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Biden quits race

- US president said pulling out of election in 'best interest' of party
- Democrat endorses vice-president, Kamala Harris, to take his place

Sam Levine *New York*
Lauren Gambino *Washington*

Joe Biden yesterday withdrew his bid to seek a second term in the White House, endorsing the vice-president, Kamala Harris, to take his place as the Democratic candidate in an extraordinary decision that plunges the US into chaos less than four months before the election.

The 81-year-old president's decision to stand aside comes after weeks of pressure about his fitness and ability to defeat Donald Trump – a candidate he has warned is an existential threat to US democracy.

"While it has been my intention to seek re-election, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and focus solely on fulfilling my duties as president for the remainder of my term," Biden said in a letter announcing his decision. He said he planned to speak to the nation in more detail later this week.

Biden thanked Harris in his letter and later endorsed her candidacy in a tweet. "My fellow Democrats, I have decided not to accept the nomination and to focus all my energies on my duties as president for the remainder of my term," he tweeted. "My very first decision as the party nominee in 2020 was to pick Kamala Harris as my vice-president. And it's been the best decision I've made. Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year. Democrats – it's time to come together and beat Trump. Let's do this."

Harris thanked Biden in a statement "for his extraordinary leadership as president". She also said "with this selfless and patriotic act, President Biden is doing what he has done throughout his life of service: putting the American people and our country above everything else. I am honored to have the president's endorsement and my intention is to earn and win this nomination.

"I will do everything in my power to unite the Democratic party – and unite our nation – to defeat Donald Trump. We have 107 days until Election Day. Together, we will fight. And together, we will win."

The president made the stunning announcement after a weeks-long pressure campaign by Democratic leaders, organisers and donors who increasingly saw no path to victory so long as the embattled incumbent remained on the ticket. More than 30 Democratic members of Congress had called on Biden to step aside.

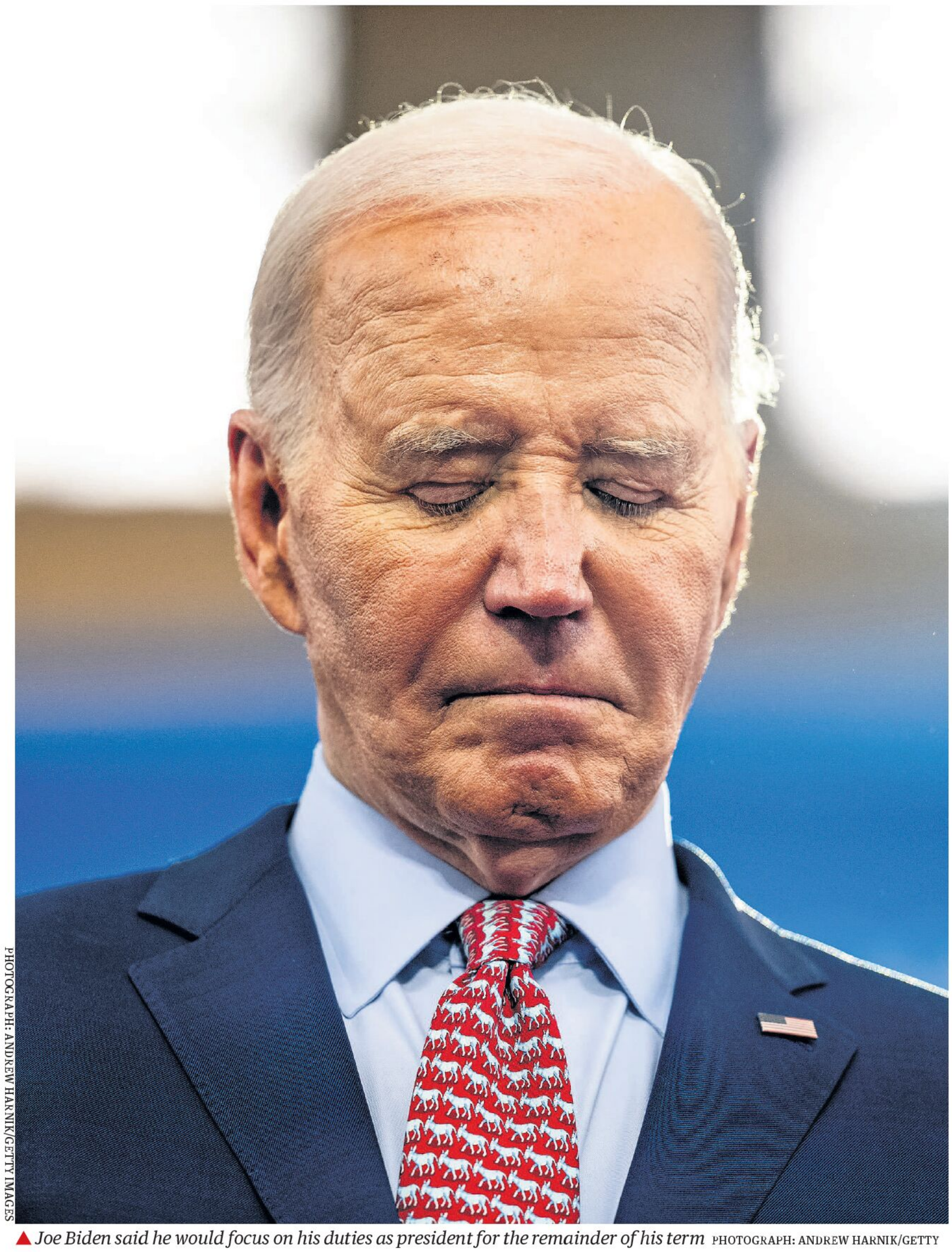
As recently as Friday, his campaign had insisted he was staying in the race. An ABC News/Ipsos poll released yesterday found that 60% of Democrats believed he should end his run. The same poll found that nearly 76% of Democrats would be satisfied with Harris as the nominee.

Biden's decision appears to have been abrupt. The president told his senior staff yesterday afternoon that he had changed his mind about staying in the race, with campaign officials still reportedly on the phone with delegates asking if they could count on their support.

In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said Biden "was not fit to run for President, and is certainly not fit to serve – And never was!"

Biden "only attained the position of President by lies, Fake News, and not leaving his

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PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES

▲ *Joe Biden said he would focus on his duties as president for the remainder of his term* PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY

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▲ *Kamala Harris is Biden's choice and delegates may see her as the safest option for candidate*
PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY

Biden quits race 'in best interest' of his party and endorses Harris

Continued *from page 1*

Basement", Trump said. "All those around him, including his Doctor and the Media, knew that he wasn't capable of being President, and he wasn't."

Trump went on to list a series of falsehoods about immigration, concluding: "We will suffer greatly because of his presidency, but we will remedy the damage he has done very quickly. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

Minutes after yesterday's announcement, Trump told CNN that he believed it would be easier to defeat Harris than it would have been to beat Biden.

It is unclear if any other Democrats will try to challenge Harris for the nomination. And it is still not clear whether she is better positioned to beat Trump. An NBC News poll from earlier this month showed Trump leading Biden and Harris by 2 points, which was within the survey's margin of error.

Former president Barack Obama, who selected Biden as his vice-president for both his terms, released a statement yesterday praising Biden's decision. There had been reporting in recent days that there was tension between the men over Biden feeling that Obama and other Democrats were trying to push him out.

"Joe Biden has been one of America's most consequential presidents, as well as a dear friend and partner to me," said Obama, who won the presidency in 2008. "Today, we've also been reminded – again – that he's a patriot of the highest order.

"I also know Joe has never backed down from a fight. For him to look at the political landscape and decide that he should pass the torch to a new nominee is surely one of the toughest in his life. But I know he wouldn't make this decision unless he believed it was right for America. It's a testament to Joe Biden's love of country – and a historic example of a genuine public servant once again putting the interests of the American people ahead of his own – that future generations of leaders will do well to follow."

Obama, who stopped short of endorsing Harris, said Democrats would be navigating "uncharted waters in the days ahead". He added: "But I have extraordinary confidence that the leaders of our party will be able to create a process from which an outstanding nominee emerges."

Bill and Hillary Clinton endorsed Harris in a joint statement. "We are honored to join the president in endorsing Vice President Harris and will do whatever we can to support her," the former president and secretary of state said.

Harris's nomination is not automatic, and there are other Democrats – including the Michigan governor, Gretchen Whitmer, the California governor, Gavin Newsom, and the Illinois governor, JB Pritzker – who could seek the nomination. If any of those candidates were nominated at the party convention in Chicago next month, they would face the monumental task of introducing themselves to voters, crafting a campaign message and defeating Trump – all in two and a half months.

Citing sources, CBS News yesterday reported that neither Whitmer nor Newsom intended to pursue the Democratic nomination. The network added: "There's no one at this moment preparing behind the scenes to challenge vice-president Harris."

The chair of the Democratic National Committee, Jaime Harrison, said the party would "undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward" to choose a candidate to defeat Trump in November.

A disastrous debate performance last month, and his uneven public appearances since, have only exacerbated longstanding voter concerns that the president was simply too old to serve another four years.

Democrats immediately praised Biden's decision, including Chuck Schumer, the majority leader in the US Senate, and one of several Democrats who had been pressuring Biden to step aside.

"Joe Biden has not only been a great president and a great legislative leader but he is a truly amazing human being. His decision of course was not easy, but he once again put his country, his party, and our future first," Schumer said in a statement.

Biden's decision to step aside, though remain as president, caps a singular few weeks in US politics, the latest stunning episode in the election season. Trump, the Republican nominee, survived an attempt on his life at a rally in Pennsylvania that bloodied his ear and left one spectator dead. Biden, after appealing for calm after the attack, had returned to the campaign trail last week determined to salvage his candidacy.

As Biden's vice-president, Harris, 59, has the largest national profile of any Democratic candidate, and delegates may view her as the safest option. Campaign finance experts also say Harris would have the most straightforward legal argument to keep the Biden campaign's fundraising haul, while another nominee might have to forfeit that money. As of the end of May, the campaign had $91.6m in cash on hand.

The prime minister, Keir Starmer, said last night: "I know that, as he has done throughout his remarkable career, President Biden will have made his decision based on what he believes is in the best interests of the American people."

An act of selfless grace Decision to put his country first contrasts sharply with Trump's narcissism



David Smith
Washington

Legend has it that when King George III heard that George Washington, the first US president, had decided to retire after his second term, he remarked: "If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world."

Joe Biden, 81, holed up at a Delaware beach house with a bad cough after a Covid diagnosis, ended his pre-election campaign yesterday. It was a selfless decision that put the country's interests before his own – an act of grace that many see as vividly contrasting with the narcissism of his opponent, Donald Trump.

It also sets the stage for a completely different sort of election in November as top Democrats rapidly rushed to endorse Kamala Harris, which the president himself did. Now the Republicans will have to deal with issues of mental competence and an aging candidate.

Although many fellow Democrats had lost faith in Biden's mental acuity and capacity to beat Trump, they had no mechanism to oust Biden, who won a mandate in the party primaries and continued to enjoy the support of black and progressive voters. Although he had spent decades striving for the crown, and sincerely believed he could finish the job, Biden ultimately realised that it was not about him and never had been.

Opinion polls strongly suggest that he would have lost in November to Trump, a twice-impeached felon and instigator of the January 6 insurrection. To cling on and go down in flames, returning the White House keys to Trump, would have destroyed his legacy. He would have been remembered as the man who saved democracy in 2020 only to sacrifice it at the altar of his own ambition in 2024.

Instead, whatever happens now, the 46th president will be remembered for steering America's recovery from the Trump presidency and the pandemic, delivering legislative achievements that will long outlast him – and giving his party a fighting chance to beat Trump again.

His withdrawal was "one of the most stunning acts of patriotism of my lifetime", Norm Eisen, a former diplomat, wrote on X. David Axelrod, a former senior adviser to President Barack Obama, added: "History will honour him for his many extraordinary accomplishments as president AND for the terribly difficult and selfless decision he made today." The comedian Jon Stewart tweeted simply: "Legend."

Biden's announcement was the latest drama in a month that has shaken US politics: his hapless debate performance on 27 June, a supreme court decision to grant broad presidential immunity on 1 July, an attempted assassination of Trump on 13 July, the collapse of the classified documents case against Trump and the selection of JD Vance as Trump's running mate on 15 July.

Future historians will surely look back at the first of those, the debate, as one of the most spectacular own goals in campaign history. For months Biden's decline had been mostly concealed from the public as he stuck to teleprompter speeches and conducted few interviews or press conferences.

If this was a conspiracy, it was an inept one: it was Biden's own campaign that sought a presidential debate much earlier than usual so to awaken the nation to the danger of Trump. Instead the incumbent's halting, doddering showing had the opposite effect, shining a harsh light on his own flaws instead. From that moment, the writing was on the wall.

By yesterday 36 congressional Democrats had publicly called on Biden to drop out of the race. Party heavyweights such as a Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer and even his old boss, Obama, had sent powerful signals. Yet Senator Bernie Sanders, US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and others continued to rally around him. The final excruciating decision was Biden's alone.

It immediately scrambled the race for the White House and potentially threw Trump on the back foot. Suddenly he, at 78, finds himself the oldest major party nominee for president that America has ever seen – now his gaffes and name mix-ups will be in the spotlight.

The lesson of elections in Britain and around the world this year is that anti-incumbent sentiment is high. If the US is also on course for a change election, Trump is no longer the change candidate. A man who has spent his media and political career as a limelight-hogging disrupter will now have to respond to disruption on the other side.

> *'Historians will see the debate as one of the most spectacular own goals in history'*

Biden immediately threw his weight behind Harris. It is surely her race to lose. Some will back her with enthusiasm, pointing to the historic nature of her candidacy and how, since the fall of Roe v Wade, she has found her voice on the issue of abortion rights.

Tim Miller, the communications director for the Jeb Bush 2016 presidential campaign, told MSNBC: "If you want to sum up a contrast, a prosecutor versus a convicted criminal, a woman who wants to protect your freedoms versus an old man that wants to take them away."

Others will make a pragmatic case that to bypass the first woman, and first black woman, to serve as vice-president would be disrespectful, offensive and self-defeating.

Cornell Belcher, a Democratic pollster and strategist, said on MSBNC: "If the Democrats want to give the White House back to Donald Trump, let them go into an open nomination process and disrespect and step over the first black woman vice-president of this country and they will be committing absolute suicide. That is a surefire way for Donald Trump to become president again."

The events of the past month, and the past eight years, have taught us to expect the unexpected – an open nominating process and Democratic melee is still possible. But Bill and Hillary Clinton were both quick to endorse Harris and there will be more to come.

Having witnessed last week's Republican national convention in Milwaukee, Democrats understand the value of unity.



▶ *Protesters in Washington DC on Saturday demand that Biden stands down from the presidential race*

PHOTOGRAPH: DANIEL SLIM/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The statements in full

Joe Biden's withdrawal yesterday followed a disastrous debate performance that led Democrats to fear he was heading for certain defeat against Donald Trump. He published a letter announcing his decision to withdraw:

My Fellow Americans,
Over the past three and a half years, we have made great progress as a nation.

Today, America has the strongest economy in the world. We've made historic investments in rebuilding our nation, in lowering prescription drug costs for seniors, and in expanding affordable health care to a record number of Americans. We've provided critically needed care to a million veterans exposed to toxic substances. Passed the first gun safety law in 30 years. Appointed the first African American woman to the Supreme Court. And passed the most significant climate legislation in the history of the world. America has never been better positioned to lead than we are today.

I know none of this could have been done without you, the American people. Together, we overcame a once in a century pandemic and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We've protected and preserved our Democracy. And we've revitalized and strengthened our alliances around the world.

It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President. And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term.

I will speak to the Nation later this week in more detail about my decision.

For now, let me express my deepest gratitude to all those who have worked so hard to see me reelected. I want to thank Vice President Kamala Harris for being an extraordinary partner in all this work. And let me express my heartfelt appreciation to the American people for the faith and trust you have placed in me.

I believe today what I always have: that there is nothing America can't do – when we do it together. We just have to remember we are the United States of America.

In a second post, he endorsed vice-president Kamala Harris to replace him on the ticket:

My fellow Democrats,
I have decided not to accept the nomination and to focus all my energies on my duties as President for the remainder of my term. My very first decision as the party nominee in 2020 was to pick Kamala Harris as my Vice President. And it's been the best decision I've made. Today I want to offer my full support and endorsement for Kamala to be the nominee of our party this year. Democrats – it's time to come together and beat Trump. Let's do this.

A life of tragedy and resilience

Biden calls time on consequential political career



◀ *Campaigning with his wife, Jill, in Delaware for the 1988 nomination. Right, as a newly elected senator in 1972*

PHOTOGRAPHS: PHOTOQUEST/GETTY IMAGES, PENSKE MEDIA/GETTY IMAGES





▼ *President Barack Obama and then vice-president Joe Biden at a US v Brazil basketball game in Washington in 2012*

PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK SMITH/GETTY

Martin Pengelly
Washington

Joe Biden's historic decision yesterday to step down as the Democratic nominee for president signals an imminent end to one of the most consequential American political careers.

At 81, the oldest president ever sworn in has finally yielded to time - and his own party. Someone else, most likely the vice-president, Kamala Harris, will face Donald Trump in November.

Biden will remain in the White House until 20 January, but Democrats and Republicans will soon survey something new: a political landscape without Joe Biden at its centre.

Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1942, Biden attended the University of Delaware and Syracuse law school, became a public defender, then entered politics. A natural campaigner, in 1972, he ran for US Senate aged 29, scoring a huge upset over J Caleb Boggs, a two-term Republican more than twice his age.

The same year voters gave the Republican Richard Nixon a landslide win. Nixon was the 37th president. In 2021, Biden would become the 46th. In that 49-year span, as eight presidents came and went, Biden was a senator for 36 years, vice-president for eight.

As a junior senator, Biden suffered his first, but not last, tragedy when a car crash killed his wife, Neilia Biden, and one-year-old daughter, Naomi, at Christmas in 1972. He became known for riding the rails, from Delaware to Washington and back, to care for his sons, Beau and Hunter.

He married his second wife, Jill Jacobs, in 1977, and their daughter, Ashley, was born four years later.

For 17 years, Biden was a ranking member (most senior minority member) or chair of the Senate judiciary committee. He led five supreme court confirmations. In 1991 the nominee Clarence Thomas was accused of sexual harassment and Biden was widely seen to have mishandled the hearings. In 2019, he said Thomas's accuser, Anita Hill, "did not get treated well. I take responsibility for that."

Biden's record on crime would also haunt him, particularly his support for a 1994 bill that many say contributed to problems of mass incarceration and racial injustice. Another 1994 bill, banning assault weapons, remained a source of pride.

For 11 years Biden was the chair or ranking member of the foreign relations committee. In 1991, he voted against the Gulf war. In 2002, after 9/11, he voted for the invasion of Iraq, later saying he was wrong.

In 1987 he ran for president. At 45, he sought comparison with John F Kennedy but, as reported by Richard Ben Cramer in the campaign classic What It Takes, youth and drive were not enough to prevent embarrassing failure.

Biden took to quoting Neil Kinnock, then Labour party leader, about being the first member of his family to go to college.



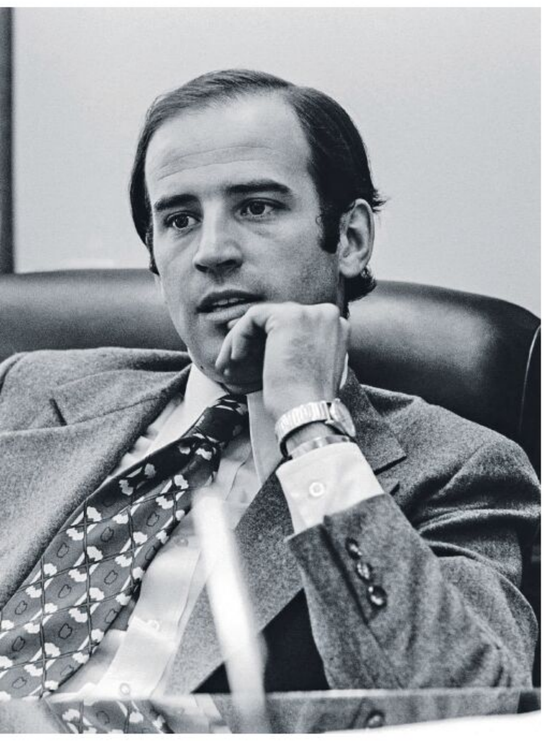
▲ *Joe Biden is helped after falling at a US Air Force Academy graduation, near Colorado Springs, in June last year* PHOTOGRAPH: BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY

Unfortunately, Biden stopped saying he was quoting Kinnock.

Kinnock didn't mind but the US press did. Biden's freewheeling speaking style (and accompanying evocations of his Irish ancestry) often left him open to error. But he was an effective communicator, all the more remarkably so given he stammered as a child.

Months after abandoning his presidential campaign, Biden suffered a brain aneurysm so severe a priest was called to administer the last rites. He later suffered another.

He was nothing if not resilient. Twenty years later, he ran for president again. A great debate stage line about a Republican rival went down in history: "Rudy Giuliani, there's only three things he mentions in a sentence: a noun, a verb and 9/11." But Biden soon dropped out.



Barack Obama won the nomination. When the Illinois senator, 47, picked Biden, 66, as his running mate, the New York Times said Obama had acquired "a longtime Washington hand" who could "reassure voters" rather than "deliver a state or reinforce [a] message of change".

Biden spent eight years as vice-president, his working relationship with Obama, reports suggested, not quite so close as it was often portrayed. Biden played key roles in successes including advancing LGBTQ+ rights, legislating to prevent violence against women and securing healthcare reform. A push for gun reform failed.

Biden eyed a third presidential run but in 2015 the death of his son Beau from brain cancer took a terrible toll. Furthermore, Obama backed Hillary Clinton.

Amid the chaos of the Trump years, Biden decided to run again. Significant support from black voters propelled a primary win. In the year of Covid, campaign travel was limited. For a 77-year-old candidate, that wasn't much of a problem. Come the election, Biden won by more than 7m votes and with electoral college ease.

The first major book on 2020 was called Lucky: How Joe Biden Barely Won the Presidency. Regardless, his campaign message about a "battle for the soul of America" fuelled two productive years. With congressional Democrats, Biden secured major legislation, boosting the economy after Covid, securing infrastructure investment and funding the climate crisis fight.

Trump had incited an attack on Congress, but Trumpism would not die. Republicans took back the House. Biden oversaw foreign policy disaster – the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan – and success, marshalling support for Ukraine against Russia.

The dam could not hold. Questions about his age and fitness ran at a hum before the disastrous debate in Atlanta in June led to Democratic dissent bursting through. At first, Biden displayed characteristic fire, blaming "elites" and vowing to fight on.

Then Trump survived an assassination attempt and emerged seemingly stronger than ever. Calls for Biden to quit the race grew louder. Eventually, he heard them.

Explainer How the party will find a replacement

With all of the presidential primaries over, the process for replacing Joe Biden could be complicated and politically volatile. Biden has already won far more delegates than he needs to secure the nomination, and the Democratic national convention, which will bring a formal end to the primary process, is next month.

Have Democrats already officially named Biden as their nominee?
No. Democrats will convene in Chicago from 19 to 22 August to formally select their presidential nominee, so until now Biden was still considered the presumptive nominee. The Democratic national committee had plans to virtually nominate Biden before the convention. New plans have not yet been released.

What happens to Biden's pledged delegates now he has withdrawn?
Biden's pledged delegates will probably arrive in Chicago uncommitted to any specific candidate, which could kick off a frenzied fight to win their support. Senior Democrats, such as the former House speaker Nancy Pelosi, have called for an open nomination process, which would allow several candidates to vie for the nomination.

Elaine Kamarck, a member of the Democratic national committee rules committee and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, wrote in January: "Candidates who step into the breach hoping to take the place of the fallen candidate will find out who these delegates are and woo them in as many ways as they can. The outcome will be a convention where the result may not be known ahead of time."

Democrats have not seen a floor fight for the presidential nomination since 1968, when their convention was coincidentally held in Chicago. In a potentially eerie parallel to 2024, then president Lyndon Johnson decided against seeking re-election just months before the election. The assassination of Robert F Kennedy left Hubert Humphrey, Johnson's vice-president, as the main opponent against Eugene McCarthy, the anti-Vietnam war candidate.

The fraught nominating process was overshadowed by the violence on Chicago's streets, as tens of thousands of police officers and national guard officers confronted anti-war protesters. In the end, Humphrey won the nomination – even though he had never appeared on a state primary ballot – but he went on to lose to Richard Nixon in the general election.

Does Kamala Harris automatically win all of Biden's delegates due to his endorsement?
No. The delegates will now be uncommitted and could theoretically vote on the floor for any candidate. Biden has already endorsed Harris, but in the days since the debate a number of names – including California's governor, Gavin Newsom, and Michigan's governor, Gretchen Whitmer – have been floated as possible replacements for Biden. But Harris will still probably go to the convention as a strong favourite for the nomination. As the vice-president, she has the largest national profile of any potential candidate, and Biden's pledged delegates are mostly party loyalists who would be looking for the safest possible choice.

How would a nominee be chosen on the floor?
On the first ballot, a winning nominee would need to secure the votes of a majority of Democrats' roughly 4,000 pledged delegates. If no candidate won a majority on the first ballot, Democrats would continue on to a second ballot, in which so-called "superdelegates" would have an opportunity to vote.

Superdelegates are mostly senior Democratic party leaders, and they would go to the convention not pledged to any candidate. With the roughly 700 superdelegates added to the voting pool, the winning candidate would then need to secure about 2,300 delegates to capture the nomination.

Although superdelegates would make up a relatively small share of the delegate pool, they could play an important role in choosing the nominee. Their support for a particular candidate would speak volumes and could sway fellow delegates.

Joan E Greve *Washington*



Possible contenders include Kamala Harris



Gavin Newsom, governor of California



Gretchen Whitmer, Michigan's governor

Reaction Trump goes on the attack while Democrats praise president's legacy

Richard Luscombe
George Chidi

A vicious attack by Donald Trump on Joe Biden and his legacy led the Republican party's reaction to the president's decision to withdraw from the 2024 race.

"Crooked Joe Biden was not fit to run for president, and is certainly not fit to serve – and never was!" Trump, the Republican nominee, said in a post to Truth Social, repeating his favoured insult for the man who beat him in the 2020 election, and rehashing a familiar litany of unsubstantiated grievances.

"He only attained the position of president by lies, fake news, and not leaving his basement. All those around him, including his doctor and the media, knew that he wasn't capable of being president, and he wasn't.

"And now look what he's done to our country, with millions of people coming across our border, totally unchecked and unvetted, many from prisons, mental institutions, and record numbers of terrorists. We will suffer greatly because of his presidency, but we will remedy the damage he has done very quickly."

Speaker Mike Johnson, a Trump loyalist, issued a statement calling on Biden to also resign the presidency.

"If Joe Biden is not fit to run for president, he is not fit to serve as president," Johnson said. "He must resign the office immediately. November 5 cannot arrive soon enough."

He also attempted to paint Biden's decision to stand aside as a coup staged by the Democratic party, a position that became a popular talking point for Republicans and the Trump campaign in recent days.

"We must be clear about what just happened. The Democrat party forced the Democrat nominee off the ballot, just over 100 days before the election," Johnson said.

"Having invalidated the votes of more than 14 million Americans who selected Joe Biden to be the Democrat nominee for president, the self-proclaimed 'party of democracy' has proven exactly the opposite.

"The party's prospects are no better now with vice-president Kamala Harris, who co-owns the disastrous policy failures of the Biden administration."

A slew of other senior Republicans fell in line yesterday to add their condemnation.

Richard Hudson, chair of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) called Biden's withdrawal "a scandal of historic proportions" in a statement posted to X.

He also questioned if Biden was capable of finishing out his term. "If the president is mentally unfit to campaign, he is mentally unfit to have the nuclear codes," he said. "Judgment day is coming in November."

Not all Republicans were quick to condemn. Ohio's governor, Mike DeWine, a frequent critic of Trump, said in a statement: "I have known President Biden since 1995, when I entered the US Senate and served with him on the Senate judiciary committee. Fran and I wish President Biden and the first lady all the best as he serves out the remainder of his term and in the years ahead."

Democratic leaders quickly piled praise on the president for his lifetime of service.

The former speaker, Nancy Pelosi, who reportedly was one of several lawmakers nudging Biden to withdraw, spoke of her "love and gratitude" in a message following Biden's announcement.

"President Joe Biden is a patriotic American who has always put our country first," Pelosi said. "His legacy of vision, values and leadership make him one of the most consequential presidents in American history."

Though Biden has endorsed Kamala Harris, the vice-president, as his successor, a question is emerging among Democrats: whether the party will coalesce around Harris to take up the baton and run in his stead, or whether the Democratic National Convention should have a "floor fight" for the nomination next month when the party meets in Chicago.

Ronald Klain, Biden's former chief of staff, backed Harris. "Now that the donors and electeds have pushed out the only candidate who has ever beaten Trump, it's time to end the political fantasy games and unite behind the only veteran of a national campaign – our outstanding @vp, @KamalaHarris," Klain wrote on X. "Let's get real and win in November!"

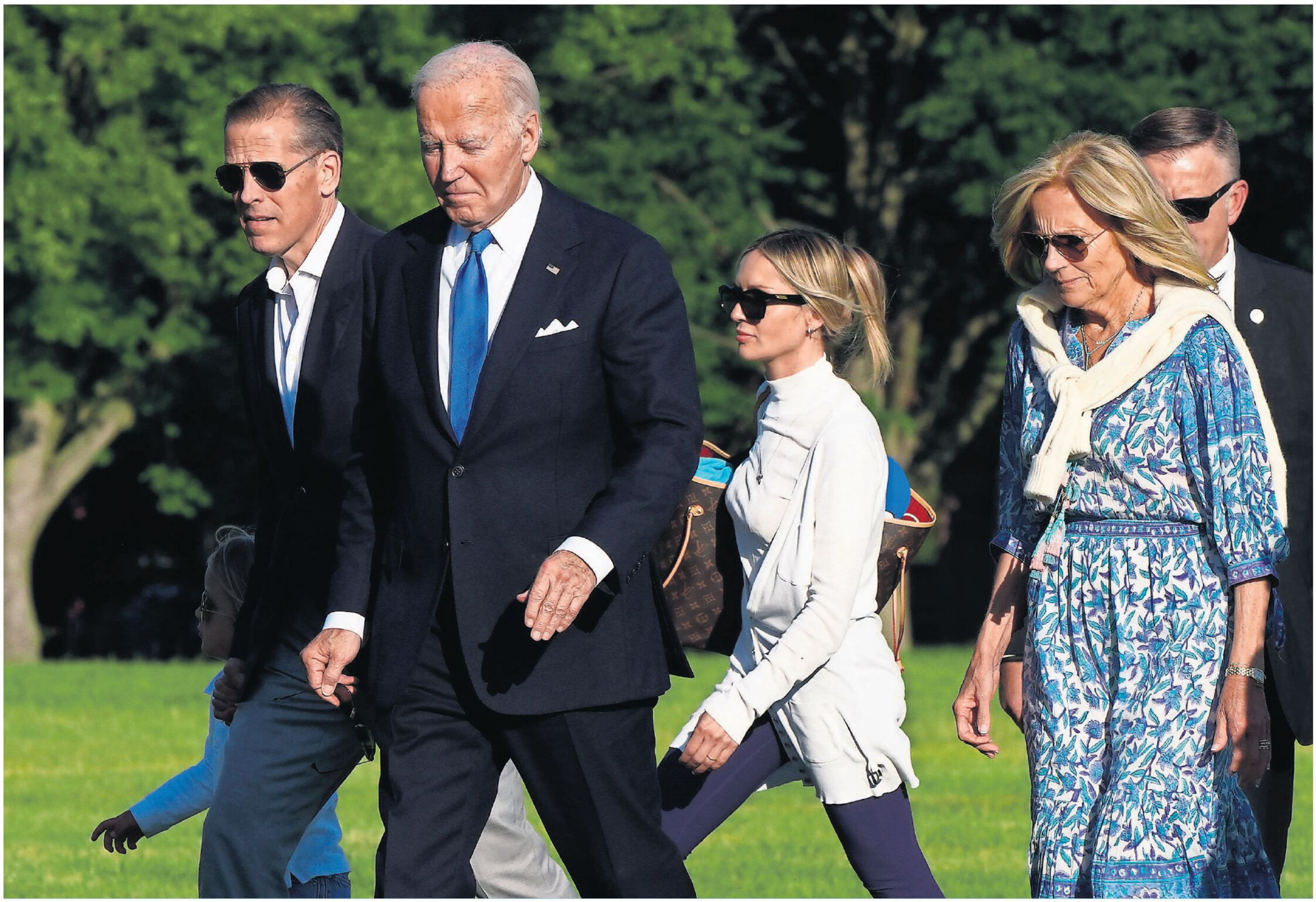
The senators Mark Warner, Tammy Baldwin and others quickly offered their support for Harris in messages yesterday, as did former president Bill Clinton and Senator Hillary Clinton.

"Now's the time for us to rally around Kamala Harris and defeat Donald Trump," said Brandon Scott, mayor of Baltimore. "Black women have saved this country time and time again. For that reason and a hundred others, there is no other – or better – option than the vice-president to unite our party and win in November."

Jaime Harrison, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, described some of the next steps the party will take. "In the coming days, the party will undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward as a united Democratic party with a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November," he said.

"This process will be governed by established rules and procedures of the party. Our delegates are prepared to take seriously their responsibility in swiftly delivering a candidate to the American people."

Many of the strongest contenders – including California governor Gavin Newsom, Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro and Michigan governor Gretchen Whitmer – made statements expressing their gratitude for Biden's service, while studiously avoiding discussion about their own potential candidacies.



▼ Joe Biden, here with his family, had been under mounting pressure to step aside as Democratic nominee
PHOTOGRAPH: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Decision time The final 48 hours that consigned Biden's candidacy to history

Ed Pilkington

Forty-eight hours is an aeon in American politics, especially if you are Joe Biden – and the party you lead, as well as a growing number of your closest allies within it, are turning inexorably against you.

On Friday morning, the message coming out of Joe Biden's camp left no room for interpretation. He may be sick with Covid, but he was resolute: the Biden re-election show must go on.

"He's not going anywhere," Biden's campaign chair, Jen O'Malley Dillon, snapped on MSNBC's Morning Joe, a programme that the president watches so avidly it had become the daily temperature gauge of Biden's ailing campaign.

Then Biden himself popped up with a statement clearly intending to silence the doubters. "I look forward to getting back on the campaign trail next week to continue exposing the threat of Donald Trump's Project 2025 agenda," he said, referring to the ultra-right blueprint produced by Trump acolytes for a second Make America Great Again (Maga) term.

When news came in later that afternoon that the Biden campaign had scheduled a visit to Austin, Texas, for an event at Lyndon Johnson's presidential library on Wednesday, it seemed that he really did mean it. Biden, 81 be damned, was forging ahead.

The problem was, the doubters would not be silenced. As Friday slipped into Saturday, the noise emanating from them was building from whispers into a cacophony.

On Friday alone, at least 10 Democrats in Congress joined those who had publicly called for Biden to go, arguing that it was in the best interest of the party and the country given the threat to democracy posed by Trump. Prominent figures in the party such as senator Sherrod Brown, himself in a tough race for re-election in Ohio, called on Biden to end his campaign.

Sending a message that would not have been lost on Biden and his team, top Californian lawmakers close to Nancy Pelosi, the former Democratic speaker of the House, joined the chorus.

Adding her name to that of Adam Schiff, congresswoman Zoe Lofgren told Biden bluntly that his candidacy was "on a trajectory to lose the White House and potentially impact crucial House and Senate races down ballot. It is for these reasons that I urge you to step aside."

While the 40-odd members of Congress who by Saturday had stuck their necks above the parapet remained a small minority of the 264 Democrats in Congress, in private the rot went much deeper. The stamp of Pelosi, and other leading Democrats who had been pushing Biden to quit from behind the scenes, was beginning to tell.

As Biden continued to self-isolate in his house in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, with the first lady, Jill Biden, only able to support him from a separate room, the president could sit and stew over the many of his supposed political friends who were abandoning him. According to the New York Times, he was fuming about Pelosi's role as the person he blamed for being the prime instigator of a campaign to oust him.

Barack Obama, with whom Biden has had a fraught relationship since Obama nudged his former vice-president to stand aside for Hillary Clinton in the presidential race in 2016, was also the subject of Biden's mounting frustrations, the newspaper reported.

With the walls closing in, it couldn't have helped Biden's mood that Trump was delighting in his misery. So much for the new, warm and caring Trump who was supposed to have emerged from the previous weekend's shooting – on Saturday Trump was back to his favourite pastime of rubbing salt into a rival's wounds.

He was so happy to be in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Trump told a Maga rally – much more fun than sitting "on some boring beach watching the waves coming in".

The New York Times reporter Kenneth Vogel disclosed on X that 30 minutes before the historic announcement was made, Biden re-election staffers were busily calling delegates pushing them to shore up his crumbling hopes by publicly declaring support for him.

We don't know when exactly he made the decision, but Biden had finally come to the view that he had no choice but to repeat the words that so many Democrats had been telling him over these past exceedingly painful days: "I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down."

It may be some time before we know the full emotional depths to which Biden had to dig to write that agonising letter.

As he said in it, the presidency had been "the greatest honour" of his life, and now he was kissing it goodbye.

Succession race

Who will be the next Democratic nominee?

Martin Belam
Chris Michael
Joanna Walters

Joe Biden won the Democratic primaries earlier this year but would not have officially become the party's candidate for president until endorsed at the 2024 Democratic national convention in Chicago, which takes place from 19-22 August. And it has all fallen apart a month before that.

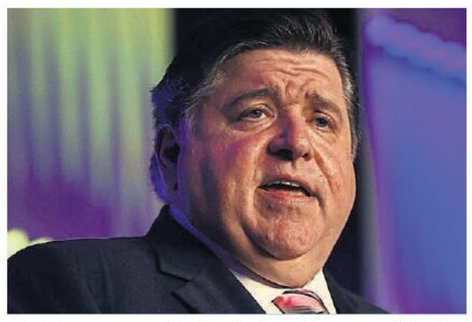
There was no formal mechanism to replace him as presumptive nominee, and such a move would have been the first time a US political party had attempted to do so in modern times. With Biden ultimately quitting of his own volition, he will hope to make the process to choose his replacement smoother. But it will not be straightforward, and the immediate road ahead is not clear.

Yesterday afternoon Biden endorsed his vice-president, Kamala Harris, to become the Democratic nominee for president. She is the first female US vice-president and would become the first female president of the United States if she is officially nominated by the party at its convention and beats Trump in November. Not long after Biden, Bill and Hillary Clinton also endorsed Harris.

Biden's endorsement of Harris will carry weight with delegates at the convention but is not binding.

The Chicago convention was supposed to be a choreographed event, a formality, for the Biden-Harris ticket. Now things are up in the air. The Democratic National Committee's chair, Jaime Harrison, said in a statement that the party would "undertake a transparent and orderly process" to select "a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November".

So who are the most likely candidates to head the Democratic ticket?



▲ *Governor JB Pritzker has codified the right to abortion in Illinois*

Kamala Harris

Biden's vice-president was always the most logical pick, as someone already deputising for the commander-in-chief. However, she has been criticised for not carving out more of her own role in the Biden administration and has poor polling approval ratings, suggesting she would struggle against Donald Trump. The 59-year-old was backing Biden after the debate. Then support for him drained away, and now the spotlight is being trained firmly on Harris. The most senior party leadership, in the shape of the Democratic House speaker emerita, Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer, the Senate majority leader, and Hakeem Jeffries, the House minority leader, reportedly privately agreed with dozens of members of Congress who have been publicly calling on Biden to quit the race. That number continued to grow over the weekend, until Biden did as they were urging. But few until Biden yesterday specified who should replace him. Harris was chosen as Biden's running mate when she was a US senator for California, having been attorney general of the state and previously a district attorney based in San Francisco. She ran an unsuccessful campaign for the presidential nomination in 2020 that never made it to the primaries. As vice-president she was given difficult briefs including immigration but has most assuredly found her footing defending reproductive rights, in the wake of the US supreme court overturning Roe v Wade in 2022.

Gavin Newsom

The 56-year-old California governor was in the spin room on the night last month after the first presidential debate of the 2024 election, talking down any alternatives to Biden as nominee, saying it was "nonsensical speculation". He had a prime-time debate last year with the Florida governor, Ron DeSantis, which could be a presidential match-up of the future, and has made a point of supporting Democrats in elections away from his home state, which looked, at times, like a shadow White House campaign.

JB Pritzker

The 59-year-old governor of Illinois would be one of the wealthiest of picks. He can flourish his credentials of having codified the right to abortion in Illinois and declaring it a "sanctuary state" for women seeking abortions. He has also been strong on gun control, and he legalised recreational marijuana.

Gretchen Whitmer

The Michigan governor, 52, was on the shortlist for VP pick for Biden in 2020, and a strong showing in the midterms for the Democratic party was in part attributed to her governorship. She has been in favour of stricter gun laws, repealing abortion bans and backing universal preschool.

Sherrod Brown

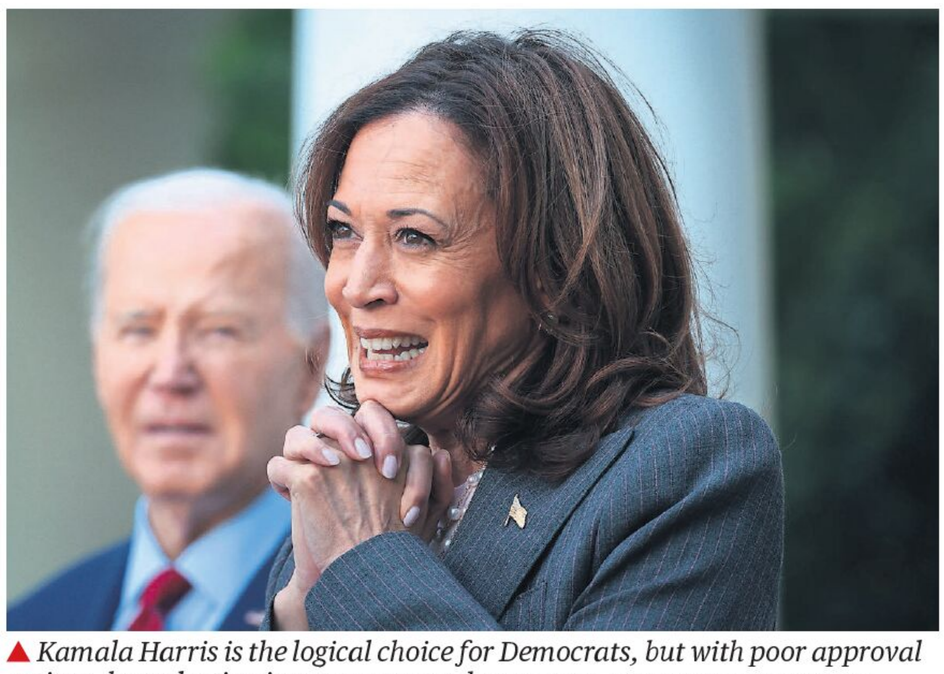
The 71-year-old would be the oldest of the picks, but is still seven years younger than Trump. It was considered a surprise when he did not have a tilt for the Democratic nomination for 2020, at the time saying remaining as Ohio's senator was "the best place for me to make that fight" on behalf of working people. A strong voice on labour rights and protections, he has also defended IVF and abortion.

Josh Shapiro

The Democratic governor of Pennsylvania has been a rising star in this swing state for years but shot to national prominence in the autumn of 2022 when, as state attorney general, he won the gubernatorial race over an extreme Trumpist Republican. His name has been on many lips of late, and the reckoning since Biden stepped aside is if Harris wins the nomination, Shapiro would be a strong pick as her running mate.

Pete Buttigieg

He's Biden's transportation secretary and a one-time rival the US president beat in the 2020 primaries. Then he was known most widely as "Mayor Pete" after coming to prominence as the civic leader of South Bend, Indiana. His sharp mind and record as a war veteran got him talked about as potentially the first millennial to become president. He was the first publicly gay person confirmed to a US cabinet post. That would be a first for a US president, vice-president or nominee.



▲ *Kamala Harris is the logical choice for Democrats, but with poor approval ratings, her selection is not guaranteed* PHOTOGRAPH: WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY IMAGES

Trump attack

Pressure on Secret Service head to resign

Edward Helmore
New York

The head of the US Secret Service came under renewed pressure to resign yesterday as she prepared to appear before a congressional committee to explain how a gunman was able to shoot Donald Trump in the ear at a rally in Pennsylvania.

In a statement on Saturday, the Pennsylvania congressman Brendan Boyle became the first Democrat to call for Kimberly Cheatle to step down, as new details about security lapses before Trump's near-assassination on 13 July came to light.

After the Washington Post reported that for two years the presidential protection agency had denied Trump requests for more security, Boyle said he had "no confidence" in the Secret Service leadership. Boyle said on X: "The evidence coming to light has shown unacceptable operational failures. I have no confidence in the leadership of the United States Secret Service if Director Cheatle chooses to remain in her position."

Top Republicans, including the Senate minority leader, Mitch McConnell, and House speaker, Mike Johnson, called for her to go. McConnell said: "The nation deserves answers and accountability. New leadership at the Secret Service would be an important step in that direction."

Johnson addressed claims Trump was not adequately protected because Cheatle had prioritised diversity in the agency. "No, ma'am - that is not your top priority," he told CNN. "We want the most capable officers regardless of gender. Their job is protection, not diversity ... People just don't understand why basic tasks were not taken. Director Cheatle said people were not on that roof because of the slant, and she was worried about the health and safety of her agents. That makes no sense to us."

The gunman, Thomas Crooks, was able to fire about seven rounds with an AR-15 despite warnings from the public that a man was "bear-crawling" on the roof with a rifle. Cheatle has said the Secret Service considered the roof too "sloped" to place a counter-sniper team on top of safely.

Cheatle, a Joe Biden White House appointee, was confronted by Republican senators at their party's national convention demanding she step down but has said through her office that she has no plans to do so.

Pressure on her has increased since it was revealed that 20 minutes passed between Secret Service snipers first spotting Crooks, 20, on a nearby rooftop and the time he fired at Trump. By the time Crooks was shot dead in Butler, Pennsylvania, the ex-president's ear had been hit by a bullet and a spectator was dead.

It was also reported that top officials had rejected requests from Trump's security detail, blaming a lack of resources. According to the Post, agents with Trump's security detail requested magnetometers and more agents to screen audience members at indoor events, as well as more snipers at outdoor events. At the Butler rally, areas outside the perimeter, including the glass research factory that Crooks used as a perch, were assigned to local police.

Overseas

Leaders praise Biden's work and service

Andrew Roth
Washington

US allies offered tributes to Joe Biden's work over decades of government service after his announcement that he would not seek re-election this year.

The US election campaign comes at a pivotal moment, with major conflicts ongoing in Ukraine and Gaza, both US political parties warning of a growing great-power rivalry with China, and European allies unsettled about a revanchist Russia and potential America First policy under Donald Trump that could see Washington turn its back on the continent.

Foreign leaders highlighted Biden's work as a partner in international security without addressing the tense political debate still unfolding in the US.

"Dear President @JoeBiden," the Polish prime minister, Donald Tusk, wrote on X. "You've taken many difficult decisions thanks to which Poland, America and the world are safer, and democracy stronger."

Keir Starmer called Biden's career "remarkable". "I respect President Biden's decision and I look forward to us working together during the remainder of his presidency," the prime minister said. "I know that, as he has done throughout his remarkable career, he will have made his decision based on what he believes is best for the American people."

Former Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett wrote on X: "President Biden is a true friend of Israel who stood by us in our most difficult moments. During my tenure as Prime Minister, I witnessed his unwavering support of the State of Israel. Thank you for everything."

US adversaries criticised Biden's record and accused him of standing behind growing tensions around the world. "Biden has caused problems all over the world and in his own country, the United States. Since he sees that he will not be elected, he is withdrawing without waiting for the election," Russian state Duma leader Vyacheslav Volodin, an ally of Vladimir Putin's, told reporters.

Biden "should be held accountable for the war unleashed in Ukraine, for destroying the economies of European countries, and for the sanctions policy against Russia and other countries," Volodin said.

Campaigners call on ministers to end culture war against cycling

Peter Walker
Senior political correspondent

The new government should end the previous culture war-based approach to active travel and start investing properly in safe bike routes, the UK's biggest cycling campaign group says.

The call from Cycling UK comes after a survey it commissioned that looked into the reasons people don't ride a bike, found that almost half cited safety worries – a particular concern with older riders.

The group is calling for coherent and committed investment in cycling for transport – noting this would be a contrast to the approach taken under Rishi Sunak's government. Sunak and his transport secretary, Mark Harper, opposed low-traffic neighbourhood schemes, 20mph zones and bus lanes, seeking to rebalance the roads in favour of drivers.

The Cycling UK polling found that while 92% of British adults can ride a bike, fewer than half do, with 48% of people citing road safety as the reason they do not cycle.

The charity stresses that while cycling is safer than many people believe, and has become more so in recent years, the perception of danger remains a major barrier. This can often be addressed by cycling-specific infrastructure such as separated bike lanes, which 70% of people want to see more of, the poll found.

It has called on the government to commit 10% of the total transport budget to active travel, arguing this would bring huge dividends for public health and the environment.

