

90p



2024 NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THURSDAY 4 JULY 2024 Number 4,248

INTERVIEW

Celia Imrie

I stripped for Calendar Girls... but I still have body issues



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SPORT

Cavendish rewrites Tour de France history

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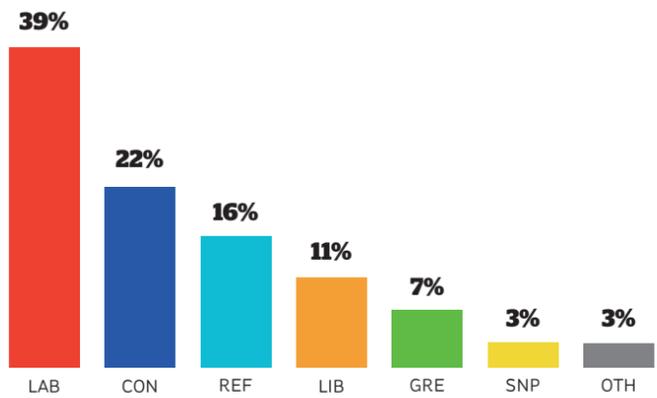
Over to you

Only one UK national newspaper has never supported a political party - and never will

The **i** paper = politics without the spin

Labour's lead narrows in final poll but Starmer still on course for landslide

- » Tories make small recovery in final **i** poll before voting today, but Labour still has a 17-point lead
- » Labour support softens slightly but Conservatives end the campaign less popular than when it began
- » Most Cabinet ministers fear for their futures
- » Meanwhile major YouGov poll forecasts a 212 majority for Keir Starmer, which would be biggest for a single party since 1832 if replicated in voting today
- » Reform stable on 16% with Lib Dems forecast to make leap in seats through targeted campaigning



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WELLBEING

How health experts spend their lunch hour

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Part-time workers 'No kids but we want a better life'

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SCIENCE

Flying hippos (yes, really) Who are you calling flat-footed?

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ELECTION 2024

Your (essential) voting guide

Where each party stands

Workers + Benefits

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OPINION

No, Boris Johnson cannot save the Tories now by Ian Dunt

Did Farage peak too soon? by Katy Balls

Labour warned on asylum policy

The News Matrix

The day at a glance



THURSDAY

4

JULY

Quote of the day



The nice thing about being a celebrity is that if you bore people, they think it's their fault

HENRY KISSINGER



Birthdays

Prince Michael of Kent, 82; Ruby Tandoh, baker, 32; Neil Morrissey (below), actor, 62; Jo Whiley, broadcaster, 59



Anniversaries

Tuesday 4 July 1837
The Grand Junction Railway opens, linking the Liverpool and Manchester Railway to Birmingham via Warrington, Crewe, Stafford and Wolverhampton with 82 miles of track.

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Lily Allen is posting pictures of which part of her body on an adult-only website?
See p.23

The Page3 Profile

BELLA GRACE, ART ACE AT WIMBLEDON

A championship dream?

Illustrator Bella Grace is the creative force behind the poster for this year's Wimbledon tennis tournament. The purple, green and gold creation can be seen all over the grounds until 14 July.

For Ms Grace having her design picked has been the "pinnacle" of her career. She told the BBC: "I'm completely honoured to have this opportunity and it means the world to me."

How did she match sport and art?

The artist, from the Isle of Wight, said she has always been a big tennis fan and was a ball girl for the Eastbourne International tennis tournament in East Sussex as a child.

When approached by Wimbledon to create a design, she said it was the trophies that inspired her.

The men's and women's singles prizes have been depicted using flowers and items linked to Wimbledon such as score cards, rackets and umpire chairs against a background of green grass courts and purple blooms.

She said: "The poster celebrates two of Wimbledon's iconic trophies brought to life through vibrant flowers, intertwined with symbols synonymous with Wimbledon, with each element paying homage to the tournament's rich heritage and long-standing traditions."

Take advantage of your own copy...

Ms Grace added: "To see it here... to see everyone wanting to take photos of it and seeing people holding programmes is just a dream come true."

A copy of the poster can be purchased from the Wimbledon shop at the tournament grounds.

Sally Guyoncourt

BROADCASTING

C4 News cleared over Reform investigation

Ofcom will not investigate Channel 4 News after Reform UK claimed the broadcaster used an actor as a "plant" in an undercover report on the party. The watchdog said it received over 270 complaints about the programme, which saw a man named Andrew Parker filmed using a racial slur to describe Rishi Sunak.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Funds' pre-election timing defended

An official has defended the announcement of £300m in funding for Northern Ireland just days before the general election. Appearing before a Stormont committee, Neil Gibson of the Department of Finance said "markedly different" communications were used in order to preserve Civil Service impartiality.

ELECTION

Voters reminded to bring their photo ID

People should ensure they have the correct photo identification to vote before heading to the polling station today, the Electoral Commission has warned. Everyone wanting to vote in person will have to show ID. Not all types of ID will be accepted, but a passport, driving licence or blue badge are valid.



TRANSPORT

Driving-test fees 'could be raised'

Driving-test fees could be raised for learners who have already made multiple unsuccessful attempts, a motoring research charity has suggested. The RAC Foundation said this would encourage them to wait until they are ready to pass, easing the "unacceptable" test backlog.

WEATHER

Hurricane Beryl closes in on Jamaica

Hurricane Beryl was heading towards Jamaica last night after crossing islands in the south-east Caribbean, killing at least seven people. A hurricane warning is in effect for Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac. Beryl was losing intensity but was still forecast to be hurricane strength. **PAGE 15**

PEOPLE

Slater donations to fund ongoing search

The mother of missing Briton Jay Slater has said donations will be used to support volunteers looking for her son in Tenerife. The 19-year-old, from Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire, disappeared on the island on 17 June. In a statement on the GoFundMe appeal, which has raised almost £50,000, Debbie Duncan thanked donors.

UNITED STATES

Legal fight ends over 'Titanic' expedition

The US government has ended a legal fight against an expedition to the Titanic shipwreck after the firm that owns the ship's salvage rights scaled back its dive plans. RMS Titanic Inc originally planned to take images inside the ocean liner's severed hull and to retrieve artefacts from the debris field. The wreck is protected as a designated grave site.



The List

Favourite brews for a nation of tea lovers

Britons enjoy an average of two cups of tea a day, making enough to fill almost seven Olympic pools. Wales is home to the UK's greatest tea lovers, according to research commissioned by the charity Breast Cancer Now ahead of its annual Afternoon Tea campaign this August (breastcancer.org/afternoon-tea). The teas most preferred by respondents are:

- 1 English breakfast (55%)
- 2 Earl Grey (16%)
- 3 Green tea (13%)
- 4 Lemon and ginger (11.09%)
- 5 Chai (11.04%)
- 6 Peppermint (10%)
- 7 Matcha (6.82%)
- 8 Chamomile (6.66%)
- 9 Other e.g. Assam, decaffeinated, rooibos (5%)
- 10 Darjeeling (4%)



HEALTH

£500,000 for trials from Weir's charity

Clinical trials into motor neurone disease (MND) have received a £500,000 boost from a charity founded by late rugby union legend Doddie Weir on what would have been his 54th birthday.

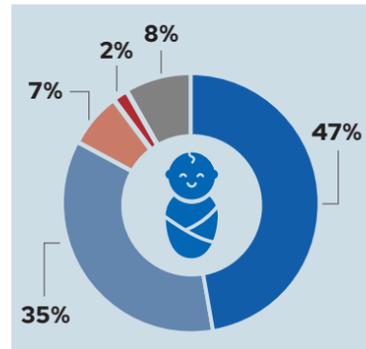
Weir, who made 61 appearances for Scotland, was diagnosed with the terminal condition in 2016 and set up the My Name's Doddie Foundation to boost research into the disease. He died in November 2022, aged 52.

The foundation said the £500,000 will support sites across the UK to deliver MND trials by funding the time of clinical staff in their search for effective treatments.

Special delivery

How important do you think it is, if at all, that the father attends the birth of his child?

- Very important
- Fairly important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Don't know



5,439 GB adults surveyed; 27 June 2024
percentages rounded SOURCE: YOUNG

COURTS

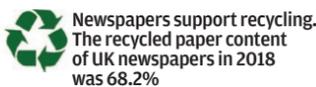
Warrant lifted for Madeleine suspect

A man who is a suspect in the 2007 disappearance of British toddler Madeleine McCann had an unrelated arrest warrant lifted by a German court yesterday.

The move came in an ongoing trial over sexual offences Christian Brückner, 47, is alleged to have committed in Portugal between 2000 and 2017. The warrant was lifted over a lack of "urgent suspicion".

He is serving a seven-year prison sentence in Germany for a rape he committed in Portugal in 2005.

Brückner has not been charged in the Madeleine McCann case, in which he is under investigation on suspicion of murder.



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PIC: JAKE BROUGHAM

CHILE**Rare white rhino calf makes debut at zoo**

Hannah, a 13-year-old white rhinoceros, has delivered a calf in a rare zoo birth for the almost-endangered species. The arrival of the male calf, named Silverio, came two weeks ago at the Buin Zoo in Chile's capital of Santiago. The calf took his first steps in public after 12 days of medical care on Tuesday.

PEOPLE**K-pop stars take to the road for Disney+**

K-pop stars Jimin and Jung Kook are to host a Disney+ travel show, called *Are You Sure?*. The show will see the pair travel around the world shopping, eating and trying new experiences, including in their home country of South Korea. Jimin, 28, and Jung Kook, 26, rose to international stardom in K-pop band BTS.

MOTORING**Car sales outstrip public transport**

Spending on car purchases has risen three times faster than for public transport journeys. Around £57.4bn was spent on new and used cars in 2023, up 6 per cent on five years earlier, AA analysis of Office for National Statistics data show. Public transport spending was £60.9bn last year, up 2 per cent over the period.

MUSIC**Kelce had 'a blast' on stage with Swift**

American football star Travis Kelce hinted he may once again share the stage with girlfriend Taylor Swift on her *Eras* tour. The Kansas City Chiefs player said on his *New Heights* podcast it was an "absolute blast" to perform with Swift at Wembley last month, joining her on stage for "I Can Do It With a Broken Heart".

Letter from the Editor
Oliver Duff
i@inews.co.uk

**Voters, sir. Thousands of 'em**

This general election has seen more opinion polls than any previous campaign. All of them have pointed in one direction: carnage for the Conservative Party after 14 years of government. Of course, only one poll matters, and that's the one where you can cast your ballot today.

Last night, the final "mega-poll" by YouGov predicted that Labour would win power in a historic landslide, with a majority of 212.

The last time that a single party won a bigger majority was 1832, when Earl Grey's Liberals toasted the Duke of Wellington's Tories. If YouGov's results are replicated in voting today, the 2024 version of the Tories would be reduced to 102 seats, losing 70 per cent of MPs.

Let's see. You decide. About a quarter of voters say they intend to vote tactically. A lot of seats remain finely balanced, and the disruptive influence of Reform UK means that pollsters have differed in their predictions about the level of Tory pain. The Conservatives' worst result was 156 MPs in 1906, comfortably higher than is forecast this time.

Among Starmer's team there is paranoia about tonight's 10pm exit poll – the first indication of how people actually voted, before real results are counted overnight.

Labour has tried to avoid sounding complacent while also talking like a government in waiting. Veterans are haunted by flashbacks to Kinnock in 1992.

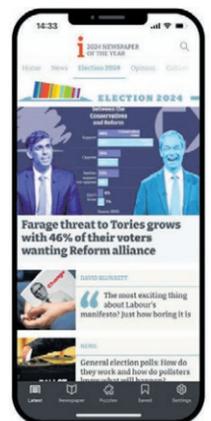
However you vote, whatever the result, you know that i has never endorsed a political party and never will. We are here to hold the Government – and their opponents – to account, and to make sure they serve your interests.

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MONARCHY

Camilla becomes member of Order of the Thistle

By Tony Jones

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh have become members of Scotland's highest order of chivalry.

Camilla and Edward, who have strong connections with Scottish institutions and charities, were formally installed as members of the Order of the Thistle at St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh.

Human rights lawyer Baroness

Helena Kennedy, forensic anthropologist Baroness Sue Black and Scotland's first black professor Sir Geoff Palmer were also recognised for their contribution to Scotland.

The King is the sovereign of the order and appointments are his personal gift.

Charles was part of a procession into the cathedral with the Prince of Wales, also a member of the order, and the other Knights and Ladies of

the order who all wore their mantles and Thistle stars.

Camilla was installed as a Royal Lady of the Thistle, while Edward became a Royal Knight.

A protest by the anti-monarchy group Republic took place. Francine Love, from the group, said: "We believe it's time to showcase the democratic alternative to this outdated institution – an elected head of state."

JUSTICE

Violence on rise as overcrowding fuels jails crisis

Exclusive

By Lizzie Dearden and Hugo Gye

"Mini-riots" are breaking out in prisons across England and Wales as overcrowding raises the risk of large-scale disorder, **i** can reveal.

Officials say that the current capacity crisis, which has triggered an emergency early release scheme and the use of police cells to hold inmates, risks endangering prisoners, staff and the public.

There are fears that if a full riot breaks out and parts of jails are put out of use, there would not be enough space elsewhere to detain and separate the displaced convicts.

i revealed yesterday that prisons are days away from being completely full and that a contingency plan code-named Operation Brinker could be used for the first time to implement a "one-in, one-out" system if capacity nears zero.

Mark Fairhurst, the national

chairman of the Prison Officers' Association, said that "concerted indiscipline", which can cover incidents from groups of inmates defying officers' instructions to violent brawls, were on the rise.

"They can be mini-riots, we're running at one per week," he told **i**. "They're happening all over the place and it's far more than normal."

"All the catalysts for major disturbances are happening, and if we lose a wing or a jail [to a riot], where are we going to put the prisoners?"

There are only about 1,400 spaces left in prisons in England and Wales, but the Prison Governors' Association estimates that there are only 700 in adult male prisons, because the larger figure includes women's jails and open prisons.

Mr Fairhurst said that prison officers wanted the incoming government elected this week to make "a brave and bold decision and do something rather rapid" to stop overcrowding worsening.

Mark Day, of the Prison Reform Trust, said there would be "difficult choices" for the new government.

On the campaign trail yesterday, Sir Keir Starmer suggested that, if elected, Labour could cut the length of time that most criminals spend in prison and may grant early release even to some "high-risk" offenders in order to ease overcrowding.

A spokesman for the Prison Service said that robust plans were in place to deal with disturbances, including specially trained Tornado response teams.

"We have a zero-tolerance approach to violence and prisoners who break the rules will be punished," they added.

The Conservatives and Labour were approached for comment.



How yesterday's **i** revealed the extent of prison overcrowding

MEDICINES

Weight-loss drug Wegovy may raise risk of blindness

By Jane Kirby

The popular weight-loss jabs Ozempic and Wegovy have been linked to an eye condition that can cause blindness, a study has found.

People with diabetes who were prescribed semaglutide – the two brands' pharmaceutical name – were in excess of four times more likely to be diagnosed with a condition called non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (Naion).

People on semaglutide who were overweight or obese were more than seven times as likely to develop the condition as those on other weight-loss medicines.

The uncommon condition stems from a lack of sufficient blood flow to the optic nerve. People with Naion typically experience sudden vision loss in one eye without any pain.

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

The US study, published in *Jama Ophthalmology*, was led by Joseph Rizzo, a professor at Harvard Medical School.

He said future patient-doctor discussions "should include Naion as a potential risk".

A spokesman for the drugs' producer, Novo Nordisk, said the study had limitations but that it would be taken "very seriously".

NATURE



Unusually for land animals, hippos almost exclusively trot

VICKI JAURON/GETTY

Hefty hippopotamuses achieve lift-off when they are trotting

By Nina Massey

Hippos are most often pictured gliding through the water or lazing on a bank, but research suggests that the giant land creatures can become airborne for substantial periods of time.

When trotting fast, their feet leave the ground for up to 0.3 seconds, a study has found. Researchers at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) in London also discovered that unlike most large land animals, hippos almost exclusively trot – with the fastest ones taking to the air.

The findings suggest that they are able to push the apparent limits of what giant land animals can do, even though they are amphibious.

Researchers say the findings will improve the understanding of how the size of large animals influences their movement on land.

Hippopotamuses are among the largest land animals and can often weigh more than 2,000kg.

Previous studies have suggested the animals often use a standard four-footed (quadrupedal) walk, with a footfall sequence of left hind, left fore, right hind, right fore – similar to elephants.

But other studies have found they trot with their diagonal feet in moving simultaneously.

Before now, researchers had not identified whether hippos become airborne when they move quickly, as is the case with other mammals, such as horses, but less common among larger animals.

John Hutchinson, a professor of evolutionary biomechanics and lead author of the study, said: “It’s hard to work with hippos as they tend to stick to the water and very seldom are trained to be studied in zoo col-

lections. They’re also very dangerous. That’s part of the reason why science knew little about how hippos move before our research.

“We’re thrilled to provide the first study purely focused on revealing how hippos walk and run.

“We were pleasantly surprised to see how hippos get airborne when they move quickly – it’s really impressive.”

Professor Hutchinson and a former RVC undergraduate student, Emily Pringle, collected video footage from Flamingo Land Resort in Kirby Misperton, North Yorkshire, recording how two hippos moved in their paddock during the day.

They also sourced video footage from the internet of hippos moving, providing a broader range of behaviour and movements compared with those in captivity.

Analysing the data, they found

i The research will support the reconstruction of the evolutionary biomechanics of hippo lineages and help veterinarians diagnose or monitor hippos that have problems moving or are experiencing lameness.

that unusually for land animals, hippos almost exclusively trot – even when walking slowly or running quickly.

Other land animals tend to have a wider range of gaits – for example, rhinoceroses can use a standard quadrupedal walk, trotting and galloping as they increase speed.

Elephants can only do typical walking – not trotting – and never leave the ground with all four feet.

The study is published in the scientific journal *PeerJ*.

EDUCATION

Tractor Boys' prom tribute

By Sally Guyoncourt

Ipswich Town have long been associated with the tractor – but one of the club’s teenage fans has taken the pairing a step further by rolling up to his school prom in a large example of the agricultural vehicle.

Evan Baldwin turned up at Manningtree High School in Essex in the cab of a giant John Deere tractor.

The 16-year-old, from Brantham in Suffolk, told the BBC: “I thought instead of getting a normal car I may as well get a tractor as it would be quite cool and stand out – and it all links [to Ipswich Town].”

The football fan said people had not believed he would go through with the stunt. He said he was “slightly nervous driving in” but ended up feeling “on top of the world”.

Evan also sported a bright blue suit and blue-and-red Hawaiian shirt in honour of the “Tractor Boys”, who have been promoted to the Premier League for the upcoming season.

PEOPLE

Nursing student saves man's life

By Sarah Ward

A nursing student saved an elderly man's life on the platform of a railway station.

Sarah Randall, 22, was waiting at Ayr station, South Ayrshire, on Monday when she saw the man in pain. He had fallen and suffered a severe open fracture.

Ms Randall, from Barrhead in East Renfrewshire, took a dress from her bag to make a tourniquet and bandage.

She said: “I was just in the right place at the right time and I’m just glad I could help.”

Andrew Girvan, from the Scottish Ambulance Service, said: “Sarah’s actions were above and beyond what is expected of a student.”

HISTORY

National Trust survey uncovers two Roman villas

By Emily Beament

A survey of a National Trust estate as part of its plans to restore nature has uncovered evidence of two previously unknown Roman villas.

The charity commissioned the geophysical survey across more than 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) at the Attingham Park estate in Shropshire, to map the area’s archaeological remains.

The findings will help the trust to work with its tenant farmers on the estate as they create habitat such as woodlands and wet-

lands to help nature recover in the area, while protecting important archaeological remains.

The estate encompasses part of the buried Roman city of Wroxeter (Viriconium Cornoviorum), which is cared for by English Heritage.

The survey – the largest the National Trust has ever commissioned – revealed evidence of what are believed to be two previously unknown large Roman rural villas and a Roman cemetery on a road leading out of Wroxeter.

The National Trust said it was likely that the villas would have had



An artist's impression of an Iron Age farmstead enclosure NATIONAL TRUST

features typical of such country estates of this type, such as underfloor heating known as hypocausts, their own bath houses, and mosaic floors.

The survey also detected eight ditched enclosures and the remains of pre-Roman Iron Age farmsteads.

ANIMALS

How to stop cats scratching sofas

By Nina Massey

Scientists have pinpointed strategies to save cushions, carpets and sofas from pet cats.

While scratching is a normal feline behaviour, it could be managed by adapting play sessions and offering scratch posts (inset) in the right spots, according to a study.

Researchers found that the presence of children, the personality traits of cats and their activity levels “significantly” affected the extent of scratching behaviour.

Dr Yasemin Salgirli Demirbas,

from Ankara University in Turkey, said her findings could “foster a more harmonious environment”.

Writing in the journal *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, she said stress was a leading reason for unwanted scratching.

Dr Salgirli Demirbas added: “Providing safe hiding places, elevated observation spots and ample play opportunities can also help to alleviate stress and engage the cat in more constructive activities.”

The experts also suggested short play sessions that mimic successful hunting scenarios.



COVER STORY

Labour set for victory in record landslide despite dip in polls

By Hugo Gye, Arj Singh and Chloe Chaplain

Labour appears to be on course for a crushing general election victory as the people of the UK cast their ballots today – but 100 or more seats could still be up for grabs, according to the latest polls.

Three seat-by-seat surveys found Sir Keir Starmer's party heading for a majority of at least 200, which would be the best result in its history. A YouGov poll put the size of the majority at 212.

Its final pre-election poll found a small recovery for the Conservatives but warned it would be "too little, too late" for Rishi Sunak.

Sir Keir insisted he was "ready for government" and had instructed his team to "hit the ground running", while the Prime Minister said that "millions and millions" of voters had not yet made up their minds which party to support.

A poll by BMG Research for i found that Labour holds a 17-point lead over the Tories, which implies a landslide win in terms of seats.

Labour's vote total has softened slightly during the campaign while the Conservatives have risen by several points in the past fortnight, but still end up lower than they began after a surge from Reform UK.

Three MRP polls which use so-

Voting intention

	Last week	This week	Change
 Labour	42%	39%	-3
 Conservative	20%	22%	2
 Reform	16%	16%	0
 Lib Dems	12%	11%	-1
 Green	6%	7%	1
 SNP	3%	3%	0
 Other	2%	3%	1

Source: BMG

phisticated statistical techniques to forecast the result in every constituency in Great Britain found that Labour would win well over 400 seats with the Tories reduced to no more than 126.

This would be an extraordinary turnaround from the last general election, which Boris Johnson won with a majority of 80 seats.

The projections would leave most Cabinet ministers fearing for their seats, and give Labour the largest majority for any single party since 1832.

But all three pollsters – YouGov, Focaldata and More in Common –

found that around 100 constituencies were hanging in the balance, with a projected majority for one party or another of less than 5 per cent, suggesting that in dozens of seats last-minute decisions and differential turnout are likely to determine the result.

Speaking as he flew to his final campaign event – a Labour rally in Redditch, Worcestershire – Sir Keir said he was "ready for government" and added: "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."

Mr Sunak urged voters "to separate the frustrations which they understandably have about me or with [the] party in the past, with what a Labour government would mean for their families specifically."

Nigel Farage, the leader of Reform UK, insisted that "British politics will break up in the next five years" and said he would be a "bridgehead" for the right-wing movement if he becomes MP for Clacton in Essex.

Polls open at 7am and close at 10pm, with an exit poll to be published immediately afterwards.

The result should become clear by around 4am tomorrow, with the party leaders speaking in the early hours.

Final poll Labour holds 17-point lead over Tories

Its final pre-election poll, conducted by BMG Research, found that Sir Keir Starmer's party has a 17-point lead over the Tories, enough for it to secure an "unprecedented" majority of MPs in the House of Commons.

The Conservatives have received a two-point bump since last week in a boost for Rishi Sunak, but BMG warned it was "simply too little, too late" to have a chance of victory.

Tory voters suggested they were motivated out of concern about the possibility of a "supermajority".

Labour is on course to win 39 per cent of the vote, which would be less than Jeremy Corbyn received in 2017 but still enough for a large majority.

The Conservatives are second on 22 per cent, up from 20 per cent last week, with Reform UK remaining stable on 16 per cent. The Liberal Democrats are fourth with 11 per cent and the Greens are on 7 per cent.

BMG Research interviewed a representative sample of 1,854 British adults in an online survey between 30 June and 2 July.

Analysis

Farage still has undisputed pulling power

Hugo Gye
POLITICAL EDITOR



Nigel Farage is not particularly popular. His net approval ratings are always well into negative territory, with no more than a third of people saying that they like the veteran Brexiteer.

But he seems to have transformed the fortunes of

his party – and scuppered the Conservatives' hope of a comeback.

Before the start of the election campaign, Reform UK was bouncing around at just over 10 per cent support in BMG's polls. As Mr Farage weighed up whether or not to take a formal role in Reform's election efforts, some believed that his presence or absence would make little difference either way – after all, voters know that Reform is the

successor to Mr Farage's Brexit Party, and he was already its honorary president.

Those people were wrong. The party shot up in the polls when he announced he was entering the fray, reaching a peak of 19 per cent. And nearly half of Reform's voters say they back the party because of its leader.

The irony is that the greatest beneficiary from Farage's move will be Sir Keir Starmer, a leader who represents his opposite.



CONSERVATIVES

Tories concede defeat amid fear of big vote swings

By Jane Merrick, Richard Vaughan, Chloe Chaplain and Eleanor Langford

Conservatives with larger majorities may be more at risk from losing their seats on polling day than those in previously marginal constituencies, a party insider has warned.

Tory candidates who won their seats with majorities of 5,000 or fewer are likely to have been campaigning hard since the last election and be more on top of the data in their constituencies, the source said.

By contrast, those with majorities of about 20,000 or more will not be used to fighting hard to keep their seats and have less efficient campaigning operations.

The threat to former MPs with the safest seats underlines the scale of the challenge facing the Conserva-

tive Party as it prepares for a potentially historic defeat.

Rishi Sunak insisted that he had not given up fighting for votes, and that the result was not a "foregone conclusion". However, his comments contrasted with those of his cabinet minister Mel Stride, who appeared to throw in the towel as he warned that Labour was on course for a landslide that had "probably never, ever been seen in this country before".

The Work and Pensions Secretary told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "I have accepted that where the polls are at the moment – and it seems highly unlikely that they are very, very wrong, because they have been consistently in the same place for some time – that we are therefore tomorrow highly likely to be in a situation where we have the



Sir Keir Starmer in Whitland, Wales, yesterday, on the final day of the Labour campaign MATTHEW HORWOOD/GETTY

largest majority that any party has ever achieved.”

Mr Stride later told GB News: “If you look at the polls, it is pretty clear that Labour at this stage are heading for an extraordinary landslide on a scale that has probably never, ever been seen in this country before.”

The former home secretary Suella Braverman (*inset*) said the election was already lost as she set out her stall for the Tory leadership.

Writing in *The Daily Telegraph*, she said that her party’s failure to cut taxes and curb immigration meant it was “haemorrhaging” votes to Reform UK when it should have been making common cause with Nigel Farage’s party. “We may lose hundreds of excellent MPs because of our abject inability to have foreseen this inevitability months ago: that our failure to unite the right would destroy us,” she wrote.

She predicted that there would be “a fight for the soul of the Conservative Party” which would ultimately determine “whether our party continues to exist at all”.

But the Prime Minister said it was

not true that senior Conservatives had given up on the campaign – leaving him as the last man standing.

He said it was “not right” that he was the only person left around the Cabinet table not resigned to a huge defeat and said he did not agree the result was a “foregone conclusion”.

Mr Sunak said Boris Johnson’s appearance at a campaign rally on Tuesday was an indication of this, saying: “What you saw is that all Conservatives... are united in warning the country about the dangers of what Keir Starmer would mean.”

Asked about Ms Braverman’s remarks, Mr Sunak said there was “lots of commentary” but he was focused on “making sure as many people as possible know about the choice in front of them tomorrow”.

One minister said the views of voters were not matching with the opinion polls, telling *i*: “The polls are just not being reflected on our doorstep, so it’s too hard to call.”

But one candidate said they had “scaled back” their operation in the past week as not as many local activists were volunteering.

OPINION

Reform UK peaked too soon but it’s already plotting for 2029 election

Katy Balls



Another day, another Reform UK scandal. This has been the recurring theme of the final weeks of the election campaign: candidates for Nigel Farage’s party either have past comments come back to haunt them, or the ones who don’t quit in protest.

Among the delights to be unearthed in recent days are the Reform candidate for Orkney and Shetland, Robert Smith, who in 2016 commented on a post about political leaders being shot and referred to the then First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, with the comment: “Why not start with this b****?”

Or there’s the Reform supporter Andrew Parker, recorded calling Rishi Sunak a “f**king P**i”.

Senior figures within Reform UK have been quick to lash out, suggesting that some of the scandal is down to foul play by Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ).

There is even the suggestion that the Tories have been putting up people to act as Reform candidates to create scandal. But as one Tory candidate puts it: “Have you looked at us recently? I think a scheme like that would take a level of sophistication.”

Whatever the cause of the recent headlines, it is becoming clear that Reform’s initial rise has hit turbulence as the campaign has run on. When Farage first threw his hat in the ring – going back on a previous claim that he would sit out the election to focus on the US – there were swift predictions from all sides that it was only a matter of time until Reform overtook the Tories in the polls. At the time, a Reform figure told me: “I thought Nigel was being overly ambitious but actually I think we can be the second-largest party.”

This played into the bulk of the party’s messaging, with Farage pitching himself as the official opposition. A few polls did suggest his party might finish second to Labour – but not all have found this. And the bulk of those that did now say that Reform has fallen back behind the Tories.

So, what is going on? Reform UK supporters put it down to a range of factors. First, they were always going to come up against a squeeze as polling day approached and the Tories tried to win back potential



Nigel Farage’s recent BBC interview started the latest run of bad publicity

switchers. At CCHQ, warnings about a Labour “supermajority” are viewed as one of their most effective lines.

Second, Vladimir Putin. It was Farage’s interview with the BBC’s Nick Robinson that really started the latest run of bad publicity. Farage suggested – as some others have done – that EU aggression was partly to blame for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine because it had given Putin an excuse to act. Others have made such points before now, including a certain Boris Johnson.

But the comments allowed the Conservative attack operation to dive in – including Johnson.

Tory candidates say it has been a useful way to bring back some Reform switchers when they go out door-knocking. Unlike in some

European countries, support for Ukraine remains strong in Britain so the risk is that the comments make Farage appear unpatriotic to some of the voters he is trying to attract.

Next, candidates. Reform figures have blamed the Tories for their vetting problems on several counts – including the company that they employed to help. However, the Tories refute this – and others have been quick to point out the vetting company required Reform to do some of the vetting.



The point of this outing is to lay the groundwork for larger wins next time

But the succession of negative stories and crass comments has added to a sense among some voters that Reform UK is not yet a professional organisation.

The question being asked is: did it peak too early? It’s still the case that Reform can cut into the Tory vote and significantly hurt the Conservatives in the election. It can also deliver MPs. But whatever the result, there will be a feeling that the party could have done better.

“We’ve lost ground on silly things,” says a Reform supporter.

Yet there are optimists within Reform despite the current attacks. Ultimately, its organisers have always seen this as a two-election campaign. The real contest is in 2029. The point of this outing is to lay the groundwork for larger wins next time – and a repositioning of the British right. It’s just the return of Farage has meant more scrutiny than they had first priced in.

Within Labour there are concerns that if it disappoints in government, voters could move to the right – as they have in France where the National Rally under Marine Le Pen (*inset*) is on the rise.

This is one of the warnings from the Unite union, which is affiliated with Labour, of falling short on promises or costing the voters they ought to focus on more than they bargained for.

But even some of Farage’s admirers question his commitment on the grounds that he does have a tendency to change his mind.

It’s why the number of seats the party returns is key. “If we have seven MPs that’s the beginnings of a movement. We can make noise,” says a Reform supporter. “If it’s just one, it’s a lot harder to do.”

Katy Balls is the political editor of *The Spectator* magazine

POLITICS

Party leaders make final pitches ahead of decision day

Who went where on campaign's last day. By **Arj Singh, Chloe Chaplain, Hugo Gye** and **Richard Vaughan**

SIR KEIR STARMER

The Labour leader spent his final day on the campaign trail warning supporters against complacency – and insisting there is still a chance of a Conservative victory.

He started the day with a visit to a farm in Carmarthenshire, in Wales, where he told reporters he was planning to cut short MPs' summer break in order to pass as much legislation as possible in the new government's first few weeks.

Sir Keir also hit out at Conservative ministers' declaration that a Labour victory had become all but inevitable, accusing Tories of "effectively running a campaign to suppress the vote".

He then flew to East Kilbride, near Glasgow, for a joint appearance with Scottish Labour's leader, Anas Sarwar.

Sir Keir also said he was "delighted" to receive the endorsement of *The Sun*. The paper announced yesterday it was backing Labour for the first time since 2005, as opinion polls continued to forecast a large Labour majority.

Sir Keir's final stop was a rally in Redditch, West Midlands, which has been a major battleground in the campaign. He told the crowd: "If you want change, you have to vote for it."

If Sir Keir is installed in No 10, he hopes to have finished appointing his new Cabinet by the end of the day. Sir Keir would then have just three full days in Downing Street before flying to a Nato summit in Washington.

He was yesterday forced to promise Britain will not rejoin the EU single market or customs union for decades, in an intervention that will come as a blow to some Remainers and emphasised the political dilemmas that would face him in power.

NIGEL FARAGE

The Reform UK leader appeared at Seconds Out boxing gym in Clacton, Essex, where he is fighting to become an MP, alongside controver-



Nigel Farage spars with boxer Derek Chisora at Clacton's Seconds Out gym

sial boxing star Derek Chisora, who was in 2010 convicted of assaulting his girlfriend.

Mr Farage said Chisora was "imperfect" but insisted he was a "fantastic role model" for the "young kids" at the gym, while the boxer, who was wearing a Reform-branded robe emblazoned with "Nigel's security", said he regretted his actions.

Later, asked by reporters about the poll revealing Reform's support among young men and if there was a commonality between him and misogynistic influencer Andrew Tate, Mr Farage said: "I think Andrew Tate has built a huge following amongst these people, despite a lot of imperfections, serious imperfections.

"I think a lot of young men feel emasculated."

Since December 2022, Mr Tate has been facing charges in Romania of human trafficking, rape and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women. He denies all the allegations.

RISHI SUNAK

In a sign of how precarious the Conservative Party's position has become, Rishi Sunak spent the final days of the campaign canvassing in what would be normally considered safe Tory territory in Hampshire.

And he came face-to-face with what is emerging as one of his biggest threats when Liberal Demo-

crats activists turned up outside his visit to a primary school in Romsey and Southampton North, brandishing placards.

Mr Sunak, alongside candidate Caroline Nokes, joined pupils in a maths lesson during which one told him enthusiastically it was her birthday "on the election day".

They then helped two reception-aged girls make pizza out of playdough, where Sunak agreed with one of the children that pepperoni was the best topping. The other child informed Mr Sunak she liked tomato ketchup and worms.

Before heading to a members event in nearby Hamble Valley, Mr Sunak insisted to journalists that he would be fighting to the last hour to win over the "millions" of voters who he said had not yet made a choice.

He later met with Paul Holmes, the candidate for Hamble Valley, to help a group of local members stuff leaflets into envelopes – leaflets which did not contain any reference to Mr Sunak himself.

SIR ED DAVEY

Sir Ed Davey brought his stunt-packed election campaign to an end by driving off in a pink Cadillac, having used a tractor to knock down a blue wall earlier in the day.

The Liberal Democrat leader has toured the country over the past few weeks undertaking a series of fun and sometimes dangerous capers that culminated in him bungee jumping from a crane.

The aim of the campaign has been to grab the public's attention with stunts, then push a serious message on some of the party's priorities, such as social care, cost of living or the sewage crisis.

A senior party source said: "I think that's really resonated with people".

The Lib Dems have targeted Southern England's "blue wall": seats where they finished second in 2019, almost all Tory held.



CONSERVATIVES

Johnson return choreographed to avoid Sunak

By **Richard Vaughan**

As he took to the stage at Tuesday night's rally, Rishi Sunak hailed the 11th-hour appearance of Boris Johnson, telling the crowd: "Isn't it great to have our Conservative family united, my friends?"

Not that Mr Johnson was there to hear it. By the time the Prime Minister had set foot in front of the crowd of Tory activists, his predecessor was already halfway out of the room.

Despite the pretence of a united front after Mr Johnson's surprise appearance at the National Army Museum in Chelsea, the reality of his late star turn was the result of days of delicate negotiations between his and Mr Sunak's camps.

Desperate for a sprinkling of stardust in a campaign that has been devoid of magic, the Tory campaign director, Isaac Levido, turned to his ex-boss in the hope of gaining the boost that a Johnson show could offer.



Only one newspaper has never supported a political party



PM's family rally round

Rishi Sunak vowed that "this underdog will fight to the final whistle" on his last stump speech of the campaign trail last night.

The Prime Minister stood for a photo with his family after giving a speech at Romsey Rugby Club, north of Southampton where he grew up. He urged Tory activists to continue campaigning, claiming they had "urgent work to do" to "save the UK" from a Labour government. JONATHAN BRADY/PA

Analysis

Former PM's lacklustre cameo too little, too late for doomed Tories

Eleanor Langford
POLITICAL REPORTER



Former prime minister Boris Johnson delivered one of the shocks of the election campaign as he appeared as the surprise guest of Rishi Sunak at a rally on Tuesday.

Returning to the stage after Mr Johnson, Mr Sunak said it was "great to have our Conservative family united". But that didn't feel like the real message of the ex-prime minister's 11th-hour cameo.

In his speech, Mr Johnson only mentioned the Prime Minister once, when he thanked Mr Sunak for asking him to come. He has hardly appeared on the campaign trail in this election, though he has issued several video endorsements for candidates and written multiple newspaper opinion pieces.

He was also pictured leaving the event before Mr Sunak had finished speaking.

It's worth remembering that it was just two years ago that Mr Sunak dramatically resigned as Chancellor amid anger over Mr Johnson's response to sexual misconduct allegations regarding one of his ministers. His departure triggered the wave of ministerial resignations that ultimately pushed Mr Johnson out of No 10.

The stain of "Partygate" also

still hangs over Mr Johnson after a parliamentary report found he had deliberately misled the Commons over the scandal, and questions were raised about the culture at No 10 under his regime during the pandemic following evidence to the Covid inquiry.

With all this in mind, it's no surprise that Mr Johnson is hardly more popular with the public than Mr Sunak, with a recent YouGov poll suggesting around three-quarters of the public (72 per cent for Mr Johnson, 75 per cent for Mr Sunak) had an unfavourable view of them.

Every major poll is predicting a Labour victory in today's election, and it is highly unlikely that there is anything that the Conservatives can do at this stage to secure another term in power.

Instead, much of the party's campaign has focused on avoiding a catastrophic result as the rise of Reform UK under Nigel Farage eats into the Tory vote share nationwide.

The party's main hope now is to get Reform voters, many of whom likely share Farage's Eurosceptic views, back onside.

The best thing that Mr Johnson may have been able to give the Tory campaign is some motivation for its despondent traditional voters to head out to the polls today - and a final morale boost for a party braced for one of the worst nights in its history.

Talks were held between Mr Levido (*inset*) and Mr Johnson's long-standing aide, Lord Kempell, who was ennobled in the former prime minister's resignation honours list. What was agreed was choreographed in minute detail.

The campaign rally was opened by Michael Gove, another Conservative to have a long and tortured history with Mr Johnson, who introduced his former ally to a chorus of cheers and chants of "Boris! Boris!".

Mr Johnson was careful not to refer directly to his successor in any of his speech, apart from making it clear that "Rishi Sunak asked me" to join the campaign.

The belief from the Johnson camp that Mr Sunak was to blame for his downfall remains strong, de-

spite the raft of scandals that began with "Partygate" but ended with his defence of a Tory MP accused of sexual assault.

Mr Johnson warned the crowd of the consequences of allowing a historic Labour majority and took the fight to Nigel Farage and Reform UK in a way that Tory candidates have been privately urging Mr Sunak to do for weeks, but with little success.

He branded Mr Farage a "Kremlin crawler" and of "parroting Putin's lies", before adding: "They say Putin's a good operator, runs a tight ship and if that's what they mean by a man who shoots journalists and poisons his opponents and murders thousands of innocent Ukrainian civilians - I say shame on them."

"They can achieve nothing in this election except to usher in the most left-wing Labour government since the war with a huge majority, and we must not let it happen."

"Don't let the Putinistas deliver the Corbynistas."

As he left the stage, there were no handshakes with the Tory leader, and no posing for the cameras together. As Mr Johnson left, there were more cheers of "Boris! Boris!".

When Mr Sunak drew his speech to a close, reporters at the event said that party activists tried to spark a similar chant of "Rishi! Rishi!" that died at birth.

A source close to Mr Sunak refused to say whether there would be another appearance from Mr Johnson, telling *i*: "It was a great event. Time to crack on."

My View, page 19



Boris Johnson mentioned Rishi Sunak once and left early JUSTIN TALLIS/AFP

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IMMIGRATION

Labour warned that its Rwanda fix plan won't stop asylum crisis

Hotel bill cost set to soar as backlog grows but experts say rushing in laws may backfire. By **Lizzie Dearden**

Labour is being warned it is “out of its depth” on asylum and that its plan to address what it sees as a “Rwanda mess” will fail to prevent the crisis from escalating.

The cost of housing asylum seekers in hotels could increase from £5m to £7m a day by the end of this year unless a new government changes the asylum system to slow rising backlogs, figures show.

Labour will bring its new small boats bill forward in the first King's Speech after the general election if it forms the next government, **i** understands.

But immigration experts are concerned about the consequences of the inevitable delays involved in implementing new legislation, with a backlog of 120,000 asylum seekers already waiting.

A Home Office insider said that “even if Labour have the perfect immigration bill ready to go on day one”, it could take two years for new laws to come into force because of the internal processes required.

“A new law, no matter how well written, takes 18 to 24 months

to be implemented,” the civil servant warned.

“Keeping applicants on the [Conservatives’] Illegal Migration Act regime for so long would just skyrocket accommodation bills, whereas implementing a new law too fast would – inevitably – mean major mistakes, litigation costs and further reputational loss.

“It looks like Labour is out of their depth, albeit in a very different way from the Tories.”

The system introduced last year as part of the Conservative scheme to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda has created a “perma-backlog” that already stands at 52,000 cases.

It is rising by an average of 5,200 a month, because migrants in the Illegal Migration Act's scope can neither be deported nor granted leave to remain in the UK.

In its manifesto, Labour vowed to “restore order to the asylum system so that it operates swiftly, firmly, and fairly”, to clear the backlog and “end asylum hotels”, but has not fully detailed how changes will be implemented.

The Labour leader, Sir Keir

Starmer, and the shadow Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper (*pictured*), have not announced any reforms to asylum processing for an interim period, before new legislation comes into force. Home Office insiders say that even if there were such procedural changes they could take months to bring in while the backlog continues to grow.

More than 13,000 migrants have crossed the English Channel so far in 2024, a record for the first six months of the year, and the Refugee Council charity has predicted the figure will pass 40,000 by Christmas.

