



13 easy steps to improve your health

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Pidcock's puncture drama
Olympics: news, pages 14-15
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Knife attack on children was 'like a horror movie'

● Two dead and six in critical condition in Southport ● 17-year-old boy arrested after rampage

Constance Kampfner
Northern Correspondent
Ali Mitib, Ben Ellery Crime Editor

Two children have been killed and six are in a critical condition after a "horror movie" knife attack at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class yesterday.

A 17-year-old boy has been arrested on suspicion of murder and attempted murder following the rampage at a summer holiday club for children in Southport, Merseyside.

Serena Kennedy, the chief constable of Merseyside, said that as well as the children who died, nine youngsters were injured in the "ferocious" stabbing and two adults were in a critical condition. She said the force believed that the adults were injured while "bravely" trying to protect about 25 children as the two-hour sold-out event — which was advertised as being for six to 12-year-olds — drew to an end late yesterday morning.

The incident is the worst knife attack in Britain since the London Bridge terrorist stabbings of 2017.

The arrested teenager, who is from the nearby village of Banks but originally from Cardiff, is in custody, the police said. A knife was recovered at the scene.

Witnesses said a man wearing a mask arrived at The Hart Space, an antenatal centre, in a taxi then refused to pay the driver. He walked into the centre, which was hosting the holiday club, and shortly afterwards residents reported hearing the screams of children. "It got louder and louder with more screaming and shouting," a resident said.

A member of staff said the centre's door was normally left unlocked so children could go to the lavatory.

Residents of the quiet street described a chaotic scene as youngsters with multiple stab wounds spilt out into the road. One neighbour was helped by other residents to take about ten girls to safety in his house.

The emergency services were called at 11.47am and 13 ambulances went to the scene, as well as an air ambulance helicopter.

The suspect, who has yet to be identi-



Police and forensics staff at the attack site yesterday. Neighbours reported that the victims' screams grew louder and louder

fied, fled and The Times understands that a personal trainer at a nearby gym helped to apprehend him.

Firefighters and ambulance staff were in tears after treating injured children at the scene, with some sitting on the floor with their head in their hands.

Colin Parry, the owner of Masters Vehicle Body Repairs, next to the ante-

natal centre, said: "The mothers are coming here now and screaming. It is like a scene from a horror movie."

North West Ambulance Service said the victims were taken to Alder Hey Children's Hospital, in Liverpool, Aintree University Hospital and Southport and Formby Hospital.

Alder Hey declared a major incident

and asked parents not to take their children to the emergency department unless it was urgent.

In a statement, the King said: "My wife and I have been profoundly shocked to hear of the utterly horrific incident in Southport today. We send our most heartfelt condolences, prayers and deepest sympathies to the
Continued on page 5

Tax rise hints as chancellor cuts winter fuel payment

Steven Swinford Political Editor
Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

Rachel Reeves indicated yesterday that she was preparing to raise taxes as she scrapped winter fuel payments for ten million pensioners in an attempt to balance the books.

The chancellor claimed that the Conservatives had covered up a £22 billion "black hole" in the nation's finances as she announced plans for £5.5 billion of savings. They included ending the £200 winter fuel allowance for all but the poorest pensioners, despite warnings that some of those who need the money most would be hardest hit.

She also announced cuts to hospital and roadbuilding projects and said she would scrap plans to cap social care costs that were due to come into effect in October next year. Labour is expected to announce a Royal Commission on the issue instead.

Reeves warned that there would need to be "difficult decisions" on tax, welfare and public spending in the budget on October 30. Even with the savings she identified yesterday there will still be a £16.5 billion shortfall.

However, she chose to increase public sector pay. Junior doctors will be offered an average pay rise of 22.3 per cent at a cost of £1.1 billion in an effort to end damaging strikes.

Reeves decided to give six million public sector workers including nurses, teachers and police officers pay rises of about 5 per cent at a cost of nearly £10 billion, the biggest single cost in the £22 billion "black hole".

The pay rises are higher than the 2 per cent previously budgeted for by the government. Reeves said they were justified because they were in line with pay increases in the private sector.

The chancellor also announced that VAT would be imposed on private school fees from January 1. It will be applied retrospectively if parents decide to pay fees in advance.

At a Treasury press conference, Reeves said: "The truth is we did not know about this £22 billion black hole in this fiscal year when we went to the polls on July 4. And so there will be
Continued on page 2

IN THE NEWS

Edwards charged

Huw Edwards, 62, the former BBC News presenter, has been charged with making indecent images of children. The three charges relate to allegations between 2020 and 2022. **Page 3**

Ozempic's latest fix

Weight-loss drugs may help users quit smoking. A study found that people prescribed Ozempic for diabetes were less likely to be treated for tobacco-related issues. **Page 6**

Maduro 'victory'

Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner of Venezuela's presidential election but the result was swiftly condemned as a fraud by the opposition parties. **Page 24**

Biden's court plan

President Biden plans to reform the Supreme Court by imposing 18-year term limits and a code of ethics on its judges. He also wants to limit presidential immunity. **Page 25**

NatWest sale halted

A "Tell Sid"-style sale of NatWest shares to the public by the government has been scrapped amid fears that it would have cost taxpayers as much as £450 million. **Page 29**

Peaty has Covid

Adam Peaty tested positive for coronavirus less than 24 hours after he missed out on a third consecutive Olympic gold medal in the 100m breaststroke by 0.02sec. **Page 60**

News

Today's highlights

7am Rachel Reeves, the chancellor
7.30am Jeremy Hunt, shadow chancellor
11.50am Adam Boulton looks at the 'yellow card' system in the Conservative leadership race with Peter Walton
3.30pm Professor Brian Cox talks about his Royal Opera House show
6pm Tim Montgomerie, right, and Rachel Cunliffe chew over the big stories of the day



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TODAY'S EDITION

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 Butterfly count reveals huge drop in number spotted

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 How engineers made a fairytale reality in Bavaria

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CLIMATE CONS
 What Just Stop Oil's poster girls told Damian Whitworth

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489 days since Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was detained in Russia
 #FreeEvan



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Kidnap for ransom: the search for Muriel McKay (Part 2)

In 1970, two men were jailed for the murder of Muriel McKay in the country's first conviction without a body. Fifty-four years on, her family, desperate for answers, face one of her killers.

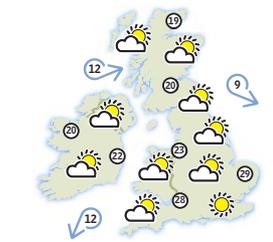
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THE WEATHER



Dry with long spells of sunshine, hot across southeastern areas of England. Full forecast, page 48

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Labour MPs urge Lammy to halt arms exports to Israel

George Grylls Political Correspondent

Britain will decide whether to ban arms sales to Israel later in the summer after officials were ordered to review evidence of potential war crimes in Gaza. David Lammy, the foreign secretary, is under pressure from backbench Labour MPs to announce a total ban. There had been speculation that a decision could come as soon as this week.

The Times understands that the process will take longer because ministers are seeking to suspend export licences for specific weapons that they can link to suspected war crimes. Investigations are expected to take weeks.

The controversy over arms sales is one of a series of potential flashpoints in the relationship between Britain and Israel, which has come under strain since Labour came to power.

Lord Hermer KC, the attorney-general, visited Israel last week to explain the government's decision to drop British objections to the International Criminal Court's warrant for the arrest of Binyamin Netanyahu. Hermer, a human rights barrister, was a surprise

appointment to Sir Keir Starmer's cabinet. He has previously stated his opposition to the "unlawful" occupation of the West Bank, describing it as "deeply damaging" to the interests of Israel and "wholly contrary to the values of tikkun olam [repairing the world] that I grew up with and continue to guide me". He told the Jewish Chronicle last year that he had "dear" family fighting in the Israel Defence Forces.

Hermer, who started his legal career with Starmer at Doughty Street Chambers, was also a signatory to a letter from leading Jewish lawyers warning Israel to comply with international law following the October 7 attacks.

Another signatory, Philippe Sands KC, is representing Palestine at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and said that a recent ruling ordering the end to West Bank settlement required the British government to stop arming Israel.

The ICJ case warns member states not to "render aid or assistance" to Israel's occupation of the West Bank. British officials are examining the use of British weapons in Gaza to see whether

any export licences should be removed, and the wider occupation of the West Bank is not understood to be under consideration.

The war in Gaza has left more than 39,000 people dead, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

British arms exports to Israel are relatively modest with just £18.2 million worth of sales last year. There is reluctance, however, to jeopardise the UK's privileged role in constructing F-35 fighter jets, which campaigners allege have been used in the bombardment of Gaza.

Britain lobbied to become a tier-one partner for the US fighter jet programme to protect British jobs in the arms industry. British arms manufacturers make 15 per cent of every plane, according to the Campaign Against Arms Trade.

However, revoking export licences and ending the sale of the fighter jets, which are operated by both the RAF and the Israeli air force, would create a diplomatic headache that could complicate the UK's purchase of more F-35s and undermine relations with the US.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 Reeves hints at tax rises

more difficult decisions around spending, around welfare and around tax in the budget and the spending review later this year. I think it's important to be honest with people. People have been misled for too long."

Jeremy Hunt, Reeves's predecessor who is now shadow chancellor, accused her of "trash talking" the economy. He said that her decision to raise public sector pay was a matter of choice. He added: "She's caved in to the unions on pay, left welfare reform out of the King's Speech, soft-pedalled on our productivity programme, and that is a choice, not a necessity. That choice means that taxes will have to go up and she chose not to tell us before the election."

Paul Johnson, head of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, said that some of the details set out by Reeves were "shocking", particularly a £6.5 billion projected overspend on housing asylum seekers and the Rwanda migration scheme.

Writing in The Times today he says: "Should we all be shocked at how some of this was buried and the extent of problems inherited by the new government? Yes, we should. Does any of this change the fact that we always knew that there are some really tough decisions coming up on tax, spending and borrowing? Not at all."

Reeves recommitted to her manifesto pledge not to raise income tax, VAT or national insurance, but

declined to give further assurances beyond that. The Treasury has drawn up plans to increase capital gains tax, which is levied on the sale of assets such as shares and property, and reduce pensions tax relief for high earners.

The chancellor's decision to scrap the winter fuel allowance for all but those who are claiming pension credit was criticised by charities. Age UK said that nearly two million pensioners who were either eligible for pensions credit but were not claiming it, or were just above the threshold, would be hit. It said that the decision would jeopardise the health and the finances of some of the country's poorest people, adding: "It will hurt the older people who need it [the allowance] the most."

The Office for Budget Responsibility, the fiscal watchdog, announced that it was conducting a review into official figures provided by the previous government for its forecasts.

Richard Hughes, the body's chairman, called the overspend highlighted by the Treasury audit "one of the largest" in recent history and raised concerns about "transparency and credibility". The review is likely to extend to the role of civil servants in the Treasury, many of whom are still in place. Reeves defended James Bowler, the most senior official at the Treasury, as she sought to blame the Conservatives.

Politics, pages 8-11
 Where's the plan for growth? William Hague, page 19
 A mixed bag, leading article, page 23

Analysis

Rachel Reeves is quickly discovering that one of the oldest political truisms — to govern is to choose — is very real (Steven Swinford writes).

The chancellor said yesterday that what Labour inherited is so dire she has no choice but to make significant cuts to public spending, including scrapping winter fuel payments. She also signalled there would be further tax rises and possible cuts to benefits as a direct result of a £22 billion "black hole" in the finances left by the Tories.

However, she also made a choice. Nearly £10 billion of the black hole is because of public sector pay awards of about 5 per cent. The figure does not include the potential cost of a 22 per cent pay rise for junior doctors, which is expected to be £1.1 billion. At the same time the cuts to the winter fuel allowance have already led to concerns from charities about how it will hit pensioners.

The difficult news is only just beginning. If Reeves remains intent on retaining her fiscal rules the choices ahead are likely to be even more challenging.

Ban on puberty blockers is ruled lawful

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A ban on puberty blockers for those aged under 18 has been upheld by a judge, who said ministers had acted lawfully when they pushed the measure through parliament.

A challenge to the temporary ban, which was rushed through the day before parliament was dissolved for the general election, was brought by campaigners who said it put young transgender people at risk.

The campaign group TransActual had argued in the High Court that "hormone treatment reduces the elevated risk of death by suicide" among the group.

At the Royal Courts of Justice in

London Mrs Justice Lang allowed TransActual's judicial review to proceed, but then dismissed it on all three of its grounds.

She noted the campaign group had accused the health secretary of "not undertaking further investigations and consultation prior to making the order to ascertain the availability of medical support" for younger people claiming to be transgender. However, "further investigations and consultation at this stage would have been unlikely to have made any difference", she said, as it would "not have been possible to ascertain the responses of GPs".

She said Victoria Atkins, the Tory health secretary at the time, had "made a lawful judgment...taking into account

the advice about potential difficulties" and had introduced a statutory instrument to parliament against the backdrop of the Cass report on gender identity services for children and young people, which was released in April.

The review, conducted by Hilary Cass, a retired consultant paediatrician and former president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, had recommended that "puberty blockers should only be accessed through a clinical research programme", the judge said, adding: "However, the clinical research programme is not yet in place."

Campaigners said that they would seek leave to appeal against the judge's ruling.

Edwards charged with sharing 37 indecent images of children

David Woode Crime Correspondent
Alex Farber Media Correspondent

Huw Edwards, the former BBC News presenter, has been charged with making indecent images of children.

He faces three charges of such activity between December 2020 and April 2022. Edwards, 62, who left the corporation on medical grounds in April, was arrested in November last year and charged on June 26, the Metropolitan Police said.

The charges do not relate to an incident last summer in which Edwards was suspended after being accused of paying a young person and receiving sexual images.

The Met said: "These allegations did not form part of the matter which was considered by police in July 2023. They were investigated separately as a stand-alone case."

Edwards is accused of making six category A, 12 category B and 19 category C images, according to the charge sheet. The images were said to have been shared via WhatsApp.

Under the law, category A images involve the depiction of "penetrative sexual activity; possession of images involving sexual activity with an animal or sadism". Category B is described as material involving "non-penetrative sexual activity", and category C are images of "erotic posing".

The offences are contrary to sections 1(1)(a) and 6 of the Protection of Children Act 1978. A person found guilty could receive a maximum penalty of ten years' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

Edwards, who led the BBC's coverage of many of the biggest events in recent British history, including announcing the death of the Queen on September 8, 2022, is on bail. He will appear at Westminster magistrates' court in central London tomorrow.

The Met said: "Huw Edwards, 62, has been charged with three counts of making indecent images of children following a police investigation. 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 November 8, 2023. He was charged on June 26 following authorisation from the Crown Prosecution Service.

"Media and the public are strongly reminded that this is an active case. Nothing should be published, including



Huw Edwards, who is on bail, will appear at Westminster magistrates' court tomorrow to answer the charges against him

Edwards timeline

April 2023 South Wales police make inquiries into the "welfare of an adult". A family later claim that Edwards paid their child for explicit photos from the age of 17. Detectives find no evidence of a criminal offence.

May 2023 The family complain to the BBC about

Edwards's alleged behaviour but are frustrated by its response.

July 2023 The Sun publishes the allegations and Edwards is suspended. The BBC starts a "fact-finding" mission but pauses it for a Met investigation. Detectives find no evidence of a criminal offence.

November 2023 Edwards is arrested and questioned by Met detectives.

February 2024 The BBC apologises for its handling of the complaint.

April 2024 Edwards resigns from the BBC on "medical advice". He had received his full pay while suspended.

June 2024 Edwards is charged with making indecent images of children between December 2020 and April 2022. The three charges do not relate to the earlier alleged victim.

July 29, 2024 The Met announces that Edwards has been arrested and charged.

on social media, which could prejudice future court proceedings."

A BBC insider said that the corporation learnt that Edwards was facing criminal charges only hours before it was made public.

"The BBC was informed by the Met Police when a call came through [on Monday]," a senior source said.

"It will be quite a moment when he appears in Westminster magistrate's court on Wednesday morning. The court artists will be there to capture the moment when the man who announced the death of the Queen to the nation is up before Mr or Mrs Magistrate."

The development comes less than a week after accounts showed that Edwards was the highest-paid BBC news presenter, despite having spent most of the year off air.

A fellow presenter added: "Surely they couldn't have been paying him if they knew?"

The BBC's annual accounts, published a week ago, revealed that the veteran broadcaster earned between £475,000 and £479,999 for the 12 months to the end of March this year, up from £439,000 the year before.

His duties included 160 presenting days, BBC One news specials, election specials and other television programming, according to the broadcaster's annual report.

Edwards, who has five children, was taken off air and suspended from his role in July last year after a report in The Sun about him paying a young person and receiving sexual images.

Vicky Flind, Edwards's wife, announced that he had suffered a serious mental health "episode" and was in hospital. In April Edwards resigned on medical grounds and left without a payout.

At the time the BBC said he had left the corporation with immediate effect. "After 40 years of service, Huw has explained that his decision was made on the basis of medical advice from his doctors. The BBC has accepted his resignation, which it believes will allow all parties to move forward."

Edwards joined the BBC as a trainee in 1984 and during his television career fronted *News At Ten* for 20 years. He anchored coverage of major national events, including the funeral of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, in 2021 and the King's coronation last year. He also served as the BBC's voice at Trooping the Colour and the Festival of Remembrance.

From football to diving, quirky museums get lottery funding

Jack Blackburn History Correspondent

Finally, football really is coming home — or at least it is for the Welsh. In the latest round of National Lottery Heritage Fund grants, Wrexham will receive funding for a new National Football Museum in the home of the oldest football club in Wales.

The museum is the headline announcement as £76 million worth of funding is sent to projects around the country, including to museums of diving and pottery, and another celebrating Lancashire's cricketing

heritage. Thanks to a £2.7 million cash injection, Wrexham's project, known as the Museum of Two Halves, will involve a full revamp of the Wrexham Museum alongside the new football museum.

The football museum will include items such as John Charles's shirt from his debut against Ireland in March 1950, as well as a cap awarded to Billy Meredith, the pioneering Welsh footballer who played for Manchester United and Manchester City.

The funding will also ensure that the museum can acquire an unrivalled collection of memorabilia surrounding Cardiff City's FA cup victory in 1927.

Other sporting endeavours have been supported in this funding round. Lancashire County Cricket Club's history will be celebrated with a £176,000 grant for a new heritage experience at their Old Trafford ground, including immersive technology and hands-on exhibits honouring great players such as James Anderson, Brian Statham and the West Indies captain Clive Lloyd.

Museums of a perhaps more intellectual slant have also been recognised. The Egypt Exploration Society has received £61,000 to renovate its home in Camden, north London, meaning

items can go on display for the first time. These include their Oxyrhynchus Papyri collection of literary and administrative texts from 3BC to AD7.

There is also £3.4 million for the Leach Pottery museum in St Ives, Cornwall, which will celebrate the life and work of Bernard Leach. Housed in his home and workplace, the museum will chart the career and legacy of the father of British studio pottery, and enable people to discover traditional methods.

Perhaps the most niche but nonetheless fascinating project is The Diving Museum in Gosport, which has been given £800,000. The museum, which is housed in a Victorian gun battery, has 7,000 items charting the history of Brit-

ish deep-sea diving, dating back to the first such dive by the Deane brothers in 1832. Its prize exhibit is the world's first deep-sea diving helmet. However, essential repairs are required.

At the other end of the country, there is £309,000 for a new Museum of Aberdeenshire at Arbutnot House in Peterhead, with its eclectic mix of subjects.

"Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on for future generations, and these museums show that passion and variety," Eilish McGuinness, chief executive of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, said. "So, no matter what the weather brings this summer, there is always a fantastic museum or heritage place open to discover, explore and enjoy."



John Charles's shirt will be on display in Wrexham

News Southport attack

'It was mayhem ... the worst

Ben Ellery Crime Editor
Constance Kampfner
 Northern Correspondent
Ali Mitib

The Taylor Swift yoga and dance workshop advertised for children aged between six and 12 sold out quickly.

The event, held at the Hart Space, a centre for expectant mothers, babies and children that is a "lovely, relaxing" place, also included a bracelet-making workshop.

As the two-hour session, attended by about 20 to 25 children, drew to a close just before noon yesterday, a taxi pulled up at the car body shop next door and a 17-year-old youth got out.

An employee at Masters Vehicle Body Repairs said that the youngster, who was wearing a mask, refused to pay for the taxi. He said he seemed to have the wrong address, initially walking into their drive, before strolling into the children's centre.

The centre's front door was usually left unlocked to allow children to use the toilet, according to a staff member, and the teenager walked inside.

What unfolded was a horrific scene



Footage has been posted of an individual in a hooded top in front of a house that was later raided by police

of violence as the youth, armed with a knife, repeatedly stabbed child after child, as well as two adults. The car worker next door said: "I just heard the kids screaming."

One of the organisers took one of the children into the toilet shortly before the knifeman started attacking. The Times has been told.

A neighbour who was in their garden at the time said: "I suddenly heard screaming. I knew something was seriously wrong by the pitch of the screams. It got louder and louder with more screaming and shouting. You could just hear parents screaming."

Colin Parry, the owner of the car body shop, said he got a call from one of his employees telling him to leave the shop "immediately", moments after seeing the masked youth refusing to pay the taxi driver. He told BBC Radio 5 Live that he called the police once he saw young girls leaving the venue bleeding.

He said a neighbour took about ten girls to safety in his house. He was helped by another resident. "The community was coming together, everyone was trying to help," he said. "Everyone was trying to save the young kids." He said another man, a builder, also helped some of the children out of danger.

Deborah Parker, 57, lives just around the corner and said she saw a ten-year-old girl who had been stabbed. The girl rushed out to her mother who was there to pick her up. Parker said: "She went to pick her daughter up and she's come out saying, 'Mum I've been stabbed, I've been stabbed.' The mum just bundled her in the car and drove as fast as she

could and stopped here [about 200 metres away] and panicked. She was screaming 'Help me help me.' She was covered in blood. The girl was just slumped in the front seat. She was barely breathing, it was just horrendous. She was barely conscious. She didn't know what had happened because her daughter couldn't speak." She then drove back towards the ambulances and the girl was taken to hospital.

A staff member at the Hart Space, who wanted to remain anonymous, rushed to the scene. She said: "There were probably 25 children there because that's the max we have there and they had reached the max. When I got there, there was a guy who was absolutely distraught, in a mess."

"He'd seen two children run out and he thought they had got hit by a car because the car was just full of blood at the side of the car. But it was actually that the children who had been stabbed had fallen into the car. It was apparently a guy with a black hooded top on."

Bare Varathan, 35, who owns a corner shop on Hart Street, said he was called by a staff member who told him, "Boss, get to the shop!" He said: "I saw seven to ten kids outside. They were injured, bleeding. They were in the road, running. They had been stabbed, here, here, here, everywhere [Varathan indicated his neck, back and chest]. They were all aged about ten. One of them was really seriously injured. I hope they will be OK. Only two police Jeeps and ambulances arrived, then armed police came. Somebody told me he had arrived in a taxi and had a knife."

One neighbour, who did not want to be named, told The Times that he learnt of the incident after his young daughter witnessed it from their home. "I was in my front bedroom and I hear screams and I thought it was the sound of children having fun like they're at a funfair or on a rollercoaster. Then my daughter came in the room looking horrified," he said. "I saw bloody children carried out and the emergency services coming in," he said.

Footage of an individual, seen wearing a hooded top and pacing around in front of a house that was later raided by the police in Southport, was shown by ITV news last night. The clip, which was posted on Twitter/X, showed the person walking back and forth in front of the red brick house, with a caption that said it was taken 20 minutes before the knife attacks happened a 15-minute drive away. The footage then switched to a scene of armed police later arriving.

The ITV reporter wrote that neighbours told him that they later saw the same individual get into a taxi, and he added that the police arrived about two hours after the person was filmed outside the house.

Some of those injured were taken to Alder Hey Children's Hospital, as well as Aintree University Hospital and Southport and Formby hospital. Alder Hey declared a major incident.

Emergency teams were in tears after treating injured children at the scene. Firefighters and ambulance staff were also visibly upset.

Parents of the children who attended the class were led away by police officers in tears. Others hugged each other trying to understand what had happened. A resident said: "I have never seen so many emergency services in one place."

Alaina Riley, 18, said her aunt saw the suspect fleeing. "My auntie phoned me in absolute hysterics. She said someone's been stabbed. Everyone was covered in blood. Then she watched staff run out carrying children. She was distraught and crying on the phone. All she heard was screaming and they are



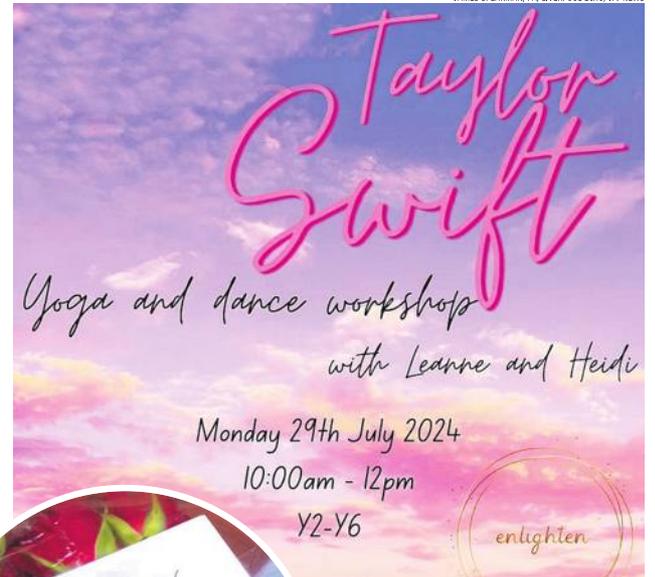
screams no one would ever want to hear. The police then started turning up. My auntie said she saw people put children on the floor and start resuscitating them until the paramedics arrived and took over. She watched two children get carried away in body bags."

The Times understands that a personal trainer at a nearby gym helped to restrain the killer.

Five miles away, at about 1pm, several police cars arrived at Old School Close, in Banks village, with their sirens on while a helicopter circled overhead, according to one witness. Local people said Matrix officers, the armed unit of Merseyside police, descended on the address shortly after the incident. At 5.25pm police confirmed they had arrested a 17-year-old male from Banks and said it was not being treated as terrorism related.

At 7pm Serena Kennedy, the chief

thing I have seen in my life'



Forensic science officers in Hart Street after the attack on a summer holiday Taylor Swift-themed yoga and dance workshop. People left flowers at the scene where two children died and nine other children and two adults were wounded. A teenager was arrested at a home in Old School Close, Banks



constable of Merseyside, said two children were dead. Nine others had been injured, with six of the nine being in a critical condition. Two adults were also in a critical condition. "We believe that the adults were bravely trying to protect the children who were being attacked," Kennedy added.

Last night it was reported that Jonathan Hayes, a businessman, tried to disarm the attacker after hearing screams from his office in the same building as the dance studio.

Hayes, 63, was stabbed in the leg after running into the studio in a desperate attempt to intervene.

His wife, Helen, 57, told The Daily Telegraph that he regrets he could not do more to stop the "ferocious attack".

Asked if her husband had tried to put himself between the knifeman and the children, she said: "He did. He heard screams."

My daughter's been stabbed, woman cried

Continued from page 1 families and loved ones of those who have so tragically lost their lives, and to all those affected by this truly appalling attack."

Sir Keir Starmer said the incident was "horrendous and deeply shocking". He wrote online: "My thoughts are with all those affected. I would like to thank the police and emergency services for their swift response. I am being kept updated."

Bare Varathan, 35, who owns a nearby newsagent, said: "I saw seven to ten kids outside. They were injured, bleeding. They were in the road, running."

"They had been stabbed, here, here, here, everywhere [Varathan indicated

the neck, back and chest area]. They were all aged about ten.

"Only two police Jeeps and ambulances arrived, then armed police came. Somebody told me he had arrived in a taxi and had a knife."

One local resident said he was at home at about midday when a woman pulled up outside in her car, screaming. He said: "She was screaming, 'My daughter's been stabbed.' It was a mum with her ten-year-old daughter. I helped to get her back up to where the police cars and ambulances were. She didn't look great but my focus was on getting her back up the street to get help."

Armed police descended on a house about five miles away in the Lancashire

village of Banks, and it was cordoned off yesterday afternoon.

At a press conference organised last night, the chief constable told reporters: "As a mum of two daughters, and the nanna of a five-year-old granddaughter, I cannot begin to imagine the pain and suffering the families of the victims are currently going through and I want to send them our heartfelt condolences and sympathies."

She added: "My officers were called to reports of a stabbing at 11.47 this morning at an address in Southport. When they arrived, they were shocked to find that multiple people, many of whom were children, had been subjected to a ferocious attack and had suf-

fered serious injuries. It is understood the children were attending a Taylor Swift event at a dance school when the offender armed with a knife walked in and started to attack the children. We believe the adults who were injured were bravely trying to protect the children who were being attacked."

Kennedy said the motive for the attack was unclear but that it was not being treated as related to terrorism.

Yvette Cooper, the home secretary, wrote online: "All my thoughts are with the families and loved ones of those affected. I have spoken to the Merseyside Police & Crime Commissioner to convey full support to the police and thanks to the emergency services."



SALLY ANDERSON/ALAMY

X marks the spot The Black Blues Brothers show off their acrobatic prowess on Calton Hill, Edinburgh, where they are about to start their fourth and final Fringe season

Taking weight-loss drugs may help smokers to quit the habit

Tom Whipple Science Editor

The new generation of weight-loss drugs may not only help you give up food, but smoking too.

A study has found that people prescribed Ozempic for type 2 diabetes management were less likely to be treated for tobacco-related problems.

The findings, which come from an analysis of more than 200,000 patients, fit in with other anecdotal evidence that drugs such as semaglutide, the trade name for Ozempic, can affect other addictions such as alcoholism.

However, the researchers who uncovered the finding, which was published in the journal *Annals of Internal Medicine*, cautioned that we would need to await the results of proper trials to be sure that the drugs do help.

The latest data comes from comparing those put on different forms of anti-diabetes medication for the first time between 2018 and 2023 in the US. Of

the 223,000 treated, just under 6,000 were given semaglutide.

Despite the fact that they were prescribed the medication on the basis of their diabetes, those 6,000 were less likely to visit a clinic because of their smoking. The difference was small but significant. After a year, about 20 per cent of those taking semaglutide had spoken to a doctor because of concerns about smoking, compared with 25 per cent of those on other medication.

There are several potential explanations. One is that the two groups were different — it may be that those given semaglutide were also less likely for other reasons to be smokers. It could even be that they were just as likely to smoke, but less likely to ask for help.

Dr Rong Xu, from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Ohio, said: "Our assumption is if people go to the doctor, they have more of a problem." Another possible explanation is that those given the drug re-

duce their smoking for other reasons. One suggestion put forward by Xu and her colleagues was the slimming effects of semaglutide. Smoking suppresses the appetite, which makes some people reluctant to quit — but if people know they are also on an appetite-suppressant drug then they may be more willing to do so. "Fear of weight gain on smoking cessation contributes to smoking and relapse," they write.

But it is also possible that there is a genuine link at a biochemical level. This fits with growing evidence for other conditions. "We are pretty sure semaglutide hits multiple targets. For diabetes and weight loss that's a target in the gut and pancreas. But we think semaglutide also has a target in the reward system in the brain. That controls a lot of addictions, not just for tobacco," said Xu. Experiments in rodents have shown they can be weaned off nicotine addiction using semaglutide.

Semaglutide was developed as a way

to control diabetes, but those using it found as a side-effect that they also lost weight. Since its licensing as a weight-loss drug, researchers have been intrigued to find links — some now relatively well validated — to other conditions. It appears to be protective against heart disease, independently of weight loss it induces. Another new study found it may also stave off Alzheimer's.

If it does indeed combat smoking, the authors of the latest research said that its other known actions could be complementary. "The fact that semaglutide leads to weight loss becomes particularly relevant because smoking cessation is associated with weight gain, which contributes to relapse, particularly in women. Moreover, because smoking impairs glycemic control and increases cardiovascular and cancer risks, the beneficial effects of semaglutide for glycemic control, and reduction in cardiovascular and cancer events, would offer additional benefits."

Veto on A&E blood clot tests for laughing gas abusers

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

Health service chiefs have rejected a coroner's appeal to force A&E wards to conduct speedy blood clot risk assessments in cases of laughing gas abuse.

Heidi Connor, the coroner for Berkshire, had called on NHS England to strengthen emergency procedures in the wake of the death of a 24-year-old student last year.

Ellen Mercer died of complications

related to sustained nitrous oxide abuse after inhaling two to three bottles of the gas every day.

An inquest was told that Mercer spent 24 hours in the emergency department at Wexham Park Hospital, Slough, without receiving a formal blood clot risk assessment.

The student, who lived in Buckinghamshire, was doing an online business degree. On February 9 last year, she went to hospital after saying she was

unable to walk. "The canisters she used had caused injuries and decreased her mobility," the coroner said in her report. She died from a clot caused by laughing gas use and immobility.

Laughing gas, or "hippy crack", is inhaled for its rapid but short-lived feelings of euphoria. It is a class C drug and its sale and recreational use became illegal in November.

In her prevention of future deaths report, Connor warned about delays in

making blood clot risk assessments, adding that NHS policy was unclear and that long waits in emergency departments were not taken into account.

In its response to Connor, NHS England said it would not be "effective" to ask emergency staff to conduct the tests. It noted, however, that the policy on [venous thromboembolism] risk assessments had been updated and tests "should be completed on inpatients within 14 hours of admission".

Quintagram® No 2007

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 South Asian language (5)

— — — — —

2 Foundation (5)

— — — — —

3 Restaurant employee (6)

— — — — —

4 Brandishing (8)

— — — — —

5 Inhabitant of Skye or Jersey, eg (8)

— — — — —

A	A	A	B	D	D	D	E
E	E	G	H	I	I	I	I
I	I	I	L	L	N	N	N
R	R	S	S	S	T	W	W

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Coogan's football role

Steve Coogan will play Mick McCarthy in a film about the Ireland football manager's row with Roy Keane, his captain, before the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea. Keane left before the start after criticising the squad's diet and preparations. Éanna Hardwicke will play him in *Saipan*, named after the island where Ireland were based.

Second Spitfire death

A 71-year-old pilot died after his replica Spitfire crashed near Enstone Airfield, Oxfordshire, on Sunday afternoon. The man, who has not been named, was pronounced dead at the scene. The Air Accidents Investigation Branch is investigating the cause. In August last year Trevor Bailey, 68, died when his replica Spitfire crashed at the same area.

Bath bag incident

Two people in Bath have been taken to hospital with difficulty breathing and itchy eyes, with police suspecting their symptoms were triggered when "a woman approached people with a bag" in the street. Avon and Somerset police said. Emergency services in protective clothing attended and the area was cordoned off. No arrests were made.

Cancer drug stand-off

A life-extending drug for incurable breast cancer will not be available on the health service in England after Nice, the NHS spending watchdog, failed to agree on a price with AstraZeneca and Daiichi Sankyo. Nice said it was deeply dismayed by the high cost of Enhertu. Breast Cancer Now said a "stand-off" was denying patients "precious hope" of life.

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First animals emerged 1.5 billion years earlier than thought

Kaya Burgess Science Reporter

From the emergence of the earliest simple single-celled life on Earth, it took another 3.1 billion years before the first complex creatures and animals evolved. Or so scientists thought.

However, the earliest animals may have appeared 1.5 billion years earlier than assumed, developing in a small inland sea that acted like an evolutionary “laboratory” before dying out and leaving only mysterious fossils.

It is commonly agreed that the first

complex organisms emerged about 635 million years ago, but new evidence suggests that this may have taken place far earlier, 2.1 billion or so years ago.

About 35 ancient pieces of crust form the building blocks of the continents. More than two billion years ago two of them, the Congo and São Francisco cratons, collided and joined, triggering the eruption of underwater volcanoes. This upheaval led to a body of water being cut off from the main oceans.

“We think that the underwater volca-

noes, which followed the collision and suturing of the Congo and Sao Francisco cratons into one main body, further restricted and even cut off this section of water from the global ocean to create a nutrient-rich shallow marine inland sea,” said Dr Ernest Chi Fru, from Cardiff University’s School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, lead author of the study published in the journal *Precambrian Research*.

This inland sea became like a “nutrient-rich lab for experiments in biological evolution”, the researchers

said. They believe their findings provide compelling evidence to suggest that unusual rock formations found about ten years ago in an area known as the Franceville basin in Gabon on the Atlantic coast of central Africa are in fact fossils of “macro-organisms”.

They date to 1.5 billion years before the widely accepted emergence of complex organisms that we would recognise as animals rather than microbes.

Scientists have debated whether the formations really are large organisms, with some questioning whether the

conditions existed on Earth 2.1 billion years ago for complex life to emerge.

The researchers looked at the rock around the fossil-like formations and found what Dr Chi Fru called “a localised environment where cyanobacterial photosynthesis was abundant for an extended period of time, leading to the oxygenation of local seawater and the generation of a large food resource”.

Researchers believe the primitive creatures that emerged in this sea died off and that complex life had to wait another 1.5 billion years to re-emerge.

Fearful Britons believed Great Storm of '87 was a nuclear attack

Jack Blackburn History Correspondent

At the end of the *One O’Clock News* on October 15, 1987, the BBC weather forecaster Michael Fish famously told the nation that there was not a hurricane on the way — and so the nation went peacefully about its business. That night, when the Great Storm hit, some of the unprepared people of Britain feared that something even worse had hit our shores.

“A nuclear attack”, was the immediate thought of one woman and she was not alone. A number of respondents to the Mass Observation Project (MOP) feared that the Russians were attacking, while older people were taken back to the days of the Blitz. Others, however, first turned their worried minds toward the fate of their patio furniture.

These insights about the reaction to

career. “Earlier on today apparently a woman rang the BBC and said she’d heard that there was a hurricane on the way,” he said. “Well, if you’re watching, don’t worry — there isn’t. But, having said that actually, the weather will become very windy.”

That night, when gusts of 120mph hit, many did not have a clue what was occurring and assumed the worst. A few weeks later, the MOP got people to write about their experiences and it seems that the storm had caused both young and old to think about war, though in strikingly different ways.

When one correspondent from the east of England woke to “a frightening roaring sound”, her immediate conclusion was not weather-related.

“In my half-awake state I thought it was a nuclear attack,” she said. “It sounded like the sound effects in *War Games*. That thought brought me quickly awake!”

Other people also composed their thoughts on the threat of atomic apocalypse. “The hurricane was a very frightening experience,” said one woman from Brighton. “The feeling of being cut off communication-wise put me in mind of how it might be if ever there should be a nuclear attack.”

For older correspondents, the experience brought back sharp memories of the Second World War and the comparisons were made often. A woman born before the war recalled the evening she spent with her husband during the storm, in which the references to the war were frequent. “A noise, a bang, very loud, very close, that rumbled a bit, and reminded me of a bomb,” she wrote of one incident. “We felt it was like the Blitz and told each other so, frequently.”

The researchers say that, for the older generations, the experience was one of “sensory nostalgia”. One woman in her seventies said that the wind sounded “like the thousand-bomber raids” which set off to Germany in the war.

For others, there were more domestic worries at hand. One man recalled his wife being “concerned for the patio set”, while another woman said “I ventured into the dining room with a torch and saw the greenhouse flying towards the dining room windows”. Mercifully a tree stopped the full collision, though she said she was finding bits of glass in the garden for weeks afterwards.



London in October 1987, after Michael Fish had dismissed talk of a hurricane

that night in 1987 have been distilled from the vast MOP archive by academics at the University of Exeter. The testimonies capture the fears and trepidation of ordinary people.

“In recording the sensory effects of the gale, their writings reveal how readily feelings of comfort and safety in the home could be undone,” said Dr Timothy Cooper, senior lecturer in the department of humanities and social sciences at the University of Exeter. The paper, *That Awful Night in October*, which he co-authored with Matthew Turner, has been published in the journal *Cultural and Social History*.

It seems that the extraordinary storm had helped to reveal the wider anxieties of the time, and part of the problem was that the forecasters had got it so wrong, with Fish uttering the words that would haunt the rest of his



Wet spring blamed for butterfly shortage

With a week to go before the end of its Big

Butterfly Count, the wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation has said that this year’s results may be the lowest in the survey’s 14-year history (Benjamin Cooke writes).

Members of the public who spent 15 minutes looking for butterflies for the count saw on average seven. At this time last year the average was 12.

The charity attributed the low number to this year’s unusually wet and windy spring, coupled with the cold start to the summer.

Dan Hoare, its conservation director, 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.”

Although butterfly numbers fluctuate greatly year on year, depending on the weather, their numbers are in long-term decline and 80 per cent of species are now less numerous than they were in the 1970s.

Hoare attributed this longer-term decline to climate change, habitat destruction and pesticides. The influence of climate change can be seen most clearly in species such as the holly blue and peacock butterflies, which have expanded their range to parts of Scotland that

The peacock, holly blue and, below, the small tortoiseshell. The Big Count’s numbers may be the lowest yet

were not in the past warm enough. In the south of England, the decline of species such as the small tortoiseshell is probably also attributable to climate change, Hoare said, “although it could also be due to pesticide use increasing in farmland and gardens”.

He criticised the last Conservative government for letting farmers use neonicotinoid pesticides, which have been tightly restricted in the European Union.

“Those pesticides are deliberately designed to be incredibly toxic to insects,” he said. “They get transferred in pollen off the crops onto other plants.” He said

ministers should also ban the sale of insecticides in supermarkets. “If you go into any big supermarket, alongside a couple of bits of tomato fertiliser

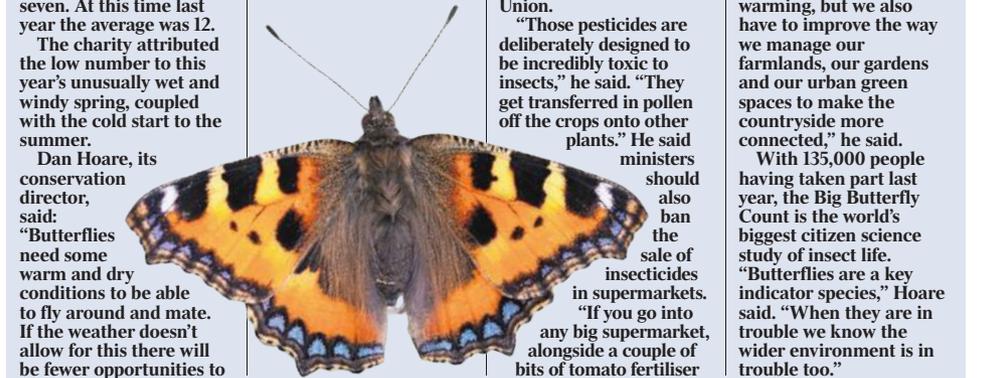


you’ll see a whole bunch of things people can spray in their gardens to kill bugs. So it’s no surprise that we step outside and can’t find any insects.”

To help butterflies thrive in gardens, Hoare suggested planting native wildflowers and using peat-free compost.

“We absolutely have to try to limit climate warming, but we also have to improve the way we manage our farmlands, our gardens and our urban green spaces to make the countryside more connected,” he said.

With 135,000 people having taken part last year, the Big Butterfly Count is the world’s biggest citizen science study of insect life. “Butterflies are a key indicator species,” Hoare said. “When they are in trouble we know the wider environment is in trouble too.”



News Politics

Prospect of tax rises blamed on 'black hole'

Steven Swinford Political Editor
Geraldine Scott Senior Political Correspondent

Rachel Reeves accused the Conservatives of leaving an "unforgivable" £22 billion black hole in the public finances as she indicated that taxes would have to rise.

She cancelled or postponed road and hospital building projects, restricted winter fuel payments to just the poorest pensioners and warned that "difficult decisions" on tax would be required in her first budget on October 30.

Jeremy Hunt, her predecessor who is now the shadow chancellor, accused her of "trash talking" the economy with a "cock and bull" story about the public finances. He highlighted her choice to increase public sector pay by £9 billion.

THE '£22 BILLION BLACK HOLE'

At the heart of Reeves's spending audit was an assessment that government spending was expected to be £21.9 billion above and beyond reserves.

The audit, she said, included a projected £6.4 billion on asylum and immigration because of the cost of accommodating people and the Rwanda refugee scheme. Military assistance to Ukraine had exceeded reserves by £1.7 billion while propping up the railways cost £1.6 billion. The bill for meeting the independent recommendations for public sector pay rises came in at about £9.4 billion, while inflation also placed pressure on departmental budgets.

While some of the "black hole" is a political choice — Reeves decided to accept the recommendations of public sector pay review bodies in full — economists were surprised by other figures, particularly on asylum.

WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

One of the most contentious announcements from Reeves was a decision to end universal winter fuel payments for pensioners, except those on benefits. The payments, which are worth £300, were available to everyone above state pension age.

Pensioners will qualify only if they are receiving pension credit, meaning that ten million people will no longer get the payments. This will save about £1.5 billion but charities said it would hit 1.8 million people on low incomes.

PUBLIC SECTOR PAY

Reeves committed the government to £9 billion of pay rises for six million public sector workers. NHS workers and teachers will receive 5.5 per cent while most other sectors receive 5 per cent. Reeves also pledged to resolve the junior doctors' dispute with a pay rise of 22 per cent over two years. This could cause trouble — nurses have said that they want "pay restoration" as well.

TAX RISES

Reeves announced that the budget on October 30 would include "difficult

decisions" over tax, public spending and welfare. Increasing capital gains tax and a raid on pensions tax relief are being considered.

CUTTING COSTS

Reeves said that departments would have to absorb about a third of the cost of public sector pay rises, about £3.2 billion next year. Stopping "all non-essential consultancy spend" would save £550 million next year, with £225 million from "administrative efficiencies". Ending the Rwanda scheme would save a further £1.4 billion.

NEW HOSPITALS

Reeves said that there would be a "complete review" of the Conservatives' New Hospital Programme. The previous government had promised to build 40 new hospitals in England by 2040.

THE SOCIAL CARE CAP

The Tories pledged to implement the social care cap — which would limit the amount someone could pay towards their own care to £86,000 — in October 2025. That timeline has been dropped and Labour is expected to launch a royal commission to seek a cross-party solution. Reeves said that the £1.1 billion needed for this had not been provided.

TRANSPORT

Reeves said that there were £1 billion of unfunded transport projects promised by the Conservatives. She said that several major road upgrades would not go ahead, including a dual carriageway and tunnel planned for the A303 near Stonehenge, and the A27 Arundel bypass. Plans to reopen closed railway lines under the Restoring our Railways programme would be scrapped.

RISHI SUNAK'S ADVANCED BRITISH STANDARD

Rishi Sunak announced the Advanced British Standard, a qualification combining A-levels and T-levels at the Conservative Party conference last year, but Reeves said he "didn't put aside a single penny to pay for it". She axed the scheme to save £200 million.

THE BLAME GAME

The Office for Budget Responsibility said that after being informed of the overspend, it had concerns over the "transparency and credibility" of the Conservative government's forecasting and spending plans. Richard Hughes, the OBR chairman, announced a review into how the former government prepared its figures. That threatens to embroil senior civil servants in the Treasury who signed off the figures.

NATWEST

Reeves ditched Tory plans for a "Tell Sid"-style share sale of the government's 20 per cent stake in NatWest, which would be a "bad use of taxpayer money" and could cost hundreds of millions of pounds due to the discounts on offer.



Labour Party balance sheet

All amounts for 2024-25

OVERSPEND

Pay rises for public sector workers	£9.4bn
Spending of reserves on measures which are "unforeseen, unavoidable and unaffordable", such as election spending or the Afghan resettlement schemes	£8.6bn
Rwanda plan and immigration	£6.4bn
Rail passenger services and rail maintenance	£2.9bn
New policy commitments made since the 2021 Spending Review which were assumed to be funded from reserves	£2.6bn
Previous year's public sector pay awards	£2.2bn
Support for Ukraine	£1.7bn
Spending on health	£1.5bn
Total overspend	£35.3bn

Total after adjustments from the spring 2024 budget reserve (the amount the Conservative Party managed to save at the last budget) predicted underspending across departments and allowing for a margin of error set by the OBR

SAVINGS

Winter fuel payments restricted to those on pension credits or other means-tested benefits	£1.4bn
Scrap the Rwanda migration partnership and retrospective of the Illegal Migration Act	£800m
Stop all non-essential government spend on consultancies in 2024-25	£550m
Administration savings of 2% across government departments	£225m
Cancel the Investment Opportunity Fund	£70m
Reviewing communications budgets across government	£50m
Cancel adult social care charging reforms	£30m
Total savings	£5.455bn

Rachel Reeves in her office in 11 Downing Street prior to her statement yesterday. She cancelled or postponed road and

Red mist conjured out of a political box of tricks

Tom Peck
Political Sketch



Rachel Reeves rose from her seat. She took a sip of water. She knew that the next ten years might hinge on the next few minutes. She was about to try to set The Narrative.

She was about to get very furious indeed, but more than that, she knew that if she let her mask of righteous anger slip even for a second, then all would be lost.

She was going to have to claim that, after 14 long years of standing and listening outside the bathroom door, that she really had been shocked to discover the state of it in there. That things were even worse than she'd been led to believe, and that — to her surprise and disappointment of course — even

tougher decisions would be necessary than she had led the voters to believe all of three and a half weeks ago.

Her eyes narrowed. Her take-no-prisoners bob haircut became an iron dome. She may or may not have sworn the Oath of the Skull and called on the power of ten tigers.

"There were things that we did not know," she said. "Things that the party opposite, covered up. A hole in the public finances of £22 billion."

Twenty. Two. Billion. Each rancid syllable was spat out with venomous intent. She paused and for a thrilling white hot nanosecond it really did seem like her next words were going to be: "That. Is. A. Disgrace."

She went on. "The contingency reserve has been spent more than three times over and they told no one. How dare they? How DARE they?"

The longer it went on the more

familiar it became. It was the sort of performance familiar to any parent who has had to pretend that a six-year-old child mounting the worktop to gain unsanctioned access to the chocolate digestives is up there with humanity's gravest ever crimes, and not, let's be honest, kind of hilarious.

While she spoke, an extremely complex letter written by someone from the Office for Budget Responsibility concerning the March forecasts was published online. For the next ten years, Labour will be treating this letter like the "sorry there's no money left" note in the drawer. It was not written in jest, which is a plus, but it is significantly less pithy, which is not.

Reeves wasn't the only one who was angry. For most of the last three months, it has been a bit of a mystery exactly why Jeremy Hunt has spent tens of thousands of pounds of his own money in the fight to not lose his constituency. Why did he personally knock on every door in Godalming about 20 times each, just for a few years in opposition? Well now we know. He did it so he could be here, at this moment, staring wide eyed over the dispatch box and shouting the word

JORDAN PETTIT/PA



hospital building projects, restricted winter fuel payments and warned that "difficult decisions" on tax would be required

"Rubbish!" over and over and over again. When he got bored of shouting "rubbish", he moved on to "absolute rubbish". Then it was "you know that's rubbish". And finally he moved on to: "You know that's absolute rubbish."

For a man as unfailingly polite as Jeremy Hunt, this sadly was the end of the line. He could escalate no further. Lesser men have a scale that can reach several octaves beyond "absolute rubbish", but not Jeremy Hunt, and that's just as well.

Eventually, he rose to tell her: "She will fool absolutely no one. The state of the public finances were available to anyone who wanted to look." That all she was doing was "preparing the ground for tax rises" that she didn't have "the courage to tell people about before the election".

When he was done, Reeves got even more angry. "The shadow chancellor had a chance to admit what he had done," she said. "The word he was looking for is sorry." The shadow chancellor was going to go straight to his bedroom.

Who was actually telling the truth? That's a bit more complex. Paul Johnson of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) spent the whole

election getting more annoyed with Labour for pretending they couldn't know the state of the public finances until after the election.

Yet while Reeves was speaking, Ben Zaranko of the IFS conceded that, actually, things were worse than you could see from the outside and that "Rachel Reeves had a right to be cross".

But, as we all know, the truth doesn't really matter. It's the mood. The vibe. Whom do you believe? Do you believe Labour, when they say that actually everything is much worse than we thought and sorry but we're going to have to bring in massive cuts and huge tax rises even though we said we weren't? Or do you believe the Tories, when they say that — guess what — Labour is now doing exactly what we said it would do?

I guess we'll have to wait and see but it's possible that over the past 14 years, Labour has forgotten that people get a lot more annoyed with governments than with oppositions. However long it takes, eventually we are all Jeremy Hunt, sitting there, pointing our fingers at the government and shouting: "Rubbish! Rubbish! Rubbish!" But it doesn't usually happen quite this quickly.

Private schools will be forced to charge VAT from January

George Grylls Political Correspondent

Labour has announced that VAT will be charged on private school fees from January 1, and parents will be unable to avoid the tax by paying in advance.

The chancellor confirmed the 20 per cent levy will come into force from the beginning of 2025.

The tax will apply immediately on any fees for the school term beginning next January, preventing parents from dodging the extra cost by paying up front.

It comes after the popularity of pay-in-advance schemes rose sharply when private schools began advertising them in anticipation of a Labour government. In an attempt to close that loophole, ministers have introduced anti-forestalling legislation to cover all fees paid from July 29 to the budget on October 30.

Rachel Reeves said the money raised from the tax would fund 6,500 new teachers. Private schools warned that the move could lead to more children flooding the state sector as parents struggle to afford fees.

There are 554,316 children at private schools in the UK, equivalent to 5.9 per cent of all pupils, according to research by the Independent Schools Council (ISC).

"Thousands of children face having their education disrupted as a result of this unprecedented tax," said Julie Robinson, chief executive officer of the ISC. "It will increase pressure on state schools and on an already-stretched SEND [special educational needs and disabilities] system, as well as on faith provision, on specialist arts education and on military families."

She added: "The draft legislation was published before consultation with independent schools. We will be working over the coming months to engage the government on the consequences of this policy on schools, families and communities. It remains our belief that the best way to improve education for all is for schools to work together, not to tax education".

Annual fees for private day schools

cost on average £18,064, according to the ISC, but that cost can rise significantly for elite boarding schools.

Brighton College, the most expensive private school in the country, costs almost £65,000 a year, meaning parents will face an extra VAT cost of £13,000.

Under Reeves's plans, local authorities that pay for students with special educational needs to attend private school will be reimbursed the cost of VAT. The chancellor also announced that private schools would have to pay full business rates from April 2025. Previously independent schools were eligible for charitable rates relief of 80 per cent.

Bridget Phillipson, the education secretary, has said that the combined taxes will raise £1.7 billion per year, although research by HM Revenue & Customs when the Conservatives were in government showed it would bring in £650 million a year.

In total, 60 per cent of voters support charging VAT on private school fees compared with 24 per cent who are opposed, according to YouGov polling.

Senior Conservative MPs criticised the tax rise as the "politics of envy".

James Cleverly, the shadow home secretary, said on Twitter/X that it was "an ideological decision" that would hit "small independent schools".

"Don't let them spin it as a necessity. It's the politics of envy," he said.

Sir Keir Starmer's cabinet contains the lowest proportion of privately educated ministers in decades. Of the 25 ministers attending cabinet, only two went to independent schools for most of their education, equating to 8 per cent of cabinet as compared with a national average of 6 to 7 per cent.

Reeves, who attended a state school south London, has described her enjoyment at beating privately educated boys at chess tournaments when she was a girl.

"There were two things I always wanted to prove: that a girl could be just as good as a boy, but also a girl from an ordinary background could be just as good as a boy from a more privileged background," she told The Times.

A shocking mess and tough decisions

Paul Johnson
Comment

Let's be clear. The new government has inherited a fiscal mess. The mess that matters in the longer term, the lack of money to avoid cuts across public services without higher taxes or more borrowing, has been evident for a long time. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has been banging on about the "conspiracy of silence" over the hard choices that will need to be made for months now.

What Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, revealed yesterday was a fiscal mess beyond even that. The government will need to spend a lot more than planned this year just to keep delivering public services. There were lots of numbers in the statement, but let's go with the net pressures of some £16.5 billion. The gross number was £22 billion of "unfunded" commitments, with £5.5 billion worth of savings identified.

These pressures look real. The cost

of housing asylum seekers looks set to exceed £6 billion. Astonishing that hardly any of that cost was budgeted for. The other big challenge comes from meeting the costs of public sector pay awards — £9 billion more than budgeted for.

How could this have happened? The technocratic answer is that we haven't had a spending review since 2021. Inflation has been a lot higher than expected, pushing up costs and pay awards beyond what was expected. And policy on things like asylum changed, also pushing up costs. Treasury allocations to departments have not kept up with these realities. That the last government implemented a £20 billion tax cut — the cut to national insurance contributions — in the face of this fiscal reality, while not addressing challenges, is hard to square with responsible stewardship of the public finances.

The numbers were new, in that they had not been published before. The Office for Budget Responsibility does not tend to look hard under the bonnet of year-on-

year departmental spending allocations. It has to accept that if the Home Office, say, is given a certain amount of money then it will live within its budget. The beefing-up of their oversight role is welcome.

Even so, a big part of what we were presented with was predictable. We knew that departmental allocations allowed for public sector pay rises of only 2 per cent. Given recent squeezes on public pay, and that private sector pay is rising at 5 or 6 per cent a year, that was never going to be enough. That was well known. It accounts for half of this year's pressures.

So, was Reeves right to have been surprised? To some extent, yes. The degree to which spending programmes were not properly funded was not transparent. Should we be shocked at how this was buried and the extent of problems inherited by the new government? Yes. Does any of this change the fact that we always knew that here are some tough decisions coming up on tax, spending and borrowing? Not at all. Paul Johnson is director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies

News Politics

Junior doctors offered 22% rise to end strikes

Poppy Koronka
Steven Swinford Political Editor

The junior doctors' pay offer of 22 per cent isn't a "good deal", a leading union doctor has said, adding that they should "remain sceptical" but still accept the offer.

The government offered the pay rise on Monday to end the long-running dispute over pay and conditions.

Speaking on Times Radio, Dr Robert Laursen, co chair of the British Medical Association's (BMA) junior doctors committee, warned that doctors could still strike in the future if pay was not increased in line with recommendations in the coming years.

The offer, if accepted, will deliver an additional pay rise of between 3.71 per cent and 5.05 per cent on top of their existing pay award for 2023-2024. It will be backdated to April 2023.

Each part of the pay scale will also be increased by six per cent, plus £1,000 — as recommended by the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration.

Laursen said: "I don't think that this is a good deal. I think that this is the best deal possible but I think there are significant deficits in it. And I think doctors should rightly be sceptical about it".

Junior doctors in the BMA will now vote on whether they will accept the pay deal and end the 15 months of successive strike action. While the committee has recommended that they should accept the offer, there is no guarantee they will agree, given that their original demand was for a 35 per cent pay increase.

In real terms, the pay deal means a doctor starting foundation training in the NHS will see their base pay increase to £36,600, up from about £32,400. A

full-time doctor entering speciality training would have a basic pay rise to £49,900 from about £43,900.

Laursen said: "I do think that they should consider taking the deal and accepting it, but there is no future route to pay restoration and I think doctors should look very carefully at the recommendation of the [Doctors and Dentists Remuneration Board] next year.

"If it does not adequately address pay restoration, then I'm concerned [...] that there will be further industrial action in the future.

"I recommend that our members take the deal as it stands now, but to remain sceptical and to keep Mr Streeting honest to his word that he wants to restore faith in the independent pay review bodies."

The government also confirmed a pay rise of 5.5 per cent for other NHS workers, including nurses. This pay rise covers about 1.3 million staff. Doctors and dentists will receive a pay rise of 6 per cent and senior NHS managers will get an increase of 5 per cent.

Responding to the NHS pay announcement for nursing staff, Nicola Ranger, the Royal College of Nursing's general secretary and chief executive professor, said: "When it comes to pay in the NHS, all professional groups deserve a clear route to fair pay restoration.

"Stagnant salaries at a time of spiralling prices forced too many to leave and deterred others from joining.

"We do not begrudge doctors their pay rise. We work together closely, in the interests of our patients. What we ask for is the same fair treatment from government.

"We will be pushing government to show us their plans for improving NHS pay — it is vital to recruit and retain

nursing staff, fill tens of thousands of vacant nurse jobs and give people the care they deserve."

Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, announced both pay offers this afternoon, remarking that it was the "start of a new relationship" between the government and the NHS.

Wes Streeting, the health secretary, said of the offer to junior doctors: "I am delighted that we have agreed an offer that finally paves the way to ending industrial action which has caused untold misery to patients and staff.

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

"This is a fair offer. Fair to junior doctors, fair to patients and fair to the NHS. It also represents an opportunity to truly reset relationships so we can begin working together to bring waiting lists down and fix the broken NHS."

Experts have hailed the deal as the "first step" for getting the NHS "back on track", the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) said, but warned that a better negotiation system was needed to avoid future strikes.

Dr Annie Williamson, research fellow at IPPR and practising NHS doctor, said: "An end to strikes is a crucial first step to getting the NHS back on track. Yet the government must also address the root cause of why they've happened in the first place.

"The way the government and NHS staff negotiate is broken. Pay review panels have no direct seat for unions or staff, so strikes become one of the only ways to negotiate, rather than a last resort.

"We need to fix the process to avoid ending up with more strikes in a year or a decade".

Q&A

GPs are threatening to bring the NHS to a "standstill" with industrial action in a row over their new contract in England — the first by family doctors in 60 years.

Who is proposing action and when will it start?
Members of the British Medical Association. A ballot by the BMA closed yesterday, and if they agree to industrial action, it will begin on Thursday and could last for "months".

What is the GPs' contract?
The BMA said the new GP services contract, which would raise funding by 1.9 per cent for 2024-25, may mean many surgeries become financially unviable. GPs say the increase is not enough to meet growing demand. The

contract sets out mandatory requirements for services. The majority of the funding comes from these contracts. Doctors began a formal dispute in April after a referendum from the BMA found that 99 per cent of 19,000 GPs surveyed rejected it.

What will the action be?
Union medics said it will not be a strike and do not want to make patients "piggy in the middle". They hope to affect administrators and policymakers.

The ballot is of GP contractors and partner BMA members, so entire GP surgeries will take part, with the BMA instructing that surgeries "should enact these actions across the whole practice team working with their practice managers". All GP surgeries in England, about 6,000, could take part.

There are nine options for industrial action, and none

involves surgeries closing. One includes limiting the number of patients doctors see a day to 25. A survey last year by trade publication Pulse found that GPs see about 37 day.

Others include stopping work GPs are not contracted to do and ignoring "rationing" for prescription medication and prescribing "whatever is in the patient's best interest".

What will the impact be?
Doctors said "patients won't come to harm", but The Guardian reported that three million appointments could be affected in a month. Action is to force policymakers into a rethink by referring more patients to hospitals, and increasing already lengthy wait times for diagnostic tests and non-urgent hospital care.

When was the last industrial action by GPs?
In 1964 they handed

undated resignations to the Wilson government. This led to the family doctor charter of 1965.

Dr Katie Bramall-Stainer, chairwoman of the BMA's England general practitioners committee, said she hoped to talk to the government about a family doctor charter for next year. "We have moved on so much since then, but we need to again agree a set of principles if you want the NHS to be free at the point of use, universal to all, funded through central taxation," she told the PA news agency.

"In a free at the point of use service, you have got to have an effective, emboldened, resourced gatekeeper. Your gatekeeper is the GP. The GP model is why the NHS has lasted as long as it has. When you try and break the GP model, you break the gatekeeper, and ... you break the NHS"



'Yellow cards' for

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent

The six Tory leadership candidates will receive "yellow cards" and be formally rebuked if they brief against rivals.

Rules designed to avoid the three-month contest being plagued by infighting have been laid down by the 1922 Committee of Tory backbenchers.

The candidates with the required ten nominations are: Tom Tugendhat, Kemi Badenoch, Dame Priti Patel, James Cleverly, Robert Jenrick and Mel Stride. Suella Braverman, the former home secretary, did not stand after claiming that colleagues had branded her "mad, bad and dangerous".

They will have about five weeks to gather support from MPs, before votes to whittle them down to four are held on September 4 and 9. Any candidate achieving 31 guaranteed supporters — a quarter of the 121 MPs — will reach the next stage, at the party's autumn conference in October.

Senior MPs hope the card system will prevent the contest from becoming a "bloodletting" exercise. Instituted on the orders of Bob Blackman, the 1922 chairman, the system will issue a public rebuke for any candidate or team found to have briefed against a rival.

Blackman said: "The constant backbiting and attacking colleagues both in public and on the media in the last parliament was one of the contributory reasons as to why the party did so badly in the general election. We are determined that we will not tolerate that happening.

"So, if candidates indulge in it, then I will get involved, obviously, to warn them and, if necessary, issue a public statement to the fact that they have

been involved in such activity. If MPs get involved in such backbiting, then the chief whip will intervene and, if ex-MPs are involved, then the party chairman will be involved in making sure that simple action is taken."

A public statement about bad behaviour would be "extremely detrimental" to candidate's chances, Blackman said. "There's a difference between vigorous debate and then attacking other individuals just because they happen to dislike what they are proposing."

However, those working on leadership campaigns have voiced concerns about the new system. Sources said that it would be "impossible to police" and "create more problems than it solves" due to the prospect of malicious complaints being made.

Badenoch, the shadow communities secretary, was the last candidate to declare her intention to run. She will be challenged by those viewed as being on the right of the party, including Jenrick, the former immigration minister, and Patel, the former home secretary.

Also fighting to replace Rishi Sunak are Tugendhat, the shadow security minister, and Stride, shadow work and pensions secretary.

Leadership teams have drawn up lists of areas they want to target over the summer. They are particularly wary of not overlooking regions that have become "Tory MP deserts", where there is little or no Conservative representation in the Commons.

The new leader will be decided by Tory members in a run-off ballot, with the winner announced on November 2 — just days before the US presidential election.

Tories won't lure the young by telling them off, Hugo Rifkind, page 21

GARETH FULLER/PA



More dangerous for migrants as police militarise the border

A migrant sailing in an inflatable boat down a riverway in France shouted “this is for Rishi Sunak” before picking up more people from a beach near Calais and travelling across the English Channel.

Footage captures a group travelling on a black dinghy before reaching the sea, where dozens of migrants waded into the water at Gravelines and pulled themselves onto the crowded boat yesterday morning.

The departures come a day after a migrant died attempting the trip to the UK. Men, women and young children, some wearing life jackets, could be seen appearing from sand dunes and walking across the beach.

Families turned back as others walked into the water to be picked up by the boat. Police patrolled the beach and appeared to approach families before they turned



A group of people thought to be migrants waded through the sea to clamber aboard an already crowded boat off Gravelines, France

away. Volunteers from refugee charity Utopia 56 were at the scene and told the PA news agency they deal with emergencies, check boats at sea are not in trouble, distribute clothes and monitor how police engage with migrants.

One volunteer, Pablo Eymard-Picollec, said of the families who turned back: “I think a few police officers talked to them and told them to stay on the beach. As you can see on the boat, it was really crowded, so they assumed it was too risky for them to go, but we have to speak with them to know for

sure the reason they didn’t go today.” It comes as the French coastguard rescued 34 migrants, while one person died, after a “heavily loaded” boat got into difficulty overnight from July 27 to 28.

Another migrant aid volunteer, who wished not to be named, said it’s more dangerous now as the police have militarised the border. “More and more people are coming in one boat because there is less chance for them to try,” they said. “There are more people now in one boat than before, there is more risk ...”

More than 16,000 migrants have made the journey via the English Channel this year so far, with the latest arrivals of 370 people travelling in six boats on Saturday.

contenders who brief against leadership rivals

Who’s in the running?

Kemi Badenoch

Age: 44
Pitch: A pragmatic leader who can bridge the ideological divide between the left and right of the party. Badenoch, centre, has been a vocal critic of “identity politics” and said the Tories had become “increasingly liberal”, having “talked right yet governed left”. A Conservative Home poll early this month suggested she was the favourite to succeed Sunak with the support of 26 per cent of members.
Odds on winning: 7/4 (Ladbrokes)

James Cleverly

Age: 54
Pitch: A loyalist who served the past three prime ministers and rose above infighting. Viewed as less factional and believes a lurch left or right would “narrow” the party’s offer to voters. The former foreign and home secretary, below right, said the Tories needed to “re-establish our reputation as the

party who, in government, helps grow the economy, helps people achieve their goals, their dreams, and their aspirations”.
Odds on winning: 6/1 (Ladbrokes)

Priti Patel

Age: 52
Pitch: A unity candidate closely connected to grassroots Tories. She will highlight

her experience as home secretary and working under William Hague’s Tory opposition in the 2000s. She wants to give more powers to members – deciding policy, putting delegates on the board and a democratically-elected chairman.
Odds on winning: 8/1 (Ladbrokes)

Robert Jenrick

Age: 42
Pitch: Jenrick’s pitch is that the Tories suffered a landslide defeat because they failed on the NHS, on the economy and especially on migration. He will try to be the candidate of the right but will argue he can represent the centre ground too.
Odds on winning: 5/2 (Ladbrokes)

Mel Stride

Age: 62
Pitch: Well regarded among Tory MPs, if not well known to the public. His pitch is as a safe pair of hands who can rebuild the party without being part of a faction. Stride believes that restoring its reputation for competence is key.
Odds on winning: 28/1 (Ladbrokes)

Tom Tugendhat

Age: 51
Pitch: A candidate with senior ministerial experience, but sufficiently distanced from previous governments. His foreign affairs and defence credentials are lauded by the party. Tugendhat, right, said in his launch video that the party broke too many promises and had to regain voters’ trust to win the next election.
Odds on winning: 5/1 (Ladbrokes)



Anne-Marie Trevelyan Comment

The first job of the next leader of the Conservatives will be to rebuild the party. To do this, we need a leader with vision, a leader who will not get buried in the minute details nor shy away from hard decisions. We need a leader who will answer the big question of what Conservatism looks like in the 2030s and 2040s. I am backing Tom Tugendhat.

