

INSIDE



SUMMER SURVIVAL GUIDE

ISSUE 1625 / 22-28 JULY 2024

# EBW

£4

**Rob Delaney**

on

**Housing for nurses**

**Robin Hood politics**

and **Deadpool**

Interview page 22



A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT

NEW EVERY WEEK

# ISSUE

# LLOYD COLE



SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER  
THE APEX - BURY ST EDMUNDS

WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER  
THEATRE SEVERN - SHREWSBURY

THURSDAY 19 SEPTEMBER  
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OCTOBER 2024 and friends

Thursday 10 Liverpool Hangar 34\*  
Friday 11 Sunderland Fire Station\*  
Saturday 12 Sheffield Leadmill\*



Thursday 17 Lincoln Engine Shed+  
Friday 18 NorWich Epic+  
Saturday 19 WolverhampTon Kk's+



Thursday 24 Frome Cheese & Grain #  
Friday 25 London Camden Electric Ballroom #  
Saturday 26 SouTharnpTon 1865#



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25 SEP LINCOLN THE DRILL  
26 SEP NORWICH THE WATERFRONT  
17 NOV CHESTER THE LIVE ROOMS  
1 DEC LEEDS BRUDENELL

PLANET ROCK & THE BIG CARTEL  
PRESENTS

# KING KING



## 2024 TOUR

JUL 27 HOLMFIRTH	OCT 20 CARLISLE
OCT 10 KENDAL	OCT 23 GATESHEAD
OCT 11 CHESTER	OCT 24 LINCOLN
OCT 12 SOUTHAMPTON	OCT 25 NORWICH
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22 EDINBURGH QUEEN'S HALL*	<b>DECEMBER</b>
23 SUNDERLAND FIRE STATION*	01 GRIMSBY DOCKS ACADEMY
24 LEEK FOXLOWE ARTS	03 YORK CRESCENT
26 BRISTOL EXCHANGE	04 CHESTER LIVE ROOMS
27 SOUTHAMPTON THE BROOK*	05 CARDIFF GLOBE

\* as special guests to Hugh Cornwell

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# THIS WEEK'S BIG ISSUE

## COVER FEATURE

**Rob Delaney talks blockbuster movies, bereavement and bailing out the NHS.**  
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**School's out for everyone: our Summer Survival Guide will help parents and carers navigate the holidays.** Page 16

## LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

**Dame Laura Kenny lacked confidence at school, but became a leader on the cycling track.** Page 28

## BOOKS

**Did George Mallory beat Hillary and Norgay to the peak of Everest? It's an enduring mystery destined never to grow old.**  
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## MUSIC

**Let's choose you a running soundtrack, even if you're partial to a bit of Celine Dion.**  
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## MY PITCH

**Steven Paterson sells the magazine in Edinburgh, where he has lots of loyal customers. Just don't try to play him at poker.**  
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## HOW THE BIG ISSUE WORKS

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PHOTO: JULIEN DE ROSA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



## Going in Seine

The river Seine has been cleaning up its act. So much so that it's safe enough to be used as a venue for the Olympics, starting in Paris this week. Several events will take place in the river, including long distance marathon swimming races and the wet legs of triathlons.

But it's been a long journey to get to the finishing line.

Like any major river in any major city, the Seine was used for centuries as an open sewer, and as a general-purpose dump through the industrial revolution and intense urbanisation.

The bucolic scenes seen in Georges Seurat's paintings of bathers in the Seine were consigned to history until a €1.4 billion (£1.2bn) state-backed plan began as the city was named host of this year's Games in 2024. There was investment in treatment plants, new wastewater management systems and an expansion of storm basins, all with the aim of reducing by 75% bacterial pollution in the river.

So if Paris can do it, how long until we can take a dip in the Thames, Avon, Mersey, Tyne or Clyde?

Water in the UK is a massive issue. Huge improvements have to be made managing waste and cleaning up rivers. During the King's Speech last week, King Charles said: "My Government recognises the need to improve water quality and a bill will be introduced to strengthen the powers of the water regulator."

Let's hope the new bill can make a splash.

# THE DISPATCH

News, views & miscellany

## FOOD POVERTY

# 'If children are going hungry, how can they thrive?': Two-thirds of teachers worry their pupils won't have enough to eat this summer

By Lottie Elton  
Big Issue Reporter

● More than two-thirds (68%) of teachers are worried at least one child in their class will experience hunger during the summer break because their parents cannot afford to feed them, new research has found. Food rescue charity The Felix Project has found that half of teachers are worried that between one and three children in their class will go hungry over the break.

A further 13% said they are worried between four and six children will experience hunger; 3% said between seven and 10, and most disturbingly 2% said more than 11 children in their class. Averaging the teachers' concerns, around 645,000 children across the country could experience holiday hunger this summer.

The health of pupils is at "significant risk", Marc Thompson, headteacher of Mandeville Primary School in London, told Big Issue. "It's a huge issue, one that we must take really seriously. Our primary purpose is to make sure that the children are safe. And that is not just about what we deliver in school, it's about what we deliver outside of school.

Food is the most essential thing. If these children are going hungry, how can they thrive? Their lives are exponentially more difficult."

Mandeville Primary School – where 60% of pupils are eligible for free school meals – runs a weekly 'food shop', where parents and carers of pupils at the school can pick up fresh fruit, vegetables and other nutritious foodstuffs. Like 170 other schools across the capital, they are supported by The Felix Project and funding from London mayor Sadiq Khan.

**645,000**  
children across the  
country could  
experience holiday  
hunger this summer

Local mum Stephanie often attends the food shop with her daughter. She described the support as "fantastic".

"I work part-time, and most of my money goes on bills. When you see what's left, it can feel like: What do I do?" she said. "The summer holiday is very, very difficult because it's breakfast, snack, lunch, snack, dinner, dessert. But I take [my daughter] to the food shop, she can pick aubergines, potatoes, loads of healthy things. We can spend time cooking in the kitchen together."

Grandmother-of-two Irene was reluctant to visit the food shop at first, saying there was a "bit of stigma".

"I thought, 'I don't want to, I don't want to,'" she said. "I had to tell myself: 'Irene, you need it. Just go.' That negative feeling changed really quickly."

The food shop ensures that Irene's two grandsons get a "decent meal".

"Everyone there, you see them happy and excited, lining up with their bags and trolleys. Vegetables are so expensive at the supermarket, going up a pound here, a pound there. I get my meat at the supermarket, then often get my veg here at the shop. It is good, it really helps."

Thompson added: "Our school is a community, us helping each other is not such a big deal – it shouldn't be a big deal. We all know each other, which I think helps people feel more comfortable in that relationship. Stephanie is a member of our PTA, for example, she comes in and supports us with covering a nursery on one day, or helping out with sports day. Life can be challenging for all of us, and being able to accept help is not something that should make you feel anything negative."

The Felix Project charity provides a range of services including large-scale food deliveries, nutritious prepared meals and cook-at-home meal kits. Last year, they delivered the equivalent of 3.6 million meals to families in London, rescuing perfectly good food from the bins of supermarkets, restaurants and farms.

The scale of child hunger should be front and centre of the UK political agenda, urged Charlotte Hill, CEO of The Felix Project. "That any child might experience hunger and not have access to enough nutritious food during the school holidays is heartbreaking," she said. "However, through [our survey] results we can see there are many teachers out there worried up to six children per class may be in this position – that's beyond heartbreaking, that's shameful for our society."

thefelixproject.org

To read Big Issue's Summer Survival Guide, which will help parents and carers through the holiday season, turn to page 16

## IN NUMBERS:

**68%**

of teachers are worried at least one child in their class will experience hunger during the summer holidays

**2,019,509**

children were known to be eligible for free school meals in England in 2022-23. This is up from **1,142,043** in 2015-16

An estimated **4.3 million** children are living in poverty – up by **700,000** on 2010 when the Tories came to power

Around

**1 million**

children in the UK are experiencing destitution – meaning their families can't afford to feed, clothe or clean them

THE BIG NUMBER

120,000

This is how many private rental homes are needed to prevent prices from continuing to hit new heights. Rightmove said an influx of new homes would restore "normal growth" of 2% rather than the 7% rise in advertised prices recorded

FOOD POVERTY



Food bank has a beef with MP lunches

Do you think it's unfair that MPs can tuck into a three-course meal for as little as £10.41 while others are struggling to stave off hunger? One food bank is taking a stand.

North Paddington Food Bank has launched a campaign called No Food in the House to put an end to MPs' subsidised lunches.

Based on Westminster's doorstep, the food aid charity said it was

"deeply troubled" that politicians can eat "Panko coated lamb loin with carrot and Timothy Taylor Ale purée, black garlic, potato galette, and natural jus" across 17 bars and eateries in the House of Commons at the cost of £7 million a year to the taxpayer.

Instead, the cash saved could go towards tackling hunger and poverty for the three million people across the country relying on food banks.

Artist Corbin Shaw has created a number of artworks to front the campaign, which feature on billboards across the UK, while a change.org petition calling for the end of subsidised dining has racked up more than 80,000 signatures and counting.

Sign the petition here: [change.org/p/end-fine-dining-subsidies-for-mps-no-food-in-the-house](https://change.org/p/end-fine-dining-subsidies-for-mps-no-food-in-the-house)

OLYMPIC GAMES

The athletes' village at the Paris Olympics and Paralympics will host 10,000 Olympians and has even seen organisers turn an old cinema and electrical station into gyms. Three-thousand apartments containing a total of 14,500 beds will accommodate athletes for the games before being turned into 2,800 housing units – 2,000 family homes and 800 student flats – with office

14,250 beds

space for 6,000 workers and properties to house another 6,000 people. It remains to be seen whether those homes remain affordable in Paris's sky-high rental market. In 2022 the BBC found just 200 of the 9,000 homes built on the Olympic Park following London 2012 remained affordable.

The bed spaces created for the Paris 2024 Olympics could certainly make a

12,000 people on the streets

difference to the homelessness situation in France.

Around 300,000 people are homeless in the country, according to the French Observatory of

Inequality, and between 6,000 and 12,000 are sleeping on the streets.

A significant proportion of France's homeless population are in Paris. Authorities face accusations that more than 12,000 homeless people have been moved out of Paris to make way for tourists ahead of the Olympic Games.



## OPINION

# One of the biggest crises facing the UK is barely talked about – the crisis of an ageing population

By James Rose

Journalist specialising in demographics.

● Despite steering the Labour Party to a landslide victory, for Keir Starmer, the hard work is only beginning. He faces an inbox full of problems, from crumbling national infrastructure to polluted rivers and ballooning NHS waiting lists.

But one of the foremost crises facing the UK is barely mentioned: the ageing population. Decades of low birth rates combined with increasing life expectancy means that the UK, like many western states, is ageing rapidly.

The UK had 9.3 million people aged over 65 in 2000, today the number is 12.5 million. The UN predicts this number will reach 18.7 million by 2050. The relative share of old people as a part of the UK's total population will also leap from 16% in 2000 to over 26% by 2050. This trend is even more dramatic for those over 80, who are predicted to grow from 4% to 10% of the total population.

These changes will place a huge strain on our already creaking welfare and healthcare system. The elderly generally require substantially more healthcare expenditure than the young, with the Nuffield Trust calculating that the average 85-year-old costs the NHS roughly eight times more than the average 25- to 30-year-old.

On top of that, more retired people means more state pensions for the government to fund. In 2023 the government spent £141bn on state pensions, substantially more than all government spending on defence, transport and overseas aid for that year combined.

Finding the money to meet these additional costs will be hugely challenging – this will be exacerbated by the fact the state will be relying on taxes from a

relatively smaller number of working-age adults to pay for them.

Without dramatic changes those creaking systems will collapse and it will be the vulnerable who will suffer most. A recent report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows more than two million pensioners already live in poverty. Without a functioning welfare system, that already dire figure will skyrocket.

Our political leaders need to be upfront and honest about the challenges presented by an ageing population, and how it is in all our collective interests to try and address them.

We need to consider community-based ideas. Sweden is trialling intergenerational living solutions, called SällBo, where over 70-year-olds live with those aged under-25, and share communal spaces. Although this project has only been in action for a few years, there is evidence that it is diminishing feelings of isolation in its elderly participants. Elsewhere, Japan has long had centres called Yoro Shisetsu, which provide combined care facilities for both children and the elderly. Again, the results are extremely positive.

While some may question whether such schemes could work in the UK, they must be worth trying. Big problems, after all, require bold thinking.

The crises facing Starmer are complex and numerous. Unlike NHS waiting lists or the intractable housing crisis, relatively simple, low-cost measures could help allay the immediate effects of this one. Instead of following the path of wilful ignorance taken by his predecessors, Starmer should take decisive action to spare a lot of people a lot of suffering.

EDITOR'S CHOICE  
5 PIECES YOU NEED TO READ ON BIGISSUE.COM



1 Travis frontman Fran Healy on unfinished business and why being working class is a superpower

2 Scotland's national poet Kathleen Jamie thinks book festivals are the wrong target for climate activism

3 'Huge mandate': Brits of all political stripes want stronger rights for workers, poll finds

4 'It's David vs Goliath': Inside Amazon workers' historic battle for trade union recognition

5 Jenna Coleman on policing the town that #MeToo forgot in *The Jetty*

## OUR VENDORS

## National Lottery funding strengthens Big Issue support for Roma vendors



● The National Lottery Community Fund has given a significant sum in new funding to the Big Issue Group (BIG) to help vendors from the Roma community. In collaboration with the Roma Support Group, BIG will use the grant to expand its support for more than 500 Roma vendors selling the Big Issue.