The new arrivals are adding to a backlog of around 120,000 asylum seekers waiting for decisions, and the cost of housing and financially supporting those in limbo is set to rocket after the election.

Calculations by **i** show that hotel costs could rise to almost £7m a night by the end of this year, up from around £5m when the last official figures were released in March, if asylum processing is not speeded up and alternative accommodation cannot be found.

The next government will have to choose whether to increase that amount further by moving hundreds of asylum seekers out of



Tribunals Backlog builds in asylum decision appeals

A new backlog is building in a specialist court that considers appeals against asylum decisions.

More than 29,000 new asylum cases flooded into the First-Tier Tribunal in the year to March, but it can only process up to 1,000 a month and a backlog of 27,000 cases is rising quickly.

Even if no new appeals were to be lodged, it would take more than two-and-a-half years to clear that figure at the current rate.

Decisions quashed by judges must be remade by a specialist “secondary

casework” team, which may have to conduct new interviews and request further documents in a process taking many more months.

An official report released by the Ministry of Justice said a 330 per cent year-on-year rise in asylum appeals in the most recent quarter “stemmed from the Home Office tackling its legacy asylum decision backlog”.

More than half of asylum seekers fighting against refused and withdrawn claims in the past year were successful.

Comment

Don't be conned by the rhetoric on immigration – look at facts instead

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown



Impressions and emotions can determine elections. But facts matter. And facts about immigration have gone missing, or been successfully obscured.

Here are some truths neither Reform nor the Tories tell you. I share them to disabuse at least some who have been conned.

Full Fact, a non-partisan fact-checking charity, said of our asylum system in August last year: “There are currently no visa routes available for the

purposes of travelling to the UK to claim asylum, and it is not possible to apply for asylum in the UK without being physically present here.”

The UK does provide some humanitarian and other forms of protection to vulnerable people from specific areas but getting refuge legally is well nigh impossible. Those on small boats are not “illegals”. They are being used as political foils.

There's more. An internal Home Office report concluded that the “role of welfare policies, economic factors and labour market access as potential drivers of migration to the UK is limited as many asylum seekers

have little to no understanding of current asylum policies and the economic conditions of a destination country”.

This information and the following figures come from the Migration Observatory in Oxford. In 2022, settled asylum seekers made up 5 per cent of the UK's foreign born population and 0.6 per cent of the total population.

The current sound and fury is completely disproportionate to the actual numbers. Between 2014 and 2021, the numbers of those who received an initial decision on their claim within six months fell from 87 per cent to 6 per cent, as processing was consciously reduced.

Now to Rwanda. We've just learnt that more than £320m spent on this scheme is not recoverable if the Tories lose the election. Sunak indignantly accuses Starmer of failing to support this policy while it sinks before our eyes.

By 24 June, more people had tried to cross the Channel this year than in the same period of the previous four years.

The hysterical focus on small boats has deflected voters from the huge increase in legal migration. At an all-time peak in 2022, 745,000 people were

invited in. In 2015, the figure was 379,000. The country would seize up without incoming workers.

Beware of Trumpan, nationalist politicians who want to keep Britain “British”.

If they get their way, the NHS and care sector, hospitality and small businesses, the arts, food production and cleaning, and research and development would suffer immeasurably.

But if that is what you dream of, vote for Farage and Sunak. Just don't say you didn't know, and complain when the worst comes to pass.





The Refugee Council estimates there could be 115,000 people in indefinite limbo by the end of this year

the *Bibby Stockholm* barge (inset) and a military base. The Conservatives claimed these measures would be cheaper than hotels, but have proven even more expensive.

A Labour Party source said: "It will take us a bit of time to unpick the whole big mess of legislation in this area and we will need to bring forward our own legislation to put in place our plan.

"We're going to have to deal with the perma-backlog and whatever mess we inherit. These people are here and under the Government's legislation they literally can't be returned home."

The Home Office is already facing having to reconsider thousands of asylum claims that Rishi Sunak claimed were "cleared" as part of his legacy backlog pledge, with record numbers of appeals sparked by alleged errors and shortcuts in last year's drive.

Several legal cases are under way against the Government, including a High Court battle over the Safety of Rwanda Act and individual claims by asylum seekers who say they were unlawfully detained for flights. The Home Office insider called for the new government to repeal the Illegal Migration Act and "roll back to the most recent stable version" of asylum processing.

"It's tried and tested and requires no training, just some staff shuffling," the source added,

saying a new government could also reduce hotel costs by giving asylum seekers permission to work. But Labour doesn't intend to repeal the Act.

With the vast majority of asylum seekers banned from working, 80 per cent of those awaiting a decision are destitute and reliant on government housing and support.

The Refugee Council estimates there could be more than 115,000 people in indefinite limbo by the end of this year, because the Illegal Migration Act bans the government from giving small boat migrants who arrived after 7 March, 2023 leave to remain in the UK.

It called for the new government to issue guidance instructing the Home Office to start processing the claims, under a so far unused clause of the law stating that leave to remain can be granted if the "duty to remove" is not in force.

Labour has also pledged to tackle Channel crossings with a new Border Security Command and would seek additional return agreements for failed asylum seekers.

The party has not laid out any plans for creating new safe and legal routes for asylum seekers to reach the UK, which experts and charities say is necessary.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, warned that "there is no magic bullet" to tackling small boats, adding: "The approach that Labour has articulated about smashing the gangs is an important part, but it needs to be part of a broader strategy that also looks at why people flee."

POLITICS

Why Brexit still matters for Northern Ireland's electorate

Molly Blackall speaks to voters on the border who are living with the referendum's fallout



In the village of Belleek, the Irish border has largely faded into insignificance. The majority of the village sits in Northern Ireland, while a small part crosses into the Republic.

Celine O'Loughlin, 82, frequently exchanges her sterling for euros to spend in the nearby Lidl, on the southern side, because it's cheaper.

David, 71, regularly wanders over the bridge from his home in the Republic to his local pub, which falls within Northern Ireland.

And Ursula McFarland crosses the border five times during the six-mile journey to her daughter's house.

Belleek residents remember a time when the border was far from invisible. During the violence of the Troubles, roads here were blown up, cars burnt and gunfights spilled out on to residential streets.

The Good Friday Agreement (GFA) in 1998 brought an end to much of the violence, and the fear. But a quarter of a century later, the Irish border is once again a central issue in British politics – even if no one seems to be talking about it.

There are just 18 seats up for grabs in Northern Ireland, out of Westminster's 650. Yet the election here matters all the same, with Brexit firmly in many voters' minds.

During the 2016 EU referendum campaign, the ramifications for Northern Ireland were barely discussed elsewhere in the UK.

Northern Irish voters – many, no doubt, mindful of their frictionless land border with the EU – backed Remain by 56 per cent to 44 per cent, as the UK as a whole voted Leave.

As Brexit negotiations began and the issue of the Irish border quickly reared its head, some Leave supporters claimed that the GFA was no longer fit for purpose.

The then-Northern Ireland secretary, Owen Paterson, and Labour Leaver Kate Hoey both declared the deal had "outlived

its use", while Conservative MEP Daniel Hannan said it had "failed".

Such rhetoric triggered a wave of fear in border villages such as Belleek, says Ms McFarland. "You could never go back to the way that it was," she says. "There are people who think there should be a [hard] border along here; there's no way we ever want that to happen again."

'FAR REMOVED' FROM WESTMINSTER

Fears that peace in Northern Ireland would be shattered have largely failed to materialise – although riots in 2021 were anecdotally linked to Brexit by unionist leaders.

But the UK's withdrawal from the EU has had an undeniably significant impact. Three new trade deals and years of negotiation were required to establish a system to manage EU imports. This avoided a hard land border with the Republic but established a sea border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, triggering a backlash from unionists.

The Northern Ireland Assembly only recently returned after two years of shutdown over disagreements – between unionists, who want to remain part of the UK, and nationalists, who want Irish unity – over post-Brexit trade arrangements.

"We knew that there would be very big changes with Brexit even before it was voted on, living here on the border," says Tommy Gallagher, from Belleek.

The majority of the village's

There are people who think there should be a [hard] border; there's no way we want that to happen

residents voted for Remain, having benefited from EU investment and wanting to avoid fresh border tensions, Mr Gallagher says.

"It's not that long ago that the campaign of violence was carried out here. Sometimes it's very easy to slip back, and that was a big worry about Brexit."

Mr Gallagher – who previously worked as a teacher and local politician for the Social Democratic and Labour Party – says that people in Belleek feel "far removed" from the politics of Westminster.



'ISOLATED AND FORGOTTEN'

Margaret Lynch owns two small shops on the high street, one selling clothes and the other gifts. She says that the impact of Brexit on her business has been lasting.

Like many in Belleek, she feels Northern Ireland has been "isolated and forgotten".

Many large retailers have been affected by the green and red lane system of moving goods, according to David McCord (inset top), a 50-year-old HGV driver and a Unite the Union representative.

He claims some chains have stopped importing perishable goods altogether because delays mean they go off before they can reach the shelves.



'BREXIT HAS MADE A UNITED IRELAND CLOSER'

In Belfast, some say that Brexit has had a negligible impact on their lives. But many agree that it has irrevocably changed the political landscape of Northern Ireland.

"I think Brexit has possibly made a united Ireland much closer than it used to be and that's maybe the biggest change in Northern Ireland that the DUP didn't see coming," says Suzie, 42, a teacher who preferred not to give her last name.

"It's definitely changed the political landscape here. I think it was a massive own goal."

Sam, a 19-year-old university student from Belfast (inset), thinks Brexit will have a strong effect. "When people voted for Brexit they were promised that... it would be a very easy and smooth process, that they'd put money back in the economy and the NHS. But that didn't really happen."

Rhonda Docherty, a 55-year-old local Government worker, says she hopes that Brexit is on voters' minds. "Nobody in London – Farage, Cameron... – talked [much] about Northern Ireland and the impact that would have. That made me really angry," she says.



Teacher Suzie says Brexit has changed the political landscape ROBBIE HAWKEN

POLICY

Labour warned of state pension 'banana skin'

Exclusive

By Adam Forrest

SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

The decision over whether to increase the state pension age is a potential "banana skin" for Sir Keir Starmer if Labour wins the general election, experts have warned.

YouGov polling, shared exclusively with **i**, shows that 72 per cent of voters oppose any increase in the age of eligibility for the state pension.

The survey, carried out for the International Longevity Centre (ILC) – a think-tank on ageing populations – shows that such a move would be particularly unpopular with Labour voters, as 80 per cent are against any increase in the retirement age.

It found that 68 per cent of Conservative voters are opposed to an increase in the state pension age, while 71 per cent of Liberal Democrats voters do not want it to rise.

Should Labour win power, as pollsters widely expect, the debate over the pension age is set to flare up within the first two years of a Starmer administration.

From 2026 to 2028, the UK's state pension age is set to rise from 66 to 67. Two government-commissioned reviews have already recommended that a further rise to 68 – currently pencilled in for between 2044 and 2046 – should be brought forward to help meet the growing costs of Britain's ageing population.

The Work and Pensions Secre-

tary, Mel Stride, said last year that it would be up to the next government to "grasp the nettle" and bring forward the rise to 68, after he delayed making a decision.

At the time he said this would be reviewed within two years after the next election, meaning it is slated for 2026.

Despite pressure to increase the state pension age, Labour is also facing calls from pensioner groups and the Unite union, a major financial backer, to bring the retirement age back down to 65.

"The state pension age issue, and funding the state pension, is a banana skin for a Labour government,"

the chief executive of the ILC, David Sinclair (*inset*), told **i**.

"It should be on [Labour chief of staff] Sue Gray's list of priorities but probably isn't. It's a banana skin because it will be controversial, but it will become something the government can't ignore."

Official figures also show that the cost of the state pension as a proportion of Britain's GDP is set to increase from 4.8 per cent to 8.1 per cent by 2071.

The ILC has suggested that the state pension age may have to rise to 70 or even 71 by 2050, just to maintain the UK's current num-

ber of working adults per retired state pensioner.

But the former Tory pension minister Baroness Altmann said that any attempt to bring in state pension age rises to 69, 70 or 71 would be "unconscionable".

Labour has not made any commitments on the state pension age, promising only a "review of the pension landscape" in its manifesto.

i The Labour Party has pledged to protect the triple lock, which ensures payments increase in line with inflation, average earnings, or 2.5 per cent – whichever is highest.

PEOPLE

The former Tory Remainder who switched to Reform

By Arj Singh

DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

A former Tory councillor who said he was "greatly saddened" by Brexit in the aftermath of the EU referendum is now standing for Nigel Farage's Reform UK.

Barry Parsons, who is standing for Reform in Morecambe and Lunesdale, said the UK and EU are "stronger together" following the June 2016 vote to quit the bloc.

And the candidate, who was then a Tory councillor on Devon County Council, also appeared to criticise the "divisive" tone of the referendum campaign.

Mr Farage, who led Ukip and was one of the key figures behind the successful campaign for Brexit, was criticised during the EU referendum for the way he campaigned.

George Osborne, the then Conservative chancellor and Remain campaigner, said Mr Farage's "Breaking Point" immigration poster had "echoes" of 1930s literature.

This week, Mr Parsons said his change of heart was due to a respect for democracy.

"My views are totally subservient to the democratic wishes of the people of this country," he said.



Mr Parsons said his change of heart was due to a respect for democracy

"UK citizens made a democratic decision in 2016 and as a democratic country my very strong view is that we all get behind that decision, irrespective of personal preference at the particular time. Clearly, many individuals still continue to try and reverse that decision. Now, that I find truly saddening."

Mr Parsons is now standing on a manifesto that criticises the Tories for failing to "grasp the huge opportunities of Brexit", commits to scrapping 6,700 retained EU laws, wants to ditch the Windsor Framework deal on Northern Ireland and renegotiate the trade deal with Brussels signed by Boris Johnson.

But in 2016 following the EU referendum, he told the *Bude and Stratton Post*: "Lancing this boil has proven hugely divisive, individually and between nations; indeed, even between countries within the UK."

"Like many others I am greatly saddened. But, I have always said that we are stronger together."

"Politics at Westminster now needs to reflect what is best for our country and not what is best for individual political parties/individual MPs."

Mr Parsons had a successful spell as councillor for Torridge District Council for 12 years, becoming leader, which resulted in him being appointed an Alderman for Devon.

Speaking to the *Lancaster Guardian* about his new campaign he said: "I ask of you, join with me and Reform UK. I am not your everyday politician; I will be here for you."

A Reform spokesman said: "It's wonderful, quite a few of our candidates voted Remain."

"But unlike many in Westminster and Whitehall they are democrats, through and through and accepted the decision made by 17.4 million people."



Wave by the sea

The leader of Reform UK, Nigel Farage, delivers a speech from a Land Rover by Clacton Pier in Essex yesterday. PAUL ELLIS/AFP/GETTY

PEOPLE

Crafty voters show true colours

By Danielle Desouza

Voters have been documenting the election in quirky ways.

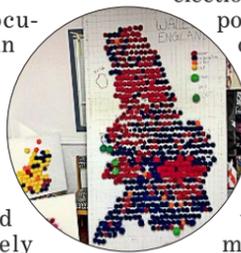
Sarra Jenkins, 38, from Loughborough, Leicestershire, has created a crocheted opinion poll tracker, with the parties' represented through appropriately coloured wool.

Ed Peacock, 39, and his wife Charlotte, 42, who live in Cardiff,

plan to stay tonight to fill out the election map using hand-made pompoms, which they also did for the 2019 and 2017 elections (*inset*).

Mr Peacock, a dog walker, said: "Hopefully we have enough pompoms of the right colours ready as we don't want to have to be making more on the night."

"Fortunately a lot of people from all over have helped, sending us in bags of pompoms."



TRADITIONS

Sunak chooses election-night cheesy pork pie

By Sam Rucker

Rishi Sunak has revealed that his favourite meal is "sandwiches" – but said he will continue a tradition of eating an election-night pork pie.

The Prime Minister was asked on ITV's *This Morning* what his final meal would be in Downing Street should he lose on 4 July.

He responded: "Well, my favourite meal generally is sandwiches. You know, I'm a big sandwich person."

"But, actually, I always have on election night – we have a bit of a tradition, my local butcher, one of my local butchers called Kitson's in Northallerton High Street, always do a special election pie."

Mr Sunak described the pie as a "very good pork pie with a special chutney and some cheese as well, on top".

DECLARATIONS

Starmer: £16,200 clothes donation 'met the rules'

By Conrad Smith

Sir Keir Starmer said he had complied with the rules after accepting a donation of clothes worth £16,200.

The Labour leader has collected more gifts than almost any other MP since 2019, including £16,200 for "work clothing" from Lord Alli, a Labour peer and a former chairman of Asos, the *Financial Times* reported.

Asked about the justification for accepting the clothes, Sir Keir said: "The declarations are really clear, if we take money from anyone on anything over a certain amount of money, it has to be declared."

"I have complied with all that, it's all in the register. Everything's done in accordance with the register and the public declarations."

Driving Miss Daisy

Liberal Democrats leader Sir Ed Davey brought his election campaign to a colourful close by driving off in a pink Cadillac following a speech in Harpenden, Hertfordshire.

Sir Ed, who has made headlines with campaign trail stunts such as surfing, paddleboarding, and a trip to Thorpe Park, was joined by deputy leader Daisy Cooper.

Earlier, he had vowed to knock down the Conservatives' Blue Wall during a visit to Chippenham in Wiltshire, where he drove a large yellow tractor. PHIL NOBLE/REUTERS



Comment

Voting today is about much more than just you

Sophia Smith Galer



I know what it's like to be not remotely interested in a general election – it's the attitude I had throughout my early adult years. It isn't that I didn't understand politics, or that I didn't think voting was important. I just didn't have faith in anyone in the political class to improve my lot or that my vote would make a difference.

I wonder how differently I might have felt if I'd been compelled to see voting not as an individual right I should exercise, but a duty that I owed to everyone else.

Researchers from Washington University in St Louis, in the US, has found that people are more likely to vote if they perceive of voting as a duty to others.

Investigating data from more than 10,000 Americans, researchers found that 82 per cent of those who viewed voting as a duty turned out to vote, compared with the 57 per cent turnout of those who didn't.

They then did a study with just over 800 people to see what would happen if they asked respondents to reflect on interdependent values rather than independent values and they were more likely to perceive of voting as a duty because of it.

We vote for who and what we individually want. But surely there is room for other people in that choice?

The findings from this study have persuaded me to begin shifting how I speak to those in my life about their vote. We vote for who and what we want. But surely there is room for other people in that choice?

And amongst the over-65s, I am eager to know: who is your duty towards? Is it those your age and does it include the wants and desires you have been hearing young people express?

Whatever age you are, voting today isn't simply about you. There will be many in your life who have no such luxury of apathy. They are languishing on NHS waiting lists, they can't buy a house, they can't afford children. They belong to places and jobs that, without your participation, will slither further into societal abyss.

Don't vote because it's your right – vote because it's your duty.

Sophia Smith Galer is an award-winning reporter, author and content creator based in London

POLITICS

Today's election forecast to return the 'most diverse' Parliament ever

Eleanor Langford and **Kitty Donaldson** assess the likely new intake

The next Parliament is set to be the most diverse ever, with a record number of women, LGBT and ethnic minority MPs entering the House of Commons, analysis by **i** has revealed.

These changes could have major implications for the policies pursued by the next government on issues ranging from transgender rights to childcare, as well as the working culture in Westminster.

i analysed multiple MRP polls and compared them with publicly available diversity data to better understand the likely make-up of MPs elected in 2024.

In 2010, less than a quarter of MPs were female, rising to a third in 2019. But the country is set to get much closer to a 50/50 parliament after the election, with 41 per cent of MPs predicted to be women.

The proportion of MPs from ethnic minority backgrounds is also set to rise, with more than 12 per cent of the Commons expected to be non-white. This is still below the 18 per cent of the total UK population made up by ethnic minorities.

The 2024 Parliament is also set to be the "gayest ever", with a record number of MPs who openly identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).

At least 57 openly LGBT MPs are forecast to be elected, an increase of 12 on 2019.

It is 40 years since Chris Smith became the first British MP to come out as gay in 1984. At this election, dozens of Labour LGBT candidates

are being supported by a campaign fund named in his honour run by LGBT+ Labour.

Joe Dharampal-Hornby, the group's co-chair, said he was proud of the group's record in "progressing LGBT+ rights and representation since 1975".

The party has reportedly fielded a record number of LGBT+ candidates at this election.

When it comes to gender balance, Labour fielded a near 50/50 gender split with its candidates, with 47 per cent of its candidates being female.

The Conservatives, SNP and Liberal Democrats both have further to go in this regard, with women making up just under a third of those running for election for each party.

Polls vary widely regarding how many Reform UK MPs will come to Parliament, but in predictions that give them over 10 seats around 13 per cent of their MPs are set to be

women. The Green Party is on track to keep at least one female MP.

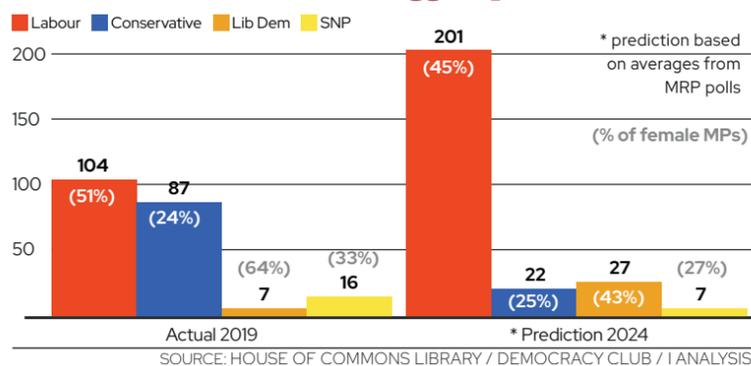
A Labour source pointed out that the party's progress had been achieved despite its decision to drop all-women shortlists amid concerns it was no longer compatible with the Equality Act.

The Conservatives struggling to hit gender parity is nothing new, despite the party having given the country its only three female prime ministers – Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May and Liz Truss.

The issue was frequently raised after the Conservatives came to power in coalition with the Liberal Democrats in 2010. In 2014 then-prime minister David Cameron even suggested the party was "open" to all-women shortlists in the future if the gender balance did not improve.

The party has never pursued the policy, however, and one female candidate standing in this election

Predicted female MPs for biggest parties



CHARITY

Captain Tom's daughter and her husband banned from trustee roles

By Sally Guyoncourt

The daughter and son-in-law of the late Captain Sir Tom Moore have been disqualified from being charity trustees after an investigation by a watchdog.

Captain Tom raised more than £38m for NHS Charities Together during the Covid pandemic by walking 100 laps of his patio at his Bedfordshire home before his 100th birthday. He died in February 2021.

The Captain Tom Foundation was established in May 2020 after Sir Tom's fundraising efforts during the first Covid lockdown.

The Charity Commission opened a case involving the foundation shortly after the 100-year-old died and launched a full inquiry in June 2022.

It followed concerns about the foundation's management and independence from Captain Tom's family.

In a statement, the family of Hannah and Colin Ingram-Moore said that they "fundamentally disagree" with the Charity Commission's decision to disqualify them as charity trustees following the investigation.

However, the family said they had made the "extremely difficult decision" not to appeal [against] the decision, saying the "profound emotional upheaval and financial burden make such a course of action untenable".

Their statement added: "We have been served an order of disqualification as trustees by the Charity Commission, it was stated that if we did



The foundation set up by Hannah Ingram-Moore in her father's name raised millions of pounds for the NHS GETTY

not appeal this order, by the 25 June 2024 deadline, we would appear on the register of removed persons.

"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 debilitating ordeal. We are increasingly concerned that the Charity Commission's process may have evolved into a relentless pursuit, and question

whether it is a tactic by the commission to make our lives more difficult, by suspending us in constant fear."

i The foundation stopped taking money from donors in summer last year.

POLICE

Mother says she ended life of terminally ill son aged 7

By Aine Fox

Police have said they are "making enquiries" after a mother revealed that she gave her son a dose of morphine that she believes "did quietly end his life" more than 40 years ago.

Antonya Cooper's son Hamish was five when he was diagnosed with stage 4 neuroblastoma – a rare childhood cancer – and was seven when he died at home on 1 December 1981.

Ms Cooper, a former chairman of Neuroblastoma UK, who lives in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, said her son had been "in a lot of pain".

She told BBC Radio Oxford: "I gave him a large dose of morphine that did quietly end his life."

Thames Valley Police said it was "aware of reports relating to an apparent case of assisted dying of a seven-year-old boy in 1981.

"At this early stage, the force is making enquiries into these reports and is not in a position to comment further."

Euthanasia – deliberately ending a person's life to relieve suffering – is illegal in England and could be prosecuted as murder or manslaughter.

Ms Cooper, who now has incurable cancer and has joined the assisted dying clinic Dignitas, was asked by the BBC if she understood that she was potentially admitting to manslaughter or murder and replied: "Yes."

The debate around assisted dying and calls for a change in the law has become louder in recent months, with legislation being considered in Scotland, the Isle of Man and Jersey.

In December, Dame Esther Rantzen (*inset*), who has stage 4 lung cancer, said she had joined Dignitas.

Campaigners against legalising assisted dying have said changing the law could put pressure on vulnerable people to end their lives for fear of being a burden on others, and argue the disabled, elderly, sick or depressed could be especially at risk.



COURTS

Husband guilty of killing wife and dumping her body in river

By Emily Pennink and Ellie Ng

A man faces life in jail for throttling his young wife in front of her lover and throwing her body, hidden inside a suitcase, into a tributary of the River Thames.

Aminan Rahman, 46, was convicted by an Old Bailey jury of murdering 24-year-old Suma Begum in a flat

in east London on 29 April last year. The killing was witnessed by Ms Begum's two children and her boyfriend via video call from the United Arab Emirates, where he was living.

Rahman then stuffed Ms Begum into a suitcase while she was either dead or unconscious and was caught on CCTV dumping it in the River Lea, which runs through east Lon-

don to the Thames. The case containing her decomposed body was found washed up on a river bank by a member of the public 10 days later.

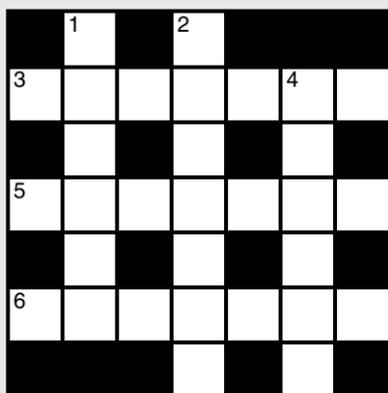
The court was told that the victim's children, then aged four months and two years, were in the bedroom where the attack took place.

Ms Begum's boyfriend, Shahin Miah, 24, had recorded an online

video of the events leading to her death, the court heard. The video was later handed in to police.

Giving evidence, Rahman accepted killing Ms Begum but claimed that he never intended to harm her and had acted in the defence of the older child. Mr Justice Bennathan remanded Rahman in custody for sentencing on 31 July.

The Five-Clue Cryptic Crossword No 4248



Across

3/5 Have a general election or get away from it all? (2,2,3,7)

6 Quite confused by American city spirit (7)

Down

1 Farah got up when sullen (6)

2 Summary: slightly ahead in boxing bout? (5-2)

4 Publicly announce almost everyone is in crowd (6)

Solution, page 45

COURTS

Donaldson sent to trial in sex offence case

By Jonathan McCambridge

The former Democratic Unionist Party leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson has been sent for trial over allegations of historical sex offences.

A district judge at Newry magistrates' court said he was satisfied that Sir Jeffrey, 61, and his wife and co-accused, Lady Eleanor Donaldson, 58, both of Dromore, Co Down, had a case to answer.

They will next appear at Newry

Crown Court on 10 September for an arraignment hearing, having been released on continuing bail.

During the committal hearing yesterday, Sir Jeffrey was asked if he wanted to say anything in answer to the charges. He responded: "Not at this stage."

He has previously indicated that he will contest all charges.

Sir Jeffrey is now accused of 18 historical sex offences – spanning a time period from 1985 to 2008 – following a review of

the case by Northern Ireland's Public Prosecution Service. He faced 11 charges when he first appeared in court in April.

His wife is facing five charges – originally it was four. There are two alleged victims.

Sir Jeffrey (*inset*) faces one charge of rape, four of gross indecency and 13 of indecent assault.

Lady Donaldson faces charges of aiding and abetting in connection with the alleged offences.

Sir Jeffrey, who served as the DUP MP for Lagan Valley from 1997, is not running for re-election.





Waves crash into the coast at Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic AP

CARIBBEAN

Beryl death toll rises as storm looms over Jamaica

By Maria Alejandra Cardona and Harold Isaac

IN KINGSTON AND PORT-AU-PRINCE

Hurricane Beryl neared Jamaica as a powerful Category 4 storm yesterday after flattening homes and devastating agriculture on smaller islands in the eastern Caribbean.

The storm has killed at least seven people and created conditions described as “Armageddon-like”.

At about 10.30am local time (4.30pm BST), the hurricane was approximately 75 miles south-east of the Jamaican capital Kingston, with maximum sustained winds of 145 miles per hour.

“Beryl is expected to bring life-threatening winds and storm surge to Jamaica on Wednesday and the Cayman Islands on Wednesday

night and Thursday,” the US National Hurricane Centre said. A hurricane warning was in effect for both locations.

Hurricane conditions were expected to reach the coast of Jamaica at about midday local time yesterday. Tropical storm-strength winds from the late morning were set to complicate outdoor preparations.

In Kingston, cars lined up at petrol stations as people filled up containers. Residents stocked up on water and other essential supplies and boarded up shops and houses.

On Tuesday, the Venezuelan President, Nicolás Maduro, said that three people had died and four were missing in Sucre state, in the extreme east of the country.

At least one person died in St Vincent and the Grenadines and at least

three people died in Grenada, officials in the Caribbean nations said.

The storm hit St Vincent and the Grenadines especially hard, said the Prime Minister, Ralph Gonsalves, who cited “immense destruction”.

Grenada’s Prime Minister, Dickon Mitchell, said Carriacou and Petite Martinique – two of the country’s three islands – had borne the brunt of the disaster, calling the situation “Armageddon-like”. REUTERS

i The rapid strengthening of Beryl – the earliest hurricane on record to develop into a Category 5 storm – is likely to have been fuelled by human-caused climate change, scientists have said.

Comment

Storms on horizon should be wake-up call for us all

Kuba Shand-Baptiste



There’s nothing like a natural disaster to remind us of the sheer idiocy of our hubris in relation to the climate crisis. Hurricane Beryl couldn’t be a louder wake-up call.

Warmer seas caused by climate change are making the fiercest storms more common. Hurricane behaviour is changing too.

The first hurricanes of the year usually form in mid-August, and the strongest do not normally appear until late August and September. But in forming just as June turned to July, Hurricane Beryl is the earliest Category 5 hurricane ever recorded.

It has torn through the Caribbean with increasing intensity. It has ripped roofs from buildings like paper. It has threatened and taken lives.

It even momentarily stole focus from Western elections that have rather ironically put the climate crisis on the back-burner – despite those Western nations being disproportionately responsible for producing more emissions.

And yet, its significance will undoubtedly do very little to encourage richer nations like ours to reduce carbon emissions.

The odds of an event like Hurricane Beryl serving as a wake-up call are especially slim here given the fact that the climate crisis has been relegated to a “wedge issue” in UK politics.

We are a nation of increasingly climate-sceptic people on a continent that has leaned progressively into climate obstructionism.

Young people, too, are swallowing climate crisis misinformation, with a third of Britons aged 13 to 17 agreeing with the statement: “Climate change and its effects are being

purposefully overexaggerated”. Rather than taking leadership and working to reverse those trends through public campaigns and more effective policies, most of the main political parties have chosen to placate these misinformed members of the public in the hope of securing votes.

None (excluding the Greens) plan to cancel approved licences for oil and gas extraction in the North Sea (the Tories, Reform UK and possibly the Liberal Democrats, plan to accelerate them). And in May, the High Court found that the UK Government’s climate action plan was so insufficient that it was ruled unlawful.

Britain’s role in producing more emissions isn’t just well documented, it is part and parcel of its “success” story. According to analysis by Carbon Brief, “the UK is responsible for nearly twice as much global warming as previously thought, due to its colonial history”.

Despite this, we are still in the business of shifting blame elsewhere, or refusing to “share the burden”, as Barbados’s Prime Minister, Mia Mottley (*inset*), said at COP28.

Part of that burden would mean providing poorer countries with climate financing and striving for a future in which we – the whole world – can support one another when faced with disasters such as these.

Donations in the wake of events like Hurricane Beryl would be a start now, but we need to think in preventative terms too.

There’s no guarantee that residents in richer Western countries won’t soon become some of the 1.2 billion people expected to become climate refugees by 2050.

The lack of focus on climate change from our two biggest parties in this election isn’t just disappointing. It is irresponsible.

We can obsess over myopic issues all we want. It will not do a thing to shield us from the horrors that await us.



FRANCE

Left and centrist parties in tactical move to halt Le Pen

By Caolan Magee

The far right’s chances of winning a majority in France’s elections have been dented after hundreds of candidates stood down in a tactical move – but experts say the National Rally (RN) party could still triumph.

Voters head back to the polls for the second and final round of parliamentary elections on Sunday.

The first round of voting last weekend resulted in Marine Le Pen’s far-right RN topping the poll with 33 per cent of the popular vote.

The NFP (New Popular Front), a rainbow coalition of far-left, communist, socialist, and green parties, won 28 per cent, while President Emmanuel Macron’s centrist Ensemble (Together) bloc trailed behind on 21 per cent – leading both blocs to create an unnatural alliance under the mantra: anyone but the far right.

To allay fears about a far-right victory and avoid splitting the vote, around 215 centrist and left-

wing candidates who placed third in the first round across France’s 577 constituencies have dropped out of the race.

They hope this will help push other left-wing and centrist candidates over the victory line to defeat the far right.

The far right’s chances of winning the 289 seats needed for a majority have been dented by the blocking tactics of the left and centre, but experts say that this does not necessar-



ily mean voters will unite to keep out the far right.

Phil Smith, a professor in French politics at the University of Nottingham, told **i**: “Despite the very large number of candidates standing down there is still a possibility of a far-right government.

“This is because it really depends on who is still running from the centre or the left.”

He added: “If the left-wing candidate standing is more moderate, then the centre will find it easier to support them, if it is more radi-

cal left – the centre could struggle to support.

“The former prime minister of France Edouard Philippe, a Macron (*inset*) supporter, has said he would vote for someone in a communist party running in his area. But endorsements like this do not mean they will but will depend on who the candidate is.”

Analysts say that some centrists feel alienated by left-wing presidential candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon, dubbed the Jeremy Corbyn of the French left.

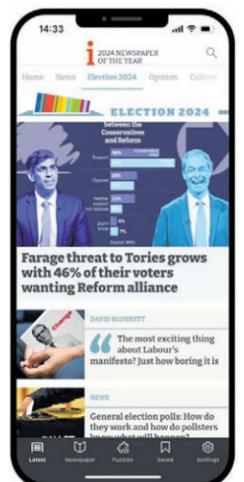
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UNITED STATES

Biden pledges to fight on despite party's jitters

By Taz Ali, Sally Guyoncourt and Caolan Magee

The US President, Joe Biden, insisted yesterday that he would not give up his re-election bid following reports that he was reconsidering his candidacy amid pressure from senior Democrats.

In a call with staff last night, Mr Biden vowed that "no one is pushing me out". It came after *The New York Times* reported that the President had told a close ally he may not be able to salvage his campaign following a disastrous TV debate against Donald Trump last week.

The ally said that Mr Biden, 81, "knows that if he has two more events like that [the debate], we are in a different place" by the end of the weekend.

Andrew Bates, a White House spokesman, said that the report was "absolutely false". At a White House briefing, Mr Biden's press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, said that he would "absolutely not" step down, describing him as "strong and resolute" and "as sharp as ever".

Quentin Fulks, a senior Biden campaign aide, told CNN that reports of Mr Biden quitting were "false". He said: "There are a number of rumours floating out there. The President is in this race to win it."

But a senior adviser to Mr Biden, who also spoke to *The New York Times* on the condition of anonymity, said the President was "well aware of the political challenge he faces".

Mr Biden was scheduled to meet Democratic governors last night.

He also has an interview scheduled tomorrow with George Stephanopoulos of ABC News and campaign

events in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin going into the weekend.

Both Mr Biden and his Vice President, Kamala Harris, joined an all-staff call yesterday held by the White House chief of staff, Jeff Zients.

"I am running. I am the leader of the Democratic Party. No one is pushing me out," Mr Biden said, according to Emmy Ruiz, a senior aide.

Mr Zients reportedly acknowledged that the days since the debate have been challenging but he emphasised, as he spoke to White

House aides, the accomplishments of the Biden administration.

Mr Zients told aides that the White House's job was now to focus on continuing to implement Mr Biden's agenda, and pointed out that the President (*inset*) has previously always made it through tough times.

The President is also said to have begun speaking privately with senior Democratic Party politicians such as the Senate majority leader, Chuck Schumer, and the House minority leader, Hakeem Jeffries.

But the President suffered a blow as Representative Jim Clyburn, a long-time Biden ally, said he would back a "mini-primary" in the run-up to the Democratic National Convention next month if Mr Biden were to withdraw from the race.

i Democrats are understood to be **dissatisfied with the explanations** of the President's poor performance at the debate from both White House staff and Mr Biden himself.



Michelle Obama was rated more favourably than Joe Biden and Donald Trump in a recent poll GETTY

DEMOCRATS

Obama urged to consider entering election

By Victoria Crow

The former US first lady Michelle Obama is likely to be under pressure to consider entering the race for the White House, despite her opposition to the idea, US political experts have said, after a poll suggested that she could beat Donald Trump.

A Reuters/Ipsos survey put both Trump and Joe Biden on 40 per cent after last Thursday's debate. Among top Democrats, only Mrs Obama – the wife of former president Barack Obama

– outperformed Mr Biden and led Mr Trump.

Mrs Obama, 60, had a 55 per cent favourability rating, putting her ahead of both candidates.

The lawyer has consistently said she is not interested in running for president. Yet Scott Lucas, a professor of US politics at University College, Dublin, said senior Democrats would be considering their options.

"At this point I think you would ask whether Michelle Obama would at least consider getting into politics," he told **i**.

"She is very capable, very intelligent, very thoughtful and a decent person. Her speech in October 2016 [in which she said] 'when they go low, we go high' was one of the high points in American politics."

Nadia Hilliard, a lecturer at University College, London, agreed that Mrs Obama was likely to be urged by donors and strategists to consider standing.

Dr Hilliard said Mrs Obama's appeal lay in her "incredible capacity" to "know exactly what people want to see".

Analysis

America has one last chance to avoid a Trump presidency

Michael Day
CHIEF FOREIGN COMMENTATOR



A silver lining has emerged for Donald Trump's opponents in the US Supreme Court's shock ruling on presidential immunity. It will allow American justice one last chance to help prevent the convicted felon from regaining the keys to the White House.

The justices have asked Washington DC judge Tanya Chutkan to hold a pre-trial evidentiary hearing in the autumn, for the case in which Trump is accused of a conspiracy to overturn the result of the 2020 presidential election. Special counsel Jack Smith

won't be able to prosecute Trump in these hearings – but he will be able to parade much of the evidence, as Judge Chutkan (*inset*) decides what remains admissible under the immunity ruling.

Smith will call his big-gun witnesses, including former vice president Mike Pence, whom Trump pressured to wrongly certify the election result in his favour.

One leading commentator has already predicted that it will be like a 6 January Capitol riot hearing "on steroids" – right in the run-up to the vote in November.

Only one of Smith's paragraphs in the indictment – relating to Trump's

direct dealings with his then acting attorney general – is automatically proscribed by the ruling on absolute immunity for official presidential acts. Evidence relating to the rest of the indictment can be aired in public.

If Judge Chutkan exhibits her previous desire for proceeding quickly with hearings related to the trial, then by September or October America may see a quasi-trial unfolding in the nation's capital in what could be the home stretch of the presidential election campaign.

As such, legal analyst Norm Eisen, of the Brookings think-tank, has said that Trump may still be held accountable.



"The Scotus [Supreme Court of the US] immunity ruling is terrible – but not all hope is lost. Far from it, a mini-trial in DC can illuminate Trump's 2020 election interference wrongdoing," he told *New York Magazine*.

"It's going to put some of the most disturbing elements of the attempted coup on trial for the American people, for the court and the American people, to consider."

He told CNN he believed most of Smith's allegations would "be able to continue under this new test" of the immunity ruling. But this will only happen if Trump is kept out of the White House and thus denied the chance to order officials to drop the case.

"Every witness he has; he's going to bring them into that

courtroom," MSNBC analyst Lawrence O'Donnell said of Smith on Monday night.

"They're all going to be under oath and the defence is going to be able to cross-examine them... So you're going to see this incredible 6 Jan hearing on steroids, possibly for six to eight weeks, in September to October."

Patricia Crouse, a professor at the University of New Haven, thinks the hearing would be "a good reminder of what a horrible human being Trump is right before the election".

"The left in America is furious about the [immunity] decision. If they can hold on to that anger until November it might help," she said. "Some have said that after that decision, they would vote for Biden even if he were dead."

The Opinion Matrix

COMMENT FROM HOME AND ABROAD

ELECTION WEARINESS



Voters have had their fill of politics

ITV News

The most striking thing for me about this election isn't the rise of Reform or the multitude of mistakes by the Conservative Party. It's the fact that none of it seems to have enthused anyone to drastically change their mind. Voters are utterly fed up with politics. (Paul Brand)

Sky News

What Sir Keir's team is acutely aware of is that [a Labour] victory is predicated, in a large part, not on what the Labour leader is offering but a collective sentiment in the country that voters want the Conservatives out. (Beth Rigby)

TORY PARTY RALLY



Sunak totally outshone by Johnson

The Critic

Officially, Boris Johnson was there to help. It was a good thing we knew this, because otherwise it would have looked like he was doing his best to undermine his successor. He mentioned Sunak only once, in passing, right at the start of the speech. He attacked Starmer at length, but the actual Prime Minister was essentially ignored. (Robert Hutton)

The Daily Telegraph

We're all up after Keir's bedtime, he joked. BoJo was almost carried off over people's heads. When Rishi entered, he almost crawled between their knees. (Tim Stanley)

GREEN POLICIES



Environment needs to be top of agenda

The Guardian

Ed Miliband is right to say that if the country is to play a leading role internationally, the right example needs to be set at home. But after five years during which the green agenda has become a target for the radical right, arguments need to be restated and won. (Editorial)

Daily Mail

The idea that anyone would regard Miliband as some sort of luminary, or that he could lead us anywhere but to the poor house is laughable. Yet in his Gadarene rush to decarbonise Britain, he can inflict huge damage. (Editorial)

CRISIS IN PRISONS



Overcrowding in jails needs to be tackled

The Sun

Our jails packed to bursting, holding more prisoners than ever. If Labour wants to hit the ground running and be truly tough on crime it must immediately identify new prison sites, race through the planning and get the foundations dug. (Editorial)

Financial Times

According to the most recent figures published by the Ministry of Justice on 28 June, the prison population stood at 87,360. Capacity, already stretched by the practice of assigning two prisoners to the same cell, is 88,818 in England and Wales. (William Wallis)

DENCH JOINS THE GARRICK



The stage is set for a break in tradition

New Statesman

London clubland is more than an exclusive social zone; it is where a large proportion of British establishment politics is transacted. Admitting women will not only change its demographics: it will also shift its political orientation. (Aaron Reeves)

The Times

My advice for newly elected female members who want to get a feel for the club is to turn up on your own and plunge in. Although the club has strong theatrical connections, don't bother to make a grand entrance. The club has the feel of a refuge, not a stage. (Atholl Galliphant)

SIR ANDY MURRAY



A sporting knight to remember

The Spectator

To watch Murray was to undergo some kind of transference as he howled not just with backhands missed but with the points won, each shot planted on the line like a nail jammed into his chest. And now, the pain is over. For all of us. Andy can look forward to his statesman era of tennis. (Arabella Byrne)

Daily Express

Fans will embrace the opportunity to cheer on one of Britain's great sporting knights. His passion, grit and skill is legendary. We hope he enjoys every moment on court with Jamie. They will make us proud. (Editorial)

Quote of the day



I had support without thinking I had support. Mates would pop round and have a chat

Ainsley Harriott
The TV chef says his friends helped him through the end of his marriage in 2012

Life In Brief

CHRISTOPHE DELOIRE HEAD OF REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS

Christophe Deloire, who negotiated to free imprisoned journalists around the world and offered refuge to media workers under threat as the head of Reporters Without Borders, has died at the age of 53.