While the Conservative Party’s record includes successes like Universal Credit, hosting the 2012 Olympics, the Global Investment Summit which secured over £10 billion in green investment for the UK, Cop26, the 2022 Commonwealth Games and getting Brexit done, these wins have been overshadowed by more recent challenges. Covid-19 and Putin’s invasion of Ukraine have put immense pressure on the UK. The Conservatives navigated these crises, prioritising innovation and providing hundreds of billions in support.

But these successes, challenges and economic support packages are now historic and voters want the promise of a better future for their families. To win the next election, we must unite and choose a leader who listens to citizens, rebuilds the party, and values democracy. Tom Tugendhat embodies these qualities. He is intelligent, humble and determined.

Tom has the integrity and passion this country needs, qualities few others have demonstrated. He is clever, funny and determined, an

unashamedly proud dad who will provide our party and this great country with the vision and policies needed to thrive in an unstable world. Recent polling shows that the general public and Conservative voters agree that Tom is the best choice, and we know Labour polling showed Tom was their greatest threat.

The next iteration of the Conservative Party’s journey must be to understand today’s citizens, their aspirations and fears, and clearly articulate our beliefs and vision.

Conservatives have faith in people and believe in a smaller state because the nation’s success — economically, culturally, and educationally — comes from allowing talent and creativity to grow, supported by government without heavy-handed interference, taxation or directives.

We achieve success across the country by demonstrating that profit is vital because it brings purpose and dignity to individual, community and corporate efforts. Policies that empower innovation allow creators to keep the value of their efforts to reinvest as they choose, not as the government demands. Our history, our institutions and our future intertwine for our success as a nation, with its world-leading successful multi-cultural citizenry.

The rest of the world looks in awe at the UK, and at our successful democracy. Tom lives and breathes that love of, and respect for, the UK on the global stage. Our country needs Tom Tugendhat’s leadership driving the Conservative Party to sustain the UK’s future success.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan is a former Conservative minister



Heatwave for now as heavy showers loom

A heatwave will be declared today in parts of the country where the temperature is forecast to reach more than 30C (Laurence Sleator writes).

It is expected to be 32C in London and the southeast, which would be the hottest day of the year, and in other parts of the country it will be dry and warm.

An official heatwave is defined as when a

location records at least three consecutive days with maximum temperatures exceeding 25C, or 28C in London and the southeast.

Frank Saunders, the Met Office's chief meteorologist, said: "Much of the UK is entering a warm or even hot interlude, with some places in England and Wales likely to meet heatwave criteria."

In Scotland the temperature could reach 21C and in Wales 26C. It



Sunbathers enjoy the heat in Brighton as swimmers cool off at Hathersage lido in the Peak District. Warnings for downpours are in place for Thursday

could also reach 29C in the east of England and 27C in the west.

The hottest day of the year so far was July 19 when 31.9C was recorded at St James's Park in central London.

But the sunny weather is only expected to last as long as Thursday, when yellow weather warnings are in place for thunderstorms bringing in rain and gusty wind. The warning covers

most of England and part of Wales.

David Oliver, deputy chief meteorologist, said: "The heaviest showers on Thursday could result in 20-30mm of rain within an hour,

with daily totals possibly reaching as high as 90mm if multiple showers impact the same location. Lightning and hail present additional hazards." Weather, page 47

AI takes lead in fight against illegal sales by puppy farmers

Will Humphries

AI has helped block 27,000 unscrupulous puppy breeders from hoodwinking British buyers on one of the country's biggest pet websites.

In the four years since "Lucy's law" was passed, which banned Britons buying puppies from unregistered breeders, people are still buying animals from puppy farms which disguise themselves as legitimate operations.

To combat unethical practices the Pets4Homes website, which rehomes more than one million pets a year, has turned to AI and image checking algorithms to ban some 27,000 user accounts which didn't pass standards on breeding practices or ethics.

Lucy's law means that anyone wanting to get a new puppy or kitten in England must now buy direct from a breeder or adopt from a rescue centre instead. Licensed dog breeders are

required to show puppies interacting with their mothers in their place of birth. If a business sells puppies or kittens without a licence, they could receive an unlimited fine or be sent to prison for up to six months.

The law is named after Lucy, a cavalier King Charles spaniel who was rescued from a puppy farm where she was subjected to terrible conditions. Puppy farms depend on third-party sellers to distribute often sick, traumatised, un-socialised puppies which have been taken away from their mother at just a few weeks old.

Analysis by The Kennel Club last year showed one in four dog owners did not research before buying, often prioritising "cuteness" over ethics. The same study also found twice as many people acquired puppies through social media compared to five years ago, with a third of puppies of those coming directly from puppy farms. A quarter of these

get sick or even die within the first year.

Axel Lagercrantz, chief executive of Pets4Homes, said AI systems are vital in fighting puppy farming, but educating buyers on researching breeders is also crucial to tackle the root issue and cut demand. "Ensuring seller legitimacy is one major piece of the puzzle in order to combat puppy farming," he said.

"Every day 250,000 users visit our site and 4,000 adverts, 60,000 images and videos are uploaded, and 50,000 messages are sent. With AI, it's possible to scan images, verify vaccination records, and detect suspicious financial activities ... we have blocked around 27,000 users."

A common practice by puppy farmers attempting to avoid detection is to use multiple accounts under different identities, steal images from legitimate vendors and forge their documentation. Pets4Homes said their operations had stopped one listing where images

were flagged for not containing a photo of the puppies together with mother and where one image had previously been used for a different listing.

After further investigation it was revealed that the listing had been uploaded by a family member of a known puppy farmer in Doncaster. The same seller had further attempted to evade detection by using 11 different family member passports to create 11 different accounts for other listings.

Thanks to device fingerprinting and linking IP-addresses and postcodes, all accounts were linked and then banned from Pets4Homes before the individual managed to connect with a buyer.

In a different case, three different families involved in illegal puppy farming were using six different accounts to sell puppies in the Rochester area. They were discovered on Pets4Homes after the AI model analysed the information they shared on the platform.

Bereavement can make you age faster

Kaya Burgess Science Reporter

The grief of losing a loved one can make you age faster, a study suggests, providing new evidence that bereavement can have a negative impact on your health.

Losing someone close during adulthood appears to have a more significant effect than losses experienced during childhood, while people who suffer two or more losses are hit by a greater impact, according to researchers in the United States.

Previous research has found that losing a parent or sibling early in life has been linked to poor mental health, cognitive impairment, an increased chance of heart problems and a higher mortality risk in later life.

The new study sought to assess whether the loss of a loved one could also have an effect on the "biological age" of the body.

One way of measuring biological age is by measuring the extent of "DNA methylation". This is a process where chemicals latch on to a molecule of DNA to change its function without altering the DNA's code. There are about 28 million "methylation sites" within our DNA and these change with age.

Scientists can measure this process at certain key sites in a person's DNA, using a number of different scales called "epigenetic clocks" to assess the body's biological age.

The researchers from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, whose report was published in the journal *Jama Network Open*, suggested that prolonged stress after bereavement may be responsible for speeding up the ageing process.

Female prison officer faces jail for sex with inmate

David Woode Crime Correspondent

A female prison officer who was filmed having sex with an inmate in a cell faces jail for a "shocking breach" of the public's trust.

Linda De Sousa Abreu, 30, was on duty when her encounter with the unnamed inmate at Wandsworth prison in south London was filmed by another prisoner. Various edits of the video, almost five minutes long, were watched millions of times on social media. The

incident took place between June 26 and June 28. De Sousa Abreu, from Fulham, west London, was arrested at Heathrow airport days after the video emerged and charged with misconduct in public office.

The married mother of one appeared at Isleworth crown court yesterday. Flanked by two officers, she spoke only to confirm her name and enter a guilty plea.



Her relatives attended the hearing. Eloise Marshall KC, for the prosecution, said that investigations were continuing and the court was asked to adjourn sentencing.

Judge Martin Edmunds KC, the recorder of Kensington and Chelsea, released De Sousa Abreu on bail to await sentencing on November 7. He

Linda De Sousa Abreu is a married mother of one

ordered a pre-sentence report to "consider all options including the position of your child".

Edmunds told the defendant: "The fact I am asking for that report and granting you bail is not an indication of the sentence you will receive."

Tetteh Turkson of the Crown Prosecution Service said: "This was a shocking breach of the public's trust. De Sousa was clearly an enthusiastic participant who wrongly thought she would avoid responsibility."

Climate action is virtue signalling, says ex-head of National Trust

Ali Mitib, Marianne Doherty

A former chairman of the National Trust described plans by climate activists to target the heritage charity over its use of Barclays as “virtue signalling”. Climate activists will hold protests at more than 40 trust sites this week in an effort to stop the charity from banking with Barclays because of its links to the fossil fuel industry. The organisers of

the protests, which include staff, volunteers and members of the trust, intend to focus on creative acts of protest ranging from picnics to parades and musical performances. Sir Simon Jenkins, who served as the chairman of the trust from 2008 to 2014, criticised the protests. “These things are so ridiculous and they’re all about posturing and virtue signalling,” he said. “The National Trust is deeply

involved in all forms of conservation and it’s been leading the way in trying to protect the landscape. “It’s been leading the way in [how] it heats its properties and its energy use... Its secondary and tertiary links to various activities that other people don’t like is neither here nor there.” Jenkins, a former editor of The Times, expressed support for the trust’s position of allowing peaceful protests.

Sally Chapman, a volunteer at Knightshayes, a trust site in Devon, said that she was “really unhappy about the National Trust banking with Barclays”. She added: “I am sure that the National Trust founder Octavia Hill would be too. It does not fit with her vision of providing healthy green spaces for ordinary people.” A spokeswoman for the trust said: “The National Trust fully understands

the urgency needed to find solutions to the climate crisis and the strength of feeling about this. We welcomed Barclays’ announcement that they will stop direct financing to clients engaged in oil and gas expansion, and that they will require clients in the energy sector to prepare climate transition plans. It is important that we continue to engage with the banking sector to do more and faster to reduce financed emissions.”

Tommy Robinson quits UK ‘to avoid case’

Ali Mitib

Tommy Robinson has left Britain after committing a “flagrant” contempt of court by playing a film that was the subject of an injunction at a protest in central London, the High Court has heard.

The far-right activist, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, did not attend a hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice in his latest contempt of court case.

The solicitor-general began action against Robinson, 41, in June over an alleged breach of a court order after he lost a libel case in 2021, when he was found to have made false claims about a boy who was assaulted in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, in 2018.

Yesterday, Adam Payer, representing the solicitor-general, said it was believed that Robinson had left Britain hours after being released on unconditional bail following his arrest on Sunday in Folkestone, Kent, under the Terrorism Act 2000.

Mr Justice Johnson issued a warrant for Robinson’s arrest but said it should not be carried out “until early October” to allow him time to indicate that he would attend the next hearing voluntarily or to ask to “set aside” the warrant.

The court was told that Robinson was held after a demonstration in London that involved the screening of a film “central to this application”. Payer said this showed a “flagrant” and “admitted” breach of the court order.

He said: “We understand he failed to co-operate with a port stop and search. The implication is he was attempting to leave the country and was not intending to attend this hearing this morning.”

Payer added that Robinson had been reminded of the hearing before being bailed but it is believed he “left the UK last night and there was nothing to prevent him from doing so”.

Payer said Robinson had returned to the UK “with the purpose of publishing the film” before leaving again “to put himself beyond the reach of this court’s jurisdiction”.

The judge said he was “entirely satisfied” that the hearing could proceed in Robinson’s absence, with a further hearing expected to be held in October.

In 2021 Jamal Hijazi, a refugee, successfully sued Robinson after he was assaulted while at school in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, in 2018. After a clip of the incident went viral, Robinson made false claims, including about Hijazi attacking girls, leading to the libel case. Mr Justice Nicklin ordered Robinson to pay Hijazi £100,000 damages plus costs, and made an injunction to stop the allegations being repeated.

Hope Not Hate, the campaign group, provided a “dossier of evidence” to the attorney-general’s office, with the solicitor-general then taking legal action.

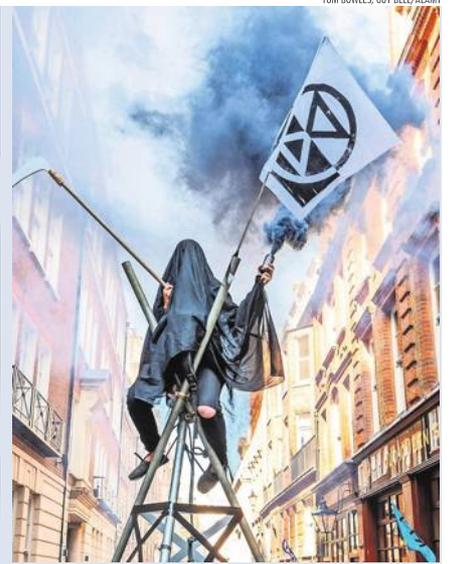


Gatwick passengers just step over Just Stop Oil protesters

Seven Just Stop Oil protesters who tried to disrupt passengers at Gatwick yesterday were arrested, the

airport said (Ben Clatworthy writes). Just after 8am the environmental activists sat on the floor in an attempt to block access to the

area of the South Terminal, where passengers are screened. However, travellers simply climbed over them. Barriers were put up around the activists and passengers were later diverted to another entrance before the group was



The Just Stop Oil protest coincided with an Extinction Rebellion Cut the Ties demonstration at the Policy Exchange offices, above and left

Midlands, Leeds Bradford and Newcastle airports have all obtained court injunctions to stop environmental activists trespassing on their land.

A Sussex police spokesman said: “Eight people have been arrested on suspicion of interfering with public infrastructure. The airport is functioning as usual, and no disruption has been caused.” Opinions must never trump judicial decisions, Melanie Phillips, page 20 Poster girls, Times2

Lost portrait of Henry VIII spotted in background of social media post

Jack Blackburn History Correspondent

Doomscrolling social media might not be a complete waste of time after all — if you’re an art historian.

As more people post pictures of their homes online, artworks which might otherwise have remained hidden are on display. This voyeur’s paradise has allowed one lucky art expert to make a significant discovery, all while idling on his phone.

A “lost” portrait of Henry VIII has been identified by Adam Busiakiewicz, an art historian who has worked with the auction house Sotheby’s, after he spotted it in the background of a social media post.

Busiakiewicz was “scrolling at speed” through Twitter/X when he noticed the



The Henry VIII portrait is from a set commissioned in the late 16th century

painting in the background of a post from Tim Cox, the lord-lieutenant of Warwickshire. It appears to be one of the “Sheldon” portraits, a set of 22 pictures dating back to 1590, most of which are now untraced. This one had been missing for 116 years.

“I feel quite lucky,” Busiakiewicz said. “Social media allows you to have this very strange insight into a room where you might never go.”

Busiakiewicz was perfectly placed for his discovery. Being Warwickshire-born, he had the local connection that meant he saw Cox’s post in the first place and he had just spent a year working on another painting from the set so he was primed to recognise its sibling.

Cox’s photo was of an event at Warwick’s Shire Hall and Busiakiewicz’s eye

settled upon a distinctive arched frame which is a marker of the Sheldon set. Within an hour, he was fairly certain he had made a find.

“Strange discoveries can happen at any moment, it appears,” he said. “This is especially the case when your eyes are particularly honed in on gilt frames that feature in the corners of photographs of peoples’ homes.”

The portraits were commissioned in the late 16th century by the tapestry maker Ralph Sheldon. Busiakiewicz went to Shire Hall for a closer look and said he had “no doubt” that it was a Sheldon portrait. Warwickshire county council has moved the painting to their Museums Collections Centre for further research, while Busiakiewicz is still keeping an eye out online.

News Olympics

Pidcock scrambles to gold on

David Brown Paris

Tom Pidcock defied a puncture to win gold and retain his mountain bike cross-country title yesterday with one of the greatest Olympic comebacks, as British athletes celebrated a “Magic Monday” of medals.

The Prince and Princess of Wales sent a message of “huge congratulations”, saying “Here’s to more success ahead!” after Team GB picked up their first two golds at the expense of the host nation.

The equestrian eventing team won the first gold after pushing the French into second place in the final showjumping round of the three-day competition.

Pidcock suffered a puncture and was left with the apparently impossible task of chasing down the 40-second lead of the French rider Victor Koretzky, 29.

French fans booed — and one threw a bottle — at the British rider as he crossed the finish line after the pair battled over a thrilling final lap.

His second consecutive Olympic mountain bike cross-country gold came only 16 days after he was forced to pull out of the Tour de France with Covid.

Pidcock, whose 25th birthday is today, said: “The Olympics is so special, you never give up, you give everything, and that is what I had to do.”

“This is what makes the Olympics to me, the fact that it’s bigger than cycling. 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.”

“I think it’s my most emotionally draining victory. The build-up, it’s such a long time in my head and then you’re waiting all week, the training, it builds up and builds up. It’s not until you cross the finish line that it all pours out.”

After crossing the finish line yesterday he hugged his parents, Sonja Harper, 56, and Giles Pidcock, 57.

“You grow up, they take you to races, they make a lot of sacrifices,” the gold medallist said. “They brought me up to be who I am. They let me grow to love this sport and into who I am.”

Pidcock will now target Saturday’s road race.

Tom Daley won a silver in the synchronised 10m platform diving in his fifth games, competing with Noah Williams, 24. Silver completes the collection for Daley, who also has three bronzes and one gold. It is the first Olympic medal for Williams.

Daley, 30, returned to training last year after his eldest son, Robbie, said he wanted to see him compete at the Olympics. He was watched by his husband, the American screenwriter Dust-in Lance Black Daley, and their two children.

“I’m so proud to have been able to decide to come back,” he said. “I think most of that is being able to set an example to my kids that if you have a dream and work really hard, it doesn’t mean you’re always going to be able to achieve exactly what you want to.”

China’s Hao Yang and Junjie Lian took the gold medal.

Daley, who now lives in California, said he did not know if he would compete at a sixth



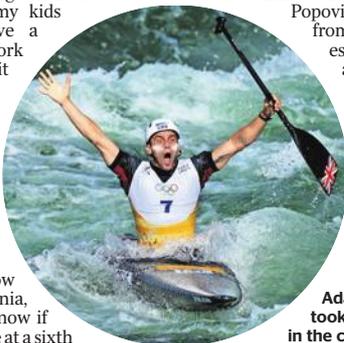
Games in Los Angeles in 2028. “I went from being the youngest on the team in 2008 to now oldest diver on the team,” he said. “I want to enjoy this moment and make decisions about the future of diving, for me, later on.”

Matt Richards won a silver medal in the men’s 200m freestyle swimming, just two hundredths of a second slower than Romania’s David Popovici. Richards, 21, from Droitwich, Worcestershire, won gold as part of the men’s 4x200m relay team in Tokyo.

His losing margin was the same as Adam Peaty’s in the 100m breaststroke on Sunday.

Adam Burgess

Adam Burgess, 32, took the silver medal in the canoe slalom



claimed his first Olympic medal with a canoe slalom singles silver at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium after being pipped to gold by the French.

Burgess, 32, from Stoke-on-Trent, was in gold-medal position until the home favourite Nicolas Gestin finished 5.48 seconds faster.

Burgess said that he had been dreaming of winning an Olympic medal since he was ten. “It was what I was thinking about in the start pool, I just wanted to do that kid proud that dreamt of this moment,” he said. “I went out there and gave it my all — and here we are.”

Max Whitlock, 31, became the first male gymnast to represent Britain at four Olympic Games and already had six medals, three of them gold. However, yesterday he had to settle for fourth place in the artistic team all-around final.

“I’m really gutted,” he said. “Fourth is always difficult, we’ve come fourth quite a few times at the Olympic Games.”

Olympics, Sport, pages 53-60

Rugby player accused of racist WhatsApp message

David Brown

A Team GB rugby player is being investigated over an alleged racist comment in a post alongside a photograph showing her wearing a black facemask.

Amy Wilson-Hardy, 32, posted a picture of herself with the facemask on a WhatsApp group. Another member of the group replied “genuine chocolate face”, which led to the response “thought I’d have a better chance with the blacks”, the Daily Mail reported.

The British Olympic Association said it was investigating the post after the conversation was leaked on Instagram with the caption: “A little black face racism.”

The comment could have been a reference to the All Blacks, the New Zealand national side.



Amy Wilson-Hardy played in Great Britain’s sevens win over Australia yesterday

A spokesman said: “The British Olympic Association has been made aware of an image on a social media platform and is investigating the matter.”

Wilson-Hardy started in the 26-17 victory over South Africa in the rugby sevens yesterday afternoon.

The allegation was reported shortly before the start of the quarter-final against the United States, which Great Britain lost 17-7.

Born in Poole, Dorset, Wilson-Hardy

Magic Monday for Team GB



Tom Pidcock, left with his girlfriend Beth, won the mountain bike cross-country title. Above, Noah Williams and Tom Daley, inspired by his son Robbie, right, claimed silver in the 10m synchronised platform diving but the gymnast Max Whitlock, below, could not add to his three gold medals from previous Games



won a bronze medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. She has ten England caps and plays for Trailfinders Women in Premiership Women's Rugby. In 2016 she was part of the first Great Britain rugby sevens squad at the Rio Games, where the team finished fourth.

She missed out on selection for Tokyo because of a stress fracture and a lack of training time after the pandemic, but helped Great Britain win gold at the European Games in Poland last year.

Wilson-Hardy told The Sun before the start of the Paris Games: "There's a picture I use as motivation, of me crying on the floor. That was from Rio, where Canada were celebrating around us — and that's been the fuel ever since for me."

"Everything we do is all about getting that gold medal. It's an amazing privilege to go to the Games regardless of where you come. But we feel that hunger and that desire to just go that step further and come back with something around your neck."

'Sponsor-free' venues still come with baggage

Adam Sage Paris

Bernard Arnault, the French luxury goods billionaire, has been accused of "imposing" his Louis Vuitton brand on Olympic venues that are officially meant to be sponsorship-free zones.

Arnault, 75, one of the world's richest people, persuaded Paris 2024 to use Louis Vuitton trays to present medals to winning athletes. The move is fueling claims that Arnault, who is close to President Macron, is turning the Games into an advertisement for his group Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH), and its 75 brands.

The firm paid €150 million to become a premium sponsor of Paris 2024 and is enjoying high visibility. Its Berluti brand created the clothes for the French team while the jewellery and watch brand Chaumet designed the medals. Dior produced the dresses worn by stars such as Lady Gaga and

Céline Dion in the opening ceremony.

Louis Vuitton created trunks to carry the Olympic flame and the medals before they are placed on trays for the presentation. The first trunk featured prominently in the ceremony, as did Louis Vuitton's headquarters.

During the event, VIPs were given Moët & Chandon champagne — also an LVMH brand. In the Olympic torch relay, bearers went through the Cheval Blanc vineyard in Bordeaux, which belongs to Arnault.

In papers handed to the media before the opening ceremony, LVMH and its brands were mentioned 50 times, outdoing France's national motto: liberty was mentioned 26 times, equality 24 times and fraternity 14 times.

Jean-Richard Sulzer, an economist, said the ceremony had been a "big advertisement for Louis Vuitton".

LVMH is also present at Olympic venues even though these are supposed to

Equestrians riding high after victory over French rivals

David Brown Versailles

Laura Collett led the eventing team to Britain's first gold medal at the Paris Olympics with a dramatic final show-jumping round to secure victory over France.

Thousands of crystals embedded in her helmet sparkled during a dazzling ride in which she overcame personal tragedy and a controversy that could have cost the team victory.

The Princess Royal, recovering from a head injury she suffered during a horse-related accident, made her first public appearance at the Games to present the gold medals to the British team. Princess Anne, 73, was in the eventing team at the 1976 Montreal Games and is now president of the British Olympic Association.

Collett's performance overtook the French team's points total in the final ride of the three-day team competition. It followed strong performances by her team-mates Ros Canter, 38, and Tom McEwan, 33, in the spectacular grounds of the Château de Versailles.

Collett, 34, from Cheltenham, described her mount, London 52, as "the horse of a lifetime". Less than two hours after the team gold, the pair also won bronze in the individual event.

Collett lost the sight in an eye, suffered multiple fractures and was in a coma for ten days after falling from a horse in 2013. "I just want every child out there to realise that you can never dream too big," she said after defending the team gold medal won at Tokyo. "I definitely never really dreamt, realistically dreamt, I could go to an Olympic Games, let alone go to two and come back with two team gold medals."

Asked how the victory compared with her first gold during the Covid lockdown, she replied: "It doesn't come close, even just riding into the arena, oh my god, you can feel the noise, it was unreal."

"Lucky it didn't distract [London 52] at all, he's a true professional and he rose to the occasion, I think he knew



Ros Canter, Laura Collett and Tom McEwan on the podium after Collett secured gold with the final round

what was at stake and I wouldn't have wanted to have sat on anything else."

The medal ended a torrid week for British equestrianism after the withdrawal of Charlotte Dujardin, 39, from the dressage competition after a video showed her whipping a horse 24 times in a minute.

Collett described the eventing team's win as a "huge moment" for equestrian sport. "Seeing our horses go in there, look a million dollars and perform like they have all week, hopefully that shows what goes into this," she said. "There's a huge team behind us that makes it possible and horses don't go like that if they're not happy."

Victory followed controversy after Canter received 15 jumping penalties in the cross-country element, which drastically reduced the team's lead over France. Canter's appeal was rejected.

Team GB's riders were cheered to victory by thousands of British supporters among the 16,500 spectators.

Sophie Hughes, from Devizes, Wiltshire, brought her daughter, Jossie, 15, to watch. "This has been the most emotional and amazing day of sport I have ever witnessed in person," Hughes, 55, a solicitor, said. Jossie who rides for Dauntsey's School and Tedworth Pony Club, said: "It would be a dream to ride at the Olympics in four years' time."



Trunks created by Louis Vuitton carry Olympic medals to presentations

be "clean" environments in which sponsors are absent. The volunteers at the medal ceremonies wear clothes designed by the group while the medals come on Louis Vuitton trays. These have no logo but feature the brand's recognisable damier pattern.

Le Monde said LVMH had "imposed

Louis Vuitton in Olympic venues [that are] sanctuaries from which brands are forbidden under International Olympic Committee rules".

Speaking to French media before the Games, Arnault's son, Antoine, who is LVMH's image and environment director, said: "We found this means, [which is] very discreet but at the same time paradoxically very visible, to be present. It is a trick, or a subliminal way, of being present."

La Croix, the French Catholic daily, said Arnault could also be declared "the great winner of the Olympics".

Paris 2024 denied that it was the first time that a sponsor had been visible in Olympic venues, saying that Omega, for instance, was present "according to strict rules".

It said the medal trays respected the rules because the damier was "a design element (not a brand) characteristic of Louis Vuitton".



Pop-up pop Lady Gaga, in Paris after singing at the Olympics opening ceremony, treated fans outside her hotel to an unreleased song from an iPad atop her limousine

Sham wedding lawyer barred from practice

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A solicitor who was jailed for organising “sham marriages” in India to duck UK immigration rules has been thrown out of the legal profession.

Mathew Chellam, 53, was said to have been paid “handsomely” for his “corrupt services” in facilitating applications for residency for people who did not have the legal right to stay. Chellam, who qualified as a lawyer in India before joining the roll of solicitors in England and Wales, was found to have “spun a veritable web of lies and deceptions” in submissions to the Home Office on behalf of his clients.

He was convicted in 2016 of offences including assisting unlawful immigration and seeking leave to remain in the UK by deception and sentenced at Snaresbrook crown court, northeast London, to eight years in jail.

He has now been struck off after a tribunal ruled that his actions caused “tremendous harm to the reputation of the legal profession”. The case was held in absentia as Chellam has returned to India where his address is unknown.

The hearing at the Solicitors’ Disciplinary Tribunal was told that Chellam was admitted to the roll in England in 2013 and made several fraudulent applications to the Home Office to try to facilitate unlawful immigration.

The tribunal found that, for a year, Chellam had provided immigration advice and services without being registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. The tribunal said that Chellam “knew or ought to have known that his conduct was in material breach of the obligations to protect the public and the reputation of the legal profession”. As well as striking him off, the tribunal ordered him to pay £4,058 in legal costs.

Growing concern over the spread of fake sign language on TikTok

Georgia Lambert

Fake imitations of British Sign Language, the official language used by deaf people in the UK, are trending on TikTok, experts have warned.

With over half a billion views across the hashtag #deaftok, TikTok hosts an inclusive community of young, deaf people and has become the go-to platform for 74 per cent of Gen Z viewers wanting to learn new things.

However, Signature, a national charity and the UK’s awarding body for BSL, says that authentic content is crowded out by content creators teaching and sharing inaccurate sign language.

TikTok, which relies entirely on video content, is the main channel for disseminating fake signs, with 89 per cent of viewers having spotted fake signs on the platform.

The charity explained that the fake signs are often legitimate BSL-recognised signs mistakenly shared without

context or they are entirely made up. Consequentially, this misinformation culturally appropriates and misrepresents the deaf community.

Matthew Ford, a spokesman for Signature, said: “A sign can have a completely different meaning depending on your facial expressions. You have regional variations — different parts of the country use different signs. So, if you use signs from different places interchangeably, it won’t make sense. Our chair [Dr John Walker] sees it all the time, where people online are sharing what is essentially gobbledygook”.

Fake sign language has been shared online for years. Most notably during the livestream of Nelson Mandela’s memorial service in 2013, when an interpreter gestured using a limited number of signs, a lack of facial expressions while leaving long gaps between translations. Hundreds of people took to social media to express their anger while Paul Breckell, chief executive of

UK charity Action on Hearing Loss, said that he was “shocked” by the quality of sign language interpretation.

A decade later in 2022, singer Olly Murs shared a clip of his song *Die of a Broken Heart*, claiming he used sign language taught to him by a hearing influencer called Isabella Signs. The video was retracted after viewers pointed out that the signs were not BSL.

To address the imbalance between authentic BSL and fake signs, the charity launched a campaign called Re/Sign, partnering with qualified teachers and deaf content creators to share proper use of signs choreographed with music. Vanessa Robinson, creative director at Recipe advertising agency, said: “You can’t spot fake sign language unless you are fluent in sign language. When we discovered people were accidentally teaching and learning incorrect sign language, it was a shock”.

Lindsay Foster, executive director at Signature, added: “TikTok as a platform

has huge potential to reach a younger audience and make them feel part of a community; something which can be difficult to find for deaf young people in particular. Using dance as a conduit for our campaign objective will hopefully help to spread awareness of fake sign in a way that is relatable and impactful”.

According to Ford, Signature is in its second consultation with the government to introduce a BSL GCSE in secondary schools in England starting in September 2025. The first consultation took place under Rishi Sunak’s government and in 2015, Signature led a pilot of the proposed curriculum in six state and private schools across the UK.

In June 2023, Gillian Keegan, the former education secretary, said: “This historic GCSE will give students a vital life skill valued by employers. This new qualification will break down barriers, advance equality of opportunity, and celebrate the history and rich culture of British Sign Language.”

Lettuce is a little gem for nettle stings

Tom Whipple Science Editor

In the Middle Ages, Britons knew what to do with a nettle sting: rub it with a dock leaf. “Nettle in, docke out,” writes Chaucer in *Troilus and Criseyde*. Seven hundred years later, children still sang, “Dock dock dock, you be stout, take the sting of a nettle out!”

But have we been fooling ourselves? The first rigorous study into dock leaves as a nettle treatment has found that they do indeed reduce nettle pain but are no better at it than a lettuce leaf.

Dr Rajendra Raman, from Victoria Hospital, Fife, and colleagues realised that, despite the dock’s longevity as a remedy, no one had thought to test it and, in the grand tradition of self-experimentation, took turns at stinging each other on each arm, applying dock to one, lettuce to the other.

The study, reported in the *Emergency Medicine Journal*, was assessed on a count of hives and how much pain the subjects felt, and there was no clear difference in treatments.

Raman said he thought the act of rubbing the affected area helped, particularly if the leaf was crushed and released soothing juice, but “I think more likely it’s just got a strong placebo effect”. He urged colleagues to replicate the work using bigger sample sizes.

Special needs may have been over-diagnosed in Wales

James Beal Social Affairs Editor

Nearly half of people born in Wales in 2002-03 were classed as having special educational needs, research has found.

A report for the Nuffield Foundation found that 48 per cent of the group were identified as having SEN at some point before they turned 17. Academics identified several factors that made some of those born in Wales between 2002 and 2008 more likely to receive such a diagnosis. These included being a boy, born

in summer and in a deprived area. The findings suggest some over-identification of SEN among these groups.

A new system for identifying educational needs was introduced in Wales in 2020, and the number of children identified as having SEN has fallen significantly. It was 20 per cent lower in the year after the new system began.

Children are identified as having SEN if they have much greater difficulty learning than most of their peers, or a disability that limits their use of facilities.

The study analysed data from more than 200,000 children in Wales born between 2002 and 2008. It found that boys were 5.5 times more likely to be identified with SEN than girls.

Researchers suggested “there may be gender bias at play”, meaning that boys’ behaviour gets more attention and girls may be better at masking SEN. Poverty also played “a large role”, with those born in the most deprived areas 4.6 times more likely to be identified as having SEN. Learners born in the sum-

mer, thus younger in their year group, were three times more likely to be identified with SEN than those born in the autumn.

Cathryn Knight, from Bristol University, and Emily Lowthian, from Swansea University, wrote on the Conversation website: “It suggests a potential issue of over or under-identification of certain children ... It is crucial to understand a child’s environment and their individual situation to effectively support their learning needs.”

Wolverine helps Marvel claw back box-office dominance

Keiran Southern Los Angeles

Marvel's *Deadpool & Wolverine* shattered box office records with a \$438 million opening weekend worldwide, handing the superhero studio a much-needed boost amid fears about its future.

The film starring Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman is an irreverent take on the genre and was R-rated in the US, meaning it is not suitable for viewers under 17. That did not seem to put off audiences, however, and it achieved the best North American opening ever for an R-rated movie, at \$211 million. Across all ratings, it is the sixth-largest domestic debut ever.

The film easily eclipsed the \$125 million domestic opening of *Deadpool 2*, which was released in 2018 and beat the previous R-rated record of \$132 million held by the first *Deadpool* film.

The earnings made the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) the first franchise to make \$30 billion at the global box office after an unprecedented run of blockbusters since 2008's *Iron Man*. That film starred Robert Downey Jr, a mainstay of the MCU, whose return to

Marvel movies was announced at the Comic Con festival in San Diego last weekend.

"This is a spectacular opening," David A Gross, who runs the film consultancy firm Franchise Entertainment Research, said of *Deadpool & Wolverine*. "The leap above *Deadpool 2*'s start is outstanding." He noted that the *Deadpool* franchise had a bright future because "these characters' popularity is growing, not slowing. The numbers are fantastic."

The film had a mixed reception from critics. Its commercial success, however, could not have come at a better time for Marvel, which had been in a run of indifferent form. Recent productions, including *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania* and *The Marvels*, both released last year, failed to break even and fell flat with critics.

Experts suggested Marvel had spread itself too thinly. To feed the Disney+ streaming service the studio had to expand its output to include spin-offs and television series but the quality was uneven and fans struggled to follow the quickly multiplying storylines.

Bob Iger, the chief executive of Dis-

ney, Marvel's parent company, conceded in May that there was a risk of killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

"We're slowly going to decrease volume and go to probably about two TV series a year instead of what had become four and reduce our film output from maybe four a year to a maximum of three," he told investors.

For the first time since 2012 Marvel will release only one film this year, owing partly to the disruption of the pandemic and last year's Hollywood strikes.

Gross said the pandemic had not slowed the biggest superhero titles. *Spider-Man: No Way Home* made

\$1.9 billion after its release in December 2021, *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness* made \$956 million in May 2022 and *Black Panther 2* made \$859 million the following November.

Deadpool & Wolverine has continued that success, but films featuring lesser-known char-

acters such as *The Flash*, *Morbius*, *Blue Beetle* and *Madame Web* have underwhelmed.

"The less established and newer films have struggled, and as a result there are fewer superhero movies,"

Gross said. "In 2018 and 2019 we had seven superhero pictures per year.

"Now we're going to have five — that's a significant loss."



The new film took \$211 million in the US

TMS

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Jenrick's own wall of sound

After losing weight and getting a Caesar haircut, Robert Jenrick has launched his bid to be Tory leader. The former housing secretary will hope to do better than when he stood for president of his college's student union at Cambridge and lost despite being unopposed. Jenrick was the only candidate for the role in the St John's junior common room in 2002-03 until a group ran a campaign for RON (re-open nominations), backed by them singing *Da Doo Ron Ron* whenever Jenrick entered the bar. To their glee, RON got more votes, buying time for a new candidate to be found, who beat Jenrick in the rerun. A year earlier he had been compared by *Varsity*, the student paper, to Michael Heseltine for saying that his goal was to be a millionaire on his way to Westminster before he turned 30. "Appears to be a gentleman," the paper said, "but you can't help feeling there's something hidden behind it all."

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Labour may be planning to ban MPs from having second jobs but one of their new recruits is already sniffing around for business as a consultant ear, nose and throat surgeon. "I think there will be plenty of work for me," Peter Prinsley, the MP for Bury St Edmunds & Stowmarket, tells the Jewish Chronicle. "It's very noisy. A lot can't hear what's going on and have hoarse voices from shouting."

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HUSBAND WRANGLER
The Oscar-nominated Irish actress Saoirse Ronan plays a farmer's daughter in her latest film, *The Outrun*, for which she had to learn how to deliver lambs. "It's like tackling a man," she says of holding down a pregnant ewe. "You've got to grab

them, put your knee on their back, get them on the ground — and just get your hand up there." Ronan, below, got married at the weekend. I suspect her husband is now walking with a limp.

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WHINING STARMER
The comedian Matt Forde is a fine impressionist, voicing various politicians for *Spitting Image*, but the prime minister is proving a problem. "Keir Starmer doesn't think it's very good," Forde told *The Ponsonby and Massie Podcast*, saying that Starmer had taken to doing an impression of Forde's impression back at him when they met. The key to doing Starmer, he says, is to speak in a very forced way as if one nostril is blocked. No wonder the PM is sniffy about it.

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*When an actor plays a living person, there is always a risk of meeting and being told that they hated the portrayal. Jeff Goldblum tells *Empire* that he was surprised when James Watson, discoverer of DNA, whom he played in *Life Story* in 1987, told him that he has always wished that the part had been given to John McEnroe instead. "There's a scene where I play tennis," Watson explained. "And McEnroe could have done it better."*

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SHE'S ONE UNFUSSY LADY
Starmer is not the only member of his family to get to No 10 this month. His wife, Victoria, occupies that place in *Tatler*'s list of the 25 "most elegantly effortless style kings and queens". (My own M&S-based scruffy chic, which is certainly effortless, must have just missed out.) Lady Starmer is described as "unfussy" and "always impeccable", which some might see as contradictions. The list is topped by Princess Beatrice, who has been rehabilitated in the fashion stakes 13 years after showing up to Prince William's wedding with a giant pretzel on her head.

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PATRICK KIDD

The inside track on Paris 2024

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Police appeal after dogwalker murder

Detectives investigating the murder of a woman in Suffolk have appealed to rail passengers who may have witnessed the attack to come forward (Shayma Bakht writes).

Anita Rose, 57, had been walking her dog in the village of Brantham on Wednesday. She was found unconscious by a cyclist at about 6.25am.

The mother of six was taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, but died on Sunday from serious head injuries.

A 45-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder on Saturday and was re-arrested on suspicion of murder after she died. A 37-year-old woman from the Ipswich area was arrested on suspicion of handling

stolen goods in connection with the incident, Suffolk police said. The pair have been released on bail until October 25, pending further inquiries.

Rose's springer spaniel, Bruce, was said to have been unharmed.

Detective Superintendent Mike Brown said that officers had recovered Rose's iPhone but were looking for the pink zip-up jacket she was wearing before the incident.

He said: "We are keen to speak to anyone who saw anything on Wednesday, or anyone travelling on trains towards Ipswich or Manningtree that morning who saw anything that they think might be useful to the police investigation. We are also keen to speak to anyone living in the area



SUFFOLK POLICE/PA

Suffolk detectives have found Anita Rose's phone but they are still searching for her pink jacket

that has CCTV or doorbell cameras." Local people were urged to remain vigilant as police continued to investigate the murder of Rose, who was believed to have worked in a garage. Teams of officers were seen searching a field of wildflowers near where she was found, and along a section of the Ipswich to London railway line.

A tribute from Rose's children said: "Our mum was well known and loved in the community. She was brutally taken from us devastatingly too early ... She wasn't just a mum of six, she was also a grandma to 13, a long-term partner, a mother-in-law and a special friend to so many. Someone somewhere must know something."



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Fresh concerns raised over Jeremy Bamber conviction

Mario Ledwith

Jeremy Bamber, who was jailed for murdering five members of his adoptive family, has said that he is "hugely encouraged" that his conviction will be overturned after an investigation highlighted new allegations of police malpractice and incompetence.

The 63-year-old is serving a whole life term for shooting dead his adoptive parents Nevill and June Bamber, his sister Sheila Caffell and her six-year-old twin sons at White House Farm in Essex in 1985.

New concerns have been raised about the safety of the conviction in a 16,000-word investigation published by the New Yorker magazine.

The US publication unearthed documents and tracked down police officers involved in the initial investigation who pointed to failures in the investigation. They included that an error-prone detective inspector mis-handled a bloodied Bible at the crime scene before restaging it for investigative photographs, and grossly mis-handled a rifle silencer central to the case. The investigation further high-

lighted how a 999 call appeared to have been made from inside the farmhouse while Bamber was waiting outside with police.

Bamber has always insisted that he did not carry out the attacks and has made multiple complaints against the police, as well as unsuccessful attempts to have his case reinvestigated. He maintains that the tragedy was



Jeremy Bamber has always insisted he did not carry out the 1985 murders

a murder-suicide by Caffell, a former model who had been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and had a history of mental health problems.

This was the theory accepted by Essex police before Bamber's girlfriend, Julie Mugford, approached the force and said he had been planning the killings for more than a year.

Bamber, aided by a team of supporters, has made three applications

to the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) to review his case. The most recent application in 2021 is still under review.

After the publication of the article, Bamber said that he was "hugely encouraged" and that it would "markedly increase the pressure" on the miscarriages of justice watchdog. He told the publication: "I've been awake in jail a billion seconds. I didn't murder my family. I promise you."

Philip Walker, a spokesman for the Jeremy Bamber Innocence Campaign, spoke to Bamber about the investigation yesterday. "He is looking forward to taking the next steps in the legal process involved in returning to the Court of Appeal very soon," Walker told The Times.

A CCRC spokesman said: "The approach taken to reviewing the thousands of pages submitted was agreed with the applicant's representatives and we have been prioritising the most complex issues first — these naturally take the longest time to review. It would be inappropriate to comment any further while this review is under way."

Airport stamping row lawyer pulls out

Constance Kampfner
Northern Correspondent

A controversial lawyer has parted ways with the family at the centre of the Manchester airport assault row after footage emerged showing the lead-up to the incident.

Akhmed Yakoob had been representing Fahir Amaaz, 19, and his brother Amaad, 25, after a clip of their arrest at the airport last Tuesday went viral.

A Greater Manchester police constable filmed kicking and stamping on one of the men's heads as he lay on the ground after being Tasered has

been advised he is under criminal investigation for assault over the altercation, the Independent Office for Police Conduct said on Friday.

However, Yakoob, a Birmingham solicitor with a large social media presence, said that he was "stepping aside" and had "recommended the family to a lawyer" after new CCTV footage showed three officers being violently attacked moments before, leaving one with a broken nose.

In a video released late on Sunday night, Yakoob blamed his decision to distance himself from the family on the media, accusing it of "sabotage".

"The media have tried to sabotage

me," he said. "They've made it about me, not police misconduct. So, after consulting with the family, I have decided for now to step aside."

He added: "I'd like to say that I am not for violence, whether it's from police officers or whether it's from civilians. Always remember that."

The Lamborghini-driving criminal defence lawyer has more than 200,000 followers on TikTok, where he promotes his services with the catchphrase: "There is a defence for every offence." In May he came third in the race to be the West Midlands mayor, winning nearly 70,000 votes on a pro-Gaza ticket.

**Tories won't lure the young
by telling them off**

Hugo Rifkind
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Comment

A good start but where is the plan for growth?

Labour has kept to an efficient script in its first weeks in power — the harder job is shaping a coherent economic policy



William Hague

David Lammy is the first foreign secretary since my own appointment to that office in 2010 to have had time to prepare since, like me, he spent years shadowing the job. The preparation shows: after a well-planned speech to staff about his priorities he was straight off to Germany, Poland and Sweden. Ministers made sure-footed debuts at the Nato and European Political Community summits and got off to a good start with the White House and Donald Trump at the same time. It is an obvious strength of the incoming government that leading figures were given the jobs they were expecting and that they planned their first weeks in advance, no doubt under the watchful eye of Sue Gray.

Little more than three weeks into the new administration there are abundant signs of a script being carefully followed. Much of it is an attempt to make government work differently. The appointment of some ministers who are non-political experts — Patrick Vallance for science and James Timpson for prisons — is commendable in a Whitehall system that lacks expertise. The creation of “mission boards” to co-ordinate departments is at least an attempt to break departments out of their silos. A powerful ministerial “quad”, an inner cabinet of Keir Starmer, Angela Rayner, Rachel Reeves and Pat McFadden, is intended to keep a grip at the top.

It is easy, however, to see how these generally laudable ideas might

fall apart once the opening script runs out. Experts tend to get fed up quickly if their expertise is suppressed by political pressures — Vallance was rapidly slapped down for making the very valid point that visas for top scientists and innovators to come to Britain will need to be cheaper if we are to compete.

Mission boards will become talking shops unless they are either driven from the top, with intense prime ministerial chairmanship, or given their own power, with budgets and staffing that make them stronger than the rival departments jostling around their table. The “quad” will achieve little if its only purpose is for Rayner to be controlled by the other three, and nothing at all if they fail in that limited, though necessary, objective.

Looming over it all is the duopoly of Starmer's most formidable advisers: Gray as the chief of staff sitting outside his study door, and Morgan McSweeney, the master

Starmer's team will need more emergency repairs than he expects

strategist a few yards further away. These two are the top of a strong and experienced team, but future conflicts are built into any team with two leaders. The difference between responsibility for strategy on the one hand and tactics on the other seems obvious when an army is marching confidently in the morning sun but soon becomes impossible to distinguish in the subsequent fog of war.

Having carefully engineered his machinery of government, Starmer will find that it needs more lubrication and more emergency repairs than he expects.

Nevertheless, he can be commended for trying to set it up in a way that will permit co-ordination, grip and expert advice if it is run well.

A far bigger problem is what it is that the ministers are going to co-ordinate and grip. What is the policy to promote economic growth, without which all the gleaming new machinery of government turns into smouldering wreckage at a future election?

This is where the advance planning and careful scripting runs into its first big problem. It is one thing to execute a plan for what you expected — running the government. It's less credible to implement a scripted plan for being surprised. That Rachel Reeves would stand up at the end of July, as she is doing as I write, and look shocked by what she has discovered, is just as much a part of planning in advance as everything mentioned above.

Since ministers will need to justify tax rises that they didn't mention in the election, and explain why growth doesn't take off with ease, they need to blame it on their predecessors while they have the chance. Looking shocked is part of the script, like turning up at a surprise birthday party that you knew about in advance.

Less credible still is to award pay rises in the public sector well above inflation, including 22 per cent for junior doctors, and then ask for sympathy for the state of government finances. This is akin to writing a large cheque and then feigning surprise when your bank account becomes overdrawn. The overall effect is less than convincing. Ministers cannot genuinely be shocked by the intense year-year pressures on public spending unless they've never spoken to anyone in the governments of France,



JORDAN PETTIT/PA

Ed Miliband's renewable energy plan will put prices up in the short term

Germany or Italy — in all of which the escalating costs of health, welfare, defence and interest payments strain the budgets every week of countries not growing quickly enough to afford them.

The thrust of the Reeves statement, generous on pay but cutting back on some infrastructure projects, does not provide immediate confidence that the new government will have a coherent approach to economic growth. But the real test of that will come with the budget in October, since this week's announcements are a planned bit of British politics rather than any redefining of our economics. That is when the new chancellor must try to answer the question of how we will keep up with the scale and speed of what is happening around the world.

This month I was in the UAE, and

there is no doubt about that country's strategy for growth. The investment in AI and semiconductors from public and private sources can't be far short of \$100 billion. Growth is fuelled by real estate construction, cheap energy from many sources and huge efforts to attract talent from all over the world. Britain is a very different country, but this is an example of the fast-changing world in which we have to compete.

Positively, ministers have taken sensible steps on technology

There are mixed signs from Labour's first weeks. Housebuilding is clearly a huge priority for ministers, although they will find lengthy planning procedures and skills shortages limit what they can achieve. Renewable energy is a much-vaunted policy, but the signs are growing that Ed Miliband's approach will make energy more expensive in the short term, limiting the growth of the rest of the economy while sucking in more Chinese imports in the dash to decarbonise the grid.

More positively, ministers have taken some sensible steps on technology, expanding the role of the science and innovation department, resolving to make full use of health data and seeking expert advice within weeks on opportunities provided by AI. Reeves will need to go very big on these opportunities, while not raising taxes that close the door on people with talent and ideas.

Labour's careful political plan has seen them through their first month. They will need a more coherent economic plan to survive the coming years.

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Comment

Just Stop Oil's idea of justice is a danger to all

Climate protesters' zealous certainty about their cause leads them think they are above the law

Melanie Phillips



@MELANIELATEST

The co-founder of the Just Stop Oil movement, Roger Hallam, was jailed this month for five years. Judge Christopher Hehir gave four fellow activists four-year jail sentences after they were also found guilty of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance. During four days in November 2022, the group disrupted the M25 when more than 45 protesters climbed gantries, forcing the police to stop traffic.

The judge said he was handing out exemplary sentences because of the seriousness of these offences and the risk that they would further escalate.

In an interview with The Times, Hallam gloated that the sentences would galvanise further protests. Whether that's true or not, his attack on the judge is instructive. Hallam believes he should be above the law because he believes that his cause is above the law.

According to him, the world is about to be ended by climate change, which spells "billions of deaths and ecological collapse". That certainty apparently bestows on Hallam and his ilk an entitlement to behave with no restrictions whatsoever.

This is as chilling as it is preposterous. Whatever may happen in the future, no one has the right to inflict harm on others.

The court heard that the delays caused by the M25 action caused people to miss funerals, flights and exams. A patient suffering from an aggressive cancer missed his appointment. A special-needs child who was late for school missed taking vital medication. The action was intended to produce gridlock throughout southern England, which the judge said would have threatened food supplies and the maintenance of law and order.

That's why the judge said the evidence for catastrophic climate change was irrelevant.

In any event, that evidence is contested. Even scientists who believe that action needs to be taken

Roger Hallam shares a totalitarian perspective with historic tyrannies

to mitigate the effects of man-made climate change have nevertheless counselled against wild exaggerations such as the certainty of planetary apocalypse.

For Hallam, however, the argument is as unchallengeable as it is cataclysmic. There is therefore literally nothing that should be ruled out to prevent climate change from happening, because nothing else can compete in importance.

After all, according to this thinking, what's the significance of a cancer patient's suffering, food supplies or a special-needs child's uncontrollable behaviour compared to the end of the world and human extinction?

This is a totalitarian perspective that Hallam shares with the great tyrannies of history. For them, the belief that the end justifies the means always derives from the absolutist conviction that there is no alternative to dogmatic certainty about the redemption or perfection of the world.

Today, this drives Islamic extremism; in the past, it helped justify Stalin's gulags, the French revolutionary terror and the mass murder of heretics by medieval Christians who believed in the imminent end of days and the redemption of humanity. As Hehir observed of the five defendants: "Each of you some time ago has crossed the line from concerned campaigner to fanatic." According to Hallam, that proved that the judge himself was a fanatic and "an extreme but predictable example of that psychotic mindset". Which rather proved the judge's point.

In an open letter from prison, Hallam wrote: "We should live under the rule of law, and so should the government." But the rule of law, it appears, is only what meets his approval. For he declared: "The basis of the law is the welfare of the people. If a regime enables the destruction of the lives and livelihoods of the people, then the government is a tyranny, and the people have the right to rebel."

And he really does believe that the government is planning "the death of its citizens" through its climate change policies. You might have thought that such patently unhinged fanaticism would be viewed as such by all except the most loopy supporters of this cause. Think again.

More than 1,000 celebrities, lawyers and academics, including the Coldplay singer Chris Martin, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and the artist Dame Tracey Emin signed a letter in which the five jailed activists were said to be "fulfilling a necessary service by alerting the nation to the grave risk we all face". But they weren't alerting the nation; they were causing direct and immediate harm to others.

These dignitaries described the sentences passed on the "whole truth five" as "one of the greatest injustices in a British court in modern history". Really? Some of us might have other candidates for that accolade, such as the sentences passed on the hundreds of innocent postmasters whose lives were destroyed through grotesquely wrongful convictions.

This letter is just the latest example of an alarming cultural slide. We saw it over the Occupy movement when people in public life saying "Well, they do have a point about the iniquities of capitalism" helped sanitise Occupy's violent and unlawful activities.

We saw it when police officers took the knee in support of Black Lives Matter despite its aggressive anti-police agenda, and when Sir Keir Starmer and Angela Rayner even tweeted a picture of themselves doing so.

And now we can see that, just like Roger Hallam, 1,000 of the great and the good believe that an opinion they share should trump judicial decisions. Such people, it seems, believe less in convictions under the rule of law than in disorder under the rule of convictions.



Students can play a role in boosting our reserve forces

David Davis

British defence policy is in a bind. We are threatened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the deteriorating situation in the Middle East and China's belligerent behaviour towards Taiwan. Against this we have a military force that isn't capable of stopping a Russian armoured juggernaut rolling over the plains of central Europe. But the nearly two decades-long squeeze on public finances initiated by the 2008 financial crash and exacerbated by the Covid pandemic mean that there is precious little money to expand our defences.

Resolving this will be tough, but some answers stand out. The real issue is as much about manpower as it is money. In the past few decades, our forces have been cut to their smallest size in 300 years. So massively expanding the size of our reserve forces is the only viable step forward.

A typical reserve soldier only costs about 20 per cent of that of a regular soldier. Our reserves are currently tiny. Throughout Europe, most of our allies either have large reserves or they are rapidly increasing them.

America's citizen soldiers are critical to their national effort

Israel's rapid response to the atrocities of October 7 was possible due to a reserve force of 465,000. Ukraine's reserves are similarly measured in many hundreds of thousands. America's citizen soldiers are also critical to the national effort. Battlefield experience shows that these are first-rate soldiers.

Our reserve force currently numbers less than 35,000. In my view, this should be nearer 200,000. But we have to recruit them.

It is time we made joining our reserve forces much more attractive. One place to start is at our universities, with a simple offer to all students. Serve for three years in the reserves, plus one year after graduation, and we will pay off all your tuition fees. Along with paid training during vacations, graduates should be able to start their careers debt-free.

Beyond this, the government should incentivise civilians to volunteer as reservists by making the training attractive, flexible and financially worthwhile. Using existing drill halls and permanent staff we could accommodate three times the current strength at very little marginal cost.

The current recruitment process is desperately bureaucratic. Today it takes almost a year longer to join up than it took 25 years ago. That should go. The need for these changes has gone from desirable to essential for our survival. We have to get on with it.

David Davis is the MP for Goole & Pocklington

Hilary Rose Notebook

Cold turkey crunch time as I kick the crisps habit

At a marvellous spa-clinic place earlier this year, I arrived thinking I was in reasonable nick. But the personal trainer told me I had to do weights, the therapist thought I was mad, the nutritionist told me I had to eat less bread and everyone pointed out that my crisp habit is unsustainable unless I want to get fat, which I don't. This is devastating. The bread I can manage: salads for lunch instead of sandwiches, although what the cookery writers don't tell you is that turning lentils into lunch is a lot more fuff than putting tuna mayo in a roll.

But what chocolate is to you, crisps are to me. A packet with lunch, a few before dinner. No more. I've gone cold turkey on crisps, the same way I went cold turkey decades ago with cigarettes: I stopped buying them. I don't go down the savoury snack aisle at the supermarket, I steer clear of the vending machine at work and

my clothes are a bit big on me. Kate Moss once said that nothing tastes as good as thin feels. I bet she's never had a Hula Hoop.

Breakfast in America

I accept that I can't get a decent cup of tea in America. Partly, it's because the teabags are too weak, partly it's because they use warm, not boiling, water. But bless them, their blithe ignorance of the finest caffeinated hot drink in the world can still surprise me. Visiting some American friends who moved from London to Chicago I arrived prepared, with my own teabags, and a determination to boil the water myself, in a pan. The only thing odder than Americans not having toasters is Americans not having kettles, but that's a whole other discussion.

"There was no need for you to bring teabags," my friend protested, as she added tepid water from the coffee machine to a mug. "We still had a few of your favourite English Breakfast left in the open packet when we moved here, gosh,

more than a year ago now! We brought them with us."

Reverse gear

For years, I've railed against the women in my patch of west London who drive big cars they can't park. For reasons I won't bore you with, I've had to swap my Polo for a VW T-Cross.

"Interesting choice," said my friend Rupert. "The ideal car for a mother of three living in rural Berkshire."

Having spent my entire life being a bad driver who can park like an angel, I'm now a bad driver who can't park at all. I've only ever driven compact, low-slung cars, so the dimensions and height of this one throw me. I have no idea how close or far I am from the cars in front and behind.

Having hated the nanny-state parking beeps on my old car, which I could park blindfold on a dime, I now miss them. I cringe

to admit it but I have to get out and check how much space there is. I've become one of those women I railed against. The shame.

Load of flannel(s)

There's much hand-wringing over the number of village pubs closing, but what about village shops? Unless there's a local shop, half the new houses Labour is planning to build will be useless without a car. I know this because of Deepa, who runs the village shop in Adderbury, Oxfordshire. Her shop is a place of wonder, housing the biggest collection of the most random objects in a space roughly the size of two Ford Fiestas: bin bags, ginger wine, drain clearer, fresh parsley, dried oregano, every condiment in the world.

I was confident I'd catch her out, though, when I asked for a flannel because flannels seem to be endangered. People prefer sponges, which is crackers because you can't put a sponge on a hot wash. However, you underestimate a well-run village shop at your peril. Deepa thought about it for a minute, rummaged around the back of the hardware section and emerged triumphantly with three. "What colour?" she asked, waving them at me. "Green, white or blue?"

Giles Coren is away





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Tories won't lure the young by telling them off

If Kemi Badenoch wants to win over the next generation she has to understand why they think capitalism has failed them

Hugo Rifkind



@HUGORIFKIND

So Kemi Badenoch is all in, but Suella Braverman is all out. The latter, writing in *The Daily Telegraph*, explained that she would not be standing to lead the Conservatives because she had been “branded mad, bad and dangerous” for speaking the truth about the party’s failure to “eschew the luxury beliefs brigade”.

Badenoch, meanwhile, declared in *The Times* that she would be standing, and would be speaking truths aplenty. “We sought to build an increasingly liberal society,” she wrote. “But liberalism has been hacked.”

It would be easy to sneer at this stuff. Same old Tories, same old culture war comfort zone. One might also point out that the party has just clearly lost an election not because of any of this but through being flatly rubbish. “We thought we could just be managerially better at governing than the other side,” writes Badenoch. To which one can only reply, jeez, really? Because nobody else did.

Instead, let’s take both of them

entirely seriously. For actually, at the heart of both their arguments there is a genuinely interesting idea, if better expressed, unsurprisingly, by Badenoch than by her erstwhile rival. It is also, for reasons I hope to explain, exactly what the Conservatives should not be saying right now, because it’s pointless and it won’t work.

Essentially, it’s an argument that the kids have gone weird and they need to be made un-weird. By “kids”, of course, we really mean “anybody too young to instinctively vote Conservative”, which is admittedly a now rather expansive definition of “kids”, perhaps bringing to mind the mid-stage career of, say, Cliff Richard. Still, that’s the crux of it.

With Braverman, it’s there when she complains that it was “on our watch that transgender ideology and critical race theory seeped into our institutions, notwithstanding our rhetoric”. With Badenoch, it’s embedded in the most interesting part of her column, where she writes about “promotion of a post-modernism that can best be described as joyless decadence”.

This is quite a thinky point. For all her thundering, Badenoch is quite a thinky person. For her, though, this decadence is not confined to the usual culture-war fare of transgenderism, race and so on. It also has a real impact at the ballot box. To understand where she’s

coming from, I’d refer you to an essay she wrote last year about the “New Authoritarians” of the left, in which she argued that the spread of left-wing perspectives, particularly among the young, prevents the right from ever getting a decent hearing.

When the right advocates deregulation, she wrote, “people don’t interpret it as a call for freedom from bureaucracy, but as the loss of the regulatory safety net that protects them from exploitation”. Likewise, tax cuts are seen as “favouritism to wealthy business

The young doubt their ability to ever achieve a traditional family life

owners” and family policies make people feel “judged”. And for the right to win elections, she explained, these arguments need to be tackled and destroyed.

Obviously, she’s not wrong. The trouble is, neither are the people she’s complaining about. Do younger people today scorn traditional Conservative viewpoints? Clearly, yes. Is this, though, because they’ve caught some “woke mind virus” (as Elon Musk puts it) and nobody has set them straight? Well, no. It’s because of their lives. They earn too little, they lack job security, they

cannot afford decent homes. They doubt their ability to achieve a traditional family life, now or ever, whether they want one or not.

Braverman hit out in her column at “luxury beliefs”. That is not what these are. Badenoch hasn’t used that language, but her “post-modernism” point refers to the same idea, and not just on this stuff. She also means views on gender, or climate policy, or immigration, or even the Middle East that are demonstrably unrealistic, yet cleaved to nonetheless as signifiers of political identity.

It seems to me, though, that even the more glaring luxury beliefs of younger voters are much like their other luxuries that older folk get cross about: their notorious coffees, their brunches, their holidays, their Instagram beauty cults. As in, these are things you can enjoy, and aspire towards, when more traditional targets of aspiration are simply out of reach.

Or to nail this point down: sure, maybe it’s a fiction that you can change your sex. But when it’s also a fiction that you can ever own a home, or afford a life that even roughly matches the one that’s supposed to be on offer, who cares? That virus, in other words, isn’t a virus at all. It’s a symptom of everything else.

There’s nothing wrong with wanting to see faith in capitalism restored and society less fractured by

competing ideologies, particularly when some of those ideologies seem frankly wacky. For what it’s worth, I daresay Sir Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves would like that, too. What they seem to grasp, though, which a great many Conservatives currently do not, is that you don’t win the argument just by, well, arguing. If you want people to come back down to earth, first you need to make the ground a lot firmer.

This ought to be an inherently Conservative position. But none of the current crop seem to be saying anything like this at all. Like Badenoch, they all speak of “Conservative values”. These matter, she writes, “because of their enduring power to transform lives”. But lives, conversely, transform values, too, and certainly more than bitter rhetorical arguments do. For good or for ill.

Never mind post-modern decadence; what about Conservative decadence? What about the right’s own drift — mirroring the other side — into believing you can simply scold and condemn your way to a better world? It’s often said of Badenoch that she’d cross the road to start a fight, and I wouldn’t relish her fighting me. But that’s the gig of a mere opinion columnist, not a potential prime minister. How about making your own side of the street a tad more appealing first?

Letters to the Editor



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Uncrewed aircraft

Sir, I disagree with the opinions expressed in your article "Why Labour must back the Tempest fighter jet" (Ian King, Jul 25). As someone who worked on both the UK's previous two manned combat aircraft programmes (Eurofighter Typhoon and Joint Strike Fighter/F-35), I cannot clearly see why Britain's priority should be to launch another one. The last two UK manned combat aircraft programmes have been procured in such small numbers as to leave Britain without a credible force for a serious war. The Tempest programme for another new manned combat aircraft would probably suffer the same fate.

Uncrewed combat aircraft offer the opportunity to reduce unit costs significantly because survivability requirements are much less, thus allowing procurement of a credible-sized force. Peacetime investment in surge production capacity would be required to ensure Ukraine war attrition levels could be managed.

This requires three changes of mindset: first, within the Ministry of Defence, which needs to review the UK defence industry as a vital part of our defence capability rather than as a burden to be endured; second, within the Royal Air Force, which needs to accept that the days of manned combat aircraft are coming to an end; and third, within BAE Systems, which should focus on volume manufacture of relatively simple systems rather than on low rate manufacture of highly complex systems.
Dr Andrew Hartland
STOVL aircraft team leader, MDA JSF team; head of management support, Eurofighter GmbH

Anti-missile shield

Sir, Certainly it is the case, as your leading article says ("Counter Punch", Jul 26), that allowing Kyiv to "fire western missiles at airfields deep inside Russia... would make a serious difference to the war", as this would constitute a considerable escalation of hostilities, possibly with disastrous consequences. A less escalatory strategy would be to concentrate on the further development and deployment of anti-missile defence systems, which we lack even for the protection of our own country.
Dr Guy SM Moore
Sandown, Isle of Wight

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Monumental joy at Reeves's spending squeeze

Sir, It should have been self-evident that the Stonehenge world heritage site landscape was unutterably precious and that there should be perpetual inquiry here. The government's decision to cancel the tunnel scheme is therefore joyous news, as the parts of the landscape which would have been destroyed by it will now be there for future generations to interpret the place anew and with better technology. How did we ever get to a situation in which the Stonehenge landscape would have been subject to "rescue archaeology" to fit around big business's timetable for building a flyover and tunnel through this landscape? In whose interest was this? We need now to work out a 21st-century solution to the make the most of the Stonehenge area. One idea is to grass it over to make it a national park, another is to build environmentally friendly transport infrastructure that would increase travel flow to somewhere other than one of the wonders of the world.
Professor David Jacques
Blick Mead project director, Stonehenge world heritage site; University of Buckingham

Sir, While I am delighted that Rachel Reeves's decision means that the view

of Stonehenge from the A303 will remain undiminished, I am dismayed that the further implication of this is that nothing will be done now to ease the plight of weary west-bound or east-bound travellers. The main problem with the road past Stonehenge is not the road itself, it is that it is blocked at both ends by major intersections and roundabouts, and, to the west, by the village of Winterbourne Stoke. Surely it must be possible to devise a scheme that will address these three issues in a timely and cost-effective way.

Rob Newman
Paignton, Devon

Sir, Rachel Reeves is being disingenuous in heaping all the blame for the hole in public finances on the previous government ("Squeeze on spending to lift UK from £20bn black hole", news, Jul 29). While shadowing the previous chancellor, she was responsible for throwing light on black holes as they developed.
Robin Laurance
Oxford

Sir, Is it really that surprising that Rachel Reeves should be so critical of the financial situation she has inherited? Any organisation that inherits a failing operation will always

ensure that a dire situation is made clear to everyone: it is sensible, realistic and liberating, as strategies are constructed from what is now seen as a clean slate.
David Hudson
Crowborough, East Sussex

Sir, The new government has promised to improve the state of the NHS. How does it intend to do that given that one of the first things Rachel Reeves announced yesterday was a review of all planned new hospitals? I retired from an NHS trust in Hertfordshire more than 20 years ago, when new hospitals were badly needed and not enough were being built. I fail to see how Labour will improve the health service if it does not keep to the building plans.
Irene Hinshelwood
Bishop's Stortford, Herts

Sir, I have just watched Rachel Reeves accuse the Conservatives of hiding a £22 billion hole in public spending. But these figures were then disputed by Jeremy Hunt, the last chancellor. Such a divergence between the two parties is not only unhelpful but turns the electorate off politics. Surely honesty is always the best policy?
John Ramus
Longfield, Kent

Marbles loan deal

Sir, The British Museum states that Elgin "acted with the full knowledge and permission of the legal authorities of the day" — viz, the Ottoman Empire ("Reset with Europe opens door to Elgin Marbles loan deal", Jul 29). That is equivalent to a present-day purchase of artefacts from Crimea with permission from Russia. Without doubt, the marbles should be returned to Athens, where they belong.
David Lewis
Slinfold, W Sussex

Sir, The proposal to return the Elgin Marbles to Greece on a "long-term loan" means that they will never come back to the British Museum. The ploy is to circumvent the 1963 law barring a permanent return to Greece. In practice, the long-term loan will simply be extended on its recurring expiry dates.
Douglas Kedje
Sonning Common, Oxon

Sir, Your leading article "Parthenon

Progress" (Jul 29) makes no mention of an alternative solution for art lovers: 3-D digital copies could be made of the Elgin Marbles and be given to Greece.
Nigel à Brassard
London SW7

Badenoch's pitch

Sir, Kemi Badenoch (comment, Jul 29) says: "That 80-seat majority disappeared after Brexit as disagreements emerged over lockdown policy, housebuilding, state spending and more." No. It disappeared because the party lost its reputation for competence and integrity.
Lord Young of Cookham
Conservative chief whip 2012-14

CQC inspections

Sir, Brian Parton (Jul 29) is right that Care Quality Commission visits were planned and in effect were stage-managed. Notice periods of three months were not uncommon, thereby allowing organisations time to

hold their own internal inspections and "bury bad news". Further, there was no mechanism by which the CQC's own performance could be monitored, other than by self-regulation (Henry Wyatt letter, Jul 29).
Lee Taylor
Orthopaedic surgeon, Chichester

Acts of courage

Sir, Further to your article "Raw courage can take us all by surprise" (Jul 27), my father, Richard Guest, died nine years ago helping to save two young girls from drowning off Tywyn beach in north Wales. Neither girl was known to him, and both survived, but he died in the rescue. He was 73. He was recognised by the Carnegie Society and was also awarded a Queen's Gallantry Medal, which has proved to be of some comfort to my mother and wider family, as his death has left a huge void in our lives. To read about similar incidents helps me to understand and appreciate his actions on that day.
Gareth Guest
Walsall, W Midlands

NEW METHODS OF BUILDING HOUSES

FROM THE TIMES JULY 30, 1924

During the debate on the Housing Bill in the House of Lords Lord Weir delivered an interesting speech in which he suggested that by the standardisation of layout, and the construction of sections of buildings in factories, it would be possible to erect a three-room house, with scullery and bathroom, including foundations, but exclusive of land, roads, and drains, for under £300.

