

THE TIMES



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Glory for England

Kane's understudy fires team to final



8-PAGE PULLOUT

Clooney calls on Biden to 'save democracy' by standing aside

Alistair Dawber, David Charter
Aubrey Allegretti Washington

George Clooney has become the most prominent Democrat to call on President Biden to end his campaign for a second term in the White House. In an excoriating letter last night, the Hollywood actor and longstanding Democrat supporter said that Biden,

whom he hosted three weeks ago at a \$30 million fundraising dinner, was a shadow of his former self.

The attack came after days of rows over whether the president, 81, should stand aside in favour of a younger candidate. It follows his disastrous performance in last month's presidential debate against Donald Trump, which has led many in his party to question

whether he has the mental fortitude to fight and win November's election. Biden has remained adamant throughout that he will not quit the race.

"The dam has broken," Clooney wrote in the letter to The New York Times. "We can put our heads in the sand and pray for a miracle, or we can speak the truth. Joe Biden is a hero; he saved democracy in 2020. We need him to do

it again." The Oscar winner described himself as a proud, lifelong Democrat and admirer of Biden, calling him a friend. "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," he 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's letter was the second major blow yesterday to Biden's hopes of riding out the storm over his candidacy. Speaking on MSNBC's *Morning Joe* show, Nancy Pelosi, the former Democratic speaker of the House, **Continued on page 8**



Three members of the Hunt family, Louise, 25, Carol, 61, and Hannah, 28, died in Hertfordshire on Tuesday. A search for the suspect lasted until about 4pm yesterday

Former soldier held over 'triple crossbow murder'

● Youngest victim 'had broken up with suspect' ● Father returned from work to find loved ones dying

David Woode Crime Correspondent
David Brown Chief News Correspondent
Ben Ellery Crime Editor
Charlotte Alt

An army veteran suspected of murdering the wife and two daughters of a BBC sports commentator was apprehended by police yesterday after a day-long manhunt.

Armed officers had been searching for Kyle Clifford, 26, after Carol Hunt, 61, and daughters Louise, 25, and

Hannah, 28, the family of the BBC horse racing commentator John Hunt, were found dead at their home in Hertfordshire on Tuesday evening following a suspected crossbow attack.

Clifford, a former member of the Queen's Dragoon Guards, was found alive in a cemetery at about 4pm yesterday in Enfield, north London. He was filmed being taken away on a stretcher and was driven to the Royal London Hospital. Hertfordshire police said that no shots had been fired by officers.

Hunt, 58, who has worked for Radio 5 for about 20 years, was reported to have found his family tied up at home in Bushey with serious injuries when he returned from commenting at Lingfield Park in Surrey.

They died a short time later in the house. Hunt has an older daughter, Amy, 30.

Police said they believed Clifford was known to the victims and it is understood that Louise had broken up with him last week. Detective Inspector Jus-

tine 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. Following extensive inquiries, the suspect has been located and nobody else is being sought in connection **Continued on page 5**

Bills will soar to clean up water firms' financial mess

Clean it up
CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor
Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor

Households face water bill increases of up to 73 per cent to raise money to repair "crumbling infrastructure" and deal with record sewage spills.

Owat, the water regulator, will rule today on the water companies' request for £100 billion of investment over the next five years to create reservoirs, upgrade sewage works and build other infrastructure.

Approving the full amount would raise the annual average bill in England and Wales to £584.74, a 33 per cent increase, between 2025 and 2030.

Labour ministers believe regulators have no choice but to raise bills but will set out a series of "mitigation" measures designed to ensure the cash is not diverted to bonuses and dividends.

Customers in Kent, Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight face the highest increases after Southern Water asked for a 73 per cent rise. The lowest mooted increase is Northumbrian Water, at 14 per cent.

Owat will probably trim the total investment but that is unlikely to make a dramatic difference to the anticipated increases in bills.

The Times Clean It Up campaign has been clear that bills will need to rise to improve waterways, with protection for vulnerable customers. Such a price spike might have been avoided had previous governments and Owat backed smaller rises in the past decade. Instead bills stayed flat or fell in real terms.

The average annual water bill of £448 at present in England and Wales is broadly in line with similar countries such as Germany and the Netherlands. But it is far less than the £900-plus paid in Norway and nearly £800 in Denmark, and much more than southern European nations such as Spain, where **Continued on page 6**

News

Today's highlights

- 7.15am** David Black, chief executive of Ofwat as it tells water companies what they can charge customers
- 8.05am** Jonathan Powell, former chief of staff to Tony Blair
- 8.45am** Stuart Pearce, former England footballer, right, on last night's victory
- 11am** Anas Sarwar, Scottish Labour leader
- 1.30pm** Lord Kinnock, former leader of the Labour Party

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TODAY'S EDITION

NEWS



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Ford's new version of the Seventies icon angers fans
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SPORT



HIGH-FLYER
All Blacks legend Richie McCaw on life after rugby
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POWER DRESSING
A sequel to The Devil Wears Prada is on the way
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470 days since Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was detained in Russia
#FreeEvan

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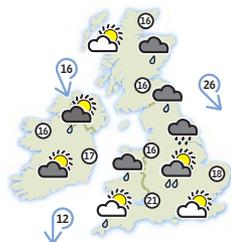
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THE WEATHER



Mostly dry with sunny intervals and the chance of a shower across much of Britain. Full forecast, page 53

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First small boats challenge for Starmer as 400 migrants land

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor
Aubrey Allegretti Chief Political Correspondent

More than 400 migrants crossed the Channel on Tuesday in only six boats in the first significant challenge for the Labour government on the small boats crisis as Sir Keir Starmer said that he would need time to tackle the issue.

The prime minister said the small boats crisis cannot be tackled “overnight” when asked by journalists if the issue will get “worse before it gets better”. However, he insisted that he had “set up our first steps straight away” and that his plans for a new Border Security Command will be set up “at speed” to target the people smuggling gangs facilitating the journeys.

Figures published by the Home Office showed that a total of 419 migrants crossed the Channel in six small boats on Tuesday, which took the total number to have arrived this year to more than 14,000. Tuesday’s figures suggest that a significantly higher number of migrants are piling into boats,

with an average of 70 per vessel compared with an average of 50 for previous crossings this year. The French prevented a further 126 from making the crossing on Tuesday.

However, it has emerged that the French authorities rescued 19 migrants from a boat and allowed the same vessel to continue into French waters with dozens more passengers on board. It marks a shift in tactics from the French, who had previously refrained from rescuing migrants from boats after they are in the water.

Speaking to reporters at the Nato summit in Washington yesterday, Starmer was asked whether the small boats crisis could get worse before it gets better. “I have always said the previous government’s Rwanda policy was a gimmick, it wouldn’t be a deterrent. They argued, if I recall, that even the passing of the legislation would be a deterrent. It clearly hasn’t worked, wasn’t going to work — we’ve had record numbers coming over this year.

“That, unfortunately, is what we’ve inherited — we can’t change that over-

night.” Pressed again, Starmer added: “It can’t be changed overnight. What we can do is set up our first steps straight away.

“The Border Security Command... the home secretary made a statement in relation to that in terms of setting the command up. This a command that will lead on smashing the gangs and as I’ve said many times before, having been myself part of operations that have taken down gangs — police and prosecutors across borders gathering evidence and intelligence, sharing data, having an arrest strategy, a prosecution strategy, an evidence strategy has successfully brought down many gangs, including terrorist gangs.

“I do not accept these are the only gangs that can’t be brought down. I’m determined that our Border Security Command working with others will do so. That’s why it’s got such a rich mix of security and intelligence, alongside prosecutors, alongside law enforcement. And we will get on with the recruitment and setting up that command at speed.”

Labour’s ‘Gaza problem’ not going away, says former MP

Fiona Hamilton Chief Reporter

Labour has “got a problem” with its position on Gaza that will put MPs on the back foot for years, one of the most high-profile casualties of the pro-Palestinian vote has warned.

Thangam Debbonaire, who was in line to become culture secretary until she lost the Bristol Central seat, said that “the lack of a strong narrative had consequences” for Labour candidates.

Four Labour MPs lost to pro-Gaza independent candidates, while the Green Party’s victory in Bristol was also fuelled in part by left-wing anger over Labour’s position on the conflict.

Expressing frustration that Sir Keir Starmer had not clearly explained the party’s position on a ceasefire, Debbonaire told Channel 4 News: “It’s easy to craft a narrative that goes, ‘Your MP didn’t vote for a ceasefire’ if your own party hasn’t said, ‘We voted twice for a ceasefire’. She said “it wasn’t like we hid it but we did not craft a narrative”, saying that she had been “collateral damage” of a strategy of avoiding talking about the Middle East.

Meanwhile an independent MP who declared his election victory was for Gaza is now facing questions after a supporter was charged with Islamist terrorism offences. Shockat Adam won the Leicester South constituency last

week, ousting Jonathan Ashworth, the former Labour frontbencher. Leicester police said that Majid Novsarka, 36, also known as Majid Freeman, had been charged with encouragement of terrorism and supporting a proscribed organisation. He has been released on bail and is due to appear at Westminster magistrates’ court on July 24.

The charges allege that in March he posted online about the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack, in which 12 people were killed in Paris in 2015, and “at the time of doing so intended members of the public to be directly or indirectly encouraged or otherwise induced by the statement to commit, prepare or instigate acts of terrorism”. He is also accused of supporting Hamas.

Novsarka described Adam as the “best man” in the contest for Leicester South. He confronted Ashworth on the campaign trail and accused him of having blood on his hands over Gaza. The video of the incident, which went viral, was promoted by Adam.

Sources close to Adam said that Novsarka held no role in his campaign. While Adam shared a post referencing the viral video, he has deleted it since.

A spokesman for Adam said that he would “not be distracted by our grapes from a beaten rival whose divisive politics were resoundingly rejected at the ballot box”.

Archer quits Lords before age reform

Max Kendix

Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare has joined a wave of peers leaving the House of Lords before radical reforms expected from the new Labour government.

The novelist and convicted perjurer retired on the day of the election after seeing Sir Keir Starmer’s manifesto promise to cap the age of peers at 80.

Archer, 84, was one of five peers over the anticipated age limit to retire since Labour announced the plans in June.

Lord MacKenzie of Culkein, 84, Lord Rana, 85, Baroness Fritchie, 82, and Lord Saville of Newdigate, 88, have also retired since the policy was confirmed.

The government plans to scrap 91 of the 92 hereditary peers and expel those over the age of 80 from sitting in the upper chamber, while allowing those who reach the threshold during the course of the parliament to sit until the next election. Starmer said that the “primary driver” of the age cap was to reduce the size of the upper chamber. He said: “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 than our House of Lords. We have to reduce it.”

Hire ex-convicts to cut reoffending, firms told

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor
Aubrey Allegretti Chief Political Correspondent in Washington

The government will make a major pitch to companies to recruit former prisoners as it puts employment at the heart of its long-term plan to tackle the prison crisis.

Shabana Mahmood, the justice secretary, will announce further emergency measures this week to respond to the overcrowding crisis in jails, but will start to lay out a long-term vision for reforming prisons, The Times has learnt.

James Timpson, the prisons minister who has employed thousands of ex-

convicts at his locksmith and key-cutting company Timpson, wants to significantly boost the number of companies that recruit them.

Ministers will consider scrapping short custodial sentences but this will not be announced as part of the King’s Speech next week, which will set out Sir Keir Starmer’s legislative agenda for the next year. Instead, the plans will be considered as part of a wider review of sentencing laws.

Labour sources pointed to statistics showing that more than a quarter of prisoners reoffend. Tackling reoffending is crucial to cutting the number of people in prison. Reoffending is esti-

mated to cost £18 billion a year. Research by the Ministry of Justice has found that former prisoners who have a job on their release are less likely to reoffend. The department also found that 90 per cent of employers that recruited former prisoners found them reliable, motivated and trustworthy. However, only one in six were in employment six weeks after release and less than a quarter in work after six months.

The government is said to be planning to expand employment advisory boards in jails to act as a link with employers, to ensure that offenders gain skills that could get them a job on release.

Joyful fans have never had it so good

England's thrilling late winner sent supporters' hearts (and their pints) soaring, writes **Charlie Parker** in Dortmund

The Three Lions are through to their first major cup final on foreign soil after triumphing over the Netherlands in the European Championship.

England will face tournament favourites Spain in Berlin on Sunday, with the men now one game away from ending 58 years without a trophy.

Goals from Harry Kane and Ollie Watkins sent the Dutch side and their "orange army" of fans home from Germany, as millions watching back home celebrated the historic win.

Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka and the rest of Gareth Southgate's men were jubilant as they left the pitch and went back to their camp in central Germany last night after their 2-1 victory.

Last night the King sent a message to Southgate and the players, saying: "My wife and I join all our family in wishing you the warmest congratulations on reaching the final... and in sending our very best wishes for Sunday's match. If I may encourage you to secure victory before the need for any last-minute wonder goals or another penalties drama, I am sure the stresses on the nation's collective heart rate and blood pressure would be greatly alleviated! Good luck, England. Charles R."

The Prince of Wales, an Aston Villa fan and president of the FA, sent a personal message on Twitter/X, praising Watkins, who scored the winner. He posted: "What a beauty, Ollie! Congratulations England!"

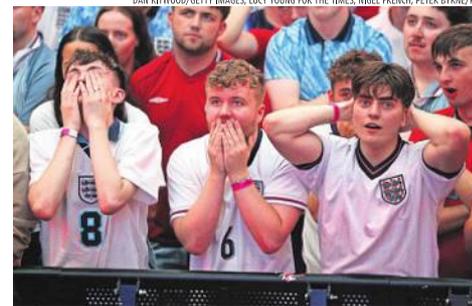
Sir Keir Starmer will attend the final, No10 confirmed last night. Asked if England's semi-final win meant it was "coming home", Starmer, who is attending a Nato summit in Washington, said: "It looks like it."

President Biden responded: "It's because of the prime minister."

Last night video of Watkins's goal was shown on a big screen at the Killers' concert at the O2 Arena in London as the band segued into their hit *Mr Brightside* and confetti and streamers were shot into the crowd.

England supporters were outnumbered six to one in Dortmund after up to 120,000 fans from the Netherlands flooded across the border for the match, in one of the biggest shows of support in the tournament's history. But the result, secured by a goal in the 90th minute, sent the estimated 20,000 Three Lions fans into a frenzy that comfortably drowned out the Dutchmen.

Hours before kick off, Netherlanders dressed head to toe in their distinctive



England fans in Croydon, left, Wembley and Manchester as Ollie Watkins's late winner sent Gareth Southgate's side into the Euros final against Spain on Sunday. Below: Holland supporters at the Dutch Centre in London

bright orange kits and fancy dress outfits swept through the city.

Football revellers let off smoke bombs, sang anthems and danced in formation as they paraded from the city centre to the stadium in their famous "left to right" fan march. The throng bounced as one behind an old English double decker bus that had been covered in orange and repurposed as the nation's party vehicle.

Some set off fireworks from the crowd while others hoisted foam busts of their players into the air.

Englandmen were hard to find among the crowds outside, but a small cohort had gathered at a bar called Wenkers a short walk away from the main fanzone. Seasoned supporters, some who have been to every major tournament since 2000, said they had never felt so outnumbered by rival fans.

The party-like atmosphere was briefly marred by violence, however, when Dutch hooligans launched attacks on Three Lions fans enjoying pints at a bar next to the march. Five people were injured as Holland fans threw stools and benches at the drinkers inside the Sau-

Prayers go unanswered at the Dutch church in London

Lara Wildenberg

Alternating cries of joy and pain could be heard from the cellar of a 13th-century friary in central London, but at nine minutes to 10pm there was silence.

Netherlanders fans in orange had filled the function room beneath the Dutch Church to watch the semi-final. When Ollie Watkins's 90th-minute shot landed in the net heads were in hands.

The Dutch Centre had interest from 150 Orange fans within a day of announcing its event at Austin Friars, where in 1550 Edward VI had offered Dutch and

French-speaking refugees freedom of worship. Yesterday the church was offering chilled Heinekens and Gouda cheese cubes on sticks with pickled onions and decorated with tiny red, white and blue flags.

The crowd rose to their feet at Xavi Simons's early goal, hugging and cheering.

There were boos when the referee called for a penalty at 8.18pm, then agony as Harry Kane scored. Dorothea Blake, 58, who has lived in Britain for 29 years, was with her English husband.

"I think that penalty wasn't totally correct," she said. "When the Dutch feel like something is incorrect they feel disheartened."



Debutant claims magnificent seven wickets in star's swansong

Elizabeth Ammon Cricket Reporter

As he prepared to make his Test debut for England yesterday, Gus Atkinson may have expected to feel a touch of first-time nerves. But the 26-year-old Surrey fast bowler couldn't have foreseen that his debut performance would land him in the history books.

Atkinson claimed a stunning seven West Indies wickets for 45 on the first day of the Test summer at Lord's, leaving England in a commanding position.

A full house at the home of cricket had been primed to pay tribute to James Anderson for his 188th and final Test match after his two-decade-long

career. Instead, fans rose to their feet to applaud the start of a new chapter for Ben Stokes's England team.

Atkinson, who travelled to India with the Test team last summer but did not play, enjoyed a dream start, removing Kraigg Brathwaite, the captain, with his second delivery, then taking another wicket before he had conceded a run. He proceeded to take a

Gus Atkinson's debut Test performance made history



further three in an over after lunch and claimed two further scalps as the West Indies were blown away for 121.

His stunning seven-wicket haul put him into the third spot on the list of best figures in an innings on debut by an England player after John Ferris, who took seven for 37 against South Africa in Cape Town in 1892, and Dominic Cork, who took seven for 43 against the West Indies also at Lord's in 1995.

Atkinson also became the fifth bowler to take a five-wicket haul on his first appearance since Stokes

took over the leadership of the Test team in the summer of 2022.

All around Lord's were images of Anderson — his face on the front of the match day programme, footage of some of his best spells played on the big screens and there was Anderson-related merchandise on sale in the various outlets around the concourse.

The veteran seamer, England's leading wicket taker in Test cricket, is finishing his career at Lord's 22 years after he made his debut at the same ground. His departure came after Stokes and England's head coach, Brendon McCullum, felt they needed to build a younger team with a view to trying to regain

salitos restaurant, smashing windows. The clash prompted British police to confirm groups of "risk supporters" had travelled among the crowds.

Leo Woeho, a worker at the restaurant, said: "The Dutch started it after trying to steal an England flag — there was provocation on each side and it got out of hand. Fortunately no one was badly hurt."

As Holland's army of fans finally arrived at Borussia Dortmund's 66,000-seat BVB Stadium, they occupied the famous "Yellow Wall" end of the arena, turning it orange. Back in the UK, more than 20 million people had gathered in pubs and around televisions to watch the match, including members of the royal family.

Buckingham Palace had wished the team "the best of luck" before the game, posting a video on social media showing the Coldstream Guards performing a rendition of "It's Coming Home".

Fans were hopeful this would be the case, noting that the win meant England had reached their second successive Euros final.

Sport, back page; The Euros, pullout

the Ashes in the winter of 2025-26. The Lancastrian has a reputation for being grumpy but was clearly moved when his wife Danielle, his daughters Ruby and Lola and his parents were given the honour of performing the traditional ringing of the Pavilion bell to signal start of play.

Stokes gave the fans what they wanted — to see Anderson bowl — and although he picked up one wicket, it was Atkinson who was the man of the day in front of a capacity crowd of 34,000. By the end of the day England had taken a first innings lead of 189 with the loss of three wickets.

Test match coverage, pages 61-63

News Crossbow attack

'I heard screaming — within 15

Charlotte Alt, David Woode
David Brown, Ben Ellery

Neighbours of the quiet cul-de-sac where tragedy unfolded on Tuesday evening questioned whether the first seeds had been sown last week.

Louise Hunt, 25, a dog groomer, arrived at the family home so distressed last week that she crashed her car into a telephone pole at the edge of her driveway.

Glyn Nicholas, 77, a neighbour, recalled: "Louise had split up with a boyfriend. She was upset and crashed the car into the post because of the break up. The [car] door was caved in."

Louise, who lived with her father John, a BBC horse racing commentator, her mother Carol, 61, and sister Hannah, 28, had been in a relationship with Kyle Clifford, 26.

On Wednesday, as a police forensic tent was pitched on the driveway of the £800,000 detached family home at Ashlyn Close, Bushey, Hertfordshire, Clifford was apprehended by police having been on the run for about 22 hours.

Another neighbour in the cul-de-sac recalled hearing screaming between 6.30pm and 7pm on Tuesday. "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," she said.

Hunt, 58, was reported to have found his family tied up when he returned from commentating at the Lingfield Park racecourse in Surrey.

Police and ambulance crews arrived at the house shortly before 7pm to find the three women with serious injuries. They died a short time later inside the house.

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

At 7pm Alan Vincent looked out of his kitchen window and noticed an ambulance. He went outside to see three ambulances and at least ten police cars.

About 15 minutes later a man arrived in a Mini and parked in the middle of the road. Vincent, 86, said: "He told me that his girlfriend had been injured. He said he had received a phone call from the police. I said he could park in my driveway." This is believed to be Hannah's boyfriend.

"The police told me to get back inside the house," said Vincent.

Simon Powler, 49, a tennis coach who lives close by, added: "I got told to go inside because a man might be on the loose with a crossbow."

Armed police moved from house to house in the quiet suburb questioning residents, requesting doorbell camera footage and telling them to stay indoors.

Derek Turner, 73, said: "It happened all of a sudden. The whole place went crackers. There were police cars everywhere — armed police in black uniforms with semi-automatic guns. I thought it was a terrorist thing."

Laurence Brass, a local councillor who canvassed the street last week for the general election, said he was watching the European Championship semifinal on television when the police operation began. A helicopter landed on the lawn outside his flat.

"We're very shocked; we're not used to this in this area — it's a typical leafy, British suburb," said Brass, a Liberal Democrat on Hertfordshire county council.

"The most dramatic thing that has ever happened here is a bit of illegal fly-tipping and suddenly we are told there are three murders. I think residents are

Radio man's big break was down to wife

Behind the story

John Hunt is a seasoned sports commentator, renowned for his engaging BBC Five Live racing coverage. He has become a trusted industry voice with a career in racing commentary spanning more than two decades (Georgia Lambert writes).

Before entering broadcasting, Hunt had a varied career with stints in the police force and working as a nurse.

His transition to sports was prompted by his late wife who spotted an advert for a trainee broadcaster position at Ladbrokes, the sports betting company.

His big break came in 2004 when he joined BBC Radio 5 Live, where he began commentating on horse racing. His role expanded significantly, covering events like the London 2012 Olympics.

Hunt is also an ambassador for Racing to School, a charity that inspires young minds through the provision of free outdoor educational events for schools, at a variety of racing venues.

Matt Chapman, ITV's racing commentator, wrote on Twitter/X: "No words needed for what has happened to @Huntycaller and family

today. Impossible to comprehend the pain.

"Just know we are all here for you John. We love you pal — racing loves you."



a bit traumatised." At 8.31am on Wednesday, Hertfordshire police announced that they were investigating a triple murder. They said they were hunting Clifford, an army veteran and former security guard, from Enfield, north London.

Detective Superintendent Rob Hall said: "Given the serious nature of the incident, I would ask anyone who knows where he is to contact police immediately. If you believe you see him, please do not approach him and dial 999 straight away. He may still be in possession of a weapon."

Initial searches were focused 14 miles east of Bushey where ten armed police officers with riot shields descended on Clifford's family home in Enfield at 8am.

One neighbour, who declined to give her name, said she became aware of the incident when she noticed two helicopters circling overhead. She left home in her car 90 minutes later and discovered the road was "cordoned off at every angle".

"It was frightening. There were police officers everywhere," she said. "They had big guns, long shields and headgear



The respected BBC racing commentator John Hunt with his late wife Carol and their daughters, Hannah, left, and Louise, below, who were also found dead



like what you see at riots. There were two helicopters circling overhead.

"People were trying to enter the street but they [the police] were ushering people out. A police officer asked me where I was going and how long I was going to be. I think they were here for about an hour.

"I went over to Hilly Fields [park] to

walk my dog but was ushered out because there were police there. They looked like they were searching it."

A young mother described the commotion that unfolded on the "very quiet" street after the school run.

"I saw them go into the house. [Police] dogs were barking and I realised something serious was happen-

ing." She said her eldest child attends a nearby school that had been "placed into an amber lockdown. My other child's nursery has shut their doors too. We're very worried."

The mother added: "A lot of the parents are worried about our kids. I've asked my husband to do the school pick-up because I don't feel safe."

Jade-Simone Bacon, headteacher of St Michael's Primary School, said it had been visited by police and she had made the decision not to let children into the playground.

"The police have advised us to continue business as usual so we have locked the building and will continue teaching," she said.

At 12.30pm police held a media conference at their headquarters in Hitchin in which Chief Superintendent Jon Simpson urged members of the public not to confront Clifford.

The search focused on a cemetery in the Hilly Fields area of Enfield, around 120 yards from the Clifford family home, which had been raided by police earlier in the day.

From about 3pm, the cemetery was entered by numbers of armed police of-

minutes it was absolute chaos'

Horror at BBC over their colleague's loss

Continued from page 1

with the investigation at this time."

In a press conference before Clifford was located, police had said that the murders were a "targeted incident". They had warned that as well as the crossbow, "other weapons may have been used".

The Home Office has announced a rapid review of crossbow laws to consider whether they should be tightened.

A note sent to Hunt's colleagues at Radio 5 Live yesterday said that the organisation would provide the commentator with "all the support we can".

Neighbours reported hearing a woman screaming at about 6.30pm on Tuesday and said that within 15 minutes "it was absolute chaos" as armed police officers swarmed through the area, instructing residents to stay indoors and requesting camera doorbell video.

About 20 police vehicles and ambulances attended the scene and a police helicopter scoured the area throughout Tuesday night looking for Clifford.

CCTV images captured after the attack appeared to show Clifford, dressed in black, walking from the area carrying what looked to be a large object before getting into a black car.

Initial searches were focused 14 miles east of Bushey where ten armed officers with riot shields descended on Clifford's family home in Enfield at 8am yesterday. Police descended on Lavender Hill Cemetery, about

120 yards away, at around 3pm. Clifford was located having suffered wounds and was taken to a hospital.

Yvette Cooper, the home secretary, said: "The loss of three women's lives in Bushey is truly shocking. My thoughts are with the family and friends of those who have been killed and with the community. I urge people to support Hertfordshire police with any information about this case."

Hunt was described as an "outstanding commentator and broadcaster" by colleagues.

The BBC racing correspondent Cornelius Lysaght said: "There are no words. 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's impossible to know what he can be going through."

"But I know I'm 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."

A Home Office spokeswoman 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."

Jon Simpson had told the public to avoid Clifford

Suspect's brother was sent to jail for revenge murder

David Brown

The older brother of the suspected triple killer Kyle Clifford is in prison for murdering a moped passenger after a dispute over a girlfriend.

Bradley Clifford, now 30, drunkenly chased Jahshua Francis, 19, and his passenger Soban Khan, 18, after they hit his Ford Mustang with a bottle.

Francis drove into oncoming traffic and tried to mount the pavement in a desperate attempt to escape during a chase in Enfield, north London, in August 2017.

The pair were thrown into the air when the bike was hit by Clifford's car, his trial at the Old Bailey was told, and Khan was killed.

Clifford, an air conditioning firm manager, denied murder but was convicted in May 2018. He received a life sentence and was told that he would spend at least 23 years behind bars.

The murder followed an argument between Clifford and one of Khan's friends about his girlfriend.

The two men agreed to go to a car park for a fist fight. While Clifford waited in his £35,000 Ford Mustang, Khan

drove away and smashed a bottle on the side of the car.

Attab Jafferjee, for the prosecution, said that the moped was no match for the power of Clifford's car. He said: "It was rapid, it was brutal and it was unrelenting. He pursued the moped down a straight stretch of road at speed — not to apprehend the two people on it, but to mow them down for daring to damage his prized vehicle."

Khan's father, Najam, told the court in a victim impact statement: "We all had such high hopes for Soban for his life and what was proving to be a very promising future. He was a great son and a great brother. Unfortunately with boundless pain we will never see him become anything more, not a husband, not a father and the successful man he wanted to be. We will continue to grieve for the rest of our lives. His smile and words will never leave us."

The judge told Clifford: "Soban was a rising star with a promising future. As Mr Khan says, no parent should have to bury their child. You were already in a violent temper and the actions by those teenagers on the moped turned you into a murderer."



The suspect Kyle Clifford, right, was filmed, above, leaving the house where the bodies were found in Bushey, Hertfordshire. Police searched Lavender Hill Cemetery in Enfield, north London, in the hunt for Clifford



officers and ambulance staff rushed into the area.

Rae Cresswell, 26, said she watched as armed officers "swarmed" Lavender Hill Cemetery.

Cresswell, who lives near to the scene, said: "I've been in and out of the cemetery all afternoon and at about 3pm I noticed a few police officers with masks over their faces holding guns and guiding sniffer dogs."

"Initially I was scared. I asked them if they wanted me to leave but they said I was fine to stay. I was hoping to have seen him so I could tell someone to come and get him."

"A few minutes later more officers swarmed in and they started to clear the area."

Clifford was filmed by a news helicopter being stretchered away to an ambulance at about 4.30pm and taken to the Royal London Hospital.

At about 5.15pm two forensic investigators, wearing face masks and dressed in blue scrubs with black plastic liners over their shoes, entered the cemetery.

Hertfordshire police released a statement at 6.23pm, confirming that Clifford had been apprehended.

Crossbow laws: how is it so easy to carry one?

Laws governing the possession of crossbows are more liberal than for firearms.

It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy or possess a crossbow. For adults it is only illegal to carry one in public without a "reasonable excuse". There is no need for a licence and they are available to buy online.

The maximum punishment for carrying a crossbow without a reasonable excuse is four years in jail.

The Home Office began a review of crossbow laws, to see whether they needed tightening, such as by introducing licences and police checks for

anyone who wants to buy one. This would take the rules closer to those for buying and owning guns.

The review of controls was announced after an attempt to kill Queen Elizabeth with a crossbow by Jaswant Singh Chail, who was aged 19 when arrested at Windsor Castle on Christmas Day 2021. He was jailed for nine years.

Killings are rare, with fewer than ten between 2011 and 2021, but the question of whether laws need tightening has arisen recently after fatal attacks.

In January the convicted stalker Bryce Hodgson was shot dead by police after he broke

into a London home armed with weapons including a crossbow.

In January last year a domestic homicide review found that the Metropolitan Police failed to protect Sana Muhammad from her ex-husband before he killed her with a crossbow. Muhammad, 35, was eight months pregnant when Ramanodge Unmathallegadoo, then 51, burst into her home and fired an arrow into her stomach in 2018. Her unborn son was delivered by caesarean section and survived.

Unmathallegadoo was sentenced to life in jail with a minimum term of 33 years in 2019.



Hug of love Benjamin Brook, aged six, from Camblesforth with Skylark Orange, a rare breed Lincoln Longwool, at the 165th Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate

YORKSHIRE POST/SWIS

Quintagram® No 1991

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

- 1 Unit of paper quantity (4)
- 2 Disorderly group (6)
- 3 Delve into and search (through) (7)
- 4 Agent of retribution (7)
- 5 Youth activity movement (8)

A	A	A	A	B	B	C	E
E	E	E	E	G	G	G	I
L	M	M	M	N	N	O	R
R	R	R	S	T	U	U	V

Solutions T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Murder suspect bailed

A mother who has been jointly charged with murdering her daughter has been granted bail. Scarlett Vickers, 14, was allegedly stabbed at home in Darlington on Friday. Her parents Simon Vickers, 48, and Sarah Hall, 44, have been charged with murder. Hall appeared at Teesside crown court. No application for bail was made for Vickers.

Protest camps defeat

The Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham have won High Court orders to regain possession of land used by pro-Palestinian protest camps since May. They took separate actions against two activists and persons unknown. A judge granted summary orders, concluding that protesters had no prospect of showing a breach of duty or of their human rights.

Rapist and cheat jailed

A sex attacker who posed as a businessman to defraud women out of £210,000 in a romance scam has been jailed for 12 years. Christopher Harkins, 37, from Helensburgh, Argyll and Bute, was convicted in May of one rape and making sex videos without consent. He admitted fraud. A judge at Kilmarnock high court said his crimes were "devastating".

Heads in the clouds

The classic British stereotype of always talking about the weather is true with the subject coming up five times in a typical day, a poll of 2,000 people for Warner Bros has found. The average adult checks the forecast 11 times a week and spends nine minutes a day talking about it, or five months during a lifetime. Many said that socially it was an easy ice breaker.

Water clean-up cash must not go on bonuses, minister demands

Continued from page 1

average bills are about £200, figures from the water industry body EurEau show.

Steve Reed, the new environment secretary, has called in the bosses of 16 water companies for a meeting today to discuss four immediate reforms to the sector.

Chief executives will be told that their companies need to change their articles of association to put the environment and customers at the heart of their objectives. Companies will also need to give new powers to "customer panels" to allow them to summon board members for questioning.

Reed has written to Ofwat asking it to ensure that funding for infrastructure to clean up rivers and deliver new water supplies is ring-fenced, to avoid money being spent on bonuses, dividends and salary increases. Cash that is not spent will be returned to customers, Reed will promise.

Finally, compensation will be doubled for households facing problems such as interruptions to their water supply. Eligibility for compensation will be widened, making payouts for "boil water notices" — such as the one issued recently by South West Water — a statutory requirement rather than a voluntary one.

"The previous government turned a blind eye as water bosses pocketed millions in bonuses while pumping record levels of sewage into our rivers, lakes and seas," Reed said.

"We will never look the other way while water companies pump sewage into our rivers, lakes and seas. This unacceptable destruction of our water-

Turning the tap

Water and wastewater companies

Customer bills	Actual average bill, 2024-25	Proposed average bill, 2029-30	% increase
Southern Water	£420	£727	72.9%
Wessex Water	£508	£690	35.7%
Thames Water	£436	£627	44%
Dŵr Cymru	£466	£602	29.1%
South West Water	£497	£596	20%
Anglian Water	£491	£573	16.8%
Yorkshire Water	£430	£569	32.3%
Hafren Dyfrdwy	£396	£560	41.2%
United Utilities	£442	£554	25.2%
Severn Trent Water	£403	£546	35.7%
Northumbrian Water	£415	£471	13.6%

The proposed changes in bills do not take account of inflation. Source: Ofwat

ways should never have been allowed, but change has now begun so it can never happen again."

The award-winning Times Clean It Up campaign has been pressing for urgent action from the water industry and regulators to help reduce pollution and clean up Britain's waterways, including greater power for the Environment Agency and more action from companies to improve the thousands of storm

overflows that discharge effluent near beaches and rivers.

Labour is pinning the blame for the state of Britain's rivers and seas — and therefore the need for big water bill increases — on the Conservatives.

"This is a result of 14 years of failure under the Conservatives who essentially weakened regulation, allowing water companies to pump record levels of sewage out, while also letting our infrastructure crumble," a source close to Reed said.

Reed is expected to discuss a "reset" in relations with water bosses, to work together and bring in more private investment to upgrade infrastructure.

Among the chief executives is Chris Weston of the heavily indebted Thames Water, which has investment plans that would raise bills by 44 per cent. This week Thames Water warned that an unfavourable settlement with Ofwat could trigger defaults with its lending banks.

Labour has no appetite for nationalising Thames Water, the UK's biggest water company, but could appoint special administrators in the event of the business collapsing.

South East Water, which supplies water to 2.3 million customers, said this week that it required a cash injection to stay afloat. The company's £1.9 billion investment plan would raise water bills by 22 per cent.

Reed's initial four reforms are only the first steps he is planning to get tough with the water sector. He also has to work with Ofwat in the coming months to establish the rules for a flagship ban on bonuses for bosses of egregiously polluting water firms.

Behind the story

Just as energy bills are briefly falling, most water bills will go up. It's a shift that is arguably overdue, however unwelcome for households in a cost of living crisis (Adam Vaughan writes).

Past decisions by regulators to protect customers have meant that water bills stayed flat or fell in real terms for 15 years.

Water companies hope to present Ofwat's decision as a story of record investment. Last year they proposed spending £96 billion between 2025 and 2030. They later revised that to £100 billion. Some £55 billion will be devoted to daily operations and maintenance of existing assets, from sewer networks to water transfers. The rest will go on new infrastructure to ensure drinking water supplies as populations grow and climate change continues, and for new storm tanks and extra stages of treatment for wastewater.

Thames Water says money will run out next May without new funds. Campaigners will blame companies, regulators and government. Water firms will point out that they can only spend what Ofwat allows them to. If it had allowed bills to increase with inflation for the past ten years, there would have been £11 billion more to spend.

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A Mexican royal wave as SW19 becomes Queen's

The Queen arrived at Wimbledon yesterday to watch a Russian-born tennis player take on a Ukrainian (Tom Witherow and Kate Mansey write).

Queen Elizabeth disliked tennis, watching the championships only four times.

Camilla's visit to the Royal Box is her second since the coronation. She was at Centre Court last year with her sister, Annabel Elliot.

Upon arrival the Queen was introduced to players and staff.

She met Jamie Delgado, who holds the male record for playing in consecutive Wimbledon tournaments after reaching his 23rd in 2014 at the age of 37. She also met Laura Robson, the former professional who works as a broadcaster for the BBC and others.

The Queen talked with the ball boys and girls as well as Martyn Falconer, the head gardener at the All England Club. She also met Stephen Loizou, chief executive of Jigsaw4u, a charity based in Mitcham, south London, that helps



The Queen's arrival brought a burst of sunshine to Wimbledon yesterday after five days of rain and disrupted matches. She was joined in the Royal Box by her sister Annabel Elliot, above left, and Mike and Zara Tindall as well as the actress Keira Knightley, left



young people deal with trauma. The Queen was joined by Mike and Zara Tindall along with her brother, Peter Phillips, and his girlfriend Harriet Spurling, an NHS nurse. They were joined in the Royal Box by Keira Knightley, the actress.

Camilla watched as Elena Rybakina, a Russian who switched to the Kazakhstan tennis federation in 2018, took on Elina Svitolina, of Ukraine. Svitolina wore a black ribbon in tribute to those killed in the Kyiv children's hospital bombed by Russian forces. She lost to Rybakina in two sets, 6-3, 6-2.

The Queen's appearance will fuel speculation over whether the Princess of Wales, who is being treated for cancer, will present the trophies



on Sunday. Sally Bolton, chief executive of the All England Club, said her team was in "constant

dialogue" with Kensington Palace. "Our absolute priority is her recovery," she said. "We announce

the presentation parties on the morning of the finals."

The Queen's arrival brought a welcome burst of sunshine after five days of rain.

Wimbledon issued refunds worth £250,000 to fans with tickets for outdoor courts who saw less than two hours of play.

More than 50 of the 86 matches were rained off. It forced organisers yesterday to start play at 10.30am so matches in the doubles and junior tournaments could remain on schedule.

William's inspiration for helping the homeless

Kate Mansey

She spent her formative years sleeping on the streets of Newport. He lived in Kensington Palace and boarded at Eton.

Now, Dr Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, 41, has been invited by the Prince of Wales to be part of a team working to solve the country's homelessness problem. Today Prince William, 42, will attend an event in Lambeth, London, to mark the first anniversary of Homewards, his five-year campaign with the Royal Foundation to end homelessness.

In a speech William is expected to steer away from political rhetoric to say: "Homelessness is a complex societal issue and one that touches the lives of far too many people in our society. However, I truly believe that it can be ended."

Although Cohen-Hatton said that her path into homelessness was "by no means unique", her route out of it has been extraordinary. She said: "I grew up in a single-parent household after the death of a parent. My mum found it incredibly difficult to cope and struggled with her mental health. We lived in abject poverty and it was an incredibly volatile situation. And it meant that by the time I was 15, nearly 16, I ended up sleeping on the streets of Newport."

During her time sleeping rough, her only moral support came from her pet dog, Menace. She started selling copies of The Big Issue, which she credits with saving her life, and joined the fire service at 18. Cohen-Hatton, now chief fire officer at West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, said: "I think one thing the prince does know is trauma. And you could really see that coming through."

The Homewards project is running in six locations across the UK, including in Newport. In the past year, more than 100 homes have been pledged and 500 jobs created at Pret a Manger.

One trial is looking to liaise with schools to identify at-risk families. Matt Downie, managing director of the charity Crisis, hopes this will get "upstream" of the problem. A Kensington Palace spokesman said of the prince: "He knows that it's an issue that is far too present in our society but he also firmly believes that change is possible and it is possible for homelessness to be ended."

Psst: gossiping can harm your career

Sophie Freeman

People who like a good gossip at work are perceived as more sociable but less competent, a study has found.

They are more likely to be trusted to help organise social events but less likely to be asked their advice about ethical matters.

The study's co-author Nahid Ibrahim, from the University of Leeds business school, said that gossip remained a "valuable form of information exchange".

"It often helps people navigate the workplace by offering information typically unavailable through formal channels. For example, as a newcomer, you probably would like to know what working with your other colleagues is like, who gets along with whom and who to avoid."

"Gossip also helps people understand the organisational culture and helps

people build relationships. Indeed, this is rooted in evolutionary reasons for gossiping.

"In early human communities, gossip helped people judge others' actions and reputations, ensure everyone followed the rules, and build connections among group members. Therefore, gossiping can be seen as a hallmark of a well connected individual with an extensive social network.

"However, gossiping is also seen as a form of moral transgression as gossipers often share private and sensitive information about others, with or without an explicit intention to harm their reputation. Moreover, gossiping comes with certain labels such as 'idle talk', 'chit chat', etc, suggesting that gossiping at the workplace can be considered a waste of time — the time that could be otherwise devoted to pursuing more meaningful and productive activities.

"Hence, although gossipers are seen

as more sociable than someone who does not gossip, they are also seen as less moral and competent."

For the study, the researchers presented 1,400 participants with hypothetical workplace scenarios about their colleague "Alex" over five different experiments. A gender-neutral name was used by the researchers to avoid prejudice.

In each experiment half were told that Alex enjoyed chit-chatting and that "whether it was everyday happenings in the company or their co-workers' personal lives, good or bad, Alex talked about all of them". The other half were told that Alex did not like to engage in chit-chat about others and did not talk much about daily occurrences within the company or the personal lives of their colleagues.

In one of the experiments the participants were asked to judge Alex on various aspects of their personality.

Those told about gossip Alex rated them as more sociable but less moral and competent.

In another experiment participants were told they needed to tackle an ethical matter at their company — specifically how to handle employees who had received gifts from clients exceeding the allowed value — and whether they would go to Alex for advice.

Those presented with the image of Alex as a chit-chatter were less likely to go to them for advice. In another experiment, people who were told they needed to organise a welcome lunch for new employees at their company, where the aim was to create a "warm and welcoming environment where these newcomers could establish connections with their colleagues and feel a strong sense of belonging", were more likely to ask gossip Alex for help than non-gossip Alex.

Workplace gossip can be good and

bad, according to Ibrahim. "Organisations are very similar to social communities, and gossip plays a critical role in ensuring their effective functioning," she said. "It fosters relationships among its members, paving the way for effective collaboration. Gossip is often helpful in uncovering workplace issues that might not be reported through formal channels and can help increase employee morale."

"However, gossip also has the potential to cause harm to individuals, groups and organisations as a whole. It can damage individuals' reputations and create misunderstandings among members, disrupting teamwork and co-operation. The targets of gossip can often experience lower morale and higher dissatisfaction, which can lead to formal complaints and grievances."

The findings are published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology.

News Politics

Labour starts work to reset relationship with the EU

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent
Washington

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Sir Keir Starmer has put Britain on course for significantly closer ties with Europe as he used his first international summit to launch a diplomatic charm offensive with EU leaders.

The prime minister held a one-to-one meeting with Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor, on the margins of the Nato summit in Washington where he called for the “widest possible co-operation” between the two countries.

He also met Ulf Kristersson, the Swedish prime minister, and watched England’s Euro 24 semi-final with Dick Schoof, the new Dutch prime minister, as part of a wider diplomatic mission surrounding the summit.

Unusually, Starmer has taken not just John Healey, his defence secretary, to the summit but also David Lammy, the foreign secretary, and Nick Thomas-Symonds, the Europe minister.

They are expected to use the event to hold bilateral meetings with their EU counterparts as Starmer looks to build support for his plan of a new defence and security agreement with the European Union.

Lammy has made clear that he wants the pact to extend beyond military co-operation and to include energy, climate change and even illegal migration. In an effort to make rapid progress, Lammy has said that the agreement would not necessarily need to be a legally binding document but could take the form of a political declaration, which would not take so long to negotiate.

Separately, Sir Patrick Vallance, the science minister, told a G7 meeting that the UK wanted to be a “reliable partner” after tensions stoked by Brexit.

Starmer said that he had brought Lammy and Thomas-Symonds with him because the Nato summit gave him the opportunity to hold lots of meetings that would otherwise have taken “months and months” to organise. Thomas-Symonds attended the meetings with Scholz and Kristersson.

“[Nato] has provided a really important window of opportunity for me and my team, because we’ve got the summit within a week of the election, so we get the opportunity to strengthen our relations with various of the Nato leaders and others obviously that are there, including EU leaders,” he said. “The central purpose is obviously all about Nato but it is a very important opportunity to strengthen those relations.”

Starmer also highlighted that the UK will host a meeting of the European Political Community, which includes EU leaders and those from neighbouring states, at Blenheim Palace next week. Rishi Sunak had wanted to use the summit to discuss illegal migration, but Starmer and British diplomats are likely to try to win support for their defence and security pact. They also want to start mobilising support for a more

extensive renegotiation of Britain’s free trade deal with the EU. This is due to be reviewed next year and Starmer wants it to include a new food safety agreement to reduce time and costs for exporters at the border.

He wants to underline that while Labour has ruled out rejoining the EU’s single market and customs union, that does not preclude significantly enhancing co-operation in other areas.

“I do think there is scope for a significant improving of our defence and security relationship with the EU,” he said. “I think this is complementary with Nato. Nato is still the cornerstone of defence in Europe and our approach on defence has always been Nato first.”

In a summary of the meeting with Scholz, Downing Street said that the German chancellor had welcomed Starmer’s commitment to “resetting the UK’s European partnerships”.

A spokesman said: “[Starmer and Scholz] noted how important our friendships with like-minded countries will be in a challenging international environment. They discussed the importance of having the widest possible co-operation across all aspects of the relationship.”

Meanwhile Vallance told fellow G7 ministers that the UK was looking to host an international scientific research facility as it sought to “reset” its reputation in a spirit of “humility and shared endeavour”.

“We will be a reliable partner, a dependable ally, and a good neighbour on the world stage,” Vallance told the meeting of G7 science and technology ministers in Bologna, Italy. “I am proud to join a new government with a mandate for change, which also marks a reset in how the UK collaborates with the rest of the world, with humility and shared endeavour.”

In an interview with the BBC he said that Brexit was “definitely a problem” because it had shut down access to the EU’s Horizon research programme, which Britain rejoined this year as an associated country.

He also called for a relaxation in visa rules for scientists to attract more talent to the UK, but was immediately slapped down by the Home Office.

Vallance, who was chief scientific adviser during the Covid-19 pandemic, told BBC Radio 4’s *World at One* that Britain should make it easier for people to come to the UK to contribute their “scientific knowledge creation”.

He said: “There are lots of different bits of visa issue, including the cost, which is very high at the moment, for people coming to the UK that needs to be looked at when you need to think about how we can make the environment right for people to come, who we want to have here, contributing to science.”

However, an official at the Home Office responded by saying that lowering visa fees was “not government policy”.

Anniversary summit overshadowed by US politics, leading article, page 25



Sir Keir Starmer, in Washington for his first Nato summit, spoke with President Biden in the Oval Office, and met President Zelensky, left, the secretary-general of Nato Jens Stoltenberg, right, and President Macron, far right



Clooney adds voice to Biden doubts

Continued from page 1

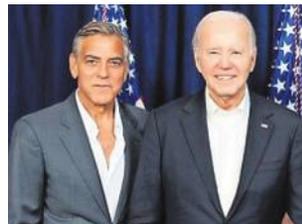
stopped short of saying the president should withdraw from the race but warned that “time is running short”.

Pelosi, 84, has hitherto been an ally of the president. She is by far the most senior elected Democrat to demur over his continuing in the race, however, leaving open the possibility that others in the party will use her intervention to call for Biden to step down.

Asked if Biden had her support to remain as the Democratic nominee, Pelosi said it was a question for him. “We’re all encouraging him to make that decision because time is running short,” she said. “But he’s beloved.”

Biden has spent days fighting to persuade colleagues that he still has the mental capacity to serve for another four years in the White House. At the conclusion of a second term in January 2029 he would be 86.

The interventions by Clooney and



Clooney met Biden three weeks ago

Pelosi came as Biden prepared to meet the press today at the conclusion of the Nato summit. He is likely to face further questions about his ability to lead.

Biden was also due to meet Sir Keir Starmer in the Oval Office last night. The prime minister sidestepped a question about Biden’s age after it was suggested the president would be banned from the House of Lords under

Labour’s plans to axe peers aged 80 and over. “It doesn’t reflect on how other elected representatives are chosen in other countries,” Starmer said.

Earlier, the prime minister said his meeting at the White House was a “very good opportunity” to discuss defence co-operation.

The prospect of Trump winning in November overshadowed the start of the Nato meeting after the former president told supporters on Tuesday that the US would not protect nations that did not spend enough on defence. “I didn’t even know what the hell Nato was ... before but it didn’t take me long to figure it out,” he said at a rally in Florida.

Julianne Smith, the US ambassador to Nato, told CNN: “No one had to explain Nato to Joe Biden. It’s something that he has committed himself to from the early days of his career.”

Doctor’s orders are what Biden and US voters need to hear, Thunderer, page 22

SAUL LOEB/AFP/STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA, NATHAN HOWARD/REUTERS, LUDOVIC MARIN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



Arsenal shirt for the PM's new team-mate

Aubrey Allegretti

Sir Keir Starmer was expected to give a personalised Arsenal football shirt to President Biden when the two leaders met last night at the White House.

On the day England played the Netherlands in the Euros, the prime minister and the US president were due to have a one-to-one meeting to discuss Nato plans to boost support for Ukraine and curb Russian aggression.

Starmer, an Arsenal fan, was to pass on the shirt bearing Biden's name and the number 46 (Biden is the 46th US presi-



dent). Another gift was a framed copy of the original Atlantic charter that led to the formation of Nato. It is adorned with amendments from Clement Attlee, Labour prime minister from 1945-51, the period when Nato was set up. The exchange was being done by diplomats away from the cameras.

Arsenal shirts are a staple of Starmer's gift-giving to leaders. Last September he gave one to President Macron of France on a trip to Paris.

During a 2009 trip to the White House, Gordon Brown, then the prime minister, gave Barack Obama a pen holder carved from the timbers of the sister ship of HMS Resolute, whose timbers were used to make the so-called Resolute Desk, presented as a gift by Queen Victoria and still used in the Oval Office today. He received a box set of 25 DVDs selected by the American Film Institute which included *Raging Bull*, *Casablanca*, *Psycho* and *The Graduate*.

Imagine the scene in the Oval Office as Starmer went wild

Tom Peck
Political Sketch



If it were ever in doubt that Sir Keir Starmer is a lucky man, may we turn immediately to the first question put to him on his inaugural visit to the Oval Office.

"Is football coming home, Prime Minister?"

"It looks like it," says the prime minister, before pointing out that the England team are "undefeated under a Labour government".

"I heard the good news," says the president. "It's all because of the prime minister."

Moments earlier, we presume, he'd been screaming "GET IN!" and chucking his pint of lager all over the famous Peale portrait of George Washington. By the time they let the cameras in it was a sea of calm.

What a start to life in the Big Time. Day five, hanging out in the Oval Office. On day nine, he's going to be hanging out at the Olympiastadion in Berlin. The first prime minister to head off abroad to watch England in a major tournament final, ever.

Sir Keir looks very much at home in the Big Time. So used is he to all this already that he felt sure enough not only to briefly duck out of the Nato summit to watch Harry Kane's penalty but also to slowly rise out of his seat and say the word. "Yes" very quietly indeed, right in front of the Dutch prime minister.

All this stuff is water off a duck's back, to Sir Keir. We've all now seen the obligatory photograph of the new prime minister on his private jet, in the centre of a full clock face formation of very excited-looking dictaphone-pointing journalists.

The trappings of power are different now. There are no grand jewels or garments. Power can be calibrated with extreme accuracy through the blandness of a leader's comments in an extremely short news clip while standing in front of a boring-looking backdrop on their way into a Very Important Meeting, ideally in Washington DC.

On that metric we now know beyond doubt that Sir Keir Starmer is now a very powerful man indeed.

Into this most rarefied world he has entered like a man who has always belonged. Lesser mortals might find themselves daunted by the prospect of meeting a BBC microphone nose on and confirming that you've "just had a very good bilateral meeting" and that you're "very much looking forward" to further bilateral meetings later.

Not Sir Keir. He was born to do it. We always suspected it and now we know. We have seen the pictures. Prime ministers to the left of him, presidents to the right, the hands clasped, the chin angled slightly toward the ceiling. Textbook stuff.

The new prime minister gave his first press conference in Downing Street over the weekend. He seemed slightly nervous. He must now realise he didn't need to be. He was asked, at one point, if he was "getting used to being called prime minister". This is the sort of question to which the likes of you or I might answer: "Little old me, eh? Who'd have thought it?"

Not Sir Keir. Here's what he had to say, and this is verbatim: "I recognise it is important for civil servants to refer to the office holder as prime minister because they're serving the office."

"I recognised this when I was director of public prosecutions, that it's important to them to use the title because it reinforces that public service. I respect that and understand that."

Remarkably, no one in the room rose to their feet and applauded. They should have. That's right up there with some of Theresa May's very finest work, and she had years of practise, by the end.

To hit these heights on day one is simply world class. His is the earth and everything that's in it.

The Keir Years are now very much upon us.

Starmair has completed its ascent. The captain has switched off the seatbelt sign and absolutely no turbulence is expected.

I'd just sit back and watch a movie if I were you. Next stop, Berlin.

Britain 'unafraid to challenge China'

Aubrey Allegretti

Britain will be unafraid to challenge China, Sir Keir Starmer said, as he promised an "audit" of relations with the world's second-largest economy.

The prime minister refused to say if he could formally categorise China as a "threat", as some who believe the West has taken too soft a stance say that he should do. Concerns about attempted political interference, state-backed hacks and claims of human rights abuses have fuelled a growing frostiness in relations with China.

Starmer criticised "14 years of damaging Conservative inconsistency over China", in a nod to the change in approach ever since David Cameron proclaimed a "golden era" in UK-China relations as prime minister.

As he arrived for talks with Nato leaders on bolstering western security, he said the government would "co-op-

erate where we can" with President Xi's government, including on tackling climate change.

However, he added Britain would also "compete where we need to, and challenge where we must".

"Labour will bring a long-term and strategic approach to managing our relations," the prime minister said. "We will improve the UK's capability to understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities China poses through an audit of our bilateral relationship."

"We will always act in our interests and defend our sovereignty and our democratic values. We will stand with and support members of the Hong Kong community who have relocated to the UK."

While Russia is viewed as the most pressing threat by Nato leaders gathered in Washington for the alliance's 75th summit this week, China remains a concern. Western-allied

countries in the Indo-Pacific — known as the IP4 — are attending for the third summit in a row. The leaders of Australia, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand's attendance is viewed as an important way to build bonds between them and Nato.

"Increasingly, partners in Europe see challenges halfway around the world in Asia as being relevant to them, just as partners in Asia see challenges halfway around the world in Europe as being relevant to them," the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, said last week.

It came as China joined military exercises in Belarus on Monday, a few miles from the border of Nato's eastern frontier in Poland. Photos posted at the weekend showed Chinese troops disembarking from a plane and offloading equipment. Further posts showed the troops marching at a training ground.

China flexes its might, page 26

News Politics

Starmmer says Kyiv can fire British missiles at Russia

Larisa Brown Defence Editor
Aubrey Allegretti Washington

Sir Keir Starmer has signalled that Ukraine can use British weapons to hit military targets in Russia as he prepares the UK to take a leading role in Nato.

The prime minister said decisions on the use of long-range Storm Shadow cruise missiles were for the Ukrainian armed forces to make as he stepped on to the world stage in Washington.

Starmer said the military aid was “for defensive purposes” but it was up to Ukraine to decide how to use it.

A Ukrainian military source praised Starmer’s position, suggesting he had gone further than the Conservative government. “This is a more clear and very strong message to partner countries,” the source added.

Starmer and President Zelensky of Ukraine hugged as they met on the fringes of the Nato summit.

Zelensky posted on Twitter/X: “I thanked prime minister Starmer for all the UK’s military and financial assistance provided to our country.”

“This morning, I learned about the permission to use storm shadow missiles against military targets in Russian territory. Today we had the opportunity to discuss the practical implementation of this decision. I’m grateful to the UK for its unwavering support for Ukraine and our people.”

President Biden held his first bilateral meeting with Starmer last night. The president called America and UK the “best of allies” and described Britain as “the transatlantic knot” that tied Nato together. Starmer congratulated Biden on hosting the 75th anniversary summit, hailing “a bigger Nato, a stronger Nato and a Nato with the resolve that we need”.

Ukrainian sources believe that with the prospect of Donald Trump returning to the White House in November and the rise of the far right in France, the UK will be expected to take on a



Ukraine’s generals can decide how to use the Storm Shadow, Starmer says

leading role in defeating Russia. John Healey, the defence secretary who accompanied Starmer to the summit, said that under the new government Britain would be the “leading European nation in Nato”.

He told journalists that European countries would need to do more of the “heavy lifting” as the United States was likely to turn its attention towards the Indo-Pacific region. “We recognise the responsibilities that, with other European nations, we must pick up,” he added, in comments appearing to prepare for a Trump victory.

Britain has set itself apart from its Nato allies by giving the green light to Zelensky to do as he wishes with its weapons. Germany has been especially cautious, refusing to hand over long-range Taurus missiles amid fears they could be used to hit targets in Russia.

The US has declined to lift all restrictions on the use of its weapons by Kyiv but allows Ukraine to hit confirmed military targets to prevent the capture of Kharkiv on the eastern border.

Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, said in a warning to Starmer that such a move would be an “irresponsible step towards escalating tensions”. He added that Moscow would “record all of this and ... take appropriate measures”.

Starmer is facing growing demands for the government to set out plans to increase defence spending from 2.3 per cent to 2.5 per cent of GDP. He has said he will wait until a major defence re-

view is finished before outlining his plans to achieve the new target, which could take a year. Starmer said the review would begin next week, looking at needs “wider than the money question”.

He twice declined to say if defence spending would reach 2.5 per cent by 2029. Luke Pollard, the armed forces minister, told the *Today* programme on Radio 4 there would be no money for defence if the economy did not grow.

John Foreman, a former defence attaché to Moscow and Kyiv, said waiting until the review outcome was “kicking it into the longest of long grass”.

He said it was an “abdication of UK leadership within European Nato at a time of potential peril in November in DC”. James Cartlidge, the shadow defence secretary, said that by deferring a decision on defence spending, the government could inflict “significant harm” on the armed forces.

To demonstrate that Britain’s support for Ukraine had not changed, Starmer also recommitted to spending £3 billion a year to provide military support.

The funding will last until 2031 but Downing Street stressed that it would be provided “for as long as needed”. A further £40 million was pledged for the Nato Comprehensive Assistance Package, which gives Ukraine protection against drones, support to de-mine recaptured land and rehabilitate injured military personnel.

In his address to fellow leaders, Starmer will recall how Nato was created by “the generation who defeated fascism”. He is expected to say: “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.”

Defence offers Labour a chance to lead, *Iain Martin*, page 23
Bolstering the forces, *letters*, page 24

Where the allies stand

Defence spending of Nato countries

As a percentage of GDP, in 2024



UK
The UK has indicated that Ukraine can use long-range missiles supplied by the UK to strike military targets in Russia

*Puerto Rico, French Guiana, Hawaii and other territories outside the Nato core area are under member jurisdiction but not protected by the collective defence clause

Government support for Ukraine

	Financial	Humanitarian	Military	Total
US	\$21bn	\$2.6bn	\$50.4bn	\$74bn
EU institutions	\$33.7bn	\$2.3bn	-	\$36bn
Germany	\$1.4bn	\$3bn	\$10.2bn	\$14.6bn
UK	\$3.3bn	\$548.5m	\$8.8bn	\$12.6bn
Canada	\$4.8bn	\$368.5m	\$2bn	\$7.1bn
Denmark	\$122.5m	\$249.2m	\$5.6bn	\$6bn
Netherlands	\$715.6m	\$566.3m	\$4.3bn	\$5.6bn
Poland	\$944.9m	\$380.7m	\$3bn	\$4.3bn
France	\$799.4m	\$361.8m	\$2.7bn	\$3.9bn

Source: Nato, Ukraine support tracker

Behind the story

Across much of the 600-mile front line in Ukraine, Kyiv’s forces are on the defensive, outnumbered and often outgunned (Marc Bennetts writes).

President Zelensky is focused on securing new air defence systems, fighter jets and security guarantees.

In Moscow, President Putin has said there can be no end to the war unless Kyiv surrenders the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions, as well as Crimea. Ukraine has ruled out giving up territory. Putin has demanded that Ukraine formally renounces its

ambitions to join Nato and that the West scraps its sanctions on Moscow.

The Kremlin’s war effort is being supported by round-the-clock weapons production in Russia, outstripping output by Ukraine’s western allies.

Kyiv, however, has decimated Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, using sea drones, mines and western missiles, it says. Ukraine has also targeted Russian oil depots to disrupt the Kremlin’s military supply lines.

President Biden has vowed to deploy five new Patriot air defence systems to Ukraine to defend against cruise and ballistic missiles. Patriots are of no use, however,

against the glide bombs that Moscow is using in the east of the country.

Ukraine is also expected to take delivery of F-16 fighter jets: Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway have pledged to transfer dozens to Ukraine.

Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, said yesterday that they would take to the skies this summer. Speaking in Washington, Zelensky said Ukraine would need more than 120 F-16s to challenge Russia.

Ukraine’s greatest need, however, is arguably for western troops — the one thing that Nato is extremely unlikely to provide. Donald Trump has

vowed to end the war in 24 hours if he returns to the White House after November’s US election. His plan appears to be to tell Zelensky that he will cut aid to Ukraine unless Kyiv agrees to a deal with Russia that would most likely result in it losing territory. At the same time, he would probably inform Putin that the United States will accelerate military support for Kyiv unless Russia calls off its invasion. However, Trump is notoriously unpredictable.

“The whole world is looking towards November and, truly speaking, Putin awaits November too,” Zelensky said.





Who has sent the most

Vehicles sent to Ukraine
(Jan 2022 to Apr 30, 2024)

Tanks

Poland	324
Netherlands	104
Czech Republic	90
US	76
Denmark	69

Infantry fighting vehicles

US	252
Netherlands	207
Germany	140
Czech Republic	131
Denmark	80

Howitzers

US	198
UK	78
Italy	76
Germany	73
France	57

Multiple launch rocket systems

US	39
Czech Republic	12
Norway	11
UK	6
Germany	5

US
The US has resisted lifting all restrictions on the use of its weapons by Kyiv but does allow Ukraine to hit confirmed military targets to prevent the capture of Kharkiv on the eastern border

Europe
Other European countries have not publicly confirmed whether Ukraine can use their weapons on Russian territory

What Ukraine wants

Patriot missile
Surface-to-air/anti-ballistic missile system

Length: 5.8m
Range: 22 miles
Speed: 3,150mph
Warhead: 90kg high explosive fragmentation

ATACMS
Surface-to-surface missile

Length: 4m
Range: 190 miles
Speed: 2,300mph
Warhead: Cluster

Humvee
Light armoured car

F-16 Fighting Falcon
Multi-role fighter

Length: 15.06m
Wingspan: 9.96m
Combat range: 339 miles
Speed: Mach 2.05

Armaments: 1x20mm cannon, 9 x hardpoints capable of holding selection of guided missiles, bombs and unguided rocket

155mm artillery
Ammunition



UK on a mission to restore faith in its armed forces

Larisa Brown

After decades of sweeping cuts without a plan to deliver military capability, the crisis facing the armed forces is stark.

General Sir Patrick Sanders, the chief of the general staff until last month, said that Britain's armed forces were so worn down they could fight a small war for only a month.

The idea that the UK could deploy a 25,000-strong armoured division overseas has been described as "smoke and mirrors" because the army has not invested in the supply trucks and electronic warfare kit to ensure it can fight.

The army is considered deficient in important capabilities such as artillery and air defence. The RAF and the Royal Navy have overspent on the latest ships and aircraft, forcing the army to cut back on its own modernisation plan.

The United States, Britain's closest ally, is growing tired of being relied upon. General Randy George, the US army chief of staff, said in May that Britain could no longer rely on his forces to plug its gaps, adding that the UK needed to be self-sufficient in sustaining its troops on the battlefield.

Other senior US generals have also questioned Britain's status as a top-level fighting force — concerns echoed by European generals and diplomats, who cast doubt on the ability of Britain's army to face a "high intensity" conflict.

The British Army is now less than 73,000 strong — the smallest number under arms since the Napoleonic era — and is set to shrink further amid recruitment and retention issues.

Earlier this year the Public Accounts Committee said the gap between the Ministry of Defence budget and the cost of the UK's desired military capabilities had ballooned to at least £16.9 billion, its largest deficit ever. MPs said Britain was in an "alarming place".

John Healey, the new defence secretary, has a daunting task ahead of him. Without access to all the classified security briefings and intelligence from domestic spies and allies, he has had more difficulty preparing for office than most of his Labour colleagues.

Luke Pollard, one of his ministers, said the government needed access to all MoD information "to work out pre-

cisely what shape our armed forces should be". This would explain why Labour did not answer questions about reversing cuts to troop numbers during the general election campaign, pointing instead to plans for a major review.

The government is right — a review would help it to understand where to spend the money — but there is no doubt among military chiefs and politicians that the armed forces need more investment to do what is being asked.

Much of any increase to the defence budget would need to be spent on currently underfunded projects. The Tories, who cut defence spending and left the armed forces "hollowed out", set out a timetable for increasing defence spending to 2.5 per cent by 2030.

Funding was to rise from 2.32 per cent this year to 2.35 per cent next year. It was then expected to hit 2.5 per cent at the end of the decade.

Rishi Sunak's government said spending would reach £871 billion by the end of the decade — £7 billion more than if spending stayed at its current 2.3 per cent of GDP.

Labour in government has said it will wait for the review before setting out a timeline for increasing defence spending to 2.5 per cent — the level it was at when last in government. This is a process that could take a year, leaving months of uncertainty.

James Cartledge, the shadow defence secretary who was previously a minister in the department, has said it is a delaying tactic by the Treasury to save money this year. He said the potential implications would be severe: "This is bad news in a way that maybe isn't fully appreciated. It will create uncertainty for the defence industry, which needs to be firing on all cylinders."

Andrew Morrison, another former defence minister, said that a review was not necessary. "One thing [the] UK armed forces aren't short of is reviews. This Labour one is a blatant delaying tactic. Same old Labour."

General Sir Richard Shirreff, former deputy supreme allied commander in Europe, said he agreed with Sir Keir Starmer, adding: "You cannot begin to resolve the problem until you understand the extent of it." He said that a review could be completed in six weeks.

Don't ape Farage, former mayor warns the Tories

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

The Conservatives are in "terrible danger" of rushing to a "warped view" of why they lost the election and installing a leader who will not return them to power, one of party's most electorally successful figures has warned.

Andy Street, who beat Labour to become the first mayor of the West Midlands, said it would be "very, very foolish" of the party to adopt a Reform-lite agenda in response to Nigel Farage's success.

His comments came as a YouGov poll found that 47 per cent of Conservative members said they were in favour of a merger with Reform UK.

But Street warned that party members had a "warped view" of the election result because they were disproportionately canvassing Tory voters tempted by Reform as part of Rishi Sunak's

core vote strategy. He said: "The main issue is that we lost enormous ground to the Lib Dems and in many seats directly to Labour as well. We must not choose a new leader on the basis of a warped view and a false perception of what happened in the election."

Street bucked the electoral trend by only narrowly losing his mayoral role in May on a swing of less than 4 per cent. Nationally the party suffered a swing of 20 per cent away from it. He said it was clear that the Tories lost not because the party was seen as "too woke" or not right-wing enough — but because "we failed to deliver".

Kemi Badenoch defended her criticism of Sunak in a shadow cabinet meeting, saying it was a "shame" her comments were leaked. The YouGov poll found she is the favourite among party members to lead the party.

No need to rush, leading article, page 25

News

Delayed justice: rail firms' payouts for late trains rise 30%

Ben Clatworthy
Transport Correspondent

The number of passengers being awarded compensation for late or cancelled trains has hit a record high.

Rail companies settled 76 million claims in the financial year to April, a 30 per cent increase on the previous year. Passenger numbers, which were recovering from the pandemic, only rose by 16 per cent over that period, according to the Office for Road and Rail (ORR).

Great Western Railway (GWR), which runs services in the west of England and Wales, paid out for 1.43 million claims, the most of any operator and an 80 per cent increase on 2022-23. Second was Avanti West Coast, which was part of a long industrial dispute and paid out 1.1 million times, up 41 per cent.

The Elizabeth Line in London and the southeast, which fully opened in May 2022, recorded the biggest increase in claims — 191 per cent — compared with the first year of full service. Elizabeth Line journeys increased by 54 per cent over the same period, although punctuality and reliability have deteriorated, the ORR said.

Only four operators — Heathrow Express, Greater Anglia, Southeastern

and ScotRail — made fewer payouts than the year before. Typically rail passengers are entitled to 25 per cent of the cost of a single ticket if the arrival at their destination is delayed by between 15 minutes and 29 minutes. This rises to 50 per cent for delays of between 30 and 59 minutes. There is a full refund on a single ticket if the delay is more than an hour. If it is longer than two hours, the passenger can claim back the full cost of a return. Passengers can claim up to 28 days after their journey.

Some operators, including London North Eastern Railway (LNER), the government-run company, only pay out after 30 minutes' delay.

LNER paid out on 784,913 claims, a 22 per cent increase year-on-year.

Others that pay out only after 30 minutes' delay are Lumo, Hull Trains, CrossCountry and ScotRail.

Rail operators have been locked in industrial disputes with many of their workers for two years, but also complain that they are made to take the rap for many delays and cancellations caused by factors outside of their control, including infrastructure issues, which are the responsibility of Network Rail, and the weather.

GWR said the rise in claims was largely the result of strikes, flooding, "poor performance by Network Rail"



Passengers at Paddington await Great Western Railway services amid strikes in February. The operator made more than 1.4 million compensation payments

and even an unexploded wartime bomb, which affected services around Plymouth in February. A spokesman said: "We recognise how important it is that our trains arrive on time and work incredibly hard to ensure they do."

Avanti, which has faced criticism over cancellations, delays and poor service, also said it had been affected by issues outside its control. It was badly hit by strike action and an unofficial ban on rest day working by drivers, until it signed a new contract with drivers in March, agreeing to pay them

£600 per overtime shift. A spokesman for the operator said: "We would like to apologise to customers who have experienced delays ... as the ORR's figures show, the Delay Repay scheme the industry has in place is working and making it easier than ever for customers to receive compensation when their train is delayed."

Labour has pledged to renationalise the railways, bringing track and train under the control of a single body, Great British Railways.

Payouts if pilot is too ill to fly, page 16

Operating costs

April 2023 to March 2024		
	Claim closed, 2023-24	% change on 2022-24
Heathrow Express*	20,331	-32%
Greater Anglia*	182,425	-20%
Southeastern*	652,831	-4%
ScotRail*	69,718	0%
Govia Thameslink Railway*	787,710	1%
Chiltern Railways*	71,711	10%
Caledonian Sleeper	6,512	10%
West Midlands Trains	334,697	17%
Grand Central	32,967	21%
TransPennine Express*	311,070	21%
London North Eastern Railway*	784,913	22%
East Midlands Railway*	349,506	26%
Hull Trains*	20,194	26%
London Overground	10,625	30%
c2c*	22,602	30%
South Western Railway*	525,390	33%
Avanti West Coast*	1,109,024	41%
TFW Rail*	169,601	49%
Northern Trains	363,282	56%
Lumo*	42,323	61%
Merseyrail	2,368	62%
CrossCountry*	274,294	85%
Great Western Railway*	1,434,373	88%
Elizabeth line	27,236	191%

*Have included season ticket compensation for strike days in their data. Comparisons between train operators should be treated with caution as the number of passenger journeys varies and operators run different schemes. Source: Office of Rail and Road

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Image simulated. Samsung account login is required for certain AI features.

Dubai frees flight attendant after 'suicide attempt'

An Irish flight attendant charged with attempting suicide in Dubai after allegedly being beaten in a domestic attack will be allowed to fly home (Joshua Thurston writes).

The Dubai authorities had imposed a travel ban on Tori Towey but Simon Harris, the Irish prime minister, told his parliament yesterday that the United Arab Emirates had lifted it.

He said that embassy staff would take Towey, 28, to the airport when she was ready to leave.

"The embassy, of course, will continue to follow up on the case, which is still active," Harris said. He had previously described

her ordeal as "unimaginable" and "unacceptable".

Micheál Martin, the Irish foreign minister, said Towey would "hopefully" be leaving Dubai as soon as possible. "It has been traumatic," he told the national broadcaster, RTE. "Different jurisdictions have different norms and different approaches, which sometimes don't approximate to ours."

Towey was a cabin crew member for the Emirates airline.

The advocacy group Detained in Dubai, which provides legal help in such cases, said Towey was "looking forward to getting home to Ireland and seeing the rest of her family".

The group claimed



that she had been attacked. In one incident her passport had been ripped up, it said. When she had it replaced she learnt that she was subject to a travel ban but was not told why.

Radha Stirling, the group's chief executive, said that after a violent row at home a few weeks ago she fled to a bathroom. "Feeling like there was no way

out [she] wrapped an electrical lead around her neck," she added. "The next thing she remembers is an ambulance crew and police waking her up. Tori's experience is nothing short of tragic and she is lucky to be alive."

Towey has learnt that her case is to be brought before a court this month.

Mary Lou McDonald, the Sinn Féin leader, raised the case on Tuesday. She told the Irish parliament that Towey



Tori Towey tried to take her own life after her husband attempted to break her arm, the Irish parliament was told

tried to take her life after her husband repeatedly attempted

to break her arm. McDonald accused officials in Dubai of failing to protect Towey, adding that the approach to domestic violence was "grotesque and medieval".

Towey, who moved to Dubai in April last year to work, has been staying in a rented property with her mother, Caroline, who went to comfort her.

For confidential support, the Samaritans can be contacted by calling 116 123 or going to samaritans.org

Mother's fury at jail sentence of 'evil' drink-driver

Mario Ledwith

The mother of a baby who was killed by a drink-driver who was on his phone travelling at 141mph has criticised his prison sentence.

Shalorna Warner described Darryl Anderson, 38, as an "evil monster" who had shown no remorse over the crash that killed her eight-month-old son Zackary Blades and her sister Karlene Warner, 30.

After the collision on the A1(M) motorway in May, Anderson told police "sometimes mistakes happen" before concocting a story that a hitchhiker was driving his car at the time.

He was jailed for 17 years at Durham crown court on Tuesday, of which he

between four and 15 years. The sentence given to Anderson was reduced because he entered an early guilty plea.

Both cars were driving from Newcastle airport when the crash occurred at 3.15am on May 31.

Anderson had flown back from a holiday in Turkey. After drinking on the flight, he drove his Audi A5 erratically, missing a junction as he sent WhatsApp messages on his 200-mile journey home to Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Moments before the crash, Anderson took a photo of his speedometer at 141mph to "show off".

The impact of the crash sent Zackary hurtling 50 metres out of his child seat. In the immediate aftermath of the incident, as Warner scoured through debris looking for her son, Anderson did not offer help. "There was no remorse, it's almost as though he made a mockery of it all," said Lareesa Warner, 28, Zackary's aunt.

As he was being breathalysed by police at the roadside, Anderson said: "I'm a good man. This is f***ing awful for me. I've got a business." He was found to be three times over the legal drink-driving limit.

Police cameras later captured him saying: "Sometimes mistakes happen. But I'm not a bad person."

During his sentencing hearing on Tuesday, members of the victims' family challenged Anderson to look at them as they read victim impact statements. Warner told him: "You have left a broken shell of a woman and a childless mother."

Lareesa Warner said the family was particularly aggrieved at how Anderson invented the story about picking up a hitchhiker. "Surely, if you had any remorse, or felt guilty, you'd say, 'I am so sorry, this is what happened, and I deserve every single thing coming to me.'"



Zackary Blades, eight months, was killed in the crash

must serve at least 11 and a half, with a driving ban of 21 and a half years.

Warner said yesterday: "What more does someone have to do to be given a life sentence?"

Relatives of the family told The Times that they were disgusted at what they deemed to be an unduly lenient sentence that they believe will not deter similar behaviour. "Our punishment will last for a lifetime," said Alison Warner, Zackary's grandmother. "He got a longer driving ban than sentence, how does that make sense? We will never be the same again. Justice wasn't done, definitely not."

