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Features



The Daily Telegraph

NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

Rowling attacks PM over new women's minister

Anneliese Dodds failed to define the word 'woman' and pledged to rewrite gender law

By Daniel Martin
DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

SIR KEIR STARMER has sparked a row by appointing a women's minister who said that there are many definitions of a woman.

JK Rowling, Martina Navratilova and other feminist campaigners attacked the Prime Minister's decision to appoint Anneliese Dodds as the women and equalities minister.

In an interview on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* in 2022, Ms Dodds said there are "different definitions legally around what a woman actually is". When asked again, she said: "I think it does depend what the context is."

She has also pledged that Labour is "committed to modernising the Gender Recognition Act", saying the process is "intrusive, outdated and humiliating".

It comes after months of criticism of Sir Keir's stance on gender issues. He had previously said it was "wrong" for one of his MPs to say only a woman has a cervix, and last year said 99.9 per cent of women did not have a penis. He has since changed his stance and said biological men should not be allowed to use women's lavatories.

Labour has been accused of trying to hound out Rosie Duffield, one of its MPs, after she campaigned for same-sex spaces. Ms Duffield faced an internal investigation for alleged transphobia, but was eventually exonerated. At last week's election, she saw her majority dramatically increase.

After Ms Dodds's appointment, Rowling described her comments as "nonsensical". The Harry Potter author, who gave Labour £1 million in 2008, has accused the party of having "abandoned" her and others campaigning for women's rights. Writing in *The Times* before the election, she said she would struggle to vote for Sir Keir, saying she had a "poor opinion" of his character.

Rowling has become known as a fierce

advocate of the rights of biological women after criticising Scottish Government proposals to introduce self-identification for transgender people.

Navratilova, the nine-time Wimbledon singles champion and another prominent gender-critical campaigner, responded to the announcement by tweeting: "Dodds is just awful..."

Sir Keir announced that Bridget Phillipson, the Education Secretary, would also hold the title of minister for women and equalities, because the title legally has to be held by a secretary of state.

But Ms Dodds will attend Cabinet and take the lead on equalities issues even though she is only a minister of state.

In opposition, she said that she was going to be the first secretary of state for women and equalities. Instead, she will combine her equalities role with that of aid minister, in what will be seen as a significant downgrading of the position.

Tess White, a Tory member of the Scottish Parliament, said: "In March 2022, on International Women's Day, Anneliese Dodds could not define what a woman is while being interviewed on *Woman's Hour*."

"Shockingly, she said 'woman' can mean 'all kinds of things'. She is now minister for women and equalities. That should alarm us all."

Ms Phillipson has also been criticised for her approach to women's issues after she refused eight times to say whether a biological male should be able to use a women's lavatory during an interview with LBC radio before the election.

Joan Smith, the journalist and author, said: "Biological reality, and Labour MPs who recognise it, snubbed by Keir Starmer. Dodds and Phillipson [are] now in position to carry out manifesto commitments opposed by thousands, if not millions, of women. I knew he couldn't be trusted."

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Russia bombs Kyiv children's hospital



The main children's hospital in Kyiv was struck yesterday in a Russian missile barrage that killed at least 22 people, including two children. Mothers were seen cradling their sons and daughters outside the Ohmatdyt Children's Hospital, while other young patients received emergency treatment after the daytime strikes. Report: Page 12

Blair predicts £50bn Labour tax raid

By Daniel Martin, James Titcomb and Michael Searles

SIR TONY BLAIR has warned that Sir Keir Starmer will have to put taxes up by more than £50 billion unless he comes up with radical new ways to improve productivity.

The chief economist at the former prime minister's institute forecast that taxes would need to go up by 1.9 percentage points of GDP by the end of the parliament to stabilise debt.

Tax rises would also be needed to meet increasing health costs caused by an ageing society, to plug the decreasing tax take from oil and gas as part of

the transition to net zero, and to avoid austerity, a report from the Tony Blair Institute says.

It suggests that Sir Tony does not believe the new Prime Minister's growth agenda will be enough to meet the challenges of the future.

In a speech at a conference in London today, Sir Tony will call for greater use of artificial intelligence to boost growth. "Britain is facing an unenviable triple whammy of high taxes, heavy debt and poor outcomes," he will say.

"And worse is to come with the demographics of an ageing population against us, deep structural health problems and rising numbers of long-term sick. The

simple and unavoidable truth is that unless we improve growth and productivity, and drive value and efficiency through our public spending, we're going to become poorer. Much poorer." Sir Keir has appointed a number of key figures from Sir Tony's time in office, such as Douglas Alexander, who is now a business minister, and Jacqui Smith, the higher education minister.

The fiscal calculations are contained in a report by Tom Smith, the Tony Blair Institute's director of economic policy, titled *The Economic Case for Reimagining the State*. He said productivity improvements were vital owing to the pressures of an ageing society and

lower tax revenues from oil and gas. "Many of these challenges are not unique to the UK but, without a change in approach, taxes will need to rise by 1.9 percentage points of GDP by the end of this parliament, 3 percentage points cumulatively by the end of the next Parliament and 4.5 percentage points cumulatively by 2040," he said.

Based on the OBR figures for 2024-25, the size of the economy is £2.8 trillion. A rise of 1.9 percentage points of GDP would be equivalent to about £53 billion. Mr Smith said that some of the productivity increases needed could be achieved by speeding up

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Go ahead and challenge me, says Biden as he defies calls to step down

By Rozina Sabur DEPUTY US EDITOR

JOE BIDEN has said Democrats are "driving me nuts" by calling for him to stand down, as he dared his critics to "go ahead and challenge me" for the party's 2024 presidential nomination.

The 81-year-old US president declared that "I am not going anywhere" after his disastrous debate with Donald Trump, 78, triggered calls from his party for him to stand aside.

Senior Democrat figures including Nancy Pelosi, the former House speaker, have since raised questions about Mr Biden's mental fitness.

He said it was time to end speculation over the fate of his re-election cam-

paign in a letter to Democrats on Capitol Hill yesterday. He wrote: "I have heard the concerns that people have - their good faith, fears and worries about what is at stake in this election. I am not blind to them."

But, he stressed, "it's time for it to end", adding: "I wouldn't be running again if I did not absolutely believe I was the best person to beat Donald Trump in 2024. I want you to know that despite all the speculation in the press and elsewhere, I am firmly committed to staying in this race."

Shortly afterwards, he called in live to television station MSNBC to say he was tired of "the elites in the party" who think "they know so much more" about

this year's White House race. He urged sceptical Democrats to "run against me" when the Democratic National Convention meets in August to crown the party's presidential candidate.

While Mr Biden has secured enough delegates to win the Democratic nomination, some donors and lawmakers have called for him to step aside and let Kamala Harris, the vice-president, or another candidate lead the ticket.

"If any of these guys don't think I should run - run against me. Go ahead. Announce for president. Challenge me at the convention," he told MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, his favourite morning US cable news programme.

He added: "I don't care what those

big names think. They were wrong in 2020, they were wrong in 2022 about the red wave, they're wrong in 2024."

The president conceded that he had "a terrible night" during his debate against Trump in Atlanta last month, but added: "I have not had many of those nights."

In response to questions about his mental acuity, he said: "I have a neurological test every single day - try sitting behind this desk and making these decisions. It drives me nuts people talking about this. I'm not going to explain any more about what I should or shouldn't do. I am running."

Listeners reported hearing the sound of paper shuffling as the president

spoke. At one point, he was asked specifically whether he had been tested for any "age-related illnesses", such as pre-Parkinson's.

Mr Biden skirted the question, saying he thought he had Covid on the night of the debate, but was then up until 2am afterwards meeting crowds.

It came as Democratic members of Congress reportedly prepared to press their party's leaders to convince Mr Biden to step aside for a new candidate.

A growing number have voiced concern over Mr Biden's poor public approval ratings, as well as fears about his fitness to serve another four years.

They believe it could hurt their prospects for retaining the Senate, which

they control by a 51-49 majority, and retaking the House, where Republicans have a 219-213 majority.

In his letter yesterday, Mr Biden said he has had "extensive conversations" with the leadership of the Democratic party and "most importantly, Democratic voters" over the past 10 days.

He said those voters had "spoken clearly and decisively" during the party's nominating contest, during which he said he had "received over 14 million votes". Speaking to MSNBC, Mr Biden added that he retained the support of the "average voter" and particularly noted his support among black voters.

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Charles Moore Macron will pay for Leftist gamble

Comment



Holiday not-spots How to avoid the anti-tourist mob

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MATT

"Do you think you could build 250 houses here on Wednesday evening when the England match is on?"

NEWS Labour will press Nato over defence spending

Labour will use this week's Nato summit to urge other countries to increase their defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP, David Lammy and John Healey have said. In a joint article for *The Telegraph* website, the Foreign and Defence Secretaries say that Britain will reach that threshold "as soon as possible". They add that all Nato allies, which currently have a target to spend 2 per cent of GDP on defence, "should adopt this [2.5 per cent] as a new defence target".
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NEWS Cyclist sent pensioner 'flying through the air'

An 81-year-old woman died after a collision with a cyclist on a towpath sent her "flying through the air", a court has heard. Polly Friedhoff "sustained serious injuries to her head, arms and ribs" and died 12 days after Edward Bressan tried to overtake her as she walked with her friend Ewa Huggins in Oxford. Mr Bressan told police he had rung his bell before the collision, but Ms Huggins told Oxford Crown Court she did not hear any warning from the cyclist. The trial continues.
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Labour to tell nations to up Nato spending

Foreign and defence secretaries say UK will hit threshold of 2.5 per cent of GDP 'as soon as possible'

By **Daniel Martin**
DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

LABOUR will use this week's Nato summit to urge other countries to increase

their defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP, David Lammy and John Healey have said.

In a joint online article for *The Telegraph*, the foreign and defence secretaries said that under Labour, Britain would reach that threshold "as soon as possible". They said they would be arguing that "all Nato allies should adopt this as a new defence target".

Nato members have a target to spend 2 per cent of GDP on defence. Last year,

only 11 of the alliance's 32 members, including the UK, hit the target. It follows criticism from the Conservatives that Sir Keir Starmer has not put a date on when he will meet the target. Rishi Sunak had promised to do so by 2030.

The Nato summit in Washington will be the new Prime Minister's first appearance on the world stage. Accompanied by his foreign and defence secretaries he will seek to reassure other members of the alliance that, despite

the change of government, Britain's backing for Nato is as strong as ever.

The Biden administration announced last night that the US president will host Sir Keir for a bilateral meeting during the summit at the White House.

Mr Lammy and Mr Healey wrote that Labour will have a "Nato first" defence strategy, because: "We must stand together and stand up for what's right."

They wrote: "Our government's commitment to Nato is therefore unshakable. We will have a 'Nato first' defence strategy. European security will be our foreign and defence priority. Our commitment to Britain's nuclear deterrent is absolute.

"We will increase spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP on defence as soon as possible, whilst arguing all Nato allies should adopt this as a new defence target."

The pair said they wanted to emulate Ernest Bevin, the former Labour for-

eign secretary, who "had the vision and determination to bring twelve nations from Western Europe and North America together to create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization". They said on the 75th anniversary of the alliance, the foremost adversary was Russia.

"We must strengthen our defences to deter Putin effectively," they wrote. "And we must reinvigorate our support for the brave people of Ukraine, as they defend their freedom against Vladimir Putin's new form of fascism.

"Our generation faces a darkening global landscape. Those who believe in freedom and international law must stand together, stand for what's right - just as Bevin did 75 years ago."

The pair added: "We will be fully committed to strengthening other alliances that enhance British security."

David Lammy and John Healey: telegraph.co.uk

NEWS BULLETIN

Mother who admitted to ending child's life dies

A mother who ended the life of her terminally ill seven-year-old son has died, days after admitting to the act during a live radio interview.

Antonya Cooper, from Abingdon, Oxfordshire, acknowledged she was potentially admitting to manslaughter, but that she was suffering from terminal cancer. Ms Cooper, 77, whose son Hamish had stage four cancer before his death in 1981, said she would happily face the consequences of ending his life. Last week, Thames Valley Police confirmed it was investigating. Ms Cooper had been undergoing chemotherapy for breast and pancreatic cancer. Thames Valley Police was contacted for comment.

Bee 'anthrax' threatens colonies after outbreak

Bee colonies are under threat from a lethal disease after the worst outbreak of apian "anthrax" in 10 years was detected in the North East.

American foulbrood (AFB) has been found in more than 30 colonies in a six-square-mile area near Guisborough, North Yorkshire, according to the National Bee Unit. AFB is caused by a bacteria that infects young bee larvae and spreads through the hive, leading to the death of the colony. The only way to control the outbreak is by burning and destroying all infected colonies. The National Bee Unit, part of the Government's Animal and Plant Health Agency, said the new outbreak was the largest since 2014.

Gut bacteria could be used to diagnose autism

Autism could be diagnosed by gut bacteria, according to a new study.

Scientists say a new way of diagnosing the condition may help address the "massive backlog" in people waiting to be seen.

In the study, researchers from the Chinese University of Hong Kong analysed stool samples from 1,627 children aged one to 13, with or without the condition.

They found specific bacterial and non-bacterial components of the gut microbiome and their functions could contribute to autism spectrum disorder in both boys and girls.

The findings were published in the academic journal *Nature Microbiology*.

Flight cancellations hit over 10,000 passengers

More than 10,000 passengers have had their flights cancelled at UK airports because of bad weather and air traffic control staff shortages in Europe.

At least 125 flights were hit on Sunday and yesterday, including 82 British Airways flights to and from Heathrow. Several airlines also cancelled Gatwick flights.

The worst-hit was easyJet, with 34 flights grounded on Sunday and at least nine yesterday.

Airlines blamed "adverse weather" and "traffic control delays" for the grounded flights, which could mean that thousands of holidaymakers are not compensated because these causes of disruption are usually deemed to be outside the control of airlines.

Good nurses hounded while bad ones let off, says report

By **Michael Searles**
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

GOOD nurses are being hounded over minor issues while bad ones are let off, a report into the nursing regulator has found.

A "toxic culture" at the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) of "see no evil, hear no evil" meant that nurses accused of rape and sexual assault were not investigated because it "happened outside of work".

One nurse was accused of rape and sexual assault of both colleagues and patients but was not struck off until seven years after first being reported to the NMC, the report by Nazir Afzal, the former chief prosecutor, said.

Nurses also told of the "terrifying" consequences of speaking up, with multiple examples of "complaints being

'I am extremely sorry to hear the testimony of NMC colleagues who shared distressing experiences'

ignored or the complainant being punished or demoted".

It comes less than a year after Lucy Letby's trial heard that hospital leaders allegedly failed to listen to staff's concerns about her on multiple occasions.

The independent review was commissioned after a whistleblower revealed a widespread "culture of fear" within the NMC.

Despite this, the review found that "it quickly became apparent that there was anger felt towards the whistleblower from senior leaders and that issues raised were seen as a source of irritation rather than an opportunity for learning".

Sir David Warren, the NMC's chairman, said: "This is a profoundly distressing report to read.

"I am extremely sorry to hear the testimony of NMC colleagues who have shared their distressing experiences of racism, discrimination or bullying.

"On behalf of the council, I give my absolute assurance that addressing this will be front and centre of change at the NMC."



Ice cream float After becoming stuck in the sand as the tide began to turn at Harlyn Bay beach in north Cornwall, an ice cream van is partially submerged in the sea, despite multiple attempts by an off-road vehicle with a winch to pull it to safety.

Church takes first steps to allowing gay priests to marry

By **Cameron Henderson**

THE Church of England has taken its first steps towards allowing gay members of the clergy to marry.

The General Synod, the Church's legislative body, voted to pass proposals that pave the way towards a report on the question of same-sex civil marriage ceremonies between members of the clergy or one member of the clergy and a lay person. Church leaders will now

reconvene in February to discuss the prospect, as well as steps to permit blessings for same-sex couples in so-called "standalone" services, which closely resemble marriage ceremonies.

These would build on proposals agreed in November, when the Synod voted in favour of permitting blessings for same-sex couples during regular church services on a trial basis.

The proposals passed comfortably by 22 votes to 12 in the House of Bishops

and by 99 votes to 88 among the Clergy respectively. Among the laity, the vote was much closer, passing by just four votes, with 95 in favour and 91 against.

The proposals were met with widespread dismay among conservative-leaning groups in the Church.

Rev Canon John Dunnett, the national director of the Church of England Evangelical Council, said: "I was born in the Church of England. But if the 'Prayers of Love and Faith' bus con-

tinues in the same direction, I sometimes wonder whether I will die as a member of the Church of England or not."

The Rev Will Pearson-Gee, a Buckinghamshire rector, said: "I think it could be a watershed moment.

"They've woken up a sleeping giant. Up until now we've just been disinterested, but people have been radicalised."

Before today's vote, the Most Rev Jus-

tin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, called for unity between factions.

"The reality of the church as we live it is always messy," he told Church leaders gathered in York.

"That the church flourishes as one is indispensable to the gospel in this land.

"That the Church flourishes as one is essential to the Anglican community, which like all global churches, is deeply divided and seeking the support of each other."

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Rain to blame for poor Wimbledon attendance, insist organisers

All England Club denies loss of superstar players like Federer and Nadal is behind drop in spectators

By Max Stephens

WIMBLEDON'S chief executive has suggested the weather rather than competition from other events is to blame for a dip in attendance at this year's tournament.

Fewer visitors were recorded on every day of the tournament's opening week, except for last Tuesday when Sir Andy Murray, the two-time Wimbledon champion, was expected to play in the first round of the men's singles.

Tournament records reveal 282,955 fans had passed through SW19, around 10,000 fewer than in 2023, a near 4 per cent drop.

Sally Bolton, head of the All England club, blamed rain for the dip in visitors and denied that Wimbledon had lost its allure for fans following the absence of stars like Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams.

As the second week of the tournament began yesterday, Ms Bolton said: "This year the weather has been so variable and so bad at times that I think at the moment our assessment is it's almost certainly the weather that's impacting [attendance]."

She added: "I think the real challenge for everyone is the variability of the

weather. Even those who are just using weather apps can see that you are coming in, looking two days ahead and it looks like it's getting better and then it changes."

"None of us had seen how excited people would become about the likes of [Carlos] Alcaraz [the defending Wimbledon champion] and [Jannik] Sinner [the World number one] and others."

"There is genuine excitement about this new generation."

Torrential downpours had certainly dampened enthusiasm from expectant visitors with nearly a month's worth of rain (38.6 mm) falling in the space of a single week, according to Met Office data, recorded at nearby Kew Gardens.

Friday alone saw half a month's worth of rainfall (26.6mm) in a single day and the lowest attendance on Wimbledon's fifth day (36,360) since 1998 - excluding the pandemic-restricted 2021 tournament.

However in a week featuring a general election and Euro 2024, Ms Bolton said it was becoming increasingly difficult to grab viewers' attention.

She added: "I think the broader challenge for tennis and sport is that competition for people's attention and time is just ever greater from a whole range of different things."

Ms Bolton dismissed concerns that the semi-final clash between England and the Netherlands on Wednesday would affect Wimbledon attendance, commenting: "I am not concerned about a football impact. At this point, I am still concerned about it still raining".

England's Euro 2024 quarter-final victory against Switzerland on Saturday was watched on BBC One by a peak audience of 16.8 million people.

Asked if this was the most challenging tournament to schedule since her tenure began, in 2020, Ms Bolton replied: "Probably from a scheduling standpoint and just the unpredictability of the weather, it just means that when you are looking ahead to a day, you start with a plan in mind and the rain really is quite unpredictable."

A total of 79 matches have been cancelled so far, many of them featuring junior players, owing to a combination of the weather and player injuries.

Ms Bolton said they were prepared to accept fluctuations in attendance because of tickets being held back for its famous queue.

She added: "We're never about maximising our attendances, we're all about protecting the queue and making sure that we have still got that accessibility, accepting that, as a result of that, [there is] some variability on the numbers that we will end up achieving."

The weather for the tennis does not look likely to improve immediately, as yellow weather warnings for rain have been issued by the forecaster across parts of southern England and south Wales on Monday night and in northern Scotland on Tuesday night.

While well known players like Emma Raducanu, below, have failed to attract large crowds, the competition has still managed to draw famous faces, such as Sir Mark Rylance, right



Royal replacement ready if Princess cannot attend tennis finals

By Matt Hughes

THE Duchess of Gloucester has been earmarked to present the Wimbledon trophies this weekend if the Princess of Wales is unavailable, as she continues her recovery from cancer treatment.

Debbie Jevans, the chairman of the All England Club, told *The Telegraph* in the build-up to the Championships they would give the Princess "as much flexibility as possible" in determining whether she is able to fulfil her duties as club patron on finals weekend, including leaving a decision until the morning

of the women's final on Saturday. The Princess has made just one public appearance this year, at Trooping the Colour, after she announced in March that she is being treated for cancer.

Kensington Palace is not confirming any potential engagements for the Princess while she continues a course of preventive chemotherapy, and her attendance at Trooping the Colour on June 15 was announced the day before.

While Ms Jevans said a fortnight ago that she was "hopeful" the Princess would be able to attend, given the uncertainty Wimbledon has had to put

contingency plans in place. The All England Club has a strong relationship with the Royal family, with 10 royals having presented the trophies since Prince George (later King George V) became the club's first president in 1907, and it is understood that during informal discussions the Duchess of Gloucester has emerged as

The Princess will be given until the morning of the women's final to make a decision



a potential replacement.

A Wimbledon spokesman told *The Telegraph* that a decision had yet to be made, and the presentation party would be confirmed on the morning of each final.

The Danish-born Duchess, 78, is a huge tennis fan. She has been an honorary president of the Lawn Tennis Association for 25 years and attended Wimble-

don as a guest of the club last week.

In another complication for Wimbledon, the Prince of Wales is likely to be in Berlin next Sunday for the final of Euro 2024. The Prince was photographed celebrating England's dramatic penalty shoot-out win over Switzerland in Düsseldorf on Saturday, and may attend the final even if Gareth Southgate's side are beaten by the Netherlands in tomorrow's semi-final, given his own role as president of the FA.

The Princess of Wales has been patron of the All England Club for eight years, and since 2016 has presented the

trophies, moments of global significance that are hugely valued by Wimbledon. Indeed, such is the symbolic importance of the trophy presentation that the potential optics of the Princess handing over a trophy to a Russian player - and the propaganda boost it would give to Vladimir Putin - was one of the reasons cited for the club's controversial decision to ban Russians from the Championships following the invasion of Ukraine two years ago.

The All England Club now has a president after the Duke of Kent stepped down three years ago.

Radio 2 should stay 'uncool' says Ken Bruce

By Anita Singh
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

RADIO 2 should be "uncool" and not try to appeal to a young audience, Ken Bruce has warned.

The veteran DJ spent four decades at the station before moving to Greatest Hits Radio, its commercial rival, last year.

He said that Radio 2 should not appeal to anyone under the age of 35 and should never stray into Radio 1 territory.

"I think there should always be a clear division between Radio 1 and Radio 2. There should be clear blue water, as they say in politics, between what each station is doing," the 73-year-old DJ told the *Beyond The Title* podcast.

"Radio 1 should be serving the 15-30 age group, and Radio 2 should be serving 35-plus - not really any younger than that."

"It's a state of mind, Radio 2, it's not so much about the music that's being played."

He went on: "You move from being a youngster who is interested in going to clubs and meeting people and having a great time, to becoming somebody

with a career, very often a family, and responsibilities - and it's a state of mind."

"And you're also more comfortable with yourself, so you don't mind being uncool when you're over 35."

"Whenever Radio 2 started to think of itself as being cool, I always said, 'Stop, stop, stop, stop. That's the worst thing we can do.'"

Speaking to *The Telegraph* earlier this



Ken Bruce worked as a DJ at Radio 2 for four decades before leaving last year

year, Bruce said that he had become frustrated by the directive to play new music all the time during his mid-morning show, as he believed that Radio 2's audiences wanted to hear old favourites.

"Obviously you want to play new music, but the balance had got out of kilter."

"I felt I would rather be playing pieces of music that have stood the test of time, that people already know and love and will enjoy hearing again," he said.

He also explained that he no longer listened to Radio 2, saying: "If you worked in a factory for 40 years, would you go back and stand outside the gates staring in? No."

Bruce has added 1.6 million listeners to his Greatest Hits Radio slot since joining. The audience for Fallon, his Radio 2 replacement, has fallen, though it continues to be the UK's most popular radio programme, with 6.75 million listeners.

A Radio 2 spokesman said: "Radio 2, the UK's most listened-to radio station with 13.2m listeners each week, continues to target an audience aged 35+, a target that has remained unchanged for decades."

England fans dash to Dortmund for semi-final

By Ben Rumsby in Wolfsburg

THE UK could witness its biggest last-minute exodus of football fans to a major tournament today with up to 40,000 tipped to dash to Dortmund for England's European Championship semi-final against the Netherlands.

Supporters desperate to celebrate the Three Lions reaching their first tournament final on foreign soil are expected to flock to Germany ahead of tomorrow night's historic showdown, following Saturday's quarter-final penalty shoot-out victory against Switzerland.

Yesterday return flights to nearby Dusseldorf were still available that would arrive in time for the 8pm kick-off but at a cost in excess of £800, while fans were still scrambling for tickets that were being sold for up to £17,000.

Most will travel in hope rather than expectation of getting into tomorrow's game but will still be able to soak up the atmosphere in Germany and congregate to watch it at the various fan parks.

Many would have booked flights within minutes of Saturday's nail-biting win over Switzerland, while others could elect to make the 350-mile trip in campervans. With an estimated 40,000 England fans already in Germany, a

doubling of that number would see them match the 80,000 Netherlands supporters to make the short trip across the border.

Veterans of previous tournaments forecast the sudden exodus from the UK would dwarf the estimated 5,000 fans who famously rushed to the 1990 World Cup semi-final, when many drove 24 hours to Turin, and the similar number of supporters who dashed to the 2018



Germany could receive up to 40,000 England fans ahead of tomorrow's game

semi-final in Russia, where high costs and visa entry requirements prevented many more travelling.

Mark Knapper, 65, from Hertfordshire, who has attended almost every England game for the last 25 years, said: "Up to 40,000 England fans will rush out for the semi. It will be our biggest last-minute rush to a tournament. Dortmund is easy to get to and the atmosphere is amazing."

Simon Harris, a long-standing member of the England Supporters Travel Club and a Conservative member of Shropshire Council, added: "Why wouldn't you go? Russia and Qatar were expensive, and Covid ruined Euro 2020."

Were England to reach the final, they face ticket prices that had as of yesterday hit more than £25,000 for a pair.

Resale site ticombo.com, selling 1,615 tickets to the final, was charging between £3,020 and £25,376 for two seats worth £80-£850 at face value.

Tournament organiser Uefa said: "We urge fans not to purchase tickets on the secondary market."

The Football Association would get just 10,000 official tickets for the final at Berlin's 75,000-capacity Olympiastadion were England to get there.

Labour paves way for autumn tax rises

Schemes may include pay-per-mile levy to replace fuel duty returns as electric car market grows

By **Melissa Lawford and Matt Oliver**

RACHEL REEVES has ordered a review by Treasury officials that could usher in autumn tax rises as she warned that Britain is facing the worst public finances since the Second World War.

The Chancellor has asked civil servants to compile a dossier on the current situation and will present her analysis to MPs before the summer recess.

It is likely to trigger fears that Labour is laying the groundwork for up to £15 million of tax rises in its first Budget, going far beyond anything proposed in the party's manifesto.

The Conservative Party said the speech was a clear sign that Labour is now preparing for tax rises. A Tory spokesman said: "Rachel Reeves herself said you don't need to win an election to find out the state of the public finances. Admitting that with the OBR, there is already detailed public scrutiny of the country's finances. We warned that Labour would attempt this ruse as a cause to raid pensions and raise taxes. It is now clear that is coming to pass, and the British people will pay the price."

Sir Keir Starmer also warned about the dire state of the economy. Speaking in Cardiff, the Prime Minister said: "The economy is in a bad state. I think the whole country knows that. That is why there was such a strong mandate for the incoming Labour government for change."

However, Ms Reeves appeared to rule out a raid on banks' reserves of the kind suggested by former prime minister Gordon Brown.

In her first speech as Chancellor, she said that Labour has inherited the "worst set of circumstances since the Second World War."

Ms Reeves said: "I have repeatedly warned that whoever won the general election would inherit the worst set of circumstances since the Second World War. What I have seen in the past 72 hours has only confirmed that our economy has been held back by decisions deferred and decisions ducked, political self-interest put ahead of the national interest. A government that put party first and country second."

Ms Reeves said that she had instructed civil servants over the weekend to make an assessment of the public finances "so that I can understand the full scale of the challenge".

In comments that will lead to speculation of tax rises, Ms Reeves said that previous governments had been unwilling to make the "difficult decisions to deliver growth". She added: "I will not hesitate." Economists have warned that the new Labour government will likely have little choice but to introduce tax rises to rebuild struggling public services.

In the run-up to the election, Paul

Johnson, director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), criticised all parties for a "conspiracy of silence" in the manifestos over the true scale of the economic and fiscal challenges facing the new administration.

Analysts at investment bank Citi said they expect a package of tax increases in the autumn worth around £15 billion.

The IFS has warned that wealth taxes, such as inheritance tax and capital gains tax, are one of the few options left on the table for a Labour government.

It came as Labour was told it must consider road pricing to prevent a black hole emerging in the public finances.

A civil servant who is head of future roads technology at the Department for Transport, called for ministers to consider a controversial "per-mile" tax on drivers to ensure "electric motorists keep paying their share".

In a series of social media posts on X, formerly known as Twitter, which have since been deleted, he wrote: "The obvious answer is to find another tax so

'What I have seen has only confirmed our economy has been held back by decisions ducked'

electric motorists keep paying their share. But electric vehicles don't use special electricity that you can tax. And a purchase or a registration tax won't restrain gridlock.

"So you need some kind of per-mile cost. And that leads you back to road pricing. The principle is you pay a small fee for every mile you drive. Just like you effectively do through fuel taxes today.

"In the fancier versions, you adjust the prices so you pay less on empty roads and more on busy ones."

He predicted pay-per-mile pricing would be unpopular and insisted there was no "secret plan" to introduce it. He suggested one way of implementing the tax would be to levy it on future buyers of electric cars only, making it more politically palatable.

He is a career civil servant who has worked at the Department for Transport since 2009.

He is currently responsible for leading government policy on the development of road infrastructure, according to his profile on LinkedIn.

Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP, the former Tory leader, warned that road pricing would be a mistake. He said reported proposals to introduce such measures in London – which Sadiq Khan, the Labour mayor, has denied – threatened to make the capital "a no-go area" for elderly motorists who did not want to travel by underground but were already deterred by congestion charging.

The Department for Transport has been asked to comment.

Labour's election manifesto did not set out the party's plan for fuel duty or vehicle excise duty, commonly known as "road tax", which electric car drivers will start paying from next year.



JONATHAN BRADY/PA WIRE

Reeves unspun: What the Chancellor

Analysis

Fiscal restraint might be the new mantra, but a new focus on spending projects as well as taxes looms large

By **Szu Ping Chan**

RACHEL REEVES chose the Churchill Room at the Treasury to deliver her maiden speech as Chancellor.

Some of the most important announcements of the last century have been delivered there, including the creation of the NHS and the

announcement of the Bank of England's independence.

Watched by an audience of Cabinet ministers, bankers and business leaders, including HSBC boss Noel Quinn and Tom Glover, the UK chairman of energy giant RWE, Reeves outlined her priorities for what she described as a "national mission" to raise growth.

Greenbelt building blitz

One of the Chancellor's starkest admissions was that Labour's housebuilding drive risked piling more pressure on already overstretched public services by increasing local populations.

Reeves promised to revive mandatory housing targets that could include building on areas of the green belt, as she reiterated a manifesto pledge to build 1.5 million homes over the next five years.

Trade-offs "always exist", she said towards the end of the 10-minute speech. "Any development may have environmental consequences, place pressure on services, and rouse voices of local opposition," she said.

Reeves has made fiscal restraint her mantra, suggesting there will be no new money to build hundreds of new GP surgeries, dentists or schools alongside the new developments, potentially fuelling local discontent.

'We will not succumb to a status quo which relegates the national interest below other priorities'

But she remained defiant: "We will not succumb to a status quo which responds to the existence of trade-offs by always saying no, and relegates the national interest below other priorities."

Labour has already set out plans to build on what it calls "grey belt" or areas of "poor quality" and "ugly" land currently designated green belt. Reeves also stressed that her "golden rules" include a goal that any scheme built on the green belt land must target 50 per cent of housing that is deemed affordable.

Upgrading industry

Labour is unshamed about its plans to

intervene in the planning system, especially when it comes to big infrastructure like gigafactories and data centres.

Reeves suggested that many of the barriers to building will be torn down, with planners only just stopping shy of riding roughshod over local concerns. Priorities will be set at national level, reducing the likelihood that they will be blocked by councils.

The Chancellor said two big data centres that had planning permission rejected, including a £1 billion project in Hertfordshire, were already being revived.

Reeves insisted that the economic benefits of development will be a

Reeves suggested that many of the barriers to building will be torn down

Our first Treasury Dalek wants to turn the nation into a Skaro that brooks no argument

Sketch



By **Tim Stanley**

I for one welcome our new socialist overlords. I'm hoping they'll bring back the unions, an overtime ban, work to rule and if the editor demands one more sketch of Ed Davey – "everybody out!" If I just can't be bothered to work, I can always go back

on the dole. "The people's flag is deepest red..."

So it was with great personal interest that I watched Rachel Reeves's statement – a historic day, for she is Britain's first Dalek Chancellor. The voice is electronic; the smile automatic. She swept into the briefing room, bumped into the lectern a couple of times, then pointed a plunger at the audience. "BRITAIN IS NOT GROWING. YOU MUST GROW." The business journalists – all graduates in art history – nodded sagely. "YOU WILL

"The tracks of HS2 are now overgrown with flowers and chirrup with frogs – and that's the way I like it"

BUILD. FAILURE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

I grew uneasy. Where's the redistribution? The dream of ending child poverty? More importantly, where's my back-pocket bung for electing a Labour Government? The least she could offer is a free bus pass

or some cinema tickets. But no: it seems that having campaigned as a Tory, Ms Reeves is going to govern as a Tory – minus their romantic attachment to the countryside.

She pledged "robust fiscal rules" and a "strong resolve" (those Thals won't know what hit 'em). As the Dalek Chancellor turned to planning reform, she became excited, the plunger wagging about, and declared onshore wind farms (groan), housing targets (yikes) and "an interventionist approach" by the new housing minister. Who might

that be? I typed it into Google and the face of Angela Rayner popped up, grinning from ear to ear like she'd won a speedboat on *Bullseye*. *Gott im Himmel*.

Now, I like Red Ange: in this new Government, she's the best line of defence between me and doing a day's work. But her in charge of infrastructure? I had a vision of finding Ms Rayner in my back garden with a clipboard and two sinister workmen, measuring the flower beds: "I'd say we could fit two council 'ouses and a wind farm in 'ere."

"But what about my roses?" I ask. "Your objections 'ave been noted, comrade. Noted and overruled..."

What has Britain done? We've elected a party that wants to turn us into Skaro: concrete bunkers from here to the horizon, with not a blade

of grass between Watford and Peterborough. Kent become a business park.

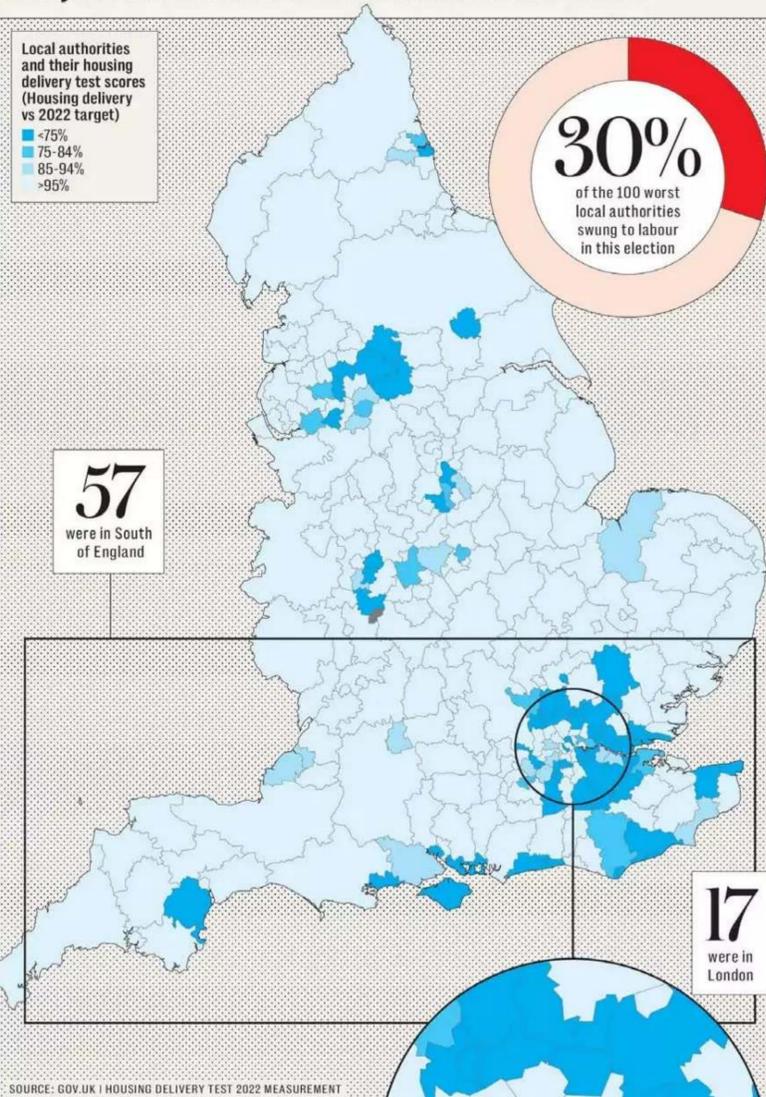
A journalist asked if her speech amounted to a war on Nimby's; Ms Reeves described herself as a Yimby. The implication was clear: "YOU WILL SUBMIT!"

