The Guardian
Thursday
11 July 2024
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Alicia Witt

Why I will never watch my new film



G2

Starmer: 'shocking' prisons crisis is worse than I feared

- More than 20,000 to go free early as jails approach capacity
- Conservatives accused of 'act of self-harm to country'

Pippa Crerar
Rajeev Syal
Jessica Elgot

The "shocking" prisons crisis is even worse than feared, Keir Starmer has said, as the government prepares to release tens of thousands of inmates early to stop jails becoming full.

The prime minister suggested he was opposed to freeing violent criminals and sex offenders as ministers prepared to announce the terms of a new prisoner release scheme for England and Wales tomorrow. The Guardian understands they are examining whether domestic abusers can be excluded.

The scheme is expected to allow early release for those who have served 40% of their sentence, instead of 50% under current rules for inmates serving determinate sentences. Whitehall sources say this could lead to the release of more than 20,000 people over many months.

The former Tory justice secretary Alex Chalk is understood to have pushed Rishi Sunak for months to change those rules, but the then prime minister is said by insiders to have repeatedly overruled him, believing it would be politically toxic and that numbers could be managed within existing systems.

Speaking to reporters on a trip to the Nato summit in the US, Starmer said the Conservative government had been reckless in letting prisons come within a fortnight of reaching overflow. "It is shocking for our country to have got into a state where we have too many prisoners and not enough prison places," he said. "To a point where any government is now in a position where it has to release prisoners early. That is a shocking indictment. That is a total failure of government."

Prisons are understood to have been operating at 10

Holland-daze
Watkins puts England in dreamland



▲ *England goalscorer Ollie Watkins (left) and defender Marc Guéhi celebrate after Watkins' winner against the Netherlands* PHOTOGRAPH: KENZO TRIBOULLARD/AFP



Barney Ronay
Dortmund

Put out more flags. Dig out the St George's Cross jester's hat. Prepare to throw what remains of your plastic beer glass in the air. England's footballers will now contest the final of Euro 2024 in Berlin this weekend, against Spain, after yet another thrilling moment of late drama in Dortmund.

The Aston Villa striker Ollie Watkins, playing in his first tournament, was the late hero, after coming on as a late sub for Harry Kane with the game poised at 1-1. England and the Netherlands were staring balefully at the prospect of extra time when Watkins took a pass from Cole Palmer - another sub - turned swiftly, and hammered the ball home without looking up.

Signal Iduna Park is another of the Rhineland's huge industrial metal football hangars. In that moment the ground exploded, a huge wave of noise barrelling down from England end and the bench emptying on to the pitch. England, who have been pilloried, questioned and insulted 2

▼ *Jubilant England supporters enjoy the victory during the semi-final at the Westfalenstadion in Dortmund*
PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS/THE GUARDIAN



Bring on Spain

Watkins leaves it late to put Southgate's men into final of Euro 2024

Continued *from page 1*

by influential broadcasters, will now play in their second straight final in this tournament and they did it not just by winning late, but by playing well, producing their best performance of the summer.

From the start, the occasion felt big, epic, retro, and always somehow slightly out of control on the emotional scale. Dortmund was thronging all afternoon with orange shirts, crackling with broken glass under foot, its winding streets haunted by England songs, England wails and drones and chants: Don't Take Me Home, Phil Foden's On Fire, and a recent addition to the canon, Stop the Boats Nigel Farage.

For a while even the rain was massive and relentless, drenching the deep green turf, creeping in through the holes in the corrugated roof, cooling the clammy air.

The Dutch fans had turned Dortmund's vast yellow wall into a roiling orange mass. England had the other end and most of the in-between, tiers decked out with the usual pageantry of flags, a familiar tour of the country from Bristol to Carlisle to Bermondsey.

The talk at this tournament, even as England progressed, had been about gaps. Gaps in the team. Gaps between the manager, fans, media. But there was a window of light in this game. For half an hour in the first half, England's young midfielders played like princelings.



▲ *Dutch fans watch as their chance slips away* PHOTOGRAPH: EMIEL MUIJDERMAN/EPA

England fielded their comfortable armchair formation again, the Southgate security truss, three at the back, with the hugely composed Marc Guéhi returning after suspension. They look happier with that extra defensive body, the box of white shirts tighter. Southgate-ism is control and security, the footballing equivalent of a pensive and reassuring frown.

England played well for the opening minutes, then suddenly the Dutch scored from a quick turnover. The noise came in a slingshot from that end as the Dutch players ran to the ziggurat of orange. No matter. England were, of all things, playing quite well. They looked perky, fresh, unafraid. They had a series of coherent attacks, shots at goal. They were

▼ *Ollie Watkins is mobbed by his team-mates after his late goal put England through to the final*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX GRIMM/GETTY IMAGES







'Spain is Lamine Yamal'

Young star's riposte to far right

Sam Jones
Madrid

As indicated by the shouts that echoed through cities, towns and villages on Tuesday, Spain has a date with destiny.

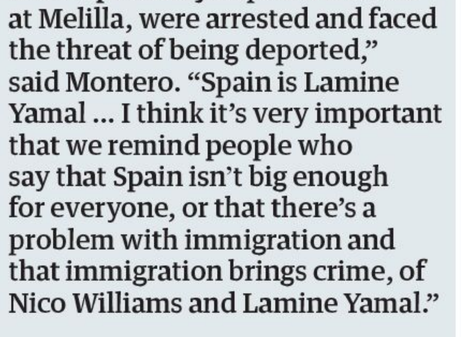
Spain's prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, may have been immersed in the Nato summit in Washington, but he found time to congratulate La Roja. "TO THE FINAL!" he wrote on X. "The whole country is behind you! Let's go, Spain!"

Sánchez was far from alone in being delighted by Spain's 2-1 win over France in Munich.

"¡¡A wild Spain make it to the final in Berlin!!" panted the Marca sports website, while El Mundo couldn't resist a dig at its French sister newspaper L'Équipe for having had the karmic temerity to use the slogan *"No pasarán!"* on the eve of the match: "They shall not pass? Well, we already have."

Pride and attention fell on Lamine Yamal, whose goal put Spain into the final and made him, at the age of 16 and already the youngest footballer to have played for Spain, the youngest man to score in the tournament's history. But what Yamal did next snagged Spanish eyes almost as much as his goal. Crossing his hands over his chest, he used his fingers to spell out three digits: 304.

As viewers and pundits were quick to note, these are the last three numbers that make up the 08304 postcode of Yamal's Rocafonda neighbourhood in the Catalan city of Mataró, which lies 20 miles north east of Barcelona.



▲ *Matchwinner Lamine Yamal, 16, is the son of immigrants to Spain*

Rocafonda and other diverse districts across Spain have often been demonised by the far-right Vox party, which likes to rail against what it terms "multicultural shitholes". Yamal's proud and defiant gesture showed it was a young man from one of those "multicultural shitholes" who put Spain in the final.

Yamal's gesture – and his story – prompted Irene Montero, the Podemos MEP and former national equality minister, to point out that the 16-year-old star and Nico Williams, another force behind Spain's progress, had been born in Spain to parents from abroad.

"It became very clear last night … that Spain is Nico Williams, whose parents jumped the fence at Melilla, were arrested and faced the threat of being deported," said Montero. "Spain is Lamine Yamal … I think it's very important that we remind people who say that Spain isn't big enough for everyone, or that there's a problem with immigration and that immigration brings crime, of Nico Williams and Lamine Yamal."

▲ *England fans watching the game at the Boxpark in Croydon go wild after Ollie Watkins' last-minute goal*
PHOTOGRAPH: DAN KITWOOD/GETTY

awarded a penalty, made by Bukayo Saka's slaloming run, and a reckless challenge from Denzel Dumfries, almost kicking Kane's foot clean off his ankle as he went to shoot. Kane buried the kick. One-one.

This place was throbbing, noise moving across the pitch in swirls. The Dutch manager, Ronald Koeman, sank into his chair, then did something that changed the game. The injured Memphis Depay, an attacker, was replaced by a midfielder, reinforcing the Dutch where England were creating the overloads. The tension shifted. The Netherlands braced and held on to the 1-1 scoreline to half time. This is what Southgate often fails to do, the hand of the manager reaching on to the pitch, tugging at the parts, fixing, tightening, altering the flow.

Beyond the spaceship doors clamped on the roof of the main stand, the sky had turned a lovely Martian red. And for a while Foden, Kobbie Mainoo and Saka had the ball on a string, just zipping about, making things up. This is what this thing is supposed to look like. At one point Mainoo found Foden with drag-back heel-flick, prompting a curling shot that almost crept into the corner. They can play, these boys. It was the sunniest, most liberated half-hour of their time so far in Germany.

Half-time seemed to draw the life out of the game. Southgate will be blamed, because Southgate must be blamed. But the Netherlands set themselves defensively to match England, who became more cautious in their movements. The game became a mass exercise in feints and misdirection, a really cautious and quite soporific game of chess.

Southgate appeared on his touchline in an attitude of concern. The waistcoat is long gone, glimpsed only in cardboard cutouts brandished by England's fans in bars, like stag do mementoes. At these Euros, Southgate has gone charity pro-am golf weekend chic, cream polo shirt and skinny black slacks. He stood and frowned. Passivity has been a strength, a virtue, an active and deliberate method with England. They keep winning, slowly. Is it the only way to do this? Apparently so. England will always take it deep, but they roll on now to Berlin.

'This is more like it'
Foden ignites fans' fire

Phil Foden is finally on fire – and England are heading to Berlin for their first major tournament final outside of Wembley.

A 2-1 win against the Netherlands, and a performance that in large parts of the game finally lived up to the nation's inflated expectations, will see England play Spain in what will be back-to-back European Championship finals for Gareth Southgate and his team.

The prime minister, Keir Starmer, led the tributes from England fans. "What a game, England, and what a winner," he wrote on X while attending the Nato summit in Washington DC. "Berlin, here we come!"

No 10 confirmed that Starmer and the culture secretary, Lisa Nandy, would be attending the match on Sunday.

The Killers, playing at the O2 Arena in London last night, screened the game at the gig and let off confetti at the final whistle, with music and football fans celebrating wildly.

To date, there had perhaps been an ironic edge to England supporters' own musical tribute to Foden in their rehashed version of Bruce Springsteen's Dancing in the Dark ("Can't start a fire, can't start a fire without a spark, Phil Foden is on fire").

But the Manchester City midfielder's conducting of his team's talents on a humid night in Dortmund, at least in the first-half, offered reason for glorious extra gusto from England's travelling support in the Westfalenstadion.

Rather than sitting back, as Southgate's team have been accused of doing, England piled on the pressure.

"This is more like it," said Ryan Shaw, 32, a roofer from Macclesfield who had come to Dortmund without a ticket.

There had certainly been plenty of doubters after a series of poor performances in the group stage, and a near-death experience against Slovakia in the round of 16 followed by a win on penalties against Switzerland.

But as the England players joined the crowd in a raucous rendition of Neil Diamond's Sweet Caroline, and about 25 million people at home cheered the final whistle, there was belief in the air.

The Dutch fans left the stadium with little to be ashamed of. Their good-natured support had lit up the west German city; more than 75,000 turned Dortmund orange.

There were some scuffles between supporters earlier in they day. Five England supporters were said to have sustained minor injuries after being attacked by Dutch fans during an altercation over a St George's flag.

England fans can enjoy a few wondrous days contemplating whether they will see modern-day equivalents of Geoff Hurst, Bobby Charlton and Bobby Moore lift a trophy on Sunday evening.

"So good, so good, so good," chorused the fans in the bars of Dortmund as they offered yet up another rendition of Sweet Caroline. It would be difficult to argue. Daniel Boffey *Dortmund*

Patients are fobbed off and gaslighted, says NHS watchdog

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

NHS patients raising safety concerns are too often "gaslighted", "fobbed off" or dismissed as "difficult women", according to England's patient safety commissioner, who criticised health leaders for a "relentless focus" on finance and productivity.

Dr Henrietta Hughes said patients and loved ones sounding the alarm about substandard care should be an early indicator of danger or potential harm, but far too frequently they were completely ignored. NHS trusts focusing too much on budgets meant that "the culture becomes toxic, and we're just on the road back to the Mid Staffs scandal", she added.

Hughes was referring to the failures at Mid Staffordshire NHS foundation trust, where hundreds of patients were neglected, dismissed or ignored between 2005 and 2009. Some were left lying in their own urine, unable to eat, drink or take essential medication.

"The patient's anecdote is the canary in the coalmine," she said. "It's the thing that tells us there's something going wrong. But too often we hear about patients who have raised concerns being gaslighted, dismissed, and fobbed off."

Hughes, who was appointed to her role in 2022, said she was determined to bring about improvements in patient safety but was "swimming against the tide" when it came to making a lasting cultural change in the NHS.

Speaking to the British Medical Journal, Hughes also said women in some cases had been patronised and had legitimate fears dismissed.

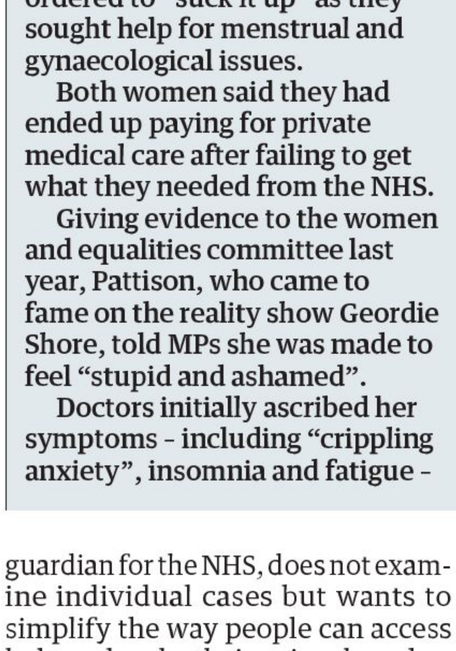
Her role was created after a damning report examined three scandals: hormone pregnancy tests that are thought to be associated with birth defects and miscarriages; sodium valproate, an antiepileptic drug that can cause birth defects when taken by pregnant women; and pelvic mesh implants, which have been linked to serious complications.

Hughes said that, too often, patients raising concerns were simply passed off as "difficult women". She said: "It shows a very dismissive and very old-fashioned, patronising attitude to patients who have identified problems and need to have their voices heard."

Hughes, the former medical director at NHS England and national guardian for the NHS, does not examine individual cases but wants to simplify the way people can access help and make their voices heard.

"There's over 100 patient safety organisations, and one of the things that we'll be working on this year is doing the Patient Safety Atlas of Powers, an easy-to-read guide of the arm's length bodies and regulators and what their roles and remits are," she said.

"Because as far as I'm concerned, they don't join up. They don't reference the next step in the chain."



▲ *Martha's rule, implemented after Martha Mills died in hospital, allows patients to seek an urgent review*

Hughes said Martha's rule was one area where she felt her team had really made a difference.

This patient safety initiative, enabling those whose health is failing to obtain an urgent second opinion about their care, is to be rolled out in 143 hospitals in England, the NHS said in May.

The move followed pressure on politicians, NHS bosses and doctors after Merope Mills, a senior editor at the Guardian, and her husband, Paul Laity, told the story of what happened to their daughter, 13-year-old Martha, who died of sepsis at King's College hospital in London in 2021.

Martha had sustained an injury to her pancreas when she fell off her bike on a summer holiday. However, doctors at King's College did not listen to her parents' concerns, including the possibility Martha could have had sepsis, a major cause of avoidable death that kills an estimated 40,000 people a year in the UK.

"I've never seen something happen at that scale and speed before, particularly in such a collaborative way," Hughes said.

However, beyond that success, NHS trusts were in danger of focusing too much on finance, making the working culture "toxic", she added.

Last year she pointed out in a report that neither the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) nor NHS England had patient representatives on their boards, nor did they regularly hear from a patient at their board meetings. Hughes said she still believed this to be the case.

"I've been continuously raising this concern that I have, that safety is seen as some kind of sideshow rather than as central and paramount," she said. "The relentless focus on productivity, finance, and performance is really missing a huge opportunity to start with patients and start with safety."

But Hughes said she was "swimming against the tide" when it came to making a lasting cultural change with her role, which is funded by the DHSC.

A DHSC spokesperson said: "Too many patients are not listened to, treated with respect, or given the information they need to access the right services. This government will prioritise patient safety to ensure that the NHS treats everyone with the high quality and safe care that they deserve."

A spokesperson for NHS England said: "It's vital that everyone working in the NHS listens to and works with patients to identify and act upon concerns, and learns from experiences so they do not happen again."



Naga Munchetty



Vicki Pattison

TV stars told to 'suck it up'

The TV personalities Vicky Pattison and Naga Munchetty have revealed how they were ordered to "suck it up" as they sought help for menstrual and gynaecological issues.

Both women said they had ended up paying for private medical care after failing to get what they needed from the NHS.

Giving evidence to the women and equalities committee last year, Pattison, who came to fame on the reality show Geordie Shore, told MPs she was made to feel "stupid and ashamed".

Doctors initially ascribed her symptoms – including "crippling anxiety", insomnia and fatigue – to premenstrual syndrome (PMS), but she was eventually diagnosed with premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD).

Pattison said: "I was always told exactly the same thing: 'This is PMS. This is what women go through. Every other woman in the world is dealing with this.'"

She decided to go private "after feeling ignored and invalidated by the NHS" and said she "could've kicked myself for taking so long" as she was immediately diagnosed with PMDD.

The broadcaster and journalist Munchetty, who has been diagnosed with adenomyosis, said her pain became so intense that her husband once called an ambulance.

She said she had been told since she was about 15 "to 'suck it up' and 'You're normal' and 'Everyone goes through this', and especially told by male doctors who've never experienced a period and then by female doctors who hadn't experienced period pain".

"No woman says she's in pain unless she is in real pain. No woman says she is anxious unless she is really anxious. No woman wants to appear weak or appear incapable until she really is, until she can't cope any more. And it shouldn't be that way."
Andrew Gregory

Restore UK relations with Kabul to help women, aid regulator says

Patrick Wintour
Diplomatic editor

The UK should consider restoring its diplomatic presence in Afghanistan to support Afghan women and to help monitor the impact of British aid, the deputy commissioner for the official UK aid watchdog has suggested.

Hugh Bayley, who visited Kabul in May, said he believed Afghan women and NGOs would welcome more western diplomats to represent the opinions of women to the Taliban as he released a report by the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) on the effectiveness of the UK programme, which is the second largest operated by Britain.

The UK pulled all diplomatic representation out of Afghanistan when the Taliban took over in 2021. Since then, Afghan bank assets held overseas have been frozen and the economy has nosedived. Yet as much as $2.9bn (£2.3bn) of aid has been sent to the country, largely to NGOs rather than to Taliban-directed ministries. No state recognises the Taliban as the Afghan government, though countries including Russia, China, Iran, Turkey and India have opened diplomatic missions in Kabul.

Bayley said the benefits of a British presence had been put to him by NGOs, on top of the regular visits to Kabul from the UK mission in Doha.

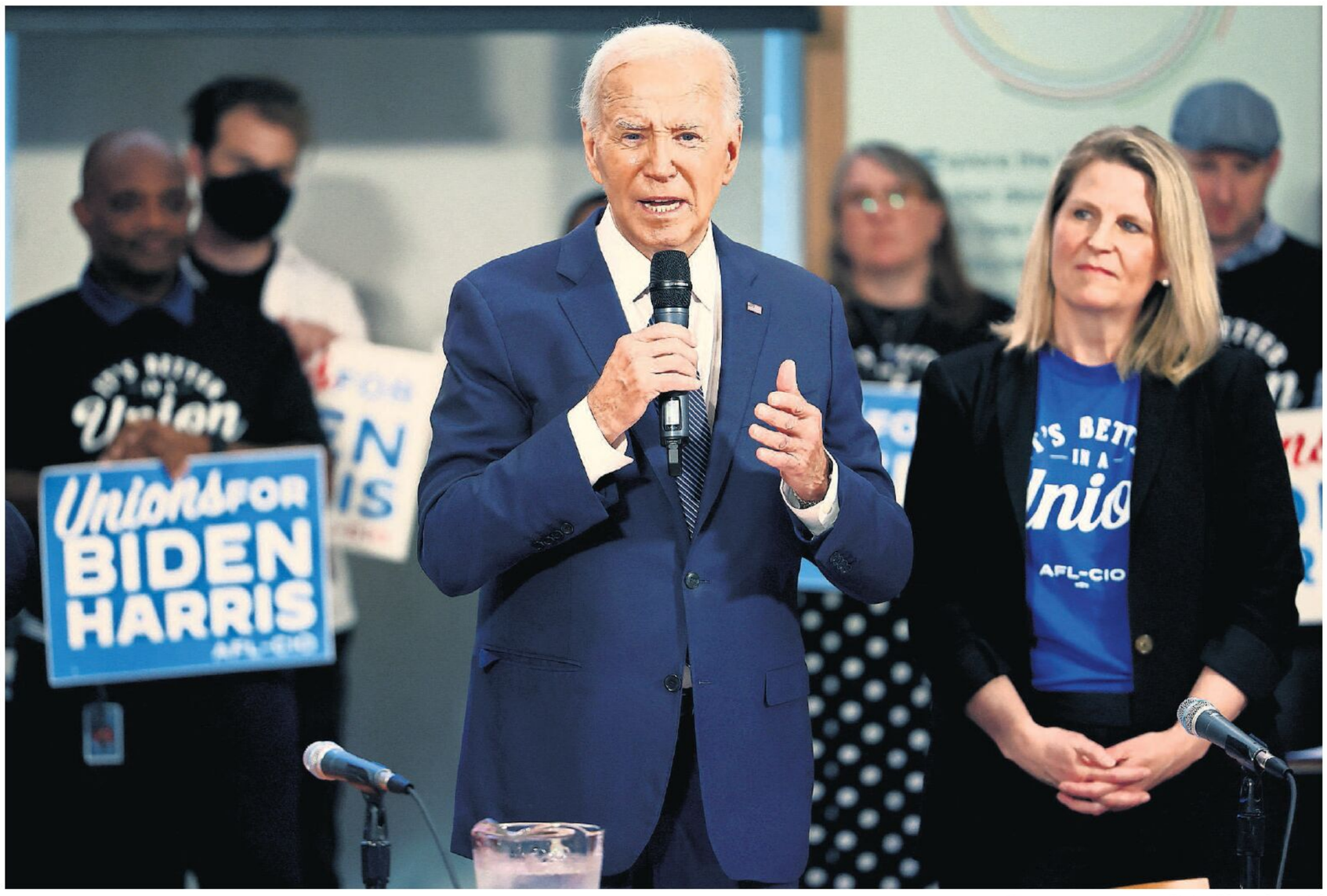
"The UK's £150m programme in Afghanistan is currently our second biggest bilateral programme anywhere in the world, second after Ukraine, and ICAI's view is that if you are dispensing that amount of British taxpayer's money, you need eyes on the ground to see how it has been spent," he said.

"If western countries don't have a presence on the ground and don't engage with both Afghan civil society and the Taliban, then the western aid funded approach will achieve less," he said, pointing out that although the UK has a target for 50% of its aid to reach women, it is impossible to meet it without presence there.

He added that a senior UN official had told him: "If we do not engage with Afghan citizens including the Taliban, we will burn one bridge after another."



▲ *Hugh Bayley says western nations now need a presence in Afghanistan*



Joe Biden speaks at a meeting of union leaders in Washington yesterday. The president is facing growing calls to drop out of the race after his poor performance in a debate with Donald Trump

PHOTOGRAPH: REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

'We are not going to win with this president': George Clooney calls on Joe Biden to quit race

Robert Tait
Washington

George Clooney, the Hollywood actor and one of the Democratic party's biggest fundraisers, yesterday called on Joe Biden to step aside to save democracy from Donald Trump.

In an opinion article in the New York Times, Clooney expressed deep affection for the US president but said personal interaction with him at a recent fundraising event in Los Angeles - the Democratic party's most successful ever, raising more than $30m (£23m) - suggested Biden's stumbling performance in last month's debate in Atlanta was not an aberration.

'Joe Biden is a hero. He saved democracy in 2020. We need him to do it again in 2024'



George Clooney

"It's devastating to say it, but the Joe Biden I was with three weeks ago at the fundraiser was not the Joe "big F-ing deal" Biden of 2010," the long-time party member wrote.

"He wasn't even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate. Was he tired? Yes. A cold? Maybe. But our party leaders need to stop telling us that 51 million people didn't see what we just saw."

Clooney added: "We are not going to win with this president."

Stressing that his call was made reluctantly, Clooney praised the political battles Biden had won during his career but said his age represented an insurmountable adversary.

"But the one battle he cannot win is the fight against time. None of us can," he wrote.

Clooney's plea came as Biden continued to insist on staying in the race while senior Democrats agonise about how to change his mind. Republicans in Congress gleefully sought to tighten the screw by summoning three White House aides to testify about Biden's mental fitness.

The summons came as a subpoena from James Comer, the GOP chair of the House oversight committee, who demanded testimony from Anthony Bernal, the top aide to the first lady, Jill Biden, deputy chief of staff Annie Tomasini, and senior adviser Ashley Williams, Axios reported.

Clooney called on leading party figures to come off the fence and make the case to Biden, writing: "Most of our members of Congress are opting to wait and see if the dam breaks.

"But the dam has broken. We can put our heads in the sand and pray for a miracle in November, or we can speak the truth."

He concluded: "Joe Biden is a hero; he saved democracy in 2020. We need him to do it again in 2024."

In further signs of Democratic support for Biden wavering yesterday, Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado predicted Trump would defeat Biden in a "landslide", while the House Democratic leader, Nancy Pelosi, said it was up to Biden "to decide if he's going to run", in remarks that will intensify the pressure on the president to reconsider his determination to stay in the race.

In an impassioned interview with CNN, Bennet said he believed Biden could no longer win November's election and said his campaign needed to assess whether he steps aside in "moral" terms based on the importance of saving the country from the "American tragedy" of a second Trump presidency.

"This race is on a trajectory that is very worrisome if you care about the future of this country," Bennet told CNN's Kaitlan Collins. "Donald Trump is on track, I think, to win this election and maybe win it by a landslide, and take with him the Senate and the House. It's not a question about politics, it's a moral question about the future of our country."

Pelosi told MSNBC's Morning Joe it was "up to the president to decide if he is going to run" and said of House Democrats: "We're all encouraging him to make that decision because time is running short."

The latest comments followed a meeting of the Democratic Senate caucus in which Bennet and two other senators, Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Jon Tester of Montana, reportedly said they believed Biden was no longer able to win after the debate failure, in which he appeared repeatedly confused, lost his train of thought and failed to counter lies from Trump.

While no senators have explicitly called on Biden to step aside, seven House members have appealed to him to abandon his re-election bid.

The president has refused to bow out, telling his doubters to challenge him at next month's Democratic national convention in Chicago.

He has secured crucial support from the Congressional Black Caucus, though yesterday one of its members, Marc Veasey of Texas, became the first to break ranks, telling CNN that Democrats running in tight races should "distance themselves" from Biden in an effort to "do whatever it is they need to do" to win.

Bones reveal secrets of Isle of Wight's 'Cretaceous cows'

Rachel Hall
Ian Sample

A new species of large plant-eating dinosaur that roamed the Isle of Wight about 125m years ago has been identified.

The specimen, which had 149 bones, was the most complete dinosaur discovered in Britain in a century, researchers said.

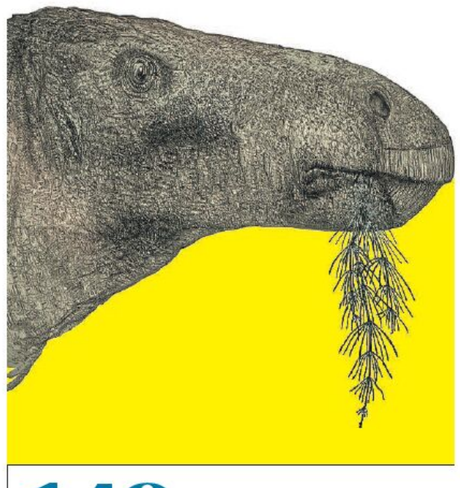
Comptonatus chasei (pictured) is named after the late fossil hunter Nick Chase and the place where it was found, the cliffs of Compton Bay. It belongs to a group of herbivorous dinosaurs known as iguanodontians, bulky creatures often described as the "cows of the Cretaceous period [145m-66m years ago]".

"This really is a remarkable find," said Dr Jeremy Lockwood, a scientific associate at the Natural History Museum, who helped with the dinosaur's excavation and spent years studying the skeleton.

"This animal would have been around a tonne [1,000kg], about the size of a large male American bison. Evidence from fossil footprints found nearby shows it was likely to be a herding animal, so possibly large herds of these heavy dinosaurs may have been thundering around if spooked by predators on the floodplains over 120m years ago."

For the study, published in the Journal of Systematic Palaeontology, the researchers analysed every part of the fossil, including the skull, teeth and spine, as well as a pubic hip bone that was "about the size of a dinner plate".

Dr Susannah Maidment, a senior researcher and palaeontologist at the Natural History Museum, said *Comptonatus* demonstrated the fast rates of evolution in iguanodontian dinosaurs during that time period. The work could help researchers understand how ecosystems recovered after an extinction event at the end of the Jurassic period (201-145m years ago), she added.



149

Number of bones of Comptonatus chasei found, making it the most complete UK discovery in 100 years

Comptonatus was discovered in 2013 by Chase. It took several years for the specimen to be prepared for analysis by Lockwood and his colleagues.

Eight extinct species from the Isle of Wight have been named in the past five years, which Lockwood said showed that the island may have once had one of the world's most diverse ecosystems.

The *Comptonatus* specimen is now part of the collection at the Dinosaur Isle museum in Sandown in the Isle of Wight.

Army veteran captured after three women are killed in crossbow attack

Jamie Grierson
Mabel Banfield-Nwachi
Vikram Dodd

A British Army veteran wanted in connection with the murder of three women in a suspected crossbow attack has been captured after being found with injuries, police said.

Kyle Clifford, 26, who is understood to have served in the British army for about a year, was named as a suspect by Hertfordshire police after the deaths of Carol Hunt, 61, and her two daughters, Hannah, 28, and Louise, 25, at a property in Bushey.

Ch Supt Jon Simpson, from Hertfordshire police, told reporters yesterday that the suspected murders in Bushey were believed to have been "targeted".

Yesterday afternoon a statement from Hertfordshire police said that Clifford had been found in north London and had received medical treatment for injuries. Police emphasised that no shots were fired.

London Ambulance Service confirmed that a man was treated at a cemetery before being transported to a "major trauma centre", which could be one of four hospitals within the capital.

Yesterday afternoon there was a significant number of police at Lavender Hill Cemetery, 16 miles from the crime scene and near a property that was searched earlier in the day as part of the manhunt.

Paramedics and ambulances were also present at the location. Footage captured from a helicopter showed a man being stretchered out of the cemetery grounds.

At this stage, police said they believed the suspect was known to the victims and no one else was being sought in connection with the investigation.

Sources said that Carol Hunt was found in the hallway of the house with a crossbow bolt in her chest, while evidence of ligatures were found near the victims. One of the victims was understood to have sent a text to her partner, urging a call to the police.

Clifford is believed to have served in the British army for a year, sources said. The Ministry of Defence was contacted for comment.

The women are understood to be the family of the BBC's racing commentator John Hunt. In a note sent yesterday to staff of BBC Five Live, his place of work, the organisation described the incident as "utterly devastating".

The Hunts have another daughter, Amy, who is thought to live in Birmingham.

Police said that a crossbow or other weapons could have been used in the attacks, and that they were investigating what relationship any of the victims might have had to Clifford.

The home secretary, Yvette Cooper, is urgently considering the findings of a Home Office review, launched in 2021, to see if tougher crossbow laws need to be introduced.

A source said that the victims were not gagged and bound when found, but there were ligature marks around their wrists and face. The source said all the victims showed signs of injuries to their knees.

The Guardian understands that one of the victims called 999 and alerted police about the incident before the perpetrator fled.

Detectives have asked the public to report anything suspicious they might have seen in Ashlyn Close from midday on Tuesday, about seven hours before they found the women. A source said the women might have been held hostage for hours before police were called.

One neighbour described hearing screams from the suburban home where the three women died. The 46-year-old who lives near the scene but asked not to be named, said "absolute chaos" then broke out as armed police put the road into lockdown.

She told the PA news agency: "It was between 6.30pm and 7pm last night and it literally just sounded like kids, somebody screaming, and then it was more shrill and I was like 'that's definitely a woman screaming', and within 15 minutes it was absolute chaos.

"We had armed police running down, screaming 'stay in your house'... they shut us off and basically put us into lockdown."

Yesterday morning armed police raided a property not far from the cemetery in Rendlesham Road, Enfield, which is understood to have been linked to Clifford's brother, Bradley, who was jailed for life in 2018 for murder. Schools in the area were placed in lockdown.

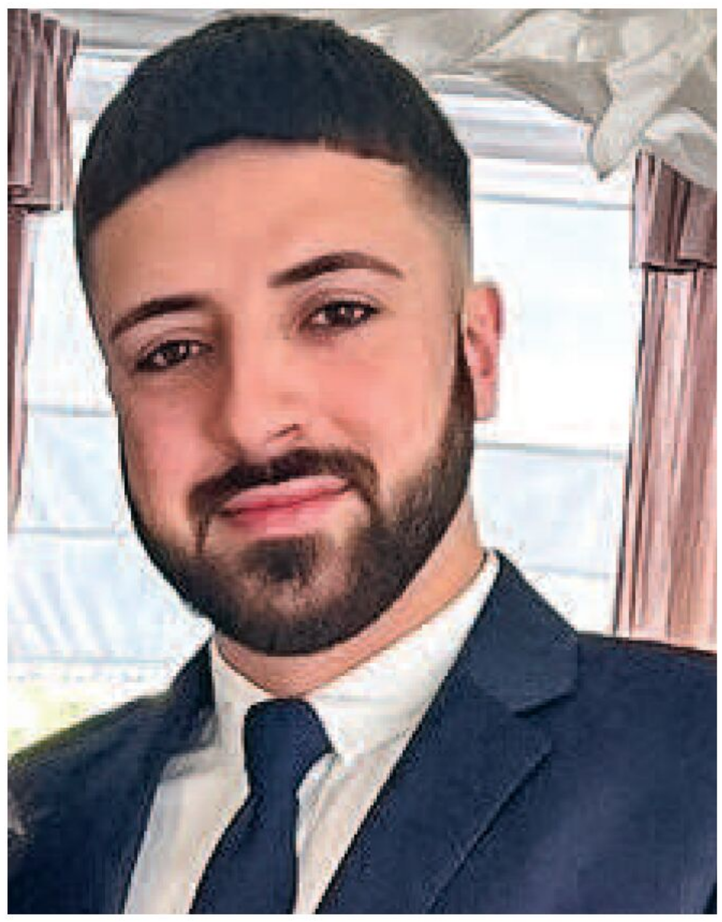
DI Justine Jenkins, from the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit, said: "This continues to be an incredibly difficult time for the victims' family and we would ask that their privacy is respected as they come to terms with what has happened. This investigation is moving at pace and formal identification of the victims is yet to take place."

She added: "Following extensive enquiries the suspect has been located and nobody else is being sought in connection with the investigation at this time.

"We have had an overwhelming number of calls and would like to express our gratitude to the members of the public who have contacted us."

Detectives have appealed for information or video footage. The home secretary said she was being kept fully updated about the inquiry into the "truly shocking" deaths.

People do not need a licence to own a crossbow, but it is illegal to carry one in public without reasonable cause. A Home Office spokeswoman said: "We keep legislation under constant review and a call for evidence was launched this year to look at whether further controls on crossbows should be introduced. The home secretary will swiftly consider the findings to see if laws need to be tightened."



Kyle Clifford, the suspect in the murders of three women found on Tuesday, was captured by police in the Enfield area PHOTOGRAPH: HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE/REUTERS



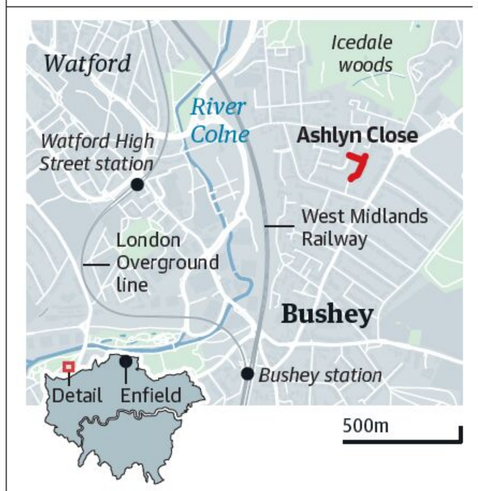
▲ *An armed police officer yesterday searches the Lavender Hill cemetery, in Enfield, during the hunt for Kyle Clifford* PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES LINSELL CLARK/SWNS



▲ *Forensic officers at the house in Ashlyn Close, Bushey, Hertfordshire, where victims of the crossbow attack were found* PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES MANNING/PA



Tributes for family Neighbours, friends and broadcasters pay their respects





John Hunt with his wife, Carol, who was found fatally injured at home in Hertfordshire along with their daughters Louise and Hannah

PHOTOGRAPH: PIXEL8000

Tightening control What are the laws on crossbows and will they be changed?

Jamie Grierson

On Christmas Day 2021, Jaswant Singh Chail, armed with a powerful crossbow, was detained close to Windsor Castle. Chail, encouraged by an AI chatbot, wanted to kill the late queen but was stopped in his tracks and ultimately jailed for nine years.

After the incident, the then home secretary, Priti Patel, launched a review of crossbow controls. It was not until February this year that the Home Office opened a call for evidence on a possible tightening of rules around the weapons.

The call for evidence closed in April but there has been no further progress towards changing the laws governing crossbows. As a result, there is currently no registration system for owning a crossbow and no requirement for a licence.

But, under government guidance, anyone who carries a crossbow in public without "reasonable excuse" faces up to four years behind bars.

After three women were found dead in Bushey, Hertfordshire, the new home secretary, Yvette Cooper, said she would "swiftly" consider findings of the review to see if the laws need to be tightened further.

Crossbows are subject to statutory controls under the Crossbows Act 1987, which makes it an offence to sell or hire one with a draw weight of 1.4kg or greater, to under-18s in England, Wales and Scotland. Similar legislation exists in Northern Ireland, where those under 18 are not permitted to hire a crossbow.

The maximum penalty for the sale or hire of a crossbow to anyone under 18 is six months' imprisonment or a fine. It is also unlawful to hunt with a crossbow under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The targeting of the queen three years ago was one of a number of incidents that raised the profile of crossbows. In January this year, the convicted stalker Bryce Hodgson was shot dead by police after he broke into a London home armed with weapons including a crossbow. The 30-year-old was given a suspended jail term last year, placed under supervision and subjected to a restraining order.

According to Home Office statements in February, there were fewer than 10 killings involving a crossbow between 2011 and 2021 – but the department said it was "clear that when used as a weapon, crossbows do pose a risk".

In January 2023, a domestic homicide review found the Metropolitan police had missed opportunities to protect Sana Muhammad from her ex-husband in the years before he killed her with a crossbow.

The 35-year-old was eight months pregnant when the former nurse Ramanodge Unmathallegadoo, then 51, burst into her home and fired an arrow into her stomach in 2018.

The pair had divorced four years earlier after entering into an arranged marriage in their home country of Mauritius in 1999, when Muhammad was 17.

She died after sustaining catastrophic internal injuries from the attack but her unborn son – who was delivered by caesarean section – miraculously survived.

Unmathallegadoo was found guilty of murder and handed a life sentence with a minimum term of 33 years in 2019.

In 2010, a student who called himself the "Crossbow Cannibal" was jailed for life for the murders of three women in Bradford. Stephen Griffiths murdered Suzanne Blamires, 36, Shelley Armitage, 31, and Susan Rushworth, 43.

Griffiths was arrested after CCTV footage of him attacking Blamires at his block of flats was discovered by a caretaker at the complex. Blamires could be seen running out of Griffiths' flat with him in pursuit. She was later seen being dragged on the floor by her leg by Griffiths. She was then shot with a crossbow before Griffiths "gestured" by holding a finger up to the CCTV camera.

After the Bushey killings, a Home Office spokesperson said: "This is an appalling incident and the home secretary is being kept updated by the police.

"We keep legislation under constant review and a call for evidence was launched earlier this year to look at whether further controls on crossbows should be introduced. The home secretary will swiftly consider the findings to see if laws need to be tightened further."



▲ Yvette Cooper said she would look into whether a law change is needed

'John is the archetypal family man, so it is impossible to know what he is going through'

Cornelius Lysaght
BBC broadcaster

Jamie Grierson

Tributes have been paid to three women murdered on Tuesday in an "utterly devastating" crossbow attack in Hertfordshire.

Carol Hunt and her two daughters, Hannah Hunt, 28, a beautician, and Louise Hunt, 25, a dog groomer, were found injured at a property in Bushey, Hertfordshire, and died shortly afterwards at the scene.

It emerged yesterday that they were the family of John Hunt, the BBC racing commentator.

Glyn Nicholas, 77, retired, who said he had lived in the same road as the victims for 50 years, said: "They were a private family, all very nice, a private family. They all did their own things. Louise started a business a couple of years ago, and it was a thriving business, we all took our dogs there to be groomed."

He added: "[They were] a very close-knit family and they used to love the street."

As tearful residents in the area, near the family's home in Ashlyn Close, Bushey, started to lay flowers, Hunt's colleagues offered their love and thoughts. A note sent to staff at BBC Radio 5 Live yesterday said the organisation would provide Hunt with "all the support" they could.

It read: "The news today about John Hunt's family is utterly devastating. Our thoughts are with John and his family at this incredibly difficult time and we will provide him with all the support we can."

The BBC racing correspondent Cornelius Lysaght said: "Like everyone else I feel numb and sick on John's behalf at such incomprehensible evil. Everyone who knows John knows he is the absolute archetypal family man, so proud of them, so it is impossible to know what he can be going through.

"But I know I am speaking for the whole racing community and the whole wider sports media community as well, both of which he's been part of for so long, when I say everyone is sending sympathy, love and support to him. It's just awful."

The ITV and Sky Sports Racing commentator Matt Chapman said: "News like this is shocking enough but on a personal level even more so when it involves a friend and colleague you totally respect. There are no words here. Just the wish to let John know we love him … John is an outstanding commentator and broadcaster – but he's also just a lovely bloke."

A statement from Sky Sports Racing read: "Everyone at Sky Sports Racing is deeply saddened by the tragic deaths in Hertfordshire and our thoughts are with our colleague John Hunt, his family and friends."





▲ Hannah (top) and Louise Hunt, who died at their home in Bushey



▼ *Keir Starmer held his first official bilateral talks with the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy*
PHOTOGRAPH: STEFAN ROUSSEAU/REUTERS

UK will provide Kyiv with £3bn a year in military aid 'for as long as it takes', Starmer tells Zelenskiy

Pippa Crerar
Dan Sabbagh
Washington

The new government will stick with plans to spend at least £3bn every year on military support for Ukraine for "as long as it takes" in its conflict with Russia, Keir Starmer has said.

After his first official bilateral talks with the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, at the Nato summit in Washington, the prime minister confirmed that the military aid would continue until at least 2030-31.

The UK has to date pledged £12.5bn in support to Ukraine since February 2022, of which £7.6bn is for military assistance and the rest for humanitarian and economic support.

In his talks with Zelenskiy, Starmer said that Ukraine was on an "irreversible" path to Nato membership. However, diplomats at the Nato summit said that setting out any firm timetable would be a gift to Vladimir Putin.

Today, the prime minister will tell his fellow leaders: "Nato was founded by the generation who defeated fascism. They understood not just the value of our strength, but the strength of our values.

"Those values are under attack once again. Putin needs to hear a clear message ringing out from this summit – a message of unity and determination, that we will support Ukraine with whatever it takes, for as long as it takes, to uphold our shared values and our shared security."

British officials have said that while the possible return to the White House of Donald Trump, whose continued backing for Nato and Ukraine is unclear, is at the back of their minds, their focus is on getting the alliance into the best possible shape for whoever wins the US election.

> ***'We will support Ukraine ... to uphold our shared values and shared security'***
>
> **Keir Starmer**
> *Prime minister*

Starmer has called on Nato allies to increase defence spending in response to rising global threats, including from Russia, as he launches a review setting out British plans to spend tens of billions of pounds extra on the military.

He will warn the other 31 Nato countries that the frontline defence of the Euro-Atlantic region is the Ukrainian trenches, and that the international community cannot waver in the face of Russian aggression.

Multi-year funding has been one of Kyiv's most pressing asks of Nato states, so that it can plan its defence against Russian forces. Britain will deliver a new package of artillery and 90 Brimstone missiles in the coming weeks.

The government will launch its strategic defence review next week

Peers' retirement age
PM rejects Biden comparison

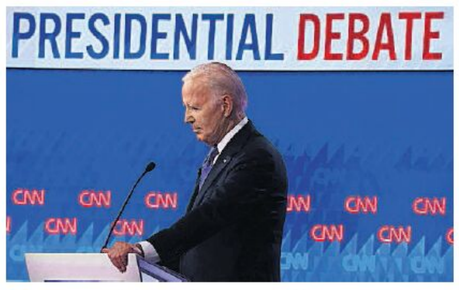
Keir Starmer has denied that his decision to bring in a retirement age of 80 for the House of Lords means he believes Joe Biden should stand down as US president.

Ahead of his first bilateral talks with Biden at the White House, the UK prime minister said the "primary driver" for bringing in a retirement age for peers was the size of the second chamber.

"The simple fact is that our House of Lords is massive. It is the second biggest political chamber in the world. I think it's only the Chinese who have a bigger political chamber. We have to reduce it.

"That is the primary driver of the retirement at 80. You can see why that needs to be done. We've got 800-plus members of the Lords – it's simply too big. We need to reduce it. So it doesn't reflect on how other elected representatives are chosen in other countries; it's to do with the size of the house."

After Biden's disastrous performance in his first debate against Donald Trump boosted concerns about his age and fitness for office, he faced calls to stand down as the Democratic nominee for the presidential election due in November. Pippa Crerar



▲ *Joe Biden is facing calls to stand down following a disastrous debate*

but it is likely to take up to a year to complete, leaving Starmer under pressure to confirm a timetable for Britain to boost defence spending to its target of 2.5% of GDP.

However, Luke Pollard, the armed forces minister, said yesterday that the government would not increase spending on the military unless it was also able to grow the economy.

"The way we deliver increased public spending on defence, on schools, hospitals or prisons, is by growing our economy," he told the BBC. "If we don't grow our economy, there won't be the money to support those public services and the ambitions that we have - and that includes defence."

A No 10 source suggested that the 2.5% commitment would stand, irrespective of whether the new government hit its growth targets, and even though that would raise difficult questions over its funding.

Downing Street was unable to confirm whether the strategic defence review would be published before the comprehensive spending review, expected this autumn, but suggested it would not take the full year.

Also at the Nato summit, the defence secretary, John Healey, pledged that Britain would be "the leading European nation" in Nato under Labour, though spending may have to rise significantly if Britain is to remain ahead of Germany.

The cabinet minister, appointed last Friday, acknowledged that European countries within Nato would have to take on more of the burden of defending the west against Russia regardless of whether Joe Biden or Trump won the US presidential election in November.

"Whoever is elected to the White House, we have to recognise that American priorities are likely to shift to the Indo-Pacific," Healey said

Starmer met Biden for the first time at the Nato summit's welcome event. The pair shared a few private words as they shook hands before the cameras. The prime minister, a passionate football fan, gave the president an Arsenal shirt with the name "Biden" and the number 46 on the back - a reference to his status as the 46th US president.

President Biden called the US and UK the "best of allies" in his first bilateral talks with Starmer, describing Britain as the "knot" that tied the transatlantic relationship together.

Biden appeared to back Starmer's ambition for a better relationship with the EU, suggesting that the closer the UK was with Europe, the tighter the knot would be.

"I kind of see you guys as the knot tying the transatlantic alliance together, the closer you are with Europe," he said.

Starmer congratulated Biden on hosting the 75th anniversary of the summit, hailing "a bigger Nato, a stronger Nato and a Nato with the resolve that we need".

He added: "The special relationship is so important. It's forged in difficult circumstances, endured for so long, and stronger now than ever.

"I'm very pleased to be able to come so early in government to recommit to Nato, to recommit to the special relationship and to discuss these affairs with you."

Ukraine news *Page 29 →*



The supply of F-16s from Denmark and the Netherlands is part of what Nato has called 'a substantial package' of military support for Ukraine

PHOTOGRAPH: BURHAN ÖZBILICI/AP

F-16s

First fighter jets on way to Ukraine and will be flying 'this summer'

Dan Sabbagh
Washington

The first F-16 fighter jets are on their way to Ukraine and will be flying sorties this summer, according to a statement from the Dutch and Danish governments that was released by the White House at the Nato summit.

Dick Schoof, the Dutch prime minister, and Mette Frederiksen, his counterpart from Denmark, said the "transfer process" of F-16s to Kyiv was under way after months of pilot training and political negotiations.

The two leaders said "Ukraine will be flying operational F-16s this summer" - the first of about 85 of the combat aircraft committed to Kyiv to turn around its fortunes on the battlefield. Ukraine signalled that more may be to come.

The long-awaited supply of F-16s is part of what Nato's secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said would be "a substantial package" of support for Ukraine, which includes the donation of four Patriot air defence systems, Nato-led training for Ukraine's troops - and a commitment that Kyiv's path to membership is "irreversible".

Allies are also expected to directly criticise China - with stronger language than used before - for assisting Russia's invasion, calling it a "decisive enabler" of the war by supporting Moscow in its "no limits" partnership, and supplying military components and chemicals for explosives.

An announcement on F-16s had been expected at the same time as the summit, and the hope is that the fighters will be able to stifle Russian glide bomb attacks launched from warplanes operating up to 43 miles (70km) away that have been devastating frontline positions.

But it remains unclear how far Ukraine will be able to use F-16s to attack targets in Russian territory or air space. The US has previously been concerned about the potential for escalation but relaxed its position to allow the bombing of targets inside Russia by long-range artillery.

Keir Starmer said he was happy to see Ukraine use Storm Shadow missiles to attack targets inside Russia as long as they were used to defend itself - and in accordance with international law. "It is for defensive purposes but it is for Ukraine to decide how to deploy it for those defensive purposes," he said.

It ends a lengthy wait for Ukraine, whose president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, has been lobbying for at least 18 months for western jets to complement its small and ageing Soviet standard air force, which is no match for Russia's. Zelenskiy said he was grateful to Denmark, the Netherlands and the US for taking what he described as practical steps of assistance - and indicated that he was hopeful of more donations to raise numbers to a target of 130.

"F-16s will also be used to bolster Ukraine's air defence. I am confident that they will assist us in better protecting Ukrainians from brutal Russian attacks, such as this week's strike on the Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv," the president said.

Norway and Belgium have also committed to supplying F-16s, but Zelenskiy said: "I anticipate that our air force capability coalition will be strengthened even further through the joining of new participants."

It remains unclear how effective the F-16s, combat jets designed in the 1970s, will be in the war against Russia. Particularly important will be how they are concealed and protected when on the ground, at a time when Ukraine's air defences have been stretched.

This month, Russia said it had destroyed five Ukrainian Su-27 jets in an Iskander missile attack on an airbase in Myrhorod. Ukraine acknowledged some losses amid criticism that the planes were lined up on the tarmac in daylight within range of Russian missiles.

On Tuesday night, Joe Biden, the US president, announced that Nato members would supply four Patriot anti missile batteries, while Italy would supply a similar Samp-t, which could be used to protect airbases from Russian attacks. Confirming the development, Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, said: "As we speak, the transfer of F-16 jets is under way." It should, he added, "concentrate Vladimir Putin's mind on the fact that he will not outlast Ukraine".

Ukraine is not expected to become a member of Nato until the end of its war with Russia, as several countries believe that immediate membership would in effect lead to a war between Moscow and the military alliance.

85

Approximate number of F-16 jets committed to Ukraine. Volodymyr Zelenskiy has a target of 130 planes

Sketch

John Crace



It was all so unfair and he had no one to blame but himself – Sunak was now a beaten beta male

Sliding doors. It had been a while since Rishi Sunak had had a decent night's sleep. Even when he did manage the occasional few hours of uninterrupted unconsciousness there was no liberation. His dreams were even more terrifying than reality. Always the same thoughts running through his head. Why had he done it? Why had he talked himself into going for a July election when he could have waited another six months? When he could have at least enjoyed the summer. Two years in Downing Street would have looked so much better on his CV.

Round and round. The same circular ruminations. He had thought he was being so clever by doing the unexpected. But all he had succeeded in doing was wrongfooting his own party. If Sunak was honest with himself he would have to admit that a large part was because he couldn't take the waiting any longer. Knowing things would probably get worse. A desire to get the whole thing over and done with, to break the Tory party, and let someone else pick up the pieces.

What he hadn't anticipated was how much he would miss the trappings of power. He had thought he was above all that, but now his life felt empty without the dozens of advisers and staff hanging on his every word. Never having to open his own car door. Or helicopter door, for that matter. Most of all he missed those three words - "yes, prime minister".

Sunak felt this especially keenly as he saw the photos from Keir Starmer's trip to Washington. It could - it should - have been him on that plane surrounded by lobby journalists hanging on his every word. Look how easily Starmer had fallen into the role. It was all so unfair. And he had no one to blame but himself. He would have loved the Nato summit. Hanging out with other world leaders. Even if he was the lone beta male among a horde of alphas. Now he was just a lone beaten beta male. Left on the sofa at home, surfing the news channels. Hoping that Starmer would screw up. Yet knowing that he wouldn't. His staff would not allow it. Joe Biden would have been a breeze. No awkwardness there. Otherwise it would just have been a lot of back-slapping and mutual congratulations. You're marvellous. No, you're marvellous. Why are we here? I've no idea.

There was only so much he could take of the new PM enjoying himself. He went to make a sandwich – another humiliation

These international summits were, for the most part, a piece of theatre. But they let the in-crowd feel special. And it hurt that he was now off the invite list. And dinner at the White House was to die for.

Sunak turned the TV off. There was only so much of Starmer enjoying himself he could take. He went to the kitchen to make a sandwich. Another humiliation. Normally there would be someone to do that for him. Hell, he was beginning to think that it might have been better if he had lost his seat in Richmond. Because that way he could have got all the hurt in at once. He could have just got out of the country as fast as possible. It wasn't as if he needed the £90k salary.

