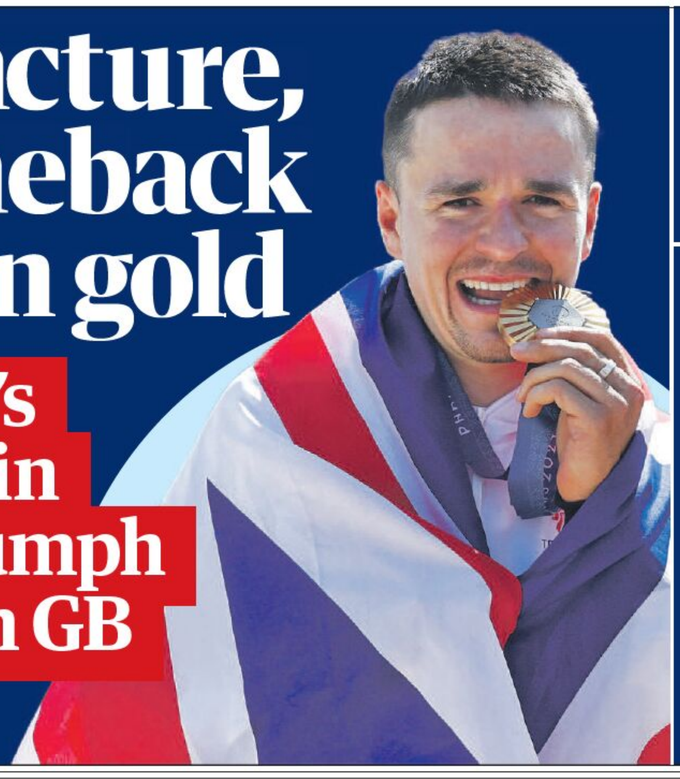
A puncture, a comeback ... then gold

Pidcock's mountain bike triumph for Team GB

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'A beacon of brazenness' Authors celebrate the great Edna O'Brien

G2



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Two children dead and nine injured in 'ferocious attack' at dance class

Teenage boy held after stabbings that also left two adults critically hurt

Jessica Murray
Josh Halliday
Hannah Al-Othman

Two children were killed and nine injured, six critically, in a series of stabbings yesterday at a children's dance class in Southport.

Two adults were also in critical condition last night after what police called a "ferocious attack" at a Taylor Swift-themed yoga and dance class at The Hart Space, a studio which also hosts antenatal and hypnobirthing classes in the north-west seaside town.

Merseyside police chief constable, Serena Kennedy, said that a man armed with a knife had entered the class and began attacking the children at about 11.47am.

"When [officers] arrived, they were shocked to find that multiple people, many of whom were children, had been subjected to a ferocious attack and had suffered serious injuries," she said. "We believe that the adults who were injured were bravely trying to protect the children who were being attacked."

A 17-year-old boy from the village of Banks five 2



▲ *The scene of the attack in Southport, Merseyside. Police said the motivation for the stabbings remained unclear* PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES SPEAKMAN/PA WIRE

Reeves acts to plug £22bn hole 'covered up' by Tories

Pippa Crerar
Larry Elliott
Peter Walker

Rachel Reeves has cut winter fuel payments for 10 million wealthier pensioners as she seeks to plug a £22bn black hole in the public finances she said was "covered up" by the Conservative government, heralding tax rises in her first autumn budget.

The chancellor also shelved the long-delayed cap on what people would pay for social care as she ignited a bonfire of Tory policies she said would be needed to close the gap, telling MPs: "If we cannot afford it, we cannot do it."

Yet almost half of the shortfall, £9.4bn, was a result of her decision to fund above-inflation public sector pay recommendations in full, helping to reverse years of declining wages and see off the threat of industrial action.

Her response to a Treasury internal audit commissioned by Labour within days of taking office also paves the way for a brutal first budget on 30 October where she is expected to put up some taxes as well as cutting welfare and public spending.

"We don't want to increase taxes but we are in a position where there was a £22bn gap between the money the previous government spent and what they budgeted for, and so we are going to have to make difficult decisions," she told a Treasury press conference.

In a further sign that tough measures are being planned for the budget, the Treasury document outlining the spending pressures said that her plan for Whitehall departments to make £5.5bn of in-year savings would not be sufficient.

"The government is setting out further steps to tackle the spending



▲ *The chancellor, Rachel Reeves*

pressures that remain and to take the difficult decisions necessary to secure the public finances," it added.

Jeremy Hunt, Reeves's predecessor as chancellor, said she would "fool absolutely no one" with the financial audit and accused her of a "shameless attempt" to lay the groundwork for tax rises in her autumn budget.

In a deeply political statement, Reeves pointed the finger of blame at the Tories. However, she ruled out raising income tax, national insurance or VAT, keeping to the commitments made in Labour's election manifesto. "Upon my arrival at the Treasury three weeks ago, it became clear that there were things that I did not know, 4

Two children die after knife attack on dance class in Southport

Continued from page 1

miles away in Lancashire and born in Cardiff, was arrested on suspicion of murder and attempted murder in connection with the attack.

Kennedy said "the motivation for the incident remains unclear" but it was not being treated as terrorist related, although Counter-terrorism Police North West had offered support to the force in its investigation.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, police described it as a major incident and 13 ambulances were sent to the scene, while Alder Hey children's hospital in nearby Liverpool declared a major incident, asking people to avoid their "extremely busy" A&E department.

The dance and yoga session, aimed at children aged six to 11, was being run by two teachers, and was due to finish at noon, just 10 minutes after the stabbings took place.

Residents and business owners described horrific scenes after the attack, including children bleeding in the street and parents screaming as they tried to locate their children.

Alaina Riley, 18, said her aunt, who lives across the road from the venue, witnessed "little kids run out screaming covered in blood" and two staff members "crawling" out of the building. Riley said her aunt saw parents running out of the class carrying children covered in blood and attempting to resuscitate them. "I think it was pickup time," Riley said. "She said she had never heard screams like it. She was distraught and in an absolute state on the phone to me."

Local residents were reportedly bringing children out of the building to tend to their injuries before the emergency services arrived.

Colin Parry, the owner of Masters car repair shop, which is next door to The Hart Space, said he saw "two or three kids" lying seriously injured on the floor. "It was horrific, absolutely," he said, adding that his colleague had run to the door of the studio after he heard "screaming that wasn't normal". He added: "About 10 kids go running past him, all bleeding, and one of them collapsed on the floor outside," he said. Further down the road, Debrah Parker, 57, said she heard a young girl come out of the building saying: "Mum, I've been stabbed, I've been stabbed." Parker added: "She [the mother] bundled her in the car as fast as she could, she was screaming: 'Help me, help me.' She was covered in blood."

Kennedy said families of the dead and injured children were being supported by specialist officers, and wider trauma support for all those affected would be provided. "As a mum and a nana, I can't begin to imagine the pain and suffering that the families and the victims are going through at this time, and I wish to send my heartfelt condolences to them," she said.

Dave Kitchin, head of service at North West ambulance service, told a press conference the knife attack would leave a "lasting impact on the whole community".

He also confirmed that 11 casualties were treated at what he described as a "devastating scene".

Police cordoned off a large area near where the stabbings took place, as well as a street in Banks believed to be linked to the suspect.

Last night the king sent his "most heartfelt condolences, prayers and deepest sympathies" to the families and loved ones of the victims of the "utterly horrific" attack.

The prime minister said the events in Southport were "just truly awful" and that "the whole country is deeply shocked at what they have seen and what they have heard".

Keir Starmer said: "I know I speak for everybody in the whole country in saying our thoughts and condolences are with the victims, their families, their friends and with the wider community. It is impossible to imagine what they are going through right now."

He also thanked the emergency services for their response, saying: "They have responded to an awful incident today. I want to thank them for the professionalism they have shown in doing so."

Merseyside's police and crime commissioner, Emily Spurrell, said she was "utterly shocked and devastated" by the incident. "To hear that innocent, defenceless children have been attacked during a Taylor Swift event at a dance school as they enjoyed the start of the summer holidays is unthinkable and absolutely abhorrent," she said. "These young people had their whole lives ahead of them and it is hard to find the words to convey our deep sadness.

"Our region will be heartbroken that more young lives have been lost at the hands of violence and more have suffered serious injuries."



▲ *Serena Kennedy, Merseyside police chief constable, yesterday*



'A frenzied attack' Residents tell of horror after deadly atrocity in suburban street

Josh Halliday
Hannah Al-Othman

It was shortly before midday on what felt like the hottest day of the year when the sound of children playing was shattered by screams.

Girls as young as five ran in fear, some covered in blood, after their Taylor Swift dance class on the first week of the summer holidays turned into an atrocity.

A 17-year-old boy wearing a hood and a Covid face mask had walked into the class in the seaside town of Southport in Merseyside, having taken a taxi from a nearby village.

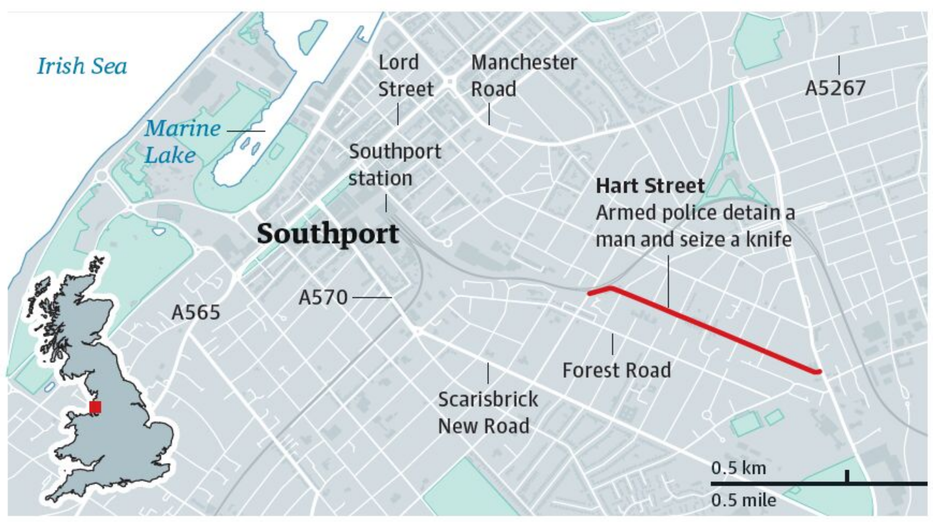
Alaina Riley, 18, said her aunt rang her "screaming down the phone" after witnessing "little kids run out screaming covered in blood" and two staff members "crawling" out of the building.

Parents had just arrived to pick up their daughters from the Hart Space, which was hosting the Swift-themed holiday club, when the attack began. Colin Parry, the owner of the nearby Masters car repair shop, said he had a brief exchange with a male he believed to be the attacker minutes before the stabbing.

He said: "He came down our driveway in a taxi and didn't pay for the taxi, so I confronted him at that point. He was quite aggressive he said: 'What are you gonna do about it?'

"The customer I was dealing with at the time confronted him as well, and he [the attacker] said the same to him. Then he turned around and walked out of the drive." Parry continued working

Emergency services called to 'major incident' in Hart Street



Source: OpenStreetMap

▼ *Emergency service responders at the scene, where the media gathered outside the cordon*

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY



on a vehicle and moments later got a telephone call from a colleague saying "You need to get outside here now, get out here", he added.

"I went out and there's two or three kids just lying on the floor. I mean, it's a frenzied attack. It's not one stab. He's gone crazy, the lad's gone crazy," he said.

Parry's colleague ran to the door of the dance studio after he heard "screaming that wasn't normal", he added. "He went out to see what it was and about 10 kids go running past him, all bleeding, and one of them collapsed on the floor outside the neighbour next door but one and he was attending to her."

Parry said the children involved were primary school age and that one older girl, believed to be a teenager, had been stabbed as she tried to usher the youngsters to safety out of the building.

He said: "He just stabbed her in the back as well while she was trying to get the other kids back.

"I don't know how many were in the building after that but I know probably three or four came out afterwards being carried out and put on the floor for people to work on." Parry said he rang 999 and told them: "You need to get ambulances here now. We need police. We need armed police. There's a kid dying here on the floor."

People living nearby were bringing children out of the building trying to tend to their injuries before the emergency services arrived.

Parry said: "When he [the attacker] came in here you wouldn't have known that he had anything on him or any intent to do anything like that, but that's probably why he didn't carry on the confrontation with us - because he knew what he was going to do."

Parry said he was "numb" after witnessing the atrocity. "It was horrific, absolutely."

Neighbours said they were alerted to the incident at about noon when they heard a woman in the street shouting for help.

Debrah Parker, 57, said she heard a young girl come out of the building saying: "Mum, I've been stabbed, I've been stabbed."

Parker added: "She [the mother] bundled her in the car as fast as she could, she was screaming, 'help me, help me', she was covered in blood."

Michelle Birkby, 36, said: "I heard her shouting 'my daughter has been stabbed', begging for help. She was trying to flag down the police." They said the woman had carried her daughter away from the scene, but another neighbour had got into the car with her to help her drive her daughter to where paramedics were, inside the cordon.

"She was desperate for help," Birkby added. Soon after, she said, large numbers of police arrived. "I can't fathom. We're just all in a bit of shock."

Witnesses said police and paramedics were treating the children in the middle of the street before taking them to hospitals across Merseyside.

One resident said police officers put injured girls in the back of their patrol car, while parents who had turned up to collect their daughters were instead trying to resuscitate them in the street.

One parent, who did not want to be named, said: "My daughter was in it and she was traumatised. She ran away and she's safe," he said.

Local WhatsApp groups were filled with messages saying "lock your windows, lock your doors" over fears an attacker was on the loose stabbing people. One person said she ran down her street telling neighbours to lock their doors and stay inside.

Ashen-faced paramedics and firefighters sat with their heads in their hands outside the police cordon, some being comforted by residents, after the casualties were taken away.

Cheryl Grisedale, 56, said: "They looked white-washed. Shocked. Parents as well".

Grisedale, an upholsterer whose house looks on to Hart Street, had taken multipacks of water, soft drinks and crisps to the officers standing in baking heat guarding the aftermath of the attack.

A retired teacher, whose house backs on to Hart Street, said she heard the blare of sirens as she prepared to leave her home shortly after midday.

"It's just appalling," she said. "I won't say the old cliche of 'it doesn't happen around here' because these days anything can happen but I'm just shaken that this could happen in this little quiet suburban area".

Later in the day, a 17-year-old boy from Banks, a village five miles from the scene, was arrested in connection to the stabbings and was taken into police custody.

Police closed off a close houses in the village. It is understood that the suspect took a taxi from there directly to the scene. Several police cars and officers remained on the street throughout the afternoon and into the evening, with a helicopter flying overhead.

Neighbours said that although it was a small community, the first anyone knew of what had happened was when police vans turned up. "I know it's a small village but we don't know anything about it," one said.

"We're just absolutely shocked down here," another said. "It's a small village but we don't know who's moving in."



▲ *Forensic officers on Hart Street, where girls as young as five ran from their dance class when the knife-wielding attacker entered*



▶ *An air ambulance at the scene, where witnesses said children were treated in the street before being taken to hospital*



◀ *Flowers left near the scene in Hart Street. Neighbours said they heard a woman in the street shouting for help after her daughter was stabbed*

PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES SPEAKMAN/PA

Analysis

Echoes of Dunblane as inquiries start

Vikram Dodd
Police and crime correspondent

It will come as little, if any, comfort in the days and months to come that targeted attacks on groups of children at play are mercifully rare in the UK.

The worst in British history was the Dunblane massacre in March 1996, when a gunman walked into a school and killed 16 children and a teacher, before taking his own life.

Thomas Hamilton, armed with guns, carried out his attack in the Scottish village, opening fire on a class of five- and six-year-olds. Hamilton, described as a loner, had previously been removed from the Scouts after concerns were raised about him, fuelling his sense of grievance. The Dunblane massacre led to a toughening of firearm laws.

Later, Hamilton was cited by Horrett Campbell, who was convicted of an attack on an infants' school in Wolverhampton, armed with a machete and homemade flamethrower in 1996. Campbell was convicted of wounding seven people and adults. In a police interview he outlined the sense of perceived grievance that drove his attack. He felt a grievance against the children, who he claimed had called him names.

The jury at Stafford crown court heard Campbell, who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, told police during the interview why he attacked the school: "They hadn't done anything personally but they had contributed to the pressures I've had by jeering at me if I walked past." Campbell was ordered to be detained indefinitely.

For Merseyside police, their investigation into the attack on the children's dance class in Southport is just beginning. Detectives will be rushing to identify any addresses their suspect has links to and searching them. They will also be trying to identify any electronics, such as phones or computers, gain access to the devices, and scour their contents for any clues.

The urgent need is to satisfy themselves the suspect acted alone in the planning of the attack. Other considerations will be seeking clues as to the motive for the selection of the dance class, and why it was visited with such violence.

Mental health will be examined, as will whether the suspect had any contact with the statutory agencies before the attacks.

As people in Southport try to deal with the horror, there are likely to be three formal processes: a criminal trial of the suspect; inquests into the deaths; and a specific one into the circumstances surrounding the death of a child.

Reeves cuts winter fuel payments to help plug £22bn hole 'covered up' by Conservatives

Continued from page 1

things that the party opposite covered up; covered up from the opposition, covered up from this House, covered up from the country," she told MPs.

Reeves blamed the £22bn financial hole on the soaring bill to deal with asylum claims and illegal immigration, costing £6.4bn this year alone, along with extra spending on the NHS, Ukraine funding and maintaining roads and railways also putting extra pressure on the public finances.

Support for her claim that there had been significant overspending in the dying days of the previous government came from the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), which launched a review into how the departmental spending totals for this spring's budget were reached. Richard Hughes, the OBR's director, said he had become aware of the upward pressures on spending only last week.

The number of pensioners receiving the winter fuel payment will be cut from 11.4 million to 1.5 million as a result of the decision to means test a benefit worth up to £300 for a household with at least one member aged over 80.

The Treasury said the bill for the payment - introduced by Gordon Brown in his first budget after Labour's 1997 victory - was currently £2bn a year. The change will come into force this winter and will save £1.5bn in the next financial year.

Reeves said Labour would show its commitment to pensioners by maintaining the triple lock, under which the state pension increases each year in line with earnings or inflation, or a minimum of 2.5%.

Morgan Vine of the charity Independent Age said: "Today's decision to end the winter fuel payment for those not receiving pension credit risks driving hundreds of thousands of older people into further financial hardship. We welcome the chancellor's intention to tackle the low uptake of pension credit, but means testing the winter fuel payment now will mean too many older people will fall through the cracks and not get the vital financial support they desperately need, especially when household bills like energy are still extremely high."

Reeves will save a further £1bn next year by not going ahead with the changes to social care proposed by Sir Andrew Dilnot. These would make the means test for local authority support more generous and raise the capital limit - the amount of savings that determines whether an individual is eligible for local authority care - from £23,500 to £100,000.

In response to furious shouts from the Tory benches on the issue, she responded: "I can understand why members are angry. I am angry, too. The previous government let people down."

The Treasury said £9.4bn of the upward pressure on spending this year was the result of the chancellor's decision to meet the recommendations of the public sector review bodies in full. The cost does not include the proposed 22% deal for junior doctors, which arrived too late to be included in the analysis.

Paul Johnson, the director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, said: "At a time when private sector earnings are growing by between 5% and 6% a year, public sector pay awards were always going to come in higher than the 2% budgeted by departments. That is a pressure that was known."

The Treasury said 20% VAT on private school fees would be introduced on 1 January but that parents who prepaid their fees in an attempt to avoid the additional cost would still have to pay.

Among the Tory projects to be scrapped are the Advanced British Standard, announced by Rishi Sunak last year to replace A-levels and T-levels, which was forecast to cost £200m next year but with no money set aside to pay for it.

Boris Johnson's long-promised 40 new hospitals and various road projects will be reviewed for a more realistic timetable. But the Stonehenge tunnel on the A303, the A27 Arundel bypass and the "restoring our railways" scheme will be axed.

£9.4bn
Amount of spending shortfall that is due to decision to fund above-inflation public sector pay rises

20%
The rate of VAT that the Treasury will introduce on private school fees from 1 January

1.5m
Number of pensioners who will receive the winter fuel payment, down from 11.4 million



Junior doctors Lengthy dispute nears end as leaders agree 22% pay increase

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

Junior doctors' leaders in England have agreed a new pay deal with the government, which could lead to their wages rising by 22.3% over two years.

The agreement comes after 44 days of strikes since junior doctors first took industrial action in March 2023 in pursuit of a 35% pay rise. Stoppages by staff across the NHS since December 2022 have led to the postponement of 1.5m appointments, procedures and operations at an estimated cost of more than £3bn.

The British Medical Association's junior doctors committee has accepted an offer of an average rise of 22.3% over 2023-24 and 2024-25, the Guardian understands.

During a meeting on Saturday, the committee agreed to put the offer to its members, according to a source. If accepted, it will end the industrial action. Tens of thousands of members will now vote on the deal.

If accepted, the offer will deliver an additional pay rise of between 3.71% and 5.05%, averaging 4.05%, on top of the existing 8.8% average pay award for 2023-24. This will be backdated to April 2023.

Ministers are also accepting the recommendations of the review body on doctors' and dentists' remuneration for 2024-25. It will uplift each part of the pay scale by 6%, plus £1,000 on a consolidated basis, averaging an increase of more than 8%. This will be backdated to April 2024.

It means a doctor starting foundation training in the NHS will see their base pay rise to £36,600, compared with about £32,400 before the offer was made, the government said. A full-time doctor entering speciality training will see their basic pay increase to £49,900 from about £43,900 before the deal was struck.

After details of the deal emerged, two other unions were quick to draw comparisons between the junior doctors' offer and the 5.5% rise agreed for other NHS staff.

Hundreds of thousands of NHS workers are in line for the rise announced by Rachel Reeves yesterday after more than a decade of austerity. "An above-inflation rise was the right thing to do after many years of NHS wages lagging behind increasing prices," said the Unison leader, Christina McAnea. "Though health workers will look at what they're getting and compare it with the deal agreed for junior doctors."

A Unite spokesperson added: "Health workers being offered less than half of what junior doctors have been offered is not good enough. It will certainly not deal with the recruitment crisis in the NHS."

Junior doctors have said their pay has been cut by more than a quarter over the past 15 years and had called for a 35% increase.

Wes Streeting, the health secretary, has previously said he would



▲ *The chancellor, Rachel Reeves, announced a 5.5% pay increase for non-doctor NHS workers yesterday*
PHOTOGRAPH: JESSICA TAYLOR/UK PARLIAMENT

not meet the demand for 35%, saying that if he gave in then "any trade union worth their salt" would come back the following year with the same request.

The breakthrough in talks came on Friday, the Guardian understands. It followed a series of intensive meetings between Streeting, government officials and Dr Vivek Trivedi and Dr Robert Laurenson, the co-chairs of the junior doctors' committee.

The sudden nature of the deal marked a lightning-quick conclusion to the 20-month dispute over pay. The first face-to-face talks between Trivedi, Laurenson and Streeting took place just 20 days ago on 9 July. In a joint statement, Trivedi and Laurenson said: "It should never have taken so long to get here, but this offer shows what can be achieved when both parties enter negotiations in a constructive spirit.

"This offer does not go all the way to restoring the pay lost by junior doctors over the last decade and a half. However, we have always said that we did not expect to get there in one go. This offer, combined with the recommendation of the pay review body today, changes the current trajectory of our pay, even though there is further to go yet."

Streeting said he was delighted to have agreed an offer to end the industrial action that had caused "untold misery" to patients and staff.

"Everyone agrees we can't have more disruption, more cancelled appointments, which is why my priority from day one has been to end this dispute," he added.

"This has been a tough negotiation, but we have worked rapidly to reach a fair offer. I have been honest about the terrible economic inheritance left for this government, while the junior doctors' committee has been clear that nothing less than the offer on the table will bring these strikes to an end."



▲ *Junior doctors have held 44 days of strikes since March last year*

Analysis Risky but potentially devastating manoeuvre

Peter Walker
Pippa Crerar

The basics of Rachel Reeves' Commons statement about her fiscal inheritance from the Conservatives were simple: there is a £22bn financial hole that needs fixing. But there was a bigger picture being presented, and with it, a potentially invaluable political prize.

At the heart of the chancellor's near-30-minute presentation to the Commons was a narrative that most MPs and some of the public will already be familiar with: we are having to make tricky decisions because the Tories left us a mess.

The three and a half weeks since the change of government have already been punctuated by new ministers taking to the airwaves to say they are shocked - shocked! - at the state of their departmental budgets. Reeves' statement was the centrepiece, the culmination, of a carefully honed message.

Such ideas are not easy to fix in public opinion, but if they settle they can be equally hard to shift. Successfully presenting much of Labour's work as a noble attempt to clear up after the Tories has obvious attractions, and an equally obvious example from recent history.

When David Laws, the Liberal Democrat chief secretary to the Treasury under the coalition government, first arrived at his desk after the 2010 election he found a now infamous note.



◀ *Jeremy Hunt, the shadow chancellor, said Rachel Reeves should not place the blame on the Conservatives*

In keeping with playful Treasury tradition, Gordon Brown's chief secretary, Liam Byrne, scribbled a note for his then unknown successor: "Dear chief secretary, I'm afraid there is no money. Kind regards - and good luck! Liam."

This was a joke from a ministerial team who had helped the UK pull through the 2008 banking crisis. But in a ruthless and vastly effective piece of political messaging, the coalition - and just about every Conservative minister since - pretended it was serious.

Reeves' attempt to blame the Tories for spending cuts now, and possible tax rises in the autumn, is both a tribute to the success of that tactic and a piece of revenge served utterly cold, 14 years on.

The idea of government books riddled with uncosted projects and illusory savings might also provide leeway for Keir Starmer's government, heavily hemmed in by its pledge to not pull the main fiscal revenue levers of income tax, national insurance or VAT.

The political tables had already turned since 2010. Many voters deserted the Tories because of a sense they had become chaotic. Getting voters to now believe that the Tories in effect gave up on tough decisions because they knew they would lose the election and it would thus not be their problem could be even more resonant.

All this is a tricky political manoeuvre, not least because the Tories can point to numerous examples of Reeves saying before the election that she knew exactly what she faced.

There is a brutal political battle to come, illustrated in the Commons yesterday as Jeremy Hunt, the shadow chancellor, accused Reeves of wanting to "blame the last Conservative government for tax rises and project cancellations she's been planning all along".

Reeves was ready. "I can understand why members are angry," she said after Tory MPs shouted, "Shame!" as she announced the scrapping of a planned cap on social care. "I am angry, too. The previous government let people down."

However the narrative lands, there are politically tricky times to come for the government. Announcing cuts is one thing. It will feel all the more real when millions of pensioners don't get a winter fuel payment, a promised bypass isn't built, or a new hospital never gets from blueprint to reality.

Pensioners 2m could lose winter fuel allowance

Patrick Butler
Social policy editor

Up to two million financially struggling older people could lose annual payments worth hundreds of pounds under plans to restrict the winter fuel allowance to the poorest pensioners, campaigners have warned.

Rachel Reeves announced the plans in a speech yesterday outlining a series of spending cuts to help fill what the government says is a £22bn "black hole" in the public finances.

Charities criticised the changes, which could save £1.5bn, warning people who fail to claim the main qualifying benefit, pension credit, could face "heat or eat" dilemmas this winter because they will lose eligibility for payments.

The chancellor also scrapped long-delayed plans drawn up by previous administrations designed to protect individuals from having to sell their homes to meet large social care bills, saving £1bn a year by 2026.

Potentially millions of affluent pensioners will lose winter fuel payments of between £100 and £300 a person, designed to help people aged 67 or over pay heating bills in the coldest months. In the winter of 2022-23, 11.4 million people received them, alongside extra one-off cost of living payments of up to £300.

Caroline Abrahams, the charity director of Age UK, said: "Our initial estimate is that as many as 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it and will be in trouble as a result; yet at the other end of the spectrum well-off older people will scarcely notice the difference."

She added: "Means-testing winter fuel payments this winter, with virtually no notice and no compensatory measures to protect poor and vulnerable pensioners, is the wrong policy decision, and one that will potentially jeopardise their health as well as their finances - the last thing they or the NHS needs."

Age UK estimates 800,000 older people on very low incomes - under £218.25 a week for single pensioners and under £332.95 for couples - are eligible for, but do not claim, pension credit, which will be the main qualifying benefit for the winter fuel payments under the plans, and could potentially lose out.

The decision to means-test winter fuel payments - a universal benefit available to all state pensioners since 1997 - came as a surprise, with previous cost-cutting governments tending to shy away from a cut that might alienate older voters.

The Treasury said the payments would now be targeted at households over state pension age in England and Wales who receive pension credit and universal credit. Those eligible will receive £200, or £300 for those over 80. Payments are devolved in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

"This will better target support for heating costs at those who need it, while all pensioners will benefit from the government's commitment to maintain the triple lock for the basic and new state pension in this parliament," a Treasury document outlining the chancellor's plans said.

£1.5bn
Potential saving to the government from the means-testing of people's eligibility for winter fuel payments

Asylum



Public sector pay



Rail



Stonehenge tunnel



Spending cuts What did Reeves set out and what happens next?

Peter Walker
Richard Partington

Rachel Reeves unveiled a series of spending cuts yesterday, with the prospect of tax rises to come in the autumn, after telling MPs about what she called £22bn in unfunded spending commitments for this financial year due to Conservative neglect.

How do the sums add up?

The official Treasury table for the shortfall is slightly complex and is made up of two main sections: £35.3bn of what is called "total departmental gross pressure" – ie the presumed overspend for the 2024-25 financial year – minus £16.3bn of presumed reserves and underspends, with another £2.9bn then added for assumed shortfalls already calculated by the Office for Budget Responsibility. This gets to £21.9bn, rounded up by Reeves to £22bn.

The £35.3bn total excess comes from: agreeing to public sector pay awards (£9.4bn); "overhang" from earlier pay awards (£2.2bn); extra health spending beyond pay (£1.5bn); asylum and migration overspend (£6.4bn); various "new policy commitments" (£2.6bn); extra costs on rail (£2.9bn); unfunded support for Ukraine (£1.7bn); and what is called "normal reserve claims" – unforeseen spending and adjustments – totalling £8.6bn.

Of the less technical elements, the main ones are:

Public sector pay
Reeves announced ministers would accept the recommendations of pay review bodies for a series of pay rises for public sector workers, which are largely around 5% and so above inflation. There has also been agreement to try to end a dispute with junior doctors by giving them a 22.3% pay rise over two years. While Reeves argued that there was an economic cost of not meeting pay claims, as her predecessor, Jeremy Hunt, pointed out for the Conservatives, this is a choice.

Asylum
Reeves said this was in part the extra costs of the Tories' Rwanda deportation scheme, and the money spent accommodating asylum seekers whose cases were not being processed as they remained in limbo pending the presumed start of flights to Rwanda. Much of this does appear to be a genuine surprise.

Rail
The £2.9bn unaccounted extra cost comes from, Reeves told MPs, how Conservative ministers "handed out cash to rail companies" to make up for lower passenger numbers and thus few revenues due to Covid, and not properly budgeting for this.

What are the spending cuts?

These are so far an interim solution, with the same Treasury document that set out the apparent overspend saying the savings thus far identified would total £5.5bn for the 2024-25 financial year, rising to £8.1bn in 2025-26.

In the 30 October budget, there will be as yet unknown decisions on tax and spending including on areas such as social security. There will also be reviews of a series of road projects and the Conservatives' promised 40 new hospitals, with cuts to these being announced later.

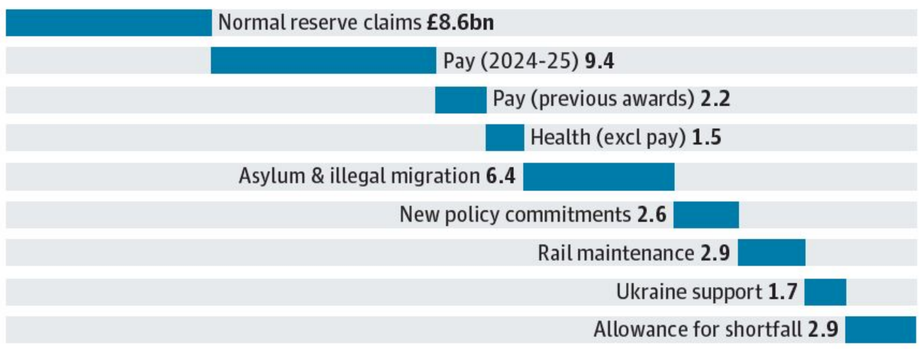
Of the savings announced so far, this is what the Treasury has confirmed:

Departmental cuts
Totalling £3.1bn in both financial years, this will include a 2% cut to administration budgets, plus cutbacks to spending on consultants and communications.

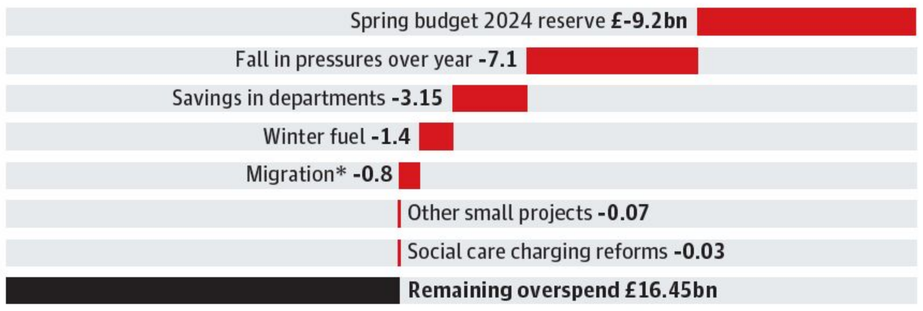
Winter fuel payments
Saving £1.4bn this year and £1.5bn next year, this will mean the payment for pensioners will no longer be universal, and will only be paid to people in receipt of pension credit or other means-tested benefits. The payments already vary in amount depending on age and income. Now those eligible will get £200 a year, rising to £300 if one household member is aged over 80.

Asylum and Rwanda
As explained above – in scrapping the deportation scheme and beginning again to process asylum claims, the hope is to save £800m this year and £1.4bn next year.

Forecasted overspend for 2024-25



Cuts and budget reserves 2024-25



Source: HM Treasury. Note: Spending above resource departmental expenditure limits set by the Treasury at spring budget 2024. Totals may not sum due to rounding.*cancellation of Rwanda scheme and retrospection of Illegal Migration Act

Scrap plans for social care cap
Under the plan, originally due to begin in autumn 2023 but then delayed by two years, people in England would never have to spend more than £86,000 on their personal care over their lifetime. This will now not happen, saving just £30m this year but £1.1bn the next year.

Road scheme cancellations
Two road schemes are definitely scrapped – a two-mile tunnel for the A303 road under Stonehenge; and work on the A27, including a Chichester bypass. This, as well as not reopening old rail lines under the Restoring Your Railways programme, will save nothing this year but nearly £800m next.

Qualifications and investment
There are also two smaller savings: a £185m saving next year by not going ahead with Rishi Sunak's plan for the Advanced British Standard, a replacement for A levels; and £120m over the two years by cancelling the freeports-focused Investment Opportunity Fund.

What is the longer-term plan?

Growing the economy
Reeves will argue that the number one priority will be growing the economy to help finance public spending. Earlier this month the chancellor published Treasury analysis suggesting that £58bn in additional tax revenue could have been brought in last year if the UK economy had grown at the average rate of other OECD nations' economies over the last 13 years.

Growth has been stronger than anticipated so far this year, which could help to open up some additional headroom for spending. However, securing consistently stronger rates of growth will be challenging. Some economists warn cutting back on growth-enhancing infrastructure projects will make it even tougher.

Tax rises?
Labour hemmed itself in ahead of the general election by promising not to raise income tax, national insurance rates or VAT, which make up the bulk of revenue that comes into the Treasury. Corporation tax is also off limits.

However, the party has quietly explored options around raising taxes on wealth, including on capital gains, inheritances and pension contributions.

Reeves could argue these fall outside of her manifesto promise not to hit "working people" with higher tax bills.

The Resolution Foundation thinktank estimated on Sunday that reforms to capital gains and inheritance taxes could collectively raise almost £10bn. The former Bank of England economist Michael Saunders estimates up to £25bn could be raised from more extensive reforms.

In her statement to the Commons, Reeves heralded potential tax rises in the budget now confirmed for 30 October, saying this would involve "difficult decisions to meet our fiscal rules across spending, welfare and tax".

Borrowing?
The chancellor has clung tightly to the same fiscal rules set by Hunt, which require the national debt to be falling as a share of GDP in the fifth year of forecasts.

However, she could move the goalposts. A small technical change floated by City economists includes a change to the way losses to the Treasury on the Bank of England's quantitative easing programme are accounted for, which could open up about £20bn of headroom.

Reeves has, though, sought to maintain an image as an "iron chancellor" who will balance the books, drawing contrast with Liz Truss after the September 2022 mini budget triggered a meltdown in financial markets.

But growing numbers of top economists – including the former Bank of England chief economist Andy Haldane – have argued for more fundamental reform.

Reeves could say there is a need to redraw the rules to increase borrowing to finance the repair of the public realm, which could pave the way for stronger economic growth in future.

NHS reaction Pause in hospital building must be 'as short as possible'

Ben Quinn
Steven Morris

The pause by Rachel Reeves on plans to build 40 new hospitals "must be as short as possible" to deliver on pledges to drive down waiting lists, the NHS confederation has warned.

There was also anxiety across the political spectrum, including among Labour MPs, about what the move would mean for crumbling hospitals affected by the reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (Raac) crisis.

In other reaction to the chancellor's cuts to bricks-and-mortar projects, builders and campaigners warned axing infrastructure risked harming efforts to boost growth.

There was relief Reeves had spared projects such as HS2 and road schemes including the Lower Thames Crossing, rendering the infrastructural consequences of her announcement less stark than had been expected.

But the review of the previous government's plan for 40 new hospitals prompted unease. The NHS Confederation, which represents the healthcare system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, said health executives recognised it presented an opportunity to cut waiting lists.

However, it warned: "In hospitals and other services where there are collapsing roofs, broken equipment and outdated facilities, with each day that passes without a longer-term fix more funding is having to be used to provide short-term solutions to allow for the provision of patient care to continue.



▲ *Hospitals affected by Raac are a concern given the chancellor's cuts*

"For the government to be able to deliver on their key pledge to drive down waiting lists and ensure the NHS is fit for the future, the pause to the delivery of the New Hospitals Programme must be as short as possible and NHS leaders need clarity about timelines."

While Tory MPs criticised the chancellor for pausing their key £20bn new hospital drive, launched by Boris Johnson, others such as the Liberal Democrat MP Al Pinkerton urged her to prioritise spending on Raac-affected units.

Labour backbenchers were restrained on the question of the hospitals. Stella Creasy, whose Walthamstow constituency was earmarked for one of the 40, said it was becoming "painfully clear" how much of a mess the public finances are in, but she added: "Hospitals like Whipps Cross have been left in limbo racking up bills that mean it is more expensive not to act than to get on with the rebuild."

In other sectors, the National Federation of Builders said: "Today is not a good day for growth" after the pausing of the new hospitals, cancellation of the A303 and A27 road improvements and a review of the Restoring Your Railway programme.

Rico Wojtulewicz, the head of policy at the group that represents small- and medium-sized house builders, also warned of a potentially "bumpy twelve months" against the backdrop of the downgrading of construction growth forecasts.

Sam Richards, a former No 10 adviser to Johnson and now the CEO of the pro-growth campaign group Britain Remade, warned that projects in the Restoring our Railways fund – such as the Tavistock railway line – were vital for bringing prosperity to parts of the country that did not get the same focus as London and the south-east of England.

Separately, there was a mixture of relief and anger at the announcement that the controversial Stonehenge tunnel project was being halted.

Tom Holland, a historian and the president of the Stonehenge Alliance, which opposes the tunnel, said: "This monstrous white elephant should have been put out of its misery long ago."

The archaeologist David Jacques said it was "joyous news", adding: "The landscape will be there for future generations with advanced technology to research and interpret the place anew."

King Arthur Pendragon, an arch-druid and veteran roads campaigner, said: "It doesn't mean we won't have to fight it all over again in the future. We shall remain vigilant."

Local Conservative politicians criticised the move. Richard Clewer, the leader of Wiltshire county council, said hundreds of millions of pounds had already been spent and three months' worth of work on electricity cables had been completed.

Analysis
Larry Elliott



Different year but the same refrain: this is going to hurt

For George Osborne, read Rachel Reeves. For 2010, read 2024. The party affiliation might be different but the message from the two chancellors shortly after arriving at the Treasury was the same. In both cases it amounted to two basic propositions: this is going to hurt, and the other lot are to blame.

Like Osborne, Reeves said she would not duck tough decisions, and she was as good as her word. Labour's first chancellor in 14 years announced £5.5bn of spending cuts and made no secret of the fact there will be more pain to come in the budget on 30 October.

Even after the decisions to scrap infrastructure projects, end the Rwanda scheme, means-test winter fuel payments for pensioners, and abandon plans to make social care more generous, Reeves said she would have a £16.4bn hole to fill.

The implications are clear. There are tax rises to come in the budget and tight settlements for Whitehall departments in a one-year spending settlement. Ruth Gregory, of Capital Economics, says she expects tax rises of £10bn, with the rest covered by £7bn of additional borrowing.

All of which is par for the course for a new chancellor. A well-established rule of politics is to get bad news out of the way early and craft a narrative that the measures are unavoidable owing to the incompetence of the previous lot.

Osborne was a master of that in 2010 with his refrain that Gordon Brown's Labour government had failed to mend the roof while the sun was shining. Labour has learned from the experience.

In truth, some of the "hole" in the public finances was due to the decision taken by Reeves to accept the recommendations of pay review bodies for public sector workers. That will cost £9.4bn, and as Paul Johnson, the director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, noted, was not quite the bombshell the chancellor professed it to be.

Johnson did, however, provide some political cover for Reeves: the chancellor was within her rights to feel aggrieved at some of the upward pressures on spending that she had found out about only since arriving at the Treasury.

"Some of the specifics are indeed shocking, and raise some difficult questions for the last government," he said. "If the scale of these overspends and spending pressures was apparent in the spring … it is hard to understand why they weren't made clear or dealt with in the spring budget. Jeremy Hunt's £10bn cut to national insurance looks ever less defensible."

Sooner or later, governments are judged by their own choices. Reeves's infrastructure spending cuts sit oddly with Labour's "growth mission", and the decision to limit winter fuel payments to households receiving pensioner credit will not be universally popular in Labour circles, either. Honeymoons don't last for ever.

Sketch
Zoe Williams



Chancellor's financial disaster story lacks the wow factor



▲ *Rachel Reeves stuck to her line that Labour did not know about the '£22bn black hole' before the election*
PHOTOGRAPH: JORDAN PETTITT/PA

If we cannot afford it, we cannot do it," Rachel Reeves said, many times, during her spending inheritance speech. It was like your mum explaining why you couldn't have sweets on the way out of the supermarket. You're bored of hearing it, kiddo? Then stop asking.

ITV News's Shehab Khan went to the heart of the matter at the press conference, later in the day: is she really only discovering this now? And if it's a wheeze, won't that erode trust in politics?

"The truth is, we did not know about the £22bn black hole until after the election," she insisted, to this and most subsequent questions. Whether the question will ever be answered definitively, and whether it would sweeten harsh decisions anyway, it's far too soon to say.

Presumably quite soon, and surely by October's budget, we'll have got used to Reeves's delivery. Right now, though, it's like discovering Robert Peston's cadence during the financial crash. "Hmm, this sounds bad," I remember thinking.

Never mind. I will pay cash money in the amount of £1 to whoever can name the MP whose job it was to say "wow" at the dropping of every bombshell. "Upon my arrival at the Treasury, it became clear that there were things I did not know," Reeves started. "Wow," said a little voice from the crowd. Too soon, but never mind, good effort. "The spring budget wasn't even close." The total pressures added up to an additional £35bn. "Once you account for the slippage you usually see over the year, we inherited a projected overspend of £22bn." "WOW". Not in the future. Now." ("Wow"). "Covered up by the party opposite." Jeremy Hunt would come back in, later, as cross as you've ever seen him (which is not very), but as he listened, he looked like that mysterious sixth-former in a group being reprimanded for smoking weed; the one whose idea you're reasonably sure it wasn't; the one who'll get away with a detention while everyone else is expelled.

> *Reeves's main dramatic imperative was that the Conservatives had been much worse than anyone could possibly have realised*

Reeves's main dramatic imperative was that the Conservatives had been much worse than anyone could possibly have realised or predicted.

Eye-poppingly expensive asylum schemes – Rwanda the headline, which had not been costed, leaving a £6.4bn overspend; a £1.6bn overspend on rail services; not enough money set aside for the promises made to Ukraine, which this government will nevertheless honour. Fair play, that all adds up to a lot of money, but isn't this exactly what it looked like at the time? When Boris Johnson was out and about, spaffing (to use his memorable word) money on photo opportunities with Volodymyr Zelenskiy, did that look like the unfolding of a carefully accounted plan? Reeves's disaster tale lacked any element of surprise, without which it was just a lot of bad news.

Her immediate steps to curb spending were unnervingly modest: many people will agree that affluent pensioners do not need the winter fuel allowance – though there will doubtless be those on the income boundary who will suffer – but it's hard to imagine that saving being enough to even touch the sides of the black hole.

HS2 Company reveals Sunak's downgrade cost more than £2bn

Rob Davies

HS2 has revealed more than £2bn in costs linked to Rishi Sunak's decision to downgrade the high-speed rail line.

The UK's largest infrastructure project revealed that it had written off £1.1bn in costs incurred during "phase two", which was due to link Birmingham to Manchester until the government scrapped it last year.

In its annual report, HS2 Ltd also disclosed a further £1bn in accounting charges relating to the project's reduced ambitions, which will lower its expected future income.

In total, the business announced £2.17bn in one-off costs associated with cutting back the railway.

Sunak axed the second leg of the HS2 project and scaled back plans for London Euston station in October last year.

Confirmation of the plan provoked dismay in a city that was due to benefit from the new rapid link, with the timing widely seen as a political gaffe.

It was a decision that followed a series of long delays and rises in estimated costs that had caused the high-speed line's predicted price tag to balloon to £71bn.

The government said it would save £36bn by scrapping part of the line, and Sunak pledged to reinvest in other rail projects including Network North.

While the decision to terminate HS2 in Birmingham has met with anger in regions that were poised to benefit, Labour has said it would not reverse the previous government's decision, after Keir Starmer said in January that it was "not possible".

Business view *Page 32* →

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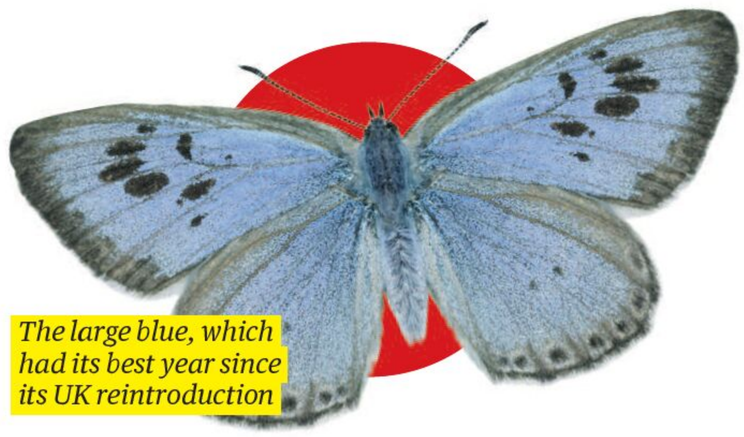
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Conservationists sound alarm as UK butterfly numbers hit record low



The large blue, which had its best year since its UK reintroduction





▲ *The ringlet butterfly and the green-veined white, left, are dwindling as extreme weather linked to global heating affects their conditions for mating*

PHOTOGRAPH: BLICKWINKEL/ALAMY

Helena Horton
Environment reporter

Butterfly numbers are the lowest on record in the UK after a wet spring and summer dampened their chances of mating.

Butterfly Conservation, which runs the Big Butterfly Count, sounded the alarm after this year's count revealed the worst numbers since it began 14 years ago.

Many people have noticed the lack of fluttering insects in their gardens. Experts say this is due to 2024's unusually wet conditions. Climate breakdown means the UK is more likely to face extremes in weather, and the natural rhythms of the seasons that insects such as butterflies are used to can no longer be relied on.

The UK had its wettest spring since 1986 and sixth wettest on record, as an average 301.7mm (11.87in) of rain fell across March, April and May, 32% more than usual. The Met Office has said recent decades have been warmer, wetter and sunnier than those of the 20th century.

Dr Dan Hoare, the director of conservation at Butterfly Conservation, said: "Butterflies need some warm and dry conditions to be able to fly around and mate. If the weather doesn't allow for this there will be fewer opportunities to breed, and the lack of butterflies now is likely the knock-on effect of our very dreary spring and early summer."

The extra rain is not the only problem; the charity said 80% of butterfly species in the UK had declined since the 1970s, with habitat loss, climate breakdown and pesticide use being the main causes. Butterfly populations already hit by these issues would be less likely to be able to cope with extreme weather.

"The lack of butterflies this year is a warning sign to us all," said Hoare. "Nature is sounding the alarm and we must listen.

"Butterflies are a key indicator species. When they are in trouble we know the wider environment is in trouble too."

Painstaking work by conservationists has meant that some butterfly species have had recoveries in recent years. Results released in April from the annual UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS), the largest and longest-running scientific butterfly dataset in the world, showed encouraging signs that conservation efforts are working: the large blue, which was reintroduced to the UK in the 1980s after it became extinct in 1979, recorded its best year yet.

However, butterfly species are also struggling to bounce back from the 2022 drought. They do not mate in wet conditions, but they also need the plants their caterpillars eat to be watered. Species including the green-veined white and the ringlet still have low populations because their caterpillars did not survive the drought.

The extremes of climate breakdown mean that as butterflies try to recover from one extreme weather event such as a drought, they are hit with another, such as very heavy and sustained rainfall.

Butterfly Conservation said there was still a chance of some butterflies emerging late if the weather got drier and sunnier.

Police appeal for information after woman killed on dog walk in Suffolk

Rachel Hall

Detectives investigating the murder of a woman who died after she was attacked while taking her dog for a walk are appealing for information from rail passengers who may have seen something.

Anita Rose, 57, left her house to take her springer spaniel Bruce for a walk in Brantham at about 5am on Wednesday, Suffolk police said.

The mother of six was found lying unconscious on a track by a member of the public at about 6.25am and was taken to Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge with serious head injuries. She died in hospital on Sunday.

A 45-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder on Saturday, then re-arrested on suspicion of murder after Rose died. He has been bailed until 25 October, together with a 37-year-old woman from the Ipswich area who was arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods in connection with the incident.

Speaking at the force's headquarters yesterday, Det Supt Mike Brown from Suffolk police's major investigation team appealed for information.

He said officers were looking for a pink zip-up jacket made of waterproof material, potentially from the Regatta brand, that Rose was believed to have been wearing. He wants any members of the public who might have seen it to come forward.

Brown said police would release a map showing the route they believed Rose had walked, and they wanted to speak to anyone who saw anything on Wednesday in those areas.

He added that officers were also keen to obtain local CCTV and video doorbell footage, and to speak to anyone who was travelling on trains towards Ipswich or Manningtree on that morning who saw anything that may be of use to the investigation.

Brown said: "Our investigation team continue to progress a large number of inquiries to establish the circumstances surrounding Anita's injuries and her subsequent death.

"This work includes house-to-house inquiries, searches at the scene and surrounding areas where Anita was found, as well as searching through CCTV footage and ongoing forensic work.

"Residents will continue to see an additional police presence and officers patrolling and engaging in the area over the coming days as our investigation continues.

"I recognise that many people will feel concerned, but I can reassure you that we are working hard to identify what has taken place and this investigation is a priority for the constabulary."

Edwards charged with making indecent images of children

Haroon Siddique
Legal affairs correspondent

The former BBC presenter Huw Edwards has been charged with three counts of making indecent images of children.

Edwards, who left the BBC in April, will appear at Westminster magistrates court tomorrow on charges relating to images shared on a WhatsApp chat.

He spent 40 years at the BBC, where he was its highest-paid newsreader at the time of his resignation, with a salary of £435,000-£439,999 in the year 2022-23.

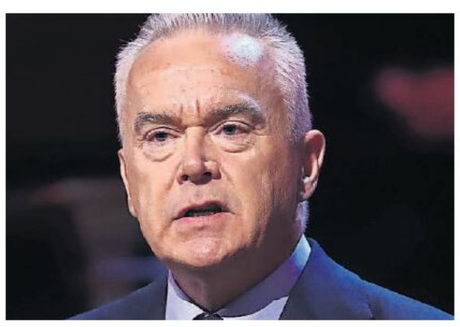
Edwards, 62, who lives in Southwark, London, was charged last month after an investigation by the Met police, the force said.

A Met spokesperson said: "The offences, which are alleged to have taken place between December 2020 and April 2022, relate to images shared on a WhatsApp chat.

"Edwards was arrested on 8 November 2023. He was charged on Wednesday 26 June following authorisation from the Crown Prosecution Service.

"He has been bailed to appear at Westminster magistrates court on Wednesday 31 July.

"Media and the public are strongly reminded that this is an active case. Nothing should be published, including on social media, which could prejudice future court proceedings."



▲ *Huw Edwards, who left the BBC in April, will appear in court tomorrow*

Edwards, who was born in Bridgend, south Wales, in 1961, is married to the TV producer Vicky Flind. He was a reporter for the local radio station Swansea Sound before joining the BBC as a news trainee in 1984.

Two years later he became a parliamentary correspondent for BBC Wales and he began presenting the national Six O'Clock News in 1994.

Edwards became a fixture in the corporation's coverage of major political and royal events. He announced Queen Elizabeth II's death on the BBC on 8 September 2022 and presented coverage of her funeral that month. He also anchored the broadcast of King Charles III's coronation last year.



▼ Tom Pidcock fought his way back from a puncture to win a dramatic cross-country mountain biking gold

PHOTOGRAPH: EMMANUEL DUNAND/AFP/GETTY

Mountain biker Pidcock and GB eventing team spark magic Monday medal rush

Daniel Boffey
Paris

Britain's athletes overcame all manner of adversity, from life-changing injuries to a puncture and a Covid scare, to claim two golds in Paris yesterday and ensure God Save the King rang out over the Olympics for the first time since 1948.

There were also individual silver medals on the third day of the Games for Matt Richards, 21, who lost out on the top prize by a fingertip in the men's 200m freestyle final, and 32-year-old Adam Burgess in the men's singles canoe.

Tom Daley and Noah Williams took silver in the 10-metre synchronised dive, prompting Daley, who already has three bronzes and a gold to his name, to thank his husband for taking "the reins with the kids".

"It's just so special," he said. "This time last year, deciding to come back, not knowing whether I would make the synchro team, let alone qualify for a spot at the Olympics, and now to be here in Paris, diving in front of my son, who is just right there and actually asked me to come back."

The day ended with the announcement from Team GB that the swimmer Adam Peaty had tested positive for Covid after just missing out on Sunday on a historic third gold in as many Games in the 100m breaststroke.

Officials said they remained optimistic Peaty, 29, would recover in time for this week's 4x100m medley and 4x100m mixed medley as he seeks to add to his six Olympic medals, but there are inevitable concerns about the health of rest of the camp.

Joy at the magic Monday medal rush, including the first golds under a king since the death of George VI, remained undiminished, with the Prince and Princess of Wales tweeting: "Huge congratulations to the equestrian eventing team and Tom Pidcock in the mountain biking on winning Team GB's first gold medals! Here's to more success ahead!"

In the sizzling heat of the Château de Versailles, Tom McEwen, Ros Canter and Laura Collett, who nearly died when her horse fell on her in 2013 and who today has only partial sight in one eye, were first to top the podium for Team GB and retain their Olympic team eventing title.

It was a record fifth team gold medal won by Great Britain in the three-day event, which includes dressage, cross-country and jumping. Collett, riding London 52, would go on to take bronze in the individual women's eventing. "I never thought this day would come," she said. "I owe absolutely everything to that horse and the team that have made it possible just to get here."

There had been no shortage of tension at the start of the day, with Britain's comfortable lead having been alarmingly shrunk overnight after a controversial jumping penalty against Canter, but it was Pidcock and his mountain bike that delivered the most exquisite Olympic drama when he secured Team GB's first individual gold.