It is to be a builders' government after 14 years of "decisions deferred" and projects cancelled. A pity. The tracks of HS2, which came so close to destroying the countryside just to shave 10 minutes off a trip to Birmingham, are now overgrown with wild flowers and chirrup with frogs – and that's the way I like it.

The Conservatives had their faults, but at least they got nothing done, and thus threw up some barriers to progress. The Tory party needs to hurry up and regenerate a new leader.

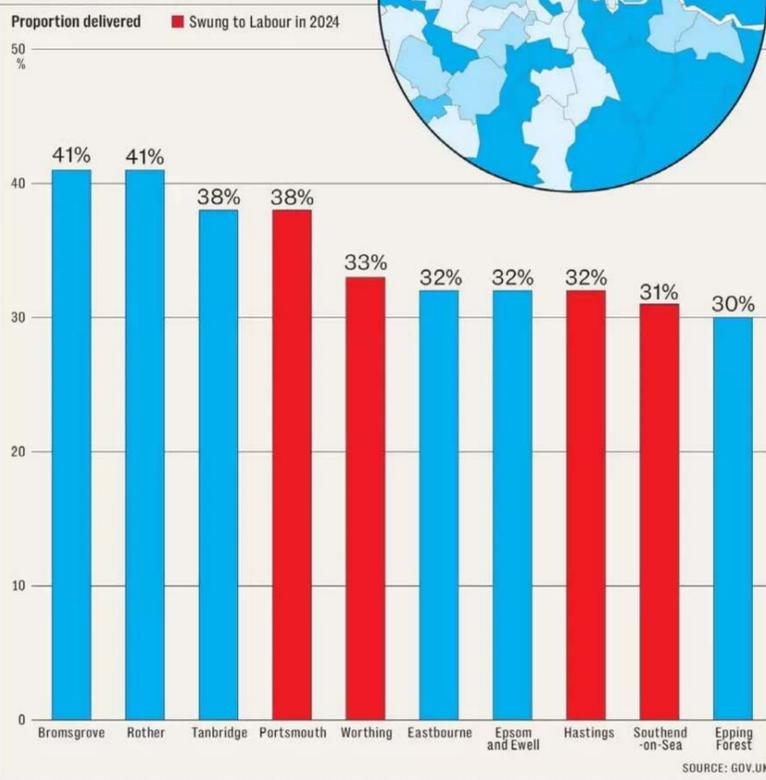


Many at-risk councils sit within Labour constituencies



SOURCE: GOV.UK | HOUSING DELIVERY TEST 2022 MEASUREMENT

Some of the most at-risk local authorities now lie in Labour constituencies



Nimbys face shock of their lives amid planning shake-up

Reeves to risk 'short-term political pain' as she bends councils to her will with housebuilding programme

By Melissa Lawford

RACHEL REEVES used her first major speech as Chancellor to send a clear message to Britain's Nimbys: start quaking in your boots.

Planning reform was the central pillar of Labour's plan for economic growth during the election campaign, and Ms Reeves has wasted no time in laying the groundwork for the Government's aim to build 1.5 million homes over the next five years.

Yesterday, Ms Reeves said Labour will consult on a new growth-focused approach to the planning system before the end of July, to reform the National Planning Policy Framework.

This will include restoring mandatory housing targets, which Michael Gove, the former housing secretary, heavily watered down after bowing to a rebellion from backbench Tory MPs led by Theresa Villiers.

Ms Reeves made it clear that she is gearing up for a brawl. "The question is not whether we want growth, but how strong is our resolve - how prepared are we to make hard choices and face down the vested interests; how willing, even, to risk short-term political pain to fix Britain's foundations," she said.

"I know that there will be opposition to this. I'm not naïve."

Or in other words, "she has declared her willingness to fight battles with Nimbys where necessary", says John Myers, founder of the Yimby Alliance campaign group.

At a time when the public finances are crippled, planning reform offers a route to growth that is effectively free. Regulatory reform does not require billions of pounds in investment or tax rises to pay for it. The only cost to Labour will be political capital - something which Ms Reeves has a lot of right now.

"It's clearly part of what they've been elected to do and they have got a big majority. So in principle they are in a better position to see off these challenges than any government probably since before the Second World War," says Paul Cheshire, emeritus professor at the London School of Economics and a former government adviser.

London's commuter belt and the South East will be home to the biggest fights - and that is where local Nimbys are in for the biggest shocks.

Under the existing system, housing delivery in local authorities is measured against their local targets. If local authorities are delivering 85 per cent to 95 per cent of their target, they effectively need to increase their target by 5 per cent over the five years ahead. If they are delivering less than 85 per cent, the increase in their target is 20 per cent.

This system of penalties was rendered toothless when the targets became advisory, but should have new weight now that they will become mandatory again.

"They do have some reasonably forceful sticks that they have devised to enforce those targets. It should, over

Jonathan Reynolds, the Business Secretary, and Rachel Reeves embrace after the Chancellor's speech at the Treasury

time, mean that it becomes more and more difficult for local authorities to not meet their targets," says Mr Cheshire.

Labour plans to force local authorities that are not meeting their targets to accept proposals for development.

It could also go further and increase the housing delivery test penalties, or cut the threshold at which they are imposed, says Simon Coop, senior director at Lichfield planning consultants. "Those that have persistently under-performed might face additional action."

Nearly a third of local authorities will face some kind of sanction when the targets become mandatory again because they have been consistently under-delivering, says Mr Coop.

"The expectation is that they will be expected to rapidly and significantly boost their output."

The worst performers are heavily concentrated in the South East.

Of the 295 local authorities in England, 76 delivered less than 85 per cent of their housing targets, meaning they will be expected to ramp up their targets significantly.

The vast majority of these local authorities that have been falling most short are in the southern commuter belt. Of the 76, 56 were in the South, with 25 in the South East and 14 in the East of England alone. In Conservative-held Epping Forest, in 2022, the local authority had delivered just 30 per cent of the homes in its target plan. In Southend-on-Sea, Hastings, and Worthing - all of which flipped from the Tories to Labour - the authorities had delivered 31 per cent, 32 per cent and 33 per cent respectively.

Performance is worst in the South East because this is where housing is most unaffordable and where it is hardest to find land, says Mr Cheshire. It is also where the largest number of local authorities have ditched their plans altogether.

Many of the worst performers also have land in the green belt - which they will likely come under new pressure to build on.

Angela Rayner, the Deputy Prime Minister, is about to write to local authorities to make it clear that they will need to deliver their local plans and review their greenbelt boundaries to make land on disused "greybelt" sites (such as car parks) available for development, Ms Reeves said.

"I think we're going to see some pressure to build on green belt land where authorities haven't been meeting their targets or aren't going to meet their targets," says Mr Myers.

Ms Rayner will also start making greater use of ministerial powers to make direct interventions in planning decisions and "will not hesitate" to review applications that are in national or regional interests, said Ms Reeves.

Other policies include providing a further 300 planning offers across the country, an immediate end to the effective ban on new onshore wind farms in England and new priority to energy projects in planning decisions.

Labour's political capital to drive planning reform has been further boosted by the landslide local elections in May, in which it won 1,158 seats across the 107 council elections.



Politics
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really meant as she vowed to fix Britain

"central consideration" for Angela Rayner going forward, insisting that the Deputy Prime Minister "will not hesitate to review an application where the potential gain for the regional and national economies warrant it".

Onshore wind farms

Reeves announced that Labour would end what she described as an "absurd ban on new onshore wind in England". The Chancellor vowed to go further, and "consult on bringing onshore wind back into the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime". In other words, this could see decisions on large developments made

"nationally not locally". This means that decisions on where wind farms will be built would land in the in-tray of Ed Miliband, the Energy Secretary, regardless of local opposition.

Pension boost

Reeves confirmed the Government will shortly reveal plans to invest billions of pounds in a new national wealth fund to attract more international investment and help drive the UK towards net zero.

Led by former Bank of England governor Mark Carney, the group wants Britain to invest more in projects such as carbon capture and green steel, with the aim of creating

She announced that Labour would end an 'absurd ban on new onshore wind in England'

thousands of jobs along the way. She also suggested Labour would build on the work started by Jeremy Hunt, the former chancellor, to boost pensions.

Going for growth

Labour's first and arguably most important mission is to achieve the highest sustained growth in the G7.

Reeves claimed that Treasury analysis she commissioned over the weekend suggested the UK economy was £140 billion smaller than if it had grown at the OECD average of industrialised economies. "That's money that could have revitalised our schools, our hospitals, and other public services," she told the audience.

Achieving this goal would mean growing faster than the US, which has expanded much faster than any other G7 nation since the pandemic.

Britain has privately been warned that it must stop pretending it can continue to offer the public services that people expect while keeping the tax burden down.

Tax

The Tory "blame document" is already being written. Reeves opened her speech with what she dubbed "the inheritance", painting an economic backdrop that she said was "the worst set of circumstances" in peacetime. The Chancellor has asked civil

She painted an economic backdrop that she said was the 'worst' in peacetime

servants to compile a spending dossier in the coming weeks, which will be presented in Parliament before the summer recess in July or August. A date for the Autumn Statement will also be set at this time.

The dossier will focus on public spending and whether Labour is likely to be able to stick with a commitment made by Hunt to raise it by 1 per cent in real terms over the next parliament.

Several think tanks, including the Institute for Fiscal Studies, have warned this is not realistic, prompting fears Labour will use the analysis to lay the groundwork for billions of pounds in new tax rises - beyond what it outlined in its manifesto.

AI 'can help Whitehall cut one million staff'

Continued from Page 1

housebuilding, reforming infrastructure planning, and improving relations with the European Union.

But, he said this would not be enough to avoid large tax rises, saying that AI must also be harnessed to drive growth. There is absolutely no doubt that this is an era of transformation. Things which were impossible will become possible; advances which would have taken decades will happen in a few

years or even months; the value we can add, the improvements in efficiency we can make, the radical benefits in outcomes we can secure, could be truly revolutionary."

Mr Smith's report found that more than 40 per cent of tasks performed by public sector workers could be partly automated by AI and robotics, saving a fifth of their time.

Once adjusted for unpaid overtime, a sixth of all work done by public sector workers such as civil servants, nurses and police officers would be freed up, creating a "dividend" that could be used to boost front-line numbers or reduce workers to cut debt.

The report said public sector workers' productivity had been flat for more

than 25 years but that the workforce had grown by 500,000 over that time to six million.

Another report by the Tony Blair Institute included modelling on the economic benefits of preventing ill-health, such as heart disease, cancer and musculoskeletal disorders. Around 5 per cent of people aged 50 to 64 will leave their job within any given year, but this jumps to 13 per cent among people with heart disease, and 23 per cent of those who have had a stroke.

The analysis found that by cutting rates of heart disease by a fifth, such as through the use of statins, it would boost the economy by £2.2 billion within five years and mean 50,000 extra people were still in work.



Point taken

Sir Keir Starmer with Hilary Benn, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, at Stormont Castle, Belfast, yesterday.

IN BRIEF

Sinn Féin welcomes return of Troubles trials

Sinn Féin has said it welcomes Labour's commitment to repeal the Legacy Act that protects British veterans from prosecution after Sir Keir Starmer visited Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister pledged to ditch the effective amnesty for Troubles-era killers, including British veterans, before his general election victory. Sir Keir held talks with the leaders of Northern Ireland's major parties in Stormont in Belfast yesterday. Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin's leader, said her party had a "very constructive" meeting with the Prime Minister. "Issues around the legacy legislation... We very much welcome the commitment to repeal that," she said.

Sledgehammer attack 'was just a falling sign'

Damage to a Labour MP's home allegedly attacked by a sledgehammer may have actually been caused by a fallen sign, *The Telegraph* understands. Andrew Western, who was re-elected as the MP for Stretford and Urmston, Greater Manchester, in the general election, said that police had launched an investigation into an incident at his property on Saturday night. Posting on social media, he said: "I'll tell you that when someone takes a sledgehammer to your property." It has now emerged that there is a suspicion the damage was caused by a sign falling into the house. It is understood this explanation is disputed.

BBC loses 2m viewers on election night

The BBC's election night audience was down nearly two million on 2019, while Channel 4 doubled its ratings. BBC 1 topped the ratings with 4.2 million viewers tuning in between 10-11pm on Thursday night to see the results of the exit poll. At the last general election, the figure was 6.1 million. In 2019, Huw Edwards was the election night host. This year presenting duties were shared by Laura Kuenssberg and Clive Myrie. ITV's audience for election night was 1.3 million, down from 2.3 million in 2019. Channel 4 was the night's success story with 930,000 viewers, almost double the 466,000 who tuned in for the last election.



Class '24 Sir Keir Starmer, the new Prime Minister, centre front, with his incoming Government of Labour Party MPs at Church House in Westminster. Labour won 411 seats in a landslide victory at last week's general election, giving it a majority of 172 in the House of Commons.

The trans rights backer in charge of women's spaces

Despite vow to protect single-sex lavatories, new equalities minister has also supported self-ID

By Tim Sigsworth

LABOUR'S women and equalities minister supported transgender people being able to declare their own gender. Anneliese Dodds, who has replaced Kemi Badenoch, backed proposals that would have allowed anybody to acquire a gender recognition certificate if they wanted one. Gender self-identification was official Labour policy under both Jeremy Corbyn and Sir Keir Starmer. The now-Prime Minister only scrapped the policy after the backlash to Nicola Sturgeon's failed attempt to introduce it in Scotland in early 2023 via the Gender Recognition Act. Upon being appointed shadow minister for women and equalities in

September 2021, Ms Dodds made it clear that she supported self-ID, which would revoke the existing requirement for a formal medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria. In a speech at the Labour Conference, she said that a Labour government would acknowledge "that trans rights are human rights" and "reform the Gender Recognition Act to enable a process for self-identification while continuing to support the 2010 Equalities Act". Sir Keir had chosen to uphold the Corbyn-era position and, that same month, attacked Rosie Duffield, Labour MP, after she said only women have a cervix. It formed part of a broader package of pro-transgender measures about which Ms Dodds spoke out in favour. In November 2021, she said Labour would change the law to ensure tougher sentences for anti-trans hate

Anneliese Dodds replaced Kemi Badenoch as equalities minister



crimes. A few months later, in March 2022, Ms Dodds failed to define what a woman was in an interview on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*. "I think it does depend what the context is," she said, prompting a backlash from gender-critical campaigners - those who emphasise the importance of biological sex. The stilted exchange was republicised by JK Rowling, the Harry Potter author, following Ms Dodds' appointment to the Government. The MP for Oxford East had also been firmly supportive of a complete ban on conversion therapy. Speaking in February last year, she vowed to "break new ground by introducing a full, trans-inclusive ban on conversion therapy". Later that same year she told the Labour Party conference: "We will deliver where the Conservatives have failed by bringing in a full, no-loopholes, trans-inclusive ban on conversion therapy." Critics such as Dr Hilary Cass have warned that such a policy could prevent therapists from questioning children who believe they are trans, which her landmark review earlier this year said was "essential". In March that year, however, Labour signalled a major change in transgender policy by ditching self-ID in response to the backlash to the SNP's Gender Reform Act, which was ultimately blocked by Westminster in what was branded a "humiliating defeat". That July, Ms Dodds wrote in *The Guardian* that the existing sex change process was "intrusive, outdated and humiliating" and that it needed

"modernising" - without specifying what exactly that would involve. In August, she used an interview with the *i* newspaper to say that Labour would remove "indignities" in the process that she described as "very problematic", while maintaining that single-sex exemptions in the Equality Act would not be overridden. In the run-up to the election campaign in May, Ms Dodds branded the gender transition process "dehumanising". "We believe everyone should be treated with dignity and respect," she said. "We want to see the

Transformed Labour's changing stance on gender

April 4 2020 Sir Keir Starmer wins the Labour leadership contest. His campaign made no suggestion that the party's position on transgender issues would change from the 2019 manifesto which endorsed gender self-ID.
June 9 2021 Sir Keir pledges that a Labour government will be "committed" to introducing "self-declaration for trans people". Later, on Sept 26, he was asked if it was transphobic to say only women have a cervix, as Labour MP Rosie

Duffield had. He replied that "it is not right".
March 28 2022 Sir Keir repeatedly refuses to say whether a woman can "have a penis" in an interview on LBC. "I don't think that discussing this issue in this way helps," he said.
Jan 18 2023 Ms Duffield is heckled by fellow Labour MPs as she speaks against Scotland's Gender Reform Act. Later, on Jan 4 2024, Ms Duffield said she had been "exonerated" of transphobia allegations after a party investigation.

'Everyone should be treated with dignity. We want to see the process for gender recognition modernised'

process for gender recognition modernised, while protecting single-sex spaces for biological women. This means stripping out the futile and dehumanising parts of the process for obtaining a gender-recognition certificate, while retaining important safeguards." Labour has proposed that the law be changed so that gender recognition certificates only require the signature of one GP - not the panel of doctors and lawyers that is currently used. Bridget Phillipson, the Education Secretary who is technically Ms Dodds' superior as women and equalities minister, has also been an outspoken advocate of transgender policy reform. In May, she accused Mrs Badenoch of loving "nothing more than a culture war" in response to the then women and equalities minister's claim that some girls were getting urinary tract infections from not wanting to use gender-neutral lavatories in schools. She also declined to commit to keeping the Conservatives' new sex education guidance, which says that it should not be taught earlier than the age of nine and urges schools not to teach contested gender ideology. Last month, the MP for Houghton and Sunderland South suggested that Labour would ditch guidelines banning children from being taught that there are more than two genders. Asked three times if she would keep the ban or ditch it, Ms Phillipson refused to answer directly but said: "There are trans people within society and their existence should be recognised." She was also criticised for refusing eight times to answer whether a biological male should be able to use a women's lavatory during a radio interview with LBC.

Labour will allow 100,000 migrants to apply for asylum in 'effective amnesty'

By Charles Hymas
HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

LABOUR is to allow more than 100,000 migrants to apply for asylum after scrapping Rishi Sunak's Rwanda scheme, Sir Keir Starmer's spokesman indicated yesterday. Some 90,000 migrants earmarked for deportation to Rwanda will be among the 102,000 who will be processed through the asylum system. The move came as the first migrant boat crossed the Channel since Sir Keir won the election as his spokesman admitted it would be a "challenging" summer for the Government. Their arrival takes the total who have crossed the Channel so far this year to a record 13,600 for this point in the year. It is about 3 per cent higher than the 13,172 at the same point in 2022, the previous record year. It is also 8 per cent higher than the 12,503 at the same point in 2023. Asked if those arriving by small boats would now have the right to claim asylum, the Prime Minister's official spokesman said: "We need to ensure



Migrants rescued in the Channel were brought ashore by Border Force yesterday

that people who arrive here are processed so that people are not sitting in the system, housed in expensive taxpayer-funded hotels as they have been under previous administrations." James Cleverly, the shadow home secretary, claimed it amounted to an amnesty. "The very first thing Labour

before." As of April 2024, there were 102,888 asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their claim. Refugee Council officials said it was a "reasonable potential estimate" that some 70 per cent - or around 60,000 of the 90,000 - would be granted asylum given the profile of the countries from which most illegal migrants came. Yvette Cooper, the Home Secretary, is working with Home Office officials to establish whether it will need to repeal Conservative immigration legislation in order to switch migrants into the asylum system and introduce its own legislation. The changes would be incorporated into a new Border Security Bill in next week's King's Speech. Sir Keir's spokesman said: "The Government has set out its very clear position that as the Prime Minister said over the weekend, the Rwanda scheme is dead and buried. It started. The scheme was cancelled and flights won't go ahead. The Government is now focused on the work needed to secure our borders and smash the gangs in addition to recruiting for the Border Security Command."

People smugglers to be hit with travel bans

By Charles Hymas

SUSPECTED people smugglers will face travel bans under new counter terrorism-style laws to be set out in Sir Keir Starmer's first King's Speech next week. The new legislation will give the police, Border Force and intelligence officers working under the new Border Security Command powers to treat people smugglers like terrorists. The Border Security Bill, to be set out in the King's Speech, will allow officers and investigators to use serious crime prevention orders against suspected people smugglers. They enable law enforcement to place restrictions on travel in the UK or abroad as well as on access to the internet and banking. Any breach of the order carries a maximum penalty of up to five years in jail. They can be applied both before a suspected people smuggler is convicted or if they are found guilty. They have previously been restricted to terrorists but will be extended to immigration crime in the legislation. Border Force officials will also get expanded powers under the 2000 Ter-

rorism Act to stop and search anyone suspected of being a people smuggler. Police are required in traditional stop and searches to have "genuine and objectively reasonable suspicion" that they will find a banned weapon or item like drugs for use in a crime. The new powers will enable officers to carry out personal searches, seize phones and copy data on the devices of any suspects at ports and border control. Like terrorism police, officers could get warrants to search suspected people smugglers' premises and seize items before an offence was committed. "By replicating this power for organised immigration crime, we can ensure that investigators can raid and seize relevant information and property from addresses linked to people smuggling before an offence has taken place," said a policy document. Hundreds of officers will be deployed across Europe to stop people smugglers as part of the new UK Border Security Command. Up to 1,000 extra officers will also be recruited by the NCA, Border Force and MI5 to target smuggling gangs.

Farage savours becoming a big wheel in Clacton

Dispatch



By Gordon Rayner in Clacton

After triggering a political earthquake at the election, Reform leader is 'overjoyed' to get to business as an MP

AS CLACTON'S newly elected MP walks through the seaside town's Pavilion funfair, he is stopped so many times for pictures that they might as well rename it Farageworld.

This corner of Essex is the epicentre of the political tremor that Reform UK pulled off in polling 4.1million votes last week, and for Nigel Farage the campaigning is over and the serious business of representing his constituents is about to begin.

He is, he says, "overjoyed" to be an MP after 30 years of trying, and at the beginning of his first week in the job he can't hide his excitement.

"I can't wait to get started," he says. "When I was an MEP I was representing eight million people, but this is very different.

"Walking down the street here, with people stopping me all the time to chat, you have a far greater sense of representing people, that you're the person they're going to turn to whether they voted for you or not."

He is giddy as a schoolboy when one of his team hands him an envelope simply marked Member of Parliament – his new MP briefing pack that should have been given to him straight after Thursday's count but which got lost in the bedlam that followed his victory.

"People keep asking me when I'm getting sworn in and the truth is I have no idea," he says, as he opens the envelope.

He reads it: "Induction is tomorrow. There are 334 new MPs though, so it's going to take a while."

Having spent the past few years changing history by helping bringing Brexit to pass, and shuttling across the Atlantic to help out his friend Donald Trump, Mr Farage is having to adjust to the reality of life as a local MP.

He spends Monday morning in a long meeting with Ian Davidson, chief executive of Tendring district council, before heading to his campaign office, a former Chinese restaurant above an amusement arcade, which has a disused bar at one end of the room and an enormous Union flag at the other.

It is from here that his team will mastermind their assault on next year's local council elections, which will be step one in his plan to convert those four million votes into more parliamentary seats, based on the formula that enabled the Lib Dems to win 72 seats with half a million fewer votes.

"Paddy Ashdown was brilliant at this," he says. "He understood that to win parliamentary seats, you first have to win council seats.

"Then the councillors identify with their communities, campaign for the party at a Westminster level, and when there is a by-election they have 1,000 people ready to turn up and campaign."

Reform UK now has five MPs, and Mr Farage is delighted to have established his "bridgehead" in Parliament. I ask whether his plan is still to be prime minister in five years, when he will be 65, or whether a more realistic target would be overtaking the Tories – something he could have done if just 336,000 votes had gone the other way last week. "I don't know," he shrugs. "All sorts of things could happen. If someone younger and better looking than me comes along I will recognise that and hand over. If not, I'll do it."

"I've been in this game for more than 30 years now, I'm very good at reading trends and I'm more bullish and ambitious now than I have ever been."

Parliament will give him a platform to boost the profile of Reform like never before. His election will also enable him to raise the profile of Clacton, a town desperately in need of jobs and



Nigel Farage says he is delighted to finally be elected to Parliament at the eighth attempt

investment rather than relying on seasonal income from holidaymakers.

We head to the Three Jays pub in Jaywick, an area where 70 per cent of voters backed Reform, and which acted as a satellite office for the campaign. Sitting at the bar is Bob Brace, a 69-year-old pub singer who wears a Reform UK T-shirt and says he had never been politically active until Mr Farage entered the race five weeks ago.

"Nigel is one of the most famous men in the country," he says.

"You don't have to be a rocket scientist to work out that anyone who is a friend of a US president is going to lift the profile of Clacton. What they have achieved in the space of a few weeks is incredible."

There is already talk in the pub of whether Trump might one day visit Clacton. Might Mr Farage bring him here? "You never know," he teases.

He is serious, though, about helping Sir Keir Starmer to navigate his relationship with Trump should he

return as president. "Our relationship with America, even under a Labour government, is very, very important," he says, "and I won't do anything to get in the way of that."

"Trump loves the UK and if I can be helpful with that relationship I will be because it really matters. Keir Starmer won't be the most fascinating person Trump has ever met but neither was Theresa May, and he got on with it."

He will, he says, make "two or three flying visits" to the US this year.

Much of his diary is still to be decided; he is "in talks" with GB News about returning to host his evening show, but accepts that doing it four nights a week, as he was before the election campaign, will be difficult.

For lunch, we head to Clacton's seafront and My Big Fat Greek Taverna, the restaurant that hosted Mr Farage's election night party. As he savours a moussaka with a glass of red wine, Mr Farage discusses how he can use his profile to benefit his constituents.

"I'm concerned about levelling up funds that the Tories promised to Clacton and whether Labour will honour those promises," he says. If Labour try to reallocate the money elsewhere, they will find that "I can be a great friend but I'm a terrible enemy."

He says the election has taught him that he needs to campaign for "something bigger" than political issues: values, and in particular family, community and country. "No one speaks up for the family," he says, admitting that after two failed marriages "my track record is not great." He is passionate about people having a sense of community and looking out for each other, and about patriotism and pride in the Union flag.

He admits, though, that the issue of security worries him. He is looking for a home in the constituency which he says will need to be "very isolated, for obvious reasons" and says the issue of face to face constituency surgeries will need "a lot of thought". He says: "David

'Starmer won't be the most fascinating person Trump has ever met but neither was Theresa May, and he got on with it'

Amess was one of the most all-round pleasant, genial, non-controversial people out there, and he was stabbed to death at a constituency surgery, so you would have to be an idiot for it not to worry you. I can't live or operate without a high level of security.

"Clement Attlee used to get the Tube home when he was prime minister, but nowadays I'm concerned about MPs walking across Parliament Square."

There are no such worries as we leave the restaurant to walk to the Reform UK office. Within 10 yards, Mr Farage has been stopped by a couple barely out of their teens who excitedly ask for a photograph with him.

He can barely manage two or three steps without being stopped and asked for more pictures. A grey-haired man says: "My wife will be so envious."

Another couple ask for a picture with their three children. And so it goes on, all the while backed by the sound of people hooting their car horns and shouting "well done Nigel".

Tories need a new pair of eyes, says chairman as he quits role

By Charles Hymas
HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

RICHARD HOLDEN has quit as the Tory chairman, saying the party needs a "new set of eyes" after its worst election result in modern political history.

Mr Holden, a former transport minister, resigned after overseeing a disastrous campaign that saw the Conservatives reduced to just 121 seats.

His departure was announced as Rishi Sunak unveiled his shadow cabinet, with David Cameron also stepping back from front-line politics after deciding not to take up the post of shadow foreign secretary. He is replaced by Andrew Mitchell, his deputy.

In his letter of resignation, Mr Holden wrote: "While there is obviously the need for stability and continuity during this period, there is also the need to simultaneously have a thorough review into the general election campaign. While I will feed into that, this would best take place with a new set of eyes to help provide the clearest view."

Mr Holden faced controversy after being parachuted from his former Red Wall constituency of North West Durham into the safe seat of Basildon and



Richard Holden oversaw a general election campaign filled with blunders

and reflect on these results. We should also challenge ourselves candidly and deeply on the strengths of the Conservative Party across the country, and outline where improvements can be made."

Lord Cameron is understood to have decided to step down after fulfilling his duty to the party by serving in government when asked to do so by the then prime minister. Mr Sunak appointed him as a foreign secretary in November 2023 after sacking Suella Braverman as home secretary, in what was seen as an attempt to see off a rebellion by Right-wing MPs demanding that he toughen up his immigration policies.

Kemi Badenoch, one of the expected leadership contenders, is promoted to shadow secretary of state for levelling up, housing and communities. It could help boost her profile as she will be shadowing Angela Rayner, Labour's deputy leader, on the key issue of housing, where Labour will be pushing some of its most radical policies.

None of the other potential leadership contenders – Tom Tugendhat, the shadow security minister, James Cleverly, the shadow home secretary, and Victoria Atkins, the shadow health secretary – change positions.

Next head of 1922 Committee could be in place this evening

By Amy Gibbons
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE new chairman of the 1922 Committee is expected to be in place by this evening as the Tories prepare to elect a new leader.

The candidates to head the powerful committee of backbench Conservative MPs will take part in a hustings this afternoon, with a winner set to be picked by the end of the day.

The 1922 Committee, previously led by Sir Graham Brady, the veteran Tory MP, plays a crucial role in organising the process to choose the next party leader, including deciding the rules and time-frame for the contest.

The chairman is also famously responsible for collecting letters of no confidence from Tory MPs who wish to change their leader and delivering the bad news when the time comes, earning committee members the nickname "the men in grey suits".

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown and Bob Blackman, the only two members of the committee to survive the general election on July 4, have both thrown their hats into the ring for the chairmanship. It is expected to be a quick selection

process, with the winner chosen just hours after the hustings.

Mr Blackman has been the MP for Harrow East since 2010. In Thursday's election, he pulled off the rare feat of increasing his majority, even as the Conservatives lost 251 seats across the rest of the country.

Speaking to *The Telegraph*, he said: "It was sheer hard work, slogging nine hours a day for six weeks during the election campaign, knocking on doors, talking to people, running a very local campaign."

Sir Geoffrey, who was first elected in 1992 and won the new seat of North Cotswold on Thursday, has also confirmed his candidacy, telling *The Telegraph* the Tories need a

chairman "with the authority to be able to get the party together to be able to hear every view and then take everything forward".

An important question for the committee's new executive will be how much time to allow for the leadership race, with some senior Conservatives calling for a longer contest so the party can conduct a full post-mortem on why it lost and properly test the candidates.

If it opts for a quick race, Mr Sunak could face Sir Keir Starmer across the despatch box on July 24 and remain leader until his replacement is chosen later in the summer.

However, if it is decided that a longer process is needed, with the contest concluding in the autumn, Mr Sunak may hand over to an interim leader while colleagues battle it out for his old job.

Bob Blackman, right, and Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown





Kicking up a storm Daisy Edgar-Jones attends the London premiere of *Twisters*, released 19 July, a follow-up to the 1996 disaster film *Twister*.

Royal Mail slashes flights to keep costs grounded

By James Warrington

ROYAL MAIL is to scale back airmail operations in a cost-cutting measure that it has claimed will tackle chronic delays to letter deliveries.

The company has said that it is halving its number of domestic flights in order to improve reliability, which comes amid growing demand for next-day services.

The move is expected to reduce costs for Royal Mail, which posted losses of £348million last year.

Parent company International Distribution Services has sought to shore up Royal Mail's finances and improve its quality of service amid a sharp slump in letter sending.

The postal service is currently being investigated by regulator Ofcom after it failed to deliver more than a quarter of first class post on time last year.

It marked the sixth consecutive year that Royal Mail fell short of delivery targets and has left the company at risk of a multimillion-pound fine. Ofcom last year fined the business a record £5.6million for its failings.

Royal Mail, which has been chartering flights since the 1960s to connect London and the South East with Scotland and Northern Ireland, said the reduction in flights would help improve reliability, and said the move would also help it meet growing demand for bulky parcels, which make up the majority of its revenue.

Switching to road deliveries will allow the company to deploy larger lorries to help deal with spikes in demand during busy periods.

Alistair Cochrane, chief operating officer at Royal Mail, said that the changes "mean that we can reduce our reliance on air, which is good for our customers and the environment".

Cancers caused by smoking hit all-time high

Almost 160 people each day are diagnosed with the disease as result of tobacco, according to analysis

By Michael Searles HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

CANCERS caused by smoking have hit a record high, according to analysis by Cancer Research UK.

The charity said almost 160 people were being diagnosed with cancer

every day as a result of smoking. It called on the new Government to prioritise passing the smoking ban that had been put on hold during the general election.

Labour has pledged to bring forward the legislation, which would mean no children turning 15 this year or younger would ever be legally able to purchase tobacco.

Wes Streeting, the Health Secretary, said he was "committed to creating a smoke-free country".

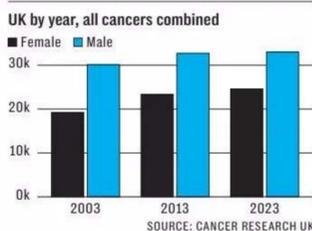
Mr Streeting said: "Prevention is better than cure. This Government will

shift the focus of healthcare from simply treating sickness to preventing it in the first place."

He added: "Protecting future generations from the harms of smoking will save thousands of lives and ease pressures on the NHS. By building a healthier society, we will help to build a healthy economy."

The number of smoking-induced cases of cancer hit 57,555 in 2023, up 17 per cent on 2003, the analysis found. There were 49,325 cancer cases of all types caused by smoking then, although this rose to as many as 56,091 in 2013.

Smoking attributable cancer cases



The biggest jump in cases were seen in liver, throat and kidney cancers, which have doubled over the past 20 years. For liver cancer alone, smoking-linked cases have risen from 711 in 2003 to 1,630 last year, while kidney cancer has gone from 1,215 in 2003 to 2,151 last year. Throat cancer cases have risen from 619 to 1,261 over the same period.

The analysis also includes cases of breast cancer after Cancer Research UK said it was confident in scientific research showing the effects of smoking on that form of the disease, causing around 2,200 cases last year.

Tobacco is known to cause 16 different types of cancer, with 33,000 annual cases of lung cancer alone.

Dr Ian Walker, Cancer Research UK's executive director of policy, said that "six people are diagnosed every hour in the UK with cancer that was caused by smoking".

"Smoking is a uniquely toxic consumer product and has no place in our future. Raising the age of sale of tobacco products will be one of the biggest public health interventions in living memory, establishing the UK as a world leader," he said.

Eton bans smartphones for new pupils in favour of 'brick' phones

By Alex Barton

ETON COLLEGE is to ban new pupils from taking smartphones to school and will provide them with Nokia "brick" phones instead.

The £49,000-a-year school has written to the families of a new cohort of pupils about the policy, which will take effect in September.

Many schools have tightened the rules around smartphone use amid concerns about students' mental health and behaviour.

Mike Grenier, the deputy head overseeing pastoral care, reportedly said in the letter to parents of new boarders that children's smartphones should be taken home and SIM cards transferred to school-issued Nokia phones that can only make calls and send texts.

Eton does not allow younger boys to have phones on them during the day, with those in the first three years having to hand in electronic devices at night.

The new rules apply to pupils in the first year of Eton, who are in year nine and turn 14 in the course of the school year.

An Eton spokesman said: "Eton routinely reviews our mobile phone and devices policy to balance the benefits and challenges that technology

brings to schools. From September those joining in Year 9 will receive a 'brick' phone for use outside the school day, as well as a school-issued iPad to support academic study. Age-appropriate controls remain in place for other year groups."

Staff will keep hold of a smartphone if

'We need to make sure the government launches a consultation into the effects of smartphones'

it is deemed a child needs one.

Eton faced backlash in 2018 following the ban on the use of smartphones in classrooms. The move left some of its teachers "spitting" with anger, with one senior master criticising it as "Luddite" and "Amish".

Several private schools are introduc-

ing tighter restrictions on the use of smartphones for the September intake.

Alley'n's in Dulwich, south London, is urging parents not to buy a smartphone for young children. At Brighton College, year seven pupils will not be able to have internet-enabled phones on site from September.

Thomas's in Battersea, south London, which was attended by Prince George and Princess Charlotte, is introducing a similar policy.

Smartphone Free Childhood, the campaign group, welcomed the policies but called for more government action.

Joe Ryrice, the group's co-founder, told *The Times*: "We have to ensure it's not only the most privileged in society who are able to protect their children."

"The data show that the harms caused affects those in the lowest economic households the most. On average they spend twice as much time a day on screens, and are twice as likely to report being physically threatened online."

"We need to make sure the most vulnerable in society are not left behind, and that the government launches an immediate consultation into the effects of smartphones on children so that we can protect children in households where parents don't have the time, tech knowledge or headspace to monitor and control their access to smartphones."



Eton has asked for pupils' SIM cards to be transferred to Nokia phones

Record numbers fail driving test five times

By Alex Barton

A RECORD number of learner drivers are taking six or more attempts to pass their practical test, official figures show.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) found that 93,204 people took their driving test six or more times from 2023 to 2024.

Figures showed that 38,588 were awarded their licence on the sixth attempt, but the remaining 54,616 failed the 40-minute assessment.

Separate data shared with *The Telegraph* also showed that more than 13,000 drivers required more than 10 attempts to pass their practical test.

One person had spent £1,700 on 74 theory tests and is yet to pass, according to a Freedom of Information request submitted by AA Driving School. DVSA data showed more than 13,000 candidates took between 10 and 20 attempts

to get the all-clear from an examiner, while 269 needed over 20. A further 16 people needed more than 30 attempts.

More than 9,000 learners needed 10 to 20 attempts to pass their theory test. Nine people have taken over 50 theory tests and are still to pass. Lack of preparation which contributes to nervousness was said to be causing the high rate

'The inability to obtain a slot means some are still having lessons when they could have their licence'

of repeated failures, according to the CEO of RED Driving School Seb Goldin.

Mr Goldin also said: "The number of learners failing their theory test has grown in three years, with more people now passing their GCSE Maths exam."

Theory tests cost £23 per attempt and practical tests cost £62 during weekday daytimes, or £75 during evenings, weekends and bank holidays. Repeated failures are also said to be worsening backlogs as new learners are unable to book test slots.