And now he was being asked to address the 1922 Committee. What was there to say? Sorry? Again. He'd done enough apologising. Then there'd be the half-hearted banging on the desks and foot stamping. Almost worse than silence. You could touch the pity in the room. He had no idea how he was going to get through the next few months.

Crisis in prisons is even worse than I had feared, says Starmer

Continued *from page 1*

99% capacity for 18 months with a net increase of 100 prisoners every week. A government source said: "What we encountered when we came in was a shocking act of self-harm to the country. They had pulled small levers to try to delay prisons reaching capacity by weeks, but had never taken the tough decisions. There are now no good options."

A decision must be made this week to prevent full capacity being hit by 1 August. The justice secretary, Shabana Mahmood, will make a statement tomorrow about the terms of the prisoners' release.

Starmer pointed to a report in May that found a high-risk prisoner had his release date brought forward despite a history of stalking, domestic abuse and being subject to a restraining order. He said he had "pressed Rishi Sunak hard" on that case in parliament, adding that "you know from my question to Mr Sunak ... where I stand on this".

He said: "Some of what we've found is shocking ... The situation is worse than I thought it was. I'm pretty shocked that it's been allowed to get into that situation. It's reckless to allow them to get into that place ... We're going to have to set out the state of affairs; what we intend to do about it, but it will include this question for risk categories."

Experts said the early release system was a short-term fix. Tom Wheatley, the president of the Prison Governors Association, said Starmer appeared to have heeded warnings for emergency action but that investment was needed. "We're hopeful the penal populism of the last government is a thing of the past and that the new government is willing to invest in our service so that we can effectively protect the public by reducing the likelihood of reoffending," he said.

Mark Fairhurst, the national chair of the Prison Officers' Association, said Starmer's promise to act followed years of neglect. "By the end of July, prisons will be full. So no matter what people's opinions are, or how unpalatable the announcement may be, there is an urgent need to decrease the prison population and give our members some breathing space so we can start to reverse the chaos of the last 14 years."

Last week Starmer appointed the prison reform campaigner James Timpson as his prisons minister. The owner of a chain of shoe repairers and key cutters, Timpson has long employed ex-offenders and has argued the country is "addicted to punishment ... locking people up far too long. And we're sending people to prison when actually all the evidence suggests prison is not the right place for them."

A Ministry of Justice source said there were no plans to extend the early release scheme from 70 days early, which was announced in May. It was previously extended to 60 days from 18 days in March. It is hoped that the releases will buy enough time to begin efforts to build capacity and start to address reoffending rates.

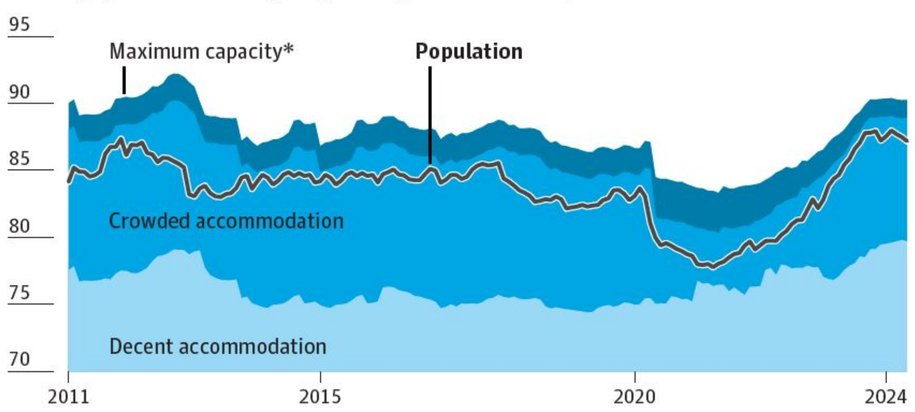
Speaking to the Today Podcast, Chalk said the releases were "the right way to proceed" but added that it would "buy you 18 months, but it won't buy you any more than that. You have to, as the new justice secretary, be very frank and credible about the long term."

On his way to Washington for the Nato summit, Starmer also said there were no immediate fixes to the small boats crisis, suggesting he expected numbers of asylum seekers crossing the Channel to rise over the summer.

He said the government would not put number on when they expected the crossings to begin to fall. "That unfortunately is what we've inherited - we can't change that overnight ... Nobody but nobody should be making these crossings. The numbers are going up, not down," Starmer said.

The prison population is close to capacity

Prison population and capacity in England and Wales, thousands



Source: Institute for Government and Ministry of Justice. *The upper limit of prison capacity minus the margin needed to provide accommodation for different classes of prisoner (levels of security, sex etc)



Domestic violence

Pledge will put more pressure on jails, adviser warns PM

Daniel Boffey
Chief reporter

Keir Starmer's pledge to halve violence against women will put more pressure on prisons, a Home Office adviser has warned, saying there could be an additional 10,000 domestic abuse convictions if just one in three victims come forward.

Nicole Jacobs, the government's domestic abuse commissioner, has written to the prime minister to highlight that the current prisons crisis is taking place at a time of historically low rates of convictions for those perpetrating domestic abuse.

Starmer has promised to halve violence against women and girls within a decade, with measures including dedicated "rape courts" and domestic violence experts taking 999 calls.

In her letter, Jacobs welcomes the Labour government's commitments. However, she questions how they can be achieved at a time when ministers are expected to authorise emergency measures this week under which criminals could be automatically freed after serving between 40% and 45% of their sentence.

With just a few hundred places left in prisons, the new justice secretary, Shabana Mahmood, has been told that a decision must be made this week to avoid capacity being exceeded by 1 August.

Jacobs writes of her concerns about the early-release scheme, arguing that those who have perpetrated domestic abuse should be exempted, while calling for long-term planning to avoid the prisons crisis affecting Labour's strategy to reduce violence against women and girls.

She writes: "This problem requires long-term solutions. We must acknowledge that this crisis

▼ *Nicole Jacobs, the domestic abuse commissioner, has written to Keir Starmer to highlight the impact his pledge to halve domestic violence would have on the current prison crisis. Shabana Mahmood, right, the justice secretary, has been warned capacity could be exceeded by 1 August if no action is taken*







PHOTOGRAPH: HOUSE OF COMMONS

Commons people
Almost 300 of the MPs installed for the first time in the 4 July election gathered in the House of Commons for this group photograph. Of the 650 seats, 335 were taken by first-timers, mostly from Labour, while 15 more MPs were returned to parliament after a gap in service.

Dawn Butler MP 'reported to police' for post praising her BAME colleagues

Aletha Adu



▲ *Dawn Butler, front, posted an image on X of herself and eight colleagues with the caption: 'Labour government showing off the melanin'*

Dawn Butler has said she would not be silenced for celebrating ethnic minority representation after she appeared to be reported to the police for praising the "Labour government showing off melanin" online.

After Monday's meeting of the parliamentary Labour party, attended by all 411 MPs, Butler posted three photographs on X alongside the caption, with one picture featuring her with eight colleagues: Kim Johnson, Zarah Sultana, Bell Ribeiro-Addy, Apsana Begum, Florence Asholomi, Juliet Campbell, Miatta Fahnbulleh and Taiwo Owatemi.

A user replied to the post, saying: "Just imagine if a white MP celebrated the lack of melanin in a group photo..?

"@Keir Starmer are you ok with party racism? @metpoliceuk how about you? You've just lost my respect because I thought you were about the UK not just one demographic."

Butler told the Guardian: "We often talk about having to see it to be it, and how representation matters. But for some when colour is mentioned they get offended. And expect me to be silent. I celebrated that Rachel Reeves is the first female chancellor of our country, so why can't black and brown people be celebrated too?"

The day after the post, Butler wrote on X: "This ruffled a few feathers someone even reported me to the police. Honestly I can't stop laughing. My morning message to those people is, get used to me celebrating my greatness, I will not play small to make you feel better about yourself."

The Metropolitan police were contacted for comment.

Starmer's unveiled his new cabinet this week, which has the highest number of state-educated and female ministers in history.

Overall a record 89 minority ethnic MPs were elected, but David Lammy, the foreign secretary, is the only black cabinet minister in the government, which has prompted concern on the Labour benches. Starmer's cabinet has two ministers of Asian descent: Shabana Mahmood, one of the UK's first Muslim female MPs, and Lisa Nandy.

Diane Abbott, who officially became the new mother of the house yesterday, celebrated the growing number of female MPs.

"When I was a new member in 1987, there were only 40 female members of parliament. Today we have 264, and some of us are glad that we have lived to see this," she told the Commons.

"I can't speak about the increased numbers of female members of parliament without referencing my predecessor Baroness Harriet Harman, who did so much to work to have an equal and diverse house.

"We are going into very tumultuous times, and historically, this house has played a role in these events both nationally and internationally. And I'm sure it will be the same going forward, and we will be presided over in the excellent way of the speaker-elect."

is occurring when just one in five victims of domestic abuse report to the police, and just 5% of police-recorded domestic abuse results in a conviction.

"As we work to raise awareness of domestic abuse, build faith in the criminal justice system and improve criminal justice outcomes for victims who do report, convictions will, and should, only increase. Our criminal justice system must be prepared for that.

"If returning to the 2016 high of 18% of police-recorded domestic abuse resulting in a conviction, this would be considerably higher. A lack of prison places must not stop the new government's ambition to halve violence against women and girls in a decade. We owe it to the 2.1 million victims of domestic abuse every year."

Early release schemes under the last government freed several people jailed for domestic abuse.

Charlie Taylor, the chief inspector of prisons, found in May that a high-risk inmate at HMP Lewes who posed a danger to children had his release date brought forward despite "having a history of stalking, domestic abuse and being subject to a restraining order".

Jacobs writes: "Any prisoner early release scheme, if progressed, must include an exemption for domestic abuse – this includes those convicted of domestic abuse-related offences as well as those convicted for other offences but where there is a known history of domestic abuse.

"HM Inspectorate of Probation found that around one-third of those being managed by probation were known perpetrators of domestic abuse, even when this was not their index offence.

"For those perpetrators who have received prison sentences, this provides a period of respite for victims and their children to recover and plan for their safety. Early release undermines this, especially when victims are unable to know the date of their perpetrator's release. Without this, safety planning is impossible. Victims must not pay the price of prison overcrowding."

Prosecution and convictions for domestic abuse have been falling for a decade. The latest quarterly results published in April showed a slight increase in referrals from the police but a decrease in charging rates to 78.4%. Completed prosecutions had reduced by 1.5% and the conviction rate had gone down by 0.9 percentage points to 75.1% of those prosecuted.

The Ministry of Justice has been contacted for comment.

10,000
Estimate of additional domestic abuse convictions if just one in three victims came forward

Hospitality Wetherspoon boss urges Reeves to 'rectify' taxes

Rob Davies

Tim Martin, the politically outspoken boss of the JD Wetherspoon pub chain, has praised the new Labour chancellor's economic "pedigree" as he called for tax changes to help the struggling hospitality sector.

Martin regularly publishes economic and political commentary alongside his company's results and has previously voiced support for Brexit and Boris Johnson.

Yesterday, however, he made overtures to Rachel Reeves as he blamed the previous government for failing to relieve the tax burden on the struggling hospitality sector.

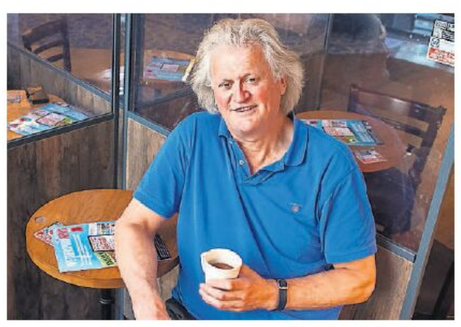
"The last government failed to implement tax equality between pubs and supermarkets, leading to pub closures and underinvestment," he said. "Wetherspoon hopes that the current chancellor, with a Bank of England pedigree, will understand how many beans make five, and rectify this inequality."

Martin has often lamented the fact that 20% VAT is levied on food sold in pubs but not in supermarkets, which he says unfairly allows thriving shops to keep beer prices artificially low at the expense of the struggling hospitality sector.

More than 500 pubs closed in 2023, according to figures from the British Beer and Pub Association, as the industry wrestled with the higher prices of energy, rents and labour.

While many pubs are still struggling to recover from Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, which Martin criticised for being harsher on pubs than on other sectors, JD Wetherspoon's 801 venues have consistently outperformed rivals.

The company recorded further growth in revenue in the 10 weeks to 7 July, a period that includes most of the Euro 2024 football tournament. Sales were up 5.8% in the period and 7.7% year on year, during which time the company shut 26 underperforming pubs and opened two new ones.



▲ *Tim Martin blamed the previous government for the sector's woes*

"Sales per pub are approximately 21% higher than pre-pandemic levels, which has helped compensate for the very substantial increase in costs," Martin said.

He reeled off a list of cost increases since the pre-pandemic 2019 financial year, including a £164m rise in the cost of labour, £28m on energy, £38m on repairs and loan interest costs that are up by £16m.

The pub company has sought to boost its takings by introducing beer gardens, staff rooms, above-bar glass racks and improved beer dispensing systems. It expects this year's profits to be broadly in line with market expectations, indicating earnings for the year of about £75m.

"These numbers don't just happen by themselves," said Derren Nathan, an analyst at the investment firm Hargreaves Lansdown. "Wetherspoon consistently outperforms its peers and continues to invest in measures to improve serving times and the customer experience. That's helped it to mitigate an inflationary-led assault on its cost base."

Nathan added that an England victory in last night's Euro 2024 semi-final against the Netherlands, which would book the team a place in Sunday's final, could provide a "final flurry" before the end of the financial year.

Braverman and Badenoch exchange barbs over leaked shadow cabinet comments

Jessica Elgot
Eleni Courea

Suella Braverman has attacked her leadership rival Kemi Badenoch for comments that were leaked from a shadow cabinet meeting, as one poll of grassroots members put Badenoch as the members' favourite.

The poll also found half of Conservative grassroots members are in favour of a merger with Nigel Farage's Reform UK.

Badenoch reportedly told her shadow cabinet colleagues at their first meeting on Tuesday that Rishi Sunak's decision to call an early election without informing them had been "disastrous" and bordering on unconstitutional.

She also said Braverman appeared to be having a "very public" breakdown, after controversial public comments by the former home secretary. Two allies of Braverman on the right of the party – Danny Kruger and Sir John Hayes – are said to be backing Robert Jenrick.

In a post on X, Badenoch said: "It's a shame our discussions in shadow cabinet were leaked yesterday. If there is no private space to discuss our party's challenges, we will never fully address what the electorate told us last week.

"The views of those outside these meetings matter too. Not just backbench MPs, but our party activists, members and friends who lost seats after giving everything to the campaign.



The former business secretary Kemi Badenoch is the favourite to become the next Conservative leader in a YouGov poll of grassroots party members

PHOTOGRAPH: JASON ALDEN/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

"In government, we had too much nodding along in the room and arguments outside it. That culture needs to change. We need to be honest with one another in private, and united in the direction we take afterwards."

Braverman wrote back: "I'd be interested in knowing whether Kemi thinks I'm having a 'very public nervous breakdown.' Kemi, and the rest of the cabinet, should not have nodded along, as they and Rishi took the party to disaster. The refusal to take responsibility is at the root of our problem. It was not someone else's fault."

Sunak addressed MPs at their first 1922 Committee meeting in parliament last night. Bernard Jenkin, the Tory MP for Harwich and North Essex told reporters that Sunak was "very sorrowful, apologetic" and that there was "no hostility, none whatsoever" towards him.

He added that Sunak was "not rushing out of the door as some previous leaders have done" but that he has not set a timetable for how long he was willing to carry on as a caretaker leader. Jenkin said the party should not rule out having an interim leader.

Edward Leigh said the meeting was "perfectly polite". But he told reporters that his party needed to be a "proper Conservative party" to bring back Reform voters and that "you can't just say we're all united ... we have to stand for something".

Badenoch has support from 31% of those polled for the Party Members Project, run by researchers at Queen Mary University of London and Sussex University.

Others who have been touted as potential leaders have minimal support from party members – Priti Patel gained just 6% and Jenrick, who has attracted a slew of names in support from the party's right, has about 7%.

James Cleverly, the former home secretary who is said to be contemplating a bid as a unity candidate, would be backed by 10% of the party, according to the poll.

A fifth of Conservative members polled said they would most prefer to see the return of Boris Johnson to lead the party, and 10% said they would like to see it led by Farage.

Braverman is the only potential leadership candidate who has suggested the Tories should seek an accommodation with Farage and the hard-right Reform UK.

Of those surveyed, 47% of party members said they were in favour of a merger, with support strongest among the over-50s and those from lower-income backgrounds.

Cleverly has called for the Conservative party to unite in opposition, as the party heads into what is likely to be a bitter leadership campaign.

Writing in the Times, he said: "There is strength in unity, and the Conservative party has always been at its best when it embraces being a broad church. We lost voters to the left and the right, and we won't win them all back if we narrow our offer."

The Tory veteran Bob Blackman was elected as head of the 1922 Committee on Tuesday night, and will be responsible for helping set the rules of the leadership election.

Blackman suggested yesterday he was inclining towards a longer contest, telling BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "I think we've got to take time to reflect on the fact that we were beaten in the election, and we need to decide, as you say, which direction we choose."



The disrupter

Dismissive, unpleasant, rude – but will Farage change tune in Commons?

Blackman takes over '22'

Veteran Tory MP who holds party's future in his hands

Ben Quinn

Rishi Sunak remains leader of the Conservatives for now, but the party's most important figure is arguably a veteran backbencher with little national profile and zero ministerial experience.

Bob Blackman, MP for Harrow East, has taken on a pivotal role in shaping his party's forthcoming leadership contest after being elected as chair of the 1922 Committee of backbench Tory MPs.

His election has already caused the first ripples of what could be a new Tory civil war when some MPs turned up to be told voting for the post finished earlier than they expected, but those tensions are only a foretaste of the issues that could come across the desk of the 68-year-old in coming weeks.

An avid reader of crime and mystery novels, Blackman has kept his cards scrupulously close to his chest about his views on who he believes is best placed to succeed Sunak, though his hard-right credentials are well known.

As for how the leadership contest could unfold and whether there might be a change of the rules, Blackman told TalkTV on Tuesday: "That is up for complete discussion." But he was clear he believed the party shouldn't rush its decision, and the scale of the defeat that had just been inflicted on the Tories had given Labour a majority that meant "they can almost do what they want to do".



Bob Blackman in India. He has hosted a divisive Hindu nationalist

One of the few Tories to have increased their majorities last week, Blackman was first elected to parliament in 2010, having previously been a member of the London assembly and deputy leader of Brent council. He used to work for British Telecom in sales and management positions before becoming a sales tutor at the BT Training College.

He has had 14 years in parliament without experience in government, but controversies have not evaded him. In 2015 he was ordered by the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority to repay more than £1,000 in expenses after submitting more than 700 "inaccurate" travel claims.

Three years earlier, Blackman was one of the most vocal opponents of David Cameron's move to allow same-sex couples to get married, voting against it and telling the BBC that the principle of same-sex marriage was "wrong in the first place". He doubled down, saying that Cameron should instead have been bringing back the vaguely worded, anti-gay section 28 law of 1988 that banned teachers from talking about homosexuality.

Since then, he defended his hosting of parliamentary events attended by a controversial Hindu nationalist. Senior Tories distanced themselves from Tapan Ghosh, who gained notoriety in India for his incendiary rhetoric about religious minorities. Blackman said the activist had only been invited to give evidence at a meeting about a report into Hindu minority rights in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

A Brexiter, Blackman has been a member of the hardline Eurosceptic European Research Group of Tory MPs and was involved in putting pressure on Theresa May as she wrestled with finding a Brexit deal that would satisfy party rebels.

On his website he claims credit for changing the law twice, including through his sponsorship of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which places duties on housing authorities to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness.





◀ *Nigel Farage after winning for Reform in Clacton, where he will serve 77,000 constituents*

PHOTOGRAPH: CLODAGH KILCOYNE/REUTERS



▲ *Jacob Rees-Mogg with his wife, Helena, and three of their children*

Conservatives

Rees-Moggs to feature in fly-on-wall documentary

Amelia Hill

It was Angela Rayner who tweeted, when Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg spent a Commons debate slouching on his back, that she was "half expecting his nanny to march into the chamber with a blanket, pillow and a hot cup of Horlicks for the poor man".

Now that nanny will star alongside the rest of the family, including the former MP's six children, whom the nanny now looks after, in a fly-on-the-wall documentary.

The documentary, Meet the Rees-Moggs, to be aired on Discovery+ this year, promises to "lift the lid on the man behind the public image" over five hour-long episodes.

The show makes Rees-Mogg the latest politician to make a foray into reality TV, following Matt Hancock's stint on I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here! in 2022, Penny Mordaunt competing in Splash! in 2014 and George Galloway's appearance on Celebrity Big Brother in 2006.

Rees-Mogg, who lost his seat as the Conservative MP for North East Somerset in the general election, has a show on GB News, which the media regulator Ofcom found had breached impartiality rules by allowing Tory MPs to serve as news presenters.

Discovery+ said the show would offer a "never-before-seen look" into the life of the former MP. It will follow him through the run-up to the general election and its aftermath, as his 14-year tenure in the Commons came to an end.

Rees-Mogg said: "Animals, children, an election and a film crew. What could possibly go wrong? This everyday story of Somerset folk is fun to film, but may be a bit more Fawlty Towers than Downton Abbey."

The former MP is known for his old-fashioned dress sense and sensibility. He once said that despite having six children – the youngest of whom is named Sixtus Dominic Boniface Christopher Rees-Mogg – he had never changed a nappy. "The nanny does it brilliantly," he said at the time. "I've made no pretence to be a modern man at all, ever."

Instead, his children have been taken care of by the family nanny, Veronica Crook, who looked after Rees-Mogg when he was a child in the 1970s.

Jennifer Rankin
Brussels

It was the speech that made Nigel Farage's reputation: inflammatory, insulting and riddled with distortions. Speaking on the floor of the European parliament, Farage addressed Herman Van Rompuy, an erudite, softly spoken former Belgian prime minister, appointed to the new post of European Council president. "I don't want to be rude," Farage began. "But, really, you have the charisma of a damp rag and the appearance of a low-grade bank clerk and the question I want to ask is: who are you?"

Van Rompuy's job was to chair meetings between EU leaders, rather than, as Farage put it, be "the political leader for 500 million people". Amid heckles and boos in the far-from-full Strasbourg chamber, Farage said Van Rompuy's intention was to be "the quiet assassin of European democracy", before going on to insult the Belgian's home nation as "a non-country".

The new MP for Clacton, who was sworn in yesterday, is not likely to get away with such unparliamentary behaviour in the House of Commons. (Farage was fined for the attack on Van Rompuy in 2010.) But allies and EU officials agree it was that one minute 24 second speech in 2010 that propelled him to public attention – and notoriety – all across Europe.

"Suddenly the media sat up and took notice," said Gawain Towler, Reform UK's head of press, who has been working with Farage for 20 years. "That really put Nigel Farage on the map," he said, recalling "hundreds thousands of views" on Greek, Italian and Dutch YouTube.

For EU insiders, the insults were not a surprise. "It was the usual stuff," said Guy Verhofstadt, the veteran Belgian MEP, who is standing down from the European parliament and was in the chamber that day. "His style of debating was always like that," Verhofstadt said. "What he did was attack everybody that stood for Europe. You could know from the start of the debate what he was going to say."

But it took time for the Ukip MEP to craft his style.

Farage was first elected to the European parliament in 1999, benefiting from proportional representation that was introduced by Tony Blair for the UK's European elections that year. He was not yet the boisterous performer he would become, but his message was consistent. In one of his first speeches in 1999, his notes shake slightly in his hand as he urges the government to "leave this club and get into the real trading world".

He and his MEPs were known for stunts: wearing protest T-shirts, heckling and fixing little union flags to their desks in the chamber. But they struggled to get the British media attention they craved. Towler – who along with a later Ukip leader, Paul Nuttall, once dressed up in a chicken suit for a photo opportunity about EU leaders' alleged cowardice for not holding referendums on a treaty – complained that the British press ignored them.

The arrival of the European parliament's streaming service in 2008 combined with the rise of social media was a game-changer. Short, punchy clips of Farage haranguing European politicians went viral, getting far more views than the EU's official channels.

Richard Corbett, a long-serving Labour MEP, recalls puzzlement over speeches from Farage and his Ukip team. "They'd get up and start doing a rant about something that had sometimes nothing to do with what was on the agenda, it was completely out of context ... but of course the reason was that it was geared to making a YouTube clip."

In their occasional meetings on trains or planes, Corbett recalls someone who was "chatty" but "tried to avoid getting caught into discussing facts, figures". EU civil servants remember a disrespectful attitude. "It was clear that he despised the civil servants, he despised any rule or custom," said one former civil servant. "His demeanour was very dismissive, unpleasant."

"He never did any proper work," they added. "He was really just there to disrupt things."

He had frequent run-ins with officials over expenses – and was docked half his MEP salary in 2018 over allegations of misuse of public funds. And he appointed a woman he met in a Strasbourg bar – long rumoured to have become his girlfriend – to a job as a parliamentary researcher.

Farage made no impact in the committee rooms, where the legislative work was done. Over a three-year period, he attended only one of 42 meetings of the parliament's fisheries committee when it was negotiating decisive reforms. In 2014-16, he took part in only four in ten European parliament votes, the worst voting record of all British MEPs.

As an MP, Farage will face new demands from his 77,000-strong constituency in Clacton. "The one thing we know from his time as an MEP is that he likes being in the limelight," Simon Usherwood, a professor of politics at the Open University, said. "He is not a great paperwork guy."

Towler, Reform's spokesman, said Farage saw his constituency work as "absolutely vital", as was "ensuring you had a good team of caseworkers who can pick it up and do the job".

Usherwood will also be watching to see whether Farage and Reform MPs join House of Commons committees. "He could justify not participating in the life of the European parliament because he rejected its legitimacy and its authority, but clearly he can't do that with Westminster," Usherwood said.

The jury is out, he added, on whether Farage tries to be constructive. "I can imagine that [Farage] wants to be seen as being in parliament and speaking from the green benches. It is going to be part of that cultivation of an aura of respectability, which is presumably the next stage of his plans for getting ahead."



◀ *Nigel Farage campaigning in the Brexit referendum. He became an MEP in 1999 and gained social media attention after YouTube clips showing him attacking European politicians went viral*

PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX MACNAUGHTON PHOTOGRAPHY/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ *Nigel Farage presented a nightly show for the talk radio station LBC*



▲ *Nigel Farage in Ramsgate, Kent, during the 2015 general election*

‘The world’s most joyful museum’ scoops prestigious £120,000 prize

Lanre Bakare
Arts and culture correspondent

The Young V&A in east London has won the prestigious Museum of the Year award, fighting off competition from the National Portrait Gallery to win the £120,000 prize.

Judges described the museum as a “truly inspirational” institution that engaged with the local community of Bethnal Green and radically rethought its offering with young people in mind.

Jenny Waldman, the director of Art Fund, the national art charity that supports the award, said: “The Young V&A has done something completely rare; it’s completely reimagined the museum.

“It’s started with its target audience and then it fit all the pieces of the museum - the building, the collection, display, interpretation, exhibitions, learning - around that central focus of young people. It’s the world’s most joyful museum.”

The Young V&A’s previous incarnation as the Museum of Childhood was described as “a place where childhood went to die”, with rows of Victorian doll’s houses and other toys that were designed for older visitors to “take a trip down memory lane”.

The renovated building, which had a three-year makeover at a cost of £13m, is a different proposition altogether: it is light, airy and playful. “It’s mind-blowing, a brilliant concept perfectly executed,” Waldman said.

She said that even on an incredibly impressive shortlist, the Young V&A stood out with ideas. In the 0-5 years area, for example, the curators grouped items together by colour to be more accessible to young minds.

The Young V&A was among a shortlist of institutions that had undergone extensive renovations in the past few years. The National Portrait Gallery’s £41.3m makeover, which took three years and included doors designed by Tracey Emin that serve as the new entrance, was in the running.



▼ *Visitors to the Young V&A can enjoy colourful and interactive exhibits in the reimagined space*
PHOTOGRAPH: LUKE HAYES/V&A

So was the Manchester Museum, which reopened in 2023 after a £15m refit and included a new south Asian gallery. A partnership with the British Museum, it was co-curated by 31 people from Manchester’s south Asian diaspora who were “just ordinary folk, not museum folk”, according to its director, Esme Ward.

There were also nominations for Dundee Contemporary Arts in its 25th year, and the tiny Craven Museum in Skipton.

Before the shortlist was announced Waldman called for greater financial support for the museum sector, telling the Sunday Times that investment in museums was “contracting in a very worrying way”.

“Museums, local authorities and the national government all need to think together about how to empower museums to create the conditions for people and communities to thrive,” Waldman said. “Museums are absolutely up for it, they’re already doing incredible work.”

The culture secretary, Lisa Nandy, said: “This year’s Art Fund Museum of the Year was a tough competition with an exciting shortlist representing institutions from across the country. Congratulations to the Young V&A on this achievement, recognising their hard work to create a unique space dedicated to young people.”

The Young V&A renovation was the work of De Matos Ryan and AOC architects, which consulted children from the nearby Bangabandhu and Globe primary schools and Morpeth secondary school for their ideas.

The result was a fun, colourful and tactile space that one critic said had become one of “London’s great indoor public spaces, a British Museum Great Court ruled by the under-15s”.



Two children from same school die aged five and six

Hannah Al-Othman
North of England correspondent

Two children who were pupils at the same Liverpool primary school have died, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has said.

The children, aged five and six, attended Millstead primary school in Everton, which caters for children with special educational needs.

The school is dealing with an outbreak of giardia, which causes diarrhoea and stomach cramps, but the UKHSA said it was unlikely the deaths were linked to the outbreak.

Michelle Beard, the headteacher of Millstead primary, told the Liverpool Echo that the two children “filled their classes with joy”, and added that the school community was “devastated” by their deaths.

“The entire Millstead school community is devastated to have learned of the sad recent passing of two of our younger children. We have sent our sincerest condolences to both of their families,” she said. “Both children filled their classes with joy during their time with us, and they will forever be in our hearts. We are working closely with our families, staff and pupils to support them as we come to terms with this terribly sad news.”

The newspaper reported on the outbreak of giardia at the school last month, and said the UKHSA had been working with Liverpool city council following a “small number of cases”.

At the time, the UKHSA said public health measures had been put in place “to help prevent further cases”.

Giardia is caused by a microscopic parasite. Symptoms include diarrhoea, stomach cramps, flatulence and fatigue. It spreads easily, but it is generally not thought to be a serious health risk, and is normally easily treated with antibiotics.

Emma Savage, a consultant in health protection for UKHSA’s Cheshire and Merseyside health protection team, said: “The deaths are unlikely to be due to giardia. Giardia usually causes a self-limiting gastrointestinal illness which can spread easily in households and school settings.”

‘Both children filled their classes with joy during their time with us’

Michelle Beard
Millstead’s headteacher

Drivers will be charged up to £4 to use two tunnels under the Thames

Gwyn Topham
Transport correspondent

Drivers will be charged up to £4 at peak times for a one-way trip through either the Blackwall tunnel or the Silvertown tunnel in east London after the latter opens next year, Transport for London has announced.

However, TfL is proposing to halve the charges for low-income local residents to use either of the road tunnels under the Thames, as well as exempting buses, black taxis and zero-emission cabs.

Standard off-peak journeys would cost £1.50 for car drivers paying automatically, TfL said, as an eight-week consultation on the proposals opened yesterday.

The Blackwall tunnel has been free to use since it opened in 1897, but TfL has argued since developing plans for the Silvertown crossing in 2012 that both routes should incur a charge.

According to TfL, the Silvertown scheme, costing about £2bn, is needed to reduce congestion and to improve air quality around the Blackwall tunnel, which is used by about 100,000 vehicles a day.

But campaigners against the project argue it will lead to heavier traffic and worsen pollution overall.

The mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: “We have worked to improve [the scheme], adding discounts for low-income residents and local businesses, new bus services, a bespoke cycle shuttle service and free cross-river bus and DLR [Docklands Light Railway] transport for at least the first year.”

But Victoria Rance, from Stop the Silvertown Tunnel, said: “New roads make new traffic and that new traffic will be going through already highly polluted parts of Greenwich and into Newham, the most polluted borough in London, where thousands of children are already exposed to illegal levels of air pollution.”

Caroline Russell, a Green party London assembly member, urged Londoners to “respond to the consultation with creative ideas for repurposing the tunnel, prioritising people walking and cycling and travelling on public transport”.

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Night owls do better in cognitive tests than morning larks, researchers find

Anna Bawden

The idea that night owls struggle to get anything done in the day may have to be revised. It turns out staying up late could be good for our brain power, with new research suggesting people who identify as night owls could be sharper than their "early to bed, early to rise" counterparts.

Researchers led by academics at Imperial College London studied data from more than 26,000 people in the UK Biobank study who had completed intelligence, reasoning, reaction time and memory tests. They then compared how sleep duration, quality and chronotype - when they felt most alert and productive - affected brain performance.

They found that night people and those classed as "intermediate" had "superior cognitive function", while morning larks had the lowest scores.

Staying up late is associated with creative types. Artists, authors and musicians known to be night owls include Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, James Joyce, Kanye West and Lady Gaga. But while politicians such as Margaret Thatcher, Winston Churchill and Barack Obama famously seemed to thrive on little sleep, the study found that duration is important for brain function, with those getting between seven and nine hours of sleep each night performing best in cognitive tests.

Dr Raha West, lead author and clinical research fellow at the department of surgery and cancer at Imperial College London, said: "While understanding and working with your natural sleep tendencies is essential, it's equally important to remember to get just enough sleep, not too long or too short. This is crucial for keeping your brain healthy and functioning at its best."

Prof Daqing Ma, co-leader of the study and also from Imperial's department of surgery and cancer, added: "We found that sleep duration has a direct effect on brain function, and we believe that proactively managing sleep patterns is really important for boosting, and safeguarding, the way our brains work. We'd ideally like to see policy interventions to help sleep patterns improve in the general population."

But some experts urged caution in interpreting the findings. Jacqui-Ann Hanley, head of research funding at Alzheimer's Research UK, said: "Without a detailed picture of what is going on in the brain, we don't know if being a 'morning' or 'evening' person affects memory and thinking, or if a decline in cognition is causing changes to sleeping patterns."

"Further research is needed to consider how other lifestyle factors are playing into what we are seeing, and to gain a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms in the brain that are causing cognitive changes."

Jessica Chelekis, a sleep expert at Brunel University London, said that there were "important limitations" to the study, as the results did not account for education attainment, or include the time of day the cognitive tests were conducted.

The study's main value was challenging stereotypes around sleep, she added.

"The cultural belief that early risers are more productive than 'night owls' does not hold up to scientific scrutiny. While everyone should aim to get good-quality sleep each night, we should also try to be aware of what time of day we are at our best and work in ways that suit us. Night owls, in particular, should not be shamed into fitting a stereotype that favours an 'early to bed, early to rise' practice."



▲ *Lady Gaga is among the artists known to thrive on staying up late*



◀ *The Met Office said a month's worth of rain had fallen in the first nine days of this year's Wimbledon championships*

PHOTOGRAPH: JORDAN PETTITT/PA

Washout leaves Wimbledon with £250,000 refunds bill

Emine Sinmaz

Wimbledon is to hand out at least £250,000 worth of refunds after the tournament was hit by near-non-stop rain on Tuesday.

There was no play on the outside courts for most of Tuesday and 75 of the 91 scheduled matches were cancelled. Only Centre Court and No 1 court have roofs.

The Met Office confirmed yesterday that more than a month's rain - 52.6mm - had fallen in the first nine days of the championship.

The wet weather has also been blamed for a drop in visitor numbers. On Tuesday, 34,922 people passed through the gates of SW19, the lowest attendance on day nine since 2018.

7,000

Number of people expected to be offered refunds after rain forced the cancellation of 75 matches

34,922

Number of tennis fans who entered SW19 on Tuesday, the lowest attendance on day nine since 2018

Heavy rain over the first nine days of the championship has caused a backlog of matches and forced organisers to make scheduling changes. The mixed doubles final has been moved from today to after the men's singles final on Sunday.

Wimbledon said it would refund people who bought a Court 2 ticket or a grounds pass before 5pm on Tuesday. "We thank all ticket holders affected for their patience and understanding," it said. More than 7,000 refunds are expected to be issued, costing the club over £250,000.

The Met Office has said the weather is due to improve. "Tomorrow is likely to be dry with some sunny spells," said Abby Smith, an onsite forecaster at Wimbledon.

"For the rest of the championships, a mix of showers and sunny spells with the chance of more persistent rain at times."

Case against three women criticised as racist after it collapses

Neha Gohil
Community affairs correspondent

The leader of an advocacy group representing black and minority ethnic women has criticised an "institutionally racist" and "unfair" legal system after an assault case against her and her two friends collapsed.

Selma Taha, 52, the executive director of Southall Black Sisters, Divina Riggon, 42, and Danae Thomas, 53, had been charged with assaulting a woman in King's Cross underground station in London. The three women said they were victims of a violent racist attack.

Their case was formally discontinued yesterday after prosecutors were provided with information that meant they no longer had a realistic prospect of conviction.

Taha said: "I'm very happy that these racist charges have been dropped. We should never have been prosecuted. They should have never taken that line. Because what we know from the work that we do is this is what always happens to black women. They are always prosecuted first, rather than being seen as deserving victims."

The three women were accused of assault by beating, while Riggon was also charged with harassment and Thomas accused of racially aggravated harassment. All the charges were discontinued.

Rajiv Menon KC, the barrister representing Taha and Thomas, said: "This decision should have been made nine months ago. This prosecution should never have been brought. Danae, Selma and Divina were victims of a racist attack on the tube and whilst this kind of prosecution was extremely common 20, 30, 40 years ago, it should not be happening any more in 2024. It is an outrage."

A spokesperson for the CPS said: "We have a duty to keep all cases under continuous review and following information received in the past few days, we decided that there was no longer a realistic prospect of conviction and these charges were discontinued."

Additional reporting **PA Media**

I lost everything after Rwanda roundup, says asylum seeker

Diane Taylor

A Syrian asylum seeker who was one of 220 people arrested and detained in preparation for forced removal to Rwanda has said he lost everything after his release.

Critics described the mass round-ups before the local elections in May as a "stunt" that needlessly disrupted the lives of many.

The prime minister, Keir Starmer, said last week the policy was "dead and buried". However, in a high court case this week, the home secretary, Yvette Cooper, said she would set out her position on the Rwanda legislation and guidance on 1 October.

Mohammed (not his real name), 27, arrived in the UK from Syria in July 2022 and was detained in May, before being released in June. "I was arrested and locked up as part of the last government's attempt to win votes," he said. "I had committed no crime. When I was released from detention I had lost my accommodation and all my belongings. I lost everything."

Those arrested in raids by immigration enforcement teams were seized in haste. Though some were able to return to their previous accommodation after being released from detention, others were moved to areas far from support networks.

"I was living in a shared house in Hull with other asylum seekers who were very nice," Mohammed said. "We all ate halal food and there was no drinking or smoking in the house. We kept the place very clean. Now I've lost everything. The Home Office moved a new person into my room.

"A charity organised for me to stay with an English woman in a village which is two bus rides away. She is very nice but I miss my friends and my support network in Hull."

A second man who was attending college in Newcastle was moved to Sheffield so has to restart his studies.

On Monday the Rwandan government issued its first statement acknowledging Starmer's intention to scrap the scheme. It said Rwanda "takes note" of the intention of the UK government to terminate the partnership, adding that the "crisis of irregular migration" was an issue for the UK, not Rwanda.

It is not known if Rwanda will repay the £270m handed over by the UK as part of the deal. Under the terms of the agreement it has no obligation to refund the money.

So far this year, more than 13,000 people have crossed the Channel in small boats, a record. There were no crossings in the first few days of the new government owing to poor weather conditions but on Monday 65 people crossed in one boat. On Tuesday 419 people crossed in six boats.

> ***'I can live without my house and my clothes but I cannot live without dignity'***
>
> **Mohammed**
> *Syrian asylum seeker, 27*

James Wilson, the director of Detention Action, said: "After being detained unlawfully and then released and relocated, many asylum seekers have now lost any stability they had managed to find. It is vital that the government now processes their claims and finally allows them to get on with rebuilding their lives."

Shirley Hart, of the charity Welcome House in Hull, said: "Rounding hundreds of people up for Rwanda and detaining them was just a stunt by the last government. As a result of being detained, all of the asylum seekers have lost the trust we had spent so long building up. One of the asylum seekers we support, who was detained for Rwanda, is absolutely broken by his experience."

Mohammed said: "I lived in a war in my country from the age of 13. I can live without my house and my clothes but I cannot live without dignity and a sense of security."

A Home Office spokesperson said: "All individuals previously detained pending removal to Rwanda have now been bailed."

Designs solicited for 'powerful' Grenfell memorial

Robert Booth
Social affairs correspondent

Architects are being invited to compete to design a "powerful" memorial to the victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster that will feature the names of those who died in the fire and be of "significant stature".

A design brief was published by the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission yesterday, starting a search for firms from Britain or abroad to draft concepts for a "bold" memorial set in a garden, which should be "exceptional and heartfelt".

The shortlist of five will be selected in the autumn and given £20,000 each to produce designs before a winner is picked next spring and a planning application submitted in 2027, a decade after the fire.

There is continued uncertainty over the future of the tower, which is being held up with steel props. Whether it is demolished is a decision for government ministers.

The commission consists of 10 community representatives and is co-chaired by the Labour peer Paul Boateng and Thelma Stober, a solicitor. The memorial will be funded by the government, which now owns the site.

But one of the community representatives, Nabil Choucair, who lost six members of his family in the fire in June 2017, said: "We lost our loved ones, and a sacred site could be destroyed and replaced with something that is not what we want to represent our families."

In drawing up the brief, the memorial commission consulted 2,259 members of the community, defined as bereaved families, survivors, residents of the wider estate and others who live near the tower. Those consulted included members of 31 of the 43 bereaved families.

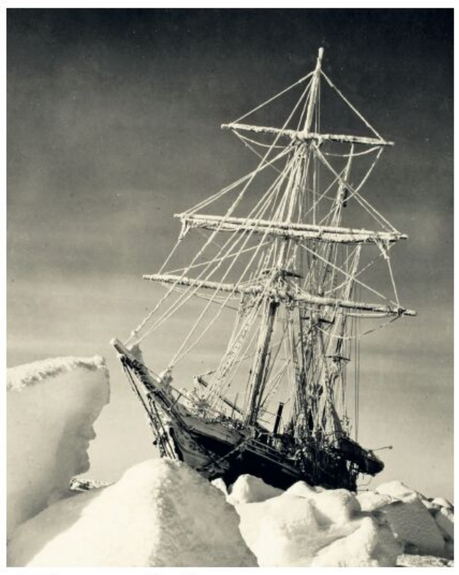
Based on their views, the commission is calling for "a bold memorial – to create more than a simple place of commemoration" with a design that is "both exceptional and heartfelt, a poignant reminder and powerful homage to those at the heart of the tragedy".

It added that the memorial "should prominently display the names of the 72 victims, with options for the bereaved families on how and whether to include them".

Would-be designers are reminded that the colour green is significant for the Grenfell community and that materials from the tower might be included in its construction.

72

Number of people who died in the 2017 fire. Their names will feature prominently on the memorial



Shackleton's Endurance shipwreck to be given new protection

Harriet Sherwood

A protection ring around the Endurance, one of the most famous shipwrecks of all time, is to be widened from 500 metres to 1,500 metres in order to restrict activities close to the vessel.

The move is part of an international plan to conserve the site, drawn up by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT) and Historic England and published yesterday.

The plan said the Endurance would be preserved in situ, all activity would be undertaken with the aim of preserving and enhancing the site, and nothing would be taken from the wreck or the surrounding area.

The biodiversity, habitats and ecology of the wreck, which is home to sea anemones, sea lilies, starfish and sponges, would be recorded and preserved.

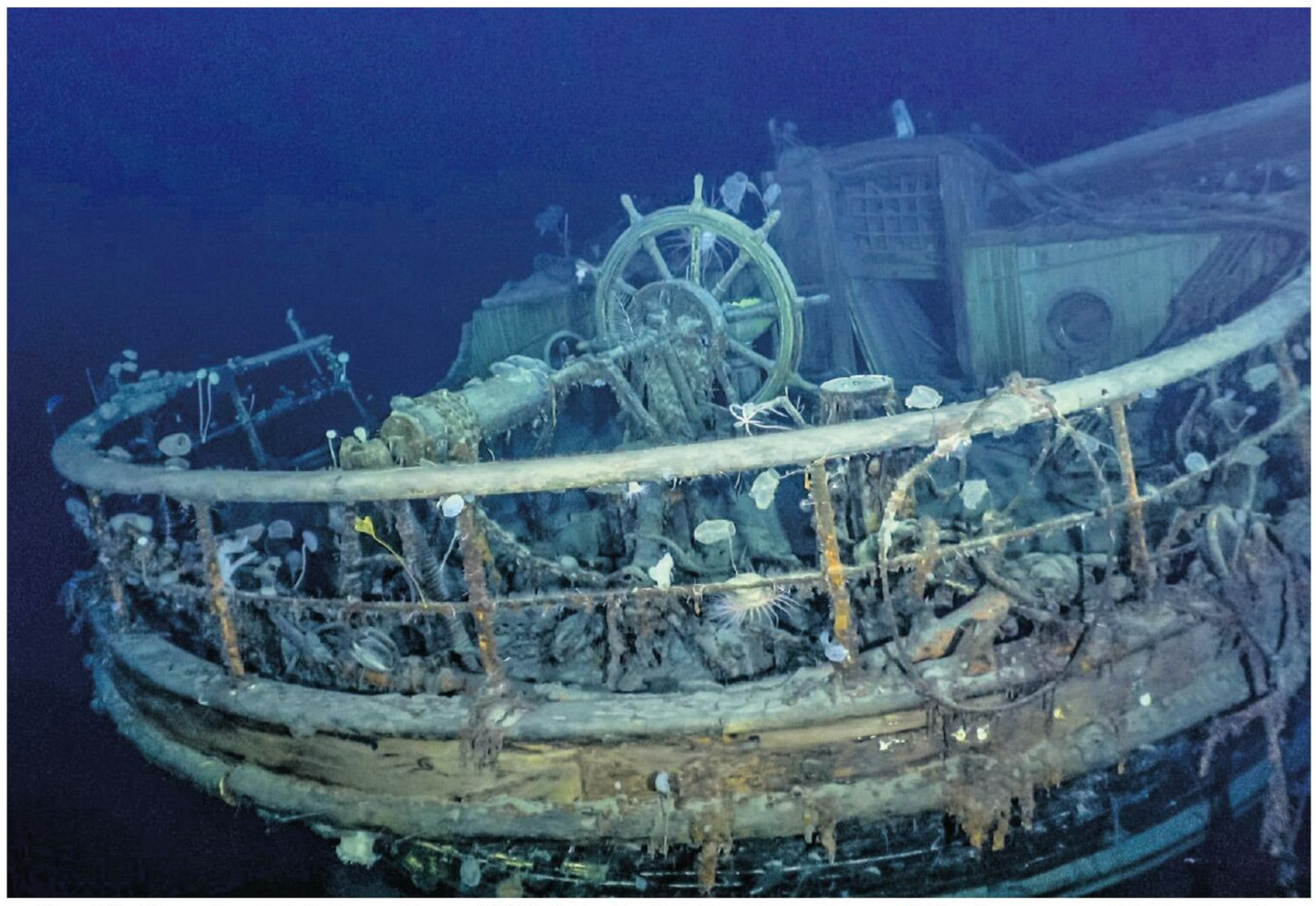
The wreck was "pretty well protected" already, 3,000 metres below the surface of the remote Weddell Sea, said Camilla Nichol, the chief executive of UKAHT. "But now that its location is known, people will be more interested in going, and climate change means the site will become more accessible."

The Endurance, thought to be lost for ever, was found in the icy waters of the Antarctic in 2022. It had not been seen since it was crushed by ice and sank in the Weddell Sea in November 1915. Footage showed the 44-metre (144ft) ship to be intact.

"This is by far the finest wooden shipwreck I have ever seen," Mensun Boud, the leader of the Endurance22 team, said at the time. "It is upright, well proud of the seabed, intact and in a brilliant state of preservation."

In December 1914, Sir Ernest Shackleton set sail from South Georgia with 27 men, heading for Vahsel Bay in the Weddell Sea. The plan was to cross the vast Antarctic ice sheet to the south pole, and then keep going to the Ross Sea on the other side of the continent.

But two days after leaving South Georgia, the Endurance encountered polar pack ice. The ship became stuck and eventually the crew decamped to the ice, where they remained for another five months, before sailing in the lifeboats to Elephant Island.



▲ *The Endurance shipwreck and, left, the icebound vessel in 1915*

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: FALKLANDS MARITIME HERITAGE TRUST/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC/PA

From there, in freezing temperatures and rough seas, Shackleton and five others sailed 800 miles to South Georgia. They organised the rescue of the rest of the crew, who were picked up alive within months.

It was "perhaps the greatest story of exploration, peril, leadership and survival ever told," the conservation management plan said. The wreck must be protected for future generations, the report added.

The plan was shared with the 56 other countries signed up to the Antarctic Treaty and received "100% endorsement", said Nichol.





Three interracial couples enter sex therapy, with, from left, Irene Sofia Lucio (Patricia), Fisayo Akinade (Gary), Chalia La Tour (Teá), and James Cusati-Moyer (Dustin). Above: Olivia Washington (Kaneisha) and Kit Harington (Jim)

PHOTOGRAPHS: HELEN MURRAY

Theatre review Sex and race collide in a satire that demands to be argued about

Slave Play
Noël Coward theatre, London
★★★★☆

Arifa Akbar

What happens in the bedroom, with all the power play, is vital documentation in literature, said Doris Lessing in defence of Lady Chatterley's Lover. It might be an old argument but it is an effective one in favour of Jeremy O Harris's confrontation with race between the sheets.

The overarching idea behind his play is that historical racial violence lives on, somatically, through the generations and reveals itself in sexual dynamics. Its enactment is in its own outré league: rarely has a West End stage seen a giant black dildo employed on a Gone With the Wind-style four-poster bed, along with antebellum master-slave cosplay and a tongue-frenzy of sexualised boot licking.

The shock value is leavened by the cartoonishness in the main, although the play has still garnered its detractors. Featuring three interracial couples in a novel sort of sex therapy, it led to outrage in its off-Broadway run in 2018. It comes to London garlanded to the hilt after 12 Tony award nominations, a spin-off HBO documentary and glittery audiences on Broadway.

As far as stage shocks go, Jackie Sibblies Drury's play Fairview was much more genuinely angry, Michael R Jackson's A Strange Loop more painfully intimate. Neither is it as fantastically original as Harris's play Daddy. But it is not as abstruse, with three clear, distinct parts, and a daringly frolicking appeal.

The couples include Kaneisha (Olivia Washington, full of suppressed rage), and Jim (Kit Harington, sufficiently priggish as the group's buttoned-up Brit). There is Phillip (Aaron Heffernan) a mixed-heritage hunk enlisted to spice up the vanilla marriage of the naively Karen-esque Alana (Annie McNamara), who make the play's most unrealistic couple. More fleshed out are the black, middle-class Gary (Fisayo Akinade, superb) and Dustin (James Cusati-Moyer), who looks white but identifies as "other".

It is clear from Kaneisha's first twerk as an indentured slave that this is a trick of a play, the title revealing its punning doubleness. Directed by Robert O'Hara at two hours straight through, the play is too clever for its own good, throwing the subject matter in the air without quite landing it, and is an intense experience, in spite of its romping humour and trotting pace.

The role play is deliberately stagey, as if to reassure us it is not real. You wait for it to reveal its intentions and then comes a therapy circle in which you wait for the characters to reveal themselves. Satire distracts from this, with counsellors Teá (Chalia La Tour) and Patricia (Irene Sofia Lucio) speaking in comic buzzwords and controlling the couples with pass-agg militancy. Therapy talk, race theory and academic-speak is rolled into the laughs and undercuts the emotional freight. As a result, there is an unresolved tension between a show that seeks to dramatise its anger and one that wants to be playfully incendiary.

But when the tone flips, the play takes on a sudden charge, such as when Phillip speaks about the racialised gaze of Alana's voyeur husband and in Gary's fight with Dustin. The final act, although dealing in fantasy, is paradoxically the most honest, dangerous and compelling of all. What Harris does especially well is to acknowledge the intricate intersections between the gender, race, class and colourism of his characters.

It feels distinctly like an American play, confronting plantation slavery, although the therapy section brings a more generalised trauma. It feels of a moment, too, and seems to predict BLM anger with language used in the resurgence of the 2020 movement (likening racism to a "virus").

Clint Ramos's set hides its shocks behind a mirrored back wall that reflects the audience (it was such a mirroring that inspired Harris to create the concept of Black Out nights) and it reminds us, lest we forget, that this is a play about the way "we" look alongside the characters on stage.

Ultimately, all of us are implicated, mirror or no mirror. I challenge anyone to leave without needing to argue in favour or against, describe moments, express solidarity or otherwise. It might be flawed but it is charismatic, needling theatre. An event.

Until 21 September

'Tin tabernacle' with links to 1907 sea rescue is given Grade II listing

Steven Morris

A Cornish church made of corrugated iron that was speedily erected more than a century ago and has strong connections to a famous sea rescue has been given protected status.

Historic England has declared that St Mary's, in the fishing village of Cadgwith, is important both for its architectural worth and its link to the 1907 rescue of 456 passengers and crew from the liner Suevic after it ran aground off the nearby Lizard Point.

Built at the end of the 19th century, the church is regarded as a fine example of a "tin tabernacle", a prefabricated corrugated iron building developed as a low-cost way to establish a place of worship.

Many were built during the upsurge in nonconformism, which was strong in Cornwall. Few survive, having been used temporarily until they could be permanently replaced.

The church, which is set into the hillside to the north of Cadgwith cove, is also synonymous with sea rescues. Its first vicar, the Rev Henry Vyvyan, was given a silver medal by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for the part he played in the Suevic rescue on the Cadgwith lifeboat, which holds the record for the largest number of people saved in a single RNLI operation.