His proposal was that every encouragement should be given to the building trade to expand, to develop, and to become more efficient, but apart from what that

production of steel plate were large and insufficiently employed, and there was no shortage of timber in the world. The use of these materials eliminated the bricklayer, while the multiple production of timber units by the use of jigs and other methods made us independent of the skilled joiner. Inner walls and partitions would be lined with wood or composition board, no plasterers thus being required. The use of either metallic shingles or asbestos sheets for roofs did not involve the use of slates. In moving the second reading, the Lord Chancellor said the Bill would cost the country one per cent of its income, but if it succeeded there would be a far-reaching savings. The Bill invoked the assistance of the State, and to that extent it was a Bill coloured by Socialism.

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THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Pruning Gardiner

Sir, Your article (Times2, Jul 26) announcing Sir John Eliot Gardiner's break with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestras was not entirely unexpected by all who know him, especially those who have worked for him. This has been a decision we very much hoped could be avoided but, unfortunately, we have to understand that continuing difficulties made it impossible for him to continue his association with the organisation he founded and ran for 60 years. It will have been one of the hardest choices he ever had to make. Additionally, the responsibility to provide enough work for his musicians has always been at the forefront of his mind. As for the unfortunate incident last summer, I would like to say that, having been one of his musicians for over 54 years, occasional outbursts happened when John Eliot had the impression that a musician did not quite engage with him. Entering through the wrong door was only the most recent reason. Now we are looking forward to having John Eliot back on stage and wish him many more years of glorious music-making.
Hildburg Williams
London NW11

BBC assignments

Sir, As a former BBC World Service editor I would like to correct the assumption that foreign travel is for "fun and games" (letter, Jul 29). In my almost 30 years as a producer I made programmes on every continent; it was only on a fourth working visit to the US that I saw the White House — and even then it was while en route to the airport. In a six-week period in South Asia I had one day without recording interviews or collecting material for a six-part series, 30 editions of a daily programme and sufficient material to provide the station with 24 hours of other material. Exciting, yes, holiday, no.
David Craig
London NW6

Glory of the Fells

Sir, I agree with Lorna Stather (letter, July 29) about washing lines. If she visited this part of the country she would see lots of them on dry days. The sight of a line full of washing billowing beside a fellside farm is a thing of beauty. Since his retirement, my husband has also discovered the satisfaction to be derived from pegging out a basket full of laundry.
Sue Thomas
Cockermouth, Cumbria

Brilliant film score

Sir, In your list of the 25 greatest film scores (Saturday Review, Jul 27; letter, Jul 29), you omitted the best one of all: Maurice Jarre's score to David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962).
David Elston
Cattal, N Yorks

Fingers of music

Sir, Talk of the handshake game (letter, Jul 29) has reminded my of my music teacher, Graham Ireland, advising us to listen carefully, because he had been taught by Herbert Sumson, who had worked with Sir Edward Elgar, who had traded tips with Sir Arthur Sullivan, who had been taught by John Goss, who had studied under Thomas Attwood, one of the few English pupils of Mozart.
Paul Davis
London SE1

Daily Universal Register

UK: The Office for National Statistics announces latest figures on energy production, consumption and prices.

Nature notes



If you live in southern or central England, or south Wales, look out at dusk and in the early mornings for speckled bush

crickets on grasses and bushes (particularly brambles), in gardens and hedgerows, and the edges of woods. They are lovely creatures: a bright, leaf green but boasting — on very close inspection — a light scattering of freckles on their bodies and legs. Their antenna are fine and very long; they cannot fly but their huge back legs can propel them a long way. Some crickets sing loudly, for example Roeseff's bush cricket, which can make a dull suburban street sound positively tropical, but the speckled bush cricket is far more circumspect: the male's song consists only of a very quiet "chip". MELISSA HARRISON

Birthdays today



Tom Pidcock, pictured, Olympic gold medallist (2020, 2024, mountain bike cross-country race), 25; **James Anderson**, cricketer, England (2003-24), 42; **Maj-Gen Chris Barry**, director,

Land Warfare, British Army, 53; **Prof Stephen Blackmore**, chairman, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, 72; **Sir Peter Bottomley**, Tory MP for Worthing West (1975-May 2024), Northern Ireland minister (1989-90), 80; **Kate Bush**, singer-songwriter, *Wuthering Heights* (1978), 66; **Teresa Cahill**, opera singer, 80; **Richard Caseby**, managing editor of *The Sunday Times* (1997-2011), communications consultant and campaigner for inquest reform, 64; **Andrea Coomber KC**, chief executive, Howard League for Penal Reform, 52; **Hannah Cockroft**, seven-time Paralympic gold medallist and world record holder, 32; **Kenton Cool**, mountaineer who has climbed Everest 18 times, 51; **General John de Chastelain**, chairman, independent international commission on decommissioning, Northern Ireland (1997-2011), 87; **Frances de la Tour**, actress, *Rising Damp* (1974-78), three-time Olivier Award winner, 80; **Laurence Fishburne**, actor, *The Matrix* trilogy, 63; **Wing Commander Andy Green**, world land speed record-holder (since 1997), 62; **Buddy Guy**, blues guitarist and singer, 88; **Harriet Harman KC**, Labour Party MP for Camberwell & Peckham (1997-2024, previously Peckham 1982-97), leader of the Opposition (2015), 74; **Kate Hobhouse**, chairwoman, Fortnum & Mason (department store), 62; **Sir Christopher Nolan**, film-maker, *Oppenheimer* (2023), 54; **Jason Robinson**, former England rugby World Cup winner, 50; **Justin Rose**, golfer, winner, US Open (2013), 44; **Ted Sarandos**, businessman, co-chief executive, Netflix, 60; **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, actor, governor of California (2003-11), 77; **Hilary Swank**, actress, *Million Dollar Baby* (2004), 50; **Daley Thompson**, decathlete, Olympic gold medallist (1980, 1984), 66.

On this day

In 1945 the Japanese submarine I-58 sank the USS Indianapolis, killing 883 seamen.

The last word

"Beauty is unbearable, drives us to despair, offering us for a minute the glimpse of an eternity that we should like to stretch out over the whole of time." Albert Camus, French philosopher, *Notebooks* (1998)



Chancellor's Mixed Bag

Home truths about the state of Britain's finances are welcome. But blank cheques to public sector workers and cuts to infrastructure are no way to spur growth

At the general election, both Labour and the Conservatives were engaged in a conspiracy of silence. Neither party was willing to admit that the imbalance in state spending and revenues would soon require correction. However base the politics of stating the obvious only after winning a landslide, Rachel Reeves is quite right now to tell the truth about public spending — namely that current levels are nowhere near affordable. Her remedy, however, risks squandering whatever promise was to be found in Labour's threadbare manifesto.

It is hardly news that the government is spending money that it does not have. Yet some of what Ms Reeves told the Commons was a shock even to independent economists. Conservative ministers oversaw a £6.4 billion overspend on asylum costs. Falling rail passenger numbers have left a £1.6 billion funding shortfall. Not nearly enough cash was left in reserve to meet Britain's obligations to Ukraine. That the Office for Budget Responsibility has now launched a review into its preparations for the last budget suggests Ms Reeves may not just be politicking when she accuses her predecessor of concealing these uncomfortable truths.

Tories complain that the chancellor knew what she would find when she opened the books. Even if that is true, and to a large extent it is, they cannot

complain. For 14 years they lambasted the governments of Sir Tony Blair and Gordon Brown for every fiscal difficulty they faced. Ms Reeves is an astute politician and can hardly be blamed for responding in kind. What matters now is how she chooses to make the sums add up. That is the question of political judgment on which the future health of the British economy now rests.

Some of her decisions are promising. Subjecting the winter fuel allowance to strict means testing ought to have been done long ago. The chancellor also suggested that other benefit cuts may follow. About time, too. However, other announcements suggest this supposedly changed Labour government may be reverting to type. Having refused to provide clarity on tax throughout the election campaign, Ms Reeves now says there are difficult decisions to come. If that is code for a hike in capital gains tax, then the high earners and investors who already shoulder most of the burden — and will be expected to fund many of the major projects to which this government is committed — are unlikely to thank her.

The same is true of public sector pay. Ms Reeves complained that the Conservatives budgeted only for salary increases of 2 per cent, not the 5.5 per cent recommendation she has agreed to. Wes

Streeting, the health secretary, has also proposed a 22 per cent pay increase for junior doctors. Both decisions reveal the government's priorities and instincts. It is not enough for the chancellor to repeat the mantra that she will not do what she cannot afford: she must actually apply that rule to the public sector, no matter how noisy the complaints of the unions that bankroll the Labour Party. Ending strikes is a noble aim but consumers will punish her if there is a wage-price spiral.

Cuts to infrastructure projects are also disappointing. Growth has long been the chancellor's watchword. Her rhetoric implied she understood the reasons for Britain's economic malaise. Political chaos and spasmodic changes to the tax regime offered no stability to investors. Restrictive planning laws made housebuilding and infrastructure projects impossible. Public services are at once overstretched, underfunded and unreformed. Signing blank cheques to public sector workers while new roads, railways and hospitals are mothballed is a curious move for a government that claims to be committed to growth and public service reform. Tax rises, too. No matter how difficult her inheritance, Ms Reeves will own the consequences of her response. She must ensure it does not undermine her mission.

Rogue Regime

Venezuela's ruthless dictator must be held to account for transparent electoral fraud

Since taking office in 2013, President Maduro of Venezuela has periodically assured his followers that the country's revolution will win *como sea*, roughly "by hook or by crook". He can say that again. The republic's national electoral council, dominated by regime loyalists, swiftly declared Mr Maduro the winner of Sunday's presidential election. It is a transparent fraud, which democracies should swiftly denounce.

Official results, with the great majority of the vote supposedly counted, show Mr Maduro with a seven-point lead. It is not only the Venezuelan opposition, whose monitors were turned away from many polling stations, that alleges fakery. Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, voiced "serious concerns that the declared outcome does not reflect the will or the votes of the Venezuelan people". Gabriel Boric, the moderate left-wing president of Chile, expressed similar incredulity. Exit polls (not just opinion polls) had shown the opposition candidate, Edmundo González, leading Mr Maduro by over 30 points.

Voter suppression is consistent with the way the socialist rulers of Venezuela have, over 25 years,

ravaged and impoverished a populous nation richly endowed with natural resources. The Bolivarian republic was once known for having the most extensive proven oil reserves of any nation. Instead of using the proceeds of oil exports to diversify the country's industry and asset holdings, Mr Maduro and his predecessor, Hugo Chávez, engaged in a catastrophic populist experiment.

The regime drained the coffers of the national oil company to finance an expansionary boom, while applying price controls to basic goods, along with import controls and capital controls, and seizing foreign enterprises. Inevitably, these policies sent inflation soaring, created widespread shortages, debased the currency and destroyed living standards. The economy contracted by around 70 per cent between 2013 and 2019, Annual inflation is now back down to "only" 50 per cent from a prolonged period of hyperinflation but the economic devastation remains.

Mr Maduro can maintain power only by gerrymandering, repression, harassment, muzzling the media and now, on all available evidence, shameless ballot rigging. Popular opposition figures such

as the conservative María Corina Machado were barred from standing. Some seven million Venezuelans have fled the country during Mr Maduro's rule. Many who tried to vote in Venezuelan embassies abroad were turned away. It was probably naive to believe an entrenched dictatorship could be replaced at the ballot box.

For the international community, including the Organisation of American States and the European Union, there is a quandary of how best to reimpose or stiffen sanctions while enabling the flow of humanitarian aid. The Maduro regime's sanctions-busting support from other authoritarian states including Russia, Cuba and Iran are helping to keep it afloat. China was among the first to congratulate Mr Maduro on his supposed victory. But democratic movements must stand with Venezuela's opposition to compel the regime to respect constitutional norms. Ms Machado and Mr González are likely to face repressive measures now from a thuggish government anxious to eliminate all public criticism.

Britain must join Latin America and the US in strongly supporting their cause.

Feats of Courage

Times readers' votes will decide the winner of a prize recognising civilian bravery

The secure trappings of modern society mean that few people have the occasion to find out how they would respond if confronted with a life or death situation calling for swift, heroic action. The ten nominees for the Times/Royal Humane Society's award for bravery are an exception: in a variety of adverse circumstances, each proved capable of astonishing feats of courage. Times readers are being invited to vote for the most outstanding act of bravery on the shortlist, with the winner to be announced at a ceremony in London in October.

Of the ten intrepid characters, some have already been deservedly celebrated in the news in

recent years. Lukasz Koczocik, head porter at Fishmongers' Hall, stepped up to confront the perpetrator of the 2019 London Bridge terror attack with the improvised use of a ceremonial pike, sustaining serious injuries in the process. Georgia Laurie, also nominated, had even less than a ceremonial spear to work with when disaster struck: after her twin sister was dragged underwater by a crocodile in Mexico, Ms Laurie repeatedly fought the animal off with her fists, saving her sibling's life in the face of prolonged physical risk.

Most striking of all are the lengths some have gone to save not family, but perfect strangers. In

2019, Lloyd Bishop narrowly escaped death when he jumped onto live railway tracks to save a man attempting suicide, his remarkably cool-headed rescue effort recorded on the station's CCTV.

In 1887, a letter to *The Times* from the artist George Frederic Watts led to the creation of the now well-known memorial in the City of London's Postman's Park, commemorating acts of "heroism in everyday life". The remarkable altruism of our nominees shows the age of everyday heroism is far from over. Selecting a winner will be a challenge, though one that pales by comparison with the difficulties our shortlist has faced down.

World

Maduro accused of election fraud after shock win

Venezuela

Stephen Gibbs Caracas

Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner of Venezuela's presidential election yesterday in a move swiftly denounced as a fraud by opposition parties.

The national electoral authority, controlled by the ruling socialist regime, said Maduro had received 51.2 per cent of the votes while his main rival, Edmundo González, had 44.2 per cent. The opposition, however, said that González had received 70 per cent, and an exit poll put him on 65 per cent to Maduro's 31 per cent.

The result, if not overturned, means that Maduro will remain in power until 2031. "I am Nicolás Maduro, president re-elected of Venezuela," he told supporters. He accused "demons" of trying to attack the electoral centres.

Opposition parties said they had evidence from election-machine printouts at polling stations that González was the rightful winner, by a landslide. "We have all the minutes transmitted by the electoral council," said Maria Corina Machado, the opposition leader who had been banned from standing in the election, but who asked her supporters to support González, a retired diplomat.

Pre-election polls had Maduro trailing by more than 25 points.

Longstanding allies congratulated Maduro, with China's foreign ministry praising Venezuela for "smoothly holding its presidential election". President Putin said he was confident that Maduro's "work at the head of state will continue to contribute to [Venezuela's] progressive development in all areas". He added: "Remember that you are always welcome on Russian soil."

President Diaz-Canel of Cuba said he had spoken to "brother" Maduro to convey warm congratulations on behalf of the party, the government and the Cuban people.

However, governments across the

Venezuelan Iron Lady faces biggest test of her mettle yet

Profile

She has been nicknamed the Iron Lady of Venezuela, and her energy and courage are certainly undisputed (Stephen Gibbs writes). Commentators compare the nonsense rhetoric of Maria Corina Machado, 56, to that of Margaret Thatcher, the politician she has said she particularly admires.

Now Machado, below, is beginning a new campaign against the Maduro regime after questionable election results. An industrial engineer, she was blocked from running, which is why the veteran diplomat Edmundo González was the opposition candidate. A supporter of the anti-government protests from 2014-19, she has repeatedly been threatened with imprisonment. Rival opposition politicians have long undermined her, telling journalists that she was too radical,

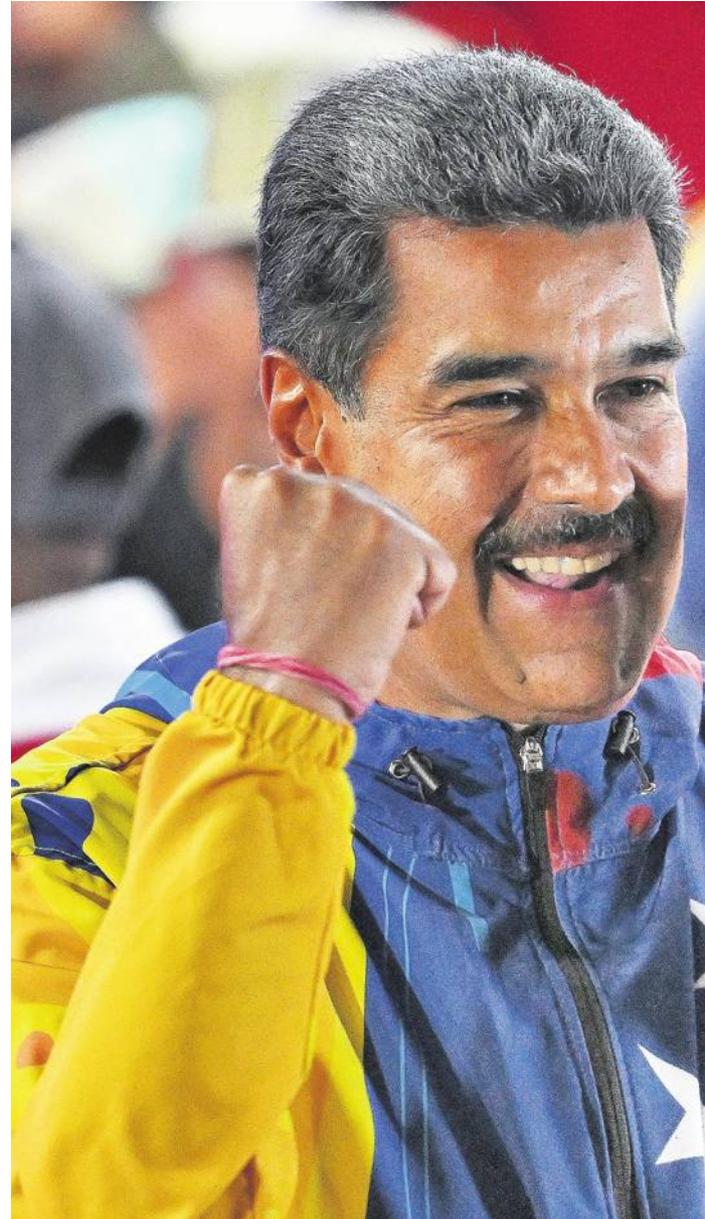
too confrontational, too push to be electable.

Last October she began to prove her doubters wrong. She won a primary election, organised by the opposition, with more than 92 per cent support.

She is subject to a 15-year ban from political office due to supposed "administrative irregularities" when she served as a congresswoman, so she helped to anoint the mild-mannered González, 74, as her successor.

A firm believer in free markets, her policies fall into a broadly centre-right spectrum. Although a committed Catholic, she has expressed support for gay marriage and would

permit abortion under some circumstances. However, her most powerful message concerns Maduro's most disastrous legacy: the division of families through migration: almost 7.7 million people, a quarter of the population, have left in the space of seven years.



President Maduro claimed victory in Caracas even as opposition leaders and



Venezuelans living in Mexico City reacted with despair to news of Maduro's win

Americas, whose countries have suffered from the massive wave of migration from Venezuela since Maduro took office in 2013, were quick to question the result. Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, said: "We have serious concerns that the result announced

does not reflect the will or the votes of the Venezuelan people. The international community is watching very closely and will respond accordingly."

President Boric of Chile said the Maduro regime "must understand that the results it publishes are difficult to believe... from Chile we will not recognize any result that is not verifiable."

President Milei of Argentina was more forceful. "Maduro. Dictator. Get out!" he said, adding that he hoped "the armed forces this time will defend democracy and the popular will".

Maduro, speaking at his victory party, responded: "Milei, you wouldn't last one round with me, you cowardly insect. You are a fascist piece of shit."

Britain expressed concern about "serious irregularities" in the election, with the Foreign Office posting on Twitter/X: "We call for the swift and transparent publication of full, detailed results to ensure that the outcome reflects the votes of the people."

The opposition gave its own blunt warning to the regime shortly before the results were announced. Perkins Rocha, a lawyer with the coalition of

parties that challenged Maduro, said: "Be careful. Don't mock the people. We have the proof of the results."

The opposition had seen the vote as its best chance in a decade to win back power from the socialists. United behind González — after Machado had been sidelined by the government — they predicted an "avalanche" of protest votes that would be impossible for the regime to cover up.

Maduro continued campaigning despite her ban, bringing out huge crowds across the country and urging her supporters to vote for González. "The whole world knows what happened," she said yesterday.

Maduro, who took over after the death of Hugo Chávez in 2013, oversaw one of the steepest economic collapses in the world as the oil-rich nation's GDP shrank by 75 per cent in a decade.

On Saturday he welcomed hundreds of international "observers" to Venezuela to monitor the election, despite their open partisanship. "We have resisted," he told his supporters. "The worst times are behind us... what is coming is going to be beautiful."

Dozens of opposition supporters were banned from entering Venezuela in the build-up to the election, including a delegation of ten Spanish politicians who flew in from Madrid and were immediately deported. On Friday a plane due to leave Panama with four former Latin American presidents on board was denied landing rights in Caracas until they disembarked.

The US, under Donald Trump, began heavily sanctioning Venezuela after the 2018 election, which was also widely considered to have been rigged. The Biden White House, concerned by migration and keen to restore normal trading relations, has spent much of the past three years trying to coax Maduro to hold a fair vote, with the promise of relief from sanctions in return.

A "technical mission" of observers from the Carter Centre, an Atlanta-based NGO, was in Venezuela and is expected to release a report on its findings today. A small UN team also observed the vote but will not present its findings to the public.

Maduro's rogue regime must be held to account, leading article, page 23

Kim's pre-teen daughter 'in training to succeed him'
Page 26

Bordeaux businesses see red over cruise ship ban
Page 27



JUAN BARRETO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

governments across the region and further afield questioned the official results

No more serving for life on Supreme Court, vows Biden

United States
David Charter Washington

President Biden plans to reform the Supreme Court by imposing 18-year term limits and a code of ethics on its nine judges.

He also wants Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to limit presidential immunity after the court agreed sweeping protections in an appeal brought by Donald Trump.

"This nation was founded on a simple yet profound principle: no one is above the law," Biden wrote in an article for The Washington Post yesterday. "Not the president of the United States. Not a justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. No one."

The president, who was due to speak in detail about his proposals in Austin, Texas, requires the support of the Republican-controlled House and Democratic-majority Senate to enact changes. A constitutional amendment to change the immunity powers would require agreement from two thirds of Congress and three quarters of state legislatures, a seeming impossibility in today's polarised environment.

The Democrats have become concerned at the rulings of the court shaped by Trump, who added three conservative justices during his four years in office, and which overturned a 1973 ruling guaranteeing access to abortion. They have also complained about the behaviour of the longest-serving judge, Clarence Thomas, who concealed paid holidays and other gifts provided by a wealthy benefactor.

"I have great respect for our institutions and separation of powers," Biden wrote. "What is happening now is not normal, and it undermines the public's confidence in the court's decisions."

Biden's proposed code of ethics would require justices to disclose gifts, refrain from public political activity and recuse themselves from cases in which they or their spouses had financial or other conflicts of interest. Sitting presidents would be allowed to appoint one justice every two years, each to serve 18 years, ending lifetime appoint-

Analysis

With fewer than 100 days before the next election, proposals for far-reaching reform of a core American institution can only be aspirational or symbolic (David Charter writes).

President Biden's plans to overhaul the Supreme Court stand no chance of passing a divided Congress in an election year. In a non-election year the plans might have appealed across the aisle as a way to address the lifetime appointment rule that makes the system of replacing senior judges both a lottery and a high-stakes political drama.

This was highlighted by the contrasting ways Congress treated the replacement of two justices who died towards the end of a presidency. Antonin Scalia, a conservative, died 11 months before the end of President Obama's presidency but a Republican-controlled Congress refused to consider his nominee, so it fell to President Trump to nominate his successor.

By contrast, the liberal Ruth Bader Ginsberg died four months before Trump's term ended but Congress, still in Republican hands, rushed through the conservative Amy Coney Barrett, who is still only 52 and could serve for four decades.

Biden has resisted voices on the left who wanted to expand the court. He has thus dodged the Republican attack line that Democrats want to "pack the court". In calmer times, his Supreme Court proposals would get a hearing. But the idea of a constitutional amendment to settle the question of presidential immunity seems absurd in today's political environment.

ments to the court. The plans were part of his now-abandoned re-election campaign and are backed by Kamala Harris, the vice-president who has become the party's presumptive nominee.

Harris said: "There is a clear crisis of confidence facing the Supreme Court as its fairness has been called into question after numerous ethics scandals and decision after decision overturning longstanding precedent."

"That is why President Biden and I are calling on Congress to pass important reforms — from imposing term limits for justices' active service, to requiring justices to comply with binding ethics rules just like every other federal judge. And finally, in our democracy, no one should be above the law. So we must also ensure that no former president has immunity for crimes committed while in the White House."

Trump rejects court reform as an attempt by Democrats to subvert the election and overhaul one of his proudest achievements. He posted on his Truth Social platform this month: "The Democrats are attempting to interfere in the presidential election, and destroy our justice system, by attacking their political opponent, ME, and our honourable Supreme Court. We have to fight for our fair and independent courts, and protect our country."

Mike Johnson, the Republican House Speaker, said Biden's proposal would not be considered by the lower chamber, where Republicans have a slim majority. "It is telling that Democrats want to change the system that has guided our nation since its founding simply because they disagree with some of the court's recent decisions. This dangerous gambit of the Biden-Harris administration is dead on arrival in the House," he posted on Twitter/X.

Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator from South Carolina, said Democrats did not complain when the court "was pumping out opinions they liked". He told CBS: "What's been a threat to the country is an out-of-control liberal court issuing opinions that basically take over every phase of American life based on nine people's judgment."

Analysis

Until last night, there was a theory about Nicolás Maduro that many diplomats and Venezuelan analysts bought into: that the one thing he really wanted was legitimacy via the ballot box (Stephen Gibbs writes). That, they surmised, was why there was always a glimmer of hope that "Nico" could be persuaded to take part in a fair-ish competitive election and then the Venezuela problem would begin to be

solved. It was a deal all sides wanted. The Ukraine war, and its effect on global energy supplies, had convinced the Biden administration that cutting itself off from a large supply of oil on its doorstep for the sake of some Trump-era sanctions made no sense. It was showing readiness to lift them. It also sought a stable Venezuela, to end a troubling flow of migrants into the US. Most European countries were also getting tired of only half-recognising the Maduro government on the basis of a 2018 election and were

ready to bury their differences. All Maduro needed to do was take part in an election and everyone could move on. But then came along María Corina Machado, with her resonating, emotional message of reuniting divided families and a brilliantly organised campaign using a proxy candidate. And an angry population seeking revenge at the ballot box. Maduro had a choice: lose power, or lose the legitimacy that experts thought he craved so much. For him, it was an easy choice.

Meloni pours scorn on her EU ally

Italy
James Imam Milan

The Italian prime minister has accused the EU of falling for "fake news" in a withering response to claims that she is limiting press freedom.

The European Commission had suggested that Rome was stepping up intimidation of critics and was tightening its grip on the public broadcaster, Rai.

Giorgia Meloni hit back in a sternly worded letter to Ursula von der Leyen, the commission's newly re-elected president, in the latest sign that their once-warm relationship is fraying amid tensions over top EU appointments. "The content of this document has been distorted by some in an attempt to attack the Italian government," Meloni wrote. "Some have even gone so far as to claim that the rule of law and freedom of information are at risk." Meloni dismissed claims that her

government was limiting press freedoms as "clumsy and specious attacks" in an age when "fake news increasingly pollutes the debate in Europe".

She wrote: "It is regrettable that not even the commission's report on the rule of law, and in particular on the freedom of information on public service broadcasters, has been spared by professionals sowing disinformation and mystification."

Scrutiny of Meloni's record intensified this month after a journalist was ordered to pay her €5,000 for mocking her height on social media. Critics claim that Rai is becoming a pro-gov-

ernment megaphone, dubbing the broadcaster "Tele Meloni", after her allies were appointed to top positions and rules amended to increase airtime for government figures during the European parliamentary elections. Rai employees organised strikes after an anti-fascist monologue was cancelled in April.

The commission's report expressed "concern" that Italy had made "no major developments" in reforming its harsh defamation law and said comprehensive reform was needed to ensure that Rai was "better shielded from risks of political interference".

Meloni has long insisted that her aim is to eradicate an ingrained left-wing bias.

Giorgia Meloni denies interference in Italy's state broadcaster



World



Obese Kim's daughter 'in training to succeed him'

North Korea
Gavin Blair Tokyo

Kim Jong-un's daughter, Kim Ju-ae, is being trained to succeed the North Korean leader amid concerns about his health, Seoul's spy agency has said.

A National Intelligence Service briefing on the Pyongyang regime told the South Korean parliament's intelligence committee that succession classes were under way. This, according to the committee's secretary, Lee Seong-kwon, "hints at Kim Ju-ae being a likely successor".

Lee added: "Conscious of the [North Korean] public's reaction to the young Kim Ju-ae, the levels of propaganda and the frequency of exposure to the outside world are being adjusted while undisclosed activities [successor training] are being simultaneously carried out."

The report follows years of speculation over who will take over the hermit

kingdom's family dynasty after Kim's reign comes to an end.

Ju-ae, believed to be between ten and twelve years old, has been seen accompanying her father to a range of events and ceremonies since her public debut at a missile launch in November 2022.

She was initially referred to in state media as the "beloved" daughter of Kim, 40, but last year that reference was switched to "respected", the term used to describe her father, fuelling speculation that she was being prepared to eventually take over from him.

Ju-ae is believed to have an older brother and a younger sibling, though



they have never been seen in public. Lee suggested that concerns about Kim's health were accelerating succession planning, saying: "Kim Jong-un is extremely obese, weighing 140kg [22st] and having a body mass index in the mid-40s, far exceeding the healthy maximum of 25, and is considered to be in a high-risk group for heart disease."

"We understand that he has been showing symptoms of high blood pressure and diabetes since his early thirties, and if he does not improve his health condition, there is a strong possibility that he may develop cardiovascular disease, of which there is a family

history." Both his father, Kim Jong-il, and his grandfather, Kim Il-sung, died of heart attacks.

Park Seon-won, another committee official, said the briefing reported that Pyongyang was looking abroad for possible medical treatments for the country's supreme leader. He also said the language being used in North Korean state media around Ju-ae shows a "successor structure is solidifying". Park noted the use of expressions reserved for successors or leaders, such as "hyangdo", or "direction", which is used to mean lighting the way forward in the revolutionary struggle and leading the way to victory.

However, he stressed that Seoul's spy agency had not yet "ruled out the possibility of another sibling stepping forward or the possibility of some other change, based on the fact that the successor has not been finalised".

Kim's younger sister, Yo-jong, 36,

would be the only serious contender. In recent years she has been on various powerful committees and acted as a spokeswoman for the regime in making bombastic denunciations of South Korea, the US and Japan in particular.

Kim's older sister, Sol-song, 50, has never held a senior role, while his older brother, Jong-chul, 42, is understood to play guitar in a band and has been spotted at Eric Clapton concerts in Singapore in 2011 and twice at the Royal Albert Hall in London in 2015.

Kim was shown by state media inspecting flood-hit areas of the North Pyongan province, in the west of the country, over the weekend after record rains struck large swathes of east Asia.

North Korea suffers more than other countries during such disasters due to weak infrastructure and the effects of deforestation. More than 4,000 people were cut off by flood waters, according to state media.



Kim Ju-ae has been seen at several events with her father, Kim Jong-un, who inspected floods from his car at the weekend

It's time to leave Lebanon, Americans are told as war looms

Lebanon
Samer Al-Atrush
Middle East Correspondent

The US and Germany have called on their citizens in Lebanon to leave the country as Israel weighs its retaliation to a Hezbollah rocket attack at the weekend that killed 12 children, bringing the two sides to the brink of war.

Binyamin Netanyahu has vowed to strike hard against the Iranian-backed Shia militants, who have been conducting cross-border attacks since October.

David Lammy, the foreign secretary, said he spoke to President Pezeshkian of Lebanon and welcomed his call to stop the fighting. "We both agreed that widening of conflict is in nobody's interest," he wrote on Twitter/X.

Rena Bitter, the US assistant secretary of state for the bureau of consular affairs, called on American citizens to leave when they could, in case war broke out. "Should commercial air not

be available, individuals already in Lebanon should be prepared to shelter in place for long periods of time," she said in a video message shared online.

The German foreign office warned that Beirut's airport could be attacked, as happened in the 2006 war between Israel and Lebanon. Several airlines including the German carrier Lufthansa have cancelled flights to the city.

Israel and Hezbollah are believed to want to avoid a repeat of that war. Yet the Hezbollah attack on Saturday, which killed 12 children as they played football in the village of Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights, will force Israel to respond heavily after ten months of tit-for-tat airstrikes and rocket attacks.

Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, spoke to Isaac Herzog, the Israeli president, yesterday and "emphasised the importance of preventing escalation of the conflict and discussed efforts to reach a diplomatic solution to allow citizens on both sides of the border

Analysis

Asked how he managed the Levant, which included present-day Lebanon, Syria and Israel, the 7th-century Muslim caliph Muawiyah said: "It's as if I and the people are grasping a strand of hair. If they pull, I relax. When they relax, I pull." (Samer Al-Atrush writes) Hezbollah and Israel will be testing that strand of hair in the coming days. For ten months they have

pulled it back and forth, but never to the splitting point of all-out war. Saturday's rocket attack on a Druze village in the Golan Heights, which killed 12 children, may appear to be that moment but both sides want to avoid a repeat of their devastating 2006 war. Hezbollah, which has announced every cross-border attack on Israel, understands the gravity of the moment. It very quickly denied having fired the rocket,

suggesting that the Shia militants fear they may have broken Muawiyah's hair. Israeli leaders have said they will strike Hezbollah hard, and in ways not yet seen. Lebanon's foreign minister has said the group is willing to pull away from the border if Israel stops its attack. If this claim is correct, the tragic incident in the village of Majdal Shams may provide a way of allowing both sides to avoid a war that neither asked for.

between Israel and Lebanon to return home", the state department said.

Israeli officials said that their military would retaliate, but in a manner that would avoid all-out war. One of the officials predicted the response would last for several days. "The estimation is that the response will not lead to an all-out war ... that would not be in our interest at this point," Reuters quoted the anonymous official as saying.

Iran warned Israel against striking Lebanon, with Pezeshkian telling President Macron of France that it would lead to serious consequences, Iranian state media reported.

Saturday's rocket attack was the biggest single-day loss of civilian lives in Israel since the terrorist attacks by Hamas on October 7, which killed more than 1,200 people. Hezbollah started firing rockets at Israel in support of Hamas, leading to a low-intensity conflict that has emptied out towns in northern Israel and southern Lebanon.

Bordeaux business owners see red over ban on cruise ships

France

David Chazan Paris

Many Bordeaux residents have welcomed a plan to stop cruise ships docking near its historic centre, claiming they are unsightly and cause pollution.

Business owners are furious, however, arguing that restaurants and retailers will lose millions of euros a year.

Pierre Hurmic, the Green mayor, said his plan to remove the giant ships

from the picturesque city in southwest France had overwhelming support. "The visual impact of these ships in the city is increasingly criticised by my fellow citizens," he told RTL radio.

He said he was not banishing the cruise ships but would force them to dock on the other bank of the Garonne river, away from the old town.

The chamber of commerce, which claims not to have been consulted, said the ban would undermine businesses.

Patrick Seguin, its head, said cruise ship passengers spent €20 million a year in local restaurants and shops.

"This decision carries heavy consequences for Bordeaux's commerce and yet we were not brought into the discussions."

Many residents say the charm of Bordeaux's hundreds of historic buildings and sites is being spoilt by the liners. "They dwarf everything in sight," Martine, 42, a schoolteacher, said.

Cruise ships bring 60,000 passengers to the heart of Bordeaux each year, according to Brigitte Bloch, head of the tourist office. She added, however, that this represented only a small proportion of the four million visitors. "Tourism from the cruise ships is economically important, but it counts for relatively little overall," Bloch said.

The passengers often take coaches to Bordeaux's wine châteaux and Bloch said they could continue to do so even

if they docked away from the city centre. Seguin, though, argued that if the cruise liners were compelled to dock away from the city centre, they might stop coming to Bordeaux.

"Few cities in the world can accommodate cruise ships in their historic centre," he said. "Coming upriver is a technical constraint for the boats, and passengers pay extra for it. If they are stopped from docking in the city centre, they won't be able to justify the cost."

How engineers made a fairytale reality

Newly discovered plans for 'mad' king's palace reveal the cutting-edge technology at its heart, writes David Crossland

Bavaria's "Mad" King Ludwig II was not content with having his own lake in his artificial dripstone cave: he insisted that the water be warmed to a temperature of up to 28C.

Whenever his arrival at Linderhof Palace, 50 miles southwest of Munich, was announced at short notice, workers would rush to heat the lake in his Venus Grotto by burning wood in two boilers. It is not known if he swam there or if he just wanted to keep his hand warm as he trailed it in the water from the shell-shaped boat he was rowed around in.

From there he could gaze up at the echoing chamber whose walls were colourfully lit to variously resemble the cave from the first act of Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*, or the Blue Grotto on the island of Capri.

Like all his fairytale palaces, the cave at Linderhof relied on cutting-edge 19th-century technology behind the scenes to ensure that the eccentric monarch could dive into his medieval worlds in the greatest possible comfort.

The advanced level of engineering has been illustrated by the recent discovery of more than 200 original plans in the archives of the Stuttgart-based company that made Ludwig's dreams come true.

Gas- & Wasserleitungs-Gesellschaft Stuttgart, which is still in business, gave the finely detailed technical illustrations in pencil, ink and watercolour to the Bavarian Palace Administration. Much of



Ludwig never lived to see the completion of Neuschwanstein castle in 1892, but he revelled in his Venus Grotto, top

the machinery delivered to the palaces by train had been lost, which made the plans all the more valuable, the administration said.

The company did not just provide the heating system that warmed the

lake, it also built the grand fountains in the parks of Linderhof and another of Ludwig's palaces at Herrenchiemsee, and the water closet system at his most famous castle, Neuschwanstein — a technical challenge, because the pipes had to be laid up the narrow mountain ridge on which it stands.

It built a waterfall in the Venus Grotto and the water pipes needed to cool the glowing-hot theatre lights that illu-

minated the cavern, which is being renovated at a cost of €60 million and is due to reopen to the public next year.

Ludwig was both dreamer and technology enthusiast. When he travelled by train he would insist on riding with the engine driver to see how the steam locomotive worked. He was particularly interested in theatre technology.

His visions extended to flying and he repeatedly aired the idea of attaching a

peacock-shaped cabin to a hot-air balloon, attached to a cable, so that he could descend from Neuschwanstein to the nearby Lake Alpesee for a swim.

The ardent admirer and patron of Wagner regarded himself as a successor to the knights of Schwangau whose heraldic animal was the swan, and he fantasised about being the fictitious swan knight Lohengrin. He ordered swans from Britain and put the birds in the lake of his grotto.

Neuschwanstein, completed in 1892, six years after Ludwig's death, had mod cons that were far removed from the medieval worlds in his mind. In addition to running water, central heating and flushing toilets, it had food lifts, battery-operated bells for servants, steel window frames and an internal telephone system.

At Herrenchiemsee, Ludwig had a dining table that came out of the floor laden with food so that the reclusive could eat without being bothered by servants. The Venus Grotto's lights were powered by one of the world's first electric power stations.

His gold-plated sleigh, the first vehicle to be illuminated with a battery-powered light bulb, is on display at Nymphenburg Palace in Munich.

The king was dethroned on the grounds of insanity after running up substantial debts on his lavish projects. His death the next day was ruled as suicide but that verdict has been disputed. He was 40 years old.



HERBERT KEHRER/GETTY IMAGES; MAURITUS IMAGES/ALAMY

Franco family fights attempts to seize mansion for the nation

Spain

Isambard Wilkinson Madrid

The descendants of General Franco are resisting attempts by the Spanish authorities to take possession of a mansion claimed to have been illegally acquired by the dictator's wife.

The city council of Coruña, in the northwest Galicia region, is seeking to annul the sale in 1962 of the 18th-century Casa Cornide to Carmen Polo, Franco's wife.

The Franco family argues that it is their rightful property and has refused to open it to the public, as the law re-

quires, after it was declared national heritage by Galicia's regional government last year.

The Franco family, led by Francis Franco, a grandson of the dictator, has claimed that the city council of Coruña "consciously and voluntarily" accepted the sale of Casa Cornide to Polo and is now acting with "obvious political opportunism, which has nothing to do with reasons of public interest". A statement added: "We are the owners."

The house was built in an unusual late Baroque style and was once home to José Andrés Cornide, an 18th-century naturalist. It was bought by Polo for

a token sum, 25,000 pesetas — the equivalent of €7,000 today. The authorities have said they will prove in court that the sale was not legal.

They argue that, after Polo took a liking to the house, two mayors of Coruña contrived municipal ownership in 1962, only to auction it soon afterwards. It was bought by an aristocrat who sold it to Polo hours later for a fraction of what he had paid for it. They also argue that the sale to Polo was illegal because she was the wife of the head of state. Experts have said in a consultation report that "the architects of the sale were well aware of this prohibition".



Casa Cornide was sold for a token sum

Spain's Socialist-led government won a case in 2020 that resulted in the Franco family transferring the Pazo de Meirás estate in Galicia to the state. As with the Casa Cornide, the government had argued that a sale transferring the estate to Franco and his wife in 1941 was fraudulent. The family had tried to sell the estate and Casa Cornide.

Earlier this year the regional government rejected the family's argument that they could not open it to the public because it was a private home. A report stated: "It is practically empty of furniture, so it does not seem likely that it is the private home of its owners."

World

Magritte's leaves see the light of day again

A little-known gouache painting by René Magritte has surfaced for the first time in more than 20 years and is expected to sell for €5 million at auction (David Chazan writes).

L'Incendie (The Fire) depicts five overlapping trees in the form of giant leaves juxtaposed against a foreboding sky. The painting was completed just after the Second World War, in 1947, but rather than depict the darkness of life under the Nazis the leaves are thought to signify joy and growth in a style the Belgian artist described as "sunlit surrealism".

In a 1988 book on Magritte, Jacques Meuris wrote that the

trees and leaves "may be regarded as 'individuals', with multifarious feelings, endowed with charms in the various senses of the word".

Magritte sold *L'Incendie* to Alexander Iolas, an American gallerist who specialised in European surrealists in the late 1940s and early 1950s and presented Andy Warhol's first exhibition in 1952.

Elizabeth Arden, the cosmetics magnate, later acquired it along with a number of other works by Magritte. *L'Incendie* was last auctioned in 1992. Since then it has been in an Italian private collection.

"Magritte's imagery is timeless, and part of its magic is its ability to surprise you over and over again," Thomas Bompard, of Sotheby's in



L'Incendie, held in a private collection since 1992, was described by the artist as "sunlit surrealism"

Paris, said. He sees Magritte's five leaves as coincidentally echoing the five Olympic rings, which adorn the Eiffel Tower for the Paris Games. "We couldn't dream of a more fitting image, not only to celebrate 100 years of surrealism, but also to evoke, in such a poetic way, the symbol for the most global sporting event, this year taking place on our doorsteps."

"In signature Magritte style, the more you look the more you see. Magritte's leaves imbue poignance into a simple, everyday image."

It will be auctioned as part of a sale of surrealist art starting on October 18 in Paris alongside works by Salvador Dali, Joan Miró, Francis Picabia, Jane Graverol and Dorothea Tanning.

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Kyiv 'helped' Mali rebels rout Putin's private army

Mali
Marc Bennetts, Jane Flanagan

Ukraine has said it provided intelligence and other unspecified assistance to Tuareg rebels in Mali who routed fighters from the Kremlin-backed Wagner mercenary group.

At least 20 Wagner fighters, including a commander, were killed in an ambush in the north of the African country at the weekend, a pro-Kremlin media outlet said.

Other sources said that up to 80 Wagner mercenaries may have died when they were attacked by about 1,000 rebels during a sandstorm. Dozens of Mali government troops are also said to have been killed.

"The rebels received intelligence — and not only intelligence — to allow them to carry out a successful military operation," said Andriy Yusov, a spokesman for GUR, the Ukrainian military intelligence service. He gave no other details. A photograph published by the Kyiv Post showed Tuareg rebels holding up a Ukrainian flag, purportedly in the aftermath of the battle.

"Our forces decisively obliterated

these enemy columns," Mohamed Elmaouloud Ramadane, a spokesman for the rebels, said. Videos on Telegram showed apparent Wagner mercenaries lying dead on a battlefield. At least 15 were taken prisoner.

The wreckage of a Mi-24 helicopter could be seen among the ruins of traditional mud homes, and an up-ended military truck. "The ambush was professional," a Russian defence ministry source said. "We are concerned for the fate [of the prisoners]."

Wagner deployed to Africa in 2017 as part of the Kremlin's attempt to extend its economic and political interests on the continent. Its losses in Mali are thought to be its heaviest outside Ukraine since 2018, when up to 200 fighters were killed during a clash with US forces in Syria.

Kyiv's involvement in the ambush would mark a serious escalation in the GUR's efforts to take the fight to Russia outside its borders. Kyrylo Budanov, its head, was planning an attack on Wagner in Mali as early as last year, according to leaked US National Security Agency documents. Ukrainian special forces are also reported to have taken part in

Sudan over the past year. In Moscow, a pro-war Telegram channel said that instructors had been working with Tuareg rebels and that some had been brought to Ukraine for training with first-person drones.

About 1,000 Wagner fighters entered Mali in 2021 after the country's pro-western president had been toppled by a military coup. The ruling junta has sought closer ties with Moscow and also received Russian weapon supplies. France, the former colonial power, withdrew its forces in 2022 after the new government demanded that it leave. Ethnic Tuareg fighters are seeking an independent state in the north of the country. The conflict has been worsened by clashes between government forces and jihadist groups linked to Al-Qaeda and Islamic State.

Wagner has helped the Russian government extract gold from Africa worth at least £2 billion since the start of the war in Ukraine, according to the Blood Gold Report research programme. Its fighters were implicated in a massacre of more than 500 people in a village in Mali last year, a UN report said.

Indians die fighting for Russia in Ukraine

Ukraine
Marc Bennetts

An Indian man whose family said he was tricked into fighting for Russia in Ukraine has been killed in action, despite President Putin's promise to Delhi that any of its citizens recruited by the Kremlin would be discharged.

Ravi Moun, 22, is the fifth Indian to have died in Ukraine since the war started in 2022. Dozens are thought to have been sent to front lines after being lured to Russia by the promise of non-combat jobs in the army or work in the civilian sector.

Others were said to have been held



Ravi Moun's family sold all their land to pay for him to go to Russia for work

for alleged visa violations and told they would have to serve one year in the army or ten in prison.

Narendra Modi, the Indian prime minister, raised the issue with Putin at a meeting in Moscow on July 9 and was "given assurances" they would be repatriated, Indian foreign ministry sources said. The ministry was trying

to bring home about 50 citizens fighting in Ukraine and the Russian embassy in India said Moscow had pledged to find an early solution.

Moun's brother, Ajay, said the family paid an agent 1.1 million rupees (£10,200) to get him a job in transportation. Once in Russia, however, he was threatened with prison unless he agreed to fight, relatives said. His family last spoke to him in March.

"If he [Moun] knew he would have to fight, he would not have gone," Sonu Mator, his cousin, said. The family raised the money to send Moun to Russia by selling their acre plot of land in the state of Haryana.

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Business

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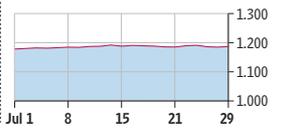


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Interest rate vote on knife-edge as food price inflation falls again

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The pace of price rises in Britain's shops has held steady over the past month at its lowest level since October 2021.

In the latest sign that cost pressures are stabilising before the Bank of England's interest rate decision this week, it emerged that shop prices have increased by 0.2 per cent over the year to July, according to the British Retail Consortium and NielsenIQ. In the past

month, prices have decreased by 0.1 per cent.

Grocery inflation continued to ease, falling to 2.3 per cent on an annual basis in July from 2.5 per cent previously. It was the slowest pace of food prices inflation since December 2021, demonstrating that price pressures that drove up the cost of living have started to ease.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 triggered a sharp increase in the prices

of food and energy, heaping pressure on household finances. Food prices inflation hit a peak of about 20 per cent.

"The 2023 declines in global food commodity prices continued to feed through, helping to bring down food inflation rates over the first seven months of 2024," Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the British Retail Consortium, said. She added that consumers looking to update their summer wardrobes could do so at bargain prices,

with clothing and footwear prices falling for the seventh month in a row.

Signs that inflation has settled have ignited speculation that the Bank will lower interest rates for the first time since 2020 this week. Financial markets believe that there is a 50-50 chance that the Bank's ratesetting monetary policy committee will vote in favour of cutting the UK base rate from 5.25 per cent.

However, the committee has emphasised that services inflation, at

5.7 per cent, remains too high, potentially steering the group toward leaving the base rate unchanged. The decision is expected to be extremely tight, with Andrew Bailey, the governor, possibly casting the deciding vote.

The UK's official inflation measure, the consumer prices index, which is published by the Office for National Statistics, has remained at 2 per cent for the past two months, in line with the Bank's target.

'Tell Sid' sale of NatWest shares halted

Reeves says offer a bad use of taxpayers' money

Ben Martin Banking Editor

A "Tell Sid"-style sale of NatWest shares to the public by the government has been scrapped amid fears that it would have cost taxpayers as much as £450 million.

The plan to offload part of the state's near-20 per cent stake in the FTSE 100 bank to individual investors had been floated by the last Conservative government in November.

However, Rachel Reeves revealed that the new Labour government had axed the initiative because it was "a bad use of taxpayers' money". The chancellor said: "Having considered advice, I have concluded that a retail share sale offer would involve significant discounts that could cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of pounds. It would therefore not represent value for money and it will not go ahead."

Estimates released by the Treasury showed that cancelling the sale was expected to save between £100 million and £450 million. "This figure reflects the avoidance of a future loss of income from share sales should a retail offer take place," it said. The estimate assumed a retail offer size of between £1 billion and £3 billion, accompanied by "a package of incentives for retail investors that equates to a discount to market price of between 10 per cent and 15 per cent". Other potential costs associated with the abandoned sale were not included in the calculations.

NatWest revealed last Friday that it had spent £24 million preparing for the deal. Jeremy Hunt, the previous chancellor, had hoped that a retail offer of NatWest stock would emulate the 1986 privatisation of British Gas, which was

marketed with a campaign featuring the slogan: "If you see Sid, tell him."

It would have been the first time that the government had sold shares it owns in the bank to individual investors. The aim was to encourage share ownership among the public as part of wider government efforts to bolster London's stock market, which has been plagued by low valuations and a dearth of new listings in recent years.

M&C Saatchi, the advertising group, had been hired by the Treasury to devise a marketing campaign for the sale. Investment bankers from Goldman Sachs and Barclays were advising on the design of the transaction, which would have been at a discount to NatWest's prevailing share price in an effort to attract investors.

It is thought that the Conservative government was poised to launch the retail offer when Rishi Sunak called a snap election in May. This forced the Treasury to put the offer on hold. Reeves said she would stick with the previous government's target of selling off its stake entirely by 2025-26.

The government's stake is a legacy of NatWest's £45.5 billion bailout during the 2007-09 financial crisis, which left taxpayers owning almost 85 per cent of the lender. The state shareholding has been cut since 2015 through deals to sell chunks of stock both to institutional investors and back to the bank. There is also a trading plan that "dribbles" state-owned shares into the stock market.

NatWest said: "Any decisions around the sale of government shares are a matter for His Majesty's Treasury."

NatWest shares closed up 9½p, or 2.6 per cent, at 371½p, valuing the taxpayer's stake at just over £6 billion.



Davina McCall, the television presenter, is among the celebrities to have supported Zoe, the wellness start-up

Zoe's doing well with \$15m investment

Tom Saunders

A wellness start-up championed by celebrities including Davina McCall and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall has raised millions of dollars from an American investor as the British business expands in the United States.

The New York-based Coefficient Capital has invested \$15 million in Zoe, which was launched in April 2022 offering a smartphone app that gives users personalised nutrition advice.

Zoe was co-founded by Tim Spector, a professor at King's College London, and Jonathan Wolf and George Hadjigeorgiou, whose backgrounds are in artificial intelligence and consumer apps. Members receive a do-it-yourself kit that allows them to monitor their

gut health, blood sugar levels and blood fat. The results from the tests are used to deliver recipe recommendations.

The cheapest starter package lasts four months and costs £299 to cover the testing phase, plus an additional £35 monthly payment. Soon after it was launched, the business had a waiting list that stretched to a quarter of a million people. It is now looking to expand in America.

"There's a really big opportunity for us in the States, which is going through an even worse health crisis than we are in the UK," Wolf, 49, said. "The situation there is further advanced because the food has been worse in the US for longer."

Unlike in Britain, significant competitors to Zoe already exist in America, in-

cluding Levels, which supplies glucose monitors and an accompanying app to its members. However, Zoe claims that its edge over its rivals lies in its scientific roots, which are relatively uncommon within the wider "wellness" space. The company recently published the results of an 18-week trial of its products in Nature Medicine, the academic journal.

The company is not without its critics and a report by the Food Standards Agency last year said that the benefits of personalised nutrition systems such as Zoe were "somewhat marginal".

Zoe has raised a total of \$118 million in a series of fundraisings, including an \$8.5 million crowdfunding campaign. Coefficient Capital has invested in a range of consumer brands, including Oatly, the oat milk manufacturer.

Business

Need to know

1 Rachel Reeves has scrapped a “Tell Sid”-style sale of NatWest shares to the public amid fears it would have cost taxpayers as much as £450 million. The plan to offload part of the state’s near-20 per cent stake to individual investors had been floated by the Conservative government in November. **Page 29**

2 The pace of retail price rises held steady over the past month at its lowest level since October 2021. Ahead of the Bank of England’s interest rate decision this week, it emerged that shop prices had increased by 0.2 per cent over the year to July. **Page 29**

3 A British wellness start-up championed by celebrities including Davina McCall and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall has raised millions from an American investor. Coefficient Capital has invested \$15 million in Zoe, launched in April 2022. **Page 29**

4 A court ruling against a US rival sent shares in Reckitt Benckiser to their lowest level in more than a decade. A jury in St Louis, Missouri, found Similac, Abbott Laboratories’ specialised milk formula for premature babies and a product similar to Reckitt’s Enfamil, had caused a girl to develop a bowel disease.

5 Nikkei, the Japanese owner of the Financial Times, has denied a report that it is considering putting the newspaper up for sale. The Japanese company beat off competition from Axel Springer, the German publisher, with its bid to buy the FT from Pearson for £844 million in 2015.

6 The weighted balance of retail sales has fallen to -43 per cent after wet weather at the beginning of July, from -24 per cent in June, according to the CBI, in a second month of declining sales. Retailers also expect sales to drop in August. **Page 32**

7 The number of mortgage approvals slowed to 59,976 in June from 60,134 in May, below expectations, data from the Bank of England shows. The figure is still above the 2023 monthly average of 48,000. **Page 32**

8 An €874 million writedown in the value of its Chinese beer business has driven Heineken to a first-half loss. The Dutch brewer said the impairment charge related to concerns over slowing demand in China. That, in turn, pushed the company to a €95 million net loss for the six months to end of June. **Page 34**

9 Pearson, the technology and education publisher, reported a 10 per cent decline in its first-half profits. “The only risk [of AI] I worry about is that we don’t innovate fast enough,” said Omar Abbosh, the former Microsoft executive who took over as its chief executive in January. **Page 35**

10 Bankers, lawyers and advisers working on the £2.1 billion deal for Keywords Studios are set to earn as much as £84.7 million in fees from the sale of the video games studio. The bidding consortium led by EQT, a Swedish private equity firm, expects to spend up to £59.5 million. **Page 37**



ME Group cleans up on our laundry

Times have changed since Dot Cotton’s laundrette in EastEnders was the community hub of Albert Square, with their numbers in Britain falling by three quarters in only 25 years (Jessica Sharkey writes). But while traditional businesses disappear from the high street, ME Group’s laundry brand has enjoyed a 16.7 per cent rise in revenue.

ME Group’s units, under the Wash ME

and Revolution Laundry brands, are cashless, are open 24/7 and are outdoors. A big expansion is planned.

When washing machines were invented in 1908, they were expensive and used mainly by businesses. Today 97 per cent of British households own one and the laundrettes on the high street are feeling the pinch.

John Quigg, who owns a laundrette in the City, said his monthly gas bill had



Abbott’s baby formula setback deals blow to Reckitt Benckiser

Tom Howard

A court ruling against an American rival in the United States sent shares in Reckitt Benckiser to their lowest level in more than a decade.

A jury in St Louis, Missouri, found that Similac, Abbott Laboratories’ specialised baby formula for premature babies and a product similar to Reckitt’s Enfamil, had caused a girl to develop necrotising enterocolitis, a potentially deadly bowel disease.

The girl, now three years old, is suffering with damage to her brain and digestive system, which lawyers argued the feeding of Similac had contributed to. Abbott, which strongly disagreed with the verdict and will appeal against it, was ordered to pay damages of \$495 million late on Friday.

Shares in Reckitt, which has its own necrotising enterocolitis trial that is due to start in September, tumbled by 393p, or 8.8 per cent, to £40.93 at the close last night. The shares have lost a quarter of their value this year as concerns about the company’s exposure to costly litigation surrounding the disease have deepened.

Hundreds of other lawsuits have been filed in the United States against Abbott and Reckitt. David Hayes, a pharmaceutical industry analyst at Jefferies, the broker, said the stock market had thought Reckitt risked being hit with penalties of up to \$3.5 billion over the next year, but after Abbott’s ruling over the weekend “that risk may be extended”.

Reckitt is one of the world’s largest makers of medicines, bleaches and cleaning products and is behind brands

Behind the story

America’s doctors are worried about the unfolding necrotising enterocolitis litigation (Tom Howard writes). However, their concerns are not to do with the safety of Enfamil or Similac, the milk formulas made by Reckitt Benckiser and Abbott Laboratories, respectively, that are given to premature babies. They are more concerned that, faced with potentially billions

of dollars’ worth of lawsuits, the companies might soon stop making the formulas altogether.

“Special formulas designed for pre-term infants provide an essential source of nutrition,” Benjamin Hoffman, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said. “Recent court cases may jeopardise the availability of these formulas. Courtrooms are not the best place to determine clinical recommendations for the care of infants.

Feeding decisions should be made by clinicians and families.”

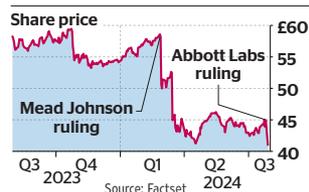
Twice now lawyers in the United States have convinced juries that Reckitt and Abbott failed to properly warn doctors and parents that infants receiving their formulas were at greater risk of contracting the intestinal disease.

Studies have shown that a mother’s breast milk may reduce the risk of necrotising enterocolitis, but Abbott and Reckitt have strongly

denied their formulas cause it. Even the medical community is not sure what causes the disease, which has a fatality rate of between 15 per cent and 40 per cent.

The AAP wants the US government to provide better support to donor milk banks to help them to add to and store their stockpiles. “More than 300,000 infants are born prematurely every year and we must protect the supply of infant formula for those who need it,” Hoffman said.

Wrecked



including Nurofen, Dettol and Vanish. In 2017, it paid \$18 billion for Mead Johnson, the baby formula maker that owns the Enfamil brand.

The acquisition, Reckitt’s largest ever, has proved problematic. Low

birthrates, regulation changes and local competitors have weighed on its sales. This year, in a shock ruling in America, Reckitt was told to pay \$60 million in damages to a mother who said her premature baby had died after consuming Enfamil premature baby formula. Reckitt is appealing against that verdict.

For very premature babies, the mother is usually not lactating and so doctors typically use a combination of donor breast milk and specialised formulas to feed the babies. There are few other options.

Although there is an acceptance that breast milk is better at protecting against necrotising enterocolitis, Reckitt and Abbott deny that their

formulas, which are available only in hospitals, cause the disease. The lawsuits allege that the companies did not warn doctors that babies receiving the formula were at greater risk of necrotising enterocolitis.

Reckitt said: “Specialised pre-term nutrition products for premature babies provide essential, life-saving nutrition to the most vulnerable infants when mother’s or donor milk is unavailable or insufficient.

“We stand behind the safety and efficacy of our preterm nutrition products. Claims by plaintiffs’ lawyers that these products cause necrotising enterocolitis are not supported by the science or the medical consensus and are irresponsible.”



anyone without the facilities for bigger loads. Its units can wash up to 20kg for £11, compared with the average machine's 5kg to 8kg capacity.

The company has 873 laundry units in the UK, four of which are with Motor Fuel Group. The average unit makes £20,000 a year, but those outside London, where more people have a car, are more popular.

Charles Hall, head of research at Peel Hunt, ME Group's corporate broker, said: "Imagine a big family in a small house. They can do a large load in one 20kg machine. There are many uses, but a heavy load is the most popular one."

"Most people do have a home washing machine now, but they break down a lot. It can sometimes take weeks to fix or to get a new one, so people can use them in emergencies."

Launderettes have had a surprising cultural impact, and not just the one in *EastEnders*. The 1985 TV advertisement for Levi's 501, set in a 1950s launderette, catapulted Nick Kamen to stardom.

more than doubled in the past year. "Before the pandemic, people had no free time. I had professional couples come in and dump a load of washing between them and I'd wash it for them."

"Now more people are working from home and they aren't rushing around as much. I used to get people coming to me once a week with work shirts and suits; now they come once every six months with all their cashmere."

Quigg, who has owned his business for 18 years, has doubts about ME's model. "We have terrible weather," he said. "What if it

Me Group's Revolution launderettes take large loads. Dot Cotton ran the one in *EastEnders*. The 1985 TV advert for Levi's made Nick Kamen a star

rains?" Despite the British weather, ME Group said it was opening 300 more forecourt sites after signing a new deal with Motor Fuel Group, Britain's largest independent forecourt provider. It expects its underlying profit to increase by five times over the next ten years to reach £200 million.

The brand is different to high street launderettes in that it targets lorry drivers, large families and

Nikkei denies reports of FT sale plan

Helen Cahill

The Japanese owner of the Financial Times has denied a report that it is considering putting the newspaper up for sale.

Dylan Byers, a media correspondent for Puck, an influential American news website, wrote in a newsletter that board members at Nikkei had "grown impatient" with the FT's performance and were "pushing for a consideration of a sale". He cited three sources on the story and quoted one as saying that the paper had "never really met expectations" after its acquisition.

Byers has been working in journalism for almost 20 years at publications including Politico and CNN and has been described as a "scoop machine" by his peers. He posted the story to his 102,000 followers on Twitter/X on Saturday.

The Japanese company beat off competition from Axel Springer, the

German publisher, with its bid to buy the FT from Pearson for £844 million in 2015.

Responding to the claims, Nikkei said: "The article by Mr Byers is completely baseless."

A spokeswoman for the FT said: "The



Roula Khalaf has been editor of the Financial Times since 2020

Puck speculation is totally untrue."

The FT's print readership in Britain declined 16 per cent last year to 134,774, according to the most recently filed accounts at Companies House. Digital subscriptions rose by 13 per cent to 1,097,340, driven by a 17 per cent increase in corporate subscriptions. The FT's digital content revenues rose by

16 per cent to £193.1 million. The group's revenues fell by 5 per cent to £458 million, with operating profits down 7 per cent at £29 million.

The broadsheet has been criticised in some circles for its editorial attitudes towards the UK, with Stephen Glover, a columnist for the Daily Mail, writing in 2016 that the FT had "consistently talked down the British economy" in the lead-up to the European Union referendum, while Matthew Moulding, founder of the London-listed THG retail group, has accused the newspaper of deciding to run a negative story about his company "come what may".

The paper supported Labour in the general election despite the party's plan to scrap non-dom tax rules, a policy with implications for its wealthy readership. Roula Khalaf, editor of the FT, said in an interview with Der Spiegel, the German magazine, that the newspaper had "always seen its role as holding business to account".

Licht facing a life or death dilemma

BUSINESS COMMENTARY Alistair Osborne



Companies are rarely immune from legal risk. But few would envy the choice of Kris Licht, the Reckitt boss. Should he threaten to withdraw a product that can save the lives of premature babies? Or simply put his faith in an American justice system that, on present form, is out to get him?

Licht has only been running the Durex-to-Dettol combine since October last year. But in that time the shares are down from £58 to £40.93, mainly due to a problem not of his making. His inheritance included a howler of a deal: Mead Johnson, the \$16.6 billion baby milk buy of Rakesh Kapoor, one of his predecessors.

Kapoor's immediate successor Laxman Narasimhan had already written Mead down by £8.5 billion, while selling off its China wing. But now both Mead and rival infant formula maker Abbott Laboratories have become embroiled in US litigation over whether their products cause necrotising enterocolitis (NEC), an often fatal bowel disease in premature babies.

Both deny it does. But that didn't stop an Illinois court jury in March ordering Reckitt to pay \$60 million to Jasmine Watson, whose premature baby died after being fed Mead's Enfamil formula milk in intensive care. Or for a jury in St Louis, Missouri, to up the stakes last week by ordering Abbott to pay \$495 million, including \$400 million in punitive damages, to an Illinois mother Margo Gill: the reason for the latest 9 per cent drop in Reckitt shares. Barclays' analyst Iain Simpson called the Abbott ruling "close to a worst-case scenario" — and not least for Licht, who last week belatedly put Mead up for sale. Finding a buyer looks even more fanciful now.

In litigious America, lawyers have lined up another thousand cases, picking jurisdictions such as St Louis where juries in poor areas are said to be particularly amenable to big awards. And, proving how tricky it is to quantify the risk, analysts put Reckitt's potential liability at anywhere between £400 million and £8 billion: the latter the amount the shares are down since March, with the selling looking overdone.

Both companies say there is no scientific evidence for the court verdicts — or for the plaintiffs' claims that they failed to warn them about the risk of NEC. Breast milk has been shown to reduce the risk of the disease. But, in cases of babies of 22 weeks, mothers' milk is not always an option. And, crucially, the companies say their formula milk is administered by neonatal experts and only after discussions with the babies' parents.

Indeed, it can be a lifesaver for the 300,000 premature infants born in the US each year: a reason the American Academy of Pediatrics has backed the companies, calling their "special formula ... a routine and necessary part of care of these preterm infants". The NEC Society itself has also warned that the "litigation may result in unintended harmful consequences".

Hence the dilemma for Licht and Abbott boss Robert Ford. Neither

make any real money from their formula milk for pre-term babies: Abbott's sales are just \$9 million, with Reckitt's similarly low. But withdrawing the product could cause many more baby deaths, with Licht adamant he won't risk that.

Yet, without that threat, what's to push US politicians into granting the two companies the sort of immunity from civil action that vaccine makers get under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986? And, failing that, the only way out looks to be via long legal appeals or some sort of class-action settlement. Either way, it'll be a while before Reckitt investors are shot of their problem child.

NatWest farrago

Bang goes the "Don't Tell Nige" campaign. M&C Saatchi had been limbering up for something catchy to lure us all into the great NatWest share sale — "The bank that banned Nigel Farage", say, complete with the strapline "disingenuous grifters need not apply".

Not any more. The spoilsport new chancellor Rachel Reeves has canned the whole retail shebang, preferring to sell down the taxpayer's remaining one-fifth stake, worth about £6 billion, to her new friends in the City.

Of course, she's right. Her predecessor, Jeremy Hunt, had dreamt up the NatWest sale as a nice, discounted pre-election bribe — at least until Rishi Sunak scotched that with his daft decision to go for a July election. As Reeves put it, "having considered advice, I have concluded that a retail share sale offer would involve significant incentives that could cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of pounds" — up to £450 million on her maths.

She'd assumed a retail offer of £1 billion to £3 billion at a "10-15 per cent" discount: a pointless giveaway, whatever the joys of encouraging more people to buy shares. And not least with NatWest showing signs of improvement, even if a share price of 37½p is still well adrift of the 502p at which we had to rescue the bank via 2008's £45.5 billion bailout.

Still, it does remove a bit of political theatre, given how the new MP for Clacton had been urging the "great British public" not to put their money into the lender that "debanked" him. No doubt he'll find something else to moan about soon.

Off-Peaky travel

No mention of the Peaky Blinders Express: the Birmingham-to-London line better known as HS2, ideal for visiting the relatives in Wormwood Scrubs. There was talk Reeves would cancel the final five-mile stretch from Old Oak Common to Euston as part of her spending cuts. Not a word, though, in her 27-page missive. The £65 billion-plus line should never have been built. But it would be even more ridiculous if it never made it to central London.

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GSK agrees Flagship deal to boost pipeline

Alex Ralph

GSK has entered into a partnership with an American life sciences venture capital investor to develop new respiratory and immunology medicines in a deal potentially worth up to \$7.2 billion.

The FTSE 100 pharmaceuticals group has agreed a collaboration with Flagship Pioneering to discover and develop a portfolio of future "transformational" medicines and vaccines.

The two companies initially will fund up to \$150 million to identify the most promising concepts for further research with companies associated with Flagship, which include Moderna, the American vaccines company, and Foghorn Therapeutics, another Nas-

daq-quoted biotechnology specialist. Then they plan to amass a portfolio of up to ten novel medicines and vaccines that GSK will have an exclusive option to develop.

Flagship and its associated companies will be eligible to receive up to \$720 million in upfront, development and commercial milestone payments from GSK, plus pre-clinical funding and tiered royalties, for each programme. The collaboration with Flagship covers areas of GSK's therapeutic specialisms and forms part of wider attempts to build its drugs pipeline.

