains consciousness (AD) (S)

7.30 EastEnders Teddy and Sharon share a filthy drink (AD) (S)

8.00 Gardeners' World The team reports from the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival See What to watch (S)

9.00 The North York Moors: A Wild Year (R) (S)

9.25 Live at the Apollo Ed Gamble hosts with Tom Davis and Judi Love (R) (S)

9.55 Gimme Gimme Gimme Tom and Linda go clubbing (R) (S)

10.25 FILM: Moulin Rouge! (2001) Romantic musical starring Ewan McGregor and Nicole Kidman See Film choice (S)

12.25 am Today at Wimbledon **1.25** Sign Zone: Springwatch **2.25** Sign Zone: Andy Murray: Will to Win **3.25 - 6.20am** This Is BBC Two

ITV1

6.00 am Good Morning Britain (S) **9.00** Lorraine (S) **10.00** This Morning (S) **12.30 pm** Loose Women (S) **1.30** News; Weather (S) **1.55** Regional News; Weather (S) **2.00** James Martin's Great British Adventure (R) (S) **3.00** Lingo (R) (S) **4.00** Tipping Point (R) (S) **5.00** The Chase (R) (S) **6.00** Regional News; Weather (S) **6.30** News; Weather (S)



Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain

7.00 Bradley & Barney Walsh: Breaking Dad The duo continue their European adventure in Germany (AD) (R) (S)

7.30 Emmerdale Charles is determined to get to the truth (AD) (S)

8.30 Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain New series. The chef begins a cooking tour of the UK See What to watch (AD) (S)

9.00 Douglas Is Cancelled The furore around the joke continues to mount See What to watch (AD) (S)

9.50 - 6.00am Election 2024 Live: The Results Tom Bradby leads ITV's coverage as viewers see the results announced and the emerging political shape of the new Parliament See What to watch (S)

Channel 4

6.15 am Cheers (R) (S) **6.40** Cheers (R) (S) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond (AD) (R) (S) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond (AD) (R) (S) **8.05** Everybody Loves Raymond (AD) (R) (S) **8.35** Everybody Loves Raymond (AD) (R) (S) **9.05** Frasier (AD) (R) (S) **9.35** Frasier (AD) (R) (S) **10.05** Frasier (AD) (R) (S) **10.35** Frasier (AD) (R) (S) **11.05** Help! We Bought a Village (R) (S) **12.05 pm** Channel 4 News (S) **12.10** Help! We Bought a Village (R) (S) **1.10** Car S.O.S (AD) (R) (S) **2.10** Countdown (S) **3.00** A Place in the Sun (R) (S) **4.00** Renovation Nation (AD) (S) **5.00** A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? (R) (S) **6.00** Four in a Bed (R) (S) **6.30** The Simpsons (AD) (R) (S)



24 Hours in Police Custody

7.00 Channel 4 News (S)

8.00 The Supervet: Noel Fitzpatrick A Marbella-based French bulldog is flown in for treatment on a broken elbow (AD) (S)

9.00 24 Hours in Police Custody A 76-year-old man is arrested following allegations of historical child sex abuse (AD) (R) (S)

9.45 Britain Decides with The Rest Is Politics and Gogglebox General Election results with Krishna Gurusamy and Emily Maitlis See What to watch (S)

12.00 Britain Decides with The Rest Is Politics and Gogglebox See What to watch **2.00am** Britain Decides with The Rest Is Politics and Gogglebox See What to watch **4.00 - 6.00am** Britain Decides with The Rest Is Politics and Gogglebox See What to watch

Channel 5

6.00 am Milkshake! **9.05** Milkshake! Story Den (R) (S) **9.15** Jeremy Vine (S) **11.15** Storm Huntley (S) **12.45 pm** Friends (R) (S) **1.10** Friends (R) (S) **1.40** 5 News at Lunchtime (S) **1.45** Home and Away (AD) (R) (S) **2.15** FILM: A Deadly Mother (2020, TVM) Thriller starring Monica Rose Betz (R) (S) **4.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (R) (S) **5.00** 5 News at 5 (S) **6.05** Police Interceptors (AD) (R) (S) **6.55** 5 News Update (S)



Own-Brands: The Big Taste Test

7.00 Happy Campers: The Caravan Park At Holiday Resort Unity, an extended family gets separated from each other (S)

7.55 5 News Update (S)

8.00 Supermarket Own-Brands: The Big Taste Test Examining the difference between leading brands and supermarkets' own versions See What to watch (S)