Deloire, who had been battling a sudden and aggressive brain tumour, died in Paris surrounded by loved ones, according to board members of Reporters Without Borders, also known by its French acronym RSF.

Deloire was "a tireless defender, on every continent, of the freedom, independence and pluralism of journalism, in a context of information chaos," RSF said in a statement. "Journalism was his life's struggle, which he fought with unshakeable conviction."

Emily Wilkins, president of the US National Press Club, said: "Christophe was a great friend to journalists

everywhere. Our hearts go out to Christophe's family at this time and to all in the RSF community and indeed to everyone around the world who has been touched by his compassion and inspired by his leadership."

With boundless energy and a ready smile even when dishing out trenchant criticism, Deloire travelled constantly – to Ukraine, Turkey, Africa and beyond – to lobby governments and defend journalists. Press freedom activists from many countries shared tributes to his work and mourned his passing.

Deloire helped the Russian broadcast journalist Marina Ovsyannikova to secretly flee from Russia in 2022 after she denounced the war in Ukraine on live television. RSF also launched a programme to provide protective equipment and training to Ukrainian journalists after Russia's invasion.

Deloire worked for the release of the

French journalist Olivier Dubois, who was held by Islamist extremists in Mali for two years and freed last year, and for other jailed reporters.

In his 12 years at the helm of RSF, Deloire expanded the group's reach and activism and raised its profile with governments. Under his watch, it launched the Journalism Trust Initiative, which certifies media organisations with the aim of restoring public trust in the news, and the Forum for Democracy programme, aimed at heading off threats to democratic thoughts and freedoms.

Christophe Deloire was born in Paray-le-Monial in Burgundy in 1971. He worked as an investigative reporter and led a prominent French journalism school, the École CFJ, before becoming director of RSF.

In 2011, he wrote in *Le Monde* about the importance of journalists



maintaining the same standards to which they hold the powerful.

"If tomorrow the French people, readers or voters accuse us again of having kept a secret among ourselves, of accepting different standards for the powerful than for the humble, what will we tell them?" he wrote. "It should be our ambition to say nothing but the truth – but the whole truth."

Deloire is survived by his wife, Perrine, and his son, Nathan. AP

Born 22 May 1971
Died 8 June 2024

My View



Ian Dunt

No, Johnson cannot save the Tories

The former prime minister deserves to see what he destroyed

It's good that Boris Johnson came back at the end. He should be here to see it. He should witness with his own eyes the triumph of the man he once dismissed as irrelevant. The former prime minister popped up unexpectedly during one of Rishi Sunak's last campaign events on Tuesday night.

The two of them can't stand to look at each other, of course. They didn't appear together. Johnson mentioned his successor only once, as a basic nicety, and didn't praise a single thing about his record. But he came: his one little effort for the Tory party before its annihilation.

Johnson might be the first prime minister alive who has aged more aggressively out of office than they did in it. His face appears to be crumpling, ravaged by disappointment. His eyes are hollow.

In his various social media videos, he screeches some garbled nonsense about imaginary left-wing enemies. Now it's clear that this is his default position: knackered, beaten, in serious decline.

Some Conservatives still harbour a belief that Johnson could have led them to the promised land. The most prominent proponent of this view is Nadine Dorries (*inset below*), who wrote a piece of romantic fiction dressed up as a political memoir about how he had been brought down by shadowy agents of control inside the Conservative Party.

Johnson himself insists that the party was "only a handful of points" behind when he left office.

It's all false. And it's not the kind of falsity that requires forensic detective work to refute. It's just boringly and demonstrably false as a matter of public record.

The Conservatives were 12 points behind Labour when Johnson resigned. On 7 July 2022, the weekly average of national opinion polls for the week ending 10 July showed Labour on 42 per cent and the Tories on 30 per cent.

It's not some kind of coincidence. Johnson was pressured to resign by Tory elders precisely because he was so unpopular. And why was that? Because he had proved inept, useless, sordid and despicable.

In the period before his resignation he had tried to scrap the entire standards systems to save



Boris Johnson, who appeared at a Tory rally in London on Tuesday, insists that the party was 'only a handful of points' behind when he left office JUSTIN TALLIS/AFP

his pal Owen Paterson, endlessly misled voters over "Partygate" and had just got himself into another sleazy squabble over sexual misconduct accusations against his deputy chief whip.

Far from being their saviour, Johnson is in fact the originator of the mess the Conservatives find themselves in. And yet Sunak has nothing else to opt for. He has no other opportunities available to him.

In one of his final moments of public humiliation, the Prime Minister was forced to bring back the man he had once undermined – desperately appealing for help from the very person who he had triumphantly replaced.

But the mortification did not end there. Not only did Johnson return. He returned to help spread what must surely be the single most pitiful election message offered by a governing party in British political history: that voters must

prevent a Labour "supermajority". "None of us can sit back as a Labour government prepares to use a sledgehammer majority to destroy so much of what we have achieved," Johnson said.

Even now, it is extraordinary to watch a party concede defeat before voters even go to the polls. But the message is even worse than that. It tells voters that the Conservative Party has messed things up so badly that it is about to be wiped out, then pleads with them to come to its rescue.

There is nothing there for the electorate: no retail offer, no promise, no ideas. There is simply

There is nothing there for the electorate. It is the complete surrender of Conservatism

a plea for mercy. It is the complete surrender of Conservatism as a viable political force.

"Isn't it great to have our Conservative family united, my friends?" Sunak said as he bounded back to the stage. No living soul on the face of the planet would have been convinced of his sincerity. Here was a man whose ignominy was so comprehensive that it was a direct challenge to thesauruses everywhere.

He had been deconstructed on the world stage, broken down into constituent parts and then ground into the dust. His failure is total, absolute, sum. And now here he was, grateful for his old enemy to return so that he could help to spread the message about how badly he was about to be defeated.

But the opprobrium does not belong to Sunak alone. There is more than enough to be shared. The desperation of the supermajority message is as much of an indignity to Johnson, who never seemed to consider Sir Keir Starmer much of a threat when the two faced each other across the dispatch box.

After all, for the first few years he was soaring high in the polls as the public backed the Government over Covid and then rewarded it for the vaccine. He called the Opposition leader "Captain Hindsight". He branded him "plastic, pointless, bollard". He baselessly accused him of not acting over the Jimmy Savile abuse scandal when he was director of public prosecutions.

But now the fates have turned. The man he had once mocked and disregarded was triumphant far beyond Johnson's own accomplishments. And all he can do to save his party from extinction is warn voters that the pointless bollard is going to win so comprehensively, so completely, that it poses a threat to democracy.

Sunak was quite right to bring him back. It's fitting that he should be forced to return to the scene of the crime so he can see for himself the consequences of his actions. It's quite right that he should be here, at the very end, to experience the rejection for himself.

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Your View

Tweets, emails and letters to:
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 9 Derry Street,
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More jail spaces not the answer

With reference to your article about the crisis facing prisons (i, 3 July), why are the prisons full? Are too many people being sent to prison rather than being sent for rehabilitation? We read that, apart from knife crime, the rate of offending in the country has gone down in recent years.

Clearly the current situation is out of control, and the next government will have to make some serious decisions.
JENNIFER PEARSON
 TOPSHAM, DEVON

The present crisis of prisons being short of places may lead to a good outcome in the longer term. It is a shameful fact that England and Wales have Western Europe's

highest imprisonment rate per 100,000 of the population: a total of 146 against, for example, Germany's 67. Scotland and Northern Ireland also have imprisonment rates well above the western European average of 83 prisoners per 100,000 population, at 144 and 98, respectively. The number of prison places has risen by 93 per cent in 30

years under Labour, Tory and Coalition administrations, to a total of 88,000. Instead of building more prisons, we should instead be sentencing those convicted of some offences to probationary periods, which can be rigorous and involve some curtailment of liberty but have a better chance to rehabilitate the offender successfully. This will not happen quickly, of course, but the new government could make a statement of intent from the beginning. It may even attract cross-party support.
RODNEY JONES
 TIMPERLEY, GREATER MANCHESTER



Less well-known acts such as indie-folk trio Kingfishr (above) made for a great Glastonbury, says Tony Hardy

Murray is an ace ambassador

Like many others, I am disappointed that we shall not see Sir Andy Murray in the Wimbledon men's singles, but I am also relieved as I am sure it is the right decision. I know he will have thought long and hard before deciding not to play and it would have been awful to see him limping off court unable to finish a match. He has put his body through a lot to maintain the necessary high level of fitness over the years. How much better to give himself another three days of recovery and play men's doubles with his brother Jamie. Murray has given us so much enjoyment and is an excellent ambassador for the game of tennis.
MARY HAYWARD
 CHELTENHAM

Glasto acts not hard to follow

Eleanor Peake makes valid points about Glastonbury programming (i, 2 July) but in my experience there are usually four or five acts on at any one time you'd quite happily see. So it's not ultimately a deal breaker if you can't physically fit into a field. There is so much more to see; it's about making choices that don't criss-cross the vast site so you spend more time walking than watching. Many of the best shows I saw were on smaller stages – evidenced by those of us who watched the brilliant Ayoub Sisters followed by ace Irish band Kingfishr on the Avalon Stage first thing on Sunday.
TONY HARDY
 KINGSTON UPON THAMES, SURREY

Errors happen with GPs too

As a retired GP who helped in the training of physician associates (PAs), I can tell you that GPs make mistakes despite their extensive training, which is why they pay thousands of pounds every year into medical defence societies (i, 2 July). PAs undergo intensive two-year clinical training after completing a three-year science degree. I found them mature, capable and enthusiastic. They worked during the junior doctors' strike and are less likely to emigrate for higher pay. It is pointless highlighting their mistakes without doing the same for doctors, pharmacists and nurse prescribers.
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In tomorrow's **FRIDAY** edition

FILM
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 BOOKS

The 30 best books for summer
 From tense thrillers to frothy romcoms and time-hopping love stories



Rejoice! We have a 'Love Island' worth watching

TELEVISION

Emily Watkins



Taking the temperature of the UK this summer, our constitutionally sullen country is unrecognisable – practically happy.

I know I am. And as someone impervious to Euros fever, and too invested in the election to relax about it, my good mood is down to one thing – *Love Island*.

Whether or not a given series of *Love Island* is “good” or not is nebulous. Those running the show can micromanage as many devious challenges as they like, but really it's down to vibes, chemistry and happy (or unhappy) accidents.

So while I am keen to give producers their due – casting reality TV veteran Joey Essex as one of the islanders, for instance, was a stroke of genius – this year's season, the first really juicy one in years, feels like a natural phenomenon.

Ours is not to wonder why, simply to sit back and enjoy. Well, OK, let's wonder a little bit – if only to luxuriate in this series' refreshing watchability after several lacklustre iterations in a row.

From Marmite characters – think of straight-talking Jess (brave or bully?) or hot-headed 21-year-old Ciaran dropping the L-bomb after just a few weeks (adorable, or hopelessly naïve?) – to *telenovela*-grade betrayals in Casa Amor (Ayo, I'm looking at you), 2024's island is brimming with the messy, can't-look-away drama that made *Love Island* a British institution in the first place.

I'm also loving the producers' new schtick of chucking people with whom the islanders have history into the villa – like lobbing grenades of ready-made horny resentment into a pit of Insta-ready lions.

Joey's move from poor Samantha to his ex, Grace, when she arrived provided one of the season's most agonising (read: compelling) arcs, exceeded only when he dropped her in turn about 30 seconds later for newcomer Jessy.

As you will have gathered, I'm loving the show – but no episode would be half as fun without the

chatter afterwards. Just as my boyfriend is as animated during post-match analysis over pints as by the football game itself, *Love Island* is a social activity, feeding us conversational fodder ranging from the trivial to the profound.

Historically, the show has brought everything from slut-shaming and body image to gaslighting and coercive control into the national consciousness, and raised vital awareness in the process.

On a smaller scale, the show offers a chance to bond not only with our friends but with strangers at the bus stop or the hairdressers; we're all the cast, playing out our own dramas.

Will Joey and Jessy go the distance, and what about my friend and her husband? Is Sean in the villa for the right reasons, or is every relationship transactional to some degree? How do human beings recover from heartbreak and betrayal, if they ever can? Asking for a friend.

It's easy to be snobby about *Love Island* (especially now that the cast is mainly composed of micro-influencers) – but at its best, the show deals with humanity's most universal experiences and eternal



Casting reality TV veteran Joey Essex as one of this year's islanders was 'a stroke of genius'

The latest series has pulled society back from the brink of disintegration

instincts. Betrayal, longing, sex, shame. When it trills, *Love Island* presses all the same buttons in my brain as sitting opposite a friend with a glass of wine as she unloads the best gossip you have ever heard. If you are immune to that thrill, I would feel sorry for you.

But although there's endless joy in dissecting the specifics, *Love Island*'s power is bigger than any one storyline. Like the Euros (yawn) and the election (yikes!), a watchable season gives the nation a shared topic for conversation – something in increasingly short supply in the era of on-demand streaming.

The fact that, in 2024, a good chunk of the country would know what I meant if I said “Imagine if Mimii brought Lionel back!” is part of *Love Island*'s flippant, convivial fun.

I'm sure something about Harry Kane would generate a similar buzz, but I simply can't bear it. As for the election, my nails are bitten to the quick and I just want it to be over.

In conclusion: *Love Island* has pulled society back from the brink of disintegration. With any luck, a new government can take the baton on Friday. Hope and love are in the air this summer – both unfamiliar, all the more delicious for it.

BRITAIN DECIDES



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Single women are bearing the brunt of housing crisis

SOCIETY

Vicky Spratt


The gender pay gap has generated hundreds of headlines in recent years, but how women are trapped at the sharpest end of the housing crisis has flown under the radar.

Exclusive data shared with **i** by the Women's Budget Group (WBG), an independent think-tank, has found there is not one area in England which could be considered

affordable for a single woman to rent or buy a home. Yes: nowhere.

Worse still, those who rely on state support to pay rent are experiencing a growing shortfall between housing benefit and their housing costs.

House prices are considered to be affordable only if median prices are no more than three times median salaries. According to the WBG's analysis of house price and earnings

data, the average UK house price is now about eight times men's average salaries and 11 times women's.

In London, average house prices are now 13 times men's salaries and 16 times women's. That makes it almost impossible for most single women to get a mortgage.

The gender housing gap is one of the reasons why homelessness is soaring, particularly among families with children. It will have a severe scarring effect on the mental and physical health of the children who are caught up in this mess.

On average, women still earn less than men. They are also more likely to have caring responsibilities, so the historic rent and house price inflation of the last decade has hit them hardest.

Like house prices, rents are only considered affordable if they take up one third or less of an income. According to the WBG, the average cost of renting a one-bedroom home in England now swallows up 36 per cent of women's earnings, but just 26 per cent of men's. In London, it's 53 per cent of women's earnings compared with 41 per cent of men's.

Got children? For a two-bed home, women must spend 40 per cent of their earnings compared with 28 per cent of men's. In London that's 62 per cent of women's earnings

compared with 49 per cent for men. Inflation may have fallen back to 2 per cent, but rents rose by an average of 8.7 per cent between May 2023 and 2024. In the same period, wages rose by 6 per cent, widening the affordability gap.

The Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, agreed to boost the local housing allowance (LHA) – which is how housing benefit is calculated – from April this year. However, record rent inflation means this is now wiped out. The WBG's analysis of the maximum support available to pay private rent through the LHA shows that in Brent, north-west London, there is a shortfall of £515 and in Bristol a shortfall of £335.

According to the Department for Work and Pensions' own research, the majority of housing support claimants who cannot get enough help to pay rent are single women – and 68 per cent of these women have one or more dependent children.

Britain needs a government that will take the gender housing gap seriously, not only because of the pain it is causing single women, but because future generations will one day ask why nobody stepped in to stop so much harm being done.

Vicky Spratt is **i**s Housing Correspondent

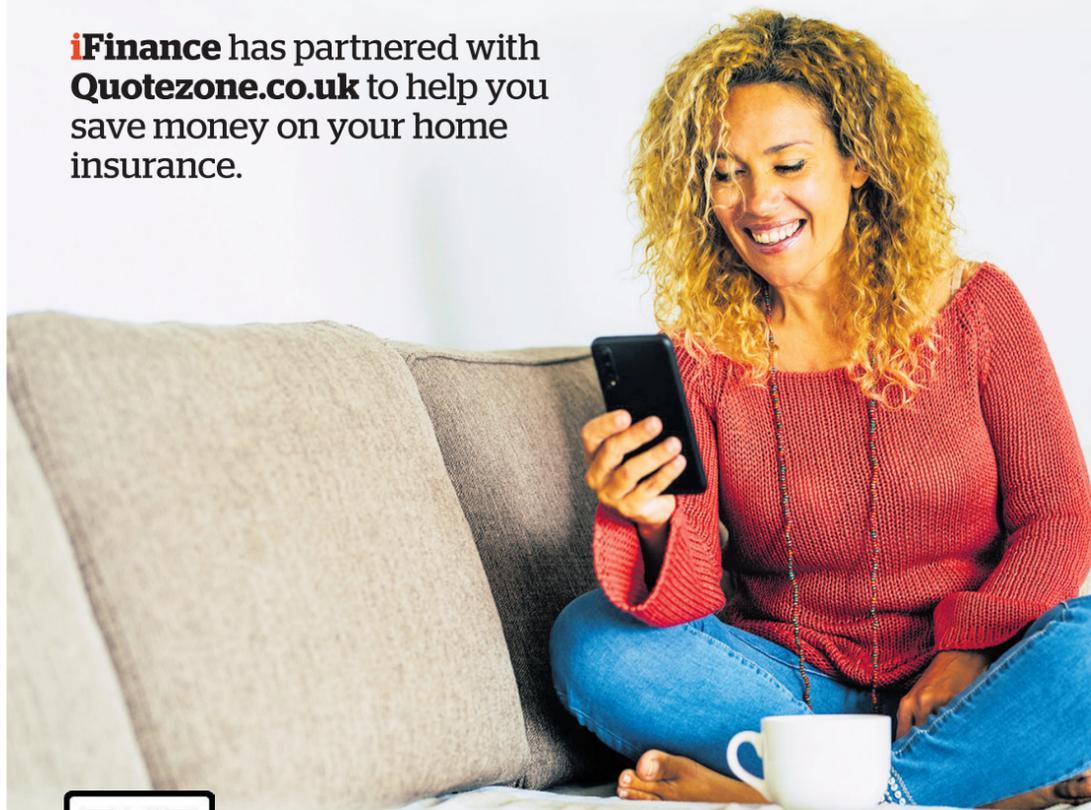
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EDUCATION

Richard James


School sports days offer life lessons

The season is almost upon us – a time of year described on Mumsnet as both “awful” and “traumatic”. But while parents worry about how their little ones will fare at sports day, there is another stress bubbling away: how hard should they really try in the parents' race?

My eldest daughter is three and this month is her nursery sports day. Already, there is discussion about parents throwing themselves down tracks marked out by cones and rucksacks.

On parenting forums there are endless people asking for advice and launching polls on whether they should even take part (“I've only run for the bus in the past 20 years”), while others feel shame after taking it all far too seriously in 2023 and worry about looking “uncool”.

Should you try to set a good example for your children and go for gold, or should you play it safe so as not to embarrass yourself and your

family? I have been at sports days where parents look like they have taken leave of their senses in their attempt to run 50 yards, with flip-flops flying and elbows everywhere.

I canvassed opinion among friends on how they approach their races. The dads were fairly predictable, with responses including “second place is first loser, nothing but gold!” and “act like you don't care, but then run like the wind (and probably keel over with a back spasm)”.

One fellow dad admitted, shamefully, that they had won a dads' 5km race in a year that his kids weren't even there. The best advice was probably: “Don't embarrass yourself, get the bronze medal, but don't break a sweat.”

By comparison, the mums I asked were consistent in saying they tried to win, but didn't give it too much thought. Almost all said it



was always a dad who caused a scene at their child's sports day.

One thing was consistent among all the responses: coming last or making no effort is definitely not an option.

Embarrassing your child(ren) must be avoided at all costs, but then again, having to deal with embarrassing parents is also a vital life lesson.

So, I guess I had better start training. At 42, I had assumed that my sprinting days were a long way behind me. It appears that they are only just beginning.

Richard James is **i**s Executive News Editor

ENVIRONMENT

Google's greenhouse gas emissions rise 48%

By Martyn Landi

Google's greenhouse gas emissions have risen by 48 per cent since 2019, according to the firm's latest environmental report, driven by the increasing power demands of artificial intelligence (AI).

The tech firm has set itself the goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2030, but said the increasing amount of energy needed by its data centres to carry out the more intense levels of computing required to power AI services made reducing emissions challenging.

One of the major concerns around AI has been the potential environmental impact of its development, with a recent study by the International Energy Agency forecasting that the amount of electricity being used by the world's data centres in 2022 could double by 2026.

In January, Google committed to investing \$1bn (£788m) in the UK to build a new data centre in response to demands around AI.

According to Google's latest environmental report, in 2023, greenhouse gas emissions from the company were up 13 per cent on 2022, and up just under 50 per cent since 2019.

\$1bn

The amount Google has committed to building a new data centre for AI in the UK as demand rises

"This result was primarily due to increases in data centre energy consumption and supply chain emissions", the company's report said.

"As we further integrate AI into our products, reducing emis-

sions may be challenging due to increasing energy demands from the greater intensity of AI compute and the emissions associated with the expected increases in our technical infrastructure investment."

As well as the increasing electricity demands sparked by the rise in demand for AI services, the report also highlighted the stark contrasts in carbon-free energy use in the company's different data centres.

Google's data showed that most of its centres in Europe and the Americas obtained most of their energy from carbon-free sources, but cen-

tres in the Middle East, Asia and Australia used far less.

"In spite of the progress we are making, we face significant challenges that we're actively working through," Google said.

"In 2023, our total GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions increased 13 per cent year over year, primarily driven by increased data centre energy consumption and supply chain emissions.

"While we advanced clean energy on many of the grids where we operate, there are still some hard-to-decarbonise regions like Asia-Pacific."

PEOPLE

Allen dips a toe into OnlyFans to help foot the bills

By Sally Guyoncourt

Lily Allen has begun selling pictures of her feet on the adult website OnlyFans.

The 39-year-old singer and actress is charging subscribers £8 a month for the opportunity to gaze at her soles, toes and arches.

The "Smile" singer revealed she was joining the adult-only website on Tuesday. She posted a pic of her toes beside the Trevi Fountain in Rome on Instagram, adding a link to "La dolce feeta" which leads to her OnlyFans account - Lily Allen FTSE 500.

The decision to become a sole trader comes after she revealed in her podcast *Miss Me?* that her pedicurist had said her trotters had racked up a "rare" five-star rating on WikiFeet, a site where users appraise peoples' feet.

And with that kind of attribute, the star was told she "could make a lot of money".



Lily Allen nails it on the internet



Capturing the change in seasons

Rebecca Styles, artist in residence at Thorp Perrow Arboretum, paints a picture at the North Yorkshire attraction, as part of a 12-month project documenting the arboretum's

transformation through the seasons from spring to winter.

Styles' artworks will go on public display following her year-long residency. DANNY LAWSON/PA

PEOPLE

Vorderman to make speech at film festival

By Casey Cooper-Fiske

The television and radio presenter Carol Vorderman said "I live without apology" as it was announced that she will deliver the Alternative MacTaggart speech at the Edinburgh Film Festival.

The former *Countdown* star (*inset*) will speak about her screen career and go on to address her recent social media campaigning.

Vorderman began her career on the maths and English-based gameshow in 1982, where she spent almost 30 years as its maths expert, before more recently turning her hand to political activism.

The 63-year-old has been involved in a number of social media spats with Conservative MPs as a result of her political campaigning in recent years and will discuss them in her speech.

The Alternative MacTaggart is a lighter-hearted speech that aims to promote debate in the television industry from an alternative viewpoint.

Vorderman said: "I choose to live a life outside of the media thrall of London and I live without apology. Beware the post-menopausal woman who doesn't give a damn."



THEATRE

McKellen reveals wrist and neck injuries from stage fall

By Naomi Clarke

Sir Ian McKellen has revealed that he injured his wrist and neck when he fell from a West End stage last month, in an incident that forced him to withdraw from the remainder of a play's national tour.

The veteran actor (*inset*), 85, was portraying Sir John Falstaff in a production of *Player Kings* at the Noël

Coward Theatre last month when he lost his footing during a fight scene and fell from the stage.

He has assured fans on social media that he is "on the mend" and doctors have said he will make a "complete recovery" if he avoids working for the next few weeks.



He was taken to hospital after the accident to receive treatment and two shows were cancelled to allow him to rest before his understudy, David Semark, stepped in to finish the West End run.

Earlier this week, it was confirmed that Sir Ian would be withdrawing from

the rest of the run and that Semark would take over the role for the upcoming performances in Bristol, Birmingham, Norwich and Newcastle.

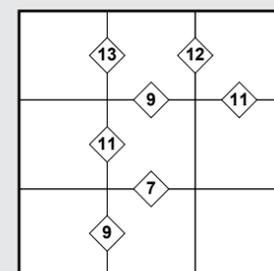
Sir Ian also expressed how difficult missing the shows had been on him, but encouraged theatre fans to still attend the "masterful production" by Robert Icke.

He added that Semark had taken over his role "with panache".

Player Kings, a production of William Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Parts One and Two*, moved to the Bristol Hippodrome yesterday.

One-minute Wjuko

How to play Place 1 - 9 once in the grid, obeying the sums between pairs of squares



Solution: page 45



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MILITARY

China 'tests red lines' as firms work to supply Russia with attack drones

By Kieron Monks

Chinese companies are reportedly working with Russian partners to develop an attack drone and plan to send the weapons to Moscow in a potential escalation of Beijing's involvement in the war in Ukraine and a breach of a red line.

The drone, said to be based on the Iranian "Shahed" that Russia has used heavily in Ukraine, has undergone testing ahead of "preparation for shipment to Russia", Bloomberg reported, citing European officials.

One source said China is already sending component kits for Russia to assemble and could also send completed drones, according to private intelligence assessments.

Models of the Chinese "Sunflower 200" design, which has been described as an "upgrade" of Iran's Shahed drones, have been displayed at military trade shows over the past year, including in Moscow.

The drone can reportedly be used for reconnaissance and in "suicide" mode - fitted with explosives and flown directly into a target.

Dong Jun, the defence minister, said last month that China had "never supplied weapons to either party in the conflict" and Beijing had "strict control over exports of dual purpose" that could have a military use. But China has supplied vast quantities of components and "dual use" items that have powered Moscow's war machine, according to Western assessments.

Russia has been able to source micro-electronics for missiles, fighter jet parts and navigation equipment from China, according to a study by



The aftermath of an attack by Russian Shahed drones on Zaporizhzhia GETTY

the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a US think-tank.

The Chinese embassy in London did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Dr Thomas Eder, an analyst at the Austrian Institute for International Affairs, said that China had escalating its support for Russia.

"China is definitely testing red lines," he told i. "They have not delivered complete weapons systems... but they have become crucial for battlefield goods imports in Russia."

He said China could exploit ambiguity by supplying parts, or knowledge, that would give Russia the same benefits as drones. "Western countries may not have a consensus about how to judge that," he added.

i The UK Foreign Office is urging Beijing to stop Chinese companies supplying components for weapons to Russia.

DIPLOMACY

Xi and Putin hail efforts to counter the West

By Pavel Mikheyev
IN ASTANA

Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, hailed their Eurasian security club as a force for global stability at a summit for the group yesterday.

The pair have expanded the

Shanghai Co-operation Organisation - a club founded in 2001 with Russia, China and Central Asian nations - to include India, Iran and Pakistan. Its leaders see it as a counterweight to the West.

Mr Putin said it had "firmly established itself as one of the key pillars of a fair, multipolar world order".

Calling the Russian President an "old friend", Mr Xi alluded to the progress their two countries had made in implementing "plans and arrangements for the next development of bilateral relations".

The organisation's summit, which is taking place in the Kazakh capital, Astana, ends today. REUTERS

ISRAEL

One killed in 'terror attack' as assailant is shot dead

By Emily Rose
IN JERUSALEM

One person was killed and another wounded in a stabbing attack in an Israeli shopping centre yesterday, in which the assailant was shot dead.

Police said it was a suspected terror attack, while Israel's *Ynetnews* named the accused attacker as Joud Rabia from Nahaf, a town where many of Israel's Arab minority live.

There was no claim of responsibility, though the Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad described the attack as a "heroic operation".

Israeli medics said that one of the two victims was pronounced dead in hospital, and the attacker died at the mall in Karmiel, northern Israel.



Video shared on social media showed two men lying motionless on the floor while people tried to give them medical attention. At least one of the men receiving care was wearing a green uniform.

A third man, not in uniform, was lying motionless a short distance away.

Israel is conducting a military offensive in Gaza in retaliation for the deadly Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on 7 October.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the army would continue its campaign against Hamas, and denied that generals could wind down the operation.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No 4184 BY KLINGSOR

ACROSS

- 1 Answer after president's given short shrift (10)
- 7 Cook with mum, making bread (4)
- 9 I'll go into lounge with champagne and a sweet (8)
- 10 Some furores ultimately ensue (6)
- 11 After university, English girl somehow is more unattractive (6)
- 13 Starts to regret eating stuffing coloured like a kebab? (8)
- 14 Punishment constrains everyone in revolutionary group to conform (4,4,4)
- 17 As I'm left in penultimate part of contest, I could be this (12)
- 20 Italian town that's no resort? Wrong! (8)
- 21 Screw around and do sketch again? (6)

- 22 Police returned, requiring corporation to make formal statement (6)
- 23 Hint pub needs to open around middle of September (8)
- 25 Runs, wearing Edward's anorak (4)
- 26 Randomly chosen composer - this one? (10)

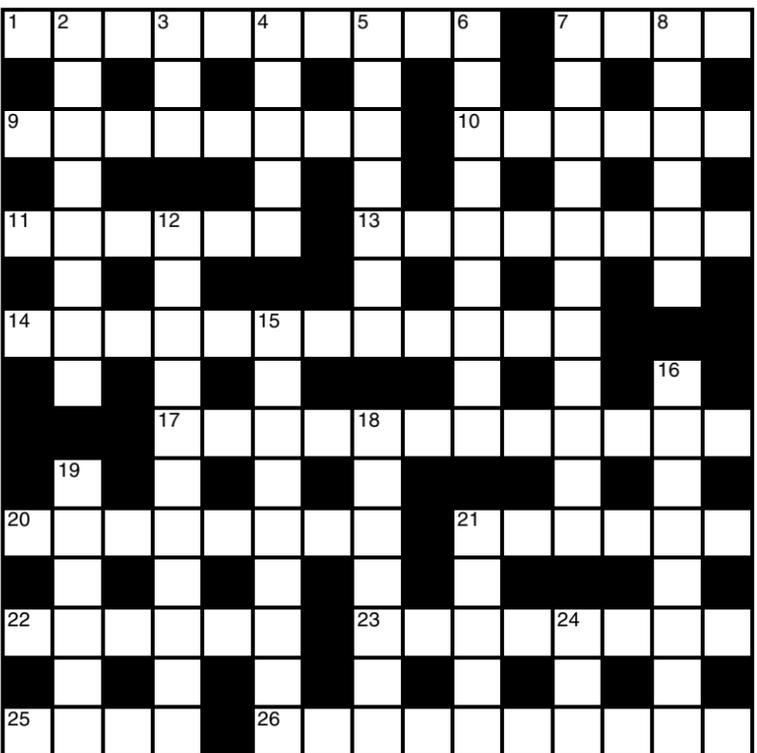
DOWN

- 2 Carriage fetched almost a million (8)
- 3 Regularly jovial and crude? (3)
- 4 Superior meal, but no starter (5)
- 5 What batsman off the mark might say is an art form (7)
- 6 One breaks new organ playing Grieg? (9)
- 7 Unkempt beauty partied topless (11)
- 8 Maybe private bar one gets to join (6)

- 12 Embellished being badly treated outside restaurant (11)
- 15 Small English bloke twice turns up to identify culprits (4,5)
- 16 Cuban perhaps lends air to dance (8)
- 18 Silly John gets upset in school? (7)
- 19 I eat after ten (6)
- 21 Consumed by fury, nanny's heading for a row (5)
- 24 Be upset - boat's beginning to sink (3)

Solution to yesterday's Cryptic

AUTOPSY ANTACID
N H I E P E R O
THECATSWHISKERS
O R N R T A I
NEEDING OMITTED
Y S S O D F U O
MONSTROSITY RES
O D S E
ACT WINNINGPOST
R E I A A S F I
CELLNET CATCHUP
H L D U R A S
FLIBBERTIGIBBET
O N A E L N I E
ENGAGED LIGHTER



Stuck on the cryptic crossword? For today's solutions, call 0905 789 3580. Calls cost 80p per minute plus your network access charge. If you are having trouble accessing this number, please call our helpdesk on 0333 202 3390.

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2024 VOTING GUIDE **PART 8** Workers and benefits

PARTY	DISABILITY AND PIP	UNIVERSAL CREDIT	CHILDCARE AND BENEFIT
Conservative and Unionist 	<p>The party vows to reform disability benefits so they are “better targeted” and improve PIP assessments to make it more specific to someone’s need – following a consultation. The party wants to stop the number of claims from rising and argues people with mental health issues, for example, may not need as much financial support as someone with a physical disability.</p>	<p>The Tories would continue with the roll-out of universal credit and introduce tougher sanctions for those who are on out of work benefits and do not engage with the work coach system - including the threat to withdraw all support after 12 months if they do not take up suitable jobs.</p>	<p>The party wants to reform child benefit by calculating it based on household rather than individual incomes to make it fairer. They have promised parents 30 hours of free childcare a week from when their child is nine months old to when they start school – as well as rolling out an expansion of the childcare industry.</p>
Labour 	<p>Labour would work with councils to help match up disabled people, or those with health conditions, with jobs as well as dealing with backlog of access to work claims. The party wants to reform or replace the work capability assessment process for out-of-work sickness benefits and will look at the consultation already in place about overhauling PIP.</p>	<p>The party wants to reform employment support – including Job Centres – so they are better able to get people into sustained employment, with a focus on local leadership working with employers and skills. The party will keep universal credit and does not plan to change the sanctions. It would review the benefit to ensure it “tackles poverty” but has not given details.</p>	<p>Labour will open an additional 3,000 nurseries through upgrading space in primary schools and continue with the extension of government-funded hours. It will also review the parental leave system. The party has not set out any plans to change child benefits but said it would fund free breakfast clubs in every primary school for all children.</p>
Liberal Democrats 	<p>The Lib Dems want to give disabled people more of a role in shaping the disability benefit system and want to reform PIP to improve the assessment process but have not set out details. The party would bring the work capability assessments in-house.</p>	<p>The party wants to set up an independent commission to recommend further annual increases in universal credit to ensure it covers essentials, such as food and bills. The party would cut the wait for the first payment of universal credit from five weeks to five days and replace the sanctions regime with incentives, and remove the benefit cap.</p>	<p>The Lib Dems have said they would restore the full rate of universal credit for all parents regardless of age, scrap the two-child limit and the benefit cap, and extend free school meals to all children in poverty. The party wants to double statutory maternity and shared parental pay and bring in an extra month for fathers and partners.</p>
Reform UK 	<p>The party said all assessments of PIP and out-of-work sickness benefits must be face to face. Independent medical assessments will be required to prove eligibility for payments but anyone registered with severe disabilities or serious long-term illnesses would be exempt from regular checks.</p>	<p>Reform said anyone “fit to work” must find employment within four months, or accept a job offer after two, or will have benefits withdrawn. The party would impose a requirement of five years’ residency and employment to claim any benefits.</p>	<p>Reform would front-load the child benefit system for young children to make it easier for parents to be at home with them. Leader Nigel Farage said the party would scrap the two-child benefit cap but this is not stated in the manifesto.</p>
Green 	<p>The Greens want to immediately increase disability benefits by 5 per cent and end what they say is the targeting of carers and disabled people on benefits. The party opposes proposals to replace PIP with “vouchers” and wants to reform the eligibility test.</p>	<p>The party wants to increase universal credit and legacy benefits by £40 a week and end the five-week wait. It promises to introduce a minimum wage of £15 an hour for all, regardless of age, with costs to small businesses offset by increasing the Employment Allowance to £10,000.</p>	<p>Greens said they would abolish the two-child benefit cap and want to negotiate with the childcare sector with the aim of extending the number of free hours to 35 per week from nine months.</p>
Scottish National Party 	<p>The SNP has pledged to scrap the proposed welfare reforms for sick and disabled people but does not set out details, although it wants to bring certain benefits under the control of the Scottish Government.</p>	<p>The SNP wants to ensure under-25s receive the same amount of the benefit as those over that age and scrap the bedroom tax. It is calling for full devolution of social security.</p>	<p>The SNP will call for the two-child benefit cap and “associated rape clause” – in which a woman who becomes pregnant after being raped must prove it in order to avoid the cap – to be scrapped. The party wants housing benefit and local housing allowance devolved.</p>
Plaid Cymru 	<p>Plaid opposes proposed changes to the work capability assessment and moves to get more sick and disabled people into work. Under its plans for a devolved benefits system, health welfare would come under the control of the Welsh Government.</p>	<p>It opposes benefit sanctions and said first payments of universal credit should be shortened so that individuals and families do not get into debt. Plaid is in favour of a universal basic income and supports pilots. Plaid said core benefits should be linked with inflation. The party also wants to introduce a Welsh Benefits System to devolve health and housing benefits.</p>	<p>Increase child benefit by £20 per week. Plaid wants education and childcare service for children aged 12 months in Welsh until they are eligible for full-time education.</p>
In summary	<p>There is some consensus among the bigger parties that benefits need reforming and some claimants need help in returning to work. But smaller parties are opposed.</p>	<p>The ongoing battle between ensuring those in need are properly catered for while the system is not abused is reflected in the parties’ stances. The Lib Dems tick both boxes.</p>	<p>All the parties recognise childcare needs reform with nursery places and the smaller parties mostly want an end to the two-child benefit cap.</p>



Cornish new potato and mackerel fish cakes with sun-dried tomato sauce and sour cream



SERVES 1

For the fish cakes

- 180g new potatoes
- 1 cooked or smoked mackerel fillet, flaked with skin removed
- 2tsp finely chopped chives, parsley or dill
- 1tsp mayonnaise
- 1-2tbsp polenta
- Light olive or rapeseed oil for frying
- Salt and pepper

For the sun-dried tomato sauce

- 25g sun-dried tomatoes in oil, roughly chopped, plus 1tbsp oil from the jar
- 125g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 clove garlic, finely sliced
- 1tsp dried oregano
- 1tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Salt and pepper, pinch sugar

To serve

- 1tbsp sour cream
- Lemon wedge
- Handful salad leaves

Scrub the potatoes clean. Leave any small ones whole and halve the larger ones. Put in a saucepan, cover with cold water and season with salt.

Cover, bring to the boil and simmer for 13 to 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the tomato sauce. Over a medium heat, warm one tablespoon of oil from the sun-dried tomato jar in a small frying or saucepan.

Pop in the sun-dried tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, garlic and oregano. Cook for about 10 minutes.

Use a hand blender and beaker to blitz the sauce until silky smooth. Add in the balsamic vinegar and season to taste with salt and pepper, plus a pinch of sugar if required. Cool in a ramekin.

When they are boiled, drain the potatoes, pop them back into the dry pan and toss over a low heat. Transfer to a mixing bowl and break the potatoes down into a pulp. Set aside to cool briefly.

To make the fish cakes, toss the flaked mackerel into the cooled potatoes, add the herbs and mayonnaise and season with a pinch of salt and pepper.

Use a fork to mash everything together, then use your hands to form a ball. Divide into two and shape each into a fish cake.

Dust the fish cakes all over with polenta and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes to firm up.

To cook the fish cakes, warm about two tablespoons of oil to medium-high in a non-stick or cast-iron frying pan.

Fry the fish cakes for about four minutes on each side until crispy and golden. Serve straight away with the sour cream, tomato sauce, green leaves and a squeeze of lemon.

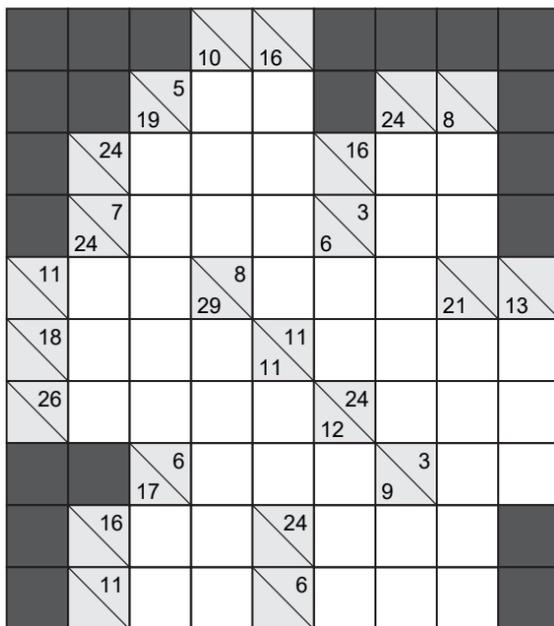
Recipe from seasonalspuds.com

Tomorrow
Spaghetti with clams

Games & Puzzles

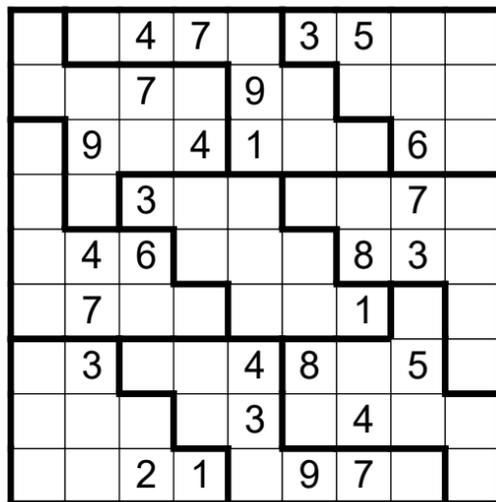
Kakuro

How to play Fill the white squares so that the total in each across or down run of cells matches the total at the start of that run. You must use the numbers from 1-9 only and cannot repeat a number in a run.