GSK said that a committee of the European Medicines Agency had recommended expanding the approval of GSK's respiratory syncytial virus

vaccine for the prevention of lower respiratory tract disease from adults aged 60 and above to include adults aged 50 to 59 who are at increased risk for the disease.

The company also has reached a confidential settlement to resolve another Zantac case filed in state courts in Illinois. The company is battling tens of thousands of cases in the United States alleging that the old heartburn drug caused cancer. GSK said it did not admit any liability in the settlement and reiterated that the "scientific consensus is that there is no consistent or reliable evidence that ranitidine increases the risk of any cancer".

Shares in GSK were up by 4p, or 0.3 per cent, at £15.57 at the close.

Business

Retail rues summer damp squib with sales in decline

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

Poor weather and people setting aside cash to take advantage of attractive rates on savings accounts have led to a sharp decline in retail sales.

The weighted balance of retail sales has fallen to -43 per cent during July from -24 per cent in June, according to the CBI, in a second consecutive month of declining sales. Retailers said they also expected sales to drop in August.

Wet weather at the beginning of July was identified by the business lobby group as a key driver of weak consumer spending. Wholesale sales volume contracted at a quicker pace this month, as did purchases in the motor trade.

The CBI said retailers were struggling to offload stock because of sluggish consumer demand, with unsold product levels reaching their highest levels since June last year.

"Retailers anticipate annual sales volumes to continue falling in the next month," the CBI said. "Sales are also set to remain below seasonal norms in August. However, some firms expressed hope for an improvement in market conditions following the general election."

Separate economic surveys that covered activity during May and June have suggested that households and businesses paused spending during the election campaign. Economists have speculated that Labour's landslide victory will contribute to an improvement in GDP growth by removing political uncertainty from spending decisions.

Martin Sartorius, principal economist at the CBI, said: "July marked a disappointing month for the distribution sector, with retailers feeling the sting from a harsh mix of unfavourable weather conditions and continuing market uncertainty."

"While the downturn in sales volumes is set to continue next month, some firms expressed hope for an improvement in market conditions post-general election. The sector will now look for the new government to deliver on its bold reform agenda outlined in the King's Speech to supercharge growth to effectively aid



Wet summer weather put a dampener on retail sales as rain kept people away from high streets and shopping centres

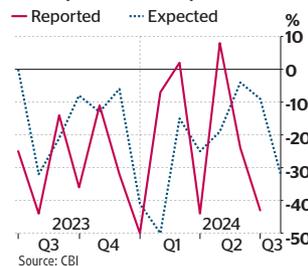
households' finances and offer market stability."

Consumer spending has been underwhelming this year, weighed down by a higher propensity to save among households and by unsettled weather over the summer months. According to the Office for National Statistics, retail sales dropped by 1.2 per cent during June.

The UK relies heavily on household consumption to generate GDP growth, with the services industry representing about two thirds of all output. Expected interest rate cuts by the Bank of England this year could encourage a rise in consumer spending by reducing incentives to save and making borrowing more affordable.

Gathering gloom

The weighted balance of retail sales has fallen to -43 per cent, compared with expectations of -9 per cent



Inflation has stabilised at 2 per cent for the past two months, in line with the Bank's target, and wages accelerated by 5.7 per cent on an annual basis in the past three months.

Economists expect pay growth to outstrip inflation for the rest of the year, helping living standards to recover from the cost of living crisis. An increase in real wages has raised hope that retail sales will strengthen as the year progresses.

The economy has outperformed analysts' expectations recently, with the Office for National Statistics estimating that GDP expanded by 0.7 per cent in the first three months of 2024, the fastest growth in the G7 group of large economies.

Gilts rally as investors get ready for rate cut

Alex Ralph, Jack Barnett

Government bonds rallied yesterday, pushing the yield on benchmark debt to its lowest level since last month as investors positioned themselves for the Bank of England to cut interest rates this week and after a big update from the chancellor on the public finances.

Ten-year gilt yields fell by 0.07 percentage points to 4.02 per cent and the rate on two-year government gilts dropped by a similar degree to 3.84 per cent.

Members of the Bank of England's nine-strong monetary policy committee are on the brink of voting in favour of lowering borrowing costs for the first time since March 2020. Investors think there is a 50-50 chance that the MPC will cut the base rate from 5.25 per cent, a 16-year high, on Thursday. Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank, could cast the deciding vote on whether to hold or cut borrowing costs.

The rally coincided with a Commons' address by Rachel Reeves in which she announced spending cuts before an autumn budget to help to fill a £22 billion fiscal hole she claimed Labour had inherited from the Tories. They include cutting winter fuel payments for wealthier pensioners and axing transport and hospital programmes.

John Higgins, chief markets economist at Capital Economics, said investors appeared to "remain confident in the Labour Party's commitment to fiscal discipline, but the disputed 'revelation' that the country's public finances are in even worse shape than previously assumed may quell the feeling of optimism that temporarily buoyed sterling and some UK financial assets in the immediate aftermath of this month's general election."

Business groups expressed disappointment at infrastructure projects being cancelled. Shevaun Haviland, of the British Chambers of Commerce, said that "efficient management of public finances and services is a key factor in setting the framework for economic growth", but added that "infrastructure projects inject wealth into local areas, as well as having a multiplier effect on investment".

Mortgage approvals at a six-month low

Jack Barnett

Mortgage approvals have slipped to their lowest level since January as high interest rates continue to subdue activity in the housing market.

The number of mortgage approvals slowed to 59,976 in June from 60,134 the previous month and below analysts' expectations, data from the Bank of England showed. The figure is still above the monthly average of 48,000 in 2023.

The report further illustrates that high interest rates are deterring some people from pushing ahead with house purchases. The Bank said that the effective interest rate on newly drawn mortgages had jumped by three basis points to 4.82 per cent, while the rate on all mortgages rose to 3.65 per cent.

There is hope that the central bank will lower its base interest rate for the first time in four years on Thursday, with financial markets pricing in a largely even chance of a loosening in policy. Rates stand at 5.25 per cent.

Such a move could prompt mortgage

providers to lower their rates, potentially boosting home purchases. High street lenders have started reducing their rates in anticipation of rate cuts by the Bank. Last week Nationwide offered products with rates below 4 per cent for the first time since February.

"We expect mortgage approvals to

59,976

Mortgage approvals in June, down from 60,134 the month before

Source: Bank of England

improve in the second half of the year, reaching 65,000, as mortgage interest rates fall back in response to Bank of England interest rate cuts," Rob Wood, at Pantheon Macroeconomics, a consultancy, said. He noted that lump sum mortgage repayments had eased to £1.2 billion in June, the lowest amount since January 2016, indicating that consumers' anxieties about how high

interest rates would go had faded. Gross lending of £20.8 billion in June outstripped the £18.7 billion in repayments in that month.

Members of the Bank's ratesetting monetary policy committee have emphasised that services inflation remains elevated and that could convince them to keep rates on hold for an eighth meeting in a row. Services inflation edged down to 5.7 per cent last month.

There also were signs within the Bank's research that people remain cautious about increasing their borrowing. Credit card spending totalled £500 million in June, down from £600 million in the previous month, probably a reflection of weak retail sales, which slipped by 1.2 per cent in the month. In total, consumer borrowing was £1.2 billion, down from £1.5 billion in May.

Households added £8.4 billion to savings accounts in June, up from an increase of £6.5 billion in the previous month but broadly in line with the recent trend.

Housing market confidence is returning, says Zoopla

Emma Taggart

House prices are expected to have increased by 2 per cent by the end of the year, according to Zoopla.

The property website's forecast comes amid expectations that the Bank of England will cut interest rates in August or September.

Increases to mortgage costs have reduced the confidence of would-be buyers over the past year. However, activity in the property market is hotting up, with Zoopla saying that the supply of homes for sale last month was up by 16 per cent from June 2023.

House prices climbed by 0.1 per cent in June year-on-year to reach £265,000 on average, with the rise in the supply of homes on the market limiting price inflation.

Zoopla said the average estate agent had 33 homes for sale, more than at any point in the past half-a-dozen years.

Buyers were paying 96.8 per cent of the asking price on average, the highest level in 18 months. Confidence in the housing market has improved as buyers adjust to mortgage rates above 4 per cent and as activity in the property sector picks up.

"There are clear signs of growing confidence," Richard Donnell, executive director of research at Zoopla, said, "with many more homes for sale and buyers paying an increased proportion of the asking price. We expect to see more sales, but house price inflation will be kept in check by more supply and affordability pressures keeping a lid on buying power, especially across southern England."

In Northern Ireland, prices have risen by 3.9 per cent annually, but in the east of England they are 1.2 per cent lower. Over the past year prices have risen the most in Belfast, Manchester and Liverpool.

Mehreen Khan

China's green energy drive can't last if the rest of the world won't buy it



“Amid speculation about how Labour plans to fill a £20 billion “black hole” in the public finances, one money-raising option that Rachel Reeves won't be announcing in her first budget is tariffs on Britain's trading partners, notably China.

Depending on how and at whom they are targeted, tariffs can be a lucrative source of revenues for cash-strapped governments. Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, has even touted an outlandish replacement of all US income tax with revenues from his proposed 10 per cent tariff on American imports, rising to 80 per cent on China, should he win November's election in America.

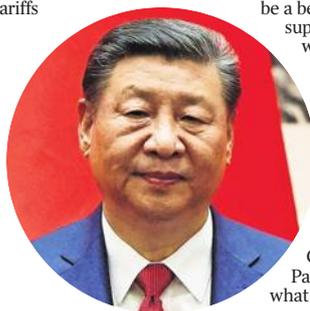
Despite Britain's fiscal predicament, Labour hasn't been tempted to follow suit. Reeves has confirmed that the country will not impose a levy on China's electric vehicles because “we don't want to close the UK economy down to imports and exports”.

She told Bloomberg TV: “Our view is that where possible we trade, we cooperate and we challenge in areas where it's important to challenge. We benefit from trade links around the world, including with China.” At this month's meeting of G7 trade ministers, Jonathan Reynolds told his counterparts that the UK would remain “vigilant” but had no plans to apply tariffs on the world's second largest economy.

The decision makes Britain a transatlantic outlier after the Biden administration imposed a 100 per cent tariff on Chinese electric vehicles, while the European Union has imposed levies of up to 38 per cent.

Labour's justification for staying away from tariffs echoes the Conservatives, who also invoked the benefits of free trade and open markets. However, Labour hasn't used the more contentious claim that China is providing a

President Xi is prioritising export-oriented growth



global public good in driving down the cost of green technologies. This justification is cited by climate activists and by some progressive economists, who note that China should not be punished by richer nations for an industrial policy that the rest of the world, especially poorer countries, ultimately will benefit from by accelerating global decarbonisation.

The most-cited case is solar panels, where China has stolen a march on industrial powerhouses such as Germany with huge state-subsidised investment in photovoltaic panels over the past decade. China dominates 80 per cent of the market for solar panel production, undercutting American equivalents by more than two thirds on price. Developing nations in Africa have been among the beneficiaries of China driving down costs, with the continent's imports of solar technologies rising by 130 per cent over the first half of 2023.

The numbers involved in China's emergence as a green energy superpower are staggering. Climate Energy Finance, a Sydney-based think tank, says China will hit its aggressive 2030 renewables production target by the end of the month, producing 1,200 gigawatts. The country is generating 10GW of solar and wind power every fortnight, the equivalent of the output of five nuclear power stations a week, according to Climate Energy Finance. China was also responsible for the bulk of the 50 per cent increase in global renewable electricity production last year.

While richer countries flounder, China is dominating market share in the clean energy technologies of the future and is flooding the rest of the world with them. The question for western nations, including Britain, is whether Beijing will turn out to

be a benevolent energy superpower or one that will tie countries into a pernicious dependency.

America clearly thinks the latter and European nations are slowly being convinced of it, too. Proving malignant intent on the part of the Chinese Communist Party is difficult, but what is clear is that the

strategy of mass investment in advanced manufacturing is now an existential one for China's economy.

With growth faltering since the pandemic, President Xi has doubled-down on an economic model that prioritises export-oriented growth and that has graduated from cheap, low-end goods to rivaling developed nations in clean energy, chips and artificial intelligence, a shift that has been called the “China shock 2.0”. Xi's plan relies on the rest of the world being willing consumers of Chinese goods, rather than Beijing rebalancing its economy in favour of domestic demand. This seems to derive from his moralistic view of material consumption as promoting laziness and sowing the seeds of civilisational decline. At the party's recent third plenum, Xi mentioned “consumption” only four times in his speech. Investment was mentioned 28 times.

China's green energy abundance, therefore, is not necessarily the fruits of a strategy that prioritises decarbonisation but at its root is still driven by a deep-seated mercantilist theory of economic growth. This is now coming up against a global trading environment that is no longer gratefully receiving made-in-China goods, in the richer West and even parts of the poorer global South.

Most worryingly for Xi, who is preparing for the hyper-protectionism of a potential Trump presidency, is that trading partners in Brazil and India also have put up barriers against the glut of Chinese steel and electric vehicles. Last month Indonesia said that it was imposing tariffs of up to 200 per cent on key Chinese textile imports.

For the West, the choice is not between whether we have a prosperous China pumping out goods to the rest of the world and helping to prop up the global economy, or a slow growth model that can't revive domestic consumption without state help. If there are simply not enough buyers for Chinese wares, then, at best, tariffs could force Beijing into an economic rebalancing that it is unwilling to voluntarily undertake.

Mehreen Khan is Economics Editor of *The Times*

James Kirkup

Blunt talking can help ministers to capitalise on PFI-style deals

Get ready for an unlikely summer blockbuster: **PFI 2 — The Handback.** The stage is set perfectly for a new age of British public-private partnerships, where the private sector provides the capital to build and maintain public sector facilities in return for a long-term income stream.

Dire public finances mean there isn't any money for nice things. Yet politics demands nice things. If a Labour government with a huge majority can't fix up dilapidated schools, crumbling courts, potholed roads and creaking hospitals, voters — and some of its own MPs — may wonder what it's for. So logic points the Labour government to deals that allow the owners of capital to receive a return on investment by allocating that capital to the provision of things used by the public sector.

Led by The Future Governance Forum, a think tank linked to Sir Keir Starmer, policy wonks have been at work on new partnership models. The mutual investment model in Wales, where local authorities sit on the boards of project companies, is getting a lot of attention. So are Australian community-based models. The government has a need for new partnerships, ideas for making them work and strong interest from the private sector. Full steam ahead?

Not quite. Writing here this month, Dominic O'Connell detailed the difficult history of the last Labour government's bright idea on this area, the private finance initiative. That history could undermine Labour's future agenda, for, just as Labour needs new deals with the private sector, PFI will return to the headlines and will remind voters of what they don't like about such deals. About 700 PFI deals, including 200 schools and 160 hospitals, are outstanding. Remaining payments to contractors will exceed £150 billion.

Over the next few years, those schools and hospitals and hundreds of other sites will come home to roost, handed back to public ownership as PFI deals expire. But in what condition? And will continuing payments be required to contractors for further work and maintenance?

Big money and fuzzy contracts mean that expiries are often disputed. PFI “handbacks” are a feast

for lawyers and a nightmare for Labour strategists. Every one is a potential source of headlines about a cash-strapped local authority or NHS body having to pay more taxpayers' money to wicked-sounding financiers far away.

This is an open goal for populists. Last week the Commons heard from Lee Anderson, an MP for Reform. Nigel Farage's party isn't known for its interest in financial engineering, but Anderson was complaining about the financing of King's Mill Hospital in Nottinghamshire, rebuilt under PFI by Skanska, the Swedish contractor, almost 20 years ago. Recent local headlines say things like “Hospital still costing taxpayers £1 million a week” and “More than £1.5 billion still to pay on local hospital”. Reform's interest is a sign of things to come. PFI will return to the political agenda and will spark public concern just as Labour needs a very different and more positive debate about public-private deals.

Experts at Grant Thornton say that some tensions can be eased if public and private sector participants adopt a “collaborative mindset” and avoid combative language. Replacing “handback” and “expiry” with “transition” could help, they suggest. That's sensible, but it's not enough. A politically viable return to PFI-style deals requires a blunt, brave conversation with the electorate. Many PFIs delivered real improvements in public services. Investors and policymakers should say so.

The fact that those investors made a return should be addressed frankly, too. Ministers should state plainly that return on investment is a feature, not a bug, and that without it capital will go elsewhere. Nor is there anything dishonourable about making a profit from health, education and the rest. Workers who provide their labour for public services can rightly expect to be rewarded; providers of capital should, too.

These are tough messages for Labour politicians to deliver. But they're not as tough as having to tell the public you're not going to fix those dilapidated schools and hospitals after all.

James Kirkup is a partner at Apella Advisors

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Business

Writedown in Chinese beer gives Heineken a hangover

Dominic Walsh

An €874 million writedown in the value of its Chinese beer business has driven Heineken to a first-half loss.

The Dutch brewer said the impairment charge related to concerns over slowing domestic demand in China. That, in turn, pushed the company to a €95 million net loss for the six months

to the end of June, reversing from a €1.16 billion profit in the same half last year, and sent its shares tumbling by €9.20, or 10.1 per cent, to €81.50 in Amsterdam.

The company does not own its Chinese beer interests outright, but has significant holdings and joint ventures. It said the hit was against the carrying value of CBL, which has a controlling

interest in China Resources Beer. "The decline was driven by concerns on the macroeconomic environment in China and a negative view on consumer goods companies seen as more exposed to soft consumer demand," it said.

Excluding one-off and exceptional items, Heineken said it had achieved a net profit increase of 4.4 per cent to €1.2 billion and that it was lifting its

forecasts for the full year. In February, the brewer had predicted low-to-high-single-digit annual adjusted operating profit growth. It now expects growth of between 4 per cent and 8 per cent, slightly below what the market had been expecting.

Analysts said the figures were a mixed bag, with organic beer volume growth of 2.1 per cent being below consensus forecasts of 3.4 per cent, while volumes of the Heineken brand had increased by 9.2 per cent. Sales growth of 6 per cent was also slightly below consensus expectations.

Operating profit growth of 12.5 per cent was short of a consensus forecast of 13.2 per cent and Laurence Whyatt, a consumer analyst at Barclays, described the new guidance as "underwhelming. This set of results has not achieved the new aim of management to 'be more boring'."

Trevor Stirling, at Bernstein, a broker, said there was "food for bulls and bears" in the results, with "most regions slightly below expectations". He noted that performance had been particularly strong in the Americas, up by 37 per cent, as lower transport and commodity costs brought wider profit margins.

Heineken boosted its revenue by 5.9 per cent to €17.8 billion, with operating profit rising by 12.5 per cent to €2.1 billion. Net profit rose by 4.4 per cent to €1.2 billion.

Dolf van den Brink, 51, Heineken's chief executive, said the revenue increase had been driven mainly by the growth of its largest operating companies in Nigeria, Mexico, Brazil, Vietnam and India. He said the group was upping the ante of low and no-alcohol products, notably Heineken 0.0, where volumes grew by 14 per cent. It also was exploring "beyond beer" opportunities, including cider.

In Britain, volumes outpaced the wider market, led by Birra Moretti and Beavertown. Cruzcampo, its Spanish lager, became the largest industry launch in the off-trade in more than a decade across beers, wines and spirits.

Heineken dates back 150 years to when Gerard Heineken, then 22, bought his first brewery in Amsterdam. It now has more than 300 brands, including Amstel, Tiger and Sol.



Lamborghini accelerates before switch to electric

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THE TIMES

Business briefing

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Lamborghini has claimed its best half-year results as it prepares to enter the world of the electric sports car (Robert Lea writes).

The famous Italian marque, which is owned by Volkswagen, reported that the 5,558 vehicles it had delivered in the first six months of 2024 had

brought in €1.62 billion of revenue, an average of more than €290,000 per vehicle, and had produced operating profits of €458 million. The carmaker, which shifted 10,000 units for the first time in a year in 2023, said that all the latest numbers were records.

Lamborghini, which is based near Bologna, is

building three models: the Revuelto, the classic low-slung Italian sports car and heir to the Aventador, above; the Urus, a crossover upright estate; and the Huracan supercar, which goes into retirement at the end of the year to be replaced by the Temerario.

The latest model will be a hybrid supercar as

Lamborghini takes the road to decarbonisation. Last year the company unveiled its first all-electric concept model, the Lanzador.

Britain is Lamborghini's third largest market, behind Germany and the United States, the largest destination for its vehicles, accounting for nearly 30 per cent of sales.

Plans for more marketing cost Entain

Dominic Walsh

Plans to increase marketing spending in the United States have prompted the City's punters to reduce their bets on the gambling group behind Ladbrokes, Coral and Sportingbet.

Shares in Entain fell sharply after BetMGM, its partnership with America's MGM Resorts International, published a first-half trading update in which it warned that underlying losses for the full year would double.

The update revealed a 6 per cent increase in net revenues for the joint venture to \$1 billion after a strong marketing effort to boost growth.

That advertising push led to an underlying loss of \$123 million and the company said it expected that figure to double to \$246 million on the back of a further marketing drive.

BetMGM operates an online business, deploying brands including Borgata, PartyCasino and PartyPoker. The core BetMGM brand is available in 29 American markets as well as in

Puerto Rico. The extra investment, expected to be funded by bank debt within the joint venture, is likely to be focused on iGaming, which covers online casinos, roulette, card games and bingo, in the second half of this year.

Entain said that iGaming generated more than \$400 million of profit on an

\$123m

Underlying first-half loss in MGM Resorts' joint venture with Entain

Source: Entain

annual basis. On a longer-term forecast, Entain retained its confidence about hitting a target of \$500 million of underlying earnings, but said that would be achieved in the coming years rather than in 2026.

"The first half of this year has been very important in laying the groundwork for BetMGM's future," Adam Greenblatt, 49, the chief executive of

BetMGM, said, adding that 2024 had been "a year of investment, focusing on improving our customer experience and stepping up our level of investment in players.

"We are encouraged to see this strategy delivering accelerating momentum. We have exceeded our goals for both acquisition and retention, which should lead to higher year-over-year revenue growth for the second half of this year into 2025," Greenblatt said.

David Brohan, an analyst at Goodbody, the broker, said that he remained positive about Entain and its prospects, but noted: "Increased spending in the second half and the subsequent increased loss for 2024 may get a mixed reaction.

"The company has been clear that 2024 will be an investment year. However, it is important that the pathway to profitability does not veer off track."

Shares in Entain closed down by 52½p, or 8.1 per cent, at 596½p.

Pearson pins its hopes on AI as profits decline

Emma Taggart

Pearson wasted no time in looking forward to a future where rapid advances in artificial intelligence will revive its growth after the technology and education publisher reported a 10 per cent decline in its first-half profits.

"The only risk [of AI] I worry about is that we don't innovate fast enough," Omar Abbosh, the former Microsoft executive who took over as its chief executive in January, said. "That's why we put Pearson on the front foot to make sure that we make AI available throughout all of our platforms."

Abbosh said the group's assessments and verification division would become more important as AI use continued to grow. "Have we looked at the use of AI for uncovering AI? Yes, of course we have. Those tools are out there. I wouldn't say they are bomb-proof today. "In a world of AI, anyone can make up almost anything and yet at some point you're going to want to know that your surgeon has the skills they say they have and so the assessment of skills becomes incredibly important."

The appointment of Abbosh 58, as chief executive, replacing Andy Bird, 60, was widely seen as a shift towards Pearson modelling itself as a technology-focused business.

The FTSE 100 company reported pre-tax profits of £212 million for the six months to June 30, down from £236 million during the same period last year. Sales in the first six months of 2024 fell by 7 per cent to £1.75 billion, from £1.88 billion previously. Despite the dip in sales, the group said it was on track to meet its annual forecasts in both 2024 and 2025.

Pearson reported a 2 per cent in-

crease in sales in its assessment and qualifications division, its biggest unit, during the six-month period. Pearson also received a boost from its English-language learning unit, which achieved an 11 per cent increase in sales.

However, contract losses in its virtual school business resulted in a 1 per cent decline in sales in the division and revenues from higher education dipped by 2 per cent.

Pearson said the continued development of a growing number of AI models would "significantly change the world of work and skills requirements". Its workforce skills unit looks set to benefit from this shift as Pearson suggested employers would "need to find new pools of talent [and would] contin-



Omar Abbosh said his main concern about artificial intelligence was not innovating fast enough

uously develop and verify the skills of their workforces".

The company also believed that labour shortages and the growing number of baby boomers (born from 1946 to 1964) leaving the workforce presented a chance for it to expand by addressing the skills shortfall in the labour market.

Pearson was founded as a construction business in the 1840s and over the years has had interests in banking and television. The company moved into the publishing industry in the 1920s when it bought several regional newspapers in Britain. It owned the Financial Times, which it sold in 2015.

Pearson shares fell by 6p, or 0.6 per cent, to £10.45 last night.

Gourmet figures help put spring in Cranswick's step

Emma Taggart

A rebound in sales of its premium-range products during the first quarter have boosted the fortunes of Cranswick.

The FTSE 250 producer of fresh pork, bacon, gourmet sausages and poultry reported a 6.7 per cent increase in revenues during the 13 weeks to June 29, driven by higher sales volumes. The increase came as Cranswick won a series of new contracts and as the brand's supermarket customers returned to promotional activity.

Adam Couch, 55, the group's chief executive, said: "We have made a strong start to the year, delivering another quarter of strong revenue growth, while continuing to provide excellent service levels, ensuring full availability of our products for our customers and the UK consumer."

Cranswick said that trading had been strong, with "robust demand continuing in our core UK food categories". The group had reported like-for-like revenue growth of 6.4 per cent in the first quarter.

The pork and poultry producer said that its premium product ranges had performed particularly well during the

period, with an easing in input costs reflected in the price at the till. Strong demand for the group's premium ranges in Britain offset lower meat prices in Asia and the rest of Europe.

"Export sales volumes were strongly ahead, but were offset by reduced pricing in the Far East and European Union, albeit there are early signs that Far East prices are starting to firm," the company said.

In recent months food producers in Britain have made gains as consumers increase their spending and as input costs ease. It comes after a long period of high food prices inflation coupled with supply issues.

Revenues from Cranswick's pet products division were "strongly ahead" of the same period last year as the company continued to process its supply deal with Pets at Home.

Cranswick, based in Hull, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, dates back to the 1970s, when a group of farmers clubbed together to make and sell pig feed. It employs more than 15,000 people in 23 facilities supplying supermarkets with everything from gourmet pasties to continental meat products.

Shares in Cranswick rose by 60p, or 1.3 per cent, to £46 last night.

Business

The Times unit trust information service

Table with columns: Sell, Buy, +/-, % for ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS. Includes sub-sections for UK Corporate Bond and UK Equity.

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Europe's wind of change blowing in AI

After working with America's technology powerhouses, three founders set up Mistral, Katie Prescott writes

Arthur Mensch is a celebrity in Paris. The entrepreneur is the co-founder and chief executive of Mistral, Europe's answer to OpenAI, which has shot to fame not only in his home country but also in Silicon Valley.

Named after the strong, cold wind that blows from southern France into the Mediterranean, Mistral is hailed by Mensch, 32, a former academic, as "a French wind and a wind of change". In case there's any doubt about its origins, the name Mistral was chosen, too, because it included the letters IA, in that order, which stand for *intelligence artificielle*, French for AI.

It was a wind of change that seemed to come from nowhere. The company was started only last year, founded by Mensch, Guillaume Lample and Timothée Lacroix, also in their early thirties. The former researchers from Google DeepMind and Meta met while at the École Polytechnique and École Normale Supérieure, two of France's *grandes écoles*, which specialise in science and engineering. After developing AI for American companies, they set out to do the same in Europe.

Mistral secured funding from some of the best-known American investment firms, including Lightspeed Venture and Andreessen Horowitz, at astounding speed. Eric Schmidt, the former Google chief executive, put money in, as did famous French names such as Xavier Niel, the telecoms billionaire.

Paul Murphy, part of the team that brought Mistral to the attention of Lightspeed, is a partner at the fund's London office and sits on the company's board. "The founders are probably three of the top ten people from a research perspective in the field of AI right now," he said "When we invested in the company, it was already off to the races."

The business builds large-language models for generative AI, technology trained on vast swathes of data so that it can learn from examples to create new content, such as writing stories. It has a chatbot called Le Chat (pronounced as per the French for cat, rather than the English for talking) and a platform for developers called La Plateforme. In February Mistral AI announced a revenue-sharing partnership with Micro-



Arthur Mensch and his co-founders have built Mistral into a global presence in artificial intelligence in barely a year

soft to distribute its models. It has similar deals with AWS and Databricks.

It celebrated its first birthday in June by announcing that it had raised further funding of €600 million from backers including General Catalyst, Nvidia, Salesforce, Samsung and IBM. This took the total raised by the business in less than a year to more than €1 billion, giving it an extraordinary valuation of almost €6 billion, propelling it into a leading position in AI but keeping it under its founders' control.

There are only a handful of so-called frontier AI companies. Most are in the United States, so sovereignty is highly prized. Mistral's European roots matter and may become even more impor-

tant. On July 19, Yann LeCun, Meta's chief AI scientist, wrote: "Meta will *not* release the multimodal versions of its AI products and models in the EU because of an unpredictable regulatory environment."

Unlike OpenAI and Anthropic but akin to Meta, Mistral's technology is "open source", so the company shares its tools and software with researchers, developers and companies to refine and modify. This, Mensch argues, is an effective way to improve the product.

Murphy said it also gave Lightspeed the conviction to invest. "AI is very different to other forms of software and that there's no way that the most confidential data is going to get sent over to a

black box." Mistral AI focuses on complex use cases in finance, technology and the public sector. It recently hired Marjorie Janiewicz, a former chief revenue officer at Foursquare and a French technology ambassador in San Francisco, to run its American operations. Although the team remains very small in comparison with its peers, it is hiring carefully. Mistral has compiled a list of 50 key people in AI that it wants to hire and has managed already to bring some of them on board.

Many onlookers wonder: "Why France?" Mensch attributes the success of AI across the Channel to the country's renowned computer science and maths educational system, along with a

renaissance of its technology scene. Over the past decade, Paris has nurtured more and more technology businesses, championed by President Macron, who vowed to make France a "start-up nation", setting his sights on challenging the dominance of the sector by America and China.

"Europe has been producing some of the best researchers and scientists and technology for decades, but never got any credit because they would just get exported to the US," Murphy said. "Now you have some of the best companies in the world being built across Europe and in the UK by people from Europe and the UK, invested in by funds like us that have a base in the region. So the whole life cycle is finally working in a way that it has always worked in the US and Silicon Valley."

Macron has stood firmly behind the company. When Europe was creating AI legislation, he fought against strict rules for a more pro-innovation approach. And political ties extend within the business. One of the company's board members is Cédric O, 41, a former French digital minister who evangelises about the importance of fighting to accelerate European technology.

"Geopolitics and technology, it's a war of movement, not of position," he recently told Sifted, a media platform covering the start-up sector. "The last time France thought it had solved its problem by taking shelter behind the Maginot line, it didn't end so well."

Beyond the hype, there remain challenges. Not least because the political wind has changed. France's uncertain electoral outcome has created instability, not to mention uncertainty over whether the pro-business landscape will be maintained. Then there are practical considerations. Mistral has warned of a lack of data centre and grid capacity in Europe to train its models.

"We are reaching the capacity," Audrey Herblin-Stoop, its head of public affairs, said. "We need to build data centres and ensure there is enough electricity for the scale of AI development today."

Although the company's valuation is enormous and the backing significant, it is still less than its Silicon Valley competitors. OpenAI has received \$13 billion from Microsoft, Anthropic almost \$8 billion and Elon Musk's xAI \$6 billion, funds needed for the costly computing power, infrastructure and talent that underpins them. Above everything, Mistral's challenge remains managing its next stage of growth in a highly competitive and rapidly changing world.

Keywords advisers net £85m treasure

Ben Martin

Bankers, lawyers and other City advisers working on the £2.1 billion deal for Keywords Studios are set to earn as much as £84.7 million in fees from the sale of the video games studio.

The bidding consortium led by EQT, the Swedish private equity firm, expects to spend up to £59.5 million on advice and financing for its takeover of the London-listed company, while Keywords estimates that its bill for the deal will amount to as much as £25.2 million, documents show.

The lion's share will go to the investment banks on the transaction, which include JP Morgan and HSBC, which are acting for the bidders. The EQT consortium said that fees for its financing arrangements would amount to £26.6 million and that other financial advice would cost it £16.8 million. Keywords, which is being advised by



Keywords has worked on franchises including Rise of the Tomb Raider

Deutsche Numis and Robey Warshaw, said that it would pay £20 million for financial advice.

Law firms are expected to earn as much as £12 million, while accountants and public relations advisers will earn paydays from the takeover.

Based in Dublin and listed on Aim, London's junior stock market, Keywords provides services to the video

games industry including game development, audio and art and has worked on franchises such as *Fortnite*, *Call of Duty* and *Rise of the Tomb Raider*. EQT is working with Temasek, the Singaporean sovereign wealth fund, and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board on the takeover. The consortium is offering Keywords investors £24.50 a share to take the company private.

The acquisition is part of a wave of dealmaking in recent months as private equity firms and other bidders take advantage of cheap valuations of London-quoted companies relative to their peers listed on exchanges overseas. Other recently agreed takeovers include Nationwide Building Society's £2.9 billion swoop on Virgin Money UK, the high street bank, and the \$5.3 billion purchase of Darktrace, the cybersecurity company, by Thoma Bravo, an American private equity investor.

Philips wakes from crisis over sleep apnoea devices

Robert Lea

Philips is seeking to put turbulence over faulty sleep apnoea devices behind it after reporting a strengthening financial performance in the first half.

With sales, orders and profit margins heading in an upward direction, Roy Jakobs, chief executive of the Dutch industrial group, hailed a success driven by a "focus on enhancing execution, improving end-to-end supply chain resilience and increasing agility and productivity".

It is two years since Jakobs, 50, was promoted to the top job after the abrupt departure of his predecessor. The former boss went following a welter of legal actions in the United States as Philips began recalling machines to treat a condition in which sufferers stop

breathing when they are asleep. The ventilators and respirators produced by Philips were alleged to be discharging carcinogens into the airways of users. The company reached a \$1.1 billion settlement this year.

Philips was known for its televisions and radios, but has switched its focus to health technology. It now produces an array of scanners and X-ray machines, diagnostics for cancers, heart disease and respiratory issues.

For the second trading quarter of 2024, Philips reported group sales of €4.5 billion from year-on-year like-for-like growth of 2 per cent. Order intake was up 9 per cent, with operating income of €816 million.

Shares in Philips, quoted in Amsterdam, jumped by €3.47, or 14.6 per cent, to €27.21 last night.

Business Markets

William Kay Tempus

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips



New grouping will be tried and tested

ALLIANCE WITAN

Market cap £5bn | Annual dividend 26.48p

This autumn's combination of Alliance Trust and Witan Investment Trust not only will create one of the biggest groups in the sector, but also has sparked a debate about the future of UK mutual investing. The terms will not be finalised until shareholder votes in September, but essentially Witan will be wound up, its funds placed with Alliance and Witan's investors will receive Alliance shares pro rata to the size of the two concerns.

With £5 billion in assets, in terms of global investment trusts the combine will be neck-and-neck with F&C Investment Trust and behind only Scottish Mortgage, the sector's Goliath. It almost certainly will qualify for membership of the FTSE 100 share index.

That will increase demand among institutions that are mandated to hold shares in the entire index and will match the Alliance management's desire to put more pension funds, insurance companies and other investment groups on the share register. Not all retail investors are happy about that, fearing that newcomers will unduly influence policy, but that should be outweighed by the resulting liquidity.

Given that the Alliance and Witan portfolios and strategies substantially overlap, in search of similar mixtures of capital and income growth, the

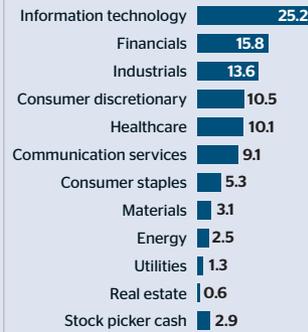
A stronger alliance



ADVICE Buy
WHY Alliance Witan managers have every incentive to make the merger work

main benefit of the deal is to spread costs more widely. Pretty well the same number of managers will be deploying the much larger fund. Not many of the Witan staff are likely to be keen to decamp from Queen Anne's Gate, near Buckingham Palace, for Alliance's more bracing base in Dundee. Andrew Bell, Witan's chief executive, will retire. Since Willis Towers Watson, the risk manager, took over the Alliance

Portfolio allocation, %



funds seven years ago, shareholders' total returns have been 105 per cent, compared with Witan's 65 per cent. What that translates into next year will be keenly dissected by the rest of the investment trust industry to see if it provides a blueprint for further combinations.

It also turns the spotlight on what might be the best management model. Alliance and Witan are run on multi-manager lines, which means that Willis Towers Watson employs several fund managers covering different specialisations, regional or industrial. F&C is also under the multi-manager umbrella. Scottish Mortgage, though, is run solely by Baillie Gifford and is focused on the United States. That

has made its performance more volatile, but over the past ten years it has stood out by riding the growth of the likes of Nvidia, Moderna, Amazon and Tesla.

Alliance and Witan would argue that this is not the sort of experience they are offering. Their goals are consistency and reliability, with relatively gentle growth in capital and income, so they are targeting a very different breed of investor, one that's older and more risk-averse.

Alliance and Witan boast 56 and 48 consecutive years of dividend increases, respectively, a selling point that the combined group will not surrender lightly. Alliance aims to outperform the MSCI All-Country World index by 2 per cent a year, net of costs, over rolling three-year periods. However, as interest rates come down, Scottish Mortgage should begin to motor.

Alliance Witan is a tried-and-tested machine that will appeal to institutions and investors content with a middling income level today on the assurance that it will rise steadily in future. In the half-year to the end of June, Alliance reported a 9.5 per cent net asset value total return while the MSCI AC World index grew by 12.2 per cent. Dean Buckley, the chairman of Alliance, said that underperformance was mainly because it had avoided fashionable AI stocks. Alliance paid a 6.62p second interim dividend, making 13.24p so far this year, a 5.8 per cent increase. The plan is to pay at least another 13.24p in the year's third and fourth dividends.

TRAVIS PERKINS

Market cap £2bn | After-tax profit £38m

After several mainly miserable years, life may be looking up for Travis Perkins. As a building materials supplier, its followers should welcome a pro-housebuilding government. In addition, the week after the election it announced a new chief executive who can be expected to make the most of the more promising environment.

What can go wrong? Well, quite a lot, actually. First, it is clear that the

strategy of Angela Raynor, the deputy prime minister and housing secretary, is based on scrapping many planning rules treasured by local government. Moreover, the proposed nibbling at green belts around the country is likely to face fierce resistance from the ever-active not-in-my-back-yard lobbies. These hurdles are not insurmountable, but they could delay the moment when the promised building boom hits companies' bottom lines.

Peter Redfern will not formally place his favourite photos on the chief executive's desk until September 16, but no doubt preliminary discussions about next

steps are under way. He brings many years' experience at the helm of the much bigger Taylor Wimpey. He quit that housebuilder two years ago to spend more time with his family, but now says: "I want fresh challenges because, at the end of the day, what tends to get me up in the morning and drive me forward is solving an interesting problem."

He will have looked at Travis over the years and doubtless will have had ideas for sorting it out, even though it is a very different animal from Taylor Wimpey. As a supplier, it constantly suffers the effect of customers destocking and restocking. Profit margins have been squeezed

in sales to the big builders. At the same time, it has overreached trying to take its Toolstation retail business on to the Continent. Adjusted operating profit for 2023 was £180 million, short of forecasts of £240 million, and investors can expect more horrors this year once Redfern has written off as much as he can. After that, though, Travis' shares could pick up.

ADVICE Hold
WHY Worth waiting until the picture clears next year

NEWS IN BRIEF

Smithson is off-colour

Smithson Investment Trust, a £2 billion fund run by Terry Smith's Fundsmith, has compared its performance so far this year to "watching paint dry". In commentary alongside the trust's half-year results, Simon Barnard, the investment manager, said "there is no doubt that this is a tough time in the market for smaller companies" and that the "level of asset flows being attracted to certain US large-cap stocks is potentially sucking the air out of entire asset classes". The trust's net asset value fell by 1.8 per cent during the period.

Vitol's record dividend

Vitol Group paid a record dividend of \$6.5 billion last year as the global energy crisis boosted the world's largest independent oil trader. The payout represents an average of about \$14 million for each of the 450 or so employees who own the Swiss-based Dutch multinational. Vitol has paid out more than \$25 billion to its partners over the past 15 years, Bloomberg News reported, citing the company's audited accounts.

Pharma rebellion

Alliance Pharma has suffered a shareholder revolt against a series of resolutions at its annual meeting, including over executive pay. Almost 38 per cent opposed the Aim-quoted company's remuneration report and a similar number against the re-elections of Richard Jones, its senior independent non-executive director, and Martin Sutherland, an independent non-executive. Alliance said it would "consult with shareholders to understand their views".

SIG issues warning

Hopes for a recovery in construction demand have eluded SIG, the roofing, building and insulation group. Before its half-year results due next week, the Sheffield-based company said its sales had fallen in May and June by 7 per cent. That meant, it said, operating profits in the first half would be between £10 million and £12 million, with the result for the year between £20 million and £30 million. Shares in SIG fell by almost 2p, or 7.2 per cent, to close at 24½p last night.

PRICES

Major indices

New York		
Dow Jones	40,539.93	(-49.41)
Nasdaq Composite	17,370.20	(+12.32)
S&P 500	5,463.54	(+4.44)
Tokyo		
Nikkei 225	38468.63	(+801.22)
Hong Kong		
Hang Seng	17238.34	(+217.03)
Amsterdam		
AEX Index	904.12	(+2.52)
Sydney		
AO	8224.30	(+70.90)
Frankfurt		
DAX	18320.67	(+96.88)
Singapore		
Straits	3444.18	(+17.71)
Brussels		
BEL20	4116.86	(+28.66)
Paris		
CAC-40	7443.84	(-73.84)
Zurich		
SMI Index	12214.90	(-26.59)
DJ Euro Stoxx 50	4815.39	(-47.11)
London		
FTSE 100	8292.35	(+6.64)
FTSE 250	21252.07	(-104.23)
FTSE 350	4586.27	(-0.01)
FTSE Eurotop 100	4028.47	(-17.07)
FTSE All-Shares	4542.18	(-0.16)
FTSE Non Financials	5446.91	n/a
techMARK 100	6967.12	(-34.64)
Bargains	n/a	
US\$	1.2848	(-0.0018)
Euro	1.1878	(+0.0023)
SDR	0.98	(+0.00)
Exchange Index	84.09	(-0.12)
Bank of England official close (4pm)		
CPI	134.07	Jun (2015 = 100)
RPI	387.30	Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)
RPIX	381.90	Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)
Morningstar Long Commodity	677.16	(+5.72)
Morningstar Long/Short Commod	4703.45	(+27.75)

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	SEP 24	98.370	98.930	98.340	98.690	247463	743958
	Dec 24	97.920	98.210	97.920	97.280	4	184
	3-Mth Sterling	Dec 24					
3-Mth Euribor	SEP 24	96.505	96.520	96.505	96.515	96032	526059
	Dec 24	96.820	96.895	96.820	96.840	138124	572269
	3-Mth Euroswiss	Dec 24					
FTSE100	SEP 24	8327.0	8373.5	8290.5	8300.0	80168	482215
	Dec 24	8409.0	8426.0	8359.5	8357.5	5	424
	FTSEurofirst 80	Dec 24					
	Dec 24				6456.5		
	Dec 24				6508.0		

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Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 6,00pm)		Brent (6,00pm)	
	SEP 24	79.68-79.66	Dec 77.72-77.70
	Oct	78.89-78.88	Jan 77.31-77.29
	Nov	78.2-78.22	Volume: 2,204,913
Crude Oils (\$/barrel FOB)			
Brent Physical	80.06	-1.79	
BFOE(Oct)	79.51	-1.93	
BFOE(Oct)	78.87	-1.78	
WTI(Sep)	78.95	-1.67	
WTI(Oct)	74.52	-1.71	
Products (\$/MT)			
Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)			
Premium Unld	850.00	854.00	-3.00
Gasoil FCC	724.50	725.50	-3.00
3.5 Fuel Oil	447.00	447.00	+0.00
Naphtha	637.00	631.00	-3.00
ICE Futures			
Gas Oil			
Aug	730.75-730.50	Nov	730.25-730.00
Sep	732.50-732.25	Dec	725.00-724.75
Oct	734.25-734.00	Volume:	740,884
RobustaCoffee			
Sep	426.2-425.8	May	3744-3725
Nov	411.8-411.3	Jul	3815-3601
Jan	396.9-396.3		
Mar	384.6-383.6	Volume:	18358
White Sugar (FOB)			
Reuters			
May	520.50-520.10		
Aug	513.20-512.70		
Oct	537.50-537.40	Oct	507.70-504.20
Dec	525.70-525.40	Dec	538.00-502.20
Jan	523.30-522.90	Volume:	77,353

BONFANT/DIEGO/GETTY IMAGES



Smaller McBite of burgers

Customers cutting back on eating out has taken a chunk out of sales at McDonald's (Emma Taggart writes). The fast-food group's global sales for the quarter to the end of June fell by 1 per cent to \$2.46 billion, the first such decline in more than three years. The slowdown came as a shock to analysts, who had expected quarterly revenue growth of 0.5 per cent. Chris Kempczinski,

the chain's chief executive, said customers were searching for promotions and deals and had been "more discriminating with their spend". High levels of food prices inflation have forced people to search for affordable food options and to eat at home. This has led to a slowdown in demand for fast-food at companies such as Domino's Pizza. Several chains have introduced promotions as they seek to win back customers. Comparable sales for McDonald's in the United States fell by 0.7 per cent during the

quarter, compared with a 10.3 per cent increase during the same period last year. International sales fell by 1.1 per cent amid weakness in the French market. Revenues for the McDonald's franchise section, where its restaurants are operated by local partners, fell by 1.3 per cent as conflict in the Middle East and reduced demand in China weighed on the division. Investors were still hungry for the company's shares, which rose by \$9.48, or 3.8 per cent, to close at \$261.48 in New York.

Bridgepoint could still have plenty of sizzle

Jessica Newman Market report

If you've been among the doubters thinking that Bridgepoint's sheen will wear off any time soon, then think again. At least, that's the advice from Bank of America, which thinks there is the potential for the listed private equity company behind Burger King UK and Hobbycraft to exceed its recently upgraded earnings forecasts. A couple of weeks ago Bridgepoint lifted its outlook for the present year and 2025 on the back of a performance in the first half of 2024 that had proved better than expected. It now thinks that performance-related fees will represent 25 per cent of its total income this year and in 2025, higher than normal, while fee-related

Wall Street report

New York's indices were largely flat at the start of a busy week featuring a US Federal Reserve rate decision and results from a series of Big Tech companies. The Dow Jones industrial average fell by 49.41 points, or 0.1 per cent, to 40,539.93.

earnings margins are set to be about 37 per cent, up from a previous forecast of between 30 per cent and 35 per cent. "Middle-market private equity has been more insulated from the realisation logjam and deal volumes have held up better," Hubert Lam, a Bank of America analyst, said. "As such, we think Bridgepoint is well positioned to succeed in the current environment." Additionally, the company's 33 per cent discount to its European peers was "substantial", in Lam's view. He and his team are confident that Bridgepoint's capital markets day in October, which should provide investors with clarity on its strategy and new initiatives, will act as a catalyst for the shares. As the bank repeated its "buy" rating and raised its price target to 300p from 270p, Bridgepoint's shares rose 6½p, or 2.4 per cent, to 277p, their dearest price in more than five months. The wider market's strong start

LEISURE

Martin sells Wetherspoon stock

Sir Tim Martin has cashed in just over £10 million of stock in his JD Wetherspoon pubs chain (Dominic Walsh writes). The company, known for its inexpensive pints and cheap curries, issued a stock exchange statement confirming his sale of 1.36 million shares at 739p each. Martin, 69, collected £10.06 million from the sale. The statement said that Martin's holding had fallen to a shade over 30.38 million shares, valuing his remaining stake at £224.5 million



Sir Tim Martin collects £10 million, cutting his stake below 25 per cent

and cutting it below 25 per cent. At its peak in 2015 JD Wetherspoon had 951 pubs and its founder and chairman still insists that his "best estimate" is that the company has the potential eventually to reach 1,000 in Britain. At present, on the back of rising taxes, soaring staff costs, the pandemic and a cost of living crisis, the company has a trading estate of 801 pubs. Despite this reduction, Martin said that total sales were about a third higher than in 2015 and sales per pub had increased by about half since then. Martin said most of the disposals had been of smaller and older sites or of pubs close to another Wetherspoons. Its shares fell by 19½p, or 2.6 per cent, to close at 730p.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
JD Sports Fashion	Bullish note from RBC 4.1%
NatWest	Recent strong results 2.6%
Bridgepoint	Bank of America reiterates "buy" rating 2.4%
ME Group	Signs deal with Motor Fuel Group 2.1%
Cranwick	Strong first quarter 1.3%
Anglo American	Copper prices fall -1.7%
JD Wetherspoon	Sir Tim Martin trims stake -2.6%
Entain	BetMGM annual losses set to be higher than anticipated -8.1%
Reckitt Benckiser	Negative read-across from Abbott trial verdict -8.8%
Energean	Worries about escalation of conflict in Middle East -9.7%

failed to survive to the end of the session. The FTSE 100, up 1 per cent in morning dealings, finished the day only 6.64 points, or 0.1 per cent, higher at 8,292.35, while the FTSE 250 gave back early gains to close down by 104.23 points, or 0.5 per cent, at 21,252.07. Fears about the escalation of conflict between Israel and Hezbollah prompted investors to sell shares in Energean, the oil and gas company that has operations in Israel. Its shares sank 106p, or 9.7 per cent, to 989p. Burberry was out of favour again, falling 11½p, or 1.6 per cent, to 735½p. Analysts at HSBC, who reminded clients that Joshua Schulman, the luxury goods group's new boss, would maintain the same strategy as his predecessors, said: "It is difficult to understand how a strategy that has not been efficient in the past seven years and under two chief executive's tenures could suddenly become efficient." They argued that despite

the shares having almost halved in the year to date, making Burberry the worst performer in the FTSE 100 this year, the label's valuation was still not attractive "as prospects are very blurry for 2025 and beyond". One retailer that was on investors' shopping list was JD Sports Fashion, which rose 5p, or 4.1 per cent, to 128½p. The sportswear group was given a leg up by RBC, the broker, which reckons it is set to benefit from a rise in demand this autumn. Joining JD Sports at the top of the risers' board was AstraZeneca, which advanced 184p, or 1.5 per cent, to £123.64 as large companies such as the drugs business, which derive a lot of their earnings from overseas, benefited from a weak pound. Mkgango Resources was a mover on Aim, climbing 1½p, or 30.4 per cent, to 6p after the Canadian rare earths explorer said its subsidiary had signed a mining development agreement with the government of Malawi for its Songwe Hill deposit.

London Grain Futures				
LIFFE Wheat (close €/t)				
Nov	190.00	Jan	190.00	Mar
May	201.00	Jul	201.00	Volume: 919
London Metal Exchange (Official)				
Cash	3mth	Dec 22		
Copper Gde A (\$/tonne)	8905.0-8906.0	9032.0-9033.0	9210.0-9220.0	
Lead (\$/tonne)	2052.0-2054.0	2080.0-2082.0	2165.0-2170.0	
Zinc Spec HI Gde (\$/tonne)	2613.0-2614.0	2665.0-2667.0	2720.0-2725.0	
Alum HI Gde (\$/tonne)	2203.0-2203.5	2262.5-2263.5	2422.0-2427.0	
Nickel (\$/tonne)	15575.0-15585.0	15890.0-15895.0	16975.0-17025.0	
Tin (\$/tonne)	29150.0-29155.0	29300.0-29350.0	29155.0-29205.0	

Gold/Precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Because of a technical issue, the gold fix prices are from Friday.

Bullion: Open \$2396.45

Close \$2377.01-2377.30 High \$2401.18

Low \$2369.86

AM \$2374.55 PM \$2386.10

Platinum \$ (£) (E21.46)

Silver \$27.57

Palladium \$ (£)

European money deposits %

Currency	1mth	3mth	6mth	12mth
Dollar	0.13	0.20	0.29	0.55
Sterling	4.20	5.30	4.74	0.81
Euro	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.50

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks 5.25 ECB Refi 4.25 US Fed Fund 5.25-5.50

Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 8.74

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.8198-8.8674	8.8634-8.8648	132ds	416ds
Euro	1.1885-1.1820	1.1879-1.1879	10pr	31pr
Montreal	1.7727-1.7813	1.7811-1.7813	11ds	36ds
New York	1.2807-1.2888	1.2848-1.2849	3pr	8pr
Oslo	14.083-14.176	14.144-14.148	73ds	191ds
Stockholm	13.867-13.936	13.920-13.923	210ds	666ds
Tokyo	196.81-198.59	197.85-197.87	84ds	255ds
Zurich	1.1332-1.1390	1.1389-1.1390	38ds	117ds

Premium = pr Discount = ds

Dollar rates

Australia	1.5295-1.5305
Canada	1.3862-1.3863
Denmark	6.8984-6.8989
Euro	0.9245-0.9245
Hong Kong	7.8102-7.8103
Japan	15.93-15.939
Malaysia	4.6365-4.6415
Norway	11.004-11.013
Singapore	1.3438-1.3439
Bahrain dinar	0.4807-0.4878
Brazil real	7.2487-7.2525
Euro	1.1878-1.1879
Hong Kong dollar	10.035-10.036
India rupee	107.63-107.64
Indonesia rupiah	20921-20935
Kuwait dinar KD	0.3918-0.3941
Malaysia ringgit	5.9397-5.9461
New Zealand dollar	2.1892-2.1897
Singapore dollar	1.3275-1.3276
S Africa rand	23.725-23.735
U A E dirham	4.7153-4.7160

Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia \$	1.966	
Canada \$	1.780	
Denmark Kr	6.863	+0.03
Euro	1.188	
Hong Kong \$	10.034	
Hungary	467.047	+4.58
Indonesia	20914.159	-24.14
Israel Shk	4.775	+0.26
Japan Yen	197.907	+0.56
New Zealand \$	2.190	+0.01
Norway Kr	14.135	-0.04
Poland	5.098	+0.04
Russia	111.124	+0.46
S Africa Rd	23.745	+0.26
Sweden Kr	13.912	+0.02
Switzerland Fr	1.139	
Turkey Lira	42.422	+0.01
USA \$	1.285	

Rates supplied by Morningstar

MORNINGSTAR Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by Morningstar or this publication

Business Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by Morningstar. The yield is the sum of a company's trailing 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.

12-month high and low High/Low prices for UK equities are based on closing prices. Investment trust high and low prices are based on intra-day figures.

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
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Automobiles & parts

395%	132%	Aston Martin Lag	159%	-	4%	-4.3
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Banking & finance

236%	136%	Abrdn	167%	-	1%	8.6
7%	3%	Acuity RM	3%	-2.3
2837	2058	Admiral	2671	+ 14	2.7	24.1
19	10%	ADVF	14	...	...	-2.5
452	249	AJ Bell	452	+ 8	2.5	22.9
26561%	2140%	Aon Corp	24945%	...	...	24.6
1105	877%	Arbutnot Bkg	972%	...	...	4.8
7%	4	Argo Group	4	...	...	-0.1
232%	166%	Ashmore	170	- 3%	9.7	11.7
1529%	1225	Aus New Z	1465%	- 17%	...	12.5
497	369%	Aviva	493	+ 3%	6.7	13.2
414	289	Banco Santander	379%	- 1%	3.9	6.6
5420	3065	Bank of Georgia	4505	+ 95	5.0	5.4
232%	129%	Barclays	232%	+ 1%	3.4	8.9
...	...	Blue Star Capital	...	...	...	-0.1
535	350	BP Marsh&Ptnrs	535	+ 7%	2.0	14.7
14%	4	Braveheart Inv	5%	...	...	2.1
...	...	Brevin Dolphin	515	+ 1	...	28.1
289%	16%	Bridgespot	277	+ 6%	3.2	30.7
37	26%	Brisk Sec	29	...	...	5.9
286	244%	Chesna	253	+ 3%	9.4	20.5
...	...	City of Lon Gp	10	+ 1	...	-0.6
410	301	City Lon Inv Gp	374	+ 5	8.7	12.9
943	299%	Close Bros	524%	- 24	8.2	5.5
339%	89%	CMC Markets	321	...	...	25.6
1326%	769%	CommerzBk	1252%	- 15%	...	8.1
1404%	800%	Deutsche Bk	1205%	- 8%	...	4.9
225%	147	Direct Line Ins	191%	+ 3%	2.1	12.1

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
3180	1858%	3I Group	3042	+ 14	2.8	40.6
355	289	3I Infrastructure	346%	- 2%	3.3	-7.9
1653%	1126	Aberforth Smr	1650	+ 22	3.2	-12.8
1264	980	Alliance	1216	+ 2	1.9	-3.4
426%	323	Asia Dragon Tr	410	+ 1	1.5	-16.1
210	160	Athelney Trust	190	+ 5	5.0	-4.5
250%	186	AVI Global Trust	238	- 2	1.4	-10.2
243	175	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	184%	- 2%	0.8	-10.8
101%	75%	BaillieGifford Eu Gr	93%	...	...	2.3
793	633	Baillie Gifford JnTr	740	+ 6	1.1	-12.7
142	104%	Baillie Gifford SN	114%	...	...	-3.3
180%	141%	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	179	+ 1%	1.9	-5.1
87%	60	Bal Comm Prop	85%	+ 1%	4.6	-27.7
118	91%	Bankers Inv Trst	114%	+ 1%	2.0	-10.8
388	325%	BH Macro	385	+ 1	...	-32.5
1064	715	Biotech Growth	1038	- 22	...	-5.2
127	104	BlckRck Com Inv	117	+ 1%	3.4	-10.8
159%	131%	BlckRck Frt Inv	144%	- 1%	3.8	-8.1
653	457%	BlckRck Gt Euro	599	- 4	1.0	-5.6
208	170	BlckRck Inc & Gwth	199	+ 1	3.5	-12.2
1606	1146	BlckRck Smr	1592	+ 14	2.7	-11.7
207	172%	BlckRck Sustain Amer	199	+ 1%	3.5	-10.1
668%	503	BlckRck Thrgmontn	662	+ 3	2.2	-10.3
634	490	BlckRck Wild Min	551	+ 3	5.9	-4.3
1423%	1065	Brown Adv US Sm	1395	+ 5	...	-11.9
1420	964	Brunner	1380	+ 5	1.6	-4.9
3700	2593%	Caledonia Inv	3600	+ 5	1.2	-35.4
447%	371%	City of Lon IT	442	- 2%	4.9	-2.2
95	60	Crystal Amer Fd	90	...	...	22.6
516	406	CT Priv Eq Ord	468	+ 8	3.9	-5.8
96	72	CT Property	73%	- 1%	4.1	-34.5
343	266%	CT UK Caplnk	340	+ 3	3.6	-9.5
88%	75	CT UK HIT B	88%	+ 1%	...	-0.7
95%	71	CT UK HIT	92	+ 1%	5.9	-4.9
590	448%	Dunedin Ent	503%	+ 2%	5.7	-22.3
778	629	Edinburgh IT	773	+ 4	3.6	-9.5
162%	120%	Eidn Widw	161%	+ 1	...	-11.7
320	273%	EP Global Opp	292	- 1	1.3	-21.6
92%	73	European Assets	86%	+ 1%	5.6	-11.7
917%	748	European Opp Trust	880	- 2	0.3	-10.6
1058	825%	F&C Invest Tr	1038	+ 4	1.3	-10.8
549%	473%	Fidelity Asian Val	494	+ 1	2.6	-9.6
246	161%	Fidelity China Sp	186	- 1%	2.7	-10.9
740	569	FidlyEngMkt	707	- 4%	2.0	-11.9
412%	311%	Fidelity European Trust	396	+ 1	2.0	-4.9
186%	151	Fidelity Jap Tr	168%	+ 2	...	-10.5
335	252	Fidelity Svc Pl	332	+ 1%	2.8	-9.5
920	788%	Fins Gwth & Inc	849	- 1	2.0	-7.4
84%	59%	GOR Infrastructure	83%	+ 1%	6.3	-35.8
381%	22%	Gdn Prop Prc Mkt	33	...	...	-38.7
152%	127%	Greenoat UK Wind	141%	+ 1%	6.3	-16.9
230%	176	Hansa Investment	221	- 1	0.8	-43.2
221	175	Hansa Inv Co A'	211	- 2	0.8	-45.9
2772%	2114%	Hvstest Gbl Pt Eq	2630	- 60	...	-42.8
1370	1120%	Head Euro Foc	1235	+ 1%	2.1	-11.7
171%	136	High End Inv	165	...	...	6.0
969%	626	High Smr	662	+ 10	2.9	-14.4
2285	1590	Herald	2220	+ 10	...	-12.4
530	357	Hgcapital Trust	519	- 10	1.3	-4.6
141	111	HICL Infra	125%	+ 2%	5.2	-22.6
...	...	Highbridge Tactical	...	...	...	-61.1
1338	1046	IGC Ent Tr	1330	+ 20	1.6	-8.7
419%	331%	Imax Evn Mkts	396	...	...	1.0
349	283	Inveso Asia Tr	319	- 2	4.2	-12.3

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
9674	8038	Lonk Stk Ex Gp	9468	- 10	1.2	68.5
238%	183%	M&G	210	+ 2%	9.5	16.9
277%	202	Man Fin	246%	- 13%	4.9	16.1
26	15	Manx Fin	19	...	...	2.4
2%	1	Marehale Cap	1%	...	...	-3.9
798	490	Mattoli Woods	795	...	...	3.4
...	...	Metal Tiger	9	+ 1%	...	-2.0
118%	28%	Metro Bank	40	...	...	2.9
...	...	Nat Aus Bk	1927%	+ 24%	...	16.9
371%	176%	NatWest	371%	+ 9%	4.7	7.9
343	332%	Numis	343	...	...	...
514%	280%	Oneasings Bank	514%	- 13	6.0	7.9
688	453%	PayPoint	688	...	...	2.7
...	...	PCF Group	...	...	...	-0.4
560%	441%	Phoenix	540	+ 2	9.7	...
1101	684%	Prudential	696	+ 11	2.4	14.3
3	1/2	Quantum Blockchain	1/2	...	...	-2.2
127%	71%	Quilter	127%	- 2%	4.0	41.1
60%	...	Randall & Quilter	...	...	...	...
1848	1458	Rathbone Grp	1788	+ 4	4.8	35.2
...	...	Riverfort Global Opp	...	...	...	1.6
277%	162%	Rockwood Strategic	535	+ 1%	6.1	7.1
2450	1800	S&U	1870	- 5	9.6	8.0
...	...	Sancus Lending Grp	...	...	...	-0.1
47%	39%	Schroder REIT	47%	+ 1%	...	79.0
463%	347%	Schroders	386%	+ 1%	5.5	15.9
1183	402	St James Place	558%	+ 3	4.2	...
785%	573%	Stand Chart	726%	+ 3%	2.9	8.2
12	4%	Starvest	11%	+ 1%	...	-1.9
60	45	STM Group	52%	...	...	1.1

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
592	290	Billington Hldgs	465	- 15	4.1	5.8
235	170	Boot (Henry)	228	+ 7	3.3	11.8
423	304%	BREEDON	423	+ 2	3.2	13.6
444%	291%	Br Land	403%	+ 3%	5.7	-2.5
160	90	Caledonia Trst	135	...	...	...
68%	49%	Cap & Regnl	67%	+ 1%	8.5	35.5
2450	2300	Cardiff Prop	2300	...	...	0.9
1%	1%	Carecapita	1%	...	...	-0.2
163%	118%	Clarke T	159	...	...	...
...	...	Countryside Partner	229%	+ 14	...	16.7
21%	11%	Craven House	21%	+ 1%	...	-0.1
2402	1779	Derwent London	2262	+ 20	3.5	-3.3
4%	4	Delphin Capital	4%	+ 1%	...	-5.1
23	15%	First Prop	18%	...	...	...
47%	33	Fletcher King	46	...	...	1.6
71	34%	Fontons Group	67%	- 1%	1.3	39.6
307	193%	Galifford Tr	299	- 15	3.6	21.6
495	261%	Genius Group	488	- 9	2.4	3.6
619	353	Gleeson (M)	575	- 1	2.2	19.7
1051%	751	Grafton	1051%	+ 1%	3.5	12.1
274%	218%	Grainger	241	+ 3	2.9	68.8
369%	295%	Great Portland	349%	+ 2	3.4	5.2
30%	20%	Hamerson	28%	...	...	-0.4
175	95%	Harworth Gp	166	- 1%	0.8	14.4
425	275	Heath (Samuel)	290	...	...	4.1
279%	185	Helical PLC	228	+ 3%	2.1	-1.6
880	587%	Highcroft Invs	587%	- 12%	...	-2.5
196%	100%	Ibstock	183%	+ 3%	3.7	34.6
225	178	James Halstead	184	- 1	4.4	17.2
1490	673	Keller	1444	- 48	3.0	11.9

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	Yield %	Dividend %	P/E
38	23%	SIG	24%	- 1%	...	-6.4
70%	45	SigmaRoc	68%	...	...	36.2
101%	78%	Sirius Real Estate	94%	...	...	5.5
168%	117%	Smart (D)	125	...	...	2.5
30	15	Steppe Cement	15	...	...	5.3
159%	104%	Taylor Wimpey	159%	+ 1%	6.0	16.1
160	110	Town Centre	137%	- 2	3.5	5.4
955	692%	Travis Perkin	955	- 4%	1.8	53.6
170%	130%	Tritax Big Box Reit	164%	+ 1%	...	44.1
68%	44	Tritax Eurobox	67%	- 1%	...	...
409%	236	Tyman	409%	+ 2	3.3	20.0
1057	851	Unite	947%	+ 7%	3.7	38.5
1373	682	Vistry Group	1373	- 3	21.5	...
92	69%	Warehouse REIT	86%	+ 1%	...	-3.2
645	458	Workspace Grp	622	+ 4	4.5	-6.2

Equity prices Business

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/ -	Yld%	P/E
20%	6%	IMCO	7	...	-1.8	
...	...	Mediclinic	501	+	1/2	31.3
1%	1/2	M Pharm	1/2	...	-1.1	
75%	58	NOX Group	61	-	1	26.9
100%	81.63	Invictus	CHF 98.07	+ 0.62	-	28.7
2%	2	Omega Diags	2 1/2	...	-1.6	
14	1/2	Oveco Bio	1/2	...	-0.3	
450	166%	Orford Biomedica	380 1/2	+ 12 1/2	-2.3	
2%	1/2	Physiomics	1/2	...	-1.7	
8%	2 1/2	Proteome Scis	3 1/2	-	1/2	38.8
5960	4093	Reckitt Benckiser	1093	- 393	4.2	10.0
37%	8%	RUA Life Sciences	101	-	1/2	-1.2
105%	10%	Sarum Hlths	32	...	-5.1	
1197%	896%	Smith & Neph	1128	+ 6	2.7	47.7
266	210	Spire Hare	253 1/2	+ 1	0.8	38.4
9%	3%	Synalgen	4 1/2	-	1/2	-0.9
74	49%	Tissue Regenex	67	-	1 1/2	...
12%	4	Totally	9 1/2	+ 1 1/2	1.4	...
498	327%	Tristel	492 1/2	+ 7 1/2	2.7	39.3
14%	1%	ValRx	2 1/2	...	-1.1	

Industrials

107	50%	Accsys Tech	55	...	-2.4	
4630	342 1/2	BASF	3420 1/2	- 61 1/2	...	...
4473%	2137%	Bayer DM50	2309 1/2	- 2 1/2	-0.5	
175	25	Biome Tech	25	...	-0.6	
1%	...	Bytrol	...	...	-0.2	
...	...	Camb Gbl Timber	6 1/2	...	-9.0	
88%	66	Coats Grp	87 1/2	+ 1/2	2.5	21.7
5956	3899	Croda	4104	+ 28	2.6	33.5
845	230	Copper (James)	274	+ 4	2.5	8.0
156%	107%	Elementis	151 1/2	+ 2	1.0	41.0
15%	4%	Hardiex	7 1/2	...	-2.9	
1870	1446%	Johnson Math	1640	- 15	4.6	28.1
1706	131 1/2	Mondi	1544 1/2	- 1	4.0	15.6
115	87%	Robinson	115	...	4.7	...
456	263 1/2	DS Smith	456	-	3.9	13.6
730%	486%	Sinre Pacific	682 1/2	+ 4 1/2	-	3.4
9%	2	Simpl Environ	2 1/2	...	-1.9	
629	122%	Synthomer	256	- 28	-	32.1
2456	1985%	Takeda Pharm	2174 1/2	+ 29 1/2	...	-4.7
1%	1/2	Velocys	1/2	...	-0.2	
1594	1082	Victrex	1086	- 4	5.4	31.3
477%	325%	Wynnstay Group	370	-	4.6	12.2
574	276	Zetofarms	484	+ 2	1.4	26.0

Leisure

130	70%	888 Hlths	85 1/2	- 1	-6.7	
759	507	Accesso Tech	700	...	4.8	
530	525	Best of the Best	530	...	5.9	
1377	811 1/2	Carnival	1212 1/2	- 14 1/2	47.9	
192%	116	Celcor	177 1/2	...	23.9	
424%	304%	Dominos Pizza	315	- 9 1/2	3.2	11.2
1403%	596%	Entain	596 1/2	- 52 1/2	2.7	-4.2
1475	1255	Flutter Ent	1505	- 295	...	...
21%	29%	Gaming Reims	37 1/2	+ 1 1/2	18.9	
290	265	Heavtree	265	...	2.1	8.5
160	145	Heavtree A	160	...	3.5	5.1
120	45	Hermes Pacific	52 1/2	...	...	...
8752	5986	InterContinental Hotels	5986	+ 18	1.5	23.1
1	1/2	Minoan Grp	1/2	...	-9.2	
312%	199%	Mitch & Butlers	308	- 7	41.6	
178	82%	On The Beach	145	- 1 1/2	0.6	15.4
103%	62%	Rank Grp	69 1/2	- 1/2	-3.4	
68	40	Restaurant Gr	64 1/2	...	...	...
63	42	Rotala	63	...	...	...
175	62%	Sportech	84	+ 9	...	...
257%	144%	SSP	173 1/2	+ 2 1/2	2.1	...
2%	1%	Tasty	1 1/2	...	-0.2	
97%	32%	Tintrex	32 1/2	- 5	-1.7	
677	401	Tui	563 1/2	- 20 1/2	-	3.1
1%	1/2	Webs Holdings	1/2	...	-2.8	
847%	613	Wetherspoon JD	730	- 19 1/2	22.6	
3678	2849	Whitbread	2854	- 42	3.3	17.8
1225	946	Young & Co A	994	- 6	2.1	20.7
878	592	Young & Co N/V	710	+ 12	3.1	14.0

Media

107%	54%	Aeorea Comms	60 1/2	+ 3	5.2	21.0
52	27%	Altitude Group	45	...	62.5	
112	70	Arcontech Grp	98	- 1/2	3.5	11.4
572	317%	Ascential	572	+ 4	...	...