9.00 Susan Calman's Grand Day Out New series. The comedian explores the Channel Islands See What to watch (S)

10.00 Only Fools and Horses: Secrets & Scandals (R) (S)

11.05 FILM: Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw (2019) Action starring Dwayne Johnson **1.35am** PlayOJO Live Casino Show **3.35** Yorkshire Tea vs PG Tips: Battle of the Brews **4.20** Inside the Balmoral Hotel **5.10** House Doctor **5.30** Entertainment News on 5 **5.40** Milkshake! Monkeys' Amazing Adventures **5.45 - 6.00am** Paw Patrol

Film choice



Space Cadet (2024) Amazon Prime Video ★★★

Emma Roberts returns to the kind of flitty comedy that made her name (*Wild Child*, *Scream Queens*). In Liz W Garcia's *Legally Blonde*-esque film, Roberts is Rex, a fun-loving Florida party girl who somehow winds up as Nasa's number one space cadet. Up against other candidates with stronger CVs and, let's be honest, bigger brains, it's down to Rex's sparky personality to see her through.



Inglourious Basterds (2009) Film4, 9pm ★★★★

Quentin Tarantino's homage to war films offers all the hallmarks of the director's audacious style. It's audaciously bloody, darkly comic and anchored by actors playing thrillingly against type. Christoph Waltz won an Oscar for his incendiary turn as the "Jew Hunter"; Brad Pitt is almost as memorable as the chief Nazi-killer, Aldo "the Apache" Raine.



Moulin Rouge! (2001) BBC Two, 10.25pm; not NI/Scot/Wales ★★★

Baz Luhrmann's intoxicating spectacle was the first musical to be nominated for Best Picture in 22 years. Set in 1899 Montmartre, it follows a poet (Ewan McGregor) who becomes love-struck with a courtesan (Nicole Kidman). Luhrmann's characteristic mix of modern pop and a period setting ensures that this is a thrilling assault on the senses.

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BBC Four

7.00 pm Canal Boat Diaries **7.30** FILM: North By Northwest (1959) Hitchcock thriller starring Cary Grant **9.40** FILM: On the Waterfront (1954, b/w) Drama starring Marlon Brando **11.25** Listen to Me Marlon: Imagine **1.05 am** Canal Boat Diaries **1.35** Full Circle with Michael Palin **2.25 - 3.25am** Treasures of the Indus

ITV3

11.40 am Heartbeat **12.40 pm** Heartbeat **1.40** Classic Emmerdale **2.10** Classic Emmerdale **2.40** Classic Coronation Street **3.15** Classic Coronation Street **3.50** Inspector Morse **6.00** Heartbeat **7.00** Heartbeat **8.00** Vera **10.00** The Tower **11.00** Agatha Christie's Poirot **11.55** The Royal **12.45 am** Upstairs, Downstairs **1.40** Upstairs, Downstairs **2.30 - 6.00am** Teleshopping

ITV4

11.55 am BattleBots **1.00 pm** Tour de France Highlights **2.00** Tour de France Live. Coverage of stage six, from Macon to Dijon **5.00** Great Racehorses **5.20** Mr Bean **5.55** BattleBots **7.00** Tour de France Highlights **8.00** FILM: Octopussy (1983) James Bond spy adventure starring Roger Moore **10.45** FILM: Rocky (1976) Drama starring Sylvester Stallone **1.00 am** The Sweeney **1.55** Auto Mundial **2.20** Motorsport Mundial **2.50** Unwind with ITV **3.00 - 6.00am** Teleshopping

Sky Arts

Noon The Joy of Painting **1.00** Tales of the Unexpected **2.00** The South Bank Show Originals **3.00** Dickens: Phantoms and Fictions **4.00** Discovering: Samuel L Jackson **5.00** The Joy of Painting **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected **7.00** Battle of the Bagpipes **8.00** The Directors **9.00** Discovering: John Hurt **10.00** The Ghost of Richard Harris **12.20 am** Comedy Legends **1.20** I Am Richard Pryor **3.15** Tales of the Unexpected **3.45 - 5.00am** National Trust: National Treasures

Sky Atlantic

11.10 am Gomorrah **12.15 pm** Game of Thrones **1.20** The Sopranos **2.25** The Sopranos **3.30** Six Feet Under **4.35** Six Feet Under **5.45** Gomorrah **6.50** Gomorrah **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.00** House of the Dragon **10.20** Band of Brothers **11.30** Succession **12.40 am** Watchmen **1.45** The Deuce **2.55 - 4.05am** Game of Thrones