Camilla Benitz, the managing director of AA Driving School, added: "At a time when the backlog only seems to be growing, simple errors are blocking drivers who are ready to pass but cannot find a test."

"Learning to drive can be expensive at the best of times. Drivers arriving unprepared for their theory and practical tests doesn't just hurt their bank balance, but also the wallets of test-ready learners. The inability to obtain a slot means some are still having lessons when they could have their full licence."

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a LINE UP YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO CHANGE

PRICE DROP

~~£14~~

£12

24 x 300ml

EXCLUSIVE

24x 300ml

Budweiser

KING OF BEERS.

2 FOR £7

8x 330ml

Coca-Cola

ZERO SUGAR

8x 330ml

PRICE DROP

~~£3~~

£2

each

ASDA

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT

GET MATCH READY

ASDA

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT

If you look under 25 and want to buy alcohol you will need to prove your age. Challenge 25. No I.D. No sale. You must be 18 or over to purchase alcohol. Selected stores. Subject to availability. Asda Stonebaked Spicy Fajita Chicken Pizza 355g, Asda Deep Pan Four Cheese Pizza 425g, was £3 now £2 (47p per 100g). Budweiser Lager Beer Bottles 24x300ml was £14 now £12 (£1.67 per litre). Coca-Cola Zero cans 8x330ml and Diet Coke cans 8x330ml £4.25 (£1.61 per litre). May exclude Asda Express and small stores. see ASDA.com/smallstores

Girl, 14, 'stabbed at home by her parents'

Teenager pronounced dead at the scene following alleged family confrontation

By Martin Evans

A 14-YEAR-OLD girl was stabbed to death at home after a confrontation with her parents, a court has heard.

Scarlett Vickers suffered a single stab wound to the chest in the incident at a semi-detached house in Darlington, County Durham, on Friday evening.

Her parents Simon Vickers, 49, who works for the 3M manufacturing plant in Newton Aycliffe, and Sarah Hall, 44,

who is unemployed, appeared in court yesterday charged with her murder. Sarah Kemp, the prosecutor, told Newton Aycliffe magistrates' court that the fatal stabbing had followed an incident at the family home.

Georgia Snowden, representing the victim's mother, told the court her client disputed the facts of the prosecution case and was "absolutely distraught".

Police and paramedics were called to the property just after 11pm but Scarlett was pronounced dead at the scene.

Both defendants were dressed in grey police-issue sweatshirts and trousers and Ms Hall shook throughout the five minute hearing.

Ms Kemp told the court: "There was an incident at the home address in Dar-



lington resulting in the fatal stabbing of Scarlett, the 14-year-old daughter of both defendants.

"She suffered a single knife wound to the chest resulting in her death. This is not a matter that can be dealt with here and I ask the case be sent to the crown court."

Steven Hudd, the district judge, told Mr Vickers and Ms Hall: "The offence of murder is one which can only be heard at crown court. I am sending your case to Teesside Crown Court for a plea and case management hearing on Aug 5."

He said if either defendant wished to make a bail application, there would be an opportunity to do so tomorrow, but they were remanded in custody until then.

Det Supt Craig Rudd, the senior investigating officer, said: "This incident has resulted in the tragic death of a young girl, and our thoughts are with her family and friends."

"I would like to thank the local community for their patience and co-operation while investigative work is still being carried out at the scene, and to reassure residents that we believe this to be an isolated incident."

Neighbours spoke of their "utter

shock" following the death of the teenager.

Floral tributes were placed outside the house, some by teenage girls who were school friends of Scarlett's.

One message read: "To Scarlett. Rest easy sweet girl, we all love and miss you. Sleep well from Demi and Lexi."

A neighbour said: "The first anyone knew was when the police cars and ambulance arrived."

In a tribute posted to its website, Haughton Academy in Darlington said Scarlett was a "lovely girl and important member" of the school community.

The statement continued: "A very friendly girl with a great sense of humour, she was popular with her friends and will be greatly missed by everyone at school."

"I used to see their daughter playing in the garden. They've always seemed like a pleasant family"



A police team at the family home in Darlington. One tribute to the teenager, above left, read: "Rest easy sweet girl, we all love and miss you"

Tate brothers accused of failing to pay tax on £21m of revenue

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

ANDREW TATE and his brother Tristan have been accused of failing to pay tax on £21 million of revenue from their online businesses, including OnlyFans.

Devon and Cornwall Police are bringing a civil claim against the brothers – and a third person referred to only as J – over unpaid tax, Westminster magistrates' court heard yesterday.

The force is seeking around £2.8 million in seven frozen bank accounts. Sarah Clarke KC, for Devon and Cornwall Police, said: "Andrew Tate and Tristan Tate are serial tax and VAT evaders. They, in particular Andrew Tate, are brazen about it."

It is claimed that they paid no tax in any country on £21 million revenue from businesses online earned between 2014 and 2022.

Ms Clarke quoted from a video posted online by Andrew Tate, in which he said: "When I lived in England, I refused to pay tax."

The court heard he said his approach was "ignore, ignore, ignore because in the end they go away" and that the brothers had "a huge number of bank accounts" in the UK, seven of which have been frozen.

Ms Clarke said that money "washed

around UK bank accounts" that were used "as a mechanism for moving revenues from their business activities through a wide number of accounts".

"That's what tax evasion looks like, that's what money laundering looks like," she told the court.

The money came from products they sold online, as well as their OnlyFans sites, the court was told – with the Tates also being accused of failing to pay tax

and money-laundering in both the UK and Romania.

It is claimed that the brothers paid just under \$12 million into an account in J's name and opened a second account in her name, even though she had no role in their businesses. Devon and Cornwall Police allege this was fraud by false misrepresentation.

Paul Goldspring, the chief magistrate, will decide on the balance of prob-

abilities whether what the police claim is true. J also moved money through her own account – including one payment of £805,000 that was made to her Revolut account, the court heard.

Of this, £495,000 was paid to Andrew Tate and £75,000 to an account in J's name that was later converted to cryptocurrency, it is alleged. The case was adjourned until today. Andrew Tate has been contacted for comment.

Telling a female colleague they look 'nice' could be harassment

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

TELLING a colleague they look "nice" could count as sexual harassment, a tribunal has ruled.

Marcus Hall, a senior lawyer, made such a comment to Megan Bratt, a legal secretary, at work, before asking her "Am I allowed to say that?" a hearing was told.

The remark by the family law expert was found by the employment tribunal to be a sexual one that created an "intimidating" environment for Ms Bratt, who described feeling "violated". She responded by telling the then 60-year-old he needed to be "careful", referring to ex-Manchester United footballer Mason Greenwood, who at the time had been accused of rape and controlling and coercive behaviour.

The tribunal heard that over the six weeks of her employment, senior partner Mr Hall discussed how his former girlfriend had cheated on him with a much younger policeman and had dating sites featuring lingerie-clad women on his device at work.

The legal secretary is now in line for compensation after successfully suing for sexual harassment.

The hearing was told Ms Bratt started work at Mr Hall's firm JGQC in Lincoln on Jan 4 2022. Within weeks, she started to complain about comments he made, which she said made her feel "very uncomfortable". The tribunal heard Mr Hall told her he was single and "went into graphic detail about his for-

mer partner who he said he caught cheating on him with a 22-year old police officer and described how he had found a used condom on the floor.

Ms Bratt – who the hearing in Lincoln was told had had plastic surgery – also accused him of standing close to her and commenting on her appearance.

"One was in the kitchen on 2 February 2022 where [she] says Mr Hall leant against the wall with his arms folded and with a 'creepy smile' on his face commented that she looked nice and then asked if he was allowed to say it," the tribunal heard. "[Ms Bratt] says she found this violating (particularly in reference to the am- I-allowed-to-say-it comment). She told him he needed to be careful about what he said and Ms Bratt then made reference to Mason Greenwood.

"[Ms Bratt] says Mr Hall in response stated, 'yes, but he was a rapist'."

The conversation made the legal secretary "freeze" and not "know what to say", the tribunal heard. Two days later, when helping Mr Hall install an app, the hearing was told Ms Bratt saw adverts from dating sites which showed images

Megan Bratt was called a 'Love Island reject'

of women "dressed in lingerie in provocative poses on Mr Hall's Facebook account".

Two weeks later she was shown a video of Mr Hall's girlfriend bent forwards in a skirt blowing a kiss.

Ms Bratt resigned on Feb 21 saying she did not feel "safe" at work.

She launched a grievance but the tribunal found that it was not conducted fairly as fellow staff who had worked with Mr Hall for more than 30 years did not take her complaints seriously.

The panel highlighted how a female colleague had made a "personal attack" on "Love Island reject" Ms Bratt, accusing her of "flaunting" herself on social media, appearing in "a shocking state of attire" and coming to work as if dressed for a night out.

The firm claimed that Mr Hall's behaviour was just "office banter".

The panel upheld her claim of sexual harassment based on a number of the incidents she complained about.

Ms Bratt's compensation will be decided at a later date.

Charges against Greenwood were dropped in February 2023.



Boy left in vegetative state after 'show-off' back flip from pier

By Alex Barton

A 15-YEAR-OLD boy has been left in a vegetative state after doing a "show-off" backflip off a pier on his first trip to a beach without his parents.

Jack Dolan landed on his head after jumping off Stone Pier in Margate, Kent, on June 23.

His parents, Lisa Dolan, 33, and Dave Dolan, 35, are now fundraising so they can move house and make the necessary alterations in order to look after him at home. Jack requires round-the-clock care and doctors are unsure how long he will survive.

Speaking about the incident, Mr Dolan said: "I think he misjudged it and landed face first on the water and knocked himself out."

"It was only three or four metres and if he'd landed a quarter rotation one way or the other he would probably have been fine."

"That's why we can't be angry at him. He'd done it so many times before, there is no blame. I know he was laughing, I can actually see him doing it, smiling and being a complete show-off."

He added: "The last thing he would have known was being happy."

It was their child's first trip to the beach without them as he has ADHD.

Video from Jack's holiday to Egypt last September showed him doing the same move off the side of a jetty. Mr Dolan, who lives in Rainham, Kent, said: "It was the first time we'd let him. We'd always said no because we were



Jack Dolan had performed the back flip before while on holiday in Egypt

quite strict. He had ADHD and he acts before he thinks. But he was 15 and we wanted to give him a bit more freedom."

Jack, a pupil at The Howard School in Medway, was with a group of friends and his girlfriend when the accident occurred.

It is thought he did not realise the height of the pier or the depth of the water when he jumped in. He is understood to have been knocked unconscious upon impact before his friends pulled him from the water.

After Jack's friends called emergency services and his parents, he was rushed to King's College Hospital, London, by

air ambulance. An MRI scan revealed he had suffered severe brain damage. Doctors said he may live for just weeks – but conceded that he could survive for years.

Mr Dolan said: "He's on end-of-life care and while his body is OK, his brain is dead. He can't go to a children's hospice because you have to be close to death. He's off life support and breathing, but doing nothing else."

"His eyes flutter sometimes but he's asleep most of the time. We want to take him home, but we live in a maisonette and we can't have him here."

A person in a vegetative state is alive, can breathe unaided and there is a slim chance of recovery. Brain death is when a person is being kept alive artificially and there is no chance of recovery.

Jack's family, including his sisters Faith, 10, and Grace, eight, are currently in council accommodation and are raising money for home alterations at a new property.

Mr Dolan said: "We need two reception rooms, a downstairs closet and a wet room."

About £12,000 has been raised out of a target of £20,000.

Sam Cass, who organised the fundraiser for Jack, described him as "the biggest joker, with a heart of gold."

He added: "He loves to show off in front of girls and won't leave the house without doing his hair. He loves his family, will do anything for his sisters and this fundraiser is to take a little bit of the burden away from them."

Cyclist sent pensioner 'flying through air'

Rider charged under law from 1861 after 81-year-old pedestrian died following collision on a towpath

By Fiona Parker
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

AN 81-YEAR-OLD woman died after a collision with a cyclist on a towpath sent her "flying through air", a court has heard.

Polly Friedhoff "sustained serious injuries to her head, arms and ribs" and died 12 days after Edward Bressan tried

to overtake her on the left-hand side, as she walked with her friend Ewa Huggins near Iffley Lock, Oxford.

Mr Bressan, 56, told police he had rung a bell to signal to Mrs Friedhoff and her companion as he went to overtake the pair. Yet giving evidence at Oxford Crown Court yesterday, Ms Huggins denied hearing any bell or shouts of warning from the cyclist.

Mr Bressan is charged with causing bodily harm by "wanton or furious driving" under the Offences Against Person Act (1861), a Victorian law originally designed to deal with horse-drawn carriages.

The previous government commit-

ted to changing the law so dangerous cyclists could face life in prison, as is the case for dangerous drivers. The new Government said before the election that it would bring in tougher punishments for dangerous cyclists.

Opening the case, prosecutor Andrew Jordan said: "Mrs Friedhoff and Ewa were walking on the right-hand side of the path, and Mr Bressan attempted to overtake them on the left. "It is that manoeuvre that will be the focus of your attention in this trial.

"You will hear differing versions of the position, speed and reaction of the parties, and as to whether there was any warning from Mr Bressan."

Mr Jordan added: "Prosecution say that Mr Bressan's driving of his bicycle was reckless and that in overtaking the ladies he caused bodily harm to Mrs Friedhoff."

Giving evidence, Ms Huggins said she had known Mrs Friedhoff for 40 years and said they were "very very close friends" who took walks together "two or three times a week".

Describing when the collision happened at around noon on Nov 20 2022, she said: "Polly was on my left, we were chatting, walking fairly close together, the path isn't very wide and suddenly, I saw Polly basically flying in front of me and falling flat onto the towpath."

Ms Huggins told the court how her friend was a "keen walker" and "pretty fit" despite underlying health conditions. She was wearing a "very colourful knitted, multicoloured short coat".

She did not see the collision and later saw the cyclist, Mr Bressan, lying on top of his bike.

When asked if Mrs Friedhoff fell in front of her, Ms Huggins said: "Yes at an angle and with incredible force actually, I can still hear her scalp hit the ground."

She added: "I can't remember any shouting or bell-ringing before it happened."

Ms Huggins said her friend was unresponsive as they waited for paramedics

to arrive. "I actually thought she was dead", she told the jury.

"I was calling to her to squeeze my hand or blink, I knew she couldn't speak, but there was no response whatsoever and there was a lot of blood coming out of her mouth."

Questioning the witness, Kuljeet Dobe, for the defence, said: "I'm going to suggest that he did ring his bell and that you moved a little further to the right and said something to Polly, but she moved to the left suddenly but that's when his bike made contact with her and that's when she fell."

Ms Huggins denied this was the case. The trial continues.

King to address Senedd in Welsh for 25th anniversary

By Victoria Ward
DEPUTY ROYAL EDITOR

THE King will demonstrate his fluent Welsh as he marks the anniversary of the Senedd 25 years after he officially opened it with his late mother.

The King and Queen will visit the Welsh parliament on Thursday, when the monarch will deliver a speech reflecting on the past as well as looking to the challenges of the future, such as climate change.

The couple last visited the Senedd in September 2022, following the death of Elizabeth II.

Then, in a speech also delivered partly in Welsh, the King expressed his "immense gratitude" for his time serving as Prince of Wales, promising that his eldest son, William, who had inherited the title, also held a deep love for the country.

Since ascending the throne, the King has maintained his passion for Wales and has pledged to continue his long association with the country.

He learnt Welsh while studying at Aberystwyth University and remains fluent, surprising aides recently by seamlessly slipping into the language to chat to a Welsh student.

The King and Queen will be welcomed to Cardiff by the Royal Welsh, who will form a guard of honour, marking the first time the King will have seen them since he was appointed their Colonel-in-Chief on St David's Day.

They will be greeted by primary schoolchildren representing schools from across Wales, as well as dignitaries including Vaughan Gething, the First Minister of Wales. Mared Pugh-Evans, who has been appointed the King's harpist, will give the first performance in her new position.

The King and Queen will be introduced to members of Senedd staff who have worked at the parliament for 25 years, or who are 25 years old.

Before leaving, they will meet members of the community who have contributed to key moments in the Senedd's history, including the petitioner who successfully started a campaign for carrier bag charges.

The late Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Charles attended the opening of the Welsh Assembly on May 27 1999 at Crickhowell House. The Prince spoke in Welsh to assembly members and the Queen signed a special edition of the Government in Wales Act - a symbol of the transfer of powers from Westminster to Wales.



Notes on a scandal *The School for Scandal* promises to bring period flair and big hair to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. The show, written by Richard B Sheridan and directed by Tynuke Craig (*The Color Purple*), is based in London during the 1770s and plays until September 6.

Queen's cake-maker 'can teach angels to bake' after he dies at 91

By Victoria Ward

THE master baker behind royal cakes made for Elizabeth II's wedding and the Golden Jubilee has been laid to rest clutching a piping bag.

Eddie Spence, who was awarded an MBE for services to sugar craft in 2000, died at his home in Bournemouth, Dorset.

The 91-year-old once spent a whole day beating eggs for Elizabeth II's wedding cake and went on to create elaborate bakes for royal events including Charles and Diana's wedding and the Golden Jubilee.

Tracy Spence, his wife, said: "I always said he had royal icing in his veins and

was born with a piping tube in his hand. I have placed a piping bag in his hand at the chapel of rest so he is ready to teach the angels his skills."

Mr Spence enjoyed a 71-year career, producing an elaborate, 56lb gold state coach design for the late Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, her Diamond Jubilee in 2013 and her golden wedding anniversary in 1997. His last royal commission was for the late Queen and Prince Philip's 70th wedding anniversary in 2017, for which he made intricate sugar flowers to replicate the myrtle in her wedding bouquet.

Mr Spence once said the cake he designed for Princess Margaret's wedding to Antony Armstrong-Jones in



Eddie Spence once spent an entire day beating eggs for a royal wedding cake

1960 was his favourite. Born on Edinburgh's Royal Mile, Mr Spence started baking at Mackie's confectioners bak-

ery at the age of 14. After serving his apprenticeship, which lasted more than six years, he was promoted and by the age of 22 he was teaching baking at some of the leading colleges in the country.

He continued to work at Mackie's and at one point was making 50 wedding cakes a week.

Mr Spence said in an interview: "I started there at 14 because my parents couldn't afford to keep me in school and straight away I loved it."

"Most people started their apprenticeships at 16 but I got a two-year head start which put me at an advantage."

"The apprentices worked downstairs in those days and not long after I started

I went upstairs to deliver some ingredients and the man in charge asked what I was doing."

"It turned out they were working on a cake for the Queen's wedding and I

'I started baking at 14 as my parents couldn't afford to keep me in school and straight away I loved it'

was given the job of hand-beating eggs for the job. It took all day but it was definitely worth it."

It was his first experience of making cakes for the Royal family but he went

on to create elaborate bakes for most senior royals, including Prince Andrew, Prince Charles and Princess Margaret.

Of the latter, he said: "I remember receiving a letter telling me she wanted it to be traditional, so that's what we did. The detail on that cake was amazing and it took a lot of hard work."

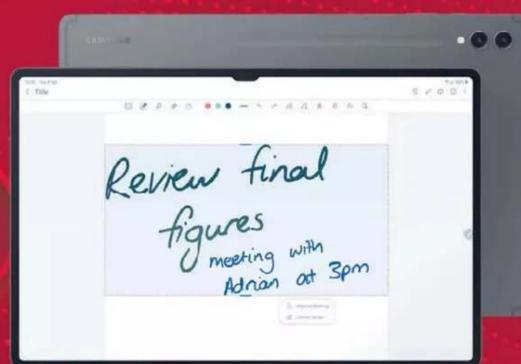
His proudest moment, however, was receiving an MBE from the late Queen in 2000.

"She was absolutely fabulous," he once said. "At the end of getting my medal and to thank her I said 'thanks pet'. I always call everybody pet and of course right away she laughed and she wrote it down on her book. That was the biggest and most enjoyable moment."

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Macron rejects PM's resignation after defeat

President asks Attal to stay in post as chaotic election result plunges France into political limbo

By Henry Samuel in Paris

EMMANUEL MACRON has asked his prime minister not to step down as he pleads for calm after chaotic parliamentary election results left the country facing a hung parliament.

Gabriel Attal offered his resignation on Sunday night after Mr Macron's party was pushed into second place, triggering frantic talks to form a new government. Mr Macron said yesterday he had turned down the resignation,

and asked Mr Attal, 35, to remain in post for now to "ensure the stability of the country" just two weeks ahead of the Paris Olympics.

The New Popular Front, or NFP, an alliance which comprises Jean-Luc Mélenchon's hard-Left France Unbowed (LFI), Communists, Greens and Socialists, came first in Sunday's snap legislative election, taking 193 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly.

Mr Macron's centrist Together group came second on 165 seats and Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) and its allies came third on 143 seats, in a stunning setback for the hard-Right party that polls had predicted to come out in front.

The snap election was called in the wake of the Macron camp's humiliating defeat to RN in last month's European

parliamentary elections. Mr Macron insisted it would bring "clarity" over the French electorate's wishes.

However, it has ended in confusion as the three main blocs fell short of the 289 seats required for an outright majority, raising the prospect of deadlock. Possible solutions include the NFP forming a minority government and seeking support on a bill-by-bill basis, a broad coalition for the centre-Left and centre-Right, or a government of technocrats.

Flush with its unexpected pole position, the NFP announced that it would come up with its own candidate for the next head of government "within the week" to replace Mr Attal. Mr Mélenchon, whose LFI won the most seats in the alliance (74), on Sunday evening,

unilaterally called on Mr Macron to "leave or appoint a prime minister" from the NFP, which he implied should come from his party.

He insisted the NFP should then be allowed to start rolling out its Left-wing programme. Policies include boosting the minimum wage by 14 per cent, cutting the retirement age from 64 to 60 and freezing energy prices and essential goods – by decree, if necessary.

His lieutenant Manuel Bompard confirmed the party's stance yesterday, saying: "The president must appoint as prime minister someone from the NFP, to implement the NFP's programme, its whole programme and nothing but its programme."

But Socialists and Greens are keen to put other names forward, pointing out

that together they form a larger group than Mr Mélenchon's.

Socialist leader Olivier Faure, for his part, hoped that the NFP would be "in a position to present a prime ministerial candidate within the week". Both he and Marine Tondelier, the Green Party leader, have said that the figure should be someone "consensual", which appeared to rule out the divisive Mr Mélenchon. However, his ally Mathilde Manot said the Leftist firebrand was "absolutely not disqualified".

Many commentators said it was totally unrealistic for the NFP to think it could impose its radical programme without support from a wider coalition.

"The truth is that the Left cannot hope to govern without compromising, in one way or another, with more cen-

trist forces," wrote Left-leaning editor-in-chief Laurent Joffrin. "French voters did not give it a mandate to implement its programme, but to prevent the RN from taking power. Let's not forget that the lion's share of NFP MPs in the new assembly were elected by voters from another party."

With Mr Macron due to fly to Washington tomorrow for a Nato summit, his camp argued that it was up to the president to appoint the new prime minister from the largest group in parliament that can form a workable majority.

"It is important not for the president, but for the country, to have a majority that can govern and take decisions, that can pass a budget and that can implement public policy," said an Elysée source.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon 'France's Corbyn' who culls his critics

Bitter and disappointed at Sunday night's results in parliamentary elections, Jordan Bardella, the National Rally (RN) leader, warned that an unholy Left-wing alliance had thrown "France into the arms of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's extreme Left". "The New Popular Front (NFP) is ready to govern," intoned Mr Mélenchon, a former Trotskyist and self-styled leader of the alliance that includes his France Unbowed (LFI) party, as well as the Greens, the Communists and the Socialists. In other words, the 72-year-old firebrand is ready and willing to step up to become France's next prime minister. But the rest of the NFP, which came first in Sunday's election, would beg to differ. Francois Hollande, the Socialist former president who won a seat on Sunday, described Mr Mélenchon as the "problem" rather than the "solution" to forming a government. The vast majority of French voters agree, polls show. A divisive figure, Mr Mélenchon has been nicknamed France's Jeremy Corbyn. Suggestions of anti-Semitism have surrounded him, although he strenuously denies the claims. He has offered tepid support for Ukraine and previously appeared supportive of Vladimir Putin. He has already shown a brutal side during the election campaign, when he "purged" LFI members who criticised him. Yesterday, party heavyweight Clémentine Autain said she was leaving LFI in disgust at his purge of fellow members, and ruled out Mr Mélenchon as prime minister. "He's not the leader of the New Popular Front," added Yannick Jadot of the Greens, who said the NFP would pick a candidate "this week".



Jean-Luc Mélenchon, France's hard-Left firebrand and leader of the New Popular Front, stands before supporters on Sunday night, after the exit poll which showed his alliance coming first in the parliamentary elections

Hard-Left looks to undo president's reforms in wake of election shock

Analysis



By Henry Samuel in Paris

FRANCE'S biggest parliamentary force after Sunday's election wants to reverse president Emmanuel Macron's timid pension reform "within a fortnight" and launch a soak-the-rich spending spree that could cost the taxpayer €300 billion (£253.5 billion).

The New Popular Front (NFP), which comprises Jean-Luc Mélenchon's hard-Left France Unbowed, along with Communists, Greens and Socialists, won 187 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly. Mr Macron's centrist Together group came second on 159 seats, with Marine Le Pen's National Rally and its allies coming third on 142 seats.

All three blocs fell far short of the 289 seats required for an outright majority.

Yet speaking after the victory, Mr Mélenchon, 72, insisted NFP would apply its tax-and-spend programme to the letter or not at all.

He is not alone. Olivier Faure, leader of the Socialist Party, insisted he had "one compass: the New Popular Front programme". This would entail deeply expensive measures including more holidays, more civil servants, more housing, more places in crèches and free organic school meals, but also a rise in minimum wage of 14 per cent, lowering the retirement age to 60 down from 64 and a freeze on energy prices and essential goods. The NFP intends to enact these policies within weeks and by decree if necessary.

The Left coalition estimates that its

shopping list of measures will cost at least €150 billion over the next three years, although Mr Macron's allies say the true cost will be nearer €300 billion. NFP insists the programme is viable despite France's deficit hitting a worrying 5.5 per cent of GDP. The country's borrowing rates are rising, and it needs to make savings of at least €25 billion from 2025 to respect its European budgetary commitments.

In the short-term, the Left-wing alliance wants to repeal the latest pension reform "within a fortnight of our victory", said Marine Tondelier, the leader of the Greens. This measure alone would cost €18 billion, estimated the French finance ministry. As for retirement at 60, a "common objective", it would result in a "€70 billion shortfall" and a drop in labour

'It doesn't stand up to scrutiny for two seconds. The NFP doesn't have means to govern alone'

and growth "leading to impoverishment in France", the finance ministry told *Le Figaro*.

Raising the minimum wage to €2,000 could cost the public purse at least €2 billion, according to ministry officials. Moreover, raising wages would have a knock-on effect on "the trade deficit while fuelling inflation", according to Sylvain Bersinger, chief economist at Asterès.

The NFP proposes a 10 per cent pay rise for civil servants at a cost of around €10 billion and free organic school meals could cost up to €3.2 billion, according to finance ministry officials. Other measures are difficult to put a figure on, such as abolishing

tax on energy bills or increasing the number of civil servants in education and health. Among the most emblematic measures is a proposed freeze on prices of essential goods, including food, energy and fuel. The Left insists this will not dent the state's finances. However, the finance ministry puts the figure at €20 billion.

While the total cost is open to debate, Mr Macron's Renaissance party put it at €287 billion, while the budget minister said it would cost €100 billion a year.

The Left intends to finance the programme by bolstering a wealth tax, abolishing a current 30 per cent flat tax and creating a windfall tax on large groups. In short, "we will ensure that we finance this very ambitious project by taking it out of the pockets of those who can afford it", said Mr Faure.

A proposed inheritance tax could bring in the most money. In 2022, Mr Mélenchon mooted a cut-off figure of €12 million "beyond which, I'll take everything", he said at the time.

Patrick Martin, president of the French employers' federation Medef, warned it would "lead to an explosion in deficits and debt and a loss of confidence in the future".

Meanwhile, finance minister Bruno Le Maire said its application ran the risk of sparking a "financial crisis" and "the economic decline of France". However, the NFP does not have an absolute majority and, despite its proposals if it hopes to forge a viable governing coalition. But with figures like Mr Mélenchon in the mix, consensus will be a tall order.

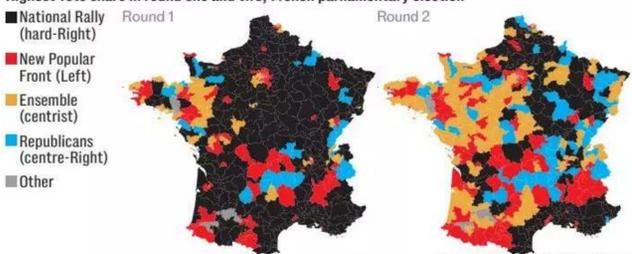
The Macron camp still hopes to circumvent the hard-line Left to form a coalition of "reasonable" centrists, perhaps hiving off Socialists and Greens from the current alliance or wooing conservative MPs from the Republican party. A source close to the president told *The Telegraph* that Mr Macron's centrist Together alliance was now "the pivotal group in parliament".

For now, stagnation appears the most likely scenario with the National Assembly divided. *Le Monde's* Nicolas Chapuis wrote: "Jean-Luc Mélenchon has tried to impose an uncompromising line, particularly on the New Popular Front programme.

"This scenario does not stand up to scrutiny for two seconds. The NFP does not have the means to govern alone."

French election results

Highest vote share in round one and two, French parliamentary election



SOURCE: FRENCH INTERIOR MINISTRY

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Russia vents its fury on Kyiv's sick children

Dispatch



By Liz Cookman in Kyiv

Hypersonic missile kills two and injures 16 – seven youngsters among them – after hospital is targeted

WHEN a missile hit Kyiv's Ohmatdyt Children's Hospital yesterday, Olena Magarevska threw herself over her son, Andriy, to protect him.

The boy, who is nine and disabled because of a neurological condition, was recovering from surgery on the fifth-floor intensive care unit when air raid sirens sounded just before 10am.

Hospital staff were unable to evacuate him to the shelter because of his medical needs, so he was moved to a dining area with sturdy walls for safety.

Then the Russian KH-101 hypersonic missile smashed through the roof in a rare daytime attack that left one dead and 30 wounded, according to hospital staff.

"I heard a loud explosion and me and my husband both jumped to cover Andriy with our bodies. The windows

were completely destroyed so then we covered him with pillows in case there was another attack or falling debris," Mrs Magarevska told *The Telegraph* through tears.

"The lights also went out and it was so dark in the room. Andriy doesn't like the dark, he's scared of it, so I turned the torch on my phone to try to calm him."

Ohmatdyt is Ukraine's largest children's hospital, where more than 20,000 youngsters and teenagers are treated every year for a range of problems, from injury to genetic conditions and cancer.

The missile left a giant hole gouged out of the building in central Kyiv, with rescue workers scrambling to evacuate the most sick and infirm, passing bricks by hand to clear the way.

Children from the oncology ward, unable to evacuate to the shelter alongside most other patients, were forced to sit on the pavement attached to IV drips.

Daytime missile strikes have become rare, and direct hits have largely been kept away from Kyiv in recent months. Russia has targeted civilian infrastructure, and some observers pointed out the attack on the hospital had echoes of Vladimir Putin's playbook in Syria.

The surprise attack came as Viktor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister, met Xi Jinping, the Chinese president, to



Devastation at the Ohmatdyt Children's Hospital following the missile attack. Above, a mother cradles her wounded child

discuss a potential peace deal. Mr Orbán has also visited Volodymyr Zelensky and Putin in recent days.

Andriy was left in his bed inside the smouldering hospital for five hours before he was evacuated to another Kyiv hospital. While he waited, Mrs Magarevska and her husband, Igor, tried to keep Andriy calm amid the broken glass and ceiling debris.

When Andriy was moved first to a

stretcher in the lobby, Mrs Magarevska held and kissed his hand, stroking his head for comfort amid the chaos of the relief operation.

Volodymyr Zovnur, director general of the hospital, said that it had been a routine morning and that staff were gathered for a meeting when the air alarm sounded and they rushed out to move children to the shelters.

"We heard one explosion nearby and we moved to a safer area and then the second explosion hit us. I ran to the emergency department and asked the doctors to start helping the wounded immediately," he said. "Approximately 30 people were wounded and one died – she was taking children to the shelter at the time. Some of the wounded are doctors and nurses, many with shrapnel wounds."

Mr Zovnur said that one doctor had been about to carry out heart surgery at the time of the attack, but both he and the eight-year-old patient had survived.

Volunteers quickly descended on to the scene, bringing medical supplies, water and food for outpatients, staff and rescue workers. The hospital was plunged into darkness with even the generators damaged, and the corridors flooded because of burst pipes. The air was thick with smoke and rocket fuel.

The first children to be evacuated were those with the most urgent needs – those with cancer or who rely on

'If I could give my own life to save the children, I would ... don't let any more children get hurt'

breathing equipment. Some doctors were trapped and had to escape out of the window while four staff members were in the lift at the time of the attack and were briefly stuck.

"If I could give my own life to save the children, I would," Nina Fiterenko, a hospital cleaner, said. "The West has to give us more support, more air defences – don't let any more children get hurt."

A baby was reportedly pulled out from under the rubble last night evening and taken to another hospital.

According to Vitali Klitschko, the mayor of Kyiv, two people were killed at the hospital, including a young doctor, and 16 were injured, of whom seven were children. Ukraine's ministry of health announced that Germany is to take some of the children for treatment from tomorrow.

Seven Kyiv districts were hit, with 82 people injured and at least 22 killed, according to Kyiv's military administration. Among the damaged areas were a former factory, residential buildings and another medical facility, where at least seven were killed. One metro station was also damaged.

"Russia cannot help but know where its missiles are flying, and must answer for its crimes: against people, against children, against humanity in general," Mr Zelensky said.

Tuesday has been declared as a day of mourning in the capital.

Iran's 'moderate' president fires early warning of intent on Israel

By Akhtar Makoui

IRAN'S new moderate president told Hezbollah's leader that he will continue to support the terror group and other regional "resistance movements" against Israel.

In a letter to Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader, Masoud Pezeshkian said: "The Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently supported the resistance of the regional people against the illegitimate Zionist regime."

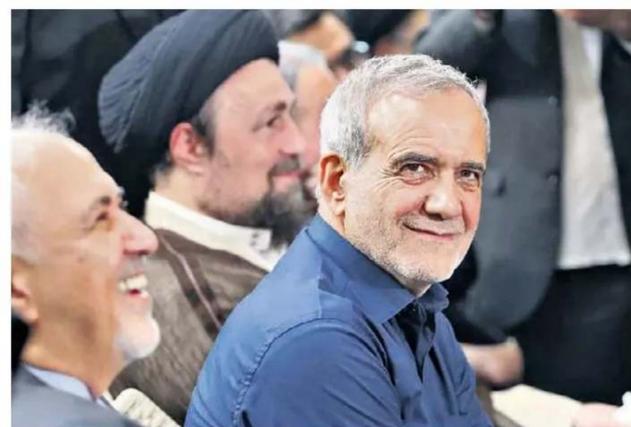
He emphasised that the support is "deeply rooted in the fundamental policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ideals of Imam Khomeini, and the guidance of the Supreme Leader."

It marks Mr Pezeshkian's first public statement on foreign policy since his election on Saturday.

The letter suggests that Iran's approach to regional politics and its relationship with Israel is unlikely to shift under the new administration despite Mr Pezeshkian's moderate stance.

"I am confident that the resistance movements in the region will not allow this regime to perpetuate its warmongering and criminal policies against the oppressed people of Palestine and other nations in the region," Mr Pezeshkian wrote.

The Hezbollah secretary-general was among the first foreign leaders to con-



Masoud Pezeshkian's comments suggest a change in regional policy is unlikely

gratulate Mr Pezeshkian on his victory in Iran's presidential election.

In his message, Hassan Nasrallah said: "The resistance movements and the nations of the region consider the Islamic Republic of Iran to be a stable supporter of the oppressed and a powerful and permanent support for the resistance."

"We will continue on this path until we achieve final victory, with the

mighty, dear, and powerful Iran at its centre."

Since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza on Oct 7, there have been near-daily exchanges of fire along the Israel-Lebanon border.

Analysts warn that an all-out war between Hezbollah and Israel could result in severe damage on both sides and potentially escalate to involve major international powers.

EU's 'war policy' backfiring, says Orbán after meeting with Putin

By James Rothwell in Berlin

EUROPE'S "war policy" is hurting its people and economy, Hungary's prime minister has said after meeting Vladimir Putin as part of an unsanctioned attempt to resolve the conflict in Ukraine.

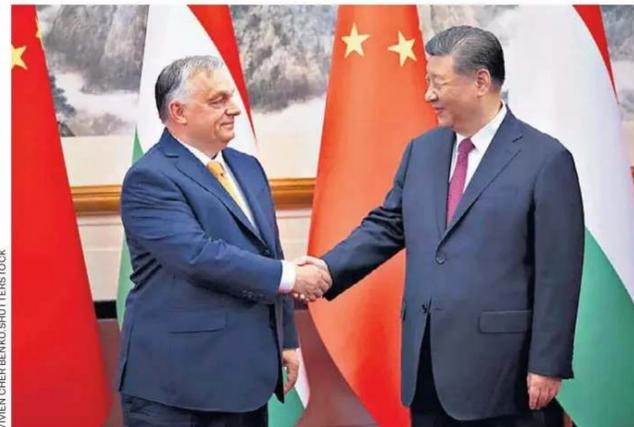
Viktor Orbán claimed that "main victims" of the Ukraine "war policy" led by Brussels and Washington were "the European economy and the European population".

The Hungarian leader, who has been strongly criticised by EU leaders over concerns he is too close to Putin, also said Russia was extremely hard to defeat.

"Putin cannot lose when you look at it in terms of soldiers, equipment and technology," he said. "The defeat of Russia is a thought that is hard to imagine. The probability that Russia could actually be defeated is completely incalculable," he told *Bild*, the German tabloid newspaper.

Mr Orbán has used his role as the president of the European Council, which rotates between member states, to try to launch his own process for ending the war via negotiations.