Anderson, who has a young daughter, admitted two charges of causing death by dangerous driving, which can result in a life sentence. Most terms are

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News

Speaking up helps Parkinson's patients

Rhys Blakely Science Correspondent

An American form of speech therapy developed for patients with Parkinson's disease is more effective than the standard NHS treatment, a trial suggests.

The condition, which affects about 150,000 people in the UK, is caused by a loss of nerve cells in part of the brain, leading to a reduction in dopamine, which is key to regulating movement.

It affects speech in several ways with many patients speaking in a quiet monotone. Sometimes their speech can sound hoarse and lack emotion. They may also slur words or mumble.

The research found that Parkinson's patients who were given an intensive course of "Lee Silverman voice treatment" benefited, while those given standard NHS speech and language therapy showed no improvement.

The Lee Silverman technique, developed in the United States in the 1980s, is based on speaking more loudly. Experts say it is not widely available in the UK, blaming a lack of funding and staff.

The intensive treatment with several weekly sessions helps people recognise that their voice is too quiet, training them to speak more loudly. The technique is also known as LSVT LOUD.

For the new study, published in the British Medical Journal, 388 people with Parkinson's or difficulty speaking were randomly split into three groups. They received either the Lee Silverman voice treatment, NHS speech and lan-

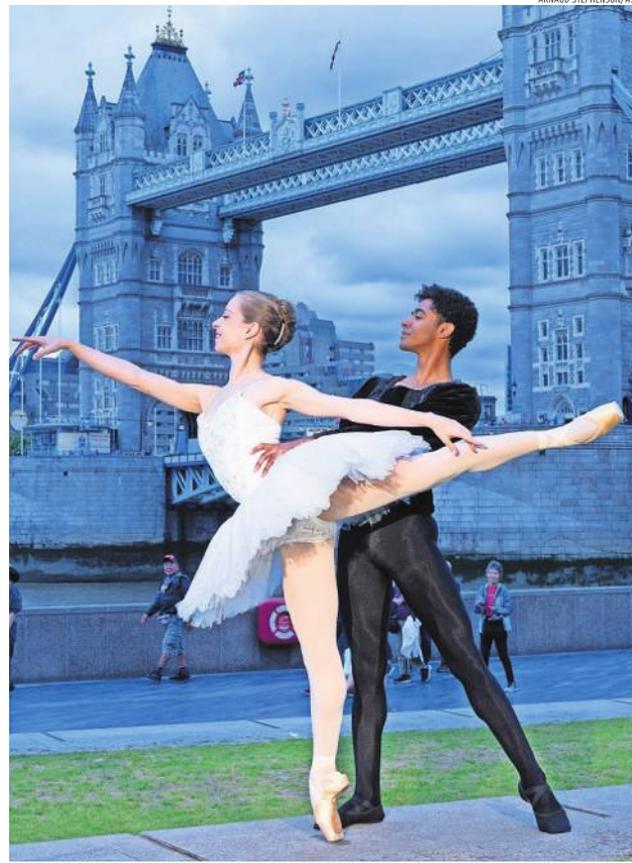
guage therapy or no help at all. The Lee Silverman group had four face-to-face or remote 50-minute sessions per week for four weeks. They did exercises such as saying "ah" for as long as possible and speaking in a clear, loud voice while repeating sentences as well as some homework.

NHS speech and language therapy was delivered according to what was offered locally, with an average of one session every other week for 11 weeks.

The findings of the trial showed the Lee Silverman treatment reduced the voice problems patients had. The NHS therapy showed no evidence of benefit when compared with no help at all.

The trial, funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research, was led by experts from the Nottingham and Birmingham Universities. Professor Catherine Sackley, from the institute's Nottingham biomedical research centre, said: "This is the first study of its kind to look at the most effective treatment options. The results clearly show that, delivered in this way, the LSVT LOUD method is effective. The NHS method as it is currently delivered is not effective."

Rowan Wathes, of Parkinson's UK, welcomed the study but said: "The findings should not be taken that LSVT is the only way to treat voice problems. The important thing for people with Parkinson's is for them to have timely access to therapy that is personalised to their needs and goals."



On pointe London City Ballet returns after a 30-year hiatus with its Resurgence tour, with Bárbara Verdasco and Arthur Wille. Its UK run starts in Bath on July 17

Two pupils at school hit by infection die

Kieran Gair

Two children at a primary school at the centre of an infection outbreak have died, the health authorities have said.

The pair, aged five and six, were pupils at Millstead Primary School, in Everton, which closed last month over an outbreak of giardia, which causes diarrhoea, fatigue and stomach cramps.

However, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said it was unlikely the deaths were linked to the outbreak.

The school said its community was "devastated" by the deaths and that the pupils had "filled their classes with joy".

Giardia is an infection of the digestive system caused by microscopic parasites. The infection spreads easily but it is normally treated with antibiotics.

The UKHSA has not disclosed when either child died but a letter from the school's head was sent on May 21, alerting parents to two confirmed cases of giardiasis at the school. At the time, the UKHSA said it had been working with Liverpool city council and partners after a "small number of cases of giardia". It said a link between their deaths had not been established but they were "unlikely" to be due to the outbreak.

Giardiasis can be prevented by regularly washing your hands with soap and water and after going to the lavatory or changing nappies and before handling or eating food.

Merseyside police said they were not investigating the deaths.

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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."

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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.

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Historians lay myths about our ancestors' sex lives to rest

Jack Blackburn History Correspondent

A decent life expectancy, low starvation and plenty of premarital sex: welcome to Britain before the 20th century.

A surprising image of how our forebears lived, loved and died has been painted by a group of Cambridge academics, who have debunked 60 myths about Britain's past to mark the 60th anniversary of Campop, the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure.

Chief among the myths is the view that our ancestors avoided premarital sex — whereas, at certain points in the past, more than half of brides at weddings were pregnant. The high points for this were in the first Elizabethan era and the early 19th century, suggesting that times of plague and Napoleonic war were strangely aphrodisiacal.

While it would perhaps be wrong to think of these eras as rife with free love and teenage kicks, the nature of courtship at the time did provide an avenue for young people to enjoy their sexuality. "People didn't wait until they were married to have sex," Professor Alice Reid, director of Campop, said. "They would start becoming more intimate before marriage, but probably when they had agreed to get married. Most of these prenuptial pregnancies were probably like this, and then the pregnancy probably just speeded up the marriage a little bit."

Another myth is that newlyweds would usually be appallingly young; most women were in fact in their mid-twenties, while men were about two and a half years older. This was true from the mid-16th century and, with the exception of a few decades in the 17th century, remained the case until the baby boom of the 1950s and 1960s, when the average fell below 24. Once a

baby was on the way, though, the common belief is that childbirth was extremely hard for the mother to survive. Many did die, but nowhere near as many as one might think. On average, women would have up to five children and, between 1550 and 1800, the maternal mortality rate was about 13 in every 1,000 birth events (it is now 100 times smaller).

"A lot of literature liked to have women dying in childbirth, it makes a good story," Reid said. "It was the most dangerous period in an adult woman's life, but that doesn't mean the mortality rate was really, really high."

Children of the poorest agricultural labourers had a better chance of making it through infancy than those of wealthy families. The important factor was not wealth but location, with rural babies living longer than urban ones.

Furthermore, if you could make it to two then you had a decent chance of living a long life. While many would assume that, back in the day, you would live to 40 and then drop dead from the exhaustion of being a Georgian, the evidence is that 25 per cent of two-year-olds would go on to live to 70. If you could get to 25, then you had a 42 per cent chance of making your three score years and ten.

The research has also highlighted that some of our longstanding traditions are not so longstanding. For instance, Miss and Mrs had no connotations about marriage, but were to do with social standing, until the 19th century.

These myths come from a variety of sources, although the really fascinating question is why they take root. "We like to think that there's a trajectory of gradual improvement," said Reid. "We make an assumption that there's been continual progress, continual development of this trajectory."



Kit Harington, the *Game of Thrones* star, right, is unusually sidelined as a pensive Englishman in Jeremy O Harris's play

American soul-baring doesn't travel well

Theatre Dominic Maxwell

Slave Play

Noël Coward, WC2N (120min)

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

It took five years for *Slave Play* to cross from Broadway to the West End. It boasts some acute moments and fine performances from its Anglo-American cast. Yet Jeremy O Harris's play comes across as the sort of ideas-led piece that would stimulate over an hour but has been unwisely swollen to two hours.

Fans of the *Game of Thrones* star Kit Harington may be puzzled that he spends much of that time on the sidelines, playing a pensive Englishman appalled by the American soul-baring around him. They may or may not find solace in the way that the mirrored backdrop of

Clint Ramos's set reflects not just the audience's assumptions back at them but also, at key moments, Harington's perfectly toned bottom.

It's no great spoiler to say the world *Slave Play* starts in, a plantation in the Old South, is bogus. The n-word gets flung around as the whites sexually dominate the black slaves. The night has barely begun when Kaneisha (Olivia Washington) starts getting down to Rihanna.

We know this is a game. What sort of a game we wait to see. And wait. *Slave Play* takes knotty ideas about race and sex and colonial legacies and ancestral trauma and tries to have some frank fun with them. Here and there it pulls it off. But Robert O'Hara's artful production offers just too many interludes between its good bits. Joining Kaneisha and Jim are two other interracial couples: empowered Alana (Annie McNamara) and clueless Phillip (Aaron Heffernan), plus sensitive Gary (Fisayo Akinade)

and his (it turns out) actor boyfriend Dustin. One of the night's best jokes is how Dustin (James Cusati-Moyer) angrily insists he's not white, while never saying what he is instead. ("Eggshell?" Gary suggests.)

It's amusing the way the relationship of the therapists (Chalia La Tour, Irene Sofia Lucio) mirrors that of their clients. Most of the satire, though, is more sluggish. The digs at therapy-speak are old hat. The opening role play could be done in minutes, not half an hour plus. And when (real spoilers start here) it turns out we are in a residential clinic where interracial couples sort out their sex lives, an ensuing group therapy session is stretched and stretched again.

It all goes up a gear in the superior psychodrama of a third act that suggests Harris is a way more potent writer when not straining for laughs. Finally, there is real pain, ambiguity and oddness.

To September 21, slaveplaylondon.com



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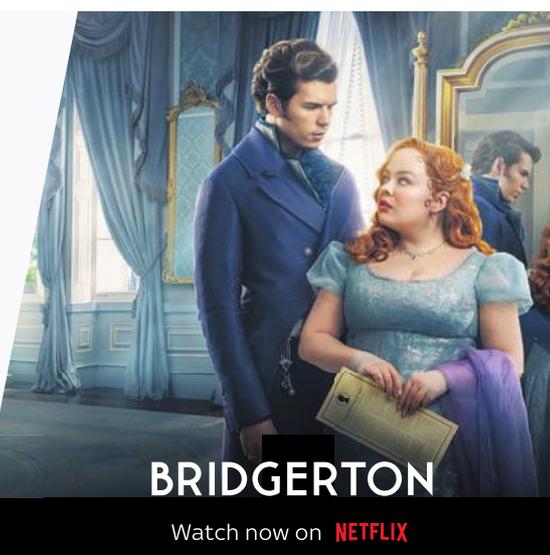
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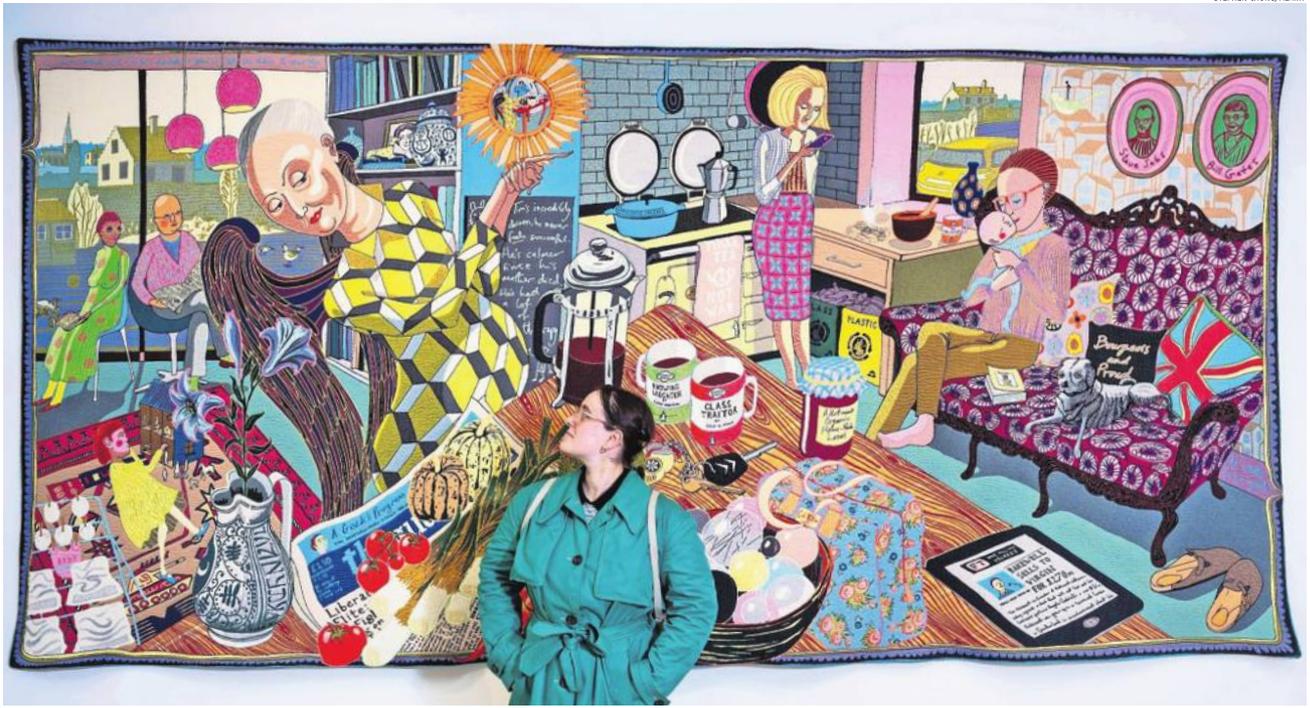
Ben Clatworthy
Transport Correspondent

Airlines face having to pay compensation to passengers whose flights are cancelled because of pilot sickness.

The Supreme Court has ruled that a pilot falling ill, who is then unable to report for duty, does not amount to an "extraordinary circumstance".

Kenneth and Linda Lipton took BA CityFlyer, a subsidiary of British Airways, to court after their flight from Milan to London in 2018 was cancelled because a pilot fell ill while off duty. They arrived more than two hours late and believed they would be owed compensation under a EU261 [Air Passengers Rights Regulation] claim, which covers compensation for delays and cancellations. The airline refused to pay the £220, arguing it was an "extraordinary circumstance".

After two courts upheld the company's position, the Court of Appeal ruled in the couple's favour. The airline took the case to the Supreme Court. Yesterday, five Supreme Court justices dismissed the appeal.



Stitches in time The Annunciation of the Virgin Deal features in a show at Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, London, of large tapestries by Grayson Perry, a Turner prizewinner



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Housemate who 'let dog escape' stabbed to death

Kieran Gair

A woman boasted about stabbing a military veteran 26 times after he let her pet Pomeranian escape, a court has been told.

Winter Swan-Miller, 37, is accused of stabbing Stuart Crocker, 62, after her therapy dog, Oblivion, escaped from the home they shared in Andover, Hampshire.

Crocker's body was found surrounded by notes. The court was told that the messages included: "take my f***ing dog you whore. This is why I've done this haha" and "taking my dog, are you real?"

In TikTok videos posted after Crocker's death, Swan-Miller said that she had "been a bad girl" and: "I don't feel like I've done a bad thing at all."

Swan-Miller, of no fixed address, has previously told the jury that "dogs are my whole world" and that she "loves animals."

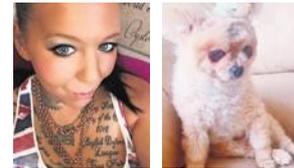
Opening the trial at Winchester crown court in May, the prosecution said that she had hoped to achieve "fame and notoriety" by posting about the murder.

Police believe that Crocker died on the morning of June 23 last year. His

body was found five days later after a neighbour reported a smell.

The prosecution argues that Swan-Miller inveigled her way into his life to have a place to live then financially exploited him. After the dog escaped it was stolen but had been returned to Swan-Miller by June 21, according to a video on her TikTok account.

It is alleged that when their rela-



Winter Swan-Miller's Pomeranian, Oblivion, was stolen then returned

tionship soured she erupted into violence and stabbed Crocker before going to a McDonald's in Andover town centre. She later made her way to Birmingham, where she was arrested on June 30.

Swan-Miller maintains that she killed Crocker while lawfully defending herself from sexual assault by him. She was asked yesterday by Gur-

deep Garcha KC, for the defence, whether she had attacked Crocker in revenge for harming her dog.

"Definitely not," she said, adding that she had always been "petrified about something happening" to the animal. Pomeranians are a breed of toy dog known for their intelligence and sociability.

Nicola Shannon KC, for the prosecution, showed the jury videos that Swan-Miller had posted on TikTok after Crocker's death.

In one, entitled "Part Two" she can be heard saying: "Taking my dog from me, the only thing in the entire world that I've got. I did do what I did and I did it because I had no choice. They took away the only thing in my life that I have got, and that's my dog Oblivion."

She added: "You took away my dog, you all did this."

In another video she said: "I swore if anyone hurt my dog I would never let it go. I did it as a f***ing statement. My morals let me do it."

Swan-Miller denies murder and two charges of fraud. Edward Jones, 44, who is accused of letting Swan-Miller stay with him in Birmingham, denies assisting an offender and a charge of fraud. The trial continues.

Pregnant worker mocked over lost job

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A global health research group must pay £21,000 to a pregnant employee after a boss who made her redundant sent her seven laughing emojis.

Abubakar Yaro was described as being "callous" towards Mahnaz Rezvani, a human resources manager at the Glasgow office of the Africa Health Research Organisation.

The not-for-profit research organisation was founded in the UK in 2004 but its headquarters moved to

Ghana. Rezvani, who started at the organisation last year with a salary of £32,000, emailed Yaro in August to tell him she was pregnant and that the baby was due in February.

Several days later, Yaro told Rezvani to send out a message that "staff are made redundant for the next six weeks" because he had secured new investors and would resign from managing the organisation. When Rezvani told Yaro that she would "wait until the new management officially starts their work and get in

touch with me", Yaro responded with a row of seven laughing emojis.

Rezvani went on to take a position at the Royal Voluntary Service before going on maternity leave and suing her former employer.

The employment tribunal judge, Lesley Murphy, sitting in Glasgow, awarded Rezvani £21,681 in compensation for pregnancy discrimination, saying the emojis would have disabused Rezvani of "any vestiges of hope" that her "employment might be rescued and continue".

Early birds catch the worm, but night owls are sharper

Rhys Blakely Science Correspondent

Night owls tend to be mentally sharper than morning people, a study has suggested.

Researchers found that adults who prefer to be active late in the evening rather than at the crack of dawn performed better, on average, at a range of cognitive tests.

One sleep expert said that the results argued for night owls not being "shamed into fitting a stereotype that favours an 'early to bed, early to rise' practice".

A team from Imperial College London looked at data from nearly 27,000 people aged 53 to 86 who signed up to the UK Biobank project. They explored how different aspects of sleep — including duration, timing and quality — might affect mental acuity and overall cognitive ability.

The volunteers were asked to complete tests on computer screens to measure intelligence, reasoning skills, reaction times and memory. It was up to them what time of day they did this; whether it was in the morning or later

in the day was not recorded. Night owls tended to perform better in the tests, compared with morning larks.

People with an "intermediate" chronotype, who had no clear preference for mornings or evenings, scored in between.

Dr Jessica Chelekis, a sleep expert from Brunel University London who was not involved in the study, said: "The main takeaway should be that 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 (cognitive) best and work in ways that suit us."

The study also found that sleeping between seven and nine hours a night was the optimum for mental sharpness, boosting cognitive functions such as memory, reasoning and the speed of processing information.

By contrast, sleeping for fewer than seven hours or more than nine hours had a "clearly detrimental" effect on brain function, the researchers said.

Younger individuals and those without chronic illnesses generally scored higher in the cognitive tests, while healthier lifestyle choices, such as not smoking, were associated with better cognitive performance.

Dr Raha West, from the department of surgery and cancer at Imperial College London, who co-led the research, said: "It is

important to note that this doesn't mean all morning people have worse cognitive performance. The findings reflect an overall trend where the majority might lean towards better cognition in the evening types.

"While it's possible to shift your natural sleep habits by gradually adjusting your bedtime, increasing evening light exposure, and keeping a consistent sleep schedule, completely changing

from a morning to an evening person is complex."

Professor Daqing Ma, co-leader of the study, who is also at Imperial College London's department of surgery and cancer, said: "We've found that sleep duration has a direct [link with] 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."

The results have been published in the journal *BMJ Public Health*.

The study also found that sleeping for fewer than seven hours a night was bad for brain function



TMS

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The art of journalism

Lisa Nandy, the new culture secretary, is not noted for her love of the arts nor sport. She was, however, a wannabe journalist at Newcastle University. A few years ago Nandy told her successors on *The Courier* that she had been a student columnist. She seems to have had a Boris Johnson approach to it. "I used to hide from our editor because I had never written what I was supposed to have written by the deadline," she said, "and often our editor would have to write it himself." Nandy, below, then made the mistake in her third year of sharing a house with the editor, who would shout through her door: "I know you're there, Lisa. I can hear your phone ringing." Nandy admits that "the quality was not high, but what I did learn was confidence".

Men are not as picky as women think. Dame Prue Leith writes in Somersets Life about her first date with her husband, John Playfair. "I wore a white silk shirt, tan jacket and gold necklaces," the cook says. "I thought I looked so elegant. He turned to me and said: 'What are you wearing? I fell for you in your orange jumper!'"

FINAL CHAPTER

Jeffrey Archer has resigned from the House of Lords after 32 years, along with five others who barely visited and six who were removed after not attending in the last session. The author and former Tory deputy chairman last voted in 2017 and has not spoken there this century, but popped in occasionally to keep his security pass. Seven months ago, Archer threw his final Christmas shepherd's pie party, a tradition among



Westminster politicians for 50 years, saying that at 83 he is getting too old. Friends fear he may now have only another dozen or so novels left in him.

ON THE BACK FOOT

With Sir Keir Starmer's first Nato summit coinciding with a big football match, the prime minister asked officials in Washington to pass him notes last night updating him on England's fortunes. When John Major was prime minister, cabinet was often interrupted by folded messages that were passed to the PM, then to the cabinet secretary and to Ken Clarke, the chancellor, accompanied by grimaces. Michael Heseltine grew suspicious, suspecting the collapse of sterling, and snatched one of these notes out of Clarke's hand only to read the far more important news that England were five wickets down at Edgbaston.

The comedian James Sherwood is unconvinced by the nominative determinism in the new cabinet. "Someone called John Healey should be the health secretary," he said. "The defence secretary should be John Hurty." For the same reason, I'd have made James Cleverly shadow education secretary.

GOOD AS GOULD

Nepotism is alive and well in the Labour Party with the instant elevation of Georgia Gould, the new MP for Queen's Park & Maida Vale, to a ministerial job in the Cabinet Office. Gould's late father, Philip, was their strategy and polling adviser on the path to power in 1997, for which he was ennobled. Her first appearance in the media came as a baby 37 years ago when she appeared on the cover of *Private Eye* being held by Neil Kinnock. "I'm feeling a bit wet," a speech bubble from the then Labour leader said, to which a nurse replied: "That's why we're going to vote for Maggie."

PATRICK KIDD

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News

Capri fans race to condemn new model

The “legend is back”, Ford claimed yesterday as it unveiled its remake of the Capri, the classic car for boy racers. Fans of the original two-door coupé took a different view (Andrew Ellson writes).

Sally Bristow, of the Capri Club, summed up the feelings of her members: “I cannot understand why they called it a Capri. It’s not a low-slung, two-door, sports car. It’s a four-door SUV. Ford has misnamed it.”

The new Capri, which is fully electric, was launched with fanfare in London, with Ford choosing Eric Cantona, the former footballer, to promote it. It said the new version was “rebellious to its core”, with “the swagger you would



The new, all-electric Capri and, left, the original loved by boy racers everywhere

expect” from the original, which was produced between 1968 and 1986. Cantona said: “Some say legends are born.

Others say legends are made. Only legends really know. This Capri is a remarkable reinterpretation of the classic.” However, critics said that there were only a few hints that the new

version was even related to the original. The main similarity is the curved rear window but this was not enough to placate Capri fans. When Ford tweeted about the launch, there

was not one positive reply. One user asked whether Ford’s designers had even seen the original. Another wondered whether the company had “bred a Capri and a Transit”. Another added: “Stop ruining iconic cars just so you can sell school run cars.”

Ford insists that the new model, which will cost between £48,000 and £52,000, is “in keeping with the iconic design” but now comes with “a modern purpose”, such as 570 litres of boot space.

The basic model has a 77kWh battery that can power it to 62mph in 6.4 seconds and has a range of up to 390 miles on a standard test cycle.

A review by Top Gear describes the car as not bad-looking but “slightly generic”.

Ford is desperate for success after struggling to transition to electric vehicles. Its electric vehicle unit reported losses of £1 billion in the first three months of this year, equivalent to nearly £100,000 for each of the 10,000 vehicles sold. Letting in cheap electric cars from China comes at a cost, Ed Conway, page 21

Same-sex couples buck adoption trend with 50% more applications

James Beal Social Affairs Editor

The number of applications made by same-sex couples to adopt children has risen by more than 50 per cent in the past decade.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) statistics show that 675 applications were made by same-sex couples last year, which is an increase from 425 in 2013 and bucks the trend across other groups.

In heterosexual couples, applications are down almost 50 per cent, from 4,656 in 2013 to 2,372 in 2023, while those from step-parents are down from 433 to 408.

Sole applicants or single parents have also seen a fall, from 963 to 794, while overall the number of applications is down 35 per cent from 6,549 to 4,279.

Katie Welton-Dillon, from Hall Brown Family Law, suggested that this demonstrated the eagerness of same-

sex couples to have their own families.

“The last decade has seen a substantial drop in adoptions taking place in England and Wales each year. Since 2014, though, marriages between individuals of the same sex have been possible and we have seen an increasing number of such couples keen to explore all options to start a family,” she said. “Some couples choose to do so either by surrogacy, capitalising on advances in medical science or adopting from abroad. Others recognise the advantages of providing a home for children already within the care system in this country.”

Barnardo’s said that the number of LGBT couples adopting was increasing year on year in the UK. In 2022, twice as many adoptions were by same-sex couples as in 2021.

Same-sex couples in the UK, excluding Scotland, have had the right to

adopt since 2002, after the Adoption and Children Act was passed. In Scotland the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 enabled same-sex couples to jointly adopt children.

In 2016, almost 10 per cent of all adoptions in England involved same-sex couples. This had risen to 12 per cent by 2018. By 2023, one in five adoptions in the UK were to same-sex couples. Research has shown same-sex families score particularly well in assessments of family relationships, parental well-being and child adjustment.

The MoJ figures show orders on adoption to heterosexual parents between 2013 and 2023 were down by 46 per cent, while orders to sole parents were down by 8 per cent. But same-sex parents bucked the trend, up 71 per cent from 388 to 665.

Overall, the number of adoption orders is down 32 per cent, from 6,071 to

4,166. In 2013, 3,084 out of 6,071 adopted children were girls, whereas in 2023 more boys (2,137) than girls (2,029) found new families.

The figures also show an increase in the adoption of older children. The 15-17 age group accounted for 211 adoptions last year, up 52 per cent on 2013.

Welton-Dillon said: “Although many individuals regard young children as being especially vulnerable, teenagers also undoubtedly derive considerable benefit from parental support as they prepare for adulthood.”

Michael Gove, who was adopted as a child, led a campaign to boost the number of youngsters in care finding permanent families when he was the education secretary. Charities have blamed lower figures on judges who in 2013 ruled that adoption should only be considered “when nothing else will do”.

Judge rejects students’ strikes claim

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

The High Court has rejected attempts to bring a group legal action by thousands of students over disruption to their tuition caused by lecturer strikes and the pandemic.

More than 5,000 current and former students at University College London are seeking damages over alleged breaches of its contractual obligations to provide in-person teaching and access to its facilities.

UCL, one of the country’s biggest universities, is defending the claims, stating that it was not under an obligation to provide in-person, campus-based tuition.

Students told a hearing in London last month that the case should be managed through a group litigation order (GLO), where several claims with similar issues can be dealt with together.

However, in a ruling yesterday, Judge Jeremy Cooke said a group action would not be appropriate as it would not “help to promote fairness, save costs or allow the claims to be dealt with in a timely and efficient manner”. He said a further hearing is to be held on July 19, before another in November.

After the ruling, UCL said a trial of several “test cases” is to be held in 2026.

Professor Kathy Armour, the vice-provost of education and student experience at UCL, said: “We are pleased that the court has refused the GLO application which would have only caused further delay to this claim.”

Student Group Claim said similar action was being prepared against other UK universities, and solicitors have “been in correspondence” with more than 50 institutions.

Waterstones sacks bookseller after gender tweet

James Beal Social Affairs Editor

A bookseller has been sacked by Waterstones after saying that she would enjoy “tearing up” and binning novels by a gender-critical author.

Tilly Fitzgerald, who also reviews books for her 90,000 followers on TikTok and shares recommendations under the name Tilly Loves Books, was dismissed after the spat with the novelist Christina Dalcher.

Dalcher, a former university researcher, had expressed her support for

Seen, a new publishing network that claims it will protect women’s rights and raise concerns about gender ideology. In response Fitzgerald posted on Twitter/X: “Oh I’ll enjoy tearing up your books and popping them in the bin today. Thanks for the heads up.”

Hours later, after her comments were flagged to Waterstones, Fitzgerald posted a tearful video saying she was “heartbroken” by being sacked.

Waterstones later said Fitzgerald, from Worthing, West Sussex, had been fired for breaching its social media poli-



Tilly Fitzgerald had said she would enjoy “tearing up” books by a gender-critical author

cies. Fitzgerald said the sacking was “disproportionate” and a warning would have been more appropriate. She told The Times: “The property I was referring to was always my own ... I never intended to touch store stock.”

Waterstones said it had “received some messages about an employee who has been dismissed”. It added: “This was on the grounds of contravening Waterstones policies and has nothing to do with transgender rights.”

In a statement to The Times, the company said: “We are an inclusive employer and follow due process in [human resource] matters. For obvious reasons we are unable to comment on the specifics of individual cases.”

Dalcher, who lives in the US state of Virginia, was approached for comment.

Baldwin 'broke cardinal rules of gun safety' on set of film

Keiran Southern Santa Fe

Alec Baldwin "violated the cardinal rules of firearm safety" on the set of the film *Rust*, leading to the death of a cinematographer, a court in New Mexico has been told.

The actor is accused of involuntary manslaughter over the October 2021 shooting of Halyna Hutchins. He pleaded not guilty in a Santa Fe court to the charge, which carries a sentence of 18 months in prison.

Baldwin, 66, was rehearsing a scene on Bonanza Creek Ranch with a replica 19th-century revolver when the gun discharged, killing Hutchins, 42, and wounding Joel Souza, 51, the film's director.

The prosecution alleges that Baldwin's carelessness and disregard for safety protocols led to the death of Hutchins. Baldwin has insisted that he did not pull the trigger and it was not his responsibility to check that the firearm was safe.

The trial began yesterday with opening statements. Baldwin was joined in court by his wife, Hilaria, and brother, Stephen. He kept his gaze trained on Erlinda Johnson, for the prosecution, during the opening, in which a photo of Hutchins on set was shown.

"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," Johnson said.

The court was told that the set of *Rust*, a low-budget western in which Baldwin played an outlaw, was chaotic. He was accused of using a gun as a "pointer".

A member of the camera crew had

walked off the production over safety concerns on the morning Hutchins was killed on October 21. That day Baldwin was rehearsing inside a church.

The scene involved his character being helped to a pew after being wounded. Baldwin was working with Souza and Hutchins on "blocking", or figuring out his movement. He had to remove the revolver from a holster and point it towards the camera.

Johnson said Baldwin was supposed to take out the revolver slowly. Instead he would "do his own thing" and cocked the hammer during rehearsals before

lunch, she added. The prosecution said that during the break a live round had been inserted in the gun. When Baldwin returned he failed to check that the gun was safe, she added.

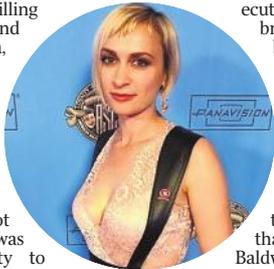
While performing the unholstering movement his "finger was on or around the trigger". Johnson said that on the third attempt Baldwin removed the gun

quickly, cocked the hammer and pointed it at Hutchins. The revolver went off and the cinematographer was hit by a .45 calibre round.

"It perforated her right lung, lacerated her spinal cord and exited on the left side of her back," she said. The same bullet hit Souza in his right shoulder and was later removed. Hutchins, a wife and mother, was taken to hospital, where she was pronounced dead.

The prosecution challenges Baldwin's assertion that he did not pull the trigger. It says an FBI analysis found that the gun could not have gone off without the trigger having been pulled.

She said Baldwin failed to perform basic safety tests that afternoon. "He ...



Alec Baldwin held the gun that killed Halyna Hutchins, left, but denies firing it

pulled the trigger in reckless disregard for Ms Hutchins's safety," she said. "The only true and just verdict in this case ... is a verdict of guilty to involuntary manslaughter."

Lawyers for the defence say that it is outrageous to pin the blame on Baldwin, who was failed by colleagues whose job it was to make sure the gun was safe.

Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, the *Rust* armourer, was convicted of involuntary manslaughter earlier this year and sentenced to 18 months in prison. She plans to appeal against the conviction. David Halls, the assistant director, pleaded no contest to one charge of

negligent use of a deadly weapon and was given a suspended six-month sentence.

"This was an unspeakable tragedy but Alec Baldwin committed no crime," Alex Spiro, for the defence, said. He added that Baldwin had been assured the weapon was safe.

Spiro said Gutierrez-Reed loaded a live round into the gun and Halls gave an inadequate check before handing it to the actor. He added that the investigation should have focused on how a live round came to be on the set.

The trial is expected to last until Friday next week. It is not known whether Baldwin will give evidence.

We're set for less rain, but uncertainty still reigns

Tom Whipple Science Editor

It won't be balmy. It won't be beach weather. But there is at least a chance, meteorologists believe, that for the rest of the week there will not be quite so much rain.

The latest forecast suggests that after a fortnight of heavy rain and chilly temperatures, the country is moving to lighter rain and average temperatures.

Going into the weekend, the Met Office says, much of the country can expect it to be drier and warmer. Their forecast still contains the occasional word like "torrential", but, in a month with double the expected rain so far, they are at least tempered by the words "scattered" and "sunny spells".

Anna Shuttleworth, a Met Office meteorologist, said that today parts of the country could experience 23C. "It's not too bad in the sunshine if you are sheltered from that northerly wind," she said.

This would be a marked difference from the first eight days of July, when the UK as a whole had 44 per cent of the expected rain for the month and in London it was 86 per cent.

The low temperatures and heavy rain have been in part a consequence of the jet stream being to the south of Britain, bringing in bands of low-pressure weather systems.

For next week, the Met Office expects similar but slightly warmer conditions. "There are limited, if any, signs for more prolonged settled and warm weather, but winds are likely to stay fairly light overall with temperatures, particularly across the south, coming up to around the average for the time of year," it said.

And summer itself? Forecasters do not expect dramatic changes. As for August, the Met Office said there was hope, but a lot of uncertainty. "There remain encouraging signs of a more settled spell developing at some point during the period, at least for a time, and perhaps more likely in the south," it said. "Above average temperatures overall, and drier than average conditions overall, are slightly favoured."

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**Freedom from technology
is life's true luxury**

James Marriott

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Comment

Starmer must face up to our China problem

Allowing cheap electric cars to flood the British market comes with both economic costs and security concerns

Ed Conway



@EDCONWAYSKY

If you were looking to make a pilgrimage to the place where Britain's motor industry really began, you could hardly do better than to seek out a 70-acre site on the outskirts of Birmingham.

Opened in 1905, the Longbridge plant was one of the first British automobile factories. This was where the "Baby Austin", Britain's equivalent of the Ford Model T, was conceived and built, followed eventually by the Morris Minor and the Mini.

By the 1960s, Longbridge and its enormous workforce were turning out more than 200,000 cars a year. Then in the 1970s, when the sector faced its darkest hour, Longbridge became a badge of British industrial shame: strikes, inefficiency and, eventually, collapse. In 2005, a century after the factory's formation, the rump of what was left, MG Rover, was sold off to a Chinese company.

Back then China was a bit of a joke among motoring aficionados. Despite having invested billions in trying to build a car industry, it was still struggling to turn out a decent internal combustion engine. Today, China has leapfrogged Japan, France and Belgium to become the second-biggest source of cars in Britain (after Germany). Seemingly out of nowhere, it is the world's biggest car exporter, bar none.

If this sounds surprising, perhaps it's because most of our Chinese cars wear marques that sound, well, not very Chinese. There's all those brand

new MGs, for starters. If you're driving a Tesla Model 3, you are driving a car made in Shanghai; same thing for many Model Ys. Polestars are made in Chengdu and many western brands, including Mercedes and Volkswagen, are producing electric cars via joint ventures in China. But the stealth invasion will soon give way to an influx of new, unfamiliar car brands from BYD, Nio and even the smartphone manufacturer Xiaomi.

Today, Chinese carmakers are making vehicles cheaper than pretty much anyone else. The most popular example is the BYD Seagull, a small electric hatchback that sells for about £8,000 in China.

That China can make cars this cheap owes a lot to what we in the West call "industrial strategy". Chinese firms may never have been terrific at making petrol engines but, many years ago, Beijing realised it had a fighting chance of competing

This is deep industrial dominance of the like we've never seen before

on electric vehicles. So it showered its producers with a host of subsidies, cheap loans and tax breaks that, according to OECD estimates, are nine times more generous than anything on offer anywhere else in the developed world. And as Britain and the US fixated on the political soap operas of Brexit and Donald Trump, Chinese policymakers got busy cornering the market for pretty much every component you need to make an electric car.

The upshot: China controls 83 per cent of global battery production. It also controls 84 per cent of the market for the cathode chemicals

that provide all the lithium inside those batteries, and 92 per cent of the graphite needed in those batteries.

This is deep industrial dominance of the like we've never seen. When Herbert Austin opened the Longbridge plant, no single country dominated car production in the way that China dominates the production of these battery components. You could say something similar about the manufacture of solar panels and, to a slightly lesser extent, the production of steel and aluminium.

All of which brings us to the big economic news on this front. A couple of months ago President Biden announced 100 per cent tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles (as well as other tariffs on Chinese solar panels, metals and a host of battery components). This month the EU followed suit with its own (slightly less punitive) tariffs.

The UK has yet to formulate its own response. Indeed, since this issue didn't come up at all during the election campaign, we still have no idea what the new Labour government will do about it. But since the EU and US have already acted, there is little time to waste.

If we were to ape Biden, it would have far-reaching consequences. While Chinese imports are a tiny fraction of American sales, they account for nearly one in five automobiles sold in this country. Are British consumers really ready to see the price of those cars rise by 100 per cent? Moreover, given that we are mostly talking about electric cars, a tariff would do serious damage to the government's net zero aspirations.

Ask folks in Whitehall what they think about the White House's move and you tend to hear what you might call the conventional economist's case. In short: to warn that imposing tariffs could land us in a full-blown



Hawker Hurricanes were assembled at the Longbridge car plant in the 1940s

trade war, much like the one in the 1930s that prefigured the Second World War. Surely, they argue, it would make more sense to remove tariffs, allow the Chinese to subsidise their car factories, buy up their £8,000 cars and save a few pounds in the process? Voilà, we would all be better off.

Except that this misses a couple of important points. The first is that it's not a given that we're all better off. It's far from clear that the benefits of being able to buy a cheaper car from China outweigh the economic impact of all those shuttered factories, lost jobs and displaced workers — especially if China isn't reciprocating by buying other British exports (which it isn't).

Second, and more saliently, this is not only about economics. It's about security too. In the First and Second

World Wars, the Longbridge plant was co-opted by the government to build shells, guns, aircraft and engines. Thousands of Hurricane fighters and Lancaster bombers were built in a "shadow factory" at the site through the 1940s. Motor workers quickly became weapons makers — after all, making a car engine wasn't all that different to making an aircraft engine.

That raises a question: in the event of war, what happens to a country that has deindustrialised to the extent that Britain has? The short answer is: we don't really know. In previous wars Britain was never self-sufficient; but it was considerably better equipped to be able to fight than it is today.

Perhaps this stuff doesn't matter, but it is at least part of the rationale for why the US is taking the threat of deindustrialisation so seriously.

Car tariffs didn't feature in Labour's manifesto. They are unlikely to be near the top of Sir Keir Starmer's immediate to-do list. But he would do well to visit Longbridge (and not just because it is another part of the Midlands that Labour won back from the Tories in last week's election).

There he will find the car assembly buildings are all gone. The machinery that once made the munitions that helped Britain win the war has been cleared away, replaced with retail outlets and housing.

Ed Conway is economics editor of Sky News and author of *Material World*

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Comment

Freedom from technology is life's true luxury

Looming divide is between those at the mercy of screens and those who can afford to ignore them

James
Marriott



@J_AMESMARRIOTT

My route to work takes me past a number of enormous advertising hoardings promoting new smartphones. Silicon Valley's latest wonders are masterpieces of pointless finesses: finely-milled aluminium bezels, "dual-ion glass coatings" and photo quality so dazzlingly acute I get the impression you might hurt your eyes looking at pictures of your own children. Here, for the next few months at least, is the ultimate achievement of high-tech luxury.

I gave up my own smartphone almost six months ago and find myself inspecting these advertisements with a pang of nostalgia. My present phone, a grey, plastic Nokia, is a squat, pathetic thing. It seems to belong to another species entirely from the gleaming übermenschen of modern communications technology.

And yet I am increasingly convinced that my Nokia is the true luxury option. Its photo quality is embarrassing (scrolling through the picture gallery of beige shapes looming out of fuzzy grey shadow, I sometimes struggle to distinguish friends from dinners). Punching out text messages on the numerical keypad is an unlovable chore and periodically reduces me to episodes

of humiliating subliteracy ("hlo m8 u gd?"). But my attention is my own; no longer held on a short leash to be constantly jerked back to a screen. I have regained the capacity for reading more than ten pages of a book without reaching for Twitter. I can think for more than five minutes at a time. Going smartphone-free was only meant to be a self-experiment but I am increasingly convinced that I have stumbled into a crucial modern privilege. In a technological age, the real luxury is not more technology but freedom from technology.

This week Eton College announced that all new pupils will be issued with Nokia phones. Many other private

Among the youngest, technology use is an important class divide

schools have similar policies. A notable pioneer of the screen-sceptic approach is the Waldorf School of the Peninsula in California, which educates children of the Silicon Valley elite. Middle-class parents, motivated by evidence that smartphones have a negative impact on mental health, memory, learning proficiency and attention spans, are leading a movement to limit their children's access to phones.

Consequently, among the youngest members of society, technology use is growing into an important class divide. Children from lower-income backgrounds spend more than eight hours a day on their phones, compared with less than six for their

middle-class peers. The disturbing prospect is the emergence of a two-tier society in which only wealthier children have access to the cognitive and emotional benefits of a reality-based upbringing.

You only have to watch your fellow passengers desolately scrolling, jabbing and swiping at Candy Crush Saga on public transport to doubt whether a smartphone is really the infinitely desirable luxury that the Silicon Valley propaganda would have us imagine.

The truth is that we are not the beneficiaries of smartphones but their victims. Aside from a few undeniable conveniences, they are not designed to make our lives easier or happier but to make them narrower and more limited. The aim is to force us to spend as much time as possible absorbed in a tiny rectangle of glass, viewing ads. This is the "attention economy". Freedom from its mind-sapping tyranny is a luxury most easily enjoyed by the better-off.

You can already spend thousands of pounds escaping the internet. The "light phone", a sleeker, sexier, low-functionality alternative to my Nokia, costs more than many smartphones and promises its users no "specific feature", simply the "experience" of precious time: "hours back each day". There are the "digital detox" holidays and retreats. Middle-class professionals jealously guard their email-less out-of-office holiday hours. Analogue products such as vinyl records have become newly prestigious. Reality is the new luxury.

The technological class divide is most notable in the level of

independence from technology you enjoy in your professional life. Almost all of us use screens in our work but the tech blogger Venkatesh Rao draws an interesting distinction between those who work "above and below the API" (application programming interface). Those who work "above the API" spend their lives issuing instructions to computers. These are programmers, coders and the users of spreadsheets, databases, graphic design software and so on. Those working "below the API" take orders from computers and are condemned to spend their working hours being harassed by screens instructing them to pick up passengers, deliver items, process fast-food orders or find products in a warehouse. Their performance at these tasks is then monitored and graded by computers.

Indeed, those born at the bottom of the social scale may spend their whole lives at the mercy of screens. You are raised by a screen as a child, your parents too exhausted or poor to offer you such indulgences as "natural play". Screens at school and at home prevent you from fulfilling your academic potential. You spend your work life in insecure jobs, obeying the dictates of a screen. The poorer you are, the harder it is to get by without a smartphone.

My chance to live without one is a lucky quirk of a job that does not require me to be constantly online. It has given me a chance to taste the benefits of disconnection. I love it — which is why it is such a disturbing thought that these freedoms may one day be the privilege of a wealthy few.



Doctor's orders are what Biden and US voters need to hear Jim Kennedy

If President Biden is truly fit to run for another four-year term, he would do himself, his party and the American people a real service if he took a full battery of tests at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and authorised the team of doctors who examine him to conduct a no-holds-barred news conference to reveal the results.

I say that not as a medical professional but as someone who helped to organise a similar event for Bill Clinton after major surgery in 2004. On September 3 that year, the former president was rushed to hospital after experiencing chest pains and shortness of breath. Three days later, he had quadruple coronary bypass surgery.

That same day, with the encouragement of both Clintons, we organised a news conference in the hospital lobby. It featured four doctors and lasted close to half an hour. The doctors were remarkably detailed in their description of Clinton's condition and what the surgery entailed.

Even though he was no longer in office, he wanted to be transparent about what had happened because he saw it as an opportunity to educate people about heart disease, its prevention and treatment.

If Biden has a clean bill of health, that fact would go a long way towards erasing doubts about his ability to serve out this term and another. Yes, he is tested "every day", as he says, but many Americans do not feel he has a passing grade. A decisive medical analysis that clears him of any debilitating conditions would set the record straight.

If a problem is uncovered, one that would truly preclude him from another stressful four years in the Oval Office, then that would provide the closest thing to the divine intervention the president invoked in his ABC interview last week. And a more elegant — and perfectly understandable — exit from the campaign would be possible. "Doctor's orders" are preferable to donor or pundit demands.

Either way, pass or fail a thorough exam, people everywhere could learn much more about the conditions of old age. And a moment of clarity would clearly serve the public interest.

It's not too much to ask any elderly candidates, including Donald Trump, to be screened by a panel of experts at Walter Reed so that they, their families, and all of us whose lives may be in their hands, can be sure they are "of sound mind and body". If they want our votes, we have the right to a vote of confidence in their capacity to excel in what is the hardest job in the world.

Jim Kennedy was a spokesman for President Clinton, vice-president Al Gore and the senators Hillary Clinton and Joe Lieberman

Janice Turner Notebook

Roundhead won't fall for any Cavalier flamboyance

The Roundheads are back in power, I thought with satisfaction, watching our new PM chair his first cabinet meeting. It was Saturday morning, no one had slept for a month, yet here was Sir Keir Starmer, gimlet-eyed.

Britain is most often led by Cavaliers: Blair, Cameron, Truss and — Prince Rupert himself — Johnson. Roundheads had a good run with Thatcher and Major, then only the short reigns of Brown and May.

A Roundhead-Cavalier divide transcends the left-right spectrum, being about temperament: Kemi Badenoch is a Roundhead, Angela Rayner a bit of a Cavalier. The former are more likely to be swots from modest backgrounds, lacking public school swagger. (Cameron ducking out of politics once his swanning around as foreign secretary days are done is so Cavalier.) Roundheads are tireless, conscientious and austere,

but can tip into being didactic and joyless. Sunak was a rare hybrid. His instincts are Roundhead: he never relished the pomp of power, such as D-Day photo calls, preferring to grind away at his desk. Yet his wealth drew him inevitably into the Cavalier flamboyance of fancy trainers and private lakes. Starmer wrote a 1,500-page law tome. Always awkward in the look-at-me brashness of campaigning, he is happily cracking his knuckles for a 90-hour week, a Roundhead to his bones.

Missing in action

The Fawcett Society proposes to convene a cross-party caucus of women MPs. After 42 years in parliament, surely its new chair, Harriet Harman, knows that like-minded Tory and Labour women have always pulled together on issues such as abortion rights. Why do they need a charity to book the room?

In the past decade's feminist battle, which united Corbynite trade unionists and Tory baronesses, Fawcett and Harman were both MIA. They could have intervened in the gender wars to host

debates seeking common ground. Instead, when women in public life were vilified, threatened and sacked for believing in sex-based rights or questioning the medical transition of children, they hid away.

Women had to form new groups — Woman's Place, Fair Play For Women. Their victories include the Cass review, a rethink on trans prisoners and many fraught legal cases. So it's pretty rich for Fawcett to claim any right to speak for women now just to bolster its falling membership and reduced funds. "Courage calls to courage," said its suffragist founding spirit Millicent. Pity that Fawcett and Harman blocked their ears.

Sick of the ick

On the side of a bus sailing down the Strand I saw a massive banner ad for Always panty-liners with the slogan "Goodbye period gush". On TV during the football, a nappy commercial featured a couple listening to their baby's monitor for the sound of "poomageddon". A

detergent campaign has people sniffing strap-hanging armpits on the Tube for signs of "boomerang smells".

They reflect how much less euphemistic we've grown about bodily excretions. Women have long feared suddenly standing up during menstruation and staining clothes. Is it progress that this now has a (monetisable) name? Will paper tissues be marketed for your "snottiest cold", or toilet roll for your "runniest poos"? I'm not sure that explicit ickiness is progress.

Skin deep

What is your favourite cooking task? I used to think it was shelling peas: running a nail down the seam, winking each one out until they skitter into the bowl. Or broad beans, the same as peas plus, when cooked, popping the green inner bit out of the white sacs. Or whipping egg whites and double cream into pleasing peaks. But this summer we've bought whole boxes of ripe tomatoes from a Turkish supermarket and I've enjoyed deskinning them to make sauce. Dip in boiling water for a minute, straight into cold, then enjoy the satisfying way they crack open and the skin comes away like wallpaper from a damp wall. Mindfulness in culinary form.

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Defence offers Labour a chance to lead

Higher military spending would set an example to rest of Nato and also boost the government's industrial strategy

Iain Martin



@IAINMARTINI

Since winning a landslide victory the new prime minister has been flying high. Somewhere, 29,000 feet above the Atlantic, Sir Keir Starmer was brought down to earth by journalists travelling with him to the Nato summit marking the 75th anniversary of the alliance.

He was put under pressure. Given the deteriorating geopolitical situation, when will he commit to increase UK defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP? The previous government made the pledge to get there by 2030, still too little, too late. But Labour has declined to do even that, saying it'll get there "when possible".

If Rishi Sunak had not blown up his premiership prematurely with an early election that went wrong, the MoD plan was for Britain to lead by example at the Washington summit on getting the Nato target of 2 per cent spending for all its 32 members moved to 2.5 per cent.

Instead, the new government has slowed that momentum and No 10 has announced that it will order yet

another defence review. Pressed on the urgency of such a decision, with former service chiefs warning that Britain couldn't defend itself or fight a war for long if the worst happened, the PM stressed his review could be done in a bit less than a year.

With Russia, China, Iran and North Korea acting in concert and the liberal global order disintegrating fast, we don't have anything like a year to waste. Sir Richard Dearlove, the former head of MI6, said on Times Radio yesterday that the UK should be spending 3 per cent of GDP on defence to deal with the most dangerous global challenges of his lifetime. "It is more important than the NHS," he said, which is true given that if the country cannot be

Britain is playing a vital role as part of a maritime coalition

defended, all else is moot. Of course it is not unreasonable for the new government to take a proper look at commitments and capabilities with a quick review — and I stress, *quick* review. There is a valid argument for ministers taking a little time to avoid being snowed under by officials and service chiefs and later regret they missed something. That should be possible in 100 days, maximum.

Even better would be the short, sharp approach of key commanders such as Alan Brooke during the Second World War. Take a month to gather the key players, work out what is lacking, and start fixing it.

The UK has already had a slew of strategic reviews as the threats worsen. The Integrated Review was published in March 2021. This was refreshed last year along with the Defence Command Paper, all designed to set a long-term course that could be clearly understood by the services. What they need most is some more money.

Underpinning the Integrated Review is the sensible theory that the threats we and our allies face are ever more interconnected. We cannot think narrowly of defence as being simply about our own immediate neighbourhood. Russia is at war with Ukraine and threatens other European states, yet Russia is aided by China and North Korea.

The previous government spoke of a tilt to the Indo-Pacific, alongside stepping up European security. The tilt has been much-criticised and much-misunderstood, as though it is all about the threat to Taiwan where the UK can do little to help beyond intelligence. Yet the rebalancing — the tilt — makes perfect sense when the Indo-Pacific starts at the bottom of the Suez Canal and takes in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf, where

the UK has significant capability already working alongside the US, patrolling sea lanes on which international trade and our economy depend. China is expanding its navy and pushing up against the West. Britain is playing a vital role as part of a maritime coalition, combating countries dedicated to disruption.

This is a new government so it can do what it likes. But what exactly is Labour saying it wants to do differently? Initially, it wanted to be

What this is really about is the Treasury saying there's no cash

more Europe-focused on defence, but of late the close relationship with Australia in the Aukus defence pact seemed to have persuaded the leadership that the direction of policy it is inheriting is broadly correct.

What this is really about is the Treasury saying there is no money. It has a tendency to regard defence as a bottomless pit. A year-long review looks like a move to put off the decision on more defence spending until after the budget, expected in September, or as a Westminster veteran put it: "To long-grass it in the hope it goes away. Which it won't." Without further increases in a budget already stretched by

upgrading the nuclear deterrent, there are fears that new fighter jet programmes and frigates may have to be axed. Plus every penny is needed to modernise the army and restock munitions and weapons systems sent to Ukraine.

Labour would be better to think about this in a completely different way. Defence fits with their aim to launch an industrial strategy, boosting manufacturing, technology and construction and securing national resilience. In these terms, strengthening defence is an economic opportunity. Rightly, ministers also want to encourage a wave of private investment to increase growth. A so-called wall of money is said to be waiting to invest and, with France undergoing extreme turbulence, the UK by contrast may yet become an exemplar of stability. Put all that together and a rapid commitment to defence would fit with the government's economic programme as well as being the right thing to do.

With the geopolitical picture so dark, it is fascinating to watch the new government get its speedy introduction to global realities, with all the opportunities and grave challenges they bring. In opposition, Starmer was adept at creating a holding position and being designedly vague. Now, the world comes rushing in and it turns out vague won't do.

Letters to the Editor



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1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF



Tory infighting

Sir, I admit to being one of the disillusioned mass of voters who have turned their backs on the Conservative Party. However, while Rishi Sunak may have been guilty of judgment errors and failed tactics, there is no single person responsible for the Conservatives' catastrophic downfall. It has been a slow and painful demise for almost a decade accelerated by the shenanigans of previous incumbents such as Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, the absence of integrity and indeed honesty by its most senior members, a lack of direction and indecision on key policies. Most of all, though, it's the continual bickering and infighting and pursuit of personal gain and status rather than getting on with the business of government.

Could I suggest that Kemi Badenoch should take a good look in the mirror before hurling stones at those outside her glass house ("Badenoch takes swipe at Sunak over election decisions", July 10). She is one of the most serious offenders and is synonymous with the malaise that has infected the Conservative hierarchy in recent years.
Dorothy Drummond
Chichester, W Sussex

Digital health

Sir, David Smith cites Sir Tony Blair's proposals for investing £3.4 billion in the NHS to generate £35 billion of productivity savings ("Technology offers hope after horror story of public sector productivity", July 10). Under these imaginative proposals each citizen would have a digital health record, enabling them to carry out basic health checks as part of a preventive health programme.

The quid pro quo for such an expansion of digital healthcare is far more effective cybersecurity to protect data held on patients. There have been ransomware attacks on seven NHS hospitals in England and a similar incident affecting more than 100,000 people in Dumfries and Galloway. The Health Service Journal recently reported that only 27 of the 41 NHS integrated care systems in England had a cybersecurity plan. Furthermore a US government study showed that hospitals that suffered a ransomware attack were more likely to suffer worse health outcomes. An expansion of NHS digital healthcare will require investment in a much more robust cybersecurity system if it is to retain public confidence.
Professor Ian Kunkler
Edinburgh

Corrections and clarifications

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Defence spending and bolstering the forces

Sir, Having listened to Luke Pollard, the junior defence minister, on Times Radio (July 10), I was interested in his comments about how UK industry is to be supported in the awarding of new defence contracts.

Our UK company has been designing and manufacturing military equipment for the MoD for many years, winning numerous tenders. Defence procurement seeks the highest quality equipment, at the most economical price for taxpayers, but this does not necessarily mean that the contract will be awarded to a UK company. Many factors in the tender process are taken into account and the winner is the company that offers the "most economically advantageous tender".

MoD competitive tendering from initial prequalification through to contract award in no way provides more support for a British company than they would a European supplier. The new government is going to have to focus on this area if it truly wants to support UK industry in the awarding of defence contracts.

Andrew Phillips
Group technical director,
MST Group

Sir, It is inevitable that a new government will seek to conduct a strategic defence review, partly to address the substantial failings in our strategic ambitions and existing

defence forces described in your leading article ("Potemkin Defence", July 10), and partly in the hope that it can postpone significant extra expenditure. But whatever the review's outcome, we know that our existing forces are desperately lacking in manpower, ammunition and all forms of logistic support. We are in no position to respond adequately to a major crisis in a very dangerous world. These failings need repair irrespective of any review if we are to have any prospect of confronting an unexpected threat. Wars must be fought with what you have, not what you aspire to. A more productive approach would start immediately to remedy these serious shortfalls in our capability while the defence review considered the wider strategic demands of the future. None of this would be wasted expenditure and it would greatly strengthen our defences.
Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon
Vice-Admiral Sir Jeremy Blackham
London SE13

Sir, The legitimate concerns of retired high-ranking military commanders about the weakness of the UK's home defences ("Starmar 'is playing with fire on defence spending'", July 10) conceal a grand irony. This was the generation of senior officers whose careers progressed with silent public acquiescence through the diminishing

of the volunteer territorial forces over the past two decades.

For all their limitations, the Territorial Army, the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and the RAF Volunteer Reserve were the bedrock of force regeneration and national survival through the 20th century.

The lessons from Ukraine indicate that a New Model Territorial Force with legions of specialist drone and air defence units is the minimum needed to sustain the national infrastructure when the hordes of precision missiles and drones arrive on day one of any conventional future European conflict.

To defend is to choose. Resources could be freed to underwrite the birth of a nationally unifying citizens' militia. The Scandinavians are showing us the way.

David Rew
Former Colonel, Territorial, Regular and Army Reserve

Sir, Further to your coverage of the Russian missile strike on the children's hospital in Kyiv (news, July 9 & 10) and our prime minister's reluctance to commit himself to an immediate increase in defence spending, he might find it useful to reflect on his reaction if the headline had read: "Russian missile strike on Great Ormond Street children's hospital".
James Servaes
Hambleton, Surrey

In praise of Nimbys

Sir, Let's hope that the planning reforms the new government will be implementing include Nimbys in the decision making rather than ignore and steamroller them (letters, July 9 & 10).

Nimbys are people who love the place they live in, know it well and understand what's going to work and what won't. They want well-built, well-designed, attractive houses that serve the whole community. They want access to green spaces and nature, alongside sufficient infrastructure (doctors, dentists, schools, roads, etc). What they don't want is the cookie-cutter approach to housing, cramming as many lookalike unattractive houses into developments to maximise developers' profits and meet targets set by politicians far away, inevitably resulting in soulless places and overwhelmed local services, and leading to social problems as well as

the destruction of place and nature.
Sue Paterson
Banchory, Aberdeenshire

Sir, Before the new administration builds more than a million new houses, perhaps it should consider that we already have plenty of housing for British workers in the UK.

The problem is that we sell our housing stock on the international market, to people who do not work here. We need to stop this and limit all purchases to British passport-holders and/or those who pay the correct levels of income tax. Also, we must end the ridiculous situation of empty/derelict housing by making it mandatory that all property must be occupied for at least six months of the year.

Adam Gent
Sparsholt, Hants

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

Training nurses

Sir, Now we know that the Nursing and Midwifery Council is failing (Thunderer, July 10), will anyone ask the fundamental question "What is wrong with nursing?" The answer can be found in the profound changes introduced by the Conservative government in the 1980s under the influence of the previous incarnation of the NMC, the UK Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting. This took nurse training out of the apprenticeship system in hospital schools and through the route of the social sciences, not medicine, into the blob of the new universities. The intention was to change the ethos from vocation to profession. The result has been a major shortage of nurses, importing them from overseas and a dysfunctional profession.

Dr Ann Bradshaw, SRN
Ret'd senior lecturer in adult nursing,
Uxbridge, Middlesex

FORD'S NEW FACTORY IN DAGENHAM

FROM THE TIMES JULY 11, 1924

Mr H S Jenkins, managing director of the Ford Motor Company (England), speaking at a luncheon at the Hotel Metropole, said that the company had acquired a 307-acre site on the north bank of the Thames at Dagenham, Essex, where it was proposed to produce all-British Ford cars under conditions and in quantities calculated to ensure the greatest possible perfection of manufacture. The enterprise would provide a valuable stimulus to the British labour market, and enable a greatly increased export trade. Building

operations would proceed without delay, as it was anticipated that the present anomalous position with regard to Ford cars created by the horse-power tax would be made the subject of a proper adjustment. The Dagenham site would be occupied by works capable of employing 10,000 people, and of producing 500 cars per day. This would not only supply the British market, but the needs of the entire Continent of Europe. The site, which was of a riverside character, lay partly on agricultural and partly on reclaimed land, and was ideally suited to its purpose. The shore was well adapted to the construction of docks and wharfage, and the advantages of the situation on the navigable part of the Thames, in facilitating the intake of material as well as the export of the finished product, would be obvious. The railway ran through the property, and there were excellent roads on all sides. Proximity to the great labour resources of the East

End of London was a further advantage. The extent of the development depended on whether payment for the British-made car was assisted by the alteration of the tax question. The horse-power tax, as at present levied on the Ford car, was unjust. Today the Ford touring car in this country was 92 per cent British labour and material. Starting in Britain with a sale of 1,485 cars in 1911, demand had steadily increased until it had reached the "record" figures of 40,000 cars and trucks a year. This did not include export to Antwerp, Bordeaux, Copenhagen, Cadiz, and Trieste, all of which were dependent for chassis and body parts on the English company. In June of this year the ten millionth Ford car was produced. He estimated that there were 200,000 Ford cars in Great Britain.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Source of a cuppa

Sir, Your article "Tea drinkers face strain of price rise" (July 9) is misleading in implying that the UK still buys a large amount of its black tea from northeast India. This is no longer the case. Out of the 83,554 metric tonnes of black tea consumed last year (a modern low figure) about 50 per cent was sourced from Kenya, where there is now a massive oversupply of tea and historically low prices. Forty-plus years ago we in the Brooke Bond blending room went three months without no Indian tea following an export ban. Not one consumer wrote in to complain about (or praise) the change in flavour.

Alan Carmichael
Nairobi

Museum priorities

Sir, David Childs (letter, July 9) is correct: we certainly lack a Museum of Britain in spite of spectacular advances in our knowledge of the past. Some years ago I pointed this out to a British Museum working party. However, the members seemed more concerned to emphasise their international role and thus justify the retention of the Parthenon marbles.

David Miles
Former chief archaeologist, English Heritage; Cuxton, Kent

Lesson in accents

Sir, Graham Read's letter on Welsh accents (July 10) put me in mind of a teacher when I was at school in the Rhondda in the Sixties. A new arrival from England asked why the teacher was nicknamed Jock. I replied that it was obvious from his Scottish accent. He insisted that to him the teacher sounded as Welsh as anyone else there. I made inquiries and was astonished to find that "Jock" was indeed Welsh born and bred but had studied at a Scottish university.

Mike Tudball
Romsey, Hants

Partner words

Sir, Matthew Parris, in noting that "scantly" is always accompanied by "clad", asks for other words that take a partner (Notebook, July 10). As a travel journalist, my favourite partner word is swanky, as in hotel. In my years of travelling around the world I've never heard of any other type of place or institution possessing swank.

Bob Maddams
Louth, Lincolnshire

Sir, I have never heard of a knoll other than the grassy one alleged to have been pivotal in the JFK assassination.

Colin Johnson
Wolverhampton

Alpine modesty

Sir, Edward Whymper was not the only Victorian anxious that alpinists should appear respectable (letter, July 9). In an era when even piano legs were trousered, climbing presented special difficulties to women. Mrs Henry Warwick Cole came up with the perfect solution, sewing small rings into the seams of her skirt and passing a cord through them "in such a way that the whole dress may be drawn up at a moment's notice", thus allowing her to avoid tripping over the hem on difficult terrain and protecting her ankles from public gaze.

Jane Robinson
Haddenham, Bucks

Daily Universal Register

UK: The King and Queen visit the Senedd in Cardiff to mark 25 years since the founding of the Welsh parliament.
Italy: G7 science and technology meeting.

Nature notes



Henry Williamson's novel, *Tarka the Otter*, begins on a twilight evening with a heron calling. It's a great way to start a nature book

because a grey heron's call is unforgettable. Far from melodic, it sounds like a shriek of annoyance, but it is highly dramatic and can travel a long way, especially when ambient noise levels are low. The sense of occasion on hearing a heron is usually deepened because the rudimentary rasp (transcribed by Williamson as kra-a-ark!) is delivered when the large bird is in flight, huge wings flapping laboriously as it lumbers through the air. In a nod to this distinctive call, Cumbrians used to call herons joan-na-ma-crank, while Fenlands folk knew them as diddleton frank. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today



Giorgio Armani, pictured, fashion designer, 90; Craig Charles, actor, *Red Dwarf* (1988-2020), *Coronation Street* (2005-15), 60; The Right Rev Lord (Richard)

Chartres, bishop of London (1995-2017), 77; Jane Gardam, novelist, *God on the Rocks* (1978), *The Queen of the Tambourine* (1991), 96; David Graham, actor, best known for voicing the Daleks in *Doctor Who*, 99; Julia King, Baroness Brown of Cambridge, physicist, chair, Carbon Trust, vice-chancellor, Aston University (2006-16), 70; Lord (Michael) Levy, life president of Jewish Care and former Middle East envoy to Tony Blair, 80; Henry Lowther, jazz trumpeter, 83; Manuel Marrero Cruz, prime minister of Cuba, 61; Pauline McLynn, actress, *Father Ted* (1995-98), *Shameless* (2010-11), 62; Peter Osborne, political commentator, *The Fate of Abraham: Why the West is Wrong About Islam* (2022), 67; Paul Polman, chair, Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, chief executive, Unilever (2009-18), 68; Caroline Quentin, actress, *Men Behaving Badly* (1992-98), *Doc Martin* (2015-19), 64; Dean Richards, rugby union player, England (1986-96), 61; Adi Roche, campaigner for nuclear disarmament, founder (1991) and chief executive, Chernobyl Children International, 69; Richie Sambora, musician, Bon Jovi, 65; Lawrence Stroll, executive chairman, Aston Martin Lagonda, and co-owner of the Aston Martin Cognizant Formula 1 Team, 65; Sunil Vaswani, businessman, co-founder and chairman, Stallion Group (conglomerate), 61; Suzanne Vega, singer-songwriter, *Luka* (1987), *Tom's Diner* (1987), 65; Jake Wightman, athlete, 1500m gold medallist in the World Championships (2022), 30; Caroline Wozniacki, tennis player, former world No 1, 34.

On this day

In 1969 David Bowie released the single *Space Oddity*. The opening track from his second studio album was his first to chart in the UK.

The last word

"Give the children of the poor that portion of education which will enable them to know their own resources ... this, and this only, will work out that moral revolution, which is the legislator's noblest purpose." Letitia Elizabeth Landon, English poet and novelist, *Ethel Churchill (or The Two Brides)* (1837)



No Rush

Having suffered the worst electoral defeat in their history, the Conservatives should take time to select a competent leader who can guide them through the wilderness

Having resoundingly rejected Rishi Sunak's government at the polls, most voters are now paying scant attention to the Conservative Party. They can hardly be blamed for their disengagement. In the week since that historic defeat, the culture of indiscipline that proved so ruinous for the Tories in power is as toxic as ever. Hardly had the dust settled on the ruins of Rishi Sunak's tail-end administration than the battle for the succession blazed into life. Suella Braverman, the former home secretary, used a speech in Washington for her opening salvo, attacking colleagues as closet left-wingers. Kemi Badenoch, the shadow housing secretary, responded by lambasting Mr Sunak at the first meeting of the shadow cabinet — remarks which were promptly leaked by another minister. Other contenders for the leadership spend their days courting colleagues and the media.

As they survey the wreckage of the election and bitterly apportion blame, these would-be leaders of an enfeebled opposition are in danger of rushing headlong into oblivion. The Conservative Party is battered, broken, irrelevant in the House of Commons and intellectually exhausted. Any good psychotherapist would caution their client not to take life-altering decisions when in such disarray. That, however, is what the Tories risk doing.

Common sense dictates that the Conservatives should take their time in choosing a new leader. Arguments to the contrary are motivated primarily by the negative emotions the unhappy few left in parliament are now experiencing. Veteran Tory MPs are embarrassed to be sat opposite a staggering 411 Labour counterparts, sharing benches with the other architects of their downfall: 72 Liberal Democrats and Nigel Farage's infamous five from Reform UK. They are ashamed by the abysmal Tory election campaign; they are impatient to seek closure and move on under a new leader. That is understandable but a swift contest would be deeply counterproductive. Given no heir apparent, nor an agreed diagnosis of the party's ills, Tory interests would be best served by a period of prolonged calm and sober debate.

In 2005, the last time the party chose an election-winner in opposition, the contest lasted seven months after it was called by Michael Howard. That autumn's Conservative conference turned into a beauty parade for the contenders, each of whom made a 20-minute speech. This extended timetable gave each candidate time to think deeply and talk seriously about their political vision. The process was the making of David Cameron, who constructed a convincing case for a brand of

modern, compassionate conservatism. He spoke passionately without notes and undid David Davis whose status as frontrunner failed to survive an underwhelming address.

Some will argue that long leadership contests did not serve the Labour Party in 2010 or 2015, when months of introspection resulted in the elections of Ed Miliband and Jeremy Corbyn respectively. Mr Sunak may not wish to remain in place beyond party conference, or even the end of summer. But the arguments for a more gradual process, overseen if necessary by a caretaker leader, are compelling. The triumph of a polarising candidate could split an already diminished party.

The continuing role of party members in selecting the next leader must be open to question. The Tory membership of some 160,000 is old and more right-wing than the country in general. It was the membership who overrode the parliamentary party and elected Liz Truss as prime minister, with disastrous consequences. Any leader in the Commons should command the support of a majority of their MPs. However, rewriting the party rulebook may be too fraught a process. Hopefully, a longer contest would result in cooler heads, better judgment and a less divisive leader. The Tories should take their time. They are not short of it.

Uneasy Alliance

Nato's 75th anniversary summit is overshadowed by the US presidential race

The number that should be on every leader's lips at this week's summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in Washington is 75. For three quarters of a century since April 4, 1949 Nato has protected Europe and North America, and by extension the entire free world, firstly from Soviet totalitarianism and then from Russia's expansionist autocracy. Its 32 members are part of the most successful defensive military alliance in history. Under Article 5 of its founding treaty an attack on one is an attack on all. That mutual guarantee has weathered crises and stood the test of time.

There is, however, another number doing the rounds: 81. It is the age of President Biden and it haunts the huddles and side meetings. Disquiet over Mr Biden's mental capacity, now shared by no less a luminary than the actor George Clooney, is casting a shadow not only over the summit but the alliance's future, most pressingly its commitment to save Ukraine from being overwhelmed by the invading forces of Vladimir Putin. If Mr Biden withdraws from the presidential race, or if he doesn't, Nato's most powerful state could soon be led by a man who describes the organisation as a

"rip-off" composed of nations freeloading at America's expense.

If Mr Biden's frailty is the elephant in the room Donald Trump is the gorilla. Throughout Mr Trump's political career it has been difficult to discern what is and what is not true in his many colourful pronouncements. But the signs are that the Republican's return to the White House may not bode well for Nato or Ukraine. Mr Trump has spoken of his desire to bring the war to a swift conclusion, which many fear will be at Ukraine's expense. A Trumpian peace, if imposed in the face of opposition from America's security establishment, might involve the permanent amputation of Ukrainian territory in Russia's favour and the Finlandisation of the Ukrainian state.

A Trump presidency is also likely to result in a radical refashioning of Nato. Trump acolytes are suggesting the wholesale withdrawal of US land forces from Europe with Washington's contribution to the continent's defence confined to air and naval units, and the nuclear umbrella. For European Nato members, many of which are only slowly rebuilding their armies after years of neglect,

this is a sobering prospect. There is even a suggestion of withdrawing US protection for "offending" countries that fail to reach their allotted share of spending. European Nato members, including Britain, have been used to budgets of 2 per cent of GDP or less; Mr Trump's people are suggesting 10 per cent. Hyperbole, clearly, but a sign of the uncomfortable conversations to come if he wins in November. Sir Keir Starmer, currently dawdling over reaching 2.5 per cent, may find himself on the receiving end of a Trump monologue.

As with all stage-managed events Nato's jubilee is swathed in positives. The alliance is promising more Patriot air defence systems for Ukraine to stave off Russian attacks, and donated F16s should soon enter the fray. Sweden and Finland are valuable new additions to alliance — though Hungary and Turkey continue to flirt with Moscow.

For 75 years Nato has had American power as its bedrock. Yet even as the world becomes more dangerous the ground is shifting. A second Biden administration would still be increasingly distracted by China. Whoever wins on November 5, Europeans will find themselves paying more to stay safe.

No Laughing Matter

A Japanese prefecture has made a daily giggle mandatory

This newspaper seldom finds itself in agreement with the Japan Communist Party, yet today is an exception. "To laugh or not to laugh," argues Toru Seki, a Communist assemblyman in Yamagata prefecture, "is one of the fundamental human rights."

Mr Seki was criticising the prefecture's decree that citizens "make efforts to shape mental and physical health through means such as laughing once a day". However pompously he expressed his concern, Mr Seki is surely right. The state has no business telling people how often they must find something amusing. Humour is personal and idio-

syncratic. Only David Brent and, apparently, some Japanese politicians, fail to realise that obligatory, officially endorsed "fun" is by definition a toe-curling embarrassment for all concerned. When politicians order a daily guffaw even from those recently bereaved, for instance, or made homeless by a natural disaster, or a patient just handed a cancer diagnosis, the instruction becomes tasteless as well as futile. Laughter may well be the best medicine, yet not when it is statutorily prescribed.

Enforcement will be tricky. As with Marbella council's recent decision to fine bathers who

urinate in the sea, a crackdown on stony-faced refusniks in Japan will face problems of both definition and detection. When does a snigger, smirk or snort qualify as a laugh? Who will decide? Japan has an enviably low crime rate, even so its police have better things to do than monitor chortle levels?

None of which is to argue that laughter is a bad thing. Quite the opposite, as the British, world champions at mining humour from the depths of despair, know all too well. And even when all looks truly bleak, the clumsy missteps of those in authority will reliably provide a good giggle.

World

China stages war games as Nato warns of conflict

Nato

Richard Spencer China Correspondent

Nato and China have moved closer to direct confrontation as Beijing ordered war games near key western allies and a Washington summit issued a wide-ranging warning to President Xi over his military posture.

In advance of Nato's 75th anniversary celebrations, Jens Stoltenberg, the outgoing leader, expressed concerns about China's diplomatic backing for Russia's war in Ukraine.

A draft summit communiqué went further, calling China a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war effort and a systemic challenge to Euro-Atlantic security. It also drew attention to China's space programme and the rapid expansion of the country's nuclear arsenal.

The leaders talked about growing "partnerships" with China's pro-western Pacific neighbours, with Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea all invited to Washington. China meanwhile chose the start of the summit to launch sea exercises in the western Pacific featuring one of its aircraft carriers, the Shandong, and fighter jets.

The Shandong was reported to have sailed to the Pacific by an unusual route close to the Philippines, another American ally that is in the middle of a war of words with Beijing, over control of the South China Sea. At the same time, Chinese jets crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait to join the Shandong in an echo of previous provocative flights near the self-governing island, which China claims as its own.

This coincided with joint Pacific patrols between China and Russia and an unusual joint "counter-terrorism exercise" between troops from China and



Belarus, Russia's closest friend in Europe. That is taking place less than five miles from the Belarusian border with Poland, a Nato member, and 30 miles from the border with Ukraine.