Film4

11.00 am Nothing But the Best (1964, b/w) Black comedy starring Alan Bates **1.05 pm** Time Lock (1957, b/w) Thriller with Robert Beatty **2.35** Comanche Station (1960) Western with Randolph Scott **4.10** Hell Is a City (1960, b/w) Thriller starring Stanley Baker **6.05** Clear and Present Danger (1994) Action thriller starring Harrison Ford **9.00** Inglourious Basterds (2009) Adventure starring Brad Pitt See Film choice **12.10 am** Zola (2021) Crime comedy drama starring Taylor Paige **1.55 - 4.00am** Heatwave (2022) Thriller starring Kat Graham

Drama

11.40 am The Bill **12.40 pm** Classic EastEnders **1.20** Classic EastEnders **2.00** London's Burning **3.00** Born and Bred **4.20** Tenko **5.20** Birds of a Feather **6.00** Waiting for God **6.40** Are You Being Served? **7.20** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** Father Brown **9.00** A Small Light **10.00** New Tricks **11.00** Soldier, Soldier **12.10 am** Footballers' Wives **1.15** Call the Midwife **2.25 - 4.00am** Classic Holby City

Variations

Northern Ireland
BBC One: 9.55pm Election 2024 - Northern Ireland 2.00 - 5.30am Election 2024 - Northern Ireland
BBC Two: 9.55pm Election 2024 2.00 - 6.20am Election 2024
UTV: 8.30 - 9.00pm UTV Life

Scotland
BBC One: 9.55pm Election 2024 - Scotland 2.00 - 6.00am Election 2024 - Scotland
BBC Scotland: 7.30pm Scotland's Greatest Escape 8.00 Beechgrove Garden 8.30 Hidden Lives 9.00 My Husband the MMA Fighter 9.30 Best of Chewin' the Fat 9.55 Election 2024 - Scotland 2.00 - 6.00am Election 2024 - Scotland
STV: 8.30 - 9.00pm Animal 999

Wales
BBC One: 9.25pm Kiri's TV Flashback 9.55 Election Wales 2024 2.00 - 6.00am Election Wales 2024
BBC Two: 9.55pm Election 2024 2.00 - 6.20am Election 2024
ITV1 Wales: No variations

ITV1 Regions
No variations

S4C
6.00am Cyw 12.00 Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd 12.05pm Bois y Rhondla 12.30 Cerys Matthews a'r Goeden Faled 1.00 Prynawn Da 1.55 Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd 2.00 Seiclo: Tour de France 4.40 Pablo 4.50 Sion y Chef 5.00 Stwmsb 6.00 Dan Do 6.30 Arfordir Cymru: Bae Ceredigion 6.57 Newyddion S4C 7.00 Heno 7.30 Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd 8.00 Pobol y Cwm 8.25 Rownd a Rownd 8.55 Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd 9.00 Seiclo: Tour de France 9.30 Y Gêm 9.55 Etholiad 2024 2.00 - 6.00am Etholiad 2024

Dave
Noon Storage Hunters UK 2.00pm Extreme Fishing with Robson Green: At the Ends of the Earth 3.00 Top Gear 5.00 The Haiky Bikers' Northern Exposure 6.00 Rick Stein's Long Weekends 7.00 Would I Lie to You? 7.40 Richard Osman's House of Games 9.00 QI XL 11.00 Taskmaster 12.00 Would I Lie to You? 12.40am Alan Davies: As Yet Untitled 1.40 Dave Gorman: Modern Life Is Goodish 2.45 Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA 3.35-4.00am Travel Man: 48 Hours in Amsterdam

GOLD
11.40am Last of the Summer Wine 1.00pm The Green Green Grass 1.35 My Hero 2.15 Still Open All Hours 2.50 Dad's Army 3.30 Are You Being Served? 4.10 Last of the Summer Wine 5.30 Still Open All Hours 6.05 The Green Green Grass 6.40 Dad's Army 8.00 Blackadder Goes Forth 8.40 Only Fools and Horses 9.15 The Young Ones. The housemates from Scumbag College test their mental dexterity against Footlights College on University Challenge, but not before Vyvan loses his head 10.00 Paul Whitehouse's Sketch Show Years See What to watch 10.35 Victoria Wood as Seen on TV 11.20 The Lenny Henry Show 12.40am Only Fools and