829%	587	Auto Trader	800 1/2	+ 6 1/2	1.1	31.6
714	381	Bloomsbury Pub	688	+ 4	2.1	17.5
1%	1/2	Bonhill Group	1/2	- 1/2	-1.5	
157%	65	Catalyst Media	85	...	31.7	5.8
1%	1/2	Cenacore	1/2	...	-0.2	
...	...	DCD Media	100	- 30	-	5.0
46%	31	Eblivity	38	...	...	...
1145	577	Future	1090	- 28	0.3	14.2
243	132	GlobalData	214	-	2.1	56.3
...	...	Hyve Group	120 1/2	...	...	...
235	107%	IG Design Grp	212	+ 2	-9.4	
878%	685%	Informa	876 1/2	+ 2 1/2	2.0	29.3
84%	59%	ITV	80 1/2	...	6.1	15.5
5	1 1/2	Jaywing	1 1/2	...	...	...
1%	1/2	Live Company Grp	1/2	...	...	...
189%	119%	ME Group	189 1/2	+ 3 1/2	3.0	14.2
...	...	Mediastest	...	...	-2.0	
88%	42%	Merit Grp	74	...	-6.3	
...	...	Mirads	1 1/2	- 1 1/2	...	...
44	10%	Mission Group	26	- 1	6.1	-2.0
283%	208	Moneysupermarket	225 1/2	...	5.3	16.7
2208%	1491	News Corp A	2156 1/2	+ 16 1/2	-	73.6
2274%	1512	News Corp B	2225	+ 17 1/2	-	75.9
1036	354	Next 15 Group	807	- 23	1.8	31.4
1045	812	Pearson	1045	- 6	2.1	19.8
5%	2%	Primorus Inv	3	...	-1.8	
172%	107%	Quatro	140	+ 15	-	5.3
105%	59	Reach	101 1/2	+ 1/2	7.2	14.9
85	62%	REACT Grp	75 1/2	...	77.0	
3661	2473	Relx	3661	+ 53	1.6	38.9
594%	462%	Rightmove	558	- 2	1.6	22.8
95	58%	SpeacendPeople	95	...	13.3	
290%	176%	STV Group	270 1/2	- 5	4.1	28.7
745	170	System1 Group	745	+ 30	76.0	
2942%	2207%	21st Cent Fox Inc A	2942 1/2	+ 22 1/2	-	11.7
2739%	2011%	21st Cent Fox Inc B	2739 1/2	+ 21	-	10.9
...	...	Vela Tech	...	...	4.5	
400	294	Williamson	395	-	2.6	19.4
850%	681%	WPP	740 1/2	- 4 1/2	5.2	73.3
97%	67%	Zinc Media	72 1/2	...	-8.0	

...	...	Dantarg Energy	...	...	1.1	
35	14	Condor Glb	22	...	...	...
1%	...	Corcel	1/2	...	-0.9	
8478%	76%	DRD Gold	76 1/2	+ 1 1/2	9.0	
1%	1/2	ECR Minerals	1/2	...	-0.8	
1%	1/2	Empyrean Energy	1/2	...	-1.9	
1931	1250	Endeavour	1706	- 8	3.8	...
18%	12	EnQuest	12 1/2	...	-1.1	
3%	1%	Eurasia Mining	2 1/2	+ 1/2	-4.5	
1%	1/2	Europa Oil&Gas	1	...	-6.4	
95	41%	Ferropo	60 1/2	- 1	-5.3	
639%	440%	Fresnillo	572	- 7	0.7	23.0
...	...	GS Exploration	28	...	-2.6	
19%	7%	Galantas Gold	9	...	-1.9	
10%	1%	GCM Resources	3 1/2	- 1/2	-6.4	
18%	7%	Gem Diamonds	12 1/2	- 1/2	...	...
11%	1%	Getech	1 1/2	...	-0.2	
501%	368%	Glencore	427 1/2	- 6 1/2	5.2	16.0
...	...	Global Petrol	...	...	-0.7	
1532%	1261%	Gold Fields	1261 1/2	- 5 1/2	-	20.3
8%	5%	Goldstat	6 1/2	...	4.7	
1%	1%	Goldstone Res	1 1/2	...	-1.8	
11%	5%	GreatBl Gold	7 1/2	...	...	...
164	78	Griffin Mining	134	+ 2	21.4	
151%	84%	Gulf Keystone	130 1/2	- 3	3.0	...
17%	8%	Harland & Wolff Grp	8 1/2	- 1/2	-0.1	
193%	73%	Hochschild	174 1/2	- 2	...	...
159%	1%	Horizonte Miners	1/2	...	-0.1	
448	231	Hunting PLC	448	+ 3	1.8	8.1
...	...	Independ Res	...	...	...	...
141%	6%	Indus Gas	7 1/2	...	0.5	
1%	...	Ironvold	...	...	-5.0	
97	45	ITM Power	51 1/2	- 2 1/2	-5.0	
8%	4%	Jubilee Metals	6 1/2	+ 1/2	13.5	
5%	1%	Karel Diamd Res	1 1/2	...	-7.0	
1%	1%	KEFI Gold and Copper	1 1/2	...	-3.5	
442	294	Kenmare Res	326	- 4	13.5	3.0
...	...	Lamprell	8 1/2	...	-0.7	
11	1%	Landore Res	3 1/2	...	-1.8	
...	...	Landsdown Oil&G	...	...	...	...
13%	6%	Leeds Group	6 1/2	+ 1/2	-1.9	
6%	2%	Lexington Gold	3 1/2	...	...	...
9%	6%	MC Mining	7 1/2	...	-4.0	
5%	1%	Metalix Explor	4 1/2	+ 1/2	0.9	
1%	...	Nostra Terra	...	...	-0.7	
14%	4	Nostrum O&G	5 1/2	+ 1/2	...	...
...	...	Oil Search	218 1/2	- 5 1/2	-	60.3
...	...	Oilex	1 1/2	...	...	...
...	...	Oriole Resources	1 1/2	...	-4.1	
...	...	Ormonde Mining	1 1/2	...	-3.4	
5%	2	Orsur Mining	4	...	-7.6	
28%	12%	Pan African Res	28 1/2	+ 1 1/2	2.6	9.2
40%	10%	Pantheon Res	16 1/2	- 1 1/2	...	...
20%	11%	Parkmead Grp	13 1/2	...	-0.5	
1%	1/2	Pathfinder Min	1/2	...	-3.4	
76%	32%	Petra Diamonds	32 1/2	- 1 1/2	-0.8	
3%	1%	Petrol Resources	1 1/2	...	-5.4	
4%	2%	Petro Mata	2 1/2	- 1 1/2	...	...
87%	10%	Petrofac	16 1/2	- 5 1/2	-0.2	
...	...	Petronet Res	...	...	-0.2	
...	...	Phoenix Global	6 1/2	+ 1/2	-1.0	
28%	3%	Plexus Holdings	13 1/2	+ 1 1/2	5.6	
215	160	Polymetal Intl	215	+ 50	...	2.4
730	524	Purvairi	668	...	0.9	19.2
8%	4%	Prospect Energy	8 1/2	...	...	...
10%	1%	Proton Motor Power S	2	...	-1.8	
...	...	Providence Res	3 1/2	...	29.0	
3	1/2	Quadrice	1 1/2	- 1/2	-8.3	
...	...	Rambler Met&Min	5 1/2	...	0.1	
...	...	Reabold Resources	...	...	-0.8	
1%	...	Red Rock Res	...	...	-0.4	
6950%	5275%	No Tinto Ltd	5893 1/2	- 2	...	12.1
5891	4559	Rio Tinto	4899 1/2	- 47 1/2	6.7	10.3
...	...	San Leon Energy	16 1/2	+ 1 1/2	...	6.1
1%	1/2	Scirocco Energy	1/2	...	-1.3	
71%	21%	Serabi Gold	68 1/2	...	7.5	

Natural resources

268	129%	Serica Energy	129 1/2	- 1 1/2	17.5	4.7
14%	9%	Shanta Gold	14 1/2	...	14.6	
2946	2318%	Shell	2771 1/2	- 8	3.8	12.8
15	7%	Shuka Minerals	7 1/2	...	...	...
1%	1/2	Sound Energy	1/2	...	-2.3	
12%	7%	Star Energy	7 1/2	...	-2.1	
...	...	Sunrise Resources	...	...	-7.6	
1%	...	Tertiary Minerals	...	...	-5.2	
2%	2%	Thor Mining	2 1/2	...	-0.8	
5867%	4479%	Total Eng SE	5190 1/2	+ 4 1/2	4.8	7.4
...	...	Tower Resources	-0.4	
39%	26%	Tullow Oil	29 1/2	- 1 1/2	-5.0	
...	...	UK Oil & Gas	-0.4	
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Register

Obituaries

Prince Michael of Greece and Denmark

Author, historian and first cousin of Prince Philip who renounced his right of succession to the Greek throne to marry a commoner

"I do not envy him, the poor guy," Prince Michael of Greece and Denmark said when his cousin King Charles III succeeded to the throne of the United Kingdom. "He does it with dedication. But I would not like that job at all."

Michael and Charles were related via Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, whose father and Prince Michael's father were brothers — but their lives were to take very different courses.

Almost 60 years before Charles's ascension, Prince Michael had renounced his right of succession and those of his descendants to the Greek throne. It was not a renunciation as seismic in its consequences as the abdication of Edward VIII, for Prince Michael was only third in line to the Greek throne and unlikely to have been called to sit upon it.

Yet it was done for the same reason — to be free to marry a commoner — after he fell in love with Marina Karella, the daughter of Theodoros Karella, an Athens-based textile manufacturer, whom he met in 1963 in Amman, at a party thrown by King Hussein of Jordan, when she was an art student.

At the time, the expectation had been that he would marry Princess Maria Beatrice of Savoy, the youngest daughter of the former King Umberto of Italy, but once he met Marina, his resolve was unshakable.

"I remember I was dancing with her at a party, and I just looked at her. It was like a revelation — it was her and no one else," he recalled in his 2004 autobiography *Mémoires Insolites*. "She was just so lovely and gracious with me. It didn't take long to decide that I wanted to marry her."

They became engaged a few weeks later but because the marriage was non-dynastic, it required a special dispensation from King Constantine II of Greece (obituary, January 11, 2023) and it took two years to negotiate and disentangle the royal protocols.

They eventually married in the King's palace in Athens in 1965 with about 30 members of the royal houses of Europe, both current and defunct, in attendance. "It was love at first sight and it has never, ever changed," he said 58 years later.

Giving up his birthright had conferred "a sense of freedom". The bane of being a prince was "to be exactly like everyone, but not to be considered like everyone," he believed. "We are not disgusting, but we are uninteresting, unassuming relics of a fabulous past."

The advantage of opting for a life more ordinary, he pointed out, was that he could choose his profession. After opting to become a writer and historian under the name Michel De Gres, his published works included royal biographies, among them Louis XIV, the Sun King, from whom he was descended on his mother's side; volumes about the Greek royal family and the crown jewels of the Russian Tsars; and historical novels in French.

His decision to become a historian, he believed, may have been influenced by his experience as a boy of seeing his mother burn all of his late father's papers. She was observing a "family tradition" that one's personal history went to the grave with you, she said.



Prince Michael in 2007, promoting one of his many historical books, and, below, his wedding to Marina Karella, the daughter of a textile manufacturer, with King Constantine II and Queen Anne-Marie at the palace in Athens in 1965

"I am fascinated with the unexplored pathways of history, those events forgotten from textbooks for being too unconventional and disconcerting, or due to family secrets being well kept," he said.

Last year he published *Crown, Art, and Fantasy: A Life in Pictures*, a lavishly illustrated coffee-table tome drawn from his extensive photograph library

Of Marina, he said: 'It was love at first sight and it has never changed'

that moved from formal engagements with Queen Elizabeth II to bohemian parties with Mick Jagger and Andy Warhol in New York.

However, the book that made the biggest splash was *Living With Ghosts* (1995), a collection of stories about 11 historical female wraiths he claimed to have encountered while staying in some of the great haunted castles and royal palaces of Europe.

"You get ghosts there because they are places of power which attracts greed, jealousy and drama," he told the Daily Telegraph. "They really don't frighten me because I've been familiar with them all my life."

He claimed to have once shared a Paris mansion with the ghost of the composer Franz Liszt and believed that his family had a particular "sensitivity" to the spirit world.

His father, Christopher, Prince of Greece and Denmark, reportedly saw the ghost of a well-dressed woman while staying at Sandringham with Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. The apparition appeared in the mirror in his bedroom and the following day when visiting the nearby Houghton Hall, the seat of Lord Cholmondeley, he found a portrait of the woman in exactly the same dress as he had seen her in his mirror.

Staying in palaces — haunted or otherwise — was a perk of his birthright of which he was happy to take advantage. "What is enjoyable is to have royal cousins in every country of Europe. You can always find someone to ring and say, 'Here I am! Can I come stay with you?'" he joked. "We don't do it often, but the idea — I like it."

He is survived by his wife, who did not take the title Princess or Her Royal Highness, but became Marina, Consort of Prince Michael of Greece and Denmark and is an artist and sculptor whose work has been exhibited in galleries around the world.

He is further survived by their two daughters, Princess Alexandra Elli Francisca Maria of Greece, who followed her father's example and married a non-royal, and Princess Olga Isabelle of

Greece, who married into the former royal family of Italy.

Together with his wife he ran a charitable organisation called Eliza to raise awareness of the scandal of child abuse. He named it after a Puerto Rican girl whom he had taught in New York and who was murdered by her mother and her mother's lover. Their organisation offered awareness pro-

grammes for doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers and social workers to help them to recognise cases of child abuse and to know how to act accordingly.

Prince Michael of Greece and Denmark was born in Rome in 1939, the only child of Prince Christopher of Greece and Denmark, the youngest son of King George I of Greece, and his second wife, Princess Françoise d'Orléans, the daughter of Prince Jean d'Orléans, Duke of Guise, the Orléanist pretender to the Bourbon throne of France as Jean III.

His father died when he was a year old and with Europe at war, his mother took her son to live in Morocco, where he grew up in the household of his grandmother, Princess Isabelle d'Orléans. They subsequently moved again to Andalusia, Spain, and, once the Second World War was over, settled in Paris.

Orphaned at 14 by the death of his mother in 1953, he inherited a chateau in Roubaix, northern France, and became a ward of his uncle, Henri d'Orléans, the Comte de Paris, who had succeeded his father Jean as the claimant to the defunct French throne.

On graduating from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris, he moved to Greece, living in the royal palace in Athens with his cousin King Paul and then doing four years of military service with the Cavalry-Armoured Corps and the Hellenic coastguard.

"I didn't discover my country until I

He claimed that he shared a mansion with the ghost of Franz Liszt

was 20 and when I arrived, I said, 'what happens if I don't like Greece? What happens if the Greeks don't like me?', he recalled. "But it was love at first sight."

After the military coup of 1967 and the exile of his nephew King Constantine II following a failed attempt to overthrow the junta, he was the only member of the Greek royal family to remain in the country. However, by the time the junta formally abolished the monarchy in 1973, he and his family had relocated to Paris.

He moved again in 1980 to New York, where he spent a dozen years before returning to Europe, where he kept homes in Monaco, Paris, Athens and on the Aegean island of Patmos, which he called "paradise".

"All Greeks who live in exile want to go back. It's in the blood," he said. "It's a very human country where everyone tells you good morning. Unknown people chat with you and the Greeks always smile. It's a small country, but it's eternal."

Prince Michael of Greece and Denmark, author and historian, was born on January 7, 1939. He died on July 28, 2024, aged 85



Rosemary Righter

Formidable Times and Sunday Times journalist whose acerbic writing and dedication to press freedom shed light on foreign affairs

Forensic, excoriating and unanswerable in its damning conclusions, Rosemary Righter's investigation of the corruption and cronyism of Unesco, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation headquartered in Paris, was probably the single most important body of evidence that persuaded the United States, and subsequently Britain, to withdraw from the UN body.

She argued, with the usual acerbic force she brought to all her journalism and writing, that Unesco, far from upholding global press freedom as its founders intended, had become inimical to freedom of expression and, in particular, virtually all the western press. Its director-general, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal, was determined to promote a "new information order". Righter was determined to stop him. She won. The United States withdrew its crucial financial contribution, and M'Bow's plans to limit the ability of western journalists to expose wrongdoing, especially in developing countries, came to nothing.

Righter, a long-time journalist for The Sunday Times and subsequently the chief leader writer for The Times, had always taken a keen interest in the United Nations. She was a convinced internationalist, but was never starry-eyed. Her book on the future of the UN, *Utopia Lost*, published in 1995 to mark its 50th anniversary, maintained that the UN was unfit to deal with the new international political order. It was, she argued, cumbersome, bureaucratic and dominated by self-aggrandising functionaries — in particular, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Egyptian secretary-general from 1992 to 1996. Indeed, her subsequent review of his memoirs was magnificent in its biting condemnation of an "unpleasantly self-obsessed and somewhat self-pitying polemic". She noted that a man she called "devoid of administrative talent" was justifiably denied a second term by the Clinton administration, due to his colossal political misjudgments, particularly over Bosnia and Rwanda.

Press freedom — indeed freedom in

general — was a leitmotif of Righter's campaigns. In 1978 she published *Whose News?*, arguing that a democratic society required a fully informed public. In 1970 she was based for two years in Hong Kong as assistant editor of the *Far East Economic Review* and it was here that her keen interest in China and the machinations of Chinese politics began. Her conclusions were often prescient but damning. She visited China several times, and shared a mutual interest in it with Robert Elegant, her American second husband, who was a prolific novelist and China-watcher. Her reviews of Chinese affairs, often for *The Times Literary Supplement*, offered a firm grasp on the opaque manoeuvrings for power among the Chinese elite.

Ursula Rosemary Douglas was born with a twin sister, Veronica, in Chesterfield in 1943 to Andrew and Marjorie Douglas. From 1961 to 1964 she read

The secretary-general of the Commonwealth once chased her around a table

English at Girton College, Cambridge, where she cut a dash. One contemporary recalled her pleasure at being voted "the best legs in Cambridge", and she later used her allure to good effect in charming global statesmen to give her valuable insights. She used to recall, with a grin as well as some feminist indignation, being chased around the table by Chief Emeke Anyaoku, the Nigerian secretary-general of the Commonwealth.

She began work as a public relations officer for Thomas Nelson publications in South Africa and a year later moved to Chatto & Windus. Her spell in Hong Kong led to a job with *Newsweek*, where she developed an admiration for the vigour and ideals of the United States (though again, as her editorials later showed, never a naive assessment). She also around this time developed a lifelong smoking habit. She then moved to *The Sunday Times*, working with the



Righter's book on the future of the UN, *Utopia Lost*, published to mark its 50th anniversary, maintained that it was unfit to deal with a new international order

Insight team before becoming development and also diplomatic correspondent, including a spell in Paris and South Africa. This prompted her astute interest in international affairs. She was later to become a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, a member of the Overseas Development Institute (serving on the council for a decade from 1984), a member of the International Press Institute, the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Royal Institute of International Affairs — a comprehensive network of all the think tanks that influenced foreign policy in Britain and beyond.

For three years Righter — by then married to William Harvey Righter, an American English and philosophy academic at Warwick University — was project director of the Twentieth Century Fund in New York. She became chief leader writer for *The Times* in 1989 and was promoted to associate editor in 2002. She took a year off following a serious taxi traffic accident that broke her femur. But she returned with vigour and her judgments were as clear-cut and trenchant as her writing. On the claims for the EU's Lisbon treaty, she commented: "Pass the hemlock. And the sick bag.

The 'European ideal' consists, it is now evident, of imposing on voters far-reaching changes to the way they are to be governed, without allowing them a look-in or a voice. The 'path of hope' beckons only to Europe's most messianic federalists: it consists of a treaty clause that says that governments may in future cede powers to Brussels without consulting their parliaments, let alone their cussed voters." This was 12 years before the Brexit referendum.

She was a proud exponent of the art of leader-writing, skilled in encouraging others to write to a position agreed at combative morning conferences. She was fast, passionate and precise. Her editor in the 1990s, Sir Peter Stothard, called her the paper's "intellectual rock and conscience".

Righter, who had no children, was a gregarious soul and a genial dinner-party host whose propensity to mix the most furious negronis left many of her guests — but never her — on the floor. She particularly enjoyed cooking, as well as opera, travel and fine arts.

After the death of Bill Righter she married Robert Elegant and shared with him a fine old country house in Todi, in Umbria, where they entertained many guests and spent many months each year. (Colleagues were disappointed that she did not take his surname so as to become "Elegant Righter".)

He died at the age of 95 (obituary, September 14, 2023), soon after a fine birthday party Righter hosted for him. Her twin sister Veronica survives her.

With Italy as an adopted home, she naturally became immersed in its tumultuous politics. She was scathing about the prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's antics, but wrote about Italy with a deep affection for the country.

Rosemary Righter, journalist, was born on April 2, 1943. She died of lung cancer on July 28, 2024, aged 81

Herbert Hoelter

American prison consultant who helped Bernie Madoff, Martha Stewart and others when they faced time behind bars

Any white-collar American criminal worth their salt knew what to do before being sentenced: hire a consultant. Herbert Hoelter was one of the first in that field, supporting Ivan Boesky, who in 1986 admitted insider trading; Martha Stewart, who was convicted of fraud in 2004; and Bernie Madoff, who created the largest Ponzi scheme in history but was only sent to a medium-security jail thanks to Hoelter.

"He knew he was going to get a life sentence and asked what could he do with the rest of his life," Hoelter told the *Chicago Tribune*. "I said to participate in as many programmes as you can. Find ways to help people who, believe it or not, are less fortunate than you."

As the go-to concierge of wealthy criminals, Hoelter developed strategies for persuading judges to impose alternatives to jail. If incarceration was unavoidable, he helped his clients to navigate life behind bars. "Our philosophy isn't that punishment should not occur, it's that it should occur in different ways," he told CNN.

He convinced a judge to reduce Leona Helmsley's 1992 tax-evasion sentence, so that the "queen of mean" could care for her ill husband; proposed a community service programme for Michael Milken, the king of junk bonds;



Hoelter assisted the rich and the poor

and put together a list of ailments from diabetes to hypertension for Alfred Taubman, which meant the price-fixing ex-Sotheby's chairman was spared a maximum-security jail and instead did his time in a federal medical centre.

The biggest challenge, he said, came in helping once-powerful clients to adjust. They had to accept restrictions on the business they could undertake behind bars. One client in California was sent to solitary confinement after being discovered working on papers for a property deal. "The transition from

being outside to being an inmate is a dramatic one," Hoelter said.

Unlike some prison consultants, Hoelter's knowledge of the system did not stem from first-hand experience. Instead, he spent more than 40 years building a database that drew upon the experience of others. He also had a network of prisoners behind bars ready to form greeting parties when one of his new clients joined them.

While they had little in common other than being well-to-do prisoners, these clients all had similar concerns about how they were going to cope. "The answer is, you do the best you can," Hoelter said, adding that he encouraged them to set goals such as exercising, losing weight or learning a skill. "You can help other people. You can teach. You can educate. You have a mind. Use that and don't atrophy."

Herbert Joseph Hoelter was born in Yonkers, New York, in 1950, the third of eight children of Herbert Hoelter Sr, a local government officer, and his wife Helen (née Parker). He captained the basketball team at Bishop Duffy High School in Niagara Falls, studied at the University of Buffalo and took a master's in social work at Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He worked in a doughnut shop, laid

asphalt and delivered newspapers.

In 1969 he married Susan O'Keefe, a church volunteer. She was killed in 2000 when an SUV mounted the pavement while the couple were out jogging. "I was talking with her next to me while we ran. One second she was there, and in a flash she was gone," he said. Two years later he married Martha Ginn, who survives him with the children of his first marriage: Sarah, Katie and Jeff.

As a young man, Hoelter coached a basketball team whose members came

The grim conditions that underprivileged people were held in shocked him

from challenging backgrounds. On one occasion only two of his players turned up, the others having been arrested. He visited them and was dismayed by the conditions in which they were being held. "It broke his heart and opened his eyes to the terrible things going on in the juvenile detention system," Katie told *The New York Times*.

After graduating he worked for the children's and youth commissioner in Pennsylvania before moving to Baltimore in 1977, co-founding the National

Center on Institutions and Alternatives to promote other possibilities than incarceration. "There was a gap in the system. Judges were being presented with either a probation sentence or a prison sentence. We thought there was a lot of room for alternatives," he said.

Hoelter was then contacted by a doctor who had been convicted of fraud and wanted to avoid jail. "We put together an alternative sentence where he would help an Aids clinic for free for 500 hours rather than do laundry at a prison, and the judge liked it," he said. "That sprang into doing more cases."

Hoelter used the income from his well-off clients to help poorer inmates. "You've got to have a Robin Hood type of a concept," he said. He insisted that the cost of jails and their failure in preventing recidivism meant that noncustodial sentences were worth fighting for, adding: "Somebody has got to say this incarceration binge has been bankrupting us, both fiscally and socially."

Herbert Hoelter, American prison consultant, was born on September 20, 1950. He died of heart failure on May 2, 2024, aged 73

Call to the Bar

Inner Temple

The following have been called to the Bar this Trinity term: Roshanjit Singh Gill Sarjeet Singh, Narayani Panesar, Charlotte Louise Jerram, Kiran Rani Sharma, Muhammad Nazrith Bin Nazim, Seema Mahbuba Janan Syeda, Maariyah Ismail, William James Christian Glenwright, Bethany Johanna Trusser, Jade Tohan Selu-Ojeme, Samuel David Larner, Jacob Harry Mills, Victoria Grace Fraser-Leonhardt, Tomas McCabe, Myat Eaindra Chok, Jake Stephen Long, Julia Lizim Poyong, Dinora Amponsah, Jakub Bartłomiej Kaluza, Talia Webster, Spieke Western, Alexis Jane Body, Thomas Stuart Phillips, Nicole Jade Wallace, Chloe Michelle Hall, Adnan Raees Gulbul, Michael David Housemayne Rivelin, Maura Brigid Donaghy, Caleb Suggitt, Feranmi Thomas, Wayne Junior Miller, Zara Yusuf, Ravina Kaur Bahra, Howard Chi Ho Carlos, Armela Lasku, Naagathurga Vijaya Kumar, Jesse Oluwakayode Williams, David Keith English, Andrew William Jones, Alina Naeved, Sarah Elizabeth John, Mia Hannah Gibson, Joy Christine Elson, Thalia Mae Christian-McGrail, Andie Charlotte Lee, Antonia Nadine Henry-Leoncia, Benjamin Davison Alfred Moodie, Fatima Soomro, Marc Ainer, Samantha Huey Yee Tan, Susanna Oluwatamilore Fadeyi, Muskan Surana, Kinza Bungish, Cheng Zai Ze, William Dare Roper Robinson, Ellen Louise Coombe, Edwin Chan, Aisling Alice Sims, John Jack Frederick Good, James Robert Gamblin, Thomas Isaac, Bethany Lauren Birkett, Amelia Charlotte Trem, Sudiksha Devi Chuturdharee, Abbi Robinson, Abigail Helen Richards, Karu Ashwin Karu Ramesh Kumar, Daniel James Hodgkinson, Gulam Mehr Ali Shah, Ai Wei Choong, Chong Tian King, Maleka Jade Akuanay, Molly Amy Blain, Ayaz Hussain, Hannah Miri Bentwood, Lim Jue Wei, Matthew Cawson, Rachel Grace Lane, Adam Mustanshir Bharmal, Sarah Louise Hutchin-son, Henry Raphael Fahrenkamp, Scarlett Hadassa Wilson, Charlie Rose Taylor Castanheira, Eunice Lo, Alyx Ibbotson-Feetham, Eunice Tan Yi Wen, Yu Qi Leong, Grace Holding, Qi Qi Chang, Katherine Agnes Pegg, Adam Lugun Raj, Oluwabusola Temitope Ajayi, Harrison Joseph Norton, Jade Alexis Dobinson-Evans, Sioned Louise Fitt, Zacharie Charles Mouillé, Alexandra Claire Thorne, Valerie Huei Zhen Ong, Oluwapelumi Amanda Adeola, Karen Larissa Petch, Sean White, Elahah Akhgar, Adnan Hussain.

Lincoln's Inn

The following have been called to the Bar this Trinity term: Muhammad Kashif Riaz, MD Repon Mia, Shantanu Dev, Md Yusuf Ali, Noresh Das, Alamgir Hossain, AKM Mahidul Islam, Krishan Nadesan, Dean Maximin, Monira Parvin, Shahjahan Khan, Md Mahbubur Rahman, Shams Wasif, Fakhar Azam, Hina Altaf Bajwa, Md Mahamudul Hasan, Mohammad Mahade Hasan, A.S.M. Khalid Iqbal, Zarjis Islam Pavel, Mahmood Ul Hassan, Zaid Al Nahian, Asef Abrer Shahriar, Md Maruf Hasan, Anonna

Tasnim Orthly, Asfandyar Zeb Khan, Muhammad Waleed Bin Aamir, Aumia Kamal, Chloe Elizabeth Steel, Mahbuba Tabassum, S M Shaikh Hasan, Yeap Chia Term, Ummye Dourjooe Chowdhury Raka, Syed Faisal Qadir Shah, Anna Claire Wright, Mohammad Mahmudul Hassan, Salsabil Afza Haque, Laura Louise Henderson, Muhammad Hamza Akhtar, Khadija Jamal Sukhera, Xiao Yicheng, Julia Ifraim, Lee Nawen, Asif Hossain Bin Azad, Wajeeha Sabir, Raja Asfandyar Babar, Hisham Sohail Khan, Mohamad Salman Khalid, Shola Chantell Barnett, S M Shahinur Rahman, Samuel Alexander Michael Willis, Umme Smita Mim, Lauren Williams, MD Sakib Ahmmed, Rafique Ahmed, Asif Mahmud Mubin, Robert Paul White, Hassan Abid Khan, Uyoj Marma Katherine, Khadija Akter Liza, Fabia Firose, Tasnim Ferdous Ali, Israt Zahan Waishi, Ruhi Kaur, Hamzah Hassan Bodla, Haider Shah, Alaiakh Ahmed, Faiza Rokiba, Redwana Sharif Doreen, Faria Nowshin, Muhammad Hassan Anwaar Pannun, Muhammad Saad Sarang Abbasi, Nazifa Sarwar, MD Shahrir Ahmed, Md Shafiuddin Jihad, Melissa Ewurabena Davies, Kanwar Abdul Moeed, Lai Suan Kit, Kishanthini Saravanakumar, Musanna Galib, Tania Hosain Bipa, Lim Jia Sheng, Zachary Richmond Thomas Salmon, Sumaiya Yasmin Twama, Fatima Zahra Khan, Amirah Shan, Muhammad Hassan Khan, Sophie-Dominique Wadde, Joshua Liam Hillis, Madeleine Kate Allison, Loza Al Busaidi, Sen Yang Soon, Misam Bukhari, Haider Pansota, Ayush Lavraj Sumaruth, Mohammad Aktaruzzaman Siddique, Emily Chyna Davis Lennon, Imran Ahmed, Mehroz Akram, Muhammad Shayam Homayon, Muhammad Naim bin Mohd Mokhtar, Abigail Andrew, Rahatul Islam, Talha Azim, Mohammad Hamza Khan, Luaza Reza Turin, Khawaja Rahab Hussain, Sakib Mahbub, Md Foyal Rahman, Tushiti Richa Devi Gopaul, Uzair Siddiqi, Savi Julka, A.K.M Mahmudul Hoque Alif, Farha Binte Azad Etu, Blánaid Kearney, Allana Marie Bennison, Shaheer Alam, Mary Margaret Collingridge, Purabi Saha, Muhammad Huzaifa Afzaal, Satesh Singh, Eiman Khurram, Sumaiya Alam Dipty, Maaz Nadeem, Sonika Jugnauth, Zhen Qi Wong, Henry David Watson, Hajira Imran, Tan Jie Mei, Kafayatullah Umer, Natasha Chhavi Hardaker, Elliot Gribble, Eloise Cordelia Hewson, Muhammad Aamn Khan, Mohsin Panhwar, Abdullah Al Imran Khan, Kaneez Fatima Owaisi, Huw Watkins, Maimuna Khalid Ranjha, Hamim Khaled Ayon, Laiba Khan Afridi, Farah Lyana Binti Shaharuddin, Thomas Bell Curr, Joseph Alexander Cosmo Kay, Rose Elisa Davinder Pal, Nicholas Callum West, Ayaz Khan, Ashrafur Rahman Medha, Kalim Ilyas, Imogen Eastham Brown, Lim Jia Ming, Nur Diyana Yazeera Yazli, Muhammad Umair Khan, Wong Jing Wen, Zaki Amjad, Abdullah Noor, Rizwan Rasheed Siddiqui, Kwame Kusi Agyemang, Daniel Ch'ng Shen Loong, Donald Ling Her Wang, Haashim Imrane Duffaydar, Jan Farooq Butt,

Wing Yee Tew, Muhammad Danyal Arif, Nusrat Jahan, Chew Qion Xi Raynice, Mian Sakher Tabassum, Mohammad Faisal Miah, Syed Sajjad Haider Rizvi, Aishani Parmesser Chaturvedi Toolesee, Hamza Abbas, Jason Sia Rui Yong, Fahid Rafique, Rana Bilal Abbas Ali Khan, Ahmed Jawed, Fahad Arslan Chaudhry, Muhammad Usman Sami, Teng Yee Von, Renee Lai YuYing, Han Min, Xun Kang Lim, Mohamed Hamzah Khatri, Shah Nawaz Ahmed, Jared Jing Rae Chew, Ke Xin Belinda Lim, Mst. Khadijatul Kobra, Ong Kai Ling, Tan Yan Joey, Guy Jolyon Cecil, Jamal Udin Hussain, Nimrah Ashraf, Connie May Trendle, Sia Tze Jian, Anjuman Ara, Kaysya Kaludeva, Md Suhel Miah, Felicia Xin Yi Ooi, Chew Mingyih, Mohammad Mahbub Hassan, Stow Hui Wun, Kareena Talwar, Hira Agha, Emmanuel Sagayam, Abdullah Nizamani, Muhammad Immad Qamar, Syed Mohammad Tayyab, Muzzammil Mukhtar, Ali Mardkan Khan Khichi, Akinola John Akinyanaju, Mian Zafar Iqbal, Naheed Merchant, Abdul Jalil Khan, Philip Tristan Meears-White, Atta Hussain, Md Saiful Islam.

Middle Temple

The following have been called to the Bar this Trinity term: Amir Fauzan Bin Mohd Fauzi; Ang Seh Juan; Ji Ying Wong; Leysa Anjali Gopy Munraj; Reece Joshua John McAllister; Kenneth Prakash; Yvonne Liu Yi Wen; Olamide Oluwaseun Oluwatobi Joy Thompson; Afua Peprah Sarfo-Bonsu; Adhiti Shenava; Paige Patricia Christine Taylor; Thomas Jacob Anderson; Chua Zhuo Ling; William John O'Shaughnessy; Yoong Hong Yap; Lucy Ann Blue; Chan Jiung Luu; Nirvaan Ghoorah; Theresa Elizabeth Cook Norwood; Jacklyn Kelly Cocksley-Pepeko; Tiyyan Rajan; Brendon Arvind Raj ALL Bimal Raj; Aravna Munorath; Teo Yih Zheng; Alison Georgina Lillie; Blessing Folasade Ayeni; Isotta Reichenbach; Mithurran M Ravinthiran; Ashvinaa Kerupagaran; Asher Navin Joseph; Sonia Yong Xiao Xin; Yu Huan Lin; Shakti Iswer Nagarajan; Abigail Jayne Orwin; Prakash M Ravi; Julia Iman Binti Mohd Johanna Nelson; Phoebe Olivia Hannah; Aniel Innocent; Joscaidy Maria Abreu Talbot; Elliott Michael Wright; Sophie Jane Hanson; Nicholas Zheng Lewis; Sze Ting Pui; Sarah Tiffany May Holt; Jen Horng Lim; Francesca Lucie Chaplin; Hansikka Kaur Banga; Ruby Grace Lillie Kalmis; Yee Xuan Tan; Jyoteesha Rumon; Kristy Jia Wen Wong; Xiao Cheng Ng; Hibah Fariba Noleen Abdullah; Toshan Chuturdharee; Jia Yi Gan; Li Bin Koh; Zi Xuan Siew; Dhanya Ravi; Hong Tien; Richard Jerome Peter Selestine; Jun Qi Lim; Emily Margaret Osborne; Nasirah Cunniff; Charlotte Mae Thomas; James David Keating; Leah Treanor; Abaigael Lynn Van Deerlin; Peter John Turner KC; Mohini Devi Deepoo; Bibi Hanna Dookhee; Vinaayakaraj Vicknaraj; Lim Sook May; Manisha Sabaratnam; Alicia Joanne Dass; Shaun Joseph Matos; Hishteeqa Gondeea; Kahrthik-eyan S Selvarajah; Aniesha Nana Afua Amoakoa Obuobie; Siew Shien Lim; Yong Chow Lai;

Rahim Amjad; Tee Qian Yu; Walter David Verkaik; Radin Mas Mohamad Mateen Bin Radin Mas Mohamad Suffri; Lee Jia Ying; Ev Meng Wong; Ren Jie Low; Arvind Krishna A/L Ram Prakash Rao; Sai Brinda Thiaga Rajan; Kennedy Aldsworth; William Francis O'Hara; Dashvin Ram Subramaniam; Imaan Foad Noorauly; Yu Henna Sin; Kesari Nandan Gujadhur; Ten Jia Zheng; Ting Ze Lim; Charlene Woon Zi Xuan; Dexter Zhen Hao Cheong; Prince Yao Dakpo; Alyssa Wai Shan Chin; Mei Teng Wong; Nadia Roumanaa Eathally; Jia Shen Chua; Carmen Jia Jue Lee; Benjamin Brian Follows; Ang Ee; Ling Xuan Xi; Igor Emmanuel Valere; Lim Li Ken; Ong Xin Yi; Maia Elizabeth Hercyk; Clara May Brown; Sara Jane Asquith; Shi Yun Lee; Robert Andrew Kenneth Morton; Wan Nur Aisyah binti W Zulkifli; Dhanurvedi Bhaugerutti; Jun Ming Liow; Nur Sabrina Binti Rohaizi; Daniel Alexander Hallstrom; Scymont Andre Travis Fountain; Benjamin Thomas Hirst; Kirtha Viloshen Ravindra Kumar; Eleanor-Mary Silk; Spencer Scott Downey; Rianna Sanyu Nankya; Sathesei Ganesin; Iqra Jamil; Tehshena Ramakrishnan; Melissa Katherine Dubé; Jia Yoon Goh; Jack David Warman; Joe En Yee; Estelle Lluich; Misha Alexandra Nayak-Oliver; Stella Maria Wojdyla; Xue Rui Lee; Tara Bahar Asghari-Coliveri; Adam Ronald Brown; Alexander Clevehood Ng; Oliver Richard Scott; Yan Yu Seah; Lim Min; Zhi May Che; Eldon Ling Han Xuan; Siti Balqis Binti Zainal; Zhi Ning Chew; Jessie Gan Ze Xin; Pei Jie Wong; Jaymie Jia Yi Sin; Zhi Yang Lim; Zhi Ying Lim; Ru Xin Ling; Yau Jun Ting; Lim Yee Thong; Zheng Xin Kwok; Georgia Mary Ezzard; Teng Ze Khoo; Yi Wei Leong; Monique Nicola McIntosh; Chooi Ling Teh; Ivan Jan En Yu; Wan Yee Khoo; Suet Yeng Ku; Celes Xin Ni Chuah; Mariam Hussain; Elizabeth Jane May Collier-Taylor; Yuliya Mik; Caitlyn Meghan Jones; Tan Lay Kin; Joseph Long; Ayomide Abraham Jimoh-Ibrahim; Benjamin Lee Fitzmaurice; Emema Emuobor Efeotor; Sara Haqi El Kaysi; Ayanthi Tamara Palihawadana; Quazi Arham Abedin; Greg Steven Mitchell Clement; Sean Patrick Charles Cole; Ticiana Fernandes Castro de Alencar; Hannah Brumpton; Eleanor Katie Hull; Jayne Ann Lever; Bibi Ishrath Peeroo; Martha Angela Garcia Vizuet; Niall Christopher Robinson; Mohammad Riadz Bin Mohd Rashdan; Rohan Singh Sidhu; Ibtelhal Khalifa Derek Cahusac de Caux; Sarmelan Mugunthan; Lois Isabel Connelly; Alexander John Henry French; Iqra Shabir; Amy Siew Pitt Wen; Oliver Luke Goodrich Taylor; Piers Barnaby Benton; Gemma Ann Mc Kernan; Xin Yen Lim; Ha Wai Hiun Sandra Ha; Jie Kai Lee; Belinda Elizabeth Curtis; Benjamin George Sasvari; Ogechi Niamh Igwe; Sajini Sridaran; Bibi Shabneez Nushruth Hossain; Divya Thapa Magar; Maia-Vianna Jones; Asha Thirunavukkarasu; Robbyn Nikita Thompson; Veronika Imogen Phillips; Stephanie Elizabeth Longmore; Daniel Richard Blurton; Conrad Sean Cummings; Bebhinn Catherine Murphy; Charles David Creasey; Jane Rapin.

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To book a Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register, visit: newsukadvertising.co.uk for help, please call 020 7782 7553 or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

WHAT man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. Luke 15:4-5 (AV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Forthcoming Marriages

MISS O. L. AYLETT AND MR T. W. L. BRIGGS
The engagement is announced between Olivia, daughter of Mr and Mrs Crispin Aylett of Wimbledon, London, and Thomas, son of Mr and Mrs Alexander Briggs of East Meon, Hampshire.

Deaths

ST AUBYN Henrietta Mary on 12th July 2024, aged 92. Hugely loved mother, grandmother and great grandmother. Thanksgiving service will be held at Chesil House, Winchester, on Friday 4th October at 2.30pm. Donations in Henrietta's memory can be made to Cancer Research UK at steelsfunerals.co.uk

BUXTON

Andrew Edward died peacefully on 27th July 2024, aged 89. Wonderful father, husband, grandfather and brother.
Funeral arrangements to be held at office@hovetonhallelstate.co.uk

CHAMIER Michael Edward Deschamps died at home in Luxembourg on 20th July 2024, aged 83. Beloved husband of Deborah, devoted father of Richard, Alexandra and Rosalind and loving grandfather of Rafael, Valentina, Aiden, Alicia and Luca.

COCHRANE Malcolm Ralph MBE, DL died on 24th July 2024, aged 85. Dearest husband of Mary, father of William, Alice and Harriet and grandfather of seven. Thanksgiving service at the church in Berwick St James, Wiltshire, SP3 4TS, on Tuesday 13th August at 2.30pm.

DOHERTY Barbara Elisabeth (née Baker, universally known as Betty Rose) died peacefully on 18th July 2024, aged 97. Loving wife of the late Peter Doherty, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Admired for her wise counsel, integrity and humour, she was much loved by her family and friends. Requiem Mass at St Osmund's Church, Barnes, London, SW13, on Wednesday 14th August at 10am and afterwards at the Old Sorting Office, SW13. Family flowers only.

LEWIS Margaret Catherine Ann (née Surgey) passed away peacefully on 21st July 2024, aged 83. Devoted and beloved wife of Adam. Loving mother of David, Helen, Rosie and Anthony and adored grandmother of William, Poppy, Rachel, Fred, Leo, Jasmine, Monty and Rafie. Her warm personality, sense of humour and beauty will be sorely missed by all. Funeral service to be held at St John The Baptist Church in Aldenham on Wednesday 7th August at 2pm. All are welcomed.

Court Circular



St James's Palace

29th July, 2024
The Princess Royal, Member, International Olympic Committee, and President, British Olympic Association, accompanied by Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, today attended the XXXIII Olympic Games in Paris, France.

Kensington Palace

29th July, 2024
The Duke of Gloucester, Patron, Three Choirs Festival, this evening attended a performance of "Mass for the Endangered" in Worcester Cathedral and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire (Mrs Beatrice Grant).

MALE David Arthur (Dr) died on 17th July 2024, aged 96. Funeral at Weeley Crematorium, CO16 9JP, on Tuesday 13th August 2024 at 11am. No flowers, donations if desired to Harwich Society or RNLI c/o Harwich and Dovercourt Funeral Service.

MICHEL Christopher Charles passed away on 19th July 2024, aged 86, in Alderney, the Channel Islands. Charles, who went to Leeds Grammar School in 1947, won a scholarship to Queen's College, Oxford. As an expert of micro-vascular circulation, he ran a successful research team that moved to London when he became the professor of physiology at St Mary's Medical School in 1984. He continued his role when St Mary's merged with Imperial College in 1988. Since 2000 as emeritus professor of physiology and bioengineering, Charles continued his research, contributing to many collaborative publications. He is survived by his wife Rosalind, his son, his daughter and his four grandchildren.

MYERS John Melvin on 5th July 2024, aged 89. Much-loved husband of Mary, and father to Catherine, Andrew and Kieran and some may remember him through his company SOLON Consultants. A funeral will be held on 6th August at St Philip and St James, Bedford. Flowers welcome or donations to Dementia UK.

STIRLING James, Sir James Stirling of Garden died on 22nd July 2024, aged 93. There will be a private burial followed by a memorial service at a later date.

SURENDRANATH Mu Kattil died peacefully on 19th July 2024, aged 86. Husband of the late Padmini, beloved father to Madhu and Suma and dearly beloved grandfather to Kitty, Hugo, Sophie and Patrick. Private cremation to be held on Saturday 3rd August at Kingston Cemetery & Crematorium, Surrey. Donations, if desired, to Imperial College London's Faculty of Engineering Dean's Fund via mukattilsurenranath.muchloved.com

WARD Jean (née Walker) died peacefully on 5th July 2024, aged 93. Beloved wife of the late Wilfrid, devoted mother of John and Joanna and much-loved grandmother of five. Funeral has taken place. Thanksgiving on 3rd October. For details please contact jeanwardservice@gmail.com.

In Memoriam - Private

LIPWORTH B. I. In cherished memory of Bertrand who passed away nine years ago. "He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much. Whose life was an inspiration, whose memory is a benediction." (Robert Louis Stevenson)

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AS SEEN ON TV

Sport

Command of reverse-swing offers England an edge down under

Steve James



It isn't all about the Ashes down under in 2025-26 but Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum have recently made no secret of their desire to construct a bowling attack in readiness for that series, which will surely define their Bazball mission and tenure.

That was the reason for shifting James Anderson into the coaching/mentoring ranks, and at Edgbaston on Sunday, in the shape of some devastating reverse-swing bowling from Mark Wood, came the clearest indication yet that England may be able to compete in Australia, where, it should be remembered, they have not won a Test since 2011, losing 13 of the 15 since, with two drawn.

The template has been drawn up: two genuinely fast bowlers (Wood and Gus Atkinson) who can reverse-swing the ball, a swing bowler (Chris Woakes), an all-rounder (Stokes) with a variety of skills including pace (he averaged 85.4mph before lunch on Sunday) and reverse-swing, and an attacking spinner in Shoaib Bashir. This looks like an attack that can threaten, even when the pitches are at their flattest and the Kookaburra ball at its most unresponsive.

Of course, the biggest question mark among that quintet concerns the

35-year-old Woakes, whose bowling has previously suffered from homesickness, averaging 51.88 abroad and 21.83 at home, and he has not exactly starred with the new ball, which was the accusation levelled against Anderson in his latter Tests.

But, as he demonstrated in his partnership of 106 with the brilliant Jamie Smith on Saturday, Woakes's runs at No 8 (or No 9 in this third Test, because Wood had been deployed as a night-watchman) are mightily important and in Anderson he now has an ideal source of counsel on how to disprove critics that he cannot succeed in Australia.

Edgbaston and reverse-swing have always rubbed along quite nicely. It was the scene of one of the greatest overs of reverse-swing in the history of the game, when Andrew Flintoff dismissed both Justin Langer and Ricky Ponting in the second innings of the second Test of the 2005 Ashes — so Sunday's intoxicating post-prandial spell of five for nine in six overs from Wood will have certainly alerted the Australians.

The context was very different (2005 was one of the greatest series, while this was depressingly one-sided for the most part) but it is still a passage of sustained, rapid reverse-swing bowling that will live long in the memory. Particularly of those shell-shocked West Indian tailenders whose misfortune it was to be terrorised by the 90mph-and-above rockets that darted late and against all conventional instincts.

The fate of Jayden Seales, the left-handed No 10, probably summed up best the sheer helplessness of the visiting batsmen under such fire. His

second ball from Wood was a vicious bouncer that hit him on the shoulder, and was accompanied by an uncharacteristic volley of advice from the bowler, and his third was an unplayable swinger at 94mph that almost began outside leg stump and ended up unrooting off.

But it was the leg-before dismissal of the wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva that perhaps was most telling. Rarely do you see a batsman walking for such a decision, but that is what Da Silva did, simply because he had been so deceived by Wood's pace and deviation in the air, and because it had clearly been coming for some time with a series of close shaves.

Facing reverse-swing at that pace is simply horrible. Pakistan's Waqar Younis and Wasim Akram were among the original and most lethal of the brethren, and they could render even the most accomplished of batsmen nonplussed because of their speed and skill. When one side of the ball has become very rough and the other is shiny, most medium-pacers can reverse-swing a ball, but the ball will swing so early that it is easily countered. When the ball reverse-swings at the pace of Waqar, Wasim or Wood, it will do so wickedly late and will therefore be so much more difficult to handle, not least because the optics that the ball is providing are so damned confusing.

For example, as a right-hander, if the seam is canted towards the slips and the shiny side is facing you, everything you have ever learnt as a batsman will tell you that that ball is going to swing away from you. And for the early part of the innings, that training and instinct will serve you well. But then comes that moment when the ball starts reverse-swinging and that same sight suddenly sees the ball scooting the other way. As I said, it is horrible.

Sometimes the ball starts reverse-swinging suddenly, and on Sunday it was the six off Bashir to bring up Mikyle Louis's fifty that proved the unexpected catalyst, as at the other end Stokes immediately began to find

Wood's spell of sustained, rapid reverse-swing bowling on Sunday will have alerted the Australians



lavish movement against Kavem Hodge and Louis.

"I actually said to Hodge, 'You need to blame Louis for this because that six he hit landed straight on the rough side,'" Stokes said afterwards. "That's why it started doing loads."

The key then is to ensure that the roughed-up side of the ball remains dry, while the other is continuously shined. On Sunday Harry Brook was in charge of this, taking the role of polisher-in-chief once assumed by Joe Root, demanding that sweaty palms were kept away from the ball, which must be thrown by holding the seam in one's fingers, with the fewer players touching it the better. "Reverse-swing doesn't come that often, but you really need to make sure that you look after the ball," Stokes said.

England certainly did that. Stokes, aided by his "beyond-the-perpendicular" release point, can reverse-swing the ball both ways, snaring Louis, at second slip, with a reverse away-swing, with Atkinson also reverse-swinging the ball cleverly. He was simply a revelation in this series, gradually showing more of his talents after a magnificent debut at Lord's when the wobble-seam delivery looked to be his most potent weapon. He can also stand the seam up to bowl a conventional away-swing.

Woakes can reverse-swing the ball but he had a thigh niggle and was not required on Sunday. Maybe Jofra Archer will be available by the time of the Ashes too, with Josh Tongue, Olly Stone and John Turner other options for those two genuine fast-bowling spots; possibly Brydon Carse and Jamie Overton too.

Then you have Ollie Robinson (if his mind and body can be sorted), Matthew Potts, Dillon Pennington, Matthew Fisher and Sam Cook vying for the other spot.

Sunday was a glimpse of a bright bowling future.

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PARIS 2024



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Sport Racing

Goodwood Rob Wright

- 1.50 Enfaar (nb) 4.10 JM Jungle (nap)
- 2.25 Wolf Of Badenoch 4.50 I Maximus
- 3.00 English Oak 5.20 Queen's Reign
- 3.35 Kyrios 5.55 Miss Bodacious

Going: good, good to soft in places

Draw: 5F-6F, high numbers best

Racing TV

1.50 Coral Chesterfield Cup Handicap ITV

(£51,540: 1m 2f) (18 runners)

1 (16)	2-3465 SIR BUSKER 123 (V,C,D) W Knight 6-9-12	Brandon Wilkie (5)	80
2 (13)	006-11 ENFJAAR 17 (H,D) R Varian 4-9-12	J Crowley	97
3 (4)	31-110 OUZO 42 J Osborne 8-9-12	S Osborne	80
4 (9)	5-5100 THEMSSIAS FOX 17 (D) A Balding 5-9-11	O Murphy	70
5 (11)	013-64 MAX MAYHEM 24 (D) H Kobeski 6-9-6	K Shoemark	79
6 (10)	315-90 REAL GAIN 41 (D) R Hughes 4-9-6	James Doyle	94
7 (17)	1-4955 TRACK OF TIME 24 (P,D) J Williams 4-9-5	Rossa Ryan	98
8 (2)	-51360 DUAL IDENTITY 17 (D) W Knight 6-9-4	C Shepherd	87
9 (15)	43-040 AERION POWER 41 Sir M Stoute 6-9-4	R L Moore	97
10 (6)	260000 KILBYEGS WARRIOR 17 (P,D) C Johnston 4-9-4	K Stott	94
11 (18)	5-0240 TAKE HEART 17 (P,D) P J Murtagh (Ire) 4-9-2	B M Coen	98
12 (12)	3-1103 TONY MONTANA 17 (D) M Bell 4-9-1	David Egan	93
13 (14)	405141 WADACRE GOMEZ 23 (D) J Johnston 4-9-2	W Buick	80
14 (1)	210401 BYSTANDER 31 (D) K R Burke 4-9-12	C Lee	86
15 (2)	0-1400 KING CROST 17 E Walker 4-8-11	J P Spencer	92
16 (8)	02400 KIRG'S CODE 17 P Evans 4-8-11	S D Bowen (3)	76
17 (5)	30-032 STAY WELL 40 (D) H Morrison 6-8-11	H Doyle	86
18 (7)	201500 LOTAL TOUCH 10 (D) C Johnston 4-8-11	Vincent Y Ho	76

3-1 Enfaar, 6-1 Wadacre Gomez, 7-1 Real Gain, 15-2 Bystander, 10-1 Tony Montana, 12-1 King Crost, 14-1 Stay Well, 16-1 Max Mayhem, Sir Busker.

Rob Wright's choice: Enfaar had plenty in hand when winning the John Smith's Cup at York; he can defy a db rise. Dangers Take Heart, Tony Montana

2.25 HKJC World Pool Vintage Stakes ITV

(Group 2: 2-Y-O: £99,242: 7f) (8)

1 (3)	14 AN OUTLAW'S GRACE 16 Hannon 9-3	S M Levey	103
2 (1)	13 AOMORI CITY 19 C Appleby 9-3	W Buick	91
3 (6)	21 ARABIAN SUN 9 C Cox 9-3	R Kingscote	86
4 (8)	14 COOL HOOF LUKE 42 A Balding 9-3	O Murphy	102
5 (2)	125 ELECTROLYTE 19 A Watson 9-3	James Doyle	104
6 (4)	514 THE PARTHENON 44 (D) A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-3	R L Moore	97
7 (5)	421 TIGER MASK 17 (D) K R Burke 9-3	C Lee	84
8 (7)	1 WOLF OF BADENACH 44 (D) H Palmer 9-3	J P Spencer	93

9-4 The Parthenon, 4-1 Aomori City, 5-1 Cool Hoof Luke, 6-1 An Outlaw's Grace, Electrolyte, 12-1 Wolf Of Badenoch, 14-1 Arabian Sun, 16-1 Tiger Mask.

Wright choice: Wolf Of Badenoch looked a good prospect when making a winning debut at Doncaster. Dangers An Outlaw's Grace, Aomori City

3.00 HKJC World Pool Lennox Stakes ITV

(Group 2: £102,078: 7f) (8)

1 (5)	223-15 AUDIENCE 42 (D) J & T Godsen 5-9-11	R Havlin	120
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Beverley Rob Wright

- 2.10 Evelyn's Phoenix 3.55 Jamih
- 2.45 Lakers 4.00 Mareski's Man
- 3.20 Atherton's Beau 5.20 Swordplay

Going: good to firm, good in places

Draw: 5F-1m, low numbers best

Racing TV

2.10 Handicap (£3.65: 1m 2f) (13)

1 (9) 31130 SISTERANDBROTHER 12 (D) H Rott 6-1-2 Miss S Dorey (5)
 2 (10) 05420 NATCHER TRACE 18 (D) Carroll 7-1-0 Mr H Smith (7)
 3 (6) -0033 DODGED 49 (D) R Menzies 7-1-13 Miss A Garven (5)
 4 (7) 5630-DANIEL DERONDA 42 (D) M Sowersby 7-1-11 Mr Nicholls (3)
 5 (1) 0-340 MASQUE OF ANARCHY 50 (D) Craig Lidger 6-10-9 Mr M Brown (5)
 6 (4) 61413 IRVING 24 (M) Hammond 8-10-9 Miss B Smith (7)
 7 (5) 3-460 A SHINING MOON 45 (D) P Molyneux 6-10-4 Mr L Kent (5)
 8 (5) 32421 EVELYN'S PHOENIX 19 (P) T Easterby 3-10-4 Miss R Roberts (9)
 9 (2) 44440 LODE YOURS 41 G Tutty 3-10-1 Miss A Collier (2)
 10 (11) 50-13 LORDE WARBURTON 25 (T,V,D) M Sowersby 7-10-1 Miss S Brotherton (5)
 11 (2) -5026 RAYENA 29 (T,V) R Fahy 4-9-12 Miss L Teal (2)
 12 (8) -4056 STRAITOUTTACOMPTON 24 M Chapman 8-9-11 Miss A Bowers-Carter (7)
 13 (10) 50-0-0 SELBY'S JOY 14 B Rathwell 4-9-11 Miss C Brooks (5)
 5-2 Evelyn's Phoenix, 4-1 Inv, 11-2 Lorde Warburton, 13-2 Sisterandbrother, Dugged, 12-1 Natcher Trace, 14-1 Lode Yours, 20-1 Others.

2.45 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £4,050: 7f) (7)

1 (5)	31 LAKERS 13 G Boughey 9-11	P Cosgrave	85
2 (4)	4 DIVINE LEGACY 24 B Bethell 9-4	C Rodriguez	92
3 (2)	621 WINTER WARRIOR 8 R Burke 9-4	S Gray	74
4 (1)	KING OF IR 14 S Quinn 9-4	P Mulrennan	94
5 (3)	3 KNIGHTS GOLD 24 B Newland 4 J Inside 9-4 Joanna Mason		80
6 (4)	20 LAZY GRIFF 38 C Johnston 9-4	J Fanning	79
7 (2)	WEST TYRONE K Ryan 9-4	T Eaves	25

2-1 Lakers, 9-4 Lazy Griff, 5-1 West Tyrone, 8-1 Gentle Warrior, 10-1 Knights Gold, 12-1 King Of Ir, 14-1 Divine Legacy.

3.20 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £4,050: 5f) (9)

1 (1)	05 ACRIDEN 6 M & D Easterby 9-2	B Garrity	71
2 (4)	40 BUNGLE REIGERS 46 Tony Coyle & Kaine Wood 9-2 JD Nolan		88
3 (8)	00262 CUNIG 6 M & S C Thomas 9-2	R Scott	70
4 (5)	0 FOCUS ON ZAAAM 11 J Furlado 9-2	C Murtagh	85
5 (7)	0 MISTER SKY BLUE 6 Tutty 9-2	S Gray	76
6 (4)	3 ATHERSTONE BEAU 20 R Fell & S Murray 9-2	T Kelly-Marshall (7)	79
7 (2)	52 FROGGER 14 S Pearce 9-2	T Head (3)	83
8 (6)	423 LUNAR FORCE 6 T Easterby 9-2	S B Kirrane	90
9 (3)	60 PURE LIBERTY 6 S C Williams 9-2	Laura Pearson	94

4-1 Froger, 11-1 Lunar Force, 10-20 Cugini, 4-1 Atherton's Beau, 14-1 Bungle Reigers, 25-1 Mister Sky Blue, Acridus, 33-1 Pure Liberty, 66-1 Focus On Zaaam.

3.55 Handicap (£4,004: 1m 4f) (11)

1 (6)	00002 A POET'S SECRET 27 (P,T) M Murphy & M Meady 4-9-13	P Mulrennan	82
2 (1)	53304 THREE PLATOON 8 (B,T) R Menzies 6-9-12	C Rodriguez	92
3 (2)	0-440 GRIFTER 20 (G,C) J Candlish 5-9-11	J Garrity	74
4 (9)	56483 DR RIO 8 (D) C Carroll 8-9-9	Z Wheatley (3)	85
5 (8)	64530 INBETWEENS 6 G Kellogg 7-9-3	J Peate (3)	83
6 (1)	506-6 BAMBOO BAY 7 (D) J Murphy 6-9-3	R Elliott (7)	80
7 (10)	55-60 A TOU TO DREAM 18 (D) (B) Pears 4-9-3	H Russek	102
8 (4)	02602 JAMM 8 (P,D) Miss T Jackson 9-9-3	Joanna Mason	94
9 (5)	70-0-0 GAZWOOD J13 S A Harris 5-9-3	Laura Pearson	90
10 (3)	550-6 HOPE JOANNA 61 C Johnston 3-8-6	J Fanning	111
11 (3)	34546 RUBIO DE ORO 22 (P,T) M Sowersby 3-8-6 A Brookes (3)		80

10-30 Jamm, 7-2 Rio, 4-1 A ToU To Dream, 13-3 Three Platoon, 12-1 Grifter, Bamboo Bay, 4 Day To Dream, 14-1 Hope Joanna.

4.30 Handicap (£4,527: 5f) (7)

1 (5)	-5036 MISS BRAZEN 22 (D) M & D Easterby 4-10-2	Joanna Mason	20
2 (7)	01440 BELLA KOPELLA 12 (C,D) W Tinkler 4-10-2	R Scott	80
3 (6)	-5002 MAJESKI MAN 33 (P,C) D Midea 7-9-13	D Nolan	4
4 (1)	04002 SOUL SEEKER 3 (P,T,C) D O'Meara 7-9-12	M Winn (5)	8

2 (6)	-45044 ART POWER 17 R K Burke 5-9-6	D Allan	113
3 (4)	02-211 ENGLISH OAK 40 (D) E Walker 4-9-6	James Doyle	116
4 (8)	122-30 KINROSS 17 (C,D) R Beckett 7-9-6	Rossa Ryan	118
5 (7)	17/5111 NOBLE DYNASTY 31 (D) C Appleby 6-9-6	W Buick	110
6 (3)	4-234 POGO 31 (D) C Hills 8-9-6	K Shoemark	107
7 (1)	13-571 TIBER FLOW 52 (D) W Haggas 5-9-6	T Marquand	104
8 (2)	1-3613 CHICAGO CRITIC 38 J P Murtagh (Ire) 3-8-13	B M Coen	107

5-2 Kinross, 3-1 Noble Dynasty, English Oak, 13-2 Audience, 10-1 Tiber Flow, 12-1 Chicago Critic, 20-1 Pogo, 25-1 Art Power.

Wright choice: English Oak was an impressive winner in a competitive handicap at Royal Ascot; he can handle this rise in class. Dangers Kinross, Audience

3.35 AI Shaqab Goodwood Cup Stakes (British Champions Series) ITV

(Group 1: £283,550: 2m) (7)

1 (5)	2-2492 AL QAAREEM 17 R K Burke 5-9-12	C Lee	110
2 (4)	55-015 COLTRANE 40 (P,D) A Balding 7-9-12	O Murphy	114
3 (2)	135-30 GREGORY 40 (C) J & T Godsen 4-9-12	James Doyle	102
4 (1)	22-111 KYRIOS 40 (D) A P O'Brien (Ire) 6-9-12	R L Moore	117
5 (3)	23-313 SWEET WILLIAM 40 (V,C,D) J & T Godsen 5-9-12	R Havlin	111
6 (6)	133-45 TASHKHAN 17 (D) E Ellison 6-9-12	B Robinson	112
7 (7)	14-431 TRUESHAN 25 (D) A King 8-9-12	H Doyle	115

12-Kyrios, 17-1 Sweet William, 15-2 Gregorie, Coltrane, 14-1 Trueshan, 20-1 Al Qaeda, 66-1 Tashkhan.

Wright choice: Kyrios had an injury-hit season last term but looked back to his best in the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot; he is hard to oppose. Danger Trueshan

4.10 Coral Racing Club Handicap (£30,924: 5f) (13)

1 (8)	012263 DEMOCRACY DILEMMA 11 (D) R Cowell 4-9-9	Rossa Ryan	95
2 (13)	05-053 EQUITLATERAL 25 (D) C Hills 9-9-9	J P Spencer	87
3 (1)	700-10 WALBANK LYN 17 (D) G Boughey 4-9-9	David Egan	80
4 (6)	6-2141 FEAR FIRE 17 (D) Owen Burrows 4-8-13	P Dobbs	90
5 (9)	016001 KIWAWO 5 (D) G Baker 5-8-10(Sex)	C Shepherd	85
6 (7)	511000 ONE NIGHT STAND 98 (B,F,D) S Dixon 7-8-9	O Murphy	82
7 (4)	504004 JIM JUNGLE 30 (D) S Quinn 4-8-9	J Hart	93
8 (12)	125319 NIVELLO 30 (P,T) G Boughey 5-8-9	H Bentley	88
9 (3)	0-0314 TATTERSALL 38 (D) M Dods 4-8-9	C Beasley	81
10 (11)	031501 ROCKING ENDS 11 (D) Tom Claver 4-8-6	Vincent Y Ho	83
11 (5)	051213 MISS ATTITUDE 5 (P,D) J Champion 4-8-4	F Norton	82
12 (2)	2-4506 LORDE RIDDIFF 40 (D) & S Quinn 9-8-4	H Doyle	86
13 (10)	604443 DANGER ALERT 18 (V,D) G Baker 4-8-4	S D Bowen (3)	88

4-1 Fair Wind, 6-1 Lorde Riddiford, 7-1 Rocking Ends, Democracy Dilemma, 10-1 Walbank, Jim Jungle, Miss Attitude, 12-1 Tattersall, Kiwano, Equilateral.

Wright choice: Jim Jungle looked to be back in form when an unlucky fourth in a hot handicap at the Curragh. Dangers Fair Wind, Democracy Dilemma

4.45 British Stallion Studs EBF Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £30,924: 6f) (15)

1 (6)	BLUE PINKYAT 2 C Johnston 9-2	Rossa Ryan	-
2 (4)	32 CARRADOS 51 A Watson 9-2	James Doyle	70
3 (9)	3 GANNAS 20 J O'Brien (Ire) 9-2	R Kingscote	60
4 (3)	HUSCAL C Hills 9-2	H Doyle	-
5 (13)	3 IMAXIMUS 26 (B,F) R Hughes 9-2	R L Moore	62

1-4 Corio Partiro, 3-1 Remarkable Flight, 4-1 Hyllyll, 7-1 Northstead Gardens, 8-1 Persian Phoenix, 10-1 Novation, 12-1 Sweet Sister, 20-1 Master Tonner.

8.10 Classified Stakes (£2,983: 1m) (8)

1 (4)	42241 FART OR FABLE 4 (P,D) J S Moore 7-9-13	Millie Wannocott (5)	81
2 (1)	053-6 DAANY J21 (H,T) J Tickle 7-9-9	F Fisher (3)	83
3 (7)	6/433 JAMES PARK WOODS 18 (D) D Davis 8-9-9	L Morris	82
4 (2)	6-046 KEEPER'S CHOKE 29 (D) S Wintle 10-8-9	M Hill	85
5 (3)	49300 OWER STARLIGHT 13 (P,D) S Lynch 7-9-9	A Volkhynsky (3)	81
6 (4)	-0060 RAINBOW MIRAGE 129 (D) S Dye 7-9-9	E Jones (5)	83
7 (5)	0000- ROCKYTHEROCKSTAR 294 (T) D R Brown 3-9-9 Hornby		86
8 (8)	4-0461 GUJUD 21 (P) J G O'Shea 3-9-1	L Edmunds	85

5-2 Fart Or Fable, 11-4 James Park Woods, 9-2 Daany, 5-1 The 7-Keiper's Choice, 12-1 Ower Starlight, 29-1 Rainbow Mirror, 9-4 Rockytrockstar.