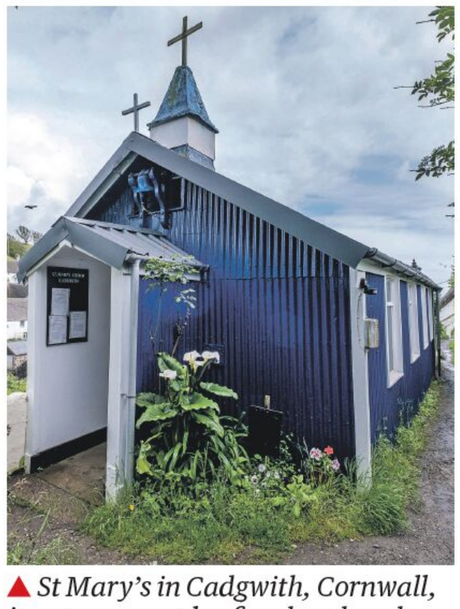
Historic England, which has given the Grade II listing, said it was one of the few tin tabernacles that remained in use. In 2022 when a Cadgwith fishing boat, Crig-A-Tana, capsized and sank and two crew members were saved by an RNLI lifeboat, a service of thanksgiving was held at the church.

Another piece of maritime history, the grave monument to James Gall, a member of the crew of the steamer SS Forfarshire which was wrecked on the Farne Islands off the north-east coast of England in 1838, has also been given Grade II listing.

Grace Darling, 22, and her father, William, a lighthouse keeper, rowed out and rescued the stranded survivors, including Gall. She is still one of the RNLI's most beloved figures.

Gall, a fireman on the ship, died in 1888, and an evening of song at Barrow town hall in Cumbria was held to raise funds for the memorial.

Historic England has produced an interactive map of landmarks connected with the RNLI to mark its anniversary, and it is asking the public to contribute to the Historic England Missing Pieces project.



St Mary's in Cadgwith, Cornwall, is a rare example of such a church

Joy as UK resident of 47 years is granted right to remain by Home Office

Neha Gohil
Community affairs correspondent

A retired newsagent and "local legend" from Merseyside has said he feels marvellous after a Home Office U-turn granted him the right to live in the UK almost 50 years after he arrived.

Nelson Shardey, 75, launched legal action against the Home Office and raised almost £50,000 earlier this year after he was refused the right to stay in the UK permanently, despite having lived in the country since 1977 and run his shop, Nelson's News, in Wirral for 31 years.

However, before an expected court hearing in autumn, Shardey has now been informed that the Home Office has reversed its decision, granting the retired newsagent indefinite leave to remain in exceptional circumstances.

Shardey said: "With this settlement, I will be happy to move freely. I'll be happy to see my children, I'll be happy to keep smiling at people because I know we are all one people and they all believed in me and we shall be one complete family ... I feel some healing in me.

"I am praying that anybody in the same circumstance as me or similar, when they believe in fairness and justice, can achieve it."

Shardey came to the UK on a student visa from Ghana at the age of 28. He said he believed he had British citizenship until he applied for a visa to attend his mother's funeral in 2019.

His sons, Aaron and Jacob, said their father had no reason to doubt his legal status as he was granted mortgages, paid taxes, did jury service and was able to get married.

Last year, Shardey was told by the Home Office to complete the 10-year route to settlement, which would require him to pay thousands of pounds in visa fees. Only then would he be eligible for indefinite leave to remain - the right to live and work in the UK.



▲ *Nelson Shardey, 75, launched legal action against the Home Office after he was refused the right to remain in the UK* PHOTOGRAPH: JOEL GOODMAN/THE GUARDIAN

Shardey's lawyer, Nicola Burgess, from the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, said she was "thrilled" that he would be granted indefinite leave to remain, providing him security and certainty in his retirement, but stressed that "it wasn't an easy process".

Shardey said the Home Office's Windrush unit gave the family incorrect information when a caseworker advised him to apply for the Windrush scheme in 2022, even though he was not eligible. Burgess said: "Incorrect applications, a lack of legal advice, wrong information from the Home Office and two previous refusals to grant ILR.

"Despite this, he made the decision to fight on. Nelson's bravery in the face of a dysfunctional immigration system has been inspirational."

She said Shardey's experience mirrored those of many who face an "unfair" immigration system and called on the new Labour government to shorten the settlement route to five years.

The family said the majority of the £50,000 crowdfund would be distributed to three charities: the Clatterbridge Cancer Charity, the Boaz Trust and the Wirral Foodbank.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "We are working with Mr Shardey to process his application for indefinite leave to remain. We apologise for any inconvenience and distress caused."

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YOU CAN HELP FAMILIES WHO HAVE LOST EVERYTHING

£95 COULD HELP PROVIDE AN EMERGENCY SHELTER KIT

On the morning of Monday 8 July, as people across Ukraine were starting their day, a wave of deadly strikes hit several cities, including the capital, Kyiv, Dnipro, Kryvyi Rih, Kramatorsk and Pokrovsk. Homes and infrastructure have been destroyed. Dozens of people have been killed and injured.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is working around the clock with partners on the ground to get lifesaving aid to the most vulnerable. UNHCR has the local knowledge and expertise to get aid through to the hardest hit, but even before these latest attacks our work in Ukraine was critically underfunded – we need your help.

Please will you give £95 to help provide an Emergency Shelter Kit?

The kits comprise building materials such as wood, nails, plastic sheeting, adhesive foam and a reinforced tarpaulin to protect families from the elements.

Speaking from Dnipro on Monday, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine, Denise Brown, strongly condemned the attacks, including the strike on Kyiv's Children's Hospital Ohmatdyt.

"It is unconscionable that children are killed and injured in this war. Under international humanitarian law hospitals have special protection. Civilians must be protected."

The people of Ukraine must not be forgotten.

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 the war, and its human impact, has sometimes slipped from the front pages and away from public consciousness.

Monday's attacks are a grim reminder that the full-scale war continues relentlessly, with people, homes and infrastructure impacted on almost a daily basis. **Your support today can help the UNHCR team in Ukraine continue to support the most vulnerable and save lives.**



Medical and emergency workers in Kyiv helping people after the attacks on Monday.

£95 could provide an Emergency Shelter Kit containing building materials such as wood, plastic sheeting and tarpaulins.



Give now at **unrefugees.org.uk/ukraine-guardian**
Call **0800 029 3883**, or fill in and return the form below

I would like to give: ☐ **£95** ☐ **£190** ☐ **£285** ☐ **Other £** _____

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to **UK for UNHCR** OR ☐ I would like to make a donation by debit/credit card

Card no. ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ Expiry date ☐☐ / ☐☐

Signature _____ Date ___ / ___ / ___

☐ Tick here, if you don't want to receive an acknowledgement by post

Title First name Last name

Address

Postcode

Provide your details below to receive updates by email and/or phone on the impact of your support and how you can donate and help in other ways.

Email

Phone

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

A minimum of 75% of your gift will directly help Ukrainian families, funding Emergency Shelter Kits and other humanitarian interventions.

United Kingdom for UNHCR is a registered charity in England and Wales (1183415).

Please return this form along with your cheque to: **Freepost UK FOR UNHCR**
(you don't need a stamp)

Increase your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate giftaid it

☐ I would like UK for UNHCR to claim Gift Aid on this donation (currently 25p for each £1 donated), as well as any donations I make in the future and have made in the past four years to UK for UNHCR, until I notify you otherwise. I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand that council tax and VAT do not qualify. If your circumstances change or you have any questions, please contact our **Supporter Care Team** on **0800 029 3883** or email **supportercare@unrefugees.org.uk** The Gift Aid claimed will be used to fund the whole of UK for UNHCR's work.

Respecting your personal data: We will use your details to process your donation and to keep you up to date with our work, fundraising activities and other events. You can read more about how we use your data in our Privacy Policy **unrefugees.org.uk/privacy-policy** You can opt out of any communications at any time by contacting our **Supporter Care Team** using the details above.

Today, you could help save a life. Scan now to give online.

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency United Kingdom for UNHCR

P24UAAGU1



▲ *Families playing in the Thames near Oxford. Thames Water says sewage incidents have risen by 6%*
PHOTOGRAPH: MATT SMITH/ALAMY

Thames Water awaits Ofwat verdict as report shows 108 sewage upgrades incomplete

Sandra Laville
Environment correspondent

Thames Water has failed to complete more than 100 upgrades to ageing sewage treatment works to meet legal pollution limits, the Guardian can reveal.

The schemes, costing £1.1bn, were supposed to cut pollution into rivers by increasing the capacity at sewage works, adding the removal of phosphorus to the treatment process, and installing new storm tanks. The upgrades, which were promised in 2018, are being paid for by customers as part of a five-year spending round ending in 2025, but will not be delivered within that timeframe.

Meanwhile, the company awaits a crucial decision today from the water services regulator, Ofwat, on its new five-year business plan. Thames wants to increase customer bills by 59% by 2030 to pay for investment of £19.8bn to tackle sewage pollution, leaks and water shortages after decades in which it has sweated its assets and underinvested.

The company is asking the regulator to allow the late projects to be rolled over into the new spending round, known as PR24.

Ash Smith, the founder of the campaign group Windrush Against Sewage Pollution, said customers had already paid for the projects to upgrade ageing sewage treatment works, and were being asked to pay again. "Thames Water failed to deliver around 108 schemes funded in the last spending cycle and we question whether that is a deliberate act to keep it financially afloat," he said.

"A proper investigation into this company is long, long overdue. It has broken our sewerage infrastructure while extracting cash, right under the noses of regulators and the government."

Industry-wide, water companies are seeking to increase customer bills by up to 91% to pay for investment of £96bn. The new environment secretary, Steve Reed, has summoned water company chiefs to a meeting today after the Ofwat decision on the PR24 business plans.

As well as the increases in bills, Thames wants the regulator to agree to issue it with lower fines for pollution. Thames has also asked Ofwat to increase a 3% limit on capital returns in order to attract investment as the company struggles to stay afloat with debts of more than £15bn. Thames has estimated that the average annual customer bill will be £608 by 2030.

Details of the failure to deliver the 108 upgrade projects on sewage treatment works across the network were contained in a deeply buried appendix to the PR24 business plan being considered by Ofwat.

The improvements to the treatment works were intended to meet a company target to reduce pollution to zero by 2025. But this week, Thames said sewage pollution had increased by 6% in the past year, to 350 events, breaching its legal pollution target. Most of these were related to delays to the upgrading of its sewage treatment works.

The 108 schemes included upgrades to prevent sewage pollution from seeping into internationally significant chalk streams in the Cotswolds, where the headwaters of the River Thames rise.



91%
The rise in bills sought by some water firms. They meet Steve Reed, the environment secretary, today

The survival of Thames Water, which provides drinking water and sewerage services for 15 million customers, is to a large extent dependent on today's decision by Ofwat.

Thames is seeking new investors for fresh funds. The company said it would run out of money by next June without a cash injection, raising fears of a potential collapse. Its chief executive, Chris Weston, this week blamed last year's increase in pollution on a 40% rise in rainfall in 2023, saying the ageing treatment works could not cope.

But under the Climate Change Act 2008, all water firms are legally obliged to take appropriate action to adapt to the future impacts of climate breakdown, and to provide regular updates on their progress. Thames was first ordered to assess the impact of climate change on its longer-term resilience in 2011.

The firm has blamed the failure to deliver the 108 schemes on macroeconomic events including Covid-19 and the rise in inflation. Thames said supply chain problems were a major reason for the delays, as well as pressure from the Environment Agency to force the company to create more storm tank capacity.

It said: "We have faced financial and delivery-related constraints, which means a number of schemes will be delivered late." The company said in its annual report this week: "After decades of underinvestment, it will take time to restore asset health to the level we expect and require."

Nils Pratley *Page 32 →*

South East
Beleaguered firm calls for cash injection from investors

PA Media

South East Water said that it needed a cash injection from investors to stay in business as it geared up for a key Ofwat ruling on its spending plans.

The struggling water firm, which serves 2.3 million people across Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire, said it was "in discussions with lenders and shareholders regarding additional liquidity".

The talks were at an advanced stage and the extra funding was expected to be raised, but the company had not struck a deal concerning the investment.

It said in a results statement yesterday: "If it is not possible to raise the additional liquidity, the group and therefore company would not have sufficient liquidity for the going concern period. The risk that the funding will not be received constitutes a material uncertainty that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the group and company to continue."

South East Water's parent company, HDF Holdings, is owned by NatWest's pension fund, an Australian infrastructure investor and a Canadian pension fund.

The company is already on Ofwat's watchlist for financially at-risk companies, alongside Thames Water and other regional monopolies.

The company's financial update is to be followed today by a draft verdict from Ofwat on water companies' five-year spending plans and bill increases to 2030. That will kick off six months of negotiations with Ofwat, before the regulator's final decision in December.

South East Water has put forward plans entailing spending rising to £1.9bn. Those plans would involve increasing customer bills by 22%.

The search for funding comes after South East Water's owners provided a £150m loan to a unit in the utility group this year.

South East Water's pre-tax loss narrowed to £36m for the year to 31 March, down from £74m the year before. Turnover rose 9% to £281m.

The company is also still under investigation by Ofwat for an incident in June 2023 when it failed to deliver water to thousands of customers for more than a week. The consequences could include a hefty fine from the regulator.

South East Water said: "Since the investigation was launched, we have entered into a constructive and transparent dialogue with Ofwat.

"Our colleagues, contractors, partners and stakeholders have all played a vital role in ensuring we kept the taps flowing for as many customers as possible, even during the extreme weather which impacted on our operations and overall performance in 2023-24."

Debt, dirty water and dividends: rising tide of Thames Water's troubles

Anna Isaac
Alex Lawson

Government officials who tour Coppermills, a vast Thames Water treatment works in north-east London, are left under no illusions about the dire condition of Britain's infrastructure.

"It's in a shocking state," said one official who has visited the 1960s site, which supplies approximately a third of the capital's population with drinking water and sewage services. "It's a slow-motion management disaster."

Thames has publicly admitted that Coppermills is in such poor condition that it could be a "point of failure", leading to prolonged water supply disruption for more than 500,000 people.

Coppermills is just one corner of a huge, decaying empire that serves 16 million customers across London and the Thames Valley. Evidence of that decay is all too frequent: from the rivers clouded with sewage when it rains, and the burst pipes and water mains, to the threatened water shortages when the sun shines. A slow-moving crisis that has engulfed Thames has left it teetering on the brink of a painful restructuring, or even a temporary renationalisation.

Thames has also become a totem of mismanagement, corporate greed and lax regulatory oversight. And for a new Labour government coming to terms with its economic inheritance, Thames is a timebomb that is about to detonate.

New breed of investors

The roots of decay go back more than two decades. In the early 2000s, as the government prepared to shunt two renationalised companies, Railtrack and British Energy, back into private hands, the message to regulators was clear: play nice and do not put off foreign investors. It was against this backdrop of light-touch regulation that Macquarie, which started out as a small Australian merchant bank in the 1960s, decided to buy Thames Water in 2006.

Britain's privatisation wave, kicked off by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, was entering a new phase. The early owners were cashing in their lucrative investments, and a new breed of investors were circling.

The Macquarie-led consortium outmuscled investment heavyweights – including the gas-rich state of Qatar and Guy Hands's Terra Firma – to land the £8bn acquisition from German's RWE.



▲ *Macquarie cut costs ruthlessly after buying the company in 2006*

Macquarie pruned costs ruthlessly. Cliff Roney, who had a four-decade career within Thames Water before retiring in 2018, recalls a shift when it took over from RWE. "When Macquarie arrived, they presented a glossy presentation to us, promising investment in assets and staff. Within months, it was clear we'd been sold a pup," he says. "Some important sites needed in case of water shortages were sold off. They were so tight on spending, you could barely order a box of pens. All the skills were contracted out – we had electricians, blacksmiths, window fitters – they were all outsourced under Macquarie."

Parsimony even extended to the boardroom – although not where pay was concerned. When Martin Baggs left his job running Thames Water in 2016, he might have expected a celebration, or at least a gold watch. Baggs had spent seven years as chief executive churning out profits and dividends for Macquarie. But in recognition of his service, he and his top team were each presented with a tea towel.

"It had self-portraits drawn by the directors – they didn't even pay for a designer to create them," says a former Thames executive. "Macquarie ran a very tight ship: if money didn't need to be spent, it wasn't."

Hollowed out

But money was flowing, elsewhere. A £656m dividend was extracted in the first year of Macquarie's stewardship, in 2007, dwarfing the company's profits of £241m. Thames churned out dividends of more than £200m in each of the seven years which followed.

It carved Thames up into a complex corporate structure, layering debt across multiple layers of companies. This so-called whole-business securitisation even involved setting up subsidiaries in the Cayman Islands. The consortium would ultimately take out £2.8bn during Macquarie's ownership, two-fifths of the total £7bn in dividends that Thames Water has paid between 1990 and 2022, according to Guardian analysis. Macquarie said £1.1bn was paid out to all shareholders, with its funds receiving £508m.

Its current owners – which include Canadian pension fund Omers, the UK universities pension fund and a subsidiary of the Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund – have not taken a dividend since 2017, although "internal" dividends have been paid to service debts higher up its complex corporate structure.

Thames Water, which was privatised with zero debt, saw its debts swell from £3.4bn in 2006 to £10.8bn in 2017, when Macquarie sold its final stake.



It is estimated that Macquarie left Thames with an extra £2.2bn in loans and that £2.8bn was taken out in dividends by the consortium, including Macquarie. Thames's pension position went from a £26.1m surplus in 2008 to a £260m deficit in 2015. "They left Thames in a crumbling state," says Roney.

From 2004 to 2019, there were "grotesque excesses" of debt amassed at water companies, including Thames, while dividends grew fatter, a senior water industry source said. "It was asset stripping, pure and simple."

A Macquarie spokesperson said: "Debt increased in line with the company's asset base, which doubled due to the record £11bn of investment delivered over the period."

The highest profile Macquarie executive linked to Thames is Martin Stanley, its former head of asset management, whose division oversaw Thames Water transactions. He was paid £10m in 2021, the year he stepped down from the role, and landed a £2.5m house with a pool in Suffolk.

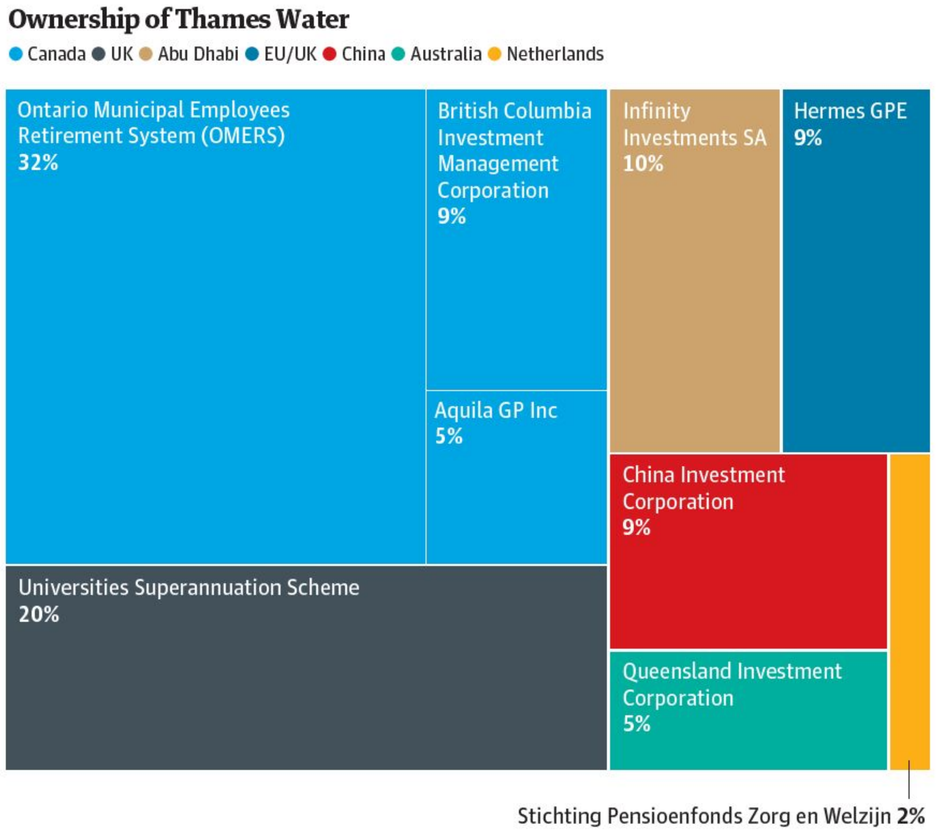
Irked by "misconceptions" about utility investors, another Macquarie executive, Martin Bradley, who oversaw the head of asset management and the Thames transactions, wrote to the Financial Times earlier this year arguing that the consortium had kept bills affordable and invested £11bn in network upgrades. The company has even taken the unusual step of addressing media "mischaracterisations" online.

The Macquarie spokesperson said: "We have had no influence over the decisions taken at Thames Water in the seven years since our managed funds sold their final equity stake. During the 11 years in which our funds were shareholders in Thames Water, we oversaw the largest investment programme in the company's history and the highest rate of investment per customer in the industry."

Concern about underinvestment in the water industry amid the broader challenges of the climate crisis and population growth led to a National Infrastructure Commission report in 2018 that underlined the need for greater drought resilience and leakage reduction. It is still issuing such warnings, saying in 2023 that "a lot more still needs to be done". In the aftermath of that report, plans for reservoirs finally advanced, including a reservoir to the south-west of Abingdon in Oxfordshire – although it still remains the centre of an intense local tussle.

By the time Macquarie cashed in its stake, work had begun on the much-debated Thames supersewer, a separate project that sits outside Thames Water's ownership but which will ultimately be paid for by Thames customers.

Ownership of Thames Water



Source: Thames Water 2023 annual report. Notes: Hermes GPE's controlling party is the US company Federated Hermes Inc. Figures do not add up to 100% because of rounding up or down



Sewage being processed at Thames Water's Longreach sewage treatment works in Dartford, Kent

PHOTOGRAPH: CARL COURT/GETTY



The Thames 'supersewer', which will ultimately be paid for by Thames Water customers

PHOTOGRAPH: DOMINIC LIPINSKI/PA

It was hard to find a corner of British infrastructure free from the bank's reach. From airports such as Glasgow, Aberdeen and Southampton to the gas pipe network manager Cadent, Macquarie was now deeply embedded in the UK's critical national infrastructure.

But along with those assets, Macquarie has acquired a mixed reputation among financial services professionals. Three current lenders to Thames criticised its approach during its time as a major shareholder at the company, saying its behaviour had reflected poorly on the rest of the investment community.

Outrage grows

In March 2017, Britain's biggest water company was hit with the first of what would be a string of huge fines. It was just eight days after Macquarie had sold its final stake in Thames to investment managers controlled by Omers and the Kuwait Investment Authority.

The Environment Agency's prosecution led to a record £20.3m penalty, imposed after the emergence of huge leaks of untreated sewage into the Thames and its tributaries that had led to serious impacts on residents, farmers and wildlife, killing birds and fish. The incidents, in 2013 and 2014, took place at sewage treatment works at Aylesbury, Didcot, Henley and Little Marlow, and a large sewage pumping station at Littlemore.

"This is a shocking and disgraceful state of affairs," said Judge Francis Sheridan, delivering the sentence at Aylesbury crown court. "One has to get the message across to the shareholders that the environment is to be treasured and protected, and not poisoned."

Much more was to follow. In the four years after Macquarie's exit, Thames was fined £32.4m for 11 pollution cases, including £4m for discharging an estimated half a million litres of raw sewage into the Seacourt and Hinksey streams in Oxford. In 2023, it was fined £3.3m and called "reckless" over a 2017 incident in which millions of litres of raw sewage entered two rivers near Gatwick. That came on top of £12m of penalties for late roadworks in London.

In numbers

16m

The number of Thames Water customers, stretching across London and the Thames Valley

£656m

Dividend taken in the first year of Macquarie's stewardship, against profits of just £241m

£15.6bn

Thames's debts, up from zero at privatisation. Its pension fund went from surplus to £260m deficit in 2015



River Action and Surfers Against Sewage activists protest outside Thames Water HQ in Reading in June

PHOTOGRAPH: GEOFFREY SWAINE/ REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

The fines were also racking up elsewhere: in 2021, Southern Water was fined a new record of £90m by the Environment Agency for deliberately dumping billions of litres of raw sewage into the seas off north Kent and Hampshire over several years.

Between 2015 and the summer of 2023, there were 59 prosecutions of water companies in England, with fines handed down by the courts of more than £150m. As the fines mounted, so did the public outrage, led by a clutch of campaigners, notably the former lead singer of the Undertones, Feargal Sharkey.

Financial implosion

The political winds started to shift, with the then environment secretary, Michael Gove, saying in 2018 that water companies "have not been acting sufficiently in the public interest". Some had been "playing the system for the benefit of wealthy managers and owners, at the expense of consumers and the environment", hiding "behind complex financial structures" to avoid scrutiny, he said. Ultimately, it had allowed "failures to persist for far too long".

But the wheels of regulation turn slowly. In 2017, the Cayman subsidiaries were ordered to be shut down. But it was only last year that Ofwat gained powers to stop payments of dividends to shareholders if they threatened a water company's financial resilience. And despite the catastrophic financial position it left Thames Water in, Macquarie made a shock return to the English water industry in 2021, taking control of troubled Southern Water and injecting £1bn to save it from possible renationalisation.

Macquarie said that the regulator had welcomed its investment in struggling Southern Water.

Ofwat faced a worsening conundrum. The water monopolies were so heavily indebted that fines risked further undermining their financial resilience.

By 2021, mounting outrage over sewage discharges had reached a climax. In November of that year the Environment Agency and Ofwat announced separate, parallel investigations into "potential widespread non-compliance at wastewater treatment works".

Meanwhile, financial problems at Thames were starting to mount. Sarah Bentley, the latest chief executive to promise to turn around the struggling utility, abruptly resigned in June 2023. Before the week was out, it emerged that the government had begun contingency planning for the collapse of Thames, and that Adrian Montague would become chair.

Across English and Welsh water companies, fraught negotiations with Ofwat were under way over how much they could increase bills by for their next five-year spending cycle, due to run from 2025 to 2030.

But cash was running out. In July 2023, Thames said it had secured £750m of emergency funding from its shareholders to run to March 2025 and indicated that a further £2.5bn would be needed to cover the five years to 2030. By December, Thames's complex financial structure was the source of intense examination in Westminster, and had been described by one MP as an "absolute shambles".

The arrival in January of Chris Weston, a former British Gas executive who was most recently boss of power generator Aggreko, was a last roll of the dice by its despairing shareholders. The £2.3m-a-year chief executive was "the bolshiest utilities executive they could find", sources said.

In March, shareholders dropped a bombshell: they pulled the plug on the first £500m tranche of the £750m committed the previous year, calling the company "uninvestable". Ministers showed little sympathy - Gove called Thames "arrogant". With no more shareholder cash forthcoming amid the standoff with Ofwat, Thames's parent company, Kemble, told creditors in April it could not pay a £190m loan due later that month.

In Whitehall, contingency planning for Thames's failure gathered pace. A government team set up to study the situation in 2023, codenamed Project Timber, drafted a blueprint for turning Thames into a publicly owned arm's-length body. Lenders would be forced to take big losses - with the rest of its £15.6bn debt added to the public purse. Its situation was described as a "critical risk" to the country in briefings to the prime minister and chancellor, Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves, within days of them taking office.

A Thames Water spokesperson said: "We have set out an ambitious business plan for the next five years, and with consistent leadership and priorities, time and resources, and the appropriate regulatory determination, we will turn around this business and make it perform for all our customers, the environment and our wider stakeholders."

The company's fate now rests on how generous Ofwat is with its first ruling on its spending plans today. Thames has been lobbying desperately to allow it to pay dividends up to Kemble, increase bills by up to 59% and receive smaller fines, but it is unlikely to receive a warm reception.

A damaging restructuring for investors and lenders - or even temporary renationalisation - looks inevitable. Ofwat's final view on bill rises will be released in December. Thames, its investors and - quietly - Macquarie will hope it is still in private hands by that point. The 35-year privatisation experiment looks set to culminate in a crisis that the new Labour government will have to clear up.

World

Israel orders evacuation of Gaza City as it intensifies offensive across territory

Lorenzo Tondo *Jerusalem*
Malak A Tantesh *Gaza*

The Israeli military told all Palestinian civilians to leave Gaza City and head south yesterday, as it stepped up a military offensive in the territory that has killed dozens of people over the past 48 hours.

The evacuation order, carried out by dropping leaflets urging "all those in Gaza City" to take two "safe routes" south to the area around the central town of Deir al-Balah, came after a series of deadly strikes over the past two days in other parts of Gaza.

On Tuesday an airstrike on the entrance of a school-turned-shelter in southern Gaza killed at least 31 people, including eight children, according to officials at the nearby Nasser hospital.

Footage broadcast by Al Jazeera showed children playing football in the school's yard when a sudden boom shook the area, prompting shouts of: "A strike, a strike!"

The Israeli military said it was reviewing reports that civilians had been harmed. It said the incident occurred when it struck with "precise munition" a Hamas fighter who took part in the 7 October raid on Israel that precipitated the Israeli assault on Gaza.

The area hit was crowded at the time of the attack, according to witnesses who spoke to the BBC.

Yesterday's attack was the fourth on or near schools sheltering displaced Palestinians in four days. Israel has said that in every instance the sites were targeted because they were being used as bases by Hamas fighters, police officers or politicians.

Further Israeli strikes in the early hours of yesterday killed at least 20 Palestinians. Associated Press reported that 12 people had been killed in the Nuseirat refugee camp and eight at a home in Deir al-Balah, an area that is within the "humanitarian safe zone" where Israel has told Palestinians to seek refuge.

In a visit to central Gaza yesterday, Israel's military chief, Herzi Halevi, said forces were operating in different ways, in multiple parts of the territory, "to carry out a very important mission: pressure. We will continue operating to bring home the hostages."

Israeli ground troops have advanced into sections of Gaza City in recent days, prompting a mass exodus of thousands of Palestinians seeking to flee the barrage of shelling and airstrikes. Last week, the military directed Palestinian residents to evacuate from the eastern and central areas of the city.

Despite yesterday's directive, an immediate large-scale departure from the city did not materialise.

Many civilians told the Guardian they have concluded that there is no refuge in war-stricken Gaza and that they lack confidence in the safe corridors set by Israel.

Residents said they also feared that if they left they would not be able to take belongings and would not be able to return.

This is the first time that all residents of Gaza City have been asked to evacuate since the evacuation orders released by the Israelis during the first week of war. Large parts of the city and urban areas around it have been flattened or left a shattered landscape by previous Israeli assaults.

The last few days of airstrikes have been some of the fiercest since the war broke out. Hamas's armed wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, described the fighting as "the most intense in months".

The intensified offensive could be aimed at increasing pressure on Hamas in ceasefire talks.

The new fighting has unfolded as international mediators led by Egypt, Qatar and the US make a renewed effort to push through a proposed ceasefire deal. Talks are due to continue in Doha and Cairo this week, attended by the CIA director, William Burns, and the Mossad chief, David Barnea. "There is an agreement over many points," a senior source told Egypt's Al Qahera news on Tuesday.

However, Hamas has again accused Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, of deliberately trying to thwart the truce talks.

Netanyahu told a US envoy yesterday he was committed to securing a Gaza ceasefire deal provided Israel's red lines were respected, Netanyahu's office said in a statement.

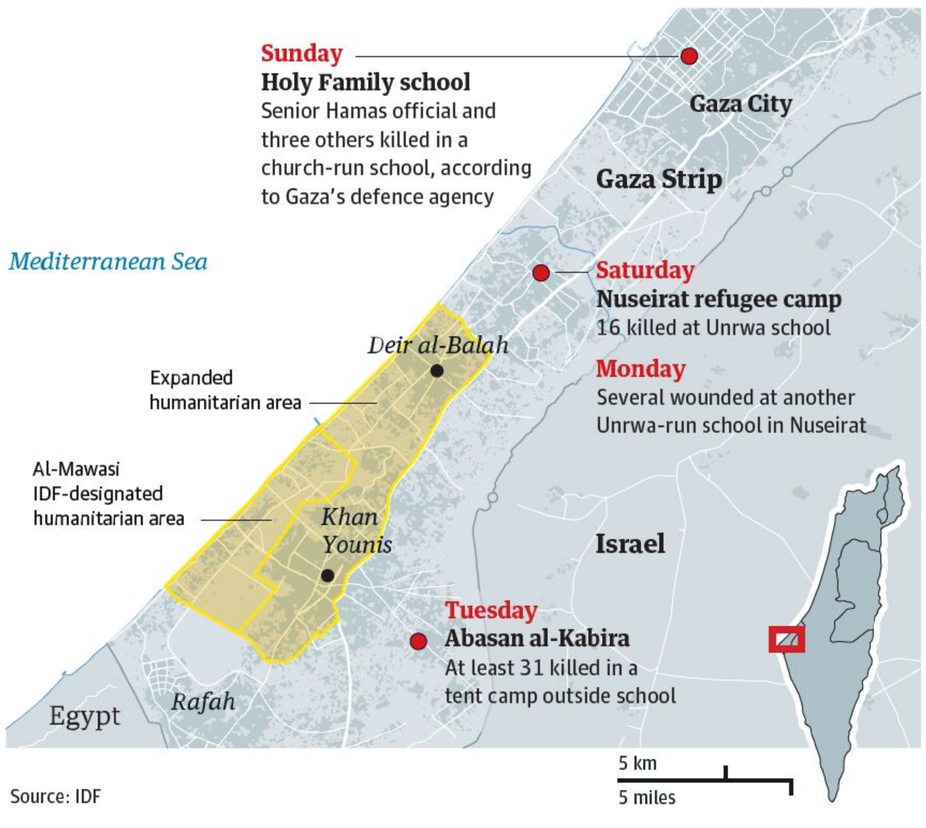
On Sunday, Netanyahu's office issued a document entitled Principles for a hostage release deal. Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported that it demanded that "any deal enable Israel to resume its offensive operations until it achieves its war goals", to "prevent Hamas from smuggling arms from Egypt", and to prevent "thousands of terrorists from returning to northern Gaza".

Pressure is mounting on Israel as a Gaza ceasefire could also allow for de-escalation between Hezbollah and Israel.

Yesterday, the Hezbollah chief, Hassan Nasrallah, speaking at a memorial event for a senior Hezbollah official who was killed in an Israeli strike last week, said his group would end hostilities against Israel as soon as a ceasefire was achieved in Gaza.

Additional reporting **Reuters, AFP and Associated Press**

Israel has launched attacks on or near schools sheltering displaced people four times in four days



Source: IDF



IDF strike caught on film

'Unimaginable casualties' in attack on al-Awda school

Lorenzo Tondo
Jerusalem

The scene shows a moment of respite and relative calm in Gaza: a crowd of people watching a football match in the playground of a school turned shelter. A player fails to control a long pass from a teammate. The opposing goalkeeper gathers the ball and looks to launch it back up the pitch.

But just after he throws the ball, a deafening boom sends everyone present running for cover, including the person filming. "A strike! A strike!" someone screams.

The footage was broadcast by Al Jazeera, which said it captured the moment on Tuesday of an Israeli airstrike next to the gate of al-Awda school in Abasan al-Kabira, east of the city of Khan Younis in Gaza. As the person who was filming the match flees, they pass dead bodies and severely injured people among the debris.

The death toll from the strike – which hit an area where hundreds of displaced people from villages east of Khan Younis had set up makeshift camps – rose to 31

Film set shooting
Opening statements in Alec Baldwin trial
Page 26



'Narco-pentecostal'
Rio drug lord accused of Catholic repression
Page 28



PHOTOGRAPH: ABED RAHIM KHATIB/AVALON

yesterday, officials at the nearby Nasser hospital said. Dozens more were injured.

Witnesses said the area was bustling with people and market traders when the strike occurred.

"We were sitting at the entrance of the school ... suddenly and without warning, rockets were fired," Mohammed Sukkar, a witness, told Agence France-Presse.

A Palestinian boy who lost several relatives told Al Jazeera: "A missile fell and destroyed everything. I lost my uncle, my cousins and my relatives."

People recounted seeing individuals with severed limbs and body parts lying around.

"I witnessed ... people thrown around and body parts scattered, blood," a young woman called Ghazzal Nasser told Reuters. Before the attack "everything was normal", she said. "People were playing, others were buying and selling [food and drinks]. There was no sound of planes or anything."

Ayman Al-Dahma, 21, said the number of casualties was "unimaginable".

"They said it was a safe place," he told the BBC, "that there w water and food, there were schools and everything ... Suddenly a rocket comes down on you and all the people around you."

Asmaa Qudeih, a witness who lost some relatives in the attack, told Reuters: "Bodies flew in the wind, body parts flew."

Videos from Nasser hospital, where the casualties were taken, showed dozens of dead and seriously injured people, including children, strewn across the floor of a room.

The Israel Defense Forces said the incident was under investigation. "A warplane, using precision munitions, attacked a terrorist from the military wing of Hamas who participated in the hideous massacre on 7 October," the IDF said in a statement.

In a statement on X, the German foreign ministry said: "People seeking shelter in schools getting killed is unacceptable. The repeated attacks on schools by the Israeli army must stop and an investigation must come quickly."

Tuesday's attack was the fourth on or near schools sheltering displaced Palestinians in four days.

Israel said all the strikes were aimed at targeting militants hiding in the buildings.

Philippe Lazzarini, the commissioner-general of Unrwa, wrote on X: "Schools have gone from safe places of education and hope for children to overcrowded shelters and often ending up a place of death and misery." Lazzarini said two-thirds of Unrwa's schools in Gaza had been targeted since the start of the war.

"The blatant disregard of international humanitarian law cannot become the new normal," he added.

▲ *Mourning the loss of those killed in the strike on al-Awda school, where the death toll rose to 31 yesterday*

US aid effort
Pier to be dismantled after 20 days in operation

Julian Borger
Washington

A military pier, built by the US two months ago as a way to bring seaborne humanitarian aid into Gaza, is to be permanently dismantled within a few days, US officials have told reporters.

The officials said the pier, which has had to be moved repeatedly to avoid bad weather, would be reconnected to the Gaza coastline yesterday but would only operate for the next few days before being taken apart by the US army and navy.

The pier will be back in place to allow the delivery of humanitarian supplies which have accumulated in Cyprus and on a floating dock offshore since the pier went out of action on 28 June as a result of weather conditions, according to the plan.

The chief Pentagon spokesperson, Maj Gen Patrick Ryder, said on Tuesday that the pier was at the Israeli port of Ashdod, which is used during bad weather, but added: "My understanding is that Centcom [US Central Command] intends to tentatively re-anchor the pier this week."

Ryder did not comment on the longer-term prospects for the pier. Aid workers familiar with the project had been predicting for weeks that it would not survive beyond July.

The scheme, first unveiled by Joe Biden in March, was intended to be a temporary measure to complement the meagre amount of aid allowed into Gaza via land crossings by Israel, but US officials told Reuters in June it would last until August or September.

The eastern Mediterranean off the Gaza coast had been choppier in the summer months than had been expected, with storms making it necessary to move the pier in and out of position repeatedly.

Since it was first manoeuvred into position on 17 May, the pier has been operational for fewer than 20 days, and for most of those aid deliveries were simply unloaded on the beach without being distributed around Gaza because of security concerns.

The World Food Programme (WFP) suspended distribution convoys on 9 June, after 274 Palestinians were killed by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in a raid on the Nuseirat refugee camp that rescued four Israeli hostages. Apart from a day's operations to clear the backlog of humanitarian assistance on the beach, the WFP has continued to suspend its convoys pending a full security review.

About 8,800 tonnes of aid has been unloaded off the pier, about 500 truckloads, equivalent to a single day of deliveries before the war began.

Critics said the $230m (£180m) project would divert attention from the international effort to pressure Israel to open land crossings into Gaza, the most efficient way to deliver aid to the 2.3 million Palestinians trapped there, more than a quarter of whom are in imminent danger of famine.

Land deliveries have dwindled dramatically since Israel launched an offensive on the southern border city of Rafah in May. According to UN figures, the number of trucks entering Gaza through the two remaining open crossings, Kerem Shalom and Erez West, fell from 840 in May to 756 in June to only 18 so far in July.

A spokesperson for the US Agency for International Development (USAID) said: "What we continue to focus on is getting urgently needed aid to people in need across Gaza through all available mechanisms."

"Ashdod port is open for humanitarian deliveries and we expect humanitarians will increasingly use this route," the spokesperson said. "Erez West and Kerem Shalom are also open, though insecurity and kinetic operations are constraining onward distributions within Gaza. The United States is actively involved in discussions with Israel, the UN, and other humanitarian organisations to determine ways to overcome these constraints and allow assistance to reach people in desperate need."

▼ *Choppier than expected weather meant that the pier had to be moved several times throughout the project*
PHOTOGRAPH: US ARMY/REUTERS



Eyewitness

Verge of greatness

As stage 12 of the Tour de France gets under way today, the race, which started in Florence, has so far been free of fan-caused incidents. Instead, dedicated watchers have been taking up their roadside vigil in excited and not always muted anticipation of the peloton's passing. Here is a selection of this year's spectator spectacles.



▲ *Dressing up is a long-established fan tradition. Here, Britain's Mark Cavendish is not to be distracted on stage seven*

PHOTOGRAPH: ANNE-CHRISTINE POUJOULAT/ GETTY IMAGES



◀ *A building on the route of stage six between Mâcon and Dijon in east central France offers a vantage point for a lone spectator*

DANIEL COLE/AP





▼ *Cherry-picking their view, fans get a lift on some farm machinery as stage 11 passes by*

MARCO BERTORELLO/GETTY IMAGES



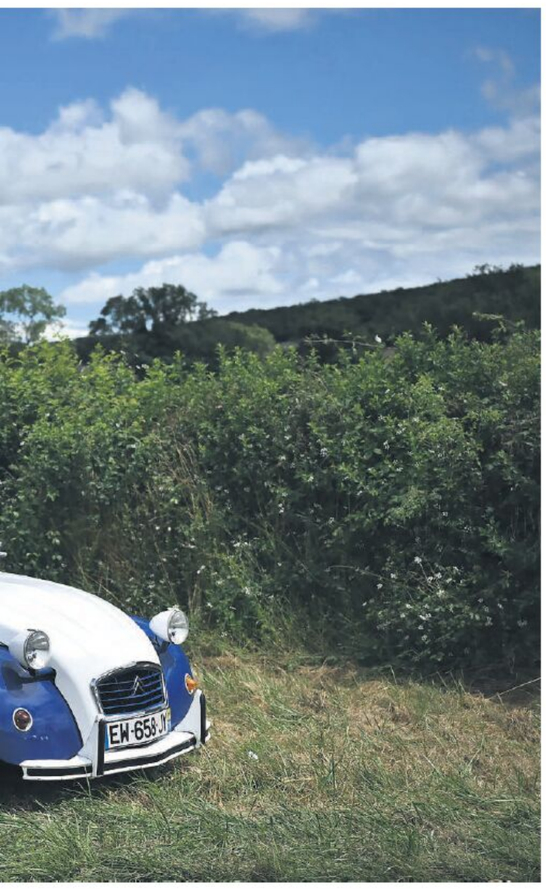


▼ *Far from Switzerland, Swiss flags fly on the stage 11 Col de Néronne ascent in the Massif Central*

MARCO BERTORELLO/GETTY IMAGES







▲ *Whiling away the time waiting for the pack to pass on the stage nine circuit from Troyes, in central France*

MARCO BERTORELLO/GETTY IMAGES

◀ *The sunroof of a Citroën 2CV may not afford much of an improved sightline during stage six*

MARCO BERTORELLO/GETTY IMAGE



▲ *Residents of Évaux-les-Bains in central France, the start point of stage 11, fish for promotional handouts*

MARCO BERTORELLO/GETTY IMAGES

◀ *An offer of wings to help riders on the mountainous climb through stage four from Pinerolo, Italy, to Valloire in France*

DANIEL COLE/AP



Alec Baldwin arriving at Santa Fe county district court yesterday. His defence team argue he was not responsible for checking the firearm that killed Halyna Hutchins

PHOTOGRAPH: ROSS D FRANKLIN/AP

Alec Baldwin dubbed 'reckless' as manslaughter trial begins

Dani Anguiano
Santa Fe

Alec Baldwin violated the "cardinal rules of firearm safety" on the film set of Rust, prosecutors have argued in the actor's involuntary manslaughter trial, which got under way yesterday in Santa Fe.

Almost three years after the fatal shooting, prosecutors began to lay out their case against Baldwin, painting a picture of an unsafe workplace on a tight budget, while the defence argued that he "committed no crime" and was simply "an actor, acting".

The state said Baldwin acted in a reckless manner that led to the death of the cinematographer Halyna Hutchins, who was killed on the film's set at the Bonanza Creek Ranch, a popular filming location 30 minutes outside the city, in October 2021.

Baldwin was rehearsing when he pointed a prop firearm at Hutchins and the weapon fired a single bullet, killing Hutchins and injuring the director, Joel Souza. He has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The evidence will show that the gun was functional, the prosecutor, Erlinda Johnson, said, despite Baldwin's statements that it had malfunctioned. But Baldwin failed to carry out a safety check and repeatedly violated safety rules with the weapon by leaving his finger on the hammer and trigger and pointing it at people while filming, she argued.

"He pointed the gun at another human being, cocked the gun and pulled that trigger in reckless disregard for Ms Hutchins' safety," Johnson said. "The evidence will show that someone who played make-believe with a real gun and violated the cardinal rules of firearm safety is the defendant, Alexander Baldwin."

> *'He pointed the gun, cocked the gun, and pulled that trigger'*
>
> **Erlinda Johnson**
> *Prosecutor*

The trial will focus on the Colt .45 used in the shooting. Baldwin has claimed that he did not fire the weapon, but the prosecution contends that forensic testing on the gun had shown that the actor pulled the trigger and that Baldwin was negligent in his handling of it.

The defence argued that Baldwin was focused on playing a character and was not responsible for checking the gun. Others on set were tasked with ensuring the weapon's safety, Alex Spiro, a defence attorney, said.

The critical issue in the case, he said, was how a real bullet found its way on to the film set: "The evidence will show that on a movie set, safety has to occur before the gun is placed in an actor's hands."

He said Hutchins' death was an "unspeakable tragedy" but that "Alec Baldwin committed no crime; he was an actor, acting".

The trial continues.



Macron urges French parties 'to build solid majority for the country'

Jon Henley
Europe correspondent

Emmanuel Macron yesterday called on political parties to "rise to the occasion and work together" to build a mainstream coalition with a solid majority after voters in a snap election returned a hung parliament with no obvious route to a government.

The French president (pictured above) said in a letter published in Le Parisien that no one had won the election in which the left-green alliance came top but fell far short of an absolute majority. "No political force has a sufficient majority, and the blocs that have emerged are all minorities," Macron said.

He called on all parties "that identify with republican institutions, rule of law, parliamentarianism, a pro-European stance and French independence to partake in a sincere, loyal dialogue to build a solid ... majority for the country".

The formulation appeared designed to exclude Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN), but also implicitly the radical left France Unbowed of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, which is the largest party in the New Popular Front (NFP) alliance that emerged as the surprise election winner.

The NFP, which also includes the Socialist, Green and Communist parties, won 182 of the assembly's 577 seats and can count on the support of another 10 or so left-leaning MPs, while Macron's centrist coalition returned 168 MPs. The far-right RN was third with 143.

The NFP has since claimed that as the largest bloc it must be allowed to field the next prime minister and implement its programme.

Many in Macron's camp, however, echoed by MPs from the centre-right Les Républicains, have said they will not support an NFP-led government and would back a confidence motion against a cabinet that featured France Unbowed members.

Macron said in his letter that voters had not wanted the RN to govern. Only republican forces represented a majority, he said, and the demand for "change and power sharing" required them to build a broad alliance.

It would take time for parties to negotiate compromises, Macron added, so the outgoing government of Gabriel Attal would continue to "exercise its responsibilities and be in charge of day-to-day affairs, as is the republican tradition".

China building two-thirds of world's renewables projects

Amy Hawkins
Senior China correspondent

The amount of wind and solar power under construction in China is now nearly twice as much as the rest of the world combined, a report has found.

Research published today by Global Energy Monitor (GEM), an NGO, found China has 180 gigawatts (GW) of utility-scale solar power under construction as well as a further 159GW of wind power, bringing the total to 339GW, well ahead of the 187GW being built by other countries, which includes 40GW under construction in the US. The researchers only looked at solar farms with a capacity of 20GW or more, which feed directly into the grid, meaning the total amount in China could be far higher, as small farms account for about 40% of China's solar capacity.

The findings underscore China's leading position in global renewable energy production at a time when the US is increasingly worried about Chinese overcapacity and dumping, particularly in the solar industry.

China has experienced a boom in renewables in recent years, encouraged by strong government support. Xi Jinping, China's president, has stressed the need for "new quality productive forces", a slogan that signifies a desire to pivot China's economy towards technology and innovation. Xi has said that "new quality productive forces" include strengthening green manufacturing.

Between March 2023 and March 2024, China installed more solar than it had in the previous three years combined, and more than the rest of the world combined for 2023, the GEM analysts found. China is on track to reach 1,200GW of installed wind and solar capacity by the end of the year, six years ahead of target.

The report said the "wave of construction guarantees that China will continue leading in wind and solar installation in the near future, far ahead of the rest of the world".

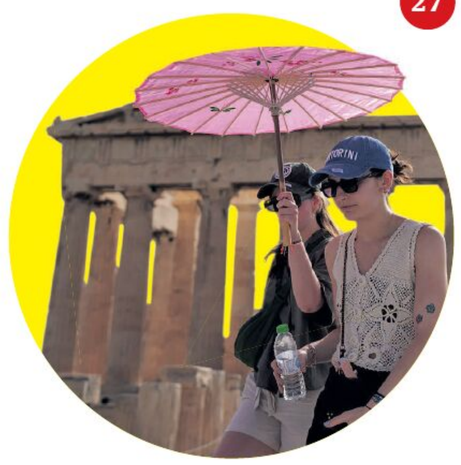
Analysts have said still more renewable capacity would be needed for China to meet its target of reducing the economy's carbon intensity - how many grams of carbon dioxide are released to produce a kilowatt hour of electricity - by 18%, an important factor in reducing emissions.

Earlier analysis suggested that China will need to install between 1,600GW and 1,800GW of wind and solar energy by 2030 to meet its target of producing 25% of all energy from non-fossil fuel sources.

Between 2020 and 2023, only 30% of the growth in energy consumption was met by renewable sources, compared with the target of 50%.

"It is obviously important for China to keep on adding more renewable energy to meet its targets," said Li Shuo, director of the China Climate Hub at the Asia Society Policy Institute in Washington. He added: "There is no sign that the country is trying to steer away from its coal consumption".

‘It’s about survival’ How mayor is helping Athenians adapt to record temperatures



Helena Smith
Athens

Trees, cooling centres, water stations. All three are on Haris Doukas’s mind as he sits in his office-turned-control centre on the top floor of city hall.

Barely six months into the job, the mayor of Athens’s top priority is simple: ensuring the people of Greece’s capital – mainland Europe’s hottest metropolis – survive the summer. After the hottest June on record, the city has already witnessed record-breaking temperatures and wildfires.

“In any place tackling such extreme weather phenomena would be difficult,” says Doukas. “In a city of seven hills and such dense urban development, it’s especially complex.”

That is why Doukas is so preoccupied with planting trees. “A green neighbourhood can experience a drop in temperatures of 5%, the difference between a tortuous day in a heatwave or not,” says the mayor, who was an academic and political unknown before being fielded for the post by the social democrat Pasok party.

“It’s not a matter of lifestyle, or improving the quality of life; it’s about survival when 23% of the green lung around Athens has in recent years been destroyed by fires. It’s vital we have more trees, more air-conditioned community centres and more water stations on our streets and squares.”

Doukas, who taught energy policy at Athens’ Polytechnic, is no newcomer to the climate crisis or the perils it poses.

“The best thing about this job is that you can improve people’s lives,” says the 44-year-old. “It’s no longer about theories but about making Athens more sustainable and resilient.” But he has no illusions. “Of course I’m worried … We’re doing whatever we can.”



▲ *Water and shade: a local, above, and tourists, top right, find ways to counter last month’s heatwave*
PHOTOGRAPH: STELIOS MISINAS/REUTERS

Last week, Greece’s prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, whose centre-right government has invested heavily in a “war chest” of firefighting equipment, including early detection drones, warned that this summer was “expected to be particularly dangerous”.

After days of firefighters battling blazes fuelled by hotter, drier and windier weather – telltale signs of climate change – it was clear that “the most difficult times” lay ahead, he said.

With temperatures nudging 40C in mid-June, and meteorologists predicting the mercury will be “6C above normal” for the rest of July, Athens’ city hall has opened air-conditioned public spaces, set up a 24-hour “heatwave line,” reinforced staff at municipal clinics and extended a home care support programme that sees social workers, nurses and psychologists dispatched to the apartments of older people living alone. Under a pilot scheme monitoring the effects of heat on the older generation, seniors have been given biometric watches that can alert authorities.

“Greece has an ageing population that is, and will be, more vulnerable to the heat,” says Olga Dourou, the vice mayor in charge of the scheme, whose study of active ageing at PhD level is being put into practice by the municipality. “People are living longer and we’re going to have to take measures to deal with it.”

Efi Petropoulou and Rena Papadaki are retirees who remember Attica’s once famously dry climate. “The atmosphere in Athens has really changed,” says Petropoulou. “It’s so heavy and humid and it’s definitely got a lot hotter. Before you’d cope by closing the shutters and putting on the fan. Now it’s impossible without air conditioning.”

“And who’d have thought we’d come to this?” Papadaki chips in, pointing to the air-conditioning unit at the neighbourhood club where they meet every day.

The club is one of seven community centres in central Athens that the municipality has opened to protect and shelter people when heatwaves strike.

“Most get here by 9am when the doors open and leave at 9pm when they close again,” says Aliki Kirmitsa, who lives in Neos Kosmos, a blue-collar area of postwar apartment blocks where the centre is located.

“It’s a blessing. People like us in the third age would struggle without it. After all, who can afford to keep the air conditioning running around the clock?”

Greeks who might never have talked about the weather – or at least have faced it with stoicism – today follow it in real time on mobile phone apps, often shaking their heads in disbelief.

Dimitris Dimitras, a waiter in Plaka, the picturesque district beneath the Acropolis, is among those cursing the humidity that makes it especially hard to work. “Look at this, these humidity levels, we could be in Indonesia,” he says, pulling out his phone. “I’m 61 and the heat really bothers me now … if it goes on like this there will be nobody waiting tables.”

Ever more Greeks are choosing to holiday in northern climes, with Norway and other parts of Scandinavia becoming increasingly popular. “All our flights are fully booked,” says Frosso Stavraki at the Cosmorama travel agency, which specialises in tours to northern Europe. “When it’s so hot people are looking for somewhere cool.”