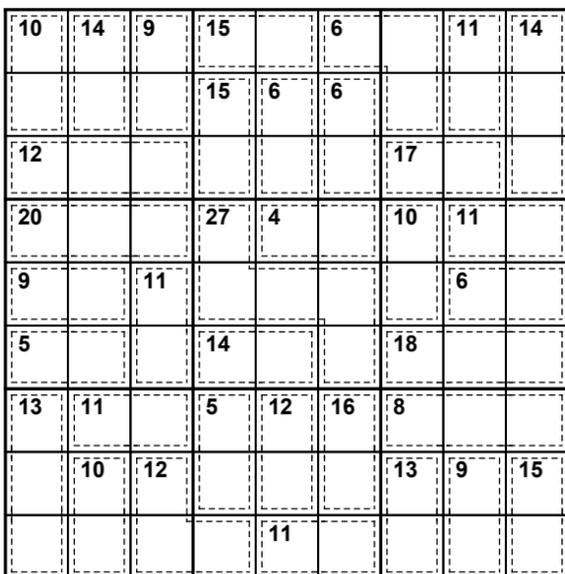
Jigsawdoku

How to play Place the numbers 1-9 once in each row, column and bold-lined jigsaw region.



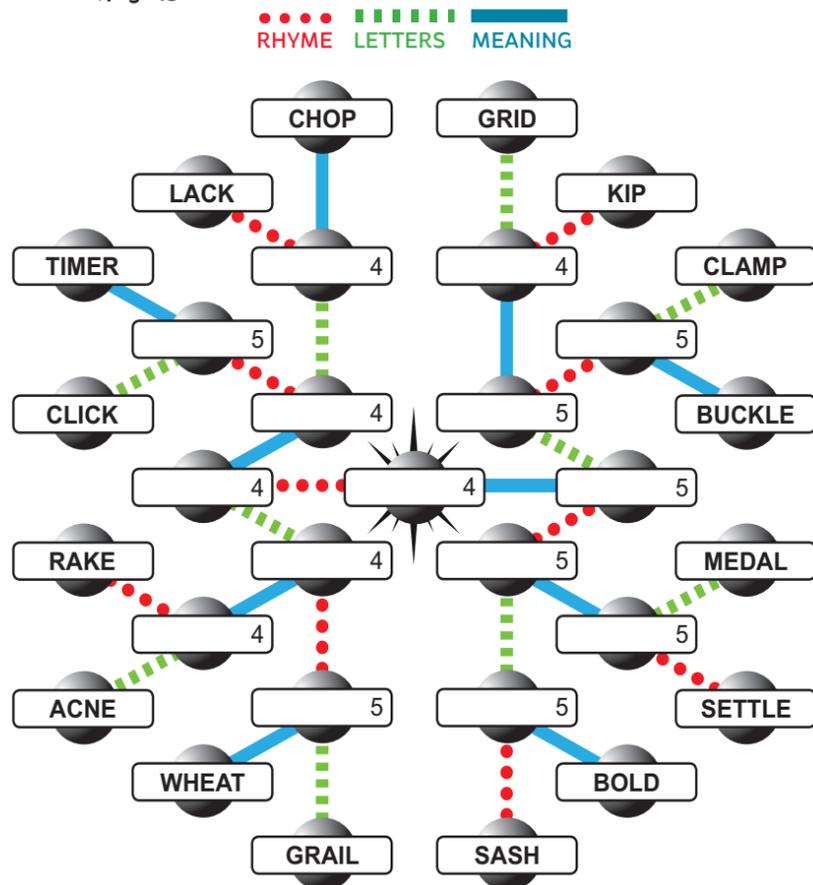
Killer Sudoku

How to play Each row, column and 3 by 3 box must contain each number (1 to 9) only once. The sum of all numbers contained in a dotted area must match the number printed in its top-left corner. No number can appear more than once in a dotted area.



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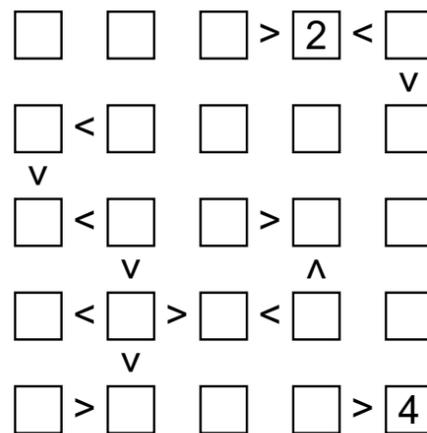
Find the missing words by following the **RHYME**, **LETTERS** and **MEANING** links – eg, a word that **rhymes** with 'cheek', has one **letter** different from 'pear' and has the same **meaning** as mountain, would be 'peak'. Full rules at zygolex.com.
Solution, page 45



Futoshiki

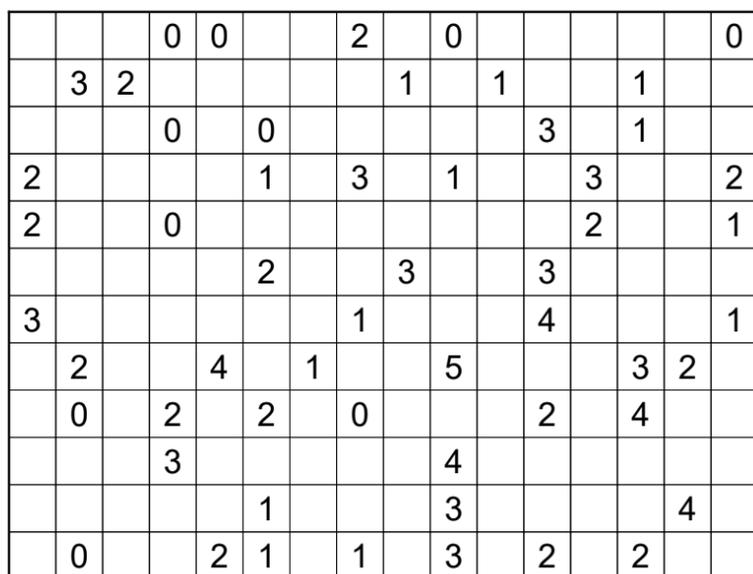
How to play

Place the numbers from 1-5 exactly once in each row and column. The greater than and less than signs ('>' and '<') indicate where one cell is greater/less than the adjacent cell indicated.



Minesweeper

How to play Find all the mines in the grid. Numbers in certain squares indicate how many mines there are in the neighbouring squares, including diagonally touching squares. Mines cannot be placed in squares with numbers.



Number Square

How to play Fill the empty squares with numbers that will make the across and down calculations produce the results shown in the grey squares. Each numeral from 1 to 9 must only appear once. The calculations should be performed from left to right and top to bottom, rather than in strict mathematical order.

Easier

2	-		x		-40
x		+		x	
	+		x		15
÷		x		-	
	x	4	x		60
4		64		3	

Harder

	x		+		44
+		-		+	
	+	4	x		72
+		÷		-	
	-		x		3
15		3		12	

Codeword No 3926

How to play The numbers in the grid correspond to the letters of the alphabet. Solve the puzzle and fill in the letters in the key as you discover them. Three letters are provided to give you a start. The solution will be printed in tomorrow's paper, the solution to yesterday's codeword is on page 45.

9	21	23	22	20	25		9	3	26	2	3	18
20		3		14		22		21		15		22
13	23	16	20	22	13	15		22		22		15
1		14		24		20	22	24	4	20	3	15
3	12	16	11	9		3		23				3
9		6				23		16	1	3	23	20
		3		20	4	23	2	11		15		
23	16	15	8	4		13				19		9
3				16		24		3	10	3	8	20
11	16	24	3	15	20	16		12		3		23
3		16		6		20	4	22	11	17	18	3
7		18		3		3		9		18		3
5	22	3	18	7	9		16	20	20	3	9	20

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13													
14	15	16	17	18	F	19	20	21	22	R	23	24	25	Z	26										
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Need a little help getting started? Then call for up to four extra clue letters on 0901 292 5204. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge (if you are having trouble with the phone service, call the helpline: 0333 202 3390). Or text **THE CLUE** to 85100 to receive your clues. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge (if you are having trouble with the text service, call the helpline: 0333 335 3351). Clues change each day at midnight.

Word Ladder

How to play Convert the word at the top of the ladder into the word at the bottom of it, using only the four rungs in between. On each rung, you must put a valid four-letter word that is identical to the word above it, apart from a one-letter change. There may be more than one way of achieving this.

JUST
PINK
CATS
HOOF

idoku Exclusive to i

How to play Each numeral from 1 to 9 must appear (once only) in the squares forming the red letter i.

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

Sudoku Easier

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

Tomorrow: Harder

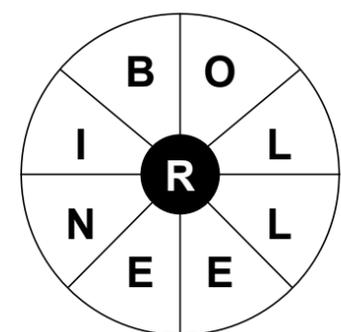
ABC Logic

How to play Place the letters A, B and C only once in each row and column. Each row and column has two blank cells. The letters at the edge of a row/column indicate which of the letters is the first/last to appear in that row/column.

	B	A	C	C	B	
B						
A						B
C						A
A						
	A	C		A		

Word Wheel

How to play This is an open-ended puzzle. How many words of three or more letters, each including the letter at the centre of the wheel, can you make from this diagram? We've found 37, including one nine-letter word. Can you do better?



Number Square, Word Ladder, Word Wheel, Kakuro, Minesweeper, ABC Logic, Killer Sudoku, Futoshiki, Codeword, Jigsawduko and Wjuko created by Clarity Media. For more puzzles, see clarity-media.co.uk

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Concise Crossword No 4248

- ACROSS**
- Broad flat fish (3)
 - Cold symptom (5)
 - Stage (5)
 - Abstruse (7)
 - Merciful (7)
 - Froth (5)
 - Unalterable (11)
 - Stiff (5)
 - Instance (7)
 - Innate abilities (7)
 - Vast crowd (5)
 - Abyss (5)
 - Impediment (3)
- DOWN**
- Wavelet (6)
 - Long (5)
 - Judicial expenses (5)
 - Strange (7)
 - Paid attention to (6)
 - Harsh (6)
 - Dispute (11)
 - Finery (7)
 - Lack of interest (6)
 - Reviewer (6)
 - Beat (6)
 - Durable fabric (5)
 - Danger (5)

Stuck on the concise crossword? For today's solutions, call 0905 789 3590. Calls cost 80p per minute plus your network access charge. If you are having trouble accessing this number, please call our helpdesk on 0333 202 3390.

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1		2					3		4			5
				6			7					
8							9					
10										11		
		12	13							14		
15												16
17				18			19				20	
21										22		
23												24

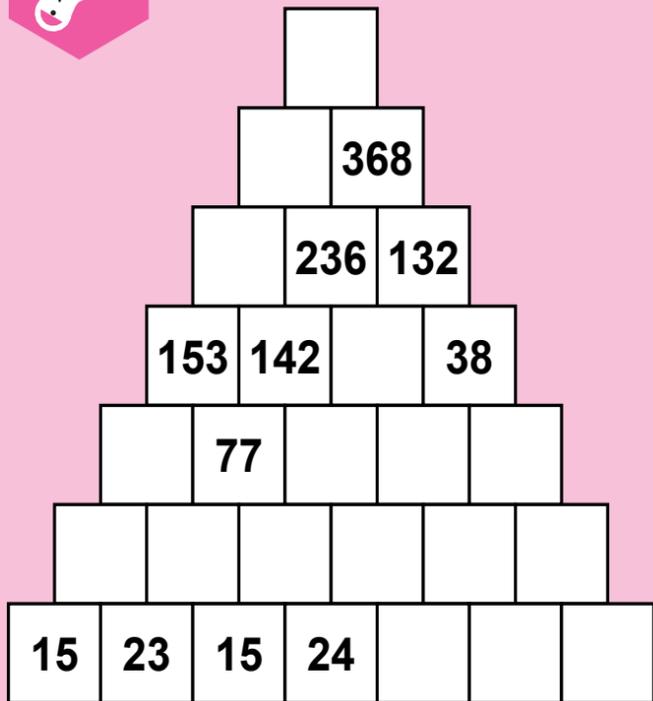
Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword
ACROSS 1 Neigh, 4 Cur (Nacre), 7 Mace, 8 Vocalist, 9 Escritoire, 11 Jagged, 13 Tether, 15 Inhabitant, 19 Casement, 20 Luck, 21 Nit, 22 Cargo.
DOWN 1 Neat, 2 Iceberg, 3 Havoc, 4 Cello, 5 Reserved, 6 Script, 10 Maintain, 12 Drivel, 14 Titular, 16 Agent, 17 Attic, 18 Echo.

Today's other puzzles Cryptic Crossword, page 25
 Five-Clue Cryptic, page 14; One-Minute Wjuko, page 23
Puzzle solutions See page 45

Children's Corner Number Tower



How to play The value of each square in the number pyramid is the sum of the two squares directly under it.



Knight's Tour

How to play A chess knight visits each square of the grid exactly once, starting at 1 and ending at 100 (these squares are shaded). Deduce the whole path of the knight - some of which is already given - and thus complete the grid. The knight moves either two squares horizontally followed by one square vertically, or two squares vertically followed by one square horizontally.

86		76	59		91	100	8		
		85				7	53	56	
		82		90			12		
61	78	93		97	49	52			
					4	1			
	68			73		26			
	95	34		70	44	47	14	25	
	64					22			
			71		37				
	32	29		39	16	23		41	18

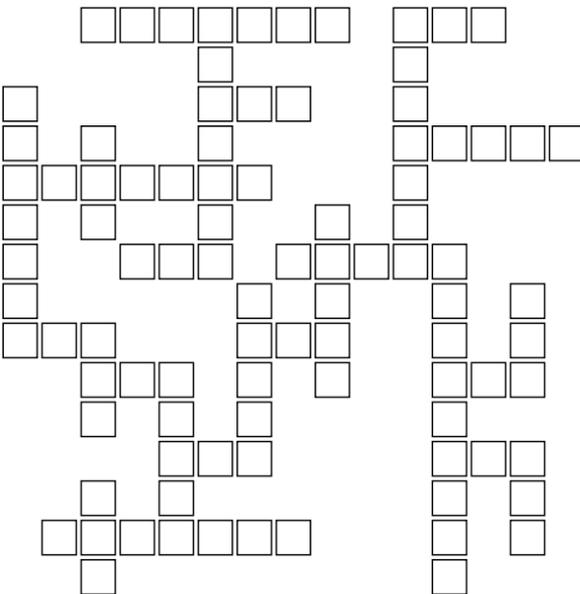
Rectangles

How to play Divide the grid into a series of rectangles or squares, such that every cell in the grid is in exactly one region. Numbers indicate the size of each region: for instance a "7" in a cell means that cell is part of a region that contains seven cells in total. There is only one number in each region.

2			6				2	
					10			
2		12						
							4	2
					10			
						15		
	5			6				
								14
5		5						

Word Fit

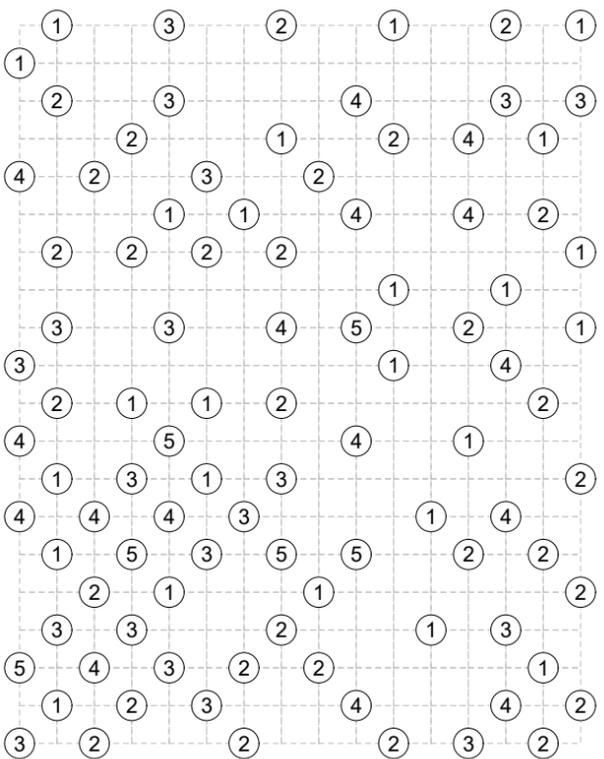
How to play Can you fit all the words into the grid to complete the puzzle? Some words may initially fit in more than one place, but there is only one way to fit all the words together to complete the grid.



- 3 letters**
- Elf
- Eye
- Gum
- Hop
- Ice
- Ill
- Mix
- Nan
- Par
- Pig
- Sag
- Sop
- Was
- Yap
- 5 letters**
- Lower
- Meals
- Pages
- Paved
- Wrist
- 7 letters**
- Connect
- Decreed
- Haywire
- Narrate
- Precede
- Redoing
- 9 letters**
- Symposium

Bridges

How to play Connect every island (represented by circles) into a single interconnected group. To do this draw bridges between islands. The number in each circle states how many bridges must be connected to that island. Bridges cannot cross each other, can only be drawn horizontally or vertically, and there can be a maximum of two bridges between any pair of islands.



Word Search

How to play The classic word-search puzzle: find all the words in the grid. Words may be hidden horizontally, vertically or diagonally and in either a forwards or backwards direction.

M	S	V	N	B	D	U	O	F	A	Q	S	C	G	Y
A	P	I	I	Z	L	Z	U	C	A	X	J	Y	H	C
I	L	Y	N	N	U	F	T	I	T	N	I	A	S	B
D	H	A	J	G	S	R	O	N	K	J	R	R	E	S
I	G	J	E	Y	E	H	F	P	A	K	U	C	C	H
N	U	X	R	S	Y	R	S	Q	B	B	B	Q	O	A
M	O	N	S	T	E	R	I	N	L	A	W	B	N	L
A	N	H	E	D	L	K	G	Z	T	H	R	R	D	L
N	E	Q	Y	U	E	E	H	B	L	U	E	Z	A	W
H	I	L	G	I	G	F	T	L	N	S	K	T	C	E
A	S	M	I	W	N	J	E	P	H	T	R	O	T	D
T	T	O	R	Q	A	C	B	I	P	L	A	Y	U	A
T	C	B	L	C	E	M	O	H	K	E	P	C	F	N
A	O	N	T	H	E	F	L	O	O	R	D	C	L	C
N	W	O	T	R	E	D	R	O	B	S	S	D	E	E

- ACTRESS
- AIN'T IT FUNNY
- ANGEL EYES
- ANTZ
- BORDERTOWN
- ENOUGH
- GIGLI
- HOME
- HUSTLERS
- JERSEY GIRL
- MAID IN MANHATTAN
- MONSTER-IN-LAW
- ON THE FLOOR
- OUT OF SIGHT
- PARKER
- PLAY
- SECOND ACT
- SHALL WE DANCE?
- SINGER
- THE CELL

Solutions: page 45

Word Square

How to play Simply answer the clues alongside the grid, writing the answers in the respective rows. The solution must read the same horizontally in each row as it does vertically in each column.

				Physical magnitude
				Wild mountain goat
				Sixth Greek letter
				School test

CalcuDoku

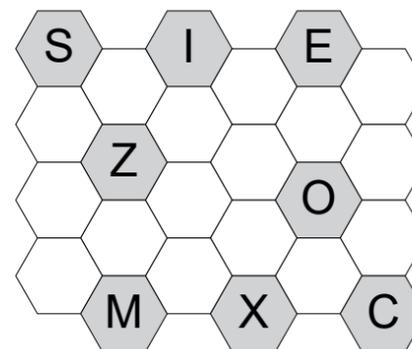
How to play Place the numbers 1-6 once in each row and column, obeying sums in bold-lined regions. The number in each region indicates the total for the region, and the symbol shows which type of operation should be applied to the numbers: addition, subtraction, division or multiplication. Numbers may repeat within bold-lined regions. With subtraction always take the lower numbers away from the highest number in a region, and with division divide the highest number by the lower numbers.

15+			7+	6÷	7+
2x		8+			
10+			11+		8+
	3-		3-		
6x	11+			8+	
	3÷		10+		

Hexalex

How to play Place each of the letters below once into the empty hexagons, crossing them off as you do so. Enter the letters in such a way that it is possible to find all the words listed alongside the grid by moving from hexagon to adjacent hexagon to spell out each word.

A D F G H J K L N P R T U V W Y



- CUT
- FILED
- FRY
- GYM
- HELD
- JOT
- NUT
- TOWN
- TRY
- TUX
- VILE
- YAK
- YAPS
- ZAP

Policies at a glance - where each party says it stands, topic by topic, before today's general election



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS	MINIMUM WAGE	EQUALITY	PENSIONERS' BENEFITS
<p>Pledges to continue implementing its Minimum Services Levels legislation, which it claims will ensure a base level of staff is forced to work to ensure essential services can continue to run. Despite implementing such laws in areas such as the rail sector minimum service levels have yet to be enacted. Makes no mention of how it will solve the junior doctors strikes.</p>	<p>In government, the Tories have raised the National Living Wage to £11.44 an hour and extended it to workers over 21, although not those younger. They have committed to keep the rate at two-thirds of median earnings, which would take it to an estimated £13 by the time of the next election.</p>	<p>The Tories would introduce legislation to clarify that the protected characteristic of sex in the Equality Act means biological sex. New laws to ensure schools follow government guidance for teachers on how best to support gender questioning students would be introduced. The party would deliver a Disability Action Plan to transform the everyday lives of people with disabilities.</p>	<p>The party would keep the state pension triple lock and introduce a new Triple Lock Plus, which would mean from April 2025 the personal allowance for pensioners would be increased. All current pensioner benefits, including free bus passes, winter fuel payments, free prescriptions and TV licences, would be maintained.</p>
<p>Will introduce a "new deal for working people" and launch a full consultation on how to shape new employment laws. Under the plans, it will ban "exploitative" zero hours contracts, end fire and rehire practices, introduce basic rights on parental leave, sick pay and protection from unfair dismissal. It says it will strengthen the collective rights of workers.</p>	<p>The National Minimum Wage would be set with regard to the cost of living and all adults would be entitled to the same minimum pay level. Labour said it would ensure the minimum wage is high enough by changing the remit of the independent Low Pay Commission to account for the cost of living. It would expand this to all adult workers.</p>	<p>Labour would require public bodies to consider how their priorities and policies may reduce socio-economic inequality. The full right to equal pay for ethnic minority workers and disabled people would be introduced. Female workers would have stronger protections in law for equal pay and against maternity and menopause discrimination and sexual harassment.</p>	<p>Labour would retain the triple lock for the state pension and adopt reforms to workplace pensions to deliver better outcomes for UK savers and pensioners. A pensions review would consider what further steps are needed to improve security in retirement, as well as to increase productive investment in the UK economy.</p>
<p>The party promises to "modernise" employment rights to ensure they are fit for the age of the gig economy, creating a new "dependent contractor" employment status with entitlements to basic rights such as minimum earnings levels, sick pay and holidays. It would also enable any worker the right to request fixed contract status after 12 months of "zero hours".</p>	<p>Liberal Democrats would set up a review into a "genuine living wage", which would be 20 per cent higher for zero hours workers. There would be a new status of "dependent contractor" for self-employed people who in practice get all or nearly all their income from one source and who would get the right to sick pay and paid holiday.</p>	<p>The Lib Dems would champion the Human Rights Act, implement a Race Equality Strategy to address inequalities, including in education, health and maternity, criminal justice and the economy, and make misogyny a hate crime. Everyone would have a new right to flexible working. All forms of conversion therapies and practices would be banned.</p>	<p>The party would keep the state pension triple lock. Waspi women would be properly compensated. Measures to end the gender pension gap in private pensions would be introduced. The state pension system would be improved by investing in helplines to ensure quicker responses to queries and resolution of underpayments.</p>
<p>Promises to scrap employment laws in an effort to slash red tape and boost productivity. In particular, it would abolish the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DE&I) rules, which it says have "lowered standards and reduced economic productivity".</p>	<p>Nigel Farage has previously warned that increasing the National Minimum Wage could attract more immigration. Reform says it would abolish some employment laws in order to boost the economy, adding: "We must make it easier to hire and fire so that businesses can grow."</p>	<p>"Woke policing" would be replaced by "common sense policing" and all Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DE&I) roles and regulations would be scrapped in the public sector, including in police forces. The 2010 Equality Act would be scrapped.</p>	<p>The party would copy Australia, which encourages savings and pension contributions from a younger age. It would also accept the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee's 2021 recommendations in full to amend the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme arrangements so that all the scheme surpluses accrue to the mineworkers.</p>
<p>Insists trade unions are a "vital partner in building a fairer, greener economy". Party will campaign to repeal current "anti-union legislation" and replace it with a "Charter of Workers' Rights". It calls for maximum 10:1 pay ratios for all private and public sector organisations, as well as demanding equal rights for all workers in the gig economy and those on zero-hours contracts.</p>	<p>The National Minimum Wage would be raised to £15 an hour, with a maximum wage introduced of no more than 10 times the salary of a firm's lowest-paid employee. Firms would have to carry out "equal pay audits" on a regular basis and it would become cheaper to take an employer to a tribunal. The Greens also back "moving towards a four-day working week".</p>	<p>The party would campaign to end violence against women and girls, scrap legislation that it says erodes the right to protest and free expression, and campaign for the right of self-identification for trans and non-binary people. Hate crime, misogyny, Islamophobia and antisemitism would be tackled. Large and medium-size companies would redress any inequality uncovered.</p>	<p>The party would replace the state pension triple lock with a double lock, uprating pensions with inflation and wage rises. The rate of pension tax relief would be equated with the basic rate of income tax to help fund social care.</p>
<p>Would repeal legislation that forces workers in key industries to keep services running at a minimum level while they are on strike. All workers would have access to statutory sick pay. The party wants to expand paid maternity leave to a full year, including at least 12 weeks on full pay, with fathers given an extra 12 weeks of shared parental leave.</p>	<p>Calls for the National Minimum Wage and employment rights to be devolved in order to scrap "exploitative" zero hours contracts, ban fire and rehire and close the gender pay gap. Pledges to increase the National Minimum Wage to the level of the National Living Wage.</p>	<p>The SNP would protect and enhance the rights of the LGBTI community. Under Scottish independence, the party says it would have the full powers to improve equality in law and society, and the ability to champion LGBTI equality internationally. The party would also protect the right to abortion, including giving all women access to abortion.</p>	<p>The SNP would demand the UK Government delivers "full, fast and fair compensation" for Waspi women. The state pension triple lock would be maintained. The party would oppose any further increases in the state pension age. The cut to pension credit that means older couples in Scotland could be £7,000 worse off per year would be reversed.</p>
<p>Will reverse recent "regressive" anti-strike legislation, while pushing for legislation to tackle insecure work, deliver paid bereavement and miscarriage leave. It would ban fire and rehire practices, abolish zero-hours contracts, establish the right to "disconnect" to protect workers from being contacted outside of work hours and reform shared parental leave.</p>	<p>Give the Welsh Government control of employment law in Wales, which is now determined on a UK-wide basis from Westminster. Plaid makes no direct mention of the National Minimum Wage, but would seek to pay an apprenticeship living wage.</p>	<p>LGBTQ+ inclusion would be promoted throughout society, including all workplaces and participation in sport. Conversion therapy practices related to sexuality and gender identity would be banned. The party would fund research into the barriers that communities face in accessing healthcare, addressing structural and institutional racial discrimination.</p>	<p>Plaid Cymru would demand the UK government implements the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy committee recommendations to improve the pensions of former mineworkers. It would keep the triple lock, increase the income tax personal allowance for pensioners in line with the triple lock and back compensation payments for Waspi women.</p>
<p>With the exception of the Tories and Reform, the parties feel the rights of workers need rebalancing with particular regards to union rights.</p>	<p>All the parties except Reform acknowledge that wages, whether at minimum or living level, have to keep up with the cost of living. They would also tackle unfairnesses in zero hours contracts.</p>	<p>With the exception of Reform, which would repeal the 2010 Equalities Act, all the parties are pledging to beef up protections for women and minorities.</p>	<p>Apart from the Greens, the parties are intent on protecting the state pension triple lock.</p>



Recent research* forecasts that by 2025, the population aged over 65 will reach approximately 14.3 million individuals. While retirement often involves relocating to rural, coastal, or suburban areas, a growing number of older adults are opting for later living communities in urban hubs like Riverstone. These individuals are drawn to cultural settings, seek to 'right size' their properties, and value access to exceptional amenities.

The tradition of investing in later living homes within vibrant communities is deeply ingrained in American and Australian business cultures, showcasing a nuanced understanding of evolving ageing needs, surpassing that of the UK. For over two decades, these communities have flourished on those continents, establishing themselves as a recognised lifestyle choice. In the UK, this trend is gradually gaining momentum, with more developments focusing on these homes and their community aspects. This shift is driven, in part, by the ongoing ageing of the UK population, necessitating a proactive response to demographic shifts and their implications for individuals and society.

Downsizing is emerging as a significant trend, motivated by

Reinventing retirement – later living in the capital with Riverstone

factors such as oversized family homes postchild departure, escalating maintenance demands, and rising expenses.

Another driver behind the rise in later living is the evolving concept of life beyond 65. The "Third Age" is now commonplace, with many individuals entering this stage possessing ample time and financial resources, coupled with improved health and energy levels, enabling them to pursue previously neglected interests.

The average age for transitioning to later living homes varies, but notably, it is decreasing annually. The demographic makeup is roughly evenly split between single residents and couples, with a significant portion relocating from within a 10-mile radius.

Transitioning to a later living community does not entail sacrificing independence, freedom, or homeowner status. On the contrary, it presents an opportunity to join a burgeoning community that prioritises these values while promoting overall well-being.



Residents benefit from hassle-free maintenance, as well as access to care and health services if needed.

Riverstone stands as a cornerstone of this growing movement with its thriving communities in London. With residences in cultural Kensington, riverside Fulham and leafy Hampstead on The Bishops Avenue, Riverstone offers a range of apartments for sale. New residents automatically become part of the exclusive members' community, The Riverstone Club, gaining access to amenities such as a swimming pool, spa, exercise studio, private cinema, restaurant and bar, and more.

For more information about Riverstone, or to book a tour call 020 3839 8544, visit www.riverstoneliving.com

Alternatively, scan the QR code using your smartphone camera or QR reader to visit the website.



In association with

Riverstone

Prices start from £810,000. T&Cs apply. Other fees apply. Prices correct at time of publication.

*Source: Knight Frank Senior Housing Review 2023/24

Panorama

Around the world in 10 stories



SWITZERLAND

UN warns over far-right hatred

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for vigilance in the face of far-right political gains in Europe, citing narratives that dehumanise migrants and asylum seekers. "History tells us, in particular in Europe, that the vilification of the other... is a harbinger for what's to come," Volker Türk told reporters in Geneva. "It's an alarm bell we need to ring."

The far right made gains in the EU Parliament last month as France's National Rally rises in popularity. REUTERS

JAPAN

Floppy disk war is finally won

Japan's government has finally eliminated the use of floppy disks in all of its computer systems, two decades since their heyday, reaching a long-awaited milestone in a campaign to modernise the bureaucracy.

By the middle of last month, the Digital Agency had scrapped all 1,034 regulations governing their use, except for one environmental stricture related to vehicle recycling.

"We have won the war on floppy disks!" the digital minister Taro Kono, who has been vocal about wiping out fax machines and other analogue technology in government, declared yesterday. REUTERS

SOUTH KOREA

BTS member Jin to carry Olympic torch in Paris

By Jonathan Landrum Jnr

Jin, the oldest member of the Korean pop supergroup BTS, will be an Olympic torchbearer at the Paris games after recently completing his mandatory military service.

The 31-year-old singer is

expected to represent South Korea in the torch relay in hopes of spreading the message of "harmony" and "peace". He finished his 18-month military service last month.

Jin and the other torchbearers are scheduled to visit various historic sites throughout the host country.

Jin, whose full name is Kim Seok-jin, began his military service at a boot camp in late 2022. The other members of BTS - Jung Kook, V, Jimin, Suga, RM and J-Hope - are currently serving their military duties. AP

Postcard From...

Paarl

Freya, a six-month-old lion cub rescued from the wildlife trade in Lebanon, poked a nose out of her transport crate and sniffed the air before taking her first steps in her new home at a sanctuary in South Africa.

But her relocation to the Drakenstein Lion Park is only a partial success story.

Drakenstein has taken in other lions from zoos and circuses in France, Chile, Romania and elsewhere. But animal welfare groups say that South Africa takes a contradictory position when it comes to the species.

There are more than 300

captive lion facilities in South Africa, with more than 7,000 lions. The big cats are bred for petting but also for killing in "canned hunting" experiences, or for the lion bone trade.

South Africa has permission to export lion bones and skeletons, mostly to south-east Asia to be used in traditional medicines. Canned hunting, where lions are chased and shot in enclosures, is also legal.

Audrey Delsink, the Africa wildlife director for Humane Society International, said it was important for people to realise that cute cubs used for petting encounters at some South African parks - but not at Drakenstein - end up being big lions shipped off to be killed. "We cannot pull the wool over tourists' eyes any more," Ms Delsink said. AP

Gerald Imray

INDIA

Religious event stampede death toll rises to over 120

By Shivam Patel and Saurabh Sharma

IN PHULRAI MUGHAL GARHI, INDIA

The death toll from a stampede at a Hindu religious gathering in northern India rose to 121 yesterday, as police reported that the number of people at the function was more than triple the permitted capacity.

The stampede on Tuesday took place in the village of Phulrai Mughal Garhi in Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh state, about 125 miles south-east of New Delhi. About 250,000 people gathered despite permission being given for only 80,000, according to a police report.



People mourn three victims of the same family who died in the stampede

At least 121 people were killed and 31 were injured, with the dead including 112 women and seven children.

At the Hathras district hospital,

where several victims were taken, doctors said most of the deaths were a result of suffocation.

"The injured are fewer because... if you get caught in a stampede, the injuries will mostly be fractures, scratches, or body pain, so most people got up and left," said Neeta Jain, the doctor in charge of the hospital's emergency ward.

Police described a scene of chaos when the preacher at the congregation, Surajpal, also known as "Bhole Baba", was leaving in his car.

Thousands of devotees shouted and ran towards the vehicle, crushing others still sitting in the gathering, according to police. REUTERS



Park is blooming lovely

Tourists take selfies against the blooming wildflowers and sunflowers at the Olympic Forest Park in Beijing yesterday. VINCENT THIAN/AP

AUSTRALIA

Teen stabbing suspect previously faced charges

By Rod McGuirk
IN MELBOURNE

A 14-year-old boy accused of stabbing a student at the University of Sydney previously faced charges that were dismissed by a court, a state government minister said yesterday.

Newspapers also reported that the teenager was accused of threatening to shoot fellow students.

The boy is the third Australian child since April to be accused of a stabbing attack which was linked to online radicalisation.

He remained at a Sydney hospital for a mental health assessment the day after the attack early on Tuesday, said the policing minister for New South Wales, Yasmin Catley.

She said the suspect was charged by police last year and a court dis-

missed the allegations. She added that he had been attending a Department of Communities and Justice programme, which Australian media have described as a deradicalisation programme.

The *Daily Telegraph* newspaper in Sydney reported that the suspect was charged last year with threatening to shoot fellow students at his school in the city. AP

IRAN

Turnout 'lower than expected'

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, said yesterday that the turnout in the first round of the country's presidential election was "lower than expected".

Turnout was about 40 per cent, Iran's interior ministry said - the lowest since the 1979 revolution.

"We hope that people's turnout for the second round will be important and a source of pride for the Islamic Republic," Mr Khamenei added. REUTERS

GERMANY

Syrians held over war crimes

German police have arrested four stateless Syrian Palestinians and one Syrian national suspected of committing crimes against humanity and war crimes in Syria 10 years ago.

The men are suspected to have been affiliated with the Free Palestine Movement armed militia in Syria.

"The individuals... are strongly suspected of killing and attempting to kill civilians [which] qualified as crimes against humanity and war crimes," prosecutors said. REUTERS

PORTUGAL

Three killed as boat capsizes

Three people died and three are missing after a fishing boat with 17 crew on board capsized off central Portugal's Atlantic coast.

"So far, 11 people have been rescued alive and three have been found lifeless," the maritime authority said. "Search operations for the three missing people are under way."

Port captain Pedro Cervaens Costa said most of the crew were Portuguese. REUTERS

WELLBEING

How health experts spend their lunch hours

Most workers only have time for a short break, but there are ways to make it count. By **Libby Galvin**



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The term "lunch hour" is a bit of a misnomer – apparently the average UK worker takes less than a 33-minute break, if they take one at all. But among those who do down tools in the middle of the day, many are using the time to do much more than just swallow a sandwich.

We spoke to five health experts at the top of their games to find out exactly how they make their lunch breaks count.

'I spend one minute belly breathing before eating for better gut health'

Dr Megan Rossi (inset, below)
Dietitian, nutritionist and research fellow at King's College, London, and founder of The Gut Health Doctor

"Between my time at King's College, the clinic and everything else in between, my days are pretty full-on. I usually just throw together a speedy, gut-loving lunch in a few minutes.

"But I will always put my laptop aside to do 60 seconds of diaphragmatic breathing to help lower my cortisol levels before I start eating. Not only is this a game-changer for managing stress throughout the day, but it prepares my gut for digestion by activating the parasympathetic nervous system – often better known as the 'rest and digest' state.

"It also massages the stomach and intestine, helping to minimise uncomfortable digestive symptoms like bloating."

'I do leg raises at my desk for a longer life'

Dr Matthew Brown
Consultant in pain medicine at One Welbeck healthcare and head of pain medicine at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London

"I rarely get a lunch hour – work is so busy, I start around 7.30am and get home around 7.30pm. But I'm a big fan of the concept of 'exercise snacking', which means that whenever I get a short break I try to use it to get my heart rate up, stretch or build strength.

"Muscle strength is important, especially as you age. There is plenty of evidence to show that if you cannot stand up out of a chair without using your hands, your life expectancy is shorter than someone who can.

"So when I've got 10 minutes I'll whip out a resistance band – these are a great way to do some low-key resistance training. For example, I can loop a band over my leg while I'm reading a document at my laptop, and sit there doing leg raises to build quad strength. You can buy a pack online for £10.

"Humans weren't designed to sit on a chair or at a desk all day, but often we do, and it can become a vicious cycle. If you are in pain, the temptation is to avoid physical activity in case it causes a flare up of your symptoms.

"But the less you do, the more physically deconditioned you



become and the more likely you are then to experience pain... so I like to keep moving."

'I walk round the pond to let my brain 'sleep''

Russell Foster
Professor of circadian neuroscience at the University of Oxford and author of *Life Time: The New Science of the Body Clock*

"If I'm working from home, I make a conscious effort to go outside and walk down to what has become one of my happy places – the wildlife pond we put in our garden a couple of years ago.

"Often, we are not afforded enough time to stand back and ponder, and it can be an immensely powerful thing to do. Whether it's emails pinging or people speaking to us, we are bombarded with information and processing all that data as it floods in takes up a lot of the brain's energy.

"But if you can detach yourself, much like you do when you are asleep, your brain has a chance to play with what it's taken in – and

research has shown that parts of your brain can 'sleep' while you do something meditative or repetitive such as swimming (another lunchtime hobby of mine).

"I find this time, when I'm not consciously thinking about anything, is in fact when I come up with my best ideas or solutions!

"But I have to 'save up' for this switching off time, as on Tuesdays and Thursdays when I'm always in the lab it's chock-a-block, and I'm lucky to have a sandwich at my desk. It's a compromise, but worth it for the free time and space to be creative."

'I network over lunch to get new ideas'

Rob Madden (inset, left)
Physiotherapist and performance coach to heavyweight boxer Anthony Joshua and director of OPTIM7SE performance coaching

"I typically try to meet up with other colleagues and pick their brains, and eat good food while doing it. It's good to be on top of what other people are doing, share ideas and share challenges, too.





Breathing exercises and stretching can pay dividends during a short lunch break
WASANA KUNPOL/GETTY

"I go quite high calorie at lunch, something like sourdough with avocado, a side of vegetables, two poached eggs and maybe a sausage, and I might have some yogurt and berries as well, or even a pastry.

"Between my clinic and the gym, I burn a lot of energy! Lunch is a time to network and refuel my body and kill two birds with one stone.

"As well as my clients and keeping up with hobbies and fitness I have a child, so I'm very time poor. By having these social and business meetings over lunch – not always formal, often quite light-hearted – it allows me to do that part of my work which I don't always have time for after hours."

'I eat nothing till 12.30pm – I'm more productive'

Dr Dean Burnett (inset, above)
Honorary research associate at Cardiff University School of Psychology and author of *The Emotional Brain: Lost and Found in the Science of Emotion*

"When it gets to about 12.30pm, it's not optional: I must have lunch or I don't think I'd be able to work

in the afternoon. Lunch is my first meal of the day: I practise intermittent fasting, and keep my 'eating window' to between 12pm and 7pm. I like the structure of this way of eating, and it suits me as

I'm not a morning person – I tend not to be hungry first thing, and I am more productive later in the day, which sometimes is difficult now I have young children to consider.

"As I only have two meals a day, lunch is hearty and full of as many healthy ingredients as possible, avoiding anything ultra-processed – I'm expanding my vegetarian repertoire.

"I'll take at least half-an-hour away from my garden office, head in to the kitchen and put together a vegetable and salad-packed wholemeal wrap, perhaps with tuna.

"I might throw some leftovers from the night before onto my plate, too. I make a real effort to avoid high sugar food – for me, personally, it makes me feel sluggish.

"I may have only travelled five metres from my desk to eat lunch, but it's enough to feel I've 'got away' and had a proper break from work."



CRIME

'I'm a pickpocket pro – here's how to keep your items safe'

Performer James Freedman uncovers some of the sneakier tactics used by thieves. By **Eleanor Peake**

James Freedman could pick your pocket in a busy station, on the train – or at one of his live West End shows. He's on the right side of the law, but over his 20-year career as a pickpocket performer he has been immersed in the techniques of professional thieves.

"I learned a lot of it from a career pickpocket who proudly said he'd never been arrested," he says. "He became one of my closest friends."

As a child, Freedman obsessively read library books on the art of pickpocketing, eventually getting a gig as a stage performer and consultant for TV shows like *Hustle*. In 2015, he was appointed the UK's first fraud prevention ambassador by the City of London Police.

From protecting your "leather" (wallet) to avoiding the "mug's pocket" (back of your trousers), Freedman knows the jargon and the secret tools used to open pockets from the outside (a coin with a tiny knife inside).

Now more than ever, Freedman's insider knowledge is in demand. The police and some banks have warned of a rise in criminals watching over someone's shoulder as they type in their phone PIN, before stealing the device. One criminal gang leader said they could steal upwards of £50,000 an hour.