Nato has been debating whether to extend its zone of interest beyond its core purpose of defending pro-western Atlantic and European states. At the weekend Stoltenberg said pro-western nations both in the Atlantic and Pacific regions were alarmed at the growing alignment of Russia with North Korea and China, as well as with Iran.

"They all want Nato, the United States, to fail in Ukraine, and if Putin wins in Ukraine, it will not only embolden President Putin, it also would embolden President Xi," he said in an interview with American television. "As the Japanese prime minister said: 'What happens in Ukraine today can happen in Asia tomorrow.'"

Xi's plans for both Taiwan and the Philippines are uncertain, but conventional estimates say his armed forces would be ready to attack Taiwan by 2027. America's other allies in the western Pacific, particularly Japan and the

Philippines, also fear Chinese dominance. South Korea has its own concerns about the diplomatic support offered by both Russia and China to the capricious and aggressive Kim dynasty's rule over North Korea.

European Nato members are divided about how far to join America in taking on China, with which they have close trading relations. However, they are also concerned that America, particularly under a possible second presidential term for Donald Trump, is losing interest in Europe in favour of a "pivot to Asia". By showing Washington that Europe is committed to the defence of democratic allies around the world they hope to persuade Trump that they are "all in together".

John Healey, the British defence secretary, told journalists that Ukraine would remain the main focus. But in an interview with the Politico website he added: "Alliances with like-minded nations in the Indo-Pacific are important ... there needs to be a realism about military commitments."

Nato's concerns are mirrored in Beijing. The Chinese foreign ministry used harsh language on Tuesday when asked about the summit. "Nato, as a relic of the Cold War and the world's largest military group, claims to be a regional defensive organisation while continuously overstepping its boundaries, expanding its powers, provoking confrontation, and engaging in hegemonic bullying," Lin Jian, a spokesman, said. "China firmly opposes Nato's slanderous attacks and blame-shifting against China, and opposes Nato using China as an excuse to advance into the Asia-Pacific region and disrupt regional stability."

Nato's anniversary summit is being overshadowed, leading article, page 25

Russians deny Ukraine trauma exists

Russia

Marc Bennetts

Life for many Russian soldiers in Ukraine consists of endless months spent in rodent-infested trenches, under fire, surrounded by the corpses of fellow servicemen. Survival rates are low and one in five war veterans suffers from mental health issues, according to the country's defence ministry.

Yet as the Kremlin seeks to recruit men for the front, discussing the growth of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is becoming increasingly frowned upon. Instead, Russian psychologists are using the term "post-traumatic growth" to refer to what they claim are the positive effects of fighting in Ukraine, according to a report by Lyudi Baikala (People of Baikal), a banned anti-war website in Siberia.

"War doesn't just traumatise people — it also heals them," Vasily Langovoy,

a psychologist, told Lyudi Baikala. Combat experience in Ukraine, he said, can lead to "positive personality changes" among soldiers resulting in increased decisiveness, better workplace performance and heightened sexual desire in their wives.

Tatiana Uryvchikova, a psychologist, admitted that combat was stressful but emphasised what she called the "emotional benefits" of fighting among the ranks of Russia's invading forces.

"Stress can cause a person to either break down or become tough, like steel," she said. "We never know which one it will be. But many soldiers' wives told me that their husbands returned from the front more heroic and ... began showing their best masculine qualities."

Maria Lebedeva, another psychologist, spoke of the "idiotic term PTSD", saying that "it won't affect anyone".

Some of the psychologists have dramatically changed their opinions on

the condition, promoting suspicions they have been pressured by the authorities into promoting pro-war viewpoints. In 2019, Mikhail Reshetnikov, a veteran of the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan who now works as a psychologist in St Petersburg, gave interviews about the difficulties veterans faced in adapting to civilian life. Last year, however, he told MPs that "hysteria" over PTSD needed to be "debunked", and that just 32 out of every 1,000 soldiers suffer from it. It was unclear where he took the figures from.

Despite the attempt to portray the war as character-building, there is copious evidence of the damage caused to mental health. Viktor Birtolan, who fought with the Wagner mercenary group in Ukraine, told Lyudi Baikala his application to join the riot police had been rejected because he said he was motivated by the need for some "good old-fashioned violence".



Lot of bottle A street artist sells "finely polluted" river water on the banks of the watersports during the Olympics following a €1.4 billion clean-up. However,

Vineyards splash out

France

Adam Sage Paris

The Cadard family has been running a vineyard in the Loire Valley for five generations, ever since their ancestor, a brigadier general, turned from soldiering to winemaking.

Now the family has a new helper — a robot that tills the soil between the vines. "My parents said I was mad," Benoît Cadard, the latest member of the family to run Château de Quincy, told La Nouvelle République du Centre Ouest, his local newspaper.

His Vitibot, as the robot is called, cost almost €200,000 (£168,600) although subsidies of €65,000 were available, according to Cadard. It proved to be a good investment, he said, adding that his parents had been won over and he was considering buying a second machine. He told *Téma Agriculture & Ter-*

roirs, the agricultural website, that he could now sit in the vines, with his computer connected to the internet through his smartphone, and do administrative tasks while the ground was tilled and weeds removed.

Cadard is not alone. According to Les Echos, the financial daily, there are several hundred robots employed in French agriculture, about half of them in vineyards, where they have replaced the tractors once used to till the soil.

The newspaper said France was the world leader in rural robotisation, ahead of the US. But the electric-powered Vitibots — which are equipped with lithium-ion batteries, two real-time kinematic positioning GPS devices, 12 mechanical detectors, two inertial control units and an emergency stop — are not perfect. Like most contraptions equipped with the latest technology, they are all but impossible to

**Palestinians told to leave
Gaza City amid IDF assault**
Page 28

**No dolce vita for Romans
as Airbnb swamps capital**
Page 29



Laugh-a-day heart health rule 'an insult to the mirthless'

Japan
Richard Lloyd Parry Tokyo

Politicians in Japan have introduced a rule calling on citizens to laugh at least once a day because of evidence that it reduces the risk of a heart attack.

Members of the assembly in Yamagata prefecture in northern Japan passed the ordinance last week, inspired by research at the local university. Opponents insist that laughter is nothing to do with politicians and that the dignity of the mirthless must be protected.

The rule, proposed by the conservative Liberal Democratic Party that holds a majority in the assembly, decrees that Yamagata citizens "will deepen their understanding of the beneficial health effects of laughter and make efforts to shape mental and physical health through means such as laughing once a day".

It also orders businesses to "develop a workplace environment filled with laughter" and it designates the eighth day of every month as a "day of laughter", when it will be promoted with particular vigour.

But the decree has angered those in the assembly's opposition camp. "To laugh or not to laugh is one of the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the constitution regarding freedom of thought and creed as well as an inner freedom," said Toru Seki, assemblyman for the Japan Communist Party.

Satoru Ishiguro, a member of a coalition called the Prefectural Politics Club, said that it discriminated against those with disabilities that prevented them from laughing. "The human rights of those who have difficulties laughing due to illness or other reasons must not be undermined," he said.

One of the angriest reactions came from Shigeru Minamino, an expert on Japan's constitution at Kyushu University. "To sum it up: don't be ridiculous. It's none of your business," he wrote. "I believe it is good to laugh at least once a day but that's down to my personal

opinions and values. It's not something to be ordered or recommended by a prefectural assembly."

The controversy originates in a scientific paper published five years ago in the *Journal of Epidemiology* by a team from the Yamagata University School of Medicine. It is based on a survey of 17,152 people aged 40 and younger who responded to a questionnaire about laughter frequency, and whose health was tracked over several years.

The researchers found that those who reported laughing at least once a week were less likely to experience cardiovascular problems than those who did so less than once a month, allowing for other factors such as age, smoking and alcohol consumption.

The scientists caution that their study has its limitations. "In this study we defined 'laugh out loud' as laughter," said the team led by Professor Kaori Sakurada. "Accordingly, silent laughing and smiling were not counted as laughter." But even putting aside grinning, beaming and silent snickering, they believe their study has clear implications for health policy.

"Our findings suggest that increasing the frequency of laughter might reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and increase longevity," they conclude. "Our findings support the positive effects of laughter therapy, such as laughter yoga for longevity."

Yamagata is not the only Japanese prefecture with laughter legislation. Hokkaido has designated August 8 as a "day of laughter" (8/8 can be pronounced in Japanese as "ha-ha"). Osaka also has similar programmes.

Kaori Ito, one of the sponsors of the Yamagata ordinance, emphasised that it was not mandatory and that no one would be arrested or imprisoned for failing to laugh. "The ordinance does not force people to laugh," she said. "It also emphasises the respect for an individual's personal decision."

Forcing people to chuckle is no laughing matter, leading article, page 25



Seine. Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris, plans to swim in the river next week after it was finally declared safe for there is no guarantee that it will still be below the pollution threshold when the swimming events begin later this month

on workers who never whine

mend when they break down, said Cadard.

Still, French manufacturers believe they have a bright future given the difficulties of finding people prepared to work in vineyards these days.

"People are no longer interested in working in the world of viticulture: it's hard, fastidious and physical labour," said Edouard Descamps, whose firm, Viti Morley, provides services to châteaux in Bordeaux.

With tractor drivers in particularly short supply, Descamps has bought a robot that works in 15 or so of the châteaux that are his clients. "It's got an autonomy of between 10 to 12 hours and it only costs €10 to recharge. I absolutely don't regret it," he said.

Under French law, an operator has to be within 300m of the robot at all times in case it goes haywire. But Descamps said Viti Morley's operator was able to



The Vitibot costs more than £150,000 and is extremely precise at weeding

undertake other tasks while the Vitibot was at work. He said the Vitibot was a "lot more sophisticated" than a robot lawn mower with "technology that evolves like an iPhone".

Christophe Gaviglio, vineyard mechanisation engineer at the French Institute of Wine and Vine, said electric robots were more precise than humans at weeding, used less energy than tractors and were more respectful of the soil because they weighed less.

He said there were about 200 such robots working in French vineyards and that their number had risen rapidly over the past two years, partly because of the state subsidies without which they would not be competitive. He said it cost between €650 and €1,000 per hectare per year to weed vineyards with a tractor, but more than €1,000 with a robot "without the subsidies".

Manufacturers believe robots will soon be able to prune vines and spray herbicides so that labourers are no longer in contact with products such as glyphosate, but Gaviglio said this was not necessarily an efficient approach.

Man caught smuggling 100 snakes in his trousers

Richard Spencer China Correspondent

A man has been arrested after trying to smuggle more than 100 snakes from Hong Kong into mainland China by stuffing them down his trousers.

The man, whose name and age were not given by the authorities, was stopped in the green "nothing to declare" channel at the checkpoint on the border between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, the city facing it on the mainland.

"Upon inspection, officers found six drawstring canvas bags, each sealed with plastic tape and containing live snakes of various colours and sizes," the Chinese customs service said. There were 104 in total.

The snakes were not venomous and included native breeds such as black rat snakes, and non-native ones like milk

snakes, western hognose snakes, corn snakes and bullsnakes. The customs statement included a video of officers laying out the bags of snakes and peering into them nervously.

It was not clear exactly what the man intended to do with the snakes, but the smuggling of wild animals into China has been a major concern of animal campaigners for decades. In recent years, the Chinese courts have handed down life sentences for those caught dealing in rare and protected species.

There is a trade in exotic animals for pets but for snakes the market is usually their meat, which is believed to have medicinal qualities. Killing and eating snake is not illegal; last year Pizza Hut in Hong Kong introduced a snake, mushroom and ham pizza topping, based on a traditional Chinese stew.

World

Leader's daughter challenges gay ban

The daughter of the long-serving president of Cameroon has caused uproar by coming out as a lesbian and criticising the African nation's tough laws against homosexuality (Adam Sage writes).

Brenda Biya, 26, an aspiring rapper who lives in Switzerland, posted a picture on Instagram of herself embracing Layyons Valença, a Brazilian model. In the now-deleted post, the caption read: "I am crazy about you, and I want the world to know." She said it came as a surprise to her mother, brothers and father Paul, 91, who has led the former French central African colony with an iron hand since 1982.

Biya explained her actions in *Le Parisien* newspaper, saying she had gone public to help lesbians and gay people persecuted in Cameroon and the other 26 African states with laws against same-sex couples. Some two dozen people are in



Brenda Biya, left, posted an image of her kissing a Brazilian model. Homosexuality is banned in Cameroon

Cameroonian prisons under some of the region's harshest anti-gay laws. These impose maximum terms of five years for actions perceived as

promoting or engaging in homosexual behaviour. Beatings and murders are common, activists say.

"This law existed before my father was in power. I find it unfair and I hope my story can make it change," Biya said.

Biya, whose social media posts under her

rap name King Nasty depict her posing in luxurious locations and cars, said she had been attracted to women since her teenage years.

"I was in denial. I knew the traditions of my country. For me, it wasn't possible ... I thought I was going to have to hide it all my

life." An anti-LGBTQ group in the country has since lodged a complaint with the public prosecutor against Biya for "promoting and inciting the practice of homosexuality". One of her brothers called her to voice the family's anger. Her mother, Chantal Biya,

the first lady, demanded that she delete her post but since then the family has been silent.

Biya claimed she deleted the post after the reaction "turned sour", but said in a video on TikTok: "I also received a lot of support from LGBTQ communities."

Women assaulted at bull festival

Spain

Simon Hunter Madrid

Eleven sexual assaults have been reported in the first four days of the San Fermin "running of the bulls" festival in Pamplona.

The Feminist Movement, a Spanish campaign group, said that at least three were "high-intensity" attacks.

The police have yet to provide further information about the exact nature of the incidents.

Iratxe Alvarez, a spokeswoman for the movement, said: "The attitude and behaviours that some men have towards women is unacceptable. Touching, harassment, rapes, insults ... We are fed up with so many sexist men."

Sexual violence has long been a problem at the running of the bulls, which is held every year from July 7 to 15 in the capital of Spain's Navarre province.

The fiesta, which attracted nearly 1.5 million people last year, is famed for its bull runs starting at 8am, which encompass six fighting bulls and six tame steers careering through the packed streets of the city.

However, the fiestas are also famous for their partying — and each year there are reports of groping, sexual harassment and serious sexual assaults.

The most notorious of these incidents occurred in 2016, when a group of five men assaulted an 18-year-old woman in the vestibule of a block of flats. It became known as the *manada* — "wolf pack" — case.

After several trials, the men were convicted of rape and were each jailed for about 15 years. The case shocked Spain and prompted the Socialist-led government under the prime minister Pedro Sánchez to reform laws covering sexual assault and consent.

Israel warns Gaza City to evacuate after airstrike

Israel

Amal Helles Cairo
Gabrielle Weiniger

Israel's military has told all Palestinians to evacuate Gaza City as it presses on with a fresh offensive across the strip.

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) dropped leaflets on the city calling on residents and displaced persons to head south, away from the renewed fighting in and around Gaza City, which will remain a "dangerous combat zone".

In a tweet in Arabic from the IDF spokesman, residents were told to find a "safe route" to evacuate.

Thousands of Palestinians have been forced to flee under heavy bombardment over the past two days.

The mass evacuation comes after an Israeli strike on a school building in southern Gaza killed at least 29 people and injured dozens more, including many who had taken shelter there.

The Israeli military said it had targeted a terrorist from Hamas's military wing who was involved in the October 7 massacre on civilians in southern Israel, and that it was "looking into the reports that civilians were harmed".

The strike took place in front of the Al-Awda school in the town of Abassan, east of Khan Yunis, where witnesses say displaced people were sheltering inside the building and in tents around it.



The Hamas-run health authorities in Gaza said most of the people killed were women and children, and that the death toll was expected to rise.

"Children were in front of the entrance to the school door, my child being one of them — they were selling some simple things on the stalls. Suddenly they threw a missile at them," said Umm Muhammad, whose son is now in urgent need of intensive care. She said there were no empty beds to treat him, adding: "He was trying to buy some food to satisfy his hunger."

Others had visited the school on Wednesday to go online.

Muhammad Abu Abed, 33, was at the school to get an internet connection to talk to his fiancée, who is in Egypt receiving medical treatment after surviving an earlier bombing. He was killed.

"Usually he does not go to the Al-Awda school area, but there was an internet connection," his sister Ghaida, 27, said. "He wanted to go and make a call over the internet to his fiancée. It was only a few moments before we heard heavy bombing. My mother called him and she felt that something had happened. 'His phone is ringing so he is fine,' she said. But unfortunately this hope has now been dashed."

Josep Borrell, vice-president of the European Commission, responded to the strike on social media, condemning "any violation of international law" and calling for those responsible to be held to account.

Israel said the incident was under review but that it used "precise munition" to strike against the Hamas operative.

A video shared by Al-Jazeera claimed to show the attack. In it, children can be seen playing football in the courtyard before a loud explosion occurs nearby, sending people running for cover.

"I cannot describe what happened to me," Ahmed Qudayh, 14, said.

"I was standing in front of Al-Awda school and then I found myself lying on the ground. I could not move. Martyrs, body parts and wounded were everywhere. Dust and shrapnel. We could no longer see from the smoke.

"Everyone was looking for someone who belonged to him."

Suspect arrested over war shrine 'toilet' vandalism

Japan

Richard Lloyd Parry Tokyo

A man has been arrested in Tokyo in connection with a notorious incident in which a Chinese social media personality defaced and urinated on the Shinto site in Yasukuni Shrine, the Shinto site where hanged Japanese war criminals are commemorated.

Jiang Zhuojun, 29, is suspected by police of buying the paint used to spray the word "toilet" on to a stone pillar in the shrine in central Tokyo. The man who perpetrated the vandalism, Dong Guangming, 36, known by his online nickname of "Iron Head", posted a video of the act, which also showed him allegedly urinating.

Yasukuni Shrine is dedicated to about 2.5 million Japanese men who have died in wars since the start of the 19th century. Among them are Class A war criminals convicted and executed by allied tribunals after the Second World War.

Many Japanese people argue that Yasukuni serves the same role as the Cenotaph in Britain or the US's Arlington National Cemetery: a politically neutral memorial to sacrifice in war. However, the shrine's museum and its official website espouse a view of history that justifies Japan's invasions of other east Asian countries as both heroic and politically necessary.

The act of vandalism, which took place at the end of May, provoked anger

among right-wing commentators. One, a plastic surgeon, Katsuya Takasu, a nationalist who has denied the Nanjing massacre and the Holocaust, offered a bounty of 10 million yen (close to £50,000) for Iron Head's capture.

Tokyo police possess warrants for the arrest of Guangming and another man believed to have filmed the stunt but they returned to China hours after the incident, leaving behind Zhuojun, who lives in a town north of Tokyo.

In the video posted online, Guangming expresses his opposition to the decision by the Japanese government to discharge wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean — a move denounced by the Chinese government.

"Faced with the Japanese government's permission to discharge nuclear wastewater, we can do anything, can't we?" he said.

Yasukuni's most controversial occupants are the 14 war criminals hanged by the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and secretly enshrined at Yasukuni in 1978. Since then the site has served as the focus of Asian fears of resurgent Japanese militarism.

Tokyo has a secular war memorial, the little-known Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in Chidorigafuchi Cemetery, a few hundred metres from Yasukuni. There have been discussion about establishing a new, larger site of commemoration, but this has been vigorously opposed by the country's right.

Romans fight back or flee as Airbnb rentals rise

Italy
Tom Kington Rome

In Rome's historic Trastevere district, the fightback against late-night revellers quickly turned to violence.

"It happened at 2am on Via San Francesco a Ripa, when locals couldn't get to sleep and threw water from their balconies on people below who promptly broke into their building and ran up the stairs shouting 'We'll kill you!'" said Simonetta Marcellini, head of the residents' group Trastevere Emergency.

Once considered a quintessential working-class Rome neighbourhood, Trastevere is now overflowing with bars and restaurants — a transformation accelerated by the arrival of hundreds of Airbnb flats, which has coincided with the exodus of 45 per cent of residents in the past decade.

The rest of the centre of Rome, stretching from the Colosseum to St Peter's, is not far behind, with 38 per cent of locals having left in the past ten years and 17 per cent of the area's housing up for grabs on Airbnb.

Giovanni Caudo, a city councillor, said: "Romans left behind have no idea who lives in their building any more. My café in the Monti district is full up with tourists having breakfast. Locals have been shut out."

Across the world, cities are taking measures against Airbnb. London, Paris and Amsterdam have a maximum number of days per year a house can be rented, New York sets a minimum of 30 days for a stay (unless the host is resident too) and Barcelona plans a total ban.

Italy arguably has more to lose, given that neighbourhoods like Trastevere and Monti have distinct identities dating back centuries. But apart from a new attempt to register rental properties, the Italian government is doing far less than other countries to stop the depopulation of its historic city centres.

Filippo Celata, a housing expert at Sapientia University in Rome, said: "Italian mayors have been asking the government to legislate but it is clear it has no intention of doing anything — we are at year zero. The government register is simply a way to tax renters."

In Florence, where 29 per cent of accommodation in the heart of the city is on Airbnb, a former mayor tried to block new listings on the site, only to be halted by a local court.

In Venice, where 22 per cent of properties are on Airbnb, special permission was given by a previous government to limit rentals but the city's right-wing mayor has yet to take advantage.

Matteo Salvini, the hard-right ally of the prime minister Giorgia Meloni, said last year that Italian homeowners should never be stopped from listing on Airbnb, saying: "Everyone must be free to decide how to earn money."

Celata said Italy's high incidence of home ownership made it difficult to tell people they cannot let them out.

Right-wing politicians in Italy have often dismissed the residents of historic city centres who complain about depopulation as left-wing intellectuals.

Apart from water thrown from balconies in Trastevere, residents' protests have been few and far between compared with Barcelona, where 3,000 marched last weekend holding banners demanding tourism be slung out.

Michele Campisi, head of the heritage group Our Italy, said: "The Barcelona protesters are young, while young people in Rome are less interested in the culture and history of the city."

He also said that residents letting out homes and leaving city centres had to take their share of the blame. "They complain the city has changed while they rent out their homes," he said.

In Trastevere, Simonetta Marcellini said Italians wary of the legal rights given to renters were often happier to let short-term to tourists. Rome officials have increased checks on owners letting out their properties without permits, but Caudo said the city should block rentals in saturated central areas: "Rome already has the power to limit the number of certain types of shop in one area — why can't it with rentals?"

He hoped tourists could be pushed to areas that needed an economic boost.

Celata claimed the centres of Rome and Florence might be nearing saturation, but said he feared for the fate of smaller cities such as Verona and Pisa.



The Trastevere district has been transformed by tourism fuelled by Airbnb flats



Le Pins Marine Le Pen, 55, leader of the hard-right National Rally, arrives at the National Assembly in Paris for a welcome day for new and re-elected MPs

Macron calls for coalition despite poll humiliation

France
Adam Sage Paris

President Macron sought to end the chaos at the heart of the French political system with a call for mainstream parties to unite in a grand coalition.

His words, in an open letter to France, came after the snap parliamentary elections ended in deadlock and a defeat for his own centrist camp.

Faced with a hung parliament, Macron called for a coalition of all MPs, with the exception of the populist National Rally and the radical left France Unbowed party.

Both reacted with fury. Jordan Bardella, 28, the Rally chairman, said Macron had "organised the paralysis of the country by positioning the extreme left at the gates of power. And his message is now: 'Sort it out.' Irresponsible."

Clémence Guetté, 33, a France Unbowed MP, said the president had failed to understand the historic nature of the crisis facing France. He was "more alone than ever", she said.

Macron called for unity between parties who believed in democracy, the EU and the "defence of French independence". He said they should "build a solid majority for the country [that would be] necessarily plural. It's in the light of these principles that I will choose a prime minister," he said, adding that this could take "a little time".

The 46-year-old president, who has said he will remain in his post until the end of his term in 2027, has asked Gabriel Attal, the outgoing prime minister, to stay on in a caretaker capacity.

Macron appears to believe that his grand coalition will include his own centrists, the centre-right Republicans but also leftwing parties like the socialists, the ecologists and perhaps even the communists. These parties are part of the New Popular Front (NPF) which also includes France Unbowed, which Macron wants to exclude after accusing it of antisemitism.

The NPF emerged from the parliamentary elections with the most MPs — 182 — largely because of tactical voting to block the populist right. But it fell well short of an absolute majority. Macron's strategy is to split the NPF in the hope that its more moderate members will join his coalition.

But the NPF has rejected his plan, saying that it should be asked to form a government having won the elections. "No one won," Macron retorted.

Migrant tax perks plan sows division

Germany
Oliver Moody Berlin

Germany's ruling coalition is split over a plan to hand tax incentives to highly educated foreign professionals.

Ministers complain that it would give a few immigrants an unfair privilege.

The country has an acute shortage of skilled labour in sectors such as IT, construction, health and social care. More than half the country's companies say business is suffering from too few accountants and engineers.

Concern is rising as baby boomers retire, leaving fewer workers to support a growing number of pensioners.

As part of a "growth package", the government proposes to exempt skilled immigrants from paying tax on 30 per cent of their wages during their first

year, falling to 20 per cent in the second and 10 per cent in the third.

The definition of a skilled worker is unclear but one model would require at least a university or college degree and a prospective income of more than €40,000 a year.

The proposal, driven by the liberal Free Democratic Party, has been criticised by others in government.

The Social Democratic Party of Olaf Scholz, the chancellor, is especially opposed to the measure. Hubertus Heil, the party's labour minister, said the plan would set different tax rates for people doing the same job.

Some of his party colleagues fear the plan could be provocative in eastern Germany, where campaigning for three regional elections in autumn has been dominated by questions of immigra-

tion and economic justice. The centre-right opposition has described the proposal as "anti-German discrimination".

Martin Huber, of the Bavarian Christian Social Union, posted on Twitter/X: "What more misguided incentives will the coalition establish ...? The coalition is ... snubbing the hardworking population."

Leading economists have also dismissed the proposal. Monika Schnitzer, the government's chief economic adviser, told the Rheinische Post that the real problem was the bureaucracy facing skilled immigrants. But the Free Democratic Party rejected the criticism, saying other European countries had already introduced similar generous incentives. In Spain educated immigrants can keep 24 per cent of their income tax-free for the first four years.

World

Whales jump for joy despite net threat

The rare sight of two huge humpback whales breaching simultaneously has been captured off Sydney as thousands of the marine mammals make their annual migration from Antarctica (Bernard Lagan writes).

"Every one to three trips we see a jumping whale but to see two jumping out of the water at the exact same time is not very common," said Simon Millar, the skipper of a whale-watching boat.

John Goodrich, a photographer who caught the double breach off Manly, a northern suburb of the city, said it was a whale-



GOWHALEWATCHINGSYDNEY.COM

The two adult humpback whales breached at the same time — a rare event

specialists to free snared whales. Ten days ago teams in small boats released an 18m-long humpback dragging a tangle of about 200m of rope and fishing buoys off the coast south of Sydney, weighing a combined 800kg.

Another humpback was found last week anchored to the seabed north of Sydney, trapped by trawler cabling.

"It was showing some distress and struggling to breathe," Wayne Phillips, the Sea World Foundation's head of marine sciences, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "It wasn't moving and seemed to have been stuck in the same place for up to eight days by the time we actually got there."

Last year 13 humpback whales were cut free off the New South Wales coast.

watcher's dream. "It's pretty incredible," he told Sydney's Daily Telegraph. "It's what everybody wants to see: two big adults jumping

out of the water at the same time."

Each year humpback whales undertake one of the longest migrations in the animal kingdom.

From May, about 60,000 of the mammals travel up to 10,000km in a round trip from the Antarctic Ocean, passing close to Sydney

towards breeding grounds in tropical waters off the north of Australia before returning south in November.

But entanglements in debris, especially heavy fishing gear, are becoming more common, and Australia has recruited more

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Asylum seekers returned in 'push-back' GPS boats

Australia
Bernard Lagan Sydney

Australia has begun putting seaborne asylum seekers on to boats pre-programmed with GPS co-ordinates that carry them back to their departure point without Australian personnel travelling on board, the Indonesian authorities have said.

Indonesian police found two boats carrying 44 men — 36 Bangladeshis and eight Rohingyas, who had left the country in June — grounded on its southernmost landfall, Rote Island, on Monday. Authorities said that Australia had sent the men back in aluminium boats whose navigation systems had been programmed with the co-ordinates of the island.

The boats were supplied with just enough fuel and provisions to make the journey from Australia's northern waters to Rote Island. The men said they had tried to reach Australia from Indonesia's southern coast but had been intercepted by an Australian Border Force (ABF) vessel, on which they were detained for 18 days.

They said that they were then told to board new, Australia-supplied boats after ABF personnel destroyed the wooden craft they had used to travel from Indonesia. Mardiono — Rote



Indonesia's police chief, who, like many Indonesians, goes by a single name — said the ABF instructed the asylum seekers to 'take this boat ... to Rote, back to Indonesia,' he told The Australian newspaper yesterday.

"When we checked the boats, they've run out of everything so they had no other choice than to land."

Mardiono added: "I think [the Australian authorities] have calculated how much fuel they need to get here." The ABF refused to confirm or deny an expanded "push-back" policy.

Australia has a longstanding policy that denies settlement to any asylum seekers arriving on small craft. In 2014, under the government of Tony Abbott, the former conservative

prime minister, a small number of asylum seekers were returned to Java in submersible lifeboats.

Before that, the Abbott government had intended to return asylum seekers on more traditional vessels, but the craft failed marine safety tests. Since late 2012 the government has also forced people seeking asylum into "offshore processing centres" in the tiny Pacific state of Nauru and, formerly, in Papua New Guinea. More than 4,000 people have been sent to these centres.

The reintroduction of the turnback policy using larger craft would suggest that concern is mounting within Anthony Albanese's government over a fresh wave of people-smuggler vessels arriving from Indonesia, carrying mostly Bangladeshi, Rohingya and Chinese nationals.

Under international law, Australia has no right to intercept and turn back boats on the high seas without the consent of the country in which a boat is registered.

If the reports are correct, Australia appears to be circumventing this provision by transferring asylum seekers to its northernmost waters — around Ashmore Reef — before putting them in boats for their automatic return to Indonesia.

Crocodile that killed girl, 12, is shot dead

Joshua Thurston

Wildlife rangers have found and shot dead a 4m-long saltwater crocodile that killed a young girl while she was swimming with her family in northern Australia.

Officials have been trying to trap or shoot the animal since the 12-year-old's death last week and killed it on Sunday with permission from the region's traditional landowners. Croco-

diles are considered a totem by many indigenous Australians.

Police confirmed the animal was the one that killed the girl at Mango Creek near Palumpa, a settlement seven hours' drive from Darwin.

The girl's death, the first fatal attack in the Northern Territory since 2018, has restarted debate on whether more should be done to curb the crocodile population. The reptiles have exploded across the coun-

try's tropical north since they became a protected species in 1971.

Grahame Webb, an expert on the animals at Charles Darwin University, said the size of the crocodile shot indicated it was male and at least 30 years old. The reptiles can reach 70 years old and up to 7m in length.

The attack came weeks after the territory approved a ten-year plan to lift the culling rate near human habitat from 300 animals to 1,200 a year.

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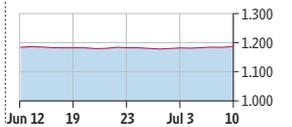


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Daily Mail owner quits Telegraph auction over inquiry fears

Richard Fletcher Business Editor

The Daily Mail owner DMGT has withdrawn from the auction for the Telegraph newspapers amid fears that it would be drawn into a long and complex competition inquiry.

The privately owned media group, which is run by Lord Rothermere, is understood to have told bankers over-seeing the sale of its decision in recent days. The Abu Dhabi-backed RedBird

IMI kicked off a new auction of the Telegraph newspapers and the Spectator magazine last month after the government blocked the investment firm from taking control by issuing a so-called public interest intervention notice.

DMGT was considered one of the frontrunners alongside Sir Paul Marshall, the hedge fund boss who owns a stake in GB News.

The auction is being overseen by The

Raine Group, a US firm, and Robey Warshaw, the London-based boutique investment bank.

A spokesman for Daily Mail and General Trust said "DMGT believes the new statutory regime governing the ownership of UK newspapers is overly restrictive, and could curtail our ability to raise capital for our news publishing and other media businesses — both now and in the future.

"With a new government in place, we

would face a heightened risk of a protracted regulatory process if we were to win the auction."

He added: "This would cast further uncertainty over the Telegraph and could disrupt our plan to grow DMGT's diverse stable of news titles."

The Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act, designed to curb foreign state control of British news after the political row over the ownership of the Telegraph titles, restricts for-

eign state investment in media groups. The Times revealed in June 2023 that Lloyds Bank had seized the Telegraph media group from its long-term owners, the Barclay family.

Goldman Sachs was appointed to find a buyer, but that auction process ended when RedBird IMI agreed to acquire the Barclays' debt from Lloyds.

This complex deal is thought to have valued Telegraph Media Group at about £600 million.

Regulator to shake up listing rules

Reforms aim to prevent firms floating abroad

James Hurley

The City regulator is to go ahead with the biggest shake-up of listing rules in three decades in an attempt to help London equity markets attract and retain more companies.

The Financial Conduct Authority said loosening rules that govern the rights and information given to shareholders when companies float on the stock market would align "the UK's regime with international market standards".

The City has blamed UK listing rules for discouraging promising companies from floating here and for risking driving businesses overseas, with the loss of Arm Holdings, the chip designer, to Wall Street last year regarded as symptomatic of London's weak appeal to technology and high-growth firms.

The changes, which the authority said would allow "a wider range of companies to issue their shares on a UK exchange", include a simplified listings regime, removing the "premium" and "standard" listing in favour of a single category.

The need for votes on significant or related party transactions has been removed and there will be greater flexibility around enhanced voting rights, often held by founding entrepreneurs behind promising companies which can cause disagreements with shareholders.

It will also be easier for companies with little financial track record to float.

The regulator said its overall approach was to move away from "before the event" controls and towards putting

the onus on investors to do their own due diligence before backing a company.

The reforms, which will apply from July 24, follow two FCA consultations last year, and today's announcement came with the new government's approval.

Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, said that the changes "represent a significant first step towards reinvigorating our capital markets, bringing the UK in line with international counterparts and ensuring we attract the most innovative companies to list here".

A review chaired by Lord Hill of Oareford under Boris Johnson's government found that the number of listed companies in the UK has fallen by about 40 per cent from a recent peak in 2008.

Nikhil Rathi, chief executive of the regulator, and Sarah Pritchard, its executive director, markets and international, said reform was needed to tackle the risk that "our regime falls increasingly out of step with those of other jurisdictions, making it less likely that companies eager to grow choose the UK as a place to list their shares".

Listing rules ultimately determine which companies are allowed to list in London and what shares end up in the nation's pension pots and tracker funds.

Pension schemes, asset managers and some trade associations have warned the authority that the changes could damage investors' ability to engage and hold boards to account.

Railpen, the pension fund for 350,000 railway workers, the People's

Continued on page 34



Power trip Sheryl Sandberg, former chief operating officer of Meta Platforms, and her husband Tom Bernthal arrive at the Allen & Company Sun Valley Conference in Idaho, a private week-long meeting of leaders in business, media and politics

UK overtakes India in venture capital

James Hurley

The UK has overtaken India as the world's third largest venture capital market amid an industry slump in which investment and deal numbers dropped markedly last year.

The British Business Bank, the state economic development agency, said there were reasons to be optimistic about the UK's ability to attract and finance fast-growing companies despite the slowdown.

Venture investment declined by 48 per cent to £8.8 billion in 2023 in the UK compared with the previous year, while the number of deals fell by 25 per cent to 2,152.

The global venture capital industry has been hit by higher interest rates,

which reduces its attractiveness to investors, pressure on valuations and a shortage of "exit" or sale opportunities, preventing fund managers from reinvesting.

However, Louis Taylor, chief executive of the bank, said: "I think these numbers are really exciting in a lot of ways. We're the third biggest market for venture capital globally, [our] market share of venture capital globally has gone up in the last couple of years."

Equity investment in private companies has now returned to 2019 levels. Taylor said "exuberance" in private markets during the pandemic had been reversed but investments and valuations had returned to "pretty reasonable" levels.

The UK trails only the United States

and China as a destination for venture capital and new data from Dealroom, which monitors the industry, shows that the UK took nearly a third of all European venture funding in the first half of this year. The data showed signs of a "return to growth" this year.

Taylor said he met Rachel Reeves and Jonathan Reynolds, the chancellor and business secretary, in recent days. Reeves said this week that the bank would be expected to work with the UK Infrastructure Bank, which is investing in green technology and regional growth, under a new National Wealth Fund with £73 billion of extra funding.

Taylor said Labour saw the organisations as "critical enablers of private sector money investing in the growth economy".

Business

Need to know

1 Households are to face water bill increases of up to 73 per cent to raise money to repair “crumbling infrastructure” and deal with record sewage spills. Ofwat, the water regulator, will rule today on water companies’ request for £100 billion of investment over the next five years to create reservoirs, upgrade sewage works and other new infrastructure. **Page 1**

2 The Financial Conduct Authority, the City regulator, is to go ahead with the biggest shake-up of listing rules in three decades in an attempt to help London equity markets attract and retain more companies. **Page 31**

3 The UK has overtaken India as the world’s third largest venture capital market amid an industry slump in which investment and deal numbers dropped sharply last year. **Page 31**

4 The Daily Mail owner DMGT has withdrawn from the auction for the Telegraph newspapers amid fears that it would be drawn into a long and complex competition inquiry. The privately owned media group, which is run by Lord Rothermere, is understood to have told bankers overseeing the sale of its decision in recent days. **Page 31**

5 Microsoft and Apple have withdrawn from their board observer seats at OpenAI, the ChatGPT maker, in an effort to fend off global regulators’ concerns at the close relationships between big tech and a small cohort of powerful AI start-ups.

6 Oil demand is expected to peak next year and fossil fuels will decline to about two thirds of the global energy mix by 2050 as renewable power grows rapidly, based upon current climate policies, according to BP, the energy company. **Page 34**

7 Labour’s plans to “get Britain building again” have been dealt a blow after Barratt Developments, one of the country’s biggest developers, said it would build fewer homes in the coming year. **Page 36**

8 Labour’s decisive victory at the polls, and the prospect of interest rate cuts, has made estate agents more optimistic about the outlook for the housing market this year. **Page 37**

9 London may be about to lose its favoured position among the international elites as a well-connected financial centre with cultural appeal as the new government prepares to increase taxes on individuals resident in the UK whose permanent home, or domicile, for tax purposes is outside the UK, as well as executives working in private equity. **Pages 38-39**

10 British pension schemes are overpaying fund managers amid an “extreme” range of charges in the sector, suggesting retirees could get better returns if trustees secured better deals. According to a report by ClearGlass, a data analytics company, shared with the Financial Times, pension plans paid £15 billion more than necessary in fees. **Page 39**



Sotheby's paid £66m dividend despite woes

The auction house Sotheby's, controlled by the telecoms tycoon Patrick Drahi, has paid a £66 million dividend despite a fall in sales and profits (Alex Ralph writes). Accounts for Sotheby's in the UK show company made a £41 million dividend last year, followed by £25 million last month.

Sotheby's, which was established in 1744 in

London and is now headquartered in New York, was taken private by Drahi, the founder of the telecoms firm Altice, in 2019 for \$3.7 billion, ending 31 years of public ownership.

Drahi, 60, is best known in the City for becoming the largest shareholder in BT, Britain's biggest telecoms group, following a series of debt-fuelled investments in the global telecoms industry. The dividends are



Direct Line to start using price comparison websites

Emma Powell

Direct Line, one of the UK's largest motor insurers, has said it will start offering its core brand on price comparison websites for the first time, in a major shift aimed at turning around its performance after a string of profit warnings.

In his first strategy review, Adam Winslow, who was appointed chief executive of the FTSE 250 group in March, said the insurer would launch a “bespoke” range of price comparison products that would give customers greater choice, in an acknowledgment that more than 90 per cent of the motor insurance market's sales were made via these channels.

“To grow, winning on price comparison websites is critical,” Winslow, 46, said.

The company already offers some brands, including Churchill and Privilege, on comparison websites but had shied away from selling Direct Line-branded deals, instead relying on its direct relationship with customers.

Winslow pointed to strategic mistakes that had been made by the company, including “over-reliance” on direct sales — given the dominance of comparison websites — and taking too long to overhaul its motor insurance platform.

Operations will be refocused in its core motor, home, commercial direct and rescue businesses, with plans to launch its own fleet of patrol vehicles. It will either sell or stop investing in its motor partnerships business as well as pet and travel insurance, which to-

Adam Winslow said that winning on such websites was “critical”



Profile

Adam Winslow will be well attuned to the competitive edge and rapid growth that price comparison websites can deliver for an insurer.

His father, Peter Winslow, helped to reinvent the insurance market with meerkats and comparethemarket.com, as the former chief executive and chairman of BGL Group, the company that launched the

comparison website that now dominates the industry.

The decision to launch Direct Line-branded products on price comparison sites is a break with a strategy that had marked the insurer out from its rivals since the market took off about two decades ago. Winslow has held a series of senior roles at Aviva, the FTSE 100 group, and AIG. He had been running Aviva's UK and Irish general insurance business since May 2021, steering it through a period of

soaring claims inflation that has wrongfooted several players in the sector, including Direct Line.

At the time of his appointment, Danuta Gray, 64, Direct Line's chairwoman, said that he “stood out for his strategic understanding of the sector”.

His task now will be to prove to investors that he can drive growth in new customers while maintaining pricing discipline, a lack of which contributed towards unseating his predecessor.

months of the year. The solvency ratio stood at 193 per cent at the end of last year. In September, the insurer sold its broking division to RSA Insurance, a Canadian-owned rival, for £520 million, averting fears that it would be forced to tap equity markets to shore up its finances.

Direct Line, based in Bromley, Kent, is one of Britain's biggest motor insurers but has been thrown into turmoil by a string of profit warnings since 2022, which led to the abrupt departure of Penny James as its boss in January last year and knocked its share price.

This left it vulnerable to a bid from Ageas, a Belgian insurer, which made two takeover approaches to Direct Line in January and March, valuing the business at as much as £3.2 billion. Both were rejected by the Direct Line board.

Asked whether he was concerned about Direct Line being the potential target of another bid, Winslow said he would not “possibly speculate” on “other people's motivations or intentions”.

“I'm absolutely focused on the things I can control and influence,” he said.

A revised dividend policy to pay 60 per cent of operating earnings was set out but restarting payouts would depend on having a strong solvency ratio and capital generation in its motor business. A one-off dividend of 4p a share was offered alongside full-year results in March.

The resumption of shareholder returns would be reviewed “on an ongoing basis”, Winslow said, with the first opportunity being when the company reports half-year results at the start of September. Any additional capital returns will be reviewed annually alongside full-year results.

The shares, which have fallen 43 per cent over the past five years, closed up 6¼p, or 3.3 per cent, to 199¼p.

gether generated £160 million in gross written premiums last year.

The insurer is targeting at least £100 million in annual cost savings by the end of next year, by decommissioning legacy technology systems, digitalising more of its operations and “simplifying” the business.

Job cuts could be on the cards as a result but Winslow would not be drawn on the specifics of any headcount reduction. The company employs just over 10,000 people.

“I think we are likely to need a different profile of resources and probably fewer resources in the business,” Winslow said, which would include people. The insurer raised

its solvency ratio target — a measure by which assets cover commitments to future payments — to 180 per cent in the medium term, from 160 per cent, “deliberately to acknowledge past experience and the fact that we're in the early stages of a turnaround”, Winslow said.

The company has previously admitted that it did not act fast enough to raise prices to combat elevated rates of claims inflation.

It is now aiming for net insurance margins of 13 per cent by 2026, compared with a margin of about 10 per cent at present.

During the first quarter, the volume of in-force motor policies fell by 2.6 per cent quarter-on-quarter to just under 4.1 million on March 31, compared with the 1.6 per cent dip that Direct Line had previously reported for the first two



ANGELA WEISS/APP; POL EMIE/SIPA

Sotheby's, led by Patrick Drahi, left, said that falls in sales reflected the "cyclical nature" of the art market, which meant a "degree of variation in turnover year on year"

understood to have been structured as an intra-group transfer of funds, rather than paid directly to Drahi.

The tycoon was reported late last year to have sounded out potential buyers for a minority stake in Sotheby's amid pressure on Drahi to sell assets in indebted Altice.

Sotheby's had also considered an initial public offering, but Charles Stewart, its chief executive, indicated in December that the plans had been dropped.

"Patrick is incredibly committed to Sotheby's," said Stewart, who also talked down the prospect of a sale. "I would find it very, very unlikely. It's not in his plan or interest at all."

More recently, in April, Sotheby's moved to borrow about \$500 million through bonds backed by personal loans made to art collectors.

Its UK business's revenue fell to £144.9 million last year, from £150.9 million, with auction sales falling 4.1

per cent to £125.9 million and private sales dropping 2.8 per cent to £19 million, according to accounts filed this week.

Sotheby's said the sales performance reflected the "cyclical nature" of the global art market, which meant a "degree of variation in turnover year-on-year".

The number of employees fell to 403 from 450 but the staff costs rose slightly to £45.5 million, from £44.1 million.

Profit before tax declined 9.3 per cent to £27.2 million.

In the accounts, Sotheby's said the art market was influenced by the overall strength and stability of the global economy, the financial markets and geopolitical conditions.

The auction house added: "Competition in the art market is intense. A fundamental challenge facing any auctioneer or art dealer is the sourcing of high quality and valuable property for sale."

Sotheby's was approached for comment on the 2023 UK results. The UK business's ultimate parent company is Next Alt, based in Luxembourg and controlled by Drahi.

UK risks reputation for governance

BUSINESS COMMENTARY Alistair Osborne



Stock markets aren't much cop without stocks. So, something had to be done about London's dwindling exchange: an arena where the number of listed companies has dropped by 40 per cent since 2008's peak and where, between 2015 and 2020, Britain accounted for just 5 per cent of the world's floats.

Yet, you wonder if the Financial Conduct Authority has hit upon the right sort of something. It's opted for the biggest overhaul of the listing regime in more than 30 years and one that will wild west things up nicely. Yes, "buyer beware" has long been the key rule for any investment. But after this revamp it'll be pretty much the only one.

The regulator's 159-page missive comes after myriad consultations. And the feedback was entirely predictable. Companies looking to float and the "sell-side community" — fee-hungry banks, advisory firms, lawyers etc — say the reforms will "improve UK competitiveness and promote growth": a view shared by our new chancellor Rachel Reeves. By contrast, "most pension schemes, asset managers, and certain trade associations" like tighter rules, not least over dual-class shares and related party deals. What a surprise.

True, the FCA makes fair points. It "received little evidence to demonstrate that these features currently result in a valuation premium accruing to UK listed equities or increased asset allocation". They haven't stopped the "long-term trend of de-equitisation by UK pension schemes". And, "as of 2021, 77 per cent of UK asset manager allocations in equity were invested in non-UK equities". So they're clearly happy investing in all kinds of places with less stringent rules.

Yet, two issues stand out. First, over dual-class shares. The FCA is axing the "premium" and "standard" listing categories, so everything will now get indexed. One result? Your FTSE 100 tracker — or indeed pension — would have been treated to the delights of the now bombed-out THG and Deliveroo. The FCA reckons "equity indices could easily be tailored to remove issuers with particular characteristics", such as dual-class shares. But that's nowhere near as easy as it sounds.

Second, related-party deals. The FCA is axing the shareholder vote, putting the onus on the board and a "fair and reasonable" opinion from an adviser. So, it'd now be even easier for Playtech founder Teddy Sagi, say, to have sold his own companies to the listed group.

Yes, fewer rules may force investors to do better research. And maybe they'll be less gullible next time bankers try to dump them into the likes of Made, Moonpig or Dr Martens. But too few rules may also hurt the UK's reputation for good governance. It's not obvious that'll make our market more attractive.

Move in, move on

Bang goes Martyn Clark's home alone strategy. The new Crest Nicholson boss only arrived at the housebuilder last month. And

already he finds himself welcoming in Jason Honeyman, his opposite number from rival Bellway. Fancy quitting his job as Persimmon's commercial chief for that.

Clark was set on doing up the accident-prone Crest: a business that has somehow contrived to turn a land bank skewed to the housing shortage in the southeast into four profits warnings in ten months. Yet, no doubt he realised it was also a sitting duck for takeover.

So it's proving. He pitched up to find the Crest board, chaired by Iain Ferguson, fending off two all-share tilts from Bellway, the second at 253p a share and valuing the group at £667 million. Then came various leftfield efforts from Avant Homes, the business run by ex-Persimmon chief Jeff Fairburn of £75 million bonus fame, which is backed by the Elliott hedge fund. The latest of these was even easier to reject. It involved Crest acquiring Avant in an all-paper deal, taking on its debts and diluting investors, so that Elliott could become the combo's biggest shareholder with 30 per cent.

Still, Bellway's latest attempt looks more on the money: enough to get a "minded to recommend" statement from the Crest board (story, page 37). Bellway's dangling 0.099 of its shares for each of Crest's and offering its target's investors 18 per cent of the merged group — up from 171 per cent before. True, given the drop in Bellway shares since the offer period began from £27.18 to £25.56, it no longer equates to a 28.3 per cent premium or a bid worth £720 million at 273p. It's now worth 253p, the same price the board said "significantly undervalued" Crest.

Yet Crest, whose shares fell 1 per cent to 236½p, is no easy enterprise to defend — particularly for a bloke who's never run a plc before. Yes, Bellway would be paying a discount to its net asset value of £803 million. But there are industry doubts over whether the £145 million Crest set aside for cladding issues is enough. And, both boards see "compelling strategic and financial logic" for a deal: similar to the rationale for Barratt's takeover of Redrow.

Bellway's northern bias balances Crest's to the south. The duo could buy bigger sites, selling both Crest family homes and Bellway's smaller ones aimed at first time buyers. Peel Hunt sees at least £25 million of synergies. And the top 25 investors in Crest, holding 78 per cent, also own 36 per cent of Bellway. This deal is not yet home and hosed. But Clark's days as the boss of his first plc are already looking numbered.

Meerkat manor

Shouldn't it be renamed Indirect Line? Its new boss Adam Winslow grew up in a family of meerkats: the result of his dad, Peter, being the brains behind Comparethemarket.com. So, it's no shock he's a fan of price comparison websites, understanding they're "where 90 per cent of consumers shop". They'll soon be home to the insurer's "strongest brand". Simple, really. What took it so long?

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Microsoft and Apple quit OpenAI board

Katie Prescott

Microsoft and Apple have withdrawn from their board observer seats at OpenAI in an effort to stave off global regulators' concerns over the close relationships between big tech and a small cohort of powerful AI start-ups.

Less than nine months after taking on the role, Microsoft has written to the ChatGPT maker, which it has backed with \$13 billion, saying that its resignation was "effective immediately".

Apple, which recently announced a partnership with OpenAI to integrate its chatbots into its products, will not take up its planned seat, the Financial Times reported.

The top generative AI businesses, which include OpenAI, Anthropic and Mistral, have close links to tech giants, who have backed them with billions of dollars. Watchdogs fear that these relationships could entrench Silicon Valley's dominance over the new technology, stifling competition as well as increasing their power and influence.

The UK's competition authority set out its concerns last December, saying that the development of AI "is unri-

valled in economic history" and calling competition between developers "critical" to "guide the development of the market toward positive outcomes for people and businesses".

The Competition and Markets Authority is weighing up whether Microsoft's partnership with OpenAI could be considered a merger, along with a similar tie-up between Amazon and Anthropic. It has invited comments.

\$13bn

Microsoft's financial backing for the ChatGPT maker

Source: Microsoft

The regulator is scrutinising the "multi-year, multi-billion-dollar investment, collaboration in technology development and exclusive provision of cloud services by Microsoft to OpenAI" and whether Microsoft has material influence over the business.

By dropping the board seat, Microsoft will be hoping that this will clear one of the main issues that has been raised about its investment. The Euro-

pean Commission also looked at the deal, and while it concluded that the observer seat did not change OpenAI's independence or Microsoft's influence over OpenAI, it is still considering an antitrust investigation.

In the US, the Federal Trade Commission is also examining the impact of investments and partnerships between big tech firms and AI start-ups.

OpenAI went through a tumultuous period last November when Sam Altman, its chief executive, was fired and rehired over the course of a week-end in a dispute over its strategic direction. Microsoft then took up the board an observer role.

In the letter, Microsoft said: "We accepted the non-voting board observer role at a time when OpenAI was in the process of rebuilding its board."

With the new board in place, Microsoft said it was "confident in the company's direction" and as a result "we no longer believe our limited role as an observer is necessary".

Alex Haffner, a competition partner at Fladgate, the law firm, said: "It is hard not to conclude that Microsoft's decision has been heavily influenced by the ongoing competition scrutiny."

Rate cut 'a question of when, not if'

Mehreen Khan

The UK economy is still suffering from "uncomfortable strength" in wage growth and service sector inflation, the chief economist of the Bank of England has warned.

In his first public comments since the announcement of the general election in early June, Huw Pill said key measures of price growth remained high, even though headline inflation has fallen back to the Bank's 2 per cent target.

"At annual rates still not far from 6 per cent, annual services price inflation and wage growth continue to point to an uncomfortable strength in those underlying inflation dynamics," Pill said. He admitted that it was a question of "when, not if" the Bank would cut in-

terest rates this year. "The latest data also remains consistent with the view that these inflationary pressures have now been contained, and may be starting to revert towards levels that are more consistent with the achievement of the inflation target," he said.

A seven-strong majority on the nine-member Monetary Policy Committee — including Pill — voted to keep interest rates on hold at 5.25 per cent last month. But policymakers including Andrew Bailey, the Bank governor, have paved the way for monetary loosening at the next meeting in August.

The Bank has kept the base rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent since last summer. Traders pared back their bets on an August rate cut from 65 per cent to 50 per cent after Pill's comments. The

Bank's next meeting will come after the release of latest figures on the state of the labour market, wage growth and inflation next week.

Analysts at Deutsche Bank said they expected UK annual headline inflation to remain stable at 2 per cent in June.

In a speech delivered at Asia House in London, Pill said the Bank should not fixate on single data points as it tries to disentangle the "signal" on inflationary pressure from "noise": "While the MPC must remain open to the possibility that compelling new evidence could emerge which would lead the committee — individual members of it — to a revised opinion, it should also remain cautious in seeing any single data point as either a necessary or sufficient trigger for that re-assessment," he said.

Business

Energy efficiency around the world 'lagging far behind targets'

Emma Powell

Progress on improving energy efficiency has been "disappointing", improving at about a quarter of the rate being targeted by global leaders, BP has said.

Energy efficiency, measured as the amount of energy used per unit of economic activity, has fallen by an annual average of just over 1 per cent over the past four years, BP estimates, slower than the previous decade and much weaker than the 4 per cent rate targeted

in the energy efficiency pledge at the last UN Climate Change Conference, more commonly known as Cop.

In its closely watched energy outlook report, BP said slow advances in energy efficiency were one reason for the divergence between the path global emissions is on, versus a pathway consistent with the 2050 Paris climate goals.

The war in Ukraine and turmoil in the Middle East had helped to speed up the shift to green energy and energy security, which could support greater

emphasis on energy efficiency and growing domestic production, BP said.

Investment in low-carbon energy has grown rapidly to about \$1.9 trillion last year, BP estimates, up about 50 per cent since 2019. Spending has been concentrated in developed economies.

BP predicts energy efficiency will improve under both the current trajectory and net zero scenario, by an average of 2.1 per cent and 3.4 per cent, respectively, better than the typical rate of 1.6 per cent over the past 25 years. Faster

progress would be "supported by the increasing shift towards wind and solar power generation, which reduces the energy losses associated with converting thermal energy into electricity, as well as by the broader pressures to decarbonise the energy system and enhance energy security", BP said.

Weaker global economic growth out to 2050 reflecting slower population growth and weaker gains in output per capita could drive down the pace of the increase in demand, and cause it to fall.

Under the current trajectory, faster gains in energy efficiency with greater growth in renewables and a slowdown in demand could help the world move to a "substitution" phase of the energy transition in the 2030s and 2040s.

Spencer Dale, BP's chief economist, said the world's "carbon budget is running out" and "despite marked increases in government climate ambitions and actions, and rapid growth in investment in low-carbon energy, carbon emissions continue to rise".

Demand for oil to peak next year, warns BP

Emma Powell

Oil demand is expected to peak next year and fossil fuels will decline to about two-thirds of the global energy mix by 2050 as renewable power grows rapidly, based upon current climate policies, according to BP.

In its latest energy outlook report, the energy giant said that increasing efficiency of internal combustion engine vehicles and then a more rapid rise in electric cars and trucks on the road would drive oil demand to reach the top in the middle of this decade.

The share of oil within the overall energy mix would decrease from about a third in 2022 to about a quarter by 2050 under the current trajectory and to a little over 10 per cent under a net zero scenario.

The current trajectory scenario is based on climate policies and carbon reduction pledges already in place. The net zero scenario assumes a significant tightening of climate policies aligned with the 2015 United Nations-backed Paris climate agreement to cut the world's carbon emissions by about 95 per cent by the middle of the century.

Growth in oil demand since 2019 — which has averaged about 500,000 barrels a day a year — has been largely driven by increasing consumption in emerging economies and increased demand for petrochemicals like diesel and jet fuel, BP said. Consumption in developed markets has continued to slip for most of the past two decades, having fallen by about two million barrels a day in 2022, compared with the pre-pandemic level and 5.5 million barrels a day below the 2005 peak.

Carbon emissions, caused primarily by the burning of fossil fuels, also peak in the mid 2020s in both of BP's scenarios.

Investment in oil and gas production totalled \$550 billion last year, according to BP's research, well below its peak at the start of the last decade, helped by better productivity.

BP argues that energy demand is set to be 5 per cent higher than the 2022 level by 2050 under the current trajectory, increasing out to the mid-2030s before plateauing, but about 25 per cent lower under a net zero scenario mapped by BP.

Chinese demand peaks in the mid-to-late part of this decade in both scenarios, before falling to around 15 per cent and 35 per cent below 2022 levels by 2050 under the current trajectory and net zero scenario, respectively.

Renewable power sources will grow the fastest, more than doubling by 2050 in the current trajectory and increasing more than threefold under net zero, growing from just over 10 per cent in 2022 to more than a quarter of global energy supply by 2050 and more than half of all primary energy in net zero.

The growth will mean that fossil fuels decline from about 85 per cent of energy in 2022 to about a two-thirds on the current trajectory and a third by 2050 under net zero.

The largest falls occur in the share of coal, as the world shifts towards lower carbon fuels in industry and power. By 2050 coal consumption is between 35 and 85 per cent lower in the two scenarios.

Spencer Dale, BP's chief economist, said: "The world is in an 'energy addition' phase of the energy transition in

an exchange". There have been warnings in some quarters that the weaker rules may depress UK valuations even further.

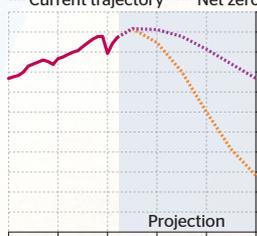
Pirc, the shareholder activist group, said: "This seems to open the gates for more value-destroying listings. The lobbying that has gone on here has been based on mantras and assertions without any evidence. In fact, evidence points to the fact that New York hasn't attracted capital by having lesser rules; it has a tough regulatory regime."

Quilter Cheviot, a wealth manager, said: "Using the listing rules as a reason for the London market's struggles is a bit of a red herring. The main reason for the gloomy clouds over the City is the makeup of the main indices. London is home to large, legacy industry companies, such as miners, oil and gas and financials, which have been out of favour in the past decade."

On the slide

Oil demand Million barrels a day

● Current trajectory ● Net zero



Source: BP

Change in oil demand by sector

Million barrels a day

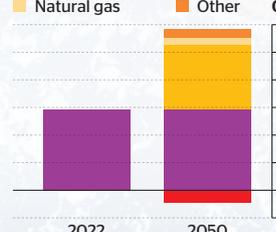
■ Current trajectory ■ Net zero

	2022-35		2035-50	
Road transport	-3.4	-9.6	-15.5	-26
Other transport	2.1	-1	-1.4	-7.9
Feedstocks	5.41	3.5	1.5	-5.6
Buildings and power	-2.3	-5.5	-2.1	-4.1
Industry	-1.1	-4.1	-3.3	-7.8
Other	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	-0.5
Total	0.5	-17	-21	-52

Electricity generation by source in current trajectory

■ Wind and solar ■ Coal

■ Natural gas ■ Other



which it is consuming increasing amounts of both low carbon energy and fossil fuels."

The challenge is to move, for the first time in history "to an 'energy substitution' phase", he said, in which low carbon energy increases sufficiently quickly to more than match the increase in global energy demand.

"This occurs only when the growth of

the 'new' energy — this time low carbon energy — exceeds the increase in total global energy demand, so that the use of the 'old' energy — in this case unabated fossil fuels — declines in absolute terms," he said.

Global energy demand has continued to grow, averaging about 1 per cent a year per year between 2019 and last year, BP said, although that is below

an average rate of a little below 2 per cent over the previous decade.

While the investment in renewable energy sources like wind and solar have risen during that time, it has not been enough to meet the increase in demand, it said. Fossil fuels have filled the gap, consumption of which reached a fresh high last year, driven by increased oil demand.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31
FCA listings shake-up

Partnership, which has millions of auto-enrolled pension members, and council pension funds are among those that have sounded the alarm.

The City regulator acknowledged that the new rules "involve allowing greater risk". Rathi said the reforms "may mean investors change how they engage with companies, making more use of shareholder rights at law and other mechanisms to scrutinise boards and business strategies".

He has conceded that the new regime may lead to more stock market failures but argues that it will attract a more diverse range of companies to Britain.

The regulator noted that shareholder approval would still be required for "key events, like reverse takeovers and decisions to take the company's shares off

Behind the story

Ever since Arm Holdings, the UK-based chip design king, chose New York over London for its listing last year the clamour for a rethink of the UK's stock market rules has become cacophonous (Patrick Hosking writes).

Much quieter have been the institutional investors who worry that watering down standards of protection is not the answer. The reformers have won, with the Financial Conduct

Authority pushing ahead with rule changes that allow companies to flout the principle of "one share, one vote" and push through related-party deals without approval.

The upside, it is hoped, will be an influx of more exciting growth companies to London. The danger is it becomes a magnet for murky companies seeking to disadvantage outside investors. The last time the listing rules were watered down, London welcomed IPO disasters including Bumi, Essar and ENRC.

Buyer beware, is the usual riposte. Investors need to subject their picks to more scrutiny and should be less hostile to entrepreneurs who sometimes for very good reasons want to preserve power in their fiefdoms.

But there are two problems with this thinking. First, these companies are likely to enter indices like the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 and will automatically be included in tracker funds — used by investors who don't want to be bothered with stock selection and like minimum standards

of governance and disclosure.

Second, a market that lowers standards ends up tarnishing everyone in it. In a used-car lot with no checks, all are assumed to be cut-and-shut jobs, even the good ones. Trust sinks. Prices fall.

The brokers, bankers, lawyers and accountants may enjoy a flurry of new clients and fees for a while. But investors are simple souls: if they find too many IPO stinkers on their plates, they will give London an even wider berth and valuations will fall further.

Patrick Hosking

Labour's dash for growth risks confusing intervention with action



“No one can fault the new government on its production of growth synonyms in the past few days. It's kick-starting this. It's catalysing that. It's turbo-charging the other. It's mobilising, it's unlocking, it's jumpstarting. It's powering up, it's firing up, it's booting up.

If the nation's productivity could be boosted by the uttering of action verbs alone, we'd already be Singapore on stilts. The same goes for punchy alliteration. The days of delay, deferral and ducking of difficult decisions were over, declares Rachel Reeves, the first alliteratively named chancellor since, er, Kwasi Kwarteng. Reeves is right, though, in her first speech since arriving at the Treasury last week to emphasise economic growth as the only way to drag Britain out of its long malaise. We need to produce more to boost living standards and to generate the additional taxes that must be found to repair and modernise crumbling public services.

She was right too to admit the nation would have to accept hard trade-offs, though she wasn't quite candid enough to spell them out. The price of growth may be a new windfarm in your neighbourhood. It may also mean a new uptick in immigration if the UK is realistically to source the necessary skills. Any attempt to strong-arm pension schemes into more growth-stimulating UK investment may quite possibly lead to smaller retirement incomes. Faster growth also tends to worsen bottlenecks and exacerbate inflation. One unintended consequence could therefore be higher interest rates for longer.

It is too early to say whether the blizzard of new policy initiatives will actually generate an acceleration in growth. Again, if progress could be guaranteed by new quangos and task forces alone, we'd be off to the races. So far we have been

China's bullet trains relied on Beijing taking control of planning



promised a Growth Mission Board, a Growth Delivery Unit, a National Planning Policy Framework, a Regulatory Innovation Office and a National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority. The two promised state investment bodies, GB Energy and the UK Infrastructure Fund, are now to be augmented by a third, the National Wealth Fund.

The ponderous names of these new organisations will conjure up worries about growth-inhibiting talking shops, more red tape and a bias towards patronage, empire-building and report-writing over taking necessary decisions.

Many of us recall Ronald Reagan's quip that "the nine most terrifying words in the English language are: 'I'm from the government, and I'm here to help'". (Though, counterintuitively, he made that oft-quoted remark not when withdrawing state support but when dishing out record levels of subsidy to struggling American farmers in 1986.)

One effective way of stimulating the animal spirits of businesses and investors is to get out of the way, or at least to lubricate the process by which they clear the inevitable regulatory hurdles. Amid all the fine words and abstractions from ministers in the past few days, the one small but nuggetty promise to fund the hiring of 300 extra planning officers is perhaps the most concrete — given the terrible backlog and delays in council planning departments.

Free-market purists are wrong to argue that governments can't foster faster growth except by intervening as little as possible. History shows that's bunk. Japan's extraordinary growth in the postwar years is a textbook example of how Tokyo's aggressive trade policies and export

promotion paid off. China's extraordinary great leap forward from 1990 to 2020 was delivered by a Beijing prepared to bulldoze through pro-growth infrastructure decisions — from bullet trains to new airports.

But Britain over the decades has struggled to develop a consistent or even

remotely coherent industrial policy, let alone one co-ordinated across Whitehall departments.

The new government has some promising tailwinds. Business leaders are relatively cheerful and for the most part have plenty of capital if they wish to deploy it. The promise of political stability after the chaos of the past few years will sweeten boardroom sentiment. So will the promise of fiscal rectitude by Reeves. They alone should encourage boards to dust off investment plans.

Then there are the promising noises on planning and the reintroduction of housebuilding targets for councils. Nothing quite helps produce a pick-up in the economic pace as a housebuilding boom, thanks to the potent multiplier effects in every corner of the country.

A larger question mark arises over the more radical policies of trying to boost private investment by allocating public money alongside it. Apart from in the pandemic era, the Conservatives largely avoided this approach. Labour has no such qualms: about £16 billion has been earmarked for co-investment, mostly in infrastructure and green energy projects. But Labour administrations have been prone to mistakes in the past. The first is to conflate and confuse pro-growth policies with other laudable policy objectives, such as preserving jobs or tackling climate change. The second is to think it is easy to successfully pick the winners of tomorrow, whether individual companies or sectors. The third is to be swayed by what is fashionable or eye-catching. The endless bankrolling of Concorde and the costly rescue of British Leyland were the results of this kind of muddled thinking.

Sir Keir Starmer's ambition to become "a clean energy superpower" has echoes of Harold Wilson's slogan about "the great white heat of technology". There has to be a risk of a misallocation of capital and the creation of loss-making zombie industries. That would not just be a waste of public money. It could also crowd out other sectors, starving them of capital and talent. Tricky thing, growth.

Patrick Hosking is Financial Editor of *The Times*

Ryan Bourne

New housing targets are no substitute for planning reform

“No new government could reverse the underlying causes of Britain's housing woes overnight. Recognising this,

Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, is right to reintroduce mandatory government housing targets, at least as an interim measure to encourage new supply.

In an excellent Treasury speech, Reeves put land-use planning reform at the centre of her economic growth strategy this week. Her initial moves include funding 300 new planning officers, empowering the deputy prime minister to approve projects, and mandating local authorities to reassess greenbelt boundaries and establish explicit housing targets. All will increase the housing supply somewhat, but one hopes as first

'Oxford and Cambridge, whose combined population rose by more than 95,000, only saw 29,430 new houses built'

steps towards more comprehensive reform, rather than the limit of her ambitions.

Labour wants to oversee at least 1.5 million new homes this parliament, or about 300,000 yearly. Given today's restrictive land-use policies, such as green belts and density limits, coupled with the discretionary nature of case-by-case development decisions, local authorities simply wouldn't facilitate that much building without substantial pressure from central government.

Centrally planned housing targets, however, are certainly not ideal and Reeves's ultimate goal should be to not need them. Governments can't estimate the "correct" number of houses, evident in the 4.3 million shortfall we have today relative to the average European country.

Moreover, previous government plans have failed to allocate homes well geographically. The economist Paul Cheshire's research shows that between 1980 and 2018, Barnsley and Doncaster added 56,340 new houses with a combined population

increase of nearly 23,000 people, whereas Oxford and Cambridge, with a combined population increase exceeding 95,000, saw only 29,430 new houses built.

Reeves's local housing targets, if matching previous Conservative efforts, will be weighted towards an area's projected population growth. A functioning market shouldn't require such people-counting. Areas experiencing rising demand ought to see more construction, yet our planning laws hinder development where demand is strongest. LSE economists have shown that Help to Buy subsidies, for example, fuel only price increases in Greater London, where planning restrictions are tight, while boosting housing construction on the English-Welsh border, where planning is lax. Over time, the planning regime ensures houses aren't where people would really want them.

The Conservatives under Boris Johnson considered weighting local housing targets by affordability metrics so that new home building better tracked market price signals. That is, until the Tories realised the resultant "mutant algorithm" implied mass housebuilding in their shires. They then pivoted back to heavier weighting on population growth and forcing more development into urban areas, before Rishi Sunak abandoned targets entirely.

The lessons from all this are clear: governments cannot replicate a functioning housing market through centralised planning. While using targets to counteract existing bad planning laws is defensible, what we really need are more enduring, institutional reforms. We must make more land available for development and consider adaptive zoning laws, whereby applications complying with land use and building codes get approval automatically.

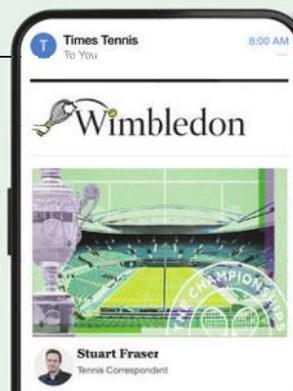
Reeves clearly understands the housing challenge. She has started very well. Yet one feels she has a once-in-a-generation opportunity here to really get this right. Doing so will require both resolute political will and completely overhauling today's paradigm.

Ryan Bourne is an economist at the Cato Institute and editor of the new book *The War On Prices*

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Business

Barratt deals blow to Labour by promising fewer homes

Tom Howard

Labour's ambitious plans to "get Britain building again" have been dealt a blow after one of the country's biggest developers warned it would build fewer homes in the coming year.

Barratt Developments expects to deliver between 13,000 and 13,500 flats and houses between now and the end of June 2025, down from 14,004 over the past year. This was already Barratt's lowest annual output since 2013, excluding the lockdown-hit 2020.

Sir Keir Starmer has pledged to build 1.5 million homes over the next five years in an attempt to ease the UK's housing shortfall, and will rely on the major housebuilders, including Barratt, to deliver the bulk of them.

During the housing market slowdown of the past 18 months, Barratt slowed new site openings while it waited to sell the flats and houses it had already built. It has also been buying less land than usual because of the drop-off in sales.

As a consequence, it has 326 active sales outlets around the country — 63 fewer than at this point last year. Barratt's forward order book has reduced from £2.22 billion last summer to £1.91 billion.

The volume guidance for the year ahead is 7 per cent below the level that the City had pencilled in, which contributed to Barratt shares falling 6p, or 1.2 per cent, to close at 485p.

Anthony Codling, an industry analyst at RBC, suggested that Barratt is being hamstrung by its relatively small land bank. "It can build homes very well, it just doesn't have the land on which to build them," he said.

Barratt has already struck a deal to buy a rival builder, Redrow, which will give it more land. Shareholders from both sides have approved the tie-up, which is currently being looked at by

the Competition and Markets Authority. Barratt is hopeful that it will get the all-clear next month.

Barratt Developments was founded in 1953 by Sir Lawrie Barratt, an accountant from the northeast of England who could not afford to buy a home so built one instead. It was listed on the London Stock Exchange in 1968 and is now a member of the FTSE 100.

Like all builders, it benefited from the pandemic's housing boom, although sales have fallen sharply over the past couple of years as the cost of living crisis, record house prices and higher mortgage rates crippled affordability.

David Thomas, Barratt chief executive, acknowledged that he and his team "continue to navigate a challenging macroeconomic backdrop". On average over the past year, Barratt has been selling 0.58 homes per site per week, a marginal improvement on the 0.55 sales rate in the previous 12 months but still almost half what it was doing in the pandemic.

Thomas, 61, said would-be buyers had "remained sensitive to mortgage availability and affordability", although the easing of mortgage rates over the past six months has helped demand recover, as have "continuing elevated levels of sales incentives" and a trimming of its prices. The average Barratt home sold for £368,600 last year, a reduction of almost 3 per cent compared with the previous year.

First-time buyers have been hit the hardest by the rapid rise in mortgage rates, although Barratt has seen "some recovery" among this cohort, which account for just over a quarter of its buyers. Despite being its worst outturn in more than a decade, Barratt still built a few more homes than it had anticipated last year. Reflecting that, it said that it expected its profits for the year just gone to be "slightly ahead of our previous expectations".



Crest steps closer to tie-up with Bellway

The merger of two of Britain's biggest housebuilders came a step closer as Crest Nicholson said that it was minded to accept a sweetened takeover proposal from its larger FTSE 250-listed

rival Bellway (Tom Howard writes). Bellway's third all-paper offer values Crest at £720 million and would give Crest's shareholders 18 per cent of the enlarged group. It is worth £50 million more than its previous bid.

The two companies sold just shy of 13,000 flats and houses last year.

If they were to merge, the enlarged group would become the country's third-largest housebuilder behind Barratt Developments and Vistry, with a market capitalisation of about £4 billion.

Last week Crest rejected a proposed offer from Avant Homes, which is run by Jeff Fairburn,

the former boss of Persimmon, and backed by the activist investor Elliott Advisors, and there is speculation that other bidders could emerge.

Persimmon has been mooted as another possible suitor, although it is pursuing the Edinburgh-based Cala Homes, which is being sold by Legal & General, the insurance and asset management group. Private equity firms are

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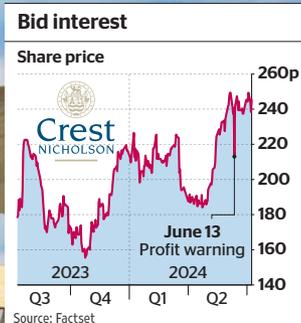
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Crest Nicholson shares fell 2½p, or 1 per cent, to close at 236¼p, although that remains some way off Bellway's offer, which works out to about 273p a share. Bellway shares slipped 24p, or 0.9 per cent, to £25.56.

Bellway wants Crest for its land bank in the southeast of England but also to add a more premium brand to its range. Most of the homes Bellway builds are targeted at first-time buyers whereas Crest tends to build larger family homes. If a deal gets done, the plan would be to retain the Crest brand name.

Perhaps the biggest attraction of Crest, though, is its subdued stock market value, which has almost halved over the past three years as it has stumbled from one problem to another.

There have been repeated cost overruns at a troublesome regeneration project in Farnham, Surrey; a costly fire in a block of flats that it built; and most recently the discovery of build defects and other issues at dozens of old developments.

The latest in a string of profit warnings came last month — on the same day that Bellway's interest first came to light — when Crest said it was having to spend twice as much fixing those defects at older sites than it had hoped.

Bellway's offer, although a premium to the current share price, is still below the book value of Crest's land bank, meaning that it would be picking up £800 million worth of land for £720 million. Some commentators have argued that the discount is warranted, given the issues Crest has run into when building out some of its sites in the past.

also thought to have taken a look at Crest as a wave of consolidation sweeps through the sector.

Bellway wants to carry out more due diligence before deciding whether to submit a formal bid. It has until 5pm on August 8 to do so or walk away. Should it make a firm offer, Crest's board said it would be minded to recommend it "unanimously to shareholders".

Bellway's offer values Crest Nicholson at £720 million. If the FTSE 250 companies were to merge, the enlarged group would become the third-largest housebuilder in Britain

Estate agents forecast sunnier outlook for housing market

Tom Howard

Labour's decisive victory at the polls last week, coupled with the prospect of looming interest rate cuts, has made estate agents more optimistic about the outlook for the housing market this year.

The spring and early summer, usually the busiest time of year for agents, has not been as fruitful as they had hoped, with mortgage rates having risen again after a steady fall in the run-up to Christmas.

Most agents reported a fall in new buyer inquiries again in June, according to the latest industry survey from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. It marks the third month in a row where interest from would-be buyers has pulled back.

A small majority of those polled also agreed fewer sales last month than they did in May. The RICS said the results showed that the housing market's brief recovery earlier in the year has "slipped into reverse".