Backat city hall, Doukas says his aim is to plant 5,000 trees by December – 25,000 by the end of his term – to help reduce pollution, lower temperatures and improve air quality. It’s a tall order but he’s determined. “I follow our new tree app on my phone every day,” he says, pulling it up on the screen.

“At 11%, the green space in Athens is well behind the European average … with this I can see exactly where and when new samplings have been planted. Here it’s the way forward.”

Japan adds new category to heatstroke index after six die in Tokyo



▲ *Mist machines cool Tokyo’s streets*

Justin McCurry
Tokyo

Medical experts in Japan are to add a “most severe” category to the country’s heatstroke index amid warnings that the extreme heat is straining medical services and causing damage to public health comparable to that in a natural disaster.

The Japanese Association for Acute Medicine said it would add a fourth category to the three-level classification later this year in an attempt to reduce deaths from heatstroke.

The announcement came in the same week as authorities in Tokyo said six people had died from the effects of a heatwave that has sent temperatures as high as 40C (104F) in some parts of the country – well above the 35C threshold classified by weather officials as “extremely hot”.

The association said the death toll from heat exhaustion had risen from a few hundred a year two decades ago to about 1,500 in 2022. The sheer number of deaths suggests heatstroke now poses a danger on a par with that of a major natural disaster, it said, while urging people not to go outside unless absolutely necessary.

In its index, the least serious classification is mild heatstroke – with symptoms such as dizziness and profuse sweating. Next come moderate cases, where symptoms include headaches and vomiting, according to the Mainichi Shimbun paper. The third level is severe, where patients can lose consciousness and have convulsions. The new “most severe” category will apply to people with a core temperature of 40C or higher and an inability to communicate.

Tokyo authorities have urged people to avoid physical activity as the environment ministry issued danger-level alerts in response to days of temperatures in the upper 30s.

Cooling shelters have been set up around the capital to offer respite from the heat and humidity.

Several people have died since the heatwave intensified last week, according to reports, including an 86-year-old farmer whose body was found in a field surrounded by towels and bottles of water.

9,000
Number of people across Japan who sought emergency treatment for suspected heatstroke last week

60%
Proportion of emergency hospital visits for heatstroke that were made by people over 64 last week

The fire and disaster management agency said the number of people taken to hospital for heatstroke last week had quadrupled from the previous week, as Tokyo and other areas experienced record temperatures for this time of the year. Just over 9,000 people sought emergency care for suspected heatstroke nationwide, the Japan Times reported, citing the agency – more than twice the number during the same period last year.

The extreme heat in Japan – a result of the climate crisis and a strong high-pressure system in the South Pacific – poses a particularly serious threat to the country’s large population of people aged over 64, who accounted for almost 60% of emergency hospital visits for heatstroke last week.

Additional reporting **Agencies**

‘Narco-pentecostal’ drug gang accused of ordering Catholic churches in Rio to close

Tom Phillips
Rio de Janeiro

Reports that a powerful Rio drug lord known for his extremist religious beliefs ordered Catholic churches near his stronghold to close have spooked worshippers and security experts and exposed the advent of a “narco-pentecostal” movement made up of heavily armed evangelical drug traffickers.

Claims emerged in the Brazilian press over the weekend that Álvaro Malaquias Santa Rosa – a notorious gang boss known as Peixão (Big Fish) – had determined that three places of worship should shut down in and around the agglomeration of favelas that he controls in northern Rio.

Peixão – whose nickname comes from the ichthys, a fish symbol denoting Jesus – took control in 2016 of five favelas that have become known as the Complexo de Israel or Complex of Israel, an allusion to the evangelical belief that the return of Jews to the Holy Land is a step towards the second coming of Christ.



▲ *Cocaine stamped with the star of David, a symbol used by a gang boss*

A neon star of David has been erected at the top of the complex and at night can be seen for miles around. The roofs of the favelas’ red-brick houses are dotted with blue and white Israel flags demarcating the territory the gangster controls.

In the past, Peixão’s troops have been accused of ransacking Afro-Brazilian temples and banning Afro-Brazilian celebrations in the Complex of Israel, where more than 100,000 people live. But this week’s reports were the first relating to Catholic places of worship.

The first inkling something was amiss came on Saturday when staff in the Our Lady of Conception and Saint Justin Martyr parish told parishioners meetings and mass were suspended “until further notice”. The social media post was later deleted but, according to local newspapers, word quickly spread among churchgoers that the order had come from Peixão.

The newspaper O Globo said there were subsequent reports that armed men had visited two other churches, Saint Hedwig and Saint Cecilia, and decreed that weddings and christenings should not take place. Those churches also published messages announcing their temporary closure.

The Archdiocese of Rio insisted its churches were operating as normal. In a statement, Rio’s public security secretary attributed the reports to online rumours and claimed no such order had been given.

The civil police’s anti-intolerance and racism unit is reportedly investigating. On Monday, military police launched an operation to remove barricades blocking roads into Peixão’s domain, where Bible-themed murals carry quotations from the psalms.

Whatever the truth, the drama has alarmed churchgoers and highlighted the growing influence of bandits known as “narco-pentecostals” who now control large swaths of Rio.

Octavio Guedes, a commentator on the GloboNews television network, said: “They call themselves evangelicals but I refuse to use this term. In reality, [Peixão] is a narco-religious-fundamentalist.”

Experts say the backdrop is the breakneck spread of evangelical churches through Brazil in the years since Peixão, 37, was born in Rio’s northern suburbs.

Brazil’s evangelical community has exploded from less than 7% of the population in 1980 to 22% in 2010 and about 30% today. The Catholic congregation, meanwhile, has shrunk dramatically. In 1991, 83% of Brazilians identified as Catholic, compared with about 50% today.

The evangelical revolution has been particularly fervid in Rio, especially in deprived suburbs and favelas where preachers provide crucial support to downtrodden residents whose relatives face unemployment, alcoholism and drug addiction.

But a byproduct has been the melding of Christian extremism and members of the drug factions who govern many such communities. Some observers credit preachers with reducing levels of violence by embracing Rio’s drug lords and trying to convince them to spill less blood.

But others fear they have radicalised highly dangerous outlaws such as Peixão – who is reportedly wanted for crimes including trafficking and murder – with dire consequences for religious freedom.

Cecília Olliveira, a security expert whose group, Fogo Cruzado, tracks armed violence, said it was common to hear of incidents in which radicalised traffickers attacked Afro-Brazilian temples called *terreiros* or banned the wearing of necklaces known as *guias* or white clothes.

But Olliveira had never heard of Catholic churches facing similar repression, which she called the consequence of longstanding religious intolerance from sectors of the neo-pentecostal church.

High flyers Dancers and acrobats from Compagnie XY scale new heights as they perform during the Möbius Morphosis show by the choreographer Rachid Ouramdane at the Pâquier city park in Annecy, France.



PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD BORD/GETTY

Irish woman held in Dubai over ‘attempted suicide’ is freed

PA Media

The Irish taoiseach, Simon Harris, said yesterday that a travel ban imposed by Dubai authorities on Tori Towey, an Irish woman who was reportedly charged with attempted suicide, had been lifted.

Towey, 28, a flight attendant from County Roscommon, was charged with attempted suicide and alcohol abuse after waking up in a police station after an attack, Irish parliamentarians were told. Dubai officials had also banned her from leaving the state, the Dáil chamber heard.

Harris told MPs yesterday: “The embassy will take Tori to the airport as soon as she is ready to go and the embassy of course will continue to follow up on the case, which is still active as of now.”

Samaritans are on freephone 116 123, or email jo@samaritans.org



▲ *Tori Towey, a flight attendant, is being assisted by the Irish embassy*

Man caught trying to enter China with 100 snakes hidden in his trousers

Agence France-Presse
Beijing

A man has been caught trying to smuggle more than 100 live snakes into mainland China by cramming them into his trousers, according to the country’s customs authority.

The unnamed traveller was stopped by customs officers as he attempted to slip out of semi-autonomous Hong Kong and into the border city of Shenzhen, China Customs said in a statement. “Customs officers discovered that the pockets of the trousers the passenger was wearing were packed with six canvas drawstring bags and sealed with tape,” the statement said.

“Once opened, each bag was found to contain living snakes in all kinds of shapes, sizes and colours.”

The statement said officers seized 104 of the reptiles, including milk snakes and corn snakes, many of which were non-native species.

An accompanying video showed border agents peering into transparent plastic bags that were filled with squirming red, pink and white snakes.

China is one of the world’s biggest animal trafficking hubs, but authorities have cracked down in recent years. Its biosecurity and disease control laws forbid bringing in non-native species without permission.

“Those who break the rules will be … held liable in accordance with the law,” the customs authority said, without specifying the penalty.





▼ *Father Ivan, Kurakhove: 'I can't leave. The doctors stay to care for the body, I am here for the soul'. Left, fighting a fire caused by an airstrike*

Lost home

Clinging on in Donetsk as shells flay hope away

Pjotr Sauer
Kurakhove

For the few residents remaining in Kurakhove, a city in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region seven miles from the frontlines, the worst-case scenario was all too easy to envisage.

Nearby towns and cities like Avdiivka and Bakhmut had been razed to the ground before falling and their names were now synonymous with the devastating tactics employed by the Russian army in the 28-month-long war.

"Russia destroyed my house, there is nothing to come back to," said Liudmyla Alyokhina, 78, sitting on a bed in the Kurakhove hospital, bandages covering shrapnel wounds on her arms from a rocket strike. "I don't know what I will do when I recover."

It pained her to think that her son, a Ukrainian soldier who had been in Russian captivity since the beginning of the war, could only one day return to a home that no longer existed.

Russia has for most of this year achieved only small tactical gains at huge cost at the eastern front - the last major breakthrough was the capture of Avdiivka in February - but it has in the same period accelerated the assault on frontline Ukrainian cities to a scale previously not seen using a new weapon, glide bombs. These modified Soviet-era bombs are fitted with imported electronics allowing warplanes to launch them at Ukraine from a safe distance.

Russia's creep towards Kurakhove underlines a worrisome trend for Kyiv as its troops, outnumbered and outgunned, are under threat of being outflanked and losing control of the critical Pokrovsk-Kostyantynivka supply route. A day after Oleksandr Syrsky, Ukraine's commander-in-chief, called the situation towards Pokrovsk "complicated", Ukrainian forces announced a withdrawal from parts of the strategically important eastern city of Chasiv Yar they had long fought to hold.

During a visit to Kurakhove by the Guardian the air was filled with the relentless roar of shelling, which included at least one glide bomb and five artillery strikes on buildings. Shops and restaurants were largely closed, the city filled with Ukrainian forces.

The remaining civilians in Kurakhove were mostly those desperate to stay in their homes until the very end. Many among them, elderly and frail, displayed signs of trauma.

The local church was one of the few places that provided solace to some, with Father Ivan, standing near the altar, in high demand. He had just returned from the city's graveyard where he had conducted a funeral service for two civilians killed in recent shelling. His congregation was mostly the elderly and soldiers, the latter keeping him up to date with battlefield developments.

Like others, Ivan said he often struggled with the daily question of whether to stay or go. "But I can't leave. The doctors stay behind to care for the body, I am here for the soul," he said. A loud noise interrupted him - the sound of a glide bomb, which he seemed to largely ignore. The bomb struck a field on the outskirts of the city, narrowly missing a home and igniting a large swath of land.

In Kurakhove there were murmurs of agreeing to an imperfect peace with Russia, reflecting the growing war fatigue and despair those living near the front experience. According to a recent poll the level of Ukrainians who believe the war would end in a settlement is at a record low of 30%.

Not far from the city the 148th separate artillery brigade had set up its base, moving into one of the many abandoned village houses. Standing next to a BM-21 Grad multiple rocket launcher concealed among the trees with camouflage, a unit commander with the call sign Odesa pointed approvingly to two dozen shells affixed to the back of the vehicle. The shells were new, he said, delivered as part of a recent initiative by the Czech Republic to ship hundreds of thousands of shells to the country. "But it is nowhere near enough," he said.

Another soldier who went by the call sign "professor", said: "It is so frustrating, you see the Russian but you are told to preserve shells in case they attempt a breakthrough." The unit had last fired a round weeks ago, he added.

Much of the soldiers' time was spent indoors, where they had a makeshift gym and found refuge from the Russian drones. With Elon Musk's Starlink device, the unit remained connected online, often glued to their phones for the latest news. Professor, who worked as an engineer in the Kyiv metro before the full-scale invasion, had managed to catch the recent US presidential debate and gave a detailed account of it.

The city of Pokrovsk, 26 miles north of Kurakhove, serves as the initial point where refugees from surrounding towns gather before an evacuation train takes them westwards. In a former school that had been repurposed as a refuge centre, a family of five were sitting huddled in a makeshift room strewn with mattresses. The day before they had made the perilous journey out of Toretsk, a nearby mining town, as Russian troops advanced to its outskirts.

The recent surge in Russian shelling had transformed their home town into a "dead city", said Evgeniy Shintsov, 48, flanked by his wife and 18-year-old son, Dmitry, as his grandmother, Nadezhda, lay beside them in silence.

Residents have also been urged to evacuate Pokrovsk, which was this month hit by a "double-tap" missile strike - two missiles striking the same spot half an hour apart - that killed five people and wounded 41 others.

However the head of Pokrovsk's military administration, Serhii Dobryak, sympathised with those who chose to stay. "We can see with our own eyes that the Russians only bring destruction with them. But it's not easy to just leave your house ... and then go where exactly?"

Pacing around the garden and surveying the rubble that was once his house, Andrii Khuzhela was trying to make sense of the double tap attack he said his family miraculously survived. "Russia wants to wipe us from the map of the Earth. There's no logic behind it." Khuzhela said he was an avid animal lover and seven of his parrots had perished under the rubble; the few colourful birds who survived fluttered for days among the sunflower fields and bombed-out surroundings. Distressed cats and dogs were hiding inside abandoned buildings.

Surrounded by a dozen goats, Serhii Rachenko sat on a concrete bench, watching his livestock graze at sunset. For 30 years he had sold goat milk and cheese, handing out the rest to those in need. Now, he said, there was no one left to feed. "I would go but I can't leave the goats behind. But soon there will be nothing left here, just death."



▶ *Liudmyla Alyokhina says her captive soldier son will find upon his return a home obliterated*

PHOTOGRAPHS: JĘDRZEJ NOWICKI/THE GUARDIAN



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Business

BP predicts oil demand peak in 2025, ending rising emissions

Jillian Ambrose

BP has predicted that the world's demand for oil will peak next year, bringing an end to rising global carbon emissions by the mid-2020s amid a surge in wind and solar power.

The energy company's influential outlook report has found that oil use will rise by around 2m barrels a day to peak in 2025 at about 102m across both of its forecasts.

The first forecast scenario shows the world's current energy transition trajectory and the other shows the pathway to meeting global net zero targets by 2050.

BP predicts in both scenarios that carbon emissions will reach a peak in the middle of the decade amid a rapid expansion of wind and solar power as technology costs continue to fall.

However, the report sets out starkly different pathways for the future demand for gas, which has emerged in recent years as a key growth area for energy companies including BP.

Under the report's net zero scenario, gas use would peak around the middle of this decade before halving by 2050, compared with 2022 levels. But the current trajectory suggests that gas demand will continue to grow throughout the forecast, expanding by around a fifth by 2050.

In both scenarios, demand for liquefied natural gas, which is cooled to be transported on ships, climbs by 40% and 30% above 2022 levels in the current trajectory and net zero scenarios, respectively.

The report also showed higher than expected oil consumption in the 2030s compared with previous forecasts, which would pose a serious threat to the world's climate targets.

BP said that its forecasts for the current global trajectory, which includes climate policies already in place, show that the world will breach the carbon budgets keeping global temperatures from rising over 2C above preindustrial levels.

Under the world's current trajectory, oil demand is expected to fall to 97.8m barrels a day in 2035, which is 5% higher than last year's BP forecasts. The net zero model predicts oil demand will remain at 80.2m barrels in 2035, up 10% on last year's outlook.

BP said oil would continue to "play a significant role in the global energy system for the next 10-15 years".

The company attracted anger from environmental campaigners after watering down a pledge to cut oil and gas production by 40% by 2030, compared with 2019 levels, to a 25% decline over the same period after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine ignited a surge in global energy market prices. The findings are likely to raise fears that the global shift away from fossil fuels towards clean power may be slowing, in part due to rising energy demand in developing economies.

102m

The number of barrels of oil used a day by 2025 and the point at which demand will peak, according to BP

Spencer Dale, BP's chief economist, warned that the world was in an "energy addition phase" where the consumption of both low-carbon energy such as renewables and fossil fuels was increasing.

In order to keep a cap on rising emissions, low-carbon energy sources will need to roll out at a pace that matches the increase in global energy demand, Spencer added.

BP's outlook predicts that wind and solar power capacity will surge eightfold by 2050 under the world's current climate policies and by a factor of 14 under its net zero scenario compared with 2022 levels.

The growth of new renewable energy projects is expected to be concentrated in China and developed economies over the next decade, accounting for about 30% to 45% of the increase in new capacity across BP's two scenarios.

The rapid expansion in wind and solar power will continue to help drive further declines in technology and energy costs that will in turn help fuel more renewable projects, said the company.

Barratt blames drop in homes built on 'year of uncertainty'

Julia Kollewe

Barratt Developments expects to complete fewer houses this year despite Labour's pledge to build hundreds of thousands more.

Its shares were the biggest faller on the FTSE 100 index yesterday, initially dropping by 2.9%, and later trading 1.2% lower.

Barratt, Britain's biggest housebuilder, expects completed homes to drop by up to 7% to between 13,000 and 13,500 this year, down from 14,004 in the year to 30 June, citing "another year of economic and political uncertainty". That total was down by 18.6% from the previous year, when it built 17,206 homes.

Despite lower output, the builder estimates that adjusted profits before tax will be slightly ahead of its previous expectations, amid tight cost control and easing building materials inflation. Analysts had forecast full-year profits of £355m.

David Thomas, Barratt's chief executive, said the business looked forward to working with Keir Starmer's government on addressing the UK's housing shortage. "We welcome the new government's urgency and focus on housebuilding and reform of the planning system as key to unlocking economic growth and tackling the chronic undersupply of new homes."



▲ *Barratt said it expected completed homes to drop below 13,500 this year, down from 14,000 last year*

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK WAUGH/ALAMY

The housing market is still recovering from the aftermath of Liz Truss's unfunded budget in September 2022 that sparked a crisis in the mortgage market. The Bank of England is taking longer than expected to lower interest rates, with financial markets forecasting the first reduction in August or September.

Barratt had drastically scaled back land purchases in the past two years but is starting to purchase more land.

This week, the new chancellor, Rachel Reeves, unveiled a number of measures to "get Britain building again" and construct 1.5m homes over the next five years. The government will create a taskforce to accelerate stalled housing sites, beginning with 14,000 homes, and hire 300 local authority planning officers.

Barratt said demand from first-time buyers had shown some recovery, accounting for 27% of private sales in the past year, up from 25% the previous year. Demand among existing homeowners remained resilient at 16% of private reservations in the year, though Barratt said it was having to offer sales incentives and part-exchange to prospective buyers.

Barratt has agreed to buy the housebuilder Redrow in a £2.5bn deal. Together they could build 18,000 homes a year.

Microsoft gives up its observer role at OpenAI

Dan Milmo
Global technology editor

Microsoft has withdrawn its observer seat on the OpenAI board and Apple will no longer be able to appoint an executive to a similar role, amid regulatory scrutiny of big tech's relationship with artificial intelligence startups.

Microsoft, the largest financial backer of the ChatGPT developer, announced the move in a letter to the startup, as first reported by the Financial Times. It said the resignation of the observer role, which does not carry a vote in board decisions, was "effective immediately".

Microsoft said it had seen significant progress by OpenAI's new board, which was formed after the dramatic sacking and reinstatement of the chief executive, Sam Altman, last year. It said OpenAI was going in the right direction, including a commitment to safety and building a "great culture".

"Given all of this we no longer believe our limited role as an observer is necessary," said Microsoft, which has invested $13bn (£10.2bn) in OpenAI.

However, it is understood that Microsoft believed the observer role was causing concern among competition regulators. In the UK, the Competition and Markets Authority is reviewing whether the partnership has resulted in "an acquisition of control", while in the US the Federal Trade Commission is also looking at the partnership.

The European Commission has decided not to conduct a formal merger review into Microsoft's investment in OpenAI but is scrutinising exclusivity clauses in the agreement between the companies.

An OpenAI spokesperson said that the San Francisco-based startup was establishing a new approach to "informing and engaging key strategic partners".

"Moving forward, we will host regular stakeholder meetings to share progress on our mission and ensure stronger collaboration across safety and security. We look forward to continuing to receive feedback and advice from these key stakeholders," the spokesperson said.

OpenAI will no longer have board observers under the new approach, which rules out Apple taking up such a role. It was reported this month that Apple was planning to place the head of its app store, Phil Schiller, on the board as part of an agreement announced in June. Apple was approached for comment.

Business view
Nils Pratley



Go with the flow: government should not rule out special administration for Thames

What is the new government's policy on Thames Water? We'll get a firmer guide – maybe – after regulator Ofwat gives its verdict on all the English and Welsh water companies' business plans today. In the meantime, all we have to go on is this pre-election comment from Jonathan Reynolds, now the business secretary: "I wouldn't want to see a nationalisation. I think there should be a solution that falls short of that."

That statement raises more questions than it answers, unfortunately. Which type of nationalisation would Labour not wish to see? A full-fat, permanent return to public ownership? Or also the temporary "special administration" variety in which Thames's balance sheet would be straightened out before a return to the private sector?

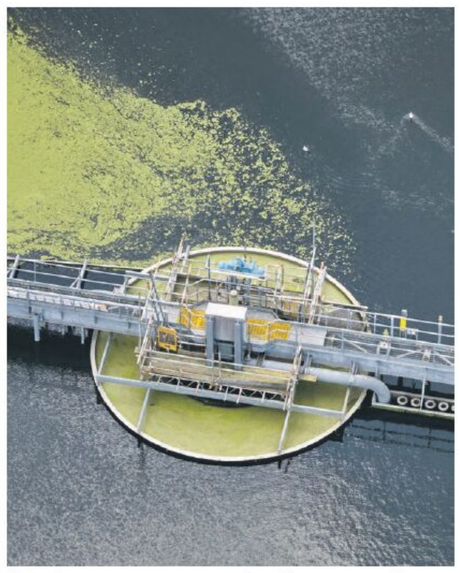
If Reynolds merely meant that permanent nationalisation is a bad idea, many of us would agree. The state's last grand adventure into building infrastructure, which is what water companies do, was the financial catastrophe called HS2. It is too easy to imagine a repeat in which over-worked departmental officials are given the runaround by sharp private sector contractors who would inevitably do much of the work at Thames. Customers might end up no better off.

But there is a problem if the Labour government is also signalling that it is reluctant to press the "special admin" button. The threat of special administration is surely essential in the current unstable position. It is one way to impose on Thames the solution that has always looked the simplest way out of the financial mess – a debt-for-equity swap in which shareholders are wiped out while bondholders, owed £15.2bn collectively, take a hefty loss.

Thames's current shareholders, as it happens, have already given up. They have written down the value of their stakes and declared the company to be "uninvestable". But that still leaves bondholders, who are hoping to escape intact if Ofwat is sufficiently generous with its increases in bills.

The company's business plan involves a 44% rise over the next five years, which equates to 59% after inflation, to fund the bulk of a £19.8bn investment programme. On that basis, Thames's management thinks it has a chance of raising £3.25bn in fresh equity from new shareholders while also avoiding losses for lenders.

Come on, though, an increase of 59% is extreme. Everybody knows bills have to rise meaningfully, but 59% would smell suspiciously like a case of billpayers bailing out bondholders by stealth. The cleaner outcome would be a debt write-down to bring the leverage ratio, currently 80%, to the 55%-60% level that regulators regard as financially resilient.



▲ *Thames Water is looking to Ofwat to approve a 59% rise in users' bills*

> *Everyone know bills must rise, but 59% is extreme. It would smell suspiciously like a case of billpayers bailing out bondholders by stealth*

If Thames was towing, say, £10bn of borrowings rather than £15bn, the company would look a far more investable proposition. Thames would have financial breathing space while its new chief executive attempts to improve operational performance.

We'll see where Ofwat lands on bills, but today's draft determination is just the start of the horse-trading and political lobbying before the final decision in December. It is why ministers should be careful about what they mean when talking about preferred outcomes. Do not rule out special administration: it may yet be needed to impose a debt-for-equity swap that would probably have happened already if Thames was listed on the stock market.

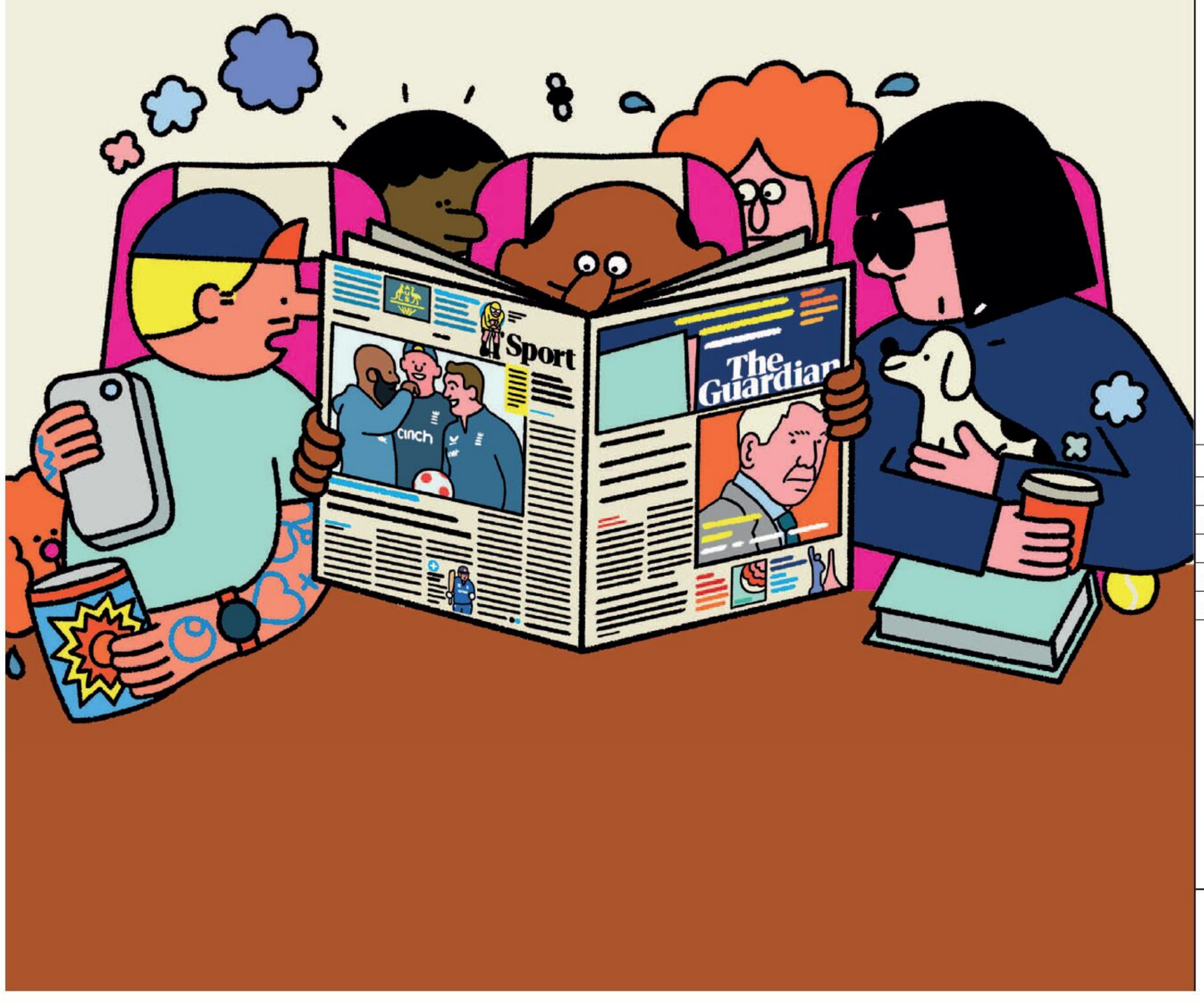
If Reynolds and co are scared of upsetting bondholders, they need to get over it. Financial markets are quite capable of viewing Thames for what it is – a special case of extreme financial engineering. On the right terms, they'll still show up for new energy infrastructure.

Worry instead about the fury of Thames customers if they are bounced into a stitch-up for the benefit of bondholders.

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The Telegraph

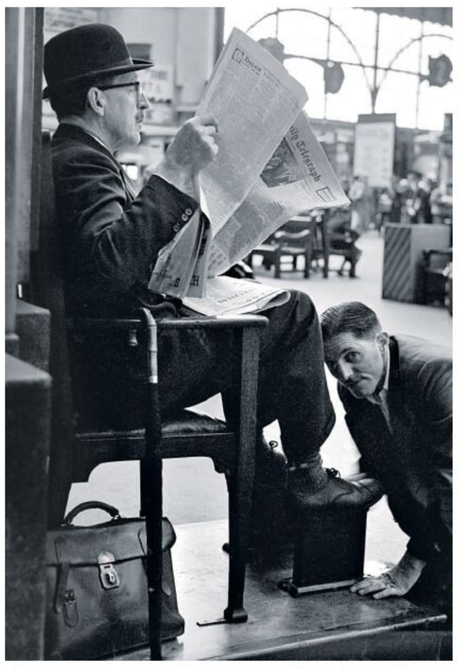
Can titles find new owner after long months in limbo?





◀ *Clockwise from far left: unsold copies of the paper in May; the Telegraph clock on Fleet Street in 1931; a perhaps typical reader in the early 1960s. Once a pillar of the establishment, the Telegraph's troubles led to its owners, TMG, taking a record loss of £245m last year*

PHOTOGRAPHS: MATT CARDY; HULTON-DEUTSCH/CORBIS/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES



Jane Martinson

As the dust settles on Labour's landslide election win, the Conservative party is yet to decide when or how it will replace Rishi Sunak as leader. Meanwhile the newspaper regarded as the party's house bible continues in its own kind of limbo.

More than a year after the Telegraph and its sister title, the Spectator, were seized by Lloyds Bank as down payments for debts run up by their proprietors, the Barclay family, the papers are still effectively ownerless, with a second auction in under a year set to start in earnest next Friday.

What happens next is likely to set the tone for both the rightwing in politics and Britain's media.

Many close to the paper nicknamed "the Torygraph" will shrug when asked what comes next in a saga that has lasted 13 months, involved the threat of criminal investigations and led to new takeover laws. Asked about the possibility of an unexpected new owner, one dealmaker involved in the negotiations sighed: "Nothing would surprise me at this point."

When the Barclays bought the titles in 2004, the auction involved clandestine deals, lawsuits and many bidders, all gazumped by the family's £665m offer. The declining fortunes of newspapers ever since, hit by ageing readers and a digital revolution that decimated revenues, meant that Telegraph Media Group (TMG) was valued in its immediate parent company at just £134m in the last year of full Barclay ownership, despite revenues of £254m. Nevertheless, the battle for TMG that began in June 2023 has, if anything, been wilder than before.

Just as the Lloyds auction was about to get under way in October, RedBird IMI, a relatively unknown US investment vehicle largely funded by Abu Dhabi, took control of TMG by paying off the Barclays' outstanding £1.16bn debt in full. Half that sum covered Lloyds' mooted £600m price tag for TMG, allowing RedBird to take control without a competitive auction.

As the complicated deal went off for regulatory review, the then culture minister barred the Barclays from managing the titles they still owned on paper, with the independent directors appointed by Lloyds continuing to manage the company. This has remained the case, even as RedBird's ambitions have been thwarted by increasing hostility to its deal and a Conservative government that responded by rushing through laws against foreign state ownership of newspapers and magazines.

At the end of April, RedBird IMI conceded defeat and announced a new auction.

The new sale could be straightforward, but a combination of continuing questions over the former owners and political change makes it anything but.

The starting gun was finally fired on the auction process on 20 June, just after results for TMG in 2023 were finally released. These revealed a £278m black hole due to intercompany loans made from the group to other parts of the Barclay family empire that were considered unlikely to be repaid.

The publisher also warned of "potential irregularities" in the recording of historic transactions between group companies after a financial review could not trace the money. These discrepancies are understood to have prompted the series of suspicious activity reports sent to the National Crime Agency by several of the company's regulated advisers, which emerged at the start of the year.

TMG's results warned of a "risk of future claims" in case the UK tax authority or any other agency took action against the titles.

Potential bidders



Rupert Murdoch, the owner of the Times



Lord Rothermere, owner of the Daily Mail titles



David Montgomery, local news consolidator



Sir Paul Marshall, backer of GB News

The accounts were signed off by PwC, auditors for the Telegraph for many years under the Barclays.

The £278m provision pushed TMG to a record loss of £245m last year despite a 5% rise in turnover to £268m. Although growth in digital subscribers helped drive operating profits up 35% to £53m, the risks could deter potential bidders.

To avoid this, a process designed to create a new company without the liabilities and baggage of its predecessor, a so-called "hive down", was used. "Any monkey business is kept separate and is not consequently in the sale," said someone involved.

The plan seems to have worked, with keen interest in titles rarely on the market, including from some of 2004's disappointed suitors such as Lord Rothermere, owner of the Daily Mail, New Corp's Rupert Murdoch, and the former media executive turned local news consolidator David Montgomery.

There is also Sir Paul Marshall, libertarian backer of GB News and the Unherd website, and Lord Saatchi, a former Tory co-chair responsible for the party's best known advertising campaigns. Even Conrad Black, the man who sold to the Barclays before going on his own tumultuous journey, is said to have been approached about a potential bid.

Despite such complications, there are still expected to be several first-round bids for the Telegraph on 19 July. With its previous owners the Barclays both keen on Brexit and friends of Nigel Farage, it will be interesting to see what the new owner makes of those links with the Reform party. A potential auction winner is not expected to be announced until the end of the summer at the earliest, just as the Conservative party leadership battle goes into full swing.

Jeff Zucker, the former CNN executive spearheading the RedBird IMI deal, has said interest has come from "around the globe". The group has appointed the Raine Group, a US boutique bank best known in Britain for its roles in advising on Premier League football deals, as well as the former chancellor George Osborne of City advisory firm Robey Warshaw.

RedBird's main aim is to make a return on the £600m used to pay off part of the Barclays debt. Those close to Zucker suggest he would rather open a new fund in the US to replace the 75% backing from the UAE, than sell at a loss.

One further wrinkle is that Sunak's snap election did not leave enough time to finesse the foreign ownership ban. As the legislation stands, the Norwegian sovereign wealth fund - the world's largest, holding 1.5% of all listed companies - would have to sell any stake in UK newspapers. It could also make it difficult for multimedia owners such as Murdoch and Rothermere to accept investment from such funds for non-UK assets while owning their British newspapers.

The issue is likely to sit high up in the in-tray of the new culture secretary, Lisa Nandy. The laws could be put before the house before recess. However, Nandy is said to have other priorities, such as moves to introduce a football regulator, arguably more important to Labour voters than the fate of a newspaper that backs its rival.

Jane Martinson's book You May Never See Us Again: The Barclay Dynasty - A Story of Survival, Secrecy and Succession, is out in paperback this October

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Eileen M ★★★★★

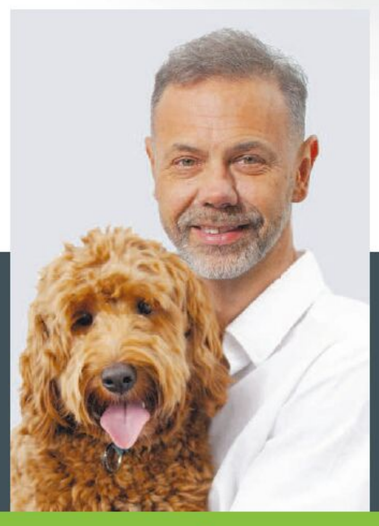
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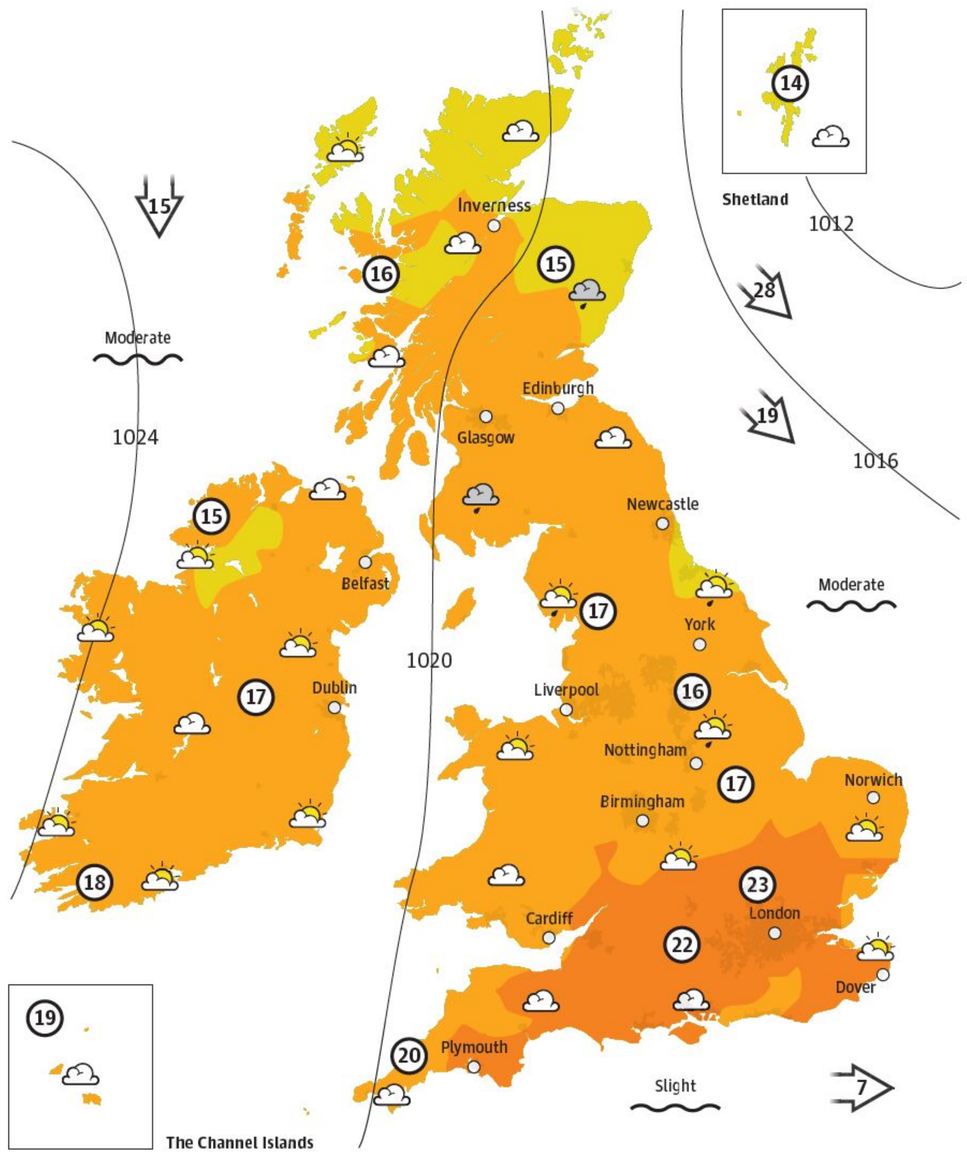
5737

Weather
Thursday 11 July 2024

UK and Ireland Noon today

Sunny · Mist · Fog · Sunny intervals · Hazy · Mostly cloudy · Overcast/dull · Sunny showers · Sunny and heavy showers · Light showers · Rain · Sleet · Light snow · Snow showers · Heavy snow · Ice · Thundery rain · Thundery showers · Temperature, °C · Wind speed, mph · Windy

35C 30 25 20 15 10 5 0 -5 -10 -15 -20



Forecast

Low 10 High 18
Tomorrow



Low 10 High 17
Saturday



Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO_2 readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

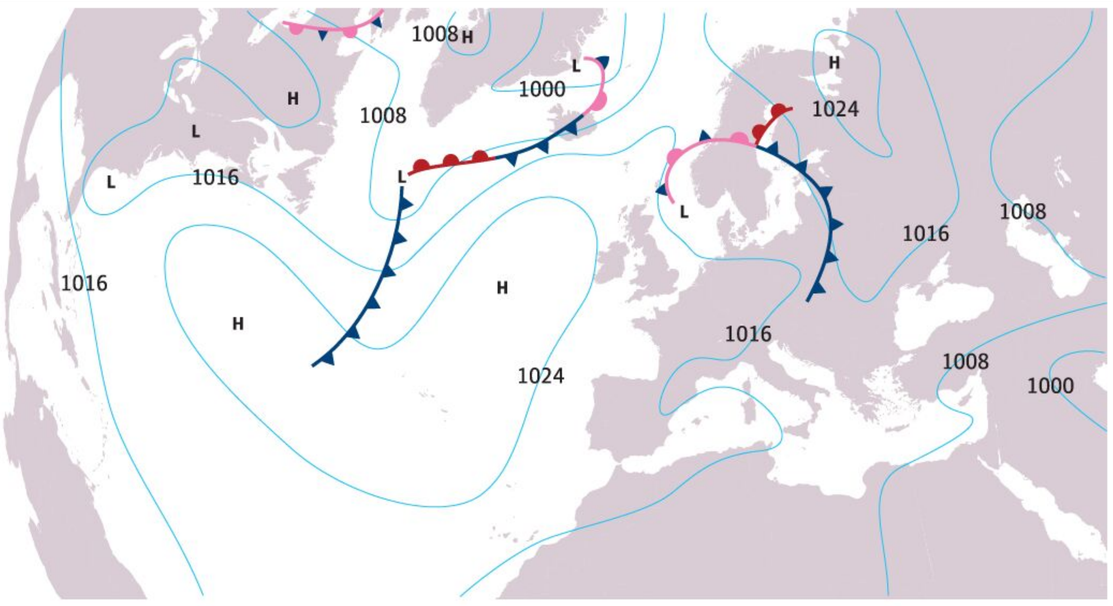
Latest	
09 Jul 2024	425.81
Weekly average	
30 Jun 2024	425.61
10 Jul 2023	422.67
10 Jul 2014	400.41
Pre-industrial base	*280*
Safe level	*350*

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

	Lows and highs	Precipitation	Air pollution
London	13 – 23	5%	Low
Manchester	10 – 17	65%	Low
Edinburgh	10 – 17	25%	Low
Belfast	10 – 16	15%	Low
Glasgow	10 – 18	25%	Low
Inverness	9 – 16	60%	Low
Leeds	10 – 15	85%	Low
Liverpool	11 – 18	85%	Low
Newcastle	9 – 15	25%	Low
Sheffield	10 – 16	65%	Low

Atlantic front



Cold front · Warm front · Occluded front · Trough

Weatherwatch

The US may not have a monopoly on tornadoes, but it certainly dominates the market, with three-quarters of the world's twisters occurring in a region known as "tornado alley" across eight states of the central US.

Now meteorologists are using computer models to find out how terrain affects tornado formation. Research from Purdue University in Indiana, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, compares North America with South America, which has a similar number of severe thunderstorms but far fewer tornadoes. They used models to alter terrain, changing plains to forests or flattening mountain ranges. These had a significant effect on wind shear, the difference in wind speed with altitude.

"The wind shear in the kilometre of air above the ground is a critical ingredient for tornadoes," said Dan Chavas, one of the researchers.

The researchers say that without the Andes, South America might have had its own tornado alley. The mountains' surface roughness prevents the wind speed patterns that typically cause tornadoes. This is why its neighbour to the north has the dubious blessing of a steady stream of twisters. **David Hambling**

Around the world

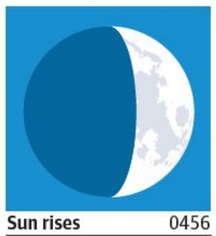
Algiers	33	Lisbon	27
Ams'dam	21	Madrid	37
Athens	36	Malaga	33
Auckland	14	Melb'rne	12
B Aires	10	Mexico C	22
Bangkok	33	Miami	30
Barcelona	29	Milan	34
Basra	50	Mombasa	30
Beijing	36	Moscow	27
Berlin	26	Mumbai	31
Bermuda	28	N Orleans	32
Brussels	22	Nairobi	22
Budapest	37	New Delhi	37
C'hagen	21	New York	31
Cairo	39	Oslo	21
Cape Town	17	Paris	25
Chicago	27	Perth	17
Corfu	37	Prague	27
Dakar	30	Reykjavik	11
Dhaka	31	Rio de J	25
Dublin	17	Rome	33
Florence	36	Shanghai	27
Gibraltar	31	Singapore	30
H Kong	32	Stockh'm	23
Harare	25	Strasb'g	27
Helsinki	24	Sydney	18
Istanbul	30	Tel Aviv	33
Jo'burg	21	Tenerife	25
K Lumpur	32	Tokyo	30
K'mandu	25	Toronto	23
Kabul	33	Vancouv'r	22
Kingston	32	Vienna	32
Kolkata	32	Warsaw	31
L Angeles	32	Wash'ton	34
Lagos	28	Well'ton	12
Lima	18	Zurich	27

High tides

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Aberdeen	0525	3.9m	1807	3.6m	**London Bridge**	0604	6.5m	1812	6.3m
Avonmouth	1127	11.2m	2337	11.3m	**Lossiemouth**	0347	3.7m	1626	3.4m
Barrow	0326	8.3m	1551	7.9m	**Milford Haven**	1029	5.9m	2244	6.1m
Belfast	0316	3.5m	1548	2.9m	**Newquay**	0923	6.0m	2138	6.2m
Cobh	0940	3.6m	2202	3.6m	**North Shields**	0731	4.7m	2011	4.3m
Cromer	1029	4.7m	2322	4.2m	**Oban**	0958	3.3m	2206	3.5m
Dover	0317	5.9m	1532	6.2m	**Penzance**	0853	4.7m	2110	4.9m
Dublin	0335	3.8m	1609	3.4m	**Plymouth**	1000	4.7m	2203	4.9m
Galway	0939	4.4m	2148	4.4m	**Portsmouth**	0331	4.2m	1611	4.3m
Greenock	0415	3.4m	1713	2.9m	**Southport**	0224	8.2m	1448	7.8m
Harwich	0355	3.6m	1601	3.7m	**Stornoway**	1116	3.9m	2316	4.1m
Holyhead	0219	5.2m	1447	4.7m	**Weymouth**	1012	0.8m	2221	1.0m
Hull	1018	6.8m	2254	6.2m	**Whitby**	0805	5.1m	2042	4.7m
Leith	0651	5.0m	1917	4.8m	**Wick**	0319	3.2m	1554	2.8m
Liverpool	0304	8.5m	1528	8.1m	**Workington**	0330	7.6m	1558	7.1m

Sun & Moon



Sun rises	0456
Sun sets	2114
Moon rises	1051
Moon sets	2341
First Quarter	13 July

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather** ©2024

Lighting up

Belfast	2157 to 0505
Birm'ham	2126 to 0500
Brighton	2111 to 0502
Bristol	2124 to 0509
Carlisle	2145 to 0450
Cork	2150 to 0530
Dublin	2150 to 0512
Glasgow	2157 to 0450
Harlech	2138 to 0507
Inverness	2208 to 0436
London	2114 to 0457
M'chester	2133 to 0457
Newcastle	2141 to 0444
Norwich	2115 to 0446
Penzance	2130 to 0526

Sport

Football

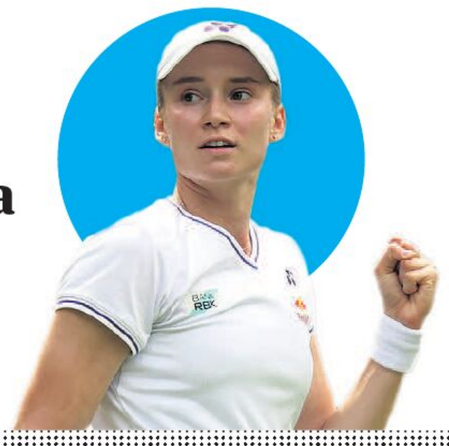
Staveley to sever ties with Newcastle after three years

Page 42 →

Wimbledon

Rybakina cruises into semi-final against Krejcikova

Page 38 →





▲ *Kylian Mbappé could not stop France losing to Spain but his calls on his fellow citizens to reject extremism will be remembered*
ANTONIO CALANNI/AP

Non, merci

Mbappé taking on the far right a source of national pride despite France's exit

Philippe Auclair



It is not because Kylian Mbappé spoke out, twice, about the necessity to take a stand against "the extremes" and, more to the point, the National Rally, that he skied a shot that would have brought France level with Spain in their semi-final. But it is because he and others, such as Marcus Thuram and Jules Koundé, did speak out that it will be possible to look back on France's frustrating Euro 2024 with something like pride. "Never at such a moment, never such a player, never in such a trenchant, brilliant, mastered fashion, never in the history of the French national team, had we witnessed the conjunction of a major moment in French political life, the words of a captain and a great sporting event," L'Équipe enthused.

The French sports daily had a point, even if other French footballers had taken political stances in the past. The Saint-Étienne forward Dominique Rocheteau had not hidden his unease about taking part in the World Cup held in General Videla's Argentina in 1978, though he didn't go as far as the Swedish players who lent their support to the mothers demonstrating on the Plaza de Mayo during the same tournament. More recently, Zinedine Zidane had called on the French electorate to vote against Marine Le Pen's father, Jean-Marie, in the 2002 presidential election, calling what was still the Front and not yet the Rassemblement National "a party that does not correspond at all to the values of France". Kylian, Marcus, Jules *et les autres* are the heirs of Zizou in more ways than one.

What was unique, however, was the clarity of the message - and the urgency of the situation, when the far right appeared to be "on the doorstep of power", according to national and international media whose apocalyptic predictions were shown to be wide of the mark. And what was surprising was how few voices outside the Rassemblement National itself were raised to pour scorn on what the French players had said, or how they had expressed it. Didier Deschamps might not have publicly joined their call to reject the far right; but what he said was, in its own way, just as powerful. "[These players] are immense footballers but [also] first and foremost French citizens," he said. "They speak with their own words and their own sensitivity."

The all-important word here is "citizens". Though they're now careful to dispense with openly racist rhetoric in public, French rightwing extremists are quick to suggest that many - far too many, *mon bon Monsieur* - of the footballers who have given their country so much joy over the past three decades somehow do not really represent the "real France". The words and action of Mbappé and his teammates in Germany demonstrated that the exact opposite is true: they spoke as true sons of the *République*. The "real" France is theirs, too.

The spirit that animated them was not one of hatred, but an echo of the values on which the first republic had been founded, this institution that gave the world the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and made France the first European country to abolish slavery, in 1794. The tricolore flag of the Revolution belongs to them in a way that the RN activists and politicians who drape themselves in its folds cannot comprehend. The people who turned out in record numbers to reject Le Pen and Jordan Bardella last Sunday know this. They know who the true patriots are.

That footballers whose parents or grandparents were born outside France or in the *départements et territoires d'outre-mer* - the relics of the former French empire - should have played their role in this rejection gave more proof that it is impossible to separate the history of the French national team from the history of immigration, and of colonisation, of the *République*. First- and second-generation immigrants and players from the French colonies already composed a large part of the squad that took part in the 1938 World Cup, whose roots lay in Algeria (Ben Bouali) and Senegal (Diagné), but also Italy (Di Lorto, Zatelli), Poland (Kowalczyk and Povolny) and Uruguay (Cazenave).

Rightwing extremists are quick to imply these footballers do not represent the 'real France'

Football, then as now, in France as almost everywhere else, was a means of integration and social advancement. What set France apart was that it called upon those "foreigners" from the outset, when other European countries would have to wait decades to see men and women of exogenous backgrounds being accepted in their national teams. France's international successes, in 1958 as in 1984, 1998, 2000 and 2018, were built on this willingness to draw upon the talent and hunger of "new" French citizens and their descendants, who, in turn, embraced the honour of representing what is their home, "this beautiful country, France", as Mbappé put it; and few things grate as much as this with the far right.

This is no fairytale. The multi-ethnic, multi-faith rainbow France that was celebrated after the 1998 World Cup triumph, as if football had somehow reunited a nation riddled with ambiguities, empty promises and hypocrisy when it comes to race relations, is but a daydream. Yet the hope is real. The electorate delivered a clear verdict. If it knew one thing, it was that it did not want this future to be shaped by the Rassemblement National. There are circumstances in which saying "no" is not just the main thing, but the only thing, to quote a maxim of which Deschamps has always been fond, sometimes too much so. The true *rassemblement* was that of citizens who refused to accept the perspective of neo-fascism. Some of these citizens were footballers. If their first duty is to represent their country, they did it well.

Golf

McIlroy hits back at 'unfair' critics of late collapse at US Open

Ewan Murray
The Renaissance Club

Rory McIlroy has hit back at critics of his own and his caddie's US Open performance, after the Northern Irishman saw the trophy slip from his grasp in painful fashion at Pinehurst.

Hank Haney, a former coach of Tiger Woods, and the television analyst Smylie Kaufman, a former PGA Tour player, offered a negative appraisal of McIlroy's approach. Harry Diamond, McIlroy's caddie, was also in the line of fire after McIlroy bogeyed three of his last four holes.

Speaking for the first time since Bryson DeChambeau pipped McIlroy to the third major of the year, the 35-year-old was dismissive of "unfair" comments directed at Diamond in particular. "Hank Haney has never been in that position," McIlroy said. "Smylie has been in that position once. I love Smylie and he was out there on 18 [when McIlroy missed a decisive putt]. But just because Harry is not as vocal or loud with his words as other caddies, doesn't mean he doesn't say anything.

"These guys that criticise when things don't go my way, they never say anything good when things do go my way. So where were they when I won Dubai this year or Quail Hollow or the two FedEx Cups that I've won with Harry or the two Ryder Cups or whatever? They are never there to say Harry did such a great job when I win but they are always there to criticise when we don't win.

"They are not there. They are not the ones hitting the shots and making the decisions. Someone said to me once: 'If you would never take advice from these people, you should never take their criticisms either.' I wouldn't go to Hank Haney for advice. I love Smylie, but I think I know what I'm doing and so does Harry."

McIlroy spent a few post-US Open days in Manhattan, which seemed to have served as a head-clearing exercise. He won the last of his four majors in August 2014 but none of his attempts for a fifth have been lost in such dramatic style. "Just like I look back on some of my toughest moments in my career, I'll learn a lot from it and I'll hopefully put that to good use," McIlroy said.