"This survey shows there is real appetite to encourage more cycling, more routes and the building of better infrastructure to ensure people are kept safe," said Sarah Mitchell, Cycling UK's chief executive.

"The public recognise the benefits and are desperate to enjoy them. With political will and proportionate funding, we can make it a reality."

Mitchell called for any debate on the issue to be led by evidence, saying this was too often not the case under the previous government.

When she started, Lou Haigh, the new transport secretary, said efforts to make transport more environmentally friendly were "the critical thread weaving through every priority".



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Brain scans reveal not all sleepless nights have same cause

Oscar Allan

The sluggish start to the day, the struggle to concentrate on everyday tasks and the lethargy that comes with just a few hours' sleep are symptoms that will be familiar to anyone with insomnia.

But not all sleepless nights are the same, according to research. Brain scans have revealed evidence for distinct forms of insomnia, each with an associated pattern of neural wiring.

While the clinical distinction may mean little to those whose days are blighted by sleep deprivation, the discovery raises the prospect of tailored interventions for people with different kinds of insomnia, which could lead to better treatments.

Researchers at the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience in Amsterdam analysed MRI scans from more than 200 people with insomnia and dozens of sound sleepers and found structural changes that distinguished sleepers from the sleepless and five separate forms of insomnia.

"If these subtypes differ in their biological mechanism, then patients in each subtype might benefit from different focused treatments," said Tom Bresser, a neuroscientist and first author on the study.

Insomnia is broadly defined as poor sleep, generally owing to difficulties falling or staying asleep, which negatively affects daytime functioning. About a third of adults in western countries have sleep problems at least once a week, with up to 10% qualifying for a formal insomnia diagnosis.

Chronic insomnia is diagnosed if someone suffers sleep problems on at least three nights a week for three months or more.

In the latest work, published in Biological Psychiatry and led by Prof Eus van Someren, the team looked at MRI brain scans from 204 people with insomnia who had been grouped according to the subtypes and 73 people without sleep problems. The scans revealed brain structure differences between the subtypes, providing further evidence that they are rooted in biology.

The researchers think personality and mood traits can be used to categorise insomnia because their influence may be similar during sleep and waking hours. For example, if people tend to be badly affected by stress during day-to-day life, stress may also be more likely to interfere with their sleep.

It means that meditation, an effective relaxation technique, may help with subtypes characterised by high energy levels before bed. Patients with some forms of insomnia are more likely than others to develop depression, so clinicians could offer early preventive therapy.

Prof Tsuyoshi Kitajima, who studies sleep at Fujita Health University in Japan, said it was surprising that insomnia subtypes derived from questionnaires had such biological differences in the brain scans.

Dieter Riemann, a professor of clinical psychophysiology at the University of Freiburg in Germany, called the work "highly interesting" and said it may encourage clinicians to treat insomnia differently. "Many of them see insomnia as a minor complaint or a symptom, but if it has some neurobiological underpinning then that would mean we have to take insomnia more seriously than we did before," he said.

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Brett Clibbery and Sarah Packwood were attempting to sail from Nova Scotia to the Azores

PHOTOGRAPH: SARAH JUSTINE PACKWOOD

Couple who were sailing across the Atlantic found dead on raft

Rachel Hall

The bodies of a couple who were on a sailing trip across the Atlantic Ocean have been found on a life raft that washed up on a remote Canadian island almost six weeks after they were last seen.

British woman Sarah Packwood, 54, and her Canadian husband, Brett Clibbery, 70, are thought to have abandoned their yacht and died before their raft washed up on Sable Island, known as the "graveyard of the Atlantic" east of Nova Scotia, Canada, on 12 July.

They were reported missing on 18 June after having left Nova Scotia in their 13-metre (42ft) eco-friendly yacht, Theros, on 11 June. On 13 June, Clibbery's Garmin GPS device pinged a final signal about 40 miles south-west of Sable Island. They were on their way to the Azores, the 2,000-mile trip expected to take 21 days.

In a post on Facebook, Clibbery's son James confirmed the pair had died, saying the last few days had been "very hard". He said he was awaiting a DNA test on the bodies.

He added: "They were amazing people, and there isn't anything that will fill the hole that has been left by their so far unexplained passing."

Canadian police have said a "multi-agency" investigation is under way. One theory investigators are exploring is that the yacht was struck by a passing cargo ship that did not notice the collision, according to the Canadian news website Saltwire.

The Canadian coastguard and military are not believed to have spotted wreckage or any sign of the boat.

More than 350 shipwrecks have been recorded on Sable Island since 1583, according to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, which says the island is near an important shipping route, lies on a common storm path and is surrounded by "tricky" currents.

The pair met by chance at a bus stop in London in 2015 when Clibbery, a retired engineer visiting from Canada, was preparing to donate a kidney to his sister. Their story was featured in a 2020 How We Met article in the Guardian that described how they had bonded over their shared passion for travel.

> ***'There isn't anything that will fill the hole left by their so far unexplained passing'***
>
> **James Clibbery**
> *Brett Clibbery's son*

When they met, Clibbery told Packwood about his boat, Theros, and his passion for sailing. She said: "It was something I had always wanted to do but never had time for."

She added: "He took me on my first ever yacht trip and I loved it. Brett proposed to me in the main cabin of the boat."

The couple then married on Theros in 2016 and Packwood moved to Canada in 2018, purchasing land with Clibbery on Salt Spring Island.

In a video posted to their YouTube channel, Theros Adventures, on 12 April, the pair called their trip the "green odyssey" and explained how it would rely on sails, solar panels, batteries and an electric engine repurposed from a car.

Clibbery said: "We're doing everything we can to show that you can travel without burning fossil fuels."

The couple's previous adventures had included sailing down the west coast of Canada and the US before crossing the Panama canal towards the Caribbean and coming all the way back up to Nova Scotia.

Post-Brexit barriers force officer from Italy to quit UK police

Lisa O'Carroll
Brexit correspondent

A police officer working in Manchester says he has been forced to quit his job because his salary is not high enough to sponsor his Italian wife so she can join him in the UK due to the post-Brexit immigration barriers.

Campaigners have warned that his tale of Brexit anguish is being repeated up and down the country in low-paid public sectors where many EU citizens work.

Italian Dani, who has asked for his full name not to be used, has been in the country since 2017 and has full settled status under the post-Brexit residency scheme for EU citizens.

He was one year into a two-year probation period training to be a detective, but only earns £26,000, £3,000 short of the £29,000 needed to act as a sponsor to bring a foreign family member into the country.

"It is very stressful because it took me ages to get into this job. I don't know what I will do when I go back with my wife to Italy," he said.

Dani completed a PhD in clinical sports in Glasgow and entered the force on a two-year graduate programme, which according to Met police figures can cost more than £100,000 in total.

Dani met his wife in 2022 and, like many EU citizens, just got on with his life in Britain. He gained entry to the Greater Manchester police detective programme in May 2023. When he joined the police force, the salary threshold to bring in a family member was £18,600, but the family sponsorship threshold was raised to £29,000 in the spring as part of Rishi Sunak's phased-in doubling of the sponsorship salary threshold to £38,700.

He says his wife"could easily find a job" in the UK, as she is a hospitality manager, but he has been told by lawyers he has little chance of success, and the £10,000 to £12,000 it would cost to apply could be wasted.

Andreea Dumitrache, the communications manager for the3million campaign group, said: "The reality is that most people don't earn £38,700, so love is now a privilege for the few."

Greater Manchester police said it was for the Home Office to comment.

The Home Office said the future of the sponsorship thresholds was up to the new government.



Dani, who is halfway into training to be a detective, has to leave the UK

Patients and holidaymakers told IT chaos could take days to resolve

Rob Davies

NHS patients were warned that GP services "cannot be resumed immediately" and stranded holidaymakers were told it could take days to get them to their destinations as the effects of Friday's global IT outage continued.

CrowdStrike said yesterday it had deployed a fix for the "defect" with its cybersecurity software update that caused chaos for businesses that use Microsoft operating systems. It was "deeply sorry" for the inconvenience and disruption.

The outage caused a backlog to crucial services that will take time to clear, the British Medical Association (BMA) said.

"Friday was one of the toughest single days in recent times for GPs across England," said Dr David Wrigley, deputy chair of the general practitioners committee for England at the BMA. "Without a clinical IT system, many were forced to return to pen and paper to be able to serve their patients. While GPs and their teams worked hard to look after as many as they could, without access to the information they needed much of the work has had to be shifted into the coming week."

Computer systems have largely returned to normal, but there was continuing disruption to crowded holiday flight schedules. Some passengers were warned it could take "days" to reach their destination.

The no-frills airline Wizz Air said schedules would take "some time to return to normal". Customers could rebook or seek refunds online. The travel firm Tui cancelled 11 flights from five UK airports yesterday after axing 32 flights from 10 airports on Friday, blaming the impact on its airline crewing system.

Flight and hotel customers on a cancelled flight could change to any other Tui package without administration fees, including a 10% "rebooking incentive" if the new holiday was more expensive. Customers would also receive a £200 voucher, or £100 for children.

TUI said those who wished to cancel would receive a full refund as well as the voucher. Flight-only customers would automatically receive a refund on cancelled trips.

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Vulnerable people face fight for Covid treatment, charities warn

Nicola Davis

Clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) people with Covid are struggling to get timely access to treatments such as antiviral drugs, charities, patients and doctors have warned amid a summer wave of the virus.

People with certain health conditions or who meet other specific criteria are eligible for medications that can help the body fight the virus that causes Covid. They include those 85 years or older or who have Down's syndrome, an organ transplant, a weakened immune system, lung cancer or sickle cell disease.

Before June 2023, CEV patients in England who tested positive for Covid were contacted directly by their local Covid medicines delivery unit (CMDU). But responsibility for prescribing drugs was devolved to the 42 NHS integrated care boards (ICBs) in England, with experts saying this has led to a postcode lottery when it comes to accessing treatment.

Concerns have been raised after patients have reported needing to make repeated calls to secure access to drugs, often while seriously ill, despite the requirement that medication must be given within five days of symptoms starting. Patients have reported having to argue for their eligibility even though they meet current guidelines.

"The British Liver Trust has received calls from people with liver conditions who have experienced difficulty in accessing antiviral treatment, expressing frustration and anxiety," said Vanessa Hebditch, director of communications and policy at the charity.

"People with advanced liver disease are extremely vulnerable if they contract Covid, and we must ensure that anyone who is vulnerable – including those who are immunosuppressed or who have had a transplant – are able to get treatment as quickly as possible. This is particularly important in light of information about new strains of Covid."

Fiona Loud, policy director at Kidney Care UK, said: "We are still seeing people in the kidney community finding it difficult to access lateral flow tests and Covid treatments due to the lack of clarity as to how CEV people should do this. There has been no recent communication from the government, which has led to us at the charity producing guidance for patients.

"For our community it feels like we are out of sight, out of mind and the pandemic simply isn't over for people with compromised immune systems."

Azeem Majeed, a professor of primary care and public health at Imperial College London who is also a GP, said the devolution of responsibility for prescribing antiviral drugs left patients themselves having to work out how to obtain treatment.

He said: "This decentralisation may lead to variable uptake of treatment and increased health inequalities as people from poorer backgrounds, or with lower educational levels or limited English-language skills, will find it more difficult to navigate the new system and are therefore less likely to receive treatment.

"Covid is now seen as a much lower priority for the NHS compared to a few years ago. Much of the infrastructure that was in place during the pandemic has been dismantled."

The Department of Health and Social Care said it would be for local ICBs to comment on individual cases.

Half of Kew's tree species at risk from climate crisis

Helena Horton
Environment reporter

More than half of the tree species at Kew's Royal Botanical Gardens are at risk of death because of climate breakdown, a study has found.

During the drought of 2022, the botanical gardens in south-west London lost 400 trees. Scientists decided they should chronicle the climate risk to the trees to see how many could possibly be lost in the coming decades. The finding that half of its 11,000 trees are at risk has led Kew researchers to write a succession plan for replacing some trees likely to die as the climate breaks down.

Kew is particularly vulnerable, as much of its planting was done at least 100 years ago when future climate scenarios were not considered. The site was thought to have a specific and stable climate which supported trees that liked damp soil.

The UK's 10 warmest years since 1884 have occurred in the 21st century, and London's climate in 2050 is expected to be comparable to that of present-day Barcelona.

Climate modelling by Kew researchers drawing on specific projections for west London, and weather station records from the gardens have been combined with global tree data and details of existing plant collections, alongside empirical testing. The researchers found that more than 50% of Kew's tree species could be vulnerable by 2090, with 45% predicted to be at the edge of their known range and 9% outside their range based on mean annual temperature.

This has implications for British natives such as English oak, common beech, silver birch and holly, which could be at risk in areas of the UK with a similar climate to Kew.

Richard Barley, the director of gardens at Kew, said: "[The succession plan] is a crucial and very timely step towards understanding the effects of the projected climate on our living landscapes, enabling us to implement changes that will make them more resilient.

"This is not just about Kew Gardens, though. It is a broad call to diversify the plants we select for our landscapes. By focusing on resilience and adaptability, we hope to show it is possible to mitigate the severe impacts of climate change in urban spaces and gardens such as Kew."



▲ *Autumn at Kew, where trees such as English oak are under threat*

The threads of history: study sheds light on Pepys' keen fashion sense

Nicola Davis

He might be best known for his juicy diary, administrative prowess and wandering eye – but new research has highlighted a different side of Samuel Pepys: that of a budding fashionista.

A historian from the University of Cambridge has analysed the diarist's collection of French fashion engravings, arguing that they not only show Pepys was keeping up with the scholarly and gentlemanly trend of collecting prints, but also reflect a long-term interest in the latest styles.

"It demonstrates that Pepys had – to put it in very colloquial terms – a finger in a lot of pies," said Marlo Avidon, whose study has been published in the journal The Seventeenth Century. "[He] was very concerned with appearing a certain way and cultivating this gentlemanly reputation – both in an intellectual capacity and as a member of fashionable society."

Born in London in 1633, Pepys was the son of a tailor and a washerwoman, who eventually became an MP, the secretary of the Admiralty and president of the Royal Society.

But he is perhaps most famous for the diary he kept for almost a decade during the 1660s. As well as offering a firsthand account of a number of momentous events such as the plague and the Great Fire of London, it provides fascinating insights into more mundane aspects of daily life.

After Pepys's death, his diary and other papers were bequeathed to his alma mater, Magdalene College, Cambridge. Among them were two volumes that contained his collection of French fashion illustrations. Printed between 1670 and 1696, these depicted the latest styles as modelled by the French elite.



▲ *The Royal Navy administrator and diarist Samuel Pepys collected French fashion prints such as these*
PHOTOGRAPHS: MAGDALENE COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

'He was concerned with appearing a certain way as a member of fashionable society'

Marlo Avidon
University of Cambridge

While this is not the first time the prints have been examined, Avidon said her work considered them alongside Pepys's diary to demonstrate that throughout his life he had a very keen interest in clothing.

"Even when he stopped writing the diary in 1669, what these prints help us see is that this interest in clothing didn't necessarily go away – it just manifested in another form," she said.





The diary reveals Pepys could be controlling and overbearing regarding the attire of his wife, Elizabeth, while reflections on his own wardrobe are also carefully noted.

Avidon cites one entry of 1663 in which Pepys records a colleague approving of some of his new clothes – including a velvet cloak. As a result, Pepys writes, he is "resolved to go a little handsomer than I have hitherto".

But not all of his clothes struck the right chord. In 1669 Pepys shelved his new summer suit "because it was too fine with the gold lace at the hands, that I was afeared to be seen in it".



PHOTOGRAPH: FINNBARR WEBSTER/GETTY IMAGES

▲ *The Palestinian ambassador to the UK, Husam Zomlot, joins union members during the annual martyrs festival in Tolpuddle, Dorset*

Spending dilemma as Reeves hints at above-inflation public sector pay rise

Peter Walker
Senior political correspondent

Labour is fast approaching a moment of truth over its election pledges on tax and spending, experts say, after Rachel Reeves indicated the government could agree above-inflation pay rises for public sector staff.

The chancellor promised a full statement on pay board recommendations that teachers and NHS workers should receive 5.5% pay awards, before an autumn budget that is set to be one of the most difficult economic balancing acts in years.

While Reeves said denying such pay rises would bring its own costs, notably in likely strike action and a hit to recruitment and retention, economists said agreeing them would cost billions of pounds not on the balance sheet. Government spending plans, following an election in which Reeves and Keir Starmer repeatedly ruled out rises to many taxes, "aren't consistent with pay rises in the region of 5.5% to 6%", said Ben Zaranko, senior research economist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).

"It's extremely difficult to see how you do that without finding some extra cash from somewhere, probably some combination of higher taxes or higher borrowing. It may be that they can fudge the fiscal rule or they get a bit lucky with the economic outlook. But I've got limited sympathy for the argument that things are economically much worse than we thought. It was all entirely predictable – and predicted."

In a sign of the challenge, the Institute for Government (IFG) thinktank released a report arguing services including the NHS and schools were in such a poor state that spending plans were "likely to prove untenable". The only way to avoid more deterioration, it argued, would be radical reforms, boosted capital spending and longer-term budgets.

In her first major interview since becoming chancellor, Reeves insisted the economy was in a worse state than expected and argued that Rishi Sunak's government had sat on difficult decisions, saying the teachers' pay recommendation had been on the desk of the previous education secretary, Gillian Keegan.

While the IFS estimates a 5.5% rise for teachers and NHS staff would cost £5.5bn, rising to £10bn if the same was given to all public sector staff, Reeves indicated she was not unsympathetic to the idea, despite it being well above the 2% inflation rate. Ministers would, she told BBC One's Sunday With Laura Kuenssberg programme, "make sure the sums add up".

She added: "But we also know that there is a cost to not settling – a cost of further industrial action, a cost in terms of the challenge that we face in recruiting retaining doctors and nurses and teachers as well."



▲ *Rachel Reeves said rejecting the pay advice would have its own costs*

The reaction of public sector unions if ministers rejected pay recommendations would be furious, with the National Education Union having warned strikes "would almost seem inevitable" if this happened.

Any move to balance the books by increasing taxes, even those outside election pledges, would be seized on by the Tories as breaking a key pledge to voters, as would a rise in borrowing. Speaking to the BBC after Reeves, Jeremy Hunt, the shadow chancellor, said it was "nonsense" to suggest Labour had taken on a financial mess. "This spin about this terrible economic inheritance is because Labour wants to raise taxes," he said.

Zaranko said that while 5.5% recommendations were "probably above what was most people were expecting", this did not help with the dilemma of how to keep within stringent tax and spending promises. One option, he said, could be increasing the likes of capital gains tax. "There's some moderately good economic news out there, it's possible that they'll sort of manage to fudge their way through by raising a little bit here, a little bit there," he said. "But I think that the longer this parliament goes on, the trickier that will be, unless they do manage to magic up some growth."

Reeves also talked up her plan for a review of pensions to make them more flexible and lucrative, as set out in an opinion piece in the Mail on Sunday. "I'm about deeds, not just words, and so we will have that pensions bill and it will do the things that are necessary," she told the BBC.

The IFG report on public services, released with the backing of people including Andy Burnham, the Labour mayor of Greater Manchester, said under current spending plans, unprotected services, including police, courts and social care, are set for average annual real-terms funding cuts of 2.4% between 2025-26 and 2028-29.

A way out of the quandary, it said, would be to "rethink public service delivery by focusing on prevention rather than acute provision; on capital, rather than day-to-day spending; on frontline innovation, rather than top-down command and control".

'Harassment' Failed Labour candidate details abuse during campaign

Peter Walker
Senior political correspondent

A Labour candidate defeated by a pro-Gaza independent in the general election has called for the new MP to formally disown supporters who she says waged a campaign of "intimidation, abuse and harassment" against her.

Heather Iqbal, who came second in the Dewsbury and Batley constituency to Iqbal Mohamed, who was standing as an independent, called for her opponent to "take action and be explicit" in calling out supporters for their actions.

A spokesperson for the new MP said he condemned abuse and negative campaigning, but would "firmly reject" the idea that any of this came directly from his team.

Iqbal told the Guardian that before the general election, during the local elections in May, groups of people stood near polling stations in Dewsbury and Batley yelling: "You're not a Muslim if you vote Labour."

The general election, she said, was worse: "As well as the van with a megaphone shouting that I was a Zionist and genocide agent, we had activists being chased down the street, malicious online content about my white husband and my first name.

"There didn't seem to be many boundaries when it came to being a supporter of his campaign."

Even after the campaign was over, Iqbal said, Labour supporters had been labelled "traitors and hypocrites" by backers of Mohamed, with efforts to stop them holding positions in mosques or charities.

"What Iqbal Mohammed does next about this will tell us everything we need to know about the MP he will be," Iqbal told the Guardian. "Denial and distancing simply won't do, especially since there is a mountain of evidence of abuse from some of the campaign team he's tagged in his Facebook posts.

"We have the receipts – the abusive videos, the voice notes, the lengthy WhatsApp posts. It is time to acknowledge what his campaign team put Labour activists through, and apologise."

While campaigning in the West Yorkshire seat, the Labour candidate said, members of her campaign team were followed by a van carrying the face of the independent candidate, with supporters yelling abuse about them.

Video footage recorded at the time by Iqbal's team and seen by the Guardian does not show the van, but features a megaphone-amplified voice following them, urging voters to, "boycott the Zionists, boycott the Labour party". It adds: "Do not vote for Zionists, do not vote for warmongers."

Labour councillors in Kirklees and elsewhere quit amid widespread anger about the death toll in Gaza, and what some in the party argued was insufficient condemnation of Israel by Keir Starmer.

Such was the anger that four pro-Gaza independents won Commons seats on 4 July, among them Mohamed, and Shockat Adam, who defeated Labour's Jonathan Ashworth in Leicester South.

As well as disowning the actions, Iqbal said, the new MP should sign the pledge about civility in politics led by the Jo Cox Foundation.

"If he wants to heal the enormous and ugly divide he and independent supporters have created in Dewsbury and Batley, he must take action and be explicit," Iqbal said. "Lukewarm words about how he doesn't want anyone to be upset do nothing."

The spokesperson for Mohamed said the van with the megaphone was not following Iqbal or her team, but that "their paths crossed when the unfortunate incident took place".

They added: "Our campaign was made aware of an isolated incident that took place a few days before polling, involving a verbal altercation. The police were called to investigate, and we believe no further action took place.

"We firmly reject any suggestions that our campaign used negative tactics during the election. We also wish to make clear that any such behaviour, whether by purported supporters or those of the opposition is not condoned."

The MP had now signed the Jo Cox civility pledge, they said.

The Commons speaker, Lindsay Hoyle, said last month that intimidation and threats against MPs had reached unprecedented levels. All new MPs have been given handheld panic alarms, which send a warning signal when triggered.



Labour's Heather Iqbal said she was denounced as 'a Zionist and genocide agent' during the campaign
PHOTOGRAPH: FACEBOOK



Prisoners at HMP Lincoln. The chief inspector says change is needed before the early release scheme starts
PHOTOGRAPH: ANDY AITCHISON

Probation Watchdog calls for cut in caseload

Rajeev Syal
Home affairs editor

Ministers should consider reducing the caseload of the probation service by up to 40,000 people if they are to ease the prison overcrowding crisis, a watchdog has told the Guardian.

Martin Jones, the chief inspector of probation in England and Wales, said the current model was "not sustainable" and suggested ministers should free up capacity by no longer asking probation officers to monitor people released from prison after short custodial terms for crimes such as shoplifting.

Days after the justice secretary, Shabana Mahmood, announced plans to release thousands of offenders from September because of the overcrowding crisis, Jones also suggested that youth justice services could take some of the probation service's workload by monitoring 18- to 21-year-olds released from prison.

About 5,500 offenders on standard determinate sentences are expected to be freed before Christmas after serving 40% of their sentences. Responsibility for monitoring the newly released offenders on licence will fall on the probation service, whose measures can include electronic tagging and curfews.

In his first in-depth interview since joining the inspectorate in March, Jones said ministers must lighten the workload of the service, which is struggling with a rise in cases and inexperienced and overworked staff.

"Let's not pretend the service can manage nearly a quarter of a million people within its current resourcing envelope. You might have to make some choices in relation to people for whom there might be some benefits, but where do you focus those resources? I don't think this current model is sustainable," he said.

The way offenders are monitored in the community has come under intense scrutiny since the murder of Zara Aleena, a law graduate, in east London in 2022.

Her killer, Jordan McSweeney, who had a long history of misogynistic and racially aggravated incidents, should have been seen by probation officers as high-risk and recalled to prison after missing appointments. Instead, he was assessed as being of medium risk and remained free to attack Aleena.

That case followed the exposure of failings by the probation service when Damien Bendall murdered three children and his pregnant partner in Derbyshire in 2021.

As part of an overview of the system, Jones said:

- He suspects that each of the probation service's 12 regions in England and Wales are already struggling to cope with the number of cases.
- About two-thirds of the cases his staff inspect fall short of the standards set to keep the public safe.
- 97% of probation delivery units examined by the watchdog fell below the standards set for good practice.
- He is drawing up an inspection programme for probation hostels – halfway houses for high-risk offenders – because at present there is no independent oversight of their work.

Jones said there was an urgent need to address the workload and argued that people who received short custodial sentences such as shoplifters, who were brought into the probation system in 2015 by Chris Grayling's Offender Rehabilitation Act, could be taken back out.

Previously, offenders sentenced to less than 12 months were released unconditionally after half of their sentence had been served in custody.

"I think you could deal with those people more effectively by way of community sentences," he said.

Thousands of cases involving 18- to 21-year-olds could be moved over to youth justice services, he added.

"Youth justice services is a very stable service. It currently has a cut-off at the age of 18. What if we asked youth justice services to reach out and actually deal with young adults up to the age of 21, and actually supervise them in that way?" Jones said.

A Ministry of Justice spokesperson said: "The prison system is in crisis, which is putting significant pressure on the whole justice system. We are gripping the situation and supporting our hard-working staff, including recruiting 1,000 more probation officers to deliver robust supervision and protect the public."

Tories Party told it must appeal to wide base of voters

Peter Walker

The Conservatives must resist the false choice of wooing voters who shifted to either Reform or the Liberal Democrats in the election, according to a leading Tory-facing thinktank, as the party faces a crunch week in deciding its post-defeat future.

Former Conservative supporters who opted for Reform or the Lib Dems on 4 July had common characteristics including scepticism towards Keir Starmer and worries about immigration, the thinktank Onward said.

Based on polling of more than 52,000 people in May and June, its report Breaking Blue said Conservative leaders should focus instead on what it called "super demographics" – the elements shared by many of those who abandoned the party. It comes as the executive of the 1922 Committee, which represents Tory MPs, is due to meet again on Wednesday evening to try to thrash out a timetable for selecting a replacement for Rishi Sunak, who has said he will step down.

A meeting last week failed to agree on how fast to act. One option would be to use the party's annual conference at the end of September to announce a successor. Others want to take longer, but this may require an interim leader given uncertainty over how much more time Sunak wishes to spend in the role.

Much of the early skirmishing between supporters of various candidates has centred on whether the party should tack to the right to tempt back voters who moved to Reform, or whether this might further alienate centrist Tories who opted for the Lib Dems.

However, the Onward research suggested that defectors to both parties disliked Starmer – 76% of Reform backers and 58% of Lib Dem supporters – and also supported curbs to immigration, with 53% of Tory-to-Lib Dem voters backing this.

The report said a more fertile focus would be based on demographics that seem more relevant to those likely to be won back – generally voters who are older, working class, backed Brexit, own their homes, do not live in cities and do not have a degree.

But it also warned that the party must appreciate the sheer scale of the challenge, with more than a fifth of former Tories aged under 34 moving to Labour, and a quarter of those aged 45-74 going for Reform.

This was "a once-in-a-century defeat", said Sebastian Payne, the head of Onward, with the party experiencing a "four-way pincer movement" of support loss based around age, income, geography and views about Brexit.

"The route back to power will be difficult," he said. "The trap in the upcoming leadership contest is to argue that the Conservatives either need to focus on Liberal Democrat or Reform UK defectors. The truth is that the party has to focus on both – and luckily these groups are more similar than many presume."

76%
Proportion of defectors from the Tories to Reform who said they disliked Labour's Keir Starmer

Indonesians who paid thousands to work on UK farm fired within weeks



Emily Dugan

Indonesian workers who paid thousands of pounds to travel to Britain and pick fruit at a farm supplying most big supermarkets have been sent home within weeks for not picking fast enough.

One worker said he had sold his family's land as well as his and his parents' motorbikes to cover the more than £2,000 cost of coming to Britain in May and was distressed to find himself jobless with few possessions.

The labour exploitation watchdog is investigating allegations that he was one of several workers charged illegal fees of up to £1,100 by an Indonesian organisation claiming it would get them to the UK faster.

In Indonesia the worker earned about £100 a month selling food. He said his parents were "very disappointed" as he had sold everything for a shot at helping his family. "I feel confused and mad and angry about this situation," he said. "I have no job in Indonesia [and] I've spent all my money to come to the UK."

The Guardian has spoken to four of the dismissed workers and in three cases seen evidence of apparent fee payments to a third party as well as more than £1,000 sent for flights and visas to the licensed recruiters.

The allegations of illegal fees paid in Indonesia raise questions about the risk of exploitation in the seasonal worker scheme, which allows workers from foreign countries a six-month visa to work on farms but makes them bear all the financial risk.

The Guardian understands the immigration minister, Seema Malhotra, will look into exploitation in the work visa system to clamp down on exploitative practices. The independent Migration Advisory Committee recommended last Monday that seasonal visas should continue to ensure food security but should include more protections, such as guaranteeing at least two months of work.

Haygrove, a farm in Hereford that supplies soft fruit to British supermarkets, gave the man and four other workers warning letters about the speed of their picking before dismissing them between five and six weeks after they had started work. They were booked on a flight home by their recruiters the next day.

The workers said the targets at the farm in Ledbury included picking 20kg of cherries an hour. Another of the sacked pickers said: "It was very hard to meet the target because day by day there was less fruit."

He said he had borrowed money from "the bank, friends and family" and that he was still more than £1,100 in debt. "Why have I ended up like this? Now I'm in Indonesia with no job … It's not fair for me because I've sacrificed so much."

Beverly Dixon, the managing director of farming at Haygrove, said the farm had consistently had to make up the men's wages because of poor performance and had supported them to try to improve. She said targets were "set based on achievable standards with the majority of pickers sometimes achieving more than double that speed".

The five men arrived in Britain in mid-May and were dismissed from Haygrove on 24 June, having earned between £2,555 and £3,874. Once the cost of coming to Britain – as well as living costs – were taken, several said they had been left with significant debts. Two of the men ran away to London and refused to board flights home booked for 25 June. They have now been given new jobs in a packhouse after an intervention by a migrant welfare activist.

Andy Hall, the migrant labour rights specialist who intervened on behalf of the men, said: "This scandal shows once again that the entire burden of shouldering the multiple risks associated with the seasonal workers scheme in the UK is placed not on supermarkets, farms, scheme operators or other supply chain actors but on vulnerable workers from overseas."





▼ *The workers were told they were not picking fruit fast enough and were dismissed weeks after starting work*

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS RATCLIFFE/GETTY



▲ *Haygrove, in Hereford, supplies soft fruit to British supermarkets*

PHOTOGRAPH: GARETH PHILLIPS

A Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) investigation was opened last month. It is understood to be focused on allegations over the illegal charging of fees in Indonesia.

Dixon said Haygrove was "deeply concerned" to hear of the "alleged financial challenge faced by the Indonesian workers, particularly if one or more paid an illegal recruiter in Indonesia" and the farm was fully supporting the GLAA investigation.

The Guardian revealed that Indonesians were coming to Britain owing up to £5,000 to unlicensed foreign brokers in 2022. The debts were to third parties, and AG Recruitment, the British agency that officially recruited them, lost its licence as a seasonal worker sponsor.

Since then, Indonesia had been considered a risky country to recruit from, but the route was reopened this year by a new UK recruiter, Agri-HR. It worked in partnership with an Indonesian agent, PT Mardel Anugerah, which also secured a licence to recruit to Britain, and was being supported by the Indonesian embassy.

> *'I feel confused and angry. I've spent all my money to come to the UK'*
>
> **Indonesian worker**

However, workers allege a third party in Indonesia, Forkom, which appears to be a communication hub for Indonesians trying to work abroad, recruited workers and charged fees, saying it could get them to Britain faster. It is illegal to recruit without a licence under UK and Indonesian law.

Agri-HR said: "On hearing these allegations, Agri-HR immediately contacted the GLAA with the request to investigate these claims. The GLAA interviewed some workers that same day and are continuing with their investigations and further worker interviews have taken place and are scheduled."

Workers told the Guardian Forkom was encouraging its members to pressurise the families of the dismissed pickers who ran away, with one saying his family was visited at 3am.

Delif Subeki, of PT Mardel Anugerah, said his agency was introduced to Forkom by Indonesia's manpower ministry and agreed to "give priority" to members. Subeki said it had "clearly informed" applicants that it was not using third parties for recruitment and that no fees should be paid.



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Water quality sensors to alert wild swimmers to real-time pollution risk



▶ *People paddle at Warleigh Weir, near Bath*
PHOTOGRAPH: BEN BIRCHALL/PA

Linda Geddes

Real-time water quality monitors are being installed at wild swimming spots and beaches across southern England to help people assess their immediate risk of illness from polluted water.

Wessex Water is installing sensors at three freshwater sites in Dorset, Somerset and Hampshire, plus two coastal sites in Bournemouth, after a successful pilot at Warleigh Weir near Bath. Here, the artificial intelligence-based system correctly predicted when bacteria in the water were high 87% of the time.

Southern Water is testing a different system at Tankerton in Kent and Langstone Harbour in Hampshire, with a further sensor expected soon at nearby Hayling Island.

Although water companies and regulators now test river water for markers of pollution that harm wildlife, there is no requirement to test for faecal bacteria such as *E coli* and intestinal enterococci unless the site is a designated bathing water.

Even here, water samples must be sent to a lab for analysis, and the results are not published for a week or so afterwards, with final classification each November. This makes it difficult to assess the immediate risk from sewage or agricultural runoff.

"People may be swimming at a location all year, and it is only when the final classification is published that they realise what the quality has been," said Ruth Barden, the director of environmental solutions at Wessex Water.

The company used Warleigh Weir as a test bed after pressure from the local landowner and keen swimmer Johnny Palmer to disclose how storm overflows and treatment works were affecting the River Avon.

Barden said: "We want people to be able to enjoy and use their watercourses without putting themselves in danger. But collecting this data is also helpful for us to understand what level of impact our assets are having on water quality – if any – and what the solutions could be to rectify that."

One system tested was an AI-based approach developed by the UK startup UnifAI Technology. Rather than measuring bacteria directly, it infers when levels of *E coli* or enterococci are high, by analysing data from real-time sensors placed upstream, that measure pH, temperature, turbidity (cloudiness), dissolved oxygen and ammonia.

Water companies are obliged to start installing such sensors on rivers up and downstream of storm overflows and wastewater treatment works by the Environment Act 2021, which aims to improve water quality and protect wildlife.

For about six months, river water samples are repeatedly tested for bacteria levels, and the AI learns to correlate these with patterns in the sensor data. After this period, the public is given access to an app that gives half-hourly predictions of bacteria levels and issues a water-quality alert when they are likely to be high.

"We never tell swimmers that it is safe to get in the water; that's a personal decision, and there are lots of reasons why it may not be safe. But an alert means there may be a problem with the water quality," said Dan Byles, the chief commercial officer at UnifAI.

Wessex Water is installing the system at three more swimming spots – Farleigh Hungerford in Somerset, Fordingbridge in Hampshire and Poole Park lagoon in Dorset – plus Bournemouth and Boscombe piers, with real-time swim alerts expected from 2025. It is also in discussions with landowners and river users at 20 sites across south-west England.

The technology could provide insights into how storm overflow discharges and other events correlate with reduced water quality. Byles said: "We can effectively start to build up a digital twin of the river systems."

The campaign group River Action UK said the technology should not deflect from tackling the root causes of pollution. "Technological advances in real-time monitoring of river pollution are welcome, and well overdue, especially if they can be used to warn river users of dangerous pathogen levels proactively," said its chief executive, James Wallace.

"We need the environmental regulators to use pollution data as evidence of malpractice to underpin enforcement of the law and hold polluters to account. Only when it becomes less expensive to abide by the law than breaking it will we see the necessary investment in maintaining and upgrading sewage treatment works."

Southern Water is investigating whether UnifAI's machine learning models could be applied to data from sensors it is testing at coastal sites, and use its own algorithms to estimate bacteria levels, based on scattering of light in water. "We're still in the science phase," it said.

87%
Success rate of AI-based system in predicting bacterial load in rivers or seawater from a range of data

Theatre review

Well-timed swim drama dives into doping issues

Red Speedo
Orange Tree theatre, London
★★★☆☆

Chris Wiegand

A pair of swimming briefs is quite the costume for a stage debut, which can feel exposing enough for actors. But appearing on the hottest day of the year, Peaky Blinders' Finn Cole may well have been relieved to be sporting just the titular trunks of Lucas Hnath's 2013 play.

The mini pool in Anna Fleischle's striking set, part of an in-the-round design that covers the Orange Tree's stage and walls in a mosaic of blue, provides an extra opportunity to cool off. The stillness of that tranquil pool, beneath Sally Ferguson's shimmering lighting, contrasts with the choppy life of Cole's swimmer, Ray, after performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) are discovered at his club.

This threatens his Olympic ambitions but also jeopardises his brother Peter (Ciarán Owens), a lawyer who dreams of stage-managing Ray's glittering future and is engineering sponsorship with Speedo, as well as Ray's Coach (Fraser James), whose reputation is at stake too. Personal fears and ethical questions about PEDs are complicated by the arrival of Ray's ex, Lydia (Parker Lapaine), a sports therapist recently embroiled in her own scandal.

Red Speedo's UK premiere has been cannily scheduled alongside the Paris Games. The potency of its debate is further boosted by the doping row about Chinese swimmers at the 2021 Olympics and the prospect next summer of the Enhanced Games, featuring the former world champion swimmer James Magnussen, where PEDs will be actively encouraged.



▲ *Parker Lapaine (Lydia) and Finn Cole (Ray) – in the titular trunks – on Anna Fleischle's striking blue set* PHOTOGRAPH: JOHAN PERSSON

The stillness of the pool contrasts with the choppy life of swimmer Ray after drugs are discovered

Hnath's principal thesis is that a level playing field in sports is near impossible because multiple socioeconomic factors give unfair advantages before competitors have even begun training. Peter is obsessed with future-proofing his daughter by sending her to private school; Ray would not be where he is without Coach's free sessions.

Roy Orbison's You Got It bookends the drama, its silky tones sounding suffocating in light of Peter's dubious insistence of brotherly love. The balance of the play's symbiotic relationships is precarious: acts of self-preservation threaten the quid pro quo. It is Ray who wears a giant twisting sea serpent tattoo on his back, but each character displays a slippery instinct. One minute Coach is gently manipulating Ray, the next Peter is directly threatening Coach. First seen aggrandising Ray like a salesman, Owens veers from Mamet-speak to a bullish sourness redolent of Neil LaBute's writing, though the play's comic tone is halting.

The drama gathers some pace and tension from Holly Khan's sound: propulsive drumming in between scenes and an intermittent alarm that resembles an extended starter buzzer. But the stakes do not feel high enough in the final stretch and Hnath raises intriguing themes without fully investigating them.

Nevertheless, Matthew Dunster's production is well acted across the board. "Things wash over you," Lydia tells Ray, and Cole has the right unreadable blankness as a young man who is not as bright as his character's name suggests. Played at 90 minutes without an interval, it stings like chlorine but I'd have appreciated some extra laps with these characters.

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AI advances 'could lead to more child sex videos'

Dan Milmo
Global technology editor

Artificial intelligence is being used by paedophiles to produce AI-generated videos of child sexual abuse that could increase as technology improves, according to a watchdog.

The majority of such cases seen by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) involve manipulation of existing child sexual abuse material (CSAM) or adult pornography, with a child's face transplanted on to the footage. A handful of examples involve entirely AI-made videos lasting about 20 seconds, the IWF said.

The organisation, which monitors CSAM around the world, said it was concerned that more AI-made CSAM videos could emerge as the tools behind them become more widespread.

Dan Sexton, chief technology officer at the IWF, said if the use of AI video tools followed the same trend as AI-made still images, which have increased in volume as technology has improved, more CSAM videos could emerge.

"I would tentatively say that if it follows the same trends, then we will see more videos," he said, adding that future videos could also be of "higher quality and realism".

IWF analysts said the majority of videos seen by the organisation on a dark web forum used by paedophiles were partial deepfakes, where AI models freely available online are used to impose a child's face, including images of known CSAM victims, on existing CSAM videos or adult pornography. The IWF said it found nine such videos.

The organisation, which operates a hotline for the public to report abuse, said it had found examples of AI-made CSAM images being sold online by offenders in place of non-AI made-CSAM.

The IWF's chief executive, Susie Hargreaves, said: "Without proper controls, generative AI tools provide a playground for online predators to realise their most perverse and sickening fantasies.

"Even now, the IWF is starting to see more of this type of material being shared and sold on commercial child sexual abuse websites on the internet."



▲ *An 18th-century portrait shows Sabine Winn with her husband Rowland in domestic contentment at Nostell country house* PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER THOMOND

Misery behind a picture of happiness revealed

Mark Brown
North of England correspondent

In the painted portraits it is all serenity, happiness and domestic bliss. But behind the smiles of 18th-century "lady of the house" Sabine Winn is a different story: one of isolation, loneliness and marital anguish.

The National Trust is to tell, for the first time, the story of Winn at the country house where she lived for 30 years and which brought her profound unhappiness - Nostell, a Palladian mansion near Wakefield in West Yorkshire.

Simon McCormack, Nostell's property curator, said the inner lives of people who lived in England's historic houses were often not deeply explored.

"We have tended to present quite a narrow narrative, one of everything is fine and all the cracks are papered over. But actually, the cracks are quite interesting and are interesting to visitors."

He said a country house was like a novel, with "avenues and cul-de-sacs and ebbs and flows".

The life of Winn and her family has echoes of Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca, with added EastEnders.

She was born in Switzerland in 1734 and met Sir Rowland Winn when he was on the Grand Tour. They fell in love, married and lived in London for several years before moving to the Winn family home in Yorkshire in 1765, a place she described as "one of the most desolate and ill-fated corners of the universe".

She clearly had misgivings but so did the Winn family, who did not believe a "foreigner", who could not speak English, could run the country house.

Despite her efforts, she never mastered English and her husband was rarely there. "I want to live only for you, yet I am always without you," she wrote in 1769.

After moving to Nostell she is not thought to have left Yorkshire at any time until her death in 1798.

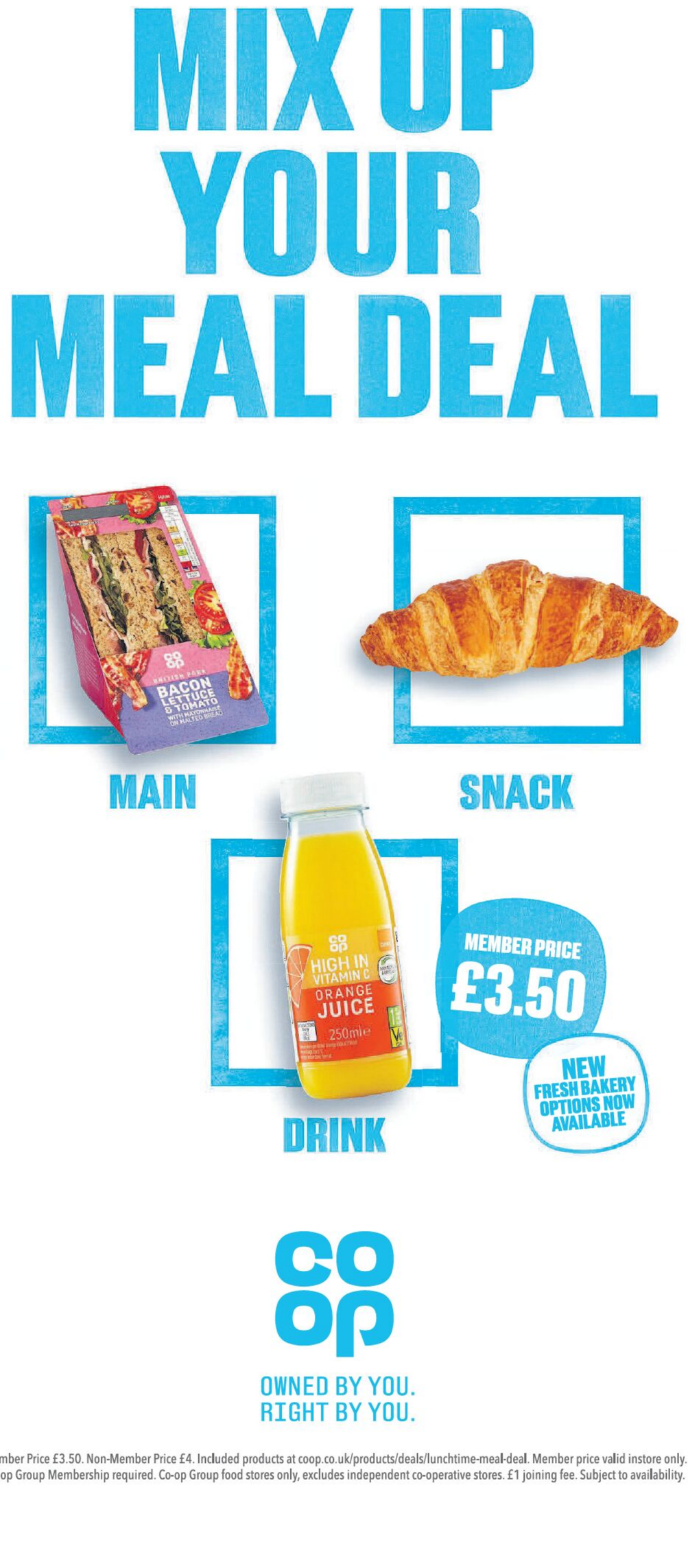
McCormack said Winn had been "isolated and stranded" and struggled to fit into the role and responsibilities of such a grand country house.

There were numerous financial and family problems along the way.

To deal with the challenges of her life, Sabine often retreated to her dressing room, which was her private sanctuary. For the new display the room has been rearranged and includes the ink-stained Chippendale secretary - a desk and bookcase - where she wrote countless letters to her husband.

"I shall no longer act tactfully if you do not come back this week," she wrote in one.

Curators say the challenges Winn faced at Nostell - the language barriers, the strained family relationships, her worries over physical and mental health - are all concerns that resonate today.



World

Houthis and Hezbollah attack Israel as fears of regional conflict grow

Ruth Michaelson
Jerusalem

Israeli forces said yesterday that they had intercepted a ballistic missile fired by Houthi militants in Yemen targeting the southern city of Eilat in retaliation for a series of strikes on the Yemeni port city of Hodeidah.

Meanwhile, sirens sounded across northern Israel after the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah fired a volley of rockets and drones from southern Lebanon, raising fears of a regional confrontation as the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, prepared to travel to Washington for a planned speech before Congress.

The Israeli army said some rockets targeting northern Israel were intercepted, while drones sent from Lebanon landed in open fields, sparking forest fires. Israeli forces say they struck southern Lebanon in response.

The Houthi military spokesperson, Brig Gen Yahya Saree, said the militants fired multiple ballistic missiles towards Eilat early yesterday morning, and targeted a US ship in the Red Sea with missiles and drones, calling both attempts "successful".

Gaza's civil defence reported heavy fighting in Rafah as well as dozens of deaths from Israeli airstrikes in the central part of the territory.

The Houthis' "response to the Israeli aggression against our country is inevitably coming and will be huge", said Saree.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said its long-range Arrow 3 missile defence system intercepted the missiles directed at Eilat outside Israeli airspace, but sirens sounded as a warning to local people about possible falling shrapnel.

The attempted strikes on the port city followed a barrage of Israeli airstrikes targeting oil facilities, cranes, and a power station near Hodeidah, which Saree said killed three people, wounded 87 and left columns of smoke and fire towering over the port facilities.

The Times of Israel reported that the Israeli air force believed that targeting civilian infrastructure such as the cranes, which are allegedly employed for military purposes, sends a message to hostile parties including Hezbollah.

"Israel is capable and willing to target dual-use civilian-military infrastructure, and carry out what could be considered disproportionate responses to attacks," officials said.

The targeting of Hodeidah's port facilities sparked fears for the provision of international aid into Yemen, where millions are facing starvation and an estimated 18.2 million people are in need of humanitarian relief, according to the EU.

Saudi Arabian authorities said after the strikes that the country had no involvement in the attack, and declined to allow its airspace to be used for the attacks despite a continuing conflict with Houthi militants.





▶ *Relatives outside a hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza, mourn family members killed in an Israeli airstrike*
PHOTOGRAPH: BASHAR TALEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Israeli forces struck Hodeidah in response to a rare drone attack on Tel Aviv in the early hours of Friday morning, which killed one man and injured 10 others. While the Houthis hailed the assault as a success due to their developing drone capacity, Israeli authorities blamed "human error" for leaving a gap in air defences.

The Houthis have vowed to continue their attacks as long as the Israeli assault on Gaza continues. Israeli strikes on the territory have killed more than 38,000 people in almost 10 months of war, the longest in the country's history.

Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi militia in Yemen, said "attacks on civilian facilities do not serve as a deterrent for us".

For months, the group's targeting of global shipping routes in the Red Sea has caused serious disruptions to trade, forcing ships to take alternative routes away from Eilat.

Netanyahu remains under increasing pressure at home, including from the Israeli public and his own military top brass, to agree a ceasefire deal that would release some of the estimated 116 hostages still held by Hamas in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and a pause in fighting.

The Israeli prime minister reportedly met negotiators before he was due to fly to Washington, where he is expected to meet Joe Biden and address Congress this week. Netanyahu was due to meet Biden tomorrow, his office said.

Observers hope that Netanyahu's US trip will also provide a pathway to cool tensions in northern Israel and southern Lebanon, where the IDF is battling Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants, and avert a regional war.

Hezbollah fired rockets towards a kibbutz in northern Israel on Saturday, in response to an Israeli strike in Lebanon that hit an arms depot and wounded several people including children.

Hamas militants based in Lebanon also fired on an Israeli army base, and a drone strike wounded two Israeli soldiers in the occupied Golan Heights.

'McCarthyism' Universities condemn bill in Knesset to limit academic freedom

Emma Graham-Harrison
Matan Cohen

Israel's education minister and the country's national union of students are backing a draft law to limit academic speech in the country, which the heads of leading universities have attacked as "McCarthyite" and fundamentally undemocratic.

The legislation being debated in the Knesset would give a government-appointed committee the power to order the firing of academic staff it decides have expressed "support for terror". If the universities refuse, their funding would be cut.

Critics say the legislation is undemocratic and would undermine Israeli academia because it restricts free speech and allows politicians to weaponise accusations that should be handled by the legal system.

Uri Sivan, the president of the prestigious Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, known for links to the country's hi-tech and defence industries, said the law was "McCarthyite".

He said: "It is a form of McCarthyism, a very violent form, because it is meant to threaten people not to express their mind, in a system that should be free of any intimidation, encouraging free speech, encouraging criticism."

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Portugal hosts musicians in exile
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Bangladeshi court cuts job quotas that led to protests

Redwan Ahmed *Dhaka*
Hannah Ellis-Petersen *Delhi*

Bangladesh's top court has scaled back the quotas on government jobs that led to widespread student-led protests and violent clashes that killed more than 100 people.

Yesterday afternoon the supreme court overturned a ruling that had reintroduced quotas for all civil service jobs, meaning that 30% were reserved for veterans and relatives of those who fought for Bangladesh in the war of independence in 1971.

The supreme court ruling, which was brought forward in light of the protests, stipulated that only 5% of jobs would now be reserved for descendants of freedom fighters and another 2% for those from ethnic minorities or with disabilities, with the rest open to candidates based on merit.

The return of the quotas, which had been scrapped in 2018, caused anger among students, who argued they were unjust at a time of economic decline and unfairly benefited those in the ruling Awami League party, which was founded by those who fought in the independence war.

Peaceful demonstrations initially broke out on university campuses across the country as students mobilised through social media to demand an end to the quotas.

However, the unrest turned violent last week as pro-government groups were accused of attacking the protesters with weapons and riot police used rubber bullets and teargas to break up protests.

Protesters hit back at police with bricks and stones in clashes across the country and stormed the headquarters of the state broadcaster in Dhaka, setting it alight. In another city, protesters broke into a prison and released hundreds of inmates.

The clashes between pro-government forces and protesters have left thousands injured and about 150 dead, though the government has refused to release official data on the death toll. Witnesses have alleged that police violence is responsible for a large number of the fatalities.

The government has also imposed a communications blackout, with the internet shut down and phone lines widely jammed. At least 70 leaders of the political opposition and several student leaders and activists have also been arrested, accused of stirring up unrest.

As the court ruling was given yesterday, the country remained under a strict indefinite curfew, with people banned from leaving their homes and gathering in any capacity. Police were granted "shoot on sight" orders for those who violated the curfew and the capital, Dhaka, resembled a war zone, with military personnel and tanks patrolling the streets and army helicopters flying low over the city. While the roads were largely deserted, protests continued in some quarters of the capital.

Student organisers said the supreme court ruling did not mean the end of the protests, which have escalated into the greatest challenge in years to the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, with many calling for her resignation. Hasina, who has been in office since 2009, has been accused of authoritarianism and rampant corruption and her re-election in January was widely documented as rigged.

Mahfuzul Hasan, a protest coordinator from Jahangirnagar University, said they still had several demands that the government must meet before they would call off the demonstrations.

He said: "Now we want justice for the lives lost of our brothers. The prime minister has to apologise and those who are guilty have to be tried."

He said he was among many student protest leaders who now feared for their safety and were concerned about being "abducted" by law enforcement agencies.

Hasib Al-Islam, a Dhaka university student and protest coordinator, said he saw the supreme court verdict as positive but said students were waiting to see how Hasina's government responded and were demanding that a quota reform bill be passed through parliament.

Islam said: "Our protest against the quota system is already under way, and it will continue until the government issues a executive order in line with our reform demands."

Among those calling for justice was the family of Abu Sayeed, a final year English student who was killed in the protests on Thursday, allegedly by the police.

A video of Sayeed being fired at by police during a protest at a university in the city of Rangpur had gone viral on social media before the government shut down the internet.

Sayeed's brother Abu Hossain said: "My parents are in shock. My brother died for demanding fair rights for every student. He died a martyr. I hope he'll be remembered for it and his death was not in vain."



▲ *Students attack a police officer after Dhaka's protests turned violent*

The student union lobbied for the law, including spending 500,000 shekels (£105,000) on a billboard campaign to promote it nationwide. The ads prompted the Haaretz newspaper to warn in an editorial that the country's "illiberal students need a lesson in democracy".

Israel's education minister, Yoav Kisch, said he backed the law, though it is not a government initiative.

"It is important that academic institutions have great independence, but there are places that cross a line that must not be crossed," his office said in a statement.

Ofir Katz, a member of the governing Likud party and chair of the ruling coalition, presented the draft as a private bill, with other backers including a legislator from the party of the prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rival, Benny Gantz.

Sivan said the legislation was dangerous for its broad restrictions and its narrow focus on universities, adding that Israel already had laws against incitement to terror that covered all residents.

"What they are trying to do is subject academics to stricter rules than other residents of Israel, where a violation of state laws is not judged in court but rather by a government-appointed administrator, with no process or opportunity for the accused one to defend him or herself.

"This is an extreme violation of fundamental democratic principles. In a democratic country everyone is equal before the law."

Katz, when asked if existing laws against incitement fell short, said Israel needed additional controls on discourse by people with "public platforms", and denied that the law would limit academic debate.

"The criminal aspect is a separate matter," he said. "The freedom to express oneself is not the freedom for incitement to terrorism."

Elchanan Felhimer, the chair of the National Union of Israeli Students, said the billboards were designed to be provocative to draw attention to the law but had strong student support. Of the 30 university chapters of the union, two-thirds supported the campaign.

One of the academics targeted, Anat Matar from the philosophy department at Tel Aviv University, said the role of students in drafting and promoting a law to silence their lecturers was particularly disturbing.

"Whether or not it passes, a significant damage has already been done," she said. "The mere fact that it is supported by the national student union and by many local student unions, and that there is hardly any protest among students against, it manifests another step down the ladder towards full-blown fascism."

Yair Lapid, the leader of the opposition, said the law would erode democracy. "According to this bill, the person who decides what it means to speak against the state of Israel is Yoav Kisch. Not the police and not the court," he told the Knesset.



▼ Xico, Mexico
Dancers join celebrations yesterday for the feast day of the town's patron saint, Mary Magdalene
PHOTOGRAPH: HECTOR QUINTANAR/GETTY IMAGES





▼ *Bomb damage in Omdurman. Tens of thousands of people have been killed in Sudan's civil war*

PHOTOGRAPH: XINHUA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Women in war-torn Sudanese city forced to have sex with soldiers for food, victims say

Zeinab Mohammed Salih
Khartoum

Women struggling to survive in the war-torn Sudanese city of Omdurman say soldiers are forcing them to have sex in exchange for food.

More than two dozen women who have been unable to flee fighting in Omdurman said that sexual intercourse with men from the Sudanese army was the only way they could access food or goods they could sell to raise money to feed their families.

The women said that most of the assaults had taken place in the "factories area" of the city, where the most food is available.

One victim said she had no choice but to have sex with soldiers to get food for her elderly parents and her 18-year-old daughter. "My parents are too old and sick and I never let my daughter go out to look for food. I went to the soldiers and that was the only way to get food – they were everywhere in the factories area."

The woman said she was forced to have sex with soldiers at a meat-processing factory in May last year, not long after Sudan's devastating civil war broke out between the country's regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), then again in January at a warehouse.

The conflict has left tens of thousands dead and displaced more than 10 million people, according to the UN. A recent UN-backed report said nearly 26 million people were facing high levels of "acute food insecurity".

Reports of rape by armed men emerged within days of the conflict starting on 15 April 2023. Numerous accounts of RSF fighters perpetrating sexual violence in a systematic manner have been documented in the Khartoum area and in Darfur, where the RSF now controls all but one major population centre.

Some of the women who spoke to the Guardian said that soldiers were also demanding sex in exchange for access to abandoned houses where it was still possible to loot items to sell in local markets.

One woman said after having sex with soldiers she was permitted to take food, kitchen equipment and perfumes from empty houses. She spoke of her shame at the sexual assault she was forced to endure and being reduced to stealing property to survive.

"I am not a thief," she said. "What I went through is indescribable, I would not wish it on an enemy … I only did it because I wanted to feed my children."

Aid organisations have struggled to supply food to people in desperate need around the country. Although the UN's World Food Programme said recently it had made deliveries to the Khartoum area, the women the Guardian spoke to said that they had not seen any international aid coming into their neighbourhoods.

A third woman the Guardian spoke to said she had been tortured by soldiers after she stopped having sex with them. The 21-year-old said she had had sex with soldiers in return for being allowed to loot houses in west Omdurman but that she stopped after her brothers told her they were opposed to looting.

The woman said that when she told the soldiers she would no longer be coming to see them two of them held her down and burned her legs. "I was told by the soldiers that I was full of myself for refusing to go with them," said the woman, who showed the burn marks on her legs.

A resident of a neighbourhood in west Omdurman said he had seen soldiers bringing women to houses belonging to people who had fled. "A lot of women come and queue outside our neighbourhood," he said.

"The soldiers let them enter and choose those they like the look of to enter houses. I sometimes hear screaming but what can you do? Nothing."

'I fear they'll kill me for talking'

The Pakistani poet abducted after criticising the military

Shah Meer Baloch *Islamabad*
Hannah Ellis-Petersen *Delhi*

It was late at night in Islamabad and Ahmad Farhad was returning from the shop with food for breakfast when someone walked up behind him. "Don't be scared, don't scream and come with us," the man whispered.

Clutching bread, eggs and jam, the poet complied. With a sinking feeling he recognised the car, with blacked-out windows, as one used by Pakistan's military agencies for abductions. "We have to tie your hands behind your back and put a cloth on your face," the man told Farhad, before everything went dark. Certain he would never see his wife and children again, Farhad pleaded to be killed with a single bullet rather than tortured. The car occupants replied: "Don't worry. Things don't turn out that way."

Farhad, known for poetry that accuses the military of treating the constitution "like a toy", had long feared he was an intelligence agency target. Days earlier he had tweeted about threats to his life.

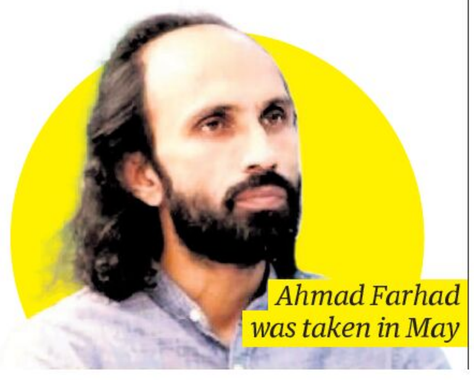
Pakistan's military has long been accused of using agencies to carry out abductions and disappearances of critics, though its top brass deny the practice. Many die in custody, with families receiving mutilated corpses, and few survivors discuss their ordeal.

Speaking for the first time about his abduction in May, Farhad told the Guardian he was thrown into a tiny, hot, stinking cell and soon fell ill, but was given no medical help. Instead he was interrogated. His captors made it clear his political poetry, activism and a social media post calling for the army chief to resign, were why he was there.

"They asked me many times, what's my issue with the army chief and the military?" he said. "The interrogator then pressed me harder, asking about my resistance poetry, particularly my two poems on the military and enforced disappearances. He would scream at me 'why did you use the name of the army as a title of the poem, why do you hate the military?'" Farhad said he did not hate the military or the chief but believed all should follow the constitution.

Farhad was unaware his abduction had lifted him from little-known poet to national resistance figure as his verses spread. His wife, Syeda Urooj Zainab, filed a high court case blaming the security agencies, including the ISI intelligence agency. The judge summoned the security agency head and senior figures from the interior and defence ministries. If they did not produce Farhad, he said, he would ask the prime minister to explain.

ISI and the defence department denied knowledge of Farhad, but his interrogator increased the pressure on him. "He threatened they could easily kill me and dump my body and it would be no issue," he said. "He listed journalists and activists who have been killed and said, 'what happened to their cases? – nothing'."



Ahmad Farhad was taken in May

Two weeks after he was seized, Farhad resurfaced in police custody in Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir and later got bail. He is now charged with obstructing a public servant at a checkpoint, which he denies. The military's media wing refused to comment.

Before his release, Farhad was told not to give interviews or use social media. However, he has refused to stay silent and plans to publish a book of resistance poems. "I fear they will kill me for talking," he said. "But I believe I should tell my story. I was abducted and I know who abducted me."

The situation was summed up, he said, by his poem *Fauj Nama*, or Verse on the Army, which was among those to rile his captors. One line runs: *"We live here merely to draw our breath / The entire land of Pakistan belongs to the army."*

Free to fight

The convicts who are plugging gaps in Kyiv's military



▼ *Volodymyr Prysiazhniuk, who was serving an eight-year term for manslaughter, at a training camp*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALESSIO MAMO/THE GUARDIAN



Luke Harding
Zaporizhzhia region



Last year Volodymyr Prysiazhniuk quarrelled with his father-in-law, Yuriy. Both men were drunk. "I'd had a litre of beer," Prysiazhniuk recalled. The family row escalated and he punched Yuriy twice in the head. The older man fell over, dead. In court Prysiazhniuk admitted his guilt and told the judge he had called an ambulance. He got eight years for manslaughter.

Prysiazhniuk had reconciled himself to a long period behind bars. In June, however, he walked out of penal colony number 67, in the western Ukrainian town of Sokyriany, and boarded a bus. Several other inmates joined him. They said farewell to the Soviet-era jail and were driven to a military camp in the country's south-east.

The convicted killer is one of 3,800 inmates freed early under a new scheme designed to plug gaps in Ukraine's armed forces. After two and a half years of all-out war, the government in Kyiv is struggling to find recruits. In May it passed legislation allowing convicts for the first time to volunteer for the army, having previously rejected the idea.

Rapists and mass murderers are not eligible. Also barred are those found guilty of national security crimes. Military outfits are now competing to attract suitable prisoners. According to the justice ministry, 5,900 expressed interest. Some were rejected for health reasons. Prysiazhniuk signed up after two representatives from the first separate assault battalion visited his colony.

It was, he said, a good decision. "People immediately started treating me with respect," he said. "The warmth was incredible. When you are in jail you are nothing. Now I'm a person again."

Officially, 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since 2022. Many believe the actual figure is higher. Was he worried about dying? "Nobody can predict what will happen," he said. "You have to hope it will be OK."

A month ago the first batch of 58 prisoners arrived at the battalion's training base in the Zaporizhzhia region, 12 miles from the frontline. Their new home is a leafy outdoor camp, hidden beneath camouflage netting and shady trees. Around are meadows of wild flowers. Recruits get uniforms, boots and a rifle. They sleep underground on wooden bunks.

On Monday they learned basic infantry skills: how to creep through undergrowth in single file and to avoid enemy surveillance. Both sides make extensive use of drones, meaning soldiers have to trek 2 miles at night to reach forward positions. The convicts are taught to operate automatic weapons and machine guns, and how to recognise mines and booby traps, and to set them.

"I'm proud of myself. I feel a new confidence," Vladyslav Vasyliev said. "If I don't survive, my kids can at least be proud of me. I want to defend them and my country." Vasyliev said he joined the battalion three years into a five-year sentence for theft. "I was young and stupid," he said. He claimed he and his fellow prisoners were more committed than law-abiding civilians, many of whom are reluctant to fight.



▲ *Denis Kravchenko, an instructor, said some recruits needed to be fitter*

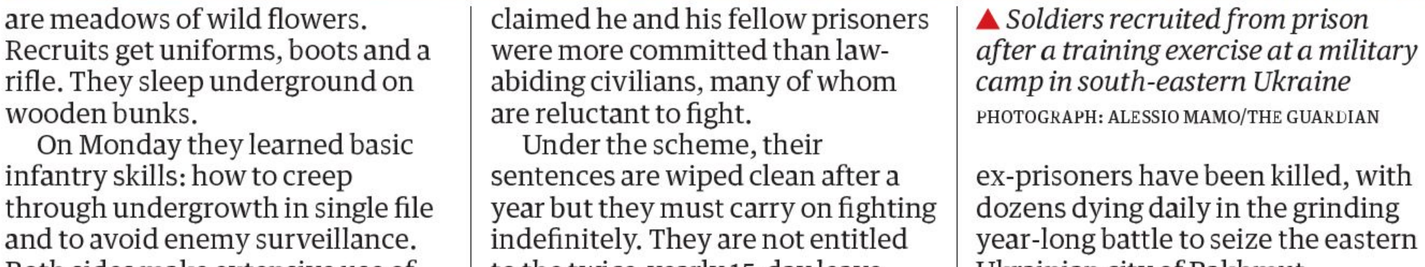
Under the scheme, their sentences are wiped clean after a year but they must carry on fighting indefinitely. They are not entitled to the twice-yearly 15-day leave period given to regular soldiers, though the battalion says it will reward good behaviour with marital visits. If prisoners desert, they receive an extra five to 10 years in jail, on top of their original sentences.

Vasyliev said his wife Natalia loved him, "the good and the bad", adding that his estranged sister had got in touch.

Not all relatives, though, are fans. Prysiazhniuk admitted this his wife, Boghdana, stopped speaking to him last month. "She is upset and thinks I won't come back," he said. "We have two small girls, aged three and one."

Previously a potato distributor, he said he tried to enlist when Russia began its invasion but was told he was not required. What did he think of Vladimir Putin? "He's a prick," Prysiazhniuk answered.

Russia, notoriously, began recruiting for the military from among prison inmates in 2022, so far signing up about 100,000 people. A large number of Russian ex-prisoners have been killed, with dozens dying daily in the grinding year-long battle to seize the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut.



▲ *Soldiers recruited from prison after a training exercise at a military camp in south-eastern Ukraine*
PHOTOGRAPH: ALESSIO MAMO/THE GUARDIAN

Oleksii Dukh, spokesperson for the battalion, said Ukraine would not employ Russia's bloody tactics with its own prison volunteers. "They don't try and preserve lives. They use their guys like meat," he said. He described the new recruits as "pretty good".

Denis Kravchenko, an instructor, said the military needed better PR and higher salaries if it wanted to solve its recruitment problem. The convicts are paid a standard army wage: $500 (£390) a month, plus $2,500 when they served on the frontline.

Some of the new recruits needed to work on their fitness levels, he added. Later this summer they would be sent to join assault units, used to storm Russian positions. Inevitably, he acknowledged, there would be casualties.

He added: "Our battalion has lost 20 guys over the past two months. Across the whole line of contact it's around 50 people a day. We've got used to this. One person's death is a tragedy. A thousand is a statistic."

Hong Kong 'openly flouts sanctions' against Iran and Russia

Amy Hawkins
Senior China correspondent

Hong Kong has become a global trade hub for "the world's most brutal regimes", according to a report examining the city's role in facilitating the flow of goods to countries under sanctions by the west, including Russia, Iran and North Korea.

A report by the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation has found that between 2021 and 2022 exports of semiconductors from Hong Kong to Russia roughly doubled to $400m (£300m), second only to shipments from mainland China. Semiconductors are vital to Russia's war effort as they are a component in drones and missiles.

The report analyses Hong Kong's exports in a five-month window in 2023, with a particular focus on items from the common high priority list (CHPL) developed by the US to identify items sought by Russia.

The researchers found that, between August and December 2023, Hong Kong exporters shipped nearly $2bn worth of goods to Russian buyers. Nearly 40% of those exports, by value, came from items on the CHPL.

One of the companies featured in the report is Piraclinos, a charcoal and fertiliser supplier. According to the report, in December 2023, Piraclinos shipped more than $2.5m of electronic integrated circuits and other CHPL items to VMK, a Russia-based company targeted by US sanctions. Piraclinos was approached for comment.

Hong Kong has long been a hub for international business operations, above-board and illicit. The ease of setting up companies, a process that takes just a few days in Hong Kong, allows individuals to seamlessly create new avenues for transferring goods and payments, and mask their identities through shell companies, even when they are in the sights of the western authorities.

In one example detailed in the report, a Hong Kong-based company, Arttronix, was dissolved days after it was targeted by US sanctions for supplying electronic components to Iran. One year later, Arttronix's owner set up a new company under a different name. It is not clear whether the new company is also involved in exporting electronics to Iran, but the owner "never should have been able to start a new company," said Samuel Bickett, the report's author.

"Beijing's crackdown has played a major role here," Bickett said. Companies in Hong Kong "openly flout the sanctions and show no interest in even paying lip service to them".

Trade between China and Russia has boomed since the start of the war in Ukraine. Last year, bilateral trade reached $240bn, a record high.

‘Afghanistan is silent’

Young musicians who found hope in Portugal

Ashifa Kassam
Braga

A stone’s throw from Portugal’s oldest cathedral and buzzing bakeries serving up *pastéis de nata*, the complex notes of a sitar fill the ground floor of an unassuming building in the northern city of Braga. The soft strumming belies the radical nature of the mission that has taken root here: to preserve Afghan music and use it as a tool to counter those who want to eradicate it.

“The Taliban tried to silence us,” said Ahmad Sarmast, the director of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music, in his new office in Braga. “But we’re much stronger and much louder than yesterday.”

Launched in 2010 under the US-backed government in Kabul, the institute once stood as a powerful sign of the changes sweeping Afghanistan. Young male and female musicians – often from poor backgrounds – performed together in ensembles that included Zohra, the country’s first all-female orchestra.

They toured the world, offering up a singular blend of Afghan and western music as they reclaimed the country’s music traditions and directly challenged the years of silence enforced by the Taliban. “It was a symbol of progress, of human rights and of women’s empowerment,” Sarmast said. The institute’s future, however, and that of its young musicians, went dark in August 2021 as the Taliban returned to power.

> ***‘Everyone was running. I took my instrument and ran’***
>
> 
>
> **Ramiz Safi**
> *Musician*

Ramiz Safa, 20, was in a shop in Kabul, waiting for his *rubab* – an Afghan stringed instrument – to be repaired when news broke that the Taliban were back. “Everyone was running. Someone came to us and said: ‘You have to get away, because this is a music shop,’” he said. “I took my rubab and I ran.”

He hid his instruments as soon as he got home. Soon after, he headed to a barber’s shop to change his appearance as much as possible. “It was really scary,” he said.

The Taliban’s return came as Sarmast was on holiday in Australia. From 6,000 miles away, he scrambled to figure out how best to protect the 280 or so people affiliated with the institute. “Our school was on the top of the Taliban’s hit list,” he said. For years it had been targeted by the Taliban, who went as far as to plant a bomb at a 2014 concert, killing one person and leaving Sarmast badly injured.

Working with the US-based foundation that supports the institute, he contacted everyone he could think of, pleading with politicians and heads of state for help. Only one country responded immediately: Portugal, setting off a months-long struggle that would eventually allow 273 people, including musicians, instructors and staff, to travel there.



▲ *Zohra Ahmadi, who, with her cousin Farida, now lives in Portugal*
PHOTOGRAPHS: GONÇALO FONSECA/GUARDIAN

The young musicians, most of whom had been evacuated without their families, reeled from homesickness and culture shock as Portuguese courts wrangled with the question of how best to handle the unaccompanied minors. “At first it was really hard,” said Farida Ahmadi, 15. “A new culture, new home, new language.”

As plans to house them for a few weeks in a Lisbon military hospital stretched to eight months, morale plummeted, Sarmast said. Many were haunted by what they had left behind. “Every night I had dreams about the Taliban,” Safa said. “Now, day by day, it’s getting better.”

Citing lack of accommodation and the cost of living in Lisbon, Portuguese courts decided the group should be moved north, Sarmast said. About 70 musicians and staff now live in Braga. The unaccompanied minors are in the care of two institutions and attend local schools, while those aged over 18 attend the music conservatory.

Farida said she had become used to the sights and sounds of Portugal. “We are progressing now,” the violin player said. “And it’s something really amazing.”

Last year the institute obtained approval from the Portuguese government for the musicians’ families to join them. In August the students will perform at Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center in Washington DC.

“Afghanistan is a silent nation,” Sarmast said. “Learning music is a crime. Playing music is a crime. Listening to music is a crime.”

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Business

Trouble brewing
Price of tea to rise after poor harvests
Page 29



Delay in gambling levy could cost lives, experts tell Starmer

Rob Davies

The prime minister has been urged to follow through on the previous government's plan for a £100m-a-year levy on gambling companies in an open letter from "deeply concerned" advocates of the proposal, who warned a delay would cost lives.

Last year, the Conservatives published a white paper on reform of gambling regulation, but many of its proposals have been left up in the air by Labour's election victory.

One measure yet to be finalised is a statutory levy on gambling firms' revenues to fund research, education and treatment for problem gambling.

The levy was expected to raise £100m to be spread among the NHS to oversee treatment, UK Research and Innovation to do research into gambling harms, and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities to look at harm prevention.

However the plan was not included in policy proposals laid out in the king's speech last week.

Campaigners for gambling reform have also expressed misgivings about ties between senior Labour politicians and the betting industry and what impact those could have on plans set out in the white paper.

In an open letter to Keir Starmer, members of the House of Lords, campaigners and researchers called on Labour to publish its response to a public consultation on the levy and implement legislation to enact it.

"For years, the gambling industry exerted influence over the research, prevention and treatment of gambling-related harm by providing inadequate funding through a voluntary system," they said.

Writing that they were "deeply concerned by the delay to enact a statutory levy", the letter's signatories called on the government to press on with it. "This commitment has received support from all sides of the political debate, as well as leading NHS clinicians and academic experts," they said.

They warned that any delay "will lead to further harm to mental health, damage communities across the country and, ultimately, cost lives".

Signatories include the chief executive of Samaritans, eight members of the House of Lords, academics and campaign groups.

Gambling-related harm is expected to come into sharper focus this week, when the Gambling Commission publishes figures based on a new methodology. These are expected to indicate that rates of problem gambling may be higher than previously thought.

When the regulator issued an experimental survey using the new method in November last year, it showed that 2.5% of the population may be suffering from problem gambling, eight times higher than the previous 0.3% estimate.

£100m
Amount to be raised by the annual levy on gambling companies proposed by the Tory government

The commission is also expected to publish evidence of the links between gambling and suicide.

Supporters of the levy say the system of voluntary donations gives the industry too much influence over funding intended to help the very people that bookies and online casinos make their money from.

A government spokesperson said: "As stated in the government's manifesto, we are absolutely committed to reducing gambling-related harm.

"We will ensure responsible gambling and strengthen protections for those at risk."

Some measures included in the white paper are set to go ahead, including a cap of between £2 and £5 on digital slot machine stakes, while a pilot scheme testing the effectiveness of affordability checks to stop punters losing vast sums is under way.

Other proposals have been left in limbo, including plans for a gambling ombudsman to settle disputes between customers and operators.

The white paper did not include action to curb gambling advertising.

John Lewis to be never knowingly undersewed

Rob Davies

John Lewis customers will be able to give their favourite leather jacket a new lease of life or have a cushion cover fixed, as part of a repairs partnership with Timpson Group, the business famed for offering ex-offenders a second chance.

The service, which will be trialled at five stores from today, is designed to encourage shoppers to pay to have items altered, repaired, cleaned or restored, rather than throwing them away and buying replacements.

Extending a garment's life by nine months can reduce its carbon, waste and water footprints by up to 30%, according to Wrap, a charity that supports the circular economy.

The cheapest repair on offer at John Lewis will cost £10.95, for "minor" rips and tears, or fitting a new half-pocket. For £19.95 a broken zip on a cushion cover can be fixed. At the more expensive end, customers can pay £99.95 to have a handbag restored.

Items from any brand can be fixed through the service.

The 16-week trial, at John Lewis's Oxford, Liverpool, Cheadle, Milton Keynes and Welwyn branches, is a collaboration with Johnsons, the 200-year-old dry cleaning company.

Johnsons is part of Timpsons Group, which is known for its key-cutting and shoe-mending business and owns brands including photo chain Snappy Snaps. Timpsons and John Lewis highlighted the environmental benefit of mending clothes and household items rather than replacing them.

Timpsons has a long record of employing former prisoners, who now account for more than 10% of its workforce, about 1,200 ex-offenders in total. This led to its chief executive, James Timpson, being made a peer and named as Keir Starmer's new minister for prisons shortly after Labour's landslide election victory earlier this month.

Will Lankston, managing director of Timpson Direct, said: "Alterations have always been one of the core parts of our business and we have been seeing this increase over the past few years as more customers are conscious about the environment and are wanting to repair and bring back to life some of their well-loved garments and accessories."

John Lewis said that the trial would show it which customers wanted to use the service and what they wanted from it, such as the type of garments that were most commonly brought in for repair.

Ministers 'must ignore the net-zero nimbys' to hit 2030 target

Richard Partington
Economics correspondent

The government will need to take on "net-zero nimbys" and ramp up public investment to decarbonise Britain's homes, transport and electricity system, a thinktank has said.

With Keir Starmer promising a rapid transition to decarbonise the power system by 2030, the Resolution Foundation said achieving the target would require more government spending and private investment.

The thinktank said projects to meet the goal – including solar farms, battery storage and onshore wind turbines – were likely to face local resistance. Many renewables installations would be in wealthier parts of the country, with two-thirds of proposed solar projects in the richest 40% of neighbourhoods.

"Doing this effectively will require overcoming opposition to development from net-zero nimbys, who often live in wealthier parts of the country," said Jonny Marshall, a senior economist at the thinktank. "The government must be prepared to win these battles, which won't be popular with some voters but are vital for the country as a whole."



▲ *Wind turbines and grid pylons have faced local opposition*
PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS RATCLIFFE/BLOOMBERG

Options for dealing with friction could include taking responsibility out of local hands to unblock development, or providing financial incentives to smooth opposition. Otherwise local opposition could "stymie decarbonisation".

The Labour government is already lifting a de facto ban on new onshore wind turbines in England, relaxing planning laws and dropping the legal defence of a proposed coalmine in Cumbria. Ed Miliband, the energy secretary, last week drew criticism from Conservative MPs over green-lighting of a £600m energy farm on the Cambridgeshire/Suffolk border.

> ***'The government must be prepared to win the battles, which won't be popular with some voters'***
>
> **Jonny Marshall**
> *Resolution Foundation*

The thinktank's former chief executive, Torsten Bell, who became a Labour MP this month, has criticised politicians who are critical of energy projects. He wrote on X last week: "You can be pro-net zero or pro-zero building but not both …"

It followed the Green party co-leader, Adrian Ramsay's call for a pause in construction of electricity pylons in his Waveney Valley constituency.

Going for growth

Productivity's a puzzle in our service economy

Larry Elliott
Economics editor

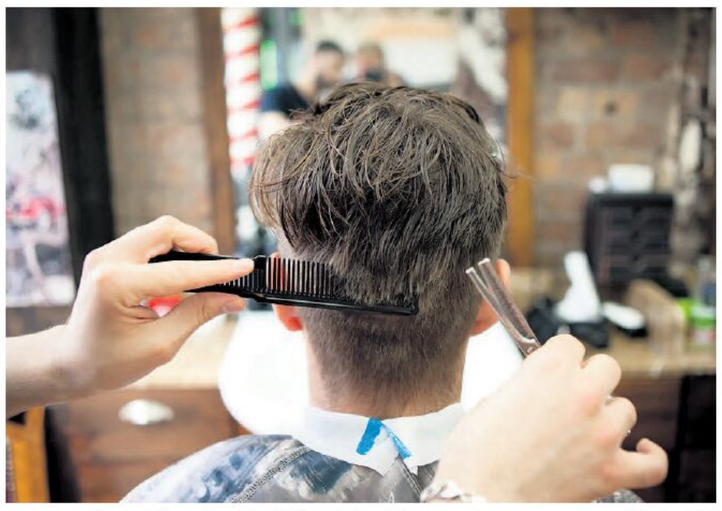
I'm due a haircut and in the past week received a message from my barber containing the news that the price will be 10% higher than the last time I went for a trim. If I call in for a coffee on my way to work it will be a similar story. After recent price rises, I can expect to pay nearly £4 for a flat white.

These are two examples of what Rachel Reeves calls the everyday economy in action, and they tell us something about the challenge facing the chancellor as she seeks to improve Britain's poor economic performance.

It's not hard to see why a haircut and a cup of coffee are going up in price. Rents are higher, insurance is more expensive and so are fuel and labour. Businesses have a choice: they can absorb these extra costs or they can try to pass them on to their customers. Many are doing the latter, which is why inflation in the services sector is running at 5.7% while overall consumer price index inflation is 2%.

This matters. These days, Britain is primarily a service-sector economy. Manufacturing and construction are still important, but services account for about 80% of national output. Prices have risen by about 20% in the past three years and labour shortages have made it harder for employers to resist pressure for higher pay to compensate.

The very nature of the service sector makes productivity improvements hard to chisel out. My haircut takes as long as it did a year ago. As a customer, I am getting the same service but paying more for it. As a nation, output per worker is up by 1.5% in the four years since the start of the Covid pandemic; in the public sector – where Reeves is contemplating above-inflation pay awards this year – productivity is 6% lower.



Hairdressers' costs have risen in recent years but they have relatively few ways of working more efficiently, like many other sectors in services-based Britain

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

Productivity is easy to measure in a car factory but harder to assess in the NHS. If a GP spends five minutes more per patient but by doing so saves lives, does that count as productivity loss, because of the extra time spent, or (as it should) a productivity gain?

The fact that Britain is a labour-intensive service-sector economy has made the Bank of England warier about cutting interest rates than it might otherwise have been. A blogpost on Threadneedle Street's Bank Underground site by a staff member, Tomas Key, found that trend (underlying) wage growth is 6%, double its pre-pandemic level.

This raises two questions. The first is whether higher wage growth is merely a response to higher inflation and will come down now that prices are rising less quickly. That appears to be the case. The annual growth in average earnings was 5.1% in the year to May compared with 8.2% in the same month of 2023.

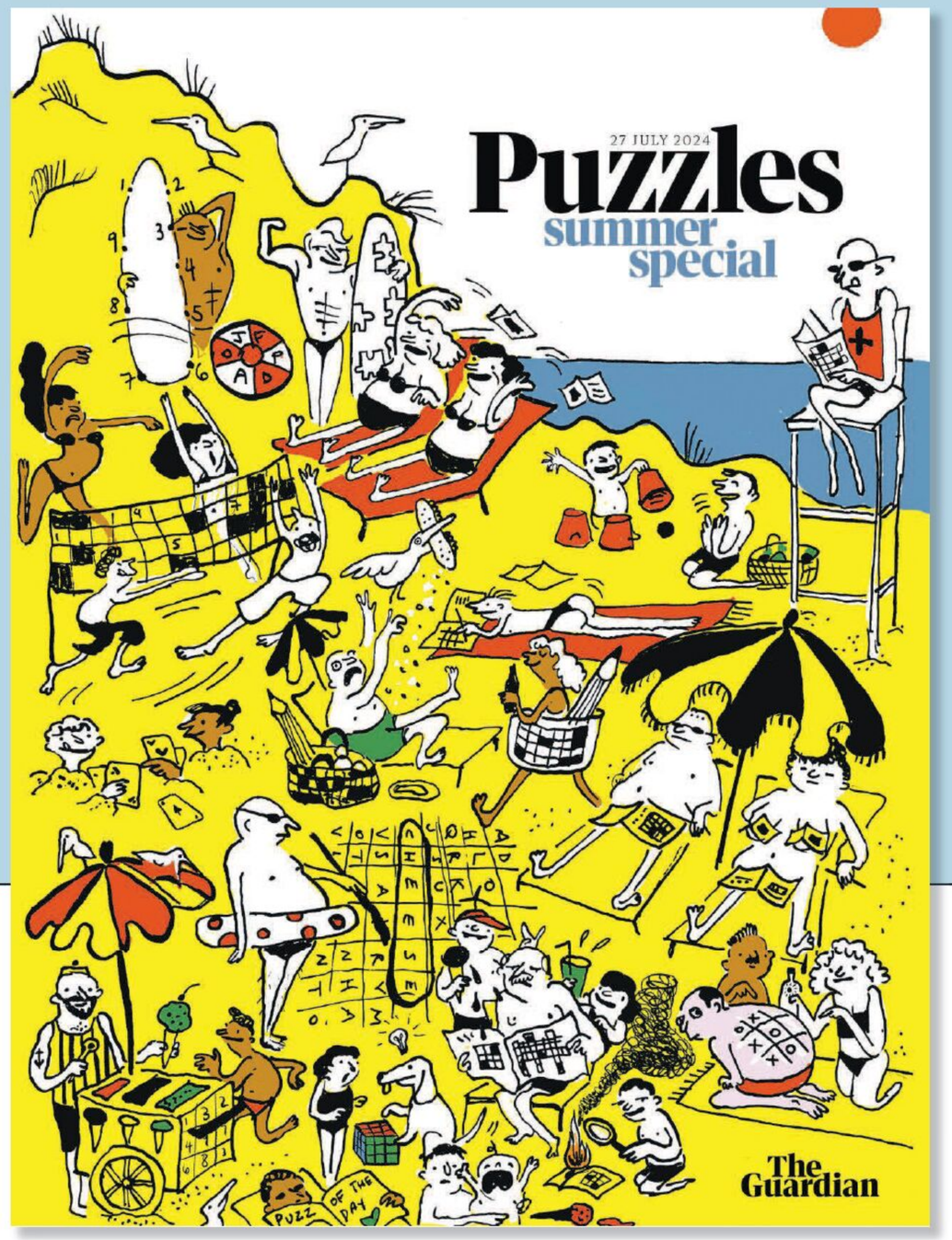
Labour shortages increase the pressure for higher pay

The second is whether the Bank can do much to bring down wage growth, short of keeping interest rates at a punitive enough level to cause economic distress. The answer is no, not really. Higher interest rates are a crude tool that work by making businesses too nervous to risk raising prices and by forcing workers to accept below-inflation pay increases through the fear of losing their jobs.

So far, the evidence is that the economy has withstood a year of interest rates at 5.25% much better than might have been expected. There was a short, shallow, technical recession in the second half of 2023 but activity is now gently recovering. It would be doing so more quickly were it not for the 14 increases in official borrowing costs between December 2021 and August 2023.

All that said, the answer to Britain's productivity weakness does not lie with the Bank of England. Instead, it will depend on changes to the supply side of the economy. Reeves will chair the first meeting of the Treasury's new growth mission board tomorrow.

But Britain is going to remain predominantly a service-sector economy and there are services that do not readily lend themselves to productivity gains. A robot cutting my hair? I don't think so.



Your summer puzzles special

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The Guardian summer puzzles special is back for a third-year of mind-bending word games, serious sudokus, weapons-grade general knowledge and a bonus quick crossword. Featuring contributions from Alex Bellos, sudoku geniuses Cracking the Cryptic, pub quiz mastermind Frank Paul and many of your other favourite crossword setters and quizmasters. It'll keep you stumped for weeks.

Only with the Guardian on Saturday 27 July

The Guardian



▼ *A tea picker at work on a United Nilgiri Tea Estates company plantation in southern India*

PHOTOGRAPH: FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION

Crunch time for the cuppa

Extreme weather and fall in demand hits tea industry

Zoe Wood

Tea is a British institution and 100m cups will be drunk today, but experts warn that our beloved brew could get pricier as extreme weather causes misery for growers in India and Kenya.

Last week's cost of living update put food inflation at 1.5%, but a box of 80 teabags now costs £2.65, a rise of 18p or 7% on a year ago.

Food industry bible the Grocer has pointed to bigger price hikes, with branded and own-label "everyday" teabags in supermarkets up as much as 30%.

One factor is supply chain problems resulting from Houthi attacks on vessels in the Red Sea. But harvests in Kenya and India, which supply half the UK's tea, have been disrupted by heatwave, drought and flooding.

"I've just been in India where the north-east is having a drought and the south is having too much rain and farmers are talking about productivity down 40%," says Anna Mann, associate director for responsible business at the Fairtrade Foundation. "The price of tea hasn't changed in a decade. We're looking at one of the first times when there might be shortages and it will have to shift."

In May, tea production in India was down 30% on 2023. As a result, in the last week of June, the average tea price topped £2 a kg, almost 20% up on a year ago, according to Tea Board of India data.

Across India growers are battling stagnant or falling yields due to the climate crisis, says Shilajit Roy Choudhury, vice-president of the United Nilgiri Tea Estates company. "I've been in the plantation industry for 35 years now and see the change," he says. "I would love, every day, to have sun in the morning and rain in the afternoon. Historically that was the case. It is not any more."

The company is based in Tamil Nadu, southern India, and would normally get spring showers in February and March and a big crop in April and May. This year, Choudhury says, "our rains are already a month and a half late".

The Fairtrade supplier is having to adapt. "We are 6,500ft-7,000ft above sea level and in May had temperatures touching 30C."

Tea is unusual among agricultural commodities in that, unlike coffee and cocoa, there is no futures market. Prices are determined by supply and demand with about 70% of the world's tea traded through auctions.

Prices paid to producers differ by grade. African black teas tend to be lower grade, due to the varieties and production techniques, and are more likely to end up in teabags.

> ***'I would love sun in the morning and rain in the afternoon. That was the case. It is not any more'***
>
> **Shilajit Roy Choudhury**
> *Tea producer*

Intermediaries can take a large slice of money paid for small growers' tea, so they earn a fraction of the amount it fetches in shops here, says the Fairtrade Foundation.

Climate change is threatening tea-growing regions of east Africa with deeper, longer dry seasons, though this year unusually heavy rainfall has been an issue.

"I've been tea farming for 26 years and there have been some very big changes," says Geoffrey Mitei, who has one acre in Kericho County, Kenya. His Fairtrade producer organisation had to buy in water for processing tea in its factory after floods disrupted its supply, resulting in increased costs.

The tea farmer's cause has not been helped by the rise of coffee culture and younger consumers switching to herbal infusions and kombucha. When Unilever put its tea business up for sale four years ago, the then boss pointed to falling demand for "builder's tea".

Andrew Thompson, professor of molecular plant science and head of soil, agri-food and biosciences at Cranfield University, says: "Coffee has grown and tea hasn't, and when you go into a high street coffee shop you're paying twice as much for coffee as for tea."

Thompson is involved in a Kenyan project with Lipton Teas and Infusions to breed drought-resistant varieties. "If you look forward at effects of climate change, then you get downwards pressure on east African production mainly because of drought but occasionally floods," he says.

This is making fair prices even more urgent as without investment, producers cannot mitigate for global heating, according to Mann.

"Shoppers don't realise," he says. "They're having a cup of tea, they love it, but in a year or two from now this could have massive knock-on effect on where tea comes from, what it tastes like and the price we pay."

Developing countries 'facing worst debt crisis in history'

Larry Elliott

Developing countries are facing the worst debt crisis in history, with almost half their budgets being spent on paying back their creditors, a study has found.

The report, by the campaign group Debt Relief International for Norwegian Church Aid, says more than 100 countries are struggling to service their debts, resulting in them cutting back on investment in health, education, social protection and climate change measures. Debt service is absorbing 41.5% of budget revenues, 41.6% of spending and 8.4% of GDP on average across 144 developing countries, according to the study.

It says that without urgent action problems will persist into the 2030s, and that pressures are greater than during both the Latin American debt crisis of 1982 and the debt crisis of the 1990s. The latter prompted relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative.

In 2020 the G20 group of leading developed and developing countries launched the common framework, a scheme designed to speed up and simplify the debt relief process. However, progress has been much slower than hoped, reflecting the fact that much poor country debt is now owed to China and private bondholders.

The report says the common framework is falling "way short of expectations in terms of timeliness, participation by creditors, and the scale of relief provided". Countries would still be paying an average 48% of their budget revenue on service after relief, and as a result few are applying to join the process.

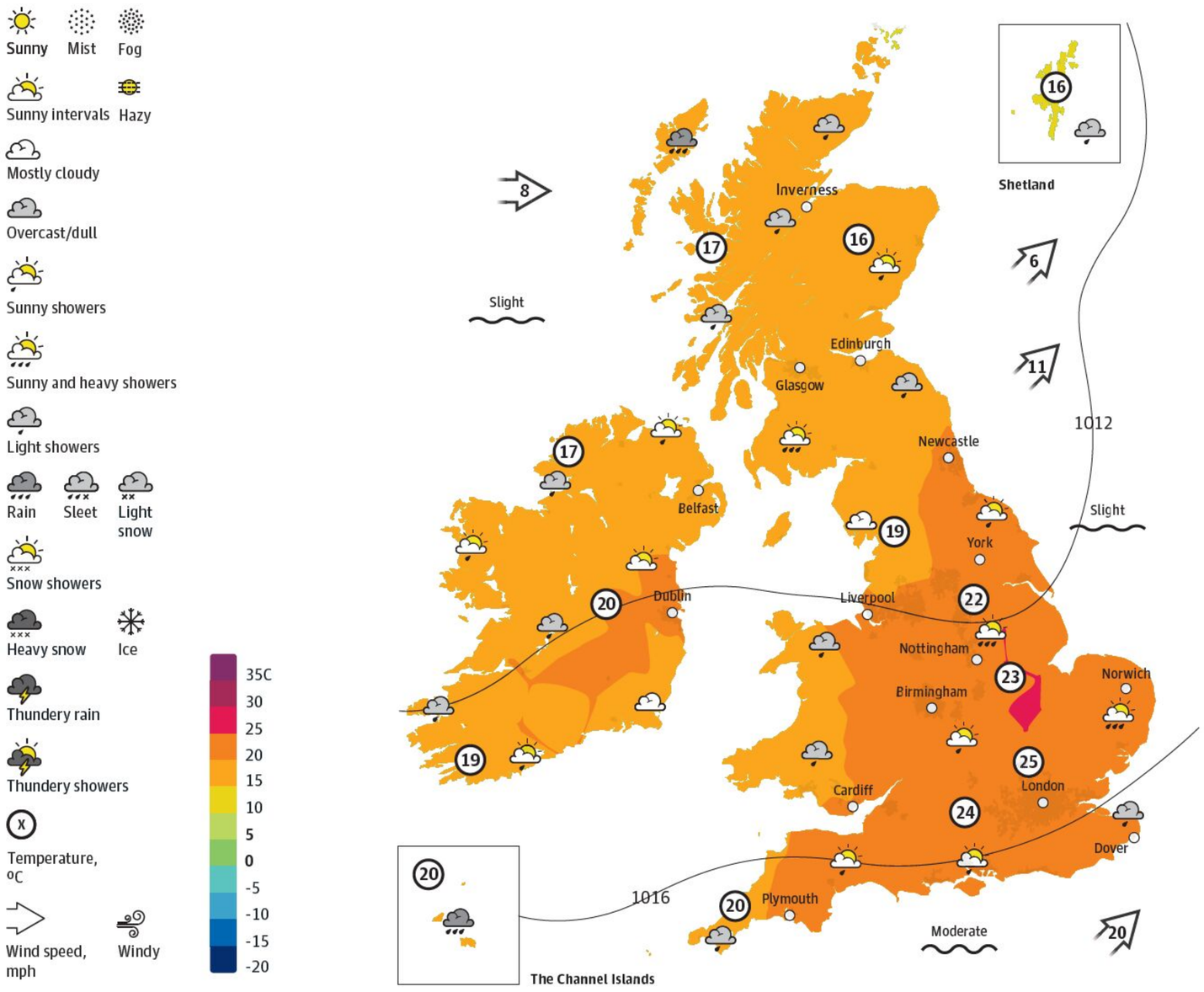
Among the suggestions made by the report are that debt relief should be available to countries of all income levels and regions and tailored to their needs, and that it should be provided in ways that reduce service to less than 15% of budget revenue.

Matthew Martin, one of the report's authors, described the current debt crisis as the worst in history.

Dagfinn Høybråten, the secretary general of Norwegian Church Aid, added: "A high debt burden is a huge drain on a country's economy and hit the poorer parts of the population first ... We do not have a generation to tackle this."