Last Friday, Mr Orbán travelled to Moscow to meet Putin, three days after a visit to Kyiv where he met Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president. He also travelled to Beijing yesterday to see



President Xi of China applauded Viktor Orbán's Ukraine 'peace mission' yesterday

Xi Jinping, the Chinese president. Mr Xi has expressed support for Mr Orbán's self-styled Ukraine "peace mission" despite it being condemned by EU leaders.

The three-part trip was without the support of the European Commission or Ukraine, with Ursula von der Leyen, the commission's president, claiming it was a form of "appeasement" to Putin.

In his interview with *Bild*, the Hun-

garian prime minister also claimed there was no way to resolve the conflict on the battlefield.

"People, we, the world, want peace, to stop killing each other," he told the newspaper. "Let's start negotiating."

After complaining that the EU's support for Ukraine was harming taxpayers, he suggested the bloc should pull away from Washington's approach to the war and set up an "anonymous" policy.

Why Biden is railing against white liberal elites

Analysis



By Rozina Sabur DEPUTY US EDITOR

President tries to focus the election conversation on racial lines as he fights for his political life

WHEN an angry Joe Biden called into MSNBC's *Morning Joe* show yesterday he blamed the "elites" for trying to oust him from the presidential campaign.

"I'm getting so frustrated by the elites... who think they know so much more," he said during the phone-in live on US morning TV. His comments were part of an aggressive day of messaging telling critics inside his own party that he would not step down.

But it was also part of a carefully coordinated effort to paint his detractors as out of touch and liberal – and mostly white.

As the president fights for his political life, his inner circle are beginning to focus the conversation on racial lines to mount their defence.

"I'm here for two reasons pal," Mr Biden said in his tirade as he defended his decision to stay in the race. "One to rebuild the economy for hard working middle class people. Number two, remember all this talk about how I don't have the black support? Come on, give me a break. Watch".

Mr Biden has long relied on his upbringing in Scranton, Pennsylvania's industrial heartland, and his historic

'Not one African-American member of Congress has called on the president to step down'

support among black Democrats, to paint himself as the voice of Middle America. It was African American voters in particular who salvaged his presidential bid at the 11th hour in 2020.

Mr Biden likes to refer to this support base as the true soul of the Democratic Party, and is convinced that, in his hour of need, it will rally behind him once again.

Cedric Richmond, a senior black Democratic official, and a key member of the Biden campaign, is among those to have highlighted the fact that "not one African-American member [of Congress] has called on the president to step down".

Mr Richmond warned that white lawmakers sounding the alarm over Mr Biden's electability "risk alienating some of their base" by turning on the president.

Anita Dunn, an influential member of the Biden brain trust, but one who rarely speaks publicly, has notably broken cover to argue the same point.

"The people Joe Biden fights for – middle-class labour union members, blacks, Latinos – they know he fights for them and they're going to stay in the fight for him," she told Politico.

It may not be an argument that persuades key Democratic donors, but it could well force the hand wringing back behind closed doors – at least until his next major blunder.

For now, Mr Biden intends to continue to wage his campaign by touting himself as the voice of black



US ELECTIONS 2024

Joe Biden greets Kahlia Brown, Miss Black Teen Pennsylvania, at a campaign rally in Harrisburg on Sunday

Walk this way President given pictorial guides on how to get on and off stage

Joe Biden has been given printed guides directing him where to walk on and off stage at events.

The printouts show large images of the entrance and exit to a stage with the words: "Walk to podium," Axios reported. The guides include a precise path to the podium for the US president to follow.

One five-page document seen by the publication showed large

pictures of an event space taken from different angles, accompanied by the words "view from podium" and "view from audience".

Republicans have drawn attention to videos showing Mr Biden appearing unsure of where to walk on and off stage, using them to suggest he is not mentally fit enough for office.

The latest guide is reportedly from a



White House events template sent to staffers.

One unnamed person who staffed a Biden fundraiser told Axios: "It surprised me that a seasoned political pro like the president would need detailed verbal and visual instructions on how to enter and exit a room."

Andrew Bates, a White House spokesman, said high levels of detail were critical to

presidential advance work, regardless of who was president. "These are basic approaches that are used by any modern advance team, including the vice president's office."

Questions over Mr Biden's fitness to lead the country have intensified since last month's presidential debate, which was described as "disastrous" for the Democrats.

Democratic voters. There are obvious limitations to this argument. For one, polls show Mr Biden's support among minority groups, especially black men, has eroded since 2020.

For another, the argument that Democratic opposition to the president's re-election comes from a minority of white elites will be immediately undercut if others join their ranks. Mr Biden has been boosted for now by Steven Horsford, the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, who declared: "Joe Biden is the nominee. We're not going back, we're going forward". But calls from senior black Democrats for Mr Biden to step aside in the months ahead could be fatal.

As he goes on the offensive, Mr Biden and his White House allies have also attempted to mitigate his political vulnerability by promoting Kamala Harris, his vice-president.

After years of being criticised for

staying silent about Ms Harris's onslaught of negative press, Mr Biden's aides have begun to boost his deputy's standing. "She is increasing her role [in the 2024 election] and she's been a valued partner since day one," Mr Richmond, a campaign co-chair, said over the weekend.

Ms Harris has tread a delicate balance amid Washington chatter over the potential for her to succeed Mr Biden. The vice president, like her potential rivals, governors Gretchen Whitmer and Gavin Newsom, has reiterated her support for a second Biden term.

Yet all three are reportedly privately preparing for the alternative.

Mr Biden remains defiant, laying down the gauntlet for rivals to "run against me" on Monday. His aggressive new line of attack may mute his critics for now. But it is unlikely to silence them forever.

'Gatekeeper' Hunter Biden stands in way of calls for father to quit

By Susie Coen
US CORRESPONDENT in New York

HUNTER BIDEN is acting as his father's "gatekeeper" as calls for the US president to step aside ahead of the November election continue to mount.

Joe Biden's family rallied around the Democrat leader and urged him to stay in the presidential race after his disastrous debate performance against Donald Trump. Hunter Biden is understood

to have raised eyebrows after returning from Camp David to Washington with his father and sitting in on White House meetings as an adviser.

He has also been acting as a "de facto gatekeeper for longtime friends", deciding who has access to the US president, according to Axios.

It comes as a top Democrat official told the US website that "every single person not named Biden" or paid by him recognised how bad things were

for the president. Mr Biden, 81, has made no secret of the respect he has for his son, previously calling him "the smartest guy I know".

But critics have raised questions over whether Hunter, a former crack cocaine addict who was convicted of three federal gun crimes last month, is the right person to be advising his father. He is also set to stand trial for tax related crimes in September, to which he has pleaded not guilty. His legal woes have

sparked questions over conflicts of interest. While Mr Biden said he will not pardon his son, it would remain a possibility if he is re-elected.

According to US media, Hunter, 54, has been "destabilising" Mr Biden's team by sitting in on meetings. He is understood to have called for Anita Dunn and Bob Bauer, Mr Biden's top aides, to be sacked following the debate performance, sources told Politico. "Longtime aides are now raising concerns about

Hunter Biden's presence alongside the president in meetings", the outlet said.

Meanwhile, sources told NBC News that the "reaction from some senior White House staff members has been 'What the hell is happening?'"

Andrew Bates, a White House spokesman, said: "Hunter came back with the president from their family weekend at Camp David and went with the president straight into speech prep".

Last week, Mike Turner, chairman of

the House Intelligence Committee, wrote to the White House chief of staff, amid concern over Hunter Biden attending meetings. Mr Turner demanded to know whether he had been "receiving classified information".

A growing number of Democrats have called Mr Biden to withdraw from the race. However, the president has remained adamant he will not drop out.

A White House source denied Hunter was acting as a gatekeeper to Mr Biden.

El Salvador threatens to jail shopkeepers who overcharge

By Simeon Tegel

EL SALVADOR'S hardline president has threatened to treat shopkeepers accused of price gouging like the gangsters he rounded up in sweeping reforms at the start of his presidency.

President Nayib Bukele, the millennial leader who once styled himself "the world's coolest dictator", was responding to recent steep rises for food and other basics in the troubled Central American nation.

The president warned shopkeepers and suppliers that he was "not playing around", stressing: "I expect the prices to come down by tomorrow or there are going to be problems."

"I am going to issue a call, like we did to the gangs at the start of 2019... to the importers, distributors and food wholesalers: stop abusing the people of El Salvador, or don't complain about what happens afterward."

Mr Bukele is hugely popular, with an approval rating of around 85 per cent, thanks to his draconian approach to the gangs, which has ended their reign of terror. He has locked up nearly 80,000 young men, often without evidence that they are gang members. They are held

dozens to a cell and paraded before the cameras in their underwear.

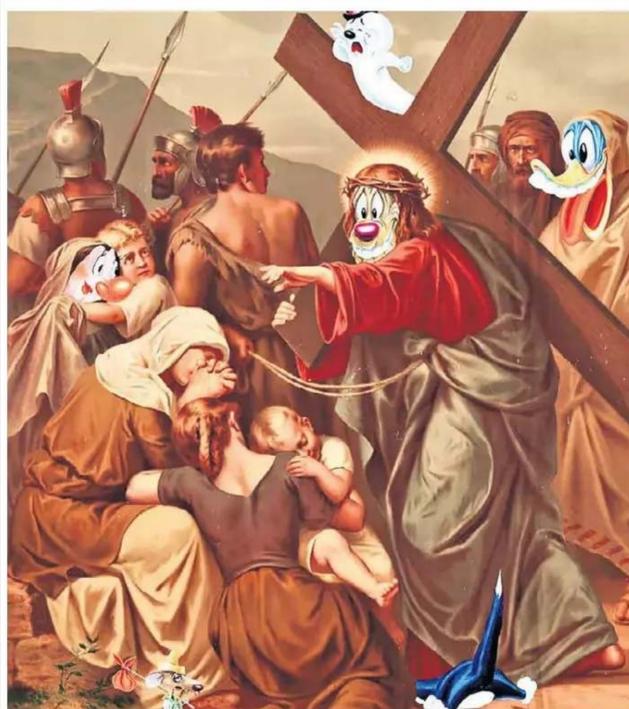
Yet the economy has long been Mr Bukele's achilles heel. The poverty rate, now 30 per cent of the population, and the national debt, now roughly 80 per cent of GDP, have surged since he took office in 2019.

Prices of basic food such as bread, eggs, meat and fruit rose 30 per cent in Mr Bukele's first four years in office. But government inspectors say some prices have tripled in recent months.

Meanwhile, his flagship economic policy, adopting Bitcoin as the national currency, has baffled ordinary citizens, failed to generate jobs or growth, and antagonised the International Monetary Fund, whose support he badly needs.

Mr Bukele's New Ideas party, which is increasingly associated with the hard Right, dominates congress and has given the president wide-ranging emergency powers to tackle the gang crisis.

But those powers would not authorise him to jail price speculators. Meanwhile, establishing price controls would be widely seen as both attacking the free market and repeating the mistakes that have ravaged other Latin American economies from Argentina to Cuba.



The oil painting, by artist Phil James, had been on display at a gallery in Sydney

Looney Tunes Jesus pulled from exhibition after outcry

By Nick Squires

A PAINTING in which Jesus and other Biblical figures are portrayed with faces from Looney Tunes cartoon characters was removed from an art exhibition in Sydney after protesters said it "mocked" Christianity.

The oil painting, titled *Jesus Speaks to the Daughters of Jerusalem*, by a 48-year-old artist called Phil James, was on display at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in south-western Sydney.

It elicited such a strong reaction from local Christians that the mayor of Liverpool council, the local authority, ordered that it be taken down, despite the fact that the exhibition it featured in had only two more days to run.

The removal of the painting has sparked a debate about artistic freedom and the limits of religious tolerance, with critics saying the decision to take it down was "ludicrous".

The decision came after a brief but vociferous campaign by a group of conservative Catholics called Christian Lives Matter.

"I've just gotten word that this shocking, disrespectful art mocking Jesus Christ has finally been removed," Char-

lie Bakhos, the founder of Christian Lives Matter, wrote on Facebook.

He thanked the "hundreds and hundreds" of supporters who had "respectfully" called for the artwork to be banned. The painting was "another cheap and low attempt at mocking Christianity here in Sydney", he said.

"This is another attack on Christianity that we have managed to put a stop to thanks to everyone's support. Let's keep defending our faith respectfully. No faith, no religion, no race, no one should be mocked."

The artist, who goes by the name Philjames, said he had been taken aback by the reaction to the painting and that he had received threats of physical violence. He had been sent dozens of "vile" messages on social media, saying that the level of vitriol was "frightening".

He said that while he was concerned about the safety of gallery staff, amid a threat of protests by campaigners, he was worried that the controversy may have set a precedent on limiting freedom of expression. "That for me is the most problematic thing: the mayor requested it to be taken down, putting politicking before freedom of expression. Where does it end?"

Resist Labour's surrender to criminals with every sinew

ROBERT JENRICK

In these pages last month, I warned of Labour's radical hard-Left agenda. With a huge majority behind Sir Keir Starmer, we can now see it in action. The change Labour is bringing is clear: taxes up, prisons emptied and our borders opened.

The Conservative Party has much soul-searching to do. We must strike a careful balancing act of defending the things we got right in government while being frank about where we let voters down. This will take time. But as we conduct this post-mortem, we cannot give Labour a free pass. We owe it to the country to scrutinise everything the new Government does and fight policy decisions that harm the national interest. And I can think of no greater threat to the national interest than Labour's plan to release thousands of offenders early from prison in the coming weeks.

Let's be clear what this would mean. Letting out thousands of prisoners just 40 per cent of the way through their sentence risks triggering a crime wave of rapes, assaults and robberies in the very near future. Most people in our prisons have offended many times before and will offend again. Nine per cent of criminals are responsible for 52 per cent of all convictions. That's why, under the Tories, we brought in 5,700 extra prison places.

Of course, I acknowledge that difficulties exist in managing our criminal justice system, but I know from my time at the Home Office that there are real alternatives to Labour's policy of mass-release. Labour says this is an emergency – so let's treat it like one and act seriously. Labour could deport foreign criminals and give them a lifetime ban from ever re-entering the UK, which would free up thousands of places. It could explore creating emergency capacity by delivering Rapid Deployment Cells.

The British people did not vote to let despicable

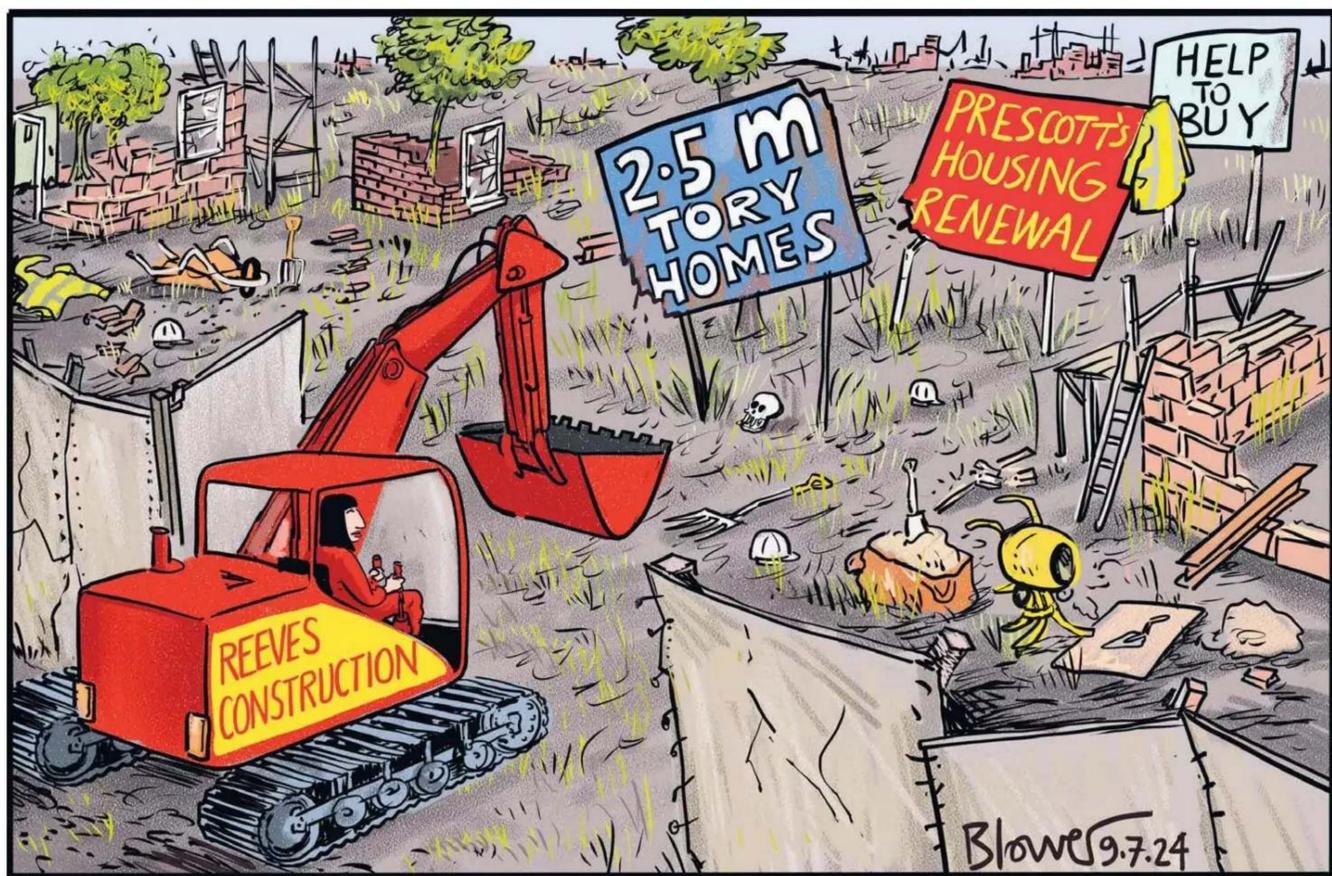
criminals off scot-free. In fact, Labour's own manifesto repeatedly criticised early release policies. This is an ideologically-driven choice being taken when Labour feels that opposition is lacking.

The newly-appointed prisons minister, James Timpson, is a decent man who has done plenty of good work to help ex-prisoners rebuild their lives. But he has also made clear he believes far fewer people should be in jail. Labour is portraying its extreme policies as inevitable ones. But the party can't spin its way out of this: it is a policy choice and will elevate ideology above public safety.

This duplicity is not limited to law and order. Rachel Reeves's speech yesterday suggests that – within days of entering Downing Street – Labour will be back doing what it does best: raising taxes. And on his first day in office, Starmer scrapped the Rwanda plan and surrendered to the people smugglers. Instead of pursuing a deterrent, Labour has rebranded the existing Small Boats Operational Command. Starmer said he would strengthen the border, but he is leaving us without one. The only credible solution is to bolster the Rwanda scheme, as myself and scores of Conservative colleagues proposed.

Unsurprisingly, Labour hid these policies from view during the campaign. It attacked early release policies and said it would secure a strong border and would not raise taxes. Labour knew there was no way it could win a mandate from the British public for this. Far from being "unburdened by doctrine", Starmer is unburdened from what the British people want and advancing dangerous ideas that have circulated in the Labour movement for the last few decades.

We should now take our time in agreeing on a new direction. But, in the meantime, we must unite and fight this radical agenda with everything we've got.



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Labour's fanatical centrists are laying the ground for the next populist revolt

Give the party credit for at least talking about reform. But its plans do not meet the scale of the challenges

SHERELLE JACOBS



Britain's new Prime Minister is enjoying quite the honeymoon. Across the centrist commentariat, there is elation that the "adults are back in the room". An upswell of liberal hope that Labour heralds a return to competent, compassionate politics is palpable. In certain circles, awe at the return of "experienced" Blairites to government has been barely disguised.

To his most ardent fans, Keir Starmer radiates an almost spiritual benevolence. While Tony Blair was filled with a kind of frenetic evangelism, Starmer has struck a more Anglican tone – authoritative, non-dogmatic, post-ideological. Perhaps it may yet cut through with a nation weary of perma-crises and endless culture wars.

And yet one cannot help but wonder how long the euphoria can last. After all, Western politics is hardly swinging back to a golden age of technocratic managerialism. From France to America, the centre is imploding. Starmer fans may think that the failed Brexit revolution has inoculated Britain from the new populist virus. More accurately, given the Tory implosion, many of the voters who ditched Labour in 2019 had little choice but to give the centre-Left technocrats another go at fixing the country. British technocracy is on its final lifeline, in other words.

Yes, it's happened again. In December last year, a non-white actor played Isaac Newton in *Doctor Who*. Then, in April this year, it was announced that non-white actors had been cast to play Tudor courtiers in *Wolf Hall: The Mirror and the Light*. And now, non-white actors have been cast to play Anglo-Saxon noblemen in *King and Conqueror*, a drama series about the Norman conquest of 1066. And all these shows are on the BBC.

Some viewers may be puzzled by this insistence on "colour-blind" casting in historical dramas – and not only because it makes the programmes look inauthentic. For one thing, it seems unlikely that, in this day and age, the BBC would be happy to show white actors playing non-white historical figures. So why is it acceptable the other way round? A cynic might wonder whether such casting is part of a cunning ploy to reinforce the fashionable progressive message that, throughout its history, this country has always been ethnically diverse – which means that, if you object to mass immigration in the 21st

century, you're not just racist, but historically ignorant. Still, whatever the thinking behind this approach, we must judge a programme before we've seen it. So for now, all we can do is imagine what this diverse and inclusive new Anglo-Saxon drama might be like...

Those of us who have not drunk the Starmer kool-aid, but are soberly aware that this country stands on the edge of a precipice, must hope that he does in some way succeed. This new Government deserves credit for at least making some of the right noises. With border control the glaring exception, Starmer's Labour has generally proved more willing than the Tories to point out problems facing Britain. It has been bolder in its insistence that the NHS is broken and needs to be reinvented. It has also been more assertive about the need for planning reform, even at the risk of upsetting Nimbies.

Still, Starmer's vow to "rebuild Britain" appears to be built on shaky foundations.

Perhaps most worrying is that Labour lacks a compelling plan for growth. Though Starmer likes to present himself as a consummate pragmatist, his party has developed a romantic weakness for the supposed lessons of the Apollo space programme for the economy today. Obsessed with the age of astronauts and the heroic exploits of JFK administration, and suffering from an intellectual crush on the economist Mariana Mazzucato – who argues that the "muscular" state that propelled men into space must be revived to jumpstart growth today – Starmer's plan to revive Britain hinges precariously on "mission-driven" interventionist projects. They range from a National Wealth Fund to the Great British Energy project.

It should go without saying that JFK's mission to put a man on the moon – which operated on the mantra "waste anything but time" – is a ridiculous model for reviving broke Britain.

But it is also a problem that Labour appears decidedly less enthusiastic about the far less glamorous supply-side revolution that the party would be

well-placed to pursue. It is ominous that Labour, despite its fitful rhetoric, seems unwilling fundamentally to change Britain's nationalised, highly-centralised planning system. The proposals Rachel Reeves announced yesterday are, if anything, even more dedicated to top-down control and therefore vulnerable to any change in the political weather in Westminster.

Labour's masterplan to fix the NHS seems equally flimsy. While some may be reassured by talk of bringing back arch-Blairite Alan Milburn to help reform the health service, fixing it doesn't so much require an experienced hand as it does an unapologetic revolutionary.

Milburn's task under New Labour – to bring waiting lists down through decentralising reforms and more private sector involvement – was tough but straightforward, boiling down to a transfer of power from the centre to the frontline of care. Some in the health service, looking for pragmatic solutions to dysfunctional management and patchy state funding, were supportive of his plans (in the end, Milburn was arguably unshook not by the NHS but the Treasury).

In contrast, Labour's aim today – to reinvent the NHS from a service that patches up patients at death's door to one that seeks to prevent ill health in the first place – is infinitely more difficult. The party's reluctance to level with NHS workers, and the country, on the basic reality that, in a stagnant economy, there is no magical source of extra funding for prevention is a ticking time bomb. Sooner or later, we will have to confront the need to redirect cash from frontline services.

Some Blairites also like to wax lyrical about the salvational potential of technologies like genomics to predict and prevent ill health. But there are

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ultimately no technological silver bullets that can make up for our chronic shortage of healthcare workers or fix the smoking ruins of social care.

But perhaps the issue that Starmer is most dangerously weak on is migration. One wonders whether he has made the basic error of mistaking the outgoing Tories for rule-flouting populists that he must define himself against. The reality is that they were only reluctantly willing to flirt with drastic proposals that test international law because all conventional alternatives had failed. And although liberals appalled by the Rwanda policy may celebrate its demise, Britain is now without any deterrence policy whatsoever.

The new Home Secretary's Border Security Command repeats the mistake of the war on drugs, trying to clamp down on criminal networks while failing to address the underlying factors fuelling the industry. Experts have already voiced their scepticism that Labour will improve on efforts in the area of enforcement. Starmer may benefit from a fall in the number of legal migrants, driven by a tightening of visa policies announced by the last government. But the numbers will soon plateau. At which point the Prime Minister will have to consider more radical plans like scrapping the worker shortage list, or risk the ire of voters.

With the Tories in disarray, Starmer may be sitting pretty for now, but time is shorter for him to deliver than many think. One can almost hear the far-Left earthquake in France rattling the newly-installed furniture in Downing Street. Or indeed the Labour Left and their unions backers murmuring with anticipation that, with centrism imploding internationally, they may be able to install their socialist "secret weapon" Angela Rayner into No 10 sooner rather than later.

Starmer's party has developed a romantic weakness for the supposed lessons of the Apollo space programme

Way of the World Michael Deacon

I will not tolerate the use of such irresponsible and inflammatory rhetoric. Who do you think you are? Nigel Farage?"

Courtier 1: "Please, Your Majesty. This is a hostile foreign army. They will destroy our way of life."

King Harold: "What alarmist nonsense. I don't want to hear any more of these far-Right conspiracy theories. In any case, it's vital that we remain open to the world. As any historian worth his, her or their salt will tell you, Britain has always been vibrantly multicultural – ever since the *Windrush* arrived, in 1948BC."

Courtier 2: "But..."

King Harold: "Anyway, whether you like it or not, it would be an act of catastrophic national self-harm to shut our borders to newcomers. If we had an NHS, I can assure you that it would collapse without them."

Courtier 1: "But, Your Majesty..."

King Harold: "Silence. I shouldn't have to remind you that this court's HR department operates strict policies on diversity and inclusion. It's high time people with outdated attitudes like yours were dragged kicking and screaming into the 11th century."

Courtier 2: "Of course, Your Majesty. Just as you say."

King Harold: "Now, send for my bards. I wish to enjoy their rendition of the latest plainchant by Stormzy."

Scene: the court of King Harold II, September 1066. Suddenly the doors burst open, and two courtiers rush in.

Courtier 1: "Your Majesty, we bring alarming news. A vast Norman fleet has been sighted off the south coast."

Courtier 2: "That's right, Your Majesty. We must act at once, in order to stop the boats."

King Harold: "Stop the boats? Don't be such a hateful bigot. These are obviously desperate people in urgent need of our help. We must show compassion, and offer them all state-funded accommodation at the nearest Best Western."

Courtier 1: "But Your Majesty, I really don't think these people crossing the Channel from France are asylum seekers. They're clearly all men of fighting age."

Courtier 2: "That's right, Your Majesty. This is an invasion."

King Harold: "Invasion? I'm sorry, but

I will not tolerate the use of such irresponsible and inflammatory rhetoric. Who do you think you are? Nigel Farage?"

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Tories may be feeling glum about the election result. But I think they should look on the bright side. Because there will be at least one benefit to having Labour in charge.

Which is that it will do wonders for the quality of Left-wing discourse.

For the past 14 years, Left-wing activists and commentators have relentlessly told us that every single problem in our lives is the fault of the government. Don't earn enough money? It's the government's fault. Bills soaring? The government's fault. Deadly pandemic? The government's fault. This has been the Left's constant refrain. The government is always to blame – and, if it doesn't immediately fix your problems, it's because it's useless, stupid, and very probably evil.

Suddenly, though, the future is looking much brighter. Because, now that a party they support is in power, something tells me that the Left will take a more mature, thoughtful and considered view of events. Running the country, they will solemnly remind us, isn't easy. Times are tough, difficult decisions must be made, and the Prime Minister doesn't have a magic wand. You can't just blame everything on the Government, you know...

A heartening thought. My only fear is that, if the Tories ever get back in, everything will be the government's fault again.

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ESTABLISHED 1855

Labour's top-down planning reforms

The Green Belt was created by the post-war Labour government, underpinned by a substantial parliamentary majority similar to that enjoyed by Sir Keir Starmer. To this day, the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act remains the template for decision-making, despite umpteen reform attempts aimed at speeding up building both of new housing and essential infrastructure.

The new Government is to make another effort at unblocking what everyone accepts is a sclerotic system but no-one has been able to free up. As with its 1940s predecessor, Labour's answer is a top-down, centralised, interventionist approach.

Rachel Reeves, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said new quotas for building homes would be imposed on local councils, while developments deemed to be in the national interest would be prioritised over local objections.

As a statement of intent, two major projects to build new data centres on green belt land in the South East and blocked by planners will be revisited. The developers said they would create jobs, unlock foreign investment, and boost growth in the local and national economy. Both were refused planning permission over concerns that they would harm the local environment, but Angela Rayner, the Deputy Prime Minister, may now let them proceed.

Ms Reeves also said the ban on onshore wind farms would be lifted immediately, with local communities receiving unspecified benefits, presumably in the form of cheaper electricity. Labour has moved quickly on this agenda now that the biggest obstacle – the threat of a Tory backbench rebellion – has been neutralised by the election result. Many of the seats likely to be affected are in the hands of the Lib Dems, who do not have the votes to oppose these reforms even with Conservative support.

Permitting the construction of new housing, data centres and energy infrastructure is a central plank of Labour's dash for growth on which everything else it has promised depends. The Government believes it has a mandate to override local objections to nationally important projects and has the majority to push them through, even in the Green Belt.

Ms Reeves said "a new growth-focused approach to the planning system" would take shape before the end of the month. Her ambition is clear. But the collateral damage of this "national mission" will be the environment and local democracy.

French deadlock

Emmanuel Macron called a snap election in France to provide clarity after the European polls showed a strong advance by the Right-wing National Rally (RN). But the outcome is greater confusion, with the parliament more fragmented than at any time since the foundation of the Fifth Republic in 1958.

The two-round electoral system was designed to contain extremist parties and avoid instability. But no party has a majority and a coalition including far-Leftists obtained the most seats. Marine Le Pen's RN had expected to win but was squeezed by the Left and Mr Macron's Ensemble movement as they ganged up to keep the Right out.

However, this is by no means the end of the RN. With its allies, it now has more than 140 seats in parliament whereas a few years ago it had just eight. Ms Le Pen's real ambition is the presidency in 2027 and, by being excluded from government, she avoids the blame for whatever comes next.

What might that be? Even though it is the largest grouping, the Leftist New Popular Front (NFP) won't be able to form an administration alone. It is a fragile mix of old-style Socialists, Communists, Greens and the radical firebrand Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who even his own coalition partners do not want to see anywhere near power.

Ensemble lost dozens of seats but remains a viable force, and Mr Macron may seek to peel off members of the NFP to form a government along with the conservatives and independents. However, coalitions are hard to achieve and maintain in France. The most likely outcome is deadlock and political uncertainty – not the image the president wanted to project to the world on the eve of the Paris Olympics.

Driven to despair

How many times is it reasonable to flunk your driving test? New official figures show the soaring numbers of those who repeatedly fail in this rite of passage. Last year, 93,204 unfortunates had to endure the motorised ordeal on six occasions, with 38,588 passing on that final attempt. But another 54,616 were destined to repeat the trial. More than 13,000 drivers required 10 or more goes to pass, with 16 still on repeat after 30 tries. It may be tempting to blame social media – or some other contemporary ill – for addling young minds, but the worst offenders are not Generation Z-ers. While women aged 60 and over have a pass rate of 28 per cent, that for 17-year-old boys is the highest at 60 per cent. Evidently, some things do not improve with age, but then the young are more accustomed to examinations.

Labour's housing plans show scant regard for the natural world

SIR – The Labour Government is about to drive bulldozers through what remains of our countryside – the idea plainly being to get the work done quickly in the hope that the electorate will have forgotten about the carnage in five years' time ("Labour to bring back housing targets", report, July 8).

The green belt is now regarded as merely another planning hurdle, and no longer a secure bulwark against development. The continuation of urban sprawl, and Labour's election pledge to impose wind turbines and solar panels on fertile farmland that should be producing food, will further degrade what remains of Britain's natural world. Already there have been local extinctions among once-common species such as skylarks, yellowhammers and corn buntings.

These were the formerly abundant field birds of my north-east Warwickshire childhood, and I mourn their loss.

John Phillpott
Worcester

SIR – After many years of affordable housing taking a back seat, we're in desperate need of a government that really understands the issues holding back our homebuilding efforts.

In parts of the UK where more homes are most needed, local planning authorities have been hamstrung in their efforts to deliver new developments due to strong local opposition. This proves the value of the top-down targets that Rachel Reeves, the Chancellor, has said will now be reintroduced.

Some housing associations I work with tell me it can now take as long as two years for projects to go through planning, while more than one million people are left languishing on social-housing waiting lists as a result.

Just as vital is the promised recruitment of hundreds of new planning officers who can push through new applications, tackle the backlog and provide invaluable advice to less qualified local councillors who might be more likely to be swayed by

well-organised local protests. Ideally, they should be given greater autonomy across the whole process, driven by the understanding that local areas need to thrive in order to survive.

Jonathan Pearson
London W1

SIR – Andrew Holgate (Letters, July 8) wonders how the shortage of materials and workers will affect plans to provide 1.5 million new homes.

Last year I asked three builders to quote for work on my house. All promised they would, but none came even to look at the job. In February this year a fourth gave a quote, which we accepted, with work due to start at the end of March. The scaffolding went up in mid-May and the first part of the job was carried out last week.

The builder has now disappeared without a word as to when he'll be back to finish the work. I do hope the Government has better luck than us.

William T Nuttall
Rossendale, Lancashire



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BBC intrusion

SIR – Does anybody else find the over-dramatic programme trailers and iPlayer advertisements during BBC Wimbledon coverage very intrusive – especially when players change ends?

We may as well have no licence fee and commercial breaks.

James Thacker
Tanworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire

SIR – I can't be the only one who has to turn the sound down to avoid the tennis commentators' unnecessary conversations. The BBC camerawork is marvellous. Nothing else is needed.

Joan McLeary
Harrogate, North Yorkshire

SIR – It is most unfair that, after the completion of a singles match, the loser is allowed to leave the court while the winner is left to face the toe-curling ritual of the "how does it feel?" post-match interview. The two players should go off together.

Jeremy Nicholas
Great Bardfield, Essex

The pooch factor

SIR – I agree with Robert Jewell (Letters, July 8) that a reduction in VAT for pubs would have a minimal effect on the price of a pint.

Here in Brixham there are approximately 21 pubs and bars, and it's fair to say that most are struggling. There are, however, three that are bucking that trend, and this is despite the disadvantage of not being situated around the picturesque harbour.

They are the Queens Arms, the Bell Inn and the Vigilance. All have one thing in common: they don't allow dogs. With food and children common in pubs nowadays, perhaps dog-free is the way to go.

John Hadley
Brixham, Devon

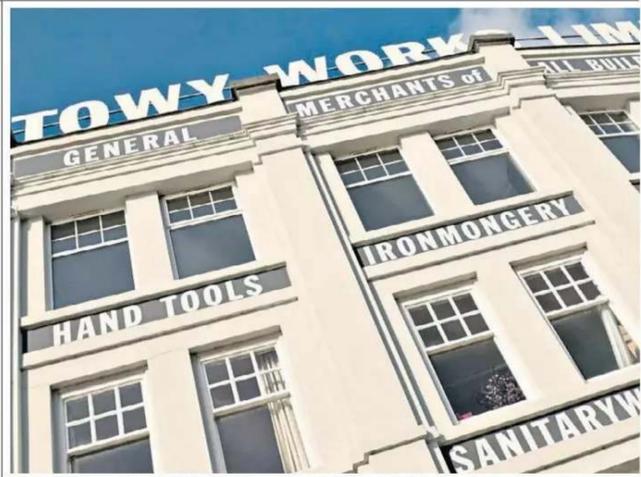
Gooseberry gathering

SIR – It is sad that gooseberries (Letters, July 8) are difficult to find – as, indeed, are gooseberry pork pies.

These were made in Mansfield as the traditional dish of the annual July Fair. The fair celebrated the granting of the market charter by Henry III in 1227, meaning that Mansfield could hold a market in perpetuity. The highlight was when the town's mayor cut the pie in front of the gathered crowds. They often contained more than 60 pounds of gooseberries, and were shared among the people.

A recipe can be easily found for this most delicious of pies. Try it.

Stuart Duckmanton
Mansfield, Nottinghamshire



Nailed it: Towy Works Ltd, a builders merchants established in Carmarthen in 1795

The lost expertise of traditional ironmongers

SIR – I lament the demise of traditional high-street hardware shops – the type of ironmonger who, when you asked for a bucket-handled pointing trowel, knew what you meant and had them in stock.

They have been replaced by DIY stores and online retailers that sell

imported screws and drill bits made from inferior alloys.

I am running out of my stock of items, many of which I inherited from my great-grandfather, and am at a loss as to where to find replacements.

Jonathan Yardley
Wolverhampton

MPs overlooked for senior government jobs

SIR – There appears to be a trend to parachute into the House of Lords someone seen as having the skills, knowledge and experience to do a particular ministerial job ("Starmer's Cabinet snub to Thornberry as he appoints lawyer who fought UK", report, July 8).

What does this say about the quality of our MPs? What does it say about the contempt in which our politicians hold the link between elected representation and prime ministerial power?

Linda Hughes
Newton Abbot, Devon

SIR – We are seeing a democratic deficit gaining ground: the appointment of unelected people to positions of power over the people simply by making them life peers.

The practice is even more odious when the appointees have previously failed at the ballot box or have been subject to some scandal requiring them to resign from office.