Rory McIlroy says he has already moved past his setback at Pinehurst

"It's something that's been a bit of a theme throughout my career. I've been able to take those tough moments and turn them into great things not very long after that.

"I still think about the short missed putt that I missed at Crans-sur-Sierre in 2008 in a playoff. I was probably more devastated after that because it was my rookie year on tour; I hadn't won yet. I remember feeling really bad after that for a week.

"I stewed on what happened at Pinehurst for a couple of days but thankfully I can go home and look at what I've achieved in the game and sort of feel OK about myself. Look, it was a great opportunity. It passed me by but hopefully when I get that next opportunity, it won't pass me by."

McIlroy has pinpointed where he thinks things fell apart at Pinehurst. He believes, for example, he paid too much attention to DeChambeau over the closing stretch. "Maybe I was a little too aware of where Bryson was and what he was doing," McIlroy said.

"After the 14th tee, you're sort of looking at the 13th green and then I had to wait on my tee shot on 15 before he hit his second shot into 14. Just the way the course flowed, it just made me very aware of what he was doing at the same time. So it sort of got me out of my own little world a little bit."

The Open takes place at Royal Troon next week. "It's just another opportunity," McIlroy said. "I'm playing great golf and it's another opportunity to see how I can hopefully handle it better than I handled it a few weeks ago." First, a Scottish Open defence in East Lothian.



▲ *Jonas Vingegaard gets the better of Tadej Pogacar in the final sprint*
GUILLAUME HORCAJUELO/EPA

Cycling *Tour de France*

Vingegaard reveals fear after pipping Pogacar in gripping win

Jeremy Whittle
Le Lioran

Jonas Vingegaard, the defending Tour de France champion, came back from what he described as life-threatening injuries to beat race leader and long-standing rival, Tadej Pogacar, in the toughest stage of the 2024 Tour de France to date.

"Three months ago, I really believed I was going to die," the Danish rider said of his spell in intensive care after a terrifying downhill crash in April. "Now, sitting here with a stage win in the biggest race in the world, it's incredible. "

After out-sprinting UAE Team Emirates leader Pogacar, an emotional Vingegaard, Tour winner in 2022 and 2023, paid tribute to his wife Trine and his Visma Lease-a-Bike team, for supporting his recovery from his high-speed crash in April's Tour of the Basque Country. "I spoke with Trine straight away, and both of us had tears in our eyes," the Dane said. "The support she and the team gave me means so much, with how much bad luck we have had."

But Vingegaard has also been accused of playing the victim card by some within Pogacar's UAE Emirates team. "I don't care" he said. "I'm playing the victim card, because I am a victim. Seeing where I have come from, I don't think a lot of guys would have made the Tour"

In a pulsating finale at Le Lioran to the Tour's most testing stage so far, the big four of Pogacar, Vingegaard, Primoz Roglic and Remco Evenepoel traded blows on some of the steepest, roughest roads in the Massif Central.

The quartet of Grand Tour winners lived up to the pre-race hype in a stage that saw Pogacar instigate a long-range solo attack, Vingegaard call his bluff, Roglic, of Red Bull Bora Hansgrohe, crash on a damp hairpin bend and Soudal Quick-Step leader, Evenepoel, seek to limit his losses.

Pogacar had rolled the dice, gambling on an attack, 31.6km from the finish, and 600m from the top of the Puy Mary. Once again however, as in the finish to stage two in Bologna, on the giant climb of the Galibier and on Sunday's gravel stage around Troyes, he failed to land a killer blow.

Asked if Vingegaard's stage win gave the Dane the upper hand, Pogacar said: "I don't see it as advantage to Jonas. I think today we were pretty equal, just at different times of the stage. We will see in the big mountains. But we are, more or less, at a similar level."

Yet Vingegaard had never before beaten Pogacar in a head-to-head sprint and his stage win was as much a psychological blow as a sporting success. "It's a sprint after a tough, tough day," Pogacar said, "and Jonas was faster than me. Now everyone can see he's in good shape, the best shape of his career if you ask me. I was a little bit disappointed I didn't win, but I was satisfied with the day."

If Vingegaard's form is not a surprise, his resilience, following the crash that hospitalised him for 12 days, is. Pogacar meanwhile brushed away suggestions he had sought to exploit any vulnerability on the technical descents of the roads leading to the finish in Le Lioran. "I just wanted to make a gap on Puy Mary," he said of his solo attack. "I don't see any weakness of Jonas going downhill. He's really focused. After his crash, for sure, he was scared, but now he's really confident."

After months of bad luck, crashes and illness, all of which ensured that several of his key mates were unable to ride the Tour, Vingegaard could only see the positives. "I've only had one and half months of training before this race," he said. "I'm here now and it's more than I would ever have expected. We've had so much bad luck in the team. Hopefully it's the turning point."

He may well be right. The Slovenian's repeated failure to distance the Dane will feed into the speculation that while Pogacar remains strong, Vingegaard, unable to even compete until the start of the Tour in Florence, may be getting stronger as the race heads south towards the Pyrenees.

Today's action

Stage 12
Aurillac ▶ Villeneuve-sur-Lot
203.6km, flat
TV *ITV4* **Web** *Follow the stage live at theguardian.com/sport*

Results

Football

EURO 2024
Semi-final

Netherlands	(1) **1**	**England** (1) **2**
Simons 7		Kane 18pen Watkins 90

COPA AMÉRICA
Semi-final

Argentina	(1) **2**	**Canada** (0) **0**
Álvarez 22, Messi 51		

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
First qualifying round: First leg Borac Banja Luka L Egnatia Rrogozhine L; Dinamo Minsk O Pyunik 0; Flora 0 Celje 5; KÍ 2 Differdange 0; Ludogorets 3 Dinamo Batumi 0; Ordabasy 0 Petrocub 0; Rigas 3 Larne 0; Slovan Bratislava 4 Struga 2

CONFERENCE LEAGUE
First qualifying round: First leg Auda L B36 L; Velez 1 Inter Club d'Escaldes 1

Tennis

WIMBLEDON (London)
Men: Singles: Quarter-finals: N DJOKOVIC (Ser, 2) bt A DE MINAUR (Aus, 9) w/o; **L MUSETTI** (It, 25) bt T FRITZ (US, 13) 3-6 7-6 (7-5) 6-2 3-6 6-1

Women: Singles: Quarter-finals: E RYBAKINA (Kaz, 4) bt E SVITOLINA (Ukr, 21) 6-3 6-2; **B KREJCIKOVA** (Cz, 31) bt J OSTAPENKO (Lat, 13) 6-4 7-6 (7-4)

Men: Doubles: Quarter-finals: N SKUPSKI & M VENUS (GB/NZ, 9) bt C Frantzen & H Jebens (Ger/Ger) 7-6 (7-1) 7-6 (7-1); **H Heliovaara & H Patten** (Fin/GB) bt M AREVALO & M PAVIC (ElS/Cro, 4) 4-6 7-6 (7-5) 7-6 (10-7); **M PURCELL & J THOMPSON** (Aus/Aus, 15) bt MAXIMO GONZÁLEZ & A MOLTENI (Arg/Arg, 11) 6-4 6-7 (8-10) 6-3; **M GRANOLLERS & H ZEBALLOS** (Sp/Arg, 1) bt K KRAWIETZ & T PÜTZ (Ger/Ger, 8) 6-4 7-6 (7-3)

Women: Doubles: Quarter-finals: C DOLEHIDE & D KRAWCZYK (US/US, 7) bt T Babos & N Kichenok (Hun/Ukr) 1-6 6-2 6-0; **HSIEH SW & E MERTENS** (Tpe/Bel, 1) bt C GAUFF & J PEGULA (US/US, 11) 6-2 6-1; **K SINIAKOVA & T TOWNSEND** (Cz/US, 4) bt L KICHENOK & J OSTAPENKO (Ukr/Lat, 9) 6-1 6-3; **G DABROWSKI & E ROUTLIFFE** (Can/NZ, 2) bt B KREJCIKOVA & L SIEGEMUND (Cz/Ger, 8) 6-4 6-7 (5-7) 6-4

Mixed Doubles: First round: J Withrow & A Sutjiadi (US/Ina) bt A VAVASSORI & S ERRANI (It/It, 5) 6-3 3-6 10-8

Second round: M Willis & A Barnett (GB/GB) bt R Ram & K Volynets (US/US) 2-6 6-3 11-9; **E Shibahara & N Lammons** (Jpn/US) bt A Sutjiadi & J Withrow (Ina/US) 7-6 (7-5) 6-4; **J ZIELINSKI & HSIEH S** (Pol/Tpe, 7) bt H Watson & J Salisbury (GB/GB) 7-6 (7-4) 6-4; **U Eikeri & M González** (Nor/Arg) bt L KICHENOK & M PAVIC (Ukr/Cro, 3) w/o; **G Olmos & S González** (Mex/Mex) bt A Muhammad & A Molteni (US/Arg) 7-6 (7-5) 4-6 10-8; **J Murray & T Townsend** (GB/US) bt K Krawietz & A Panova (Ger/Rus) 6-7 (3-7) 6-1 10-5; **D KRAWCZYK & N SKUPSKI** (GB/GB, 6) bt C Bucșa & F Martin (Sp/Fr) 6-3 6-3

ORDER OF PLAY (SELECTED COURTS)

Centre Court (1.30pm) D Vekic (Cro) v J PAOLINI (It, 7); B KREJCIKOVA (Cz, 31) v E RYBAKINA (Kaz, 4)

No 1 Court (1pm) M GRANOLLERS & H ZEBALLOS (Sp/Arg, 1) v M PURCELL & J THOMPSON (Aus/Aus, 15); H Heliovaara & H Patten (Fin/GB) v N SKUPSKI & M VENUS (GB/NZ, 9); S González & G Olmos (Mex/Mex) v M Willis & A Barnett (GB/GB); A HEWETT & G REID (GB/GB, 1) v M De la Puente & J Gerard (Sp/Bel)

No 2 Court (11am) B Bryan & M Bryan (US/US) v M Baghdatis & X Malisse (Cyp/Bel); M González & U Eikeri (Arg/Nor) v N Lammons & E Shibahara (US/Jpn); J ZIELINSKI & HSIEH S (Pol/Tpe, 7) v J Murray & T Townsend (GB/US); R Vinci & Zheng J (It/Chn) v A Barty & C Dellacqua (Aus/Aus)

Cricket

THIRD MEN'S TWENTY20 INTERNATIONAL
Harare India 182-4 (S Gill 66). Zimbabwe 159-6 (DM Myers 65 no). India beat Zimbabwe by 23 runs.

VITALITY BLAST
Hove Sussex 200-7. Hampshire 178 (JM Coles 4-34). Sussex beat Hampshire by 22 runs.

RACHAEL HEYHOE FLINT TROPHY
Clifton Park Sunrisers 109 (BA Langston 6-24). Northern Diamonds 111-6. Diamonds beat Sunrisers by four wickets.
New Road Central Sparks 144 (TG Norris 4-18). Lancashire Thunder 147-2 (EL Lamb 71 no, KM Mack 52 no). Lancashire Thunder beat Central Sparks by eight wickets.
Cheltenham Western Storm 217 (FC Wilson 67; KE Bryce 4-20). The Blaze 220-5 (LF Higham 62 no; SJ Bryce 61). The Blaze beat Western Storm by five wickets.
Newbury South East Stars 120 (FE Davies 4-14). Southern Vipers 121-3 (CR Knott 57 no). Southern Vipers beat South East Stars by seven wickets.

Cycling

TOUR DE FRANCE
Stage 11 (Evaux-les-Bains - Le Lioran, 211km): **1** J Vingegaard (Den) Visma | Lease a Bike 4h 58min 0sec; **2** T Pogacar (Svn) UAE Emirates at same time; **3** R Evenepoel (Bel) Soudal Quick-Step +25. **Selected others: 13** S Yates (GB) Jayco-AlUla +3:43; **17** B Healy (Ire) EF Education-EasyPost +4:39; **34** O Onley (GB) dsm-firmenich PostNL +16:04
Overall standings: 1 T Pogacar (Svn) UAE Emirates 45hr 0min 34sec; **2** R Evenepoel (Bel) Soudal Quick-Step +1:06; **3** J Vingegaard (Den) +1:14. **Selected others: 16** B Healy (Ire) EF Education-EasyPost +12:08; **21** S Yates (GB) Jayco-AlUla +19:54; **28** G Thomas (GB) Ineos Grenadiers +32:41; **38** T Pidcock (GB) Ineos Grenadiers +49:48

WOMEN'S GIRO D'ITALIA
Stage 4 (Imola - Urbino, 131.0 km): **1** C Emond EF-Oatly-Cannondale 3h 35m 45s; **2** S Paladin (It) CANYON//SRAM Racing at 17s; **3** C Uttrup Ludwig (Den) FDJ-SUEZ at 20

Fixtures

Football (7pm unless stated)
Copa América
Semi-final Uruguay v Colombia (1am)
Europa League
First qualifying round: First leg Botev Plovdiv v Maribor; Elfsborg v Pafos (6pm); Paks v Corvinul Hunedoara (6pm); Ruzomberok v Tobol (6pm); Sheriff v Zira (6pm); Wisla Krakow v Llapi (7.30pm)
Europa Conference League
First qualifying round: First leg (selected) Bala v Paide; Bravo v Connah's Quay (5pm); Caernarfon v Crusaders (6.30pm); Magpies v Derry (5pm); Shelbourne v St Joseph's (7.45pm); Stjarnan v Linfield (8pm)
Rugby league
Betfred Super League
Warrington v Leeds (8pm)
Cricket
Third Women's Twenty20 International
England v New Zealand, Canterbury (6.30pm)
Vitality Blast
North Group Derbyshire v Lancashire, Derby (7pm); Worcestershire v Leicestershire, New Road (5.30pm); Yorkshire v Durham, Headingley (6.30pm)
South Group Gloucestershire v Middlesex, Cheltenham (5pm); Essex v Kent, Chelmsford (7pm)

Greg Wood's racing tips

Newmarket **1.50** Space Legend **2.25** Ain't Nobody (nb) **3.00** Dorney Lake (nap) **3.35** Giavellotto **4.10** Valentia Island **4.45** Lead Artist **5.20** Repertoire
Carlisle **2.10** Individualism **2.45** Runninwild **3.20** Cypriot Diaspora **3.55** Wathbah **4.28** Bateman **5.03** Evelyn's Phoenix
Doncaster **2.35** Marbuzet **3.10** Swift Tuttle **3.45** Reposado **4.20** Flowstate **4.55** Charency **5.30** Delicacy **6.00** Hurt You Never
Newbury **5.50** Geo **6.25** Brian **7.00** Land Of Magic **7.35** Vanish **8.10** Tipsy Tiger **8.45** Al Khawaneej River
Epsom **6.05** Allonsy **6.40** Balayaged **7.15** Fahrenheit Seven **7.50** Al Ameen **8.25** Local Bay **9.00** Saachi

Rugby union

Six Nations could become Saturdays only to boost ratings

Robert Kitson
Auckland

All future men's Six Nations fixtures could be staged on Saturdays as officials seek to enhance the championship's pulling power. It is understood serious consideration is being given to scrapping Friday and Sunday games and instead expanding the use of the popular final weekend Super Saturday concept.

Staggering the kick-offs and playing an entire three-game round on the same day has proved a significant television ratings success, while the seven most-watched games of the 2024 Six Nations were all Saturday kick-offs. Conversely, the three men's Six Nations matches with the lowest TV audiences in the UK this year – Wales v France, Ireland v Italy and France v Italy – were all played on Sundays.

The move would find favour with many travelling supporters, who would be spared the logistical ordeal, say, of Friday night fixtures in Cardiff. The 2025 championship is also due to kick off on a Friday, with France hosting Wales on 31 January, but several unions are believed to be in favour of reverting to Saturday-only matches.

The proposal is among several continuing scheduling debates as administrators in both hemispheres examine how best to expand rugby's global audience and maximise revenues. Also high on their list of priorities is the scheduled launch of the new biennial Nations Cup tournament in 2026, with a lucrative proposal of £800m over eight years having been tabled to stage a so-called Super Bowl of Rugby finals weekend in Qatar.

No final agreement has been reached but, despite the potential financial bonanza, some major unions are understood to have reservations. In addition to Qatar's human rights record, a relative lack of travelling supporters could have an impact on ticket sales and the atmosphere inside the stadiums. Sources suggest discussions are now entering a decisive phase.

Webb handed doping ban

The former Wales scrum-half Rhys Webb has been banned for four years after testing positive for a banned substance, the French Anti-Doping Agency has confirmed. The 35-year-old, who joined French club Biarritz last year, was provisionally suspended after testing positive for a growth hormone last July. Webb has protested his innocence but the findings were confirmed following B-sample analysis. The backdated ban expires in 2027 when Webb will be 38, and may end his playing career. PA Media



▼ *Elena Rybakina has dropped only one set on her run to the semi-finals*
MIKE EGERTON/PA

Rybakina crushes Svitolina as dominant run continues

Elena Rybakina	**6 6**
Kazakhstan, 4	
Elina Svitolina	**3 2**
Ukraine, 21	

Tumaini Carayol
Wimbledon

A couple of weeks before the start of Wimbledon, Elena Rybakina had an all too familiar setback. In the early stages of a quarter-final during a warm-up tournament in Berlin, she retired with a stomach injury. A cloud of uncertainty still hung over her status as she returned to Wimbledon, where in 2022 she won her first and only major title.

But as Rybakina has progressed through the draw and all of her rivals have gradually fallen away, she has reached the final stages performing at a spectacular level and reinforcing her status as the prohibitive favourite. Rybakina returned to the semi-finals with an imperious performance on Centre Court, crushing a helpless Elina Svitolina 6-3, 6-2.

In the past two years Rybakina has established herself inside the top five while consistently making deep runs and winning titles across all surfaces. She might have achieved even more if not for the health problems she has had to consistently address. She has retired or withdrawn from matches six times over the past year, mostly because of illnesses that have continued to affect her matches and training for weeks. This time around, she has quickly shaken off those issues and rediscovered her form.

"I'm feeling pretty well on the court, especially last three matches," Rybakina said. "I think I showed really good tennis. Sometimes serve can be off, but then the groundstrokes are really well. I'm playing pretty confident. As we all know, sometimes you wake up and something can happen. Hopefully nothing is going to happen tomorrow. For sure I will try to stay focused and show the same tennis."



Elina Svitolina was powerless against Rybakina's serve

As Rybakina seeks a second grand slam title to reinforce her status as one of the best players in the world, the 25-year-old will face another player seeking to solidify herself as a multiple slam winner.

On No 1 Court, the 31st seed Barbora Krejcikova outplayed Jelena Ostapenko, seeded 13th, to win 6-4, 7-6 (4) in a battle between the Roland Garros champions of 2021 and 2017 respectively. Rybakina and Krejcikova, the last remaining grand slam winners in the draw, will face each other today.

While Rybakina set the tone with her massive, precise serving and her determination to take the first strike off both wings, much of the opening set was extremely competitive. Svitolina held her ground well, serving effectively and comfortably redirecting Rybakina's pace.

At 4-3, with the new balls imbuing her vicious strokes with even more pace, Rybakina's level skyrocketed and she separated herself from her opponent. She returned spectacularly, even as Svitolina landed ample first serves, taking the decisive break to love before closing out a clean set with a 115mph ace out wide. By the time Rybakina had reeled off five consecutive games to lead 6-3, 2-0, there was only going to be one winner. For all the grit, consistency and resourcefulness Svitolina competes with, she was completely flattened by one of the best servers and ball strikers in the world.

"It's very, very difficult because I feel like I'm in a good form," Svitolina said. "I feel like I played really good tennis. Of course, when the opponent is striking the ball that big, everything goes in. Serve goes really quick. Lots of aces. It's tough to do anything. I was trying to dig, trying to fight, trying to get my chances back, but she didn't really let me."

As Rybakina reinforced her status as favourite, Svitolina departed Centre Court satisfied with her progress. In her emphatic fourth-round victory against Wang Xinyu, the Ukrainian took to the court hours after a Russian missile struck a children's hospital in Kyiv. After that match, Svitolina said that her mind was in a fog, with the victims of the attack dominating her thoughts, but she was still able to focus and perform.

While Svitolina has opted against shaking hands of Russian opponents, she has chosen not to avoid Russian-born players who now represent other countries. After Rybakina, a Moscow-born Kazakhstani, closed out the win with her seventh ace, the pair greeted each other respectfully before going their separate ways.

Women's semi-finals

B Krejcikova *Cz* 31			**D Vekic** *Cro*
E Rybakina *Kaz* 4			**J Paolini** *It* 7

Djokovic into last four as De Minaur pulls out

Simon Cambers
Wimbledon

Novak Djokovic received a walkover into the Wimbledon semi-finals yesterday after the seven-time champion's scheduled opponent, the Australian Alex de Minaur, withdrew because of a hip injury.

De Minaur, the ninth seed, sustained the injury on Monday at the end of his victory against the Frenchman Arthur Fils. At the time, he thought he would be fit to play but he lasted less than 10 minutes of a practice session yesterday and said the risk of further injury was too high.

"I'm devastated," De Minaur said. "I have to pull out due to a hip injury, a little tear of the fibrocartilage that is at the end or connects to the adductor.

"I felt a loud crack during the last three points against Fils. I got a scan and it confirmed this was the injury and with high risk of making it worse if I was to step on court."

It is a huge disappointment for the 25-year-old De Minaur, who had made it through to the quarter-finals here for the first time, backing up his run to the last eight at the French Open last month.

"It's devastating, I haven't really been able to enjoy what I've achieved this week because I knew once I felt that pop, I knew something bad had happened," he said.

"In the grand scheme of things it could have been worse, so I'm trying to hold on to that."

De Minaur, who said he had been struggling to sleep and felt pain when walking, said doctors told him his recovery could be three to six weeks, but their confidence was low because of the nature of the injury.

"I haven't been able to tell me a definitive recovery plan because it's such a unique injury," the Australian said. "It's based on my pain, a little. Right now, it can be anywhere from three to six weeks, it just depends how quickly my body heals.

"It's no secret that at this stage this was the biggest match of my career. I wanted to do anything I could to play.

"I got the results yesterday. I knew what the results were yesterday but I still wanted to wake up today and feel some sort of miracle. But one stretch, one slide, one anything could make this injury go from three to six weeks to four months, so it's too much to risk."

Djokovic, trying to win a record 25th grand slam title, will now have two days off before playing the the No 25 seed Lorenzo Musetti tomorrow after the Italian prevailed in a marathon five-set epic against Taylor Fritz.

Djokovic is now through to a record-equalling 13th Wimbledon semi-final as he attempts to win an eighth title.



▲ *Alex de Minaur fears he may have made his hip injury worse by playing*

Italy rising after Musetti sees off Fritz in slugfest

Lorenzo Musetti	3	7	6	3	6
Italy, 25					
Taylor Fritz	6	6	2	6	1
US, 13					

Bryan Armen Graham
Wimbledon

The tattoo along the right ribcage of Lorenzo Musetti reads *Il meglio deve ancora venire:* the best is yet to come. At this rate the 22-year-old from the small Tuscan town of Carrara might not be waiting much longer.

The 25th-seeded Italian, who had never been past the fourth round at a major until this week, won 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 against Taylor Fritz in a rollercoaster quarter-final yesterday. He advanced into the semi-finals where he will face the second-seeded Novak Djokovic.

"I have no words," said Musetti, only the fourth Italian man to reach the last four at the All England Club after Nicola Pietrangeli (1960), Matteo Berrettini (2021) and Jannik Sinner (2023). "I kept the best for the end."

Playing on a sun-splashed No 1 Court, two of the in-form men of the grass-court season traded hellfire over nearly three and a half hours before a rollicking crowd.

Brimming with confidence after rallying from two sets down to beat the fourth-seeded Alexander Zverev on Monday, the 13th-seeded Fritz fought off a pair of break points in his opening service game, but it was Musetti who blinked first when he was broken in the fourth game. The American served out the set from there in 36 minutes behind a booming serve that clocked as high as 135mph.

Musetti was broken in a marathon opening game of the second set. But Fritz was unable to consolidate as he was broken for only the second time in 82 games. The American levelled with a break in the fifth game only to fall behind in the eighth, troubled by Musetti's shrewd counterattacking and change of pace. The Italian was broken to love while serving for the set, but forced a tie-break and snatched an early mini-break that proved the difference.

Fritz, 26, was broken to open the third and became impatient in the rallies. Overeager to shorten the points and looking for outright winners, he was broken to love while Musetti raised his level showcasing his one-handed backhand. By then the visibly frustrated Fritz's first-serve percentage dropped to 25% in the third from 79% in the opening two sets.

The American appeared to steady himself at the outset of the fourth, forcing a break chance in the fourth game which Musetti erased with a lob winner. Fritz held from love-40 in the fifth game, saving four break points in the game then breaking Musetti in the eighth as unforced errors began to creep into the Italian's forehand. Moments later he comfortably held to force a fifth set.

The seesaw battle took a final turn when Musetti painted the sideline with an inside-out forehand to break Fritz early in the decider. The Italian consolidated with a love hold. Once he broke again with a forehand passing winner for 4-0, the match was a handshake away.

It won't get any easier from here. Musetti has lost five of six previous meetings against Djokovic, the lone win coming on clay last year in the last 16 at the Monte Carlo Masters.

Musetti said: "I think it's one of the toughest matches on tour. But I'm an ambitious guy and I like to be challenged."

Men's semi-finals

D Medvedev *Rus* 5	L Musetti *It* 25
C Alcaraz *Sp* 3	N Djokovic *Ser* 2



▲ *Lorenzo Musetti emulated Jasmine Paolini by making the semi-finals*
HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS



Cricket

◀ *England fast bowler Lauren Bell (left) started her career with Berkshire*
MICHAEL STEELE/ ECB/GETTY IMAGES

ECB accused of freezing counties out of women's shake-up

Raf Nicholson

Counties in England which do not already have a first-class men's team believe they are being frozen out of plans for a new second division for women's cricket.

Only first-class men's counties will have the chance to run a team in the top two tiers of women's domestic cricket from the 2025 season, even though first-class status has never formally existed within women's cricket and, historically, many county women's sides have been stronger than some first-class ones.

Applications from nine counties to run teams in the second tier of women's domestic cricket from the 2025 season are being disregarded by the England and Wales Cricket Board without reaching the interview stage.

Nine of the 20 national counties (formerly known as minor counties) had applied to sit in the semi-professional tier two - including Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Devon, Northumberland, Staffordshire and Wiltshire. After meeting the bid deadline of 11 June, all nine were told on 13 June that they would have the opportunity to present their bids directly to an ECB interview panel.

But in an email sent by Richard Gould, the ECB's chief executive, on 17 June he said there were concerns within the ECB that national counties did not have the "level of professional resources" required to run a tier two team. Gould added that the ECB were "pausing the current process to identify whether members from the Recreational Game [national counties] could be selected to become a Tier 2 women's team by 2025".

The Guardian understands that bids from first-class counties are continuing to be assessed, with a final decision about the makeup of tier two set to be taken at an ECB board meeting on 17 July - in effect freezing out the national counties before they can meet with the governing body.

Domestic women's cricket is undergoing a restructure away from regions to counties. Tier-two women's teams will receive £200,000 worth of funding annually from the ECB between 2025 and 2028. While only counties with historic "first-class" status were eligible to bid for tier-one teams - with the eight winners announced in April - applications for tier two (which is expected to contain between 10 and 14 teams) were opened up to all.

The national counties had been required to submit 2,000-word supporting statements with their bids explaining their reasons for wanting to be awarded tier-two status and how they would "approach the creation of high-performance environments for their women's team and talent pathway", as well as details of their proposed coaching and support staff structure, training and match-day facilities plan, and an annual financial projection for how they will operate their women's senior tier-two programme and talent pathway.

Berkshire played in Division One of the Women's County Championship and were County T20 champions in 2010, producing international players including Isa Guha and the England fast bowler Lauren Bell. The selection criteria outlined in the tier two process document, seen by the Guardian, specifically includes "historic performances in ECB Women's County competitions". However, first-class counties which have never won silverware in women's cricket now appear to be being rewarded purely on the basis of their status in the men's game.

"We followed all the guidelines, all the rules, and spent hours putting our bid together. And then they say: 'Sorry, guys, we've changed our mind,'" one senior staff member at a national county told the Guardian.

In a joint letter to the ECB board dated 25 June, eight of the nine national counties which submitted bids requested a "full review of the process and decision making within the ECB executive".

Gould has followed up by offering to meet counties individually to discuss the situation. One member of staff at a national county alleges the only appointments being offered are for after 17 July - at which point the decision about who is awarded tier-two status will have been made.

The ECB, however, disputes this. An ECB spokesperson said: "Gould has already met with a number of national counties, so it would not be correct to indicate that ECB is not engaging with stakeholders."

'Gould has met with a number of national counties'
ECB spokesperson

Atkinson blows West Indies away to boost England's regeneration

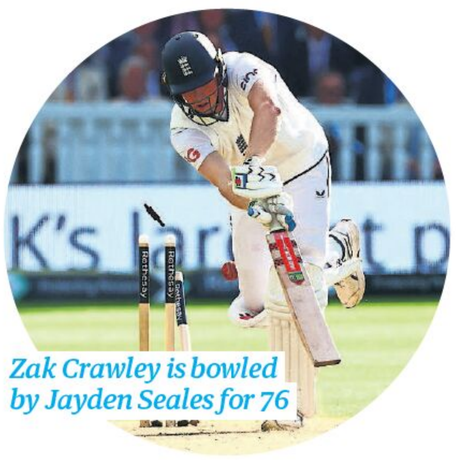
Ali Martin
Lord's

Like those hippy wigs in Woolworths mentioned at the end of Withnail and I, they were selling limited edition Jimmy Anderson last Test merchandise on day one at Lord's. The greatest two and a bit decades of English seam bowling in history are nearly over, man, and for a mere £60 punters could get their hands on a commemorative hoodie.

How long Anderson's grand farewell lasts may hinge on the weather in St John's Wood over the coming days, England having dominated the early exchanges against West Indies. They also did so in a manner that lent weight to the decision by Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum to reboot the Test side this summer, with the newcomer Gus Atkinson bursting out of his cellophane wrapping to take seven sparkling wickets.

Sideways glances might have followed had Anderson dominated proceedings at the start of this 188th and final Test. Although the 41-year-old was not exactly sidelined. His greatest hits featured regularly on the big screen and his 701st Test wicket put a full stop on a rather sorry 121 all out from the tourists. His daughters, Lola and Ruby, ringing the bell at the Bowlers' Bar before play was a lovely moment, Anderson cracking a proud smile out in the middle that just about prevented a tear from forming.

But 21 years since one shy, undemonstrative fast bowler announced himself to the world with a place on the Lord's honours board, another cut from the same cloth repeated the trick. Atkinson, a smidgeon older than that early days Anderson at 26, claimed the third-best figures by an



Zak Crawley is bowled by Jayden Seales for 76

England men's Test debutant – seven for 45 from 12 overs – with the slippery wicket-to-wicket nip that trumped just 19 first-class games for Surrey.

The skies over St John's Wood were bruised for most of the day and Stokes is a captain who rarely needs a second invitation to bowl first. Having seen their achilles heel – batting – exposed on a slow surface during the first half, West Indies' clear strength – fast bowling – could not quite provide the requisite rush of wickets in response. Instead, England closed on 189 for three for a commanding overnight lead of 68 runs.

There were some bright moments from the tourists, not least Jayden Seales terminating Zak Crawley's 76 with a yorker that knocked back leg stump. Seales had earlier nicked off Ben Duckett cheaply on the drive, while Jason Holder – twice thwarted by the review system – finally removed Ollie Pope lbw for 57 with an inswinger. But with Joe Root (15) and Harry Brook (25) poised to resume first thing, they still have it all to do.

West Indies had started determinedly against Anderson and the returning Chris Woakes before the lacquer came off the Dukes ball and it started to move. Even after being pegged back by Atkinson's initial spell of five overs, two for two, plus a wicket for Stokes when Brook's low catch at slip removed the opener, Mikyle Louis, for 27, things appeared honours even. Stuck in by their hosts, they were 61 for three at lunch.

Atkinson's early burst had seen just his second ball in Test cricket chopped on to the stumps by Kraigg Brathwaite – 10 minutes off strike inducing a loose cut from the West Indies captain – and Kirk McKenzie fenced to slip. What followed after the interval surpassed those early inroads, however, Atkinson filleting the middle order with three wickets

Immediate impact

Gus Atkinson's seven for 45 are the second-best Test figures by an England men's bowler on debut

7-43	**Dominic Cork**	*v WI*	1995
7-45	**Gus Atkinson**	*v WI*	2024
7-46	**John Lever**	*v Ind*	1976
7-49	**Alec Bedser**	*v Ind*	1946
7-56	**James Langridge**	*v WI*	1933
7-62	**Tom Hartley**	*v Ind*	2024
7-103	**Jim Laker**	*v WI*	1948

John Ferris took 7-37 v South Africa on his England debut in 1892 but he had already played eight Tests for Australia (all against England)



Gus gets the home crowd on their feet

Fast bowler Gus Atkinson celebrates his fifth wicket, a feat that brings plenty of hope for next year's Ashes series
ANDREW BOYERS/ REUTERS

in four balls that turned the usual Lord's hum into a guttural roar.

Brathwaite's early exit had taken with it 12 of the 16 Test centuries this West Indies side had scored previously and the other two batters to taste three figures, Holder and Joshua Da Silva, lasted just three balls between them. Once Alick Athanaze fell to Root at first slip on 23 – ending a 44-run stand with fellow Dominican, Kavem Hodge – and Holder offered half a bat to edge to third, Atkinson found himself on a hat-trick.

Da Silva kept out the full, straight attempt but was sent on his way next ball when an inside edge flew behind. As well as sealing a maiden Test five-wicket haul for Atkinson – just his second in first-class cricket – it was a first catch for his Surrey teammate and fellow debutant Jamie Smith. The 23-year-old kept pretty tidily overall, too, despite Lord's being a tricky ground for it.

In between this surge and Atkinson wiping out the two Josephs – Alzarri and Shamar both skying catches in the final throes – came a wicket for Woakes. For some, the 35-year-old is a slight curio in this reshuffle; a bowler who, like Anderson, feels unlikely to make the targeted Ashes tour the winter after next. England still want a degree of continuity, however, and after some early jaffas that found only fresh air, Woakes finally removed Hodge for 24 thanks to a remarkable reflex catch from Pope at short cover.

Like Brook earlier on – albeit with a more nonchalant celebration – it summed up a fine display in the field. Stokes sending down eight successive overs of thudding swing without any ill-effects from knee surgery last year was another box ticked. It just needed a wicket for Anderson, with England and the capacity crowd finally having their collective wish granted when a full inswinger to Seales, the No 11, struck the back leg in front.

All told, it was the kind of day Stokes and McCullum will have had in mind when they tapped Anderson on the shoulder in April: a worthy celebration of what a remarkable career and, in Atkinson's arrival, the promising first steps of a new one.

Day one scoreboard

Lord's England lead West Indies by 68 runs with seven first-innings wickets remaining.

West Indies First innings	Balls	4s	6s
*KC Brathwaite b Atkinson 6	33	0	0
M Louis c Brook b Stokes 27	58	4	1
KSA McKenzie c Crawley b Atkinson 1	14	0	0
A Athanaze c Root b Atkinson 23	56	3	0
KAR Hodge c Pope b Woakes 24	48	3	1
JO Holder c Brook b Atkinson 0	1	0	0
†J Da Silva c Smith b Atkinson 0	2	0	0
AS Joseph c Woakes b Atkinson 17	9	4	0
G Motie not out 14	19	3	0
S Joseph c Pope b Atkinson 0	2	0	0
JNT Seales lbw b Anderson 2	8	0	0
Extras (lb7) 7			
Total (41.4 overs) 121			

Fall 34, 36, 44, 88, 88, 88, 88, 106, 106.

Bowling Anderson 10.4-3-26-1; Woakes 11-2-29-1; Atkinson 12-5-45-7; Stokes 8-2-14-1.

England First innings	Balls	4s	6s
Z Crawley b Seales 76	89	14	0
BM Duckett c Da Silva b Seales 3	13	0	0
OJD Pope lbw b Holder 57	74	11	0
JE Root not out 15	39	1	0
HC Brook not out 25	29	3	0
Extras (lb9, nb4) 13			
Total (for 3, 40 overs) 189			

Fall 29, 123, 153.

To bat *BA Stokes, †JL Smith, CR Woakes, GAP Atkinson, S Bashir, JM Anderson.

Bowling AS Joseph 10-1-66-0; Seales 9-1-31-2; S Joseph 9-1-42-0; Holder 10-0-38-1; Motie 2-0-3-0.

Toss England elected to field.

Umpires NN Menon (Ind) and RJ Tucker (Aus).

TV Umpire AT Holdstock (SA).

Analysis

Andy Bull *Lord's*



Anderson the wallflower at his own party but late rabbit brings rare smile

'And opening the bowling from the Pavilion End it's …" Jimmy Anderson, of course. Same as it has been, on and off, since he took five for 73 against Zimbabwe here in his very first Test 21 years ago. He's almost a fixture at Lord's, like Old Father Time on the weather vane above the scorers' box. The 21 other men from that first Test match he played are long gone now: one of them was Anderson's last boss at the England and Wales Cricket Board; another is his latest; a third is working as one of his coaches; many of the rest make a living talking about him and his teammates. But Anderson is still out there, for this last week at least.

Those old teammates of his will tell you he was a sullen kid who hardly spoke to them all week. He didn't seem so very different now, a little slower, for sure, and with a few more wrinkles too, but still pretty surly with it. Anderson only goes at two-and-some runs an over but he still gives more four balls than he does smiles.

They were a little late starting, and Anderson didn't seem to enjoy the wait. The pre-match rigmarole went on longer than he wanted. Both teams were held at the doorway from the Long Room while they played a video tribute to him on the big screens at either side of the ground. Anderson leant against the doorframe, leg cocked, arms crossed, and looked down at the ground while everyone else watched, a wallflower at his own party. Left to himself, you guess Anderson would have preferred to slip out of Test cricket without letting anyone know he was going.

Not least because if England had kept control of the story they might have been able to make it look like his decision instead of one they made for him. "Dear Jimmy …" went the video tribute, which made it sound like one of those letters soldiers get from their girlfriends back home. "I'm sorry to tell you I've met someone else." He's 6ft 2in tall, 26, he bowls 90mph.

After the anthems, Anderson watched his family ring the pavilion bell to signal the start of play for the day, passed his cap and sweater to the umpire, Rod Tucker, ran his hands through his fringe, rehearsed his opening delivery, and finally started in on his run.

The day was made for it, God-given for swing bowling. The floodlights were on, the sky was thick with heavy grey clouds, and a stiff wind was blowing from the south.

Anderson knew one of the two batsmen as well as any other he has bowled to: this was the 13th Test he has played against Kraigg Brathwaite, and Brathwaite, always slow and steady he goes, set about the innings with the measured pace of a man setting out on a mountain expedition. At the other end, though, was Mikyle Louis, making his debut. Louis was so young and sure of himself that when Anderson bowled him a fuller one up by his off stump, he didn't think but launched it for four through long-off. It was just about the last ball Anderson let anyone drive all morning. Up in the Sky box, his old mate Stuart Broad was imploring him to pitch it up.

But Anderson wouldn't. So everyone waited, and waited, and after a while it felt like the wait had gone on so long that the champagne was starting to turn flat. We have an idea of how our goodbyes ought to be, but in reality these moments seldom go how we hope. Anderson's first over went for nine, his second and third were maidens, there were a handful of singles off his fourth and fifth, but there wasn't a wicket anywhere among them. Eventually Ben Stokes brought Gus Atkinson on to replace him, and Brathwaite immediately chopped a sloppy cut shot into his wicket. Well, there's one, Gus, just another 699 to go.

Numbers two, three, four, five, six and seven actually followed pretty swiftly, some of them to superb catches, others to sorry shots. Test wickets have rarely seemed so easy to come by.

Midway through the afternoon Atkinson had seven for 36, and people were checking the lists of the best Test figures on debut. Anderson, meanwhile, was still waiting for his first. He had said before the game that all he wanted to do in his final Test was make a contribution, and here he was, the only man in the attack without a wicket. So Stokes brought him back on to bowl at the last man, Jayden Seales.

And then, at last, there it was. He got it with a beautiful inswinger that beat the inside edge of Seales's bat and hit him flush in front of leg stump. Seales called for a review, just because it is the thing to do, and everyone turned to watch the replay on the big screen. It was a beautiful ball, one we've seen him deliver dozens of times before, but if you were looking in the right direction, you'll have seen something entirely new, too, even after all these years. Down in the middle of the field, Anderson was wearing a brilliant grin. You've never seen him so happy to trap a rabbit.



▲ *Jimmy Anderson watches in the Long Room during a video tribute to him*

CHRIS FOWELL/PROSPORTS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Perfect start

'It's more than I could have dreamed of'

Simon Burnton
Lord's

Gus Atkinson declared his first day of Test cricket "more than I could have dreamed of" after he raced to a place on the fabled Lord's honours board on his debut, taking seven wickets as England bowled West Indies out for 121. Zak Crawley and Ollie Pope both scored half-centuries in the afternoon as the home side eased to 189 for three at stumps to take control of the first Test of the summer.

"I don't think it's sunk in yet. I was looking up at the board seeing my figures and just thinking, 'Wow.' A very special day," Atkinson said. "I was a bit nervous this morning. I woke up and all I could think about was the day ahead. I was a bit emotional this morning and then having my family there for my cap presentation – if you could have asked me what I wanted from my day that was pretty close to the top. It was pretty cool. Just to take a five-for is amazing, more than I could have dreamed of.

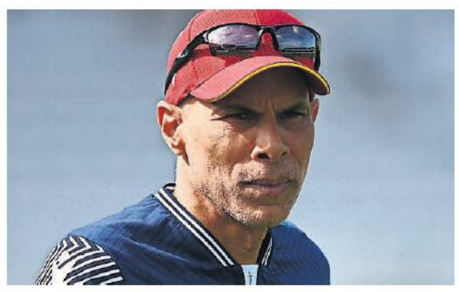
"I was trying to keep as level as possible. My dad was saying, 'It's the biggest day of your life.' And I was saying, 'Relax!' I was a bit nervous to start with but once the first few overs were bowled I was pretty calm."

Not only was it Atkinson's Test debut, it was his first red-ball game at Lord's. But after being introduced into the attack with West Indies 34 without loss he bowled three overs and taken two wickets before he conceded his first run, and later produced a triple-wicket maiden as the tourists slumped from three down to seven without shifting their score from 88.

Jimmy Anderson, the focus of pre-match attention on his final England appearance, took one wicket, as did Chris Woakes and Ben Stokes.

Atkinson ended with seven for 45, the second-best figures for a Test debutant in England's men's team (after Dominic Cork, who also took seven wickets but conceded two runs fewer, also against West Indies and also at Lord's, in June 1995). "I've played a few white-ball games here. I've always felt like I would bowl quite well here with a red ball," he said.

Jimmy Adams, West Indies' assistant coach, blamed his side's poor performance on a combination of England's excellence with the ball and their own inexperience. "England exploited conditions really well – they were consistent, they got the ball to swing, they didn't give us any freebies, and maybe there was a little bit of inexperience on our part as well," Adams said.



▲ *Jimmy Adams said West Indies would learn lessons from the day*

"I think all of England's bowlers are world class. We hadn't seen Gus bowl but he's done pretty well in county cricket this season and he really put his hand up, and had a dream debut."

Only three members of West Indies' team had played a Test match in England before, and their unfamiliarity with local conditions perhaps contributed to their poor showing with the bat.

"For young men who've never toured England or batted in conditions like this, it was a real searching examination, but for a young lineup I'd rather they learned these lessons early in their careers," Adams said. "I think it'll make them better players going forward."

‘Best job in the world … that’s how it feels to me’

After securing his dream role as Wales manager, Craig Bellamy is keen to show he has the character to succeed

Ben Fisher

To get a flavour of quite how hungry Craig Bellamy is to succeed as a manager, listen to him talk about watching Wales’s next opponents, Turkey, eight times in the past week, since it became apparent he would get his hands on the job he has always pined for. Bellamy the player was an emotional leader, an inspirational figure and a firebrand happy to dig out teammates after weak performances, but Bellamy the coach is an obsessive used to turning in marathon days in pursuit of victory. Poring through clips of players is one example of his inner workings. “I’ve got a load of South Africa at the moment, but I think we’re OK,” he says, smiling.

It may come in handy down the line. After all, Bellamy’s overarching aim is to help Wales to make the 2026 World Cup. He is a magnetic, patriotic and complex character and an hour in his company at Hensol Castle, on the outskirts of Cardiff, flies by as he discusses everything from the Owain Glyndŵr tattoo celebrating Wales’s 15th-century victory over England at the Battle of Pilleth on his right arm and his mental wellbeing to the erosion of some footballing fundamentals.

“I think you need to move away from formations, need to start looking at football differently, we don’t play formations, we play shapes,” he says. “The idea is: ‘Can I create an extra player in a part of the field where you [the opposition] don’t have it?’”

Bellamy cares deeply. In the past perhaps too much and he acknowledges in some quarters there are perceptions to be put to bed. After working alongside Vincent Kompany at Anderlecht and more recently Burnley, he wanted to move out of the shadows and become a manager in his own right, in part to shake any accusations that he lacks the experience to take a top job. But he knows this is also a chance to address another elephant in the room. “Temperament,” he says, “that’s a nice word that usually gets used. Hopefully after a few months, a year, maybe two, maybe three - I don’t know - I think then you’ll have a good understanding that ‘yeah, [his] temperament is fine, now he has experience’, and hopefully I’ll be able to dismiss that. It is also important for me to dismiss that.”



Craig Bellamy is tasked with guiding Wales to the 2026 World Cup

Bellamy made 78 appearances for his country, captaining them between 2007 and 2010, and appeared at home in familiar surrounds, striding into a room of reporters in white trainers and a light-blue suit with the Wales crest fixed on his lapel. Does being back in his birthplace carry extra significance? “That wasn’t the big calling for me,” he says. “I’ve got to be honest, I felt at home at Burnley. I feel like every job I do or wherever I’ve worked or played, it’s always been the biggest club, it’s always the best club in the world. This now is the best job in the world, Wales are the best football nation in the world, that’s how it feels to me. That’s what it feels I am representing and that’s how I try to challenge it.”

The Football Association of Wales moved quickly to hire Bellamy on a four-year contract, with the 44-year-old highly regarded for his work alongside Kompany. He could have stayed on under Scott Parker, with whom he played at West Ham. But the appeal of Wales was too strong. “It hasn’t left me,” he says. “I spoke to Vincent for about an hour yesterday, and he said: ‘I knew this was the one job I could lose you to.’ He’d never said that to me, but he felt in the time we worked together it was the role he knew he wouldn’t be able to talk me out of.”



‘He gave us oxygen’ Rodri in awe of supreme Lamine

Spain’s schoolboy sensation dazzled teammates and fans alike against France - and is now ready for his final exam

Sid Lowe
Donaueschingen

Julian Nagelsmann said Germany weren’t going to kick him out of his socks, but, well, they *were* going to put their foot in. Adrien Rabiot promised that they were going to take him out of his comfort zone, apply the pressure. He looked good, and there was eulogy implicit in the Frenchman’s words, but if he was going to beat France, he would have to “do more”. And so Lamine Yamal did *that*, and *there*, curling in an absurd shot that, still 16 but not scared, took Spain into the final and made him the youngest ever goalscorer at a Euros or a World Cup, ahead of some guy called Edson Arantes do Nascimento.

That and all *this*. At the end of the semi-final, Rodri, the Spain midfielder who is something like the Spain manager, said he had taken Lamine Yamal aside and congratulated him. “I am very, very proud of him,” Rodri said.

“People will hold on to the goal, that sudden starring moment from a kid who is 16. And you have to have enormous quality to be able to do that, and doing it in a semi-final speaks to the player he is, the incredible future he has. Very few players can do that,” Rodri insisted. “But I hold on to his defensive commitment, the support he gave teammates, how he closed off spaces, the oxygen he gave us. How complete his game was … and I told him that personally … *chapeau*.”

The first thing Lamine Yamal did, after 110 seconds, was bring down a long diagonal, exchange passes with Jesús Navas, and dash away from Rabiot and Théo Hernandez. The second was a foul: not on him, but by him, Hernandez the victim again. So much for the spotty kid with the braces bottling it. And the third was a glorious delivery from which Fabián Ruiz might have put Spain into the lead. All that inside five minutes. The last thing he did, 90 minutes later, was get a yellow card for hauling down Hernandez, one last service.

In the meantime, there had been three shots, 44 touches, two key passes and three tackles attempted, all of them completed. When at last he reached his teammates, forced to go the long way back to the bench, he collapsed on to the floor, exhausted. “As well as the goal, he did exceptional work; he gave everything until the last minute,” the Spain coach, Luis

Staveley to cut her links with Newcastle

Louise Taylor

Amanda Staveley is to sever ties with Newcastle, almost three years after becoming the public face of the club’s Saudi Arabian-controlled takeover.

Staveley and her husband, Mehrdad Ghodoussi, became directors and minority co-owners of Newcastle in October 2021 when Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund purchased an 80% majority stake and Staveley and Reuben Brothers each assumed 10% holdings. With Newcastle then without a chief executive or a sporting director, the Saudis handed Staveley and Ghodoussi a rolling management contract to handle the day-to-day running of the club.

The pair played a key role in appointing Eddie Howe as the manager in 2021 and if he is unlikely to be surprised by the news, he may well be unsettled by the loss of such key allies.

Staveley played a vital role in brokering the controversial £300m deal that ended Mike Ashley’s 14-year ownership of Newcastle and subsequently helped negotiate a series of key transfers involving players such as Bruno Guimarães and Kieran Trippier arriving at St James’ Park.

She also prioritised the club’s women’s team, proving a key figure in its rise from the fourth to the second tier.

The appointments of Darren Eales as Newcastle’s chief executive and Dan Ashworth as sporting director reduced her role though and it seemed significant she reduced her stake to 6% last year while the Reuben Brothers increased theirs to 14%.

In March a series of listings at Companies House removing Staveley as a director of 20 companies related to Newcastle United raised questions about her future on Tyneside but, at the time, she said it was merely a form of administrative housekeeping.

Yet if Staveley and Ghodoussi were preparing for a departure from Newcastle in the spring it was almost certainly delayed by Ashworth’s defection to Manchester United and the need for a new sporting director.

With Paul Mitchell having arrived to fill that role last week and recent sales for a combined total in excess of £60m having ensured that Newcastle remained on the right side of profit and sustainability roles, it appeared Staveley’s work was done. Newcastle declined to comment on her departure.

Marseille agree £26.7m deal for Greenwood

Manchester United have accepted a €31.6m (£26.7m) offer for Mason Greenwood from Marseille, with the forward to sign for the Ligue 1 club subject to his terms being finalised.

The deal is for a guaranteed €27.6m plus €4m in add-ons and if the 22-year-old can come to contractual agreement with Marseille and joins, his troubled United career will end. It is understood the sell-on clause is 40-50% of any fee.

Greenwood last played for United in January 2022. He was loaned to Getafe last season, scoring 10 goals in 36 appearances with six assists.

Meanwhile, United yesterday announced a £71.4m net loss in the third quarter of the financial year, with Sir Jim Ratcliffe’s 27.7% buy-in costing the club £30.3m, though the Ineos owner has since injected $200m (£156.1m) into the club.

With previous accounts detailing a £9.6m cost involved with Ratcliffe becoming United’s largest minority owner, the total stands at £39.9m.

United’s £71.4m net loss is up from £5.6m from the same quarter of 2023.

Jamie Jackson

▼ *Lamine Yamal, 16, has received his school exam results while in Germany*
XINHUA/SHUTTERSTOCK



de la Fuente, said. "That makes him an even better player; it will make him mature as a footballer and a person."

And yet, Rodri was right: people would cling to the goal, remember it above all else. How could they not? "I had hoped that my first goal would be a great goal," Lamine Yamal said, appearing down by the bus holding his player of the match award. "My little brother, the mini MVP," Nico Williams called him; Spain's wingers, a symbol of a new generation, a new team, of a shifting society too, have become inseparable over the last month. And it was a *golazo* all right. Almost identical to one he scored a year ago. Against France. In the semi-final of the Euros. At under-17 level.

It has all happened so fast, under-17s, under-19s, straight to the first team. He made his Barcelona debut at 15. It is less than a year since there were conversations with his family to ensure he would choose Spain over Morocco. Some, especially on the other side of the country's great footballing divide, thought it too fast, even absurd. He still needs parental authorisation to travel abroad with the national team, and Barcelona. There is a tutor assigned to him. At the start of the season, his club's sporting directorate set a target for the season: for him

'The last Euros I watched at a shopping centre with my mates,' said the 16-year-old

to complete the fourth year at school. He took his homework and got his exam results down in Donaueschingen.

He passed that - "I can concentrate on the Euros," he said - and passed this too. The pitch decides. Asked about Lamine Yamal after the game, Antoine Griezmann said: "You saw him." Before it, during that countdown thing, Kylian Mbappé had come to greet him. Mbappé, the *next* great player, inheriting the crown from Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, is *nine* years older. His teammate Navas, who on Tuesday night became the oldest player to appear in a semi-final, the last man standing from the World Cup-winning team in 2010, when Lamine Yamal was three, is older than his father. He had won five trophies by the time Lamine Yamal was born.

"The last Euros Spain played in, I watched at a shopping centre with my mates," Lamine Yamal said afterwards. "Now I want to enjoy being here. I was talking to my mum and she's so happy."

De la Fuente added: "We saw a touch of genius from a player we need to take care of. I will give him advice. I want him to work with the same humility to improve with the same kind of attitude and maturity he shows on the pitch. He looks like a far more experienced player. I celebrate the fact that he is Spanish and in our team, and I hope we can enjoy him for years to come."

On Saturday, he turns 17, the day before the final. "I've told my mum she doesn't need to get me anything," he said. "I've already got the final, which is my dream and hers too."

Hallgrímsson gets shock call to manage Ireland

After a near eight-month search, the Republic of Ireland has appointed Heimir Hallgrímsson as national men's team manager. The 57-year-old, a qualified dentist, is best known for being joint-coach, with Lars Lagerbäck, of the Iceland side that reached the Euro 2016 last eight, beating England on the way, and was most recently Jamaica coach.

His predecessor, Stephen Kenny, was sacked in November after another Irish failure to qualify for a major tournament - their last such appearance was at Euro 2016. John O'Shea has been caretaker for Ireland's four friendlies since then.