Weather
Monday 22 July 2024

UK and Ireland Noon today



Forecast

Low 13 High 21
Tomorrow



Low 12 High 23
Wednesday



Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO_2 readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

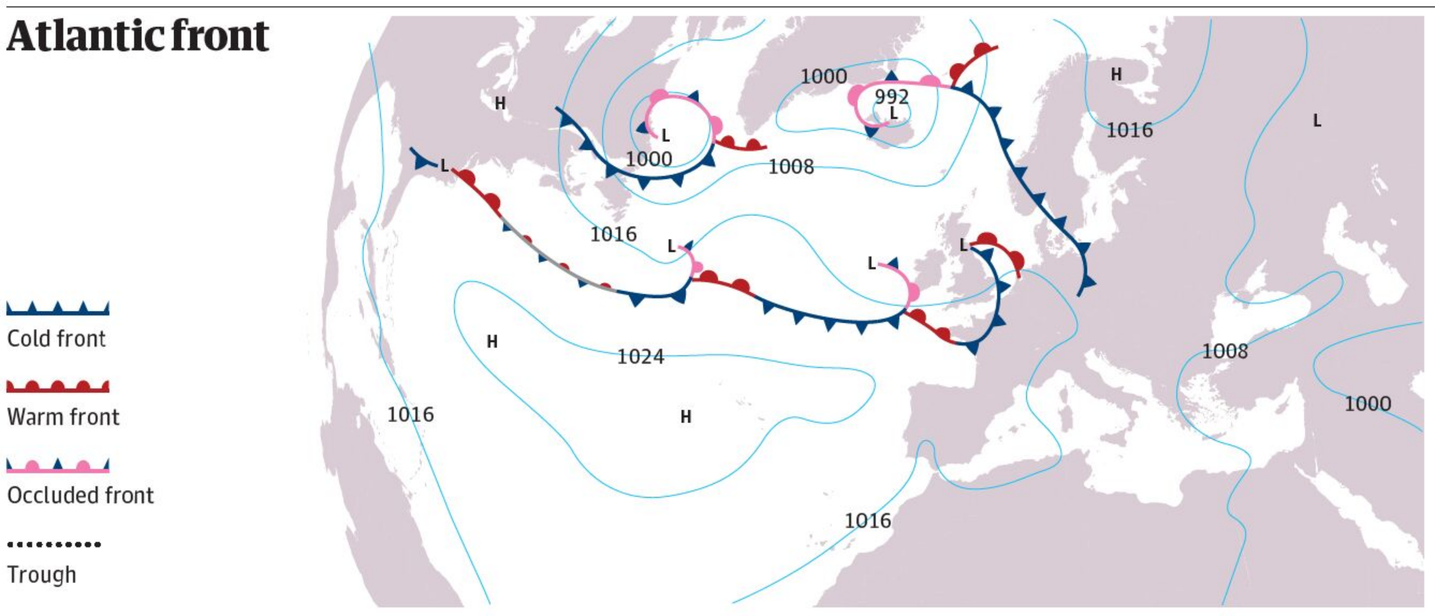
Latest	
20 Jul 2024	426.11
Weekly average	
14 Jul 2024	425.95
21 Jul 2023	421.45
21 Jul 2014	398.98
Pre-industrial base	*280*
Safe level	*350*

Source: NOAA-ESRL

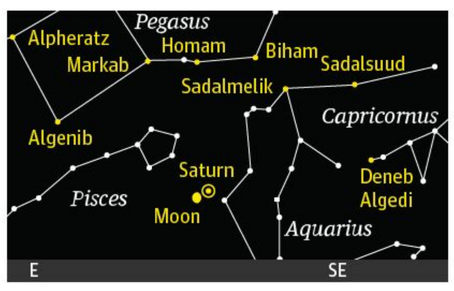
Around the UK

	Lows and highs	Precipitation	Air pollution
London	16 25	40%	Low
Manchester	13 21	85%	Low
Edinburgh	12 18	85%	Low
Belfast	11 19	60%	Low
Glasgow	10 19	90%	Low
Inverness	11 16	80%	Low
Leeds	14 22	85%	Low
Liverpool	14 22	85%	Low
Newcastle	11 20	85%	Low
Sheffield	14 22	85%	Low

Atlantic front



Starwatch



The moon glides to a close encounter with Saturn this week. The chart shows the view looking east-south-east from London at midnight on Wednesday, shortly after the pair rise.

The moon will be heading for its last quarter phase, with about 83% of its visible surface illuminated.

Saturn is experiencing retrograde motion: instead of moving eastwards as measured against the backdrop of stars, it is appearing to backtrack westwards. By November, it will have finished its loop to again move eastwards.

Saturn is not really doing this; it is an optical effect caused by perspective as Earth catches up and undertakes the outer planet. This year, the moment of undertaking, known as opposition, takes place on 8 September.

Saturn's yellowish hue will be easily visible during this month's conjunction in contrast with the moon's silvery light. **Stuart Clark**

Around the world

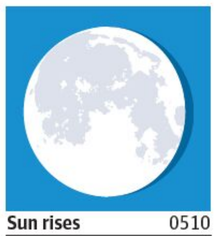
Algiers	31	Lisbon	36
Ams'dam	22	Madrid	36
Athens	36	Malaga	28
Auckland	15	Melb'rne	16
B Aires	16	Mexico C	22
Bangkok	33	Miami	32
Barcelona	28	Milan	34
Basra	47	Mombasa	29
Beijing	35	Moscow	22
Berlin	24	Mumbai	28
Bermuda	29	N Orleans	28
Brussels	23	Nairobi	23
Budapest	33	New Delhi	34
C'hagen	21	New York	28
Cairo	38	Oslo	18
Cape Town	17	Paris	25
Chicago	28	Perth	20
Corfu	36	Prague	25
Dakar	31	Reykjavik	11
Dhaka	32	Rio de J	23
Dublin	20	Rome	32
Florence	35	Shanghai	38
Gibraltar	26	Singapore	32
H Kong	33	Stockh'm	23
Harare	27	Strasb'g	27
Helsinki	25	Sydney	19
Istanbul	33	Tel Aviv	33
Jo'burg	21	Tenerife	25
K Lumpur	33	Tokyo	34
K'mandu	27	Toronto	26
Kabul	35	Vancouv'r	22
Kingston	33	Vienna	30
Kolkata	31	Warsaw	32
L Angeles	31	Wash'ton	28
Lagos	28	Well'ton	11
Lima	18	Zurich	25

High tides

Source: © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Times are local UK times

Aberdeen	**0232**	4.2m	**1511**	4.2m	**London Bridge**	**0313**	7.1m	**1539**	6.8m
Avonmouth	**0844**	12.5m	**2105**	13.0m	**Lossiemouth**	**0103**	4.0m	**1345**	4.0m
Barrow	**0031**	9.0m	**1301**	8.8m	**Milford Haven**	**0741**	6.7m	**2002**	7.0m
Belfast	**0004**	3.4m	**1235**	3.3m	**Newquay**	**0631**	6.7m	**1852**	7.0m
Cobh	**0653**	3.9m	**1917**	4.1m	**North Shields**	**0438**	5.0m	**1715**	5.0m
Cromer	**0745**	4.9m	**2031**	4.9m	**Oban**	**0719**	3.7m	**1941**	4.0m
Dover	**0010**	6.4m	**1234**	6.6m	**Penzance**	**0604**	5.2m	**1826**	5.6m
Dublin	**0030**	4.1m	**1310**	3.9m	**Plymouth**	**0719**	5.1m	**1933**	5.5m
Galway	**0637**	4.9m	**1849**	5.3m	**Portsmouth**	**0030**	4.6m	**1306**	4.6m
Greenock	**0137**	3.4m	**1358**	3.2m	**Southport**	**--**	--	**1222**	8.6m
Harwich	**0100**	3.9m	**1318**	3.9m	**Stornoway**	**0827**	4.5m	**2037**	4.9m
Holyhead	**--**	--	**1155**	5.3m	**Weymouth**	**0736**	1.1m	**1951**	1.4m
Hull	**0737**	7.4m	**2016**	7.3m	**Whitby**	**0514**	5.4m	**1748**	5.4m
Leith	**0351**	5.4m	**1623**	5.5m	**Wick**	**0026**	3.4m	**1304**	3.3m
Liverpool	**0013**	9.1m	**1241**	8.9m	**Workington**	**0037**	8.1m	**1304**	7.9m

Sun & Moon



Sun rises	0510
Sun sets	2102
Moon rises	2210
Moon sets	0552
Last Quarter	28 July

AccuWeather.com

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather** ©2024

Lighting up

Belfast	2143 to 0521
Birm'ham	2114 to 0514
Brighton	2100 to 0515
Bristol	2113 to 0523
Carlisle	2130 to 0506
Cork	2138 to 0544
Dublin	2136 to 0528
Glasgow	2142 to 0507
Harlech	2125 to 0522
Inverness	2151 to 0455
London	2102 to 0511
M'chester	2120 to 0512
Newcastle	2127 to 0501
Norwich	2103 to 0501
Penzance	2118 to 0539

Formula One
Piastri clinches first grand prix win in Hungary
Page 37 →

Football
Ten Hag praises Yoro's 'mature' United debut
Page 41 →



Sport



▲ *Security around Paris's popular tourist spots, including the Arc de Triomphe, has increased in the buildup to the Games*
FU TIAN/GETTY

Paris 2024

City of Delight

Buzz and cynicism go hand in hand as world awaits the first post-Covid Olympics

Tumaini Carayol
Paris



In the late hours of the final Friday before the Olympic Games begin in Paris, a young waiter named Anatole closed up his brasserie for the night in the shadow of the Sainte-Chapelle by the Seine. Under regular circumstances, the area would be flooded with tourists and potential customers crossing over the river to catch a glimpse of the famed Cathédrale Notre Dame, but this time the brasserie and the surrounding area were empty. In the rare absence of humans, dozens of rats roamed the streets all night.

With less than a week to go until the Olympics officially open, areas directly surrounding the Seine have practically been locked down. Only those with a "Games Pass" QR code on their phone or an Olympic accreditation are allowed to cross certain parts of the river, meaning pedestrians are constantly turned away. The anti-terrorism security perimeter (SILT) will be in place until after the opening ceremony, which takes place on Friday over the Seine.

For Anatole, that means carrying on as usual even though business is down by more than 80% and tips are nonexistent. The modest flower market across the square, the 19-year-old noted, is in far worse shape for the week. Various booksellers and marketeers who normally do business by the Seine have also been removed despite their protests. The hope is that when the world finally arrives at their doorstep, the area will open up and business will bloom again.

Across Paris, there are notable differences compared with even six weeks ago during the French Open. Police are seemingly everywhere, certain areas have had small makeovers, and volunteers and workers are present around the city. Over the weekend, neighbourhoods were bustling until late at night as citizens enjoyed France's capital before, at least for the next few weeks, it belongs to the world.

At the same time, genuine excitement is counterbalanced by cynicism and caution. One of the concerns is Paris's transport system, which will be tested to the limits by the influx of visitors. Numerous train lines have been down in the past week. Other trains are packed, the lines without air conditioning leaving people melting in the formidable summer heat. There are further concerns over the movement of migrants from encampments up north in Saint-Denis.

That it is even possible to make these observations is a great relief after the delayed Tokyo Olympics of 2021. Three years ago, after the initial three-day quarantine, the daily saliva tests and 11 days of taking buses between the hotel and event venue with no contact with the general population, one of my strongest memories was my first encounter with the public outside the Aomi Urban Sports Park, the temporary venue for sport climbing.

One of the surrounding roads overlooked the venue, from where the climbing wall was barely visible. Signs and stewards implored spectators to keep away from the perimeter, but some resourceful citizens brought folding chairs and sat at the top of the hill to watch the climbing action from a distance. For nearly three weeks the Olympics had taken over their country yet this was about as close as most of the wider Japanese public came to participating in their own Games. A key aim of the Paris Games is to bring the Olympics out of the stadium and to the wider public: 8.8 million tickets have been sold, more than at any other Olympics.

One of the many lessons from the Tokyo Games was that no matter the surrounding circumstances, elite sport will deliver. If it was still compelling in the silence of those echoing empty stadiums, it will be gripping at full force over the coming weeks. So many athletes have spent the past three years and more building up to this moment, their schedule aimed at peaking for the specific days of competition. There will be joy and devastation in equal measure. The athletes will live out their dreams and nightmares in stunning surroundings: the shadow of the Eiffel Tower, the Château de Versailles, Grand Palais and a second trip to Roland Garros in six weeks. So many iconic venues will be reimagined in different context.

One of the many lessons from Tokyo was that no matter what is going on around it, elite sport will deliver

As much as the International Olympic Committee might try to present itself as existing in a politics-free utopia, there are question marks surrounding the event and its member nations. More than 300 Palestinian athletes and sporting officials have been killed since the Israeli air attacks and ground incursion into the territory. More than 450 Ukrainian athletes have been killed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Global Rights Compliance claims a large number of Russian and Belarusian athletes have broken neutrality rules. Humanitarian crises continue in Sudan and Congo.

Anti-doping will remain a massive issue, particularly after the recent revelations that Chinese swimmers had tested positive months before the Tokyo Games. The French team, meanwhile, have enforced a hijab ban at the same time that Paris 2024 describes inclusivity as a key pillar of its ambitions. The use of Tahiti as a venue for surfing, meanwhile, has drawn protests from locals over the controversial Olympic judging tower. And security remains a significant concern.

Seven years after Paris was confirmed as host city another Games, with all its politics and contradictions alongside pure sporting excellence, has almost arrived.

‘I went from cloud nine to the bottom of the pack’

Becky Downie has overcome heartbreak, tragedy, and being ostracised in her sport to reach a third Olympics

Tumaini Carayol



◀ *Becky Downie believes she is still capable of challenging for an elusive Olympic medal at 32, having made her debut at the Games 16 years ago*
IRIS VAN DEN BROEK/ANP/GETTY IMAGES

The 2019 world championships seemed to mark a transformative moment in Becky Downie’s lengthy gymnastics career. After years of tireless work, heartbreak, and multiple demonstrations of her immense resilience, Downie’s grit yielded a first individual world medal - silver on the uneven bars. Less than a year before the Tokyo Games, she was ready for her ultimate goal of chasing Olympic glory.

Instead, she was to endure further pain. “The last couple of years have been the hardest cycle I’ve ever done, for so many different reasons,” she says.

The gym work alone was challenging enough. Having toiled to ensure that she was in the best mental and physical form of her life by 2020, the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics by one year meant that Downie had to start from scratch. While all athletes were in the same position, as a 28-year-old gymnast, managing her body and remaining healthy presented a significant challenge.

During the same period, athlete-led movements around the world continued to spotlight a widespread culture of abuse within the sport, prompting Downie and her sister, Ellie, to become the most high profile British gymnasts to speak out. They detailed weight shaming, overtraining that led to injuries, and the insults they received during training. They thought they would be commended for their bravery, but Downie says that she and her sister were subject to significant backlash from figures within the sport that made their lives even more difficult.

“It went from cloud nine, being world medallists, being at the top of the program, getting into a new world of sponsors,” says Downie. “There were a lot of things changing for us in a really positive way and then it was like everything just went. We were at the bottom of the pack, we lost all our sponsors, nobody really wanted to talk to us.

“It was hard to go from a high in our careers to starting again. I genuinely feel like the last three to four years have been trying to fight my way back. Also, it feels hard because it was something that I don’t think either of us deserved; we did a good thing and we also were doing really great gymnastics. To then be made to feel like you weren’t good any more was really, really hard to take. It’s crazy when I look back at it, everything that’s happened. It still doesn’t feel real to me.”

Downie remained focused and although she was not quite able to discover her glittering form and consistency of 2019, she put herself in contention for the 2021 Olympic team. On the night before the trials in Cardiff, Downie was informed in her hotel room that her 24-year-old brother, Josh, had died suddenly during a cricket game from a heart condition that had been undiagnosed.

In order to keep her dream alive, Downie resumed training days after her bereavement. She conducted her Olympic trial alone at a later date but was controversially not selected for the team or even the reserves. Downie was critical of the insensitivity she felt British Gymnastics had shown towards her in light of her brother’s passing. Most of all, she has had to endure the harrowing trauma of losing a sibling at such a young age. “It’s taken a very long time to climb my way back, and I think it’s probably climbing back from the lowest point I probably could have been,” she says.

‘It’s taken a very long time to climb back from the lowest I probably could have been’



▲ *Becky Downie (right) and her sister Ellie after being awarded their MBEs*
ANDREW MATTHEWS/PA IMAGES

It is a testament to Downie’s resilience and courage that, in the coming weeks, she will compete in her third Olympics at the age of 32.

Downie’s career has been a fascinating journey; she is one of the greatest British gymnasts of all time, winning 10 European medals, two world championship medals and enjoying unprecedented longevity. Even though the uneven bars requirements at her first Commonwealth Games in 2006 are unrecognisable from today’s compositions, she has evolved with the times, consistently producing some of the most innovative and difficult routines. Her eponymous skill, the Downie, has never been more popular.

But her biggest triumphs have been hard earned. Downie competed at Beijing 2008 and Rio 2016, but also had to deal with not being selected for London 2012 and Tokyo 2020.

“The main thing that’s kept me going is the dream of having an Olympic medal,” says Downie. “I don’t think I’d still be here if I didn’t think I could do it. In terms of opinions, there’s kind of a 50/50 split. I know what my potential is but it’s been a long time since I’ve been at top level on the world stage. At the same time, I genuinely believe that I have the quality of routine to get where I want to be.”

Alongside her bold whistleblowing, Downie’s gymnastics have also helped to transform the sport. Until recently, women’s gymnastics was considered the domain of teenagers, but this generation has shown that it is possible to enjoy lengthy careers. There has never been a 32-year-old female gymnast competing at this level in Great Britain, making Downie an example for generations to come.

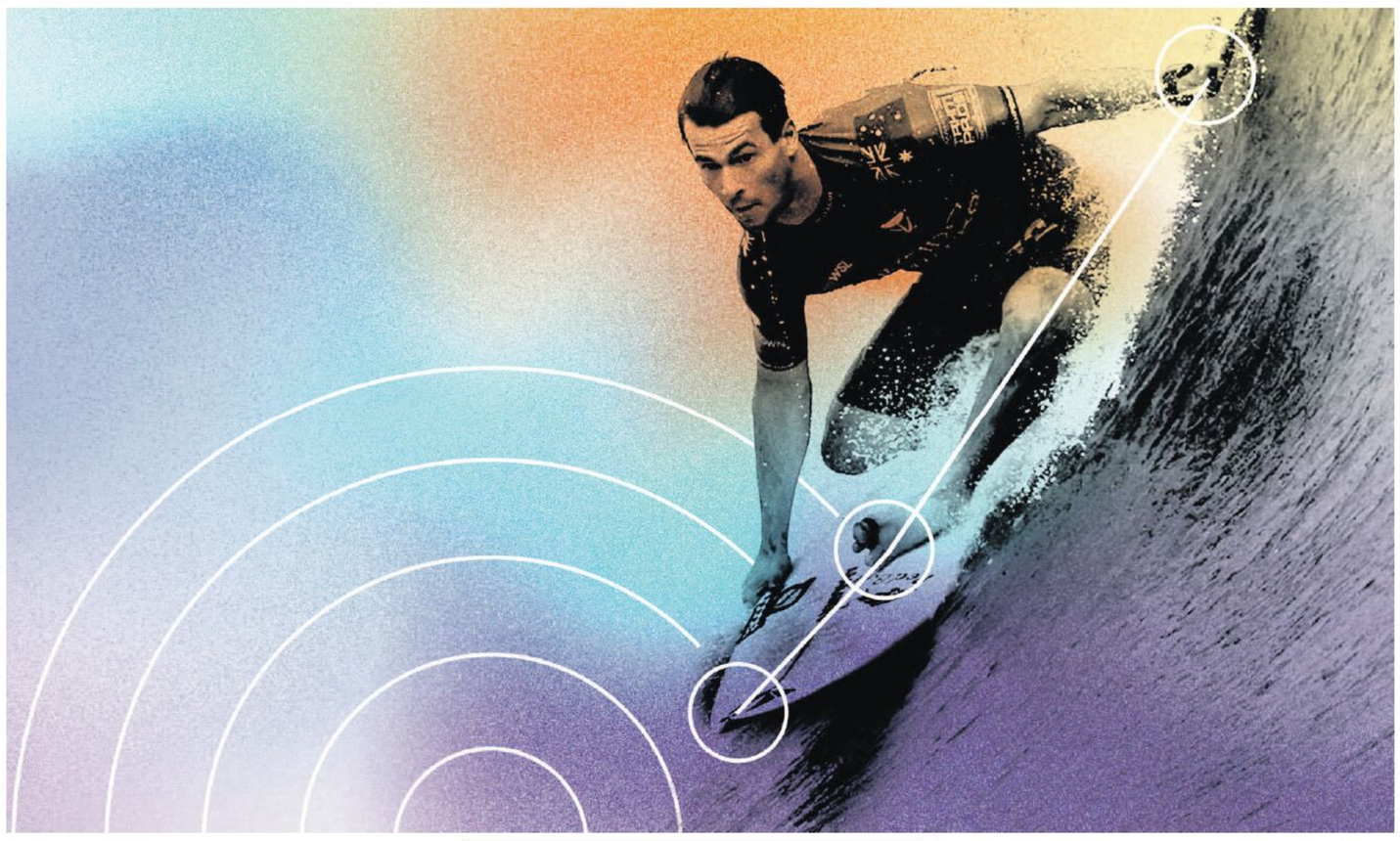
“I think people are learning that you can manage bodies, you can maintain that and actually, you can be stronger and do bigger skills and better skills when you get older, rather than trying to do everything when you’re a teenager,” she says. “It’s been really cool to see the shift. It’s been an honour to be part of that shift. I think being able to prove that you can actually improve when you get older is a pretty cool thing.”

Downie’s bravery has also been rewarded. Earlier this year, Becky and Ellie received MBEs for the impact of their whistleblowing on gymnastics. As she continues to toil in service of her personal sporting goals, Downie understands that her influence on the sport has already been immeasurable.

“I think whatever happens this year, however it pans out, no Olympic medal can come close in that respect,” she says. “As much as that would be the icing on the cake for my career, I think what we’ve been able to do, the legacy is massive.

“I’m just so grateful that I did choose to stay. It’s been very, very hard, but to be in this position now and hopefully to be enjoying the last bit of my career, I can’t wait for it.”

Midas touch How to master riding a barrel like Australian surfer Jack Robinson



GUARDIAN DESIGN; AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Australia's gold-medal hope is one of the world's tube masters, and novices can learn from his technique, writes *Kieran Pender*

During last year's Tahiti Pro, one of the most fearsome stops on the World Surf League, Australia's Jack Robinson was trailing the three-time world champion Gabriel Medina. There were just minutes on the clock, with a spot in the WSL finals on the line.

Robinson's skill as a tube-rider – flying at high velocity within the hollow middle section of the wave – is renowned. The 26-year-old's superb performances in Tahiti had already earned him a spot at the Olympics, which hosts surfing on the same island. But in the final his technique came to the fore – the reason he is among the gold-medal favourites at the Games.

With eight minutes left, and Robinson needing a score of 7.18, a wave appeared. Robinson took off late and compressed his body to pull into the barrel. The wave fell around him and for a moment it appeared the Australian had been swallowed. Then he came roaring out, his fist aloft. Robinson's barrel earned him a score of 7.83, securing a place in the finals.

Many amateurs go their whole life without a tube ride. But the head of high performance at Surfing Australia, Kate Wilcomes, says all surfers can learn from Robinson's ability. "There's a few elements that go into being a great barrel rider," says Wilcomes. "You have the skill set itself – being able to get into the position you need to."

Once a surfer is in the wave, controlling speed becomes critical. "Barrel riding all depends on speeding up and slowing down at the right times," Robinson told Stab magazine in 2016. There are two main ways to slow down on a fast-moving wave. One is a "kick stall" – moving your back foot to the tail of the board to halt its momentum, with the nose of the board almost lifting off the wave's face. This is something Robinson does only sparingly. "Your biggest obstacles are making it look neat and not getting sucked over because you've lost all your speed," he once said. Alternatively, a surfer can drag their hand along the wave to add friction and slow the ride.

Slowing down will get a rider into the heart of the wave – then it's time to speed up again. This involves "pumping". Robinson told Stab: "Bend at the knees, not at the waist. Keep most of your weight on the front foot as you really drive forward. Keep your arms low. Look like you're not even trying."

There is also general fitness. "The strength of the body to handle the demands of paddling into such waves, and taking wipeouts," Wilcomes says. Plus, a mental element: "There's the determination, the risk-taking, to lean into such a scary wave."

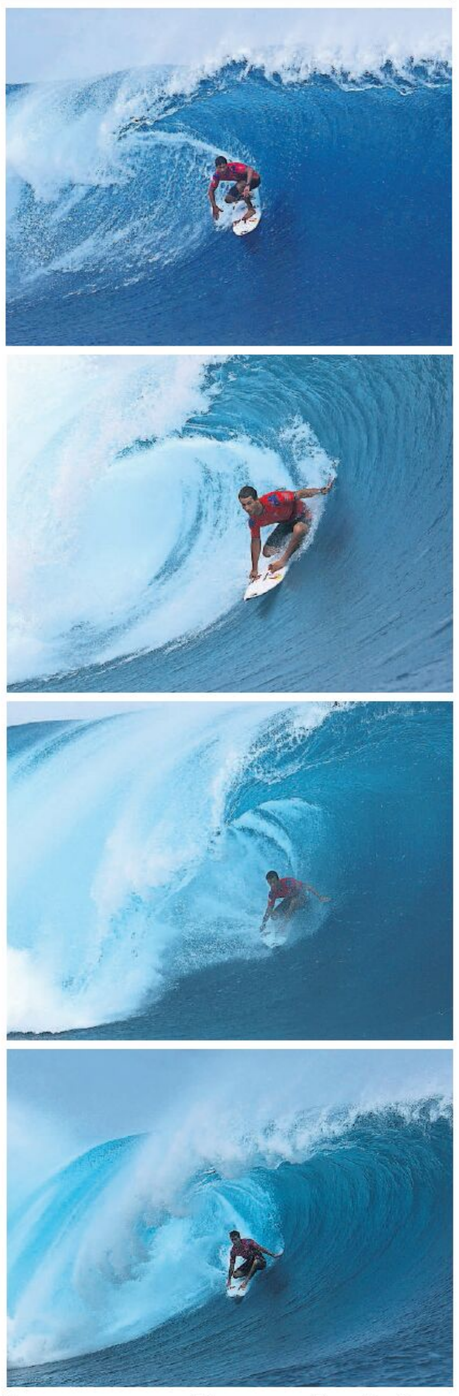
Wilcomes offers practical guidance. "First there's body position. Even a novice can practise on an uneven surface, on a wobble-board, working on hip mobility and core strength. Then practising getting into position riding a wave – on beach breaks to start with. Then understanding your why: why do you want to push yourself over the ledge?"

Surfers should observe their local beach. "There's the specifics of the location," says Wilcomes. "How the wave barrels, where to take off, even if you're just bodysurfing, understanding where it allows you to come out of the barrel, where it closes out."

Three key takeaways

- Use a wobble-board to help with hip mobility and core strength.
- Practise getting into position on beach breaks.
- Overcome fear and develop deep understanding of the wave.

Shape shifter



In a sequence of images after Jack Robinson has pulled himself into the barrel, look at the subtle variation in his body and arm positioning, stabilising and slowing with his hand in the wave to control the speed.

Team GB's triathletes chase gold with go-fast trisuits

Sean Ingle
Paris

Great Britain's triathletes will pursue Olympic gold in Paris with the help of a new weapon: cutting edge trisuits designed to make them go faster on the water or a bike.

The new kit, which uses different materials and covers more of the body than conventional trisuits, was tested secretly in competition by Team GB's Alex Yee and Beth Potter in a world series race in Cagliari in May. Yee won his race, while Potter was third.

The trisuits, which have been developed by the UK Sports Institute, draw on some of the aerodynamic technology that has helped British Cycling to top the Olympic medals since 2008. However, they can also be tweaked to give triathletes extra help in the water.

The performance director of British triathlon, Mike Cavendish, confirmed that the new suits had been approved by World Triathlon for use at the Games. "For us, trisuits are a big one," he said.

"I can't say too much, but we have spent the last three or four years developing suits that have as much of the body right up to the edge of the rules covered up as you possibly can.

"If you know anything about cycling, the more you can cover up the skin, the better. The sport's rules are pretty restrictive, but we found some interesting things we can do around that, and the type of material we use."

Cavendish confirmed the suits were very different to off-the-peg models produced by major brands. "You won't be able to buy these," he said. "They're bespoke fitted to every athlete. It's quite difficult to get materials that work very well in terms of fluid dynamics, as well as heat dynamics and aerodynamics. But we've done a lot of work with our partners at the UK Sports Institute and their innovation team, testing both materials, fit, and then treatments for materials.

"What you will probably see is if you look at the back of our women's suits, for instance, they will look different to everybody else's. The sleeves will look different, along with the way that the zips have been designed, and you won't be able to see a treatment on them."

The UKSI initially developed the trisuits for the Paralympics when rules were changed to allow sleeves down to the elbow. It then realised they could find performance benefits for Olympic triathletes too, even though World Triathlon has different rules. "The beauty of this project is we've been able to tailor it to the individual athlete in terms of their strengths – whether it's the swim that they're trying to protect, or it's their performance on the bike," said Fiona Johnson, a senior performance innovation consultant at the UKSI.

"There's a lot of knowledge that we've learned from cycling and swimming that was transferred across to our triathletes."

Johnson's colleague Greg Stevens said that while it was hard to quantify the precise level of performance gain, he expected that the GB trisuit would be "at least as good" as a top of the range trisuit in two of the three events – and "a step up in whichever metric that individual athlete is really looking for, whether that's aerodynamics on the bike, heat and temperature regulation, or on the swim.

"It's not just a cycling suit with a slight bit of water repellency," he said. "Likewise it's not a swimsuit with some cycling sleeves grown on.

"It's actually a hybrid of the two. What we've been able to do is make sure that the key metrics of a performance fabric from swimming are in the right areas of the body. And the key bits for cycling are in the right area of the body. And then put on to a pattern in a seam placement that makes it comfortable to run in. Hopefully we can help our athletes push on. If it looks faster and it scares the opposition, that's an added bonus as well."

Team GB's rivals will certainly be fearful given their successful record of using skinsuits in other sports. British Cycling and British Skeleton have had success using suits with special drag resistant ridges developed initially by scientists at TotalSim in Northampton and the UKSI for the 2008 Games.

Those ridges are able to create a turbulence effect in the suit that reduces the amount of wind resistance acting on the body. The suits are also custom made, with each athlete undergoing a 3D laser-scan for fitting before they are built with polyurethane derivatives.

However, Cavendish was also keen to stress that the trisuits were just one element of Triathlon GB's preparations for Paris, and that the squad's talent, culture and the intricate planning for the event, were even more vital for success.

"I reckon we're ahead of people in terms of our open water protocol," he said. "I would say we're ahead of people in terms of what we're doing with our trisuits, our relay tactics and relay strategies. And we're also ahead in terms of our open water prep."



▲ *Alex Yee and Beth Potter will represent Team GB in the triathlon*

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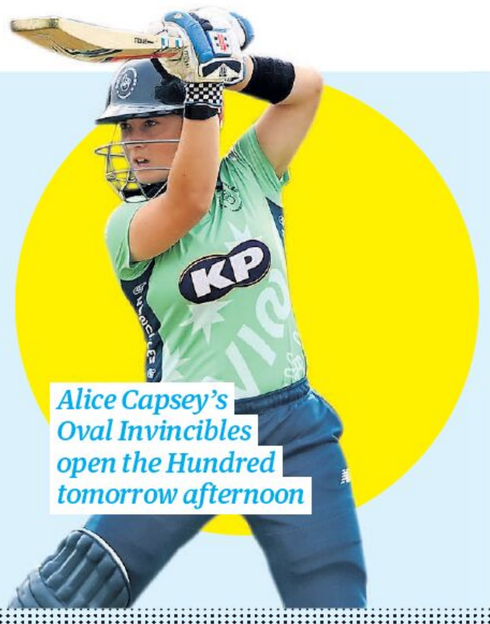
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The week ahead



Alice Capsey's Oval Invincibles open the Hundred tomorrow afternoon

Today

Cricket
World Cup League 2
Scotland v Oman, Dundee (11am)
Tennis
ATP Atlanta Open
Georgia, United States (to 29 July)
Sky Sports Tennis
ATP Croatia Open
Umag, Croatia (to Sun)
Sky Sports Tennis
ATP Generali Open
Kitzbühel, Austria (to Sun)
Sky Sports Tennis
Racing
Ayr, Beverley, Cartmel, Windsor

Tomorrow

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
Champions League
Second qualifying round: First leg
Ferencvaros v The New Saints (7pm); Lincoln Red Imps v Qarabag; Shamrock Rovers v Sparta Prague (8pm)
Premier Sports Scottish League Cup
Group A Aberdeen v Airdrieonians *Premier Sports 1*; East Kilbride v Queen of the South
Group B Buckie Thistle v Dundee Utd (8pm) *Premier Player*; Stenhousemuir v Ayr
Group C Kelty Hearts v Peterhead; Queen's Park v Elgin
Group D Dundee v Annan *Premier Player*; Inverness CT v Arbroath
Group E Cove Rangers v Livingston; Spartans v Forfar
Group F Alloa v St Johnstone *Premier Player*; East Fife v Brechin
Group G Montrose v Edinburgh City; Partick v Clyde *Premier Player*
Group H Hamilton v Ross County *Premier Player*; Stirling Albion v Stranraer
Cricket
The Hundred Men
Oval Invincibles v Birmingham Phoenix, The Oval (6.30pm)
Sky Sports Cricket
The Hundred Women
Oval Invincibles v Birmingham Phoenix, The Oval (2.45pm)
Sky Sports Cricket
Racing
Lingfield, Musselburgh, Wolverhampton

Wednesday

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
Men's Olympic Games
Group A France v USA (8pm)
Eurosport 1; Guinea v New Zealand (4pm). **Group B** Argentina v Morocco (2pm) *Eurosport 1*; Iraq v Ukraine (6pm) *Eurosport 1*. **Group C** Egypt v Dominican Republic (4pm) *Eurosport 1*; Uzbekistan v Spain (2pm).
Group D Japan v Paraguay (6pm); Mali v Israel (8pm)
Europa Conference League
Second qualifying round: First leg
Riga v Slask Wroclaw (6pm)
Cricket (11am unless stated)
Metro Bank One-Day Cup
Group A Lancashire v Durham, Sedbergh; Northamptonshire v Derbyshire, Northampton; Worcestershire v Middlesex, New Road
Group B Essex v Warwickshire, Chelmsford; Leicestershire v Nottinghamshire, Grace Road
The Hundred Men
Southern Brave v London Spirit, Utilita Bowl (6.30pm)
Sky Sports Cricket
The Hundred Women
Southern Brave v London Spirit, Utilita Bowl (3pm) *Sky Sports Cricket*
Racing
Catterick, Leicester, Lingfield, Salisbury

Thursday

Football (7.45pm unless stated)
Women's Olympic Games
Group A Canada v New Zealand (4pm); France v Colombia (8pm) *Eurosport 1*. **Group B** Germany v Australia (6pm) *Eurosport 1*; USA v Zambia (8pm). **Group C** Nigeria v Brazil (6pm); Spain v Japan (4pm) *Eurosport 1*
Europa League
Second qualifying round: First leg
Kilmarnock v Cercle Brugge (7.30pm) *BBC Scotland/BBC iPlayer*
Europa Conference League
Second qualifying round: First leg
St Patricks v Vaduz (6pm)
Rugby league
Betfred Super League
Huddersfield v Leeds (8pm)
Sky Sports Action
Cricket
Only Test (first day of five)
Ireland v Zimbabwe, Stormont (11am)
The Hundred Men
Manchester Originals v Welsh Fire, Emirates Old Trafford (6.30pm)
Sky Sports Cricket
The Hundred Women
Manchester Originals v Welsh Fire, Emirates Old Trafford (3pm)
Sky Sports Cricket
Metro Bank One-Day Cup
Glamorgan v Gloucestershire, Sophia Gardens (11am); Surrey v Yorkshire, The Oval (11am)
Golf
3M Open
Blaine, Minnesota (to Sun) *SS Golf*
CPKC Women's Open
Vancouver, Canada (to Sun) *SS Golf*
Racing
Doncaster, Great Yarmouth, Newbury, Sandown, Worcester

Friday

Multi-sports
Olympics
Paris, France (to 11 August)
BBC One/BBC Two/BBC iPlayer/ Eurosport 1/Eurosport 2/Discovery+
Rugby league (8pm unless stated)
Betfred Super League
Hull KR v London Broncos
Sky Sports Arena; Leigh v St Helens *Sky Sports Mix*; Wigan v Warrington *Sky Sports Action*
Cricket (11am unless stated)
Third Test (first day of five)
England v West Indies, Edgbaston
Sky Sports Cricket
World Cup League 2
Scotland v Namibia, Dundee
Metro Bank One Day Cup
Group A Hampshire v Northamptonshire, Utilita Bowl; Somerset v Kent, Taunton (2pm).
Group B Leicestershire v Warwickshire, Grace Road (2pm); Nottinghamshire v Sussex, Nettleworth
The Hundred Men
Northern Superchargers v Trent Rockets, Headingley (6.35pm)
Sky Sports Mix
The Hundred Women
Northern Superchargers v Trent Rockets, Headingley (3pm)
Sky Sports Mix
Golf
LIV United Kingdom Invitational
Uttoxeter (to Sun)
Racing
Ascot, Chepstow, Sandown, Thirsk, Uttoxeter, York

Saturday

Football (3pm unless stated)
Men's Olympic Games
Group A France v Guinea (8pm); New Zealand v USA (6pm).
Group B Argentina v Iraq (2pm); Ukraine v Morocco (4pm) *Eurosport 2*.
Group C Dominican Republic v Spain (2pm) *Eurosport 2*; Uzbekistan v Egypt (4pm). **Group D** Israel v Paraguay (6pm) *Eurosport 2*; Japan v Mali (8pm)
Premier Sports Scottish League Cup
Group A Aberdeen v Dumbarton *Premier Player*; Airdrieonians v Queen of the South
Group B Ayr v Buckie Thistle; Falkirk v Stenhousemuir
Group C Hibernian v Peterhead *Premier Player*; Queen's Park v Kelty
Group D Bonnyrigg Rose v Arbroath; Dundee v Inverness CT *Premier Player*
Group E Dunfermline v Cove Rangers; Livingston v Spartans
Group F Morton v Alloa; St Johnstone v East Fife *Premier Player*
Group G Clyde v Montrose
Group H Raith v Hamilton; Ross County v Stirling Albion *Premier Player*
Rugby union
International match
Uruguay v Scotland (8pm)
BBC iPlayer/TNT Sports 2
Rugby league
Betfred Super League
Catalans v Hull FC (6pm) *Sky Sports Action*; Salford v Castleford (3pm)
Sky Sports Action
Betfred Championship
Toulouse v Dewsbury Rams (5pm)
Cricket
Metro Bank One-Day Cup
Derbyshire v Middlesex, Derby (11am)
The Hundred Men
London Spirit v Birmingham Phoenix, Lord's (6.35pm) *SS Cricket*
The Hundred Women
London Spirit v Birmingham Phoenix, Lord's (3pm) *SS Mix*
Tennis
Olympics
Paris, France (to 4 Aug)
Boxing
Joe Joyce v Derek Chisora
London (9pm)
Racing
Ascot, Chester, Lingfield, Newcastle, Salisbury, York

Sunday

Football (3pm unless stated)
Women's Olympic Games
Group A France v Canada (8pm); New Zealand v Colombia (4pm).
Group B Australia v Zambia (6pm); USA v Germany (8pm).
Group C Brazil v Japan (4pm); Spain v Nigeria (6pm) *Eurosport 2*
Premier Sports Scottish League Cup
Group G Motherwell v Partick *Premier Sports 1*
Cricket (11am unless stated)
Metro Bank One-Day Cup
Group A Hampshire v Somerset, Utilita Bowl; Lancashire v Kent, Blackpool; Worcestershire v Durham, New Road
Group B Gloucestershire v Essex, Bristol; Nottinghamshire v Yorkshire, Nettleworth; Sussex v Warwickshire, Hove; Surrey v Glamorgan, The Oval
The Hundred Men
Welsh Fire v Oval Invincibles, Sophia Gardens (6.35pm) *Sky Sports Cricket*
The Hundred Women
Welsh Fire v Oval Invincibles, Sophia Gardens (3pm) *Sky Sports Mix*
Formula One
Belgian Grand Prix
Spa-Francorchamps (2pm)
Sky Sports F1
Racing
Pontefract, Uttoxeter

The main event

Paris 2024 opening ceremony

Friday, 6.30pm

The Olympic Games officially open with what organisers are describing as a "bold, original, unique" show along the Seine



Boycott is readmitted to hospital with pneumonia

Sir Geoffrey Boycott has returned to hospital after having a setback in his recovery from throat surgery, his family has revealed.

Boycott, 83, was discharged from hospital on Friday after a successful operation to remove a cancerous tumour from his throat, but is now back under hospital care after developing pneumonia.

A brief statement from his daughter on Boycott's X account read: "Thank you all for the well wishes, we've been blown away by the sheer number of them. Unfortunately, things have taken a turn for the worse and my father has developed pneumonia and is unable to eat or drink so is back in hospital on oxygen and a feeding tube for the foreseeable."



▲ *Sir Geoffrey Boycott, 83, is back in hospital 'for the foreseeable'*

Boycott revealed earlier this month he had received a second cancer diagnosis after he previously went through extensive chemotherapy in 2002.

The former Yorkshire and England batter scored 8,114 runs in 108 Tests for his country, including 22 centuries, at an average of 47.72 and amassed 48,426 first-class runs in total across two decades.

Boycott spent 14 years working on BBC's Test Match Special after retiring as a player in 1986 before he stepped down from his broadcasting role in 2020. **PA Media**

Results

Football

PREMIER SPORTS SCOTTISH LEAGUE CUP
Group stage
Group A Dumbarton 3 Airdrieonians 4; East Kilbride 0 Aberdeen 4. **Group B** Buckie Thistle 1 Falkirk 5; Dundee Utd 2 Ayr 1. **Group C** Kelty Hearts 1 Hibernian 0; Peterhead 4 Elgin 2. **Group D** Arbroath 0 Annan Athletic 3; Inverness CT 3 Bonnyrigg Rose 0. **Group E** Forfar 1 Cove Rangers 1 (Forfar win 3-1 on penalties); Livingston 1 Dunfermline 0. **Group F** Brechin 1 Alloa 3; St Johnstone 2 Morton 0. **Group G** Clyde 1 Motherwell 3; Edinburgh City 0 Partick 6. **Group H** Ross County 2 Raith 1; Stranraer 0 Hamilton 3.

Rugby union

MEN'S INTERNATIONALS
Australia 40 Georgia 29; Chile 11 Scotland 52; Japan 14 Italy 42; New Zealand 47 Fiji 5; South Africa 64 Portugal 21; Uruguay 5 Argentina 79

Rugby league

BETFRED SUPER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pts
Wigan	17	14	0	3	465	206	+259	28
Warrington	18	13	0	5	460	241	+219	26
Hull KR	18	13	0	5	441	238	+203	26
St Helens	18	11	0	7	451	210	+241	22
Catalans	18	11	0	7	341	258	+83	22
Salford	18	11	0	7	325	344	-19	22
Leeds	18	9	0	9	321	336	-15	18
Leigh	17	7	1	9	326	272	+54	15
Huddersfield	18	7	0	11	330	393	-63	14
Castleford	18	6	1	11	304	473	-169	13
Hull FC	18	3	0	15	252	542	-290	6
London Broncos	18	1	0	17	182	685	-503	2

Castleford 24 Catalans 18; Hull FC 24 Wigan 22; Leeds 12 Hull KR 20
Friday Huddersfield 16 Salford 8; Leigh 36 London 6; St Helens 10 Warrington 24

BETFRED CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pts
Wakefield	16	15	0	1	538	188	+350	30
Toulouse	16	11	1	4	448	230	+218	23
Sheffield	16	11	0	5	410	259	+151	22
Bradford	16	10	1	5	395	272	+123	21
Widnes	16	9	1	6	385	301	+84	19
Featherstone	16	8	0	8	422	313	+109	16
Batley	16	8	0	8	268	344	-76	16
Doncaster	16	7	1	8	281	380	-99	15
York	16	7	0	9	394	345	+49	14
Swinton	16	6	0	10	338	388	-50	12
Whitehaven	16	5	2	9	312	478	-166	12
Barrow	16	6	0	10	241	459	-218	12
Halifax	16	5	0	11	296	443	-147	10
Dewsbury	16	1	0	15	214	542	-328	2

Barrow 8 Sheffield 6; Batley 29 Dewsbury 22; Bradford 36 York 28; Featherstone 12 Doncaster 24; Halifax 20 Widnes 24; Toulouse 32 Wakefield 4; Swinton 20 Whitehaven 22

BETFRED WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pts
Leeds	9	7	0	2	350	60	+290	14
Wigan	9	7	0	2	356	76	+280	14
St Helens	8	7	0	1	284	62	+222	14
York	8	6	0	2	268	74	+194	12
Huddersfield	9	3	0	6	148	374	-226	6
Warrington	9	3	0	6	82	368	-286	6
Barrow	9	2	0	7	82	266	-184	4
Featherstone	9	0	0	9	82	372	-290	0

Barrow 10 Leeds 28; Huddersfield 44 Featherstone 8; St Helens 82 Warrington 0; York 10 Wigan 18

Cricket

SECOND MEN'S TEST (day four of five)
Trent Bridge England 416 (OJD Pope 121; BM Duckett 71; BA Stokes 69) & 425 (JE Root 122; HC Brook 109; BM Duckett 76; OJD Pope 51; JNT Seales 4-97). West Indies 457 (KAR Hodge 120; J Da Silva 82 no; A Athanaze 82; CR Woakes 4-84), 143 (S Bashir 5-41). England beat West Indies by 241 runs.
(*Full scoreboard on page 39*)

ICC MEN'S WORLD CUP LEAGUE 2
Dundee Scotland 290-9 (HG Munsey 91, RD Berrington 79; BM Scoltz 3-23). Namibia 235-9 (MG Erasmus 63, M van Lingen 60; MA Leask 4-40). Scotland beat Namibia by 47 runs (DLS method).

MEN'S MINOR ONE-DAYS
Arundel Sussex 340-6 beat Hertfordshire 282 by 58 runs.
Bury St Edmunds Essex 347 beat Suffolk 319-4 by 28 runs.
Caldicot Worcestershire 183-1 beat Wales County 182 by nine wickets.
Cambridge Surrey 223 beat Cambridgeshire 45-2 by 15 runs (DLS method).
Horsford Northamptonshire 312 beat Norfolk 254-8 by 58 runs.
Jesmond Durham 193-7 beat Northumberland 192 by three wickets.
Knypersley Warwickshire 316-7 beat Staffordshire 194 by 122 runs.
Lincoln Lincolnshire 334-5 beat Nottinghamshire 331 by five wickets.
Nantwich Cheshire 243-6 beat Derbyshire 242 by four wickets.
Sedbergh Lancashire 231-8 beat Cumbria 192-9 by 39 runs.
Swindon Glamorgan 238-3 beat Wiltshire 236 by seven wickets.
Thame Middlesex 333-8 beat Oxfordshire 215 by 118 runs.
Truro Somerset 272-9 beat Cornwall 177 by 95 runs.
Wellington Yorkshire 382-5 beat Shropshire 135 by 247 runs.
Wimborne Hampshire 336-8 beat Dorset 196 by 140 runs.

Tennis

ATP SWEDISH OPEN (Båstad)
Final: N Borges (Por) bt R Nadal (Sp) 6-3 6-2

ATP SWISS OPEN (Gstaad)
Final: M Berrettini (It) bt Q Halys (Fr) 6-3 6-1

ATP HAMBURG EUROPEAN OPEN (Germany)
Final: A Fils (Fr) bt A Zverev (Ger) 6-3 3-6 7-6(1)

WTA HUNGARIAN OPEN (Budapest)
Final: D Schnaider (Rus) bt A Sasnovich (Rus) 6-4 6-4

WTA PRAGUE OPEN (Czech Republic)
First round: E Jacquemot (Fr) bt J Bouzas Maneiro (Sp) 6-3 6-4; **E Seidel** (Ger) bt N Podoroska (Arg) 6-4 2-6 6-1; **V Tomova** (Bul) bt R Jamrichova (Svk) 7-6(3) 6-3; **A Kalinina** (Ukr) bt S Bejlek (Cz) 7-5 6-7(7) 6-2; **R Masarova** (Sp) bt S Lamens (Neth) 2-6 6-2 7-6(5).