Horses 1.20 The Young Ones 2.10 Victoria Wood as Seen on TV 2.50-4.00am The Lenny Henry Show
ITV2
Noon Dress to Impress 1.00pm Deal or No Deal 2.00 Supermarket Sweep 3.00 Charmed 4.00 Dawson's Creek 5.00 Dress to Impress 6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase 7.00 Deal or No Deal 8.00 The Masked Singer US 9.00 Love Island 10.05 Tell Me Everything 11.05 Family Guy 12.05am American Dad! 1.05 Karaoke Club: Drag Edition 2.10 Don't Hate the Playaz 2.50 Unwind with ITV 3.00-6.00am Teleshopping
More4
11.25am Find It, Fix It, Flog It 12.30pm Come Dine with Me 3.10 Four in a Bed 5.50 Chateau DIY 6.55 Car S.O.S 7.55 Grand Designs 9.00 Perfect Pub Walks with Bill Bailey 10.00 24 Hours in A&E 12.10am 999: On the Front Line 1.15 24 Hours in A&E 3.25-3.55am A Place in the Sun
PBS America
11.55am Inside Japan's War 1.00pm WW2: Battle of Crete 2.10 The Vietnam War 4.35 Inside Japan's War 5.45 Grand Tours of Scotland 6.25 The Vietnam War 8.50 WW2: Battle of

Crete 9.55 Inside Japan's War 11.00 Manson: The Lost Tapes 12.00 WW2: Battle of Crete 1.10am Grand Tours of Scotland 2.00-6.00am Teleshopping

Talking Pictures TV
24 hours, including at: 11.20am FILM: The Shillingbury Blowers (1980) Comedy drama starring Trevor Howard 1.00pm FILM: The Day the Earth Caught Fire (1961, b/w) Sci-fi thriller starring Edward Judd 3.00 Crown Court 4.30 Enemy at the Door 5.35 FILM: Miranda (1948, b/w) A mermaid is caught by a doctor during a fishing holiday, and decides to go home with him to sample life on dry land. Comedy starring Glynis Johns and Griffith Jones 7.10 MR James: A View from a Hill 8.00 The Brothers 9.05 Van der Valk 10.05 FILM: Yield to the Night (1956, b/w) Drama starring Diana Dors 12.05am FILM: Ransom (1975) Drama starring Sean Connery 1.55 FILM: Cisco Pike (1971) Crime drama starring Kris Kristofferson 3.45-5.30am FILM: Beat Girl (1960, b/w) Drama starring Gillian Hills

Yesterday
Noon Great British Railway Journeys 1.00pm Antiques Roadshow 2.00 Bangers & Cash 4.00 The World at War 5.00 Secret Nazi Bases 6.00

Antiques Roadshow 7.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics 8.00 Bangers & Cash 9.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics 10.00 Bangers & Cash 11.00 Abandoned Engineering 12.00 Great British Railway Journeys 1.00am Train Truckers 3.00-6.10am Teleshopping

Sky Sports Main Event
11.30am Live DP World Tour Golf. The BMW International Open 5.00pm Live Ladies European Tour Golf. Coverage of day two of the Aramco Team Series event from London's Centurion Club 6.00 The F1 Show 7.00 Live Ladies European Tour Golf. Coverage of day two of the Aramco Team Series event from London's Centurion Club 7.30 Live PGA Tour Golf. The John Deere Classic 9.00 Live PGA Tour Golf. The John Deere Classic 12.00-6.00am SSN Euro Report

Sky Sports Premier League
Noon Gary Neville's Soccerbox 1.00pm Premier League Best Goals 2.00 Premier League Highlights 5.00 Premier League Review 7.00 Premier League Icons 7.30 Premier League Stories 8.00 SSN Euro Report 10.30 Back Pages Tonight 11.00 Class of '92: Full Time 12.00 PL Retro 2.00-4.00am Premier League Years

TNT Sports 1
Noon Live: World Championship of Legends Cricket. England v South Africa 4.00pm Live: World Championship of Legends Cricket. West Indies v Pakistan 8.30 TNT Sports Cricket Reload 9.00 Live MLB. Seattle Mariners v Baltimore Orioles (start-time 9.10pm) 12.15am Born Racers 1.30 Uefa Europa League 2.30-4.30am Women's Test Match Cricket

Discovery
Noon Wheeler Dealers: Dream Car 1.00pm Railroad Alaska 3.00 America's Backyard Gold 4.00 Flying Wild Alaska 5.00 Homestead Rescue: Raney Ranch 6.00 Iron Resurrection 7.00 Kindig Customs 8.00 Garage Squad 9.00 August 4th: An Olympic Odyssey 10.30 Naked and Afraid XL 12.30am Mystery at Blind Frog Ranch 1.30 August 4th: An Olympic Odyssey 3.00-5.00am Naked and Afraid XL