"The number one thing to worry about is your phone, because your phone is worth a few hundred quid, but the data on it is worth even more," says Freedman.

These sorts of pickpockets are commonplace. "There are many more professional pickpockets than you might think," he says. "There are the muggers and then there are the people who treat it as an art form. The evolution of all these sorts of scams has a Darwinian beauty, even though the people doing it are scumbags. I have an appreciation for some of the techniques.

"I'm not a mugger. There's a difference between someone who goes into your bag when you put it by your bar stool and a professional pickpocket. They have learned that craft. There's a certain charm and style and often amazing skill to it."

Here, Freedman shares his knowledge of the professional pickpocket – and how to keep your phone and online banking safe.

Beware the pickpocket sign

"Pickpockets will trick you into showing them what you have," Freedman says. "A common thing is that they'll stand by the sign that says: 'Beware pickpockets.' Often they will even put those signs up themselves."

"That's because they are waiting for you to tap your pocket to check your items are still there," he explains. "It's an instinctive thing, and they're watching."



James Freedman, a well-known entertainer, uses his skills for good; he learnt from a career pickpocket who had never been caught

A more modern version of this is a loud text alert on a crowded Tube or train. "Everyone pulls their phone out," says Freedman.

"I even remember once, at an airport, hearing a pickpocket go up to the station desk and say, 'I've just had my pocket picked.' Which is a very odd thing to say.

"She had no pockets and you would normally say, 'My bag's been stolen' or 'my wallet'. She was waiting for the announcement that came 30 seconds later, which told everyone to 'please be aware that pickpockets operate in this area'."

They rarely work alone

"If you want to see a professional pickpocket, come out of Westminster Tube station," he says. "It is mostly tourists who come out and take out their phones to find where they're going. That's where you'll find them.

"You can't [identify them] by what they look like. It could be any age, any sex, any clothing. It's about their behaviour. They're looking at other people's belongings and pockets and scanning."

They will rarely work alone, so be cautious when being approached or stopped on the street. "There will be someone who has got to create the distraction – known as the blocker – and then there will be someone who steals," he says. "And they often have a sling bag for easy access."

Be extra vigilant of people attempting to speak to you in a crowded place: "They like crowds."

Avoid rucksacks

There are certain bags that pickpockets love. "Rucksacks are not secure at all," he says. "They're

Thieves often stand by the 'beware pickpockets' sign – they're watching to see you tap your pocket

for mountaineering and designed to be easy to open. I would also always put your handbag in front of you when walking or have a cross-body bag in front of you."

An even better investment is a money belt. "Put your money in different money belts and never keep all of your credit cards and driver's licence in the same place.

"It's bad enough that you just lost your credit card with the security number on the back, without also giving the person who finds them your full name, date of birth and the registered address."

Watch your train talk

Pickpockets are listening for anything that might help them to get into your bank accounts once they have stolen your phone.

"People feel like they're in their own bubble on the train," says Freedman. "They look at their screen and they forget everything else. They are distracted from the fact they are sitting on a crowded train.

"I've often heard people call out credit card numbers on a phone call, or their phone number, or they call out their address."

Once a pickpocket has heard your personal information, you are more likely to be a target.

Disable contactless payments on your cards

"I disable contactless payment on all my cards and if I can't disable it through my banking app, I disable it with a knife," he says. "I cut through the antenna, which the banks don't like. You can see the antenna by shining a torch through the card and then just cut it at any point, and the chip will still work, but the contactless won't."

This is a more extreme measure, but once a pickpocket has access to your phone's PIN, they have access to your contactless accounts.

Television Thursday 4 July

CRITIC'S CHOICE

GERARD GILBERT



PICK OF THE DAY

Election 2024
9pm, Sky Showcase; 9.50pm, ITV1; 9.55pm, BBC One

Is it going to be an all-nighter for you, or will you have decided that the result of the 2024 general election is such a foregone conclusion that you might as well get some early shut-eye? Either way, Kay Burley is first out of the blocks with Sky's election-night coverage, featuring a 360-degree immersive studio normally used by Sky Sports. Tom Bradby (left) is anchoring ITV's coverage, joined in the studio by George Osborne, Ed Balls and Nicola Sturgeon, while Laura Kuenssberg and Clive Myrie present BBC One's results show. Jeremy Vine is again in charge of the iconic (and presumably, tonight, quite busy) swingometer.

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The Supernet: Noel Fitzpatrick
8pm, Channel 4

Some people will do anything for pets, especially when money appears to be no object. This week, a seven-month-old expat French bulldog is flown in by private jet from Marbella in Spain with his family, after surgery to fix his broken elbow proved unsuccessful. The hope is that a custom fusion plate system will get Milo out of pain.

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Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain
8.30pm, ITV1

A new series in which the chef hits the road in his 1950s food truck and discovers what it takes to produce the food on our plate, while cooking with the British ingredients he finds

along the way. It's hardly a novel angle for a foodie series, but Tom Kerridge is a likeable presence as he begins by heading to Cambridgeshire, where he is in search of beetroot, and Kent, where he picks apples and pears. He then cooks an "ultimate" crumble (personally I blame Jamie Oliver for the self-praise inflation).

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Douglas Is Cancelled
9pm, ITV1

Steven Moffat's satirical comedy-drama stars Hugh Bonneville as a veteran news anchor on the wrong end of an online pile-on. Here we find producer Toby and wife Sheila (Ben Miles and Alex Kingston) in full damage-limitation mode, while icy colleague Madeline (Karen Gillan)

continues her ambivalent stance on the furore. With Douglas due to be interviewed at the Hay Festival (which, ironically enough, has recently found itself at the centre of the culture wars over its sponsorship by Baillie Gifford), can they prep him for some savage questioning by "a Newsnight woman".

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Britain Decides With The Rest Is Politics And Gogglebox
9.45pm, Channel 4

Channel 4 does things a bit different and left field (so to speak) with its election results coverage. As Krishnan Guru-Murthy and Emily Krishnan present news and analysis and Professor Hannah Fry crunches the numbers, Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart give their assessment

	ONE	TWO	itv1	4	5	FOUR	FILM	itv2
Daytime	6.00 Breakfast (S). 9.30 Morning Live (S). 10.45 Scam Interceptors (S). 11.15 Homes Under The Hammer (S). 12.15 Bargain Hunt (S). 1.00 BBC News At One; Weather (S). 1.25 BBC Regional News; Weather (S). 1.35 BBC News At One; Weather (S). 1.45 Wimbledon 2024 Coverage of day four (S).	6.45 Beechgrove Garden (R) (S). 7.15 Garden Rescue: Top Of The Plots (R) (S). 8.00 Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (R) (S). 9.00 BBC News (S). 11.00 Wimbledon 2024 Coverage of day four (S). 3.00 Wimbledon 2024 Further coverage of day four (S).	6.00 Good Morning Britain (S). 9.00 Lorraine (S). 10.00 This Morning (S). 12.30 Loose Women (S). 1.30 ITV News; Weather (S). 1.55 ITV Regional News; Weather (S). 2.00 James Martin's Great British Adventure (R) (S). 3.00 Lingo (R) (S). 3.59 ITV Regional Weather (S). 4.00 Tipping Point (R) (S). 5.00 The Chase (R) (S).	6.15 Cheers (R) (S). 7.05 Everybody Loves Raymond (R) (S). 7.35 Everybody Loves Raymond (R) (S). 8.05 Everybody Loves Raymond (R) (S). 8.35 Everybody Loves Raymond (R) (S). 9.05 Frasier (R) (S). 9.35 Frasier (R) (S). 10.05 Frasier (R) (S). 10.35 Frasier (R) (S). 11.05 Help! We Bought A Village (R) (S). 12.05 Channel 4 News Summary (S). 12.10 Help! We Bought A Village (R) (S). 1.10 Car 5.0.5 (R) (S). 2.10 Countdown (S). 3.00 A Place In The Sun (R) (S). 4.00 Renovation Nation (S). 5.00 A New Life In The Sun: Where Are They Now? (R) (S).	6.00 Milkshake! 9.05 Milkshake! Story Den (R) (S). 9.15 Jeremy Vine (S). 11.15 Storm Huntley (S). 12.45 Friends (R) (S). 1.10 Friends (R) (S). 1.40 5 News At Lunchtime (S). 1.45 Home And Away (R) (S). 2.15 FILM: A Deadly Mother (Jeff Hare 2020) Thriller, starring Monica Rose Betz (R) (S). 4.00 Bargain-Loving Brits In The Sun (R) (S). 5.00 5 News At 5 (S).	 Madeline (Karen Gillan) has some advice for the beleaguered anchor in 'Douglas Is Cancelled' 9pm, ITV1	 Krishnan Guru-Murthy presents election news 9.45pm, Channel 4  Paul Whitehouse looks back at hit sketch shows 10pm, Gold	6.00 CITV 9.00 World's Funniest Videos (S). 9.30 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records (S). 10.00 Love Bites (S). 11.00 Love Bites (S). 12.00 Dress To Impress (S). 1.00 Deal Or No Deal (S). 2.00 Supermarket Sweep (S). 3.00 Charmed (S). 4.00 Dawson's Creek (S). 5.00 Dress To Impress (S).
6pm	6.00 BBC News At Six; Weather (S). 6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather (S).		6.00 ITV Regional News; Weather (S). 6.30 ITV News; Weather (S).	6.00 Four In A Bed (R) (S). 6.30 The Simpsons The family recalls stories about disasters at sea (R) (S).	6.05 Police Interceptors (R) (S). 6.55 5 News Update (S).			6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase With Joe Lycett, Chizzy Akudolu and Nick Knowles (S).
7pm	7.00 Wimbledon 2024 Coverage of the prestigious tournament (S).	7.00 EastEnders (S). 7.30 EastEnders Teddy and Sharon share a flirty drink (S).	7.00 Bradley & Barney Walsh: Breaking Dad (R) (S). 7.30 Emmerdale (S).	7.00 Channel 4 News (S).	7.00 Happy Campers: The Caravan Park (S). 7.55 5 News Update (S).	7.00 Canal Boat Diaries (S). 7.30 FILM: North By Northwest (Alfred Hitchcock 1959) Thriller (S).	6.05 FILM: Clear And Present Danger (Phillip Noyce 1994) Action thriller, starring Harrison Ford (S).	7.00 Deal Or No Deal Game show, hosted by Stephen Mulhern (S).
8pm		8.00 Gardeners' World The team reports from the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival (S).	8.30 Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain New series. The chef begins a cooking tour of the UK (S).	8.00 The Supernet: Noel Fitzpatrick (S).	8.00 Supermarket Own-Brands: The Big Taste Test (S).		8.50 Inglourious Basterds Interview Special	8.00 The Masked Singer US The three remaining celebrities perform again (S).
9pm	9.25 Not Going Out Lee's father announces his engagement (R) (S). 9.55 Election 2024 (S).	9.00 The North York Moors: A Wild Year (R) (S). 9.25 Live At The Apollo (R) (S). 9.55 Gimme Gimme Gimme (R) (S).	9.00 Douglas Is Cancelled (S). 9.50 Election 2024 Live: The Results (S).	9.00 24 Hours In Police Custody (R) (S). 9.45 Britain Decides With The Rest Is Politics And Gogglebox (S).	9.00 Susan Calman's Grand Day Out New series. The comedian explores the Channel Islands (S).	9.40 FILM: On The Waterfront (Elia Kazan 1954) Drama, starring Marlon Brando (S).	9.00 FILM: Inglourious Basterds (Quentin Tarantino 2009) (S).	9.00 Love Island The fun continues with another feast of flirting and fallouts in the villa (S).
10pm		10.25 FILM: Moulin Rouge! (Baz Luhrmann 2001) Romantic musical, starring Ewan McGregor (S).			10.00 Only Fools And Horses: Secrets & Scandals Behind-the-scenes stories of how the show was made (R) (S).			10.05 Tell Me Everything Bex quickly realises the price of popularity after throwing a party (S).
11pm					11.00 FILM: Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw (David Leitch 2019) Action adventure (S).	11.25 Listen To Me Marlon: Imagine An intimate portrait of Marlon Brando (S).		11.05 Family Guy Peter and Quagmire help Mort with his financial troubles (S). 11.35 Family Guy (S).
Late	2.00 Election 2024 (S).	12.25 Today At Wimbledon (S). 1.25 Sign Zone: Springwatch (R) (S). 2.25 Sign Zone: Andy Murray: Will To Win (R) (S). 3.25 This Is BBC Two (S).		12.00 Britain Decides With The Rest Is Politics And Gogglebox (S). 2.00 Britain Decides With The Rest Is Politics And Gogglebox (S). 4.00 Britain Decides With The Rest Is Politics And Gogglebox (S).	1.35 PlayOJO Live Casino Show (S). 3.35 Yorkshire Tea vs PG Tips: Battle Of The Brews (R) (S). 4.20 Inside The Balmoral Hotel (R) (S). 5.10 House Doctor (R) (S). 5.30 Entertainment News On 5 (S).	1.05 Canal Boat Diaries (S). 1.35 Full Circle With Michael Palin (S). 2.25 Treasures Of The Indus (S). 3.25 Close	12.10 FILM: Zola (Janicza Bravo 2021) Crime comedy drama, starring Taylour Paige (S). 1.55 FILM: Heatwave (Ernie Barbarash 2022) Thriller, starring Kat Graham (S). 4.00 Close	12.05 American Dad! (S). 12.35 American Dad! (S). 1.05 Karaoke Club: Drag Edition (S). 2.10 Don't Hate The Playaz (S). 2.50 Unwind With ITV (S). 3.00 Teleshopping

on what many are predicting to be a game-changing moment in British politics. And to add to the fun, Gogglebox favourites provide their take on the election campaigns.

Paul Whitehouse's Sketch Show Years

10pm, Gold

Is it time for a new sketch show, or is short-form comedy now the preserve of TikTok? Whitehouse's history of the seemingly obsolete genre now moves on to the 1980s, when Oxbridge and Footlights alumni still loomed large – including Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie and the *Not The Nine O'Clock News* crew. Hale and Pace, Kenny Everett, *Acorn Antiques* and Scotland's *Naked Video* are also fondly remembered.

FILM CHOICE

LAURENCE PHELAN



FILM OF THE DAY

Zola

12.10am, Film4

(Janicza Bravo, 2021)

Both vivid and woody – the movie equivalent of "Soundcloud rap" – this wild ride of a film is one for fans of *Spring Breakers*. Or it's *Euphoria* for grown-ups. It tells a story first shared with the world in a 148-tweet thread posted in 2015 by a user with the handle @_Zolarmoon: a Detroit stripper who thought she'd signed up to a road trip to Florida with a new friend but was actually being trafficked by this friend's pimp. It's cool, transgressive, funny and exhilarating, without losing sight of the absolute horror of the situation nor of the corrosiveness of the sex trade and the gig economy – the bleakness of the 24-hour hustle.

Inglourious Basterds

9pm, Film4

(Quentin Tarantino, 2009)

What it lacks in action, Tarantino's throwback to *Dirty Dozen*-style wartime adventures makes up for with things that are missing from many of his other excursions into genre cinema: well-written characters, suspense and plot.

I Am Legend

10.25pm, Sky Cinema Sci-Fi/Horror

(Francis Lawrence, 2007)

A virus has killed everyone, leaving only Will Smith to roam an eerily deserted Manhattan. An unnerving vision of mankind's mortality, the city devoid of people is this blockbuster's most impressive special effect.

ON DEMAND

Space Cadet

Prime Video
Comedy with Emma Roberts as a party girl who wants to become an astronaut.

The Man With 1,000 Kids

Netflix
A docuseries about a serial sperm donor who is the father of many children.

Jana: Marked For Life

BBC iPlayer
This Swedish series follows a prosecutor investigating crimes and her own trauma.

itv3



6.00 *Classic Emmerdale* (S) 6.35 *Classic Emmerdale* (S) 7.00 *Classic Coronation Street* (S) 7.35 *Classic Coronation Street* (S) 8.05 *Agatha Christie's Poirot* (S) 9.10 *Agatha Christie's Poirot* (S) 10.30 *The Royal* (S) 11.40 *Heartbeat* (S) 12.40 *Heartbeat* (S) 1.40 *Classic Emmerdale* (S) 2.10 *Classic Emmerdale* (S) 2.40 *Classic Coronation Street* (S) 3.15 *Classic Coronation Street* (S) 3.50 *Inspector Morse* (S).

6.00 *Hollyoaks* (S) 7.00 *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA* (S) 8.00 *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA* (S) 9.00 *The Goldbergs* (S) 9.30 *The Goldbergs* (S) 10.00 *Young Sheldon* (S) 10.30 *Young Sheldon* (S) 11.00 *Modern Family* (S) 11.30 *Modern Family* (S) 12.00 *The Big Bang Theory* (S) 12.30 *The Big Bang Theory* (S) 1.00 *The Big Bang Theory* (S) 1.30 *The Big Bang Theory* (S) 2.00 *The Goldbergs* (S) 2.30 *The Goldbergs* (S) 3.00 *Modern Family* (S) 4.00 *Young Sheldon* (S) 4.30 *Young Sheldon* (S) 5.00 *The Big Bang Theory* (S) 5.30 *The Big Bang Theory* (S).

8.55 *A Place In The Sun* (S) 9.30 *A Place In The Sun* (S) 10.25 *A New Life In The Sun* (S) 11.25 *Find It, Fix It, Flog It* (S) 12.30 *Come Dine With Me* (S) 1.00 *Come Dine With Me* (S) 1.30 *Come Dine With Me* (S) 2.05 *Come Dine With Me* (S) 2.35 *Come Dine With Me* (S) 3.10 *Four In A Bed* (S) 3.40 *Four In A Bed* (S) 4.15 *Four In A Bed* (S) 4.50 *Four In A Bed* (S) 5.20 *Four In A Bed* (S) 5.50 *Chateau DIY* (S).

6.00 *NCIS: Los Angeles* (R) (S) 7.00 *SEAL Team* (R) (S) 8.00 *The Flash* (R) (S) 9.00 *Stargate SG-1* (R) (S) 10.00 *Stargate SG-1* (R) (S) 11.00 *NCIS: Los Angeles* (R) (S) 12.00 *The Flash* (R) (S) 1.00 *MacGyver* (R) (S) 2.00 *MacGyver* (R) (S) 3.00 *Hawaii Five-0* (R) (S) 4.00 *S.W.A.T* (R) (S) 5.00 *SEAL Team* (R) (S).

6.00 *The Guest Wing* (R) (S) 7.00 *The Guest Wing* (R) (S) 7.55 *Six Feet Under* (R) (S) 9.00 *Six Feet Under* (R) (S) 10.05 *Gomorra* (R) (S) 11.10 *Gomorra* (R) (S) 12.15 *Game Of Thrones* (R) (S) 1.20 *The Sopranos* (R) (S) 2.25 *The Sopranos* (R) (S) 3.30 *Six Feet Under* (R) (S) 4.35 *Six Feet Under* (R) (S) 5.45 *Gomorra* (R) (S).

6.00 *Heartbeat* An ex-convict becomes the target of a hate campaign (S).

6.00 *The Big Bang Theory* (S) 6.30 *The Big Bang Theory* Leonard is offered a job opportunity (S).

6.55 *Car S.O.S* (S).

6.00 *Stargate SG-1* Major Graham goes berserk (R) (S).

6.50 *Gomorra* Ciro has retired to Sofia in Bulgaria (R) (S).

7.00 *Heartbeat* A Russian trawlerman is accused of being a spy (S).

7.00 *Hollyoaks* (S) 7.30 *Come Dine With Me* Hull florist Jayne gives her guests a taste of Spain (S).

7.55 *Grand Designs* A couple building a multicultural home in the Chess Valley (S).

7.00 *Stargate SG-1* O'Neill and Teal'c are caught in a time loop (R) (S).

7.55 *Game Of Thrones* Ned confronts Cersei about Jon Arryn's death (R) (S).

8.00 *Vera* A social worker is murdered (S).

8.00 *Dance Moms* The Nationals loom (S).

9.00 *Gogglebox* (S).

8.00 *Rob & Romesh vs F1* The boys continue their Formula 1 journey in Monaco (R) (S).

9.00 *The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live* (R) (S).

10.00 *The Tower* Lizzie decides to turn herself in (S).

10.00 *Naked Attraction* A pansexual opera singer is looking for a man as tall as she is (S).

10.00 *24 Hours In A&E* A 12-year-old is rushed to St George's after suffering a severe asthma attack (S).

10.00 *A Discovery Of Witches* Diana makes plans to complete her training (R) (S).

10.20 *Band Of Brothers* Easy Company overruns Hitler's Bavarian retreat (R) (S).

11.00 *Agatha Christie's Poirot* An aristocrat is murdered at a masquerade ball (S).

11.05 *First Dates* A linguistics expert who can never say the right thing when it comes to dating (S).

11.05 *24 Hours In A&E* A look at the work of a specialist stroke team (S).

11.00 *The Walking Dead* Rick tries to lead Carl to safety (R) (S).

11.30 *Succession* Kendall plans his next move (R) (S).

12.45 *Upstairs, Downstairs* (S) 1.40 *Upstairs, Downstairs* (S) 2.30 *Teleshopping*

12.05 *The Big Bang Theory* (S) 1.05 *Rick And Morty* (S) 1.35 *Smiling Friends* (S) 2.10 *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (S) 3.00 *Dance Moms* (S) 3.50 *Modern Family* (S) 4.15 *Modern Family* (S) 4.40 *The Neighborhood* (S).

12.10 *999: On The Front Line* (S) 1.15 *24 Hours In A&E* (S) 2.20 *24 Hours In A&E* (S) 3.25 *A Place In The Sun* (S) 3.55 *Close*

12.00 *Last King Of The Cross* (R) (S) 1.00 *Entourage* (R) (S) 2.00 *Road Wars* (R) (S) 3.00 *Hawaii Five-0* (R) (S) 4.00 *S.W.A.T* (R) (S) 5.00 *Highway Patrol* (R) (S) 5.30 *Highway Patrol* (R) (S).

12.40 *Watchmen* (R) (S) 1.45 *The Deuce* (R) (S) 2.55 *Game Of Thrones* (R) (S) 4.05 *The Guest Wing* (R) (S) 5.00 *The Guest Wing* (R) (S).

Radio

BBC Radio 1

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 1* 5.45 *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* 1am *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 Dance* 5.00 *Radio 1 Early Breakfast* With Arielle Free

BBC Radio 1Xtra

6.33am *1Xtra Playlists* 7.00 *Nadia Jae* 10.00 *DJ Day* 12.45pm *Newsbeat* 1.00 *Kaylee Golding* 4.00 *Remi Burz* 5.45 *Newsbeat* 6.00 *Remi Burz* 7.00 *DJ Target* 9.00 *Seani B* 10.30 *Seani B* 11.00 *1Xtra's Throwback Party* 12midn't *Throwback Thursday* 1.00 *Throwback Thursday* 2.00 *Throwback Thursday* 3.00 *1Xtra Salutes* 4.00 *1Xtra's R&B Slow Jamz* Mix With Chuckie 4.30 *1Xtra's R&B Chill Mix* 5.30 *1Xtra's Throwback Party*

BBC Radio 2

6.30am *The Gaby Roslin Breakfast Show* 9.30 *Vernon Kay* 12noon *Tina Daheley* 2.00 *Scott Mills* 4.00 *Sara Cox* 6.30 *Sara Cox's Half Wower* 7.00 *Jo Whaley's Shiny Happy Playlist* 7.30 *Jo Whaley* 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* 12midn't *Phil Williams* 3.00 *Alternative Sounds Of The 90s* With Dermot O'Leary 4.00 *Owain Wyn Evans*

BBC Radio 3

6.30am *Breakfast*. Petroc Trelawny presents the classical breakfast show. 9.30 *Essential Classics*. Georgia Mann plays a selection of music and features. 1pm *Classical Live*. The Leonkoro Quartet perform Shostakovich's Third String Quartet. 4.00 *Composer Of The Week*: Richard Strauss. Richard Strauss's uncomfortably close relationship with the Nazi High Command. 5.00 *In Tune*. Sean Rafferty is joined by pianist Mishka Rushdie Momen. 7.00 *Classical Mixtape*. Featuring Brahms's Hungarian Dance No.5. 7.30 *Radio 3 In Concert*. Rufus Wainwright's *Dream Requiem* from Paris. 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*. Hiromi celebrates Herbie Hancock. 12.30am *Through The Night*. RIAS Chamber Choir performs mass settings old and new.

BBC Radio 4

6am *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* 12noon *News* 12.04 *The Bottom Line* 12.32 *Sliced Bread* 12.57 *Weather* 1.00 *The World At One* 1.45 *Buried: The Last Witness* 2.00 *The Archers* 2.15 *Drama: Assisted* 3.00 *Ramblings* 3.27 *Radio 4 Appeal* 3.30 *Feedback* 4.00 *The Briefing Room* 4.30 *BBC Inside Science* 5.00 *PM* 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 *Rosarita* and film *The Nature of Love*. 8.00 *The Media Show*. The latest news from the fast-changing media world. 9.00 *Loose Ends*. With David Baddiel, Richard Thompson, Nooruddean Choudry and Amy Gledhill. 9.45 *Election 2024*. Rachel Burden and Nick Robinson host live election night coverage. 12.48am *Shipping Forecast* 1.00 *Election 2024* 5.20 *Shipping Forecast* 5.30 *Election 2024*

BBC Radio 4 Extra

6am *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* 12noon *Patterson* 12.30 *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*

Pick of the day



Ramblings

3pm, BBC Radio 4
In the first of two episodes recorded in the Republic of Ireland, Clare Balding (above) travels to Moyle Hill in Co Donegal to meet adventurer and motivational speaker Nikki Bradley.

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 *Comedy Club: Rhysearch* 10.30 *Comedy Club: The Guns Of Adam Riches* 10.55 *Comedy Club: The Comedy Club Interview* 11.00 *Comedy Club: Detective Sergeant Nick Mohammed* 11.30 *Comedy Club: I've Never Seen Star Wars* 12midn't *Great Lives* 12.30 *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 *Dick George - Private Investigator*

BBC 5 Live

6am *5 Live Breakfast* 9.00 *Nicky Campbell* 11.00 *Adrian Chiles* 1pm *Tennis* 7.00 *Tennis*. Katie Smith presents coverage from day four of Wimbledon. 9.00 *5 Live Formula* 1.9.45 *Election 2024*

BBC 6 Music

7.30am *Nemone* 10.30 *Mary Anne Hobbs* 1pm *Craig Charles* 4.00 *Huw Stephens* 7.00 *New Music Fix Daily* 9.00 *Riley & Coe* 11.00 *Song Explorer* 12midn't *New Music Fix Playlist* 1.00 *New Album Fix* 2.00 *Glastonbury Live Sets* 2024 3.00 *Glastonbury Live Sets* 2024 3.30 *6 Music's Jukebox* 5.00 *The Remix* With Chris Hawkins 5.30 *Chris Hawkins*

Classic FM

6.30am *Classic FM Breakfast* With Dan Walker 9.00 *The Classic FM Hall Of Fame Hour* With Dan Walker 10.00 *Alexander Armstrong* 1pm *Anne-Marie Minhall* 4.00 *Margherita Taylor* 7.00 *Relaxing Evenings*. Zeb Soanes presents the evening show. 10.00 *Calm Classics*. Katie Breathnach presents a selection of music for the late evening and early morning. 1am *Bill Overton* 4.00 *Early Breakfast*

Absolute Radio

6am *Dave Berry* 10.00 *Leona Graham* 1pm *Ben Burrell* 4.00 *Bush And Rich* 7.00 *Danielle Perry* 10.00 *Jay Lawrence* 1am *Ben Coley* 4.00 *Dan Noble*

Heart

6.30am *Heart Breakfast* With Jamie Theakston And Amanda Holden 10.00 *Pandora Christie* 1pm *Matt Wilkinson* 4.00 *JK And Kelly Brook* 7.00 *Heart's Feel Good Weekend* With Dev Griffin 10.00 *Fia Tarrant* 1am *Heart's Feel Good Weekend* With Jonny Meah 4.00 *Early Breakfast* With Lindsey Russell

TalkSPORT

6am *TalkSPORT Breakfast* With Alan Brazil 10.00 *Euro GameDay Warm Up* 1pm *Euro GameDay Live* 4.00 *Euro GameDay Live* 10.00 *Euro Sports Bar* 1am *Extra Time* 5.00 *Early Breakfast*

Working 9-to-5

(it's no way to make a living)

More people are turning their backs on the hustle and grind of full-time work and opting to go part-time to improve their work-life balance - but what does it mean for their careers, and companies? By **Hannah Fearn**

Hayley Knight is calling in from Cappadocia in Turkey, the beautiful and remote network of cone-like rock formations and cave homes. But she's not on holiday: the 36-year-old, who runs a marketing and public relations consultancy with her husband Marcus, has spent her morning on client calls and fielding emails before she heads out to enjoy the local lunch spots and views. "It's very hot. It's 11am here and it's 46°C already," she says. "It gets a bit too hot in the afternoons."

Knight is one of a fast-rising number of professionals dropping the hustle and grind for a part-time life, choosing to work four days a week even though she doesn't have any children or other caring responsibilities.

A quarter of British employees now work part-time, according to findings from the Office for National Statistics last year - that's eight million people, up from 5.8 million in 2018.

Data from the social enterprise Timewise have shown that the number of people wanting part-time work is outstripping the number of available part-time jobs, by four to one.

Knight's husband and business partner also works four days a week, and the pair have ensured their business can be run fully remotely so they can travel in their spare time. After years putting in long hours and longer weeks, she was desperate to regain control of her life - and her work.

"I was running an agency in London before and during Covid, and by the end of it I was absolutely burnt out," she says. "We both packed up our jobs and left London and went travelling for two years.

"Then we set up our business. It's been fun and exciting. It's very different but we're making it work. We have an employee in the UK and an amazing list of clients who are completely understanding of our lifestyle."

The shift to a four-day week, she says, has had a profound effect on her happiness and productivity. "I have a much better relationship with work and a much better work-life balance. I am just generally happier and have better mental health."

In Edinburgh, Philip Brocklehurst, a 36-year-old management consultant, shifted down to a four-day week in 2021, just after the first lockdowns, to have more time to train for the endurance sports he loves.

He works for Deloitte, where a growing number of employees have



Hayley Knight and her partner are digital nomads OLGA EMRULLAH

negotiated similar arrangements, and says his request to drop a day was met with enthusiasm rather than concern.

"It was a really easy conversation to have. I do a lot of outdoor sports and I just wanted a better balance between my work and my outside interests," he says. "I'm a senior manager so I often spend time between lots of different projects, so it's easier to manage a four-day week at my level."

"The big benefit is the reduction of overall stress levels. I use running and climbing as a way to manage my stress. I have ADHD and I find exercise helps me manage my symptoms, and the four days concentrates you a bit more. It makes it easier to focus on getting the work done in those times."

Rates of part-time work are rising all around the world. The Netherlands comes out top of the rankings: the latest figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for 2022 show that 35 per cent of their working population do not work full-time hours. Japan, Switzerland and Australia come next, all with about a quarter of workers on part-time arrangements.

But we are catching up. In the UK, between January and March this year 8.15 million people were part-timers while 24.85 million con-

tinued to put in five days a week. Like many part-time workers, Brocklehurst took a cut in pay by reducing his hours for better work-life balance, but others are choosing to compress their hours over fewer days or work in other flexible ways to boost both their free time and their income.

According to Kate Field, the global head of health, safety and wellbeing at the UK's national standards body, BSI Group, many people going part-time supplement their income with other activities, often setting up their own businesses.

And the part-time trend isn't just a white-collar one. Industries such as construction and manufacturing are also experiencing this demand for work outside the usual five-day week, and being forced to adapt.

According to experts, the growing interest in part-time employment was fuelled by the pan-

Arts

Celia Imrie

The actress and author on body dysmorphia: 'I don't like taking my clothes off'

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TV review

Battle of the Bagpipes

Worthy but ultimately dull look at the Marmite of musical instruments

▶▶ Page 41



demarc as workers experienced having more free time. This has led to changes in workers' rights: in April, the law was changed to give employees the right to request flexible working – including part-time working – from their first day in a new job.

Research shows that care responsibilities and physical limitations are the primary reason for requesting part-time work. But this was the main factor for less than half of respondents in a recent survey by Timewise.

Among women who work part-time, the most cited reason was to manage care responsibilities (32 per cent rising to 45 per cent among

women aged 35 to 49), but only 13 per cent of men mentioned caring as a primary factor.

More men than women reported working part-time to better manage their mental or physical health (25 per cent versus 20 per cent).

Tellingly, health issues were a more common reason among lower-income groups (a trend which persists regardless of gender, ethnicity

If you've only got work and work isn't going well, you can be really miserable

or highest level of education). However, more lower-income households work part-time – which may be a Catch-22 situation.

Nevertheless, Simon Daly, the employee experience strategy director at the consultancy Qualtrics, says that the most common request from staff since 2020 is simply wanting to take greater control over their working lives. "Having a work-life balance is crucial to employee happiness," he says.

Other studies back that up. International Workplace Group, a company which provides office space, polled more than 1,000 workers in May and found four in five said their wellbeing had improved significantly since they had gained more flexibility over their working pattern.

Dr Josie Perry, a work psychologist, counsels many clients who face burnout because, as she puts it, "work has been too much of their life for too long".

She recommends finding an arrangement that puts work and personal passions – whether it be running, sailing or even gardening –

in careful balance so you're not relying too heavily on either. "It reduces your risk of burnout. If you've only got work and work isn't going well, maybe through no fault of your own, that can make you really miserable," she explains.

The part-time genie, she says, is now out of the box. Dr Perry believes that, like the shift from a job for life to portfolio careers 40 years ago, the shift to part-time work is this generation's permanent adjustment to the way we see work and life.

"The employers that will do really well and will be able to get the best employees will be the kind of organisations that make people feel like they belong even if they are only doing one day a week," she adds.

For some industries or businesses, that is a more difficult adjustment and there will be good reasons for some people to be refused their request to go part-time.

Field says that refusals are still common and often defensible in roles where staff have a frontline, "on call" or emergency response element.

And smaller businesses might also find that there are additional costs, particularly around the pay-as-you-earn tax burden, when employing more individuals to cover the same amount of work.

"There may also be some challenges [for small businesses] in terms of reorganising work among existing staff and what that means for the people who are left. Are there enough people left to do the work?" says Field.

"You can't have the situation where people who are full-time are having to do more work because some people are part time, and that might be a very genuine reason for not being able to offer part-time work."

But some studies show that productivity is increased when staff work part-time – and recruitment or restructuring may actually be cheaper over the long term.

"Offering or allowing part-time may lessen the need for lay-offs and downsizing when a company needs to reduce its workforce. It also allows organisations to expand their pool of qualified candidates as it may appeal to, for example, parents who want to be able to pick up kids or students," says Angela Champ, a human resources adviser.

Many who have already adjusted to part-time work say there is no way they would ever go back to their former working lives.

Kathryn Davies, a lawyer with media law firm Tan Ward, shifted to



FAST FACTS WORKING HOURS

Two in five women in the workforce (38 per cent) in the UK are part-time, compared to 13 per cent of men.

This rises to 45 per cent of women aged 35-49, according to Timewise.

Nearly half (46 per cent) of workers think part-time work could be a barrier to career progression.

Childcare costs are a barrier to full time work: representing almost a third of the income of a family on the average UK wage.

flexible, part-time employment on a contract basis two months ago and already feels better for it.

Like Knight, she is using the flexibility she has to travel while working, and is speaking to me from Bulgaria.

"It's like getting back the gift of time," she says. "There's huge amounts of freedom in the balance of work not being the dominant thing in your life any more and I work less hours because it's more efficient."

Would she consider a return to the rat race for the right role? Even after a few weeks, she can't imagine it.

She says: "It would be very hard to get my head back in that space."

As managers become younger, experts predict that even younger employees – perhaps as young as their twenties – will want to start embracing the part-time life, and find ways to afford to do so.

But Champ has a warning for them. "The relationships and reputation that an employee fosters early in their career may have an impact on their career trajectory and potential future earnings," she says.

"An early career employee might do better working full-time to learn the business before taking advantage of alternative work arrangements like part-time."

But other businesses simply aren't assessing their younger staff in this way. Mo Kanjilal Williams, a 50-year-old former software sales rep based in Brighton, set up her business as a diversity and inclusion consultant four years ago.

She works a four-day week, often doing short days too to allow herself time for volunteering, mentoring and writing her first novel.

She offers the same flexibility to her team and says she doesn't track their time, only judges their output. She enrolled her company in a large UK-wide trial of a four-day week, during which the team had MRI scans and blood tests taken. For all participants, measures of health improved.

"I think this is the way forward," Williams says. "We had a parent-child relationship to work. The pandemic forced the change and young people coming into the workplace will expect it."



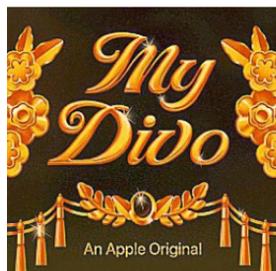
Philip Brocklehurst says working a four-day week cut his 'overall stress'



ARTS



Podcast My Divo



In Apple TV+'s first dual language podcast *My Divo*, which is available in both English and Spanish, host Maria Garcia explores the life and legacy of the legendary Mexican singer Juan Gabriel, and her own identity through the lens of his impact.

Gabriel was a megastar in Mexico from the 1980s to the 2000s, and was the country's first gay icon. As such, he had a huge effect on those, like Garcia herself, making sense of their own queer identities despite conservative traditions.

And as well as queerness, Gabriel was a huge figure in national identity more broadly. As Garcia tells the story of his life she explores politics, religion and club culture - unearthing plenty about both her country and herself.

Emily Bootle

●● I still have body issues - I don't like going naked ●●

Celia Imrie talks to **Francesca Steele** about anorexia, working with Victoria Wood and stripping off in 'Calendar Girls'

Celia Imrie is one of life's gamblers. Not in the money sense, but in the sense of embracing the unexpected. Already a world-renowned actress, with an Olivier Award and plenty of stage and screen credits to her name, from *Hedda Gabler* with Glenda Jackson, to British blockbusters *Calendar Girls* and *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, she published her first novel at the age of 62 after someone suggested fiction writing one day.

It was following the publication of her 2011 memoir *The Happy Hooper*, and she just thought "Why not?". Her gently comic 2015 debut *Not Quite Nice* became a best-seller and nine years later aged 71, she is publishing her fifth novel, *Meet Me at Rainbow Corner*.

It's an extremely enjoyable historical novel about Dot and Lilly, two friends in the Second World War who meet at the American Red Cross club on Rainbow Corner in Piccadilly, where GIs wowed English girls with their tales of Hollywood, just as rationing was still making life pretty miserable for the Brits.

There's also a secret traitor passing secrets to the Nazis at Rainbow Corner. Imrie did know from the beginning who her traitor would be, she says, but in real life, she likes being surprised. "Oh yes, I'm a gambler. I love not knowing what's going to happen in life. Where I'll be next week or what I'll be doing."

Actually, Imrie does know what she'll be doing next week, and that's filming the adaptation of Richard Osman's spectacularly successful book *The Thursday Murder Club*, about amateur crime sleuths in a retirement home. "I'm excited," she says, "but you do still get the frights on the first day, of course."

I mention to Imrie that Osman called her "mischievous" when the casting was revealed. "Yes, I love that. That's the way I see life I suppose. I'm an optimist."

Imrie does come across as an optimist, a quality that seems all the more incredible when you consider some of the things she's been through.

In 2005 she recovered from two pulmonary embolisms, which almost killed her. As a teenager, growing up in Guildford, Surrey, she developed very serious anorexia for several years, after her child-





Celia Imrie (back centre) and fellow 'Calendar Girls' stars TOUCHSTONE PICTURES, GETTY

hood dream of becoming a ballet dancer was stopped in its tracks because ballet schools told her she was the wrong size.

Imrie was admitted to hospital and underwent electroconvulsive therapy. In her memoir she writes that after three years, a nurse told her that a "truly sick" child needed her bed. After that she decided to eat.

Interestingly, she regrets the pain this caused her mother and father more than anything, she says, and feels that it was "self-induced", although she's aware that this is not a fashionable view.

"It's not easy, but I would encourage anybody with that sort of anxiety about themselves to just look outside yourself to other people," she says. "I strongly believe you can get over it." (It's worth noting that Beat, the UK's Eating Disorder Charity, says that "eating disorders are never a personal choice".)

She turned to drama, but to placate her father, who wanted her to become a secretary, she did a dance teaching course at the Guildford School of Acting. "I'm a bit of a fraud really," she admits. "I've never studied acting in my life."

And yet Imrie has had the most varied career, starting as a chorus girl and often jobbing in pantomimes even after she scored coveted roles such as that in *Hedda Gabler*.

She must also be one of the UK's best-connected actors, having worked with every national treasure, from Dames Helen Mirren and Julie Walters on *Calendar Girls* to Bill Nighy, Dames Judi Dench and Maggie Smith on *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, to Hugh Grant, Colin Firth and Jim Broadbent on *Bridget Jones's Diary* (she is soon to appear in the fourth in the franchise: *Mad About the Boy*).

Calendar Girls (2003), about a group of middle-aged Yorkshire women who posed for a nude calendar to raise money for leukaemia research, put Imrie on the map as a national treasure herself.

In her calendar shot, her character had to pose coyly, her breasts hidden behind some comically chosen Bakewell tarts. Is it harder getting naked on screen after experiencing pretty severe body dysmorphia issues?

"I'm afraid it doesn't ever leave you. I don't like taking my clothes off. But we did have champagne and Twiglets in my dressing room after my photograph, which is a jolly good way of doing it."

She worked extensively with the comedy writer and actress Victoria Wood, who died in 2016. Wood cast her in the parodic sitcom *Acorn Antiques*, and later in BBC's *dinnerladies*.

"Victoria wrote almost like music, brilliantly, but every single syllable had to be as she had written it. She was quite strict, understandably, because she'd

written it like a melody," she says. Imrie strikes me as quite a precise person too, but she suggests not. "Sometimes I think Victoria would like to be marching like you see the bands in Horse Guards Parade, but I'm more likely to be doing the can-can in the middle of it all." So she's a bit wild? "I think so, yes."

Her father and her mother had different perspectives on her creative ambitions, having had completely different backgrounds. Her father, 20 years older than her mother, grew up in Glasgow tenements. He went on to be a radiologist and was keen for his children to do something "sensible".

Her mother, on the other hand, was posh and "a bit bohemian". "I love my mother for breaking all the rules, because she wasn't supposed to marry my father. She had a lot of opposition."

Despite growing up in a happy household, Imrie has never married, previously stating that she felt that marriage was also a "trap".

When she was 42 she had a son, Angus Imrie, now also an actor (the creepy stepson in *Fleabag*), with fellow actor Benjamin Whitrow, who died in 2017, although it was more of an arrangement than a romance and she essentially solo-parented.

She doesn't want to talk about that today, though, and in general, despite having written a memoir, she seems anxious about discussing her private life.

"I've got into trouble before, you know?" She has previously said some controversial things on #MeToo, suggesting actresses just "got on with it" more in the past. When I ask her if the younger generation deal with sexism differently these days, she says: "I think they're more self-absorbed, if you really want to know," although her publicist later emails me to tell me that Imrie "doesn't actually think that".