Golf

THE OPEN (Royal Troon)
Final scores (GB/Ire unless stated)
275 X Schauffele (US) 69 72 69 65. **277** B Horschel (US) 72 68 69 68; J Rose 69 68 73 67. **278** T Lawrence (SA) 71 74 65 68. **279** R Henley (US) 69 75 66 69. **280** S Lowry 66 69 77 68. **283** Im S (Kor) 76 72 66 69; J Rahm (Sp) 73 70 72 68; S Scheffler (US) 70 70 71 72. **284** D Brown 65 72 73 74; M Jordan 71 71 71 71; A Scott (Aus) 70 77 66 71. **285** An B (Kor) 75 71 68 71; J Day (Aus) 73 68 76 68; A Norén (Swe) 69 75 71 70. **286** J Catlin (US) 76 70 69 71; M Hughes (Can) 69 74 75 68; C Morikawa (US) 73 70 72 71. **287** D Burmester (SA) 71 69 76 71; D Hillier (NZ) 76 71 68 72; S Sharma (Ind) 76 72 67 72. **288** E Ferguson 74 73 70 71; P Harrington 72 73 71 72; S Straka (Aut) 70 74 73 71. **289** L Canter 71 74 70 74; P Cantlay (US) 73 68 75 73; C Conners (Can) 71 70 80 68; J Dean 69 77 71 72; R Fox (NZ) 73 73 76 67; J Spieth (US) 71 74 74 70. **290** S Burns (US) 76 69 65 80; E Cole (US) 72 73 72 73; D Johnson (US) 74 69 72 75; Kim M (Kor) 73 71 72 74; C Kirk (US) 70 76 69 75; M Manassero (It) 73 73 70 74; G Migliozzi (It) 73 75 71 71; J Thomas (US) 68 78 67 77; B Todd (US) 73 73 70 74; C Young (US) 73 73 71 73. **291** K Kitayama (US) 77 69 74 71; M Wallace 70 77 71 73. **292** J Campillo (Sp) 80 68 73 71; E Grillo (Arg) 71 74 72 75; M Homa (US) 76 72 70 74; Kim S (Kor) 76 71 71 74; B Koepka (US) 70 73 78 71; T Olesen (Den) 72 73 76 71; C Scott 71 75 70 76. **293** S Crocker (US) 72 74 69 78; H English (US) 76 71 72 74; M Fitzpatrick 70 78 73 72; R MacIntyre 72 75 72 74; A Meronk (Pol) 73 72 73 75; M Pavon (Fr) 72 72 77 72; G Woodland (US) 76 68 72 77; R Mansell 75 71 74 73. **294** A Ancer (Mex) 73 75 70 76; J Niemann (Chi) 71 71 76 76. **295** B Harman (US) 73 73 72 77; R Højgaard (Den) 74 72 74 75; P Mickelson (US) 73 74 72 76; T Morrison (US) 75 73 74 73; Wang J (Kor) 72 72 77 74; J Skov Olesen (Den) 76 71 72 76. **296** A Eckroat (US) 73 73 72 78; N Højgaard (Den) 69 75 75 77; H Matsuyama (Jpn) 75 72 75 74; T McKibbin 73 72 77 74; D Thompson (USA) 74 73 71 78. **297** R Fowler (USA) 79 69 74 75. **298** T Hoge (US) 74 70 74 80; M Siem (Ger) 73 71 77 77; Song Y (Kor) 71 76 77 74. **299** A Cejka (Ger) 73 74 72 80; D Clarke 77 71 76 75; A Rai 73 74 75 77. **302** L Masaveu (Sp) 73 75 78 76. **303** A Ogletree (US) 75 72 79 77. **306** D Fichardt (SA) 77 71 80 78.

BARRACUDA CHAMPIONSHIP (Truckee, California)
Leading third-round scores (US unless stated)
197 P Fishburn 65 68 64. **199** M Armitage (Eng) 66 69 64. **201** C Jarvis (SA) 69 68 64. **199** M Rottluff (Ger) 68 66 65. **201** O Wilson (Eng) 70 67 64. **201** P Rodgers 69 68 64; P Waring (Eng) 68 69 64. **202** A Saddier (Fr) 66 70 66. **203** H Buckley 69 67 67. **203** Noh S (Kor) 67 70 66. **204** C Hoffman 71 67 66. **206** M Schow 70 66 70. **203** P Kizzire 70 67 66. **203** L Nemecz (Aut) 69 68 66; S Stevens 67 70 66; J Suh 73 63 67. **204** I Gilligan 69 69 66. **207** R Brehm 72 67 68. **203** S Ryder 65 71 67. **204** H Norlander (Swe) 67 71 66. **205** C Hadley 70 70 65; B Silverman (Can) 62 75 68. **204** L Griffin 69 69 66; M Laird (Sco) 68 68 68. **205** A Putnam 68 69 68; S Tarrío (Sp) 68 69 68. **206** J Bramlett 72 66 68; A Smalley 71 67 68. **204** T Clements (Eng) 68 68 68. **206** E Kofstad (Nor) 68 70 68; H Long (Ger) 68 70 68; S Piercy 69 69 68. **204** C Reavie 71 65 68. **206** A Tosti (Arg) 68 70 68.

DUTCH LADIES OPEN (Hilversum)
Final scores (GB/Ire unless stated)
205 J Melichova (Cz) 70 68 67. **206** K Metraux (Swi) 65 67 74. **208** C Angurasaranee (Tha) 73 66 69; E Young 68 69 71. **209** P Delacour (Fr) 70 69 70; D Forbrigd (Nor) 70 69 70. **210** N Hofstede (Neth) 68 71 71; L Pace (SA) 71 72 67; S Tan (Sin) 71 66 73; N Iturrioz (Sp) 73 70 67; C Williams 71 71 68; S Kouskova (Cz) 72 69 69. **211** A Taylor 71 70 70; M de Roey (Bel) 69 71 71; L Fünfstück (Ger) 66 72 73; E Spitz (Aut) 69 73 69; N Dlamini (Swa) 66 73 72. **212** N Broch Estrup (Den) 73 68 71; A Fanali (It) 74 67 71; A Valenzuela (Swi) 72 71 69. **213** M Martín (Sp) 73 72 68; C Palomar-Herbin (Fr) 72 70 71; H Burke 69 74 70; A Sauzon (Fr) 69 72 72; M Kobori (NZ) 68 75 70; L Sobrón (Sp) 69 71 73; S Kibsgaard Nielsen (Den) 70 71 72; T Arafi (Swi) 72 71 70; K Henry 73 71 69; F Parker 69 74 70.

DANA OPEN (Sylvania, Ohio)
Leading third-round scores (US unless stated)
197 C Wannasaen (Tha) 66 65 66. **200** Ryu H (Kor) 67 68 65. **202** Lin X (Chn) 65 67 70; L Grant (Swe) 67 65 70; Cheng S (Tai) 69 67 66. **203** L Li 68 68 67; Jang H (Kor) 68 71 64; Liu M (Chn) 68 65 70. **204** Choi H (Kor) 64 71 69; S Kemp (Aus) 68 67 69; S Lewis 67 70 67. **205** P Anannarukarn (Tha) 67 71 67; A Ashok (Ind) 65 72 68; C Borge (Nor) 71 67 67; M Saigo (Jpn) 68 67 70; M Nam 71 70 64; K Riihijaervi (Fin) 68 72 65.

Cycling

TOUR DE FRANCE
Final stage (Monaco - Nice, time trial, 33.7km)
1 T Pogacar (Svn) UAE Team Emirates 45:25; **2** J Vingegaard (Den) Team Visma-Lease a Bike +1:03; **3** R Evenepoel (Bel) Soudal-Quick-Step +1:14; **4** M Jorgenson (US) Team Visma-Lease a Bike +2:08; **5** J Almeida (Por) UAE Team Emirates +2:18; **6** D Gee (Can) Israel-Premier Tech +2:31; **7** M Landa (Sp) Soudal-Quick-Step +2:41; **8** H Tejada (Col) Astana-Qazaqstan Team +2:50; **9** S Buitrago (Col) Bahrain-Victorious +2:53; **10** A Yates (GB) UAE Team Emirates +2:56
Other notable finishes: **55** G Thomas (GB) Ineos Grenadiers +5:53; **134** M Cavendish (GB) Astana Qazaqstan Team +9:14

Overall standings: 1 T Pogacar (Svn) UAE Team Emirates 83:38:56; **2** J Vingegaard (Den) Team Visma-Lease a Bike +6:17; **3** R Evenepoel (Bel) Soudal-Quick-Step +9:18; **4** J Almeida (Por) UAE Team Emirates +19:03; **5** M Landa (Sp) Soudal-Quick-Step +20:06; **6** A Yates (GB) UAE Team Emirates +24:07; **7** C Rodríguez (Sp) Ineos Grandiers +25:04; **8** M Jorgenson (US) Team Visma-Lease a Bike +26:34; **9** D Gee (Can) Israel-Premier Tech +27:21; **10** S Buitrago (Col) Bahrain-Victorious +29:03
Other notable finishes: **42** G Thomas (GB) Ineos Grenadiers +2:47:36

Athletics

LONDON DIAMOND LEAGUE (selected)
Men's 100m: 1 N Lyles (US) 9.81; **2** A Simbine (SA) 9.86; **3** L Tebogo (Bot) 9.88; **4** L Hinchliffe (GB) 9.97

Men's 400m: 1 M Hudson-Smith (GB) 43.74; **2** V Norwood (US) 44.10; **3** J Richards (Tri) 44.18; **4** C Dobson (GB) 44.23

Men's 400m hurdles: 1 A Dos Santos (Br) 47.18; **2** R Clarke (Jam) 47.63; **3** ID Abakar (Qat) 47.72; **4** K McMaster (BVI) 47.81

Men's high jump: 1 H Kerr (NZ) 2.30m; **2** J Harrison (US) 2.26; **3** W Grimsey (GB) 2.22; **4** K Stefela (Cz) 2.22

Women's 200m: 1 G Thomas (US) 21.82; **2** J Alfred (StL) 21.86; **3** D Asher-Smith (GB) 22.07; **4** D Neita (GB) 22.20

Women's 400m: 1 N Pryce (Jam) 48.57; **2** N Kaczmarek (Pol) 48.90; **3** L Klaver (Neth) 49.58; **4** A Anning (GB) 49.63

Women's 400m hurdles: 1 F Bol (Neth) 51.30; **2** S Little (US) 52.78; **3** R Clayton (Jam) 53.24; **4** A Knight (Jam) 53.69

Women's 800m: 1 K Hodgkinson (GB) 1:54.61; **2** J Reekie (GB) 1:55.61; **3** G Bell (GB) 1:56.28; **4** N Goule-Toppin (Jam) 1:56.83

Women's pole vault: 1 N Kennedy (Aus) 4.85m; **2** A Newman (Can) 4.75; **3** M Caudery (GB) 4.65; **4** S Morris (US) 4.65

Snooker

SHANGHAI MASTERS (China)
Final: J Trump (Eng) bt S Murphy (Eng) 11-5

Greg Wood's racing tips

Cartmel 1.40 Belles Benefit **2.10** Malangen **2.45** Jolie Couer Allen **3.20** Starlyte (nb) **3.55** Carcaci Castle **4.30** Happy Du Mesnil **5.00** Over Milk Wood
Ayr 2.30 Tilsitt **3.05** Hammer The Hammer **3.40** La Boo **4.15** Eternal Sunshine **4.50** Concert Boy **5.25** Helter Skelter
Windsor 5.18 Spirited Dancer **5.50** Fleetwater **6.20** Izipizi **6.50** Raheen Rode **7.20** Supreme King **7.50** Warren Hill **8.20** Golden Phase **8.50** Adace
Beverley 6.00 Sensorium **6.30** Toptime (nap) **7.00** Tropez Power **7.30** Alice's Impact **8.00** Twilight Jazz **8.30** Dr Rio **9.00** Princess Niyla



◀ *Oscar Piastri (right) and Lando Norris prepare for the post-race debrief after a result that was determined by their bosses*
BRYN LENNON/ GETTY IMAGES

Norris hands Piastri first victory after McLaren team orders row

Giles Richards

For Oscar Piastri, taking his debut Formula One victory at the Hungarian Grand Prix will be a moment long to savour, yet it was one that for his McLaren teammate, Lando Norris, could not have been more painful, secured through the gritted teeth of the British driver who was forced to concede a potential win by playing the team game. Pleasure and pain then in an enormously entertaining F1 soap opera in Budapest.

McLaren took a one-two at the Hungaroring in a fascinating examination of the complexities of managing the fiercely competitive urges of drivers, of the needs of the team, of fairness, of whether a sense of comradeship might be engendered between the clashing of egos across a garage. For all the emphasis in F1 on mechanical prowess, what played out was an all too human tale. Who, after all, would find it easy to give up such a victory?

Team orders are nothing new in F1, nor are they necessarily obeyed, as Sebastian Vettel demonstrated in the 'Multi-21' incident at Malaysia in 2013 to take a controversial victory. Vettel was ruthless at the time, a trait that came to be admired by his team and one shared by countless champions. Doubtless these were factors going through Norris's mind, not least given recent accusations the British driver is not steely enough to be a champion.

The race, only the 35th for Piastri, had all but belonged to the 23-year-old from Melbourne, who had taken the lead from second on the grid behind Norris on the opening lap. But when McLaren later pitted Norris before his teammate, to cover off Lewis Hamilton who finished third, it gave the British driver the lead – with the expectation he would then hand the place back to Piastri.

Knowing every point might be vital in chasing down Max Verstappen in the championship race, Norris was understandably reluctant to surrender the position. He wanted the points and was still simmering from a poor start he later acknowledged had cost him the potential win, and was very reluctant to roll over. While Piastri faced the cold-sweat consideration that it was his only error that instigated the drama when, with a three-second lead, a minor off on lap 33 had allowed Norris to close to within a second. It left Norris on his wing and when the final stops occurred after the Australian pitted, he emerged behind his teammate.

McLaren told him he would be given the place back, having lost out to the undercut they had given Norris only to forestall Hamilton. What followed was an almost one-way conversation from team to Norris, one ostensibly calling the shots but the other with his hands on the wheel.

"We would like you to re-establish the order at your convenience," Norris's race engineer, Will Joseph, said in a relaxed tone. Norris did not ease up. "Once you get to Lando we will swap position," Piastri's race engineer, Tom Stallard, told him. Norris made no effort to slow up and the tone changed. "I know you will do the right thing," Joseph said on lap 58. "Just remember every single Sunday morning meeting we have," he beseeched in reference to the plans for exactly this scenario. "Well tell him to catch up then please," Norris shot back. The laps fell away and Joseph switched to bargaining. "The way to win a championship is not by yourself, it's with the team, you are going to need Oscar and you are going to need the team," he said with five laps to go.

This was gloriously tense until, with three laps to go, Norris pulled over on the main straight to let his teammate past and the pair took the flag line astern. Honour had been maintained and Norris did the right thing. McLaren must now consider quite how they manage the situation if Norris's efforts to catch Verstappen are to be prioritised. The team have been out of the title fight for years but are back now and with it comes the complex problem of a winning car and two genuinely competitive drivers. Verstappen's lead over Norris now stands at 76 points.

McLaren's debrief will be lively, as it will be at Red Bull as Verstappen too contributed to quite a show in Budapest. The world champion's poor temper throughout was as clamorous as Norris's quiet seething was constrained. Upgrades intended to give Verstappen the edge failed to deliver and he spent the race complaining about the handling of his car and furious at his team's strategy. It ended in clumsy ignominy. Looking to make up places he charged at Hamilton on lap 63 and hit the British driver at turn one, launching his Red Bull into the air, but was not penalised.

Of greatest concern for Verstappen will be that, even as the McLaren drama played out, both cars comfortably had the edge on him in Budapest.

Full results

1	**Oscar Piastri** Aus McLaren	25pts *1hr 38mins 01.989sec*
2	**Lando Norris** GB McLaren	18pts *+2.141sec*
3	**Lewis Hamilton** GB Mercedes	15pts *+14.880sec*
4	**Charles Leclerc** Mon Ferrari	12pts *+19.686sec*
5	**Max Verstappen** Neth Red Bull	10pts *+21.349sec*
6	**Carlos Sainz Jr** Sp Ferrari	8pts *+23.073sec*
7	**Sergio Pérez** Mex Red Bull	6pts *+39.792sec*
8	**George Russell** GB Mercedes	5pts* *+42.368sec*
9	**Yuki Tsunoda** Jpn RB	2pts *+1:17.259sec*
10	**Lance Stroll** Can Aston Martin	1pt *+1:17.976sec*

Also finished
11 **Fernando Alonso** Sp Aston Martin *+1:22.460*
12 **Daniel Ricciardo** Aus RB +1 lap
13 **Nico Hülkenberg** Ger Haas +1 lap
14 **Alexander Albon** Tha Williams +1 lap
15 **Kevin Magnussen** Den Haas +1 lap
16 **Valtteri Bottas** Fin Kick Sauber +1 lap
17 **Logan Sargeant** US Williams +1 lap
18 **Esteban Ocon** Fr Alpine +1 lap
19 **Guanyu Zhou** Chn Kick Sauber +1 lap

Not classified
20 **Pierre Gasly** Fr Alpine 33 laps

Championship standings
Drivers: 1 Verstappen 265pts; 2 Norris 189; 3 Leclerc 162; 4 Sainz 154; 5 Piastri 149; 6 Hamilton 125; 7 Pérez 124; 8 Russell 116; 9 Alonso 45; 10 Stroll 24
Constructors: 1 Red Bull 389pts; 2 McLaren 338; 3 Ferrari 322; 4 Mercedes 241; 5 Aston Martin 69; 6 RB 33; 7 Haas 27; 8 Alpine 9; 9 Williams 4; 10 Sauber 0
**Fastest lap: George Russell 1:20.305 (lap 55)*



▲ *Max Verstappen provided drama in a collision with Lewis Hamilton*

Five-star Bashir rips apart West Indies for series win

Ali Martin
Trent Bridge



When Nottinghamshire announced at 2pm on the fourth day that entry for the fifth would be free, it looked for all money - well, no money - like a great offer. The final equation was not yet known but an unyielding surface - one that served as the canvas for centuries from Harry Brook and Joe Root - was hinting at the potential for a thrilling finale.

Instead, over the course of an extended evening session, the value of these tickets plummeted like the stock market after a Tufton Street mini-budget and, beyond data capture for the county's marketing team, was rendered worthless. Set a target of 385 in 138 overs to level the series, West Indies were skittled for just 143 in 36.1 overs as England reclaimed the Richards-Botham Trophy with a game to spare.

It was almost the perfect day for Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, featuring runs from the engine room - Brook powering 109 from 132 balls, Root finessing 122 from 178 - and a rush of wickets from an attack that, as may have been mentioned before, no longer has either Jimmy Anderson and Stuart Broad at its disposal.

Among those central to the 241-run victory was the young off-spinner who they are now set on, Shoaib Bashir leading the team off the field, ball raised to all corners, after a match-winning five-wicket haul.

Chris Woakes knocked over the opening pair of Kraigg Brathwaite (47) and Mikyle Louis (17) by wobbling the Dukes ball in the channel and finished with six wickets for the match; a personally memorable 50th Test cap and a solid response to some of the question marks around his new role as attack leader. Mark Wood, though not entirely reflected by the final column, bowled like the speed of light on his return - just ask Kevin Sinclair, bounced out by a snorter - while Gus Atkinson backed up his 12-wicket debut at Lord's with four more on his pile, forever probing off-stump and asking questions.

But beyond the extra day off before the third Test at Edgbaston starting on Friday - the golf course calling, no doubt - England's captain and head coach will have taken most delight at Bashir's match-winning figures of five for 41 from 11.1 overs. The 20-year-old has struggled for a spot in Somerset's XI this summer but at Trent Bridge he filleted the middle order, cleaned up Jason Holder with a quicker arm ball, and inflicted the coup de grâce when Shamar Joseph, destroyer of roof tiles on day three, was bowled attempting a repeat. Jamie Smith also held five catches overall, none so good at emulating his county teammate Ben Foakes as the low pouch off Kirk McKenzie when Bashir tickled an under-edge.

It may be that West Indies ran out of gas in the end, having dug deep after the mismatch at Lord's, and kept pace with England initially. After Kavem Hodge delivered the innings of his life - a memorable 120 that, along with Joshua Da Silva's unbeaten 82, helped to secure a first-innings lead - Brathwaite's attack had the chance to inject some true jeopardy on day three, with cloud cover overhead and the floodlights at full beam.

Instead, they frayed, the talented Jayden Seales finishing with four wickets but among those to struggle when the contest was truly on the line. After marshalling England through to stumps on day three from a perilous three down, 99 ahead, Brook and Root continued their march on a sunnier fourth to provide the ballast for 425 all out. It turned out this was the first time that England had made 400 runs in both innings of a Test match; the kind of statistic that almost sounds made up.

Ollie Pope was named player of the match - scores of 121 and 51 the clincher - and Ben Duckett had a shout after two crisp half-centuries that set the tone in both innings. But the third-innings stand of 189 in 41.2 overs from Brook and Root was what bolted the door shut, even if Stokes, like those logging on to claim the free day-five tickets, did not expect the cascade of West Indian wickets that saw them lose 10 for 82 in 23 overs.

Going by the century celebrations alone - Brook's calm raise of the bat after a quick single, compared to Root's instinctive punch of the air upon driving Alzarri Joseph through the covers - a newcomer would have struggled to work out which of the two was tasting their first Test century on home soil, and who had just made their 32nd overall, drawing level with Steve Smith and Kane Williamson to boot.



'A supreme snooker player'
Clive Everton pays tribute to the late, great Ray Reardon *Journal, Page 6* →

They were contrasting innings, too. Brook resumed his overnight 71 looking for Test century No 5, motoring to it with all the crunched drives and muscular intent that marks him out as the coming man; his early drive through extra cover off Seales a statement of intent. Root, 37 not out first thing, played the touch game, more than happy to operate in the slipstream of the young buck by guiding and hustling his runs.

There have been a fair few along the way, this innings seeing Root rise two places to eighth in the all-time list of run-scorers and overtaking Mahela Jayawardene (11,814) and Shivnarine Chanderpaul (11,867) in the process. The totaliser sits at 11,940, Root left 13 short of Brian Lara at No 7 when, having been liberated by the century to the point of bringing out his previously mothballed reverse ramp, he chipped Holder to short cover.

Root's final contribution came at the end and was a typically selfless act, pushing Bashir ahead of his teammates to rightly soak up the Trent Bridge applause. Even the folks who snapped up those free day-five tickets could not begrudge the youngster his moment.

Day four scoreboard

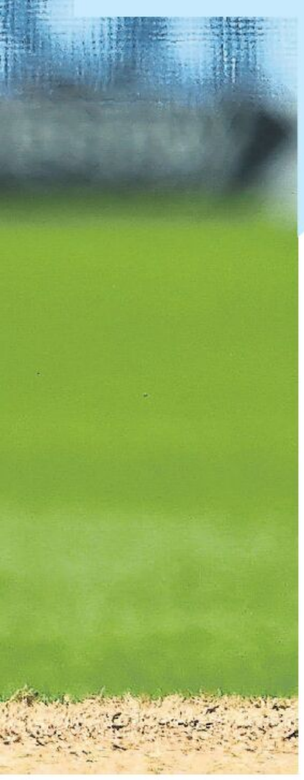
Trent Bridge England beat West Indies by 241 runs.
England First innings 416 (OJD Pope 121, BM Duckett 71, BA Stokes 69).
West Indies First innings 457 (KAR Hodge 120, J Da Silva 82, A Athanaze 82; CR Woakes 4-84).

England Second innings (overnight 248-3)	Balls	4s	6s
JE Root c McKenzie b Holder 122	178	10	0
HC Brook c Da Silva b Seales 109	132	13	0
***BA Stokes** c S Joseph b Seales 8	19	1	0
†JL Smith c Da Silva b Sinclair 6	7	0	0
CR Woakes c Holder b S Joseph 12	23	1	0
GAP Atkinson not out 21	26	3	0
MA Wood b Seales 0	7	0	0
S Bashir b Seales 0	3	0	0
Extras (b4, lb8, w1, nb4) 17			
Total (92.2 overs) 425			

Fall cont 329, 341, 348, 378, 419, 421.
Bowling AS Joseph 20-0-103-2; Seales 22.2-1-97-4; S Joseph-19-0-75-1; Holder 15-2-54-1; Sinclair 15-1-78-1; Brathwaite 1-0-6-0.

West Indies Second innings	Balls	4s	6s
***KC Brathwaite** c Smith b Woakes 47	48	8	0
M Louis c Smith b Woakes 17	40	2	0
KSA McKenzie c Smith b Bashir 1	5	0	0
A Athanaze c Root b Bashir 1	12	0	0
KAR Hodge lbw b Bashir 0	4	0	0
JO Holder b Bashir 37	42	2	2
K Sinclair c Crawley b Wood 1	17	0	0
†J Da Silva lbw b Atkinson 14	26	1	1
AS Joseph b Atkinson 0	2	0	0
JNT Seales not out 8	10	0	0
S Joseph b Bashir 8	11	0	0
Extras (lb8, w1) 9			
Total (36.1 overs) 143			

Fall 61, 66, 74, 75, 82, 91, 113, 113, 129.
Bowling Woakes 8-3-28-2; Atkinson 9-1-49-2; Wood 8-2-17-1; Bashir 11.1-2-41-5.
Toss West Indies elected to field.
Umpires AT Holdstock (SA) and RJ Tucker (Aus).
TV umpire NN Menon (Ind).
Referee J Srinath (Ind).



◀ *Joe Root hit 122 off 178 balls and shared a productive 41.2-over partnership with Harry Brook*
DAVID ROGERS/ GETTY IMAGES

Analysis
Simon Burnton *Trent Bridge*



◀ *Ben Stokes embraces Shoaib Bashir after the 20-year-old takes the third of his five wickets on day four*
MANJIT NAROTRA/ PROSPORTS/ SHUTTERSTOCK

Stokes and England reaping rewards of creating nurturing environment for young bowlers

Shoaib Bashir's preparation for this match was not exactly ideal. The early summer brought three games for Somerset in the County Championship in which he took a total of four wickets, but with the vastly more experienced Jack Leach at the club he was then left out of the squad and farmed out on loan. He still kept his place in the England side, having made his debut in India over the winter, but in the opening Test of the summer he neither bowled a ball nor scored a run. Between sessions at Lord's the head coach, Brendon McCullum, repeatedly pulled together Bashir and Ben Stokes and jokingly introduced them: "This is Bash, if you haven't met him …"

England were expected to beat West Indies here, and many will give them little credit for doing so. Though it has thrown up some extraordinary statistics – England had never in their history scored 400 runs in both innings of a Test – it was in many ways a pretty ordinary game. But the evidence it provided of the assimilation of Bashir, the nursing of this callow 20-year-old, so short of experience and recent sources of confidence, to the point where they could toss him the ball on the fourth afternoon with a Test in the balance and he would go and win it for them, that is something extraordinary.

Days such as this breed excitement, which Bashir may or may not eventually justify. He has so many stories still to tell. But for him just to look around this dressing room and the characters it contains – Stokes made his England debut when Bashir was seven; Joe Root was in the team when he had just turned nine – and not be utterly broken by sheer bewilderment is evidence partly of his own level-headedness but also of the environment that has been created. "He just loves being in the dressing room, he loves the fact he's part of the group," Stokes said.

And as a young bowler Bashir is not alone in that: in the two years since Stokes and McCullum took over the Test team five bowlers have taken five-fers on debut – at Lord's last week Gus Atkinson did it twice; in the previous decade there had been only two. This is not normal.

Stokes was aware that "it's been a really strange couple of months for him since India", and once the decision was made to keep him in the squad, made contact to talk it through. "When you're going out on loan to just feel like you're bowling some overs, that's where communication becomes a very important part about being a leader," Stokes said. "So I picked up the phone to him and we just had a good chat around everything.

"He's such a confident lad, he backs his ability and he just couldn't wait to get started. And even though he didn't play a … I was going to say 'a big role' but he didn't play a role at all last week at Lord's, I think the performance he put in this week a lot of spinners would be very happy with. This was a week where myself and Jeets [the spin bowling coach Jeetan Patel] were just telling him to show off his skills. And you know, I thought he did that."

Bashir said: "Ben's just got a lot of words of inspiration, and he's just so calm under pressure and even when we lost a few quick wickets he was all chilled in the dressing room. The team environment is just special. I'm the youngest in the team and it's quite nice with everyone getting around me."

In England's entire Test history there have been five five-fers taken by bowlers younger than 21: Jimmy Anderson against Zimbabwe in 2003, Rehan Ahmed against Pakistan in 2022, and three now by Bashir. Here he benefited from coming on just after Woakes had dismissed Mikyle Louis and after a confident start West Indies' run chase started to fray. Within three overs Bashir had found the edge of Kirk McKenzie's bat, trapped Kavem Hodge lbw, and had Alick Athanaze caught at slip.

After the best part of four days hanging to a greater or lesser extent in the balance, this game was effectively decided in half an hour, with Bashir at the heart of it; a little later he took the last two wickets, including Jason Holder with his best delivery of the day, to finish the job.

Despite a positive forecast, a nicely poised match and £10 tickets, his performance came in front of large expanses of empty seats. But everyone loves a freebie, and the announcement in mid-afternoon that entry would be free on day five led to an online queue simply to reach Nottinghamshire's ticketing website which eventually exceeded four hours. By the time late arrivals got a chance to buy a ticket there was no game for which to buy a ticket. England's players have learned to grab their chance; it seems their fans are not quite there yet.

'Bag of tricks' Captain heaps praise on his spinning tyro

Simon Burnton
Trent Bridge

Ben Stokes praised a breakthrough performance from Shoaib Bashir after he became the youngest England player to take a Test five-fer on home soil. The captain said the 20-year-old bowler had "showed the world what he can do" as West Indies were skittled for 143 and the second Test was won by 241 runs.

"That wicket offered hardly anything for a spinner throughout the whole Test match, and to be honest I didn't think it did today," Stokes said.

"The way he can change his pace, overspin, underspin – he showed his full bag of tricks today. He's got so much talent, his ceiling is so high and he's got an unbelievable desire and will to get better and learn. The great thing about Bash is if you see him get hit over his head, he starts smiling and he's all right. I love the way in which that doesn't affect him."

This was Bashir's 15th first-class game, with his promotion to the Test side for the winter tour of India – and his selection for this series when he was not even in his county side – seen by many as premature.

"The decisions we make are based around not only how far their talent can take them but because we think they're good enough for international cricket straight away," Stokes said.

"A great way to look at it is, this is the worst they'll be. If you think you can identify talent and throw them into the international environment and give them confidence, give them backing, they're going to progress really quickly.

"Bash showed everybody what he could do in India where conditions were in his favour, but seven wickets on this wicket and the way he bowled – I don't want to say it's an 'I told you so' sort of thing, but it sort of is."

Having spent the best part of 11 sessions working themselves into a position from which they could feasibly win the match, West Indies proceeded to lose it in one. "I'm disappointed because we know we can do a lot better than what we showed," said Kraigg Brathwaite, their captain.

"The main thing is to learn from it. This game is gone, it's history, we can't bring it back. Cricket will always bring challenges.

"We can say we're not far away, but it's important to learn. We still have five Test matches remaining this year. We'll keep learning, and by the end of the year we'll be better off."



▲ *Ben Stokes was full of admiration after a great day for the spin bowler*



▼ *Tadej Pogacar powers through the final time trial on his way to another title*
THOMAS SAMSON/AFP/GETTY



▼ *From left: Remco Evenepoel, Richard Carapaz, Biniam Girmay and Pogacar on the podium*
SEBASTIEN NOGIER/EPA

Pogacar seals first double of the century with dominant victory

Jeremy Whittle
Nice

Tadej Pogacar followed in the wake of the late Marco Pantani, sealing the first Giro d'Italia-Tour de France double of the 21st century in swaggering style, with victory in the final time trial of the 2024 Tour, in Nice.

Pogacar now joins an elite club of double winners, but none have achieved this feat in the modern era, or with such swagger. Over the two Grand Tours, totalling almost 7,000km, his accumulative lead has been well over 16 minutes, and he has spent 39 days as either Giro or Tour leader.

The last battle between the 2024 Tour's top trio - Pogacar, Jonas Vingegaard, the outgoing champion, and the debutant Remco Evenepoel - came on the corniche roads of the Côte d'Azur, but stuck to the script with the Slovenian once again dominating the outcome.

In the time trial from Monaco to Nice, Pogacar beat Vingegaard by 1min 03sec and Evenepoel by 1:14, to win overall from the Dane, champion in 2022 and 2023, by 6:17.

Pantani's Giro-Tour double came 25 years ago, in a chaotic era blighted by unrelenting doping scandals. But Pogacar's comes in different times, in a highly commercialised and technologically driven sport, globalised by Netflix, dominated by nation state sponsors, that has also embraced success stories from new territories, such as Slovenia, Eritrea and Ecuador.

Pogacar is uber-champion of this era, the freestyling boy racer to whom the Netflix generation is increasingly drawn. Pantani's Giro-Tour double came before he was even born. As his time trial performance yesterday demonstrated, he is loved by fans because he never lets up.

Meanwhile, for some in the peloton, after 72 hours spent climbing in the southern Alps, the demanding 33.7km time trial was a bridge too far. Most were happy to go through the motions, with Pascal Ackermann letting slip that he had enjoyed his celebratory end-of-Tour pizza, before the stage, rather than after. But unlike Ackermann, Pogacar was still hungry. The 25-year-old, even with the Tour already won, appeared as insatiable and invincible as ever and rode the time trial as if his life was at stake. Of course, he won, yet again.

The stats speak for themselves: en route to his Grand Tour double, he has won six stages in the Tour and six in the Giro, making him the first rider to win six stages in both races in the same season.

The shadow looming over this Tour has been that of Eddy Merckx, cycling's greatest of all time, whose career record is now facing serious competition from Pogacar. Merckx started seven Tours in his career and won five, while Pogacar, still only 25, has won three out of five. Merckx spent 97 days in the *maillot jaune* while the Slovenian has already worn the Tour leader's yellow jersey for 40.

The 79-year-old Merckx has already lost one prestigious gong, that of the record-breaking number of Tour stage wins, to Mark Cavendish, who sprinted to a 35th win in Saint-Vulbas on stage five. Asked after the Nice finish, if he had ridden his last Tour, Cavendish responded: "100%." Retirement is imminent.

Pogacar might accept that fate played a hand in the outcome of this year's race. Vingegaard's Visma Lease-a-Bike team, winner of all three Grand Tours in 2023, has so far been a greatly depleted force, blighted by injury and illness. Worse was the horrendous high-speed crash at the Tour of the Basque Country in April, which forced three of Grand Tour racing's Big Four - Vingegaard, Evenepoel and the ill-fated Primoz Roglic - off the road. Meanwhile, across Europe, the Slovenian was hitting his stride.

Pogacar was not racing with them in Spain, but had already set out his stall elsewhere, dominating the Strade Bianche classic in Italy and the Volta a Catalunya in Spain. The writing was on the wall, and after he won the Giro by an eyewatering 9:56 in May, the double was very much on.

This, however, is the Tour de France and inevitably there are the usual doubts from "haters" as Pogacar labelled them, freely expressed as soon as a performance is deemed extraordinary. Pogacar muddied the waters himself when asked about his team's use of the noxious-sounding, but legal, "carbon monoxide rebreathing". One day he did not know what it was, but by the next he was an expert.

There were other stories to focus on. The three stage victories taken by the Eritrean Biniam Girmay, the first black African rider to enjoy such success in the Tour, led to his win in the green jersey points classification, while victory in the King of the Mountains classification, by the pugilistic Richard Carapaz, was the first by an Ecuadorian.



▲ *Mark Cavendish crosses the finish line in his last ever Tour de France*
TIM DE WAELE/GETTY IMAGES

How they finished

General classification

1	**T Pogacar** *Svn*	83hr 38m 56s
2	**J Vingegaard** *Den*	83hr 45m 13s

Points classification

1	**B Girmay** *Eri*	387pts
2	**J Philipsen** *Bel*	354pts

King of the mountains

1	**R Carapaz** *Ecu*	127pts
2	**T Pogacar** *Svn*	102pts

Young rider classification

1	**R Evenepoel** *Bel*	83h 38m 56s
2	**C Rodríguez** *Sp*	84h 04m 00s

'Phenomenal' Team director pays tribute to Cavendish

Jeremy Whittle
Nice

Mark Cavendish bowed out of his last Tour de France in Nice yesterday as his sports director, Mark Renshaw, confirmed that the record-breaking Tour stage winner had ridden his final race. After the Tour's final stage to Nice, Renshaw, a former teammate, said: "This is his last professional race."

Earlier, Cavendish had been a little less forthcoming. "Likely so, yeah," he said when asked if he was about to retire, but also added that it was "100%" his last Tour.

Renshaw, his former lead-out man in many Grand Tour sprints, paid tribute to the longevity of a career that began in the 2007 Tour de France. "For Cav to have been at the level that he has been, for so long, is probably one of the most impressive things," he said.

"Obviously, there has been his hunger for success, with different teams at different times, that shows that he's a phenomenal athlete."

> ***'This is the first Grand Tour where I was confident every day'***
>
> **Tadej Pogacar**
> *Tour de France winner*

Renshaw agreed nobody would have blamed the former world champion, if, after securing his record-breaking win in the first week of the Tour, he had called it a day. "A few days later he lined up chasing a 36th stage and he was really disappointed to not succeed," Renshaw said. "I'm sure he would have loved to have gone home, but he's a team player."

As Cavendish bowed out, Tadej Pogacar took centre stage, which - based on his swagger during the final week of the 2024 Tour - is where he likes to be. "I cannot describe how happy I am," the Slovenian said.

"After two hard years in the Tour de France, always some mistakes, this year everything [went] to perfection. It's incredible.

"Some people would think the Giro was a safety net if I didn't succeed in the Tour de France. To win the Tour de France is another level, and to win both together, is another level above that level."

Pogacar has finished first or second in each of the five Tours de France he has started. "This is the first Grand Tour where I was totally confident every day," he said. "Even in the Giro I remember I had one bad day, but this Tour de France was amazing. I was enjoying from day one until today and I had such great support behind me. I just couldn't let anyone down, so I was enjoying it for them as well."

Football

'Mature' Yoro can be regular United starter, says Ten Hag

Jamie Jackson

Erik ten Hag praised Leny Yoro's "mature performance" in his Manchester United debut against Rangers and believes the 18-year-old defender can be a regular starter as one of the first-choice centre-backs.

After joining on Thursday, Yoro, who left Lille for £52.2m, impressed in United's 2-0 victory in their second pre-season game, playing the first half before Ten Hag changed all 10 outfield players at the break.

"For the first time, after just one training [session], it's a very mature performance," the manager said. "That's what we saw when we scouted him. He's a very young, talented centre-back and there's a lot to come. He's here, we think he can play but there's so many games that he'll be in a group of four or five defenders."

Ten Hag wants a second centre-back and is targeting Bayern Munich's Matthijs de Ligt and Everton's Jarrad Branthwaite, but any further signing may depend on whether one of Harry Maguire or Victor Lindelöf is sold.

"That is obvious but we want to have a strong squad, as strong as possible," Ten Hag said. "The football leadership is very on the front foot. That's what clubs like Manchester United should do. We're very pleased we've done business - we have Yoro in, we have [Joshua] Zirkzee in - two high-potential assets for the future. But when I say future, the future also starts today. The next game is always the most important, next season is always the most important."

Scott McTominay is attracting interest but Ten Hag wants the midfielder to stay. "We have very good players, so they'll always have interest. If you score 10 goals in a season and perform very well for Scotland there will be an interest. We want to actually keep him."

Ten Hag was also enthused by Amad Diallo, who scored a fine opener against Rangers at Murrayfield, cutting inside and beating Jack Butland with a smart finish. "He made a very good progression from last season. The past two seasons he was on loan and then he was planned to play a role but had a very bad injury in pre-season that dropped him a little bit back. But in the last games of last season he showed his assets. This season has to become his season."

Ten Hag played down United's prospects of challenging for the title. "Look, we can beat every opponent. We've shown that more than once - against City, against Liverpool - but the truth is there's also a long way to come. We have to get more consistent. That has to do with having the right winning culture. When we bring this in the dressing room - it's not just to do with the dressing room, the standards should be delivered in the whole club."



▲ *Leny Yoro impressed on his United debut after only one training session*

Liverpool youth player 'racially abused' twice in two games

Liverpool have called for an urgent investigation after saying a member of their under-18 team was subjected to racial abuse in two consecutive matches during a youth tournament in Germany.

Liverpool players and coaches left the pitch in both fixtures, against Hoffenheim on Friday and Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday, at the Bundesliga Cup youth tournament after the same player complained to match officials and coaches that he had been abused. Both matches were abandoned, despite Eintracht's claim that any remarks were "a linguistic issue".

A club statement said: "Liverpool can confirm that a member of our under-18s team reported he was racially abused by an opponent while playing in the Bundesliga Cup youth tournament at Schwäbisch Hall in Germany on Friday. The player immediately alerted the match official, his teammates, and our coaching staff. Consequently, LFC's management team decided to stop the game and leave the pitch together.

"In a further incident, the same player was the target of abuse during a fixture in the tournament [on Saturday]. Again, the player alerted his teammates and coaching staff and our management team opted to leave the pitch once more. We are proud of our player for his prompt actions in reporting the incident and the maturity of his response. He and any of his teammates affected are being supported by the academy safeguarding team. The club calls upon our opponents and the tournament organisers to conduct an urgent and thorough investigation into the incident."

The Eintracht sporting director, Timmo Hardung, told German newspaper Bild the club took the accusation "seriously" but insisted it had been a "linguistic issue" relating to a term commonly used in Germany.

"Our entire youth academy is like Eintracht Frankfurt, multicultural and we have clear values that we live by and demand again and again," Hardung said. "Racism has no place here, but we still take such an accusation seriously. We can rule out racism, it is a linguistic issue, and therefore hope to have resolved the misunderstanding among the players and Liverpool officials concerned."

Hoffenheim have been contacted for comment. **PA Media**

Golf *The Open*

Rahm's brave chase hits the buffers on notorious Railway

The Spaniard raced into contention on the final day before 11th hole claimed another big-name victim

Paul MacInnes
Royal Troon

Previously on "CSI: Troon", a succession of males wearing breathable fabrics have been stiffed by a silent killer. Known only as "The Railway", balls go into the thorns and they don't come out. Yesterday lunchtime another unwitting individual appears to have walked into the trap, a golfer going by the street name of "Rahmbo". An investigation is being conducted, but the outcome is contested. It looks like another case for Chief Inspector Gorse.

After a prolonged period of deliberation, the inquiry was duly wrapped up. The scene was cleared, the ball dropped and Jon Rahm resumed his round. But the damage had been done and "The Railway" - Royal Troon's notoriously tricky 11th hole - claimed another victim. What had begun the day as an insurgent charge up the leaderboard stalled a few shots short of the summit.

"You know, four under [on the front nine], I wanted to keep that going. I thought it would get close to the lowest round of the week. It was a great round of golf," Rahm said later, reflecting from the clubhouse.

"That back nine wasn't turning into a left-right wind, it wasn't helping as much as it has in the last few days. I just needed to strike those iron shots good enough to give myself good birdie putts. I ended up having a lot of long putts for birdie. But then I did make two really lengthy par-putts in the last couple of holes, right? So it all evens out."

Rahm was calm after completing his final round, open and philosophical as to the experiences he has had on the Ayrshire coast this weekend. It has been by far his best performance at the majors this year, after a Masters where he was nine over for the tournament, a missed cut at the PGA and a foot infection that caused him to pull out of the US Open last month. It has also been a case of ifs, buts and maybes, especially on this final day when, for the opening hour at least, he was the hottest man on the course.

Rahm played the opening hole bravely, holding off the wind to drive 228 yards, clinging to the left of the fairway. His approach shot stayed on the left-hand side but came short, 17 feet from the pin. Long putt, no problem, and as he rolled the ball in to cheers he claimed a birdie. The 2nd hole was dealt with in similar fashion, drifting left on the wind but finding the fairway, then the green, then the hole with clinical putting from 24 feet. Back-to-back birdies became a hat-trick after a 334-yard drive was laid up four yards from the hole. Another birdie followed at the 7th and Rahm, who had begun the day two over par, had closed in to just three shots off the lead.

The ascent began to stall on the Postage Stamp, that 100-yard conundrum, where a presentable birdie opportunity came up six inches short. The next two holes were a scramble to save par and, then, it was that Railway. After taking the penalty shot he found the semi-rough, then the green, and sank a putt from three feet to record a bogey. He was one under for the tournament but his rivals had begun their own rounds and the ground had shifted away from the Spaniard. He wasn't about to get it back, but he didn't drop another shot either.

▼ *Jon Rahm impressed on the front nine but his round lost momentum*
ROSS KINNAIRD/GETTY

In a way, Rahm's round was an encapsulation of his tournament, one of his best performances of the year but tempered by moments of mystification. "The one thing I keep on thinking about all week is the fact I haven't birdied a single par-five," he said.

"I can't remember the last time I played good golf, possibly finished top 10 and not birdied a single par-five. That's where basically I think the tournament lied for me. If I could pick when I hit bad shots or good ones, I'd probably choose some different spots, but it's just the luck of the draw."

It was also great entertainment, with the fluctuations in touch as well as conditions part of what makes the Open great. In the end, Rahm tied for seventh place and declared himself to be pleased with his work as he now begins preparations for the Olympics. "I mean, listen, we're not always going to have a perfect year," the 29-year-old said. "But I'm glad to actually at least have shown up to one of the majors.

"To actually play good. I was feeling really good going into the US Open and it was not the easiest not to play in that. So having not been able to practise a lot, and to come here and play and perform well, I'm very happy with myself."





Schauffele shakes off Rose to seal America's clean sweep

Ewan Murray
Royal Troon



Craig Stadler, Tom Watson, Tom Watson, Raymond Floyd. Scottie Scheffler, Xander Schauffele, Bryson DeChambeau, Xander Schauffele. Not since 1982 had American golfers completed a clean sweep of the four majors until Schauffele emulated Watson by prevailing at Royal Troon.

Luke Donald, Europe's captain, must be delighted this is not a Ryder Cup year. Not that the bigger picture is particularly appealing for Donald; the stars and stripes sit adjacent to the names of nine of the past 12 major champions.

At the start of this year, Schauffele was regarded as a nearly man. He was arguably the finest golfer of his generation never to taste success in one of the sport's big four events. In the blink of an eye, he has become a multiple major winner; glory at Valhalla in the US PGA Championship in May surely assisted Schauffele on the Ayrshire coast. As others wilted, he knitted together a 65 to win by two, at nine under par, from Billy Horschel and a resurgent Justin Rose.

Schauffele is so calm and methodical in the way he goes about his business that the brutality attached to this Open exam was never likely to faze him. He is golf's silent assassin. The 152nd Open should be remembered as one that threatened to deliver a far more spectacular storyline than ultimately arrived.

There is always a key stretch. For Schauffele, this arrived between the 11th and 16th on day four. He played that in four under, allowing daylight to appear between him and the field. This, it should be remembered, is the toughest set of holes at Royal Troon. The prospect of a first Open playoff since 2015 had threatened until Schauffele decided the tournament was his for the taking. His back nine took just 31 strokes.

Rose encountered mixed emotions as he walked from the 18th green. As a qualifier, it was a shock to many that the Englishman was even in contention. Yet the 43-year-old retains lofty standards. He will privately know he will not have many more opportunities to add to his solo major win to date. As Schauffele heated up on the inward half, Rose's putter turned stone cold. Horschel holed out from distance at the last to match Rose's seven under aggregate.

For a spell yesterday afternoon, Thriston Lawrence had commentators and spectators alike scrambling towards Wikipedia. The 27-year-old missed the cut in his only other Open appearance. When making a birdie at the 9th, Lawrence was two clear of Schauffele and one ahead of Rose. It was not so much that the South African took a dose of the jitters thereafter - he dropped only a single shot to finish fourth - but that Schauffele pressed his accelerator. Russell Henley earned fifth at five under after a 69.

Shane Lowry will rue a horrible stretch from the 8th tee on Saturday, which so influenced the 77 that basically cost him the Open. He returned to the links to post a 68, which afforded him sixth place at four under par. This was, however, one that got away for the 2019 champion.

"It's very disappointing, there's no two ways about it," Lowry said. "I had a great chance of winning this Open and it's going to hurt for a few days."

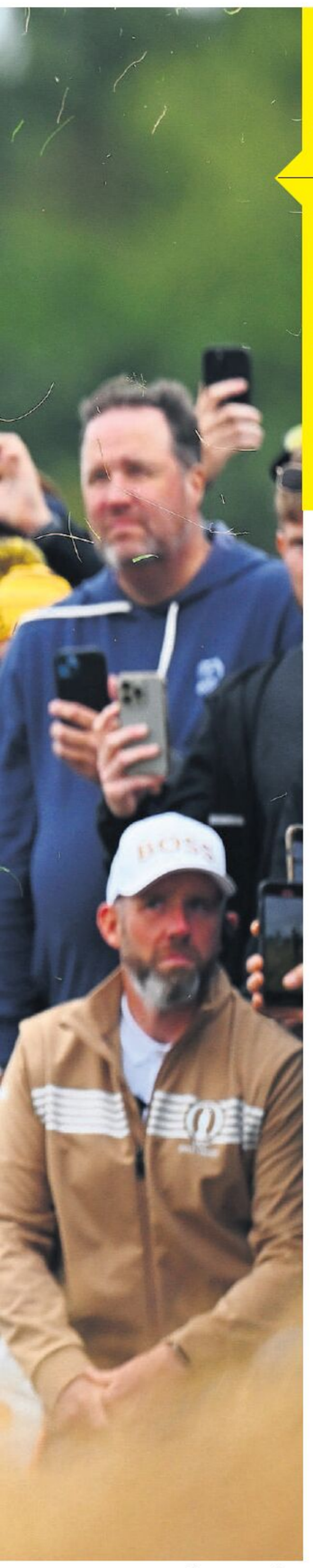
There was no fairytale victory for Dan Brown. The Yorkshireman, who arrived in Troon just inside the world's top 300, finally hit the buffers as he slid from minus three to even par inside six holes. It is to Brown's great credit that he avoided a tailspin from there, a 74 sufficient for a share of 10th. He will take huge heart from his Open display. He has also earned a return, at Royal Portrush next July.