Sky Cinema Premiere
24 hours, including at: 10.20am The Shamrock Spitfire (2024) Biographical drama starring Shane O'Regan 12.20pm LaRoy, Texas (2023) Comedy crime caper starring Steve Zahn and John Magaro 2.20 A Sacrifice (2024) A social psychologist

investigates a local cult connected to an unnerving event. Drama starring Eric Bana, Sylvia Hoeks and Sadie Sink 4.20 Meg 2: The Trench (2023) When a mining operation unleashes a school of megalodon sharks, rescue expert Jonas Taylor attempts to save the day. Thriller sequel starring Jason Statham 6.20 Drift (2023) A young woman escapes her war-torn country to a Greek island, growing close with a tour guide as the pair find hope in each other. Drama starring Cynthia Erivo 8.00 LaRoy, Texas (2023) Heartbroken after discovering his wife is cheating on him, a suicidal man is mistaken for a low-rent hitman by a stranger. Writer/director Shane Atkinson's comedy crime caper starring Steve Zahn 10.00 A Sacrifice (2024) A social psychologist investigates a local cult connected to an unnerving event. Drama starring Eric Bana 12.00 American Star (2024) Thriller starring Ian McShane 1.50am Am I OK? (2022) Romantic comedy drama starring Dakota Johnson 3.30-5.10am Ruthless (2023) Action thriller starring Dermot Mulrooney

Sky Documentaries
Noon FILM: Love to Love You, Donna Summer (2023) Profile of the singer 2.00pm Donyale Luna: Supermodel 3.50 My Icon: Pam Cooky 4.00 The

Directors 5.00 Discovering: Michelle Pfeiffer 6.00 The Nineties 7.00 Shaq 8.00 Stax: Soulsville USA 9.00 The Essex Murders 12.00 The Ringleader: The Case of the Bling Ring 1.50-4.00am King in the Wilderness

Sky History
Noon Secrets in the Ice 1.00pm Salvage Kings 2.00 Swamp People: Serpent Invasion 4.00 Pawn Stars 6.00 American Pickers 7.00 Forged in Fire 8.00 Swamp People 9.00 Swamp Mysteries with Troy Landry 10.00 Adventure Gold Diggers 11.00 Rust Valley Restorers 12.00 Pawn Stars 2.00am Storage Wars 3.00-4.00am Swamp People
Sky Max
Noon The Flash 1.00pm MacGyver 3.00 Hawaii Five-O 4.00 S.W.A.T. 5.00 SEAL Team 6.00 Stargate SG-1 8.00 Rob & Roshem vs F1. Rob Beckett and Roshem Ranganathan continue their Formula 1 journey in Monaco, hanging out with driver George Russell, before Rob finally takes his manual driving test 9.00 The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live 10.00 A Discovery of Witches 11.00 The Walking Dead 12.00 Last King of the Cross 1.00am Entertainment 2.00 Road Wars 3.00-4.00am Hawaii Five-O

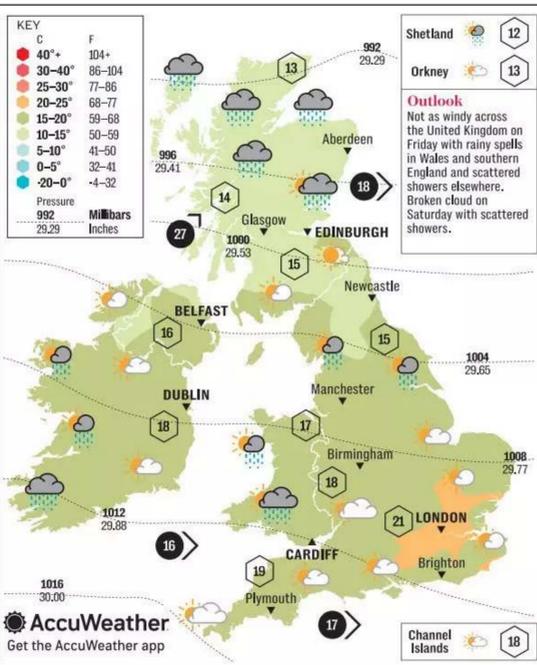
Weather & Crosswords

Forecast

General situation

Breezy to windy across the United Kingdom today with scattered showers in Scotland. Sunny breaks elsewhere with the odd shower or two in Northern Ireland and northern England.