Marc Canham, the Football Association of Ireland's director of football, and Jonathan Hill, the chief executive, both of whom are English, were tasked with finding the new man, before Hill resigned in April. Lee Carsley, the former Ireland international who coached England Under-21s to winning the European Championship last year, was long viewed as the leading candidate but Canham, who led the process, could not tempt him.

Hallgrímsson said: "I am looking forward to working closely with the players to help coach and guide them towards improved performances and results ensuring we qualify and compete at major tournaments on a regular basis." **John Brewin**

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If these are Southgate's last throes they are bewildering but brilliant

Manager criticised for his substitutions finally brings on the right men at right time and England are in the final

Jonathan Wilson
BVB Stadion Dortmund



England's problem, in major tournament game after major tournament game, has been taking an early lead. Since time immemorial the English response to going ahead has been to try to protect what they have, as though inspired by some Boy's Own urge to recreate the siege of Mafeking at every opportunity. What better way to avoid that then, than by going behind and only taking the lead at the very last?

That's obviously not the plan, but it does seem in keeping with the wildness of late-era Gareth Southgate. The technocrat with his clipboard and his data has somehow been transformed into a reckless adventurer. Why rust unburnished on the shore when you can set off into the dark, broad seas, court adventure and improvise? Who remembers the back four now? Who wants to win tournaments with clean sheets when you could progress with injury-time goals and a sense of narrative inevitability? Why try to be Portugal or France, when you can be something far less explicable, far more magical?

Coming from behind is how England got past Slovakia and Switzerland, and it was, eventually, how they got past the Netherlands.

These are the games that etch moments into the national consciousness, often more so when there is failure: Chris Waddle's penalty, Paul Gascoigne's outstretched toe, Jordan Henderson running futile shuttles across the pitch against Croatia.

But even if Spain win on Sunday, England will have the memory of Ollie Watkins scoring the most Ollie Watkins goal imaginable to reach the first major tournament final they have ever reached outside of England.

Football is a capricious game, bedevilled by ironies and paradoxes. England had, finally in this tournament, looked fluent from the off.

Until Luke Shaw came on at half-time, there was no left side, but that has become such a familiar flaw that it barely seems worth commenting on any more. England's left flank for much of this tournament has existed as a sort of phantom limb: a memory of it remains, there may even be times when there is an urge to scratch it, or play the ball out there, but it soon passes.

The thought before the game had been that England's shape meant that, unless the Netherlands pressed with great alacrity and maintained a compact shape, they would often have an extra man in the middle of midfield. Not only that, but that England's personnel in that area seemed physically more imposing. So of course the opening goal came from Xavi Simons dispossessing Declan Rice, a player with a good three and a half inches on him.

But that put England where

Watkins From Weston-super-Mare to England super sub

2014 After starting the season on Exeter's bench Watkins moves to Conference South side **Weston-super-Mare** on loan. Scores 10 goals in 24 games and among interested spectators is the then Walsall manager Dean Smith.

2015 Back at League Two **Exeter**, 24th and final pick for pre-season tour to Scotland. Ends year as starting striker for the Grecians.

2016-17 Named EFL's young player of the year after scoring 16 goals in 52 games to help Exeter reach the playoffs.

2017 Smith, now at **Brentford**, signs him and hails "a player with an awful lot of potential".

2019-20 Scores 26 goals as Brentford reach Championship playoff final, losing 2-1 to Fulham.

Summer 2020 Smith, who has moved to **Aston Villa**, signs him again for a then club-record £28m. Nets 14 league goals in first season.



Spring 2021 Gareth Southgate picks him for **England**, saying "We think this is an opportunity for us to work with Ollie." Watkins comes off the bench to score on his debut, a 5-0 Wembley win over San Marino in a World Cup qualifier.

2023-24 Nineteen league goals and 13 assists as Villa finish fourth and qualify for the Champions League.

Euro 2024 A goal, a man of the match award and England are in the final. Weston-super-Mare post on X: "Dreams do come true." (📷)



▼ *Xavi Simons shows his frustrations at full time*
HOLLANDSE HOOGTE/ SHUTTERSTOCK



they wanted to be: behind. And for once in this tournament, they were not playing a team who dropped deep into a low block at every opportunity. There was space for England and they relished passing the ball into it. This was by far their best performance of the tournament. There were backheels and volleys and backheel volleys. Kobbie Mainoo glided about with astonishing confidence and maturity, controlling midfield with the quality of his passing; the idea that at the start of the tournament he was third choice for the role has come to seem vaguely hallucinatory. Phil Foden kept bending left-footed shots at goal. It all felt very unSouthgate: it was thrilling, disconcertingly so. It couldn't last, and it didn't. In the midst of it all there was a slightly debatable penalty that Harry Kane converted.

It was a measure of how well England had played that, other than his header at goal from a right-wing corner, Denzel Dumfries, such an attacking threat for the Netherlands, had only four touches in the England half before half-time. But there was also the knowledge that in every game in this tournament, the Netherlands had improved after half-time. When Memphis Depay went off, it felt significant that Ronald Koeman replaced him with a midfielder in Joey Veerman. At the break he went for his familiar card in a crisis: Wout Weghorst for Donyell Malen; it was still 4-2-3-1 but a much less attacking variant of it.

With the big man up front, an obvious outlet, it allowed the Netherlands midfield to sit a little deeper so they were more compact.

The space was no longer there for England. The flow was checked and the thought arose that a more ruthless side, a better side, might have ensured they took the lead when they had the advantage. As well as another chance from a set play Dumfries had 12 touches in the England half in the second half.

For all the dragons Southgate has slain - penalties, Germany, Koeman - the one he still seems unable to dispatch is the Sven-Göran Eriksson trait of first half good, second half not so good. And nobody would ever accuse Southgate of being over-hasty in his use of substitutions. The game drifted. It was level too long; England cannot bear too much equality.

And yet they still won it. It turned out Southgate had made the substitution at the perfect time. It turned out he had brought on the right men: Cole Palmer to Watkins to a winner. It turned out that, despite it all, England were going to their second successive European Championship final. Late-era Southgate is bewildering, but it is magnificent. Whether it will be enough for Spain on Sunday is another matter entirely. Logic says not, but logic has ceased to have much to do with it.

◀ *Phil Foden goes agonisingly close with a brilliant shot that hits the post*
TOM JENKINS/THE GUARDIAN

Dutch despair
Orange wall falls silent after chance slips away

Paul MacInnes
BVB Stadion Dortmund

The Netherlands have had the fans of the tournament. That may not be much consolation for them after losing so late in Dortmund, but it's true. Yet the legions of Dutch supporters who turned the city into a sea of orange could not help their team over the line. Ultimately, it was the players who came up short.

Was it the injury to Memphis Depay that turned the game after what had begun as a full-throated Dutch assault? Or the penalty given against Denzel Dumfries for apparently inconsequential contact? Or was it what the critics of Ronald Koeman's side had been saying all along: that this team was just not Dutch enough, not technical enough to ensure victory at the latter stages of a tournament?

In the end it felt like the last of these. Depay had flitted in and out of the tournament and when he went down with a hamstring injury on the half-hour it gave Koeman a chance to staunch a lot of bleeding. England had dominated the first half after going behind to a Xavi Simons belter and the manager had to stiffen his side. That he duly did, with Joey Veerman Wout Weghorst coming into the play, and the Netherlands reverted to the kind of functional team that could hold England at bay for long periods but not properly impose themselves. And in the end, the dam burst.

So let's scroll back for a moment and think about what will be an indelible memory for so many Dutch football fans. The party had begun at about 9am when it became clear that any estimates as to the number of *Oranje* in Dortmund were way under. By 10am there were people dancing on the streets to techno coming out of an orange pickup truck. By 11am, the bars were full. By 1pm the streets were full too.

The pre-game peaked with the fan march, which moved from the city centre along the "green path" to the stadium more than four hours before kick-off. Being inside it felt like a cross between the density of people you get at Notting Hill carnival and the noise of the Kop on a European night, except with people hanging off lamp-posts, bobbing left to right and wearing all kind of orange apparatus; from a plastic coif to a bishop's mitre and a toilet plunger.

Inside the ground the promised Orange Wall turned out to be an Orange Quoin, bending round the south-west corner of the BVB Stadion. But there was energy in abundance for the Dutch to feed off and Simons was wolfing it down. His opening goal happened in the blink of an eye; robbing Declan Rice, driving forward and slamming the ball beyond Jordan Pickford. Looking like a player who'd been told he could take a leading role on such a big stage, Simons led the press, linked the play and was the emblem of the team's good start.

With Simons in a No 10 position, however, it was two Dutch central midfielders against a miasma of England attackers and midfielders. As soon as it became clear that England backed themselves to get into the game, the Netherlands struggled to hold on to what they had won and the noise from the fans began to ebb away. The penalty was contentious, and afterwards the Dutch players seemed willing to cling to an injustice as consolation, but their manager acted to change the shape of his team by half-time to lessen the English threat.

The substitutions had the effect Koeman intended, but the adjustment was something he may have wished to avoid all the same. Gone was the high press and all the intensity off the ball. Gone was much of the sense of attacking threat. Instead the Netherlands were playing like Slovakia and Switzerland had, getting numbers behind the ball and looking to prosper from set plays. This is what his critics have held against him.

With 15 minutes of the second half gone, whistles began. But then Jerdy Schouten forced Luke Shaw into conceding a throw-in and the first cheer for some time could be heard. From that throw a free kick followed and Veerman floated an expert ball to the back post where a touch from Virgil van Dijk forced Pickford into a low save.

That was enough to swing the momentum of the game for a spell. It wasn't pretty to watch, but as England laboured to unlock the massed ranks, the Netherlands began to see more of the ball. With every cross there was danger in the England box. That in turn meant England had to change. With 10 minutes to go, Gareth Southgate did and the pendulum swung once more, this time decisively against the Netherlands.

'Absolute disgrace'



A big "wait, what?" moment came when the VAR referee awarded England a penalty for a "reckless tackle" after Denzel Dumfries raised his right foot to block Harry Kane's effort on goal. Kane converted from the spot. "It's an absolute disgrace," said ITV's former England defender Gary Neville (📷). "He goes in naturally just to try to block the shot and I don't think there were many England players claiming for it." ITV's rules analyst Christina Unkel was surprised that VAR had been involved. "It is not a clear and obvious error, and in fact the preferred recommendation is for this not to be a penalty," she said.

Player ratings

Netherlands
4-2-3-1

Bart Verbruggen Made good saves from Kane and Foden, distributing well too on skiddy pitch. No chance with goals. **7**

Denzel Dumfries At the heart of the first-half drama. Conceded penalty, cleared off the line and hit the bar. **7**

Virgil van Dijk Denied by Pickford in a crucial moment. Headed and blocked everything but it was not enough. **7**

Stefan de Vrij Solid for most the part but made critical error of giving Watkins space for trademark finish. **5**

Nathan Aké Given plenty to do by Saka and Walker before interval. Got a grip, with occasional foray upfield. **7**

Jerdy Schouten Struggled until the team shape changed. Then showed spiky ball-winning ability and distribution. **7**

Tijjani Reijnders Dynamic midfielder shone after Veerman's arrival, recycling possession and combining on left. **7**

Donyell Malen Lively at start but only chance was doused. Moved centrally but replaced by presence of Weghorst. **5**

Xavi Simons Started with fire and scored. Heavily involved after moving right, but scuffed second-half volley. **7**



Cody Gapko Almost invisible for an hour but influence grew with his team's confidence before the late heartbreak. **6**

Memphis Depay Departed injured and had largely been a hindrance, although did slide Malen in for one opening. **5**

Substitutes: Joey Veerman (for Depay 35) **7**. **Wout Weghorst** (for Malen ht) **7**. **Brian Brobbey** (for Simons 90) **6**. **Joshua Zirkzee** (for Dumfries 90) **6**.

England
3-4-2-1

Jordan Pickford Could he have got more on Simons's early blast? Solid after, with crucial save from Van Dijk. **6**

Kyle Walker Marauded and thought he had teed up a winner for Saka. Asked questions by Gakpo later on. **7**

John Stones Dealt well with Weghorst and sound in possession, eschewing temptation to take risks. **7**

Marc Guéhi Big block on Malen before the half-hour and denied Weghorst later. Solid and composed. **7**

Bukayo Saka Roamed everywhere from right-sided perch and tempo was crucial to early recovery. **7**

Kobbie Mainoo The best player on the pitch before half-time. Had a tougher second half but still shone. **8**

Declan Rice Caught by Simons for the goal and unconvincing in possession. Never stopped battling. **5**

Kieran Trippier Square peg in round hole where Netherlands were exploitable. Half-time exit made sense. **5**

Phil Foden Found pockets, hit post and denied on the line in an excellent first half. Space at a premium in second. **7**

Jude Bellingham Less effective than England's other attackers and booked. Not his turn to find the magic moment. **5**

Harry Kane More like his old self as England battled back, winning penalty and tucking it away. Faded after interval. **7**

Ollie Watkins Introduced for Kane in the 81st minute, to add the killer touch - and sent England on to Berlin. **9**

Substitutes: Luke Shaw (for Trippier ht) **6**. **Cole Palmer** (for Foden 80) **7**. **Conor Gallagher** (for Mainoo, 90) **6**. **Ezri Konsa** (for Saka 90) **6**.

Nick Ames

Villan becomes England's latest hero

The Aston Villa striker has hardly featured so far this tournament, but scored a dramatic late winner

BRADLEY COLLYER/PA



Watkins magic and squad's spirit take England to first overseas final

Netherlands	**1**
Simons 7	
England	**2**
Kane 18pen, Watkins 90	

	Netherlands	England
Possession	44%	56%
Shots on target	2	3
Total attempts	7	9

Jacob Steinberg
BVB Stadion Dortmund



The more rabbits England pull out of the hat, the more it feels as if this is their time. They survived more jeopardy during this absorbing semi-final triumph against a decent but hardly awe-inspiring Netherlands, and there were moments when the game seemed to be slipping away from them. With Ronald Koeman adjusting his tactics midway through the first half and the Dutch pushing as extra time beckoned, the fear was that this was going to be another night of questions about Gareth Southgate's touchline decisions.

But there is something magical about a team that can keep taking blows but clamber off the canvas. For here, after the wonder of Jude Bellingham's overhead kick against Slovakia and the nerveless penalty shootout against Switzerland, was a moment that will stand the test of time – and, thanks to Ollie Watkins and Cole Palmer, will forever serve as the perfect riposte to those who have pinned the blame for every disappointment on Southgate's in-game management.

England's manager has been derided, mocked and even showered with empty cups of beer. His tactics have been questioned and he has been told he always get easy draws. But when Southgate turned to his bench with 10 minutes left here, how satisfying it must have been for the two players he introduced for a tiring Harry Kane and Phil Foden to be the architects of the goal that carried England's men into their first final overseas. There could be no better exhibition of the spirit instilled by Southgate than when Watkins took a pass from Palmer in the 90th minute, held off Stefan de Vrij and turned sharply before making it 2-1 with an angled shot into the far corner.



▲ *Denzel Dumfries catches Harry Kane to concede a penalty*

In a different environment, Watkins would never have been in the right frame of mind to make such a stunning impact. The Aston Villa striker has not played since England's second game, the dispiriting draw with Denmark, and knows that few jobs in football are more thankless than being Kane's back-up.

Yet there have been various positive contributions from Southgate's substitutes during this European Championship. This team, while far from perfect, have developed priceless resilience. It can be glimpsed in the defending from Marc Guéhi, who made a huge block on Wout Weghorst in the second half, and the response after the Netherlands went ahead with a special goal from Xavi Simons.

Behind for a third successive game, England refused to panic. Driven on by the 19-year-old Kobbie Mainoo, they were level when Kane equalised from the spot after a foul by Denzel Demfries. And at times, with Bukayo Saka irrepressible on the right and Foden having his best game of the tournament, there were moments in the first half when it seemed Eng-



The final Spain v England

Sunday 8pm
Olympiastadion, Berlin
BBC One and ITV1

Euro finals pedigree
England have the most recent final experience, having lost to Italy on penalties in 2021, but that rollercoaster night at Wembley is their high-water mark. Spain share with Germany the record of having won the European Championship three times, lifting the trophy in 1964, 2008 and 2012 (📷), and were runners-up to France in 1984. Impressive.



Form guide
England have made it to the final with a win over Serbia, draws with Denmark and Slovenia, an extra-time win over Slovakia, a penalty shootout triumph against Switzerland and a late winner to see off the Netherlands. Spain have won all six matches, seeing off Croatia, Italy, Albania, Georgia, Germany (after extra time) and France, with nine different goalscorers along the way.

Previous meetings
An England side featuring Gareth Southgate triumphed in the Euro 96 quarter-final at Wembley on penalties after a 0-0 draw (they also drew 0-0 at the Bernabéu in a group match when Spain were World Cup hosts in 1982). At Euro 1980 in Naples England won 2-1, with goals from Trevor Brooking and Tony Woodcock. Alf Ramsey's side also won both meetings in the 1968 European Championship, Martin Peters and Norman Hunter securing a 2-1 win at the Bernabéu after Bobby Charlton's goal sealed a 1-0 victory at Wembley.

land would run away with it. That they failed to kill the game there and then will be a source of concern for Southgate. There cannot be a similar generosity against Spain in the final. But for now, England can revel in the way that they responded to a bright start from the Netherlands.

There were structural issues down England's left early on. They paid after seven minutes, when Guéhi's clearing header fell to Declan Rice, who was slow to move his feet and quickly dispossessed by Simons.

Simons advanced with one thought in his mind, any doubt banished by John Stones backing off. A few yards outside the area, the midfielder laced a right-footed effort into the far corner. Over on the left, Kieran Trippier called for calm and Rice regained his composure. England, again in a 3-4-2-1, took belief from Kane moving with greater freedom.

The captain had a point to prove about his fitness. Kane looked stronger, holding off defenders, and he led the fightback. England sensed a way back when their No 9, having pulled away from Virgil van Dijk, tested Bart Verbruggen from 25 yards.

Saka was next to drive forward, wriggling away from Nathan Aké, who was having a torrid time. Desperation taking over the Dutch defence, they panicked when the ball reached Kane, who shot over a split second before being caught by Dumfries. It was a clear foul, albeit one that needed a VAR review, and Kane stood over his first penalty in a tournament since his miss against France. Any nerves? No chance. Verbruggen guessed correctly, diving to his right, but Kane's shot was too hard.

England poured forward, Kyle Walker supporting Saka with a stream of overlapping runs. Foden was untouchable for a while. One curling shot hit the woodwork; another was cleared off the line by Dumfries.

There was a warning for England when Dumfries headed a corner against the bar. But the Dutch were hanging on. Mainoo was running midfield. Koeman responded, Memphis Depay replaced by Joey Veerman, who stiffened midfield. Koeman also changed the complexion of his attack at half-time, Donyell Malen making way for Weghorst.

Despite bringing Luke Shaw on for Trippier, England struggled to regain their flow. They were no longer working the ball to Saka and Jude Bellingham was blunted. Pickford denied Van Dijk after a poorly defended free-kick.

The Dutch had Tijani Reijnders, Jerdy Schouten and Veerman dictating the tempo. Southgate reacted after Saka had a goal disallowed for offside, Watkins and Palmer coming on. Palmer sliced over but England attacked again and Palmer cleverly found Watkins, whose unerring finish gave Verbruggen no chance.

England will not be favourites against Spain, but they should not be underestimated.

Netherlands	England
4-2-3-1	**3-4-2-1**
Verbruggen; Aké, Van Dijk🟡, De Vrij, Dumfries🟡 (Zirkzee 90); Reijnders, Schouten, Gakpo, Simons🟡 (Brobbey 90), Malen (Weghorst ht); Depay (Veerman 35)	Pickford; Walker, Stones, Guéhi; Saka🟡 (Konsa 90), Mainoo (Gallagher 90), Rice, Trippier🟡 (Shaw ht); Foden (Palmer 80), Bellingham🟡; Kane (Watkins 81)

Referee Felix Zwayer (Ger) **Attendance** 60,926

Golden goal
'I said to Cole he was going to set me up'

Nick Ames
BVB Stadion Dortmund

England's history-making hero Ollie Watkins described his disbelief after a "special moment" that he had not dared to imagine earlier in his career.

Watkins propelled England's men to their first major tournament final on foreign soil with a brilliant last-minute goal against the Netherlands, cracking in low from an angle to spark jubilation in Dortmund and beyond. The Aston Villa forward explained such scenes were a distant prospect when he was coming through as a youngster at Exeter, but revealed he and his fellow substitute Cole Palmer had predicted they would combine for the winner.

"I said to Cole that we were both going to go on the pitch and he was going to set me up at half time," Watkins said, pointing to the pass Palmer provided. "I manifested it and as soon as he turned I knew I needed to make a move. You don't get that opportunity often so I had to take it. I don't think I've hit a ball that sweet before."

The biggest emotion for Watkins came in recalling how, when battling for a first-team spot in League Two and spending time on loan with the National League South club Weston-super-Mare in 2014-15, breaking boundaries with England barely crossed his radar.

"I never thought I'd be playing in the Euros for England. Obviously you can dream but I'm a realist. I was just focusing on getting back into the first team at Exeter. I've worked hard to get to this point and I'm going to enjoy every moment. I can't lie to you and say I've dreamed about that. Obviously scoring for England is amazing but I didn't think I'd be doing it in a tournament like that."

Watkins scored 27 goals for Villa last season as they secured a place in the Champions League. But he has been second fiddle to Harry Kane at national-team level and had only made one substitute appearance in Germany, in the group stage against Denmark, before this intervention last night. This time he replaced Kane, who had scored a penalty earlier but laboured in the second half, with nine minutes left and was able to banish the disappointment of his bit-part role.

"To be honest, recently I got a bit frustrated. I don't like to be on the bench, I've had the best season of my career. I've had a few messages from friends saying: 'Be patient, you're going to get an opportunity.' They feel like I've got a big part to play in the tournament. The amount of people that have messaged me today saying I'm going to score tonight when I come on is ridiculous. Hopefully they can do the same for the final, or even give me the lottery numbers."

Gareth Southgate hailed Watkins's momentous impact and paid tribute to his attitude. "For Ollie to produce that moment when he did saved us another half hour and was very, very special for him, I am delighted for him," the manager said. "[He]has trained like that every day, he has been ready for his moment and the whole group have been."

England's coaching staff must now plot a way past Spain, who were able to enjoy a day of relative rest after beating France on Tuesday. Nonetheless Southgate allowed himself to bask briefly in their achievement.

"We have had some incredible nights in the last seven or eight years," he said. "The only reason I did the job was to try and bring success to England as a nation. To be able to take the team to a first final overseas, I am immensely proud. But we have come to the final to win; we play the best team in the tournament with a day less to prepare."

Southgate suggested it was too early to say whether Kieran Trippier, who had a groin problem and was replaced by Luke Shaw at half-time, would be fit for the final on Sunday in Berlin. He also said Kane had taken "quite a big knock" in the collision with Denzel Dumfries that, after a VAR review, earned England that controversial spot-kick and a chance to equalise Xavi Simons's opener.

The Netherlands were furious about the decision, ultimately made by the referee, Felix Zwayer, to award the penalty. "What do you do as a defender?" their manager, Ronald Koeman, asked regarding the incident, in which Dumfries had seemingly been attempting to block a Kane snap-shot. "This is not a penalty. Dumfries wanted to block the ball. Then the shoes collide. Such VAR decisions destroy football."

The captain, Virgil van Dijk, made little attempt to hide a similar view. "The referee ran back inside straight after the full-time whistle, that says a lot. I had no time to shake his hand. But it is what it is, the game is done."



Gareth Southgate warned that the final will be a tough test

Sport

Olé, Olé, Ollie!

Stunning late strike from super sub Watkins sends Three Lions into final with Spain

Reports and analysis *Pages 44-47 →*



LEON KUEGELER/REUTERS

Euro 2024

Netherlands	England
1	2
Simons 7	Kane 18pen Watkins 90

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Journal

Opinion and ideas



After the landslide, no one stands on solid ground

Aditya Chakrabortty



Don't forget the word landslide has another meaning, freighted with danger. Soil comes loose and the ground fails. Solid land turns semi-liquid under your feet. Without warning, rocks come crashing down. A vast river of mud covers roads, levels homes. What was once safe territory turns lethal. No one at Westminster this week wants refreshers in geology, and who can blame them? Yet this general election shows us that the landscape for both government and official opposition is growing ever more treacherous.

It's not just the fact that Keir Starmer has scooped a Tony Blair-style majority on Jeremy Corbyn-style polling. It's also that this country's two big parties took their lowest share of votes and seats alike in more than a century. There hasn't been such weakness at the heart of the party system since Lloyd George's Liberals were on their deathbed.

Long before the side slides off a mountain, the conditions build up until, finally, just a little rainfall can trigger calamity. Many of the biggest names around the new cabinet are dreading a downpour in their own back yard. Consider those representing Labour's real heartlands: the big cities, with their electoral coalition of renters, ethnic minorities and established leftwingers – a coalition that is coming apart.

Look at David Lammy in Tottenham, who lost more than 12,000 votes on Thursday. Or Starmer himself, who talked about deporting Bangladeshis, perhaps forgetting that one in 10 of his own constituents are of Bangladeshi origin; he dropped 17,000 votes. And if you think being the toast of SW1 protects you from rough music at the neighbourhood ballot box, consider Wes Streeting, who came within 500 votes of losing his seat.

So what, you might ask. Flash some left ankle and win back those malcontents. Except on the other side of the same cabinet table are those under direct attack from Nigel Farage's troops. Think Angela Rayner, Yvette Cooper, Bridget Phillipson, Jonathan Reynolds, John Healey: all representing northern towns, all with Reform as their main opposition. Cast your eye across the valleys of south Wales, where Farage launched his manifesto. From Llanelli to Pontypridd, Reform ran Labour a strong second in 13 Welsh seats. The next devolved elections in Wales are less than two years away, and already Labour people worry they may end up a victory parade for the Faragists.

ILLUSTRATION: ELLIE FOREMAN-PECK

After the landslide, no one stands on solid ground

Aditya Chakrabortty

← Continued from front

A map of who won south Wales last Thursday is, like London, unbroken red. A map of who came second will show south Wales a big blob of Reform turquoise, while inner-east London turns Green. The electoral coalition on which Labour depends does not have one single breakaway bloc – it is splintering in opposite directions.

What's the story? I see two separate threads, which are starting to braid around each other. The first has been with us for years and has had dramatic impact, such as with the Brexit vote of 2016 or the collapse of the "red wall" in 2019. At those points, the whole of SW1 wonders why the plebs aren't doing as they're told.

Reporting around the country for this column since 2010, I've seen why, time and again. You go to a town where the big employer or major industry died decades ago. Now the coalmine is a call centre or the factories are warehouses. And the local institutions have withered away, from the unions to the newspaper to the Labour offices. And this extends way beyond politics: the latest census shows the least Christian part of England and Wales is not some urban fleshpot but a big tranche of south Wales.

This is the world described by the late Peter Mair in his classic Ruling the Void – a book about how western political parties have lost interest in the public, while the public has lost interest in political parties. Until the era of John Major, only one in five voters flipped between blue, yellow and red. Last week that doubled to two in five voters, according to Focaldata; the polling company calls it "a state of permanent revolution".

As Keir Starmer became Labour leader in 2020, there were many agonised think-pieces about how he had to find a way to speak to both Hartlepool and Hackney. In the end, he did no such thing. He chose to face Hartlepool and blank Hackney. Labour traded votes from the big cities for those from small towns. With its share of the vote in England up only half a percentage point on 2019, the party's whopping electoral success this time round came from such efficient targeting.

Since cities are where Britain's ethnic minorities live (more than 40% of Londoners are from ethnic minorities – not that you see many of us in our supposedly "London-centric" media and politics), this trade comes with racial consequences. It means Natalie Elphicke rather than Diane Abbott or Faiza Shaheen. It means waving union flags while calling those protesting against war crimes in Gaza "fleas".

And it ultimately means a huge political problem, because Starmer's team is speedily converting safe Labour territory – Muslims and other ethnic minorities – into marginal voters. None of my reporting leads me to believe that process will automatically reverse if there's a pause to the massacres; the anger over Westminster's disregard for brown lives in the Middle East is much more about Westminster's disregard for brown lives in Britain.

After conducting focus groups with Muslims, Luke Tryl, director of More in Common UK, observes: "We would hear real frustration over Labour on Gaza, but very quickly it would come back to a broader point that Labour took Muslim votes for granted [and] their communities had been neglected. Very similar to what you'd hear in the red wall, post-referendum."

When the white working class started peeling off from New Labour, Peter Mandelson declared they had nowhere else to go. Except now they do. They can choose Reform, while brown working-class voters can plump for independents or Greens – or both sides can just stay at home.

New Labour's strategy of triangulation works brilliantly when there are only two parties to pick from. But it offers diminishing returns as our political system moves towards accommodating four or more parties. Starmer's team could plough on, of course, with an economic growth strategy that consists of hoping for economic growth. It could ignore that big crack there in its coalition, this worrying bulge over there. But then, when they least expect it, the rocks might start falling and, soon, the ground could give way.

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Defence budget

Sir Keir Starmer should not be bounced into spending targets that don't add up

When it comes to the defence budget, enormous pressure is being put on Sir Keir Starmer to do something he already intends to do. As a Nato member, Britain has signed up to a target of military spending at 2.5% of gross domestic product. The prime minister has made a "cast-iron" guarantee to honour that pledge, and restated it ahead of a Nato summit in Washington this week.

This was also the policy of the last Conservative government. There was no timetable for reaching the target until April this year, when Rishi Sunak declared that it would happen by 2030. Within a month, Mr Sunak had called an election. Those two things are related. The 2030 deadline was a partisan device to make the Tories look more hawkish than Labour.

Sir Keir chose not to mimic the 2030 line before the election and is resisting calls to revive it now, with good reason. The fiscal terms on which the last government claimed it would finance the rearmament schedule were a trap for Labour. Jeremy Hunt, then chancellor, conjured tens of billions of pounds out of thin air by projecting implausible cuts to other departments that no one expected a moribund government to enact.

Demanding that the new administration make an equivalent commitment within days of taking office, as the Tories, their press cheerleaders and a canny defence lobby are doing, is a pointless continuation of the election campaign.

Labour's stance under Sir Keir is hardly pacifist. The prime minister has recognised the imperative of stalwart support for Ukraine against Russian aggression. He and David Lammy, the foreign secretary, and John Healey, the defence secretary, have made a clear priority of defence and security cooperation as part of a post-Brexit rapprochement with the European Union.

That agenda is made more urgent by the prospect of Donald Trump, a capricious and unreliable partner for Nato's European members, winning a second term as US president in November. Labour's high command observes diplomatic protocol by not naming Mr Trump as a threat to European security and a reason to step up spending, but they are attentive to the danger.

When senior military figures conjure apocalyptic scenarios to urge more haste in hiking budgets, they are doing what all providers of essential publicly funded services do – lobbying government with the strongest case they can muster. The prime minister should not ignore their arguments, but nor should he be intimidated by them.

The new government is not naive about the dangerously volatile global security environment and what that means in terms of spending priorities. There is no ideological obstacle to Britain reaching the 2.5% goal for military spending, but it still has to be done within the realms of Labour's self-imposed fiscal rules. The defence budget will have to rise from £64bn (about 2.3% of GDP) to about £69bn in today's money.

Economic growth is the engine of all future revenue in Labour's plans. When ministers say future spending parameters depend on the state of the economy, they are stating a banal fact. When they say the scope of a higher military budget should be developed alongside a strategic defence review, that too looks like rational policymaking. Sir Keir does not need to depart from such a method. The Tories' habit of putting political posture ahead of facts and rationality is one of the main reasons they are now in opposition.

Local government

Labour must follow the money to make good the failures of 'levelling up'

Over the years, England's town halls have become used to being treated with a mixture of hostility, condescension and neglect. During the late 1980s, writing at the height of Margaret Thatcher's ideological assault on leftwing councils, the political scientist Andrew Gamble warned that her centralising tendencies could pave the way to "the eventual abolition of local government". In the 2010s, Conservative administrations blithely swung the wrecking ball once more, as punitive austerity hollowed out council budgets to an unsustainable degree.

Sir Keir Starmer's decision to sit down with England's metro mayors in Downing Street this week – the first meeting of its kind – was therefore both welcome and significant. Tuesday's get-together largely amounted to warm words and selfies outside No 10. But Sir Keir's announcement of a new council of regions and nations formalises a more equal and respectful relationship. It is a genuine statement of collaborative intent. The sense of a step-change was also conveyed by Angela Rayner's decision to remove Boris Johnson's "levelling up" slogan from the housing, communities and local government department that she now leads. Rarely has a political slogan generated so many ministerial speeches and column inches, to such little concrete effect.

But beyond the optics and the sense of a fresh start, immense challenges loom as well as opportunities. Sir Keir is right to see greater devolution of powers to local authorities as a means of boosting economic growth – his administration's overriding priority. Regional and local leaders are far better placed to identify their areas' requirements, and harness their potential, than ministers and civil servants sitting in Whitehall.

Similarly, plans to extend "trailblazer" powers over areas such as transport, housing and skills will liberate regions to innovate and reform. Moving from ringfenced annual funding rounds to single budget settlements will allow proper planning and joined-up thinking. In all this, Labour is on the right track and making the right noises. With a fair wind, the party's 11 metro mayors could become invaluable champions and collaborators in a new era of devolution, as the government seeks to restore public services so grievously undermined over the last 14 years.

Sooner or later, however, if a renaissance of municipal England is truly to take place, Sir Keir and Ms Rayner will need to face up to inconvenient truths. Financially, local government is on its knees. If inflation and other pressures are taken into account, the austerity years have reduced council spending power by half. Local revenue-raising powers are circumscribed and limited. Drastic cuts in funding from central government have hit poorer parts of the country hardest. As they struggle to fulfil statutory responsibilities in relation to social care, councils have closed leisure centres and libraries, neglected parks and shuttered advice centres.

During the election campaign, Sir Keir channelled Theresa May, insisting there was "no magic money tree" to deal with this crisis. But a new financial settlement for local government is desperately needed. Without one, there risks being a Potemkin quality to Labour's devolution programme, and the impact of laudable reforms will be undermined by a crisis of resources.

Rehabilitating intermediate tiers of government, and deepening local democracy, is a civic necessity in an age of profound disillusionment with politics. Labour's good intentions in this regard are clear. But it must find a way to will the means as well as the ends.

In Gaza, my home, a hidden threat lurks in the rubble

Haniya Albaioumy



Amid the many horrors unfolding in my Gaza home, there is one that, for now, is hidden but threatens to blight hopes for recovery long after the bombs have stopped falling. Gaza is one of the most densely populated places on Earth. And, tragically, it could now be one of the most densely contaminated in terms of unexploded munitions. This is a deadly legacy that will claim lives and hamper attempts at reconstruction for years to come.

I know this because in my role as an emergency response manager for Mines Advisory Group (MAG), I will be one of those tasked with assisting colleagues as they clear the unexploded bombs left behind. Our daily work requires sifting through the rubble and detritus of war in heavy body armour, trying to map a way forward from the destruction and devastation.

I am from Gaza City, so I have a special personal interest in returning my home to some kind of normality: a place where children can play at the seaside and their parents can go about their normal lives without fear of an unexploded bomb going off nearby.

Hundreds of thousands of missiles, grenades, shells and other weapons have been expended in Gaza since 7 October. A significant proportion of those weapons will have failed to explode and could be buried in the ground, lodged in the rubble or lying on the surface. Landmine and explosive ordnance experts like us have to go into war zones after the dust has settled and find each and every one of these potentially lethal items, making them safe. In Gaza, the painstaking and dangerous reconstruction operation could, according to the UN Development Programme, cost $40bn (£32bn) and take more than a decade to complete.

The precise scale of the challenge will only be known when safe access allows proper survey. The vastness of the task is made worse by the sheer variety of weapons deployed. There is an estimated 37m tonnes of rubble through which experts will have to sift to detonate explosives; and then there are the airdropped bombs that could be buried as deeply as 14 metres under the surface. Each will require different approaches, with some being detonated in place and others requiring the removal of complex and sensitive fuses by highly trained explosive ordnance experts.

Such clearance is expensive and time-consuming. And it has intrinsic hazards. In Gaza, we know there will be asbestos and chemical hazards. Tragically, the explosive ordnance experts will probably have to also face the distressing task of handling human remains.

As a new government in the UK has started to think about what will be required on "day one" after the war, states must reckon with how they begin to deal with the aftermath of this conflict. Because the sooner we are able to survey, prioritise and commence the dangerous and difficult job of clearance, the sooner we can enable safe passage for humanitarian relief and the reconstruction of essential infrastructure.

For me, this is personal: I left Gaza just three months ago but my family remain there, sheltering from the missiles in makeshift accommodation along with hundreds of thousands of others in Khan Younis. I worry about what the future holds for my family, for my nephews and nieces. When will they have a home again? When will they have a school to attend? I think constantly about my loved ones' safety and our impatient hopes for peace.

As a professional who has worked in humanitarian mine action for the last decade, I also think of the concrete actions we need to take *now* to ensure the swiftest possible recovery for the Palestinian people in Gaza. Those steps are simple to define: a ceasefire that ends the killing and enables safe access, and for the international community to commit to and release funding as soon as possible.

The sooner Gaza can be made safe, the sooner we can rebuild our community – and the sooner we can begin to pick up the pieces of our shattered lives.



The remains of the al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City in April 2024 PHOTOGRAPH: MAHMOUD ISSA/ANADOLU/GETTY

✻ **Haniya Albaioumy** *is a Gaza emergency response manager for the Mines Advisory Group*

Geoffrey Robertson *is former president of the UN's war crimes court in Sierra Leone. His latest book is The Trial of Vladimir Putin*

Labour must not block the prosecution of Netanyahu

Geoffrey Robertson



Should Benjamin Netanyahu be prosecuted by the international criminal court (ICC)? The Sunak government tried to stop it happening, but now the Starmer administration must decide where it stands. Back in May, the prosecutor of the ICC applied for an arrest warrant against Netanyahu for war crimes involving the indiscriminate bombing of civilians and the starvation of citizens in Gaza. It is down to the court to decide whether the evidence is sufficient to put him on trial. But the ICC has now given Starmer's government the opportunity to choose whether or not it wishes to continue the previous government's intervention. If it does, this will be its first big moral mistake.

Palestine was accepted as a member state of the ICC in 2015, and in 2021 the court ruled that it had jurisdiction to investigate and punish Israeli war crimes in Palestine. But now Britain is attempting to derail the prosecution by claiming that the Oslo accords from 1995 prevent Israelis being prosecuted for crimes in Gaza.

Why Britain has decided to raise this now is a mystery: David Cameron gave no explanation, and there are suggestions that it has been filed at the behest of the White House. The US is not a member of the ICC, and expects the UK to look after its interests.

The obvious reason why the Starmer government should drop this benighted initiative is that it is a legal nonsense. The Oslo accords are a dead letter. They were an early attempt at a two-state solution that ended a few years later with the failure of Bill Clinton at Camp David.

Israel's argument, adopted (so far) by the UK, is that Palestine is precluded from prosecuting Israelis and this means it cannot "delegate" such prosecutions to the ICC. This is wrong because the ICC prosecutor is in no sense a delegate of Palestine. Karim Khan KC is an independent prosecutor who has collected evidence that he will bring to the court to ask it to issue an arrest warrant. Meanwhile, the ICC operates on the level of international law and takes no account of domestic amnesties and immunities and limits on prosecutions. The fact that authorities in Gaza have not prosecuted Israelis does not prevent the ICC doing so. That is why the argument is wrong and an explanation is needed as to why the UK told the court last month that it intended to advance Sunak's plan.

Last week, the Foreign Office told the Guardian it had acted because it was "imperative" for the court to consider the Oslo accords. It is not – unless Netanyahu raises them in his defence or another member state intervenes to take this bad point. Why should the UK waste its time and money, and worsen its image in the human rights world, by advancing this pettifogging argument that there should be no international justice for crimes against humanity in Gaza if committed by Israelis?



New to the Big Apple – it's the big wheelie bin

Emma Brockes



Last year, 200 composting bins were rolled out in New York City, with a unit on every other corner you could open and close via an app. This was exciting for those of us who have hit an age when rubbish disposal is something we think about. For a while, my kids indulged me in my need to discuss composting – whether our bag would fit in the bin; how good the exercise made us feel; whether it actually did anything useful or not – before pointing out I was talking about it too much. This week, a new fleet of wheelie bins has been introduced across the city, and the excitement has been almost too much to bear.

The "trash revolution", as Eric Adams, the mayor of New York, put it while placing a black bag in a wheelie bin in front of reporters on Monday, sounds like a characteristic piece of hyperbole from the man, but for once he wasn't exaggerating. Like banking technology, rubbish disposal is one of those baffling areas in which the US in general, but New York in particular, is wildly behind Britain.

You have probably seen the visuals: pyramids of sagging black bin bags piled high on New York pavements, oozing bin juice and adding to the city's rat problem. In the kind of 32C (90F) heat we're having this week, it's these kerbside rubbish mountains that give the city its distinctive summer smell – gently rotting General Tso's chicken with a sharp undertone of mouldy citrus and a hint of, what is that? The sort of armpit-baked-bread smell that wafts out of branches of Subway and, rich and warm with decay, is more usually associated with peat bogs. I don't hate it altogether. Like a lot of New Yorkers who take performative pleasure in defending the city's most disgusting elements, I can disparage the bin smell while remaining vaguely sentimental about it. But of course this does not remain true of the rats.

And so a bin technology that has been in place in Britain for decades finally reaches New York, although, unlike in Britain, New Yorkers will be asked to pay for it. By 12 November this year, landlords and property owners of, in the first instance, apartment buildings with fewer than 10 units, will be required to buy wheelie bins from the city at roughly $50 a pop. Officials predict that this will reduce the amount of loose bin bags on New York's pavements by 70%. Violators will be fined $50 by the Department of Sanitation, a levy that increases for serial offenders and is enforced by its own discrete cop unit called the sanitation police. Eventually, all buildings in the city will have to meet this standard.

The wheelie bin rollout is part of a larger discussion about what to do with the refuse mountains created in high-density cities in an era of unprecedented waste. You can get fined for not separating the recycling in New York, but using composting bins for food waste isn't compulsory. The city generates 14m tonnes of trash a year, disposed of via 6,000 garbage trucks. As Eric Lach reported earlier this year in a fantastic piece in the New Yorker about garbage disposal, for a long time the city's waste was dumped in the Fresh Kills landfill site in Staten Island, until that borough threatened to secede from the city (or possibly from the US as a whole) if the garbage trucks didn't turn around. The site was closed by Rudy Giuliani in 2001. Now New York ships its trash outside the city.

Anyway, in a city facing intractable problems around affordable housing, the public education system and the state of the subway, the wheelie bins of Mayor Adams's trash revolution may end up being the most successful and feelgood part of his legacy. He certainly looked very cheerful on Monday, dumping rubbish for the photo op in a crisp white shirt and aviator glasses, while his signature theme tune, Empire State of Mind, blasted in the background.

Meanwhile, the real credit for any trash revolution should be directed to the boots on the ground. One of my daughter's favourite T-shirts features a photo of a large garbage truck under the acronym DSNY – the Department of Sanitation New York – and the legend "New York's Strongest". (Of course the DSNY has merchandise available for purchase in adult and child sizes; this is what makes America great.) We talk a lot about New York Tough in relation to the fire and other emergency services. But in this sweltering heat, it's the city's sanitation workers who deserve the most praise, their own TV show and the life-changing technology of a 35-gallon bin on wheels.



Chortle chortle, scribble scribble

Inside the Old Bailey with two of Britain's last remaining court reporters

Sophie Elmhirst

GUARDIAN DESIGN/PA

The question is: "Will it make?" A nice murder will make. A crime involving a celebrity will make. Make the papers, Guy Toyn meant. Toyn is the co-owner of the news agency Court News UK, which reports the stories emerging from London's criminal courts. In the mix this week was the man who had head-butted Roy Keane: that would *definitely* make. But the gang murders that routinely fill the Old Bailey, where Court News is based, rarely make. No, a nice murder would be a woman killing a man, ideally a middle-class white woman killing a man. Like the recent case of the primary school teacher who buried her partner in their back garden. That would always make.

Toyn – a towering man of 61 with a voice you can hear through walls – was deciding which courts to visit with a teenage intern who was shadowing him for the week. The 18 courts at the Old Bailey, properly known as the Central criminal court of England and Wales, are the setting for the major criminal trials of Greater London. On offer today, a Tuesday in June, was the usual frantic menu of disturbed human behaviour: in court 12, a case of cocaine-smuggling in a shipment of bananas; in court 11, a man appealing against the refusal of a shotgun licence after he had threatened to kill an employee; in courts 6, 7 and 8, a range of stabbings.

Toyn has worked at the Old Bailey with his business partner and fellow court reporter Scott Wilford for the best part of 35 years. The job hasn't changed hugely over that time. As an agency rather than a publication, the Court News model depends on selling stories to the national press. Wilford will offer up a report on the first day of a murder trial or a high-profile sentencing and the Daily Mail, say, will put in an order. (Court News makes about £130 for a non-exclusive court report and anything up to £700 for an exclusive story.)

In a nod to the low status of the journalist in the court's hierarchy, Toyn describes court-reporting as "grovelling" – as in: "Let's go for a grovel round the courts." Someone once told Toyn to stop calling it grovelling, as it diminished both his self-respect and the status of the job, but Toyn likes to say the word with a charged irony. As young men with "huge chips" on their shoulders, Toyn and Wilford bonded over a dislike of authority. They shared more than a grudge, though. "If me and Scott didn't think this job was important," Toyn said, "we would have given up years ago and made a lot more money."

To reach Toyn at his desk – marked by a sheet of paper taped to the wall saying "Guy's desk" – you must climb the Old Bailey's central staircase, walk beneath lush ceiling frescoes, past hand-carved coats of arms, along lobbies lined with Sicilian marble, until you find a heavy door behind which lies the designated space for the press: a suite of rooms in terminal decline, smelling lightly of toast. In corners lie objects that look as if they were unthinkingly put down decades ago and never moved again: a stack of museum-worthy beige laptops; a row of abandoned shoes; two stepladders, both bearing the inscription: "This belongs in press room so FUCK OFF." To one side, a blue pinboard displays cuttings from a remote tabloid heyday when a different kind of story made the papers: "Wife Burned to Death By a Pan Of Spuds"; "Christian Soccer Thug Preys on Ref"; "Blackmail Victim's 'Sweets Up Bum' Torture". Toyn considered the nature of that particular experience. "It depends on what kind of sweets they were," he mused. "If they were nice *bonbons* …"

Toyn was defensive about the state of the press room. Yes, the paint was peeling and the red carpet swirled with disconcerting yellow stains, but compared to some courts, the Old Bailey was luxe. Had I been to Southwark? "You'd slit your wrists." He said this cheerfully: decades at the Bailey meant the darkest horrors usually came wrapped in a joke. Here, within the comforting degradation, Toyn likes to be casual: red running shorts, matching T-shirt, muddy trainers. To go into court, however, he has to smarten up. As Toyn is constantly going in and out of court, the day involves multiple costume changes into black trousers, a mauve jersey and proper shoes that he keeps in a plastic bag on a shelf.

Opportunities to be theatrical are rarely missed. Wilford, the lugubrious bassist to Toyn's frontman, sits at the adjacent desk to Toyn, and Toyn often insists on addressing him as "Mr Wilford", as if they were in a period drama about an old Fleet Street paper, presses clanking beneath them. While Toyn strides around, Wilford rarely moves from his chair, simultaneously managing reporters, editing copy and processing invoices. Wilford talks in a quiet patter. Toyn, asked for his origin story, took a deep breath and boomed: "It was a dark night on a blasted heath. There was a crack of thunder. Ye horrors! Toyn was born." That voice was Gothic Novel. He has several in his repertoire: Idiot Judge, Pretentious Barrister, Moaning Gen Z, Misc Drunk. Then there are the performative laughs: "AHARHARHAHAR"; "OHOHOHO"; "HA! HA! HA!" His natural accent is Bristolian, which he deploys when he can use the rolling "Rs" to their most entrancing effect, turning certain words, like "pervert", into an entirely new sonic experience. Perrrrrverrrrrt.

So: the order of the day. Cocaine smuggled in bananas was intriguing, but the shotgun licence appeal was more sellable. The case was fundamentally insignificant – "Mr Snooty wants to go on a shoot with his ra-ra mates," as Toyn had it – but the man was the millionaire owner of a celebrity-favoured tailoring business and the Daily Mail had run a story on him before and might again. Plus, Toyn had snapped a photo of him when he was last in court wearing a bike helmet with his tongue sticking out comically to one side. Pictures helped: the story might well make.

To be a first-class court reporter, according to Toyn, requires a singular talent: shorthand. Jack Hudson, one of Court News's three junior reporters, has beautiful shorthand. He also possesses other essential skills: the ability to sift dense legal language for a good news line and to write the story fast, direct from the courtroom. Hudson is "one of the last great court reporters in the world", Toyn added. Hudson – a tall, quiet, ferociously hard-working man of 25 – smiled uncertainly. "You think I'm exaggerating but I'm not!" Toyn cried.

Toyn's shorthand was still pretty good as far as I could tell, looping and decorous on his notepad as he made notes in the shotgun case. When I admitted to Toyn that I'd never learned how to do it, he looked disapproving. Shorthand was essential. The old skills were the best skills. He is generally a man for whom things were better before. Murders were better. Judges were better: fiercer, more impressive. Barristers were better.

More than anything, though, things were better before the internet. In his professional lifetime, Toyn felt he had seen not just the collapse of court reporting but the entire news industry. When he and Wilford started out in the 1980s as junior reporters at the Central News agency, the Old Bailey press room was packed with journalists from four different specialist court-reporting agencies, who used to race to file their copy first. Back then, Central was at the bottom of an established hierarchy, selling stories to the local and regional press. Toyn and Wilford were expected to do the grunt work of the court-reporting, then share their notes, free, with the grander reporters from the other agencies who supplied the nationals and spent the afternoon in the pub.

When Toyn and Wilford bought out Central in 1999 and rebranded as Court News, years of resentment at this arrangement were channelled into a counterattack. They stopped sharing their notes and hustled out the other agencies. For a few years, as the only remaining specialist court agency, they made good money, employing at least five reporters and two photographers. But business dried up as local and regional papers began to fall away (more than 320 closed between 2009 and 2019, according to the Charitable Journalism Project). Now, in the press room it's mostly just Toyn and Wilford. Their three junior reporters rove around the other London courts, and they share the space with a reporter from the general news agency PA, a BBC producer and the occasional national journalist. For a few major trials, journalists will descend en masse. But day to day, it's a quiet place.

As we walked between the courts, Toyn ran into one of his favourite criminal barristers – an ebullient, passionate character, one of the old school – who was on a break from a gang murder trial. On seeing Toyn, the barrister ran back into court and re-emerged with a taped-up box, marked "Evidence", which contained a 2ft-long knife that looked so unreal in its design – blood-red, with baroque, curling, lethal edges – that it resembled a theatrical prop more than a murder weapon. The barrister was desperate to impress on us quite how bad the epidemic of knife crime was in London, and despaired at the media's lack of interest. "People don't want to talk about this," the barrister said gloomily. "It doesn't sell."

It was a tragedy, said Toyn, as we walked away. The press wanted stories that would appeal to their readers and advertisers, which did not include stories of stabbings too common to be considered newsworthy. As a matter of journalistic duty, Toyn and Wilford would cover the opening or verdict in a gang murder and post the story on their website and social media. But few readers would click. To Toyn, the tragedy was one of civic ignorance. The general population, he said, had no idea what went on in these courts, and therefore no idea what was actually going on in society.

Finally, it was cocaine bananas time. We happened to enter the courtroom as a police officer began to deliver a presentation on the subject of banana ripening, the science of which was apparently essential to the prosecution's case. Toyn's face lifted with joy. Bananas had to be harvested green. He laughed audibly, noting fast. They had to be stored at a temperature of 14.5C. Chortle chortle, scribble scribble. A slide compared bananas with peaches, apples and melons. Toyn shook his head with delight.

This is why the job never got old. Behind every door of every court was something you had never seen or heard before. Back in the press room, Hudson filed his report from the shotgun case. The judge had made his decision: the millionaire would not have his licence renewed. "He must have money to burn, that bloke," Toyn said, noting that the millionaire had hired his barrister privately. "I *must* have my shotgun licence!" Posh Git voice.

The next morning, Wednesday, a new murder case was opening – possibly. Hudson went to find out. Whether something is or isn't happening in the courts is impenetrable to the outsider, and sometimes to the insider, too. Every afternoon, the court list for the following day is posted online and on large noticeboards on the ground floor of the Old Bailey, but the list only contains the names of the defendants and the court numbers, with no details of the charges. Clerks must be chased down to fill in the gaps and last-minute alterations often occur: cases are delayed, there aren't enough judges, defendants don't show or are late.

Years ago, Toyn and Wilford used to write campaigning articles about the chaos in the courts, but they had to stop, not having the time or resources to write stories that didn't sell. Now, said Toyn, there was only one court reporter left in the UK with a conscience: Tristan Kirk at the Evening Standard. Kirk has been running a long campaign challenging the single justice procedure, which fast-tracks low-level criminal cases through magistrates courts with such speed and lack of transparency that the Magistrates' Association recently called for its reform.



Media outside the Old Bailey

GUARDIAN DESIGN/ ALAMY

"So much of legal proceedings are effectively concealed from reporters," Kirk told me. The digitisation of the court system, a process that has accelerated since a 2016 government reform programme, has had mixed results. Cases can now be streamed online by those directly involved and accredited press. But court documents, such as summaries of the barristers' arguments, are sometimes shared privately online between barristers and the judge without ever being heard in court. After the event, it's even harder to find out what happened. Transcripts of trials can only be obtained through expensive court-approved legal transcription services. In a recent House of Commons debate, the Liberal Democrat MP Sarah Olney told the story of a rape victim who had tried to access the transcript of her case and been quoted a figure of £7,500. (In the US, by contrast, the Public Access to Court Electronic Records system allows access to federal court documents at a maximum price of $3 per document.)

Even when they are present, the press can meet resistance. Toyn told me that in some of the smaller magistrates courts the staff were so unused to the presence of journalists that his reporters would sometimes have to explain that they were allowed to be there. He'd had experience of barristers at the Old Bailey refusing to tell him their names. "One of the things that I like about this job is that you have carte blanche to be extremely rude to snooty barristers," he said. "You don't have to take any shit from these people at all, with their Oxford fucking degrees." He paused, and attempted a conciliatory tone. "I don't mean walking in and saying: 'Hey, arsehole.'" It was more a case of reminding a criminal barrister that if they were publicly funded, they were open to scrutiny.