Pidcock, who turns 25 today, appeared to be losing an epic battle with France's Victor Koretzky on the gravel of Elancourt Hill, but delivered the performance of his career, clawing back from a puncture and a clumsy wheel change to snatch victory and Britain's second gold.

The race had come down to one moment when Pidcock dived to the left and Koretzky went right, and the pair almost came together, prompting some of the partisan home crowd to boo the British cyclist, but his devastated French rival was magnanimous in defeat.

"There was some gravel on the track, and I took some with my front wheel and I lost a part of the gap I had on Tom," Koretzky said. "I'm really disappointed, this mistake cost me the gold medal."

After retaining his Olympic title, the Yorkshireman, who had been leading until he suffered a puncture, described what will go down as one of the great Olympic comebacks as "the most emotionally draining victory of my career".

Racism row

Rugby player investigated

A Team GB rugby sevens player is being investigated by the British Olympic Association over an alleged racist message sent on WhatsApp.

A screengrab of a message allegedly sent by Amy Wilson-Hardy, below, was posted to Instagram by a person saying it showed racism. A BOA spokesperson said: "The British Olympic Association has been made aware of an image published on a social media platform and is investigating the matter."

Wilson-Hardy also represented Team GB in the 2016 Olympics in Rio. She played for the British women's team as they lost 17-7 to the United States yesterday. She has previously played 15-a-side rugby for her country, as well as for a host of Premiership clubs.
Tom Ambrose





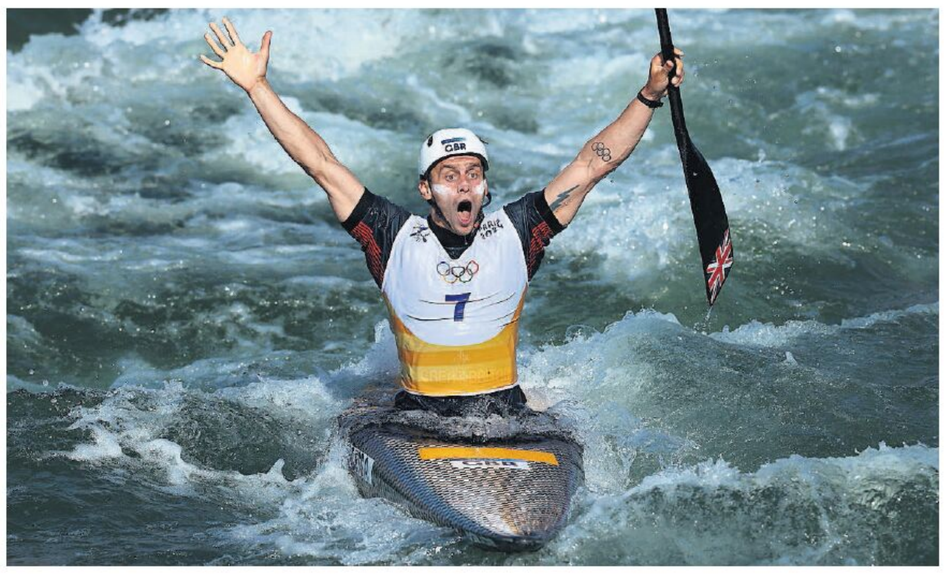
▲ *The eventing team of Rosalind Canter, Tom McEwen and Laura Collett won Team GB's first gold of the Games*

PHOTOGRAPH: ED ALCOCK/MYOP/ THE GUARDIAN



▼ *Adam Burgess celebrates silver in his canoe final. Meanwhile Adam Peaty, right, has Covid, but hopes to be fit for the medley relay*

PHOTOGRAPH: JUSTIN SETTERFIELD/GETTY



'So special' Daley thanks husband after silver dive

Barney Ronay
Aquatics Centre

Most Olympians like to talk in the moment of triumph about suffering, tunnel vision and the realisation of some stark and unforgiving goal. As Tom Daley and Noah Williams celebrated their silver medal for Team GB in the 10m synchro platform dive the talk was about family, support networks, life balance – and also juice cups.

Daley and Williams produced a performance of sustained precision at the Aquatics Centre to finish second behind the brilliant Chinese pair Yang Hao and Lian Junjie. For Daley a silver medal completes the Olympic set after three bronzes and a gold. But even the moment of triumph contained a reminder of his day job as father of Robbie, five, and Phoenix, one.

"Before the competition had started it felt like we had won. Just being able to be there with my family and my kids is so special," said Daley. "They were stood right above the mixed zone when we were doing our interviews. Phoenix did throw his juice cup at me. I'll have to give it back to him at some point. It nearly took out one of the BBC reporters. It was really nice to have him there and share that."

The post-competition ceremonials were also an opportunity to pay tribute to the support of his husband, the screenwriter Dustin Lance Black, who could be seen weeping in the stands after the final dives.

"The people closest to Olympic athletes don't get enough credit for how much they really have to sacrifice and support," said Daley. "My husband has been there all year to be able to take the reins with the kids when I've gone to training camp or competition. He has a career of his own and he has been prepared at times to put that to one side for me to be able to achieve my goals. This year was definitely a spanner in the works because we moved to LA and Lance is getting back on with his career and he has been so supportive to allow me to go back and have another go at an Olympic Games. It's just so special to have somebody who supports you unconditionally."

There also were tears for Williams, who paid tribute to his coach Dave Jenkins, who died in 2021, but played a huge role in propelling him toward this, his first Olympic medal. "Dave was probably the nicest person I ever knew," said Williams. "He took me to into international competition and to my first Olympics. I genuinely wouldn't be here without him. He also taught me what Tom has said, that diving isn't the most important thing in the world."

The British pair began training together only in November, a combination of snatched hours at competitions and a week spent around the pool at Daley's house while Williams was injured.

"I live in LA, he lives in London," said Daley. "We turned up, winged it together and competed."

Asked if he might re-emerge at the age of 34 for a sixth Olympics in LA, Daley's response was intriguing. "I don't know yet because I went from being the youngest on the team in 2008 to now oldest diver on the team. I want to enjoy this moment and make decisions about the future of diving, for me, later on. I live in LA now so it could be a chance to have a second home Games."



◀ *Tom Daley and his diving partner Noah Williams celebrate their silver medal*

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS/ THE GUARDIAN

He said: "It was all going pretty well, and I knew that Victor would be strong and it would not be easy today, and then the puncture happened. We weren't ready in the pits but he did a fast change and I knew at that point that I had five laps and thought anything was possible. Suddenly I was coming really fast back to Victor but I couldn't get rid of him and I knew how fast he was on the last lap."

In the Olympics aquatics centre, Daley and Williams finished second behind China's Yang Hao and Lian Junjie, but the day had brought nothing but pleasure to Daley, the father of Robbie, five, and Phoenix, one.

"Before the competition started it felt like we had won. Just being able to be there with my family and my kids is so special," Daley said. "They were stood right above the mixed zone when we were doing our interviews. Phoenix did throw his juice cup at me. I'll have to give it back to him at some point. It nearly took out one of the BBC reporters. It was really nice to have him there and share that."

The day did not go all Team GB's way. Richards missed out on gold in the 200m freestyle by just 0.02 seconds, and a British favourite for the race, Duncan Scott, placed fourth but just 0.15 behind the winner, Romania's David Popovici.

Richards said: "I can't be too disappointed – my first ever individual [final] at an Olympic Games, to walk away with a silver medal. Obviously two one-hundredths off gold is excruciatingly frustrating, but if anything it's added more fire to my belly."

Britain's rugby sevens lost 17-7 to the US in the quarter-finals, and the US ended a 16-year drought in men's gymnastics by clinching bronze in a dramatic team final. At one point the British team, who ended just outside the medals, had been in a gold medal position, but it was Japan who pipped China to victory.

Britain's Max Whitlock said: "It was hard. I'm really gutted, actually. Fourth is always difficult. We've come fourth quite a few times at the Olympic Games now."

Dan Evans struggled against Stefanos Tsitsipas, losing 6-1, 6-2 in the second round of the men's singles after his extraordinary heroics on Sunday alongside Andy Murray on Sunday in the doubles. The British pair play again today. Evans said: "I'll be fine. It was a quick turnaround and it was just too much today".

Meanwhile, Rafael Nadal may have played his final game at Roland Garros after losing to Novak Djokovic 6-1, 6-4 in the second round. "I have been suffering a lot of injuries the last two years," he said. "So if I feel that I am not competitive enough to keep going or physically I'm not ready to keep going, I will stop and I will let you know. But I don't think every day about if I am retiring or not."

Rowing Fathers on Team GB are less scrutinised, claims Glover

Geneva Abdul

The Olympic rower Helen Glover has said fathers on Team GB receive less scrutiny for being parents than female peers and have expectations that their careers will last longer.

As the No 1 female rower in the world and a double Olympic champion, Glover, who has three children, has long been an advocate for working mothers. Since announcing her return from retirement to compete in Paris, she has been outspoken about the difficulties of juggling parenthood as an elite athlete.

"Many men in Team GB have children, and it's not spoken about because it doesn't change anything. And it's expected that their careers are longer than women's careers," Glover told the Radio Times.

"But hopefully the biggest thing about these Games is how many women competitors are coming back after having children."

When competing in Tokyo in 2021, Glover was the first mother to make the Great Britain rowing team, and qualified for the Olympic final just 18 months after becoming a mother of twins. This year, more mothers than ever are taking part in the Olympics and Paralympics and the Olympic village has a nursery for the first time.



'Having a family and constantly worrying and checking in on them never finishes'

Helen Glover
Pictured with her children

On Sunday, Glover, alongside teammates Esme Booth, Sam Redgrave and Rebecca Shorten, progressed to the women's four final, with a third gold medal within reach for the 38-year-old.

In 2012 and 2016, Glover won gold in the women's pair, and this year led Team GB as she carried the flag at the opening ceremony.

"Having children is definitely harder than training," Glover told the Guardian before the Olympics. "Childbirth is going to happen and you can't stop it, whereas when you're rowing, you can stop at any stroke. But having a family and constantly worrying and checking in on them just never finishes," she said.

Glover told the Radio Times: "It makes my day much harder, because I'm putting in the same training as everybody else, just with three hours less time.

"But part of being the best mum I can be is being present. So even if I'm stressed or tired, I see [the children's] faces light up when I'm at the school gate. Every time, it makes me feel I've got the balance right."

She previously told the Guardian: "A big part of the decisions to come back was in thinking: 'What can I actively do to help the future for my little girl and other little girls out there' … and also other women who have got young families and want to feel empowered?"

Triathlon British team ready – but are at the mercy of sewage in Seine

Sean Ingle
Paris

For Britain's team of gold-medal-chasing triathletes, no stone has been left unturned at these Olympics. They scrub their wetsuits with Hibiscrub disinfectant every time they enter a river. They use probiotics, mouthwash and cola to further protect against *E coli*. Recently they have even developed a special trisuit that is more buoyant and aerodynamic, to gain a further edge.

But there is one thing that Team GB has found it impossible to prepare for: rising sewage levels in the Seine. The heavy rain on Friday and Saturday has already led to both swimming practice days to be cancelled. And yesterday it had left today's men's race on a knife-edge.

So when Team GB's Alex Yee – a favourite for gold – set his alarm last night, he would not have been sure what would happen next. He might have been racing a few hours later, at 8am local time. He might have been forced to wait for a reserve day later in the week. Or, in extreme circumstances, his Olympics might have become a competition of just bike riding and running.

A decision from the organisers was due early this morning based on measurements in the Seine, where the triathletes were due to swim 1500m, before going on a 40km bike ride and a 10km run.

Étienne Thobois, the chief executive of Paris 2024, said: "We are very respectful of the athletes. They are the heart of the Games. We have done everything we could in relation with the international federations and public authorities to achieve the goal of swimming in the Seine, which will be a fantastic legacy."

That certainly is true. Swimming in the Seine has been banned for more than a century. But since 2015 organisers have spent about £1bn to ensure a cleaner river for the Games, and to allow Parisians to swim in it afterwards.

Renovations have included the construction of a giant basin to capture excess rainwater and stop too much sewage from flowing into the river, as well as renovating infrastructure and upgrading wastewater treatment plants. The hope last night was that the forecast hot weather would be enough to reduce *E coli* levels low enough to race.

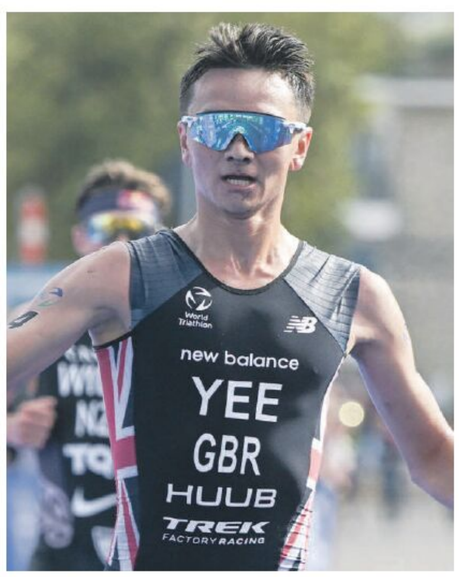
Assuming all goes well, Team GB's triathletes could have an extremely successful Games. Last year Yee won the men's test event in Paris, while Beth Potter won the women's equivalent. For good measure, Britain are also favourites for next week's mixed relay.

On a course where it is expected to be hard to break away on the swim or the bike, it also helps that Yee and Potter are exceptional runners. The 26-year-old Yee competed for GB in the 10,000m at the European athletics championships in 2018, while Potter, 32, ran over the same distance at the 2016 Olympics.

No wonder Mike Cavendish, GB triathlon's performance director, was confident of a strong showing from Yee, Potter and the rest of the British team. "Alex's cycling is massively underappreciated," he said. "He is pushing not far off Tour de France numbers over a shorter distance, and he is a much better cyclist than people give him credit for. We've also done a huge amount of work with him from an open water perspective. So if he has a good swim, I wouldn't be betting against him.

"The same applies to Beth," Cavendish added. "She has worked with the 2012 and 2016 gold medallist Alistair Brownlee, and there aren't many people who know much more about the sport than him."

Cavendish conceded that other teams are also strong, especially the French. But, to British eyes, the triathlon course around the Pont Alexandre III looks to be the place to be in the coming days – assuming, of course, the Seine keeps itself clean.



▲ *Team GB's Alex Yee is among the favourites for gold in the triathlon*



Doing it for Ukraine Fencer Kharlan dedicates bronze medal to homeland

Nick Ames
Grand Palais

This was for Ukraine. It was for the people back home where every victory, of whatever kind, is laden with meaning. It was for those who have lost their lives fighting to ensure the country's athletes remain free to compete. It was for Olha Kharlan's family in Mykolaiv, where her parents spent months living under continued Russian attack.

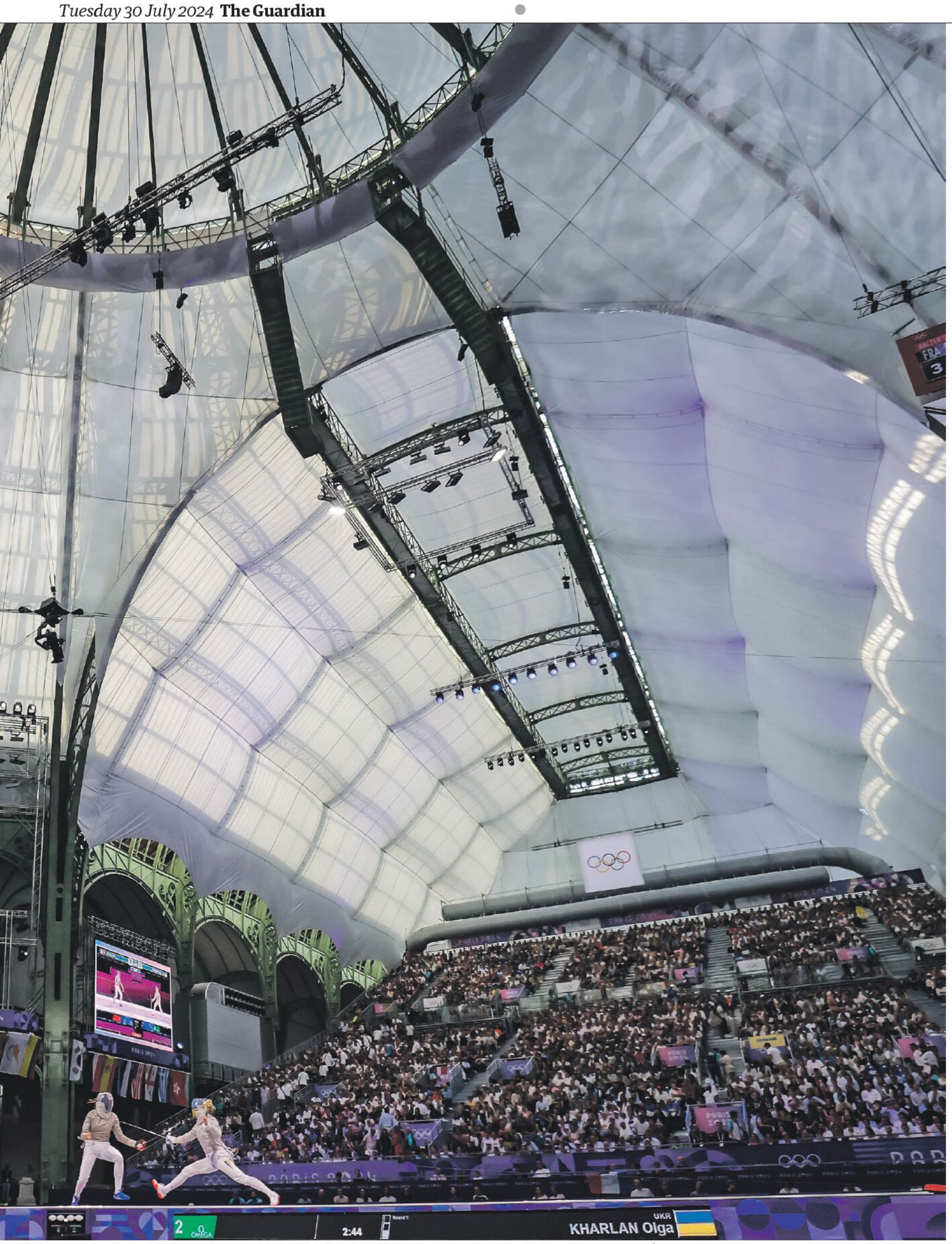
Kharlan collapsed to the ground in tears after beating South Korea's Choi Sebin, the South Korean, in sudden death to win bronze in the women's sabre. She leaped into the arms of her coach, Andrea Terenzio, before kissing the blue and yellow coloured mask through which she had glimpsed history. While she had hoped to roll back the years with gold in what is almost certainly her final Olympics, it was fitting that a genuine national icon should deliver Ukraine's first medal of Paris 2024.

"This is a message to all the world that Ukraine will never give up," said an exhausted Kharlan, who had just proved the point spectacularly. Her evening looked sure to end on a regretful note when Choi, at 23 a huge prospect in this sport, stretched ahead by six points. "Come on Olha!" came a cry from the crowd, and something astonishing stirred. An arena that had been bathed in patriotic fervour all day and would explode again an hour later when a local favourite, Manon Apithy-Brunet, won the title found the energy and generosity to shift focus.

> ***'It's for my country. We are showing we can fight – and I showed it somehow'***
>
> **Olha Kharlan**
> *Ukrainian fencer*

They began chanting for Kharlan, a six-time world champion who already had four Olympic medals to her name. An 11-5 deficit became a 12-11 advantage and, in an impossibly tense final set of exchanges, a decisive turnaround to 15-14. "This medal is totally different," she said. "It's special because it's for my country. All the athletes here are going through the war. We are showing that we can fight, and I showed it somehow."

The Grand Palais was a magnificent venue: another ingenious use of Parisian props that gave this entire occasion a



sense of genuine awe, two sheer stands cascading down towards the podium from beneath the glass-domed roof. Before the evening's showcase bouts the contenders announced themselves regally on a balcony overlooking the scene.

In getting here, Kharlan had faced bigger obstacles than a buoyant local crowd whose noise eked every decibel out of this hall's supreme acoustics. In a narrow Olympic context this ended up being France's night, a hugely absorbing day's entertainment ending with Apithy-Brunet beating her compatriot Sara Balzer.

A year ago, Kharlan was disqualified from the world championships for refusing to shake hands with her defeated Russian opponent Anna Smirnova. It was devastating: she knew her ejection would make qualification for the Olympics impossible. A personal intervention from Thomas Bach, the IOC president and a former fencer, meant common sense prevailed.

There was more than a flicker of curiosity during the afternoon when, after sailing into the last 16, she was bracketed to face the Azerbaijan representative Anna Bashta. Until 2019 Bashta competed for Russia, where she was born.

▲ *France's Sara Balzer, left, and Ukraine's Olha Kharlan tussle in the women's sabre individual semi-final*
PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS/THE GUARDIAN

Olha Kharlan: 'This is a message to all the world that Ukraine will never give up'



Kharlan overcame her comfortably before the pair shared a handshake and a brief hug, Bashta explaining later that they were longstanding acquaintances. Had Bashta switched nationality after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the situation may have been different.

Gold glimmered tantalisingly until, in her semi-final, Kharlan came up against a vigorous Balzer and that reverberating wall of French pride. If that was one miracle too far, she would send Ukraine's sizable contingent of wellwishers into paroxysms of delight in the bout for bronze. "A lot of pressure because you want to dedicate it," she said of the weight carried into that decider. "You want to do it for your family, for yourself. All the sacrifices, all the news, all the tragic moments when Russia bombed and killed people."

For Kharlan, that craving for a departure bathed in gold will persist until the women's team event on Saturday. It would take some doing to top the picture of release, relief and sheer emotion that embossed her evening.

Religious row Tableau based on Greek gods, say art experts

Jon Henley
Paris

A controversial tableau in the Olympics opening ceremony denounced by Christian traditionalists as an offensive parody of The Last Supper was in fact inspired by a 17th-century Dutch painting of the Greek Olympian gods, art historians have said.

"Does this painting remind you of something?" the Magnin Museum in the French city of Dijon asked (with a wink) on X, inviting people to "come and admire" The Feast of the Gods, painted by the artist Jan van Bijlert between 1635 and 1640.

The Paris 2024 organising committee on Sunday apologised to Catholics and other Christian groups if they had been offended by the scene, which featured drag queens, a transgender model and a semi-naked singer sitting in a fruit bowl.

French bishops regretted the "excesses and provocation" of the tableau, which they said amounted to "a mockery of Christianity". Far-right French politicians and conservative Christians in the US and elsewhere have been more vituperative.

Leonardo da Vinci's much-parodied The Last Supper portrays the final meal Jesus is said to have taken with his apostles. However, the creative director of the opening ceremony, Thomas Jolly, denied the scene, titled "Festivity", was based on the painting.

"That wasn't my inspiration," he told BFM TV. "I think it was pretty clear. There's Dionysus who arrives at the table … Why is he there? Because he's the god of feasting, of wine, and the father of Sequana, the goddess of the River Seine."

In Friday's ceremony, watched by 23 million people in France and, according to a Harris poll, rated a success by 86%, Dionysus was played by the singer-songwriter Philippe Katerine. Sequana was in a later scene embodied by Floriane Issert, a non-commissioned officer in the *Gendarmerie nationale,* riding a metal horse along the river.

The idea, Jolly said, was "more to have a big pagan party linked to the gods of Olympus, Olympian, Olympianism … You'll never find in me any kind of wish to mock."

Art historians in France and the Netherlands have pointed to Van Bijlert's work, a portrayal of the ancient Greek deities gathered for a feast on Mount Olympus as the likely inspiration for Jolly.

▶ *Dionysus on a platter, left, and the Feast of the Gods painting. Thomas Jolly said his idea was 'a big pagan party linked to the gods of Olympus'*





Rail sabotage Arson attacks were by far left, minister claims

Daniel Boffey
Paris

France's interior minister has suggested that far-left activists were behind the attacks on the high-speed rail system on the eve of the Olympics opening ceremony as a fresh wave of vandalism targeted internet cables.

Four days after the attacks, Gérald Darmanin said the investigation into the arson attacks had "identified a certain number of profiles who could have committed it". He suggested those on the extreme left may have been encouraged to strike the transport system by unnamed others, describing the attack as "very precise, extremely well targeted".

Darmanin told the TV channel France 2: "This is the traditional mode of action of the far left. We must be careful, the question is whether they were manipulated or is it for their own benefit. There are people who can approach this movement."

The minister also confirmed yesterday the arrest of "around 50 people" who had "clearly, with others – estimated at 150 – wanted to carry out either sabotage or radical protests in Paris during the first events of the Olympic Games".

France's telecoms network also suffered isolated outages in six regions after telephone operators were targeted by vandals between 1am and 3am yesterday. The attack appeared to have hit France's long-distance fibre-optic network, affecting internet speed for about 11,000 people. Orange, the provider for the Olympics, was not affected.

In the early hours of Friday, arsonists had burned through fibre-optic cables at installations along the high-speed TGV lines connecting Paris with the west, north and east.

Le Parisien newspaper reported yesterday that a far-left activist had been arrested on Sunday at an SNCF site in Oissel, Normandy.

The suspect was said to have had in his vehicle access keys to SNCF premises, cutting pliers and a set of universal keys as well as "literature related to the far left".

Tommy Robinson flees country on Eurostar before court hearing

Ben Quinn

Tommy Robinson fled Britain on Sunday to "put himself beyond the reach of authorities" in the UK, where he was due in court over alleged contempt proceedings, the hearing was told. The far-right activist, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, was arrested on Sunday at the Eurotunnel terminal in Folkestone but released on unconditional bail.

Mr Justice Johnson issued a warrant at the high court for Robinson's arrest but ordered that it not be carried out until early October to allow him time to indicate that he would attend the next hearing voluntarily, or apply to "set aside" the warrant.

Robinson was due to appear at the court yesterday accused of contempt of court for making a documentary, Silenced, that repeats false claims he made about a Syrian refugee that led to him losing a libel case in 2021.



▲ *Tommy Robinson was arrested at Folkestone but later released on bail*

The hearing was told by Adam Payter, representing the solicitor general, that Robinson was reminded by police in Kent on Sunday night that he was due to be in court yesterday but nevertheless left the UK by Eurostar.

The solicitor general launched legal action against Robinson in June over an alleged breach of a court order after he lost the libel battle in 2021. A judge ordered him never to repeat the falsehoods, but last year he began repeating those claims.

Payter told the court that Robinson – whom he referred to as Yaxley-Lennon – was part of a demonstration on Saturday in Trafalgar Square, where he showed the film on a big screen. The film had a new foreword narrated by Robinson, who was shown standing outside the high court and could be heard referring to the injunction.

Payter said Robinson returned to the UK recently for the purposes of publishing the film and then sought to leave immediately "to put himself beyond the reach of this jurisdiction".

Nevertheless, he said, the activist was served physically and online with legal documents advising him he was required to attend the hearing. Johnson said he was satisfied that Robinson was served the documents.

The film repeats false claims that led to Robinson losing a libel case brought against him by a Syrian schoolboy, Jamal Hijazi, who was filmed being attacked in a school playground in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, in October 2018.



◀ *A man cools off in Battersea Park, London, yesterday. Much of England has heat health warnings until tomorrow*

PHOTOGRAPH: DAN KITWOOD/GETTY

Heatwave warning for England as 32C highs forecast

Rachel Hall

Health officials have issued yellow warnings as a heatwave was forecast to push temperatures above 30C in south-east England.

The UK Health Security Agency issued yellow heat health warnings for all of England except the north-east and north-west until tomorrow.

The UKHSA said the hot weather may have "significant impacts" on health and social care, particularly across the south-east and London.

Temperatures are forecast to reach 32C in the capital today, before dipping to 29C tomorrow and Thursday. Temperatures peaked at 27.3C in Charlwood, Surrey, on Sunday.

The warmer temperatures are a result of a change in weather pattern from lower to higher pressure as the jet stream weakens to the west of the UK. High pressure means the air is sinking from higher in the atmosphere, which brings drier, more settled and sunnier weather.

Heatwave criteria are met when a location records at least three consecutive days with maximum temperatures meeting the heatwave threshold, which varies by region; for example, this is 28C in London, and 25C in the north of England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Last week, the climate campaign group Round Our Way warned of "worryingly hot" temperatures affecting children and teachers in classrooms as the climate crisis drives more heatwaves. Its research showed that classrooms breached a recommended maximum temperature of 26C during the heatwave in late June.

The UKHSA recommends during heatwaves that people look out for vulnerable people, including children and older people, and those with underlying health conditions. People should close curtains in rooms that face the sun, drink plenty of fluids, avoid physical exertion during the hottest parts of the day and keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm.

If someone is still feeling unwell after 30 minutes of recovering in the cool and drinking water to combat heat exhaustion, they may have heatstroke and should call 999.

The Met Office has issued a yellow warning for thunderstorms. Most of southern England, the Midlands and much of the north of England are covered by the alert, which comes into force at 12am on Thursday and ends at 11.59pm.

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Tatchell joins 'history makers' in National Portrait Gallery collection

Harriet Sherwood

A vibrant portrait of the human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell has been hung in the National Portrait Gallery's "history makers" space as part of a drive to reflect contemporary Britain.

The painting by Sarah Jane Moon shows Tatchell in a casual pose. The 72-year-old activist sports a rainbow tie to celebrate almost six decades of fighting for LGBTQ+ rights.

Tatchell said he was "delighted and honoured" to have his portrait in the gallery "alongside so many esteemed public figures".

"I love the bold, expressive, joyful style, which reflects the spirit of my campaigns," he added. He consciously chose brightly coloured clothes for sittings in order to avoid "the sombre, dark tones" of many portraits.

Although few men routinely wear ties these days, it is not unusual for Tatchell. He realised many years ago that people had "preconceptions about campaigners in T-shirts. I put on a tie and people started treating me much more seriously, so I've stuck with ties ever since."

Moon said she liked her subjects to "wear what they feel comfortable in". She hoped the result reflected Tatchell's "energy and enthusiasm" and "warmth and generosity".

The portrait is the first by Moon to be acquired by the NPG for its permanent collection.

"Portraiture is a genre that has often upheld the status quo and perpetuated certain class structures, particularly in this country. There's still a lot of commissioned portraiture that falls into the realm of society portraiture, that's quite conservative. But I think it is changing," she said.

The artist, who is also gay, was delighted when Tatchell agreed to sit for her. "He has such a strong moral compass," she said. His activism over so many years was "an inspiration".

Tatchell moved from Melbourne to London in 1971 and became a leading member of the Gay Liberation Front. He has espoused many human rights and social justice causes, including anti-apartheid, racial justice, electoral reform and the climate crisis.

"There has been hugely positive progress in my lifetime. When I was a teenager in the 1960s, homosexuality was still punishable by up to life imprisonment. But one of the big failures is that we haven't fundamentally changed class and wealth inequality in the UK," he said.

"I'm still going strong, and I hope to go on for another 20 years. There are so many injustices to fight and overturn."

Sarah Howgate, the NPG's senior curator of contemporary collections, said: "Since reopening last year, the gallery has worked hard to ensure that our new displays better reflect the diversity of the UK."

She said she was "delighted" that the gallery was displaying this portrait of "one of the most influential campaigners living today".

'A lot of portraiture is quite conservative, but that's changing'

Sarah Jane Moon
Artist



▲ *Peter Tatchell says he loves the 'bold, expressive, joyful style' of the painting by Sarah Jane Moon* PHOTOGRAPH: TOM HARTFORD/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Princess Leia's Star Wars gold bikini sells for $175,000 at auction

Claire Keenan

Princess Leia's gold bikini worn by the late Carrie Fisher in Star Wars has been sold for $175,000 (£136,000).

The costume, made famous in the 1983 film Return of the Jedi, when Fisher's character wore it while chained to Jabba the Hutt's throne, was bought at a sale by Heritage Auctions on Friday in the US.

The seven-piece ensemble, which includes a brassiere, hip rings, an armlet and bracelet, was designed by Richard Miller, the chief sculptor for Industrial Light & Magic, the visual effects company founded by the Star Wars creator, George Lucas.

A miniature spacecraft from the first Star Wars film sold for $1.55m) at the auction. The Y-Wing starfighter, which helped bring down the Death Star, was one of only two miniatures created for the production.

It was designed by the US artist Colin Cantwell to Lucas's direction that he wanted the spaceships to have "distinct shapes so that the audience could immediately tell whether a ship was a 'good guy' or 'a bad guy'", according to Heritage Auctions.

The auction of Hollywood memorabilia also included a movie poster from Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home by Bob Peak, which sold for $106,250; a Thor hammer from Marvel's Thor: The Dark World, which sold for $81,250; and a Mandalorian helmet, bought for $40,000. The wand used by Daniel Radcliffe in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban sold for $52,000, while an outfit worn by Macaulay Culkin in the first Home Alone film sold for $47,500.

The bikini has become one of the most famous costumes in film history. It last sold for $96,000 at a Star Wars memorabilia auction in 2015.

Fisher, who shared her strong feelings about it over the years, said in 2016 that she thought Lucas was "kidding" when he first showed her the bikini, saying she felt "nearly naked, which is not a style choice for me ... It wasn't my choice."

Miller added soft material to the costume so that Fisher would be more comfortable. "However, she still didn't like it. I don't blame her," he once said in an interview. "I did put leather on the back of it to help it feel better."



▲ *Carrie Fisher said the 'nearly naked' costume 'wasn't my choice'*

Bereavement in early life may speed up ageing, research finds

Ian Sample
Science editor

The stress of bereavement may accelerate the ageing process, according to researchers who found evidence that losing a loved one in early life had an impact long before people reached middle age.

Scientists spotted biological markers of faster ageing in people who had lost a parent, partner, sibling or child, but the telltale signs were absent in others who had not experienced the death of someone close to them.

The finding suggests bereavement and grief take their toll on the body's tissues and potentially increase the risk of future health problems. But it also raises the prospect that counselling and effective social support could help in the aftermath of a death.

Allison Aiello, a professor of epidemiology at Columbia University in New York, said losing someone close was a "significant stressor" and a life experience consistently linked to poorer mental health, cognitive impairment, heart and metabolic problems and an earlier death.

"Our research reveals a significant association between experiencing losses from childhood through adulthood and biological signs of ageing," Aiello said.

The decline in tissue and organ function brought on by accelerated ageing might explain in part why bereavement can have such an impact on health.

The researchers drew on data from the US National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, which followed participants from their teenage years into adulthood. In particular, they looked at people aged between 19 and 43 who were bereaved before the age of 18.

3,963
The number of people studied, almost 40% of whom had lost a loved one by adulthood

Biological ageing was assessed by analysing people's DNA for chemical changes that build up over the years. These epigenetic clocks can reveal whether a person's biological age is older or younger than their chronological age, which has a bearing on disease risk in later life, Aiello said.

Among 3,963 people studied, almost 40% had lost a loved one by adulthood. Those who experienced more bereavements had significantly older biological ages than those who had not lost people close to them.

Given the results, published in Jama Network Open, Aiello said research should now focus on whether helping the bereaved with counselling and coping strategies reduces the ageing effect.

The study appears alongside separate work on the impact of a healthy diet and added sugar on biological age. According to the research, women in the US who followed a vitamin- and mineral-rich diet had a younger biological age than those on poorer diets. But even for the women who ate healthily, each gram of added sugar was linked to a rise in biological age.

"It's the first demonstration of the effect of added sugars on our epigenetic ageing," said Elissa Epel, an author of the paper and professor in the department of psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco.

The researchers analysed food records from 342 black and white women from Northern California and compared them to healthy eating habits, such as the Mediterranean diet.

Women who ate more healthily had a lower biological age, according to their epigenetic clocks, but the scientists saw faster biological ageing in those who consumed foods with added sugar. The women in the study ate between 2.7g and 316g of added sugar a day.

Dorothy Chiu, a postdoctoral scholar at the University of California, San Francisco, and first author on the paper, said she would expect similar effects in men.

Venezuela in turmoil as Maduro's victory claim is denied by opponents

Patricia Torres and Tom Phillips *Caracas*
Tiago Rogero *Rio de Janeiro*

Nicolás Maduro's claim of victory in Venezuela's presidential election has brought the South American country to a hazardous standoff, with his thwarted opponents accusing him of rigging the election to remain in power, and many leaders in the region and beyond questioning the veracity and transparency of the vote.

Throughout the day there were reports of street protests spreading across the capital and all around the country, including in the states of Falcón, where demonstrators were filmed tearing down a statue of Hugo Chávez, and Portuguesa, where footage showed a group vandalising a propaganda billboard featuring a photograph of Maduro and a slogan promising "More Changes and Transformation".

Sunday's results, which followed an election described by independent observers as the most arbitrary in recent years – even by the standards of the authoritarian regime founded by Maduro's mentor and predecessor, Hugo Chávez – appeared to have dashed opposition hopes of ending a quarter of a century of Chavista rule and economic turmoil.

After a six-hour delay in releasing the results prompted global concern, the government-controlled electoral council claimed Maduro had won with 51.21% of the votes, compared with 44.2% for his rival, former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia.

The council said that, with about 80% of votes counted, Maduro had secured more than 5m votes compared with González's 4.4m. Authorities delayed releasing the results from each of Venezuela's 30,000 polling stations, saying only that they would be released in the "coming hours". Amid reports of the first post-election protests breaking out in the capital, Caracas, Maduro was officially confirmed as the victor. "I assume the mandate of the people to be their president and lead our country towards peace and prosperity," Maduro said.

Critics blame Maduro, 61, for leading Venezuela into a crippling economic and social crisis, and turning the country into an increasingly repressive state where political opponents are routinely jailed and tortured.

Addressing supporters in Caracas, Maduro dedicated his victory to Chávez, who anointed him as his successor shortly before his death in 2013. "Long live Chávez. Chávez is alive!" Maduro shouted.

He added: "I am Nicolás Maduro Moros – the re-elected president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela … and I will defend our democracy, our law and our people."

But the opposition was quick to dispute the results.

"The Venezuelans and the entire world know what happened," González said in his first remarks.

The opposition leader, María Corina Machado – who had thrown her weight behind González's campaign after being banned from running – rejected the result, claiming the opposition had won in every single state.

"We won and everybody knows it," she said. "We haven't just defeated them politically and morally, today we defeated them with votes," Machado said, claiming González should be considered the country's president-elect.

Edison Research, which conducts high-profile election polling in the US and other countries, published an exit poll showing González had won 65% of the vote, while Maduro won 31%.

"The official results are silly," said Edison's executive vice-president, Rob Farbman, adding that it stood by the results of its survey. Edison's exit poll was conducted nationwide with preliminary data from 6,846 voters interviewed at 100 polling locations. A local firm, Meganalisis, predicted a 65% vote for Gonzalez and just under 14% for Maduro.

The Carter Center, which sent a team of electoral observers for the vote, called on the electoral authority to immediately publish the complete results by polling station.

Although Maduro's allies in countries such as Cuba, Bolivia and Honduras congratulated him on his victory, key players including the US, Spain and the EU expressed deep reservations about the election.

Later yesterday, Venezuela announced the expulsion of all diplomats from Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay, and said it would withdraw its own representatives from those countries. The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, said Washington had "serious concerns that the result announced does not reflect the will or the votes of the Venezuelan people".

Spain's foreign minister, José Manuel Albares, also called on the electoral authority to release voting information in the interests of "respecting the democratic will" of the Venezuelan people.

Josep Borrell, the EU's most senior diplomat, said the will of the Venezuelan people had to be respected, adding: "Ensuring full transparency in the electoral process, including detailed counting of votes and access to voting records at polling stations, is vital."

Panama's president, José Raúl Mulino, said his country was putting relations with Venezuela "on hold" and would withdraw diplomatic staff from Caracas until a full review of the result was conducted.

Mexico's leftwing president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, said he would recognise a winner only after results were reported fully. "We're going to wait until they finish counting the votes," he said.

Brazil – whose president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, said recently that he had been "frightened" by Maduro's warnings of a "bloodbath" if he lost the vote – hailed a "peaceful" election day in Venezuela but said it was keeping a close eye on the vote count.

Celso Amorim, a former foreign minister, now Lula's chief diplomatic adviser, who observed Sunday's vote, said that while he was still familiarising himself with what happened, "the main issue is transparency".

"The [Brazilian] government continues to monitor the situation until we have the necessary data to make an informed decision [on whether or not to recognise the results], as with any election," Amorim said in an interview with the Brazilian newspaper O Globo.

González's campaign had generated a rare wave of optimism among millions of disillusioned citizens after a decade during which the economy of the country with the world's largest oil reserves contracted by 80% and nearly 8 million people – almost a third of Venezuela's population – fled abroad.

Additional reporting *Sam Jones*



◀ *Nicolás Maduro claims victory in Venezuela's presidential election in a result greeted with scepticism worldwide*



'We long for change'

Uproar on the streets after disputed election result

Tom Phillips
Patricia Torres *Caracas*

It was mid-morning in Catia – 12 hours after Nicolás Maduro claimed victory in Venezuela's presidential election – and the residents of this longtime Chavista stronghold were up in arms.

At first the sound of spoons clattering against crockery began timidly, puncturing the eerie silence that had gripped large chunks of the capital, Caracas, in the hours after Maduro's highly controversial move to claim another six-year term.

Soon it grew into a thundering, indignant cacophony as locals appeared at their grated windows with pots, pans and plates, to let the Venezuelan strongman know what they thought of his 11-year rule, during which the oil-rich country has nosedived into one of the worst ever economic collapses outside a war zone.

"People are fed up with the same old shit – with the fraud," fumed one local, Yesica Otaiza, as the *cacerolazo* – a pot-banging protest and South American tradition intended to express political discontent – spread to a neighbouring tower block and along the street.

"We are longing for change and he [Maduro] laughed at us and rubbed it in our faces," said the street hawker, 38, who, like many, was convinced the election had been stolen. "He doesn't want to accept that he lost."

Sofía Sánchez, 12, pointed her mother's mobile phone skywards towards the balconies to capture the startling uproar – once unthinkable in a pro-government







◀ *Venezuelans in Spain gathered in support of the opposition, Edmundo González Urrutia and María Corina Machado.*

Above, raucous protests in Caracas and, top, guards at a government building

PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID CANALES/SHUTTERSTOCK; CRISTIAN HERNANDEZ/AP; YURI CORTEZ/AFP

bastion such as this. "They're doing this because they don't agree with what the president Nicolás Maduro Moros is doing," she said, explaining that two of her aunts had fled overseas to Chile to escape the economic meltdown.

"They don't want Maduro as president because he hasn't been a good president."

Similar sentiments could be heard across Venezuela's on-edge capital yesterday after Maduro's disputed claim to have won re-election sparked international condemnation and outrage from opposition voters who believe they were the true winners.

The British Foreign Office said it was concerned by "allegations of serious irregularities" in the vote and Chile's leftist president, Gabriel Boric, called it "hard to believe".

Maduro's opponent, the low-key former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia, and his campaigning partner, the conservative activist María Corina Machado, have rejected the president's claim to have won re-election.

"We won and everybody knows it," Machado declared on Sunday after the government-controlled electoral authority announced Maduro had prevailed with 51.21% of the vote compared with González's 44.2%.

As charcoal-coloured clouds hung low over the mountain-flanked city, many streets were strangely deserted and shops were closed as people braced for potential turmoil and protests.

"So far things are calm but there are rumours about disturbances," said David Perdomo, a shoemaker, as he sat on a bench on Bulevar de Sabana Grande, a normally teeming shopping district where there was hardly a soul to be seen and most shutters were down.

Perdomo, 58, said he had always voted for the government since Hugo Chávez was democratically elected in 1998, catapulting the oil-rich South American nation into 25 years of Chavista rule. But this year he had switched sides.

"They made so many promises and they did nothing," he complained of Maduro's increasingly repressive administration, which has presided over a migration crisis in which 8 million citizens have fled abroad.

One of those economic exiles is Perdomo's grandson, whom he has not seen since he moved to Colombia seven years ago. Other relatives live in Chile and Ecuador.

Farther along the boulevard, Mary Monsalve stood outside a hairdresser and voiced frustration at the opposition's supposed defeat.



◀ *The leader of the opposition Encuentro Ciudadano party, Delsa Solórzano, speaks to the media as she waits for the presidential election results in Caracas*

"People are sad and disappointed," said the nurse, 42, adding that Maduro's claim of victory had come as a shock. In the working-class area where she lives, she had seen few people turn out to vote in the red shirts traditionally worn by Chavistas on election days.

"This time ... most people came in white," she said. What was that colour supposed to symbolise? "*La libertad*," Monsalve replied. "Freedom."

Not all of the Venezuelans on Sabana Grande were upset by Maduro's claim to have won. Enrique Pacheco, a jobless builder, celebrated the result as he clutched a government-controlled tabloid that had stamped a photo of Maduro's grinning face on its front page.

"It's good news ... He's not to blame for the situation the country is facing," argued Pacheco, 79, blaming Venezuela's opposition and the US for causing the country's economic collapse with its campaign of sanctions.

"They can't attack us with missiles so they use sanctions," Pacheco said, hailing Maduro as an everyman president of the poor. "I can't work out if the people who voted for the opposition are stupid, imbeciles or just ignorant."

But many more people appeared to have voted against the incumbent and were perplexed and exasperated that their candidate had lost.

"Many people thought Corina would win and they can't understand what happened," said Ayari Rauseo, 48, a clothes seller, as she described how Venezuela's slow-motion collapse had torn apart her family.

Rauseo's sister is in Mexico, battling to reach the United States, where she hopes to build a new life. Her brother lives in Manaus, the largest city in the Brazilian Amazon, with her son. Her daughter is also now thinking about leaving. "She wants to go to Spain," Rauseo said, staring despondently into the middle distance. "I just don't have any more words."

Rauseo said she was a longtime supporter of the "Bolivarian" socialist-inspired movement that Chávez entrusted to Maduro before his 2013 death. She always voted "for the revolution ... always, always, always", she said. No more.

Minutes later, the mid-morning silence was broken as the pot-banging protests erupted, here and in other blue-collar areas that were once hotbeds of Chavista support.

On the highway back into town the sound of clanking kitchenware echoed from the shanties lining the road. Brightly coloured propaganda billboards and posters jumped out from the urban landscape, their pro-Maduro slogans at odds with the metallic din.

"I choose peace. I choose Nicolás," read one. Another informed the few passing motorists: "Nicolás is our hope."

Tory ban on prescribing puberty blockers was lawful, high court rules

Haroon Siddique
Legal affairs correspondent

A ban on prescribing puberty blockers to children with gender dysphoria in England, Scotland and Wales was lawful, a high court judge ruled yesterday.

The Conservative government issued an emergency order on 29 May temporarily outlawing the supply of puberty blockers pursuant to an overseas prescription, in the wake of the review by Dr Hilary Cass into gender medicine.

The review criticised the lack of evidence surrounding the benefits and the risks associated with puberty blockers and the legislation was designed to ensure they could only be obtained as part of an authorised clinical trial.

The advocacy group TransActual and a young person who cannot be named challenged the decision, claiming it lacked rigour and was motivated by the personal views of the health secretary at the time, Victoria Atkins.

They argued that she had not identified the "serious danger to health" needed to justify emergency legislation and that she should have consulted before issuing the order.

However, Mrs Justice Lang handed down a judgment saying Atkins had acted in accordance with the law.

The judge wrote: "In my view, it was rational for the first defendant to decide that it was essential to adopt the emergency procedure to avoid serious danger to the health of children and young people who would otherwise be prescribed puberty blockers during that five- to six-month period. Under the emergency procedure, there is no requirement to hold a consultation procedure ...

"The Cass review's findings about the very substantial risks and very narrow benefits associated with the use of puberty blockers, and the recommendation that in future the NHS prescribing of puberty blockers to children and young people should only take place in a clinical trial, and not routinely, amounted to powerful scientific evidence in support of restrictions on the supply of puberty blockers on the grounds that they were potentially harmful."



▲ *Protesters against the puberty blocker ban take part in the Trans Pride march in London on Saturday*
PHOTOGRAPH: WIKTOR SZYMANOWICZ/GETTY

Lang said that while the Cass review did not conclude that puberty blockers caused a serious danger to health, that was not the question it was asked to address. She said that the fact that the review's findings had been acted upon by NHS England, the Royal College of GPs and the General Pharmaceutical Council "gave them considerable further weight".

> ***'The Cass review's findings amounted to powerful scientific evidence in support of restrictions'***
>
> **Mrs Justice Lang**
> *High court judge*

The court heard that the temporary ban had had "a very real human cost" on more than 1,000 under-18s. Lang said: "I recognise that the claimants' evidence does show that this cohort has had difficulties in obtaining access to UK-registered GPs and mental health services since the order was made.

"In my view, this is essentially an issue about achieving a successful implementation of the new scheme, not the lawfulness of the order. NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care should consider how implementation can be improved as soon as possible, and ... before the next order is made."

The new health secretary, Wes Streeting, who is understood to be minded to make the ban permanent, said after the high court ruling: "Children's healthcare must be evidence-led. Dr Cass's review found insufficient evidence that puberty blockers are safe and effective for children with gender dysphoria and gender incongruence.

"We must therefore act cautiously and with care when it comes to this vulnerable group of young people.

"I am working to improve children's gender identity services and to set up a clinical trial to establish the evidence on puberty blockers.

"I want trans people in our country to feel safe, accepted, and able to live with freedom and dignity."

THE ENERGY ACT 2004

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR SAFETY ZONE SCHEME DURING CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR MAINTENANCE OF THE DOGGER BANK C OFFSHORE WIND FARM

THE ELECTRICITY (OFFSHORE GENERATING STATIONS) (SAFETY ZONES) (APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND CONTROL OF ACCESS) REGULATIONS 2007 – STATUTORY INSTRUMENT 2007 NO 1948

Notice is hereby given that Doggerbank Offshore Wind Farm Project 3 Projco Limited (company number 07791977), with registered offices at Doggerbank Offshore Wind Farm Project 3 Projco Limited, No.1 Forbury Place, 43 Forbury Road, Reading, United Kingdom, RG1 3JH have applied for consent from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero as set out in the Energy Act 2004 and the Electricity (Offshore Generating Stations) (Safety Zones) (Application Procedures and Control of Access) Regulations 2007 (SI No 2007/1948) for safety zones as detailed below, for the consented Dogger Bank C Offshore Wind Farm during construction and periods of major maintenance during the operational phase.

The following safety zones will be applied for:

- 500 metre (m) 'rolling' safety zones around any Wind Turbine Generator (WTG) or Offshore Substation Platform (OSP) (including any associated or partially constructed infrastructure, e.g., foundations) whilst work is underway at that structure, as indicated by the presence of construction vessels.
- 50m pre-commissioning safety zones around any WTG or OSP where construction work is not ongoing prior to final commissioning.
- 500m safety zones around any WTG or OSP where major maintenance is being undertaken during the operational phase (where 'major maintenance' is as defined under the Electricity Regulations 2007 (SI No 2007/1948)).

Details of the safety zones will be provided via Notice to Mariners prior to the commencement of any construction and major maintenance operations. Further details will be provided in the supporting safety zone application, for which a request may be made for a copy between 6th August and 3rd September 2024 by email to DoggerBankConsentsConsultations@sse.com (referencing 'Dogger Bank C Safety Zone Application' in the subject line).

Any person wishing to make representations to the Secretary of State about the application should do so by email to the Secretary of State, Energy Infrastructure Planning Team, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero at energyinfrastructureplanning@energysecurity.gov.uk stating the name of the proposal and nature of their representations, between 6th August and 3rd September 2024.

Tory party leadership contest: the six contenders



Rishi Sunak will be succeeded in November

Eleni Courea
Political correspondent

The full list of Conservative leadership candidates has been published after yesterday afternoon's deadline passed. Six MPs will be running in the three-month-long contest to succeed Rishi Sunak.

Four will be shortlisted by MPs in September and given the chance to make their pitch at the Conservative party conference and in the weeks leading up to it. MPs will then narrow down the list to two candidates, and grassroots members will elect their next leader in early November.

Suella Braverman, who has long been angling for the leadership, announced this weekend that she would not be standing because the majority of Tory MPs did not share her views – though she claimed she had the 10 backers needed to make it on to the ballot paper.

The Guardian takes a look at the six runners and riders who have unveiled their bids.



Kemi Badenoch is the bookies' favourite

Tom Tugendhat



A Tory centrist who was made security minister in Rishi Sunak's government after a strong run for the Conservative party leadership in the summer of 2022. His pitch then was that he was untainted by the Johnson government's chaotic administration.

A former reserve officer who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, Tugendhat became an MP in 2015 and built up a profile on foreign policy issues. He was chair of the foreign affairs select committee between 2017 and 2022 and has been notably hawkish on China.

When launching his leadership pitch, Tugendhat suggested he was open to pulling the UK out of the European convention on human rights, which was dismissed by some as an attempt to pitch for rightwing votes. He voted to remain in the EU in 2016.

Odds: Ladbrokes 5-1
William Hill 4-1

Mel Stride



A staunch Sunak loyalist whose frequent media appearances made him the face of the Conservative campaign in the run-up to the election disaster. By the end of it he was warning that Labour was on track for a huge victory – and on election night he clung on to his Central Devon seat by just 61 votes.

Now running for the Conservative leadership, Stride has put unity at the centre of his pitch and pointed to his experience in roles that involve bringing people together, including Treasury select committee chair and Commons leader. He first became an MP in 2010 and backed remain in 2016.

Odds: Ladbrokes 28-1
William Hill 20-1

James Cleverly



The first candidate to come out of the blocks, Cleverly has pointed to his extensive experience as a senior minister. He has served as home secretary and foreign secretary in the Sunak and Truss governments, and was education secretary and Conservative chair under Boris Johnson. He first became an MP in 2015.

Under successive prime ministers Cleverly was often trusted with taking the government's message to the airwaves. He is pitching himself as a centrist with broad appeal, though he has taken a swipe at the right of his party by warning against "sacrificing pragmatic government in the national interest on the altar of ideological purity". He backed Brexit in 2016.

Odds: Ladbrokes, 6-1
William Hill 9-2

Kemi Badenoch

A well-established campaign operation and popularity with grassroots members have made her the favourite in this contest. This is her second tilt at the leadership; she came fourth in the race to succeed Johnson in the summer of 2022.

In government, where she served as business secretary and minister for women and equalities, she has made a name for herself on gender and culture war issues, including by calling for a change to the Equality Act so that sex is defined only as someone's biological sex. She has also become known for her combative style.

Launching her campaign on Sunday night, Badenoch argued that calls for party unity were not enough and that the Conservatives' "incoherent" set of policies were to blame for their election defeat. She pledged to rebuild the party by 2030 and respond to Reform UK's threat from the right. She backed Brexit in 2016 and was first elected in 2017.

Odds: Ladbrokes 7-4
William Hill 15-8

Priti Patel

Arguably the most rightwing candidate in the race, she has vowed to give grassroots members a greater say in how their party is run. Part of her pitch is that she has served in government under three prime ministers but is not associated with the Liz Truss or Rishi Sunak governments.



Priti Patel signed the Rwanda deal

First elected as an MP in 2010, Patel was international development secretary under Theresa May and home secretary under Johnson. She was sacked by May over unauthorised meetings with Israeli ministers while on a trip to the country. She weathered bullying allegations in the Home Office – where a Cabinet Office inquiry found she had "unintentionally" breached the ministerial code in her behaviour towards civil servants – and quit when Johnson left Downing Street.

As home secretary Patel launched a points-based immigration system, signed the agreement with Rwanda to process UK asylum seekers there, and agreed returns deals with Albania and Serbia. She backed Brexit in 2016 and was a prominent figure in Vote Leave.

Odds: Ladbrokes and William Hill 8-1

Robert Jenrick



Once billed as a run-of-the-mill centrist Conservative MP – so much so that he was nicknamed "Robert Generic" – he has transformed himself into the darling of the Tory right, supplanting Braverman and mopping up many of her supporters. That transformation is especially remarkable given Jenrick was said to have been installed by Sunak as a minister in the Home Office to keep an eye on Braverman. He soon gave up this unofficial role and began deploying increasingly hardline rhetoric as immigration minister until he quit last December, calling on Sunak to take a tougher line.

Jenrick is now expected to put immigration at the heart of his leadership campaign. He backed remain in 2016.

Odds: Ladbrokes 5-2
William Hill 11-4

Ex-News International CEO's files can be searched over 'cover-up'

Caroline Davies

Documents linked to a former News International executive can be searched over claims Rupert Murdoch's media company falsely implicated Gordon Brown and Tom Watson in a "fake security threat" to justify the deletion of millions of emails, the high court has heard.