Scottie Scheffler was firmly in the mix when reaching four under thanks to a birdie at the 8th. What followed was totally out of keeping with the world No 1's 2024 up to that point. Scheffler missed from 30 inches while en route to a double bogey at the 9th. He handed another two shots to the course at the 18th, by which point his race was run anyway. His one under tied seventh with Im Sungjae and Jon Rahm.

Justin Thomas's Sunday challenge lasted a single shot. He cracked his

Final leaderboard

-9
Xander Schauffele *US*
-7
Billy Horschel *US*
Justin Rose *Eng*
-6
Thriston Lawrence *SA*
-5
Russell Henley *US*



Making hay at Royal Troon

Xander Schauffele eased to his second major win of 2024 with an outstanding round of 65 yesterday

STUART FRANKLIN/ GETTY IMAGES

Analysis

Andy Bull *Royal Troon*

Journeyman Brown finally makes name for himself despite regrets of what might have been

You couldn't but pick up the whispers at Royal Troon, they were on the breeze in between all the breakers, warbles, claps and caws. "Jon Rahm birdied the first three holes!" said the one lad who had managed to get reception on his phone to the two either side of him while he flicked his thumb down along the scoreboard.

"How's Rosey doing?" his mate asked. "He's just teed off." The other cut in: "Here comes Scottie Scheffler now." He waited a beat. "Who's that with him?" The three of them squinted into the middle distance at the man strolling down the fairway. Blue sweater, blue slacks, white cap. No one spoke.

"Who's that?" is a question a lot of people have been asking lately about Dan Brown. Four days ago, you needed to have been paying pretty close attention to the outer reaches of the DP World Tour to know anything much about him.

Brown, a 29-year-old journeyman from Northallerton, was ranked 272 in the world coming into the Open, and had missed the cut in six of his past eight tournaments. But it has been a long old week on the links, and a lot has changed. Brown said himself that he would have been delighted if you had told him on Monday he was going to be tied 10th.

But after rising as high as first place with 20 holes left to play, he found he was disappointed to wind up where he did, nine shots off winner Xander Schauffele. "It's a little bit," he paused for a moment, searching for the words. "I wanted to do better and be higher up the board."

Even Brown has seemed a little surprised by how well he has played this week. He said it helped that he has got used to failing on the DP World Tour, so he isn't scared of it any more. "I suppose a lot of people probably thought I was going to be shaking this morning and really nervous, but I've been absolutely fine," he said on Saturday night. "I didn't know myself, I didn't know last night if I was going to wake up this morning, be nervous, sweaty, whatever it might be, but I think I felt all right."

His own mother booked a hotel up here only for the first night of the championship. She's superstitious, and didn't want to bet he'd make it to the weekend. Which was a shame. She would have got fair odds given he was 750-1 to win the thing.

Everyone kept waiting for the moment when Brown was going to look down and see the ground was gone from underneath his feet because he'd run so far over the cliff. But it never came. You wondered if it might happen on Saturday night, when he dropped three shots playing the final two holes, and wondered again yesterday morning, when he was seventh on the leaderboard at the start of the final round, and paired with Scheffler, the world No 1 golfer. Scheffler is a few inches taller, $69m richer, and 271 places higher in the rankings. But Brown took it all in his slow and steady stride, only stopping for a quick pull on a cigarette now and then.

He said he was a little thrown by the wind, which had flipped on the front nine. He dropped a shot at the 1st when he missed a putt from 10ft after playing out of a greenside bunker. And he had back-to-back bogeys at the 4th, 5th, and 6th. But he made birdies on the 2nd and 7th, which meant he kept his foothold on the first page of the leaderboard. Scheffler passed him on the way. The American pulled himself up to third place by reaching four under after eight holes. But he scored a double-bogey six by three-putting the 9th, and there was no coming back.

Brown covered the back nine, which is as hard a stretch as any in major golf, in level par, which was a stroke better than Scheffler managed. The gap between the two of them wasn't as big as you might think. When you rise as high as the hundreds in the rankings, the margins get pretty slim.

Brown is about to take three weeks off when, you can only hope, he'll finally be able to enjoy what he achieved at Royal Troon this week. He did it in conditions that broke some of the best golfers in the game. He has also almost made more money in these four rounds (€291,576/£245,580) than he has in the first four years of his professional career, and earned a good chunk for his 19-year-old brother Ben, who has been caddying for him. For a man who once had to borrow money off his grandmother to pay to travel to a tournament in Switzerland, it's a life-changing sum. More importantly, he's won himself an exemption for the 153rd Open at Royal Portrush too.

Brown has made more money in these four rounds than he did in the first four years of his professional career

So Cinderella didn't get to marry the prince. But at least she can treat herself to a new pair of shoes, and come back for another shot next year.



◀ *Dan Brown, who started the day one shot off the lead on three under, plays a shot from a bunker on the 4th hole*

CHARLIE CROWHURST/R&A/ GETTY IMAGES

opening drive right and on to Troon beach. With a triple-bogey seven, he was out of the tournament. This was a strange major for Thomas, who followed a first-round 68 with a 78 and third-round 67 with a 77. His plus-six total was matched by Dustin Johnson.

Brooks Koepka completed a grim year at major venues – he finished no better than 26th – at eight over. Koepka's lust for this domain is such that he must be pondering the competitive impact of his switch to LIV Golf.

At eight over, Nairn's Calum Scott collected top amateur honours and the silver medal that comes with it. The youngster has a year left at Texas Tech, the college that recently played a part in Ludvig Åberg's stunning rise. Scott plans to complete his studies, despite the professional temptation that will arrive as a result of his showing here.

"It's one of the highest honours you can win as an amateur," Scott said. "First, you have to make the cut to win this award and to be above 11 other amateurs, I'm very proud of myself for that. To compete in a tournament like the Open, it's amazing."

Big things seem to lie ahead for Scott. While Schauffele is right in the midst of them.

'You want to walk off going, yeah I didn't squander that'

Continued *from back page*

major. He finished in a share of sixth at the US PGA Championship in May. "The deal I made with myself today was to come off with no regrets. I'll have a few more chances but you know that this is a great opportunity. You want to walk off the golf course going: 'Yeah, I didn't squander that.'

"I ran putts at the hole today. I feel like I had opportunities. I felt like I took a lot of them. But I felt super comfortable out there, which the fact that I haven't really been in contention much this year, that gives me a lot of heart.

"Two major championships this year, strongest fields in golf, they've been my two best weeks. I've got a lot of confidence. What I'm working hard for is to have these big-time moments in my career. I'm looking for those big-stage moments and today was nearly it. It was a lot of fun."



Justin Rose knows a big opportunity to win one more major has gone

Schauffele, who won that US PGA at Valhalla, has therefore claimed two of the past three majors. "I feel very honoured," he said. "Hearing your name called with 'Open champion' right after is something I've dreamed of for a very long time."

He revealed that in recent days he watched highlights of Henrik Stenson's epic battle with Phil Mickelson at this venue in 2016. "It was to motivate me," Schauffele said. "I guess that paid off pretty nicely."

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Sport

‘It was hard fighting back’
Becky Downie on overcoming being ostracised in order to keep her Olympic dream alive



Paris 2024 countdown *Pages 31-33 →*

Tour de France
Pogacar wins third title while Cavendish calls time
Page 40 →



DARREN STAPLES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Bish, bash bosh ...
Bashir takes five wickets as England race to West Indies series victory

Report and reaction
Pages 38-39 →

Norris admits he considered ignoring order to give up lead

Giles Richards

Lando Norris admitted he considered disobeying team orders to surrender the lead of the Hungarian Grand Prix, to allow his McLaren teammate, Oscar Piastri, to take victory, describing his thought process in the closing stages as he engaged in a stand-off with his team as “pretty crazy”.

Norris had been told by McLaren to hand back the lead he had gained through a pit-stop strategy decision from Piastri, who had led almost the entire race. However, for the final 17 laps Norris resisted the repeated and increasingly frenetic calls to concede the position, before finally doing so reluctantly with three laps to go.

The British driver acknowledged it had been hard to obey the team orders. “Things are always going to go through your mind because, you know, you’ve got to be selfish in this sport at times,” he said. “You’ve got to think of yourself. That’s priority No 1, think of yourself. I’m also a team player, so my mind was going pretty crazy at the time.”

The 24-year-old, who is second in the world championship to Red Bull’s Max Verstappen and realistically his only challenger this season, had seriously envisaged ignoring the entreaties of his team as he considered the title fight. “When you’re thinking of the seven or six points that I give away, then ... it crosses your mind. So it was not easy.”

After a tense finale where there was no indication Norris would concede, he did pull over and insisted he had always planned to comply. Having done so, however, he said: “I was put in this situation and it’s not my fault that I was leading the race in a way. The team should have just boxed Oscar first and we wouldn’t even be having this discussion. As a team, maybe we could have done things slightly differently.”

Report *Page 37 →*



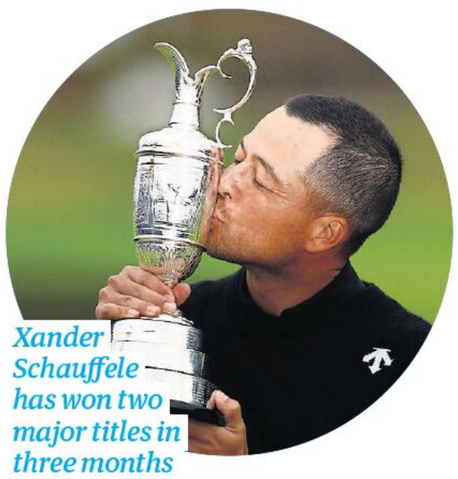
▲ *Lando Norris questioned the strategy of his McLaren team*

‘I choked back tears’
Rose left to rue missed chance after Schauffele’s Open glory

Ewan Murray
Royal Troon

Justin Rose admitted he held back tears after Xander Schauffele beat the Englishman to the 152nd Open Championship at Royal Troon. Schauffele’s 65 yesterday meant he saw off Rose and Billy Horschel by two shots to lift the Claret Jug.

A Rose victory would have been the most popular of all. The 2013 US Open champion progressed through final qualifying in Somerset just to make the Troon field. The 43-year-old praised Schauffele for his outstanding display but admitted the extent to which falling short resonated.



Xander Schauffele has won two major titles in three months

Contemplating the final green, where he stood with arms aloft after converting for a birdie, Rose said: “I won second place, I won points, I won prizes, FedEx Cup points, all that stuff. At that point, you’re being a professional.

“Then I walk 10 steps and I’m choking back tears. So that’s the shift. I was enjoying 18 with the fans, too. I just think it’s such an amazing stage. For me, that’s the best look in golf, those two long grandstands that you walk down and the big yellow leaderboard. That’s what I associate with a magic moment.

“There are two emotions: gutted when I walked off the course and it hit me hard because I was so strong out there today. I kind of got off to the start I wanted. I really played the way I wanted to today. I got off on the front foot. I played my way right into the tournament early doors. Felt comfortable with it all day.

“Did a lot of the hard things really well on the golf course today. Just a critical moment midway through the back nine momentum-wise. Obviously Xander got it going. I hit a couple of really good putts that didn’t fall and then suddenly that lead stretched.

“In terms of how I played and the execution of my emotions today, my mindset, I left it all out there. I’m super proud of how I competed.”

Rose has gained belief that he can win another

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They fought for women's rights; now they're forgotten *Susanna Rustin, page 3*

Why I took the plunge into teeny, tiny swimwear *Rich Pelley, page 4*

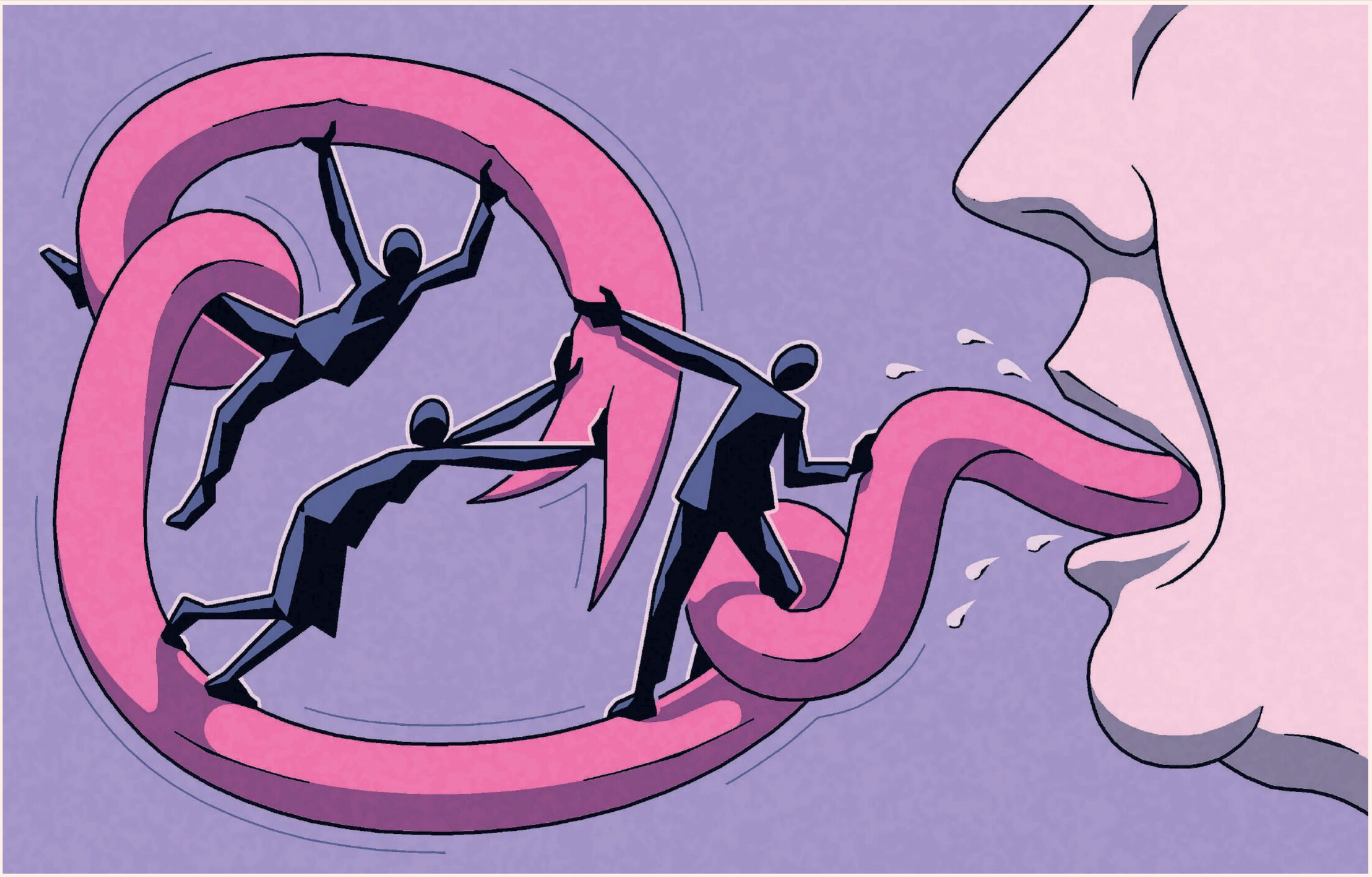
Ray Reardon, one of the greatest British snooker players *Obituaries, page 6*

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Journal

Opinion and ideas



Labour must expose the snake-oil charm of populism

John Harris



For a politician who has usually avoided high-flown rhetoric, Keir Starmer is suddenly sounding remarkably ambitious. As he addressed the House of Commons after last week's king's speech, he said his government's aim was "nothing less than national renewal". Taking aim at the chunk of rightwing politics that encompasses both Tory Brexiters and culture warriors and the chancers of Reform UK, he also said that his government's agenda represents "a rejection, in this complicated and volatile world, of those who can only offer the easy answer – the snake-oil charm of populism".

Over the past seven days, two different elements of the news have demonstrated the daunting challenge Starmer faces. Many domestic headlines have focused on his government's opening array of policies and the fact that they highlight – within tight financial limits – its purposeful approach to power. And at last week's meeting of the European Political Community, ministers enthusiastically reconnected with our old friends in the EU, and gave Starmer an opportunity to reaffirm Britain's commitment to the European convention on human rights and international law.

But developments in the US threaten to drown all that out. Bandaged and exultant, Donald Trump now seems to be on his way back to power, amid chilling realisations of what this will mean for his country's democratic institutions and fragile social bonds, the war in Ukraine and politics all over the globe. Joe Biden has increasingly suggested all the frailties of liberal democracy and old-fashioned Atlanticism made flesh – and whoever is chosen as his replacement is hardly certain to stall Trump's momentum. Meanwhile, the far right continues to disrupt politics across Europe. For the foreseeable future, looking out at the world from a British perspective is going to involve a discomfiting tension – between the small comforts of Labour's cautious social democracy and a gathering sense of global disorder and breakdown.

So far, this dichotomy seems to be encouraging a flimsy British exceptionalism. At the state opening of parliament, for example, the mere sight of Starmer and Angela Rayner apparently sharing warm words with Rishi Sunak and Oliver Dowden was enough for some people to suggest that in a world gone mad, Britain remains an oasis of civility and calm. Starmer then told MPs not only that populism "does nothing to fix our

ILLUSTRATION: MATT KENYON

Labour must expose the snake-oil charm of populism

John Harris

← *Continued from front*

foundations", but that "the British people have rejected it, as they have throughout their history". And at that point, he crossed over from principled opposition to the most dangerous force in our politics into something that sounded rather Panglossian. In the midst of Starmer's political honeymoon, it is an unfashionable point to make, but our national condition is still largely defined by a populist success Labour is still unable to contest: Brexit, arguably the greatest triumph for the new right anywhere in the democratic world. On 4 July, more than 4 million people opted for Reform UK, which, on number of votes, put it well ahead of the revived Liberal Democrats as the UK's de facto third party.

Thanks to Nigel Farage and his followers, and many Tories – including Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, who both surfaced at the Republican convention – British versions of Trumpism are alive, if not necessarily well. Meanwhile, the rightwing press is full of pundits awed by the prospect of Trump's return, who sound like unsettling throwbacks to the more troubled periods of the 20th century. These people are surely looking ahead to a mouthwatering scenario: the Starmer government colliding with its first difficulties just as Trump romps home, and the next Conservative leader decides to double down on the crabby, introverted mindset that has gripped the Tories since 2016.

Whatever its successes, the incarnation of rightwing populism that is currently dominant in the UK probably limits its political potential. Reform UK still tends to look like a force commanded by old and posh former Tories: if its shop window continues to be dominated by mustard-coloured trousers, pints and fags and nostalgia for imperial measures and the Dunkirk spirit, it will not advance nearly as quickly as Farage would like. But clearly, this does not mean that British populism will always take that form. Across the Channel, look at National Rally's 28-year-old president, Jordan Bardella, whose catchphrase is "France is disappearing": along with his 1.5 million TikTok followers, he may herald a grim political future in which the very real problems of millennials and generation Z-ers are successfully blamed on immigration and multiculturalism.

To some extent, the Labour leadership is obviously mindful of populism's still-unfolding threats, and how the government should already be pushing back. It is telling that the term "working class" is suddenly back in the party's vocabulary. Despite glaring policy gaps, much of its initial programme is focused on issues that create the disconnection the new right cynically feeds on: witness plans to boost bus services, increase rights at work and protect people who live in rented housing.

And then there are the difficult subjects that Farage and his ilk will try to exploit over the next few years. Starmer's emphasis on border security might cause dismay in some quarters, but it is an issue to which his government needs coherent answers. It also flags up the clear risk of Labour trying to sound tough on immigration and asylum, fearing a loss of support to the kind of people who want Trumpesque bans, and really believe in a thinly concealed nativism. Trying to close them down by leaning into their agenda threatens to give them even more political space: sooner or later their nasty and impossibilist arguments will surely have to be tackled head-on.

In that sense, all those votes for Reform UK – which came second to Labour in 89 constituencies – highlight perhaps the biggest quandary of all. If a party founded and led by privately educated opportunists can successfully present itself as the voice of ordinary people, when might we find a senior Labour politician with the confidence and wit to expose that for the scam that it is? So far, the post-election foreground has been dominated by an efficient-looking man in a suit, talking about calm and patience and trying his best to return politics to normal. That is a noble endeavour, of course. Whether it will succeed is another question.

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'Comment is free... but facts are sacred' CP Scott

Green politics

Ed Miliband has gone big with GB Energy. He needs the UK to go bigger still

Sir Keir Starmer's legislative plan to green Britain has arrived not a moment too soon. Last week, the government's advisers warned that only a third of the carbon reductions required by law would be met under existing plans. The Climate Change Committee said that, for the first time since setting itself carbon-reduction targets, the UK is not on track to meet its goal. It is supposed to reduce emissions in 2030 by 68% compared with 1990 levels, to meet net zero by 2050.

The UK should, says the committee, now be in a phase of rapid investment and delivery. But the Tories' turn against net zero policies has meant little progress on the rollout of low-carbon technology. That is why Labour's king's speech, which put the environment at the centre of policymaking, was so welcome. Ed Miliband, the energy secretary, won the argument that the urgency of the climate emergency needed a bigger, more interventionist state.

Greening the economy solely through market mechanisms has not unleashed its potential. To change this, Labour confirmed bills to set up state-owned Great British Energy; to modernise the crown estate so the seabed is investment-ready for offshore renewables; and to reform planning so that key infrastructure such as grid upgrades don't get tied up in arguments with local communities. Mr Miliband had promised the kind of expansion in clean energy that the committee says is now required. That means much more solar and wind energy secured by GB Energy "which will own, manage and operate clean power projects".

There are some valid doubts about whether its limited budget – £8.3bn over five years – will mean GB Energy is just a co-investor in schemes rather than a serious rival to private investors. Without well-funded state intervention, the Common Wealth thinktank points out, the government would end up with the current market model of "uncoordinated [investment], replete with barriers and delays and vulnerable to policy errors".

Mr Miliband won't deliver a green transition – and good jobs – by sticking to the status quo. He also has to meet two challenges. One is electoral: the Green party came second to Labour in dozens of seats and will capitalise on any failure to make good on the party's climate pledges. The second is that without sufficient action, acts of civil disobedience are likely to spread.

To demonstrate its superiority, GB Energy must translate low-cost clean energy generation into lower bills. This means probably adopting a policy like the New Economics Foundation's "energy guarantee" to protect essential needs, reduce bills and cut carbon emissions. This scheme seeks to provide energy for free, or at low cost, while applying a premium to higher levels of usage – which would incentivise investment in energy efficiency and renewables.

Political parties can modify perceptions by creating a plausible narrative that alters the way the public construes salient issues. Thoughtful critics say that may not be enough. Helen Thompson, professor of political economy at Cambridge University, remains sceptical of Labour's raised expectations and about the utility of its goal to fully decarbonise electricity generation by 2030. She argues that without the state spending large sums of money to electrify the country's heating and transportation systems with green energy, Britain would still be exposed to inflationary oil and gas price shocks. That is an argument – as Mr Miliband would say – to go big, not go small, when it comes to the climate emergency.

North Korea

High-level defectors make the headlines, but more would leave if they could

South Korea celebrated its inaugural Defectors' Day on 14 July, in honour of the 34,000 North Koreans who have made their home there. Within hours, news broke that one of Pyongyang's senior diplomats had joined them. Ri Il-kyu, who had been a political counsellor in Cuba, is the highest-level defector since 2016, when North Korea's deputy ambassador to Britain vanished from London and surfaced in Seoul. Mr Ri said that he was motivated by disillusionment with the regime, though frustrated ambition seems to have contributed.

Such insiders can bring valuable insight into political life and events in Pyongyang. Any such information is especially welcome when the North has deliberately increased its isolation and opacity, and when there are growing concerns about its burgeoning arms-for-oil relationship with Russia and advances in its weapons programme. George Robertson, head of the new Labour government's defence review, warned last Tuesday that a "deadly quartet" of nations – China, Russia, Iran and North Korea – are acting together against the west.

The North, previously identified alongside Iran and Iraq in George W Bush's "axis of evil", might see that as something of a promotion. Long an expert in using nuclear blackmail as a diplomatic tool, North Korea has now seized on the opportunities afforded by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moscow has used its UN security council veto to prevent the panel of experts monitoring Pyongyang's sanctions violations from continuing their work – shutting off another avenue for scrutiny.

Mr Ri told a South Korean newspaper that Ri Yong-ho, the foreign minister who vanished from the spotlight two years ago, was sent to a prison camp, while another senior diplomat dealing with the US, Han Song-ryol, was executed for spying. Life in the elite is no guarantee of safety, and leaving it can be still more dangerous. Kim Jong-un's own brother was killed in public, at the airport in Kuala Lumpur, in a plot arranged by Pyongyang's agents (though North Korea denied responsibility). Collective punishment ensures that many stay in line for fear of what might happen to their families.

"Every North Korean thinks at least once about living in South Korea," Mr Ri said. Belief in the system broke down long ago. The humanitarian crisis has deepened. But few outside the elite have the opportunity to flee. The number of defectors overall has plummeted in recent years, from 2,700 a decade ago to just 196 last year, thanks to crackdowns by the Chinese authorities in border areas and then – as Covid struck – the closing of borders, building of fences and intensification of domestic controls by the North Korean regime. This has also drastically reduced knowledge of what is happening in the country.

In a powerful report from Human Rights Watch this spring, one defector explained that a relative was scared to leave because of "a general sense of terror much stronger than a bullet or a wire fence". Those who are caught face prison camps where beatings, sexual violence and torture are said to be rife, part of an extensive system of forced labour detailed in a new report by the UN human rights agency. High or low, North Koreans face repression and brutality. But while so many struggle to survive, those at the top enjoy material comfort – and if that's not enough to make them stay, they have a better chance of getting out.



Women march against the anti-abortion bill in London in November 1979
PHOTOGRAPH: PHOTOFUSION/ REX FEATURES

They fought for women's rights - why are they forgotten now?

Susanna Rustin



I looked for the house in London where, in 1855, Barbara Leigh Smith hosted the first meeting of the campaign for married women's property rights. A petition to change the law decreeing that husbands owned everything marked the start of her lobbying career. But Blandford Square was remodelled when Marylebone station was built, and the building is long gone.

Then I tried Langham Place near Oxford Circus. Here a plaque marks the site of the Queen's Hall, destroyed in the blitz, while another commemorates a dinner attended by Oscar Wilde. But there is nothing to mark the place where Barbara and her friends established the English Woman's Journal and headquarters of their Langham Place group, which campaigned for women's education and jobs, along with a club that charged members one guinea a year.

It isn't that Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (the last is her married name) has been entirely neglected. There are biographies, and a portrait owned by Girton College, Cambridge, is at present on show in Tate Britain's Now You See Us exhibition.

But with women's rights to be educated, work, own property and vote secured, and even the Garrick Club now admitting women, does it really matter that she, her friends and numerous other women who fought for women's rights, aren't better known? Having spent the past three years writing a book about them, I think the answer is yes. It isn't that all feminism's forebears have been forgotten. But those who are remembered tend to be celebrated for their most singular, dramatic deeds. Suffragettes pouring acid on golf courses and women's libbers flour-bombing the 1970 Miss World contest have both recently featured in films.

I love these stories. But they are not how-to manuals. And from the perspective of now, with a huge problem of violence against women, an ongoing crisis around care - widely recognised to disproportionately affect women - and deep concern about maternity services among pressing issues, it is important to think about how change happens. Harriet Wistrich's new book, Sister in Law, contains no hunger strikes or bra fires, but it shows how feminist lawyers worked with activist groups including Southall Black Sisters to carry on work the Women's Liberation Movement began in the 1970s.

From equal pay to abortion, it has taken grassroots as well as legislative action to advance women's interests

With 263 MPs, the parliamentary representation of women is at an all-time high of 40%. For the generations past who fought for women's rights, this is a triumphant vindication. But female MPs are still a minority and have many claims on their time and efforts. Parliamentarians are representatives, not substitutes, and it would be a mistake to conclude that these numbers make civil society groups redundant.

From equal pay to abortion, it has always taken grassroots as well as legislative action to advance women's interests. Rights were won by a movement comprising multiple campaigns over decades, not a handful of famous faces. The Langham Place women (who called themselves a "Reform firm") were part of this. Two of its members - Barbara Bodichon and Emily Davies - went on to found Girton, the first women's college at Cambridge. Another society (again including Barbara) led the overlooked first stage of the campaign for women's suffrage. Female trade unionists were crucial to pushing forward women's rights at work, and recognising where labour and women's rights came into conflict (some male trade unionists were as sexist as their bosses, and feared that female workers would undercut wages). In the 1920s the Six-Point Group was a precursor to lobbying organisations such as the Fawcett Society. Feminist criminal justice activism, dating back decades, has been crucial in highlighting failures and biases in the handling of domestic and sexual violence.

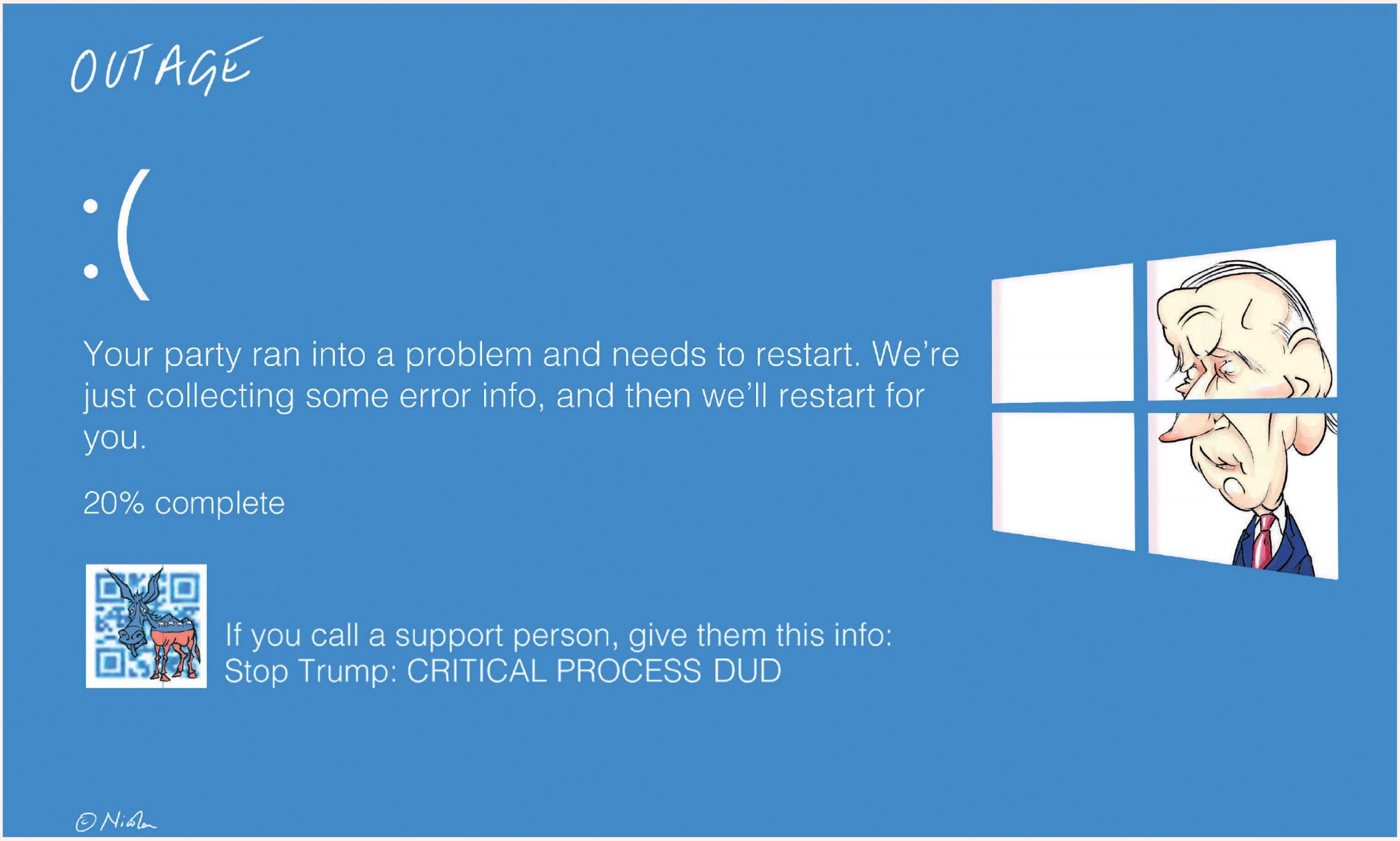
One reason why I think feminism's history has been disregarded is a paradoxical legacy of the liberal, reforming tradition that Barbara Bodichon was part of. If things are perpetually improving, then no progressive is ever progressive enough. In recent years the left has been successful, in part, in demanding a re-evaluation of history - above all of the legacies of imperialism. This shift in perspective was long overdue.

But while it is imperative to confront the horrors of colonialism, we should avoid blanket condemnations of Victorian values - which were more complex than is often assumed - and their corollary, a conviction of the moral superiority of the present. Zadie Smith, whose most recent novel dealt with slavery, commented on this self-congratulatory tendency last year, when she said: "We live on top of a monstrosity now ... When we say 'How could they ever?', how can *we* ever?' ... Are you going to get on a plane this summer? We do it all the time."

This might seem a long way from where I started, looking for Barbara Bodichon's traces in London. But for feminists, I think a renewed engagement with the past is essential. I am not arguing for a policy of veneration, either of 19th-century campaigners or those still living. Generational conflict is part of politics and always has been. But the failures and divisions of the past, as well as the victories, can be learned from. Barbara herself was a tactful diplomat who understood that if women were to move into areas of life that men wanted to keep them out of (universities, art, politics), they had to work together.

Absorption in history can also be a form of escape. I've experienced this myself while working on my book. But for reasons of politics as well as pleasure, dead feminists could do with some respect.

* **Susanna Rustin** *is the author of Sexed: A History of British Feminism*



I have taken the plunge into tiny swimwear

Rich Pelley



Europeans are better at almost everything than us Britons, from food, weather and Eurovision to - ahem - football. But one place they lose, trousers down, is in acceptable male beachwear. Only on the beaches of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Gran Canaria and Ostseebad Warnemünde will you find the local men confidently peeled down to nothing but a tiny pair of swimming briefs or, worse still, in beach cafes come lunchtime, just the briefs with socks and sandals.

The British wouldn't usually be seen dead in such figure-hugging monstrosities. Why is this? Has our collective modesty led us to a national repression? Or is there simply an unspoken British tradition of preferring to avoid implying: "Here are my genitals. Please rate them."

Tight, brief-style men's swimsuits became popular in Australia at the start of the 20th century. The former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott was noted for his "budgie smugglers" - a term used in Australia, New Zealand and the UK as "a jocular reference to a man's tight-fitting swimming costume or swimsuit appearing as if he has a budgerigar concealed inside, ie his bulging genitals".

Famous fans from these isles include Ray Winstone, who sports a bright yellow pair in the 2000 film Sexy Beast. David Beckham modelled an impractical white pair for H&M in 2014, and the presenter Nick Knowles wore a fetching red pair in the I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here! jungle in 2018. Some lists of famous wearers of bum-huggers include Daniel Craig, who comes out of the sea in a tight pair of light blue trunks in 2006's Casino Royale, a tribute to Ursula Andress and her white bikini from 1962's Dr No. His trunks later sold for £44,450 at auction despite the fact that, to the trained eye, they extend too far down the leg to count as true budgies.

In April, the Irish actor Andrew Scott donned a pair of retro black-and-white film-noir huggies for his portrayal of the 1950s sociopathic conman Tom Ripley - although they were perhaps less daring than the lime green version worn by Matt Damon in 1999 when playing the same character. Earlier this month, the Normal People actor Theo James filmed a new advert for Dolce & Gabbana in Capri in a pair of white tighties. Trunks by BDXY, the actor Luke Evans's brand, leave little to the imagination, such as what the outline of his business looks like.

According to Lucy Maguire, the senior trends editor at Vogue Business, this is all thanks to the boom in "babygirl men", with celebrities such as Jacob Elordi, Timothée Chalamet and Pedro Pascal unafraid "to show more skin and embrace bold style choices".

Prince William wasn't shy of a pair of grey ball-huggers playing water polo at university. You wouldn't catch Tom Daley plunging into the pool without a pair, either. But this is OK because that's what swimming trunks are for: swimming. I'm a regular (if not very good) swimmer and wouldn't be seen dead in a pair, preferring oversize orange Superdry boarding shorts that go down to my knees and are freezing cold the millisecond I get out of the water. In the name of journalism, I decided to swap my baggy shorts for a more figure-hugging little number and pop down to the local lido to see how I got on.

Trunks usually come with an inside netting. My eye-wincingly tight pair of £19.99 "men's low-rise swim briefs" gave me a weird feeling of skin on polyester that I hadn't experienced before. Also, my old trunks had pockets. Where was I supposed to keep my locker key? I don't own any sandals, so I styled out the walk from changing room to pool in trunks plus trainers and got in as quickly as possible before someone noticed me.

Without the usual swim drag of swaths of material, I instantly felt the benefit. Forty lengths later I'd forgotten I was wearing them completely (which has happened before when my shorts have fallen off, sunk to the bottom and I've swum on obliviously). My skin-tight briefs remained so safely attached I'd happily wear them next time I take the Wild Water Rapids at Center Parcs, where my trunks also once made it down before I did. Am I a convert? For swimming, yes. For fashion, I remain unconvinced. Call me old fashioned, but next time I want to smuggle a budgerigar, I think I'll do it somewhere other than my pants.

✻ **Rich Pelley** *is a freelance writer*

Letters

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Established 1906

Country diary

Pen Pyrod, Gower

At the very tip of the Gower peninsula, a beast rears west. Its English name, Worm's Head, derives from *wyrm*, a monstrous serpentine beast – a Welsh dragon of sorts. To me, the lumpy sometimes-island, connected to the mainland by a jagged causeway at low tide, looks like a turtle, with a long narrow carapace peering into the Atlantic drizzle.

There's a Coastwatch station overlooking the causeway, where the passages of ships, tide, weather and wildlife are logged and advice is issued to those wishing to cross. Despite warnings, the hapless and unwary still get stranded from time to time. When I arrive, the tide is ripping over the rocks – I'm too late to make the trip. Instead, I climb to the nub end of the land, where I scramble between outcrops of fissured and lichen-crusted rock, over flower-rich turf smelling of thyme, salt and petrichor.

I stop when I spot a hunched form on the next outcrop. The Coastwatch volunteers are not the only sentinels here. A female kestrel is roosting with her back to me. Her head swivels; she scans me, then looks away. I pick a way past her cautiously, giving her has much space as I can, and nestle into a turf-lined hollow from which I can see her, the worm and the sea. The mizzle arrives, pinging softly off my jacket, prompting the bird to ruffle feathers as red as her Welsh name, *cudyll coch*, suggests, as red as the ochre topsoil here.

She settles again and we both watch the water, whose surface is crosshatched into a texture like skin by small waves reflecting off the rocks. A seal with a pale bib and huge black eyes bobs to the surface, regards us for a minute, then rolls languorously away. My eyelids feel heavy.

I wake 20 minutes later. It's still drizzling, but somehow I'm warm and, if not exactly dry, strangely unsaturated. The bird is still there and I think perhaps she has been dozing too. The thought prompts an emotion that I can't name, but it's close to gratitude.

She doesn't stir as I leave to climb back up the way I came, and I can still see her silhouetted form a long way back along the cliff path.

Amy-Jane Beer

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UK defence policy rests on unity in a divided world

Regarding your article (UK faces defence threat from 'deadly quartet', 16 July), the new government's strategic defence and security review must promote a maritime defence strategy. Britain and global partners are threatened by the aggression of Russia, North Korea, Iran and proxies – China too, sadly.

The sea remains central to national prosperity and security – 95% of trade by volume is in ships. Our merchant navy, responsible for trade and supply chains, is vital to national resilience. Protection of trade is a prime duty of the senior service – witness HMS Diamond shooting down Houthi missiles aimed at merchant shipping in the Red Sea.

The Royal Navy, Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) and merchant navy are fundamental to our island trading nation, but all have too few ships and people to fulfil their roles. Urgent unsentimental reorganisation of our armed forces provides the money to equip a more capable navy.

The Royal Navy, RFA and merchant navy operate round the clock, all year, in peacetime and war, protecting and connecting our islands and 14 UK overseas territories, working with allies worldwide and promoting global Britain. In the Cayman Islands, HMS Trent is at the forefront of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Warships and commercial ships provide the UK with considerable utility in the mighty oceans deep – the fleet must have sufficient ships and equipment to fulfil its roles effectively. *Si vis pacem, para bellum*.

Mark Dickinson *General secretary, Nautilus International*, **R Adm Bob Love, Commodore Michael Clapp, Capt Martin Reed, Dr James WE Smith** *King's College London*

● What Britain needs is not more defence spending but fewer enemies. Russia does not want to be our enemy and falling out with it has had serious repercussions for our finance and services sector. In 2007, Vladimir Putin made it clear that Nato expansion would not be tolerated if extended to Ukraine, and, one way or another, it won't.

China does not want to be our enemy, but quite reasonably resents our interference in its internal affairs. Hong Kong and Xinjiang are parts of China. The South China Sea is the concern of those surrounding it. We need China as a source of consumer goods and for access to its market. Our interference in the Middle East has created the refugees now crossing the Channel.

Harold Wilson abandoned British involvement "east of Suez". We are in no financial position to resurrect it. "Mind your own business" should become the central tenet of our foreign policy.

Peter Hartill
Matlock, Derbyshire

● Britain's defence review needs to prioritise soft power to achieve real security. Wars between England and Scotland or with Germany did not end because we spent more on defence but because states built robust mechanisms for dialogue and conflict resolution.

We could spend 20% of GDP on arms and still not defeat a determined onslaught by China and Russia. Our best defence is through sustained cooperation and diplomacy to prevent conflict erupting into war.

Our biggest threat is global heating, a common enemy against which humanity must unite.

Titus Alexander
Author of Practical Politics: Lessons in Power and Democracy

Trump shooting and a picture of US violence

Your editorial on Donald Trump's shooting (15 July) neglects to mention the long history of violence that has characterised life in the US since its founding. It's a violence against the perceived other, the violence of slavery and the Indigenous inhabitants of the Americas, the violence against workers as a product, the violence of capital that creates violence against authority.

You might well have mentioned the history of state violence overseas: from the so-called Spanish-American war through Vietnam and much of south-east Asia and Central America to Iraq and Afghanistan and the ongoing violence in Gaza and the West Bank.

Our American culture of violence is inseparable from our identity: a historical product of myth-making and media capitalism that sells, under the guise of free speech and unrestrained commerce, a cult of rugged individualism peddling AR-15s without regard for public safety and general welfare.

All these highlight the cruelty of the hollow pleas of a rich white political class to condemn violence against them.

James C Wright
William R Kenan Jr chair and professor emeritus, Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, US

● Jonathan Jones describes the "religious suggestiveness" of Evan Vucci's picture of a bloodied Donald Trump, fist raised beneath the stars and stripes ('This uncanny image can be summed up in one word: blood', 16 July). To Jones's iconographic parallels we can add Piero della Francesca's Resurrection, in which the wounded Christ rises, holding a flag in his fist.

Christian supporters of Trump will see his survival as "mystical", as Jones says. Let's hope they remember the words of the man in Piero's "flag and fist" picture: "If anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it."

Rev Robert Titley
London

● Jonathan Jones's excellent tour of imagery echoed by the Trump post-assassination attempt photograph missed one parallel: Delacroix's Liberty Leading the People. All he needed to do was rip his shirt open, Superman-style, and his installation as embodiment of the nation would be complete.

Roy Stewart
Caterham, Surrey

Golf courses preserve vanishing habitats

Derek Worthing suggests building on land "wasted" as private golf courses (Letters, 15 July). Here in north Wirral, it is only the existence of these courses that has prevented the dune land from being covered in concrete like the rest of the Mersey coast. The courses devote much effort to protecting vanishing habitats. Meanwhile, they attract thousands of visitors annually, pumping millions into the local economy, and employ hundreds of local people.

If Mr Worthing is looking for a target, I suggest the hundreds of brownfield sites in this area that are unpopular with developers.

Kevin Murphy
Wallasey, Merseyside

● Land devoted to golf courses isn't "wasted". Golf courses provide a haven for diverse threatened flora and fauna, the latter including the pensioners who play, thereby keeping hospitals free for those who do not appreciate the benefit of fresh air and exercise. Golfers provide their own energy to play, and maintaining the course has a positive carbon footprint. Golf is – and always has been – green.

Phil Dowell
Bridport, Dorset

Corrections and clarifications

● We reported that Bamburgh in Northumberland had scored five stars for its "seafront and pier" in a Which? survey (Dunes and castle help Bamburgh win best seaside spot yet again, 19 July, p21). The village does not have a pier, but "seafront/pier" was the category in which Bamburgh was top-rated for its long sandy beach with views of the castle.

● It is the Advertising Standards Authority, not "Agency" (Wessex Water ad banned over misleading omissions, 10 July, p35).

Editorial complaints and corrections can be sent to guardian.readers@theguardian.com

Royalty and poverty come face to face

Another front-page triumph for the Guardian last Thursday: a photo of the ludicrously ermined, beribboned and bejewelled Charles and Camilla perched on golden thrones above an article about the dire levels of child poverty in the UK. A neat juxtaposition paints a thousand words.

Claire Whatley
Salisbury, Wiltshire

● I wonder how long it will take the taskforce on child poverty to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw and argue that "The trouble with the poor is that they don't have enough money" (Report, 18 July).

Marie Catterson
London

● Building more houses will not fix the housing crisis (Report, 17 July). Britain does not have a lack of houses, it has a lack of houses for people who need them. Without rent controls, limits on second homes, and phasing out buy-to-let mortgages, new homes will just be snapped up by the rentier class and the problem will persist.

David Youngs
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

● Re Royal Mail's elastic bands (Letters, 20 July), when I delivered the Christmas post as a student, we tied the bundles of post with string, using a postman's slipknot. We returned the string to the sorting office to be used again.

Peter Hames
Northam, Devon

● Our local library now helps with elastic bands. If you reserve a book, you can find it on a shelf for collection with a piece of old paper with your name on it. It is of course wrapped round the book with a rubber band.

Bob Hargreaves
Bury, Lancashire



Ray Reardon

One of the great British snooker players hailed for winning the world championship six times

Ray Reardon, who has died aged 91 from cancer, was snooker's world champion six times in the 1970s, the decade in which the game was changing from subterranean folk sport into a TV attraction.

Always immaculately dressed, a highly popular and genial ambassador for the game, ever adept at engaging a crowd, he remains the oldest champion and, on the strength of his 18-15 defeat by Alex Higgins at the age of 49 in 1982, its oldest finalist. After his wins in 1970, 1973-76 and 1978 he was still good enough to reach the 1985 semi-finals, when he was 52, before Steve Davis, the dominant figure of the 80s, trounced him 16-5.

As a player, he transformed himself from brilliant young potter into supreme tactician. In later life his deep knowledge of the game was utilised by Ronnie O'Sullivan, who acknowledged him as a significant factor in capturing the 2004 world title.

Commercially, Reardon's peak came too early; prize money of £7,500 for winning the 1978 world title, £12,500 for reaching the 1982 final and £20,000 as a 1985 semi-finalist looks like petty cash by today's standards, although it did not seem too bad in those days, particularly as the snooker revival had started from a low base.

Reardon was born into a snooker family, to Cynthia and Ben Reardon, in Tredegar, south Wales, where he attended Georgetown secondary school. His father, a coalminer, played in the local league for the Miners' Institute, as did his uncles. When Ray was 14, and after a brief stint as a motor mechanic, he became a miner himself. On his 17th birthday, in 1949, he made his first century break in the morning and won the first of six consecutive Welsh amateur titles in the evening.

Reardon taking part in the Masters Snooker Championship at Wembley Arena, London, in the 1980s. Below, in 2004 with Ronnie O'Sullivan

BOB THOMAS/GETTY; TREVOR SMITH/ALAMY

In 1956, the family moved to Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, in search of better job prospects. That same year he looked likely to become English amateur champion when he held a 7-3 overnight lead against Tommy Gordon in the final at Burroughes Hall in London, but his tip flew off with his first shot the next day, perhaps through the agency of a betting gang. Forced to play with an unfamiliar cue in those pre-superglue days, he lost 11-9.

Eleven years in the pits ended in 1957 after he was buried in a roof fall at the Florence Colliery in Stoke, unable to move a muscle for three hours. "I had to breathe through my nose," he was to recall, "because if I opened my mouth I'd suffocate to death on the dust."

> **I had to breathe through my nose because if I had opened my mouth I'd have suffocated to death on the dust**

With iron self-control he kept calm by imagining he was playing endless games of marbles with his eight-year-old brother, Ron.



After that he became a police officer in Stoke, earning a commendation for bravery for disarming a man who was brandishing a shotgun, and another for crawling across a frosty rooftop to drop through a skylight on to an unsuspecting burglar.

In 1964 he achieved his ambition of winning the English amateur championship, beating John Spencer, himself to become a three times world champion, 11-8 in the final at the Central Hall, Birmingham.