More than 100,000 people in the UK identify as Roma and the Fundamental Rights Agency has estimated that around 80% of Roma people are at risk of poverty. Around 7% of rough sleepers in London were recorded as Roma/Travellers at the last count.

Catherine Parsons, managing director of the Big Issue Changing Lives CIC, said: "We're very grateful to The National Lottery Community Fund for funding our work with the Roma community. With the input of Roma people at every stage, we've co-produced a pioneering programme that we hope will connect and empower this often overlooked group to feel part of society."

## CHRIS BRYANT / KING'S SPEECH

"This is, if you like, the Sugababes moment. This is when we push the button. This is when we press the reset button on the political agenda on the country."



MP Chris Bryant paid tribute to the pop icons ahead of the state opening of parliament. Sugababes aren't the only early-00s institution suddenly back in vogue. In Labour's first King's Speech in 14 years, Keir Starmer's government pledged to revive the economy, focus on housebuilding and tackle the cost of living crisis. Head to [bigissue.com/tag/kings-speech](https://bigissue.com/tag/kings-speech) for reaction, analysis and more.

CARTOON



HEALTH



## Brits are losing faith that the NHS will be there for them when they need it

● A new study by King's Business School has found that an increasing number of us do not believe that our health conditions will be treated. It comes as newly released statistics show a hike in waiting times and frontline GP services becoming ever harder to access.

**One in five (18%)**

of people now doubt that the NHS will care for them when they need it, double the 9% who thought so in 2008.

**307,500**  
people in England had been waiting more than a year to start routine hospital treatment at the end of May

**7.6 million**  
treatments were waiting to be carried out at the end of May (nearly double the 2017 total)

**Half the population**

said they'd decided against seeing an NHS GP about a health condition in the last year

**32%**

said they didn't think they'd be able to get an appointment

**37%**

of those who didn't contact their GP said it was because they thought their condition wasn't very serious or that they could treat it themselves – the top answer given

**30%**

said that they thought they wouldn't be able to get through to the GP practice on the phone (or that waiting times would be too long (28%))

POLITICS

## This is what parliament would look like under proportional representation

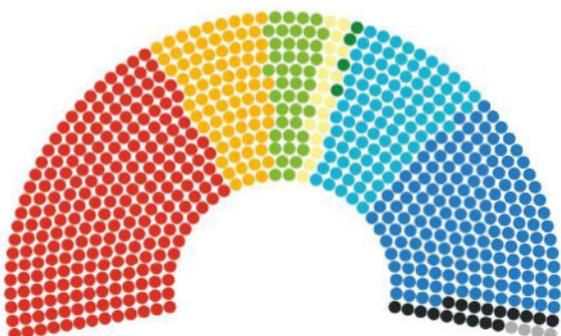
● Labour's landslide general election victory has renewed debate on electoral reform after the new parliament was branded the "most disproportionate in history".

Keir Starmer's party secured 64% (412) of seats from just under 34% of votes under the first-past-the-post system, while Reform UK and the Green Party shared 1% (nine) of seats with more than 20% of the overall vote.

The Electoral Reform Society's Jess Garland described the result as "extremely skewed" and called for a switch to proportional representation.

Under that system, Labour would have 220 MPs, the Conservatives would have 154, and Reform UK would have 93. The Lib Dems would have 79, and the Greens would have 44.

- Labour
- Liberal Democrats
- Green Party
- SNP
- Plaid Cymru
- Reform UK
- Conservative
- Northern Ireland
- Other



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A smartphone is shown vertically, displaying the logo for 'THE Positive News PODCAST'. The logo features the word 'THE' in a small, white, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, 'Positive' is written in a large, white, serif font. Underneath 'Positive', the word 'News' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the logo, 'PODCAST' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The background of the phone screen is a dark blue gradient with a lighter blue curved shape behind the text.

THE  
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PPA Scotland magazine of the year 2020, 2019, 2017, PPA Best Covid Response, Campaign of the Year, Innovation of the Year, Team of the Year 2020

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PPA Scotland Hall of Fame inductee 2021

Jane Graham PPA Scotland Writer of

the Year 2018

# EDITOR'S LETTER



## Cheer up, it might happen

Britain is quite a lot happier than sad. Last week, according to YouGov, 50% of the population said they were happy and 22% said they were sad. It's not binary though. There are other measurements including whether we all feel frustrated, stressed, optimistic, don't know (a pretty steady 2% over the years) and apathetic. At present that sits at 15%. Though, if you were really apathetic would you care to fill out a survey?

Taking the numbers as they are, that 28% gap, with sadness dipping way down, is the largest it's been in over a year. The first week of June 2023 made people feel good (though not sure why – Manchester United lost the FA Cup final to Manchester City and record numbers of syphilis cases were reported in the UK) and that good feeling and gap to low sadness number was the first significant one since back in early 2020. Just before everything changed.

It should also be said that it's not clear where the weighting of numbers come from across Britain. That last happiness percentages were drawn before the final of the Euros. Gareth had yet to, nobly, collect his training cones and hand them back in. It may be that the numbers take a knock. A quick question following the final asked if Southgate should receive a knighthood. Some 48% of you said no. Harsh.

But it may also be that things tick up further. There are reasons to be hopeful following the King's Speech outlining the Labour programme for government and what that means for making lives better. There are positive noises about greater local autonomy; they are keen to follow the Manchester model for municipal bus operations; they will bring train franchises into public ownership (rail nationalisation consistently plays well in

opinion polls); they're going to deal with no-fault evictions and they are setting up a new child poverty unit, working across government departments and also bringing in external experts from charities and the third sector. They are yet to announce a lifting of the loathed and punitive two-child benefits cap, but rumours persist that this will be looked at. It's hard to see how they can be serious about properly tackling the worst of child deprivation without ridding the country of this.

Keir Starmer's mission is to be mission-led. There needs to be much detail yet. We'll see.

There is a key survey that catches the eye, tucked away on the polling giant's site. When asked if they'd rather be stuck in the woods with a man they didn't know, or a bear, 53% of women aged 18-29 chose the bear. This is not related to the TV show (the third series of which, incidentally, is MUCH better than the mutters moan, especially the final four episodes), but deals with a real bear.

If the nation is really to get happier, then lads you're going to have to buck up your ideas.

Paul McNamee is UK Editor of Big Issue

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@PaulMcNamee

The YouGov happiness survey's good feeling and gap to low sadness number was the first significant one since back in early 2020

Hopefully the King's Speech gave everyone a lift



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## 2. Help



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## 3. Earn



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# BIRD'S WORDS



## Government future planning appears to be for the birds

I always used to think that if I was a bird – rather than just having the surname – I'd be a crow. I like their jet-black look. And their noise. And the fact that they are supposedly clever and, like me, up early and often to bed late.

But now I see myself more as one of the seagulls who are often up even before me, their cawing noise disturbing the light sleepers in our house.

I do not live near the coast but these birds have moved inland and are being noticed, with press comment about the nuisance they have become. Apparently in 2019 their culling was terminated because of the extension of human rights to other species.

They are big, strong birds, and if you get the chance to study them you will see they are incredibly clean and elegant. Yet apparently, they rip food off the public and attack in the pursuit of nourishment. Like all animals they have a zest for life. And like virtually all animals their arrival inland is – I am told – due to the shortage of fish at sea. They are adapting to our hoovering up of their life source.

So seagulls, along with melting ice and high winds and hot sun and tidal realignments, are signs that mankind is dead useless at protecting its future. In fact, politics and governments are notorious defenders of the here and now. In Marxist terms they would be accused of 'worshipping at the altar of the accomplished fact', always dealing with the here and now and leaving the future to its own devices.

Governments do seem to put dealing with the future off to the future. And at times they do wallow in vitality when they respond loudly to an emergency, often an emergency from the

past that just got put off to the future. Therefore they never take on board how much of what was once the future is buried in the current crisis.

So when I go on about prevention they always say "we love it and will one day get on with it. But not now". In other words, don't plan the future. Wait until it becomes an emergency.

Recently it has become apparent that the armed forces have been so scaled back that we are exposed to the well-armed of other countries. And that we could not defend ourselves in an attack. For decades the governments of various complexions have been told about this glaring issue but jack shit has been done about it. Each of our last 10 prime ministers has overseen a shrinking, so now there is an urgency to review the defence of our islands. An emergency is upon us and a costly re-equip will be called for.

That's government-think. What on occasions I have called Westminsterism. An inability to think before the future is allowed to fester into today's or tomorrow's emergency.

### THIS WEEK JOHN WILL BE

#### Reading:

*Young Hearts Crying* by Richard Yates

#### Watching:

*Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961)

#### Listening:

*Boswell's Life of Johnson*

#### Doing:

Speaking at the Disability Policy Centre's parliamentary event

That's why we so welcome the idea of a new instrument of change like a new administration. Able, we hope, to embrace the future. To familiarise themselves with the future by planning for it.

Wales's government has been planning for the future with its Well-being of Future Generations Act.

A far-sighted commitment to a future life that needs to be planned now. Of course, their emergency struggles with the Welsh health service cannot be ignored and hopefully they will be able to rectify falling behind the rest of the UK, but the bravery of facing up to what's coming down the line and preventing the worst aspects as much as possible is highly commendable.

The future where seagulls can return to their traditional healthy diet will only come about if this government grabs this future with both hands and moves from its gauche and easily criticisable beginnings to create the sciences of prevention.

So much can be reduced down to a lack of sensible and thoughtful investment. Of spending to save.

The moment that Starmer came into office the headlines blared out that the prison crisis was worse than expected. And that upwards of 10,000 prisoners would have to be released after 40% of their sentence rather than 50%, with good behaviour.

Immediately I saw the headlines: more prisons to be built at lightning speed! And because yesterday the future wasn't planned for, it's today's emergency again.

We have so many futures awaiting the kind hand of investment, each waiting in the queue behind yesterday's untreated futures which become today's emergencies.

Rome wasn't built in a day, nor was its decline a one-day event. It took centuries to end up smelling like a rotting pilchard. A neglect of the future fed through to a rotting of the present.

It's a cohesive response to emergency that is more likely to head off its recurrence. Good emergency work is commendable but it has to be supported with stability and curing.

So let's encourage government to get its handling of emergencies right but also to take on the mantle of the future: don't leave it to break down into tomorrow's emergency.

The move of seagulls inland shows them adapting to an uncertain future, something our new government should consider



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*By Isabella McRae*  
Big Issue Senior Reporter

*Illustrations by Sam Peet*



# THE BIG ISSUE SUMMER SURVIVAL GUIDE

## SCHOOL'S OUT

● Children are wild with excitement because the summer holidays are here (and have been for a few weeks already in Scotland). Weeks free of homework and maths lessons? Sign us up. But parents know it can be a constant challenge to keep them entertained.

Megan Bennett, a parenting coach at Action for Children's Parent Talk, says: "It feels like a long time and, as lovely and special as that time can be, sometimes thinking of ideas and making sure they've got things to do can lead to worrying about spending lots of money. "Social media plays a big role because you compare yourselves to other families. As parents, you want to give your children the best summer, and that can be overwhelming."

In a cost of living crisis, it can seem an especially tricky task. Many families struggle without free school meals, and childcare may be unaffordable for many.

Lynn Perry, the chief executive of Barnardo's, says: "The cost of living crisis has squeezed household budgets and tipped more families into poverty, with many people having to make heartbreaking choices about what to cut from their budgets to make ends meet."

But there is support available, and the Big Issue's Summer Survival Guide is back to help you navigate the holidays. We've rounded up our top tips, and we'll keep directing families to places they can get help this summer.

## FREE AND LOW-COST THINGS TO DO

● You don't have to spend a lot to have a great summer. Megan Bennett says: "Children really love being with you. They are so excited to have a summer with their siblings and parents. Sometimes parents put extra pressure on themselves, as if it needs to be a big showy time, but actually, a movie night on the sofa is just as exciting to them as going somewhere really expensive."

It is also worth asking what your kids want to do. They might suggest something far simpler than expected – maybe it's having a disco in the living room, baking together or a scavenger hunt.

Read on for more suggestions of activities on a shoestring.

### GET SPORTY FOR THE OLYMPICS

The Olympics will be the talk of the summer, and it's a fantastic opportunity to get your kids moving. Keep an eye out for events near you.

Slough is hosting a **sports carnival** at Arbour Park Stadium (Sunday 28 July), a free family day out where kids can try sports and watch the Paris Olympics on the big screen.

**Forestry England** is inviting families to try out Olympic-inspired challenges on their famous Gruffalo trails at 21 forests across England (free, from 23 July).

There might be free sports taster sessions near you. Ask your local sports centre or check out Eventbrite or social media. You could also encourage your kids to create their own sports tournament.

### GO TO A MUSEUM FOR FREE

Plenty of museums across the country offer free entry. If you're in London, why not walk among the dinosaurs at the **Natural History Museum**, learn about wonderful inventions at the **Science Museum** or spark your imagination at **Tate Modern**?