News Group Newspapers (NGN), the publisher of the Sun and the defunct News of the World, faces accusations it created a "false narrative" that Watson conspired with the ex-prime minister to obtain stolen data in an effort to conceal wrongdoing and "subvert" police investigations into the phone-hacking scandal.

Will Lewis, now the CEO of the Washington Post, was group general manager of News International at the time of Operation Weeting, the 2011 Metropolitan police service (MPS) investigation into phone hacking.

Yesterday, judge Mr Justice Fancourt was told that in MPS minutes of a meeting between detectives and Lewis on 8 July 2011, it was recorded Lewis had told them: "We got a warning from a source that a current member of staff had got access to Rebekah's [Brooks's] emails and had passed them to Tom Watson MP.

"This came to Rebekah. I was asked to meet the source. I will consult with BCL [lawyers] as to whether I can tell you the identity of the source. The source repeated the threat. Then the source came back and said it was a former member of staff and the emails had definitely been passed and that it was controlled by Gordon Brown. This added to our anxieties. We took steps to try and be more specific around her emails."

NGN denied that the 2011 security threat over the suspected theft of chief executive Brooks's emails was devised as part of a cover-up. In written arguments, Anthony Hudson KC, for NGN, said the "threat" to Brooks's data was "believed to be genuine".



▲ *Will Lewis was group general manager of News International*

He added: "NGN received information on two occasions that there was a direct threat that a current or former employee was actively trying to sell data belonging to NGN.

"It was against this background that NGN decided that multiple copies of confidential data should not be held in various systems, which would increase the risk of loss of data."

The judge was told that the publisher, which had initially objected to making searches for potentially relevant material linked to Lewis and James Murdoch, the executive chairman, and others, had now agreed.

It came during a preliminary high court hearing over claims brought by Watson and the ex-Liberal Democrat business secretary Vince Cable. Both allege NGN targeted them through voicemail interception and the use of private investigators.

In written arguments, David Sherborne KC, for Watson, said the politician had been a target for NGN's "unlawful activities" as a member of the culture, media and sport select committee that was investigating media malpractice.

"Lord Watson was also (falsely) cited by senior NGN executives, such as Rebekah Brooks and Will Lewis, as part of the 'fake security threat' used to 'justify' the wiping of the crucial back-up tapes of NGN's email system, that led to the deletion of millions of incriminating emails, as the claimants allege," Sherborne wrote.

In Cable's claim, the publisher is accused of unlawfully obtaining covert recordings in 2010 where he said he had "declared war on Murdoch".

Cable alleges that the recordings, obtained in a Daily Telegraph "sting", were leaked to the BBC by Lewis, documents said. The BBC's report of the comments led to the then prime minister, David Cameron, stripping Cable of responsibility for adjudicating on NGN parent company News Corp's bid for full ownership of the broadcaster BSkyB.

The hearing continues.

Music review

Robert Plant thrills with rousing set

Cambridge folk festival
Cherry Hinton Hall
★★★★☆

Robin Denselow

Robert Plant is clearly enjoying himself. He may be a rock god, but he's also a music fan with impressively eclectic taste. Twenty-four years ago he was on this same stage at the Cambridge folk festival with Priory of Brion, reviving 1960s favourites by Them and Love. He has worked with four bands and Alison Krauss since then; tonight he "presents" his newish five-piece, Saving Grace, who started in low-key fashion five years ago supporting Fairport Convention, but here give a masterclass in how to revive and rework country, folk, rock and blues.



▼ *Robert Plant and Suzi Dian sing a mix of country, folk, rock and blues at this year's Cambridge folk festival*
PHOTOGRAPH: AARON PARSONS

Dressed in black, Plant trades vocals with Suzi Dian while adding occasional harmonica and bass guitar. First comes the brooding and bluesy Win My Train Fare Home, which he originally recorded at the Festival au Désert with the English guitarist Justin Adams.

Next up is a charming rendition of traditional song The Cuckoo, backed by banjo, and a pounding revival of Led Zeppelin's Friends, with Dian adding accordion. Later come tributes to Los Lobos and Bert Jansch, and a rousing a cappella finale of the traditional Incredible String Band favourite I Bid You Goodnight. It's a thrilling performance.

Elsewhere at the festival, many of the finest sets are from female American singer-songwriters. Leyla McCalla, a former member of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, switches between electric guitar, banjo and cello while mixing personal and political songs with reminders of her Haitian heritage.

Lizzie No, on harp and guitar, weds gospel-edged political anger to a glorious upbeat weepie in The Heartbreak Store. And then there is Peggy Seeger, 89 and as funny, feisty and angry as ever, playing piano, banjo and guitar, backed by her sons Neill and Calum MacColl and her daughter-in-law, Kate St John. No one can sing The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face like the woman for whom it was written.

From the UK, there are also strong sets by the Scottish veterans Capercaillie and the English folk-rockers Oysterband. And thankfully the festival features new experimental traditional music thanks to Hack-Poets Guild, as Marry Waterson, Lisa Knapp and Nathaniel Mann rework bleak stories from ancient broadsides with edgy, three-part harmonies and backing dominated by fiddle and bass guitar.

It is unfortunate – if perhaps predictable – that they don't get the audience they deserve on the second stage, while the vast majority of the Cambridge crowd cheer on the Celtic and US country musicians of the main event, Transatlantic Sessions.

It's an impressive weekend, though it should concern the English folk scene that English traditional music had so little representation at our best-known folk festival.

Prison system fails society and inmates – Rinder

Harriet Sherwood

The television personality and criminal barrister Rob Rinder has said the UK prison system fails inmates, victims and society.

Rinder, who has hosted courtroom reality TV shows and presented documentaries about British justice, said the prison system was repeating the same mistakes.

In a recent series for Channel 4, Britain Behind Bars: A Secret History, Rinder looked at the penal system over centuries, uncovering the experience of inmates from petty crooks to infamous gangsters and murderers.

He told Radio Times prisons' focus should be on rehabilitation rather than punishment. The UK prison system failed to equip inmates with the "skills to enable them to return to society. Yet it costs about as much to send someone to prison as it does to Eton for a year. We've not delivered rehabilitation and, in many cases, not done justice to the word punishment," Rinder said.

+ HUNGER EMERGENCY + HUNGER EMERGENCY + HUNGER EMERGENCY + HUNGER EMERGENCY +

Horn of Africa Hunger Emergency

Displaced families across the Horn of Africa urgently need food to survive – will you give £119 to help them?

Across the Horn of Africa, years of severe drought and now torrential floods have created mass displacement and a hunger crisis of unprecedented proportions that is threatening the lives of millions.

Years of failed rainy seasons have caused rivers to dry up, crops to fail and livestock to die. Now devastating floods have claimed hundreds of lives and washed away homes and livelihoods.

- Over 20,000 refugees have been displaced by the flooding in the UNHCR supported Dadaab refugee camp.
- Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to leave their land and homes behind in search of food.
- Prices have skyrocketed, making even basic foods unaffordable for displaced families.

How you can help

Lives are at risk, but if you can give an urgent donation today, you could help UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, get lifesaving Emergency Payments to the most vulnerable families. UNHCR is on the ground delivering vital aid, but resources are desperately stretched and your support is urgently needed.

A gift of £119 could help provide an Emergency Payment so a displaced family can buy the food they need to survive.

There is food available in local markets and Emergency Payments are one of the most effective ways to help people caught up in the crisis. They can be quickly delivered directly to families, allowing parents to prioritise their family's most urgent needs, and they help to support the local economy.



Main: Fathi had to leave her home and all her possessions behind in search of food. Insert: Thousands of refugees in the Dadaab camp have been displaced by the floods.

You could help provide a payment to a mother like Fathi, who fled her home in Awdheegle in 2023 with her children in search of water and food:

"The best of us cooks one meal a day. There are people who stay hungry for three to four days – they have nothing to cook. There are children who died of hunger recently. Food is our priority. We can think of education and other things when we get food."

Your support could save lives

With needs increasing we face a race against time to get help to the most vulnerable. I hope you can send a gift to UK for UNHCR today, and together we will continue to stand by displaced people and refugees, and do all we can to help them survive.

HUNGER EMERGENCY

£119 could help provide a lifesaving Emergency Payment for a displaced family to buy food and other essentials.

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

I would like to give: ☐ **£119** ☐ **£238** ☐ **Other £** _____

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

Card no. | Expiry date

Signature | Date / /

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

Title First name Last name

Address

Postcode

Email*

Phone*

*Please provide your details to receive updates by email and/or phone on the impact of your support, future appeals and details of other ways you may wish to help.

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

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

giftaid it

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

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

Scan this QR code to donate online

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

A minimum of 75% of your gift will directly help displaced and refugee families in the East & Horn of Africa, funding Emergency Payments and other humanitarian interventions.

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency
United Kingdom for UNHCR

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

P24HAAGU1



Standing high The Black Blues Brothers, five Kenyan acrobats whose show is a tribute to the cult 1980 film, perform part of their act on Calton Hill yesterday before the start of the Edinburgh festival fringe on Friday.

PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF J MITCHELL/ GETTY IMAGES

Lawyer steps aside over remarks about Manchester airport incident

Josh Halliday
North of England editor

The lawyer for the family at the centre of the Manchester airport brawl has said he is stepping aside as investigations into the incident gathered pace.

Akhmed Yakoob became the focus of criticism after claiming 19-year-old Muhammed Fahir was the victim of an "attempted assassination" that had left him "fighting for his life".

In footage that emerged at the weekend, Fahir could be seen throwing punches at police officers before being incapacitated with a stun gun. An armed officer was then filmed kicking the teenager in the face and stamping on his head.

The officer has been suspended and is facing criminal charges of assault as part of an investigation by the Independent Office for Police Conduct. Greater Manchester police have stepped up their investigation into Fahir and three others who were arrested for affray and assault on emergency service workers.

Yakoob, a director at Birmingham-based Maurice Andrews Solicitors, said on Sunday night: "The media have tried to sabotage me. It's not the first time they've done this though, but they've made this whole situation about me rather than police brutality and police misconduct, which is unfair on Greater Manchester police and the family.

"So after consulting with the family I have decided for now to step aside and I have recommended the family to a lawyer. But I will be keeping a close eye on this."

The 36-year-old, who has 200,000 followers on TikTok and has been posting about Fahir's case, came under investigation by the Solicitors Regulation Authority this year after he used social media to promote a false claim of racism against a teacher.

He stood as an independent candidate in Birmingham Ladywood in the general election after coming third in the vote for West Midlands mayor in May. He apologised in June after saying on a podcast "70% of hell is going to be women", and for failing to condemn a guest saying he would give his wife a "backhander" if she made money dancing on TikTok.

Renewables overtake fossil fuels in providing EU power

Ajit Niranjan
Europe environment correspondent

Wind turbines and solar panels have overtaken fossil fuels to generate 30% of the European Union's electricity in the first half of the year, a report has found.

Power generation from burning coal, oil and gas fell 17% in the first six months of 2024 compared with the same period the year before, according to the climate thinktank Ember. It found the continued shift away from polluting fuels has led to a one-third drop in the sector's emissions since the first half of 2022.

Chris Rosslowe, an analyst at Ember, said the rise of wind and solar was narrowing the role of fossil fuels. "We are witnessing a historic shift in the power sector, and it is happening rapidly."

The report found EU power plants burned 24% less coal and 14% less gas from the first half of 2023 to the first half of 2024.

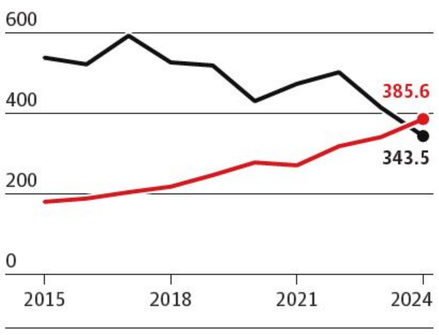
The shift comes despite a small rise in electricity demand that has followed two years of decline linked to the pandemic and Ukraine war.

"If member states can keep momentum up on wind and solar deployment then freedom from fossil power reliance will truly start to come into view," Rosslowe said.

Europe is among the biggest historical polluters that have contributed the planet-heating gases that haev made extreme weather more violent, but it also has some of the most ambitious targets to clean up its economy. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, European leaders have sped up their shift to renewables with stronger rhetoric and looser permitting rules.

But while solar power has boomed, the wind industry has struggled with high inflation on top of continued opposition from politicians and the public. The EU installed a record 16.2GW of new wind power capacity in 2023, according to the lobby group Wind Power Europe, but this was about half of what was needed that year to meet its climate targets for the end of the decade.

EU electricity generation
First half of each year, terawatt hours



Source: Ember. Note: analysis of 13 EU member states

Scenarios modelled by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and International Energy Agency show that most of the electricity needed to power a clean economy will come from rays of sunlight shining on panels and gusts of wind spinning turbines.

The Ember report found 13 member states generated more electricity from wind and solar than from fossil fuels in the first half of the year. Germany, Belgium, Hungary and the Netherlands hit that milestone for the first time, the authors found.

Andrea Hahmann, a scientist at Denmark Technical University who co-wrote an IPCC report chapter on energy systems, said the development was "significant but not surprising".

"Strong winds were prevalent during the first six months of 2024 in northern Europe, where most wind energy is generated," she said. "The 'crossing of the lines' demonstrates that the EU's electricity transition is possible, and we should not give in to pessimism. The renewable energy targets that must be met are substantial but achievable with the proper policy measures."

Singer Sinéad O'Connor died from COPD and asthma, death certificate says

Michael Sun

Sinéad O'Connor died from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and bronchial asthma, her death certificate has confirmed.

The document, registered in London last week by O'Connor's first husband and close friend, John Reynolds, said the Irish singer died from "exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and bronchial asthma together with low-grade lower respiratory tract infection".

O'Connor, 56, died on 26 July last year in her south London home, where police found her unresponsive. At the time, they said they were not treating her death as suspicious.

In January, a coroner determined that she died of natural causes.

During her three-decade career, she had a global hit with her 1990 cover of Prince's Nothing Compares 2 U which propelled her into the spotlight, sometimes against her wishes.



▲ *Sinéad O'Connor had a talent 'beyond compare', said the then taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, last year*

In the public eye, she became known as an outspoken activist – including for ripping up a picture of Pope John Paul II during a Saturday Night Live performance in 1992.

Her death drew tributes from friends, collaborators and public figures. Ireland's then taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, said: "Her music was loved around the world and her talent was unmatched and beyond compare."

O'Connor's death came 18 months after her 17-year-old son, Shane, died. She has three living children.

World

Lebanon hit by drones as Netanyahu pledges harsh response to missile strike

Ruth Michaelson and Quique Kierszenbaum *Jerusalem*
Andrew Roth *Washington*

Israeli drones struck a remote road in southern Lebanon, underscoring tensions as the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, promised a "harsh" response to the rocket strike on the occupied Golan Heights that killed 12 children.

"The state of Israel will not and cannot let this pass. Our response will come, and it will be harsh," he said during a visit to the remote town of Majdal Shams, a majority Druze village in a region annexed by Israel from Syria in 1981.

Video footage showed a crowd of Druze residents gathering in objection to Netanyahu's visit.

Tensions between Israel and Lebanon have risen in recent days after Saturday's rocket strike on the town, which killed 12 children as they played football.

Netanyahu and the defence minister, Yoav Gallant, visited Majdal Shams as a funeral was held yesterday for the 12th child killed in the attack. "Hezbollah will pay a price ... the actions will speak for themselves," Gallant told grieving families.

US officials were said to be involved in frenzied diplomatic efforts to head off a larger Israeli response. But John Kirby, a White House security spokesperson, described warnings of an "all-out war scenario" as "exaggerated".

"Nobody wants a broader war, and I'm confident that we'll be able to avoid such an outcome," he said. "I'll let the Israelis speak to whatever their response is going to be."

In a separate conversation, a spokesperson for the US national security council said Joe Biden and Netanyahu had not spoken since the attack but stressed that US officials had been in contact with both Lebanese and Israeli officials. He said talks had been held "at multiple levels".

Earlier in the day, two Israeli drone strikes killed two people, according to Lebanon's state news agency, as well as wounding three others, between the towns of Chaqra and Meiss El Jabal, close to the de facto border between Israel and Lebanon.

Lebanon's Hezbollah militia later named both men killed, and said they were fighters from southern Lebanon who died "on the road to Jerusalem".

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it shot down a drone sent from Lebanese territory in the early hours of the morning, intercepting it after it crossed into Israeli territory. Sirens sounded again across the northern Galilee region later in the day over a further suspected drone infiltration.

Israeli and US officials blamed Hezbollah for the missile strike on Majdal Shams, which the Lebanese militant group has denied. The IDF shared analysis of shrapnel that it said showed the drone was Iranian-made.

Netanyahu flew back early from a trip to the US and spent Sunday in discussion with military security officials. He later convened his security cabinet to discuss how to respond to the strike on Majdal Shams.

Netanyahu's office said ministers had authorised him, along with Gallant, "to decide on the manner and timing" of Israel's response.

"The prime minister has made clear that Israel will not allow this terror. Hezbollah will pay a heavy price that it has not paid thus far," David Mencer, a spokesperson, told reporters. "One way or another, whether through diplomacy or other means, our north will be secured."

A senior Israeli defence official told Reuters that Israel wanted to hurt Hezbollah, but did not wish to drag the region into an all-out war. Two other officials said the country was preparing for the possibility of a few days of fighting.

Danny Citrinowicz, an analyst with Israel's Institute for National Security Studies, said: "We are as close as we have ever been to another war between Israel and Hezbollah. What they did, murdering young boys and girls in Majdal Shams, requires a different response. But the question is what will be different."

"What will determine the level [of] escalation is Hezbollah's response. There are people saying this will be a back and forth for a couple of days, but it takes two to tango, each side wants to raise the bar, but we don't have an off-ramp for this," he added.

"Hezbollah will have to retaliate, and then what will Israel do ... yes, the US administration is pressuring both Israel and the Lebanese intently, but it's hard to see how it can contain the level of escalation."

Security analysts at the New York-based Soufan Group said the strike in Majdal Shams "constituted the type of incident that many experts have long assessed might tip the balance from relatively limited Israel-Hezbollah cross-border exchanges to devastating all-out conflict".

Hezbollah, they added, probably denied responsibility for the strike because of the high casualties, the location in an area internationally recognised to be Syrian land occupied by Israel, and the Druze Arab identity of the victims. The Druze are a sect who live in the Golan Heights, parts of southern Syria and into Lebanon.

The analysts said: "The most pressing task for US officials appeared to be delaying any Israeli retaliation to allow time for diplomacy to achieve de-escalation."



▼ *The aftermath of an attack by the Israeli military on the Lebanese border village of Kafr Kila yesterday*
PHOTOGRAPH: RABIH DAHER/GETTY IMAGES



Gibraltar Calls to act on fuel shipment to Israel

Patrick Wintour
Diplomatic editor

An overwhelming case exists for the UK to intervene to stop a US oil tanker carrying 300,000 barrels of jet fuel for use by Israel in Gaza from docking in Gibraltar, according to a letter from a cross-party group of MPs addressed to David Lammy, the UK foreign secretary.

Protests in Spain led by trade unionists and political activists have already resulted in the owners of the Overseas Santorini abandoning plans to dock in the Spanish port of Algeciras. According to Marine Traffic, the ship is now destined to reach Gibraltar at 2pm today.

The Gibraltarian government, however, says it has received no formal request to dock. The letter to Lammy and Fabian Picardo, the chief minister of Gibraltar, comes from MPs including Sarah Champion, the chair of the international development select committee in the last parliament, and the former shadow chancellor John McDonnell.

Campaigners say the Overseas Santorini is carrying JP-8, a military-grade fuel, delivered as part of a contract with the US government, that powers F-16 fighter jets. According to a UN investigation, it was probably an F-16, which are built using UK parts, that bombed British doctors from Medical Aid for Palestine in Gaza in January.

The MPs, including members of the Green party, SNP and Labour, have urged the government to "prohibit and prevent Gibraltar being used as a haven for the transport of military fuel used in Israel's assault

Ticket to ride?
Japanese airports ban motorised suitcases
Page 26



Black City
'World's first oil town' wrestles with legacy
Page 29



▲ *Children look out from the back of a lory as Palestinians flee the Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip*
PHOTOGRAPH: EYAD BABA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Trump to take part in FBI victim interview over shooting

Anna Betts
New York

Donald Trump has agreed to participate in a victim interview with the FBI regarding his attempted assassination earlier this month, the bureau told reporters yesterday.

It comes as authorities continue their investigations into the 13 July shooting in Butler, Pennsylvania, where Thomas Matthews Crooks fired eight shots from an assault rifle that hit and injured the former president, killed a rally attendee and injured several others.

On Sunday, new details about the shooting emerged from text messages between local security units, obtained by the Republican senator Chuck Grassley and published and verified by the New York Times, including that local law enforcement had spotted the shooter 30 minutes earlier than officials had said.

The text messages show that a local counter-sniper first noticed a man, later identified as Crooks, loitering in the area where the counter-snipers were set up more than 90 minutes before the shooting occurred.

The Times reported that at 4.26pm the counter-sniper alerted his colleagues of the man, and that the man had parked near their vehicles and was siting on a picnic table near the warehouse, where several counter-snipers were, outside the fenced area of the grounds where Trump would be appearing later.

One of the counter-snipers took pictures of him and the photos were shared in a group chat. Another text went out among the local officers at 5.38pm, saying they should inform the Secret Service, the New York Times reported. "Kid learning around building we are in. AGR [American Glass Research] I believe it is. I did see him with a range finder looking towards stage. FYI. If you wanna notify SS snipers to look out. I lost sight of him," one of the texts, accompanied by photos of Crooks, reads.

One of the two remaining counter-snipers reportedly ran out of the building attempting to keep sight of Crooks until other law enforcement arrived, but Crooks ran off.

At 6pm, one officer in the group texts guessed that Crooks was moving to the back of the warehouse complex and away from the event, the Times reported. Instead he climbed onto a building in the complex closest to the stage. At 6.11pm Crooks began firing.

A Secret Service spokesperson has said the agency "is committed to better understanding what happened before, during and after the assassination attempt ... to ensure that never happens again".

'I did see him with a range finder ... FYI. If you wanna notify SS snipers to look out'

Text from Butler law enforcement officer

on Gaza". The letter says: "The jet fuel will be unloaded and used to fuel the Israeli air force's F-16 and F-35 that drop bombs on the people of Gaza. The 300,000 barrels of fuel are sufficient for around 12,000 F-16 refuelings."

It adds: "The case to prevent Gibraltar's facilities from being complicit in Israel's breaches of international law are overwhelming. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed in Israel's assault."

The call to block the shipment comes from a large coalition of groups, including Progressive International, Global Energy Embargo for Palestine, Disrupt Power, the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy, Valero Out of Corpus, the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature, BDS and Gibraltar for Palestine. They are operating under the banner "No Harbour for Genocide".

The campaign's pressure led to the port workers' unions UGT and CCOO backing the campaign and Spanish politicians - including the current and former Podemos leaders Ione Belarra and Pablo Iglesias, as well as Sumar, the junior coalition party in government - denouncing the planned docking of the Overseas Santorini. In a statement on Sunday, the Gibraltar government said the US-flagged tanker had not requested to dock in Gibraltar or use any of its port services.

In May, the Spanish foreign minister, José Manuel Albares, said Spain would not authorise ships carrying weapons for Israel to call at its ports after the country refused to let a ship call at the south-eastern port of Cartagena.

Elia El-Khazen, the coordinator of the German-based Global Energy Embargo for Palestine, had called on the Madrid government to act against the Overseas Santorini, pointing out that the international court of justice had issued binding orders on Israel to relieve the humanitarian pressure on Gaza. The UN Human Rights Council also passed a resolution in April expressing concern about the use of jet fuel in Gaza.

300,000
The number of barrels of jet fuel onboard a US tanker which MPs say will be used by Israel in Gaza

12,000
The number of F-16 refuellings the barrels of fuel would be sufficient for, according to the MPs' letter

The campaigners say the oil is being shipped by the Valero company from Corpus Christi, Texas, and is heading for the port of Ashkelon in Israel. For years these regular shipments have stopped at Algeciras and Limassol, Cyprus.

The pressure on the UK government comes as the business secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, announced he was making a free trade agreement with Israel one of his priorities. But ministers are expected to shortly announce limited restrictions on arms export licences to Israel if the arms are deemed capable of being used in Israeli offensives in Gaza.

Biden proposes term limits and ethics code for supreme court

Adam Gabbatt
Lauren Gambino *Washington*

Joe Biden has proposed sweeping changes to the US supreme court, including the introduction of term limits for justices and a constitutional amendment to remove immunity for crimes committed by a president while in office.

The reforms, detailed by the White House yesterday, call for limiting a justice's term on the court to 18 years rather than the current lifetime appointment, as well as a binding, enforceable code of ethics and a constitutional amendment that would in effect reverse a supreme court decision in July granting former presidents broad immunity from prosecution for actions taken in office, a decision Donald Trump hailed as a "BIG WIN".

It represents a sharp shift for a president who had until recently resisted calls from within his party to embrace court reform. In a Washington Post op-ed, Biden wrote: "I have great respect for our institutions and separation of powers. What is happening now is not normal, and it undermines the public's confidence in the court's decisions, including those impacting personal freedoms. We now stand in a breach."

The reforms are unlikely to win approval in the narrowly divided Congress. Public confidence in the court has slipped to historic lows in recent years. According to a 2023 Gallup survey, nearly six in 10 Americans disapproved of the way the supreme court was handling its job.

Biden also called for stricter, enforceable rules on conduct which would require justices to disclose gifts, refrain from political activity, and recuse themselves from cases in which they or their spouses have financial interest.

Eyewitness

Hey city rollers This month enthusiasts took part in Roll On London, one of the biggest and most vibrant events in the European roller-skating calendar. Since stumbling across "jam" skaters at his local park in 2021, the documentary photographer and musician **Roland Ramanan** has embedded himself in the scene, following skaters to various London venues and their homes, and to Barcelona. His project has a popular Instagram account, where Ramanan interviews skaters and shares their portraits. Since the resurgence of roller-skating during the Covid pandemic, its popularity has boomed. In 2022, Ramanan finally gave in to the inevitable and, at the age of 56, took up roller-skating himself.





▲ *Renee skating near Westfield shopping centre in Stratford, east London. The area was a popular hub for skaters in the 1990s and early 2000s*



▲ *Skaters on their way to a birthday celebration at the Roller Nation rink in north London in 2021*





◀ *Johnny, a London-based skater, in the circle at the Skate Love festival in Barcelona*

◀ *Skaters at the Roll On London festival last year. The annual event is billed as 'the UK's biggest skate party'*

PHOTOGRAPHS: ROLAND RAMANAN





▲ *Amir Bacchus-Marquis, a pro skater and community leader in London*



▲ *A skater called Rouge, on a visit to the UK from the US, shows off his moves*



◀ *Coordinating moves and linking hands while skating at speed is a skill that has its origins in the US but is now a big part of the UK scene*

EU states 'failing to properly investigate border violence'

Lisa O'Carroll

Authorities in EU member states are not doing enough to investigate credible reports of violations of human rights, including deaths, on their borders, an EU human rights body has said.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) said human rights agencies and NGOs were reporting "serious, recurrent and widespread rights violations against migrants and refugees during border management" but despite "credible" reports many were not investigated.

An increasing number of cases are going to the European court of human rights, raising questions about border management in at least three countries, it said.

"National authorities in Greece, Croatia and Hungary did not effectively investigate incidents of ill treatment and loss of life during border management. Examples include insufficient efforts to locate and hear victims and witnesses, hindering lawyers in their work and not having access to key evidence (eg footage from border surveillance)."

Greece's migration policies have been in the spotlight since the Adriana, an overcrowded fishing boat, sank in June last year with the loss of an estimated 500-650 lives.

> *'Europe has a duty to treat everyone at the borders fairly, respectfully and in full compliance with human rights law'*
>
> **Sirpa Rautio**
> *FRA director*

The FRA cited five examples highlighting what it considered a flawed approach to loss of life and allegations of violence across Europe's frontier states. In one of the most egregious cases, it cited the discovery of an unaccompanied child who was found unconscious with a fractured skull and swollen lip in France by volunteers.

The child had been apprehended by police after hiding in a lorry destined for the UK. The case, and allegations of possible police involvement, was reported to the public prosecutor in Boulogne-sur-Mer but the child could not be found later.

In 2020, the Croatian police intercepted four Afghans who had entered the country irregularly. According to the rights agency, they were held for two days, humiliated and beaten. The incident is being investigated but according to the victims' lawyer the perpetrators have not been identified.

In April 2020, Maltese authorities instructed a fishing vessel to take a boat in distress back to Libya. In six days at sea 12 people died or went missing. A magistrate concluded there was no prima facie evidence for criminal charges, the FRA said.

In June 2022, two Palestinians recognised by Greece as refugees were allegedly subjected to physical and sexual abuse and abandoned on a life raft at sea after being stopped by police in Kos. The Turkish coastguard rescued them and an official complaint is still pending before the Greek public prosecutor.

The FRA director, Sirpa Rautio, said: "There are too many allegations of human rights violations at the EU's borders. Europe has a duty to treat everyone at the borders fairly, respectfully and in full compliance with human rights law."

The agency has drawn up a 10-point plan including regular guidance and training for local prosecutors and investigators on how to protect victims and how to collect and preserve evidence, including mobile phone data. Facilitation of victims' participation in criminal proceedings and their protection was paramount, the report said.

The report added: "Investigative authorities should request records of border surveillance and body cameras, global position systems, records of patrol cars and officers' phones."

ANC expels former president Jacob Zuma for backing rival party in election

Rachel Savage

South Africa's former president Jacob Zuma has been expelled by the African National Congress after he backed a rival political party that helped cost the ANC its parliamentary majority in recent national elections.

"Former president Jacob Zuma has actively impugned the integrity of the ANC and campaigned to dislodge the ANC from power, while claiming that he had not severed his membership," the party said yesterday.

The ANC – which had governed South Africa alone since the country's first fully democratic elections in 1994 – slumped from 57.5% of the vote in 2019 to 40.2% in May.

Poor public services and chronically high unemployment played a part in the collapse, but a significant portion of its base flocked to Zuma's new party, uMkhonto weSizwe (MK). Named after the ANC's armed wing during apartheid, it became the country's third largest party, with 14.6% of the vote.

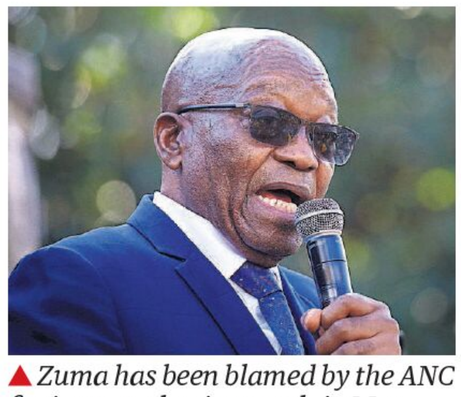
Zuma, 82, was president from 2009 to 2018, but was forced to resign amid corruption allegations. The launch of the MK party in December was seen by analysts as an attempt to get revenge on Cyril Ramaphosa, his successor as ANC leader and as president of South Africa.

The MK party accused the ANC of running a "kangaroo court". It said Zuma would consult his legal team to decide his next steps.

"We don't know why you [set up a new] party and then you argue for your membership, when you have taken a conscious decision to leave the ANC," the ANC secretary general, Fikile Mbalula, told a press conference. "You have brought us below 50%. We are grappling with that."

A judicial inquiry alleged that Zuma replaced competent officials with loyalists and influenced the awarding of large contracts, to benefit the Indian businessmen brothers Atul, Ajay and Rajesh Gupta, a scandal known as state capture. He is also due to go on trial next year on charges that he accepted bribes in a 1999 arms deal. Zuma has always denied corruption allegations.

Zuma has 21 days to appeal against his expulsion, the ANC said.



▲ *Zuma has been blamed by the ANC for its poor election result in May*

Japan is on the case: crackdown on rideable luggage

Tim Hornyak
Tokyo

As record numbers of tourists flock to Japan to take advantage of the weakness of the Japanese yen, some are running into trouble with authorities thanks to the growing popularity of motorised, rideable suitcases.

Two big Japanese airports have already asked travellers not to ride motorised suitcases within their facilities, according to the Kyodo news agency, while police are urging domestic retailers to warn customers of the strict laws concerning their use.

In recent years motorised luggage, similar to children's scooters but powered by lithium-ion batteries, has become more common among travellers, while also being popularised by celebrities such as Paris Hilton and Shilpa Shetty.

According to Kyodo, Japan currently classifies the electric suitcases, which are popular in the rest of Asia, as "motorised vehicles that can be ridden on roads only with the required safety equipment and a driving licence".

In June, a Chinese woman in her 30s, studying in Japan, was referred to prosecutors for driving without a licence after she allegedly rode a three-wheeled suitcase on a pavement in Osaka on 31 March, according to Osaka prefectural police.



▲ *A passenger on an electric suitcase at Bangkok airport, Thailand. The devices are treated as motor vehicles in Japan* PHOTOGRAPH: BOB HENRY/GETTY

Under Japan's traffic laws, the woman's suitcase, which can travel at up to 8mph, is categorised as a "motorised bicycle", the same as some mopeds. The police reiterated in June that licenses were required for such mobile luggage.

In July, a boy from Indonesia rode a motorised suitcase past pedestrians along a street in Osaka's bustling Dotonbori shopping district, according to Kyodo, which said his family was surprised to learn that a driving licence was mandatory for such vehicles in Japan.

According to Takeru Shibayama, a senior scientist at the Vienna University of Technology's institute of transportation, Japan's broad range of vehicles that fall under the category of motorised bicycles may force the country to discuss "whether a new classification should be established" to deal with electric suitcases.

Japan has struggled to deal with new forms of transport recently. Traffic violations involving electric scooters surged fourfold in the six months after restrictions were eased in July 2023, according to the National Police Agency.

The loosened regulations allow for people over the age of 16 to ride them without a driver's licence, and they are now a common sight in big cities such as Tokyo.

Protesters gather in Nigeria before week of nationwide action over economic crisis

Eromo Egbejule
Abidjan

Hundreds of protesters have gathered in central Nigeria days before planned national demonstrations over economic hardship and record inflation.

The protesters, many of them young people, converged in the town of Suleja, 30 miles outside the federal capital, Abuja, with placards criticising the government's policies. Week-long nationwide protests had been due to begin tomorrow.

A cost of living crisis that was already hitting Africa's most populous country when the president, Bola Tinubu, took office in May last year has intensified after he removed a controversial fuel subsidy and announced other reforms.

The prices of everyday commodities have astronomically increased, uninterrupted electricity remains a distant dream, and fuel queues remain a common feature of life in the country, despite Nigeria's status as one of the world's top oil and gas producers. Nigeria has also become the world's malnutrition capital with more than 31.8 million children affected, according to NGO data.

As the protest in Suleja began, there were counterprotests in parts of Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital and Tinubu's stronghold, with big banners saying: "Say no to protest", only a couple of miles away from fuel queues in the city.



▲ *Demonstrations have been held in Abuja recently over rising living costs*

In recent weeks, the Nigerian government had been warning and pleading in equal measure for citizens not to take to the street, apparently aware of its deepening unpopularity.

"You can't judge leadership within one year," Nyesom Wike, the minister in charge of Abuja, said on Sunday at a forum convened to speak with young people in the city.

Analysts said the government was attempting to prevent a repeat of the protests in Kenya, where young people held the state to a standstill for weeks, forcing the government to repeal new taxes.

Tinubu, who approved an increase in the national minimum wage from 30,000 naira (£14.40) to 70,000 naira a month, urged young people not to demonstrate, claiming organisers were mobilising for mass action with "sinister motives". He has also met traditional rulers across the country to urge them to prevail on their subjects to be patient with his administration.

Authorities have claimed the aim of the protests is to destabilise the country. On Friday, the secret service said it had identified "the funding lines, sponsors and collaborators" of a plot to topple the government via the demonstrations.

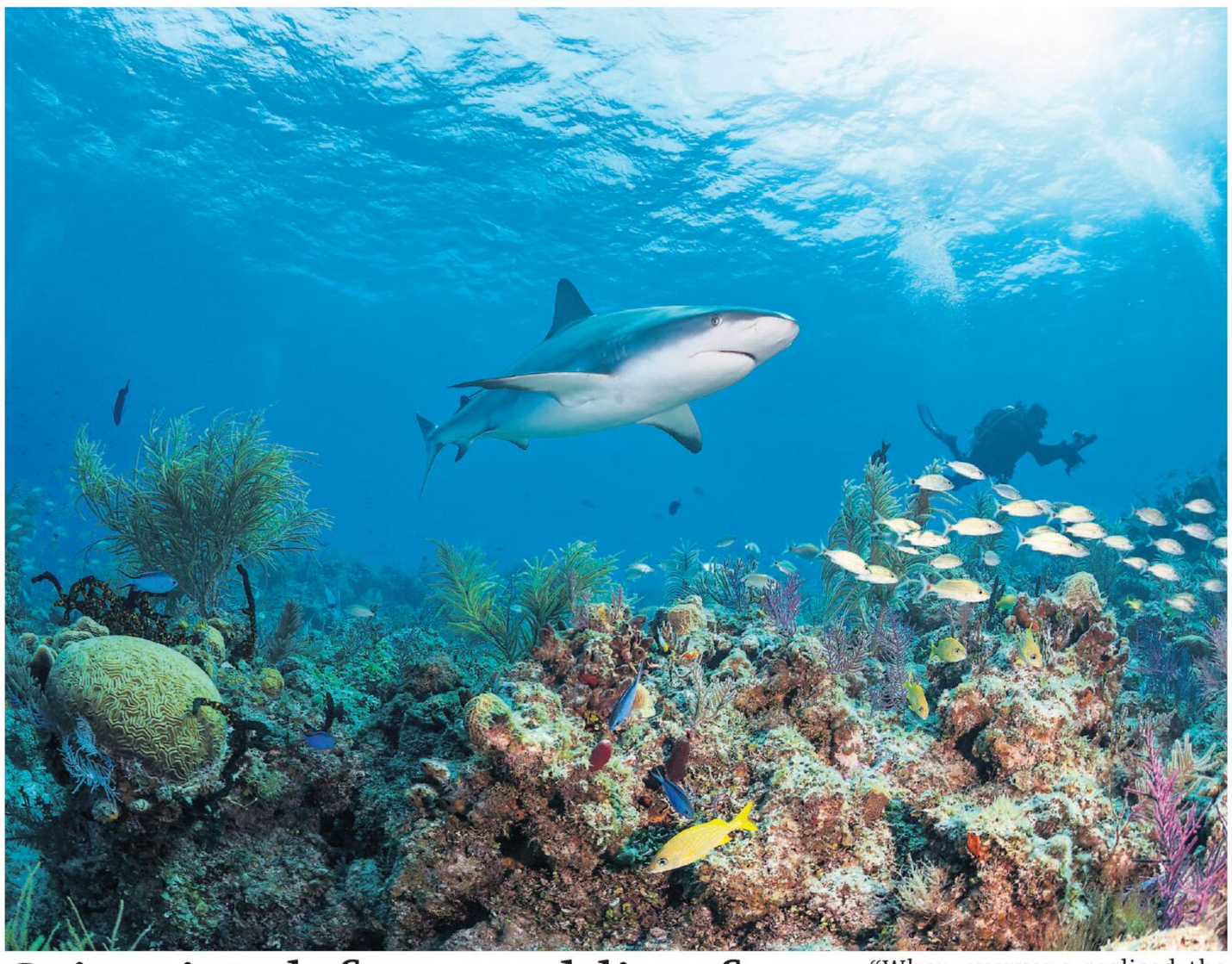
A day after, the police chief, Kayode Egbetokun, said the security agencies were in possession of "credible intelligence" on the involvement of foreign mercenaries. Neither statement gave any details.

Local reports say soldiers blocked the highway leading to Abuja yesterday, while police reinforcements were seen in the northern hub of Kano on Sunday.

The US, UK and Canada have issued travel advisories in the run-up to the protests.

The last major protests in Nigeria were the Occupy Nigeria demonstrations against fuel subsidies in 2012 – in which Tinubu played a key role – and the 2020 campaign against a rogue police unit known for its extrajudical killings.

▼ *Corals have begun bleaching in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans, according to the US Coral Reef Watch*
PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES



Scientists left scrambling for solutions as record heat risks bleaching 73% of coral reefs

Graham Readfearn
Brisbane

Coral scientists are calling for a major rethink on how to protect reefs after 18 months of record-breaking ocean temperatures.

Across the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans, latest figures from the US government's Coral Reef Watch, shared with the Guardian, show 73% of the world's corals have been hit with enough heat for them to begin bleaching.

Beginning in February 2023, this is the fourth global mass bleaching event – the second in 10 years, and the most widespread on record.

"We're coming out of a couple of decades where we made predictions," said Prof Tracy Ainsworth, the vice-president of the International Coral Reef Society. "Now we are at a point where we hoped we would not be. Now we're asking: what do we do now?" Three articles published in the scientific journal Nature Climate Change have called on the coral conservation and science community to have a collective rethink.

"I would call it soul searching," said Prof Tiffany Morrison, a co-author of one of the articles which is sharply critical of widespread programmes, many with corporate backers, to grow corals in nurseries and then plant them out on reefs.

> ***'Now we are at a point where we hoped we would not be. We're asking: what do we do now?'***
>
> **Prof Tracy Ainsworth**
> *Coral expert*

"When everyone realised the scale of the climate impacts on coral reefs, the first instinct was to just do something and intervene because people were so distressed."

In Florida and the Caribbean last year, many replanted corals died as record-breaking heat stress swept across the region.

Dr Derek Manzello, the director of Coral Reef Watch, said the number of reefs affected by heat stress from the current global event was still rising and had "definitely led to almost everyone involved with reef science and restoration having a hard think about future activities".

In another scientific article, Prof Michael Webster of New York University suggested a radical idea that, he said, would have been far too controversial for a scientific paper only 10 years ago.

Webster said conservationists should consider introducing corals that have evolved in very hot regions to reefs where the current mix of corals are struggling to survive.

He said reefs will have a better chance of surviving through the coming decades if they have a diversity of coral species.

"Getting CO_2 down has to be our endgame, but we have centuries where coral systems like reefs will be in trouble," he said.

Oslo used by drug smugglers as gateway to Europe, mayor warns

Miranda Bryant
Nordic correspondent

The mayor of Oslo has warned that drug smugglers are targeting the Norwegian capital as a gateway into Europe as authorities tighten controls on major ports such as Antwerp.

Anne Lindboe said drugs worth up to £560m have been smuggled through Norway's largest port, which receives 50-70 ships and 243,000 containers every week.

"It seems that the port of Oslo is becoming a preferred port in Europe for criminal, hardened gangs," Lindboe told the broadcaster NRK. Oslo port, she added, was "slightly too poorly guarded".

Customs officials in Antwerp, the European capital of drug smuggling, said cocaine seizures in the Belgian port were down by half as criminal gangs switched routes after an increase in policing.

The Norwegian customs service union says there is only one mobile scanner at Oslo, which is shared with two other ports. When it is not available, customs officers have to check containers with hand-held scanners, which they say are not as effective.

The union's leader, Karin Tanderø Schaug, said the cocaine and organised crime situation was "critical" and that it was essential to "reinforce the customs in Norway".

"This fight [across Europe] is so important. We cannot afford to underestimate the importance of control at the borders," she added.

Among young adults, Norway has the third highest cocaine consumption in Europe. Last year, the customs service made 1,847 drugs seizures – more than in the previous 10 years combined – including record quantities of cocaine.

The amount of cocaine in Oslo is "alarming and increasing", said Tanderø Schaug, urging the Norwegian government to act. "When Antwerp [has] more control and police, the criminals will change routes. And Norway can easily become a transit country as well. Same for Sweden."

Norway has proposed increasing funding for its customs service. The finance minister, Trygve Slagsvold Vedum, said: "Drug trafficking and organised crime is a threat to our society. To stop the gangs, we must confiscate their money and stop the flow of drugs into Norway.

"We are aware that Oslo is one of the ports used for importing illegal drugs, which is why there is a scanner that can be used at both ports in Oslo as needed, according to the customs agency's threat assessments."



Fears over safety of Ireland's roads after five deaths

Shane Harrison
Dublin

Ireland's police force has said it is seriously concerned about the number of deaths on the country's roads after five fatalities over the weekend. Those who lost their lives included motorcyclists and a 14-year-old boy on an e-scooter.

The teenager, Joe Carthy, died after his e-scooter collided with a car in Kilkenny city on Saturday evening. He was the third e-scooter user to die in Ireland within the last month.

A local councillor, Joe Malone, said the family was "distraught". He told RTÉ radio: "Joe comes from the Traveller community. And they're all out there last night and coming together and trying to take it in. It's so sad."

The use of e-scooters was made legal in the Republic of Ireland in May after previously being a legal grey area. A licence is not needed to ride one and it does not have to be registered, taxed or insured.

However, riders have to be over 16 and there are other restrictions including a maximum speed of 20km/h and the e-scooter cannot weigh more than 25kg.



▼ *Police are seriously concerned at the high rate of fatal car crashes and collisions involving e-scooters, left*

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN ALLEN/ALAMY

In another accident in County Meath on Sunday, a motorcyclist in his 30s and his pillion passenger, also in his 30s, died after a collision involving two other motorbikes near Oldcastle. The two victims were pronounced dead at the scene.

A third man was taken to a nearby hospital with serious injuries while a fourth man was being treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

Supt Liam Geraghty of the Garda Síochána said: "So far this year we are now looking at approximately 16 motorcyclists or pillion passengers who have lost their lives on our roads. There were 26 for the total of 2023. So it is concerning at this early stage, which is the peak social motorcycling time of year, that we're in such high numbers."

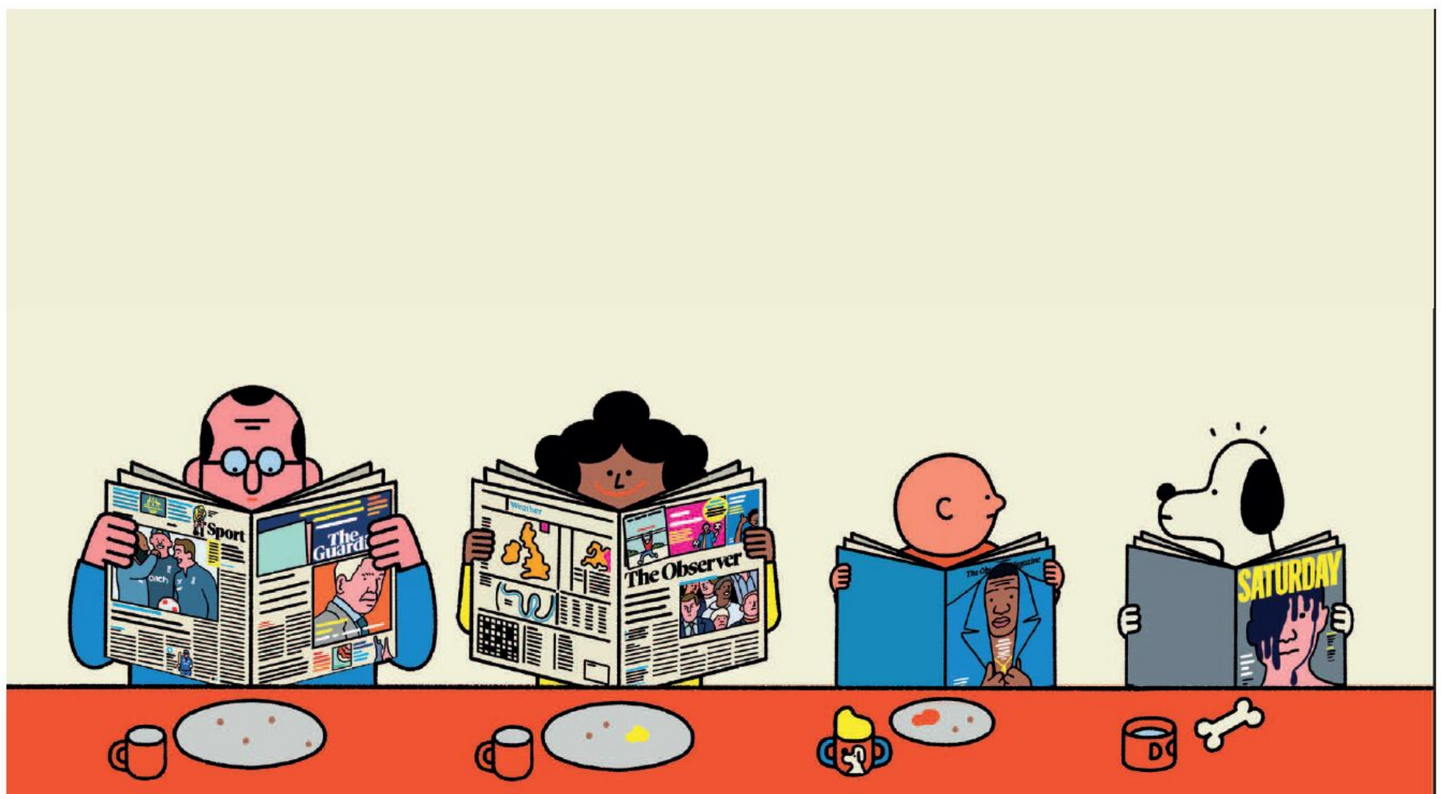
Another man died in a single-vehicle crash on Sunday night in County Meath and a man in his 40s died in a single-vehicle crash in County Cork in the early hours of Saturday morning.

The Irish police force is appealing to road users who may have camera footage of any of the accidents to come forward.

Before the weekend fatalities, the number of deaths on Irish roads was already up on last year and the finance minister, Jack Chambers, had indicated more money could be made available to the Road Safety Authority for public awareness campaigns.

Until relatively recently the number of road fatalities had been falling, but that trend has reversed.

Hard-hitting advertising about the dangers of drink-driving, speeding and the use of mobile phones while behind the wheel has returned. Some of those involved in the campaigns include sporting stars such as the rugby international Andrew Porter and Danny O'Donoghue from the band the Script.



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Breaking the habit

Baku hosts Cop29 amid questions over green policy



An oil production platform in the Caspian Sea, near Baku – which is known as the world's first oil town

PHOTOGRAPH: GRIGORY DUKOR/REUTERS

Fiona Harvey
Environment editor

Just a few miles from the site of the next UN climate conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, is a district that for more than a century was known as Black City. Every house and factory was thickly stained with soot, from the oil that was extracted and refined by the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Baku was the world's first oil town: pioneering wells were dug in the 1840s, followed by refineries from 1859. Alfred Nobel's brothers came in the 1870s and established what became a large oil industry, contributing a sizeable portion of their fortune to establishing the Nobel prize. People take pride that oil produced here helped win the second world war, supplying Russia's army fighting Adolf Hitler on the eastern front.

There are still oil wells in Baku, their piston pumps nodding in rhythm while the flares of refineries stand out clearly against the night-time skyline.

Today, fossil fuels make up 90% of Azerbaijan's exports: the petrostate pioneer is still one of the top 10 most oil and gas-dependent economies in the world.

Gone, though, are the black-stained buildings that gave the city its nickname.

In the past two decades, an intensive cleanup operation has turned central Baku into White City. Soviet-era blocks have been reclad in gleaming beige facades. So convincing is the 19th-century styling that it is hard to believe most of it is barely 10 years old – the only clues are on a few streets where the transformation has yet to be completed, and the neat new fronts contrast with a back view of flaking concrete.

Azerbaijan is hoping to effect the same transformation in the energy sector, first on its own, and then on the rest of the world's oil-drenched economies.

President Ilham Aliyev has declared his country "in the active phase of green transition", with targets to generate 30% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, up from about 7% today. The government is building vast solar farms in the plains near Baku, and has ambitious plans for an interconnector to export low-carbon power to Georgia, and then under the Black Sea to Romania and Hungary. "We cannot deny the existence of the fossil fuel industry, because it is a major source of income for many countries. And it's not something that can be abandoned overnight," said Yalchin Rafiyev, Azerbaijan's lead negotiator at Cop29.



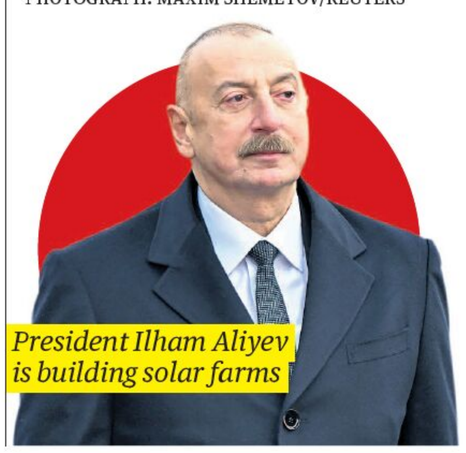
A Cop29 sign in Baku, Azerbaijan, which is hosting this year's UN climate summit in November

PHOTOGRAPH: AZIZ KARIMOV/GETTY



The Heydar Aliyev cultural centre, designed by Zaha Hadid, occupies a prominent position in the capital

PHOTOGRAPH: MAXIM SHEMETOV/REUTERS



President Ilham Aliyev is building solar farms

"The most important thing is how the fossil fuel countries and companies perceive the real challenge related to the climate, and how do they act in a responsible manner?"

Azerbaijan is already making a shift – oil accounts for a declining share of its exports. However, gas exports have more than made up for the shortfall, and vast investment is now turning an oil country into a gas giant. Azerbaijan plans to increase its gas output by a third in the next decade.

Aliyev has presented this as his contribution to saving Europe from Vladimir Putin's aggression in Ukraine, telling EU ministers this spring that Azerbaijan's oil and gas deposits were a "gift from God" and that Azerbaijan had a "responsibility" to help Europe.

For an oil-producing country to host a Cop is not unusual. Last year's host country, the United Arab Emirates, home to the world's seventh largest gas reserves, raised many eyebrows by appointing Sultan Al Jaber, the chief executive of its national oil company, Adnoc, as Cop28 president.

Many other fossil fuel-producing countries have held the presidency: the UK in 2021, Qatar in 2012, Canada in 2005 and Brazil in 1992, when the UN framework convention on climate change was forged. Next year, Brazil will host Cop30 in Belém in the Amazon. This is despite becoming a member of the oil cartel Opec+ and setting a target of increasing output from 3.7m barrels a day to 4.8m by 2028.

Laurie van der Burg, a public finance lead at the campaign group Oil Change International, said there was a "cognitive dissonance at the heart of international climate diplomacy" that was exemplified by the Cop29 host. "On the one hand, [it is] pledging to submit national climate plans in line with the 1.5C limit, while at the same time ramping up fossil fuel production," she said.

"Unless the Cop troika [UAE, Azerbaijan and Brazil] recognises that there is no such thing as 1.5C-aligned climate plans with more coal, oil and gas infrastructure, it risks making a mockery of the unprecedented mobilisation that led to the Cop28 decision to phase out fossil fuels."

For the Azerbaijani government, there is no contradiction in being an oil and gas exporter while striving to limit global temperatures to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels. Nigar Arpadarai, the UN high-level champion for Cop29 in Azerbaijan, said: "I don't think that oil-shaming is a good thing. Yes, we are an oil and gas country. This is our history. This is where we are coming from.

"But we are doing lots of things. We are committing and we have a strong drive towards a new paradigm."

If Azerbaijan is to shift away from fossil fuels, the wrench will be enormous. To walk around central Baku is to witness endless traffic jams, filling every lane of the large modern highways that traverse the capital, as well as the boulevards of the Black/White City.

Despite pockets of rural poverty, and the only recently concluded war with Armenia, this is a thriving economy, and the Aliyev administration – nominally a democracy, with elections and parliament, but in reality an autocracy with no real opposition and suppression of civil society – would like to keep it that way.

The key issue at Cop29 will be raising the finance needed for poorer countries to cut their emissions and cope with the impacts of extreme weather. This will require trillions of dollars a year, but so far the wealthy developed world has barely met its longstanding commitment of providing $100bn (£78bn) annually.

If Azerbaijan is to host a successful Cop, and genuinely transition away from fossil fuels, then what happens in Baku needs to be more than just whitewashing the facade of an oil-dependent nation. Fellow petrostates have sought to diversify through exploring other mineral wealth, expanding tourism, operating as a travel hub like UAE in Dubai, or using their oil wealth to buy up profitable assets overseas, like Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

For Azerbaijan, quadrupling renewable energy production from a small base can only be the start.