As someone about to star in a film about a care home, does she worry much about ageing? "Yes. You see, independence is terribly important to me. I do think on the whole care homes are rather grim and I'd dread going into one, but when we did *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* I said something similar, so I'd better be careful.

"But the point is you don't know what's going to happen. That's the thing about the girls in the war, you know? They just had to live for the moment. And that's what I try to do too."



'Meet Me at Rainbow Corner' is published by Bloomsbury, £16.99

Last night's television

ED POWER



Worthy but dull look at the Marmite of musical instruments

» **Battle of the Bagpipes** Sky Arts, 9pm ★★☆☆☆

If Marmite were a musical instrument, it would be a set of bagpipes – a fact acknowledged early in Sky Arts' docuseries **Battle of the Bagpipes**. "The sound of the pipes is like nothing else," said Northern Ireland pipe band leader Richard Parkes. "Either you like it or don't like it."

Parkes was speaking as his Field Marshal Montgomery Pipe Band prepared for the World Pipe Band Championship in Glasgow – the "battle" referred to in the title of this worthy-but-dull documentary, which followed musicians from across Britain and Ireland vying for the biggest prize in piping.

Everyone involved stressed the fiercely competitive nature of the championships. "Pipes have been a huge part of my life since I was born," said Finlay MacDonald of Glasgow's National Piping Centre. "They're not just an instrument. They're way more than that."

Like all the piping enthusiasts interviewed for the three-part series, he spoke with fervent emotion. How disappointing, then, that little of the pipers' passion was reflected in the tone of a plodding doc that mostly played a bum note. Parkes, of Field Marshal Montgomery Pipe Band, had piped all his life but 20 years ago suffered a stroke. "I wasn't sure if I'd be able to play again," he said. "My whole playing experience is different." There was surely more to be said about his journey back to health. Alas, it was quickly glossed over.

The Scottish pipes have a unique history, linked to tensions between clans

Battle of the Bagpipes was on surer ground when it delved into the evolution of the instrument. People have played variations of the bagpipes for thousands of years and ancient pipes have even been found on the Syria-Iraq border. However, the Scottish pipes have their own unique history, linked to political tensions between Highland clans. "They were always an instrument of war. Their sheer volume speaks to that," said Dr Calum Robertson of National Museums Scotland.

In the 19th century, the Scottish Highland pipes became synonymous with the British Empire, and to this day there is a strong link between piping and the military. This relationship was



The Inveraray and District Pipeband in Sky Arts' 'Battle Of The Bagpipes'

explored with a visit to Redford Barracks outside Edinburgh, where recruits to the Army School of Bagpipe Music and Highland Drumming received instruction.

"I've been in the army three years now," said one soldier, Kevin Gunn. "I needed a bit of discipline. I was a wee bit of a nutcase." He was a likeable chap, and I would have liked to spend more time with him.

But instead, it was back to the civilian bands as they practised for the World Championships. We were introduced to Kerr McQuillan, a lead drummer with Scotland's Peoples Ford Boghall and Bathgate Caledonia Pipe Band from Bathgate, Scotland. As with Richard Parkes, McQuillan had grown up with bagpipes and always dreamed of becoming a lead drummer in a pipe band. Receiving that accolade with Boghall and Bathgate – while a teenager – was, he said, "the best day of my life."

A more imaginative film might have leaned into these human moments. Sadly, Sky Arts was reluctant to serve up any genuine drama. Instead, it gave us endless scenes of band members rehearsing and of Richard Parkes and other pipe leaders delivering sergeant major-style instructions to their musicians.

You might say a series about pipers should include lots of piping. That's well and good, but music, whatever the instrument or genre, is about people connecting with one another. There were some great stories to be told here, but they were drowned out by *Battle of the Bagpipes'* determination to be just another box-ticking documentary by numbers.

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ECONOMY

Services growth 'seizes up' as firms put plans on hold

By David Connatt

Growth in the UK services sector slowed last month amid a "seize-up" in business activity as companies put plans on hold in the run-up to the general election.

The closely watched S&P Global UK services purchasing managers' index slowed to its lowest rate for more than six months.

The services sector accounts for nearly 80 per cent of Britain's total economic output and employment.

The survey, which covers businesses ranging from transport companies to financial firms, property agents, bars and restaurants, showed that the services sector continued to grow but at a slower rate.

The poll, monitored by interest rate setters at the Bank of England, showed modest growth, but it was

the lowest since last November. The data specialist S&P Global, which compiles the index, linked the slow-down to companies taking a "wait-and-see" approach to the outcome of today's election.

"We are seeing some evidence of a pre-general election seize-up across the UK services economy," said Joe Hayes, an analyst at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

The survey suggested that some firms wanted to know what the new government would look like before

placing orders and commissioning new projects. Mr Hayes said that Britain was "on track for another quarter of gross domestic product growth", although it would be "less punchy" than the first quarter.

The economy grew by 0.7 per cent in the first three months of the year, according to official figures, pulling out of the brief recession that it entered at the end of 2023.

Costs paid by services companies, seen by the Bank of England as a gauge of inflationary pressures, fell to their lowest level since February 2021, which could encourage its Monetary Policy Committee to cut interest rates when it meets in August.

"Prices still continue to show a high degree of stickiness across the UK service sector, although input cost inflation once again trended lower in June," Mr Hayes added. "The direc-

{i} UK factory output rose in June, but at a slower pace than in May, as **shipping delays and higher freight costs hit exports**. Despite this, firms are optimistic about a recovery.



The services sector kept growing last month but at a slower rate than in May

tion of travel here is encouraging for the Bank of England, but our survey's gauge of prices charged actually rose on the month as some companies noted their pricing power was strong enough to raise their fees."

Rob Wood, of the consultancy Pantheon Macroeconomics, said the PMI would probably bounce back after the election as firms and households resume spending, with the wait-and-see approach expected to fade away.



SUPERMARKETS

Tesco staff make £30m from share scheme

By David Connatt

More than 20,000 Tesco workers will share a windfall of more than £30m from the supermarket's buoyant share price.

The supermarket chain said store and warehouse employees are benefiting from strong growth in the value of its shares, which have risen 23 per cent this year.

Experts say the UK has been slow to offer staff share ownership benefits, but Tesco and other retailers have acted to attract and retain staff after Brexit and the pandemic squeezed the labour market.

Tesco said workers who joined its share savings schemes were able to buy at a discount price of either £1.88 or £1.98 and either keep the shares or sell them on. Tesco shares closed at £3.04 last night.

Workers who invested the maximum of £500 a month stand to make a profit of almost £10,000 from the three-year scheme and almost £20,000 from the five-year scheme if they opt to sell.

The company said that about 52,000 of its 300,000 UK workers are in the save-as-you-earn schemes, into which staff have invested £63.5m since 2019.

Emma Taylor, Tesco's chief people officer, said: "Colleagues tell us they like this way of saving every month – and when Tesco performs well, they share in a multimillion-pound payout or can keep shares bought at a discounted rate."

"This year the schemes' success is rewarding our colleagues with thousands of pounds in profit."

Quote of the day



Legal cases and the risk around political action means the water sector may be viewed as largely uninvestable

Jenny Ping
Citigroup analyst on the pitfalls of putting money into UK water companies

The 30 Second Briefing

MOBILE NETWORKS

Care to share?

Vodafone and Virgin Media O2 have agreed to extend their mobile network-sharing agreement to the mid-2030s. The deal will extend further should Vodafone's proposed merger with Three UK get approved. The deal expands the existing arrangement between Vodafone and

Virgin Media O2 in the extension of the Shared Rural Network in hard-to-reach areas of the UK.

The need to network?

The network-sharing agreement, which includes joint-infrastructure upgrades, aims to transform the mobile experience for tens of millions of UK customers but is also aimed squarely at transforming Vodafone's chances of merger with fellow mobile operator Three UK – a deal being scrutinised by competition regulators as it could control more than 50 per cent of the 5G network market.

Give and get?

While parts of the network-

sharing deal are separate from the outcome of the Vodafone UK and Three UK merger, if the deal goes through the combined group will also provide Virgin Media O2 with more 5G spectrum to better equip it to hold its own against the Vodafone-ThreeUK merger.

Concerns allayed?

That could help to address the regulator's concerns about a merger that would reduce the number of mobile networks in Britain to three from four. "This new agreement addresses the issues we have voiced and the CMA [Competition and Markets Authority] outlined in its initial decision," said Lutz Schüler, Virgin Media O2's boss.

COMMENT

Outlook for mortgages and jobs is better than it seems

With the pandemic and surge in inflation behind us, the next government has reason to be hopeful, says **Hamish McRae**



As the economic picture in the UK begins to brighten, mortgage rates are set to gradually come down as central banks cut interest rates HOWARD KINGSNORTH/GETTY

So we get a new government this week. What will it mean in practical terms for our finances? Will we get cheaper mortgages? Will there be more jobs? What will happen to pensions? And inflation? Will real pay, climbing at last, keep rising? In short, what difference will it make?

These are huge questions, and ones to which the answers are really as much about the world economy as they are about politicians' proposed policies. But there is a place to start, one that will be the base on which our next government can build.

It is that we, and the other advanced economies, are basically through the twin disasters of the pandemic and the surge in inflation.

Both saddled us with huge costs. You can't shut down large chunks of the world economy for months without a hit to living standards, for we all, in one way or another, have to pay for the loss of output. And the surge in inflation has disrupted everyone's finances, with some gainers and a lot more losers.

But now that is mostly past. In as far as we can be sure of anything, the world economic cycle is turning up and if it conforms to past patterns there should be several years of reasonable growth.

Inflation is moving towards acceptable levels, and central banks are either cutting interest rates or

are about to. Here in the UK the issues are whether rates start to come down in August or September, and at what level they settle.

Headline inflation here in May was already down to the target two per cent and may well have dipped below it in June. This gives a stability that we have not had since the pandemic.

Simon French at Panmure Liberum Economics points out that the economic inheritance of the next government is not as bad as is popularly assumed. Most people are not aware that our public sector debt relative to GDP is the second-lowest of the G7 countries, and that we are in the middle of the pack in recent growth.

In the next few months there will be two things to look for.

The most obvious will be what happens to the cost of money, in particular of mortgages. Rates will come down, but maybe not by much.

The Labour leadership is aware of the frustrations of young people

The world economic cycle is turning up and there should be several years of reasonable growth

unable to buy their first home, and has promised to keep mortgage rates low. But it does not control monetary policy, and Rachel Reeves, presumably our next chancellor, has made it clear there will be no change to the Bank of England mandate.

What would really help would be to ease planning controls and she has promised to do just that. But politicians can't build houses.

It takes construction companies to do that, and they have to staff up, clear supply chains, make sure the power and water utilities are connected and so on.

We don't build nearly enough homes for our booming population, but since annual housebuilding has been running at only around 200,000 a year for the past 40 years, it will take a long time to crank up the programme.

Still, it's a reasonably positive outlook for the housing market. And it is also a reasonably positive picture for the jobs market.

Underlying demand for labour continues to be reasonably strong, and if consumers pick up their buying, as seems to be happening, the second half of the year will show solid growth in the economy – which means solid growth in jobs.

There are two particular issues

here. One relates to people who were working and have, for various reasons, stopped. It is something the next government must tackle.

The other is the plans for greater job protection. The idea is admirable, as many people have unsettling contracts. But the ability of the economy to create jobs may be undermined. If it is more difficult to downsize a labour force, companies may hire fewer people in the first place. We don't know how the plans will work in practice.

Whether pay keeps rising or not is clearer. It will, and it has to. It would take a serious global recession to stop the strong underlying demand for labour, and while that is always possible, it does not seem likely in the near future.

Of course, this sketch of a reasonably benign economic outlook for the new government may be wrong. There may be some global catastrophe round the corner.

It certainly needs a benign outlook to tackle the longer-standing issues facing the UK, including the need to boost productivity, and lift the regions that have lagged behind.

The challenges for young people remain as large as ever. But if we do get a few years of stability, that's helpful for us too.

In a funny way, the problems facing us as individuals are much the same as those facing the politicians. We all need a following wind.

From the business pages

Tourism boost for jobs in Spain

El Mundo

Spain hopes to beat its own record for tourist arrivals this summer and companies are preparing with a flood of hiring. June saw an increase of 71,095 jobs, thanks to the hospitality and commerce sectors, which added 32,030 and 30,304 workers, respectively. Government minister Elma Saiz said the latest data show Spain has been creating jobs uninterrupted for 50 months.

Bookseller goes into administration

The Age

Australia's biggest online bookseller, Booktopia, has gone into voluntary administration weeks after suspending its shares on the Australian Stock Exchange. The retailer has been scrambling to secure funding as it felt the financial strain after three years of losses. Administrators will reassess the business and explore a sale or recapitalisation.

World Bank bans Kenyan auditors

The East African

Audit firm Ernst and Young, Kenya has been barred from World Bank projects for two-and-a-half years after it was found guilty of conflict of interest and corruption. The World Bank said it related to two public programmes in Somalia. The company admitted guilt for sanctionable practices and agreed to comply with integrity conditions.

Record gas imports to Mexico from US

El Financiero

Mexico imported 6.4 billion cubic feet of US natural gas per day between January and April, a new record, according to data from the US Energy Information Administration. Purchases of US natural gas were 8.25 per cent higher than in the same period in 2023, which represented its largest growth in the past three years. The US is the world's leading producer of natural gas, the World Energy Review said.

The Business Matrix

The day at a glance



LEISURE

Itsu ponders 80 new restaurants

Asian food chain Itsu has said it wants to expand in the UK. The chain is considering opening 80 new restaurants and has appointed property group Savills to advise on its plans. Itsu is seeking to grow in London as well as in cities such as Liverpool, Birmingham, Cardiff, and Glasgow.

HOMEWARE

Topps Tiles sales in further decline

Topps Tiles has reported a further decline in sales in the third quarter, as it coped with "challenging" market conditions. Sales fell 6.2 per cent in the first 39 weeks of its financial year, it said, from a 5.8 per cent decline last reported, with "subdued demand" in its main domestic markets.

SUPERMARKETS

Sainsbury's wins top grocer title

Sainsbury's has been named the UK Grocer of the Year. It is the first time the supermarket chain has secured the top award since 2007, beating last year's winner M&S, as well as Tesco, Lidl, Aldi and social enterprise The Company Shop. It won praise for gaining shopper spend from both Aldi and Lidl amid the cost of living crisis.

IRELAND

Economy could enter recession

The Irish economy could experience another technical recession this year, the Bank of Ireland said. Its economic outlook revised down its GDP growth forecast to 1 per cent. The revision reflects a drop in contract manufacturing, where Irish-based multinationals contract overseas firms to produce goods.

SPORT

Manchester Utd plans 250 job cuts

Manchester United FC is looking to cut about 250 jobs. The redundancies would include all departments and levels of the club, except for its charitable arm, the Manchester United Foundation. The club had about 1,112 staff as of June last year, meaning the cuts amount to about 22 per cent of its workforce. **PAGE 50**

LEISURE

Hawksmoor chain is put up for sale

The restaurant chain Hawksmoor has been put up for sale in a deal that could value the company at a reported £100m. Hawksmoor operates 13 locations, including 10 in the UK. Rare Restaurants, the owner of rival Gaucho, is also exploring a sale of the business having appointed Clearwater M&A advisers.

PHARMA

GSK takes over vaccines business

Drugmaker GSK bought partner CureVac out of their alliance on flu and Covid-19 vaccine development. GSK, one of the world's largest vaccine makers, will now take control of CureVac's leading experimental vaccines to fight infections, such as seasonal flu and bird flu.

INVESTMENTS

Record £11.4bn for equity funds

UK investors added a record £11.4bn into equity funds over the first six months of 2024, as the prospect of further central bank interest rate cuts fuelled demand for riskier assets, fund network Calastone said. Half-year funds into shares were the highest in its 10-year records.

FTSE 100 up 0.61% at 8,171.12

Company	Price	Chg %	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg %	High	Low	Company	Price	Chg %	High	Low
3i Group	3008.0	-1.22%	3180.0	1843.5	GSK	1503.5	-	1823.5	1302.6	Rio Tinto	5329.0	+3.08%	5910.0	4509.5
Admiral	2573.0	+1.18%	2870.0	2010.0	Haleon	326.1	+1.08%	371.2	306.8	Rolls-Royce	455.8	+2.15%	488.5	143.8
Airtel Africa	118.5	+1.63%	132.5	90.2	Halma	2717.0	+1.30%	2750.0	1802.0	Sage	1081.0	+0.56%	1285.0	892.4
Anglo Amer	2425.5	+1.23%	2813.0	1630.0	Hargreaves Lans	1115.0	-0.62%	1169.0	676.4	Sainsbury(J)	254.6	+1.68%	311.2	243.8
Antofagasta	2153.0	+3.36%	2425.0	1280.0	Hikma Pharma	1823.0	-1.19%	2222.0	1711.0	Schroders	374.4	+2.41%	470.0	346.2
AB Foods	2479.0	+0.53%	2765.0	1907.5	Howden Joinery	889.5	+2.60%	937.0	605.0	Scot Mort Inv Tst	890.6	+0.07%	946.1	634.0
Ashtead Group	5178.0	+0.90%	6180.0	4437.0	HSBC Hldgs	685.3	-0.52%	725.2	572.9	Segro	906.2	+1.82%	944.8	675.0
AstraZeneca	12020.0	-0.55%	12704.0	9461.0	IAG	173.3	+5.51%	187.7	137.0	Severn Trent	2408.0	+2.42%	2761.0	2243.0
Auto Trader Group	802.4	-0.05%	849.0	584.8	IMI	1780.0	+0.62%	1911.0	1429.0	Shell	2851.0	-0.64%	2961.0	2251.0
Aviva	474.7	+1.24%	501.4	366.0	Imperial Brands	2045.0	+1.54%	2077.0	1553.5	Smith&Neph	986.2	+1.36%	1264.5	887.0
BAE Systems	1277.5	+0.75%	1415.2	883.4	Informa	846.6	+1.66%	880.6	684.0	Smith (DS)	426.0	+0.95%	429.6	260.5
Barclays	218.2	+3.51%	224.3	128.1	IntCont Htlis	8220.0	+0.64%	8790.0	5184.0	Smiths Gp	1723.0	+1.89%	1776.5	1517.5
Barratt Dev	487.0	+1.90%	582.6	384.1	Intermediate Cap	2208.0	+1.66%	2448.0	1244.9	Smurfit Kappa Grp	3508.0	+0.40%	3910.0	2528.0
BAT	2455.0	+0.90%	2742.0	2233.0	Intertek	4746.0	+0.08%	5145.0	3746.0	Spirax Group	8585.0	+1.54%	11280.0	7900.0
Beazley	654.5	+0.61%	715.0	485.8	JD Sports Fashion	112.9	-4.00%	177.8	103.0	SSE	1814.5	+1.62%	1932.5	1485.0
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	4708.0	+1.42%	5360.0	3801.0	Kingfisher	252.8	+0.80%	274.0	198.3	Stan Chart	722.6	+1.40%	796.0	571.0
B&M&ValRtl	435.9	-0.84%	618.2	433.5	Land Secs	637.0	+1.43%	729.4	551.2	Taylor Wimpey	147.5	+1.97%	153.4	98.9
BP	482.6	-0.42%	562.3	441.1	Legal & Gen	230.8	+1.76%	259.0	203.1	Tesco	304.2	-0.07%	316.1	217.5
BT	138.1	+0.66%	145.9	101.7	Lloyds Bk Gp	55.9	+1.71%	57.4	39.4	Unilever	4302.0	-0.14%	4464.0	3680.5
Bunzl	3032.0	+1.13%	3306.0	2680.0	LondonMetric Prop	193.2	+0.47%	210.8	152.3	United Group	906.5	+1.74%	1069.0	834.3
Burberry	877.2	+3.49%	2275.0	844.6	Lon Stock Ex	9238.0	+0.11%	11080.2	7784.0	United Utilities	984.8	+2.71%	1139.5	896.8
Centrica	138.4	+1.73%	173.7	120.0	M&G	206.0	+1.93%	241.1	181.6	Vodafone	69.2	+0.29%	82.6	62.7
Coca-Cola HBC	2682.0	-0.07%	2830.0	2065.0	M&S	288.8	+1.30%	314.0	183.8	Vistry	1229.0	+3.28%	1383.0	630.5
Compass	2136.0	-0.33%	2332.0	1940.5	Melrose Ind	558.8	+1.27%	681.2	445.4	Weir Group	1964.0	+0.31%	2210.2	1652.5
Convatec	237.6	+1.02%	295.2	195.1	Mondi	1542.5	+2.83%	1719.8	1304.0	Whitbread	2956.0	+0.89%	3714.0	2848.0
Croda Intl	4090.0	+3.31%	6032.0	3849.0	National Grid	912.2	+2.15%	1052.8	645.0	WPP	730.2	+2.01%	878.6	656.0
Darktrace	583.6	+0.48%	625.9	271.4	NatWest Group	321.5	+1.39%	329.8	168.0					
DCC	5620.0	+0.99%	6075.0	4145.0	Next	911.20	+0.73%	9530.0	6492.0					
Diageo	2508.5	+1.83%	3509.0	2452.0	Pearson	984.0	+0.68%	1046.5	809.6					
Diploma	4152.0	+1.91%	4340.0	2772.9	Pershing Square	4142.0	-0.19%	4368.0	2782.0					
easyJet	462.9	+4.21%	591.1	350.0	Persimmon	1421.0	+2.27%	1506.0	925.0					
Entain	632.0	+2.17%	1414.5	617.8	Phoenix	536.0	+1.90%	564.8	436.4					
Experian	3687.0	+0.71%	3796.0	2366.0	Prudential	720.4	+2.16%	1123.0	684.7					
F&C Inv Trust	1010.0	+0.60%	1058.0	825.7	Reckitt Ben	4231.0	-0.63%	6006.0	4102.6					
Fraser's Group	863.5	-0.06%	949.5	674.5	RELX	3570.0	-0.14%	3675.0	2432.0					
Fresnillo	574.0	+4.08%	647.5	435.2	Rentokil Initial	464.7	+2.56%	663.8	387.8					
Glencore	477.0	+2.31%	506.7	365.3	Rightmove	538.6	+1.16%	603.0	457.7					

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Markets

FTSE 100	8171.1	+0.61%
FTSE 250	20529.4	+1.66%
FTSE All Share	4463.1	+0.75%
FTSE Eurofirst300	2042.7	+0.68%
Dow Jones*	39298.1	-0.09%
S&P 500*	5535.6	+0.48%
Nasdaq*	18185.8	+0.87%
DAX	18374.5	+1.16%
CAC 40	7632.1	+1.24%
Hang Seng	17978.6	+1.18%
Nikkei	40580.8	+1.26%

€1.1819 +0.14¢	\$1.2764 +0.91¢	\$2,362.9 +\$38.94	\$86.37 -\$0.22
EURO/ POUND	DOLLAR/ POUND	GOLD Per troy ounce, London pm fix	OIL Brent crude, per barrel

the markets

The **FTSE 100** rose by 49.92 points, or 0.61 per cent, to close yesterday at 8,171.12. The biggest risers were **IAG**, up 9.05p to 173.3p, and **easyJet**, up 18.7p to 462.9p.

The biggest fallers were **JD Sports**, down 4.7p to 112.9p, and **3i Group**, down 37p to 3,008p. In France, the **CAC 40** was up by 1.24 per cent, while the **DAX** rose by 1.16 per cent in Germany. The price of **Brent crude oil** fell to \$86.37 a barrel.

The **pound** fared well against both the **dollar** and the **euro** – rising 0.91 cents to be worth \$1.2764 and 0.14 cents to close at €1.1819 by the close of trading in London.

ADVICE CLINIC

Loyal customers deserve the same deals as new ones

Ask Rocio



Your questions about business

Dear Rocio, How can we ensure consumers get a fair deal for energy? Name and address supplied

Rocio says: When it comes to getting the best deal, who should energy companies prioritise? Do they entice new customers with low prices or reward existing ones for their loyalty?

The question has been highlighted after the energy regulator Ofgem hinted it was minded to remove the ban on acquisition-only tariffs – bargain deals only available to new customers – introduced in April 2022.

This ban, deemed a temporary fix at the height of the energy crisis to stabilise the market, has helped give customers confidence their supplier is acting in their best interests.

Removing it would allow energy suppliers to attract new customers with cheaper options or lure switchers from rivals. It could come into force from next October. A decision is expected this month.

Which? believes removing the ban is a mistake. It would be unfair for existing customers not to have the



Consumers usually end up with higher energy bills when firms collapse GETTY

same access to the best deals that new customers could enjoy.

These so-called “loyalty penalties” aren’t a new phenomenon. They became such an issue in the insurance sector the regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority, had to step in and ban firms charging existing customers more than new ones.

Our research underlines the per-

ceived unfairness. A national survey of over 2,000 people found more than 80 per cent thought existing customers facing higher rates than new ones was unfair. Only one in 10 thought it was fair.

We, along with others including E.ON, Octopus, So Energy, Rebel Energy and fellow consumer groups End Fuel Poverty Coalition, Citizens

Advice and Fair by Design, wrote to Ofgem highlighting the inherent unfairness of penalising existing customers, but also raising the potential impact on those in debt, who may be unable to switch providers.

There are also lessons from history for Ofgem to heed. The pitfalls of encouraging firms to offer unsustainably cheap deals to new customers contributed to over 30 suppliers going bust in recent years.

The result was billions of pounds of energy costs left behind by those suppliers that still needed paying despite them leaving the market – in many cases taking customers’ hard-earned money with them. Consumers ultimately paid the money back through higher bills.

Over time, as more consumers upgrade their homes with greener technologies, the relationship between customer and supplier will need to be deeper than the shallow focus on how much switching on price is taking place.

Allowing suppliers to revert to old ways of enticing new customers and penalising existing ones risks weakening that relationship. The ban on this practice has done vital work to protect customers from having their loyalty taken advantage of.

Puzzle solutions

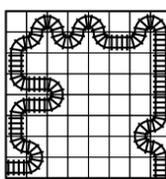
Dominoes

4	4	2	6	1	1	6	2
5	3	5	1	0	3	6	2
6	1	3	0	1	1	5	5
0	6	3	2	3	2	6	4
0	4	3	4	0	6	1	5
5	0	1	6	2	5	0	2
3	0	4	3	5	4	4	2

Journey Finder

1	3	3	2	1	4
2	4	2	4	3	1
1	3	2	1	4	2
2	1	4	3	1	2
3	1	4	4	4	3
4	2	3	3	2	1

Train Tracks



Number Square

2	-	7	x	8	-40
x	-	+	-	x	
6	+	9	x	1	15
+	-	x	-	-	
3	x	4	x	5	60
4		64		3	

5	x	7	+	9	44
+	-	-	+		
8	+	4	x	6	72
+	+	+	-		
2	-	1	x	3	3
15		3		12	

idoku

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

Kakuro

				10	16				
				1	4				
				9	7	8		9	7
				4	2	1		2	1
				8	3			3	4
				9	1	8		2	5
				7	2	9		8	7
				2	3	1		3	2
				9	7			9	8
				8	3			2	1

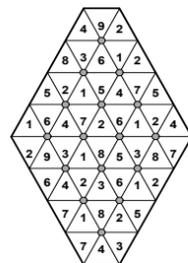
Wijuko

9	4	8
6	5	3
7	2	1

Binary

0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0

Number Hexagon



Zygolex

LEFT TO RIGHT:
hack; grip; clock; clasp;
hock; grasp; pawn;
lawn; grass; pain;
brass; ache; metal;
grain; brash

Daily Quiz

- 42
- Horseshoe
- Madeira
- Julia Cameron

Word Ladder

JUST	CATS
BUST	COTS
BUNT	COOS
BUNK	COOK
PUNK	HOOK
PINK	HOOF

Sudoku

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

Jigsawdoku

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

ABC Logic

	B	A	C	C	B
B	B	A	C		
A		A	C	B	B
C				B	A
A		B	A	A	
A	A	C	B		
A	C		A		

Yesterday's Codeword 3925

1	E	T	Z	F	J	X	S	Y	O	A	D	B	G
14	U	V	W	L	I	R	C	P	H	Q	N	M	K

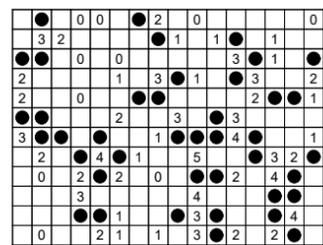
Word Wheel

NINE-LETTER WORD rebellion
OTHER WORDS beer, bier, boiler; bonier, bore, born, borne, brine, brio, broil, enrol, erne, ire, iron, leer, libero, liner, lonelier, loner, lore, nobler, nor, orb, ore, rebel, reel, rein, rib, rille, rill, rob, robe, robin, roe, role, roll

Killer Sudoku

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

Minesweeper



Number Tower

899
531 368
295 236 132
153 142 94 38
76 77 65 29 9
38 38 39 26 3 6
15 23 15 24 2 1 5

Calculatedoku

5	4	6	2	1	3
1	2	3	5	6	4
6	1	4	3	5	2
4	5	2	1	3	6
3	6	5	4	2	1
2	3	1	6	4	5

Word Square

S	I	Z	E
I	B	E	X
Z	E	T	A
E	X	A	M

Rectangles

2	6	2
10		
2	12	4
10		
5	6	15
5	5	14

Pathfinder



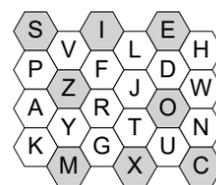
Chain Link

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4	5	6	2	3	1
1	6	2	3	4	5
6	2	4	1	5	3
5	3	1	6	2	4
2	4	3	5	1	6

Futoshiki

5	1	4	>	2	<	3
4	<	5	3	1	2	
2	<	4	5	>	3	1
1	<	3	>	2	<	4
3	>	2	1	5	>	4

Hexalex



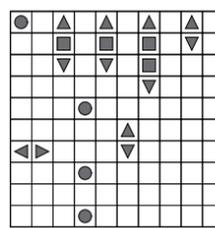
Word Fit

P	R	E	C	E	D	E	H	O	P		
R	E	I	N	A	N	Y	W	R	I	S	T
D	E	C	R	E	E	D	P	R			
O	E	E	C	P	A	G	E	S			
I	N	E	F	T	M	V	A	G	E	S	
G	U	M	E	Y	E	S	M	A			
I	L	L	A	L	D	P	I	G			
X	O	L	W	A	S	O	S	O	P	A	R
Y	E	R	R	A	T	E	I				
N	A	R	R	A	T	E	U				
P							M				

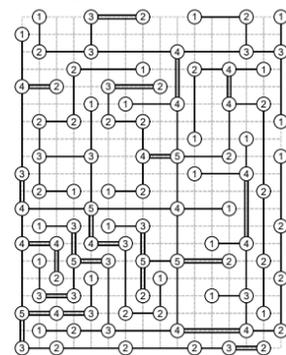
Knight's Tour

86	83	76	59	6	91	100	57	8	11
77	60	85	92	99	58	7	10	53	56
84	87	82	75	90	5	98	55	12	9
61	78	93	88	97	74	49	52	3	54
94	81	62	69	50	89	4	1	48	13
63	68	79	96	73	46	51	26	43	2
80	95	34	67	70	27	44	47	14	25
33	64	31	38	45	72	15	22	19	42
30	35	66	71	28	37	40	17	24	21
65	32	29	36	39	16	23	20	41	18

Battleships



Bridges



Word Search

M	S	V	N	B	D	U	O	F	A	Q	S	C	G	Y
A	P	L	Z	L	Z	U	C	A	X	J	Y	H	C	
I														

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JUNE 2025

Tue 3 **Embark the brand-new 5★ Vista and depart Southampton for your all-inclusive voyage**
Wed 4 **Saint-Malo, France**
★Recommended Excursion*: **Mystical Mont St. Michel**
Gaze in awe at breathtaking Mont Saint-Michel, an iconic medieval hamlet clustered on a tiny island. Cherish the village's marvelous Benedictine abbey, perched atop the islet's bluffs
Thu 5 **Relaxing at sea in luxury**
Fri 6 - **Bordeaux, France** (overnight – depart early pm)
Sat 7 ★Recommended Excursion*: **Fort Medoc & Lanessan Castle**
Drive through the legendary Médoc wine-growing region during a coach journey. Contemplate Fort Médoc, a 17th-century stronghold named a UNESCO World Heritage site. View several of the fort's intriguing facilities, including its elegant entrance and underground hall. Discover Château Lanessan, an illustrious winery anchored by a marvellous 19th-century manor. Savour a delectable tasting of two distinct vintages at the château
Sun 8 **San Sebastián, Spain**
★Recommended Excursion*: **San Sebastián & Tapas Tasting**
Walk the narrow, pedestrian-only streets of Old Town and admire the architecture. Pause at the lookout at Monte Igueldo for a panoramic view of San Sebastián. Dine on pinxtos, the Basque version of tapas, at an atmospheric bar in Old Town

Mon 9 **Gijón, Spain**
★Recommended Excursion*: **Gijon Highlights and Cider Tasting**
Admire Mirador de la Providencia, an inspired man-made lookout that extends toward the sea. Enjoy unhindered views of Gijon's skyline and the dramatic Asturian coastline from one of the Mirador's balconies. Relish a tasting of traditional Asturian sidra, or cider, at a renowned cellar in Gijon. Tour the streets of Gijon's alluring Old Town, home to splendid medieval plazas and monuments
Tue 10 **La Coruña, Spain**
★Recommended Excursion*: **La Coruña through the Eyes of Picasso**
Visit the home where teenager Pablo Picasso lived for four years with his family. View replicas of paintings and drawings that Picasso created while living in the home. Walk through La Coruña while the guide points out attractions Picasso would have known
Wed 11 **Bilbao, Spain**
Thu 12 **La Rochelle, France**
Fri 13 **Brest, France** (depart early pm)
★Recommended Excursion*: **Panoramic Brest & Mythical Coast**
Appreciate sweeping views of Brest's imposing 15th century castle from the town's handsome harbor
Sat 14 **Paris (from Le Havre), France** (depart late night)
Sun 15 **Arrive in Southampton**

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Today's Weather

Light scattered showers are expected, especially in Scotland. Patchy cloud cover will allow for sunny intervals across England and Wales.

Today's high	Today's low	Moon Phase	Sunrise	Sunset
20°	5°		04:50	21:19

Around Britain

City	Temp (Midday yesterday)	Rain (mm)	Sun (hrs)
Aberdeen	12	R	3.7
Aberporth	15	DR	3.4
Aberystwyth	15	SH	1.2
Aviemore	13	C	3.7
Belfast	16	SH	15.0
Birmingham	15	C	3.4
Bournemouth	19	C	0.1
Bridlington	16	C	4.4
Bristol	15	SH	1.5
Cardiff	16	DR	0.8
Cromer	15	C	3.4
Durham	15	C	9.8
Eastbourne	17	R	0.3
Edinburgh	14	C	2.1
Eskdalemuir	12	SH	16.7
Glasgow	13	R	1.3
Holyhead	15	DR	1.2
Hove	17	R	0.3
Hull	16	C	3.5
Huntingdon	15	DR	4.5
Ipswich	14	C	5.6
Isle of Man	14	R	14.2
Isle of Wight	15	SH	0.6
Kinlochewe	13	R	17.5
Kirkwall	12	R	5.1
Leeds	16	C	4.3
Lerwick	11	C	5.1
Leuchars	14	C	1.5
Lincoln	15	C	4.3
Liverpool	17	C	5.3
London	17	SH	0.4
Manchester	16	C	4.0
Margate	16	C	4.4
Milford Haven	16	R	2.6
Morecambe	15	C	9.8
Newcastle	16	C	5.6
Norwich	15	C	4.0
Nottingham	15	C	4.0
Okehampton	15	DR	0.2
Oxford	15	C	0.7
Plymouth	16	SH	0.2
Portland	18	C	0.0
Portsmouth	16	SH	0.3
Prestwick	13	R	5.0
Rhyl	17	C	4.8
Sheffield	15	C	3.9
Shrewsbury	15	C	3.3
Skegness	14	R	3.4
Southend	17	C	3.6
Stoke	14	C	4.8
Stormoway	13	R	7.3
Swansea	15	R	2.0
Tiree	14	SH	14.0

Global

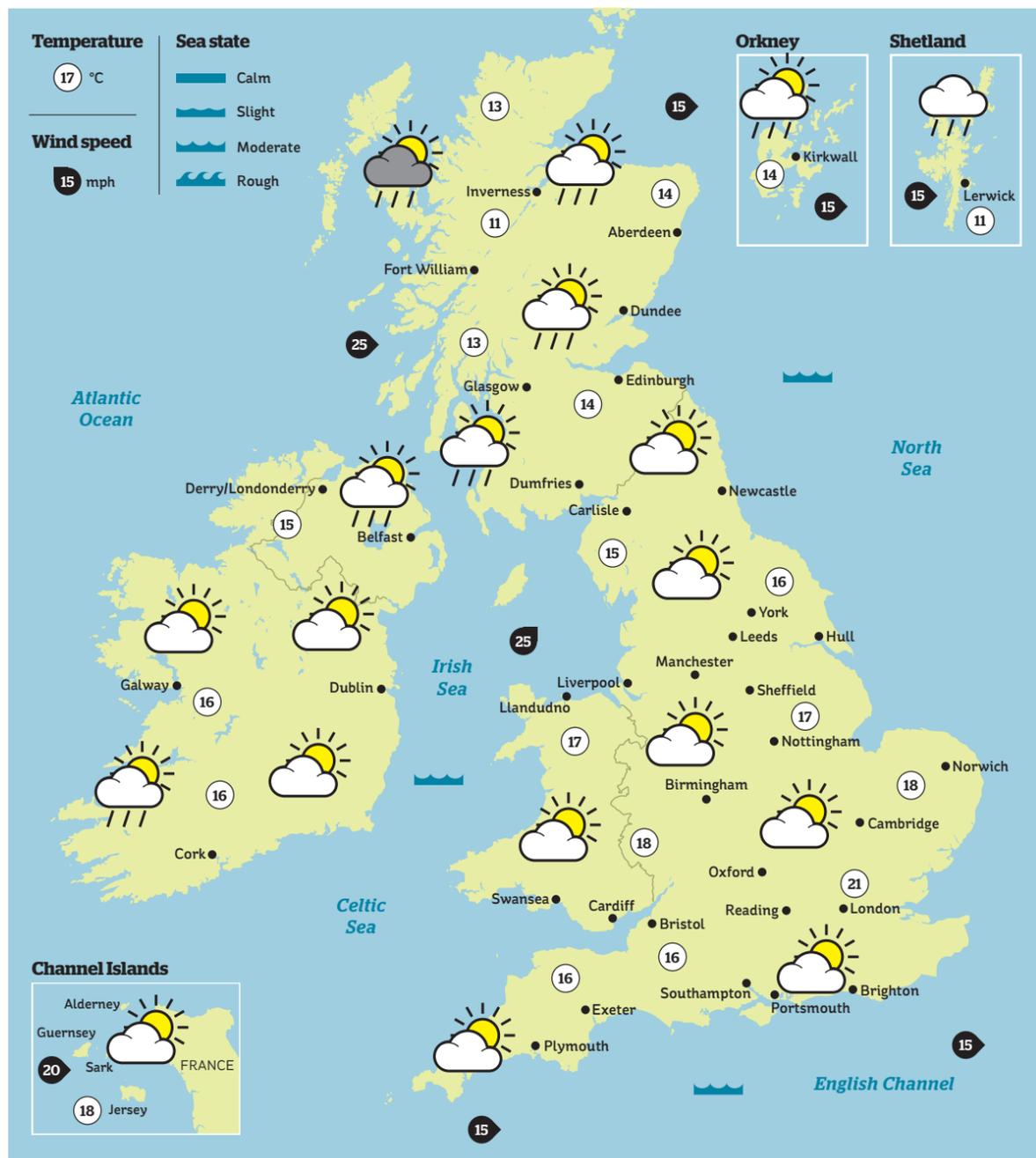
City	Temp (in °C)	Cond	City	Temp (in °C)	Cond
Abu Dhabi	40	S	Miami	29	SH
Abuja	28	SH	Milan	20	R
Alicante	29	S	Moscow	30	S
Amsterdam	13	R	Mumbai	32	TH
Athens	33	S	Munich	14	TH
Bangkok	29	F	New York	27	S
Barcelona	24	S	Nice	25	F
Beijing	26	S	Palma	26	S
Berlin	16	C	Paris	19	C
Brussels	14	R	Prague	18	C
Budapest	23	F	Reykjavik	13	DR
Chicago	23	R	Rio	24	S
Delhi	34	C	Rome	25	TH
Dubai	41	S	Stockholm	17	TH
Dublin	19	C	Strasbourg	17	R
Frankfurt	18	SH	Sydney	15	F
Geneva	20	C	Tenerife	25	S
Helsinki	14	R	Tokyo	31	S
Hong Kong	31	S	Toronto	23	S
Istanbul	32	S	Vancouver	19	F
Johannesburg	17	S	Vienna	19	C
Lisbon	28	S	Warsaw	20	SH
Los Angeles	22	S	Washington	28	F
Madrid	30	S	Wellington	11	SH

Key: C=Cloudy, DR=Drizzle, F=Fair, FG=Fog, H=Hail, M=Mist, R=Rain, S=Sunny, SH=Showers, SL=Sleet, SN=Snow, SS=Sandstorm, TH=Thunderstorm

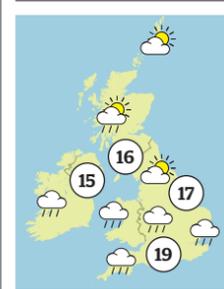
Air Pollution Index

Air pollution levels Low (1) Very high (10) uk-air.defra.gov.uk

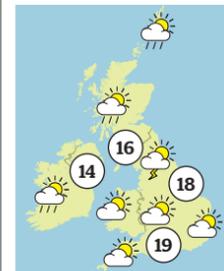
Region	Today	Tomorrow
Highlands	2	2
North East Scotland	2	2
Central Scotland	2	2
Scottish Borders	2	2
Northern Ireland	2	2
North West & Mersey	2	2
North East	2	2
Yorkshire & Humber	2	2
North Wales	2	2
West Midlands	2	2
East Midlands	2	2
South Wales	2	2
South West	2	2
South East	2	2
Eastern	2	2
Greater London	3	2



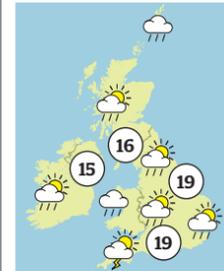
Five-day outlook



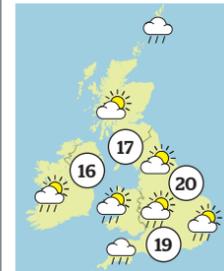
FRIDAY Heavy rain and cloud expected over Southern Ireland, England and Wales over the day. Spells of sunshine and light cloud elsewhere.



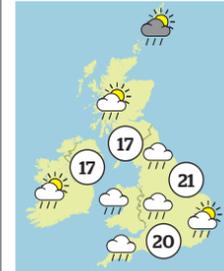
SATURDAY Heavy rain and cloud is forecast across North England and Scotland until early evening. Sunny spells and strong winds in South England.