If not, check what's in your area. There's the wacky **House of Marbles** games factory in Devon, the **Scottish National Portrait Gallery** in Edinburgh, or the **Big Pit: National Coal Museum** near Abergavenny. More museums with free entry all around the country can be found on [moneysavingexpert.com](https://moneysavingexpert.com)

Museums often offer free and low-cost activities. For example, **Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums** has workshops including making flexible moving fish and becoming a Roman god or goddess. ▶





## SAVE MONEY WITH DISCOUNTED DAYS OUT

Official **London Theatre's Kids Week** will run again this year, from 24 July to 6 September. A child 17 and under can go free to any participating show when accompanied by an adult paying full price.

Through **National Rail**, you can get two-for-one tickets at some of the UK's biggest attractions. These include **Thorpe Park**, **Kew Gardens**, **Chessington World of Adventures**, **Alton Towers** and **Legoland**.

If you receive universal credit and some other benefits, you can go to **London Zoo** for £3 per person. Benefits claimants can also go to **Edinburgh Zoo** for £7 per person. And the **London Transport Museum** and **Tower of London** offer tickets to people on universal credit for £1.

## GO TO A LOCAL FARM

Many farms offer free entry. They tend to be run by charities so may ask for a small, voluntary donation.

## JOIN A READING CHALLENGE

The **Summer Reading Challenge** encourages children to keep reading during the summer holidays, making reading fun – and it's free to take part. You can either sign up at your local library or online.

## HEAD TO A TOY LIBRARY

There are more than 1,000 toy libraries in the UK, where you can choose a toy to borrow. Search online to find your nearest one. You'll have to pay a small registration fee, but it costs much less than buying new. Also go to car boot sales, **Facebook Marketplace** and charity shops for secondhand toys, or sites like **Gumtree** and **Preloved**, where you could try selling the toys they've grown out of to fund replacements.

## GET CRAFTY

Children love making a mess and having fun with crafts. Bennett says: "Think about drawing, writing, painting, cooking, getting out in the garden, starting a collection of leaves and rocks and stones.

"Some parents worry they need to go out and buy loads of craft resources, but it's about using what you've already got at home. Kids love making dens. They love getting out in the garden. Water play."

You will find a range of artsy activities on [tate.org.uk/kids](http://tate.org.uk/kids) from making a magazine to carving soap!

There are simple recipes for making slime, playdough and salt dough, which barely cost anything and can easily be found online. You could also try junk modelling (creating arts and crafts out of household recycling).

Or get 10 free templates to design your own board games at [museumofgaming.org.uk/documents/DesignYourOwnGame.pdf](http://museumofgaming.org.uk/documents/DesignYourOwnGame.pdf)

# SAVE MONEY ON CHILDCARE

● Childcare is expensive over the holidays. Many employers don't offer enough flexibility, and not everyone has family they can rely on for childcare.

Local council holiday camps are often free or budget-friendly, and libraries, museums and leisure centres often run affordable activity groups too.

Kids on free school meals in England can get at least 16 days of free childcare and a nutritious meal through the **Holiday Activities and Food Programme** (your local authority will have more details).

Wales has its **Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme**, which provides healthy meals, education sessions and sporty activities to children living in deprived areas in Wales.

There are no longer comparable schemes across Scotland or Northern Ireland. Contact your local family information service via your council to find out what affordable childcare is available locally.



# SAVE MONEY ON FOOD



● One Big Issue reader suggested people “club together with a couple of other families and take it in turns to cook for everyone” – saving time and money on energy costs and food.

“Cooking bigger portions doesn’t cost much more and it’ll be like eating out for the kids. You can even get them to score meals like *Come Dine with Me* to make it more fun,” she added.

Another reader said community meals can be a great option. **FoodCycle** offers community meals in 89 locations across England. There are also independent local options, like **The Feed** in Norwich, or **Carib Eats**, which offers free Caribbean food in Hackney.

Bennett says it’s sometimes as simple as sticking to the routine you were following during term time. Follow a meal plan for the week, and meal prep for your days out.

“It’s about having those meals that you can comfortably afford,” she says. “You don’t have to be eating out or trying wild new recipes. Look at what’s on offer. Most supermarkets have vouchers and store cards. Look at what you get points for and build your meals around that.”

## ARE FREE SCHOOL MEALS BEING OFFERED IN THE HOLIDAYS?

Free school meals are not being offered nationwide this summer holiday. Some children get support, but it depends on where you live. Contact your council for information.

## WHERE KIDS CAN EAT FOR FREE OR £1

Lots of restaurants and cafes offer deals in the holidays – but be warned, you often have to buy an adults’ meal to qualify. Here are some of the best:

**Asda** has a £1 kids meal deal, and you don’t have to buy anything else. It comes with a hot meal and fruit, or a sandwich, drink and fruit.

At **Ikea**, the kids’ pasta with tomato sauce or the mac and cheese come with a soft drink for 95p. Any other kids’ meal is £1.50.

At **Tesco Café**, kids eat free if an adult buys any item at the café.

**Sainsbury’s** is donating over £2.5m to Comic Relief to fund free meals via food charities. It also has a kids eat free scheme in its cafes.

We have a full list of all the deals on [bigissue.com/life/food](https://www.bigissue.com/life/food)

## HOW TO GET HELP FROM A FOOD BANK

Food banks provide food if you cannot afford it. You usually need a referral from a support service or professional, such as Citizens Advice, schools, or a charity. If you’re not sure where to get a referral, your local council can help.

You can also call the **Trussell Trust’s free helplines** and talk to a trained adviser. It’s **0808 208 2138** if you live in England or Wales, and **0800 915 4604** if you live in Northern Ireland. Contact your local council if you live in Scotland.

@IsabellaMorae

## HELP IS HERE

You can always turn to Big Issue for money advice, or tips on how to survive the summer holidays and make your budget stretch further at [bigissue.com/advice](https://www.bigissue.com/advice)

# HOW SPECSAVERS ARE HELPING VENDORS SEE AND FEEL SEEN

Our partnership with the leading opticians and audiologists is about more than just free sight and hearing tests, it's about treating every member of the community with dignity and respect

Words: Marc Burrows

(Below) Clive Rowe with his beloved dog, Geezer

“I’ve been selling the Big Issue for nearly 20 years now,” says vendor Clive Rowe, with justifiable pride. “And Geezer here has been with me for 15 of those.” He gestures to his canine companion, a dog who’s seen almost as much of Plymouth’s streets as Clive has.

In a world where eye tests can feel far from a priority, and where cheap, pound-shop reading glasses and squinting at small print are the norm, Clive and his fellow Plymouth vendor, Mihaela Postaru have benefitted from a true community collaboration. For the past two years, Big Issue and Specsavers have been teaming up to bring better sight to the lives of vendors across the UK. It’s a partnership that’s less about rose-tinted glasses and more about the nitty-gritty of community support.

“My reading is absolutely terrible,” Clive, who sells the magazine by Plymouth’s Theatre Royal, admits. “I can’t do without glasses.” His journey from pound-shop specs to a pair of brand-new prescription frames shows this collaboration in action. “Having a proper pair of glasses is so



much better,” he says, adjusting his new frames with a satisfied nod.

Mihaela’s story, on the other hand, is less about gaining new glasses and more about gaining peace of mind.

“I was worried because I had a little bit of an eye infection in my left eye, and my right eye was really unclear as well,” she explains. Her brush with better eye care came in the form of an invitation. “I was selling outside Sainsbury’s and Josie from [the Sainsbury’s store] Specsavers came to me and asked me if I wanted my eyes checked.”

The result? A clean bill of eye health and a sigh of relief. “When they told me that my eyes were healthy, I was ecstatic,” she grins.

Susan Owen, a Frontline Vendor Support Worker at Big Issue, outlines some of the challenges vendors face.

“Many Big Issue vendors come from a background of homelessness,” she says. “This may not be on the streets in a cardboard box, but it could be in a hostel or shelter, or sleeping on someone’s floor. When you’re in that situation, getting an eye test is not usually a priority. Your priority is getting somewhere safe and warm to sleep, getting food for the day.” She also thinks personal pride is another barrier.

“I think that sometimes they can be embarrassed,” she explains. “They may not be as clean and smell as fresh as someone else, they wonder whether they’re going to be treated the same, treated in a friendly way and with respect.”

But both Clive and Mihaela had their fears reassured when they went to their appointments. “I was surprised when I went in,” says Clive. “There’s so many friendly staff and the moment you walk in they make you welcome.” Despite initial nerves, Mihaela found the experience easy and seamless. “I wasn’t used to all the eye tests and lights and everything,” she admits.

“But they made it so much easier for me, they told me not to worry and told me exactly what to do.”

For Dame Mary Perkins, co-founder of Specsavers, the partnership makes sense. After all, a high street optician is a key part of any community and should be accessible to every member of that community. “Since my husband Doug and I set up Specsavers 40 years ago, we have always had a commitment to delivering accessible,

(Right and below) Mihaela Postaru on her pitch, and visiting the Specsavers store



### About Specsavers Out of Hours Service

■ Forty-four Specsavers stores are trialling free eye health clinics outside of usual opening hours for people experiencing homelessness. The clinics aim to provide a quieter experience for patients, some of whom face barriers to health care. Local homelessness organisations work with the stores to identify and accompany patients. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and the hope is to roll this out to more stores soon.

## There’s so many friendly staff and the moment you walk in they make you feel welcome

CLIVE ROWE

community-based healthcare,” she says. “Helping people to see and hear better regardless of their circumstances. That might mean visiting the homes of people who cannot leave them unaided through our domiciliary Home Visits service or making eye and hearing care more accessible for people experiencing

homelessness. Helping to remove the barriers that some people, like Mihaela or Clive, might face to getting the eye and hearing care they have a right to, is extremely important to us.”

As Big Issue and Specsavers continue to expand our partnership, vendors across the UK are finding themselves with clearer vision and, perhaps, a clearer path forward. It’s a collaboration that’s less about grand gestures and more focused on practical support – proving that sometimes, the most revolutionary act is simply helping someone see a bit better or giving them confidence and peace of mind.

And it’s about more than just glasses or eye tests. It’s about recognition, respect, and the simple dignity of being seen – both literally and figuratively. As Clive and Geezer head back to their pitch, and Mihaela returns to her spot outside Sainsbury’s, they carry with them not just the ability to see clearly, but the knowledge that they themselves have been seen, heard and valued. And in a world that often overlooks those on its margins, that might be the most visionary outcome of all.

Find out more about how Specsavers is working to tackle homelessness across the UK at [specsavers.co.uk/homelessness](https://www.specsavers.co.uk/homelessness)

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# ‘Money should be handed out Robin Hood-style poor people all day long

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*Rob Delaney stars in Deadpool & Wolverine, in cinemas this week. And he was – genuinely – thrilled to talk to Big Issue about elections, blockbuster movie sets, saving the NHS, and the serious business of being a piece of handsome furniture*

*By Adrian Lobb*

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● “Big Issue? Let’s go,” says Rob Delaney. “I read the Big Issue all the time. My kids read it. I’m thrilled.”

It’s been quite a week for Delaney. Not only is he promoting *Deadpool & Wolverine*, the biggest movie of his career, by talking to his favourite magazine, but there has also just been a general election. For the first time since settling in the UK in 2014, Boston-born writer-comedian-actor Delaney is not living under a Tory government. How is he feeling? Is the mood music in the country noticeably different?

“It does feel a little bit different. Anything that gives people a little beacon of hope is always positive,” says Delaney. “I wasn’t telling people to go vote Labour this time, for a variety of reasons, but I’m entirely prepared to give Starmer and company at least a 20-minute grace period. Because if they succeed, we all win.”

“I’m one of those people that sees a vote as transactional. I want people to get something. They’re going to ban new drilling and there’s the wealth fund. So there are some good ideas. But I want nurses to be able to afford to live within 40 minutes of the Central London hospital they work in and things like that. There are real issues with housing.”

*Deadpool & Wolverine* has taken over two floors of an expensive hotel ahead of the UK premiere of the summer’s hottest film, which brings megastars Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman together at last alongside Delaney, *The Crown*’s Emma Corrin and *Succession* star Matthew Macfadyen. As he welcomes us, Delaney is as warm and charming as his screen presence suggests. But when it comes to politics? He’s not prepared to take any nonsense.

“Look, we’re in the Corinthia hotel right now... where I imagine most Big Issue interviews take place,” he jokes.

“But look around a neighbourhood like this one and you see the amount of money in this country is outrageous. The sheer square footage of empty flats owned by people who don’t live in the country – come on now.

“So when I hear [new chancellor] Rachel Reeves say, ‘there isn’t any money’... we’re not morons. There is money. Take it. Mint it. Make it happen. I’m not interested in equivocating or managing expectations. So say whatever you want. But make changes.” ▶

Delaney made his name as one of the funniest people on social media. When Twitter was in its infancy, it could be a place of joy and connection. There was a brief glimpse of a positive, interactive space for sharing ideas and jokes. And Delaney's humour cut through better than anyone's. That led directly to his big breakthrough. He met Sharon Horgan online and they co-wrote and co-starred in four seasons of the Bafta-winning comedy *Catastrophe*. From there, his career has blossomed. Big-screen roles in *Hobbs & Shaw* (with Dwayne Johnson), *Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning* (opposite Tom Cruise), *The Good House* with Sigourney Weaver and long-awaited Christmas caper sequel *Home Sweet Home Alone* have established him as a reliable comedic presence in blockbusters.