However, with the arrival of political certainty and a potential rate cut around the corner, estate agents are growing increasingly confident about their prospects for the rest of 2024. A net 20 per cent of respondents expect to be selling more houses in three months'

THE TIMES Business briefing

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time than they are currently. That is the most upbeat reading since January 2022, when Britain was still in the middle of the post-lockdown property boom.

"Although activity across the housing market remained subdued last month, forward-looking aspects did improve slightly," Tarrant Parsons, senior economist at the RICS, said.

"There are some factors emerging now that could support a recovery in the months ahead. If the Bank of England does decide that the current inflation backdrop is benign enough to start loosening monetary policy next month, this may prompt a further softening in lending rates. In addition, the recent election delivered a clear outcome, with housing pushed up the political agenda."

According to the RICS polls, estate agents think house prices have been steadily declining for much of the past two years, and the majority reported that they retreated again in May.

However, for the first time since before the mini-budget in the autumn of 2022, more agents than not think that prices will increase over the coming three months. The institution said the survey suggested that "the decline in house prices has largely run its course".

Ex-Wimpey boss to head Travis Perkins

Emma Taggart

The builders' merchant Travis Perkins has appointed Pete Redfern, the former Taylor Wimpey boss, as chief executive after a slowdown at the company.

The FTSE 250 company said that Redfern would become chief executive on September 16 when the current boss Nick Roberts, 55, steps down after five years.

Redfern, 53, was chief executive of the housebuilder Taylor Wimpey for 14 years until 2022.

He also served as a non-executive director at Travis Perkins for nine years until last September.

In December 2021 after announcing he was stepping down as boss of Taylor Wimpey, Redfern told The Times: "I do think that what I'll want is going to

be different, but I would not rule out plc life and I would not rule out housebuilding.

"I want fresh challenges because, at the end of the day, what tends to get me up in the morning and drive me forward is solving an interesting problem. Interesting often means solving a problem you haven't solved before."

Separately, the builders' merchant appointed Geoff Drabble as its new non-executive chairman from October 1. Drabble, 64, chairs Ferguson, the plumbing supplies group, and he was previously chief executive of Ashtead, the plant hire company, from 2006 to 2019.

Drabble takes over the role from Jez Maiden, 63, the interim chairman.

Travis Perkins acknowledged the "underperformance" of the business.

During the past two years, the group's shares have fallen by more than 60 per cent, valuing Travis Perkins at £1.8 billion. In March the company reported that annual pre-tax profits in 2023 had fallen to £70 million from £245 million in 2022.

The builders' merchants added that this year would be another challenging one for the business as it grappled with a slowdown in housebuilding.

RBC praised Travis Perkins for the "quality and speed" of the new appointments as analysts at the bank said: "This clears up the management uncertainty and we expect both to continue the work started on simplifying the group and improving efficiency and cash generation."

Shares in Travis Perkins closed up 48¼p, or 6.1 per cent, at 849½p.

Wetherspoon chief's glass is half full

Emma Taggart

Sales growth at JD Wetherspoon slowed in the run-up to summer as the pub chain continued its "gradual recovery" from the pandemic.

Like-for-like sales, excluding the impact of new or closed pubs, rose by 5.8 per cent in the ten weeks to July 7. This compares with sales growth of 11 per cent in the ten weeks to July 28, 2023, a period that included more bank holidays.

Sir Tim Martin, chairman of JD Wetherspoon, said: "We had higher than average sales growth as pubs recovered from the pandemic, but by normal standards 5 or 6 per cent sales growth with inflation at 2 per cent is quite good."

For the year to date, like-for-like sales have grown by 7.7 per cent. Sales per pub are 21 per cent higher than before the pandemic. Martin estimated that for the current financial year, compared with 2019, labour costs for the company had risen by £164 million and energy had increased by £28 million.



Sir Tim Martin hopes Rachel Reeves will fix the "inequality" with restaurants

"Notwithstanding these cost pressures, the company continues to endeavour to 'widen the moat' by investing in areas such as beer gardens, staff rooms, above-bar glass racks and improved beer dispense systems," he said.

At its peak in 2015 there were 951 Wetherspoons pubs. The company has scaled back to 801, after the cost of living crisis and an increase in staff costs. More pubs are set to close, with 26

sold or surrendered to the landlord in the year to date. A further ten are on the market or under offer.

"If we made one mistake we opened some pubs too close to others," Martin said. "We've scaled back a bit where we've got two pubs in small or medium-sized towns."

Martin, 69, founded the business in 1979 on the site of a former betting shop in Muswell Hill, north London. The pub was originally named Martin's Free House before he renamed it JD Wetherspoon after one of his teachers when he lived in New Zealand. He owns a quarter of the business.

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

Supermarkets do not pay VAT for food sales, while in pubs and restaurants there is a 20 per cent VAT rate for food. Shares in JD Wetherspoon closed down 15¼p, or 2 per cent, to 753p.

Return of leisure travellers feeds Upper Crust owner

Helen Cahill

The owner of Upper Crust has benefited from a rising demand for leisure travel and snacks in airports and train stations.

SSP, which employs 43,000 people globally, said total sales grew by 16 per cent in the quarter ended June 30, with like-for-like sales up by 6 per cent.

The company's like-for-like sales in the UK and Ireland, North America and central Europe were up by 8 per cent, 5 per cent and 3 per cent respectively as consumers felt the benefit of a cooling in inflation. Shares closed up 16¼p, or 10.4 per cent, at 172¼p.

Hospitality businesses are on course to benefit from the reduction in inflation and an expected cut to interest rates, with food price inflation declining for the 16th month in a row in June, down to its lowest level since late 2021.

SSP said: "Led by an increasing demand for leisure travel, we have seen a

strong sales performance across all regions. We are well positioned for the peak summer trading period."

The group is planning to deliver revenues of between £3.4 billion and £3.5 billion, with underlying earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation set to come in at between £345 million and £375 million.

SSP is forecasting underlying operating profit of between £210 million and £235 million.

Analysts at Peel Hunt said the group could double its profits over the next three years and that it was benefiting from higher passenger volumes and increased prices across its range of products.

They said: "We believe it likely that strong leisure travel over the peak summer trading period will drive [financial] forecast upgrades in September."

"With the valuation [of SSP] close to record lows, we view this as an attractive medium-term buying opportunity."

Business

Milan promises la dolce vita for

Proposed increases in taxes on non-doms and private equity partners may prompt an exodus, Helen Cahill writes

London has long held a particular allure for the wealthy, international elites because it is a well-connected financial centre which also has great cultural appeal.

Yet the UK capital may be about to lose its favoured position among the ultra-rich as the new government prepares to increase taxes on individuals resident in the UK whose permanent home — or domicile — for tax purposes is outside the UK, as well as executives working in private equity.

The government looks set to abolish the favourable tax regime introduced under George III in 1799, where a non-dom pays UK tax only on the money they earn in the UK. It is also planning to change the tax treatment of carried interest, a form of income for managers of private equity funds where their share of profits is taxed as a capital gain rather than as ordinary income, usually at a lower rate.

The two measures together may be a significant deterrent for the wealthy, and prompt many to take advantage of tax incentives for high-net-worth individuals launched in Italy seven years ago. The Italian government has been luring thousands of people by announcing in 2017 a flat tax rate of €100,000 per tax period regardless of the amount of foreign income received, and the scheme has put a spotlight on the country's richest city, Milan.

Milan has long held an appeal to the international elite as it is regarded as the "engine" of the Italian economy and is the preferred location for the offices of global financial firms. UniCredit, one of Italy's largest international banking groups, is headquartered in Milan, and Rothschild & Co, one of the world's largest independent financial advisory groups, has established its Italian wealth management division in the city. Bank of America, Société Générale, BNP Paribas, Barclays' investment bank and Deutsche Bank Wealth Man-



agement also have offices in the well-heeled metropolis.

Giulia Cipollini, head of tax and wealth planning for Italy at Withersworldwide, the law firm, an adviser for City professionals looking to move to Milan, says it appeals to executives owing to its proximity to Switzerland and France — not forgetting Lake Como.

She said: "Milan has the benefit of being very well-connected with the rest of the world, with three large airports nearby, if you want to get a flight to Sao Paulo or Los Angeles. But it's also a relatively small, liveable city. It's quite cosy, and a lot of clients tell me how easy it is to just walk around rather than taking the subway."

Mark Harvey, head of the international department at the property agent Knight Frank, said most expats inquiring about taking advantage of the flat-tax regime start their property search in Milan.

He said: "If you're going to land and benefit from the flat-tax regime you are far more likely to go via Milan, and so that's mainly why we are seeing such a huge stampede into this location."

"People often arrive in Milan, and then later on move elsewhere throughout Italy, perhaps north nearer the lakes or south into Tuscany. It depends on where they are with their families."

One partner of a boutique investment bank said he moved to Milan after Brexit as it is convenient for cross-border work and has good international schools. He was able to convince staff members to join him due to the "phenomenal tax breaks", and said friends and contacts were now getting in touch to ask for advice on making a similar move in light of Labour's tax plans.

He said: "What I see in terms of the influx of expats into Milan is very much the people in a private equity firm who are making the majority of the carried interest. They are the ones who have the most tax leakage to mitigate."

"It's a no-brainer for a non-dom to leave the UK, and a lot of private equity executives are looking at relocating somewhere outside of the UK. When people ask me about Milan, it's a very simple conversation. I tell them about the tax break and then I put them in touch with a lawyer who can help them."

Cipollini added: "From the UK, we are seeing clients in the finan-



Milan is attractive to global financial firms as it is deemed the "engine" of the Italian economy — Giulia Cipollini, below left, of

cial sector, and people who became concerned about political instability after the spring announcement to cancel the UK non-dom tax regime.

"It was quite vague, and some clients decided to move due to the uncertainty, because that announcement was perceived as creating instability without clear guidelines."

Italy's flat-tax regime has been running for some years and is therefore mature enough to attract residents from the UK. Cipollini said clients had been cautious about the Italian scheme to start with but were becoming more confident about moving.

The applicant numbers have jumped in every year since the scheme's inception, rising by an average of 45 per cent annually, according to data from Italy's

Tax regimes across Europe

	Regime	Tax costs
UK	Non-dom	Income from outside UK only taxed if transferred to the UK
Italy	Flat tax	€100k flat tax on foreign income, ordinary tax on Italian income
Switzerland	Lump-sum	Wealth tax, minimum of CHF 100k per year
Monaco	N/A	None

Source: Blick Rothenberg

audit court, with applicant numbers rising by 41 per cent, from 803 to 1,136, in 2022. The scheme has attracted a total of 3,180 applicants so far.

Cipollini said: "Tax policies take time to become well-known and to be per-

ceived as stable. We have a lot of clients who decided to monitor the situation and see if the Italian regime for immigration and tax would remain in place and that it would finally be perceived as stable and competitive."

Ex-chancellor's consortium bids for fintech group

Helen Cahill

A consortium of investors led by Lord Hammond of Runnymede, the former chancellor, have increased their offer for the financial technology firm Equals Group to £253 million.

Railsr, a finance firm that counts Lord Hammond as its chairman, has teamed up with TowerBrook Capital Partners, a private equity firm, to bid for Equals Group.

The consortium has made an improved proposal for the Aim-listed company as it runs a strategic review.

The consortium has now offered 135p-per-share for the company, which develops and sells digital platforms that enable organisations to move money through payment and card products.

In a stock exchange announcement, Equals Group said: "The improved proposal follows a series of prior proposals from the consortium and remains subject to the completion of ongoing final due diligence, which Equals is facilitating, and finalisation of acquisition financing by the consortium."

"A further update will be provided in due course."

The payment platform is currently examining its strategic options after the collapse of a takeover bid from Madison Dearborn Partners, a private equity firm, last month.

Equals Group's shares closed down by 1/2p, or 1.3 per cent, at 115½p.

The group, which focuses on small and medium-sized businesses, said last week that its revenues were up by

33 per cent to £60 million in the six months ended June 30. Equals Group said that it had seen a "strong pick-up" in trading during the second quarter of its financial year, and that it had no debt and a cash pile of £20.5 million after



Lord Hammond became chairman of Railsr this year

paying a dividend of £1.9 billion to its current shareholders.

Railsr, founded in 2016 by Nigel Verdon, 57, and Clive Mitchell, 57, is a payments business known for acquiring the British assets of Wirecard, the

German financial group that collapsed amid an accounting scandal.

Railsr fell into difficulty in 2022, before being acquired by Embedded Finance, a start-up, for £414,000. Lord Hammond was appointed Railsr chairman this year to replace Rick Haythornthwaite, who stood down to become chairman of NatWest Group.

The former chancellor has held a number of roles in business since leaving government.

He became a non-executive director at Ardagh Group, a senior adviser at OakNorth Bank and chairman of Copper Technologies.

He has been a strong supporter of UK fintech companies and is also chairman of the Fintech Growth Fund, which invests in growth-stage companies in the financial sector.

Linklaters pay hits £1.9m for top partners

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

Equity partners at Linklaters are earning average salaries of £1.9 million as the "magic circle" law firm profits from a rebound in City dealmaking.

The 8 per cent rise in pay for those partners at the firm's top table came as Linklaters broke the £2 billion revenue landmark for the first time.

Senior partners at the firm confirmed that revenue for the year ended April 30 rose by 10 per cent to a record £2.1 billion. That resulted in Linklaters' highest ever pre-tax profit of £942 mil-

wealthy fleeing UK



Withersworldwide, says it appeals to executives as it is near Switzerland and France

Harvey said the tax regime had become “gradually more and more popular”, and that the result of the UK general election had prompted two family offices based in Jersey to make inquiries within the past week.

Milan’s property market has been booming since the tax incentives came in, with professionals competing for a relatively small amount of stock. Harvey said rental properties could be snapped up within a few hours as so many people were looking for detached family properties with outdoor space, and the property market hadn’t caught up with the increased level of demand.

Meanwhile, hospitality brands are looking to capitalise on the rising interest in the city, with Soho House announcing recently that it would open a

six-storey club in Milan, and Three Hills Capital Partners, the private equity firm, also preparing to open a private members’ club in the former private residence of a Versace executive. The club, which is opening in the autumn, provides a space for a “global gathering of extraordinary, enquiring characters who speak freely and mix privately”, according to marketing documents, with membership costing nearly €5,000.

Bill Thomson, who moved to Italy 36 years ago and now chairs Knight Frank’s network of offices in the country, said the level of interest in the flat-tax scheme had been rising.

Thomson said: “It started off very, very slow, with just a handful of people but it began to build up in 2021. Now it is really gathering pace.”

lion, an increase of more than 10 per cent on last year.

The firm’s financial report also showed a 24 per cent rise in revenue from its US operations over the last year.

Leading London law firms were jolted this year by the merger between the magic-circle practice Allen & Overy and Shearman & Sterling, which was based in New York. The deal is seen as the most significant move into the US market by a magic-circle law firm in the last generation.

Apart from full equity partners, the average pay for partners more broadly at Linklaters rose by 7 per cent to £1.8 million.

Despite the rising numbers, pay for equity partners at Linklaters lags in fourth position in the five-strong magic circle. Top of that league table is understood to be Slaughter and May, where equity partners are estimated to earn on average £3.5 million each. However,

Slaughter and May is the only member of the magic circle not to be a limited liability partnership (LLP) and is therefore not required to publish its annual financial results.

Of the four LLPs in the magic circle, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer leads the pack, with equity partners at the

£942m

Linklaters’ pre-tax profit – a record high
Source: Linklaters

Anglo-German firm on average paid £2.09 million each. Those at Clifford Chance are on £2 million, while partners at the newly merged A&O Shearman are at the bottom of the pile on average pay of £1.82 million.

Equity partner pay at the top domestic firms in the City pales when compared with salaries at their US rivals.

High-end homes lose shine

Plans to abolish “non-dom” status for wealthy foreign nationals and the introduction of VAT on private school fees have triggered sharp falls in the prices of high-end London properties, one of the capital’s largest estate agents has said (Tom Howard writes).

M Winkworth has seen an increase in individuals who may be affected by proposals to scrap non-dom tax reliefs putting their homes up for sale. At the same time, there has been a drop-off in wealthy overseas buyers looking to establish a base in the UK.

“The [non-dom] plans have killed demand,” Dominic Agace, chief executive of Winkworth, said. “There are more houses coming to market as people are potentially looking to exit owning property and there’s less demand. That’s causing a readjustment of prices at the moment.” While the best houses on the most desirable streets in Kensington and Chelsea, Marylebone and Westminster were still “faring well”, Agace said that properties sitting just below best-in-class status had declined in value by 10 per cent in the past year.

By contrast, prices across the London market as a whole are almost 2 per cent higher than they were a year ago, according to data from Nationwide, the mortgage lender. Agace, 44, said there has also been an impact from Labour’s plans to add 20 per cent VAT to private school fees, with evidence of some parents downsizing to free up extra cash. “The premium, aspirational houses down the best streets in the Fulhams and Hammersmiths – the ‘zone 2s’ – have always been like gold dust; but we’re seeing that because people have reduced their budgets, those houses aren’t as popular,” Agace said. “[Movers] are either trying to stay in the area but maybe not down the premium streets, or they’re looking at other areas, and school fees are a big part of that.”

Jeremy Hunt, the former chancellor, used his budget in March to begin phasing out non-dom status. Labour said in its manifesto that it will “abolish non-dom status once and for all, replacing it with a modern scheme for people genuinely in the country for a short period”.

Kirkland & Ellis, which is based in Chicago and has a large London operation, pays its equity partners on average £6.25 million each. Latham & Watkins, which was founded in Los Angeles and also has a significant City presence, pays its equity partners on average around £4 million each.

In its report this week, Linklaters also announced that 40 per cent of its recently elected partners across the firm were women, while 15 per cent came from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Commenting on the financial figures, Paul Lewis, managing partner at Linklaters, highlighted mergers and acquisitions work as well as complex restructurings, energy deals and disputes as the “biggest drivers of growth”.

He warned that the general market for business remained challenging, but added: “With markets now bouncing back, particularly on the public M&A front, our teams have had a very busy start to the year.”

British pension funds overpay investment managers by £1.5bn

Jack Barnett
Economics Correspondent

British pension schemes are overpaying fund managers amid an “extreme” range of charges in the sector, suggesting that retirees could receive better returns if trustees secured better deals, research shows.

According to a report produced by ClearGlass, a data analytics company, and shared with the Financial Times, pension plans paid £1.5 billion more than necessary in fees to fund managers.

The report, which examined fees paid by nearly 700 private and local government pension schemes with a combined £550 billion in assets under management, is likely to increase pressure on trustees to ensure they find the cheapest deals for their clients. ClearGlass scrutinised pooled fund strategies that represented about 40 per cent of assets deployed by defined-benefit pensions funds.

High fees paid by pension schemes can eat into the scale of the payout that members receive in their retirement if investment returns underwhelm. These charges are often not fully disclosed, so scheme managers can end up overpaying for products.

Defined-benefit plans guarantee members payouts based on length of service at an employer and salary. Employers bridge any shortfall.

Some pension vehicles paid 14 times more for the same product compared with alternatives. One plan paid six times more for a fund following a fixed income government bond index as the cheapest provider on the market.

Another pension fund paid seven times as much for a listed passive UK stock fund compared with the most competitive deal on the market.

The research demonstrated that government pension schemes have inefficiently deployed taxpayers’ money by overpaying for products. The public finances, already thinly stretched, are forecast to come under greater pressure in the coming decades as a result of the UK’s ageing population.

According to the Office for Budget Responsibility, UK debt as a share of GDP could climb to as high as 300 per cent by the 2070s, mainly driven by increased spending on healthcare and pensions. The triple lock on pensions, which increases the state pension in line with whichever is greatest out of inflation, wages or 2.5 per cent, has also put upward pressure on public spending via state pension provision. Defined-benefit pension schemes have become increasingly rare, with most people now enrolled on a defined contribution scheme. Payouts from these vehicles are determined by the amount of cash deployed by an employee and the return on investment. Defined-benefit schemes are still common in the public sector.

A spokesman for the Financial Conduct Authority said: “We’ve increased price transparency in asset management, for example through standardised fund costs disclosure to pension trustees, with the aim of boosting competition. We’ve previously raised the issue of investment consultants being unregulated and, in 2017, referred competition concerns to the Competition and Markets Authority.”

A spokesman for The Pensions Regulator said: “We expect trustees to engage with their advisers to understand the costs their scheme incurs and how savers’ money is being invested. We urge trustees to read our new general code to ensure they are clear about their duties.”

Labour landslide ‘positive’ for City, predicts fund boss

James Hurley

Labour’s resounding win in last week’s general election could encourage the return of overseas investors and help to revive the UK’s ailing stock market, one of Britain’s biggest fund managers has predicted.

John Ions, chief executive of Liontrust, said the large majority secured by Sir Keir Starmer’s party “should herald a period of stability that will be positive for financial markets”, despite the investment management firm seeing another £900 million of outflows in the last quarter.

High inflation in the wake of the pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, plus related energy and supply chain shocks, led to weak sentiment among retail investors and a period of high outflows from investment funds.

Last year £6.1 billion was withdrawn from Liontrust funds, about £4 billion of which was from UK assets.

Ions has previously complained about UK stocks being “out of favour” with investors.

However, he said asset managers could expect improved trading: “Along with falling inflation and the expectation of a reduction in interest rates, this should encourage international investors to return to the UK and boost capi-

tal flows to the stock market. Given the ever-increasing need for individuals to save more for their retirement as well, this will significantly improve the outlook for asset managers.”

Liontrust saw £0.9 billion of net outflows in the previous quarter, compared with £1.6 billion in the same period in 2023. Assets under management were £27 billion as of the end of June, down by 2.8 per cent over the three-month trading period.

Ions’s prediction follows forecasts that the new government could help the UK enjoy a return to favour among foreign investors after a period of significant outflows and weakness in UK stock valuations.

Jason Thomas, Carlyle’s head of investment strategy, has said that even “modest success” in rebuilding “faith in government” could prove a “boon to UK asset prices”.

Responding to Liontrust’s trading statement, analysts at Berenberg said: “While short-term flows are challenging to predict and we expect the business to remain in net outflows in [the current quarter], we believe that it will be well positioned when investor sentiment returns to the UK equity market.”

Liontrust shares closed up 32p, or 5.3 per cent, to 636p.

Business Unit trusts

Lauren Almeida Tempus

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Potential target invests in simple plan

QUILTER

Market cap
£1.6bn

Forward p/e
ratio 13

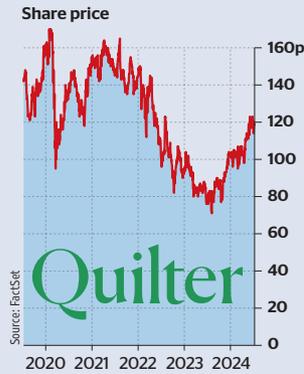
Quilter, the FTSE 250 wealth manager, has never quite recovered its share price to its pre-pandemic level. The £1.7 billion business still trades more than a quarter below this 2020 high, even after rebounding about 18 per cent this year.

The group listed on both the London and Johannesburg stock exchanges in 2018. Since then it has massively simplified its model, having sold off various parts of the business, including a life assurance division and its international operations, to become a more focused UK wealth management group.

That being said, Quilter does have a more complex model than some of its rivals in the sector. It is made up of two key segments: high net worth and affluent. The high-net-worth business covers Quilter Cheviot, its fund management business, as well as Quilter Cheviot Financial Planning, which helps very wealthy people with complex financial planning needs.

The larger, higher-margin affluent business covers Quilter Financial Planning, which is one of the largest distributors of financial advice in the country, as well as an investment platform and an investment

Changing strategy



ADVICE Hold
WHY Improving business with an attractive dividend

solutions business. The affluent business has a "multi-channel" access model, which means customers can arrive at their services either through a network of thousands of independent financial advisers, or through Quilter's 1,400 financial planners. The company then makes money from fees it charges on assets under its management or administration.

The group's operating margin has

Sales and profits by segment

Total net revenue	
Affluent	£393m
High net worth	£211m
Head office	£21m

Adjusted profit before tax

Affluent	£124m
High net worth	£41m
Head office	£2m

Operating margin

Affluent	32%
High net worth	19%

Source: Company report

been slowly improving as it has slimmed down, hitting 27 per cent last year, ahead of its 25 per cent target for 2025, and it is now eyeing its medium-term goal of 30 per cent.

Quilter's model may be a little more convoluted but its growth strategy is relatively straightforward: improve its service, build scale and improve efficiency. So far this appears to be working well — there was a 57 per cent rise in year-on-year gross inflows into the high-net-worth business in the first quarter of the year, and a 16 per cent rise in the affluent segment.

The company has also improved its solvency II coverage ratio, which measures the health of its balance

sheet, which stood at 271 per cent as of the end of its last financial year.

But there is a cloud that looms over much of Britain's wealth management industry: the Financial Conduct Authority's new "consumer duty" rules. These require all financial service companies to deliver "good outcomes" for their customers. This has stung wealth advisers and platforms — with St James's Place, one of Quilter's biggest rivals, losing much of its market value after it booked a £400 million provision to cover potential client refunds earlier this year.

Quilter has fared better so far, and it says that complaints relating to its advice have remained at a "low and consistent" level over the past four years. But it still faces uncertainty in this area. The company said in its latest update that it had agreed with the FCA that it would appoint a "skilled person" to undertake a review into whether its appointed representative firms have met their servicing obligations to customers.

Analysts at the broker RBC flagged earlier this year that they considered Quilter the most likely takeover target in the sector. Since then the broker Hargreaves Lansdown has recommended a takeover deal that values it at about 17 times 2025 earnings. In the meantime, investors can continue to enjoy Quilter's steady progress, not to mention a healthy dividend. The shares are expected to yield 4.9 per cent over the next 12 months, compared with 4 per cent in the FTSE 250.

SMITHSON INVESTMENT TRUST

Market cap
£2bn

Discount to NAV
11%

The Smithson Investment Trust has a compelling pitch. The closed-end investment fund promises to provide its shareholders with a "similar investment experience" to star investor Terry Smith's Fundsmith Equity fund — not through huge mega-cap names, but through investing in a group of small to medium-sized businesses.

To be clear, Smith does not manage the trust, although it does sit within his Fundsmith business. Smithson is managed by Simon

Barnard, who joined Fundsmith in 2017.

The £2 billion portfolio is invested in a mix of 34 companies with market caps that range between £500 million and £15 billion. The manager takes a Terry Smith-inspired approach of being a long-term investor in companies that already have a good track record of success, a dominant market share in a niche product or having brands or patents with which rivals would find it difficult to compete.

Its top holdings as of the end of June included Diploma, the London-listed industrial equipment distribution business, as well as the fashion company Moncler and the

risk manager Verisk Analytics. The FTSE 250 fund's recent performance has been mixed. In the past three years it has seriously lagged the MSCI World Small Mid index, which has delivered a total return of 7 per cent, compared with a 25 per cent decline in the trust, as higher interest rates hit the valuations of some of its technology holdings.

This column last rated Smithson as an avoid in February 2023, citing concerns around how the fund, which launched in 2018, might fare in a higher interest rate environment. Since then the shares have fallen by 6 per cent.

The possibility of lower rates later this year could help appetite for the

shares recover. They now trade at a double-digit discount to its net asset value, which suggests there is considerable offer on value for investors who are willing to stomach Smithson's volatility.

The strategy is sound, with an emphasis on quality over everything else, but a high-conviction approach in what is already a risky area means this fund is only for the brave.

ADVICE Hold
WHY Possible lower rates could support small caps

NEWS IN BRIEF

VW may shut Audi site

Volkswagen is considering shutting the Brussels factory that builds Audis as rising competition and softening demand put pressure on Europe's biggest carmaker. The plant, opened in 1949 to make VW Beetles, was turned over to produce Audi's fully electric Q8 e-tron in 2018, employing about 3,000 people. The company said the cost of finding an alternative use for the plant would have an impact of up to €2.6 billion. A spokesman said options "may include ceasing operations if no alternative is found".

Beryl 'to cost US \$1bn'

Hurricane Beryl will cost the US economy at least \$1 billion, the insurance broker Gallagher Re has predicted. The storm, which has ripped through the Caribbean and Mexico, landed in the US on Monday as a category one hurricane. It knocked out power for millions of Texans and could cause floods in parts of Illinois, Michigan and New York. Steve Bowen, chief science officer at Gallagher Re, said: "It is entirely within reason that this [will] settle as a multi-billion-dollar cost."

Apple iPhone target

Apple is targeting a 10 per cent increase in sales of its new iPhones in the second half as it pins its hopes on the rollout of artificial intelligence features. It has told suppliers it aims to ship at least 90 million iPhone 16 devices, Bloomberg reported. Over the same period last year, it shipped 81 million iPhone 15s. Apple declined to comment. Last month, Apple showcased new AI features, including a function to make an email sound more professional.

Foreign investment rise

A resurgence in foreign direct investment in the UK was led predominantly by increases in Greater London, Scotland and the West Midlands, with all other regions of the UK seeing investment levels decline. According to EY, there were 985 FDI projects last year, a 6 per cent increase on 2022. Greater London reported a 20 per cent increase in projects to 359. In Scotland, the number of projects increased by 14 per cent to 142, the highest number on record.

PRICES

Major indices

New York		
Dow Jones	39721.36 (+429.39)	
Nasdaq Composite	18647.45 (+218.16)	
S&P 500	5633.91 (+56.93)	
Tokyo		
Nikkei 225	41831.99 (+251.82)	
Hong Kong		
Hang Seng	17470.99 (-52.24)	
Amsterdam		
AEX Index	939.62 (+6.77)	
Sydney		
AO	8058.30 (-16.90)	
Frankfurt		
DAX	18407.22 (-64.83)	
Singapore		
Straits	3451.06 (+24.97)	
Brussels		
BEL20	3994.31 (+49.27)	
Paris		
CAC-40	7573.55 (-53.90)	
Zurich		
SMI Index	12151.19 (+99.53)	
DJ Euro Stoxx 50	4958.86 (-10.97)	
London		
FTSE 100	8193.51 (+53.70)	
FTSE 250	20927.76 (+282.74)	
FTSE 350	4529.43 (+34.12)	
FTSE Eurotop 100	4087.33 (+38.39)	
FTSE All-Shares	4486.21 (+33.60)	
FTSE Non Financials	n/a	
AO	6978.21 (+64.70)	
techMARK 100	n/a	
Bargains	n/a	
US\$	1.2842 (+0.0054)	
Euro	1.1863 (+0.0039)	
SDR	0.98 (+0.00)	
Exchange Index	83.95 (-0.12)	
Bank of England official close (4pm)		
CPI	133.92 May (2015 = 100)	
RPI	386.40 May (Jan 1987 = 100)	
RPIX	381.10 May (Jan 1987 = 100)	
Morningstar Long Commodity	n/a	
Morningstar Long/Short Commod	n/a	

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	SEP 24	98.060	98.380	97.920	97.970	283922	703496
	JUN 25						
	SEP 25	97.920	98.210	97.920	96.850	4	205
3-Mth Sterling	SEP 24						
	DEC 24						
	MAR 25						
3-Mth Euribor	SEP 24	96.470	96.475	96.465	96.470	112256	599765
	DEC 24	96.685	96.690	96.675	96.680	152600	549777
	MAR 25	96.685	96.905	96.880	96.890	113654	417958
3-Mth Euroswiss	JUN 25	97.060	97.085	97.045	97.070	100832	341780
	SEP 25	97.190	97.225	97.185	97.210	80983	328338
	DEC 24						
FTSE100	SEP 24	8185.0	8232.5	8164.5	8217.5	56163	475203
	DEC 24	8278.0	8278.0	8278.0	8221.5	1	368
	SEP 24						
FTSEurofirst 80	SEP 24						
	DEC 24				6708.5		

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Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 6,00pm)		Brent (6,00pm)	
		Sep	85.46-85.45
		Oct	84.58-84.56
		Nov	83.80-83.79
		Dec	83.13-83.11
		Jan	82.56-82.53
		Volume:	2250552
Crude Oils (\$/barrel FOB)		LIFFE	
Brent Physical	86.57	+0.80	
BFOE(Sep)	86.25	+0.23	
BFOE(Oct)	84.43	+0.14	
WTI(Sep)	82.14	+0.44	
WTI(Oct)	81.14	+0.28	
Products (\$/MT)		Cocoa	
Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)		Jul	7405-7331
Premium Unid	895.00	898.00	+4.00
Gasoil FFC	770.50	771.50	+1.25
3.5 Fuel Oil	490.50	496.00	+5.50
Naphtha	669.00	683.00	+4.00
ICE Futures		RobustaCoffee	
Gas Oil		Jul	4392-4251
Jul	780.25-779.75	Oct	778.25-778.00
Aug	776.25-776.00	Nov	775.00-774.75
Sep	771.25-776.75	Volume:	805295
		White Sugar (FOB)	
		Mar	548.00-547.50
		May	544.90-544.70
		Aug	545.70-536.00
		Oct	552.50-552.10
		Dec	533.60-519.80
		Volume:	79342



JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

British Airways owner on flightpath to growth

Jessica Newman Market report



The owner of British Airways was cleared for take-off yesterday as Morgan Stanley told clients that the airline is more likely to deliver earnings upgrades than many of its peers. Although IAG's cheap valuation is not rare in the industry at the moment, the FTSE 100 company has a "much clearer pathway to earnings upgrades here than many names in the industry", analysts at the US investment bank said.

They argued that tight capacity growth in North America should provide pricing support in the near term, while a successful turnaround in BA's margins by 2026 "would contribute substantially to the group". Morgan Stanley is so optimistic in fact, that the bank double-upgraded

Royal Mail to scrap post trains

Royal Mail plans to stop using its own trains as it changes the way it delivers post (Tom Saunders writes). The company said that its current fleet was almost 30 years old and at the end of its operational life. It does not plan to buy new trains when they are retired, instead using a combination of commercial rail services and its existing road network instead. The news

comes as the postal service announced plans to cut the number of domestic flights it runs by half, to reduce costs and lower emissions. Only about 3 per cent of mail is transported by rail and the increased workload for the company's drivers will create more than 30 full-time driving jobs. The move appears to be a change in direction from Royal Mail's previous strategy to move away from planes and lorries in favour of the railways as part of net zero efforts. In 2022 it was reported that then-

chief executive Simon Thompson wanted to at least treble the postal volumes transported by train. However, the company already claims to be the greenest delivery business in the UK, with a fleet of about 5,000 electric vehicles. The shake-up comes after the Royal Mail owner International Distribution Services agreed to a £3.57 billion takeover offer from the Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky's EP Group in May. Labour vowed to "robustly scrutinise" the takeover and give workers a "stronger voice" in its manifesto.

Wall Street report

Strength from large stocks maintained investor sentiment as the Nasdaq rose by 218.16 points, or 1.18 per cent, to 18,647.45, a record high, while the Dow Jones industrial average was up by 429.39 points, or 1.09 per cent, to 39,721.36.

its recommendation on IAG from "underweight" to "overweight" — a "buy" in old money. Investors heeded analysts' advice as the shares closed up 5p, or 3 per cent, at 178p. Optimism swept across the City with easyJet up 13p, or 2.8 per cent, to 478½p, while Wizz Air advanced 52p, or 2.5 per cent, to £21.26. The mood was also positive on the wider market as fresh remarks from the chairman of the Federal Reserve raised hopes of a September interest rate cut. In testimony to the US Congress on Tuesday, Jerome Powell said the Fed had made "considerable progress" in tackling soaring inflation and expressed concerns that holding rates too high for too long could hamper economic growth. Investors cheered in response. Mirroring the rally on Wall Street overnight, the FTSE 100 bounced back 53.70 points, or 0.7 per cent, to 8,193.51 with just a dozen stocks left in the red. The FTSE 250 rose 282.74 points, or 1.4 per cent, to 20,927.76.

LEISURE

Hostelworld placed to improve

Hostelworld was the worst performer in the FTSE All-share index yesterday after the online travel specialist reported lower-than-expected revenue growth in the first half of its year. The Irish company, which enables tourists to book in budget accommodation worldwide, had net revenues of €46.4 million in the half to the end of June, a 1 per cent year-on-year rise. Hostelworld flagged "strong consumer demand" for lower-cost destinations such as Asia and Central



Hostelworld allows travellers to book rooms worldwide

said the company was well placed to start returning cash to investors, which should help the shares. It was, however, able to keep a lid on operating costs, which dipped 2 per cent to €12.5 million, while direct marketing as a percentage of sales fell 6 percentage points to 45 per cent, helping underlying profits jump 88 per cent to €9.6 million. Bosses are confident of meeting the City's underlying profit expectations for this year. Shares fell 9p, or 5.5 per cent, to a one-month low of 153p.

America with a more people travelling alone, which caused net average booking value to fall 10 per cent to €13.60. Peel Hunt noted the update was "slightly disappointing on the trading front", but

Gold miners were on the up as prices of the yellow metal rose on Powell's comments. Fresnillo was up 22½p, or 3.8 per cent, to 608p, while Endeavour Mining picked up 68p, or 3.9 per cent, to £18.31. Retailers also recovered from the previous day's tough session, with Marks and Spencer up 6½p, or 2.3 per cent, to 297p and Next up 218p, or 2.5 per cent, to £88.92. The latter did well from analysts at Citigroup doing away with a "sell" rating. They have turned more positive as they estimate the retailer will generate about £2 billion in extra cash over the next five years that can be used towards share buybacks and further equity investments. Property companies, sensitive to interest rate movements, also made gains. Land Securities, one of the biggest owners of commercial property in Britain, added 14p, or 2.3 per cent, to 635p and LondonMetric, the warehouse landlord, moved up 5p, or 2.6 per cent, to 196½p.

Barrat Developments slipped 6p, or 1.2 per cent, to 485p after the housebuilder said it would build fewer homes in the next 12 months. Gym Group shares strengthened after its membership numbers increased to 905,000 by the end of June, up from 867,000 at the same period a year earlier. That helped revenues jump 12 per cent in the first half to £112.1 million, giving bosses confidence that the group will deliver annual results "at the higher end of market expectations". The shares rose 10½p, or 8.5 per cent, to 133p. Shares in Impax Asset Management dropped 45p, or 10.8 per cent, to 372p, after the sustainable investment house's assets under management fell almost 7 per cent to £36.9 billion in its third quarter. Atlantic Lithium dropped 1p, or 5 per cent, to 19p after the company, which is aiming to create a lithium mine in Ghana, halted work at its Ewoyaa project in Mankessim, following a fatal accident on Tuesday.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
SSP Group Reports jump in third-quarter sales	10.4%
Travis Perkins Names former Taylor Wimpey boss as new chief executive	7.1%
Fresnillo Gold prices rise	3.8%
Direct Line Insurance Impressive capital markets day	3.3%
IAG Morgan Stanley double upgrades to "overweight"	3%
Crest Nicholson Wobbles after board gives green light to Bellway's improved offer	-1%
Barrat Developments Trims homebuilding targets	-1.2%
JD Wetherspoon Slower sales growth in recent weeks	-2%
SThree Extends losses	-2.9%
Hunting Barclays reduces rating to "equal weight"	-4.1%

London Grain Futures				
LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)				
Nov	196.05	Jan	unq	Mar
May	204.50	Jul	unq	Volume: 879
London Metal Exchange				
(Official)				
Cash	3mth	Dec 22		
Copper Gde A (\$/tonne)	9761.5-9762.0	9921.0-9925.0	10205.0-10215.0	
Lead (\$/tonne)	2154.0-2155.0	2211.0-2213.0	2280.0-2285.0	
Zinc Spec Hi Gde (\$/tonne)	2871.5-2872.0	2932.0-2933.0	2970.0-2975.0	
Alum Hi Gde (\$/tonne)	2468.0-2468.5	2525.0-2525.5	2680.0-2685.0	
Nickel (\$/tonne)	16975.0-16980.0	17250.0-17260.0	18370.0-18420.0	
Tin (\$/tonne)	34275.0-34325.0	34250.0-34300.0	33865.0-33915.0	15mth

Gold/Precious metals (US dollars per ounce)

Because of a technical issue, the gold fix prices are from Tuesday.

Bullion: Open \$2365.01

Close \$2377.69-2378.04 High \$2386.11

Low \$2363.51

AM \$2362.40 PM \$2367.90

Platinum \$ (£)

Silver \$30.92 (£24.08)

Palladium \$ (£)

European money deposits %

Currency	1mth	3mth	6mth	12mth
Dollar	0.13	0.20	0.29	0.55
Sterling	4.20	5.30	4.74	0.81
Euro	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.50

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks 5.25 ECB Refi 4.25 US Fed Fund 5.25-5.50

Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 8.74

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.8162-8.8530	8.8496-8.8509	142ds	429ds
Euro	1.1871-1.1822	1.1864-1.1860	10pr	32pr
Montreal	1.7425-1.7492	1.7480-1.7481	9ds	30ds
New York	1.2784-1.2847	1.2842-1.2842	2pr	8pr
Oslo	13.541-13.763	13.751-13.757	86ds	217ds
Stockholm	13.486-13.545	13.541-13.545	206ds	658ds
Tokyo	206.31-207.76	207.65-207.66	96ds	280ds
Zurich	1.1471-1.1552	1.1547-1.1548	40ds	122ds

Premium = pr Discount = ds

Dollar rates

Australia	1.4817-1.4819
Canada	1.3612-1.3613
Denmark	6.8914-6.8919
Euro	0.9238-0.9239
Hong Kong	7.8109-7.8110
Japan	161.70-161.71
Malaysia	4.7038-4.7038
Norway	10.709-10.715
Singapore	1.3488-1.3489
Sweden	10.548-10.547
Switzerland	0.8992-0.8993

Other Sterling

Argentina peso	1179.9-1179.9
Australia dollar	1.9028-1.9031
Bahrain dinar	0.4801-0.4872
Brazil real	6.9389-6.9428
Euro	1.1863-1.1864
Hong Kong dollar	10.030-10.031
India rupee	107.24-107.24
Indonesia rupiah	20809-20815
Kuwait dinar KD	0.3917-0.3941
Malaysia ringgit	6.0168-6.0232
New Zealand dollar	2.1119-2.1115
Singapore dollar	1.3730-1.3732
S Africa rand	23.276-23.286
U A E dirham	4.7176-4.7179

Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia \$	1.903	
Canada \$	1.367	
Denmark Kr	6.842	+0.01
Euro	1.185	
Hong Kong \$	10.021	+0.02
Hungary	466.144	-0.93
Indonesia	20835.204	+37.60
Israel Shk	4.696	
Japan Yen	207.396	+0.86
New Zealand \$	2.110	+0.02
Norway Kr	13.747	+0.16
Poland	5.048	+0.01
Russia	113.542	+1.11
S Africa Rd	23.249	+0.03
Sweden Kr	13.550	+0.01
Switzerland Fr	1.154	+0.01
Turkey Lira	42.180	+0.10
USA \$	1.283	

Rates supplied by Morningstar

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Unit trusts Business

The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS

Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gilt Yield A Inc	206.01	...	-0.27	...
Strategic Bond Fund	132.12	...	+0.31	2.59
UK Corp Bond F	104.79	...	-0.78	...
UK Equity C	631.26	...	-14.91	...
UK Equity A	335.58	...	-0.62	5.91
UK Growth A	843.29	...	+0.23	3.27
UK Income A Inc	1473.81	...	-5.83	...
UK Mid Cap A	465.61	...	-11.35	...

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS LTD

0800 092 2511

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income R Acc	204.13	...	-0.05	3.11
Global Income R Inc	123.66	...	-0.03	3.09
Global Select R Acc	179.41	...	-0.04	...
High Income R Acc	65.30	...	-0.02	5.91
Income R Acc	899.15	...	-1.50	3.50
Income R Inc	245.26	...	+0.78	3.60
Monthly Dist R Inc	70.94	...	+0.01	...
SmartGAP European Equity R Inc	1890.40	...	-0.23	2.04
SmartGAP Global Equity R Acc	1041.16	...	-0.47	...
SmartGAP UK Equity R Acc	1030.44	...	+2.27	2.69
Strategic Assets R Acc	93.16	...	+0.13	2.88
Strategic Bond R M Acc	1010.88	...	-0.12	3.38
Strategic Bond R M Inc	570.21	...	+0.06	4.09
Strategic Bond R Q Acc	1020.20	...	+0.12	4.13
Strategic Bond R Q Inc	93.30	...	+0.06	4.23
UK Select R Acc	893.35	...	-1.01	1.62
UK Select R Inc	893.35	...	-1.01	1.62
UK Smaller Cos R Acc	10213.92	...	+2.93	1.55
UK Smaller Sits R Acc	810.73	...	+1.46	1.47

AXA FRAMINGTON UNIT MGMT LTD

Dfing: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients: 0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc	572.40	...	-2.70	...
Gilt	201.30	211.80	+0.10	...
Gilt Inc	74.35	78.24	-0.39	1.09
Health Acc	3290.00	...	+3.00	...
Japan Sm Co Acc	63.56	66.09	-0.19	0.20
Managed Inc	138.30	...	-0.10	4.39
Monthly Inc	215.20	...	-0.10	4.20
UK Growth Inc	219.80	...	-0.10	...
UK Select Opps Inc	1935.00	...	+3.00	...
UK Sm Co Inc	299.60	...	-0.90	...

AXA FUND MANAGERS LTD

Admin & Eq 0117 999 0808 AXA Trusts

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gen Acc	2101.00	...	-6.00	...
Gen Inc	1079.00	...	-2.00	2.70

AXA FUND MANAGERS LTD

Admin & Eq 0117 999 0808 AXA Trusts

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gen Acc	2101.00	...	-6.00	...
Gen Inc	1079.00	...	-2.00	2.70

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Acc A	234.70	...	-0.30	1.71
European Growth	84.50	...	-0.10	1.53
US Leaders	69.50	...	-0.20	2.09
UK Income	680.90	...	-0.20	2.09
UK Income	216.20	...	-0.20	...

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT LTD

0870 606 6402

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Beacon Inv	84.88	...	-0.35	...

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Shares Class 1 - Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bd	49.99	...	-0.31	...
Emerging Mkts	116.50	...	-0.50	...
Euro Growth & Inc	1457.00	...	-6.00	2.24
Euro Bond	145.00	...	-1.23	1.63
FTSE All-Shr Track	458.10	...	+0.50	1.23
Global Growth SCI	374.60	...	-0.60	...
High Inc Trst	11.57	12.14	...	5.22
Max Inc Bond	70.48	...	-0.40	...
Multi Man Gwth	44.21	...	-3.10	...
Multi Man Dist	60.44	...	-3.27	...
North Amer	1102.00	...	+1.00	...
Pacific Gwth	477.40	...	-0.04	...
Strategic Bd	204.00	...	+0.10	1.67
UK Equity	946.00	...	-2.00	...
UK Gwth & Inc A	498.50	...	-0.20	...
UK Gwth & Inc Dist	234.70	...	-0.10	1.51
UK Smaller Cos	1122.00	...	-1.43	...

EDENTREE INV MGMT LTD

0800 398 3100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Resp & Sust Sterling Bond	186.79	...	-0.20	2.36
Resp & Sust Euro Acc	353.50	...	+0.50	2.24
Resp & Sust Gld Eq	373.20	...	-1.10	0.93
Resp & Sust Mgd Income	1122.00	...	+0.30	4.52
Resp & Sust UK Eq	220.90	...	+0.10	1.21
Resp & Sust UK Equity Opps	330.10	...	+0.50	1.51

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL

Private Cnts 0800 414161 Broker Digs 0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec Sits	2565.00	...	-2.00	...
American	6749.00	...	-2.00	...
Euro Opps	437.00	...	-0.20	0.35
European	391.00	...	-25.00	0.60
Extra Income	22.76	...	-0.01	6.11
Global Spec Sits	6559.00	...	+19.00	...
Global Focus	5246.00	...	-8.00	...
High Income	149.50	...	-0.20	1.03
Japan	656.40	...	+5.60	4.06
MoneyMdr Bal	43.23	...	-0.12	4.39
MoneyMdr Glob	327.60	327.60	-0.10	...
MoneyMdr Gwth	76.12	...	-0.95	...
MoneyMdr Inc	29.22	...	-0.03	5.06

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS LTD

01296 386 386

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond	34.00	...	-0.06	3.73
Ethical	143.80	...	-0.10	0.18
European	129.00	...	-0.10	1.83
Far Eastern	130.70	...	-0.40	1.94
Fund of Inv Trst	151.70	...	-0.10	0.69
Intl Growth	156.00	...	-0.10	0.67
Japanese	86.79	...	+0.48	1.15
North Amer	190.00	...	-0.40	0.06
Special Cos	116.40	...	-0.40	1.80
Smaller Sits	50.34	...	-0.17	1.03
UK Equity Inc	102.90	...	+0.10	3.29
UK FTSE 100 Tr	78.57	...	-0.07	2.33
UK FTSE ALL-S Tr	88.51	...	+0.09	2.35
UK Growth	94.49	...	+0.34	3.27

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK) LTD

Eq: 0845 745 6123 Dfing: 0845 745 6126 Mon-Fri 8-6

HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc	1225.15	...	+2.60	1.03
Amer Ind Inc	956.98	...	-1.04	1.04
Euro Ind Acc	1217.20	...	-1.51	2.89
Euro Ind Inc	834.65	...	-0.92	2.96
FTSE 100 Ind Acc	312.27	...	-1.28	3.11
FTSE 100 Ind Inc	135.00	...	-0.55	3.19
FTSE 250 Ind Acc	324.91	...	-0.75	2.96
FTSE 250 Ind Inc	131.98	...	-0.43	3.05
FTSE All-S Acc	796.35	...	-0.52	3.17
FTSE All-S Inc	382.68	...	-0.25	3.25
Jap Ind Acc	168.91	...	+0.64	1.62
Jap Ind Inc	127.03	...	-0.49	1.65
Pac Ind Acc	363.44	...	+2.51	3.73
Pac Ind Inc	346.75	...	+1.48	2.80

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK) LTD

Eq: 0845 745 6123 Dfing: 0845 745 6126 Mon-Fri 8-6

HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc	1225.15	...	+2.60	1.03
Amer Ind Inc	956.98	...	-1.04	1.04
Euro Ind Acc	1217.20	...	-1.51	2.89
Euro Ind Inc	834.65	...	-0.92	2.96
FTSE 100 Ind Acc	312.27	...	-1.28	3.11
FTSE 100 Ind Inc	135.00	...	-0.55	3.19
FTSE 250 Ind Acc	324.91	...	-0.75	2.96
FTSE 250 Ind Inc	131.98	...	-0.43	3.05
FTSE All-S Acc	796.35	...	-0.52	3.17
FTSE All-S Inc	382.68	...	-0.25	3.25
Jap Ind Acc	168.91	...	+0.64	1.62
Jap Ind Inc	127.03	...	-0.49	1.65
Pac Ind Acc	363.44	...	+2.51	3.73
Pac Ind Inc	346.75	...	+1.48	2.80

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced Acc	275.05	...	-0.01	1.30
Balanced Growth	155.95	...	-0.14	...
Corp Bd Acc	289.80	...	-0.58	3.24
Corp Bd Inc	106.90	...	-0.22	3.04
Gilt & Fd Inc Acc	492.78	...	-1.62	...
Gilt & Fd Inc Inc	74.17	...	-0.49	0.66
Income Acc	792.49	...	-1.72	3.82
Income Inc	313.33	...	-0.68	3.94
Monthly Inc Acc	313.41	...	+0.77	...
Monthly Inc Inc	334.07	...	-0.14	4.10
UK Gwth & Inc Ret & Acc	1020.29	...	-0.19	3.64
UK Gwth & Inc Ret & Inc	1466.80	...	-0.88	3.75
UK Gwth & Inc Acc	162.43	...	-0.19	3.64
UK Gth & Inc Inc	68.80	...	-0.08	3.75

HSBC Specialist Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Acc	10122.15	...	+2.60	1.03
American Index Retail Inc	10958.36	...	+2.04	1.04
Asian Gwth Acc	140.77	...	-0.07	...
Asian Gwth Inc	130.99	...	-0.06	...
Chinese Eq Acc	513.81	...	-0.27	0.40
Chinese Eq Inc	434.76	...	-0.22	0.34
Euro Gwth Acc	973.97	...	+0.05	0.41
Euro Gwth Inc	817.05	...	+3.29	0.44

IGNIS ASSET MGMT

Client Servs: 0207 163 4000

Investment Multi-Manager Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Gth Inc	322.55	340.42	-3.34	...
Balanced Growth	262.17	276.69	-0.93	...
Balanced Growth Acc	393.13	414.92	-1.40	1.49
Corporate Bond	99.69	...	-0.29	4.27
European Growth	403.88	426.26	-3.57	...
European Growth Acc	475.71	502.07	-4.21	...
Global Gwth	333.53	349.90	-2.09	...
Higher Yield	83.98	88.64	-0.29	...
Higher Yield Acc	275.04	290.28	-0.92	...
Japan	49.06	51.78	-0.03	0.94
Managed Trust	130.69	138.15	-0.16	...
Managed Trust	71.96	76.96	-0.17	2.66
Mngt Pflco Inc	95.54	100.84	-0.11	...
Pacific Gwth	496.71	526.34	-2.81	1.34
Strategic Bond A	756.24	789.14	-1.64	0.15
Smaller Comp	628.94	663.79	-1.26	0.21

INSIGHT INVESTMENT FDS MANAGEMENT LTD

Client Servs: 0207 163 4000

Investment Multi-Manager Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Well Blfr Bal Acc	96.05	...	-0.32	...
Well Blfr Gwth Acc	93.79	...	-0.36	...

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD

Dfing: 0800 085 8571 Inv Serv: 0800 085 8677

Prnt Serv: 0800 228 2121

INVESCO Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Str Inc W/Tr	323.57	...	-0.12	...

INVESCO PERPETUAL FUNDS

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Childrens Acc	526.54	...	-0.18	...
Corp Bond Acc	217.06	...	-0.57	3.46
High Income Inc	332.08	...	-0.78	3.01
Income & Gwth Inc	438.13	...	-0.80	1.68
Income Inc	1316.03	...	+2.42	3.36
Money Acc	98.64	...	-0.22	3.56
Monthly Inc Plus Inc	94.43	...	-0.13	5.26
UK Aggress Acc	354.28	...	-0.24	3.15
UK Growth Acc	102.32	...	+0.03	...
UK Sm Co Equity Acc	1442.63	...	+1.53	1.32
UK Sm Co Equity Inc	82.54	...	-0.04	...

INVESTEC FUND MGRS

Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900

OEIC Series Liabls & Ev

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Acc	912.00	...	-5.59	...
Asia ex Japan Acc	630.80	...	-1.29	...
Capital Accumulator Acc	10231.48	...	-3.21	...
Cautious Managed Acc	10239.70	...	+0.37	2.25
Diversified Growth Acc	10239.70	...	+0.22	2.28
Diversified Growth Inc	10239.70	...	-0.63	...
Diversified Growth Inc	10239.70	...	-0.69	3.01
Diversified Growth Inc	10239.70	...	-0.48	3.45
Diversified Income Acc	10239.70	...		

Business Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by Morningstar. The yield is the sum of a company's trailing 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.

12-month high and low High/Low prices for UK equities are based on closing prices. Investment trust high and low prices are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & parts

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yld%	Div%	P/E
395%	132%	Aston Martin Lag	158%	-	1%	-1.3

Banking & finance

236%	136%	Abrdn	165	+ 6	9.1	...
7%	3%	Acuity RM	3%	...	-0.4	...
2837	2029	Admiral	2624	+ 31	2.8	23.6
19	10%	ADVF	13	...	-3.2	...
403	249	AJ Bell	393	+ 5%	2.9	19.9
2688%	2169%	Aon Corp	2287%	+ 28%	...	22.6
1105	877%	Arbutnot Bkg	997%	+ 20	4.8	4.4
9	4	Argo Group	4	...	-0.1	...
232%	166%	Ashmore	174%	+ 2%	9.6	12.0
1570%	1225%	Aus New Z	1540%	+ 30%	...	13.2
497	369%	Aviva	483	+ 7%	7.0	12.9
414	278%	Banco Santander	372	+ 8	4.0	6.4
5420	2650	Bank of Georgia	4365	+ 100	5.3	4.9
220	129%	Barclays	219%	+ 2%	3.6	8.4
...	...	Blue Star Capital	...	...	-0.1	...
522%	50	BP Marsh&Ptnrc	522%	...	2.0	14.3
14%	4%	Breavehnt	4%	...	1.8	...
...	...	Brewin Dolphn	515	+ 1	...	28.1
289%	16%	Bridgepoint	245	+ 8	3.6	12.2
37	24%	Cenkus Sec	29	...	...	5.9
286	244%	Chesnara	248%	...	9.6	20.2
...	...	City of Lon Gp	10	+ 1	...	-0.6
424	301	City Lon Inv Gp	376	+ 1	6.8	13.0
976%	299%	Close Bros	485%	+ 8%	9.3	5.1
339%	89%	CMC Markets	332	+ 2%	1.4	8.0
1332%	7%	CommerzBk	1234%	+ 3%	...	80.7
1410%	769	Deutsche Bk	1301%	+ 2%	...	5.3
225%	134%	Direct Line Ins	199%	+ 6%	2.0	12.6

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yld %	Div %	or Pm
3180	1853%	3i Group	2980	+ 42	2.8	40.6
349	289	3i Infrastructure	333	+ 4	3.3	-7.9
1584	1126	Aberforth Smir	1584	+ 16	3.2	-12.8
1264	980	Alliance	1226	+ 10	1.9	-3.4
423	323	Asia Dragon Tr	421	+ 2	1.5	-16.1
210	160	Atlas Trust	185	...	5.0	-4.5
250%	185%	AVI Global Trust	238	+ 2	1.4	-10.2
243	175	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	190%	+ 1%	0.8	-10.8
101%	75%	BaillieGifford Eu Gr	96%	+ 1%	2.3	-14.6
793	633	Baillie Gifford JnTr	749	+ 9	1.1	-12.7
142	104%	Baillie Gifford SN	113%	+ 1%	...	-16.3
177%	141%	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	171%	+ 1%	1.9	-15.1
85	60	Bal Comm Prop	82%	+ 1%	4.6	-27.7
117%	91%	Bankers Inv Trst	116%	+ 1%	2.0	-10.8
390	325%	BH Macro	372	+ 1%	...	-13.5
1048	715	Biotech Growth	1002	+ 12	...	-5.2
127	104	Bk&Rck Com Inc	118	...	3.4	-10.8
159%	131%	Bk&Rck Fro Inv	145%	+ 1%	3.8	-8.1
653	457%	Bk&Rck Grt Euro	627	+ 5	1.0	-5.6
208	170	Bk&Rck Inc & Gwth	195	...	3.5	-12.2
1520	1146	Bk&Rck Smir	1486	+ 6	2.7	-11.7
207	172%	Bk&Rck Sustain Amer	193	- 1	3.5	-10.1
643	503	Bk&Rck Throgmorton	631	+ 5	2.2	-10.3
635	490	Bk&Rck Wld Min	585	+ 4	5.9	-6.3
1360	1065	Brown Adv US Sm	1275	+ 5	...	-11.9
1370	964	Brunner	1355	+ 10	1.6	-4.9
3700	2593%	Caledonia Inv	3525	...	1.2	-35.4
432	321%	City of Lon IT	432	+ 5	4.9	-12.2
95	60	Crystal Amber Fd	89	...	22.6	-11.2
516	406	CT Priv Eq Ord	440	+ 3	3.9	-5.9
96	72	CT Property	73%	- 1%	1.1	-14.5
340	265%	CT UK Cap&Ck	333	+ 3	3.6	-3.5
88	75	CT UK HT B	86%	...	...	-8.7
95%	71	CT UK HT	89	+ 1%	5.9	-4.9
590	448%	Dunedin Est	502%	...	5.7	-22.3
796	615	Edinburgh IT	739	+ 7	3.6	-9.5
157%	120%	Elin Wildlife	148%	...	...	-11.7
232%	273%	EP Global Opp	293	- 5	1.3	-21.6
912%	73	European Assets	86	- 1%	5.6	-11.7
95%	740%	European Opp Trst	896	+ 13	0.3	-10.6
1058	825%	F&C Invest Tr	1022	+ 4	1.3	-10.8
549%	473%	Fidelity Asian Val	506	+ 3	2.6	-9.6
246	181%	Fidelity China Sp	195	+ 4	2.0	-10.9
740%	568	FidelityEmergMkt	720	+ 4	2.7	-11.9
412%	311%	Fidelity European Trst	396	+ 5%	2.0	-4.9
186%	151	Fidelity Jap Tru	177	+ 2	...	-10.5
316	252	Fidelity S&P Val	315%	+ 5	2.8	-9.5
920	788%	Fins Gwth & Inc	839	+ 4	2.0	-7.4
84%	59%	GC Infrastructure	81%	+ 2	6.3	-35.8
38%	22%	Gdn Prosp Pk MI	33	...	...	-18.7
152%	127%	Greenoat UK Wnd	139%	+ 1%	6.3	-16.9
230%	176	Hansa Investment	212%	...	0.8	-43.2
221	175	Hansa Inv Co 'A'	207	+ 2%	0.8	-45.9
2536	214%	Hlvest Gbl Pl E	2450	+ 35	...	-2.8
196	149	Huro Euro Foc	188	+ 2	...	-11.7
177	136	Huro Foc	161	+ 1	6.0	-8.2
902	626	Huro Hml	890	+ 8	2.9	-14.4
2250	1590	Herald	2245	+ 20	...	-12.4
504	315%	HipCapital Trust	501	+ 14	1.3	-4.6
141	111	HKLI Infra	124	+ 1%	5.2	-22.4
...	...	Highbridge Tactical	...	...	...	-61.1
1276	1046	IGG Ent Tr	1260	+ 24	1.6	-38.7
419%	331%	Imax Eur Mkts	381	- 2	1.0	-11.0
349	283	Invesco Asia Tr	327	- 1	4.2	-12.3

12 month High Low Company Price (p) Yld% Div% P/E

67	39%	EGF-Hermes Hldg	67	+ 4%	7.7	...
187	145	EPE Special Opps	169	...	...	...
1164%	935%	FBDI	1117%	...	...	6.7
87%	46%	Fisik	75	...	0.3	15.0
64	43	Frankel Topping	43	...	2.4	30.0
1374	837	Georgia Capital	1050	+ 20	...	2.4
1120	670	Gresham House	1100	+ 20	...	30.5
490	335	H&I Group	375	...	4.5	7.7
51%	39%	Harsard Global	47	...	9.4	9.8
1153	690%	Hargreaves Lansdown	196	- 2	3.8	19.5
186	115	Helios Underst	181	+ 8%	3.5	35.3
720%	575%	HSCB	670%	+ 1	7.2	7.3
843%	611	IG Group	843%	+ 11%	5.4	11.4
590	368%	Imax	372	- 4%	6.6	12.4
294	125%	Intermed Capital	226	+ 24	3.5	28.7
131%	100%	IPF	131%	+ 3	8.0	6.5
139%	115%	International Public P	129%	+ 2%	...	88.6
597	429%	Investec	597	+ 8%	5.5	8.1
355	283	Investment Co	355	...	...	44.1
61%	41%	IP Group	41%	...	2.9	-2.5
115	64%	Jarvis Securities	59%	...	9.2	6.6
155	73%	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	83	+ 2	0.2	...
107%	68%	Just Group	107	+ 1%	1.9	9.5
489	40%	Lancashire Holdings	618	+ 8	2.5	5.9
256%	205%	Legal & Gen	232	+ 3%	8.7	31.8
...	...	Liberty Group	502%	- 2%	...	16.2
85%	52%	Liontrust	636	+ 32	11.6	7.9
38%	27	Livermore Invest	38%	...	...	...
58	39%	Lloyds Banking Gp	58	+ 1%	4.6	8.3
24%	15%	LMS Capital	18%	...	...	-4.0

12 month High Low Company Price (p) Yld% Div% P/E

9674	7986	Lonk Stk Ex Gp	9216	- 18	1.2	66.7
238%	183	M&G	211%	+ 2%	9.4	17.0
277%	202	Man	257%	+ 9%	5.2	16.9
26	15	Manx Fin	19	...	2.4	5.4
2%	1	Marechale Cap	1%	...	...	-3.7
798	490	Mattoli Woods	796	...	3.3	41.4
...	...	Metal Tiger	9	+ 1%	...	-2.0
124%	28%	Metro Bank	34%	+ 1%	...	2.7
1933%	1350%	Nat Aus Bk	1885%	+ 26%	...	16.5
326%	176%	NatWest	322%	...	5.1	6.9
343	332	Numis	343	...	...	...
487%	280%	OneSavings Bank	487%	+ 16%	6.5	7.5
650	436	PayPoint	640	+ 8	3.0	15.0
...	...	PCF Group	1%	+ 1%	...	-0.4
560%	441%	Phoenix	542%	+ 7%	9.7	...
1101	687%	Prudential	735%	+ 20	2.3	15.1
3	1/2	Quantum Blockchain	1%	...	...	-2.5
123%	71%	Quilter	121	+ 2%	4.3	39.0
60%	...	Randall & Quilter	...	...	...	...
1950	1458	Rathbone Grp	1760	+ 14	4.9	34.6
1%	...	Riverfort Global Opps	1%	...	1.6	-1.8
274%	162%	Rockwood Strategic	266%	...	...	6.8
2450	1800	S & U	1910	- 10	9.4	9.1
1%	...	Sancus Lending Grp	1%	...	...	-0.1
46%	39%	Schroder REIT	46%	+ 1%	...	...
464%	347%	Schroders	376%	+ 9%	5.7	15.5
1183	402	St James Place	561	+ 14%	4.2	...
785%	573%	Stand Chart	721%	+ 12%	3.0	8.1
...	...	Starvest	11%	+ 1%	...	-1.9
60	27	STM Group	52%	- 1%	1.1	54.1

12 month High Low Company Price (p) Yld% Div% P/E

592	290	Billington Hldgs	520	- 2	3.8	6.5
228	170	Boat (Henry)	224	...	3.5	11.6
403%	304%	BREEDON	403%	+ 9	3.3	13.0
444%	291%	Br Land	410%	+ 7%	5.5	-3.5
160	90	Caledonian Trst	130	...	...	...
64	49%	Cap & Regnl	64	- 1%	8.8	33.7
2450	2300	Cardiff Prop	2300	...	0.9	26.2
1%	1%	Carecap	1%	...	...	-0.2
163%	118%	Clarke T	159	...	3.7	11.5
...	...	Countryside Partner	229%	+ 14	...	16.7
17%	11%	Craven House	15%	...	...	-0.1
2402	1779	Derwent London	2288	+ 36	3.5	-5.3
4%	3%	Dolphin Capital	4%	+ 1%	...	-5.1
24%	15%	First Prop	18%	...	...	...
47%	33	Fletcher King	46	...	1.6	21.1
275	192%	Galfrid Try	272	+ 1		

Equity prices Business

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1%	1/4	Pharma	1/2	-	-0.7	
75%	50%	MOX Group	68%	+	1.4	32.5
98.35	75.99	Novartis	CHF98.30	+ 1.21	3.3	24.4
24	2	Omega Diags	2%	+	-1.6	
1%	1/4	Oveca Bio	1/2	-	-0.3	
450	166%	Oxford Biomedica	334%	+ 6	-2.0	
2%	1/4	Phisomics	1/2	-	-1.6	
8%	2%	Phytosome Sciences	3%	+ 1/4	-4.0	
5960	4110	Reckitt Benckiser	4321	+ 74	4.4	19.0
37%	8%	RUA Life Sciences	10%	-	-1.2	
120	10%	Sareum Hldgs	33%	+ 1/4	-5.3	
1209%	89%	Smith & Neph	1092	+ 14	2.8	46.2
266	207	Spire Hare	237	- 1/4	10	35.9
9%	3%	Symaigen	5	+ 1/4	-1.0	
71%	49%	Tissue Regenix	70	-	-	
17	4	TotalE	7%	+ 1/4	1.7	-
485	327%	Tristel	465	-	2.8	37.1
14%	1%	ValRx	2%	- 1/4	-1.2	

Industrials

107	50%	Accsys Tech	55	- 1/4	-2.4	
4650%	3436%	BASF	3684%	+ 44%	-	
4499%	2169%	Bayer DM50	2204	+ 65%	-8.1	
175	37%	Biome Tech	37%	-	-0.9	
1%	-	Byotrol	-	-	-0.2	
-	-	Camb Gbl Timber	6%	-	-9.0	
88%	6%	Coats Grp	84%	+ 3%	2.6	21.0
5956	3899	Croda	3996	+ 50	2.7	32.6
845	230	Cropper (James)	300	- 10	2.8	8.0
156%	100	Elementis	149%	+ 2%	1.1	40.5
15%	4%	Hardie	7%	-	-3.1	
1870	1446%	Johnson Mathi	1657	+ 9	4.6	17.1
1706	1311%	Mondi	1553%	+ 21%	4.0	15.7
112%	87%	Robinson	110	-	5.0	-
426%	263%	DS Smith	415%	- 4%	4.3	12.3
733%	491	Swire Pacific	70%	- 21%	-1.5	-
9%	2	Symph Environ	4%	-	-1.9	
637%	122%	Synthomer	267%	+ 3%	-2.2	
2363%	1910%	Takeda Pharm	2049%	+ 6%	-	-3.2
1%	1%	Velocis	1/2	-	-0.7	
1955	1110	Victrix	1110	- 10	5.1	15.7
477%	325	Wynnstatt Group	385	- 7%	4.6	11.7
574	276	Zetefoams	456	+ 29	1.5	26.2

Leisure

130	70%	888 Hldgs	85%	- 1	-6.7	
802	507	Accesso Tech	700	+ 2	47.8	
530	520	Best of the Best	530	-	-	-
1377	811%	Carnival	1276	+ 3%	50.4	
186	116	Celific	186	- 4	25.0	
424%	275%	Domino's Pizza	316%	+ 6	3.3	11.3
1403%	618%	Entain	660%	+ 20%	2.8	-4.6
17475	1215%	Flutter Ent	19550	+ 15	-	-
41%	29	Gaming Realms	36	- 1%	18.3	
290	265	Heavirtex	265	-	2.0	8.5
160	145	Heavirtex A	160	-	3.4	5.1
125	45	Hermes Pacific	52%	-	-	-
8752	5210	InterContinental Hotels	202	+ 108	1.5	23.8
1	1/4	Minoan Gp	1/2	-	-4.6	
312%	199%	Mitch & Butlers	296	+ 2%	40.0	
178	82%	On The Beach	142	+ 1/4	0.6	15.0
103%	62%	Rank Grp	70%	+ 1/4	-3.4	
68	37%	Restaurant Gp	64%	-	-	-
63	42	Rotale	63	-	-	-
175	-	Sportech	84	+ 9	-	-
260%	144%	SSP	172%	+ 16%	2.3	-
2%	1/4	Tasty	1%	-	-0.7	
130	32%	Tintrex	32%	- 5	-1.2	
677	401	Tui	563%	+ 20%	-	3.1
1%	1	Webis Holdings	1%	-	-6.8	
847%	613	Wetherspoon JD	753	- 15%	23.3	
3678	2855	Whitbread	2924	+ 9	3.3	-
1230	946	Young & Co A	970	- 6	2.2	20.2
880	592	Young & Co N/V	660	+ 8	3.4	13.9

Media

107%	54%	Aeorea Comms	58%	- 1	5.0	20.3
52	27%	Altitude Group	43	- 1/4	59.7	
112	63%	Arcontech Grp	92	-	3.8	10.7
548	317%	Ascential	353%	-	4%	-
829%	587	Auto Trader	811%	+ 4%	1.0	32.0
670	381	Bloomsbury Pub	670	+ 6	2.1	25.8
4	1/4	Bonhill Group	1/2	- 1/4	-1.5	

157%	65	Catalyst Media	85	-	31.7	5.8
1/4	1/4	Catenace	1/2	-	-0.2	
-	-	DCD Media	100	- 30	-	5.0
47	31	Ebiqity	39	-	-	-
1145	577	Future	1077	+ 18	0.3	14.1
243	132	GlobalData	216	- 1/2	2.1	56.8
-	-	Hyge Group	120%	-	-	-
235	107%	IG Design Grp	196	- 7	-0.8	
868%	685%	Informa	848%	- 2%	2.1	28.3
83	55%	ITV	82%	- 1/2	5.9	15.8
-	-	Jayving	1%	-	-	-
-	-	Live Company Grp	1%	-	-	-
182%	119%	ME Group	179	+ 2%	4.2	13.4
-	-	Mediaset	-	-	-1.8	
88%	42%	Merit Grp	86	-	-7.4	
-	-	Mirado	1%	- 1/4	-	-
48%	10%	Mission Group	22	+ 1%	8.1	-1.7
283%	208	Moneysupermarket	231%	+ 3%	5.1	17.1
2185%	1504%	News Corp A	2157%	- 3	-	73.6
2250%	1525%	News Corp B	2226	-	-	76.0
1036	554	Next 15 Group	804	+ 4	1.9	31.2
1042	812	Pearson	1007%	- 3%	2.2	19.1
5%	2%	Primorus Inv	3%	-	-9.9	
172%	107%	Quarto	140	+ 15	-	5.3
102%	59	Reach	98%	- 1/4	7.3	14.4
85	62%	REACT Grp	73%	+ 1	-	-
3654	2442	Relx	3955	-	1.6	38.2
594%	462%	Rightmove	540%	+ 2	1.7	22.1
95	58%	SpaceandPeople	82%	-	-0.9	
290%	176%	STV Group	265	-	4.2	28.1
685	26%	System1 Group	685	+ 22%	69.9	
2754%	2226%	21st Cent Fox Inc A	2754%	+ 11%	-	10.9
2575%	2029%	21st Cent Fox Inc B	2562	+ 8%	-	10.2
-	-	Velo Tech	-	-	4.5	-
400	257	Williamson	374%	+ 4%	2.7	18.4
873%	681%	WPP	727%	+ 13%	5.2	72.0
97%	72%	Zinc Media	72%	-	-8.0	

Natural resources

1/4	1/4	ADM Energy	1/2	-	-0.7	
-	-	Advance Energy	1/2	-	-0.1	
24%	11%	AFC Energy	17%	-	-7.4	
60%	23%	Afrenta PLC	57%	+ 1/4	-	-
1/4	-	Alba Mineral Res	-	-	-	-
1/4	-	Allen Metals	1/2	-	2.4	-
99%	36%	Alumina	92%	- 1/4	-	-
2	1/4	Aminex	1%	-	-	-
32	-	Amar Mines Corp	-	-	-0.5	
404%	276%	Anglo Amer Plat	2765%	- 4%	3.2	13.0
2773%	1670%	Anglo American	2407%	+ 28	3.1	-
92	42	Anglo Asian Mng	88	- 1	3.5	-
2410	129%	Antofagasta	2186	+ 9	1.3	32.9
3%	1%	Arc Minerals	1%	-	-5.5	
3	1%	Ariano Res	2%	+ 1/4	15.1	
1/4	1/4	Arkle Resources	1/2	-	-2.6	
1%	1/4	Armadales Cap	1/2	-	9.3	
1%	1/4	Asiamet Rescs	1/2	-	-5.0	
485%	286	Atlatayo Mine	438	- 2	1.5	25.1
-	-	Baron Oil	-	-	-9.1	
125	30	Beowulf Mining	39	+ 3	-3.7	
-	-	Bezzant Res	-	-	1.1	
2700	2175	BHP Group	2277	- 1	5.3	19.9
3	1%	Border & Shih Pet	2%	-	-	-
42%	15%	Bougainville	26%	+ 1/2	-	-
1%	-	Bowlrover	1%	-	-0.4	
558	444%	BP	454%	+ 1/4	4.8	6.7
8%	3	Cadence Min	3%	- 1/4	-2.3	
2%	1%	Cadogan Petrol	2%	-	5.7	
1010	720	Caledonia Mining	795	+ 10	5.6	-
4%	2%	Caspian Sunrise	3%	-	95.5	
131	78%	Centamin	131	+ 2	2.4	21.3
229%	152%	Cent Asia Metals	206%	+ 6%	9.1	13.4
9%	1%	Chaarat Gold	1%	-	-0.6	
17%	6%	Charlot Oil & Gas	7%	- 1/4	-4.7	
1%	1/4	China Nonfer Gold	1%	-	-	-
-	-	Clantarf Energy	-	-	-	-
35	14	Corder Gld	24%	-	-	-
1%	-	Corcel	1%	-	-1.0	
9064%	75%	DRD Gold	75%	+ 1%	5.0	8.8

1/4	1/4	ECR Minerals	1/2	-	-2.0	
1/4	1/4	Empyrean Energy	1/2	-	0.8	
1967	1250	Endeavour	1831	+ 68	3.7	-
18%	12	EnQuest	13%	+ 1/4	-1.1	
3%	1%	Eurasia Mining	2%	+ 1/4	-4.5	
1%	1/4	Europa Oil&Gas	1	-	-	-
95	41%	Ferropo	57	- 1/4	-5.0	
639%	440%	Fresnillo	608	+ 22%	0.7	24.4
-	-	63 Exploration	28	-	-2.6	
19%	7%	Galantus Gold	7%	-	-1.6	
10	7%	GCM Resources	5%	- 1/4	-8.7	
11%	2%	Getech	2%	+ 1/4	-0.4	
501%	368%	Glencore	479	+ 2%	4.7	17.9
1/4	-	Global Petrol	-	-	-0.8	
15386%	1243%	Gold Fields	1243%	+ 15%	2.6	20.0
8%	5%	Goldstat	6%	-	5.0	
1%	1%	Goldstone Res	1%	-	-1.7	
11%	5%	Greathd Gld	7%	-	-	-
164	77%	Griffin Mining	150	-	36.3	
151%	84%	Gulf Keystone	145	+ 1%	3.8	-
17%	8%	Harland & Wolff Grp	8%	-	-0.1	
191%	70%	Hochschild	191%	+ 3%	-	-
172	17%	Horizonte Min	1%	-	-0.1	
446	199%	Hunting PLC	403	- 17	1.8	7.3
-	-	Independ Res	-	-	-	-
194	6%	Indus Gas	7%	-	0.5	
1/4	-	Ironvold	-	-	-5.1	
98%	45	ITM Power	58%	+ 1%	-5.6	
8%	4%	Jubilee Metal	6%			

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**Retired doctor and
independent MP**
Dr Richard Taylor
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Register

Obituaries

Pal Enger

Footballer and career criminal who acted on an obsession in 1994 when he stole the Edvard Munch masterpiece *The Scream*

As an unhappy child suffering physical and psychological abuse from his stepfather, Pal Enger would go to the National Gallery in Oslo twice a week and study Edvard Munch's masterpiece *The Scream*.