SUNDAY Light patchy rain is forecast across the UK, with widespread cloud. This rain may be locally heavy, particularly in parts of Scotland.



MONDAY Scattered showers are forecast across the UK, which are expected to be the heaviest in Southern England. Light and variable winds.



TUESDAY A mix of sunshine and showers across the UK, with wet weather mostly confined to northern areas over the day. Light and variable winds.

GENERAL SITUATION A well-developed low pressure system situated to the north-west of Scotland will begin to fill today, as it tracks eastwards towards Scandinavia. Vast areas of occlusion from this system will bring heavy rain to much of Scotland and parts of Northern England today, as well as heavy winds in the west. Trailing cold and warm fronts from a low-pressure system in the Atlantic are expected to bring rain to the south-west overnight.

Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: The morning is forecast to see scattered showers and light drizzle in western coastal areas, with moderate rain expected in western Ulster. Elsewhere

will remain dry, with scattered cloud and little in the way of sunshine. Becoming dry by evening, yet staying mostly cloudy. Moderate westerly winds. Max temp: 14C. Tonight, risk of showers. Min temp: 17C.

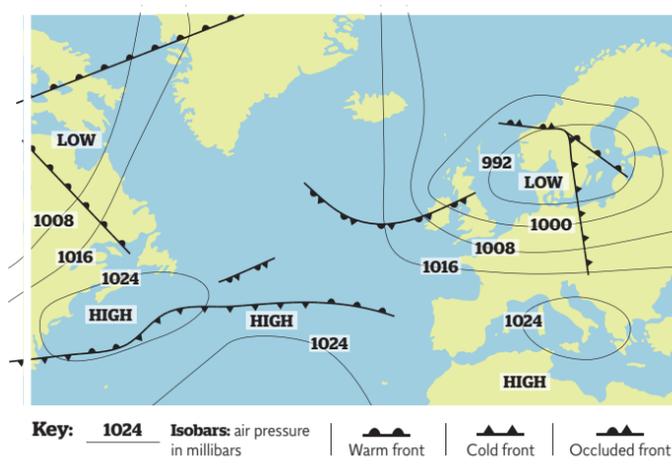
N Isles: An overcast and grey day, with little in the way of sunshine. Light rain and heavy cloud is expected from the early hours of the morning. This wet weather will be heaviest around midday, before then easing off slightly over the afternoon. Moderate westerly winds, heavier in northern areas. Max temp: 11C. Tonight, further rain. Min temp: 9C.

NW Scotland, NE Scotland, W Isles, SE Scotland, SW Scotland, IoM, NE England, NW England: A wet and windy day forecast. Heavy rain and showers is expected throughout the day across Scotland, with some showers turning locally heavy at times, particularly over the Highlands. This wet weather will persist throughout the day. Winds will be moderate and westerly, strongest in western areas. Max temp: 16C. Tonight, showers remaining. Min temp: 5C.

E England, E Anglia, SE England, London, Midlands: The morning will be settled and fine, with some early spells of sunshine forecast. From midday, cloud will start to build,

however sunny spells can still be expected, particularly in the south. Staying warm and dry over the afternoon. Moderate westerly winds, which will be stronger in the south-east. Max temp: 20C. Tonight, dry yet cloudy. Min temp: 11C.

N Wales, S Wales, SW England, Cen S England, Channel Is: The morning will see some patchy cloud, with a risk of light, isolated showers in North Wales and South-West England. Over the afternoon, this cloud will break at times, giving way to some spells of sunshine. Patchy rain is set to move over the south-west from late evening. Moderate westerly winds. Max temp: 17C. Tonight, patchy rain. Min temp: 10C.



SYNOPTIC PRESSURE A low moving east away from Iceland will begin to fill and weaken. The large region of high pressure that has been dominating the North Atlantic recently will begin to move further south away from Europe. As this happens, a broad area of high pressure will develop across continental Europe and the Mediterranean Sea.

HIGHS AND LOWS (Yesterday, up to 2pm)	HOURS OF DARKNESS
Warmest: Exeter Airport, Devon, 21C	Aberdeen 22.06-04.21
Colest: Balmoral, Aberdeenshire, 6C	Birmingham 21.31-04.52
Wettest: Levens Hall, Cumbria, 38.6mm	Bristol 21.28-05.01
Sunniest: Camborne, Cornwall, 4.6hrs	Cardiff 21.31-05.03
	Glasgow 22.03-04.40
	Hull 21.33-04.39
	Inverness 22.17-04.24
	Liverpool 21.41-04.51
	London 21.19-04.51
	Manchester 21.39-04.48
	Stormoway 22.31-04.29
	Swansea 21.35-05.05
	York 21.37-04.40

CYCLING TOUR DE FRANCE

Cool Cavendish finally breaks stage-win record of legend Merckx

By George Simms

Mark Cavendish has won a record-breaking 35th Tour de France stage, finally overtaking Eddy Merckx as the all-time leader.

Cavendish had last won a stage in 2021, 13 years after his first in 2008, but returned in 2024 specifically to break Merckx's record.

And the 39-year-old Astana-Qazaqstan rider passed the milestone in the fifth stage of this year's race, a 177.4km route from Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne to Saint-Vulbas near Lyon.

He came off the wheel of Fabio Jakobsen late on and held off Belgian Jasper Philipsen before celebrating with his wife and children.

"I just wanted to get the run in to do it," Cavendish said after the race. "I'm in a little bit of disbelief. Astana have put a big gamble on this year, we gambled coming here to try and win one stage.

"You have to go all-in and we've done it. We worked it exactly how we wanted to do, how we built the team, the equipment, every little detail has been put towards today."

Slovenian Tadej Pogacar retains the yellow jersey, 45 second ahead of Remco Evenepoel.

Cavendish had almost broken

the record in 2023, coming within a dropped chain of passing the milestone in stage seven en route to Bordeaux.

Cavendish then broke his collarbone the following day, ruling him out of the rest of the race and leading to him reversing his retirement announcement to return in 2024.

He then struggled through the opening stage last Saturday from Florence to Rimini, appearing to vomit on his bike, suggesting his return may have been in vain.

But a man known for extraordinary comebacks has lived up to his reputation once again with a truly remarkable stage win.

The "Manx Missile" has previously won the Tour de France green jersey points classification in 2011 and 2021, also winning the World Championship in 2011.

In 2021, Tour director Christian Prudhomme called Cavendish "the greatest sprinter in the history of the Tour and of cycling", and this record appears to confirm that.

And in Netflix's Tour de France documentary *Unchained*, Cavendish said: "Ultimately, I don't want to share the record.

"So I spent a long time thinking, 'F**k, can I do another year?' And, er, yeah, let's just do it. F**k it."

35

Mark Cavendish won his 35th stage his first in 2008, eclipsing Eddy Merckx in the process



Mark Cavendish throws up his arms as he crosses the line yesterday AP

Eight stages of the Tour's 111th edition were considered suited to sprinters like Cavendish, meaning he had multiple attempts to break the record.

In the days before the race began, Cavendish said: "I know what it takes to be at the highest level. The work that goes into it, especially when you're not as good physically as other bike riders.

"I love this sport - I've always loved everything about this sport, especially this race. It's quite beautiful

that I start in Florence. I lived here for 10 years. I'm training on the same roads I did throughout my career. Taking myself out of the fact that I have a job to do, on an emotional level, I couldn't have asked for more.

"I feel the same as last year. I started that race enjoying every moment of what I do. Now, instead of having that one month of having it, I have a whole year of it. I'm more ready [for retirement] now than I was last year. I was ready last year, but I'm so happy I carried on."

How the Manx Missile compares to Belgian great

By Tom White

Sir Mark Cavendish's stage win sees the Manxman move clear of the great Eddy Merckx at the top of the charts, but how does he compare to the great Belgian?

Merckx's record of 34 wins stood alone from 1975, when he claimed his last two stage wins on his penultimate appearance in the race, until Cavendish matched it in 2021.

The Manx Missile drew level with victory on stage 13 in Carcassonne, his fourth win of the 2021 Tour, some five years after he reached 30 with four wins during the 2016 Tour.

Cavendish's best year came in 2009 with six stage wins - two short of Merckx's eight in both 1970 and 1974, which is tied with Charles Pelissier (1930) and Freddy Maertens (1976) as the all-time record.

He won five stages in both 2010 and 2011, added four in 2008, 2016 and 2021, three in 2012, two the following year and one in 2015.

Cavendish is riding in his 15th Tour compared to Merckx's seven, but has contested only 32 more stages than Merckx's 183, winning 35 out of 215 for a strike rate of almost one in six.

The contents of Merckx's wardrobe are what truly set him apart. While the British rider finished with the green jersey in 2011 and 2021, Merckx, on his debut in 1969, won the yellow jersey as the overall race winner, the green as top sprinter and the King of the Mountains and combination classifications as well as the combativity award - he remains the only rider ever to sweep the major classifications.

Results Service

CRICKET

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP - DIVISION ONE

SURREY V ESSEX

THE OVAL (Day 4 of 4): Surrey (20pts) beat Essex (3pts) by 145 runs
Essex elected to bowl

SURREY - First Innings 262 (Smith 100)

ESSEX - First Innings 180 (Walter 64)

SURREY - Second Innings 278 (Patel 107, Smith 70)

ESSEX - Second Innings 21-2

Second Innings Contd

	Runs	6s	4s	Bls	Min
D Elgar c Sudharshan b Worrall	60	0	6	95	154
*T Westley c Foakes b Lawes	28	0	5	50	64
M J J Critchley c Foakes b Lawes	0	0	0	1	1
P I Walter b Lawes	56	0	8	87	123
*M K S Pepper c Sibley b Lawes	26	0	4	34	48
S R Harmer c Foakes b Worrall	7	0	1	42	57
S Snater lbw b Clark	7	0	1	24	31
J A Porter not out	0	0	0	0	1
J M Cox abs	0	0	0	0	0
Extras (b13 lb4 nb4)	21				
Total (611 overs)	215				

Fall: 1-11, 2-17, 3-86, 4-86, 5-117, 6-181, 7-194, 8-215, 9-215
Bowling: D J Worrall 18-3-71-2, J Clark 22-1-3-56-3, J P A Taylor 6-0-41-0, T Lawes 13-4-26-4, D W Lawrence 2-0-4-0.

Umpires: P J Hartley and G D Lloyd.

SOMERSET V WARWICKSHIRE

TAUNTON (Day 4 of 4): Somerset (20pts) beat Warwickshire (7pts) by 5 wickets
Somerset won toss

WARWICKSHIRE - First Innings 412

SOMERSET - First Innings 284

WARWICKSHIRE - Second Innings 281-8

(Bethell 66, Yates 57, Davies 50, Overton 4-57)

Second Innings Contd

	Runs	6s	4s	Bls	Min
*M G K Burgess not out	17	0	2	18	28
Extras (b4 lb1 nb4)	9				
Total (for 8 dec. 832 overs)	281				

Fall: 1-106, 2-110, 3-171, 4-175, 5-177, 6-229, 7-275, 8-281
Bowling: J H Davey 12-2-36-0, C Overton 19-4-57-4, M J Leach 32-2-88-97, 3, M Pretorius 11-0-44-0, K L Aldridge 9-1-42-0.

SOMERSET - Second Innings

T Kohler-Cadmore c Barnard b Hannon-Dalby

	Runs	6s	4s	Bls	Min
A R I Umeed c Burgess b Hannon-Dalby	30	0	6	26	31
*A Lammonby c Barnard b Booth	26	0	4	43	44
T B Abell not out	152	2	14	207	292
T Banton c Yates b Barnard	81	2	7	109	121
M Pretorius c Barnard b Rhodes	14	0	2	10	11
T J E K Rew not out	57	1	7	54	74
Extras (b2 lb1 w1)	4				
Total (for 5, 914 overs)	413				

Fall: 1-44, 2-77, 3-144, 4-282, 5-299
Bowling: C R Woakes 19-4-82-0, O J Hannon-Dalby 15-0-73-2, M Booth 9-4-0-69-1, E Barnard 18-1-56-1, J Bethell 18-2-73-0, R M Yates 5-0-18-0, W M H Rhodes 5-0-27-1, D R Mousley 2-0-12-0.

Umpires: R J Bailey and M Newell.
Hampshire v Kent. The Rose Bowl: Hampshire 505-8dec. (130.0 overs; J M Vince 211, B C Brown 110; J D M Evison 4-83) & 180-4 (22.1 overs; L A Dawson 56no).

Kent 343 (99.3 overs; J A Leaning 118, F I N Khushi 53, K H D Barker 4-86) & **340** (118.2 overs; B G Compton 92, H Z Finch 84; K J Abbott 5-89). **Hampshire (23pts) beat Kent (4pts) by 6 wickets.**

Lancashire v Nottinghamshire, Southport: Lancashire 353-9dec. (97.0 overs; K K Jennings 187no; L W James 4-61). **Nottinghamshire 126** (44.4 overs; B T Slater 64no; J M Anderson 7-35) & **270-4dec.** (102.0 overs; J M Clarke 115no). **Lancashire (14pts) drew with Nottinghamshire (11pts).**

Gloucestershire v Glamorgan, Cheltenham: Gloucestershire 179 (44.4 overs; T van der Gugten 5-59) & 610-5dec. (116.0 overs; J R Brace 204no, C T Bancroft 184, M A H Hammond 121, B J Webster 65no). **Glamorgan 197** (61.1 overs; B J Webster 5-17) & **592** (152.0 overs; S A Northeast 187, M Labuschagne 119). **Gloucestershire (11pts) tied with Glamorgan (11pts).**

THIRD ONE DAY INTERNATIONAL

New Zealand Women v England Women, Bristol: New Zealand Women 211-8 (42.0 overs; A C Kerr 57, L K Bell 5-37). **England Women 212-5** (38.4 overs; N R Sciver-Burnt 76no, A E Jones 50). **England Women beat New Zealand Women by 5 wickets.**

CYCLING

TOUR DE FRANCE, Stage 5 (Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne - Saint-Vulbas, 177km): 1 M Cavendish (GB) Astana Qazaqstan Team 4h 08m 46s, 2 J Philipsen (Bel) Alpein-Deceuninck 15 S Bennett (Rep Ire) Decathlon AG2R La Mondial, 25 D McLay (GB) ARKEA-B&B HOTELS, 35 J Stewart (GB) Israel-Premier Tech, 37 B Healy (Rep Ire) EF Education-EasyPost, 66 G Thomas (GB) INEOS Grenadiers, 71 A Yates (GB) UAE Team Emirates, 74 S Yates (GB) Team Jayco-AlUla, 123 B Turner (GB) INEOS Grenadiers all same time. **Overall:** 1 T Pogacar (Sloven) UAE Team Emirates 23h 15m 24s, 2 R Evenepoel (Bel) Soudal Quick-Step +45s, 13 A Yates (GB) UAE Team Emirates 3m 21s, 19 S Yates (GB) Team Jayco-AlUla +44.0, 29 G Thomas (GB) INEOS Grenadiers +72.4, 30 B Healy (Rep Ire) EF Education-EasyPost +81.2, 34 T Pidcock (GB) INEOS Grenadiers +131.2, 36 O Onley (GB) Team dsm-firmenich PostNL +135.1, 78 S Williams (GB) Israel-Premier Tech +48.59.

RACING

Bath - Firm

6.30 1. ABOLISH (W Carson) 11-2-2. **Lil Guff** 3-1. **Faro De San Juan** 11-2-5 ran. 5-2 fav Crimson Angel (5th) nk, 1/4l (A Carroll). **Placepot:** £230.90. **Quadpot:** £48.80.

Epsom Downs - Good-good to firm in places

6.50 1. HOT CASH (D Probert) 9-2-2. **Sir Peter Fossick** 7-2. **Jack Andrea** 10-1-7 ran. 9-4 fav Bracklesham Bay (6th) 1/4l, 5/4l (J Channon). **7.25 1. GET IT** (P Cosgrave) 11-4-2. **Mr Wagyu** 85-40 fav. **3. Princess Shabnam** 8-1. **6 ran.** 1/4l, 1/4l (G Baker). **8.00 1. INCREMENTAL** (D Murphy) 13-2-2. **Hallipon** 10-1-1. **3. Wahraan** 7-2. **8 ran.** 3-1 fav Atlantic Convoy (6th) 3l, 2l (M Bell). **9.00 1. LITTLE BOY BLUE** (R Havlin) 28-1-2. **Tropez Power** 11-2-3. **Mister Bluebird** 7-2 fav. **10 ran.** nk, 1/4l (W G M Turner). **Jackpot:** Not won, pool of £1554.90 carried over to Newbury. **Placepot:** £226.70. **Quadpot:** £60.00.

Musselburgh - Good-good to firm in places

3.30 1. CODE PURPLE (C Lee) 15-2-2. **Pembrokeshire** 7-1. **3. Purple Martini** 7-2 1t-fav. **10 ran.** 7-2 1t-fav Without Delay (9th) 1/4l, 2l (B Haslam). **Placepot:** £358.20. **Quadpot:** £29.70. **Place 6:** £295.66. **Place 5:** £24.17.

Thirsk - Good to soft-good in places

4.55 1. JEHANGEER (T Eaves) 13-2-2. **Manila Scouse** 11-1-3. **Summerhand** 15-8 fav. **9 ran.** 1/4l, hd (K Ryan). **Placepot:** £68.00. **Quadpot:** £4.90. **Place 6:** £88.4. **Place 5:** £62.7.

TENNIS

ALL ENGLAND LAWN TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS, WIMBLEDON:

Men's Singles First round: E Ruusuvaari (Fin) bt M McDonald (US) 7-6 (8-6) 4-6 5-7 7-6 (8-6) 6-3; A Rinderknech (Fr) bt K Nishikori (Japan) 5-7 6-4 6-7 (2-7) 6-3 6-2; (24) A TABILO (Chile) bt D EVANS (GB) 6-2 7-5 6-3; T Machac (Cz Rep) bt D Goffin (Bel) 3-6 3-6 6-4 6-1 7-6 (10-5); R Safiullin (Rus) bt (26) F CERUNDULO (Arg) 6-7 (5-7) 3-6 7-5 6-3 6-4; T Kokkinakis (Aus) bt (17) F AUGER-ALIASSIME (Can) 2-6 5-7 7-6 (11-9) 6-4 6-4; L POUILLER (Fr) bt L Djere (Serb) 3-6 7-6 (7-4) 3-6 6-3 6-1; Q Halys (Fr) bt L Djerer (Serb) 6-4 6-4 6-2; (21) K KHACHANOV (Rus) bt A Karatsev (Rus) 6-3 6-7 (4-7) 7-6 (13-11) 2-0 ret.

Men's Singles Second round: M Kecmanovic (Serb) bt (27) T GRIEKSPLOOR (Neth) 4-6 7-6 (9-7) 1-6 6-2 6-3; J Struff (Ger) bt (32) Z ZHANG (Chin) 5-7 6-3 7-6 (7-1) 7-6 (10-8); (5) D MEDVEDEV (Rus) bt A Muller (Fr) 6-7 (3-7) 7-6 (7-4) 6-4 7-5 (3) C ALCARAZ (Sp) bt A Vukic (Aus) 7-6 (7-5) 6-2 6-2; (29) F TIAFOE (US) bt B Coric (Croa) 7-6 (7-5) 6-2 6-2; (16) U HUMBERT (Fr) bt B Van de Zandschulp (Neth) 7-6 (11-9) 6-1 6-3; (12) T PAUL (US) bt O Virtanen (Fin) 4-6 6-3 5-7 7-5 6-4; (23) A BUBLIK (Kaz) bt A Cazaux (Fr) 6-4 7-6 (7-1) 6-4; R Bautista Agut (Sp) bt L Sonego (It) 6-3 3-6 6-3 6-4; F Fognini (It) bt (8) C RUUD (Nor) 6-4 7-5 6-7 (9-11) 6-3.

Women's Singles First round: (11) D COLLINS (US) bt C Tauson (Den) 6-3 7-6 (7-4); M Camila Osorio Serrano (Col) bt L Davis (US) 6-3 6-1; (20) B HADDAD MAIA (Br) bt M Frech (Pol) 7-5 6-3; (31) B KREJCIKOVA (Cz Rep) bt V Kudermetova (Rus) 7-6 (7-4) 6-7 (1-7) 7-5; K Volynets (US) bt M Lourdes Carle (Arg) 6-2 7-5; J Niemeier (Ger) bt V Golubic (Swt) 6-2 6-1; (21) E SVITOLINA (Ukr) bt M Linette (Pol) 7-5 6-7 (9-11) 6-3.

Women's Singles Second round: L Sun (NZ) bt Y Starodubtseva (Ukr) 4-6 6-3 6-2; L Zhu (Chin) bt (25) A PAVLYUCHENKOVA (Rus) 6-4 6-3; E RADUCANU (GB) bt E Mertens (Bel) 6-1 6-2; (9) M SAKKARI (Gr) bt A Rus (Neth) 7-5 6-3; (28) D YASTREMSKA (Ukr) bt V Gracheva (Fr) 3-6 6-4 7-6 (10-5); D Vekic (Croa) bt (3) E ANDREEVA (Rus) 6-2 6-3; (7) J PAOLINI (It) bt G Minnen (Bel) 7-6 (7-5) 6-2.

B Andreescu (Can) bt (26) L NOSKOVA (Cz Rep) 6-3 7-6 (7-5); D Shnaider (Rus) bt S Stephens (US) 6-1 6-1; (19) E NAVARRO (US) bt N Osaka (Japan) 6-4 6-1; S KARTAL (GB) bt C Burel (Fr) 6-3 5-7 6-3; (2) C GAUFF (US) bt A Todoni (Rom) 6-2 6-1.

Today, Centre Court: J Feanley (GB) v (2) N Djokovic (Serb); (1) J Swiatek (Pol) v P Martic (Croa); R Hijikata (Aus) & J Peers (Aus) v A Murray (GB) & J Murray (GB). **No 1 Court:** (32) K Boulter (GB) v H Dart (GB); (28) J Draper (GB) v C Norrie (GB); M Giron (US) v (4) A Zverev (Ger). **No 2 Court:** (7) H Hurkacz (Pol) v A Fils (Fr); (10) O Jabeur (Tun) v R Montgomery (US); (4) E Rybakina (Kaz) v L Siegemund (Ger). **No 3 Court:** Munar (Sp) v (9) A De Minaur (Aus); X Wang (Chin) v (5) J Pegula (US); (11) D Collins (US) v D Galfi (Hum); E Ruusuvaari (Fin) v (11) S Tsitsipas (Gr).

Court 4: C Busca (Sp) v J Bouzas Maneiro (Sp); L Darderi (It) v (25) L Musetti (It); D Shnaider (Rus) & E Vesnina (Rus) v Y Putintseva (Kaz) & C Tauson (Den); H Dart (GB) & M Lumsden (GB) v (5) S Errani (It) & M Paolletti (It).

TODAY'S FIXTURES

GOLF

DP WORLD TOUR BMW INTERNATIONAL OPEN (Golfclub Munchen Eichenried, Munich). **ARAMCO TEAM SERIES** (Centurion Club, St Albans).

Sporton TV



Tennis: Wimbledon

BBC Two/One, from 11am

Golf: BMW International

Sky Sports Golf, 11.30am

Cycling: Tour de France

Eurosport 1, noon/ITV4, 2pm

Golf: Aramco Series London

Sky Sports Mix, 3.30pm

Golf: John Deere Classic

Sky Sports Golf, 7.30pm

CRICKET

Sport has gone soft. Choreographed Anderson farewell proves my point

Kevin
GarsideCHIEF SPORTS
CORRESPONDENT

Jimmy Anderson took the first wicket of the morning, his eighth of the innings, in Southport. Of course he did, he is still the best seamer in England, if not the world under a grey lid. A day prior he took all six Notts wickets to fall before lunch, and returned in the afternoon to claim a seventh, the scalp of Dillon Pennington, one of those earmarked to replace him in the England attack.

That marvellous bit of mischief highlights the absurdity of Anderson's position in the first Test of the summer against the West Indies at Lord's next week, a tribute act to England's finest bowler in which he plays himself.

Whatever the merits of Pennington, Anderson is manifestly worthy of inclusion for the series against the West Indies and Sri Lanka.

He was England's most assured bowler in India earlier this year, where Bazball ran into the orthodox brilliance of Yashasvi Jaiswal, Jasprit Bumrah and Kuldeep Yadav et al, and suffered the consequences in a crushing 4-1 beating. After that humbling you would have thought England might just pick the best XI instead of trialling candidates for an Ashes series at the back end of next year, as if that were the only meaningful fixture.

Moreover, Sir Clive Woodward frequently reminds us, the future does not exist. In international sport there is only ever the next match. Representing England is not an apprenticeship or an audition, but a place to do your stuff, to deliver proven performance. And in the English context, winning is the only permissible result.

Yet in the opening engagement of the summer Anderson is considered not for what he might do but as some kind of reward for what he has done, a sentimental send-off that, however well intended,

Anderson is considered... as some kind of reward for what he has done - a sentimental send-off that insults him

manages to insult him, offend the opponent and the contest. It also hints at a Bazball hierarchy exhibiting signs of cult leadership, a belief in their own rectitude and sense of mission at the expense of the reality on the ground.

Take this extravagant claim from Ben Stokes, which is wildly out of kilter with the Indian experience. "The reward for our work isn't what we get but what we become. And what we've managed to become is a sports team that will live forever in the memory of people who were lucky enough to witness us play cricket." Place your own eye-roll emoji here.

The Anderson case shares elements of the fuff around Andy Murray's swansong at Wimbledon, not to mention the indulgence of Cristiano Ronaldo by Portugal at Euro 2024. Though Anderson differs in that he is still demonstrably capable at the highest level, all are examples of sport moving into a performative space in which winning and losing is not the first consideration. All three have acquired cultural capital and relevance that transcends the field of play.

Who benefits from all of this? Not the participants, whose authenticity is diminished by the choreographed farewell. Not the contest, which, in the case of Murray and Ronaldo, is warped since they are but shadows of their former selves. And certainly not the spectator, who is denied the tension and the drama of the real thing.

Sport scripts its own endings. That's its power and its glory.

Anderson, Murray and Ronaldo have decided so many contests by virtue of their talent. Inevitably those gifts fade.

It is nature's way of telling us it's time to go. Murray and Ronaldo are done. Anderson almost. None are ornaments to be tinkered with. The world turns, whether we, or they, like it or not.



ENGLAND WOMEN

Bell and Sciver-Brunt inspire hosts to a series clean sweep

England completed a 3-0 ODI series whitewash over New Zealand as Nat Sciver-Brunt engineered a successful run chase in Bristol.

Sciver-Brunt made an unbeaten 76 from 84 balls as England - 72 for 4 at one stage in reply to New Zealand's 211 for 8 in a rain-reduced 42-over contest - crossed the winning line by five wickets with 20 deliveries remaining.

A fifty from Amy Jones and Alice Capsey's unbeaten 35 gave Sciver-Brunt the support. It was a recovery act that ensured Lauren Bell's career-best figures of 5 for 37 from nine overs did not go to waste.

Bell said: "I have made a few changes to the mental side of the game. The skill is there, it is just applying it in a game which I managed to do today. With Sophie [Ecclestone] having a rest today, it meant a few of us had a big job to do."

Drizzle prevented play until 2.35pm as England took the opportunity to rest Danni Wyatt, Lauren Filer and Ecclestone, with the series already wrapped up by handsome wins at Chester-le-Street and Worcester.

Bell was one of the beneficiaries of the changes after sitting out Sunday's win at New Road and England's capacity to strike early was evident again. Georgia Plimmer's full-length dive could not beat Charlie Dean's direct hit from backward point, and fellow opener Suzie Bates edged Kate Cross to give a difficult chance that wicketkeeper Jones accepted in outstanding fashion.

Sophie Devine and Amelia Kerr repaired the early damage with a partnership of 68 from 77 balls.

Devine became Bell's first victim for a run-a-ball 43, chopping on a delivery that bounced more than she had expected. The unfortunate



England's Nat Sciver-Brunt scored an unbeaten 76 from 84 balls

Maddy Green was adjudged lbw but unable to review as DRS was briefly out of operation.

Kerr and Brooke Halliday put on 65 for the fifth wicket before Bell returned and tilted the contest in England's favour. She won an lbw call against Kerr, aiming for a big legside swish and departing after making 57 from 82 balls. Halliday's resistance ended on 31 when she gloved down the legside and Jones took another smart catch.

Bell wrapped up her five-wicket haul as slower balls deceived Isabella Gaze and Lauren Down, both spooning up comfortable catches to Sciver-Brunt on the offside.

Tom Lawes took 4 for 26 as Surrey dismissed Essex for 215 to complete a 145-run victory over their nearest rivals at The Oval and increase their lead at the top of the County Championship Division One.

RACING

Teal sees star in Dancing Gemini

By Jon Freeman
RACING EDITOR

White Birch, expected to be the main threat to City Of Troy in Sandown's Coral-Eclipse, has been ruled out of this weekend's showcase following an unsatisfactory blood test.

It's the second summer setback for the John Murphy-trained grey after missing out on a Royal Ascot rematch with Auguste Rodin, one of his victims while running up a spring Curragh hat-trick.

His defection leaves Dancing Gemini as the new second favourite to City Of Troy and he was trounced eight lengths by the Ballydoyle colt in the Epsom Derby last month.

But trainer Roger Teal, ever the optimist, is looking forward to giving his stable star another crack at the odds-on favourite on Saturday.

Dancing Gemini was a strong-finishing runner-up in the French

2000 Guineas at Longchamp and then a not-so-quiet fancy for the Derby, despite concerns that a mile and a half might be stretching his stamina too much.

Those fears proved well-founded as he weakened out of the places in the closing stages, but Teal believes there was more to it than that.

"After they had gone two furlongs, I knew it was going to be a massive ask," said Teal (left). "When Dylan (McMonagle) organised him, he made up a lot of ground very quickly and for a minute the dream was alive, but he faded in that last 100 yards.

"The step back to a mile and a quarter will be ideal, he just failed to stay the Derby distance.

"City Of Troy is a very good horse. Aidan (O'Brien) has always been very bullish about him and we have to respect him. If we get anywhere near him in the Eclipse we'll have run a blinder."



1 top tips

BEST BET
I Love Paris
(8.25,
Newbury)

Has shown promise without winning. This could be her right trip.

NEXT BEST
Ludo's
Landing
(7.35,
Kempton)

A step ahead of the handicapper and the one to beat here on his first try at 12 furlongs.

HAYDOCK GOOD TO SOFT

3.40 SUPALITE GROUP HANDICAP (CLASS 4) £12,000 added 6f

1	03-067	RAATEA (CD) J Camacho 7 9 11	Ryan Sexton V 12
2	2217-1	ALBERT CEE (D) James Owen 4 9 9	S D Bowen (5) 5
3	-63113	TIRIAC (D)(BF) J Channon 4 9 8	C Rodriguez C 1
4	080-20	LUCKY MAN (D) R Spencer 5 9 8	G Wood C 2
5	74-901	HYPERFOCUS (CD) T Easterby 10 9 8	S B Kirrane C 13
6	106901	GRANT WOOD (CD) P Midgley 5 9 5	J Hart 7
7	-12009	KING'S VANITY (BF) A Balding 4 9 4	C Lee 9
8	14413-	KIT GABRIEL (D) D Loughnane 5 9 3	Rossa Ryan C 3
9	1-7430	SERGEANT PEP (D) C Cox 4 9 2	D Costello 4
10	693-80	EQUIANO SPRINGS (D) T Tate 10 9 1	T Eaves 6
11	151066	TRILBY (CD) S England 4 8 11	S Gray 11
12	70-308	ALCAZAN (D) R Teal 6 8 9	H Doyle 10
13	38490-	TOUSSAROK (D) A Carroll 6 8 8	A Mullen 8

BETTING: 9-2 Albert Cee, 5-1 Tiriac, 6-1 Trilby, Grant Wood, 8-1 Hyperfocus, 10-1 Raatea, Lucky Man, King's Vanity, 12-1 others.

NEWBURY GOOD TO FIRM

6.10 RAPID PERSONNEL BILLINGTON FOUNDATION APPRENTICE HANDICAP (CLASS 5) £11,000 added 5f

1	033924	SAFARI DREAM (D) B Millman 4 10 3	O Searle (3) C 7
2	244513	HURT YOU NEVER (C)(D) Adrian Nicholls 5 10 2	Mia Nicholls (3) 1
3	385472	LIHOU (D) P Evans 8 10 2	Liam Wright (3) 10
4	070-59	EEH BAH GUM (D) M Appleby 9 10 0	Elle-May Croot (3) 8
5	3-3809	HEARTRATE (D) M Loughnane 4 9 11	T Jakes B 2
6	180-88	CONCIERGE (C)(D) M Attwater 8 9 10	O Lewis (3) V 9
7	232022	SPLIT THE PROFIT (BF) M Murphy & M Keady 3 9 10	Sorcha Woods (3) B 4
8	763657	MACANUDO (D) J Williams 3 9 8	Kaiya Fraser B 3
9	245323	BINT HAVANA GOLD R Hughes 3 9 8	Taryn Langley (5) 6
10	246135	Q TWENTY BOY (D) M Usher 9 8 12	Alicia Perkins (5) 5

BETTING: 4-1 Lihou, 9-2 Split The Profit, Safari Dream, Hurt You Never, 13-2 Bint Havana Gold, 7-1 Macanudo, 12-1 Q Twenty Boy, 14-1 others.

6.45 ENGLISH PROVENDER BILLINGTON FOUNDATION EBF FILLIES' NOVICE STAKES (CL 4) 2YO £12,000 added 6f

1	ANGELICA BAY	Ollie Sangster 9 2	K Stott 6
2	BRIGHTWALTON	R Hannon 9 2	S M Levey 7
3	CROCODILE RIVER	E Dunlop 9 2	D Probert 1
4	GLAMOUR SHOW	E J-Houghton 9 2	C Bishop 1
5	HANDCUFFED	A Balding 9 2	O Murphy 5
6	43 HAVANA DANCE	J Portman 9 2	T Whelan 2
7	0 LIMEGREENTANGERINE	T Ward 9 2	H Crouch 8
8	4 SHOSTAKOVA	C Cox 9 2	J Fahy 3
9	STELLENBOSCH	R Hannon 9 2	P Dobbs 9

BETTING: 7-2 Havana Dance, 4-1 Shostakova, Handcuffed, 5-1 Brightwalton, 7-1 Stellenbosch, 8-1 Angelica Bay, 10-1 Glamour Show, 20-1 Crocodile River, 33-1 Limegreentangerine.

7.20 TIE THE KNOT AT UFTON COURT NOVICE STAKES (CLASS 4) 2YO £12,000 added 6f

1	63	CHELSEA EMBANKMENT	R Beckett 9 2	H Crouch 4
2	77	GLENDINE	P Evans 9 2	J Peate (3) 7
3	0	I MAXIMUS	R Hughes 9 2	O Murphy 2
4	0	JET PACKER	R Hannon 9 2	S M Levey 8
5	7	KING OF BEARS (BF)	P & O Cole 9 2	D Probert 10
6	0	MEEGHAT	R Hannon 9 2	P Dobbs 6
7	0	SPELL MASTER	A Balding 9 2	K Stott 5
8	0	THE WACO KID	H Palmer 9 2	J Leavy (5) T 3
9	0	TOKEN GESTURE	M Usher 9 2	G Rooke 9
10	0	WAR HOWL	B Meehan 9 2	C Bishop 1

- 10 declared -

BETTING: 3-1 King Of Bears, 7-2 Chelsea Embankment, 9-2 Spell Master, 13-2 Meeghat, 15-2 The Waco Kid, 8-1 I Maximus, 12-1 War Howl, Jet Packer, 50-1 others.

7.55 BILLINGTON FOODS SUPPORTS THE BILLINGTON FOUNDATION HANDICAP (CLASS 4) £14,000 added 7f

1	418363	WOODSTOCK (D) R Carr 4 10 2	Joanna Mason C 6
2	64236	HAT TOSS (D)(BF) James Owen 4 10 0	K Stott C 3
3	-22160	CHOLA EMPIRE (D) D M Simcock 5 10 0	H Crouch 4
4	0-8452	RED MAIDS (D) M Rimmel 4 9 9	D Probert T 1
5	232461	ALGHEED (D) M Loughnane 6 9 9	S Osborne 5
6	4-5706	TADREEB (D) M Attwater 6 9 9	W Carson 2
7	72-100	PUREFOY (D) A Balding 3 9 5	O Murphy 7
8	244-17	STATE FLAG (D) T Ward 3 9 2	S M Levey 8

- 8 declared -

BETTING: 3-1 Hat Toss, 9-2 Purefoy, State Flag, 5-1 Red Maids, 7-1 Woodstock, 8-1 Algheed, 10-1 Chola Empire, 14-1 Tadreeb.

KEMPTON STANDARD TO SLOW

7.35 UNIBET ZERO% MISSION HANDICAP (CLASS 3) £15,000 added 1m 4f

1	0-9545	GLOBAL HEAT (D) S bin Suroor 8 9 11	H Turner 2	
2	0-8448	THERE'S THE DOOR	P Evans 4 9 11	R Kingscote 6
3	253-69	SIMPLY SONDHEIM (C) G Baker 5 9 10	P Cosgrave 7	
4	21-521	CRACKSKING (CD) J Fanshawe 4 9 10	T Sheppard 4	
5	1/78-8	GOOLOOGONG (C) G Baker 4 9 9	C Shephard 10	
6	76-002	THE GOAT (D) A Balding 4 9 6	Jason Walton 5	
7	000-50	GRAIGNES (C) G Baker 8 9 4	N Callan 3	
8	232026	WAY OF LIFE (D) J Portman 6 9 3	R Hornby 1	
9	24450-	NAVAL COMMANDER (C) F Brennan 7 9 1	A Keeley (3) 8	
10	/00515	MET OFFICE (D)(BF) J Butler 7 9 0	L Morris 9	
11	422412	LUDO'S LANDING	C Johnston 4 8 9	J Fanning 11

- 11 declared -

BETTING: 13-8 Cracksking, 7-2 The Goat, 13-2 Ludo's Landing, 10-1 Way Of Life, 12-1 There's The Door, 14-1 Simply Sondheim, 16-1 Met Office, Graignes, Naval Commander, Global Heat, 30-1 Gooloogong.

ENGLAND WOMEN



Mary Earps continues her recovery from a hip injury

Charles and Earps in fitness boost for Wiegman

By Katherine Lucas

England are hopeful Mary Earps and Niamh Charles will be in contention for their crunch Euro 2025 qualifying double-header against the Republic of Ireland and Sweden.

The duo are currently undergoing rehab while the rest of the Lionesses prepare for a behind-closed-doors friendly against the Netherlands today.

Earps, who joined Paris Saint-Germain from Manchester United this week, is recovering from the hip injury that forced her out of England's 2-1 victory in France last time out, while Charles has a calf problem.

"Everyone who is here is fit or in rehab or building towards minutes," Sarina Wiegman said yesterday. "The situation's very different to [what] we're used to, there have been holidays, some players coming in at different stages of rehab, but everything goes to plan so far.

"So we expect [them to be fit], but of course we have some sessions and the game, but we expect that everyone who's in camp right now would be available for next Friday [against the Republic of Ireland] and Tuesday [against Sweden]."

The England boss also revealed Lauren James is "progressing well" from the toe injury that led her to pull out of the squad and return to Chelsea but is "still not totally recovered".

England sit in the play-off spot in third in Group A3 but qualifying for Euro 2025, which they enter as defending champions, is still in their hands as they still have second-placed Sweden to play. That is thanks to a pivotal 2-1 away win in France, which Wiegman insisted "proved again that we can play at the highest level."

"We said 'OK so we can show that against France, that's a top level team,' she said. "That's our new standard, again we want to get to new standards and push ourselves and improve all the time."

MANCHESTER UNITED

Women's team is withering under Ratcliffe's watch

Daniel Storey

CHIEF FOOTBALL WRITER



When Manchester United Women were reformed in May 2018, any celebration was mitigated by the overwhelming sense of tardiness that surrounded the entire thing.

While England's other superclubs had established themselves in the Women's Super League top three, either through historic commitment (Arsenal, Chelsea) or significant investment (Manchester City), United were the odd ones out. Manchester United were the last Premier League team to have a representative female team. Their creation came after repeated heavy criticism.

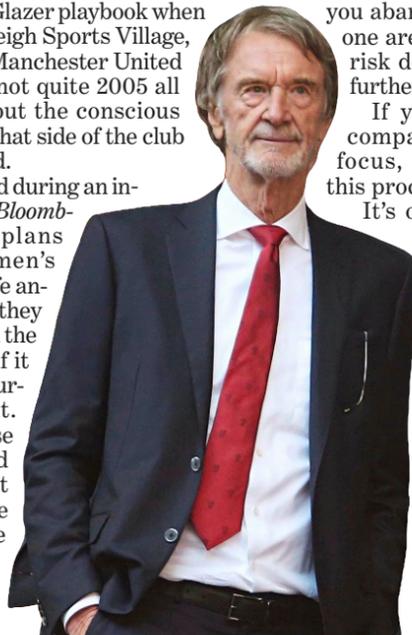
Then, as with everything else, it was easy and appropriate to blame the Glazer regime. An earlier guise of Manchester United's women's team had been founding members of the North West Women's Regional Football League in 1989 and, in 2001, had become officially linked with the main club.

Within months of the Glazer takeover in 2005, the team was disbanded. The club spoke of "core business" interests that evidently didn't include women's football. For all the business-speak and public commitments to shifting sands and changing cultures, the task of taking over at United required a simple ethos, just so long as you had the wealth.

Put sticky notes on your laptop screen, your bathroom mirror and your steering wheel with one question: "What would the Glazers do?". Do the opposite and you couldn't go far wrong.

Sir Jim Ratcliffe (*right*) has chosen a different path. He is veering closer to the Glazer playbook when it comes to Leigh Sports Village, the home of Manchester United Women. It's not quite 2005 all over again, but the conscious devaluing of that side of the club is pronounced.

When asked during an interview with *Bloomberg* on his plans for the women's team, Ratcliffe answered "Well they have just won the FA Cup", as if it required no further thought. Ratcliffe chose not to attend that final, but a men's league game on the same day. Bad start.



Continuing, he admitted that he hadn't gone into detail on the women's team because "we've been pretty much focused on how we resolve the first-team issues, in that environment, and that's been pretty full-time for the first six months".

Is he bad at PR, or just careless about how he sounds?

Nobody is pretending there aren't myriad issues to solve at Manchester United, nor that the men's team will not take up a significant proportion of budget, time and effort. In fact the *Daily Mail* reported yesterday that a quarter of the club's workforce are being made redundant.

Words matter to those who have been repeatedly devalued in the past, and to hear talk of "first-team", and with it the inadvertent admission that the women's team comes way down the list, represented a dim misstep.

Then things got worse. Last week, *The Guardian* revealed that because of an overhaul of the men's first-team training building at Carrington, the men's teams would use the women's and academy building for 2024-25. That means the women's team will have to use temporary cabins for a year. The message this sends on the back of Ratcliffe's assessment is dismal.