"Bonkers," Delaney says, reflecting on his career trajectory. Now comes the third *Deadpool* film – the second in which Delaney plays Peter. "There's a real earnestness to him. So it's not the irreverence that is *Deadpool*'s signature, but there's freedom to be weird and wacky and silly," says the actor.

Its predecessor took \$785 million at the box office. Expectations are high.

"It's bananas," Delaney adds. But the weight of expectations around the movie weighed lightly on the creative team. It was fun, says Delaney, thanks to the tone set by the leading actors.

"Ryan's Canadian, Shawn Levy the director is Canadian, I'm not sure where Hugh's from... that's a joke," he says. "So the main people involved are really kind and funny and creative and collaborative. They have about 172 years of experience on film sets so they know what works. They want it to be the best that it can be, so they encourage taking chances and being silly and being bold."

The lack of superstar ego is, says Delaney, the norm these days.

"By the time I was allowed to be on TV and in movies, bad behaviour was on its way out," he says.

"I haven't seen anything too horrific. The worst thing I've seen on set is an actor arguing with a director, being like, 'I don't know if my character would do that.' I have to walk away. Because my answer to that is, 'Your character would do that because the director just told you to do it. So do it five times.'

"You're furniture," he continues, exasperated. "You're handsome furniture, you actor! Just do it."



### If Tom Cruise says a blue alien with horns is going to smash through the wall in three minutes, he believes it

*Deadpool* and *Wolverine* are reluctant superheroes in the new film as they team up to save an entire historical timeline. Anyone who saw *Wolverine* die in the film *Logan* knows how complex it all is. But, typically, this is directly referenced in the film – which goes beyond meta into a whole new realm, biting the hand that feeds with gags about Disney, Marvel and how audiences will suck up the film's extended run time.

Delaney has had the best view of anyone of Reynolds and Jackman working together.

"It's a small thing. But when *Wolverine* gets frustrated with crazy, flamboyant *Deadpool*, it's funny every single time," he says. "It's a tiny facial expression or a grunt from *Wolverine*. But you believe it. Because Hugh Jackman just so

(Clockwise from top left) with Sharon Horgan in *Catastrophe*, *Home Sweet Home Alone*, *The Good House*; with *Deadpool* & *Wolverine* co-stars Ryan Reynolds, Emma Corrin and Hugh Jackman; as Peter in *Deadpool 2*

is *Wolverine* and Ryan so is *Deadpool*. They're inhabiting characters they know so intimately that the little grace notes they do between each other are very, very funny. It's probably agonised over, but they make it look easy."

For Delaney, this is the secret of good acting. And he cites Tom Cruise as the master.

"Big, big admirer of Tom Cruise in a lot of ways," he says. "But particularly with acting, because he just so fundamentally believes whatever he's doing. If he says a blue alien with horns is going to smash through the wall in three minutes, he believes it. And thus you, the audience, believe it."

"I'm more interested in an actor really believing what they're doing than whether they got their Geordie accent perfect, you know? That's the type of make believe I'm interested in – when somebody, in a really childlike way, really believes the game."

Ryan Reynolds, of course, is as well-known in the football game these days as co-owner with Rob McElhenny of the mighty Wrexham FC.

"It's an incredible story. They are having a great time and doing a wonderful thing," says Delaney. "It is shining a light into a corner of the world that people don't know about. There's real utility and value to what they are doing there."

(From below)  
Big Issue's Adrian  
Lobb shows the  
magazine to a couple  
of superheroes;  
Delaney with his copy

Whether it is Reynolds and football-based community building, self-proclaimed 'not-for-profit actor' Michael Sheen, or Jennifer Lawrence joining Malala Yousafzai to campaign on women's education, Delaney is all for film stars using their power for good.

"Being in the public eye is not good. Nor is it bad," he says. "It's like you have the keys to a big crane truck. And you could use that to drive to a construction site and help build a school, or you could use it to run over a family having a picnic. So you want to use it wisely."

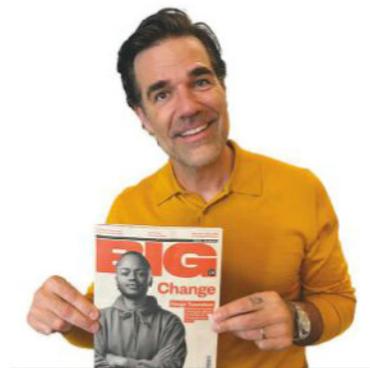
Delaney has used his platform to campaign for better funding for the National Health Service in this country. He wrote a beautiful, moving depiction of love and grief and the health service in his 2022 memoir *A Heart That Works* – in which he talked about his young son Henry's death from cancer in 2018.

There was no plan to talk about Henry or his death in this interview. Delaney is here to promote his new film. It's a comedy. There should be no expectation that he excavates his trauma in every interview he conducts.

But the personal and the political intertwine in complex ways. When asked how he first got a grasp on British politics, he recalls the years his family was reliant on the brilliance of people working in the NHS. And how his political outlook was shaped and reinforced by seeing the public, free-at-point-of-use principles of the NHS up close.

"I wouldn't overstate my competence or my grasp on politics," says Delaney, who lives in London with his wife Leah and three sons. "But where I might offer a little useful perspective is that I went

**Being in the public eye is not good. Nor is it bad. It's like you have the keys to a big crane truck. You want to use it wisely**



from a lower tax bracket to a higher tax bracket at the same time my son Henry's health was failing, and then he was dying, and then he was dead. So I started making more money and finding new opportunities to become a class traitor, but at the same time I was finding out the limits of what money can do.

"Money can solve a lot of problems. It's great. It should be handed out Robin Hood-style to poor people all day long. But when I was learning about what it can and can't do surrounding my son's illness, I was also seeing nursing staff



## Bloody heroes

Rob Delaney (seen below left campaigning in London in 2023) is not the only *Deadpool & Wolverine* star to back the NHS. Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman have called on film fans to be everyday superheroes by donating blood in the latest collaboration between the NHS and Disney. "Just one hour of your time could save three lives," says Jackman in the new video. Reynolds, channelling Deadpool, adds: "Will you be a giver to a receiver in need?"

Mark Chambers of NHS Blood and Transplant explained the importance of the message: "Right now the NHS needs more young people to become the donors of the future. And we urgently need more donors of black heritage. Giving blood is easy and each donation saves up to three lives. Please register today to book an appointment."

Register and book via the NHS Give Blood app or at [blood.co.uk](http://blood.co.uk)

who have to take three buses to get to work because they can't afford to live anywhere near the hospital. And that was very educational for me."

Whether he is considering the recent election or thinking about the future of the NHS, Henry is always on his mind.

"I don't know how to not talk about my son, Henry," he adds. "Don't know how to do it. Miss him. Need to think about him. Talk about him."

"I'm thinking about him all the time, so if I don't release a little steam and talk about him, then I would go crazy."

"And I'm in the public eye, right? So if I'm going to talk to you, I'm gonna talk about him. Particularly talking to Big Issue – because it wouldn't surprise me if a larger collection of people who are homeless are bereaved parents than in the regular world. Because it's the type of thing that can lead you down a path that winds up in homelessness."

"People who currently have roofs over our heads have to realise only a few things happening to us separates us from somebody selling the Big Issue."

Talking openly doesn't come without a cost. But there is a relief and a release in practising what we might call radical openness – a refusal not to talk about important or difficult things, a refusal to bottle up feelings. As philosophies go, says Delaney, it's not a bad one.

"Sometimes I wish it wasn't, but honesty does seem to be the best policy that I've yet to discover. I'm always searching for others. But being honest about how you feel is a good way to survive the things that are difficult. Be real. Live longer. Have less ulcers in your belly because you don't tense up with bullshit."

He pauses, maybe remembering his kids read the Big Issue, and cracks another big, warm smile. "You can abbreviate that to BS. I'm sorry!"

*Deadpool & Wolverine* is in cinemas from 26 July @adey70

\*\*\* ENDORSET EVENTS PROUDLY PRESENT \*\*\*

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THURSDAY



**BLACK WATER COUNTY**  
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**MONKEY**  
**IMPRINTS** ⇄ **US**  
**GUNS OF NAVARONE**  
**CONSUMMATE ROGUES**  
THE SWAMP STOMP STRING BAND  
DJS: MABEL, DAN WHALEY, FATHER KIRK  
YOUR HOST: GRANT SHARKEY

FRIDAY



**WILL VARLEY**  
**SKIMMITY HITCHERS**  
**MONKEY BIZZLE**  
**JACK FRANCIS**  
**BOOTHILL ALLSTARS**  
**CONCRETE PRAIRIE**  
**SINFUL MAGGIE**  
DESPERATE MEASURES ⇄ THE DOOKS  
GRANT SHARKEY ⇄ DORSET PHIL  
**FRASER MORGAN BAND**

SATURDAY



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**SEAN MCGOWAN**  
**IDESTROY**  
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CLOCKWORK CAROUSEL ⇄ TRAV CATS  
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## MORE THAN ONE STORY

3/9

## Ozward Boateng, If You Must



A new series of short films exploring why people become homeless has been made by Cardboard Citizens, a charity that uses drama and performance to transform the lives of those who have lived experienced of homelessness, in association with Black Apron Entertainment. Each film is written and performed by people who have experienced homelessness and can be watched at [bigissue.com](http://bigissue.com).

This week's film is *Ozward Boateng, If You Must*, written by Roy Williams and performed by David Olapoju. The protagonist is Johnny, a Big Issue vendor. He may be a character in the film but his experiences reflect those of vendors across the country.

"This is my first day, but I just need a minute," Johnny begins. He is nervous about standing on the street, bringing attention to himself. But this reminds him of other times he stood out.

"Believe it or not, but I had a very expensive suit once. Ozward Boateng if you must," he says.

Life has changed, due to loss, prejudice, anger. Johnny recalls he had "a good job, banging car. So banging, I would lose count the amount of times the police would pull me over."

The film is written by Roy Williams, one of the UK's leading dramatists. He was awarded an OBE for Services to Drama in 2008 and made a fellow of The Royal Society of Literature in 2018. His theatre work includes the state-of-the-nation trilogy *Death of England* (co-written with Clint Dyer) and the Olivier Award-nominated *Sucker Punch*. For TV, film and radio he has written *Babyfather*, *Offside*, *Fast Girls*, eight series of BBC Radio 4's *The Interrogation* and Bafta-nominated *Death of England: Face to Face* and *Soon Gone: A Windrush Chronicle*.



## By Roy Williams

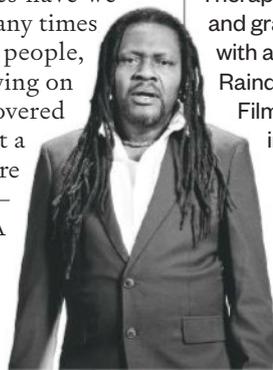
There is a saying about storytelling. If you want to know where the best unsaid stories are, go to the graveyard. There are hundreds, thousands even, of people with untold stories. Stories about love, grief, pain, everything.

I was thinking about all of that as I sat down to write my film. All of the souls in any graveyard around the world. Ones who may not have had their dreams realised. But there are people, thousands of people, who are alive and kicking and who we casually ignore: the homeless.

How many times have we all done it? How many times have we walked by people, men and women, lying on the streets, some covered up with nothing but a blanket, and those are the fortunate ones – how many times? A show of hands anyone? But it is not

## David Olapoju

Johnny is played by David Olapoju (below), who first performed with Cardboard Citizens in 2005: "Drama has been therapeutic and cathartic. It keeps me balanced, which allows me to continually explore myself and the human condition," he says. He received a Diploma in Psychotherapy from an Intercultural Perspective from the Refugee Therapy Centre and graduated with a BA from Raindance Film School in 2024.



just them now, is it? The Big Issue sellers, in almost every city in the country. Each of us could lose count how many times we have walked past. Have we ever stopped to ask them who they are? What are their names? What are their dreams? Do they have any? How did they wind up on the streets, what is their story?

Everyone has a story, they must do. We are humans, our life is our story. It is a tragedy, if not a crime, that black men of a certain age are more likely to suffer mental illness than anyone else. Why is that? Do these black men not have a story to tell? Do they have dreams? A story? Of course they do. So, is it because no-one wants to listen, any more than they want to listen to anyone lying in a grave? What is that about?

The more I ask questions about anything, the more I want to write about it. I wanted my man to be listened to. If only for a moment. Nothing is as it seems.

@royboywilliams



To watch this film scan this QR code or visit: [bigissue.com/news/housing/cardboard-](http://bigissue.com/news/housing/cardboard-citizens-more-than-one-story-ozward-boateng)

[citizens-more-than-one-story-ozward-boateng](http://bigissue.com/news/housing/cardboard-citizens-more-than-one-story-ozward-boateng)

*Ozward Boateng, If You Must* will be live from Thursday afternoon. Others are available to watch now.

# DAME LAURA KENNY

*As a teenager, the UK's most-decorated female Olympian was painfully shy at school, but down at the cycling track she showed everyone who was boss*



**When I was 16, I'd actually already started cycling competitively.**

The first time that I went to a race abroad was in 2008 and I raced in the Europeans for Great Britain. I was still at school. My mum and dad wanted me to stick at school but I thought I was starting my career. I remember we got sat down for a careers meeting in year 11. And they said to me, what do you want to do? And I said, I want to be a professional cyclist. And someone said to me, but that's not a proper job. And I was like, hang on a minute. Because I was already getting paid. It wasn't much but it was money and lots of other people weren't even on a path for that yet.