8.40 Handicap (£2,983: 1m 6f) (10)

1 (2)	0-233 CUBANA HABANA 18 R L Uwellinn 5-10-3	A Keeley (3)	82
2 (1)	-4300 AFRICAN STAR 31 (P,T) M Loughnane 4-10-3	Millie Wannocott (5)	82
3 (10)	0-322 WYVERN MERLIN 41 (P,D) Miss M Murphy 8-10-10 Edmunds		83
4 (7)	30-4-4 HIDDEN DEPTHS 129 (P,T,D) M Mulholland 9-10-10 Keniry		84
5 (3)	4/3-6 MADE FOR YOU 113 (P,D) & R Flinn 9-10-12	L Gordon (3)	83
6 (6)	-0032 ORIENTAL ART 7 D M Simcock 6-9-12	Georgia Dobie	76
7 (4)	-6141 MUJUD 26 (P,D) J Tickle 9-9-11	T Fisher (3)	83
8 (1)	-4121 GOJDS 20 (P,D) Sir M Prescott 3-9-10(Sex)	L Morris	90
9 (1)	-1235 BERGAMANN 13 (D) M Morrison 7-9-9	R Hornby	100
10 (2)	0050 CALCULATE 123 (D) Williams 3-9-4	Isabel Williams (3)	85

5-2 Goddess, 5-1 Mujig, Oriental Art, 6-2 Young Merlin, 15-2 Cubana Habana, 8-1 Hidden Depths, 12-1 Made For You, Bergamann.

Lingfield Park Rob Wright

- 5.45 Imperial Cult 7.25 Harvard Sound
- 6.00 SURREY FIRE 8.00 Teal D'Alexandre
- 6.55 Cox Te Partiro 8.30 Mbbape

Going: avr: standard;

Turf: good to firm, firm in places

Draw: no advantage

Sky Sports Racing

5.45 Handicap (AW: £5,234: 1m 4f) (12)

1 (9)	36121 DILLYDINGDILLYDONG 7 (P), James Owen 6-11-15(Sex)	R Coakley	79
2 (4)	69540 PEARL PRINCE 12 (D) K Jewell 6-9-9	D Probert	82
3 (2)	54126 THURSDAY 27 S Dow 4-9-9	N Callan	80
4 (12)	2-500 ST PAT OF EPSOM 27 (C) P Phelan 6-9-8	P Bradley	92
5 (4)	13033 LARGO BAY 42 (D) M Madgwick 6-9-8	G Rooke	56
6 (11)	44651 CHURCHILL ROSE 14 (P) F Cellowes 4-9-8	H Davies	63
7 (5)	26550 FRANCOVAT 27 (P,C) M Madgwick 5-9-8	W Carson	80
8 (10)	00001 IMPERIAL CULT 7 (C,D) R Cook & J Bridger 5-9-15(Sex)	F Marsh	79
9 (7)	55024 LOST IN TIME 11 (P,D) D Ivory 7-9-5	D Quinn	80
10 (1)	66603 DAPHNE WAT 17 (C) G J Moore 4-9-9	T P Quayle	111
11 (10)	41303 PRIVATE BRYAN 14 D De Gelles 7-9-4	T Whelan	92
12 (3)	05005 BLONDELLE 13 C Dunnett 6-9-4	J Haynes	92

3-1 Dillydillydong, 9-2 Churchill Rose, 5-1 Imperial Cult, 7-1 Private Bryan, 8-1 Daphne May, 10-1 Largo Bay, Lost In Time, Thurday.

6.20 Novice Stakes (AW: £3,942: 1m 2f) (8)

1 (4)	32020 HAMPDEN 21 T Ward 3-9-7	D Probert	80
2 (6)	03 PROPHE'T'S PATH 20 Owen Burrows 3-9-7	F Marsh	80
3 (5)	2-40 SURVEY FIRE 20 M Morrison 3-9-7	H Davies	85
4 (1)	66 ARAZZO 27 Harry Charlton 3-9-5	T Whelan	92
5 (3)	352 THORNTONLEDALE MAX 22 (D) M Simcock 3-9-2	J Haynes	92
6 (2)	CHOLA RANI 10 M Simcock 3-9-2	J Haynes	92
10-11	Hampden, 4-1 Thorntonle Dale, 5-1 Prophe't's Path, 10-1 Arazo, 12-1 Chola Rani, 14-1 Survey Fire.		

6.55 Handicap (AW: 3-Y-O: £2,983: 1m 2f) (8)

1 (5)	00-44 SWEET SISTER 34 D Coakley 9-11	G Bass (3)	83
2 (1)	44500 NOVATION 12 G Kellaway 9-9	D Probert	82
3 (4)	11124 COX TE PARTIRO 56 (P,B) R Spencer 9-9	N Callan	80
4 (1)	66 ARAZZO 27 Harry Charlton 3-9-5	T Whelan	92
5 (3)	352 THORNTONLEDALE MAX 22 (D) M Simcock 3-9-2	J Haynes	92
6 (2)	CHOLA RANI 10 M Simcock 3-9-2	J Haynes	92
7 (7)	4006 NORTHSTADE GARDENS 15 D M Simcock 9-3	C Fallon	92
8 (2)	6000 MASTER TONEY 92 (H) J Kitten 8-13	T Whelan	92

6 (12)	62 JOUNEY 34
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Struggling Pérez to stay at Red Bull

EXCLUSIVE

Molly Hudson Motor Racing Reporter

Sergio Pérez will remain a Red Bull driver for the second half of the Formula 1 season, despite a poor run of form that led to intense speculation that he would be replaced.

The Times understands that Pérez, 34, retains the support of the team and will continue to partner Max Verstappen, the reigning world champion, when the season resumes in Zandvoort for the Dutch Grand Prix in late August.

It is understood Red Bull have kept faith with the Mexican driver and believe he can rediscover the form that led to him recording four podium finishes in the first five races of the season.

"Checo [Pérez] remains a Red Bull Racing driver despite recent speculation, and we look forward to seeing him perform at tracks he has previously excelled at after the summer break," Christian Horner, the Red Bull team principal, told staff at their Milton Keynes factory yesterday.

After planned talks with Helmut Marko, the Red Bull senior adviser, Horner made his decision and delivered the news to the factory staff.

Daniel Ricciardo and Liam Lawson were both rumoured to be candidates to replace Pérez but it is understood neither was considered seriously, with several of the circuits towards the end of the season suiting Pérez's driving style, including the Azerbaijan Grand Prix, which he won last year.

Pérez has proved a selfless team-mate of Verstappen but has come under pressure in recent weeks, with McLaren and Mercedes closing in on Red Bull's 42-point lead in the constructors' championship.

He signed a new contract with the



Pérez, left, will remain Verstappen's team-mate at Red Bull, despite the Mexican driver's recent struggles this season

team in early June, extending for a further two years, although in F1 such agreements mean little if performance does not follow.

After the Belgian Grand Prix, where Pérez finished seventh, promoted one place after George Russell was disqualified, Horner said: "Checo is a great team player, he's a massive team player. That's why he was selected... why we took him at the end of 2020 to put alongside Max and he's won [five] races for us."

"Second in the World Championship last year, goodness know how many

podiums and has been the most successful combination [alongside Verstappen] that we've ever had as a driver pairing. What's frustrating for everybody is Checo struggling because nobody wants to see him struggle. Everybody wants to see him succeed."

Pérez suffered consecutive retirements in Monaco and Canada, which stunted his momentum and confidence. He finished the first half of the season closer to last place in the drivers' championship than to his team-mate in first. He has shown glimpses of the pace he can produce, lining up second on the

grid at Spa, and will need to focus on consistency in the final ten races.

Speculation had mounted in recent weeks but Pérez had insisted that he would remain with the team. Ricciardo is also likely to retain his seat at Red Bull's sister team, RB, after improved performances in recent weeks.

Meanwhile, Carlos Sainz has signed for Williams on a two-year deal starting next season, ending the speculation about his future that has affected the moves of several other drivers.

Sainz, 29, was the most sought-after available driver this season after it was

announced that Lewis Hamilton would be replacing him at Ferrari next year.

His two-year deal, with options to extend, is a significant statement from Williams and their team principal, James Vowles, who has pledged to lead them back to their success of old. Sainz will replace Logan Sargeant next season.

"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," Sainz said. "However, I am fully confident that Williams is the right place for me to continue my F1 journey and I am extremely proud of joining such a historic and successful team, where many of my childhood heroes made their mark on our sport."

"The ultimate goal of bringing Williams back to where it belongs, at the front of the grid, is a challenge that I embrace with excitement and positivity."

Alpine and Sauber (who will become Audi) were both fighting for the signature of Sainz and will now move on to other targets such as Kevin Magnussen, the Haas driver who is out of contract after this season and who had described Sainz as the "cork in the bottle" of the market for drivers.

Sainz took victory at the Australian Grand Prix this season, recovering from a bout of appendicitis to do so. He has three career wins and 23 podium finishes.

"Carlos has demonstrated time and again that he is one of the most talented drivers on the grid, with race-winning pedigree, and this underlines the upwards trajectory we are on," Vowles said. "Carlos brings not just experience and performance, but also a fierce drive to extract every millisecond out of the team and car; the fit is perfect."

Results

Cricket

Metro Bank Cup: Group A Middlesex v Northamptonshire

Radlett (Northamptonshire no toss): Middlesex (2pts) beat Northamptonshire by five wickets

Northamptonshire (balls) (balls)

P P Shaw c De Caires b Hollman 76 (58)

E N Gay c De Caires b Cornwall 1 (4)

R S Vasconcelos c Davies b Cornwall 6 (1)

G A Bartlett c De Caires b Brookes 27 (37)

S A Zaib c Fernandes b Hollman 58 (77)

*L D McManus c De Caires b Brookes 2 (9)

A H Miller c Kaushal b Hollman 73 (68)

J J Broad not out 38 (20)

J J G Sales c Cracknell b De Caires 2 (4)

M G Finan lbw b Kaushal 15 (12)

A Weatherall not out 35 (22)

Extras (b 1, lb 4, w 8, nb 4) 19

Total (9 wks, 50 overs) 317

Fall of wickets 1-8, 2-36, 3-113, 4-117, 5-122, 6-247, 7-264, 8-267, 9-294.

Bowling Kaushal 8-0-61-1; Cornwall 8-0-54-2; Brookes 10-1-73-2; Anderson 5-0-30-0; Hollman 10-0-49-3; Fernandes 3-0-18-0; De Caires 6-0-27-1.

Middlesex (balls) (balls)

J B Cracknell c McManus b Broad 49 (52)

N M De Caires lbw b Miller 17 (18)

N Fernandes c Broad c Zaib 83 (103)

S D Stoneman b Broad 0 (1)

*M D Robinson not out 83 (78)

M Anderson not out 35 (23)

T J L Davies not out 31 (17)

Extras (lb 3, w 12, nb 6) 21

Total (5 wks, 48.1 overs) 319

L B K Hollman, H J H Brookes, I Kaushal and N B Cornwall did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-52, 2-90, 3-90, 4-218, 5-284.

Bowling Finan 9-0-47-0; Weatherall 6-10-54-0; Miller 7-1-58-1; Broad 9-0-65-3; Sales 3-0-17-0; Bartlett 5-0-29-0; Zaib 9-0-46-1.

	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	RR
Worcestershire	2	2	0	0	0	4	2.82
Hamshire	2	2	0	0	0	4	0.93
Derbyshire	2	2	0	0	0	4	0.48
Somerset	2	1	1	0	0	2	0.00
Kent	2	1	1	0	0	2	-0.15
Durham	2	1	1	0	0	2	-0.36
Middlesex	3	1	2	0	0	2	-1.48
Northamptonshire	3	0	3	0	0	0	-0.61
Lancashire	2	0	2	0	0	0	-0.62

The Hundred

Manchester Originals v Trent Rockets: men

Old Trafford (Manchester Originals won toss): Trent Rockets (2pts) beat Manchester Originals by one run

Trent Rockets (balls) (balls)

J Lyth b Butt 9 (12)

A T Banton c Ferooqi b Butt 45 (22)

A D Hales c and b Walter 10 (14)

S R Han c Mir b Hartley 12 (16)

S R Powell c Walter b Hartley 27 (17)

S I Washin c Overton b Hartley 4 (7)

R A Khan not out 15 (9)

J A Thompson run out 4 (5)

Extras (b 4, w 11, nb 4) 19

Total (7 wks, 100 balls) 145

*L Gregory, L Wood and S J Cook did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-55, 2-56, 3-78, 4-88, 5-124, 6-125, 7-145.

Bowling Ferooqi 10-4-13-0; Walter 15-6-12-1; Currie 15-4-23-0; Raza 20-13-29-2; Mir 20-4-39-0; Hartley 20-6-25-3.

Manchester Originals (balls) (balls)

*P D Salt c and b Cook 16 (8)

M D B E Hales c Hain b Thompson 40 (37)

M F Hurst c Wood b Cook 2 (3)

W L Madsen b Khan 28 (20)

P J Walter b Khan 29 (15)

J Overton b Wasim 0 (3)

T W Hartley st Banton b Wasim 2 (2)

S R Butt run out 21 (12)

S W Currie not out 10 (6)

Extras (lb 1, w 5) 6

Total (8 wks, 100 balls) 144

U Mir and F Ferooqi did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-17, 2-19, 3-68, 4-118, 5-119, 6-121, 7-144, 8-144.

Bowling Wood 10-4-14-0; Wasim 20-5-21-2; Cook 20-5-37-2; Gregory 10-3-23-0; Khan 20-10-24-2; Thompson 15-6-17-1; Lyth 5-17-0-0.

Oval Invincibles P W L T NR Pts NRR

2 2 0 0 0 4 1.295

Trent Rockets 2 2 0 0 0 4 1.200

Welsch Fire 2 1 1 0 0 2 1.076

Southern Brave 1 1 0 0 0 2 0.909

B'ham Phoenix 2 1 1 0 0 2 -0.981

London Spirit 2 0 2 0 0 0 -0.556

M'ster Originals 2 0 2 0 0 0 -1.359

N Superchargers 1 0 1 0 0 0 -2.350

Women

Old Trafford (Trent Rockets won toss): Manchester Originals (2pts) beat Trent Rockets by one run

Manchester Originals (balls) (balls)

B L Mooney st Wraith b Gordon 24 (22)

S Wolvaardt run out 12 (9)

E L Lamb b Graham 9 (11)

K E Bryce c Sciver-Brunt b Gardner 32 (27)

E Jones run out 34 (25)

*S Ecclestone b Graham 13 (5)

F M K Morris not out 1 (1)

Extras (lb 1, w 10) 12

Total (6 wks, 100 balls) 137

†E Threlkeld, K J Garth, A Z Monaghan and L R Liler did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-13, 2-45, 3-65, 4-117, 5-132, 6-137.

Bowling Sciver-Brunt 15-8-20-0; Potts 5-3-8-0; Gardner 20-12-17-1; Gordon 20-5-33-1; Graham 20-7-31-2; King 20-5-26-0.

Trent Rockets (balls) (balls)

B F Smith c Threlkeld b Filer 8 (8)

G E Scrivens st Threlkeld 6 (6)

*Ecclestone 9 (12)

†N A J Wraith c Monaghan b Filer 17 (11)

*N R Sciver-Brunt not out 56 (46)

A K Gardner c Mooney b Bryce 36 (23)

H L Graham not out 1 (1)

Extras (w 7, nb 2) 9

Total (4 wks, 100 balls) 136

K L George, A M King, J P Groves, G E A Potts and K L Gordon did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-13, 2-37, 3-47, 4-133.

Bowling Garth 20-8-34-0; Filer 20-9-26-2; Morris 15-4-19-0; Bryce 15-4-24-1; Ecclestone 20-12-19-1; Monaghan 10-5-14-0.

Oval Invincibles P W L T NR Pts NRR

2 2 0 0 0 4 1.603

London Spirit 2 1 1 0 0 2 0.475

Trent Rockets 2 1 1 0 0 2 0.475

Welsch Fire 2 1 1 0 0 2 -0.200

M'ster Originals 2 1 1 0 0 2 -0.204

Southern Brave 1 0 1 0 0 0 -0.337

N Superchargers 1 0 1 0 0 0 -1.000

B'ham Phoenix 2 0 2 0 0 0 -1.625

Golf

USPGA Tour 3M Open

Blaine, Minnesota: Leading final scores (United States unless stated): 267 J Vegas (Ven) 68, 66, 63, 70. 268 M Greyserman 70, 68, 67, 63. 269 M Kuchar 68, 67, 63, 71. M McNealy 70, 66, 63, 70. 270 T Pendrith (Can) 66, 64, 73, 67. 271 P Fishburn (J) 67, 63, 70; K Kitayama 66, 69, 70, 66. S Theegala 66, 69, 66, 70. 272 Lee Kyoung-hoon (S Kor) 67, 69, 68, 68. M NeSmith 68, 64, 70, 70. J J Spaun 70, 68, 65, 69. 273 S Burns 70, 65, 69, 69. C Champ 69, 70, 61, 63. T Finau 67, 69, 70, 67. T Moore 69, 71, 65, 68. H Norlander (Swe) 68, 72, 67, 66. M Schmid (Ger) 70, 70, 65, 68. A Smalley 69, 65, 69, 69. 274 J Bridgeman 63, 70, 72, 69. C Davis (Aus) 68, 69, 65, 72. M Hughes (Can) 64, 72, 70, 68. A Putnam 67, 66, 75, 66; J Suh 68, 69, 68, 69

PGA Tour CPKC Open

Calgary, Alberta: Leading final scores (United States unless stated): 275 L Coughlin 68, 70, 66, 71. 277 M Saigo (Japan) 73, 74, 71, 69. 278 Ryu Hae-ran (S Kor) 70, 69, 64, 75. J Shin (S Kor) 70, 74, 67, 67. 280 J Kupcho 69, 72, 68, 71. 281 R Zhang 71, 71, 66, 73. N Guseva (Russ) 75, 70, 67, 69. 282 B Henderson (Can) 72, 73, 69, 68. A Lee 70, 75, 70, 67. N Koerstz Madsen (Den) 71, 73, 69, 69. L Ko (NZ) 70, 71, 72, 69. 283 L Vu 71, 70, 69, 73. G Dryburgh (Soo) 74, 72, 69, 68.

Tennis

DC Open

Washington: First round: Men C O'Connell

(Aus) bt H Mayot (Fr) 6-4, 7-6 (7-3); J Wolf (US) bt Z Svajda (US) 6-4, 7-5; C Garin (Chile) bt A Karatsev (Russ) 6-4, 6-2; D Elahi Galan (Col) bt M Cressy (US) 6-4, 6-3; M Bellucci (It) bt M McDonald (US) 7-6 (7-4), 7-6 (7-3); Women A Pavlyuchenkova (Russ) bt A Krueger (US) 6-3, 4-6, 6-4; C Dolehide (US) bt L Tsurenko (Ukr) 6-1, 3-6, 6-4; Wang Yafan (China) bt Karolina Pliskova (Cz) 5-7, 6-3, 6-0.

Fixtures

Cricket

Metro Bank Cup: Group B: Kia Oval Surrey v Gloucestershire (11.0).

The Hundred: Headingley Northern Superchargers v Southern Brave (women 3.00 pm 6.35).

Football

Kick-off 7.45 unless stated

Champions League: Second qualifying round, second legs Sparta Prague (2) v Shamrock Rovers (0) (6.00); The New Saints (0) v Ferencvaros (5).

Scottish Challenge Cup: First round: North Bucks O'Dee v Aberdeen U-21; Buckie Thistle v Dundee Utd U-21 (8.0); Dundee U-21 v Forthartine Utd; Fraserburgh v Hearts U-21 (7.30). South Berwick v St Mirren U-21; Cowdenbeath v Kilmarnock U21; East Kilbride v Celtic U-21; Hibernian U-21 v Albion; Motherwell U-21 v East Rising; Rangers U-21 v Bo'ness Utd.

Yesterday's racing results

Ayr

Going: good (good to firm in places)

2.30 (5f 110yd) 1. **Symbol Of Strength** (Connor Beasley, 9-2); 2. Motawahli (6-4); 3. Weissmuller (Evans fav), 5 ran. 1 1/4, nk. A Keatley.

3.05 (6f) 1. **Biplane** (Mark Winn, 11-4); 2. Sound Of Iona (5-2 fav); 3. Highland Oily (7-2). 7 ran. NR: Chookie Dunedin. 1/4, 1/2, J S Wainwright.

3.40 (7f 50yd) 1. **He's A Gentleman** (Hollie Doyle, 100-30 fav); 2. Alpine Sierra (4-1-3); 3. On A Session (11-2). 8 ran. 11, 11, H Palmer.

2.10 (fm 2f) 1. **Chatrangar** (Hollie Doyle, 4-4); 2. Pol Roger (2-3); 3. Stressfree (11-8 fav), 6 ran. Hd. 2/1, A Watson.

4.45 (1m) 1. **Roaring Ralph** (Connor Beasley, 11-2); 2. Shine On Brendan (9-2) (1-fav);

3. Volcanology (15-2), 9 ran. NR: John L Sullivan. 1/4, 1/4, M Dods.

5.20 (5f) 1. **Zuffolo** (Rhys Elliott, 11-2); 2. Frank The Spark (8-1); 3. Cuban Rock (11-2). 11 ran. Sh hd. 2 1/4, M Dods.

Placepot: £185.50. Quadpot: £35.90.

Southwell

Going: standard

2.15 (1m 13yd) 1. **Light Up Our Stars** (L Morris, 17-2); 2. Havana Smoke (17-2); 3. First Dynasty (9-1); 4 ran. 1/4, 1/4, S Dixon.

2.50 (6f 16yd) 1. **Invictus God** (S De Souza, 7-2); 2. Gilet (28-1); 3. Top Juggler (7-2). 14 ran. 1/4, nk. Tom Clover.

3.25 (6f 16yd) 1. **Daytona Lady** (Joanna Mason, 22-1); 2. Rambuso Creek (14-1); 3. One More Wave (100-30 fav). 14 ran. Nk, 2 1/4, Mrs R Carr.

4.00 (7f 14yd) 1. **Grand Karat** (James Doyle, 2-1 fav); 2. Another Investment (11-2); 3. Sonmarg (10-1). 12 ran. NR: Justcallmepete, Zero Carbon. 2/4, 2/4, J Harry Charlton.

4.35 (1m 6f 21yd) 1. **Sun Dancer Girl** (Callum Hutchinson, 9-2); 2. Veer (11-2); 3. Bittalemon (3-1). 5 ran. NR: All Greek To Me. 2 1/4, 4/4, A M Balding.

5.10 (1m 3f 23yd) 1. **Kildare Legend** (Daniel Muscitt, 15-8 fav); 2. At Vimeiro (7-2); 3. Who's Glen (6-1). 13 ran. 3/4, 1/4, J Ferguson.

5.40 (1m 3f 23yd) 1. **Make Aclaim** (Harrison Shaw, 9-1); 2. Eavestone (6-5 fav); 3. Sugar Road (9-1). 11 ran. NR: Meridian Way. 3/4, 1/4, Grant Tuer.

6.15 (1m 3f 23yd) 1. **Heat Of Passion** (L Morris, 2-1 fav); 2. Rogue King (9-4); 3. Yippee (9-2). 8 ran. 4/4, 3/4, Sirk Prescott.

Placepot: £255.20. Quadpot: £26.20.

Windsor

Going: good to firm

5.35 (6f 12yd) 1. **Strike** (Olivia Tubb, 3-1); 2. Antiphon (2-1 fav); 3. As If By Chance (6-1). 7 ran. NR: Abolish. 1/4, 1/4, J G Portman.

6.05 (6f 12yd) 1. **Preanka** (K T O'Neill, 22-1); 2. Quee Dos (3-1 fav); 3. Miss Nightfall (100-30). 13 ran. NR: Halfett. 4/4, 1/4, Alice Haynes.

6.35 (2m 2f) 1. **Chorus** (Tom Marquand, 4-9 fav); 2. Lake Two (11-2); 3. Equuluse Star (50-1) 9 ran. 5f, 1 1/4, W J Haggas.

7.05 (6f 12yd) 1. **Palmar Bay** (Rossa Ryan, 11-2); 2. Amazyndon Dream (9-2); 3. Elmonjed (11-0 fav). 8 ran. NR: Indian Creak. 3/4, 1/4, N B Beckett.

7.40 (1m 3f 1yd) 1. **Atlantis Blue** (Jim Crowley, 3-1); 2. More Than A Feelin (14-1); 3. Sol Dao (13-2). 8 ran. 4/4, 1/4, George Baker.

8.10 (5f 21yd) 1. **Faro De San Juan** (Rossa Ryan, 9-2); 2. Nogo's Dream (3-1); 3. Dystus (28-1). 7 ran. NR: Lochaber. Hd. 1/4, Dylan Cunha.

8.40 (1m 2f) 1. **One Cool Dreamer** (Rossa Ryan, 100-30); 2. Lia Rose (11-4); 3. Patronage (13-2). 8 ran. 1/4, 1/4, A King.

Jackpot: Not won. Pool of £5,400.90 carried forward to Goodwood today.

Placepot: £12.90. Quadpot: £43.30.

Wolverhampton

Going: standard

5.50 (1m 1f 104yd) 1. **Showlan Spirit** (Mr S Walker, 9-2); 2. Handel (16-1); 3. Sea Of Charm (17-2). 13 ran. Sh hd, 1/4, George Baker.

6.25 (7f 36yd) 1. **Searchingtheblues** (Tyler Heard, 9-2); 2. Beauty Nation (4-9 fav); 3. Navarre Special (18-1). 10 ran. 8f, 2 1/4, M D Usher.

6.55 (7f 36yd) 1. **Porfin** (Tyler Heard, 11-1); 2. Stella Hogan (11-1); 3. Lady Wingalong (8-13 fav). 10 ran. Sh hd, 1/4, P S McEntee.

7.10 (7f 36yd) 1. **Amroon** (Billy Loughnane, 11-5 fav); 2. Oriental Spirit (7-2); 3. Rose Fandango (12-1). 8 ran. NR: Blacklion, Cut To The Chase. 1/4, 1/4, M Botti.

8.00 (1m 142yd) 1. **Eretat** (Billy Loughnane, 10-11 fav); 2. Dayer Bay (15-2); 3. King's School (17-2). 8 ran. NR: Darkizideothemoon. 1/4, 2/4, C Johnston.

8.30 (5f 21yd) 1. **Acex Wild** (Finley Marsh, 4-1); 2. Angle Land (12-1); 3. Level Up (7-1). 11 ran. Hd. 2, 1 A Wintle.

9.00 (1m 6f) 1. **Standbackandlook** (Brandon Wilkie, 4-6 fav); 2. Sophar Sogood (18-0); 3. Bascinet (7-1). 11 ran. 3f, 4/4, W J Knight.

Placepot: £33.10. Quadpot: £10.10.

Sport Football

United making plans for £2bn 100,000-seat new stadium

Smith Rowe leaves US to seal £34m Fulham move

Paul Hirst

Los Angeles



Scott McTominay and Harry Maguire in Los Angeles – the city's 70,000-seat SoFi Stadium took four years to build



ASH DONEGAN/MANCHESTER UNITED/GETTY IMAGES

Manchester United will decide by the end of the year if they want to revamp Old Trafford or build a new 100,000-seat stadium on the grounds of their present home.

Sir Jim Ratcliffe, the Ineos chairman who owns 27.7 per cent of the club, has told the stadium taskforce, which was set up in April, that it should report back in December with its findings.

At present, the taskforce, which is led by Lord Coe and includes figures such as Gary Neville and the mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, is leaning towards recommending that a new stadium is built in the car park area behind the Stretford End, rather than a revamp of the existing ground. However, the club say that no final decision has been made.

The taskforce acknowledges that building a new stadium would be costly, at an estimated £2 billion, and says any decision will not be made without canvassing the opinions of the supporters.

The club have already asked 30,000 fans for their thoughts in a survey. A subcommittee of the taskforce is set to be appointed, including a representative of the Manchester United Supporters' Trust, to gauge the mood of fans.

The club are not ruling out a revamp of the present stadium and it would be the cheaper option, at an estimated cost of £1 billion, but United would also lose match-day revenue because they would probably have to close part of the 74,100-capacity stadium while building works are undertaken. The club have about 51,000 season ticket holders.

If United do build a new stadium, they have vowed to ensure that the arena is in keeping with United's traditions. Landmarks such as the Holy Trinity Statue, depicting Sir Bobby Charlton, George Best and Denis Law, would be protected. It is anticipated that a new

stadium would take six years from the point of inception to the end of construction.

United would be able to play in the present stadium, built in 1910, while a new ground is built.

If the capacity did reach 100,000, it would make the new ground the biggest football stadium in the world.

United's senior staff have been on a tour of the SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, where the first team played against Arsenal on Saturday night, and other American venues. They have also paid a visit to Real Madrid's Bernabeu and Barcelona's Nou Camp, which have been redeveloped of late.

Real put a new outer shell on their stadium during a four-year revamp and inserted a subterranean system that allows them to store their pitch under-

ground and use the arena for concerts and NFL games. Barcelona are playing at the City's Olympic Stadium while the Nou Camp is refurbished.

The SoFi Stadium, described by the Inglewood mayor James T Butts as "the pre-eminent stadium in the world", took almost four years to build.

The impressive arena was bankrolled entirely by Stan Kroenke, the Arsenal and LA Rams owner.

The Rams and their local rivals LA Chargers both play at the SoFi, which cost about £5 billion. The construction of the 70,000-seat SoFi has helped to provide jobs for Inglewood, which has historically been a deprived part of California.

United would hope to fund any new stadium with private investment and some public money, which would be put

towards improving transport links to the stadium.

The former United forward Andy Cole devoted part of his tour diary, published on United's website, to talking about the job opportunities created in Inglewood, 12 miles south of downtown LA, since the SoFi was built.

"I don't draw this comparison lightly, but you can see a parallel with the opportunity back home in Manchester," Cole said. "A new or redeveloped stadium at Old Trafford could be the focal point for revitalisation of the surrounding area. United fans and everyone in the north of England deserves a truly world-class stadium, and SoFi set the standard to aim for. This is the kind of arena the best players in the world want to be playing in and fans want to be experiencing."

Gary Jacob, Tom Allnut

Emile Smith Rowe flew home from Arsenal's tour to the United States last night to seal a transfer across London to Fulham for about £34 million.

The attacking midfielder left the US on the day that Arsenal completed the transfer of the Italy defender Riccardo Calafiori from Bologna in a deal worth £42 million.

Fulham have offered a club-record fee for Smith Rowe and will pay an initial £27 million plus £7 million in add-ons. Smith Rowe, 24, has been out of favour at Arsenal and suffered from groin and knee injuries in the past two seasons. Last season he made only three Premier League starts.

Smith Rowe had two years left on a deal that was signed after Arsenal turned down Aston Villa's £30 million bid in 2021. He then took the No 10 shirt, won a first England cap in November 2021 and ended the campaign with his best return of ten goals and two assists, but he has not scored a club goal since.

Fulham, who signed Ryan Sessegnon as a free agent last week, have been in talks with Fluminense about André, the defensive midfielder, as a replacement for João Palhinha, who joined Bayern Munich for £47.5 million.

The Tottenham Hotspur winger Bryan Gil has joined Girona on a season-long loan. Gil will return to Spain for a third consecutive year after loans at Valencia and Sevilla. Tottenham signed Gil from Sevilla for £21 million in 2021 but the 23-year-old has struggled with the physical demands of the Premier League. Last season Gil started only two league games under Ange Postecoglou, who left the Spaniard out of the squad for this summer's pre-season tour to Japan and South Korea.

AC Milan are confident of concluding a deal this week for Emerson, the right back valued at £17 million by Tottenham.

Brighton & Hove Albion are expected to sign Diego Gómez from Major League Soccer side Inter Miami for £10 million. The central midfielder, 21, is part of the Paraguay Olympic squad and will join after the tournament.

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 **SAT 27TH JULY**
 **WED 31ST JULY**
 **SAT 3RD AUGUST**

After a 6-1, 6-4 win in which he dictated the rallies, Djokovic consoles Nadal



ANDY CHEUNG/GETTY IMAGES

'It was taken from me' – Ori questions judges in loss

Boxing
Tom Kershaw

Team GB's boxing woes worsened significantly last night as Delicious Ori lost a controversial split decision against Armenia's Davit Chaloyan.

The super-heavyweight contender had been billed as a gold medal prospect and the heir apparent to Anthony Joshua but was defeated 3-2 on the five judges' scorecards at the North Paris Arena. Ori defeated Chaloyan en route to claiming gold at the European Games last year and seemed well placed to do so again after taking a 20-18 lead on two of the judges' scorecards heading into the final round.

The 27-year-old, who is now expected to turn professional, did concede he had allowed the former World Championship silver medalist to land too many eye-catching punches but remained convinced, like many ringside, that he had done enough to win.

"I can't believe it. I'm absolutely gutted," Ori said. "For the past eight years, I've dreamt about that Olympic gold and it's been taken away from me. It could be me, it could be the judges, but at the end of the day, that's what's happened. I feel like I've let myself down and my family. I knew I had to go in strong and hard but I didn't want to overcommit myself. That was the result, I have to accept it and move on."

The defeat caps a miserable time for GB Boxing in Paris. After a record haul of six medals, including two golds, in Tokyo three years ago, only six boxers qualified for these Games. Charley Davison, Pat Brown and Rosie Eccles all lost their first-round bouts, with the latter also aggrieved at the judges.

That has left only Chantelle Reid and Lewis Richardson and both are significant outsiders, raising a recently inconceivable but now very real likelihood of bringing home no boxing medals at all from Paris.



Ori believed he had done enough to win but suffered a split-decision loss

No goodbyes from Nadal but this felt like king of clay's abdication

Tennis
Tom Kershaw Paris

Rafael Nadal cocked an irritable eyebrow and refused to confirm if this would be his fated last dance at Roland Garros. After all the visceral magic he has brought to the sport and this venue above all, nobody can force him into a hurried goodbye, and the continuation of a dewy-eyed doubles act with Carlos Alcaraz awaits at the very least.

But if this defiant 6-1, 6-4 defeat does eventually prove to be his last appearance in the singles on Court Philippe-Chatrier, there was no more befitting an opponent than Novak Djokovic.

Before the 60th meeting in a two-decades-long rivalry that has illuminated sport like few others, the Serb had led their head-to-head record by only one; the all-time men's singles grand-slam tally by only two. If not for the injuries that have afflicted Nadal since he prevailed in the pair's last meeting here two years ago, those ridiculously fine margins could be even sligher.

This was the kingdom of the Spaniard

had ruled like no other, but all reigns must come to an end and, after his first-round defeat at the French Open this year, this felt like the final proof of his abdication.

"Everything has a beginning and an end," Nadal said. "I will miss playing tennis at a competitive stage, as [will] all professionals that have played all their lives. I like what I do. Of course I'm going to miss the adrenaline, but I cannot complain. I've achieved much more than I dreamt. If that's going to be the last match here, I'm going to accept it in peace. I gave my best."

Djokovic is only a year younger at 37 but refuses to age and grimace like an ordinary mortal; even knee surgery in June could not prevent him from reaching the Wimbledon final this month. An Olympic gold medal is the only precious title to elude him — Nadal won his in Beijing in 2008 — and, on this evidence, he may well claim it at what is surely his final Games too.

Nadal summoned vestiges of his greatness but they were restricted to flourishes. Instead it was Djokovic for

Evans 'sore' before doubles

Dan Evans lost 6-1, 6-2 against Stefanos Tsitsipas in the second round of the men's singles. That leaves Jack Draper as Team GB's sole hope in either singles draw.

Evans will now try to recuperate in time for the next — and possibly final — chapter in Andy Murray's farewell in the doubles today.

"I played too much tennis yesterday," Evans said. "My back is pretty sore ... I'm pretty tired. Andy's been resting all day so that's one good thing."

whom there was no angle too brave, no ball beyond reach. He broke five tennis, dictated the rallies from the baseline and tested Nadal's tight hamstring with an array of slices.

The sole game Nadal won in the first set was merely a consolation and he was soon 4-0 down in the second. What was the difference? "Everything," Nad-

al said. "I was not able to have enough quality shots, enough quality movement. He was playing from comfortable positions all the time. Playing against Novak without creating damage to him and without having the legs of 20 years ago is almost impossible. He played better than me from beginning to end."

But it is not in Nadal's DNA to bow out meekly. He has always chased after every point as if it is his last, long before the strained sinews in his body began to render that a real possibility. He duly staged a valiant comeback and the crowd's belief stirred when Djokovic double-faulted to gift back one break.

Feeding off the relentless chants of his name, Nadal then broke again to restore parity after reacting brilliantly to retrieve a Djokovic smash before drilling a passing shot into the corner. A guttural roar of "vamos" followed, but salvaging pride had spent Nadal's reserves. After saving three break points at 4-4, he did not even attempt to chase the sublime drop shot that sealed his fate and a long goodbye drew shorter still.

How the British got on at the Olympics on day three

Archery

Men: Team: 1/8 elimination round Taiwan 6 Great Britain 0.

Badminton

Men: Doubles: Group A B Lane and S Vendy (GB) bt A Dong and N Yakura (Can) 21-14, 21-12.
Women: Singles: Group N K Gilmour (GB) bt K Azzahra (Azer) 21-13, 21-11.

Boxing

Round of 16: Men: 92kg D Chaloyan (Arm) bt D Ori (GB) 3-2.

Canoeing — slalom

Men: Canoe single: Leading positions: Semi-final 1, N Gestin (Fr) 93.12sec; 2, M Trave (Sp) 96.69; 3, S Tasiadis (Ger) 96.74; 4, A Burgess (GB) 97.21. Final 1, Gestin 91.36; 2, Burgess 96.84; 3, M Benus (Slovakia) 97.03.

Cycling — mountain bike

Men: Cross-country: Leading final positions 1, T Pidcock (GB) 1hr 26min 22sec; 2, V Koretzky (Fr) 1:26:31; 3, A Hatherly (SA) 1:26:33; 8, C Aldridge (GB) 1:28:32.

Diving

Men: Synchronised: 10m platform: Leading final positions 1, J Lian and H Yang (China) 490.35pts; 2, T Daley and N Williams (GB) 463.44; 3, R Wiens and N Zsombor-Murray (Can) 422.13.

Equestrianism

Eventing: Leading final positions: Individual jumping 1, M Jung (Ger) Chipmunk FRH) 21:80pen; 2, C Burton (Aus, Shadow Man) 22:40; 3, I Collett (GB, London 52) 23:10; 4, T McEwen (GB, JL Dublin) 25:80; 21, R Canter (GB, Lordships Graffalo) 42:40. **Team** 1, Great Britain (Canter, McEwen, Collett) 91.30pen; 2, France 103.60; 3, Japan 115.80.

Gymnastics — artistic

Men: Team: Leading final positions 1, Japan (D Hashimoto, K Kaya, S Oka, T Sugino, W Tanigawa) 259.594pts; 2, China (Lu Yang, Su Weide, Xiao Ruoteng, Zhang Boheng, Zou Jingyuan) 259.062; 3, United States (A Hong, P Judo, B Malone, S Nedoroscik, F Richard) 257.793; 4, Great Britain (J Fraser, H Hepworth, J Jarman, L Whitehouse, M Whitlock), 255.527.

Hockey

Women: Pool B Great Britain 0 Australia 4.

Judo

Women's -57kg: Round of 32 E Liparteliani (Geo) bt L Nairne (GB), Ippon.

Rowing

Leading positions: Men: Eight: Heat 2 1, Great Britain (S Carnegie, R Gibbs, M Bolding,

J Dawson, C Elwes, T Digby, J Rudkin, T Ford) 5:37.04; 2, Australia 5:42.07; 3, Italy 5:52.52.
Women: Pair: Repechages 1, H Rasmussen and F Erichsen (Den) 7:34.57; 2, E Britz Zamorano and A Centelles (Sp) 7:36.98; 3, R Edwards and C Brew (GB) 7:37.11. **Eight:** Heat 1 1, Great Britain (H Long, R McKellar, H Dumford, E Ford, L Irwin, E Stewart, H Taylor, A Campbell-Orde) 6:16.20; 2, Australia 6:18.61; 3, Canada 6:21.31.

Rugby sevens

Women: Pool B Great Britain 26 South Africa 17. **Quarter-finals** Great Britain 7 United States 17; New Zealand 55 China 5; France 14 Canada 19.

Sailing

Skiff: Leading overall positions: Men (after six races): 1, New Zealand 14pts; 2, Ireland 19; 3, Spain 28; 8, Great Britain (J Peters, F Sterritt) 39. **Women** (after six races): 1, France 10; 2, Netherlands 20; 3, Italy 28; 20, Great Britain (F Black, S Tidey) 67.

Windsurfing: Leading overall positions:

Men (after one race): 1, N Goyard (Fr) 1pt; 2, N Renna (It) 2; 3, J Soe (Den) 3; 21, S Silis (GB) 21. **Women** (after two races): 1, E Wilson (Ger) 3; 2, M Maggetti (It) 8; 3, MB Bazo German (Per) 8.

Shooting

Men: Trap: Leading qualifying positions 1, R Levin-Andersson (Swe); 2, J Willett (Aus); 3, G Cernogoraz (Cro); 9, N Hales (GB); 23, M J Coward-Holley (GB).

Swimming

Leading positions: Men: Freestyle: 200m: 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. **Backstroke:** 100m: Final 1, T Cecon (It) 52.00sec; 2, Xu Jiayu (China) 52.32; 3, R Murphy (US) 52.39; 8, O Morgan (GB) 52.84. **Women:** Backstroke: 100m: Heat 3 1, K Berkoff (US) 57.99; 2, E Terebo (Fr) 59.10; 3, K

Toussaint (Neth) 59.84; 4, D Hill (Ire) 1:00.40; 5, K Dawson (GB) 1:00.69; 6, M Harris (GB) 1:00.85. **Breaststroke:** 100m: Final 1, T Smith (SA) 1min 52.88sec; 2, Tang Qianting (China) 1:05.54; 3, M McSharry (Ire) 1:05.59; 6, A Evans (GB) 1:05.85. **Individual medley:** 400m: Heat 1 1, E Weyant (US) 4:36.27; 2, K Grimes (US) 4:37.24; 3, F Colbert (GB) 4:37.62; 4, K Shanahan (GB) 4:40.40. **Final 1, S McIntosh (Can) 4:27.7; 2, Grimes 4:33.40; 3, Weyant 4:34.93; 7, Shanahan 4:40.17.**

Table tennis

Round of 64: Singles: Men L Pitchford (GB) bt V Wu (Fiji) 11-6, 11-3, 11-3, 11-2.

Tennis

Second round: Men: Singles S Tsitsipas (Gr) bt D Evans (GB) 6-1, 6-2. **Doubles:** Czech Republic (A Pavlasek and T Machac) bt Great Britain (N Skupski and J Salisbury) 4-6, 6-3, 10-8.

Sport Paris Olympics 2024

Silver completes set for Daley, a man who transcends diving

Owen Slot

Paris



The comeback, as Tom Daley revealed after winning his fifth Olympic medal, so nearly did not happen. Go back 12 months to the World Championships in Fukuoka, Japan, and Daley was doing the childcare and watching events unfold from his home in Los Angeles. The deal was straightforward: if the British pair in the men's 10m synchro won a medal, then they would remain the No 1 British pair, and Daley would remain at home with the kids. No comeback. If they didn't, he would take his first nervous steps back to the pool.

The two Britons were Matty Lee, who had won gold with Daley at the Tokyo Olympics, and Noah Williams, of whom more later. They finished fourth. It was from there that Daley began writing this last amazing chapter.

Here at the Olympic Aquatic Centre, when it was finally complete, he stood clutching a baby's juice mug. He had to look after it because his one-year-old, Phoenix, had chucked it at him after the competition.

It remains unclear whether he was actually standing on the podium with a juice mug in his pocket. But that is the multitasking parent for you. Just one of the roles in his modern life was winning silver here.

His partner was Williams, no doubt congratulating himself on that excellent Fukuoka fourth. Williams broke down in tears when interviewed after the event because he was asked about David Jenkins, the coach who had guided Williams throughout his career until his death three years ago.

"I've never seen Noah cry before," Daley said. When he then added that it was not only Jenkins, but his own late father, Rob, who would have been so proud, he reopened another chapter of his long, storied career.

Throughout it all, he has represented so much. The bullied schoolboy, the bereaved child, the teenager who came out, his life as a proud gay man and then a proud gay father. In every new role, he has been a proud advocate and it would be simple to lose yourself in his significance as such a widely admired and classy public figure and to overlook his extraordinary feats as a sportsman.

Here in Paris we saw it again, but you had to remind yourself: he's been back doing this for only a year. You also had to remind yourself that he lives in Los Angeles and Williams is a Londoner, and so they had managed to squirrel away only two months' training together.

And yet he managed to step up and deliver a genuinely excellent performance. This may suggest that Williams was in some way an inferior half of the pairing, but while Daley would never acquiesce to such an interpretation of their partnership, Williams was keen to acknowledge how Daley had dived "amazingly" and how he had "helped me elevate how I normally dive".



Daley, below left, won a fifth Olympic medal, alongside Williams

They were joint second with Canada after the first of six rounds of diving. They were a clear second after the second round and thereafter they just continued to put distance between themselves and the Canadians. The slightest of errors would have let the Canadians in. In fact, it went the other way. They delivered with every dive.

In front of them, the Chinese pulled away to a victory that requires context. China's ambition is to win gold in all eight of the diving events. Their track record in recent Games has been seven

of the eight. In London 2012 they won six, and that was a bad one. Here in Paris they are, so far, two from two.

Their diving in the 10m synchro was immaculate. Six times they would follow Daley and Williams on to the platform, an order of play that would allow the British pair to apply the pressure. However well the Brits executed, though, the Chinese pair, Lian Junjie and Yang Hao, were utterly resistant to it. They outscored Daley and Williams in every round.

For different nations the prize is different. For China it is gold or bust. Daley and Williams' silver felt as if it was a victory. The two Ukrainian teenagers felt that their fifth place had let people down, though the circumstances are significant here. Both their fathers have been at the battle front; they have been having to move training venues because of bombing.

Meanwhile Gary Hunt was just delighted to have been a part of it. Hunt is a 40-year-old from Leeds who won a bronze for England at the 2006 Commonwealth Games. He once worked as a Tarzan in a French

Daley's Olympic medals

Gold 2020 Tokyo
10m synchronised

Silver 2024 Paris
10m synchronised

Bronze 2012 London
10m platform

Bronze 2016 Rio
10m synchronised

Bronze 2020 Tokyo
10m platform



means that he has the full set: bronze, silver and gold.

What he also has is a new generation who have seen what he has done and have decided to follow him. Before Daley, Britain just wasn't a nation that competed in diving. A diving medal in 2004 was a surprise and a one-off. Yet here in Paris, Daley and Williams's was already the second diving medal for Team GB and more are expected. In both the Tokyo and Rio Olympics, Team GB won three.

For so many reasons Daley is an inspiration. At every Olympics, now, we are met with another of them: the fact that he has transformed a sport.

The question now is if he will continue to do so or whether he will instead return to his role leading the childcare in Los Angeles. There is no answer to that yet, he said. He clearly has not ruled out the LA Games in four years' time. After all, as he said, that would be a second "home" Games for him. Diving is also set to introduce mixed events and he quite likes the sound of that.

He also has Hunt as a role model. Hunt is still cliff diving from heights of 27 metres at the age of 40. For a man who has already left a considerable mark upon the world, that would give Daley not just one more chapter, but two.



Richards shows no fear – but falls agonisingly short of gold

Matt Lawton

Chief Sports Correspondent, Paris



When you have trained in a paddling pool wearing a harness attached to a garage door, lane one of an Olympic swimming pool presumably holds no fears.

Ordinarily, it would be seen as something of a disadvantage to be stuck on the outside of any elite race. But Matt Richards excelled here in the La Défense Arena, adding an individual silver medal in the 200m freestyle to the relay gold he claimed in Tokyo three years ago.

In a race where only seven hundredths of a second divided the medals, Richards lost by an all-too-familiar margin for British athletes in this water. Just 0.02sec to be precise, echoing exactly the gap between Adam Peaty and gold the previous evening. “It’s excruciatingly frustrating,” he said afterwards.

The 21-year-old Welshman who was raised in Worcestershire lost to the Romanian he beat to the world title last year, and at some point may reflect with some regret on a performance in the semi-final that left him in such a poor lane. He was more than a second slower than David Popovici on that occasion, qualifying seventh-fastest overall and therefore giving himself that extra hurdle to overcome.

That he came as close as he did to beating Popovici to a first individual Olympic title certainly made it exciting, not least for the family members who were here after initially being scammed

into paying thousands of pounds for fake tickets.

On a night when his compatriot, Duncan Scott, could finish only fourth — a seventh Olympic medal will surely come in the relays for the 27-year-old — Richards proved once again that he is indeed now the outstanding British male in this event.

In Tokyo he was the baby of that winning 4x200m freestyle relay team. But last year he beat both Scott and Tom Dean, the Tokyo Olympic champion, to clinch his first British title, and he claimed the scalps of Dean as well as the outstanding Popovici to secure World Championship gold as well.

Clearly, Richards is made of strong stuff; something he demonstrated during lockdown when he worked tirelessly in that makeshift training pool at his parents’ home, with his dedication even extending to the fact that he is dating one of his training partners. Richards and Emily Large, 23, are due to marry a few days after the Games.

“I’ve got my family, my fiancée, mum and dad all up in the stands, so it doesn’t get much better than that,” he said.

Asked if that losing margin was becoming the curse of the British team, he replied:

“It seems that way, but I can’t be too disappointed with that. It’s my first individual event at an Olympic Games, so to come away with a silver is great.

“And, if anything, losing by so little has added more fire to my belly. I’ve got a lot more to come this week. The 100m is tomorrow, the 4x200m is tomorrow



Richards, left, led in the closing stages and thought he had touched home first but fell short by the same 0.02sec margin as Peaty the previous night

too. It fuels me for the rest of the week.”

The race was mighty close. “I thought I had got it,” he said. “It felt as if I had touched first. The time says differently. It is not a sport that is up for debate, it is black and white. It wasn’t my best finish, I would be lying if I said it was fantastic.

“I looked at the scoreboard and saw the number two next to my name and it was great, but also so annoying. But we move on, we get better and try to get it next time.”

It was a shame for Scott. There is so much to admire about the quiet man from Stirling; not least for the principles he displayed in refusing to share a

podium with a convicted doper back in 2019. Sun Yang was furious with the then 22-year-old. Unshaken, Scott simply stared back at him.

On this occasion he was only just out of the medals, finishing just eight hundredths of a second behind the USA’s Luke Hobson. As Scott acknowledged, it was the worst place to finish; something to which his team-mate, Freya Colbert, can also testify.

She claimed fourth in the women’s 400m individual medley, behind Canada’s teenage phenomenon, Summer McIntosh.

The 17-year-old was outside her own world record but still finished almost six seconds clear of second-placed Katie Grimes, touching in 4:27.71 compared with the American’s 4:33.40.

How shallow pool is ending hopes of world records

Swimming
Craig Lord Paris

Does Paris have a slow pool? Hopes of witnessing world records tumble this week are fading fast after two days of relative slowdown across the board.

On Sunday night Adam Peaty’s 100m breaststroke final was the slowest in Olympic waters since Athens 2004, while Léon Marchand fell 0.45sec shy of his world record in a dominant 400m medley victory, in 4:02.95, which left everyone suggesting he might have been the first sub-four-minute man in history had it not been for “the shallow pool”.

On seeing Marchand miss his mark, despite being in the form of his life having last year taken down Michael Phelps’s last remaining solo record, Thomas Ceccon, the Italian 100m backstroke world-record holder who had come to Paris aiming to improve his time, said: “I can forget [that], then!”

After Peaty’s final, Britain’s Nick Gillingham, the two-times Olympic medal winner and former 200m breaststroke world champion, tweeted:



Britain’s Richards is one of the few swimmers who prefers the shallower waters

“Did pool maintenance do a back wash down the pool to speed the water up and slow down the swimmers for this race?”

The two 50m pools — one for competition, the other for warming up and

down — are huge temporary tanks staged at the Paris La Défense Arena for the duration of the Games.

At 2m 15cm deep, the competition pool complies with the minimum depth of 2m, but it is 85cm shy of the 3m

standard of the past four Games and many other events, including a string of World Aquatics Championships. Organisers argued that they did not need such depth in Paris because the artistic (synchronised) swimming, which does require 3m, is being staged at a different venue.

Deeper water is generally faster for competitive swimming. The shallower the water, the more vortices there are and the stronger the turbulence that creates waves.

In a deep pool the power of those waves is quelled as they dissipate before coming into contact with walls and floor. In a shallow pool the turbulence bounces back and the water is alive with “water that fights you”, as Alexander Popov, the Russian sprint king of the 1990s, once remarked.

Breaststrokers, particularly the big, hefty sprinters like Peaty, suffer the most from turbulent waters because the stroke covers a deep range of movements below the surface.

It is the slowest of all four strokes because the body position offers by far the greatest resistance, which makes it

unforgiving of anything that gets in its way. Swimmers also say that beyond the turbulence, shallow waters often “feel” slow because they do not perceive the black line between the lanes and the pool floor around it to be “moving under you as quickly”.

Bernd Berkahn is coach to the German Lukas Märtens, the 400m freestyle winner on Saturday in a time more than a second down on the one he set at national trials last month, when he challenged the world record. Berkahn says that the issue with the pool in Paris is not just about turbulence. He says that, because the pool is shallower, the clutter of tech furniture on the floor — equipment linked to cameras, timing and other technical needs — is catching the lights and reflecting it into the faces of swimmers in the last five metres as they approach the wall.

In contrast Britain’s Matt Richards, who last night won silver in the 200m freestyle, notes: “I like shallower pools because my turns benefit from it in a deep pool the drive off the wall always feels much ‘heavier.’”

Sport Paris Olympics 2024



From left: Canter, McEwen and Collett retained the team eventing title for Team GB at Versailles, while Collett, below right, also won individual bronze

Golden reminder of bond between human and horse

James Gheerbrant

Versailles



Great Britain's first gold medal of the Paris Olympics arrived on a morning of sparkling sunlight, set against the opulent splendour of Versailles. The

eventing team of Laura Collett, Tom McEwen and Rosalind Canter, defending the title GB won in Tokyo, had earned a lead during the first two phases of the competition and, over the treacherous fences of the showjumping course, they held on to it assuredly. Given a palace for a stage, they delivered a performance of regal aplomb.

Two hours later Collett won bronze in the individual eventing final, adding to Britain's recent tradition of excellence in this sport: nine equestrian

gold medals now, and 20 medals overall, at the past six Olympics, in a sport where the British predilection for feats of athletic excellence while seated overlaps with an element of caprice, a covenant of trust, not found on the inanimate craft of the velodrome and rowing lake.

That bond had been tarnished, of course, with the sudden recusal on the eve of the Games of Charlotte Dujardin, the face of this equestrian team and their most successful member; a dynamite news story and a disabusing intru-

sion of violence into this genteel world of white picket fences, raked sand and clipped topiary spirals.

Nothing that happened here will right or redeem Dujardin's actions, but it did remind us of other stories, other protagonists. Like Collett, whose journey in sport encompassed a near-fatal fall in 2013 that put her in a coma for six days and left her partially blind. "I really struggled," she has said of adjusting to the loss of the sight in her right eye. "In the end I had to give myself a bit of a talking-to. I realised it didn't have to stop me doing what I wanted to do."

Showjumping, the third and final component of eventing, is a sport of constant jeopardy. The only success is the avoidance of error. In the stands surrounding the course on three sides there was almost total stillness; the only movement the fluttering of fans, the horses tracing their loops over the sand in an atmosphere of rapt silence, held breath, broken only by the hollow clonk of a dislodged bar and the lurching gasp that followed, or the exhalation of applause that announced the completion of a clear round.

Britain had a small lead after the first two disciplines, dressage and cross country, but from the first round of the day, when Canter knocked over only one fence and the riders from France



and Switzerland, in second and third place, dislodged two each, it felt safe. McEwen went clear next, giving Collett a buffer in the final round. She faltered only on the last fence, by which time victory was secure — though that lapse would ultimately cost her gold in the individual, which went to Germany's Michael Jung, after both completed clean runs in a further round.

It did not feel a significant disappointment though. "I've never ridden into an atmosphere like that,"



DAVID DAVIES/PA WIRE, TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JACK HILL

Burgess claims reward for throwing caution to wind

KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/AP

Canoe slalom
Ben Bloom Vaires-sur-Marne

Canoe slalom is one of those sports that presents its top three paddlers with the gruesome endeavour of sitting on a rotating trio of chairs representative of a live podium, forcing them to watch publicly while waiting for others to beat their time and snatch their medal away.

Three years ago, at the Tokyo Olympics, Adam Burgess briefly occupied the gold, then silver and finally bronze seats, before he was shunted into fourth place, where he would remain, missing out on the CI podium by just 0.16 seconds.

As he sat in gold-medal position in Paris with three rivals remaining, the thought ran through his head that it might happen again. "It would have been absolute heartbreak," he admitted.

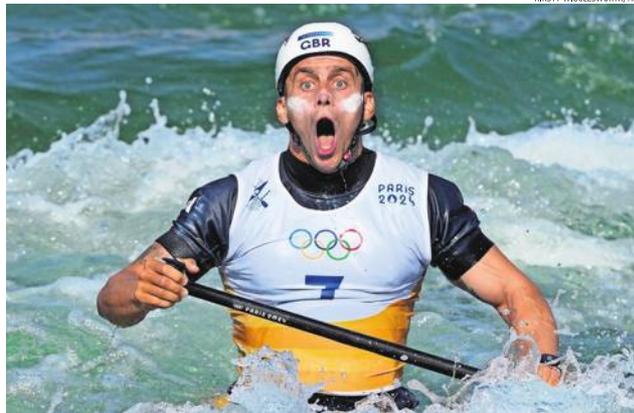
Thankfully, this time his podium place was not for taking. Only when France's superb home favourite, Nicolas Gestin, surpassed him with the last run of the final did he have to relinquish his grip on gold.

Gestin's time of 91.36sec provided an astonishing margin of victory over Burgess's 96.84sec after the Briton had paid the price for a glaring mid-race error. But after his previous near-miss in Tokyo, silver left no sense of a disappointing consolation prize as he reaped the rewards of going on an all-out attack.

"I really wanted to just leave it all out there today," Burgess, 32, of Stoke-on-Trent, said. "I've paid the price and 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.

"When I looked up and saw I'd finished first I realised I'd done enough on the rest of the course to absorb that mistake. I was just so happy. It was magical."

Olympic silver has been a long time coming for a veteran who took up the sport while still in primary school. Hailing from the same Stafford & Stone club as Team GB team-mate and Olympic K1 champion Joe Clarke — who begins his quest for two more gold medals today — Burgess had developed some-



The 32-year-old Burgess was able to win a medal after finishing fourth in Tokyo

Leading medals table

	G	S	B	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	2	3	7
9 Canada	2	1	2	5
10 Germany	2	0	0	2

thing of a reputation during his career for delivering through rounds before falling short in finals.

As the only member of the British team for these Paris Games without an individual world title on his CV, Burgess admitted he was fuelled by those who doubted his prowess at the highest level.

"A lot of people said I had to be lucky and was maybe not the one who was talked about for a medal," he said. "I'll admit there was a little bit of that which gave me a bit of grit to go and prove people wrong today.

"We're not a huge sport and we don't get to show it off in front of so many

people. It's the most beautiful sport in the Olympic Games. I was trying to lock into that and just show everyone how much I was enjoying myself."

After exhibiting a look of pure shock upon crossing the finishing line, the scale of his achievement soon descended when his silver was confirmed.

Burgess has often attributed his sporting success to his devotion to yoga, breath work and cold-water therapy. But as he stood on the podium, wearing a Team GB friendship bracelet made by his coach's two daughters, all serenity was happily forgotten, replaced by the "ugly" tears he had visualised if ever this moment arrived.

"I was thinking about myself as a 10, 11-year-old dreaming of that moment," he said. "I was thinking about Olympic Games gone by when I was watching, in Athens and Beijing, and I was thinking about my parents, my family, everyone out here in the stands here to support. I was thinking about the disappointment in Tokyo, so much.

"I've been trying to visualise success in this race in the build-up and I've not been able to do it without getting emotional. I had this image in my head of hugging my coach Craig [Morris] at the finish line and we're all ugly crying. That's exactly how it panned out."

said Collett, who along with McEwen was part of the winning team at the Covid-affected 2020 Games. "I thought [gold in] Tokyo was special but this is incomparable. It has blown that out the water: going out in front of a crowd and feeling like every single person is willing you on."

McEwen described Collett's riding as "poetry in motion". He too had a fantastic competition, jumping clear in both rounds to add to a faultless performance in the cross country; only a relatively weak dressage cost him an individual medal. Canter, on her Olympic debut, also deserved huge credit. Her chances in the individual event had been blown by a harsh penalty in the cross country, but she recovered her composure brilliantly.

What must it have felt like for each of the competitors as they rode into the enclosure and saw that long vista, the Grand Canal laid out before them like a pane of glass, the glint of the palace in the distance? There was something resonant in the contrast between the sporting arena and its setting. A palace such as Versailles is built in the belief that it will stand for ever more, that it will endure through the most seismic acts of God. An Olympic showjumping course is an ephemeral structure and one quite literally designed to be

knocked over, to be demolished by the merest brush of a hoof.

That tension, between eternity and precarity, is one it has been hard not to feel when thinking about this sport over the past week. Horse riding is the most ancient and elemental of sports; it has been in the modern Olympics since the very beginning and it feels as if it will be there for ever. And yet, it does not take much to bring the whole edifice tumbling down. The Dujardin scandal has the potential to be a ruinous moment of revelation. Some have asked if this could even be the end of dressage.

What will save this sport, ultimately, is its best side: the truth and the depth of the relationship, in most cases, between these humans and their horses. It has been striking to witness the intimacy of that bond and the way many of these athletes speak about their horses as if they were people.

Reflecting on the way she felt as she entered the arena, how she could sense the crowd willing her on, Collett said of her horse, London 52, known as Dan: "It felt like Dan felt that too. He tried so hard, I'm just the lucky one that gets to steer him. I owe absolutely everything to that horse. He's a true professional and I think he knew what was at stake." It was a tribute not to the mere vehicle of her victory, but to an equal partner.

Familiar agony for retiring Whitlock

Gymnastics
Tom Kershaw Paris

The podium floor was a picture of agony, ecstasy and familiar heartache after a breathtaking conclusion to the men's team gymnastics final. Team GB fell short of a bronze medal again, just as they had in Rio and Tokyo, after Luke Whitehouse erred on the vault and an underwhelming all-round effort on the horizontal bar ceded too much ground to the United States.

But their despair paled in comparison to the dramatic finale that unfolded on the same apparatus minutes later. An insuperable Chinese team had led by more than three points heading into the last of six rotations and were seemingly on a certain course for gold before Su Weide fell twice and Japan snatched glory at the very death with three impeccable routines.

The Bercy Arena was stunned into silence and the athletes themselves

were lost to differing states of sheer disbelief. It was exhilarating and impossibly cruel, a perfect summation of the volatile margins in team gymnastics, where all three scores on each apparatus count towards the final total. A single mistake can be so costly, and that pressure proved crushingly apparent.

It appeared to affect Whitehouse at his maiden Olympics, too. Team GB had started brilliantly on the pommel horse, with Max Whitlock's score of 15.226 a formidable marking post ahead of his bid to retain gold in the individual final on Saturday.

"I'm really gutted actually. Fourth is always difficult, we've come fourth quite a few times at the Olympics now," Whitlock, who plans to retire after these Games, said. "Right now, it feels quite raw but overall we can be quite proud. Fourth is still a high position in the world.

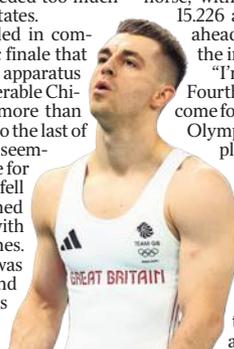
"We've made history from the number of finals we've made in qualifications and now we can try and move forward, take con-

fidence from today, and hopefully finals can go to plan."

They had held a slender lead after one rotation but the standings can be fickle, with each team competing simultaneously on different apparatus. After the second rotation, GB had fallen back to fifth, despite Harry Hepworth's brilliant score of 14.800 on the rings, but the vault can be particularly vulnerable to high scores and horrible slumps. Whitehouse went first but underperformed his Dragulescu Vault — a handspring double front flip with a half twist — and touched the mat with his hands in a messy landing. A score of 13.033 was a brutal setback and Jake Jarman's spectacular response could only salvage so much, but the 22-year-old will take high hopes into the all-around, floor and vault finals.

It was an uphill struggle from there, with the horizontal bar — the team's weakest apparatus — still to come. Whitehouse can take consolation from an impressive closing floor routine, but the required calamity from the US on the pommel horse was not forthcoming. That gut-wrenching moment was already reserved for elsewhere.

Team GB finished fourth



Sport Paris Olympics 2024

Pidcock pulls off do-or-die move in epic comeback

Rick Broadbent

Paris



From the cusp of disaster Tom Pidcock fought like hell. Deploying true grit and pure class, he overcame a flat tyre and seemingly flatlining prospects to bridge a 40-second deficit and crown one of the great sporting comebacks with an audacious overtaking move.

"It's the Olympics," he said after a mountain bike race of epic scope. "You've got to go all in."

The facts are that Pidcock, 24, won the cross country by nine seconds from Victor Koretzky, a Frenchman who had fuelled partisan chaos around Elancourt Hill. It was Team GB's first individual gold medal and Pidcock's second in the event after his win in Tokyo. Beyond that it was a race of raw emotion and empty tanks. And it came down to gilded moments on the last lap.

"My back hurts now," the Yorkshireman said afterwards with a grimace. "I was suffering. It was difficult to enjoy it because of the situation. I was fighting to come back. The point of the Olympics is to do excellence and I didn't want to give up. My goal was to get to the front. That is all I was thinking about. It was the most emotionally draining victory of my career."

A puncture on the fourth of eight 4.4km laps was exacerbated by a delay getting a spare front wheel, and Pidcock had to reconcile himself to a sudden fall from first to ninth. Initially he made little dent on the lead, but with three laps to go he started scything mighty lumps from it.

On the last lap he passed Koretzky and many may have believed that was that. But the Frenchman responded. They exchanged the lead again and 36 dreams had been whittled down to a duel.

Finally it came down to a single move in a wooded section with trees lining the middle of the narrow track. Pidcock went left and accelerated. Koretzky went right and thought he had enough. When they veered back towards each other they almost collided, but Pidcock had the slender gap. As Koretzky narrowly missed another tree, that was that. Immediately the French cried foul.

One spectator likened it to Max Verstappen in its bloody-mindedness. It was a do-or-die move executed to perfection and worthy of a gold medal. The officials looked at it and decided it was fine. "I did nothing wrong," Pidcock said. "He could have gone left, and I would have gone right. In this position you don't hesitate. The gap was there and I was going for it. He left the door open. We were racing for a gold medal."

Koretzky took the defeat well and blamed himself. "There was some

gravel on the track and I took some with my front wheel and lost a part of the gap I had on Tom," the 29-year-old said. "I'm really disappointed. This mistake cost me the gold. In the woods he overtook me and took my shoe off, and it was difficult to do something at this moment."

After 1hr 26min 22sec, Pidcock was subjected to some booing from the disappointed crowd, who may have been surprised to see him in the lead. In fairness, they later chanted his name and the rider took it on the chin. "The boos are a shame because that's not really the spirit of the Olympics," he said. "But I do understand that the French are very passionate and wanted Victor to win. They didn't boo the rock that made me puncture."

Pidcock is an interesting character who did not come out of the Netflix series about the Tour de France particularly well. An episode detailing how he defied Ineos Grenadiers orders to ride for himself in 2023 rather than his team-mate Carlos Rodríguez, when the Spaniard had risen higher in the general classification, was titled *The Enemy Within*. Rodríguez gave the camera a knowing look and said: "There are a lot of adjectives to describe him."

Pidcock pulled out of this year's Tour with Covid symptoms but has now bounced back in style. If he has not yet achieved all he wants from France's biggest cycling race, this was his tour de force. "What's the point in stressing?" he said of the post-puncture gap. "I have had enough stress this week. Victor is the fastest guy in mountain bikes on the last lap and I knew this would be super-difficult coming into the final lap."

"I knew if I could stay close to him then I could make a move in the last part where he wasn't expecting it. Someone was telling me I was in eighth. I don't give a f*** what position I am in. I want to know how far it is to the front."

Not far enough was the answer as far as Koretzky was concerned, but at least he was part of something special. When a lead is being whittled away in sync with the race distance then drama is guaranteed. And when it comes to racing on wheels, the difference between a genius who can see an opportunity when it has not even got to the door and someone who goes too far is often a subjective argument.

Not long after Pidcock's latest win, an email winged its way to my inbox from a man who uses the same barber as the cyclist did when he was a child. "She tells a story about a very young Tom Pidcock who would zoom across the bust Oakwood crossroads on his bike, never seeing any



From 40 seconds behind to champion: how he did it

1, lap 4 Pidcock fell from first to ninth after a puncture. A delay in getting the spare front wheel on did not help matters

2, lap 7 Having caught up from 40 seconds behind, Pidcock attacked on the penultimate lap, bursting ahead of Koretzky...

3, lap 8 But Pidcock lost his lead near the start of the final lap

4, lap 8 On the last lap and with time and track running out, Pidcock went left around trees in a wooded section when Koretzky had gone right... just managing to squeeze into first place as the pair returned to the racing line



danger," he wrote. "She is not surprised by success!"

Pidcock had said the course was "a bit bland" and was not rowing back just because it had turned out well. "It looks a lot better on TV than it does to ride," he said. Blunt but not bland, it was some kind of brilliance. South Africa's Alan Hatherly was third, with GB's Charlie Aldridge eighth. "He's one of a kind," Aldridge said of Pidcock.

No quarter given and no half-measures, Pidcock had nothing left by the end, although he still has the road race to go. He said he would think about that later but is all in with the Olympics. "It's bigger than cycling," he said.

In the end he used a quote more commonly associated with NASCAR and made famous by the Tom Cruise film *Days of Thunder*.