- ♦ **London, Cent S England, Channel Is, SW England, E England, SE England, E Anglia, Midlands:** Cloud, sunny intervals and breezy today. A moderate westerly wind. Max 65-70F (18-21C). Broken cloud tonight with blustery showers late. Min 50-57F (10-14C).
- ♦ **NW England, Lake Dist, IoM, Cent N England, NE England:** Breezy today with a couple of showers. A moderate W to SW wind. Max 46-62F (8-17C). Broken cloud tonight. Min 41-54F (5-12C).
- ♦ **Wales:** Sunny intervals today with the odd afternoon shower. A moderate W wind. Max 48-62F (9-17C). A shower tonight. Min 42-55F (6-12C).
- ♦ **N Ireland:** Windy today with the odd shower. A fresh W wind. Max 46-62F (8-17C). Mainly dry and breezy tonight. Min 40-50F (4-10C).
- ♦ **SW Scotland, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, W Isles, SE Scotland, NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, Orkney, Shetland:** Blustery showers today. A moderate to fresh W to SW wind. Max 38-60F (3-16C). A couple of showers tonight. Min 36-52F (2-11C).



Four day forecast



European readings

Last night's report for 24 hours to 6pm

	Max	Min	Daytime	weather
Akrotiri	30	24	sunny	
Alicante	29	19	sunny	
Amsterdam	17	10	rain	
Athens	32	25	sunny	
Barcelona	24	19	cloudy	
Bari	26	20	sunny	
Belgrade	26	15	p/cldy	
Benidorm	30	19	sunny	
Bergen	15	8	p/cldy	
Berlin	19	12	p/cldy	
Biarritz	23	14	p/cldy	
Bodrum	32	23	sunny	
Bordeaux	23	14	p/cldy	
Brest	18	12	showers	
Brussele	17	12	rain	
Bucharest	29	19	cloudy	
Budapest	27	11	sunny	
Cagliari	28	20	windy	
Chamonix	17	11	rain	
Copenhagen	21	13	p/cldy	
Corfu	30	23	p/cldy	
Cork	19	11	windy	
Corsica	25	19	p/cldy	
Crete	30	24	sunny	
Dublin	20	11	showers	
Dubrovnik	27	21	sunny	
Faro	29	21	sunny	
Florence	29	20	p/cldy	
Frankfurt	18	12	rain	
Funchal	24	19	sunny	
Gdansk	20	13	showers	
Geneva	20	13	showers	
Gibraltar	26	18	sunny	
Hamburg	16	12	showers	
Helsinki	17	10	showers	
Immsbruck	22	13	rain	
Istanbul	32	23	p/cldy	
Kyiv	25	15	showers	
La Rochelle	20	14	p/cldy	
Lisbon	30	18	sunny	
Lucarno	22	15	showers	
Luxembourg	15	11	showers	
Madrid	34	16	sunny	
Majorca	29	19	p/cldy	
Malaga	33	19	sunny	
Malta	27	21	windy	
Marseille	28	19	windy	
Menorca	26	20	cloudy	
Milan	25	18	rain	
Monaco	25	19	showers	
Moscow	32	22	p/cldy	
Munich	17	12	showers	
Naples	27	21	storms	
Nice	25	21	cloudy	
Nicosia	39	24	sunny	
Oporto	27	14	sunny	
Oslo	18	12	showers	
Palermo	25	23	p/cldy	
Paris	21	13	p/cldy	
Perpignan	28	17	sunny	
Prague	18	13	p/cldy	
Reykjavik	16	9	showers	
Rhodes	32	24	sunny	
Riga	24	13	showers	
Rome	24	20	p/cldy	
Saint Malo	21	12	cloudy	
Salzburg	18	13	showers	
Santander	22	13	p/cldy	
Santiago/Comp.	24	12	sunny	
Sofia	24	16	windy	
St. Petersburg	18	16	showers	
Stockholm	21	14	showers	
Strasbourg	17	14	showers	
Tenerife	26	20	windy	
Tirana	31	18	p/cldy	
Toulouse	25	13	p/cldy	
Valencia	31	21	p/cldy	
Venice	26	17	showers	
Vienna	23	16	cloudy	
Vigo	27	13	sunny	
Vilnius	24	13	cloudy	
Warsaw	21	12	p/cldy	
Zagreb	26	13	p/cldy	
Zurich	16	13	showers	

Nature Notes

Hippos fly when they get moving

HIPPUS are most often pictured gliding through the water or lazing on a bank, but new research suggests the giant land creatures become airborne as they move on land. When trotting fast, their feet leave the ground for up to 0.3 seconds at a time, a study has found. Research from the Royal Veterinary College also suggests that unlike most large land animals, hippos almost exclusively trot, with the fastest ones taking to the air. John Hutchinson, professor of evolutionary biomechanics and lead author, said: "We were pleasantly surprised to see how hippos get airborne when they move quickly - it's really impressive." The study, published in the journal PeerJ, analysed video footage of hippos in a paddock at Flamingo Land Resort in North Yorkshire as well as video footage from the internet of hippos moving.