**If you were to get an impression of me at 16 it would solely depend on where you met me.** If you met me on the school playground, you would think, she's really shy. She's got like, one best friend. I certainly wouldn't be this confident, chatty person. But if you met me down at the track, you'd be like, wow, she's a leader. She's very confident in her ideas. And she's very open to expressing her opinion. Because when I was in the velodrome I was brimming with confidence. And I loved the people down there, they made me feel like me. I hated school, literally hated it. The worst thing for me would be sitting in English and being asked to read out loud. I was like, absolutely not. I just felt awkward and totally embarrassed.

**My family are very close to this day.** I've got one sister and I speak to my mum and dad and my sister every single day. I'm very family orientated. And I try to get people together as much as physically possible. I just like it. I like growing up in a family that relies on each other, who can call them up whenever they need. My dog has been really poorly recently and my dad just dropped everything to take him to the vets. I like that they can rely on me and I rely on them and it's always been that way. And I would do anything to keep [husband and fellow track star] Jason, [and sons] Albie and Monty together for as long as possible.

**I think my big breakthrough was in 2010 when I was 18 and I won the Omnium at the Junior World Championships.** At the time, the Omnium had just been announced as an Olympic event in 2012. Now, there were seniors, girls a little bit older than me who were racing already in the senior events. But at the World Championships in February, I won. I still didn't really think I'd make it to London

## 2008 THE YEAR LAURA TURNS 16

Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt is rescued from Farc guerrillas after six years in captivity

Lehman Brothers files for bankruptcy, triggering the global financial crisis

A proton beam is circulated for the first time in the CERN Large Hadron Collider

2012. But it was my sister that said, you could actually make it. You're only 18 months away from the Olympics. You could actually get there. And I remember thinking, there's no chance. Then I got to race the Omnium at the 2011 World Championships because Lizzie Armitstead was ill. I never looked back. I was part of the GB programme and I knew I had to try my absolute socks off. I actually won the world championships in April of 2012 and that was me ready to go.

**I still remember the exact moment I realised I had won an Olympic gold medal.** It just felt like a dream. It was mental, something I'd wanted since I was young. I felt like I was living this out-of-body experience. It just didn't feel like my life. I just never expected that 2012 would be my first Olympics. I thought I'd miss out on that. But it was one of the best moments of my life. There's not many things that you would go back and relive. I wouldn't change 2012 in the slightest – I would relive it 100 times over. [Kenny went on to win two golds in 2012 and another two in 2016.]

**It's funny because if you'd gone into the velodrome and seen the 18-year-old me and him [Jason] and asked, do you reckon those two will ever get married, you'd say absolutely not.** We are such different characters. I do not stop talking. He's not like that at all. He has to do everything exactly on time, but I'm not very organised, it's always carnage around me. I remember his old coach was amazed. Jason would have a meeting but he couldn't go till he passed on the baby to me, and I'd be really late and I'd finally get there and he'd rush off. His coach said, how do you do that? He'd have gone mental if that had been anyone else. Because he has to do everything exactly on time. But he just forgives me. We find each other really easy to talk to.

**I think the 16-year-old me would have been quite happy just to win one gold medal.** I remember saying to my mum when I was 16, you know what, I just want to go to the Olympics. It wasn't even winning I cared about. I just wanted to go to the Olympic Games, because to me, that's the pinnacle of a sporting career. If you'd told me I would win a gold medal, then I'd go on to do it again and again, I wouldn't have believed you.

**I had a bit of trouble getting pregnant again after my first son.** It was so difficult – as an athlete you rely on your body to perform.

I thought, my body performs as and when I need it to, and it always has done. I can get it fit and I can get it ready. It's never let me down. But now, it was letting me down. I would say it consumed me as much as bike riding consumed me, 24/7. Just the want and the desire for something that wasn't happening. I wasn't in control of anything to do with having another baby. [After suffering an ectopic pregnancy, she did finally give birth to son Monty.]

**It was a total shock when I got told I was going to be a dame.** I got an email with a really weird subject title. I can't remember what it said, but I remember thinking oh my goodness, that's confidential, what is it? Then I scrolled down to the letter and I was just totally surprised and I suddenly had all these emotions. Obviously I was really happy and I screamed a voice message to my mum and dad, and my sister. They couldn't work out what I was on about. Then I just wrote, I'm gonna be a dame. And they were just like, wow. I was so honoured and proud. Especially because Jason got it too.

**If I could have one more conversation with anyone, it would probably be with my dad's mum, my nan.** She looked after [sister] Emma and me when we were little. And we were horrible. We were just a nightmare giving her hell. I'd want her to have lived a bit longer though, so I could be 16 and actually have an adult conversation with her. I didn't appreciate her until she got poorly. She got dementia in the end. And I used to go to visit the care home a lot, and it was really hard because she forgot me. I put in all the effort to go and see her, and actually, she forgot me first.

**If I could relive one moment... I actually have two best times ever.** The moments just after I'd given birth. Those eight hours in the hospital. I know that sounds mental, but it's so relaxed once they're here. I loved the calmness and knowing I had what I wanted – they're here, they're alive and it's all lovely. And you're just sitting getting cups of tea. I would relive that time and time again, those were the best times of my life.

Laura Kenny is ambassador of a new children's fitness and wellbeing campaign, a collaboration between Magic Light Pictures and Team GB. Visit [gruffaloevent.com](http://gruffaloevent.com) to download the Gruffalo and Friends x Team GB activity pack. Find the exclusive apparel range by Asda in stores from 17 July or online at [bit.ly/3Y1nGZU](http://bit.ly/3Y1nGZU)  
Interview: Jane Graham @janeannie

## THE MOMENT I REALISED I HAD WON AN OLYMPIC GOLD FELT LIKE THIS OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE. IT DIDN'T FEEL LIKE MY LIFE



▲ 2009 Winning the British Cycling National Junior Women's Road Race Championship in Radwinter, Essex



► 2021 Team GB's flag bearer for the closing ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics

▼ 2022 With husband Jason after becoming Sir and Dame in a ceremony at Windsor Castle



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🌸 **The Sentimentals & friends**  
🌸 **Kathryn Tickell & The Darkening**  
🌸 **The Wandering Hearts**  
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🌸 **Bella Hardy** 🌸 **The Pleasures** 🌸 **HEISK**  
🌸 **Suntou Susso Band** 🌸 **Ranagri**  
🌸 **The Hello Darlins** 🌸 **The Magpies**  
🌸 **Joshua Burnell Band** 🌸 **NATI**  
🌸 **The Hunch** 🌸 **Sidiki Jobarteh Trio**  
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**BOOKS**

George Mallory's Everest attempt is still a mystery 100 years on  
**Mick Conefrey**

**THE FRINGE**

Hey, internet trolls – I don't care if you don't like what I'm wearing  
**Chloe Petts**

**INTERVIEW**

*Chuck Chuck Baby* creator says her musical is really a love letter  
**Louise Brealey**

**MUSIC**

From techno to pop, find your perfect beat to keep on running  
**Malcolm Jack**

# CULTURE

**ART****MAKE THEM STOP**

by *Aaron Little*

“Doing portraits requires a lot of concentration to make them accurate,” says Little, who submitted this artwork via the 240Project, an activity centre empowering West London’s vulnerable community. “Having spent several years being homeless, I got into the habit of ‘people watching’ which inspired me to do portraiture.”

[240project.org.uk](http://240project.org.uk)

# Books



By Barry Pierce

## REVIEWS

### A cult favourite crosses the pond

It is with gilded trumpets and celestial harps we should announce that finally (finally!) Kate Zambreno's books are being published in the UK. A long-time cult literary figure, Zambreno has been your favourite writer's favourite writer for years now.

One of the progenitors of that ever-controversial mode of writing known as autofiction, it was upon the publication of her now-classic non-fiction work *Heroines* in 2012 that Zambreno suddenly found her name mentioned in the same breath as Maggie Nelson, Eileen Myles and Sheila Heti.

Her latest book, **The Light Room**, which is subtitled *On Art and Care* was published in the US last year and is being put out by Corsair in the UK, marking the first time Zambreno has been published here. A perfect example of Zambreno's trademark mix of memoir and essay, *The Light Room* focuses on those dark lockdown months when she entered into full isolation from society with her husband, her newborn baby and her young daughter.

Zambreno's style is reminiscent of synapses snapping. At any point, she'll observe an object or be reading a book and it'll cause a domino effect in her thinking that leads us into an exploration of some aspect of art and culture.

For example, at one point she observes a dinosaur calendar in a museum gift shop which causes her brain to snap to a similar calendar that she knows was used by the artist David Wojnarowicz in 1989, a few years before he lost his life to Aids.

This begins a whole section whereby Wojnarowicz's life and art are meditated upon, interspersed with observations of Zambreno's current life situation, raising small children through a pandemic. Elsewhere, Zambreno reflects on the life and work of the Italian writer Natalia Ginzburg whose work has seen a huge revival over the past few years.

These are but a few of the artists who Zambreno examines in *The Light Room* but it gives an impression of her style. She is one of those writers whose breadth of knowledge is almost staggering. Thank goodness she is open to sharing that with us.

Pol Guasch wrote **Napalm in the Heart** when he was only 20 years old. Originally published in Catalan in 2021, the novel makes its way to the UK's shores via Faber and a lyrical translation by Mara Faye Lethem. Focusing on a young man living under a military occupation, the novel is made up of short, succinct passages of poetic prose that cut straight to the heart of every thought and emotion. Guasch is an acclaimed poet in his native Catalonia, so his sharp style makes sense. There is simply no room for fat in the prose.

The result is a beautiful and affecting debut novel that often finds moments of beauty in a setting so wholly devoid of it. More than once, I found myself recalling Justin Torres's excellent novel *Blackouts*, which also takes a successfully stylish approach to immensely bleak material. Having already found fans in Colm Tóibín and Alejandro Zambra, it's hard not to imagine Guasch becoming a young superstar of the international scene.

Barry Pierce is a journalist and cultural commentator @BarryPierce

Zambreno is one of those writers whose breadth of knowledge is staggering



*The Light Room* by Kate Zambreno is out now (Little, Brown, £22)



*Napalm in the Heart* by Pol Guasch, translated by Mara Faye Lethem, is out now (Faber, £16.99)

## TOP 5

### Historically important memoirs

Selected by Joshua Lisec

*New York Times* bestselling co-author who has ghostwritten more than 90 books

#### 1 **The Fire Next Time** by James Baldwin

Through two deeply personal essays, Baldwin helped America understand the pressing demands of the Civil Rights movement in a work that remains influential decades later.

#### 2 **The Heart Has Its Reasons**

by Wallis Warfield Simpson  
King Edward VIII's determination to marry a divorced American socialite led to a constitutional crisis and his abdication. The ultimate ghostwriting assignment for a mysterious public figure sheds light on how it came about.

#### 3 **Always With Honor**

by General Pyotr Wrangel  
The memoirs of the fabled – ultimately failed – leader of the anti-communist military forces during the Bolshevik Revolution shows why it's not always the winners who write history.

#### 4 **Nicaragua Betrayed**

by Anastasio Somoza Debayle  
Former Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza Debayle wrote an account of his administration and its downfall from exile in Paraguay not long before he was assassinated. A fascinating inside look at a terrible period in the country's history.

#### 5 **Seven Pillars of Wisdom**

by TE Lawrence  
British Army Col TE Lawrence's memoirs of his time as an adviser to Bedouin forces fighting the Ottoman Empire are historically important, but also such a great narrative they were made into the film *Lawrence of Arabia*.



*So Good They Call You a Fake* by Joshua Lisec is out now (£25.99, lisecghostwriting.com)

## ESSAY

# The enduring mystery of Mallory

By Mick Conefrey

Even though officially Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay were the first men to summit Everest in May 1953, George Mallory is just as famous, and the mystery remains as to whether he beat them to the top. Like James Dean, Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix or his own hero, the poet Percy Shelley, Mallory is one of the good who died young, like all those dead soldiers from WWI, destined to ‘never grow old’.

I’ve been fascinated by his story for many years, and the mythology that grew up around him after his mysterious death a century ago in 1924. I’ve written several other climbing books and made mountaineering documentaries for the BBC but there’s no other character quite so compelling.

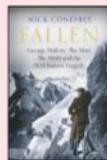
Mallory had star quality in buckloads. He was handsome and charismatic, a brilliant climber and skilled

speaker. His name was his destiny: ‘George’, the dragon slayer, ‘Mallory’, echoing Thomas Malory, the first chronicler of the Arthurian legend. Mallory was the beating heart of three British expeditions, the climber who kept going when everyone else wanted to turn back.

But was he an obsessive egotist driven by ‘summit fever’, or as his teammate Edward Norton wrote: ‘the most formidable opponent that Everest has or is ever likely to encounter’?