"I had to go for a 'rubbing is racing' gap," he said. Those who saw it will for ever be glad that he did.

Conquering Tour is all that's left to do

The Yorkshireman is at a crossroads and can now fulfil his true potential in the world's greatest bike race, writes **David Walsh**

Not long after Britain's first gold medal had been delivered by the equestrian team, Tom Pidcock sat on his mountain bike in Elancourt, southwest of Paris, waiting to begin his quest for a second consecutive gold in his discipline. Those in his corner would have wished his bike to prove at least as reliable as the magnificent animals who carried the equestrian team to glory.

A machine, you might have thought, should be at least as dependable as a horse. Alas for Pidcock, the bike let him down. He punctured on the fourth lap of a 4.4km circuit. That was close to

halfway and not a good moment to have a mechanical issue. In these stressful times a second feels like a minute and it seemed the mechanic was on a coffee break. A Formula 1 wheel change, this was not.

Pidcock stayed calm, an achievement that warranted a gold medal in itself. He lost about 40 seconds and for any normal mountain biker that would have been curtains. You've read the story many times: GB rider suffers cruel fate. Over the first three laps Pidcock had worked hard to get himself to the front of the race and then had his troubles when he should have been enjoying a slight breather.

His post-puncture pursuit of the French rider Victor Koretzky was a masterclass of intuitive brilliance. Knowing what you have to do to reel in your rival while understanding how best to do it. First he needed to get back into a nice rhythm, then gradually go harder and get to Koretzky in good

PANORAMIC/SIPA/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



time. It felt as if Pidcock was reading from a computer, eating into his rival's lead through small bites. He caught Kozetzky on the penultimate lap, which would have been how he wanted it.

At that point the plot took an unexpected twist. Pidcock decided to shake off Kozetzky, which was expected. Kozetzky refused to be shaken off, which was not. Some of Pidcock's accelerations were brutal and each time the French rider responded. Coming into the last 2km, another twist. Kozetzky attacked Pidcock and got eight or ten bike lengths ahead.

Pidcock fought back, the lead changed. Then changed again. Getting to the last part of the final descent, Kozetzky led and was now favourite. There was one chance for Pidcock, a point on the descent at which the riders could take a path either side of two trees.

On the previous lap they had taken the path to the right. Kozetzky didn't even think about it. He went right. Pidcock did think about it and went left. Ten metres on, their paths converged and the riders collided. Crucially Pidcock was half a bike length in front and, from the high-speed coming together, it was Kozetzky who lost control, his left foot unclipping from the pedal.

That instinctive decision to go to the left side of the trees was pure Pidcock. It

was his opportunity, and the execution, founded on explosive acceleration, was perfect. In that moment the gold medal was claimed. He described it as one of the great wins of his career, which it was because it was victory pulled from the bowels of defeat. The French crowd booed him, not out of bitterness but rather an expression of disappointment that their hero had been vanquished.

Pidcock has something special. Two years ago at the Tour de France, on Bastille Day of all days, he was one of five breakaway riders to reach the early slopes of Alpe d'Huez with that day's race at their mercy. Every man in the break could climb and, because it was Pidcock's first Tour, you wondered if he had it to win at the summit.

Then, on the brutally steep early slopes, Pidcock took some food from his back pocket. He peeled off the wrapper, crumpled it and took aim at a roadside rubbish sack. In it went, tempting you to think he might have made it in darts. That calmness in the big moment, the almost casual belief that he can do virtually anything on his bike, is what distinguishes him.

Of course he won the race to Alpe d'Huez that day. Did so without fuss or stress. And had you stood beside him while he waited for his wheel change, he probably would have told you not to

worry, he'd regain the lost ground. Through the three laps that he chased, there wasn't a hint of desperation.

He has won pretty much all there is to win in mountain biking and cyclocross and today, the day after getting his second Olympic gold medal, he celebrates his 25th birthday. Whether he admits to this or not, this is his crossroads moment. From here there is a new direction and a new challenge, the Tour.

He told Ineos Grenadiers he couldn't go all in for the Tour until he'd taken care of business here. The team accepted that. Next year's Tour will be his fourth experience of the race but in a sense it will be his first as a general classification contender. It's a huge ask but he needs to discover his true potential in the world's greatest bike race.

So far he's endured a difficult relationship with the Tour. Cyrille Guimard, who was team boss when Bernard Hinault won his first four Tours, says there is no reason why Pidcock cannot become a grand-tour winner and that he "can do practically everything".

Everything? That would mean trading punches with Tadej Pogacar. Only time can tell us whether he's capable of that. Pidcock will celebrate this gold medal and some morning soon he will wake up and realise the toughest road is still ahead of him.

Your guide to day four

GOLDS UP FOR GRABS 12

HIGHLIGHTS

Triathlon Men's individual, featuring Alex Yee (7am, right)
Men's hockey Great Britain v Netherlands (11.45am)
Rugby sevens Women's medal matches (bronze 6pm, gold 6.45pm)
Swimming Includes 4x200m freestyle relays (9pm)

WITH YOUR BREAKFAST

The men's individual triathlon gets under way at 7am — the first Games since Athens 2004 at which a Brownlee brother has not represented Great Britain. There is a ready-made replacement, however, in Alex Yee, pictured, who won silver in Tokyo and is out for revenge on the defending champion, Norway's Kristian Blummenfelt. He will be joined by Sam Dickinson, who was part of the gold medal-winning mixed relay team at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Lucy Renshall, the first British judoka in five years to top the world rankings, in 2022, starts her hunt for a medal in the -63kg weight class. Becky Wilde and Mathilda Hodgkins Byrne take to the water in the women's double sculls



semi-finals at 9.50am. At La Défense Arena, Team GB are favourites in the men's 4x200m freestyle relay. The heats start from 10am.

WITH YOUR LUNCH

Britain's men's hockey team face hot favourites the Netherlands at 11.45am, and Ireland face India at 12.15pm.

There will be a first viewing of the defending BMX freestyle champion from Tokyo, Charlotte Worthington, and Kieran Reilly, the men's world champion, when the seeding rounds start from 12.25pm.

The table tennis mixed doubles reaches its medal matches from 12.30pm at South Paris Arena 4, and the women's rugby sevens semi-finals kick off at 2.30pm and 3pm.

INTO THE EVENING

The final of the men's swimming 4x200m relay is the most

captivating event at the end of day four, and that is scheduled for 9pm, coming after the women's 100m backstroke and men's 800m freestyle finals.

The women's rugby sevens reaches its resolution with the medal matches beginning at 6pm at the Stade de France, while the medal matches for the women's team épée will start at 6.30pm from the Grand Palais.

France face New Zealand in the men's football at 6pm in Marseille, and the surfing medals will be decided in the early hours of the morning in Tahiti, French Polynesia.

GLOBAL STARS

Swimmer Katie Ledecky, the seven-times Olympic champion, will race in the women's 1,500m freestyle heats. Simone Biles will bid for an eighth Olympic medal in the women's team gymnastics final.

TODAY'S ACTION IN FULL (TEAM GB INVOLVEMENT IN BLUE)

Archery

Men's and women's Individual elimination rounds from 11am.

Badminton

Group stages from 7.30am
 Women's singles. 8.20 Men's doubles. 9.10 Women's doubles. 10.0 Men's singles.

Basketball

10am and 12.20pm Men's group A. 4.15 and 8.0 Men's group B.

Basketball 3x3

4.30pm, 5.0, 8.0, 8.30
 Women's pool round. 5.35, 6.05, 9.05, 9.35 Men's pool round.

Beach volleyball

Men's and women's preliminaries from 8am.

Boxing

10am Men's 51kg round of 16. 10.48 Men's 80kg round of 16. 11.20 Women's 54kg round of 16. 12.08pm Women's 57kg round of 32. 2.30 Men's 51kg round of 16. 3.18 Men's 80kg round of 16. 3.50 Women's 54kg round of 16. 4.38 Women's 57kg round of 32. 7.00 Men's 51kg round of 16. 7.32nd of 16. 8.36 Women's 54kg round of 16. 9.08 Women's 57kg round of 32.

Canoeing — slalom

2pm Women's canoe single heats, first run; second 4.10. 3.0 Men's kayak single heats, first run, second 5.10.

Cycling — BMX freestyle

12.25pm Women's park qualification. 2.12 Men's park qualification.

Equestrianism

10am Dressage individual/team grand prix, first day.

Fencing

Women's team épée from 12.30pm. 2.50 play-offs/semi-

finals. 6.30 Bronze medal match. 7.30 Gold medal match.

Football

Men's group C 2pm. Group B 4pm. Group A 6pm. Group D 8pm.

Gymnastics — artistic 5.15pm Women's team final.

Handball

Women's preliminaries: group A 8am, 10am and 8pm. Group B 1.0, 3.0 and 6.0.

Hockey

Men's pool A 9am, 9.30, 11.45
 Great Britain v Netherlands. Pool B 12.15, 4.0, 6.45.

Judo

Men's -81kg elimination rounds from 9am. Women's -63kg elimination rounds from 9am. 12.16pm Men's and women's quarter-finals. 3.0 Men's repechage. 3.17 Men's semi-finals. 3.34 Women's repechage. 3.51 Women's semi-finals. 4.18 Men's bronze medal contests. 4.38 Men's final. 4.49 Women's bronze medal contests. 5.09 Women's final.

Rowing

8.30am Women's single sculls quarter-finals. 9.10 Men's single sculls quarter-finals. 9.50 Women's double sculls semi-finals. 10.10 Men's double sculls semi-finals. 10.30 Women's four repechages. 10.40 Men's four repechages.

Rugby sevens

Women's play-off placings from 1.30pm. 6.0 Women's bronze medal match. 6.45 Women's gold medal match.

Sailing

All races from 11am. Men's and women's windsurfing. Men's and women's skiff.

Shooting

Men's and women's trap qualification. 8.30 10m air pistol mixed team bronze medal. 9.0 10m air pistol mixed team gold medal. 2.30pm Men's trap final.

Surfing

6pm Men's quarter-finals. 8.24 Women's quarter-finals. 10.48 Men's semi-finals.

Swimming

Heats from 10am. Men's 200m butterfly; men's 100m freestyle; women's 1500m freestyle; men's 200m breaststroke; men's 4x200m freestyle relay. 7.30pm Men's 100m freestyle semi-finals. 7.41 Men's 200m butterfly semi-finals. 7.57 Women's 100m backstroke final. 8.03 Men's 800m freestyle final. 8.25 Women's 100m freestyle semi-finals. 8.46 Men's 200m breaststroke semi-finals. 8.59 Men's 4x200m freestyle relay final.

Table tennis

9am Men's and women's singles round of 32. 12.30pm Mixed doubles bronze medal match. 1.30 Mixed doubles gold medal match.

Tennis

From 11am Men's singles second round; women's singles third round; men's doubles third round; women's doubles second round; mixed doubles.

Triathlon

7am Men's individual.

Volleyball

Men's pool matches from 8am.

Water polo

Men's group matches 9.30am.

Sport

Reprieve for Pérez

Red Bull end speculation by sticking by troubled driver

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DAVID DAVIES/PA; EMMANUEL DUNAND/APP/GETTY IMAGES

Blazing saddles



Pidcock wins dramatic mountain bike gold after puncture
Eventing team defend title – and Collett adds individual bronze

The best reports and analysis from the Olympic Games in Paris, pages 53-59



Laura Collett, left, was part of the eventing team that won Great Britain's first gold medal of the Paris Olympics, while Tom Pidcock, right, claimed a dramatic victory

Peaty Covid positive a day after silver

Matt Lawton Chief Sports Correspondent, Paris

Adam Peaty tested positive for Covid less than 24 hours after he missed out on a third consecutive Olympic gold medal in the 100m breaststroke by only 0.02sec.

The 29-year-old swimmer had seen off the threat of his main rival, Qin Haiyang, of China, only to discover that the Italian Nicolò Martinenghi had narrowly beaten him to the touch in La Défense Arena.

Peaty still claimed silver, his sixth Olympic medal, but he complained afterwards of waking up on Sunday morning with a sore throat and it now turns out that he was indeed ill.

A statement from Team GB read: "Adam began feeling unwell on Sunday, ahead of his 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.

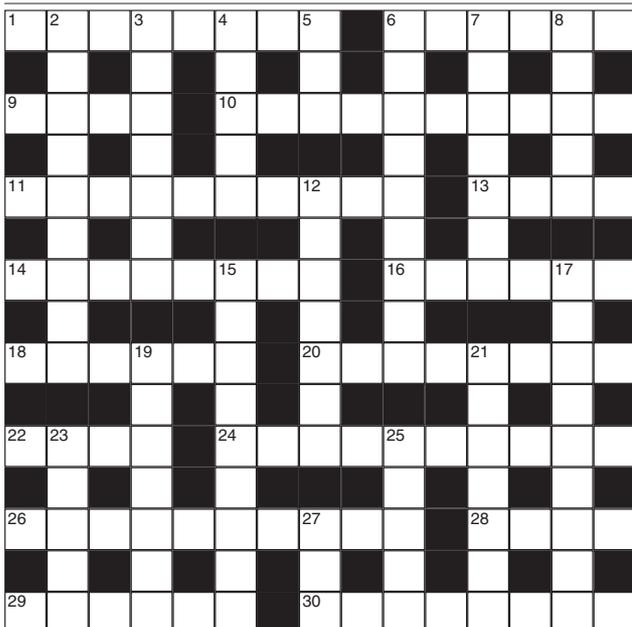
"He is hopeful to be back in competition for the relay events later in the swimming programme. As in any case of illness, the situation is being managed appropriately, with all usual precautions being taken to keep the wider delegation healthy."

Before the Games started Team GB medical staff said they were aware of high infection rates both in the UK and here in Paris. While every effort has been made to limit the spread of infection in the athletes' village, Peaty has fallen ill.

Martinenghi's winning time of 59.03sec was the slowest to claim Olympic gold in the event since the 2004 Games in Athens, and it was way down on Peaty's own world record of 56.88. Peaty was quicker in the semi-finals; both he and Qin dipped under 59sec in their respective heats. They had been expected to go a good deal faster in the final.

'Slow' pool dashes record hopes, page 55

Times Crossword 28,982



ACROSS

- 1 Project I stuck to furiously (5,3)
- 6 Darn discomfort caused by exercise? (6)
- 9 Method initially introduced to get free ticket (4)
- 10 Husband stupidly cheating claims love is intense (4-6)
- 11 Training on F1 track, wearing extremely expensive footwear (10)
- 13 Cross threshold on the way back (4)
- 14 Continue leading cheers at home (8)
- 16 Encourage female not to lose face when interrupted by guys (6)
- 18 Starts to seem highly engrossed by Eastern faith (6)
- 20 Welshman acquires rigging equipment from Scotland perhaps (8)
- 22 Small, standard box? (4)
- 24 Travelling pretty far to take in a later, exclusive event (5-5)
- 26 Apiarists haphazardly grabbing top of dying plant (10)
- 28 Definitely somewhat still able to win (2,2)
- 29 Prohibition all but ended? Correct! (4,2)
- 30 Means of identifying bugs cracked by social media firm (4,4)

DOWN

- 2 Basis of philosophy exists with every single PM (9)
- 3 Senior footballer better practise with no end of vigour (7)
- 4 Different source that has given away millions (5)
- 5 Animal found in middle of mountains, say (3)
- 6 Person finally sick of dancing with a partner? (6,3)
- 7 Temporary current running through place underground close to dam (7)
- 8 Company taking over empty neighbourhood building in LA (5)
- 12 Liberal German certainly not upset to be featured in warrant (7)
- 15 Love helping to support a party (9)
- 17 New person left out? It almost happens! (4,5)
- 19 Manage to be upstanding and celebrate work in the NHS? (7)
- 21 Musician's track mostly introduces a new one (7)
- 23 At first, pet Alsatian regularly rejected carb-heavy food (5)
- 25 Many papers covering large area of study (5)
- 27 Heavy weight cask picked up (3)

Yesterday's solution 28,981



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times2

What I lacked to be an Olympic medal-winner like Pidcock and Peaty

Robert Crampton



My favourite bits from the Olympics so far: Celine Dion appearing to smell her own armpit at the culmination of

her big number at the opening ceremony; the unknown man with the dad bod and outstanding budgie smugglers who had to dive into the pool to retrieve a swimming cap; the revelation that the swimming times are slower because the pool is shallower than normal, which means the waves are bigger so it's like ploughing through surf. Obviously they need to dig deeper for Los Angeles in 2028. If they made the pool 200ft deep, like a cenote in the Yucatan, Adam Peaty could shave loads off his world record.

Talking of Peaty, the dominant theme of this Olympics so far is the comeback. Peaty won a silver in the 100m on Sunday to add to his golds at Tokyo and Rio. It's an extraordinary feat, given the peculiar dedication required by swimmers, given that he was probably suffering from Covid as he swam, and given that not so long ago Peaty was locked in black despair, drinking way too much for anybody, let alone a professional athlete, and badly out of condition. Yet there he was, missing out on three consecutive golds — something that only Michael Phelps has achieved in a single Olympics men's swimming event — by two hundredths of a second.

Last year I was going to the lido religiously, three or four times a week, right up to early November. Then it got cold and I packed it in. Evidently Peaty and I occupy radically different levels on the swimming pyramid, but physical and technical ability is not the point. The point is I wish I had one tenth of his determination.

How about Simone Biles? In Tokyo, while undergoing her own mental health torment, she was struck down with "the twisties", which I thought was like the "yips" in golf or "dortitis" in, well, darts. But the twisties is way more serious than that because it describes the gymnast's loss of the ability to maintain body control during aerial manoeuvres. Which is catastrophic, such control being the



Mountain biker Tom Pidcock

essence of the sport. Biles fell off the beam, landed badly, rolled out of bounds. She didn't know where she was. Imagine how terrifying that must be. An ordinary person would never want to look at an asymmetric bar again.

I did a forward roll at school when I was 12 and hurt the top of my head, as you do when you get a forward roll wrong. I gave up all forms of gymnastics. When I broke my wrist playing rugby aged 15, I quit. When I tore my ACL playing football aged 51, I quit. When I broke my collarbone and several ribs falling off a motorbike in my forties, that was me done with motorbikes.

Anna Henderson, who won a shock cycling silver in the time trial on Saturday, broke her collarbone twice this season, most recently in April. Scarlett Mew Jensen, who got a bronze with Yasmin Harper in the synchronised 3m springboard, broke her back — her actual back — three months ago. Kimberley Woods, bronze medallist in the kayak single, had a car crash three years ago that put her in a wheelchair. Let's not forget Andy Murray who, after multiple surgeries, playing through obvious pain, is held together in these final days of his career by major strapping and iron will. And then there is the mountain biker Tom Pidcock, who won gold yesterday despite a puncture, a bout of Covid this month and a crash in April that left him unable to walk.

Four days in, Paris 2024 is shaping up as the "Brits (and Simone) display staggering quantities of raw physical and mental courage" Olympics. It's awe-inspiring stuff.

Snoop snubbed in Paris

Staying with Biles, as someone who thinks revenge gets a bad press, I like the sound of Nellie Biles, the wife of Simone's biological grandfather Ronald and also her adoptive mum. In 2010, when Simone was 13, she and Nellie ran into Snoop Dogg in New York City. They asked him for "two seconds to take a photo". "One, two," he replied, and walked off. Poor show Mr Dogg! Nellie did not forget the diss.

The Snoop is in Paris as a track and field commentator, Nellie is there to support her amazing daughter's amazing comeback. Fourteen years on from the snub, Nellie offered herself on the same TV show as the rude rapper and promptly told the story of their previous encounter. Awks.

Let that be a lesson to all celebrities tempted to sneer at their fans' requests. Don't get sassy. It'll come back to bite you one day.

The childhood friend who the prince entrusted with his duchy

They got up to mischief as kids. Now William van Cutsem is an adviser to his 130,000-acre estate. By Hilary Rose

If ever someone was woven into the thread of Prince William's life, it is William van Cutsem. Known to his friends as VC, the 45-year-old was recently appointed an adviser to the Duchy of Cornwall and, according to Duchy accounts, has a "keen interest in regenerative farming practice". It's a subject that today is close to the heart of the heir to the throne as he embarks on managing the 130,000-acre estate that last year provided him with a £23 million income. But long before he and VC bonded over regenerative farming, long before they married their respective wives and settled down, they shared a love of shooting, skiing, pretty girls and parties. For Prince William, there are friends and then there are Van Cutsems.

The two Williams have known each other all their lives. They grew up shooting ducks at Sandringham and deer at Balmoral. When Prince William was caught, aged 13, driving a two-tonne V8 Land Rover along treacherous mountain tracks on the Balmoral estate, who should be travelling in the Land Rover behind but William van Cutsem, with an 11-year-old Prince Harry? When Prince William told his parents he didn't want either of them to go to Eton's parents' day in 1997, he asked his nanny Tiggy Legge-Bourke instead. She arrived with three teenage girls, William van Cutsem and a picnic. "Charles," an aide was reported to have said, "was not exactly best pleased."

When a 17-year-old Prince William took a group of friends on a Greek island cruise with his father and Camilla Parker Bowles, one of those friends was William van Cutsem. The rest were mostly pretty young women including one, Emilia d'Erlanger, who was fast becoming best friends at Marlborough with Kate Middleton (and is now a godmother to Prince George). When Queen Elizabeth gave her grandson and heir permission to throw a millennium sleepover party at Windsor Castle, who topped the guest list? William van Cutsem. And who but VC could accompany William on one of his first safaris in Africa?

The entire Van Cutsem clan were invited to the Dance of the Decades, a spectacular ball thrown by Queen Elizabeth to mark Princess Margaret's 70th, Anne's 50th, Andrew's 40th and William's 18th. And when Prince Charles took his young sons skiing at

Klosters, one of the party pictured unloading his skis was the youngest Van Cutsem boy. When Kate Middleton walked down a catwalk at St Andrews in a see-through dress, Prince William's girlfriend of the time, Olivia Hunt, soon found herself instead on the arm of none other than ... William van Cutsem! "A royal ex-girlfriend will often end up going out with a family friend," a contemporary told Tatler. "It's a convenient way of keeping things in the family."

The family connections with royalty date back generations precisely because they never discuss it. VC is the youngest of four sons, the others being Hugh, Edward and Nicholas. His father, Hugh senior, met King Charles at Cambridge and was his best friend, off and on, his whole life. His grandfather Bernard was a banker and bloodstock breeder who trained horses for Queen Elizabeth. His mother, Emilie, the daughter of an Amsterdam banker, acted as a second mother to the young William and Harry when their parents' marriage was failing. Their nanny, Legge-Bourke, would take them to stay with the boisterous Van Cutsem boys at the happy family home in Norfolk, Anmer Hall. Only last month Tiggy Pettifer, as she now is, wished Hugh van Cutsem a very public happy birthday on Instagram.

Today, Anmer is William and Kate's "forever" home near Holkham beach in north Norfolk, the epicentre of the "Turnip Toffs" social circle that includes the Cholmondeleys at Houghton Hall. Back then, in the 1990s, Anmer was rented out to Hugh van Cutsem by Queen Elizabeth while he was building his family pile nearby, Hilborough House, a vast brick and flint neo-Georgian pile with a nod to their roots in the form of Dutch gables.

VC was born in 1979, three years before Prince William, and educated, like his father and brothers, at Ampleforth College, the Roman Catholic Eton. His Companies House entry lists directorships of several companies including Pigeon, which specialises in land, investment planning, renewables and development. In 2013 he married Rosanna Ruck Keene, who helped to console Prince William during a brief split from Kate in 2007. Nevertheless, William and Kate were in attendance for the wedding in south Oxfordshire, Kate heavily pregnant with Prince George and Prince William acting as an usher.

Under siege from seagulls

I've always thought seagulls were potentially dangerous on account of being

numerous, fearless, perpetually hungry and, most of all, huge. The first time you see one close up, you go, "Crikey! That's enormous!" You sort of picture a seagull as pigeon-sized, then it turns out they're closer to an albatross. And is it me or are they

getting even bigger? We humans are, and foxes are, cats and dogs too, so there's no reason why seagulls shouldn't be bulking up as well. It doesn't surprise me, then, that Hyndburn, the area around Accrington in Lancashire, is under

siege from thousands of gulls. And Hyndburn isn't even on the sea! It is, however, host to a newish landfill site that attracts the pestilential creatures, who have been carpet-bombing residents with bird crap. Dare I mention the word "cull"? Can't be far off.



Ruck Keene used to work as a headhunter in the City before her marriage but now runs a luxury British clothing company with her sister, who overlapped at Edinburgh University with Pippa Middleton. The company is named Troy London, after the regency manor house in which the Ruck Keenes grew up, and the Princess of Wales is regularly photographed wearing the brand's tailored, waisted parka-style jacket.

The whole family have ties that bind them to the royals. VC is a godfather to Prince George; his brother Edward is a godson of King Charles and was a page at his wedding to Lady Diana Spencer; his brother Hugh is married to Rose Astor and their daughter, Grace, is a goddaughter of Prince William and was a bridesmaid at his wedding. She nearly stole the show when she put her hands over her ears and pulled a face on the balcony. All of the Van Cutsems were invited to the weddings of William and Harry, with Astor posting an excited video, now taken down, of her and Hugh — known as Hunter — on their way to the latter.

But while everything is now cosy in north Norfolk, the family love-in has not been without drama. When Charles and Diana's marriage broke down, Hugh and Emilie initially provided a "safe space" for him to have trysts with Camilla. (Diana described Hugh as "heavy furniture" if she had to sit next to him at dinner.) But the

William van Cutsem, centre, with his brothers Edward, left, and Hugh in 2000. Top: William van Cutsem with his wife, Rosie, and Prince William in June

“The whole family have ties that bind them to the royals

couples fell out first when the Van Cutsems told Charles they thought Tom Parker Bowles's alleged drug use made him a bad influence on Prince William. In short order, they were struck off the Clarence House Christmas card list and the Sandringham shooting party list.

Then, in 2004, Edward van Cutsem married one of the 6th Duke of Westminster's daughters at Chester Cathedral, in what was widely described as the society wedding of the year. Citing protocol, Emilie refused to let Camilla sit anywhere near her lover, Charles. Instead, she was placed at the back with the bride's family. The insult was such that Camilla refused to go, and Charles — the groom's godfather — miraculously found something else he had to do instead. The following year, Charles and Camilla resolved the seating plan situation once and for all by getting married. Hugh, who was said to have been like an older brother to Charles when they were younger, was only reconciled with his friend years later, the year before Hugh died in 2013 at the age of 72. Charles was said to have left their meeting in tears.

Today, VC lives at Hilborough with his wife and two sons, Maximilian and Hugo, surrounded by 4,400 acres of his own land. Rosie, as she is known, once invited Hello! into her lovely garden. "The proximity to nature," she told the magazine, "is just fantastic." But don't expect any revelations about their proximity to royalty. What happens at the Van Cutsems' stays at the Van Cutsems'.

My Greek mum has a Lidl Greek Week obsession

Pete Paphides goes shopping

I am visiting my mum this weekend and she's keen to take me to her local Lidl. There are a couple of reasons for this. The first, I suspect, is that she thinks I'm a bit snobby about Lidl. In north London, where I live, she thinks we have only Waitrose and that we make unfair judgments about Lidl and the people who shop there. On this score, she's only half-right. I don't go to Lidl, but it's not because I view it from a class-based remove of unearned superiority. It's more that I can't trust myself not to make dozens of unnecessary impulse purchases in the famous "Middle of Lidl" aisle, which houses a totally random selection of bargain items, from stretchy yoga pants (£12) to snack helmets, which resemble crash helmets but have a partitioned tray at jaw level so you can walk around the house with both hands free yet still have a selection of, say, Bombay mix or Flipz White Chocolate Fudge Pretzels inches away from your outstretched tongue.

So, what's my mum's other reason for wanting to take me to Lidl? Well, when Greek Week is upon us she needs my strong, (relatively) youthful arms to help to carry her spoils back to the car. And in 2024 you're rarely more than a full moon away from the next Lidl Greek Week. Initially a twice-yearly affair, Lidl's Greek Weeks have become so popular that their frequency has escalated to once every six weeks or so. It isn't hard to see why the good folk of her Solihull locale get excited about the promise of dozens of Mediterranean comestibles descending upon their local Lidl. What confuses me more is why my mum is so keen to join in. Every week is Greek Week in my mum's house. Within seconds of arriving there I'm offered bowls of avgolemono soup, freshly baked plaits of spanakopita and glistening diamonds of baklava, all washed down with a tiny cup of tarry Greek coffee — yes, it's the same drink as Turkish coffee, and if you need to know more, I refer you to the lyric of *Istanbul (Not Constantinople)*.

But no, it's become a big deal. "You would never believe just how many Greek things they get in!" she gasps, and I note that her excitement is not all that different from mine when I'm telling my politely smiling wife about the limited edition David Bowie live albums and 10in EPs of popular children's TV themes I'm planning to buy on Record Store Day. As we commence the short drive to Lidl, I wonder whether her feelings about Greek Week are the same as my late dad's about Harry Enfield's Cypriot chip shop proprietor alter ego Stavros. Back in the Eighties, when Stavros was ubiquitous on our TV screens, my dad — who also ran a chippy — didn't care about the authenticity or accuracy of Enfield's character. It was just exciting to see a version of himself represented on British TV in some way.



Pete Paphides. Below: his mother, committed Lidl fan Victoria

And perhaps it's a bit like that with my mum and Lidl Greek Week. The scale of the operation is something to behold. All the stuff you'd expect to find in a Greek grocer — feta, halloumi, Greek yoghurt, Greek honey — is abundant. But then there's all this other stuff where the people in charge

“Meatballs with tzatziki inside them? That's not a thing

of Lidl's Greek Week have tried to out-Greek Greece at its own Greekness! Meatballs with tzatziki inside them? That's not a thing! Tahini with cocoa in it? Never heard of it! Gyros pizza? Don't get me started!

Does Lidl apply a similarly competitive energy to its other celebrations of national cuisines? In Irish Week do you get tins of Guinness with soggy Tayto crisps floating inside? When it's Indian Week does it sell samosas soaked in lassi? And what about Eridanou, the company that makes all this Greek stuff for Lidl?

What does it do for the rest of the year, when it's not Greek Week? Well, it turns out: a) Eridanou is really just a made-up name for Lidl's fantastical Greek food laboratory, where an elusive Willy Wonkaioannou continues his demented mission to create hitherto undreamt Hellenic hybrids, and b) it's always Lidl Greek Week somewhere in the world. And in other countries, Lidl even does a British Week, when presumably you can get fish and chip-flavoured Victoria sponge and faggot trifles. "So, what did you think of it?" my mum asks as we get out of the car and I help her with her shopping bags. Silly question, really. There's nothing I can say that isn't already apparent from the tzatziki meatballs sitting in the tray of my snack helmet.



Why I won't go on a GP strike, but what one may mean for you

Dr Mark Porter

GPs in England look set to be the next group of NHS doctors to take industrial action over concerns about the future of primary care.

Unlike their colleagues in hospital it probably won't result in a full strike — at least not any time soon — but more a work to rule designed to try and minimise the impact on the public.

As I write, the ballot has only just closed, so I don't know the result, but given that 19,000 GPs have already rejected NHS England's latest below-inflation funding deal, I would be very surprised if industrial action isn't coming to a practice near you and soon. So what can you expect?

Well, it's not going to be good. Accessing primary care wherever you live in the UK is already difficult, as many of you will have discovered when contacting your own surgery, but contrary to what you may have heard or read, this isn't because GPs are a bunch of greedy, lazy grifters. It's because surgeries (at least most of them) are doing more with less. And it's simply not sustainable.

I know. I am a GP, and so I would say that, but here's some context which, although it doesn't fit the popular narrative, gives some insight into why it is so hard to get an appointment. During June GPs in England completed six million more appointments (see below) than they did in the same month in 2019. And while appointments have risen by 26 per cent in five years, over the same period the number of fully qualified GPs has decreased (down from 28,357 to 27,606) and funding in real terms has fallen significantly. In addition, what money practices have been allocated has increasingly come with conditions about how it can be used, such as on allied healthcare professionals like pharmacists and paramedics rather than extra GPs.

It's a worrying combination and one reason my small rural practice has tripled in size in recent years. We have gone from a team of 23 looking after 6,000 patients to more than 80 caring for about 20,000. Not because we are forward-thinking, brilliant doctors but

The facts about local surgery appointments

- In June — traditionally one of the quieter months — GP surgeries in England completed 28.7 million appointments (including 51,000 Covid vaccinations)
 - 44 per cent took place the same day they were booked/requested
 - 44.6 per cent of all appointments were with a GP, and 19.6 per cent with a nurse
 - 64.8 per cent were conducted face-to-face, the rest by telephone or online.
- Source: NHS Digital

because, like many practices across the UK, two neighbouring surgeries were struggling. Watching them close simply wasn't an option.

And while GPs are having to do more with less, you are paying the price (and not just in taxes). My practice used to have one of the highest patient satisfaction ratings in England but that has slipped in recent years, as have waiting times. We still deal with all urgent cases the same day, but you can wait three weeks or more for a routine appointment compared with four or five days in 2019.

So what is likely to happen next? Well, assuming the ballot goes the way I expect, industrial action could start as soon as next week. Plans are still being finalised but are likely to include reducing the number of daily

“**Extra duties will be put on the back burner by your GP**”

consultations to the accepted safe limit of 25, instead of the present level of 40 to 50, leading to even longer waits. Your GP is also likely to stick to the letter of their contract, meaning that extra duties — everything from medical reports to doing work that should be done by the hospital — will be put on the back burner. You will be inconvenienced, as will hospitals and other community services.

Could it progress to a full strike? I hope not. And if it did, I would carry on working, albeit only to cover colleagues who down stethoscopes. But after 38 years in the NHS I am at the end of my career so my stance on industrial action matters less than that of younger team members who are the future of the service. And many of them are furious.

Last but not least, I am a patient too, and likely to become an even more dependent one in the future. So, like you, I have a vested interest in a responsive and sustainable GP service, the very backbone of the NHS — but unless something changes, I worry its best days may be behind us.



Having just redecorated our house, and spent two weeks breathing in paint fumes, I was alarmed to read that painting can increase the risk of bladder cancer. How do chemicals in paints affect the bladder?

Some types of chemical absorbed into your bloodstream via the lungs are excreted in urine by your kidneys, so come into contact with the bladder wall. It is estimated that about 10 per cent of bladder cancers are caused by occupational exposure to such chemicals, although many of them, such as aromatic amines used in dyes, rubbers and textiles, were banned long ago.

However, the past matters as it can take 30 years or so for bladder cancers to develop. This is particularly important for ex-smokers who are also at risk due to arylamines in tobacco smoke. Indeed smoking accounts for about half of all cases.

You should always ventilate rooms properly when decorating but I wouldn't worry in your case. Increased occupational risk in decorators is based on years of exposure and often to oil-based paints and solvents they inhaled decades ago.

Please don't ignore blood in your urine, even if just a tinge. It can happen with infections but if out of the blue is often the first sign of bladder cancer and warrants investigation.

13 things to do

From eating broad beans to switching up your stride — try these instant good health hacks, says Peta Bee

Health advice moves apace, with scientists producing a seemingly endless stream of evidence showing how you can refine your daily diet and activity to live a healthier and longer life. Not every gain requires an overhaul of your existing lifestyle, as in some cases tiny tweaks can have a dramatic effect on mood, fitness or disease prevention. From small dietary changes to daily health hacks, the following promise to enhance your wellbeing.

1. Eat more broad beans to beat the blues

The key to happiness could come from the humble broad bean, or vicia faba, which according to the Cambridge University researcher and botanist Dr Nadia Mohd-Radzman is rich in protein and iron but, more importantly, the compound levodopa, or L-dopa, which has been linked to improvements in mood. A 2022 study in Nature's Molecular Psychiatry showed that drugs containing L-dopa can help to treat a condition known as anhedonia, the inability to feel or experience pleasure. “The broad bean could do so much good for people in this country if they could be persuaded to eat it,” Mohd-Radzman says.

2. Go vegan for eight weeks to slow ageing

Going vegan can change the way your body ages, reducing biological ageing by as much as 0.63 years in two months, according to a study published this week in BMC Medicine. It tracked 21 pairs of identical twins, with one of each pair asked to follow a strict vegan diet while the other ate a diet that included meat, eggs and dairy. By the end of the trial the new vegans had decreased the estimated ages of their heart, liver and metabolic systems but had also slowed their biological ageing clock, as measured by DNA methylation, by 0.63 years.

“Anyone who chooses a vegan diet can improve their long-term health in two months, with the most change seen in the first month,” said Christopher Gardner, professor of medicine at Stanford University and a lead author on the paper.

3. Take sodium bicarbonate to boost your workout

The idea that an ingredient used as a raising agent in baking can also boost athletic performance is not new — we first reported on its use in 2008 — but its reputation has reached a high point



with the news that many of those at the Paris Olympics are taking it.

“Bicarbonate is found in our blood but loading with supplements of it increases the pH of blood to make it more alkaline,” the sports nutritionist Anita Bean says. “This helps to buffer the hydrogen ions produced during intense exercise that lead to fatigue, allowing you to keep going for a bit longer while also neutralising lactic acid to help you recover faster.”

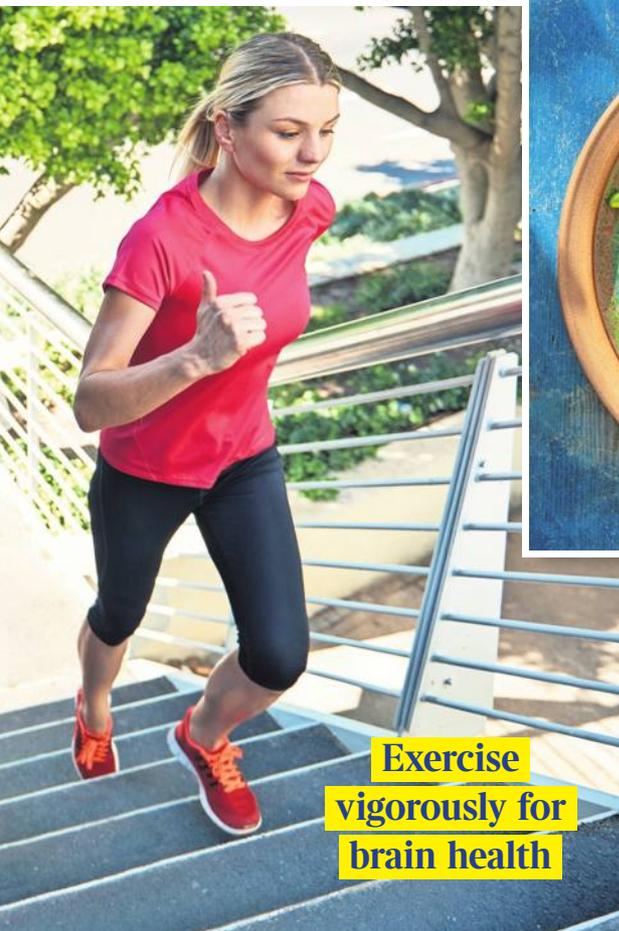
Dissolving bicarbonate of soda into water as a drink is one option but Bean says that can be harsh on the gut lining and lead to diarrhoea and stomach issues. The most sought-after brand for athletes is the Maurten BicarB System, launched last year and reportedly used by the 800m medal hopeful Keely Hodgkinson among others. It provides gel sachets of the ingredient to limit tummy issues.

4. Exercise vigorously for a long-lasting brain boost

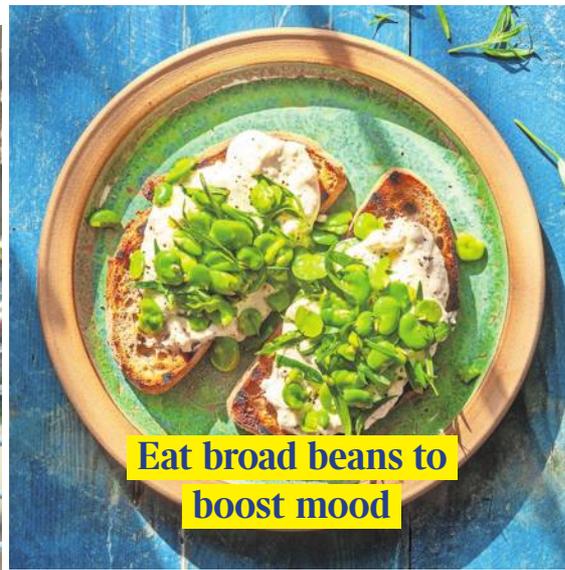
Any activity helps to prevent dementia, according to the latest report by the Lancet Commission, but evidence for the effects of adding more vigorous workouts from midlife onwards is growing. Researchers from the University of Queensland's Brain Institute recently assigned a group of people in their sixties and older to either low-intensity workouts of balance and stretching exercises, medium-intensity brisk walking on a treadmill or a high-intensity session of four four-minute bouts of hard

now to improve your health

COVER AND BELOW: GETTY IMAGES



Exercise vigorously for brain health



Eat broad beans to boost mood

running on a treadmill at near-maximum exertion. Each group repeated their prescribed workout three times a week for six months, during which time scientists carried out brain scans and cognition tests. In a five-year follow-up only the HIIT workouts boosted cognition and prevented cognitive decline.

"In high-resolution MRI scans of that group, we saw structural and connectivity changes in the hippocampus, the area responsible for learning and memory," says Dr Daniel Blackmore, a research fellow in ageing and dementia studies. It follows a study last month in *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, the journal of the Alzheimer's Association, that showed how people with high blood pressure, who are at a higher risk of dementia, can lower their risk of cognitive impairment by doing vigorous exercise at least once a week.

5. Eat baby carrots three times a week for an antioxidant boost

Carotenoids, the antioxidant compounds that give carrots, squash and sweet potatoes their characteristic colour, and which are converted by the body into vitamin A, are known to prevent inflammation and protect heart health. Last month researchers at the American Society for Nutrition conference reported that eating one serving of baby carrots — equivalent to 8-12 tiny carrots — three times a week was better at boosting

carotenoid levels in the body than a supplement alone.

Suresh Mathews, professor of nutrition and dietetics at Samford University, Alabama, found that adults asked to eat the carrots recorded a 10.8 per cent increase in carotenoids in their skin whereas those taking a carotenoid-containing multivitamin saw no changes. Those who consumed both the carrots and the nutrient capsule saw the biggest gains with a 21.6 per cent spike in carotenoid levels. The message? That "the food first philosophy always works", Mathews says, and that supplements are not always the answer.

6. Cut down on even moderate drinking to protect brain health

We are advised by the NHS to limit alcohol intake to no more than the upper limit of 14 units per week (one unit of alcohol equals 10ml or 8g pure alcohol, about the amount an adult can process in an hour) and, ideally, to spread drinking over three or four days. Yet even that is likely to be too much, with a WHO statement in 2023 suggesting that no level of alcohol is safe when it comes to human health and the latest Lancet Commission suggesting that cutting it out is better than merely cutting down.

An endless stream of research shows that just one drink a day can raise the risk of heart disease and brain shrinkage associated with dementia in women. Dr Richard Piper, CEO of the charity Alcohol Change, says that 18 to 25-year-olds are leading the way, with 30 per cent of them now classed as non-drinkers, whereas midlifers still adhere to the "one more glass won't harm" approach. "People aged 45 and older are the heaviest drinkers in history," Piper says. "If you are drinking more than you should, cut down is the advice."

7. Chop and change your stride to burn more calories

Walking faster or uphill can ramp up energy expenditure and enhance your health but you can also increase calorie output by chopping and changing your stride, according to one

new study from the University of Massachusetts. For every 1 per cent rise in step length, there was a 0.7 per cent rise in energy cost of walking, the researchers said. By varying the length of your stride throughout the day you will incrementally — but significantly — help to burn more calories.

8. Try the 5:2 diet to ward off type 2 diabetes

It's best known as a weight-loss diet but the 5:2 intermittent fasting approach, in which calorie intake is cut to 500 for women and 600 for men for two days a week, and you can eat what you like (within reason) on the other five,

has now been shown to bring additional health gains.

In June German researchers showed that the approach, popularised by Dr Michael Mosley, protects against liver inflammation and disease, and last month a study in *Jama Network Open* reported that it helped to slow type 2 diabetes in its tracks. After four months, participants on the 5:2 diet fared better than those on diabetes medication, with better blood-sugar control and faster weight loss than those on the medication. The 5:2 diet "may serve as an initial lifestyle intervention for patients with type 2 diabetes, providing an alternative to the use of metformin and empagliflozin medications", write the scientists from China.

9. Stop smoking to reduce your risk of dementia

Unsurprisingly smoking is ranked highly as one of the modifiable risk factors for dementia in the latest Lancet Commission report. Tobacco smoke is known to cause oxidative stress that damages cells in the body and might be connected to the onset of Alzheimer's disease. It also damages the structure of blood vessels, reduces circulation of blood flow to the brain and raises the risk of stroke and hypertension, which are both linked to dementia. The charity Alzheimer's Research UK cites a large study that found people who smoke heavily in midlife more than double their risk of developing dementia two decades on, and a review of 37 research studies showed smokers were 30 per cent more likely to develop dementia and 40 per cent more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than people who had never smoked. Time to stub it out.

10. Walk briskly (or do heel drops) to build your bones

The faster you walk — 100 steps a minute is generally accepted to be a brisk pace — the better it is for your bones, particularly those of the femoral neck in the hip joint that are particularly prone to fracture as we age. For a recent study in the journal *Bone*, Finnish researchers tracked 299 older adults as they took part in 12

months of activities designed to test the effect of muscle strength, endurance, balance and flexibility training on bone health. Throughout the year the team used Dexa scans to check changes to bone density of participants and found that, while all moderate and intense activity reduced the decline in bone density of the hip joint, brisk walking, stair climbing and jumping was associated with better preservation of bone mineral density. "Jumping-like impacts can also be achieved without the actual jumping by first raising up on your tiptoes and then dropping down onto your heels," suggested Tuuli Suominen, a researcher at the University of Jyväskylä and one of the authors.

11. Climb five flights of stairs daily

You don't need a gym to improve your fitness, and Dr Sophie Paddock, a researcher at the University of East Anglia and Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Foundation Trust, recently told the European Society of Cardiology that daily stair climbing will make a significant difference. In her review, which involved 480,000 participants, she found stair climbing to be associated with a 24 per cent lower risk of dying from any cause and a 39 per cent lower risk of dying from cardiovascular disease. At least five flights a day is a start — that was shown to cut heart disease by one fifth in a study in *Atherosclerosis* journal.

12. Stand on one leg for ten seconds every day

Test your balance by timing how long you can hold a one-legged balance on each side while keeping arms at your sides and gaze fixed straight ahead. If you are middle-aged or older and wobble after less than ten seconds, your risk of dying from any cause within the next decade almost doubles according to a recent study in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. In the study by the Clinimex exercise medicine clinic in Rio de Janeiro and the Bristol Medical School, participants were allowed three attempts. Balance wanes in later life but can be maintained with practice: standing on one leg while brushing your teeth every day, progressing to doing so with eyes closed, is the simplest way to improve it.

13. Drink two to three cups of coffee a day

Coffee is packed with healthy antioxidants that could extend your life, according to a 12.5-year study of 450,000 healthy middle-aged adults in the UK in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*. All types of coffee helped drinkers to live longer compared with abstainers, and the biggest benefits came from two to three cups a day. Freshly ground coffee had the strongest effect, reducing risk of early death by 27 per cent but decaffeinated was life-enhancing (14 per cent reduced risk) and even instant coffee (11 per cent) had a positive effect. "Drinking modest amounts of coffee of all types should not be discouraged but can be enjoyed as a heart-healthy behaviour," the researchers said.

“The faster you walk, the better it is for your bones”

health

Easy exercises to improve your

Modern living plays havoc with our backs and prematurely ages us. Dr Steven Weiniger, an expert on physiology, shares his top tips to rectify the problem with **Antonia Hoyle**

From cosmetic surgery to expensive gyms and celebrity-endorsed supplements, we are sold endless, sophisticated ways to try to keep ageing at bay. There is one treatment that is rarely mentioned and requires no special equipment or drastic measures, however. And it doesn't cost a penny. Strengthening our posture, says Dr Steven Weiniger, "is the best free anti-ageing strategy out there" and can, with just a few minutes' practice a day, make us look "ten years younger".

In his 45-year career, Weiniger, an American chiropractor and author of *Stand Taller Live Longer: Posture & Anti-Aging Strategy*, has advised countless doctors and athletes on the importance of good posture and helped to shape US policy as a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging.

"Standing tall is a great way to look thinner and feel better," Weiniger says, "but good posture is not spoken about because it's not about selling something."

Put simply, he says posture means "the way we balance our body", which he divides into four "posture zones" — the head, torso, pelvis and lower extremity (legs and feet) — all of which, standing upright, should be symmetrical and roughly stacked on top of each other.

When one body part is out of sync, some muscles have to work harder to compensate, which leaves other, underused, muscles to grow weak and tight, reinforcing poor posture habits and causing cumulative changes to the way we stand and move.

At a sprightly 69, Weiniger's upright 5ft 7in frame is all the more impressive

given he has Scheuermann's disease, a congenital condition that causes spinal curvature. Teaching me what he has coined his StrongPosture techniques over Zoom from his home in Sandy Springs, Georgia, he credits his being able to "move well, stay active and vertical" to his daily practice.

Our posture problems often start because we carry our head forward, he says, largely as a result of constantly looking down at computers, books and devices. Since the adult head weighs about 10-11lb, this causes us to slump forward as we age, and "for every inch forward the head is balanced, the effective weight of the head being carried by the neck and shoulder muscles doubles".

As a result of our shoulders rounding forward, "the pectoral muscles become tighter", Weiniger says. The torso leans back to compensate, which increases the pressure on the upper vertebrae. When compressed, the vertebrae "wedge", which is when one side collapses, creating a wedge shape, which causes pain and a hunch. Meanwhile, he says, "the pelvis — the pelvic floor muscles are part of the core muscles that support the abdomen — tends to sag, especially when we're carrying weight in the lower abdomen. That leads to lower back pain." Even our feet, if not balanced equally, can increase pressure on the spine, adding to the slumped, fragile frame we associate with the elderly.

Although poor posture creeps up on us slowly, Weiniger says, he is "concerned" that our digital lifestyles mean it is now evident as early as adolescence. "You can see the consequences of technology on posture everywhere, from airports to

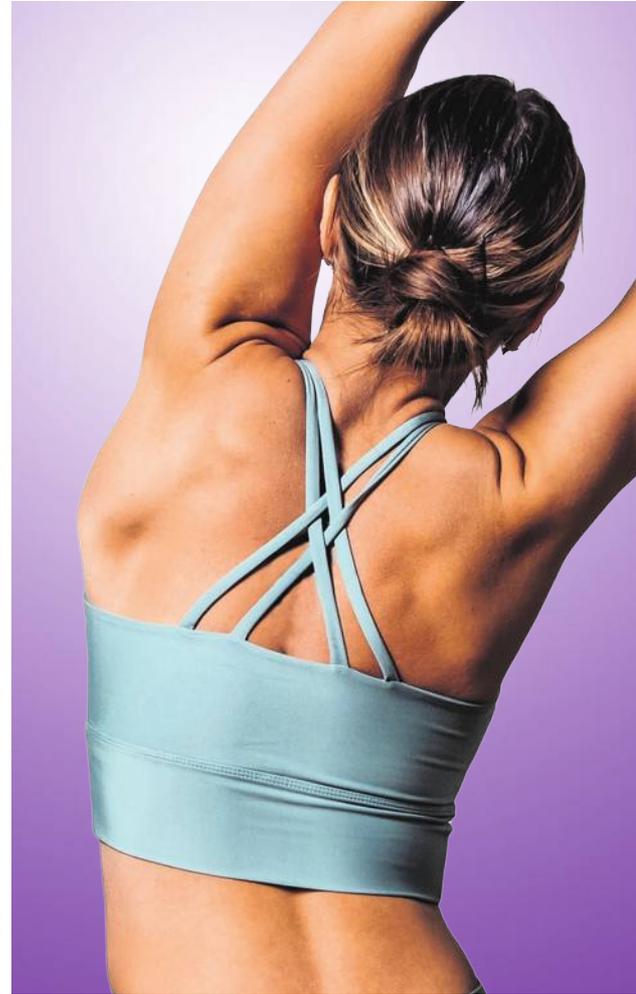
shopping precincts," he says. "Today's kids are the first to have played with phones and tablets since they were babies — who learnt to swipe before they could speak — and their posture is literally folding. If you put a child in front of an iPad their head will move forward to the torso," he says, setting a poor posture precedent in motion that will only worsen in adulthood. "Like a sapling that's being bent they're not going to suddenly straighten out. They're going to keep [leaning] forward."

Sedentary jobs further exacerbate "tech neck". About 80 per cent of UK office workers spend between four and nine hours sitting at their desks each day and, Weiniger says, sitting stresses our body by forcing us to overuse some muscles, including deep upper neck muscles such as the suboccipitals, a common cause of headaches, and underuse others, such as the small muscles between vertebrae, frequently implicated in lower back pain, to maintain balance. The upshot is that by midlife, most of us slouch.

"Our bodies were designed to move to survive," Weiniger says. "Humans are not made to spend half their waking hours looking at a device."

This not only makes us look older — it affects our health. Because slumping our shoulders constricts the rib cage and compresses the abdomen, the diaphragm (the muscle under the lungs that drives breathing) moves less, forcing us to lift the shoulders to breathe. "Belly breathing with the diaphragm is deeper and has been shown to reduce stress and lower blood pressure," Weiniger says.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Hollywood A-listers are already aware of the importance of good posture. "Actors



are trained hard to be aware of their carriage," says Weiniger, who cites Harrison Ford and Nicole Kidman as examples of excellent deportment. Cardiovascular exercise and weight training alone won't counter the

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posture — and look younger

ANDREW FOX FOR THE TIMES; GETTY IMAGES



“Standing tall is a great way to look thinner and feel better

damage of poor posture because they often only strengthen already-strong muscles. In addition to flexibility workouts such as yoga, which can help, we need to incorporate proprioception — or balance — exercises into our fitness regimen to target deeper, often underused muscles that stomach crunches or running, say, don't. Endless back exercises in the gym are not necessary.

“The sooner you start, the better,” Weiniger says. He suggests we first take a picture of ourselves standing as straight as we can against a wall to ascertain whether our perception of how upright we stand matches the reality.

Even the most athletic among us can be oblivious to our distorted posture, he says. “I've worked with people who have won national powerlifting championships and part of the reason was because we trained them to be correct about how they move their body.”

He says ten minutes a day of dedicated practice, which is best spread throughout the day between work and other activities, including the exercises below, is enough to create “an awareness throughout the day. It takes a bit of focus to begin but becomes a habit and makes a big difference to how you feel and how you look.”

1. Explore your base to improve awareness of your feet under you

This exercise creates a greater awareness of how your feet support you, Weiniger says. “Standing tall, shoulders back and arms by your side, feet flat a foot width apart, breathe in, then breathe out as you raise yourself onto the balls of your feet, standing tall. Breathe in, then out as you slowly lower your heels to the ground. Breathe in, then breathe out as you lift your toes as high as you can, balancing on your heels without leaning forward. Breathe in, then out as you come down and slowly ground your feet. Breathe in, then out as you roll the weight of your body onto the outside edges of both feet. Breathing in, ground your feet. Repeat for the inside of both feet. Do each position for one slow breath once a day.”

2. The stork to improve your balance

Stand straight, shoulders back, arms by your side, feet together and flat on the floor. Lift your right leg until your thigh is parallel to the ground and your knee is at a 90-degree angle. If you're wobbling, lightly touch a wall. “This allows you to focus on the mechanics [of the posture] and train your awareness to stabilise the head over the pelvis, which means engaging and stabilising the core,” Weiniger says. “Keep breathing slowly and gently pull your belly in to use your breath to drive your motion, using the compressive force of the diaphragm to hold your body up — it's the link between the torso and the pelvis.”

Hold the posture for five slow breaths — about 30 seconds — before repeating on the other leg, observing which side you found it easier to balance on, and therefore which requires more practice. “For most there is a surprisingly big difference,” says Weiniger, who adds that this posture strengthens muscles typically underused in the lower body, such as the gluteus medius and gluteus minimus, which sit below the more commonly used and larger gluteus maximus. Repeat three times a day.

3. Neck retractions to strengthen the neck muscles and help to keep your head in the correct position

Start in the wall lean position (see above). Keep your shoulders back and palms facing forward, which opens up the torso and stabilises the shoulder girdle (the bones that connect to the arms on each side) against the wall. Slowly press your neck straight back to the wall as far as you can while keeping your head level and tucking in your chin slightly and then let it move forward.

“Breathe in as you move your head forward and slowly breathe out as you push it back. Keep your eyes locked forward and imagine your head is on a train track moving forwards and backwards.” Do this for five slow breaths, twice a day. “You should feel a little stretch at the bottom of your skull where your neck and skull



connect,” Weiniger says. “This area tightens over time. The looser you can keep it the better. This exercise strengthens and lengthens the deep neck muscles.” It may not feel like a “natural” movement, he warns, because we are so used to leaning our heads forward.

4. Ball sit to get in touch with your supporting core muscles

“An exercise ball makes the sitting posture less stable and lets you find the core muscles you're not using,” Weiniger says. The core muscles that stomach crunches alone won't work comprise the diaphragm at the top, the pelvic floor at the bottom, the transversus abdominus, the deepest layer of abdominal muscle, “which

“An exercise ball lets you find the core muscles you're not using

runs horizontally, like a corset, underneath the rectus abdominis,” and the multifidus, narrow muscles that stabilise the lower spine, located in between nearly every vertebra. All these need to be strengthened for “fluid, graceful movement”, Weiniger says.

He suggests a firm ball 75cm in diameter (mine cost £21.24 from Amazon). Sit on the front third of the ball with your knees at right angles or higher. Make sure your feet are flat on the floor hip distance apart. Your back should be straight and your palms should be facing upwards on your thighs, which helps to prevent your shoulders rolling in. Using your core, slowly move the ball forwards and backwards by a few inches, keeping your torso stable. When you've got the hang of this, make a circle with the ball. “Holding a pillow between your knees will increase the focus on your core,” Weiniger says. Do three circles each way, once a day.

5. Wall lean to get your body correctly aligned

This exercise will help to align your head so it sits directly above your shoulders and strengthen the alignment between your torso and pelvis.

Stand against a wall. Put your right heel in front of your left toe — this is to measure how far your feet should be away from the wall — then move your left foot and place it alongside your right foot. Have your feet hip distance apart. Lean your buttocks and shoulders against the wall, arms by your side and shoulders down.

“Making sure your head is level, push your head back as far as is easily comfortable,” Weiniger says. “It's not important to touch the wall. The effort is keeping your shoulders down and the head level, which can literally make you taller. Take five slow breaths. Each time you breathe in level your head and each time you breathe out push your shoulders further down.”

Our instinct in this position is to rest our head on the wall, he says, but “this exercise gives you an awareness of where your head is compared to your torso. Do it twice a day.”

times2

‘We’re not criminals’: what Just Stop Oil’s poster girls told me

Now convicted, the two students were defiant when they spoke to Damian Whitworth after their soup antics

Whatever you think of Phoebe Plummer and Anna Holland’s decision to throw soup at one of the world’s most famous paintings, it is undeniable that their act of eco-protest has had an unusual cut-through.

The Just Stop Oil activists are likely to be given jail terms in September after being found guilty of criminal damage for throwing tomato soup over Vincent van Gogh’s *Sunflowers* in the National Gallery in London.

When I met them a few days after the incident, which made headlines around the world in October 2022, they were far from contrite and planning further protests. And, perhaps because of Plummer’s pink hair, they were immediately recognisable.

As the two students left the café in southeast London where we had been talking, staff and customers gave them astonished looks. “Oh my God, I’ve just realised who they are,” said one of the female baristas, as if she’d just clocked Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce. “Sidcup is a good place to lie low,” added one of her customers.

Plummer and Holland, both 22, were told by Judge Christopher Hehir at Southwark Crown Court last week to be “prepared in practical and emotional terms to go to prison”. The same judge just sentenced five JSO activists to jail terms of between four and five years for protests that brought part of the M25 to a standstill over four days in 2022.

Plummer has already been jailed for six months for her part in a slow march in London, and when I spoke to the two women they were familiar with custody cells after their arrest for the soup throwing and breezily sought to put a positive spin on the experience. “I bring my university reading into jail cells with me because I’ve got time to study,” said Holland, who was studying English literature and creative writing at Newcastle University at the time.

“They’re not pleasant places to be, but in a custody cell you get hot food, shelter, clean clothes, warm blankets; things that aren’t guaranteed if we keep on hurtling towards climate catastrophe. Millions in the global south have already lost these things to climate disaster,” said Plummer,



Phoebe Plummer and Anna Holland. Above: throwing soup over Van Gogh’s *Sunflowers*

who studied social anthropology at Soas, University of London.

Plummer said she felt “empowered” after throwing the soup at *Sunflowers*. “I felt like I was seizing back power from the systems that are hell-bent on destroying us and destroying everything we know and love. I felt like I was grabbing power over my future because right now we’re being denied our right to a future.”

She has become the “poster girl” for JSO, involved in several protests and stunts. The pair warned then that their attention-grabbing at the National Gallery was the start of an escalation of protests by Just Stop Oil, which is trying to disrupt airports during the holiday season, including Gatwick where several activists were arrested yesterday.

Throwing the soup caused outrage around the world. Some of the disgust dissipated once it became clear that the painting had a glass cover and the work was undamaged. But nevertheless there was widespread feeling that vigorously thrusting a can of soup so close to one of the country’s greatest art treasures was pretty idiotic.

Judge Hehir said they “came within the width of a pane of glass of destroying one of the most valuable artworks in the world”. The frame was damaged in the attack. Copycat incidents have included pumpkin soup being thrown at Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* in the Louvre in Paris in January this year.

Plummer and Holland said they wanted to do something that would deliver a visual jolt. “It was a very shocking action,” Holland said. “We did this to shock people because once people were shocked at what we did, we wanted them to start asking

“I bring my university reading into jail cells with me. I’ve got time to study

themselves: where should that shock truly be directed?”

The *Sunflowers* is “so iconic”, Plummer chipped in. They needed to get people’s attention, they claimed, to try to engage them on the peril facing those affected by climate change, including people displaced by floods in Pakistan, suffering from famine in Somalia and dying from the heatwave we had in Britain that summer. “Two young girls throwing soup at a painting has gotten people talking about it more than these millions of lives that have been destroyed due to climate catastrophes,” Plummer said.

They may have been exaggerating, but it is probably true that more people were aware of their stunt than the tragedy developing in Somalia. However, targeting one of the world’s most famous paintings caused enormous upset and I wondered why they targeted a genius who found a whole new way to show us the natural world that he loved.

“That painting was protected by glass,” Plummer said. “But the fact is millions of people in the global south aren’t protected. As young people our own futures aren’t protected. That shock reaction is because it is something beautiful, and you have that feeling of wanting to protect something beautiful, something valuable, of not wanting to see it be destroyed. Where is that sentiment when it’s our planet? When it’s our environment? When it’s people whose lives are being destroyed?”

This is where a lot of people will part company with Just Stop Oil. People do care about the planet. It is possible to sympathise with the view that climate change is not being tackled with sufficient urgency while taking a hardline stance on soup in art

galleries. Isn’t the danger for those who throw soup, glue themselves to walls and endlessly block traffic that their actions alienate their audience?

“I completely understand people’s frustrations against us,” Holland said. “But the fact of the matter is, as a result of our action, people are talking about not just what we did, but about the demands that we are conveying as Just Stop Oil.”

Were they? Or were they just talking about the outrageousness? “Well, this isn’t a popularity contest. We’re trying to make change. Martin Luther King was the most hated man in America when he was alive. The suffragettes weren’t popular,” Plummer said.

Some of the comment on Just Stop Oil has been that “posh” people with plummy accents are disrupting the lives of less privileged people. Everyone, regardless of class, gender or ethnicity, would be affected by the climate crisis and so it is unifying, Holland argued.

“I don’t have to work three jobs to feed my kids or pay my heating bills, which means that I can dedicate time towards fighting for the people that don’t have the means to fight right now and are being hit hardest,” Plummer said.

She went to St Mary’s Ascot, an expensive boarding school, and Tatler magazine, always attuned to its readers’ world view, headlined its story on the attack: “St Mary’s Ascot alumna charged with criminal damage for Van Gogh stunt.” Did Plummer laugh at that? “I did. Especially as I didn’t go to St Mary’s for very long. I went there for three years.”

Her involvement with Just Stop Oil began after she became frightened about the future and felt hopeless. “I’ve tried all the other things. I’ve gone on marches, I’ve signed petitions, I’ve written to MPs, I’ve made the individual lifestyle changes I feel like I can make.

“I’m vegan. I haven’t bought any first-hand clothes for four years, but it doesn’t make any meaningful change. We have to use these tactics now because we don’t have any time to waste. Our generation doesn’t have the luxury of sitting on the sidelines.”

She has lost one other luxury. Her bail conditions included that they cannot enter museums. “Shame,” Plummer said. “I do love art galleries.”

Soon, the judge’s warning suggests, it won’t just be museums that will be beyond the reach of Plummer and Holland. In the immediate aftermath of the National Gallery incident, Plummer claimed there had been, in addition to the criticism, an outpouring of support.

“A lot of people realise that this is a proportionate response to the criminality of the government,” she said of the soup throwing. “We’re scared little kids trying to fight for our future. What we did was not a criminal act. We’re not criminals.” Unfortunately for them, a court has now decided otherwise.

Jakub Jozef Orlinski is rarely in repose, but right now he's like a manic puppy. "It's a historical moment," he exclaims, eyes gleaming, before adding, perhaps unnecessarily: "I'm super-excited!"

He's not, at this point, talking about his career, spectacular though that is. At 33 he's certainly the world's most famous Polish breakdancing, skateboarding, modelling countertenor. But his excitement in this case is that breakdancing (or just "breaking" as it now tends to be known) has become an Olympic sport for the first time.

Orlinski won't actually be competing in the Paris Games. "I've been breaking since 2010 but I'm nowhere close to those guys," he says. "They are flying, like gravity doesn't exist." But that didn't stop him making a surprise appearance in the Games' opening ceremony, singing an aria from *Les Indes galantes* by the baroque composer Jean-Philippe Rameau while breakdancing on a barge in the pouring rain — a moment he shared with his 225,000 Instagram followers.

It wasn't the first, and is not likely to be the last time, that Orlinski has done something eye-popping, as well as body-popping, on the opera stage. Last month the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées staged Vivaldi's opera *L'Olimpiade* and hired Orlinski not only to sing a leading role but also to demonstrate the new Olympic sport as part of the show.

"It was super-challenging to sing and dance simultaneously in this extreme way," he says. "We had a dance battle during the opera. You needed enormous breath control. But I loved the intensity, the comedy, the fun, the release."

Five years ago at Glyndebourne Orlinski rode a bicycle in mid-air while singing the title role in Handel's *Rinaldo*. He followed that by pole dancing, in a fetching mini-skirt and platform heels, in the composer's *Theodora* at the Royal Opera House. The same year he appeared on the cover of Polish Vogue

"I do a lot of things that are quite ridiculous and funny," Orlinski says. "I get hired not only because I can sing but because I have a particular set of physical skills and the director has an idea of how to use them. Or they are happy for me to adjust the staging to suit myself."

I suspect he won't be pole dancing, in drag or otherwise, when he gives a recital at Edinburgh International Festival, nor when he opens the Wigmore Hall's new season in September. But even when he's doing what countertenors are supposed to do — sing arias from baroque operas — Orlinski likes to remake them to suit his irreverent character.

That's apparent from his latest album, modishly titled *#LetsBaRock*. On it, he sings a lot of familiar 17th and 18th-century pieces, but reharmonised and given a 21st-century makeover with the help of his regular pianist/composer partner Aleksander Debicz, a backing team of Polish pop musicians and a lot of moody synthesized backgrounds.

For Purcell's *Sound the Trumpet*, Orlinski vocalises like a muted trumpet, while for a pastiche Bach number called *Tocatta* he does a rap in a raspy baritone. To say it's a little weird is like saying that the Atlantic is a little wet. But Orlinski seems



Twist and shout! The breakdancing opera star who sang at the Games

Jakub Jozef Orlinski is a skateboarder, model — and leading countertenor. After the Olympics, he'll open the Edinburgh Festival, he tells **Richard Morrison**

sanguine, indeed positively thrilled, about the likelihood of *#LetsBaRock* raising the hackles of the purists.

"I'm completely aware that there are people who will say: 'Why would you do this? It's not fun.' That's fine. Not everything is for everybody. I have done very pure classical albums in the past, but this is me expressing myself as an artist. It's not because I want to reshape the classical world. It's just my inner hunger to do different things. And to give something to the young people who follow me on Instagram. I want them to think, 'Oh my gosh, I didn't know I needed Purcell and Monteverdi in my life, but now I do.'"

In the same spirit he now sings at



Orlinski at the Olympics opening ceremony

rock festivals. "In 2022 we got an offer from the producer of Meskie Granie, which is the biggest summer festival in Poland," Orlinski says.

"It's like your Hyde Park or Reading festivals: thousands of people with beer and hot dogs listening to rock, rap and pop. Well, we played on the main stage doing classical music but with a twist."

How did the crowd respond? "I was blown away, because actually I was very stressed about how it would be received. You spend your life in classical music performing to people who know what to expect, and then you are suddenly in this environment where the audience is mainly there to see some famous hip-hop group who



Jakub Jozef Orlinski on the Polish Vogue cover. Left: in London last week

are on after you. As soon as we started we had a technical problem. So I did six minutes of stand-up comedy while it was fixed. Actually, that was the best thing that could have happened, because it relaxed people."

Does he think many of the audience had heard a countertenor before?

"That's what I said to them before I started. I said, 'You might be shocked by the sound I'm producing — but actually you've heard it before.' Pop singers like Justin Timberlake and Justin Bieber all go into falsetto for the high register. It's just that they aren't trained in the operatic way."