Its whole economy, like the world's, will need to be rebuilt.



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[1]The Food Foundation Food Insecurity Tracking 2024.

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Business

Consumers cut back due to cost of living crisis and poor weather

Richard Partington
Economics correspondent

UK consumers have cut back on summer spending amid the impact of poor weather and the cost of living crisis, figures show, underscoring the challenge for the Bank of England before its interest rate decision on Thursday.

In a sign of weakness in consumer spending over the summer months, figures from the British Retail Consortium (BRC) showed that clothing and footwear prices fell for the seventh consecutive month in July as weak demand persisted.

Separate figures from the Bank of England showed that credit-card borrowing also slumped in June as poor weather for the time of year and concerns about the cost of living deterred households from spending.

The figures came as financial markets predicted the Bank's interest rate decision on Thursday will be on a knife-edge as policymakers consider whether to cut borrowing costs for the first time since the Covid pandemic.

After a drop in headline inflation to the government's 2% target for two consecutive months, City economists believe Threadneedle Street's monetary policy committee could narrowly vote to cut interest rates from the current level of 5.25%.

The Bank has said its decision will rest on whether price growth in the service sector of the economy is slowing, and whether Britain's jobs market is cooling to levels consistent with keeping inflation near 2%.

Reflecting subdued consumer appetite as households held back from spending, the BRC figures showed annual shop price inflation was unchanged in July at 0.2%. This was below the three-month average rate of 0.3%, and the lowest rate since October 2021.

Non-food price deflation, which means prices are falling compared with a year ago, continued at 0.9%, marginally slower than 1% in June, as retailers cut their prices in an attempt to lure reluctant consumers. The BRC's chief executive, Helen Dickinson, said: "Holidaymakers could pick up bargain summer wear and summer reads as clothing and footwear prices fell for the seventh consecutive month amidst persistent weak demand, and the prices of books fell."

The Bank's figures show that net consumer credit borrowing fell from £1.5bn in May to £1.2bn in June, missing City economists' forecasts for a stronger growth rate as households held back from borrowing to finance their spending.

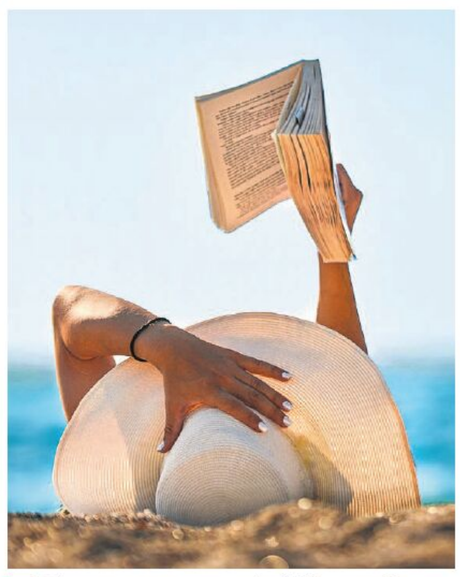
The global and UK head of financial services at the accountancy firm KPMG, Karim Haji, said the figures showed that customers were yet to feel the effects of recent stronger levels of economic growth and lower inflation.

"What is clear is that, despite two straight months of inflation remaining on target, households aren't necessarily feeling better off for it," he said. "Indeed, wage growth has slowed in recent months, which may go some way to explaining this."

Retailers, however, are hopeful that a pickup in spending could come given a rise in footfall at shopping destinations after the start of school summer holidays in England and Wales last week. The data provider MRI Software said footfall rose by 4.8% in all retail destinations compared with the previous week, led by a 6.9% jump in shopping centre activity, a 4.4% rise in visits to high streets and a 3.3% increase at retail parks.

The Bank's latest snapshot also shows that net mortgage approvals, which indicate future levels of borrowing, remained largely unchanged in June from a month earlier, in a sign of the property market treading water before the general election and Thursday's rate decision.

RBC Capital Markets' European housebuilding analyst, Anthony Codling, said: "Stability is good, but in our view, the UK housing market appears to be treading water, waiting for - hoping for - the first Bank Rate cut. There is a small chance it could come on Thursday, but we believe the first cut is more likely in September. Once mortgage rates start to fall, we expect housing market activity to pick up."



▼ *Shoppers shelter on Oxford Street in London as rising summer holiday footfall gives retailers hope. Above, holidaymakers have enjoyed falling prices on summer reading and clothing*

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: HOLLIE ADAMS/ REUTERS



Ofgem plans to encourage flexible use of cheap energy

Jack Simpson

Ofgem is pushing ahead with plans to make it easier for British homeowners to reap the benefits of using electric car chargers and heat pumps at non-peak times, as the grid becomes more reliant on wind and solar power.

The energy regulator plans to encourage flexible electricity use in the home by creating a single register in which flexibility service providers (FSPs) can access more markets and better rates for owners of energy assets such as EV chargers and battery storage systems.

In the current system, FSPs must sign up multiple times to access different local and national flexibility markets, meaning customers can miss out on the best rates.

The new streamlined system will include a "one-stop sign-up point" that would give FSPs access to all flexibility markets.

The need to use electricity more flexibly comes as domestic energy use is to increase by 50% by 2035 amid the increasing take-up of EVs and heat pumps, while energy production is increasingly due to come from more intermittent energy sources such as wind and solar as the UK tries to achieve net zero emissions targets.

Ofgem said its shake-up should drive more flexible energy use and could contribute to £30bn to £70bn in savings and lower bills for all consumers by reducing the need to build as much expensive infrastructure.

Some energy providers and distribution networks have already begun providing flexibility services.

Octopus Energy's Go electric tariff manages the charging of 150,000 electric cars and provides lower tariffs for owners to charge in the quiet hours of the night.

National Grid has also run a series of demand flexibility days since January in which households and businesses were paid to cut back on electricity use during the peak period, usually between 4pm and 7pm.

Eleanor Warburton, a director of Ofgem, said: "We are already starting to see real acceleration in small-scale flexible energy ... Asset registration will create a streamlined one-stop sign-up point, which will help maximise consumer participation."

The regulator also announced yesterday it had appointed Elexon to develop local flexibility markets. The facilitator, which is expected to be fully operational by early 2026, will act as an independent expert to help drive alignment between national and local distribution networks.

JD Wetherspoon founder Martin nets almost £10m from share sale

Rob Davies

The founder of JD Wetherspoon, Tim Martin, has sold almost £10m worth of shares in the pub chain.

Martin, who also chairs the hospitality company, sold 1.361m shares in the business on 26 July, according to a London Stock Exchange announcement. Shares in the business dropped in early trading yesterday as a result, 0.9% lower at 743p.

The Wetherspoon's boss sold the shares at a price of 739p apiece, securing himself a £9.58m windfall. The sale has reduced his stake in the company from 25.68% to 24.58%, or 30.38m shares. The company did not disclose a reason for the sale.

Martin founded the firm in 1979 with one venue, Martin's Free House, and has since expanded it to 801 UK sites, employing 43,000 staff.

JD Wetherspoon reported that like-for-like sales had increased by 5.8% in the 10 weeks to 7 July despite unseasonably wet weather.

It is shrinking its pubs portfolio against a tough backdrop for an industry still wrestling with a hangover from Covid-19 venue closures and the ensuing energy and inflation crises, coupled with the cost of living pressure on consumers.

The company opened two pubs but sold or surrendered the lease on 26 premises in the year to the start of Julyand had a further 10 trading pubs either on the market or under offer.

Martin is well known for appending his political pronouncements to the company's stock market updates.He praised the chancellor Rachel Reeves's economic "pedigree" earlier in July as he called for tax changes to help the hospitality sector.

Business view
Nils Pratley



Reeves must realise the HS2 saga has only one sensible destination: it's Euston or bust

No, the long and painful saga of HS2 did not reach its final destination when Rishi Sunak axed the entire northern phase of the project last October. For starters, there is the mopping-up exercise on the cost of that decision – a writeoff of £2.17bn in the latest accounts. Of that, £1.1bn is money actually spent on the ground in preparing phase two before it was jettisoned. It is money down the drain in the purest sense.

But then there is the unresolved question of Euston, which has been its own fiasco within the greater shambles. The intended HS2 station on the site has been through two designs already and there is still nothing resembling a final plan, in large part because the Department for Transport "still does not know what it is trying to achieve", as the public accounts committee put it in July last year. The former prime minister's last contribution was to ditch the 10-platform version and appoint a new development body to attract private capital and develop a definitive strategy.

On the plus side, Sunak's action did at least seem to acknowledge that it would be absurd to stop the railway at Old Oak Common in north-west London, 5 miles from Euston. All the modelling shows the destination would primarily be convenient only to about one-third of passengers – those going on to Heathrow or catching the Elizabeth line. On the other hand, the outgoing government did not actually provide the funding to set the tunnelling machines in motion to complete the last leg to Euston.



▲ *An HS2 tunnel boring machine at Old Oak Common. The Tories did not fund the final stage to Euston*
PHOTOGRAPH: LEON NEAL/GETTY

It is why the forward-looking detail on page 48 of HS2's annual report, as opposed to the historical writeoffs, was the critical bit of the document: "Failure to secure funding to deliver Euston tunnels and station could impact the organisation's ability to safely operate and maintain Old Oak Common Station and train services across HS2, Great Western mainline and Elizabeth line."

Well, quite. Stopping at Old Oak Common would probably overwhelm the already busy Elizabeth line and make the whole system less resilient. Many west coast passengers would probably continue to use the conventional service to Euston, undermining the supposedly core idea that HS2 will release capacity for local services. In short, there is no alternative to going on to Euston: HS2, even in its slimmed-down incarnation, makes little sense without it.

> *Stopping at Old Oak Common would probably overwhelm the Elizabeth line and make the whole system less resilient*

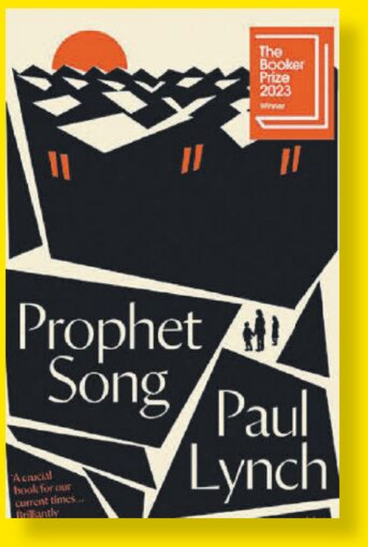
Despite speculation that the future of the Euston tunnel hangs in the balance, Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, did not mention it in her list of spending cuts yesterday. Let us hope that means the money will arrive from somewhere because a critical point is fast approaching. The boring machines, awaiting final assembly in Germany, need to be dropped into place at Old Oak Common before the next stage of work on the station, due to be completed between 2029 and 2033, proceeds. The design of Euston can wait, but a green light for tunnelling is required within months.

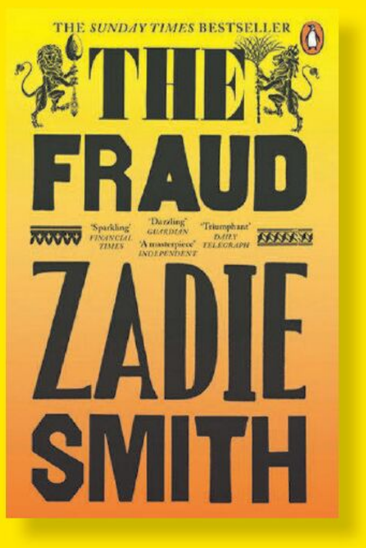
The overspend on misconceived HS2 over the years has been a national embarrassment. But phase one without the leg to Euston would make a bad situation worse. Reeves should clear up the fresh uncertainty over the tunnel. It has to be built.

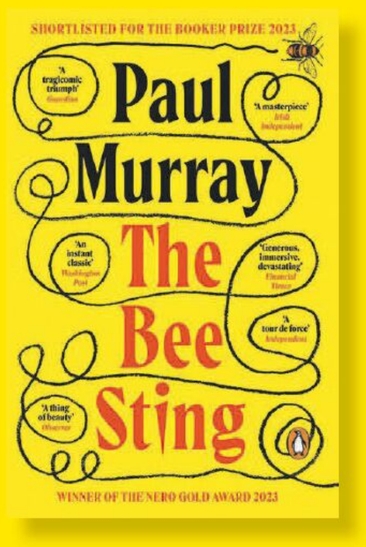
3 for £25 on summer reads

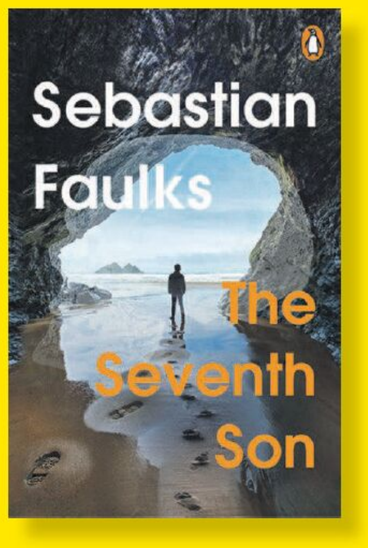
Stock up your shelves this summer with our multi-buy offer on selected paperback fiction, from the hottest new releases to Guardian Bookshop bestsellers

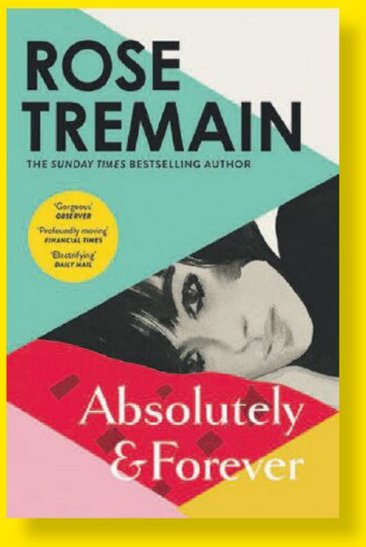
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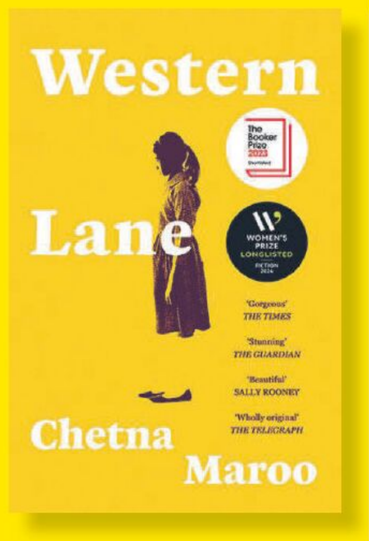












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The Guardian Bookshop



From left, Philip Davies, Charles Walker, Julian Knight, William Wragg, Alok Sharma and Ben Wallace, who have set up companies this year

Life after politics Tory MPs set up companies as defeat loomed

Rob Davies
Michael Goodier

As the Conservative party hurtled towards electoral defeat in June, the veteran backbencher Philip Davies appeared to be weighing up his next career move.

Davies incorporated a new company, Nessen Ltd, on 20 June, describing the nature of its business as "management consultancy" in a filing to Companies House.

The then candidate for Shipley listed his own occupation as "consultant". Days later, Davies insisted he was still "busting a gut to win" his seat, despite admitting - amid the snowballing political betting scandal - that he had placed an £8,000 wager on himself to lose. Fittingly, his new venture shared a partial name with a horse he once co-owned called Nessen Dorma, according to a racing publication.

But Davies, who did not reply to requests for comment, was far from the only Tory MP hedging his bets.

At least a dozen others set up management consultancies or public relations businesses this year as they faced up to the prospect of life after politics, according to Guardian analysis.

There is no suggestion of any wrongdoing or conflict of interest on the part of the MPs. Rather, Companies House filings suggest many were lining up what appeared to be new earning opportunities.

Some did so as electoral defeat loomed, others after standing down and still more in the days immediately after Labour's landslide victory. On 22 May, the day Rishi Sunak called the election, the former Conservative MP Julian Knight set up DWR174 Consulting Ltd. Knight had been suspended from the party over allegations of sexual impropriety, which he denies, but contested his Solihull constituency as an independent candidate. He did not respond to requests for comment.

Some MPs had already incorporated businesses in the months before the election, which was called early but had to be held by January 2025 at the latest.

Marcus Fysh, who would declare the Conservative party "dead" in the aftermath of the vote, appeared to be preparing for life after politics in March, when he incorporated an "information technology consultancy". Fysh said it was set up to "handle some of the investments I have been making in artificial intelligence and software engineering".

The former Conservative MP William Wragg, who was embroiled in a honeytrap sexting scam this year, had incorporated a management consultancy called Hammerbrace Ltd three months before that, in partnership with his colleague Charles Walker.

Days after it emerged that Wragg had given out MPs' numbers to someone who apparently extorted him after they met on a dating app, Wragg applied to strike Hammerbrace from the corporate register. Wragg did not return a request for comment.

The details of MPs' plans for work outside politics have emerged as the Labour government prepares to put forward legislation to tighten up the rules on what work members of the House of Commons can perform other than public service.

The proposals, which were approved by the Commons last Thursday, would prevent MPs from taking second jobs that fail to meet a test of putting constituents first.

MPs' work after politics is monitored by the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, which provides advice to the most senior politicians, usually ministers, on taking roles within two years of leaving office. The independent body typically scrutinises those who might be seen to have a conflict of interest or recent access to privileged information, or who could lobby the government.

The former defence secretary Ben Wallace set up Glenfiddich Consulting on 8 April after announcing his intention to stand down. He told the Guardian that the company had been set up to receive payment for freelance work, such as speaking engagements about geopolitics.

He was one of several MPs who incorporated companies after announcing their departure from politics but while still serving their constituents, according to Companies House filings, with April proving a busy month.

Alok Sharma, the former business secretary who chaired the Cop26 climate conference in Glasgow in 2021, set up the Office of Alok Sharma in March. He did not return a request for comment.

Management consultancies were by far the most common choice of new venture for MPs who had announced their intention to stand down. Stephen Hammond, Will Quince and Mark Pawsey set up Vineyard Consultants, Will Quince Ltd and MP Strategic Consulting respectively in April. They did not return requests for comment. Two days before the election, Andrew Percy set up Kitsilano Consulting Ltd. He declined to comment.

Several MPs who did contest the 4 July vote busied themselves with new business ventures in the days immediately after losing their seats. Amanda Solloway set up Amanda Solloway Ltd, Mark Jenkinson incorporated Redghyll Ltd and Anthony Browne started Grand Strategy Ltd, all within two weeks of the result. Browne, a former chief executive of the British Bankers' Association, said he planned to return to regulatory affairs. "I have set up a company as I plan to hire and employ people as part of a hopefully thriving business," he added.

Khalid Mahmood, the only Labour MP on the list, set up KN Strategic Solutions on 17 July. He told the Guardian he had done so to receive fees paid as a senior fellow of the thinktank Policy Exchange.

Incorporating a company is a legal and common way to receive fees as a freelancer. It legitimately minimises taxes on earnings.

Reckitt share price plummets after court ruling on rival's baby formula

Jack Simpson

Reckitt Benckiser's share price has dropped to a 10-year low after a US court ruled that a formula produced by its rival Abbott Laboratories had caused a baby girl to develop a serious bowel disease.

The share price of the British-based consumer goods group, which is facing similar legal action over its Enfamil formula, plunged by about 9% to roughly £40.75 yesterday after Abbott was ordered to pay $495m (£386m) in damages by a court in Missouri on Friday.

A St Louis jury concluded that Abbott's specialised formula for premature babies had led to an Illinois baby developing necrotising enterocolitis (NEC). Abbott intends to appeal.

In March, Reckitt was ordered to pay $60m in damages to a mother who claimed that Enfamil, produced by the Reckitt subsidiary Mead Johnson, had led to the death of her baby.

The company faces its own NEC-related trial in September and investors are waiting to see whether it will be subject to further payouts.

Analysts Jefferies said the Abbott ruling was likely to "depress sentiment" for Abbott and Reckitt, and estimated a discount for the legal liability of £3bn for Reckitt.

According to Reuters, there are now 1,000 cases filed against each, or both, of the companies in US federal or state courts. Abbott and Reckitt have denied the claims.

An Abbott spokesperson said: "Verdicts like [Friday's ruling], where the science and opinions of healthcare professionals who spend their lives treating these babies are ignored, make it difficult to continue supplying these products indefinitely."

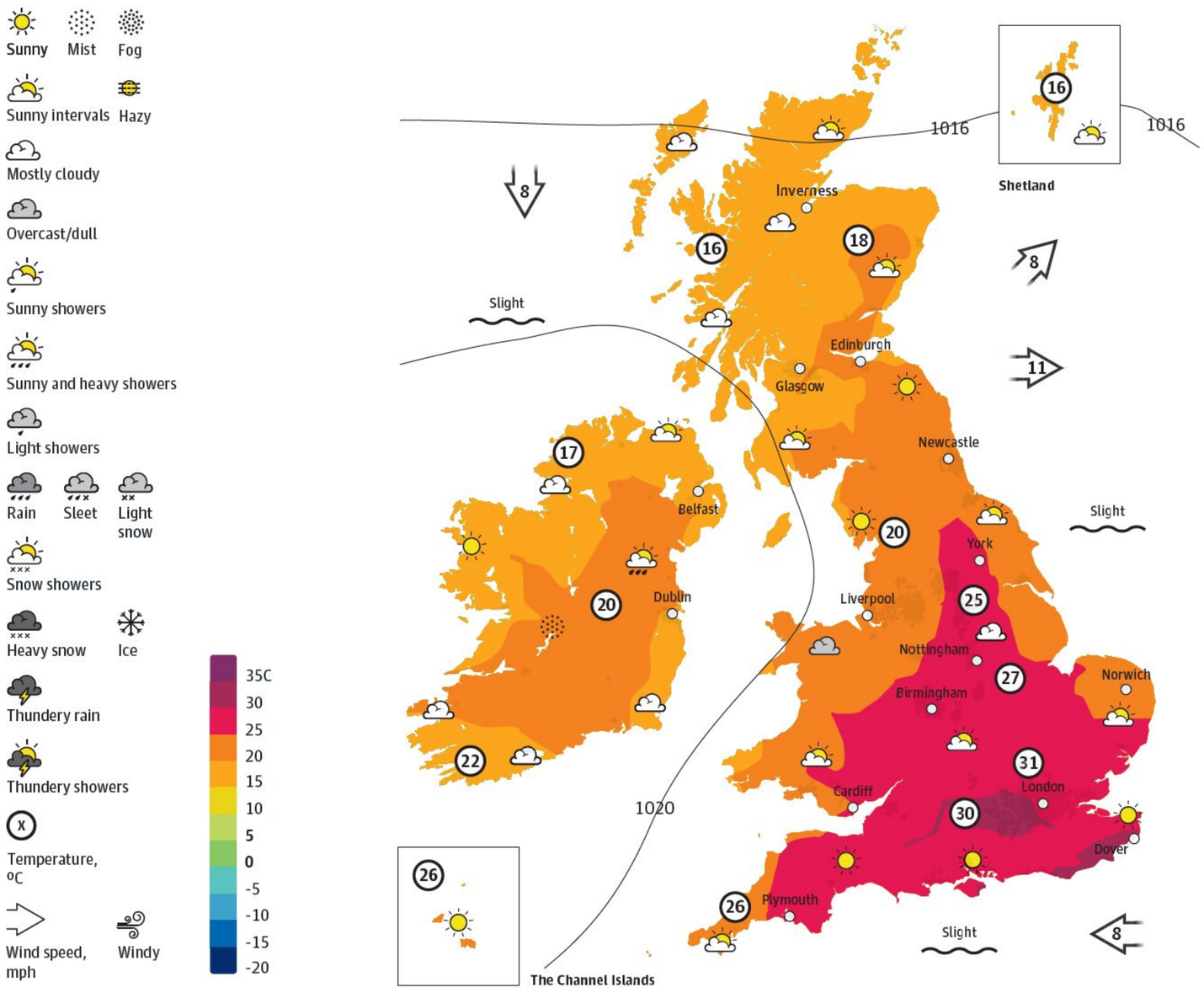
Analysts from JP Morgan said the $495m damages were much higher than expected, with a payout of between $60 and $100m expected.

Abbott's stock was down 6.9% at $98.32 yesterday, while Reckitt's £40.75 share price was its lowest since January 2013.

Reckitt said: "We stand behind the safety and efficacy of our preterm nutrition products ... Claims by plaintiffs' lawyers that these products cause NEC are not supported by the science or the medical consensus and are irresponsible."

Weather
Tuesday 30 July 2024

UK and Ireland Noon today



Forecast

Low 13 High 26
Tomorrow



Low 16 High 22
Thursday



Carbon count

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

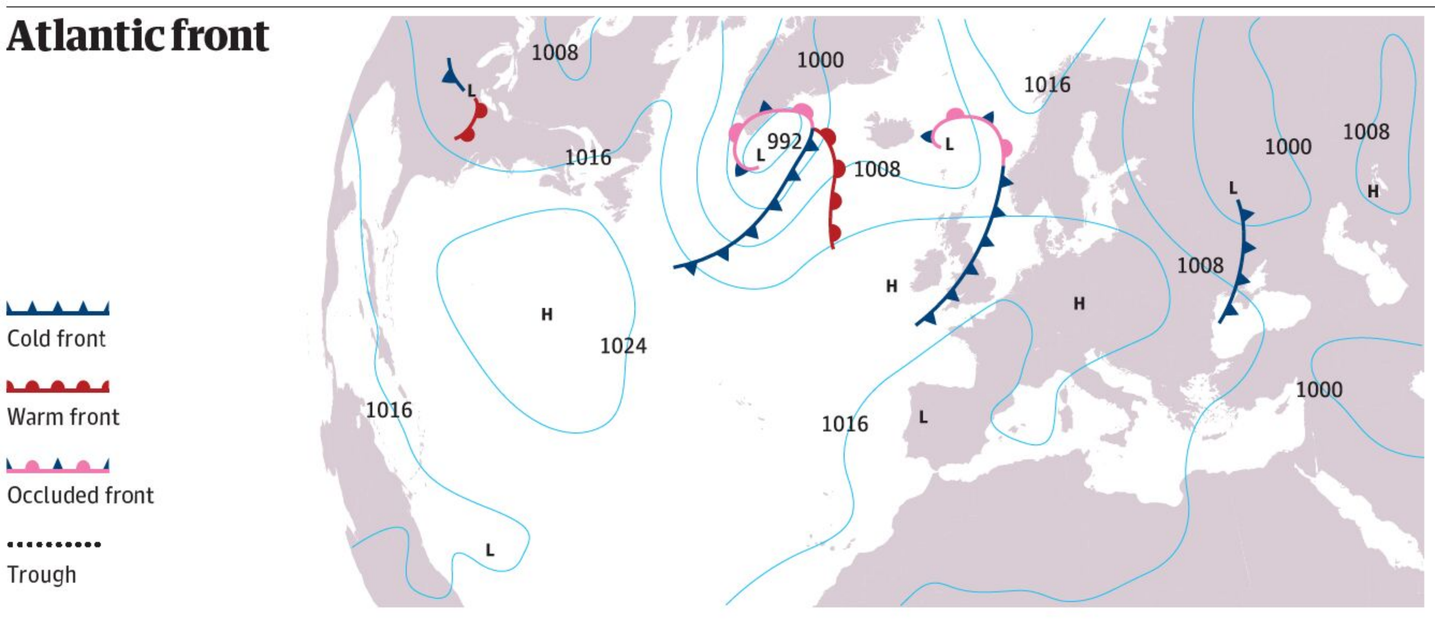
Latest	
26 Jul 2024	424.52
Weekly average	
21 Jul 2024	424.80
29 Jul 2023	421.28
29 Jul 2014	398.97
Pre-industrial base	*280*
Safe level	*350*

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

	Lows and highs	Precipitation	Air pollution
London	18 31	10%	Low
Manchester	12 23	5%	Low
Edinburgh	8 20	0%	Low
Belfast	9 20	25%	Low
Glasgow	7 20	25%	Low
Inverness	8 18	0%	Low
Leeds	14 25	5%	Low
Liverpool	12 22	5%	Low
Newcastle	10 22	5%	Low
Sheffield	14 25	5%	Moderate

Atlantic front



Weather tracker

The Paris Olympics had a soggy start but conditions improved over the weekend. Meteorologists expect temperatures to soar early this week, prompting warnings.

The weather in the French capital has been forecast to climb to 35C (95F) today, about 8C above average for the time of year, posing a challenge to athletes. Southern parts of France are likely to experience the hottest weather, reaching the high 30s celsius, nearly 10C above average.

The heat is likely to go out with a bang next week as low pressure pushes in from the south, bringing thunderstorms to swaths of the country midweek. Spain is also preparing for hot weather, with warnings issued as temperatures are likely to exceed 40C this week.

Meanwhile, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Belarus have issued warnings for strong winds and heavy rain, with extreme weather predicted in Latvia and Estonia.

The storms are caused by an area of low pressure that pushed north-eastwards from Poland on Sunday. More than 150mm of rain within 24 hours is expected in some parts with the potential for thunderstorms and winds of about 60mph in coastal areas. **Morgan Thomas** *MetDesk*

Around the world

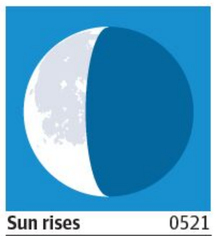
Algiers	36	Lisbon	30
Ams'dam	27	Madrid	38
Athens	36	Malaga	33
Auckland	16	Melb'rne	12
B Aires	13	Mexico C	23
Bangkok	31	Miami	32
Barcelona	33	Milan	33
Basra	47	Mombasa	29
Beijing	26	Moscow	21
Berlin	27	Mumbai	30
Bermuda	30	N Orleans	33
Brussels	30	Nairobi	23
Budapest	29	New Delhi	37
C'hagen	22	New York	28
Cairo	36	Oslo	24
Cape Town	15	Paris	35
Chicago	32	Perth	20
Corfu	36	Prague	27
Dakar	31	Reykjavik	12
Dhaka	32	Rio de J	21
Dublin	20	Rome	33
Florence	37	Shanghai	37
Gibraltar	28	Singapore	33
H Kong	29	Stockh'm	23
Harare	26	Strasb'g	32
Helsinki	22	Sydney	15
Istanbul	31	Tel Aviv	32
Jo'burg	19	Tenerife	26
K Lumpur	32	Tokyo	36
K'mandu	30	Toronto	27
Kabul	37	Vancouv'r	21
Kingston	33	Vienna	28
Kolkata	32	Warsaw	26
L Angeles	28	Wash'ton	31
Lagos	28	Well'ton	12
Lima	18	Zurich	33

High tides

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

Aberdeen	**0929**	3.7m	**2221**	3.5m	**London Bridge**	**0944**	6.1m	**2207**	6.3m
Avonmouth	**0240**	10.6m	**1512**	10.2m	**Lossiemouth**	**0731**	3.5m	**2023**	3.3m
Barrow	**0721**	7.7m	**2001**	7.4m	**Milford Haven**	**0150**	5.7m	**1426**	5.4m
Belfast	**0659**	3.1m	**1946**	3.0m	**Newquay**	**0049**	5.8m	**1325**	5.5m
Cobh	**0058**	3.4m	**1328**	3.4m	**North Shields**	**--**	--	**1135**	4.3m
Cromer	**0228**	4.1m	**1448**	4.3m	**Oban**	**0154**	3.0m	**1423**	2.9m
Dover	**0703**	5.5m	**1930**	5.6m	**Penzance**	**0015**	4.6m	**1256**	4.4m
Dublin	**0744**	3.6m	**2030**	3.5m	**Plymouth**	**0108**	4.6m	**1353**	4.5m
Galway	**0101**	4.1m	**1346**	4.1m	**Portsmouth**	**0729**	4.0m	**2004**	4.1m
Greenock	**0755**	3.0m	**2017**	2.9m	**Southport**	**0600**	7.6m	**1851**	7.3m
Harwich	**0738**	3.3m	**1958**	3.4m	**Stornoway**	**0308**	3.9m	**1602**	3.8m
Holyhead	**0619**	4.8m	**1909**	4.6m	**Weymouth**	**0131**	0.7m	**1412**	0.6m
Hull	**0205**	6.1m	**1424**	6.4m	**Whitby**	**--**	--	**1207**	4.8m
Leith	**1045**	4.7m	**2326**	4.6m	**Wick**	**0713**	2.9m	**2002**	2.8m
Liverpool	**0659**	7.9m	**1943**	7.6m	**Workington**	**0724**	6.9m	**2007**	6.7m

Sun & Moon



Sun rises	0521
Sun sets	2050
Moon rises	0001
Moon sets	1732
New Moon	4 Aug

AccuWeather.com

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

Lighting up

Belfast	2129 to 0534
Birm'ham	2101 to 0526
Brighton	2049 to 0526
Bristol	2101 to 0534
Carlisle	2117 to 0519
Cork	2126 to 0556
Dublin	2124 to 0540
Glasgow	2128 to 0521
Harlech	2113 to 0534
Inverness	2135 to 0511
London	2050 to 0523
M'chester	2107 to 0524
Newcastle	2113 to 0515
Norwich	2050 to 0513
Penzance	2108 to 0550



Alex Yee won team gold and individual silver in Tokyo

Paris 2024

Sport

Today

Paris 32° Tahiti 22°

Highlights

7am
Taking the plunge

An early viewing start as the men's triathlon gets under way. Britain's Alex Yee took silver in Tokyo, and also won the test event last year on this course, starting at the base of Pont Alexander III and taking in many key Paris landmarks. The big problem remains the quality of the water (*see report, page 12*).

12.25pm
Worthington rides again

Tokyo gold medallist in freestyle BMX, Charlotte Worthington goes again. Three years ago, the Mancunian became the first women to land a 360-degree backflip in competition. She stepped away from riding to prioritise her mental health but has regained her love of the sport. World champion Hannah Roberts of the US - who took silver in Tokyo - offers stiff competition. In the men's event, Kieran Reilly is another huge medal hope - he won the world title last year.

5.15pm
Biles to add to medal pile?

Three years ago, the stage appeared set for US gymnastics superstar Simone Biles to tower over the Tokyo Games. Then came the twisties, a string of withdrawals, and ultimately just bronze on the beam. This time around, more storylines overlap as a return to form and new elements bearing her name collide with calf discomfort that flared up a couple of weeks before competition began. She still topped the all-around standings in Sunday's qualifying - today comes the team final and a chance of a fifth Olympic gold. A huge pointer of whether she will remain in the hunt for more.



Charlotte Worthington is the defending champion in freestyle BMX

8.59pm
GB primed for pool party

The 4x200m freestyle relay offers Team GB one of their best chances of gold. The squad has formidable strength in depth, with the four who won in Tokyo all ranking in the world's top 10 for the distance. Reigning individual champion Tom Dean - who did not qualify to take part solo this time around after being beaten by Matt Richards and six-time Olympic medallist Duncan Scott in the trials - is likely to line up alongside two-time gold-winning James Guy.

9.35pm
It's the 3x3 basketball

Jimmer Fredette's college basketball exploits sparked "Jimmermania" at BYU, drew praise from Barack Obama and led to a first-round draft pick to the NBA in 2011. But by 2021 his career had stalled and Fredette was playing in China. In 2022, he switched to 3x3 and a previously floundering US team is now a medal favourite at La Concorde.

2.34am & 3.15am (Wed)
All eyes on the wall of skulls

Some late-night viewing thanks to the surfing competition taking place in Teahupo'o - approximate translation "wall of skulls", though it's been nicknamed The End of the Road - in Tahiti, with athletes staying in a cruise ship moored offshore). The attraction is what surfer.com described as "without a doubt one of the heaviest, scariest, most dangerous left-hand reef break waves in the entire world".

Today's TV

Live
Discovery+ All events live
BBC One 6.45am-1pm, 1.45pm-6pm, 7pm-10pm
BBC Two 1pm-1.45pm, 6pm-7pm
BBC● 6.45am-11pm
Eurosport 1 6.50am-9.23pm
Eurosport 2 6.50am-2am

Highlights
BBC One 10.40pm
Eurosport 1 9-10.15pm

Schedule Day 4

Archery	Men's Women's	**11:00, 16:45** Round of 32 **11:52, 17:37** Round of 16 **11:26, 17:11** Round of 32 **12:05, 17:50** Round of 16
Artistic gymnastics	Women's team	**17:15** Final●
Badminton	Women's singles Men's doubles Women's doubles Men's singles	**07:30, 08:20, 14:40, 18:30** Group stage **08:20, 13:00, 13:50, 19:20** Group stage **09:10, 10:00, 13:50, 19:20, 20:10** Group stage **10:00, 15:30, 20:10, 21:00** Group stage
Basketball	Men's pool stage	Group A **10:00** Spain v Greece **12:30** Canada v Australia Group B **16:15** Japan v France **20:00** Brazil v Germany
3x3 basketball	Women's Men's	**16:30** United States v Germany **17:00** Australia v Canada **20:00** Azerbaijan v Spain **20:30** France v China **17:35** Lithuania v Latvia **18:05** Netherlands v China **21:05** France v Poland **21:35** United States v Serbia
Beach vollyball	Men's Women's	**08:00, 09:00, 10:00, 11:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00, 19:00, 20:00, 21:00** Preliminaries **08:00, 09:00, 10:00, 11:00, 14:00, 15:00, 16:00, 19:00, 20:00, 21:00** Preliminaries
Boxing	Men's 51kg Men's 80kg Women's 54kg Women's 57kg	**10:00, 14:30, 19:00** Round of 16 **10:48, 15:18, 19:32** Round of 16 **11:20, 15:50, 20:36** Round of 16 **12:08, 16:38, 21:08** Round of 32
Canoe slalom	Women's C1 Men's K1	**14:00, 16:10** Heats **15:00, 17:10** Heats
Cycling (BMX)	Women's freestyle Men's freestyle	**12:25** Park qualification **14:12** Park qualification
Equestrianism	Dressage	**10:00** Individual grand prix day 1 **10:00** Team grand prix day 1
Fencing	Women's team épée	**12:30** Quarter-finals **14:00** Classification 5-8 **14:50** Semi-finals **15:40** Placing 5-8 **18:30** Bronze match● **19:30** Gold match●
Football	Men's	Group C **14:00** Dominican Republic v Uzbekistan, Spain v Egypt Group B **16:00** Ukraine v Argentina, Morocco v Iraq Group A **18:00** United States v Guinea, New Zealand v France Group D **20:00** Israel v Japan, Paraguay v Mali
Handball	Women's	Group A **08:00** Germany v Slovenia **10:00** Norway v South Korea **20:00** Sweden v Denmark Group B **13:00** Netherlands v Spain **15:00** Hungary v Angola **18:00** France v Brazil
Hockey	Men's	Group A **09:00** Spain v France **09:30** South Africa v Germany **11:45** Great Britain v Netherlands Group B **12:15** Ireland v India **16:00** Argentina v New Zealand **18:45** Australia v Belgium
Judo	Men's -81kg Womens -63kg	**09:00** Round of 64 **09:28** Round of 32 **11:20** Round of 16 **12:16** Quarter-finals **15:00** Repechage **15:17** Semi-finals **16:18, 16:28** Bronze bouts● **16:38** Gold bout● **09:00** Round of 64 **09:28** Round of 32 **11:20** Round of 16 **12:16** Quarter-finals **15:34** Repechage **15:51** Semi-finals **16:49, 16:59** Bronze bouts● **17:09** Gold bout●
Rowing	Women's sgl sculls Men's sgl sculls Women's dbl sculls Men's dbl sculls Women's four Men's four	**08:30** Quarter-finals **09:10** Quarter-finals **09:50, 10:00** Semi-finals A/B **10:10, 10:20** Semi-finals A/B **10:30** Repechage **10:40** Repechage
Rugby 7s	Women's	**13:30, 14:00** Placing 5-8 **14:30, 15:00** Semi-finals **15:30** Placing 11-12 **16:00** Placing 9-10 **17:00** Placing 7-8 **17:30** Placing 5-6 **18:00** Bronze match● **18:45** Gold match●
Sailing	Men's windsurfing Women's windsurfing Men's skiff Women's skiff	**11:00** Races 9-12 **11:00** Races 9-12 **15:35** Races 7-9 **14:45** Races 7-9
Shooting	Men's trap Women's trap Team 10m air pistol	**08:00** Qualification day 2 **14:30** Final● Qualification day 1 **08:30** Bronze match● **09:00** Gold match●
Surfing	Men's Women's	**18:00** Quarter-finals **22:48** Semi-finals **01:12 (Wed)** Bronze match● **02:34** Gold match● **20:24** Quarter-finals **00:00 (Wed)** Semi-finals **01:53** Bronze match● **03:15** Gold match●
Swimming	Men's 100m f/s Men's 200m br/s Men's 200m b/f Men's 4x200m f/s Women's 100m f/s Women's 1500m f/s Women's 100m ba/s Men's 800m f/s	**10:00** Heats **19:30** Semi-finals **10:00** Heats **20:46** Semi-finals **10:00** Heats **19:41** Semi-finals **10:00** Heats **20:59** Final● **10:00** Heats **20:25** Semi-finals **10:00** Heats **19:57** Final● **20:03** Final●
Table tennis	Men's singles Women's singles Mixed doubles	**09:00** Round of 32 **09:00** Round of 32 **12:30** Bronze match● **13:30** Gold match●
Tennis	Men's singles Women's singles Men's doubles Women's doubles Mixed doubles	**11:00, 18:00** Round 2 **11:00, 18:00** Round 3 **11:00** Round 3 **11:00** Round 2 **11:00** Rounds 1-3
Triathlon	Men's	**07:00** Individual●
Volleyball	Men's	Group B **08:00** Italy v Egypt Group C **12:00** United States v Germany Group A **16:00** Slovenia v Serbia **20:00** France v Canada
Water polo	Men's	Group B **09:30** Australia v Serbia **14:00** Japan v France **20:05** Spain v Hungary Group A **11:05** Croatia v Italy **15:35** United States v Romania **18:30** Montenegro v Greece



Andy Murray is back with Dan Evans in the men's doubles - fourth match on Suzanne Lenglen court

In brief

Rugby sevens

US dump Britain out in quarter-final

Britain's women crashed out of the rugby sevens with a 17-7 defeat by the United States in last night's quarter-final. An early try from Ellie Boatman put GB in a strong position. But the US came back with a try from Naya Tapper, followed by a Kristi Kirshe score just after the interval. When Sammy Sullivan went over for the US's third try, Britain's hopes were in tatters. Earlier in the day, GB beat South Africa 26-17 to set up the knockout tie. **Guardian sport**

Hockey

GB in trouble after Australia humbling

Great Britain fell to a 4-0 defeat against Australia in the women's hockey tournament. GB fell behind in the second quarter in Colombes when Rebecca Greiner opened the scoring from a penalty corner. Alice Arnott added a second two minutes later. Tatum Stewart converted a penalty stroke in the final quarter before Grace Stewart wrapped up the win. GB, who won gold at the 2016 Rio Games, also lost their opener, 2-1 to Spain, and face a battle to reach the quarter-finals. **Guardian sport**

Athletics

Lyles defends his 'fastest man' claim

Noah Lyles has defended his claim that he's the "fastest man in the world". "It's me," Lyles said in a press conference yesterday. "It's always going to be me." Lyles was criticised for giving himself the moniker on social media last weekend. The 27-year-old drew pushback given Lyles's best 100m time of the year (9.81sec) falls short of that posted by Jamaica's Kishane Thompson (9.77sec). But Lyles, the reigning 100m and 200m men's world champion, added on YouTube: "The titles 'fastest man' and 'fastest woman' are awarded annually to the winners of the 100m at the world championships. I won the men's 100m at the 2023 world championships, and Sha'Carri [Richardson] won the women's." **Guardian sport**



▶ *Ben Stokes's return with the ball means he can use his fastest bowlers in shorter spells*
ANDREW COULDRIDGE/ ACTION IMAGES VIA REUTERS

England eye bright times with Anderson now master mentor

Emergence of Atkinson and Smith, plus the return of Stokes to the attack, offers real hope for the future

Ali Martin

And so at the end of England's clean sweep of West Indies, the best bowler by way of average and economy rate was … Jimmy Anderson. Yep, despite being shepherded into retirement with that farewell first Test, the GOAT was still top of both columns for the two sides. His four wickets at Lord's cost 14.5 runs each and his overs 2.17 a pop; a nice statistical postscript for a remarkable career.

Anderson decided against joining his fellow contributors when the Richards-Botham Trophy was presented to Ben Stokes on the outfield at Edgbaston on Sunday. The trophy is a double-ended cup that, depending on whether placed to receive some Caribbean rum or a splash of English ale, denotes the holders. England, having slaked an 18-month thirst for a series win with the 3-0 scoreline, rightly kept the triumphalism to a minimum.

Instead, Anderson opted to remain out of shot, having quietly slipped into the role of bowling mentor for the last two Tests. Mark Wood credited him for the advice that led to that five-wicket burst of reverse swing on the final day, while Brendon McCullum, the head coach who flew halfway around the world to issue the fabled tap on the shoulder in late April, was impressed with his input.

"The way he was able to exit the game at Lord's, that memory will live with him for ever," McCullum said. "And to move straight into the coaching staff … what he's given in the past couple of matches has been quite incredible."

Granted, the West Indies batting lineup was pretty brittle. England could also have taken a look at either Matthew Potts or Dillon Pennington in the final Test, given the Anderson call was made with the future in mind and the series was already won. But over the course of the two wins in Nottingham and Birmingham, the thinking behind the great man's exit grew flesh on the bones.

A combination of one home-conditions banker (Chris Woakes), two outright quicks with the ability to reverse-swing the ball (Wood and Gus Atkinson) and an attacking spinner (Shoaib Bashir, rather than Jack Leach) signposted what is now the new structure for England's Test attack. Overall, it worked well. One name is missing here, and there is a case to say that after 10 days of one-sided cricket – West Indies only briefly flickering at Trent Bridge and Edgbaston – the most significant development beyond Jamie Smith's emergence as a wicketkeeper-batter of considerable talent was the return of Stokes the bowler. The most recent England team to win in Australia, in 2010-11, did so with a four-man attack but only thanks to a world-class spinner in Graeme Swann. Otherwise, their most potent attacks tend to be balanced by an all-rounder, be it Ian Botham, Andrew Flintoff or Stokes.

Stokes, who thundered in for 49 overs, displayed none of the grimaces of last summer – the ones that flagged his urgent need to go under the knife – and the knock-on effect for England's new approach was clear to see. Over the course of the six innings against West Indies, Stokes bowled in five and induced five breakthroughs. He looks as lean as ever, his speeds were hovering in the mid-80s mph (just ask Zak Crawley, after breaking his finger dropping a catch on the final day), and the swing endures.

Had Anderson ploughed on, it would have meant Woakes stepping aside to leave a long tail or the two outright quicks rotating for one spot. As it was, England saw the best of all three, be it Wood terrorising batters, Atkinson announcing himself with 22 wickets – there is so much to like here, even without that bumper haul – or Woakes steadily growing into the series. After a disrupted early season that included time off for bereavement, the 35-year-old took 11 wickets at 21 and twice bailed them out with the bat.

While Woakes has struggled overseas – a bowling average of 21.8 in England balloons by 30 runs abroad – the head coach noted the lack of new-ball opportunities that perhaps explains the disparity. "It's hard to rub him out," McCullum said, regarding Woakes's prospects of a further chance on the road next winter. "He's a remarkable cricketer."

England's hope in time is that Jofra Archer and Josh Tongue, when fit, will push hard for those two designated pace berths or even make it three in the same XI. Who knows, perhaps the penny will drop for Ollie Robinson, or Potts, Pennington or Sam Cook will challenge for the new ball role. Either way, after flipping the Richards-Botham Trophy in the manner they did, the roles are now defined and the makeup of England's post-Anderson attack has clarity.

McCullum hails 'harder feel'

England's 3-0 series win against West Indies showed they had "bounced back with a harder feel" after their winter defeat by India, according to Brendon McCullum. "We're not the finished article, but this is a step forward," the head coach said. "It's really satisfying, the growth of the side in general. Sometimes when you lose you get a period of reflection, and what we've seen is a team which has bounced back with a bit more of a harder feel to it.

"The group and the understanding of how we want to play as a team is starting to get to where we want it to. We're not the finished product but this has been a step forward. You're starting to formulate the sort of side able to go up against the best teams in the world." Simon Burnton

Formula One

Sainz signs two-year Williams deal after 'complex' decision

Carlos Sainz said an "exceptionally complex" Formula One driver market delayed his decision to sign a two-year deal with Williams. The Spaniard will leave Ferrari at the end of 2024 after Lewis Hamilton was announced early this year as his replacement for next season.

Sainz has won three F1 races in his career to date, the latest of which came at the Australian Grand Prix in March. Having previously driven for Toro Rosso, Renault and McLaren, Sainz had been linked with a number of seats for 2025 including Alpine, Sauber and Mercedes. But his immediate future was confirmed yesterday.

"I am very happy to announce that I will be joining Williams Racing from 2025 onwards," the 29-year-old said. "It is no secret that this year's driver market has been exceptionally complex for various reasons and that it has taken me some time to announce my decision.

"However, I am fully confident that Williams is the right place to continue my F1 journey and I am extremely proud of joining such a historic and successful team, where many of my childhood heroes drove in the past."

Sainz will replace Logan Sargeant at Williams, where he will partner Alex Albon. Williams last took a podium finish in 2021, with their last win coming courtesy of Pastor Maldonado's shock victory at the 2012 Spanish Grand Prix. **PA Media**

Results

Cricket

THE HUNDRED MEN
Old Trafford Trent Rockets 145-7 (TW Hartley 3-25). Manchester Originals 144-8. Trent Rockets beat Manchester Originals by one run.

THE HUNDRED WOMEN
Old Trafford Manchester Originals 137-6. Trent Rockets 136-4 (NR Sciver-Brunt 56). Manchester Originals beat Trent Rockets by one run.

METRO BANK ONE-DAY CUP
Radlett Northamptonshire 317-9 (PP Shaw 76, AH Miller 73, Saif Zaib 58; LBK Hollman 3-49). Middlesex 319-5 (MD Stoneman 83, NS Fernandes 83; J Broad 3-65). Middlesex beat Northamptonshire by five wickets.

Rugby union

OLYMPIC GAMES
Women's sevens
Pool A Canada 26 China 17; New Zealand 38 Fiji 7
Pool B Great Britain 26 South Africa 17; Australia 19 Ireland 14. **Pool C** Japan 39 Brazil 12; France 31 USA 14
Quarter-finals Australia L Ireland L; France 14 Canada 19; Great Britain 7 USA 17; New Zealand 55 China 5

Tennis

OLYMPIC GAMES
Men: Singles: Second round: R Safiullin (AIN) bt TM Etcheverry (Arg) 6-0 7-6(1); **N Djokovic** (Ser) bt R Nadal (Sp) 6-1 6-4; **F Cerúndolo** (Arg) bt U Humbert (Fr) 7-5 6-7(5) 7-5; **C Ruud** (Nor) bt A Vavassori (It) 4-6 6-4 6-3; **S Tsitsipas** (Gre) bt D Evans (GB) 6-1 6-2; **D Koepfer** (Ger) bt M Arnaldi (It) 3-6 6-2 6-1; **S Báez** (Arg) bt B Hassan (Leb) 6-2 3-6 7-6(3); **C Alcaraz** (Sp) bt T Griekspoor (Neth) 6-1 7-6(3)

Women: Singles: Second round: L Fernandez (Can) bt C Bucsa (Sp) 7-6(4) 6-3; **A Kerber** (Ger) bt J Cristian (Rom) 6-4 3-6 6-4; **J Paolini** (It) bt M Linette (Pol) 6-4 6-1; **Zheng Q** (Chn) bt A Rus (Neth) 6-2 6-4; **I Swiatek** (Pol) bt D Parry (Fr) 6-1 6-1; **B Krejcikova** (Cz) bt Wang Xin (Chn) 6-3 6-1; **D Vekic** (Cro) bt B Andreescu (Can) 6-3 6-4; **C Gauff** (US) bt ML Carlé (Arg) 6-1 6-1; **C Osorio** (Col) 7-6(4) 6-4; **E Navarro** (US) bt V Tomova (Bul) 6-7(5) 6-4 6-1; **M Sakkari** (Gre) bt Yuan Y (Chn) 6-2 6-1; **D Collins** (US) bt C Wozniaki (Den) 6-3 3-6 6-3

Men: Doubles: First round: T Machac & A Pavlasek (Cz) bt J Salisbury & N Skupski (GB) 4-6 6-3 10-8

Archery

OLYMPIC GAMES
Men: Team: Final: South Korea 5 France 1
Bronze: China 2 Turkey 6

Canoeing

OLYMPIC GAMES
Men: Canoe Slalom: Single: Final: 1 N Gestin (Fr) 91.36sec; **2** A Burgess (GB) 96.84; **3** M Benus (Svk) 97.03; **4** S Tasiadis (Ger) 97.27; **5** M Travé (Sp) 97.92; **6** L Rohan (Cz) 98.09; **7** L Jegou (Ire) 98.52; **8** M Marinic (Cro) 100.35

Cycling

OLYMPIC GAMES
Men: Mountain Bike: Cross-country: 1 T Pidcock (GB) 1hr 26min 22sec; **2** V Koretzky (Fr) 1:26:31; **3** A Hatherly (SA) 1:26:33; **4** L Braidot (It) 1:26:56; **5** M Flückiger (Swi) 1:27:42; **6** S Gaze (Aus) 1:28:03; **7** R Amos (US) 1:28:08; **8** C Aldridge (GB) 1:28:32

Diving

OLYMPIC GAMES
Men: 10m Synchronised Platform: Final: 1 Lian J & Yang H (Chn) 490.35pts; **2** T Daley & N Williams (GB) 463.44; **3** R Wiens & N Zsombor-Murray (Can) 422.13; **4** K Berlín Reyes & R Willars Valdez (Mex) 418.65; **5** K Boliukh & O Sereda (Ukr) 412.65; **6** D Bedggood & C Rousseau (Aus) 394.74; **7** T Barthel & JS Eikermann (Ger) 364.41; **8** G Hunt & L Szymczak (Fr) 314.58

Equestrian

OLYMPIC GAMES
Individual Eventing: Final Standings: 1 M Jung (Ger) 21.80 penalties; **2** C Burton (Aus) 22.40; **3** L Collett (GB) 23.10; **4** T McEwen (GB) 25.80; **5** K Tomoto (Jpn) 27.40; **6** T Price (NZ) 28.50; **7** Y Oiwa (Jpn) 30.30; **8** F Vogg (Swi) 30.50

Team Eventing: Final Standings: 1 Great Britain 91.30 penalties; **2** France 103.60; **3** Japan 115.80; **4** Belgium 123.40; **5** Switzerland 128.40; **6** Sweden 130.50; **7** USA 133.70; **8** New Zealand 134.60

Gymnastics

OLYMPIC GAMES
Men: Team Final: 1 Japan 259.594pts; **2** China 259.062; **3** USA 257.793; **4** Great Britain 255,527; **5** Ukraine 254,716; **6** Italy 248.260; **7** Switzerland 247.427; **8** Canada 245.426

Hockey

OLYMPIC GAMES
Men: Group A: India 1 Argentina 1; Ireland 1 Australia 2

Women: Group A France 0 Belgium 5; Germany 1 Netherlands 2; Japan 0 China 5
Group B Great Britain 0 Australia 4; South Africa 2 Argentina 4; Spain 1 USA 1

Judo

OLYMPIC GAMES
Men: 73kg: Final: H Heydarov (Aze) bt J-B Gaba (Fr) 10-0; **Bronze A:** A Osmanov (Mol) bt M Lombardo (It) 10-0; **Bronze B:** S Hashimoto (Jpn) bt A Gjakova (Kos) 1-0

Women: 57kg: Final: C Deguchi (Can) bt Huh M (Kor) 10-0; **Bronze A: H Funakubo** (Jpn) bt R Silva (Br) 10-0; **Bronze B: SL Cysique** (Fr) bt E Liparteliani (Geo) 11-0

Shooting

OLYMPIC GAMES
Women: 10m Air Rifle: Final: 1 Ban H (Kor) 251.8, shoot-off 10.4; **2** Huang Y (Chn) 251.8, shoot-off 10.3; **3** A Gogniat (Swi) 230.3; **4** S Maddalena (US) 207.7

Men: 10m Air Rifle: Final: 1 Sheng L (Chn) 252.2 OR; **2** V Lindgren (Swe) 251.4; **3** M Maricic (Cro) 230.0; **4** A Babuta (Ind) 208.4

Swimming

OLYMPIC GAMES
Women: 400m Individual Medley: Final: 1 S McIntosh (Can) 4min 27.71sec; **2** K Grimes (US) 4:33.40; **3** E Weyant (US) 4:34.93; **4** FC Colbert (GB) 4:35.67; **5** E Ramsay (Aus) 4:38.01; **6** M Narita (Jpn) 4:38.83; **7** K Shanahan (GB) 4:40.17; **8** E Walshe (Ire) 4:40.70

Men: 200m Freestyle: Final: 1 D Popovici (Rom) 1min 44.72sec; **2** M Richards (GB) 1:44.74; **3** L Hobson (US) 1:44.79; **4** D Scott (GB) 1:44.87; **5** L Märtens (Ger) 1:45.46; **5** D Rapsys (Lit) 1:45.46; **7** M Giuliani (Aus) 1:45.57; **8** K Matsumoto (Jpn) 1:46.26

Men: 100m Backstroke: Final: 1 T Ceccon (It) 52.00sec; **2** Xu J (Chn) 52.32; **3** R Murphy (US) 52.39; **4** A Christou (Gre) 52.41; **5** P Coetze (SA) 52.58; **6** H González de Oliveira (Sp) 52.73; **7** Y Ndoye-Brouard (Fr) 52.77; **8** O Morgan (GB) 52.84

Women: 100m Breaststroke: Final: 1 T Smith (SA) 1min 05.28sec; **2** Tang Q (Chn) 1:05.54; **3** Mona McSharry (Ire) 1:05.59; **4** B Pilato (It) 1:05.60; **4** L King (US) 1:05.60; **6** A Evans (GB) 1:05.85; **7** E Jefimova (Est) 1:06.50; **8** A Zmushka (AIN) 1:06.54

Women: 200m Freestyle: Final: 1 M O'Callaghan (Aus) 1min 53.27sec OR; **2** A Titmus (Aus) 1:53.81; **3** SB Haughey (HK) 1:54.55; **4** M-S Harvey (Can) 1:55.29; **5** Yang J (Chn) 1:55.38; **6** B Seemanova (Cz) 1:55.47; **7** E Fairweather (NZ) 1:55.59; **8** C Weinstein (US) 1:56.60

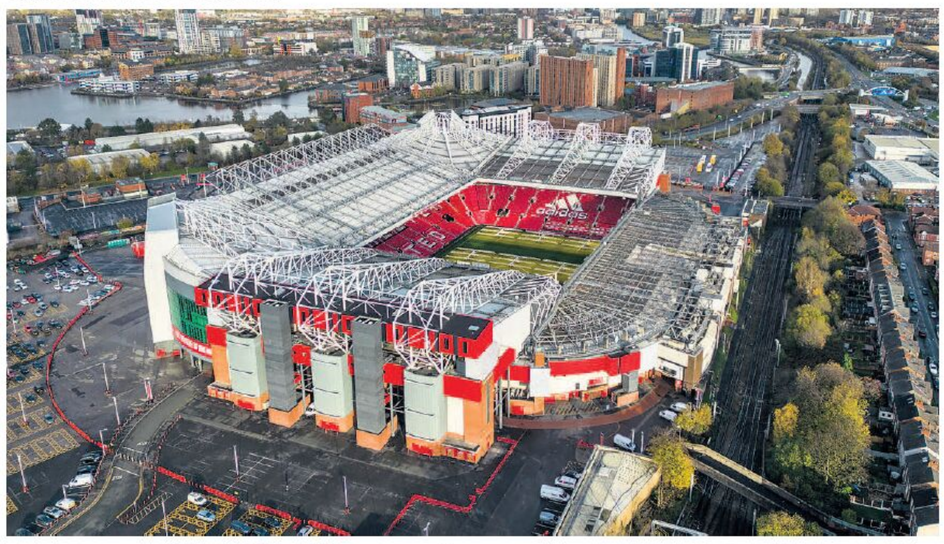
Fixtures

Cricket
Third Men's T20 International
Sri Lanka v India, Pallekele (2.30pm)
The Hundred Men
Northern S'chargers v Southern Brave, Headingley (6.35pm)
The Hundred Women
Northern S'chargers v Southern Brave, Headingley (3pm)
Metro Bank One-Day Cup
Surrey v Gloucestershire, The Kia Oval (11am)

Greg Wood's racing tips

Yarmouth 1.30 Twilight Jazz **2.00** Expensive Rose **2.35** Lady Justice **3.10** Aulis **3.45** Fillyfudge **4.20** Sir Rodneyredblood **4.55** Oh So Audacious **5.30** Silver Shamrock
Goodwood 1.50 Dual Identity (nb) **2.25** An Outlaw's Grace **3.00** English Oak **3.35** Kyprios **4.10** Jm Jungle (nap) **4.45** Jouncy **5.20** Surveyor **5.55** Katey Kontent
Beverley 2.10 Lord Warburton **2.45** Lakers **3.20** Forager **3.55** Dr Rio **4.30** Majeski Man **5.00** Bell Shot
Lingfield 5.45 Imperial Cult **6.20** Hampden **6.55** Idyllic **7.25** Harvard Sound **8.00** Etoile D'Alexandre (nap) **8.30** Shot Of Love
Ffos Las 6.05 Port Noir **6.35** Son Of Wind **7.05** Jax Edge **7.40** Kate The Cook **8.10** James Park Woods **8.40** Godsend

▼ *A new stadium for Manchester United may be built next to Old Trafford*
CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY



Ratcliffe backs new £2bn, 100,000-capacity stadium

Jamie Jackson
Los Angeles

Sir Jim Ratcliffe wants Manchester United to decide on their stadium plans by December and favours a new facility with a capacity of 100,000 that would cost more than £2bn and take about six years to complete. That would be constructed next to Old Trafford, allowing use of the existing venue until the new one is ready.