In many ways, Mallory was a typical middle-class British mountaineer. A vicar’s son, he learned to climb at public school, and practised in the Alps and North Wales. But there was much more to him than that. His friends were artistic and unconventional: Duncan Grant the painter, Lytton Strachey the historian, John Maynard Keynes the economist, Rupert Brooke the poet. In his famous essay *The Mountaineer as Artist*, Mallory compared a climb in the Alps to a great symphony with all its highs and lows. For the 1922 official Everest account, he penned one of the most lyrical descriptions of Everest ever written, describing it as a “prodigious white fang excrement from the jaw of the earth”. In 1923 he told a journalist that he was willing to risk his life for Everest, “because it is there”.

But climbing wasn’t his only passion. Mallory was an idealist, a Fabian



*Fallen: George Mallory: The Man, The Myth and the 1924 Everest Tragedy* by Mick Conefrey is out now (Atlantic Books, £22)

Mount Everest expedition party in 1924 – Irvine and Mallory are in the top row, far left and second left respectively

who dreamt of working for the League of Nations and creating a new type of school where children would thrive. In the Himalayas, however, he had one focus: to get to the top of Everest. Mallory wasn’t interested in Tibetan culture, he didn’t want to collect Himalayan flowers, all he wanted to do was climb.

His impatience sometimes got the better of him. In 1922, Mallory agitated for a third attempt after the first two failed, but it ended in disaster with seven porters dying in an avalanche. He was wracked with guilt, but it didn’t stop him doing it again two years later with Andrew Irvine, the youngest member of the team. Mallory’s flaws were obvious to those around him. In 1922 the expedition doctor, Tom Longstaff, called him a “great, stout-hearted baby”, while the expedition leader, Charles Bruce, wrote that Mallory was a “great dear but he forgets his boots on all occasions”.

But for all his flaws and chaotic style, Mallory’s charisma and his obsessive pursuit of the summit won over his detractors and future admirers. When his body was found high on Everest in 1999, he was once again front-page news, the world willing his discoverers to find proof that he had gone all the way. In the end they didn’t and in the years since then, there have been repeated attempts to find the body of his partner, Andrew Irvine, and a Kodak camera that might contain evidence that he and Mallory had reached the top together.

In the latest twist to the saga, it’s claimed that both bodies and the elusive camera were spirited off the mountain by the Chinese authorities. But if the possibility of finding photographic proof has gone, does no-one now believe Mallory and Irvine could have reached the summit? Absolutely not.

On the 100th anniversary of his disappearance and death, Mallory is once again in the headlines. A Hollywood movie has been on and off the cards for the last 10 years and there’s even a musical doing the rounds, *Mallory and the Mountain*. Even if definitive proof may never be found that he reached the top of Everest, it’s equally impossible to prove that he didn’t get there.

Like all great legends, Mallory is continually reinvented by new generations of mountaineers and acolytes: in the 1920s he was called the ‘Galahad of Everest’; today we can see him for what he was: a complex, fascinating, heroic but contradictory figure, the unresolved quality of his story forever drawing us back to him.

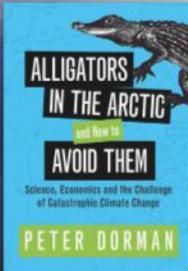
Mick Conefrey is an award-winning author and filmmaker [mickconefrey.co.uk](http://mickconefrey.co.uk)



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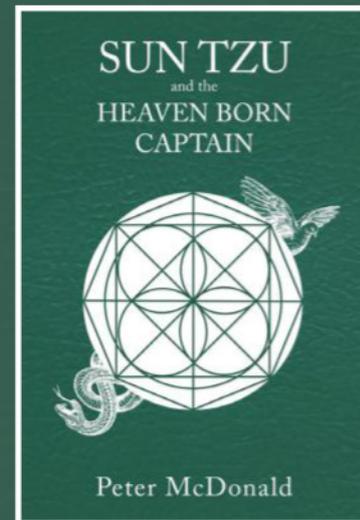
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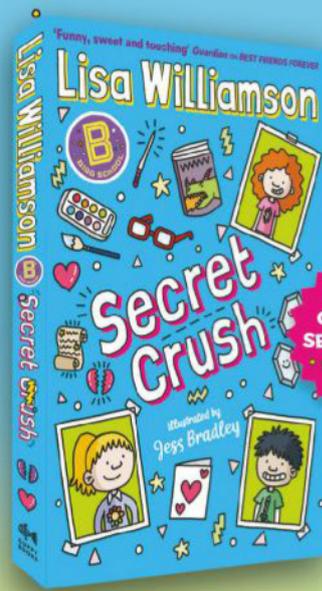
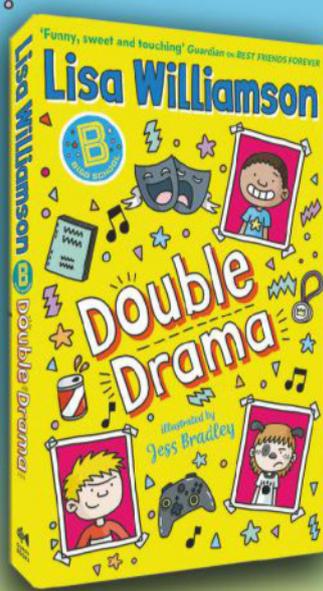
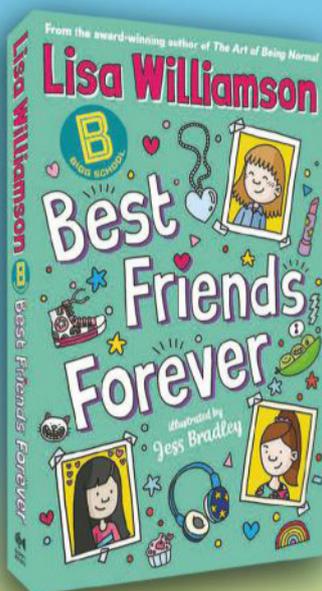


Numerous books have been written about Sun Tzu and his masterpiece, Art of War. However, none have the scope and perspective of Peter McDonald's volume...

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'Funny, sweet and touching . . . ideal for fans of Jacqueline Wilson' *Guardian*

# The Fringe

By *Chloe Petts*

## SOCIAL MEDIA

### Dear internet trolls, I'll wear whatever jacket I like

As a person vaguely in the media who possesses a body and clothes, I'm no stranger to the hatred and vitriol that comes from all directions when online. I'm talking about trolls – not little plastic figurines that sit atop your pencil, but hairy, smelly men who live under their mum and dad's house and reply things like, "that dress makes you look pregnant" to the tweets of the *Loose Women*.

Of course I'm being facetious; internet trolls can take many forms. From middle-aged women who didn't like an answer I gave about the civil service on *House of Games* to football fans who call me a woke snowflake for publicly liking women's football (joke's on them, I do rude gestures at eight-year-olds who support the opposing team regardless of gender), the internet is a shield behind which we can all hide from the consequences of our hateful words.

I was recently exposed to my largest deluge of online malevolence when I was given my own segment every Saturday morning on popular rolling sports news channel Sky Sports News late last year. I would start the show by doing an anarchic comic monologue that rounded up the previous week in football, in which I could tell it like it is, as long as it is grossly centrist and in keeping with the sponsors' values.

Some disgruntled viewers took to the internet, initially in their tens and then their hundreds, critiquing my

appearance and the clothes I chose to wear. A 6ft 1in lesbian who wears a wide-leg trouser and a functional shirt clearly wasn't something they were used to on their glamorous sports channel and boy did they let me know.

One morning I was really excited to wear a new shirt and jacket I'd purchased the previous day. I received a Twitter notification and found that someone had taken a picture and video of me, posted it with an insulting caption and now hundreds of people were replying with their hot takes on my sartorial choices. One stranger wrote: "Who would wake up in the morning and choose to wear that?"

I was pretty upset and turned to some of my colleagues at the channel. It was former Rangers striker Kris Boyd who gave me the kindest advice. The gist of Kris's words was that all people who work in the media are subject to abuse at some point in their careers but it seems to affect women more, particularly women who aren't white, thin, able-bodied or straight.

I then asked famously cantankerous ex-referee Mike Dean what he thought coz he's no stranger at all to being called a "w\*\*\*er" by hordes of football fans baying for his blood. He said three simple words: "Ignore, ignore, ignore."

I think Mike is correct but simply muting and blocking trolls and

I was perplexed as to why it felt so integral for someone to take time out of their day to try and ruin mine

switching off my social media still wasn't enough. When you're being faced with a deluge of abuse online, you can shield yourself from it, but it didn't stop this feeling in me that my image was being taken out of context all over the internet and, even worse, the insidious sense that people in my real life were somehow reading all of these criticisms and thinking the same thing that those online were saying.

I don't believe that people should be beyond criticism. If you don't enjoy something I've made then you're entitled to share that opinion with your followers, but tagging me in a series of vitriolic tweets seems to go beyond a healthy engagement with my work into an arbitrary dislike of someone who you've never met. I was perplexed as to why it felt so integral for someone to take time out of their day to try and ruin mine.

It's difficult to know what I can contribute on the subject of trolling when so much has been written about it and any sweeping statements seem trite and overdone: "be kind", "remember that your words are reaching a real person with thoughts and feelings", "people who troll are just cowards themselves with horrid little lives". All true, but also vomit. If people on the internet haven't got that it's horrid to be horrid by now, then they're unlikely to ever come to this conclusion.

Therefore, my advice would take a more pragmatic approach. It's unlikely that we'll ever truly stop trolling; it would take the complete rehabilitation of hundreds of thousands of dimwits or total global reform in how we legislate the internet and that seems unlikely to happen soon. Therefore, it's about how we change our own personal attitude towards hate speech and the internet.

It's very easy to think that trolls represent the real world because our brains can't distinguish between near threat and faraway threat, but as long as a troll isn't on my street shouting that they don't like my jacket while wielding a knife then they can't hurt me. It's also pretty powerful to think that I've angered hundreds of men across the internet simply for existing.

And, if all else fails, you could write an Edinburgh Fringe show about your experience so you get to have the last laugh, muahahaha.

Troll with it: Chloe Petts discusses her online experiences in a new show



Chloe Petts brings her brand new show, *How You See Me, How You Don't*, to the Pleasance Courtyard, Forth as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe from 31 July to 25 August at 7pm and then on a UK tour. For more info and tickets, visit [chloepetts.org](http://chloepetts.org) Chloe Petts' debut stand-up series for BBC Radio 4, *Chloe Petts' Toilet Humour*, is available on BBC Sounds

## INTERVIEW

## Chuck Chuck Baby



# 'DON'T WRITE US OFF. GIVE US THE CHANCE TO TELL THESE STORIES'

By Louise Brealey

**Chuck Chuck Baby** is a love story musical set in and around a North Wales chicken factory. The indie film stars Louise Brealey – best known as monstrous Deb in this year's Bafta-winning comedy *Such Brave Girls* and Molly Hooper in *Sherlock* – as Helen, who's caught in a tangled web of relationships around the terrace where she lives.

Made on a shoestring and shot in just 26 days by 50-year-old Janis Pugh – a writer-director making her debut feature – the film is a real joy and also features some of the real-life factory workers it depicts.

Brealey talks to Pugh about class, women and how music soundtracks our lives.

**LOUISE BREALEY:** You're just back from Flintshire, where we filmed *Chuck Chuck Baby*. Big night?

**JANIS PUGH:** Yeah. I'm knackered! Fifty women in the pub after a hard week, all drinking and singing every word to Meat Loaf's *Two Out of Three Ain't Bad*. It was the pub I took you to when you were prepping to play Helen.

**LB:** That place was amazing. How much is it a pint again?

**JP:** She keeps it at £2.50 because people can't afford to pay more. Life is hard in a small town when there's not a lot of money or prospects. So when they go out, there's this real sense of an outlet with each other.

**LB:** The script felt like a celebration of working-class women like my mum and her mum. Before we met, I watched *House*, your short doc with your mum, who you lost in 2012, with her friends from the plastic bag factories. How important was that connection between women for you?

**JP:** From the moment I started writing, I wanted to put these incredible women on a platform and celebrate them. This weekend I felt again the beauty of the support network in those communities.

**LB:** At the world premiere in Edinburgh I was on the same row as Vanessa, Amanda and Babs, the real chicken factory women who were supporting artists in the film. There's a moment where they are seen in close-up on the big screen. They didn't know it was coming, but I did. So I looked down the row to watch them see themselves – and see themselves being seen. Whenever I think about that moment I feel tearful. Because women like them, and like Helen, usually get overlooked. It was properly magical.

**JP:** In the edit I was asked to take them out. That was a big battle.

**LB:** Bloody hell, I didn't know that! What?! There's an almost documentary quality to it – you see the "real" women and understand that this is about, and for, all these women. We've seen the film through the prism of Helen's journey, but in that moment, to me, the film becomes a love song to those women.

**JP:** It is a love letter to them. The film responds to how working-class communities have been splintered by the closing down of factories, unemployment and Brexit.

**LB:** When Annabel Scholey's character Joanne comes back after 20 years to clear out her dad's old council house, she can't believe the high garden fences everywhere, separating neighbour from neighbour. The metaphor is really powerful.

**JP:** The fences make everyone become an island within their own garden, shutting people out and losing each other and the community.

(Main pic) Louise Brealey as Helen in *Chuck Chuck Baby*; (right) writer-director Janis Pugh



(Below) Louise Brealey



**LB:** Exactly. We shot on an estate near Flint station and in the amazing wild landscapes around there. Is the town a character in the film for you?