The world-famous 1893 painting conveys the artist's existential angst after the early death of his mother and older sister; Enger knew just how the spectre-like figure felt, cradling its head in its hands. "As soon as I got close to the picture I got an extraordinary feeling. Of anxiety. Strange things in my head. I had such an intense connection with *The Scream* right away. And it's never left me," he said.

Years later as a young man, Enger was faced with a choice: a career in professional football with Norway's top club or a life of crime. He excelled at both, but chose the latter and began to plan the ultimate art heist to steal the painting with which he remained obsessed. Enger had first tried to steal it in 1988 but broke the wrong window and had to be content with making off with another Munch painting, *Love and Pain*, otherwise known as *Vampire*.

Six years later he tried again, hiring two homeless men to drive up to the National Gallery early one morning, place a ladder against the wall, break a

He left a note behind: 'A thousand thanks for the poor security'

window, liberate *The Scream* with wire cutters, clamber down the ladder with the painting, wedge it between the front seats of a car and speed off. It took 52 seconds to complete the job, while the only security guard on duty believed that the burglar alarm had gone off by mistake. The thieves left a note handwritten by Enger: "A thousand thanks for the poor security."

As police frantically reviewed CCTV footage from the day leading up to the heist, Enger's image was foremost, looking at the painting with a knowing smile, but he had a good alibi. "I always liked attention. I wanted money and fame. But at that time I most wanted to show the world I could pull off something huge," he said.

He therefore chose to steal the painting on the day of the 1994 Winter Olympics opening ceremony in Lillehammer on February 12 to cause maximum embarrassment to his country. He continued to drop Pink Pantheresque calling cards, such as doing an interview with a Norwegian newspaper protesting his innocence with a front-page picture of him standing where the painting used to be. When his son Oscar was born he published a notice in the newspaper, "Entered the world with a scream." He even had the temerity to turn up at the city's police station to complain that the 200,000 kroner (£27,000) reward being offered for recovery of the painting was inadequate.

Clare Beavis, producer of a 2023 Sky documentary about the heist, *The Man Who Stole The Scream*, said: "Pal is the only criminal I've ever come across who wanted everyone to know that it was him who committed the crime. He wanted to show everyone that he was so



Enger with *The Scream*, which was stolen by two men he hired who broke into its museum through a window; he took *Vampire*, below, in an earlier attempt

clever that the police couldn't get him, even though they knew he had done it."

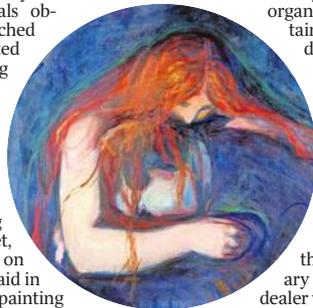
Having failed to solve the crime despite Enger's heavy hints, the Norwegian police turned to Scotland Yard's specialist art theft unit. At the same time, some of Norway's more unsavoury criminals objected to being watched and interrogated about the missing painting and began to threaten Enger. Fearing for his life, he put out feelers to the art world. Knowing there was no chance of selling the painting on the open market, he put a ransom on *The Scream* to be paid in full to prevent the painting being destroyed.

Charles Hill, Scotland Yard's art theft expert (obituary, March 2, 2021), then entered the scene. A colourful American expat and Vietnam War veteran, Hill had recovered the Vermeer

masterpiece *Lady Writing a Letter with Her Maid*, in Antwerp in 1993 after it was stolen from Ireland in 1986.

This time he posed as Chris Roberts, a loquacious, "slightly dodgy" American art dealer who was doing some covert buying for the JP Getty organisation, having obtained agreement and documentation from the Getty Museum in California to authenticate his false identity. A burly Scotland Yard officer posed as his minder — an English gangster living in Amsterdam.

Enger was told through an intermediary that the American dealer wanted to recover the painting and was prepared to pay a \$700,000 ransom to give it back to Oslo's National Gallery in return for the right to exhibit it at Getty's museum in Los Angeles. Three months after the theft Hill met Enger's representative at



JYRN H. MOEN/DAGBLADET

even his burgeoning footballing talent could keep him out of trouble. His heroes were not Diego Maradona or the Brazilian playmaker Zico, but the Corleone family in the Oscar-winning mafia films *The Godfather* and *The Godfather II*. At the age of 15 he even flew to New York to visit Little Italy and see where some of the films were set.

He was still a teenager when he broke into the first team of the league champions Valerenga Fotball. In a part-time league where wages were low, the players began to wonder how their teenage team-mate could afford a Porsche, flashy clothes and expensive watches. "By day, I was a professional football player at the best club in Norway. By night I was the best criminal in Norway."

His team-mates abided by an omerta with regard to any player who they saw as a positive influence in the dressing room and Enger was popular. Not even the team's police officer was prepared to blow his cover. In any case, whenever one of them locked themselves out of their car, they knew who to ask for help. "Believe me, it wasn't long before that car was open," said one.

Enger's speciality was blowing up ATMs and jewellery heists. He was jailed after stealing his first Munch painting in 1988. He had hung *Love and Pain* in a room above a snooker hall that he bought with his ill-gotten gains. The venue was popular with police officers. "They [the police] didn't know it was hanging one metre from them. That was the best feeling. We let them play for free just to have them there."

Enger handed the painting in after an associate informed on him and he was sent to prison for four years. "The other prisoners called me 'The Asking Man' because I asked all the time, 'How do you do this? How do you do that?'" he recalled. "Before I was an ordinary criminal, maybe. But by the time I left prison I was an expert." On being released, he tried to resurrect his football career and played for a time for Mercantile in Norway's third division.

Notwithstanding the considerably more comfortable penal regime in Norway, Enger still tried to escape during his second spell in prison after stealing *The Scream*. He gave his guards the slip during a field trip but was apprehended 12 days later in a blond wig and dark sunglasses in the act of buying a ticket to Copenhagen.

He was never fully rehabilitated. In 2015 Enger was charged with stealing 17 paintings in Oslo after his wallet was found in the gallery from which they had gone missing.

Father to five children by different women, Enger revelled in being the subject of the 90-minute documentary *The Man Who Stole The Scream*. Entirely unrepentant about his life of crime, he said in the documentary: "When I see the painting now it feels different, because it gets the attention it was supposed to have before I took it. They hung it in the corner before but now it's in the middle. They built a new museum because of me."

Pal Enger, footballer and art thief, was born on March 26, 1967. He died of undisclosed causes on June 29, 2024, aged 57



a summer house 70 miles outside Oslo, where he was shown the painting, which he knew was real because of the wax marks Munch had left while blowing out a candle above the canvas. The police moved in.

Enger was arrested, put on trial and sentenced to six-and-a-half years in prison. He was freed in 2000 after serving four. During a later incarceration in 2007 he took up the easel himself and exhibited his abstract paintings. Several sold for not inconsiderable sums.

Pal Enger was born in Oslo in 1967 and grew up on the gritty high-rise Tveita estate. His mother was an alcoholic and his stepfather was abusive to both her and the child. Craving attention, Pal would attempt to climb the walls of the housing block.

He started getting into trouble while still at school, falling in with a criminal gang operating from the estate. Not

Dr Richard Taylor

Retired NHS consultant and popular independent MP for nine years who campaigned for better public health services

The congratulations continued rolling in days after Dr Richard Taylor had won election to parliament in 2001. The retired consultant at Kidderminster General Hospital had stood as an independent candidate after the government had cut the hospital's services, including its accident and emergency department.

He had been enjoying his retirement when Tony Blair's Labour government and Worcestershire health authority proposed withdrawing services from Kidderminster General, where he had practised for more than 20 years. The area had elected its first Labour MP in the 1997 landslide, when the barrister David Lock won by 6,946 votes.

The proposal by the health secretary Frank Dobson meant pooling hospital resources at the newly built private finance hospital to the east of Worcester. Lock was originally part of the group objecting to the plans, but later withdrew from the campaign.

Public opposition built. More than 12,000 people marched through Kidderminster with a Victorian carriage carrying a coffin with the slogan "death of excellence". Campaigners protested outside the House of Commons and interrupted a visit by Blair to nearby flood-damaged Bewdley. "I've got the message," Blair said. But the withdrawal of services went ahead.

Campaigners then turned to Taylor, who had been chairman of the Save Kidderminster Hospital group. He took his bedside manner to the Wyre Forest constituency for a guerrilla campaign in the shires. The local Horticultural Society delivered leaflets, a chip shop renamed a special sausage meal "Taylor's Torpedo" and a Victorian singers group sang "It's a long way to Worcester City", to highlight the distance people had to travel to get to A&E. The independent MP Martin Bell, who had been two years below Taylor at the Leys School in Cambridge came to campaign for him in a battle that drew visits from several big names.

The sketch writer David Aaronovitch, upon walking through Stourport-on-Severn with Taylor, pronounced: "It's just like a ward round, isn't it? They all know you." They did. Taylor swept to

victory with a majority of more than 17,000 votes.

Richard Taylor was born in Manchester in 1934, the youngest child of Mabel and Thomas Taylor. He grew up in the grade II listed Marton House near Skipton in Yorkshire, and was educated at the Leys School. Medicine ran in the family. Mabel was the daughter of a GP and in 1914 became one of the few women in Britain to have a driving licence so she could deliver medicine to patients during the conscription of the First World War. As a young boy Richard would spend time with his Uncle Harry, another GP, on his rounds.

He studied medicine at Clare College, Cambridge, proving a valuable player in the cricket team as a left-arm spin bowler. From there his medical studies began at Westminster Hospital Medical School, although they were interrupted by National Service in 1961. Apart from humdrum postings to Lincolnshire and RAF Halton in Buckinghamshire, he spent three months on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. He later recalled it as an

A sausage meal called 'Taylor's Torpedo' was served in a chip shop

opportunity to indulge in birdwatching, one of his great passions.

While serving he married his first wife, Ann Brett, a trainee nurse. They had three children: Sally, a nurse consultant; Caroline, an electric canal boat builder; and Stephen, a communications director. They divorced in 1984. Their children survive him.

After experience at St Stephen's Hospital and Westminster Hospital, where he was tutored by Queen Elizabeth II's physician Sir Richard (Dick) Bayliss, he moved to Kidderminster General Hospital in 1972 to become a consultant rheumatologist.

There, he threw himself into his work. His family spent Christmases going into the hospital to visit him with presents. His aptitude for medicine wasn't reflected in his ability for doing housework. His daughter Caroline



Taylor celebrating his election landslide in 2001 with his second wife, Christine

recalled that they got a donkey, William, as Taylor was too busy to cut the grass at their house in Trimley, on the outskirts of Kidderminster. The thinking was that at least it would be more docile than a goat, until William escaped and ran down the road with their washing line in his mouth.

Through his work, his opinions on the health service were developing. He was opposed to private practice in the NHS, despite pressure on consultants to take on such work. On one occasion he bought a consulting couch for his home in Kidderminster, but saw only a handful of patients before he stopped. In a letter to The Daily Telegraph in 1975 he warned that "urgent" action was needed to save the NHS and that Barbara Castle's offer of a pay rise for

consultants, from which he would have benefited, was ill directed.

Taylor retired in 1995 and looked forward to enjoying a life of classic cars, holidays to Wales, his interest in nature and his young family. He had met his second wife, Christine Miller, an administrator, in February 1990 after being set up on a blind date. After a whirlwind romance they married seven months later, and their only daughter, Georgina, was born in 1993. Both survive him. However, that retirement was interrupted by the government's plans for Kidderminster hospital. After protests proved ineffective, campaigners turned their sights on the ballot box.

Fears about the impact of the closure of the A&E were made more acute during the election campaign when

John Jones, a heart patient, died in February 2001 after his ambulance arrived at Worcester Hospital too late. It had driven past the shuttered Kidderminster unit en route. It hardened support for Taylor, and his victory seemed a foregone conclusion, but the scale of the majority still surprised many. His election gave rise to the political sociology term "the Richard Taylor effect" of the electoral danger of reconfiguring health services.

"You cannot ride roughshod over a community's feelings without rebellion," Taylor told the local newspaper the Kidderminster Shuttle that night. "They have used the ballot box — the only weapon left to people who have been disregarded." Its headline the next day was "Doctor in the House". Taylor was off to Westminster, across the river from St Thomas' Hospital where he once worked.

His election led to some services being retained at Kidderminster — but the A&E never returned. Taylor sat on the health and social care select committee after the Conservative Party gave up a place for him, and contributed to the establishment of the 111 non-emergency number. However, he did not restrict his views to healthcare. In his nine years in parliament he opposed the Iraq war, adoption of the euro and legalisation of cannabis, and backed section 28, which prohibited the promotion of homosexuality in schools.

Despite becoming one of the few independent MPs to retain their seat — in 2005 — he lost in 2010 to the Conservative Mark Garnier, and his second retirement began. He took on a number of voluntary positions, including becoming president of the National Health Action Party, for which he unsuccessfully stood again in Wyre Forest in 2015, and other civic groups in Kidderminster. Otherwise, he told an interviewer, his retirement was spent enjoying the three Bs: books, birds and Beethoven.

Dr Richard Taylor MBE, retired hospital consultant and MP for Wyre Forest 2001-10, was born on July 7, 1934. He died from bowel cancer and dementia on June 26, 2024, aged 89

The Rev Canon Bill Ritson

Popular, literary Anglican cleric behind the scenes at St Albans Cathedral with a simple faith in which fun played a large part

Every Anglican cathedral needs an influential figure behind the scenes who does not take things too seriously.

As canon residentiary, chaplain to four bishops for two decades and secretary to the Diocesan Pastoral Committee and Board of Ministry for many years, Bill Ritson pricked pomposity admirably at St Albans Cathedral.

The son of a churchwarden, he firmly resisted the complexities of the clerical mind that clog up diocesan committees. As such, his minutes and aides-memoir were often brilliant, if not hilarious, essays on life at the abbey and became keenly anticipated.

A lay listener remarked: "Bill's simple and uncomplicated faith, in which fun plays a large part, appealed in a very direct way to many lay folk."

At one St Albans Abbey feast, where the guest was Nigel Hawthorne — no stranger to the church's Trollopian absurdity having played the arch-deacon Dr Grantly in a masterful 1982 BBC adaptation of *The Barchester Chronicles* — Ritson's introduction almost stole the actor's thunder. On another occasion, much enhanced by cushions, he would mimic senior clerics



Ritson was sensitive and shrewd

in the Church of England. As a preacher Ritson gave sermons that were never longer than ten minutes, but would still be suffused with erudite references to films, novels and plays. When he retired there was standing room only at St Albans Abbey to wave him off.

In one address, given both in Cambridge and in London, he spoke of

Ian Charleson, the star of the film *Chariots of Fire*, who played Eric Liddell, the Scottish runner who refused to compete on a Sunday and, after winning the 400m gold at the 1924 Olympics in Paris, became a missionary in China and died in a prisoner-of-war camp there in February 1945.

Ritson told the tragic tale of Charleson's last performance as Hamlet in 1989 when aged only 40 and dying of Aids. "He said Shakespeare's lines as if to encourage us all — a young actor frail and fragile at the very gate of death trying to encourage and affirm his fellow human beings: 'Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!'" Ritson saw that, through inspired acting, the words of Shakespeare could lead us to be lights of courage to others.

The Right Rev Peter Walker, while lecturing at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where Ritson studied, had noticed Ritson was so self-effacing, never putting his goods in the shop window, that some dons had undervalued him. But when Ritson returned to preach at Corpus it was this outstanding sermon that connected with the contemporary life of the undergraduates.

Gerald Richard Stanley Ritson was born in Sunderland in 1935 to Gerald, a lawyer, and Violet (née Cowell), a domestic science teacher. He was educated at Durham School and read classics and theology at Corpus.

Bill, as he was known, came slowly to the decision to be ordained, influenced by his north-country parish, worship at Durham Cathedral and Walker, who perceived his gifts at Corpus.

After two years of National Service in the army — during which he once demanded the name of the Archbishop of Canterbury from a group of late-night returning revellers as the barracks password — he trained for the priesthood at Lincoln Theological College. After being ordained in 1961 he served in various parishes in the diocese of St Albans before moving to the cathedral. Having cared for his elderly father, he demonstrated pastoral gifts of sensitivity and shrewdness, gently encouraging many young people who were considering a vocation to ministry.

In 2000 he retired to a small flat with in sight of the stage door of the Old Vic on the aptly named Mitre Road in southeast London. Here, his guests,

sleeping in his study, faced a 6ft pile of theatre programmes and, outside, passages lined with film and Broadway posters as well as bookshelves crammed with theology and plays.

He was invited to be an auxiliary priest at Southwark Cathedral by the dean, Colin Slee. Ritson also had special links with St Paul's, the actors' church in Covent Garden, and the Haymarket Theatre. He was a strong supporter of the ministry of women and alert to the need for down-to-earth catholic ecumenism. He was always available and his warm smile and alert and probing questioning won friends wherever he was. Widely read, he understood the questions and hesitations of many reflective English Christians. In later years he came out as gay and, in retirement, advised and mentored many young people who were struggling to find their identity.

The Rev Canon Bill Ritson, Anglican priest, was born on March 23, 1935. He died on June 22, 2024, aged 89

Email: obituaries@thetimes.co.uk

Court Circular



Windsor Castle
10th July, 2024

The King this afternoon gave a Luncheon for Members of the Order of Merit at Windsor Castle.

The following had the honour of being invited: Professor Sir Roger Penrose and Lady Penrose, Sir David Attenborough and Ms Susan Attenborough, Sir Timothy Berners-Lee and Lady Berners-Lee, the Lord Rees of Ludlow and Dame Caroline Humphrey, Mr Neil MacGregor, Mr David Hockney and Mr Jean-Pierre Gonçalves de Lima, the Hon John Howard and Mrs Howard, Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub and Miss Lisa Yacoub, the Lord Darzi of Denham and the Lady Darzi, Professor Dame Ann Dowling and Professor Thomas Hynes, Sir James Dyson and Lady Dyson, Sir David Adjaye and

Lady Adjaye, Professor Dame Elizabeth Anionwu and Miss Nina Patel, the Baroness Benjamin and Mr Keith Taylor, Professor Margaret MacMillan and Ms Ann MacMillan, Sir Paul Nurse and Lady Nurse and the Lord Janvrin (Secretary and Registrar of the Order of Merit).

His Majesty held a Council at Buckingham Palace at 4.30pm.

There were present: the Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP (Lord President), the Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, the Rt Hon Edward Miliband MP and the Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP.

Ms Anneliese Dodds MP, Ms Louise Haigh MP, Mr Richard Hermer, Mr Darren Jones MP, Mr Peter Kyle MP, Mr Ian Murray MP, Ms Bridget Phillipson MP, Mr Steven Reed MP, Mr Jonathan Reynolds MP, Ms Joanna Stevens MP and Mr Wesley Streeting MP were sworn in or made affirmation as members of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council.

The following took the Oath of Office or made affirmation, kissed hands upon

appointment and received the Seals of Office: the Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP (as Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government), the Rt Hon Wesley Streeting MP (as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care), the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP (as Secretary of State for Education), the Rt Hon Edward Miliband MP (as Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero), the Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP (as Secretary of State for Business and Trade and President of the Board of Trade), the Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP (as Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology), the Rt Hon Louise Haigh MP (as Secretary of State for Transport), the Rt Hon Steven Reed MP (as Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), the Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP (as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland), the Rt Hon Ian Murray MP (as Secretary of State for Scotland) and the Rt Hon Joanna Stevens MP (as Secretary of State for Wales).

Mr Richard Tilbrook was in attendance as Clerk of the Council.

The Rt Hon Sir Clive Alderton (Principal Private Secretary to Their Majesties) was in attendance.

The Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP had an audience of His Majesty before the Council.

The Queen this afternoon attended the Lawn Tennis Championships at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, Wimbledon, London SW19.

Kensington Palace
10th July, 2024

The Duke of Gloucester, Grand Prior, the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, this evening attended the Grand Prior Dinner at St David's Hotel, Havannah Street, Cardiff, and was received by Colonel Kevin Davies (Deputy Lieutenant of South Glamorgan).

The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, Friends of St Paul's Cathedral, this afternoon attended the Annual Festival Service in St Paul's Cathedral, London EC4.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To book a Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register, visit newsukadvertising.co.uk for help, please call 020 7782 7553 or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

JUST as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything. Ecclesiastes 11:5 (NRSV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

KING on 2nd July 2024 to Lara (née Sirimanne) and Alexander, a son, Jack Gehan Naisbitt.

Forthcoming Marriages

LORD G. W. CARNEGIE AND MISS M. E. ST AUBYN

The engagement is announced between George, second son of the Duke and Duchess of Fife, of Brechin, Angus, and Matilda, daughter of the late Mr Michael St Aubyn and of Mrs James Findlay, of Watership Down, Hampshire.

VISCOUNT GARNOCK AND LADY VIOLET MANNERS

The engagement is announced between William, elder son of the Earl and Countess of Lindsay, of Lahill, Fife, and Violet, eldest daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Rutland, of Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire.

Deaths

BALL Anthony Charles (Tony). Died on Sunday 23rd June 2024, aged 84. Beloved husband of Lindy, loving father of Jason, Camilla and Hugh, and much-loved stepfather and grandfather. Funeral service at All Saints Church, Martin, SP6 3LE, on Thursday 18th July at 2.30pm.

COOPER Antonya Angelika Bryony (née James) on 6th July 2024, aged 77. Antonya died peacefully at home with her beloved husband Alastair by her side and all of her children nearby. We are so proud of the brave Mama who fought so hard for her children and for what she believed in. She was a force of nature. There will be a small private family funeral, but there will be a celebration of her life later this year. Instead of flowers, Antonya requested that donations be sent to Neuroblastoma UK.

EWBANK Michael William Francis (Will / Bill) died on 3rd July 2024, aged 77. Adored husband of Heather, brother of Christopher and loving uncle. Funeral service to be held at noon on 1st August 2024 at Mortlake Crematorium, TW9 4EN. Family flowers only. Donations to Parkinson's UK. Inquiries to Ernest Larner Funeral Directors, 020 8788 2942.

KESSLER CBE

George, died on Tuesday 2nd July 2024, aged 70. George was a character in a world generally devoid of them. Once met, never forgotten. Much-loved father to Madeleine and Flora, son to Jo, and brother to Charles, James and Ed. As a supporter of arts and culture, donations in his memory are welcome to Artichoke Trust, please send directly.

LAZENBY Professor JF. Emeritus professor of ancient history, Newcastle University. Died peacefully at home with his children at his side and surrounded by his beloved books on Tuesday 2nd July 2024, aged 90. Husband to the beloved Pa to Emma and Nic, adored Grandpa to Ellie, Alex, Rebecca and George and much-loved father-in-law to Matt and Andrea. Also beloved brother to the late Michael and the late Stephen and much-loved brother-in-law to Francis and uncle to Jennie. Family funeral – no flowers by request. Donations in lieu can be given to Cancer Research or Cats Protection.

LUSHINGTON Diana died peacefully on 23rd May 2024, aged 85. Much-loved Mum to Hazel, Daphne and Veronica, and Granny to Duncan and Lucas. Funeral at St John's Church, Hythe, at noon on 25th July. Donations in lieu of flowers to Age UK or St John's Church via dianalushington.muchloved.com

MASON Miles Christopher Charles died peacefully on 23rd June 2024, aged 92. Much-loved widower of Caroline, father of Robert and Charles, and grandfather of Tom, Will, Emily, Sam and Livvy. A service of thanksgiving will be held at St John's Church, Hartley Wintney, on Monday 22nd July 2024 at 1.30pm and afterwards at The Elvetham hotel. Family flowers only please and donations if desired to the Alzheimer's Society.

OLIVER Helen Mary (née Shepherd) died peacefully on 24th June 2024, aged 90. The funeral service will take place at St Nicholas Church, Great Horstead, on Tuesday 23rd July at 2pm. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to St Nicholas Church. www.quintetchurches.com/givingtostnicholas.htm Inquiries to Austin's, 01763 27411.

PARSONS
Diana Christine, peacefully on 24th June 2024, aged 84, after a long illness, peacefully at home. Wonderful mum of Rachel, Jeremy and Richard; precious granny of Marcus, Natalia, Alex, Sol and Eve, great-granny of Sienna, and cherished friend. Funeral at North Wilts Crematorium, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 8ET, on 22nd July 2024 at 11am. Inquiries to Claridge Funeral Service, Marlborough, 01672 511836.

REYNOLDS
Dinah Mary (née Dixon) on 6th July 2024, aged 87, loving wife of the late Rev John Reynolds, ceramic lover and indefatigable traveller, died after a short illness never having made it to Arkhangel in Russia – to her great regret. Funeral to be held on Thursday 25th July at St Andrew's Church, Linton Road, Oatford, OX2 6JG, at 2pm. No flowers please but donations, if wished, to Inmovista International.

Birthdays
BELFER Daniel Walter Belfer celebrates his 96th birthday on 11th July 2024. Born in Vincennes, Paris, he came to England in 1944, spending many years in London and latterly moving to Edinburgh. He continues to be much loved as the husband of the late Valerie, father of Simon, father-in-law to Kathryn and grandson to Zachary, Benjamin, Joshua, Michael and Kieran. Long may it continue.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES

To place notices for these sections please call 020 7782 7553

Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 11.30am three days prior to insertion



Legal Notices

Notice of Intended Distribution to Creditors
HENDERSON EUROTRUST PLC
(In Members' Voluntary Liquidation) ("the Company")
(Company Number 02716241)
Registered office: 1 More London Place, London, SE1 2AF
Principal trading address: 201 Bishopsgate, London, EC2M 3AE
As Joint Liquidators of the Company, we hereby give notice that we intend to make a final distribution to its creditors. The last date for proving is 19 August 2024 and creditors of the Company should by that date send their full names and addresses and particulars of their debts or claims to me Derek Neil Hyslop of Ernst & Young LLP, 1 More London Place, London, SE1 2AF. In accordance with Rule 14.38(1)(c) of the Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016, we may thereafter make the proposed distribution without regard to the claim of any person in respect of a debt not yet proved. Joint Liquidators: Derek Neil Hyslop (IP number 9870) and Richard Barker (IP number 7150) both of Ernst & Young LLP, 1 More London Place, London, SE1 2AF. Date of Appointment: 04 July 2024. For further details contact Mark Chapman on +44 113 296 2602 or at Mark.Chapman@parthenon-ey.com. Dated: 4 July 2024. Derek Neil Hyslop, Joint Liquidator

CR-2024-001618
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS COMPANIES COURT (ChD) IN THE MATTER OF YU GROUP PLC AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice dated 2 July 2024 confirming the cancellation of the share premium account of the Company and a statement of capital were registered by the Registrar of Companies on 5 July 2024. Osborne Clarke LLP One London Wall London EC2Y 5EB Solicitors for the Company

THE TIMES

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Law

Here's how to rescue the justice system

Legal experts give Keir Starmer's government advice on where to start, writes **Jonathan Ames**

Sir Keir Starmer KC is a renowned barrister, former chief prosecutor and darling of the human rights brigade. But none of that will count for much with the legal profession — and court users generally — if his week-old government doesn't tackle the perceived ills in the justice system.

More specifically, the criminal justice system — with ever-mounting delays in the courts and bursting prisons — is seen to be at crisis point.

"We look forward to seeing how the new government will invest in and sustain our criminal justice system in the short and long term," said Tana Adkin KC, chair of the Criminal Bar Association, who wryly noted that "previous governments — including Labour — have sought to manage the system on an ever-decreasing budget in real terms regardless of the need for investment in the civic buildings that contain it and the people that deliver it".

Adkin was one of several members of the legal profession great and good to speak to *The Times* in the wake of Labour's landslide win last week.

The Bar Council and Law Society — the umbrella bodies representing barristers and solicitors, respectively, in England and Wales — were predictably cautious and banal in their welcoming of the Labour administration. However, Nick Emmerson, the society's president, did note that the new justice secretary, Shabana Mahmood, must invest in a "root and branch review of the whole justice system, including legal aid and courts estate. At the same

time improving access to justice is a priority — we have to ensure everyone, with no exceptions, has access to advice and representation."

Adkin sent an even tougher message to Starmer and Mahmood, however. "It is about time that the state recognised that the criminal justice system underpins our society and needs to be trusted by its people to deliver justice for all in a timely fashion, rather than being a political football used to bolster popularity," she said.

And there was a similar message from a KC who bears the scars of recent battling in government for the justice system. Sir Robert Buckland, the Tory justice secretary between 2019 and 2021, dished out some specific advice. "Labour have to find new ways to manage the remand population more effectively and to put more offenders on to intensive community-based penalties that restrict liberty and allow monitoring but without using prison places," he said.

Tom Franklin, the chief executive of the Magistrates' Association, agreed, saying that "we must have a grown-up discussion about sentencing. It is generally recognised that short custodial sentences are not very effective in promoting rehabilitation." He added that Labour's stated plans to boost the capacity of the police "will result in higher arrest rates — but without the resources needed to deal with them speedily, this will just increase bottlenecks, delays and backlogs".

Even City lawyers are warning



Angela Rayner with Keir Starmer and Shabana Mahmood, the justice secretary, who has inherited a dysfunctional system

Starmer and Mahmood of the need to invest significantly on the criminal side of the justice equation. "Full prisons, dilapidated courts and the publicly funded Bar and law firms are all in urgent need of resources that simply may not be made available in the immediate term," said Alasdair Douglas, who is a former head of the City of London Law Society and now chairs the public affairs consultancy DRD.

'It is recognised that short custodial sentences are not very effective'

He added, hopefully, that "having a former DPP [director of public prosecutions] as PM should make it easier to argue for an end to dysfunction in the justice system".

Away from the blood and guts of crime, lawyers have predicted that Labour's stated plans to overhaul employment law will be "seismic". Included are measures to simplify union recognition, beefing up the rights

of trade unions to recruit and organise at workplaces and a new duty on employers to inform all employees of their right to join a union.

In advance of polling day Labour had also touted the introduction of electronic balloting to make the process of calling strikes easier and quicker.

Labour also wants to reform the practice of "fire and rehire", where bosses can re-engage staff on less favourable terms. But as Katherine Flower, a partner at Burges Salmon, notes, reform might trigger unintended consequences: "If you limit an employer's ability to dismiss and re-engage," she says, "the danger is you leave them with potentially only one option: to dismiss."

And then there is the highly emotive issue of "zero-hour contracts". Labour has described the practice of not guaranteeing workers a set number of hours as "exploitative". Yet, Flower says, "many workers as well as employers find this flexibility beneficial", and therefore it is likely that the new government will legislate to provide those workers who want the security of guaranteed hours with the opportunity to

move on to a contract, while "those who enjoy the flexibility offered by zero hours can leave matters as they are".

Family law is also a high-profile point on the justice agenda, as lawyers have increasingly complained that it too is beset by underinvestment.

Jo Edwards, chair of the family justice group Resolution, reminded new ministers that Labour pledged in its manifesto to reform cohabitation law, with the lawyer saying: "For too long we have ignored the reality of how people are living their lives, and it is not enough to educate people about their lack of rights or just encourage them to marry or form a civil partnership. We need to protect people, and their children, from financial hardship by finally grappling with these issues and introducing a framework of rights and responsibilities for unmarried couples."

Resolution also called for ministers to commit to state funding for initial family legal advice "to support people as they navigate separation and, where appropriate, signpost them away from court and alleviate the pressure on our courts".

Law Commission plans to overhaul contempt laws

Jonathan Ames

Just weeks after one of America's most venerable magazines triggered a debate over England's contempt of court laws, government advisers have proposed radical surgery.

In May, *The New Yorker* published a 13,000-word article that suggested the murder convictions of the nurse Lucy Letby were unsafe.

The magazine, which was available in the UK, published the article in advance of Letby's retrial at Manchester crown court — and subsequent conviction — on a remaining murder charge, and during her appeal of conviction, which was ultimately rejected, on the other charges.

The attorney-general's office confirmed in May that it was reviewing *The New Yorker's* article, but as of this week it had not advanced the position. The magazine's editor has declined to

comment on issues around the publication of its story in the UK.

This week the Law Commission for England and Wales has published a consultation on proposals that would do away with the centuries-old distinctions between criminal and civil contempt in favour of what it describes as a "modern, streamlined set of contempt laws".

According to the commission, there should be three forms of contempt of court, including what it calls "general contempt", which would include the abuse of court staff or witnesses, disrupting hearings, or making unauthorised recordings of proceedings.

The second category would be "contempt by breach of court order or undertaking", which would include litigants in high-value commercial disputes breaching freezing orders by taking assets out of the country, or

protesters entering land in breach of an injunction. That second category would also cover the breaching of antisocial behaviour injunctions.

The third category under the commission's proposals would be "contempt by publication when proceedings are active".

That would include reports by traditional newspapers and broadcasters — and social media posts — that create "a substantial risk that the course of justice in active proceedings will be seriously impeded or prejudiced".

The commission gives as examples any publication that reveals information that may not be admissible in evidence and risks influencing a jury in a criminal trial.

Redefining contempt is all well and good, but the commission recognises that courts are limited in the sanctions they can impose, with jail sentences or fines essentially the only options.

But those two options "are not always suitable", the commission says. For example, it notes that "where vulnerable people have breached the conditions of antisocial behaviour injunctions, 'prison may not be appropriate, and they may have no money to pay a fine'".

To address that issue, the commission proposes expanding sentencing options to include community orders, which may include unpaid work, drug or alcohol treatment and restrictions on places that a person may go or where they must live.

While the commission has firm views on the categories of contempt and reform of the sanctions for breaching the proposed restructured law, it is keen to hear from lawyers and others on several other points during the consultation, which runs until November 8.

Included is a crucial issue for the media: whether criminal proceedings should continue to be considered

"active" from the point at which a person has been arrested, or whether they should not be considered "active" until a person has been charged.

The commission acknowledges that moving the point of active proceedings "would expand what the media may report during criminal investigations".

Commissioners are also open to suggestions on whether the courts should be able to review decisions by the attorney-general to grant or refuse consent to bring proceedings for contempt by publication while proceedings are active. At present that process cannot be reviewed by the courts.

Times Law

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Russia sanctions are Kafkaesque

Catherine Baksi

John Healey hardly had time to sip a glass of champagne to celebrate his party's general election triumph before the new defence secretary was on a flight to Ukraine.

At a meeting in Odesa with President Zelensky, Healey pledged to hand over a fresh round of military supplies as well as to adhere to a promise made by Rishi Sunak to send other equipment.

Since Vladimir Putin ordered his troops to invade Ukraine in 2022, the UK, US, EU and others have imposed thousands of sanctions on Russia, including targeting wealthy business figures who are believed to have links to the Kremlin, freezing their assets and impounding their yachts.

The UK implemented sanctions agreed by the UN or imposed unilaterally or with other groups, putting restrictions on dealing with people who are listed and referred to as "designated persons".

After leaving the EU, the UK needed a new regime, both to implement UN sanctions and to impose its own — and the rules have become more complicated. In a 2023 High Court ruling Mrs Justice Cockerill noted that the EU regulations had been ten pages, but the UK's Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, which provides the main legal basis for imposing and lifting them, is 71 pages and the regulations made under it run to 364 pages.

The UK has 38 sanctions regimes, but much of the present legal work relates to Russia. "The scheme is draconian and intended to be so," says Alun Milford, a partner at the law firm Kingsley Napley and former general counsel at the Serious Fraud Office.

"The list of designated persons is huge — none of whom needs to have been convicted of an offence or in-



John Healey, the defence minister, met President Zelensky in Odesa this week

deed be under criminal investigation as a condition of designation," he says, adding that the regulations make it clear that the definition of those deemed to be supporting Russia is wide and the standard for designating someone is low.

A person can challenge designation, first to the minister who made it then, if that fails, through a High Court process that is similar to judicial review. But, Milburn says: "I'm not aware of a single successful challenge brought in the court because the discretion that ministers have is very broad."

Sanctions regimes have evolved over the past 25 years, moving from "comprehensive" or "country" sanctions to "targeted sanctions" focused on individuals or entities and intended to be more proportionate and nuanced, Guy Martin, a consultant at Carter-Ruck, says. He adds that sanctions are designed to coerce the elites of a targeted regime, including influential businessmen, army officers and government officials, to change the leadership without harming its civilian population.

In theory, they are meant to be "tem-

porary administrative measures and not of a criminal or punitive nature", Martin says. But in practice, he adds, they can last for many years and have the same practical impact on those targeted as punitive measures, without affording them the same levels of due process and judicial protection as are provided to the subjects of criminal proceedings.

"A sanctioned person can find themselves in a Kafkaesque situation whereby suddenly and without any prior notification they are subjected to highly draconian measures, yet they are given little information about the grounds for their listing or the evidence said to justify such action," Martin says.

The sanctioned person, he says, can find it difficult to get a lawyer or even know the evidence against them and can face "a lengthy uphill struggle" to challenge the imposition. The system allowing for sanctioned persons to get legal representation is slow and cumbersome, taking up to two years for a licence allowing payment of legal fees to be granted by the Treasury's office of

financial sanctions, and causing "serious hardship" to the sanctioned person.

The Treasury office is too slow at processing other licence requests to enable individuals to conduct acts that would otherwise breach sanctions prohibitions, Michael O'Kane, a partner at Peters & Peters, says. This also affects "those trying to cease commercial relations with sanctioned entities and persons, so undermining the objective of sanctions," he adds.

O'Kane criticises the targeting of people who have divested themselves of Russian assets, resigned from posts, left Russia or denounced the war, and refusals to "de-list" them. "Out of over 2,000 people listed, four have been de-listed, with no reasons given, which means it's impossible for anyone else to know how to conduct themselves," he says.

He calls on the new government to create a task force similar to that in the US, which would engage with representatives of sanctioned people on steps to take towards de-listing.

Despite the impact sanctions have on the individuals targeted, whether they achieve their objectives is questionable. Regulations governing the Russian sanctions regime state that the purpose is "encouraging Russia to cease actions destabilising Ukraine or undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty or independence of Ukraine" and for "promoting the payment of compensation by Russia for damage, loss or injury suffered by Ukraine" as a result of the invasion.

"If its objective is to stop Russia's invasion of Ukraine, stop the war or impact the Russian war machine, we can doubt that it has had the effect that ministers hoped," Milford says. Sanctions have affected Russia's ability to trade with the West. But as a consequence "Russia has pivoted its alliances towards India and China", he says.

OUT OF COURT

The cases, the chatter, the chaos: what's really going on in the law

Thornberry's cabinet snub

Labour may have won its biggest majority in the party's history last week, but one of its barrister MPs is more than slightly miffed.

Emily Thornberry had been Sir Keir Starmer's shadow attorney-general, but was given the chop. Thornberry jumped on X/Twitter to say she was "very sorry and surprised not to be able to continue" into government. She went on to describe Richard Hermer KC, the lawyer who was rushed up to the House of Lords so he could take the attorney-general role, as being "a much more accomplished lawyer than I could ever hope to be". Evidently Starmer agrees.

Say it in Welsh

"Y mae Cylchdaith Cymru a Chaer yn parhau i fod mor byrlymus ag manau eraill yn Cymru a Lloegr, maent o dan straen i ddarparu yr holl erlynyddion sydd ei angen i erlyn achosion Rasso, sy'n rhoi pwysau ychwanegol ar y barnwriaeth a llysoedd lleol." That was the opening line of the latest weekly message to members of the Criminal Bar Association — and for those who don't speak Welsh, here is the association's translation: "The Wales and Chester Circuit remains vibrant but, as elsewhere across England and Wales, under severe strain to supply all the prosecutors we collectively needed to cover Rasso [rape and serious sexual offence] cases, putting added pressure on the judiciary and local courts." Association officials went with Welsh to coincide with the new prime minister's tour of the nations and commemorate that since 2016 it has been an official language of parliament.

Judge bosses leaving do

Bar and bench turned out in force at Woolwich crown court in southeast London last week to bid farewell to Chris Kinch KC, who has been the resident judge for 12 years. The cast included the senior presiding judge, Lord Justice Edis, the Court of Appeal's Lady Justice Thirlwall, three High Court judges and Carol Atkinson, the designated family judge for east London, also known as Mrs Kinch.

Edis paid tribute to Kinch's work to put the 12-court centre on the map and tackle its faults, which included the heating working only in summer, air conditioning only in winter, a leaky roof and a broken lift. Kinch was credited with making the venue "less inaccessible" by ensuring the Elizabeth Line stopped at Woolwich. Kinch, a keen Bruce Springsteen fan, slipped 23 references to the Boss's hits into his valedictory speech, which finished with a blast of *Glory Days*.

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Lawyer of the week Dearbhla Minogue

Dearbhla Minogue, a solicitor at Global Legal Action Network (GLAN), successfully represented the World Uyghur Congress in a judicial review at the Court of Appeal. The group challenged the National Crime Agency's decision not to investigate the importation of cotton produced through Uyghur forced labour as criminal property under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

What were the biggest hurdles you had to overcome in this case? The need to manage all the moving parts. It was a lot of work, late nights and responsibility to our clients who were, and still are, undergoing terrible torment as exiled Uyghurs. I also had twins in the middle of it all.

What is the best decision you have taken as a lawyer? Instructing our counsel team on this case, who were spectacular. Even though the judgment makes it all sound straightforward, it didn't feel that way at the time.

Who do you most admire in the law? Gearóid Ó Cuinn, the director of GLAN. He is highly principled and really lifts other people up, which I think is a rare quality. I would certainly not be where I am if it weren't for him.



What is the best advice you have received? Remain independent. This advice came from my godmother, the writer Dervla Murphy, when I told her I was planning to go into the law. I think it has made me a better lawyer.

What is the funniest thing that has happened in your job? I have a terrible habit of going to the wrong place. On two different occasions, I had meetings in the Hague and went to the wrong city in the Netherlands. Leiden and Amsterdam are very pretty, though.

What are the best and worst elements of being a lawyer? The best is getting to meet and work with such brilliant people, and to feel like I am doing something that matters. The worst part is selective application of the law depending on who the victims are, and the fact that the job takes over your life.

What law would you enact? One that requires a judge to grant arms licences, rather than a politician.

What is your favourite book? I vaguely recall having time to read. I love *The Periodic Table* by Primo Levi.

Catherine Baksi
catherinebaksi@hotmail.com

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Weather Eye Paul Simons



Today Mostly dry with sunny intervals. The chance of a shower across parts of Britain. Max 23C (73F), min 5C (41F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy, du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder **previous day **no data not available

Table with 4 columns: City, Temp C, Rain mm, Sun hr%. Lists weather for various UK cities like Aberdeen, London, Manchester, etc.

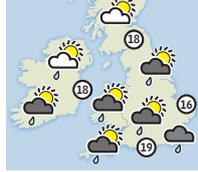
Five days ahead

An unsettled period with widespread cloud and scattered showers. Sunny spells at times

Tomorrow

A scattering of showers across southern and eastern areas. Drier elsewhere with some longer sunny spells across Ireland and Scotland.

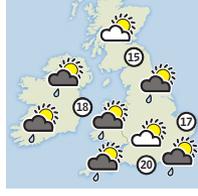
Max 20C, min 7C



Saturday

Sunny spells and patchy cloud across Scotland. Thicker cloud further south with a few isolated showers.

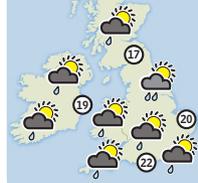
Max 21C, min 7C



Sunday

A cloudy day with widespread scattered showers, heaviest across northeastern areas.

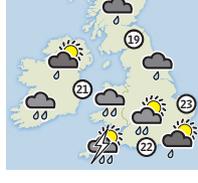
Max 23C, min 7C



Monday

A band of showery rain will spread in from the southwest, heavy and perhaps thundery at times. Drier further north.

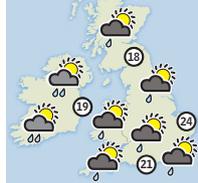
Max 23C, min 7C



Tuesday

Widespread scattered showers will spread northwards, heaviest across Ireland in the afternoon.

Max 24C, min 8C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

Wind speed (34 mph), Sea state (Calm), Temperature (23 degrees C) icons and text.

Flood alerts and warnings

At 17:00 on Wednesday there were six flood alerts and no warnings in England, two flood alerts and no warnings in Scotland and no flood alerts or warnings in Wales.

For further information and updates in England visit flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk



General situation: A largely dry day with sunny intervals and patchy cloud. The chance of a shower across eastern Scotland and central Britain.

Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Mostly dry with sunny spells. The chance of an isolated shower in eastern areas during the morning.

NW Scotland, NE Scotland, Glasgow, N Isles, Argyll, SW Scotland: A cloudy morning with the chance of an isolated

light shower. Some longer sunny spells later as cloud clears. Maximum 18C (64F), minimum 6C (43F).

Cen Highland, Moray Firth, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee, Borders: A rather cloudy day with the chance of an isolated shower in eastern areas during the morning.

Lake District, Iola, NE Eng, NW Eng, Cen N Eng, E Eng, Wales, Midlands, E Anglia: Scattered showers spreading

southwards, widespread across Wales and the Midlands. The chance of an isolated shower elsewhere with patchy cloud and sunny intervals.

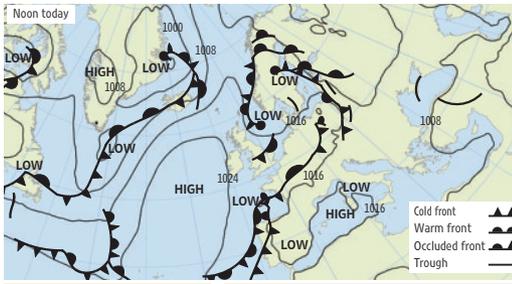
London, SE Eng, Cen S Eng, SW Eng, Channel Is: Mainly dry with some long spells of sunshine.

The chance of an isolated shower in the afternoon as thicker cloud builds in.

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres

Table with 4 columns: Location, Time, High (Ht), Low (Ht). Lists tide times for various UK locations.



Synoptic situation

An area of low pressure in the northern North Sea will push a series of occluded fronts across eastern Scotland and central Britain today bringing scattered showers and areas of thick cloud.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday. Warmest: Wisley, 22.1C. Coldest: Cairngorm, 3.1C.

Hours of darkness

Table with 2 columns: Location, Time. Lists hours of darkness for various UK locations.

I love England in a heatwave," said Leon Tallis in Ian McEwan's novel Atonement, "It's a different country. All the rules change."

The hot weather hangs over the rest of the first part of the novel like a suffocating vapour and was based on the real heatwave of 1934, when the temperature reached 33.3C in Nottinghamshire on July 11 during a run of nine consecutive days over 27C.

Wildfires broke out widely across England and Wales, water was carted to places suffering critical shortages, and some canals were closed to barge traffic to conserve water.

Even storms towards the end of July made little impact on the water shortages. The drought was only broken by rainfalls in December, in what was the wettest December on record with the heaviest downpours in the south of England.

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Sport

Vingegaard wins epic mano-a-mano

David Walsh

Le Lioran



On the short, last pull to the finish at Le Lioran, Jonas Vingegaard slowed, turning to check on Tadej Pogacar. Like a gunslinger waiting for the first twitch, Vingegaard continued to glance over his left shoulder. Pogacar waited too; patient and imperturbable. This was a sprint he had to win. No one beats him in a two-up sprint. Then Vingegaard did.

I have followed this race for more than 40 years. Seen some truly great Tours; '86, '87 and, especially, '89. Yet there is nothing from the last four decades that compares with Vingegaard and Pogacar. Two great riders who had the bad luck, our good luck, to arrive at the Tour at the same time. Greg LeMond and Laurent Fignon had one tumultuous battle. These two are on their fourth.

Their rivalry began at the 2021 Tour when the then unheralded Vingegaard had the impertinence to attack and distance Pogacar on Mont Ventoux. Plucky, we thought at the time, having no idea of who we were dealing with. Pogacar reeled him in that day and went on to win his second consecutive Tour. Since then, there have been epic battles but none as riveting or dramatic as this 211-kilometre race through the Massif Central.

By staying in Vingegaard's slipstream through the last kilometre, Pogacar went with his ruthless side. Sorry, Jonas, can't help, this is one that I have to win. Vingegaard knew what was coming but on the uphill drag to the line, he thought he had a chance. Two hundred metres from the finish, Vingegaard got out of the saddle, standing tall on the pedals so that when the moment came, he'd be ready.

He went with 150 metres to go, a second before Pogacar, stealing a bike length on his rival. Pogacar got out of the saddle and his power took him almost level. He then needed to get back in the saddle before going again. Alongside his rival but unable to go past him. Those who've watched these two thought they'd seen it all. Vingegaard won by centimetres, and past the line brought his hands up to his temples, as if to trap the escaping incredulity.



Vingegaard, clearly shattered afterwards, left, celebrates after holding off Pogacar to win stage 11



Pogacar couldn't immediately congratulate the victor which was unlike him. Instead, without turning towards Vingegaard, he stretched out his right hand. Vingegaard clasped it. Sometimes it's easier to shake a man's hand rather than have to say the words. It wasn't that he lost the sprint but rather that he had lost the day.

Pogacar was convinced the short but steep climbs of the Massif Central would play to his strength. To make the most of the opportunity, he got his UAE teammates to control the stage so that when he attacked, there would be a lot of tired bodies and no breakaways. The goal was stage victory and increased lead on general classification. It is this ambition, this willingness to gamble, that endears Pogacar to all who watch the sport.

His team did an exceptional job and 700 metres from the summit of the steep Puy Mary climb, 27 kilometres

from the finish, Adam Yates accelerated one last time and then Pogacar went for broke. Vingegaard was slow to react, took a long look to his left before latching on to the wheel of Primoz Roglic.

Pogacar soon had a gap, Roglic and Vingegaard ten seconds behind, Remco Evenepoel a further five seconds back. This was the tactic Pogacar had used on the Col du Galibier eight days before. Take an advantage near the top of the climb and then increase it on the descent. At the bottom of the descent from Puy Mary, the lead was 30 seconds. At that moment, Pogacar was more than halfway towards winning his third Tour de France.

They then climbed the Col de Pertus, just 4.4 kilometres. It shouldn't have made much difference. It changed everything. Pogacar's pedalling became less powerful, Vingegaard got stronger. "I was really surprised that I could close the gap," Vingegaard said afterwards. "The moment Tadej dropped me, I was thinking I would do

my pace, see if I could limit the losses, and all of a sudden on the next climb, he was just there in front of me."

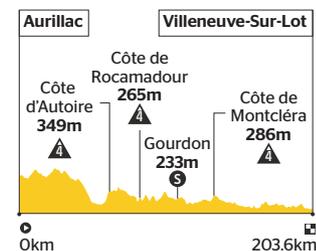
Labouring on the Col de Pertus, Pogacar looked back to see if Vingegaard was there. Then he saw him, a small, moving dot in the distance. From there to the top, he couldn't stop taking backwards glances, and every time the dot grew bigger. Until it was alongside. It was a pivotal moment in the Tour, Vingegaard by his side, not uttering a word but his presence saying all that needed to be said: "Now, Tadej, it's just you and me."

Pogacar took the eight bonus seconds at the top, five to Vingegaard. No three-second advantage was ever as hard earned. They shared the pace-making on the Col de Font de Cere and then had their extraordinary mano-a-mano to the line.

Minutes after his victory, Vingegaard cried when asked what it meant. The tears flowed; happy, happy tears. "It's very emotional for me, coming back from the crash [in April]. Sorry. It

Today's stage

Aurillac to Villeneuve-Sur-Lot 203.6km



means a lot. All the things I went through in the last three months. I would never have been able to do this without my family. I mean I am just happy to be here."

When an athlete says "I am happy to be here" it is often a platitude. When Vingegaard lay by the side of the road after a dreadful crash in Itzulia Basque three months ago, he had dislocated a shoulder, fractured a number of ribs and suffered serious damage to his lungs. Not able to breathe properly and suffering severe pain, he felt he was going to die. He spent 12 days in a Vitoria hospital and couldn't train for six weeks.

Afterwards he was asked about playing the victim card. "I am playing the victim card because I am the victim. I mean seeing where I've come from. I don't think a lot of riders would have made the Tour. I will take it day by day."

Spare a thought for Pogacar. A day that promised so much ended with so little. About 45 minutes after the race, he left Le Lioran on the UAE team bus. At least the journey to the hotel in Thiezac was just 20 minutes. Normally he shoots the breeze with his team-mates about the day. Not a lot would have been said on this journey.

Neither would they have talked about Evenepoel's gritty performance in limiting his losses or how he's still in second place on general classification. Nor would they have mentioned Roglic's crash on the final descent and the fact that he's now more than two minutes back. And when Pogacar lay down to sleep last night, only his body could have rested. Inside his head, he would have been thinking things through, wondering where they go from here, deciding how to proceed.

He still leads the Tour, has 1min 6sec on Evenepoel, 1min 14sec on Vingegaard. For sure, he will have to listen more intently when his team talk about being more strategic, less gung-ho. He will have gone to bed fearing the Yellow Jersey is the lover about to break up with him.

'Playing for the Lionesses would have been great, but I chose golf'

Golf

Cathy Harris Evian-les-Bains

Growing up, Lottie Woad had her sights set on a career in football. However, she can have few regrets about choosing golf after becoming the first European to win the Augusta National Women's Amateur.

"I'd have been very happy playing for the Lionesses," says the 20-year-old Leeds United fan, who played for Southampton's academy side until she was 12. "But in the end I had to make a choice, although I still love football."

Woad has enjoyed a stellar summer and is hoping to add to her already impressive credentials as one of eight amateurs in the field at the Amundi Evian Championship, the fourth women's major of the season, which starts in eastern France today.

A steely determination and calm demeanour helped her to birdie three of the last four holes to claim victory by one shot at Augusta in April. Then there is her relentless work ethic. The third-year Florida State student has a reputation for rising early on a Saturday, while her team-mates are recover-

ing from the night before, to practice.

"I've always had that mindset," Woad says. "I want to outwork everyone and 'win the preparation'. I realise I have to balance it but it's fair to say I work harder than any of my team-mates."

Luke Bone, the head professional at Farnham Golf Club in Surrey, knows her better than anyone, having coached Woad since she was seven. "All her coaches will attest to her work rate," Bone says. "She has a mindset of dedication and great attention to detail. Lottie is focused, driven, determined, patient and reflective."

Winner of the 2022 Girls' Amateur Championship, Woad is keen to manage expectations, saying she needs more time under her belt as an amateur and competing in top events before joining the professional ranks.

Bone has no doubt she belongs among the elite after an impressive major debut at the Chevron Championship in April, where she finished in a tie for 23rd in Texas alongside her compatriots Charley Hull and Georgia Hall.

Woad's ambition is to make the cut this week and finish as high as possible. She will be reassured by Bone's

presence on the bag as she negotiates a tricky course where patience is key.

"Lottie is very long and very accurate and carries her drive 260 yards, which puts her right up there with Nelly Korda," Bone says.

Korda, the world No 1, has returned to action saying she is fully fit after being bitten by a dog at a coffee shop in Seattle a fortnight ago. Hull is also fit, but Hull is struggling with a shoulder problem and will decide before her afternoon tee time whether she can play.

The Evian Championship, starts today. TV Sky Sports Mix, 11am

Whistlejacket to bounce back

Rob Wright Racing Editor

Whistlejacket was a little disappointing when fourth at Royal Ascot but conditions were against him there and he can bounce back to form in the Kingdom of Bahrain Jockey Stakes (2.25) at Newmarket today.

He was a red-hot favourite there but the combination of five furlongs on fast ground did not prove a sufficient test as he was a staying-on fourth to Shareholder. This extra furlong and softer surface should see him in a much better light and he can get back on track.

Space Legend will also appreciate a step up in trip in the Bahrain Trophy (1.50), while the Bet Boost at Bet365 Handicap (3.00) can go to Sergeant Wilko. He looked to have something up his sleeve when winning at Leicester last time and this tough front runner can defy a 3lb rise in the weights.

Newmarket Rob Wright

1.50 Space Legend	4.10 Miss Fascinator
2.25 Whistlejacket (nap)	4.45 Lead Artist
3.00 Sergeant Wilko	5.20 Fifty Nifty
3.55 Gavielotto	

Going: soft, good to soft in places
Draw: no advantage

Racing TV

1.50 Bahrain Trophy Stakes (Group III: 3-Y-O; £13,420; 1m 5f) (5 runners) ITV

1 (5) 211-20 ANCHUT WISDOM 40 (C) R Appleby 9-3	W Buick	115
2 (7) 02-12 KINESILOFT 39 (S) Harrington (Ire) 9-3	Doubtfire	103
3 (6) 3-210 PORTLAND 21 A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-3	R L Moore	104
4 (1) 41-2323 ROYAL SUPREMACY 20 A Balding 9-3	O Murphy	99
5 (3) 2-122 SPACE LEGEND 20 W Haggas 9-3	James Doyle	109

11-10 Ancient Wisdom, 2-1 Space Legend, 6-1 Royal Supremacy, 13-2 Portland.
Rob Wright's choice: Space Legend was a one-paced second to Caladegan at Royal Ascot; this stiffer test will suit Danger Ancient Wisdom

2.25 Kingdom Of Bahrain Jockey Stakes (Group II: 2-Y-O; £56,710; 6f) (6) ITV

1 (6) 11-11 AINVT NOBODY 22 R Ryan 9-2	T Eaves	98
2 (5) 1-1 AOMORI CITY 28 (D) R Appleby 9-2	W Buick	86
3 (2) 31 BILLBOARD STAR 14 (D) E Houghton 9-2	C Bishop	90
4 (2) 12 ELECTROLYTE 23 (D) D Watson 9-2	James Doyle	89
5 (5) 1-1 RAJKEO 38 (D) M Hall 9-2	O Murphy	85
6 (1) 214 WHISTLEJACKET 21 (BF) A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-2	R L Moore	104

13-4 Whistlejacket, 9-4 Electrolyte, 4-1 Akin'Alr, 8-1 Aomori City, 12-1 Rajkeo, 20-1 Billboard Star.
Wright choice: Whistlejacket was impressive in a listed race on soft ground at the Curragh; conditions here are back in his favour Danger Ain't Nobody

3.00 Bet Boost At bet365 Handicap (3-Y-O; £51,540; 6f) (16) ITV

1 (4) 3-5440 MILITARY 20 (B,D,A) P O'Brien (Ire) 9-9	R L Moore	109
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11-1 Individualism, 7-4 Natalura, 7-1 Bustam, 8-1 others.

Carlisle Rob Wright

2.10 Individualism	3.55 Who Wants Me
2.10 Edgewater Drive	2.28 Bustam
3.20 Cypriot Diaspora	5.03 What Times Tea

Going: soft, good to firm in places
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best

Racing TV

2.10 Handicap (E4,187; 1m 3f) (5) 2

1 (2) 1-400 ROLL IT IN GUTTER 21 M D Esterly 4-10-2	J Mason	92
2 (6) 20038 BUSTAM 31 (B) D O'Meara 4-10-1	D Nolan	92
3 (1) 4-400 MIAMI KING 18 (D) K Kellett 5-10-0	L Morris	3
4 (1) 3200- HAWORTH STAR 20 R Fahey 4-9-12	C Murtagh	4
5 (1) 0-6-01 RAINNIVILLE 5 (P) Mice A Duffield 6-9-12	Whitfield	4

11-5 Individualism, 7-4 Natalura, 7-1 Bustam, 8-1 others.

2.45 Handicap (E3,402; 6f) (13) 2

1 (4) 001010 B ASSOCIATES 15 (C) J Jardine 4-10-0	A Muller	9
2 (2) 2-144 WHITUMBRELLA 21 (C) K Kellett 5-10-0	L Morris	3
3 (1) 3200- HAWORTH STAR 20 R Fahey 4-9-12	C Murtagh	4
4 (1) 0-6-01 RAINNIVILLE 5 (P) Mice A Duffield 6-9-12	Whitfield	4
5 (1) 06400 BRAVEHEART BOY 31 (D) T Easterly 4-9-11	Fentiman	6
6 (1) 0-6-02 HOUR BY HOUR 24 (C) J Jardine 4-9-10	M Tatti	5
7 (1) 0-2-20 KRISTAL KLEAR 44 Mrs Stella Barday 4-8-9	J Fanning	10
8 (1) 4362 JESMOND DOWN 7 (BF, D) Tuser 3-9-7	H Shaw	9
9 (1) 2026 BENNY'S SON 11 (C) E Bethell 3-9-7	C Rodriguez	9
10 (5) 4-000 SIDNEY'S SON 11 (C) M Tindler 4-9-7	R Scott	10
11 (8) 0-1-11 EDGEWATER DRIVE 24 (C,D) M D Esterly 4-9-7	Muir	3
12 (3) 0-1425 KING OF THE JUNGLE 24 (B) W Storey 4-9-4	I Chadley	7
13 (6) 61320 PINPOINT 25 Ewan Williams 3-9-4	D Nolan	5

5-1 Jesmond Dawn, 6-1 Rainniville, Edgewater Drive, 7-1 others.

3.20 Handicap (E8,374; 6f) (9) 2

1 (7) 0-234 ORIGINALTRAIL 19 (D) H Haslam 5-10-2	P Mulrennan	9
2 (7) 4-024 EMILY POST 43 (H,C,D) M Dods 5-9-12	C Rodriguez	4
3 (6) 0-2-01 SIV MY EYE 33 (D) W Haggas 5-9-9	D Nolan	2
4 (1) 0-1111 RUN THIS WAY 21 (D) P Midgley 4-9-7	D Nolan	2
5 (1) 0-0323 CYPRIOT DIASPORA 27 (P) R Fahey 3-9-6	Joanna Mason	9
6 (1) 4-5101 IRIS DANCER 43 (D) T Davidson 6-9-6	B Sanderson	3
7 (8) 23221 MOST DREAMS 24 (C) Jardine 3-9-4	A Muller	9
8 (1) 5-302 BYZANTINE EMPRESS 19 Kevin Coleman (Ire) 3-9-1	P J McDonald	10

10-3 Run This Way, 5-1 Mostar Dreams, Cypriot Diaspora, 6-1 others.

3.55 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O; £3,726; 7f) (6) 2

1 (5) 50 APULIA 15 D Loughane 9-2	T Greetax	2
2 (6) LADY CHARTWELL C Johnston 9-2	J Fanning	1
3 (4) MISS RAINCLOUD Waggott 9-2	R Scott	4
4 (1) SERVING WITH STYLE R Burke 9-2	C Lee	2
5 (2) 53 WATBATH 20 A Watson 9-2	L Morris	6
6 (5) 3 WHO WANTS ME 21 Jardine 9-2	A Muller	9

7-4 Serving With Style, 2-1 Watbath, 7-2 Lady Chartwell, 8-1 others.

4.28 Handicap (E4,187; 7f) (8) 2

1 (7) 02-25 GUNDORG 19 E Bethell 3-9-9	C Rodriguez	9
2 (4) 5-46 BEALE STREET 33 B Smart 3-9-8	A Breslin	3
3 (5) 5-543 LADY FLORA 15 A Balding 3-9-6	P J McDonald	10
4 (1) 6-553 BATELAND 2 (BF) G Tutty 3-9-3	R Scott	5
5 (2) 4-2024 MAJESTIC NEWLAW 41 (C) J Jardine 4-9-3	A Muller	9
6 (4) 5-109 WARR MEMORIAL 19 M Dods 3-9-2	P Mulrennan	9
7 (3) 4-546 BEECHWOOD STAR 17 (BF) R Fahey 3-9-1	C Lee	2
8 (6) 00-10 LUMENBURG 25 (V) J Camacho 3-9-1	J Fanning	10

7-2 Lady Flora, 4-1 Gundorg, 5-1 War Memorial, Bateam, 6-1 others.

Yesterday's racing results

Catterick

Going: soft
2.50 (7f 6yd) 1, Miss Willows (Ben Sanderson), 9-10; 2, Crocodile Power (18-1); 3, Obsee Jo (13-2), 12 ran, 11/4, S Whitaker.
3.20 (5f) 1, J Street (S A Gray, 5-2 fav), 2, Lunar Force (6-1); 3, Atherton Beau (33-1), 8 ran. NR: Desdemona, Havana Pink, Tippy Top, 1/4.
Craig Lidster.
4.20 (1m), 1, Wondrous Ways (Cam Hardie, 11-2); 2, St Goddess (9-2); 3, Unthinkable (4-1), 6 ran. NR: Roysdelight, 1/4, 1/4, Ollie Pears.
4.20 (1m 7f 189yd), 1, Achnamara (Aiden Brooks, 12-1); 2, Lord Torrancia (5-2 fav); 3, Sam Sarghetti (11-2), 12 ran. NR: Carlton, 1/4, 1/4.
5.50 (1m), 1, Wondrous Ways (Cam Hardie, 11-2); 2, St Goddess (9-2); 3, Unthinkable (4-1), 6 ran. NR: Roysdelight, 1/4, 1/4, Ollie Pears.
4.55 (7f 6yd), 1, Zalnab (O J Orr, 10-3); 2, Puel-la (16-5 fav); 3, Heartwarmer (7-2), 7 ran. NR: Ingleby Ivy, Never Fear, Hd, 1/4, C Felloes.
5.30 (7f 6yd), 1, Sir Garfield Jason Hart, 15-2; 2, Profiteer (6-4 fav); 3, Last Appliance (15-2), 8

2 (10) 11-114 WOODHAY WONDER 20 (C,D) T Ward 9-8	T Marquand	98
3 (16) 22-436 DARK VINTAGE 20 (D) R Fahey 9-4	Oslin Orr	98
4 (15) 1-0160 BRAVE EMPIRE 20 (D) R Varian 9-3	D Tudhope	98
5 (11) 13410- ZABRISKIE POINT 287 C Hills 9-2	Billy Loughane	94
6 (6) 5214-6 TROPICAL ISLAND 26 (D) R Fahey 9-0	B Garrity	91
7 (3) 122-20 TWO TRIBES 20 (B) P Spencer 9-0	H Doyle	91
8 (13) 5-110 DORNEY LAKE 20 (T,B) J & T Gosden 8-13	W Buick	90
9 (7) 11-63 ELMONJED 26 (P,B,D) W Haggas 8-12	J Crowley	99
10 (14) 0-154 ARAMRAM 24 (D) R Hannan 8-11	Alec Volkhansky (C)	80
11 (5) 02-040 THUNDER BLUE 20 (D) J Osborne 8-11	S Osborne	78
12 (9) 45-141 SERGEANT WILKO 45 (D) K Ryan 8-10	O Murphy	87
13 (12) 13-550 MOWBART 17 (D) R Varian 8-9	S De Sousa	95
14 (2) 2113-9 PALMAR BAY 26 (D) R Bockett 8-8	E Greetox	84
15 (9) 2-12335 IMPERIAL GUARD 26 (D) A Balding 8-6	H Turner	79
16 (1) 22950 ROYAL EMPEROR 19 (P,D) J Ryan 8-2	Morgan Cole (S)	74

9-2 Elmonjed, 5-1 Woodhay Wonder, 6-1 Tropical Island, 8-1 Imperial Guard, 10-1 Military, Sergeant Wilko, Dorney Lake, 12-1 Dark Vintage, Two Tribes.
Wright choice: Sergeant Wilko was in good style at Leicester; he loves soft ground and can defy a 3lb rise in the weights Dangers Dorney Lake, Zabriskie Point

3.35 Princess Of Wales's Stakes (E70,888; 1m 4f) (6) ITV

1 (5) 53-351 GAVIELOTTO 55 (C) M Botti 5-9-11	O Murphy	116
2 (2) 52-100 OXFORD (D) A Watson 9-9-11	H Doyle	108
3 (4) 511-022 ARREST 63 (D) J & T Gosden 4-9-8	K Shoemark	111
4 (6) 112-12 HARMIS 7 (D) W Haggas 8-8-8	T Marquand	118
5 (1) 1-1340 MAXI KINGS 23 (D) Raphael Freire 4-9-8	David Egan	98
6 (8) 110-25 TIME LOCK 41 (D) Harry Charlton 5-9-5	R L Moore	114

4-5 Harmis, 3-1 Arrest, 5-1 Gavielotta, 11-2 Time Lock, 16-1 Outbox, 25-1 Maxi King.
Wright choice: Gavielotto produced a career-best effort in the Yorkshire Cup; he easily won on his only previous start at this track Danger Hamish

4.10 British Stallion Studs EBF Maiden Fillies' Stakes (2-Y-O; £20,616; 6f) (9) 2

1 (3) ADOON VALLEY A Goughley 9-2	Billy Loughane	-
2 (6) DREAM VOYAGE (H) M Palmer 9-2	O Murphy	-
3 (2) 0 HOT LIKE ME R Spencer 9-2	H Doyle	35

4-1 Air Force Indi, 7-2 Flowstate, 9-2 Istanbulie, 5-1 Tourist, 10-1 others.

4.55 Handicap (E6,653; 7f) (11) 2

1 (11) 4051 SNAZZY JAZZY 25 (C) S Spencer 9-9-12	Dale Swift	2
2 (8) 4004 GREAT MAX 12 (D) R Fahey 5-9-11	Mark Winn	3
3 (2) 24060 WILD PELL 3 (C,D) R Fell & S Murray 4-9-10	J Fegan	4
4 (9) 02332 MUSICAL MYSTERY 11 (D) Mearns 4-9-9	C Sheehy	4
5 (4) 5005 CARIBLLO 25 (D) R Carr 4-9-8	J Hart	6
6 (5) 1351 OUTRIN THE STORM 27 (D) R Fahey 4-9-8	J Gerritty	7
7 (9) 3160 TERAABB 26 (D) C Fellows 4-9-7	H Crouch	8
8 (7) 01432 CHARENCEY 5 (D) J Williams 3-9-6	Josephine Hogan	9
9 (6) 2116 50 LOGICAL 36 (BF, D) J & T Gosden 3-9-5	R Hawlin	10
10 (3) 1150 INNER TEMPLE 36 (P,D) A Watson 3-9-5	C Beasley	10
11 (10) 4020 GET THE MUSIC ON 20 (D) C Cox 3-9-4	R Kingscote	9

9-2 Outrout The Storm, 5-1 Charencey, Snaazy Jazzy, 6-1 Societal, 7-1 others.

5.30 Handicap (G 3-Y-O; £4,397; 1m) (8) 2

1 (5) 2495- RUN FOR THE SUN 25-5 Durlan 9-11	C Sheehy	2
2 (2) 00-00 ONTHERONEYHONEY 16 (C) Cox 9-11	R Kingscote	2
3 (7) 40222 DELICIOUS 17 (D) R Hannan 9-9	J Hart	4
4 (1) 01532 CHATTY 19 (BF) T Easterly 9-7	D Allan	4
5 (8) 0-0-1 NEW STATESMAN 166 E Walker 9-6	H Crouch	6
6 (3) 006 ESCAPE ACT 17 D M Simcock 9-5	C Planas (C)	2
7 (6) 4000 MOHAVE DANCER 19 (C) C Fellows 9-4	C Beasley	8
8 (4) 1405 KORROOK 14 J Camacho 9-2	Doubtfire	8

13-8 Chatty, 3-1 Delicacy, 6-1 New Statesman, 7-1 Escape Act, 8-1 others.

6.00 Handicap (E5,234; 6f) (13) 2

1 (11) 00000 ZAMAN JEMH 19 (V) J & S Quinn 4-10-4	J Hart	2
2 (9) 4060 SPARKLING RED 17 M Dods 4-10-3	C Beasley	2
3 (13) 05311 HURT YOU NEVER (D) Aidan Nichols, 5-10-20 Nichols (S)	J Hart	2
4 (12) 00304 JOJO RABBIT 17 (P) R Carr 4-10-2	JP Sullivan	2
5 (10) 62005 DELAGATE THIS LORO 13 (D) R Fell & S Murray 10-10-10	JR Dawson	6
6 (10) 62005 RAMBUSO CREEK 31 (P) K Ryan 5-10-2	S Gray	7
7 (5) 3442 PALMS BATTALION 29 D O'Meara 3-9-12	Mark Winn (C)	2
8 (9) 4205 COURT VUBY 26 (D) M D Esterly 3-9-10	S James	5
9 (7) 42320 SHOWALONGS 29 (D) T Easterly 6-9-8	D Allan	9
10 (3) 02340 PHOENIX STAR 13 (P) D Jessica Mearns 6-9-7	T James (S)	5
11 (2) 01-05 FRANK THE SPARK 26 (D) Midgeley 4-9-4	B Robinson	5
12 (6) 2010- SPEAR FIR 39-5 Whitaker 3-9-2	P Dennis	13
13 (1) 4040 JESSE LUK 40 (P) M Murphy & M Keady 4-8-12	C Sheehy	8

7-2 Hurt You Never, 4-1 Frank The Spark, 5-1 Pals Battalion, 8-1 others.

Epsom Rob Wright

6.05 Allonsy	7.50 Conquest Of Power
6.40 Balayage	8.25 Chips And Rice
7.15 Fahrenheit Seven	9.00 Charles Morin

Going: soft Draw: no advantage Racing TV

6.05 Handicap (3-Y-O; £4,449; 1m 4f) (5) 2

1 (4) 3-165 VOLTO DI MEDUSA 27 R Guest 9-10	P Cosgrave	2
2 (2) 2-331 ALLONSY 12 (P) R Bockett 9-9	R Cuttuback	2
3 (5) 4-042 SECRET BEACH 14 (T) B Brookhouse 9-8	J Gilligan	3
4 (1) 4-040 TURNING POINT Jack Jones 9-4	Dylan Hogan	3
5 (1) 4-020 SHOW ME A HERO 37 (V) (P) Bal 9-4	K Stott	3

6-4 Allonsy, 5-2 Secret Beach, 6-1 Show Me A Hero, Turning, 13-2 others.

6.40 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O; £5,400; 7f) (7) 2

1 (5) 2 BALAYAGE 12 C Johnston 9-2	P Cosgrave	2
2 (4) 50 BOLL DOLLY 19 (B) Miss A Murphy 9-2	R Cuttuback	8
3 (2) 4 ENCHANTED WAY 19 A Watson 9-2	Laura Coughlan (S)	8
4 (7) LADY JUSTICE 5 C Williams 9-2	D Muscitt	8

11-8 fav), 2, Tambourine Dream (5-1), 3, Solo Solataire (33-1), 8 ran. NR: Never Mind Me, Theworldisnotenough, 3/4, Hd W Knight.
6.40 (1m) 1, Salama (BF) 2-1 fav), 2, Palazzo Persico (6-1), 3, Imola (11-2), 8 ran. NR: Garden View, Nasneen, Hd, 2/4, D C Kubler.
7.10 (1m) 1, Top Of The Class (Saffie Osborne, 8-1); 2, San Francisco Bay (8-1), 3, Covert Mission (6-1), 9 ran. NR: Distinction, 1/4, nk, D M Loughane.
7.40 (1m), 1, Kynsa (Benoi D L Sayette, 4-5 fav), 2, Got No Dollars (11-3), 3, Lord P (20-1), 7 ran. NR: Chindwin, Marayel, Sh, Hd, K P De Foy.
8.10 (1m), 1, Top Of The Class (Saffie Osborne, 8-1); 2, Ant Colony (13-2), 3, Juniper's Dream (11-1), 8 ran. NR: Kilpatrick, Prince, La Mer, Gerise, Rage Of Thunder, 2/4, 1/4, G Brounce.
8.30 (6f), 1, Forever My Prince (Charles Bishop, 15-8 fav), 2, Theoretically (14-1), 3, Big Bug (16-1), 7 ran, 1/4, Eevee Johnson Houghton.
9.00 (4f 217yd), 1, Mow Loven (Paddy Bradley, 7-1); 2, Nazron (13-2 fav), 3, Kiss And Run (9-4), 5 ran, 1/4, 1/4, S Dew.
9.10 (4f 217yd), 1, Mow Loven (Paddy Bradley, 7-1); 2, Nazron (13-2 fav), 3, Kiss And Run (9-4), 5 ran, 1/4, 1/4, S Dew.
9.10 (4f 217yd), 1, Mow Loven (Paddy Bradley, 7-1); 2, Nazron (13-2 fav), 3, Kiss And Run (9-4), 5 ran, 1/4, 1/4, S Dew.
9.10 (4f 217yd), 1, Mow Loven (Paddy Bradley, 7-1); 2, Nazron (13-2 fav), 3, Kiss And Run (9-4), 5 ran, 1/4, 1/4, S Dew.