Philip Franklin
Wellesbourne, Warwickshire

SIR – Neale Edwards (Letters, July 8) is

right to say that the House of Commons has too many MPs for a country of our size.

However, the House of Lords is even worse. People who have been recognised for their excellence by their own industries for doing their day jobs do not necessarily deserve to be ennobled.

By all means, award them some form of civic recognition. And if they have expertise in their sectors, perhaps bestow an advisory role – but not power to vote on legislation. This must surely be a job for elected representatives.

Anne Jappie
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

SIR – Neale Edwards should look to Wales, where the Senedd has 60 members for a population of only three million.

Incredibly, this assembly considers itself overworked and is in the process of legislating to increase its numbers to 96.

More incredibly, there appears to be no way of stopping this travesty.

Huw Baumgartner
Bridell, Pembrokeshire

Macron emboldened France's increasingly hateful Left

CHARLES MOORE
NOTEBOOK



President Emmanuel Macron raised the spectre of Right-wing control of France by calling the unnecessary parliamentary elections whose second round was held in France on Sunday. His convoluted behaviour has now raised the opposite spectre – Left-wing control of France.

Thanks to the agreement between Macron's party and the New Popular Front of the Left, specially formed for the occasion, the Left won the most seats in the latest vote. The pact meant that each gave the other a clear run in agreed seats. In some places, voters who opposed Marine Le Pen's National Rally had no alternative but candidates from the hard-Left France Unbowed party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

Following the enormous rise in attacks on Jews in France after the Hamas massacres on October 7 last year, Mélenchon declared that anti-Semitism in France was "residual", a word which defies the facts. Mass protests against Israel's attacks in Gaza have frequently featured anti-Semitism. Currently, two teenage boys in France are charged with racially insulting and raping a 12-year-old Jewish girl.

If any anti-Semitism is residual, it is that of the National Rally. It still pops up in individual candidates, but Mme Le Pen has unequivocally condemned the

Hamas attacks. It is now largely the far-Left, not the far-Right, which pushes an anti-Semitic narrative. In critical race theory, Jews cannot be the victims of racism, since racism is defined as a white vice. Since they are "white", they must be racists.

Behind the approach of France Unbowed is a cold numerical calculation. Muslims – Arabs, black Africans or Turks – are the demographic future there. Their grievances present a unique opportunity for the Left, which long since lost the white working class. Much Islamist political discourse is anti-Semitic and almost all of it is anti-Israel. The Palestinian flag has replaced the old red and black ones in Leftist demos.

One might have thought – and certainly hoped – that the atrocities of October 7 would have turned the world against Hamas. On the contrary, they have impressed many on the Left with their terrifying power. Mélenchon, an eloquent revolutionary demagogue, clearly sees much profit in this turmoil.

The National Rally, for the same reasons reversed, increasingly sees Jews as part of the French culture they seek to defend against Islamist attack. President Macron, who is more clever-clever than wise, hopes to out-manoeuvre the extremes, but he may, unintentionally, be fanning the flames.

Where France leads, Britain might follow, though luckily our home-grown Mélenchon, Jeremy Corbyn, is much more boring than the French Lenin. Our Muslim population is roughly two

thirds that of France, and our general election last week showed Islamism on the march, winning a few seats and even threatening Sir Keir Starmer in his own patch. It is his enemy within.

◇ Rachel Reeves, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, says she wants to "kickstart" growth. The word is an unhelpful cliché.

The verb to "kickstart" is defined by *Oxford Languages* as to "start (a motorcycle engine) with a downward thrust of a pedal"; "as in older motorcycles", it adds. Politicians like the word because it sounds tough and instant. Precisely for that reason, it is inappropriate.

As Liz Truss quite recently proved, growth rarely happens because of a sudden kick. A modern, sophisticated economy is not like an old motorcycle. A better simile would be that of a once-fertile field which has lost its ready access to the road and is now choked with weeds. It is chiefly governments which blocked the access, thus letting the weeds take over. They can unblock it, if they choose, without kicking anything or anything.

Another cliché politicians love to deploy is that they are "laser-focused" on something or other. Lasers do not, in fact, focus. That is what lenses do.

◇ Perhaps taking advantage of the outrage against Tories using inside knowledge to bet on the date of the general election, the BBC recently announced the end of the *Today*

Mistaken on migration

SIR – Ben Wallace (Commentary, July 8) says "across Europe voters are worried by the massive scale of illegal immigration". Yet this is a minor concern compared to the scale of legal migration.

Mr Wallace is making the same mistake as Rishi Sunak, who was fixated on illegal migration, and failed to realise that voters care about the unsustainably vast numbers of migrants arriving here legally.

Theo Morgan
London W9

SIR – Sir Tony Blair suggests revisiting his digital ID card scheme to tackle illegal migration (report, July 8).

This would face the same problem as last time: to be effective, participation in civil society would require the ID card. Hence, no digital ID would mean no benefits, no ability to work, no ability to rent a home, no access to the NHS, and no state education. Enforcement would require detention and deportation. Labour MPs would hate this. The optics would be awful. Restrictions and enforcement would be watered down and the ID card rendered useless in combating illegal migration.

We would be left with an expensive system gathering data on law-abiding citizens and run by private contractors.

Adam Pegley
Esher, Surrey

The Tory divide

SIR – Brexiters and Remainers/Rejoiners are like matter and antimatter. The two cannot exist in the same place (political party) without a large bang occurring.

Until the Conservative Party grasps this point, it will never return to being a coherent entity.

Andy Bebbington
Ravenshead, Nottinghamshire

SIR – My late father, who was elected as a Conservative MP 100 years ago, said he thought that only MPs should elect leaders because they are the ones who have to work with them. Involving the membership means the process takes months. If it only requires MPs, it can all be dealt with in days.

Hugh Williams
Highworth, Wiltshire

SIR – Charles Penfold (Letters, July 8) argues that, in order to avoid selecting a Rishi Sunak 2.0 as leader, we should "be brave and trust the membership". If we do that, surely we risk ending up with a Liz Truss 2.0.

Susan McArthur
Tonbridge, Kent

Victorian chocolate

SIR – Chocolates more than 100 years old (Letters, July 8) still survive in their original tins all over the country.

For New Year 1900, Queen Victoria sent 120,000 tins of chocolate to the troops fighting the Boers in South Africa. The colourful tins had "South Africa 1900" and her effigy and cypher on the front, with the message: "I wish you a happy new year, Victoria RI".

Many soldiers sent them home as souvenirs rather than consume the chocolate on the veldt.

Justin Davies
Cambridge

SIR – We visited some friends who kindly offered us a drink. My husband requested a pink gin. In came the drinks and our host brought out the bottle of Angostura Bitters that had been added to the gin. He said he hoped it was okay, then showed us the bottle. Instead of the usual printed wrapper, the paper stated: "Temporary Wrapper due to Enemy Action".

He enjoyed the drink anyway.

Angela Clark
Tonbridge, Kent

programme's daily racing tips. As various eminent persons, such as Jilly Cooper, Michael Owen and Ben Wallace, have pointed out in a letter of protest, the decision was "unnecessarily puritanical". It is also slightly unpatriotic, since racing is a sport at which Britain excels. Betting on racing is one of the few pastimes on which we lose money enjoyably.

In the past, I have harboured a slight objection to *Today's* racing tips. It was not that they were pretty bad – that is entirely traditional. It is that they allowed the BBC to cover the sport itself less in other ways.

I now see that I was wrong. The removal of the tips is not making room for fuller coverage of racing. Instead, it is making yet more time for football, which is already covered much more extensively than a Radio 4 audience wants.

The BBC's lack of interest in racing is a subset of its metropolitan approach. Of its nature, the sport cannot thrive in cities. British racecourses are objects of local pride, well distributed over the country, as their evocative names – Market Rasen, Musselburgh, Down Royal, Newton Abbot, Bangor-on-Dee – remind us. It is also a sport which unites the British Isles. Racing has done more for Anglo-Irish relations than has power-sharing at Stormont.

This column's tip (in the non-betting sense of the word) is for the new Government to capitalise on its initial moral authority and gently complain to the BBC. But I fear the odds on this happening are very long.

Puzzles, Mind Games & Telegraph Toughie



KAKURO

To solve kakuro you must enter a number between 1 and 9 in the empty squares without repeating a digit. The clues are the numbers on the black squares and are the sum of the solution numbers. The clue pointers indicate the direction of the answers. A block of two squares with a clue of 3 will solve as 2,1 and a 5 will produce 4,1 or 2,3. A 4 can only be 1,3, never 2,2. *Solution tomorrow.*

GENTLE NO 5076

CODEWORDS

Numbers are substituted for letters in this crossword grid. In the smaller key grid some letters are solved. Use these as clues to complete your first word. This will solve more letters that you can then enter in the grids. *Solutions tomorrow.*

For today's right-hand codewords solutions call 0905 757 0131. For up to five extra letter clues call 0905 757 0130 or text DTCCODE (leaving no spaces) to 64343. Calls cost £1 per minute, plus network access charge; texts cost £1, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Services open Mon - Fri, 9pm - 11pm. Helpline 0333 202 3390.

Notes

NO 3301 DADA

- Across**
- Grotesque misrepresentation of story, it following battle (11)
 - One cycling qualification? (5)
 - Sick when crossing the Channel after poison spread (9)
 - Begrudge going into work not far down the road (9)
 - Pals initially meeting somewhere in Bedfordshire briefly - it's a small world! (5)
 - Really waterlogged, old township (6)
 - Confusing arrangement, lot sorted out, very nice work! (8)
 - Flower in a container like that (8)
 - Like winger Jack's behind (6)
 - Woody in love with a doll (5)
 - Forgotten commercial about first group? (9)
 - Frost, say, on web's diviner outside (9)
 - Trouble caused by those kicking off as governor general releases orders (5)
 - Plant in Vietnam, soil abroad (4-2-1-4)
- Down**
- Maybe pensioner consumed by apartheid looked towards heaven (5)
 - Expression of rank American artist (7)
 - Detached, connected with small particle (6)
 - Mister Charles the singer, approximately within range (5,3)
 - Tramp tickling a priest (7)
 - Supportive of apostate, so depraved - suggest we salute? (7,1,5)
 - Happen to check temperature on time following fever and pain locally? (8)
 - Republican Party that's developing? Alternatively, policy with high turnover of staff? (9,4)
 - Slaying monster (8)
 - European fills in application after South African (8)
 - Sweetheart stops to cross (7)
 - Weapon raised high over head of mugger (7)
 - Blunder a week arising with terminus of London Underground network (6)
 - Provider of warmth knocked back when drinking, say (5)

KILLER SUDOKU

Your clues are the caged numbers that represent the sum of the numbers within the cage. As in standard sudoku, each 3 x 3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9. *Solution tomorrow.*

GENTLE

SUDOKU

To solve this puzzle each 3 x 3 box, each row and also each column must contain all the numbers from 1 to 9. There are numerous strategies to help you solve sudoku. *Solutions tomorrow.*

REGULAR NO 6646

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

TOUGH NO 6646

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

Sudoku Solution For today's tough sudoku solution call 0905 757 0136. Calls cost £1 per minute, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Services open Mon - Fri, 9pm - 11pm. Helpline 0333 202 3390.

PANAGRAM

Create words of four letters or more, always using the centre letter. Proper nouns and plurals are not allowed, and you can only use each letter once per word. Can you find the nine-letter Panagram? *Solution tomorrow.*



Up to 8 words - Word Finder, 9 - Wordsmith, 18 - Word Wizard, 27 - Word Master, 36 - Word Genius, 45 - Word Perfect

Toughie No 3300

Help with clues
Single clues 0905 757 0126. All Across/Down clues 0905 757 0127. Calls cost £1/minute, plus network access charge. You must be 18 or over and have the bill payer's permission. Service open Mon-Fri, 9pm - 11pm. Helpline 0333 202 3390.

ANAGRAMS

Each of the anagrams below spells out a term relating to rail travel. *Solution tomorrow.*

OUT LEER NUN
TEMPT MACRON
REPLACES GIN

MIND GYM

NO 4362
Start on the left with the given number and work your way across following the instructions in each cell. Target time: 30 seconds. *Solution below.*

BEGINNER	24	3/4 OF THIS	x5	x3.5	-171	HALVE IT	+9	X BY ITSELF	-25	2/3 OF THIS	ANSWER
INTERMEDIATE	11	x14	TRIPLE IT	-334	7/8 OF THIS	75% OF THIS	5/6 OF THIS	x3.2	-81	-11	ANSWER
ADVANCED	168	+7	X BY ITSELF	3/8 OF THIS	-141	x1.8	60% OF THIS	-284	+13	x9	ANSWER

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TRAIN TRACKS

Lay down tracks to allow a train to travel from A to B. Only use straight and curved rails and the track cannot cross itself. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each column and row. *Solution tomorrow.*

MINI SUDOKU

Fill in the grid in such a way that every row and column and every 2 x 3 box contains the numbers 1-6. *Solution tomorrow.*

GENTLE NO 4129

			3	6
	2			
	5			
	6		2	
		1		
4	3	5		

PLUSWORD

NO 779
Solve the crossword, then use letters in the shaded squares to complete the additional PlusWord. A letter in a green square appears in the same column in the PlusWord as it does in the crossword; a letter in a yellow square appears in the PlusWord, but in a different column than it does in the crossword. There is only one possible answer for the PlusWord; it may be that the PlusWord contains letters that aren't found in the crossword, but it can always be worked out logically without guessing. *Solution tomorrow.*

Across

- Pointed weapon
- Brusque
- Sharp; like some angles
- Speedy
- Admittance

Down

- Hard look, as Paddington might give
- Type of nut
- Discharge violently, as a volcano
- Up and about; sitar (anag.)
- Thin, as a voice

WORD LADDER

Change just one letter to go from the top word to the bottom word. Each step must be a valid word and you cannot change the order of the letters. There are clues below for each rung, but they are not in order. For an extra challenge, try to complete the puzzle without using the clues. *Solution tomorrow.*

ATTACK, BROTHER, THINKER, MONETARY UNIT, MUSTELINE, PEEL

Play PlusWord for free online at telegraph.co.uk/pw or scan the QR code

THE SOLUTIONS

Yesterday's solutions

Sudoku Regular and Tough No 6645

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

PlusWord No 778

O	S	C	A	R
R	E	E	V	E
B	I	D	E	N
I	N	E	R	T
T	E	S	T	S

Killer Sudoku

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

Train Tracks

Mini Sudoku No 4128

1	3	6	2	5	4
5	2	4	3	1	6
2	6	5	4	3	1
3	4	1	5	6	2
4	1	3	6	2	5
6	5	2	1	4	3

Codewords 1 and 2

K	V	I	Z	T	L	A	M	J	E	H	X	N	
W	U	F	G	B	R	D	C	P	Y	O	S	O	
H	N	V	I	M	S	O	U	L	F	A	J	P	
X	Z	B	E	I	T	K	C	Y	G	D	W	R	O

Kakuro No 5075

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

Today's Mind Gym

Beginner: 26 Intermediate: 13 Advanced: 171

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Business



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DOW JONES 39344.79 -31.08 (-0.08pc)	FTSE 250 20798.32 +11.67 (+0.06pc)	FTSE All Share 4481.83 -4.25 (-0.09pc)	€€ Rate 1.1843 Change +0.19c	BRENT CRUDE \$85.75 (September) -0.79 (-0.91pc)	Back to black Why the oil giants are beating a hasty retreat over investment in renewable energy projects Ben Wright Page 21
FTSE All Share Yield 3.67 No Change	FTSE Eurotop 100 4089.29 -0.27 (-0.01pc)	Nikkei 225 40780.70 -131.67 (-0.32pc)	EURO STOXX 50 4969.83 -9.56 (-0.19pc)	S&P 500 5572.85 +5.66 (+0.10pc)	Nasdaq 18403.74 -50.98 (-0.28pc)
52WkHigh 8474.41 52WkLow 7215.76 Yield 3.73pc +0.01 P/E Ratio 13.47 -0.05	52WkHigh 40077.40 52WkLow 32327.20	Page 22		Page 22	

French pull out of race for UK mini nukes

EDF submits no design for SMR by deadline, leaving five to vie for contract to build British power station

By Matt Oliver

FRENCH state energy giant EDF has pulled out of the competition to build mini-nuclear reactors in Britain, as it takes its blueprints back to the drawing board.

The company had been vying with five others to win government support for its small modular reactor (SMR)

design, with two winners set to be chosen by the end of the year.

But with submissions for the latest stage of the competition due at 4pm yesterday, it is understood that EDF put forward no design and has effectively now withdrawn from the running.

The decision leaves five companies in the competition: Rolls-Royce, GE Hitachi, Westinghouse, Holtec Britain and Nuscale Power, all of which are understood to have met the deadline.

Great British Nuclear (GBN), the government agency handling the competition, will now seek to whittle down the list to four companies before picking two winners who will then be awarded

contracts to build the first demonstrator SMRs in Britain.

SMRs hold the promise of being far cheaper and quicker to build than large nuclear power stations, because of their modular, factory-made designs.

Labour has publicly supported SMRs but has yet to spell out whether it will follow the same timescales set out by the previous Conservative government – or whether it could aim to go faster.

The party has vowed to make Britain's power grid produce net zero carbon emissions by 2030, with nuclear power expected to play a crucial role.

EDF's exit from the competition comes after it announced last week that

it would halt internal work on new innovations for SMRs and switch to using existing technologies in designs.

The decision followed feedback from potential European customers who were concerned about costs. EDF has said it will now "evolve the design" to "offer better conditions for success by facilitating technical feasibility".

A Whitehall source said EDF's decision to drop out of the UK's SMR competition was not the result of any feedback from GBN but rather a consequence of the French company having to rethink its technology.

It comes after warnings from bidders, including Rolls-Royce, that there

should be no further delays to the competition process, which was originally due to be wrapped up by this summer.

Under current timelines, GBN is expected to announce the winners before the end of this year and award contracts and sites at some point during 2025.

Tufan Erginbilgic, chief executive of Rolls-Royce, warned that Britain risked losing its "first mover advantage" if there were further delays in the wake of last week's election and change of government.

A spokesman for GBN declined to comment yesterday. An EDF spokesman said: "EDF

remains committed to supporting the development of nuclear in the UK.

"We are looking at the option for further lifetime extensions for our existing stations, building large-scale new nuclear stations at Hinkley and Sizewell and see great opportunity for a further large-scale station at Wylfa.

"Our sites at Heysham, Hartlepool and Bradwell offer land, grid and rail connections, a skilled workforce and supportive communities which make them compelling locations for small and advanced modular reactors.

"We will continue to work positively with the UK Government to deliver a new nuclear future."



Wheel deal Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor, visited the Fleischmann organic farm in Markt Erlbach in Bavaria yesterday. It came after Chancellor Scholz spoke on the phone with the newly elected Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer.

Summer too soon for rate cut, says BoE policymaker

By Szu Ping Chan

BRITAIN'S jobs market is too strong to start cutting interest rates this summer, a top Bank of England official has said.

In a blow to Sir Keir Starmer's hopes of lower borrowing costs by August, Jonathan Haskel said he remained concerned that the labour market "continues to be tight", which could fuel stronger pay growth and inflation.

In the first public comments from a Bank official since the general election was called in May, the Imperial College professor and member of the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) said he would "rather hold rates" steady at 5.25pc than lower them too quickly.

Rates have been on hold at their 16-year high for almost a year, even though inflation fell back to its 2pc target in May. Some economists have been calling on the Bank to cut rates for months, although Bank forecasts suggest price rises are likely to pick up in the second half of this year. In a speech due to be delivered at King's College, London, Prof Haskel will say that "inflation will remain above target for quite some time". That is despite "considerable encouraging signs" that the economy is continuing to cool.

Money markets are pricing in about a 65pc chance that interest rates will be cut in August. Prof Haskel, who is one of the Bank's most hawkish policymakers, said: "The labour market continues to be tight, and I worry it is still impaired. I would rather hold rates until there is more certainty that underlying inflationary pressures have subsided."

He voted to leave interest rates on hold at the Bank of England's last meeting in June. His comments today suggest he is not likely to opt for a cut in August, which would be his last meeting on the MPC.

Hope for scrapped parts of HS2 as Hendy becomes rail minister

By Christopher Jasper

SIR KEIR STARMER'S choice of a leading advocate of HS2 as rail minister has stoked industry hopes that scrapped parts of the project may be revived.

While the primary task facing Lord Hendy, whose appointment was announced yesterday, will be to oversee Labour's renationalisation of train operators, he's also likely to prove a strong advocate for expanding the network.

Lord Hendy, who previously worked closely with Boris Johnson and sat as a crossbench peer, last year criticised

Rishi Sunak's decision to halt HS2 at Birmingham, choosing to speak out despite his position as chairman of the state-owned track operator Network Rail.

His appointment as rail minister may represent the best chance of saving elements of the scheme, including a link from the Midlands to Crewe that would allow full formations of HS2 trains to travel at top speed through to Manchester, leading figures in the sector said.

Henri Murison, chief executive at the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, said that Lord Hendy, who sits on his compa-

ny's board, will be able to set out the economic case for completing more of the original HS2 network to colleagues rather than having to draw on expertise from elsewhere.

He said: "Rishi Sunak committed to running HS2 trains into Manchester when he scrapped phase two of HS2.

"But that can't happen without building more of the line. Peter Hendy will be able to explain why that is the case, and the costs and benefits of putting this right."

Mr Sunak withdrew backing for phase two of HS2 after costs for the first phase alone surged to more than

'People will be delighted by having someone in government who knows how the railway works'

£50bn. Mr Murison said that the railway industry is not asking for more cash and that the extension of the high-speed line further north could be privately funded.

He said that, having led Network Rail, Lord Hendy, 76, is also well placed to oversee the creation of Great British Railways, which will take over

train operators as existing contracts expire and merge them with the track firm.

Lord Hendy's other main challenge will be to simplify the railway's ticketing system, something he did in London while serving as transport commissioner under mayors Ken Livingstone and later Johnson.

Richard Bowker, the former chairman of the Strategic Rail Authority and former chief executive of National Express and Virgin Trains, said that Lord Hendy is regarded as one of the most knowledgeable and able people in the railway sector. He said: "Peo-

ple right across the industry are going to be delighted by this appointment, and having someone in government who truly understands how the railway works."

The appointment of Lord Hendy extends Sir Keir's policy of recruiting specialists to ministerial roles in a so-called government of all the talents.

While known for his railway expertise, Lord Hendy began his career managing bus networks as a graduate trainee with London Transport, and is known for owning two Routemaster doubledeckers which he regularly drives.

Marston's calls time on brewing beer

By Eir Nolsoe

ONE of Britain's best-known pub companies has pulled out of brewing after selling the remainder of its beer business to Carlsberg for £206m.

Marston's, which brewed beer for 186 years, said on Monday that it had agreed to offload the outstanding 40pc stake in its brewery business as part of a push to focus on pubs. Money received from

the Danish drinks giant will be used to help Marston's pay down its debts, which have been racking up millions of pounds in interest.

Founded in Burton upon Trent in 1834 by John Marston, the company is best-known for its range of ales, such as Hobgoblin and Pedigree. However, in recent years it has moved increasingly into craft lagers and has not brewed beer independently for four years.

Marston's said the sale would enable it to bring its net debt below £1bn "in an accelerated time frame", reducing its interest costs by around £18m annually.

Marston's has worked with Carlsberg since 2020 as part of the Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company (CMBC) joint venture. The deal will lead to it relinquishing its 40pc stake in CMBC.

Ben Marlow: Page 21



Business

How France's pensioners powered the Left to victory

Older voters endorsed Jean-Luc Mélenchon's call to arms over raising the retirement age, writes Eir Nolsøe

When Jean-Luc Mélenchon responded to France's controversial pension reforms last year, his message was simple. President Emmanuel Macron may have won the battle, but he had yet to win the war. The hard-Left firebrand's backlash against the proposal to lift the country's state pension age from 62 to 64 emerged in a speech released on YouTube last March.

During that, the socialist leader said "every hour that passes" must be spent fighting Macron's policy, which had sparked fierce protests across the country. "There is no budgetary reason to take such a decision," Mr Mélenchon told viewers online. "There is no deficit, and there won't be one."

"Millions of people understand this and don't see why they should make the sacrifice of two extra years of work given to society. And they are right."

Nearly a year and a half has passed since Mélenchon's cry to keep up the fight, although much has changed. France's public finances are looking even more unsustainable, for one, with rating agencies and the European Commission issuing warnings about the country's 5.5pc deficit.

But that did not stop voters from endorsing Mélenchon and the Left-wing coalition en masse during the parliamentary elections on Sunday, which came out on top ahead of Marine Le Pen's Nationally Rally and Macron's ruling party.

The socialist veteran, 72, heads the hard-Left party, France Unbowed, which makes up the largest chunk of a coalition of Left-wing parties called the New Popular Front.

The result prompted a warning from Bruno Le Maire, the finance minister, who said France faces a period of "economic decline" that could result in a "financial crisis". However, for France's riotous pensioners this means there is now a route to revoke Macron's detested reforms.

"It could happen because this is basically the only thing the far Left and the far Right can agree on," says Maxime Darmet, a Paris-based economist at insurer Allianz Trade.

France's state pension age is still low compared with other large European

countries. This is despite reforms pushed through by Macron last year, which will raise the state pension age from 62 to 64 as of 2027.

It had last been raised from 60 to 62 by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2010.

Many people approaching retirement elsewhere in Europe will look at France's retirees with envy. Germany is in the process of raising it from 65 to 67, while British retirees have to wait until age 66. Danes already have to work until 67, with gradual increases to 69 pencilled in by 2035. Under the current system, the Danish state pension age is on track to hit 74 by 2070. The importance of reforming France's generous pensions is clear when looking at the numbers.

United Nations projects suggest the number of people over 60 is on course to rise by about six million over the coming decades. The size of France's deficit also took the government by surprise earlier this year, meaning painful spending decisions are crucial to repairing public finances.

If Mélenchon has it his way however, pensions would be made more generous rather than less.

"In the manifesto, they actually want to bring the state pension age back down to 60," warns Darmet.

"It is also about the number of years you need to work to be entitled to a full pension. Macron's reform is 43 years but both the hard Left and hard Right want to bring it down to 40 years."

Depending on how far they go, the cost could range from €10bn (£8.4bn) to as much as €60bn, says Darmet.

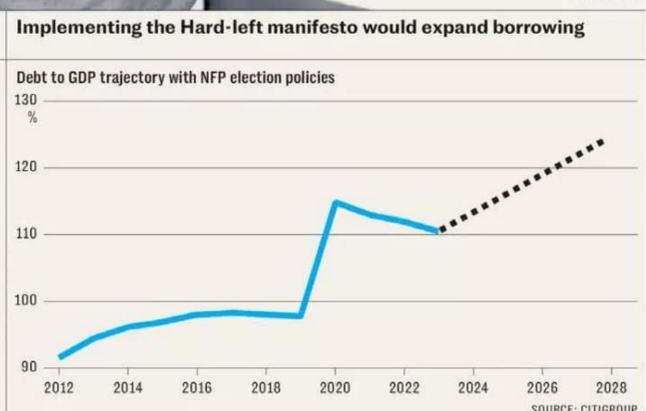
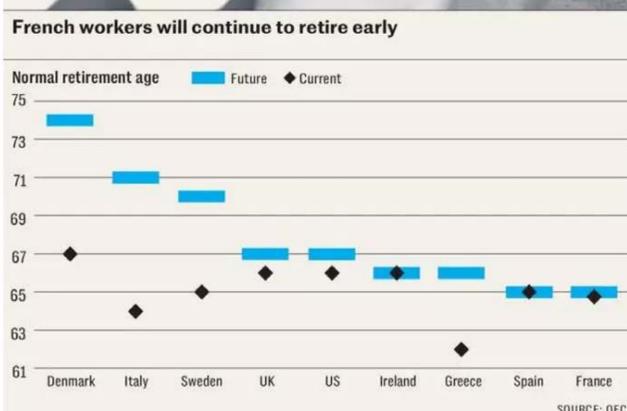
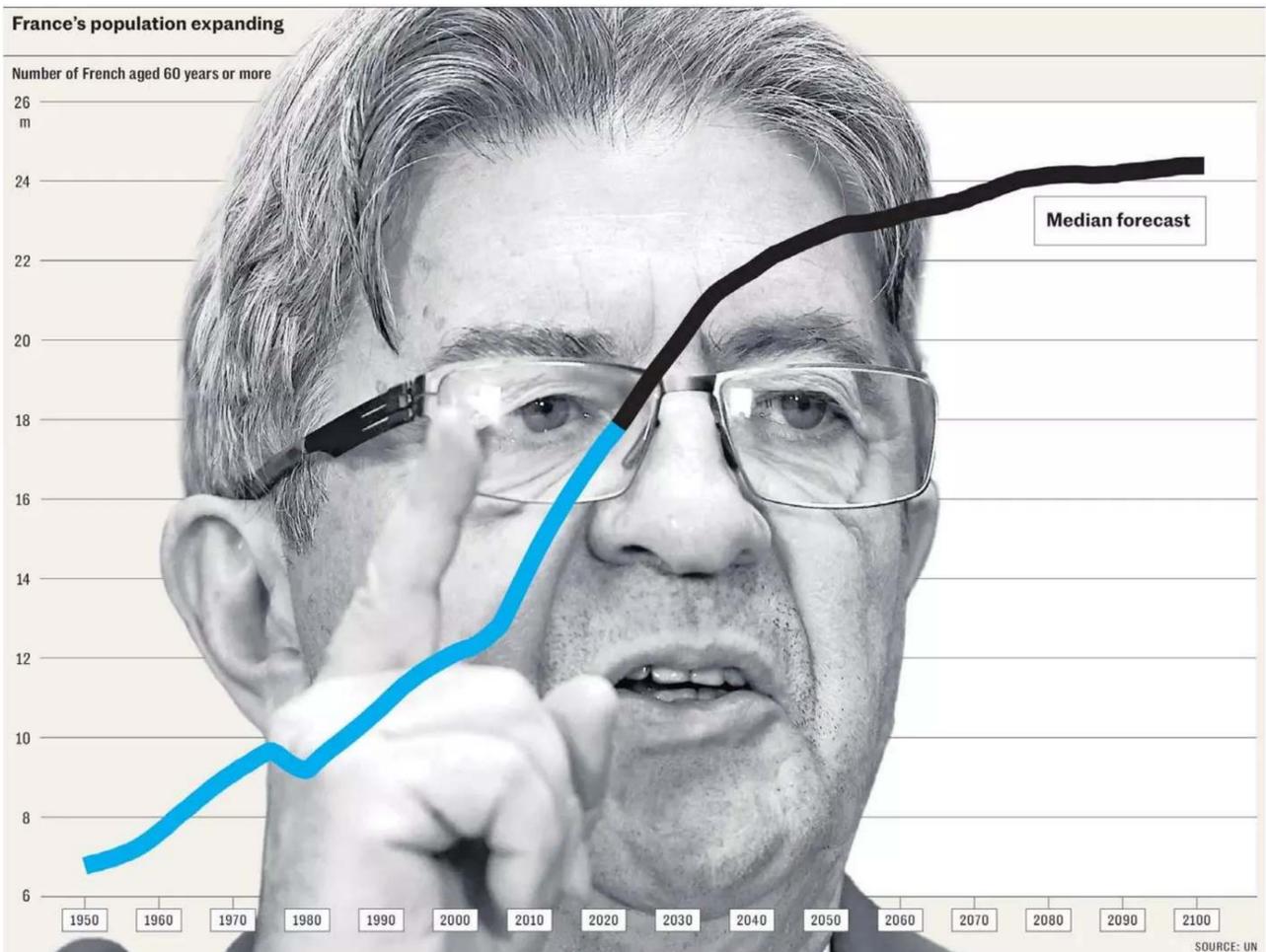
This would result in a "huge fiscal hole", he adds, as €70bn of savings already need to be made by 2027.

"I don't know how it would be financed, to be honest," says Darmet. "You find yourself potentially in a very difficult situation. The financial markets will not like this at all. They would react very, very badly."

For now, markets have taken solace in the fact that none of the main political factions have been able to score a majority. Mélenchon has the highest number of seats, while Macron's faction came second. Le Pen's hard-Right came a surprising third.

"We have a hung parliament despite the fact the Left-wing came first," says Sabrina Khanniche from Pictet Asset Management. "There is no absolute majority, which should impede the implementation of the manifesto, which is fiscally [irresponsible]."

She warns it would be concerning if the hard Left tries to revoke the reforms. "Before the election, the fiscal position of France was already weak," she says. "France needs favourable borrowing costs to contain the



'France needs favourable borrowing costs to contain the trajectory of the public debt'

trajectory of the public debt." As the second-largest eurozone economy, Khanniche says France needs to commit to "strict fiscal measures" to get its debts under control. According to her, bond traders have long been too generous in how much they charge France in interest. "This election will be a turning point," she says.

The premium charged by traders in lending to France over Germany, which has far lower debt levels, has risen slightly since Macron called the snap election. It comes as rating agency S&P warned yesterday that the next government's approach to public finances and reforms would be "key to determining France's creditworthiness". The agency, which downgraded France in May,

said its rating "would come under pressure" if growth disappoints or the government "cannot reduce its large budget deficit".

"We're going to see a lot of gridlock and instability," says Paul Danis, the head of asset allocation at RBC Brewin Dolphin. "But being the biggest bloc, [the Left] will likely demand new spending commitments from President Macron as part of a deal to form a new government."

Any large giveaways would upset the bond market and lead to higher borrowing costs, he says, particularly given that France has already seen its debt pile rise to 113pc of GDP.

This is a concern shared by Darmet, who goes further: "The one thing we know for certain is that the fiscal

'The bottom line is the debt ratio is going to continue to increase within the next few years'

sustainability is worse than before the election. It has clearly deteriorated.

"No party is now willing to deliver substantial consolidation in the next few years. The best-case scenario would be a technocratic government that managed to keep the deficit at current levels." However, even with a stable leader in charge, economists are not hopeful that the French economy will regain its footing any time soon.

"The bottom line is the debt ratio is going to continue to increase within the next few years," says Darmet. "I don't see any other possibility."

"So the big question is when do financial markets force the government into consolidation?"

"Or put another way, when do we have a Liz Truss moment in France?"

Four-day week saves money and improves services, claims council

By Adam Mawardi

THE first British local authority to test four-day-week working has claimed it results in better public services and is asking the Government to let the experiment continue.

South Cambridgeshire district council claims its controversial 15-month experiment to give staff a shorter week on full pay has led to quicker planning decisions and reduced staff turnover.

The Liberal Democrat-controlled authority introduced the four-day week

trial as part of efforts to improve services by recruiting permanently for hard-to-fill posts rather than using more expensive agency workers.

The experiment required staff to carry out 100pc of their weekly tasks while working one day less but still receiving their full salary. It ran between January 2023 and last April.

Despite pressure from unions, Labour has yet to say if it will allow councils to continue such arrangements and South Cambridgeshire's findings come in the teeth of repeated

Conservative government criticism of the four-day policy in the local authority sector. Lee Rowley, the former local government minister, last year ordered the council to end the trial "immediately", claiming the short week would not provide value to taxpayers.

Michael Gove, former levelling up secretary, warned underperforming councils in October that they were "on notice" and risked financial penalties if they did not ditch four-day weeks.

An independent report by the Universities of Cambridge and Salford into

22

Council services (out of 24) that were found to improve or remain stable in four-day-week South Cambridgeshire

the trial yesterday revealed that 22 out of its 24 services either improved or remained the same.

Areas found to have improved included call answering times at the

council's contact centre, timeliness of planning decisions, how long it takes to process benefits claims, and speed of emergency repairs to council homes.

John Williams, the lead council member for resources, said: "We know we cannot compete on salary alone and have needed to find bold new ways of tackling our recruitment and retention issues." The report shows that a shorter week would deliver £371,500 in yearly cost savings, mainly through permanently filling 10 hard-to-fill roles. The council also recruited more than

130 new staff, of which three quarters said they were influenced by the four-day week trial.

A separate independent health and wellbeing survey by Robertson Cooper also found that more staff are intended to stay longer at the South Cambridgeshire district council, reducing staff turnover and high vacancy rates.

Mike Davey, the leader of Cambridge city council, which shares planning services with South Cambridgeshire, said: "It seems to be a win-win-win situation."

Buyout barons plot escape from Britain amid tax fears

By Michael Bow

PRIVATE equity executives are stepping up plans to leave Britain over concerns Labour's proposed tax crackdown will hammer lucrative payouts.

City advisers have said buyout experts are planning to acquire property abroad and set up funds overseas in response to Labour's attempt to overhaul the "carried interest" regime.

Rachel Reeves, the Chancellor, wants to close a tax loophole that allows private equity managers to pay capital gains tax of 28c on profits, rather than an income tax of 45pc.

Mike Hinchliffe, head of private equity at Addleshaw Goddard, said executives were now giving "serious consideration" to moving overseas after Labour's landslide victory.

He said: "There's no question that fund managers have started to ask for feasibility studies about relocating. The flight risk is real." Private equity managers generally receive 20pc of the profits earned by a fund once performance reaches a certain threshold.

Labour has claimed that closing the "loophole" and taxing fund managers at 45pc would raise £565m by 2029.

In its manifesto, the party said private equity was the "only industry where performance-related pay is treated as capital gains", claiming the £565m

raised would fund 8,500 new mental health staff.

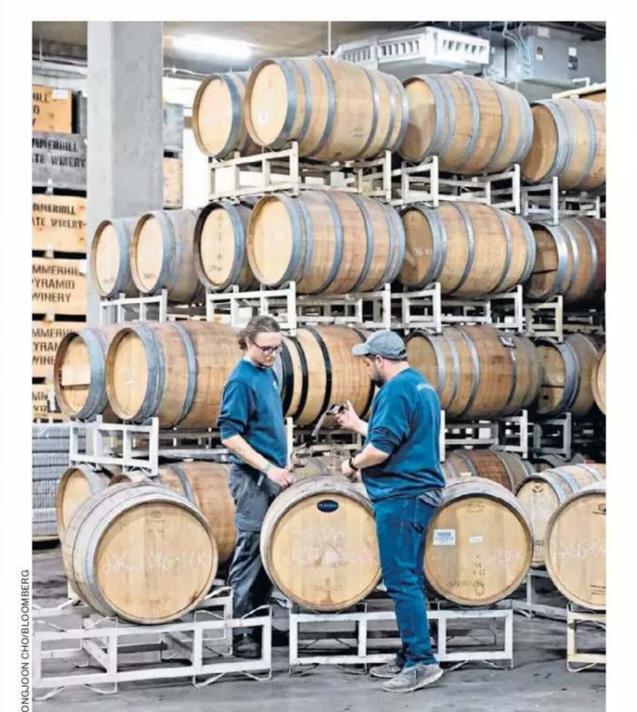
Jason Clatworthy, a tax partner at Alvarez & Marsal, said that more private equity managers had been enquiring about whether Labour could backdate some of the proposed tax changes.