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British readings

Last night's report for 24 hours to 6pm - *estimated readings

	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max/Min	Daytime weather
Aberdeen	2.3	0.30	17 8	showers
Aberystwyth	0.2	0.05	16 11	showers
Antrim	2.0	0.64	17 9	showers
Aviemore	0.5	0.11	10 7	showers
Barnstaple	0.0	0.01	17 13	showers
Barrow-in-Furness	0.5	0.27	16 12	showers
Basingstoke	0.0	0.00	18 12	cloudy
Bedford	0.0	0.17	18 11	showers
Belfast	1.8	0.38	18 10	showers
Berwick	0.7	0.11	16 8	showers
Birmingham	3.3	0.11	18 10	showers
Bodmin	0.0	0.05	17 11	showers
Bournemouth	0.3	0.00	19 13	cloudy
Braintree	0.1	0.20	18 10	showers
Brecon	0.0	0.07	18 10	showers
Bridlington	0.0	0.13	17 11	showers
Brighton	0.5	0.01	19 12	showers
Bristol	0.0	0.15	18 12	showers
Camborne	0.3	0.00	16 12	cloudy
Cardiff	0.1	0.04	18 13	showers
Carlisle	0.0	0.01	15 9	showers
Catterick	1.3	0.28	18 11	showers
Cheriton	0.0	0.01	20 12	showers
Chester	2.2	0.12	19 11	showers
Conventry	0.0	0.21	19 11	showers
Doncaster	0.0	0.24	17 11	showers
Dover	0.3	0.00	16 12	cloudy
Dundee	0.4	0.06	17 8	showers
Eastbourne	0.2	0.07	18 11	showers
Edinburgh	1.3	0.08	17 8	showers
Epsom	0.4	0.02	17 11	showers
Falmouth	0.0	0.00	18 13	cloudy
Farnborough	0.0	0.04	19 11	showers
Fort William	0.5	0.15	13 7	showers
Glasgow	1.4	0.05	16 8	showers
Great Malvern	0.0	0.06	21 11	showers
Grimsby	0.0	0.00	17 10	cloudy
Guernsey	0.0	0.00	18 13	cloudy
Hereford	0.0	0.01	19 11	showers
Hereford	0.0	0.01	19 11	showers
High Wycombe	0.0	0.12	19 11	showers
Holyhead	1.5	0.06	18 13	showers
Huddersfield	0.0	0.02	15 8	showers
Ipswich	0.1	0.16	17 10	showers
Isle of Man	1.9	0.54	18 9	showers
Isle of Skye	0.0	0.63	14 8	showers
Isle of Wight	0.2	0.03	18 13	showers
Keswick	0.0	0.40	16 9	showers
King's Lynn	0.0	0.13	20 13	showers
King's Lynn	0.0	0.09	19 11	showers
Leeds	0.0	0.47	16 9	cloudy
Leek	0.3	0.18	15 8	showers
Leominster	0.5	0.03	18 11	showers
Lincoln	0.0	0.18	18 11	showers
Liverpool	2.2	0.12	19 11	showers
London	0.0	0.01	20 13	cloudy
Manchester	1.1	0.13	17 9	showers
Middlesbrough	0.0	0.19	17 8	showers
Newcastle	3.0	0.22	17 8	cloudy
Newquay	0.3	0.00	16 12	cloudy
Nottingham	0.0	0.16	18 10	showers
Orkney	0.0	0.19	13 8	showers
Oxford	0.5	0.03	19 12	showers
Perth	0.5	0.05	17 8	showers
Peterborough	0.6	0.10	20 11	showers
Plymouth	0.0	0.00	19 12	cloudy
Portsmouth	0.1	0.05	19 13	showers
Prinstown	1.1	0.22	16 9	showers
Ramsgate	1.6	0.17	18 11	cloudy
Rhyl	0.1	0.16	19 10	showers
Rugby	0.0	0.14	19 11	showers
Salisbury	0.0	0.00	18 12	cloudy
Scunthorpe	0.0	0.20	19 11	cloudy
Sheffield	0.0	0.24	17 11	showers
Shetland	0.3	0.08	13 9	showers
Shrewsbury	0.6	0.09	18 10	showers
Skegness	0.0	0.18	17 11	showers
Southampton	5.3	0.05	19 14	showers
South-on-Sea	1.0	0.14	18 11	showers
Stockport	1.1	0.13	17 9	showers
Stornoway	0.7	0.27	13 8	showers
Swansea	0.2	0.20	17 12	showers
Swindon	0.0	0.00	17 12	cloudy
Thirsk	0.0	0.22	18 11	showers
Tiree	0.4	0.42	15 9	showers
Weymouth	0.4	0.00	18 14	cloudy
Whitehaven	0.3	0.31	14 9	showers
Widmerere	0.0	0.66	17 9	showers
Worcester	0.0	0.06	21 11	showers
Yeovil	0.5	0.02	19 12	showers
York	0.0	0.33	17 11	showers