4 (8) 30 MAGIC MILD 55 C Cox 9-2	Rossa Ryan	472
5 (4) 2 MISS FASCINATOR 13 R Varian 9-2	James Doyle	71
6 (9) 5 MYSTICAL QUEEN 20 Darvill Holland 9-2	H Turner	63
7 (7) PEARL OF WINDSOR C Allen 9-2	D Keenan	-
8 (1) 4 SEA EMILY RUN 27 Tom Clover 9-2	J Mitchell	70
9 (5) 5 VALENTIA ISLAND 13 C Appleby 9-0	W Buick	67

11-4 Miss Fascinator, 3-1 Valentia Island, 5-1 Magic Mild, 6-1 Sea Emily Run, 13-2 others.

Wright choice: Miss Fascinator shaped with plenty of promise when second on her debut over this course and distance Dangers Sea Emily Run, Valentia Island

4.45 Edmondson Hall Solicitors Sir Henry Cecil Stakes (Listed; 3-Y-O; £31,190; 1m) (6) 2

1 (6) 212-00 AL MUSAQM 21 (D) R Varian 9-5	S De Sousa	105
2 (2) 21-32 BOLD STYLE 69 (D) C Appleby 9-5	W Buick	105
3 (4) 21 LEAD ARTIST 95 (D) J & T Gosden 9-5	K Shoemark	96
4 (3) 16-023 NATIVE AMERICAN 19 R Fahey 9-5	James Doyle	106
5 (1) 11 SCALITALE 40 C Hills 9-5	T Marquand	94
6 (5) 112-25 KITTY ROSE 20 (BF) Mick Jr 9-0	O Murphy	104

15-8 Lead Artist, 5-2 Kitty Rose, 6-1 Bold Style, 13-2 Scalitale, 7-1 Al Musqm, 10-1 Native American.
Wright choice: Lead Artist looked a really good prospect when opening his account at York last time

Sport Rugby union

Helicopters, Ironman and royals

Will Kelleher takes to skies with All Blacks legend in exclusive interview



If you are a helicopter pilot in New Zealand, you become accustomed to waiting for the skies to clear. It is Wednesday morning in Christchurch, a bracing winter's day with patchy, low clouds hanging over a changing city. Tuesday was wilder, with a whippy wind, and our captain advised us that the ride would not have been very pleasant, so we have returned to Christchurch Helicopters' headquarters 24 hours later to have another crack.

Prospects look slim at 9.30am, so the pilot suggests we "sit around for a wee bit and chew the fat until the fog lifts". Luckily for me and Joe, the photographer, our host has plenty to talk about.

Richie McCaw may have lost a lot of weight since he retired as a rugby great in 2015 — going out spectacularly on his shield at Twickenham as a double World Cup-winning captain of New Zealand — yet he is instantly recognisable.

As our taxi driver drops us outside his office, McCaw strides past and happily accepts a request for a selfie from the cabbie, who has suddenly stopped talking about all the tricks he "got away with" as a flanker.

McCaw's short hair still sprouts and spikes upwards, scar-tissue crinkles around his eyes as he smiles and his nose bends a little to the right; that is what you get after a life in rugby's breakdown. Yet the rest of him works a treat. Nine years of retirement have been kind to the 43-year-old, who fills his time with a collection of daring adventures that forced his rugby-playing weight to drop rapidly from 108kg (17st), before he bulked up a little. "You end up looking like you've got some sort of disease," he says, having settled at 100kg (15st 10lb).

Whizzing about the skies in his Airbus EC120 helicopter is about McCaw's most sedate activity these days. Replacing the buzz of playing has come easily to him.

"The thing I got sick of was the thing I missed," he says. "That anticipation, having to be on all week so you get it right, and to do it as a team. You don't miss getting beaten up. I had a good innings, and I was determined not to look back but forward to the next opportunity and to be grateful for what you've got. If you get that attitude right it makes it a bit easier."

McCaw's passion for aviation grew when he was taught to fly gliders by his grandfather Jim, who flew more than 300 missions in the Second World War. He gained a private helicopter licence, then passed his commercial licence exams by scoring 94 per cent — 5 per



cent better than his All Blacks win ratio — and learnt to fly helicopters while playing. "Just because you've got a licence it doesn't mean you charge off," he says. "As the former All Blacks captain, if you make a mistake you're guaranteed to be on the front page. I had to start from the bottom, as you can't do anything but [put in] the hours and time."

McCaw worked full time at Christchurch Helicopters between 2016 and 2019, until the pandemic, and now balances that work with other projects. He was never going to hang up his boots, kick back and expand his waistline at after-dinner events. McCaw's colleagues — when he is out of earshot — reckon he is slightly obsessed with exercise, and possibly pain too.

Those traits led him to another passion. One of McCaw's friends tackles "adventure races" and multi-sport Ironman events. Idly, McCaw had once sounded keen to try one, so his mate secretly signed him up for a seven-day race across New Zealand. He told him the day after the All Blacks won the 2015 World Cup final 34-17 against Australia at

Twickenham, leaving McCaw no option but to keep training so he could complete the race in April 2016.

The race McCaw undertook, and completed in six days, is described as the "largest and most technically challenging expedition race in the world". It spans 550 kilometres across the Tasman region of New Zealand's South Island, and requires competitors to run, trek, climb, abseil, kayak and mountain bike across unforgiving terrain with everything they need to eat, sleep and survive on their backs.

The course is revealed only when athletes are on the start line, and you go until you finish — or drop out. Nothing like a quiet life.

"When you're not back until next week, it's quite intimidating; not knowing if you're good enough to get there," McCaw says. "When you get in dark spots, it feels like there's no way through. It's one of the things I enjoy the most; you look back when you have gone on and go, 'That's why I entered these events, to see whether you can handle it'."

"People didn't treat me any differently. They're tough people that got on with it, never gloated."

Of course, this being McCaw, he caught the bug, and now periodically competes — sometimes with his wife, Gemma, a Kiwi hockey Olympian — in shorter one or two-day triathlon-style events.

His most recent was a 243km coast-to-coast race from Kumara beach on New Zealand's west side, over the Southern Alps via the Goat Pass (1,070m elevation), down to the pier on New Brighton Beach in Christchurch.

"When you fly over there you go, 'This is pretty rugged,'" McCaw says, chuckling. "It's a beautiful run. I'm always hurting when I do it, but you've got to look



up and go. 'How lucky am I to be in a place like this?'"

He felt fortunate too last year, when he was invited to attend the coronation of King Charles at Westminster Abbey. McCaw was appointed the Order of New Zealand after his retirement. He had turned down a knighthood in 2011, having led the All Blacks to their home World Cup victory, but now is one of only 14 living New Zealanders to have ONZ after their name — the youngest by 31 years.

So there he was, waiting outside the abbey for the new King, with a tinge of impostor syndrome, suddenly realising he was with Victoria Cross winners, a civilian who was awarded the New Zealand Cross for helping survivors of the Christchurch mosque attacks of 2019, as well as knights, dames and lords. "They said: 'You'll be walking with the King's procession,'" McCaw says. "I thought: 'Aw, hell!' I didn't tell anyone back home, so when they saw me on TV, they went: 'What the ...?' as I walked in just before the King arrived."

Of course, back home, McCaw is worthy of this vaunted status. His record with the All Blacks was superb: 148 caps, 15 losses and two draws. More than that, he seemed to represent the best of New Zealanders, and their team: clever, often showing dollops of Kiwi ingenuity by pushing the boundaries of legality to steal ball

at rucks, talented, hard and humble. He does not cut the figure of a superstar, and does not want to. He likes that his fellow New Zealanders let him get on with being the Richie that flies helicopters.

"Things have quietened down these days," he says. "People want a selfie or an autograph, or to talk to you, but you wouldn't want it another way. Compared to fans in other sports in other countries, where people can't live normally, or can't leave their homes without being mobbed, we get on with it pretty normally. It's not as though the All Blacks are untouchable, they're seen as one of everyone. You can still be great at what you do, but do it with humility."

McCaw does not mention that he did those adventure races for charities, and plays down his role rescuing people and running supplies up to Kaikoura in his helicopter when a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck there in 2016. He felt compelled to help, having experienced first-hand the 6.3-magnitude earthquake that hit Christchurch in February 2011, and killed 185 people.

McCaw remembers eating lunch at a mall with his fellow All Black Kieran Read when it jolted through.

"There's no way you could sit on a seat; the violence was short but intense," he says. "I got back home, and you could see bits of water running and silt bubbling up, as the

city is built on a pretty swampy area. It was crazy."

After 45 minutes chatting the clouds have parted enough to hop into the helicopter, so McCaw can show me Christchurch's renovations from 1,000 feet above.

Once up and away, the city's recovery becomes clearer. Lancaster Park, the 38,000 capacity ground where McCaw won so many matches and titles with the Crusaders, has now been demolished, leaving a patch of green behind, but closer to town a new similar-sized stadium is nearing completion. It will open in November

The Ruck podcast

Listen to our special episode with Richie McCaw — and go online to watch our video of the flight...

Download this week's episode for free from iTunes

– McCaw's new life



**New Zealand
v England**

**Saturday, Eden Park
Kick-off: 8.05am
TV: Sky Sports Main
Event
Radio: BBC 5 Live**

2025, for concerts and sport. "It's going to have a roof, which in the middle of winter will be awesome," he says. "Out of the tragedies we've ended up with a pretty cool city."

McCaw points out his house in the suburbs, and Cathedral Square, where finally the gothic revival-style Anglican church, which has been barricaded and supported by metal rods since 2011, is being restored, at an eye-watering cost of £125million.

This is my first time in a helicopter, and I'm a nervous flyer, yet all feels calm with McCaw at the controls.

After 20 minutes we neatly pop down onto a rollable platform, so he can slide his machine back in the hangar.

McCaw is enjoying this England series, which moves to Auckland's Eden Park on Saturday. He lost to England only twice in 14 Tests — in 2012 at Twickenham and nine years earlier, 15-13 in Wellington, England's most recent win here, under the leadership of Martin Johnson.

"I always say about being a captain — someone who has a presence, and you can't put your finger on what it is, they command their space, influence people around them, that's what Martin Johnson had that night," McCaw says. It is clear that, all these years on, McCaw became that man himself — still commanding and influencing with his presence.

What a treat it was to wait for the clouds to clear with him.



McCaw, the third most-capped international player of all time, is as assured at the controls of a helicopter as he was as a distinguished All Blacks player, below left. Below, with Times writer Kelleher after a safe landing and, above, as part of the King's procession last year during the coronation at Westminster Abbey



'Super Saturdays' for every round of the Six Nations

Alex Lowe
Rugby Correspondent, Auckland

Six Nations bosses are working on plans to revamp the fixture schedule from 2026 and adopt a "Super Saturday" format for every round of the championship.

It would mean an end to Friday night fixtures and Sunday games, which have proven unpopular with supporters and some unions. France and Wales are the only countries capable of staging Friday night Test matches, which have been part of the men's championship since 2009. The RFU came under pressure from the Six Nations to stage Friday games but refused because of traffic and train issues. In this season's Six Nations, the seven highest audiences on UK television were for games played on Saturdays. The three matches with the lowest audiences all took place on Sundays.

England supporters who do not live close to Twickenham, in southwest London, regularly complain to the RFU over home Sunday fixtures. They also limit the number of travelling supporters, which has always been the bedrock of the championship. The Six Nations has staged a final round "Super Satur-

day" — all three fixtures on the same day, with staggered kick-offs — since 2004. The plan is to replicate that across the championship in an attempt to engage more supporters and create a more joined-up narrative, allowing the men's Six Nations to dominate the Saturday sporting schedule for five weekends out of six in February and March.

The fixtures have already been set for next season, with France to host Wales in the opening game in Paris on Friday, January 31. The format could come into force in 2026, when the Six Nations will lose one of its two fallow weeks to create room in the calendar for the new 12-team Nations Championship.

Meanwhile, the British & Irish Lions now have two fixtures to replace in their nine-game tour to Australia in 2025 after it emerged the match against a combined Australia and New Zealand XV in Adelaide on July 12 cannot go ahead. This follows the loss of the match with Melbourne Rebels on July 22.

Hamish McLennan, the recently ousted chairman of Rugby Australia, had announced the fixture without any sign-off from the New Zealand Rugby Union, which expects its top 90 players to be involved in representative teams.

Lonely walks in New York helped McIlroy ease Pinehurst pain

Golf
Tom Kershaw

There is no better place to feel invisible than New York. In the days after Rory McIlroy's painful collapse at the US Open, he strolled along the High Line, a 1.45-mile converted railroad that overlooks the west side of Manhattan, alone with his thoughts and demons as the putts that derailed him at Pinehurst played over in his mind.

"It was nice to sort of blend in with the city a little bit. A few people did [recognise me] but I had my AirPods in," McIlroy said.

It was a fitting motif for the Northern Irishman's career, a towering skyscraper of the golfing world and yet so acutely familiar with the sensation of a plummeting free fall, like the title sequence of *Mad Men*, a man lost chasing a dream sold time and again over the past decade.

After McIlroy's hasty exit from Pinehurst and three weeks of respite from competition, this was his first time publicly reflecting on perhaps the harshest capitulation of all given the angst and heartache already accumulated in search of an end to his decade-long major drought.

"The way I've described it is it was a great day until it wasn't," McIlroy said here at the Renaissance Club before his defence of the Genesis Scottish Open in North Berwick. "I did things on Sunday that I haven't been able to do in the last couple of years. I took control of the tournament. I holed putts mostly when I needed to, I made birdies, I really got myself in there. And then, look, it was obviously unfortunate to miss those last two putts. It was a tough day. There were a tough few days after that."

The column inches dedicated to McIlroy's major agony have absorbed more ink than a James Joyce novel but it did not require any pseudoscience to dissect his downfall in North Carolina. The 35-year-old had played spectacularly and surged into a two-shot lead over Bryson DeChambeau after 14 holes when the scar tissue reared to the surface in the tightest of knots, and the putt McIlroy missed at the 16th from 2ft 6in — a distance he had not erred from in 496 previous attempts — betrayed the burden of pressure.

"I can vividly remember starting to feel a little uncomfortable waiting for my second putt on 16," he said.

"Patrick [Cantlay] was hitting his putt, and he can take his time. Obviously the greens are tough. It's the end of a Sunday at the US Open. You have to be really deliberate in what you're doing."

"I had to wait a while and the more you stand there, it's hard not to start thinking about the future. It wasn't a terrible putt but I definitely felt a little bit of uneasiness before I hit it." McIlroy's sloping, downhill

McIlroy in Scotland yesterday defended his caddie and friend Diamond, inset

putt on the 18th was from only 3ft 9in but was far more treacherous, and he conceded the prospect of his ball racing past the hole and resulting in a double bogey prompted a tentative effort.

Those two errors — and DeChambeau's sublime 55-yard bunker shot on the last hole — will for ever lead highlight reels but it was McIlroy's tee shot at the 15th, which sailed fatally over the back of a penal green, that instigated his collapse.

Tiger Woods's former coach Hank Haney and PGA Tour player-turned-analyst Smylie Kaufman were among those to criticise McIlroy's caddie, Harry Diamond, in the aftermath, while Sir Nick Faldo was dismayed on Sky Sport's live broadcast but the

world No2 defended his childhood friend. "[The criticism] is certainly unfair," McIlroy said.

"Hank Haney has never been in that position. Smylie has been in that position once, and I love Smylie, and he was out there with us on 18, but just because Harry is not as vocal or as loud with his words as other caddies, it doesn't mean that he doesn't say or do anything."

"These guys that criticise him when things don't go my way, they never say anything good when things do. Where were they when I won in Dubai this year or at Quail Hollow or the two FedEx Cups that I've won with Harry or the two Ryder Cups? 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."

"At the end of the day, they are not there. They are in the arena but they are not the ones hitting the shots and making the decisions. Someone said to me once, 'If you wouldn't take advice from these people, you would never take their criticisms, either.' I certainly wouldn't go to Hank Haney for advice. I think I know what I'm doing, and so does Harry."

McIlroy says he harbours "absolutely no [regrets]" about his abrupt departure after DeChambeau sunk his winning putt on the 18th — "There's nothing that I could have said" — and he weathered this post-mortem with optimism before his return to Royal Troon next week, where McIlroy finished tied-fifth in the 2016 Open Championship, but the ghost of Pinehurst still felt haunting, and might yet prove the hardest to shake.

"I look back on that day just like I look back on some of the toughest moments in my career and I'll learn a lot from it and hopefully put that to good use," he said. "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."

Genesis Scottish Open, today
TV Sky Sports Golf, 8.30am



Sport Wimbledon



Magician Musetti sets up semi-final against Djokovic

L Musetti (It, 25)	3	7	6	3	6
T Fritz (US, 13)	6	6	2	6	1

Elgan Alderman

Novak Djokovic and Lorenzo Musetti will contest a semi-final knees-up. The Serb with rapidly repaired cartilage is taking on the Italian with white tape under his patella.

A month ago, even 24 hours ago, that

would have been a bold forecast. Djokovic, 37, was not expected to be here at all. Musetti, 22, has looked good on grass but had never reached the quarter-final of a grand-slam event before this week. The No25 seed has gone one further, showing there is a place for craft, variety and spin in beating Taylor Fritz. Centre Court will love him (sorry, Novak).

At the French Open last month Djokovic and Musetti acted out a five-

set saga that ended at 3.07am. Djokovic suffered a torn meniscus in the next round, and after surgery he made it back on to a grand-slam court 29 days later.

Alex de Minaur's "devastating" withdrawal from a Wimbledon quarter-final, because of a hip injury in the final points of his fourth-round win, secured Djokovic's passage into the last four. In lieu of the (alleged) Centre Court boo, Djokovic was seen testing his knee in

the uphill car parks of southwest London, grimacing on occasion.

In his recovery Djokovic turned to Fritz, who had been there, rehabbed that. Three years ago Fritz left Roland Garros in a wheelchair, and left Wimbledon in the third round. "He is the first person I wrote to and he has been very generous in telling me what it was like for him," Djokovic said.

He has benefited from the same happenstance that hindered him in France. The meniscus tear occurred in a fourth-round win over Francisco Cerundolo, and he had to give Casper Ruud a quarter-final walkthrough. (A good thing, perhaps; the Parisian crowd were garulolous enough without cheering on a player whose surname is even nearer to "boo" than Holger Rune.)

Fritz, at 6ft 5in, is the man from central casting for prospective Wimbledon champion: a big-serving American, a geneflector at the meniscus of Pete Sampras. But an Italian, who seemed to be playing shots like he was on Mediterranean clay, or having a casual game of paddle? Musetti is also a purveyor of sport's most amusingly artistic act: the one-handed backhand. The removal of one appendage transforming tennis architecture from brutalist to baroque.

Musetti had knocked out Giovanni

Mpetshi Perricard, the 6ft 8in ace merchant, to reach the quarter-finals. To prolong his stay, he had to overcome the best server in the men's draw. At first, it seemed he could not do so. Fritz's idol was Sampras, the most recent American to have won the men's singles here, 24 years ago. He admired how Sampras would happily "tank" on return games once he had achieved a break, so confident was he in his serve. Fritz seemed destined to emulate that, easing to the first set, then breaking Musetti's serve immediately in the second.

Then Fritz hinted at the weakness that would overwhelm him for much of the match. Taken to a tie-break, Musetti unfurled some brilliant backhanded compliments, clipping the line and eliciting applause from Fritz even after he had challenged unsuccessfully.

Musetti's variation was a dazzling deviation from baseline smackdowns. He sliced and diced, bringing Fritz forward with wizardry. An overhead slice-smash was particularly striking, creeping over the net and almost stopping dead. Fritz was broken in two of his first three service games in the third set. "The second and the third set especially, it was really windy in there," he said. "It's favouring the person that wants to

Today's order of play

11am start unless stated
Seeds in brackets British players in blue

Centre Court (1.30pm) D Vekic (Cro) v (7) J Paolini (It); (3) B Krejickova (Cz) v (4) E Rybakina (Kaz)

No1 Court (1pm) (1) M Granollers (Sp) & H Zeballos (Arg) v (15) M Purcell & J Thompson (Aus); H Heliouvarra (Fin) & H Patten (GB) v (9) N Skupski (GB) & M Venus (NZ); S Gonzalez & G Olmos (Mex) v **M Willis & A Barnett** (GB); (1) A Hewett & G Reid (GB) v M de la Fuente (Sp) & J Gerard

No2 Court B Bryan & M Bryan (US) v M Baghdatis (Cyp) & X Malisse (Bel); M Gonzalez (Arg) & U Elkeri (Nor) v N Lammons (US) & E Shibahara (Japan); (7) J

Zielinski (Pol) & S Hsieh (Chinese Taipei) v **J Murray** (GB) & T Townsend (US); R Vinci (It) & J Zheng (China) v A Barty & C Dellacqua (Aus)

No3 Court A Petkovic (Ger) & M Rybarikova (Slovakia) v **J Konta** (GB) & C Vandeweghe (US); S Houdet (Fr) v (2) **A Hewett** (GB); A Kaplan (Tur) & D Wagner (US) v (2) **A Laphorne** (GB) & G Sasson (Isr); M Moreno (Arg) & M Ohtani (Japan) v (2) D de Groot & J Griffioen (Neth); M Woodforde (Aus) & D Cibulkova (Slovakia) v M Bahrami (Iri) v A Molik (Aus)

No4 Court (10.30) M Sohns (US) v **D Britton** (GB); **M Knight** (GB) v C Chacon (Ven); N Pickerd-Barua (GB) v L de Carvalho Damazio (Br); L Han (Aus) v **S Watson** (GB);

J Kovackova (Cz) v **D Britton** (GB); **M Knight** (GB) v S Zhang (China)

No5 Court (10.30) J Kovackova (Cz) v Z Doldan (Par); W Newman (US) v S Zhang (China); M Antonius (US) v T Kawaguchi (Japan); J Lee (US) v T Takizawa (Aus); M Sohns (US) v Z Doldan (Par); W Newman (US) v C Chacon (Ven)

No6 Court X Sun (China) v T Russell (Aus); K Berzina (Lat) v J Geng (Can); J Nagel-Heyer (Ger) v D Kim (S Kor); S Put (Neth) v D Luna (Arg); R Kotseva (US) v T Russell (Aus); K Berzina (Lat) v H Minhas (SA)

No7 Court R Jodar (Sp) v (4) T Berkiet (Pol); (1) K Bigun (US) v (13) A Omar Khanov (Kaz); (1) R Jamrichova (Slovakia) v S

Zhiyebayeva (Kaz); (3) K Bigun & J Leach (US) v I Derepasiko & A Omar Khanov (Kaz); H Olawudare & G Paskauskas (GB) v J Pastikova (Cz) & J Stusek (Ger); (3) R Jamrichova (Slovakia) & E Koike (Japan) v A Arystanbekova & S Zhiyebayeva (Kaz)

No8 Court R Kotseva (US) v **L Zingg** (GB); Y Hong (S Kor) v H Minhas (SA); **E Lorimer** (GB) v H Qi (China); R Ha Costa (Ind) v A Selvarasan (GB); X Sun (China) v **L Zingg** (GB); Y Hong (S Kor) v J Geng (Can)

No9 Court (10.30) F Thomas (Switz) v J Leach (US); **M Ceban** (GB) v (10) M Mrva (Cz); (16) I Ivanova (Bul) v (3) E Jones (Aus); D Sarkisian & T Zhang (China) v A De Marchi & D Ragnetta (It); (7) M Exsted & C Woestendick (US) v H Bernet & F Thomas

(Switz); (6) E Jones (Aus) & V Paganetti (It) v R Dencheva & E Yaneva (Bul)

No10 Court (10.30) (3) F Cina (It) v (16) E Papamalamis (Fr); (4) T Grant (US) v V Valdmannova (Cz); (5) I Jovic v (11) W Sonobe (Japan); (5) M Maksimovic (Serbia) & T Papamalamis (Fr) & J Kilmas & J Kumstat (Cz); (1) F Cina (It) & M Mrva (Cz) v A Timini (Cyp) & A Vasiliev (Bul); M El Allami (Mar) & E Sartz-Lunde (Nor) v winner of V Valdmannova (Cz) & S Zhenikhova (Ger) v M Stojavljivic & M Xu (GB)

No11 Court (10.30) H Bernet (Switz) v N Honda (Japan); M Stankiewicz (Pol) v H **Oluwadare** (GB); (10) J Vandromme (Bel) v **F Johnson** (GB); I Almazan Valiente (Sp) & G de Almeida (Br) v (6) N Budkov Kjaer

(Nor) & **V Frydrych** (GB); R Goto (Japan) & R Roura Llaveras (Sp) v J de Zeeuw & R Nijkamp (Neth); winner of I Ivanova (Bul) & W Sonobe (Japan) v V Barron (Br) & T Kotsovic (Serbia) v N Basiletti (It) & L Tagger (Aut)

No12 Court T Woodbridge & R Stubbs (Aus) v J Bjorkman (Swe) & **A Keothavong** (GB); T Haas (Ger) & M Philippoussis (Aus) v K Anderson (SA) & L Hewitt (Aus); C **Robertson** (GB) v M Rottgering (Neth); M Baghdatis (Cyp) & X Malisse (Bel) v J Blake (US) & B Soares (Br); (not before 5pm) N Zimonjic (Serbia) & B Schett (Aut) v J Bjorkman (Swe) & **A Keothavong** (GB)

No14 Court (3) J Griffioen (Neth) v Z Wang (China); (1) D de Groot (Neth) v D

I know real Novak – he deserves better

Matthew Syed



I'm often asked about the most memorable moment I've witnessed at Wimbledon. Roger Federer's backhand at match point down against Rafael Nadal in the fourth-set tie-break in 2008, Goran Ivanisevic on his knees praying for the final point that would hand him victory, Steffi Graf coming back against Jana Novotna? All wonderful.

But perhaps I may also mention what happened after Andy Murray's famous triumph in 2013 and, in particular, the post-match interview with Novak Djokovic, his opponent. Understandably the crowd had been against the Serb. When he won a point, there was something close to silence; when his opponent hit a winner, there was a roar of ecstasy. That can't have been easy for a 26-year-old playing away from home.

And yet there wasn't a hint of negativity or bitterness in Djokovic's outside interview, only a willingness to see the bigger picture of a nation celebrating its first male win for decades. "Congratulations to Andy," he said. "You absolutely deserve this win. You played incredible tennis. Congratulations to his team. I know how much it means to them, and how much it means to you guys, and the whole country. It was a pleasure to be a part of this final."

We often talk about the way sport teaches children how to win but there's a more important lesson: it teaches us how to lose. Djokovic's graciousness has been conspicuous pretty much since he arrived on the ATP Tour (if you doubt this, look at his magnanimity after defeat by Carlos Alcaraz last year or, indeed, any other loss over the past decade and a half). In this he is not alone, by the way: his two great rivals, Federer and Nadal, share this humane characteristic.

Rybakina playing with calmness of champion in waiting

Allyson Rudd, Elgan Alderman

Elena Rybakina stood, bathed in a rare burst of sunshine, after her quarter-final victory and beamed.

It was maybe as close as we have ever come to seeing a display of emotion on court from the Russian-born Kazakh, right, who famously had to defend the fact she did not whoop with joy after winning Wimbledon two years ago.

The 25-year-old lets her tennis whoop for her. She is



Djokovic took aim at the catcalling Wimbledon crowd after his victory over Rune

But something has always confused me about Djokovic. It is not just when he plays Murray at Wimbledon that the crowd is against him; it's not just in SW19; it's not just in grand-slam events. Wherever he goes, whatever he does, he meets a striking and at times vindictive one-sidedness. I have seen this up close many times: the catcalling, the booing, the personal insults, the deliberate shouting out during the ball toss, you name it.

I should perhaps say that I strongly disagreed with Djokovic's stance on vaccines (and said so at the time) but the antipathy predated any of this. It was there when he was the on-court joker, doing impressions of his fellow players, a young man desperate to be liked. It was there when he was world No 3, world No 2, world No 1, and again now he has lost the top spot. Today it has become almost a rite of passage in all his matches, like swallows at the start of spring.

There has been much debate about whether spectators in his fourth-round match were shouting "boo" or "Rune" (the name of his Danish opponent, Holger Rune) but this misses the point. In pretty much every match Djokovic plays he suffers not just from a crowd on the side of his opponent but a minority who seek to throw him off his stride and who seem to be shown way more latitude

than if they did this to someone else. If spectators tried to discomfite Federer, fellow audience members would turn on them. As Djokovic put it: "I've been on the tour for more than 20 years, so trust me, I know all the tricks. I know how it works."

I know many readers think the nastiness towards Djokovic is eminently justified, that he is a terrible person, that he is the bane of men's tennis. I'd merely point out that this singular champion rose from adversity (as a child, he lived through the bombing of Belgrade), trained diligently to rise to the top during the most formidable era in men's tennis, and has invariably treated practice partners, the press and support staff with respect and courtesy.

I have interviewed him many times, so perhaps have a perspective that reaches beyond the armchair critics who believe they can discern deep moral failings in someone they've never met. He is polite, curious, interested in the world, always punctual, never fails to answer questions and, on one occasion, when our chat overran by an hour in Monaco, jumped from the restaurant table and offered to organise a helicopter to take me to the airport and then put a piece of cake in a cardboard box so I could enjoy pudding on the way home. "I couldn't

let you miss this," he said with a wink. I'm not saying he is perfect but neither is Federer nor Nadal nor Serena Williams. Believe me.

Another moment that will always stay with me is the Wimbledon final against Federer in 2019: still the most pulsating day of sport (the 50-over cricket World Cup final between England and New Zealand was taking place at the same time). I'd say 99.9 per cent (or thereabouts) of the audience was against the Serb, perhaps even more so than during the 2013 final. Some say that Djokovic feeds off antipathy but this is nonsense. As with all human beings, he wants to be liked. Indeed it took him years to develop techniques to cope with social rejection — a point he's made to me many times.

At 8-7 to Federer in the fifth set, the Swiss served two aces to bring up championship points at 40-15. The crowd rose to its feet, iPhones at the ready. I doubt a single person believed Djokovic could come back — except Djokovic himself. If you ever get a moment, go to YouTube, watch back the sequence and you'll see Djokovic preternaturally calm, like Gandalf on the Bridge of Khazad-dum: eyes focused, lips whispering to himself, that granite mind still daring to hope. The forehand winner he hit at 40-30 was so beautiful it should be framed and hung at the National Gallery.

I make no apology for admiring Djokovic, for believing he is the most impressive sportsman of my lifetime, for glimpsing in his resilience something of the greatness of our species. I've come to recognise that he will probably never be forgiven for gatecrashing the duopoly of Federer and Nadal, never tolerated for playing with such ruthless efficiency, never accepted for continuing to win at the age of 37, after operations that might have felled others. But I do hope a critical mass of people will at least agree that the catcalling and personal insults should stop. He may not be your cup of tea but the journey from cramp-ridden pretender to tennis colossus has many of the ingredients Hollywood would recognise. From audiences, at SW19 and beyond, he surely deserves better.



Musetti showed there is a place for craft, variety and spin in the modern game as he overcame Fritz in five sets to set up a semi-final showdown with Djokovic

run and chip when it's a bit windy and working against the person that's trying to go big and pick out spots. He did what he was doing really well."

Frazzled as he was, Fritz demonstrated the steel that brought him here from two sets down against Alexander Zverev and took it to a decider, which was all Musetti. Another drop shot brought Fritz charging up to the net, stumbling awkwardly on his left leg. There was no need to retire because there was only one point left in the match anyway: an unreturned serve, and a 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 victory on No 1 Court.

An Azzurro has never won the singles at Wimbledon, nor an Azzurra. Italy's six titles are littered across hard courts and clay over the past 65 years. The nation's men did win the Davis Cup last year with Jannik Sinner as their leader and Musetti as a lieutenant. Sinner, the world No 1, was knocked out on Tuesday, unable to reach the final as Matteo Berrettini, his second-round opponent, once did. In his stead is Musetti, with Jasmine Paolini still standing, still laughing in the women's semi-finals.

Musetti has three tattoos: a heartbeat with a tennis racket; an anchor with "family"; and an Italian phrase that means "the best is yet to come". He is the man to put a positive spin on things.

tall, powerful and intelligent and can cover the court without really trying to. As the only former champion left in the draw and the highest-ranked player she would already be favourite, but there is a calm superiority to the No 4 seed's performances here, shown by yesterday's 6-3, 6-2 win over Elina Svitolina that would in any case mean it would be unwise to bet against her. Svitolina, the Ukrainian, looked underpowered and had every excuse to be

under par given how emotionally draining the week has been after Monday's attack on a children's hospital in Kyiv. She said she regretted not being able to win in front of Queen Camilla, who was in the Royal Box.

"The support that Ukraine has been getting from the United Kingdom has been really unbelievable," she said. "We couldn't thank enough for all the people, as well, that let a lot of Ukrainians share their homes with them."

Barbora Krejickova shrugged fatalistically when told Rybakina would be her opponent in the semi-final today. "OK," she said, "great."

Krejickova, the No 31 seed, overcame

a typically mercurial Jelena Ostapenko, who banished a coach from her corner. If it was an act of superstition, it briefly worked — until it didn't, and the Latvian lost 6-4, 7-6 (7-4).

Krejickova, 28, had suffered diminishing returns on her three previous appearances at Wimbledon, knocked out in the fourth, third and second round. She has twice won the doubles here, however, and was helped yesterday by the No 13 seed Ostapenko landing only 49 per cent of her first serves.

The unseeded Donna Vekic will face the Italian No 7 seed Jasmine Paolini in today's other semi-final. But Rybakina looks like the one to beat.

Mathewson (US); (1) T Oda (Japan) v J Gerard (Bel); (1) Y Kamiji (Japan) & K Montjane (SA) v D Mathewson (US) & M Tanaka (Japan); T Egberink & M Scheffers (Neth) v S Houdet (Fr) & T Sanada (Japan)

No15 Court X Li (China) v (4) A Van Koot (Neth); (4) M De La Puente (Sp) v D Caverzaschi (Sp); (not before 1:30pm) S Schroder (Neth) & (1) N Vink (Neth) v H Davidson & D Ramphadi (SA); L Guo & Z Wang (China) v L De Greef & A Van Koot (Neth)

No16 Court C Woestendick (US) [15] v N Budkov Kjaer (Nor) [2]; S Zhenikova (Ger) v R Dencheva (Bul); T Kostovic (Sri) [15] v L Samson (Cz) [2]; A Razeghi (US) & M

Schoenhaus (Ger) v N Honda (Japan) & N Trouve (Fr); A Kovackova (Cz) & L Samson (Cz) [1] v M Buchnik (Isr) & O Carneiro (Br); winner of **D Piani & H Smart (GB)** v Y Kotliar (Ukr) & M Stankiewicz (Pol) v T Grant (US) & I Jovic (US)

No17 Court (2) K Montjane (SA) v Y Kamiji (Japan); T Egberink (Neth) v G Fernandez (Arg); (not before 1:30pm) A Bernal (Col) & **L Shuker (GB)** v X Li & Z Zhu (China); **B Bartram (GB)** & D Caverzaschi (Sp) v A Claido (Chile) & G Fernandez (Arg); C Ratzlaff (US) & R Spaargaren (Neth) v T Miki (Japan) & T Oda (Japan)

No18 Court A Radwanska (Pol) & F Schiavone (It) v C Black (Zim) & S Stosur

(Aus); R Krajcic (Neth) & C Martinez (Sp) v M Bahrami (Irr) & A Molik (Aus); C Brady & L Hooper (GB) v R Jodar & A Santamarta Roig (Sp); B Bryan & M Bryan (US) v J Chardy (Fr) & F Lopez (Sp); (not before 5pm) T Woodbridge & R Stubbs (Aus) v T Enqvist (Swe) & M Navratilova (US)

To be arranged: (Not before 3pm) J Cabal (Col) & R Farrah (Col) v T Haas (Ger) & M Philippoussis (Aus); D Hantuchova (Svk) & L Robson (GB) v C Black (Zim) & S Stosur (Aus); (not before 4pm) J Degladio (GB) & S Grosjean (Fr) v K Anderson (RSA) & L Hewitt (Aus); **N Skupski (GB)** & D Krawczyk (US) v winner of **H Patten & O Nicholls (GB)** v M Venus (NZ) & E Routliffe (NZ); (Not before 5pm) **G Rusedski (GB)** & I Majoli (Cro) v R Krajcic (Neth) & C Martinez (Sp)

Yesterday's Wimbledon results

Seeds in brackets British players in blue

Men

Singles: Quarter-finals (2) N Djokovic (Serbia) wo (9) A de Minaur (Aus); (25) L Musetti (It) bt (13) T Fritz (US) 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, 3-6, 6-1.
Doubles: Quarter-finals (9) **N Skupski (GB)** & M Venus (NZ) bt H Jheng & C Frantzen (Ger) 7-6 (7-1), 7-6 (7-1); (1) M Grandollers (Sp) & H Zeballos (Arg) bt (8) T Pütz & K Krawietz (Ger) 6-4, 7-6 (7-3); **H Patten (GB)** & H Heliouvaara (Fin) bt (4) M Arevalo (Hon) & M Pavic (Cro) 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (10-7); (15) M Purcell & J Thompson (Aus) bt (11) A Molteni

& M Gonzalez (Arg) 6-4, 6-7 (8-10), 6-3.

Women

Singles: quarter-finals (4) E Rybakina (Kaz) bt (21) E Svitolina (Ukr) 6-3, 6-2; (31) B Krejickova (Cz) bt (13) J Ostapenko (Lat) 6-4, 7-6 (7-4).
Doubles: Quarter-finals (1) E Mertens (Bel) & S Hsieh (Chinese Taipei) bt (11) J Pegula & C Gauff (US) 6-2, 6-1; (7) C Dolehide & D Krawczyk (US) bt T Babos (Hun) & N Kichenok (Ukr) 1-6, 6-2, 6-0; (4) K Siniakova (Cz) & T Townsend (US) bt (9) L Kichenok (Ukr) & J Ostapenko (Lat) 6-1, 6-3; (2) G Dabrowski (Can) & E Routliffe (NZ) bt (8) B Krejickova (Cz)

& L Siegemund (Ger) 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 6-4.

Mixed doubles: round of 16 **Willis & A Barnett (GB)** bt K Volynets & R Ram (US) 2-6, 6-3, 11-9; E Shibahara (Japan) & M Lammons (US) bt A Sutjiadi (Pol) & J Withrow (US) 7-6 (7-5), 6-4; (7) J Zielinski (Pol) & S Hsieh (Chinese Taipei) bt **H Watson & J Salisbury (GB)** 7-6 (7-4), 6-4; (3) L Kichenok (Ukr) & M Pavic (Cro) wo U Eikeri (Nor) & M Gonzalez (Arg); **J Murray (GB)** & T Townsend (US) bt K Krawietz (Ger) & A Panova (Rus) 6-7 (3-7), 6-1, 10-5; (6) D Krawczyk (US) & **N Skupski (GB)** bt C Bucsa (Sp) & F Martin (Fr) 6-3, 6-3.

Sport Wimbledon

'I wish I didn't absorb all the hatred'

Eugenie Bouchard tells Stuart Fraser how fierce criticism of her off-court interests hurt her confidence and tennis

When a 20-year-old Eugenie Bouchard reached the Wimbledon final in 2014, she was hailed as the new star of women's tennis. A prosperous and lucrative career on and off the court was expected, with the business media company SportsPro including the Canadian on a top-20 list of sport's most marketable athletes alongside Cristiano Ronaldo, Usain Bolt and Alex Morgan.

Ten years later, Bouchard is ranked No524 in the world after playing only one third-tier tournament this season, at which a cheque of £1,400 was received for two wins. Instead of hitting tennis balls on the grass in preparation for Wimbledon, two weeks ago she was on the smaller hard courts of California for a Professional Pickleball Association (PPA) event.

While the racket sport of pickleball becomes increasingly popular across Europe, it is pickleball that is catching more attention in North America. Pickleball is played on a smaller, badminton-sized court with a hard paddle (the term for a racket) and a perforated plastic ball. The court lines are similar to tennis, although there is an area around the net called "The Kitchen" — a non-volley zone in which serves are also not allowed to land. Points can only be scored by the player/team who is serving and PPA tour matches use a best-of-three games format, with each game won by the player/team who first gets to 11 points with a lead of two.

This is not the position that Bouchard imagined she would find herself in after walking off Centre Court on July 5, 2014, as the runner-up to Petra Kvitová but it is hard to detect any disappointment as she reflects on her journey over the past decade. Indeed, as she speaks over a video call from the beachside city of San Clemente, I ponder whether I ever saw her looking as content as this on the tennis tour.

Some of her happiness is fuelled by improvements in her pickleball skills. A PPA staff member tells me that Bouchard has just beaten a "veteran of the game". Already Bouchard has come a long way



Bouchard reached the Wimbledon final in 2014 but the Canadian is often more known for her colourful social life, inset

since she started playing pickleball in February, when a blooper-style video was shared by a viewer on social media showing a series of poor errors.

"The first few times I played I'm literally missing the ball because I think I'm swinging a tennis racket," she explains. "The strategy is so different. Rewiring my brain like that has been the hardest part because I'm so instinctive when I play tennis. I have to think more when I play and it's not a natural instinct yet. I'm still working on that."

To be clear, Bouchard is an active tennis player who is not on the verge of retirement at the age of 30. A series of physical issues — most notably

surgery on a shoulder in 2021 — has caused challenges in playing a full-time schedule because of her rankings decline but she plans to return somewhere on the American hard courts at the start of the next month.

The transition to pickleball came about during her failed qualifying attempt at last year's US Open. Looking to build a higher profile with a big name from the world of tennis, the PPA approached Bouchard's agent with a tempting offer to play professional events. "It just seemed like a really unique opportunity and I love being a part of something that's growing so quickly," Bouchard says. "Also there is challenging myself."

"I've done tennis for 25 years and I find it stimulating to try something new. I'm going to put tennis tournaments in where I can fit them in my schedule. Tennis is what I love and what I still want to keep doing. The pickleball schedule is the priority but I do want to insert those tennis tournaments."

Bouchard still keeps a close eye on the various goings-on in the tennis

world, through a natural interest in the sport and a duty to the Tennis Channel as an occasional pundit throughout the year. Recently she took notice of a quote from the British No1 Jack Draper in which he said: "I quite enjoy being in front of the camera" during a photoshoot for Vogue Magazine. "If I had said this ten years ago I would have been crucified," Bouchard said on social media last month.

This was a lighthearted comment but there is a serious side to what she says. Bouchard received fierce criticism for the many sponsorship contracts she signed, photographs she posed for, and glitzy A-list events she attended at the height of her fame. While Emma Raducanu still comes under some scrutiny for her off-court interests, there is more of an acceptance that lucrative deals and red carpet appearances are part of the business for a high-profile tennis player.

"Back in the day, I could train six hours during the day before posting on social media about being at the movies

and I would get hate," Bouchard recalls. "It was like, well, social media isn't an exact representation of my day."

"It's great that the world has changed and now not only is it acceptable to do off-court things, it's encouraged. I felt like I was being shoved into a box, like you can't do anything besides tennis."

"I was like, tennis has given me opportunities to explore the fashion world, TV and all these other things. Why would I say no? We're talking about my life in its entirety here. I would get so much hate for doing anything other than tennis. It was a burden I would bear on my shoulders and it was really hard. At least it's more accepted now. Not that I was the only pioneer to do these things but I feel like I made it a little bit more normal."

After claiming a career-high world ranking of No5 ten years ago, Bouchard never again scaled those heights. 2014 was her best year by far, reaching the semi-finals of the Australian Open and French Open before falling one step short of the trophy at Wimbledon.

In 2015 she slipped on a cleaning substance on the floor of the trainer's room at the US Open before her fourth-round match and suffered a serious concussion that forced her to withdraw from the tournament. She did not play again that calendar year and in 2018 won an out-of-court settlement from the United States Tennis Association. But her great regret before her career slide is that she ended her eight-year partnership with her coach Nick Saviano at the end of the 2014 season.

"There's no blueprint on how to handle a huge life change like what I experienced in 2014," Bouchard says. "There's no way to prepare for that. Of course I look back and have small regrets. I would have not stopped working with my coach at the time. Looking back, I would have wanted to keep my coach for stability because I was already going through so much."

"Also, I wouldn't have taken things so personally and let the hate absorb into my brain. Brainwashing works and if you start hearing negative things about yourself, it's hard not to believe it. I just wish I could have clocked that out more and not let it affect my confidence because it totally did affect how I thought about myself. It even affected how I played."

It is five years ago this month that Bouchard was most recently ranked inside the top 100. She will not put a number on her target when she returns next month but is simply not ready to let go of the sport.

"I want to achieve whatever I can," Bouchard says. "I'm not doing a full-time tennis schedule, so there will be limitations. I want to do as well as I can and see where that goes. But I love tennis and it's not something I want to give up yet at all."

Scoreboards and results

Cricket

Vitality Blast: Sussex v Hampshire
 Hove (Hampshire Hawks won toss and elected to bowl): Sussex Sharks beat Hampshire Hawks by 22 runs

Sussex (balls) (runs)
 H D Ward c Vince b Fuller 39 (20)
 D P Hughes c McDermott b Wood 0 (4)
 T G R Clark c Weatherley b Fuller 37 (26)
 J M Coles c Howell b Dawson 46 (33)
 T P Alsop run out 35 (17)
 D J Lamb c Vince b Wheel 22 (13)
 N J McAndrew c Vince b Wheel 13 (7)
 J J Carson not out 1 (1)
 Extras (lb 3, w 2, nb 2) 7
Total (7 wks, 20 overs) 200
 †A J Simpson, O E Robinson and †S Mills did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-7, 2-43, 3-126, 4-140, 5-169, 6-198, 7-200.
Bowling Wood 4-0-32-1; Wheel 4-0-43-2; Turner 2-0-29-0; Fuller 3-0-20-2; Dawson 3-0-33-1; Howell 4-0-40-0.

Hampshire (balls) (runs)
 †J M Vince b Lamb 32 (22)
 †B R McDermott run out 0 (1)
 T J Prest c Clark b Coles 7 (5)
 J Weatherley c Alsop b Carson 34 (23)
 E A Albert b Coles 27 (15)
 B A C Howell run out 32 (17)
 J K Fuller c Lamb b Coles 1 (2)
 L A Dawson c McAndrew b Mills 5 (8)
 C P Wood run out 21 (14)
 B T J Wheel c Clark b Coles 1 (5)
 J A Turner not out 3 (6)
 Extras (lb 1, w 8, nb 6) 15
Total (19.1 overs) 178
Fall of wickets 1-1, 2-8, 3-67, 4-79, 5-129, 6-137, 7-144, 8-147, 9-150.
Bowling Robinson 4-0-30-0; Coles 4-0-34-4; Mills 4-0-33-1; McAndrew 2-1-0-26-0; Carson 2-0-17-1; Lamb 3-0-37-1.

Zimbabwe v India, third T20I
 Harare Sports Club (India won toss): India beat Zimbabwe by 23 runs

India (balls) (runs)
 Y B K Jaiswal c Bennett b Butt 36 (27)

***S Gill c Butt b Muzarabani 66 (49)**
 A Sharma c Marumani b Butt 10 (9)
 R D Gaikwad c Madhevere b Muzarabani 49 (28)
 †S V Samson not out 12 (7)
 R K Singh not out 1 (1)
 Extras (b 4, lb 1, w 2, nb 1) 8
Total (4 wks, 20 overs) 182
 S R Dube, W Sundar, R Bishnoi, A Khan and K K Ahmed did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-67, 2-81, 3-153, 4-177.
Bowling Bennett 1-0-15-0; Ngarava 4-0-39-0; Chatará 3-0-30-0; Muzarabani 4-0-25-2; Butt 4-0-24-2; Masakadza 3-0-25-0; Madhevere 1-0-19-0.

Zimbabwe (balls) (runs)
 W N Madhevere c Sharma b Khan 1 (2)
 T R Marumani c Dube b Ahmed 13 (10)
 B J Bennett c Bishnoi b Khan 4 (5)
 D N Myers not out 65 (49)
 †S R Butt c Singh b Sundar 15 (16)
 J M R Campbell c sub b Sundar 1 (2)
 †C Madande c Singh b Sundar 37 (26)
 W P Masakadza not out 18 (10)
 Extras (b 1, lb 2, w 2) 5

Total (6 wks, 20 overs) 159
 R Ngarava, T L Chatará and B Muzarabani did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-9, 2-19, 3-19, 4-37, 5-39, 6-116.
Bowling Ahmed 4-0-15-1; Khan 4-0-39-2; Bishnoi 4-0-37-0; Sundar 4-0-15-3; Sharma 2-0-23-0; Dube 2-0-27-0.

Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy
Northern Diamonds v Sunrisers
 Sunrisers 109 (Gardner 21; Langston 6-24); Northern Diamonds 111-6 (Armitage 33; Burns 35; Coppock 3-35); Northern Diamonds beat Sunrisers by four wickets.

Central Sparks v Lancashire Thunder
 Central Sparks 144 (Jones 38; Ellis 33; Morris 4-18; S Morris 3-31); Lancashire Thunder 147-2 (Lamb 71; Mack 52); Lancashire Thunder beat Central Sparks by eight wickets.

Western Storm v The Blaze
 Western Storm 217 (Wilson 67; Small 32; Luff 31; K Bryce 4-20); The Blaze 220-5 (S J Bryce

61; Claridge 43; Higham 62); The Blaze beat Western Storm by five wickets.

Southern Vipers v South East Stars
 South East Stars 120 (Davidson-Richards 35; Davies 4-14); Southern Vipers 121-3 (Knott 57; Adams 22); Southern Vipers beat South East Stars by seven wickets.

Cycling

Tour de France
Stage 11 (Évaux-les-Bains-Le Lioran, 211km) J Vingegaard (Den, Team Visma | Lease a Bike) 4hr 58min 0sec; 2. T Pogacar (Slovenia, UAE Team Emirates) same time; 3. R Evenepoel (Bel, Soudal Quick-Step) at 25sec; 4. P Roglic (Slovenia, Red Bull-BORA-hansgrohe) same time; 5. G Ciccone (Itl, Lidl-Trek) at 1min 47sec.

Overall leaders 1, Pogacar 45hr 0min 34sec; 2, Evenepoel at 1min 6sec; 3, Vingegaard at 1min 13sec; 4, Roglic at 2min 15sec; 5, Almeida at 4min 20sec.

Women's Giro d'Italia
Stage 4 (Imola-Urbino, 131km) 1, C Emond

(Can, EF-Oatly-Cannondale) 3hr 35min 45sec; 2, S Paladini (It, CANYON/SRAM Racing) at 17sec; 3, C U Ludwig (Den, FDJ-SUEZ) at 20sec; 4, E Chabbey (Switz, CANYON/SRAM Racing) at 26sec; 5, K Le Court (Mauritius, AG Insurance-Soudal Team) at 28sec.

Overall leaders 1, Longo Borghini 9hr 28min 53sec; 2, Kopecky at 13sec; 3, Ludwig at 38sec; 4, J Labous (Fr, Team DSM-Firmenich PostNL) at 49sec; 5, Le Court at 51sec;

Fixtures

Cricket

Vitality Blast North Derbyshire v Lancashire (7.0); Worcestershire v Leicestershire (5.30); York, Women v Durham (6.30). **Sussex** v Kent (7.0); Gloucestershire v Middlesex (5.0). **Third Women's T20I**, Canterbury England v New Zealand (6.30).

England v West Indies: First Rothesay Test **Sport**

CHRIS FOXWELL/PROSPORTS/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Callow, inept batting unit must adapt or this will be a long tour

Steve James



The cameras panned to the stands and a hospitality box, where the great Sir Vivian Richards was on his feet, clapping excitedly and animatedly. Alzarri Joseph had just hit Gus Atkinson over mid-off for a fourth boundary in the over, holding the pose as the ball disappeared up the slope towards the edge of the Lord's pavilion.

All too sadly, that from the No 8 Joseph was a rare act of defiance from the West Indian batsmen, and even then he soon succumbed in Atkinson's next over, skying to mid-on. It must

have pained Richards no end. There have been some quite brilliant West Indian batsmen to have graced this turf, with Richards himself averaging 71.60 from his four Tests here, including 145 on his first Test appearance in 1980, but no one of that sort of class was on show here.

For all the joy about Atkinson's seven wickets on debut for England, it was all rather depressing from a West Indies point of view, and indeed from a world cricket point of view. That the Test game needs a strong West Indies has long been a cliché, the standard lament since the legends of the past were mostly gone from the game at least a quarter of a century ago. A sensational victory in Brisbane in January provided some hope for the future but here a team as green as the lush Lord's outfield endured a dreadfully poor day.

There was some movement under

cloudy skies but this is a slow pitch offering plenty of runs, as England's batsmen demonstrated late in the day.

It had all begun so well for West Indies, with nine coming from James Anderson's emotional first over of the day, during which the debutant opener, Mikyle Louis, who played for Ben Stokes's club, Cockermouth, two years ago, had revealed himself as a player of some promise. The drive for four through mid-off in that opening over was mightily commanding.

But it was misleading. After a bright start from Louis, 23,

Louis is awarded his debut cap by Richards. Inset: Brathwaite is castled

the leading runscorer in West Indies' domestic first-class season for the Leeward Islands, and Kraigg Brathwaite, the experienced captain gifted Atkinson a maiden Test wicket with an indeterminate drive to a wide delivery — the ball crashing into his stumps rather than the cover boundary as intended.

It was a bad example for the veteran of 90 Tests to set — especially when the other four members of the top five had only nine caps between them going into this match.

That summed up the visiting side's approach, really. They seemed not to know whether to stick or twist. The temptation in England, with the ball darting



around, can be to focus on playing as tightly and as watchfully as possible but often a mindset like that can be too negative, meaning scoring opportunities are missed and a bunker is entered from which there is no escape.

That is what happened here. The innings just ground to a halt. From 34 for no loss in the 11th over, the West Indian score reached 44 for three by the 22nd. The No 3, the 23-year-old left-handed Kirk McKenzie, who made only one from 14 balls, probably typified the trouble in scoring most.

Yes, there was a decent partnership of 44 between Alick Athanaze, the 25-year-old left-hander in only his fifth Test, and Kavem Hodge, the 31-year-old right-hander in his third Test (a weird mixture of age and experience), but a tone of fearful passivity had been set by an inexperienced order of which too much was probably being asked.

This was accentuated by some quite superb catching from England. There had been some concerns about how the wicketkeeping of the debutant Jamie Smith might stand up to the usually capricious wobbling of the ball here at Lord's but he had an excellent first day, capped off by a wonderful catch off the inside edge of the dangerous Joshua Da Silva, whom Atkinson snared second ball during a madcap period when West Indies lost four wickets without adding a run.

A slip cordon and a new wicketkeeper normally take some time to adjust to each other's spacings and foibles but the evidence here was that that process had been undertaken swiftly and successfully. The sight of Anderson standing at leg slip when Atkinson was on a hat-trick was a poignant signal to the changing of the guard.

There was a stunning grab by Ollie Pope at short cover off a filthy short ball from Chris Woakes. The batsman Hodge, who had cut the ball with a mighty thump, was crestfallen but as many an old coach has averred over the years, hitting the ball in the air, however hard, carries a rather inherent risk.

Pope also took a well judged catch, running back at backward point after Shamar Joseph had attempted an ambitious sweep-cum-pull but only succeeded in top-edging, complete with a slipping back foot, off Atkinson. It looked horrible, as did the West Indian scorecard that read 121 all out by the end, well before tea.

It left Pope and Zak Crawley, who had also taken a good catch at second slip, to bat merrily in the mixture of evening sunshine and gloom, taking England past the West Indies total before being parted.

There was a crispness to the strokes of both — especially early on by Pope and increasingly so by Crawley as he settled — that belied moderate seasons up until now, as well as emphasising the callow ineptitude of the West Indian batting that had gone before. It could be a long tour for them unless they adapt to the conditions quickly.

Staveley and husband leave Newcastle

Football
Martin Hardy

The Newcastle United co-owner Amanda Staveley has left her position at the club and is expected to sell her 5.7 per cent share to Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF).

Staveley and her husband, Mehrdad Ghodoussi, will both terminate the management contracts they signed during the takeover in October 2021 and end their stint as directors.

The pair have been heavily involved in the £450million worth of transfers and the general running of Newcastle since the £300million takeover, when PIF took an 80 per cent majority holding and the 51-year-old Staveley purchased 10 per cent of the club through

her company, PCP Capital Partners. Staveley's stake has been diluted to 5.7 per cent in the past two years when she did not participate in fundraising to produce capital to run the club. She paid £30million for her 10 per cent stake in Newcastle in 2021.

The influence of Staveley and Ghodoussi had remained strong: the pair were heavily involved in the busy end to June, when the club sold Yankuba Minteh and Elliot Anderson for combined fees of £67million to avoid a points deduction next season for breaking the Premier League's Profitability and Sustainability Rules (PSR).

They were also involved in the talks to reach a settlement to allow Dan Ashworth to end his 20 months of gardening leave early and join Manchester

United as sporting director last week. The timing has come as a surprise, given how heavily they were involved in avoiding PSR penalties.

Despite the departure it is thought their relationship with Yasir Al-Rumayyan, the governor of PIF and the chairman of Newcastle, is good.

Staveley was the architect of the takeover by PIF. She first appeared at a Newcastle game in 2018, when they played Liverpool, and set the wheels in motion to find the investment needed to buy out the unpopular Mike Ashley.

In 2020 she was involved in negotiations for PIF. The purchase took 18 months before it was ratified by the Premier League, which was given "legally binding assurances" that the Saudi state would not have control of the club.

Ireland turn to Hallgrímsson, coach who humbled England

Heimir Hallgrímsson has been appointed as the new Ireland head coach.

He replaces interim manager John O'Shea, who has been in charge since Stephen Kenny's departure in November last year after a miserable Euro 2024 qualifying campaign.

Hallgrímsson, 57, has pedigree on the international stage, having managed his native Iceland and Jamaica. He was joint-coach of Iceland with Lars Lagerback from 2013 — a spell which included their famous Euro 2016 win over England — before becoming sole head coach for a further two years until 2018, when he led them to their first World Cup. After a stint with Al-Arabi in

Qatar, Hallgrímsson then became head coach of Jamaica in 2022, but announced his resignation after their exit from the Copa America at the beginning of the month.

Speaking about his appointment, Hallgrímsson said: "It is an honour to be appointed head coach of the Ireland senior men's national team. Ireland is rightly a proud footballing nation which has produced talented players and enjoyed many memorable moments at tournaments.

"We have a young and exciting team that has genuine potential. I am looking forward to ensuring we qualify and compete at major tournaments."

Sport England v West Indies: First Rothesay Test

Anderson hands Atkinson the

Mike Atherton

Chief Cricket Correspondent



England v West Indies

Lord's (first day of five; England won toss): England, with seven first-innings wickets in hand, are 68 runs ahead of West Indies

The cathedral of cricket looked resplendent, with the mellow, sandy coloured pavilion set against the lush green outfield, and the congregation had come out in force, every seat sold. All that remained was for James Anderson to deliver the sermon but for once he fell flat, and it was left to the debutant Gus Atkinson to send them into rapture.

On a remarkable day, the 26-year-old fast bowler from Surrey took the second-best figures for an England bowler on debut, and the best on first innings. After striking twice in his first spell before lunch — both wickets taken before he had conceded a run — he returned immediately after the break to obliterate the West Indies middle order, taking five more wickets in seven overs, for final figures of 12-5-45-7.

As a result, England took complete control of the opening day of the Test. West Indies were bundled out in 41.4 overs and by the close were already 68 in arrears. Zak Crawley and Ollie Pope having skipped to eager half-centuries, hitting 25 boundaries between them. After the early loss of Ben Duckett for three, they forced the pace, highlighting the difference in quality in the two batting line-ups, albeit under friendlier skies.

This was Atkinson's day, though. Tall, waspish of pace, delivering the ball close to the stumps, with an ability to move it both ways, Atkinson's promise was evident. He bowled all his overs from the Pavilion End, which has been the choice of ends for Anderson for 21 years now but this was a day on which the baton was well and truly passed forth. Anderson had a watching brief, in the main, before popping in the for the final wicket of the innings, his 701st.

At the start of the day it had been all about Anderson. Knowing him, he would have appreciated but hated all the hoopla in the morning. As the players waited for the national anthems, there was a montage of his best moments on the big screen with #thegreatest as the strap-line and his family had gathered to ring the bell, the formal duty of which was conducted by his daughters, Ruby and Lola.

Happiest with ball in hand, he didn't have long to wait for the agony of all this attention to end. The crowd had cheered joyously when Ben Stokes had announced he would bowl on winning the toss — many, no doubt, would be in possession of tickets for one day only and wanted to see Anderson in action — but then his opening over was a humdrum affair, conceding nine runs, not as many as the 17 he conceded in his first over on debut, but still.



First Test scoreboard

W INDIES first innings	R	B	6/4
*K C Brathwaite b Atkinson	6	33	0/0
M Louis c Brook b Stokes	27	58	1/4
K S A McKenzie c Crawley b Atkinson	1	14	0/0
A S Athanaze c Root b Atkinson	23	56	0/3
K A R Hodge c Pope b Woakes	24	48	1/3
J O Holder c Brook b Atkinson	0	1	0/0
†J M Da Silva c Smith b Atkinson	0	2	0/0
A S Joseph c Woakes b Atkinson	17	9	0/4
G Motie not out	14	19	0/3
S Joseph c Pope b Atkinson	0	2	0/0
J N T Seales lbw b Anderson	2	8	0/0
Extras (lb 7)	7		
TOTAL (41.4 overs)	121		

Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-36, 3-44, 4-88, 5-88, 6-88, 7-88, 8-106, 9-106.

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	R	B	6/4
Z Crawley b Seales	76	89	0/14
B M Duckett c Da Silva b Seales	3	13	0/0
O J D Pope lbw b Holder	57	74	0/11
J E Root not out	15	39	0/1
H C Brook not out	25	29	0/3
Extras (lb 9, nb 4)	13		
TOTAL (3wks, 40 overs)	189		

*B A Stokes, †J L Smith, C R Woakes, A A P Atkinson, S Bashir and J M Anderson to bat.

Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-123, 3-153
Bowling: Joseph 10-1-66-0; Seales 9-1-31-2; Joseph 9-1-42-0; Holder 10-0-38-1; Motie 2-0-3-0

Umpires N Menon (India) and R Tucker (Australia).

He gave way after a wicketless opening spell. In his past 20 innings this has been the case on 18 occasions, one of the reasons why the selectors want to move him on in an attempt to find some more cutting edge with the new ball, so with West Indies proceeding cautiously to 34 without loss, Atkinson set about his work. His second ball, an innocuous one, induced a drag-on from Kraigg Brathwaite and his 14th found its way to slip via Kirk McKenzie's outside edge. He was up and running.

Given the recent rains and the absence of sun, the pitch was unsurprisingly slow but with the clouds hanging low and the lights on full beam, the conditions were challenging for a callow and inexperienced middle order. Only one more

wicket came before lunch but the context of it was important nonetheless: it fell to Ben Stokes, in the middle of an impressive eight-over spell, and to a wonderful one-handed diving catch at third slip by Harry Brook.

England's catching was excellent throughout. Brook's superlative effort and one to follow after lunch by Pope at short cover-point off a fierce Kavem Hodge cut shot, to give Chris Woakes his only wicket of the day, were the best of the eight catches taken. Only one of them went to Jamie Smith, the new wicketkeeper, but what Smith had to do he did efficiently, moving nimbly for a tall man whenever he had to dive to gather the ball.

Having looked the likeliest bowler before lunch, Atkinson was given first dibs afterwards. His post-lunch spell of 7-1-43-5 brought a dramatic collapse, which changed the day, as West Indies went from 88 for 3 to 121 all out, losing seven wickets for 33 runs in only 45 balls. The most important of these wickets was Alick Athanaze, the diminutive left-hander from Dominica, who shaped as well as anyone in making 23.

The 35th over of the innings, Atkinson's ninth, was the centre-point of this collapse, when three wickets fell in four balls, each highlighting a different skill of the bowler: first, Athanaze edged a ball pushed across him down the slope; Jason Holder was turned around to a ball that held its line a touch and then, two balls later, Joshua Da Silva inside-edged to Smith. Atkinson was scrambling the seam, and scrambling West Indies' minds.

The Josephs, Alzarri and Shamar, followed, the former after a brief counter-attack that had a fellow-Antiguan, Viv Richards, applauding from the stands. It looked, at one point, as though Atkinson might walk off with the best figures by a debutant, beating a mark set by Albert Trott in 1895, but it wasn't to be. Anderson returned to pin Jayden Seales leg-before, before walking off to cries of "Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy."

Atkinson had the commemorative ball and the wickets, though. In taking to Test cricket immediately, he was following hard on the heels of other recent debutants who had impressed. Tom Hartley, Josh Tongue, Rehan Ahmed and Will Jacks had all taken a five-wicket haul or more on debut but this one, with Anderson passing from the stage before our eyes, felt especially significant.

The obvious caveat to be added is in the brittleness of the West Indies line-up. The sight of Gordon Greenidge and Richards in the stands was a reminder not just of the excellence of the past but of the vast experience many of West Indies players of a previous generation had gained in English county cricket over the years. Some of Brathwaite's men are not just new to Test cricket but English conditions too.

This much became apparent as Crawley and Pope tucked into the bowling in the evening session, adding 94 in 19 overs, with relative ease. Having overturned one leg-before decision off Holder, Pope was unable to overturn a second shortly after going to a half-century in 70 balls, and Crawley was eventually beaten by a fast yorker from Seales 30 minutes from the close.

A bad day for West Indies threatened to become even worse when Shamar Joseph left the field clutching his leg. Although he returned soon afterwards, he looked rusty. Having missed the warm-up game because of Hurricane Beryl, Joseph has not played first-class cricket since January, while Alzarri Joseph has been playing mainly T20. Seales, who has been playing for Sussex in the Championship, looked ready for the occasion.



Atkinson has Da Silva caught behind by Surrey team-mate Smith for his fifth wicket yesterday before holding the ball aloft to an admiring Lord's crowd, far right. Right, Crawley then made a breezy 76 as England ended the day in command. Left, Anderson reciprocates the applause before his final Test



'I tried to keep as level as

Elizabeth Ammon

Gus Atkinson believes that making his debut when most of the attention was on his team-mate James Anderson helped alleviate some of the pressure as the 26-year-old seamer made history on the first day of the Test summer.

Atkinson took seven for 45, including three wickets in four balls, as West Indies were skittled for 121 at Lord's. While Atkinson is only just embarking on his Test cricket journey, Anderson — who took the 10th wicket — is playing his 188th and final match in the England whites.

"I was pretty nervous going into it but the focus was on Jimmy so it was quite nice to go under the radar a little bit and focus on performing as well as I could," Atkinson, the Surrey bowler, said. "I am very proud but I don't think it has really sunk in yet. I was just looking up at the honours board looking at my figures thinking 'wow'." "It really was a special day. I felt like something like this had been coming for a while with Surrey and I've been a bit unlucky there sometimes so to have things go my way was great. "Being out there alongside Jimmy in his final Test was incredible, being in

baton of chief mind scrambler

MATT IMPEY/REX/Shutterstock

Day two

England v West Indies
Lord'sPlay starts at 11am
TV: Sky Sports
Main Event

701

Test wickets for
Anderson. He needs eight
more in second innings if
he is to pass Shane Warne
and move second on
all-time list

Devastating debutant

Best bowling figures by Englishmen
in debut Test innings

Gus Atkinson (2024)	7-45
Alec Bedser (1946)	7-49
Jim Laker (1948)	7-103
John Lever (1976)	7-46
Trevor Bailey (1949)	6-118
Will Jacks (2022)	6-161
Richard Johnson (2003)	6-33
Bill Lockwood (1893)	6-101
Fred Martin (1890)	6-50
George Simpson-Hayward (1910)	6-43



Half Archer, half McGrath: he's key to success abroad

Simon Wilde

Gus Atkinson's stunning debut performance was welcome for multiple reasons. Chiefly, it provided an instant return on the view of the England management that it was time to invest in a new generation of fast bowlers but what should also encourage everyone involved with the team is that he is not a classic English-style bowler and has skills that may translate well to overseas conditions.

Ben Stokes is desperate to crack how to win big series abroad and the emergence of Atkinson could help to solve this problem.

This was the 101st five-wicket haul for England in Tests at Lord's and a fair number of those would have been achieved through the sort of swing bowling for which this ground is famous. James Anderson has taken seven five-fors here, and Chris Woakes three, and few have mastered swing better than them. But as has been well documented, neither is any longer seen as a credible pick on winter tours.

Though the right-arm fast bowler got the occasional ball to move, Atkinson is not a swing bowler, per se, but used the seam and a strong, distinct action to get the ball to stand up off a length on a slow pitch in deceptive fashion, as some of the West Indies batsmen discovered to their cost.

His height — he is 6ft 2in — and his speed are key assets but what is rare is the straightness of his run-up and uprightness of his action, which means there is not much to go wrong when the ball gets down the other end of the pitch. Provided he gets his lengths right, he is going to give the batsman little respite. It was striking that this was his first red-ball match at Lord's, a ground whose slope can throw novices out of their stride, yet he was untroubled by its vagaries.

These may be lofty comparisons but there is a similarity with Jofra Archer, who bowls with a very upright delivery action to a probing wicket-to-wicket line, and another great "line" bowler who took a lot of wickets at the Pavilion End here, Glenn McGrath. Atkinson may not be in their class but technically he has more in common with them than many English bowlers who may prosper at home but struggle away.

What he will have greatly enjoyed is doing so

Atkinson allied snap to seam movement in a devastating debut spell

well with his father, Ed, who sent him to Bradfield, in attendance and with two of his earliest team-mates in Surrey age-group cricket Jamie Smith and Ollie Pope alongside him (Smith took the catch that gave him his fifth wicket and Pope that which gave him seven).

Atkinson first came to wider notice when he was timed at 95mph in a match in the Hundred at the Oval in August 2023. This was eye-catching stuff but slightly misleading in that he is not quite an express bowler in the Archer and Mark Wood class. He is fast enough though: he averaged 87.9mph in his first over of the game, which suggests he found a good rhythm, and his hat-trick ball to Joshua Da Silva was timed at 90mph.

Much of his pace comes from a "snap" at the crease that his bowling coach at Surrey, Jade Dernbach, believes is quite rare in English bowlers. "He had a slight frame when he first turned up [in Surrey's first XI in 2020], and you wouldn't have expected him to bowl with any sort of pace, but because of that snap when everything clicked he'd get bounce and energy off a back of a length," Dernbach said. "If you faced him in the nets, you'd notice he bowled a heavy ball."

Even before making his mark with the Oval Invincibles, Atkinson had been spotted bowling well for Surrey in a Vitality Blast quarter-final against Yorkshire two years ago, which led to gigs the following winter at the Abu Dhabi T10 and with the Desert Vipers in the ILT20.

What was important about the fire he generated in that Hundred match was that it came against a Manchester Originals side led by England's white-ball captain, Jos Buttler. Three weeks later he was making his international debut in a T20 against New Zealand at Old Trafford, returning figures of four for 20 and dismissing Devon Conway with his fourth ball (he claimed a wicket with his second ball here at Lord's).

With Archer unavailable, Atkinson then took the final fast bowling spot in the squad for the 50-over World Cup. As England's campaign faltered, he was brought in for the hammering by South Africa in Mumbai but came out with the most economical figures among the seamers. He also played in the wins over the Netherlands and Pakistan.

How highly England regarded him was clear from the two-year central contract he was awarded in October and that he was taken on the Test tour to India as the only uncapped member of a pace bowling quartet also consisting of Anderson, Wood and the benighted Ollie Robinson.

He did not play there and came home keen to make refinements to his run-up. He played his best championship match of the season two weeks ago and has clearly timed his entrance into Test cricket to perfection.



Stokes's clever captaincy

Five different bowlers have taken a five-wicket haul on Test debut under Stokes's captaincy:

GUS ATKINSON
(v West Indies, Lord's, yesterday)
7-45

TOM HARTLEY
(v India, Hyderabad, Jan 2024) 7-62

JOSH TONGUE
(v Ireland, Lord's, June 2023) 5-66

WILL JACKS
(v Pakistan, Rawalpindi, Dec 2022)
6-161

REHAN AHMED
(v Pakistan, Karachi, Dec 2022) 5-48

I could – but I had to tell Dad to relax'

the Long Room, Jimmy leading us onto the pitch, it was all incredible.

This was only Atkinson's second five-wicket haul in first-class cricket and he has not had much experience bowling at Lord's because Surrey and Middlesex haven't been in the same division in the County Championship for most of his professional career but the tall seamer said that the infamous Lord's slope actually helped him.

"My stock ball is scrambled seam. With the slope from the Pavilion End, that was my most dangerous ball, targeting fourth stump and trying to run it down the hill, trying to push it

across the lefties with the odd inswinger. That was the best way I could get wickets. I feel like I can bowl quicker and hit the pitch harder when I bowl with a scrambled seam, it's worked pretty well for me in the past."

Atkinson is a quiet man but was clearly moved by the experience, which was witnessed by his father Ed and other members of his family. They joined him and the rest of the squad on the pitch as Gus was presented with his cap by his Surrey team-mate Ollie Pope. "I was a bit nervous this morning. When I woke up all I could think about was the day ahead," Atkinson said.

"It was emotional. Having my family there for my cap presentation from Pope was amazing.

"I tried to keep as level as possible. My dad was saying, 'This is the biggest day of your life' and I said to him, 'Relax! I'm trying not to think like that'.

"Dad was in India [Atkinson was in the squad for England's winter tour but did not play a game] and he would have been here at Lord's anyway even if I wasn't playing. He just loves it.

"To make him proud and my family proud is special. Walking through the Long Room at the end of the innings and seeing him there was pretty cool."

Sport

Atkinson's dream debut

Report and analysis as England take charge on day one at Lord's
Pages 61-63



Riding high with Richie

All Blacks legend McCaw takes Will Kelleher up in a helicopter
Pages 56-57



Southgate roars again



The final
Spain v England
Olympic Stadium, Berlin
Sunday, 8pm
TV: BBC and ITV

Manager silences critics by leading England to first overseas final – all thanks to bold late substitutions

Netherlands	1
England	2

Paul Joyce Dortmund

England have reached their first major tournament final on foreign soil after a thrilling, last-gasp victory over the Netherlands.

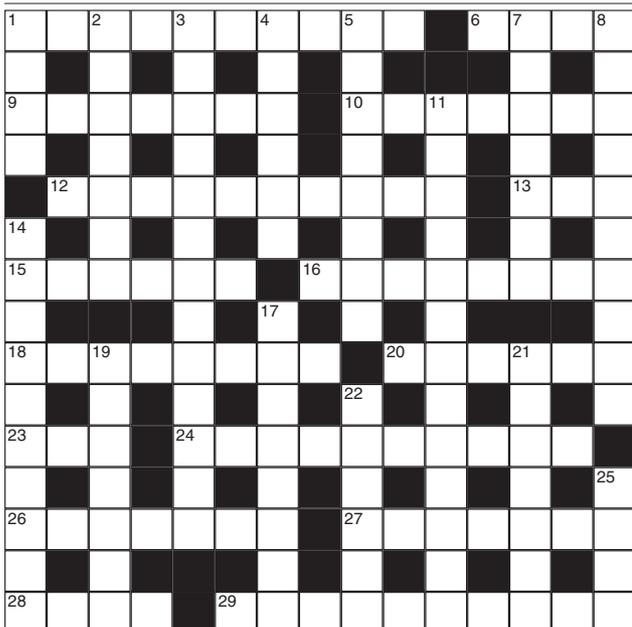
Gareth Southgate's side were heading for extra time when the manager replaced his captain, Harry Kane, with Ollie Watkins, who had played just 20 minutes at the tournament. With one second left of normal time, Cole Palmer set up Watkins to steer England into the final against Spain. "I swear on my life, I said to Cole we're coming on today and you're setting me up," Watkins said.

The Game Eight pages of the best analysis

Inside T2

Southgate celebrates in Dortmund after reaching a second straight European Championship final, with Watkins's 90th-minute winner. It will be the first time that England have contested a final on foreign soil

Times Crossword 28,966



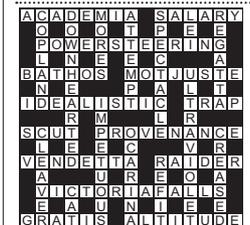
ACROSS

- 1 Is sign of hesitation about position leading to confrontation? (10)
- 6 A page gone over for homework (4)
- 9 Flair shown by the old man capturing an iconic fighter (7)
- 10 Insignificant number getting married in a cathedral ultimately? (7)
- 12 Most formal mega-performer, I boxed (10)
- 13 First person said to be tiny (3)
- 15 Get fine and quarrel, say, for creating litter? (6)
- 16 Something big in the drink — a drink swallowed by idiot (8)
- 18 Perhaps sinner and saint going out — they often meet in the dark (8)
- 20 One small female in here represented? (6)
- 23 Head dismissing learner as fool (3)
- 24 Being unrealistic about claims made by trader and performer? (10)
- 26 Name in past given to soldiers, eg, The Great (7)
- 27 Like some leaves — last bits of the autumn put in box (7)
- 28 Flower carried by glamorous entertainer (4)
- 29 Crane has wing half visible, one in French river (10)

DOWN

- 1 It's reportedly packaged and sent (4)
- 2 Politician beginning to speak with queen about international organisation (7)
- 3 Sad moralist upset about church putting priests on a pedestal? (13)
- 4 Supply help as leading characters (6)
- 5 Start of Christmas with trading opportunity on the up for light units (8)
- 7 What's authentic about modern library facility? (7)
- 8 Bill's solution penetrates synthetic materials (10)
- 11 Unquestioned supremacy not a condition to set the world alight? (13)
- 14 Follower's ace lie — time to go before fuss (10)
- 17 Prisoner terribly inert, with deprivation no end (8)
- 19 Makes good wines — merriment in store (7)
- 21 Bird enthusiast wanting story heard (7)
- 22 Fury a reader fails to finish (6)
- 25 One of the old people, this writer, requiring editor's intervention (4)

Yesterday's solution 28,965



Check today's answers by ringing 0905 757 0141 by midnight. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390.