A prime consideration in the build's aesthetic would be that it is recognisably in the club's image. The other option is a rebuild of Old Trafford but this would mean a marked drop in revenue because sections of the ground would be closed while being revamped or United would have to play elsewhere while work is taking place.

Collette Roche, United's chief operating officer, is leading the project for Ratcliffe, the minority shareholder who is in charge of football operations. She has visited a number of the world's leading stadiums and consulted owners or those principally involved in a venue's genesis. This has included discussions with Real Madrid executives regarding the reconfiguration of the Santiago Bernabéu and there has been an in-depth assessment of SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Los Angeles County.

SoFi Stadium, owned by Stan Kroenke, Arsenal's proprietor, opened in 2020 and hosted United's friendly against Arsenal last Saturday. It has a 70,240 capacity that can rise to 100,240, took four years to construct, cost $5bn-plus and has a 1 million sq ft canopy embedded with 27,000 LED screens that offer prime advertising space with the display able to be seen by air traffic coming into the nearby Los Angeles airport.

SoFi is home to the NFL's LA Rams and LA Chargers and is a major concert venue. It is situated on the 298-acre Hollywood Park campus site, an entertainment complex that features a retail park, residential apartments and the YouTube Theatre.

United held a number of meetings before their US tour with those responsible for developing SoFi to learn from the project as the club assess how best to use the Old Trafford footprint.

James T Butts Jr, the mayor of Inglewood, who drove Hollywood Park's development, said: "I'm maybe biased but I think this is the pre-eminent sports venue in the world. The roof is the biggest advertising opportunity in the world."

Football
In brief

Arsenal

Arteta hails Calafiori as defender joins for £33m

Mikel Arteta believes Riccardo Calafiori's "specific skills" can help Arsenal to make the final step in the quest for major trophies after the Italy defender's arrival from Bologna was confirmed. Having signed a five-year deal, Calafiori met his new teammates in Philadelphia before Arsenal's friendly with Liverpool. The versatile 22-year-old, who has cost an initial £33.6m, is expected to be deployed at left-back despite starring in a more central role at Euro 2024. "Riccardo is a big personality and character, with specific skills which will make us stronger as we push to win major trophies," Arteta, the Arsenal manager, said. "He has already shown great development in recent seasons with his performances for both Bologna and Italy, with his progression and development in the past year being really impressive." Arsenal could move next for the Real Sociedad midfielder Mikel Merino. **Ed Aarons**

Everton

Lyon defender O'Brien set to seal £17m move

The Lyon defender Jake O'Brien has arrived on Merseyside for a medical before a £17m move to Everton. A deal for the 6ft 6in centre-half would not, Everton insist, signal they are preparing to sell Jarrad Branthwaite to Manchester United. O'Brien has attracted interest from several Premier League clubs after a successful first season in France, where he made 27 league appearances for Lyon. Everton agreed terms with Lyon over the weekend and the 23-year-old defender started his medical yesterday. **Andy Hunter**

Chelsea

England's Carter heads to US side Gotham

The England defender Jess Carter has signed for the NWSL club Gotham from Chelsea for an undisclosed fee. The 26-year-old, who has played 36 times for the Lionesses, is understood to have signed a deal with the New Jersey-based club until the end of 2026. Carter's fiancée, the Germany goalkeeper Ann-Katrin Berger, signed for Gotham from Chelsea in April. **Tom Garry**

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Peaty's positive Covid test threatens GB relay prospects

Continued *from back page*

event. "Everyone is taking precautions," Scott said. "The British team were pretty quick to act on things, how quickly they picked it up and stuff like that. Paramount is his health rather than anything else.

"On top of that it is making sure we limit it as much as possible, how far it spreads not only within our team but for everyone else. As much as we are here to compete, we don't want other people to get ill as well. There's mask wearing, hygiene, things like that."

Scott cut a despondent figure after missing out on a medal. "I'm pretty disappointed as you can probably imagine," he said. "Fourth is pretty rotten for anyone. I was so close again. I'm really happy for Matt, it's cool for him."

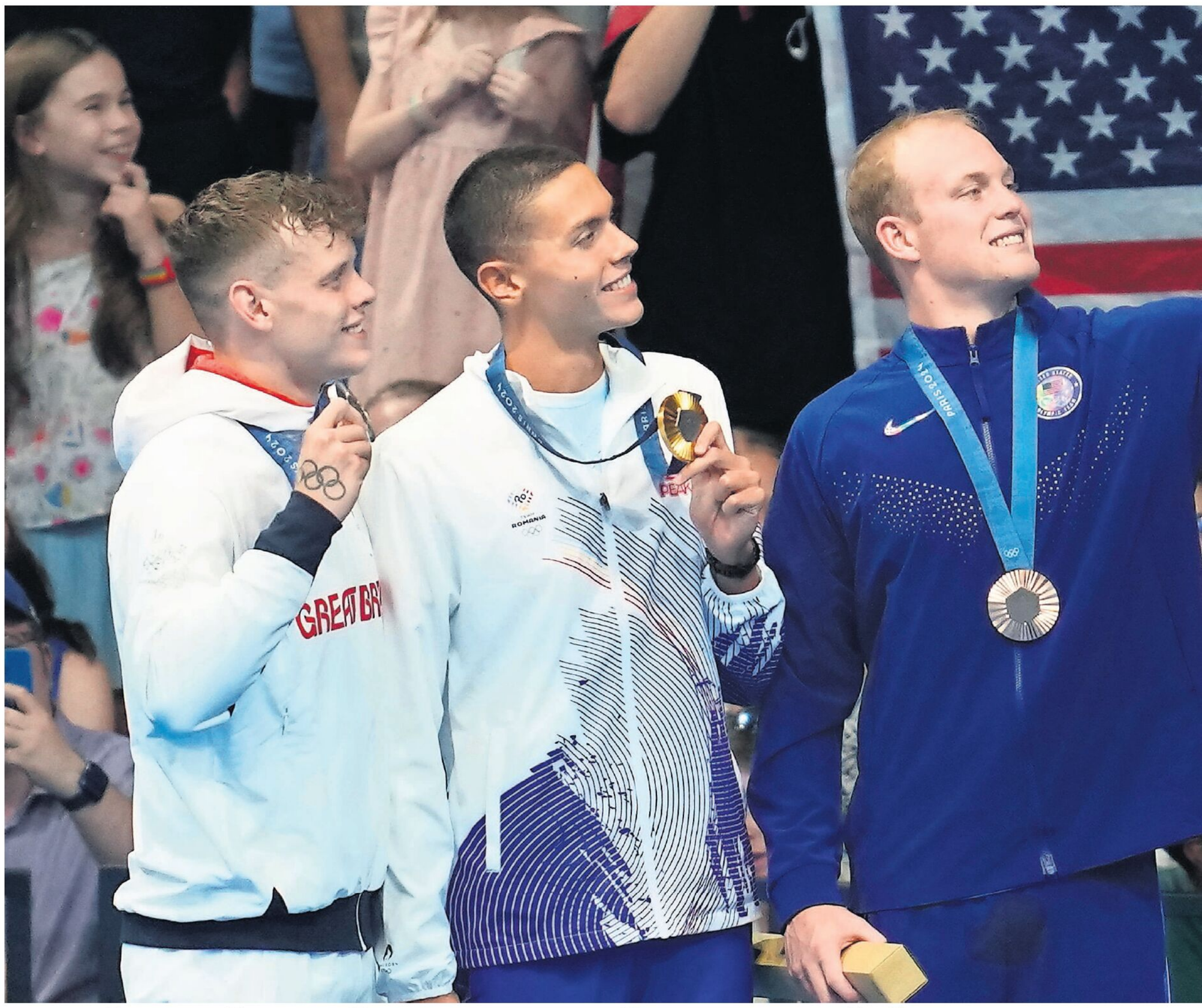
Peaty's availability or otherwise is likely to have a huge impact on the complexion of British swimming after the Olympics. Team GB will be expected to compete for gold if Peaty recovers to take his place in both the 4x100m medley and 4x100m mixed medley competitions. Without him, their task looks a stiff one.

On social media yesterday Peaty offered thanks to those around him and explained why news of his diagnosis had been made public. "I am always an advocate for complete transparency in sport as there are so many gears to make it all work. As per the British Olympic Association press release, I tested positive for Covid this morning after feeling unwell yesterday. I'll now be focusing on a fast, full recovery to give my best in the team relays later in the week."

Ollie Morgan, speaking after his appearance in the 100m backstroke final, echoed Scott's sentiment about necessary measures within the Team GB camp. "We have all the precautions in place so we should all be fine," Morgan said. "It's not something that fazes us, we know everyone will be safe. We have the best health team."

Albeit there have been no broader reports of illness within Team GB, five Australian women's water polo players tested positive for Covid in Paris on 24 July. While Team GB's precise policy with Peaty is unclear, Australia's team chief, Anna Meares, said of her competitors: "They've been wearing their masks, they're isolating from other team members when they're not training, they're not going into the high-volume areas like the gym and the performance pantry, and more broadly we have our respiratory illnesses protocol in place."

Speaking before the Tokyo Games in 2021, Peaty confirmed he had received both shots of the Covid-19 vaccine. "I've taken every measure to make sure I'm not going to spread it to anyone if I did have it," Peaty said three years ago. "Some athletes are coming out here without any vaccinations. You've got to ask them the same question. Unfortunately, it's not an easy one to answer."



Richards a fingertip from gold as Britain still search for pool glory

Silver again by just 0.02sec, this time in 200m freestyle, with Scott agonisingly fourth

Andy Bull
Paris La Défense Arena

The times are slow and margins are slim in the Olympic pool, where the Great Britain team won their second silver medal of the championships last night. It was the Welshman Matt Richards who did it, with a superb swim from lane one in the men's 200m freestyle.

He finished up just two-hundredths of a second behind the winner, the 19-year-old Romanian David Popovici. Which just happened to be the very same margin between Adam Peaty and Nicolò Martinenghi, the gold medallist in the 100m breaststroke, the night before.

British Swimming's performance director, Chris Spice, always calls this a "fingertip sport", but here in Paris races are being settled by the whites of the nails.

This one came down to a ferocious final 50m in which Popovici, Richards, the USA's Luke Hobson and Great Britain's Duncan Scott jockeyed back and forth for the winning millimetre. For the briefest moment, Richards was convinced he had won it. He believed that he had touched the wall first, but hadn't managed to do it with enough force to beat Popovici.

He was good enough to admit that "times don't care about feelings", and said that if he really did touch before Popovici without triggering the stopclock, then it was his technique that was at fault, rather than the mechanism.

"It's not a sport where it is up for debate, it is black and white, so we'll just have to do better next time."



OSCAR J BARROSO/EUROPA PRESS/GETTY IMAGES

Women's 400m individual medley

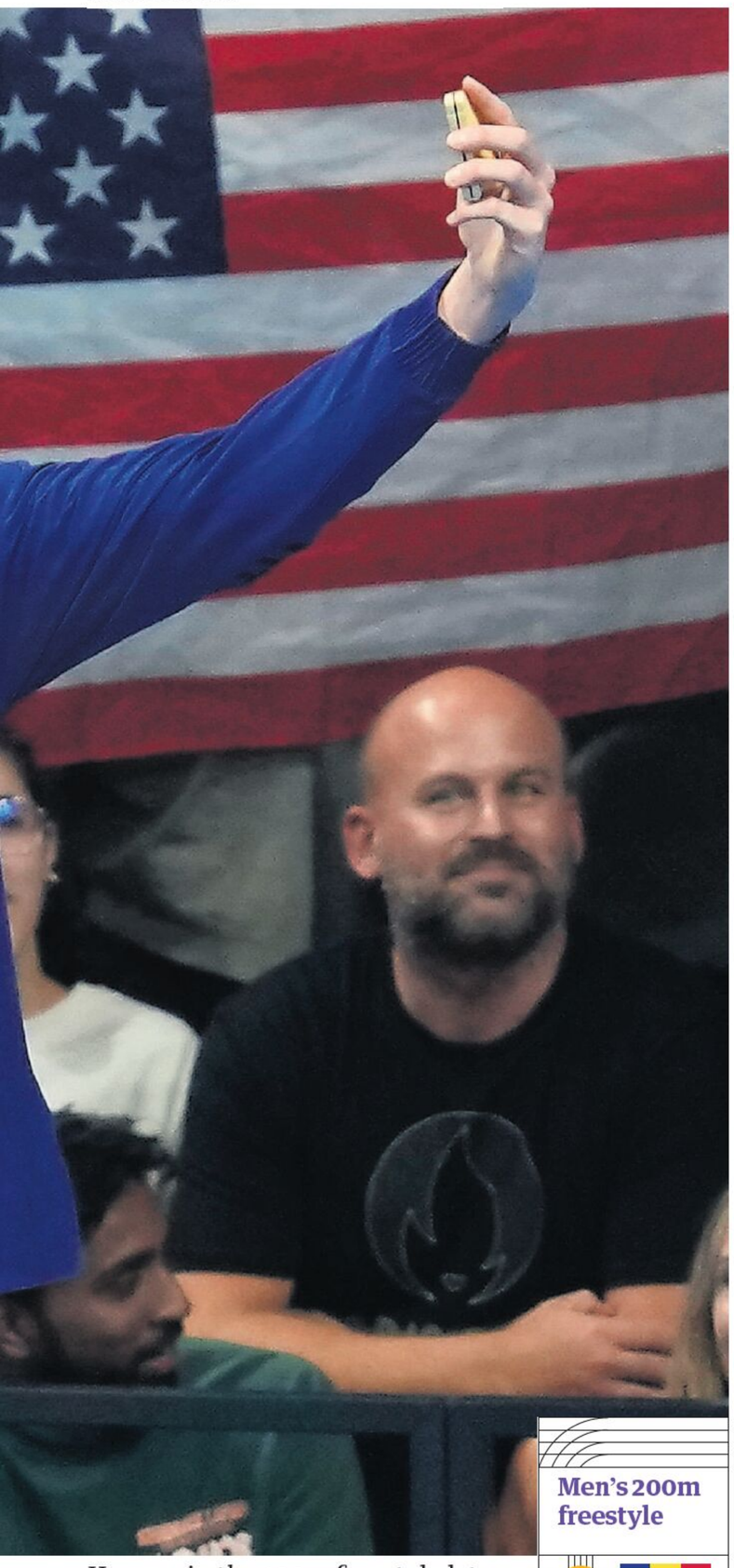
1 **S McIntosh** Can *4min 27.71sec*

2 **K Grimes** USA *4min 33.40sec*

3 **E Weyant** USA *4min 34.93sec*

◀ *Canada's Summer McIntosh eased to gold in the 400m medley*

▼ *Matt Richards (left) joins Olympic champion David Popovici (centre) and bronze medallist Luke Hobson*
ASHLEY LANDIS/AP



He goes in the 100m freestyle later this week. "Obviously two-hundredths off gold is excruciatingly frustrating but look if anything it's added more fire to my belly, and I've got a lot more to go."

It wasn't his only mistake. He made a mess of his semi-final, which is how he ended up being drawn in an outside lane. "It wasn't ideal, I'll be honest, that semi-final last night – I misjudged it a bit.

"Being out there meant I was a little bit out of the race so I had to call it on my own which in a close race like this one can mean you end up on the wrong side of it."

Still, it could have been worse. Ask Scott. There was only .15 of a second between the first four, but it was Scott's sorry lot to be last among them. He had been dreaming about winning this race ever since he took the silver medal behind his teammate Tom Dean in Tokyo; he's 27, and unlike Richards, it's not necessarily clear he will get another chance. But he too has more racing to do, in the 200m medley, when he will take on Léon Marchand, and of course both go in the 4x200m relay today.

For Richards, 21, the result was a measure of vindication for his decision to step away from the high-performance training centre at the University of Bath and move to Millfield in 2022. He was part of the quartet that won gold in the 4x200m relay in this event in Tokyo, along with Scott and Dean, which taught him a lot about what it takes to succeed at this level. But he felt he had stalled when he failed to win a medal at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, and decided he needed a change of scene. For the past two years he has been working in a small training group with the coach Ryan Livingstone.

Since the switch, he has won a world championship gold, and now an Olympic silver. He will need to carry on improving if he is going to beat Popovici, who is almost two years younger and, at his best, almost two seconds quicker. Popovici only took up swimming to help with his scoliosis when he was a kid, but turned out to have an extraordinary talent for it.

He is one of a handful of young swimmers making a breakthrough at these Games. Another of them, the 17-year-old Canadian Summer McIntosh, won the women's 400m individual medley by a streak ahead of the two USA swimmers Katie Grimes and Emma Weyant.

Great Britain's Freya Colbert, who won the world championship earlier this year, was fourth. No one was ever going to catch McIntosh, who was six seconds clear, but Colbert held on to third place all the way up to the final 50m of freestyle, when Weyant pulled ahead of her.

Three other young British swimmers – the breaststroker Angharad Evans, the medley swimmer Katie Shanahan, and the backstroker Ollie Morgan – finished down the field in their own finals: Evans sixth, Shanahan seventh, and Morgan eighth. Like Richards and Colbert, who is 20, they are all young enough to come again, and Colbert has another chance in the shorter medley later this week.

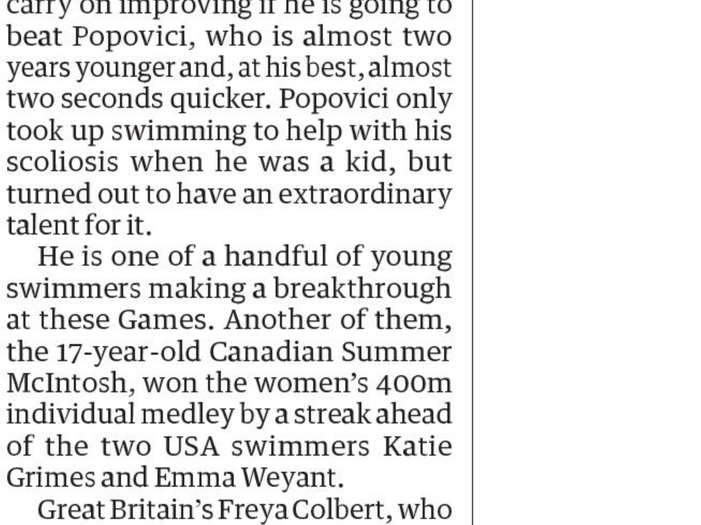
But they'll learn, too, sooner rather than later, that chances like the ones that got away from them here in Paris are few and far between in a sport as brutally competitive as this one.

Men's 200m freestyle

1 **D Popovici**
Rom
1min 44.72sec

2 **M Richards**
GB
1min 44.74sec

3 **L Hobson**
USA
1min 44.79sec



▲ *David Popovici (right) touches the finish to win gold with Duncan Scott in fourth*



▼ *It was agony for the British swimmer Freya Colbert in the 400m medley as she tailed off to finish fourth*

PETER BYRNE/PA

Tennis

Nadal 'at peace' if defeat by merciless Djokovic is his final singles match in Paris

Tumaini Carayol
Roland Garros

For the best part of two decades, Rafael Nadal has dominated the courts of Roland Garros like no tennis player has at any other tournament in the history of the sport. He has won the French Open 14 times, triumphing in 112 of his first 115 matches there. During certain periods, Nadal on Court Philippe-Chatrier has felt like the closest thing to an unbeatable force. A towering steel statue of the Spaniard now sits permanently in the tournament grounds even as he continues to play.

It is possible, though, that he has now played his final singles match on the courts that have defined his career. Yesterday, rather than mutually elevating each other as they have so many other times in the past, the 60th meeting between Novak Djokovic and Nadal proved a total mismatch as the Serbian completely dismantled his old rival 6-1, 6-4 in the second round of the Olympic Games.

From the second an unseeded Nadal was drawn into the path of Djokovic, the top seed, this was going to be a moment. Even before the players emerged from the holding room, the stands were full and press seats had devolved into mayhem, with so many people desperate to catch a glimpse of a legendary rivalry.

But this was never going to be like the battles of old, where the two rivals pushed each other to their physical, mental and emotional limits. In his sixth tournament back after being largely absent from the tour for 16 months after hip surgery and other injuries, the 38-year-old Nadal entered the court as underdog. Since his return, he has struggled to find his level again and in the build-up to the tournament had also been struggling with a thigh injury, his body still not allowing him to perform.

The disparity between their level and physical shape was instantly clear. As Djokovic forced himself inside the baseline, taking time from Nadal by hitting the ball on the rise off both sides, Nadal's movement was sluggish and his lack of depth was punished as unforced errors flowed from his racket. Nadal's career has been underscored by enduring spirit, composure and mental toughness. Even as the match seemed to be heading for an excruciating conclusion, he refused to allow himself any negative emotions.

After 70 minutes of flawless tennis from Djokovic, an opportunity arose. At 6-1, 4-0, the top seed finally felt the nerves. A couple of Djokovic errors turned into a break for Nadal and suddenly the momentum had shifted. At break point for 4-4, the Spaniard produced one more moment of total brilliance, retrieving a Djokovic smash before closing the point with a forehand winner as a roaring crowd collectively saluted him. The fightback did not last long. Djokovic won the final two games to close out the match.

While Nadal will return to compete in doubles alongside Carlos Alcaraz, he will have some decisions to make after the Games. Since losing at Roland Garros in June, Nadal has said repeatedly that preparing for the Olympics was his priority and he would not decide his future until the Games were over.

"I have been suffering a lot of injuries the last two years," he said. "So if I feel that I am not competitive enough to keep going or physically I'm not ready to keep going, I will stop and I will let you know. But I don't think every day about if I am retiring or not."

While athletes can naturally be evasive about their future plans, Nadal genuinely seems to be unsure about whether or not he should try to extend his career. Since returning to the tour in April it has been clear that he has deeply enjoyed being a tennis player once again, from the daily work in training to travelling with his family. He remains motivated and passionate about his work and he believes that the level he has shown in his matches is not reflective of how he has competed with the top players in practice.

The question is if he truly believes he is capable of performing at the level he desires again and whether his body is able to keep up with the demands he places on it. That was certainly not the case this week as he picked up a thigh injury just days before the tournament he had spent his summer preparing for. While he is not yet ready to make that call, Nadal seemed comfortable with whatever comes next: "If that's the last match here, I'll be in peace," he said. "I did my best and I can't complain."

For Djokovic, the tension of this occasion will soon be forgotten as he looks forward to round three. The pursuit of an Olympic gold medal, the one significant achievement that has eluded him in his career, continues.



▲ *Rafael Nadal congratulates Novak Djokovic on his victory*

Daley brings home a family silver as part of supreme balancing act

Team GB duo finish second in synchro 10m platform behind a remarkable Chinese pair

Barney Ronay
Aquatics Centre



As Tom Daley stood poolside, still revved and wide-eyed from six rounds of brutally focused 10m synchro diving, fresh from stepping up on to the podium with Noah Williams to take his fifth Olympic medal, a plastic juice cup landed at his feet.

It had been thrown, or dropped, from the tiers above where his sons, Robbie and Phoenix, were sitting. Daley snapped straight back into dad mode, that old muscle memory kicking in, and put it in his tracksuit trouser pocket. Half an hour later, the cup was still there as he walked through the mixed zone (purple juice: possibly grape), a companion piece to the silver medal around his neck; and a neat little note in the jumbling together of bits and bobs – a laptop here, rice cakes there, a rogue sock – that will be familiar to parents of young children everywhere.

It felt a suitable end note in Daley's progress to these Games, which he had billed, that game head already on, as an Olympics he was simply happy to be at, to compete in front of his kids and husband after the starkness of Tokyo.

In the event, Daley and Williams were here to do a great deal more than take part, as they reeled off six dives in quick succession – this is an utterly gruelling, blink and you miss it event – to take silver behind the extraordinary Chinese pair of Junjie Lian and Hao Yang.

Olympic journey Five Games, five medals



2008 Beijing The 14-year-old Tom Daley says: "I'm here for the experience, I'm not expecting to win anything. I'd rather work hard for London 2012 and win a medal there." Finishes seventh in individual 10m platform and eighth and last with Blake Aldridge in the synchronised 10m platform. The pair fall out.

2012 London Now 18, finishes fourth with Peter Waterfield in the 10m synchronised platform at home Games. Secures bronze in individual 10m platform and memorably celebrates by jumping into the pool with his team.

2016 Rio de Janeiro Bronze with Daniel Goodfellow in the 10m synchronised platform but suffers a low moment when he fails to reach individual 10m platform final.

2020 Tokyo Daley, now 26, achieves his dream, claiming Olympic gold with Matty Lee in the synchronised 10m platform. "That moment, being about to be announced as Olympic champions, I was gone. I was blubbering," he says. Also takes bronze in the individual event.

2024 Paris After a retirement U-turn and now in his 30s, Daley completes his medal set with a silver in the 10m synchronised platform with Noah Williams. Sons Robbie and Phoenix look on.

Daley would reveal that his training with Williams had boiled down to working together in competition a few times and a week spent by the pool at his house in Los Angeles when Williams had a shoulder injury. Plus, the application of his own vast and clear-headed knowledge of this elite event, a world Daley has been involved in since the age of 12.

He spoke about sacrifice, life balance and the struggle to compete while preserving some part of himself outside the insanity of total competition. There is a theme here in British aquatics, with similar talk from Adam Peaty after his own silver medal on Sunday.

Certainly, the 10m synchro was a genuinely fun, multilayered collection of people. At one end, Gary Hunt, a 40-year-old cliff diver, now competing for France via his wife, a delightful human being and all-round cool guy, who first got the hint he would not be diving at his last home Games in London after competing against the prodigious 12-year-old Daley in 2006.

Ukraine's teenage pair, fifth-place finishers, said their training had been disrupted by rockets falling over Kyiv and that their fathers are serving in the military. Australia's Cassiel Rousseau was back for another Olympics, a hugely likable mulleted

Daley completes Olympic medal set

Britain's Tom Daley (left) and Noah Williams on their way to a silver medal; Daley's first silver in his fifth Games
TOM JENKINS/ THE GUARDIAN



Men's synchro 10m platform

1	J Lian & H Yang Chn	
2	T Daley & N Williams GB	
3	R Wiens & N Zsombor-Murray Can	

figure, unveiling fresh tattoo work at each final. Above this, in their own clean, clear space, were the Chinese pair, the ultimate human expression of the high-performance programme. China now has two diving golds from two. That clean sweep is on.

Hunt, aka the Michael Jordan of cliff diving, likes to warm up by juggling. Daley has spent the last Olympic cycle doing something similar with his own life. There may have been another sportsman who has spoken at length about the extraordinary support of his husband (or indeed his wife) in putting their own career on hold, juggling childcare, making the domestic life work, as Daley did here. But none spring to mind.

This was just a brilliant competition, as it always seems to be.



The Aquatics Centre is one of two new-build facilities for the Games. It's a lovely thing, with a swooping wavy timber beamed roof, rising up next to the Saint-Denis ring road like a giant alien mushroom.

For Daley and his partners, the story of the past 16 years has been trying to keep up with China. Daley has spoken about the mind-boggling difficulty levels of competing against opponents selected from a 1.4 billion population and a sporting culture of such extreme dedication.

China has won 27 of 32 possible Olympic diving gold medals since Beijing 2008, including all but one (guess who?) at Tokyo last time out. In Daley's favour is perspective. He remains a paradox, a child prodigy turned fully grown celebrity pressure magnet, out there competing in one of the more knife-edge disciplines, whose superpower is, of all things, being a calm and well-adjusted human being. How do you manage that exactly? And can everyone have some?

There was a genuine crackle in the air as the divers walked out, Daley and Williams drawing the loudest cheer. This event is front-loaded. You walk in, strip off, get on the stairs and suddenly you're in an Olympic final, out there already falling in space.

Domonic Bedggood and Rousseau went first for Australia and produced a solid, slightly splashy opener. Canada were slick and peppy. Team GB followed Germany, Daley and Williams completely silent - "we never say a word" - before a fiddle of the trunks, a look down, then off into a lovely relaxed opening dive, nailing a 53.40 straight off.

Diving is a remarkable sport, the only event that takes place in the intermediate element, the space between earth and water, an air sport, and a thing of rare beauty at this level. Lian and Yang reeled off a 56.40 with barely a ripple.

Round three is where the difficulty levels kick in. With GB and Canada in a race for second this was a chance to flex and twirl and show something of yourself. Dive number four was the gamechanger. The British men could be seen flexing and stretching energetically on the way up. This was the dive they had practised most.

They eased into it hungrily, a back three and a half somersault pike, the turn at the edge of the board then a launch backwards into thin air. Before the first drops of splash had hit the pool their coaches were up hugging (there is a lot of hugging) and punching the air. A 93.6 put Daly and Williams clear in second place.

China were unmoved, producing another perfect falling leaf, each dive from this point a lap of honour. At the very end they blew the doors off with a stunning 103, out there competing in their own pocket of air ahead of the rest of the human race.

There were more hugs and a rueful kind of smile from Daley, who had also, in winning silver, given up his gold. He now has the full set of 10m medals. He may yet be back in LA, which he described as a chance for "another home Games". But juice cups, medals, domestic shoutout; for now this felt like the completion of one kind of cycle.

Daley says husband did childcare so he could win silver *Page 11* →

Boxing

Orie bundled out as GB's struggles in the ring go on

Barney Ronay
North Paris Arena

There was a shock at the Paris Nord Arena on another crushing day for Team GB's boxers as the super-heavyweight hope Delicious Orie lost in the first round against Armenia's Davit Chaloyan.

Orie had come to these Games suggesting it was "written" that he would win gold. Well, not here. Instead Chaloyan had other ideas in Paris. A gnarled, bulky figure, the Armenian started busily, lost the opening round, then took the final two, perhaps a little surprisingly, to win via split decision. Orie worked hard, seemed to throw more punches but was clipped enough times to take the narrow defeat.

It will be a huge disappointment for the Wolverhampton fighter, a smart, likable and highly rated figure, and for the entire boxing programme. Britain has a fine heritage in Olympic men's super-heavyweight. Every contender at every Games had won a medal of some sort to date, scrolling back through Anthony Joshua, Audley Harrison and Joe Joyce.

The draw here has been a little tough generally. Chaloyan is a one-time silver medallist at the amateur world championships. He carried Armenia's flag at the opening ceremony. But Orie also beat him easily in the recent European championships, and came to these Games seeded No 2 and already talking up his own chances of following his hero Joshua into the professional ranks. It is an utterly devastating defeat.

Afterwards Orie said he had been unfortunate on the scoring. "It's too soon for me to start saying it's unfair or fair, whatever it is. I do think I was a little bit hard done by, it was very close and I felt like I just did enough.

"For the past eight years I've always dreamed about that gold medal at an Olympic Games and it's been taken away from me. It could be from me, it could be from the judges but that's what's happened. I felt like I've let myself down, my family."

After defeats for Rosie Eccles, Pat Brown and Charley Davison in the opening three days of the programme this represents a disastrous start for Team GB boxing, unparalleled in recent Olympic history. At least two of those judging decisions were open to question. But bad luck only takes you so far.

The super-heavyweights fought last here, coming out at close to 10pm. The Olympic boxing is being held at Paris Nord Arena, also known as the Villepinte exhibition centre, repurposed from a series of trade conference-style halls into a massive echoey sports hangar. It's a perfect space, the low roof and cage of lighting rigs creating an echo chamber effect in front of a packed and fight-hungry crowd.



Delicious Orie was seeded No 2 in his division

Chaloyan walked out first to loud Armenian roars. Orie came out bouncing and looking trim as a marathon runner. And he was straight in, working to the body, zipping back out of range, although he also took a huge red glove to the side of his head in the opening seconds. The judges gave Orie the round, despite the fact Chaloyan kept clipping away at the side of his head. There was also the disconcerting sight of the GB corner working at his face before round two.

After that Orie's best moments came on the jab in the next round, snapping Chaloyan's head back, and leaving his opponent looking a little gassed at the bell. But Orie just didn't do enough in the third round to make certain. Four of the five judges awarded it to the Armenian.

As the referee announced the decision Chaloyan punched the air. Orie looked a little stunned, but shook hands with the opposition corner and the referee, hugged his opponent, and left to an unexpected turn in his own future career plans.

Orie, who was born in Moscow to a Russian mother and a Nigerian father, and spent the first seven years of his life in Russia, will now contemplate turning professional, confirming at the end that this was his last amateur fight. "I think I let a few eye-catching shots in," he said with a shrug. "I didn't think it was enough for him to win, but the judges clearly seen that so I'll just have to take it on the chin."

The early part of the evening had brought drama of a different kind as Kosovo's Donjeta Sadiku fought Angie Paola Valdes Pana of Colombia. The bout was refereed by a Kazakh, an interesting choice given Kazakhstan does not officially recognise Kosovo as a nation. A messy fight ended with a split points decision in favour of the Colombian. Sadiku stormed out of the arena with a towel over her head.

Boxers who failed gender tests cleared to compete in Paris

Sean Ingle
Paris

The International Olympic Committee has confirmed that two boxers disqualified from the world championships last year for failing gender eligibility tests will be allowed to fight in Paris.

Imane Khelif of Algeria and Lin Yu-ting of Chinese Taipei (Taiwan) start their Olympic campaigns this week: Khelif will meet the Italian Angela Carini in the 66kg category, and Lin is expected to face an unnamed opponent in the 57kg category on Friday.

The IOC's decision will be controversial. The situation has arisen because the world championships last year was run under the auspices of the International Boxing Association, whose president, Umar Kremlev, told the Russian news agency, Tass, that DNA tests had "proved they had XY chromosomes and were thus excluded from the sports events".

The IBA told the Guardian the decision "was intended to uphold the fairness and integrity of the competition". However, the IBA has been banned from running the Olympic boxing tournament in Paris because of long-running questions surrounding governance issues and a series of judging scandals. That means the boxing in Paris is now being run under the auspices of the IOC's Paris 2024 Boxing Unit.

In a statement the IOC said: "The PBU used the Tokyo 2020 boxing rules (enforced at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the related qualifying tournaments) as a baseline to develop its regulations. Those rules descended from the Rio 2016 rules. The PBU endeavoured to restrict amendments to minimise the impact on athletes' preparation and guaranteeing consistency between Olympic Games." However the IOC's own MyInfo website acknowledges that both boxers failed gender eligibility tests last year.

In its internal system, which is provided to journalists in Paris, the IOC states that Khelif was "disqualified just hours before her gold medal showdown against Yang Liu at the 2023 world championships in New Delhi, India, after her elevated levels of testosterone failed to meet the eligibility criteria". The IOC also acknowledges Lin was "stripped of her bronze medal after failing to meet eligibility requirements based on the results of a biochemical test.

Both countries' Olympic committees have been approached for comment.



▲ *Chinese Taipei's Lin Yu-ting (left) and Imane Khelif of Algeria*



▼ Ros Canter, Tom McEwen and Laura Collett held the lead taken in the opening day's dressage
ED ALCOCK/MYOP/THE GUARDIAN

Collett leads title defence as Britain win record team gold

Alexandra Topping
Chateau de Versailles

When Laura Collett was flung from her horse and trapped by the full force of its weight on top of her in 2013, doctors were not sure she would pull through. She was resuscitated five times then placed in an induced coma for six days. Her injuries included a lacerated liver, damage to her kidneys, a fractured shoulder, a punctured lung and broken ribs. A fragment of her shoulder bone travelled to her eye through her blood stream, leaving her blind on her right side.

Extraordinary, then, that she was part of a team that retained their Olympic team eventing title at the Paris 2024 Games, Team GB's first gold of the 33rd Olympiad. And there was further rapture from British fans as she followed team gold with bronze in the individual competition.

Great Britain ended the equine triathlon – which includes dressage, cross-country and jumping – with a combined score of 91.3 penalty points to finish 12.3 clear of France, who took silver on 103.6. Japan took bronze with 115.8, the country's first Olympic medal in this event.

▼ Michael Jung, on Chipmunk FRH, won individual gold
PIERRE-PHILIPPE MARCOU/AFP/GETTY

Against the hopes of the heavily partisan home crowd and in temperatures which reached 30C (86F), Collett, Tom McEwen and Ros Canter took gold after the final showjumping stage. It is the fifth team gold medal

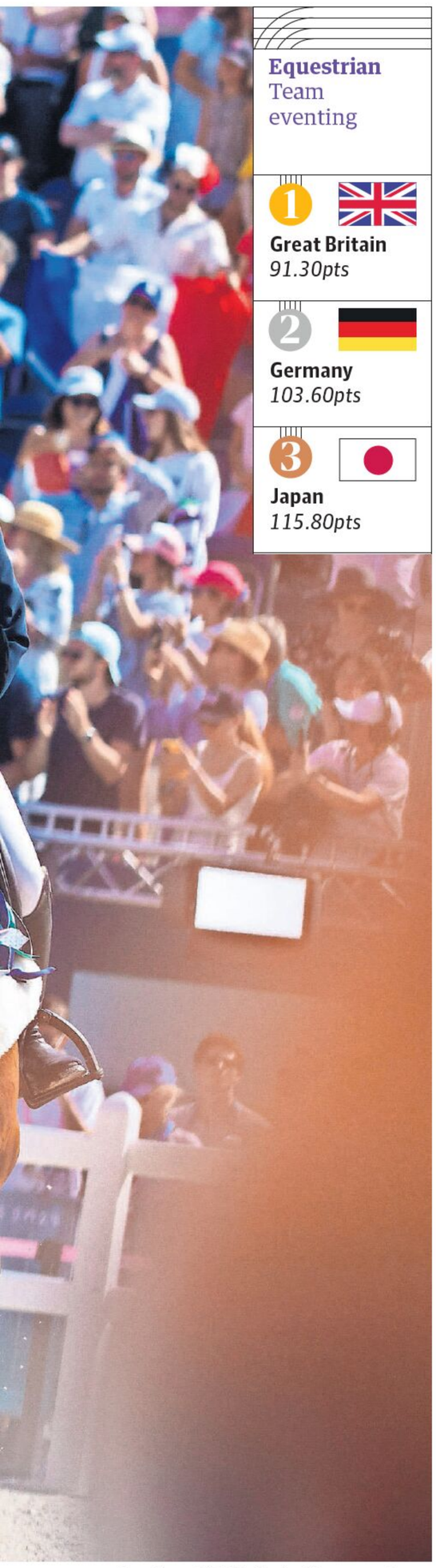


Equestrain
Individual eventing

1 **M Jung** Ger
21.80pts

2 **C Burton** Aus
22.40pts

3 **L Collett** GB
23.10pts



Equestrian
Team eventing

1 **Great Britain**
91.30pts

2 **Germany**
103.60pts

3 **Japan**
115.80pts

won by Great Britain in the event, an Olympic record.

Collett was leading the individual rankings when she took to the arena for her round in the team competition but a fence down and a time penalty dropped her to bronze. She retained that position in the final jump-off, finishing with a clear round and 23.10 penalty points; teammate McEwen was only 2.7 points adrift in fourth.

Germany's Michael Jung - arguably the GOAT of Olympic eventing - won his third individual Olympic gold, his fourth in total, after a perfect round while the Australian Christopher Burton also went clear to take silver.

Speaking after the team gold, Collett said she wanted the achievement to show "every child out there ... that you can never dream too big". Wearing a Swarovski crystal-covered helmet she said retaining the gold was an "unreal feeling".

McEwen said the crowds had transformed the experience. "Today's shown off the best of this sport's abilities," he said. "These horses have been incredible and these people in this team [are] even better."

The team gold comes with the sport still reeling after the suspension of Charlotte Dujardin, following the emergence of a video showing her whipping a horse 24 times. Asked if the gold was an important moment in light of the scandal, Collett said: "Seeing our horses go in there looking a million dollars and perform like they have all weekend, hopefully that shows what goes in. There is a huge team behind us that makes it possible and horses don't go like that if they're not happy."

At the start of the gripping third day of eventing the team event had hung in the balance, with Team GB hoping to defend their Olympic title for the first time since 1972. An astonishing performance by the 34-year-old Collett in the dressage on the first day on her horse London 52 in an Olympic record helped Great Britain to top the standings after the first phase.

The British team were way out in front on day two, until a controversial jumping penalty against Canter on Lordships Graffalo drastically reduced their lead. Canter was given 15 jumping penalties, causing her to drop from sixth to 24th in the individual and cutting Great Britain's lead to 4.7 over France.

The leaderboard was tight as they went into the final day, with just a rail between first and second place. But as the French team faltered, with a number of rails coming down, the British team extended their lead, with a flawless round from McEwen on JL Dublin, who took silver in the individual eventing in Tokyo. The third and final Frenchman, Stéphane Landois, who received a number of penalties, used his round to whip up the already noisy French crowd.

"It wasn't very nice of him," Collett said when asked about his actions. "Luckily my horse quite likes that, I wouldn't have wanted to be sat on a novice. He rose to the occasion. He's a superstar and he loves showing off and he thinks he's right at home with a palace in the background."

The event comes at a moment of intense scrutiny for equestrian sport, which has been dogged by controversies about animal welfare. Two days after the withdrawal of Dujardin last week, the Italian rider Emiliano Portale was eliminated after his horse was found to be bleeding from the mouth after the eventing dressage qualifiers. The Brazilian rider Carlos Parro was also given a warning by the Fédération Équestre Internationale after the animal charity Peta complained he was creating unnecessary discomfort to his horse Safira.

British Equestrian and its riders will surely hope the gleam of gold will quieten the discourse, at least around the British team. It may, briefly. But today the spotlight will return as the dressage competition begins.

Dujardin has been replaced by Becky Moody, who will ride alongside Lottie Fry and Carl Hester. Hester, competing in his seventh Olympics, won gold alongside Dujardin in the team dressage event at London 2012. He has condemned her actions, but will likely face a barrage of questions. Dujardin who had been hoping to become Great Britain's most decorated female Olympian, will only be able to watch.

Meltdown helps Japan clinch team gymnastics and GB finish fourth

Tumaini Carayol
Bercy Arena

As the final rotation of the gymnastics men's team final began, the Chinese team seemed almost certain to finish the day as Olympic gold medallists. After dominating the qualifying on Saturday, they had established a commanding three-point lead over Japan with three routines to go. Both teams closed out the competition on the horizontal bar, where China had outscored Japan. With plenty of room for error, all they had to do was remain relatively solid to secure their win.

However, when attempting to execute some of the most difficult gymnastics skills in the world under suffocating pressure, things can quickly fall apart. What followed was a meltdown of the ages. First Xiao Ruoteng, the Chinese veteran, landed his dismount to his knees, stumbling forward before regaining his balance. Then came Su Weide, a 24-year-old in his first Olympic Games, who fell twice. First he peeled off the horizontal bar, then, after regrasping the bar, he immediately tumbled again.

As chaos reigned in the final minutes of the team final and China crumbled, a gutsy Japanese team pulled off a dramatic last-minute comeback to win the first artistic gymnastics gold of the Olympic Games. With a score of 259.594, the Japanese team triumphed over China by .532 points.

While the Chinese team rued their second place finish, an incredibly solid United States celebrated a brilliant bronze medal, their first men's team medal since 2008. Great Britain, meanwhile, finished 1.8 points behind the USA in fourth place. Despite performing well and counting only one fall, the British team were outperformed by a more well-rounded American team.

For around two hours and 15 minutes in the Bercy Arena, China looked imperious. As they marched through the different apparatus firing down excellent routines, a large gap had opened up early to the Japanese team after a dramatic fall on the pommel horse from Daiki Hashimoto, the reigning all-around champion.

But the men's team final is such a brutal test of mental endurance and after over two hours of focus and attention, and so often these contests are decided in the very last breath. Three years ago in Tokyo, the team final also came down to the final rotation between Russia and Japan, with 18 routines from each of the top two teams separated by 0.103 points.

This time, the pressure was too much for the leaders. As Xiao and Su both struggled and the door opened for a comeback, Takaaki Sugino and Shinnosuke Oka of Japan performed extremely solid horizontal bar routines under pressure.

The fate of the men's team final eventually rested on the shoulders of Hashimoto, who had struggled on the apparatus. This time, he answered the call by performing an excellent routine to seal Olympic gold.

"I felt the rest of the team was all behind me, they had my back," he said. "They pushed me on to the stage. I was almost crying before the performance."

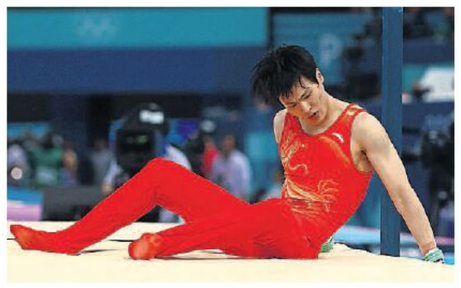
As the Japanese team celebrated on the competition floor, brandishing their flag and waving to family, friends and supporters in the crowd, a tearful Chinese team departed the competition floor in single file with their heads bowed.

Japan replace Russia as Olympic team champions, with the Russian team banned this year in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In Tokyo, the team was anchored by Nikita Nagornyy, also the Olympic all-around bronze medallist. Nagornyy is also head of the Young Army Cadets National Movement in Russia. Last month, Nagornyy was added to the US's individual sanctions list for his work in that organisation due to being "responsible for the forced militarization and re-education of Ukraine's children".

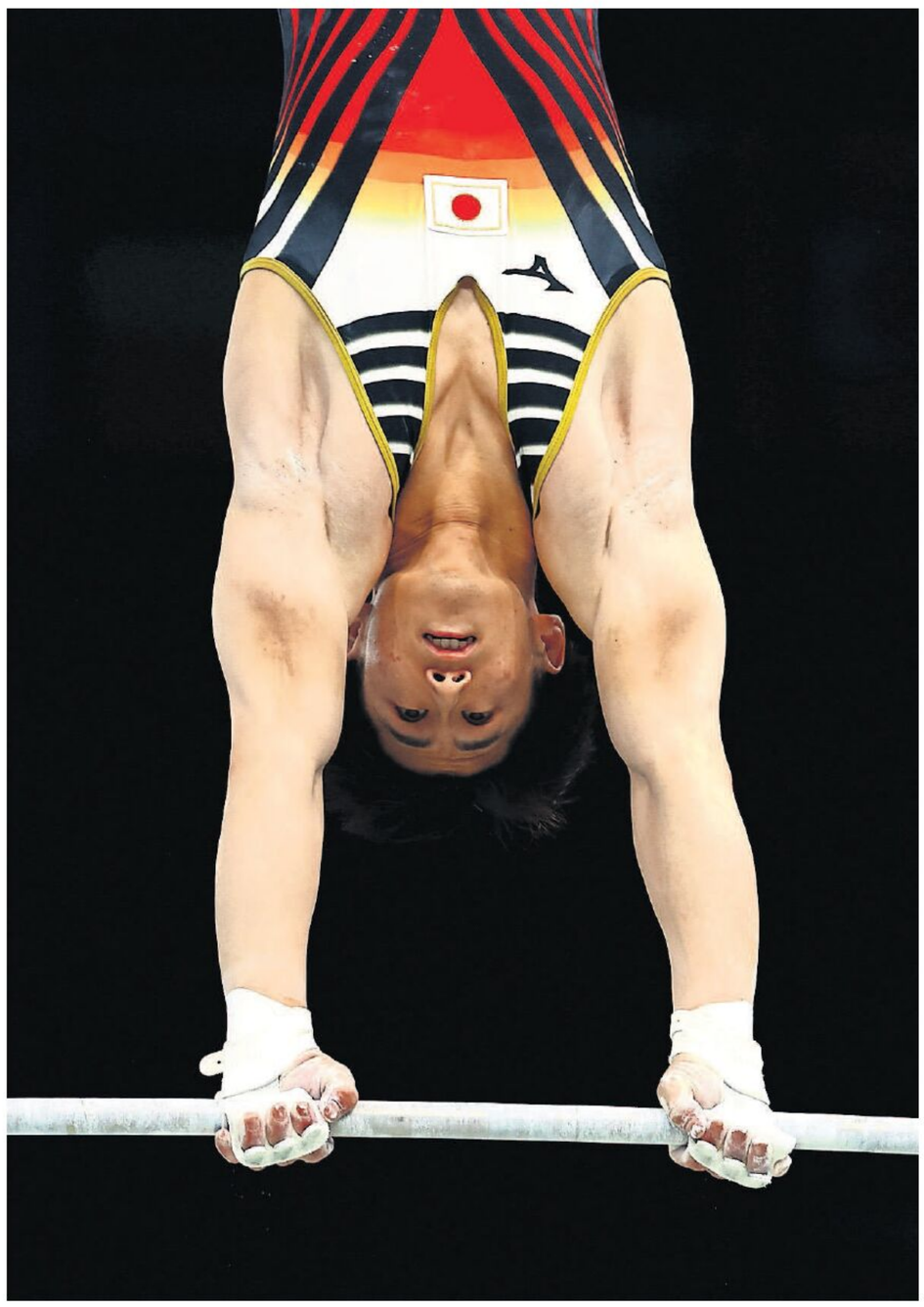
Like China, the US team's brilliant day could have unravelled on the final rotation as they headed to the perilous pommel horse. But the US remained extremely solid throughout. The final routine came down to Stephen Nedoroscik, the team's pommel horse specialist and the 2021 world champion on the apparatus. He had just one routine to contribute all night after two and a half hours of competition but he maintained his composure and helped a young US team to a well-deserved bronze medal.

"It was hard," Max Whitlock of Great Britain said afterwards. "I'm really gutted actually. Fourth is always difficult, we've come fourth quite a few times at the Olympic Games now. Right now, it feels quite raw but overall we can be quite proud. Looking at each and every performance we've done, we did everything we possibly could."

The British men will have eight individual finals to contest in the coming days, starting with Jake Jarman and Joe Fraser in the men's all-around final tomorrow. Whitlock's score of 15.266 on the pommel horse, meanwhile, is the highest of the competition so far.



▲ *Su Weide of China falls off the horizontal bar in the team final*



▼ *Daiki Hashimoto on the horizontal bar helps Japan's team to victory*
HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS

Pidcock defies puncture to win epic duel with home favourite

Jeremy Whittle
Elancourt Hill

Tom Pidcock blew away his rivals with a virtuoso performance on the rough gravel of Elancourt Hill to take back-to-back gold medals in Olympic mountain biking. In an epic battle with France's Victor Koretzky, Pidcock pulled off the performance of his career, fighting back from a puncture and a clumsy wheel change to snatch gold at the very last.

"This is what makes the Olympics to me, the fact that it's bigger than cycling," Pidcock said, three years after winning his first gold in Tokyo. "People back home, they get into the Olympic spirit, they celebrate every gold medal but the biggest thing is to inspire people. That is what I love to do. Hopefully I did that today."

On the eve of his 25th birthday, Pidcock's successful defence of his Olympic title was achieved the hard way, and as much due to his temperament and cunning as it was his power, determination and speed.

Cut adrift by 40 seconds from the front of the race after his puncture, Pidcock stayed calm. "What's the point in stressing? I have had enough stress this week."