PE managers setting up new funds were thinking twice about basing themselves in London he said, and many executives had stepped up plans to buy property abroad.

"There's a swell of people who are consistently saying, 'I'm ready to go if this goes the wrong way and they double my tax rate,'" he said. "They feel unsettled in terms of the new Government's approach to taxing people. That has picked up after the election."

Italy, Spain, Portugal and Switzerland have all been flagged as key beneficiaries if Labour pushes through the changes. In Italy, many private equity managers can qualify for a flat annual tax of €100,000 (£84,000) regardless of income.

Marco Ceretti, a partner at tax firm Maisto e Associati in Milan, said: "We've noticed an increase in people from London since January looking to relocate to Italy for tax purposes and that increase has gone faster since March, which coincided with the announcement by the previous government to repeal non-dom rules."



Barrels of fun Sampling oak-aged wine at Summerhill Pyramid Winery in Canada's Okanagan Valley, Kelowna.

Chilly June keeps shoppers away from the high street

By Hannah Boland

COOLER temperatures dealt a blow to the high street last month, as new figures revealed a dip in UK retail sales, driven by lower demand for clothes and DIY tools.

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) said retail sales "performed poorly" last month, down 0.2pc on last year, after the colder start to the month held back consumer spending.

Non-food sales were down 2.9pc over the three months to the end of June compared to last year.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the BRC, said: "Sales of weather-sensitive categories, such as clothing and footwear, as well as DIY and gardening, were hit particularly hard, especially compared to the surge in spending during last June's heatwave."

Higher demand for televisions and sound systems ahead of the Euros football competition this year was not enough to offset the sales blow.

Met Office figures showed temperatures last month were about half the level of June 2023, and were about 2C below average for the time of year.

This came as northerly winds brought cool Arctic air across the UK.

The figures were released as a separate report from Barclays showed card spending slumped for the first time

since February 2021 last month. Both sets of figures will be seen as a sign of the challenges facing Sir Keir Starmer as he pushes to grow the economy.

Consumers spent 0.6pc less on their cards in June compared to last year, Barclays said, with supermarket spending slipping 2.6pc in June and garden centre sales down 12.7pc.

Labour had pledged to drive economic growth while on the campaign trail. Yesterday, Rachel Reeves, the

0.2pc

The fall in retail sales in June after the colder start to the month held back consumer spending

Chancellor, said there was "no time to waste" in lifting Britain's growth.

Linda Ellett, UK head of consumer retail and leisure at KPMG, said: "Summer will finally have arrived but it did little to persuade consumers to hit the shops, with retail sales flatlining at 0.2pc in June."

"Despite pressure on household finances easing, with petrol and energy costs and shop price inflation continuing to fall, consumers remain reluctant to take the brakes off their spending."

Retail veteran about-turns on joining Asda

Ex-Tesco and Morrisons executive Gary Mills pulls out of senior position as sales slump at supermarket

By Luke Barr

A FORMER Tesco and Morrisons executive has backed out of a move to join Asda, days after being appointed by the troubled supermarket.

Gary Mills had been announced internally as the supermarket's new interim retail director last month, although it is understood he has since changed his mind.

It comes amid a flurry of departures at the top of Asda, with Mark Simon

recently leaving as chief transformation officer and Paul Gillow departing his role as commercial director.

Iceland's group buying director Andrew Staniland is understood to have been appointed to head up Asda's fresh and frozen food division, replacing Mr Gillow next year.

The changes form part of a management overhaul being pursued by Asda co-owner Mohsin Issa as he attempts to arrest an alarming slump in sales.

Last month, Asda was revealed to be the only major supermarket where sales were falling.

According to figures from industry analysis firm Kantar, sales at Asda were down 4pc in the 12 weeks to June 9. It means the gap has widened between Asda and its larger rivals Tesco and



Asda co-owner Mohsin Issa is pursuing a management overhaul at the troubled supermarket

Sainsbury's. Asda's market share slipped from 13.7pc to 12.8pc last year, according to Kantar.

The slump follows years of pressure on Asda, with the supermarket struggling to lure shoppers since its £6.8bn debt-fuelled takeover by the billionaire Issa brothers and private equity firm TDR in 2021.

MPs have questioned whether high debt financing costs are making Asda

less competitive and hampering its ability to lower prices. The supermarket has, at the same time, been racing to find areas where it can cut costs. The Telegraph revealed last month that Asda was planning to outsource more than 100 staff to an India-based supplier.

It said the changes were part of its plans to overhaul its IT systems to "set Asda up for long-term success" and had been a "difficult decision" that it was consulting over. Asda is also exploring ways to shake up its workforce.

Plans to alter the working week pattern for managers were also recently shelved amid a backlash from staff.

Workers claimed plans for a four-day working week had left them feeling exhausted. The flexible working arrangements had been launched to

stamp out a revolt among disgruntled store managers but staff were left unhappy with the changes.

Store staff involved in the pilot worked a 44-hour week over four days instead of five for the same pay.

The new hours, which were trialled at 20 Asda stores, led to complaints from staff that the longer shifts were "physically demanding" and they were exhausted on their day off.

Others argued that it was more difficult to meet the earlier start and later finish times of the four-day week shift while parents said it created "difficulties with childcare and school drop-offs and pick-ups".

Asda said a new pilot involving working 39 hours over five days had proved more popular and will run until the end

of the year. Employees will not receive any reduction in pay despite the shorter hours. Mr Issa has been managing Asda since 2021 but the supermarket has also been forced to step up efforts to find a new chief executive to replace him.

The supermarket is touting a package of between £8m and £10m for Mr Issa's replacement in an effort to lure a top executive to the post.

However, The Telegraph revealed that some retail bosses had raised questions over how involved Mohsin would be in the business once he stepped down from the chief executive role and had ruled themselves out until his position was clarified.

An Asda spokesman said: "We can confirm that Mark Simpson has left the business today by mutual agreement."

Current affairs

Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, and Narendra Modi, the prime minister of India, travel together in an electric car during their meeting at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence near Moscow, yesterday. Mr Modi is making his first visit to Russia since the Kremlin invaded Ukraine.



SPUTNIK/SERGEI BOBLYOV/POOL VIA REUTERS

Paramount agrees £22bn merger deal with Skydance

By Chris Price

HOLLYWOOD giant Paramount Global has agreed a \$28bn (£21.8bn) merger with Skydance Media in a deal that brings together two of the world's biggest film studios.

Under the terms of the deal, Paramount's non-executive chair, Shari Redstone will sell her family's con-

trolling stake in the group, ending their involvement in the company founded by her grandfather in 1936.

Paramount is one of Hollywood's oldest film studios, having produced cinema classics such as *The Godfather*, *Titanic* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, as well as the *Mission: Impossible* series. It also owns TV networks CBS, Comedy Central, Nickelodeon and MTV.

Skydance Media is an independent film studio launched by billionaire David Ellison in 2010 and is backed by US private equity groups including RedBird. It has produced blockbusters including *Top Gun: Maverick*, *Star Trek: Into Darkness*, and *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back*.

Ms Redstone said: "Given the changes in the industry, we want to fortify Paramount for the future while ensuring that content remains king."

"Our hope is that the Skydance transaction will enable Paramount's continued success in this rapidly changing environment."

The companies agreed to a two-step process in which Skydance and its deal partners will acquire National Amusements, which holds the Redstone family's controlling stake in Paramount, for \$2.4bn in cash.

Skydance will subsequently merge with Paramount, offering \$4.5bn in cash or stock to shareholders and providing an additional \$1.5bn for Paramount's balance sheet.

Mr Ellison, the 41-year-old tech scion who founded Skydance, will become chairman and chief executive of the new Paramount. Jeff Shell, former chief executive of NBCUniversal, will be its new president.

Paramount has shed nearly \$17 billion in value since late 2019, as its traditional television business has eroded faster than its Paramount+ streaming service could turn a profit.



Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones in the 1981 Paramount film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*

Ocado share boost from robotic warehouse

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

SHARES in online supermarket Ocado surged almost 6pc after it revealed plans to build its third robotic warehouse in Japan as part of its tie-up with Aeon in the country.

The FTSE 250 listed group – which first struck a partnership deal with Japanese retail company Aeon in 2019 – said the new site in Kuki-Miyashiro will go live in 2027.

It comes after Aeon's first robotic warehouse opened in the Kanto region of Japan a year ago, powered by Ocado's technology, with a second due to launch in Hachioji in 2026.

The pair plan to open further robotic warehouses across the country as Aeon expands its online grocery delivery offering.

Tim Steiner, chief executive of Ocado

Group, hailed the latest announcement as an "exciting moment for Aeon and Ocado's relationship as we deepen our already strong partnership".

He added: "Ocado is helping Aeon Next to provide a seamless online gro-

6pc

Surge in Ocado share value on news of the new warehouse. It had seen its shares decline by 50pc so far this year

cery experience to customers across Tokyo. We can't wait to bring this service to even more customers in the years to come."

Shares in Ocado lifted 5pc in early trading yesterday. It gives investors

some cheer after Ocado shares slumped in June when Canadian supermarket giant Sobeys paused the launch of its new Canadian warehouse sited in Vancouver.

Sobeys and Ocado also agreed to end their mutual exclusivity agreement in what was seen as a blow to the overseas rollout of the UK firm's Ocado Smart Platform.

Ocado shares have plummeted by more than 50pc so far this year – a rapid decline which has seen the retailer recently booted out of the top flight FTSE 100 Index.

Independent retail analyst Nick Bubb said: "Ocado shareholders haven't had much good news recently, in terms of the much-vaunted overseas licensing deals, but they will be pleased to hear today that the partnership with mighty Aeon in Japan is pushing ahead."

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The Telegraph

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CAPE VERDE, THE CANARY ISLANDS & MOROCCO

A voyage from Cape Verde to Gibraltar aboard the MS Hebridean Sky
17th to 29th April 2025



Join us aboard the wonderfully comfortable MS Hebridean Sky for a journey that will take us from the Cape Verde archipelago to Gibraltar with explorations in the Canary Islands, where we will visit some of the lesser-known islands, and some enchanting places in Morocco along the way. Our itinerary has been carefully designed so that we can take the opportunity to escape to warmer climes and fully appreciate the fascinating history, dramatic beauty and cultural vibrancy of the region.

We will begin our exploration in the remote and intriguing Cape Verde archipelago and there is no better way to explore the dramatic beauty and cultural vibrancy of the islands than by small ship. Each island is a little world of its own; some are arid and flat with extraordinary beaches and sand dunes whilst others by contrast are more mountainous and lush. After a relaxing two days at sea we arrive in our next island group, the Canary Islands. We have three days here during which time we will visit the islands of La Palma, El Hierro and Tenerife where we can enjoy nature at its very best. These volcanic islands impress with their unique flora and fauna and boast rugged, rocky landscapes, evergreen cloud forests, metre-high ferns and bizarre-looking dragon trees. We then set sail for the coast of North Africa where we will call into two charming places along the coast of Morocco. From the port of Safi we will explore charming Essaouira and in Casablanca we will enjoy a morning discovering the city's wonders before setting sail for our final call, Gibraltar.

In the company of just 100 or so like-minded travel companions, we will be able to make the most of the region and in our small groups we can explore places that are otherwise inaccessible to vessels larger than the MS Hebridean Sky. Whether your interests lie in botany, geology, history or walking, this region offers something for everyone.



THE ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Day 1 London to Praia, Cape Verde. Fly by scheduled indirect flight. Arrive tonight and transfer to the MS Hebridean Sky for embarkation.

Day 2 Praia, Sao Tiago. Today we explore the historic capital of Praia on the island of Sao Tiago. Praia has a wonderful African feel and we will visit Cidade Velha, the old Portuguese capital with a rich history which was once the centre of the slave trade. See the fort and cathedral which dominate the narrow, cobbled lanes and stone houses. Enjoy a traditional performance of Batuco dance before we continue into the green interior as we make our way to Rui Vaz where we enjoy a lunch of local produce in the shadow of Pico da Antonia. We will see local farms and drive past the only water dam in Cape Verde before returning to the MS Hebridean Sky.

Day 3 Porto Novo, Sao Antao. We have a full day on the most beautiful of the islands, Sao Antao. Driving up the old trading route, we pass the volcanic crater 'Cova' with its agricultural plantations and enjoy panoramic views of the island before arriving in the tiny, picturesque mountain village of Fontainhas, on the northern side of the island. After lunch in the seaside village of Ponta do Sol, we will take the coastal road towards the greenest valley in the archipelago, the valley of Paul. Here we will enjoy a coffee break whilst learning about the production of sugarcane on the island. Also discover 'Grogue', the national drink of the islands and enjoy a taste of it at the oldest traditional Grogue distillery on the island. This evening we sail the short distance to Mindelo and will be entertained by local music and capoeira on board.

Day 4 Mindelo, Sao Vicente. Enjoy a full day in Mindelo, one of the most attractive of all the Cape Verde towns with its colonial buildings, cobbled streets, cafes and lively restaurants. Depart on a morning

discovery tour of the lively markets and the secret corners of the harbour town followed by a coffee break in a typical Cape Verdean bar. There will be some free time to further explore the vibrant town independently.

Days 5 & 6 At Sea. Enjoy a relaxing two days at sea as we cruise to the Canary Islands.

Day 7 La Palma, Canary Islands. La Palma is known by locals as the 'Beautiful Island', and it is easy to see why. It is a simply stunning, peaceful and most importantly an un-spoilt destination that has deservedly been declared a UNESCO biosphere reserve. This afternoon there will be a choice of excursions. You may wish to join the tour to Caldera de Taburiente, a massive eight-kilometre-wide depression which scientists agree was a majestically tall volcanic mountain that collapsed in on itself. Alternatively, take a drive to visit Los Tilos Forest, one of the few surviving Laurisilva forests on the planet. Continue to the charming town of San Andres where we will visit the El Tendal Museum and learn more about the island and its history. Before returning to the ship we will enjoy a tasting at the Rum Factory. Finally, for those who would prefer a more energetic excursion there will be a guided trek on offer through the El Pilar area; see remains of volcanic eruptions, the magnificent views of the Valley of Aridane and the crater wall that surrounds the Taburiente National Park.

Day 8 El Hierro. Probably the least known of the Canary Islands and once considered to be the end of the world, El Hierro is unique and utterly captivating. This morning is free to explore the town or relax on board before our exploration of the island. It will be impossible not to be entranced by the island's slow pace and simple style; by its craggy coast, where waves hurl themselves against lava sculpted rock faces; by the pretty farmland and flower meadows of the interior and by the desolate volcanic badlands that stretch out like moonscapes in the south. We will also sample some of El Hierro's local wine and visit

the lizard house where the island's unique giant lizards are bred; near extinction, they are protected by international law. Alternatively, opt for the La Llania hiking excursion which will take us through primeval forests and along ancient cisterns to El Hierro's top viewing point affording spectacular views of the western parts of the island.

Day 9 Tenerife. This morning we arrive in Tenerife and have a choice of tours. Join us as we drive inland, along the base of the mountain range through beautiful pine forests to the Parque Nacional del Teide. The area was declared a National Park in 1954 and includes 14 species of plant found nowhere else in the world. Geologically the park is fascinating; of the many different types of volcanic formations examples of more than 80% can be found here. Alternatively, visit the island's gardens including the Jardin Botanico which was founded in 1788 by Charles III of Spain. The purpose of the gardens was to create an area where the plants, shrubs and flowers brought back from the New World could acclimatise to Spanish soil. In contrast to the Botanical Gardens, we will then explore the Sitio Litre Garden which boasts a luscious orchid collection. After lunch on board the afternoon is free to explore Santa Cruz at your own pace.

Day 10 At Sea. Relax on board as we sail to the North African coast.

Day 11 Safi for Essaouira, Morocco. Arriving into Morocco we will depart the port of Safi and head along the coast to Essaouira. Founded in the 18th century, Essaouira was built to be a rival city to Agadir. Formerly known as Mogador, meaning small fortress, it was designed as a fortified town surrounded by Vauban-style ramparts and played a major role as an international trading seaport, linking Morocco and sub-Saharan Africa with Europe and the rest of the world. On our full day tour we will see the amazing mixture of Portuguese and Berber architecture, the 16th century sea bastions built to

protect the city, the 18th century Medina, and in the Mellah we will find the souks dedicated to gold, spices and fish. Enjoy a seafood lunch near the beach before returning to the MS Hebridean Sky and sailing tonight.

Day 12 Casablanca. This morning we will visit the city's most important sights including the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Olive Market. The highlight of our tour will be our visit to the Hassan II Mosque, one of the largest religious monuments in the world after Mecca. It took 3,300 traditional Moroccan artisans to create the beautiful mosaics, marble floors and splendid wood ceilings.

Day 13 Gibraltar to London. Disembark and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London.



MS HEBRIDEAN SKY

is one of the finest small ships in the world and offers exceptionally spacious and well-designed suites, beautifully appointed public areas and high standards of service and food. The vessel accommodates just 118 passengers and suites feature a seating area and some have a private balcony. The spacious and finely decorated public rooms include a lounge, elegant bar, library with internet access and a single seating dining room. Outside there is a rear sun deck where meals are served in warm weather under shade, a bar, observation area and comfortable deck furniture. The atmosphere on board is akin to a private yacht or country hotel and you can be assured that after a day of exploration ashore you will return to the comfort and peace of a well-run and luxuriously appointed comfortable small ship.



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Why oil giants are beating a hasty green retreat

**BEN
WRIGHT**



Shell and BP have moved from renewables to please investors but TotalEnergies has found a third way

Ben van Beurden, the former chief executive of Shell, often made the point that, however much his company invested in renewable energy, he'd have one group of investors saying it was too much and one group saying it was too little. Similarly, when he reduced oil and gas production, shareholders would be split between those chiding him for moving too fast and those berating him for being too slow.

His successor, Wael Sawan, has clearly taken the view that ensuring everyone is unhappy might be a good definition of compromise but isn't the best way to run a multinational company.

Since he took over at the beginning

of last year, Shell has dialled back on renewables and put a great emphasis on oil and gas.

Over at BP, Murray Auchincloss, another new arrival in the chief executive hotseat, is now making similar noises. Little wonder; the shares have underperformed rivals to such an extent in recent months that there's even been speculation it could become a takeover target. Something had to give.

In response, Auchincloss has said he's slowing down investments in big budget, low-carbon projects, particularly in offshore wind, and prioritising investing in and maybe even buying new oil and gas assets, particularly in the Gulf of Mexico and shale basins in the US.

Both van Beurden and Bernard Looney, Auchincloss's former boss, strongly argued that oil giants were the companies best placed to manage, and possibly even catalyse, the energy transition. While the US firms ExxonMobil and Chevron have ploughed on with fossil fuels, seemingly oblivious to climate concerns, Shell and BP made big bets on renewables. They were rewarded with big hits to their

earnings. Their successors have taken the view that the companies they now run are better off sticking to their knitting. This is, let's not forget, a fiendishly difficult job. Energy giants have to greenlight incredibly complex geological projects, which is always a roll of the dice, while managing the commodity cycle, which can go from boom to bust in the blink of an eye.

At the same time they have to be mindful of the volatile political situation in the tricky parts of the world in which they operate, and the volatile fiscal situation in the supposedly stable parts of the world in which they're based. Trying to navigate the energy transition at the same time has often seemed like one flaming sword more than the juggler could realistically handle.

Consequently, Big Oil has, on both sides of the Atlantic, instead decided to focus on starting new oil and gas projects, cutting costs, and returning lots and lots of money to shareholders. Executives are all singing from the "return on capital employed" hymn sheet, figuring that one way to stop investors ditching your shares is to shower them in cash.

A few things have helped them come

to this conclusion. The first was, of course, the energy price spike following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But the bottom has also fallen out of the market on renewables. Wind had a torrid time in 2023 thanks to higher interest rates, supply chain inflation and engineering challenges; biofuels are struggling this year.

Oil demand has also held up much better than most people expected. There's been a huge amount of focus

'Big Oil has on both sides of the Atlantic decided to focus on starting new oil and gas projects'

on sales of electric vehicles, but this has somewhat distracted attention from the fact that there are now more vehicles powered by internal combustion engines on the roads than ever before.

The International Energy Agency predicted that 2019 represented peak gasoline. But that level was surpassed last year and 2024 looks likely to break a new record. Similarly, the fact that there are more fuel-efficient planes in

the skies has been offset by travellers taking more and longer flights.

None of this means that Big Oil can't make money from renewables. One company that appears to be managing the transition well is France's TotalEnergies. Its trick has been to put its pedal to the metal on fossil fuel production and use the proceeds to finance increased renewable capacity.

That might seem like an obvious strategy but it's actually been quite rare. Most energy executives seemed to believe you could be green or black but not both. They modelled their strategies on Dong, the Danish oil and natural gas company, which fully switched to generating renewable energy, changed its name to Orsted and watched its share price rise more than five-fold between 2016 and 2021.

But Dong was relatively small (and its share price has since fallen back to earth). Total is a much better model for BP and Shell to adopt (and for politicians to encourage). Last year, the French company's return on average invested capital came within a hair's breadth of 20pc – better than any of its peers. In the decade since Patrick Pouyanné took the helm, Total's return (including dividends) has matched that

of Exxon and Chevron and been double that of BP and Shell. How's he done it? Pouyanné operates in Europe and is subjected to just as much climate activism and investor divestment as his rivals in the UK. True, he's dropped hints about moving his company's listing to New York (much as Shell's Sawan has) where he believes his shares would be better valued (he's almost certainly right).

Pouyanné is clearly very good at his job. On his watch, Total has avoided any large write-downs on expensive projects that failed to come off. He also hasn't wasted money on foolish acquisitions. When energy prices slumped during the pandemic, Total was the only European oil and gas company that didn't slash its dividend.

One senior industry executive makes another interesting (and slightly envious) observation: as well as being Total's chief executive, Pouyanné is also the company's chairman. That's not best corporate governance practice, of course. But others in the industry believe it may have helped Pouyanné to resist pressure from his board to transition too fast and in the process demonstrate it is possible to be both green and black.

A bridge to the past

The submarine U17, a Class 206A boat that was in service with the German navy for more than 35 years, enters a lock on a transport ship in front of the Old Bridge in Heidelberg.



Generation Z and bland beer behemoths are killing off the British brewing industry

**BEN
MARLOW**



The prospect of Carlsberg becoming the biggest cask ale producer in Britain leaves a very bitter taste

Corporate deal-making rarely brings benefits, other than for the army of bankers, lawyers, and spinners charging through the nose for their advice. But the drinks industry has a particularly terrible track record when it comes to takeovers that destroy value.

Nicknamed "Megabrew", the \$275bn (£215bn) merger of Anheuser-Busch with UK-listed SABMiller in 2016 created a mega-hangover. Lumbered with a \$107bn debt overhang as a result of the acquisition, shares in Anheuser-Busch have halved since,

and it has had to take the axe to its sprawling booze empire.

So one should take the effusive announcements that accompanied Carlsberg's latest foray into Britain's beer and brewing scene with more salt than you'd get with a round of tequilas.

As part of an audacious double-swoop, the Danish outfit is swallowing soft drinks-maker Britvic in a £3.3bn takeover and taking full control of a joint brewing venture that it has with Marston's in a separate £200m deal.

Carlsberg boss Jacob Aarup-Andersen says he's "confident that Carlsberg Britvic will become the preferred multi-beverage supplier to customers in the UK", which suggests he's never tasted his own beer, never mind a Fruit Shoot.

But then one wonders when Marston's boss Justin Platt last set foot in one of its pubs when he says the reshuffle will allow the company to "focus on what we do best – giving our guests amazing pub experiences".

Carlsberg is already the fourth largest brewer in the UK. It's hard to

see how anyone benefits from more power being concentrated in the hands of a few global brewing giants – other than the companies themselves.

It can't be good for consumers or what remains of an industry that goes back centuries.

Britain's brewers and the pubs that support it are in crisis and the bland beer behemoths that increasingly dominate are part of the problem. In a world where Covid and then inflation sent costs through the roof, it is now harder than ever to compete and the smaller operators are falling like dominos as margins evaporate.

While the average price of a pint of beer across the UK has risen from £3.81 in 2019 to £4.80, the amount that pubs make has more than halved from 27p four years ago to 12p, according to the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA). Meanwhile, the number of UK breweries that collapsed last year nearly doubled to 69 from 38 in 2022, according to Insolvency Service figures.

Britain's traditional brewers have

been retreating in the face of a turbo-charged land grab that has left a handful of beer giants controlling even more of the market.

Marston's exit from brewing will leave the real ale aficionados at Campaign For Real Ale (Camra) weeping into their tankards. Abandoning roots stretching back to 1875 under its previous guise as Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries, will mean Carlsberg, a company best known for its forgettable lager, will become the biggest cask ale producer in Britain.

When the pair's joint venture was struck back in 2020, Camra warned about the "anti-competitive effects" of the pair's joint venture including "market foreclosure for small brewers, which will reduce choice for beer drinkers and pub-goers", though ultimately the competition watchdog waved the tie-up through.

The decision of Fuller, Smith & Turner to sell its entire drinks arm to Japan's Asahi for £250m in 2019 was a blow to the traditionalists too. The deal

included the historic Griffin brewery, where beer has been flowing since the 1600s. Management had previously described it as Fuller's "spiritual home" and promised never to sell.

John Turner, a descendant of the company's three Victorian family founders, said: "The forces of change were just too great," even for a company raking in £430m of annual turnover at the time.

For Asahi, it was the latest in a series of deals that has transformed it into the world's seventh largest brewer, but one with seemingly little time for nostalgia.

The company has announced it is closing Fuller's Greenwich brewery and consolidating production in Chiswick at the Griffin site.

The same market forces have proven too fierce for Adnams too. In March, the 134-year-old Suffolk brewery announced it was seeking emergency funding. Chairman Dr Jonathan Adnams blamed the continued decline in the number of pubs across Britain, and a 25pc fall in the size of the cask beer market since 2019.

Elsewhere, independent operators like London's Brick Brewery, Yorkshire's Black Sheep and Warwickshire's Purity Brewing Co have been rescued from the scrapheap by private equity firm Breal Group.

It's tempting to blame the lager lout culture derided by Douglas Hurd

during the Thatcher years when Britain's youth began turning its back on bitter.

Today, brewers must contend with the non-drinkers of Generation Z who would rather sup a Opc IPA or not go to the pub at all. Research shows as many as a third of 18 to 24-year-olds are teetotal.

The rise of craft beer has proven to be a false dawn. It was meant to favour the small manufacturers rather than the large, but the most successful ones such as Beavertown, Meantime, and Camden were quick to sell out to the same big beasts, suggesting the economics of being the upstart are no more favourable.

British brewing is nearing the end of an era that created jobs in regions that in some instances have been left behind. These were employers that were rooted in community and a source of local pride.

Entire families worked in them and people from the surrounding areas were proud customers.

Indeed it may be the terminal phase of consolidation. The massive success of Madri Excepcional, a deliberately Spanish sounding lager that is made in Tadcaster, North Yorkshire by the US brewing giant Molson Coors, is a symptom of this last hurrah.

The industry is now reduced to synthesising authenticity because there is so little of it left.

Microsoft orders China staff to use iPhones

By James Titcomb

MICROSOFT has ordered its staff in China to swap their Android devices for iPhones amid mounting security fears.

The US technology giant has told thousands of employees they must make the switch by September, becoming the latest to tighten up staff security protections within China.

It follows a string of cyber blunders, most notably last year when Chinese state-sponsored hackers accessed the email accounts of US government staff

and American companies, exposing a flaw in Microsoft Exchange software.

It has told employees that Android phones will be blocked from accessing services used to verify their identities and log into work devices, according to Bloomberg. Microsoft did not respond to a request for comment.

Microsoft has told staff they will be able to pick up iPhones at various offices in China and Hong Kong to replace Android devices such as those made by Huawei and Xiaomi.

Multinationals have introduced

increasingly strict protocols for staff when visiting or working in China. Consultancies Deloitte and KPMG told staff last year to use burner phones when visiting Hong Kong, having already encouraged the practice within China.

Microsoft is attempting to tighten up security worldwide as part of a Secure Future Initiative after it was heavily criticised in Washington last year for a "cascade of failures" that allowed Chinese hackers in a group dubbed "Storm-0558" to access the emails of high-ranking US government officials.

Watchdog fights Barclays 'mis-selling' appeal

By Michael Bow

THE financial complaints watchdog is battling Barclays' bid to quash a key ruling at the heart of the motor finance "mis-selling" scandal.

The Financial Ombudsman Service, which rules on customer complaints, is trying to block Barclays' application for a judicial review of its findings.

The dispute centres on a decision from the ombudsman in January, which found that the bank's car loan division had unfairly paid commission to a credit

broker. Its ruling revolved around the treatment of a single customer, known as Miss L, who was not made aware that her loan agreement with Barclays involved £1,600 in commission.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) launched a wholesale review into whether customers had been unfairly treated when securing loans from second-hand car dealerships. This led to other lenders, such as Lloyds Bank and Close Brothers, taking a financial hit. However, Barclays has pushed back against the ombudsman by mounting a

legal challenge. This has led to a bitter High Court dispute, as the ombudsman has accused the bank of arguing "academic points".

In its court filing, it said: "The claimant [Barclays] was given full opportunity to provide evidence that the car was not sold by the car dealer for a profit, but did not do so."

A Barclays spokesman said: "We do not agree with the Financial Ombudsman Service's decision in this case and are challenging it." The ombudsman and the FCA were asked for comment.

Markets

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Government securities

52 Week High	Low (p)	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
102.30	99.20	Treas 5% 25	100.14	-0.01	4.91
112.21	100.63	Treas 6% 28	108.17	+0.06	5.55
106.59	92.22	Treas 4% 32	101.88	+0.09	4.17
106.09	94.06	Treas 4% 36	100.35	-0.11	4.24
110.73	96.88	Treas 4% 38	104.20	+0.13	4.56

Index Link Securities

386.83	371.32	Treas 2% 12	386.07	-0.07	0.65
352.43	325.85	Treas 4% 10	343.23	+0.21	1.20
243.64	239.45	Treas 2% 15	246.54	+0.17	0.81

10-year Government Bonds

Yield%	Spread vs Bunds	Spread vs F-Bonds
3.12	-0.61	-1.16
2.51	-	-1.77
1.06	-1.45	-3.22
4.11	-1.60	-0.17

The share prices, price-earnings ratios and dividend yields below are supplied by Interactive Data (Europe) Ltd. The yields are calculated using historic dividend payments divided by the closing share price multiplied by 100.

Aerospace & defence

52 Week High	Low (p)	Stock	Price (p) +/-	Yld	P/E
575	266.1	Babcock Intl	530.14	+5	0.3
1415.5	883.1	BAE Systems	1270.11	+8	2.4
464	292.1	QinetiQ	453	-1	1.8
488.1	143.1	Bolloré-Royce	461.1	+7.5	-
183	146.1	Seimor	165	-1.4	21.9

Banks

225.1	128.1	Barclays	222	+1.6	3.6
989.1	278	Citigroup	482	-5	8.9
725.1	572.1	HBSB	672.1	-8	7.2
58.1	39.1	Lloyds Bk Grp	59	+1.4	4.7
332.1	168	NatWest Group	329.1	+5.2	6.2
423	275	Antander	376.1	+8.1	3.2
796	571	Standard Ch	717.1	-5.1	3.0

Beverages

3509	2452	Diageo	2506	-47	3.1
6032	3849	Coca Cola Intl	3995	-56	27
1917.1	1428.1	Johnson Mat	1659	-2	4.6
1632	1081	Victrex	1158	-22	5.1

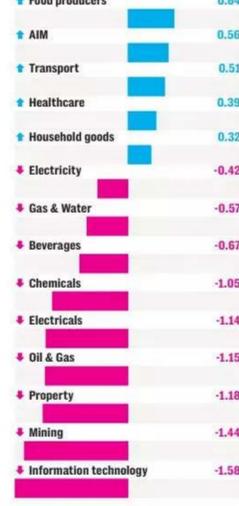
Chemicals

6032	3849	Croda Intl	3995	-56	27
1917.1	1428.1	Johnson Mat	1659	-2	4.6
1632	1081	Victrex	1158	-22	5.1

Construction

398.1	291.1	Balfour Beatty	395.1	+5.1	2.9
582.1	384.1	Barratt Dev	503.1	-1.4	5.5
2898	1903	Bellway	2672	-28	4.2
5360	3481	Berkeley Grp	4800	-26	2.6
229	170	Booth H	209	-2	3.5

Winners and losers (pc)



52 week High Low (p) Stock Price (p) +/- Yld P/E

90.1	44.1	Costain	89.1	-2.1	1.3
1029.1	737.1	Grafton Grp	954.1	-5.1	3.8
2705	1655.1	Morgan Sindal	2675	-15	4.3
1506	925	Persimmon	1471	-7	4.1
1750	423.1	Redrow	707	-7	3.5
155.1	98.1	Taylor Wimpey	154.1	+1.6	6.2

Electricals

238	135	Dialight	206	-1	-
900	586	discover:Grp	682	-8	1.8
2750	1802	Halma	2642	-35	0.8
430	260.1	Smith (DS)	3625	+0	2.1
2489.1	682.1	XP Power	1472	+4.4	1.2

Electricity

637.1	395.1	Drax Group	540.1	-7.1	4.3
1203.1	645	Nat Grid	929.1	+6	6.3
1932.1	1485	SSE	1829	-26	3.3

Engineering / Industrial

89.1	63.1	Coats Group	82.1	-1.4	2.7
870	212	Crupper J	305	-2	5.6
8850	4200	Goodwin	8700	+60	1.3
1911	1429	IMI	1793	-4	1.6
1739.1	1304	Mondi	1561	-4	16.9
79.1	48.1	Sovereign	76.1	-1.4	4.8
1776.1	1517.1	Smiths Grp	1695	-5	2.5
430	260.1	Smith (DS)	417.1	-1.4	3.4
371	251	Smurfit Westrock	357.1	-	-
11280	7900	Spirax Grp	8550	-30	1.9
2200.1	1652.1	Weir	1965	-8	2.0

Food producers

2765	1907.1	Ass Brit Fds	2504	-32	2.1
2830	2065	Coca-Cola HBC	2728	-50	2.9
4570	3158	Cranwick	4325	-2	21.5
957	615	Hilton Food	920	-3	2.7
99	48	REA Hldgs	88.1	+1	-3.5
4464	3680.1	Unilever	4348	-19	3.4

Gas & Water

173.1	120	Centrica	139.1	-2.1	2.9
775	532.1	Penon Grp	596.1	-6	7.4
2761	2943	Severn Trent	2501	-3	4.7
1139.1	896.1	Utd Utilities	1031	+6	4.8

General financial

234.1	156.1	Ashmore	174.1	-2.1	9.7
300.1	164.1	Bridgpoint Gr	238.1	-1	3.7
1169	676.1	Hargreaves L	1100	-5	3.9
850.1	600.1	IG Group	838.1	+1.6	5.4
2448	1244.1	Intermediate Cp	2226	-16	3.5
603.1	428.1	Investec	596	+6.1	5.8
66.1	40	IP Group	43	-1.6	3.0
785	519	Liontrust	619	-9	11.6
37.1	30	Lon. Fin. & Inv.	64.1	-3	1.9
11080.1	7784	Lon Stock Ex	9274	-38	1.2
241.1	181.1	M&G	209	+1.6	9.4
219.1	200.1	Man Group	248.1	+1.5	5.2
124.1	71.1	Quilter	119.1	-1.4	4.4

52 week High Low (p) Stock Price (p) +/- Yld P/E

2450	1750	S & S	1907	+60	6.3
190	346.1	Schroders	374	-7.1	5.7
475	43.1	Vauxhall Banking Grp	49.1	-1.4	12.1

Healthcare

371.1	306.1	Haleon	326.1	-1.4	1.8
1215.1	887	Smith & Neph	1062	+5	2.9

Household goods

2275	844.1	Burberry	898.1	+9.1	6.8
145	24.1	McBride	136	-6	-
169.1	81.1	PZ Cussons	103	-1.4	5.1
6006	4102.1	Reckitt Benck	4286	-12	4.5

Information technology

389	224.1	Aptitude Sftware	364	+1	5.0
1025	892.1	Sage Grp	1067	+9	1.8
205	79.1	Spirant	180.1	-1.4	17

Insurance

238	134.1	abrdn	160.1	-1.4	9.1
2870	2010	Admiral	2609	-26	3.9
501.1	366	Aviva	475.1	+4.1	7.0
715	485.1	Beazley	684.1	-23.1	2.1
240.1	132.1	DirectLink	194.1	-2	2.1
1281.1	926	Hiscox	1287	+150	2.3
690	527.1	Lancashire Hldg	623	+30	2.6
259	203.1	Legal & General	226.1	-6	8.8
564.1	436.1	Phoenix	541	-2	9.7
1102.1	684.1	Prudential	717.1	-10.1	2.3
1185.1	933.1	St. James's Place	557	-11	4.3

Investment trusts

3180	1843.1	SI	3001	-3	2.0
349	289	SI Infrastructure	328	-3	3.6
826	528	abrdn New India	816	+6	-
1264	980	Alliance Trust	1210	-4	2.1
418	242.1	Alliance Tech Trust	410.1	+4.1	-
249	32.1	Asia Dragon Trust	416	+1	1.6
243	175	Baillie Giff China	189	-3	1.1
101.1	75.1	Baillie Giff Euro Grth	96.1	-1.4	1.3
85.1	60	Balanced Comm Prp	81.1	-2.1	6.5
117.1	91.1	Bankers Investm Trst	115.1	+1.6	2.3
1048	715	Biotech Growth	972	-20	-
127	104	BlackRockEmerg&Res1615	122	-3	1.3
159.1	131	BlackRock Fndm	141	-1.4	1.6
653	457.1	BlackRock Grt Euro	629	-	1.1
208	170	BlackRock IncGrth	196	-3	2.2
107	127.1	BlackRockSustAmlnc	196	-1.4	2.1
1520	1146	BlackRock Small	1484	-6	2.8
643	503	BlackRock Thng Trst	625	+1	2.4
635	490	BlackRock Wld M	583	-1.4	6.7
1370	964	Brunner	1340	-10	1.8
3700	3110	Calendia	3540	-10	2.0
123	105	China Fin. & Inv.	121	-1.4	4.5
206	151.1	CQS Nat Res & G	185	-2.1	3.0
256	206	CT Gbl Mgd Gr	257	+3	-
121	98	CT Gbl Mgd I	114.1	-1	6.5
516	406	CT Priv Eq Ord	448	-1	6.3

Net Asset Values © 2024 Morningstar Estimated at previous day's close see www.Morningstar.co.uk

52 week High Low (p) Stock Price (p) +/- Yld NAV

340	266.1	CT UK Cap & Inc	329	-3	3.8
95.1	71	CT UKHighIncTrst	87.1	-2	6.4
590	448.1	Dunelm Intl	507.1	+5	2.0
746	612.1	Edinburgh Inv Tr	755	-2	3.7
157.1	120.1	Edin Worldwide	148.1	+1	-
880.1	634	Europa Assats	87.1	+1	6.8
1058	85.1	F&C Inv Trust	101.1	+4	1.5
549.1	473.1	Fidelity Asian V	502	-2	2.9
246	181.1	Fidelity China Sp Sfts	194.1	-3	2.7
412.1	311.1	Fidelity Euro Tot	397	-1	2.1
186.1	151	Fidelity Japan Trst	173.1	+1	-
316	252	Fidelity Vp	312	+1.6	3.0
920	788.1	Finsbury Grwth	839	-6	2.3
168.1	128.1	Gbl Small Co Trust	163	-1.7	1.8
177	136	Hand High Inc	159	+1	6.6
171	148.1	Hand Intl Inc	166	-4	1.9
902	626	Hand Smaller Co	889	-3	3.0
238	169	Hand Opp	220	+3	2.4

Arrival of an activist investor should give medical maker's performance a shot in the arm

RUSS MOULD
QUESTOR
STOCK PICKS



Smith & Nephew's share price responds as Cevian takes stake but FTSE 100 member still faces last roll of the dice

As stock ideas go, Smith & Nephew has been a shocker. The thesis that a recovery in surgical interventions in a post-pandemic world would benefit the provider of orthopaedic implants, sports medicine and advanced wound management products has not played out.