**JP:** My mum and dad used to live on that street. When we were filming, one of the neighbours came round with photos of them I'd never seen. Even walking around Flint this weekend, I could feel how I felt when I was 14 – freezing in a pair of bloody jellybeans in the snow because they were the only shoes I had. And it stays with me.

**LB:** We're paying a lot of lip service in our industry to the idea of front-and-centre-ing older women. But there is a gap between a perception of change and what is happening, which is a few high-profile actresses being allowed to tell interesting stories while the vast majority face a huge decline in their careers once they hit 40. I'm working much less, and that is down to maths: the parts are not there.

**JP:** The industry thinks an audience is not interested in older people and they're very wrong. We've seen how festival audiences have responded to these women. The industry is run by a bunch of people who believe in "big names, young women". It's so boring.

**LB:** For me it was a dream part. I don't think I've said this to you before, I felt an affinity with you. Like you, I feel I have a lot to give, creatively, and haven't always been given the chance in the work I've been allowed to do. I look at you and your vision and I'm looking at someone who is 50 and this is your feature debut. I find that incredibly exciting. I'm thinking, Don't write us off. Give us the chance to tell these stories, to show what we can do. Give us the chance to shine.

*Chuck Chuck Baby* is in UK cinemas now

## LUCY SWEET IS ON THE VERGE



Boomers get a bad rap, blamed for everything from the destruction of the planet to economic instability. But despite that, I'm quite jealous of them. They lived through the swinging Sixties, they don't have to work any more, and they couldn't give two hoots about Hailey Bieber's smoothies or the best restaurants in Berlin. I am deeply inspired by my neighbour Mary, who sits in the sun on her doorstep, drinking wine at 4pm and cheerily yelling, "This is what you can do when you're retired!" as I sadly trudge through my endless to-do list.

If you want further evidence that Boomers are enjoying life infinitely more than other generations, just tune in to the Sunday morning chillout zone that is **Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh**. As the kids say, it's a vibe. Titchmarsh in a rustic shed full of carefully placed tennis rackets and vintage car ornaments, infused with a warm filter that makes everyone look like they're on the Hovis advert.

Even if you're not over 70, this show is ideal for hangovers or times of psychological overwhelm. It seems to take its inspiration from the potter's wheel interludes of 1950s TV, and makes the Calm app look like a house party thrown by Super Hans. Nothing bad could happen here, not with Titchmarsh at the helm. I used to hate him with the heat of a thousand suns, but perhaps I've mellowed with age, or maybe he has, because he's now cosier than a cushion with some otters on it. Speaking of which – let's watch a nice segment about otters! Literally just footage of otters.

At one point I thought I was having an out-of-body experience as Alan interviewed a man who carved walking sticks with the head of owls and labradors. The man was wearing a flat cap and speaking very slowly about a duck's head he was particularly proud

of. Time became elastic and I drifted off. Ooh, what's that Alan? Wine tasting and an interview with Petula Clark? Now we're talking!

But not before we celebrate the splendour and beauty of the Northern Irish coastline. I thought maybe this was a bit about the effects of erosion, but no, just soothing library pictures of the Northern Ireland coastline. Like one of those clicky viewfinders.

Of course, Alan's gentle Sunday morning show is all propaganda. Old age is no more cosy than a bracing walk on the Northern Irish coastline. It's worrying medical appointments and shocks to the system, getting lumbered with the grandchildren, crappy pensions and being patronised and ignored. No wonder otters and labrador walking sticks are on the agenda, if only to distract you from the haunting spectre of death.

And let us not forget that older people are not gentle, cute cartoon grannies. When Petula turns up, she starts telling jaw-dropping stories about how she once went out with her BFF Karen Carpenter in Las Vegas and ended up in Elvis's dressing room.

**This show is ideal for hangovers or times of psychological overwhelm. It makes the Calm app look like a house party thrown by Super Hans**

"Elvis came out looking drop-dead gorgeous," she says, breezily, as if she's recounting a story about her Waitrose order. "He started flirting with us, so I stood up and said to Karen, 'We have to be going, we've got that thing in the morning.' She was young and naive and wanted to stay, but I'd guessed where this was going. Anyway, as we was leaving, he leaned against the door, winked and said: 'I'll get you one day.'"

At this point I'm goggle-eyed, all of Alan's tennis rackets have fallen off the wall and I've completely forgotten how to carve a walking stick into the shape of an owl. Then she starts casually mentioning how she accidentally ended up singing on *Give Peace A Chance* with her mate John Lennon.

At the end, Alan, positively glowing with cosiness, says, "Petula, can we tempt you with some Chardonnay?"

Hell, yeah, I'll have a large one, please. Also, can I stay for dinner?

*Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh* is on Sundays at 9.30am on ITV  
Lucy Sweet is a freelance journalist  
@lucyweet1

# Peter Hook & The Light

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FRIDAY 1ST NOVEMBER 2024  
ST GEORGE'S HALL BRADFORD

THURSDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 2024  
CHEESE & GRAIN FROME

FRIDAY 8TH NOVEMBER 2024  
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THURSDAY 19 : NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY  
FRIDAY 20 : NORWICH WATERFRONT

# Music



Malcolm Jack

## RUNNING TUNES

### Your bespoke soundtrack to busting a gut

The Olympic Games in Paris are fast approaching. Humankind's great ancient festival of exercise will feature many impressive feats of physical prowess, including falling into water, hitting things with sticks and lifting heavy things before putting them down again. But above all things it will feature running. There'll be short running, long running, medium running, running with jumping, running where they also throw things. It'll be a great big running party. Which means that if you, like me, happen to absolutely hate running, then you may be in for some triggering channel flicking these next few weeks.

There comes a time in every grown-up's life where their metabolism slows down, carefree overconsumption of food and alcohol catches up, and before you know it, parting the seas and rising up above you like a Ray Harryhausen stop-motion monster towers the Greek god of Consequences. Let's call him Fatsos. It's around this time that many adults give up on their appearance (tempting), or alternatively, "get into running". Other forms of exercise are available, but running is the cheapest.

The trick to enduring this ritual of self-inflicted spiritual and bodily pain, I have found, is to divert my brain as much as possible through a mix of stimuli both visual (run to nice places) and aural (stick your ear pods in and bathe your mind in lovely distracting sound). Podcasts are good, but there's only so much serious talk that a person can take in the midst of what is already a glum experience. Music is the runner's more natural companion, but shuffle play is a Russian roulette that risks compounding your misery. If the tempo of a tune is too high you can burn yourself out trying to keep pace. If it's too low then whole kilometres can pass slower than an episode of *Dan Snow's History Hit*.

It's led me to ponder – is there such a thing as the perfect piece of running music? I don't mean like Vangelis's theme score from *Chariots of Fire* or Rocky anthem *Eye of the Tiger* by Survivor, but a piece of music that scientifically hits just right, flicking the body's chemical switches and boosting a runner to glorious, speedy transcendence? Research leads to some interesting revelations.

There's loads of evidence to show that music can enhance any type of exercise. It elevates your mood by unleashing "feel good" chemicals like serotonin and dopamine, as well as helping with motivation, pacing and improving heart rate recovery time. A 2022 study in the *Journal of Human Kinetics* showed that listening to music during running led to a 10% increase in total distance covered and a 14% increase in speed.

Professor Costas Karageorghis, an expert in sport and exercise psychology at Brunel University London, has gone so far as to describe music as "a type of legal performance-enhancing drug".

Parting the seas and rising up like a Ray Harryhausen stop-motion monster towers the Greek god of Consequences. Let's call him Fatsos

But which music, specifically, is the runner's most dependable sonic dope? The answer is subjective, because so much of the benefit derives from choosing music that makes you feel best. Things like memories and associations triggered by songs can be just as important as a pumping beat. If *My Heart Will Go On* by Celine Dion was the first dance at your wedding, it could be the thing to push you to a personal best. If 180 BPM old-school gabber transports you to your happy place, gurning-faced at a leisure centre rave in Nottingham circa 1995, then by all means, get *Body Hammer* by The Speed Freak on.

Tempo, however, does matter – and it's not as simple as faster the better. When it comes to BPM (beats per minute) research shows higher tempos help, because the natural inclination is to sync your steps to the beat. However, a ceiling effect has been found to occur around 145 BPM, and anything above that may tire you out. Sorry, gabber fans.

Studies show a range of 123-131 BPM to be the sweet spot, with room for variation depending on workout intensity. If you're a soft rock fan, that might make *Livin' On A Prayer* by Bon Jovi your perfect running soundtrack. Hip-hop heads may fancy running to Run The Jewels' *Legend Has It*, while indie lovers might achieve a PB to Phoebe Bridgers' *Kyoto*. There are free online tools to search songs by BPM, so you can build bespoke playlists to your tempo and taste.

Is there any music custom made for running to? Yes lots, but most of it is generic dance gunge for people who don't actually like music. More discerning listeners may wish to seek out LCD Soundsystem's 45-minute-long composition *45:33*. Commissioned as part of a marketing campaign by Nike in 2006, it was said to have been road-tested and refined by main man James Murphy through vigorous sessions on a treadmill. He later admitted he fabricated this story to squeeze cash out of the sports brand, and he actually doesn't like running at all (I can relate). Either way it's a great record, of optimal length and speed for making those hellish but tragically necessary kilometres pass just that little bit easier.

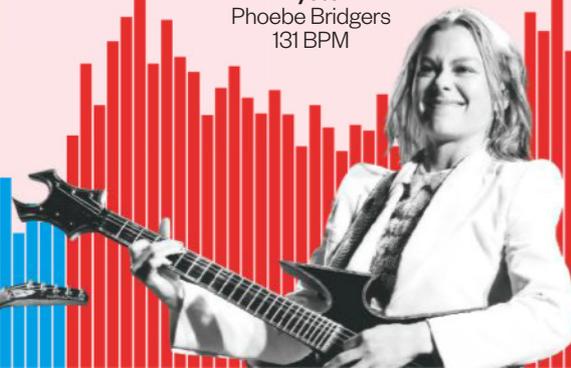
There comes a time in every grown-up's life when he may have to contemplate running with one of these

@MBJack

**My Heart Will Go On**  
Celine Dion  
99 BPM

**Livin' On A Prayer**  
Bon Jovi  
123 BPM

**Kyoto**  
Phoebe Bridgers  
131 BPM



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## HR Coordinator (Wales)



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**Contract Type:** Permanent  
**Closing Date:** 30/07/2024

Reference: 501

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To apply visit: <https://www.nelsontrust.com/hr-coordinator-2/>

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**Salary:** £23,114 per annum  
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**Closing Date:** 05/08/2024

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For an informal discussion about the role, please contact: Laura Johnson on 07340 055617 or [laura.johnson@vamt.net](mailto:laura.johnson@vamt.net)



ACE is an ambitious award-winning charity based in West Cardiff. We are recruiting a new team of staff for our Yourspace Wellbeing Service, working with Cardiff South West, West and North Primary Care Clusters, providing 1:1 and group-based support for local patients; community outreach activities; and collaborative work to identify and fill gaps in local health and wellbeing provision.

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**Location:** Cardiff  
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**Contract:** Fixed term until 31st January 2026 (with potential extension dependent on funding)

We are seeking a Wellbeing Connector to join the Yourspace team.

### Young People's Wellbeing Connector

**Location:** Cardiff  
**Salary:** £23,964 per annum (pro rata)  
**Contract:** Fixed term until 31st January 2026 (with potential extension dependent on funding)

We have two posts available, with hours and geographical focus as follows

**Hours:** 30 **Focus:** Cardiff North Primary Care Cluster area  
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We are recruiting for 2x Young People's Wellbeing Officers to join the Yourspace team.

### Community Health Development Worker

**Location:** Cardiff  
**Salary:** £27,307 per annum (pro rata)  
**Contract:** Fixed term until 31st January 2026 (with potential extension dependent on funding)

We have two posts available, with hours and geographical focus as follows

**Hours:** 22.5 **Focus:** Canton and Riverside  
**Hours:** 15 **Focus:** Cardiff West Primary Care Cluster area

We are seeking Community Health Development Workers to join the Yourspace team

For job packs and application forms please visit our website [www.aceplace.org/job-vacancies/](http://www.aceplace.org/job-vacancies/)  
Please submit your fully completed application to: Email: [recruitment@aceplace.org](mailto:recruitment@aceplace.org)

Deadline for submitting application: Midnight, Monday 29th July

Interview date: Week of the 5th and 12th of August



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If you are interested in joining our team please apply in writing attaching an up to date CV and send it to [homeaccess@tabspenarth.org.uk](mailto:homeaccess@tabspenarth.org.uk).

The closing date for applications is 31st July 2024.

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## The Endorset Festival 2024! Cerne Abbas Brewery! DORSET!



Yes, that's correct, it's a festival!! It's a piss up in a brewery!! And it's in Dorset!!!! Whats not to Love? The Endorset Festival will take place from Thursday August 1st to Sunday August 4th, 2024.

A home-grown grassroots Dorset festival hand crafted by Southcoast legends and the purveyors of the finest COWPUNK act in the deep south: PRONGHORN!!!!

Endorset is known for attracting the larger bands to an intimate festival setting. Creating a safe space for all and serving the lowest priced lagers, ciders, beers, and spirits on the festival circuit, introducing theatre performers, walkabout theatre and the best bands from around the globe.