Men's mountain bike

1	**T Pidcock** GB	*1hr 26min 22sec*
2	**V Koretzky** Fr	*1:26:31*
3	**A Hatherly** SA	*1:26:33*

All of Pidcock's predatorial instincts were on display as he shrugged off his setback, maintained his focus and then applied a brutal coup de grace, to fatigued race leader, Koretzky, almost within sight of the finish line. As the pair raced through woods in the last few hundred metres, Pidcock accelerated and took the inside line on a left-hand curve.

"There were only maybe two, three or four places on the track to undertake," Pidcock said. "Two of them were full gas anyway, the rest are single-track. It was really difficult."

But even though his attack drew boos from the partisan French crowds, he chose his moment well. "I didn't do anything wrong. I was in front, and he left the door open. We were racing for a gold medal. I wanted to win as much as he did."

It was a surprise move that, although wholly legitimate, left Koretzky between a tree and a hard place. By the time he had registered Pidcock slipping past, grazing his left shoulder, he was flailing in the woods. "He could have also gone left, and I would have gone right," Pidcock said. "In this position, you don't hesitate, the gap was there, and I was going for it."

Koretzky had no complaints. "It's part of the race," the Frenchman said. "We all want the gold and we all fought for the gold."

Pidcock, who had Covid this month, was forced to abandon the Tour de France, a little over two weeks before the Olympics. If there had been any ill effects they did not show. He and Koretzky moved straight into an early lead and had dropped the rest of the field as soon as the third lap.

"Normally in these races, in mountain bike, I make the gap early on," Pidcock said. "I made the gap, Victor was behind me."

But his puncture, which he put down to a "mistake", derailed the best laid plan. "I was suffering. I made too many mistakes. It was difficult to enjoy it because of the situation. I was fighting to come back."

A painfully slow wheel change made it a long hard road to get back to the front of the race. "At first, I didn't make any inroads," Pidcock said of his lengthy chase. "It didn't matter how much road was left, as I wasn't getting any closer. "Then with three laps to go, I took 15 seconds [back] in one lap, and I thought, for sure, with one lap to go, I'm at the front. I knew I was going to be racing for the gold."

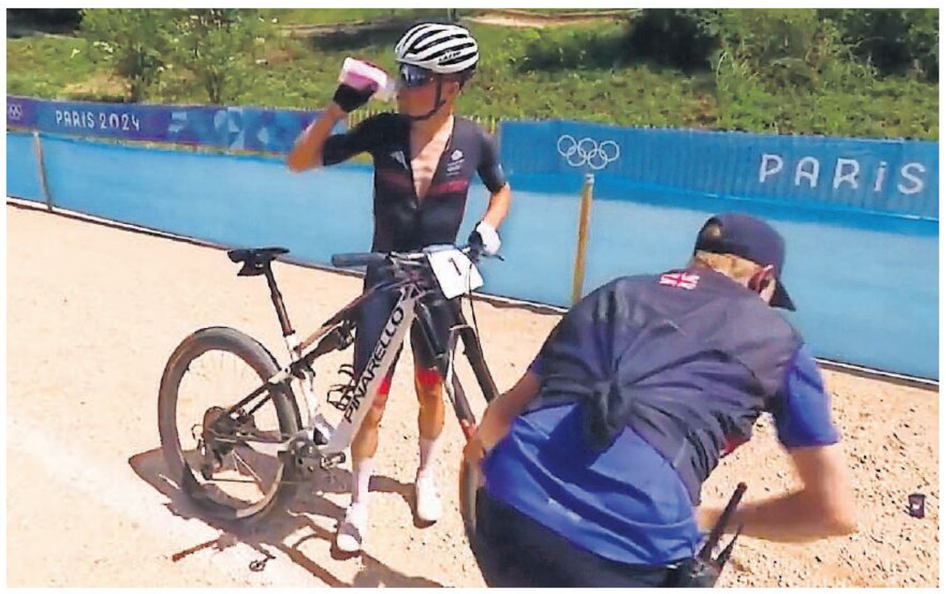
Stephen Park, the Team GB performance director, said: "He's been absolutely laser focused on winning this all year. Technically, he's just a better rider than anyone else."

Pidcock's daredevil exploits off, and on, road are fast becoming legendary. His breakneck descent off the Col du Galibier on his way to a stage win in the 2022 Tour de France is one of them, but few moments in his career are likely to top this.

Pidcock is coached by the Belgian Kurt Bogaerts, as is his Ineos Grenadiers stablemate Pauline Ferrand-Prévot, winner of the women's race on Sunday.

Bogaerts will always have Paris, the happy place for his two Olympic champions, both of whom mastered the much-maligned gravelled hill. Now Pidcock must go again, this time on the road.

His next goal is the men's 273km road race on Saturday, on a course he says is best suited to "raw power" but that others maintain is not suited to him. Based on his performance in Elancourt, Pidcock has every chance of claiming another medal.







◀ *The puncture, the overtake ... and the glorious winning feeling for Tom Pidcock*
BBC SPORT; DAVID LEVENE/THE GUARDIAN

Ain't no mountain high enough

Tom Pidcock was too powerful for French hero Victor Koretzky on Paris's Elancourt Hill
DAVID LEVENE/ THE GUARDIAN



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The *number of seconds Pidcock lost to first place* after sustaining a puncture – 'What's the point in stressing?' he later said

Fate deals a bad hand but ice-cool winner comes up trumps

Pidcock's patience, wits, pure speed and an astonishing burst of audacity deliver him a victory against the odds

Jonathan Liew
Elancourt Hill



Shortly before 4.30pm Paris time, as the last notes of God Save the King were dying away, a mechanic called Rune Kristensen was wheeling the most prized artefact in British cycling back to its truck. The Pinarello bike ridden by Tom Pidcock to Olympic gold was still coated in a fine layer of warm dust, the No 1 mounted on its front, its gears still on the same setting. On the stem, in red, white and blue, was emblazoned Pidcock's personal motto: "Play your cards right."

This is a sport where the odds can swivel in an instant, where nothing is ever won and so no cause is ever truly lost. Pidcock, a rider who has made a career out of doing the undoable, knows that better than most. Here he was dealt the most unpromising of hands, and against a hostile home crowd and a flat tyre, he cleaned out the house.

It was a ride of pure, thrilling instinct: a welcome reminder that in the chaos of competitive cross-country biking, sometimes the best plan is no plan at all. And Pidcock, who has won on



the snow-flecked peaks of Alpe d'Huez and the dandruff-white roads of Strade Bianche and now the verdant woodland of Paris, is in many ways a cyclist of the romantic imagination, of a time before strategies and specialisation and four-year plans, when the essence of the sport was simply to get on your bike and thrash it.

Specialisation will surely come for Pidcock too in the end. With a second gold safely in the bag, and with his peak years approaching, all the incentives seem to point towards a proper tilt at the Tour with Ineos Grenadiers, the laborious process of chiselling and sanding himself down into a pure mountain machine. But here, amid the tree stumps and the dirt, is where his bold and breathtaking range of skills finds its most vivid and spectacular expression.

Of course, Elancourt Hill – an hour out of Paris on the site of a former landfill quarry – is nobody's idea of a classic mountain bike course. Rather, as Pidcock tersely put it last week, it is what you get when you "just gravel over a nice hillside". For all this, it offers divine views of the city and about as visceral a spectator experience as it is possible to imagine. They were clambering up the hill and staking out their spots from early morning, defying the cloying heat, lining the long ragged ribbons, relishing perhaps the rare opportunity to have an Olympic athlete whizzing four inches past your nose.

For a time it was possible to envisage this race as an elongated procession, Pidcock simply stringing out the field until nobody remained. Plot twist! As Pidcock fought off Victor Koretzky of France at the end of the third lap he punctured. But in three respects he had been lucky. It was a front wheel, marginally quicker to replace. He was close to the tech zone. And he still had plenty of time to get back in the race.

As Kristensen affixed the new wheel, Pidcock simply took a slug of his gel, stared calmly out into the middle distance, reassessed his new hand of cards. This in itself is a gift as formidable as any of Pidcock's physical talents. The ability to live off his wits, to exist entirely in the moment, to handle debilitating setbacks with an immaculate calmness. Getting Covid at the Tour two weeks before the Olympics wasn't part of the plan. Breaking his collarbone two months before Tokyo wasn't part of the plan. And nor was this. Forty seconds down and fuming, Pidcock simply levered himself back into contention at a murderous, menacing pace.

And so to the last lap, the duel on the hill, an epic tussle, a genuinely Great Olympic Moment. Koretzky, the world No 1 and a multiple winner on the World Cup circuit, stayed with Pidcock on the brutal climb at the start of the lap, overtook him at the last feed zone. At which point Pidcock could have panicked. He could have thrown everything into some Hail Mary move that might well have sent him tumbling into the dirt.

Instead, with seconds to go, he spied a gap through the trees and simply forced his way through it, clipping Koretzky's heel on the way through. In many ways it was the final act of a kind of Total Cycling masterclass: the endurance, the patience, the bike-handling, the pure speed and finally the astonishing burst of audacity.

That dusty Pinarello bike will soon be taking pride of place in Pidcock's Andorra home. He keeps all his winning bikes, keeps all his jerseys and racing numbers, a measure of his preoccupation with history and lineage. This is why he wanted to defend his title, this is why a Tour de France contender still goes skidding up and down muddy hills, this is why a gold medal favourite calmly sucks on an energy gel while his race-ruining puncture gets fixed. Pidcock gets that true greatness isn't just what you win. It's the memories you make in the process.

Medal table

					Total
1	Japan	6	2	4	12
2	France	5	8	3	16
3	China	5	5	2	12
4	Australia	5	4	0	9
5	South Korea	5	3	1	9
6	United States	3	8	9	20
7	Great Britain	2	5	3	10
8	Italy	2	3	3	8
9	Canada	2	1	2	5
10	Hong Kong	2	0	1	3
11	Germany	2	0	0	2

Burgess puts Tokyo to rest with silver in canoe slalom

Rachel Steinberg
Vaires-sur-Marne

Adam Burgess secured his first Olympic medal with canoe slalom singles silver at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium in Paris.

The Stoke-on-Trent paddler, who was the fourth-fastest finisher from the semi-finals, put in a superb run save for a small error on upstream gate 17, but recovered at the bottom of the course, crossing the finish in 96.84sec to set the fastest run of the final with three men left to challenge.

Burgess was still sitting in gold medal position when home favourite Nicolas Gestin, the world silver medallist, left his best run for last. He destroyed the Briton's leading time in 91.36sec, 5.48sec faster than the runner-up, with Matej Benus of Slovakia rounding out the podium positions.

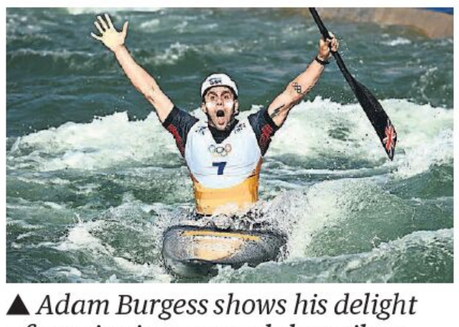
The silver medal was redemption for the 32-year-old Burgess, who avenged his maiden final from three summers ago in Tokyo, where he finished fourth and missed out on a medal by just 0.16sec.

"There'll be no waking up in the night, wondering what could have been now," Burgess said. "I really wanted to just leave it all out there today.

"I paid the price and I've missed opportunities by being a little cautious at times and I really wanted to just go out with confidence, paddle with some style and enjoy myself and I've got the result today.

"I was trying not to think about [Tokyo] too much. It was a big part of my story to go again and earn that spot in Paris but very much this was it's own story. Races always unfold differently and I didn't want that on my mind. I just wanted to be in the present moment."

Burgess's jaw dropped when he realised he was guaranteed a medal after Germany's Sideris Tasiadis, who pipped him to bronze in Tokyo, did not do enough for a podium place with his 97.27sec – and it just became a matter of which colour medal he would collect. Eventually it was gold for Gestin and the hosts, the already boisterous home crowd – despite the blazing heat – roaring as their man crossed the line for his blistering championship finish. **PA Media**



▲ *Adam Burgess shows his delight after winning canoe slalom silver*

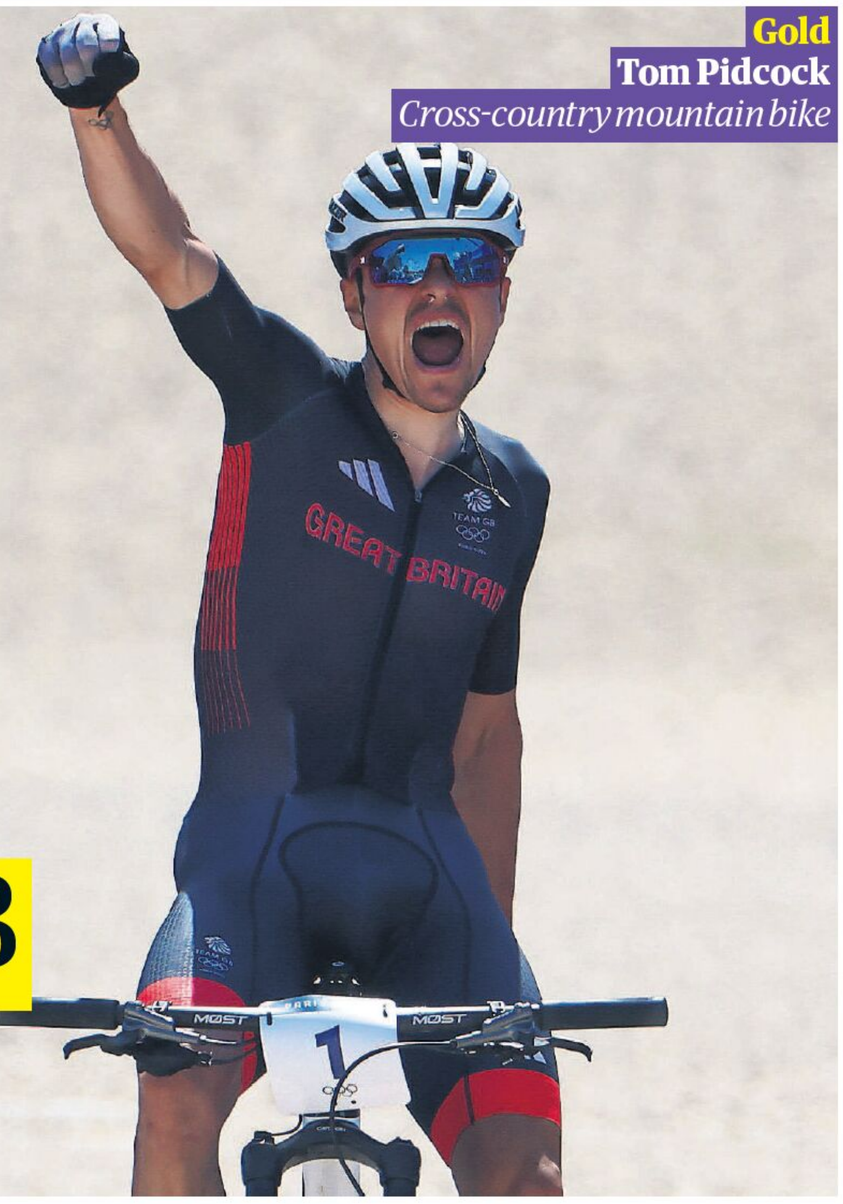
The Guardian
Tuesday
30 July
2024

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Paris 2024

Magic Monday

Pidcock's thrilling gold leads Team GB medal rush



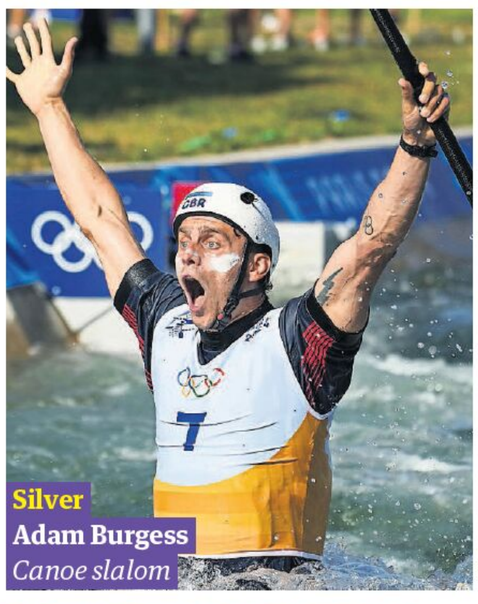
Gold
Tom Pidcock
Cross-country mountain bike



Gold
Great Britain
Team eventing



Silver
Tom Daley & Noah Williams
Synchronised 10m diving



Silver
Adam Burgess
Canoe slalom



Silver
Matt Richards
200m freestyle



Bronze
Laura Collett
Individual eventing

Plus Whitlock and co settle for fourth in team gymnastics

Olympic coverage *Pages 35, 40-47* →

DAVID LEVENE/THE GUARDIAN; ED ALCOCK/THE GUARDIAN; ANNA SZILAGYI/EPA

Sport

Covid chaos

Peaty's positive test hits swim relay chances

Ewan Murray
La Défense Arena

Britain's Olympic swimming medal haul is under serious threat, with Adam Peaty in a race against time to compete in weekend relay events after testing positive for Covid. Team GB's newly introduced safety measures were in evidence last night at La Défense Arena, where coaches and other backroom staff members wore face masks around athletes before the races got under way.

Peaty complained of a sore throat in the immediate aftermath of winning silver in the 100m breaststroke on Sunday. The 29-year-old had been denied a third gold medal in succession. By yesterday afternoon, the British Olympic Association released a statement expanding on his medical situation. All parties are privately upbeat about the chances of Peaty returning to the pool but an obvious element of uncertainty remains, including about his likely buildup.

The BOA statement read: "Adam Peaty began feeling unwell on Sunday, ahead of his men's 100m breaststroke final. In the hours after the final, his symptoms became worse and he was tested for Covid early on Monday morning. He tested positive at that point. He is hopeful to be back in competition for the relay events later in the swimming programme. As in any case of illness, the situation is being managed appropriately, with all usual precautions being taken to keep the wider delegation healthy."

After Duncan Scott's fourth-place finish in the 200m freestyle, where his teammate Matt Richards took silver, Scott said Team GB athletes are well aware of their obligations to others featuring in the Paris Olympics.

Scott had been unaware news of Peaty's situation had reached the public domain, which is understandable given necessary preparations for his own

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Adam Peaty began feeling unwell before the 100m breaststroke final

I enjoyed being home schooled – but it can't be chosen lightly *Elle Hunt, page 3*

Why the Dutch sent a child rapist to the Olympics *Renate van der Zee, page 4*

Ukraine's death-defying art rescuers *The long read, page 5*

G2 Daily pullout life & arts section *Inside*

The Guardian Tuesday 30 July 2024

Journal

Opinion and ideas

The billions Britain needs are at the chancellor's fingertips

That was authentic anger, Rachel Reeves's indignation well justified as she thundered in the Commons at the inheritance she has been left. Labour is genuinely outraged at the destruction the former chancellor Jeremy Hunt deliberately inflicted, knowing his party would be out of there for years to come. They did indeed "put party before country", as she said, by cutting tax without having the funds to pay for their promises. The Treasury's audit shows that her victorious battlefield was strewn with landmines: unfeasible commitments for Boris Johnson's fantasy 40 new hospitals, roads without budgets, every public service burned out and councils everywhere tipping into bankruptcy. This was not mere fecklessness but deliberate sabotage, an act of treason against the country.

That Tory wreckage will stay imprinted in the public memory. All that matters now is how to find the resources to breathe renewal and growth into the national decay all around us. The depth of the dishonesty in this year's budget meant she made tough cuts in-year: the winter fuel allowance made no sense for pensioners not on benefits. Social care charging caps, endlessly delayed, will not go ahead: the idea needs to be wrapped up in a better future reform. She will pay all public employees the raise they deserve, though this is still behind the private sector. Cutting £3.2bn shared between every cabinet minister's budget looks too harsh after the starvation years: what "efficiency" savings could there be?

But don't despair at this revelation of a worse-than-empty Treasury. Wait for Reeves's autumn budget for her path to growth. Her inbox is flooded with abundant ways to harvest money without breaking her promises on the three main taxes. Billions are suggested by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Resolution Foundation and multiple other towering authorities, and some she will follow.

Let's rehearse just a few. The frontrunner is raising capital gains tax (CGT), levied on money earned in idleness from rents and shares, to level out the discrepancy with the far higher income tax paid on hard work. Tax reformer Dan Neidle says Reeves is right not to announce it in advance or everyone will cash in early to avoid it. Why, the IFS's Paul Johnson asks in his book Follow the Money, is capital gains tax not due on a lifetime of shares, property or antiques, swollen in value but absolved on death? Seeing this coming, the Daily Telegraph dubs that a "double death duty". Don't expect them to remind their readers that capital gains is mainly about the wealthy: only 0.5% of people had a taxable capital gain last year.

Reeves is already committed to stopping private equity fund managers misrepresenting their earnings as a capital

Polly Toynbee



* *The Only Way is Up: How to Take Britain From Austerity to Prosperity, by Polly Toynbee and David Walker, can be ordered at the Guardian Bookshop*

The billions Britain needs are at the chancellor's fingertips

Polly Toynbee

← *Continued from front*

Again to pay less tax than their cleaners. IFS research shows raising CGT doesn't kill off investment either. "The rich will flee!" is their allies' last defence. But they are not as mobile as they pretend, with family roots that resist being dug up. Tired of London, tired of life, they fear getting bored in these "culturally barren" tax havens, finds Sam Friedman, professor of sociology at the London School of Economics. His team interviewed a raft of one-percenters and found none planning to emigrate.

The golden goose has plenty more eggs, with inheritance tax paid by just the wealthiest 4% of estates and too easily avoided: why do pension pots, farms and family businesses escape it?

It's time to charge national insurance on all income, not just on pay, including on pensions above a threshold. That's serious money. Exempting the self-employed from NI costs the Treasury £5.9bn, mostly from well-off "self-employed" partners such as City lawyers or private medics. It's a "deceit", says Helen Miller, creator of IFS Taxlab, which checks what each tax raises. Pensions tax relief is ripe for reform: high earners get 40% and 45% relief subsidised by the state, while ordinary earners get just 20%.

Reform of council tax, long overdue, would stop the richest in southern England paying less than the northern average. Tax Justice UK, with the admirable Patriotic Millionaires, urges the rich to be taxed more, suggesting "10 tax reforms to raise £60bn for public services and a fairer economy". Just as a thought experiment, the LSE's wealth commission shows a one-off raid on wealth above £2m, charged at 1% a year for five years, would bring in £80bn.

So there is money. Excess wealth and income is there for the plucking, and everyone knows it: the public is ahead of Labour in calling for tax rises. YouGov finds most people expected it to happen before the election. Attitudes towards tax changed when the bankers' crash, Covid and the cost of living crisis reminded everyone how much we relied on the state. A British Social Attitudes survey found 52% in favour of higher taxes, while the Financial Fairness Tracker survey shows more than half of people are happy for spending increases on public services, even if it meant personally paying more tax. Another study found that a majority (64%) said they'd be more likely to vote for a party committed to higher taxes on the wealthiest to invest in the NHS and public services.

This election marked the final demise of the Thatcherite small-state era. The country now has a stronger social democratic impulse than Labour yet dares trust. As the Tories veer rightwards in their search for a new leader, watch them still promise tax cuts despite the total failure of their election bribes.

The money is there for the taking. Plucking the fatter geese will please most voters, and do no economic harm to Reeves's reputation for stability. On the contrary, finding money for productive capital investment in Labour's priorities for growth, green energy and a housebuilding bonanza is being welcomed by markets as an economic stabiliser.

Her October budget will define the nature of this government by its early spending priorities. Paying underfunded public employees and the junior doctors their due is the right, and totemic, start. Raising benefits is essential, not just abolishing the two-child cap, but restoring what was stripped from families since 2020.

The NHS needs £38bn in this parliament, says the Health Foundation, just to keep pace with rising major illness, mainly among older people. Yet children should come first: early years and skills after 16 are the emblematic investment for any country that thinks about future life and growth.

Only the budget will reveal the true character of this government, by how fairly it gets, and how well it spends, the country's money. The scandalous disarray of the last budget is a low bar to soar above. But beyond emergency repairs, we wait to know the moral nature of Labour's endeavour.

The Guardian

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'Comment is free... but facts are sacred' CP Scott

Politics

Bold ambition will be needed to deliver Britain from the Tory black hole

In his "emergency budget" of 2010, delivered a month after that year's general election, the newly appointed chancellor, George Osborne, set out the rationale for an age of austerity that would frame British politics for the next decade. Falsely associating the devastating impact of the global economic crash with Labour spending and borrowing policies, Mr Osborne exploited a crisis to launch a disastrous crusade to shrink the size of the state.

Yesterday afternoon, in another defining Commons moment, Rachel Reeves also turned on her immediate predecessors, but with more legitimate arguments at her disposal. In a withering analysis, Ms Reeves laid out a "£22bn hole" of unfunded commitments for this year, much of it discovered only on opening up the books in office. The outgoing government, which calculated that an election defeat was assured, had made no attempt to make its own sums add up.

This act of irresponsibility further compromised a fiscal legacy that was already unequivocally dire. Fourteen years of chronic underinvestment and the hollowing out of the public sphere, compounded by the disastrous unforced error of Brexit and the folly of the Truss premiership, have delivered an economy beset by deep-rooted problems. Ms Reeves was right to paint the picture of Tory economic incompetence in vivid, shocking colours.

The harder part for Labour concerns what comes next. The chancellor's decision to approve in full above-inflation pay rises to NHS staff and teachers is the right one. So is the move to offer a new 22% rise to junior doctors, who have suffered more than a decade of salary attrition. These choices reflect an understanding that national renewal will not be accomplished without the rehabilitation of public services, and the eroded status and conditions of those who work within them. A Conservative government would not have made them.

More worrying are the signals given by Ms Reeves that, elsewhere, Labour may stick long-term to the fiscal caution that characterised its election campaign. A second strategic purpose of Ms Reeves' statement, beyond naming and shaming the Tory record of reckless economic opportunism, appears to have been expectation management. But the decision to squeeze spending and prioritise savings sits uneasily with the government's resolve to kickstart the growth that successive Tory governments failed to achieve. The removal of winter fuel payments as a universal benefit uncomfortably echoes past austerity measures.

Anticipated tax rises on wealth in the autumn budget would allow some room for manoeuvre. That option was left open in the lead-up to the election. But Ms Reeves has limited her own choices by refusing to challenge a key element of the Tories' grim legacy. By resolutely sticking to fiscal rules inherited from the last administration and first shaped by Mr Osborne in 2010, Labour will be pursuing its mission to rebuild a broken economy with one hand tied behind its back. As the Institute for Government has pointed out, a myopic focus on debt reduction has incentivised "bad policy decisions shaped by short-termism ... and does little to promote fiscal sustainability."

That approach has failed Britain. There was satisfaction yesterday in seeing Ms Reeves hold the previous government to account in such trenchant style. But Labour boasts a historic majority and a powerful mandate for truly doing things differently. To take that opportunity, it needs to belatedly make the argument for bold, transformative public investment that changes the political equation. The alternative is a Labour government whose aspirations are damagingly constrained by the economic errors of the past.

Carer's allowance

Ministers must back up good intentions with a plan for unpaid carers

Conor Thackray, one of the carer's allowance claimants who told his story about overpayments to the Guardian, referred to the Department for Work and Pensions as operating a "catch-out culture". This phrase sums up what is wrong with the current system. The rule that any carer earning over £151 a week must forfeit the entirety of the allowance enabling them to care for a family member who is sick or disabled (and has been formally assessed as needing care) needs to be altered. Multiple tales of small, inadvertent infractions, resulting in sizeable debts and significant hardship, make a mockery of a benefit that is meant to help those in need.

Even more egregious than this inflexibility is the way that mistakes have been handled. Despite the existence of a mechanism to alert officials to potential breaches of the £151 limit, many carers have been allowed to keep on claiming without any warning or checks. Hence the situation where people are suddenly confronted with large bills for repayments. As our reporting has shown, those affected are not an unlucky handful. Hundreds of carers have been prosecuted and criminalised for breaches, while 134,500 are paying back £251m in earnings-related overpayments. This systemic failure is a disgrace that has been allowed to drag on for far too long. The work and pensions committee's recommendations for change are five years old.

In total, around 1 million people claim carer's allowance, the purpose of which is to enable them to look after loved ones instead of – or alongside – limited paid work. Eligibility requires them to be carers for at least 35 hours per week – making caring their main "job". These are parents of disabled children, adult children of parents incapacitated in old age, and wives and husbands whose partners have become seriously ill.

Almost three-quarters of claimants are women, reflecting the wider reality that far more women than men are in familial primary carer roles. In many cases, the events leading to claims (accidents, diagnoses of terminal illness) are ones that most people would dread. But rather than treating these families with compassion, as humanity demands, the rules are rigid while enforcement is callous.

The new government has acknowledged the problem and said that it plans to fix it. The appointment to the relevant ministerial role of Stephen Timms, who chaired the work and pensions committee, is a sign of seriousness. Yesterday, officials met with campaigners. But good intentions are not enough. The case for change is established: the cap is an international anomaly, and the ceiling on earnings should be lifted or changed to a limit on hours.

The challenges around care go beyond the reform of carer's allowance. As is widely known, an outstanding one is funding. But there is also a cultural question around the value placed on this type of labour. One of the most perverse aspects of the current rules is the way that, by tightly restricting carers' earnings, it pigeonholes them as unpaid workers. This has to change. Members of our society who take responsibility for looking after those who are ill, frail or disabled must be supported.



PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES VEYSEY/ REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

I enjoyed being home schooled - but it can't be chosen lightly

Elle Hunt



Looking back on your schooldays, it's easy to feel bemused by what was deemed important to learn. I'm never using my hazy 15-year recollection of trigonometry, for example, though it was made to seem crucial at the time. In adulthood, however, I've had to research ISAs, voting and how much protein to eat - none of which would go amiss in the curriculum if it were truly meant to set you up for life.

Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that parents are choosing to devise their own curriculums. Last month a "spiritual influencer" went viral on TikTok after sharing her radical approach to home schooling. "We don't teach our children anything," she said. "If you do not like this idea of sending your kids away for 40 hours a week ... if you are not into your kids conforming, trust that you can follow their interests and they will learn everything they need to learn, not what other people need them to learn."

In principle, I agree. I was taught by my mother for four years, from the age of nine to 13, and look back on it as in some ways my most useful and influential education. Where the influencer, Mami Onami, came undone was by proudly displaying her six-year-old son's notebook, where he'd scrawled words like egg and lamp. Of course, developmental milestones aren't uniformly met, and Onami later said she'd posted out of delight that her son was finally starting to take an interest in reading and writing. But the backlash to her video, with commenters calling Onami ignorant and negligent, suggests that it was not quite, perhaps, the endorsement of her "free-schooling" she'd intended.

Known more broadly as unschooling, this pedagogical method focuses on an informal approach led by the child. It was popularised in the 1970s by John Holt, a former teacher who'd become disillusioned by the education system. Today, unschooling is seen as distinct from home schooling in that there is no curriculum, classes or even formal teacher, but it is legal and reportedly gaining in popularity. In the UK, children must receive full-time education from the age of five, but are not bound to the national curriculum.

My own education cleaved to the curriculum, not least because my mother was a qualified teacher. But with the formal learning part of schooling typically over and done in half a day, I learned to fill the time by developing my own interests, following my curiosity and otherwise keeping my mind occupied.

Certainly there were gaps: I'm no good at maths, just like my mum. And I would argue that no child should have to learn sex ed in an intimate class of two *from their parent*. But the rest of it I remember positively, as free-flowing, organic and influenced by my sister's and my individual interests, and I credit it with fostering in me an innate desire to learn - something not even the best schools can guarantee.

Having said that, I'm not sure I would look back so well on it if I hadn't re-entered formal education, joining a high school in New Zealand at the age of 13. At first I struggled with the arbitrariness of the timetable, and its density: I'm not sure I ever retained anything I was taught between the hours of 2pm and 3pm. I settled in soon enough, however, and now I can see the benefits - of having to stick to a structure, sit through lessons that weren't of interest to me, and get along with people I'd never choose as friends. In those ways, at least, school is apposite preparation for later life and the world of work.

"I credit my personalised education with fostering in me a desire to learn - not even the best schools can guarantee that

It's those skills - certainly more essential than being able to analyse the themes of The Great Gatsby - that can be overlooked when discussing the benefits of unschooling or home schooling. But instead of some pedagogical idyll, home schooling can be a last resort. The recent rise in elective home education in the UK (to 92,000 children, as of last year) has been attributed to schools' inconsistent ability to accommodate children's individual needs, particularly in the case of neurodivergence or mental illness. But parents may not be equipped to meet those needs either. And children in neglectful or abusive homes are safer at school, as the UK's child safeguarding review panel recently concluded, not because home schooling is inherently risky, but because of extra opportunities for intervention.

In his inaugural Growing Without Schooling newsletter in 1977, Holt applauded the "good example" of parents who pulled their son out of a school where (even his father admitted) he was happy because they saw peer pressure, and even the mere presence of other children, as an exclusively negative influence. Holt agreed: "If I had no other reason for wanting to keep kids out of school (and I have many), the social life would be reason enough ... mean-spirited, competitive, exclusive, status-seeking, full of talk about who is talking to so-and-so and who is not."

That sounds to me like apt preparation for the world. Holt came to advocate for disengaging from the school system because of his objection to the curriculum, and its "absurd and harmful" assumption that there was a single body of knowledge to be taught. But formal education can have benefits beyond the letter of learning; and home schooling can result in crucial gaps. The system is clearly in need of an overhaul, to better accommodate all learners, but preaching non-participation, in response to schools' prescriptiveness, seems an equally narrow solution.

I'm grateful for my dual experience of education. Both systems were challenging and expansive in different ways. But I often wonder how I might have fared in only one or the other.

* **Elle Hunt** *is a freelance journalist*



Why the Dutch sent a child rapist to Paris

Renate van der Zee



For weeks, controversy has surrounded the Dutch beach volleyball player Steven van de Velde, who was sentenced to four years in prison in England in 2016 for raping a 12-year-old girl when he was 19. He has served his time and expressed regret for what he called "the biggest mistake of my life". But is that enough for him to be allowed to represent the Netherlands at the Olympics, a contest in which participants are expected to be role models?

International media and support groups for victims of sexual violence do not think so. Many condemned the decision to let Van de Velde play, and even called upon the International Olympic Committee to investigate how he had been allowed to compete.

Remarkably, in the Netherlands itself, the case has not caused much commotion. The news hasn't made the front pages. Last week, the Team Netherlands chef de mission, Pieter van den Hoogenband, expressed mild surprise at the timing of the uproar, pointing out that Van de Velde had already returned to international sport in 2017, and played in European and World championships.

The Netherlands' Olympic committee, which selected Van de Velde, said in a statement that he had served his sentence, completed an extensive rehabilitation programme and experts had concluded there was no risk of him reoffending. The volleyball player had shown that he had "grown and positively changed his life", it said.

But why the muted reaction in the Netherlands? One legal distinction is that Van de Velde is unlikely to have been convicted of rape had he stood trial in the Netherlands rather than England. In England, sex with a 12-year-old is rape, regardless of the circumstances: an under-16 cannot legally consent. But after he was extradited to the Netherlands, having served almost a year of his prison sentence, he was released after less than a month. Under Dutch law, his crime was deemed to be the lesser offence of "*ontucht*", sexual acts that violate social-ethical norms.

On social media, there are of course Dutch people arguing that Van de Velde should not compete, with others going much further in their imagined punishments. There are also those, such as the court reporter Chris Klomp, who have argued that he is not the "sex monster" or "groomer" he has been made out to be in some English-language media.

Klomp wrote on X that, although what Van de Velde did was utterly wrong and punishable, he did not physically force the girl to have sex with him. He wrote: "The absence of coercion (other than the age difference) is also evident from the fact that the British court acquitted him of grooming. It was not his intention to 'persuade her' into sexual acts."

Klomp, along with the Dutch sports authorities and many other Dutch people, believes that now that Van de Velde has served his sentence and publicly expressed remorse, he is "of course free to move on with his life".

But there is a difference between moving on with one's life and representing your country at the most prestigious sporting event in the world, where you are also supposed to set an example. Which raises the questions: what message does the Netherlands send to the world by allowing itself to be represented by a man convicted of a sexual offence?

There is another, even more critical question: how does all of this impact the woman involved? Taking into account the victim's perspective was what Sara Alaoui, director of the Safe Space Club, an organisation supporting victims of sexual violence, called for. She felt that Van de Velde hadn't demonstrated enough of that in his statements to the Dutch press. And besides, she argued, expressions of regret alone were not sufficient, he should show by his actions that he truly deserved that second chance. For instance, by using the significant platform he now had as an Olympic athlete to talk openly and honestly about the impact of sexual abuse on victims.

Alaoui cited the example of a unique therapy group in the Dutch city of Eindhoven, where men who have been involved in domestic violence help other men who are guilty of the same. "It would be very much to his credit if he would commit himself to something like that," she said.

During this extremely heated global debate, this was one humane and constructive contribution.

* **Renate van der Zee** *is a Dutch writer and journalist*



From left: Leonid Marushchak, Yevhen Sternichuk and Marharita Kravchenko

JULIA KOCHETOVA/ THE GUARDIAN

Ukraine's death-defying art rescuers

When Putin invaded, a historian in Kyiv saw that Ukraine's cultural heritage was in danger. So he set out to save as much of it as he could

Charlotte Higgins

In early March 2022, when his country seemed in danger of falling to the Russians, it occurred to Leonid Marushchak, a historian by training, to call the director of a museum in eastern Ukraine to check that a collection of 20th-century studio pottery was safe.

He had loved the modernist works by artist Natalya Maksymchenko since he had encountered them almost a decade earlier. There were vessels covered with bold abstract glazes in purple, scarlet and yellow; exuberant figurines of musicians and dancers with swirling skirts; dishes painted with birds in flight. The collection was the radiant highlight of the local history museum in Sloviansk, the ceramicist's home town.

It was remarkable that they were in this small museum at all. Though she was born in Ukraine in 1914 and studied in Kharkiv, Maksymchenko had lived the rest of her life in Russia. But, after her death in 1978, her family, fulfilling her wishes, oversaw the transfer of about 400 works from her studio in Moscow to the city of her birth. It was a deeply resonant act. When the historic traffic of artworks has so often been from Ukraine to Russia, when artists' national allegiances have been subsumed

by the Soviet Union, when works in international museums by Ukrainians (such as Kyiv-born Kazimir Malevich) have been routinely labelled "Russian", Maksymchenko's final gift to her home town and country seemed like a statement of defiance.

Now, as the Russian army inched nearer and nearer to the museum, Marushchak worried that these works in delicate porcelain could be destroyed by a missile in a moment – or, if Sloviansk were occupied, taken by the invaders back to Moscow. Had the ceramics been prioritised for the first round of evacuations, Marushchak asked the museum director on the phone.

"Lyonya, what round?" came the reply. "We still haven't got the order to evacuate!"

Marushchak phoned his friend Kateryna Chuyeva, who was then Ukraine's deputy minister for culture. "Katya," he asked her, "why have you still not given the order for the Sloviansk museum?" She explained that she couldn't just authorise it herself – the regional authorities needed to request it first. So he called the region's culture department. They said that to issue an order, they would first need a full list of items to be evacuated.

Marushchak was furious. The situation was urgent; there was no time for that kind of paperwork. "Let's just say I have sometimes had to take my time and breathe slowly," said Chuyeva, in the face of her friend's sometimes volcanic passion. She found a way to break the bureaucratic impasse. Before the official order had even arrived, Maruschak was on his way to Sloviansk.

Marushchak cannot drive. When I asked him why he hasn't learned, he joked that if he had a licence, he'd have long ago driven to Russia to try to bring back Ukrainian artworks that have, over the centuries, been taken from his country. Without his own means of getting to Sloviansk, Marushchak had his brother-in-law drive him from Kyiv 300 miles east to the city of Dnipro. From there, friends took him a further 50 miles, to the city of Pavlohrad. Then he walked to the last checkpoint in town and hitched a lift for the last 120 miles – this time, on a Soviet-era armoured personnel carrier.

In Sloviansk, artillery boomed alarmingly close; the opposing armies were fighting over a town only 18 miles away. When Marushchak reached the museum, staff were finally packing up the exhibits – though, to his annoyance, the official instructions on what should be prioritised dated from 1970, and stated that what he referred to as "an old bucket of medals" from the second world war should be rescued first. Aside from the Maksymchenko ceramics and the medals, there was also a natural history collection to deal with – AKA, stuffed animals, which, just to add another layer of danger to the enterprise, had probably been preserved with highly toxic arsenic. Into Marushchak's ark – in reality, a police van that deputy minister for culture Chuyeva had managed to commandeer for him – went a moose, a bison, a fox, a wild boar, a wolf and a small herd of deer. All were spirited on a long journey west to a safer location.

Since those early days of the war, with the help of a motley group of intrepid friends, Marushchak has achieved something quite extraordinary. He has organised the evacuation of dozens of museums across Ukraine's frontline – packing, recording, logging and counting each item and sending them to secret, secure locations away from the combat zone. Among the many tens of thousands of artefacts he has rescued are individual drawings and letters in artists' archives, collections of ancient icons and antique furniture, precious textiles, and even 180 haunting, larger-than-life medieval sculptures known as babas, carved by the Turkic nomads of the steppe. "At times," said Chuyeva, "he has been doing almost unbelievable things" – putting himself into extreme personal danger for the sake of often humble-seeming regional museum collections on Ukraine's frontline.

A nation's understanding of itself is built on intangible things: stories and music, poems and language, habits and traditions. But it is also held in its artworks and artefacts, fragile objects that human hands have made and treasured. Once lost or destroyed, they are gone for ever, along with the stores of knowledge they contain, and potential knowledge that future generations might harvest from them. For Marushchak, his country's culture, no less than its territory, is at stake in this war: a culture that Vladimir Putin has repeatedly claimed has no distinct existence, except as an adjunct to Russia's.

On that day in Sloviansk, something became clear to him: there was no point relying on official evacuation efforts. If he wanted to see the job done, he was going to have to do it himself. "He had to do it with his own hands," his friend, the artist Zhanna Kadyrova told me. "There was no one else."

Marushchak, 38, is a tall, fair, round-faced man with a clipped beard and a close-shaved head. When he smiles, he radiates an intense sunniness, but in the background one senses a volatile weather system that might abruptly cloud into fury. Moods – impatience, frustration, delight – flit across his face in quick succession. The first time we spoke, in the autumn of 2023, at a cafe in Kyiv, he seemed anxious almost to the point of hostility. He drummed a set of keys nervously against the tabletop, talking so rapidly, and scattering so many conversational tangents, that it was hard to keep up. Yet the more we spoke, during the following spring and summer, the warmer he became. He is a person who, once he has decided to commit to something, becomes unshakeably attached. (When I asked his wife, Marta Bilas, how she would describe him to a stranger, she said "stubborn".) "He lives his project. He thinks on a different scale from most people," his friend Arif Bagirov told me.

Bagirov, a reformed "hooligan" (his word), from the now-occupied east of Ukraine, is one of the tight group of helpers who have worked with Marushchak, trusting him with their lives in the most perilous of situations. Others include a team of drivers including Marharita Kravchenko, a self-possessed young woman with razor-sharp cheekbones; Zhanna Kadyrova, one of Ukraine's most celebrated artists; and Diana Berg, a glamorous, twice-displaced activist and arts manager who fled Russian-occupied Donetsk in 2014 and then the besieged Mariupol in 2022. "We are like partisans, like guerrilla fighters," said Marushchak.

One day this spring, in his flat in Kyiv, pouring glasses of rosé and radiating bonhomie, Marushchak pulled out some of his own treasures, artworks that he has collected over the years – an early 20th-century oil painting of the apricot groves and slag heaps of the Donbas; red-glazed 1960s studio pottery by Nina Fedorova; a cheery 20th-century folk appliqué textile; a cross-stitch embroidery depicting national poet Taras Shevchenko; a 19th-century icon. Marushchak is one of life's enthusiasts, deeply knowledgable and passionate about Ukraine's artistic history – and, after a decade working with museums in eastern Ukraine, he happens to know the museums that have ended up on Ukraine's frontline like no one else.



'He doesn't know how to rest' … Leonid Marushchak, who has led efforts to rescue art works from eastern Ukraine

JULIA KOCHETOVA/ THE GUARDIAN

Until recently, he has done his evacuation work in secret. This is the first time he has spoken of the work to a journalist. Even Bilas, his wife, hasn't always known the full story. During the chaos of the first few months of war, the couple were flung from their home in Kyiv to different parts of Ukraine. Unbeknown to Bilas, while she was living with her parents in the far west of the country, Marushchak started making daily 300-mile round trips to the capital. Each morning, with his brother-in-law at the wheel of Bilas's black Mini, he would take humanitarian aid into Kyiv – and each afternoon he would take art out. "At that time no one knew whether Kyiv would fall under occupation. And if it did, at some point the Russians would target museums and archives," Marushchak told me.

When Bilas finally saw her car again after three months, on her return to Kyiv in May 2022, she noticed a pair of punctures in the s oft lining on the inside of one of the doors. "I asked Leonid and the guys, 'Who's been sleeping here in high heels?' and they said, 'Oh, so that's from some horns.'" Unbeknown to her, they been using her car to evacuate a collection of taxidermy.

Part of the reason for secrecy was that Marushchak didn't want to worry his wife. "For example, I didn't know he went to Bakhmut about 27 times," Bilas said. "I'd call and he'd say, 'I'm busy, the phone is funny, the connection is bad.'" If she asked too many questions, he and his team would just "curl up like hedgehogs", she said. That was despite the fact that she was raising money to support the evacuations, relying on donors who understood the need to release funds quickly with a minimum of bureaucratic fuss. In any case, she was herself too busy to pay too much attention to the details: aside from her day job in PR, at the start of the invasion she was asked by an old boss, who was by then working for the government, to assemble a team of linguists to translate Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy's daily speeches into 14 languages, including English, French, Arabic and Chinese.

There were other reasons for secrecy, too. At one point Bilas came across a notebook in their flat "filled with symbols and weird code". These were Marushchak's records of storage locations. "If someone sees this notebook, I don't want them to understand which collection went where and how is it packed and how's it marked," Marushchak said. (For this reason, Marushchak did not allow the stores to be photographed or inspected for this article.)

For some of Ukraine's cultural heritage, it is already too late: like the contents of Mariupol's Museum of Local History, which succumbed to multiple fires during the aerial bombing of the city; like the 3,000 cultural sites that have been officially reported damaged or destroyed; like the uncountable ancient sites in Ukraine's archaeology-rich east and south that have been wrecked. In many places, what has not been destroyed is vulnerable to theft and looting. In November 2022, just before they withdrew from the city, Russian occupiers loaded five truckloads of works from the Kherson Art Museum and drove them to Russian-occupied Crimea.

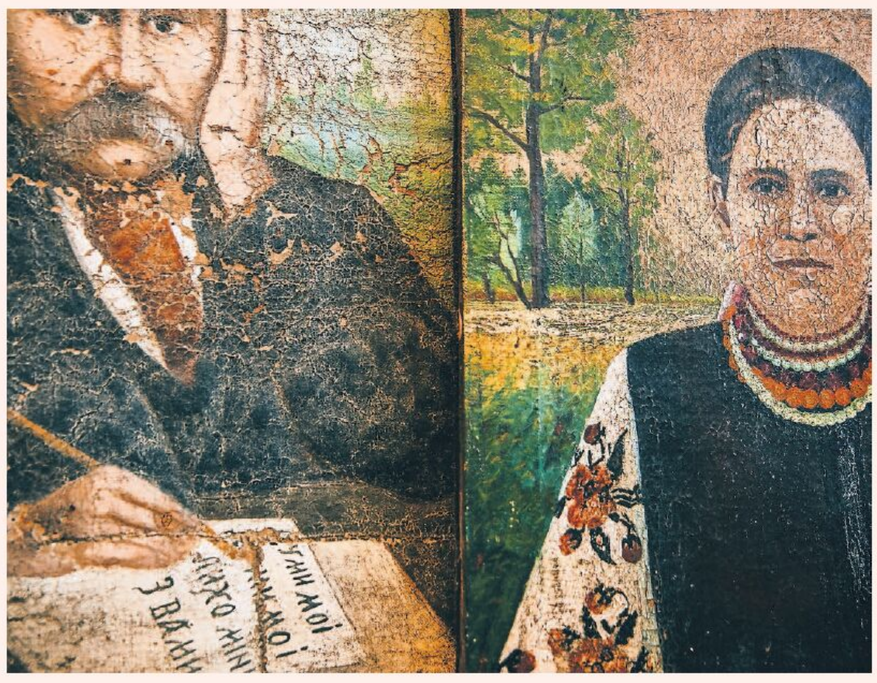
Artworks have long formed part of the spoils of war, but art is always more than simply a question of beautiful, desirable objects. Culture and politics are interleaved, as Ukraine's history – so full of violence against culture and cultural figures – shows. The killing, in Stalin's purges of the early 1930s, of an entire generation of modernist Ukrainian writers known as "the executed renaissance", looms especially large for today's cultural figures. In today's war, occupying forces have seen the very act of writing in Ukrainian or owning Ukrainian books as a threat.

By the time Bilas was examining the strange puncture marks in her Mini's upholstery, Marushchak was devoting his every waking hour to evacuating artworks and artefacts – taking the work upon himself when official procedures were neglected, unworkable or nonexistent. "He went to places where there was a very high chance of being killed or captured," said Diana Berg, the activist, who helped the efforts by initially having the donations that Bilas raised flow through her cultural NGO. "He was ready to put his life on the line – for the history of our culture."









Marushchak has conducted many of his missions with his friend, professional driver Yevhen Sternichuk, at the wheel. They have known each other for years, since Sternichuk was a kid at a summer camp in Crimea in the early 2000s, and Marushchak a camp counsellor. There still seems something of that protective relationship about the pair. After the invasion in 2022, Sternichuk said, Marushchak called him straight away, checking if he needed help, or money. As soon as Sternichuk heard about Marushchak's art rescue projects, he wanted to help.

By the summer of 2022, thanks to donations, Sternichuk graduated from driving Bilas's Mini Countryman to a roomy van, a white Mercedes Sprinter. "I drove 60,000km in that van," said Sternichuk fondly. On one trip, what at first felt like an enormous pothole turned out to be the shock waves from a supersonic bomber, which all but knocked the van over. Another time, a Ukrainian tank almost crushed them by accident. "We had some shenanigans together," he said.

In April 2022, Marushchak and Sternichuk were regularly in Lysychansk, a city in the Luhansk region with a prewar population of about 95,000. Under relentless shelling, it was being reduced to rubble. Marushchak was keeping a watchful eye on the Lysychansk Local History Museum. Aside from the strong chance that it could be obliterated by a missile, he could see that people had been getting inside, perhaps looting it. In one of the rooms was an art installation by his friend, Mykhailo Alekseenko. It included a fur coat that had belonged to the artist's grandmother, and a dining table set with elaborate glassware, "as if people had just left the table", Alekseenko told me when we met in Kyiv. The artwork began haunting Marushchak whenever he saw it through the museum windows. Why hadn't it been evacuated yet? "I started to terrorise the Lysychansk museum authorities," he said. When Chuyeva, the deputy minister for culture, rang, "I told her, If they don't let me have it, I'll steal it."

His wife found a notebook filled with symbols and weird code – these were his records of the secret storage locations he used

Artworks from Marushchak's private collection, built up over many years

JULIA KOCHETOVA/ THE GUARDIAN

The first Alekseenko knew about the rescue mission, he told me, was when he got a text message a couple of months later from Marushchak, as he was checking through the objects in the safe storage area: "Hey, how are you? We're just refreshing the air around your family treasures - please tell me how many shot glasses there were?" Alexeenko still can't quite believe what Marushchak did. "Imagine the surrealism. There are battles, shellings, noise, explosions, checkpoints every other step, and Lyonya drives in, saying. 'I need the fur. And I need the crystal.'"

Next, Marushchak set his sights on another museum, on the edge of Lysychansk, in a district that had been particularly heavily shelled. "No one wanted to go there with me, not even the military," he remembered. But two people did volunteer: his local friend Arif Bagirov, and a friend of Bagirov's, who goes by the call sign "Zombie". (Such call signs are a borrowing from military parlance - soldiers are addressed by such nicknames as a security measure.) Bagirov, who has the creased face of a heavy smoker and the wiry physique of a long-distance cyclist, explained that in the 1990s, he and Zombie "were young, jobless men in this industrial city in which all the plants and factories had shut down. I used to do a bit of boxing," he said, elliptically. "It was easy money and hard drugs." He'd gone straight 20 years ago, he told me, but Zombie ("a good-looking lad, but dangerous," he said) still attracted police attention.

For the mission, Bagirov acquired a red pickup truck, which he named Skrypa, or "Squeaker". Together, the trio made their way to the palace of culture - whose facade has, or rather had, a Soviet mosaic depicting cheery cosmonauts, including Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, now, from her seat in the Russian state duma, a hearty supporter of the invasion of Ukraine.

Upstairs was a small museum devoted to Volodymyr Sosiura, a poet who had worked in a factory in the city as a young man before the first world war. He wrote a poem that all Ukrainians know. "Love your Ukraine, love as you would the sun / The wind, the grasses and the streams together ... / Love her in happy hours, when joys are won / And love her in her time of stormy weather," runs the first verse.

Bagirov knew the place. "Lots of busts of the poet. Larger busts, smaller busts. Personal belongings," he told me. "A regular Soviet memorial museum." Despite its modesty, Marushchak remembered how artists he had brought there loved it. "The director would run to meet us - literally - and would be glad to see each new friend of ours that we brought along," he recalled.

As they drew up outside for this one last visit, so did a multiple rocket launcher system. It wasn't that the Ukrainian MRLS was a danger to them: the problem was that if it fired at the Russians, the Russians would fire back.

It fired. "How long have we got?" asked Marushchak.

"Three to five minutes, maybe. Max 10," said Bagirov.

Marushchak and Zombie dashed upstairs, where a museum employee was there to meet them. Waiting outside with the engine running, Bagirov took the opportunity to tuck into the burger that he had asked Marushchak to bring, as there was no fast food any more in Lysychansk. Inside the museum, Marushchak and the others rushed to assemble archive crates, take photos, open glass cases, pack objects. The prize artefact was Sosiura's natty emerald-green trilby hat. They got the job done in 10 minutes and were out of there as the Russians started to return fire. Bagirov had just enough time to finish the burger.

From the summit of Mount Kremenets in eastern Ukraine, you can look down on the town of Izium, now a wreck of twisted metal and smashed buildings, and the endless forest and steppe beyond. Until recently, nine ancient sculptures stared out over this same view. They are larger and sturdier than living humans, with mighty hips and breasts. Age has blurred their facial features into inscrutability. Beside them, you feel a little smaller, a little more what you really are, which is to say a flimsy, short-lived creature of bone and muscle and soft tissue. Carved about 1,000 years ago by Turkic nomads of the steppe, the solemn figures have something of the presence of Easter Island moai.

Old they may be, but the babas, as sculptures of this type are known, are not indestructible. The area around Mount Kremenets was occupied at the start of the war, and retaken after a rapid Ukrainian counteroffensive in the autumn of 2022. A few days afterwards, as soon as he heard the army was planning to inspect and de-mine Mount Kremenets, Marushchak got on the road to check out the damage, not just to the babas, but to museums and other monuments in the area. Finding that one of the sculptures had indeed been damaged by artillery, he moved its broken parts to the Izium museum, and put a cover over its base to protect it. Later, he would organise the evacuation of the whole group, along with many others elsewhere in eastern and southern Ukraine.

While in Izium, Marushchak learned that a group of soldiers had found a stash of icons - paintings of Christ or other religious subjects, and objects of veneration in eastern Orthodoxy. They

had apparently been looted from different churches by the invaders, then gathered together and stored, likely with the intention of transporting them to Russia. Impulsively, Marushchak asked the soldiers to lead him to the place. He and his driver, this time a friend called Ivan Yatsenko, followed the soldiers to a village via a tortuous route that, without a GPS signal, the pair tried to memorise. The soldiers led them to a building beside a kindergarten: inside were stacks of artworks.

"Where are we?" asked Marushchak. The soldiers had no idea of the name of the village: what they did say was that they had found the icons after breaking through enemy lines, just that morning. Meaning: they were now in what was still, officially, Russian-held territory. No one was in a mood to linger. They stacked the paintings – some from as early as the 17th century, assessed Marushchak – into the van around a bronze, bespectacled memorial to Sergey Prokofiev that Marushchak and Yatsenko had rescued from the village where the composer was born in the Donetsk region, the previous day.