A professional career was hardly worth contemplating at the time, as the World Snooker Championship had lain dormant from 1957 until 1964. But after selection for an amateur tour to South Africa he was offered a return visit as a professional and in 1967 took the plunge at the age of 35, in time for the revival of the championship tournament and the advent of BBC Two's Pot Black. This was a half-hour, one-frame competition that he won twice (1969 and 1979) and that introduced the game and its leading players to new audiences.

Then the world championship ran throughout an entire season of week-long matches, and in 1970 Reardon became champion for the first time by beating John Pulman 37-33 at the Victoria Hall in London. At the City Exhibition Halls in Manchester in 1973, the first time the championship was telescoped into a fortnight, he recovered from 19-12 down to beat Spencer 23-22 in the semi-finals and from 7-0 down defeated Australia's Eddie Charlton 38-32 to regain the title.

He retained it a year later comparatively uneventfully, but in the 1975 final in Melbourne, Australia, had to make an epic recovery from 29-23 adrift to beat Charlton 31-30. He disposed of the mercurial Higgins 27-16 in the 1976 final at Wythenshawe Forum in Manchester, and in 1978 became champion for the last time at the age of 45 with his 25-18 victory over the South African left-hander Perrie Mans at the Crucible theatre in Sheffield.

Reardon retired to Brixham, Devon, in 1991, later moving to Torquay, but having kept up with contacts on the club scene that had given him his staple income in his early professional days, he continued with exhibitions as well as his summer tours of Pontins holiday camps, a routine he much preferred to the unpaid slog of qualifying competitions.

He is survived by his second wife, Carol Covington, whom he married in 1987, and by two children, Darren and Melanie, from his first marriage, to Susan Carter, in 1959, which ended in divorce.

Clive Everton

Ray (Raymond) Reardon, snooker player, born 8 October 1932; died 19 July 2024

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Robert Irwin

Author, scholar and historian who enjoyed success with his novel The Arabian Nightmare

To readers of fiction, Robert Irwin, who has died aged 77, was known as the author of a series of historical and fantastical novels, 10 in total, beginning with The Arabian Nightmare (1983). This book was already written in the late 1970s when its author, then in his early 30s, attended the writing course at Morley College in London. But it was at Morley that Irwin met Eric Lane, a fellow aspiring novelist, who would go on to found Dedalus Press and publish The Arabian Nightmare as one of Dedalus's first three books.

The venture was not an immediate success. "There was great excitement when Hatchards in Piccadilly had sold a copy of The Arabian Nightmare," Lane said, "but unfortunately it was later found out of position in the bookshop." Persistence brought the book to the attention of reviewers, however, including Hilary Bailey of the Guardian, who called it "constantly entertaining".

As Bailey noted, Irwin had taken "the story-within-a-story technique of the Arab storyteller a stage further, so that a tangle of dreams and imaginings becomes part of the narrative fabric". The nightmare of the novel's title is the worst affliction of all, involving "infinite pain" while sleeping, yet pain that is forgotten in the morning. The Arabian Nightmare was later republished by both Penguin and Dedalus, and has been translated into 20 languages.

Alongside Irwin's novels over the years came a series of nonfiction works about the Middle East and Islam, such as his useful guide The Arabian Nights: A Companion (1994), Islamic Art (1997), Night and Horses and the Desert: The Penguin Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature (1999), The Alhambra (2004), Mamluks and Crusaders (2010) and Ibn Khaldun: An Intellectual Biography (2018).

He served as Middle East editor of the Times Literary Supplement, and in 2023 he was awarded the Royal Asiatic Society's Medal in recognition of his outstanding contribution to scholarship in the field of Asian studies.

The most controversial of Irwin's works was his polemical study For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies (2006), published in the US as Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and Its Discontents. There he took issue with Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) and its pervasive influence.

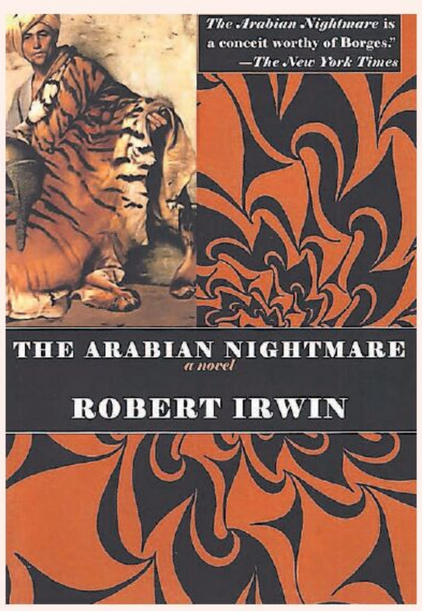
This was not exactly an attack on Said's political views, with much of which Irwin agreed. "American coverage of the Middle East and especially of Palestinian matters has mostly been disgraceful – biased, ignorant, and abusive," Irwin said in interview at the time of the book's publication.

At issue instead was Said's uncertain grasp of both history and historiography, his lumping together of western scholars of any nationality whatsoever, and his consequent argument that their work was implicated in the western imperialist project.

Irwin at his home in south London. He acquired a deep knowledge of the Middle East and the Islamic world through years of study and travel. His book The Arabian Nightmare, 1983, has been translated into 20 languages

EAMONN MCCABE/ THE GUARDIAN; OVERLOOK





Although there had been many criticisms of Said before For Lust of Knowing, just as there had been many criticisms of orientalism as a dangerous idea before Said's intervention, Irwin's book shed new light on the human figures Said had in mind. It persuaded some readers to think again, and antagonised others. Irwin had acquired deep knowledge of the Middle East and the Islamic world through years of study and travel.

He was born in Guildford, Surrey, the son of Joseph, a psychiatrist who served as superintendent at Holloway Sanatorium, and his wife, Wilhelmina. After attending Epsom college, which he loathed, Irwin studied modern history at Merton College, Oxford, and then worked on a thesis about the Mamluks, under the supervision of Bernard Lewis, at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

While the thesis remained incomplete, Irwin converted to Islam at this time and, as he recalled in Memoirs of a Dervish: Sufis, Mystics and the Sixties (2011), entered a Sufi order as an initiate, in the Algerian town of Mostaganem.

In London he tried LSD ("still legal when I did it," he later observed), anarchism, theosophy and everything else that the 60s had to offer, on a quest towards "understanding the meaning of life". In Mostaganem he experimented with asceticism with essentially the same end in mind. "To have spent my life muttering over my rosary in a monastery seems pointless," he recollected of that period. "God does not need that and neither do I."

If nothing else, these early experiences served as material for novels, by turn surreal and sensuous, that look back to this period: Satan Wants Me (1999), The Runes Have Been Cast (2021) and Tom's Version (2023). These last two constitute two-thirds of a trilogy that Irwin was working on at the time of his death.

Experiences of a different kind inform The Limits of Vision (1986), his second novel. In 1972 Irwin had been appointed a lecturer in medieval history at the University of St Andrews, and became a part-time lecturer, at various institutions, five years later. Having married Helen Taylor, also in 1972, he was now a house husband with a young daughter to look after, while Helen pursued her career as a parliamentary official.

The Limits of Vision mixes fantasy with housework, as its (female) protagonist fends off Mucor, the demonic "principle of evil" that threatens to engulf the world in "dust, fermentation, dry rot, iron mould", etc.

Irwin could also juggle, perform conjuring tricks and indulge in a serious love of shopping, showing a dandyish side in his passion for smart shoes. He loved roller-blading ("Roller-blading keeps me sane") and acquired a considerable degree of proficiency. Around his part of south London, he was known as the man on roller-blades; he kept a pencil in his pocket for writing on the move. On one occasion he accidentally disrupted a TV outside-broadcast interview with the rightwing historian David Irving by roller-blading through the background.

> **To have spent my life muttering over my rosary in a monastery seems pointless. God does not need that and neither do I**

His love of books, meanwhile, led to the creation of a library that was, he confessed, more abundant than orderly. His study, as he told the Guardian in 2008, ran not only to an astrolabe, purchased in a Damascan souk, but a Qur'an stand "bought very cheap in an auction in Scotland in the 70s", a number of Venetian carnival masks and a brass celestial globe "bought in a street market in Mumbai".

After a diagnosis of cancer in 2020, and despite his difficulty with getting about without a stick, and eventually a wheelchair, Irwin continued to travel, speaking abroad and trying to avoid being drawn into mere punditry on the worsening situation in the Middle East, which he found "intensely depressing" (while holding out hope that "things will settle down – it'll just take decades").

He is survived by Helen, their daughter, Felicity, and two grandchildren.

Michael Caines

Robert Graham Irwin, writer and scholar, born 23 August 1946; died 28 June 2024

Birthdays

Marcus Agius, banker, 78; **Simon Barnes**, wildlife and sports writer, 73; **Barbara Cassani**, businesswoman, 64; **George Clinton**, singer and songwriter, 83; **Prof Sir Philip Cohen**, biochemist, 79; **Willem Dafoe**, actor, 69; **Danny Glover**, actor, 78; **Adam Godley**, actor, 60; **Louise Haigh**, transport secretary, 37; **Don Henley**,singer, songwriter and drummer, 77; **Nigel Hess**, composer, 71; **Rhys Ifans**, actor, 57; **Joanna Kennedy**, civil engineer, 74; **Bonnie Langford**, actor, 60; **Mireille Mathieu**, singer, 78; **Carolyn Quinn**, broadcaster, 63; **Paul Schrader**, film director and screenwriter, 78; **Terence Stamp**, actor, 86; **Rufus Wainwright**, singer and songwriter, 51.

Announcements

In Memoriam

HARRIS, Rick. 3 March 1948 to 21 July 2009. Missed and remembered with love always.

WILLIAMSON, Clare, 1 May 1961 to 22 July 2023 and **Rosemary,** 15 April 1956 to 22 July 2007. Both much loved and greatly missed.

For Announcements, Acknowledgments, Adoptions, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Births, Deaths, Engagements, Memorial Services and In Memoriam, email us at announcements@theguardian.com including your name, address and telephone number or phone 0203 353 2114.

Saturday's solutions

Sandwich sudoku

3	8	4	5	2	9	1	6	7	0
6	9	5	7	1	4	3	8	2	12
2	7	1	3	8	6	9	5	4	17
8	5	6	2	4	1	7	9	3	7
9	3	2	6	7	5	4	1	8	27
4	1	7	8	9	3	5	2	6	15
1	2	3	4	5	8	6	7	9	35
5	4	8	9	6	7	2	3	1	18
7	6	9	1	3	2	8	4	5	0
4	15	26	0	19	10	3	0	0	

Killer Sudoku 927

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

Cryptic crossword
Solution No. 29,434

T	B	A	■	R	P	■	S	■	B	■	■	■	■	■
Y	O	U	N	G	■	E	M	I	L	E	Z	O	L	A
P	■	M	■	R	■	P	■	S	■	N	■	N	■	K
O	F	S	H	A	L	O	T	T	■	A	R	O	S	E
■	■	R	■	■	R	■	I	■	T	■	B	■	■	■
B	O	U	Q	U	E	T	■	L	E	O	P	O	L	D
L	■	S	■	N	■	E	■	■	R	■	■	■	I	■
O	O	H	E	D	■	R	E	F	■	I	S	L	E	T
O	■	E	■	■	L	■	A	■	O	■	T	■	■	■
M	U	B	A	R	A	K	■	O	R	L	A	N	D	O
■	U	■	P	■	A	■	U	■	■	■	E	■	■	■
L	I	N	D	A	■	R	U	R	A	L	I	S	E	D
A	■	G	■	N	■	P	■	I	■	I	■	O	■	A
D	E	L	E	T	I	O	N	S	■	L	A	M	E	R
Y	■	E	■	S	■	V	■	H	■	Y	■	E	■	N

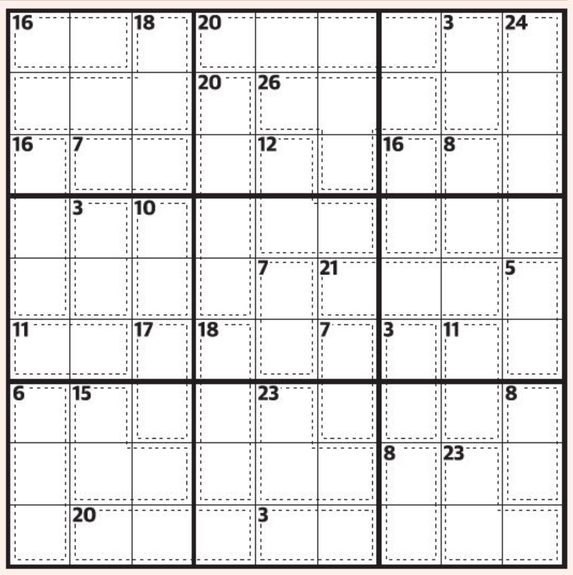
This week's winners of The Language Lover's Puzzle Book are:
Simon Drew, Dartmouth
Phil Walsh, Kings Norton
Susanna Ferrar, London
Maria Stringer, Haslingfield
K Jewell, Liverpool
Please allow 28 days for delivery

Stuck? For help call **0906 200 83 83**. Calls cost £1.10 per minute, plus your phone company's access charge. Service supplied by ATS.
Call **0330 333 6946** for customer service (charged at standard rate).
Want more? Get access to more than 4,000 puzzles at **theguardian.com/crossword**. To buy puzzle books, visit **guardianbookshop.com** or call **0330 333 6846**.

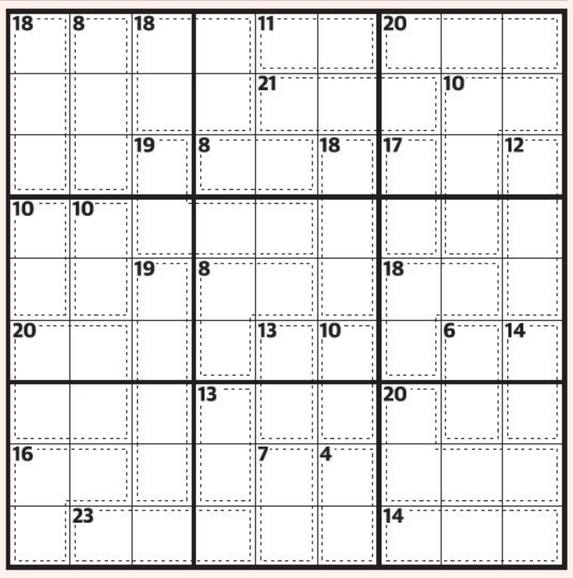
Killer sudoku

Easy

The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.



Medium



Codeword

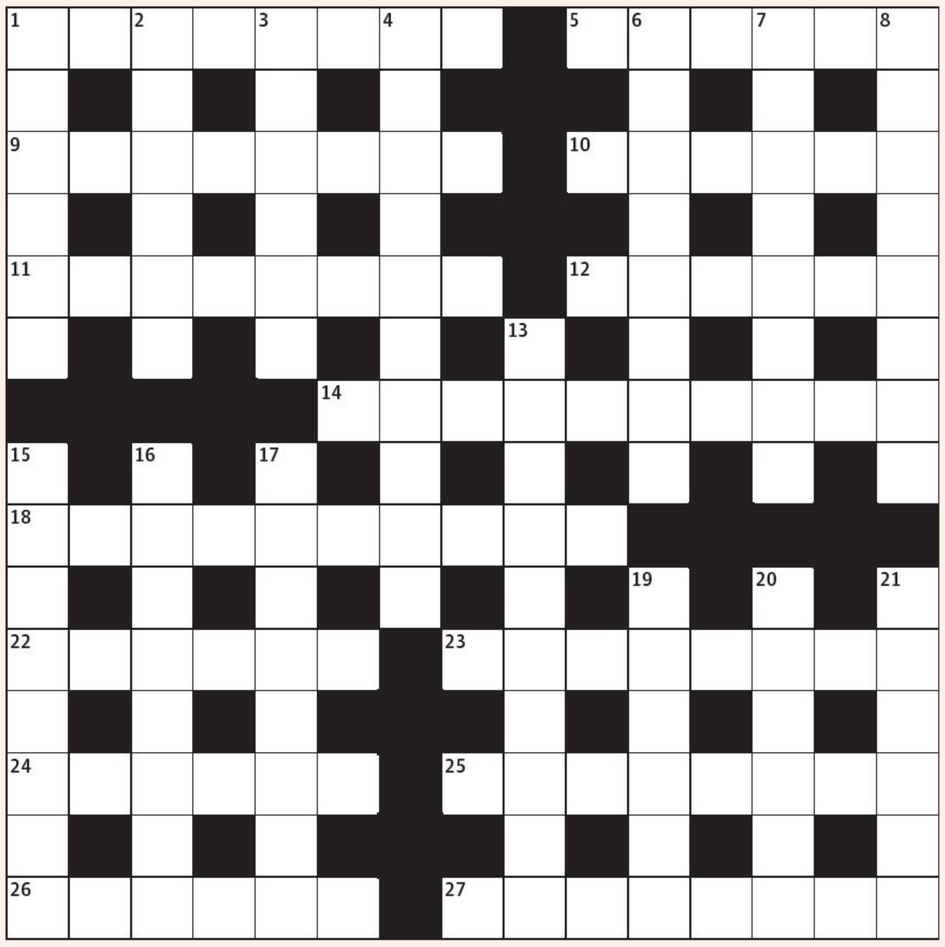
Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid, and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. The letters decoded should help you to identify other letters and words in the grid.

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

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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

Guardian cryptic crossword No 29,441 set by Anto



Across

1 Communist group that gets you going (3,5)
5 My established way to keep figure in shape (6)
9 Fool breaks a part of scenery as artistic political statement (8)
10 Band take off with drug (6)
11 Acceptable to have time for such racists? (3-5)
12 Chicken in pot that's enough for two (6)
14 One skipping meal, looking to get free travel (4,6)
18 Great facts about how actors work (10)
22 Regularly feed bimbo lies that can be swallowed (6)
23 Support for Elizabeth in relation to marriage partner (8)
24 Show Chinese doctrine contains excessive spin (6)
25 Ride out in direction that's most strange (8)
26 Waiter, one with lots of information (6)
27 One million flowers - these may enhance front - or rear! (8)

Down

1 Endlessly divide land where refreshments are stored (6)
2 Orders changes to capture carbon (6)
3 Gave back theatre subsidy? (6)
4 She provides compensation for loss of canine (5,5)
6 Raised fuss then dashed inside promptly (2,3,3)
7 Wise to swallow medicine when leaks happen (8)
8 I will leave robber choice between wife and daughter - it's offensive (3,1,4)
13 Loony left sees me shifting my personal values (4-6)
15 A cry for help about defeat - it needs careful handling (8)
16 Container is stuck in run (8)
17 Acknowledgement of success is rare? Certainly not (4,4)
19 Almost apologetic when sitting on the Spanish plant (6)
20 Central reason wasteful learners will be behind (6)
21 Guys like using this exercise system starting to build muscles (6)

G2

“I loved feeling like a superhero

Victoria Pendleton

on Olympic glory and private pain



The Guardian
Monday 22/07/24

A new start after 60



Julian Lee with two of his knives

I retired from teaching – and became a blacksmith

In 2019, one year into his retirement, 66-year-old Julian Lee decided to start making knives. The former teacher and special educational needs expert built a forge in the back garden of his Winchester home, collected steel files, heated them to 800C and began hammering, grinding and refining until he had formed a blade. "Blacksmithing knives is a beautiful combination of producing art and something with a practical use," he says. "It feels amazing to do something with your hands, and once you start making these objects, you don't want to stop."

Lee's fascination with crafting began as a child growing up in Brighton. Scavenging bits of wood to carve into makeshift toys or experimenting with clay, he found himself excelling in woodwork and metalwork classes. Yet the pressures of finding a vocation took over and he put his hobby aside.

Approaching 65, after 40 years spent working for London boroughs on specialist educational provision, Lee decided it was time for a change. "Life isn't about doing the same thing for ever and as I neared my retirement, I wanted to learn something new," he says. "I had never forgotten my childhood love of making things and working with metal was always the most alluring because it was so challenging."

Lee began reading up on the science of metal forging, types of steel and the different finishes. He then built a lean-to structure in his back garden that could house his new coke and gas forges, as well as a mighty anvil for hammering. "It took months of preparation, from buying hammers and tongs to learning the basics of the process," he says. "The anvil was the heaviest thing I've ever handled – it took three of my friends to get it into the garden and then we had to weigh it down further with anchor chains salvaged from a boatyard."

When it came to the practicalities of actually making a piece, Lee soon realised it was tricky work. "Once I started hammering these heated pieces of steel, it took me at least three tries before I could even get a primitive shape," he says. "You have to be prepared to make a lot of mistakes and to possibly break your work, but there is joy in carrying on and striving to get better."

As Lee continued practising, he began to improve and hone his technique. He sources his steel from secondhand products or Sheffield steel mills before heating it on his forge to reach a specific colour that indicates the correct temperature for hammering. Once he has a rough shape, he shapes the edge on a belt grinder before placing it back into the forge and heating it again. A quick plunge into cold oil allows it to harden. He then files by hand to refine the cutting edge before applying polish and a handle.

"It took me close to a year to start churning out decent knives, since you can spend a lifetime just improving that process of hammering out an edge," he says. "At the moment it takes me around four days to make a piece from start to finish."

Now 71 and with five years of blacksmithing experience under his belt, Lee is as passionate about his craft as ever. Typically making one to two knives a month and selling them largely to friends and family, he has begun experimenting with iron ore finishes and scorched cedar wood handles, inspired by his research into the work of Japanese master-craftsmen.

"When you're in the process of making something, it's very peaceful and there is an enormous sense of relief when you finish," he says. "It keeps you on your toes."

There are also physical risks. Lee often burns himself when picking up blades that haven't quite cooled, while his shoulders and elbows bear the brunt of the hammering. Yet he plans to continue as long as he is able. "I've come full circle, back to my teaching career, because I've recently taken on a 19-year-old apprentice who lives a few doors down," he says. "She's fascinated by the craft and it's inspired me to keep on learning. No matter your age, curiosity never stops!"

Ammar Kalia

Has your life taken a new turn after 60? Fill in the form at theguardian.com/new-start-after-60

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAEME ROBERTSON/THE GUARDIAN

Emma Beddington



My plan to tame York's unruly visitors? Potatoes and tea urns

"Go steady, we've got enough history," reads one of York's new purple street signs. "Respect your bar staff and taxi drivers, give them gratitude not attitude," says another, while a third says: "Hold it! It's not a place to pee."

This is the latest initiative to try to tame our city centre. The signs follow a "guide for stags and hens", a hospitality "code of conduct" (no admittance for "offensive inflatables", or "people we believe to be drunk" which, hmm) and cards for buskers to try to prevent people nicking their microphones.

I discovered the signs are purple due to York's "Purple Flag" status, the nightlife equivalent of a blue flag on a beach. Despite many visitors diligently honouring the city's Viking heritage of pillaging and ceremonial drinking, after a "12-hour overnight assessment ... York was deemed a vibrant, diverse and, most importantly, safe experience for residents and visitors in the evening".

So, do we have a problem or not? I'm not the best judge, being more "go away and shut up" than "live and let live". I moved out to a suburb where I can fester in blissful, misanthropic silence, but my occasional trips indicate not everyone is choosing "respect not regrets" as the signs hopefully suggest. There are still scraps, extreme drunkenness, and a berserker air of mayhem. It's exponentially worse when the races are on: residents steer clear as the city fills with would-be Tommy Shelbys looking for and finding trouble and loudly falling over by order of the Peaky Blinders.

> Nothing soothes the savage beast like watching property shows

Many party cities are now finding tourism a little ... vibrant. Amsterdam's anti-stag campaign in 2023 tried to discourage lads seeking out messy weekends, and this is fast becoming a summer of saying no to tourist excess, with demos in the Canaries, street drinking and party boat bans in the Balearics, and more.

For all my misanthropy, I'm wary of condemning "bad" tourists. Cities desperately need tourist revenue and not everyone will come for our medieval grisaille glass and outstanding collection of 20th-century ceramics. We always think things are getting worse, too, but medieval York was "noisy and crowded"; Edward III complained about "detesting the abominable smell" and there were 130 homicides between 1345 and 1385. "Circumstances that frequently led to violence will be familiar to us today, such as young men with group affiliations pursuing sex and alcohol during periods of leisure on the weekends," an investigating academic noted, drily.

Even so, the current campaign came about because hospitality staff have been facing a wave of abuse. No one in these tough jobs needs more hassle. So what can you do when things get over-vibrant, without resorting to water pistols, like Barcelona residents did recently? Thankfully, I have ideas.

First, to tone down the aggro, we need people cosy and dozy. Nothing does that more efficiently than a nice big baked potato and beans, so street wardens should patrol with cinema-usher-style trays, handing them out, free. (Yes, eating a spud and beans on the move while inebriated is challenging, but we are a martial people full of Dunkirk spirit; we shall overcome.)

Second, queues are reportedly a major flashpoint for city centre violence, so ladies with tea urns and good banter should set up outside clubs to keep everyone happily hydrated. I also recommend the installation of large screens across the city centre showing Channel 4 property shows at a low murmur. Nothing soothes the savage Jäger-bombed beast like watching George Clarke rhapsodise about the clever layout of an Icelandic-style turf house in Cumbria.

Finally, if all else fails, street wardens trained in de-escalation should step in and ask people about their grandchildren and pets. No one can stay lairy and obnoxious while full of jacket potato and showing off pictures of a toddler's chubby cheeks. Taming York doesn't need purple signs; it needs blue-sky thinking.

Why I'll be at the head of the queue for a DIY smear test

DIY smear tests for women in England may be imminent, after a pilot scheme produced promising results. In London, 27,000 undertested or untested women were offered a DIY kit by their GP or were sent one by post; 56% of the first group did the test and 13% of the second, presumably picking up women who would otherwise not have been tested for all sorts of reasons, from trauma to lack of time. The researchers from King's College London estimate that, if this was replicated throughout England, more than 1 million more people could be tested over a three-year cycle. That's brilliant - rightly heralded a "gamechanger".

I thought all the cervix-owners of my acquaintance would be overjoyed at this news, but there were a surprising number of reservations. One friend interrogated the practicalities: "How could you take a sample cleanly from the right place, jabbing blindly in the undergrowth? Maybe it's a two-person job and you have to direct your significant other.

But the most pressing question of all was: if you don't need a professional with a speculum to take a smear, why on earth are we still doing it that way? Other countries, such as Australia, have already introduced self-testing.

While they are vital, no one would mistake a smear test for a spa day. It is an awkward, occasionally excruciating, dance of wondering where to put your underwear and developing a complex about your cervix after casual comments about it being "at a funny angle". At my worst, in Belgium, a fag-scented gynaecologist inserted the speculum and then wandered off for 10 minutes. Even if the instructions are more gnomic than Ikea's, I'll be team DIY.



An Australian DIY smear test



The pet I'll never forget
Honey the chicken

"The honey-coloured one with the funny hat," said Myles, our youngest son. "I'm calling her Honey!" With that, we'd completed our family mission to choose a mixed flock of chickens at a rural poultry farm. And so we set off on the return journey to Melbourne with six ISA Brown laying hens and three pet bantams.

Since it was late in the day, the whole flock went into our fox-proof coop, with the usual settling-in biffo. Honey immediately came out on top, even with chickens twice her size who were clearly scared of her intense demeanour. But next morning she relaxed a little when introduced to the new chicken run, and so did I. Until that afternoon, when there was a knock on our front door.

"Are you missing a chicken?' said my neighbour. "There's one on the power lines by the railway track."

Yep, there she was, perched on a high-voltage cable close to some tall trees.

Determined not to see my son's pet fly away, I found an old fishing net and climbed until I was eye-to-eye with Honey.

It was just feasible. I grasped a branch with one hand, at full stretch, extended the net with the other - and right then a bus passed underneath. The branch swayed, Honey squawked, and I realised how stupid I was to be risking my life like this.

> Myles didn't take the news well – his pet had literally flown the coop

Honey must have come to the same realisation. After an instant of hesitation she leapt off the power cable and manically flapped her way over some neighbouring houses before disappearing.

Myles didn't take the news well. His brothers still had *their* pets; his had literally flown the coop. Next morning he went to school, disconsolate, and I ushered our diminished flock outside. And at lunchtime, heard a familiar squawk.

There was Honey, marshalling the other chickens, strutting about as if she owned the place. She enjoyed a status beyond her size that was instantly recognised by her peers.

Like most semi-wild birds, she laid only in spring, stashing her clutch of small brown eggs under some timber. One spring, the year of our great chook-yard massacre, Honey was thus one of the few hens to survive a fox's onslaught by staying calm and still on her hidden eggs. Which meant that, ironically, Myles was the only brother left with a pet.

She lived for more than 14 years, which I believe is close to the record for chickens.

When her time came and she could no longer reach her perch, we rested her, paralysed, on the lawn. It was a warm spring day, and she peacefully expired. My son, then 23, was moved to commission a granite headstone that still marks her grave under the olive tree at one end of the chicken run where she ruled as grande dame for so long, and so well. **Andrew Herrick**

COVER: SUKI DHANDA/THE GUARDIAN

‘I gave it everything I had. But I wish I’d achieved more’

Victoria Pendleton is one of Britain’s greatest ever athletes – yet often felt like a failure and a fraud. She tells **Simon Hattenstone** about her Olympic golds, the misery she suffered – and the joy she found after retiring



Sprint racing at the Athens 2004 Olympics

Victoria Pendleton is driving us to the stables in Dorset. We’re off to see her two horses, Vesper and Sarah. She has two bags with her – one containing her cycling gold medals, the other crammed with carrots and apples. She is convinced she’s going to feed the horses the medals. At times, you sense she wouldn’t mind.

Ask Pendleton for her greatest achievement in sport, and she’ll tell you about an event that occurred after she retired. She’d only been riding horses for a year when she raced at Cheltenham in 2016, finishing two and a half lengths behind the great Nina Carberry in the Foxhunter Chase. She’s never felt so elated, she says. Does that mean more than the gold medals? “In some ways, because it was totally unexpected. You’re dealing with a live animal so you never know what’s going to happen. All I went in with was my courage – my balls and balance, and nothing else.”

Pendleton is driving her little black sports car, dressed in black tracksuit bottoms and a black top. At 43, she’s still super-fit, as well as gutsy, funny and no-nonsense. Until she starts talking about her struggles as a track cyclist. Then she becomes a very different person.

We get to the stables. Vesper is a black gelding, Sarah a chestnut mare. Pendleton is in her element. She drinks in the perfume of their coats. “They smell heavenly to me. Without sounding too much like a hippy, there’s something about a connection between man and horse – human and horse, I should say. They are such big, magnificent animals, and so generous in their spirit. They let you sit on their backs and tell them where to go and how fast to go and they give you everything when they’re racing. It makes me so happy.” They have more soul than a bike? “Yeah!”

Her horse-racing achievements followed her final Olympics, where she won a gold medal at London 2012 in the keirin (a sprint following a speed-controlled start) and a silver in the conventional sprint. Although her achievements have since been overtaken by Laura Kenny (who won five Olympic gold medals and recently announced her retirement), Pendleton was Britain’s best known female cyclist at the time. To most of us, it looked as if she was retiring in a blaze of glory. But not to her. She was, and remains, hugely disappointed she didn’t win three gold medals at the London Olympics.

Pendleton is known for being hard on herself. Hers is a very particular story of a woman succeeding in what was then Britain’s male-dominated and macho cycling environment. It’s also a story of a woman succeeding against the odds. Pendleton is much lighter and less muscular than most female track sprinters – it’s like long-distance legend Mo Farah winning the 100m. Finally, it’s a story about a woman determined to be the best, and ultimately triumphing in a sport she didn’t much like.

Her relationship with cycling was complicated from the off. Pendleton’s father, Max, was an obsessive amateur cyclist and grass track champion. From when she was the age of nine, he would take Victoria and her twin brother, Alex, out every weekend racing with him. Often he’d sprint ahead, not waiting for them to catch up. Max would set up children’s races to keep them occupied, even if they were the only competitors. Pendleton says she thought this was normal, the way all kids lived. “I thought every family did something like that at the weekends, but clearly not.” She smiles.

Max Pendleton was desperate to make something of himself as a cyclist. Not even a big something. Victoria thinks he would have died happy finishing last at the Olympics. Just being there would have been enough. But it wasn’t going to happen.

At first, Alex was the stronger cyclist of the two, but before long, Victoria overtook him. However, as a schoolgirl growing up in Bedfordshire, it was team sports she adored; she played hockey for Harpenden, but wasn’t good enough to make a career of it. “I would love to have played a team game like that.” Why? “Camaraderie. When you win as a team it feels better than when you win as an individual because you’re sharing it with a bunch of people.”

And yet it was on a bike that she started beating all comers. Did she love cycling back then? “No. I wanted to be good at cycling. I liked training, as in I liked improving and pushing myself and having something to work towards.” What she wanted was to be the best. At anything. She was 16 when she was talent-spotted by the assistant national coach at British Cycling, Marshall Thomas. “I got a phone call from him. He said: ‘We’ve noticed you in the weekly cycling results and wondered whether you’d be interested in coming to Manchester to be tested to see if you’ve got what it takes.’”

Up until then, her father had trained her. He handed over responsibility to Thomas at British Cycling’s HQ. But cycling was still a minority sport; little more than a hobby, as far as Pendleton was concerned. Certainly not a career. She had hoped to be a vet, but her exam results weren’t good enough. She contemplated animal husbandry, zoology and





PHOTOGRAPHS: SUKI DHANDA/THE GUARDIAN, MAKEUP: DINA CATCHPOLE; AFP

I genuinely believed they had made a mistake choosing me for the cycling team

conservation. In the end, she studied sports science at university because it made sense with the cycling. She was given a £1,000-a-year grant towards training expenses.

In 2002, after university, she went to Switzerland to train. Pendleton was the only woman among a group of men that included Olympic stars Chris Hoy, Jason Queally and Craig McLean. She felt she didn't deserve to be there.

Pendleton has always struggled with confidence. When did she first think she was good enough to race at the Olympics? "I didn't believe I should be on the team till I won my first world championships in 2005. I was 25, and I finally thought: 'Well, maybe I could do this successfully,' because I genuinely believed they had made a mistake in choosing me. I thought: 'They're going to realise any moment that I don't have what it takes.'"

She had to become world champion before she thought she was good enough to be a contender? She laughs, a little embarrassed. Pendleton says the Olympics was always the pinnacle for her. "To even get there was a big deal."

She had actually raced in the 2004 Athens Olympics, a year after finishing fourth at the world championships. Pendleton hoped for a medal in Athens, but went out in the first round of the sprint. "I was gutted," she says. "I was about to pack it in. I was like: 'I told you I didn't have what it takes.'" She pauses. "I know that sounds weird. Top 4 in the world, you must be good, but to make any money out of this or to sustain this career, I had to be Top 3 or better because there's no career to be made as fifth or sixth best in the world."

She returned home, disconsolate. "I put all my stuff in a black bin liner, and put it in the bin. I wanted to erase the whole experience. My mum took it out of the bin, and said: 'You might regret that; it's a really big achievement to be part of the Olympics team.'"

Pendleton didn't give up. She focused on the next Olympics. But her relationship with the coaching team began to break down. Pendleton's great rival was the Australian cyclist Anna Meares, and she felt her coaches respected Meares more as an athlete. "Anna was strong, muscly and aggressive. And that's what they wanted. Like: 'Why can't you be more like Anna Meares?' Well, I'm not like Anna Meares. I'm not as strong as her, I don't lift as much as her. I felt they'd talk about her performance more appreciatively than mine. I'd be like: 'But you're on my fucking team, come on, this is crazy.' In her team she was considered the best and everybody rallied around Anna. I was like: 'Can I please have some of that?' I was so envious of her. I would just like to have had the same respect as my peers, that's all."

In her memoir, Between the Lines, Pendleton claims the chief coach, Shane Sutton, told her variously to "man up", "be more of a bitch" and "get more c-u-n-t in you". (She says he spelled it out so as not to cause offence.) How did she react? "Back in the day you didn't think anything of it. I was so familiar with that language it didn't hurt me. It didn't cut me up inside, but I couldn't deliver what they were asking."

The situation reached its nadir after Pendleton admitted to having a relationship with a member of her coaching staff, sports scientist Scott Gardner. In the buildup to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, they kept it secret because they knew it could prove disruptive and that her fellow cyclists might regard it as unprofessional. A couple of months before Beijing, Gardner told Sutton about their relationship and Sutton informed the performance director, Dave Brailsford. Sutton and Brailsford told Pendleton and Gardner that it would be best not to tell other team members until after the Olympics.

In Beijing, Pendleton only competed in the sprint and duly won her first Olympic gold medal, beating Meares in the final. It was the culmination of everything she had worked for. But it turned into one of the bleakest moments of her life. The following day, Sutton and Brailsford decided it was time to tell the rest of the team, including her coaches Jan van Eijden and Iain Dyer, about her relationship with Gardner. In Between the Lines, she writes that Van Eijden told her it was an act of betrayal. He and Gardner began to row. In the book, she writes that she was so distressed she took a pair of scissors and cut her arm in front of them. "I was inconsolable," she says today. "I was so distraught. I was like: 'You don't understand. You see me crying and you just think I'm crying, but I'm really, really hurting now.' And I needed to prove I was hurting because they weren't taking me seriously. I wanted them to take me seriously." She becomes tearful.



Pendleton roller racing in 1989

"They were so upset with me - disgusted, like I'd committed a crime. But the relationship didn't make me any less of an athlete or any less professional or any less successful. It should have been the happiest moment of my life, and it was taken away because some people's egos were hurt because they weren't told, because we were told not to tell them." Gardner was asked to leave the team, although he was rehired in the buildup to London 2012.

As a cyclist, Pendleton was at her peak, winning world titles in the sprint in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012. But she felt ostracised, and found it increasingly difficult to turn up to training. It wasn't just the team she was battling. She was fighting her own biology. Her natural weight is about 55kg (8st 9lb). Her competing weight was 62.5kg (9st 11lb), which still left her the lightest woman in the field. She had to constantly stuff herself to make that weight. "You're doing training that makes you feel like you want to vomit, then you're trying to put food in. It's really hard. You're like *eugh*, just eat it. Lots of animal protein. Chicken, more chicken, grilled chicken, boiled chicken, steak." She looks as if she could puke just talking about it.

Her form going into 2012 was phenomenal. She was competing for three gold medals, knew it was going to be her final Olympics, and for all her self-doubt told herself success meant winning all three. Her willpower was extraordinary. "As soft as people have made me out to be, an emotional wreck or whatever, I am really tough. Resilient. I might not look it." This is the Pendleton paradox. Slight as she may be, tearful as she often is, she is made of steel. "I commit 100%. I think that absolute desire and drive to fulfil potential isn't something you find in everybody." She compares competing to going to war.

London 2012 was, in many ways, the apogee of British sporting achievement - 29 gold medals, 65 medals in total, a gloriously sunny summer, the best kind of national unity. Team GB won eight out of the 18 cycling gold medals, and Britain was the only country to win more

Continued on page 6 →

← Continued from page 5

than one gold in cycling. It was an astonishing achievement. Was 2012 happier for her than 2008? "Yes," she says, but it sounds more like a question than a statement. "In some ways. I was stronger. I'd accepted my fate a little bit." What does she mean? "I got familiar with the way I was going to be treated. I had a finite goal to work towards because I knew I was retiring after 2012."

Although she didn't manage the clean sweep, Pendleton finished 2012 with a gold medal in the keirin and a silver in the sprint. Did she feel good when she won the gold? "No, I felt relieved that I'd managed to do that by myself, because that's how it felt. That it was me and a few select people, but very much not a team effort. It was a dedicated group of a few individuals and I thought: 'Thank God I haven't let them down.' I felt pure relief. Nothing more than relief." She names those who supported her through this time – Gardner, of course, psychiatrist Steve Peters, strength and conditioning coach Mark Simpson, mechanic Ernie Feargrieve, soigneur Luc De Wilde. Pendleton is loyal to those who were loyal to her.

But 12 years on she still can't hide her disappointment. "I underperformed, and that's the reality of it. If it had all gone to plan I could have come away with three gold medals. And I failed. I will always feel a sense of underachievement. I always wanted more for myself." Again, she's on the verge of tears. "I remember the races I screwed up more than the ones I won, because they cut the deepest."

Wow, I say, 12 years on and you're still devastated by the losses rather than celebrating the successes? "I know it seems crazy. Looking back, I'm pleased I gave it everything I had. Do I wish I achieved more? Yes." Pendleton is the most self-flagellating athlete I have met.

It ended in such anticlimax, she says. "After my last event, everybody was disappointed because I only won silver. My coaches left the village without saying goodbye. I didn't expect them to. Why would they? They were glad to be rid of me." She says a designer handbag was left on her bed by way of thanks for her decade of service to Team GB. "If somebody had made a concerted effort to shake my hand and say: 'Thank you for everything you've given to the team,' it would have meant a thousand times more than a handbag." It was actually a lovely bag, she says, but for years she couldn't bring herself to use it because it reminded her of the breakdown of her relationship with the team.

Have they apologised for the way they treated you? "No! No! Not at all. They'll claim I was super-difficult and mentally challenging."

Straight after the Olympics she retired at 32. Although she said it was her decision, today she says it didn't really feel like that. "I did feel very much bullied out of the team. I twisted the story to make it sound like it was my own choosing, whereas the reality was I didn't have the strength to walk in there another day." Did she at least feel the public loved her? "No, not really. I think I should have been more reserved and not so honest about the way I was feeling because that might have changed the public perception of me. But whenever anybody asked me how I was feeling, I always told them the truth. All out. Maybe that was the wrong thing to do."

As soon as she retired, "the first thing I did was become vegetarian, then vegan. I cut out all the things I was forced to eat." On principle? "Well, it is principle, but also it's got such negative connotations. When you're gagging as you're eating it, it puts you off!"

Although retirement came as a relief in some ways, it also proved difficult. "Having all the freedom in the world can be as paralysing as having none." She felt lost. She competed in reality shows such as Strictly, wrote her memoir, took on endurance events, and worked as a BBC pundit for the 2016 Olympics. Pendleton was treated as a star, a great British success story, but she didn't feel like one. "I felt a fraud. Who am I to be asked about these things? I always felt like a fraud. I felt so disappointed in myself and what I achieved." Does she think she'll ever embrace her cycling achievements? "I don't know when I'll look back and feel proud."

But there is one achievement even she doesn't quibble about. In 2015, Betfair set her a challenge – to switch saddles from bike to horse and ride in a competitive race at the 2016 Cheltenham festival. Pendleton had never sat on a horse before. It was a brilliant publicity stunt by the gambling company, even if it felt like an impossible ask.

"How ridiculous was that as an idea?" She laughs. It transformed her life. "I found something I wanted to get out of bed for. I lived and breathed like an exercise jockey for 18 months. I'd come to the yard, ride two or three horses, maybe four or five if I felt like it. You wash the horses after, tack up a new horse, do the training for the horses, and I loved it. *Absolutely* loved it. It was a whole new lease of life, and if I'd not done the cycling that opportunity would never have come my way."

Finally, she says, a coach brought out the best in her. Yogi Breisner, who led the British eventing team to four successive Olympic team medals, encouraged her all the way. "He is a legend of the sport, and when I went into my equestrian training he said how very coachable I was and how he enjoyed working with me. He complimented me, and he said: 'You're very courageous.'" She becomes emotional repeating his words. "And I'm like, *am I*?" Courage is a word she loves, she says, but one she had never associated with herself, largely because nobody had ever told her she was courageous. "I really thank him for that. I learned so much from him and what a coaching experience could be like."

Now she happily accepts that taking on the challenge was an act of great courage. "Starting from nothing and becoming a jump jockey, I could have died doing what I was doing on a horse, or become a quadriplegic. Professional jump jockeys are unseated once every 14 rides. And they've been doing it their whole lives. So I was doing something that was dangerous and a totally different experience. Also, the press were saying: 'This is ridiculous, she's a danger to herself, she can't do this, it can't be done.'" But she proved it could. On 18 March 2016, 12 months after first sitting on a horse, she competed in the Foxhunter Chase at Cheltenham, finishing fifth out of a field of 24. "It was the most exhilarating and rewarding moment of my life."

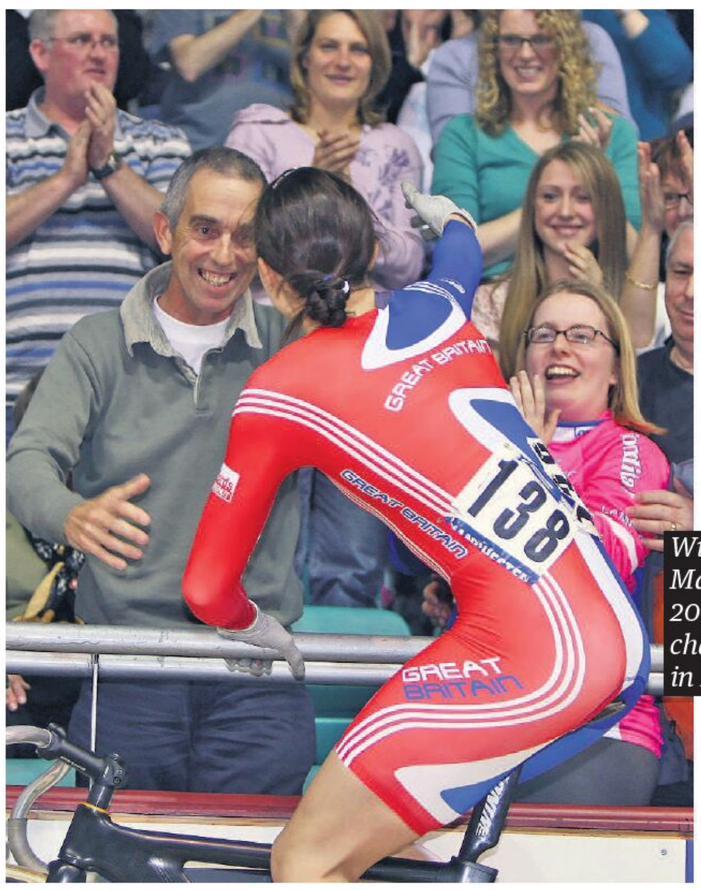
But that elation didn't last. Pendleton has always suffered with depression, and in 2018 she reached a low. She was forced to abandon an attempt to climb Mount Everest after suffering hypoxia (a lack of oxygen to the brain), she and Gardner were divorcing, and she was experiencing severe panic attacks. She simply lost the will to live, she says. "I got into a spiral. I just felt: 'What's the point in carrying on?' I thought: 'What's the point of getting out of bed?' I'd be staring at the wall, feeling nothing." In 2019, she told the Telegraph she had seriously considered suicide.

What stopped you killing yourself? She says the former British Cycling psychiatrist Steve Peters, for one. "And my brother. He always knew the right thing to



Pendleton with her gold at London 2012

> **Horse racing transformed my life. I found something I wanted to get out of bed for**



With her father, Max, at the 2008 world championships in Manchester



Taking the lap of honour at the velodrome in 2012



say." She sniffs up her tears. "I need another tissue. Sorry about that."

Alex had been diagnosed with leukaemia as a child, and after three decades in remission his cancer returned. Last June he died, after battling a brain tumour for two years. Pendleton can barely get out her words when she talks about him – how close they were, all they shared. You must miss him hugely, I say. She nods. "Alex saved my life, but I couldn't save his." And now the tears come in a torrent. "On one of my darkest days he just drove to my house uninvited. He could hear I was really down and he just turned up. And … yeah … he was very good in times of need. When I see twins I feel a sense of joy, like, you're so lucky. You've got someone there with you all the time. Nothing is too scary. Like the first day at school – you've got someone there." Does it feel like a physical absence? "Oh yeah. I do feel half …" she trails off.

She watches a horse canter gracefully in the yard. "I wish I could get my horse to canter that slowly." She says she's worried she's painted too negative a picture of her career. "Oh God, it sounds depressing, doesn't it?"

She drives me back to the station. "The thing is, all that work and sacrifice and suffering was worth it. It was a bit of a shitshow, but I loved being an athlete because I loved feeling like a superhero, feeling as strong and physically capable as I could be. It's a lovely feeling to be in your physical prime, and it's stood me in good stead because I still keep fit and do things far above and beyond my age range. I still put people to shame." Before we met today, she ran 5km, did a series of 100m sprints and treated herself to an ice bath just for good measure. "It's torture," she says, with relish. "Everything it's given me, post-cycling, all the opportunities, I wouldn't have had them if I'd not been through that."

Despite her struggles, Pendleton feels she has finally got her life back on track. Sure, she's still disappointed with only two Olympic gold medals, sad she lost so much time to depression, and she knows Alex is irreplaceable, but she's starting to accentuate the positive. She now realises there is no way she would have the life she does today without her Olympic triumphs. Cycling might have caused her all sorts of physical and emotional pain, but she says it's payback time. "I've basically been a lady of leisure since 2012, and that makes me feel a bit guilty. I keep saying to my mum, I'm going to get a proper nine-to-five job, and she's like: 'Don't be ridiculous, you put in enough work before this.' I'm a very lucky girl."

In 2019, she met former special forces operator Louis Tinsley on the C4 reality show SAS: Who Dares Wins. After the series, they started a relationship and have been together ever since. In the past, she has said she wanted to have children, but now she's decided she prefers life as it is.