In one sense Orlinski has come a long way from his starting point, singing in a male-voice choir in Warsaw. They needed high voices and Orlinski, then a teenage baritone, lost out in the draw to decide who had the indignity of singing falsetto. He proved rather good at it, so much so that he started a journey of vocal training that culminated in a place at the Juilliard School in New York.

In another sense, however, he has stayed true to his roots. He still seeks out skateboarding parks and breakdancing classes wherever he happens to be singing. And he still lives in Warsaw, about which he waxes lyrical. "Wonderful parks, wonderful culture, wonderful cafés and bars. I bring my friends from America and other European countries there and they are, 'Wow, wow, wow.' Plus, food-wise, outstanding."

Really? Because Polish cuisine doesn't have the greatest reputation. "People just aren't educated about it. To be fair, we do have those heavy soups. But also very light soups."

He has always taken inspiration from the whole spectrum of singers and musical genres. "I love the beautiful timbres of countertenors such as Andreas Scholl, but I also take inspiration from people with really meaty, soulful voices like Ewa Podles. Plus hip-hop bands, funk music, house music, all sorts."

What next? "You know, sometimes performers struggle because they don't have new ideas. That's not me. I have ideas all the time. It's both a curse and a blessing. But I'm still super young and super hungry. I'm still working on my voice. On my computer I have plans for three or four new albums."

So no resting on laurels then? "Never," he replies. "If you rest or stay the same, you are actually regressing." Orlinski sings at the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, on Saturday (eif.co.uk) and at the Wigmore Hall, W1, on September 12 (wigmore-hall.org.uk). *#LetsBaRock* is released on Erato on September 27

This Iron Lady deserves better than comic CGI

Carol Midgley TV review



Eiffel Tower: Building the Impossible

BBC4

★★★★☆

Spent

BBC2

★★★★☆

The Eiffel Tower is, obviously, a masterpiece, a wonder of engineering and human ambition, and despite the damp squib of an Olympic opening ceremony, it was still a sexy showstopper at 135 years old. So surely it deserved better than some of the comically bad visuals in **Eiffel Tower: Building the Impossible**? The recreations of the civil engineer Gustave Eiffel and his team were so stiff and lifeless they could have been made by

Madame Tussaud herself. I can't call them animations because they didn't really move. They looked like the sort of deathly figurines you see in disappointing museums.

Maybe using rather old-fashioned graphics was a deliberate attempt to remind us how very long ago it was that the "impossible" was achieved: the world's tallest man-made structure — an elegant colossus of puddle iron that is so unmistakably French. Between 1887 and 1889, using ancient techniques pioneered by the Egyptians, the Iron Lady (no, not that one) was erected and, as anyone who has climbed the 674 steps the public are allowed to climb knows, it really is a marvel. But it felt a strange decision to illustrate a technological world coup by means of CGI Woodentops.

Luckily the content itself was high quality with some lovely archive material and proper, grown-up science. Pascal Cuissot's film told us that it took just two years, two months and five days to build. And though it was originally meant to be dismantled after 20 years, it remains an epochal part of the Paris landscape.

The engineering detail was fascinating. We were shown an experiment explaining that the tower's stylish curved sides are to resist wind. Eiffel had helped to design Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty, France's gift to the US, opting



The Eiffel Tower in 1888, midway through its two-year build

for the "strategy of the reed rather than that of the oak". In other words: flexibility. At least the CGI version looked a bit like old photos of Eiffel. Think a bearded Matthew Macfadyen playing Henry Wilcox in *Howards End*.

French bureaucracy dogged the early planning but eventually it was agreed to open for the World Fair of 1889. The film showed us CGI of architects and engineers hunched over paper designs, everything calculated to one tenth of a millimetre. Quite poignant that it was Eiffel himself who saved it from being dismantled in 1909, proposing it be used for wireless telegraphy and as a tool for national defence. Shame he doesn't know that it remains the most visited monument (that you have to pay for) in the world.

At the risk of repeating myself, why do they use so little of Matt King, aka Super Hans from *Peep Show*, in **Spent**? As the sleazy agent in Michelle de Swarte's clever comedy about a catwalk model fallen on hard times, he lights up every scene he is in. And yet in this episode he was used for less than a minute. It's baffling.

Still, episode four did show de Swarte's skill in weaving the dark with the light: her problematic relationship with her father, her strained friendship with her best friend, the fact that she is a slightly annoying protagonist who lacks self-awareness. It would just have benefited from more King.

Radio choice

Ben Dowell



Does the Team Drink?

Radio 4 Extra, 10.30am

When the writer Louis Barfe, above, was researching his (excellent) book on Les Dawson a remark made by the comedy writer David Nobbs about a "seven-round lunch" from the boozy 1970s stayed with him. Comedy and alcohol have not exactly been strangers over the years but why, asks Barfe in this programme from 2019, is that the case? Alongside contributions from Marcus Brigstocke, Arthur Smith and Barry Cryer, Barfe asks whether alcohol is the reason there are few very old British comedians, with Dawson, Tommy Cooper and Eric Morecambe all dying prematurely.

OUR TV NEWSLETTER

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Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app
5.00am Rosie Wright with Early Breakfast
6.00am Aasmah Mir and Luke Jones with Times Radio Breakfast **10.00am** Mornings on Times Radio. Political interviews and conversation
1.00pm Ayesha Hazarika **2.00pm** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover. Jane and Fi's trademark entertaining style plus live discussion on the day's news **4.00pm** John Plenaar with Times Radio Drive **7.00pm** The Evening Edition with Kait Borsay **10.00pm** Darryl Morris. A first look at Sunday's newspapers **1.00am** The Story **1.30am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz
6.30am The Gaby Roslin Breakfast Show
9.30am Gary Davies. Gary Davies sits in for Vernon Kay **12.00pm** Jeremy Vine. Current affairs chat **2.00pm** Scott Mills. Music and chat, with guest Greg Rutherford **4.00pm** Sara Cox. Music and chat **6.30pm** Sara Cox's Half Wower. Sara plays the biggest and best tunes to get listeners dancing **7.00pm** Jo Whitley's Shiny Happy Playlist **7.30pm** Jo Whitley **9.00pm** The Jazz Show with Jamie Cullum. The Bristol-based bassist Stevie Toddler runs down some musical inspirations in her **Take 5 10.00pm** Trevor Nelson's Magnificent 7. Seven of *Rhythm Nation*'s biggest hits, uplifting tunes and essential throwbacks **10.30pm** Trevor Nelson's Rhythm Nation. Lujah Fiasco shares his Musical Youth. **12.00pm** OJ Borg. Through-the-night entertainment live from the Salford Riviera **3.00am** Power of Jazz (r) **4.00pm** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz
6.30am Breakfast
Petroc Trelawny presents Radio 3's classical breakfast show, featuring listener requests
9.30am Essential Classics
Ian Skelly plays the best in classical music with discoveries and surprises rubbing shoulders with familiar favourites
1.00pm Classical Live
Elizabeth Alker presents another chance to hear pianist Yunchan Lim at the Proms with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Paavo Jarvi. Korgold (Suite from *Much Ado about Nothing*, Op 11); Grieg (String Quartet No 1 in G minor, Op 27); Erkki-Sven Tüür (*Aditus*); Beethoven (Piano Concerto No 5 'Emperor') Gounod (*Par la main de ce fils and Invocation*, from *Tobie*) and Bruckner (Symphony No 1 in C minor)

4.00 Composer of the Week: Musical Olympians — Ethel Smyth (1858-1944)

Donald Macleod explores the world of Ethel Smyth through five love affairs that shaped her life and music; this edition looks at her romantic and creative partnership with Harry Brewster. Smyth (Piano Suite in E — ii. Bourree; Piano Trio — iii. Scherzo; 4 Songs — ii. The Dance; Serenade in D — 3rd and 4th movements; *Der Wald* — Scene IX and epilogue; and *The Wreckers* — Overture)
5.00 In Tune
Live music and interviews from the world's finest classical musicians
7.00 Classical Mixtape
A selection of classical favourites mixed with jazz, folk and music from around the world
7.30 BBC Proms 2024
Live from the Royal Albert Hall in London, the BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Nicholas Collon, are joined by The Swingles for the world premiere of Anna Clyne's *The Gorgeous Nothings*. Presented by Tom McKinney. Anna Clyne (*The Gorgeous Nothings*); and Olivier Messiaen (*Turangallia Symphony*)
10.15 Night Tracks
Sara Mohr-Pietsch presents an adventurous, immersive soundtrack, from classical to contemporary and everything in between
11.30 'Round Midnight
Saxophonist Soweto Kinch presents the best in jazz with a focus on the British scene
12.30am Through the Night including music by Elgar, Taffanel, Malcolm Arnold, Franz Strauss, Gebauer, Gaubert and Andersen. Jonathan Swain presents (r)

11.45 Status
Carl Honore explores the ways social status is changing in the modern world (2/5)
12.04pm Call You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 NatureBang
Becky Ripley and Emily Knight explore the art and science of medicine (2/5)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Who Cares
By Matt Woodhead. The story of three young carers in Salford, who had no choice but to become the adult in their families (r)
3.00 The Gatekeepers
Jamie Bartlett asks if Silicon Valley's radical experiment is about to implode, and what artificial intelligence will mean for a chaotic online world. Last in the series (r)
3.30 Beyond Belief
Giles Fraser explores the place of wine in some religious traditions (5/8)
4.00 The Lost Archives of James Baldwin
Tony Phillips meets the woman who owns the personal effects of James Baldwin
4.30 You're Dead to Me
Greg Jenner is joined by Dr Steve Kershaw and comedian Josie Long to learn all about the Bronze Age Minoan civilisation (4/13) (r)
5.00 PM Evan Davis presents
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Do Gooders
New series. Workplace comedy set behind the scenes of the charity sector. Clive has one day to prove that he can be a team player. Starring Frank Skinner (1/6)
7.00 The Archers
Alice follows her instincts and Chelsea is cutting with George
7.15 Front Row
Arts programme
8.00 File on 4
Emma Forde learns about the toxic water on US Marine Corps base Camp Lejeune (3/3)
8.45 In Touch
Presented by Peter White
9.00 Crossing Continents
Part two of two. Tim Whewell continues his exploration of the physical and human reality behind the slogan "From the River to the Sea", a phrase which creates intense controversy (2/8)
9.30 The Bottom Line
Evan Davis and guests reflect on the business year. Last in the series (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
Presented by James Coomarasamy
10.45 Book at Bedtime:
Giovanni's Room
By James Baldwin (2/5)

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz LW: 198kHz MW: 720 kHz
5.30am News Briefing
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
With Justin Webb and Mishal Husain
9.00 The Life Scientific
Sports scientist Vicky Tolley discusses preparing for the Paris Paralympics (6/7)
9.30 Inside Health
Weekly quest to demystify health issues, separating fact from fiction and shedding light on the latest scientific research (2/6)
10.00 Woman's Hour
Nuala McGovern presents the magazine offering a female perspective on the world
11.00 Screenshot
Ellen E. Jones and Mark Kermod look at pop music — and its fans — as depicted in film and TV, from *A Hard Day's Night* to the Beyoncé-inspired satire *Swarm* (4/6) (r)

11.00 Jon Holmes Says the C-Word
Jon and his guests discuss telling family and friends about their cancer diagnosis, going public with the news and perusing and ordering from the menu of options (4/8)
11.30 Today in Parliament
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Status (2/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra
Digital only
8.00am Miracles R Us **8.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics **8.45** Shifting the Leaves **9.00** Yesterday in Parliament **9.30** Wow! How Did They Do That? **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** A Good Read **10.30** Does the Team Drink? Exploring the links between comedy and alcohol, with contributions from writers and performers across various generations with different attitudes to drinking. **See Radio Choice**
11.00 Lord Jim **11.30** Detective **12.00** Greying **12.30pm** The Goon Show **1.00** Miracles R Us **1.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics **1.45** Shifting the Leaves **2.00** The Personality Test **2.30** Tickets Please **3.00** Summer Ghosts **3.45** The Lady of the Sea by Diana Hendry **4.00** A Good Read **4.30** Does the Team Drink? **5.00** Lord Jim **5.30** Detective **6.00** Greying **6.30** The Goon Show **7.00** Miracles R Us. By Lesley Bruce **7.30** The Sanest Guy in the Room: A Life in Lyrics. By Don Black **7.45** Shifting the Leaves. Marjorie visits the Tate in St Ives and finds a supper companion **8.00** The Personality Test. With guest host Janet Street-Porter **8.30** Tickets Please. Comedy with Jeremy Swift **9.00** Summer Ghosts. The Queen of Craigiegle, by Louise Welsh **9.45** The Lady of the Sea by Diana Hendry. **Read by Lin Sagovsky** **10.00** Comedy Club: Henry Normal: A Normal Communication. The poet reflects on communication **10.25** The Comedy Club Interview. Esiyll Sears chats to Garrett Milleker **10.30** The Consultants. Comedy sketches with Neil Edmond **10.45** Warhouses of Letters. Copenhagen becomes a warzone and Marengo heads into Russia **11.00** Clare in the Community. By Harry Venning and David Ramsden **11.30** Dave Podmore's World of Cricket. Comedy starring Christopher Douglas

Radio 4 Extra

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Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909
5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00**
5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell

10.00 Naga Munchetty. Coverage from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, featuring swimming, men's hockey and equestrian **1.00pm** 5 Live Olympics. Shooting, rugby sevens, and BMX **3.30** 5 Live Olympics. Coverage of gymnastics, judo, kayaking, and canoe slalom **6.30** 5 Live Olympics. Action from rugby sevens and swimming **10.00** Gordon Smart **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz
5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** talkSPORT Breakfast **10.00** Shebani Aherne & Rory Jennings **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Baker **4.00** talkSPORT Drive **7.00** Olympic Kick-Off — Paris 2024 **10.00** Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only
5.00am James Max **6.30** Mike Graham **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Ian Collins. Hard-hitting monologues and debates **4.00** Jeremy Kyle **7.00** Kevin O'Sullivan. The big stories of the day **10.00** Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only
5.00am Chris Hawkins **7.30** Lauren Laverne **10.30** Mary Anne Hobbs **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Emily Pilbeam **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Emily & Coe. Music, chat and features **11.00** 6 Music Artist in Residence: Shygirl **12.00** 6 Music's Indie Forever **1.00am** The Rolling Stones in Blue **2.00** The Rolling Stones at the BBC **3.00** The Rise and Fall of Britpop **4.00** The 6 Music Playlist

Virgin Radio

Digital only
6.30am Nick Grimshaw on The Chris Evans Breakfast Show **10.00** The Ryan Tubridy Show **1.00pm** Jayne Middlemiss **4.00** Ricky Wilson **7.00** Bam **10.00** Olivia Jones **1.00am** Sean Goldsmith **4.00** Steve Denyer

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz
6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Aled Jones **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Aled Jones **10.00** Alexander Armstrong **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings. With Zeb Soanes **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television & radio

Viewing Guide

Ben Dowell
A Storm Foretold
BBC4, 10pm

Top pick For a canny political operator who has been a Svengali to various Republican presidents, Roger Stone has a strange habit of leaving documentary crews

listen to his phone conversations. There are plenty of such unguarded moments in this film about the man who was convicted and then pardoned for his role in alleged Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election. At one point he tells the director, Christopher Gulbrandsen, he will "murder" him if he

uses something he said. With his jutting jaw, gritted teeth and comic-book villain demeanour, Stone may be many things but he is not affable. We first see him puffing on a cigar and observing what hard work it is "saving the western world". He then makes unpleasant remarks about Gulbrandsen's name having Nazi

overtones. And it doesn't end there. This film follows him from 2019, at the start of the 2020 campaign, to the moment the Trump movement fell apart with the riots at the Capitol on January 6, 2021. Gulbrandsen is keen to focus on his strange relationship with his subject which, as you will see, causes the director a serious

health issue. However, the most fascinating relationship happens off screen with Trump, who is mainly a voice at the end of a phone. Recent events including the presidential candidate's attempted assassination make this something of a period piece, but as an insight into how the right in America think it's grimly fascinating.

Olympics: Paris 2024

BBC1, from 6.45am
You have to be up early to get the pick of the action today, with the men's triathlon beginning at 7am. The great Team GB hope in this event — at least at the time of writing — is Alex Yee, who will be battling it out in a tough field

where the New Zealander Hayden Wilde is a formidable opponent. Other picks are the men's and women's surfing finals but you will probably be watching the highlights as they take place in the middle of the night in Tahiti. The rugby sevens women's final is on at the more pleasant time of 6.45pm.

<p>BBC1</p> <p>6.00am Breakfast. News, entertainment and weather 6.45 Live Olympics: Paris 2024. Jeanette Kwakye and JJ Chalmers present an early start to coverage on day four in Paris, where the men's triathlon gets under way at 7.00 at Pont Alexandre III, with Britain's Alex Yee going for gold. There will also be rowing quarter-finals and semi-finals at the Vaires-sur-Marne Nautical Stadium, and swimming heats at La Defense Arena. See <i>Viewing Guide</i> 11.00 Live Olympics: Paris 2024. Jeanette Kwakye and JJ Chalmers present further coverage on day four in France, including hockey action at 11.45 with Great Britain's men's facing a tough pool-stage match against the Netherlands team 1.00pm BBC News at One; Weather 1.30 BBC Regional News; Weather 1.35 BBC News at One; Weather 1.45 Live Olympics: Paris 2024. Hazel Irvine introduces further coverage from day four of the Games, where women's team artistic gymnastics, men's BMX freestyle and women's judo are among the events taking place. Also taking place this afternoon are the latest tennis and boxing contests, and judo at the Champ de Mars Arena 6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather 6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather</p>	<p>BBC2</p> <p>6.45am Breakfast 9.00 Dom Does America (r) 9.30 Wanted Down Under Revisited (r) 10.15 A Countryside Summer (r) (AD) 10.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown (r) 11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r) 12.15pm Politics Live. The latest stories from Westminster and beyond 1.00 Live Olympics: Paris 2024. Day four continues with coverage of the table tennis mixed doubles final at the South Paris Arena 1.45 Bargain Hunt (r) 2.30 The Customer Is Always Right. Inventions include a storage solution for tin cans (r) 3.00 Escape to the Country. Jules Hudson helps a couple find a characterful country house in the North Westsex Downs (r) (AD) 3.45 Ricky & Ralf's Very Northern Road Trip. Ralf Little and Ricky Tomlinson explore Cumbria (r) 4.30 The Repair Shop. The team restores a broken hand mirror containing the portrait of a mysterious French lady (r) (AD) 5.15 Flag It! Antiques experts Will Axon and Mark Stacey visit the Oxford Union to admire another selection of the public's personal treasures (r) 6.00 Live Olympics: Paris 2024. Hazel Irvine presents continued coverage of the women's team artistic gymnastics final, which reaches a conclusion at the Bercy Arena</p>	<p>ITV1</p> <p>6.00am Good Morning Britain. News, current affairs and lifestyle features 9.00 Lorraine. Early morning chat show presented by Lorraine Kelly, with celebrity interviews, entertainment news, cooking tips, fashion features and musical guests 10.00 This Morning. A mix of celebrity chat, lifestyle features, advice and competitions. Including 10.45 Weather 12.30pm Loose Women. More celebrity interviews and topical debate from a female perspective 1.00 ITV News; Weather 1.20 Regional News; Weather 1.30 Live ITV Racing: Glorious Goodwood. Ed Chamberlin and Francesca Cumani present coverage of day one of the festival, which is headlined by the Goodwood Cup. With analysis from Jason Weaver and Leonna Mayor, reports by Matt Chapman, and commentary from Richard Hoiles 4.00 Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r) 5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh presents as four contestants answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to take on one of the ruthless Chasers and secure a cash prize (r) 6.00 Regional News; Weather 6.30 ITV News; Weather</p>	<p>Channel 4</p> <p>6.25am Cheers (r) 7.15 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD) 9.05 Frasier (r) (AD) 11.05 Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes (r) (AD) 11.10 The Simpsons (r) (AD) 12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary 12.10 A New Life in the Sun. The soft launch of a bar in Spain starts to get stressful (r) 1.10 Car SOS. A neglected 1988 Fiat Uno Turbo (r) (AD) 2.10 Countdown. Helen Lederer is in Dictionary Corner 3.00 A Place in the Sun. Ben Hillman helps newlyweds to find their dream permanent home in the town of Oliva in the Spanish region of Valencia that can accommodate a large extended family (r) 4.00 The Great House Giveaway. In Clynderden in Pembrokeshire, a nurse and a fundraiser are given a two-bedroom terraced house full of abandoned belongings to fix up and flip 5.00 A New Life in the Sun: Where Are They Now? A couple in Mallorca look at ways to diversify and keep their restaurant at the top spot. Plus, catching up with B&B owners in France to see if they are still living the dream (r) 6.00 Come Dine with Me. The second night in north London (r) 6.30 The Simpsons. Homer takes the kids joyriding in Comic Book Guy's car and ends up being taken to court. With the voice of Guillermo Del Toro (r) (AD)</p>	<p>Channel 5</p> <p>6.00am Milkshake! 9.15 Jeremy Vine. The broadcaster discusses the issues of the day 11.30 Storm Huntley. Debate on the day's talking points continues 12.45pm Friends. Chandler dates a married woman (r) (AD) 1.10 Friends. A power cut exposes Chandler to temptation 1.40 5 News at Lunchtime 1.45 Home and Away. Bree tries to talk a suspicious Dana down, Bronte deftly plays the victim to a sympathetic Irene and Cash tells Eden he's worried about her threats to leave the Bay (r) (AD) 2.15 FILM: The Man with My Husband's Face (PG, TVM, 2023) A woman's husband disappears, presumed drowned, during a kayaking trip, but soon after she glimpses a man who looks exactly like him. Thriller starring Koko Marshall 4.00 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. A pub landlady braves a rainy day to drum up trade, a woman gets help running her horse rescue centre, and a musician is asked to help judge a weekly talent contest (r) 5.00 5 News at 5 6.00 Amazing Railway Adventures with Nick Knowles. From Lao Cai on the Chinese border, via the misty mountains around Sa Pa, the presenter heads south on a sleeper train to Hanoi during his exploration of Vietnam (r) 6.55 5 News Update</p>
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A dangerous business: inside the

Our gripping new investigative podcast, *Cocaine Inc.* sheds light on the global cocaine industry, where profits are counted up in millions and losses measured out in murders. Follow the trail with us across four continents.

<p>7PM</p> <p>7.00 Live Olympics: Paris 2024 Clare Balding presents coverage of the swimming finals at La Defense Arena, where a further three champions are set to be crowned, including in the men's 4x200m freestyle relay at 8.59. The British men dominated this race in Tokyo, finishing more than three seconds clear of the field to take gold. This time they are likely to face stiff competition from the likes of the USA and Australia, as a gallery of stars line up for one of the most eagerly anticipated races in the swimming calendar. The women's 100m backstroke final is at 7.57 and the men's 800m freestyle is at 8.03, and there are semi-finals in a further four disciplines, with the likes of French superstar Leon Marchand and Great Britain's Anna Hopkin and Freya Anderson expected to be in action</p>	<p>7.00 Richard Osman's House of Games Richard Osman hosts, with Malorie Blackman, Matt Dawson, Chris McCausland and Ranvir Singh (r)</p> <p>7.30 EastEnders Suki questions Vinny's methods as he kicks Priya out of the house and Alfie takes a different approach to disciplining Tommy (AD)</p>	<p>7.30 Emmerdale Kim has set her sights on Caleb. Meanwhile, it is Ella's scan day, and Jai and Laurel's marital problems pervade village life (AD)</p>	<p>7.00 Channel 4 News</p> <p>7.55 Paris 2024 Paralympics: Meet the Athletes Neil and Lora Fachie (r) (AD)</p>	<p>7.00 Our Great Yorkshire Life Emmerdale actor Dean Andrews takes British Lancastrian co-star pal Liam Fox to the Dales to find out how the world-famous Wensleydale cheese is made</p> <p>7.55 5 News Update</p>
<p>8PM</p> <p>8.00 Inside the Factory Five years ago, Gregg visited a North Yorkshire food factory to find out how they made their popular sausages. Now he is back to learn the secret of the vegan variety, and discovers the process is surprisingly space age (4/6) (r) (AD)</p>	<p>8.00 Kyle: The Gunman Who Divided America Documentary about Kyle Rittenhouse, who became one of the most controversial figures in the US after shooting three men amid Black Lives Matter protests in August 2020. He claimed self-defence at trial and was acquitted in 2021 (r) (AD)</p>	<p>8.00 Cooking with the Stars New series. Emma Willis and Tom Allen return with the celebrity cooking contest. In this edition, Carol Vorderman, Abbey Clancy, Pasha Kovalev and Danny Pinero compete to deliver stand-out dinner party dishes and progress to the next round. See <i>Viewing Guide</i> (1/6) (AD)</p> <p>9.00 Vera DCI Stanhope is called out to the banks of the River Tyne, where the body of a woman has been washed up. Although the victim appears to have been a popular manager at a local green energy company, as well as a loyal friend and a loving mother and wife, Vera uncovers a web of intrigue, betrayal and lost promises as she has to unravel the woman's complicated personal and professional life to find her killer (6/6) (r) (AD)</p>	<p>8.00 Worst House on the Street In Bristol, Scarlett and Stuart help a single mum who wants to transform her house into a colourful haven for her daughter. To get on the property ladder she bought the ultimate fixer-upper — but tasks like a new roof threaten her budget (3/6) (AD)</p> <p>9.00 The Body Detectives The experts investigate the death of an unidentified man found in a London street in 1994. Using the latest technology, the team uncover the man's hidden story, shedding light on the reasons behind his presence on that street at that moment (AD)</p>	<p>8.00 The Yorkshire Vet: At Home with the Greens A woman takes Peanut, the oldest of her 13 cats, to Peter's surgery for a check-up and rewards the ageing moggie with a luxury cat tree. Away from the farm, daughter Sarah dons her L plates and takes her parents out in the car for the very first time</p> <p>9.00 Your Kitchen: 60 Years of Fads & Gadgets Documentary charting the transformation of the British kitchen from the 1950s to the present day. TV chefs, design experts and historians reveal the trends and changes that shaped the look and design of Britain's kitchens over the decades (1/2)</p>
<p>10PM</p> <p>10.00 BBC News; Weather</p> <p>10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather</p> <p>10.40 Olympics: Paris 2024 — Tonight at the Games Isa Guha and Mark Chapman look back at the biggest stories from day four, as a total of 12 gold medals were decided, with multiple British athletes in contention for the podium. The day started with Tokyo silver medalist Alex Yee aiming for more success in the men's triathlon and it ended in the pool, where Team GB's star-studded men's relay team sought to defend their 4x200m crown, while there were also chances of glory in both judo and shooting</p>	<p>10.00 My Family Ben and Susan look forward to their holiday — but any hope of rest is ruined when Janey persuades them to let her have a party (4/13) (r)</p> <p>10.30 Newsnight Analysis of the day's events with Victoria Derbyshire</p>	<p>10.45 ITV News at Ten</p>	<p>10.00 Gogglebox The armchair critics share their opinions on shows from November 2023 including <i>The Crown</i>, <i>Survivor</i>, <i>007: Road to a Million</i>, <i>The Good Ship Murder</i>, <i>Shoplifters: Caught Red Handed</i> and <i>ITV News'</i> coverage of the Cabinet reshuffle (r) (AD)</p>	<p>10.00 Britain's Favourite Ads of the 70s & 80s A celebration of most memorable, impressive, funny and sometimes shocking British TV adverts, with industry experts, stars of the ads, and social commentators discuss how they were made and their social context. Featuring contributions by Jennyclair, Lorraine Chase, Jamie MacDonald, Hal Cruttenden, Darren Harriott and other familiar faces (r)</p>
<p>11PM</p> <p>11.05 Today at the Test England v West Indies. Action from day five of the third and final Test in the series, staged at Edgbaston in Birmingham</p>	<p>12.05am Sign Zone: The Turkish Detective (r) (AD, SL) 1.45 The Bidding Room. Nigel Havers presents as five dealers bid for intriguing items, including an astrolabe, a photo enlarge and some Beatles memorabilia (r) (SL) 2.30-3.00 Surviving The Post Office. Will Mellor meets the post office staff wrongly accused of theft (r) (AD, SL)</p>	<p>11.20 Regional News</p> <p>11.35 On Assignment Nina Hossain presents as James Mates, Barnaby Papadopoulos and Faye Barker report on affairs in Santorini, Cyprus and Spain</p> <p>12.05am Turbulence: How Safe Is Your Flight? Investigating the science of turbulence, its causes, effects and implications after turbulence caused a death and 104 injuries aboard a flight in May 2024 (r) (AD) 1.00 Shop on TV 3.00 Celebrity Catchphrase (r) (AD) 3.50 Unwind with <i>ITV 5.00-6.00</i> Ainsley's Taste of Malta (r) (AD, SL)</p>	<p>11.05 Women on Death Row A fire in Sandi Nieves' home saw her convicted for her four daughters' murders. Awaiting the possibility of a new trial, she holds out hope of speaking to her son (2/6) (AD)</p> <p>12.05am Meet the Athletes (r) (AD, SL) 12.10 Hotel Hell (r) (AD, SL) 1.00 Come Dine with Me (r) 1.55 Car SOS (r) (AD) 2.45 Becoming Elizabeth (r) (AD, SL) 3.50 Meet the Athletes (r) (AD, SL) 3.55 Love It or List It Australia (r) (AD, SL) 4.50 Frasier (r) (AD) 5.40 Meet the Athletes (r) (SL) 5.45-6.25 Countdown (r)</p>	<p>12.05am Crimes That Shook Britain The hunt for the serial killer Dale Cregan (r) 1.00 Casino 3.00 Great British Gardens with Carol Klein (r) 3.50 Chronic Pain: How to Live With It (r) 4.40 Wildlife SOS (r) (SL) 5.05 House Doctor (r) (SL) 5.30 Entertainment News on 5 5.35 Fireman Sam (r) (SL) 5.45-6.00 Paw Patrol (r) (SL)</p>

television & radio

Cooking with the Stars

ITV1, 8pm
The culinary contest is back with another set of celebrities paired Strictly-style with a professional. This time the journalist and presenter Carol Vorderman is among the hopefuls alongside the comedian Katherine Ryan and

the former sprinter Linford Christie. Perhaps the most mouthwatering chef/celebrity double act is Christopher Biggins and the tough-talking Rosemary Shrager. Once again Emma Willis plays it straight on presenting detail, accompanied by Tom Allen's camp shtick. This can be exciting, charming and fun.

Vichy and the Nazis

PBS America, 8.35pm
The collaboration between the Vichy regime and the Nazi occupiers remains a darkly compelling one. In 1942 nearly 80,000 Jews were rounded up and deported to concentration camps, most of them never to

return. Without the help of the French authorities and police these operations would probably never have succeeded. Using re-enactments and archive footage, this film by Pauline Legrand and François Pomès takes us to the dark heart of one of the most unpleasant periods in French history.

Elsbeth

Sky Witness/Now, 9pm

The jolly spin-off comedy drama starring Carrie Preston's lawyer Elsbeth Tascioni from *The Good Wife* and *The Good Fight* continues. Tonight our scatterbrained heroine — an ingenue in New York, where she works as an outside observer for the justice department to

ensure the NYPD works by the book — finds herself in the world of Upper West Side real estate with the case of a suspicious fall off a balcony. As our woman begins her sleuthing, there are skeletons in many closets, especially when it comes to Joann, a Manhattan broker with high-rolling clients and even bigger secrets.

Film Arctic

GREAT! Movies, 7.05pm

The Danish super-hunk Mads Mikkelsen commands centre stage in this survival drama. He plays a resourceful supply pilot, Overgard, who crash-lands in the vast, forbidding Arctic icescape and must utilise all his ingenuity and nifty DIY skills to stay alive. (12A, 2018)

Sky Max

6.00am NCIS: New Orleans (r) 7.00 SEAL Team (r) (AD) 8.00 The Flash (r) 9.00 Stargate SG-1 (r) 11.00 NCIS: New Orleans (r) 12.00 Supergirl (r) 1.00pm MacGyver (r) 3.00 Hawaii Five-0 (r) 4.00 S.W.A.T. (r) (AD) 5.00 SEAL Team (r) (AD) 6.00 Stargate SG-1. A dormant android is discovered on a barren planet (r) 7.00 Stargate SG-1. O'Neill enlists the help of two military prisoners to save the Earth (r) 8.00 Agatha Raisin. The competition in the Carsey Jam-Off has always been fierce — but when a judge dies after being poisoned things finally have gone a step too far and Agatha resolves to restore the contest's name (r) (AD) 10.00 The Walking Dead. The group realises that a sheltered life may be impossible (r) 11.00 An Idiot Abroad. Kar Pilkington visits the ancient city of Machu Picchu in Peru (r) (AD) 12.00 An Idiot Abroad (r) (AD) 1.00am The Force: Manchester. Documentary series (r) 2.00 Road Wars (r) 3.00 Hawaii Five-0 (r) 4.00 S.W.A.T. (r) (AD) 5.00 Highway Patrol (r) (AD)

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets (r) (AD) 8.00 Riviera (r) (AD) 10.10 Britannia (r) (AD) 12.20pm Game of Thrones (r) (AD) 1.30 The Sopranos (r) (AD) 3.40 Riviera (r) (AD) 5.40 Britannia. Double bill of the drama (r) (AD) 7.50 Game of Thrones. The Hound is judged by the gods, while Jaime receives a different form of justice and Robb is betrayed (r) (AD) 9.00 The Staircase. Based on the documentary of the same name, Colin Firth and Toni Collette star in this dramatised adaptation exploring the life of Michael Peterson (1/8) (r) (AD) 10.15 House of the Dragon. Fantasy drama set 200 years before the events of *Game of Thrones* and telling the story of House Targaryen (r) (AD) 11.35 Winning Time: The Rise of the Lakers Dynasty. The Lakers respond to Coach West's shocking announcement (3/10) (r) (AD) 12.35am We Own This City (r) (AD) 1.45 The Leftovers. Matt tries to get answers (r) (AD) 2.50 Game of Thrones (r) (AD) 4.00 Richard E Grant's Hotel Secrets. Double bill (r) (AD)

Sky Documentaries

6.00am 100 Foot Wave (r) (AD) 7.00 Discovering (r) (AD) 8.00 The Directors (r) (AD) 9.00 The Vietnam War (r) (AD) 10.00 Love Has Won: The Cult of Mother God (r) (AD) 11.00 The Russell Murders: Who Killed Lin and Megan? (r) (AD) 12.00 FILM: *Magik & Bird — A Courtship of Rivals* (PG, TVM, 2010) (AD) 1.50pm My Icon (r) (AD) 2.00 FILM: *Kipchoge — The Last Milestone* (12, 2023) 3.45 My Icon (r) (AD) 4.00 The Directors (r) (AD) 5.00 Discovering (r) (AD) 6.00 The Vietnam War. Documentary series (r) (AD) 7.00 Love Has Won: The Cult of Mother God. The life and death of Amy Carlson (2/3) (r) (AD) 8.00 The Russell Murders: Who Killed Lin and Megan? Examining the brutal murders (r) (AD) 9.00 Kings from Queens: The Run DMC Story. The death of Jam Master Jay (3/3) (r) (AD) 10.00 Fatboy Slim: Right Here, Right Now (r) (AD) 11.50 FILM: *Adrienne* (PG, 2021) (AD) 1.50am FILM: *The Go-Go's* (15, 2020) (AD) 3.50 Children of Shanghai. Documentary (r) (AD) 5.00 Discovering: Matthew McConaughey (r)

Sky Arts

6.00am Anyone Can Sing (AD) 7.00 Reinvigorating the Orchestra with Charles Hazlewood 8.00 The Joy of Painting 9.00 Tales of the Unexpected (AD) 10.00 Alfred Hitchcock Presents 11.00 Discovering: Forest Whitaker 12.00 The Joy of Painting 1.00pm Tales of the Unexpected (AD) 2.00 The Art of the Garden 3.00 Classic Literature & Cinema (AD) 4.00 Discovering 5.00 The Joy of Painting 6.00 Tales of the Unexpected. Double bill (AD) 7.00 Painting Birds with Jim and Nancy Mair. The couple visit more places around Britain to create pieces of art, beginning by seeking out the peregrine falcon in London (AD) 8.00 Dickens in Italy with David Harewood 9.00 Dickens in Italy with David Harewood 10.00 Rudyard Kipling: A Secret Life (AD) 11.00 Michelangelo: Saint or Sinner? 12.50am Wonderland: Gothic (AD) 1.50 Discovering Film: Horror Special 3.15 Sky Arts Book Club 4.10 Cheltenham Literature Festival 5.10 The Art of Architecture

Sky Main Event

6.00am Sky Sports News 7.00 Good Morning Sports Fans 8.00 Good Morning Sports Fans 9.00 Good Morning Transfers 10.00 Test Cricket Bitesize 10.15 Live Test Cricket: England v West Indies. Coverage of day one of the third and final Test in the series from Edgbaston, Birmingham 6.30pm Live The Hundred: Northern Superchargers Men v Southern Brave Men (Start-time 6.35). Coverage of the match from Headingley, Leeds. The hosts won this meeting last year as they made 201-3 when batting first, with Matthew Short top-scoring with 73 9.30 Live Tennis: The Mubalada Citi DC Open. Coverage of day two of the WTA and ATP 500 event, a hard-court tournament at William H.G. FitzGerald Tennis Centre in Washington D.C 11.00 Live Tennis: The Mubalada Citi DC Open. Further coverage of day two of the WTA and ATP 500 event, a hard-court tournament at William H.G. FitzGerald Tennis Centre in Washington D.C 3.00am Sky Sports News. Headlines 4.00 Sky Sports News 5.00 Sky Sports News

Variations

BBC2 N Ireland
As BBC2 except: 10.00pm-10.30 Barra's Wild Days Out. Barra helps out at an alpaca farm in Clogher Valley, and hears how Kevin McHugh incorporates native species into his work (r)
BBC2 Wales
As BBC2 except: 8.00pm Weatherman Walking: The Welsh Coast. Derek Brockway walks from Fall Bay to Oxwich on the Gower Peninsula (r) 8.30-9.00 SOS: Extreme Rescues. Summer visitors put the teams under strain, while there's a race against the tide to save an injured power-kiter (r) 11.05 New Voices from Wales: I Am Igbo. Eleremchi Nwosu is of Igbo ethnicity, and her parents are survivors of the Biafran Civil War in Nigeria. Now living in Wales, she goes on a journey back into her heritage 11.20 Today at the Coast. England v West Indies 12.20am-12.55 Teast. A voyage from Newlyn to Melbourne made in 1854 (r)
STV
As ITV1 except: 1.30pm-4.00 Live STV Racing: Glorious Goodwood. Coverage of day one of the festival 11.20-11.35 STV News 12.05am All Elite Wrestling: Dynamite 15.00-3.00 Shop on TV 3.50-5.05 Unwind with STV

cocaine industry

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THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

BBC3

7.00pm Top Gear. Jeremy, Richard and James try to build mobility scooters (AD)
8.00 Shark Tank: Dragons' Den US. Pitches include a kit for making toys, a device designed to cook poultry and storage for medical items 8.40 The Catch Up. A round-up of the day's news 8.45 Zen Motoring. Ogmios tests out his 'gentle beep', to take to a different realm 9.00 Stacey Dooley Sleeps Over. The investigative reporter spends a weekend with body positivity advocate Harnaaz Kur (AD) 9.45 High: Confessions of an Ibiza Drug Mule. Young offender Michaella McCollum recounts her story of attempting to smuggle 12kg of cocaine into an airport in Lima, Peru, in 2013 (AD) 10.20 This Country. The film crew arrives back in the village to discover some very sad news about a local resident (AD) 10.50 This Country. Reverend Seaton takes Kurtan and Kerry for a driving lesson (AD) 11.20 Bricksies. Documentary (3/6) (AD) 11.50 Bricksies. Documentary (4/6) (AD) 12.20am High: Confessions of an Ibiza Drug Mule (AD) 1.00 Top Gear (AD) 2.00 This Country (AD) 3.00-4.00 Bricksies (AD)

BBC4

7.00pm Today at the Test. England v West Indies. Action from day five of the third and final Test in the series from Edgbaston 8.00 Keeping Up Appearances. Hyacinth invites the new vicar round for tea — but despite her planning, the afternoon does not go as planned 8.30 Butterflies. Ben becomes convinced the stresses of life will bring on a heart attack 9.00 Timeshift: The Nation's Railway: The Golden Age of British Rail. How British Rail transformed the network after the Second World War, changing from steam to diesel and creating modern stations such as Euston (5/6) (AD) 10.00 A Storm Foretold. A look at how Trump's presidential period had to find its logical end point in the Storm at the Capitol with a focus on Roger Stone. See *Viewing Guide* 11.30 The World's Most Photographed: John F Kennedy. How President John F Kennedy expedited the power of the photograph 12.00 Paris (AD) 1.00am Timeshift: The Nation's Railway: The Golden Age of British Rail (AD) 2.00 Art on the BBC: Monet — The French Revolutionary. A history of Claude Monet 3.00-4.00 How to Build a Cathedral (SL)

Talking Pictures

6.00am What's On TPTV with Noel 6.10 FILM: *Woman in the Dark* (PG, 1934) Drama (b/w) 7.35 Quota Quickies 8.00 Sherlock Holmes (b/w) 8.35 FILM: *My Favourite Brunette* (PG, 1947) Comedy (b/w) 10.20 FILM: *Storm in a Teacup* (U, 1937) Comedy (b/w) 12.35pm FILM: *The Black Widow* (PG, 1951) Drama (b/w) 1.50 FILM: *The Second Time Around* (U, 1961) Comedy 3.45 FILM: *They Made Me a Fugitive* (PG, 1947) Thriller (b/w) 5.40 Look at Life 5.55 The Beverly Hillsbillies (b/w) 6.30 Scotland Yard. Crime drama series 7.05 Batman. Sixties superhero caper 7.35 Dangerous Assignment (b/w) 8.05 Rumpole of the Bailey (2/6) 9.10 FILM: *Goldenyev: The Secret Life of Ian Fleming* (15, TVM, 1989) Biopic of the James Bond author starring Charles Dance 11.15 Cellar Club with Caroline Munro 11.20 FILM: *The Vault of Horror* (15, 1973) The duo look into a city's falling crime rate 1.05am Cellar Club with Caroline Munro 1.10 FILM: *The Dark* (18, 1979) Sci-fi horror 3.00 Cellar Club with Caroline Munro 3.05 FILM: *976-EVIL* (18, 1989) Horror 4.55 Star Performance (b/w) 5.25 For the Love of Ada

Film4

11.00am Dunston Checks In (PG, 1996) Family comedy starring Jason Alexander 12.45pm Sister Act (PG, 1992) Comedy starring Whoopi Goldberg (AD) 2.50 One Million Years BC (PG, 1966) Hammer prehistoric adventure starring Raquel Welch 4.55 The Call of the Wild (PG, 2020) Historical adventure starring Harrison Ford (AD) 6.55 Home Alone (PG, 1990) A boy is left to defend his home from burglars when his family jets off to Paris and accidentally leaves him behind. Comedy starring Macaulay Culkin (AD) 9.00 The Sun of All Fears (12, 2002) CIA agent Jack Ryan uncovers a terrorist plan to attack America with a nuclear bomb. Action thriller based on Tom Clancy's novel starring Ben Affleck and Morgan Freeman (AD) 11.20 Film (18, 2013) A corrupt policeman plots to turn his colleagues against each other as his own cocaine use spirals out of control. Black comedy starring James McAvoy, Imogen Poots, Jamie Bell and Jim Broadbent (AD) 1.15am 3:45 Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children (12, 2016) Fantasy adventure starring Eva Green (AD)

More4

8.55am Food Unwrapped (AD) 9.30 A Place in the Sun 10.25 A New Life in the Sun 11.25 Find It, Fix It, Fix It 12.30pm Come Dine with Me (AD) 3.10 Four in a Bed 5.50 Chateau DIY (AD) 6.55 Car SOS. A Sunbeam Alpine (AD) 7.55 Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud revisits a couples who were building an experimental amphibious house built on a small island on the Thames in Buckinghamshire, to discover how well the floating house performs (8/9) (AD) 9.00 24 Hours in A&E. A 21-year-old patient is brought in with a suspected stroke and a patient in urgent care is treated for a cut (8/8) (AD) 10.00 Rescue: Extreme Medics. A trauma team from Aberdeen rush to an amateur pilot who has crashed his vintage plane on the outskirts of Moray, sustaining multiple injuries (2/5) (AD) 11.05 24 Hours in A&E. A 74-year-old is rushed into St George's with a dangerously high heart rate, after becoming dizzy while out shopping, while a patient is admitted after suffering a suspected stroke (6/7) (AD) 12.10am 999: On the Front Line 1.15 Rescue: Extreme Medics (AD) 2.20 24 Hours in A&E (AD) 3.25-3.55 Food Unwrapped (AD)

ITV2

6.00am CITV 9.00 World's Funniest Videos 9.30 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records 10.00 Love Bites (AD, SL) 12.00 Dress to Impress 1.00pm In with a Shout 2.00 Celebrity Supermarket Sweep (AD) 3.00 Charmed 4.00 Dawson's Creek 5.00 Dress to Impress 6.00 Celebrity Catchphrase. With Jeff Stelling, Charlotte Hawkins and Andy Whymem (AD) 7.00 In with a Shout. Hosted by Joy Dommett 8.00 Bob's Burgers. Linda and Tina try to help Louise build a bed loft in one day (AD) 8.30 Bob's Burgers. Louise and Bob cook Thanksgiving dinner at a retirement home (AD) 9.00 TikTok: Murder Gone Viral. The case of influencer Mabeek Bukhari and her mother Ansenen, who killed two people (1/3) (AD) 10.00 Extraordinary. Kash and Carrie have different goals at a party. Last in the series 10.35 Family Guy. Double bill (AD) 11.20 American Dad!. Stan takes home the CIA's cloned pet — Daren the Dodo (AD) 12.00 American Dad! (AD) 12.30am Bob's Burgers (AD) 1.30 Deal or No Deal (SL) 2.30 Unwind with ITV 3.00 Teleshopping

ITV3

6.00am Classic Emmerdale (AD) 7.00 Classic Coronation Street (AD) 8.05 Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) 10.20 The Royal (AD) 11.30 Heartbeat (AD) 1.40pm Classic Emmerdale (AD) 2.40 Classic Coronation Street (AD) 3.50 A Touch of Frost. A drug addict is murdered (AD) 6.00 Heartbeat. Joe follows up on the disappearance of a teenage girl (AD) 7.00 Heartbeat. Joe and Carol join forces when a girl is found to be at risk (AD) 8.00 Agatha Christie's Poirot. An industrialist is murdered after making a deal to sell rubber to the Germans, leaving Poirot wondering whether the motive was commercial or political (AD) 9.05 Martin Clunes: Islands of the Pacific. In Vanuatu, Martin climbs an active volcano (AD) 10.05 Unforgotten. Sunny and Jess continue to hunt heads as progress is slow (3/6) (AD) 11.05 Unforgotten. The victim's mother and son are put under the microscope (4/6) (AD) 11.55 The Royal. A piano teacher reveals a dark and mysterious past (9/12) (AD) 12.45am Upstairs, Downstairs. Double bill of the Seventies period drama 2.30 Teleshopping

ITV4

6.00am World of Sport 6.15 Minder (AD, SL) 7.10 The Professionals (AD, SL) 8.15 Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) 9.20 The Champions 10.25 Kojak 11.30 BattleBots 12.30pm Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) 1.40 The Champions 2.45 Kojak 3.50 Minder (AD) 4.55 The Professionals. The duo look into a city's falling crime rate (AD) 6.00 BattleBots. The Round of 32 continues with the snake Copperhead facing Mammoth 7.00 The Chase Celebrity Special. With Mark Foster, Charlene White, Ade Adepitan and Kevin Eldon. Presented by Bradley Walsh 8.00 King of the Roads. Coverage of road racing from the Isle of Man, featuring the Southern 100 on the four-mile Billown course 9.00 Beat the Chasers. Bradley Walsh hosts the spin-off in which contestants take on up to five of the quiz's resident experts at once 10.00 All Elite Wrestling: Rampage 11.10 FILM: *Tremors* (15, 1990) Comedy horror starring Kevin Bacon and Fred Ward (AD) 12.55am Auto Mundial 1.25 Motorsport Mundial 1.50 Minder. Drama series (AD, SL) 2.45 Unwind with ITV 3.00 Teleshopping

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping 7.10 London's Burning 8.00 Doctors 9.15 Classic Holly City 10.35 Classic Casualty 11.40 The Bill 12.40pm Classic EastEnders 2.00 London's Burning 3.00 Born and Bred 4.10 Howards' Wally. Patsy watches as Abby is taken away 5.20 Waiting for God 6.40 Are You Being Served?. Mrs Slocombe catches charge while Mr Rumbold is off sick 7.20 Last of the Summer Wine. Glenda receives a chase longue as an anniversary present 8.00 Mrs Sidhu Investigates. Mrs Sidhu and Tez cater for a hit television show — but things go from fantasy to reality when one of the cast is found dead in the woods (2/4) (AD) 10.00 New Tricks. The team investigates a lookalike agency, whose top two acts were found dead in an apparent double suicide (6/10) (AD) 11.20 Silent Witness. Nikki and Jack help in the investigation of the disappearance of a schoolteacher, while Thomas is determined to win justice for a murder victim (AD) 1.45am Footballer's Wives. Shannon regrets her offer to adopt Mrs Birkenham for a week 2.40 Classic Holly City 4.00 Teleshopping

U&Yesterday

6.10am Underground Worlds (AD) 8.00 Abandoned Engineering (AD) 10.00 WW2 — Battles for Europe 11.00 Secret Nazi Bases 12.00 Find It, Fix It, Fix It 1.00pm Antiques Roadshow 2.00 Bangers & Cash 4.40 WW2 — Battles for Europe 5.00 Adolf Hitler's War 6.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Erdig in North Wales 7.00 Find It, Fix It, Fix It. Henry tries to restore a monkey bike, and Simon makes use of all his skills as he tries to give new life to a bicycle 8.00 Secrets of the London Underground. Tim Dunn and Sidly Holloway explore the very first tunnel under the Thames (5/10) (AD) 9.00 Bangers & Cash. A rare 1968 Honda N600 car emerges in County Durham and Derek's in Scotland to collect an RAC Bedford van (AD) 10.00 Bangers & Cash. Dave finds a very rare 70s Sunbeam Lotus that has been rotting away in a farmyard for 29 years (4/10) 11.00 Abandoned Engineering. Ruins of a vast ghost town in the United States (3/12) (AD) 12.00 Great Continental Railway Journeys 1.00am Smoke & Steel (AD) 3.00 Teleshopping

Sac

6.00am Cw: Og y Draenog Hapus (r) 6.10 Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) 6.25 Abadas (r) 6.40 Sali Mali (r) 6.45 Fferm Fach (r) 7.00 Cymyluabychain (r) 7.10 Sam Tan (r) 7.20 Crads Bach y Traeth (r) 7.25 Caru Canu a Stori (r) 8.20 Gwdihw (r) 8.35 Octonots (r) 8.45 Sbarc (r) 9.00 Brethyn a Fflwff (r) 9.05 Sion y Cheff (r) 9.20 Byd Tad-Cu (r) 9.30 Pentre Papur Pop (r) 9.45 Delain a Loll (r) 10.00 Og y Draenog Hapus (r) 10.10 Jen a Jim Pob Dim (r) 10.25 Abadas (r) 10.40 Sali Mali (r) 10.45 Fferm Fach (r) 11.00 Cymyluabychain (r) 11.10 Sam Tan (r) 11.20 Crads Bach y Traeth (r) 11.25 Pobol y Cwm (r) 11.40 Ahoi! (r) 12.00 News: Weather 12.05pm Cwprdd Eifrig Chris (r) 12.20 Heno (r) 1.00 Sgyrs Dan y Lloer (r) 2.00 News: Weather 2.05 Prynhawn Da 3.00 News: Weather 3.05 Heno Dy Newydd (r) (AD) 4.00 Awr Fawr: Og y Draenog Hapus (r) 4.10 Sali Mali (r) 4.15 Fferm Fach (r) 4.30 Pentre Papur Pop (r) 4.45 Ahoi! (r) 5.00 Stunsh: Stwrne Ni (r) 5.05 Prys Pâr Pfyrd (r) 5.20 Lleo DREAMZZz (r) 5.40 Gwarch y Rhybin (r) (AD) 6.00 Ffasiwn Drefn (r) (AD) 6.30 Tanwen ac Ollie. On the day of the baby shower, Tanwen has an endless list of things to do (r) (AD) 6.57 Heno 7.00 Heno 7.30 News: Weather 8.00 Pobol y Cwm. Gwynr tries to make sense of her relationship with Tom (AD) 8.25 Adre. Nia Pary visits the Aberaeron home of actor and writer Geraint Lewis (r) 8.55 News: Weather 9.00 Y Sioe 2024 (r) 10.00 Taith Bywyd (r) (AD) 11.00-11.35 Bwrdd I Dri (r)

MindGames

Tetonor Moderate No 487

280	44	192	47
19	420	28	55
195	38	480	34
52	56	42	437

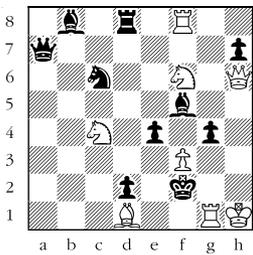
1 2 7 15 17 19 23 32 55

When complete, the strip below the grid can be split into eight pairs of numbers. Adding the numbers in a pair gives one of the 16 numbers in the grid. Multiplying them gives a different number in the grid. For example, a 4 and 6 in the strip could be paired to make 10 (4+6) and 24 (4x6) in the grid. Enter each sum below the corresponding number in the grid. The blanks in the strip must be deduced, bearing in mind the numbers are listed in ascending order.

The next Tetonor puzzle will appear on Tuesday

For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki go to page 10

Winning Move



Last chance
This is the starter puzzle for the Winton British Chess Solving Championship 2024/25. White is to mate in two. There is no entry fee. Competitors (British residents only) need send only the first move. Email winton@theproblemist.org, no later than July 31, giving name and address. Juniors under 18 on August 31, 2023 must give date of birth. Successful entrants receive the postal round. Please mention you are entering via The Times.

Codeword No 5280

15	19	15	23	23	13
23	9	22	9	9	12
4	8	10	12	21	12
10	4	15	16	3	12
6	10	9	4	10	
26	13	10	12	17	12
10	2	26	2	18	11
6	8	25	2	6	4
4	9	8	9	6	7
2	8	9	23	9	7
26	26	6	20	6	26
5	26	21	2	8	20
15	7	16	10	23	19

A X 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	X	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	X	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	B	24	25
												26	O

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

Cueclines Stuck on Codeword? To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 7563 Hard No 7564

Y	A	U	M	E	D	P	P	N	G	A	S	R	F	U	R	I	T
...
...
...
...
...
...
...

Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2308

4	4	1	2	1	2	6	6
A							B

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram®

Solve all five cryptic clues using each letter underneath once only

- Put up with one with a sore head, perhaps (4)
- Caught some cows, I'm told (5)
- US city lawyers concealing everything (6)
- Preserving choice fish (8)
- 5 A get-together of their gang abroad (9)

A	A	A	A	A	B	C	D
D	E	E	E	G	G	G	H
H	I	I	I	K	L	L	L
N	N	P	R	R	R	S	T

Challenge your mind with puzzle books from The Times



What are your favourite puzzles in MindGames?
Email: puzzles@thetimes.co.uk

KenKen Medium No 6272

1	15+			1-
15+	5+		3-	60x
	120x			
	20x	3÷		3-
		5-	3	
11+			1-	

All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 4820

	<			2	
		>	<		
	<		4		
	4			>	

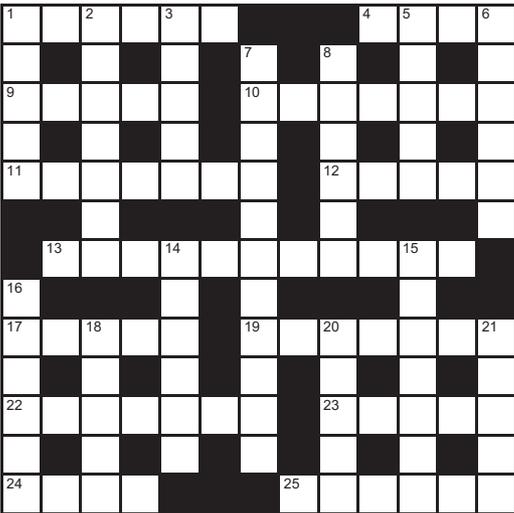
Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 3779

		34	7		7	31		12	14	20
	4				4					
23				12				23		
16			35					11		
	16		16			7				
24				30					24	17
	13			6				12	3	
			23							
	18	7	7					7	12	3
32										13
19						24				
20						4				

Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

times2 Crossword No 9596



- Across
 1 Christ's life and teachings as recounted in the Bible (6)
 4 People (4)
 9 Playground apparatus (5)
 10 Apart, in pieces (7)
 11 Projecting rock formation (7)
 12 Spiny heathland shrub (5)
 13 (Of a force) acting inwardly on a rotating body (11)

- 17 --- board, seance item (5)
 19 Person whose period of fame or success is over (3-4)
 22 Opportunist (7)
 23 Filth, dirt (5)
 24 Hard seaside sweet (4)
 25 Petrol station (6)

- Down
 1 Brio, zest (5)
 2 Bowling pin (7)
 3 Impatiently enthusiastic (5)
 5 Particular sequence (5)
 6 Inner part of a nut (6)
 7 Keyboard instrument (11)
 8 Dense rainforest (6)
 14 Hypnotic state (6)
 15 Latin ---, region including Mexico and Brazil (7)
 16 Football (6)
 18 --- Asimov, science-fiction author (1920-92) (5)
 20 18th Greek letter (5)
 21 Daughter of one's sibling (5)

Solution to Crossword 9595



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

There are some really fine players in their twenties: Michal Klukowski of Switzerland, Ben Norton of England. To these two I would certainly add Giovanni Donati of Italy. Together with his (only slightly older) partner Giacomo Percario (in his early thirties), you have Italy's ensured success for another generation. Watch them defend like tigers to defeat 5♣ (doubled) on today's deal from Italy-France in the 56th European Team Championships in Denmark.

Dealer: South, Vulnerability: Both

Teams

♠ 10832
 ♥ A5
 ♦ 8764
 ♣ 1094

♠ K9654
 ♥ KQ862
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ 2

♠ AQJ
 ♥ 3
 ♦ J109532
 ♣ 653

♠ 7
 ♥ J10974
 ♦ A
 ♣ AKQJ87

S	W(Percario)	N	E(Donati)
1♣	2♣(1)	Pass	4♠
5♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl(2)
End			

- (1) Michaels, showing five-five in the majors.
 (2) Not guaranteed to defeat the contract but a vulnerable Michaels isn't nothing. And he bid 4♠ mainly to make, while South has presumably bid 5♣ mainly to sacrifice.

Contract: 5♣ Dbl'd, Opening Lead: ♥K

What do you think of West's opening lead of the king of hearts? I'll be honest, I'm not a fan. Dummy rates to be weak — no source of tricks — but may have a ruffing value. Also, partner is probably short in hearts for his jump to 4♠. And ♥KQ8xx is hardly safe — declarer could easily hold ♥AJ109 or similar.

The only two leads that allow 5♣ to make are the king and queen of hearts. All other 11 cards lead to one down (on best play and defence after that — remember the French declarer was generous, leading that ten of clubs at trick two). Actually, I like a singleton trump lead.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY 52 -9 x2 +6 ÷4 +7 20% OF IT +9 x2 +15 **ANSWER**

MEDIUM 78 +1/2 OF IT x7 +87 +1/3 OF IT -98 90% OF IT -87 2/3 OF IT +88 **ANSWER**

HARDER 193 x4 +328 70% OF IT +981 x3 -879 +1/2 OF IT +889 90% OF IT **ANSWER**

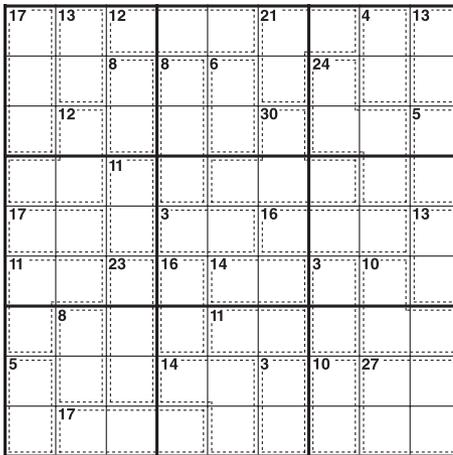
Polygon



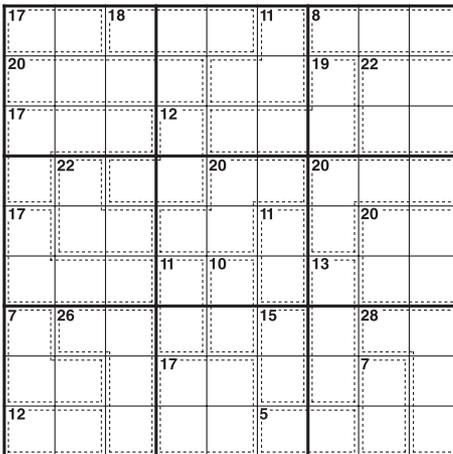
From these letters, make words of three or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. How you rate 15 words, average: 20, good; 25, very good; 30, excellent

Yesterday's answers
 girt, girth, git, grit, gut, hit, hurt, hut, phut, pit, pith, put, right, rut, ruth, thrip, thru, thug, tig, tip, trig, trip, trug, tug, tui, tup, upright

Killer Moderate No 9598



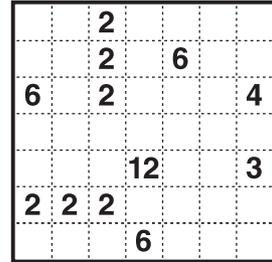
Killer Tough No 9599



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5163



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 3782

+ × = 77
 × - × = 25
 × - - = 5
 = = =
 24 1 26

Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 2740
 FIDDLE LANCER
 A O E E O E
 ACCUAIM SENNA
 S U R E O S R
 TIMON RAPTURE
 S E E C L D
 NORTH EAST
 P T A B A
 ABANDON SETTO
 S I R T O I P
 SPICA SALOONS
 I O E W N I
 MINUTE SEASON

Codeword 5279
 TRAGIC TRASHY
 A U A H M O
 DIAMANTE AREA
 S D A I Z D
 JEER SURVEYOR
 S O T W
 EXPLANATION
 T O B R N
 DUCKWEED HOPE
 L U H U
 GRIT FOOTBALL
 R C I U I S S
 HYPHEN SETTEE

Kakuro 3778
 8 5 5 3 1 7 2
 9 7 1 2 7 5 4 9 8
 8 9 3 1 2 1 2 4
 9 3 7 5 2 8 9
 8 6 8 9 8 6 7
 3 4 2 9 7 4 2
 1 2 4 6 8 9 7
 6 9 8 6 8 9 5 7
 4 1 6 2 3 4 1 2 6
 6 3 8 1 5 7 2

Sudoku 15,105
 4 1 8 5 2 7 3 6 9
 5 9 2 6 4 3 7 8 1
 6 7 3 9 1 8 5 2 4
 9 3 1 7 8 2 4 5 6
 8 2 5 3 6 4 9 1 7
 7 4 6 1 5 9 2 3 8
 1 6 7 4 3 5 8 9 2
 2 5 9 8 7 6 1 4 3
 3 8 4 2 9 1 6 7 5

GK Crossword 244
 BEWICK LEMMINGS
 A A O V A U O A
 BRIGADIER LEVIN
 O S S G L T A C
 GAT TIGGLY WINKLE
 N H O B R
 BOTTOM CUTTER
 S A O Y I Y E
 N T O A D
 OCTOBER MALORY
 H L R N I A A D
 DIANE REATION BEE
 ERATO SNOWDONIA
 I N E N T I K L
 MAINTENANCE PRIEST

Sudoku 15,106
 4 7 1 9 8 2 5 6 3
 6 9 2 3 7 5 4 1 8
 3 5 8 1 6 4 2 9 7
 2 4 7 8 5 6 1 3 9
 9 6 3 7 4 1 8 2 5
 8 1 5 2 3 9 7 4 6
 5 8 4 6 1 3 9 7 2
 1 2 6 5 9 7 3 8 4
 7 3 9 4 2 8 6 5 1

Cell Blocks 5162
 2 3 7 2
 3 12 2
 3 4
 4 5

Set Square 3781
 7 × 2 × 1
 × × × +
 6 × 9 × 8
 × × × ×
 4 + 5 × 3

Lexica 7561
 B E C K O N
 E M U T
 R S
 S T A B
 Y

Sudoku 15,107
 2 8 5 6 4 3 9 1 7
 3 9 6 2 1 7 4 5 8
 1 4 7 8 9 5 2 3 6
 8 3 9 7 6 1 5 4 2
 4 7 2 3 5 8 6 9 1
 6 5 1 9 2 4 7 8 3
 7 2 8 4 3 9 1 6 5
 5 6 4 1 8 2 3 7 9
 9 1 3 5 7 6 8 2 4

Futoshiki 4819
 > 3 | 1 < 2 | 4
 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 1
 > 4 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2
 > 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 < 5
 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3

KenKen 6271
 3 1 6 2 4 5
 5 4 1 3 2 6
 6 3 5 4 1 2
 2 5 3 1 6 4
 1 2 4 6 5 3
 4 6 2 5 3 1

Lexica 7562
 H E L L O
 A
 A R O U S E
 T O U R I
 C H I R P Y

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
 1 Hindi
 2 Basis
 3 Waiter
 4 Wielding
 5 Islander

Cryptic Quintagram
 1 Bear
 2 Heard
 3 Dallas
 4 Pickling
 5 Gathering

Suko 4181
 2 10 6
 3 4 5
 24 24
 9 8 7

Brain Trainer
 Easy 45
 Medium 696
 Harder 6,705

Word watch
 Dreikanter (a) A pebble with three curved faces (Collins)
 Quant (c) A punting pole (Chambers)
 Confelicity (c) Vicarious pleasure or joy (Brewer's)

Chess - Winning Move
 Solution: Winton puzzle

Quiz
 1 A sharp curved claw
 2 Rwanda 3 Breadcrumbs
 4 George Michael 5 X-Men
 6 Jonathan Ross 7 India
 8 Richard Dawkins
 9 Thin Lizzy or, as it says on the record, Thin Lizzie
 10 Kinder Scout
 11 Manscaped 12 Tom Rile
 13 Larry Clark 14 Brendon McCullum, who is nicknamed "Baz" 15 German shepherd or Alsatian

MindGames

For extra puzzles See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Dreikanter
a A pebble with three curved faces
b A small species of antelope
c A wind bringing overcast skies

Quant
a A unit of energy
b To shorten
c A punting pole

Confelicity
a A lucky coincidence
b A hybridisation of cat species
c Vicarious pleasure or joy

Answers on page 15

Sudoku Mild No 15,108

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

Difficult No 15,109

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

Super fiendish No 15,110

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

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz Olav Bjortom

1 Which part of a bird of prey is a talon?

2 Kinyarwanda, French, English and Swahili are the four official languages of which African country?

3 Before being fried in oil, croquettes are usually coated with beaten egg and what?

4 Which former Wham! member drove his Range Rover into the Hampstead branch of Snappy Snaps in 2010?

5 Replaced by Hugh Jackman, Dougray Scott was originally cast as Wolverine in which 2000 film?

6 After leaving the BBC in 2010, who began



hosting his eponymous comedy chat show on ITV in 2011?

7 The Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a union territory of which Asian country?

8 Which British evolutionary biologist

(b 1941) has been referred to as "Darwin's Rottweiler"?

9 Which Irish rock band's debut single *The Farmer* (1970) sold just 283 copies?

10 At 2,087 ft, what is the highest point in the Peak District?

11 Which San Diego-based male grooming company was founded in 2016 by Paul Tran?

12 Which English actor played Leonardo da Vinci in the TV drama *Da Vinci's Demons* (2013-2015)?

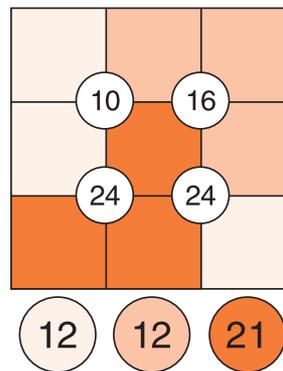
13 Which American photographer published the "groundbreaking" book *Tulsa* in 1971?

14 The England cricket team's Bazball style of play derives its name from which New Zealand coach?

15 Which dog breed is this?

Answers on page 15

Suko No 4181



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic No 2741 by Jalna

1		2		3		4			5	6		7
8					9			10				
		11										
12												
13						14						
					15							
16												
												17
18								19				
20								21				

Across

- Vermeer somehow encapsulates love, always (8)
- Vehicle carrying unknown leader once (4)
- Heave big container alongside church (5)
- Amount of sound indicated by central part of soundboard? (7)
- Fitting take (11)
- Ancient ewer principally covered with a precious metal (3-3)
- Branch seen in river? Good heavens! (4,2)
- A tavern is struggling to accommodate eg, plant eaters (11)
- Given lubrication, outer parts of gear moved smoothly (7)
- Silly passport, possibly with nothing in it (5)
- Mediocre serving of miso soup (2-2)
- They're extremely keen to welcome new youngster (8)

Down

- Every single train failing to start (4)
- A guest deduces incorrectly this is not mere conjecture (8,5)
- Deftly handles lost upset animal (11)
- Right editor on very good paper (3-3)
- Way of changing sides laid out in black and white? (5,8)
- Underwent an experience again, full of energy and happy (8)
- My family member provides a connection (11)
- Recovers from Las Vegas revelling (8)
- Marriage partner will reportedly show anger (6)
- Celeb ultimately craves that extra honour (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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