By now it was 11pm. Marushchak assumed the soldiers would escort them back to Izium, or at least a recognisable road – but they shrugged. They had to be on their way, they said. They were due back at their positions. Marushchak and Yatsenko were now on their own, on the wrong side of the frontline, with a van full of icons and a broken memorial to Prokofiev. They were illegally out after curfew, they had no documents to show that they weren't looters, and they had no idea how they were going to get through the numerous checkpoints between them and the city of Kharkiv, more than 100km away. Worse, they had only a shaky notion of how to find their way back. Each placed their hope in the other's ability to navigate their way back through the tangle of unmade roads.

To their relief, the many checkpoints they passed were unmanned – until, that is, they reached the outskirts of Kharkiv in the small hours. Marushchak, hands shaking, asked the soldiers manning the post to call the police ("the first time I've ever called the police on myself"). In the end, he said, the story of the vanload of treasures was so disorienting that the officer who turned up just let the matter go. The one thing that attracted his attention was an improperly secured gas cylinder. He said he'd have to write them up for that.

Fear is a curious emotion. At times, it arrives without warning or logic, unstoppable and blinding. At others, when its presence might be a useful warning against foolhardiness, it flees altogether. For some, it may become a familiar companion, less and less regarded as time goes on. "Of course I get scared," Marushchak told me. "Only stupid people don't get scared." But he gets less frightened than he used to. On one occasion, describing what it feels like when a shell falls near you, he spoke in almost dreamlike terms: "You almost don't hear anything, and hardly understand anything. And then you raise your head and you see that the leaves have fallen down from the trees. It is summer, the trees are bare, and you are covered in a blanket of green leaves as you lie there on the ground."

When I asked Marushchak's friend Arif Bagirov whether he had felt it worth the risk to his life to evacuate the Volodymyr Sosiura museum, he said, "I told myself, 'Listen Arif, these are your last days. You might as well live them brightly. Make your death beautiful.'" And if he'd died for Sosiura's hat? "That would have been the most beautiful death of all."

Long after most of the inhabitants had departed, Bagirov chose to stay in his home town of Sievierodonetsk, which is just across the river from Lysychansk, even closer to what was then the frontline. Mostly, he was delivering aid to vulnerable people who had been unable to leave, riding the deserted shell-cratered streets on his beloved red bicycle (call sign: Mammoth). He and a group of students managed to evacuate a group of recently excavated ancient clay pots, decorated with incised geometric patterns, from the university. They date from between 2600 and 2000BC. Thanks to Bagirov, they survive yet.



Driver Marharita Kravchenko, who helped evacuate art works from some of Ukraine's most dangerous hotspots

JULIA KOCHETOVA/ THE GUARDIAN

'It's my land and my history. They come, they kill, they loot, but our future generations need to know who and what we are'

When the Ukrainian military told him that it was time for him to leave, Bagirov gave them Squeaker, the pickup. Then he got on Mammoth and pedalled across the bridge and up the hill to Lysychansk. From there, "I looked back down and saw there was smoke coming out of Sievierodonetsk," he said. "I thought, 'Great, I've made it out.' Then I looked in front of me and saw smoke there, too." With no mobile signal, he hadn't realised that the battle had already spread to the road to Bakhmut – his route to supposed safety. Somehow, he made the 40-mile ride unscathed. A few weeks, later, Sievierodonetsk fell to the Russians, soon followed by Lysychansk. Bagirov lives in Kyiv now. He misses his old life.

But no one in Ukraine has their "old life". Everyone lives closer to death than they once did; some people, terrifyingly close. "You acknowledge to yourself you might die. But it's too early for me – I have cats at home that need looking after," said Marharita Kravchenko, a professional driver who has worked with Marushchak on some of his most perilous missions. When I asked her why she had felt able to take such risks, she said, "It's my land and my history. They come, they kill, they loot, but our future generations need to know who and what we are: that's my motivation."

Marta Bilas, Marushchak's wife – his calm, measured foil – told me that there was a point a few months ago when she realised she hadn't seen the Mercedes Sprinter for a while. "I was like, 'Where's the van?' And he said, 'It's in Nikopol.' And at some point, I said, 'Look, there is nothing there right now and most of the city is evacuated.'"

It was then that Marushchak finally told Bilas the truth about the Sprinter – and about everything else that she hadn't known about the danger and the frequency of his missions. Or nearly everything. She still isn't sure whether she knows every twist in the tale. A friend of hers once compared the situation to being friends with a couple when you know one is of them is sleeping with someone else. The dilemma, said the friend, is whether to say anything to the one being cheated on. Bilas rolled her eyes as she told me this. The analogy of her husband cheating on her with the cultural heritage of Ukraine was not necessarily one that she wished to dwell on.

What happened to the Sprinter was this. Marushchak, along with a driver called Dima Kapshuk, were in Beryslav, a town in Kherson region, close to Russian positions just across the Dnipro river. Kapshuk was packing a box into the van when he heard something – by the weird, gnawing sound of it, an Iranian-made kamikaze drone. He ran back inside the museum as it hit the van. Another drone hit something else, somewhere; a third, they could hear, was intercepted. Now came an even more terrifying sound: a Russian plane overhead. "It could have been about to drop a glide bomb," said Marushchak. "And that would have taken out the whole museum, with us in it."

Kapshuk ran outside. The back of the van was cratered, its body pitted with shrapnel holes, its windscreen broken, the shattered glass hanging concave in its frame. Somehow, though, the engine started. They got in, and Kapshuk drove the wounded vehicle to the relative safety of Mikolaiv, 85 miles away. In spring 2024, I went to see it in a yard on the outskirts of Kyiv, where Marushchak and Marharita Kravchenko reverently removed its tarpaulin covering and showed me its battered bulk. Lover of museums that he is, Marushchak would like to donate the Sprinter to the Mercedes-Benz Museum in Stuttgart.

The work goes on. It is harder, now, said Bilas: it takes her five days to raise the money she once raised in five hours. It is tougher psychologically, too. "I used to always be joking, 'Oh, you guys moved so many collections. You will have so much work after the war to move it all back.'" That was when the war seemed like it might not last long. Now, she told me, that joke has worn thin. In places like Bakhmut, Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk, there is nowhere left for the collections to return to. They are under occupation, with no immediate prospect of returning to Ukrainian hands. The cities that sustained the museums are rubble, their communities scattered or killed.

Marushchak's friends are anxious about the toll his work is taking on him. "He saw so much pain and destruction, so many attempts to destroy everything Ukrainian," said his friend Diana Berg. "He doesn't know how to rest. He works 24/7," said the artist Zhanna Kadyrova. "Even the most resilient person has his limits."

And yet the importance of the often humble-seeming regional museums that Marushchak had helped safeguard is incalculable, Chuyeva told me, especially in the light of the losses that Ukraine has suffered to its culture over the centuries. "The problem is that we have so many gaps, we have so many lost objects and documents and traditions, that we just cannot go in this way any more," she said. "We have to stop it, we have to protect what we do have."

When Marushchak and I spoke for the last time for this article, it was on Zoom. He was mid-mission. Sternichuk was at the wheel of a van, and they had pulled off the highway into an Okko, the chain of service stations that has sustained many on Ukraine's long roads during this war. Marushchak told me about going to the Kupiansk Local History Museum in Kharkiv region the day after it was destroyed by a missile attack that killed its director and another employee. He and others dug through the rubble and the wet clay of the soil, looking for the museum's inventory books. "I will remember the smell of the wet clay for the rest of my life," he said.

The pair were continuing to cover prodigious distances. The previous day they had driven from Kyiv to Kherson, via Nikopol. Today, they were between Kherson and Kharkiv. There was work to be done as the Russians tried to push their lines forward towards Ukraine's second city. The whole trip added up to 708 miles. The following week, Marushchak sent me some photos and video from the Kherson region. A baba recumbent in the steppe, huge-hipped, hands clasped in front of its body, metres away from a shell-hole, was being gently lifted from the grassland, and taken to a place of safety. ●

* **Charlotte Higgins** *is the Guardian's chief culture writer and a regular contributor to the long read*

Letters

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Country diary

Ardersier, Moray Firth

I have come across many ways of securing thatch to a roof, from pointed hazel spars to heather rope, iron crooks to old-fashioned tarred twine. But this 17th-century roof in the fishing village of Ardersier offers something I haven't seen before: everything has been tied down with orange baler twine.

As basic as the technique may seem, it's worked: the string-tied water reed has survived 35 winters in the north-eastern Highlands. The thatch is underpinned by a base coat – a layer of turf resting on the roof timbers. The turf is probably over a century old, and flecked with heather and marram grass (known here as "bent").

Once, sand dunes lined the coast of the firth, providing marram for more than 300 thatched roofs in Ardersier. The sand dunes are now gone, and the cottage I'm working on is the last thatch in the village. Things were different in the village's marram grass heyday. "Folk just helped each other do the thatching," the owner of the house I'm working on, Graham Walker, remembers. Maintenance was done annually, by the villagers themselves, using whatever materials were to hand. In the Highlands, there was no equivalent of the English master thatcher, a specialist who devotes a lifetime to one craft alone.

When Graham's roof was last thatched, 35 years ago, that self-sufficient way of working had vanished, and the nearest available thatcher lived in the western Highlands. Now, Scottish thatchers are in even shorter supply: the thatcher Neil Nicholson has boarded a CalMac ferry from North Uist, in the Outer Hebrides, and I have driven here from south Devon.

But Graham, a retired gravedigger for the Highland council, continues some of the old ways of doing things. He joins us daily on the scaffold, carrying reed, removing old thatch and tidying up. He's the most hands-on and helpful homeowner I've met in my 12 years working on roofs.

With the last section of roof stripped to reveal another snaggle of orange twine, we leave Graham organising the tarpaulins and head back to the cottage we are staying in, a few miles away. Driving west along the coast road, windows down, clouds of turf-dust swirl off my forearms, and the cab fills with the almond scent of gorse.
Tom Allan

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Preventive medicine may be key to saving the NHS

The call for the UK to focus on disease prevention is welcome (UK must move towards disease prevention to save economy and NHS, says expert, theguardian.com, 23 July). Too many preventive health opportunities are missed. To be successful, preventive interventions need to reach all who stand to benefit. They should be simple and inexpensive, without unnecessary barriers to access. In general, while individualised medical intervention has a place in the treatment of disease, it is less appropriate for the prevention of disease.

The prevention of heart attacks and strokes is a major opportunity. Most heart attacks and strokes occur in people with blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels that are not regarded as raised, whereas almost all cases occur in people aged 50 and over. For more than 10 years, prevention has been possible using an inexpensive, effective and safe polypill from the age of 50, without the need to perform prior tests or measurements. Such a polypill, containing a statin and low-dose blood pressure medicines, could prevent over two-thirds of heart attacks and strokes, with nearly the full preventive effect being achieved about three years after starting treatment. The evidence for this is secure, but unfortunately access is limited to a private service that the NHS could emulate for all to benefit.

Prevention of heart disease and stroke should adopt a simple population-based approach. In the absence of a few specific contraindications, everyone aged 50 and over should be offered preventive medication. This would be effective, more cost-effective than a personalised prevention approach and would relieve pressure on general practices and the wider NHS. The importance of prevention is now acknowledged, but its method of implementation needs urgent review.
Nicholas Wald *Professor of preventive medicine, UCL*
Aroon Hingorani *Professor of genetic epidemiology, UCL*

● Prof John Deanfield wants to move illness prevention services into the places people live, work and socialise to save the NHS. Has he considered how the NHS might work with these people as equal partners in delivering those services? Evidence shows that where people and their communities work as respected equal partners with the NHS, take-up is higher and communities' health and wellbeing are improved. This is because many people trust their networks more than they trust the NHS.

There is ample evidence that being meaningfully connected to others helps build people's confidence to take control of their lives, which improves their mental and physical health, a process known as "health creation". It also improves their connection with formal health services. Some integrated care systems are now embedding health creation, partly because of the huge prize of reducing demand on the NHS.
Merron Simpson
Health Creation Alliance

● How refreshing to see the government champion for personalised prevention present a bold plan for a "pre-NHS service". Normalising preventive health checks is good for our health, our communities and our economy. The UK has already seen this succeed, from cancer screening in supermarket car parks to health MOTs in shopping centres. Some employers have already begun to play a part too, working with local service providers to promote uptake.

However, with only 45% of Britain's workers having access to occupational health services, a radical shift is needed to encourage employers to do more on health prevention. Some countries, including those in Scandinavia, have successfully implemented models of integrated prevention. Might it be time for some analysis of what the UK might be able to learn and, if appropriate, replicate?
Dr Karen Michell
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health

Insomnia? There's a Nice-backed app for that

Dieter Riemann, a professor of clinical psychophysiology at the University of Freiburg in Germany, suggests clinicians may now take insomnia more seriously (Report, 22 July). As a GP, I certainly take insomnia seriously, observing first-hand the debilitating effect it can have on people's physical and mental wellbeing. GPs also understand the importance of tackling the root causes of insomnia and would prefer not to prescribe potentially harmful hypnotics.

The NHS in Scotland has pioneered the use of evidence-based digital therapeutics that treat insomnia and other mental health conditions safely through cognitive behavioural therapy. These are self-guided programmes, accessed via an app or online without requiring a prescription. The health secretary has expressed a refreshing openness to innovation and technologies.

Sleepio, a programme for improving sleep that was created by the digital therapeutics company for which I work, Big Health, is recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. The NHS could introduce it at pace and scale to help hundreds of thousands of people back to healthy sleep patterns, alleviating the burden on overstretched health professionals, providing options other than potentially harmful drugs and starting to cut the estimated £40bn annual cost to the UK economy due to poor sleep.
Dr Ian Wood
NHS GP; UK medical director, Big Health

Why the marathon is 26 miles and 385 yards

The massive 1908 Olympic report records its marathon as 26 miles (How the king helped solve 116-year marathon mystery, 24 July). Chris Brasher, the creator of the London marathon with John Disley, who was aware of my passion for arcane and usually irrelevant athletics history, once commissioned me to find the source of that extra 385 yards.

One of my explanations was that the 26 miles had been to the entrance of the stadium, with the extra length being the distance round the track to the royal box. But no, I don't believe that either.

What I did find out was that Dorando Pietri had, in 1909, competed in a two-man indoor professional marathon, 19 laps to the mile, at the Albert Hall. He had failed to finish, beaten by the English runner Charlie Gardiner in two hours 37 minutes, which may well still be a British indoor record. The prize was £100.
Tom McNab
St Albans, Hertfordshire

● My training bible for my first marathon in 1989 was The Competitive Runner's Handbook, first published in 1983. It tells us: "An English princess, so the story goes, wanted to watch the start of the [1908] race from her castle window and then view the finish from her seat at the [White City] stadium … That was about 2 miles longer than previous marathons … As you puff along those last few miles, all obscenities should be uttered to 'Her Royal Highness', whose vanity created the distance."
Alan Shepherd
Penzance, Cornwall

Corrections and clarifications

● We referred to Gavin Newsom as a potential running mate for his fellow Californian Kamala Harris's bid for the US presidency. The California governor has been mentioned in that regard but the 12th amendment of the US constitution presents a hurdle as it bars electoral college members casting votes for two candidates from their own state. Also, 1938 was the year Harris's father was born in Jamaica, not the year when he went to study at Berkeley (Everything you need to know about Kamala Harris, 23 July, G2, p6).

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Pylons can be pretty if you're imaginative

From my mother, Mary Moser, who died in 2022 aged 100, I learned not only to read the Guardian every day but also to see pylons as balletic figures dancing across the countryside. Even if they are unable to see pylons in this way, surely those objecting to them should realise that the destruction that will be caused by the climate crisis will be much worse (Labour vows to ensure people living near pylons 'see the benefits', 27 July).
Sue Moser
Oxford

● I find it reassuring that the use of cash has not yet completely disappeared – and has even shown a slight resurgence (Surprise increase in number of people using cash on daily basis, 24 July). Coins and notes are an essential tool in teaching the very young the basics of money management, especially as the tooth fairy is yet to go cashless.
Stuart Harrington
Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset

● While I strongly disapprove of performative nastiness, if the contract for the Bibby Stockholm, signed by the Conservative government, will run until January, could the barge not be moored on the Thames to provide office space for Conservative MPs (Bibby Stockholm barge to be shut down in January, 24 July)?
Robin Gardner
West Bridgford, Nottinghamshire

● It looks as if another public inquiry is needed to investigate the number and speed of current public inquiries (Long-winded public inquiries just pile misery on the victims, 26 July).
Margaret Harris
London



Edna O'Brien

Fearless Irish writer who scandalised her native country with her frank portrayal of female desire

Before Edna O'Brien, Irish female writers tended to come from the preserve of the "big house" or enjoyed the kind of privilege that made a life of writing possible. And by and large, their books dealt with genteel themes and conformed to recognisable genres.

When O'Brien's first novel, The Country Girls, was published in 1960, all that changed. As her friend and peer Philip Roth remarked: "While Joyce, in Dubliners and A Portrait of the Artist, was the first Irish Catholic to make his experience and surroundings recognisable, 'the world of Nora Barnacle' had to wait for the fiction of Edna O'Brien."

Written in exile in London, The Country Girls brought O'Brien, who has died aged 93, to wide international attention. The reception in Ireland was largely hostile due to the book's frank portrayal of female sexuality and desire. It was denounced as a "slur on Irish womanhood" and banned, as were several subsequent books. The notoriety established an enduring public persona - the glamorous and worldly, convent-educated libertine - that on occasion worked to the detriment of her reputation as a serious and committed writer. For decades, her name operated as a byword for transgression and subversion, particularly for women.

In addition to more than two dozen novels and short story collections, O'Brien produced numerous plays, a couple of memoirs, children's books and a collection of poems. The largely first person, linear narratives of her early novels evolved into a consciously experimental style in the 1970s and 80s. A Pagan Place (1970) is written in the second person singular: Night (1972) is a single sustained monologue.

In addition to more than two dozen novels, O'Brien produced numerous plays, a couple of memoirs, children's books and a collection of poems
JANE BOWN

The debt to Joyce, whom O'Brien revered and was able to quote at length from memory, was obvious. Like Joyce, she understood how the cadences, rhythms and syntax of English as it is spoken in Ireland could be used to liberate narrative from its empirical impulse and, among other things, give voice to female subjectivity. But her themes were entirely her own.

In 1983, the writer and journalist Nuala O'Faolain wrote: "Edna O'Brien is not a writer within a conscious literature. She owes nothing to any predecessor or to any tradition. She is a writer with one theme, women who love and suffer."

From the 90s onwards, O'Brien consciously expanded her range in a quartet of books that dealt with the massive social, political and economic changes that were sweeping through Ireland, themes largely ignored by other Irish writers.

The first of these, House of Splendid Isolation (1994), dealt with the Troubles via the relationship between a fugitive Republican, McGreevy (based on the Republican paramilitary Dominic McGlinchey, whom she interviewed at Portlaoise prison), and an elderly woman, Josie, whom he takes hostage. In the same year, she interviewed Gerry Adams for the New York Times and in 1995 published a letter in the Independent calling on the then Labour party leader, Tony Blair, to open up a dialogue with Republicans.

"It's often assumed that in order to be a serious writer, you have to look like the back of a bus"

In Ireland and England, O'Brien's involvement in political activity and her perceived sympathy for the Republican movement led to widespread criticism - in the Guardian she was described by the columnist and biographer Edward Pearce as "the Barbara Cartland of long-distance republicanism". By insisting that dialogue is the necessary first step of any conflict resolution, O'Brien did no more than anticipate the zeitgeist.

In subsequent books, O'Brien fictionalised divisive events that an increasingly prosperous Ireland would sooner have ignored. The real story of a 14-year-old rape victim who had been stopped, by law, from leaving Ireland for an abortion became Down By the River (1996). Generally speaking, these books were poorly reviewed in the UK and Ireland. Many of O'Brien's severest critics were the same people who found her intervention in politics offensive and she was routinely accused of being out of touch with modern Ireland.

Her 2002 book, In the Forest, was based on a notorious triple murder in County Clare. O'Brien's fictional killer, O'Kane, descends into madness and violence via a life of exclusion and abuse. Writing about the novel in the Irish Times, Fintan O'Toole painted the actual events as beyond human comprehension while at the same time excoriating O'Brien: "... (the events) did not and do not have a public meaning ... there is simply no artistic need for so close an intrusion into other people's grief."

There is an irony here: the Ireland that had been scandalised by the antics of Baba and Kate in The Country Girls was still unable to confront the ugly underbelly of a society in which poverty, the degradation of women, violence and routine abuse had been endemic for decades.

There is an urgent, heightened quality to these books - their narratives strain as they shuttle back and forth across space and time. Chapters are routinely no more than two pages long, staccato dialogue sits cheek by jowl with descriptive passages of extraordinary vividness and terseness. Reviewing O'Brien's The Little Red Chairs (2016) in the New Yorker, James Wood described her late style as one that "mixes and reinvents inherited forms, blithely shifts from third-person to first-person narration, reproduces dreams and dramatic monologues".

O'Brien put this style to great use in her biography of James Joyce (1999). It is still by far the best short introduction to the writer, his works and life. Such was O'Brien's ability to weave her

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own words in and around those of Joyce that when the manuscript was submitted to the prickly Joyce estate for approval no changes or deletions were requested.

The daughter of Lena (nee Cleary) and Michael O'Brien, Edna was born in the village of Tuamgraney, County Clare, into a newly independent Ireland where church and state conspired to control all aspects of women's lives and bodies. Her family had the trappings of wealth - they lived in a large house with a gate lodge, kept horses and employed farm workers - but money was scarce.

Her father's unsuccessful horse breeding, gambling and alcoholism maintained a constant level of tension in the house, which often erupted into violence. Her mother's love for her bordered on the obsessional - Edna was the youngest by five years of four children. Decades later, Lena's frequent letters to her exiled daughter in London, many of which admonished Edna for her writing and lifestyle, ended with the hope that they would be buried together.

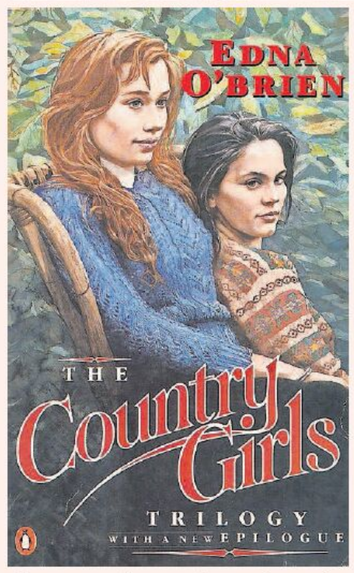
O'Brien claimed that the only books in her childhood home were bloodstock manuals and the Bible, and she often made reference to her mother's visceral fear of writing. Her turbulent childhood remained a constant touchstone in her fiction, as did the landscape of County Clare. She was educated at the Convent of Mercy in Loughrea, where she excelled at the sciences - her English teacher found her assignments "too exuberant" - and she enrolled in a pharmaceutical college in Dublin, working part-time in a chemist shop.

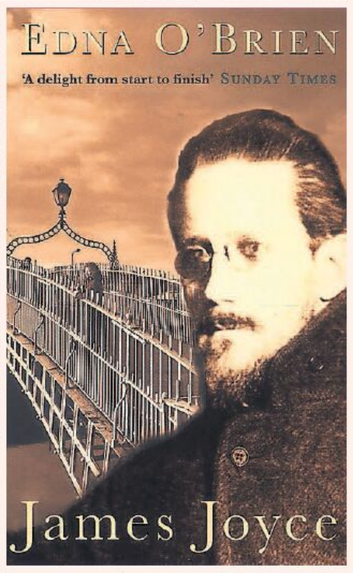
She met the Irish-Czech writer Ernest Gébler, eloped with him and subsequently married him, against her parents' wishes, in the summer of 1954. In 1960, the couple and their two sons, Carlo and Sasha, moved to London, where O'Brien was engaged by the publishers Hutchinson to undertake manuscript reports. Iain Hamilton, who ran Hutchinson, was sufficiently impressed with her efforts that he and Blanche Knopf advanced £25 each to get her to write a novel. The Country Girls was written in three weeks.

O'Brien's success led to strain on her marriage with Gébler and it broke down in 1966. As with her childhood, it provided a rich seam for her writing. She engaged in a successful three-year custody battle for her sons - she had walked out in the middle of cooking dinner one evening - and this included making an undertaking before a court that she would never let her sons see her 1965 novel, August Is a Wicked Month. The acrimony with Gébler continued - he claimed that he had largely written her early books.

Not since Oscar Wilde had an Irish émigré in London embarked on such a flamboyant life. O'Brien moved in an international celebrity set and spent extended periods in the US, where she enjoyed a large following. Her friends included Jane Fonda, Jackie Kennedy, Samuel Beckett, Mick Jagger, Francis Bacon, Ted Hughes, Princess Margaret, Ian McKellen and Harold Pinter.







Top, O'Brien, right, with fellow novelist Margaret Drabble at a press conference in London, 1972. Above left, her debut novel, The Country Girls, 1960, and her 1999 biography of James Joyce
HULTON GETTY

In 1972, she was described in the Longford report on pornography as a "purveyor of insidiously pornographic and perverted views on sex". She took LSD with RD Laing, a disastrous experiment that unhinged her mind for a year. She was a regular at the White House St Patrick's Day party, and posed for Bill Brandt and David Hockney.

Although O'Brien's professional career coincided with feminism, she had an awkward relationship with the movement. Her independence provided an early example for those seeking greater equality with men, but many were uncomfortable with the concentration on love and the fact that many of her female characters could be characterised as victims.

O'Brien was routinely referred to as "the Irish Colette". It was difficult to square a statement such as "I am obsessed by love, by the need of it and the near impossibility of it ..." with the impulse in early feminism for independence and activism. But, while O'Brien's female protagonists might not provide ready standard-bearers, that was never really her project.

The fine short story The Love Object (1968) perhaps offers a deeper insight into her real motivation. An impassioned affair between a television announcer, Martha, and a "famous", happily married, lawyer ends badly and Martha reaches suicidal depths. As she slowly, gradually recovers from the affair she finds herself falling in love with the memory of the lover more deeply than ever she had been while he was available to her.

The story ends with these lines: "I suppose you wonder why I torment myself like this with details of his presence but I need it, I cannot let go of him now, because if I did, all our happiness and my subsequent pain - I cannot vouch for his - will all have been nothing, and nothing is a dreadful thing to hang on to." More Proust than Colette.

Casual sexism is commonplace in writing about female writers and O'Brien suffered more than most. Profiles and reviews of her books concentrated on her looks, her poetic manner of speaking, her accent, speculation about lovers, often at the expense of her writing.

It is hard to imagine Seamus Heaney, John Banville or Colm Tóibín being written about in this way. As she wryly commented: "It's often assumed that in order to be a serious writer, you have to look like the back of a bus." Because she was regarded as a scandalous woman, it was assumed that all of her female characters were autobiography.

This charge simultaneously relegates autobiographical writing to a secondary category and implies that women's experience is unworthy of "serious" literature. O'Brien is on record as saying: "Whether a novel is autobiographical or not does not matter. What is important is the truth in it and the way that truth is expressed."

Although the final decade of O'Brien's life was marred with ill-health, she continued to write. At the same time, the critical response to her work (and appreciation of her career) underwent a significant shift.

It is perhaps ironic that the wholly positive reception of writers such as Eimear McBride, Anne Enright and Anna Burns, all of whom owe a significant debt to O'Brien, created an atmosphere in which the older writer could be reassessed. In Ireland, she was given the title Saoi, the highest honour of the Aosdána, in 2015. In 2018 she was made an honorary dame and in 2021 a commander of the French Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Her late novels continued to explore familiar territory - the control of women and their bodies, the treacherous workings of patriarchy, the impossibility of love, the violation of innocence, exile and abandonment - but with a renewed vigour and urgency.

She was drawn to ever more horrific material, and the writing style became sparer and sharper. Reviewing Girl (2019), O'Brien's reimagining of the 276 schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram jihadists in 2014, in the Guardian, Alex Clark wrote, "There is the blend of economy and lyricism, vignettes tumbling over one another to disorient and energise the reader. There is the intense focus on the emotional lives of women on the sharp end of mental and physical incarceration or constraint, broadening out to sketch in the patriarchal and theocratic structures that hold them there."

The theme of exile is as old as writing itself. For many Irish writers, it seems to be a prerequisite but for O'Brien it had a particularity that transcended her physical separation from Ireland. From an early age, she perceived her own femininity as a form of exile. She fervently believed that true art could only be produced out of pain, rupture and displacement.

> **"I live out of Ireland because something in me warns me that I might stop if I lived there**

In 1976, in Mother Ireland, she wrote: "I live out of Ireland because something in me warns me that I might stop if I lived there, that I might cease to feel what it has meant to have such a heritage, might grow placid when in fact I want yet again and for indefinable reasons to trace that same route, that trenchant childhood route, in the hope of finding some clue that will, or would, or could, make possible the leap that would restore one to one's original place and state of consciousness, to the radical innocence of the moment just before birth."

O'Brien is survived by her sons.
Luke Dodd

Josephine Edna O'Brien, writer, born 15 December 1930; died 27 July 2024

Birthdays

Jimmy Anderson, cricketer, 42; **Paul Anka**, composer and singer, 83; **Jennifer Barnes**, opera singer and musicologist, 64; **Prof Stephen Blackmore**, botanist, 72; **Sir Peter Bottomley**, former Conservative MP, 80; **Kate Bush**, singer and songwriter, 66; **Alun Cairns**, former Conservative MP and former secretary of state for Wales, 54; **Jimmy Cliff**, singer, 80; **Hannah Cockroft**, Paralympic athlete, 32; **Kenton Cool**, mountaineer, 51; **Kerry Fox**, actor, 58; **Sofie Gråbøl**, actor, 56; **Harriet Harman**, former acting leader of the Labour party, 74; **Lisa Kudrow**, actor, 61; **Patrick Modiano**, novelist, 79; **Stephen Moss**, journalist and author, 67; **Sir Christopher Nolan**, film director, 54; **Tom Pidcock**, cyclist, 25; **Jason Robinson**, rugby player, 50; **Justin Rose**, golfer, 44; **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, actor, 77; **Hilary Swank**, actor, 50; **Daley Thompson**, athlete, 66; **Frances de la Tour**, actor, 80; **Christopher Warren-Green**, violinist and conductor, 69.

Yesterday's solutions

Killer sudoku
Easy

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

Medium

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

Codeword

S	M	O	C	K	■	O	V	E	R	D	U	B
E	■	A	■	N	■	U	■	M	■	U	■	L
P	O	T	I	O	N	S	■	B	O	O	Z	E
T	■	■	■	W	■	T	■	L	■	■	■	N
I	N	S	T	I	L	■	T	E	N	D	E	D
C	■	Q	■	N	■	S	■	M	■	I	■	E
■	N	U	G	G	E	T	S	■	U	S	E	R
J	■	I	■	■	■	U	■	■	■	A	■	S
O	R	F	E	■	S	C	R	U	B	B	Y	■
U	■	F	■	C	■	K	■	N	■	L	■	G
S	C	Y	T	H	E	■	S	T	E	E	L	Y
T	■	■	■	O	■	I	■	A	■	■	■	P
I	N	T	E	R	■	B	O	X	C	A	R	S
N	■	E	■	A	■	E	■	E	■	I	■	U
G	R	A	V	L	A	X	■	D	U	R	U	M

Cryptic crossword
Solution No. 29,447

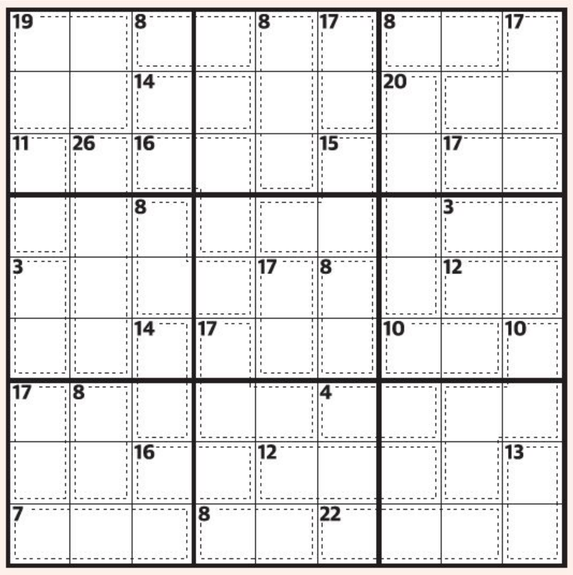
A	N	T	I	D	E	P	R	E	S	S	A	N	T	■
B	■	A	■	E	■	L	■	R	■	I	■	U	■	■
S	P	I	N	S	■	A	P	O	S	T	A	T	E	■
O	■	L	■	D	■	S	■	S	■	U	■	R	■	A
L	U	S	H	E	S	T	■	I	M	P	L	I	E	D
U	■	■	■	M	■	I	■	O	■	■	■	M	■	U
T	A	N	G	O	■	C	O	N	G	E	R	E	E	L
E	■	O	■	N	■	■	■	N	■	N	■	T	■	■
Z	O	R	O	A	S	T	E	R	■	L	A	T	T	E
E	■	M	■	■	■	O	■	U	■	I	■	■	■	R
R	W	A	N	D	A	N	■	S	I	G	N	O	R	A
O	■	L	■	E	■	S	■	S	■	H	■	V	■	T
■	T	I	N	C	T	U	R	E	■	T	R	E	V	I
■	■	S	■	A	■	R	■	L	■	E	■	R	■	O
■	B	E	E	F	W	E	L	L	I	N	G	T	O	N

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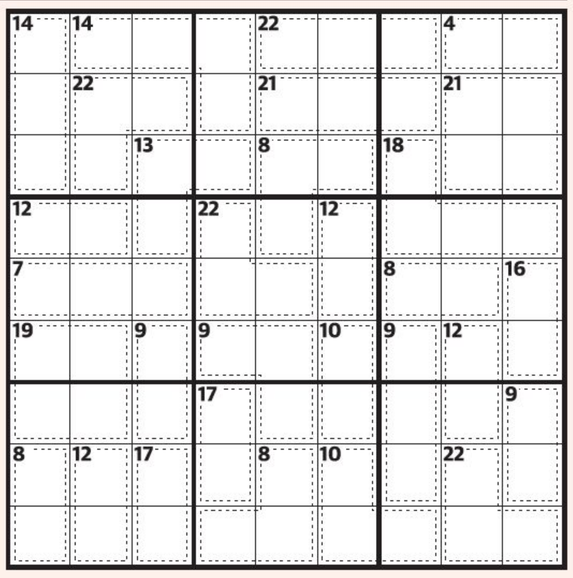
Killer sudoku

Easy

The normal rules of sudoku apply: fill each row, column and 3x3 box with all the numbers from 1 to 9. In addition, the digits in each inner shape (marked by dots) must add up to the number in the top corner of that box. No digit can be repeated within an inner shape.



Medium



Codeword

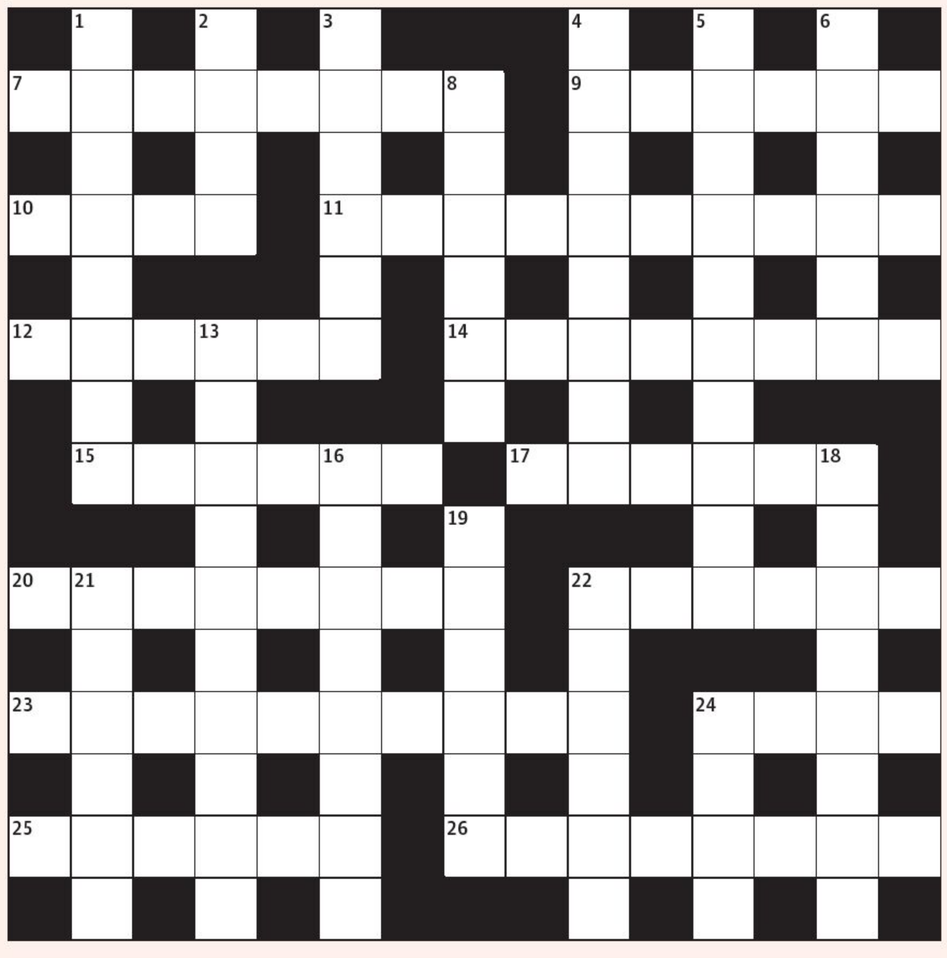
Each letter of the alphabet makes at least one appearance in the grid, and is represented by the same number wherever it appears. The letters decoded should help you to identify other letters and words in the grid.

1	■	12	■	17	■	17	■	6	■	3	■	22
15	23	18	12	13	■	9	6	5	9	23	12	25
6	■	23	■	8	■	12	■	12	■	12 A	■	8
20	8	25	23	24	25	14	■	18	12	1	19	8
19	■	6	■	■	■	11	■	■	■	4	■	16
8	23	9	21	8	19	13	■	17	16	11	13	14
13	■	■	■	23	■	22	■	9	■	13	■	■
17	16	19	11	22	17	■	26	23	10	22	6	10
■	■	6	■	15	■	18	■	2	■	■	■	11
24	6	2	11	9	■	23	13	2	8	25	10	17
14	■	19	■	■	■	17	■	■	■	12	■	25
16	8	6	17	14	■	9	6	19	18 M	11	13	11
12	■	6	■	8	■	12	■	8	■	19	■	4
17	11	7	7	25	6	19	■	21	6	10	22	6
17	■	6	■	4	■	10	■	17	■	17	■	10

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 A	13
14	15	16	17	18 M	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Guardian cryptic crossword No 29,448 set by Qaos



Across

7 German golfer breaks clubs with mistakes (8)
9 Draw and shuffle 10 diamonds (6)
10 Dance show (4)
11 Station filling with trains initially working (10)
12 European 9 stealing £1,000 motor (6)
14 Shaking hands, I will make a pile (8)
15 Wears small garments over and over, right (6)
17 It's laid-back to have worked inside farm (6)
20 Unfortunately, Amy lands a seducer of women (5,3)
22 Mr Scrooge welcomes ghost at the end (6)
23 Relative first takes day in Paris, no good staying (10)
24 Labour MP is a fighter (4)
25 '100 + 1 + 100 + 0? Not unknown' – Roman senator (6)
26 English government invades space station, worried to move abroad (8)

Down

1 Knowing ships throw away river fishing gear (3,5)
2 Just single (4)
3 Footballer carries ball quietly in race (6)
4 Perhaps McCartney is gender fluid? (8)
5 Doctors tend gash as theatre workers (5,5)
6 Tutor taps into very old Latin (6)
8 Brute posed touring hell (6)
13 Corrupt Tory breaks first promise with queen's retreat (5,5)
16 When there's jam, pull over second expensive car by wheel (8)
18 Ring for a long time (8)
19 Ask and prompt Victor to substitute Charlie (6)
21 Agents taking test recalled type of power (6)
22 One who steals mother's good food (6)
24 Obama withdrawing bill in clamour (4)



Beware of the dogs

What's behind the shocking rise in attacks on postal workers?

The Guardian

G2

Tuesday 30/07/24

Life & Arts

Plate expectations
Come Dine With Me in 100 scenes
page 4



Ian McKellen
How I made the movie of Richard III
page 9

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Zoe Williams



Why do I turn into such an animal when I watch the Olympics?

It was 2012 and, now I look it up, actually my birthday, and I was having a standup row with an American journalist because the Australian Anna Meares had just won gold in the women's cycling sprint event. Let me count the ways in which the Olympics had driven me mad. First, gripped by a patriotic fervour that even Kemi Badenoch would probably have found a bit much, I was enraged that Victoria Pendleton had come second. *Enraged*. I hated Australia; I didn't understand why American journalists were even allowed to watch the proud sportsters if they weren't going to root for the British ones.

Second, I was incandescent about the injustice of an adjudication, on a rule that I'd only learned five minutes before. Pendleton had crossed a lane line, which is forbidden, yet it looked like Meares had pushed her, then the judges said Meares hadn't, then the race was redone, then Meares won, and five-minutes-ago me didn't even know you were allowed a rematch, but now I was the Ruth Bader Ginsburg of cycling tort and I wanted to put Meares in prison.

Third, it was my birthday and I hadn't even noticed, whereas on any regular year, the whole of August is given over to either the countdown to or aftermath of this momentous date. Fourth, I later tried to make the case that cycling was the most democratic of all the sitting-down sports (no normal person has a horse, or a boat, or a kayak, or a canoe, yet any normal person can have a bike); sitting-down sports were the most sportsmanlike (citation still needed on this); Great Britain was the best at cycling, duffer judges notwithstanding; ergo, *we were the true ground zero of democracy*. I seriously thought that.

> This isn't the spirit of togetherness the Games are meant to foster

In theory, then, I know that from the opening bars of the opening ceremony, my brain will be boiled and I will be thinking batshit things and saying them out loud until it closes. So far, I have got wildly excited by Keir Starmer being the only spectator to have packed a cagoule, from which I made some wild inferences about British politics: that we were ahead of the neo-fascist curve hitting Europe and the US, a model of planning and common sense, and some day soon everyone else will catch up. Previously, before the cagoule, I thought the exact opposite.

I have summoned genuine hot tears for the silver medal of breaststroke star Adam Peaty, after all his personal struggles, about which I knew nothing at all and had to look them up on Wikipedia while I was patriotically standing up. I've sucked my teeth at the Mexican synchronised divers, muttering "Now that wasn't exactly splashless, was it, lads?" and shouted "NINE ON EXECUTION, NINE ON SYNCHRO, SUCK THAT!" as Tom Daley and Noah Williams hit the water, sounding for all the world like a person who knows their way around a diving board, as opposed to what I am: a world-class physical coward who has never jumped off anything higher than a pavement edge and doesn't like getting wet.

In normal life, I would be full of disrespectful questions, such as how is Tom Daley still so cute after all this time, and isn't it great how many sporting giants are also called Williams? Today, they are the nation's lions, and chitter-chatter is for traitors. I know nothing at all about why Kazakhstan is suddenly so good at fencing (they just are, OK?), or Uzbekistan is so good at judo; I don't really understand volleyball as a concept (there are just so many more efficient ways to move a ball from one place to another), yet here we are, and I am the most invested person ever.

The Olympics are well known for fostering a spirit of global togetherness, and that is great; well done, athletes. But the armchair expertise, the deep well of totally imagined knowledge, the phantom athleticism, that's the bit I really miss when all the medals are in.

I went to see a Morrissey tribute act. It was revealing

On Saturday night, I went to the Dublin Castle, a pub and music venue in Camden, north London, the fabled birthplace of Britpop. I wasn't there when Blur were born; I feel sure I would have remembered. But I was there the night a guy set his hair on fire because he leaned over someone lighting a cigarette. So that's going back a few years.

Covers band Viva Morrissey speak straight to the hearts of those of us with an unarguable passion for Morrissey the genre, but an inveterate dislike of Morrissey the man. It's an ambivalence deeper than the standard question "Can you love the art while finding the artist 'problematic'?".

Picasso, for instance, was of his time. He died before society figured out that locking women in studios was bad, actually. Who knows, if he hadn't died, he might have apologised. Morrissey, by contrast, lives his life as a constant provocation, peddling tired far-right tropes (Hitler was leftwing, *actually*) and dumb, crotchety attacks on Sadiq Khan, which is just not-quite-deniable Islamophobia for the basic.

I could never pay to see Morrissey, but I'd still always watch a guy who looks and sounds a bit like him, especially if he didn't get into the choppier waters of ethno-nationalism. But Viva Morrissey had elected to play You Are the Quarry in full, so Irish Blood, English Heart couldn't be skirted. And listening to the lyrics – "I've been dreaming of a time when / To be English is not to be baneful / To be standing by the flag not feeling shameful / Racist or partial" – it described, quite economically, the full political programme of the Reform party. You can imagine Lee Anderson singing it.

While it wouldn't have been possible, in 2004, for anyone to take Morrissey as seriously as he takes himself, we could have got a heads up for the future if we'd listened a fraction more closely.



Morrissey performing in 2020

Pass notes

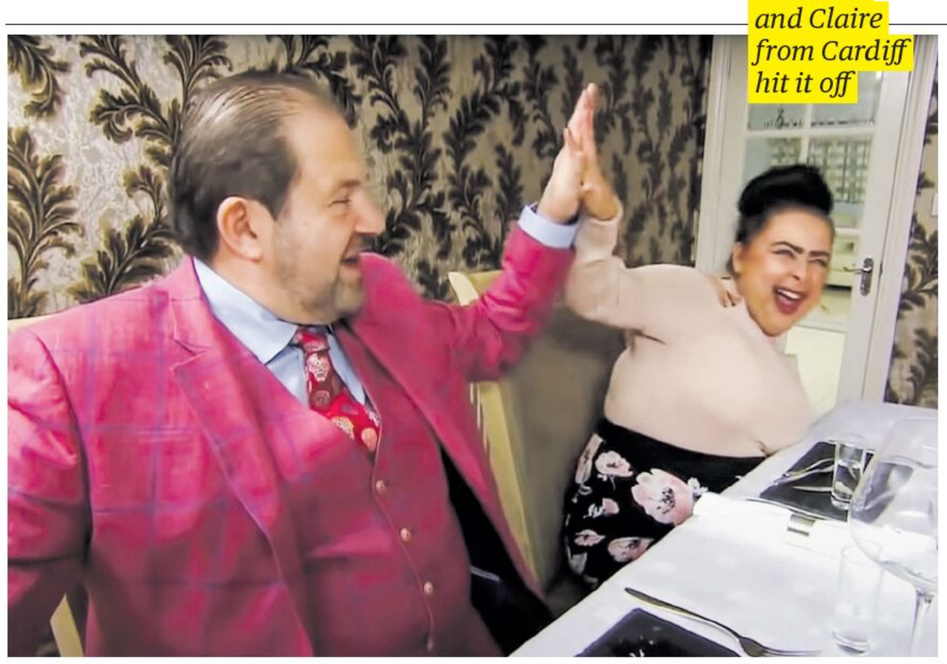


№ 4,726

Airline safety videos

Age: Around since the 1980s.
Appearance: Increasingly elaborate.
Oh God, this might be the most boring Pass Notes yet. Honestly, who watches airline safety videos? Loads of people. You have no idea. Half a million people have watched the new British Airways one.
Well, yeah, because they're all trapped on a plane with nothing else to do. I should clarify. Half a million people have watched the new British Airways one on YouTube.
Hang on, they're watching an in-flight safety video at home? Of their own accord? Yes.
Why? Because it's quite good. The five and a half minute video, May We Haveth One's Attention, sees figures inspired by classic British literature being interrupted by BA staff. It was directed by Sharon Maguire, who made Bridget Jones's Diary, with costumes by the Oscar-winning designer Jenny Beavan.
And it's going down well? Apparently so. One of the many positive comments it has received on YouTube reads: "This is the single most impressive safety video I have ever seen."
Wow, what a gamechanger. Not really. Last year's safety video had Ncuti Gatwa and Robert Peston in it, and a commenter described it as: "Best safety video ever by an airline or should I say 'brilliant!'"
People on YouTube are easily pleased. It just goes to show the effort airlines have to make to get people to watch their safety briefings. They need to grab and hold your attention.
When did this start? The first video of this kind is thought to be Delta's film from 2008, in which a flight attendant wags her finger when telling people not to smoke onboard.
Whoa, the excitement. Things escalated quickly, though. Ten years ago, Air New Zealand did a Hobbit-themed video with wigs and costumes, bungee jumps and Taika Waititi dressed as a wizard.
I just watched it! It was amazing! And now you can remember exactly what to do if your plane runs into trouble, right?
Uhhhh ... *Right?*
Sorry, the video was so much fun I stopped concentrating on the safety instructions. This is the downside of the videos. They require a careful balance between fun and education; it's easy to tip too far into the former.
So what's to be done? Have you tried ignoring the video and just watching the flight attendant's demonstration instead? All the same information, plus you get to prove to a stranger that you're better than all the other passengers because you actually pay attention.
Do say: "Safety videos need to work hard to make people watch them."
Don't say: "Because the threat of death apparently isn't enough."

COVER COMPOSITE IMAGE: GUARDIAN DESIGN; ALAMY/GETTY



Giovanni and Claire from Cardiff hit it off



Farida from Wolverhampton rates the evening



Tempers fray over a meaty menu in Walsall

Dinner takes all

It is nearly 20 years since Come Dine With Me first aired. **Dylan B Jones** pays tribute to Britain's most misguided and self-sabotaging amateur cooks

Bubbling away in its 20th year, Channel 4's Come Dine With Me is one of the most delicious reality shows ever created.

Five (or sometimes four) contestants each make a three-course meal for the others over the course of a week, for the chance to win £1,000. Each meal is hosted at a contestant's house, where wine is drunk, bedside drawers are snooped through, ill-advised party games are concocted and hilarity ensues. Then, in the cab home, the diners rate the meal out of 10.

The show's appeal lies not just in watching contestants make inexplicable and evening-ruining concoctions in the kitchen (sausage trifle, anyone?), but in the even more bizarre melting pot of social interactions.

From awkwardness over the correct number of cheek kisses to questions about the validity of pastry, Come Dine With Me's many tropes are like a hangover-curing pot of leek and potato soup (served with ice-cream because Aldi didn't have any creme fraiche). Here are 100 of them.

1. The host makes a great show of asking how everyone likes their steak, then cremates the lot.

2. A woman screams as her stilettos sink into a sodden lawn as pre-dinner cocktails are served alfresco in Dundee, where July temperatures have soared to 10C.

3. "Our third contender is wisecracking telecoms director and collector of vintage lawnmowers Barclay Gubbins Belshaw!"

4. A heated argument erupts about whether ghosts are real.

5. A contestant shoves a sparkler into a collapsing brownie and hollers: "I love a bit of bling, me."

6. A gay man cooks awful food, but wins by complimenting everyone's hair and hiring a drag queen.

7. A diner declares: "I *hate* lamb."

8. A contestant cooks a Greek menu because their mate went to Corfu and brought back a jar of olives.

9. At least three of the guests don't know what feta is.

10. Or what falafel is.

11. The narrator, Dave Lamb, mutters: "Steady, everyone!" as a belly-dancing troupe shimmies into a tiny living room in Solihull.

12. The dining room is decorated with swirly flock wallpaper in black and purple or white and silver.

13. While pouring a jar of Blue Dragon paste on to unseasoned chicken, a contestant insists: "You can't go wrong with Thai food."

14. A guest grandly reveals they once met Les Dennis at the opening of a Carpetright.

15. A man shows off by eating a whole scotch bonnet, then vomits.

16. A guest enthuses: "I think this is the most delicious panna cotta I've had in my life, Jill, well done!" Cut to post-dinner interview: "It looked and tasted like sick. Revolting."

17. A woman in a floor-length fur coat refuses to eat rabbit.

18. A flummoxed contestant asks: "Why is it all written in Spanish if they're doing a Mexican menu?"

19. Someone pronounces "chipotle" as "chipottle".

20. Lamb says: "Blimey, good luck!" as the host slams down plates of pear and peach omelette topped with lightly frozen peas.

21. A contestant cries: "Ooh, two kisses, very European!"

22. A middle-aged man whose whole personality is puns says: "What do you call cheese that's not yours? Nachos! Wahey!"

23. "The food was all right, but she just whacked some things on a plate; anyone can do that," says a woman who previously presented her guests with salad from a bag, a bowl of plain spaghetti and shop-bought ice-cream.

24. A guest explains: "Sorry, I don't like French food at all."

25. The host positions a photograph of themselves when they were 7st heavier, then is offended when everyone mentions it.

26. A person who is clearly awful says: "I don't suffer fools gladly! What you see is what you get."

27. The host delivers an artful smear of pea and mint puree, using the back of a teaspoon.

28. A contestant is introduced as the "fun-loving party girl of the group", with a montage of them clinking glasses of grape juice in an empty nightclub while the first four bars of Fergie's Glamorous plays.

29. The host forces her guests to say which animal she reminds them of, then cries when everyone says rat or snake.

30. "Tonight, I'm so proud to be giving my guests a proper taste of my heritage, although I *am* taking a shortcut and using this Old El Paso spice mix, because it's just easier."

31. The host makes a flawless three-course banquet with great care and skill, but is marked down on the soup course for serving a slice of bread they didn't bake themselves.

32. "Who's got time to make their own bread? No one."

33. The guests follow an inexplicable beach-party dress code, where everyone wears oversized sunglasses and colourful beads while eating beef wellington in the middle of January.

34. Lamb announces: "This week, we're in Dribblington-Upon-Avon, where the world record was once set for the most pansies deheaded in 24 hours!"

35. A discussion about who is the most or least posh descends into a debate about foxhunting, then one of the guests quits the competition.

36. A diner declares: "I *hate* fish."

37. Nicole Scherzinger and AR





Annierose from Coventry's sausage (yes, sausage) trifle



In Nottinghamshire, Maria struggles to contain herself in Dennis's vicinity



Kev from Burnley's notorious whisk trick

Rahman's Jai Ho! plays on the backing track while someone makes a curry.
38. A guest says: "I have never heard of baked camembert, but it sounds absolutely *foul*."
39. Lamb: "Aaaaaand here we go, fourth cheesecake of the week!"
40. A host tests their meringue by holding the bowl over their head, squealing: "Ooh, I don't like it!"
41. A contestant asks: "How old do you *think* I am?"
42. A balding 50-year-old from Slough insists he was once mistaken for Jake Gyllenhaal.
43. A Jamaican contestant is warned by everyone to put way less spice than usual in their jerk chicken, then they all complain that it's not spicy enough.
44. Starter: scallops and chorizo, pan fried and served on pea and mint puree, which everyone says is very fancy. Main: rack of lamb with unseasoned carrots and potatoes, which everyone quite likes. Dessert: cheesecake with a base so solid that a guest makes a show of hacking at it with their spoon and says: "Phwoar, got a hammer for this, mate?"
45. "This is recruitment consultant and part-time sit-down salsa dance instructor Elaine!"
46. A conversation takes place about star signs, in which three people conclude they are soulmates, one person feels left out and one person says they "don't like all that sort of thing".
47. The host says: "I'm half Moroccan, so I'd really like all my guests to learn about the food and culture of the Middle East and get in touch with their inner Shakira."
48. A contestant is exiled after daring to put fruit in a savoury dish.
49. "Ooh, another great shirt!" says the host to a guest wearing his third Hawaiian top of the week.
50. A host shows off rapport with their local butcher by saying "mate" and "wicked" a lot.
51. An instrumental version of Lily Allen's Smile plays on the backing track as someone scowls into a rice pudding.
52. A strawberry is plopped ceremoniously into a plastic flute of prosecco.
53. A diner declares: "I absolutely *hate* bread."
54. A contestant says: "Life's too short to make your own pastry."
55. A contestant says they "really like to push the envelope" with their cooking, then makes a rack of lamb with carrots and potatoes.
56. A contestant says: "This is a unique dish passed down through my family, so I've got a real place in my heart for it," then makes a rack of lamb with carrots and potatoes.
57. A contestant says: "So, we've got a vegetarian and a pescatarian, and I know Julie really hates lamb, so I've decided to do rack of lamb with carrots and potatoes."
58. A contestant ruins their chances by telling everyone to expect a Michelin-starred meal.
59. "Next up, it's door-to-door candle-wax salesperson and hummingbird-conservation enthusiast Bradley!"
60. First guest's intro: "There's nothing I hate more than someone who's outspoken, really up themselves and lives for the attention." Cut to second guest's intro: "I tell it like it is and I'm a bit of a showoff, actually, yeah."