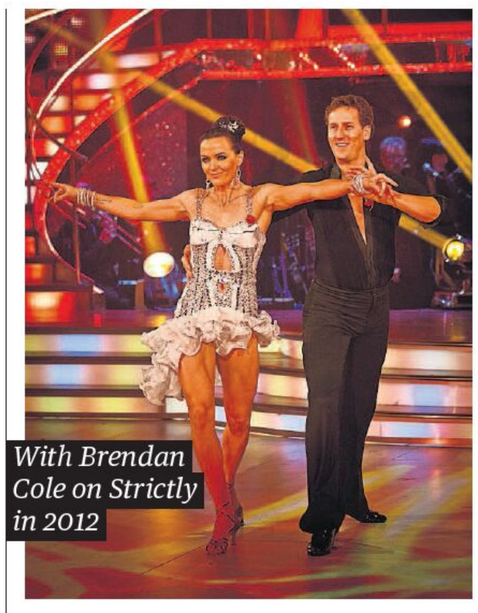
Riding Pacha Du Polder at the Foxhunter Chase at Cheltenham in 2016

She has a couple of properties she rents out, a few venture-capital trusts, she rides Sarah and Vesper, does public speaking, has sponsorship deals and all the time in the world to challenge herself. "I'm going to learn how to skydive and get my accelerated freefall licence. I'm going to take up surfing. As a kid I would have been: 'Wow, that's so cool!' My career has allowed me all kinds of freedoms and opportunities that I would never have dreamt of."

There are other positives. The once fraught relationship with Anna Meares is now friendly. "She sends me pictures of her daughter on her riding lessons on this cute little pony. It's very sweet."

For many years, Pendleton's allegations about the culture at British Cycling went ignored. But in 2016, four years after she retired, Shane Sutton was suspended by British Cycling, following allegations of sexism and bullying by the cyclist Jess Varnish, supported by Pendleton and fellow Olympic champion Nicole Cooke. Sutton resigned soon afterwards. There was an internal investigation into Varnish's complaints, with Sutton cleared of eight of the nine allegations. But a complaint that he used sexist language towards her was upheld.

In 2017, the then chairman of British Cycling, Jonathan Browning, admitted success had "come at too high a price" and that while British Cycling had excelled at performance and participation, it had not put enough emphasis "on the third P: people". The inquiry prompted by Varnish's allegations resulted in a 39-point action plan to revamp British Cycling's culture and



With Brendan Cole on Strictly in 2012

management. While Browning said: "We would like to place on record our apologies to those concerned. We sincerely regret where any of those negative experiences have occurred," he never apologised directly to Varnish, let alone Pendleton or Cooke.

When the Guardian put Pendleton's experiences to British Cycling (including her claims that she wasn't treated with respect by the coaching team; was ostracised by them as a result of her relationship with Scott Gardner; and felt bullied out of the team) its performance director, Stephen Park, acknowledged it had failed her. "Since Victoria left the Great Britain Cycling Team programme we have been determined to learn from her experience, and that of others, to ensure that we provide the best possible culture and support for our riders both on and off the bike.

"Through the work we did as part of the Cycling Independent Review, and further progress we have made since, it's clear that our programme has changed dramatically over the past two Olympic cycles. However, we apologise to Victoria and others whose experiences fell way short of the standards we now expect." It is the first explicit public apology Pendleton has been given.

When the Guardian put the allegations to Sutton that he treated Pendleton differently from the male cyclists and that he used inappropriate language, he replied: "It's probably what she needed at the time and that's why she was one of the greatest sprinters of all time. She needed to be told how it was every now and then. Word for word I can't confirm, but can certainly say it was a pleasure to be part of an amazing group of athletes in that period, Vicky being one of them. We are judged on results. We created a culture of success, but some don't see it that way.

"Ask her how many times I got stuck into the boys about swearing and farting in front of her and said we have a lady in the van. Always two sides. But in the heat of battle the tone is different. I respected Vic, still do, and she was one of the few ladies in female cycling. I always treated her like a lady."

Pendleton says she is finally beginning to see her career from a new perspective – as a pioneer who paved the way for a better future. "If you look back in history, there are a lot of things that worked at the time but became outdated. Maybe for the time and place where I existed that was my journey I had to live through, but now thankfully it seems like a much more evolved and understanding environment."

A couple of years ago she was invited to meet the British women's cycling team and was struck by the transformation. "Kaarle McCulloch was the coach at the time and she invited me to meet the girls. I was so impressed. I was like *oh my God!* They were being encouraged to have interests outside of cycling, and they had a real control over, and voice in, what they were doing. I said to Kaarle: 'Seeing what you've been doing to these girls makes me so happy because this is the kind of environment I could only have dreamed of. They're being treated like adults and individuals and they're performing.' I was just like '*Yes*!'"

I've basically been a lady of leisure since 2012. That makes me feel a little guilty

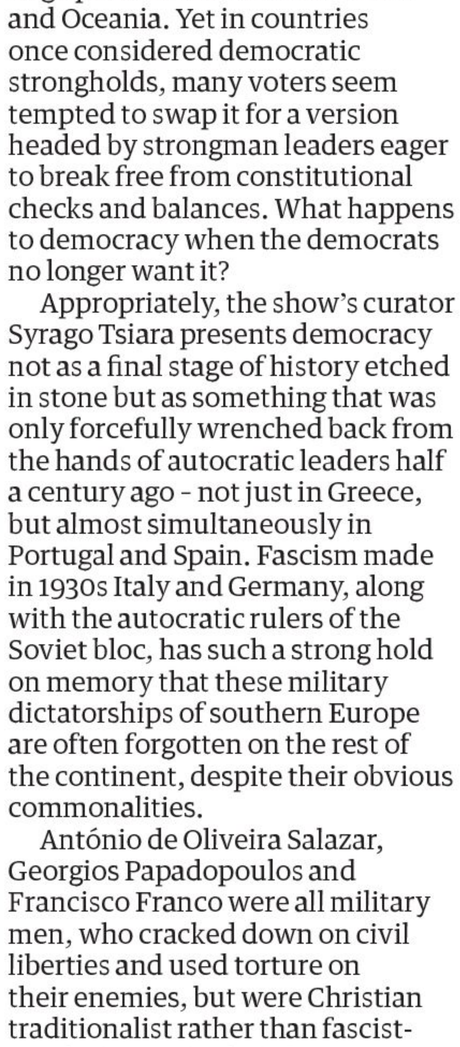
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PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY; PA

G2 The Guardian
Monday 22 July 2024

Autocratic for the people

In Athens, the birthplace of democracy, a new exhibition is celebrating the art it inspired. Ironically, finds **Philip Oltermann**, dictators have stolen the show



Archangel ... Angela Davis, 1972, by Tassos



Faceless power ... Old and Young by Yannis Gaitis, 1967

No place on Earth should have more authority to speak about the enduring appeal of democracy than the place that first came up with it. But a new art exhibition in Athens seems reluctant to shout about its credentials. You have to walk right to the end of the National Gallery of Greece's show, past 137 works by 54 artists, before you come across anything like a claim to authority – and even then it's far from triumphant.

Rika Pana's paintings of the Parthenon, set against backgrounds of melancholy blue and muddy green, accentuate not the steadfastness of the ultimate symbol of Athenian democracy, but its eventual ruin. In three paintings, from the series The Erosion of Civilisation, the pillars of the temple – commissioned by the radical democratic reformer Pericles in the 5th century BC – look like plumes of black smoke, the uncertainty of its iconic outline emphasising its own perishability.

The sombre tone feels timely: Democracy, as the show is called, opens halfway through a year crammed with watershed plebiscites that have an ominously terminal feel and pose uneasy questions. In its liberal representative iteration, democracy may have established itself as the norm of governance in most of Europe, the Americas, large parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania. Yet in countries once considered democratic strongholds, many voters seem tempted to swap it for a version headed by strongman leaders eager to break free from constitutional checks and balances. What happens to democracy when the democrats no longer want it?

Appropriately, the show's curator Syrago Tsiara presents democracy not as a final stage of history etched in stone but as something that was only forcefully wrenched back from the hands of autocratic leaders half a century ago – not just in Greece, but almost simultaneously in Portugal and Spain. Fascism made in 1930s Italy and Germany, along with the autocratic rulers of the Soviet bloc, has such a strong hold on memory that these military dictatorships of southern Europe are often forgotten on the rest of the continent, despite their obvious commonalities.

António de Oliveira Salazar, Georgios Papadopoulos and Francisco Franco were all military men, who cracked down on civil liberties and used torture on their enemies, but were Christian traditionalist rather than fascist-revolutionary in their fervour. In the cold war, their strident anti-communism guaranteed them the recognition or direct support of the US and, in Greece and Portugal's case, membership of Nato.

Their dictatorships all came to an end within an 18-month period in the mid-1970s, but democracy triumphed in different ways in each country. In Portugal, the turning point came with a military coup in April 1974, while in Spain democracy was restored gradually following Franco's death in November 1975. In Greece, the junta's rule unravelled more quickly: student protests triggered internal divisions within Papadopoulos's circle. Then came a coup in Cyprus followed by Turkey's invasion of the island, and the seven-year military dictatorship eventually collapsed.

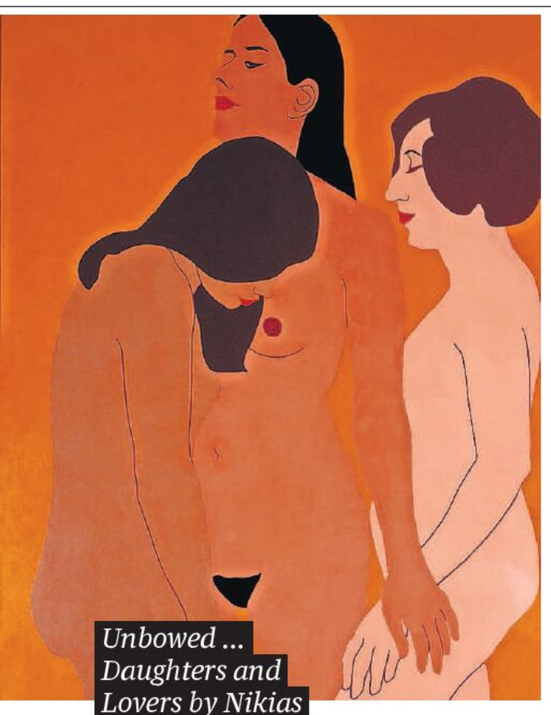
> **The show opens halfway through a year of watershed votes with an ominous feel – the sombre tone feels timely**

To the artists who continued to produce art despite strict censorship, the face of repression in these countries looked remarkably similar. The Athens show has a 1972 sculpture made by Spanish art collective Equipo Crónica, depicting one of the inconspicuous spies of Franco's secret police, facing an almost identical artwork showing the faceless informants of the Greek surveillance state, produced by artist Yannis Gaïtis at the same time.

Symbols of protest were shared: red carnations are not only ubiquitous on the graffiti and protest banners of the peaceful "carnation revolution" captured by Revolução, Ana Hatherly's 1975 film collage, but also in Greek artist Vlassis Caniaris's untitled grid of flowers moulded from plaster, made in 1969. Papadopoulos, the military officer who led the coup in 1967 then installed himself as Greece's prime minister until 1973, used to say his dictatorship was merely "a plaster cast", there to protect the patient during the "operation" required to repair democracy.

Dimitris Alithinos's sculpture Happening II seems to reference

PHOTOGRAPHS: IRENE PANAGOPOULOS COLLECTION; ANTONIA AND MANUEL PEDROSO DE LIMA COLLECTION; © NATIONAL GALLERY – ALEXANDROS SOUTSOS MUSEUM; GIORGOS IOANNOU COLLECTION ARCHIVE



Unbowed ... Daughters and Lovers by Nikias Skapinakis, 1970

this metaphor, except the patient here is a man strapped on to the roof of a car and suffocating under a sheet of plastic. In the paintings of Nikias Skapinakis, bodies dare to breathe again, naked and unbowed. Democracy, for artists like him, was a physical act of liberation for the entire body politic.

The most remarkable pictures in the show are surprising for their choice of artistic style. Pop art is commonly thought of as an Anglo-American genre, celebrating the substance and veneer of consumer culture. Yet for artists such as Spain's Alberto Solsona and Greece's Alekos V Levidis, it was the perfect way to expose political violence – even if it was, as the title of the latter's 1969 monotype on paper has it, "Made in the USA."

Pop art is also the style in which artist Giorgos Ioannou chronicled the events that triggered the junta's undoing. In November 1973, law students barricaded themselves inside the capital's Polytechnic university, demanding its removal. The protest scuppered a sham process of liberalisation initiated weeks earlier by dictator Papadopoulos, who brutally cracked down on the occupation.

Ioannou's comic-panel paintings look like a macabre homage to Roy Lichtenstein's famous Whaam! diptych, only here we see the bullets ripping into the bodies of young people. At least 40 students died during the Polytechnic uprisings, with thousands injured.

The diversity of artistic forms on display in Democracy ultimately comes across as a kind of commentary on the overarching theme: that there may well be no such thing as a "democratic" style in art. In fact, in some cases the visual language deployed by some southern European artists to tell the story of their democratic liberation has an oddly anti-egalitarian bent. In National Technical University of Athens, a Marios Vatzias painting from 1975, the protesters who were killed are picked up from the streets by angels and carried to the gods. They are no longer part of the masses but elevated to the few.

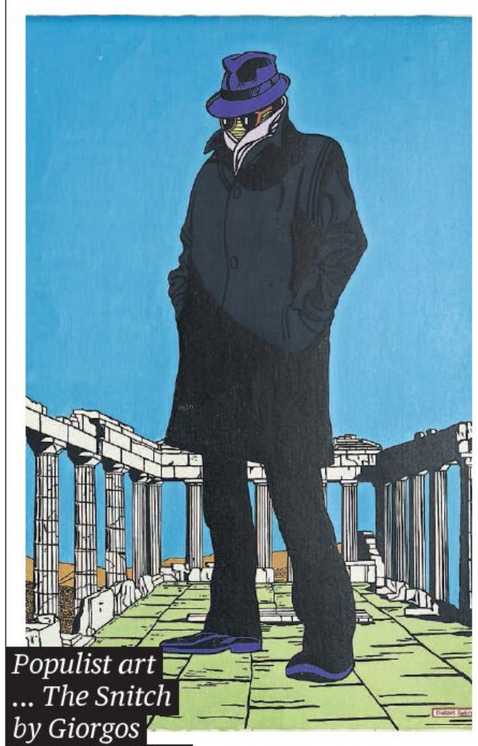
Martyrdom is a surprisingly common theme, especially in the works of Greek engraver Tassos, whose vision was celebrated in the first show at the National Gallery after the fall of the junta. Freedom fighters here are depicted as ordinary citizens but stylised as archangels toting machine guns, while the executed communist resistance fighter Ilektra Apostolou becomes Jesus on the cross.

The show's opening statement is jarring: the journey towards democracy, the wall panel claims, "begins with identifying the opponent" – which sounds more like a pronouncement from the anti-liberal political theorist Carl Schmitt than a formula for a functioning modern democracy. The street protests that accompanied Portugal and Greece's shift to democracy are, however, given their rightful place, even if the geopolitical circumstances that made dictatorships brittle enough to be toppled by the demos are largely absent from these artworks – namely the colonial wars that had fatigued the Estado Novo's armies, the Turkish invasion of Cyprus that undid the junta's claim to competence, and the rise of the European Economic Community.

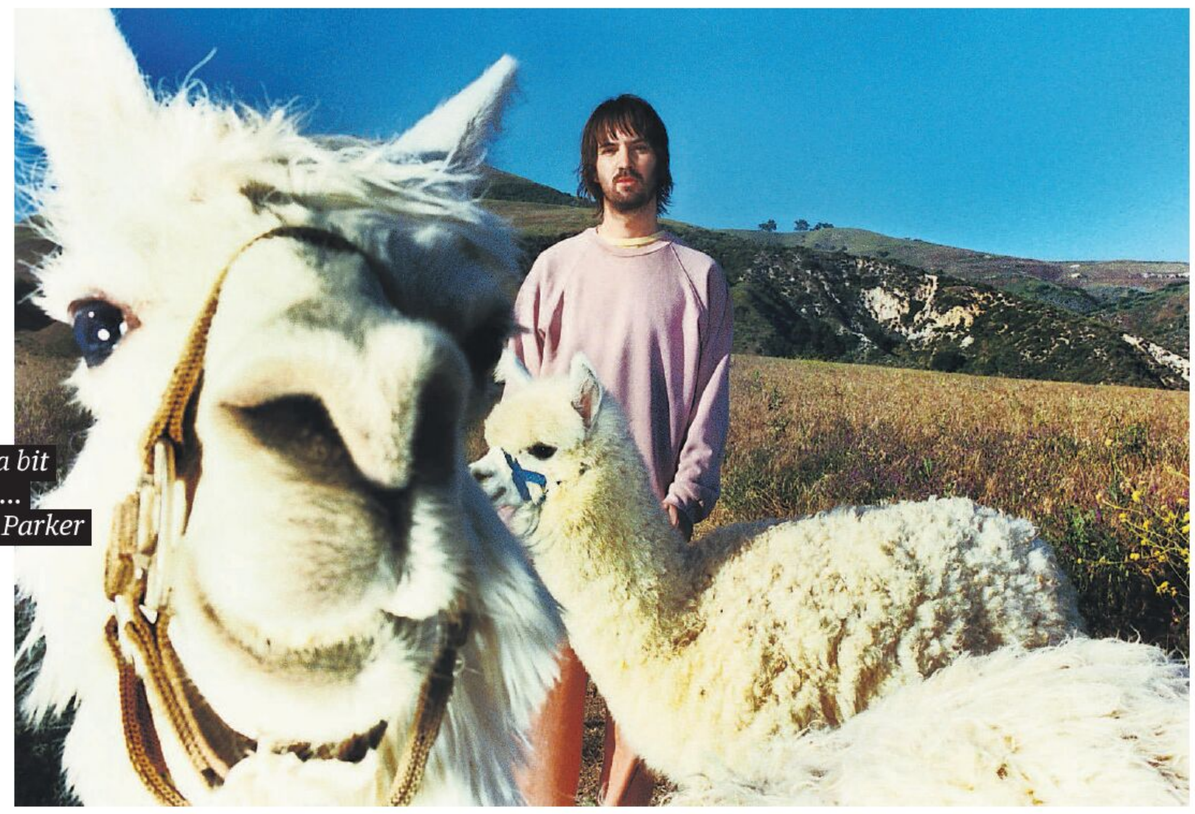
Societies that suppress freedom of expression, this exhibition contends, are doomed to fall. In this respect at least, art and the interests of democracy align. But that they don't always overlap should be clear, even if you don't agree with critic Kenneth Clark, who in his 1945 essay Art and Democracy concluded that art was "incurably aristocratic" in its tendency to exemplify the "rule of the many by the few".

The show starts and ends with Konstantinos Parthenis's large portrait of Alexandros Papanastiou, whose stint as prime minister in 1924 paved the way for the Second Hellenic Republic. There's also a small picture, by the same artist, of the goddess Athena's head, which served as an emblem of the Republican party. But as you walk through the show, these tributes to parliamentary democracy are quickly forgotten. Revolutions make better pictures than institutions.

Democracy is at the National Gallery, Athens, until 2 February



Populist art ... The Snitch by Giorgos Ioannou, 1974



Gone a bit Gucci ... Kevin Parker

'I still slap on whatever'

Tame Impala's Kevin Parker is not known for his dress sense. So how did he end up launching a clothing line with a chic French label? **Shaad D'Souza** finds out

Kevin Parker remembers the first time he ever splurged on an item of clothing: he was out shopping with his girlfriend, now wife, and bought a Gucci jacket. "It was by far the most extravagant thing I had spent money on, and I remember thinking, 'Wow, I just did that,'" he recalls. In the kind of music community Parker comes from – his multimillion-selling psychedelic project Tame Impala has its roots in the DIY scene of Fremantle, Australia – people balk at a £50 jacket, let alone one that might cost 30 times that. "The world I come from is sceptical, not instinctively warmed by the world of fashion," he says. However, "it was one of those things of slowly seeing that it's not about the shallow aesthetic, it can be more about expressing yourself, and now I respect it in the same way I respect all other art forms." Plus: "To be fair, it's a sick jacket."

> They're clothes that could be worn by people in a cult – a DIY uniform

How quickly things change: Parker has just unveiled a fashion line in partnership with the French label APC, known for its chic, minimalist basics and collaborations with icons such as Jane Birkin and Kid Cudi. Parker is not necessarily known for his fashion sense, making the collaboration something of a surprise. "It definitely wasn't on my bingo card for my career," he says with a laugh. "For the first few years of my career, I just slapped on whatever and, to be honest, I still slap on whatever. But there's a bit more thought behind it."

Befitting that mindset, APC x Tame Impala features comfortable, 70s-inspired clothes in muted pastels, inspired by "the idea of clothes that are worn by people in a cult or a commune," he says. "A sort of DIY uniform worn by people all living together in the same world."

Parker's entrance into the fashion world has dovetailed with his increasing presence in the big-budget pop universe. A few years ago, he said he wanted to become a "Max Martin type", an aspiration that's come true with this year's release of Radical Optimism, the third album by Dua Lipa. Parker worked on the bulk of the record and appeared onstage with her to perform his TikTok hit The Less I Know the Better during her Glastonbury headline set this year, an experience he describes as "way more wild than I thought it was gonna be".

"The nicest thing about it was that it was Dua headlining Glastonbury, which she has wanted to do since she was a kid," he says, his voice glowing with admiration. "I felt like I had a seat in someone's dream that they were living – I was just happy to be a part of it."

The dream, of course, only lasted a moment – Parker and Lipa tried to celebrate together afterwards, but got caught up in the Glastonbury rush. "We had a big hug, just vibing out for an instant there, and then I had to go to a DJ set and she had to go to her afterparty," he says. "We didn't get to properly rage, but that is just the way Glastonbury goes."

Parker describes himself as "an ambitious person" who's "always unsatisfied in a healthy way – dreaming of the next thing", which is why he was so thrilled to work with Lipa on an album-length project. The pair clicked at the first session in London. "The energy Dua creates in her creative space is one of no ego – we all noticed there were no huge personalities in the room trying to dominate the process," he says. "When you speak to other writers, they've all got nightmare experiences of people who were too big for the room."

Parker is one of a number of rock producers – including Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor, the Black Keys' Dan Auerbach and underground indie luminary Alex G – who have made the jump to pop in recent years. The move doesn't signal the long-forecasted death of rock'n'roll as much as an ability to "explore a different personality in making music". "Having all the attention on you, when writing songs that you're going to be singing, can be restricting, because you have to think about everything at once," Parker says. "When I had the first ambition to write pop music for other artists, [I had] the idea that it doesn't matter what you write, because you're not the one saying it. I quickly learned that's not the case – you still do care about it deeply, but it's nice to share the burden of making stuff."

And how is his new pop focus going to affect the forthcoming fifth Tame Impala record, his first since 2020? It's hard to say – staying tight-lipped seems to be one of the key skills Parker has picked up from the pop world. "All I can say is that I'm working on it," he says. "It's not finished yet, but I think it'll be there soon. I'm loving how excited I am by it – for me, with Tame Impala, if I'm not feeling inspired, there's no fucking point in doing it."

APC x Tame Impala is at apcstore.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHS: SAM NIXON/APC



Rob Rinder goes inside the prison system

Review Britain Behind Bars: A Secret History, Channel 4

A meticulous examination of a broken and cruel prison system

★★★★☆

Leila Latif



What is the fundamental function of prison? The jury is out on whether it is retribution, rehabilitation or protection of the public. But in recent years, with a more complex understanding of mental health, addiction and the criminalisation of poverty, its role has been called into question. While Tory cabinet after Tory cabinet has forged the path of more punitive sentences, many people – myself included – have been questioning the purpose of mass incarceration. Many of us have been calling for a shift towards a more Scandinavian model, which would shift the focus on to helping criminals to become fully contributing members of their communities. It's particularly relevant given that, within days of the election, prisons were said to be so full they were at breaking point, prompting Labour to announce an early release scheme – and possibly even rethink its whole approach to incarceration.

Even though Britain Behind Bars: A Secret History hasn't shifted my stance, presenter Rob Rinder's approach to the subject leads to a far more interesting programme than my own hand-wringing liberalism would have done. The lawyer and broadcaster has a fundamental belief in the legal system and sees these institutions as serving a crucial purpose – but comes to it with curiosity and empathy for inmates past and present. Over three episodes, he looks into three of Britain's most famous prisons – Dartmoor, Shrewsbury and Shepton Mallet – and interviews experts and former residents. In the case of Dartmoor, an imposing, isolated place that was the site of an infamous riot in 1990 in which a prisoner up on the roof loudly decried the "brutality of this place", he believes it is "Britain's Alcatraz", where stabbings were rife and inmates spent most of their lives without human contact.

Shrewbury's legacy is even darker, being notorious for its association with the Pierrepoint family, a line of prolific public executioners who, across the generations, took a disturbing level of pride in their work until their last hanging, in 1956. As one of Shrewsbury's former residents says, incredulously: "How [did] they sleep at night? I know I've been a bit of a nut job in my time, but I can't imagine hanging 10 people by Wednesday."

Finally, the series examines the prisons that were geared towards locking up petty criminals – specifically Shepton Mallet, best known as the place that hosted the Krays in the 1950s. Despite Rinder's faith in a justice system, he views Shepton Mallet as a place that created more criminality than it prevented.

The programme's approach is thoughtful and thorough. Rinder and his team connect the past and the present, showing the terrible parallels between the experiences of modern inmates and those who were locked up in the same cells many decades before. A thorough account is built up of a justice system that has vacillated between the well-intentioned and the desperately cruel. There are moments of dark humour, with Rinder explaining how seriously the Georgian era took theft and that even violence against livestock was punishable by death. One former inmate displays some impeccable comic timing: "Not being funny, but if you stole a sheep nowadays you wouldn't be executed for it … You might get a visit from the RSCPA."

Such moments of levity are sparse, appropriately so. Rinder is deeply disturbed to discover the pride that people took in their work as floggers and executioners, particularly as his family endured the Holocaust and the banal evil of those "just following orders". As he says: "It's a really interesting thing when we think about capital punishment – and the work people do if they don't think too deeply about the moral issues around them. If it's … just doing a job … the human being who is killed is irrelevant to the work."

Rinder is clearly in inner turmoil as he pores over the facts, but nevertheless he remains committed to the justice system. His unease around the consequences for breaking the law lead to considered but compelling television and his approach seems to come down to his background in the field. As a lawyer, he never leaps to conclusions but meticulously inches forward based on confirmed evidence. Even when the prisoners interviewed for the programme advocate for the brutality they endured behind bars – claiming it helped them turn their lives around – Rinder proceeds with caution, unwilling to lend too much credence to a single anecdote in a sea of misery. Britain Behind Bars may not compel the masses to do away with the prison system altogether, but it presents solid evidence that can only further inform the debate.

Sophie Morgan's Fight to Fly
9pm, Channel 4



"We're treated like luggage, like cattle." This documentary's opening footage of the reality of flying as experienced by disabled people is shameful. So much so that paraplegic TV presenter Sophie Morgan is taking the issue to the White House and Downing Street, and campaigning for laws to ensure the use of an invention that could allow passengers to stay in their wheelchairs while flying.

Hollie Richardson

The Battle to Beat Malaria
8pm, BBC Two
Malaria is responsible for the deaths of 600,000 people every year – mainly children under five – and makes a further 200 million sick. And yet just one costly and extremely limited vaccine exists. Could the R21/Matrix-M vaccine, developed by Oxford scientists, be the answer? With its 75% efficacy, it may be a real turning point, as Horizon investigates.
Ali Catterall

Surviving the Post Office
8.30pm, BBC One
After starring in Mr Bates vs the Post Office – the ITV drama that earlier this year compelled government action on the real Post Office scandal – actor Will Mellor meets some of the subpostmasters whose lives were torn apart by it, and learns what the series and the action it led to has really meant. **HR**

Long Lost Family
9pm, ITV1
Melanie is searching for her twin-sister siblings, and in doing so she discovers sad truths about her mother's desperate life as a homeless second world war refugee from what was then Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, in Bedfordshire, Sue Stalley demonstrates a maternal bond that has endured for more than half a century.
Ellen E Jones

House of the Dragon
9pm, Sky Atlantic
With the horribly flame-grilled Aegon laid up in bed for the foreseeable, his scheming brother Aemond has filled the royal power vacuum at King's Landing. But will his disdain for the common folk bite him in the bum? Elsewhere, exiled queen Rhaenyra moves ahead with her "mad thought" of finding some unorthodox dragon riders.
Graeme Virtue

We Hunt Together
10.40pm, BBC One
The eccentric detective drama starring Babou Ceesay and Eve Myles continues to mix criminal psychology with macabre farce (this week, an abortive attempt to flush a severed finger down a toilet). As the endgame approaches, the net has finally closed round Freddy until a new lead muddies the waters once again.
Phil Harrison

What's On
Scan the QR code below to sign up for the What's On newsletter, our free TV email with the best reviews, news and exclusive writing direct to your inbox every Monday

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **9.30** Rip Off Britain (T) (R) **10.15** Expert Witness (T) (R) **10.45** Close Calls: On Camera (T) (R) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Bargain Hunt (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.35** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.45** News (T) **2.0** Rick Stein's Cornwall (T) (R) **2.30** Animal Park (T) (R) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) **3.45** The Repair Shop (T) (R) **4.30** The Finish Line (T) (R) **5.15** Pointless (T) (R) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **7.0** The One Show (T) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 **Panorama** (T) In-depth current affairs report.
8.30 **Surviving the Post Office** (T) Actor Will Mellor meets some of the sub-postmasters whose lives were torn apart after being accused of theft.
9.0 **The Jetty** (T) A new development propels Ember into dangerous territory. Last in the series.

10.0 **News** (T)
10.30 **Regional News** (T) Weather
10.40 **We Hunt Together** (T) Freddy makes a deadly confession.
11.25 **We Hunt Together** (T) Jackson, Lola and Freddy race to unmask the killer. Last in the series.
12.10 **The Weakest Link** (T) (R) **12.55** Weather for the Week Ahead (T) **1.0** News (T)

BBC Two

6.30 **Saturday Kitchen Best Bites** (T) (R) **8.0** Sign Zone: Rick Stein's Food Stories (T) (R) **8.30** Great Coastal Railway Journeys (T) (R) **9.0** News (T) **12.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Impossible (T) (R) **1.45** Make Me a Dealer (T) (R) **2.30** The Customer Is Always Right (T) (R) **3.15** Coastal Defenders (T) (R) **3.45** B&B By the Sea (T) (R) **4.15** Cornwall: This Fishing Life (T) (R) **5.15** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** Robson Green's Weekend Escapes (T) (R) **6.30** Great Continental Railway Journeys (T) (R) **7.0** Today at the Test (T)

8.0 **The Battle to Beat Malaria** (T) Documentary about the development of a new malaria vaccine.
9.0 **The Turkish Detective** (T) Suleyman goes undercover as a rubbish collector to try to find the serial killer before they strike again.
9.45 **QI XS** (T) (R) Highlights from recent series of the show.

10.0 **Spent** (T) Mia struggles to keep a roof over her head.
10.30 **Newsnight** (T) Weather
11.05 **The Apartheid Killer** (T) An investigation into the shootings of 39 people in 1980s South Africa.
12.20 **Sign Zone** Countryfile (T) (R) **1.15** The Bidding Room (T) (R) **2.0** The Jetty (T) (R) **3.0** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.30** News and Weather (T) **1.55** Local News and Weather (T) **2.0** Cooking With the Stars (T) (R) **3.0** Tenable (T) (R) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) (R) **5.0** The Chase (T) (R) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

8.0 **Coronation Street** (T) Leanne tackles Rowan about his past, and Stu encounters a bloodied Mason.
9.0 **Long Lost Family** (T) The story of Sue Stalley, who had a baby as a teenager but put him up for adoption. Plus, Melanie Mackney, whose birth mother had twins before she was born.

10.0 **News** (T) Weather
10.30 **Local News** (T) Weather
10.45 **Goodwood Festival of Speed Highlights** (T)
11.40 **Love & Death** (T) (R) Fact-based crime drama, with Elizabeth Olsen.
12.35 **Shop on TV 3.0** Family Fortunes (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T) **5.05** Jimmy's Taste of Florida (T) (R)

Channel 4

6.25 **Cheers** (T) (R) **7.15** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **9.05** Frasier (T) (R) **11.05** Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes (T) (R) **11.10** Undercover Boss USA (T) (R) **12.05** News (T) **12.10** A New Life in the Sun (T) (R) **1.10** Car S.O.S (T) (R) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** A Place in the Sun (T) (R) **4.0** The Great House Giveaway (T) **5.0** A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? (T) (R) **6.0** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **6.30** The Simpsons (T) (R) **7.0** News (T) **7.55** Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes (T)

8.0 **Jamie: What to Eat This Week** (T) Jamie Oliver picks seasonal tomatoes to make a sticky chicken traybake.
9.0 **Sophie Morgan's Fight to Fly** (T) Documentary in which the presenter sends a group of disabled travellers undercover to expose the shocking service they can experience when flying.

10.0 **Celebrity Gogglebox** (T) (R)
11.05 **The Great** (T) Double bill.
1.05 **Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA** (T) (R) **1.55** The Simpsons (T) (R) **2.45** Becoming Elizabeth (T) (R) **3.45** Grand Designs (T) (R) **4.35** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free (T) (R) **4.55** Frasier (T) (R) **5.20** Frasier (T) (R) **5.45** Countdown (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake! 9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.30** Storm Huntley (T) **12.45** Friends (T) (R) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM Stolen Baby: The Murder of Heidi Broussard (Michelle Ouellet, 2023) (T) **4.0** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (T) (R) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Police Interceptors (T) (R) **7.0** Traffic Cops (T) (R)

8.0 **Motorway Cops: Catching Britain's Speeders** (T) PC Brian Camsell stops a car that has suspected cloned number plates.
9.0 **Police: Suspect No 1** (T) Hull detectives investigate after people are terrorised at home by a knife-wielding intruder, before the same victims are targeted again.

10.0 **999: Police Hour of Duty** (T) (R) Documentary.
11.05 **Police 999: Clear & Present Danger** (T) (R)
12.05 **Traffic Cops** (T) (R) **1.0** Live Casino Show (T) **3.0** Riot in the UK: Caught on Camera (T) (R) **3.50** Inside the Balmoral: Scotland's Finest Hotel (T) (R) **4.40** Wildlife SOS (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Coastal Path** (T) (R) Paul Rose walks 630 miles of the South West Coast Path. **7.30** Railway Walks With Julia Bradbury (T) (R) From Weymouth to Portland.

8.0 **Art of France** (T) (R) Andrew Graham-Dixon tells the history of French art, starting with the invention of gothic architecture.
9.0 **Rebuilding Notre-Dame** (T) (R) Following efforts to rebuild the cathedral, filmed a year on from the fire that ravaged the gothic masterpiece in 2019.

10.0 **Paris** (T) (R) Art historian Sandrine Voillet presents a guide to the French capital.
11.0 **Private Life of a Masterpiece** (T) (R) Rodin's The Kiss.
11.50 **Art on the BBC: Michelangelo** (T) (R)
12.50 **Coastal Path** (T) (R) **1.20** Railway Walks (T) (R) **1.50** Rebuilding Notre-Dame (T) (R) **2.50** Art of France (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm Celebrity MasterChef **8.0** Gavin & Stacey **8.30** Ghosts US **8.50** The Catch Up **8.55** Ryan Tricks on the Streets **9.0** Paddy & Molly: Show No Mersey **9.30** Paddy & Molly: Show No Mersey **10.0** Gambling: A Game of Life and Death **10.50** Pobl Bachyn **11.0** Him & Her **11.30** Him & Her **12.0** Gavin & Stacey **12.25** Paddy & Molly: Show No Mersey **12.55** Paddy & Molly: Show No Mersey **1.25** Kyle: The Gunman Who Divided America **2.25** Sky High Club: Scotland and Beyond **2.55** Him & Her **3.25** Him & Her

U&Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.10** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **7.35** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **8.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **9.0** Top Gear **10.0** Extreme Salvage Squad **11.0** Extreme Salvage Squad **12.0** Storage Hunters UK **12.30** Storage Hunters UK **2.0** James May's Top Toys **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Top Gear **5.0** Gordon's Great Escape **6.0** Rick Stein's Far Eastern Odyssey **7.0** Would I Lie to You? **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Richard Osman's House of Games **9.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **10.0** Have I Got a Bit More 2023 for You **11.0** Taskmaster **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** Would I Lie to You? **1.20** Big Zuu's Big Eats **2.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Goldbergs **9.30** The Goldbergs **10.0** Young Sheldon **11.0** Modern Family **12.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Goldbergs **2.30** The Goldbergs **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Young Sheldon **4.30** Young Sheldon **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **6.0** The Big Bang Theory **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** Celebrity Come Dine With Me **8.0** Below Deck **9.0** Gogglebox **10.0** Naked Attraction **11.05** First Dates **12.05** The Big Bang Theory **12.35** The Big Bang Theory **1.05** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.35** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.0** Modern Family **2.50** Below Deck **3.40** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **4.30** The Neighborhood **5.20** Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Film4

11.0am FILM Against the Wind (1948) **12.55** FILM The Wrong Box (1966) **3.05** FILM Barnacle Bill (1957) **4.50** FILM The Bedford Incident (1965) **6.55** FILM Gifted (2017) **9.0** FILM Top Gun: Maverick (2022) **11.35** FILM The Hunt (2019) **1.20** FILM Bandits (2001)

ITV2

6.0am CITV **9.0** World's Funniest Videos **9.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **10.0** Love Bites **11.0** Love Bites **12.0** Dress to Impress **1.0** Family Fortunes **2.0** Supermarket Sweep **3.0** Charmed **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Dress to Impress **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** The Masked Singer US **9.0** Love Island **10.05** Family Guy **11.35** American Dad! **12.35** Shopping With Keith Lemon **1.05** Shopping With Keith Lemon **1.35** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.35** Unwind With ITV **3.0** Teleshopping

Sky Max

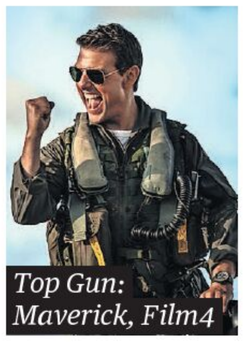
6.0am NCIS: New Orleans **7.0** SEAL Team **8.0** The Flash **9.0** Stargate SG-1 **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **12.0** The Flash **1.0** MacGyver **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** SEAL Team **6.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** Flintoff: Lord of the Fries **9.0** Mr Bigstuff **10.0** The Walking Dead **12.0** Warrior **1.0** The Force: North East **2.0** Road Wars **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** Highway Patrol

Sky Arts

6.0am Andrea Bocelli: The Journey **7.15** The South Bank Show Originals **7.45** The Joy of Painting **8.55** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Brad Pitt **12.0** The Joy of Painting **12.30** The Joy of Painting **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** Brunelleschi's Impossible Dome **3.0** Brunelleschi's Impossible Dome **4.0** Discovering: Matt Damon **5.0** The Joy of Painting **5.30** The Joy of Painting **6.0** Tales of the Unexpected **6.30** Tales of the Unexpected **7.0** Painting Birds With Jim and Nancy Moir **8.0** Battle of the Bagpipes **9.0** André Rieu: Romantic Paradise **10.45** André Rieu: Welcome to My World **11.45** Classic FM Live: Classical Anthems **1.45** Academy of Ancient Music: Vivaldi's Four Seasons **3.15** FILM Janine Jansen: Falling for Stradivari (2021) **4.10** Cheltenham Literature Festival **5.10** The Art of Architecture

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Fish Town **7.55** Six Feet Under **10.05** Gomorrah **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** The Sopranos **3.30** Six Feet Under **5.40** Gomorrah **7.50** Game of Thrones **9.0** House of the Dragon **10.20** The Last of Us **11.25** House of the Dragon **12.45** Succession **1.55** The Leftovers **2.55** Game of Thrones **4.05** Fish Town **5.0** Fish Town


Top Gun: Maverick, Film4

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.0** Classical Live. Another chance to hear Friday's first night of the Proms, featuring the BBC Symphony Orchestra performing music by Handel, Bruckner and Beethoven. Plus, Grace Williams's Concert Overture from the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, conducted by Ryan Bancroft. **4.0** Composer of the Week: Silvestre Revueltas (1/5) **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** BBC Proms 2024: Prom 5. Live from the Royal Albert Hall, Ryan Bancroft conducts the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in Schoenberg's Pelleas and Melisande, and Zemlinsky's The Mermaid. **10.0** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight. Soweto Kinch presents the best in jazz. With guest Theon Cross. **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4

6.0am Today **9.0** Orwell vs Kafka: Doublethink (R) **9.30** Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics. Natalie and guests discuss the goddess Aphrodite. (3/7) **10.0** Woman's Hour. Presented by Nuala McGovern. **11.0** Policing Protest. Mark Easton explores the history of policing protests in Britain, from the Peterloo massacre to the present day, considering where the future of protest lies. (1/3) **11.45** Child. India Rakusen explores why it is so hard to discuss pregnancy loss. (R) **12.0** News **12.04** You and Yours **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One. Presented by Sarah Montague. **1.45** Escape from the Maze. Knowing they have strength in numbers, the prison officers seize their chance. (6/10) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Ed Reardon's Week. Ed decides to dust off his woodworking skills. (R) **2.45** Gambits (R) **3.0** A Good Read. Sarah Phelps and Irenosen Okojie discuss their favourite books. (8/9) **3.30** God Next Door (R) **4.0** Donald Trump and Black America (R) **4.30** Alexei Sayle's Strangers on a Train: Nottingham to Skegness (R) **5.0** PM. Presented by Evan Davis. **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** Mark Steel's in Town. The comedian creates a bespoke standup set for Coleraine. (5/6) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** The Briefing Room. Why are anxiety and depression increasing in the UK? (R) **8.30** Inside Science (R) **9.0** History's Secret Heroes. The story of thrill-seeker turned spy Christine Granville. (R) **9.30** To Catch a Scorpion (R) **9.59** Weather **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Yellowface. By Rebecca F Kuang. (6/10) **11.0** The System. Thriller, by Ben Lewis. (5/5) (R) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News and Weather **12.30** Child (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Julie Enfield Investigates: Terminus (1/5) **6.30** Keep on Running (6/6) **7.0** Anything Legal (2/8) **7.30** Stop Messing About! (6/13) **8.0** In and Out of the Kitchen (4/6) **8.30** Dark Matter (6/10) **8.45** Why Mummy Swears (1/5) **9.30** A Walk of One's Own: Virginia Woolf on Foot (1/4) **9.45** Daily Service **10.0** Radiolab (6/8) **10.55** Inheritance Tracks **11.0** Julie Enfield Investigates: Terminus (1/5) **11.30** Keep on Running (6/6) **12.0** Anything Legal (2/8) **12.30** Stop Messing About! (6/13) **1.0** In and Out of the Kitchen (4/6) **1.30** Dark Matter (6/10) **1.45** Why Mummy Swears (1/5) **2.0** Just a Minute (3/10) **2.30** Snap (4/6) **3.0** It's Your Movie **4.0** Radiolab (6/8) **4.55** Inheritance Tracks **5.0** Julie Enfield Investigates: Terminus (1/5) **5.30** Keep on Running (6/6) **6.0** Anything Legal (2/8) **6.30** Stop Messing About! (6/13) **7.0** In and Out of the Kitchen (4/6) **7.30** Dark Matter (6/10) **7.45** Why Mummy Swears (1/5) **8.0** Just a Minute (3/10) **8.30** Snap (4/6) **9.0** It's Your Movie **10.0** Comedy Club: Mark Steel's in Town (3/6) **10.30** Goodness Gracious Me (1/6) **11.0** The News Quiz (7/7) **11.30** The Ape That Got Lucky (1/4) **12.0** Radiolab (6/8) **12.55** Inheritance Tracks **1.0** Julie Enfield Investigates: Terminus (1/5) **1.30** Keep on Running (6/6) **2.0** Anything Legal (2/8) **2.30** Stop Messing About! (6/13) **3.0** In and Out of the Kitchen (4/6) **3.30** Dark Matter (6/10) **3.45** Why Mummy Swears (1/5) **4.0** Just a Minute (3/10) **4.30** Snap (4/6) **5.0** It's Your Movie

Friday's solutions

Wordsearch



Sudoku no 6,554

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

Suguru

3	1	3	4	3	1
2	4	2	1	2	5
1	3	5	4	3	1
4	2	1	2	5	2
1	5	3	4	1	3
3	2	1	5	2	4

Word wheel

PARTIALLY

Saturday's Quick crossword

Solution no 16,913



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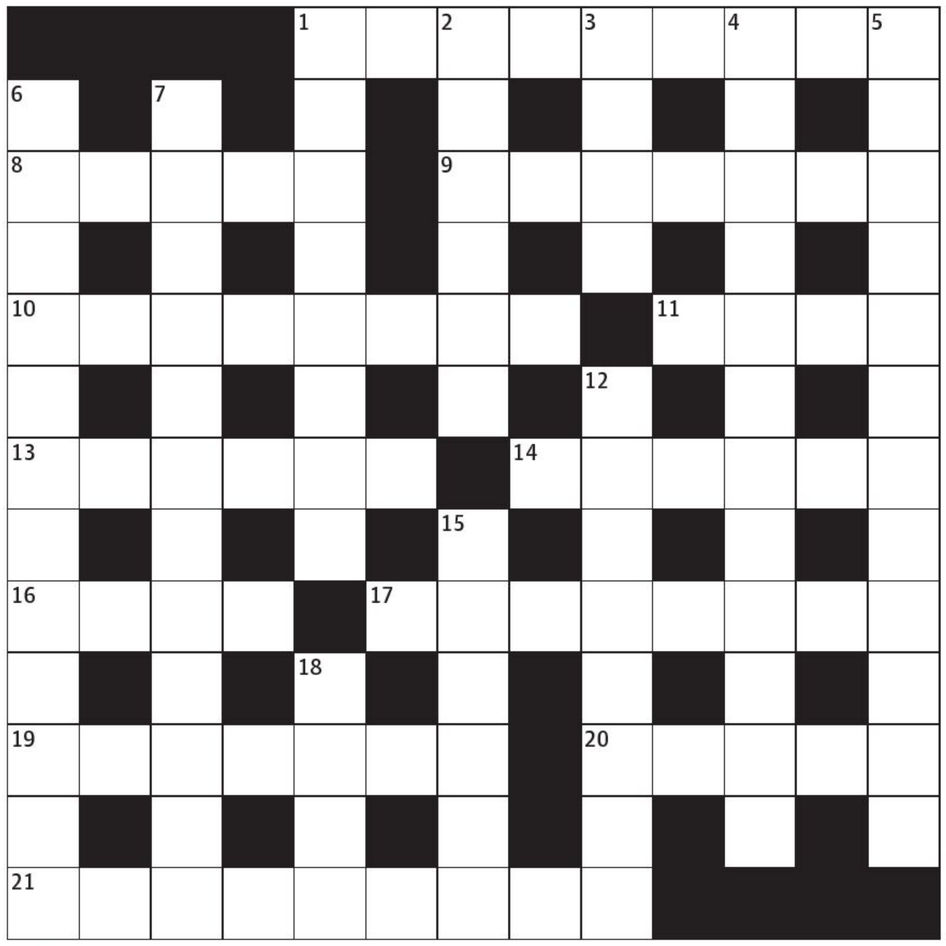
Quick crossword no 16,914

Across

1 Certain to succeed (9)
8 Particular meaning of a word or phrase (5)
9 One's on the guest list (7)
10 The first synthetic plastic (8)
11 Large-scale (4)
13 Plant that completes its life cycle in a year (6)
14 Roman goddess of the dawn (6)
16 The skinny (4)
17 Intensify (8)
19 Threatening (7)
20 Warning sound (5)
21 Caught up (in a tricky situation) (9)

Down

1 Sponge off others (8)
2 Drug which acts as a sedative or painkiller (6)
3 Prepare (the way) (4)
4 Run rings around (someone) (12)
5 Find sergeant (anag) - independent (4-8)
6 Self-seeking affection (8,4)
7 Issue which people are keen to discuss (7,5)
12 Assumed (8)
15 On the back of an animal (6)
18 Any minute now (4)



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Sudoku no 6,558

Easy. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at theguardian.com/sudoku

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

Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of two squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.

		3	5		2
				3	
					5
2			2		
	3				

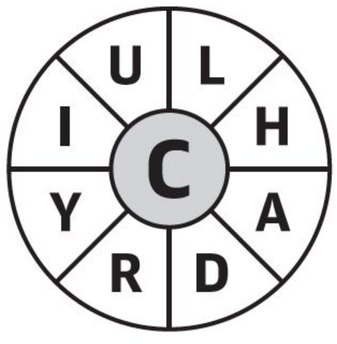
Wordsearch

Can you find 15 words that go with under in the grid? Words can run forwards, backwards, vertically or diagonally, but always in a straight, unbroken line.

V	A	L	U	E	C	I	O	V
Y	E	V	E	I	H	C	A	N
D	B	Y	E	X	P	O	S	E
U	K	X	N	R	L	N	C	O
T	L	S	I	B	N	A	O	O
S	T	C	T	L	H	D	R	E
U	E	R	D	A	E	I	E	G
D	A	L	I	N	T	G	N	R
O	P	R	G	K	E	E	Q	A
W	R	I	T	E	S	P	D	H
Q	S	W	A	T	E	R	S	C

Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-36. Good-30. Average-22.



Trivia corner

How many times has Andrew Garfield been nominated for an Oscar?
a. Once
b. Twice
c. Three times
d. Four times
Answer top right