Nor have profit margins and return on capital improved, despite efficiency programmes and an easing of the supply chain pressures that resulted from lockdowns. As result, we are sat on a 25pc book loss, only partly mitigated by just over 100p a share in dividends but if there is any good news here it is: we are not the only ones whose patience is wearing thin.

The Swedish activist investor Cevian is now on the shareholder register and the share price is responding, in anticipation of some form of action, so this may be the final roll of the dice so far as the FTSE 100 member and the Questor portfolio are concerned.

Chief executive officer Deepak Nath outlined a 12-point plan in autumn 2022, with the ultimate goal that the cost and efficiency benefits would drive the underlying profit margin to 20pc by 2025.

This year's first-quarter results (May 1) at least featured no nasty surprises as Mr Nath reassessed guidance for 2024 of underlying sales growth of between 5pc and 6pc and an underlying margin of 18pc, an improvement on 2023's

Smith & Nephew
HOLD

If Smith & Nephew can improve its margins, cash flow and returns on capital, then shareholders are in business

17.5pc (which itself represented a modest advance from 2022's 17.3pc).

However, even that 18pc figure means there is still work to be done. Weakness in the US hip and knee implant business, plus a year-on-year drop in sales at the advanced wound management business, meant the update did not inspire much market confidence, judging by how the share price continued to ebb to a mark nearly 40pc below that of five years ago.

Enter Cevian. Activists have a fairly classic playbook, and any chief executive who has not sat and thought about how their business looks relative to a typical activist approach really needs to do so.

In sum, the activist investor tends to come with one (or more) of four possible thrusts: strategic change, including asset sales, a break up for preparing a firm for a bid; a change in capital allocation policy, designed to boost cash returns to investors via enhanced dividend or share buybacks; or operational improvements, through the closure or restructuring or underperforming divisions.

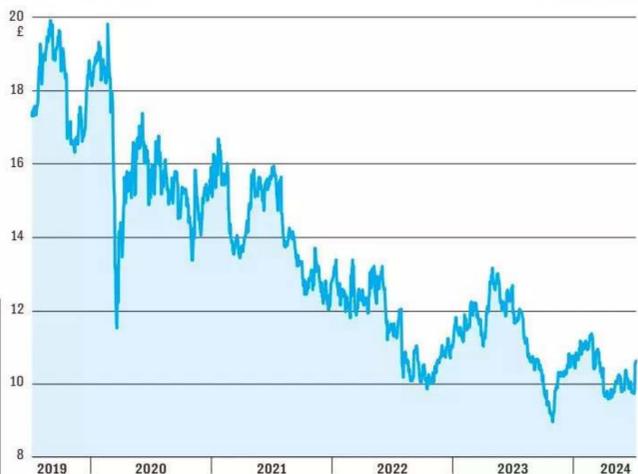
The activist investor may also try boardroom change such as improvements in governance, whereby the activist looks to improve the skill set of the board relative to the company's target industry, or reining in executive pay or even appoint its own people to the management team.

Smith & Nephew

Close: **£10.62**

Key numbers

- ◆ Market value: **£9.3bn**
- ◆ Turnover: (Dec 2024 est) **£4.5bn**
- ◆ Pre-tax profit: (Dec 2024 est) **£495bn**
- ◆ Yield: (Dec 2024 est) **2.8pc**
- ◆ Most recent year's dividend: (Dec 2023) **30.38p**
- ◆ Net debt: (Dec 2023) **£2.2bn**
- ◆ Return on capital: (Dec 2023) **5.9pc**
- ◆ Cash conversion ratio: (Dec 2023) **57pc**
- ◆ p/e ratio: (Dec 2024 est) **20.1x**



In this case, it would be logical to assume that Cevian is looking for faster improvement in operational and financial performance, and perhaps more ambitious margin targets, whether this is achieved through a cost-cutting plan or even changes to Smith & Nephew's three-division structure, so that resources can be allocated to the best effect.

One option that does not seem likely is hectoring the FTSE 100 index constituent to shift its listing to New York from London. Granted, Smith & Nephew trades at a big valuation discount to American rival Stryker, at 20 times forward earnings compared to more than 30 times, and at a discount to another transatlantic peer, Zimmer Biomet, which trades on a multiple in the low 20s.

But Smith & Nephew's margins lag those of the comparable American firms and thus is it quite legitimate to argue the discount is merited. If the margin gap closes, so could

'Smith & Nephew's margins lag those of the comparable American firms and is it legitimate to argue the discount is merited'

the valuation gap and that is still the job at hand for Mr Nath and management, albeit perhaps now in the face of greater scrutiny now that Cevian is a shareholder.

Shifting the listing to a different stock exchange would not make Smith & Nephew a better company and to think otherwise would be a mistake.

As John Bogle, the founder of Vanguard, once noted: "The stock market is a giant distraction from the business of investing. In the long run investing is about returns earned by businesses – not the stock market."

If Smith & Nephew can improve its margins, cash flow and returns on capital, then shareholders are in business. If not, the stock is dead money at best, but the prospect of a Cevian-inspired shake-up improves our chances of erasing the paper loss we currently hold on the stock.

Questor says: hold
Ticker: SN
Share price at close: £10.62p

Read Questor's rules of investment before you follow our tips: telegraph.co.uk/go/questorrules

Investor in Fortnite game supplier rejects takeover deal

A top UK investor in Keywords Studios has said it opposes an "opportunistic" £2.2bn swoon on the Fortnite and Call of Duty game supplier.

Keywords had agreed a £24.50 per share takeover deal with Swedish fund EQT last week after lengthy talks but Octopus Investments, Keyword's second largest shareholder, said the deal was in "no way reflective" of the future prospects for the business.

Octopus senior fund manager Chris McVey said: "We are extremely disappointed that the board has recommended the 2,450p cash offer which we consider to be opportunistic and in no way reflective of the true value that has been created, nor of the prospects for [Keywords'] significant future growth."

Argentina's Milei to sign deal to help him bolster economy

Argentina's libertarian president, Javier Milei, is set to sign a long-delayed pact with provincial governors in a bid to consolidate wider support for his reforms and bolster his minority government in the congress.

Mr Milei was to sign a deal with at least 17 governors to help market doubts about his ability to weather the worst economic crisis in decades, which has seen inflation near 300pc and half of Argentines slip into poverty.

After the initial strong market rally when Mr Milei took office last December, bonds and the peso have come under renewed pressure as the economy slid into recession and political tensions bubbled at home and abroad. Milei's La Libertad Avanza party now needs to bargain with other political forces.

Loyalty cards help Superdrug profits surge to £111.6m

High street health and beauty chain Superdrug has notched up a surge in annual profits after opening a series of stores while loyalty card schemes helped boost sales.

In its latest set of accounts, the group posted a 43pc surge in pre-tax profits to £111.6m for the year to Dec 30 2023, as sales jumped by 11.8pc.

It saw retail sales grow by 12.5pc after opening another 14 sites over the year, focusing on retail parks, as well as larger shops such as in Manchester's Trafford Centre, Brent Cross Shopping Centre in London and Braehead in Glasgow.

The chain also gave 45 stores a revamp over the year, including new shop fronts, layouts and upgraded store Wi-Fi.

Online retailer Huddled takes control of Boop Beauty

Online retailer Huddled has taken control of the surplus beauty product seller Boop Beauty.

London-listed Huddled, which owns Discount Dragon, said it has bought a 75pc controlling stake in Boop.

The circular economy retailer told shareholders it will pay an undisclosed "modest sum", with a commitment to inject further capital for growth. Boop is an online, direct-to-consumer retailer which specialises in the sale of surplus beauty and cosmetic products.

The business was founded by former L'Oreal in-house lawyer Yasmine Amr and delivered 558 orders in the second quarter of 2024.

Boop Beauty's online store has been taken offline to be integrated into Huddled Group.

Regulator orders inspection of masks on 2,600 Boeing jets

America's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is requiring inspections of 2,600 Boeing 737 airplanes because passenger oxygen masks could fail during an emergency.

The FAA said it was requiring the inspections of 737 Max and NG airplanes after multiple reports of passenger service unit oxygen generators shifting out of position, an issue that could result in an inability to provide oxygen in a depressurisation.

Boeing issued a bulletin to airlines calling for visual inspections on June 17, the FAA said. Airlines must inspect and, if needed, replace oxygen generators, strap thermal pads and reposition impacted oxygen generators. Boeing said it had changed an adhesive used in new deliveries.

TSMC briefly tops trillion-dollar value amid AI frenzy

Chip-making juggernaut Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company TSMC briefly surpassed \$1 trillion (£779bn) in market capitalisation yesterday as the AI frenzy continues to power tech stocks.

TSMC controls more than half the world's output of chips for everything from Apple's iPhones to Nvidia's cutting-edge artificial intelligence hardware. The company hit the threshold briefly after the opening bell in New York, but slipped lower later.

TSMC's share price has increased this year by more than 85pc. It dominates the global chip industry, and the bulk of its plants are based in Taiwan, which is claimed by China. The demand for TSMC shares comes despite rising political tension.

The Telegraph

Money Confidential

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Court & Social

Court Circular



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

July 8th
The King was represented by Sir Hew Strachan (His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Tweeddale) at the Service of Thanksgiving for Captain Sir David Younger

Luncheon

Rotary Club of London
Mr Himanshu Jain was the speaker at a luncheon held yesterday by the Rotary Club of London at the Chesterfield Hotel. Ms Candy Liu, president, was in the chair.

Dinner

Chester Business Club
The Lord Mayor of Chester, Cllr Razia Daniels, and her Consort, Mr Stephen Daniels, were guests of honour at the AGM/Charity Cheque Dinner of the Club held last evening at the Slow Boat Oriental Restaurant, Chester. Mr Patrick Gill, club president, was in the chair. Ms Jan Chillery, club chairman, and Ms Rosalind Ellis also spoke.

Reception

Conservative Foreign and Commonwealth Council
Lord Howell of Guildford was the host at the annual diplomatic party held by the Conservative Foreign and Commonwealth Council yesterday at the House of Lords. Baroness Neville-Jones, Chairman, and Baroness Nicholson also spoke.

Among others present were the High Commissioners for Bahamas, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Cyprus; the Ambassadors of Spain, Luxembourg, Norway, Azerbaijan, DR Congo, Egypt, Georgia, Germany and Guinea; the High Commissioners of Singapore and Sierra Leone; and the Ambassadors of Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Philippines, Poland, Uzbekistan, Finland, Tunisia, Lao PDR, Turkmenistan, Algeria, Morocco and Brazil, together with other members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Clergy news

Appointments
Rev Peter Dobson, can of discipline and outreach, Newcastle Cathedral (Newcastle), to be v. Fulham All Saints (London); Jane Palmer, v. Atworth with Shaw and Whitley (Salisbury), to be p-in-c, Hanworth All Saints (London); Daniel Inman, res can and prec, Chichester Cathedral (Chichester), to be assoc v, Chelsea St Luke and Christ Church (London); Rachel Woodbridge, c, Hammersmith St Paul (London), to be assoc v, Hammersmith St Paul (same dio).

Retirements and resignations
Rev Christopher Brown, ac, Uttoxeter (Lichfield), retired on April 30 2024; Charles Dale, ac, Uttoxeter (Lichfield), retired on April 30 2024; (John) Andrew Evans, v. North Hayes St Nicholas (London), retired on May 31 2024; David Baker, ac, Woodford Wells (Chelmsford), resigned with effect from May 31 2024.

Bridge news

The StepBridge online sessions started by the Welsh Bridge Union continue on Mondays, Wednesdays, Sundays and Fridays, writes Julian Potage. Bridge correspondent. During June the highest score on each of these days of the week was as follows:

Monday: 75.23% achieved by Malcolm Lewis and Nicola Adamson on the 10th.
Wednesday: 70.12% achieved by Ashwin Shah and Prafula Shah on the 12th.
Friday: 67.15% achieved by Tony Carsley and Rod Sheard on the 7th.
Sunday: 77.38% achieved by Peter Millar and Tim Dean on the 16th.

Herbie Rowley, a previous past president of the Welsh Bridge Union has died.
Following a vacancy following the retirement of Gilly Clench, the WBU has a new president, Andrea Knox.

Bridge Hand

Ben Norton in luck

By Tom Townsend

Dealer West N/S vulnerable

♠ K10 4
♥ A Q 5
♦ K J 10 7 2
♣ 9 8

♠ A 8 7 6
♥ 9 7 4
♦ 9 4
♣ Q 7 4 2

♠ J 9 5
♥ J 3 2
♦ A 5 3
♣ K J 10 3

♠ Q 3 2
♥ K 10 8 6
♦ Q 8 6
♣ A 6 5

West North East South
pass 1♦ pass 1♥
pass 2♠(1) pass 3♣(2)
pass 3♣(3) pass 4♦(4)
pass 4♥ pass pass

(1) More constructive than INT
(2) Natural, invitational
(3) Showing his spade guard
(4) Marking time

Contract 4♥ by South
Opening Lead ♣2

BOYE Brogeland's World Bridge Tour (WBT) was launched in the pandemic, to run high-level clean online events. These days, joint-headed by Thomas Charlsen, it concerns itself more with invitational live tournaments. The latest WBT Masters took place in Bodo, northern Norway. Twelve teams contested a double round-robin over four days, with Brogeland's team coming out on top.

North-South here for Tim Leslie's Sandfia were Stefano Tommasini and Ben Norton, two of my English teammates in last week's European Championships. We'll see some hands from that in due course. East-West for Brogi

(formerly Her late Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Tweeddale) which was held at Peebles Old Parish Church, Peebles, Peebleshire, this afternoon. The Princess Royal was represented by Mrs Charles Ritchie.

KENSINGTON PALACE

July 8th
The Duchess of Gloucester, Honorary President, the Lawn Tennis Association, this afternoon attended the Championships at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Wimbledon, London SW19.

Today's birthdays

Prof Richard Demarco, watercolourist, is 94; **Mr Richard Wilson**, actor, director and presenter, 88; **Prof Sir Brian Harrison**, Editor, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2000-04, 87; **Mr David Hockney**, OM, artist, 87; **Lord Osborne**, a former Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 87; **Mr Tom Hanks**, actor and producer, 68; **Mr Marc Almond**, singer and songwriter, 67; **the Earl of Longdale**, 67; **Mr Paul Merton**, comedian, broadcaster and writer, 67; **Mr Jim Kerr**, singer and

songwriter, 65; **Mr Clive Stafford Smith**, lawyer; founder, Reprieve, 65; **Dr Douglas Gurr**, Director, Natural History Museum, 60; **Miss Courtney Love**, guitarist, singer and songwriter, 60; **Ms Siân Berry**, co-leader of the Green Party, 2018-21, 50; **Mr Jack White**, guitarist, singer and songwriter, 49; and **Mr Chris Skelley**, judoka; Paralympic gold medalist, 100kg, Tokyo 2020, 31.

Today is the anniversary of the first tennis tournament held by the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club at Wimbledon in 1877.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The Daily Telegraph

LONDON, WEDNESDAY JULY 9, 1924

ROYAL WELCOME TO ETHIOPIA'S REGENT. PALACE CEREMONY.

CONFERMENT OF THE G.C.B.

His Imperial Highness Teferi Makonnen, Regent of the empire and heir to the throne of Ethiopia, who arrived in London on an official visit on Monday, was yesterday morning received in formal audience by the King at Buckingham Palace.

The Prince was escorted to the Palace by the Duke of York and the Earl of Granard, Master of the Horse. Carriages were sent from Buckingham Palace for his Imperial Highness and his suite, and a Prince of Wales' escort of Household Cavalry conducted them from 2, Albert-gate, to the Palace, and back again after the ceremony. The State carriage placed at the Prince's disposal by the King was that which is used by the King and Queen at the State opening of Parliament and on kindred occasions. The ceremony of changing guard was in progress when the Prince reached Buckingham Palace, and the two guards gave a Royal salute. The King's Marshals in resplendent uniform were on duty at the entrance to the Palace, and within the Grand Hall were the Yeomen of His Majesty's Bodyguard under command of Lord Loch. The visitor was received by the two principal officers of the Household, the Earl of Cromer, Lord Chamberlain, and the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Steward. He was conducted up the Grand Staircase, which was lined by gentlemen of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms, while other members of the same force were on duty in the State rooms.

All the members of the King's Household in Waiting and of the Queen's Household in Waiting were in attendance, and the Imperial visitor was conducted in imposing procession to the Green Drawing Room. Here he was received by the King, who wore full dress uniform, and was personally conducted by his Majesty to the Throne Room, where he was presented to the Queen.

THE KING'S SPEECH.

The Regent delivered an address to the King in the language of his own country, and this was interpreted to their Majesties by Mr. A. D. Home, British Consul for North-West Ethiopia. The King replied, and this in turn was interpreted to the Ethiopian Prince by Mr. P. P. C. Zaphiro, Oriental Secretary to his Majesty's Legation at Addis Ababa. His Majesty's reply was as follows:

"I have listened with much gratification to your Imperial Highness's kind and friendly words, for which I thank you sincerely. The Queen and I, in welcoming you to the capital of the British Empire, rejoice to have this opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with your Imperial Highness.

"I trust that your visit to this country may serve to strengthen the good relations which, I am happy to think, have for so long existed between our respective nations. I recall that your Imperial Highness's lamented father, Ras Makonnen, had the honour to represent his Majesty the Emperor Menelik at the coronation of my illustrious father, his Majesty King Edward, Ras Makonnen was, I know, actuated by the friendliest sentiments towards my country, and I am confident that the same feelings will ever inspire his son.

"During your Imperial Highness's visit every facility will be provided for you to see whatever in my country may afford you interest. I trust that your sojourn among us may be pleasant and profitable, and that you will take back with you the happiest recollections of your visit to England.

"I again thank your Imperial Highness and assure you of my feelings of true friendship. I beg that, on returning to your own country, you will not fail to convey to the Empress the expression of my sincere regard for her Majesty, and of my continued interest in the welfare and prosperity of the Ethiopian Empire."

Chess

Flying Dutchman

By Malcolm Pein

FABIANO Caruana was denied outright victory at the Grand Chess Tour's Superbet Classic in Bucharest, as he was defeated in the ninth and final round by Anish Giri, Caruana, Rameshbabu Pragmanandhaa, Alireza Firouzja and D Gukesh shared first on 5/9. Caruana dominated the resulting tie-break, winning all three games.

Alireza Firouzja could have won the tournament, but missed good winning chances against Pragm, who somehow clung on with rook, knight and three queenside pawns vs two rooks, two queenside pawns and a passed f-pawn.

Giri's 20.Qd1! and 23.Ra2!! were inspired:

A Giri - F Caruana
Catalan
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.Bg2 Bb4- 5.Nd2 0-0 6.Ng3 b6 7.0-0 Bb7 8.Q3 Nbd7 9.BE2 Qc7 10.a3 Bd6 11.Nh4 g6 12.b4 c5 13.bxc5 bxc5 14.cxd5 exd5 15.dxc5 Nxc5 16.Nb3 Nfe4 (The knight is not very stable here, so 16...Rab8 looks decent or 16...Rf8) 17.Na5 Rab8 18.Qd4 f6 19.Nxb7 Qxb7

20.Qd1! (20.Rab1?? Be5 wins)
20...Qxb2? (20...Rf8! Rf8! Bc7 maintains a rough equality, Black is

actively placed, even though White's bishops are strong and the d5-pawn vulnerable. If 22.Bd4 Qxb1 23.Qxb1 Rxb1 24.Rxb1 a5 25.Nf3 a4- 21.Qx5! Kc7 22.Bxc4 Rb4d5 23.Ra2!! Qc5 (23...Qc3 24.Rc2 Qxa3 25.Ra2! is a lovely point of White's play and 23...Qc3 24.Rc2 Qa5 is today's puzzle) 24.Qxe5 Bxe5 25.Bg2 f5 26.Nf3 Bf6 27.Rc2 Ne4 28.Rf1 Rf7 29.Ne1! Re7 30.Nd3 Rdd7?! (After the exchange of bishop for knight, opposite-coloured bishops cannot provide salvation. Black's e4-pawn is weak and soon rounded up) 31.Bxe4 fxe4 32.Nc5 Rd6 33.e3 Rc6 34.a4 Kh6 35.Nb3 Rb6 36.Nd2 Rb6 37.Rc6 a5 38.Rxe6 Rxe6 39.Rc4 Rb6 40.Nxe4 Be7 41.Rc7 Re6 42.Nd2 g5 43.Nb3 Bb4 44.Nd4 Re5 45.g4 Kg6 46.Kg2 Rd5 47.Kf3 Rd8 48.Rc6- Kf7 49.Ne6 Rd5 50.Ke4 Rd2 51.Nxg5- Re7 52.f4 Ra2 53.Rd5 Rxa4 54.Rc7- Ke8 55.Ke6 Kd8 56.Rc4 1-0

How can White secure a big advantage?

Answer:
25.Nf5-! It pins 26.Qd7s 27.Rd1 Rb1 28.Nf5-! It pins 29.Qd7s 30.Rc7 Rb1 31.Nf5-! It pins 32.Qd7s 33.Rd1 Rb1 34.Nf5-! It pins 35.Qd7s 36.Rd1 Rb1 37.Nf5-! It pins 38.Qd7s 39.Rd1 Rb1 40.Nf5-! It pins 41.Qd7s 42.Rd1 Rb1 43.Nf5-! It pins 44.Qd7s 45.Rd1 Rb1 46.Nf5-! It pins 47.Qd7s 48.Rd1 Rb1 49.Nf5-! It pins 50.Qd7s 51.Rd1 Rb1 52.Nf5-! It pins 53.Qd7s 54.Rd1 Rb1 55.Nf5-! It pins 56.Qd7s 57.Rd1 Rb1 58.Nf5-! It pins 59.Qd7s 60.Rd1 Rb1 61.Nf5-! It pins 62.Qd7s 63.Rd1 Rb1 64.Nf5-! It pins 65.Qd7s 66.Rd1 Rb1 67.Nf5-! It pins 68.Qd7s 69.Rd1 Rb1 70.Nf5-! It pins 71.Qd7s 72.Rd1 Rb1 73.Nf5-! It pins 74.Qd7s 75.Rd1 Rb1 76.Nf5-! It pins 77.Qd7s 78.Rd1 Rb1 79.Nf5-! It pins 80.Qd7s 81.Rd1 Rb1 82.Nf5-! It pins 83.Qd7s 84.Rd1 Rb1 85.Nf5-! It pins 86.Qd7s 87.Rd1 Rb1 88.Nf5-! It pins 89.Qd7s 90.Rd1 Rb1 91.Nf5-! It pins 92.Qd7s 93.Rd1 Rb1 94.Nf5-! It pins 95.Qd7s 96.Rd1 Rb1 97.Nf5-! It pins 98.Qd7s 99.Rd1 Rb1 100.Nf5-! It pins

Announcements

Email: announcements.ads@telegraph.co.uk Book online: announcements.telegraph.co.uk

Births

BUCHANAN.—On 27th June 2024, at Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi, to Georgia (née Rothman) and Rory, a daughter, Nell Rose, Susan.
Online Ref: W0026447

Deaths

ANDREW.—Stuart Charles, loving husband of the late Ann Andrew, passed away peacefully at home on 29th June aged 77. Beloved father and grandfather who will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Private funeral, followed by a Service at St George's Church, Benenden at 12.30 p.m. on 17th July.
Online Ref: W0026435

BARKER.—Martin Woods died peacefully aged 96 on 9th May. Funeral took place at Oakley Wood Crematorium on 7th June. Further information Sarah.barkerbrown@gmail.com
Online Ref: W0026420

CHAFFERS.—Ann Heather. Died peacefully on July 4th aged 91. Much loved friend to so many. Private cremation with Service of Thanksgiving at St Oswald Church, Compton Abdale on Wednesday 31st July at 3 p.m.
Online Ref: W0026432

DELAFIELD.—Anthony Latham (Tony) died peacefully on 20th June aged 90. Loving brother of Judy Barker and uncle of Sarah. Funeral at Mortlake Crematorium, TW9 4EN on 17th July at 12.40 p.m. Please contact Sarah.barkerbrown@gmail.com for further information. Donations to John Muir Trust.
Online Ref: W0026419

DREWE.—Dr Christopher David of Cross Farm, Drestelington, formerly of Castle Drogo, died peacefully on Sunday 30th June. Christopher was born in 1942, became a doctor in 1968 and together with his father, donated Castle Drogo and the surrounding estate to the National Trust in 1974. He married Cicely Jacoby in 1998. As per his wishes there will no service to mark his passing. Lovingly remembered and sadly missed.
Online Ref: W0026392

GLADSTONE.—Felicity died peacefully on 25th June aged 98. She was much loved by so many as a sister, foster mother and granny, aunt, great aunt, great great aunt and friend. A Service of Thanksgiving will take place at Holy Trinity Church, Crookham Hill, at 2.30 p.m. on 30th July 2024, after a private cremation. No flowers. Donations, if desired, to the NSPCC and/or Holcot Charitable Trust via felicitygladstone.muchloved.com
Online Ref: W0026342

KIDGELL.—Alan Edward Peter (W02 Band Sergeant Major) The 16th/5th The Queen's Royal Lancers, 7th May 1942-19th June 2024. Passed away peacefully at Winchester Hospice aged 82 years. Reunited with beloved wife, Sue. Funeral Service to take place at Salisbury Crematorium on Thursday 25th July 2024 at 12 noon. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, in Alan's memory will benefit the Army Benevolent Fund and SFAA and can be made online via: alankidgell.muchloved.com Alternatively, a donation box will be available as you leave the chapel.
Online Ref: W0026400

MELLOR.—Gordon Richardson Mellor died peacefully at home in France on 4th July, aged 94. Much loved husband, father, stepfather, grandfather and great-grandfather. Funeral Service at Cannes Crematorium at 11 a.m. CET on Thursday 11th July. No flowers please but donations, if desired, to France Parkinson Society (www.franceparkinson.fr/).
Online Ref: W0026412

POPE.—Nicholas Michael died aged 78 on 25th June. Husband of the late Isabella, father of Elizabeth and Catherine, and grandfather of Rory and Phoebe. His Funeral will be at St Mary the Virgin, Kensworth, on 18th July at 11 a.m. No flowers.
Online Ref: W0026436

SIMPSON.—Frances Mary (née Hort) BA, SRN, SCM. Passed on 16th June, aged 86. Much loved mum, grandma, partner, friend, colleague. She will be sadly missed by all who knew her. Funeral Service to be held at St Michael and All Angels, 1 Pond Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 9UL on Wednesday 17th July at 11.45 a.m. Family flowers only please, by request. Donations in memory of Frances to alzheimers.org.uk
Online Ref: W0026415

STOCKS.—Alan James died peacefully at home aged 94 on 4th July. Much loved husband of Richenda, father of Cara and Leonie and grandfather of Xavier. Private cremation. No flowers please, donations if desired to Cancer Research.
Online Ref: W0026467

THOMAS.—In loving memory of Judy Thomas, greatly loved mother of Richard and James, grandmother of Maya, Max, Christopher and Calum. Funeral at Holy Trinity, Long Sutton Church on Tuesday 16th July at 11.30 a.m. Family flowers only. Donations to Holy Trinity, Long Sutton.
Online Ref: W0026387

TREHERNE.—Isobel. Passed away at home on 30th June, aged 93. She will be greatly missed by her 11 children and 20 grandchildren, and all who have known her. The Requiem Mass will be held at 12 noon on 19th July 2024 at St Thomas of Canterbury Church, Mayfield, East Sussex, TN20 6BU. No flowers please but donations to the Alexandra Rose Charity would be welcome.
Online Ref: W0026456

In memoriam

APPELBOAM.—George Gershon, 05.03.1927 - 09.07.2017. Seven years now without you, but the precious memories of what we shared are still so very real. Didn't we have fun. Me.
Online Ref: W0026278

Personal

Text for the day

PRaise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever. Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord, or declare all his praise? Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.
Psalms 106:1-3 (NRSV)

Birthdays

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO PENNY STREET!! We hope you have a wonderful day. We love you so much and are so proud of you and all that you've achieved. Love Mum, Dad and Beau xxx
Online Ref: W0026472

The Telegraph

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The Earl of Rosebery and Midlothian

Unconventional electrician who lit art exhibitions and stage shows and planted five million trees

THE 7TH EARL OF ROSEBERY AND 4TH EARL OF MIDLOTHIAN, who has died aged 95, was a scientist, electrical engineer and agriculturalist with a brilliant, if unconventional, mind.

The grandson of Queen Victoria's last Liberal prime minister, the 5th Earl of Rosebery, and Hannah Rothschild, he came to public notice in 1977, three years after succeeding his father, at the famous sale of Mentmore in Buckinghamshire, the spectacular Rothschild house which his father had inherited.

At the start of the auction the public address system failed. Not pausing, the youthful Lord Rosebery leapt into the rostrum, upstaging the chairman of Sotheby's, Peter Wilson, delved into the wiring and fixed the problem in a trice.

The sad denouement of Mentmore, the most important of the Rothschild houses in the Vale of Aylesbury, was described as the "sale of the century". It followed three years of fruitless negotiation with the Labour Government, to whom it had been offered with its collection for £3million in lieu of death duties, with the hope of it becoming a public museum.

As it transpired, the contents sale made well in excess of £6 million and the nation privately bought another million pounds worth of pictures and furniture. The Government's mishandling of its acquisition was a turning point in the preservation movement in England, leading to the establishment of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and a happier outcome for many other historic buildings thereafter.

Neil Rosebery's unusual aptitude for science was perhaps a manifestation of a Rothschild gene, for his cousins included the scientist Victor (Lord) Rothschild and the world expert on fleas, Miriam Rothschild. As a boy he had a tin hut in which he built transistors, and at the Rosebery seat of Dalmeny, a Regency gothic house designed by William Wilkins overlooking the Firth of Forth near Edinburgh, he undertook rewiring until he got stuck under the floorboards, much to the irritation of his mother.

Neil Archibald Primrose was born in Mayfair on February 11 1929 to his father's second wife, Eva Bruce, daughter of the 2nd Lord Aberdare and former wife of Algernon Strutt, the 3rd Lord Belper. His father, the 6th Earl of Rosebery, was a first-class cricketer, the owner of two Derby-winners, and a Liberal politician who was briefly installed by Churchill as Secretary of State for Scotland.

Ronald, Lord Dalmeny, Neil's elder half-brother by his father's first marriage to Dorothy Grosvenor, died aged 21 in 1931, and Neil became the heir, taking the alternative courtesy title of Lord Primrose.

He was effectively an only child. His half-sister Lady Helen Primrose was already 16 when he was born, and there were three adult Strutt half-siblings by his mother's first marriage, including Lavinia, later Duchess of Norfolk. The young Neil occupied himself with his electrical enthusiasms and Meccano, and to the delight of his mother shared her passion for bridge.

He was 11 when the Second World War broke out, and thanks to his parents' friend, J Pierpont Morgan Jr, was sent to the United States for two years, attending



Millbrook School at Stanford, New York. He was a contemporary of William Buckley, Jr, the writer, who unkindly described him as an "uncontrollable brat". Nevertheless, his scientific bent was nurtured there, and he developed pronounced lifelong characteristics, notably his unique diet of Spam, pizza, Mars bars, Pepsi Cola, orange cheese and steam-baked white bread, which harked back to his American war years.

On return to England, he broke with family tradition (his grandfather had asked for a record of the *Eton Boating Song* to be played at his death bed) and went to Stowe, where he continued to excel at science.

After school he did National Service in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers – again a break with family tradition, of service in the Grenadiers – and then went up to Oxford to read physics at New College. There he developed an interest in stage lighting for the Oxford Union Dramatic Society, and after graduating in 1952 embarked on a career lighting plays,

The Earl and his wife Deirdre, above, at Dalmeny House; right, Mentmore Towers, the spectacular Rothschild house he had to surrender in the 1977 'sale of the century'



exhibitions and films. In Edinburgh, where both his parents were involved in setting up the International Festival, he lit several events on the Fringe.

In 1954 he was responsible for lighting the Diaghilev exhibition which made such an impression on the young Alan Bennett: "As a schoolboy in the drab world of the 1950s I remember being swept away by the glamour of it all."

In London Neil worked for Strand Electrical, the leading stage, TV and film lighting company. He then founded his own lighting companies, On the Spot, and later, in Edinburgh, Northern Light. He was responsible for lighting the epochal 1961 Epstein Exhibition in Edinburgh, the 1964 Shakespeare Exhibition at Stratford and the Louis Osman exhibition at the Goldsmiths Hall in 1971.

Later in life he kept his hand in by designing spectacular lighting at Dalmeny for the Scottish reels parties on New Year's Eve and electronically controlled firework

displays from platforms in the waters of the Firth of Forth.

His career as a lighting professional coincided with marriage and the arrival of a large family, which gave Neil the secure emotional base he had lacked. He had met Deirdre Reid, an art student at the Ruskin, at the Oxford Playhouse, where he created the lighting and she painted the sets. They courted watching Marx Brothers' films at the Walton Street cinema and were married in 1955.

Deirdre Rosebery provided Neil with a strong centring force over the remarkable 70-year span of their marriage. Both were very strong characters. They had five children, four daughters and a son.

Married life was divided between a London house in Orme Square, and Dalmeny, where Neil became a progressive forester and farmer. The Scottish estates, the historic base of the family, were given to him by his father in 1955 and Neil and Deirdre converted the upper floor at Dalmeny into a self-contained family home.

After the sale of Mentmore the ground floor of Dalmeny was opened to the public after being rearranged to incorporate retained French furniture, Sèvres porcelain and paintings from the Rothschild collection in a series of tableaux-like rooms drawing on Neil's experience of staging exhibitions and Deirdre's interests in art. Neil would refer to her London museum friends as the "Art Department".

The estates at Dalmeny and Rosebery became his passion. He planted five million trees – the woods in Dalmeny park are his memorial. He also restored cottages, rebuilt sea defences, converted farm buildings into new estate offices, restored Barnboulge Castle (his grandfather's seaside library tower), designed grain driers, laid out a pioneering wind farm and built a biomass heating system, giving full range to his scientific bent.

He had a large in-house farming enterprise and could be found into his 80s driving farm machinery, diggers, and tractors very fast around the estate, chainsaw often to hand. When really bad weather set in he would be at his computer designing heating systems or checking the stock market on CeeFax. Still active in his 90s, he met his workforce every day at 8am and his hard work and attention to detail never faltered, to universal respect.

Neil was direct when he knew best and often silent when things outside his interests were discussed. One memorable occasion when this was not the case was when experts from the National Gallery visited Mentmore and informed him that they considered that the family Rembrandt was not authentic.

Showing not the slightest emotion he simply asked them to put it in writing, quietly remarking that he knew nothing about art. His mother, who did, took the view that "experts always change their mind". And so they did, when the Rembrandt Commission came to study the picture a decade or so later.

Lord Rosebery is survived by his wife and children. His son Harry Dalmeny, chairman of Sotheby's UK, succeeds to the earldoms.

The 7th Earl of Rosebery and 4th Earl of Midlothian, born February 11 1929, died June 30 2024

Major-General John Grey

Marines rifle commander in the early days of the Troubles

MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN GREY, who has died aged 90, led his Royal Marines on to the streets of Belfast at the beginning of the Troubles in Northern Ireland and later helped to ensure the future of his Corps.