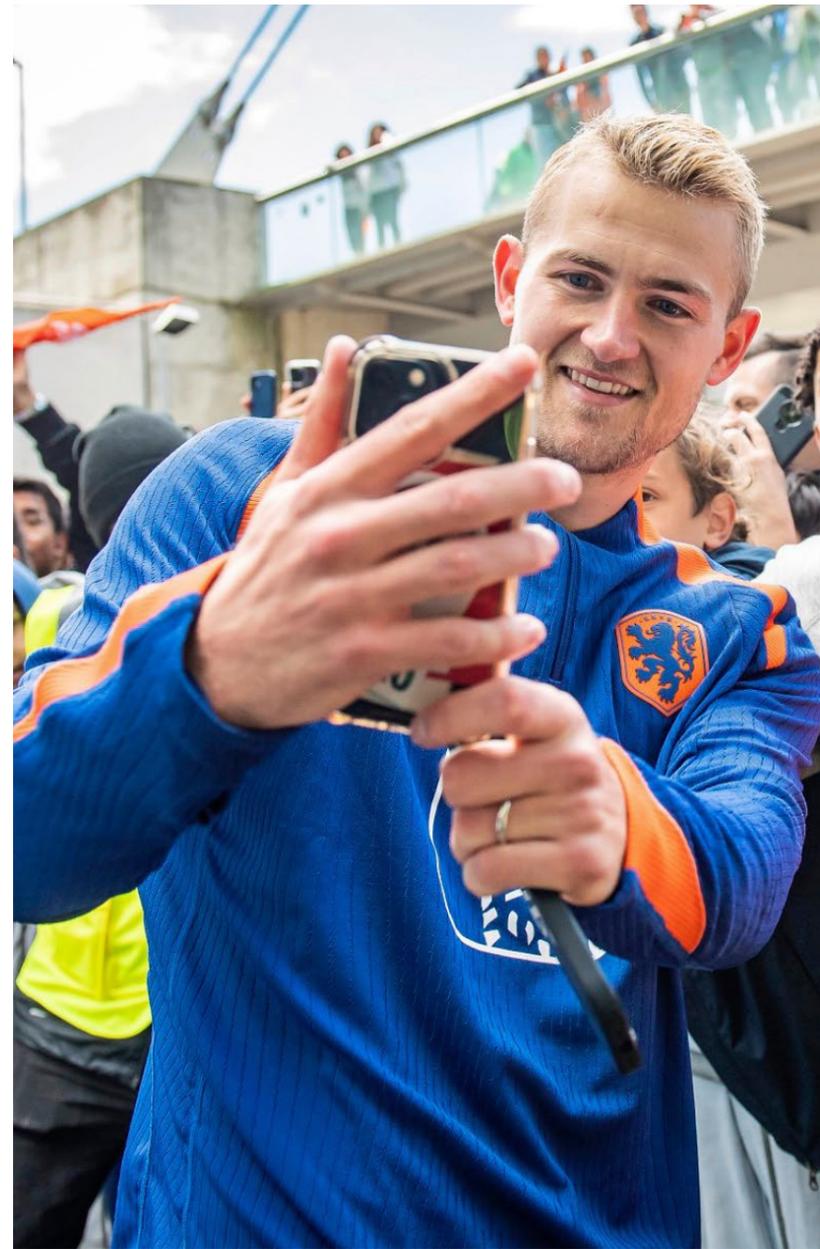
A number of high-profile players have left recently. Alessia Russo went to Arsenal on a free transfer last summer. Katie Zelem and Lucia Garcia have left on free transfers this summer. Mary Earps has joined Paris Saint-Germain after running her own contract down. Were these players enamoured by professional life in Manchester, they may have stayed. Others may follow.

Ineos has a lot on its plate; nobody is pretending otherwise. The scale of the Glazers' inattentiveness allowed weeds to grow like vast forests in every corner of the club. But if you abandon all thought of one area of that club, you risk doubling your work further down the line.

If you are having to compartmentalise your focus, how you discuss this process matters more.

It's one thing for Ratcliffe to deprioritise Manchester United Women while he focuses on the men's side of the club, but another entirely to be so foolishly brazen about his lack of consideration.

In PR terms, Manchester United Women are breaking apart.



Cut price De Ligt deal suits all as United and Bayern talks progress

Ten Hag keen for a reunion with his former Ajax captain in '£34m' move

Pete Hall



Manchester United's move for Bayern Munich's Matthijs de Ligt is progressing quickly as the club begin making moves in the transfer market.

It understands United and Bayern have begun talks over a cut price £34m deal and aim to get the switch completed swiftly to allow new co-owners Ineos and sporting director Dan Ashworth, now in situ, to continue their squad overhaul.

The 24-year-old Netherlands international has been a consistent performer at Bayern and has a close connection with Erik ten Hag, who made him captain at Ajax. He is also popular among Bayern fans, with

supporters starting an online petition with over 15,000 signatures urging their club to retain his services.

United are also making progress on talks with Bologna for De Ligt's international teammate Joshua Zirkzee, who is available for a similar price. Ashworth's arrival is expected to speed along both deals, with hope the two transfers can be completed in the next week. Paris Saint-Germain's Manuel Ugarte is on the list of midfield options being considered.

De Ligt is reportedly keen to move to the Premier League and is even understood to be willing to take a pay cut in order to secure his pathway to England.

The move suits all parties. As well the incentive of getting his substantial wages off the books, it understands Bayern require cash to complete a move for their prime defensive summer target - Germany international Jonathan Tah - with



Matthijs de Ligt (left) is a popular figure with fans

GETTY

De Ligt attracting the most interest of their current defensive crop. Joao Palhinha's imminent transfer to Munich has made a dent in their summer pot.

Eric Dier is well liked in Munich, while Kim Min-jae and France's Dayot Upamecano are not likely to be moved on. Bayern value De Ligt at a higher price, but it is understood they would be willing to come down to accept a deal for around £34m plus add-ons.

With a proper hierarchical structure in place – Ashworth joins alongside technical director Jason Wilcox and soon-to-begin CEO Omar Berrada – Ten Hag still retains a say in transfers, with no move expected to be made without his say-so.

However, the United boss is still expected to take more of a backseat than in his previous two seasons in terms of identifying players to sign. After taking over at Ajax in 2017, Ten Hag made De Ligt the club's youngest-ever skipper as they went on to win both the Eredivisie and the Dutch Cup in 2018-19.

They also reached the semi-finals of the Champions League in the same campaign, where they lost in heartbreaking fashion to Tottenham.

De Ligt then joined Juventus before moving to Bayern in 2022. Should he join United, he will play alongside a host of Ajax alumni including Antony, Lisandro Martinez, André Onana, Donny van de Beek and Christian Eriksen.

Even if De Ligt is recruited, United still remain in the market for another centre-back this summer. With injury concerns persisting over Martinez and Raphaël Varane having departed, they are especially short. Jarrad Branthwaite remains their first pick as a left-sided centre-back, but United are currently not planning to return with a second bid for the 22-year-old unless Everton drop their asking price.

Much of United's remaining transfer business will depend on how many players they can sell before now and the end of the summer transfer window. Jadon Sancho and Mason Greenwood are attracting plenty of interest from clubs across Europe but no bids have yet been received.

Brazilian midfielder Casemiro is another United are looking to move on, with interest persisting from Saudi Arabia. Defenders Victor Lindelof and Aaron Wan-Bissaka have also been heavily linked with moves away from Old Trafford.

18

Ten Hag made De Ligt Ajax's youngest-ever skipper, aged 18, ahead of the 2018-19 season

EURO 2024

'I thought I'm 30 seconds away from doing baby feeds, so thanks Jude!'

Phil Foden has had a puzzling Euros. By **Sam Cunningham**

It has, in his own words, been a "mad" week for Phil Foden. Not long after having a front row seat for Jude Bellingham's stunning overhead kick against Slovakia, he was dashing home for the birth of his third child before hurrying back to prepare for the quarter-final against Switzerland on Saturday.

Foden has been one of the most puzzling players for England – a Treble-winner and last season's Premier League Player of the Year at Manchester City but unable to hit those heights for his country, where he usually plays out of his preferred position. A player who raises as many questions as he answers on the pitch.

Here's what he had to say at England's Blankenhain training camp...

SAVED BY THE BELL

Foden had just been substituted in the dying minutes of the game against Slovakia and was walking behind the goal when he turned around to see Bellingham launch himself into the air and score that stunning late equaliser.

"I thought I'm 30 seconds away from doing baby feeds at home, so thanks to Jude for that, thanks for doing it, saved me there," Foden said, bursting out laughing.

The next day he was on a plane for the planned pregnancy of his third child, whose name he wishes to keep private. "It was arranged," he explained. "I spoke to Gareth to let him know and Gareth being Gareth he's really good with things like that."

What was it like? "Obviously it is mad to go back home and come back out, but the main focus is trying to win the Euros."

BUT CAN HE PLAY BY THE BELL?

Questions have been asked about whether Foden and Bellingham can function in the same team together. Two of the best young players in the world but who effectively play

in the same position. For England, Foden has started on the left wing and the pair have rotated and roamed, but it does not appear to be working yet.

Is it true they can't play together, as some say? "I don't agree," Foden said. "I feel like the last game we did build on it really well, in terms of keeping the ball a lot more, we piled pressure on the end, it can hopefully click in the next game."



When I first went into the City team the players in front of me said the only way I'd get a chance was by hard work

RUNNING MAN

Something not always obvious about Foden, given his attacking prowess, is that he often tops the charts for distance run in games, and it has been the case in Germany. Foden is putting in the hard yards.

"When I first went into the first team [at City]

the players in front of me said the only way I was going to get an opportunity was working hard."

'More fool them' - racist abuse will not deter Toney

By **Simon Peach**
IN BLANKENHAIN

Ivan Toney says cases of racist abuse on social media towards England players would not dissuade him from taking a penalty at the European Championship.

Three years ago Bukayo Saka, Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho were subject of vile racist abuse online after failing to score in the Euro 2020 final shoot-out defeat to Italy.

Toney had previously received racist comments on Instagram, with a man who racially abused him in 2023 becoming the first person to be banned from every English stadium.



Asked if the racist abuse he and the Euro 2020 final trio have received would put him off taking a penalty as the focus turns to Saturday's quarter-final against Switzerland, Toney (right) said: "If I score, I score. If I miss, I miss. We have to step up and you have to have the courage to take a penalty."

"What will be, will be. For those who racially abuse a player for missing a penalty or doing something wrong, more fool them."

Foden: blame the players too, we have to be leaders

» Continued from back page

was La Liga's Player of the Year and Harry Kane was top-scorer in the Bundesliga, three of the highlights in an enviable selection of players.

But England have struggled to a 1-0 win against Serbia and draws with Denmark and Slovenia in the group stage. They were on the verge of being knocked out against Slovakia in the Last 16

without a shot on target, before Bellingham produced a stunning overhead kick to equalise in the fifth minute of stoppage time before they won in extra time.

Foden, however, defended the England manager, saying: "I feel sorry for Gareth. He has not set out to do that. In training he has been telling us to press and be high and I feel like sometimes it has to come from the players."

"We have to be leaders and I feel like in those games we could have got together a little bit more and worked out a solution. So yes, we have spoken and if it happens again we can find a solution and see where it is going wrong and adapt our press."

One of the main criticisms of Southgate is that the team has defended too deeply. It has been

noticeable when they have taken the lead the team has appeared to shift backwards.

But Foden said: "The players have got to take some of the blame. There has to be some leaders to find out a solution to why it is not working. There is only so much the manager can do. He sets you up in a system and tells you how to press."

"If it is not going like that you have to... you never decide when a person is going to drop deep, as well. Maybe change the formation you are not used to. The players have got to adapt to what the other team is doing to be better. It is something we have definitely spoken about recently and going forward, hopefully you will see a different side to us pressing-wise."



British pair set for a tough draw in mixed doubles opener

» Continued from back page

doubles winners Marcelo Arevalo and Zhang Shuai.

"It should be fun," Murray added. "I have played mixed doubles a few times when I was young and then the last time was with Serena. 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."

Murray pulled out of the singles on Tuesday to focus on the men's doubles with brother Jamie, in what is the 37-year-old's final grand slam before retiring. And given that he is still recovering from surgery on

a spinal cyst, it was somewhat of a midday bombshell yesterday when it was revealed Murray would also be playing in the mixed with Raducanu.

Murray and Raducanu may not play together until the weekend, and face a tough draw.

Arevalo is the men's world No 7 in doubles, with 12 titles to his name including the French Open in 2022 and earlier this year.

Zhang is also a two-time grand slam winner, earning her first major in the women's doubles at the Australian Open in 2019 before winning the US Open two years later. She then lost the Wimbledon final with Mertens, who Raducanu beat yesterday, in 2022.

'Over the moon' Raducanu revels in new-found form on favourite court

By James Gray

Emma Raducanu secured her first win on No 1 Court since retiring from the fourth round of Wimbledon in 2021 by beating Elise Mertens 6-1, 6-2. Raducanu, 21, last played on this court three years ago when she had to quit her match against Ajla Tomljanovic due to breathing difficulties.

The British No 3 won the US Open a few weeks later but has not been back to the third round of a grand slam since – until now.

Raducanu will now face either No 9 seed Maria Sakkari or Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands for a place back in the last 16.

"I feel so, so welcome here. Honestly, No 1 Court is my favourite court," Raducanu said. "I'm over the moon to be playing here.

The last time Raducanu had set foot on this turf was while being escorted off court by medics. It was notable that this time around, she



Emma Raducanu took just 75 minutes to beat Elise Mertens

beamed with delight as the crowd, which included Romeo Beckham, rose to greet her.

Happiness has been the key theme of the Brit's summer after rediscovering her love for the game, and Mertens did little to wipe the smile off her face in the early stages. Nine unforced errors in the first four games handed Raducanu a significant advantage.

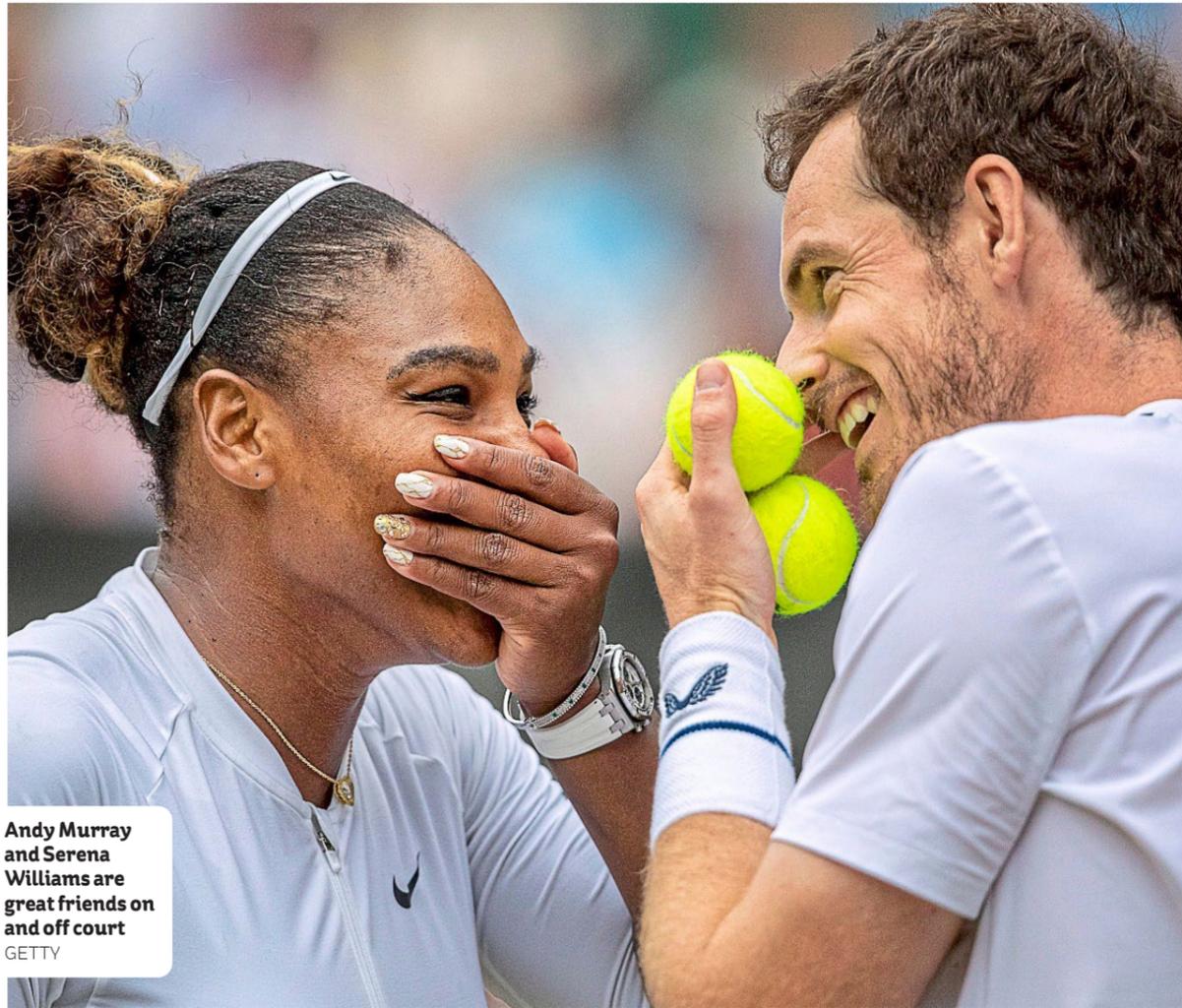
She still had to take her chances though. Her first break point was converted by a drop shot and her third, for a 4-0 lead, with a fine forehand pass.

Mertens did eventually get herself on the board and even had a point to get one of the breaks back when Raducanu served for the set, but she ran down the Belgian's drop shot and passed her with ease before closing out the opener in 37 minutes.

Mertens has been ranked as high as No 12 in the world in singles and is the world No 1 in doubles, and began to show some of that pedigree in the second set, saving an early break point with a sweetly struck forehand winner and then sealing the game with a 117mph serve.

But her own gear-change merely seemed to kick Raducanu on, climbing into a forehand return to edge ahead in the third game and then converting break point with a backhand pass. She followed it with a love hold of high-quality ball-striking and she started to swagger around the court with due satisfaction.

If her first-round match had been a case of winning ugly, this was a case of winning pretty and Raducanu finished at a canter, hitting 15 winners in the second set and wrapping up victory in just 75 minutes.



Andy Murray and Serena Williams are great friends on and off court
GETTY

Murray's great legacy in tennis will be as advocate for the women's game

The retiring Scot has been constant in his support, says **Molly McElwee**

As Andy Murray's Wimbledon career comes to an end this week, the tributes will rightly come flooding. He will be saluted as a player, a role model, and a supportive mentor for younger prospects on both tours.

But that is not the end of Murray's contribution. To my mind, one of the most gaping holes left by Murray's retirement is that of male sporting ally. In that role, he was truly tennis's greatest of all time.

Murray remains one of the only men who has, for much of his playing career, advocated for the women's side of the tour.

Where so many players choose steely focus on the court, and only look beyond when self-interest demands it, Murray has become a true supporter for women in his sport.

Just last week, there was old footage of him doing the rounds.

When England football captain Harry Kane airbrushed the Lionesses's Euros win during an interview in Germany, saying "we have not won anything as a nation for a long, long time," many social-media users reshared a press conference from 2017.

Murray had just suffered a brutal loss to Sam Querrey in the quarter-finals at Wimbledon, at what proved to be the start of a career-changing hip injury, but he still had the clarity of thought to correct a journalist who carelessly left women out of a statistic.

"Sam is the first US player to reach a major semi-final since 2009," the journalist began his question, before Murray interrupted. "Male player, right?" he said, in his deadpan way.

The year prior, in Rio, he made a similar correction in his post-match interview after defending his Olympic title. "You're the first person ever to win two Olympic tennis gold medals," BBC presenter John Inverdale said. "That's an extraordinary feat, isn't it?"

As Murray replied, "Well, [the first person] to defend the singles

title. I think Venus and Serena have won about four each, but hadn't defended a singles title before."

At both his lowest and most triumphant moments, when few other athletes would be thinking beyond their own personal situations, Murray always spoke up for women.

Where so many players choose steely focus on the court, Murray has become a true supporter for women

Some may call it pedantic, or say that Inverdale and Kane simply misspoke, but those details matter, especially in an industry where women's feats are routinely presented as less important than men's – or are left out of the history books altogether.

Murray understands that fact better than most men in public life, and has used his platform to change perceptions.

He has never expected credit for it either – quite the reverse. I once interviewed Murray for *The Daily Telegraph* in 2020 and asked him about being a male ally. He mostly cringed at the idea of being painted as special. To his mind, his natural interest and appreciation towards the women's game qualified as the bare minimum.

He also openly admitted that, before he employed Amélie

Younger generations show greater awareness of inequality but I see no one jumping into Murray's shoes

Mauresmo as his coach in 2014 – joining just a small handful of top male players to trust a woman with that position – he was less in tune with many of the extra challenges faced by women in sport.

That included the extra scrutiny which Mauresmo faced. Murray noticed that Mauresmo was treated very differently to her predecessor, Ivan Lendl. In response, he penned an essay on the importance of female representation in coaching.

“Because I’m one of only a few male athletes that have done it [hired a female coach], I’m seen as someone who has been incredibly vocal about it, which I don’t think I am,” Murray told me.

“But you realise these things happen every single day to female athletes and I just feel like everybody should be treated equally. That’s it. I don’t think it’s a radical or outspoken thing to say. It’s quite a basic thing. If someone says something that I think is wrong, then I will defend women.”

It is a simple concept but, as Murray pointed out then, few other men in his sport have taken a similar approach.

None of the other members of the “Big Four” consistently stuck their necks out for women’s tennis in the same way during their careers. Novak Djokovic even had to back-track on comments where he questioned whether women deserved equal prize money at all.

In most walks of life, younger generations show greater awareness of structural inequality. But is this true in tennis? I can see no queue of players jumping to fill Murray’s shoes.

For example, he was one of very few to call for the ATP to publish a domestic violence policy, after serious allegations against Alexander Zverev first circulated in 2020. (Zverev denied all allegations, and recently saw his domestic violence trial discontinued by a German court, but the ATP is still working on said policy, four years on from Murray’s comments).

It is not just the silence, either. On the subject of women’s issues, some ATP players routinely put their foot in it.

This week, the Australian player Nick Kyrgios expressed regret for retweeting the views of misogynist Andrew Tate, who is currently facing charges including human trafficking, rape and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women.

Then, in May, the world No 11 Stefanos Tsitsipas shared a video to Instagram appearing to promote the “Trad Wife” movement, specifically advocating for women to embrace their role to “multiply” through childbearing.

Those individual cases and the silence from the majority of other players speak volumes. Murray’s progressive attitude offered a refreshing antidote in a sporting world where women are constantly coming up against barriers. For that, among all his other qualities, he will be sorely missed.



Gauff makes light work of Todoni

Coco Gauff took just over an hour on Centre Court to dispatch Anca Todoni and set up a tie with British qualifier Sonay Kartal. The world No 2 breezed past the 19-year-old 6-2, 6-1 to book another probable Centre Court visit.

“I don’t know much [about her], to be honest,” said Gauff (above).

“It will be tough to face a Brit obviously, especially on grass. I think that they always do really well, but especially in this environment.”

There was also victory for fellow American Emma Navarro, who brushed aside returning four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka 6-4, 6-1 on Centre while world No 9 Maria Sakkari lined up a tie with Emma Raducanu with a 7-5, 6-3 victory over Arantxa Rus. For the latest action on the British summer grass court season, check out the LTA website

Tiafoe next up to receive the Alcaraz ‘Chazball’ treatment

By James Toney
AT THE ALL ENGLAND CLUB

“Chazball” is back at the All England Club and it’s just as swashbuckling as ever. We know Carlos Alcaraz – his friends call him Charly – has the all-court all-round game to become his sport’s next generational talent.

Aggressive from the baseline, with a potent forehand that repeatedly leaves flailing rivals flatfooted, there is a reason why Novak Djokovic labelled him the perfect fusion of the tennis big three.

These early rounds at the All England Club can be perfunctory affairs, it’s nice being made to work but you don’t want to sweat too hard.

However, there were still plenty of glimpses of the ingenuity, grit and flair Alcaraz (right) will need for the bigger challenges ahead, as he eased past Australia’s Aleksandar Vukic 7-6, 6-2, 6-2.

“I feel that I’m getting better and better every day,” said Alcaraz, who will now face American 29th seed Frances Tiafoe, who he defeated in the semi-finals en route to his US Open win in 2022. “Everything is improving, my serves and returns were not great in the first round but I was really happy with them.

“I’m constantly trying to change

things to get better, not just my tennis but off court too. I’m going to bed early, eating well and trying not to use my phone as much, which has been difficult for me.”

Alcaraz is known as a friend to all on tour and it’s hard to find a player with a bad word to say about him. Compatriot Roberto Carballes Baena describes him as “a 10 out of 10 guy”, Argentina’s Facundo Bagnis claims he’s an even better person than he is a tennis player, while Tiafoe is another member of the Alcaraz fan club.



“I have a really good relationship with a lot of players behind the scenes, that is really important to me,” he added. “But once you step on the court, they’re not friends.”

It wasn’t such easy work for fifth seed Daniil Medvedev, who was stretched by France’s Alexandre Muller before progressing 6-7, 7-6, 6-4, 7-5 in a match where a couple of points could have gone the other way.

Norway’s Casper Ruud was seeded eight but he’s only twice reached the second round in four appearances here and lost to Italy’s Fabio Fognini. “I try my best every year and I haven’t given up on it yet. It’s just really tough for me, I have no confidence on grass,” Ruud said.

Kartal has more tattoos on her mind after victory

By Will Jennings

Sonay Kartal will celebrate her stunning second round success with another tattoo after inking her way into Wimbledon folklore.

The Brighton star, 22, became the first British woman to reach the last 32 as a qualifier since 1997 with a gutsy 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 triumph over French player Clara Burel.

And that teed up a tantalising third-round clash with US Open champion Coco Gauff – ranked 296 places above her.

Kartal, the current world No 298, stormed into a one-set lead before being pegged back by Burel, 23, in the second. But she regained her composure when the pressure was on to seize the decider, become just the second British woman to reach the third round as a qualifier in the Open Era and rack up a bumper £143,000 in prize money.

Kartal has several visible tattoos, including one on her wrist that is a symbol of bravery. Asked if she’d get another if she lowered the colours of Gauff, she said: “Despite the outcome, whatever it is, I think there could be another one.

“I think there will probably be a bet in place with my coach – he also has tattoos and is pretty covered.

“There’s always a joke in the slams that we play if I reach certain rounds, there will be something. This is going to help me for a little while and will propel me into playing the bigger tournaments and be on the bigger stage. If it is Centre Court (against Gauff), I’ll be super-excited and proud.”

Dan Evans slumped to a straight sets defeat against Chilean Alejandro Tabilo in a game that resumed yesterday after being halted the previous evening in controversial circumstances. Evans, the former British No 1, had accused officials of “not caring about the players” after slipping on Court 12 before play was eventually suspended.

Lily Miyazaki was one of several British singles and doubles stars who had matches postponed on a rain-affected day yesterday.



Sonay Kartal will be ‘super-excited’ to meet Coco Gauff on Centre Court

Sport in brief

JACK ROWELL 1937-2024 Borthwick leads tributes to coach



Steve Borthwick has led tributes to former England and Bath head coach Jack Rowell following his death at the age of 87.

Rowell (above) coached England from 1994 to 1997, overseeing 21 victories in 29 Tests.

“We are saddened to hear the passing of Jack Rowell and extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends,” Borthwick told www.englandrugby.com. “As a Bath player, I had the privilege of working with him when he was director of rugby. He left a huge impression on me, not only as someone with incredible rugby knowledge, but also a fantastic man.”



RUGBY UNION Townsend has five new Scots starters

Gregor Townsend has named five uncapped players in his starting XV in Scotland’s first summer tour game against Canada on Saturday.

Edinburgh centre Matt Currie (above), wing Arron Reed and his Sale teammate, scrum-half Gus Warr, second-rower Max Williamson and his Glasgow Warriors back-row teammate Gregor Brown, all start the game at the TD Place Stadium, Ottawa.

Northampton hooker Robbie Smith, Glasgow prop Nathan McBeth, Leicester prop Will Hurd, Oyonnax second row Ewan Johnson and Edinburgh wing Ross McCann will hope to make their debuts off the bench.

FORMULA ONE Russell ‘as good as any driver on grid’



George Russell believes he is as good as any driver on the Formula One grid – as the Briton gears up for his home race at Silverstone on Sunday. On a high from taking advantage of Max Verstappen’s late collision with Lando Norris to claim just the second win of his career, Russell (above) will seek to land his first British Grand Prix podium this weekend.

“I believe I am as good as anyone,” said Russell. “And I think I have proven that in my three years [against Lewis Hamilton at Mercedes].”



Draper's progress and dramatic flair clear to see ahead of all-British clash

James Gray

SPORTS NEWS
CORRESPONDENT AT THE
ALL ENGLAND CLUB



A lot has changed since Jack Draper last appeared on most people's TV screens.

When he played his first-round match against Elias Ymer on Tuesday night, it was his first appearance at Wimbledon since a second-round defeat to Alex de Minaur in 2022. A shoulder injury kept him out of last year's showcase event, the tournament which for many Brits is the only tennis they will watch all year.

In those two years, Draper has better than halved his ranking, reached the fourth round of a US Open, won his first professional title and become British No 1. When Andy Murray pulled out of singles on Tuesday, world No 28 Draper was drafted in to replace him on Centre Court.

When he said afterwards "I wouldn't be here without Andy", never a truer word was spoken. "He's an incredible guy off the court, so funny, so genuine, one of a kind," Draper added of a man who has never been shy about mentoring young British players. "What a competitor, what a champion."

They are big shoes to fill, but Draper has already set about doing so. If the five-set ding-dong with Ymer is anything to go by, he has picked up Murray's penchant for the dramatic with ease. It was only his third five-setter, but the second he has won this year after beating Marcos Giron in Australia and promptly vomiting into a bin afterwards.

Those wins speak to the biggest advancement in Draper's game, the added physicality. He has been through a couple of fitness coaches,

ending a year spent with former Olympic sprinter and bobsledder Dejan Vojnovic and replacing him at the end of 2023 with Steve Kotze, formerly of Murray's camp and a whole host of other British players in an effort to end the string of injuries that has blighted his short career so far.

Draper's life has been a series of physical challenges, even back to his junior days. "He was a fighter, an absolute scrapper," Justin Sherring, one of his first coaches, tells *i*. "He spent hours and hours just developing the lefty serve so he always had that. But he was an absolute dog. He was so difficult to beat."

But Sherring insists he knew there was something special on the court, even at the age of nine.

He spent just hours developing the lefty serve. But he was an absolute dog. He was so difficult to beat

"I remember saying to his mum [Nicky, herself a national champion] 'I wish we could fast-forward right now, I love where he's at. He chases every ball, he is trying to think clearly about his game on court!'"

There has been a switch in mental approach too as he tries to be more aggressive on court. "When you're around the ends of the

Grand Slam tournaments, there's a vibration," says Sherring, who now coaches four-time grand slam doubles champion Joe Salisbury.

"And Jack is in that vibe. Deep down in that locker, in that treasure chest, there's outrageous confidence and self belief and I think he's got it."

Draper, firmly entrenched in British tennis for virtually his whole life as the son of former chief executive of the LTA Roger, will now face another Brit, Cam Norrie, whom he overtook in the rankings only a few weeks ago.

"I actually can't wait for the match," said Norrie, whose dismal form in 2024 means he will surely start as the underdog. "It's been a while since I played another Brit. No better player to play than the No 1."



A complex and frosty rivalry reaches a climax on the grandest stage

Boulter has the edge but fiery Nottingham clash shows Dart will battle for third round spot, writes **Molly McElwee**

When Katie Boulter and Harriet Dart take to No 1 Court today, there will be more than a place in the third round of Wimbledon on the line.

This is a British pair who have faced each other for the best part of 25 years - in a rivalry that has not always been friendly.

Born just four days apart, they have been pitted against each other throughout their ascent to the top of British tennis, competing for LTA favour and funding in every step of

their climb. Even Boulter and Dart's mothers went toe-to-toe on the British circuit back in the day.

Boulter is now sitting at the top of the British tennis tree, ranked top after overcoming years of fitness struggles due to serious injuries, and is seeded for the first time at a major. Dart meanwhile is hovering around the top 100 mark and has lost to Boulter the last three times they faced each other on tour - including a tightly-fought three-hour thriller in the Nottingham first round just a few weeks ago.

Boulter leads their overall head-to-head 6-1, and her more powerful, stronger serving game has usually overwhelmed Dart. But form may only be part of the story in their first ever meeting at a major.

They have had some fiery previous encounters, in particular during last year's grass court

season. When they played each other in the Nottingham quarter-finals, Dart took issue with Boulter's celebration, after she pointed to her head in apparent reference to her mental strength. Dart pointed to her own head and said: "I know you're doing it towards me. It's not professional."

Boulter immediately hit back, saying, "It's nothing personal. Mate, I do it every single match. Every match." From the outside, that frosty exchange at the net was a moment verging on pettiness, the kind of argument two sisters might have during a competitive hit.

That tension is said to only come to the boil on court though, as Boulter and Dart are part of a close-knit British team, who have shown support for each other during Billie Jean King Cup fixtures, including in the last year since that Nottingham

6
Boulter leads Dart 6-1 in their overall head-to-head - mainly due to Boulter's stronger service game



British No 1 Jack Draper battled to five-set win against Elias Ymer AP



Katie Boulter (left) and Harriet Dart have not always seen eye to eye
GETTY, PA

Fearnley's alternate career on hold as he prepares for 'flawless' Djokovic on Centre

Michael Hincks

AT THE ALL ENGLAND CLUB



Unlike some players, Jacob Fearnley admitted he could not ignore the Wimbledon draw when it took place on Friday. He was, after all, just one of four names yet to have their first-round singles match confirmed.

Another player within that quartet was a certain Novak Djokovic, a seven-time winner here and No 2 seed this time around, therefore placing him rock-bottom of the men's singles draw.

In the end, Fearnley avoided a first-round meeting with the Serbian, but knew what would likely await if he could just overcome qualifier Alejandro Moro Canas first.

On Tuesday, 22-year-old Fearnley was even in action at the same time as Djokovic faced Vit Korpriva, and admitted to being a little distracted on Court 8 as he watched the scoreboard flash up other results.

That may therefore explain Fearnley's 70-minute third set against Moro Canas, where the Briton clocked that Djokovic had just won before needing six match points himself to win the third-set tie-break 14-12 and advance.

"I'd be lying if I said I wasn't watching the scores on Centre Court. It was getting in my head a little bit that I was going to have to play him," said Fearnley.

"It's going to be a little bit intimidating, but it's a match that I'm super excited for. It's the biggest match of my career so far. Just to be able to share the court with a player like that will be really special."

Before the tournament, Fearnley had admitted it would be "daunting" and "weird" to see Djokovic on the other side of the net, but he will do so today with their second-round match on Centre Court.

The last time Fearnley was on Centre was as a teenager in the stands, watching Rafael Nadal overcome Karen Khachanov in 2017.

To complete the Big Three set, Fearnley was also a hitting partner for the "super nice" Roger Federer at the All England Club in 2018, and to add Andy Murray into the mix and make that a Big Four, well, like the soon-to-be-retiring 37-year-old, Fearnley is also Scottish – and is a big admirer of the two-time Wimbledon winner.

"He's the best role model that a British tennis player can have,

especially a Scottish player like myself," said Fearnley, who was born in Worcester but lived in Edinburgh since he was two.

"I watched him growing up, the way he climbed up the rankings, the way he competes, the way he plays, it's super special to see."

Fearnley took the less-trodden path of venturing over to the United States to play college tennis, at Texas Christian University, where compatriot Cameron Norrie also played.

There Fearnley (*below*) came out of his shell thanks to the "rowdy" nature of college sport, while studying kinesiology also gave him something to fall back on.

"It has been a different path to a lot of people, but it has been awesome," said Fearnley.

"I always wanted to go to the States, I think

I was always a bit underdeveloped. School was a big thing, my parents wanted me to have something to fall back on in case tennis didn't work, and I didn't feel mentally ready to play tennis.

"I wanted to have five years to just develop my game and as a person, socialise, meet new people. I'm really happy I made that decision, because it helped my tennis and helped me as a person.

"The fact I have a degree is huge, I also have the option to go back to school if I want to. I could also be a college coach, so that's a big thing."

Known as Jake in the US, but happy with Jacob on this side of the pond, Fearnley can put alternate careers on the backburner for now after what has been a whirlwind month.

Outside the world's top 500 as recently as June, Fearnley jumped up to 271 in the rankings after winning the ATP Challenger event in Nottingham as a qualifier and then making his ATP Tour debut at Eastbourne, where he lost to compatriot Billy Harris.

For his efforts, Fearnley then got a call from Davis Cup captain Leon Smith, who broke the news that he would be awarded a wild card for Wimbledon.

"I didn't know how to react," said Fearnley. "My dad didn't believe me at first, but it was a really cool moment."

Fearnley more than justified the wild card with a straight-sets win over Moro Canas, and now has a free shot against Djokovic, who has lost just 11 times throughout his career at Wimbledon, and only once since 2018.

"I don't think many people have the answer to that," said Fearnley, when asked about how he can beat Djokovic. "I have no idea. I've watched so many videos of him.

"It doesn't look like there's many flaws in his game. I'm going to just try and enjoy it, put my game out on the court and see what happens. I don't think there's many tactics going into the match."

But could experience beating Wimbledon No 1 seed Jannik Sinner and defending champion Carlos Alcaraz at junior

level help?

"I don't think so, to be honest," Fearnley admitted. "I played Alcaraz when he was maybe 14, I was 17. Sinner I played him maybe when we were 15. Obviously the strides they've taken in their games has been a lot more than myself."

Nevertheless, Fearnley will now get his moment on centre stage, although don't expect any chuntering to the levels of another Scot that knows this place well.

"I'm pretty chilled out," added Fearnley. "Not annoying!"

How things play out may put this demeanour to the test.

match. "I mean, we're teammates," Dart said of Boulter on Tuesday. "We played big tournaments. We've grown up together. We've been close. It's always going to be tricky, whoever I play, especially when you play a fellow Brit.

"But it's great to see that all of us are doing well and putting us in positions where we do get to play each other, hopefully more so in the latter rounds.

"She's been having an amazing year, she's been playing great. [I] expect a very tough match."

That aside, their latest meeting in the first round at Nottingham a few weeks ago still saw tempers flare again. Dart lost her cool, betting the umpire £50,000 that her call had been wrong.

"The ball is so far out, this is embarrassing," Dart said. "You're embarrassing yourself. You should be embarrassed."

Boulter chose not to engage this time, and said on Tuesday that the 6-7, 6-4, 7-5 win would "absolutely" be a confidence boost to take into their second round battle.

"For me, every single match counts," she said. "We both know each other's games inside-out, back-to-front at this point. We've played so many matches.

"But I do have to draw on the last things that I have played with her and use that to my advantage in the next round. I think it's going to be extremely tough.

She added of Dart: "I have a lot of respect for her on this surface. It's one of her favourite ones. This is

We played tournaments. We've grown up together. We've been close. It's always going to be tricky

actually her home club. She's been here since she was a tiny tot with her mom. She's grown up here. I know how tough it's going to be.

"It's exciting. You have two Brits here who are playing some very good tennis. She's someone that's going to make it very hard for me. I'm going to have to bring my A game."

The crowd may well be split on the No 1 Court, but both Dart and Boulter at least have experience on the big stage – if not the greatest success. Though Boulter won her Centre Court debut two years ago to Karolina Pliskova, she was overcome by the occasion on the same court last year, losing to former champion Elena Rybakina 6-1 6-1. Dart was also well beaten by the former world No 1 Ash Barty in the same arena five years ago by the same scoreline.

Dart is the underdog again today, but she sounded up for the challenge: "I've played many times on big courts on big occasions here.

"I think the first time I played on a big show court was actually for mixed doubles. I felt like that gave me the experience of being able to play on the court before playing a singles match really helped me.

"I also played a third round in 2019 on Centre. I feel like I can try to use that as much as possible."





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Cavendish breaks Tour de France stage wins record



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Choreographed Anderson exit shows sport has gone soft

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United talks progress with Bayern over De Lig deal

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Foden: I feel sorry for Southgate

By Sam Cunningham
CHIEF FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT
IN BLANKENHAIN

Phil Foden admits he feels “sorry” for Gareth Southgate, insisting that the manager is not solely responsible for England’s underwhelming

performances at Euro 2024 and the players need to take responsibility.

England are in the quarter-finals, where they will play Switzerland on Saturday, but have failed to set pulses racing in the four games so far.

Southgate, the England manager, has taken the brunt of criticism, fac-

ing accusations he has lacked the tactical know-how and ability to get some of the world’s best footballers to play together.

Foden was the Premier League Player of the Year, Jude Bellingham

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Raducanu wakes up Wimbledon

Briton eases to victory in second round

Emma Raducanu takes the applause from No 1 Court after a 6-1, 6-2 victory over Belgium’s Elise Mertens REUTERS

Murray: I was worried she would be asleep when I texted her about competing in mixed doubles

By Michael Hincks
AT THE ALL ENGLAND CLUB

Andy Murray revealed he was worried Emma Raducanu was asleep when messaging her about appearing in the Wimbledon mixed doubles together, but it turned out to be an offer she simply could not refuse – and she replied within 10 seconds.

The British duo have been handed a wild card for the mixed doubles at SW19, which is scheduled to start tomorrow.

Evidently eager to prolong his retirement party, Murray – also in doubles action with brother Jamie – will play mixed doubles here for the first time since teaming up with Serena Williams in 2019, while this will be a grand slam first for Raducanu.

“We’d spoken about it a few years

ago during the Covid year but obviously both of us were doing quite well in the singles and it didn’t happen,” Murray (right) said yesterday. “I was chatting to my team and we were discussing mixed and last night messaged her coach and asked if he thought it might be something she’d be up for doing.

“He said it was worth asking... Thankfully I got quite a quick reply! It was quite late yesterday evening when I sent the message, 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.”

Speaking on-court after her second-round 6-1, 6-2 singles win over Belgium’s Elise Mertens

yesterday, Raducanu said: “I couldn’t say no, it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and a dream of mine. Andy’s a hero to all of us.

“It’s a real gift and an honour that he asked me. I could never say no to and hopefully I can learn a thing or two about coming to the net.”

In her press conference afterwards, Raducanu added: “I got asked, literally like 10 seconds, I was like, ‘Yeah.’ Some things are bigger than just tennis. I think some things are a once-in-a-lifetime memory that you’re going to have for the rest of your life. To play at Wimbledon with Andy Murray, those things don’t come by [often].

At the end of my life, at the end of my career when I’m like 70 years

old, I know I’m going to have that memory of playing Wimbledon with Andy Murray on a home slam.”

Murray will first play with brother Jamie on Centre Court later today, the first time an opening-round men’s doubles match has been scheduled on Wimbledon’s main court since 1995.

The Murrays are the third match on Centre, which could start around 5pm, and face Australian duo Rinky Hijikata and John Peers, with the latter a former partner of Jamie Murray.

Murray and Raducanu, meanwhile, will play together for the first time, and the former said it is unlikely they will practice together before their first-round match against experienced duo and grand-slam

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