At the end of the morning session of the murder trial, Hudson filed his copy from the courtroom. In the press room, Wilford and Toyn read it simultaneously.

"Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear," said Toyn, with relish.

Every room contained a potential Netflix series, but Toyn had yet to find a way to reach the audience hungry for true crime

The defendant, aged 19, was accused of killing a drunk man in a park with a vodka bottle.

The chances of selling the story were slim. "Back in the day, this is the kind of thing that would have got an order from the Wembley Observer," Wilford said. "Who's going to use it? No one, now." Still, after a quick edit on their ancient, pre-Word software, which requires them to do a manual spellcheck, they would post it on the Court News website. Even if it wasn't picked up, it would at least enter their archive of court reports going back to the mid-1980s. Writing up the story was a matter of maintaining the public record: left unreported, the story would be forgotten, as if this man's death had never happened at all. (The defendant was found not guilty at the end of June.)

"Now what I'm going to do," Toyn declared, "is send it over to Mr Wilford who is going to send it to the national papers, who will not reply."

The intern, emboldened on his second day, suggested some ideas involving TikTok. Toyn was all ears. Over recent years, he has tried to drag Court News into the digital present, or as he put it, to "build a community", but it hasn't been easy. If Toyn puts up a story about rape or sexual assault, using any of those words, the story will be buried by Google. To ensure his stories remain visible, he has to word many crimes euphemistically. As a lover of language in its specificity and extremity, and as a journalist who believes in reporting what actually happens in society, Toyn finds this outrageous. "What are we going to say, rape doesn't exist?"

More broadly, Toyn was faced with a conundrum. Every room in the Old Bailey seemed to contain a potential Netflix true-crime docuseries, but he had yet to find a way of packaging the stories for a mass audience hungry for true crime. The ban on the press filming or recording cases in British courtrooms was a better system than the televised American trial, he felt, but it did limit the possibilities. (So far, the only concession was the broadcasting of judges' sentencing remarks, allowed since 2022.)

For now, Court News has a YouTube channel (623 subscribers), a decent following on X (72,000), a Substack newsletter and two podcasts. One, Fresh From the Old Bailey, is made with a freelance producer, Gavin Haynes, who winkles the best stories of the week out of the team. The podcast hadn't quite become the hit they had hoped for.

Still, Toyn wasn't about to give up. He knew there was money to be made and he had no time for high-minded distaste at the idea of criminal justice being turned into commercial entertainment. On the ground floor of the Old Bailey he showed me a row of glass cabinets containing fragments of the building's history. For centuries, public hangings of criminals had been held in front of crowds of thousands. "A good view of the scaffold," stated one of the display panels, "could be purchased in advance."

Early on Thursday, things were looking up, story-wise. A verdict was expected in the Roy Keane case, which all the papers would run. A woman nicknamed Al Capone, who'd once caused



Kingston magistrates court

GUARDIAN DESIGN/ALAMY

havoc in Worthing and claimed links to Russian royalty, was due in a magistrates court. The Old Bailey had a hearing in a case involving one of the notorious Kinahan cartel, an organised crime group about whom the Irish press ran stories almost daily. Hudson had been dispatched to Westminster magistrates court, so Toyn would be covering the cartel: a lovely opportunity for a voice (Irish Gangster).

In court, it was one of Toyn's favourite judges, a frank old-timer called Philip Katz who seemed to find the proceedings absurd. So did Toyn: at least two of the barristers and one of the defendants were called Tom, which fuelled a barrage of jokes. To Toyn's glee, Katz rapidly lost patience. The defendants were refusing to identify their phone numbers or handles on EncroChat, the encrypted smartphone service used by organised criminals until police infiltrated the network in 2020. By now, judges were well-versed in EncroChat cases and had no time for defendants' evasion – it would not help their case when it came to sentencing, Katz made clear.

Later, in the press room, Toyn regaled Wilford with the scene. "Shall we call him Judge Big Phil Katz? Phil the bruiser Katz?"

Toyn turned his attention to the intern, who needed a project, something to show for his week in the office.

"I don't care what you write," Toyn said. "If you want, you can write the word 'shite' and walk away."

For a moment, he became deadly serious. "You said you had an idea though. What about: 'The future of court reporting.'"

"What future," Wilford muttered.

Toyn and Wilford. You could make a TV series about them: Only Fools and Horses meets All the President's Men. Haynes compared them to Statler and Waldorf, the elderly pair of grumpy Muppets. Wilford is the realist, Toyn the optimist. Wilford wondered if Toyn, being older, could afford to be more positive, as he had fewer financial worries. Toyn was also in charge of "the more optimistic side of the business": the Substack, podcasts and social media – the future, in other words.

Neither seemed sure that the business would make it. "We're always close to the edge," Toyn said. In recent years, both men had been forced to reduce their salaries and borrow money to keep the business alive. (Numbers were elusive: Toyn was bracingly candid on all subjects apart from money.) Wilford declared that only a "drastic turnaround" would allow them to raise their pay again. But neither had any intention of quitting. Toyn had various ways of expressing his long-term commitment to the job. They'd have to carry him out of the Old Bailey in a casket; he loathed the thought of retirement, which to his mind meant sitting in a pub drinking frothy ale and talking about Nigel Farage; he was not going to grow carrots on an allotment. "I'm not going to do that! It's shit! I'm *not* going to fucking do that! I'm not going to watch YouTube videos on how to grow carrots!"

'One of the things that I like about this job is that you have carte blanche to be extremely rude to snooty barristers'

The hypothetical carrot endgame animated him for a while, until sincerity crept back in. This job mattered. It was important, he believed, that people knew what was happening in these courts, in all its variety and ugliness, because people should know what was happening on their streets, in their towns, in the darker recesses of society. The cocaine bananas and shotgun millionaires and street stabbings. The endlessly strange and awful things that people do, the lies we tell, the judgments and mercies we receive. These things should not go unseen or unheard.

Late morning on Thursday, Wilford had word of a sentencing in the case of a man who had sexually assaulted a woman on a train. Like the opening of a trial, a sentencing was always worth attending. Beginnings and endings made the best stories, and Toyn liked to see crimes met with punishment. ("Oh absolutely," he told me. "We want the bad people locked up.") Also, it would be a good experience for the intern's last day. Tomorrow, Friday, everyone would be out of the office apart from Toyn. "I'll be on my own in that room," he said, "shouting abuse at the computer."

In court, the defendant, a skinny man of 60, had not dressed up for the occasion. He walked into the dock in jeans and a waterproof coat, unsure whether to sit or stand. The judge, from her elevated position, guided him through the necessary movements like a teacher with a new child in class.

The judge asked the prosecuting barrister if he felt the facts of the case needed to be heard again before sentencing. The barrister did not. Toyn winced. No facts meant no story. Sure, he knew it was the sexual assault of a woman who was a member of the train's staff, but he didn't know her precise job, nor which train she was on, nor where the train was going. To write it up, he'd have to convince a barrister to share their documents or tell him the facts, which they weren't always willing to do.

The defence barrister made her case for leniency: her client had been sober since the offence, which had been committed, like most of his previous offences, when drunk. He was willing to continue rehabilitation. He was not a threat to society, she insisted, and time inside would not help. The judge then read out the victim's impact statement. After the assault she had experienced anxiety and sleep loss. Her job, which had always been a source of confidence, had become a place she felt insecure.

The judge announced her decision. Over two years, the defendant would perform community service and continue in a rehabilitation programme. She looked at him sharply: he must stay out of trouble. The man, admonished, left the court.

After delivering her sentence, the judge turned her attention to the back of the room where Toyn, the intern and I were sitting.

"Sorry," she said, unapologetically. "I don't know who you are."

Toyn got to his feet. "Members of the press, m'lady."

She looked a little quizzical. Had we been in court for the sentencing? Yes, confirmed Toyn. Fine, she replied, but she didn't think she had anything else of interest for us. She smiled firmly. Her meaning was clear: we should let her get on with the rest of her business, unobserved.

Outside in the hall, Toyn was annoyed. Why did the judge question his presence? And how was he going to write the story? He wasn't sure it was worth tracking down the prosecuting barrister, as he didn't have a picture of the defendant. Perhaps he should run out and take one as he left the building.

Was it fair, I wondered, that a man who was going to pay his dues to society in a two-year community sentence should for ever have his face on the internet associated with a crime? I muttered something about second chances. Toyn looked at me as if I were mad. His voice climbed up the register, eyes flaring with righteousness. That man had ruined that woman's life. She'd gone to work, done her job and been assaulted. What right did he have to protection of any kind?

Toyn didn't take the photo, but he found the barrister, got the details. The woman had been serving drinks and snacks from a trolley when the man had touched her on the bottom. It had happened on a train going from Glasgow to London. Back in the press room, he posted the story: "Groper on the Avanti Express." Four likes on X. Never mind: the story now existed in the public domain, recorded for posterity, if nothing else.

Afterwards, Toyn told Wilford about the judge. It was embarrassing, he said, having to stand up and say who he was. He'd been sitting in these courts for more than half his life. Watching Toyn explain himself to the judge with all the formality the court demands, the "M'ladys" and little bows, the acts of grovelling that he somehow performs with both deference and irony, I'd imagined a volley of "Fuck offs" passing through his mind. He could sit in that courtroom all day if he liked. He could listen to every single thing that went on and report whatever he was legally permitted to report. He was doing his job – a job he felt, with some justification, was an essential if unappreciated structural element of society, a load-bearing wall. A judge could not eject him from a courtroom for no reason. In fact, after her suggestion that his presence was no longer necessary, Toyn had sat down and waited a little while. He would leave the court exactly when he chose. ●

✻ **Sophie Elmhirst** *is a regular contributor to the long read*

Letters

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Country diary

Caistor St Edmund, Norfolk

Like a magnificent volcano threatening to erupt, plumes of steam rise from the mountain in the farmyard. Every day, about a tonne of horse muck and bedding from the 20 or so stabled horses is added to the muck heap – a small car's weight in manure.

The heap is shaped and piled by the digger into its mountainous form, to encourage effective rotting. It's a hub for birdlife, rich in beetles, worms and insects. House sparrows flit over its surface, looking for tasty grains from horse feed, or soft arthropods such as larvae for their nestlings. Jackdaws forage on the craggy ravines, lending an air of drama. Pied wagtails hop about at base camp.

I still remember proudly the day my primary school visited the farm in the 1980s. In a moment when the teacher's back was turned, I persuaded everyone how much fun it is to play in the muck heap. A feral bunch of us climbed to the top, ignoring the cries of despair from school staff, then jumped, free and glorious, from the summit into dark pools of effluent.

The temperature inside the heap can reach well over 50C as it decomposes. This level of heat kills eggs and larvae from parasites, showing the importance of this effective rotting. Twice a year the heap is spread on the fields, replacing artificial fertiliser.

Recently I visited a nearby large-scale arable farm and discovered the Japanese practice of *bokashi*. This involves adding live microbes to cattle manure collected from local farms. The bacteria stimulate fermentation and increase nutrient availability, aiding crop growth. *Bokashi* also reduces emissions such as ammonia and carbon dioxide. It was noticeable standing next to the inoculated manure that there was no obvious smell. This innovative approach, unusual in the UK, brings significant benefits to both environment and productivity.

You might think the hay barn, gradually filling with this year's sweet-scented bales of goodness, is the heart of the farm. Yet as I visit each day, pilgrim-like with my barrow of offerings for the great steaming god, I happen to think it is the muck heap.
Kate Blincoe

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What Labour should do now to clean up politics

Martin Kettle identifies that the real challenge for the new Labour government is to demand that MPs absorb the Nolan principles into their bloodstream (The new era's first challenge: bringing back trust in politics, 4 July).

I left the Commons standards committee in 2022, but in the preceding six years I had adjudicated on several prominent cases, including Boris Johnson (three times); Ian Paisley Jr, which led to the first triggering of the Recall of MPs Act 2015; Keith Vaz, which resulted in the longest suspension of an MP in recent times (six months); and Owen Paterson, for an "egregious" breach of lobbying rules, which also sparked an attempt by the government to sideline lay members and restructure the standards system.

I had felt for some time that the code of conduct for MPs needed to be much more explicit in demonstrating a values-driven approach that is rooted in the Nolan principles and high standards of behaviour. Indeed, the standards committee spent nearly two years undertaking a formal inquiry on this issue. The inquiry's conclusions had cross-party agreement within the committee, as well as endorsement from Lord Evans, the then chair of the committee on standards in public life, to propose an adherence to a set of Nolan principles recast to reflect the role of an MP that would perhaps help them to understand the ethos underlying each principle more easily. The committee proposed this approach in a report to the Commons. It was rejected by the Conservative government.

As Mr Kettle highlights, the Labour manifesto could hardly be clearer when it said that there needs to be a "reset in our public life" and "Labour will restore confidence in government". One way is for the Labour government, as a matter of urgency, to revisit the report and implement its recommendations.
Dr Arun Midha
Former lay member, committee on standards, House of Commons

● I would like to strongly endorse Polly Toynbee's plea that now is the time to take money out of politics (How Starmer can clean up politics – fast, 9 July). May I make a few suggestions. No business, bank or financial institution should be allowed to donate to political parties. Individuals should only be allowed to donate if they have been fully paid-up party members for at least the preceding 12 months, with the amount limited to, say, £10,000 per annum.

Auctioning access to ministers should be made illegal. All party accounts should be freely available to the general public, and all thinktanks and lobbying groups should disclose all their sources of support, however small.

I suggest that, at all elections with political parties on the ballot paper, each voter is given a money voucher that they can donate to any party on the ballot paper. Obviously, in a first-past-the-post system, this would not necessarily be the one they voted for.

This would have two huge beneficial effects. First, it would encourage voting, as there would be a real feeling of power and control over the democratic process. Second, it would make political parties focus more on groups that they largely ignore.

Both of these would have the benefit of reducing the money slopping around in politics and its inevitable corruption.
Dr Peter Estcourt
South Chailey, East Sussex

Time to scrap anti-democratic voter ID rules

The news that voter ID rules may have stopped 400,000 taking part in the general election (Report, 8 July) shows that fears that the Tories' electoral reforms would damage democracy were well founded. The Johnson administration introduced extreme photo ID requirements, stripped the Electoral Commission of its independence and designed electoral boundaries around a register missing millions of eligible citizens. Our system saw democratic backsliding.

The new government could begin to build a more inclusive democracy. It could repeal parts of the Elections Act, consolidate electoral law and introduce new innovations such as automatic voter registration. A new Representation of the People Act to strengthen elections for the 21st century is needed. The Electoral Integrity Project has a blueprint for reforms that were proposed by academics and civil society groups in the last parliament. There is now an opportunity to take them forward.
Prof Toby S James
University of East Anglia; co-director, Electoral Integrity Project

● My octogenarian grandmother was a Labour councillor in the 1990s. She now has dementia, but still follows politics keenly, and was looking forward to voting in person as she always has done. I phoned her on the morning of election day to remind her of the ID requirements, and she reassured me that she had her passport. Walking is very difficult for her, but she made it to the polling station. When she was asked for ID, she became confused and forgot that she had it. She discovered it in her handbag as soon as she got home.

Disfranchisement of older people, disabled people and those from ethnic minority backgrounds was always so obviously inevitable with this heavy-handed requirement. It saddens me that my principled, passionate grandma was one of a possible 400,000 people who were denied the right to vote last week. Labour should scrap the rule.
Name and address supplied

● One likely reason for the low voter turnout for the UK general election is likely to be that it was the first in which voter ID was required. Moreover, as the allowed forms of ID were skewed towards older voters, this further disfranchised younger voters – I know several who did not have the necessary documents. Perhaps voter ID should be dropped and voting made compulsory?
Michael Symonds
Sutton Bonington, Nottinghamshire

Tory leadership vote has got it backwards

Simon Jenkins (He's beaten and humiliated, but Rishi Sunak has one final job to do – for party and country, theguardian.com, 5 July) highlighted the importance of the coming Conservative leadership election. One thing is for sure: the system needs to be changed.

I spoke at a Young Conservative conference in 1975, during the Ted Heath/Margaret Thatcher contest. I proposed then that we should have a two-stage process, but, crucially, the other way round to the system we have now. At the moment, the parliamentary party produces a shortlist of two, and the membership, who have no idea how the contenders perform in the House of Commons, impose the leader on the MPs. Inevitably, the members choose on policy or populism, when the leader should be chosen on capability, work ethic and teamworking.

The solution is simple. After the MPs decide whom to nominate, let party members produce the shortlist and then the parliamentary party elects the new leader from it. That way, the members have a say and can offer guidance, but the final decision is made by those who have to live and work with the victor.
Stephen Reid
Basingstoke, Hampshire

Corrections and clarifications

● **The new Labour MP for Hertford and Stortford, Josh Dean, went to a comprehensive, not a grammar school (Fresh faces, 9 July, p16).**

● **A review of the Channel 4 show Investigating Witch Trials said Pendle, in Lancashire, was "the site of the first mass execution" of witches in England (The misogyny will make you want to smash furniture, 24 June, G2, p10). In fact, those found guilty were hanged at Gallows Hill in Lancaster.**

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That's not what I'd call a lazy journalist

Joel Snape claims to be lazy, and then goes on to list what he does in a week – including a full-time job, several gym sessions, writing a newsletter and practising the piano (The lazy person's guide to graft, 10 July). He doesn't need a productivity regime as much as he needs a dictionary, to find out what the word lazy really means.
Martyn Brake
Whitwell, Isle of Wight

● Frome's answer to Germany's reuse schemes (theguardian.com, 4 July) is to bring your own containers when you shop. Our local independent store sells a wide range of dried goods, oils, vinegar and more. Our own bottles and containers are weighed and then refilled. People drop off containers they don't need for people who have come without. It works a treat.
Ruth Windle
Frome, Somerset

● There is an interpretive corner at the Cheviot Centre in Wooler, the Northumberland town where Josephine Butler spent her final years (Letters, 5 July). The bronze bust and information panels in this former workhouse celebrate her courage and tenacity. Let's hope her belief in "truth before everything" resonates across the world.
Tom Johnston
Wooler, Northumberland

● It would be interesting to compare the number of votes cast with the amount of money spent on each party's campaign. Are the Greens the most efficient of the lot?
Peggy Thomas
Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire

● The early bird catches the worm / The early worm is dead. / The moral here for early worms, / It's better to stay in bed (Letters, 10 July).
Jim McLean
London



Jack Rowell

Visionary rugby coach at Bath who went on to have a turbulent time running the England national team

As rugby union's traditional wall of amateurism began to collapse in the late 1980s and early 90s, Jack Rowell's Bath club were already professional in all but name. Bath dominated English club rugby and it was inevitable that Rowell, who has died at the age of 87, would go on to coach England.

Rowell's time as national coach was a turbulent one and he was a divisive figure. Complex, acerbic and sensitive, he was successful on the national stage, leading England to a grand slam and 21 victories in 29 games. But he came into conflict with his high-profile captain, Will Carling, treated the media with ill-disguised contempt, and his time with England did not end happily in 1997.

Rowell, a successful businessman outside the world of rugby, presented himself as an anti-establishment figure. A bluff, imposing figure at 6ft 7in, he became something of a poacher-turned-gamekeeper when he took the national coaching job after the term of Geoff Cooke.

At Bath he would often tell some of his star players: "That may be good enough for England, young man, but not for Bath." That cutting, if tongue-in-cheek, approach to man-management worked in the club environment at Bath, where he was seen as a godfather figure. But it cut little ice with senior England players such as Carling and Rob Andrew.

What cannot be disputed, though, is Rowell's success with Bath, who became an unstoppable force. The club won 13 trophies between 1978 and 1994, and they did so playing a dazzling style of rugby never before witnessed in the English club game. Rowell was a visionary coach who admired the panache of Pierre Villepreux's Toulouse club, and he wanted Bath to win by playing entertaining, 15-man rugby. His strength was team-building and spotting the right players.

Rowell, centre, talking to his players during the Rugby Union World Cup semi-final between England and New Zealand in 1995, and, right, at the Recreation Ground, Bath, in 2001

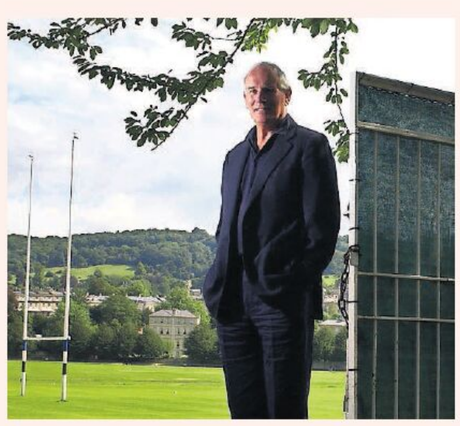
CHRIS SMITH/GETTY POPPERFOTO; TOM JENKINS/ THE GUARDIAN

Born in Hartlepool, he was the son of Monica (nee Day) and Edwin, a coal-shipping supervisor. He was educated at West Hartlepool grammar school and studied philosophy, politics and economics at St Edmund Hall, Oxford.

In his first weeks at university Rowell injured his neck in a rugby match and was told his playing career was over. However, stubborn as ever, after a period working as a chartered accountant he returned to playing in his late 20s when he appeared as a lock forward for Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and then Gosforth, who were at the time a force in English club rugby.

After four years with Gosforth he became their coach, leading them to John Player Cup wins in Twickenham finals in 1976 and 1977.

Moving to Bristol to take up a job as finance director of Lucas Food Ingredients, he approached Bath with the idea of becoming their coach, but the more traditional elements at the club were wary of his outspoken reputation and he was initially rebuffed.



"As chief executive of Golden Wonder Foods he saw the potential of a little known product called Pot Noodle

They soon changed their mind, and both Rowell's business and rugby careers took off. He became chief executive of Golden Wonder Foods, where he saw the potential of a little known product called Pot Noodle, and then a director of the food company Dalgety, of which Golden Wonder became a part.

After taking the reins at Bath, Rowell began to build his formidable winning machine. He saw the potential in the Bristol fly-half Stuart Barnes. Bristol were a much bigger club than their local rivals in those days but Rowell was happy to replace John Horton, who had helped England win a grand slam, with the young fly-half who was to go on to become an important lieutenant of the coach and play for England himself.

Rowell also harnessed the talents of players such as Jeremy Guscott, Simon Halliday, Jon Hall and Nigel Redman to eclipse Leicester as the major force in England.

It was no surprise when England came calling, and an early grand slam and a triumph over South Africa in Pretoria as well as an epic World Cup quarter-final win over Australia in 1995 gave notice that Rowell's England were a major power. But Jonah Lomu trampled over England's World Cup hopes in their semi-final and things began to unravel for Rowell.

His strained relationship with Carling took a new turn in 1996 when he made the Bath centre Phil de Glanville his new captain. This was an eccentric move by the coach. De Glanville had been tearing up trees at his club for a while but now Rowell had to drop either Guscott or Carling, breaking up what was then arguably the most effective centre partnership in world rugby. Guscott lost his place for a while, a baffling outcome for England supporters.

Under Cooke, England often played forward-dominated rugby and Rowell did at least try to expand their horizons - under him they dominated what was then an average Five Nations Championship. He was, however, effectively a part-time coach, having combined that job with his role at the Dalgety group. He rejected an offer to extend his contract in 1997 to focus on his business career.

Later he became a non-executive director at Bristol and the club's managing director before returning to Bath as director of rugby in 2002. He was made OBE in 1998.

Rowell's wife, Sue (nee Cooper), a teacher whom he married in 1969, died last year. The couple had two sons, Dominic and Christian, who both survive him.

Ian Malin

Jack Rowell, rugby coach and businessman, born 1 November 1936; died 1 July 2024

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Greg Philo

Key figure in the Glasgow University Media Group devoted to exposing bias in TV news reporting

In 1976, Greg Philo, who has died aged 76, and his colleagues in the Glasgow University Media Group (GUMG) published Bad News, a research study challenging British broadcasting's claims to impartiality. It argued that television news was not a "neutral product" but instead carried "many of the culturally dominant assumptions of our society".

The GUMG showed that while some commentators on industrial relations blamed Britain's economic problems on poor management and low levels of investment, in television news such explanations were sidelined in favour of accounts from the right blaming unions and industrial action.

Other members of the group included Peter Beharrell, Howard Davis, John Eldridge, John Hewitt, Jean Oddie, Paul Walton and Brian Winston. Few academic studies before or since have had such an impact. As the cultural theorist Stuart Hall remarked: "Whether they liked it or not, everyone read Bad News."

Broadcasters and the wider establishment did not like it at all, condemning the GUMG as Marxist. The group submitted preliminary findings based on news bulletins captured on video from the first five months of 1975 to the inquiry into the future of broadcasting. Its chairman, Lord (Noel) Annan, described the group as "a shadowy guerrilla force on the fringe of broadcasting". However, in private the BBC's editorial controller, John Wilson, said that "it was necessary to be honest and admit that there was something in what the GUMG was saying". Furthermore, there was concern that the arguments were gaining traction among BBC trainees and the wider public.

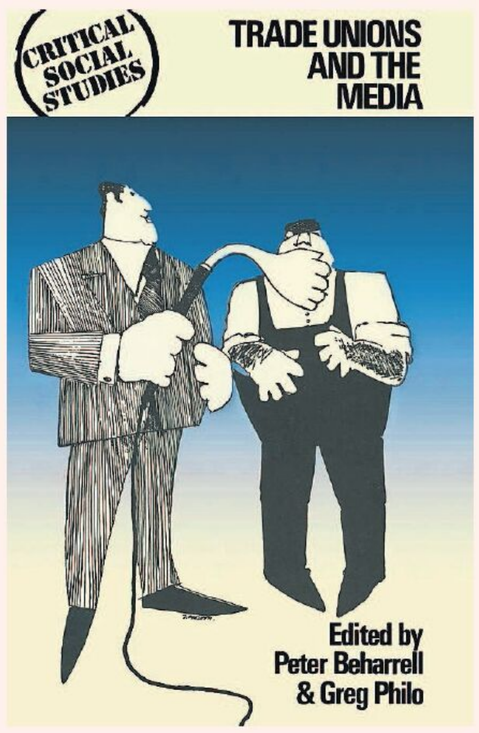
More widely the initial publication and its successors – More Bad News (1980) and Really Bad News (1982) – were well received and had a profound influence on a generation of media researchers and political communicators.

A Sunday Times interview with Greg two decades after the publication of Bad News remarked that "the emergence of spin doctors and media advisers in all political parties can be linked to the work done in Glasgow" and the group had "skills to rival any market research organisation, combined with a name independent researchers would die for".

Born in Bexleyheath, Kent (now in the London borough of Bexley), Greg was the youngest child of Irene (nee Campbell), a telephone operator, and Thomas Philo, a shipyard manager. At St Mary's Roman Catholic grammar school for boys, Sidcup, he demonstrated a flair for history and a strong and long-lasting dislike of Latin.

Greg then went to Bradford University to study sociology.





Philo, below left, and Trade Unions and the Media, which he co-edited with Peter Beharrell in the late 1970s. Philo's work was widely used in campaigning by pressure groups and charities
DREW FARRELL

There he perfected the fine art of brewing bathtub beer and co-founded the General Will, an alternative theatre group. He directed some of the group's early plays, written by the young David Edgar, graduated in 1970, and two years later went to Glasgow to study under Eldridge, an industrial sociologist.

In 1980 he became the GUMG's research director, and 10 years later was appointed professor of communications and social change.

Under Greg's four-decade leadership, the GUMG conducted grant-funded research on the reporting of subjects including developing countries, international conflicts, disarmament, mental health, political marketing, child protection, climate change, refugees and disability. Much of this research was cited in parliamentary debates, policy documents and inquiries. It was also widely used in campaigning by pressure groups and charities.

With this variety of subject matter went innovation in research methods. Greg's book Seeing and Believing (1990) took the 1984 miners' strike as a case study, pioneering the use of focus groups and exercises such as the "news game", where people wrote their own news bulletins using photographs that he had supplied. These allowed him to properly unpack how factors such as social experience, prior knowledge and the use of logic affected whether people believed or rejected media accounts.

In Bad News from Israel (2004) he brought together journalists including George Alagiah of the BBC and Lindsey Hilsum of Channel 4 News with members of the public to explore how news impacted knowledge and understanding of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

As this research demonstrated, broadcast news featured little context or explanation of the Palestinian perspective, leaving audiences confused about basic aspects of the situation and how it could be resolved.

Austerity and climate change provided the background to much of Greg's later work. He campaigned for the introduction of a wealth tax as an alternative to cuts in public spending, and researched how vulnerable groups such as refugees and disabled people were stigmatised by reporting that legitimised the "hostile environment" and attacks on disability rights.

In 2015 he co-produced, with Catherine Happer, his successor as director of the GUMG from 2021, and Chatham House, a 12-country study that demonstrated that with the correct messaging populations could be persuaded to consume less meat to combat climate change. It led to a campaign in 2019 to introduce a "meat tax", a cause advocated by the then Green party MP Caroline Lucas.

> **The arrival of spin doctors and media advisers in all political parties can be linked to the work done in Glasgow**

That year too came Bad News for Labour, which analysed the many claims of antisemitism in Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party. Greg's research showed that the scale of the problem had been exaggerated by the media and politicians, and because the leadership had failed to rebut the false claims the public greatly overestimated, in Greg's view, the incidence of antisemitism in the party.

Although he officially retired in 2021, he remained active, two years later publishing research showing how public service broadcasting had endorsed the UK government's slow reaction to the pandemic and its disastrous policy of herd immunity while marginalising scientific sources who argued for a faster and more robust approach.

At the time of his death Greg was working on a new book on the Israel-Gaza war and a grant proposal exploring how the conflict was impacting public opinion in the west, Middle East and global south.

In 1984 he married May Menzies. They had two children, Sarah-May and John-Mark, and divorced in 2010. In 2021 he married Yajun Deng, and they had two sons, Tommy-Lee and Ritchie-Ray. She survives him, along with his four children and two grandchildren.

Mike Berry

Greg (Gregory) Philo, sociologist, born 30 June 1947; died 23 May 2024

Birthdays

Giorgio Armani, fashion designer, 90; **Rachael Blackmore**, National Hunt jockey, 35; **Prof Sir Drummond Bone**, Byron scholar and former master, Balliol College, Oxford, 77; **Craig Charles**, comedian, actor and broadcaster, 60; **The Right Rev Lord (Richard) Chartres**, former bishop of London, 77; **Tony Cottee**, footballer and commentator, 59; **Jim Higgs**, cricketer, 74; **Laurence Keen**, archaeologist, historian and author, 81; **John Kettley**, weather forecaster, 72; **Lil' Kim**, rapper. 50; **Julia King, Lady Brown of Cambridge**, physicist and former vice-chancellor, Aston University, 70; **Johann Lamont**, former MSP and former leader, Scottish Labour party, 67; **Norman Lebrecht**, arts writer and broadcaster, 76; **Mark Lester**, actor, 66; **Lord (Michael) Levy**, life president of Jewish Care and former Labour fundraiser, 80; **Henry Lowther**, jazz trumpeter, 83; **Pauline McLynn**, actor, 62; **Peter Murphy**, singer, 67; **Peter Oborne**, political commentator, 67; **Caroline Quentin**, actor and broadcaster, 64; **Dean Richards**, rugby player, 61; **Suzanne Vega**, singer and songwriter, 65; **Caroline Wozniacki**, tennis player, 34.

Yesterday's solutions

Killer sudoku
Easy

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

Medium

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

Codeword

■	P	■	S	■	J	■	P	R	I	Z	E	S	■	■
V	I	R	T	U	O	S	I	■	M	■	X	■	■	■
■	M	■	A	■	Y	■	L	■	P	U	P	S	■	■
■	P	I	T	I	F	U	L	■	L	■	E	■	■	■
■	L	■	E	■	U	■	A	N	Y	O	N	E	■	■
W	E	A	S	E	L	■	G	■	■	■	S	■	■	■
■	■	■	M	■	■	■	E	■	H	E	E	L	■	■
■	V	■	A	Q	U	A	R	I	A	■	S	■	■	■
S	I	G	N	■	N	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	■	■
■	B	■	■	■	A	■	B	E	D	L	A	M	■	■
H	U	B	B	U	B	■	E	■	I	■	L	■	■	■
■	R	■	R	■	A	C	R	O	N	Y	M	■	■	■
A	N	T	I	■	T	■	E	■	E	■	O	■	■	■
■	U	■	C	■	E	F	F	U	S	I	N	G	■	■
S	M	O	K	E	D	■	T	■	S	■	D	■	■	■

Cryptic crossword
Solution No. 29,431

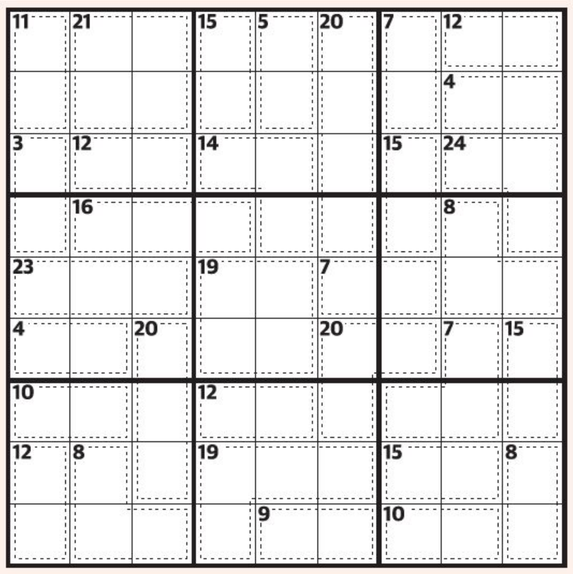
A	■	A	■	P	■	M	■	R	■	H	■	S	■	U
B	O	M	B	A	S	I	N	E	■	A	S	H	E	N
S	■	E	■	S	■	S	■	V	■	I	■	A	■	D
T	U	R	N	T	H	E	■	A	I	R	B	L	U	E
R	■	I	■	Y	■	R	■	M	■	D	■	L	■	R
A	R	C	H	■	P	E	P	P	E	R	M	I	L	L
C	■	A	■	A	■	R	■	■	■	I	■	■	■	O
T	E	N	A	B	L	E	■	A	L	E	M	B	I	C
P	■	■	■	A	■	■	■	T	■	R	■	E	■	K
A	T	G	U	N	P	O	I	N	T	■	E	M	M	A
I	■	O	■	D	■	R	■	O	■	R	■	O	■	N
N	O	T	T	O	B	E	■	T	R	U	S	T	E	D
T	■	H	■	N	■	L	■	I	■	G	■	H	■	K
E	L	I	T	E	■	S	E	M	I	B	R	E	V	E
R	■	C	■	D	■	E	■	E	■	Y	■	R	■	Y

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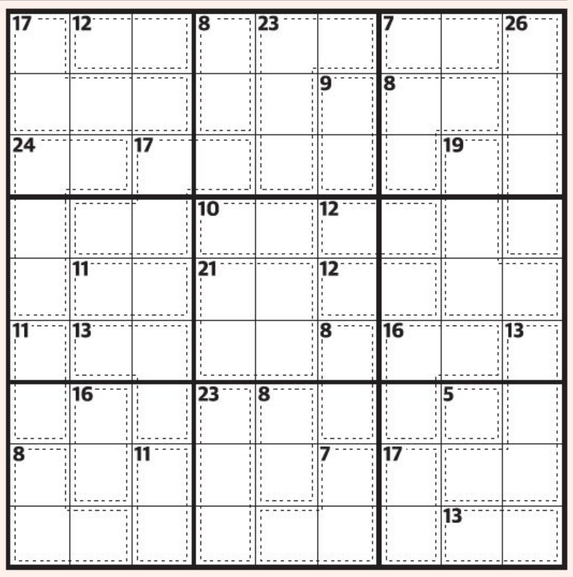
Killer sudoku

Easy

The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.



Medium



Codeword

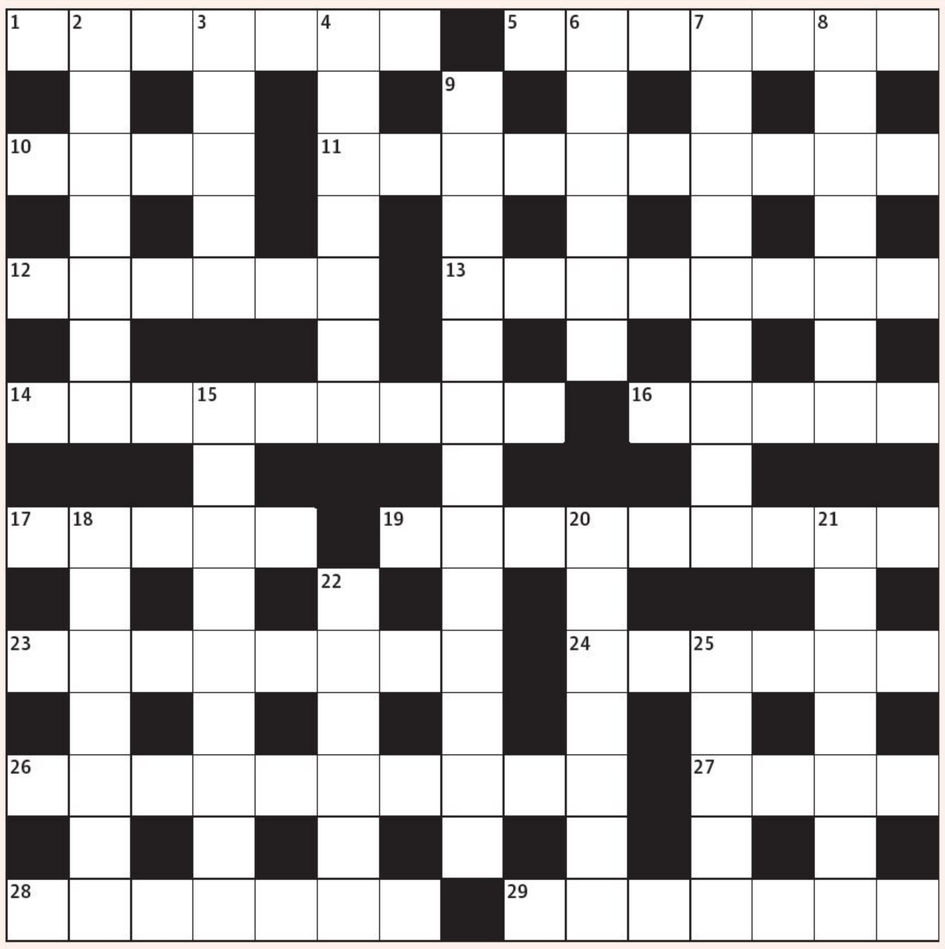
Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid, and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. The letters decoded should help you to identify other letters and words in the grid.

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

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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

Guardian cryptic crossword No 29,432 set by Vlad



Across

1 Value greatly as singer? (7)
5 Compare white American coming in with sweetheart (7)
10 Call round (4)
11 For one promoter going round it's horrible - stay strong! (5,2,3)
12 Man shot in the arm shouting (6)
13 Cool touch, sort of (2,1,5)
14 Winger receiving ball turned like this, look (9)
16 Shoot yak by Siberian border (5)
17 Bully occasionally shut up about prison (5)
19/27 Like little 'un latching on to bosom - it should prevent problem later (1,6,2,4)
23 Might masochist do this religiously? Very much so (4,4)
24 Hole up after Birkdale's seventh, one down round start of eighteenth (3,3)
26 Don't go yet, can one shag hurt? (4,2,1,3)
27 See 19
28 Hit back, right? (4-3)
29 Payment and a bit extra in post (7)

Down

2 Resigned expression from most of crew in water? (5-2)
3 Splendid drink knocked back (5)
4 Attack arrangement that's working (3,4)
6 Button it! A horny fellow's seen round monastery (6)
7 Real jerk tailgating car, ignoring old woman (9)
8 No clues solved, in brief (7)
9 Empty seats basic unless travelling here (8,5)
15 He prefers to have his meals late (9)
18 Go in truck - could be rain (7)
20 One about to punch sick sex criminal (7)
21 Feted test of stamina? (4,3)
22 Check on homes (4,2)
25 Bar in 'The Grapes' closes - at 'Crown' (5)

The Guardian



Kids go free!
The wild, wonderful life of a Norwegian child

G2

Thursday 11/07/24

Life & Arts

Adrian Chiles
Was it something I said – again?
page 3



The experts
15 ways to reduce your risk of cancer
page 4



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Adrian Chiles



Congratulations to all kids who've survived another school year

How does anyone survive their schooldays? I mean, nearly everyone does, obviously, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't count as one of life's great achievements. The happiest days of your life? For some of us, maybe. For a few others, the worst of days. But for everyone, in their own way, they are as challenging as anything adult life throws at you. I base this view on my own schooldays, my children's, their friends', and the children of my friends. In nearly every case, the kids involved have been just fine, they've done well, but I can't help feeling these successes are achieved against all odds.

Day one is monumental enough. My mummy dropped me off and left me with a bunch of children I didn't know, and a nice lady called Mrs Timmins. Blimey, I thought, this is a big deal. I got through it, though. When my mum picked me up to take me home for lunch, my little chest was puffed out with pride. I'd done well, everyone said. But after lunch the bombshell was dropped that I'd be going back there for the afternoon.



What? And I'd be going back the following day, and the day after that, and every subsequent day for the foreseeable future. This hadn't been made clear to me. I thought it was a one-time event to be brave about, like a visit to the nurse for a jab, or a trip to a safari park. Nobody told me it was a whole new way of life. I was outraged.

Finding yourself in a group of strangers is tough enough as an adult. How did we make our way through it when we were not long out of nappies? It would be another decade before my schoolwork involved reading Lord of the Flies and by then, even in the absence of fatalities, I knew what Golding was getting at.

The politics of the playground can be savage. You have a friend who's your best friend who decides someone else is their best friend and doesn't want to play with you any more. Obviously, this kind of thing is standard, happens all the time, but in that moment you can't know this – you're just a tiny kid feeling like it's the end of the world. Somehow you dig deep into your young soul and find a way of coping. You have to. And this is how we learn to be resilient. I get that. But that doesn't mean it's not hard.

And over the next dozen years or more, these massive challenges come rolling in, day after day, week after week, term after term. You don't understand what you're being taught. You keep getting bad marks. You struggle with homework. You want to be cleverer than you are. You can't get in the school team for something. You're in a fight – which is terrible, even if you win, and utterly shaming if you lose. Then there's all the nascent sexual politics to navigate. You fancy someone. You get your friend to ask them out for you. Your friend returns with the bad news. And soon everyone knows it. And these days, ye gods, whatever your bad news is, the whole world might know it, thanks to social media. And all of the above stresses and strains will follow you home and stick to you for ever.

Whenever I meet an 18-year-old leaving school or college, my first thought isn't how their exams have gone or what they're doing next. I just want to know that they're OK, that physically and mentally they're in one piece. If so, great, well done, onward. The rest of your life might, comparatively, be less of a struggle than you've been led to believe.

Snubbed again! Why is it so hard to make small talk?

There are few things worse than trying to engage in conversation someone who plainly does not want to talk to you. As a teenage boy, I went through the pain barrier several times while trying in vain to get a girl interested in me or anything I had to say. But awful as it was, I knew it came with the territory, so I had no choice but to grin and bear it. If anything, the older I get, the harder I find it. And I'm not talking about the dating game here, just normal conversation with civilised people in polite society.

I was at an event, a book launch, hosted by a famous historian. He was not the author of the book in question, but he was the writer of a biography that I happened to be reading. I thought this particular work to be luminously brilliant, so I was keen to have a chat with him. I circled him for a while, waiting for my chance to strike. My dad told me at a very young age that the best thing to talk to people about is their favourite subject, which invariably is themselves. This advice has served me well over the years, and I would be sure to abide by it here. Anxious as ever to avoid talking to someone who plainly wasn't interested in talking to me, I put some thought into my approach. Phase one: tell him how brilliant I think his book to be. Phase two: share with him my favourite quote from the book. What could possibly go wrong?

What happened was this. After I introduced myself, before I could even deploy my first conversational weapon, he said: "I'm terribly sorry, I have to go." I should have withdrawn immediately, but instead stammered out an abridged version of my lovingly prepared paean to his brilliance. Reluctantly, without interest, he slowed his exit, allowing me enough time to cough up my prepared quote, which at least had the effect of stopping him walking away. He said something brief and not disobliging, which was nice, and left. Painful, very painful. For any occasion I've done anything similar to anyone wanting to talk to me, I beg forgiveness.



COVER: MARIE VON KROGH/THE GUARDIAN. THIS PAGE: GETTY

Pass notes



№ 4,720

Frozen assets

Age: How old do you want to be?
Well, I'd quite like to live for ever, but chances are I'll shuffle off some time in my 80s. Have you considered coming back, some time in the future?
What, like reincarnation? I'm worried it might be as a dung beetle. No, more scientific and colder. Freezing, in fact …
Ah, this is about cryonics, isn't it? Yes, cryopreservation – people getting frozen for future revival, when they figure out how to bring you round again.
And will that be ever? Or never? Mark House, a lawyer working with the Arizona-based cryonics facility Alcor Life Extension Foundation, told Bloomberg: "The idea of cryopreservation has gone from crackpot to merely eccentric."
And people have already been frozen? Approximately 500 worldwide, mostly in the US. Alcor has 1,400 members and about 230 people already frozen.
Very rich people, I'm guessing? It's $220,000 (£170,000) for whole body cryopreservation at Alcor. Or you can opt for neurocryopreservation for just $80,000, which is when they freeze your brain, inside your severed head.
Ew. Anyway, even if I could afford it, anything left of my pension probably wouldn't be enough to buy a Mars bar in 2324. Mars might be where you'll be! Anyway, people are beginning to think about that – the money.
Frozen assets? There you go! But yes, basically. People who are getting cryopreserved are beginning to think about making their wealth immortal as well.
How? For example, estate lawyers, such as House, are creating "revival trusts".
What's that? It's a bit like a dynasty trust, a tool already used by the super-rich in the US to avoid federal tax when wealth gets passed down the generations. Except now you're passing it to … well, yourself, in the future.
Trying to get my (thankfully as yet unsevered) head round that … It certainly throws up some interesting questions – more philosophical than personal finance.
Such as? Are you dead when you're cryonically preserved? If you are revived, are you the same person?
What's the answer to that last one? House says no, in the eyes of the law. Partly because someone can't be a beneficiary of their own trust. The revived person in the future, however, can be.
But what if I don't want to be revived as someone else? That's why it's complicated.
Do say: "When my time's up, it's up. I'll leave everything to the donkey sanctuary."
Don't say: "Where am I? Who am I? Why am I just a head?"

Cancer doctors on 15 ways to reduce risk



Should you stop eating red meat? Go teetotal? Start running marathons? Oncologists tell **Sarah Phillips** what lifestyle choices they make to try to prevent the disease

Despite the fact that one in two people will get cancer, many of us are ill-informed about what we can do to prevent it. How do oncologists live their lives based on what they know? Doctors share the secrets of living healthily and the risks worth taking – or not.

1. Don't smoke

"The only safe amount of smoking is no smoking, given how addictive nicotine is," says the oncologist Charles Swanton, who treats patients with lung cancer and is the chief clinician for Cancer Research UK. Witnessing the pain of lung cancer patients is a potent reminder of just how devastating the consequences of smoking can be, Swanton says. And, he adds: "Smoking doesn't just cause lung cancer, but also cardiovascular disease such as heart attacks, stroke and vascular dementia – in addition to 15 other cancer types."

2. Try to maintain a healthy weight

Dr Shivan Sivakumar, an oncologist who treats patients in Birmingham with pancreatic cancers, bile duct cancers and liver cancers, says that roughly 70% of cases of liver cancer he sees are related to obesity. "Alcohol does have an impact, but nowhere near the same level," he says. "With cancer, the big cause that everyone tells you about is smoking. When you look at the statistics at the moment, about 13% of the UK population are active smokers and that is probably going to go down to less than 10% in the next few years. When you look at being obese and overweight, one in three of the population in England are overweight, and a further one in three are obese. So obesity is a much bigger risk factor now."

Joe O'Sullivan, an oncologist and professor of radiation oncology at Queen's University in Belfast, agrees. The biggest lifestyle factor for prostate cancer is weight, he says. "Too much fat, too much meat, too many carbohydrates. Anything that gives you a bigger belly – more than a 34-36in [86-91cm] waistline – increases the risk. The kind of diet that we associate with the western world – lots of saturated fats and eating more calories than you need."

Mark Saunders, a consultant clinical oncologist at the Christie hospital in Manchester, says: "There is an increasing number of what we call 'early onset cancers' – cancers in the under-50s. In colorectal cancer, this is increasing markedly, and I think the big things are lack of exercise, the wrong diet, obesity and a westernised lifestyle."

3. Reduce your meat intake

Saunders points to the fact that an estimated 13% of bowel cancer cases are linked to eating too much processed or red meat. The doctors are cautious about their own consumption: O'Sullivan doesn't eat red meat and Swanton has reduced his intake. Sivakumar says he follows a plant-based diet, although "mainly for animal cruelty reasons, rather than cancer risk". He says that the reporting of nutritional data about cancer can be very confusing, and references the work of the statistician David Spiegelhalter from the University of Cambridge, who has shown that even if everyone ate an extra 50g of bacon every day, that would only increase the incidence of colon cancer from 6% to 7%. "I think it is about having a healthy, balanced diet," says Sivakumar, "and occasionally having a sweet treat or a steak."

> **I rarely, if ever, buy processed food ... I have two takeaways a year – and they usually disappoint**

4. Avoid ultra-processed foods

"Processed food could be a reason that more younger people are getting cancer," says Sivakumar, "but we haven't really deciphered that. We do know that processed food in general contains a lot of stuff that normal food products don't. Again, it's all about risk: what does it actually mean for you? Which I don't think we've really got to the bottom of." Instead, he says, we should have the "mentality that we need to be eating healthier food", and, he adds, we probably also need to eat a lot less.

"We very rarely, if ever, buy processed food," says Saunders of his diet. "Most of the time we go to the grocers to get veg, the local butcher to get meat, and we eat a lot of fish. I do eat red meat; I occasionally have a Sunday roast. We probably have one or two takeaways a year and it's usually a disappointment. I eat biscuits at work, but we don't have them in the house. I'm definitely not perfect, but I do try to control myself so that I reduce my risk of cancer." Not enough fibre is a risk factor for bowel cancer, for which the classic "five a day" mantra can help. "There is loads of fibre in fruit and vegetables," says Saunders, adding that you should eat more vegetables than fruit.

5. Drink less alcohol

O'Sullivan has given up alcohol: "I'm such a saint really," he says. Swanton admits that he has the odd glass of wine, and Saunders drinks occasionally. Sivakumar says there is evidence that smoking and obesity are far worse risk factors for cancer. "Don't drink to excess," he says, "but enjoy your life."



6. If you notice anything you are worried about, see a doctor

Professor Pat Price, a consultant oncologist who helped to launch the Catch Up With Cancer campaign to lobby for better access to treatment, says: "Go to your GP if you've got a symptom of cancer - coughing up blood, peeing blood or rectal bleeding, or a pain, or a lump or something like that, things that you know are not right." There is a full list of signs and symptoms on the NHS website. Try not to be embarrassed. "A lot of older men in particular are shy about talking about their genitals or their urinary function," says O'Sullivan. "Hopefully, the younger generations will be much more confident in talking about it."

Saunders says: "The big ones for colorectal cancers are bleeding and a change in your bowel habit. Go to see your GP - it may well be nothing if you are young. But if it keeps happening, you have got to go back again. It may well not be cancer. It could be something simple like a pile. But you've got to be aware of your symptoms and do something about it."

7. Keep up to date with screenings

"I've tried to be good about being up to date with my screenings: cervical, breast and bowel - I absolutely welcome all that," says Price. "Only about 65% of women invited for breast screening in England attend. We've all got busy lives; the last thing we want to think about is our symptoms or a screening test which might find something. But remember, the chances are that it is going to be absolutely fine. The NHS does thousands of mammograms every day. There are a very small number that are actually positive (about nine in 1,000 tests). If they find something, it will probably be tiny and really treatable and curable. In some countries, there are no screening programmes. We are really lucky to have them."

8. Get physical

Price discovered a love of running in her 50s: "Getting out there in the fresh air, in the scenery, with nature is the best thing for you in the world." As you get older: "You are not thinking, 'I've got to get fitter,' you are thinking, 'I've got to stay healthy.'" Price does an impressive six hours of exercise a week - "I think it should be more," she says - doing strength and conditioning, dynamic pilates, high-intensity interval training and a long run at the weekend. "I find doing the London Marathon gives me a real sense of purpose each year, because I know what I'm training for. Also, at my age, if you can't be fast, be long. I think that sense of pushing yourself to the limit is quite a healthy thing to do. Fitness is great for getting older, and for your bones, muscles and mental health. I'm a real advocate of women of a certain age getting running."

9. Wear sunscreen

"I avoid going out in the sun," says Price. "I never used to much, but I am very aware of the risk of skin malignancy. So I cover up and am not a sun worshipper." Swanton says he always "wears sun cream and, being bald, a sun hat".

10. Manage stress

"Life is very stressful and many of us need to try to deal with stress better," says Price. Stress itself hasn't been proved to cause cancer, but it can mean that you live in a way that increases your risk, she says. "It sometimes means you eat a lot, drink a lot, or don't exercise. Mindfulness is really good, and breathing techniques. I know they sound a bit minimal, but they can work for many people." Of a direct link between stress and cancer, Swanton adds: "One of the reasons we don't yet know the answer to this question is that we lack good models to simulate human stress in the lab, to be able to understand and study it. But knowing about the emerging evidence on how the central nervous system alters the immune environment and reciprocally, how immune cells communicate with the central nervous system, it wouldn't surprise me at all if there was a functional link. Over the next five to 10 years, we may start to see an emergence of data testing the relationship between stress and cancer."

> **Stress hasn't been proved to cause cancer, but it can mean you drink a lot or don't exercise**

11. Look into genetic risk

"About 7% of prostate cancers are genetic," says O'Sullivan, "and you may have a BRCA, a gene mutation that is associated with breast cancer and prostate cancer." These are rare - only 1 in 400 people have them. O'Sullivan says if men have a relative who has died of prostate cancer at a young age, it is important to have a prostate-specific antigen test, which is available on the NHS, every few years from the age of 50. "The earlier you catch it, the easier it is to treat," he says. The risk of a faulty BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene is much higher for breast and ovarian cancers, says Price. "Prophylactic mastectomy is recommended when the risk gets very high and patients often choose this instead of regular surveillance," she says.