In 1969, after promotion to major, Grey commanded a rifle company of 41 Commando, Royal Marines, and took part in one of the earlier tours in Belfast at the start of the Troubles, when British forces were welcomed by the Catholic community as their saviours from the fury of the Protestants.

Accommodation in Belfast was rudimentary, often consisting of decommissioned double-decker buses, disused flax mills and derelict factories; hours were long and amenities non-existent.

Many of the operational procedures commonplace later were in their infancy – there was much trial and not a little error. Company commanders were on their own and had to keep their wits about them in fast-changing situations. Soon all this was to change, riots becoming commonplace, nail bombs and sniping everyday occurrences.

Community leaders had direct access to company commanders and exercised their rights frequently in the absence of effective policing by the RUC, who for a time seemed to have lost control; the interface with the community by the Army and Royal Marines was regular and continuous. Grey and his colleagues were *de facto* the sole effective force for maintaining law and order, and his unflappable style suited these circumstances.

John St John Grey was born on June 6 1934, in Deal, Kent, the son of a Marines officer killed in a motorcycle accident in the Second World War. He was educated at Christ's Hospital and joined the RM in 1952.

He served in 40 Commando in the Canal Zone, Malta and North Africa. After qualifying as a mortar officer he returned to 40 Commando and saw active service in Cyprus during the Eoka campaign.

On promotion to captain in 1964 he was appointed Officer Commanding Royal Marines in the cruiser *Lion*, where he found the lifestyle of a peacetime cruiser too easy and insufficiently challenging, redolent of prewar years. From *Lion* he went to the Army Staff Course at Camberley, which



His work benefited from his laidback style and humour

was more to his liking, although his laidback style led to a less good report than he deserved.

In 1970 and 1971 he studied at the US Marine Corps Command and Staff Course at Quantico, Virginia, and was seconded as operations officer in the 1st Marine Division in California. He spent 1972 and 1973 in the Directorate of Naval Plans, where his naval peers were all officers marked out for promotion in the fast track and many of whom made admiral.

Most were obsessed with anti-submarine warfare, and amphibious operations were a low priority. Much of the staff work was amateurish compared with that of the Army and Air Force equivalents.

Tact and patience were required: a Camberley-trained officer had to play his hand carefully. Where others might have given in to their frustration, his sensitivity and sense of humour helped. Grey, the sole RM member of the Directorate, proved key in ensuring that his Corps survived defence cuts, and he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in 1975.

Following study at the National Defence College, he served at Headquarters Commando Forces, and from 1976 to 1978 led 45 Commando in Ulster and for two winters in Norway. Between 1979 and 1984 he was Military Secretary and Colonel Operations in the office of the Commandant General Royal Marines (CGRM).

Grey was promoted to major-general and became chief of staff to the CGRM (1984-88). He was appointed CB in 1988 and retired a year later to become clerk to the Pewterers' Company, before retiring to Devon.

John Grey married Elisabeth Langley in 1958; she survives him with their daughter and son.

John Grey, born June 6 1934, died June 8 2024

Jon Landau

Film producer who fought hard to get James Cameron's blockbuster *Titanic* on to cinema screens

Jon Landau, who has died of cancer aged 63, was the film producer who both enabled James Cameron to see through three of the most logistically complex and financially successful films of all time. With *Titanic* (1997), *Avatar* (2009) and *Avatar: The Way of Water* (2022), the bearded dudefied conventional Hollywood wisdom and mounting media scepticism to fashion three widescreen epics that, at their best, harked back to the glory days of Cecil B DeMille.

The pair met when Landau, then a senior Fox executive, attended a marketing meeting for Cameron's *True Lies* (1994), a putative summer blockbuster starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

As Landau recalled, Cameron walked "right around to me, and he goes: 'So I understand we're going to get to be pretty good friends or bitter enemies.' And I said, 'Pretty good friends, I hope.'"

There was cause for wariness. *True Lies* had seen its budget soar, becoming the first film to cost \$100 million, before topping out at \$120 million: "This was one of the two or three most complicated movies I've ever been involved with," Landau tersely remarked at the time. Yet with the money channelled towards action as exhilarating as it was expensive, the film proved a box-office smash, taking \$378 million worldwide as the third biggest hit of 1994.

At once lavish period drama and old-school disaster movie, *Titanic* was a colossal scale-up. Born of Cameron's lifelong fascination with the deep – and the doomed ship's place in it – it necessitated an engineering project almost as vast as that undertaken by the ship's makers Harland and Wolff (the \$200 million costs proved so great that Fox eventually entered into partnership with another studio, Paramount, to bring the film into cinemas).

Yet despite a torturous shoot, a stand-off with the Fox suits over the three-hour running time and initial critical harrumphing, *Titanic* recouped \$1.84 billion upon first release, overtaking *Jurassic Park* (1993) as the highest-grossing film of all time, on its way to a lifetime total of \$2.25 billion (including subsequent re-releases). It won 11 Oscars from a record-equalling 14 nominations, including Best Director for Cameron and Best Picture for Landau.

An idea Cameron had been touting long before *Titanic*, waiting for technology to catch up with his own imagination, *Avatar* represented an even riskier gamble: an



Landau, above, left, with James Cameron and their Oscars for *Titanic*; above right, Kate Winslet in *Titanic* and a scene from *Avatar*, which spent months in cinemas and took nearly \$3 billion

original fantasy, employing state-of-the-art motion-capture technology and the much-derided 3D format to generate an immersive environment that was, as critics noted, greatly more sophisticated than anything in the screenplay.

A \$237 million budget offered some sign of the trust Landau had earned: "We asked Fox to support us for a year while we learnt to walk. Most movies, you have to run right away. They sit there and say OK, we're ready to greenlight the movie, here's the release date, and try and make that date. And that's where things go off-kilter. We said to Fox, let us learn to walk for a year, it's not going to be a small sum of money... but we're going to figure things out. Because we didn't know, we didn't have any of the answers."

They soon had them. Opening over Christmas 2009, *Avatar* spent months in cinemas, racing towards a new box-office landmark of \$2.7 billion and a Best Picture nomination. Another followed for *The Way of Water*, which defied the theatrical sector's Covid-era downturn, scooping \$2.3 billion,

the third highest total of all time, behind its predecessor and *Avengers: Endgame* (2019).

"It's phenomenal," Landau told *The Hollywood Reporter*. "Our film has illustrated that in this post-pandemic or pandemic era – whichever you want to call it – there still is that potential to draw people out of their homes to go to this incredible experience that is called movies. And I don't believe there's anything else like it... As producers, as directors, as studios, as exhibitors, we have a responsibility to continue to preserve that experience for generations to come."

Jon Landau was born in New York on July 23 1960 to Ely and Edie Landau (née Randolph), themselves impresarios of some note. In 1972, the pair founded the American Film Theatre, which beamed filmed plays into cinemas; their feature credits included John Schlesinger's TV version of *Separate Tables* (1983) and the Michael Caine thriller *The Holocaust Covenant* (1985).

A graduate of the USC's School of Cinematic Arts, Jon Landau began his production career with the nondescript teen



caper *Campus Man* (1987). He was headhunted by Disney, overseeing the effects-dependent family hit *Heety, I Shrank the Kids* (1989) and Warren Beatty's troubled comic-book throwback *Dick Tracy* (1990), before ascending through the Fox ranks.

Though Cameron projects dominated his headspace, Landau occasionally branched out, producing Steven Soderbergh's *Solaris* (2002), Cirque du Soleil's *Avatar*-inspired *Toruk*; and Robert Rodriguez's *Alita: Battle Angel* (2019), shot alongside *The Way of Water*: "People said to me, 'Jon, how are you splitting your time?' I said, 'I'm doing 70 per cent of my time on *Avatar*, I just have to. And then I said, 'I'm doing my other 70 per cent on *Alita*.' But that's just the way it is. I can't do anything unless I'm all in."

By then, the *Avatar* universe had expanded, with plans announced for three further films, currently set for release in 2025, 2029 and 2031: "We are setting out to make standalone cinematic experiences so that people feel the movies fulfil expectations or exceed expectations no matter how long the gap was. People get into a trap when they say that just because this movie was successful we should make a sequel, without asking, 'Is there a story here to tell? Is there a sequel worth making?'"

He is survived by his wife Julie Lamm, whom he married in 1987, and two sons.

Jon Landau, born July 23 1960, died July 5 2024

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Television & Radio

Television reviews Benji Wilson



De Swarte's character is a bad role model for comedy

Comedian Michelle de Swarte has created an unlikeable lead for her new series *Spent*

Television drama has come on a long way in the past few decades. We're well past the point, for example, where characters need to be likeable to be compelling. Instead, via self-combusting leads such as Tony Soprano or Fleabag, all you need is someone who at least appears to be trying. Trying to get better, trying to change, trying to break the shackles of abuse or trauma – it doesn't matter: everyone can empathise with striving, even in a racist murderer (Soprano) or a narcissist (Fleabag).

It makes *Spent* (BBC Two), a new six-part comedy-drama, an outlier, in that its lead character Mia Sinclair is caught in a tight spot... and seems dead set on doing absolutely nothing about it. Mia, played by *Spent*'s creator Michelle de Swarte, is a former model who has lived like Liberace in New York, been declared bankrupt and so returns home to the UK to escape her debts. Back at home on the council estate in Brixton, she discovers that no one feels particularly sorry for her.

And neither do we – Mia is one of the least likeable leads in television history, a woman who thinks the world owes her a living and a grand one at that. She's rude, socially tone deaf and resolutely self-centred from the first minute of *Spent* to the last. It is a remarkable feat of writing and

performance to create such a sustained figure of antipathy, one who when she says to herself in episode four "I'm not a bad person," most viewers will find themselves raising a quizzical brow.

To the earlier point: being a bad person doesn't matter so long as we can still find a reason to root for our anti-hero. But Mia gives us nothing. The series is inspired by De Swarte's own experiences as a model, and while there's a gentle critique of the industry with its underage girls, repulsive men and eau de utter vacuousness, Mia still seems in thrall to it.

Crucially, for a series billed as a comedy-drama, Mia isn't funny. You can forgive dislikeable leads a lot if they make you laugh (see *Succession*) but *Spent* sets up plenty of comedic situations – a teenage party, a disastrous circumcision ritual, some dog sitting; some actual dogging – without ever delivering the payload.

Likewise, De Swarte creates a terrific supporting cast around Mia – Juliet Cowan as her mum, Karl Collins as her dad, both with mental health issues; Amanda Wilkin as her best friend and one time lover Jo – but by the end they only serve as collateral. Each in turn is abused or manipulated by a character who dominates the drama without being anything like the most interesting person in it.

Part four of this new series of *House of the Dragon* (Sky Atlantic) was a big one for barbecue fans. It's that time of year. Finally, after three episodes of talking about an inevitable war between the forces of Aegon (Tom Glynn-Carney) and Rhaenyra (Emma D'Arcy) both houses (inevitably) had the same idea – unleash the dragons.

It led to a flame-grilled set piece in which Aegon himself, drunk, impetuous and feeling emasculated and undervalued by his advisors, decided to mount up and show everyone what he was made of. That he did: he's a berk, and he got barbecued.

The climactic dragon-off was not as jaw-dropping as I suspect the producers were hoping, if only because CGI, even at its best, can never quite match the intensity of scenes with lots of real human extras running around and battering one another (see the astonishing episodes *Hardhome* or *Battle of the Bastards*, from the original *Game of Thrones*).

When it was dragon-on-dragon action, all flaying claws and lizardly malice, the battle was brutal. When it was human slashing human it was great as well. But when it was humans flying on the back of dragons, it looked as if it was a person sitting on a pommel horse in front of a green screen and an industrial fan. Strong *Superman 2* vibes.

It broke the spell, which was a shame as the spell had been carefully concocted for the previous 45 minutes. Daemon (Matt Smith) was off at Harrenhal, quietly and then not-so-quietly losing his mind in a solo plot line that seems expressly written to let Smith flex his acting muscles.

Elsewhere, there were some delicious manoeuvres both on Aegon's Small Council and (initially in her absence as she came back from trying to broker a truce with Alicent) on Rhaenyra's. In particular, the dawning realisation on Aegon's face that he had been outwitted by Larys and Aemond was delicious. It was enough to drive him to drink and to dragon – and we all know what happens when you're drunk at the wheel.

Spent ★★ **House of the Dragon** ★★★★★

What to watch

HORSEPOWER

BBC Four, 10pm & 11pm



This four-part documentary follows the trainers and horses at Park House Stables in Hampshire

First shown on Amazon Prime Video in 2022, this atmospheric access-all-areas documentary follows life behind the scenes at one of the world's top racing stables. The focus of the four-part series is Park House Stables at Kingsclere in Hampshire, where trainer Andrew Balding (brother of broadcaster Clare Balding) stables and trains some of the best thoroughbreds in the world for some of the sport's

wealthiest owners. It is a huge operation with around 200 horses at any given time being prepared for racing greatness by dedicated, hard-working staff who are expected to give their all, and then some. "We have accommodation for 79 on site, so it's intense" says Andrew's wife, Anna Lisa, and that intensity comes across in every scene. One of the series' achievements is the sense it conveys of the bond that

exists between them all, from the apprentice grooms who do the mucking-out to the stable's champion jockey, Oisín Murphy, who delivers the wins. The latter's 2021 brush with the racing authorities over alleged drug-taking adds a frisson of jeopardy to tonight's opening two parts, though it hardly needs it. For racegoers, it's more than irresistible enough already. **Gerard O'Donovan**

DOCUMENTARY

Traitors to Hitler

BBC Four, 9pm

Following the failure of a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler in July 1944, the culprits were hunted down and hanged. To savour his revenge, Hitler ordered their trials and deaths to be filmed. This chilling *Inside Story*, first shown on the BBC 45 years ago and featuring the original footage, explores why the audacious plot failed.



Traitors to Hitler: the failed plot to blow up Hitler in 1944

The Spy in the Bag:

New Revelations

Channel 5, 10pm

Re-examining the results of a recent review into the

death of Gareth Williams, the MI6 spy found dead in a padlocked duffel bag in his London flat in 2010. Despite the bizarre circumstances, the review concurred with the police

view that Williams acted alone, but new interviews suggest many of those close to the investigation remain unconvinced at the accepted version of events.

FACTUAL

Our Great Yorkshire Life

Channel 5, 7pm

It's a big day for florist Sarah Richardson, who's arranging the showcase flower display at Newby Hall for the annual Harrogate Autumn Flower Show. And local news anchor Christa Ackroyd has a new assignment – tracing the county's horseracing history at the St Leger Festival in Doncaster.

The Yorkshire Vet: Wedding Bells & Cow Bells

Channel 5, 8pm

There's a change of scene in order as the vets head off to the Dordogne for colleagues David and Megan's wedding day. But first, a bovine caesarean is on the cards for a cow who's produced a calf so big it won't come out any other way, and Peter operates on a sheep dog who's broken his leg.

Secrets of the London Underground

Yesterday, 8pm

Tonight, we're at London Paddington, one of the best-connected stations on the network both in terms of tube and overground rail, plus a wealth of oddities



Secrets of the London Underground: Tim Dunn

below ground. While loveable ferroequinologist Tim Dunn explores the mini "mail rail" line that used to transport post to sorting offices across the capital, his partner-in-train-spotting Sidly Holloway, bizarrely, unearths a forgotten airport luggage carousel.

Super Surgeons:

A Chance at Life

Channel 4, 9pm

In the final episode of the surprisingly gripping series, recorded in the specialist surgery department of London's Royal Marsden hospital, Professor Asif Chaudry tries pioneering robotic surgery for the first time to treat a rare, aggressive form of cancer. Elsewhere, Professor David Nicol prepares to perform a challenging operation that poses an exceptionally high risk of haemorrhaging. You might have to watch through your fingers. **GO**

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The Telegraph

Money Confidential

Radio choice

The Go-Between

Radio 4 Extra, 2.30pm

A lovely treat from Radio 4 Extra today, as the station airs a handful of recently unearthed "lost" dramas

from the 1960s. Kicking things off is a terrifically entertaining 1961 adaptation of LP Hartley's *The Go-Between*. Elsewhere, while there's no shortage of cancer-diary podcasts,

Jon Holmes Says the C-Word (Radio 4, 11pm) is unusual in focusing on the male experience of cancer. Guests Stephen Fry, Richard Herring, Eric Idle and Mark Steel are among

the fellow-survivors keen to help *The Skewer* star in his quest to get men to test regularly for different forms of the disease. Necessary, educational, but light in tone. **Gerard O'Donovan**

RADIO 1

FM 97.6-99.8MHz

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 **3.30** Newsbeat **3.32** Going Home with Vick, Katie and Jamie on Radio **1.5.45** Newsbeat **6.00** Radio 1's New Music Show with Jack Saunders **8.00** Radio 1's Future Artists with Sian Eleri **10.00** Radio 1's Power Down Playlist with Sian Eleri **11.00** Martha **1.00am** Radio 1's Drum & Bass Mix **1.30** Radio 1's Drum & Bass Mix **2.00** Radio 1's Workout Anthems **3.00** Radio 1 Relax **4.00** Radio 1 Dance **5.00 - 6.57am** Radio 1 Early Breakfast with Dean McCullough

RADIO 2

FM 88-90.2MHz

6.30am The Zoe Ball Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Tina Dabeley. Tina Dabeley sits in for Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Scott Mills. Music and chat **4.00** OJ Borg. OJ Borg sits in for Sara Cox **6.30** OJ Borg's Half Wower. OJ Borg plays the biggest and best tunes to get listeners dancing **7.00** Jo Whitley's Shiny Happy Playlist. Jo plays her favourite album tracks and musical gems rarely heard on Radio **2.7.30** Jo Whitley. Music and chat **9.00** The Jazz Show with Jamie Cullum. The world of jazz **10.00** Trevor Nelson's Magnificent 7. Uplifting tunes and essential throwbacks **10.30** Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation. Lonnie Jordan from War shares his Musical Youth **12.00** The Reverend Kate Bottley **3.00am** Pick of the Pops **4.00 - 6.30am** Owain Wyn Evans

RADIO 3

FM 90.2-92.4MHz

6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.00pm** Classical Live **4.00** Composer of the Week: Thomas Linley Jr **5.00** In Tune **7.00** Classical

Mixtape. A sequence of music **7.30** Radio 3 in Concert. Featuring music by Bruckner and Sibelius **9.45** The Essay: Michael Longley's Life of Poetry. Belfast poet Michael Longley talks about his First World War poetry **10.00** Night Tracks. Sara Mohr-Pietsch presents a soundtrack for late-night listening **11.30** Round Midnight **12.30 - 6.30am** Through the Night

RADIO 4

FM 92.4-94.6MHz; LW 198kHz

6.00am Today **9.00** The Life Scientific **9.30** Is Psychiatry Working? **10.00** Woman's Hour **11.00** Screenshot **11.45** Book of the Week: The Third Information Crisis **12.00** News **12.04pm** Call You and Yours. Consumer affairs with Winifred Robinson **12.57** Weather **1.00** The World at One. Presented by Sarah Montague **1.45** Ten Second Showdown. Mike Costello explores the drama of the 100 metre sprint **2.00** The Archers. Lillian gets her hopes up, and Ben lends a helping hand **2.15** Drama: Faith, Hope and Glory. New series. By Roy Williams **3.00** The Archers. Alistair finds himself in an uncomfortable position **7.15** Front Row. Arts programme **8.00** File on 4 **8.40** In Touch **9.00** Wokewash **10.00** The Bottom Line **9.59** Weather **10.00** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Glorious Exploits **11.00** Jon Holmes Says the C-Word See Radio choice **11.30** Fragments: The London

Nail Bombings **12.00** News and Weather **12.30am** Book of the Week: The Third Information Crisis **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.00** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News Briefing **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45 - 6.00am** Farming Today

RADIO 5 LIVE

MW 693 & 909kHz

6.00am 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Naga Munchetty **1.00pm** Tennis **7.00** 5 Live Sport. Mark Chapman builds up to commentary of the first semi-final of UEFA Euro 2024 **8.00** 5 Live Sport. Spain v France (kick-off 8.00pm) **10.30** Rima Ahmed **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo **5.00 - 6.00am** Wake Up to Money

CLASSIC FM

FM 99.9-101.9MHz

6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Dan Walker **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Dan Walker **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings. Presented by Zeb Soanes **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00 - 6.30am** Early Breakfast

WORLD SERVICE

DIGITAL ONLY

8.00am News **8.06** People Fixing the World **8.30** Business Daily **8.50** Witness History **9.00** The Newsroom **9.30** Assignment **10.00** News **10.06** The Arts Hour **11.00** The Newsroom **11.30** The Global Story **12.00** News **12.06pm** Outlook **12.50** Witness History **1.00** The Newsroom **1.30** In the Studio **2.00** Newshour **3.00** News **3.06** People Fixing the World **3.30** World Business Report **4.00** BBC OS **6.00** News **6.06** Outlook **6.50** Witness History **7.00** The Newsroom **7.30** Sport Today **8.00** News **8.06**



Assignment **8.30** Tech Life **9.00** Newshour **10.00** News **10.06** People Fixing the World **10.30** In the Studio **11.00** The Newsroom **11.30** World Business Report **12.00** News **12.06am** The Arts Hour **1.00** News **1.06** Business Matters **2.00** The Newsroom **2.30** The Climate Question **3.06** Outlook **3.50** Witness History **4.00** The Newsroom **4.30** Amazing Sport Stories: Chasing Mountains **5.00 - 8.00am** Newsday

RADIO 4 EXTRA

DIGITAL ONLY

6.00am The Longest Journey **6.45** A Small Town Murder **7.00** Moving **7.30** The Goon Show **8.00** Turf Wars **8.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry **8.45** Valley of the Dolls **9.00** Munya Chawawa's Election Doom Scroll **9.30** The Test of Time **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** A Good Read **10.30** Jarvis on McCullers **11.00** The Longest Journey **11.45** A Small Town Murder **12.00** Moving **12.30pm** The Goon Show **1.00** Turf Wars **1.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry **1.45** Valley of the Dolls **2.00** Quote – Unquote **2.30** The Go-Between See Radio choice **4.00** A Good Read **4.30** Jarvis on McCullers **5.00** The Longest Journey **5.45** A Small Town Murder **6.00** Moving **6.30** The Goon Show **7.00** Turf Wars **7.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry **7.45** Valley of the Dolls **8.00** Quote – Unquote **8.30** The Go-Between **10.00** Munya Chawawa's Election Doom Scroll **10.30** Liam Williams – Ladhoo **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview **11.00** At Home with the Snails **11.30** We Are Klang **12.00** A Good Read **12.30am** Jarvis on McCullers **1.00** The Longest Journey **1.45** A Small Town Murder **2.00** Moving **2.30** The Goon Show **3.00** Turf Wars **3.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry **3.45** Valley of the Dolls **4.00** Quote – Unquote **4.30 - 6.00am** The Go-Between

Weather & Crosswords

Forecast

General situation

Low pressure moving slowly northeastward will spread spells of rain, some thundery, northward across the United Kingdom today and tonight with a gentle to moderate wind.

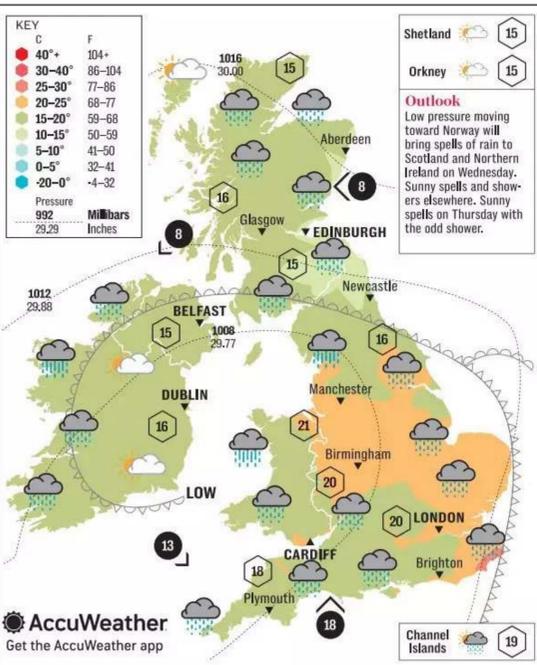
♦ **London, Cent S England, Channel Is, SW England, E England, SE England, E Anglia, Midlands:** Broken cloud today with rainy spells, some thundery. A gentle S to SW wind. Max 65-72F (18-22C). Clear periods tonight with a couple of showers. Min 55-60F (13-16C).

♦ **NW England, Lake Dist, IOM, Cent N England, NE England:** Periods of rain, some thundery, today and tonight. A gentle to moderate S to SE wind. Max 55-68F (13-20C). Min 48-58F (9-15C).

♦ **Wales:** Spells of rain today. A gentle SW wind. Max 55-70F (13-21C). Clear periods tonight with the odd shower. Min 46-58F (8-15C).

♦ **N Ireland:** Rainy spells, some thundery, today and tonight. A moderate E to NE wind. Max 48-62F (9-17C). Min 45-55F (7-13C).

♦ **SW Scotland, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, W Isles, SE Scotland, NE Scotland, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, Orkney, Shetland:** Sunny spells today with rain arriving in the afternoon. A moderate E to NE wind. Max 45-65F (7-18C). Rain tonight. Min 41-57F (5-14C).



Four day forecast

Wednesday
 Low pressure moving toward Norway will bring spells of rain to Scotland and Northern Ireland on Wednesday. Sunny spells and showers elsewhere. Sunny spells on Thursday with the odd shower.

Thursday
 Sunny spells with rain arriving in the afternoon.

Friday
 Sunny spells with rain arriving in the afternoon.

Saturday
 Sunny spells with rain arriving in the afternoon.

European readings

Last night's report for 24 hours to 6pm

City	Max	Min	Daytime	Weather
Akrotiri	34	25	sunny	
Alicante	27	21	sunny	
Amsterdam	20	12	showers	
Athens	37	27	sunny	
Barcelona	25	20	sunny	
Bari	32	22	sunny	
Belgrade	35	22	sunny	
Benidorm	28	23	sunny	
Bergen	14	12	rain	
Berlin	26	11	p/cldy	
Biarritz	30	14	sunny	
Bodrum	40	26	sunny	
Bordeaux	31	15	sunny	
Brest	17	13	rain	
Brussele	21	12	showers	
Bucharest	38	19	sunny	
Budapest	34	19	storms	
Cagliari	33	21	sunny	
Chamonix	23	11	showers	
Copenhagen	21	14	showers	
Corfu	36	23	sunny	
Cork	14	8	rain	
Corsica	29	19	sunny	
Crete	30	25	sunny	
Dublin	17	7	p/cldy	
Dubrovnik	31	22	sunny	
Faro	24	18	sunny	
Florence	33	21	p/cldy	
Frankfurt	27	10	sunny	
Funchal	24	18	p/cldy	
Gdansk	24	12	p/cldy	
Geneva	28	12	sunny	
Gibraltar	24	17	p/cldy	
Hamburg	22	13	p/cldy	
Helsinki	22	14	sunny	
Innsbruck	28	16	p/cldy	
Istanbul	32	24	sunny	
Kyiv	31	14	p/cldy	
La Rochelle	25	15	p/cldy	
Lisbon	26	15	sunny	
Locarno	27	14	p/cldy	
Luxembourg	22	12	p/cldy	
Madrid	34	16	sunny	
Majorca	29	19	sunny	
Malaga	30	19	p/cldy	
Malta	34	21	sunny	
Marseille	32	17	sunny	
Menorca	27	19	sunny	
Milan	30	20	p/cldy	
Monaco	26	21	sunny	
Moscow	28	15	sunny	
Munich	23	14	p/cldy	
Naples	31	22	sunny	
Nice	26	21	sunny	
Nicosia	39	25	sunny	
Oporto	22	13	sunny	
Oslo	19	8	p/cldy	
Palermo	31	24	sunny	
Paris	25	12	cloudy	
Perpignan	27	16	sunny	
Prague	24	13	cloudy	
Reykjavik	13	8	cloudy	
Rhodes	37	27	haze	
Riga	23	11	sunny	
Rome	29	24	sunny	
Saint Malo	18	13	showers	
Salzburg	22	16	cloudy	
Santander	23	13	sunny	
Santiago/Comp.	21	14	cloudy	
Sofia	32	17	sunny	
St. Petersburg	20	15	showers	
Stockholm	20	13	showers	
Strasbourg	27	11	p/cldy	
Tenerife	25	18	windy	
Tirana	38	20	sunny	
Toulouse	32	14	sunny	
Valencia	29	22	showers	
Venice	30	21	sunny	
Vienna	28	18	p/cldy	
Vigo	23	14	cloudy	
Vilnius	22	14	p/cldy	
Warsaw	27	16	p/cldy	
Zagreb	33	19	p/cldy	
Zurich	26	11	p/cldy	

Nature Notes

Farmers hope AI vet can be cash cow

An artificial intelligence "vet" that measures animal welfare on dairy farms could lead to increased milk production by ensuring that cows are happy, according to experts.

Sainsbury's is partnering with Vet Vision AI, a company from the University of Nottingham, to trial technology designed to spot when and why cows are happy and healthy.

The AI recognises patterns in behaviour and will suggest ways of improving animals' lifestyles.

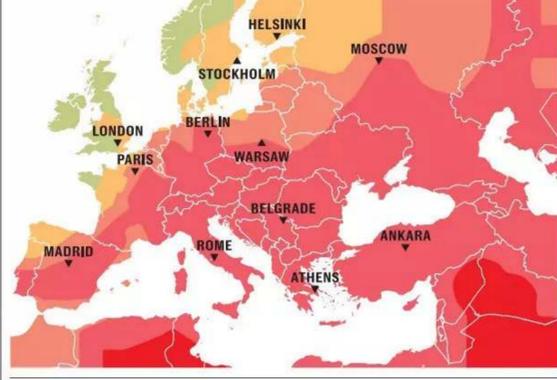
Experts said that as well as the health benefits, the AI is a step forward in farming efficiency because a healthy cow is a more productive cow. The AI is currently in 30 of Sainsbury's dairy development group farms, with aims for a further roll out next year.

Dave Bacon, a dairy farmer at Gleadthorpe Farm, said: "Knowing that my cows are more comfortable as a result means I can feel confident the investment was worth it."

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British readings

Last night's report for 24 hours to 6pm • estimated readings

City	Sun hrs	Rain in	Max/Min	Daytime weather
Aberdeen	2.0	0.19	14 8	rain
Aberystwyth	7.0	0.05	19 4	showers
Antrim	6.3	0.07	17 8	p/cldy
Aviemore	0.9	0.24	14 8	showers
Barnstaple	2.4	0.07	18 9	showers
Barrow-in-Furness	11.2	0.00	19 8	p/cldy
Basingstoke	2.7	0.06	17 9	showers
Bedford	7.8	0.02	19 9	showers
Belfast	5.4	0.00	18 10	p/cldy
Berwick	9.1	0.08	19 8	showers
Birmingham	10.9	0.02	18 8	showers
Bodmin	0.0	0.06	17 11	showers
Bournemouth	0.1	0.03	19 7	showers
Braintree	7.5	0.02	18 8	showers
Brecon	5.7	0.04	17 6	showers
Bridlington	13.7	0.16	18 8	sunny
Brighton	3.2	0.06	18 8	showers
Bristol	4.1	0.09	17 9	showers
Camborne	0.0	0.10	16 13	showers
Cardiff	3.0	0.09	18 9	showers
Carlisle	9.0	0.05	18 8	showers
Catterick	8.8	0.10	20 6	p/cldy
Cheltenham	5.6	0.11	19 8	showers
Chester	10.4	0.00	16 8	p/cldy
Conventry	7.0	0.04	20 8	showers
Doncaster	8.6	0.00	19 8	p/cldy
Dover	4.9	0.03	17 12	showers
Dundee	9.2	0.03	19 7	showers
Eastbourne	0.0	0.03	18 9	showers
Edinburgh	8.0	0.00	19 8	p/cldy
Epsom	6.6	0.08	17 10	showers
Falmouth	0.0	0.21	16 13	showers
Farnborough	4.8	0.14	18 10	showers
Fort William	2.6	0.12	16 7	showers
Glasgow	6.3	0.00	19 7	p/cldy
Great Malvern	5.6	0.10	18 8	showers
Grimsby	9.7	0.16	18 8	showers
Guernsey	0.5	0.30	17 13	showers
Hereford	5.3	0.01	18 8	showers
High Wycombe	5.6	0.07	18 9	showers
Holyhead	9.3	0.00	19 9	showers
Huddersfield	8.5	0.00	18 8	p/cldy
Ipswich	7.5	0.11	19 8	showers
Isle of Man	10.0	0.00	17 8	p/cldy
Isle of Skye	1.7	0.00	13 7	cloudy
Isle of Wight	2.7	0.01	16 14	showers
Isles of Scilly	2.9	0.23	18 13	showers
Jersey	0.6	0.26	19 13	rain
Keswick	8.2	0.07	18 4	showers
King's Lynn	8.7	0.00	21 8	p/cldy
Kew Gardens	5.7	0.06	18 11	showers
Leeds	8.5	0.00	19 6	p/cldy
Leek	8.7	0.08	18 7	p/cldy
Leominster	4.7	0.05	18 7	showers
Lincoln	8.7	0.04	20 9	p/cldy
Liverpool	10.4	0.00	16 8	showers
London	3.3	0.03	19 10	showers
Manchester	7.8	0.00	20 5	p/cldy
Middlesbrough	10.4	0.22	17 8	p/cldy
Newcastle	11.3	0.01	19 7	showers
Newquay	0.0	0.10	16 13	drizzle
Nottingham	9.5	0.00	20 7	p/cldy
Orkney	3.8	0.02	16 8	p/cldy
Oxford	5.6	0.09	18 8	showers
Perth	7.6	0.12	19 6	showers
Peterborough	6.7	0.00	19 8	p/cldy
Plymouth	0.0	0.21	17 13	rain
Portsmouth	3.3	0.14	17 10	showers
Prinstown	10.6	0.00	18 7	p/cldy
Ramsgate	4.2	0.02	18 10	showers
Rhyl	10.5	0.00	19 7	p/cldy
Rugby	7.8	0.09	18 8	showers
Salisbury	2.6	0.22	18 8	showers
Scunthorpe	9.1	0.00	19 8	p/cldy
Sheffield	8.6	0.00	19 8	p/cldy
Shetland	0.6	0.07	13 10	showers
Shrewsbury	6.6	0.01	20 7	p/cldy
Skegness	10.4	0.00	19 7	p/cldy
Southampton	7.1	0.27	18 9	rain
South-on-Sea	7.0	0.17	18 12	showers
Stockport	7.8	0.00	20 5	p/cldy
Stornoway	0.0	0.04	14 8	showers
Swansea	4.6	0.08	17 9	showers
Swindon	5.2	0.08	17 9	showers
Thirsk	9.0	0.16	21 4	p/cldy
Tiree	1.0	0.00	15 9	cloudy
Weymouth	0.0	0.27	17 14	showers
Whitehaven	13.3	0.00	16 7	sunny
Widmerere	9.6	0.05	17 5	showers
Worcester	5.7	0.03	18 6	showers
Yeovil	0.2	0.26	17 8	showers
York	9.5	0.00	19 8	p/cldy

World readings

City	Max	Min	Daytime	Weather
Accra	28	24	showers	
Addis Ababa	25	15	rain	
Adelaide	15	10	showers	
Alexandria	31	26	hazy	
Algiers	27	20	p/cldy	
Amman	33	22	sunny	
Anchorage	14	12	rain	
Ankara	33	16	sunny	
Ascension Is.	28	23	showers	
Auckland	16	8	sunny	
Baghdad	45	28	hazy	
Bahamas	32	26	p/cldy	
Bahrain	39	33	sunny	
Bangkok	33	27	storms	
Beijing	34	22	p/cldy	
Beirut	31	26	sunny	
Bermuda	29	25	p/cldy	
Bogota	19	10	showers	
Bridgetown	30	26	storms	
Brisbane	22	12	rain	
Buenos Aires	8	3	sunny	
Cairo	38	24	sunny	
Canberra	12	4	rain	
Capetown	12	7	rain	
Casablanca	26	15	sunny	
Chicago	28	21	storms	
Christchurch	9	0	sunny	
Colombo	31	27	storms	
Damascus	37	21	sunny	
Dar es Salaam	31	21	p/cldy	
Dhaka	15	10	showers	
Dubai	43	35	p/cldy	
Falkland Is.	5	2	cloudy	
Harare	27	9	sunny	
Havana	32	25	p/cldy	
Hong Kong	33	29	p/cldy	
Honolulu	26	24	showers	
Jakarta	32	25	p/cldy	
Jeddah	40	33	p/cldy	
Jerusalem	30	20	sunny	
Johannesburg	9	1	windy	
Kabul	36	18	sunny	
Karachi	37	29	p/cldy	
Kolkata	33	28	p/cldy	
Kuala Lumpur	31	24	storms	
La Paz	14	-2	sunny	
Lahore	38	28	sunny	
Lima	18	15	cloudy	
Los Angeles	25	18	p/cldy	
Maldives	32	28	storms	
Manila	35	25	storms	
Marrakesh	33	16	sunny	
Melbourne	17	4	cloudy	
Miami	32	28	p/cldy	
Montego Bay	31	26	cloudy	
Mumbai	29	25	storms	
Nairobi	24	15	storms	
New Orleans	33	27	storms	
New Delhi	32	26	rain	
New York	34	25	p/cldy	
Ottawa	27	18	cloudy	
Perth	21	8	cloudy	
Port-of-Spain	31	24	storms	
Rio de Janeiro	33	21	p/cldy	
Riyadh	43	28	sunny	
San Francisco	17	13	p/cldy	
Santiago	12	-1	sunny	
Seattle	27	19	sunny	
Seoul	25	23	rain	
Seychelles	28	26	rain	
Singapore	30	25	storms	
Sydney	19	12	showers	
Taipei City	35	27	storms	
Tangier	25	16	sunny	
Tel Aviv	33	24	sunny	
Tokyo	34	26	p/cldy	
Toronto	28	19	p/cldy	
Tunis	37	23	p/cldy	
Vancouver	22	15	sunny	
Washington	35	27	sunny	
Wellington	12	5	sunny	
Winnipeg	25	14	p/cldy	