**For further info and tickets please visit [www.endorset.co.uk](http://www.endorset.co.uk) Come and get on our LAND!!!!**

### WIN A PAIR OF FESTIVAL TICKETS

Win a pair of Endorset festival weekend tickets including a vehicle campervan/Live in pass and be our VIP guests for the whole event. Just answer the following questions correctly from our website: [www.endorset.co.uk](http://www.endorset.co.uk)

- Who are the first 4 artists on the Line Up 2024 page?
- How much is a standard weekend ticket - Thurs-Sun (Inc Camping)?
- What Southcoast legendary Cowpunk band hosts the Endorset Festival?

**Share your answers on Instagram and Facebook**

- Tag Instagram: @endorsetfestivalofficial @cerneabbasbrewery @bigissueuk @sheltercharity
- Facebook: @endorsetfestivalofficial @cerneabbasbrewery @bigissueUK @shelter
- Use these hashtags - #endorsetfestivalofficial #cerneabbasbrewery #grassrootsfestival #pronghornband #cowpunk #thebigissue #shelter

**A random post will be picked as a winner! Good Luck**



PHOTOS: ANT PENNY

## WOOL DUVETS

## MATTRESS COVERS

## PILLOWS



Premium price to farmers  
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Recyclable and biodegradable  
Flame retardant



### News from the Intrepid Wool Lady

#### Over to the Dark Side

After fiercely resisting the rip tide, I have succumbed to the technology of my smart phone. For years, I vowed it was only a phone but, I admit, I have gone over to the dark side.

For some time now it can open my gates to ensure that I never miss a courier delivery or collection.

Additionally, my phone manages Lucy, my robot lawn mower. And, by gum, Lucy is smart since she can multitask. Via blue tooth, she scuttles around the back garden ensuring the lawn is trimmed to within an inch of its life while simultaneously entertaining the puppy.

And as of yesterday, my phone now manages my solar powered energy. And, admittedly, it is mighty impressive. In real time, my phone allows me to see how much power is coming from the grid as opposed to my panels, the level of my battery charge and how I can cost-effectively best manage my power consumption.

Instead of relaxing into the marvels of all this, I find myself lying awake at night worrying about where I would be if something bad happened to my phone. And I long for the simple days.

Like back in the 1970s and my mother's old Mini Minor. It had a speedometer, an ignition, a switch for lights and a nob for the choke.

Every morning, my mother would yank out the choke nob and wait until the engine was running warm before pushing the nob back in and explaining to me that this was how to correctly start a car.

At the car's 10 year service, the mechanic looked at my mother and said: "Madam, I have to tell you that the choke nob of your car has never been connected to anything." A manufacturer's glitch leaving a void behind the dashboard where connecting wires ought to have been. Oh, for the simple life!

Jessica



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# Puzzles

## Crossword

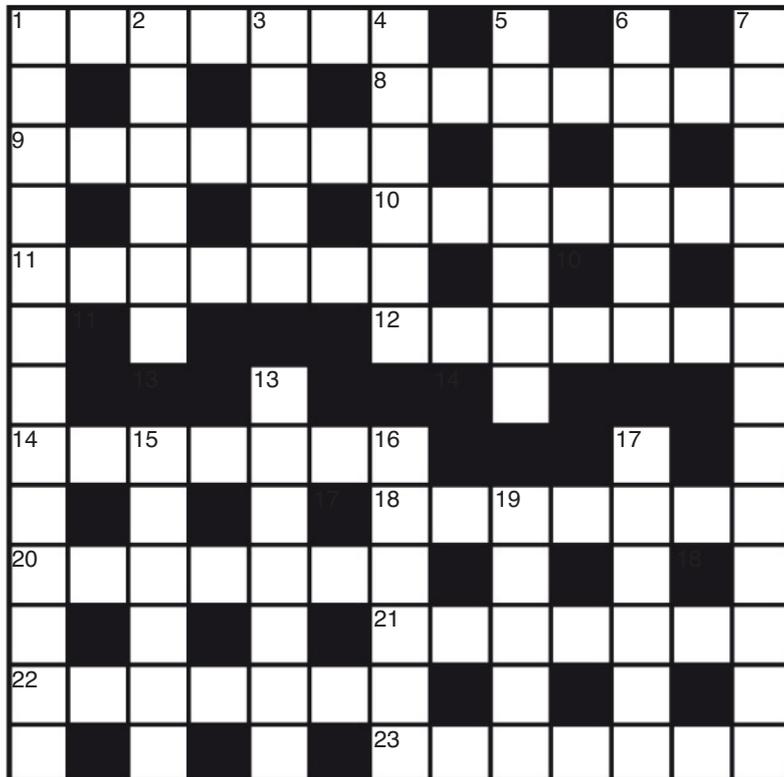
### CRYPTIC CLUES

#### Across

1. Not in time! Found dead in bed (7)
8. Spoon later found in the drink (7)
9. Twisting or is not turning (7)
10. Grant me new item of clothing (7)
11. In the narrow road, go down the middle for a dish of pasta (7)
12. Best part of soldiers' diet (7)
14. Acknowledged that the salesman was dishonest (7)
18. Greek wine returned in canisters (7)
20. Still one article on sluggishness (7)
21. Poser for child? This child sets a poser for teachers (7)
22. Become keen when thus exposed within (7)
23. It revolves to and fro (7)

#### Down

1. Warship foundered without a Baltic treasure (6-7)
2. Musician is right out after second half of July (6)
3. Square arena in Hertfordshire (5)
4. There's a risk in tearing up garden (6)
5. Our being confined in prison shows bravery (7)
6. Master new channel (6)
7. Advancing by degrees towards the answer (7,6)
13. Wild and disorderly South American city's holding out perhaps (7)
15. Rather attractive (6)
16. What one sells is material (6)
17. Remove bones from the steak (6)
19. Right to solicit outside for fish (5)



### QUICK CLUES

#### Across

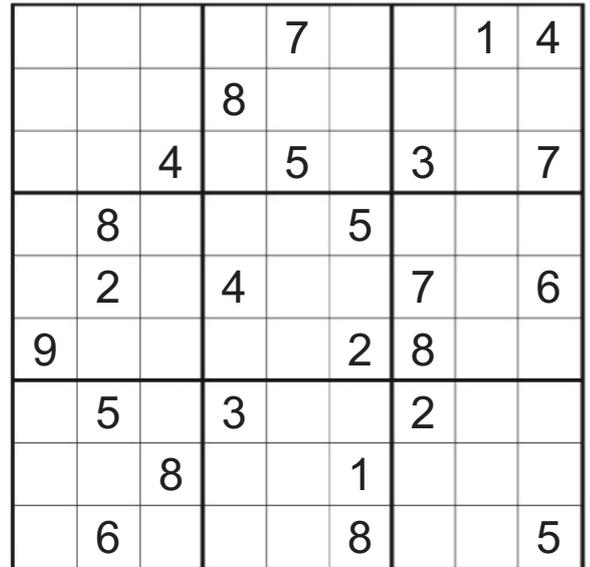
1. Unemployed (7)
8. Wellbeing (7)
9. Eucalyptus (3,4)
10. Grow (7)
11. Magnify (7)
12. Biased (3,4)
14. Colouring matter (7)
18. Wandered (7)
20. Viceroy of Egypt (7)
21. Port in Kenya (7)
22. Rice dish (7)
23. Grantee (anag.) (7)

#### Down

1. Trickery (inf.) (7-6)
2. Act in a confused manner (6)
3. Mistake (5)
4. Scandinavian country (6)
5. Hoist (7)
6. Spanish stew (6)
7. Condiments (6,3,4)
13. Digress (7)
15. Oily (6)
16. Vibration (6)
17. Divide (6)
19. Venomous snake (5)

## Sudoku

The second-toughest Sudoku in Britain



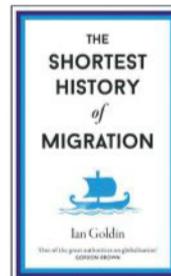
### ISSUE 1624 ANSWERS

#### CRYPTIC

- Across** - 1 Spar; 4 Humdrum; 8 Stage manager; 9 Finished; 10 Mesh; 12 Roster; 14 Persia; 16 Trip; 17 Escargot; 20 Spiritualist; 21 Electro; 22 Drop.  
**Down** - 2 Paten; 3 Register; 4 Hamper; 5 Manx; 6 Regress; 7 March past; 9 Foretaste; 11 Detailed; 13 Suicide; 15 Escudo; 18 Gesso; 19 Mint.

#### QUICK

- Across** - 1 Scam; 4 Turn off; 8 Pennsylvania; 9 Farthing; 10 Abet; 12 Insane; 14 Mouser; 16 Hand; 17 Adulated; 20 Furniture van; 21 Leaflet; 22 Yolk.  
**Down** - 2 Clear; 3 Munching; 4 Trying; 5 Rove; 6 Omnibus; 7 Flattered; 9 Frightful; 11 Colliery; 13 Sangria; 15 Adjust; 18 Trawl; 19 Will.



## Win

The first correct drawn entry to the crossword will win a copy of this week's random book selection, *The Shortest History of Migration* by Ian Goldin

**Send entries to:**  
 Crossword Competition,  
 The Big Issue,  
 43 Bath St,  
 Glasgow, G2 1HW

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

# MY PITCH

*Playfair Steps, The Mound, Edinburgh*  
Every day 8am-6pm

## STEVEN PATERSON, 47

● Interacting with people is what I enjoy the most about selling the Big Issue.

I was unstable on my feet when I started selling the magazine, I was really struggling in life with my mental health and my depression. Lately, that's gone away. I'm thinking a lot clearer and I'm more motivated. Doing the books makes me get out and about and speak to people.

I'm taking a little rest just now but when I go back to selling it seven days a week I'll be motivated to get up at six o'clock every morning, shower, go out, sell. It's not so much the money why I do the Big Issue, it's the interacting with people. The money's a bonus. I chat about anything on my pitch. If they are Lithuanian I say *labas rytas* (good morning), if they are Polish I'll say *dzien dobry*, or Ukrainian *dobryi den*. A lot of people come back and give me money just for saying that. I've picked those bits of languages up just from being on my pitch.

Recently I've been changing pitches to sell 50 a week. I was at Waverley Bridge two years ago and sold 272 in a week, which I think broke the Scottish record. That's when I had my card machine. It does help a lot: it's 50:50 with cash nowadays.

I'm from Edinburgh originally but it's quite hard to shift the magazine here. Glasgow's a lot friendlier and easier but I can't be bothered going there every day to sell and I'd had to pay for the bus. I used to like going to the pubs in Edinburgh to drink juice but not so much these days.

I did go through a bit of a bad stage with alcohol when I started the Issue, that was probably why I was selling the magazine at the beginning

**I used to go to casinos and play Texas Hold 'Em for cash games. I've got a good poker face. I don't give anything away**



in 1999 to fund the alcohol but I've no habits just now because I like selling the Big Issue and it's keeping me out of trouble.

I'm a very patient man. If I don't sell one for half an hour I am good at persevering. You need patience to sell it. I certainly have that. I used to play a game of poker every now and again. I used to go to casinos and play Texas Hold 'Em for cash games. I've got a good poker face. I don't give anything away.

I'm living in a temporary place at the moment. I'm homeless living in a bed and breakfast but it doesn't do breakfast. You don't pay anything really here because I'm on a housing list. It's not great but my room is pretty much clean. I get all the Freeview channels but I'm not really watching much telly now, it's more watching YouTube on my phone or

browsing the net. I've been here since 29 December last year. To be honest, I'm not ready for my own place. I'd crack up, I couldn't cope. Some people want a house at the snap of a finger but I don't. I'm just taking things one day at a time.

I'd like to say thank you to a taxi driver who buys the magazine off me every week and gives me a fiver. When he sees me passing over the Waverley Bridge he always shouts me over and he always buys a book.

It helps if you're struggling to sell a copy and get your eyes on the taxi rank, that's a book gone. He won't buy off anyone else, he says: "I'll get one off Stevie." Some people like to support their own vendor personally. He's a good guy.

Interview: Liam Geraghty  
Photo: Exposure Photo Agency



Emeldah's stall helped her to send her children to school and make improvements to her home

© Peter Caton/CARE/2019



Maria's honey business helps her to support her children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren!

© Ana Caroline de Lima/CARE/2018



■ Raised: **£165.00**  
■ Needed: **£234.29**



■ Raised: **£255.00**  
■ Needed: **£514.73**

# WHOSE LIFE WILL YOU CHANGE WITH AN INVESTMENT OF JUST £15?

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That's why we've set up this unique way to help some of the world's poorest people. It's called Lendwithcare – and instead of giving a donation, you can lend from just £15 to fund a fledgling business.

Emeldah Chinwa and Maria Juana are just two of the people you could help to work their way out of poverty when you make a loan through [lendwithcare.org](http://lendwithcare.org).

**VISIT [LENDWITHCARE.ORG](http://LENDWITHCARE.ORG) NOW TO MEET MORE ENTREPRENEURS AND DECIDE WHO YOU INVEST IN**

## How does it work?

- 1 You choose an entrepreneur at [www.lendwithcare.org](http://www.lendwithcare.org)
- 2 You invest any amount from £15 in their business
- 3 The entrepreneur's business begins to grow
- 4 Your loan is repaid back to you
- 5 You re-invest in another entrepreneur, you withdraw your money or donate it to CARE International

**lendwithcare.org**  
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