12. When faced with a diagnosis, knowledge is power

"If you are diagnosed with cancer, we try to advise patients to really sit with it and come to terms with it," says Price. "Because it's not great - no one wants to be diagnosed with cancer. But find out as much information as you can. Often the hardest thing is telling other people, because of their reaction: some people don't want to talk about it, or even don't want to go near you. Being open and honest can help, and make a plan with your doctors. Often patients find fear of the unknown is the biggest thing. So if you can ask all the questions and know what you're dealing with, that can help. There is a huge amount of support out there. People will help you on your journey."

13. Don't fear treatment

Some people might be worried about getting checked out for fear of treatment, but it is always improving, says O'Sullivan, particularly radiotherapy. "If people have symptoms, they can sometimes be reluctant to go to their GP because of the worry of how bad the treatment might be. A lot of people will have relatives who have had a tough time having radiotherapy treatment. But treatment has improved dramatically. If you think about what your smartphone looked like 10 years ago, and what it looks like now, it is similar to the type of technological developments in radiotherapy, to the point now where the side-effects are much reduced. Many people continue normal life around the treatment. In some radiotherapy, after five days people can be cured."

14. Talk about it

"Cancer affects one in two people in their lifetime," says Price. "Everybody knows somebody who has been touched by cancer. Sometimes, we fear it too much and think if we don't talk about it, it won't happen to us. We need to be much more open about it in our society." It is important to know, she says: "While cancer can be very bad for some, it doesn't always equal death. For a lot of people, cancer perhaps means difficult treatment, and as the Princess of Wales has said, there are good days and bad days. And then maybe you're out of the woods, and that is cancer survivorship. Then you can start looking at how does that play into making life better. Everyone's cancer journey is different and can be really tough; for some it works out and for some, sadly, it does not. As cancer doctors we want there to be as good an outcome as is possible for every patient."

15. Live life to the full

"My work has had a twofold impact," says Sivakumar. "One impact is seeing liver cancer - there are sensible things you can do to reduce cancer risk there. But you also have to remember that most cancers are not preventable: broadly 40% of cancer is preventable and 60% isn't. The other two cancers I see probably aren't in the fully preventable category. The thing it has really taught me is about work/life balance, spending time with your loved ones and making sure you have time to see them. I am a very firm believer in that."

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY/GUARDIAN DESIGN

‘The kids just get on with things’



Norway’s six-year-olds walk to school without adults, play outside without adults, stay home without adults … **Andy Welch** learns more about ‘free-range’ parenting

It’s 1.30pm. Nila and Arion arrive home after finishing school for the day. They let themselves in, make some food, then sit down to do homework, or practise piano, or do the housework they’ve been asked to do. Their parents won’t be home for a few hours yet. The children sometimes go out with friends to play in the street or wander the fields. The only real rule is no screen time unless everything else has been taken care of.

So far, so normal, perhaps, except the sister and brother are just 10 and eight, and they’ve been living this kind of unsupervised mini-adult life for years.

They live in Stavanger, on the south-west coast of Norway. Like all of their friends, they’ve been walking to and from school alone since they first attended at the age of six. They were given their own set of house keys soon after. This is the parenting way in Norway – it’s decidedly free-range, with an emphasis on independence, self-determination and responsibility, with a dash of outdoor fun thrown in for good measure.

I’ve known Nila and Arion since they were born (their parents are close friends), and I have consistently marvelled at the space and freedom they are given. On my visits to their home, I can never help but compare their upbringing with the way I and millions of other Britons were raised. While not exactly repressive or restrictive, 80s British parenting didn’t value autonomy in the same way. I certainly didn’t get my own chef’s knife for my eighth birthday, as Nila did a couple of years ago. She puts it to good use; she’s solely responsible for cooking dinner for the family one night a week.

“I can’t think of anyone who doesn’t parent like this,” says Nila and Arion’s dad, Giancarlo Napoli. He recalls one child in Nila’s class whose parents moved to another town a few years back. Rather than switch schools, this child now walks 20 minutes from his home to the train station, takes a 20-minute train journey, then has another 20-minute walk from the station to school. “This kid does that twice a day, and no one bats an eyelid,” he says. (On a related note, Norwegian children as young as seven have been known to make solo journeys from one end of Norway to the other to visit their divorced parents.)

Giancarlo is British, and moved to Stavanger in 2006 after meeting his Norwegian wife, Lena, while travelling. He teaches at a nearby college and is now a fully integrated member of Norwegian society – and a paid-up member of the free-range parenting club. But he admits it did take him some time to adjust.

Of course, free-range parenting does rather fit in with perceptions outsiders often have about Scandinavian people. Look at them all, with their hygge, and their sky-high living standards, low crime rates, enviable maternity and paternity rights and exceptional aesthetics. Norway is indeed seventh on the World Happiness Report. It also has the world’s 10th highest GDP, along with the world’s largest wealth fund and one of the world’s lowest crime rates. But this is a philosophy that runs deeper than Norway’s pockets, and it’s been around far longer than the country’s well-funded public services have.

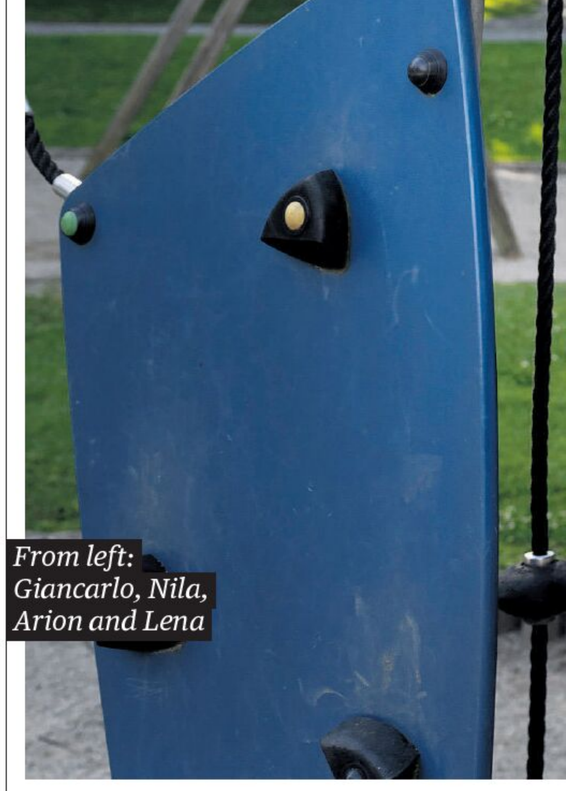
There’s evidence that Viking children as far back as the ninth century were raised in a broadly similar way: treated as adults and expected to chip in with whatever work needed to be done. It’s a way of life, deeply ingrained to the point that most Norwegians I’ve spoken to can’t understand either the fascination with their method, or why anyone would do it differently.

This more nuanced modern take – more conversations about feelings, less pillaging – rose to prominence in the aftermath of the second world war, says Willy-Tore Mørch, an emeritus professor in children’s mental health at the University of Tromsø. Much of the country’s infrastructure had been devastated by the years of Nazi occupation. Rising to the challenge, the newly formed Labour government believed that all Norwegians should contribute to the rebuilding – children included.

“The children had to be strong and hardened, and trained to be independent and loyal,” says Mørch. “Perhaps most parents today are not aware of this history, but building trust between parents and children remains a basic relational quality in modern Norwegian child-raising.”

There is also another, more practical reason underpinning some of this parenting style. “Most women here work,” says Mette Tveit, a curator and historian at Stavanger Museum. Norway has among the most gender-equal workforces, with about 73% of all men of working age in employment, and about 67% of women. Childcare is also widely available and highly affordable, meaning that going out to work is financially worthwhile. For example, kindergarten fees for 10 hours a day, five days a week, are capped at NOK 2,000 (£150) a month. In the UK, the average cost for under-twos in full-time childcare is £300 a week.

Tveit adds that Norwegian children are, in her experience, so independent that they organise their own playdates with peers. “I spend time in the US and I see how the parents arrange those things, but in Norway, even young children will organise their social events and manage their spare time. They just get on with things. It’s normal for Norwegian children to tell their parents what they’re doing; it’s not that normal to ask permission. They are just trusted to make good decisions.”



From left: Giancarlo, Nila, Arion and Lena



A low crime rate helps everyone feel safe

Trust is something that comes up when I talk to Giancarlo and Lena about their parenting, and how mutual respect is crucial. In the school holidays, for example, they’re happy for Nila and Arion to be out all day as long as they know roughly what time they’ll return – and the children comply. Lena says this is how her mother and grandmother were raised, and fondly remembers going to school herself as a six-year-old with a front door key around her neck on a piece of string. She also thinks this way of parenting should be preserved, despite the temptation to introduce technology into the equation.

“You can get GPS watches for kids, where you can track them and so on,” she says. “[But] it’s really important to me that it’s not



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARIE VON KROGH/THE GUARDIAN

a fake sense of freedom that we give the children. There was one time we thought Nila had gone missing, and even though I know if she'd had one of those watches we could've just checked to see where she was and not been worried, that's not the point."

It turns out Nila had been playing out with a friend when the friend's grandparent invited them indoors for a drink and an iced bun and she had simply lost track of time. "It was important for her to see we were worried, and she's never done it again," says Lena.

Failure, it seems, is a big part of Norwegian parenting – enjoy the freedom to make mistakes, but learn from them. There's a tacit understanding that yes, you can climb that tree, but you might fall and hurt yourself. Maybe falling will make you a better climber in future?

The usual safety features parents of other nationalities might install in their home are normally lacking in Norway, too. Giancarlo says that while log-burners are almost standard issue, he can't remember seeing a guard around one, while stair gates are unusual. "We probably should've had a safety gate at the top of the stairs, but we didn't – we just told the kids not to go down them. Just as we said: 'Don't touch the log-burner, it's very hot.'"

Mørch says the Norwegian parenting style cannot be understood without assessing the influence of the psychologist Åse Gruda Skard. Skard was a famous figure in postwar Norway, where she appeared on radio programmes and in newspapers to spread her groundbreaking ideas on "free child-rearing" as a response to the authoritarianism seen before and during the war.

"The US had Benjamin Spock, and we had Skard," says Mørch. "She strongly opposed a punishment-oriented parenting style, instead teaching parents to look at things from the child's perspective, to ask: what does the child experience in this situation? What does the child understand now? How can I help the child to understand what's going on? How can I support the child in this situation?"

As much as I admire the way my friends have raised their children – both of them kind, inquisitive, fun and well-mannered – as a recent new parent, these techniques remain aspirational for the most part, and I can't imagine adopting many of them myself. I'm all for having a rugged, outdoorsy child who can cook, but I'm not so sure about my future five-year-old returning home to tell me he'd been working on his stick whittling and knife skills at his London nursery – as preschoolers do here in Stavanger.

According to Justine Roberts, the CEO of Mumsnet, I'm not alone in my admiration for the Nordic way of parenting, or my reticence in trying it myself. "Generally, users like the freedom that children have in the Scandi way of doing things, and the fact that it can all contribute to a healthier lifestyle with more outside play. There's also a feeling that children are more integrated into society," she says.

"But I think, over the years, UK society has become more risk averse. If you just look at the way attitudes to outside play have changed over the last generation, it's very clear that parents are more reluctant to take on even the smallest risk."

Roberts believes that British

"Even young children will organise their social events and manage their spare time

parents became more scared of unsupervised outdoor play sometime in the early 90s, and blames the decade's breathless media coverage of the threats posed by paedophiles, violent crime and road traffic accidents. "The crime rate is definitely a factor," she says. "Most mums agree that it just wouldn't be possible to parent like that here. It's a shame because giving kids freedom to run around with their friends outside seems to have many advantages – for the children and their parents."

Talking of what's possible, there's a saying in Norwegian: *Det finnes ikke dårlig vær, bare dårlige klær* ("There's no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing"). And it starts in kindergarten, where children are sent with a range of equipment and clothing for anything the climate can throw at them. And know this – they will be outside at some point during the day, whatever the weather.

"When we are outside, we encourage the children to try to get over obstacles, climb rocks and walk on rough terrain," says Hanne Myhre, who works as a pedagogical leader in a kindergarten in Stavanger, caring for children. "This improves the children's motor skills, and we find that they become more robust and independent. Sometimes they fall and maybe hurt themselves, but they are comforted by the staff and after a while we can encourage them to try again." Myhre adds that children are expected to dress themselves (with support, if needed) from the age of two.

For her, the key to the Norwegian model, particularly in Stavanger, is the number of smaller kindergartens and schools located in each neighbourhood, meaning that while children do travel to and from school alone, it is usually a relatively short walk. "Of course, it helps that there is low crime," she says. "And we trust other people, but we are not naive. As well as all the other lessons, we also teach children not to go anywhere with strangers and we practise safe walking in traffic."

She believes instilling these skills helps foster independence, but boosts confidence, too, leading to mature adolescents and steady, grounded adults who have a head for decision-making. That was the consensus among everyone I spoke to for this piece, although it is, of course, difficult to know which of the traits someone has in adulthood came from the way they were raised and which came from elsewhere, just as it's impossible to tell how someone might have turned out if they had been raised in a different way.

For most Norwegians, though, this is a way of life, and not something that is endlessly questioned or even really observed, although there are naysayers.

"This parenting style has been exposed to criticism in the past 10 to 15 years," says Mørch. "Just as 'curling parents' (who sweep away any obstacles for the child), 'helicopter parents' (who monitor their child all the time) and 'cotton parents' (who pack their child in cotton wool to prevent any accident) have been criticised."

Critics of free-range parenting, he says, have called for more limit-setting, but he strongly disagrees, arguing that free-range children will learn all they need to about the world without unnecessary intervention. "They do not need parents to organise their problems."



'The catharsis was profound'

Alicia Witt channelled the misery of a cancer diagnosis and the tragic sudden deaths of her parents into the terrifying film Longlegs. She tells **Emine Saner** why she'll never watch it

So many uncanny things happened on the set of Longlegs – and not just Nicolas Cage in full serial killer makeup staying in character between takes – that surely it seeped into the deeply unsettling feel of the film. "Like clusters of birds, eagles, showing up in unexpected ways," says Alicia Witt. "I'm getting shivers just talking about it. A truck would go by with the name of one of the characters."

When she and Osgood Perkins, the film's writer and director, were having an early conversation on the phone about her role as Ruth, the mother of a young FBI agent, he asked her about working with David Lynch. (Witt made her debut aged seven filming Lynch's Dune, and also featured in Twin Peaks.) "I started answering and he said, 'I just have to interrupt you for a second because two school buses just went by and they both had 'Lynch' on them.' Making Longlegs," she says, "felt like a very spiritual experience."

I was going to ask Witt if she felt able to get on board with the film's supernatural elements, but of course she did. Agent Lee Harker (played by Maika Monroe), Witt's character's daughter, is a kind of half-psychic Clarice Starling, having some sort of connection to the serial killer she hunts, known as Longlegs. There are – without giving too much away – terrifying dolls, occult elements and some murderous mind control, and the songs of T Rex will forevermore be tainted with darkness. The film is stylish and weighted with dread – but so frightening I had my eyes shut for most of it.

Witt, who is radiant over Zoom and has a soothingly slow way of speaking, laughs. "I know that whatever I do for the rest of my career, Longlegs will be one of my favourite experiences," she says. Cage will draw the attention with his typically unhinged acting style, but Witt gives a devastatingly quiet and contained performance as Ruth, a traumatised woman whose relationship with her daughter is heartbreakingly distant.

Witt's acting career – she is also a musician – has swung towards comedy and quirky drama, as well as an unusual number of Hallmark Christmas TV movies. (Nine!) There has been darker stuff, such as small roles in the TV series The Exorcist and The Walking Dead, but nothing like Longlegs.

The role came after Witt's life had imploded. In late 2021, her parents were found dead of suspected cold exposure in their run-down Massachusetts home. In a Facebook post, Witt wrote that they were "beautifully original souls", who had refused to let her help them; she hadn't been allowed inside their home for a decade. A few months later, Witt revealed she had also been dealing with a breast cancer diagnosis, and treatment that involved chemotherapy and a mastectomy.

When Longlegs was filmed the following year, she says, "it felt as

> **I'm getting shivers just talking about it. Something was released within these frames**

though something within me that needed to be released was released, and shall forevermore remain within these frames." She doesn't intend to watch it. She doesn't love watching herself on film anyway. "But this one, it's like a spiritual reason." What does she fear might happen if she did? "It's not fear, just a choice, a conviction. I have a certainty that it's meant for others to view. I'm very proud of whatever got channelled," she says. "It felt that intense and that personal for me: the catharsis of getting to play Ruth was profound."

How had she coped? "There is a Shawn Colvin song that has the line: 'If there were no music, then I would not get through,'" says Witt. "And music was a salvation during that time." Witt has made music since childhood and has released several albums. A phrase – "Will you be my witness?" – came to her during her raw grief and ongoing treatment: "It appeared to me like a mantra. I knew that was a song that was going to be born, but I wasn't writing at that moment. But it helped me. And it's the people, the people, the people."

Those around her supported her. "I can count on one hand the people who were my touchstones, my late-night, talk till three in the morning people. They were with me every step of the way. Only they know the extent of it, and they are for ever my witnesses." Last year, Witt released an EP, Witness. "What was beautiful about the experience, amid all the rest of it, was that the relationships with these soul companions becomes so much deeper on the other end." And, she adds, "In a way, I truly believe you're not given anything you can't handle."



'A spiritual experience' ... with Lauren Acala in Longlegs



'Music was a salvation' ... performing in Nashville

There is something fairytale and wonderfully eccentric about Witt's childhood, shared with her younger brother. Their parents were both teachers and their mother, Diane, grew her hair to a Rapunzel-esque three metres, gaining the world record. Witt was described in local newspaper stories at the time as a child genius. She would read everything from college textbooks to tax forms, had a gift for music and taught herself how to grow prize-winning roses. She was homeschooled, and appeared on a TV talent show reciting Shakespeare when she was five, which is where a casting director spotted her. Two years later, she was working on Lynch's 1984 sci-fi film Dune.

"I've been fortunate beyond any measure that what I believe I came into this world to do is what I get to make a living at," says Witt. It was fate, she says, that she found her calling early – and not by "having an agent or parents that were, like, 'We're going to take you to Hollywood and make you an actor.' From the moment I set foot on stage, I had an absolute sense in the core of me that said I had found what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

When Witt was 16 she moved to Los Angeles – her mother came for a while too – and supported herself while auditioning by playing piano at the Beverly Wilshire hotel. She must have seen big movie stars coming in and out – did she feel like the outsider? "Yeah," she says. "It was odd because on a daily basis, people would approach me and assume my aspiration was to be a musician. I would say, 'Oh no, I'm an actor,' and they'd be like, 'You don't want to be an actor there's lots of actors in this town.' I had to build up the inner fortitude to think, yeah I'm a good musician but I'm a good actor."

Another "twist of destiny", as Witt describes it: the director Rafal Zielinski, at the hotel for a meeting, saw her playing the piano. "Not knowing I'd ever acted, he had a vision that I might be right for a lead in his movie. And that movie changed my life." She starred in the 1994 film Fun, playing a teenage girl who murders an older woman, and won an award at Sundance for it. More films followed, then at 18, the role of sardonic daughter Zoey in the sitcom Cybill.

How did Witt, a sheltered and naive child, survive in LA at 16? "I was a strange combination of incredibly young for my age and incredibly mature," she says. "I didn't have a drink till I was 23. I was not there to party, I was there to be an actor, and I had a strong sense of conviction that LA was where I belonged." What was difficult, having been homeschooled, she says, "was that I didn't know how to relate to people my own age. Fortunately, I found my way. Again through angels and God, I think, I connected with some incredible people who I befriended and are still some of my closest friends today."

Now Witt lives in Nashville, where she has just finished a new album. She's also on tour, and will play a London date in September. "I feel like I'm getting to do all things on my own terms. I get to make movies, I get to make music and I get to live here in real life, not surrounded by movie life or anything like that."

If not for her sense of loneliness as a child, Witt might not have pursued acting. On film sets she loved the sense of community. "It's always been about the connection with the people, as well as with the character I'm channelling," she says. In Longlegs, she found a place to purge some of the darkness that had overshadowed her life, while working with people she loved to be around. "It's odd, but true, that by making a film that explores the dark, somehow I see the light in creating something like this." It served as a reminder, too, for her own life. "I think that only by being tapped into the light can you eliminate the dark."

Longlegs is in cinemas tomorrow



A child genius ... in David Lynch's Dune

PHOTOGRAPHS: TINA TURNBOW; LANDMARK MEDIA/ALAMY; TERRY WYATT/GETTY IMAGES FOR ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION; COURTESY OF NEON

Andreas Billman

'There's a balance to this picture that draws the eye to the scale of the statue. People are surprised by its size, but in Argentina religion is just part of the everyday'



I took this in December 2021 on the outskirts of Miramar, a coastal town in Argentina. I didn't know it then but the photograph marked the beginning of my book, Dead Cow Rising. It's a conceptual documentary project that charts Argentina's rapidly rising inflation rates in images from a journey through Vaca Muerta, which means Dead Cow in English. It's a desolate but oil-rich region covering an area approximately the size of Belgium.

My mother is Argentine and my father is Swedish; having spent most of my life in the UK, I wanted to reconnect with my roots and create my own portrait of Argentina. Miramar is where I spent all my Christmases growing up. It's a happy-go-lucky beach town, five hours' drive from Buenos Aires. I was visiting family and this photo was taken during the purgatory days between Christmas and New Year. I rented a bike from the same shop I hired from when I was seven, and cycled to the sand dunes. As I walked down to the beach, this arrangement naturally fell into place. The donkeys, the car, the people looking up at Christ: there's a balance that draws the eye to the scale of the crucifix – that's what makes this picture good.

Many people are surprised by the scale of the statue – and someone once asked me if it was a real person up there – but for anyone from Argentina, it's commonplace. Religion is deeply ingrained in the fabric of society. It was not my intention to allude to the statue as a symbol of death or rebirth – I'll leave that to the viewer to interpret. It's just showing part of the everyday in Argentina.

A few days after taking this photo, I asked to borrow my uncle's car to drive into the depths of Vaca Muerta. He asked, "Why? There's nothing down there, it's desolate." But that was exactly why I wanted to go. My photography is all about arrangement, composition and creating intrigue; taking ordinary places and elevating them into something beautiful. That's why I chose an area that is undocumented and usually classed as unremarkable.

Vaca Muerta is actually a deeply complex region. It's one of the largest shale oil and gas reserves in the world, but the local community suffers from the country's wider economic turmoil. Each picture in my book is titled with the inflation rate. The first one was taken in December 2021, which I set as a baseline of zero per cent. By the last photograph, taken in February 2023, inflation reached 111%. At the time of writing it has reached 289%. To put that into perspective, when I took the photo of the crucifix, a litre of milk cost around 90 pesos. By the end of the project it cost 236. Now it costs 1,276.

My work blurs the lines between conceptual and documentary photography because it's talking about a real problem that affects people, but I'm trying to show an alternative way of visualising it. Inflation is a constant, unforgiving reality of life in Argentina. Even in a quiet moment, it's always creeping up.

People in the UK were worried when annual inflation rose to 6%. That was happening monthly in Argentina. Wages are constantly changing but do they keep up? No. Can people save money? No. So what would they rather do? They'd rather live in the present, and they do that in the best way they know. When they can, they spend their money on good meat and drinks, they host *asados* (barbecues) and have a good time with their friends and family.

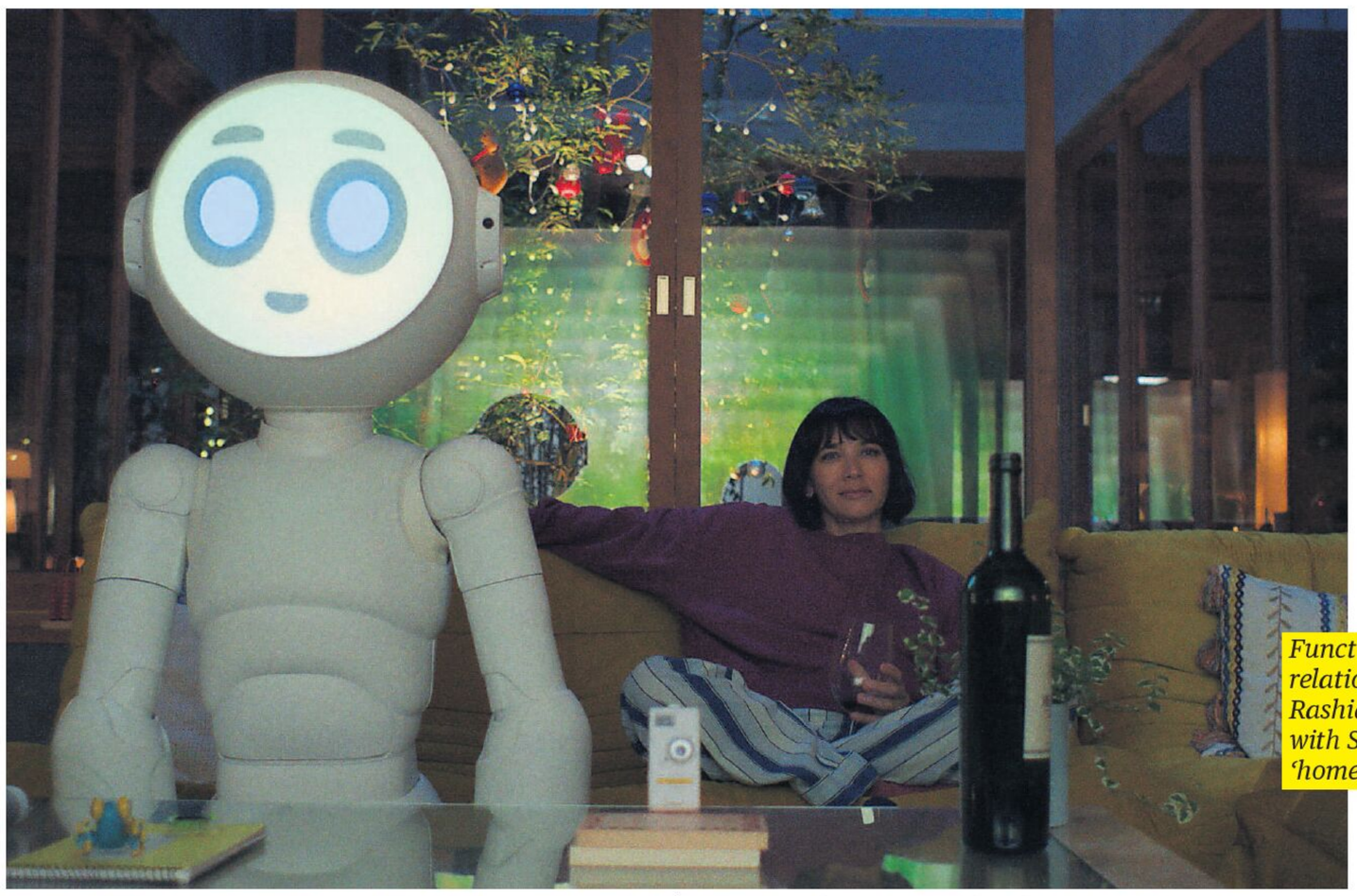
Inflation affects every aspect of life and forces them to continually adapt. I'm trying to capture a glimpse of this difficult but hopeful reality where, as inflation rises by the day, so does the people's resilience.

Interview by Marigold Warner. Dead Cow Rising by Andreas Billman is published by Artphilein Editions

The CV

Born: *Chicago, US, 1992*
Trained: *London College of Communication*
Influences: *Mark Power, Facundo de Zuviría, Lewis Baltz*
High point: *'When everything falls into place within the frame'*
Low point: *'All the shots that got away'*
Top tip: *'If in doubt, switch to a prime lens and let your legs do the work of framing and zoom'*





Functioning relationship … Rashida Jones with Sunny the 'homebot'

Review Sunny, Apple TV+

This robot comedy thriller sounds awful – but pushes the right buttons

★★★★☆



Lucy Mangan

On paper, Sunny looks like a perfect example of the crap habitually shovelled into the summer schedules. The powers that be think we are outside doing things in the glorious sunshine, instead of searching as desperately as ever for something to entertain us. What is wrong with these people? I bet they are the same ones who serve a "hearty salad" at summer dinner parties, instead of a proper meal, as if you don't have a body to fuel between June and August.

Sorry, where was I? Yes! The synopsis of Sunny: grief-stricken woman in near-future Japan joins forces with robot to unravel mystery of son and husband disappearing in apparently fatal plane crash. Oh God.

Fortunately, said God occasionally grants us a boon – and the unfolding of Sunny is one. It opens with blood spattering across an orange wall as a robot lays waste to the humans in the sitting room around it. We then cut to Rashida Jones as Suzie Sakamoto, an expat American who came to lick some wounds and live a quiet life alone in Japan some years before the main timeline. Instead, she met charming, gentle Masa (Hidetoshi Nishijima); they married and had a son, Zen.

In a flashback, we see the couple's meet-cute in one of Japan's silent restaurants (what a wonderful, wonderful country). Its quirky credibility is emblematic of the gently unpredictable and genre-spanning show – enough to keep you on your toes, never enough to make you roll your eyes. After Masa and Zen disappear, Yuki, a senior colleague from the giant tech firm for which Masa worked as a refrigeration engineer, delivers a "homebot" called Sunny (voiced by Joanna Sotomura) as a condolence gift of sorts. This is no ordinary homebot, Yuki explains, but one Masa programmed especially for her. Suzie begins to think that her husband may not have been a refrigeration engineer after all.

Suzie is a technophobe who only gradually unbends towards Sunny. "A robot killed my mother," she tells an official. "It was a self-driving car," says her mother-in-law, Noriko (Judy Ongg). "Human error was named as the cause." Noriko's role in the story goes beyond dropping poisonous bon mots, but they are her speciality.

To the comedy, the sci-fi and the odd-couple premise is added a conspiracy thriller. Suzie finds details about her husband's life and disappearance that do not add up. At the office party she attends reluctantly as Masa's widow, she meets one of his underlings, who talks of her mild-mannered husband with frightened awe. On escaping down a back stairwell, she finds a series of rooms called the "Sakamoto Incubator". One of them contains blood stains and the orange wall we saw earlier.

Sunny is a profoundly confident show. It moves at a leisurely pace – perhaps a touch *too* leisurely for some – and treads all manner of boundaries without a misstep. It considers the apparent impossibility of truly knowing another person, as well as grief and loneliness (as a younger man, Masa lived as a *hikikomori*, one of the estimated 1 million people, mostly men, who have withdrawn from Japanese society; he and Suzie bonded over their shared understanding of the need for solitude).

It also interrogates modern concerns, such as the potential of AI for good and ill, alongside all the twisty plotting and clues required for a conspiracy thriller. A chance meeting in a cocktail bar with a waitress, Mixxy (played by the songwriter and YouTube personality Annie the Clumsy, who acquits herself very well, so get that look off your face), provides a bridge to the dangerous world of bot-hacking and draws Suzie and Sunny deeper into the mystery of the plane crash and of other deaths. They are also secretly surveilled by mysterious men and attract the attention of the criminal underworld, led by a terrifying platinum blond psychopath called Hime (played by the actor You), who also seems to have known Masa well enough to turn up at his funeral.

It sounds like a lot, but Sunny stays firmly in control of itself and never sprawls. I suspect it is intended to scratch the Severance itch while we wait for the new series; it probably will. But it is undoubtedly its own thing – and a very good one, too.

The Gentle Art of Swedish Death Cleaning

9pm, W



We can learn a lot about life from this team of Swedes, who are basically the Marie Kondos for people preparing for death. Amy Poehler narrates a surprisingly uplifting documentary series, which takes the Swedish death cleaning method from Margareta Magnusson's book ("cleaning out your crap so others don't have to when you're dead") and puts it into practice in the US – starting with 75-year-old Suzi (*above right*), who needs to let go of her collection of phallic souvenirs.

Hollie Richardson

Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain
8.30pm, ITV1
To Hexham, in Northumberland, to source some good old British beef for a rib-eye … and where the cattle aren't easily, er, cowed. We also meet an adorable sheepdog, ecstatically rolling in dung. Then it's on to Lancashire, where Tom looks for, well, "toms", to rustle up a mouthwatering roasted tomato and whipped feta flatbread. **Ali Catterall**

Douglas Is Cancelled
9pm, ITV1
Steven Moffat's cancel-culture drama turns toe-curling, as we learn more about Madeline (Karen Gillan) – the co-host who may or may not be about to throw Douglas (Hugh Bonneville) under a bus. It flashes back to when she met her idol Douglas for the first time, desperate to break into TV journalism at whatever cost. **HR**

So Help Me Todd
9pm, Alibi
The mother-and-son legal drama returns for a second season of workplace tension and dysfunctional family shenanigans. This week's excuses for zingy comic repartee include Todd's attempt to open his own PI business and the case of a news anchor who is murdered live on screen. **Alexi Duggins**

Outrageous Homes
10pm, Channel 4
It's the last episode of Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen's weirdly wonderful home decor series, and he's finishing in typically outlandish style. A fake medieval castle in Weston-super-Mare, a "house of skulls", an ex-council house with rooms that represent different countries and a "neon utopia" are all on the itinerary. **HR**

Paul Whitehouse's Sketch Show Years
10pm, Gold
We've reached the 90s, a decade in which, more than ever, comedy catchphrases "became the unofficial language of Britain". Among other joys, it's a reminder of how quietly groundbreaking Smack the Pony was, how much genuine pathos there was in The Fast Show and just how much the late, great Felix Dexter is missed. **AC**

What's On
Scan the QR code below to sign up for the What's On newsletter, our free TV email with the best reviews, news and exclusive writing direct to your inbox every Monday

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.30** Morning Live (T) **10.45** Homes Under the Hammer (T) **11.45** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **12.30** Wimbledon 2024 (T) Doubles action from the outside courts. **1.0** News (T) **1.35** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** News (T) **2.0** Wimbledon 2024 (T) Further coverage of day 11. **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** Question Time (T)

8.15 **EastEnders** (T) Stevie makes plans to leave Walford.
8.45 **EastEnders** (T) Teddy uses a Mitchell family dinner to ask Sharon out again.
9.15 **A Good Girl's Guide to Murder** (T) (R) Student Pip Fitz-Amobi investigates the disappearance of fellow schoolgirl Andie Bell. Crime drama, starring Emma Myers.

10.0 **News** (T)
10.30 **Regional News** (T) Weather
10.40 **A Good Girl's Guide to Murder** (T) (R) Pip and Ravi turn their attention to Andie's best friends.
11.20 **The Traitors US** (T) (R) The prize pot is in sight.
12.20 **Match of the Day Top 10** (T) **12.50** Weather for the Week Ahead (T) **12.55** News (T)

BBC Two

6.25 FILM **The Velvet Touch** (Jack Gage, 1948) (T) **8.0** Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (T) (R) **9.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Wimbledon 2024 (T) The opening ladies' singles semi-final. **3.0** Wimbledon 2024 (T) Further coverage of day 11.

8.0 **Today at Wimbledon** (T) Qasa Alom presents highlights of the 11th day.
9.0 **Sacred Rivers With Simon Reeve** (T) (R) The adventurer visits some of the world's most famous waterways and investigates how they have shaped the lives of the people living along them, beginning with the Nile.

10.0 **Coupling** (T) (R)
10.30 **Newsnight** (T) Weather
11.05 **Today at the Test** (T) England v West Indies. Highlights of day two of the first Test.
12.05 **Colin from Accounts** (T) (R) **12.35** Sign Zone: Springwatch (T) (R) **1.35** D-Day: The Unheard Tapes (T) (R) **2.35** The Bidding Room (T) (R) **3.20** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.25** Local News (T) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newmarket (T) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) (R) **5.0** The Chase (T) (R) **6.0** Local News (T) **6.30** News (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

8.30 **Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain** (T) The chef heads to the North Pennines to see what it takes to raise the star ingredient of his steak diane.
9.0 **Douglas Is Cancelled** (T) Madeline and Douglas meet up, three years after their first encounter – only this time there are explosive consequences.

10.0 **News** (T)
10.30 **Local News** (T) Weather
10.45 **The Late Debate** (T)
11.15 FILM **The Man With the Golden Gun** (1974) (T) Spy adventure, starring Roger Moore and Christopher Lee.
1.20 **Shop on TV 3.0** Tour de France Highlights (T) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** The Chris McCausland Show (T)

Channel 4

6.30 **Cheers** (T) (R) **7.20** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **9.10** Frasier (T) (R) **11.10** Undercover Boss USA (T) (R) **12.05** News (T) **12.10** Help! We Bought a Village (T) (R) **1.10** Car S.O.S (T) (R) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** A Place in the Sun (T) (R) **4.0** Renovation Nation (T) **5.0** A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? (T) (R) **6.0** Four in a Bed (T) (R) **6.30** The Simpsons (T) (R) **7.0** News (T)

8.0 **The Supervet: Noel Fitzpatrick** (T) A toy poodle needs treatment for a damaged hip joint.
9.0 **George Clarke's Amazing Spaces** (T) A couple attempt to combine an army lorry and an old caravan to create the ultimate off-roader, and a man returns to his family's farm to build a luxury cabin.

10.0 **Outrageous Homes** (T)
11.05 **Celebrity Gogglebox** (T) (R)
12.05 **Gogglebox** (T) (R) **1.0** 999: On the Front Line (T) (R) **1.55** Kitchen Nightmares USA (T) (R) **2.45** Super Surgeons (T) (R) **3.35** Come Dine With Me: The Professionals (T) (R) **4.25** Jamie's One-Pan Wonders (T) (R) **4.50** Food Unwrapped (T) (R) **5.0** Frasier (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake! 9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.15** Storm Huntley (T) **12.45** Friends (T) (R) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.20** FILM My Fatal Memory (Gigi Gaston, 2022) (T) **4.0** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (T) (R) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Police Interceptors (T) (R) **7.0** Happy Campers: The Caravan Park (T)

8.0 **Supermarket Own-Brands: The Big Taste Test** (T) Assorted luxury own-brands are put through their paces in a series of tests.
9.0 **Susan Calman's Grand Day Out** (T) In Nottinghamshire, Susan hears tales of superheroes, explores caves, and lets off steam in a Victorian invention.

10.0 **Truth or Dare: The Murder of Mary Gregory** (T) (R)
12.15 **Cold Case Killers** (T) (R) **1.20** Live Casino Show (T) **3.20** Great British Gardens With Carol Klein (T) (R) **4.05** Great British Gardens With Carol Klein (T) (R) **4.50** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.15** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.35** Entertainment News on 5 (T)

BBC Four

7.0 **Today at the Test** (T) England v West Indies. Highlights of day two.

8.0 **Timewatch: The History of Extreme Weather** (T) (R) Dr Lucie Green reveals how some of the UK's worst weather disasters occurred many years ago.
9.0 FILM **The Woman in Black** (2012) (T) (R) A lawyer visits a village to put a deceased client's affairs in order. Horror, with Daniel Radcliffe.

10.30 **Mark Kermode's Secrets of Cinema: Horror** (T) (R)
11.30 **Talking Books** (T) (R)
11.55 **The Sky at Night** (T) (R)
12.25 **Timewatch: The History of Extreme Weather** (T) (R) **1.25** Full Circle With Michael Palin (T) (R) **2.15** Sleuths, Spies & Sorcerers: Andrew Marr's Paperback Heroes (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm Top Gear **7.55** The Catch Up **8.0** Top Gear **9.0** FILM Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials (2015) **11.05** Man Like Mobeen **11.25** Man Like Mobeen **11.50** Paddy & Molly: Show No Mersey **12.20** Paddy & Molly: Show No Mersey **12.50** Top Gear **1.50** Man Like Mobeen **2.10** Man Like Mobeen **2.35** A Good Girl's Guide to Murder **3.15** A Good Girl's Guide to Murder

Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.10** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **7.35** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **8.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **9.0** Top Gear USA Special **10.0** Top Gear **11.0** Top Gear **12.0** Storage Hunters UK **12.30** Storage Hunters UK **1.0** Storage Hunters UK **1.30** Storage Hunters UK **2.0** James May's 20th Century **2.30** James May's 20th Century **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Top Gear **5.0** The Hairy Bikers' Asian Adventure **6.0** Rick Stein's Spain **7.0** Would I Lie to You? **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Richard Osman's House of Games **9.0** QI XL **10.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **11.0** Taskmaster **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** Would I Lie to You? **1.20** QI XL **2.30** Room 101 **3.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **3.25** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Goldbergs **9.30** The Goldbergs **10.0** Young Sheldon **10.30** Young Sheldon **11.0** Modern Family **11.30** Modern Family **12.0** The Big Bang Theory **12.30** The Big Bang Theory **1.0** The Big Bang Theory **1.30** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Goldbergs **2.30** The Goldbergs **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Young Sheldon **4.30** Young Sheldon **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** Come Dine With Me Paralympics Special **8.0** Dance Moms **9.0** Gogglebox **10.0** Naked Attraction **11.05** First Dates **12.05** The Big Bang Theory **12.35** The Big Bang Theory **1.05** Rick and Morty **1.35** Smiling Friends **1.50** Smiling Friends **2.05** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.55** Dance Moms **3.45** Modern Family **5.0** The Neighborhood

Film4

11.0am FILM Comanche Station (1960) **12.35** FILM The Iron Petticoat (1956) **2.25** FILM The Ten Commandments (1956) **6.45** FILM GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra (2009) **9.0** FILM A Quiet Place Part II (2020) **10.50** FILM The Lodge (2019) **1.0** FILM Mother! (2017)

ITV2

6.0am CITV **9.0** World's Funniest Videos **9.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **10.0** Love Bites **11.0** Love Bites **12.0** Dress to Impress **1.0** Wheel of Fortune **2.0** Supermarket Sweep **3.0** Charmed **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Dress to Impress **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** Wheel of Fortune **8.0** The Masked Singer US **9.0** Love Island **10.05** Tell Me Everything **11.05** Family Guy **12.05** American Dad! **1.05** Don't Hate the Playaz **1.45** Shopping With Keith Lemon **2.20** Shopping With Keith Lemon **2.45** Unwind With ITV **3.0** Teleshopping

Sky Max

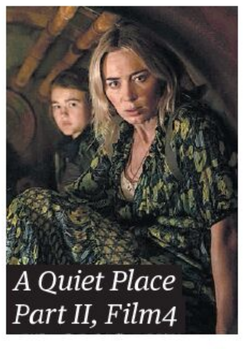
6.0am NCIS: Los Angeles **7.0** SEAL Team **8.0** The Flash **9.0** Stargate SG-1 **11.0** NCIS: Los Angeles **12.0** The Flash **1.0** MacGyver **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** SEAL Team **6.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** The 90s: Cinema's Greatest Decade **9.0** The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live **10.0** The Walking Dead **11.0** Last King of the Cross **12.0** Entourage **1.0** Brit Cops: War on Crime **2.0** Road Wars **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** Highway Patrol

Sky Arts

6.0am André Rieu & the Dutch Royal Family **8.0** The Joy of Painting **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: John Travolta **12.0** The Joy of Painting **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** The South Bank Show Originals **2.30** The South Bank Show Originals **3.0** Hepworth **4.0** Discovering: Matthew Broderick **5.0** The Joy of Painting **5.30** The Joy of Painting **6.0** Tales of the Unexpected **6.30** Tales of the Unexpected **7.0** Battle of the Bagpipes **8.0** The Directors **9.0** Discovering: Tom Cruise **10.0** Sherlock Holmes Vs Arthur Conan Doyle **11.0** Comedy Legends **12.0** The Pilgrimage of Gilbert & George **2.0** FILM Burning Man: Art on Fire (2020) **3.15** Auction **3.45** National Trust: National Treasures **5.0** The Art of Architecture

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets **7.55** Six Feet Under **10.05** Gomorrah **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** The Sopranos **3.30** Six Feet Under **5.40** Gomorrah **7.55** Game of Thrones **9.0** House of the Dragon **10.05** Succession **11.15** Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty **12.25** Watchmen **1.30** The Leftovers **2.50** Game of Thrones **4.0** Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets


A Quiet Place Part II, Film4

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.0** Classical Live. Tom McKinney showcases the best performances from the UK and beyond, including Radio 3 New Generation Artist violinist Geneva Lewis at the recent Norfolk and Norwich festival. **4.0** Composer of the Week: Thomas Linley Jr (4/5) **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** Radio 3 in Concert. The BBC Singers make a welcome return to Norwich Cathedral, broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. Conducted by the cathedral's master of music, Ashley Grote. **9.45** The Essay: Michael Longley's Life of Poetry. Featuring the poems The Leveret, and Remembering Carrigskeewaun. (4/5) **10.0** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight. Soweto Kinch presents the best in jazz. **12.30** Through the Night: Brahms, Webern and Sibelius

Radio 4

6.0am Today **9.0** Reflections. New series. Leading political figures talk about their careers. (1/4) **9.30** The Long History of Ignorance: From Confucius to Q-Anon. The Pursuit of Knowledge. New series. Rory Stewart makes a radical case for embracing ignorance. (1/6) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** The Infinite Monkey Cage. New series. Brian Cox and Robin Ince consider the wonder of trees. (1/7) **11.45** Book of the Week: The Third Information Crisis. Written and read by Naomi Alderman. (4/5) **12.0** News **12.04** The Bottom Line (6/8) **12.32** Sliced Bread: DNA Ancestry Tests (10/10) **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** Ten Second Showdown. The explosive drama of the 100-metre sprint. (4/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Faith, Hope and Glory: Serena-Hope. Drama, my Carol Russell. Last in the series. (3/6) **3.0** Ramblings: Donegal with Iain Miller. Clare Balding explores a stretch of Ireland's Atlantic coastline. (4/7) **3.27** Radio 4 Appeal: Cure Parkinson's (R) **3.30** Feedback (4/9) **4.0** The Briefing Room: Why Are More People in the UK Suffering from anxiety and depression? The rise in mental health disorders among 16 to 24-year-olds. (1/16) **4.30** BBC Inside Science **5.0** PM **5.57** Weather **6.0** Six O'Clock News **6.30** Rhysearch. Rhys James considers education. (4/5) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** The Media Show (R) **9.0** Loose Ends. With Iwan Thomas, Chloe Petts, Rhiane Fatinikun and Raghu Dixit. **9.45** Empire of Tea: The Tea Wars (R) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Glorious Exploits. By Ferdia Lennon. (9/10) **11.0** The Today Podcast **11.30** Three Million: Silk Scarves (R) **12.0** News and Weather **12.30** Book of the Week: The Third Information Crisis (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As BBC World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News Briefing **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today

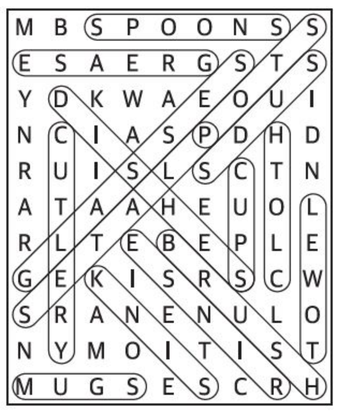
Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Dover and the Smoking Gun **6.45** A Small Town Murder (4/5) **7.0** Patterson (7/8) **7.30** Dad's Army (18/20) **8.0** For the Love of Leo (4/4) **8.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry (4/5) **8.45** Valley of the Dolls (9/15) **9.0** Rhysearch (3/5) **9.30** The Test of Time (4/5) **9.45** Daily Service **10.0** Great Lives **10.30** Sexton's Tales (3/7) **11.0** Dover and the Smoking Gun **11.45** A Small Town Murder (4/5) **12.0** Patterson (7/8) **12.30** Dad's Army (18/20) **1.0** For the Love of Leo (4/4) **1.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry (4/5) **1.45** Valley of the Dolls (9/15) **2.0** Genius (3/6) **2.30** The Philanthropist **4.0** Great Lives **4.30** Sexton's Tales (3/7) **5.0** Dover and the Smoking Gun **5.45** A Small Town Murder (4/5) **6.0** Patterson (7/8) **6.30** Dad's Army (18/20) **7.0** For the Love of Leo (4/4) **7.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry (4/5) **7.45** Valley of the Dolls (9/15) **8.0** Genius (3/6) **8.30** The Philanthropist **10.0** Rhysearch (3/5) **10.30** Knowing Me, Knowing You (1/6) **11.0** Detective Sergeant Nick Mohammed (3/4) **11.30** I've Never Seen Star Wars (2/6) **12.0** Great Lives **12.30** Sexton's Tales (3/7) **1.0** Dover and the Smoking Gun **1.45** A Small Town Murder (4/5) **2.0** Patterson (7/8) **2.30** Dad's Army (18/20) **3.0** For the Love of Leo (4/4) **3.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry (4/5) **3.45** Valley of the Dolls (9/15) **4.0** Genius (3/6) **4.30** The Philanthropist

TODAY'S TRIVIA CORNER ANSWER **SHE WAS 14**

Yesterday's solutions

Wordsearch



Solution no 16,904

C	O	C	K	T	A	I	L	S	T	I	C	K
H	■	I	■	U	■	C	■	M	■	N	■	E
O	U	R	■	G	R	A	D	U	A	L	L	Y
P	■	C	■	O	■	R	■	T	■	A	■	N
S	N	U	F	F	O	U	T	■	I	N	T	O
■	■	M	■	W	■	S	■	D	■	D	■	T
C	A	F	T	A	N	■	F	I	E	R	C	E
E	■	E	■	R	■	V	■	U	■	E	■	■
L	A	R	K	■	D	E	P	R	I	V	E	D
L	■	E	■	E	■	L	■	E	■	E	■	E
I	N	N	E	R	M	O	S	T	■	N	I	B
S	■	C	■	O	■	U	■	I	■	U	■	I
T	R	E	A	S	U	R	E	C	H	E	S	T

Sudoku no 6,544

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

Word wheel

QUARTERLY

Suguru

1	3	5	2	1	2
4	2	1	3	4	5
5	3	4	5	2	1
4	1	2	1	4	3
3	5	4	3	5	1
1	2	1	2	4	3

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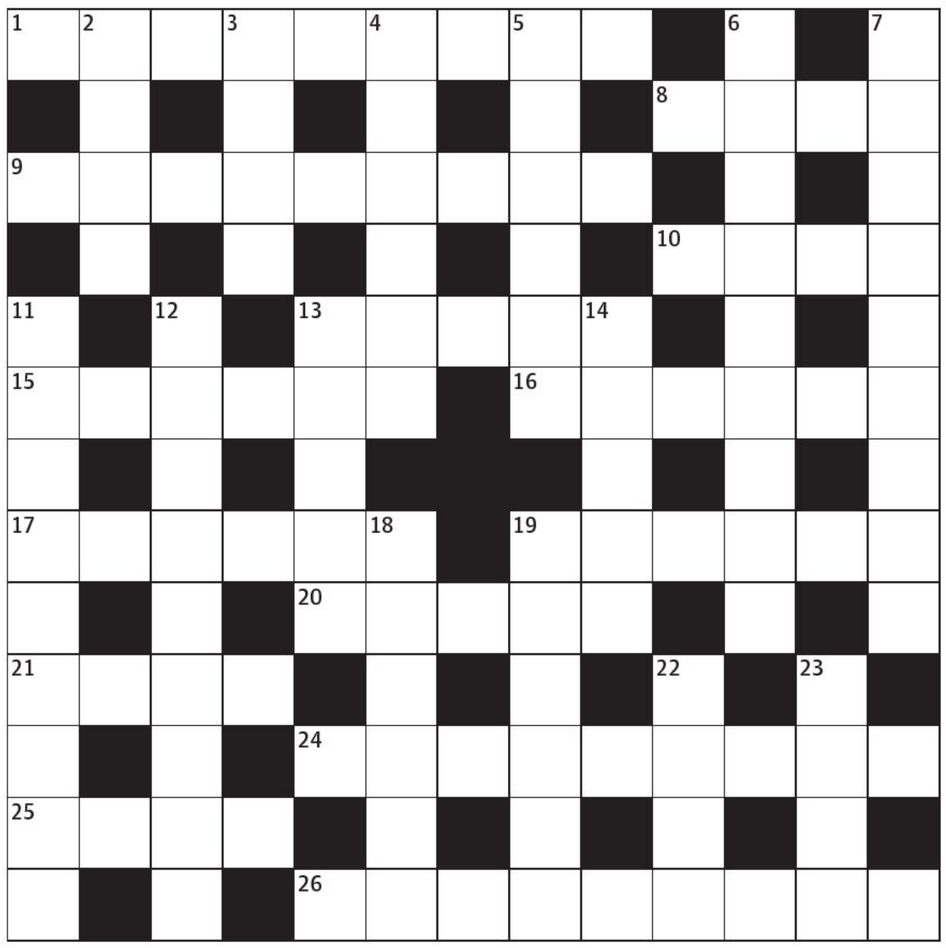
Quick crossword no 16,905

Across

1 Bias (9)
8 Someone of equal standing (4)
9 Apparent worth (4,5)
10 Fruit or savoury tart (4)
13 Abrupt (5)
15 Clean up one's act (6)
16 Use up (energy) (6)
17 Bug (6)
19 Deep dive (6)
20 Broken (informally) (5)
21 Trim (4)
24 Involving much effort (9)
25 Clove-scented flower (4)
26 One's there but not involved (9)

Down

2 Angry cry (4)
3 Off-road vehicle (4)
4 Small crown (6)
5 Race route (6)
6 Intended to help (4-5)
7 One's committed an offence (9)
11 Style of narrow trousers (9)
12 Young (9)
13 Magic, confidence or party? (5)
14 Give high praise (5)
18 Acerbically (6)
19 Least polluted (6)
22 Change direction (4)
23 Ellington or Wellington (4)



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Sudoku no 6,545

Hard. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at theguardian.com/sudoku

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

Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of two squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.

		1			
			4		
3					
			5	3	
1	3	4			2
	5				

Wordsearch

Can you find 15 words connected with cutting in the grid? Words can run forwards, backwards, vertically or diagonally, but always in a straight, unbroken line.

E	U	M	E	V	A	E	L	C
T	R	I	M	S	K	N	O	E
T	N	O	L	O	C	T	N	D
R	N	I	C	E	A	U	H	O
T	C	P	R	S	R	U	C	R
E	S	A	I	P	V	S	T	E
H	P	E	A	H	E	H	O	D
A	L	N	V	M	C	A	N	I
C	H	I	S	E	L	V	O	V
K	T	D	R	A	R	E	I	I
N	O	H	S	A	L	S	L	D

Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-31. Good-26. Average-19.



Trivia corner

How old was Jodie Foster when she was first nominated for an Oscar?
a. 13
b. 14
c. 15
d. 16
Answer top right