A balding 50-year-old from Slough insists he was once mistaken for Jake Gyllenhaal

61. Guests have a look around the host's bedroom, find a nurse's uniform and conclude that the host is a stripper.
62. "There's a lot at *steak* tonight … see what I did there?"
63. The starter is served on a slate, the main on a wooden plank and the dessert in a teacup.
64. The only man wins, then says with a chuckle: "Well, it seems like the best man won!"
65. Every time someone is making meatballs, dough balls, gulab jamun or anything else vaguely spherical, they say: "Ooh, I'm good at handling balls!" (Wink to camera.)
66. Establishing shots of Stoke-on-Trent whiz across the screen to the instrumental version of the Pussycat Dolls' Don't Cha.
67. A cloche of prize money is revealed to a stilted cheer that clearly took 20 takes at 11.30pm.
68. The bottom of a cake tin falls out and the contents land on the floor. The contestant scoops it up with kitchen towel, arranges it artfully on the plate and squirts some whipped cream over it.
69. A contestant tries to jazz up their disastrous dessert by making an outline of a spoon on the plate with cocoa powder and a stencil.
70. The favourite to win scuppers their chances by discussing farts at the table.
71. "This week we're in Little Whitherford, famous for being the first place in Britain where someone parallel-parked a Ford Mondeo."
72. A guest produces a wig from under the table: "We found *this* on a mannequin in your guest room! Are you a drag queen, Mick?" "No, I'm a trainee hairdresser." "Oh."
73. Everyone sits in stunned silence as the host sways around the dining table serenading the group with Frank Sinatra's My Way.
74. "Winner, winner, chicken dinner," says a man called Dave, proudly holding aloft a saucepan of burnt chicken korma.
75. There is unbridled horror at the revelation of shop-bought pastry.
76. A contestant says they have "accidentally" run out of eggs and calls their mum to bring some round, so she can be on TV for three seconds and say: "All right then, love. Good luck! See you later!"
77. A host tries to make chocolate domes by drizzling melted chocolate over an inflated balloon.
78. "My first impression of you, Siobhan, was that you were a bit arrogant, a bit of a know-it-all, a bit me, me, me … and now that we're at the end of the week, that impression still stands."
79. A guest in novelty sunglasses says: "I love a laugh, me!"
80. Ice-cream comes out of the freezer rock hard, so it is put in the oven and forgotten about.
81. A contestant who says in episode one that they are "the life and soul of the party" manages to alienate or offend everyone by episode three.
82. While rating their meal in the back of the cab, a contestant holds up a "9" card, then, shaking their head, flips the card upside down.
83. The host, who is the only blond person at the table, accuses a guest of "planting" a blond hair in the tiramisu.
84. "Next to arrive at the party is property surveyor, part-time children's entertainer and collector of limited-edition lion-taming DVDs Mimsy Jane Backenroth!"
85. Guests show off their "party tricks", which involve flipping up their eyelids, raising their eyebrows several times in a row or using their toes to pick up the saltshaker.
86. Calls are made for the host to be disqualified when they reveal they worked in a breakfast cafe in 1991.
87. A contestant is labelled "a game-playing ponce" because their menu is in Italian.
88. Things go south when someone says they once saw the queen's convoy ride past and someone else says they actually met the queen.
89. A contestant runs up a flight of stairs, giggling. "And they're off to get glammed up!"
90. A glass of gin and tonic is served with a complete herb garden in it.
91. A contestant holds up a garlic crusher and claims: "I have never seen one of these before in my life."
92. A contestant makes a show of uncorking a bottle of champagne with a hiss, rather than a pop, usually in a conservatory and perhaps with the aid of a tea towel.
93. The inexplicable use of food colouring ends up dyeing a brown thing green or a green thing brown.
94. The vegetarian of the group is served fish one night, a plate of plain boiled veg the next night and a baked potato on night three.
95. A contestant says: "I've eaten at London's finest restaurants on several occasions."
96. The host says, while carrying an armful of barely touched bowls of soup back to the kitchen: "Well, I think that went really well."
97. A contestant complains that their lamb is overdone *and* underdone.
98. The "joker" of the group decides to arrive dressed as a giant banana for no discernible reason.
99. A contestant admits: "We've said we'll stay in touch, but I've got no interest in speaking to any of them ever again, quite frankly."
100. And finally … "TAXI!"

Come Dine With Me is available to stream on Channel 4

PHOTOGRAPHS: CHANNEL 4

‘The dog lunged at my face –

Dog attacks on postal workers are soaring, leaving the victims with horrific injuries. What’s behind the rise – and what should owners do? **Emma Beddington** reports



Kirsteen Hobson had two operations after a dog attack

Early in December last year, Kirsteen Hobson was covering a colleague’s round. A postal worker for the past nine years in the Highland port of Oban, Hobson remembers the date because she was really looking forward to a Christmas night out. She was on the communal balcony of a block of flats when she saw one of the customers leaning out of his front door to greet her. “I said hi,” she says. “I bent over to get the mail, to hand over to him, and the next thing I knew there was a dog on my face – literally on my face.”

Before she could react, the alsatian had bitten off a large part of her top lip. “I felt my lip come off, then I managed somehow to push the dog off me. Then it lunged at my face again and got me under the eye and on my forehead.” Hobson pushed the dog off again and fled towards the door. As she retreated, the dog bit her a third time, in the thigh. She had the wherewithal to open the door to the stairwell and shut it behind her. “Had that door not been there, I don’t think I would have been able to get the dog off me.” The owner “wasn’t able to control the dog at all”, she says.

In shock, Hobson went to A&E. “A woman was dry-heaving looking at my face,” she says. After being temporarily patched up, she was sent to the nearest plastic surgery unit. Before she set off, she went to the loo. “I looked down and thought: ‘What is that?’ and it was my lip, just sitting on the toilet floor. Obviously, my lip got caught in my jacket.”

She needed two operations: one to tackle the bite in her leg and stitch her head and eye wounds; and a second to rebuild her lip, grafting skin from inside her mouth. After spending four days in hospital, she was off work for three and a half months. She is still far from 100%. “It changed my whole face,” she says. The wound under her eye is “still lumpy” and her thigh has struggled to heal.

Hobson is one of the 42 postal workers, on average, to suffer a dog attack in the UK each week. There were 2,206 attacks in the year to 31 March 2024, a 15% increase on the previous year, which was also up 15% year on year.

The severity of injuries has also increased alarmingly. “Many sustain life-changing injuries. Many cannot continue as a postal worker out on delivery as a result of the physical and psychological impact of these attacks,” says Dave Joyce, the health, safety and environment officer at the Communication Workers Union (CWU). “They are dreadful.”

That is no exaggeration: I see pictures of shocking injuries (including Hobson’s) and hear of several postal workers who have left the job as a result of attacks. According to the CWU, 1,000 postal workers have had a finger or part of a finger bitten off through letterboxes in the past five years.

“There’s still a bit of a joke in our society, a throwback to the 1970s – Benny-Hill-type sketches of dogs chasing postmen,” says Lizz Lloyd, Royal Mail’s director of health and safety. On a recent visit to a stately home, she says, she was appalled to see they were selling “postman-flavour” dog treats in the cafe. But as the experiences of Hobson and many other postal workers show, there is nothing funny about it. “Dog attacks and dangerous dogs is a national crisis,” says Joyce. “Our workers are on the frontline.”

Darren Conlon, a postie for two and a half years, agrees: “This is happening all the time. I’m not the only person in my team who has been attacked.” In November 2023, Conlon was delivering mail to a house in Plymouth. “I had heard dogs on the property in the past,” he says. “But I’d never seen them and when that happens multiple times, you assume everything is fine.” It wasn’t: as he walked up the driveway, four dogs ran over. “I thought the best thing I could do is approach them in a friendly manner, so I put my head down, showing I was not threatening, and a greyhound came straight for me. It literally hit me in the front. You know instantly: oh, no, this one’s not playing.”

Conlon tried to use his postbag as a shield. “It grabbed it, shook it in its teeth and pushed it to one side.” He hid his hands, so the dog “latched on to the back of my left thigh. It was well and truly gripped on. It was not funny at all.”

The owner appeared and after a struggle, managed to pull the dog off. Conlon was left with a deep wound that required treatment and a tetanus injection. “I couldn’t sit down for several days.” The ferocity of the attack shocked him: “I was in the Royal Marines for several years, so I’m quite used to traumatic events, but this one was a little bit different.”

Over the past nine years, Lincolnshire postal worker Paula Anderson has suffered five dog attacks. In the first, a bull mastiff jumped over a low garden fence and attacked her as she bent down to deliver mail. “I put my arm up to protect my face and it bit me on the elbow.” Despite swift treatment, the deep and painful puncture wounds became infected, requiring two courses of antibiotics. She was also attacked twice by the same jack russell – the first time it bit her wrist, again necessitating antibiotics; the second time, she was able to fight it off.

In the past six months, she has been bitten twice: once handing over a parcel in a doorway and once by a chihuahua loose in a garden. There have been “loads of near-misses”, too: “I’ve run out of gardens as fast as I could go and whacked gates shut … It just happens.”

So what is going on? For a start, there are simply more dogs about. Dog ownership expanded dramatically during and after the pandemic, with pet food industry figures now indicating there are 13.5m dogs in the UK. The phenomenon of behavioural problems in dogs who missed out on socialisation and training opportunities during lockdowns has been well documented, too.

Added to this, Lloyd says, the return to hybrid or full-time, on-site work now means that “a lot of those dogs are spending more

then my lip came off'



Darren Conlon who was bitten in the leg by a greyhound

PHOTOGRAPHS: KATHERINE ANNE ROSE/THE GUARDIAN; JONNY WEEKS/THE GUARDIAN

time in isolation and they're not used to that. The doorbell goes and it's the most exciting thing that's happened to them all day. They're increasingly territorial when they protect the home."

Louise Glazebrook, a canine behaviourist and author of The Book Your Dog Wishes You Would Read, isn't surprised to hear that attacks have increased. "We need to start talking about how our human decisions have impacts on the dogs we are sharing our homes with," she says. That includes unexpected triggers such as the expanses of glass in modern houses and flats, which can be "really disconcerting for our dogs".

Then there's our online shopping habit – another Covid hangover. "Post used to be once a day. Now, with online deliveries, it can be a gazillion times a day and the drivers can be in helmets. Some dogs can find the sudden banging of a knocker quite scary. The way we live has changed and that impacts our dogs."

It affects our posties (and other delivery workers) too, and the repercussions can linger long after a bite heals. "It's frightening," says Anderson. "Every day after, for weeks and weeks, you hear a dog barking and you think: where is it? Is it loose? Is it going to come up and is it going to bite me?" Conlon agrees: "I always think I can get through anything in life, but now whenever I hear a dog and I'm doing my post round, my level of alertness goes through the roof. It affects you mentally. This is why I want to talk about it."

"I struggle with panic attacks since it happened," says Hobson. "It's not really a rational thing; it's fear, so it's hard to overcome, but I have to try." She is cautiously testing a return to work, uncertain if she will be able to cope long-term. Her old round remains off limits: "I just can't go back. Having that feeling of being trapped in a block of flats …"

A dog bite can have consequences for the dog and dog owner, too. "If something happens, it's horrible for everybody," Lloyd says. Repercussions can range from Royal Mail suspending delivery until a problem is resolved (this can affect whole blocks and sometimes streets) to custodial sentences. The owner of the dog that attacked Hobson was sentenced to 140 hours of community service and received a 10-year ban on owning a dog. That was fairly lenient: dogs can be euthanised and, under section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act, owners can face unlimited fines and up to five years' imprisonment if their dog bites someone (rising to 14 years for a fatal attack).

The CWU's Joyce regrets the low number of prosecutions under the act and the low level of penalties generally imposed when cases do go to court; too many aggravated offences end in only a Community Resolution order (an informal arrangement intended for lower-level offences), he says. "The combination of poor enforcement by the police and poor penalties being handed down by the judiciary is not helping our cause at all. We've got to get better enforcement." He highlights the fact that Royal Mail has successfully privately prosecuted more than 30 owners after dog attacks.

So what can owners do? Plan ahead, for a start. Postal delivery hours are predictable even if Amazon et al are not, so shutting a reactive dog in another room or behind a stair gate with a toy or treat when the post is due can prevent a lot of problems arising. If the dog is likely to jump, you can stack one stair gate on top of another, says Gemma Taylor of the Blue Cross animal welfare charity.

When there's a knock at the door, it's a good habit to put your dog in another room anyway, especially if it's more reactive. "A dog that is territorial should not be going to the door to meet anyone," says Glazebrook, who adds that the same goes for dogs that are anxious or fearful around new noises or situations. Several postal workers I speak to mention the scenario where an owner opens the door, simultaneously trying to take their mail and hold their pet back with a knee or hand. It's a disaster waiting to happen, and they see it all the time.

The Blue Cross also recommends using a letterbox guard to prevent finger bites, or an external mailbox. Other tips include closing blinds so your dog can't see the postie's approach through the window and get worked up, and teaching an emergency "stop" command. These and many more are covered in a new, free Blue Cross "Protecting your Postie" webinar. Anyone can sign up, and the next session takes place on 27 September.

But it's also important to ensure you are meeting your dog's welfare needs, says Taylor: that your pet is pain-free, can express its natural behaviours, and enjoys companionship, a suitable diet and a comfortable environment. "A dog that can't settle, that is stressed, that isn't able to relax in the house is not 'normal'," agrees Glazebrook. "It is something that we need to do a deep dive into and address, because it won't just get better." She advises against owners looking for a YouTube quick fix for behavioural problems: "You can make the situation so much worse by not reaching out for tailored help or support."

The postal workers I speak to are all dog lovers. Anderson is feeding her two spaniels when we speak; she never lets them come to the door. "Mine are really soft dogs," she says. "I don't think they would ever bite anybody, but you don't take that chance, do you?" Hobson puts her French bulldog away, too. "He does bark – he's just excited," she says. "But people don't want to be faced with that. If we shut them in, it solves all the problems."

"We do care," says Conlon. "I love dogs; we've got family dogs. Your dog is protecting you, it's protecting your property, but please protect us as well. All we want to do is get people their post and parcels – and we get injuries that could change our lives."

> **I was in the Royal Marines, so I'm used to traumatic events, but this was different**



Effective exile ... O'Brien at her London home in 2019

'She was a great light of the golden age'

Her first novel was burned in her home town – but she went on to liberate Irish fiction. **Anne Enright**, **Colm Tóibín** and **Eimear McBride** celebrate the great Edna O'Brien

Anne Enright
'Her work is interested in deep primal realities'

O'Brien blew open the possibilities for Irish fiction, not because of the taboos she broke but because she had broken them as a woman. In 1960, her first novel The Country Girls was burned in the market square of her home town of Scarriff, and every Irish woman who has published since is indebted to the hurt she took on there.

O'Brien's persona was a mixture of steely determination and an old-style feminine vulnerability. She seemed frightened of many small things – she never learned to swim or to drive, for example – but was unafraid when it came to speaking the truth. She had a beautiful speaking voice and used it marvellously well. Lyrical, playful and passionate, her conversation had a self-replenishing fluency. There were no half measures with Edna: she was all in, every time.

O'Brien described herself as a mere conduit for her work – as though writing were a kind of swoon – but in truth she was incredibly industrious and deliberate in her methods. Her work is interested in deep psychological or primal realities, and this always set O'Brien at odds with the ideological and the mainstream. Though she wrote about women's lives and loves, she was uneasy with feminism. Her middle work is interested – and not always in a good way – in male brutality. Everything she did showed the same vividness and facility but she was stylistically curious, porous to the contemporary and unafraid to change.

The last novel, Girl, is among her freshest. It is set in Nigeria, to which she travelled in her late 80s for research. O'Brien kept writing because she needed the money, she said, but there are easier ways to write a book. The truth is she wrote because she was compelled to the page. Like many artists, her problems were designed to ensure production. Frail and indomitable to the last, she lived alone and made her own way.

Ireland's response to her early novels wounded O'Brien deeply. Artistically, she was also interested in suffering, in getting to the place of greatest hurt. For some, this was a kind of invitation. Up to recently, in Dublin, you knew where you were when someone sneered at her persona or her work. You could also tell when that all started to shift, when she became unassailable and it became apparent some tide of misogyny had been finally turned.

This change buoyed her last years and O'Brien became more trusting of her home country. Still, there is no doubt she would not have survived as an artist in 20th-century Ireland; a country she loved passionately and spoke about with melancholy all her life. Her spirit would have been quenched; the culture would have reduced and traduced her. Most of her adult years were spent in the close exile of London and this sense of impossible proximity made her work more central to the tradition that her voice had once changed. She met her moment. It is from such great tensions and difficulties that icons are made.

Colm Tóibín
'Instead of taking revenge, she set to work'

On the top of the small wardrobe in my parents' bedroom, over to the right, three paperbacks were hidden. This was before the draconian censorship laws were taken off the statute books in Ireland. The three books were banned novels – The Dark by John McGahern; Couples by John Updike; The Country Girls by Edna O'Brien.

In the conversations I had with Edna over the years, I never told her about finding these books. It would not have interested her much. Writing had brought trouble; she took no pleasure in being notorious in small Irish towns in the second half of the 1960s.

She had been brave. She knew that. And she had been original in the tone she used and the subjects she explored. That interested her more, but still not too much.

What Edna really wanted to talk about was style, how style works in sentences, how style in prose is a way of transforming the self and the world.

Again and again, she would come back to the figures who mattered most to her – Virginia Woolf and James Joyce and WB Yeats and TS Eliot. She was fascinated by how elements of their lives had appeared in novels and poems, how they had been transformed from merely autobiography into something grander and mysterious.

Often, I tried to break the intensity of these discussions with gossip from Ireland. But Edna knew Ireland better than I did; she made it her business to know what was going on there and was in regular touch with some of the leading players in Irish political life. Minor gossip didn't really concern her.

Once her sons were grown up, I think she began to care deeply about the quality of her own solitude. She wrote with sharp insight in novels of her middle period about being alone.

The spiritual elements in O'Brien, however, could give way to quick wit and a great worldliness. In a brilliant obituary she wrote of her friend Jacqueline Onassis, she could easily have been writing about herself. She wrote of Jackie's "breathless enthusiasm, a certain giddiness late at night, a passionate love of clothes", and added: "But the barriers which she built around herself betray a woman who had espoused self-preservation from the start ... Distance and distancing were central to her."

O'Brien's achievement was to find a style to match what was intimate and pressing with what was elusive and distant. There is a moment in her novel Time and Tide when the protagonist Nell Steadman has to go

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANTONIO OLMOS/THE OBSERVER; GETTY IMAGES



Glittering energy ... O'Brien in 1970

Edna explored the complexities of living in a woman's body while moving through a man's world

to court to fight for the custody of her children.

While O'Brien could have wrested immense drama out of the actual court hearing, she made her great scene not from the day in court but from the day before the hearing when Nell goes on her own to get a sense of the atmosphere in the place where her fate will soon be decided. This was a brilliant strategy. Instead of courtroom drama, we get the fragility of Nell herself, we get the scene imagined, foretold, rather than spelled out.

This, then, is what O'Brien came to London from Dublin to do. She had, in effect, been driven out of Ireland. Instead of complaining or taking revenge, she set to work. Since she had already disturbed the peace, then the task was to restore harmony in her prose style and then see how much glittering energy she could create by varying the tone, changing the pace, adding to the drama.

She knew as soon as she started that this - getting it right - would be worth doing for its own sake. And that is her great accomplishment.

Eimear McBride

'She had a rare eye for pricking pomposities'

With Edna's death one of the last great lights of the golden age of Irish literature has gone out. Her first novel arrived in scandal and her last leaves her beloved, but her work has weathered every season in between as only the very best can. This was because Edna was an honest writer, always true to her finely attuned ear and instincts, in a way few dared, and dare, to be. The result is a rich and varied body of work, with her jewel-like short stories, plays and poetry all strung between the great heights of her novels.

From her unforgettable debut The Country Girls in 1960, to the high modernism of 1972's Night, her turn to politics in 1994 with House of Splendid Isolation and on to her last published novel, the haunting Girl, in 2019, she explored the intricacies and complexities of living in a woman's body while moving through a man's world, with all the joy and shame, desire and danger that experience entails.

Of the many qualities overlooked by the literary bro culture into which she was obliged to publish was the exquisite calibration of her prose, its intense beauty and capacity to richly convey emotion. Too often dismissed as hysterical, and always presumed to be autobiographical, critics rarely picked up on how funny her writing was. She had a rare eye for observing secret vanities and pricking pomposities.

She held social niceties in low regard and sacred cows in none. And readers loved Edna, which I frequently had the pleasure of witnessing in person. For many women, this was for the voice she gave them and for many men, the insight she shared. But for all, it was for the deep joy her writing gave and the courage her life displayed. I will miss her. Her great work and her equally great self changed me, and all of us, for the better, for sure.

Richard III

'We went bankrupt during the shoot. So I put my fee in and so did Ian. I had to lay detonators myself because we didn't have the crew - not a safe way to run things'



'It changed my life' ... Ian McKellen in Richard III

PHOTOGRAPHS: UNITED ARTISTS/ALLSTAR

Ian McKellen
Actor, co-writer, exec-producer

When we were doing Richard III at the National Theatre in 1990, the director Richard Eyre and I felt there should be modern references in the design. He suggested looking back to the 1930s and fascism. Just before the play opened in the US, I said: "Shouldn't we film this?" He said: "Yes, you'd better write a screenplay."

At the end of the tour, I sent Richard what I'd written. I'd cut every "thee" and "thou" - it's always "you". And the first spoken word isn't heard for about eight minutes. I wanted the audience to think: "When is someone going to speak?" Richard said: "I thought you were doing a television adaptation. This is a feature film. I don't have time to direct a feature film - I'm running the National Theatre." Thank God, we managed to get Richard Loncraine instead - Richard II, as I called him. He knew nothing about Shakespeare but the partnership was perfect. He gave way on any point I made about the text and I conceded on visual things because he knew how to tell the story cinematically.

I'd done enough film acting to know you can't just do what you do on stage. It was fun to realise that I could achieve just as much by raising an eyebrow, and it was exciting to speak Richard's soliloquies straight to camera. I wasn't known as a film actor, so we wanted to get some American stars. I thought the Woodville family, which Richard III marries into, could be American, so we cast Annette Bening and Robert Downey Jr. Except Annette didn't want to do it with an American accent. She said: "People will think I can't do an English one. And I can." We had to keep saying: "Please make it more American!"

I thought the film was 10 minutes too short: it was in danger of becoming a cartoon version. But, just as with Iago in Othello, you find yourself wanting Richard to succeed against your better instincts, just to see how far he'll go - so it races along. Suddenly I was being considered seriously as a film actor. If Bryan Singer hadn't seen it, he would never have asked me to be in Apt Pupil or X-Men. Richard III the movie changed my life.

Richard Loncraine
Director, co-writer

Ian's script was very theatrical but I was struck by Richard delivering "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse," from a Jeep with its wheels spinning. His great calling is to make Shakespeare accessible for idiots like me. I said: "I can't direct a movie if I don't know what every line means."

Most of the imagery came from me, like the tank crashing through the wall at the start. I like setting things in the wrong place, such as when Richard is at the urinal halfway through "Now is the winter of our discontent". It makes the audience go: "Hang on, maybe this is real."

We needed to have movie stars to raise money for the film. Annette was lovely: never any bullshit. Robert Downey Jr was in a pretty bad way in those days: well-mannered, just not always quite with us, though his performance didn't suffer. Dominic West got his first job. He was not a great actor then by any means - but he hadn't learned anything yet.

On the first day, I knew we only had enough money for half the shoot. We went bankrupt after a few weeks, so I put my fee in, Ian put his in, and my assistant put her own money in. It was stressful. I remember laying detonators myself at Battersea power station in London because we didn't have enough crew members to do it, which isn't the safest way to run a shoot.

The battle sequence at the end was quite chaotic. My favourite shot is when Ian comes out of the bombed railway carriage and there's a guy on fire running backwards: a beautiful painterly image, with all that black smoke and the horses rearing up. Nothing to do with my talent - pure luck.

It was iniquitous that Ian didn't receive an Oscar nomination. At the premiere, Warren Beatty, Annette's husband, got down on his knees in the lobby and bowed to me in front of 150 people. I thought: "Fucking hell, that is praise indeed." What I wasn't prepared for was seeing him do it again five days later to another director, which tells you a bit about how Hollywood works.

Interviews by Ryan Gilbey



Tensions ... Stephen Amell and Alexander Ludwig in Heels

Review Heels, Netflix

This wrestling drama's fights feel more Swan Lake than WWE

★★★★☆



Leila Latif

Whether a character is a story's villain or hero is down to perspective. In the case of professional wrestling, these choices are made behind the scenes as Netflix's latest drama explains, with the heroes known as "faces" and the villains "heels". In terms of this show, the streaming company takes the former role, saving the day for fans of the US series, which was cancelled by the network Starz, and distributing it internationally with rumours circulating that a third season could be on the way. It is, however, a bit more heel-like when it comes to its other wrestling drama, Glow, whose supposedly part-filmed fourth season will never see the light of day after Netflix cancelled it.

Heels is a much more serious piece than Glow as Jack Spade (Stephen Amell) struggles with inheriting a lower-tier wrestling league from his troubled father. His brother Ace (Alexander Ludwig) is the league's biggest attraction and seemingly its only hope of solvency. As those in the know about professional wrestling will acknowledge, the athleticism and the injuries are real, but the outcomes of the matches are not, with the ultimate victor tightly scripted in advance. This is a task that Jack takes on despite being hugely overstretched by his day job and family life. He chooses to write himself as a "heel" while his brother is cheered by the crowds as a "face", but during season one the tensions between the two come to a head. Amell puts in a heartbreaking performance as a man crushed by responsibility, with the hate by design he experiences in the ring weighing heavy on his soul.

There are some interesting meta-textual flourishes, such as when Jack and his business partner, Willie (Mary McCormack), debate the importance of satisfying story arcs – and the unpredictable endings that sustain a fandom's passion for the story. But the series is too po-faced to have much fun with them and aesthetically it feels strangely unspecific. But the stakes feel surprisingly high. The series grounds itself in the literal blood, sweat and tears of each of its contenders, really driving home how – despite this being a tale of third-tier wrestlers in a fictional Georgia town – in brief moments in the ring, they feel like gods.

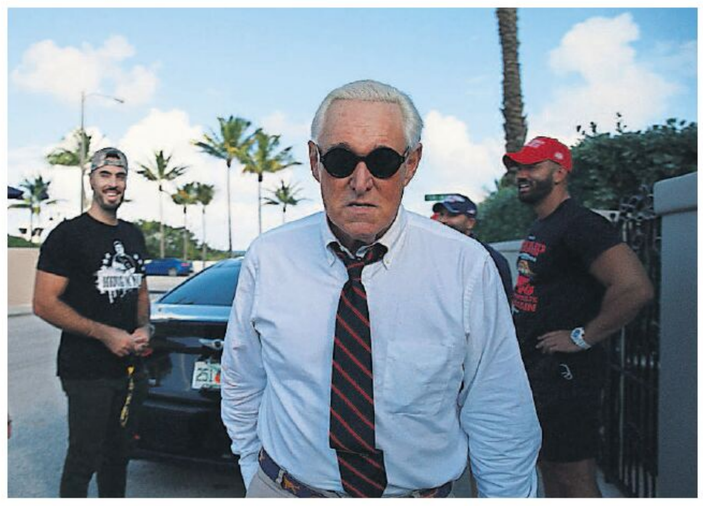
Season two simultaneously comes to Netflix alongside series one and picks up moments after the finale, making the show eminently bingeable. It leans more into character study than its predecessor, delving into unresolved traumas from the many Spade family conflicts: Jack is keen to be closer to his young son than his aggressive, aloof father was to him – even though he "named his own son after the dead dad he doesn't miss". But it also broadens its scope, looking into other wrestlers. We find out what makes Wild Bill Hancock (Chris Bauer) continue on in this gruelling field and get some series highlights courtesy of the badassery of Crystal (Kelli Berglund), who finds herself on a road to glory, not least because she's able to acrobatically take out a man twice her size in two seconds flat with just her inner-thigh strength. The wrestling scenes in the second outing are more stunningly choreographed than in the first, with cinematically elegant matches that feel more like Swan Lake than WWE.

Just like Jack, Heels takes a little while to find its footing. It's only in the second season that you see what this team is really capable of – moving away from the brothers' conflict to paint a wider portrait of broken hearts, masculine bravado and where the future of wrestling could lie.

The show also gives itself permission to have a little fun. Rival wrestling league head Gully (played by showrunner Mike O'Malley) seems to be having a whale of a time as he stomps into scenes swearing like a pirate, with a wide-eyed, scenery-chewing intensity. It's all building up to his and Jack's leagues facing off in a gloriously titled "Harmageddon" match, which sees the brothers facing their biggest, most violent fight yet and a season finale (and at present the final ever episode) that crams in so many twists it leaves your head spinning.

It presents a convincing argument that Netflix should complete this act of heroism and bring back Heels for a third season. And while it is at it, maybe it should let me take a little look-see at season four of Glow.

A Storm Foretold
10pm, BBC Four



Christoffer Guldbrandsen's 2023 documentary now has an even scarier resonance with this, its TV debut. He shadows Donald Trump's "political godfather", Roger Stone *(above)*, from the 2016 Make America Great Again campaign to the fatal storming of the US Capitol. But this "was a mutual exploitation; a dynamic that rarely ends well", and Stone soon shuts down the project – until one day, Guldbrandsen nearly dies after a cardiac arrest at 49, and Stone contacts him ...

Hollie Richardson

Cooking With the Stars
8pm, ITV1
Linford Christie, Abbey Clancy, Carol Vorderman and Christopher Biggins are some of the stars taking part in what host Emma Willis swears is the "ultimate celebrity food fight". The hopeless cooks are first tasked with dinner party dishes, each contestant under the guidance of a top chef. **HR**

Worst House on the Street
8pm, Channel 4
"It's a shambles!" Sibling property developers Scarlette and Stuart Douglas head to Bristol to help single mum Natalie perform CPR on a 1950s flat-roofed semi that, judging by its exterior, is about ready to disintegrate. A major overhaul is required; luckily six-year-old Freda has a compelling vision for the kitchen.
Graeme Virtue

Secrets of the London Underground
8pm, U&Yesterday
Fans of this always fascinating documentary series will already know of Leslie Green, the architect behind the tube's classic oxblood-tiled stations, including this week's focus, Lambeth North. We also hear from railway historian Tim Dunn about the engineering feats of the Thames Tunnel – the first tunnel to be built under a navigable river.
Ellen E Jones

Vichy and the Nazis: A Deal With the Devil
8.35pm, PBS America
The story of the Nazi-collaborating Vichy regime in France remains slightly undertold, probably because it runs counter to the nobler narrative of French resistance. This fascinating documentary explores the regime's inception and examines its shameful role in the deportation of nearly 80,000 Jews to concentration camps.
Phil Harrison

The Body Detectives
9pm, Channel 4
In this week's attempt to identify one of the many anonymous bodies found in the UK, former police detective Dave Grimstead and his team of experts look into the case of a man found on a London street in 1994. Remarkably, modern technology helps them to discover his story. **HR**

What's On
Scan the QR code below to sign up for the What's On newsletter, our free TV email with the best reviews, news and exclusive writing direct to your inbox every Monday

BBC One

6.0 **Breakfast** (T) **6.45** Olympics: Paris 2024 (T) **1.0** News (T) **1.30** Regional News and Weather (T) **1.35** News (T) **1.45** Olympics: Paris 2024 (T) **6.0** News (T) **6.30** Regional News and Weather (T)

7.0 **Olympics: Paris 2024** (T) Clare Balding presents coverage of the swimming finals at La Défense Arena, where a further three champions are set to be crowned, including in the men's 4x200m freestyle relay.

10.0 **News** (T)
10.30 **Regional News** (T) Weather
10.40 **Olympics: Paris 2024 – Tonight at the Games** (T) Isa Guha and Mark Chapman look back at day four, as a total of 12 gold medals were decided.
12.10 **Kin** (T) (R) **1.0** Kin (T) (R) **1.55** Weather for the Week Ahead (T) **2.0** BBC News (T)

BBC Two

6.45 **Breakfast** (T) **9.0** Dom Does America (T) (R) **9.30** Wanted Down Under Revisited (T) (R) **10.15** A Countryside Summer (T) (R) **10.45** The Farmers' Country Showdown (T) (R) **11.15** Homes Under the Hammer (T) (R) **12.15** Politics Live (T) **1.0** Olympics (T) **1.45** Bargain Hunt (T) (R) **2.30** The Customer Is Always Right (T) (R) **3.0** Escape to the Country (T) (R) **3.45** Ricky & Ralf (T) (R) **4.30** The Repair Shop (T) (R) **5.15** Flog It! (T) (R) **6.0** Olympics (T) **7.0** House of Games (T) (R) **7.30** EastEnders (T)

8.0 **Inside the Factory** (T) (R) Gregg Wallace finds out how vegan sausages are made, visiting a factory that churns out 90,000 pork-free bangers every day.
9.0 **Kyle: The Gunman Who Divided America** (T) (R) Documentary about Kyle Rittenhouse, who shot three men at the age of 17.

10.0 **My Family** (T) (R)
10.30 **Newsnight** (T) Weather
11.05 **Today at the Test** (T) (R) England v West Indies.
12.05 **Sign Zone** The Turkish Detective (T) (R) **12.55** The Turkish Detective (T) (R) **1.45** The Bidding Room (T) (R) **2.30** Surviving the Post Office (T) (R) **3.0** This Is BBC Two (T)

ITV1

6.0 **Good Morning Britain** (T) **9.0** Lorraine (T) **10.0** This Morning (T) **12.30** Loose Women (T) **1.0** News and Weather (T) **1.20** Local News and Weather (T) **1.30** ITV Racing Live: Glorious Goodwood (T) **4.0** Tipping Point (T) (R) **5.0** The Chase (T) (R) **6.0** Local News and Weather (T) **6.30** News and Weather (T) **7.30** Emmerdale (T)

8.0 **Cooking With the Stars** (T) New series. Emma Willis and Tom Allen host as Carol Vorderman, Abbey Clancy, Pasha Kovalev and Harry Pinero compete to deliver standout dinner party dishes.
9.0 **Vera** (T) (R) DCI Stanhope investigates when the body of a young woman is washed up on the banks of the Tyne.

10.45 **News** (T) Weather
11.20 **Local News** (T) and Weather
11.35 **On Assignment** (T) James Mates, Barnaby Papadopulos and Faye Barker with current affairs reports from Santorini, Cyprus and rural Spain.
12.05 **Turbulence: How Safe Is Your Flight?** (T) (R) **1.0** Shop on TV **3.0** Celebrity Catchphrase (T) (R) **3.50** Unwind With ITV (T)

Channel 4

6.25 **Cheers** (T) (R) **7.15** Everybody Loves Raymond (T) (R) **9.05** Frasier (T) (R) **11.05** Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes (T) (R) **11.10** The Simpsons (T) (R) **12.05** News (T) **12.10** A New Life in the Sun (T) (R) **1.10** Car S.O.S (T) (R) **2.10** Countdown (T) **3.0** A Place in the Sun (T) (R) **4.0** The Great House Giveaway (T) **5.0** A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? (T) (R) **6.0** Come Dine With Me (T) (R) **6.30** The Simpsons (T) (R) **7.0** News (T) **7.55** Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes (T) (R)

8.0 **Worst House on the Street** (T) In Bristol, Scarlette and Stuart help single mum Natalie, who wants to transform her fixer-upper house into a colourful haven for herself and her daughter.
9.0 **The Body Detectives** (T) The experts investigate the death of an unidentified man found in a London street in 1994.

10.0 **Gogglebox** (T) (R)
11.05 **Women on Death Row** (T)
12.10 **Hotel Hell** (T) (R) **1.0** Come Dine With Me: The Professionals (T) (R) **1.55** Car S.O.S (T) (R) **2.45** Becoming Elizabeth (T) (R) **3.55** Love It Or List It Australia (T) (R) **4.50** Frasier (T) (R) **5.15** Frasier (T) (R) **5.45** Countdown (T) (R)

Channel 5

6.0 **Milkshake! 9.15** Jeremy Vine (T) **11.30** Storm Huntley (T) **12.45** Friends (T) (R) **1.40** News (T) **1.45** Home and Away (T) (R) **2.15** FILM The Man With My Husband's Face (Danny J Boyle, 2023) (T) **4.0** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (T) (R) **5.0** News (T) **6.0** Amazing Railway Adventures With Nick Knowles (T) (R) **7.0** Our Great Yorkshire Life (T)

8.0 **The Yorkshire Vet: At Home With the Greens** (T) Jean takes Peanut, the oldest of her 13 cats, to Peter's surgery for a checkup.
9.0 **Your Kitchen: 60 Years of Fads & Gadgets** (T) First in a two-part documentary, charting the transformation of the British kitchen from the 1950s to the present day.

10.0 **Britain's Favourite Ads of the 70s & 80s** (T) (R)
12.05 **Crimes That Shook Britain** (T) (R) **1.0** Live Casino Show (T) **3.0** Great British Gardens (T) (R) **3.50** Chronic Pain: How to Live With It (T) (R) **4.40** Wildlife SOS (T) (R) **5.05** House Doctor (T) (R) **5.35** Fireman Sam (T) (R) **5.45** Paw Patrol (T) (R)

BBC Four

7.0 **Today at the Test** (T) Action from day five of the third and final Test between England and West Indies.

8.0 **Keeping Up Appearances** (T) (R) Hyacinth invites the new vicar round for tea.
8.30 **Butterflies** (T) (R) Ben worries he is going to have a heart attack.
9.0 **Timeshift: The Nation's Railway – The Golden Age of British Rail** (T) (R) How British Rail transformed the network after 1945.

10.0 **A Storm Foretold** (T) A look at the end of Trump's time as president, with a focus on his adviser Roger Stone.
11.30 **The World's Most Photographed: John F Kennedy** (T) (R)
12.0 **Paris** (T) (R) **1.0** Timeshift (T) (R) **2.0** Art on the BBC: Monet (T) (R) **3.0** How to Build a Cathedral (T) (R)

Other channels

BBC Three

7.0pm Top Gear **8.0** Shark Tank: Dragons' Den US **8.40** The Catch Up **8.45** Zen Motoring **9.0** Stacey Dooley Sleeps Over **9.45** High: Confessions of an Ibiza Drug Mule **10.20** This Country **10.50** This Country **11.20** Brickies **11.50** Brickies **12.20** High: Confessions of an Ibiza Drug Mule **1.0** Top Gear **2.0** This Country **2.25** This Country **3.0** Brickies **3.30** Brickies

U&Dave

6.0am Teleshopping **7.10** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **7.35** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **8.0** Border Force: America's Gatekeepers **9.0** Top Gear **10.0** Rick Stein's Road to Mexico **11.0** Rick Stein's Road to Mexico **12.0** Storage Hunters UK **12.30** Storage Hunters UK **1.0** Storage Hunters UK **1.30** Storage Hunters UK **2.0** James May's Cars of the People **3.0** Top Gear **4.0** Top Gear **5.0** Rick Stein's Road to Mexico **6.0** Rick Stein's Road to Mexico **7.0** Would I Lie to You? **7.40** Richard Osman's House of Games **8.20** Richard Osman's House of Games **9.0** Battle in the Box **10.0** Have I Got a Bit More News for You **11.0** Taskmaster **12.0** Mock the Week **12.40** Would I Lie to You? **1.20** Room 101 **2.0** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **2.25** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **2.50** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **3.15** Whose Line Is It Anyway? USA **4.0** Teleshopping

E4

6.0am Hollyoaks **6.30** Hollyoaks **7.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **8.0** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **9.0** The Goldbergs **9.30** The Goldbergs **10.0** Young Sheldon **10.30** Young Sheldon **11.0** Modern Family **11.30** Modern Family **12.0** The Big Bang Theory **2.0** The Goldbergs **2.30** The Goldbergs **3.0** Modern Family **3.30** Modern Family **4.0** Young Sheldon **4.30** Young Sheldon **5.0** The Big Bang Theory **7.0** Hollyoaks **7.30** Hollyoaks Does Come Dine With Me **8.0** Below Deck **9.0** Gogglebox **10.0** Naked Attraction's Best Naughty Bits **11.05** First Dates **12.05** The Big Bang Theory **12.40** The Big Bang Theory **1.05** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **1.40** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.05** Modern Family **2.30** Modern Family **2.55** Below Deck **3.45** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA **4.35** The Neighborhood **5.25** Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Film4

11.0am FILM Dunston Checks In (1996) **12.45** FILM Sister Act (1992) **2.50** FILM One Million Years BC (1966) **4.55** FILM The Call of the Wild (2020) **6.55** FILM Home Alone (1990) **9.0** FILM The Sum of All Fears (2002) **11.20** FILM Filth (2013) **1.15** FILM Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children (2016)

ITV2

6.0am CITV **9.0** World's Funniest Videos **9.30** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **10.0** Love Bites **11.0** Love Bites **12.0** Dress to Impress **1.0** In With a Shout **2.0** Celebrity Supermarket Sweep **3.0** Charmed **4.0** Dawson's Creek **5.0** Dress to Impress **6.0** Celebrity Catchphrase **7.0** In With a Shout **8.0** Bob's Burgers **9.0** TikTok: Murder Gone Viral **10.0** Extraordinary **10.35** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** Bob's Burgers **1.30** Deal Or No Deal **2.30** Unwind With ITV **3.0** Teleshopping

Sky Max

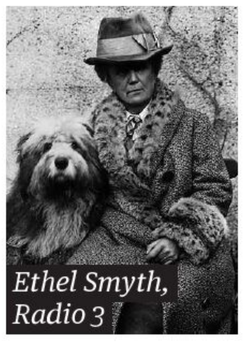
6.0am NCIS: New Orleans **7.0** SEAL Team **8.0** The Flash **9.0** Stargate SG-1 **11.0** NCIS: New Orleans **12.0** Supergirl **1.0** MacGyver **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** SEAL Team **6.0** Stargate SG-1 **8.0** Agatha Raisin **10.0** The Walking Dead **11.0** An Idiot Abroad **1.0** The Force: Manchester **2.0** Road Wars **3.0** Hawaii Five-0 **4.0** S.W.A.T **5.0** Highway Patrol

Sky Arts

6.0am Anyone Can Sing **7.0** Reinventing the Orchestra With Charles Hazlewood **8.0** The Joy of Painting **9.0** Tales of the Unexpected **10.0** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.0** Discovering: Forest Whitaker **12.0** The Joy of Painting **1.0** Tales of the Unexpected **1.30** Tales of the Unexpected **2.0** The Art of the Garden **3.0** Classic Literature & Cinema **4.0** Discovering: Sigourney Weaver **5.0** The Joy of Painting **5.30** The Joy of Painting **6.0** Tales of the Unexpected **6.30** Tales of the Unexpected **7.0** Painting Birds With Jim and Nancy Moir **8.0** Dickens in Italy With David Harewood **9.0** Dickens in Italy With David Harewood **10.0** Rudyard Kipling: A Secret Life **11.0** Michelangelo: Saint Or Sinner? **12.50** Wonderland: Gothic **1.50** Discovering Film: Horror Special **3.15** Sky Arts Book Club **4.10** Cheltenham Literature Festival **5.10** The Art of Architecture

Sky Atlantic

6.0am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets **7.55** Riviera **10.05** Britannia **12.15** Game of Thrones **1.20** The Sopranos **3.30** Riviera **5.40** Britannia **7.50** Game of Thrones **9.0** The Staircase **10.15** House of the Dragon **11.35** Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty **12.35** We Own This City **1.45** The Leftovers **2.50** Game of Thrones **4.0** Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets


Ethel Smyth, Radio 3

Radio

Radio 3

6.30am Breakfast **9.30** Essential Classics **1.0** Classical Live. Another chance to hear pianist Yunchan Lim at the Proms with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Paavo Järvi, performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 5 "Emperor". Plus, from the Cheltenham festival, the Chaos String Quartet play Grieg's String Quartet No 1 in G minor, Op 27. **4.0** Composer of the Week: Musical Olympians – Ethel Smyth (2/5) **5.0** In Tune **7.0** Classical Mixtape **7.30** BBC Proms 2024: Prom 15. Live from the Royal Albert Hall, Nicholas Collon conducts the BBC Philharmonic, the Swingles, pianist Steven Osborne and ondes Martenot player Cynthia Millar in Anna Clyne's The Gorgeous Nothings and Messiaen's Turangalîla Symphony. **10.15** Night Tracks **11.30** 'Round Midnight **12.30** Through the Night

Radio 4

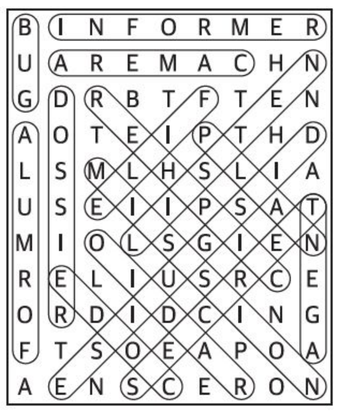
6.0am Today **9.0** The Life Scientific. Sports scientist Vicky Tolfrey discusses preparing for the Paris Paralympics. (6/7) **9.30** Inside Health (2/6) **10.0** Woman's Hour **11.0** Screenshot (R) **11.45** Status. Carl Honoré explores the ways social status is changing. (2/5) **12.0** News **12.04** Call You and Yours **12.57** Weather **1.0** The World at One **1.45** NatureBang. Becky Ripley and Emily Knight explore the art and science of medicine. (2/5) **2.0** The Archers (R) **2.15** Who Cares. Verbatim drama, by Matt Woodhead, telling the story of three young carers in Salford. (R) **3.0** The Gatekeepers. Jamie Bartlett asks if Silicon Valley's experiment is about to implode. (R) **3.30** Beyond Belief (5/8) **4.0** The Lost Archive of James Baldwin **4.30** You're Dead to Me. The story of the Minoan civilisation. (R) **5.0** PM **5.57** Weather **6.0** News **6.30** Do Gooders. Garrett Millerick's comedy. With Frank Skinner and Fay Ripley. (1/6) **7.0** The Archers **7.15** Front Row **8.0** File on 4. An investigation into the toxic water contamination at US military base Camp Lejeune. (3/3) **8.45** In Touch **9.0** Crossing Continents. Tim Whewell continues his exploration of the reality behind the controversial slogan "From the river to the sea". (2/8) **9.30** The Bottom Line (R) **10.0** The World Tonight **10.45** Book at Bedtime: Giovanni's Room (2/5) **11.0** Jon Holmes Says the C-Word. Jon and guests discuss telling family and friends about their cancer diagnosis. (4/10) **11.30** Today in Parliament **12.0** News **12.30** Status (R) **12.48** Shipping Forecast **1.0** As World Service **5.20** Shipping Forecast **5.30** News **5.43** Prayer for the Day **5.45** Farming Today

Radio 4 Extra

6.0am Lord Jim (2/6) **6.30** Detective (6/8) **7.0** Greywing (2/6) **7.30** The Goon Show **8.0** Miracles R Us (3/4) **8.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics (2/5) **8.45** Shifting the Leaves (2/5) **9.0** Yesterday in Parliament **9.30** Wow! How Did They Do That? (2/5) **9.45** Daily Service **10.0** A Good Read (6/9) **10.30** Does the Team Drink? **11.0** Lord Jim (2/6) **11.30** Detective (6/8) **12.0** Greywing (2/6) **12.30** The Goon Show **1.0** Miracles R Us (3/4) **1.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics (2/5) **1.45** Shifting the Leaves (2/5) **2.0** The Personality Test (1/6) **2.30** Tickets Please (1/4) **3.0** Summer Ghosts (2/3) **3.45** The Lady of the Sea By Diana Hendry **4.0** A Good Read (6/9) **4.30** Does the Team Drink? **5.0** Lord Jim (2/6) **5.30** Detective (6/8) **6.0** Greywing (2/6) **6.30** The Goon Show **7.0** Miracles R Us (3/4) **7.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics (2/5) **7.45** Shifting the Leaves (2/5) **8.0** The Personality Test (1/6) **8.30** Tickets Please (1/4) **9.0** Summer Ghosts (2/3) **9.45** The Lady of the Sea By Diana Hendry **10.0** Henry Normal: A Normal Communication (7) **10.30** The Consultants (2/4) **10.45** Warhorses of Letters (2/4) **11.0** Clare in the Community (2/6) **11.30** Dave Podmore's World of Cricket (2/4) **12.0** A Good Read (6/9) **12.30** Does the Team Drink? **1.0** Lord Jim (2/6) **1.30** Detective (6/8) **2.0** Greywing (2/6) **2.30** The Goon Show **3.0** Miracles R Us (3/4) **3.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics (2/5) **3.45** Shifting the Leaves (2/5) **4.0** The Personality Test (1/6) **4.30** Tickets Please (1/4) **5.0** Summer Ghosts (2/3) **5.45** The Lady of the Sea By Diana Hendry

Yesterday's solutions

Wordsearch



Solution no 16,920

R	A	V	I	S	H	■	J	A	B	B	E	R
E	■	I	■	T	■	I	■	D	■	U	■	O
P	I	T	E	O	U	S	■	I	S	L	E	T
O	■	A	■	I	■	A	■	E	■	L	■	A
R	E	L	I	C	■	A	S	U	N	D	E	R
T	■	■	■	A	■	C	■	■	■	O	■	Y
■	M	O	U	L	I	N	R	O	U	G	E	■
E	■	U	■	■	■	E	■	U	■	■	■	C
C	A	T	S	P	A	W	■	T	A	S	T	Y
Z	■	P	■	A	■	T	■	S	■	C	■	G
E	B	O	N	Y	■	O	P	I	N	I	O	N
M	■	S	■	E	■	N	■	Z	■	O	■	E
A	N	T	H	E	M	■	R	E	N	N	E	T

Sudoku no 6,566

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

Word wheel

FREELANCE

Suguru

2	4	1	3	5	1
1	3	2	4	2	3
2	4	1	5	1	4
1	5	3	2	3	2
4	2	1	4	5	4
1	3	5	2	3	1

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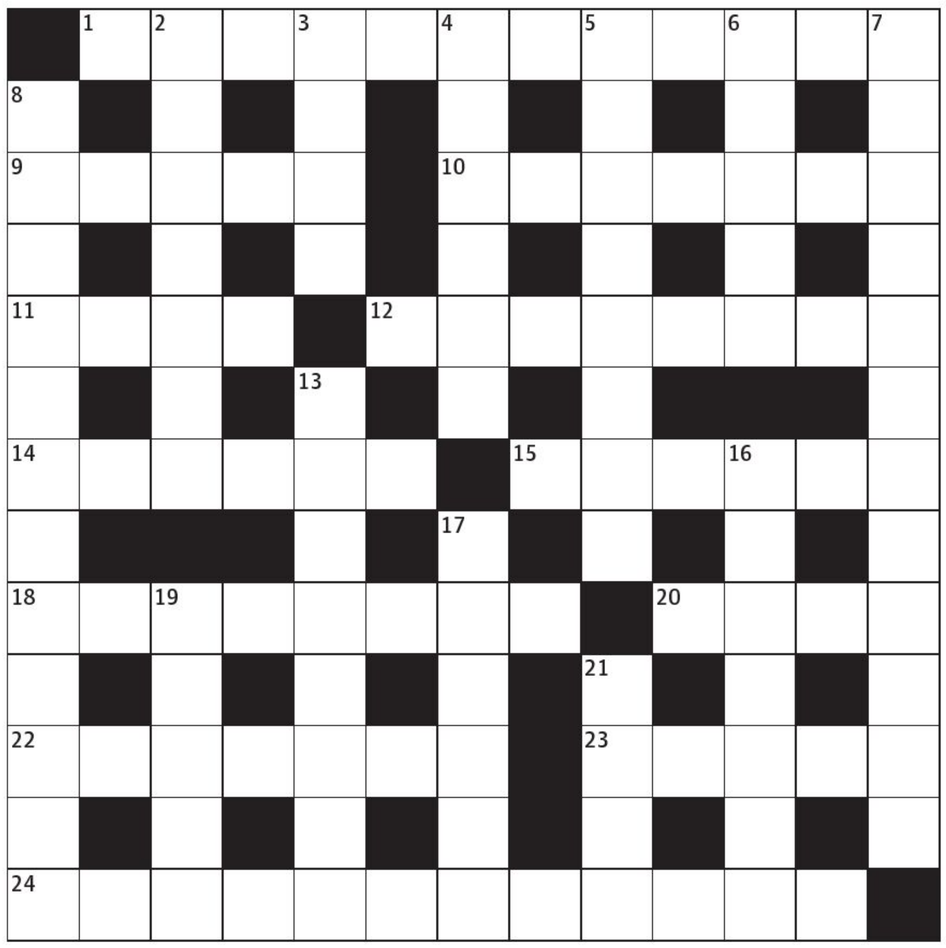
Quick crossword no 16,921

Across

1 Conventional response to "thank you" (5,7)
9 Overturn (5)
10 Covetous (7)
11 Club - legendary warrior (4)
12 Plot outline (8)
14 Nocturnal, spotted wildcat (6)
15 Desert to the other side (6)
18 Suddenly collapse (4,4)
20 Woodwind instrument (4)
22 It's neither sharp nor flat (7)
23 Off-white colour (5)
24 Have a tantrum (5,1,6)

Down

2 Impress in an inhibiting fashion (7)
3 Uncouth (4)
4 Yank - painful parting (6)
5 Pale purple (8)
6 Scent (5)
7 Attractive (4,2,3,3)
8 Stop talking! (3,1,4,2,2)
13 It never comes (8)
16 Entangle or involve (7)
17 Laid-back (6)
19 Kind of apple (5)
21 Branch (4)



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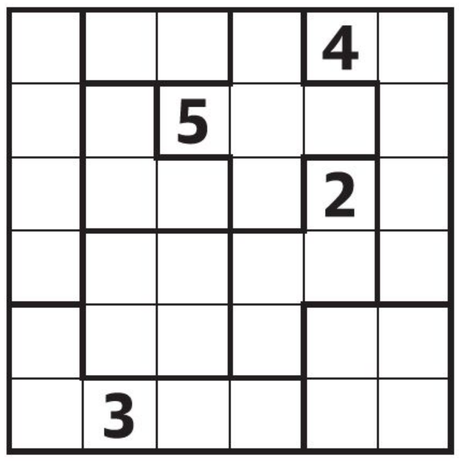
Sudoku no 6,567

Medium. Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9. Printable version at theguardian.com/sudoku

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

Suguru

Fill the grid so that each square in an outlined block contains a digit. A block of two squares contains the digits 1 and 2, a block of three squares contains the digits 1, 2 and 3, and so on. No same digit appears in neighbouring squares, not even diagonally.



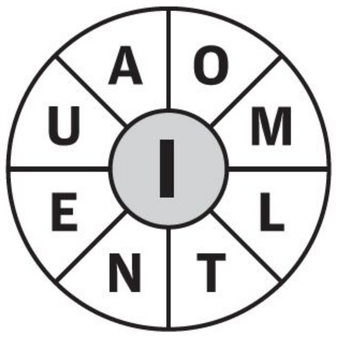
Wordsearch

Can you find 15 white things in the grid? Words can run forwards, backwards, vertically or diagonally, but always in a straight, unbroken line.

N	E	V	O	D	H	G	M	Y
F	A	W	V	T	N	T	I	N
T	E	S	E	C	H	A	L	K
I	N	E	P	A	T	E	K	B
G	T	H	U	I	E	R	R	D
L	L	A	R	C	R	E	W	U
O	A	E	I	U	A	I	O	O
O	S	R	G	D	O	N	N	L
M	P	A	P	E	R	L	S	C
S	T	E	Y	L	I	L	F	C
M	O	S	S	O	L	B	D	R

Word wheel

Find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the central letter and at least two others. Letters may be used only once. You may not use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one nine-letter word to be found. TARGET: Excellent-56. Good-47. Average-34.



Trivia corner

What year did Marie Curie win her first (joint) Nobel prize?
a. 1895
b. 1903
c. 1911
d. 1919
Answer top right