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28 >



**The A-list power broker:
why George called
time on Joe**

By Hilary Rose

tim



Caitlin Moran's

Celebrity

Watch

6

Joe Biden

Good day, dearest Times reader! And welcome to the first Celebrity Watch under a new Labour government — a moment in political history almost immediately overshadowed by the worrying fact that the American president, Joe Biden, appears to be on 4 per cent battery, but is so old no one can find a compatible charging lead.

At the weekend there was a leak of briefing documents given to Biden to help him to get on and off stage at public events. Huge photos of corridors and floors, with "Walk to podium" written above them. As one unnamed person, who staffed a Biden fundraiser in the past 18 months, told Axios: "It surprised me that a seasoned political pro like the president would need detailed verbal and visual instructions on how to enter and exit a room."

And yeah, when you put it like that, it doesn't sound good. To be honest, when you put it any way, it doesn't look good: this guy is in charge of 5,044 nuclear warheads! He's the only thing being put forward to prevent a second Trump government — an event surely being referred to, by emergency planners the world over, as "The Enf**ening."

Now George Clooney has weighed in, urging Biden in The New York Times to "save democracy again" — this time by standing down as the presidential candidate. But is there a way the Democrats can salvage this? This is a world fully soaked in the DC/ Marvel superhero universes. If it's too late to find a non-Biden candidate, I suggest that they go full X-Men: put Biden in a snazzy-looking black wheelchair and spin him as an eccentric Professor X-type character. If his handlers can get him on and off stage using a remote control and some dramatic music, that's half of all potential problems removed at a stroke.

And if Biden has communication problems? Well, Beast's ingenious mutation-suppressing serum, when given to Professor X, caused a personality change that made him aggressive towards people, and eff and jeff like a plumber. We just need a spokesperson to murmur something about "America welcoming diversity — up to and including mutants", and at least it will get the rest of the Democratic Party back inside.

A long shot? Obviously, yes. But if Trump's getting a second shot at the White House primarily off the back of *The Apprentice*, then Biden can surely give X-Men a bang. Because when I say, "After all, he has nothing to lose," I mean that in the most dolorous way possible.



5

Midsomer Murders

As we all know, the modern era is constantly full of surprises. Just when you thought you'd got your head around one development — gay penguins, say, or security-tagged cheese — something new comes along to further discombobulate.

And so it has been with *Midsomer Murders*, ITV's long-running and frankly ludicrous murder-mystery drama series. As you will know, the show revolves around the premise that, within the tiny, fictional English county of Midsomer, some 388 murders have occurred since 1997, the year the show began.

Furthermore, it demands that the viewer is able to accept that these 388 murders could be carried out by people willing to use eg, a huge wheel of cheese to kill Martine McCutcheon. Or are capable of tying someone to a lawn — and then killing them with wine bottles shot from an antique catapult. As it turns out, people clearly can: after an epic 23 series, the show is still one of ITV's best, ratings-wise.

However, this week, ITVX, the channel's streaming platform, started providing trigger warnings for seasoned viewers of *Midsomer Murders* — warning that it may contain "crime scene images", "some violent moments" and, for one episode, intriguingly, "traditional dancing that might offend some viewers".

Understandably many took to social media to ask if it was really necessary to warn people, essentially, that "there might be some murders" in a TV show called *Midsomer Murders*.

And at this point you might expect me to come up with some amusing or convoluted reason for why this is, now, necessary. But of course it simply comes down to the fact that some people are quite stupid. Just in case you were wondering.



3

Kevin Bacon

We are all, by now, used to celebrities telling us just how awful being famous can be. From Terry Wogan's pleasingly honest, "There's nothing to be said for being famous ... You can't be rude to people," to the novelist Vicki Baum's slightly bleaker, "Fame always brings loneliness. Success is as ice cold and lonely as the North Pole," in the 21st century "civilians" have been left in no doubt: those conscripted into the Forces of Stardom face a punishing tour of duty, and we should both thank them for their service and accord them a small measure of pity whenever possible.

However, this week we learnt of a celebrity who is tearing up this rulebook — and coming out as 100 per cent, balls-out, pro being famous. That celebrity? Kevin Bacon.

Wearing fake teeth, a prosthetic nose and glasses, the actor went to a shopping mall in LA to see what it was like not being Kevin Bacon. "People were kind of pushing past me, not being nice," he marvelled. "Nobody said, 'I love you.' I had to wait in line to, I don't know, buy a f**ing coffee or whatever. I was like, 'This sucks. I want to go back to being famous.'"

Perhaps this is the start of the pendulum swinging back — and people reverting to the belief, common in the 20th century, that being famous would be awesome. Or, at the very least, useful if you want a coffee.

4

The King

To the worlds of sport and royalty, and the point where they intersect: this week the King met the West Indies cricket team, before the first Test at Lord's, and was taught how to do "the spud bump" greeting by the brothers Mikyle and Jeremiah Louis.

The spud bump, for those previously unacquainted, is where two people choose not to shake hands but to bump fists instead. The King literally made a decent fist of his spud bump, while laughing uproariously, and many jolly photos were created therein.

Having a King now versed in spud bumps raises an intriguing prospect: what other forms of alternate physical greeting, used by different social groups, will our monarch now take it upon himself to learn? For there are many. Will he learn the typical Awkward Adolescent Boy Greeting, walking up to each other and avoiding eye contact while kicking each other's trainers and saying, "Hey", "Hey", "Hey", "Hey"? Or will he become conversant in the hug women give men who are known to be "handy", wherein they keep their bodies from the sternum down at a 45-degree angle from their potential assailant? Of course, if the King needs any primers on this second one, he can just watch how people greet his brother.



2

Hermes

To archaeology news, and a team in Bulgaria had a pleasant surprise while excavating the ancient city of Heraclea Sintica when they found a perfectly preserved marble statue of Hermes — the Greek god of luck.

Photographs reveal that Hermes' luck was so powerful that it extended to him having the perfect bum. As you can see, he had inherited the kind of physique in which squats really pay off. His bum is an arseterpiece.

However, some 2,000 years after the Hermes was carved, theological questions are being raised by where exactly his statue was rediscovered. For the location where lucky old Hermes has lain alone for centuries was ... a sewer. Which doesn't sound that lucky at all. It's kind of like finding Dionysus, god of wine, buried under the headquarters of Alcoholics Anonymous.





The Conservative Party

Obviously, theoretically the week's main story, by a country mile, is Labour. A historic landslide victory, followed by a relentless barrage of gigantic policy announcements: wind farms! Planning reform! The Rwanda plan scrapped! Really, the only conversations should be about a 92 per cent state school cabinet with incredible powers pumping out sea-change policies with the kind of mania one usually associates with the Beatles' amphetamine-fuelled spell in Germany.

However, in the same way you can't stop yourself social media-stalking a terrible, demented boyfriend you just broke up with — "Oh my God, look! He's bought a hat! A stupid hat! It's giving ... Sad Postman! Thank God I don't have to give him mental bandwidth any more. [pause] Are there any more pictures?" — it has been hard to tear your eyes away from the Conservative Party. Or what's left of it.

If there were such a thing as a conscious uncoupling therapist who could mediate between a brutally rejected party and the electorate that just gave it a savage punishment beating, they would be saying things like, "Come on, guys — you need to break all contact for a while," and "Maybe a period of silent reflection? And not booting them, repeatedly, in the nuts?"

Instead, the Conservatives have begun a bloody, public and humiliatingly mad debate as to why they lost the election — one that so far runs the gamut from blaming a "lunatic woke virus" (Suella Braverman) to "possible infiltration by the Lib Dems" (one delegate at Tuesday's PopCon conference). And while they presumably believe this is a conversation they are having with each other, it is of course ultimately aimed at us. We have a woke virus. We, personally, in our very houses right now, have been infiltrated by the Lib Dems. Because we were the ones that voted them out. Not to belabour the metaphor, but it's very much like a twentysomething hun sub-tweeting with a faux-blihe classic like "Lot of SNAKES IN THE GRASS around today". We know you're specifically referencing Jan in HR, love. She's the snake that dobbed

you in over your "sick day" Instagram photos from Ibiza and got you fired. You might as well just say it.

With this strong "she's turned the weans against us!" energy, almost everything the Conservatives currently do looks poignant. On Sunday it was noted that the official Conservative Party Twitter/X account was down — click on it and the timeline was blank, save for an on-the-nose "Something went wrong. Try again." It's the kind of self-own that only happens when you're in the middle of a massive life crisis. I expect to see T-shirts bearing this historic screengrab at the next *The Rest Is Politics* gig at the O2. They'll sell like hot cakes.

If we accept that the Conservatives are, emotionally, feeling dumped by a girlfriend/vengeful against their former employers (us), it's fairly obvious what they should do next. As any friend would tell them, now isn't the time for public conferences, febrile leadership races or, to be honest, anything political or work-related. Guys, you're hurt. That's what this feeling is. You're gutted. Admit it! And then follow the classic template followed by all Brits when life has left you either loveless or unemployed.

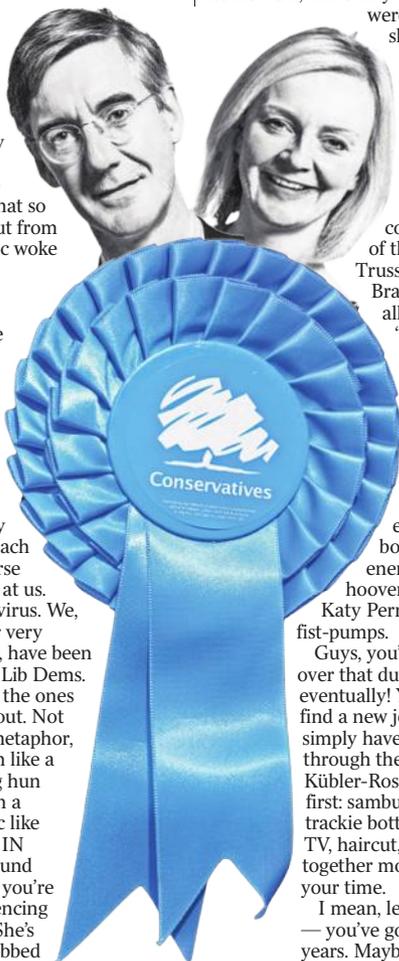
First, you need to get your girls/boys together and get incredibly drunk. Waking-up-with-one-shoe drunk. Then lean into the subsequent hangover/depression. Jacob Rees-Mogg shouldn't be suited, at a PopCon conference! He should be in jogging bottoms and a curry-stained T-shirt, horizontal on the sofa, like he was on the front bench of the House of Commons, blankly watching *Four in a Bed* and being surprised at 4pm to realise he's been silently crying for two hours. "Oh, that's why my spectacles were misty," he should murmur.

"They have acted as a Bazalgette-like piece of infrastructure, capturing my tears."

Then, after a couple of weeks of this, he, Liz Truss and Suella Braverman should all go and get "sassy" new haircuts before embarking on one of those montages where they draw back the curtains, throw all the empty vodka bottles away and energetically Hoover by Katy Perry while doing fist-pumps.

Guys, you're gonna get over that dumping eventually! You are gonna find a new job! But you simply have to move through the British Kübler-Ross stages of grief first: sambuca, shoe loss, trackie bottoms, daytime TV, haircut, getting-it-together montage. Take your time.

I mean, let's be honest — you've got at least four years. Maybe eight.



Are you really uncool? If so, then you're my perfect target audience

Deborah Ross



The radio presenter Ken Bruce, below, said this week that his former employer BBC Radio 2 is damaging itself by "thinking of itself as cool". It should, he continued, not be afraid to be "uncool" and if it wants to stop haemorrhaging listeners it would do well to keep that in mind.

Or, as I would tell Radio 2, if I had its ear: "Remember, today's cool people are tomorrow's uncool people. Sit tight, baby!" I would say the same to John Lewis, which sometimes attempts to go all hip and jazzy. If I had its ear I would say: "If you go down that route, where are all the uncool people meant to shop?" There is Selfridges, I suppose, but as an uncool person I can't be seen in there. I have my reputation to think of.

I am uncool. It may be I've always been uncool. It just comes effortlessly to me, never had to work at it or anything. I haven't done drugs once. Haven't been offered any, ever. Others can tell. I don't know how. Maybe it's the M&S fleece (comes out of the washing machine practically dry!). But if I had to put an actual date on when I officially became uncool it might be the day I decided to subscribe to *Which?* magazine so I could deep dive kettles before parting with any money. There's a lot to think about when it comes to kettles.

Boiling time, quietness, pop-up rather than lift-off lid. Also: comfortable handle, low minimum fill, easy to clean, clear water gauge. Also: the limescale filter. Is it easy to remove or a faff? Slave Niece recently set up elsewhere and bought any old kettle from Amazon. I had to

hold on to the work surface and take deep breaths when she told me that.

Once I had recovered sufficiently — I don't think you can ever recover fully from hearing such news — I said: "But I could have looked it up for you at *Which?*" She just shrugged. Shrugged! I was incredulous. Shrugged! I felt my knees go again and was back to holding on.

Having established my uncool credentials I think you'll agree that I'm the right person to head up this new venture I have in mind: a magazine for uncool people. True, there's *Which?*, but that covers only consumer goods. It has its place but I'm thinking of a magazine more general in nature, for uncool people everywhere, to reflect all their uncool interests, and available from your local least-cool shop, such as WHSmith.

There will be fashion: "That M&S fleece, how does it come out practically dry? We investigate the science behind it." Also, as usefully: "What to not wear to that party you are not going to." We will be showcasing several outfits you might not wear to the party you're not going to because *The Great British Sewing Bee* is on.



No other magazine will offer such a choice of what not to wear for never going anywhere when *Sewing Bee* is on. Or *Gardeners' World*.

There will be cooking tips — "if you're tired of pasta you're tired of life ... ditto jacket potatoes" — and real-life stories. "I just made my first Cotton Traders purchase. I don't know how it happened!" one brave lady will confess. Another will reveal: "I turned down a ticket to Robbie Williams in Hyde Park because, on enquiring if there would be seating, did not like the answer at all."

There will be campaigning journalism at its finest — "why doesn't the dump have a gift shop and café so we can make a day of it? Sign here to make it happen!" — and a problem page. "Dear Uncool Magazine, I don't know what to do. Muji duvet covers have zips, which I'd take over buttons any day, but it's European sizes so not quite the right fit. What's your advice?" Readers, you decide.

The only danger, I suppose, is that if it takes off, does that mean I've made uncool cool? In the meantime, if you don't think the magazine is right for you today: sit tight, baby!

I laugh in the face of the law

Politicians in Japan have introduced a rule calling on citizens to laugh once a day because it has all kinds of health benefits. It is based on a paper from the Yamagata School of Medicine titled: "Associations of Frequency of Laughter With Risk of All-Cause

Mortality and Cardiovascular Disease Incidence in a General Population." Just in case you thought this came from nowhere.

Is this a law? If so, how might they enforce it? I'm arresting you for not laughing the once today? You say you did? Do you have any witnesses? And how, I wonder, might your average citizen guarantee a laugh a day? You can't depend on seeing someone fall over while running for a bus as that, alas,

happens once in a blue moon. (I zip it if they are elderly or frail. I have a heart.)

If it were the law here, or rule or decree or whatever it is, I know what I would do to guarantee a laugh. First up, Tom Davis's *Murder in Successville*, a BBC show that went under the radar, now on Netflix. Watch the Deborah Meaden episode. (The double bed!)

Next, one of the first videos to go viral, *Ultimate Dog Tease*.

Just checked and even though I must have seen it a million times, it still makes me laugh. Now I've run out of space so, hopefully, today's the day you do see someone fall while running for a bus. You could be lucky in that way.

Now, in the interests of balance, I should probably tell you what doesn't make me laugh and it's this: Slave Niece announcing she has bought a washing machine with no input from me. Then, I cry.

times2

Watch out, Biden: Clooney has

The A-list star has asked the president to step aside in a piece for *The New York Times*, says Hilary Rose

It reads like a Hollywood script. George Clooney, the actor once famous for being the hot TV doctor who owned a pot-bellied pig, is now kingmaker in the land of no kings. Just as America settled into its summer holidays, apparently resigned to a choice of Joe Biden or Donald Trump in November, Clooney has lobbed a grenade onto the pages of *The New York Times*.

Describing himself as a lifelong Democrat who loves Biden, he writes that Biden is nevertheless unfit to run again for the presidency, and needs urgently to step aside if the party has any chance of beating Trump. "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," he writes. "He wasn't even the Joe Biden of 2020. He was the same man we all witnessed at the debate. We are not going to win in November with this president. 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."

Democratic leaders, he continues, "need to stop telling us that 51 million people didn't see what we just saw. We're all so terrified by the prospect of a second Trump term that we've opted to ignore every warning sign. This isn't only my opinion; this is the opinion of every senator and Congress member and governor that I've spoken with in private."



In the years since *ER* Clooney has become a power player in US politics, a man with the sort of credibility and personal approval ratings politicians can only dream of. If you think he's just a film star with a glamorous wife, you really haven't been paying attention.

Clooney has wanted to be taken seriously for years, and now he is. But the turning point wasn't when he made serious films about serious issues (although he did), it was when he married a brilliant and beautiful British human rights lawyer called Amal. Since their wedding ten years ago, she has held Isis to account and

advised the International Criminal Court. She's acquired a veneer of Hollywood glamour; he's acquired a veneer of intellectual heft. Together they've become the ultimate power couple. Now Clooney's intervention could change the face of the American election, the fate of American democracy, and, with it, the rest of the world. Not bad for the hot doctor from *ER*.

Clooney left that show in 1999 with the hope of making it big on the big screen. By 2005, he was making worthy films about US foreign policy in the Middle East, oil company corruption, and McCarthyism in *Good*

From left: George Clooney with Joe Biden, then vice-president, in 2009; with his wife, Amal, in 2022; with President Biden, Julia Roberts and Barack Obama in June. Far right: Biden with his wife, Jill

Night, and Good Luck. Fans used to seeing him smouldering in *ER* instead had to see him playing an overweight, unattractive CIA agent in *Syriana*.

As the focus became less about his looks — or so he hoped, perhaps — he began to stake out his position as a liberal political activist. He joined Bono in lobbying the World Bank to send aid to Africa, but while some actors hector and the world rolled its eyes, Clooney delivered his message with good humour. The trademark twinkle was never far away.

But when it came to being taken seriously, his love life always preceded

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wouldn't get married or have children before the age of 40.

Clooney won the bet, but Kidman had the last laugh. He was 52 and possibly the most famous bachelor in the world in the summer of 2013 when a friend brought a human rights lawyer called Amal Alamuddin to dinner at his house beside Lake Como.

"A mutual friend of ours said, 'I'm stopping by and can I bring my friend?'" George said later. "I was like, 'Of course!'" His agent had met her before and told Clooney he would marry the brilliant and beautiful specialist in international law and human rights. From London's Doughty Street Chambers, she advised governments and appeared regularly at the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights. She was unlikely to have her head swayed by a Hollywood heart-throb.

"We stayed up all night talking," Clooney said later, "and I got her email address, so we started writing. I didn't know if she wanted to go out with me. I just thought we were buddies."

That October they were seen having dinner in London on what he later admitted was their first proper date. "Pretty quickly," he said, "things escalated." One of Amal's colleagues later said that he always knew when she was reading a text or email from Clooney because she had a particular smile on her face.

Clooney proposed with a seven-carat diamond at his home in Los Angeles, and later said she was so shocked that it took her 20 minutes to say yes. They married almost exactly ten years ago, in September 2014 in



Venice, in a flurry of ceremonies, parties, couture dresses and famous friends. "It sort of changed everything in terms of what I thought my future — my personal future — was going to be," Clooney admitted.

He and Amal launched his tequila brand, Casamigos, and the pictures made the front pages. But they also discussed refugee policy with the German chancellor Angela Merkel, and that made the front pages too. In May 2016 they stole the show on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival, but three months later they were at the United Nations for a leaders' summit for refugees. In the summer holidays, he was photographed leading out his glamorous wife, in high heels and four-figure dresses, for dinner near their house on Lake Como. In term time they established the Clooney Foundation for Justice,

providing free legal support to victims of human rights abuses. It seeks "to create a world where human rights are protected and no one is above the law".

Michelle Obama gave a speech at the foundation's inaugural Albie awards, named after an anti-apartheid judge, in which she spoke of Justice Albie Sachs's role in transforming his own country, South Africa, and their ability to do the same to their own, the US. "We honour not just a single man's legacy of progress, but the possibility of progress that's yet to be written, possibility that lies inside all of us," she said. That made the front pages, too, as did Clooney's call to the White House last month, to berate the president, not to bury him.

Amal played a key role in the decision by the International Criminal Court to issue arrest warrants for war crimes for both the Israeli prime minister and Hamas leaders. When Biden condemned the move, Clooney called to complain, and that made the front pages too.

In his article Clooney writes that the Democrats have "a very exciting bench". He names the "strong Democrats" he would like to see stand, and the need to "focus on what will make this country soar". "Then," he concludes, "we could go into the Democratic convention next month and figure it out."

The Democratic National Convention next month will be held in Chicago, where *ER* was set. In America, Hollywood actors don't generally torpedo the presidency, they stand for it. Could Clooney be the saviour the Democrat needs? Could the couple with the most formidable pulling power end up in the ultimate seat of power, the White House? Well, it would probably make the front page.

him. The first, brief marriage was in Las Vegas, to his fellow actress Talia Balsam. There was a succession of glamorous girlfriends, including the British TV presenter Lisa Snowdon and the Italian TV presenter Elisabetta Canalis. On the big screen he oozed sexual chemistry with Jennifer Lopez and Julia Roberts, recruited his famous friends Brad Pitt and Andy Garcia to star alongside him in *Ocean's Eleven*, and famously had a \$10,000 bet with Nicole Kidman, whom he met on the set of *One Fine Day*, that he



How did Andrew Tate, king of toxic masculinity, make so much money?

Police accuse the influencer of tax evasion over an estimated income of £21 million and are demanding nearly £3 million. Sean O'Neill reports

Andrew Tate, the self-proclaimed misogynist billionaire, is in his wood-paneled cigar room and is in full flow — eyebrows dancing, arms waving, voice rising. His topic is not one of the usual boastful diatribes about how great he is or how to dominate a woman, build muscle or make millions from crypto. The king of toxic masculinity is railing about tax evasion.

On Monday, at Westminster magistrates' court, police applied for a forfeiture order to recoup almost £3 million in allegedly unpaid taxes from Tate, 37, and his brother and business partner, Tristan, 35.

The case is unusual. The Tates are being pursued not by one of the big guns of financial law enforcement — such as the Serious Fraud Office, HM Revenue & Customs or the National Crime Agency — but by Devon and Cornwall police.

The police say the Tates made £21 million from OnlyFans accounts and their other online businesses between 2014 and 2022.

In 2019 they are alleged to have lodged £9.5 million of their revenues in the account of a person identified only as J in an effort to hide their income. Various sums sloshed around seven bank accounts (all

now frozen) without being declared for tax purposes.

The case appears to represent one of the first accurate assessments of the Tate brothers' income, although the figures are limited to the UK.

Sarah Clarke KC, acting for the police, told the court the Tates had committed an offence under section 2 of the Fraud Act 2006 — fraud by false representation. The police are seeking to recover at least £2.8 million in unpaid tax and VAT.

“The British government is trying to damage my influence

“On any view, Andrew Tate and Tristan Tate are serial tax and VAT evaders, in particular Andrew Tate, and are brazen about it,” Clarke said.

The barrister said the brothers “have not paid a penny of tax or VAT in either a personal or corporate capacity”.

The use of J's name was a device, Clarke said, “to put distance between you and the money you are intending to deal with in a criminal way”.

Clarke quoted one of Tate's videos in which he said, “When I lived in



Andrew Tate and his brother, Tristan, right, arrive for a court hearing in Bucharest, Romania, last year

England I refused to pay tax.” His approach to tax, she said, was to “ignore, ignore, ignore, and they go away.” She alleged there was evidence of money laundering, with funds shuttling between the UK, Costa Rica, Romania and Dubai and used to buy property and supercars.

Martin Evans KC, for Tate, told the court that the transactions were “entirely orthodox” and while money had been spent on “exotic motor cars”, nothing illegal had occurred.

In his cigar room, in a video on Twitter/X responding to media reports from the court hearing, Tate was angry and exercised. The case was yet another example of the great conspiracy against him by the British government and the mainstream media, he said. The Matrix is out to get him. Apparently it's “like Covid” all over again.

“They know this is false and I'm going to prove in court this is false,” he says. “They know I have a complicated tax structure and they're going to deliberately pretend they cannot see the very obvious places

I've already paid my tax. You know I paid my tax, British government, you're just coming at me because you're bothered you couldn't get me on this garbage human trafficking case, because you're trying to damage my influence.”

Tate, who was born in America and grew up in Luton, was ranting from Romania, where he and his brother face charges of rape, human trafficking and running an organised crime gang to sexually exploit women.

Lawyers for four British women have travelled to Romania to serve the Tates with papers alleging they were sexually abused when the brothers were running an online sex business from Luton between 2013 and 2016. The UK will also seek the extradition of the Tates on rape and trafficking charges after any trial in Romania.

The brothers have consistently denied the allegations and after periods of detention, then house arrest in Bucharest, have recently been told they can travel outside Romania for the first time in three years. Tate has said on Twitter/X he is planning a “world tour”, but details have not been disclosed.

Tate's involvement in the sex industry followed a kickboxing career in which he won four world titles and a significant amount of money, and a brief appearance as a reality television contestant. He was thrown out of the *Big Brother* house in 2016 after a video emerged of him appearing to hit a former girlfriend with a belt. The woman later stated the incident had been consensual and he remained a friend.

As controversies (and criminal charges) swirled around him, Tate appears to have switched his money-making activities into a

portfolio of get-rich-quick schemes that are characterised by grandiose but vague promises.

Against a backdrop of fast cars, superyachts, private jets and bling he proclaims: "I grew up broke and now I am a billionaire." He offers to "teach the deserving the secrets to modern wealth creation".

Tate hosts *The Real World*, which appears to have replaced his *Hustlers University* and which subscribers pay to join to learn from "the world's most advanced financial education platform".

His followers can also pay to join his "global network", the War Room, which appears to be populated by men with pixelated faces in old-fashioned drawing rooms or on yachts. In here members can "access knowledge that will spark your genius and compel you to work your hardest to keep up ... there is no other place on earth with Men of this caliber [sic]". These men are said to be "grandmasters of life".

Tate boosted his status in the "influencer economy" last month by launching his \$Daddy crypto token. It was reported this week by CoinGecko to have a market capitalisation of more than \$92 million in a volatile and speculative market.

The crypto news service CoinDesk reported that holdings of the token seemed to be concentrated in a small number of hands.

Although values and trading volumes of the token have fluctuated significantly since its launch, Tate claimed, in another video posted this week, to have come into the world of cryptocurrency and "conquered the entire space instantly".

Last year, in what appeared to be another attempt to refurbish his image, Tate set up a philanthropy scheme called Tate Pledge to make a "positive impact on the world" by providing for communities and individuals in need.

He announced: "I will be spending millions and millions of dollars on charitable acts for the rest of my human life. God has blessed me with fantastic wealth. It's more money than I will ever personally need."

Tate, who claims to have converted to Islam, states that his fund has donated \$12 million in 14 countries, including Yemen, Gambia, Kenya and Syria. He claims that he has worked with 20 NGOs, but many of those charities have been at pains to distance themselves from the man and his money.

An investigation by the website UnHerd concluded that "fewer than ten charities feature in the [Tate Pledge] videos and at least one is now defunct".

The charity Human Appeal featured in a Tate Pledge video about food distribution in Lebanon but it has been at pains to point out it has no contact with the Tates.

The charity said: "Human Appeal has no affiliation with Andrew Tate, Tristan Tate, or the Tate Pledge. Human Appeal is aware that in the past Andrew Tate has claimed making donations to a group of charities, however Human Appeal has never received any funds, nor had any contact with either of the Tate brothers or the Tate Pledge."

It appears that his claims to be a philanthropist might be as opaque and questionable as his boast that he is on course to be "the world's first trillionaire".



Left: Emily Blunt, Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway at this year's SAG awards. Above: in the 2006 film *The Devil Wears Prada*

Sharpen those stilettos, the Devil is back in style again!

Avert your eyes, Anna Wintour — a *Devil Wears Prada* sequel is in the works. Anna Murphy is booking a front row seat

There's no clearer evidence of the continuing clout of a film that came out nearly two decades ago than the response to the appointment last year of the Adidas-loving Chioma Nnadi as new head honcho at *British Vogue*. "The Devil wears Sambas" was the headline. No explanation required.

The Devil Wears Prada — based on the 2003 roman à clef by Lauren Weisberger, who once worked as an assistant to Anna Wintour, she of American *Vogue* notoriety — has long been the fashion film for people who aren't that interested in fashion, not to mention for people who are and/or who work in the industry.

As Wintour quipped at an event in 2016, "For a while it seemed that that association was the only flattering thing about the enterprise, and Miuccia [Prada] and I never discussed it. Finally, at one of our lunches, she leant across the table and she said, 'Anna, that book, it's good for both of us.' And the subject has never come up again."

I have lost count of the number of times I have heard reference made in the industry to the blue jumper scene. It's the one in which Meryl Streep's

superlatively icy Miranda Priestly goes the full winter-has-come-on Anne Hathaway's bluestocking — and blue-jumpered — assistant. "That blue represents millions of dollars and countless jobs," Priestly withers, "and it's sort of comical that you think you made a choice of a sweater that exempts you from the fashion industry but that in fact was selected for you."

So what japes that a sequel is reported to be in the works at Disney, with Meryl Streep and Emily Blunt — who played a sleek proto-Priestly in the original — already signed up. Hathaway said in March that she didn't think there was going to be another film, so it's unclear as to whether she is also on the call sheet.

The plotline, such as it is, apparently pertains to a pitched battle — think immaculately manicured fingernails at dawn — between Blunt's Emily Charlton and La Priestly. The latter is attempting to steer her magazine through the choppy waters of the digital age; Charlton, now a bigwig executive at a luxury group, decides where its vast advertising budget goes.

Charlton is suddenly the one with the power to make Priestly's life better, or worse. And anyone who remembers the original, in which Charlton is sidelined and — *horreur* — doesn't get to go Paris Fashion Week, can guess which way that cookie is going to crumble, not that either would ever be seen eating one of those.

Essentially it's about budgets, then, not the most compelling narrative. Yet neither was the original's. It was all about character, and — especially in the case of Streep — about gloriously hyperbolic performances that landed

just the right side of panto. (Stanley Tucci nailed that too. Please let him be coming back for more.)

And then of course there were the clothes. The first *Devil Wears Prada* picked up the baton from *Sex and the City* and set the modern blueprint for a screen event that was as much about the togs as anything else. Not that this was new.

During the golden era of Hollywood the extraordinary creations of specialist designers such as Adrian, for actresses like Jean Harlow, enabled the cash-strapped audiences of the interwar and postwar years to dream.

In recent years the fashion fantasia has been delivered by *Emily in Paris* and, in a different way, by *Bridgerton*. *The Devil Wears ... mark 2* will be anxious to conjure up the magic again, not least for financial reasons.

The first film made \$327 million worldwide from a \$41 million budget. Could this be the beginning of a new franchise for those who don't get their kicks from superheroes but super wardrobes? I'm in.

Among the important questions are what will the devil be wearing this time? Or perhaps devils in the plural, given that it sounds as if we are going to see two fashion mavens going head to head.

Will Priestly have swapped out the Prada for, say, Balenciaga? Please tell me she hasn't embraced post-Covid track pants. And what about Charlton? I can see Blunt, always a fashion plate, in Schiaparelli's dress adorned with a faux lion's head, for example. And will they, like the rest of the industry, have succumbed to fads? Surely some things are sacred?

“It sounds as if we are going to see two fashion mavens going head to head”

times2

Power, 'corruption' and the wife of

When Andrew Billen met Carla Bruni four years ago, she said that allegations against her husband, the former president Nicolas Sarkozy, would 'go away'. Now she faces criminal charges

Four summers ago, during the international hiatus between one Covid lockdown and another, I interviewed Carla Bruni, the supermodel turned singer who married the French president Nicolas Sarkozy. Their sudden romance in the autumn of 2007 was a *coup de foudre* that made international headlines and instantly healed the broken heart that the cuckolded president had been nursing in the Élysée Palace since his divorce from his second wife.

Bruni was everything he could have hoped for and, on the afternoon of our interview, she was everything I could have hoped for: charming, coquettish, enigmatically French yet ridiculously candid. For instance, although she was speaking from the pair's Paris home to plug her new album, she happily told me in what circumstances she would murder her husband, and how.

She was wrong about one thing, however. When I asked about the allegations of corruption that had led to Sarkozy's indictment for illegal campaign financing in 2016 and were still buzzing about the remains of his political career, she assured me: "Everything will go away."

"There were many [allegations] when he stopped being president," she said. "They tried 13 times but they're all lies, incredible lies. I'm so surprised it lasted. I'm so surprised it became so political, but they achieved their goal because he's out of politics for ever. So they invented everything and won the battle, but we're much more happy now."

The allegations did not go away. Her husband went on to be convicted, and although he served his custodial sentence at home wearing an electronic tag, the threat of actual jail time remains. This week Bruni has been charged with involvement in a criminal conspiracy to "whitewash" him over cash allegedly received from Muammar Gaddafi, the late and unlamented Libyan dictator. Although she has consistently denied involvement in "Operation Save Sarko [from jail]", the offences, if proven, could prove serious enough to send her to prison. In the meantime Bruni, who has been co-operating with the authorities, is under "judicial supervision" and banned from contacting anyone involved in the case.

The only good news for Bruni is that the stipulation does not forbid her from speaking to her 69-year-old husband. That would be tough. One of the songs from the record we were discussing in 2020 was called *Les séparés* ["the separated ones"], in which she sang of separation as "suffering and secrecy". I had assumed

she was writing about the enforced seclusions of Covid, but I was wrong. She had written it before the pandemic in response to a Sarkozy absence of just *five days*. "I obviously couldn't live without him. I would rather die before him," she told me, although when she showed him the lyrics on his return he told her they were "tragic", which I suppose could be taken two ways.

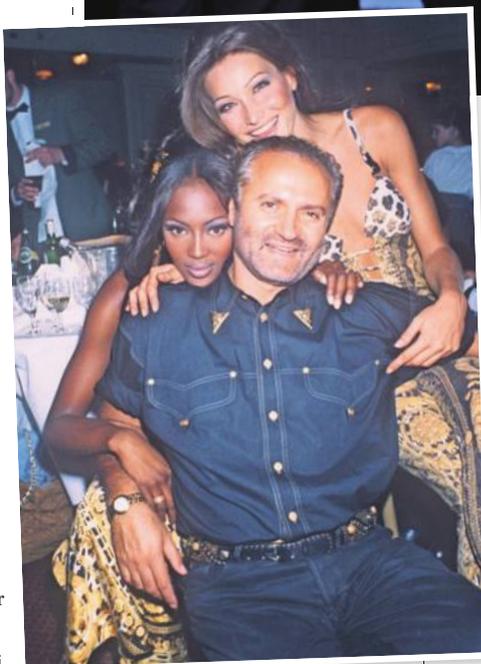
What I did not know, because she only revealed it in 2023 in a health campaign video, was that the year before we talked she had been diagnosed with breast cancer and had

“**Bruni told me she was relieved to know why she was so anxious**

undergone surgery, radiotherapy and hormone therapy. The cancer was caught in time, but she could not have been so sure of that in 2020. The thought of dying before her husband, despite his 13-year seniority, would not have been something the mother of a nine-year-old daughter could ignore. Another of her songs began: "I had a brush with death on Monday/ I felt the bullets fly past my ear." We can guess what that might have been about.

So Bruni is, I think, a brave woman and will likely face the humiliating challenges and penal perils ahead with the fortitude acquired by experience. Hers was certainly a rocky childhood. At the age of three, she moved from her native Italy to France after her very wealthy family became convinced they were at risk of being kidnapped by the mafia or Red Brigades, a real and "frightening" threat, she told me. In her adopted country, she was brought up by her French grandmother more than by either her mother, the famous concert pianist Marisa Borini, or her father, Alberto Tedeschi, a businessman and composer.

At least, she thought Tedeschi was her papa. On his deathbed in 1996, he informed her that her biological father was in fact a Brazilian grocery magnate named Maurizio R Emmert, who had had a six-year affair with Marisa. Bruni was, she told me, relieved rather than devastated; she finally understood why she was "so complicated and anxious" (as a teenager she was agoraphobic).



After the obligatory Swiss finishing school, she studied art and architecture in Paris but left for modelling at 19. It was her *derriere* on the Guess jeans posters and her face on campaigns for Karl Lagerfeld, Yves Saint Laurent and Versace. Before she left the scene to devote herself to the musical talent her (mother's) genes

had bequeathed, she was reportedly earning \$75 million a year.

Her boyfriends were legion. One of her songs, *Une enfant*, claimed she had had 30 lovers, although she told me the number was just there for the rhyme. They included Eric Clapton and Mick Jagger, although Clapton had reportedly begged the Rolling Stone not to steal her. Yet Bruni was, at 40, still unwed when she met the twice-married Sarkozy. Arranged by his friend, the advertising genius Jacques Séguéla (one of the "original *Mad Men* of France", Adweek calls him), it was quite the dinner party. Séguéla told the authors of *The True Story of Carla and Nicolas*: "I saw the connection the moment the two met. It was electric, like a bolt of lightning." Bruni went on to tell them she was seduced by his charm and his intelligence. "He has five or six brains and they're all remarkably well-lubricated."

There were plenty who said the wealthy star simply craved what she did not have: the power inherent in becoming France's first lady. She told me, though, it was the man she fell for. "He was a different [sort of] man: a Jewish name, not coming out of the right schools, not coming out of the establishment, you know?" she said. "He had nothing and he did it all alone. So I was fascinated, but I was

the French president

MARC PIASECKI/FILM MAGIC/GETTY



Left: Carla Bruni in Cannes in May. Above: with Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris in 2022. Left: with Naomi Campbell and Gianni Versace in London in 1992

“My husband and I wouldn’t last without desire for each other

not very attracted by his position because I could feel that it was full of brutality and violence.”

And then there was the sex. “My husband and me were made of desire. We wouldn’t last without desire for each other. He’s very passionate, more passionate than me. He’s not a man from the north. He’s from the south and with Hungarian blood, which is the blood of Attila.”

In his memoir last year covering their early years together (he has published three and all became bestsellers), his praise for her is more circumspect. She had presented “a worldwide image of French elegance and intelligence”. He wrote that he had declined to have a drink with Angela Merkel at a G8 summit in Normandy to join Bruni, who was pregnant with their daughter, Giulia, in their hotel suite — although the sacrifice is less impressive when you read on and discover he considered the German chancellor

“pusillanimous” and “risk-averse”.

Nevertheless, he was the agent of change in his new wife. In 2007, a year before their marriage, she had told *Madame Figaro* that she was bored by monogamy, and a few months later told another magazine that marriage was “a trap”. Indeed, she admitted to me that she was “surprised every day” not only that their marriage had lasted so long, but that they remained so close. She certainly struck me then, as I have been struck again by the news this week, as utterly devoted to “her man”.

She made it clear to me, however, that such devotion had to be mutual. “I told him if he cheats on me I’ll cut his throat.” Why would he cheat? “I don’t know, but if he cheats on me, I’ll cut his throat. He knows.”

And if she cheated on him? “I have never cheated on him. Maybe he wouldn’t cut my throat, but I would cut his throat, because I’m against divorce.”

In general, democracies do not like seeing their former leaders — or their spouses — hauled before the courts, but Adam Sage, the *Times* Paris correspondent, is not sure how much the French will fret over the Sarkozys’ latest travails. For one thing, he finds it hard to imagine either of them doing prison time, partly because it is rare for anyone to do so if their sentence is

under two years. A suspended sentence, he thinks, would be highly unlikely to affect Bruni’s career.

“Her husband has two corruption convictions to his name and is still considered to be the honourable elder statesman of the centre right,” he says. “So she will be able to carry on singing, modelling and generally pontificating on whatever issues she likes. Getting a corruption conviction in France is like getting blind drunk in the UK. It’s not a great achievement, but everyone accepts that it happens.”

In his 2011 book *The Sarkozy Phenomenon*, the author Nick Hewlett noted that Sarkozy had exceptionally close relationships with media executives, owners, reporters and also TV and film stars: “Indeed, his own life became increasingly similar to that of television, film and rock stars, and his affair and subsequent marriage to [Bruni] only served to reinforce this image.”

Perhaps the Sarkozys’ life is not so much unravelling as simply spooling out the next dramatic episodes of a grisly reality soap. Almost as soon as he emerged into public life, Sarkozy was compared, for his ambition as much as his height, to Napoleon, and Bruni is in this reckoning his Josephine.

But Carla and Nicolas: the TV Series lacks the class to rival *The Crown*. It would probably prove nearer *Plus belle la vie*, a French soap opera set among the Eurotrash and criminal classes of Marseilles — an amusing diversion as the country’s political elite sinks into the merde. Let’s just hope, for the sake of Sarkozy’s throat, that the next plot turn isn’t the one in which Nicolas cheats not on France, but on his wife.

Sexy, cool, relevant? Listen to the Lords

By James Marriott



podcasts

Peer Review

★★★★☆

How many podcasts can open an episode with the words: “My guest today is the Duke of Wellington”? *Peer Review*, hosted by Jonathan Marland (Lord Marland of Odstock) has not, alas, landed a rare interview with the hero of the Napoleonic Wars, but with the present holder of the title: an affable-seeming man named Arthur Charles Valerian Wellesley. His full title consists of such irresistible sonorities as “Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo” and “Prince of Waterloo”. The British constitution has many faults, but none can match its talent for the picturesque.

Each episode has an interview with a different member of the House of Lords. The Lords, Marland admits, “often gets a bad rap”. It is thought to be an “unelected house”. His aim is to showcase “the extraordinary breadth and diversity of talent” that sits on the red benches. I suspect not all listeners will be persuaded, but the podcast can be enjoyed as a series of oddly angled lights shone through the obscurities of the British establishment.

The Lords is an odd and awkward compromise: part ancient aristocracy, part panel of experts, part grab bag of chums and cronies who have been rewarded with peerages by various prime ministers. And many of the podcast’s guests seem sceptical about the institution to which they belong. Charlie Falconer, Baron Falconer of Thoroton, who was Tony Blair’s flatmate and later lord chancellor, is wry on the priorities of some members of the Lords. On hearing that he was a lawyer, “the first hereditary peer I met ... scrambled in his inside pocket ... and produced a parking ticket” and asked, “I wonder if you could help me with this?” Falconer explained that parking law was not his speciality.

Helena Kennedy, Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws, a former human rights barrister, says “the idea of having hereditary peers is the most ridiculous facet of the House of Lords”. The “business of patronage has to go too”.

Victor Adebowale, Baron Adebowale of Thornes, is a “people’s peer”, appointed by New Labour as part of its attempt at House of Lords reform, though he happily admits he has “no idea” what that means. “It was Alastair Campbell’s confection ... an attempt to make the peers more relevant, sexy, cool,” he says sceptically. “It didn’t work.” His life story is fascinating, however: a remarkable trajectory from the racist abuse he experienced as the son of impoverished Nigerian immigrants living in Wakefield, through charity work and thence to the top of the British establishment.

One undeniable advantage of the Lords is that it introduces people without a political temperament into the legislature. My favourite guest, Richard Chartres, the former Bishop of London, is in an engagingly mystical mood. He recalls how he was attracted to religion by his “terrifying sense” of the “vastness of the universe”, and had an “out of the body experience” in which he “became no longer conscious” of his physical presence. “Instead I was out there with all this vastness.” You won’t find Keir Starmer or Rachel Reeves talking like that. Only in the House of Lords!

“It’s part ancient aristocracy, part panel of experts, part grab bag of chums and cronies

Don't worry, it's not really about AI and coding

Carol Midgley TV review



Sunny
Apple TV+
★★★★☆

A drama about robots and coding? “No thanks,” I thought. “Life’s too short.” To me, robots and coding are two very unsexy words indeed. Heart-sinkers, along with anything involving zombies.

What is more, **Sunny**, a Japanese comic drama, ticked another box on my list of TV turn-offs: it is centred around a horrible tragedy, namely the apparent recent deaths of a woman’s Japanese husband and child in a mysterious plane crash, yet she doesn’t look all that upset and still does kooky comedy faces and bites the head off a Santa biscuit. This kind of thing

always jars with me. And the trope of a wife discovering that things about her late husband don’t add up is hardly new.

And yet, and yet ... despite all this **Sunny** is strangely, seductively moreish. I think it’s the first robot-based show I haven’t resented watching to the end, because it isn’t really about robots and coding (even though there’s a lot of both). It’s also about grief and loneliness and the part AI might play in alleviating that. It is still far too long at ten episodes with a lot of digressions, inevitably about the yakuza. But it is cleverly written and Rashida Jones (the *US Office* and *Parks and Recreation*) as Suzie, the bereaved wife and mother searching for answers, is excellent in the lead role, her expressive face able to switch between the dark and the light and back again in a single, short scene.

Suzie is an American who moved to Japan and met her husband, Masa (Hidetoshi Nishijima), who worked “in refrigerators” and with whom she had a young son. After the husband and child apparently die, her husband’s company sends her a companion robot — a domestic homebot with a sense of humour called Sunny — which he was working on (surprise! He wasn’t working on fridges at all) to help comfort her in her bereavement. But she is anti-robot (I know the feeling), especially since her mother was killed



Rashida Jones is excellent as Suzie, a bereaved wife and mother

by a self-driving car. So initially Sunny is trying her best, and Suzie is gradually thawing to the benevolent presence in her home (at one point they lie together on the bed, spooning. Nothing more, thank the lord).

But we know that at some point one of these robots has gone rogue, because the series begins with one of them battering a man to death with a chair, the blood from his head blooming onto the horrid corporate carpet. The question is, why?

Well, we are in for a ride of “dark manuals”, bad people, severed fingers and things not being what they seem. Suzie eventually comes to depend on her gadget, and I don’t blame her, since she has a most unsympathetic and weird mother-in-law (Judy Ongg). There’s also a decent turn from the YouTube personality annie the clumsy as Suzie’s new-found friend.

But it is Jones who gives this series depth and complexity, and ensures that it’s not just another bot drama. It throws up interesting ideas about love, community, solitude and whether AI will benefit or corrupt us, but it does take us round the houses to do so.

You might be a tad frustrated that by the end the mystery is only partially solved and there will clearly be a second series. I don’t know if I’ve got the “bandwidth” (sorry) for part two. But you could do far worse than watch part one.

Radio choice

Ben Dowell



The Infinite Monkey Cage

Radio 4, 11am

The Oscar-winning actress **Judi Dench**, above, loves trees. She has her own woodland, and revealed that she plants a tree in her garden whenever a friend or relative dies. She is also **Brian Cox** and **Robin Ince**’s (honoured) guest in this edition of the comedy science programme, which leafs (sorry) through all the latest tree news. **Tony Kirkham**, the former head of **Kew Arboretum and Gardens**, talks about the rare trees he has encountered, while the navigator **Tristan Gooley** shows how elements like leaf shape and colour can help us to use trees as a compass.

OUR TV NEWSLETTER

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Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app
5.00am Rosie Wright with Early Breakfast
6.00am Aasmah Mir and Stig Abell with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00am** Matt Chorley **1.00pm** Ayesha Hazarika **2.00pm** Fi Glover. Discussion
4.00pm Times Radio Drive **7.00pm** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay. Engaging evening conversation **10.00pm** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Story **1.30pm** Highlights from Matt Chorley **2.00pm** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz
6.30am The Zoe Ball Breakfast Show **9.30am** Vernon Kay. Marc Almond is the third and final artist in the summer run of Piano Room performances **12.00pm** Tina Daheyley **2.00pm** Scott Mills **4.00pm** OJ Borg **6.30pm** OJ Borg’s Half Wower **7.00pm** Jo Whalley’s Shiny Happy Playlist **7.30pm** Jo Whalley **9.00pm** The Country Show with Bob Harris. Bob is joined in the studio by Lindsay Ell **10.00pm** Trevor Nelson’s Magnificent 7. Uplifting tunes and essential throwbacks **10.30pm** Trevor Nelson’s Rhythm Nation. A mix of K’n’B and soulful tunes **12.00pm** The Reverend Kate Bottley **3.00am** Alternative Sounds of the 90s with Dermot O’Leary (r) **4.00pm** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz
6.30am Breakfast
 Petroc Terlanjany presents the breakfast show **9.30am** Essential Classics
 Georgia Mann plays music and features **1.00pm** Classical Live
 Tom McKinney showcases the best performances from the UK and beyond including Radio 3 New Generation Artist, the violinist Geneva Lewis, at the recent Norfolk and Norwich Festival, and the piano duo team of Michael Pandya and Keval Shah. Plus, music-making from Belfast courtesy of the Ulster Orchestra under the baton of its music director, Daniele Rustioni. From the Norfolk and Norwich Festival — Debussy (Petite suite — ballet); Hahn (3 *Préludes sur des airs irlandais*); Satie (Trois morceaux en forme de poire); JC Bach (*Wie bist Du denn O Gott*); Ligeti (Sonatina for piano 4 hands); Enescu (Romanian Rhapsody No. 1 in A major Op. 11 No.1); From the Norfolk and Norwich Festival — Pissendel (Violin Sonata in A minor for solo violin); Holmes (*La Vision de la Reine*); Mozart (Piano Quartet in G minor K. 478); Dvořák (Symphony No. 7 in D minor Op. 70); and Walker (*Lyric for Strings*)

4.00 Composer of the Week:

Thomas Linley Jr (1756-1778)
 Donald Macleod sees the Linley family move to London to take residence at the Theatre Royal. Tom is overworked but a greater worry are the friends, colleagues and supporters who he sees attacked, as homophobia and moral panic infects certain quarters of the press. Linley the Younger (Overture to *The Duenna*; *A Lyric Ode on the Fairies*, *Aerial Beings and Witches of Shakespeare* — extracts from parts 1 & 2; and *Let God arise*); and Linley the Elder (*Think not my love, when secret grief*)

5.00 In Tune

Early music group Ensemble Hesperii join Sean Rafferty in the studio

7.00 Classical Mixtape

Featuring pieces including Beethoven’s *Pathétique* Piano Sonata

7.30 Live Radio 3 in Concert

The BBC Singers make a welcome return to Norwich Cathedral, broadcast live on BBC Radio 3. Conducted by Master of Music at Norwich Cathedral, Ashley Grote, and featuring the organist David Dunnett and the harpist Elizabeth Green, the programme includes works by the composer Benjamin Britten, settings of texts by medieval mystic Julian of Norwich, and the powerful *Missa Brevis* by the Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály. Britten (*Hymn to St Peter*, Op 56a & *A Hymn to the Virgin*); Hilary Campbell (*Our Endless Day*); Carol Jones (*All Shall Be Well*); Gemma McGregor (*Love Was His Meaning*); Judith Weir (*We Seeken Here Rest*); Britten (*Rejoice in the Lamb*, Op 30); Liszt (*Prelude and Fugue on the name BACH*, S 260); and Kodály (*Missa Brevis*)

9.45 The Essay: Michael Longley’s Life of Poetry
 Featuring the poems *The Leveret*, and *Remembering Carrigskewann*

10.00 Night Tracks

Sara Mohr-Pietsch presents a soundtrack for late-night listening

11.30 Round Midnight

The British vocalist Jacqui Dankworth will be Soweto’s guest, selecting a treasure each night from her personal record collection. Her fourth and final choice is by Norma Winstone, John Taylor and Tony Coe, titled *Somewhere Called Home*

12.30am Through the Night

Presented by Sara Mohr-Pietsch

1.00 The World at One

Mike Costello explores the explosive drama of the 100 metres sprint (4/5)

2.00 The Archers (r)

2.15 Drama: Faith, Hope and Glory
 By Carol Russell. Feeling disillusioned, Faith decides to retire to Antigua. Then her estranged daughter arrives in London (3/6)

3.00 Ramblings

Clare Balding explores a stretch of Ireland’s Atlantic coastline (4/7)

3.27 Radio 4 Appeal

On behalf of Cure Parkinson’s (r)

3.30 Feedback

Views with Andrea Catherwood (4/9)

4.00 The Briefing Room

David Aaronovitch and guests discuss developments in cancer care (2/16)

4.30 BBC Inside Science

The latest scientific research

5.00 PM

6.00 Six O’Clock News
6.30 Rhysearch
 Considering cross-national pride (4/5)
7.00 The Archers
 Stella finds herself fighting a losing battle
7.15 Front Row
 Arts programme

5.45 Farming Today

6.00 Today
 With Martha Kearney and Nick Robinson

9.00 Reflections

Conversations with leading political figures reflecting on their lives in politics (1/4)

9.30 The Long History of Ignorance

— from Confucius to Q-Anon
 Rory Stewart makes a radical case for embracing ignorance (1/6)

10.00 Woman’s Hour

Magazine exploring issues from a female perspective, presented by Anita Rani

11.00 The Infinite Monkey Cage

Brian Cox and Robin Ince consider the science and wonder of trees with their guests, Judi Dench, Tony Kirkham and Tristan Gooley. See *Radio Choice* (1/7)

11.45 Book of the Week:

The Third Information Crisis
 Written and read by Naomi Alderman. The author reflects on the speed and scale of the internet, the sense of community and equality it can create — but also the current dangers of misinformation, group-think, and ultimately, the threat to truth (4/5)

12.04pm The Bottom Line

Business issues that matter (6/8)

12.32 Sliced Bread

A listener questions the accuracy of a DNA ancestry test. Last in the series

1.00 The World at One

1.45 Ten Second Showdown
 Mike Costello explores the explosive drama of the 100 metres sprint (4/5)

2.00 The Archers (r)

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7.15 Front Row
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8.00 The Media Show

The latest news from the fast-changing media world, shedding light on the issues of the day with the help of key players (r)

9.00 Loose Ends

With Iwan Thomas, Chloe Petts, Rhiane Fatinikun and Raghu Dixit (r)

9.45 Empire of Tea

How Britain’s sale of opium to buy tea changed China’s view of the West (4/10) (r)

10.00 The World Tonight

With Shaun Ley

10.45 Book at Bedtime:

Glorious Exploits
 By Ferdia Lennon (9/10)

11.00 The Today Podcast

Amol Rajan and Nick Robinson’s take on the biggest news stories. Last in the series

11.30 Three Million

Kavita Puri meets the granddaughter of a senior colonial figure (r)

12.00 News and Weather

12.30am Book of the Week:
The Third Information Crisis (r)

12.48 Shipping Forecast

1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only
8.00am For the Love of Leo **8.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry **8.45** Valley of the Dolls **9.00** Rhysearch **9.30** The Test of Time **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Great Lives **10.30** Sexton’s Tales **11.00** Dover and the Smoking Gun **11.45** A Small Town Murder **12.00** Patterson **12.30pm** Dad’s Army **1.00** For the Love of Leo **1.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry **1.45** Valley of the Dolls **2.00** Genius **2.30** The Philanthropist **4.00** Great Lives **4.30** Sexton’s Tales **5.00** Dover and the Smoking Gun **5.45** A Small Town Murder **6.00** Patterson **6.30** Dad’s Army. The vicar and the verger spark unrest among the platoon **7.00** For the Love of Leo. The truth of Tamsin’s visit to Paisley comes to light. Last in the series **7.30** The Last Champion: The Life of Fred Perry. By Jon Henderson **7.45** Valley of the Dolls. By Jacqueline Susann. Originally broadcast in 2005 **8.00** Genius. With guest Simon Munnelly **8.30** The Philanthropist. By Christopher Hampton **10.00** Comedy Club: Rhysearch. Rhys James considers cross-national pride **10.30** Knowing Me, Knowing You. Spoof chat show with Steve Coogan **11.00** Detective Sergeant Nick Mohammed. The Detective Sergeant goes on the trail of a fugitive **11.30** I’ve Never Seen Star Wars. Frank Skinner tries new experiences

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television & radio

Viewing Guide

Joe Clay

Los Angeles: Stories from the City

PBS America, 8.55pm

Top pick Los Angeles is one of the richest and most culturally diverse cities in the world, with its 3.8 million citizens

hailing from 140 countries and speaking 224 languages. It is the second-most populous city in the United States, behind New York City, and is the commercial, financial and cultural centre of southern California. However, just over 200 years ago it was a small outpost of Mexico, which took possession of California from

Spain after the Mexican War of Independence. After being taken by the US in the Mexican-American War of 1846-48, it remained a scrappy little town, forged in a barren and inhospitable desert, with a population of only 15,000 until the discovery of oil in the 1890s. This fascinating two-part documentary tells the story of

the City of Angels, which is synonymous with the entertainment industry. However, it was agriculture, oil, water, the rag trade and war that fuelled its growth. The first episode is *Invention of the City*, and explores the origins of LA (involving the slaughter and exploitation of the natives and evangelising priests),

before revealing how the influx of treasure seekers, railroad barons (including Henry Huntington), gangsters, oil moguls and real estate speculators opened up the state, their schemes and swindles driving the growth of the city. It also reveals the important role played by the humble citrus fruit.

Vikings: Valhalla

Netflix

Series three of the big-budget offshoot of *Vikings*, set a century or so after the events of the original, will be the final chapter in the story of Leif Eriksson (Sam Corlett), his warrior sister Freydis (Frida Gustavsson) and Prince Harald (Leo Suter). As the

series continues, our three protagonists have arrived in Constantinople, all with different missions. The main casualty of the second series was Harald's half-brother Olaf, slain at the hand of Freydis, while joining the cast is Goran Visnjic (Dr Luka Kovac in *ER*) as Erik the Red, the father of Leif and Freydis.

BBC1

Early

6.00am Breakfast **9.30** Morning Live **10.45** Homes Under the Hammer. Featuring run-down flats in Glasgow, London and Bournemouth (AD) **11.45** Bargain Hunt. Roo Irvine hosts the show from Nottinghamshire (r) (AD) **12.30pm** Live Wimbledon 2024. Coverage of day 11 of the Grand Slam tournament at the All England Club, featuring doubles action from the outside courts ahead of the ladies' singles semi-finals **1.00** BBC News at One; Weather **1.35** BBC Regional News; Weather **1.45** BBC News at One; Weather **2.00** Live Wimbledon 2024. Clare Balding presents further coverage of day 11 of the third Grand Slam tournament of the year, at the All England Club, where the ladies' singles semi-finals take place. Ons Jabeur reached the final for the second successive year in 2023 after coming back from a set down to defeat second seed Aryna Sabalenka 6-7, 6-4, 6-3. A number of doubles matches are also scheduled to take place today, and last year saw a British pairing reach a final top seed Alfie Hewett and Gorgon Reid defeat Spain's Martin de la Fuente and Argentina's Gustavo Fernández 7-5, 6-3 in the wheelchair doubles semi-finals **6.00** BBC News at Six; Weather **6.30** BBC Regional News; Weather

BBC2

6.25am FILM: *The Velvet Touch* (PG, 1948) A famous actress accidentally kills her husband — and appears to have a ready-made alibi. Thriller starring Rosalind Russell, Sydney Greenstreet and Leo Glenn (b/w) **8.00** Sign Zone: Gardeners' World. The team reports from the RHS Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival (r) (SL) **9.00** BBC News **12.15pm** Politics Live. The latest stories from Westminster and beyond **1.00** Live Wimbledon 2024. Clare Balding presents coverage of day 11 of the Grand Slam tournament at the All England Club, including the opening ladies' singles semi-final. The corresponding last-four match in 2023 saw two unseeded players meet, and it was Markéta Vondrová who belied her world ranking by comfortably prevailing 6-3, 6-3 over Elina Svitolina to reach her second Grand Slam final, having previously been runner-up to Ashleigh Barty in the 2019 French Open final **3.00** Live Wimbledon 2024. Clare Balding presents further coverage of day 11 of the third Grand Slam tournament of the year, held on the grass-courts of the All England Club. Among the matches taking place today is the mixed doubles final, which was won by Mate Pavić and Lyudmyla Kichenok last year

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain. News, current affairs and lifestyle features **9.00** Lorraine. Entertainment, current affairs and fashion news, as well as showbiz stories and gossip. Presented by Lorraine Kelly **10.00** This Morning. Daily magazine, featuring chat, showbusiness news, lifestyle features, topical discussion, health, beauty advice and more. Including Local Weather **12.30pm** Loose Women. The women put the world to rights once more **1.00** ITV News; Weather **1.25** Regional News; Weather **1.30** Live ITV Racing: From Newmarket. Francesca Cumani and Ed Chamberlin present coverage of the opening day of the July Festival, including feature the **3.35** Princess of Wales's Stakes, plus races at **1.50**, **2.25** and **3.00**. With analysis from Adele Mulrennan and Jason Weaver, reports by Oli Bell and Sally Ann Grassick, and commentary from Richard Hoiles **4.00** Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r) **5.00** The Chase. Contestants from Edinburgh, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire and Loughborough take on one of the country's finest quiz brains (r) **6.00** Regional News; Weather **6.30** ITV News; Weather

Channel 4

6.30am Cheers (r) **7.20** Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD) **9.10** Frasier (r) (AD) **11.10** Undercover Boss USA. The co-founder of an art class franchise works alongside her staff (r) **12.05pm** Channel 4 News Summary **12.10** Help! We Bought a Village. A family from Manchester juggles renovations and running a holiday complex in France (r) **1.10** Car SOS. Fuzz Townsend and Tim Shaw restore a Japanese rally car (r) (AD) **2.10** Countdown. Mylene Klass is in Dictionary Corner **3.00** A Place in the Sun. Jean Johansson travels to Spain's southern Costa Blanca to help a former NHS midwife and a brewery worker find the perfect property where they can spend their retirement (r) **4.00** Renovation Nation. In Lincolnshire, work begins on a bathroom in a Georgian farmhouse (AD) **5.00** A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? Camp site owners are thinking up something new (r) **6.00** Four in a Bed. The week's final visit is to the Cross Inn in Heptonstall, West Yorkshire, where the eccentric hosts hope to impress with their "one-of-a-kind" style (r) **6.30** The Simpsons. A dare lands Bart in hospital and he makes up a story that he went to Heaven and met Jesus, prompting a movie deal (r) (AD)

Channel 5

6.00am Milkshake! **9.15** Jeremy Vine **11.15** Storm Huntley. Debate on the day's talking points **12.45pm** Friends. Monica and Chandler interview a potential sperm donor (r) (AD) **1.10** Friends. Part one of two. The gang visits Barbados (r) (AD) **1.40** 5 News at Lunchtime **1.45** Home and Away. Dana's fears are realised when the prosecution quickly frazzles her with their aggressive line of questioning. Mali explains to Kirby why he will not be taking lessons for a while (r) (AD) **2.20** FILM: *My Fatal Memory* (12, TVM, 2022) After a violent car accident robs a woman of her memory, a handsome stranger enters her life, insisting that they are lovers. As her memory returns bit by bit, his story unravels and she is forced to fill in the gaps and uncover the truth. Thriller starring Kate Watson **4.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. A woman has built a successful chain of tattoo studios in Benalmadena. Now she plans to expand her portfolio by going into tea production — but not traditional tea (r) **5.00** 5 News at 5 **6.00** Police Interceptors. A motorist speeds through Nottinghamshire, a routine stop turns nasty and an artist in a rush is clocked at more than 100mph (r) **6.55** 5 News Update



A dangerous business: inside the

Our gripping new investigative podcast, *Cocaine Inc.* sheds light on the global cocaine industry, where profits are counted up in millions and losses measured out in murders. Follow the trail with us across four continents.

7PM	7.00 The One Show Live magazine show hosted by Alex Jones and Roman Kemp		7.00 Channel 4 News	7.00 Happy Campers: The Caravan Park Down on the Cornish coast at Tencreek Holiday Park, a new arrival and his faithful dog have turned up for a quick birthday getaway, and a chance for some recuperation after back surgery left him with difficulty walking 5 News Update
	7.30 Question Time Fiona Bruce presents the topical debate in Colchester, inviting a panel of politicians and other guests to answer questions from an invited audience on subjects that have made the headlines over the week		7.30 Emmerdale Kim covers for Billy's absence, and Manpreet tries to check how Charles is doing. Meanwhile, Gail seizes on an idea (AD)	7.55 5 News Update
8PM	8.15 EastEnders Stevie makes plans to leave Walford and apologises to Billy and Teddy for everything he has done. Reiss' stress levels are through the roof as he receives an £18,000 bill (AD)	8.00 Today at Wimbledon Qasa Alam presents highlights of the 11th day's play at the All England Club, including the ladies' singles semi-finals and the mixed doubles final	8.30 Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain The chef offers tips on cooking with steak and tomatoes (AD)	8.00 The Suprvet: Noel Fitzpatrick A toy poodle needs treatment for a damaged hip joint. He is so small that few vets are willing to perform such a procedure but the family hopes Noel can help. Last in the series (AD)
	8.45 EastEnders Phil continues to drive a wedge between himself and everyone he loves, and Teddy sees another opportunity to ask Sharon out (AD)	9.00 Sacred Rivers with Simon Reeve 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 (1/3) (r) (AD)	9.00 Douglas Is Cancelled Madeline and Douglas meet up, three years after their first encounter. Back then, things took an unexpected turn. This time there are explosive consequences. Comedy drama starring Hugh Bonneville and Karen Gillan. See Viewing Guide (3/4) (AD)	8.00 Supermarket Own-Brands: The Big Taste Test Some of the best assorted luxury own-brands are put through their paces in a series of tests against the brands they competing with. See Viewing Guide
9PM	9.15 A Good Girl's Guide to Murder Student Pip Fitz-Amobi investigates the disappearance of fellow schoolgirl Andie Bell, supposedly murdered by her boyfriend five years earlier. Crime drama starring Emma Myers and Zain Iqbal (1/6) (r) (AD)	10.00 Coupling Jeff worries about his pulling technique, while Julia debates the pros and cons of kissing a junior member of staff (8/9) (r) (AD)	10.00 ITV News at Ten	9.00 Susan Calman's Grand Day Out In historic Nottinghamshire, Susan hears tales of superheroes, explores mysterious caves, lets off steam in a wondrous example of Victorian invention, and walks in the footsteps of ice skaters Torvill and Dean
10PM	10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather	10.30 Newsnight Presented by Kirsty Wark	10.30 Regional News	10.00 Truth or Dare: The Murder of Mary Gregory The case of a grandmother with dementia who died in horrendous circumstances, which led to the question of whether or not her demise the result of an accidental fire (r)
	10.40 A Good Girl's Guide to Murder Now a team, Pip and Ravi turn their attention to Andie's best friends and find out she had a secret life that Sal was unhappy about (2/6) (r) (AD)	11.05 Today at the Test England v West Indies. Highlights of day two of the first Test in the three-match series, which was held at Lord's	10.45 Regional Programme	11.00 Outrageous Homes Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen meets a pair who live in a would-be castle in Weston-super-Mare, and visits a house of skulls and a gentleman's lodge. Plus, a home covered from floor to ceiling with glorious patterns, and an ex-council house. Last in the series (AD)
11PM	11.20 The Traitors US The prize pot is in sight for the players, and as another is banished, only six remain. The Faithful seem to be closing in as doubt about one Traitor spreads among even their most ardent supporters (10/12) (r)	12.05am Colin from Accounts Ashley leaves a mess in Gordon's sock drawer (r) (AD) 12.35 Sign Zone: Springwatch. Highlights of the series. Last in the series (r) (SL) 1.35 D-Day: The Unheard Tapes. The bloody battle for Normandy that followed D-Day. Last in the series (r) (AD, SL) 2.35-3.20 The Bidding Room (r) (SL)	11.15 The Man with the Golden Gun (PG, 1974) James Bond investigates the death of a world-renowned scientist and is drawn into a battle of wits with a wily assassin. Spy adventure starring Roger Moore, Christopher Lee and Britt Ekland (AD)	11.05 Celebrity Gogglebox Opinions on television programmes including <i>Love Island</i> , <i>The Nevermets</i> , <i>This Morning</i> and <i>The Yorkshire Vet</i> . Plus, <i>ITV News</i> coverage of the Biden v Trump debate (r) (AD, SL)
Late	12.20am Match of the Day Top 10: Moments of Euro 2020 Gary Lineker, Miach Richards and Alan Shearer count down the most memorable moments of the last European Championships 12.55-6.00 BBC News		12.00am Shop on TV 3.00 Tour de France Highlights. Gary Imlach presents action from stage 12, which followed a 203.6km route from Aurillac to Villeneuve-sur-Lot. Commentary comes from Ned Boulting and David Millar 3.50 Unwind with <i>ITV 5.05-6.00</i> The Chris McCausland Show. With Maisie Adam (r) (AD, SL)	12.25am Traffic Cops An officer follows a car suspected of being used in house burglary (r) 1.20 <i>Play010 Live Casino Show</i> 3.20 Great British Gardens with Carol Klein (r) 4.50 <i>Wildlife SOS</i> (r) (SL) 5.15 <i>House Doctor</i> (r) (SL) 5.40 Entertainment News on 5.45-6.00 Paw Patrol (r) (SL)

television & radio

Mastermind: To Think Like a Killer

Disney+
Ann Burgess was working as a psychiatric nurse specialising in rape victimology in the 1970s when she was recruited by the FBI to help it to understand the minds of violent sexual offenders and

killers. She is now credited as the brains behind the development of modern serial-killer profiling. This documentary series tells her story, revealing how she helped to solve some of America's most infamous true-crime cases, including those involving the serial killers Ed Kemper and Ted Bundy.

Supermarket Own-Brands: The Big Taste Test

Channel 5, 8pm
The products being tested (overseen by *Which?*) include olive oil, Pimm's, wagyu beef, champagne, perfume and chocolate, with a panel of taste testers seeing if they can tell the difference between luxury

brands and their imitators. "They're not easy to get because there's some craftsmanship that's gone into luxury," says Dr Amna Khan, a consumer behaviour expert at Manchester Metropolitan University. So is it possible to have a champagne lifestyle on a lemonade budget?