Sun & moon (Greenwich)

Sun rises 0451
Sun sets 2121
Moon rises 0239
Moon sets 2055
New moon July 5
Yesterday
Warmest Great Malvern 21C (70F)
Coldest Cairngorm Summit OC (32F)
Wettest Anonach 0.85 in.
Sunniest London/Heathrow 5.4 hr.

Lighting up
Aberdeen 2205 to 0422
Belfast 2202 to 0457
Birmingham 2132 to 0453
London 2121 to 0452
Manchester 2138 to 0449
Penzance 2134 to 0520

High water
Aberdeen 0040 3.8m 1305 3.9m
Belfast 1044 3.3m 2303 3.4m
Cardiff 0622 10.7m 1947 10.9m
Dover 1046 6.0m 2311 6.1m
Falmouth 0437 4.5m 1703 4.7m
Harwich 0537 6.7m 1801 6.9m
Holyhead 0954 5.1m 2219 5.2m
Hull 0537 6.7m 1801 6.9m
Liverpool 1112 3.7m 2332 3.8m
London 0048 6.6m 1328 6.4m
Lough 1056 4.3m 2315 4.4m
Southampton 0023 4.0m 0955 4.0m

Pollen count
Grass and weed pollen are very high. Tree pollen is moderate and fungal spores are high.

Sea forecast
S North Sea: A moderate to strong westerly wind today. Seas will be slight. Visibility will be good.
Dover Strait, English Channel: A gentle to fresh westerly wind today. Seas will be moderate on the east and will be rough on the west. Visibility will be good.
St. George's Channel: A moderate to strong west-southwesterly wind today. Seas will be moderate. Visibility will be good.
Irish Sea: A fresh to near gale west-southwesterly wind today. Seas will be slight. Visibility will be good.

World readings

	Max	Min	Daytime	weather
Accra	27	24	rain	
Addis Ababa	25	14	cloudy	
Adelaide	15	0	sunny	
Alexandria	32	23	sunny	
Algiers	32	16	sunny	
Amman	34	19	sunny	
Anchorage	12	12	cloudy	
Ankara	34	15	sunny	
Ascension Is.	27	24	showers	
Auckland	14	8	p/cldy	
Baghdad	42	28	haze	
Bahamas	31	26	cloudy	
Bahrain	39	35	sunny	
Bamako	32	23	storms	
Bangkok	32	26	showers	
Beijing	29	18	storms	
Berlin	31	25	sunny	
Bermuda	27	23	p/cldy	
Bogota	17	10	cloudy	
Bridgetown	28	25	rain	
Brisbane	22	13	showers	
Buenos Aires	15	7	p/cldy	
Cairo	38	24	sunny	
Canberra	12	-2	p/cldy	
Cape Town	15	11	rain	
Casablanca	30	17	sunny	
Chicago	28	23	rain	
Christchurch	8	-2	showers	
Colombo	32	28	storms	
Damascus	37	21	sunny	
Dar es Salaam	29	23	p/cldy	
Dhaka	30	26	storms	
Dubai	41	32	haze	
Falkland Is.	5	2	snow	
Harare	23	7	sunny	
Havana	32	25	p/cldy	
Hong Kong	34	29	storms	
Honolulu	25	23	p/cldy	
Jakarta	32	24	storms	
Jeddah	41	31	p/cldy	
Jerusalem	30	19	sunny	
Johannesburg	19	9	sunny	
Kabul	36	19	sunny	
Karachi	36	31	p/cldy	
Kolkata	31	26	storms	
Kuala Lumpur	32	25	p/cldy	
La Paz	14	-5	sunny	
Lahore	37	29	sunny	
Lima	17	14	p/cldy	
Los Angeles	25	16	sunny	
Madrid	32	28	p/cldy	
Manila	35	25	p/cldy	
Marrakesh	38	20	sunny	
Melbourne	15	-1	sunny	
Miami	33	27	storms	
Montego Bay	31	27	rain	
Mumbai	32	29	storms	
Nairobi	26	12	p/cldy	
New Orleans	32	27	storms	
New Delhi	34	25	storms	
New York	28	21	sunny	
Ottawa				