Douglas Is Cancelled

ITV1, 9pm
First conceived of as a stage play, Steven Moffat's drama about the travails of Hugh Bonneville's eponymous newsreader, who faces possible cancellation for a joke he cannot remember, shows its theatrical origins tonight. The pivotal,

penultimate third episode is in large part a two-hander that may remind you of David Mamet's *Oleanna* in its brutally painful dissection of male/female power-play as Madeline (Karen Gillan) and the producer Toby (Ben Miles) face off in a hotel room during an awards do. Ben Dowell

Film A Quiet Place Part II

Film4, 9pm
Evelyn (Emily Blunt) is grieving after the loss of her husband and determined to protect her daughter Regan (Millicent Simmonds), son Marcus (Noah Jupe) and newborn baby from those reptilian invaders once again. (15, 2020)

Sky Max

6.00am NCIS: Los Angeles (r) 7.00 SEAL Team (r) (AD) 8.00 The Flash (r) 9.00 Stargate SG-1 (r) 11.00 NCIS: Los Angeles (r) 12.00 The Flash (r) 1.00pm MacGyver (r) 3.00 Hawaii Five-0 (r) 4.00 S.W.A.T. (r) (AD) 5.00 SEAL Team (r) (AD) 6.00 Stargate SG-1. General Hammond announces he is stepping down from his post (r) 7.00 Stargate SG-1. Carter uncovers the truth behind an alien race that helped the Earth (r) 8.00 The 90s: Cinema's Greatest Decade. Alex Zane looks back at the era's best films (r) (AD) 9.00 The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live. The CRM plans to declare martial law and eliminate survivor communities (6/6) (r) (AD) 10.00 The Walking Dead. Daryl struggles to adjust to the Claimers' rules (r) 11.00 Last King of the Cross. John begins to turn his dreams into a reality (r) (AD) 12.00 Entourage (r) 1.00am Brit Cops: War on Crime. Following police officers in Lincolnshire (r) 2.00 Road Wars (r) 3.00 Hawaii Five-0 (r) 4.00 S.W.A.T. (r) (AD) 5.00 Highway Patrol (r)

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets (r) (AD) 7.55 Six Feet Under (r) 10.05 Gomorrah (r) 12.15pm Game of Thrones (r) (AD) 1.20 The Sopranos (r) 3.30 Six Feet Under (r) 5.40 Gomorrah. Double bill of the crime drama (r) 7.55 Game of Thrones. Theon is reunited with his father on the Iron Islands (r) (AD) 9.00 House of the Dragon. Fantasy drama starring Matt Smith and Emma D'Arcy (r) (AD) 10.05 Succession. Kendall tries to find more allies in his fight to take over control of Waystar. Meanwhile, Greg turns to his grandfather for help (2/9) (r) (AD) 11.15 Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty. Drama chronicling the professional and personal lives of the 1980s Los Angeles Lakers starring John C Reilly (1/10) (r) (AD) 12.25am Watchmen. Reclusive trillionaire Lady Trieu finally appears and makes a mysterious offer (r) (AD) 1.30 The Leftovers. US mystery drama (r) (AD) 2.50 Game of Thrones (r) (AD) 4.00 Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets (r) (AD)

Sky Documentaries

6.00am Inside the Freemasons (r) (AD) 7.00 Discovering: Kevin Costner (r) (AD) 8.00 The Directors (r) (AD) 9.00 The 2000s (r) 10.00 I Am Richard Pryor (r) 11.50 My Icon: Leon Pryce (r) (AD) 12.00 Bright Lights: Starring Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds (r) (AD) 2.00pm Nike's Big Bet (r) 3.45 My Icon: Sarah Storey (r) (AD) 4.00 The Directors (r) (AD) 5.00 Discovering: Kevin Costner (r) (AD) 6.00 The 2000s. Technological advancements (r) 7.00 Urban Secrets. Exploring London (1/8) (r) 7.55 Starz: Soulsville USA. The label prepares to close its doors. JFK in the series (4/4) (r) (AD) 9.00 FILM: JFK Revisited — Through the Looking Glass (15, 2021) Oliver Stone's documentary examining the assassination of US president John F Kennedy (AD) 11.00 Ibiza Narcos. The drugs trade (r) 12.10am Meth Storm (r) (AD) 2.00 Heroin: Cape Cod, USA. The impact of heroin addiction (r) (AD) 3.30 The Insurrectionist Next Door (r) 5.00 Discovering: Kevin Costner (r) (AD)

Sky Arts

6.00am André Rieu & the Dutch Royal Family 8.00 The Joy of Painting (AD) 9.00 Tales of the Unexpected 10.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents 11.00 Discovering: John Travolta 12.00 The Joy of Painting (AD) 1.00pm Tales of the Unexpected 2.00 The South Bank Show Originals 3.00 Hephworth. The life of sculptor Barbara Hephworth 4.00 Discovering: Matthew Broderick 5.00 The Joy of Painting (AD) 6.00 Tales of the Unexpected 7.00 Battle of the Bappies. The three bands sharpen their competitive performances 8.00 The Directors. Stephen Frears (AD) 9.00 Discovering: Tom Cruise (AD) 10.00 Sherlock Holmes vs Arthur Conan Doyle 11.00 Comedy Legends. Tribute to Richard Pryor 12.00 The Pilgrimage of Gilbert & George (AD) 2.00am FILM: Burning Man — Art on Fire (15, 2020) Documentary offering an insight into the art at the centre of the event (AD) 3.15 Auction 3.45 National Trust: National Treasures (AD) 5.00 The Art of Architecture

Sky Main Event

6.00am SSN Euro Report 7.00 Good Morning Euros 8.30 Live DP World Tour Golf. The Genesis Scottish Open. Coverage of the featured groups on day one of the Rolex Series event, held at Renaissance Club in North Berwick 10.15 Live Test Cricket: England v West Indies. Coverage of day two of the first Test in the three-match series, held at Lord's. The teams have not met here in a Test match since 2017, when an excellent all-round display from current captain Ben Stokes in the first innings, which saw him score 60 runs and take six wickets, helped the hosts to a nine-wicket triumph 6.30pm Live Women's International T20 Cricket: England v New Zealand. Coverage of the third match of the five-game series, held at the Spitfire Ground in St Lawrence, Canterbury 10.00 Live PGA Tour Golf. The ISCO Championship. Coverage of day one from Keene Trace Club in Nicholasville, Kentucky 12.30am SSN Euro Report 1.00 SSN Euro Report 2.00-6.00 SSN Euro Report

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
As BBC1 except: 10.40pm The Crime I Can't Forget (r) 11.40 A Good Girl's Guide to Murder (r) (AD) 12.25am The Traitors US (r) 1.25 Match of the Day Top 10: Moments of Euro 2020 1.55-6.00 BBC News
BBC1 Scotland
As BBC1 except: 7.00pm-7.30 River City (r) (AD) 11.20 The Traitors US (r) 12.20am The Traitors US (r) 1.20 Weather for the Week Ahead 1.25-6.00 BBC News
BBC1 Wales
As BBC1 except: 10.40pm Rewind: 60 Years of Welsh Pop (r) 11.10 A Good Girl's Guide to Murder (r) 11.50-12.50am The Traitors US (r) (AD)
ITV1 Anglia
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 Anglia Late Edition. Emma Hutchinson reports
ITV1 Border
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 Around the House. Political discussion with Paul Brand
ITV1 Central
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 Central Lobby. Alison Mackenzie hosts
ITV1 Granada
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 The Granada Debate. Political debate with Alison Mackenzie
ITV1 London
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 The Late Debate. News and events at Westminster
ITV1 Meridian
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 The Last Word. Political stories with Phil Hornby
ITV1 Tyne Tees
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 Last Orders House. Political discussion with Paul Brand
ITV1 Wales
As ITV1 except: 8.30pm-9.00 Wales This Week: Election 2024, What It All Means 10.45-11.15 Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain (AD)
ITV1 West & Westcountry
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 The Westcountry Debate
ITV1 Yorkshire
As ITV1 except: 10.45pm-11.15 Last Orders
STV
As ITV1 except: 1.30pm-4.00 Live STV Racing: From Newmarket. The July Festival 8.30-8.59 Animal 999 10.30 STV News 10.45-11.14 Sean's Scotland (r) 1.20am-3.00am Show on TV 3.50-5.05 Night Vision
UTV
As ITV1 except: 8.30pm-9.00 UTV Life 10.45-11.15 Tom Kerridge Cooks Britain (AD)



cocaine industry

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THE TIMES THE SUNDAY TIMES

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BBC3

7.00pm Top Gear. The trio test high-performance hatchbacks the Citroën DS3 Racing, Fiat 500C Abarth and Renaultsport Clio 200 Cup, and Ross Noble is the celebrity driver 8.00 Top Gear. Comedy star Rowan Atkinson takes the wheel of the Reasonably Priced Car, Jeremy Clarkson compares the Jaguar XKR-S with the Nissan GT-R, and the presenters build a train — using caravans 9.00 FILM: Maze Runner — The Scorch Trials (12, 2015) The children who escaped from a mysterious labyrinth journey through a dangerous wasteland. Sci-fi adventure sequel starring Dylan O'Brien and Kaya Scodelario 11.05 Man Like Moben. Sitcom about a reformed drug dealer trying to look after his younger sister. Guz Khan stars (AD) 11.25 Man Like Moben. The reformed drug dealer considers an arranged marriage. Paddy 11.50 Paddy & Molly: Show No Mercy. Paddy discovers a serious shoulder injury (3/8) 12.20am Paddy & Molly: Show No Mercy. Molly trains in Liverpool (4/8) 12.50 Top Gear 1.50 Man Like Moben (AD) 2.35-3.55 A Good Girl's Guide to Murder (AD, SL)

BBC4

7.00pm Today at the Test. England v West Indies. Highlights of day two of the First Test in the three-match series, held at Lord's 8.00 Killer Storms and Cold Winters: The History of Extreme Weather — Timewatch. A look at how some of the UK's worst weather disasters occurred many years ago, despite the belief that the brunt of climate change has been felt in the 21st century (2/6) (AD) 9.00 FILM: The Woman in Black (12, 2012) A lawyer visits a village to put a deceased client's affairs in order, but finds the house haunted by a vengeful spirit. Horror starring Daniel Radcliffe and Ciarán Hinds (AD) 10.30 Mark Kermode's Secrets of Cinema: Horror. The critic dissects the genre (AD) 11.30 Talking Books. Razia Iqbal is joined by Susan Hill, the author of *The Woman in Black* 11.55 The Sky at Night. Exploring images released by the James Webb Space Telescope 12.25am Killer Storms and Cruel Winters: The History of Extreme Weather — Timewatch (AD) 1.25 Full Circle with Michael Palin 2.15-3.15 Sleuths, Spies & Sorcerers: Andrew Marr's Paperback Heroes. The fantasy genre (AD, SL)

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: Beauty and the Beast (U, 1937) Comedy starring Gordon Harker (b/w) 7.30 FILM: Vintage Wine (12, 1935) Comedy starring Seymour Hicks (b/w) 9.00 FILM: A Christmas Wish (U, 1950) Comedy starring Jimmy Durante (b/w) 10.50 FILM: The Adventures of PC Angel — Investigating the Case of the Guardian Angel (PG, 1949) Crime drama starring Hugh Latimer (b/w) 12.15pm FILM: The Stranger Came Home (PG, 1954) Mystery starring Paulette Goddard (b/w) 1.55 FILM: River Patrol (PG, 1948) Crime drama starring John Blythe (b/w) 3.00 Crown Court 4.30 Enemy at the Door 5.35 FILM: It Always Rains on Sunday (PG, 1947) Crime drama with Googie Withers (b/w) 7.30 Take Two: Nanette Newman Interview 8.00 The Brothers 9.05 Van der Valk (3/12) 10.10 The People of the Deed 12.15am FILM: Hi Mom! (18, 1970) Comedy starring Robert De Niro 1.55 FILM: A Reflection of Fear (18, 1972) Thriller 3.40 FILM: Double X — The Name of the Game (PG, 1992) 5.30 Four Star Theatre (b/w)

Film4

11.00am Comanche Station (PG, 1960) Western starring Randolph Scott 12.35pm The Iron Petticoat (U, 1956) Comedy starring Bob Hope and Katharine Hepburn 2.25 The Ten Commandments (U, 1956) Historical drama starring Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner 6.45 GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra (12, 2009) Two soldiers join a top-secret mission to retrieve a deadly weapon. Action adventure starring Channing Tatum and Sienna Miller (AD) 9.00 A Quiet Place Part II (15, 2020) The Abbotts face the outside world and realise the creatures that hunt by sound are not the only threats lurking. Horror sequel with Emily Blunt and Gillian Murphy. See *Viewing Guide* (AD) 10.50 The Lodge (15, 2019) A woman is snowed in with her fiancé's children at a remote holiday village. Relations thaw between them as strange and frightening events begin. Horror with Riley Keough and Jaeden Martell 1.00am-3.50 Mother! (18, 2017) A secluded couple's relationship is tested when uninvited guests arrive at their home, disrupting their peaceful existence. Thriller starring Jennifer Lawrence and Javier Bardem (AD)

More4

8.55am Food Unwrapped (AD) 9.30 A Place in the Sun 10.25 A New Life in the Sun 11.25 Find It, Fix It, Flop It 12.30pm Come Dine with Me and Katharine Hepburn 2.25 The Ten Commandments (U, 1956) Historical drama starring Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner 6.45 GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra (12, 2009) Two soldiers join a top-secret mission to retrieve a deadly weapon. Action adventure starring Channing Tatum and Sienna Miller (AD) 9.00 A Quiet Place Part II (15, 2020) The Abbotts face the outside world and realise the creatures that hunt by sound are not the only threats lurking. Horror sequel with Emily Blunt and Gillian Murphy. See *Viewing Guide* (AD) 10.50 The Lodge (15, 2019) A woman is snowed in with her fiancé's children at a remote holiday village. Relations thaw between them as strange and frightening events begin. Horror with Riley Keough and Jaeden Martell 1.00am-3.50 Mother! (18, 2017) A secluded couple's relationship is tested when uninvited guests arrive at their home, disrupting their peaceful existence. Thriller starring Jennifer Lawrence and Javier Bardem (AD)

ITV2

6.00am CITV 9.00 World's Funniest Videos 9.30 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records 10.00 Love Bites (AD, SL) 12.00 Dress to Impress (AD) 1.00pm Wheel of Fortune (AD) 2.00 Supermarket Sweep 3.00 Charmed 4.00 Dawson's Creek 5.00 Dress to Impress (AD) 6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) 7.00 Wheel of Fortune. Graham Norton hosts the game show as an engineer, a safeguarding co-ordinator and a content writer compete (AD) 8.00 The Masked Singer US. The show takes a 2000s trip down memory lane 9.00 Love Island. As week six continues, the flirting, fighting and fun in the sun shows no sign of letting up as the contestants keep their eyes firmly on the £50,000 prize 10.05 Tell Me Everything. Jonny fights to win Box back while unaware of her secret 11.05 Family Guy. Joe cheats on Bonnie (AD) 11.35 Family Guy. Peter, Joe, Brian and Quagmire have their memories erased (AD) 12.05am American Dad! (AD) 1.05 Don't Hate the Playaz 1.45 Shopping with Keith Lemon 2.45 Unwind with ITV 3.00 Teleshopping

ITV3

6.00am Classic Emmerdale (AD) 7.35 Classic Coronation Street (AD) 8.05 Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) 10.30 The Royal (AD) 11.35 Heartbeat (AD) 1.40pm Classic Emmerdale (AD) 3.15 Classic Coronation Street (AD) 3.50 Inspector Morse. Sorcha Cusack guest stars (AD) 6.00 Heartbeat. Blakelock offers to search for a woman's missing son (AD) 7.00 Heartbeat. Face from the dead returns as Bernie prepares to receive his inherited fortune, while a girl brings shame on her father when she unexpectedly gives birth (AD) 8.00 Vera. The detective investigates a suspicious death in an army barracks that was designed to look like suicide (4/4) (AD) 10.00 Trigger Point. A journalist is sent a suspicious package (3/6) (AD) 11.00 Trigger Point. Alex contacts the police with critical information about a new attack planned for that day (4/6) (AD) 11.55 The Royal. Mr Ross and Dr Ormerod visit a hippie commune (8/12) (AD) 12.45am Upstairs, Downstairs. Double bill of the classic period drama 2.30 Teleshopping

ITV4

6.00am The Derby Through the Years 6.15 Minder (AD, SL) 7.20 The Professionals (AD, SL) 8.20 Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) 9.25 Magnum, PI (AD) 10.25 Kojak 11.30 Made in Britain (AD) 12.00 BattleBots 1.00pm Tour de France Highlights 2.00 Live Tour de France. Coverage of stage 12.5.00 Great Racehorses 5.25 Mr Bean (AD) 5.55 BattleBots 7.00 Tour de France Highlights. Gary Imlach presents action from stage 12 8.00 FILM: Jaws — The Revenge (15, 1987) The remaining members of the Brody family are terrorised by a bloodthirsty great white shark in the Bahamas. Thriller sequel starring Michael Gaine, Lorraine Gary, Lance Guest and Mario Van Peebles (AD) 9.50 FILM: Rocky II (12, 1979) Retired boxer Rocky Balboa is tempted back into the ring for another shot at Apollo Creed's heavyweight title. Drama sequel with Sylvester Stallone, Talia Shire and Carl Weathers (AD) 12.10am The Professionals (AD) 1.10 Minder (AD, SL) 2.05 Auti Mundial 2.35 Motorsport Mundial 3.00 Teleshopping

Drama

6.00am Teleshopping 7.10 London's Burning 8.00 Doctors 9.20 Classic Holly City 10.40 Classic Casualty 11.40 The Bill 12.40pm Classic EastEnders 2.00 London's Burning 3.00 Born and Bred 4.20 Tenko 5.20 Birds of a Feather 6.40 Are You Being Served? 7.20 Are You Being Served? 7.20 Are You Being Served? Wesley designs a mobile vending machine 8.00 Father Brown. The priest finds himself embroiled with MIP — which puts Lady Felicia in a compromising position (AD) 9.00 A Small Light. Miep fights to keep Otto's business running in the hope the Franks will return. Last in the series (AD) 10.10 New Tricks. The team reopens the investigation into a terrorist's death after his daughter receives an anonymous note saying he was murdered. Sasha agrees to go for dinner with her ex-husband. Ned (3/10) (AD) 11.30 Soldier. Soldier. The lids reach South Africa where they help build a medical centre 12.40am Footballers' Wives: 1.40 Born and Bred 2.50 Classic Holly City 4.00 Teleshopping

Yesterday

6.10am Secrets of the Transport Museum 8.00 Abandoned Engineering (AD) 10.00 The World at War 11.00 Secret Nazi Bases 12.00 Find It, Fix It, Flop It 1.00pm Antiques Roadshow 2.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) 4.00 The Buildings That Fought Hitler (AD) 5.00 Secret Nazi Bases. Preparations for war 6.00 Antiques Roadshow. Favourite finds 7.00 Find It, Fix It, Flop It. Presenters Henry Cole and Simon O'Brien come across a water tower from a carwheel 8.00 Bangers & Cash. Derek collects a restored 1936 Wolseley 14/36, and a Batman-inspired Chrysler Crossfire is dropped off (AD) 9.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. The team take on a modern day fast Ford to see if a "quick flip" could make a few quid (AD) 10.00 Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. Dave alerts the team to a 1979 Lotus Esprit S3 (AD) 11.00 Abandoned Engineering. A formerly strategic mountain-top villa (7/12) (AD) 12.00 Great British Railway Journeys. Double bill 1.00am Secrets of the Transport Museum. Two editions: 3.00 Teleshopping

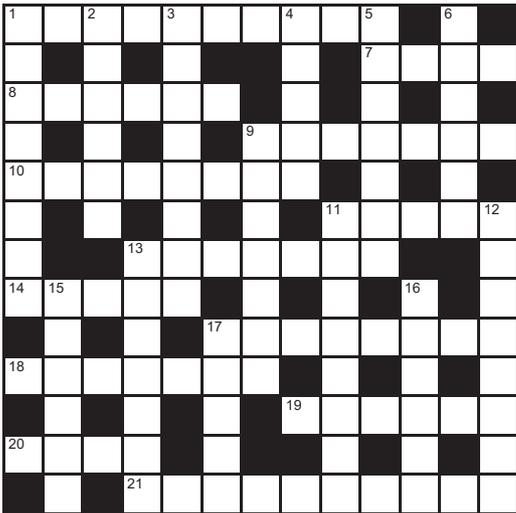
BBC Alba

6.00am Alba Today 5.00pm Children's Programmes 7.00 Dealbhan Fraoich (r) 7.30 SpeakGaelic (r) 8.00 An Là 8.30 Brudhag na Hearadh (r) 9.00 Fàsach na h-Eòrpa 9.50 Celtic Connections Shorts (r) 10.00 Seòid a' Chidsin (r) 10.30 Allison Krauss — Slioghe na Cumhainn (r) 11.30 Julie Fowlie: Ceòl Aig Baile (r) 12.00-6.00am Alba Today

S4C

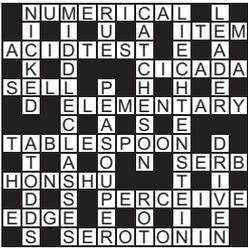
6.00am Cwyl 12.00 News: Weather 12.05pm Boi y Rhondda (r) 12.30 Y Byd ar Bedwar (r) 1.10 Prynghawn Da 1.55 News: Weather 2.00 Live Seido: Tour de France 4.40 Sli Mall (r) 4.45 Cods Bach y Traeth (r) 4.50 Sion y Cefn (r) 5.05 Stwintsh: OI Posar (r) 5.10 Y Doniolis (r) 5.15 Bwd Rwtsh Dai Oshar (r) 5.30 Tlekkers (r) 6.00 Dan Do 6.15 Live Sgorio 8.30 Seind a Rownd (AD) 9.00 News: Weather 9.30 Rownd: Tour de France 10.00 Sgwrs Dan y Lloer (r) 11.00-11.35 Cais Quinnell (r)

times2 Crossword No 9580



- Across**
- 1 In prison (6,4)
 - 7 Front part of a vessel (4)
 - 8 Garden structure (6)
 - 9 Encourage, cheer up (7)
 - 10 Promoted, advertised (8)
 - 11 Forceful exhalation through the nostrils (5)
 - 13 Caveat (7)
 - 14 Secret agents (5)
- Down**
- 17 Of the Lake District's county (8)
 - 18 Satisfies, achieves (7)
 - 19 Made a sound expressing relief or despair (6)
 - 20 Ursine mammal (4)
 - 21 Emotionally identified (with) (10)

Solution to Crossword 9579



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

This deal from the US Seniors Trials for the Mind Sports Games to be held later this year in Buenos Aires may be my absolute favourite of the year so far. West led a passive spade v 4♥, declarer, Michael Rosenberg, beating the jack with the ace and, at trick two, leading the seven of hearts (note, not wasting the jack). West performed played the queen. What do you think happened now?

Dealer: North, Vulnerability: Neither

Teams: Q4 Advanced

♥K106432
♦9
♣8763
♠87632

♠AK10
♥A985
♦Q854
♣109

♠AK10
♥J7
♦AKJ1072
♣K5

S(Rosenberg)	W	N(Zia)	E
2♥(1)	3♣(3)	3♠(4)	Pass
4♥(5)	End		

- (1) Zia Mahmood opens a Multi 2♦, playing two ranges of Weak Twos. The better ones open 2♠/2♥; the weaker ones open 2♦.
- (2) Strong asking bid.
- (3) Slides in a lead-director.
- (4) Maximum with hearts (remember Zia has already shown a "weak Weak Two" — he is near-maximum within that context).
- (5) Will have given some thought to bidding 3NT. If diamonds run for all six tricks, there will be nine top tricks (including the king of clubs — assuming West leads a club). However, my bet is West would lead a spade (as he did v 4♥), and 3NT would fail.

Contract: 4♥, Opening Lead: ♠7

mond and lead a club; or lead the fourth diamond and drop dummy's club. Each avoids the trump promotion — game made.

But what I really love is that East could have defeated the game by overtaking his partner's queen of hearts with the ace to switch to a club through ♣Kx. Three rounds of clubs (declarer ruffing with the jack) will give East back his second trump trick.

If declarer now leads the jack of hearts, he will go down. East wins the ace and puts partner in with a club, whereupon a fourth spade promotes his ♥98. Declarer can lead a club now; ruff a fourth dia-

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY	56	+ 14	⁴ / ₅ OF IT	+ 3	x 2	50% OF IT	- 11	⁷ / ₈ OF IT	- 4	50% OF IT	ANSWER
MEDIUM	82	x 7	+ 83	² / ₃ OF IT	- 78	90% OF IT	+ 44	¹ / ₂ OF IT	- 67	⁴ / ₅ OF IT	ANSWER
HARDER	168	+ 975	x 3	- 654	⁶⁰ % OF IT	+ 775	90% OF IT	+ 498	¹ / ₂ OF IT	+ 827	ANSWER

Polygon

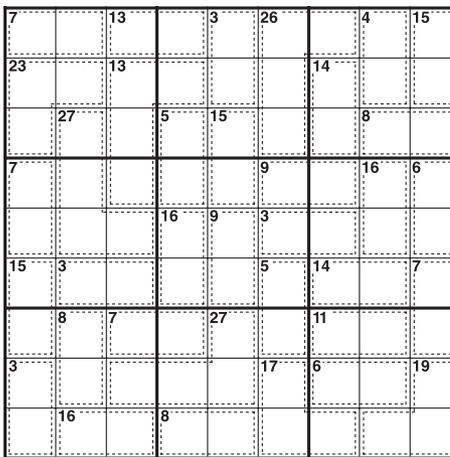


From these letters, make words of four or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. How you rate 14 words, average; 19, good; 22, very good; 26, excellent

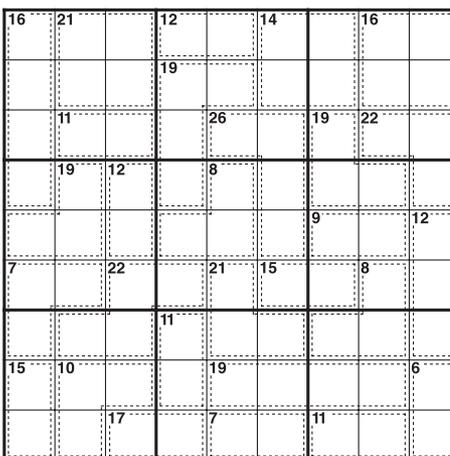
Yesterday's answers

aegis, agile, aisle, alee, allée, allege, eagle, ease, easel, else, gale, glee, ileal, isle, lase, leal, lease, legal, legalise, liege, lisle, sage, sale, sallee, seal, seel, sell, siege, silage

Killer Gentle No 9566



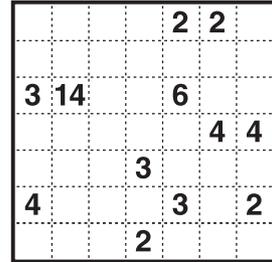
Killer Tough No 9567



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5147



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

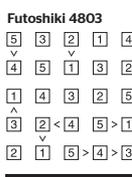
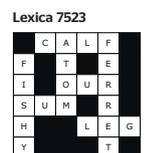
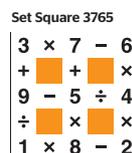
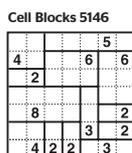
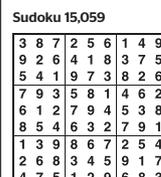
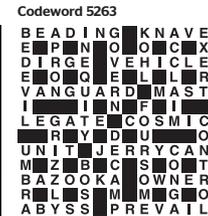
Set Square No 3766

$+$ $-$ $6 = 9$
 \times \div $4 \times$ $-$ $= 36$
 \div \times \times \times
 $=$ $=$ $=$
 21 10 10

Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Solutions



Today's solutions

Concise Quintragram	Cryptic Quintragram	Suko 4165	Brain Trainer
1 Ream 2 Rabbie 3 Rummage 4 Avenger 5 Scouting	1 Plan 2 Merit 3 Scupper 4 Sardine 5 Leisurely	8 6 9 7 5 1 3 4 2	Easy 19 Medium 388 Harder 4,868

Word watch

Whiskerando (c) A man with an extravagant moustache (Collins)
Cuadrilla (a) A matador's attendants (Chambers)
Wapentake (a) An old subdivision of counties (OED)
Chess — Winning Move
Winton puzzle — no solution

Quiz

- 1 Ken Livingstone 2 Robin Hood 3 Billie Holiday 4 France 5 Caribbean Sea 6 Health and Safety Executive 7 Habitat 8 Munich 9 President Nixon 10 Clint Eastwood 11 Sapporo 12 Strawberry 13 Howard Blake 14 Tiger Woods 15 Blood Brothers

MindGames

For extra puzzles See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Whiskerando
a A very fine margin
b A multipurpose kitchen utensil
c A man with an extravagant moustache

Cuadrilla
a A matador's attendants
b A densely furred mountain rodent
c A small group of warships

Wapentake
a An old subdivision of counties
b An amnesty
c A variety of rice wine

Answers on page 15

Sudoku Mild No 15,060

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

Fiendish No 15,061

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

Super fiendish No 15,062

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

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz Olav Bjortom

- Which mayor of London was nicknamed "Red Ken"?
- In the 2001 TV film *Princess of Thieves*, Keira Knightley played Gwyn, the daughter of which legendary outlaw?
- Lady Sings the Blues* is a 1956 album by which American jazz vocalist?
- What is the EU's only nuclear-armed power?
- The Yucatán Channel connects the Gulf of Mexico and which sea?
- Dedicated to protecting people and places, which national regulator is the HSE?
- Terence Conran opened the first of which

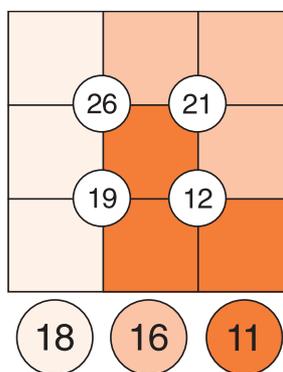


- homeware stores at 77 Fulham Road, London, on May 11, 1964?
- Bowie's 1975 song *Young Americans*?
- Who played Private Kelly in the Second World War heist film *Kelly's Heroes* (1970)?
- Japan's oldest brand of beer was first brewed

- in which city in 1876 by Seibeï Nakagawa?
- Exhibited by Michael Keens in 1806, Keen's Seedling was the first large-fruited market-quality what?
- Which English composer wrote the cantata *The Song of Saint Francis* (1977) and the oratorio *Benedictus* (1980)?
- The tech-focused sports company TMRW Sports was launched in 2022 by Rory McIlroy and which US golfer?
- First opening at the Liverpool Playhouse in 1983, which musical is this?

Answers on page 15

Suko No 4165



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic No 2725 by Beck

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

- Across**
- Aye, squid swimming for wharf's landing place (8)
 - Injure hot member in a cast? (4)
 - Heartless medical examiner in awkward position (6)
 - Cyril butchered words of a song (5)
 - Feel horrible about the French way (3)
 - Lunch slice outside a square in Italy (6)
 - Look longingly in front of box office pavilion (6)
 - Old man chopped up nut (6)
 - Woman in the middle of fighting laundry appliance (6)
 - Sort of bread regularly seen in rhyme (3)
 - Beating a bean, say (5)
 - Discover sad Shakespearean shrew on the radio? (6)
 - Swallow fluffy feathers (4)
 - Glen and Iris spilled white wine (8)

- Down**
- What a shame test interrupted by one training program (8)
 - Policy analyst exhibits kind of blue (4)
 - Romeo's follower in mountain range (6)
 - Secure stage pirate's prop? (3,3)
 - One hundred — as far as the eye can see, mostly southern — sausages (8)
 - Swamp critter native to volcanic rock (4)
 - Camera accessory left in zoo toilet (4,4)
 - Doing one better than while taking ecstasy, it might make you swell up (3,5)
 - Depressing day when area is behind (6)
 - Construction worker with church official (6)
 - Reportedly a tiny hole is unacceptable (4)
 - Line in a track from the album *Faction* (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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The THE TIMES Euros

THETIMES.COM/SPORT

JULY 11, 2024

MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

WELCOME TO THE PARTY

ENGLAND TURN UP AT LAST AS KANE
AND WATKINS GUIDE SOUTHGATE'S
MEN TO FINAL AGAINST SPAIN

JONATHAN NORTHCROFT, p2-3

MARTIN SAMUEL, p4-5



The Euros Germany 2024



Watkins stunner rewards

NETHERLANDS



Simons 7

ENGLAND



Kane 18 (pen)
Watkins 90

JONATHAN NORTHCROFT



Dortmund

Where are they now? The Southgate haters? The England baiters? The commentators who said this team and its manager were doomed and dull?

Probably still celebrating, but no matter. England are in the final of Euro 2024. Into a final on foreign soil. History. Bedlam in Dortmund. And, on the pitch and in the dugout, brilliant, redemptive, sweet, sweet scenes.

A game that was Premier League like in quality and feel and quite the best involving England at this tournament,

had swept end to end, and been thrillingly open, and was locked at 1-1 when we entered the final ten minutes. Who could do something to win it?

The answer came when, after consulting with Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, Gareth Southgate made a decision and the substitution board went up. He wanted to replace two English galacticos, Harry Kane and Phil Foden, with a pair not fully proven on the international stage — Ollie Watkins and Cole Palmer. Kane didn't look happy. Foden didn't look happy. And in the press box you knew it was one of those calls that could make or break a manager's reputation. The ploy didn't start well when Luke Shaw crossed, Watkins failed to reach the ball and Palmer sliced his shot so badly that it spiralled off towards the corner flag.

Extra time loomed and the Netherlands, having opened up England more in the second half than England had opened up them, seemed just about favourites. And then in the 90th minute, Palmer, drifting through a pocket of space towards the box, caressed a lovely pass behind the Dutch defence.

Watkins flashed onto it but had Stefan de Vrij at his back and you felt De Vrij, the experienced Inter Milan defender, had the situation covered. But, as Watkins would say after collecting the player of the match award, those

moments when you can change your life don't come often; you have to be "greedy" to take them.

And how he was, swivelling after holding off De Vrij and smashing the strike of his life through the defender's legs, across Bart Verbruggen and in at the far post. He had done it. Ollie Watkins from Torquay, Ollie Watkins once the No 9 for Weston-super-Mare, had put England into a first ever tournament final abroad.

England's substitutes piled onto the pitch, Haselbaink had to sprint like he hasn't sprinted since his Chelsea days to get over and haul Conor Gallagher back to the dugout and you could see the Dutch completely deflating. It was over

then and the remaining minutes were a formality and soon England were in front of their support, Southgate and all, bouncing to *Sweet Caroline*.

The song had changed to *Don't Take Me Home* as those supporters still bounced, 20 minutes after full-time, as the Westfalenstadion emptied completely of orange. Instead of home, they are going to Berlin, where Spain await, and a team pilloried for their performances right up until the penalty shoot-out in their quarter-final with Switzerland, are suddenly one win from immortality.

Victory did not come without luck. After Xavi Simons put Netherlands ahead with a scorching early strike, Harry Kane levelled from the spot — but it was the kind of pedantic, marginal penalty only conjured by VAR. However, for the way Southgate tweaked his system to nullify

Simons, get on top, and dominate the rest of the first half, England deserved an equaliser.

And, for how the players plugged away when it got difficult in the second period, for their manager's brave call, and for Watkins' excellence, the winning goal could not be begrudged.

Foden had actually been one of the standout players, along with Kobbie Mainoo and Bukayo Saka as England played, for the first time at these Euros, with proper zip in the opposition half. There were switches of formation, some defiant defending — with John Stones outstanding — selflessness from Jude Bellingham, and 60 per cent possession; not the perfect performance but one of numerous excellent aspects. And when a foreign journalist tried a tired slight about England's style, Ronald Koeman slapped him down. "They played some great football," Koeman said.

For a third knockout game in succession, England came from behind to win, and no side has ever reached a Euros final by doing that before. Southgate talked about "character" and also deserves credit for the psychology. England give their substitutes the positive name of "finishers" and, consistently at these finals, players have sprung from their bench to seize their moments.

"A complicated game," Southgate

1 ENGLAND HAVE REACHED THEIR FIRST MAJOR FINAL ON FOREIGN SOIL



TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER BRADLEY ORMESHER, LEON KUEGELER/REUTERS, RICHARD PELHAM/GETTY IMAGES



England's substitutes surge on to the pitch to celebrate Watkins' winner, left, in the first minute of time added on. The Aston Villa striker fired through the legs of Stefan de Vrij, above, to secure another place in a major tournament final for a jubilant Southgate, left

Spain
V
England

Euro 2024 final,
Sunday, 8pm

bold Southgate

said and initially the puzzle for England was Simons. He kept drifting from a No 10 position into an inside left pocket and getting on the ball in the early minutes. Declan Rice and Marc Guéhi had no answers.

In the seventh minute, Simons stole from the blind side to rob Rice as he controlled a headed pass from Guéhi. Shrugging Rice off strongly, Simons drove towards England's area and appeared to slightly lose control of the ball but then as Kyle Walker closed for the tackle, Simons launched himself, sliding on the slick surface as he shot.

He made the perfect connection, sending an effort clocked at more than 70mph scorching into the centre of Jordan Pickford's net. Was Pickford beaten easily? The shot was at a saveable height, but its unexpected pace and trajectory perhaps excused England's goalkeeper.

Having started with 3-4-2-1, Southgate flipped to 4-2-3-1 with Foden at 10 and Bellingham on the left and with England now matching the Dutch man for man, Simons' threat started to disappear. Now Mainoo and Foden were buzzing everywhere, passing and burrowing their ways into gaps in the Netherlands' set up and Saka was magnificent, demanding the ball, or just seizing it from Cody Gakpo, and driving at the Dutch from the right.

Saka made the breach leading to England's equaliser. Weaving into the Netherlands box his shot was blocked and Kane volleyed over but his follow through took his foot into Denzel Dumfries's raised boot.

VAR intervened and, after checking the monitor, Felix Zwayer, the referee, pointed to the spot. Koeman snorted in derision and you couldn't blame him. Zwayer judged Dumfries guilty of a reckless tackle — presumably because of the height of his foot — but the fact was Kane kicked Dumfries and not the other way round.

Not that Kane cared. Composing himself with deep breaths then starting his run up with those usual jiggling little steps, he accelerated to the ball and drove a low shot right into the corner — just as well, because Verbruggen dived the right way. Kane leapt from

supposed crisis into the record books, becoming the top scorer of knockout-stage goals in European Championship history (with seven) as well as joint leading scorer at Euro 2024.

Neither side were minded to try and close up the game, or slow the pace, and it became a white knuckle ride of transitions and open spaces. Foden tricked his way into the box and squeezed a shot past Verbruggen but De Vrij cleared off the line. At the other end, from a corner, Dumfries crashed a header against Pickford's bar.

Revelling in the spaces between the Netherlands' lines, Foden twice went close with excellent hits from range. At half-time, Koeman replaced Donnyell Malen with Wout Weghorst but Southgate brought on Shaw for Trippier, who strained his groin.

England continued flipping formations but with Weghorst on, the Dutch went wide and played diagonal balls into England's box, causing disarray and from Joey Veerman's free kick Pickford saved Virgil Van Dijk's volley.

England looked tired. Bellingham was booked for a late challenge on De Vrij. But Simons shot tamely at Pickford and then came Southgate's bold and telling changes. He was asked about England supporters' change of mood towards him and smiled ruefully. "We all want to be loved, right?" he said.

 The game was Premier League in feel and quality and quite the best England have been involved in out here

THE TEAMS RATED

BY TONY CASCARINO

England (3-4-2-1)



JORDAN PICKFORD 7
EVERTON
He has gone through the tournament largely unscathed. Made a good save and could do little about Simons's goal.



KYLE WALKER 6
MAN CITY
Gave the ball away a lot but settled and produced dangerous runs despite playing as a centre back rather than a full back.



JOHN STONES 7
MAN CITY
His season was affected by injury but he has improved as the tournament has gone on. He never really gets flustered.



MARC GUÉHI 7
CRYSTAL PALACE
Moved the ball a bit quicker than in previous games, which helped his team. Steady passing and won plenty of headers.



BUKAYO SAKA 8
ARSENAL
He made several tackles even though he is not really a defender. Often drifted inside to dangerous effect and looked very confident.



KOBBIE MAINOO 7
MAN UTD
The 19-year-old enjoyed being given a lot of space in midfield to turn and run into, and look for through balls.



DECLAN RICE 6
ARSENAL
He lost the ball for the opener, which was unlike him, but stepped into the back four well and was at the heart of England's attacks.



NETHERLANDS (4-2-3-1)



BART VERBRUGGEN 6
BRIGHTON



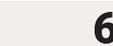
DENZEL DUMFRIES 5
INTER MILAN



STEFAN DE VRIJ 6
INTER MILAN



VIRGIL VAN DIJK 6
LIVERPOOL



NATHAN AKÉ 7
MAN CITY



JERDY SCHOUTEN 5
PSV EINDHOVEN



TIJJANI REIJNDERS 5
AC MILAN



KIERAN TRIPPIER 7
NEWCASTLE
His best game of the tournament. Got forward a lot and handled Dumfries well, and helped England to look more balanced.



PHIL FODEN 7
MAN CITY
This was the Foden that we have been waiting to see. He was a thorn in the Dutch team, though faded a little after the break.



JUDE BELLINGHAM 8
REAL MADRID
He was the main physical presence in midfield, dragging the team forward and running tirelessly. His attitude is superb.



HARRY KANE 7
BAYERN MUNICH
For the first time here it didn't feel like he was detached from the rest of the team. His team-mates' runs gave him plenty of options.



GARETH SOUTHGATE 8
MANAGER
This was his most complete performance at the tournament. It came good when it came to the crunch for his nation.



SUBSTITUTES
Luke Shaw (for Trippier 46, 7) Showed value of having a specialist left back.
Ollie Watkins (for Kane, 81min) Superb for Aston Villa and my player of the season. Has something that no other player has, taking defenders where they don't want to go.
Cole Palmer (for Foden, 81min). Another busy display from the bench and set up the winner.
Ezri Konsa (for Saka, 90+3min).
Conor Gallagher (for Mainoo, 90+3min)
Bookings: Trippier, Saka, Bellingham
Referee Felix Zwayer (Ger).

TOTAL 85

DONYELL MALEN 6
BORUSSIA DORTMUND



XAVI SIMONS 7
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN



CODY GAKPO 5
LIVERPOOL



MEMPHIS DEPAY 5
UNATTACHED



RONALD KOEMAN 7
MANAGER



SUBSTITUTES J Veerman (Depay, 35); W Weghorst, (Malen, 46); J Kirkeze (Dumfries 90+3); B Brobbey (Simons 90+3)

TOTAL 70

The Euros Germany 2024

Whatever happens now, this team and the nation are united again

MARTIN SAMUEL



Dortmund

There have been moments in Germany when Gareth Southgate has sounded as if he regretted being here at all. When it was almost as if he was inwardly furious that he had not heeded his instinct to stand down after the Qatar World Cup.

Southgate gets England, or thought he did. He was convinced when it was time to go, he would know and the decision would be his. He would be spared the ignominy of his predecessors. And then it got the better of him. The Football Association's need. The kindness of his loved ones. That blasted sense of duty that made him take the penalty that time. And the players. These players. Who could walk away from a group like this? Who could turn his back on these men?

So this was for him. For Ollie Watkins and Harry Kane, obviously, for Cole Palmer and Phil Foden, and Kobbie Mainoo, and Jordan Pickford, and Marc Guéhi and, hell, for all of them, because they have all suffered through this tournament to here, waiting, waiting for it all to click. Yet, most of all, it was for Southgate. It will be hard to beat Spain in Berlin on Sunday.

Spain look the best team here, by some distance. Yet just by remaining, just by getting to the Olympiastadion, Southgate has gone further than any of his predecessors. Not even Sir Alf Ramsey reached a final with England

on foreign soil. He stands alone for 1966 but so does Southgate now for 2024. So it wasn't a misstep after all. It was the right call. He did have it in him, just as they had it in them. And what Southgate identified as England's great strength was correct too. Substitutes. Depth. England have probably the deepest bed of forwards in the competition. If it wasn't Watkins and Palmer, it could have been Eberechi Eze and Ivan Toney. If it wasn't Eze and Toney, it could have been Jarrod Bowen and Anthony Gordon.

But Southgate can't make substitutions, remember? He can't get the best out of these players. He's a plodder, he's mediocre, he's leading a charmed existence. So he's probably a bit surprised by this, just as his detractors must be surprised by two finals, a semi-final and a quarter-final from one so ungifted.

If you build it, they will come, was the tagline that sold the film *Field of Dreams*, and if you can just stay in a tournament long enough, maybe your team will turn up in Southgate's story here. Maybe there are other countries that have this performance in them but with the exception of Spain and England, they didn't get to show it, because they're gone; or, like the Netherlands, they left it in the quarter-final, or like Romania in the group stage against Ukraine. England puffed their way to here, survived against Slovakia with seconds to spare, beat Switzerland on penalties. Yet, in Dortmund, they arrived. This was the England we had been hoping to see, that Southgate hoped to see before he departed – and he will depart this time, no matter what – this was the England performance



that is the pure product of structure and ethics and culture and coaching, and having fine players to put on the pitch.

It hasn't been easy defending the manager and this team these last few weeks. He's out of his depth, they're all overrated. Drop the dead donkeys, and the biggest ass of all. After his initial joy, Southgate even looked as if he had his serious face on again as he marched across the pitch to celebrate with his players in front of the fans. It wasn't so long ago that they would have showered him in beer had any of them been able to aim and he will not forget that. Yet, whatever happens from here, he leaves a team and nation united again. There was a danger that would be lost too, as anger about England's drab football grew. Now, whatever happens, Southgate castle is intact. What he has built will stand. He's a hard act to follow — England have never had a consistent run like this — but the building blocks are in place.

And what of public enemy No2, Southgate's captain Kane? Maybe it was smart not to drop him after all. England won the game with him off the field and his replacement scored the winner but where are England at in this match without him? It was Kane's penalty that levelled the

The Southgate castle is intact. He's a hard act to follow but the building blocks are in place

scores, beautifully struck and faultlessly aimed given that Dutch goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen went the right way, and it was Kane who won it too. He's meant to be a poor tournament performer. Yet the Netherlands haven't surrendered a lead in a European Championship game since losing to Portugal in 2012, and it was Kane that set them on the road to defeat.

The amusing thing about Kane's most vocal detractors is they talk about his penalty count as if it is good fortune, almost a sign of weakness. As if he needs penalties to boost his numbers because, without them, he'd be ordinary. Without them, he's still scored 44 goals for England. If he had never taken a penalty in an England shirt, he'd still have as many goals for his country as Jimmy Greaves, and more than Michael Owen — including all their penalties.

But he does take penalties. Boy, does he take penalties. Last night it was his 22nd to bring England back into the game. And, again, to hear some of the disparaging comments about his contribution, it is as if scoring penalties is easy. As if modern goalkeepers do not study what they will be facing with the intensity that Isaac Newton studied falling apples. As if we are in the age of the original Corinthian Casuals whose goalkeeper, in a gesture of sportsmanship, would walk out of his goal and stand to one side if a penalty was awarded against his team, offering no resistance.

Kane is not extended such courtesy. He will be heckled, undermined, his opponent will be dancing, making off-putting comments, Jordan Pickford was even gurning at the Swiss last weekend in an attempt at distraction. So it still takes the coolest head to convert, and that's before considering the occasion and the match situation. A European Championship semi-final, with England already trailing. And Kane had missed his previous England penalty of comparative importance, in the World Cup quarter-final with France in Qatar. The result? England went home. No pressure, then.

So anyone who doesn't admire what Kane does from the penalty spot

ENGLAND'S SEMI-FINALS... AS TOLD BY THE TIMES

1966 — World Cup

2 England
1 Portugal
The Times wrote: "After 16 years, and at the fifth attempt since 1950, England at long last have reached the final of the World Cup."



They did so last night in a match that Wembley will remember for a long time to come. Though England emerged victorious they did so only with the skin of their teeth."



1968 — Euro

1 Yugoslavia
0 England
"A minute from the end, so shortly after Yugoslavia had scored their goal, Trivic chopped [Alan] Mullery and in a fit of exasperation Mullery turned on his foe to kick him in return."

It was a stupid blatant retaliation and he was given his marching orders." The midfielder became the first man to be sent off playing for England.



1990 — World Cup

1 England a.e.t
1 West Germany
West Germany won 4-3 on penalties
"A dream which almost became reality last night turned into a

nightmare for Stuart Pearce and Chris Waddle. The unfortunate pair will for ever be haunted by the dreadful moment they missed the penalties which condemned England to the role of runners up in a dazzling and ultimately cruel semi-final." West Germany won the final 1-0.

1996 — Euro

1 Germany
1 England a.e.t
Germany won 6-5 on penalties
"It is over. After 120 minutes of magnificent equality, of true

and honest sporting endeavour, England are out. To lose on the twelfth penalty of that lottery which is used to separate equals cannot carry recrimination or shame. Let no one point a finger at poor Gareth Southgate."





I said to Palmer at half-time that he would set me up for winning goal, reveals Watkins

PAUL JOYCE
Dortmund

Ollie Watkins revealed he boldly predicted he would emerge as England's hero after firing them into the European Championship final against Spain on Sunday.

Gareth Southgate's side made history by overcoming the Netherlands 2-1 in Dortmund to reach their first ever overseas final. The England manager's substitutions once again proved the difference with Watkins brilliantly drilling a shot into the corner of the net in the 90th minute after Cole Palmer's pass just ten minutes after the duo had been introduced.

Afterwards, the Aston Villa striker said he told Palmer at half-time they would combine for the winner.

"Unbelievable," said Watkins, who was serenaded by exultant England supporters as he danced in front of them after the final whistle.

"I've been waiting for that moment for weeks. It's taken a lot of hard work to get where I am today, grateful that I got the opportunity and I grabbed it with both hands. I'm delighted.

"I said to Cole Palmer, 'we're coming on and you're going to set me up today.' It happened. I manifested it and as soon as he turned I knew I needed to make a move. You don't get that opportunity very often so I had to be greedy, I had to take it. After seeing it go into the bottom corner I don't think I've hit a ball that sweet before. Obviously it's such a special moment as well. Best feeling ever."

Watkins, who was on loan at Conference South side Weston-Super-Mare a decade ago while at Exeter City, had played only 20 minutes in the tournament.



Watkins celebrates his dramatic late strike with Saka and Palmer, right

ment beforehand and admitted he had become frustrated at a lack of opportunities.

"Recently I got a little bit frustrated," he said. "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 my 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.

"Obviously, they've put it out into the universe. Hopefully they can do the same for the final or even give me the lottery numbers."

England had fallen behind for the third successive game to Xavi Simons' early goal before Harry Kane equalised from the penalty spot.

The referee, Felix Zwayer, was asked by VAR to review a challenge on the England captain by Denzel Dumfries and the Netherlands were unhappy with the decision.

"In England, they would not give such a decision," said Netherlands' manager Ronald Koeman.

However, Southgate revealed Kane suffered a "big knock" in the incident and the striker added: "My foot's hanging off so he definitely caught me!

"Sometimes you get them, sometimes you don't. I was happy to step up and see that go in the back of the net. It was a nice feeling for sure."

England's focus will now switch to the showdown with tournament favourites Spain when they will endeavour to win silverware for the first time since 1966.

Southgate lost Kieran Trippier to a groin injury at half-time, with Luke Shaw coming on, and the Newcastle United defender is a doubt for Sunday given the lack of turnaround time between the games.

"The lads are singing in the dressing room, but they are straight in the ice [bath]," said Southgate. "I took the job to improve English football. We are now in a second final, the first was the first for 50 years and now this is the first one overseas. I am immensely proud of that."

"We are giving our supporters some of their best nights for 50 years. I hope they are enjoying a few beers. We have had some incredible nights the last seven, eight years, but we have come here to win."

"We will have to get the ball off them [Spain] first. They have been the best team, but we are starting to show a better version of ourselves. The extra day they have to prepare is a concern. But we are in there and, what we have shown to this point, means we have as good a chance as they do."

THE GAME RECAPPED

PAUL JOYCE ON THE KEY TALKING POINTS FROM ENGLAND'S VICTORY



Mainoo makes history before kicking a ball

There was a slice of history for Kobbie Mainoo at kick-off. Aged 19 years and 82 days, he became the youngest ever player to play in the semi-finals of a major tournament for England — though nothing that followed pointed towards his tender years.

A statistic had emerged that the Manchester United player completed 133 out of 138 passes (96 per cent) before the Netherlands game, the

highest accuracy ever recorded by Opta from a midfielder at a European Championship. Just 13 per cent had been forward

but last night he seemed more progressive in his distribution and backed that up with driving runs, astute flicks and tackles.

The sight of Mainoo sliding in to intercept a Cody Gakpo pass on the edge of his own area just before half-time neatly encapsulates his drive.



England's tactical switch-ups nullify Dutch

Bukayo Saka started off as a right wingback again as England redeployed the back three that Gareth Southgate had introduced against Switzerland.

In response to the Netherlands' breakthrough from Xavi Simons, England switched to a 4-2-3-1 system with Saka high on the right and Phil Foden as the No.10. At times, England flip-flopped intelligently between the two systems to exert control and nullify

the Dutch threat. Cody Gakpo, the Netherlands' talisman going into the game, found the going much more difficult. It was the 60th minute before the Liverpool forward could stretch his legs and then the move came to nothing. Southgate said his professional capabilities had been ridiculed during his time in charge but, here, England performed with poise and purpose. Their attacking players constantly rotated into different positions.

Foden frustrated in effort to replicate Yamal

With a shrug of the shoulders and a wave of his arms, Phil Foden had summed up his frustration. It was the 32nd minute when he sought to channel his inner Lamine Yamal by cutting inside off the right and curling a shot at goal. Unlike the Spanish teenager, his effort struck the post rather than the back of the net and his exasperated expression betrayed his disbelief at what he must do to register a goal at Euro 2024. Earlier, Denzel Dumfries had hacked Foden's attempt clear before all of the ball had crossed the goaline. Yet while the statistics — four goals in 40 caps — do not make pleasant reading, he has been



increasingly influential. More so since Southgate belatedly started using Foden off the right and at No.10, rather than on the left. Here he has run in behind and carried the ball with aplomb. A goal is surely only around the corner.

Southgate sticks to late substitutions

Only Slovenia had waited longer on average than England to make their substitutions at Euro 2024 and once again Gareth Southgate decided to roll the dice later than many would have wished. The Netherlands had become a growing force after the break and England had started looking tired, but it was still the 80th minute before Southgate introduced Ollie Watkins and Cole Palmer.

The pace of Watkins is not what Virgil van Dijk would have wanted to see, having kept Harry Kane quiet once again. Late substitutions had worked for Southgate in recent matches — and they did so again, as Watkins netted a famous late winner.

Injury may decide left back dilemma

Depending on the severity of Kieran Trippier's groin injury, the one dilemma Gareth Southgate was facing for Sunday's final against Spain may just have been solved. Luke Shaw's place in the squad despite his injury problems was dependent on the belief he made England better by providing more balance on the left as a naturally left-footed defender.

Still, Southgate's loyalty to Trippier meant the Newcastle United defender started here and he played his part, especially going forward. As the first half came to a close, Trippier could be spotted wincing and he was rubbing the top of his left leg. With four days until the final, he faces a battle to be fit but Shaw, left, may have timed his return to perfection.



Kane's well-struck penalty into the bottom corner draws England level after Simons had put the Netherlands ahead

doesn't comprehend the game at elite level. He won this penalty too, remember. Heaven knows how, because it was hard to find anyone of impartiality, and even those draped in a St George's Cross, who reckoned deep down that Denzel Dumfries had not done too much wrong. Reckless was the VAR verdict. Yet Kane kicked the underside of Dumfries' boot and while it looked to really hurt, it is hard to think what the Dutchman could have done in attempting to block the shot rather than extend his leg. Seen them given? Well, maybe — but they all looked harsh too.

Yet if England did not deserve their penalty, they deserved their parity, and their win. These are good footballers. Some of them are even great. Meaning this was one for the optimists, those who had faith that England would turn up eventually. Not because it was written or fated, because it was destined or coming home. They had to turn up because that is what good footballers do. Just as good teams win playing badly. And that's all England were. A good team, playing badly. And then, suddenly, they weren't.

2018 — World Cup

2 Croatia
1 England
a.e.t

"They started the summer as underdogs, a team who few expected to impress at this World Cup. Instead they will return home after



the third-place play-off as heroes who have united the country and made the most sceptical of fans fall in love with the team again."

2021 — Euro

2 England
1 Denmark a.e.t

"England are in the final of a major tournament for the first time since the 1966 World Cup after a dramatic extra-time victory over Denmark last night. Gareth Southgate's team will face Italy on Sunday in a game that is due to be

played in front of 67,000 fans at Wembley [due to Covid restrictions], although there will now be a clamour for the government to allow a full house."



England went on to lose the final on penalties.

The Euros Germany 2024

ITV incredulity on penalty that turned game

Pundits could scarcely believe decision – in keeping with coverage that kept a lid on the jingoism, writes **Alyson Rudd**



Sam Matterface, the ITV commentator, almost didn't bother asking Christina Unkel, in ITV's prestigious "ref room", about the challenge that led to England being awarded a first-half penalty so sure was he that nothing much had happened. But when he did she said it did not merit a VAR check. Honestly you could not have scripted it better in terms of heightening the suspense for the audience.

In the studio there was a mood of incredulity. "It's an absolutely disgraceful decision," Gary Neville said. "That is not a penalty. There has got to be a bit of licence to block a shot."

Ian Wright insisted it was a reckless challenge by Denzel Dumfries but, overall, more sober viewers would have been left feeling awkward that England had scored at all. But it fitted the overall vibe of the coverage.

ITV had made a deliberate effort not to be overly jingoistic. The first footage of the night was not of England's penalty win over Switzerland but of Spain clinching their place in the final.

"So Spain, brilliantly, are into Sunday's final," Mark Pougatch said. It was subtle. Spain had succeeded through beauty while England had been more, let's say, pragmatic.

And just in case the subtlety struggled to cut through all the beer, England's defeat by Iceland at Euro 2016 got yet another mention.

"Who could ever forget that," Pougatch said. Well, you won't let us

Mark, we all mumbled back at him. Light relief came in the compulsory aerial shot of the England team bus navigating a ring road, half obscured by an overpass. Then they dived into Gabriel Clarke's interview with Gareth Southgate in which the England manager spoke about the mood shifting from fear to embracing the challenge ahead. The pundits' response was pretty predictable. Gary Neville said Southgate's admissions were the sort normally reserved for a book 15 years down the line. Ian Wright said he loved the honesty of the England manager and Roy Keane frowned at all the psychobabble.

Karen Carney and Laura Woods were pitch side. "It's very orange, Laura," Carney said, looking around the stadium as if allergic to fruit.

"Every problem that's posed we have a solution for that," Carney added, aware she needed to somehow address the crowd imbalance.

There were plenty of shots, possibly too many, of Southgate "cutting loose" as Pougatch chose to describe the England manager's dancing and jiggling after the penalty shoot-out in the quarter final.

Then it was Rick Astley and 1988 footage of the Dutch looking scintillating and a reminder that there was concern at the time that Dutch viewers would all flush their toilets at the same time.

"We're going to have a love-in," Pougatch said, which could only mean one thing: a chat about Marco van Basten. "Where have these centre



Dumfries clips Kane after the striker had fired over the bar. After a VAR review that had caught many by surprise a penalty was given

EXPERTS' VERDICT ON THE PENALTY

Peter Walton

It was clear to me that England should have had a penalty. The defender did not get anywhere near the ball and struck Kane after he had taken the shot. But that is no defence: this was a high foot and a careless

challenge inside the penalty area.

Jamie Carragher

Never a penalty!

Gary Neville

As a defender I think it's an absolutely disgraceful decision. He goes in naturally to try to block the shot, it's nowhere near a penalty and I don't think there were many England players claiming for it. But you take your

luck. I think in the box there's a little bit of licence for defenders, with honesty, to go and try and block the shot.

Ian Wright

If that was anywhere else on the pitch you get a foul for it.

Roy Keane

Harry's been clever hasn't he? He's stayed down for so long, he's played his part.

We were shown Ronald Koeman avoiding a red card in Rotterdam in a 1993 qualification match against England and then scoring so that Graham Taylor's side failed to make the 1994 World Cup. Clarke clearly couldn't believe Koeman was prepared to join him on the pitch before kick-off and gazed at him adoringly while the Netherlands manager shrugged a lot despite looking incredibly relaxed about the imminent kick-off.

Lee Dixon and Ally McCoist, the co-commentators, were relieved to find that England were happy to play some actual football and made pleasant cooing noises that gradually, as the game's tempo changed, became more concerned grandpa in tone than adoring uncle.

"Gareth Southgate has changed the playbook," shouted Matterface after Ollie Watkins's goal while McCoist congratulated the England manager on making the substitutions he had himself suggested so that it was clear it was ITV what had won it.

Spot-kick row serves up more awkward questions for Uefa

MATT LAWTON

Dortmund

If there was a sense of embarrassment for Uefa that a referee under almost unprecedented levels of scrutiny might have given England a soft penalty, we did warn them.

Even among the tournament hosts, the decision to appoint the German Felix Zwayer for this European Championship semi-final was met with widespread incredulity. "Astonishing," cried one headline. "Irresponsible," declared another.

After all, it was their match-fixing scandal at the root of all this fuss; their journalists who exposed the involvement of Zwayer in an episode, back in 2005, that led to the central protagonist, Robert Hoyzer, being banned from football for life and sentenced to 2½ years in prison.

Zwayer, it emerged thanks to a news-

paper investigation in 2014, was found to have accepted a €300 bribe from Hoyzer. While it was determined that Zwayer had not made any questionable decisions during the match in question, and had in fact assisted the prosecution as a whistleblower, he nevertheless received a six-month ban.

This was then cited, seven years later, by Jude Bellingham when Zwayer did make a decision in a Bundesliga match that the England star and his then Borussia Dortmund team-mates considered particularly harsh. Bellingham was fined for his outburst, while the German official was so distressed that he took two months off work.

Zwayer has not taken charge of a Dortmund game since and yet here he was at the Westfalenstadion, reunited with his chief tormentor.

What could possibly go wrong? Uefa clearly thought nothing, demonstrating their enduring trust in the 43-year-old by not so much as responding to the

global media coverage of an extraordinary major tournament story.

In fairness to Zwayer, he did seem unfazed. He smiled warmly during a brief chat with both captains and any fear of simmering resentment towards Bellingham quickly evaporated when he deemed the 21-year-old to have been fouled shortly after the Netherlands' opening goal.

But, it has to be said, you could almost hear the Dutch cries of derision from the towering Oranje wall here when Zwayer awarded that 18th minute spot-kick to England.

When we were shown a replay of Denzel Dumfries' challenge on Kane, few considered it a penalty; never mind a booking. But Zwayer reviewed the incident on the monitor and deemed it a foul, inviting Harry Kane to level the scores with a quite brilliant finish and England's opponents to wonder if the situation had clouded his judgment.

That, you imagine, will be something that Zwayer rejects as strongly as he did Bellingham's comments three years ago.

And, should he feel the need to point to any evidence that highlights his professional integrity, it was not long before he was ignoring a protest by an



Bellingham was fined for his outburst against referee Zwayer three years ago

animated Gareth Southgate. England's manager appeared convinced that Dumfries had offended again, this time by fouling Phil Foden with a challenge that actually looked more worthy of a booking than the first one. Much to Southgate's frustration, Zwayer was having none of it.

Much to Southgate's relief, Zwayer did then spare Declan Rice a booking when the Arsenal midfielder probably

deserved one. Bellingham did not escape when he committed such an offence, with Zwayer showing him a yellow card and reminding the Real Madrid star that he was indeed in charge of this game.

However, it was the decision to put him in that position in the first place that remains so questionable. The job of a referee is hard enough without that kind of pressure.

Maverick at the heart of modern Spain

Dani Olmo has been a revelation for La Roja, making their attack sharper, quicker, more spring-loaded – and much less predictable

JAMES GHEERBRANT

The brilliant Spain team who won three major tournaments between 2008 and 2012 were a kind of sporting monoculture: not only were all the starters in the 2010 World Cup final drawn from Spanish clubs, only two (Gerard Piqué and Xabi Alonso) had played outside Spain. Eight of the XI had been processed through the academies of Barcelona and Real Madrid. That triumphant era was the culmination of a devoted adherence to a single style, a golden team almost artisanal in their manufacture.

The team who stand on the brink of winning Euro 2024 are more of a melting pot: a mix of origins, influences, ways of playing, who have been melded together to create a unified whole. They combine the old Spanish virtues — the care of the ball, the patient interconnection of passes — with a directness, a sense of adventure, an eye for the jugular, which feels new. To play more than one way, you must know more than one world. And perhaps no player in the squad embodies this openness, this plurality, better than Dani Olmo.

This was never supposed to be Olmo's tournament. The 26-year-old played in only one of Spain's previous nine games. The RB Leipzig playmaker started the first game against Croatia on the bench, and didn't get off it in the second, against Italy.

Even now he has started only two of the six matches. And yet he finds himself on three goals, the joint top-scorer in the tournament, with two assists to boot. He supplied the winner in the quarter-final against Germany, with a gorgeous cross wafted on to Mikel Merino's head, and against France he made it for himself, a perfect triptych of touches: one to pluck the ball out of the air; one to nudge it past Aurélien Tchouaméni with the crook of his right foot; one to slam it past Mike Maignan with his laces.

Olmo was born in Catalonia and, like Lamine Yamal and so many of his forebears, he was raised at La Masia, the Barcelona academy, where he



learnt his football from the age of nine. But when he was 16 he took a different path, believing that regular first-team football, exposure to another culture, immersion in the physical side of the game, would help him in the long run. His choice — “the hardest decision of my life”, he later said — was to join Dinamo Zagreb, 750 miles from home.

The early days in Croatia were tough, a little homesickness inevitable, but Olmo was thinking a step or two ahead: a habit ingrained in him by one of his hobbies, chess. “On the pitch, also, I try to think about every movement, not just to move left because the ball is going left,” he told Sky Sports last year. “I am always trying to find the best solutions when I have the ball and when I do not have the ball. Either for



Olmo has made a huge impact with three goals and two assists at the tournament

me or for the team-mate, to create space for other guys or even for myself.”

After seven months he had made his first-team debut for Zagreb but he had to be patient, spending most of his first 2½ seasons playing for Zagreb's second team. Midway through his third season he carved out a place in the first team. For the next two years he was a regular, scoring eight goals in both seasons. At the age of 21 he made his Champions League debut in a 4-0 win against Atalanta.

By this stage he was a fixture on Spain's youth teams, where at under-21 level he was coached by the man who has guided La Roja through this tournament: Luis de la Fuente. “We have a very special relationship,” Olmo said last week of De la Fuente. “He trusted me when I was in Croatia.”

After that, Leipzig came calling, and in Germany he has added another string to his bow. Under Julian Nagelsmann first, then Domenico Tedesco, and latterly Marco Rose, he has been part of a team who press methodically and pounce in fast transitions. “I've learnt another type of football: more direct, more vertical,” he told The Guardian. “Attack the space. It's a kind of football I have inside of me. Get the ball, go forward, be vertical, shoot from far out ... I try to have that mix of Leipzig and the selección. You learn from every experience.”

Playing Olmo as a No10, in place of the injured Pedri, has been a shift away from Spain's heritage — always three midfielders, always a temple built on those three pillars — towards something sharper, quicker, more spring-loaded. But Olmo connects too, not just with passes, but with runs, flicks, his occupation of space.

He has never been afraid to take the path less travelled, to upset the pattern, to break out of a groove before it becomes a rut. In a previous Spain era, that way of doing things might have been seen as a risk. In this one, Olmo's way feels like a gift.



From one teenage left-footed prodigy to another – Littler's advice for Yamal

ELGAN ALDERMAN

Lamine Yamal was swiftly reminded that he is not the only teenager with a cultured left foot in the sporting world. Does Luke Littler score goals like that? “Always,” is the reply.

Yamal, the 16-year-old emerging star of Spain's Euro 2024 campaign, scored a beauty in the semi-final win over France. Light-hearted joshing from Littler ended up online before the 2-1 victory was secured.

A friend of Littler created a version of the meme and sent it over, and at 9.21pm on Tuesday it ended up on the X account of @LukeTheNuke180. “How am I doing Boss?” Yamal asks. Beaming down from the clouds like a tungsten Zeus, but nearer in age to the Teletubbies sun baby, Littler replies: “You're doing a great job son ... a great job!”

Littler posted this meme in honour of Yamal, another teenage sensation

16

At 16 years and 362, Yamal is the youngest Euro goalscorer



Littler is six months older than Yamal, who turns 17 on Saturday. By this stage, Littler had already launched his takeover of the British sporting landscape, finishing runner-

up at this year's World Darts Championship when he was 16 years and 347 days old.

“I've been watching quite a bit of Spain as well and obviously I'm

saying [I'm the boss] about him, but he is world class,” Littler says. “I'm glad he did [score] because I'm a left-footer as well.

“Seeing someone so young jump through the ranks of football, one of the hardest sports to get into and become as good as you can get, it's good for the football world.”

And Littler's advice for Yamal? “You will get recognised quite a lot where you go. Whether it's ‘the boy from darts’ or ‘the 17-year-old boy who got to the World Championship final’, people are going to notice you and I've just used to it by now. It was happening day after day, so I was just like: this is part of the job now, you've got to get used to it.”

Sport had been threatening to turn into an old man's game before Yamal's goal. James Anderson (41) is playing his farewell Test at Lord's. Mark Cavendish (39) has broken Eddy

Merckx's record for Tour de France stage wins. Cristiano Ronaldo (39) has been a totem/leech (delete as applicable) for Portugal at the Euros. At Wimbledon, Andy Murray (37) had his farewell and Novak Djokovic (37) is in the semi-finals. And in Formula 1, Lewis Hamilton (39) won the British Grand Prix.

Littler was at Silverstone for Hamilton's victory, playing darts with Lando Norris, the 24-year-old McLaren driver. Littler has not been short of sporting crossovers in the past seven months. The highlights, as a Manchester United fan, were his trip to Carrington, the club's training ground, throwing some arrows with Harry Maguire and Christian Eriksen, and meeting Sir Alex Ferguson and Wayne Rooney. Is Yamal next? “I'd love to have a little kickabout with him,” Littler says. Talk about a come-and-get-me plea.

The Euros Germany 2024 *Route to the final*

GROUP A

Friday, June 14 Munich		Wednesday, June 19 Cologne	
Germany 5	Scotland 1		
Wirtz 10, Musiala 19, Havertz 45+1 (pen), Füllkrug 68, Can 90+3		McTominay 13	
Scotland 1	Switzerland 1		
Rüdiger (og) 87		Shaqiri 26	

Saturday, June 15 Cologne		Sunday, June 23 Frankfurt	
Hungary 1	Switzerland 1		
Varga 66		Ndoye 28	
Switzerland 3	Germany 1		
Duah 12, Aebischer 45, Embolo 90+3		Füllkrug 90+2	

Wednesday, June 19 Stuttgart		Sunday, June 23 Stuttgart	
Germany 2	Scotland 0		
Musiala 22, Gündogan 67			
Hungary 0	Hungary 1		
		Csoboth 90+10	

Team	W	D	L	GD	Pts
A1 Germany (Q)	2	1	0	6	7
A2 Switzerland (Q)	1	2	0	2	5
A3 Hungary (E)	1	0	2	-3	3
A4 Scotland (E)	0	1	2	-5	1

GROUP B

Saturday, June 15 Berlin		Thursday, June 20 Gelsenkirchen	
Spain 3	Spain 1		
Morata 29, Fabián 32, Carvajal 45+2		Calafiori 55 (og)	
Croatia 0	Italy 0		

Saturday, June 15 Dortmund		Monday, June 24 Düsseldorf	
Italy 2	Albania 1		
Bastoni 11, Barella 16		Torres 13	
Albania 1	Spain 1		
Bajrami 1		Torres 13	

Wednesday, June 19 Hamburg		Monday, June 24 Leipzig	
Croatia 2	Croatia 1		
Kramaric 74, Gjasula (og) 76		Modric 55	
Albania 2	Italy 1		
Laci 11, Gjasula 90+5		Zaccagni 90+8	

Team	W	D	L	GD	Pts
B1 Spain (Q)	3	0	0	5	9
B2 Italy (Q)	1	1	1	0	4
B3 Croatia (E)	0	2	1	-3	2
B4 Albania (E)	0	1	2	-2	1

GROUP C

Sunday, June 16 Stuttgart		Thursday, June 20 Frankfurt	
Slovenia 1	Denmark 1		
Janza 77		Hjulmand 34	
Denmark 1	England 1		
Eriksen 17		Kane 18	

Sunday, June 16 Gelsenkirchen		Tuesday, June 25 Cologne	
Serbia 0	England 0		
England 1	Slovenia 0		
Bellingham 13			

Thursday, June 20 Munich		Tuesday, June 25 Munich	
Slovenia 1	Denmark 0		
Karnicnik 69			
Serbia 1	Serbia 0		
Jovic 90+5			

Team	W	D	L	GD	Pts
C1 England (Q)	1	2	0	1	5
C2 Denmark (Q)	0	3	0	0	3
C3 Slovenia (Q)	0	3	0	0	3
C4 Serbia (E)	0	2	1	-1	2

GROUP D

Sunday, June 16 Hamburg		Friday, June 21 Leipzig	
Poland 1	Netherlands 0		
Buksa 16			
Netherlands 2	France 0		
Gakpo 29, Weghorst 83			

Monday, June 17 Düsseldorf		Tuesday, June 25 Berlin	
Austria 0	Netherlands 2		
		Gakpo 47, Depay 75	
France 1	Austria 3		
Wöber 38 (og)		Malen 6 (og), Schmid 59, Sabitzer 80	

Friday, June 21 Berlin		Tuesday, June 25 Dortmund	
Poland 1	France 1		
Piatek 30		Mbappé 56 (pen)	
Austria 3	Poland 1		
Trauner 9, Baumgartner 66, Arnautovic 78 (pen)		Lewandowski 79 (pen)	

Team	W	D	L	GD	Pts
D1 Austria (Q)	2	0	1	2	6
D2 France (Q)	1	2	0	1	5
D3 Netherlands (Q)	1	1	1	0	4
D4 Poland (E)	0	1	2	-3	1

GROUP E

Monday, June 17 Munich		Saturday, June 22 Cologne	
Romania 3	Belgium 2		
Stanciu 29, R Marin 53, Dragus 57		Tielemans 2, De Bruyne 80	
Ukraine 0	Romania 0		

Monday, June 17 Frankfurt		Wednesday, June 26 Frankfurt	
Belgium 0	Slovakia 1		
		Duda 24	
Slovakia 1	Romania 1		
Schranz 7		R Marin 37 (pen)	

Friday, June 21 Düsseldorf		Wednesday, June 26 Stuttgart	
Slovakia 1	Ukraine 0		
Schranz 17			
Ukraine 2	Belgium 0		
Shaparenko 54, Yaremchuk 80			

Team	W	D	L	GD	Pts
E1 Romania (Q)	1	1	1	1	4
E2 Belgium (Q)	1	1	1	1	4
E3 Slovakia (Q)	1	1	1	0	4
E4 Ukraine (E)	1	1	1	-2	4

GROUP F

Tuesday, June 18 Dortmund		Saturday, June 22 Dortmund	
Turkey 3	Turkey 0		
Muldur 25, Güler 65, Akturkoglu 90+7			
Georgia 1	Portugal 3		
Mikautadze 32		Silva 21, Akaydin 28 (og), Fernandes 56	

Tuesday, June 18 Leipzig		Wednesday, June 26 Gelsenkirchen	
Portugal 2	Georgia 2		
Hranac (og) 69, Conceicao 90+2		Kvaratskhelia 2, Mikautadze 57 (pen)	
Czech Republic 1	Portugal 0		
Provod 62			

Saturday, June 22 Hamburg		Wednesday, June 26 Hamburg	
Georgia 1	Czech Republic 1		
Mikautadze 45+4 (pen)		Soucek 66	
Czech Republic 1	Turkey 2		
Schick 59		Calhanoglu 51, Tosun 90+4	

Team	W	D	L	GD	Pts
F1 Portugal (Q)	2	0	1	2	6
F2 Turkey (Q)	2	0	1	0	6
F3 Georgia (Q)	1	1	1	0	4
F4 Czech Republic (E)	0	1	2	-2	1

ROUND OF 16

Sunday, June 30 Cologne	
Spain 4	
Rodri 39, Ruiz 51, Williams 75, Olmo 83	
Georgia 1	
Le Normand (og) 18	

Saturday, June 29 Dortmund	
Germany 2	
Havertz 53 (pen), Musiala 68	
Denmark 0	

Monday, July 1 Frankfurt	
Portugal 0	
Slovenia 0	
(aet: Portugal win 3-0 on pens)	

Monday, July 1 Düsseldorf	
France 1	
Vertonghen 85 (OG)	
Belgium 0	

QUARTER-FINALS

Friday, July 5 Stuttgart	
Spain 2	
Olmo 51, Merino 119	
Germany 1	
Wirtz 89 (aet: 1-1 after 90min)	

Friday, July 5 Hamburg	
Portugal 0	
France 0	
(aet: France win 5-3 on pens)	

ROUND OF 16

Saturday, July 6 Berlin	
Netherlands 2	
De Vrij 70, Muldur 76 (og)	
Turkey 1	
Akaydin 35	

Saturday, July 6 Düsseldorf	
England 1	
Saka 80	
Switzerland 1	
Embolo 75 (aet: England win 5-3 on pens)	

Tuesday, June 9 Munich	
Spain 2	
Yamal 21, Olmo 25	
France 1	
Kolo Muani 8	

Yesterday Dortmund	
Netherlands 1	
Simons 7	
England 2	
Kane 18 (pen), Watkins 90	

ROUND OF 16

Tuesday, July 2 Munich	
Romania 0	
Netherlands 3	
Gakpo 20, Malen 83, 90+3	

Tuesday, July 2 Leipzig	
Austria 1	
Gregoritsch 66	
Turkey 2	
Demiral 1, 59	

Sunday, June 30 Gelsenkirchen	
England 2	
Bellingham 90+5, Kane 91	
Slovakia 1	
Schranz 25 (aet: 1-1 after 90min)	

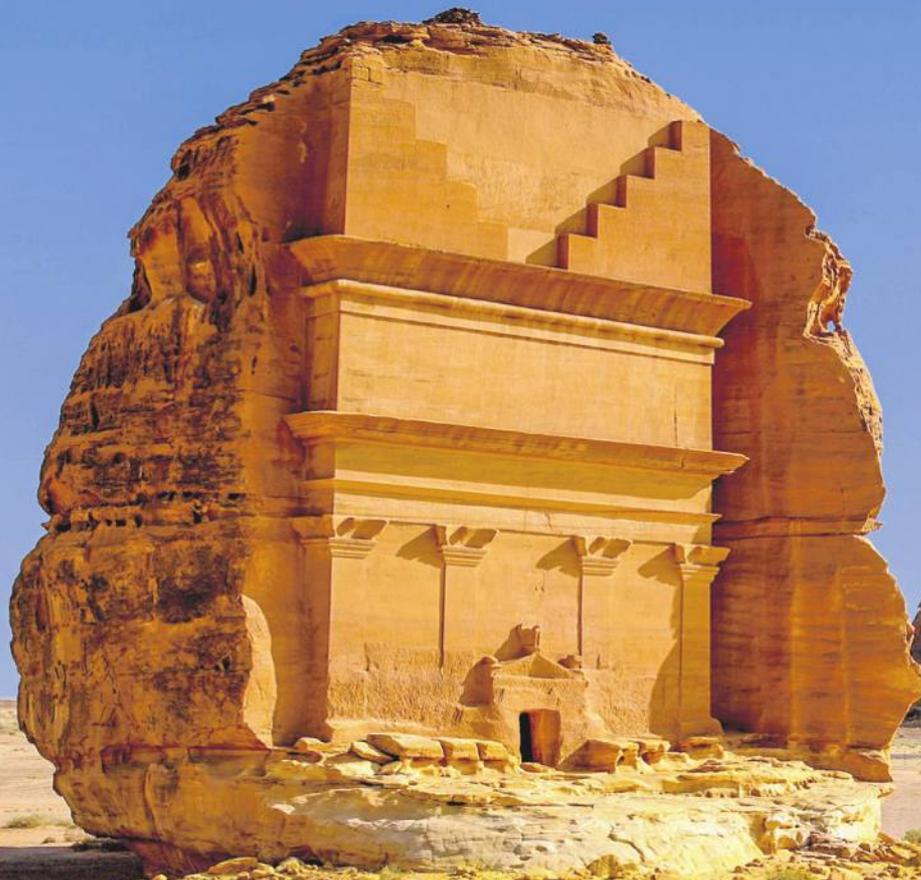
Saturday, June 29 Berlin	
Switzerland 2	
Freuler 37, Vargas 46	
Italy 0	

Sunday, July 14 8pm, Berlin	
Spain 1	England 1

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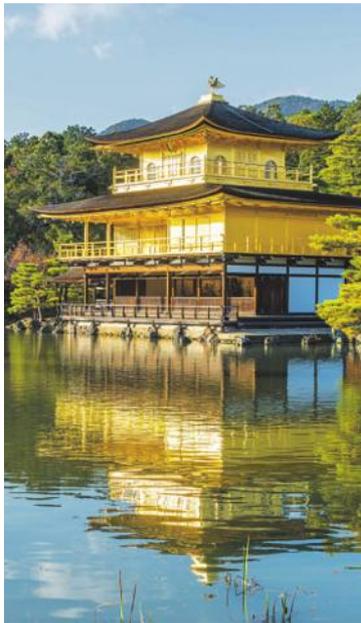
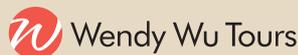
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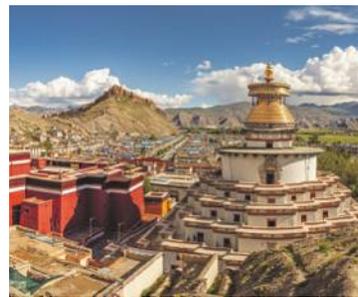
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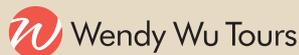
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Colombia Discovery

Departures | July 2024 to November 2025

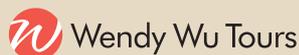
- Price Includes**
- International flights and taxes
 - All transportation and transfers
 - All accommodation
 - All meals
 - Exclusive free pre-tour extension including hotel night, breakfast and private transfers
 - Touring with guides and entrance fees

Hop between cosmopolitan cities, colonial towns, coffee haciendas and the Caribbean coast to discover everything there is to love about the enchanting country of Colombia. Landing in Bogota, explore the city before heading into the foothills of the Andes to enjoy the spectacular landscapes of the Valle Del Cocora and learn all about coffee at a typical hacienda. See the sights in and around the charming and artsy city of Medellin, including a musical

experience and cooking demonstration. Then, hop over the coast to admire the old colonial city of Santa Marta, wander the exotic coastline of the Parque Nacional Natural Tayrona and soak up the charms

of Cartagena, where you'll taste local rums and enjoy a street food tour. Spend your last day immersed in Afro-Colombian vibes with a drumming masterclass, followed by a serene sunset cruise on a catamaran.

Our Trusted Partner



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*Prices are correct at time of going to press. Prices listed are based on two sharing a twin/double room. The offer is available on bookings confirmed by July 31, 2024 and cannot be applied retrospectively to bookings already confirmed. The offer is subject to availability and Wendy Wu Tours reserve the right to change or withdraw the offer. Operated by and subject to the booking conditions of Wendy Wu, ABTA W7994 ATOL 6639, a company wholly independent of News UK.

